Agrotechnology
ISSN: 2168-9881
OPEN ACCESS Freely available online
Research Article

Snail Marketing as a Means of Rural Livelihood in Ondo, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to analyse marketing of snails as a means of rural livelihood in Ondo State, Nigeria. Data were collected from one hundred and twenty (120) snail marketers through a multistage sampling technique using a pre-tested questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, gross margin analysis, Gini coefficient and Lorenz curve were employed to analyse data collected from the field survey. Results from the study showed that majority (95.00%) of the respondents were still in their economically active age with female household accounting for 62.50% of the total sample. Majority (66.67%) of the marketers had married with an average household size of 6 members. Findings also revealed that majority (71.67%) of the respondents spent at least 6 years in schools with an average of 7 year's experience in the business. From the study, 36.67% of the marketers sold at the local markets, 32.50% sold their snails in urban markets while the rest 30.83% explored roadside market to sell their snails. Only half (50%) of the respondents belonged to marketing association in the study area. The cost and return analysis revealed that a snail marketer made an average gross margin of ₦82,340.00 and net profit of ₦81,120.00 respectively per marketing cycle. The profitability ratio conducted shows that snail marketing is profitable business with a capital turnover of 1.32 and return on investment of 31.89% per cycle per marketer. Based on these results, it is recommended that policy interventions that will facilitate provision of soft loan to the marketers without collateral should be put in place so that income inequality can be reduced among snail marketers.

Keywords: Snail marketing; Gini coefficient; Income inequality; Rural livelihood

INTRODUCTION

Background information

Snails are bilaterally symmetrical invertebrate micro-livestock with soft segmented exoskeleton in the form of calcerous shells [1,2]. In Nigeria, the West African giant snail (Archachatina marginata) is the most popular species that is edible and generally marketed. It has an ovate shell with zigzag brown stripes [3]. Snails dwell mostly in humid forest areas of the country from where they are gathered by villagers for consumption and other uses [4,5]. Snail farming has become an important enterprise in the world due to its high quality protein and medicinal value. Protein from snail meat has proved to be very rich in all essential amino acids such as lysine, leucine, argeinine and tryptophan [6,7]. The meat, which is popularly referred to as "igbin" in Yoruba tribe of Nigeria is nutritious and can be a viable supplement to the protein requirement of the people [8]. The meat has traditionally been a major ingredient in the diet of people living in the high forest belt of the country [9].

Apart from the nutritional value of snail meat. Said the glandular substances from edible snails cause agglutination of certain bacteria, which could be of value against a variety of ailments including whooping cough and high blood pressure. Also, the bluish liquid obtained from snail has high iron content and is used for the treatment of anaemia, hypertension, poor sight and infants' development [10]. Other curable ailments by

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Received date: April 01, 2021; **Accepted date:** April 14, 2021; **Published date:** April 21, 2021

Citation: Justin IO, Owoeye RS, Johnson SB. (2021) Snail Marketing as a Means of Rural Livelihood in ONdo, Nigeria. Agrotechnology. 10:133.

snails in Nigeria include anaemia, ulcer, asthma, age problems, hypertension and rheumatism [11].

Snails rearing requires a little space and can adapt to various environmental conditions which make it suitable to be reared in small towns, cities, farms, backyard or commercial levels at villages. Snails are also generally noiseless and easy to handle in addition to low capital and labour requirement for its rearing[12]. In snail commercial farms, demand usually outstrips the supply. The wholesalers, retailers and consumers usually cloud to buy at farm gate prices [13,14]. Other markets for snails are roadsides, neighbourhood markets for life snails and supermarkets, hotels, restaurants and other catering institutions for smoked, cooked, canned or processed snails. Snail prices are often higher than those charged for beef or mutton due to its increasing consumer demand and dwindling supplies [15].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The broad objective of the study is to analyze the marketing of snail as a means of rural livelihood in Ondo State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- Describe the socio-economic characteristics of snail marketers in Ondo State, Nigeria.
- Determine the cost and returns to snail marketing in the study area.
- Identify factors affecting snail marketing in the study area; and
- Identify the constraints to snail marketing in the study area.

