

Analysis of Production and Marketing Constraints, Consumer Preferences and Decision to Purchase Gari Mix in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana

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Abstract – The objective of the paper was to identify consumers' preferences for Gari Mix, various marketing and production constraints and factors that influence their purchasing decision in the Kumasi Metropolis. A total of one 133 respondents, comprising 100 consumers, 3 producers and 30 marketers, were interviewed. Using a probit model the study found that advertising, years in school, product accessibility and product attributes such as sugar content and groundnut content significantly affected consumers purchasing decisions. Also, it was found out that the Gari Mix supply chain faces several constraints of which lack of access to credit, high advertisement cost, low demand, price fluctuations and poor storage facilities were the most important. Different consumers preferred some features of the Gari mix to others. That notwithstanding, majority of them will importantly consider sugar content and groundnut content in their purchasing decisions. Results points out that 59% are indecisive about the attribute of sugar content in their preference for Gari mix, 53% of consumers are in favour of the high roasted groundnut content and will importantly consider that in their preference. Also 51% will consider powdered milk content as important attribute and 43% of consumers are in favour of the high roasted groundnut content.

Keywords – Gari Mix, Constraints, Consumer Preferences, Decision to Purchase.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cassava (*Manihotesculenta*) has traditionally been regarded as 'poor man's food' but increasingly its utilities as a cash crop are being recognized (Ulrich et al., 2013). Opportunities exist for earning incomes from processed cassava products, but several factors constrain the exploitation of these opportunities. Cassava is processed to control deterioration of roots and decrease toxicity. Due to its high perishability and potential high cyanide content, fresh cassava roots should be processed within

1-2 days of harvesting. These factors, combined with high moisture content of approximately 70%, restrict the marketing and transportation options for cassava. In view of these, processing of the harvested roots into forms that are less perishable appeared to be an important solution to the high post-harvest losses. An important end product of cassava processing is a local staple called Gari.

Gari production and marketing remain a topical issue in Ghana's Agricultural Sector. This is due to the fact that most Ghanaian staple foods require one form or the other the use of gari (FAO, 2005). The significance of Gari product is usually centred on price other than health. In view of the fact most consumers most perceive gari as

being for low income earners as well as being less nutritious the product has experienced declined (Ernesto et al., 2000). These factors coupled with increasing consumers' demand for more options, quality, diversity, consistency and value (Mylene and Kirsten, 2001) led to the introduction a value added product, Gari Mix, on the Ghanaian market.

Gari Mix is an enriched ready-to-eat food made from gari, powdered milk, sugar and roasted peanut. This makes the product a nutritious and important economic alternative. The enriched gari is found to contain 9.63% protein which is adjudged as capable of reducing the level of poor feeding culture among the people of West Africans especially Ghana where gari is a staple. The process of Gari Mix production does not significantly denature the protein content and no visible change in characteristic flavour, physical appearance and taste is noticed. It is highly nutritious and high in dietary fibre.

The introduction of Gari Mix a decade ago by a single producer received high attention and demand, especially among Ghanaian students. The success of the product attracted other producers who all recorded increasing sales until the last three years when the popularity and demand for the product and hence the sales of producers and market experienced decline. What factors led to the decline in demand and sales? What attributes of Gari Mix do consumers look out for before purchase? This study therefore aims to address these issues by examining consumers' preference characteristics for the product, analyzing the constraints faced by producers and traders as well as determining the factors that influence consumers' purchasing decision.

