

MARKETING OF PEPPER IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the marketing of pepper in the metropolitan region of Lagos with specific focus on the modes and cost of transporting tomatoes to the market, factors affecting prices of pepper and on the ways in which effective distribution channels can be used to increase customer satisfaction in Lagos as a whole. The study used a contextualized and literature based research instrument to evaluate the marketing of pepper in the Lagos metropolitan region of Lagos. The sample data were derived from a questionnaire survey of 500 respondents drawn from a sample of 10 metropolitan markets in Lagos, Nigeria. Results obtained from the analysis using descriptive statistics and correlations indicated strong positive correlation between transportation cost and pepper prices in Lagos. Although transportation issue had been identified as basic to pepper distribution in the city, the problems were not essentially limited to mobility alone. The results also suggest that the factors affecting marketing of pepper in Lagos metropolis are diverse, and these include seasonality, perishability, unit price value, sales volume weight measure and existence of competitions. Feedback from the results of research work will assist to expand knowledge as to the marketing of pepper in the metropolitan region of Lagos, for example, contributing to the understanding of the problems confronting marketers in the distribution of pepper in an urban setting like Lagos and also provide critical suggestion on what has to be done to alleviate problems. It will be of value to government, farmers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, consumers as well as anyone interested in the marketing of pepper in developing setting like Lagos, Nigeria.

Keywords: *marketing, pepper, modes, cost, price, Seasonality, Perishability, Sales Volume, Variation, Lagos, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of pepper consumption to the health and vitality of human beings cannot be overemphasized. In a country like Nigeria where the average diet is dominated by carbohydrate foods, pepper is an essential source of vitamins and minerals. In the light of the essential needs of pepper in human life, emphasis has to be laid on increasing the production level and improving the marketing mechanism.

The basic problems with pepper in Nigeria are located in two domains, firstly, those that hamper the production process and secondly, those that hamper marketing process. Pepper has the disadvantage of high perishability. This is more magnified in developing countries like Nigeria, where, due to their low level of technological capacity and lack of serious concern, farmers suffer incredible losses for inadequate preservative measures.

According to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (1974) the foods produced mainly in Nigeria include **cereals** (sorghum, millet, maize, rice and wheat), **Legumes**-(cowpea, beans and peas) **roots and tubers** -(yams cocoyam, potatoes and cassava) **fruits** -(oranges, lime, lemon, mango, pears, apple and banana). They also include vegetables ground-nut, soya-bean, Onions, Okro and pepper.

Among all these food stuffs, one of the most difficult to preserve or perishable is pepper because of this reason, they are very costly and often in bad state after a while on the shed. Their life span (after harvest) is very short of the and except they are dried, a great proportion of them end in dust-bin.

In an urban centre like Lagos for instance, land acquisition stand as a bottle neck and affects the production process as most of the farmers do not have land of their own. Marketing of the produce also adds to the problems of the farmers.

The relationship between the spatial location of farms and the marketing of the produce has been a contentious issue. For example according to **Abumere** (1979), distribution problem arises in Nigeria because the essential factors for efficient food distribution such as adequate road network, efficient transport system, market facilities like storage facilities and up to date market information system are lacking. Besides, there are problems of poor market organization, standardized weights and measures system, lack of or inadequate credit facilities and dearth of market information, with the result that when foods are produced, supplies are not always sent to areas with the highest demand (**Adalemo** 1970; **Onakomaiya** 1976) on this note, the purpose of this study was to identify all the problems hampering both supply and marketing of peppers in Lagos.

However, the major objectives of this research are to provide knowledge regarding the marketing of pepper in the metropolitan region of Lagos, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of this research are:

- ❖ To examine the modes and costs of transporting pepper to the market.
- ❖ To identify the factors affecting prices of pepper.
- ❖ To examine the ways in which effective distribution channels can be used to increase customer's satisfaction in Lagos.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of scholarly works have been done in the area of agricultural marketing systems in Nigeria. Some of them dwell on cash crop production and export, such as Ojo (1963), Akinbode (1979), Gleave (1964), while a few others with food stuffs like, Ferguson (1967), Ademosun (1973), De leaum (1977) Abumere (1979), Akinbode (1992). Yet, others also researched into livestock's Babatunde and Fetuga (1973), Mortimore (1979), Jones (1968). Abbot (1962); Adalemo (1979) and Onakomaiya (1976) had examined a medley of other agricultural issues particularly the marketing system. For clarity the discourse is categorized into two:-

