

# Marketing of Selected Salad Vegetables in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study investigated the marketing of selected salad vegetables (lettuce and cabbage) in Umuahia main market, Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. The specific objectives are to identify the socio-economic characteristics of the salad vegetables marketers in Umuahia main market, examine the marketing channels, margins and market share of salad vegetables in Umuahia main market. This employed simple random selection in choosing of respondents on the identified markets. 12 wholesalers and 28 retailers of the lettuce and cabbage marketers were randomly selected and they are tested using a well structured questionnaire, and it was used to capture data from the 40 respondents the area. The results showed that the marketing margins were N5000.00, N1200.00, and N800.00 for the producers, wholesalers and retailers of lettuce respectively while N4900.00, N18000.00, and N800.00 were margins for producers, wholesalers and retailers of cabbage respectively. The percentage market share was, 71.43%, 17.14%, and 11.43%. for producers, wholesalers and retailers of cabbage respectively. The marketing channel started from producers, to the wholesalers to the retailers then to the final consumers. Problems encountered by salad vegetables [lettuce and cabbage] marketers include inadequate capital, high cost of transportation, it is recommended that good maintenance agency should be involved to enhance smooth and easy transportation and reduce the cost of transportation, thereby bringing down marketing cost. Government should also encourage and assist institutions that provide loans and credit facilities to agricultural marketers.

## Keywords

Marketing Margins, Transport Cost, Lettuce, Producer, Marketing Cost

## 1. Introduction

Oxford Advanced learner dictionary define salad as a cold dish of usually raw vegetable, eaten raw or cooked. The term vegetables apply to the edible shoots. They are leaves, fruits and roots of plants that are eaten whole or in parts as supplement to starchy foods and this means they are mostly herbaceous [1]. Salad can be served in simple form consisting of some ingredients such as cucumber, carrots, lettuce, pees and green paper, with green beans. Salad vegetables and other vegetable are mostly annual plants that are eaten after harvest. Vegetables are good source of vitamin c, and other minerals, and because they are eaten raw none of their contents is lost. Lettuce and cabbage are the most common leafy salad vegetables found in Nigeria. Lettuce and

cabbage fall under green leafy vegetable whole leaves are used as food, which is more in carotene than any other source of carotene [2]. The food value of salads play important part in the diet as they are excellent source of protective foods. Green and yellow vegetables contain vitamin a, as the vegetable are eaten raw vitamin c is not lost. Cellulose in the form of roughage helps the body to get rid of waste materials [3].

The flavour of salad stimulates the digestive juice [4].

Cabbage has very good medicinal properties because in its raw state it is an excellent source of vitamin c. [5]. It also acts as goitrogen which blocks organification in thyroid cells thus inhibiting the production of thyroid cells [6]. Lettuce is also a very good nutritional and medicinal vegetable like cabbage. Lettuce has a nutritional value of the following nutrients per 100g. Energy (13k cal); Carbohydrates 2.2g;

Dietary fiber 1.1g; Fat 0.2g; Protein 1.4g; Water 96g; Vitamin a 166ug; Vitamin c 73ug and Iron 1.3mg [7].

Vegetables like salad vegetables (lettuce and cabbage) and other vegetables are useful for the maintenance of health. They have food value ingredients which can be utilized to build up and repair the body [8]. They are not generally stored for long period like cereals, tubers and starchy root, nut and pluses [1].

In Nigeria the consumption of vegetables among salad vegetables has been on the increase and currently is estimated at about 22-47.58kg/person/year, but the distribution of the vegetables (lettuce and cabbage) along with storage problem has made some of the consumers to relent in the consumption [9]. This necessitated the need for evaluation of the economics of marketing of selected salad in the study area.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Identify socio-economic characteristics of salad vegetable market in the study area;
- examine the marketing channels, margins and market share of salad vegetable in Umuahia main market.
- identify the constraints facing salad vegetable marketers in the study area.

## 2. Materials and Methods

Twelve (12) wholesalers and twenty eight (28) retailers of lettuce and cabbage were randomly selected and they were personally interviewed with well structured questionnaires in their shops and stands. This gave a total of 40 respondents of lettuce and cabbage marketers for the study. Objectives (i) and (iii) were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean and frequency distribution. Objective (ii) was analyzed using marketing margin model, market shares and percentages cost and net return analysis.

