

Assessment of Perceived Corrupt Practices in Marketing of Agricultural Produce Among Women Marketers in Ogbomoso Agricultural of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study assessed the corrupt practices in marketing of agricultural produce among women marketers in Ogbomoso Agricultural Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents for the study; while structured interview schedule was employed to obtain data from fifty (50) women marketers from five selected markets in each LGA of the zone. Data collected were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The study revealed that (40.0%) of the sampled women were above 50 years of age; and most (70.0%) the women sampled were married and literate with different educational backgrounds and years of marketing experience. The Sampled women engaged in marketing of tomato/pepper (32.0%); rice/bean (32.0%); maize (26.0%); yam/cassava (38.0%); orange/pineapple (8.0%). The study identified different corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce in which adulteration of processed agricultural products ranked first with WMS of 2.36; while sales of poor quality produce ranked least with WMS of 0.20. There is significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of women marketers and their perceived level of severity of identified corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce. The study therefore recommended that government should improve on her effort in standardizing the measurement unit and enforce its usage through the regulatory bodies set up for this task.

Introduction

Women in Africa (including Nigeria) generally play an important role in small-scale traditional agricultural production (Afolabi,2008). Rural women have taken over the production and processing of arable crops and are responsible for as much as 80% of the staple food items marketing. Women farmers are the principal labour force on small holder farms and perform the largest share in land preparation, weeding, transporting, processing and marketing of agricultural products.

Women therefore contribute greatly to agricultural production in Nigeria as they take the lead in most agricultural activities. The importance and relevance of women in agricultural development can therefore not be overemphasized. This is because they are known to be more involved in agricultural marketing and processing activities than men in sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries including Nigeria especially in the cultivation of vegetables and marketing of agricultural produce (Stella 2012).

According to Adubi and Jibowo (2006) women are invisible workforce and the unacknowledged backbone of the family. Nigerian women are perceived as household property that join hand in economic activities of their families with regard to exchange in marriage, participation in agricultural activities and other areas that bring money (Azikiwe, 1992; Esere, 2001). From sociological perspective, the modern day Nigerian women take part in important economic activities to the benefit of their families and the entire nation. (Ekesionye and Okolo2012). Women participation in agricultural produce marketing is not a new phenomenon. Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, caring for family members and maintaining their homes and engaging in trade and marketing of agricultural produce (SOFA Team and Cheryl Doss 2011), which is in correlation with happenings in ogbomoso agricultural zone where women are seen participating more in marketing of agricultural produce against the men who focus more on artisan, subsistent farming and civil service occupations. Agricultural produce marketing is an integral and crucial part of food production, food processing in a viable farm enterprise.

Agricultural produce marketing is viewed as the flow of goods and services from the point of initial farm production to the hands of the ultimate consumer. A lot of activities is enmeshed in the marketing of

agricultural produce by women in which in one way or the other is done to increase their profit rate and also cover up for the loss they might have incur during the process of planting to harvesting of the agricultural practice. A sizeable number of women in Oyo state are actively engaged in agricultural produce marketing as their primary source of livelihood. These include marketing of rice, cassava, maize, vegetables etc in order to earn a living. Basically women are more involved in the marketing sector of a farm enterprise than men due to the high demanding labour that farming practicing entails (cultivation of land, planting, harvesting etc), therefore they are left to cater for the sale of agricultural produce. Women thus, manage the home and at the same time, participate with their male counterpart in developing the economy of the nation. In rural areas, women participate fully in food production, processing and distribution which they combine with their traditional role of procreation and home management. (Ekesionye and Okolo 2012).

In recent times, it has become a popular opinion that corruption is an issue of grave concern and a serious obstacle to economic growth, democratic culture, national and international stability, good governance and effective implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (Phillip and Ademeso 2015). This sole activity of corruption is a common act among marketers in Nigeria, marketing of agricultural produce has witnessed its corruption effects due to the humanistic nature of women which makes them to be easily convinced and involved to adopt the practices that is in vogue among their peers so as to make up with their expected profit rate all because of persistence of consumers to buy large quantity of agricultural produce at a lesser price.

This study was carried out to assess the corrupt practices in marketing of agricultural produce in Ogbomoso Agricultural

Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria. This study describes the socio-economic characteristics of the women marketers in the area; examine different agricultural produce available for marketing; and investigate corrupt practices involved in the marketing of agricultural produce and also determined the perceived level of severity of identified corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce in the study area.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Ogbomoso Agricultural Zone of Oyo State. A multistage sampling technique was used for the study. The zone is made up of 5 Local Government Areas and one major market was purposively selected in each LGA i.e Ogbomoso North (Wazo market); Ogbomoso South (Arowomole market); Surulere (Iresaapa market); Oriire (Ikoyi market) and Ogo-Oluwa (Odo-oba market) respectively. Thereafter, 10 women agricultural produce marketers were randomly sampled for the study in each of the selected market which sum up to a total of 50 women marketers that constituted the sample size for the study.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 reveals that 26.0% of the women marketers sampled were in the age range of less and equal to 30 years; 22.0%; 12.0% and 40.0% fall within the age range of 31-40 years; 41-50years and above 50 years respectively. This implies that all the women marketers sampled are in different age groups. An indication that marketing of agricultural produce has no age restriction. A high percentage (70.0%) of them were married; and 22.0% were single. It implies that most of the respondents sampled were married. This also implies that being married as a status suggests high level of responsibility and indication that

