

Full Length Research Paper

Consumers' attitude towards local rice production and consumption in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Received 17 January, 2011 ; Accepted 11 December, 2013

The Nigerian soils are well adapted to the production of rice. In all the ecological zones of the country, rice production is well entrenched. Despite their favourable soil and ecological conditions for rice production, Nigerians still spend substantial proportions of their earnings on imported rice. Why? It is against this backdrop that this study was carried out in Ondo State, Nigeria to investigate the consumers' attitude towards local rice. Two Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected for the study and from each, two communities were randomly selected. Five wards from each community were selected, from where five respondents per ward were interviewed. The results showed that 93% of the respondents consumed local rice but only 26% consumed more of local rice than the imported. Also, 42% of the respondents consumed local rice for its relative cheaper price in addition, 80% of the respondents purchased their rice from the market while 82% spent less than 24% of their income on rice consumption. The attitude of the respondents from the study showed that, they were indifferent in their preference of local rice to imported rice, but they showed unfavourable attitudes towards importation of rice at the expense of the locally produced one given the favourable natural resources at the nation's disposal. It was recommended that, since the people desired an improvement in the production of local rice, the improvement would likely be in the area of processing which has much to be desired compared with the imported in terms of neatness and attractiveness, efforts must therefore, be made to make the rice more attractive. This can be accomplished by adopting the use of much improved technology.

Key words: Consumers, attitude, rice, consumption, production.

INTRODUCTION

Rice has become a predominantly staple food in Nigeria and other developing countries, having emerged from being a "festivity food" as in few previous decades. Rice provides 20% of the world's dietary energy supplies and it is a good source of thiamine, riboflavin and niacin (Odusina, 2008). An average Nigerian now consumes

24.8 kg of rice per year representing nine percent of total calories in take, giving the fact that the status of rice in the average Nigerian diet has been transformed from being a luxury food item to that of staple (Odularu, 2010). As food production grows at the rate of 2.3% annually, Nigerian population increases at 3.2% (FAO, 2006).

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Nigeria has therefore, not been able to produce enough rice for domestic consumption consequent to the mass rice importation with its unattractive consequences on the nation's economy (Daramola, 2005). Globally, there is the need for increase in rice production from 586 million metric tons in 2001 to 756 million metric tons by 2030 (WARDA/USAID, 2003)

Efforts of the various governments and donor agencies have been recorded in policy making, such as in the River Basin Authorities, which had the mandate of cultivating and irrigating the soil among other things for rice production, increase in awareness of improved inputs and credit facility (Bamidele et al., 2010). Despite that these efforts, coupled with those of researches and extension, have not correspondingly translated to sufficient rice production, much more so, there is a higher taste by the people for imported rice (Lancon, 2003). Some of the peoples' complaint for their distaste for local rice has been its poor quality comparative with imported rice. The general observation is that "local rice does not taste well; it is stony and such things". However, these observations are mainly attributed to poor processing methods which allow a mixture of rice products with pebbles (Kassali et al., 2010).

Evidence from the past studies has shown that, the Nigerian local rice has failed to meet the demand of her teeming population not only in quantity but also in quality, largely, due to neglect of the agricultural sector by successive governments (Ogazi, 2009). The crux of this study is therefore hinged on the attitude of the consumers towards local rice production and consumption. If rice must be produced to meet the needs of the populace, if there must also be drastic reduction in the rate of rice importation, local rice must no longer be treated with so much disdain. Specifically therefore, this study sought to:

1. Identify the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.
2. Ascertain the degree of local rice consumption.
3. Determine the effect of respondents' socio-economic characteristics on local rice production and consumption.
4. Determine the consumers' attitude towards local rice production and consumption.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ondo State. The ecological zone, under which the state falls, favors the growth of forest vegetation thus, making the area characterized with a vast of forest land with high relative humidity. The local food crop grown in the state includes rice, maize, beans, yam, cassava, plantain and vegetables. Two Local Government Areas (LGA) being Akure south and Ifedore were randomly selected. Two communities were randomly chosen from each LGA (Ibule Soro and Ilara Mokin from Ifedore LGA and Akure and Oda from Akure South). Five wards were randomly sampled from each selected community giving a total of 20 wards. Furthermore, five respondents were randomly selected from each ward making a total of 100 respondents for the study.

The data used in the study were primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through the use of well structured questionnaire while the secondary data were from published works and the ministry of commerce and industry. Information was collected on demographic and non-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, tables and percentages to show the socio-economic characteristics of the Local rice producers and consumers, their sources of input and consumption level, while correlation matrix was used to show the relationship that existed between the study variables.

