KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

ASSESSMENT OF SHEA BUTTER MARKETING IN THREE MAJOR MARKETS IN ABEOKUTA

Oso, Abiodun Olusesi[1*]

Bolarinwa, Oluwaseyi Lois[2]

Babalola Folaranmi Dapo[3]

Philip, Elizabeth Oluwatosin[4]

Kolapo Musifat Abosede[5]

Banjo Oluseun Bamidele[6]

[1,2,4,5,6]Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria
[3]University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

*Corresponding Email: ososesi@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng

Citation: Oso, A.O., Bolarinwa, O.L., Babalola, F.D., Philip, E.O., Kolapo, M.A. & Banjo, O.B. (2022). Assessment of shea butter marketing in three major markets in Abeokuta. *KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 3*(1), 21-39

ABSTRACT

Shea butter (*Vitellaria Paradoxa*) Its economic value is investigated using both close and open-ended self-structure questionnaire to generate responses from the purposively randomly selected 100 respondents in the three major markets in Abeokuta. The test of hypothesis was carried out at 0.5 level of significance. This research study investigated the "Analysis of the Shea Butter Market Structure and Performance in three major Markets in Abeokuta Ogun State". The study adopted descriptive survey research design. There were a total number of one hundred (100) respondents (shea producers/marketers) randomly selected from three major markets in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Purposive sampling was used to select three (3) major markets namely: Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta. 30 respondents were randomly selected from Iberekodo and Kuto while 40 respondents were randomly selected in Lafenwa market being the largest market of all the three. Questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection. It was designed to elicit relevant responses on the variables of interest to the study. Data were analyzed using simple percentages, tables, F-test, and students T- test statistics to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated among others that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta. Recommendations were suggested among others that first, the chiefs and elders of the communities should promulgate bye-laws against the free cutting down of live shea trees.

Keywords: Assessment, Shea Butter, Market Structure

INTRODUCTION

Shea butter tree (*Vitellaria paradoxa*) is indigenous to Sub-Saharan Africa and belongs to the family Sapotaceae. It grows in the wild and has a huge economic and ecological potential. Shea butter is naturally rich in Vitamins A, E, and F (Okullo et al, 2010). Shea butter is widely utilized for domestic purposes such as cooking, skin moisturizer and commercially as an ingredient in cosmetic, pharmaceutical and edible products (Alander, 2004). The fruit when very ripe can be eaten raw. Traditionally, Shea butter are used as cream for dressing hair, protecting skin from extreme weather and sun, relieving rheumatic and joint pains, healing wounds/swelling/bruising, and massaging pregnant women and children. It is also used in treatments of eczema, rashes, burns, ulcers and dermatitis. Lovett (2004) concluded that Shea butter is a high value export to Europe and the United States, where it is considered a luxury. Shea butter has emerged as a promising economic commodity and has gained international recognition because of its therapeutic properties. The Industry is growing steadily from a small-scale activity to a large-scale commercial activity. The processing of Shea butter products was found to be profitable as the tree possess positive potentials of enhancing the living standards of farmers. Nigeria, the leading producer of Shea butter in the world with a production capacity of about 600,000 metric tons is yet to fully realize her potentials in the processing and the exportation (Lovett, 2004). Rural livelihoods depend solely on agricultural related activities such as locust bean, honey and Shea butter to mention. The bark, leaves and roots are medicinal, commonly used in curing various illnesses. Despite these potential embedded in Shea tree, its contribution to people's livelihood in the study area is not well researched. In recent times it has been argued that the demand for quality Shea butter is on the higher side Lovett (2004) but as to whether it is economically viable to spend much time and resources in producing high quality marketable Shea butter is another case since women are at the advantage of engaging in Shea butter extraction as a way of gaining incomes. Three principal end users exist for Shea butter which is the chocolate, cosmetics and natural product industry but cosmetics industry in Europe and United States are the second largest market segment for Shea butter to West African suppliers because of the potential for direct sourcing. New market for Shea butter exit in the personal care industry because of the recognition by the cosmetics industries (and its consumer) of the therapeutic benefit of Shea butter. Peter (2005) reported that Shea butter has ultra violet light protection, anti-inflammatory, moisturizing, regenerative, anti- Eczema and anti-wrinkle properties due to the presence of a significant fraction of un-saponificables (3-12%) that includes many bio- active chemicals such as trite pine alcohols, phenol, sterols and the polyisoprenic hydrocarbon karitene. Also, the demand for Shea butter keeps increasing due to recent recognition of these beneficial properties by the markets in advanced countries. It is estimated that the amount of Shea butter used in the western personal

care market is about 10% of the total African export with the demand in the United States considered to be growing at 25% per annum. Most recently it was reported that the dietary aid products have been developed from Shea butter fractions for both human and animals, and patents have been taken out for products that have lower cholesterol, reduced arthritis symptoms and have anti-diarrheal properties.

