CHAPTER 5
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The presentation of empirical results of this study began in Chapter 4, which provided the descriptions, discussions and interpretations of the data analysis regarding the study respondents' socio-economic and demographic characteristics. This chapter is the continuation of the presentation of empirical results. It focuses on the perceived level of the current situation of overall organizational functioning, prominence of the 2002 organizational interventions, and the determinants of effectiveness with regard to the Oromia Bureau of Agricultural and Rural Development (OBARD).

5.2 CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Three main dimensions of organizational efficiency were identified, namely operating, organizational health and process efficiency aspects. An organization is said to be efficient and its progress sustainable, if it performs well in all aspects of these three dimensions of organizational efficiency. The research findings focus on these three performance dimensions of organizational efficiency, influenced by the 2002 decentralisation, as well as by other determinants of organisational performance.

5.2.1 Operating efficiency

According to Fry & Killings (1995:5), the measures of organizational operating efficiency focus on the activities related to an organization's objectives, such as profitability, financial position, and market share. In the context of non-profit organizations, organizational operating efficiency refers to tasks and activities related to the organization's operational goals.

Seven variables were identified and operationally defined to measure the operating efficiency level of OBARD. They are: (1) Extension delivery effectiveness in terms of both quantity (target farmers' reached by services) and quality (impact of extension messages on target farmers) of services; (2) Resource utilization efficiency - manpower, time, finance and materials - to achieve organizational goals at district level; (3) Resource utilization efficiency - manpower, time, finance and materials - to achieve organizational goals at regional level; (4) Financial resources availability at district level; (5) Financial resources availability at regional level; (6) Return on investment in extension (input-output ratio of investment in extension, expressed as a return per 100 Birr invested in extension by OBARD); and (7) under efficiency (the percentage of their current work time that respondents would require to achieve what they are currently doing, assuming that they were highly competent, productive and effective).

Using a 10-point scale, these variables are applied to measure the operating efficiency level of OBARD before and after the 2002 decentralization except the last two variables (return on investment in extension and the perceived level of under efficiency), which are used to assess only the current efficiency status. These results are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Respondents' mean assessment of organizational operating efficiency before and after the decentralization in 2002

	Before 2002		After 2002		Mean Differences (MD) (After 2002 – Before 2002)			
Variables	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	MD	SD	t	Sig.
Extension delivery	53.25	19.86	56.88	20.84	3.7	26.69	-2.55	.01
Resource use efficiency (D)	54.61	22.44	60.24	25.25	5.63	26.17	3.92	.00
Resource use efficiency (R)	60.24	19.49	62.10	25.59	1.85	26.72	1.26	.21
Financial availability (D)	51.82	22.02	47.61	25.37	-4.21	32.43	-2.36	.02
Financial availability (R)	60.00	21.55	48.40	26.48	-11.62	29.30	-7.17	.00
Return on investment	-	-	93.1	30.7	-	-	-	-
Under efficiency	-	-	63.2	16.7	-	-	-	-

(D) = District level; (R) = Regional level

The influence of decentralization on the organizational operating efficiency of OBARD is, in general, limited, but more significant at the district level than at regional level (Table 5.1). The biggest positive change is in resource use (manpower, time, finance and materials) at district level (Mean difference =5.6 percent; t=3.92; p=0.00). But noteworthy is also the increased extension delivery of 3.5 percent (t=2.55; p=0.01) which was achieved in spite of a reduction in the financing of 4.2 and 11.6 percent at district and regional level, respectively.

In this view of extension delivery, the respondents were further probed, although not in terms of before and after, regarding the degree to which the investment in extension is worthwhile in the context of the current situation.

The responses recorded in Table 5.1 reveal that the return on investment in extension of OBARD is perceived as 93.10 percent, which means that for every 100 Birr invested in extension, the return is currently estimated at 93.10 Birr. This implies that the organization is working at a loss. Further evidence in support of the low efficiency is the high level of perceived under-performance (36.8 percent). On an average, the respondents perceived that they could have accomplished the same work in 63.2 percent of their normal time under more favourable conditions. This represents a big potential improvement, which can be exploited if the reasons for under-performance are known.

5.2.2 Process efficiency

Organizational process efficiency refers to the level of consensus regarding goals/procedures, cooperation and smooth flow of work, ideas and information (Fry & Killings, 1995). Three variables were selected to capture this concept, namely: coordination (among departments and between stakeholder organizations in confronting common problems and finding synergistic solutions), communication (communication and openness between workers/ managers and between the managerial hierarchies of organizations), and participation (involvement of subordinates or workers in decisions

that affect them). Using a 10-point scale, the process efficiency level of OBARD before and after 2002 was measured (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Respondents' mean assessment of organizational process efficiency before and after the organizational restructuring in 2002

	Before 2002		After 2002		Mean Differences (MD) (After 2002 – Before 2002)			
Variables	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	MD	SD	t	Sig.
Coordination	51.20	19.55	54.46	23.27	3.3	28.47	-2.08	.04
Communication	51.98	20.80	55.06	22.75	3.1	28.29	-1.99	.05
Participation(D)	47.00	19.28	55.14	23.22	8.14	28.02	5.30	.00
Participation (R)	57.15	19.83	56.50	21.84	-0.67	27.95	-.43	.67

(D) = District level; (R) = Regional level

According to Table 5.2, all variables of organizational process efficiency show an improvement after decentralization, except participation of staff/workers at regional level. The biggest improvement is recorded in the area of extension workers' participation (involvement in decision making) at the district level (mean difference of 8.14 percent; t-value = 5.30; p=0.00). It appears as if the improved participation at district level might have happened at the expense of participation at regional level, which showed a decline, although not statistically significant (mean difference =-0.67 percent; t-value=0.43; p=0.67).

5.2.3 Organizational health efficiency

Organizational health refers to non-financial aspects of organizational performance, such as human outcomes and interpersonal relations. Three variables were selected, namely **job satisfaction** (the extent to which the job provides interesting tasks, opportunities for learning and to accept responsibilities), **motivation** (achievement recognition and justice in workers' placement, transfer and promotion) and **work climate** (trust and support among workers and between subordinates and managers). Table 5.3 summarizes the results.

Table 5.3 Respondents' mean assessment of organizational health efficiency before and after the organizational restructuring in 2002

Efficiency aspects	Before 2002		After 2002		Mean Differences (MD) (After 2002 – Before 2002)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	MD	SD	t	Sig.
Work climate	53.93	21.10	51.38	22.56	-2.6	28.89	-1.61	.11
Job satisfaction	56.68	20.98	49.73	22.73	-7.0	27.52	-4.61	.00
Motivation	54.56	20.82	46.28	24.57	-8.3	31.30	-4.83	.00

According to the results in Table 5.3, the overall organizational health efficiency showed the least improvement with restructuring. In fact in all cases there has been a decrease in efficiency, highly significant in the case of motivation (mean difference = -8.3 percent, t-value = -4.83, p = 0.00) and job satisfaction (mean difference = -7.0 percent, t-value = -4.61, p = 0.00). This decline could be attributed to what Fry & Killings (1995) observed, namely that management might have applied pressure for short-term results and avoided investment in organizational health aspects like training, working conditions, and other internal concerns. With the government's current political and administrative agendas of decentralization; amalgamation and downsizing of public institutions, many members of staff were deployed or moved from the region and zone offices to the districts. This could explain the negative influence on work satisfaction and motivation.

