Agricultural Journal 10 (2): 12-16, 2015
ISSN: 1816-9155

Constraints to Contributions of Cassava Enterprise to Marketing Entrepreneurs' Socio-Economic Status in South Eastern, Nigeria

[1]O.T. Ikwuakam, [2]A. Iyela and [3]L.A. Akinbile
[1]Federal College of Education, Katsina, Nigeria
[2]Federal College of Education, Okene, Nigeria
[3]University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract: Marketing of agricultural produce in Nigeria is characterized with myriads of constraints. These constraints as they relate to the contributions of cassava enterprise to marketing entrepreneurs' Socio-Economic Status (SES) are yet to be ascertained. The study therefore examined these constraints in South Eastern, Nigeria. Snowball technique was used to identify 265 marketers from which list, 87 marketers were selected using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using interview schedule. Analysis of data was done using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, Chi-square and PPMC. The study showed that 71.3 and 75.9% of the respondents had mean age of 57 and 43 years of experience, respectively. Majority (65.5%) was educated up to secondary school level and 71.3% were female. The result further revealed that majority (46.5%) earned mean annual income of ₦225395±32.59 and 65.5% derived high benefit from cassava marketing. Finance (weighted score 200) ranked first as constraint while the SES of majority (92.0%) was moderate. Experience (χ^2 = 21.366, p = 0.000) showed significant relationship with SES of cassava marketers. A significant correlation exists between benefits derived (r = 0.321, p = 0.002), constraints (r = -0.842, p = 0.018) and marketers' SES. Cassava marketing entrepreneurs are faced with numerous constraints with moderate SES. There is need for funding intervention to boast entrepreneurs marketing activities as this will mean increasing their productivity in cassava enterprise.

Key word: Marketing entrepreneurs, cassava products, constraints, socio-economic status, funding

INTRODUCTION

Cassava (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) is an important economic crop that is cultivated by most countries such as Brazil, Thailand, India and several West African nations including Nigeria. The total production world over was put at 180 million tonnes from about 16.9 million hectares of land in 2002. Africa generally was estimated to have produced 54% followed by Asia (27%) and South America (17%). The total production in Africa is reported to have risen from 35.0 million tonnes in 1965 to 97.0 million tonnes in 2002 and this was ascribed to increase in Nigeria's share of 22-35% production. Although, total output figure in Nigeria has reportedly increased to about 40 million annually placing Nigeria as the largest producer of cassava in the world (Awoyinka, 2009). The report maintained that Nigeria's production level is due to the contributions of various zones including South East that produced about 6 million tonnes annually.

The Nigeria's increased production level was attributed to increase in area of land under cultivation, yield and rise in consumption by both rural and urban dwellers nationwide and other African nations (Hillocks, 2002). Other reasons Hillocks adduced for the increase in production included availability of cassava graters and widespread adoption of improved agronomic practices and new high-yielding varieties.

Nevertheless, despite these increase in production level post harvest system such as processing, packaging, storage and marketing have consistently witnessed series of constraints in their improving the standard of living. The constraints were reported to have caused substantial losses leading to food insecurity status of the nation in terms of available calorie dietary consumption (Awoyinka, 2009). Awoyinka and Ikpi (2004) also revealed that efficient marketing system which is a sin qua non to stimulating agricultural production is unfortunately characterized with a lot of bottlenecks. FIIRO concurs to this stating also the situation left over 80% of cassava products in the hands of farmers who consume the bulk of the output and sold whatever remained in local markets. This implies that the contributions of cassava enterprise to marketing entrepreneurs' Socio-Economic Status (SES)

Corresponding Author: O.T. Ikwuakam, Federal College of Education, Katsina, Nigeria

in Nigeria could be enhanced if the constraints are thoroughly investigated, identified and addressed. It is against this background that the study traced these constraints as may be applicable in South Eastern, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study: The general objective of the study is to identify constraints to contributions of cassava enterprise to socio-economic status of cassava marketers in South Eastern, Nigeria.

Specifically the study:

- Determined the socio-economic characteristics of respondents
- Determine constraints to cassava marketing entrepreneurs
- Ascertained the socio-economic status of the respondents

Hypotheses:

- H_1: there is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of cassava marketers and their socio-economic status
- H_2: there is no significant relationship between constraints to cassava marketing entrepreneurs and their socio-economic status

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in South Eastern, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting respondents. South Eastern Nigeria has five states which include; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Two states namely; Imo and Anambra were purposively selected because of their prominence in cassava enterprise.