The tree is multi-purpose and is highly valued not only for the economic and dietary value of the cooking oil, but also for the fruit pulp, bark, roots and leaves, which are used in traditional medicines. The wood and charcoal, is used for building and fuelwood. Shea butter is naturally rich in Vitamins A, E, K and F (Okullo et al, 2010). Shea butter is widely utilized for domestic purposes such as cooking, skin moisturizer and commercially as an ingredient in cosmetic, pharmaceutical and edible products. The fruit when very ripe can be eaten raw. This butter is preferred to animal fats because it is free of any infection associated with fat from cattle or birds (BCFAN, 2010). It is a good alternative to petroleum wax which dominates body creams as the basal support for the active ingredient. It is therefore an unguent (healing ointment) for the skin (BCFAN, 2010).

Shea nuts and butter have been traded in West Africa for centuries (Chalfin, 2004). However, there is an increase in demand for Shea both as a cocoa butter substitute and a 'natural' cosmetic product have led to a rapid increase in demand and calls for an improvement upon the quality (Lovett, 2004). The quality of Shea butter is highly dependent upon the methods of grading nuts, drying, storage and processing. The local Shea market exists because most women are engaged in the processing of Shea butter which constitutes a key source of income for local women. The processors sell directly to the consumer in the local market. Very little is well packaged, labeled or certified before sale and it is sold in small balls or bowls in major markets throughout the country.

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

The study was carried out Abeokuta is the state capital of Ogun State in southwest Nigeria.

It is situated on the east bank of the Ogun River, near a group of rocky outcrops in a wooded savanna (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2012); 77 kilometres (48 mi) north of Lagos by railway, or 130 kilometres (81 mi) by water. As of 2020, Abeokuta and the surrounding area had a population of 533,000. Abeokuta's Location is in Nigeria with Coordinates: 7° 9′ 39″ N 3° 20′ 54″ E / 7.16083° N 3.34833° E found in Ogun State and Founded 1830.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of all Shea butter sellers in metropolitan Area of Ogun State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Multistage sampling technique will be used in the selection of respondents for this study. In the first stage, Abeokuta South was purposively selected based on presence of shea butter sellers. At the second stage, three major markets in Abeokuta South was purposively selected namely: market I, II and III based on the preponderance of Shea butter marketing activities. In the third stage, the actual sample size of one hundred (100 respondents) of Shea butter marketers were used for the study. Shea traders were stratified into three categories (Rural buyers, wholesalers and Retailers). Marketers were randomly selected which consist of ten (10) rural buyers, ten (10) wholesalers and ten (10) retailers each in the three markets with exception of Lafenwa which has twenty (20) retailers being the largest of the three markets.

Table 1: The Distribution of Samples from the various Randomly selected Markets

Abeokuta Metropolis Ogun State

Names of Markets	No of Marketers
Iberekodo	30
Kuto	30
Lafenwa	40
Total	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the field were sorted and analyzed using F-test statistics and independent student's T-test (inferential) statistics for testing the research hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance (which implies that if the study is replicated 100 times, the same outcome will occur 95 out of 100, and $\leq$ 5 out of 100 may vary due to

chance).

RESULTS

Table 2: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mode
Sex			
Male	10	10	
Female	90	90	Female
Total	100	100	
Age			
18 – 24 Years	15	15	
25 – 31 Years	30	30	25 – 31 Years
32 - 38 Years	25	25	
39-45 Years	12	12	
46-52 Years	10	10	
Above 52 Years	8	8	
Total	100	100	
Marital status			
Single	18	18	
Married	60	60	Married
Divorced	12	12	
Widow(er)	10	10	
Separated	0	0	
Total	100	100	
Educational status			
Primary education	43	43	Primary education
Secondary education	37	37	
Tertiary education	14	14	
Others	6	6	
Total	100	100	