This does not bode well for extension. According to Adams (1990), in organizations, such as extension, which depend on staff commitment, success primarily depends on the extension workers' motivation (willingness and commitment to serve and strive towards organizational goals) and capacity to communicate with and to get cooperation from target farmers. In such organizations, management that cannot motivate its staff is bound to be ineffective. It appears that field extension workers were doing their job in the field independently with no or little supervision regarding the quantity and quality of work performed.

5.3 DETERMINANTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Agricultural extension effectiveness in many developing countries is faced with many significant problems, both internal and external to the organization. Assessing an organization's internal (resource *strengths* and *weaknesses)* and external (*opportunities* and *threats)* environments, provides a good overview of whether an organization's business position is fundamentally healthy or unhealthy (Thompson & Strickland, 2001). These perceptions are important for the understanding of the issues in the environment and the issues within the organization to which the organization must respond in order to be successful (Cummings & Worley, 2001). Otherwise, the task of conceiving a strategy for the organization's well being becomes a chancy proposition indeed (Thompson & Strickland, 2001).

Various factors, which, according to the literature, can be expected to have an influence on organizational behaviour, were identified and categorised into personal, organizational and environmental variables or behaviour determinants. In an effort to identify and find evidence of factors influencing the organizational efficiency of OBARD, correlation and regression analyses were conducted.

5.3.1 Personal characteristics

The socio-economic characteristics of employees are important, in order to understand who they are and the effect of their individual differences on organizational performance as a whole (operational and managerial effectiveness/efficiency). The level of individual and/or organizational performance (Gibson, *et al*., 2000) of an institution can be determined by the nature of its people (e.g. individual differences, regarding perception, motivation, desire for involvement and value of the person). According to Gibson, *et al.,* (2000), to be successful in matching a person's abilities and skills to the job, a manager must examine required and possessed behaviours. Thirteen variables concerning respondents' socio-economic and demographic characteristics are identified. The

emphasis here is on the influence of these variables on the different aspects of organizational efficiency (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Correlations between respondents' personal characteristics and aspects of organizational efficiency (N=333)

		Aspects of organizational efficiency									
		Operating			Process			Organizational health			
Personal characteristics	Statistical parameter	Extension delivery	Functional efficiency	Resource use	Coordination	Communication	Participation	Job satisfaction	Work climate	Motivation	Total weighted average
Salary	r	-.11	.02	-.16	-.16	-.06	-.13	-.11	-.07	-.13	-.02
	p	.05	.76	.01	.004	.27	.019	.04	.23	.02	.67
Education	r	-.00	-.11	-.09	-.08	-.03	-.11	-.02	-.04	-.07	.05
	p	.95	.05	.09	.133	.56	.045	.67	.46	.20	.37
In-service training in management	r	.02	.05	.106	.068	.05	.101	.14*	.01	.12*	.09
	p	.68	.41	.054	.216	.34	.066	.01	.81	.02	.13
Service years in current position	r	-.04	-.02	.05	-.04	-.13	.045	-.03	-.05	-.03	-.06
	p	.42	.73	.390	.516	.021	.411	.59	.36	.65	.30
Job position	r	.04	.01	-.009	.035	.104	.053	.07	.08	.00	.09
	p	.49	.94	.868	.529	.058	.336	.21	.15	.99	.13
Age	r	-.03	.01	-.048	-.065	-.041	-.017	-.09	-.01	-.04	-.01
	p	.54	.80	.389	.240	.455	.764	.11	.79	.45	.93
Gender	r	-.06	-.05	-.102	-.012	-.063	-.070	-.05	-.00	-.09	.00
	p	.31	.39	.063	.831	.251	.202	.34	.95	.09	.98
Marital status	r	-.07	.05	-.007	-.050	.001	-.055	-.07	-.08	-.04	-.08
	p	.12	.36	.892	.362	.989	.323	.20	.16	.51	.19
Qualification in extension	r	.07	.04	.044	.009	.058	-.004	.04	.00	-.01	.13*
	p	.23	.51	.430	.873	.293	.943	.47	.97	.88	.02
Qualification in management	r	-.03	.01	.024	.026	-.053	-.065	.00	.05	-.05	.02
	p	.62	.98	.660	.634	.330	.239	.99	.40	.33	.72
In-service training in extension	r	-.05	.01	-.034	-.045	.030	.002	-.01	.00	-.03	-.08
	p	.38	.92	.544	.418	.590	.970	.88	.99	.57	.17
Total service years	r	-.03	.02	-.028	-.065	-.044	-.030	-.08	-.06	-.06	-.04
	p	.62	.77	.616	.239	.428	.582	.13	.32	.28	.49
Service years in management	r	-.01	-.01	-.026	-.104	.000	-.010	-.06	-.03	-.10	.02
	p	.80	.79	.639	.059	.999	.851	.29	.65	.06	.69

The overall impression is that personal variables (Table 5.4) have little influence on the way the organizational efficiency is perceived. An exception is the level of salary, showing significant relationship with most of the efficiency aspects. However, in all of these cases the correlations are negative, which implies that higher earning respondents tend to be more critical as far as the organizational efficiency is concerned. This corresponds somewhat to the findings of top managers who earn the highest salaries. This is also corroborated by the correlations between these two variables (r= 0.534; p=0.000).

Table 5.5 Correlation between salary, education and the management positions of the respondents (N=333)

	Management position	
Personal characteristics	r	p
Salary	.535**	.000
Education	.367**	.000
Age	.091	.089
Tenure	.098	.067

The only other determinants having a limited but noteworthy influence are education and in-service training, but a more valid indication of the comparative influence of these variables can be achieved through regression analyses. These are presented in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Total influences of respondents' personal characteristics variables

Variable	Beta	t	p
Constant		5.770	.000
Salary	-.206	-2.084	.038
Education	-.046	-.593	.554
In-service training in management	.085	1.343	.180
Years in current position	-.040	-.659	.510
Job position	.194	2.603	.010
Age	.128	1.051	.294
Gender	-.091	-1.570	.117
Marital status	-.036	-.550	.583
Highest qualification in extension	.080	1.377	.169
Formal training in management	-.015	-.258	.796
In-service training in extension	-.019	-.321	.748
Total service years in MOA	-.028	-.225	.822
Years in management	.002	.034	.973

$R^2 = 0.060$

According to Table 5.6, salary and managerial positions are confirmed to be the variables contributing most significantly to the variations regarding perceptions of the current organizational efficiency situations. However, the total contribution of personal characteristics towards explaining the variance is only six percent. This is reflected in the significant R^2 of 0.060.

5.3.2 Organizational (internal) factors

The strength of an organization's resources and its ability to mobilize them in a manner calculated to result in competitive advantage, are the biggest determinants of how well the organization will be able to perform, in light of the prevailing industry and competitive conditions. According to Thompson and Strickland (2001), an *organization's strength* is something it is good at doing, or a characteristic that gives it enhanced competitiveness (such as a skill/ important expertise, valuable physical assets, valuable human assets, valuable organizational assets, valuable intangible assets (brand name or reputation), competitive capabilities, alliances or cooperative ventures, and its market achievements determine the complement of resources at its command with which it competes). On the other hand, a weakness is something an organization lacks or does poorly (in comparison to others) or a condition that puts it at a disadvantage. An organization's internal weaknesses can relate to (1) deficiencies in competitively important skills or expertise or intellectual capital of one kind or another; (2) a lack of competitively important physical, organizational, or intangible assets; or (3) missing or weak competitive capabilities in key areas.