This results of this study will help major players (both current and potential) of the Gari Mix supply chain know the factors that should be given priority attention if success is to be achieved. Also, knowing and addressing the main challenges that militate that the performance of producers and marketers will help improve the efficiency of the entire the supply chain. Consumers on the other hand would have value for their monies since producers and marketers would deliver exactly what the need from the product.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Consumers' preferences characteristics for ready to eat foods

Literatures have been discovered consumers perception of labelling and packaging, and the role of information on consumer decision to purchase. In Roe, Levy and Derby

(1999) works, nutritional and health claims suggested that it was more necessary to bring the label of a product at the front rather than the back. In a survey conducted by Cichon and Ucherek (1999), three hundred and eighty students were asked which packaging attributes influence their choices when deciding which fruit juice to purchase. Results showed that functionality, shape, capacity, general look and ecological aspect were the most important attributes that determined consumer choice of packaging. Deliza and Silva (2003) used focus group to come out with information of high pressure in the fruit juice package as consumers' perceptions for instant foods. Robert and Akorli (2009) said that the Ghanaian consumer country of origin preferences as derived from the analysis.

It has been established that consumers differentiate products from different origins, a phenomenon that has become known by both marketing academics and practitioners as the country-of-origin (COO) effect (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1999; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Bhaskaran and Sukumaran, 2007) As one of the most extensively researched topics in international marketing and consumer behaviour, a lot of studies have been conducted to ascertain whether country of origin affects product evaluations in many countries. However, the majority of these studies have focused on consumers in developed countries. These studies show that consumers in those countries tend to prefer products from developed countries to those from less developed countries (Wang and Lamb, 1983; Jaffe and Martinez, 1995).

Basically, the attitudes of consumers in these studies to buy locally-made campaigns can be characterized as protectionist, nationalistic, and self-interest (Ettenson, Wagner and Gaeth, 1988; Akaah and Yaprak, 1993; Okechuku and Onyemah, 1999).

2.2 Constraints to Growth of Small-scale Agribusinesses

The survival and growth of the small-scale agribusiness enterprises could be highly constrained by the physical, institutional and economic environments in Ghana. Such constraints include inadequate utilization of information communication technologies, meagre capital outlay (Adebayo et al., 2004), inadequate credit assistance (Oluwalana et al., 2004, Adebayo et al., 2004), inadequate acquisition of literacy and management skills (Abba and Mustapha, 2004). The Gemini Baseline Survey of 2000, listed three key constraints faced by Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) access to resource inputs, access to finance and market problems but from the three constraints, access to finance was the major problem which could be resolved through micro financing.

Despite the wide-ranging economic reforms instituted in the region, SMEs face a variety of constraints owing to the difficulty of absorbing large fixed costs, the absence of economies of scale and scope in key factors of production, and the higher unit costs of providing services to smaller firms (Schmitz, 1982; Liedholm and Mead, 1987; Steel and Webster, 1990). SMEs face a variety of constraints in factor markets (Levy, 1993). However, factor availability and cost were the most common constraints. The specific problems differs by country, but many of them are related,

varying according to whether the business perceived that their access, availability or cost was the most important problem and whether they were based primarily on imported or domestic inputs (World Bank, 1993). Access to finance remained a dominant constraint to small-scale enterprises in Ghana. Credit constraints pertaining to working capital and raw materials, were cited by respondents (between 24% and 52% in Parker et al, 1995). Aryeetey et al. (1994) reported that 38% of the SMEs surveyed mentioned credit as a constraint, in the case of Malawi, it accounted for 17.5% of the total sample (Daniels and Ngwira, 1993). From the sample data 5% of Ghanaian proprietors indicated they had marketing constraints, (Aryeetey et al., 1994; Daniels and Ngwira, 1993).

