Original Research Article

Rural migration frame factor as a preference for labour availability in agricultural marketing in Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

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The study investigated rural migration frame factor as a preference for labour availability in agricultural marketing in Benue state. Four research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Sample survey research design was used for the study. The study was carried out in Benue State, Nigeria. The population of the study was 705 made up of 34 extension workers and 671 youth farmers. The sample for the study was 277 consisting of 243 farmers obtained via purposive sampling technique and all the 34 extension agents. A 34 item structured questionnaire titled *'Rural migration and labour availability in Agricultural marketing questionnaire (RMLAMQ)* was developed from literature and used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts. Cronbach Alpha method was adopted to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items which yielded a coefficient of 0.73 The questionnaires were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions and t-test statistics to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that respondents agreed to most of the advertising procedures for marketing agricultural produce, functions of labour in agricultural marketing, remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing and challenges confronting agricultural marketing in Benue State, Nigeria. It was recommended amongst others that stake holders should train rural youths/farmers on basic functions of marketing agricultural produce in order to boost the supply and availability of labour.

Keywords: Rural migration, labour availability, agricultural marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing trend of agricultural production has brought new challenges in terms of finding market for the surplus. Agricultural produce from rural communities are exposed to frequent wastage. This is occasioned by dearth of infrastructural facilities that could preserve them on the one hand and improper marketing mechanism that could enhance proper pricing to enhance farmers income level. In the view of Singh (2012), agricultural marketing need to be re-oriented to respond to the market needs and consumer preferences. The author asserts that marketing is a human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through exchange processes. It means attempting to actualize potential exchanges for satisfying human needs and want. As explained by Sridhar (2007), agricultural marketing connotes the performance of all business activities involved in the forward flow of food and fiber from farm producers to consumers. It includes all the activities associated with agricultural production (food, feed and fiber, assembly, processing) and distribution to final consumer including analysis of

consumer's needs, motivations, purchasing and consumption 2ehavior.

Marketing according to Ekele and Sallau (2015) is a social process by which individuals and groups obtained what they need and want through creating, offering and freely exchanging products and services of value with others. In the opinion of Solomon, Mahammed, Zainab and Dawa (2016), marketing strategy determines in a long term whether a business will succeed or not. The general assumption is that if the potential customers are not aware of products, business will not take place (Mustapha, 2013). It is important for agricultural marketing as a business to develop and implement efficient and effective marketing strategies which will incorporate relevant dimensions of marketing concept. This involves the task of selecting the customers in which to operate and develop an efficient and effective marketing combination. Solomon et al (2016) further stressed that efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved through concentrated marketing strategy which targets specific segments of the consumer population in order to maximize profitability.

In any economic system, there are always barriers that prevent producers from efficiently satisfying consumer needs. These barriers include separations of space, time, information, value and ownership. The role of marketing system is to bridge this gap between producers and consumer needs and increase the efficiency of the marketing system. This is because farmers seek higher prices for their produce, and

protection from price fluctuations. They try to reduce the amount of post-harvest waste, and secure guarantees for the sale of their produce. Thus, the ultimate targets for agricultural marketing practices are those who actually buy and eat the farm produce. In order to accomplish this, people migrate to make farm produce available for buying and eating.

As explained by Agbonlahor and Enilolobo (2013), people migrate to take advantage of spatial disparities in the social and economic environments. The authors affirmed that migration may be a deliberate attempt by the migrant to reap social benefits associated with location differential. Migrants are thus viewed as people who have left their homes to a new location, either temporarily or permanently, in order to reap private social and economic benefits. Jokisch (2002) states that migration is a social process, a livelihood strategy to improve the house hood standard of living. In the context of this study, rural migration refers to the movement of people from one location of the state to another in order to engage in agricultural marketing (of produce from the farm). Benue state is largely an agrarian economy; hence, rural migration within the state is an important source of agricultural labour.

As a survival strategy for the people, Ekele (2015) explained that migration is a source of labour supply and a pivot upon which agricultural marketing in Benue State

revolves. World Bank (2011) reported that immigration is more of decreasing hazards than to maximize benefits. Similarly, Idowu, Awoyemi Omonona and Falusi (2011) confirmed that inequality of opportunities for economic advancement is the major factor that compels internal migration in Nigeria. Hence, not only does migration contributes to migrants own well-being and security through higher and diversified incomes, but their households and home communities also benefit through the receipt of remittances. Rural migration as a framework sees rural labour that moves from one location of the state to another as primary sources of labour for agricultural marketing in the state. This involves constant and massive movement of rural youths (that constitute rural labour force) to locations where agricultural produce are plenty with the view to engage in marketing of same. In other words, migration of rural youths or farmers is the basis on which marketing of agricultural produce largely produced from rural areas can survive.