Some resource strengths and competencies are competitively more important than others, because they add greater power to the organization's strategy, or are bigger factors in contributing to a strong market position and higher profitability. Likewise, some weaknesses can prove fatal if not remedied, while others are inconsequential, easily corrected, or offset by company strengths (Thompson & Strickland, 2001). In view of this, the level of importance, two dimensions of organizational factors are identified:

resources position and general knowledge and skills of employees. Their importance level is examined by correlation analysis.

Organizational resources position

Concerning organizational resource position, five variables were selected. The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Correlation between variables of organizational resources factors and various aspects of organizational efficiency (N=340)

		Organizational efficiency aspects									
		Operating			Process			Organizational health			
Variables of organizational resources position	St	Extension delivery	Functional efficiency	Resource use	Coordination	Communication	Participation	Work climate	Job satisfaction	Motivation	Total
Skilled manpower	r	.18	.05	.36	.21	.24	.31	.13	.17	.27	.23
	p	.00	.37	.00	.00	.00	.00	.02	.00	.00	.00
Offices & accommodation	r	.18	.15	.29	.24	.20	.24	.13	.18	.25	.22
	p	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.02	.00	.00	.00
Extension aids	r	.16	.04	.16	.24	.15	.21	.25	.11	.16	.18
	p	.00	.53	.01	.00	.01	.00	.00	.04	.00	.00
Finance	r	.08	.08	.10	.14	.12	.18	.19	.03	.13	.12
	p	.18	.17	.09	.01	.03	.00	.00	.63	.02	.04
Transportation	r	.06	.01	.09	.13	.17	.18	.19	.02	.12	.08
	p	.30	.93	.11	.02	.01	.00	.00	.79	.03	.14
Total resources	r	.16	.08	.24	.23	.21	.27	.12	.22	.21	.20
	p	.01	.17	.00	.00	.00	.00	.03	.00	.00	.01

The results in Table 5.7 show that all of the selected resource variables were significantly correlated with most variables of organizational efficiency measures. Comparatively, based on correlation coefficients and level of significance, availability of the skilled manpower and offices/accommodations can be considered as more important, because they were found to have stronger and more significant association with all variables of organizational efficiency aspects. The results of regression analysis also support these findings (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8 Influences of organizational variables

Variable	Beta	t	p
Constant		26.484	.000
Extension aids	.116	1.450	.148
Offices & accommodation	.167	2.339	.020
Transportation	-.090	-.948	.344
Finance	-.097	-.906	.366
Skilled manpower	.218	2.917	.004

$R^2 = 0.101$

Table 5.8 reveals that out of the five organizational resource position variables, the skilled manpower and offices and accommodation variables are found to be the variables contributing most significantly to the variations in the current organizational efficiency situations. The overall contribution of this set of variables is higher than that of the personal characteristics towards explaining the dependent variable variation, namely total organizational efficiency (10.1 percent). This is expressed by the value of R^2, which is 0.101.

5.3.3 Environmental (external) factors

The extension organization operates in an environment which provides it with inputs (such as information, energy, and materials) and which in turn influences its goals and those of the farmers it serves (Cummings & Worley, 2001; van den Ban & Hawkins, 1996:236). External elements are related to the larger social, economic, administrative, political and diplomatic arena, of which agricultural extension is a small part. This external environment represents the external forces that can affect the attainment of organizational objectives (Cummings & Worley, 2001), in terms of what it can and cannot do (such as what is legal; what complies with government policies and regulatory requirements; special interest or pressure of politicians) and competitive conditions/

overall industry attractiveness which an organization has to be tailored to (such as customer needs and expectations).

There are two aspects of external environmental factors, the task and the general environment. While task related environment factors refer to the organization's competitive conditions, factors of the general environment are related to what an organization complies with (Cummings & Worley, 2001). A total of eight variables (four for each aspect) were identified regarding the analysis of association between organizational efficiency aspects and external environment variables (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Correlation between variables of environmental factors and various aspects of organizational efficiency (N=340)

		Variables of organizational efficiency aspects									
		Operating			Process			Organizational health			
Variables of Environmental factors	Statistical parameter	Extension delivery	Functional efficiency	Resource use	Coordination	Communication	Participation	Job satisfaction	Motivation	Work climate	Total
Task environment											
Cooperation between supplementary institutions	r	.21	.29	.20	.29	.24	.31	.22	.25	.31	.33
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Farmers' willingness	r	.23	.11	.32	.17	.16	.21	.15	.21	.08	.19
	p	.00	.06	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.16	.00
Smallholder farmers' access to credit and inputs	r	.11	.06	.10	.10	.06	.18	.13	.13	.24	.18
	p	.04	.30	.07	.07	.32	.00	.02	.02	.00	.00
New technologies and information	r	.09	.00	.06	.17	.13	.21	.00	.14	.14	.08
	p	.12	.96	.25	.00	.02	.00	.98	.01	.01	.17
Total task environment	r	.23	.14	.28	.25	.20	.32	.16	.27	.24	.26
	p	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00
General environment											
Government policies and regulations	r	.32	.19	.39	.34	.38	.36	.27	.23	.25	.35
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Land tenure policy	r	.16	.16	.19	.29	.24	.25	.23	.23	.25	.30
	p	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Political forces	r	.20	.17	.27	.31	.36	.27	.27	.16	.18	.29
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Agro-ecological	r	.11	.03	.30	.12	.11	.14	.10	.09	-.01	.09
	p	.05	.54	.00	.03	.04	.01	.06	.11	.85	.11
Total general environment	r	.29	.20	.44	.40	.42	.38	.32	.25	.24	.37
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00

It appeared that the association between perceived environmental situations and organizational effectiveness are strong (Table 5.9). This is reflected by the fact that, except for the agro-ecological variable, all the variables of environmental factors are significantly correlated with all variables of organizational efficiency measures.

These results suggest that all of the variables included in this study were found to be relevant and important, so that they need attention. More importantly, however, special emphasis should be given to appropriateness and effectiveness of strategic position to deal with (reactively or pro-actively) the general environmental conditions, as well as with the cooperation between supplementary institutions (task environment), if further improvement in the current situation of organizational effectiveness is needed. The importance of these variables are confirmed by the results from the regression analysis indicated in Table 5.10 below.

Table 5.10 Influence of organizational environmental variables

Variable	Beta	t	p
Constant		11.723	.000
New technologies and information	-.169	-3.137	.002
Farmers' willingness	.119	2.025	.044
Government policies and regulations	.332	5.183	.000
Agro-ecological factors	-.053	-.988	.324
Political forces or factors	.184	3.381	.001
Land tenure policy appropriateness	.152	3.074	.002
Smallholder farmers' access to credit and inputs	-.092	-1.655	.099
External coordination	.294	5.062	.000

$R^2 = 0.356$

According to Table 5.10, external environmental factors prove to be the variables contributing most significantly towards explaining the variance of the current organizational efficiency situation, which is 35.6 percent. This is reflected in the significant R^2 of 0.356. Except agro-ecological factors and smallholder farmers' access to credit/ inputs, the influences of all variables of external environment on general organizational performance are significant at the one percent significance level. The findings provide clear evidence of the influence of environmental variables on organizational efficiency in the Ethiopian situation. Government policies and regulations, cooperation between supplementary institutions, and political factors were found the most significant determinants in this set of variables, expressed by high t-value and significance levels. This means increased favourableness in these variables will improve organizational efficiency to a greater extent than other factors considered in this study.