Major occupation			
Farming	70	70	Farming
Trading	9	9	
Civil Servant	5	5	
Artisan	10	10	
Laborer	3	3	
Others	3	3	
Total	100	100	
Reason for getting involved in shear butter marketing			
Additional income	30	30	
Profession	15	15	
Hobby	7	7	
Family Business	43	43	Family business
Others	5	5	
Total	100	100	
Experience in Shear Butter Marketing			
1-5 years	23	23	
6-15 years	17	17	
16-25 years	40	40	16-25 years
Above 25 years	20	20	
Total	100	100	
Capital Base of Investment (N)			
#5,000-10000	12	12	
#11000-20000	30	30	
#21000-30000	48	48	#21000-30000
Above #30000	10	10	
Total	100	100	
Income Realized per Week			
Less than ₦5,000	15	15	

₦5,000 - ₦10,000	30	30	
Above ₦10,000	55	55	Above ₦10,000
Total	100	`100	
Are you a Member of any Society?			
Yes	45	45	
No	55	55	No
Total	100	100	
If yes, signify			
Cooperative Society	20	44	Cooperative Society
Trade Society	8	18	
Traders' Forum	7	16	
Thrift and Contribution Society	10	22	
Others	0	0	
Total	45	100	

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

Table 2 above shows that socio-economic characteristics of the rural households. In terms of sex distribution, majority of the actors 90% were females while 10% were male. This implies that shea butter business was predominantly conducted by females.

Age distribution of the respondents showed that majority 30% of the respondents were between 25 – 31 years of age, 25% were within the age range of 32 - 38 years of age, 15% were within the age range of 18 – 24 years of age, 12% were within the age range of 39-45 years of age. Those that were within the age range of 46-52 years and above 52 years accounted for 10% and 8% respectively. On the whole, 70% of actors fall into the economically active age group of 18–48 years showing that the majority of shea butter business actors are in the physically active age group.

About 60% of the respondents were married, 18%, 12%, 10% and 0% were single, divorced, widow(er) and separated respectively. This assured that married households have a significant influence on shea butter business activities as compared to other participants.

The study showed that majority 43% of the respondents had primary education; 37% had secondary school education, 14% had tertiary school education while 6% had other forms of education. This situation of illiteracy had serious consequences on the level of participants in the study area.

Majority 70% of the respondents engaged solely on shea butter business, 10% were artisans who engaged in shea butter business to supplement their incomes, 9% were traders who engaged in shea butter business to supplement their incomes, 5% were civil servants who engaged in shea butter business to supplement their salary, 3% were labourers who engaged in shea butter business while 3% who belong to other occupations also engaged in shea butter business.

About 63% of the respondents engaged in shea butter business because it was their family business, 30% engaged in it to earn additional incomes, 15% engaged in it as their profession, 7% engaged in it being their hobby while 5% chose to engage in shea butter business for other reasons known to them.

Experience distribution of the respondents showed that majority 40% of the respondents were between 16-25 experience bracket, 20% accounted for above 25 years of experience. Those that were within the experience bracket of 1-5 years and 6-15 years accounted for 23% and 17% respectively. On the whole, 60% of actors fall into the experience brackets of 16–25 years and above showing that the majority of shea butter business actors were experienced marketers/producers.

Capital base distribution of the respondents showed that majority 48% of the respondents started their shea butter business with between #21000-30000 capital base, 30% started it with between #11000-20000 capital base. Those that theirs with between #5,000-10000 and Above #30000 accounted for 12 % and 10 % respectively. On the whole, 78% of actors fall into the capital base brackets of #11000 - #30000.

Weekly income from income distribution showed that majority 55% of the respondents earned incomes above ₦10,000 weekly, 30% of the shea butter actors earned between #5,000-10,000 while 15% of the respondents earned less than #5,000 per week. On the whole 85% of the actors in the study area earned incomes between #5,000 and above weekly.

Majority of the shea butter actors 55% do not belong to any society while 45% belonged to one society or the other. About 20 (44%) of the respondents belonged to Cooperative Society, 10 (22%) belonged to Thrift and Contribution Society, 8 (18%) belonged to Trade Society, 7 (16%) belonged to Traders' Forum while none of the respondents belonged to others category of the society.

