

**ECONOMIC APPRAISAL OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A
CASE STUDY OF THE FOOD VENDING INDUSTRY IN KWARA
STATE CAPITAL, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The food vending industry is a growing sector in Nigeria today which has continued to play decisive roles in employment generation for females and that has eased accessibility and affordability of foods by the growing urban population. Globally the rate of unemployment is alarming and women are very often affected. In Nigeria, food vending has gained popularity amongst the female folk, being a viable line of business that has been quite instrumental to the support system of family livelihood in the face of daunting unemployment challenges. The study was carried out to appraise the performance of the food vending industry in Ilorin, Nigeria. The study employed random sampling technique to select 160 food vendors in the study area from whom primary data were collected. Descriptive statistics, budgetary analysis and regression model were the main analytical tools employed for the study. The results of the budgetary analysis revealed that the net return from food vending business by the women was N74,004.80 per month indicating that the business is a profitable venture in the study area. Factors significantly influencing food sales by the women were labour, workshop attendance, source of fund and rent while the major constraints to an efficient food vending enterprise identified by the women were unstable market condition, erratic power supply, inadequate labour and capital. The study concluded that potential of the food vending enterprise as a poverty reduction strategy and for improving the food security and nutritional status of urban population in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. It was recommended that efforts be geared towards integrating the sector into the mainstream economy in a way that would ensure sustainability of the sector and long-term economic growth.

Key words: Budgetary analysis, Enterprise, Food vending, Nutritional, Women,

INTRODUCTION

The food vending trade is a growing sector in Nigeria today. According to Draper (1996), expansion in the street food trade is linked with urbanization and the need of urban populations for both employment and food. Food vending enterprise is a prevailing and distinctive component of a broad informal sector. Food vending

trade is a growing urban phenomenon in Nigeria which is commonly seen in public spaces particularly in the cities and towns. (Tinker, 1997) defines food vendor as any minimally processed food sold on the street for immediate consumption. Food vendor is defined as ready-to-eat food or drink sold on a street or other public places, such as a market or fair by a hawker or vendor often from a portable stall (Artemis and Bhat, 2000). (Dardano, 2003) defines street food as food prepared on the streets and ready-to-eat, or prepared at home and consumed on the streets without further preparation. Street foods include snacks, main meals, or beverages. They often reflect traditional local cultures and exist in an endless variety (Winarno and Allain, 1991) but there are some street foods that have spread beyond their place of origin. Street foods are usually sold from pushcarts, kiosks and temporary stalls and cost less than a restaurant meal.

Food vendor businesses are usually owned and operated by individuals or families. Street food enterprises are generally small in size; require relatively simple skills, basic facilities and small amounts of capital. Marketing success of the street food vendors depends exclusively on location and word-of-mouth promotion (Winarno and Allain, 1991). There is increasing recognition that street food vending plays an important socio-economic role in terms of employment potential, providing special income particularly for women and provision of food at affordable costs to mainly the lower income groups in the cities (Chukuezi, 2010). Street food vending employs on average 37.8 percent of the labor force, and contributes about 38 percent to total gross domestic product in Africa (Charmes, 1998). Women predominate in street food business representing 53 percent of the vendors in Senegal (Winarno and Allain, 1991) and 75 percent of the vendors in Burkina Faso (WHO, 2006).

