

Research Article

Market Information Needs of Cocoa Marketers in Ifedore Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Cocoa has been a major source of income for many Nigerians and major source of foreign exchange earnings for the nation. Despite its immense benefit, cocoa marketers are faced with myriad problems in accessing agricultural information for improved marketing, these include financial problems, inadequacy of facilities professional, incomplete or irrelevant information on how to market their produce. The Study assessed Market Information needs of Cocoa Marketers in Ifedore Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, it ascertained market information needs and availability of market Information of cocoa marketers, identified the channels, the preferred channels of market information and identified constraints encountered by respondents in the use of market information. Primary data were collected through the use of a well structured questionnaire administered to 100 Cocoa Marketers. Both purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the cocoa marketers in the study area. The data generated from the study were analysed using descriptive statistics. The result revealed that where to buy (mean = 2.47) was the highest type of information needed by the marketers, Market association (mean = 3.81) was the most preferred information channel and Insufficient fund (mean = 4.58) was the most serious constraints affecting marketers in accessing market information. It was therefore concluded that the provision of timely, reliable and accurate market information on where to buy, storage, harvest/supply, pricing and transportation among others will be the remedy for successful marketing of Cocoa in the study area.

Keywords: Market, Information, needs, Cocoa.

INTRODUCTION

Cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*) belongs to the family *malvacea*, genus *Theobroma*, a perennial tree crop grown in tropical climates, with over 66% produced by smallholders farmers in west Africa. Cocoa has been a major source of income for many Nigerians and major source of foreign exchange earnings for the nation. Although its contributions to the total national export earnings has been slow down since the abolition of the Nigerian cocoa board in 1986 (Folayan, Oguntade and Ogundari, 2006). Cocoa is concentrated food with high nutritive value, it provides carbohydrate, protein, fat and minerals.

Again it is usually used for making beverages, wine, chocolate, cream and livestock feed. Nigeria was second largest cocoa producer in the world with about 97% of its total production from the southwestern. The fall in percentage share of cocoa output may be attributed to the negligence of the agricultural sector by

the past administrations due to the discovery of the petroleum resources that now accounts for the enormity of foreign exchange earnings, (Folayan, Oguntade and Ogundari, 2006).

Agricultural Information as suggest by Agbamu, (2006) is defined as all published or unpublished knowledge in all aspects of agriculture . Hence, information is one of the most valuable resource in agricultural development (Achughue and Anie, 2011).

Meyer and Boon,(2003) Information can also assist small scale farmers make informed decisions and take appropriate action to improved production and marketing .

Market information has positive benefits for farmers and traders and is more visible in facilitating spatial distribution of products from farm gate to consumers in the cities and between markets

Quick Response Code



Journal homepage:

<http://www.easpublisher.com/easjnfs/>

Article History

Received: 18.01.2019

Accepted: 05.02.2019

Published: 15.02.2019

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(Omoregbee and abiola 2011). Ozowa (2004) asserted that if the approaches to agricultural development programme are to work, African government need to take new approaches to information dissemination and management that grows out from clear understanding of what farmers information needs are. Information needs represent the gaps in current knowledge of the users. This imply that ,whenever an individual is rendered incapable of completing his work or activity ,then the issue of information need arises, this is because individual definitely needs information to enable him to do his work or activity. This is because all business units including farming need information to exist, compete and survive, (Dankwah, 2014).

1. What are the market information needs by the marketers in study =area?
2. What are the available Channels of these market information to the marketers in the study area?
3. Which of these channels do cocoa Marketers prefer in the study area?
4. What are the factors militating against effective dissemination of market information to the respondents in the study area?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study was to assess market information needs of cocoa marketers in Ifedore Local Government Area, Ondo State.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Ascertain market information needs and availability of market information of the Cocoa marketers in the study area;
2. Identify the channels of market information used by cocoa marketers in the study area;
3. Examine the preferred channels of market information by cocoa marketers in the study area;
4. Identify constraints encountered by cocoa marketers in the use of market information in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

This Study was carried out in Ifedore Local Government Area of Ondo State Nigeria. Ondo State is made up of 18 local government areas and it is situated in the rainforest zone with mean annual rainfall of 1500mm. The State has a land mass of 15,500km².Lying approximately between latitude 7^o10`N and 7^o16`N of the equator and longitude 5^o5`E and 5^o08`E of the Greenwich meridian with average temperature of 25^oC throughout the year. Ifedore Local Government Area is richly blessed with varied and favourable ecological and climatic conditions with vegetation ranging from mangrove swamps to rainforest. Four (4) markets were purposively selected for this study in Ifedore Local Government Area which includes Ipogun, Ijare, Ilara, Igbaraoke. The reason for this purposive sampling was due to high level of cocoa

marketing in these areas. Twenty five (25) cocoa marketers were sampled from each of the Markets which gave a total of 100 respondents for the study. The primary data were collected with well structured questionnaire and the interview schedule. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics which includes frequency counts, percentages, mean scores and Standard deviation.