Table 3: Shea Butter Marketing Structure

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mode
Do you sell only shear butter or you sell with other products made from shear butter?			
Sole shea butter	68	68	Sole shear butter
Shear butter with other product(s)	32	32	
Total	100	100	
How do you Source for shear butter?			
Homemade	23	23	
Wholesalers	20	20	
Production Source	47	47	Production Source
Firm/Industry	10	10	
Total	100	100	
How do you sell?			
Wholesales	30	30	
Retail prices	55	55	Retail prices
Both	15	15	
Total	100	100	
How is the shear butter market layout here?			
Confined	35	35	
Scattered	65	65	Scattered
Total	100	100	
Who are your usual patrons?			
Civil servants	12	12	
Traders	9	9	
Herbalists	30	30	

Health practitioners	43	43	Health practitioners
Others	6	6	
Total	100	100	

Source: Research Data, 2021

Table 3 above showed that majority of the shea producers/marketers 68% engaged in selling shea butter only while 32% engaged in selling shea butter with other products. Majority 47% sourced for shea butter through production source, 23% sourced for it through homemade, 20% sourced for it through wholesales while 10% sourced for it through firm/industry. Majority 55% sold shea butter through retailing, 30% sold theirs through wholesales while 15% sold shea butter through both means of selling. Majority 65% of the respondents had their shea butter market layout as being scattered while 35% had theirs as being confined. Majority 43% of the respondents had health practitioners as their patrons, 30% had herbalists as their patrons, 12% had civil servants as their patrons, 9% had traders as their patrons while 6% had others as their patrons.

Table 4: Shear Butter Market Performance

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mode
How often do you order for new stock?			
Weekly basis	81	81	Weekly basis
Monthly basis	19	19	
Once in two months	0	0	
Quarterly	0	0	
Total	100	100	
How profitable is the market in the selling of shea butter?			
Very profitable	72	72	Very profitable
Profitable	28	28	
Not very profitable	0	0	
Total	100	100	
At what time of the year does the market go cheap?			
April-June	55	55	April-June

July-December	30	30
January-March	15	15
Total	100	100

Source: Research Data, 2021

Table 4 above showed that majority of the shea producers/marketers 81% often ordered for new stock on weekly basis, 19% ordered for new stock on Monthly basis while 0% of the respondents ordered for new stock on Once in two months and Quarterly basis. Majority 72% of the respondents agreed that shea butter business is very profitable, 28% agreed that shea butter business is profitable while none of the respondents agreed it is not very profitable. Majority 55% of the respondents agreed that the shea butter market went cheap in April-June, 30% agreed that the shea butter market went cheap in July-December while 15% agreed that the shea butter market went cheap in January-March.

Table 5: Shear Butter Marketing Constraints

S/no	Statements	Sample Size	Mean score	St Deviation	Remarks
1.	Lack of Technical/Inputs	100	2.92	1.0824	Agreed
2.	Lack of shea butter processing Equipment	100	3.81	0.8995	Agreed
3.	Lack of personal protective equipment such as rain coats, wellington boots and hand gloves to protect themselves during shea nut collection	100	3.49	1.0023	Agreed
4.	Lack of proper storage facilities	100	3.17	1.0601	Agreed
5.	Lack of access to investment capital	100	3.79	0.8867	Agreed
6.	Lack of government assistance on the rural women involved in production and marketing of shea butter	100	3.53	1.1090	Agreed

7.	Deforestation such as bushfires, cutting of trees for firewood and destructive farming methods are all factors that affect the availability of shea nuts	100	3.26	1.0157	Agreed
8.	Poor pricing is one of the pressing marketing challenges confronting the women in shea butter business	100	3.86	0.9375	Agreed

Source: Primary Data, 2021

Table 5 above showed that shea butter industry faced the following constraints: lack of technical/inputs with mean score of 2.92 and standard deviation of 1.0824, lack of shea butter processing equipment with mean score of 3.81 and standard deviation of 0.8995, lack of personal protective equipment such as rain coats, wellington boots and hand gloves to protect themselves during shea nut collection with mean score of 3.49 and standard deviation of 1.0023, lack of proper storage facilities with mean score of 3.17 and standard deviation of 1.0601, lack of access to investment capital with mean score of 3.79 and standard deviation of 0.8867; lack of government assistance on the rural women involved in production and marketing of shea butter with mean score of 3.53 and standard deviation of 1.1090; deforestation such as bushfires, cutting of trees for firewood and destructive farming methods are all factors that affect the availability of shea nuts with mean score of 3.26 and standard deviation of 1.0157; while poor pricing is one of the pressing marketing challenge confronting the women in shea butter business with mean score of 3.86 and standard deviation of 0.9375 was the last constraint of shea butter industry in this study.