According to FAO (2007), over 2.5 billion people eat street food every day. Muzaffar *et al.*, 2009 stated that street foods provide a source of affordable nutrients to the majority of the people especially the low-income group in the developing countries. Concerns of cleanliness and freshness often discourage some people from eating street food. With the increasing pace of globalisation and tourism, the safety of street food has become one of the major concerns of public health and a focus for governments and scientists to raise public awareness (FAO, 2007; Mukhola, 2007).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Unemployment has been a major problem of most countries across the globe. According to estimates, the women are the most affected in the struggle. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2012) estimates that 88 million young women and men throughout the world are unemployed, accounting for 47 per cent of 186 million unemployed persons globally. Nigeria is not left out in this menace.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2012) Nigeria's unemployment rate increased to 23.9 percent in 2011 compared with 21.1 percent in 2010 and 19.7 percent in 2009. The "Nigerian Unemployment Report 2011" prepared by the NBS shows that the rate is higher in the rural areas (25.6 percent) than in the urban areas (17.1 percent). Amid this high rate of unemployment, the economic watchers have noticed that there is an increasing trend of disinterest by the emerging younger generation in highly labour-intensive works such as agriculture and factory work in preference for white collar jobs, resulting in many preferring to remain in the labour market rather than take up such jobs.

In addition to this, there are major factors that constrained women from business venture; mostly gender-based discrimination, lack of shared support, limited or no access to information, not enough education & training facilities, lack of trust in one's capabilities and access to resources (Afza, Hassan and Rashid, 2010).

Despite the various constraints to women involvement in businesses and gainful employment, a niche has been carved by numerous women in food ventures. It is an undisputable fact that food will always be in demand being one of the three basic requirements of human with clothing and shelter being the other two. The fact that a lot of people are always constrained by time is a critical factor that has led to purchases of prepared foods by a sizeable portion of the population. This is evident in how quickly fast food joints are springing up in different parts of Nigeria. However, it is not surprising that there are more food vendors than fast food joints in Nigeria and with most of these food vending ventures being run by women. The high number of food vendors in existence in Nigeria may be adduced to the fact that majority of the population are low to middle income earners who due to the level of their incomes can only afford to patronize such low-end food sellers.

Mostly, food vending business is predominated by women, however, quite a large number of women remain unemployed despite the ability to see a demand in the market for such business activities. A broad survey indicated that quite a large number of people do not believe in the viability and profitability of the food vending business following the assumption that the market has been flooded by food sellers coupled with the diverse constraints facing entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria hence chances of making profits have been assumed to have seriously declined. It has therefore become pertinent to carry out this study to assess the economic importance of food vendor business as a source of income for women entrepreneurs in Kwara state and the factors that influence people (especially women) to become entrepreneurs in food vendor Enterprise. This study specifically examined the profitability of the food vendor business; evaluated the factors that determine sales; and also identified the constraints to the activities of food vendor Entrepreneurs in Kwara State Nigeria. This research provides very useful insight

into the major challenges constraining people (especially women) from engaging in food vendor entrepreneurial activities hence providing relevant and meaningful information on how national employment challenges of women in Nigeria may be tackled.

METHODOLOGY

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. The state is about 300km from Lagos and 500km from Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Kwara State covers an area of 34,467.5 square kilometers and is about 300km from Lagos and 500km from Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria. Ilorin is on Latitude 8°30 and long 4°35 of the equator. Kwara state is situated in the transition zone between the forest savanna region of Nigeria and Ilorin is the capital of Kwara State of Nigeria and had an estimated population of about 847,582 as at 2007. The city is confluence of culture populated by Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Baruba, Igbo, and other Nigerian. The state has two main climate seasons, the dry and wet season with an intervening cold and harmattan period usually experienced from December to January. The natural vegetation consists broadly of rain forest and wooded and plains which are transverse by the Niger-River and its tributaries. Annual rainfall ranges from 1000mm-1500m.while maximum average temperature ranges between 30°C with this climate pattern and sizeable expanse of arable land and rich fertile soils, the vegetable which is the wooded savanna is well adapted to the cultivation of wide varieties of food crops. These include yam, cassava, maize, rice, beans, sugar-cane and vegetables.

Data Sources

The data for the study was obtained from both the primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained through structured questionnaires augmented with personal interview. Primary data was obtained from women entrepreneurs that engage in food vendor Enterprises in the study area. Secondary data were obtained from journals, related text-books, literature, bulletin and statistical annual reports.