Measurement of Variables

Objective one was achieved using a 3 point likert scale which was scored as highly needed=3, needed=2, not needed 1. A mean score (MS) of 2 and above was regarded that respondents needed marketing information($3+2+1/3=2.0$) while (MS) less than 2.0 was considered as not needed

Objective two was achieved using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentages, mean scores, Standard deviation.

Objective three was achieved using a 5 point likert scale which is coded as Most preferred =5, preferred =4, moderately preferred=3,Least preferred =2, Not preferred =1. A mean score(MS) of 3 and above was regarded that respondents preferred channels($5+4+3+2+1/5=3.0$) while(MS) less than 3.0 were considered as not preferred.

Objective four was achieved using a 5 point likert scale which is coded as Most serious =5, serious =4, moderately serious=3, Least serious=2, Not serious =1. A mean score (M.S) of 3 and above was regarded that respondents Constraint is Serious ($5+4+3+2+1/5=3.0$) while (MS) less than 3.0 were considered as not serious.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of Market Information Needs of Cocoa Marketers

From the eleven (11) market information provided in table 1, Cocoa marketers were asked to indicate the market information types needed by them as measured in three(3) point scores of rating of highly needed scored 3, needed scored 2, and not needed scored 1, with a mean score of 2.00 and above considered as the needed market information by the cocoa marketers Although farmers were aware of some of the marketing , yet the marketers needed more information on specific areas so as to improved their skills and knowledge they have.

The area were market information is needed more include: Where to buy (2.47), Where to Sell (2.31) Current price (2.23), Storage (2.23), How to buy (2.22) How to sell (2.19) Harvest/Supply (2.19), Grading (2.18), Forecast of market (2.17), packaging (2.15), processing (2.13). This result showed that marketers had highest need on marketing information for where to buy with a mean of 2.47, while the lowest need was on

processing. Although all the marketing information provided were significant (> 2.00) This findings agrees

with that of (Okoedo-Okojie and Ovharhe, 2012)

Table 1: Mean Distribution of Market information needs of cocoa marketers

Market Information	Mean	SD
Where to buy Cocoa	2.47	0.521
Where to Sell	2.31	0.465
Current Price	2.23	0.446
Storage	2.23	0.423
How to buy	2.22	0.440
How to Sell	2.19	0.394
Harvest/Supply	2.19	0.419
Grading	2.18	0.386
Forecast of Market	2.17	0.403
Packaging	2.15	0.386
Processing	2.13	0.393

Source: Field Survey, 2015

*Needed (Mean ≥ 2.0)

Distribution of Information Channels Used by Cocoa Marketers.

Table 2 indicated marketers used information on the following channel which include: Radio(38.0%), Television (1.0%),Friends/Neighbour (81.0%), Home / Farm Visit (55.0%), Sales Agents (23%), Market Association (83.0%), Local Drivers (39.0%), Group Discussion(71.0%), News papers (28.0%), Campaign/Exhibition (1.0%), Posters (4.0%), Workshop (17.0%),

GSM/ Telephone (58.0%), Pamphlet (1.0%), Bulletin (1.0%), Lectures (3.0%) Internet (27.0 %). Table four (4) indicated that all marketers obtained highest marketing information through Market Association (83.0), Friends / Neighbour (81.0 %) Group Discussion (71.0%), these three channel is a form of group discussion . This result corresponds with the findings of (Agarevo and Obinne 2010).

Table 2: Distribution of Information channels used by cocoa Marketers

Information Channels Used	Frequency	Percentage%
Radio	38	38.0
Television	1	1.0
Friends	81	81.0
Home/farm visit	55	55.0
Sales Agents	23	23.0
Market association	83	83.0
Local drivers	39	39.0
Group discussion	71	71.0
Newspapers	28	28.0
Campaign / Exhibition	1	1.0
Posters	4	4.0
Workshop	17	17.0
GSM/ Telephone	58	58.0
Pamphlets	1	1.0
Bulletins	1	1.0
Lectures	3	3.0
Internet	27	27.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Distribution of Cocoa Marketers according to Information preferred channels

Table 3 shows the preferred channels of information by cocoa marketers in the area, measured in five (5) points likert scale with mean ≥ 3.0 0 regarded as the preferred channels of information by the marketers.

