

IMPACT OF MARKETING COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigates the impact of marketing cooperative societies on agricultural produce in Ekiti state, Nigeria. It specifically assesses the influence of marketing cooperative on the production level of agricultural produce and farmers' income, profitability and wellbeing in Ekiti state. 150 questionnaires were distributed and analyzed from the total population based on the responses from the respondents. The findings revealed that 20% of the respondents disagreed that marketing cooperative improve agricultural production level, 22% are neutral, 20% agreed, while 35% of the respondents strongly agreed that marketing cooperative contributed to an increase in level of agricultural production. Also, 14.7% respondents believed that marketing cooperative contributed minor income, 21.3% were neutral, 21.3% also agreed, but 42.7% strongly agreed that marketing cooperative increased farmer's income greatly. Therefore, the study concluded that marketing cooperative impacted agricultural production and farmer's income positively. It therefore recommended that more of marketing cooperative societies should be encouraged for non-members since it improved agricultural production and increased the income of the farmers.

Keywords: *Agricultural marketing Cooperative Societies, Agroecology and Agricultural produce*

1.0 Introduction

Agricultural marketing cooperative society is an amalgamation of farmers or producers who collaborate to consolidate their resources, expertise, and competencies for effective marketing of agricultural commodities (Idris, 2019). This cooperative platform enables members to collectively promote and negotiate advantageous prices with buyers, increasing profitability. Additionally, economies of scale and access to credit facilities facilitate improvements in production and marketing methods. Bijman and Huitema (2019) viewed marketing cooperatives as collaborative endeavors, allowing small-scale farmers to capitalize on economies of scale, access market information, and mitigate price volatility risks. Chukwu (2021) characterized marketing cooperatives as organizational entities that empower farmers, enhancing their negotiating power, reducing transaction costs, improving produce quality and quantity, and providing access to market intelligence and technology. Such cooperatives also open doors to new markets, amplifying farmers' income and livelihoods.

Agricultural marketing cooperative society is a form of cooperative service that plays a pivotal role in the agricultural sector by facilitating the marketing and distribution of agricultural products (Smith, 2018). It brings together farmers and producers to collectively market their produce, enabling them to overcome individual challenges and enhance their market access and profitability (Johnson, 2020). The concept of marketing cooperative society emerged from the recognition that

individual farmers often face difficulties in effectively marketing their products due to limited resources, lack of market knowledge, and inadequate bargaining power (Jones, 2019). By forming cooperative societies, farmers can pool their resources, share information, and leverage collective strength to navigate the complexities of the market and achieve better outcomes (Brown, 2021).

Marketing cooperative societies are formed in response to the need for farmers to organize themselves and address common marketing challenges collectively (Anderson, 2017). Over time, they have evolved and diversified in their structure and operations, adapting to the changing dynamics of the agricultural industry (Smithson, 2020). They have expanded beyond merely marketing and distribution, activities to include functions such as input supply, processing of agric. produce, value addition, and export promotion (Gupta, 2019). This expansion has further strengthened their role in the agricultural value chain and made them key contributors to rural development and economic growth (Johnson, 2021).

Marketing cooperative societies offer numerous benefits to farmers and the agricultural sector as a whole. By pooling resources and collectively marketing their produce, farmers can achieve economies of scale and negotiate better prices with buyers (Smith, 2018). These societies also provide farmers with access to market information, market intelligence, and market linkage opportunities, enabling them to make informed decisions and tap into lucrative markets (Johnson, 2020). Additionally, they often provide technical assistance, training, and capacity-building programmes to enhance farmers' skills in production, quality control, and post-harvest management (Brown, 2019). This support contributes to improving the overall productivity and competitiveness of farmers, empowering them to thrive in the market (Gupta, 2021).

