

 ISSN (O): 2320-5407 ISSN (P): 3107-4928	Journal Homepage: www.journalijar.com INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR) Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/22702 DOI URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/22702	
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

WELL BEING AT WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND INNOVATION BEHAVIOURS OF PRODUCERS IN BENIN

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 16 November 2025

Final Accepted: 18 December 2025

Published: January 2026

Key words:-

Well-being, agricultural work, innovative behavior, producers.

Abstract

Agricultural sector is faced with a multitude of constraints, ranging from financing difficulties to lack of infrastructure and the effects of change with its corollaries. For this reason, producers must adopt innovative behaviours. This research analyses the influence of well-being at work in agriculture on producers' innovative behaviour in Benin. The study covered a sample of 362 producers. The collected data were analysed using Smart PLS and SPSS 21, employing measurement and structural equation modelling. We performed exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between well-being at agricultural work and producers' innovative behaviours.

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Introduction:-

The difficulties faced by the agricultural sector in developing countries, in general, and in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, are generating increasing interest among researchers in the living and working conditions of agricultural producers. "Well-being," and more specifically "well-being at work," has become a topical issue and an important area of research (Ben Mahmoud-Jouni, Charue-Duboc and Midler, 2015), both for businesses and for producers, who are increasingly undertaking career changes or radical life transitions (Farzaneh & Boyer, 2017). According to Ménard and Brunet (2010), the notion of well-being rests on the coherence between the individual and their professional activity. Work then constitutes a source of well-being when it allows the worker to act in accordance with their values, their ethics, and, more broadly, their true nature. Well-being at work is a two-dimensional construct: an emotional or affective dimension, linked to pleasure and positive feelings, and a cognitive dimension, related to the meaning individuals attribute to their work (Richard, 2012). Two main approaches are contrasted: hedonism, centred on the pursuit of pleasure and the satisfaction of desires, and eudaimonism, centred on self-realisation and the fulfilment of one's potential. However, unlike the general concept of well-being, the literature on well-being at work remains relatively limited (Kiziah, 2003).

Scientific interest in this concept is recent, dating mainly from the 1990s (Warr, 1990; Danna & Griffin, 1999; Daniels, 2000). Some authors consider well-being at work as an extension of general well-being (Diener, 1994), while others view it as a distinct concept (Massé et al., 1998; Dagenais-Desmarais, 2010). Employees' well-being at

work and innovative behaviour are two concepts situated at the intersection of human resources and management disciplines. In the agricultural sector, improving working conditions is a key lever for strengthening producers' well-being, as these conditions largely determine their quality of life and their engagement in their work. Indeed, the low level of interest in agricultural work among younger generations is a concern for researchers (Bouزيد et al., 2020; Isaac et al., 2024). The agricultural sector has the lowest wage rates, is highly seasonal, very sensitive to climate change, and often demands significant physical labour (Bouزيد et al., 2020). This pursuit of well-being is part of a dynamic that fosters the adoption of innovative behaviours.

According to Isaac et al., (2024), workplace well-being positively affects organisational performance. Motivating or remotivating producers is therefore a significant challenge for those responsible for the agricultural sector, who must also ensure the monitoring of technical approaches, promote adherence to integrated landscape management practices, support biodiversity conservation, and improve productivity by adopting new varieties, often considered weak in this region of the world (Goujon-Belghit et al., 2022; Bouزيد et al., 2020; Isaac et al., 2024).

The central question then arises: what is the effect of well-being at work in agriculture on producers' innovative behaviour in northern Benin? To answer this, this research aims to analyse the influence of the different dimensions of well-being at work on the creative behaviours of Beninese producers. It thus contributes to a better understanding of the factors likely to foster innovation in Benin's agricultural sector.

Material and Methods:-

Sample Characteristics and Data Collection:

This study took place in northern Benin. The towns of Banikoara, Sinendé, N'Dali, and Kalalé were chosen based on their agricultural productivity. We selected one hundred producers per town, for a total of 400. A questionnaire was developed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The aim was to create a coherent set of questions that would elicit the desired information from respondents to achieve the research objectives. Four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered, and ultimately, we received three hundred and sixty-two (362) usable responses.

Measurement of Variable:

The dependent variable is innovative behaviour. This variable, farmers' innovative behaviour, is measured using 21 items distributed across five dimensions: adherence to technical guidelines, adoption of improved varieties, product marketing practices, respect for the environment in farm management, and the farmer's sociocultural characteristics. 5 adapted items address the adherence to technical guidelines dimension, the adoption of improved varieties dimension by 4 items, and the marketing practices dimension by 7 items. The two remaining dimensions are each assessed by 4 items. The explanatory variable is producers' well-being at work. Referring to the research work of Abaidi and Drillon (2015), well-being at work is measured by a measurement scale comprising six dimensions with 28 items: company benevolence (5 items), recognition at work (5 items), fulfillment at work (4 items), work atmosphere (5 items), work environment (5 items), and job characteristics (4 items) according to the literature (Robert, 2007; Biétry&Creusier, 2013; Diener et al., 2010; Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2010).

Data Processing and Analysis Methods:

To collect the data, a quantitative methodological approach was used. We employed exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses within a structural equation modelling framework for data processing and analysis. Thus, we calculated several indices, including KMO, Cronbach's alphas, rho, and R^2 , to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement scales. Bartlett's sphericity test was used because it indicates the maximum number of factors to retain, even though it is almost always satisfactory in large samples (Evrard et al., 2003).