Description of variables

Socio-economic characteristics

These villages include age, sex, marital status, and household size, level of education, occupation and income. Questions that elicited the information from the respondents were asked and the responses were coded as:

Age: Less than 25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years, 46-55 years and greater than 55 years

Sex: male or female

Marital status; whether single, married, divorced, or widowed

Religion; whether Christianity, Islam or others

Level of Education: Categorized as "No formal education", "Non-formal education", "Primary school education", "Secondary school education" and "Tertiary education"

Attitude: Attitudinal statements were measured on a five-point Likert scale of "very much preferred", "much preferred", "just preferred" "Not preferred" and "very much not preferred". The five-point Likert scale was also as strongly. Agreed, "agreed", "undecided", "disagreed" and "strongly disagreed", values were assigned to each category as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively but were reversed (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) for negative statements. The mean score of response for each statement was obtained and classified as 0.1-1.14, 1.5-2.4, 2.5 - 3.4, 3.5 - 4.4 and > 4.4 and which were interpreted as "strongly disagreed", "disagreed", "undecided", "agreed" and "strongly agreed" respectively. Further interpretation of the classification was also made as "strongly disagreed" and "disagreed" were regarded as "unfavorable attitude", "undecided" as "indifference" while "agreed" and "strongly agreed" were regarded as "favorable attitude"

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the result of the respondents' socio-economic characteristics. It was found that only 17% of the respondents were above 55 years of age while the rest were 55 years and below. It is therefore, inferred that the majority of the respondents ranged between being young and middle aged. These ages could predict what their tastes, likes or dislikes were over some matter, including consumption pattern such as for local rice.

The findings also indicate that both sexes were well represented in the surveys as the males were 58% while the females were 42%. Inferences from this study would therefore be gender friendly. Furthermore, while 22% were single, 70% were married. Consumption of local rice could therefore, be regarded as a family or household decision which would further validate the outcome of the

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of t respondents.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
1-25	16	16.0
26-35	18	18.0
36-45	23	23.0
46-55	26	26.0
55-80	17	17.0
Total	100	100.0
Sex		
Male	58	58.0
Female	42	42.0
Total	100	100.0
Marital status		
Single	22	22.0
Married	70	70.0
Divorce	1	1.0
Widowed	7	7.0
Total	100	100.0
Religion		
Christianity	77	77.0
Islam	20	20.0
Other	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0
Level of education		
No formal education	13	13.0
Non-formal education	5	5.0
Primary school education	25	25.0
Secondary school education	24	24.0
Tertiary education	33	33.0
Total	100	100.0
Total family size		
1-5	30	30.0
6 – 10	62	62.0
Above 10	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0
Monthly income		
Below 5000	8	8.0
5,000-15,999	31	31.0
16,000-25,999	10	10.0
26,000-35,999	25	25.0
36,000.45,999	16	16.0
Above 46,000	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

study. It was further found that, 87% of the respondents attained one level of education or the other. The high literacy rate, could be the fact that, the people in the

study area were found in the political region that had early exposure to education consequent of the efforts of their political leader, before and immediate after

Table 2. Rice consumption patterns of the respondents.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Consumes local rice		
Yes	93	93.0
No	7	7.0
Total	100	100.0
Frequency of local rice consumption		
Daily	11	11.0
Weekly	34	34.0
Fortnightly	24	24.0
Monthly	18	18.0
Occasional	6	6.0
Nil	7	7.0
Total	100	100.0
Consumes local rice more than imported rice		
Yes	26	26.0
No	74	74.0
Total	100	100.0
Consumers local rice because of its Relatively cheap price:		
Yes	42	42.0
No	46	46.0
Others	12	12.0
Total	100	100.0

independence and who had as a focus, compulsory and free education. It was therefore, expected that, the information obtained was of valid judgment as they were conscious of the bases of their responses. The finding, on level of education, might equally be the reason while the level of the respondent's income, with a mean of about N27,000 could be regarded as average. With this, they were expected to be able to afford their preferred food item.

Results, as shown in Table 2, revealed that 93% of the respondents actually consume local rice while 1% consumes local rice daily, 34, 24, 18 and 6% consume it weekly, fortnightly, monthly and occasionally respectively. These findings indicate that local rice is still important as staple food in the study area corroborating Odulari (2010) who reported that rice form a staple in the diet of the people. Despite the fact that, imported rice seems to be more appreciated among Nigerian populace, the findings showed that, 74% of the respondents consume more of the rice than the imported. The reason why more of local rice was being consumed than the imported was because of its relatively cheaper price (42%).

Local rice is being sold at a relatively cheaper price so as to encourage patronage and consumption by the producers. This might be in the wisdom of the producers

who might have believed that, the processing of local rice has more defects, in terms of dirt content, than the imported corroborating Daramola (2005), FAO (2004) and Bamidele et al. (2010) who observed that local rice is non competitive with the imported rice due to high cost of production and poor processing technique. It is therefore hypothesized that if farmers could adopt more efficient methods of processing, the price of local rice can compete favorably with the imported ones.