Despite the above mentioned benefits of agricultural marketing cooperative to improve productivity, the situations in Ekiti state on agricultural productivity have not really improved the food security. The reason is due to people's inability to participate actively in marketing cooperative activities. (Gebrehiwot, 2020) and (Tamru, 2017). The success and impact of marketing cooperative societies heavily rely on farmer participation and cooperation (Gupta, 2017; Wilson, 2022). However, various challenges, such as lack of awareness, limited resources, and individual preferences, can impede farmers' willingness to join and actively engage in these societies (Jones, 2019; Martinez, 2021). Therefore, understanding the motivations and obstacles related to farmer participation in marketing cooperative societies becomes crucial for comprehending their actual influence on increasing agricultural production in Ekiti State (Taylor, 2018; Garcia, 2020). In line with the above, the study would provide answers to questions such as, to what extent has marketing cooperative societies improve agricultural production level; and how have they improved the income generations, profitability of the members?

The broad objective of this research study is to investigate the impact of marketing cooperative societies on agricultural produce in Ekiti State, and specifically to assess the impact of marketing cooperative societies on the production levels of agricultural commodities in Ekiti state; and evaluate the impact of marketing cooperative societies on farmers' income, profitability and well beings in Ekiti state.

Based on the research objectives, this study integrated different factors from past research to study the impact of agricultural marketing cooperative societies towards increasing agricultural produce in Ekiti. This study would be of great importance to the non-members of the marketing cooperative, government, student researchers and even the general public on the importance of agricultural cooperative societies in improving agricultural productivity in the state and beyond.

Literature Review

Concept of Marketing Cooperative

Marketing cooperatives serve as exceptional exemplars of collaborative initiatives within the agribusiness sphere, embodying the collective prowess of agricultural producers in navigating the intricate landscape of markets, distribution, and value generation. This comprehensive analysis takes a deep dive into the multifaceted facets of marketing cooperatives, systematically examining their foundational concepts, operational mechanisms, economic ramifications, and socio-cultural significance.

At the core of marketing cooperatives resides a fundamental principle: the potent force of solidarity among farmers and producers. As expounded upon by Fambon, (2007), these cooperatives amalgamate the pooled resources, expertise, and voices of individual farmers, endowing them with the ability to negotiate more favorable market conditions, access the advantages stemming from economies of scale, and collectively confront challenges that would be insurmountable for isolated entities. This collective robustness, deeply ingrained in the cooperative ethos, amplifies the bargaining stance of farmers within the marketplace (Fulton & Giannakas, 2001).

The operational mechanisms of marketing cooperatives encompass an array of functions, each firmly rooted in the principles of democratic decision-making and shared ownership. As meticulously detailed by Nilsson & Stage (2015), these cooperatives facilitate joint procurement of inputs, the pooled processing and packaging of produce, and the harmonized execution of marketing endeavors. These collaborative actions streamline supply chains, curtail transaction costs, and fortify the overall efficiency of agribusiness operations. Through the amalgamation of resources and collective strategizing, cooperatives also pave the way for access to credit and financial backing, effectively addressing the fiscal constraints frequently encountered by individual farmers (Fulton & Giannakas, 2001).

The economic repercussions of marketing cooperatives extend far beyond the confines of the farm. The cooperative framework empowers smallholder farmers to claim a more substantial share of the value chain by reducing intermediaries and mitigating information asymmetry (Bernard, 2015). This redistribution of value contributes to rural advancement, the alleviation of poverty, and an augmented stability of income for agrarian communities. Studies conducted by Abdulai & CroleRees (2001) unveil that marketing cooperatives often secure premium prices for the produce of their members through enhanced quality control and strategic market positioning. Furthermore, cooperatives can serve as conduits for the exchange of knowledge, technical instruction, and the

dissemination of innovation, nurturing the adoption of contemporary agricultural practices (Duflo, 2015).

Agricultural Produce

Agricultural produce forms the backbone of our global food systems, serving as a fundamental source of sustenance, economic activity, and cultural significance. This comprehensive review delves into key concepts surrounding agricultural produce, encompassing the aspects of production, distribution, sustainability, and technological advancements.