1. Agricultural marketing system in Nigeria
2. Distribution channels of foodstuff in Nigeria

Agricultural marketing systems in Nigeria

Agricultural produce are enormous; some of them are cash crops, which need to be exported to the countries beyond the Nigerian shores to provide foreign earnings for the country Akinbode (1979). Others are staple foodstuffs, which are needed to feed the population. But, because of the spatial differential in the locations of production and consumption, that is, the farm and the market, the produce have to be effectively distributed to reach the target markets and consumers. This reason creates the need for an organized market for the farmers and other stakeholders. It is important to understand that within the socio-economic landscape, there exist places of surpluses on one hand and places of deficit on the other. This spatial differentiation generates a system of marketing along the landscape. According to Adelemo (1979), the marketing systems in Nigeria can be classified into two categories namely an internal marketing system for domestically consumed commodities and the marketing system for exported commodities. The marketing system for exported commodities is a formal and well documented system while the market for domestically consumed commodities is largely an informal system where transactions are hardly ever documented. Beside this, the internal distribution system is characterized by market locations that are distributed widely and densely in space, although the trading activity at such locations is only at periodically predetermined intervals.

The internal market system is made up of numerous sellers and buyers whose orientation and purpose of being in the market are fashioned after local, and cultural attitudes. The sellers are less basically literate and in most cases less numerate. According to Jones, (1968), the local market is often congested, compact and consists of many distributive channels. However, Abbot (1962) in his analysis of the importance of agricultural marketing, frowned at congested and multiple distributive channels. He argued that an increased agricultural production is of little consequence for the welfare of either producers or consumers if the distribution channels remained choked and hinder the creation of time and place utility. According to him, if distribution means life to

agricultural producers in modern economies, then with the growing concentration of the population in urban centers where they have no food supplies of their own, market means survival to the consumers.

Lagos is the major recipient of foodstuffs in Nigeria. Chaturvedi (1964) while writing on the theory of marketing in the developing countries noted that producers are forced to sell marketable surplus created compulsorily out of the given produce in order to meet other pressing demands. This assertion has been found to be profoundly misleading and largely erroneous especially of farmers in Nigeria. Farmers in Nigeria, though not all, often produce deliberately for sale to consumers outside their immediate production area even though the production units are still small and a few producers have developed specialized commercial production enterprises and participated fully in the exchange economy. For cultural and traditional reasons, a large proportion of the exchange transaction takes places on informal personal basis in local market places, on market days to buy what they need and sell what they produce (Adalemo, 1979). The existence of a system of market places facilitate the satisfaction of the increasing and mutual demand for the production of one part of a region by another part and in this way it functions as distribution system within the local domestic economy. Trade flow occurs as each market place plays the role of the point where most locally produced commodities enter the supply system.

Long before the colonial time, the marketing system in Nigeria was based on commodity exchange system otherwise called barter system. There where no coin money. The exchange medium became familiar with crowns. The economy was entrenched in most of the developing countries in the late 19th century, with the introduction of coin money. The Nigeria internal trade system which was in the pre-colonial time in rudimentary form, became more sophisticated but largely personal and information with transactions involving large sums of money. According to Adelemo (1979), the internal trade system in Nigeria has two essential components – local trade or intra flow involving mostly foodstuff and interregional trade in food and cash, as well as imported commodities. Alao, (1968), Gana, 1979, and Mabogunje, (1968), posit that periodic markets constitute significant features of the rural economic landscape of most communities in Nigeria and to some extent the economy of the urban region.

Dail, morning or evening markets during the pre-colonial time existed for the exchange of goods between a city and its hinterland, while periodic market existed for regional and inter –kingdom trades.

Distribution Channels for Foodstuff in Nigeria

A distribution channel according to Heidlinsfield and Albert (1964), is a sequence of markets or discrete exchange, which a given product passes through under the supervision and control of middlemen from the production location to the final consumer. Four major channels of distribution are identified.

1. from producer to consumer
2. from producer to one middleman to the consumer
3. from producer to wholesaler to retailer to consumer
4. from producer to agent middleman to wholesaler to retailer to consumer

The first distribution channel is often used by industrial producers who sell directly to the ultimate consumer. The second channel is typical of manufacturer's agents who are the only middlemen to retailers. The third channel is called the normal or traditional channel of distribution for consumers' goods or agricultural produce, being the most commonly used channel. The last channel is used by relatively small – scale producers and small independent retailers who cater for the needs of equally small scale consumers. With reference to foodstuff channel of distribution, efficiency dictates choice. According to Onakomaiya (1970), there are eight principal factors that influence the distribution costs and marketing channels for delicacy commodities (like pepper). In Nigeria these facts summarily can be given as seasonality, perishability, unit value, average sale, total sales volume, scope and concentration of the market and the existence of competitors.