This implies that the organization's management and policy makers should rather focus on addressing issues related to policies, improving the communication with supplementary institutions and networking than on endless organizational restructuring.

CHAPTER 6

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN EXTENSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most important things an organization should do, is plan for the future. There are basically two different kinds of planning: operational and strategic. Both kinds are required, as they serve very different needs. Organizations have increasingly move into strategic planning to adapt to changing environmental circumstances or forces, and to maintain a proper fit between them and the demands of their environment (Migliore, et al., 1995:4-5). Without a long-term planning perspective, an organization is bound to face a tough situation. Instead of moving steadily toward its goals, the organization will continually swerve off course due to the endless supply of distractions that can prevent an organization from pursuing its purpose and vision (Migliore, et al., 1995). Successful strategic planning, according to Allison & Kaye (1997):

(a) Improves the focus of an organization, in that it generates:

1. *An explicit understanding of the organization's purpose, business(es), and values among staff, board, and external constituencies. That understanding supports an increased level of commitment to the organization and its goals.*
2. *A blueprint for action (a conceptual framework) that guides and supports the management and governance of the organization, that orientates board and staff as they go about doing the work of the organization.*
3. *Board milestones with which to monitor achievements and assess results.*
4. *Information that can be used to market the organization to the public.*

(b) Improves the process of people working together, in that it:

1. *Creates a forum for understanding why the organization exists and the shared values that should influence decisions.*
2. *Fosters successful communication and teamwork among the board of directors and staff.*
3. *Lays the groundwork for meaningful change by stimulating strategic thinking and focusing on what is really important to the organization's long-term success.*
4. *Most importantly, brings everyone together to pursue opportunities for meeting the needs of clients more successfully.*

In general, ***Strategic planning*** is a systematic process through which an organization agrees – and builds commitment among key stakeholders – about priorities which are essential to its mission and responsive to the environment (Allison & Kaye, 1997). In light of this strategic planning process, the perceptions of respondents from Oromia Bureau of Agricultural and Rural Development (OBARD) are examined in relation to extension mission, environment and priorities.

6.2 EXTENSION MISSION

One of the primary reasons for creating a strategic plan is to establish a common understanding of, and ambition for, an organization's work. The most succinct reflection of this shared understanding lies in the organization's mission statements – declaration of intentions, hopes, and expectations (Allison & Kaye, 1997). A mission statement consists of three elements: *purpose* - which describes the end result an organization seeks to accomplish (and for whom); *business* – a description of the primary means (program, action, services, etc.) used to accomplish the purpose; and *values* – a list of values and beliefs or guiding principles shared by members of an organization and practiced in their work (Allison & Kaye, 1997).

The extent to which the extension purpose and mission is clearly articulated in OBARD is assessed in terms of the societal needs to be focused on by extension, and how the extension concept is currently understood or should be understood.

6.2.1 The focus of extension programmes

Organizations providing a public service are seldom (if ever) in a position to provide all the services that can be expected of them. It is for this reason, and more specifically because of limited resources, that priorities have to be identified and the inputs focused. It is against this background that the identification and prioritization of societal needs is so important (Düvel, 2003), as they will influence the choice and content of programmes.

The "purpose" component of the mission statement explains the solution the organization seeks for the focus problem, since, as Allison & Kaye (1997) put it, the logic of the mission statement says that the ends (the purpose) determine the means .

Priority focused or need-based development is, therefore, an accepted departure point in the methodologies of extension. But how are these needs or priorities to be determined? Respondents' viewpoints were tested by asking them to place a given set of alternatives in rank order of importance. The results are presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 The importance rank order (expressed as weighted mean percentages) of different priority or focus alternatives (N=340)

Priority Alternatives	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
1. What the community expressed as important, irrespective of whether it is of an agricultural nature or not	57.8	21.5	4th
2. Agricultural needs that ranked highest by the community	72.5	19.9	1st
3. The biggest agricultural need considered on input/output ratio	67.2	22.8	3rd
4. The community's decision after being presented with findings (3)	69.6	23.4	2nd
5. The department's priorities	52.3	23.6	5th

In general, the most acceptable priorities are the agricultural needs ranked highest by the community (mean ranking percentage of 72.5). The community's decision after being presented with findings based on the biggest agricultural need, considered on input/output ratio, was ranked second with low differences but high variations among the respondents (mean=69.6 percent) The unfelt need representing the biggest agricultural need, based on input/output ratio, was allocated the third position (67.2 percent).

Focusing programmes on community needs (that could be extended beyond agriculture) and the department-based priorities (though they have appreciable support of 57.8 and 52.3 percent, respectively) received the lowest ranking. The variations between respondent groups are summarized in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Acceptability (expressed as mean percentage rank order) of different priority alternatives by respondents in different categories (N=340)

Respondent categories	Statistical parameter	Perceived mean percentage rank order of different priority alternatives				
		1. What the community expressed as important (felt needs not restricted to agriculture)	2. Agricultural needs ranked highest by the community	3. The biggest agricultural need based on input/output ratio	4. The community's decision after being presented with findings 3	4. The departments priorities (unfelt needs)
(a) Managerial Positions						
Non- managers	Mean	57.8	72.1	69.0	69.8	56.5
First level managers	Mean	56.9	70.6	65.2	68.4	50.0
Middle level managers	Mean	57.2	76.3	67.6	72.4	47.0
Top level managers	Mean	72.5	73.8	45.0	56.3	23.8
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	1.322	1.019	3.225	1.227	7.479
	df	3,336	3,336	3,336	3,336	3,336
	p	.27	.38	.02	.30	.00
(b) Zones						
Jimma	Mean	49.4	73.2	73.1	77.6	49.1
Arsi	Mean	58.8	69.5	68.0	66.7	58.4
South West Shewa	Mean	65.1	76.2	63.2	62.2	53.0
Borena	Mean	60.0	73.3	61.4	60.2	59.5
East Shewa	Mean	56.9	70.0	59.6	73.1	36.9
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	5.601	1.064	3.719	6.721	6.784
	df	4,317	4,317	4,317	4,317	4,317
	p	.00	.37	.01	.00	.00

The major difference between management groups is that top managers still tend towards a stronger support of what was fashionable at one stage, namely felt needs of the community, which were traditionally captured through PRA techniques. As far as the zones are concerned, Jima and East Shewa stand out with their support of a priority based approach, which implies a decision taken with the community, but subsequent to being exposed to a more objective assessment based on input/output or improvement potential considerations. This viewpoint is interesting and worthy of more general support because it does not only ensure support from the community (based on felt needs) but is more likely to be closer to the optimum priority from an improvement potential point of view or a compromise between the felt and unfelt needs.

6.2.2 The concept of extension education

The mission or purpose and the consequent means of any extension organisation will necessarily be influenced by its policy regarding the concept of extension. This section represents the means aspect of the extension mission, by which the purpose or ends of

extension will be achieved. Düvel (2003) refers to extension as a continuum, illustrated in Figure 6.1.