Sampling Techniques

The target population for this study is female food vendors. The sampling technique involves random sampling of female food Vendors in Ilorin with a total number of 160 respondents selected.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential Analysis

Most of the data are represented in tabular and descriptive forms. Descriptive tools like frequency distribution, percentages, average and ranking techniques were used to analyze the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and challenges

they face in the course of marketing their food.

Budgetary analysis was used to evaluate profitability of small scale food vendor businesses in the study area. It is given as

$$GM = TR - TVC;$$

$$GM = \sum P_i Q_i - \sum C_i X_i$$

$$NM = GM - TFC$$

Rate of returns on investment (%), $RRI = (NM/TC \times 100)$

Rate of returns on variable cost (%), $RRVC = (TR - TFC)/TVC \times 100$

Operating Ratio = TVC/TR

Where:

GM = Gross margin; TVC = Total variable cost; TR = Total revenue; NM = Net margin; TFC = Total fixed cost; P_i = Price per unit of output; C_i = Unit of inputs; Q_i = Quantity of output; and X_i = Quantity of input

Regression analysis

Production function was used to determine the factors affecting sales output of the respondents. It is expressed implicitly as

$$Y = F(x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots, x_{11}, U)$$

Where

Y = Sales output (N); x_1 = Total energy cost(N); x_2 = age(years); x_3 = Household size; x_4 = Level of education of business owners (years); x_5 = Years in business/experience(years); x_6 = Rent; x_7 = Labour (man-days); x_8 = Nature of business; x_9 = Average customers (person/day); x_{10} = participation in hygienic workshop; x_{11} = source of fund; and U = Error term

Because economic theory does not indicate the precise mathematical form of the relationship among the variables, different functional forms of the above models including the linear, semi-logarithm, logarithm and exponential functions were fitted. However, the lead equations was chosen on the bases of economic, statistical as well as econometric criteria (Gujarati and Sangeetha, 2007; Koutsoyiannis, 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Food Sellers

Table 1: Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents (Total=160)

| Variables | Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Gender | Female | 160 | 160 | |
| Marital status | Single | 17 | 10.6 | |
| | Married | 115 | 71.9 | |
| | Widowed | 16 | 10 | |
| | Divorced | 12 | 7.5 | |
| Age | ≤ 25 | 8 | 5 | 43.44 |
| | 26 – 35 | 27 | 16.9 | |
| | 36 – 45 | 71 | 44.4 | |
| | 46 – 55 | 37 | 23.1 | |
| | 56+ | 17 | 10.6 | |
| | | | | |
| Household size | ≤ 5 | 96 | 60 | |
| | 6 – 8 | 54 | 33.8 | |
| | 9 – 11 | 5 | 3.1 | |
| | 12+ | 5 | 3.1 | |
| Level of Education | No Formal Education | 66 | 41.2 | |
| | Adult Education | 16 | 10 | |
| | Primary Education | 15 | 9.4 | |
| | Secondary Education | 22 | 13.8 | |
| | Tertiary Education | 41 | 25.6 | |
| | | | | |
| Experience | ≤ 5.00 | 53 | 33.1 | 11.0091 |
| | 5.01 – 10.00 | 44 | 27.5 | |
| | 10.01 – 15.00 | 30 | 18.8 | |
| | 15.01 – 20.00 | 15 | 9.4 | |
| | 20.01+ | 18 | 11.3 | |
| | | | | |
| Cooperative membership | Members | 28 | 17.5 | |
| | Non members | 132 | 82.5 | |
| Nature of Business | Full time | 152 | 95 | |
| | Part time | 8 | 5 | |
| | | | | |

Source: Field, 2015

The socio-economic profile of the women entrepreneurs is presented in Table 1. 71.9% of the sampled women entrepreneurs were married which may imply that there was more availability of family labour engaged in preparation and sales or marketing of foods in the study area. Also many of the women were more than 40 years old, where the mean of age was 43.44. This implies that both the middle and old age people who are experienced in cooking are involved in food vending business in the study area. Household size of the respondents shows low level of dependence ratio with 60% of the household size below 5 person followed by household size between 6-8 persons which also indicates a low level of family labor availability for the business.