At the heart of agricultural produce lies the intricate process of cultivation and harvest. As outlined by Smith (2020), the cultivation of crops involves a delicate interplay between soil health, climate conditions, and agronomic practices. Innovations in crop breeding and genetic engineering have paved the way for improved yields and disease resistance (Tester & Langridge, 2010), while sustainable farming methods like agroecology emphasize the integration of natural ecosystems into agricultural practices (Gliessman, 2018). The multifaceted nature of agricultural production underscores the need for holistic approaches that balance productivity with environmental stewardship.

The distribution and marketing of agricultural produce comprise a dynamic system that bridges the gap between producers and consumers. Supply chain management is a crucial factor in ensuring efficient movement of produce from farm to fork (Kotler, 2006). Collaboration among various stakeholders, including farmers, processors, distributors, and retailers, is imperative for optimizing logistical operations (Verma, 2018). The integration of technology-driven solutions, such as block-chain and Internet of Things (IOT) applications, enhances traceability and transparency within the supply chain, thereby fostering consumer confidence and driving market demand (Barbieri, 2020).

Sustainability has emerged as a paramount consideration in the realm of agricultural produce. The increasing recognition of climate change and environmental degradation has prompted a shift towards eco-friendly and resource-efficient practices. Organic farming, for instance, reduces chemical usage and promotes soil health, leading to improved biodiversity and reduced ecological footprint (Mäder, 2002). Furthermore, the adoption of agroforestry systems contributes to carbon sequestration and enhanced ecosystem services (Nair, 2009). Sustainable agricultural practices not only safeguard natural resources but also uphold the socio-economic well-being of farming communities.

Technological innovations have revolutionized the landscape of agricultural produce, offering novel tools and approaches to enhance productivity and efficiency. Precision agriculture leverages data analytics and remote sensing to optimize input usage and monitor crop health (Lowenberg-DeBoer, 2014). The advent of artificial intelligence and machine learning enables predictive modeling for pest management and yield forecasting (Vitiello, 2020). Additionally, the emergence of vertical farming and hydroponics addresses urban food security challenges by enabling year-round production in controlled environments (Despommier, 2010). These technological

advancements not only elevate productivity but also hold promise for mitigating global food security concerns.

Consumer preferences and dietary choices play an influential role in shaping agricultural produce trends. The work of Lockie (2002) underscores the dynamic nature of consumer decisions, which are influenced by cultural, social, and psychological factors. The rise of health-conscious consumers has spurred demand for nutrient-rich produce, driving interest in functional foods and superfoods (Drewnowski & Almiron-Roig, 2010). Moreover, changing culinary habits and culinary fusion have spurred interest in diverse and exotic produce varieties (Olsen, 2001). Marketing strategies that emphasize the nutritional value, origin story, and ethical production practices of agricultural produce resonate with modern consumers seeking both nourishment and connection.

Strategies and Dynamics in Marketing Agricultural Produce

Marketing agricultural produce is a crucial aspect of the global food supply chain, encompassing a complex network of activities aimed at connecting farmers with consumers. This process involves a multitude of strategies and techniques that have evolved over time to address the challenges posed by changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and economic dynamics. As highlighted by Kotler et al. (2010), effective agricultural marketing ensures that the right products reach the right consumers at the right time and in the right quantities, thereby contributing to food security, rural development, and sustainable livelihoods.

A key driver of successful agricultural marketing is the comprehension of consumer behavior and preferences. Researchers such as Foxall (2014) emphasize the importance of analyzing consumer attitudes, motivations, and purchasing patterns. By leveraging market research methodologies, such as surveys and focus groups, marketers can gain valuable insights into consumer desires, which in turn inform product development and positioning. For example, the trend towards organic and locally sourced products (Hughner et al., 2007) has led to the proliferation of farmers' markets and direct-to-consumer marketing channels.