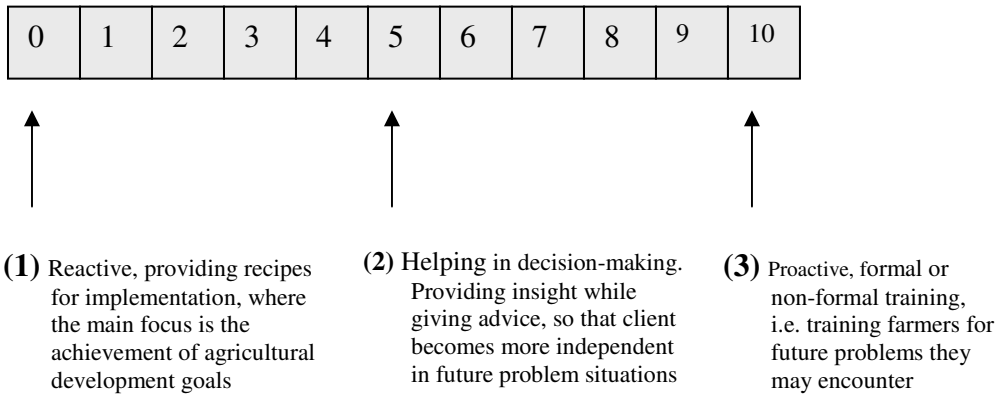

Figure 6.1 The concept of extension expressed in terms of a continuum

Figure 6.1 illustrates how the viewpoint and the consequent approach of extension can vary from, on the one extreme of the continuum, (**1**) an approach that focuses on a strictly advisory and reactive approach (based on request and restricted to advice or provision of a recipe regarding the requested issue), to (**3**) on the other extreme a pro-active approach, which focuses on preparing the client for dealing with future problem situations and thus being more of an educational or capacity-building nature. Between these extremes would be a position (**2**) where current individually-experienced problems are addressed, not only to answer the specific question(s), but also to provide insight and understanding of underlying principles, so that the individual becomes more skilful and independent in future decision-making situations.

Based on the above illustrations, the respondents were requested to indicate their perception of the concept of extension as it is understood currently and what they thought it should be. Table 6.3 gives an overview of how respondents' perceived the current interpretation of extension.

Table 6.3 Respondents' perception of the current and recommended understanding of the concept of extension and its potential contribution, expressed as mean scale point in a continuum ranging from 0 (complete reactive) to 10 (complete pro-active)

Extension concept	N	Mean	SD
The current understanding (where 0=complete reactive, 10=complete pro-active)	348	4.3	2.2
Recommended understanding (0=completely reactive, 10=completely pro-active)	348	7.2	1.8
Difference between recommended and current understanding	348	2.9	-
Percentage contribution of recommendation to increased extension delivery effectiveness	346	58.7	26.2
Percentage contribution of recommendation to increased job satisfaction	345	61.8	25.7

According to these findings in Table 6.3, the concept of extension has to be understood differently (2.9). The current understanding of extension includes both extremes with a slight emphasis on the advisory role (4.3). However, the recommendation is a bigger emphasis on the educational dimension. This means a significant leaning towards a more educational view and thus a clear recommendation that extension should be more educational (7.2) than it currently is. If accepted as policy, this ratio should also be observed in the support and financing of extension.

Some of the variations regarding these perceptions between the different categories of respondents are indicated in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 The current and recommended understanding of the concept of extension expressed as mean scale point in a continuum ranging from 0 (complete reactive) to 10 (complete pro-active) as perceived by different categories of respondents (N=348)

Categories of respondents	Statistical parameter	How the extension concept is currently understood	How the extension concept is thought should be understood	The scope of shifted understanding (Recommended–Current)
(a) Managerial positions				
Non- managers	186	4.5	7.0	2.5
First level managers	94	4.1	7.4	3.3
Middle level managers	60	4.1	7.4	3.3
Top level managers	8	4.8	8.0	3.2
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	1.507	1.511	
	Df	3,347	3,347	
	p	.21	.21	
(b) Zones				
Jimma	106	3.9	7.2	3.3
Arsi	111	5.0	7.0	2.0
South West Shewa	39	4.7	7.5	2.8
Borena	43	4.1	7.6	3.5
East Shewa	32	2.9	6.7	3.8
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	7.060	1.441	
	df	4,324	4,324	
	p	.00	.22	

The results accommodated in Table 6.4 reveal the significant variation of perceptions observed between respondents from various zones. The biggest difference in perception between zones occurred with respect to the current situation of extension concept understanding (F=7.060; df=4; p=0.00). For example, according to East Shewa zone, the current understanding of the extension concept (29.4 percent) tends even more towards the extreme alternative of recipe provision type of educational approach. Also, in its recommendation, it has little support for the other extreme point (extension as being educational in nature), expressed by the lowest weighted average mean (67.4 percent). However, the demanded change is the highest (38 percent increase) of all the respondents' categories, including managerial positions. Arsi, on the other hand, which has a long experience in various extension projects, appeared with less demand for change (20.6 percent increase), by gauging that the current situation is already at the mid point (49.8 percent).

No significant variations were recorded between respondents with various managerial positions, but the non-managers appeared less supportive of pushing extension towards its extreme educational role, as recommended by various level managers. The non-

managers are of the opinion that a 25 percent increase is reasonable, while the demand by managers, such as those of the first level, was for an increase of 34.1 percent. Also, the desired situation of operational workers was 10 percent lower than the top-level managers' assessments.

6.3 THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT OF EXTENSION

Agricultural extension organizations in many developing countries are faced with many significant problems, both internal and external. Assessing an organization's internal (resource *strengths* and *weaknesses)* and external (*opportunities* and *threats)* environments, provide a good overview as to whether an organization's business position is fundamentally healthy or unhealthy (Thompson & Strickland, 2001). Understanding the organization's environment is significant to facilitate the way an organization must respond in order to be successful (Raufi, 1989). Otherwise, the task of conceiving a strategy for the organization's well-being becomes a chancy proposition indeed (Thompson & Strickland, 2001).

The purpose of this section is to identify and prioritize the severity of environmental (internal, task and general) problems facing agricultural extension, put them in order of importance, and determine variations in perceptions between the different categories of respondents.

6.3.1 Internal environment: resource strengths and weaknesses

The strength of an organization's resources and its ability to mobilize them in a manner calculated to result in competitive advantage, are the biggest determinants of how well the organization will be able to perform in the context of the prevailing industry and competitive conditions. A *strength* is something an organization is good at doing, or a characteristic that gives it enhanced competitiveness, such as important skills or expertise, valuable physical assets, human assets, organizational assets, intangible assets

like brand name or reputation, competitive capabilities, alliances or cooperative ventures, and its market achievements.

A weakness is something an organization lacks or does poorly (in comparison to others), or a condition that puts it at a disadvantage. An organization's internal weaknesses can relate to (1) deficiencies in competitively important skills or expertise or intellectual capital of one kind or another; (2) a lack of competitively important physical, organizational, or intangible assets; or (3) missing or weak competitive capabilities in key areas.

A weakness may or may not make an organization competitively vulnerable, depending on how much the weakness matters in the market place, and whether it can be overcome by the resources and strengths in the organization's possession (Thompson & Strickland, 2001:120). Some resource strengths and competencies are competitively more important than others, because they add greater power to the organization's strategy or are bigger factors in contributing to a strong market position and higher profitability. Likewise, some weaknesses can prove fatal if not remedied, while others are inconsequential, easily corrected, or offset by company strengths (Thompson & Strickland, 2001).