Result and Discussion:-

Presentation and Analysis of Results:

The KMO index for the innovative behaviour measurement scale (0.669) is well above the 0.5 threshold, indicating that the data are factorable. Furthermore, Bartlett's test indicates statistical significance at the 1% level, allowing us to reject the null hypothesis of no correlation among the 19 constituents of the innovative behaviour variable (COPIV). Regarding the reliability of the measurement scale at this level of analysis, Cronbach's alpha (α) exceeds the empirical threshold of acceptability, which is 0.7 for all five dimensions. All Cronbach's alphas for the four dimensions are above 0.7, as are the six dimensions of the well-being variable. The measurement scales exhibit perfect internal consistency (Haïr et al., 2016).

At the structural model level, we evaluated the coefficient of determination (R^2) and found it to be high. Chin (1998) suggests that R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 in PLS-SEM can be considered significant, high, moderate, and low, respectively. Chin (1998) suggested that R^2 values above 0.67 were considered high, values between 0.33 and 0.67 were moderate, values between 0.19 and 0.33 were low, and R^2 values below 0.19 were unacceptable in PLS-SEM. The R^2 of our model is 0.98, indicating a high value (see Table 1).

The R^2 values were found to be greater than 0, indicating that each predictor contributes to the dependent variable. However, the effect sizes ranged from medium to large. They were significant for the variables "job characteristics," "work environment," "work atmosphere," "work-life balance," "recognition at work," and "fulfilment at work," respectively. The effect size strength for the six variables "job characteristics," "work environment," "work atmosphere," "work-life balance," "recognition at work," and "fulfilment at work" was met according to the recommendations of Croutsche (2009), Henseler et al. (2009), and Tenenhaus (1999). An overall goodness-of-fit (GoF) index for the model can be obtained by calculating the geometric mean of the average communalities and average R^2 values (Tenenhaus et al., 2005). Wetzels, Odekerken-Schröder, and Van Oppen (2009) indicate that values of 0.10, 0.25, and 0.36 represent a poor, medium, and high fit, respectively. Our model has a GoF index of 0.63, indicating a satisfactory fit (see Figure 1).

The aim is to test the relationship between well-being at work and innovative employee behaviours (see Table 2).

The research results for all data show that Workplace Atmosphere has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coeff. = 0.156; $p < 0.01$), benevolence at work has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coeff. = 0.299; $p < 0.05$), job characteristic has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coeff. = 0.145; $p < 0.01$), work environment has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (COPIV) (coeff. = 0.018; $p < 0.01$), fulfillment at work has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coeff. = 0.329; $p < 0.05$) and recognition at work has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coeff. = 0.080; $p < 0.01$). In light of the values obtained, we can confirm that the hypothesis that the dimensions of well-being at work positively and significantly influence workers' innovative behaviours is confirmed.

Discussion:-

The research results for all data show that workplace Atmosphere has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coefficient = 0.156; $p < 0.01$), workplace well-being has a significant positive effect on agricultural producers' innovative behavior (coefficient = 0.299; $p < 0.05$), and job characteristics have a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coefficient = 0.145). $p < 0.01$, the work environment has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coeff. = 0.018; $p < 0.01$), job fulfillment has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coeff. = 0.329; $p < 0.05$) and recognition at work has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior (coeff. = 0.080; $p < 0.01$). Our results confirm Amabile's (1998) earlier work, which showed that the quality of the work environment, including a positive organisational culture, can foster innovation. Authors such as Tremblay (1998) and Amabile (1998) have emphasised the importance of a work climate conducive to creativity. Kindness and support within the organisation have been associated with improved performance and greater creativity. The results of this research are similar to those of Eisenbeiss and Knippenberg (2015), who explored the positive effects of kindness and transformational leadership on innovation.

Our results on the "job characteristics" dimension, such as autonomy, task variety, and complexity, corroborate the findings of Hackman and Oldham (1976), who identified these as important determinants of job satisfaction and innovation. The impact of the work environment can vary, but previous studies have shown that Factors such as spatial layout, technology, and communication can influence organisational innovation. Our results confirm research highlighting the importance of employee well-being, job satisfaction, and fulfillment as precursors to innovation. Researchers such as Bakker et al. (2008) have examined the role of job engagement in promoting innovation. The positive effect of recognition at work on innovation has been addressed in studies that examine the impact of dynamic motivation and rewards on employee creativity. This research found that work well-being in public companies positively affects employee behaviour. This appears to align with the work of Van Knippenberg (2000) and Holton (1997), which highlights identification with the work group, influencing the organisation, and controlling one's work. The results presented here corroborate the work of Kushnir and Trepèrènt (1996), who examine work characteristics related to satisfaction and involvement, such as communication, social support, feedback, and ways to improve the quality of work. Our research also supports Dubois's (1998) emphasis on staff's

sense of belonging. However, our results did not highlight the mobilisation that results from taking ownership of one's work and obtaining information about the organisation and its objectives (Tremblay, 1998), but rather the work environment and the characteristics of the position. The links between satisfaction and other variables, such as involvement, themselves depend on professional groups and cultural factors (Tremblay, 1998).

Conclusion:-

The objective of this work is to study the effect of well-being at work on producers' innovative behaviours. Therefore, we conducted a quantitative analysis of the data. Indeed, the results show that principal component analysis (PCA) enabled us to retain the measurement indicators with the most significant impact on innovative behaviours. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no correlation among the 19 items identified as factors of innovative behaviours (COPIV) was rejected based on the KMO index (< 0.5) and the significance level (1%) of Bartlett's test. Items with structural coefficients greater than 0.45 and 0.65 were retained as measurement indicators of innovative behaviour. Thus, the elements EXPI1, GENI1, MOEI1, and PERI1 were retained as the dimensions of innovative behaviour. Similarly, the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed strong item-to-construct fit. Therefore, there is a positive and significant relationship between well-being at work and the dimensions of innovative behaviour.

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