At the first stage, 33% (9) of 27 LGAs in Imo state was selected using simple random sampling technique and they include: Oguta, Ohaji/Egbema, Oru-East, Orlu, Ikeduru, Njaba, Mbano, Aboh-Mbaise and Okigwe. Using simple random sampling technique 3 communities each were selected from the 9 LGAs to give 27 communities. A similar sampling procedure as in Imo State was repeated in Anambra state to select six (30%) (Idemili South, Ihiala, Ekwusigo, Awka South, Nnewi South and Njikoka) of the 21 LGAs.

Snowball technique was used to identify a marketer who in turn helped in identifying other cassava marketers. This process continued until a list of 265 marketers was obtained. The 20% (i.e., 2 marketers each from the 27 communities) of the list was selected using simple random sampling technique to give 51 marketers. In Anambra State, a list of 182 marketers was obtained. Using simple random sampling technique, 20% (2 marketers each) of the list was selected to give 36. This gave a total sample size of 87 respondents representing 51 and 36 marketers from Imo and Anambra states, respectively that was used for the study.

A 3-point scale of not a constraint = 1, mild = 2 and serious constraints = 3 was used to measure constraints. The mean scores and standard deviation were obtained and used to categorize respondents' constraints into low (<mean±1SD), moderate (within mean±1SD) and high (>mean±1SD) levels. The SES was measured as number of items possessed 0, 1, 2-4 and above 4 while the 'yes' and 'no' responses were for categorical items. The mean and standard deviation of respondents' scores were obtained and used to categorise marketers into having low (<mean±1SD), moderate (within mean±1SD) and high (>mean±1SD) SES. Frequency counts, percentages and means were used in describing the data while Chi-square and PPMC were used to test hypothesis 1 and 2, respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cassava marketing entrepreneurs' socio-economic characteristics: The result as presented in Table 1 revealed that majority (71.3 %) were within the age range of 56-65 years. This means that cassava marketing activity is not carried out by active and energetic people in the area. It implies that cassava marketing may not be sustained at the long run if nothing is urgently done to encourage youth's involvement and participation. The youths prefer taking to other means of livelihood such as Okada riding or migrating to the cities in search of other means of earning a living. The distribution of entrepreneurs by sex shows that 71.3% were females an indication that cassava marketing is carried out by female entrepreneurs even when it is not gender inclusive. The study further reveals that all entrepreneurs (100%) were married. The result confirms the finding of Imo (2002) that most food crop marketers in the South-East were female and married. The household size of majority (98.9%) was above 8. The extended family system that operates in the area may the reason for the relatively large family size. This implies likelihood of reduced household food security, benefits, income and socio-economic status. The result further shows that 65.5% completed secondary school education and this is an indication that marketers can easily understand, evaluate and access information on opportunities. Majority (75.9%) had between 25-50 years of experience in cassava marketing.

This implies that marketing in the area is not just an occupation but a way of life of the people. The result reveals that most (57.5%) earned between ₦200,001 to ₦300,000 per annum. This means that cassava entrepreneurs in the area are low-income earners. The source of finance for majority (87.4%) was personal savings while motorcycle (96.6%) bicycle (95.4%), pick-up van (93.1%) and truck/wheel barrow (90.8%) were major means of transportation. The result concurs to the report by Dipeolu that due to long distances between scattered markets locations, means of transport has changed; motorcycle, bicycle, panel and pick-up vans and trucks are common means of transportation in Nigeria.

Table 1: Distribution of cassava marketing entrepreneurs based on socio-economic characteristics

	Respondents		
Variables	F	%	Mean±SD
Age			
30-45	10	11.5	573.15±6.5688
46-55	12	13.8	
56-65	62	71.3	
>65	3	3.4	
Sex			
Female	62	71.3	
Male	25	28.7	
Marital status			
Married	87	100.0	
Single	0	0.0	
Widow	0	0.0	
Household size			
>5	0	0.0	7.28±1.318
5-8	1	1.1	
>8	86	98.1	
Education			
Primary	9	13.4	
Secondary	78	86.6	
Experience			
<25	2	2.3	42.53±9.281
25-50	66	75.9	
51-75	19	21.8	
Income			
<100,000	8	20.9	225395.01±32.59
100,001-200,000	17	19.8	
200,00-300,000	40	46.5	
300,001-400,000	16	7.0	
>400,000	5	5.8	
Source of fund			
Personal savings	76	87.4	
Credit from bank	0	0.0	
Inheritance	11	12.6	
Mode of transportation**			
Truck	76	90.8	
Head porterage	15	17.2	
Pick van	81	93.1	
Bicycle	81	95.4	
Motorecycle	83	96.6	
Boat	20	23.0	