THE STUDY DESIGN

The study area

The study was conducted in Ondo State, Nigeria. The state is situated within the topical region of Nigeria and it covers land area of about 14,606km2. According to National Population Commission (NPC, 2006), Ondo State has 3,441,024 million people with 18 local government areas. The geographical coordinates lies between latitude 5°45E - 60°00'N. The tropical climate of the State has two distinct seasons; raining season that starts from April and ends in October, and dry season that last between Novembers and March. It has a temperature range of 21- 29°C with average rainfall depth of 2,000mm on the southern area and 1,500mm in the northern area respectively. The major occupation of the people in the State is agriculture which offers about 75% of employment to the people of the state. The agricultural landscape among other thing is characterized by tree crops like cashew, mango, cocoa and oil palm. Other principal food crops include yam, cocoyam, maize, and tomato. The people also engage in livestock farming such as poultry production, goat rearing, piggery, fisheries and snail rearing [16].

Data and sampling techniques

Primary data were used mainly for the study. A multistage sampling procedure was employed to select respondents for the study. The first stage involved purposive selection of 3 Local Government Areas (LGAs) which were Akure South, Okitipupa and Owo based on the prominence of snails in the area. The second stage involved purposive selection of 4 towns/villages in each of the 3 selected local government areas based on the involvement of marketers in the enterprise, making 12 towns/villages in all. In the third stage, 10 respondents were randomly selected per town/village making a total of 120 respondents in all.

Methods of data analysis

Data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics and budgetary analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means, charts and percentages were used to summarize the socio-economic characteristics of the marketers. Budgetary (Gross margin) analysis was used to evaluate costs and returns on snail marketing by the respondents. Following [17], gross margin is mathematically specified as:

Capital turnover

Capital turnover is a measure of how effectively a business organization uses its assets to produce sales.

Return on investment

This is a performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment or compare the efficiency of a number of different investments [18].

RESULTS

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Age			
≤ 25	27	22.50	
26 – 40	51	42.50	36 years
41 – 55	36	30.00	
> 55	6	5.00	
Gender			
Male	45	37.50	
Female	75	62.50	
Marital status			
Single	40	33.33	
Married	80	66.67	
Household sizes			
≤ 5	51	42.50	
6 – 10	50	41.67	6

> 10	19	15.83	
Years of schooling			
≤ 6 years	34	28.33	
7 – 12 years	51	42.50	
> 12 years	35	29.17	
Years of experience			
≤ 5 years	25	20.83	
6 – 10 years	60	50.00	7 years
> 10	35	29.17	
Marketing channel			
Local markets	44	36.67	
Urban market	39	32.50	
Roadside	37	30.83	
Membership of association			
Yes	60	50,00	
No	60	50.00	
Sources of credits			
Friends/ relatives	20	16.67	
Cooperatives	55	45.83	
Commercial banks	10	8.33	
Savings/thrift	35	29.17	

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by socio-economic characteristics Source: Field survey, 2019.

Items	Mean value (₦)/cycle	Percentage (%)
Purchasing cost of snail @ ₦800 per kg	244000	95.92
Cost of labour for assembling/ standardization	4060	1.6
Transportation cost	5100	2
Total variable cost (TVC)	253160	99.52
Depreciation cost on fixed inputs	1220	0.48
Total cost (TC)	254380	100
Revenue		
Price (P) per kg = ₦1100.00		
Quantity (Q) sold = 305kg		
Total revenue (TR) = PxQ	335500	
Gross margin = TR – TVC	82340	
Profit = TR – TC	81120	

Table 2: Cost and returns to snail marketing in the study area Source: Field survey, 2019.

Income /Sales	Freq.	Proportion of sellers(X)	Total sales	Proportion of sales	Cumulative proportion of sales (Y)	XY
≤3000	34	0.283	91450	0.110	0.102	0.0289
3001 - 5000	28	0.233	130200	0.156	0.258	0.0602
5001 - 7000	9	0.075	60000	0.072	0.33	0.0248
7001 - 9000	11	0.092	92900	0.111	0.438	0.0402
9001 - 11000	15	0.125	156400	0.187	0.619	0.0774
1001-14 000	15	0.125	193300	0.232	0.843	0.1054
≥14000	8	0.067	142500	0.171	1.000	0.0667
Total	120	1.000	866,750	1.000		0.4034

Table 3: Market structure for snail in the study area Source: Field survey, 2019.