Against this background, seven variables were selected and respondents' perceptions assessed. The results are summarized in Tables 6.5 and 6.6.

Table 6.5 The perceived adequacy of organizational resources (based on mean scale-point percentage) by respondents (N=338)

Variables	Mean	SD
Coordination between institutions	41.4	20.8
Skilled manpower	36.4	16.9
New agric tech & info	36.4	20.6
Office and accommodation	35.0	17.6
Transport	27.1	18.7
Extension aids	22.9	18.0
Finance	21.4	16.9
Total	35.5	19.7

The overall picture depicted in Table 6.5 is one of resource inadequacy. The seriousness of the situation is reflected in the fact that all assessments fall well below the 50 percent level. Finance, extension teaching aids, and transportation facilities appear to be the most critical, with assessments of 21.4, 22.9, and 27.1 percent, respectively.

These results suggest that an organization's resource inadequacy appears to offer a partial explanation for the low level of organizational effectiveness (discussed in chapter 5).

Table 6.6 The perceived adequacy level of various organizational resources by respondents in management and location categories (N=340)

Respondents categories	Statistical indicator	Perceived mean percentage per resource category						
		Skilled Manpower	Office & accommodation	Transport	Coordination of institutions	Extension aids	Finance	New agricultural technologies & information
(a) Managerial Positions								
Non- managers	Mean	63.5	59.8	47.7	43.1	45.6	42.0	38.5
First level managers	Mean	63.2	62.1	49.2	41.4	40.8	39.9	35.1
Middle level managers	Mean	52.1	52.7	47.5	36.8	35.6	36.6	30.8
Top level managers	Mean	52.5	32.5	26.3	36.3	21.3	22.5	42.5
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	2.003	2.485	.987	1.559	2.286	1.126	1.527
	Df	3,336	3,336	3,336	3,345	3,336	3,336	3,345
	p	.11	.06	.40	.20	.08	.34	.21
(b) Zones								
Jimma	Mean	64.3	59.4	39.9	40.8	39.3	33.0	31.7
Arsi	Mean	66.2	66.5	54.4	45.3	49.8	45.5	41.9
South West Shewa	Mean	55.1	50.9	58.6	46.2	45.1	47.1	38.3
Borena	Mean	55.6	60.7	55.5	40.2	42.6	43.6	34.0
East Shewa	Mean	48.7	36.7	30.3	28.7	27.3	31.7	29.8
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	2.484	5.126	5.279	4.539	2.856	2.844	2.756
	df	4,318	4,318	4,318	4,326	4,318	4,318	4,326
	p	.04	.001	.000	.00	.03	.02	.03

The different management categories do not vary significantly as far as their assessment of resources are concerned. What is conspicuous though, is that in almost all cases, the top level managers tend to have the lowest assessments, implying that they are perhaps more critical and least satisfied with the current state of affairs. This bodes well for future change, because of the potential influence of the top managers. Unfortunately this does not apply to what frontline extension workers and their supervisors regard as the biggest deficiency, namely the availability of new improved agricultural technologies and

information. However, the low assessments by the first level and middle level managers (35.1 and 30.8 percent, respectively), indicates an awareness and possible support from them in addressing the need for change and improvement in this field.

The differences between zones are significant in regard of the assessment of all resources. These differences can be primarily attributed to the very low assessment by respondents from the East Shewa zone and some assessment (level of coordination, extension aids and finances, and transport) in the Jimma zone. Management needs to pay specific attention to the East Shewa zone, irrespective of whether this zone is less endowed with resources (which seem likely) or whether the respondents are more critical.

6.3.2 The organization's external environment

The extension organization operates in an environment which provides it with inputs such as information, energy, and materials and which in turn influence its goals and those of the farmers it serves (Cummings & Worley, 2001; Van den Ban & Hawkins, 1996:236). An organization's environment can be categorized into two: general and task environments.

General environment represents the external environment and forces that can affect the attainment of organization objectives. It is described in terms of the amount of uncertainty in social, technological, economic, ecological, and political forces (Cummings & Worley, 2001). The general environment affects organizations in terms of what it can and cannot do (such as what is legal; what complies with government policies and regulatory requirements; special interest or pressure of politicians).

An organization's task environment, on the other hand, is concerned with competitive conditions and overall industry attractiveness which an organization has to be tailored to, such as customer needs and expectations; new technological developments. It consists of five forces: supply power; buyer (customer) power; threats of substitutes; threats of entry; and rivalry among competitors (Cummings & Worley, 2001).

Eight variables were selected for analysis of the effects of environmental factors. The results are summarised in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Respondents' perceived favourableness of external environment factors, expressed by mean percentage scale points (N=338)

External environmental variables	Mean	SD	Rank
Task environment			
Farmers' willingness	56.2	20.4	1
SHF access to credit & inputs	49.2	19.4	2
Coordination between institutions	41.4	20.8	3
New agric tech & info	36.4	20.6	4
Weighted average	45.8	20.0	
General environment			
Agro-ecological	65.9	17.8	1
Government policies & regulations	52.7	17.9	2
Political factors	48.8	22.7	3
Land tenure policy	41.2	22.2	4
Weighted average	52.2	23.0	

According to the findings in Table 6.7, most of the variables of the external environment measures (in terms of favourableness) fall below average expectations of the respondents. Assessments of the general environment (mean = 52.2 percent) are somewhat better than those of the task environment (mean = 45.8 percent), which leads to the conclusion that especially the task environment appeared as a threat to organization's effectiveness and efficiency.

Seen from an opportunity or threat point of view, farmers' willingness appeared as an opportunity reflecting the organization's credibility. But lack of availability of new agricultural technologies and information and coordination between supplementary institutions appear to be the most threatening items in task environment that need to be addressed. Under the general environmental factors, land tenure policy and political interference also emerged as important issues which undermine the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization in pursuing its mission.

Variations regarding categories of management and locality are presented in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Perceived favourableness of external environmental factors expressed as mean percentage scale point by respondents in managerial and locality categories (N=338)

Categories of respondents	Statistical parameter	Aspects of task environment				Aspects of general environment			
		Coordination of institutions	Farmers willingness	Smallholders access to credits	Agric technologies availability	Govt policy & regulations	Political interference	Land tenure policy	Agro ecology
(a) positions									
Non-managers	Mean	43.1	56.5	49.6	38.5	52.7	47.0	42.8	67.6
First level managers	Mean	41.4	55.0	48.7	35.1	52.5	49.2	38.4	65.3
Middle level managers	Mean	36.8	57.2	48.3	30.8	54.7	56.6	40.7	62.3
Top level managers	Mean	36.3	53.3	50.0	42.5	48.3	30.8	38.8	59.2
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	1.559	.142	.093	1.527	.240	2.915	.858	1.034
	Df	3,345	3,345	3,345	3,345	3,345	3,345	3,345	3,345
	P	.20	.94	.96	.21	.87	.03	.46	.38
(b) Locations									
Jimma	Mean	40.8	58.6	45.8	31.7	52.0	49.8	37.1	73.0
Arsi	Mean	45.3	58.3	54.1	41.9	54.7	48.9	44.2	66.4
South West Shewa	Mean	46.2	55.4	49.7	38.3	58.5	54.3	46.1	62.5
Borena	Mean	40.2	49.2	47.9	34.0	49.4	40.5	47.4	54.9
East Shewa	Mean	28.7	50.2	46.8	29.8	48.7	54.0	33.4	63.6
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	4.539	1.599	2.737	2.756	1.163	1.576	3.772	5.198
	df	4,326	4,326	4,326	4,326	4,326	4,326	4,326	4,326
	P	.00	.17	.03	.03	.33	.18	.01	.00

The management categories do not differ significantly regarding their assessment of the favourability of external environmental factors, with the exception of political interference (F=2.915; p=0.03), in respect of which the top managers are much more negative than the rest. This is understandable, because if political interference is a limiting factor, the top managers will be the ones most aware of it, as they are more likely to interact with politicians.