Marketers highest preferred channels include: Market association with mean of (3.81), Friends with mean of 3./49, Group Discussion with mean of (3.37), Home/ Farm Visit with mean of (3.14) and GSM/Telephone with mean of (3.12). The reason for preference of these channels may be due to the fact that it the encourage group discussion and immediate feedback.

Marketers lowest preferred information channels are those ≤ 3 and these channels include: Radio with mean of (2.81), Local drivers with mean of (2.66), Sale agent with mean of (2.61), Internet with mean of (2.41), Newspapers with mean of (2.31), workshop with mean of (2.26), Lectures with mean of (2.01), Posters with mean of (2.00), pamphlet with mean of (1.95), Campaign / Exhibition with mean of (1.93), Bulletins with mean of (1.88), and Television with mean of (1.83). The finding of the highest preferred channel in the study agrees with the findings of Adekunle, Onyibe, Ogunyinka , Auta and Kuyello (2002).

Table 3: Distribution of Cocoa Marketers according to their preferred channels of information

Preferred Information Channels	Mean	SD
Market Association	3.81	1.002
Friends	3.49	0.980
Group discussion	3.37	1.060
Home / farm visit	3.14	1.092
GSM/Telephone	3.12	1.423
Radio	2.81	0.950
Local drivers	2.66	1.047
Sales agents	2.61	1.034
Internet	2.41	1.129
Newspapers	2.31	1.143
Workshop	2.26	1.050
Lectures	2.01	0.847
Posters	2.00	0.910
Pamphlet	1.95	0.734
Campaign/Exhibition	1.93	0.782
Bulletins	1.88	0.742
Television	1.83	0.726

Source: Field Survey, 2015

*Preferred Channels, Mean \geq 3.00

Constraints Encountered by Cocoa Marketers in the Use of Marketing Information

Table 4 indicated the constraints encountered by cocoa marketers in the use of market information in the study area. The identified constraints were measured in 5 point likert scale with a mean score \geq 3.00 indicating that a particular constraints was serious. The serious constraints were as follows Insufficient fund with mean of (4.58), Access to Extension Officers with mean(4.56), Insufficient feedback from Extension Officers with mean of (4.40), Unstable Government

Policies with mean of (4.31), Lack of Relevant Materials in Office and Library with mean of (4.21), Marketing charges / agency fees with mean of (4.01), Pest and Diseases with mean of (3.70), High Cost of seminar attended with mean of (3.63), Lack of storage Facilities with mean of (3.57), Seasonality of Cocoa with mean of (3.00). The Constraints that were not serious include: Language Barrier with mean of (2.58), poor road Linkage with mean of (2.27) and Proximity /Nearness to Markets with mean of (1.66).

Table 4: Constraints Encountered by Cocoa Marketers in the Use of Market Information

Constraints	Mean	SD
Insufficient Fund	4.58	0.496
Assess to extension Officers	4.56	0.499
Insufficient feedback from Extension Officers	4.40	0.667
Unstable Government Policies	4.31	0.720
Lack of Relevant Materials in Office and Library	4.21	0.880
Marketing Charges / Agency fees	4.01	1.159
Pest and Diseases	3.70	0.810
High Cost of Seminars attended	3.63	0.884
Lack of Storage facilities	3.57	0.807
Seasonality of Cocoa	3.00	0.995
Language Barrier	2.58	1.265
Poor road linkage	2.27	0.908
Proximity /Nearness to market	1.66	.623

Source: Field Survey, 2015

*Serious (Mean \geq 3.0)

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was evident that cocoa marketers lack adequate information. However it can be concluded that the provision of timely, reliable and accurate Market information on

where to buy, storage, harvest/supply, pricing and transportation among others will be the remedy for successful marketing of Cocoa in the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been proffered:

1. Adult education scheme should be made available for marketers, so that they can acquire education alongside their occupation.
2. Change agents should frequently visit the rural area and educate them more on marketing of their goods and convey relevant information that is needed to them
3. Cocoa marketers in the study area should be assisted by microcredit facilities so as to enable them expand their business.
4. The extension agencies should provide great capacity building for cocoa marketers in the area where they lack information.
5. The change agent should ensure that marketers have access to adequate information that will equip them with the required knowledge on how to market their goods.

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