Also, inefficient distribution channels often dominated by larger firms pose important limitations to market access for SMEs. As noted in the case of Ghana, demand constraints limited the growth of SMEs (Parker et al., 1995). In response to this, it can be said that the key players in any supply chain may have similar constraints among firms from different industries also. Lack of capital, poor management and technical know-how can all contribute to a producer's failure on the market. For marketers, it can be said that the various marketing channels and capital to be in the business can prevent them in gaining maximum profits.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Kumasi Metropolis. Kumasi is Ghana's second largest city and capital of the Ashanti region found in southern Ghana. Kumasi covers approximately 299 square kilometer size of land and is located in the transitional forest zone and is about 270km (by road) north of the national capital, Accra. It is between latitude 6.35° – 6.40° and longitude 1.30° – 1.35°. The study was conducted between February 28th and 6th March 2013. Kumasi Metropolis is divided into ten sub-metros out of which five were selected by simple random sampling. The sub-metros selected include Asokwa, Bantama, Oforikrom, Subin and Suame. These five sub-metros were strained to acquire the foundation for sample selection because of the populous area of the metropolis. Twenty consumers were selected from each sub-metropolitans making a total of one hundred (100) consumers. Three producers were identified and interviewed in the Kumasi metropolis. Also, thirty marketers (wholesalers and retailers) were selected using simple random sampling technique and interviewed. In total, one hundred and thirty-three questionnaires were distributed. Structured questionnaires were used for all the interviews.

The main study was preceded by a preliminary phase which involved introductory visits to the study area where discussions were held with the actors of the Gari Mix industry between February 18th and March 1st, 2013. These discussions helped in the design of the questionnaires which was later pre tested on some identifiable actors of the supply chain in the Accra

metropolis, which was the initial study area for this study. However, results from the preliminary study and the pre-testing of the questionnaire revealed that most current and important players of the Gari Mix supply chain are located within the Kumasi metropolis, hence the change in the study area.

Frequency tables and percentages were used to present the attributes and preferences of the product that consumers consider to be more important and that inform their purchasing decision. To analyze the constraints to the production and marketing of Gari Mix Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance was used. It was used to identify and prioritize the major constraints in the supply chain. The constraints were ranked from the most pressing constraint to the least pressing constraint. Probit model was used to analyze the factors influencing the buying decisions of consumers.

IV. LTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the educational level, age and sex of producers, marketers and consumers of Gari Mix. The table shows that for the all the three producers had attained tertiary education. More than half of the marketers have only basic education and majority of the consumers are with tertiary education. All of the producers are within the ranges, less than 30years. Majority of the marketers are within the age group of 31-50 whilst majority of the consumers are less than 30years (89%).Table 1 indicates that 66.7% of producers are males and 33.3% females, 20% of marketers are males and 80% females. Male consumers represent 53% while females form 47%.

Table1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Producers		Marketers		Consumers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Educational						
None	0	0	3	10.0	0	0
Basic level	0	0	17	56.7	9	9
Secondary	0	0	7	23.3	56	56
Tertiary	3	100	3	10.0	35	35
Age						
< 30	1	33.3	5	16.7	89	89
31-40	1	33.3	6	20.0	7	7
41-50	1	33.3	17	56.6	4	4
>50	0	0.0	2	6.7	0	0
Sex						
Male	2	66.7	6	20	53	53
Female	1	33.3	24	80	47	47

Source: Field Survey (2013)

4.2. Description of the Gari Mix Marketing Channel

The channels for distribution were different for each of the three producers that were included in the study. The first producer supplied to both wholesalers and retailers. The wholesalers and retailers for this producer were mainly found in the Kumasi Central Market. With this, the producer was able to produce more to satisfy such demands.

The second producer had a different supply channel ignoring wholesalers and dealing with retailers directly. Reasons given were that wholesalers were not to be trusted and that it was quite better to transport the products to the retailers. Also, it was given that retailers were selling the products to consumers with minimal profit. The last producer was dealing directly with its consumers. This was because the target market was closer to the firm and therefore the need for intermediaries was of no use according to the producer.