Variations between locations were more diversified and the differences highly significant in the case of most external environment variables. East Shewa again has the lowest assessments (especially in regard to availability of agricultural technologies and coordination with other institutions), followed by Jimma.

From the findings it can, therefore, be concluded that within the internal and external environment several constraints occur that were perceived to limit the effectiveness of extension in the Oromia regional state of Ethiopia. The respondents indicated that finance, extension teaching aids, transport (mobility), lack of appropriate technologies and office and accommodation are the most critical problems.

These findings tend to support current knowledge with regard to problems confronting extension, but some differences were observed in terms of priorities regarding the seriousness of the problems. For example, skilled manpower, coordination between institutions, appropriate technologies were identified as the top three most serious problems by Pezeshki-Raad et al., (2001) and Sigman & Swanson (1984). While the respondents of this study largely agreed with them, they gave more emphasis to finance, extension teaching aids and transport, and were thus more in line with the local findings by Fasil & Habtemarium (2006) and Belay (2002).

In the study by Fasil & Habtemarium (2006), shortage of transport and budgetary constraints were ranked first in the lists of problems that development agents face in carrying out their day-to-day activities, while limited availability of logistics and other support for extension personnel was second (2002).

In general, lack of agricultural technology, coordination with supplementary institutions, perceived inappropriateness of land tenure policy and current political situations were perceived by the majority of the groups as issues that had to be addressed.

6.4 PRIORITIES

The identification and matching of opportunities with strengths and weaknesses is basic to identifying strategy alternatives. One must bear in mind the following when choosing extension programmes or priorities: (1) perceptions of the present situation, (2) vision of the desired situation, (3) perception of why the present deviates from the desired situation, and (4) what possibilities one sees for bringing about changes through extension with available resources and manpower (Van den Ban & Hawkins, 1996). Above all, the extension organizations must direct efforts at variables that can be changed by extension, and for which the organizations have the manpower and resources available to bring about change (Van den Ban & Hawkins, 1996).

6.4.1 Clients' focus

The clients' focus or strategy is referring to how the top management intends to deal with clients. It is reflected in the extension target group focus or in the attention given to the various categories of farmers. Types of farmer priorities were assessed in terms of female or male, commercial or subsistence, low or high potential environment, using a scale where emphasis on only the first alternative equalled 1scale point or 0%, and all emphasis on the second alternative equalled 10 scale points of 100%. The results are shown in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9 The perceived (a) current and (b) recommended client focus and contribution of the latter to improvement of (c) extension delivery and (d) job satisfaction (expressed in mean percentage ratio) by respondents (N=341)

Clients' categories	Current situation		Recommended situation		Problem scope (Recommended – current)	% improvement in extension delivery	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	Mean	SD
Male focus versus female	86.0	11.6	64.2	13.4	21.8	61.1	26.5
Small-scale focus versus Commercial	90.1	9.7	70.2	15.2	19.9	56.7	26.7
Low potential areas focus versus high	44.0	20.4	24.0	17.9	20.0	55.6	28.2

*Female-male farmers' ratio: ranges from 0% (only female) to 100% (only male)

**Commercial versus subsistence farmers' ratio: ranges from 0% (only commercial farmers) to 100% (only subsistence farmers)

***Low potential versus high potential area farmers: ranges from 0% (only low potential area) to 100% (only high potential)

The current focus on male and smallholder farmers is clearly reflected in Table 6.9, while the emphasis is almost equally divided between high and low potential areas. However the recommended situation differs significantly from the current situation. Respondents realise that approximately 20 percent more emphasis should be placed on female farmers and on commercial farmers and on farming in high potential areas. The respondents believe that these changes in focus will increase extension services effectiveness and job satisfaction by over 50 percent, which seems overrated or a little bit over-ambitious. More variations occur between respondent groups and these are summarised in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10 The perceived (a) current and (b) recommended clients' focus (expressed in mean percentage) by respondents of various groups (N=348)

Respondents' category	Statistical indicator	Clients' category					
		Female versus male farmers' focus*		Commercial versus subsistence farmers' focus**		Low versus high potential area farmers' focus***	
		Current	Recommended	Current	Recommended	Current	Recommended
(a) Managerial Positions							
Non- managers	186	85.18	63.82	89.06	70.67	55.16	74.84
First level managers	94	88.42	66.20	91.89	71.82	54.35	74.57
Middle level managers	60	82.49	62.73	90.53	67.57	63.28	79.31
Top level managers	8	88.00	60.63	89.38	60.63	58.75	85.00
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	3.522	1.161	1.803	2.076	2.818	1.774
	Df	3,337	3,337	3,337	3,337	3,337	3,337
	p	.02	.33	.15	.10	.04	.15
(b) Zones							
Jimma	106	90.41	69.92	94.92	75.35	56.19	72.67
Arsi	111	80.28	61.62	85.14	67.29	54.18	79.36
South West Shewa	39	87.18	61.84	90.16	72.43	59.21	75.26
Borena	43	85.60	62.73	90.28	65.92	62.00	73.50
East Shewa	32	87.17	60.69	90.59	69.66	56.43	75.71
Analysis of variances (ANOVA)	F	11.684	7.244	15.635	5.401	1.273	2.066
	df	4,318	4,318	4,318	4,318	4,318	4,318
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.28	.09

*Female-male farmers' ratio: ranges from 0% (only female) to 100% (only male)

**Commercial versus subsistence farmers' ratio: ranges from 0% (only commercial farmers) to 100% (only subsistence farmers)

***Low potential versus high potential area farmers: ranges from 0% (only low potential area) to 100% (only high potential)

Middle and top managers tend to be more supportive of a change in emphasis towards commercial farmers and towards farmers in high potential areas

As far as differences between zones are concerned, the change to an increased focus on female farmers is most obvious in South West Shewa (25.3%) and East Shewa (26.5%), while Borena (24.3%) and East Shewa (21%) are most outspoken regarding a necessary shift towards a greater emphasis on commercial farmers. Respondents from Arsi are the stongest supporters of an increased focus on the high potential areas. Their recommendation is a 25 percent shift, while that of Borena is only 11.5 percent.

6.4.2 Extension program focus

Extension service provision strategy refers to what services an organization intends to provide to its clients. Programme foci should spell out the nature or range of the services that a business intends to offer and the boundaries of the specific services that it intends to deliver (Fry & Killing, 1995:28). The major problem in extension is the use of extension personnel for non-extension activities (Sigman & Swanson, 1984), such as providing direct services, collecting rural credit, census data and spending too much time in writing reports, which are seldom used for rural development. These duties distract extension agents from extension work, and reduce their credibility with farmers. Administrators tend to give extension workers all kinds of field tasks (involvement in government administrative works such as tax, regulatory activities, gathering statistics and other ruling parties' politically related issues).