The participants in pepper distribution include the producer (farmer) the assembler, the wholesaler, the retailer and finally the consumer. More often then not, the farmer sells right on the farm directly to the consumers but generally to the wholesaler who sells in distant markets. Most of the pepper that serves Lagos comes from far distances such as Lokoja, Zaria, Makurdi, Kano and Kaduna. Assemblers, usually women, go to the farmer to purchase in large quantity. Sometimes they buy the pepper without selection and this means that some quantity that may be unsellable is also bought. So on reaching home, they sort and repackage the produce for a wholesale purpose. Therefore the assembler is also the wholesalers in these types of distribution channel. Large sums of

money are involved in this level as transport cost is often high, due to the nature of commodity. Pepper is highly perishable. The vehicles are chartered for the whole day and even weeks in transaction that involves long distances. Retailers buy directly from the wholesaler. They could also have bought from the farmer directly especially where production is at small scale. In Lagos, most retailers buy in the market from the bulk purchaser (wholesaler). Some of the retailers sometimes purchase in higher quantity as that also gives a positive profitable margin to them. It is from these retailers that products get to the final consumer. The consumer is the lowest in any distribution channel. He is the final bearer of the intricate deficiencies that characterize the exchange process. The price that consumers pay for any produce is determined by the quantity of supply and availability of substitutes as well as the effective demand that subsist in the market.

Prices of pepper are highly unstable and are usually determined by factors beyond the control of the producer and even the distributor. The determinants of pepper prices consist of the demand for the product, target market share, competitor's reaction, cost of buying the product and dumping price. To the marketing trader, distribution is not just the act of mobilizing goods and services from one point to the other, but it is both a process and an activity, that guarantee equity and efficiency.

According to Correy (1975), distribution is a process that concerns all activities that have to do with moving the right produce to the right place at the right time and it also involves gathering produce, packaging them and disseminating to the various consumers according to their needs. Stanton(1982) also defined distribution as the physical flow of goods and activities concerned with moving product from the point of production to the end users, while Lancaster and Massingham (1988) defined distribution as being concerned with all the activities that take place between the producer process of production and consumption of goods. From all these definitions it can be deduced that distribution is both an activity as well as a process. As an activity, it involves actions and as a process, it requires different stages. These stages of distribution are those provided by the channels or alternative product flows.

RESEARCH METHODS

Sample and Procedure

The research questionnaire was administered to a random sample of 540 respondents in 10 metropolitan markets in Lagos. The target respondents were pepper producers, distributors, agents, middlemen, wholesalers and retailers. An average of 54 respondents were interviewed in each market in the metropolis. These Markets covered were Alayabiagba (Ajeromi); Pelewura (Apapa); Mosafe-Jo (Oshodi); Alade (Ikeja); Ojuwoye (Mushin); Adaranijo (Somolu); Oyingbo (Mainland); Oke-arin (Lagos Island); Obalende (Etiosa) and Tejuosho (Surulere). The questionnaire used for the data collection was pre-tested with a group of distributors within markets in Lagos in order to reinforce the questionnaires content validity. Based on the pre-test, few adjustments were made on the questionnaires before final administration. Most of the respondents were full time distributors (75 percent). Specifically, questionnaires were distributed to respondents in one market per the study local government areas of Lagos metropolis to minimize ambiguity due to the kind of respondents involved in the study. Questionnaires were only given to the retailer, distributors, middlemen, wholesalers and producers involved in the pepper business. The questionnaires are divided into three (3) sections, A, B and C. While section A addresses the issue of distributors background, section B addresses transportation modes (mobility) and section C, addresses pepper prices and distribution, their inherent problems and the opinion of the main distributors as regard better ways of effecting marketing of pepper in the metropolis.

A total of 500 usable responses were received, giving a response rate of 92.59 percent. However, due to the educational level of the respondents, some of them were unable to respond independently and quickly to the questionnaire. The researcher assisted such respondents by reading the questionnaire to them in their habitual setting and making sure that the interview was audio taped to include all data. It was then transcribed and used in answering the questionnaire.