It can also be observed in Table 1 that 66% of the women had no formal education which is similar to the findings of Nurudeen *et al* (2014) in which it was found out that 66.4% of the street food vendors in Central state of Northern Nigeria had either primary or no education. This indicates a low level of literacy which may negatively influence the marketing business as it deprives them from understanding intricacies of the markets and also prevent them from adapting and using marketing strategies (Oluyole, 2005). 95% of the respondents take the business as their primary occupation while merely 5% of the respondents were into food vending businesses on a secondary level.

33.1% of the women have five (5) or more years of experience in the food vending business while the mean number of years of experience was about 11 years. This suggests a high level of skill in minimizing source of loss in their sales activities. Majority of food vendors were not members of any cooperative society. The implication of this is that they are not likely to benefit from access to credit facilities, collective marketing, loan availability and other values attached to cooperative societies' membership.

Reasons for undertaking food vending business by the Respondents

Table 2: Primary reason for undertaking food vendor Enterprises

| Reason for undertaking Business | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Lack of Education | 22 | 13.8 |
| Ambition | 16 | 10.0 |
| Unemployment | 51 | 31.9 |
| I have interest in it | 51 | 31.9 |
| Inherited from parents | 19 | 11.9 |
| Any other | 1 | 0.6 |
| Total | 160 | 100 |

Source: Field, 2015

Table 2 revealed the primary reason why the respondents were into the food vending business. From the table, it can be seen that 31.9% of the respondent ventured into the business due to lack of employment while 31.9% indicated that they had a flair for the occupation. 13.8% of the respondents stated that they would have opted for other occupational line if they were educated hence have been compelled to take up food vending business due to their lack of education while 11.9% of the respondents ambitiously ventured into the food vending business being a profitable venture. About 11.9% of the respondents are in the food vending business having inherited such business from their parents.

Sources of Business Financing for the Food Vending Enterprise

Like with most businesses, the food vending business also requires some level of financing which serves as the capital for running the business. The major sources of these capitals were inquired from the respondents and the result is as indicated in Table 3. The study revealed that about 60% of the respondents finance their business through their personal savings. Ranking next to this is the category of people that finance the business through the sourcing of funds from their families and friends and this was about 19% of the respondents. It was interesting to note that only about 1.3% of the respondents stated the banks as their source of financing their businesses while 3.8% of the respondents sourced funds from money lenders to whom they paid exorbitant charges and also operate at a risk of losing their businesses in the event of default in repayment. Cooperatives societies served as the funding source for about 10% of the respondents which indicates that people are either not knowledgeable about the alternatives they had or were skeptical about exploring those avenues.

Table 3: Major source of fund by the respondents

| Major Source of Fund for business | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Personal Saving | 96 | 60.1 |
| Relatives and Friends | 31 | 19.4 |
| Money lenders | 6 | 3.8 |
| Banks | 2 | 1.3 |
| Cooperatives | 16 | 10.0 |
| Contributions | 9 | 5.6 |
| Total | 160 | 100 |

Note: * multiple responses were allowed
 Source; field data 2015

Small scale business owners have the tendency to engage in other business activities other than their core businesses which usually serve as safety nets in the events of downturn in their core businesses or even to serve as a form of buffer to their income levels hence the respondents were inquired of to know if the food vending business was their main source of income.

The result shown in Table 4 revealed that about 68.1% of the respondents had the food vending business as their only source of income while the remaining 31.9% had other businesses in which they are engaged such as catering services, bead making, trading, poultry and fish farming while some also indicated their spouses and older children as their main income source.