### Specification of Model

Marketing margin (MM) refers to the difference in price paid to the first seller and that paid by the final buyer [10].

$$M.M.W = W.P - P.P$$

$$M.M.R = R.P - W.P$$

Where M.M.W. = Marketing margin of wholesaler

M.M.R = Marketing Margin of retailers

W.P. = Wholesale price

P.R. = Producer price

R.P.= Retailers price of consumers' price (CP)

Market Share (%) refers to the share of the market expressed in percentage (%) received by the participants in the marketing process.

$$\text{Thus; \% Market Share} = \frac{M.M.}{C.P.}$$

Where M.M. = Marketing margin

C. P. = Consumer price or retailer price (R.P.)

## 3. Results and Discussions

Table 1 presents the analysis according to the distribution

of respondents to sex. It shows that the higher percentage of the respondents (57.5% of lettuce marketers and 62.5% of the cabbage sellers) were females while 42.5% of the lettuce sellers and 37.5% of the cabbage sellers were males. It implies that the lettuce and cabbage marketers in the study area were dominated by females. This result is obvious. These are one of the culinary used in the kitchen which is one of the major female dominions. This result is in conformity with Oluwasami [11] where he noted the domination of females in the processing of certain agricultural products more especially the salad vegetables (lettuce and cabbage).

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents according to sex (years).

Sex	Lettuce		Cabbage	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	17	42.5	15	37.5
Female	23	57.5	25	62.5
Total	40	100	40	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author.

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to age (years). It showed that 40% and 27.5% of the lettuce and cabbage marketers fell within the age range of 31 and 41 years respectively. 42.5% of the lettuce and cabbage respectively fell within range of 41 and 50 years, while 2.5% and 15% of the lettuce and cabbage marketers respectively fell within the age range of 21 and 30 years. A marginal percentage (5% of the lettuce marketers and 15% of the cabbage marketers) of the respondents fell within the age range of 51 and 60 years respectively. This implies that the majority (82.5% of lettuce marketers and 70% of the cabbage marketers) of the respondents fell within the age range of 31 and 50 years, which is the very active age. This is a productive age group which can absorb the shocks involved in marketing these commodities.

**Table 2.** Distribution of respondents according to age (years).

Categories of age (yrs)	Lettuce		Cabbage	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
21-30	5	12.5	6	15.0
31-40	16	40.0	11	27.5
41-50	17	42.5	17	42.5
51-60	2	5.0	6	15.0
Total	40	100	40	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author.

**Table 3.** Distribution of respondent according marital status.

Marital Status	Lettuce		Cabbage	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Single	15	37.5	10	25.0
Married	22	55.0	3	67.5
Widowed	3	7.5	3	7.5
Total	40	100	40	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents according to marital status. The marital status shows in this

table indicates that the majority (55% for lettuce and 67.5% for cabbage marketers) of the respondents were married; while 37.5% and 25% of lettuce and cabbage marketers respectively were single and only 7.5% of cabbage marketers were married. This portrays married respondents as being stable.

**Table 4.** Distribution of respondent according to aducational level.

Level of Education	Lettuce		Cabbage	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Primary school Education	10	25.0	8	20.0
Secondary School Education	25	62.5	25	62.5
Tertiary Inst. Education	5	12.5	7	17.5
Total	4	100	40	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author.

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents according to educational level. This analysis reveals that a good proportion (62.5% for lettuce and same for cabbage) of the marketers had secondary school education respectively; while 25.0% for lettuce marketers and 20% for cabbage marketers had only primary school educational. A marginal percentage (12.5% for lettuce marketers and 17.5% for cabbage marketers) of the respondents has varied certificates from tertiary institution. This showed that education is very