Rural labour as pointed out by Cateora, Graham and Salwan (2010) exists for agricultural marketing which in turn blends price, product, promotion, channels of distribution to capitalize on anticipated demand. These take place in the environment within which marketing plans must be implemented (Folarin, 2013). What makes agricultural marketing interesting is the challenge of molding the controllable elements of marketing decision (product, price, promotion and distribution) within the framework of the uncontrollable elements of the market place (competition, polities, laws, consumer behavior level of technology) such that marketing objectives are achieved. Chen (2005) opines that the rural labour that forms the bulk of labour available for agricultural marketing can blend a marketing mix from the controllable elements. However, the author maintained that the uncontrollable factors must be evaluated and if needed, adaptation be implemented. The adaptation of the marketing mix to these environment factors determines the outcome of the marketing enterprise. The quantitative and qualitative characteristics of human resources in Benue State can be explained by the continued trend of emigration from villages to urban areas. Janeska and Bojnec (2011) submitted that the intensity of emigration has altered the demographic structure and reproductive base of the rural households. The rural and agricultural labour market faces a mismatch with respect to the unfavourable age, education and spatial distribution of the total labour force. In corroboration, Mohammed and Basit (2011) posit that education, economic capital index, and social capital index have discernible impact on rural labour supply.

The researcher through interaction with rural youths and farmers in the state observed that there are abundant agricultural produce that ranges from roots, tubers, cereals to fruits. These produce remain in one location for a long time without being sold. There is need for marketing of these agricultural produce. Further

inquiry by the researcher as to why these produce are not promptly marketed revealed that labour that could have moved these produce to area of short supply within the state are few and most communities relied on migration of rural labour (youth) to market these produce. The farmers did not indict or implicate the rural youth of immediate community as to why these produce are not marketed. The researcher therefore sets out to investigate rural migration frame factor as a preference for labour availability in agricultural marketing in Benue State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study determines:

1. advertising procedure for marketing agricultural produce;
2. the functions of labour in agricultural marketing;
3. the challenges confronting agricultural marketing in Benue State; and
4. remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing.

Research Questions

1. What are the advertising procedures for marketing agricultural produce?
2. What are the functions of labour in agricultural marketing?
3. What are the challenges confronting agricultural marketing in Benue state?
4. What are the remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing?

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of extension agents and farmers on the functions of labour in agricultural marketing.

METHODS

Four research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. Sample survey research design was adopted for the study. Sample survey design collects and presents data from a part or sample of a population by using questionnaire to report a clear picture of the population. This design was suitable for the study because a set of questionnaire was used to collect data from sample of youths (labour) who are farmers and extension agents. The study was carried out in Benue State, Nigeria. The population for the study was 705 respondents made up of 34 extension workers and 671 registered youth farmers (Benue State Ministry of Agriculture, 2016). The sample for the study was 243 farmers. All the 34 extension agents were involved in the study due to their manageable size. Hence, the total

sample of 277.

The instrument for the study was a 34 items questionnaire developed from literature reviewed titled *"Rural migration and labour availability in Agricultural marketing questionnaire" (RMLAMQ)* and used for data collection. The questionnaire had four points response option of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with corresponding nominal values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Three experts validated the instrument, two from the Department of Vocational Agriculture and Technology Education and one from the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology all in the University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. A reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained. The researcher employed three research assistants in the administration of "RMLAMQ" on the respondents. A total of 277 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. Two hundred and sixty six (266) copies of questionnaire were retrieved and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). Weighted mean (x) was used to answer the research questions while t-test was employed to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Any mean score of 2.5 to 4.00 is regarded as agreed while mean score of 0.5 to 2.49 is considered disagreed.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What are the advertising procedures for marketing agricultural produce?

Data presented in table 1 revealed that all the 7 items on advertising procedure had their grand mean value ranged from 2.89 to 3.21, indicating that their mean values were above the cutoff point of 2.50. This showed that all the seven items on advertising procedure were agreed to by respondents. The standard deviation of the respondents ranged from .76 to .95 which indicates that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from the opinion of one another.

Research question 2

What are the functions of labour in agricultural marketing?

Data presented in Table 2 showed that 6 items were agreed to by respondents on functions of labour which had their mean value ranged from 2.63 to 3.90 which indicates that their mean value were above the cutoff point of 2.50. Respondents however disagreed on two items (Risk taking and market information) as functions of labour in agricultural marketing. This is because their

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of farmers and extension agents on advertising procedure for marketing agricultural produce (N=266:n_1 = 232 farmers; n_2=34 extension agents)