For the purpose of analysis, three statistical tools were used namely – chi square (χ^2) test, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and multiple regression. All these three statistical methods were undertaken by the instrumentality of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In this study, the multiple regression equation was used to determine the influence of various variables that determine volume of sales and pepper prices such as transportation cost and storage facilities. Beside these three fundamental statistical tools, other descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation were also employed to support the research analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows the diagrammatic depiction of the prevailing distribution channel for pepper distribution in Lagos.

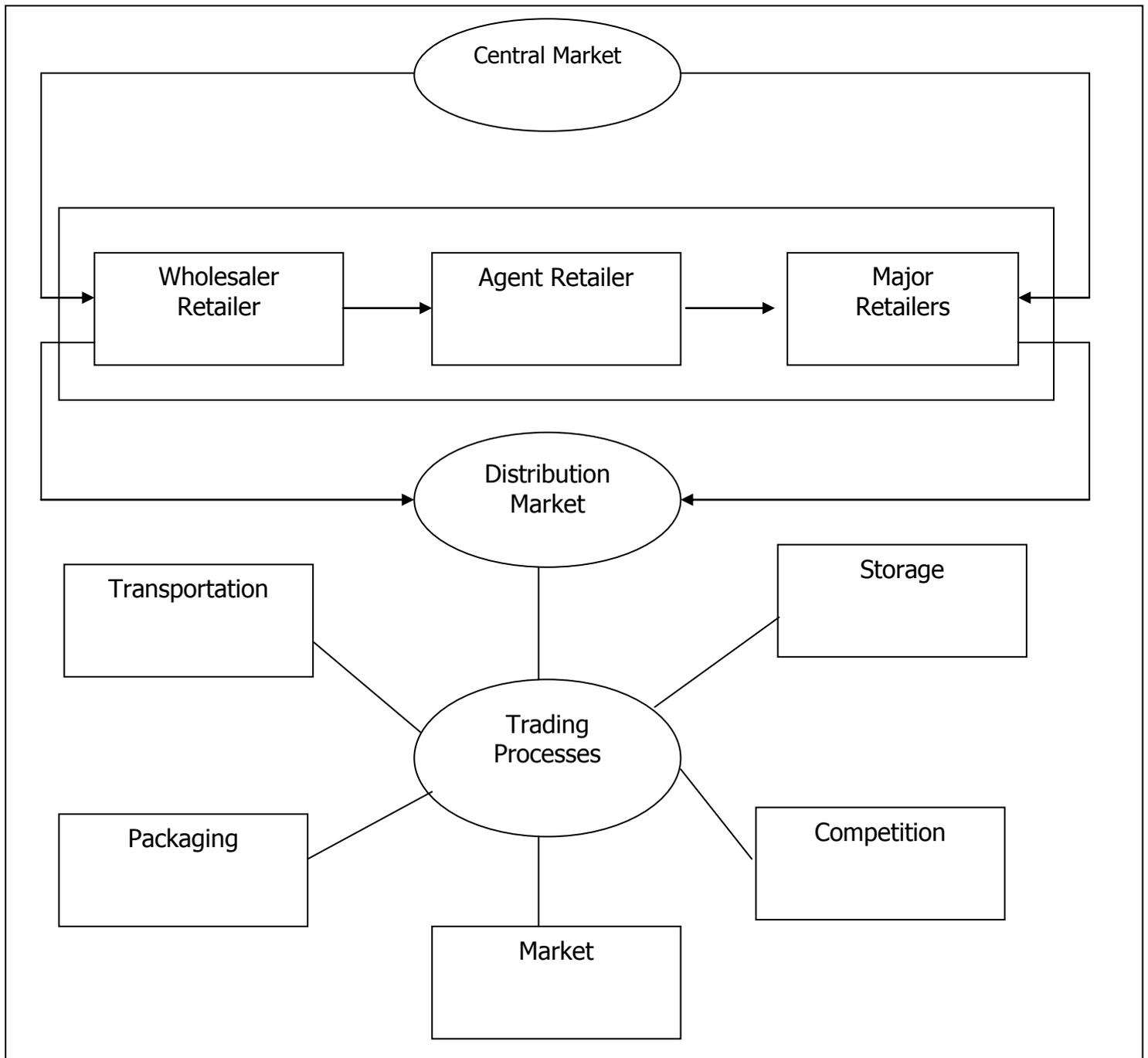


Fig 1: Distribution Channels Model for pepper in Lagos
 Source: Fieldwork {2011}

The distribution process proceeds spatially from one central market i.e. mile 12 market at Ketu, where all the distributors obtain their pepper to the distribution markets, represented by the different metropolitan markets.