The fact that majority of the respondents were dependent on the food vending business as their main income source calls for attention. This is because in the event of health and safety regulations or policies that boot those out of the business, this group of people will be pushed into unemployment with no other income source to fall back on.

Other sources of income

Tables 4: Other sources of income

| Other source of income | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| No | 109 | 68.1 |
| Yes | 51 | 31.9 |
| Total | 160 | 100 |

Source: Field, 2015

The monthly profitability and returns of a food vendor enterprise was examined and the findings are revealed in table 5 which shows that the Total variable cost and Revenue were about N 118,935.20 and N 192,940.00 respectively while the gross margin was N 74,004.80. It suggests the level of profitability of the business to be considerably good enough and this is indicative of the ability of women participating in food vendor business to as well support their homes in terms of financial obligations that are not too high.

It is however worthy of mention that majority of the food vendors are into sales of

various food types and menu combinations to their patrons. There are basically none of the respondents that are into vending of only one food type as they mentioned availability of varieties of menu as one way they are able to promote customer retention. As such, it proves challenging to be able to account for the returns to each food type they have on sale considering they carry on the trade, aggregating costs and returns to their vending of different menu. Respondents attributed this largely to the fact that most of the food types they had for sale had some common grounds in preparation and vending, in terms of menu make-up, in various ways which allows them to lump processes together in some ways. For this reason, this study had to assume the costs and returns to a food vending enterprise as an aggregate for that enterprise rather than try to find what accrued to each food type considering that this is near impracticable with the respondents since they do not keep such components of the records.

Profitability and Returns of a Food Vendor Enterprise per Month
Table 5: Gross Margin= Total Revenue – Total Variable Cost

| Variables cost | Amount(₦) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Electricity | 2626.453 |
| Water | 1835.625 |
| Sanitation | 811.125 |
| Security | 1086.875 |
| Tax | 1763.044 |
| Rent | 5271.125 |
| Labour | 8720.625 |
| Firewood | 3690.625 |
| Kerosine | 957.1069 |
| Charcoal | 6061.875 |
| Gas | 2568.75 |
| Food stuff | 81281.38 |
| Others | 2260.625 |
| Total Variable Cost(A) | 118,935.20 |
| Revenue(B) | 192,940.00 |
| Gross Margin= (B – A) | 74,004.80 |

Source: Field, 2015

Benefits derived from the Enterprise by the respondents

The table 6 indicates the kind of benefits the respondents derived from getting involved or participating in food vendor business which shows that the two major benefits derived are in income generation and as being a source of employment with percentage of 95.6% and 80.6% respectively followed by taking on the business to self-challenge with 53.1% while 50.6% chose the job as a means of improvement of status and only 34.4% of the respondents see the venture as an opportunity for freedom and emancipation.

Table 6: Benefits Derived from the Food Vendor Enterprise

| Benefits Derived from the Business | Frequency | | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----|------------|
| Income Generation | Yes | 153 | 95.6 |
| | No | 7 | 4.4 |
| Source of Employment | Yes | 129 | 80.6 |
| | No | 31 | 19.4 |
| Improvement of social status | Yes | 81 | 50.6 |
| | No | 79 | 49.4 |
| Freedom | Yes | 55 | 34.4 |
| | No | 104 | 65.6 |
| To Challenge oneself | Yes | 85 | 53.1 |
| | No | 75 | 46.9 |

Source: Field, 2015

Workshop Attendance by Respondents

Table 7: Participation in workshop or hygienic training

| | | | |
|--|-----------|-----|------|
| Workshop or hygiene training attendance of respondents | Yes | 97 | 60.6 |
| | No | 63 | 39.4 |
| | Total | 160 | 100 |
| How often training is attended | Weekly | 5 | 3.1 |
| | Monthly | 14 | 8.8 |
| | Quarterly | 26 | 16.3 |
| | Yearly | 29 | 18.1 |
| | Seldom | 22 | 13.8 |
| | Total | 160 | 100 |