Testing of Hypotheses

Testing of hypotheses only deals with probability of something being accepted or rejected and when the hypothesis tested is supported with sufficient evidence, we reject the null hypothesis (H0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H1) but if otherwise we uphold the null hypothesis (H0) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H1). It is interested in making an inference or decision about how the value of a parameter relates to a specific numerical value. That is, is it less than, equal to or greater than the specific number? It helps the researchers to make predictions and not to establish causation as it does not provide absolute proof.

Table 6: Summary of F-Test Statistics on Respondents' Responses Based on Market Structure

Soures of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square (Variance)	F-cal	F-crit	Prob > F	Decision
Treatment	11,030	2	5,515	211.3	0.24	0.002	Reject Ho
Error		97					
	2,536		26.1				
Total	13,566	99					

Source: Computed from Empirical Data, 2021

* P < 0.05 (significant)

The asterisk indicated that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta.

Decision rule: If the test computed or calculated value (absolute value of F-cal) is higher than the tabulated or critical value (critical value of F-crit), reject H0 and accept alternative hypothesis H1.

The table 6 above showed that the calculated value is 211.3 while the tabulated or critical value is 3.24. Since the calculated value 211.3 is higher than the tabulated value 3.24, therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) that there is no significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta was rejected while the alternative hypothesis (H1) that there is significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta was accepted. This indicated that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta which implied that the mean distances differ significantly for at least two major markets.

Hypothesis Two

H0: there is no significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets.

H1: there is significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets. Symbolically,

H0: U1-U2-U3 = 0 OR **U1=U2=U3** (this implies the mean distances do not differ significantly for at least two selected markets).

H1: U1-U2-U3 ≠ 0 OR **U1≠U2≠U3** (this implies the mean distances differ significantly for at least two selected markets).

Table 7: Summary of F-Test Statistics on Respondents' Responses Based on Market Performance

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square (Variance)	F-cal	F-crit	Prob > F	Decision
Treatment	9,326	2	4,663	326.01	3.24	0.002	Reject Ho
Error		97					
	1,384		14.3				
Total	10,710	99					

Source: Computed from Research Data, 2021

* P < 0.05 (significant)

The asterisk indicated that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets.

Decision rule: If the test computed or calculated value (absolute value of F-cal) is higher than the tabulated or critical value (critical value of F-crit), reject H0 and accept alternative hypothesis H1.

The table 7 above showed that the calculated value is 326.01 while the tabulated or critical value is 3.24. Since the calculated value 326.01 is higher than the tabulated value 3.24, therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) that there is no significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets was rejected while the alternative hypothesis (H1) that there is significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets was accepted. This indicated that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets which implied that the mean distances differ significantly for at least two selected markets.

Hypothesis Three

H0: lack of investment capital is not a major problem to producers of shea butter in the selected areas

H1: lack of investment capital is a major problem to producers of shea butter in the selected areas

Symbolically

Ho: x = 2.5

H1: $x \neq 2.5$

T test statistics = $\frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{s/\sqrt{n}}$

Where $\bar{x}$ = mean score of the sample or selected data (item) = 3.93

μ = mean score of the population = 2.5

s = standard deviation of the sample = 0.8175

n = total number of scores in the sample or selected data = 100

However, s/√n = the standard error of the sample or selected data

Degree of freedom = n-1 where n = total number of scores in the sample Alpha level (α) = 0.05

Table 8: Summary of T-Test Statistics on Constraints Facing Shea Butter Industry

Variables	Mean score	St Dev	F	T-cal	Tcrit	Prob > T	Decision
Sample	3.93	0.8175		17.49	0.96	0.0002	Reject Ho
Population 00	2.5		9				

Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2021

* P < 0.05

The asterisks indicated that lack of investment capital was a major problem to producers of shea butter in the selected areas.

Decision rule: If the test computed or calculated value (absolute value of t-cal) is less than the tabulated or critical value (critical value of t-crit), Ho is maintained otherwise rejected. Symbolically,

Reject Ho: if $t > t\alpha/2$ or if $t < -t\alpha/2$

Accept Ho: if $t < t\alpha/2$ or if $t > -t\alpha/2$

Where: $t\alpha/2 = 1.96$ and $-t\alpha/2 = -1.96$

Table 8 showed that absolute value of t-cal is greater than critical value of t-crit at 0.05 level of significance i.e 17.49 > 1.96 (0.05>0.0002) which implies that the result obtained is significant at 0.05 level of probability. The researcher therefore **rejects** the null hypothesis (Ho) which stated that lack of investment capital is not a major problem to

producers of shea butter in the selected areas and therefore concluded that lack of investment capital is a major problem to producers of shea butter in the selected areas. Moreso, the sample provides sufficient evidence for the researcher to reject the null or status-quo hypothesis. The observed difference is a deliberate one and not a by-product of statistical or sampling error. It also implies that the calculated (obtained) t-test is likely to occur by probability (chance) with a $p<0.05$.