Distribution involves transportation, packaging, storage of pepper, strategic delivery that engenders competition and selling at prices according to information that circulates among the market operators.

Table 1: Socio-economic background of distributor / retailer

Attribute	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	50	10
Female	450	90
Marital status		
Married	350	70
Single	124	25
Divorced	26	5
Education		
Tertiary education	10	2
Secondary education	40	8
Primary education	150	30
No-formal education	300	60
Age (Years)		
18-25	16	3
26-30	24	5
31-35	48	10
35-40	36	7
41+	376	75
Full / part-time		
Full -time	376	75
Part-time	124	25

Source: Authors field survey, 2011

Table: 1 shows that the task of pepper trading and distribution in Lagos metropolis is left to mostly women folk. Men are scarcely found in the peddling of pepper but majority concentrate on the hunter land mobilization and growing of pepper. This result does not come as a surprise perhaps because it is a petty business and most small girls who are more agile and energetic do not show any preference for the sale of pepper, leaving the business to old sluggish women.

An inquiry into the modes of transporting pepper in Lagos metropolis showed that 63.5 percent of the distributors, who always purchase their pepper from the central market in mile 12 and sell them in their chosen urban markets, use minibus vehicles, 24.5 percent use motor cycles (Okada) while 5.0 percent use taxi. Train is used by only 1.3 percent of the distributors while boat accounted for mere 1.0 percent. Human carrier accounts for 5.8 percent. The fact that the human carrier mode of transportation, though obsolete, but is still employed visibly in pepper distribution in an urbanized state like Lagos, evidently shows the poverty level in the country, as the poor means of finance on the part of the marketers of pepper. The implication of all these observations for the marketing of pepper in Lagos metropolis is that the market may be affected adversely by an inefficient transportation system, leading to spoilage and scarcity of peppers. This may affect in addition, the volume of pepper in the markets and also their prices. For instance, human carrier cannot effects large volume of delivery; the use of train is limited to the small geographic nodes covered by railway, taxi cabs, through very fast, are too expensive for the distributors. The use of minibus for pepper distribution faces the challenge of being in competition with the commuter bus transportation system. On the whole the mode of transportation affects the cost of delivery and consequently the price of pepper in the markets.

Considering the cost of transporting pepper in Lagos, analysis showed that depending on the quantity of pepper purchased and the distance, the trader spent between ₦223.20 and ₦481.20 per bag. It is evident that a higher proportion of the distributors preferred to buy between 2 and 3 bags of pepper per trip. The study also shows that the further the market from the central market in mile 12, the higher the transportation cost. Because of the spatial variation in the cost of transportation within the city market, it is expected that prices of pepper will be cheaper in the market in mile 12. Other factors such as bad road, special levies, motor park touts (Agbero) also make the cost of transporting pepper high in the Lagos metropolis. The implication of this to pepper pricing in Lagos cannot be overemphasized, because these factors jointly affect the volume of available peppers in the market, by having an impinging effect upon the range of goods, cost of transporting peppers, well as their prices.

Test of the Correlation between Transportation Cost and Pepper Prices

Table 2 shows that correlation between pepper prices and transportation cost are high and significant at 0.01 alpha levels. This shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the prices of peppers and transportation cost in virtually all the markets. The result also shows that in some cases, the prices of peppers could be explained on the account of only transportation cost. The implication of this is that transportation cost is an important determinant of the price of peppers in Lagos markets.

Table 2: A comparison of Mean Transport Cost and Spatial Variation in Pepper Prices

Location	Mean Transport Cost ₦	Mean Peppers Prices ₦	R	R ² %
PEPPER (25 kg)	Per Bag	Per Bag		
Mosafejo Market (Oshodi)	255.60	3799.00	0.747**	55.8
Adaranijo Market (Shomolu)	315.20	4036.00	0.762**	58.1
Alayabiagba Market (Ajerombi)	417.40	4246.00	0.934**	87.1
Ojuwoye Market (Mushin)	307.60	4110	0.671**	45.0
Pelewura Market (Apapa)	458.00	4702	0.680**	46.2
Oke-arin market (Lagos Island)	468.00	4632	0.867**	49.8
Obalende Market (Eti osa)	481.20	4614	0.706**	75.2
Alade Market (Ikeja)	223.20	4084	0.740**	54.8
Oyingbo Market (Lagos Mainland)	305.60	4164	0.419**	7.65
Tejuosho Market (Surulere)	312.80	4248	0.557**	31.0

Source: *Authors Field Survey, 2011*

Test of the impact of Seasonality on prices of Pepper

From the correlation in Table 3, the impact of seasonality on pepper prices has been shown to be significant in some markets in Lagos metropolis.