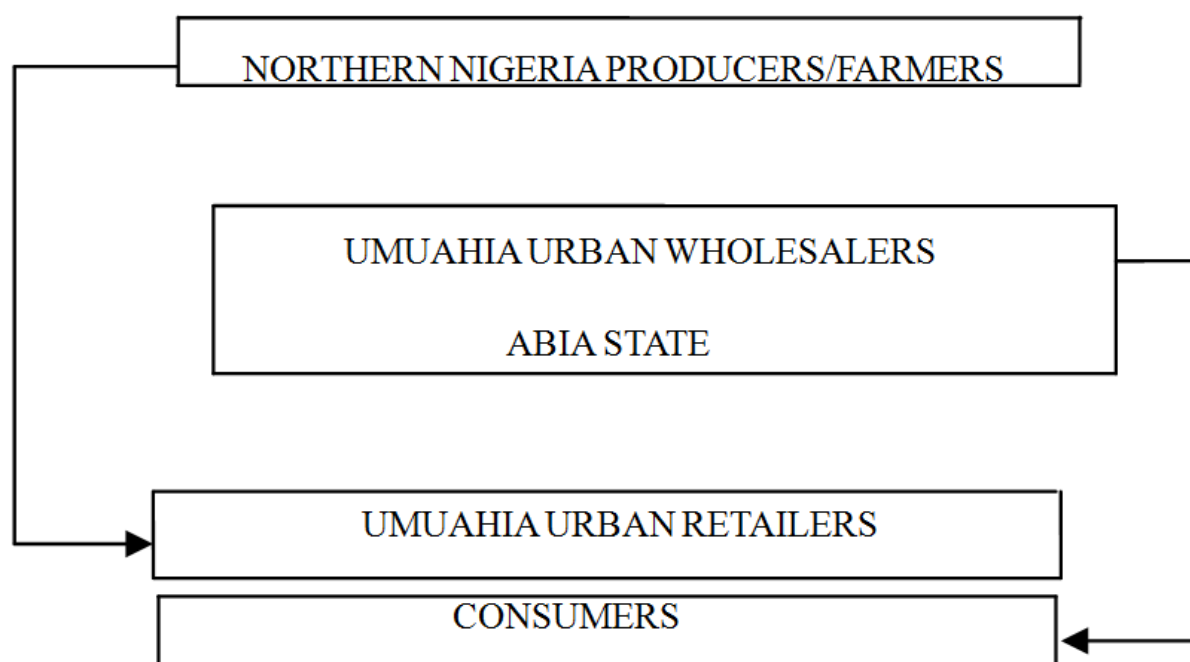
important in their business. This conforms with the findings of FAO [13], which stated that higher educational level is synonymous to higher business level in terms of income.

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents according to household size. The table shows that 40% and 47.5% of the lettuce and cabbage marketers respectively has a household size of 2 and 5 persons, while 50% and 35% of the lettuce and cabbage marketers respectively had household size of 6 and 10 persons. Only 2.5% and 5% of the marketers of lettuce and cabbage respectively has above 15 persons in their household. The result indicates that the household size is high; therefore, this will help the marketers not to spend so much money in hiring labourers. Higher family size has implication to the supply of labour to serve as canvassers.

**Table 5.** Distribution of respondent according to house hold size.

House hold size category	Lettuce		Cabbage	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
2-5	16	40.0	19	47.5
6-10	20	50.0	14	35.0
10-15	3	7.5	5	12.5
Above 15	1	2.5	2	5.0
Total	40	100	40	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author.



Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author

**Figure 1.** Schematic representation of Salad Vegetable (Lettuce and Cabbage) marketing channels in Umuahia main market Abia State, Nigeria.

Table 6 shows the distribution of respondents according to years of marketing experience. The result indicates that the majority (27.5% for lettuce and 25% for cabbage marketers) of the respondents respectively had marketing experience of 8 and 10 years, while 12.5% and 15% for lettuce and cabbage marketers respectively had marketing experience of 11 and 13 years. 10% of both lettuce and cabbage respectively had experience of 14 and 16 years. A marginal percentage of about

25% of both lettuce and cabbage sellers has experience below 5 years. This implies that the marketers had a very good marketing experience. This result is in line with Oputa [14].

Figure 1 presents the marketing channels for salad marketing in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. It shows that major participants in the distribution channel were the producers and salad vegetables traders (wholesalers and retailers). Salad vegetables (Lettuce and

Cabbage) have simple and similar channels and distribution. These commodities were moved from the producers in the northern part of Nigeria, to wholesalers and retailers in Umuahia Main Market of Abia State, where these commodities are assembled and the bulk broken to retailers in Umuahia Main Market. The major source of these commodities is from the northern states of Nigeria, include: Kano, Zaria and Plateau States which serves as the primary main sources. The retailers finally sold commodities to the end users (consumers).

**Table 6.** Distribution of respondent according to years of experience.

Categories of age	Lettuce		Cabbage	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
2-4	10	25.0	10	25.0
5-7	10	25.0	10	25.0
8-10	11	27.5	10	25.0
11-13	5	12.5	6	15.0
14-16	4	10.0	4	10.0
Total	40	100	40	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author

The broken arrows represent alternative routes of salad marketing channels. This entails a skip of the normal route where a retailer by-pass the wholesalers and buys directly from the producer, and also consumer buys directly from the wholesalers skipping the retailers. The essence of this skip is to purchase goods in fresh conditions and at a higher reduced price.