These issues in the Ethiopian situation have been the major topic in debates between the government and the agricultural professionals, practitioners and researchers (Fasil & Habtemarium, 2006; EEA, 2005:390; Habtemarium, 2005; Belay, 2002).

To investigate the focus of extension or extension programmes, nine performance areas or extension activities were identified after wide consultation and review of various reports. Respondents were then asked to indicate the level of current focus and what they thought it should be (Table 6.11). The responses of respondents were obtained on a 10-point scale (See appendix for variables descriptions).

Table 6.11 The perceived current and recommended focus of extension programs and the percentage of the recommended achievable without additional resources (N=348)

Types of services offered	Current			Recommended			Percent of recommendation achievable without additional resources	
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Problem scope*	Mean	SD
Crop	65.5	20.0	1st	84.7	17.3	19.2	58.3	24.0
Non-extension education	61.6	21.1	2nd	76.6	25.1	15.0	54.3	24.8
Non-agricultural tasks	61.1	22.6	3rd	66.6	30.2	5.5	56.1	25.6
Livestock	55.5	20.0	4th	82.9	18.8	27.4	53.9	23.0
Irrigation	54.6	25.0	5th	81.7	23.0	27.1	51.0	24.6
Cooperative management	53.5	21.1	6th	84.0	20.3	30.5	52.1	22.6
Soil & land utilization	49.8	23.3	7th	80.2	22.6	30.4	51.1	23.5
Forest & wildlife	44.6	23.3	8th	79.5	24.7	34.9	46.3	25.1
Home economics	42.3	21.5	9th	81.4	23.1	39.1	46.3	23.1

Problem scope (PS)* is the difference between recommended and current situation (Recommended – current = PS).

It appeared (Table 6.11) that currently the greatest focus was placed on non-extension education and non-agricultural tasks (government administrative, regulatory and other ad hoc activities) thereafter to crop related extension activities. Three extension service aspects (home economics, forest and wildlife, and soil and land utilization) have even received below average (midpoint) emphasis. Consequently, the respondents recommended an increased focus on extension education services by more than 27 percent, except crop. In particular, home economics, usually seen as rural women affairs programmes, received the highest demand (39.1 percent) for change in focus, followed by forest and wildlife, cooperative management, and soil and land utilization extension programmes, in that order. But cooperative management appeared to have the highest chance of implementation, expressed by comparative percentage of achievability without additional resources requirement (52.1 percent).

A further analysis was conducted for the purpose of identifying whether differences of opinion or perception between groups, Table 6.12.

Table 6.12 The perceived problem scope expressed by the mean percentage differences of the current and the recommended focus of the extension services according to respondents of various categories (N=340)

Categories of respondents	Statistical parameter	Types of extension activities								
		Crop	Live stock	Irrigation	Soil & Land	Forest & Wildlife	Cooperatives	Home economics	Non-education	Others**
a) Managerial positions										
Non-managers	MPD*	19.1	25.9	28.0	28.7	33.9	29.8	38.1	16.3	7.0
First level managers	MPD*	23.0	30.7	30.6	35.1	37.2	35.3	42.9	15.9	4.1
Middle level managers	MPD*	14.8	28.1	20.0	28.6	35.2	26.2	36.6	12.4	6.0
Top level managers	MPD*	5.7	15.7	15.7	28.6	27.1	22.9	35.7	-8.6	-26.7
Total	MPD*	19.2	27.4	27.1	30.5	34.9	30.6	39.1	15.0	5.5
Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	F	2.29	1.33	2.17	1.07	.40	1.63	.73	1.80	1.90
	df	3,340	3,340	3,340	3,340	3,340	3,340	3,340	3,340	3,340
	p	.078	.265	.091	.364	.753	.182	.537	.147	.129
(b) Zones										
Jimma	MPD*	19.5	28.3	28.8	33.9	40.7	40.9	56.3	29.2	5.5
Arsi	MPD*	15.8	25.0	23.4	27.1	29.6	24.0	26.8	10.5	9.7
South West Shewa	MPD*	14.6	26.4	23.3	27.4	33.8	30.8	29.7	1.6	1.9
Borena	MPD*	30.5	33.3	38.0	33.6	32.6	25.5	34.5	17.6	13.1
East Shewa	MPD*	25.9	30.3	29.4	29.7	39.0	28.3	47.0	-0.6	-12.8
Total	MPD*	19.7	27.8	27.5	30.4	34.9	30.8	39.4	15.4	5.9
Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	F	4.09	1.01	2.23	.93	2.06	5.99	18.34	12.17	3.00
	df	4,324	4,324	4,324	4,324	4,324	4,324	4,324	4,324	4,324
	p	.003	.406	.065	.448	.086	.000	.000	.000	.019

*MPD = Mean percentage difference;**Others= include activities such as involvement in local government administrative works

The results, shown in Table 6.12, indicate that no significant differences were observed between position groups. But there are some variations. Although they agreed with the other groups on the rank order of emphasis of most of the extension programmes, the top level managers rated the focus on the current priority areas much higher, while they rated the level of attention paid to less priority programmes much lower than the average assessment (reflected by more higher assessed mean scores for the first three highest ranked variables and the lowest for the last in comparison with the assessment of other positions). Furthermore, while in the opinion of the middle managers the current level of attention given to the livestock extension program was low (52.4 percent and ranked as the seventh), but it was the second highest priority (67.1percent) of the current extension programme, according to the top level managers.

More importantly, the top-level managers clearly differed from other groups in terms of the recommended situation (in the sense that increased demands of some programmes have been associated with the reduction of attention to the others). For instance, attention to home economics, soil and land utilization, and forest and wildlife protection and development ought to be increased by 35.7, 28.6 and 27.1 percent, respectively, and corresponding reduction of emphasis to non-agricultural and non-extension education by 26.7 and 8.6 percent.

As far as the variations between zones are concerned, more diversified views were recorded regarding four services (involvement in government works, non-extension agricultural activities, irrigation and livestock). More specifically, for example, Borena and East Shewa appear to be polarized with respect to involvement in government administrative works, ranked as currently the highest focus by East Shewa. For Borena, involvement in non-extension duties was not an issue.

In general, these findings justify the claims of the EEA report (2005:389) and support the findings by Belay (2002), that the extension programme focus has been defective, and that the extension staff has been unnecessarily engaged in administrative matters (like handling input loans, enforcing loan repayment, income tax collection, and agitating farmers to become members of a political party) which at times have put them in conflict with communities.

As far as the extension related services are concerned, the greatest focus was on promotion of crop production and protection technologies. Even the non-extension education activities, such as input and credit, were also mainly related to the extension of crop production and protection.

Some of the reasons could be: comparative availability of the technologies, lower prices of the technologies and observable-ness of impacts of the technologies within short periods of time. Further, these features of the technologies related to crops, appeared to be in line with the government's food security strategy, namely, that focus on crop production can alleviate the current existing food shortage problems.

Relatively, less attention has been given to activities, such as home economics, forest and wildlife and soil and land utilization. The reason could be lack of availability of technologies, expensiveness, and scale.

The findings imply that there is a need for reconsideration of the extension programme focus by extension management and administrative bodies.