Field Survey (2011); **Multiple response

Cassava marketing entrepreneurs' level of involvement: The result in Table 2 shows that garri (96.6%), stem cuttings (74.7%), fufu (67.8%) and fresh tubers (65.5%) were marketed always. The result further shows that based on weighted scores, fresh root tubers, fufu and garri ranked first as products always marketed while stem cuttings ranked second. The result was in line with a priori expectation and is a true indication of wider preference, acceptability, consumption and demand for fresh roots, gari, fufu and stem cuttings in the area and beyond. The result in Table 3 revealed that most marketers' (58.6%) involvement was high. The result was expected as the crop itself is a staple commodity in the area. The result confirms the report by Nzekwe and Afolabi that enhanced involvement of people in cassava enterprise is as a result of increased demand for cassava products in and outside rural communities.

Constraints to cassava marketing entrepreneurs: Result on constraints facing marketing entrepreneurs as shown in Table 4 reveals that finance (100.0%), collateral (100.0%) and limited processing option (100.0%) were constraits to all while 98.9, 97.8 and 97.7% had constraints of credit facility, instability of government policy and lack of contact with extension agents respectively. Based on the weighted scores finance (200.0%), collateral (200.0%) and limited processing options (200.0%) ranked 1st followed by instability in government policy (198.9%) as 2nd. This result is in line with a priori expectation because of the prevailing absence of effective linkages with appropriate industry, right policy framework and incentives for smooth private

Table 2: Distribution of cassava marketing entrepreneurs based on level of involvement

	Always		Occasionally		Not at all			
Variables	F	%	F	%	F	%	Weighted score	Ranks
Marketer								
Marketing fresh tubers	57	65.5	18	20.7	12	13.8	151.7	2nd
Marketing cassava chips	20	23.0	2	2.3	65	74.7	48.3	6th
Marketing cassava flour	19	21.8	5	5.7	63	72.4	49.3	5th
Marketing cassava starch	10	11.5	0	0.0	7	8.5	23.0	23rd
Marketing stem cuttings	65	74.7	6	6.9	16	18.4	156.3	2nd
Marketing garri	84	96.6	0	0.0	3	3.4	193.2	1st
Marketing tapioca	18	20.7	21	24.1	48	55.2	65.5	4th
Marketing fufu	59	67.8	7	8.0	21	21.1	143.6	3rd

Field survey (2011)

investment in cassava marketing sub-sector in the area. This implies that measures advocated to reform cassava marketing sub-sector under the Presidential Cassava Initiative have not been met. The level of severity of constraints as shown in Table 5 revealed that majority (74.7%) faced high level of constraints. It is interesting that despite this magnitude of constraints marketing entrepreneurs have persevered to remain in business perhaps due to the relative benefits and demand for their wares. The result corroborates the study by Ironkwe *et al.* (2009) which listed lack of capital/credit, scarcity/high cost of fertilizer, lack of access road, processing equipment and market as major constraints to cassava enterprise.

Socio-Economic Status (SES) of cassava marketing entrepreneurs: From the findings as shown in Table 6 majority (92.0%) had moderate SES due to their involvement in cassava marketing. The result is contrary to a priori expectation. The SES of marketers was expected to be high considering the common belief that marketers often exploit other entrepreneurs in the cassava value chain. The result may be due to high level of constraints faced by most marketers. The result is consistent with FAO (2003) that reported living standard of over 80% of agricultural population in Africa to be on the average.

Results of hypotheses testing: There is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of cassava marketers in cassava enterprises and their socio-economic status (Table 7).

The result establishes a significant relationship between marketing experience ($\chi^2 = 21.366$, $p = 0.000$) and socio-economic status of cassava marketers. The result is expected since as the number of years in business increases, so also the profitability and SES. The result establishes the importance of experience and further implies that it is a factor that leads to perfection in cassava marketing enterprise. The result is in line with the previous study by Agwu (2009) on plantain marketers in Abia State, Nigeria.