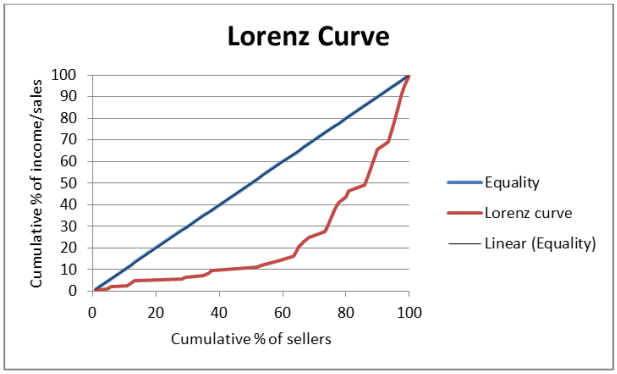

Figure 1: Lorenz curve for snail marketers.

Constraints	Mean	SD	Rank
High cost of labour	2.59	0.948	1st
High cost of transportation	2.53	0.852	2nd
Lack of organized market	2.49	1.039	3rd
Lack of capital	2.44	1.0470	4th

Table 4: Constraints facing snail marketers in the study area Source: Field survey, 2019.

DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

The result of the socio-economic in Table 1 shows that 95% of the respondents were still within the economically active age of below 56 years with female gender dominating the business with 62.50% as against male household of 37.50%. Majority (66.67%) of the respondents were married with an average of 6 household sizes. This implies that majority of the snail marketers in the area are responsible and could take genuine decisions that could enhance the success of their business together with their spouses. It also suggests that adequate family labour are available to support the marketers in their business. The result reveals that majority (71.67%) of the respondents spent over 6 years in school with an average of 7 year's experience in the business. These also indicate that majority of the snail marketers have the required educational prerequisite and experience to accept innovation and be successful in the business. These findings are similar to earlier studies conducted by [2,9,14,15].The result also indicated that 36.67% of the snail marketers sell their snails at the local markets while, 32.50% and 30.83% sell their snails at the urban markets and roadsides, respectively. This implies that there are availability of market outlets in the study area. The result reveals that only 50.00% of the respondents belong to one association or the other while 50.00% did not belong to any association in the business. The result also shows that only 16.67% and 8.33% of the marketers get their credit sources from friends/relatives and commercial banks respectively, while 45.83% and 29.17% sourced their credits from cooperatives and savings/thrift respectively. Thus, indicating that only half of the snail marketers had access to credit acquisition for their business in the area.

Cost and returns to snail marketing

Presents the distribution of cost and returns to snail marketers in the study area. It shows that cost of purchasing snail covered 95.92% of the total cost indicating that snail marketing does not involve much fixed inputs. The result revealed that a snail marketer made an average gross margin of ₦82,340.00 and net profit of ₦81,120.00 respectively in a marketing cycle. The result of capital turnover value of 1.32 realised from the business implies that a snail marketer will make a profit of 32 kobo on every ₦1 invested in snail marketing business. The return on investment for the business was31.89% which indicates that snail marketing is a profitable venture.

Market structure for snail marketers

According to a value of Gini coefficient greater than 0.35 shows that there is an inequitable distribution of income sales as cited. The Gini coefficient computed in this study for snail marketers was 0.5966 as shown in Table 3. This figure is higher than 0.35, indicating a high level of concentration and inefficiency in the snails' market structure in the study area.

Snail marketing constraints

The display the mean distribution of marketers according to constraints faced in snail marketing in the study area. The mean value of responses showed that labour was the major problem of the respondents where there is no family labour. High cost of transportation (0.852) was also identified as the second major problem confronting the marketers. Transportation of goods is an essential means of facilitating trade. Lack of organised market was also identified to be affecting them. An organised market will create room for efficient market structure and good pricing for snails. The fourth challenge was identified as lack of capital with a mean value of 2.44 and a standard deviation of 1.0470.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that snail marketing is a gender-based profitable venture that is dominated by income inequality and inefficiency in the area. Profitability evaluation showed that snail marketing is viable but its expansion is limited by high cost of labour, transportation, lack of organised market and insufficient capital in the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that snail marketers should be given financial attention to complement the existence of co-operative societies recorded in the area. This will enable them to have better access to credit facilities. Also, policy interventions in terms of provision of soft loans without collateral security as well as creating an economically healthy environment to reduce income inequality among snail marketers should be ensured by relevant policy makers in the area.

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