Discussion of the Findings

The discussion of findings was discussed in the light of the research hypotheses.

Hypothesis One

There was significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta.

This hypothesis showed that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta. The result showed that F-Test statistic computed was 211.3 (significant 0.0002) at 0.05 level of significant, this indicated that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta ($F = 211.3$ at $p<0.05$). It implied that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing structures among the three major markets (Iberekodo, Kuto and Lafenwa) in Abeokuta. The finding was in agreement with Masters et al, (2004) who empirically found that shea nuts and butter markets plays important role in rural development, income generation, food security, developing rural-market linkages and gender issues. Olukosi, et al, (2004) concurred with the finding that macro view point examines the total system of economic activities concerned with the flow of agricultural products from producers to final consumers. Marketing, at the macro level, includes processing, packaging, storage, transportation, pricing, financing, risk bearing and even product design.

Hypothesis Two

There was significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets

This hypothesis showed there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets. The result showed that absolute value of F-Test computed was 326.01 (significant 0.0002) at .05 alpha level, this indicated that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets ($F = 326.01$ at $p<0.05$). It implied that there was significant difference in Shea butter marketing performance among the selected markets. This finding was in alignment with the findings of Ayinde et al (2013) who statistically found that Consumers are likely to evaluate a marketing system in terms of its performance in avoiding high and fluctuating prices, shortages in supply and consistency in delivering

products or produce of acceptable quality. Farmers' concerns could be rather different. Their criteria might include the capacity of intermediaries to exert undue influence on prices, the extent of competition in the sectors supplying farm inputs and accessibility of marketing infrastructure at reasonable cost (e.g., suitable storage and transportation). Society is likely to give consideration to the marketing system's contribution to employment, its impact on the environment and the ethical standards to which it is perceived to adhere. Government's perceptions of a marketing system will also be coloured by its impact on employment. In addition, government will probably take into account the sector's contribution to investment, economic growth and the national treasury through its taxable income. This finding was consistent with Ferris et al., (2001) who concluded that market performance is a reflection of the impact of structure and conduct on product prices, costs, the volume and quality of output in a marketing system.

Hypothesis Three

Lack of investment capital was a major problem to producers of shea butter in the selected areas.

This hypothesis showed that lack of investment capital was a major problem to producers of shea butter in the study area. The result showed that absolute value of T-Test computed was 17.49 (significant 0.0002) at 0.05 level of significant, this indicated that fuel wood consumption contributed to high rate of forest degradation in the study area ($T = 17.49$ at $p<0.05$). This implied that lack of investment capital was a major problem to producers of shea butter in the selected area. This finding was in line with Carrette et al., (2009) who found that the constraints of the shea nut industry cut across all the different actors operating along the value chain of the commodity. They span over a wide range including production, processing and marketing. Shea trees are wild trees that naturally grow in producing areas. As a result, the life of these trees is exposed to destruction by human activities such as cutting down of the tress and bush fires. Planting of shea trees takes several years (minimum of 15 years) which discourages people in its production under controlled farms. As a result, yield of shea nut is dependent on factors not controlled by. This finding was in alignment with the work of Masters et al. (2004) maintain that the traditional method as an alternative way of processing shea butter yields low quantity. In the view of Kante et al. (2008) which also supported the finding, it is a process that is physically demanding, inefficient and lacks quality.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study depict the Shea butter market structure, show how effective and efficient the marketing of Shea butter is within the sampled communities and portray the active involvement of all the market participants as well as unveiling the potential profitability of Shea butter marketing. However, little profit was generated

from Sheabutter business. This could be because sheabutter producers were using old traditional method of production which is labourious. Problems: like transportation cost, lack of capital and labour intensive were identified that require infrastructural development and government attention.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been proposed for consideration by various stakeholders in the shea industry as well as development agents.

1. Women in the rural areas should be encouraged by the local, state and federal government to go into shea butter business as a means of reducing poverty in rural areas.
2. Shea butter processors and marketers should form co-operative society so as to enable them access loans to boost their business.
3. She abutter processing should be adopted by both governments and NGOs as a poverty alleviation initiative, given its enormous potentials locally and internationally.

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