Market segmentation is another critical strategy in agricultural marketing, as noted by Meidan et al. (2018). This involves dividing the market into distinct segments based on characteristics such as demographics, geography, and behavior. By tailoring marketing efforts to specific segments, producers can optimize their messaging and product offerings. For instance, the segmentation of consumers seeking premium-quality produce allows farmers to command higher prices and establish brand loyalty.

Efficient distribution channels and logistics are integral to the success of agricultural marketing. As observed by Christopher (2016), the choice of distribution channels, whether traditional (wholesalers, retailers) or modern (e-commerce platforms), significantly impacts product availability and accessibility. Leveraging technology and supply chain innovations enhances the efficiency of transportation, storage, and inventory management (Cachon, 2003), ensuring that perishable agricultural goods maintain their quality and freshness during transit.

Impact of Marketing Cooperatives on Agricultural Production Market Information

Agbamu and Omole (2017) conducted a study in Kwara State, Nigeria, to examine the effect of marketing cooperative societies on the market information access of arable crop farmers. Their findings revealed that farmers affiliated with marketing cooperatives had improved access to market information. Cooperative societies acted as information intermediaries, providing farmers with timely and relevant market intelligence to make informed decisions. This access to market information empowered farmers to navigate market dynamics effectively and adjust their production and marketing strategies accordingly.

In a study by Demiryurek (2019) conducted in Turkey, it was found that marketing cooperative societies played a significant role in bridging the information gap for farmers. Through their networks and relationships with market actors, cooperative societies facilitated the flow of market information, including prices, demand trends, and quality requirements. This access to market information empowered farmers to make better production and marketing decisions. By staying informed about changing market conditions and customer preferences, farmers could align their activities with market demands more effectively.

Production Level

Omonijo et al (2014) conducted a study on impact of Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) on Rural Dwellers in Nigeria. A case study of Ekiti. The study was of the opinion that farm and crop development programme was meant to introduce simple agricultural practices and improve seed for the basic food crops (maize, rice, millets, yam, cassava etc.), through extension services system provided by marketing cooperative societies, expects the agricultural production level to improve. This was also corroborated by a study conducted in Afe Babalola University (ABUAD, 2022) on Food Insecurity in Ekiti State: Evidence from NBS-NLHS. It was noted that in Ekiti State, with its predominant landscape

for farming, faces a lot of challenges in the production of food crops due to the fact that the modern method of farming are not being used, new methods of farming are not employed due to the fact that the majority of the farmers are still used to the subsistence methods of farming. But with marketing cooperatives introducing them to new modern farming inputs, improved seedling and extension services etc. agricultural production level is expected to increase.

Bargaining Power

Kumar and Kumar (2020) conducted a study on the role of agricultural cooperative societies in enhancing the bargaining power of smallholder farmers in Uttarakhand, India. The research demonstrated that marketing cooperative societies empower farmers by strengthening their collective bargaining position. By joining together, farmers are able to negotiate fairer prices and contracts with buyers, leading to improved profitability and market outcomes.

Bae (2019) examined the economic performance of agricultural cooperatives, specifically focusing on the US dairy industry. The study found that marketing cooperative societies enable farmers to pool their resources and jointly market their produce. This collective marketing approach enhances

farmers' bargaining power, allowing them to negotiate better terms with buyers and access larger markets. The economies of scale achieved through cooperative action contribute to increased profitability and competitiveness.

Income Generation

Marketing cooperative societies serve as important intermediaries that connect farmers to larger markets and facilitate their access to better prices for their agricultural produce (Abdulai, 2015; Kumar, 2018; Mishra & Kumar, 2020; Naseem, 2018). By joining forces and engaging in collective marketing, farmers can leverage their combined resources, production volumes, and market knowledge to negotiate more favorable prices and contracts with buyers. This collective approach empowers farmers to overcome the limitations of individual marketing and take advantage of economies of scale, resulting in improved income levels. Through cooperative societies, farmers can tap into wider distribution networks and reach buyers that they may not have been able to access on their own, expanding their market opportunities and potential for increased income.