Table 3 shows the respondents' perception of local rice. It was found that, even at equal price for both the imported and local rice, 48% still preferred to consume local rice just as 73% agreed to be getting real value for the money expended on local rice. However, the respondents (100%) acknowledged the need for improvement in local rice production, possibly, the processing stage. Furthermore, the findings indicated that, respondents had access to local rice through self production (7%), market contact (80%), as a gift (6%), and cooperative societies (2%) and through other means that were unspecified (5%). This implies that majority of the people buy local rice for consumption. Market forces could therefore, be said to be the determinant of the rate of local rice consumption.

In addition, the results revealed that, as a reason for

Table 3. Respondent's perception of local rice consumption.

Variable	Percentage
At the same price which would you prefer?	
Local rice	48.0
Imported rice	52.0
Are you getting real value for your money?	
Yes	73.0
No	27.0
Would you like improvement in local rice production?	
Yes	100.0
Source of local rice	
Self producing	7.0
Market	80.0
At Gift	6.0
Cooperative	2.0
Others	5.0
Reason for local rice consumption	
More palatable	73.0
Cheaper	21.0
More available	1.0
Others	5.0
Percentage of income spent	
On Local Rice	
10 – 24%	82.0
25 – 40%	16.0
41 – 54%	1.0
Above 54%	1.0
Informal source	90.0
Formal source	10.0

local rice consumption, 73% of the respondents found it to be more palatable, 21% found it cheaper while 1% found it to be more available. Majority of the respondents (82%) was found to be spending between 24% of their income on local rice consumption while 16% spend between 25 and 40% of their income on it. This result could therefore, be said to have confirmed local rice consumption as a staple food in the study area confirming the postulation of Daramola (2005), that the Nigeria's per caput consumption is about 30 kg.

Table 4 shows the attitudes of respondents towards local rice. The findings showed that the mean score of the respondent' responses on their preference for either local or imported rice was 3.32, implying that, respondents were indifferent (undecided) on which of the two types they preferred. The outcome of the study also showed that 67% of the respondents agreed with the

statement that local rice production would soon become a thing of the past", while 36% disagreed. Since 39% was earlier found to have preferred local rice to imported rice, that percentage could not have been part of those (57%) who wished for local rice production terminated, rather, that percentage could likely have included the 22% that never preferred local rice and the 39% who were indifferent to preference for local rice consumption.

The wishing away of local rice production could also be attributed to the taste of the Nigerian populace who has preference for imported commodities generally, and which could be the reason why local rice production is getting dwindling. Giving support to this assertion, further finding showed that, 81% of the respondents supported the fact that, with Nigeria's resources, she should not have been importing rice. This implies that, the neglect of the support for local rice production by the various

Table 4. Attitudes of respondents towards local rice.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Means
To what extent do you prefer local rice to imported rice?			
Very much preferred	21	21.0	1.05
Much preferred	18	18.0	0.72
Undecided	39	39.0	1.17
Not preferred	16	16.0	0.32
Very much un-preferred	6	6.0	0.6
Local rice production would become a thing of the past			
Strongly agreed	34	34.0	1.70
Agreed	23	23.0	0.92
Undecided	7	7.0	0.21
Disagreed	23	23.0	0.46
Strongly disagreed	13	13.0	0.31
With our resources should we import rice?			
Very much supported	57	57.0	2.85
Much supported	24	24.0	0.96
Undecided	11	11.0	0.33
Not Supported	6	6.0	0.12
Very much unsupported	2	2.0	0.02
Total	100	100	4.28

government administrations was likely responsible for the decline in rice production rather than because the people much more prefer the imported rice.

Conclusion

With the abundance of resources; manpower, ecological and other natural resources at the disposal of Nigeria as a nation, it is ironic for her to be largely dependent on importation of rice, to the extent of expending a large proportion of her GDP on it. Nigeria too grows rice, which is normally referred to as local rice. However, some people have greater taste for the imported while some for the local rice. The study has shown that a large percentage of the people consumes local rice, their attitude, however, shows that they were indifferent in their preference of local rice to imported rice. The people also showed unfavorable attitudes towards rice importation at the expense of the locally produced one, given the favorable natural resources at the nation's disposal. Those who consume local rice purchase it from the markets. Some consumers also believed that local rice tastes and cooks better than the imported rice but wished for improvement in the processing techniques. The wish might not be unconnected with the unattractiveness of the local rice in comparison with the imported as a result of foreign objects usually found in it. It is therefore

recommended that more effective processing techniques should be adopted to get rid of the foreign contents in local rice to bring it as part with the imported one. In addition, with a large proportion developing good taste for local rice consumption market exists for it, therefore, increase in production should be encouraged by the various levels of government administrations and private investors should also be encouraged.

Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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