Source: Field, 2015

Table 7 shows that about 60.6% of the respondents affirmed to participating in workshop or hygienic training. However, 18.1% and 16.3% of the respondents participated yearly and quarterly respectively while about 13.8% participated in workshops only seldomly. This may be due to nature of the business which does not permits the vendors to be absent from their business for long periods since the businesses is mostly about them in terms of management hence the need for their physical presence to enable them attend to their customers and also for the up-keep of their trading environment. Despite the great influences knowledge acquired from the workshop may impact on their services, about 39.4% of the respondents still have not participated in such a beneficial workshop at any point in the past. According to FAO and WHO, food vendors are required to undergo basic training in food hygiene before licensing and further training as required by the relevant authority. This is because inadequate hygiene training and/or instruction and supervision of all people involved in food related activities poses a potential threat to the safety of food and its suitability for consumption. Considering the mode of acquisition of skills for the sale of food for most of the vendors, the need for further training on food hygiene is extremely crucial due to the fact that they may not have adequate knowledge on hygienic practices with regard to their trade. It is worthy of note that majority of these food vendors are not even aware of any such licensing policy hence they operate their businesses without any feeling of being under some form of regulations or obligations that are meant to be guiding their business.

Sources of food stuff used by Respondents

Table 8: Sources of food stuff

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----|------|
| Source of food stuff | Market | 150 | 93.8 |
| | Farm gate | 6 | 3.8 |
| | Fellow food vendors | 3 | 1.9 |
| | Others | 1 | 0.6 |
| | Total | 160 | 100 |

Source: Field, 2015

Table 8 reveals the findings on the sources of foodstuff available to the respondents for their business. While about 93.8% of the respondents gets the food stuff from the market, only 3.8% made direct purchase from farm gates which is of course expected to grant them access to the food stuff at cheaper rates. Accessibility of the market with respect to their location might have been the reason for the large proportion of respondents that make purchases from the market. On another hand, it may be the availability of varieties of foodstuff at the market compared to farm

gate that has endeared majority of respondents to the market rather than having to expend time and financial resources visiting various farms for products even though farm gate prices have been noted to be cheaper from experience. About 2% of the respondents bought their foodstuff from other larger food vendors, and some of these gave reason that they are able to access the foodstuff on credit or allowed to pay up after finishing a cycle of sale by which time they are granted access to new set of food stuff on credit hence purchase on credit for future repayment has been a determinant factor even though the cost of such food stuff is slightly higher than what they could access in the marketplace. 0.6% of the respondents said they have other means of getting their food stuff including the family farm, friends' and self farm where they pay cheaper prices than what is obtainable in the markets.

Factors That Affect Sales Output

In determining the factors affecting sales output of the respondents, different functional forms of the stated models including the linear, semi-logarithm, logarithm and exponential functions were fitted and the lead equation is the semi-log which was adopted and the result is presented in Table 9. The value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the result is 0.749. This implies that about 74% of the sales output of respondents is explained by the explanatory variables included in the model and the F value of 52 indicates that the overall model is statistically significant at 5% level.

Table 9: Factors affecting sales output of the respondents

| Variables | Coefficient | Standard error | T value | p>[t] |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------|-------|
| Constant | 29508.8 | 33950.9 | 0.87 | 0.386 |
| Total energy cost | 0.165125 | 0.269395 | 0.61 | 0.541 |
| Age | -133.022 | 679.0099 | -0.20 | 0.845 |
| Household size | 1187.624 | 2708.532 | 0.44 | 0.662 |
| Level of education | 85.22075 | 999.8166 | 0.09 | 0.932 |
| Years of experience | .6188782 | .5825087 | 1.06 | 0.290 |
| Rent | -29846.19** | 14510.59 | -2.06 | 0.041 |
| Labour | 1.147358* | .225576 | 5.09 | 0.000 |
| Nature of business | 14.27298 | 58.89029 | 0.24 | 0.809 |
| Average daily customers | -3947.545 | 21031.4 | -0.19 | 0.851 |
| Workshop attendance | 17172.1* | 1950.964 | 8.80 | 0.000 |
| Source of fund | 44298.47** | 20620.23 | 2.15 | 0.033 |
| | | | | |