information provided by the respondents about this research work is genuine due to their level of responsibility which calls for total dedication to their work. Furthermore, 54.0%; 28.0% and 2.0% of the sampled women were secondary school leavers; tertiary degree holders and primary school education; while 16.0% had no formal education. This implies that majority of the women marketers are literate though with different educational background.

Most (86.0%) of the women marketers engaged in trading as primary occupation; while 14.0% are civil servant. Also, 24.0% of them indicated less and equal to 10 years of marketing experience, while 20.0%; 26.0% and 30.0% indicated 11-15years, 15-20years and above 20years as years of marketing experience. This implies that all the women marketers sampled have different years of marketing experience. The variation in the years of their marketing experience may be due to difference in their age and years of engagement in marketing of agricultural produce. Their years of experience indicates that all the women marketer are knowledgeable of likely corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce in the area.

Types of agricultural produce marketing by the respondents

Table 2 reveals the distribution of respondents by types of agricultural produce marketed. Above (38.0%) indicated yam/cassava, tomato and pepper 32.0%; rice and cowpea (32.0%); and maize (26.0%) respectively. This implies that there are different types of agricultural produce available for marketing. These responses are genuine because there is proximity between the farm families and consumers of these products to the markets in all the selected Local Government Area of this study.

Corrupts practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce

Table 3 reveals different corrupt practices identified with marketing of agricultural produce in the selected markets. Most (70.0%) of the respondents indicated adulteration of processed agricultural food (such as maize mixed with millet; yam flour with cassava flour; plantain with millet, etc.); 64.0% indicated mixing of spoilt produce with the desirable produce (adulteration); 60.0% each indicated forceful ripening of crops (such as plantain; mango) and fake measure. Also 44.0% and 24.0% indicated mixing of ripe crops with unripe ones and sale of poor quality produce respectively. This implies there are different corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce among women marketers.

Level of severity of corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce

For this objective, 4 rating scale of highly severe; severe; mild and not severe were used to determine the severity level of different corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce. Adulteration of processed agricultural products (such as mixing of maize with millet; yam flour with cassava flour; millet with plantain flour; etc.) had the highest weighted mean score (WMS) of 2.36 and was ranked 1st; followed by forceful ripening of crops e.g. plantain fruit, mango fruit (2.08) (2nd); and fake measure (forcified unit of measurement) (0.94) (3rd); while mixing of spoilt produce with desirable produce and sale of poor quality produce were ranked least with WMS of 0.34 (5th) and 0.20 (6th). This implies that there are different corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce in different markets. Mixing of processed agricultural products was prominent among the corrupt practices practiced by the

women marketers because it is not easily identified by the potential buyer at the point of sale, therefore they find it easy to indulge in such practices.

Hypothesis Testing

Test of significant relationship between some selected socio-economic characteristics of women marketers and their perceived level of severity of identified corrupt practices in marketing of agricultural produce

The result of chi square in Table 5 reveals that some of the selected socio economic characteristics variables such as marital status ($X^2= 31.720$; Pd" 0.05), level of education ($X^2= 29.200$; Pd" 0.05), primary occupation ($X^2= 45.160$; Pd" 0.05) and years of marketing experience ($X^2= 92.880$; Pd" 0.05) were all significant. This result implies that all the aforementioned socio economic variables (marital status, level of education, primary occupation and years of marketing experience) have decisive influence on their perception of corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce. This may be true because marital status, level of education, primary occupation and years of marketing experience as do with literacy and being knowledgeable on their area of specialization which is primary occupation that may be responsible for their perception of corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce in different sampled market. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study revealed that corrupt practices associated with marketing of agricultural produce are enormous and varied with products and many examples of this corrupt practices have been identified which

includes adulteration of agricultural produce, mixing of spoilt produce with desirable produce, forceful ripening of crops etc. Different age group, status and educational background of marketers are involve in this act. Therefore, there is urgent need to correct this corrupt acts, government agents (NAFDAC) set up to check the authenticity and quality of foods been sold to the populace should improve their effort and not only based their effort on imported goods only but should focus on our local markets both at the state and local government level also they should improve on their effort in standardizing the measurement unit and enforce its usage through agent; government should make a pronouncement that will guide the marketing of quality agricultural produce and her agent should be readily available that would enforce this regulation; and regular visitation should be made on this. Finally market association should act as check and balance in their respective market to consolidate the effort of the government in ensuring of quality produce in their market.

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