The result of the correlation coefficient between pepper prices and seasonality in the 10 metropolitan markets shows that the correlations are generally low and only significant in two markets for pepper. It then follows that seasonality actually affects pepper prices in Lagos metropolitan markets. The truth is that the distribution channels are affected by the constraint of seasonality which limits supply during dry season.

Table 3: Correlation Between Seasonality and Pepper Prices

Location	Pepper Seasonal correlation
Pepper Mosafejo Market (Oshodi)	0.044
Adaraniyo Market (Shomolu)	0.469*
Alayabiagba Market (Ajerombi)	0.499
Ojuwoye Market (Mushin)	-0.278
Pelewura Market (Apapa)	0.468*
Oke-arin market (Lagos Island)	0.053
Obalende Market (Eto osa)	0.499*
Alade Market (Ikeja)	0.162
Oyingbo Market (Lagos Mainland)	0.284
Tejuosho Market (Surulere)	0.306

Source: *Authors Field Survey, 2011*

Test of the impact of storage facilities on pepper prices

The result in table 4 shows that the correlation coefficient between pepper prices and storage facility (deep freezers) in virtually all markets in Lagos metropolis are so low and not significant. Thus, lack of storage facilities does affect peppers prices in the city markets. The impact is that sellers or retailers sometimes sell at reduced prices to avoid spoilage which implies incurring losses.

Table 4: Correlation between Storage Facility and Prices of Pepper

Market Location	Correlation Peppers
Mosafejo Market (Oshodi)	0.275
Adaraniyo Market (Shomolu)	0.542
Alayabiagba Market (Ajerombi)	0.153
Ojuwoye Market (Mushin)	0.154
Pelewura Market (Apapa)	0.038
Oke-arin market (Lagos Island)	0.474
Obalende Market (Eto osa)	0.271
Alade Market (Ikeja)	0.373
Oyingbo Market (Lagos Mainland)	0.266
Tejuosho Market (Surulere)	0.321

“Correlation is not significant at 0.05”

Source: *Authors Field Survey, 2011*

The findings have shown that the factors affecting marketing of pepper in Lagos metropolis are diverse and they are; seasonality, perishability, unit price value, weight measures, existence of competitors and difficulty in spatial interaction (transportation). The correlation estimations have shown a deeper level of implication of these factors to the marketing of pepper in the city and the results of statistical tests showed that these factors indeed have negative impact on pepper distribution and pricing. Also discovered in the course of the analysis is the fact that the impact of the factors mentioned above varied more critically in different locations, the market within the core metropolis (for example, Lagos island, Lagos mainland and Eti Osa) were more affected than those (for example – Surulere, Oshodi, and Mushin) and far metropolis (for example, Apapa, Ajeromi, Ikeja and Shomolu). From the study, these spatial variations are not surprising, for space as an organizing phenomenon creates clerical differentiation in space – economy.

The analysis of the distribution channel for pepper in Lagos showed that many channels are used, but the most popular is the producer to wholesaler to retailer to consumer. The study found out that mini bus is the most common medium of pepper conveyance. Analysis also shows that the cost of transporting pepper in Lagos state is very high.

To improve the marketing system of pepper and reduce the rising trend in prices in the city, the following need to be done:-

- i. Improvement in the transportation system in the city.
- ii. Provision of central storage facility for pepper distributors.
- iii. Organization of the market to ensure rapid information flow and for stream lining of the weight measure for pepper.
- iv. Government as well as private sector should assist both the farmer and the distributors with sufficient fund to engage in agricultural activities in the country.
- v. Something must be done to check the rising tide of the city population

CONCLUSIONS

Summarily, the findings are expected to have important policy implications as well as contribution to the understanding of the problems confronting the marketing of pepper in an urban setting like Lagos, and also to provide critical suggestions on what has to be done to alleviate the problems. It will be of value to government, farmers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, consumers as well as anyone interested in the marketing of pepper in developing economy setting like Lagos, Nigeria.

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