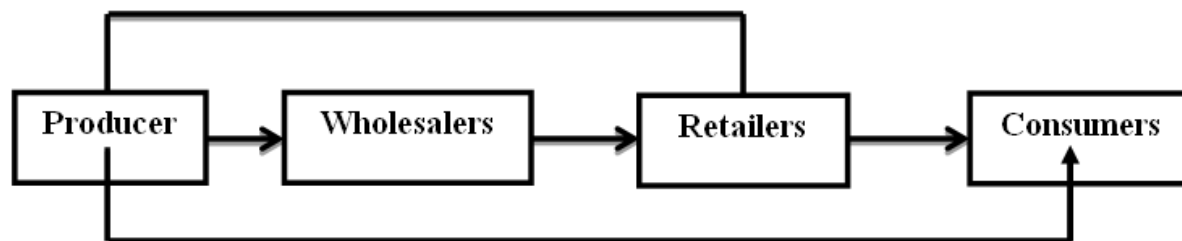


Fig.1. Marketing Channels for Gari Mix In Kumasi Metropolis

Source: Authors' construct (2013)

4.3. Consumers preference characteristics for Gari Mix

Table 4.3 displays consumer's preference characteristics for Gari Mix looking at various attributes. Fifty nine per cent (59%) are indecisive about sugar content whilst 11% (extremely important and important) are in favour of high sugar content and will consider that in their purchasing decision 30% will not consider that in their purchasing decisions. Fifty three per cent (53%) (important and extremely important) of consumers are in favour of the high roasted groundnut content and will importantly consider that in their purchasing decision, whilst 34% (extremely not important and not important) are not in favour of the high roasted groundnut content and 13% are neutral. Fifty-one per cent (51%) (important and

extremely important) will consider high milk content in their purchasing decisions whilst only 29% (extremely not important and not important) will not consider high powdered milk content in their decision and 20% are neutral. Forty-three percent (43%) (important and extremely important) of consumers are in favour of the gari content and will importantly consider that in their purchasing decision, whilst 34% (extremely not important and not important) are not in favour of the high gari content and 23% are neutral. Therefore it can be said that, consumers prefer high level of groundnut, powdered milk and gari content in the gari mix product. Meaning consumers will be willing to buy the product if these attributes are met.

Table 2: Consumers preference characteristics for Gari mix looking at the various attributes

	Sugar Content		Roasted Groundnut Content		Powdered milk Content		Gari Content	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Extremely not important	21	21	29	29	34	9	20	20
Not important	9	9	5	5	16	20	14	14
Neutral	59	59	51	51	32	20	23	23
Important	8	8	13	13	17	37	36	36
Extremely important	3	3	2	2	1	14	7	7

Source: Field Survey (2013)

4.4. Constraints in the Gari Mix Supply Chain

4.4.1. Production constraints

Constraints that had a mean score of above 3 (mid-point of a 5-point Likert scale) in table 3 below were considered to be *binding*. This implies that lack of access to credit, high cost of advertisement and fixed costs and high costs of raw materials were considered to be the most binding constraints to the production of Gari Mix. The limited access to finance makes it difficult for producers to acquire the right technology needed for efficient production and packaging. Analysis of these constraints using Kendall's W test showed 77.8% signifying that there is 77.8% level of agreement among the three producers identified as far as the importance of these constraints are concerned. These findings are consistent with Aryeetey (1996) and Dapaah and Konadu (2002) who both found limited access to finance as a major constraints to small

Table 3: Constraints to the Production of Gari Mix

Constraints Identified	Mean Rank
Lack of access to credit	4.33
High advertisement cost and high fixed cost	4.00
High cost of raw materials	3.67
High energy cost and power problems	1.67
High cost of transportation	1.33

(Kendall's W= 0.778, df= 4, Asymp. Sig. = 0.053)

and medium scale enterprises in Ghana as well as the findings of Martey et al., (2013) who found high prices of inputs as limited the performance of small firms in Ghana. Other identified constraints include high energy cost, power problems and high cost of transportation, although these problems were not deemed binding by the producers of Gari Mix.

4.4.2. Marketing Constraints

On the part of the marketers of Gari Mix, low demand for the product and high cost of the product were considered to be the most binding of the all the analyzed constraints. The fact that low demand is the most binding constraint corroborates the premise of this study. Also, price instability and unavailability of the product (when needed) to some extent were considered to be important limiting factors, although the mean score is below average. Kendall's W test showed 71.7% signifying that there is 71.7% level of agreement among the thirty marketers identified in the supply.