*, ** & *** represent Significant level at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively

Source: Data analysis, 2015

Table 9 shows that labour and workshop attendance are significant at 1% while rent

and source of fund are significant at 5%. The level of effort or commitment put into the business in terms of labour force contributes to the income of the vendor while the up-to-date information gained from the workshop attended has significant contribution towards the improving on management practices that will enhance efficiency which will in turn help the vendor to attain optimum production to maximize income. Also, different source of fund used in the business has a great impact on the income of the vendor because business financed with personal saving often brings a sense of security as a result of lack of external claim against one's business. Rent in terms of cost of shop has negative impact on the income generated in the course of business therefore, contributing a substantial claim on income.

Factors Determining Sales

Table 10: Factors that determine sales in the food vending enterprise

| Factors that determine sales | Frequency(percentage) | | | | | Mean | Rank |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|------|-----------------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | | |
| Location | 89(55.6%) | 70(43.8%) | 1(0.6%) | 0(0.0%) | 0(0.0%) | 4.55 | 1st |
| Taste of food | 88(55.0%) | 65(40.6%) | 7(4.4%) | 0(0.0%) | 0(0.0%) | 4.51 | 2nd |
| Degree of neatness of the premises | 67(41.9%) | 86(53.8%) | 6(3.8%) | 1(0.6%) | 0(0.0%) | 4.37 | 3rd |
| Quality of food | 69(43.1%) | 82(51.2%) | 7(4.4%) | 1(0.6%) | 1(0.6%) | 4.36 | 4th |
| Customer relationship | 72(45.0%) | 67(41.9%) | 14(8.8%) | 5(3.1%) | 2(1.3%) | 4.26 | 5th |
| Price of food | 56(35.0%) | 86(53.8%) | 15(9.4%) | 3(1.9%) | 0(0.0%) | 4.22 | 6 th |
| Branding | 56(35.0%) | 67(41.9%) | 36(22.5%) | 1(0.6%) | 0(0.0%) | 4.11 | 7 th |
| Packaging | 42(26.3%) | 87(54.4%) | 26(16.3%) | 5(3.1%) | 0(0.0%) | 4.04 | 8 th |
| Quantity per plate | 19(11.9%) | 62(38.8%) | 55(34.4%) | 23(14.4%) | 1(0.6%) | 3.47 | 9 th |
| Others | No=142 Percent=88.8 | Yes=18 Percent=11.2 | | | | | |

Source: Field, 2015

Note: * multiple responses were allowed

Table 10 shows the major factors that determine sales in the food vending enterprise of which the location of the business has the highest rank with the mean of 4.55 followed closely by the taste of the food and neatness of the premises in that order. The factor revealed as being the least significant is the quantity of food sold per plate which is contrary to a priori expectation where one would believe that people expend their scarce resources at the food seller that would give them access to the most quantity of food at the same price.

Constraints to the activities of food vendor entrepreneurs

Table11. Problems faced by the food vendor enterprise

| Constraints | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Unstable market condition | 144 | 90.0 |
| Epileptic power supply | 126 | 78.8 |
| Inadequate Labour | 116 | 72.5 |
| Inadequate Capital | 104 | 65.0 |
| Inadequate storage facilities | 104 | 65.0 |
| Unpredictable weather condition | 100 | 62.5 |
| Lack of finance | 94 | 58.8 |
| Harassment from sanitation officials | 93 | 58.1 |
| Competition among food vendor | 91 | 56.9 |
| Increasing volume of production | 91 | 56.9 |
| Political instability | 91 | 56.9 |
| Lack of credit | 84 | 52.5 |
| Laws and Regulation related problems | 84 | 52.5 |
| Balancing work and family | 70 | 43.8 |
| Inadequate skills | 69 | 43.1 |
| High Tax Rate | 54 | 33.3 |
| Extortion fee by Local mastans | 34 | 21.3 |

