

DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN FOOD CROP MARKETING IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

Nnanna Mba AGWU, Cynthia Ijeoma ANYANWU, Okezie ORIUWA

Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Department of Agribusiness and Management, Umudike, Abia state, Nigeria. E-mail addresses: agwu.nnanna0613@gmail.com; agwu.nnanna@mouau.edu.ng; anyanwu.cynthia@mouau.edu.ng; aijay.cynthia@gmail.com

Corresponding author: agwu.nnanna0613@gmail.com; agwu.nnanna@mouau.edu.ng

Abstract

This study has its objectives as to describe the types of crops marketed by the women; to determine the factors that influence women participation in marketing of food crops in the study area and make recommendations based on the findings. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in the study. First, two Local Government Areas were selected from each of the three agricultural zones, this was followed by the random selection of twenty respondents from the selected Local Government Areas, bringing the total number of respondents to a hundred and twenty. Descriptive statistics and the probit model were used in analyzing the data collected from a set of questionnaire administered on the respondents selected. The results of the analysis showed that cassava, maize, water yam, sweet potatoes and cocoyam were the major food crops marketed by the women. The probit results indicate that age, experience, output, source of capital and source of labour were significant at different probability levels and with different signs. The study recommended that sources of income whether formal or informal sources should be made more accessible to women, amongst other things.

Key words: food crops, marketing, participation women

INTRODUCTION

Women play a vital role in the agricultural production in many countries including Nigeria. Their role spans from tilling of land, cultivation, harvesting, processing and marketing of produce. In fact, it is increasingly known in recent times that a major share of income of rural households are obtained through women activity, and sometimes even share of women income in the household economy is more than the share of men [5].

Rural women are active participants in retail trade and marketing, particularly where trade is traditional and not highly commercialized [3]. In many parts of Asia, women market foods such as vegetables; in West Africa, they distribute most major commodities; and in the Caribbean, women account for nearly all local marketing. Through their marketing efforts, women provide valuable links among farmers, intermediaries and consumers. Petty trade often thought of in the past as non-productive, in fact serves to stimulate the production and

consumption linkages in the local economy [3].

Participation has been defined by [11] as the ability of the people to choose voluntarily to be integral parts of a development process. There has been ample research evidence to buttress the argument of women's high level of participation and contribution to agribusiness and marketing of food crops in Nigeria. However, the degree of women participation varies from country to country. Their specific task, however vary from place to place, depending on cultures. According to [19], women participation on self employment (including marketing of agricultural produce) differs across different regions of the world.

Participation in marketing has been noted as both a cause and a consequence of economic development [4]. Marketing offers households the opportunity to specialize according to comparative advantage and thereby enjoy welfare gains from trade. Recognition of the potential of marketing as engines of economic development and structural transformation gave rise to a marketed paradigm of

agricultural development during the 1908s [15], that was accompanied by wide spread promotion of market liberalization policy agendas in sub-Saharan African, and other low income regions.

As household's disposable income increase, so does demand for variety of goods and services, thereby inducing the demand- side market participation, which further increases the demand for cash and thus supply side market participation.

Gender in equality has been known to affect the overall performance and output of women involved in agricultural marketing among other agribusiness activities [20]. These include high level of poverty, vulnerability to external and uncontrollable hazards, and restricted access to productive resources, amongst others.

As women participation in different economic activities and intra-family decision making process are important indicators of their empowerment there arises the need to know the determinants of women participation in agribusiness, using marketing of food crops as a case study. The overall objective of the study is to examine the determinants of women participation in the marketing of food crops in Abia state, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to (i) describe the types of food crops marketed by the women (ii) assess the determinants of women participation in food crop marketing in the study area and (iii) make recommendations based on the findings of the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The Study area was Abia state. Abia state is in the south east geo-political zone of Nigeria and has its capital at Umuahia. The state was carved out of Imo state in August 27, 1991. It has 17 Local Government Areas and three agricultural zones of Aba, Umuahia and Ohafia. Aba and Umuahia are referred to as the urban areas and the rest are rural areas. The state shares common boundaries with Ebonyi State to the North and to the South and south west with Rivers state to the East

and South east with Cross River and Akwa Ibom state and to the North West is Anambra state. [8].

The population of Abia state is 2,833,999 [12]. The population of the urban areas are Aba north 107488, Aba south 423852, and Umuahia north 220,660 amounting to a total population of 752000 persons [8]. The state covers an area of about 5,243.7 square kilometer which is approximately 5.8 Percent of the total land area of Nigeria. [8].

Agriculture is the major occupation of the people and subsistent agriculture is prevalent and about 70 percent of the population engage in it. The main crops are yam, cassava, rice and cocoyam and maize, while the cash crops includes; oil palm, rubber, cocoa, banana, and various types of fruits.

The people of Abia are traders and Aba is regarded as one of the commercial centres in the country. The state is blessed with mineral resources such as lead, zinc, limestone, fine sand and petroleum. As regards tourism there are many tourist centers but the most outstanding are the: national war museum in Umuahia, the Azumini blue river at Ukwaeast, and the long juju of Arochukwu.

Selection of Respondents

Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in the study. First two Local Government Areas each were selected from each of the three agricultural zones of Abia state. After which, twenty women were selected randomly from these Local Government Areas, making a total of one hundred and twenty (120) women.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were primary data, which were collected through the aid of a set of questionnaire administered to the respondents. All the respondents returned their questionnaire and the therefore were used in the analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Objective (i) was analyzed using of descriptive statistical such as frequencies and percentages etc., while objective (ii) was realized by probit model.