**Table 7.** Marketing margin and market share of the producers, wholesalers, and retailers of salad vegetable (lettuce) marketers in umuahia market main market abia state.

	Producers	Wholesalers	Retailers
Measurement	(50kg)	(50kg)	(50kg)
Marketing price	(N) 5000	6200	7000
Marketing Margin	(N) 5000	1200	800
% Market Share	(%) 71.43	17.14	11.43

Table 7 Shows the Marketing Margins and Percentage (%), Market Share of the Producers, wholesalers, and Retailers of Salad vegetable (Lettuce) Marketers in Umuahia Main Market Abia State. The table reveals that the marketing price for producers, wholesalers and retailers of lettuce for (50kg) bag were ₦5000, ₦6200 and ₦7000 respectively, while their marketing margins were ₦5000, ₦1200 and ₦800 respectively. The table further showed that the percentage market share of the producers/farmers, wholesalers and retailers were, 71.43%, 17.14% and 11.43% respectively for lettuce marketers. The producers' marketing margin and share of the market were considered to be the highest when compared with those of the wholesalers and retailers. The reason could be attributed to the farmer access to market information and improved transportation. The implication is that the wholesaler's tendency exercising high economic power on prices at the expense of producer's price appeared to have been checked. More so, producers benefit more from the marketing of lettuce because of various routes available to marketing their produce.

The table 8 shows that the marketing price for producers,

wholesalers, and retailers of cabbage for (50 kg) bag were N4900, N6200 and N7000 respectively, while their marketing margins were N4900, N1300 and N800 respectively. The table further showed that the percentage marketing share of the producers, wholesalers, and retailers were, 70%, 18.57%, and 11.43% respectively for the cabbage marketers. The producers marketing margin and share of the market were considered to be highest when compound with those of the wholesalers and retailers. The implication is that the wholesaler's tendency exercising high economic power on prices at the expense of producer's price appeared to have been checked. More so, producers benefited more from the marketing of cabbage because of various routes available to them in marketing their produce.

**Table 8.** Marketing margins and market shares of the producers, wholesalers, and retailers of salad vegetable (cabbage) marketers in umuahia main market.

	Producers	Wholesalers	Retailers.
Measurement	(50kg)	(50kg)	(50kg)
Marketing price (N)	4900	6200	7000
Marketing margin (N)	900	1300	800
% market share (%)	70.0	18.6	11.

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author.

Table 9 and 10 showed that inadequate capital and high transportation cost posed major challenge to both the producer and retailer.

**Table 9.** Problem of Lettuce Marketers.

Problems Identified	Wholesales		Retailers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
High Cost of Transportation	11	27.5	12	30
Inadequate Capital	12	30	22	55
Inadequate Storage Facility	9	22.5	20	50
Price Fluctuation	8	20	17	42.5

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author.

**Table 10.** Problem of Cabbage Marketers.

Problems Identified	Wholesales		Retailers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
High Cost of Transportation	11	27.5	12	30
Inadequate Capital	12	30	22	55
Inadequate Storage Facility	9	22.5	20	50
Price Fluctuation	8	20	17	42.5

Source: Field Survey Data, 2010 by author.

## 4. Conclusion

The result of this study showed that marketing of salad vegetable (lettuce and cabbage) in Umuahia main market, Umuahia North Local Government area of Abia State Nigeria is relatively profitable, suggesting that, it is a profitable venture in the study area. This is despite some problems encountered by the marketers like, inadequate

capital and inadequate storage facilities which can be solved by giving the traders loans and credit facilities, in addition to providing a suitable storage facility to enhance their marketing activities. The findings of the study also provide evidence which show that relatively young people were involved in the marketing business which can sustain it in the long run.

## Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations have been considered to be useful to enhance the economics of salad vegetable marketing in Umuahia main market Abia state, Nigeria.

1. Government should provide a good road network. Road maintenance agency like Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) should be directed in work to maintain good network roads in both federal and state levels; and this has to be all year road.
2. Government should provide loans and credit facilities through the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) and other micro-banks in order to solve the problem of unavailability of capital.
3. Policy directed at the enlightenment and encouragement of formal education to farmers and marketers will help to improve their level of marketing and their income.

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