Source: Field, 2015

Note: * multiple responses were allowed

This study revealed that the commonest challenge the respondents encountered are

unstable market condition which mainly is observable in price fluctuations and epileptic power supply which results in a lot of wastage for the business owners, likewise preventing them from taking advantage of economies of scale in purchase since they do not have the means of preserving these products. About 90% and 78.8% of the respondents identified these two constraints respectively as having the most effect on their businesses. Inadequate labour and inadequate capital were also identified by 72.5% and 65% of the respondents respectively as affecting their businesses. This may be attributed to the fact that majority of the households of the respondents do not have too large family size which reduces the availability of family labour available for their use. Likewise, majority of the food vendors interviewed rely on personal savings to fund their businesses which is a limiting factor to capital availability.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The street food vendors play an important role in Ilorin Metropolis. At root, it creates numerous jobs and absorbs a rising proportion of the unemployed workers among women. Recognition of this sector and proper assistance would significantly improve their performance in the business. This research has revealed that sales return in food vending business is profitable.

Street foods are an important but unexplored facet of Ilorin Metropolis economy, food and nutrition. Although this food vending enterprise are illegal and unrecognised, it significantly help to reduce unemployment (among women especially), increase incomes of vendors, provide strong economic linkages in the economy and provide urban dwellers with inexpensive, varied and nutritious indigenous meals. However, quality, hygiene and safety problems, encroachment on roadsides and pavements, possible contribution to the deterioration of law and order and disturbances in the lives of other citizens are major setbacks which give cause for concerns. These have often justified harassment of food vendors by the local authority for which reason some vendors have been forced to relocate to obscure locations where they also get harassed by miscreants and thugs.

In order not to overshadow the significant role played by food vending enterprise, there is need to regulate/control food from these venture to ensure safety and thus reduce the occurrence of food borne diseases. The business of street food vending needs to be addressed carefully in order to explore the maximum benefits obtainable from the sector towards the entire economy. Generally, there is need to integrate the food vending enterprise economy into the mainstream economy in a way that would ensure sustainability of the sector and long-term economic growth. The potential of the food vendors for improving the food security and nutritional status of urban populations cannot be over emphasized. Foods vendor are promising vehicles for micronutrient fortification as the wide variety of foods

available leave the populace with wide ranges of choice to select their meals from which makes food more affordable and accessible to the consumers rather than when they have to go through the preparation process by themselves in their homes. The data available on the consumption of food from this vendors show that they are inexpensive and available foods, which in many developing countries, Nigeria inclusive, form an integral part of the diet, and that they are consumed with regularity and consistency across all income groups, but particularly by the urban poor and, in some countries, children.

Based on the findings of the study, there is need to encourage the women in this Enterprise to form groups and join cooperative societies as this will make them benefit from economies of scale in tackling their common problems and also help them to have access to credit facilities as groups rather than the limited personal funds which they invest in the business as access to more and cheaper funds will lead to an improvement in their marketing efficiency and profitability in the food vending enterprise.

Regular enlightenment should be given by skilled workers to encourage these women, sharpen their culinary and management skills, produce on commercial scale and also improve on their general approach of running their enterprise. Government should put in place the necessary infrastructures such as power supply in order to reduce storage losses and wastages and essentially, good roads to ensure effective transportation of market produce as this will help to minimize the cost of marketing operations that leads to unstable market conditions. Government should also provide sponsored marketing unit, providing facilitating services for marketing channels such as provision of infrastructure, marketing information and documentation supports.

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