S/N	Items in advertising procedure	$\overline{X_1}$	SD_1	$\overline{X_2}$	SD_2	$\overline{X_g}$	Remarks
1	Perform marketing research	2.82	.76	3.06	.82	2.92	Agreed
2	Specify the goals of the communication channels	2.73	.81	3.06	.95	2.89	Agreed
3	Develop the most effective message for the market segments selected	3.00	.86	3.24	.85	3.12	Agreed
4	Select effective media	2.17	.70	3.66	.93	2.92	Agreed
5	Compose and secure a budget	2.92	.94	3.18	.76	3.05	Agreed
6	Execute the campaign of marketing Agric produce	3.08	.64	3.20	.82	3.14	Agreed
7	Evaluate the campaign	3.02	.96	3.40	.91	3.21	Agreed

Keys: N=number of respondents, X_1 = mean of farmers; SD_1 standard deviation of farmers; x_2 = mean of extension agents, SD_2 = standard deviation of extension agents Xg = grand mean of respondents.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of extension agents and farmers on functions of labour in agricultural marketing (N=266: n_1=232 farmers; n_2=34 extension agents)

S/N	Items on functions of labour	$\overline{X_1}$	SD_1	$\overline{X_2}$	SD_2	$\overline{X_g}$	Remarks
1	Storage and assembling	2.63	1.02	2.94	1.00	2.78	Agreed
2	Transportation	3.75	.78	3.51	.87	3.63	Agreed
3	Processing and packaging	2.94	.76	3.18	.88	3.06	Agreed
4	Grades and standard	3.28	.94	3.42	.90	3.35	Agreed
5	Financing	3.21	.96	3.67	.82	3.44	Agreed
6	Risk taking	2.12	.84	2.06	.72	2.09	Disagreed
7	Market information	2.36	.71	2.42	.86	2.39	Disagreed
8	Distribution	3.88	.66	3.90	.95	3.89	Agreed

Keys: N=number of respondents, $\overline{X_1}$ = mean of farmers; SD_1 standard deviation of farmers; $\overline{X_2}$ = mean of extension agents, $SD2$ = standard deviation of extension agents $\overline{Xg}$ = grand mean of respondents.

mean values of 2.09 and 2.39 were below the cutoff point of 2.50.

Research question 3

What are the challenges confronting agricultural marketing in Benue State?

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that 9 items were rated agreed by respondents. These items had their grand mean value ranged from 2.78 to 3.56 which indicates that their mean value were above the cutoff point of 2.50. Respondents disagreed with item 10 which had grand mean value of 2.29 (below the cutoff point of 2.50). This further indicates that growth of urban centers is not a challenge to agricultural marketing.

Research question 4

What are the remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing?

Data presented in Table 4 showed that all the 9 items were rated agreed by respondents. These items had their

grand mean value ranged from 2.92 to 3.69. This has shown that their mean value were above the cutoff point of 2.50. This is also an indication that the 9 items are the remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing in Benue State.

Hypothesis

HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of extension agents and farmers on the functions of labour in agricultural marketing.

Table 5 shows a p-value of .724 which is greater than the alpha value of .05. This indicates that there was no statistical significant difference between the mean rating of responses of farmers and extension agents on functions of labour in agricultural marketing.

Major findings

1. The respondents agreed to all the advertising procedures for marketing agricultural produce.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of farmers and extension agents on challenges confronting agricultural marketing in Benue State (N = 266; n_1 = 232 farmers; n_2 = 34 extension agents)

S/N	Items on Challenges	$\overline{X_1}$	SD_1	$\overline{X_2}$	SD_2	$\overline{Xg}$	Remarks
1	Poor handling, packing, packaging and processing facilities	3.42	1.00	2.60	.76	3.01	Agreed
2	Lack of uniform standardization and grading	2.96	0.60	3.02	.68	2.99	Agreed
3	Inadequate storage capacity and warehousing facilities	3.24	0.83	3.53	.71	3.38	Agreed
4	Lack of farmers' organization	3.68	0.91	3.44	.86	3.56	Agreed
5	Lack of transport facilities	3.89	0.75	3.00	.62	3.44	Agreed
6	Adulteration of produce before sale in the market	2.85	0.80	2.71	.92	2.78	Agreed
7	Small and scattered holding	2.96	0.76	3.04	.82	3	Agreed
8	Large number of middle men (Retailers and wholesalers)	3.36	0.85	3.90	.88	3.63	Agreed
9	Inadequate research on marketing	3.01	0.72	3.16	.74	3.08	Agreed
10	Growth of urban centres	2.40	.86	2.18	.67	2.29	Disagreed

Keys: N=number of respondents, $\overline{X_1}$ = mean of farmers; SD_1 standard deviation of farmers; $\overline{X_2}$ = mean of extension agents, SD_2 = standard deviation of extension agents $\overline{Xg}$ = grand mean of respondents.