Table 4: Constraints to the Marketing of Gari Mix

Constraints	Mean rank
Low demand	4.88
High cost of the product	3.75
Price instability	2.44
Unavailability of products	1.69

(Kendall's W= 0.717, df= 4, Asymp. Sig. = 0.000)

4.5. Factors Affecting the Consumers' Decision to Purchase Gari Mix

Table 5: Probit Estimates for Factors Influencing Consumers' Decision to Purchase Gari Mix

Explanatory Variables	Coefficients	Z-Values	Probability
Age	-0.0139	-0.26	0.796
Years in School	0.2302*	1.85	0.064
Product Advertisement	1.9366*	1.72	0.085
Sugar content	1.3661***	2.97	0.003
Groundnut/Peanut content	1.0475**	2.15	0.031
Powdered milk	-0.4255	-1.12	0.263
Sex	0.6105	0.85	0.397
Accessibility	1.9575***	2.62	0.009
Household size	0.1196	0.83	0.404
Constant	-1.3243	-0.37	0.709

LR $\chi^2 = 28.86$; Prob $> \chi^2 = 0.0003$; Pseudo $R^2 = 0.20$; Loglikelihood = -57.097

Source: Field data (2013)

*, **, *** indicates 10%, 5%, 1% significant levels respectively

From table 5 above, number of years a consumer spends in school has a significant positive effect on his/her decision to purchase Gari Mix. Although Gari Mix is deemed to be relatively expensive to an average consumer (compared to the traditional/raw Gari), the more educated is expected to know and appreciate the importance and benefits of the added ingredients, hence the willingness to purchase the value added product. Advertisement had a significant positive influence on consumers' decision to purchase Gari Mix. Advertisement was critically important since the product is still not widely known to majority of Ghanaians. Thus, the more consumers are oriented through advertisement the more they will appreciate the nutritional value of the product and the more they will be willing to buy the product. This is in line with Lancaster et al. (2001), indicated that consumers are moved by advertising activities to purchase a product. The content of sugar and groundnut/peanut were also found to be significant at 1% and 5% respectively and have positive correlation with the purchasing decisions. This implies that, the higher the sugar and groundnut content the more consumers are likely to purchase the product. This desire for high sugar is not surprising since majority of the consumers are students and are lesser than 30 years who are not indifferent about high sugar content but sweets. However, it cannot be inferred from this study the extent or limit of this desire for sugar in the product. From the results above, it can be inferred that the more accessible the product is to the consumer the higher the probability of the consumer purchasing it. Similar findings have been made by Singh et al. (1995) who studied factors influencing consumers' decision to purchase milk and found convenient availability as a key factor.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major objective for this study was to analyse the preference, purchasing decision and various constraints facing Gari Mix supply chain in the Kumasi Metropolis.

The study found lack of access to credit, high cost of advertisement and fixed costs and high costs of raw materials the main production-related constraints whilst

low demand for the product, high cost of the product and to some extent price fluctuations were the main marketing-related constraints. It was also found out from the study that educational background of the consumer (measured by the number of years spent in school), product advertisement, accessibility of the product by the consumer, sugar content and the content of groundnut/peanut were the significantly and positively related to the consumers' decision to purchase Gari Mix. However, the maximum sugar content that consumers would prefer cannot be inferred from this study. Other factors like the content of powdered milk which was expected to be positively correlated to purchasing decision had a negative effect.

In the light of the above findings, the study recommends that further research should be conducted to ascertain the validity of these results and establish the average maximum level of sugar consumers would prefer in the product. Also, based on the effect of education, it is suggested that producers and marketers should concentrate on meeting the demand of the student segment of the market, satisfy them before other market segments are considered. Also, firms should create awareness on the relevance of consuming gari mix through effective marketing and educational campaigns with the aim of highlighting the nutritional and health benefits of the product.

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