Specification of Model

The probit model is specified as follows;

$$Y_{(1,0)} = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5$$

Where: $Y_{(1,0)}$ is the dependent variable, which is the participation index

X_1 = age of the woman respondent (years)

X_2 = educational attainment (years)

X_3 = household size (number of persons)

X_4 = number of years in the marketing food crops

X_5 = income (₦)

X_6 = output (kg)

X_7 = capital source (1= informal sources 0= formal sources)

X_8 = labour source (1= hired sources 0= family labour)

μ = error term

b_0 = constant

b_1 - b_8 = coefficients

Probit analysis is a specialized regression model of binomial response variables. Probit modeling is used for explaining a dichotomous dependent variable with the empirical specification formulated in terms of latent response variable [18]. In this study, dependent variable Y , is a utility index of participation in marketing of food crop activities. Participation takes the discrete values of 1 for participation in marketing of food crops, 0 for non-participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Types of Food Crops Marketed By the Women in the Study Area

Table 1. Types of food crops marketed according to ranking

Food crops	Frequency	Percentage
Cassava	89	74.17
Maize	78	65
Water yam	62	51.67
Sweet potatoes	60	50
Coco yam	50	41.67

Source: computations from field survey, 2011.

Among the crops marketed, cassava ranked first among others. As shown in Table 1 below, 74.17 percent of the respondents attested that they participated in the sale of cassava. Maize accounted for 65 percent to rank the second most marketed produce among the crops. Water yam ranked third among the crops. In this case, 51.67 percent of

the respondents participated in the sale of water yam. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that they sold sweet potatoes while 41.67 percent of the respondents sold cocoyam. However, the responses were multiple in nature

Determinants of Women Participation in Food Crop Marketing in Abia State, Nigeria

The estimates of the determinants of women participation in food crop marketing in the study area as shown in Table 2 indicate that age, experience, output, source of capital and source of labour were significant at different probability levels and with different signs.

The coefficient of age of the respondents was significant at 10 percent level and had a positive sign. This implies that with increasing age, there is the probability of women participating in the marketing of food crops. Many studies have revealed that those who fall within the active age brackets engage in agriculture and related activities given the drudgery nature of the enterprise [1].

Table 2. Estimates of the determinants of participation in food crop marketing by women in Abia state, Nigeria.

Variables	Coefficients	Standard error	z-test
Age	0.04945	0.02380	2.08*
Education	0.01358	0.07232	0.19
Household size	0.01644	0.1023	0.16
Experience	0.00236	0.0796	0.03
Income	5.9388	1.1498	5.16***
Output	0.7077	0.1416	4.99***
Capital source	0.5778	0.1422	4.06***
Labour source	-0.8106	0.3081	-2.63**
Constant	-2.9501	1.6642	-1.77

LR χ^2 19.17***

Prob χ^2 0.0001

Pseudo R^2 0.654

Note: *, *** denotes 1% and 10% significant levels respectively

Source: Computations from field survey, 2011.

This result is plausible, given the fact that, in the rural areas, these food crops are sold by women who more or less sit in their stalls without much stress as the products are also harvested with in the areas. As [16], put it, most women who engage in programmes in

women in agriculture do that during spare times. This result is also in line with [7].

The coefficient of output was also significant at one percent probability level with a positive sign. This implies that, the larger the output from their farms, the greater the probability women in the study area participating in food crop marketing. Among the rural dwellers, there is usually the need for some cash to pay for other household needs, such as school fees, medicine and other consumer goods, coupled with the fact that there is poor storage facilities, large outputs may prompt women into participating in the sale of these food crops. This study consolidates that of [9].

Source of capital which was dummied was significant at one percent level with a positive sign. This implies that the ability to raise funds from in formal sources could lead to women participation in food crop marketing. Formal sources of credits have been known to have conservation lending practices which often times, deny women the required credits. Informal sources become handy sources of funds. According to [17], credit from informal sector dominates agricultural financing in the rural areas. Within the parley of agricultural financing, informal credit sources are unquestionably most popular. Collateral free lending, proximity, timely delivery, and flexibility in loan transaction are some of the attractive features of informal credit [10]. This result is very plausible and in line with [6].

The coefficient of income was significant at 99 percent confidence level with a positive sign. This implies that higher income could lead to higher probability of women participating in food crops marketing. While credit is a problem for all small businesses, the lack of access to credit and financial services is particularly acute for women. Therefore, richer women will be more disposed to participate in business, food crop marketing inclusive than poorer ones. This result is in line with [14, 2, 13].

Sources of labour was also significant in explaining women participation in food crop marketing in Abia state at five percent probability level but with a negative coefficient. This means that there is a negative

relationship between hired labour and marketing of food crops by women. This is possibly because women who are usually cash constrained may not afford to pay or incur additional costs on hired labour

The LR χ^2 was 19.17 which is significant at one percent level, while the pseudo R^2 was 0.654 meaning the 65.4 percent of the variability has been explained in the equation. However, it is possible that there were some other variables that should have been included in the model.

CONCLUSIONS

Women participation in agricultural production and the marketing of agricultural produce in particular is an age long activity. However, this study has revealed the factors which could influence women in participating in the marketing of food crops in Abia state Nigeria.

The study therefore recommends that sources of income whether formal or informal sources should be made more accessible to women. This will enable them source for the required funds needed to support their businesses. Again, output of agricultural crops should be encouraged. This is because, as output increases, women will be encouraged to go into its marketing for more income for their upkeep and that of their families.

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