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation of farmers and extension agents on remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing. (N=266; n1 = 232 farmers; n2 = 34 extension agents)

S/N	Items statement	$\overline{X_1}$	SD_1	$\overline{X_2}$	SD_2	$\overline{Xg}$	Remarks
1	Establish cooperative marketing by probing the produce of the members of enhance bargaining power.	3.53	.78	3.30	.71	3.41	Agreed
2	Provide training to farmers via workshop on agricultural marketing.	3.58	.81	2.77	.80	3.23	Agreed
3	Create awareness and improve on market extension	3.09	.86	3.04	.74	3.06	Agreed
4	Provide transport facilities to facilitate movement of produce.	3.72	.93	3.67	.91	3.69	Agreed
5	Standardize and grad agricultural produce	3.07	.75	3.28	.86	3.18	Agreed
6	Establish regulated market to monitor and enhance appropriate pricing of produce	2.84	.88	3.01	.76	2.92	Agreed
7	Improve handling and packing of agricultural produce.	3.82	.73	3.25	.93	3.53	Agreed
8	Provide cold storage facilities	3.73	.71	3.52	.86	3.62	Agreed
9	Strengthen market research and market information	3.87	.67	3.80	.90	3.83	Agreed

Keys: N=number of respondents, $\overline{X_1}$ = mean of farmers; SD_1 standard deviation of farmers; $\overline{X_2}$ = mean of extension agents, SD_2 = standard deviation of extension agents $\overline{Xg}$ = grand mean of respondents.

Table 5. t-test analysis of mean ratings of responses of farmers and extension agents on functions of labour in agricultural marketing

Status	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Error Mean	Df	t-cal	Sig	Alpha Value	Remarks
Farmers	232	3.412	.320	.043					
					264	.286	.724	.05	NS
Extension Agents	34	3.026	.345	.0271					

Keys: N = Number of respondents, STD= standard deviation, Df = degree of freedom, t-cal = t-calculated, Sig =P-value; P>0.05, NS = Not significant.

2. Most of the respondents' responses were in the affirmative on the functions of labour in agricultural marketing.

3. It was found out from table 3 that respondents confirmed 9 out of 10 challenges confronting agricultural marketing in Benue State.

4. Findings from table 4 revealed that respondents were in agreement on all the items on remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing.

5. Null hypothesis tested revealed that there was no statistical significant difference in the mean ratings of responses of farmers and extension agents on function of labour in agricultural marketing.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings that respondents agreed to all the advertising procedures in marketing agricultural produce was in consonance with the findings of Singh (2012) who reported that agricultural marketing consists of performing market research, select effective media and execute the campaign of marketing agricultural produce. The finding is also in line with study by Mustapha (2013) who found out that advertising involves developing the most effective message for the market segment selected. The findings from table 2 that most of the respondents agreed with the functions of labour in agricultural marketing were in agreement with study by Solomon et al (2016). The authors confirmed that packaging and processing transportation and assembling are essential functions of labour in agricultural marketing. The findings corroborate the work of Ekele and Sallau (2015). The authors' asserts that distribution and risk taking are integral aspect of agricultural produce marketing.

Findings from Table 3 confirmed that numerous challenges confront agricultural marketing in Benue State. The findings was in agreement with study by Folarin (2013) who found out that inadequate storage capacity, poor handling and packaging, lack of transport facilities and lack of farmer organization are perplexing challenges that confronts agricultural marketing. Similarly, the findings were in consonance with the work of Chen (2005) who reported that adulteration of produce and inadequate research on marketing are drawbacks that hinders agricultural marketing.

The findings from Table 4 that respondents agreed with all the remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing was in line with finding by Cateora et al (2010) and Idowu et al (2011). The authors submitted that provision of cold storage facilities, establishment of regulated market to enhance appropriate pricing and strengthening market research are implementable remedial measures for improving agricultural marketing. Folorin (2013) and Solomon et al (2016) also supported the finding. The authors suggested that creating awareness, providing training for farmers and improving

grading/handling could solve the marketing obstacle on agricultural produce.

CONCLUSION

The study has established that rural labour who are predominantly farmers are involved in agricultural produce marketing from one location of the state to another. The active participation of these rural labour (youths) forms the basis of labour availability in agricultural marketing in Benue State. Several procedures, functions, challenges and remedial measures have been discussed to ensure effectiveness in agricultural produce marketing. The implementation of these could form a fulcrum on which subsequent marketing of agricultural produce would revolve in the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Advertising strategies and procedure should be strengthened and encouraged to ensure that farmers (youths) who form bulk of labour available in the state participate efficiently in agricultural produce marketing.

2. Stakeholders' especially state ministry of agriculture should train rural youths and farmers on basic functions of marketing of agricultural produce. This will boost the supply and availability of labour.

3. State government in collaboration with various nongovernmental organization should work together in order to ameliorate the various challenges facing labour availability for agricultural produce marketing.

4. Ministry of agriculture with the cooperation of extension agents should ensure the immediate implementation of all remedial measures identified in the study.

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