There is no significant relationship between constraints to cassava marketing and entrepreneurs' socio-economic status in the study area.

The PPMC analysis result in Table 8 revealed that there is significant relationship between constraints ($r = -0.842$, $p = 0.018$) and cassava marketing entrepreneurs' SES. This implies that SES of entrepreneurs has correlation with the magnitude of constraints they faced. The result is in conformity with the finding by Nweke that due to constraints, cassava enterprises do not bring as much benefit as may be expected to farm families that are involved in it.

Table 3: Level of involvement

	Marketers		
Levels	Score	F	%
Low	2-6.8	36	41.4
High	6.9-10	51	58.6
Mean	6.92±1.62		

Field survey (2011)

Table 4: Distribution of cassava marketing entrepreneurs on constraints

Marketers n = 87

	Serious		Mild		Not a constraint			
Variable description	F	%	F	%	F	%	Weighted score	Rank
Finance	87	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	200.0	1st
Credit facilities	86	98.9	1	1.10	0	0.00	197.8	3rd
Land/Shop	56	64.4	6	6.90	25	28.70	135.7	12th
Interest rate on loan	76	87.4	11	12.60	0	0.00	187.4	5th
Poor pricing of cassava products	50	57.5	15	17.20	22	25.30	132.2	13th
Collateral to secure loan	87	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	200.0	1st
Limited processing option	87	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	200.0	1st
Pest/Disease infestation	71	81.6	16	18.40	0	0.00	181.6	7th
Non-availability of labour	71	81.6	16	18.40	0	0.00	181.6	7th
Poor extension agents' contact	85	97.7	2	2.30	0	0.00	197.7	4th
Instability in government policy	86	98.9	1	1.10	0	0.00	198.9	2nd
Market	71	81.6	14	16.10	0	0.00	179.3	8th
Soil erosion	19	21.8	56	64.40	12	13.80	108.0	14th
Hospital	70	80.5	0	0.00	17	19.50	161.0	10th
Access road	66	75.9	5	5.70	16	18.40	157.5	11th
Cost of hired labour	81	93.1	1	1.10	5	5.70	187.3	6th
Cost of processing	68	78.2	19	21.80	0	0.00	178.2	9th

Field survey (2011)

Table 5: Level of severity of constraints to cassava marketing entrepreneurs

	Marketers (n = 87)		
Severity	Score	F	%
Low	64 -78.8	22	25.3
High	78.90-84	69	74.7
Mean	78.90±7.28		

Field Survey (2011)

Table 6: SES of cassava marketing entrepreneurs

Socio-economic class	Scores range	F	%	Mean	SD
Marketers					
Low SES	110.0-158.87	7	8	162.75	3.95
Moderate	158.88-166.7	80	92		
High	166.8-167.0	0	0		

Field survey (2011); SD: Standard Deviation

Table 7: Chi-square analysis between selected socio-economic characteristics and SES of cassava marketing entrepreneurs

Variables	df	χ^2-values	p-values
Age	2	1.087	0.581
Sex	2	1.945	0.378
Marital status	-	-	-
Household size	2	0.102	0.950
Education	4	5.384	0.250
Experience	4	21.366	0.000*

*Sig at 0.05; ** at 0.01

Table 8: PPMC analysis between constraints and cassava marketing entrepreneurs' SES

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Constraints	-0.842	0.018	S

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the socio-economic status of most cassava marketing entrepreneurs in the study area was moderate. Although, cassava marketing in the area was not gender exclusive, majority were small scale female entrepreneurs with a large proportion having secondary school education. The severity level of constraints was high with finance, policy inconsistency, lack of collateral for loans and lack of extension agents' contact ranking high as limiting factors. The severity level of constraints may have been a reason for the low income status of most cassava marketers as well as their moderate socio-economic status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Extension service should be improved to ensure proper dissemination of market information to the marketing entrepreneurs
- There is need for sustainable policy framework by the government to strengthen microfinance institutions and establish linkages between them and formal financial institutions with a view to establishing a formidable rural financial mechanism that will enable cassava marketers gain access to financial services with little or no collateral
- Integrated rural development through provision of physical infrastructures such as feeder roads, rural water supply, electricity and rural communications should be intensified by the government to encourage youth involvement and reduce the rate of rural urban migration

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