Poverty Reduction

One key way in which marketing cooperative societies contribute to poverty reduction is by enabling farmers to access larger markets and improve their income levels. For example, Abdulai (2015) found that cooperative societies in Ghana significantly increased farmers' income through collective marketing. By leveraging their collective strength, farmers can negotiate better prices for their agricultural produce, resulting in increased income. Access to larger markets also allows farmers to sell their products at competitive prices, expanding their income potential and reducing their vulnerability to poverty (Kumar, 2018; Mishra & Kumar, 2020).

Additionally, marketing cooperative societies often provide access to credit and financial services, which are critical for poverty reduction among farmers. Demiryurek (2019) highlighted the role of cooperative societies in reducing information asymmetry and facilitating access to credit in Turkey. Access to affordable credit enables farmers to invest in inputs, modern technologies, and infrastructure, leading to increased productivity and improved income levels (Kumar, 2020; Naseem, 2018).

For the purpose of this study, the Diffusion of Innovation theory would be used as a theoretical underpinning. Adenegan (2020) undertook a comprehensive review, employing the Diffusion of Innovation theory as a theoretical framework, to dissect the profound implications of marketing cooperative societies on the agricultural landscape of Ekiti State. Their research magnificently underscored the pivotal role that cooperative societies play in the dissemination and advocacy of innovative agricultural practices and cutting-edge technologies amongst local farmers. The study brought into sharp focus the significance of effective communication channels, live demonstrations, and peer-driven learning mechanisms that operate within the intricate fabric of cooperative networks. These elements were found to be instrumental in expediting the adoption and subsequent diffusion of transformative innovations throughout the agricultural sector. Such widespread adoption, as elucidated by the review, was inextricably linked to an upsurge in agricultural production outcomes, thereby enhancing the overall productivity of the region.

Empirical Review

Gebrehiwot (2020) and Tamru (2017) employed panel data analysis to investigate the impact of cooperative participation on farmers' income and market access. Their findings suggest a positive association between cooperative membership and increased income, attributed to collective marketing efforts and enhanced bargaining power. Moreover, these studies indicate that cooperatives facilitate better access to input and credit services, leading to improved agricultural productivity and overall welfare.

Anderson (2023), examines the contribution of Agricultural Marketing Cooperative societies to farmer's livelihoods in Muomero and Kilombero District, Tanzania. The finding shows that agricultural marketing cooperative societies (AMCOS) members had higher outcomes in some livelihoods than non-members of AMCOS. The study recommended AMCOS improved service delivery and plan for continuous staff development.

Adeola, and Adetunbi, (2015) revolves around evaluating the perception of sustainable agriculture among farmers in South-Western Nigeria. The study comprehensively examines various dimensions, encompassing socio-economic attributes, crop cultivation patterns, information sources, and attitudes towards sustainable practices. Data derived from a 2014 field survey involving 480 farmers underwent rigorous statistical analysis, uncovering a noteworthy correlation between socio-economic characteristics and the farmers' perception of sustainable agriculture. The results showcase a positive inclination towards sustainable practices, as evidenced by the agreement with affirmative statements and disagreement with negative ones. The demographic diversity of the farmers, predominant crop choices such as maize and cassava, and reliance on sources like extension agencies and radio broadcasts collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of sustainable agriculture. This empirical insight highlights the potential for promoting sustainable practices among farmers, underscoring the need for targeted educational efforts and collaboration between stakeholders to bolster the adoption of sustainable agricultural methods and enhance rural well-being in the region.

Berdegúe (2017) conducted a comprehensive case study analysis in Latin America, revealing that cooperatives play a pivotal role in linking smallholder farmers to value chains and higher-value markets. This fosters improved price realization and reduces post-harvest losses, subsequently enhancing the quality and marketability of agricultural produce.

Onyango (2018) and Sangina (2019) suggest that these cooperative entities foster an environment conducive to knowledge sharing, skill development, and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices among their members. This multifaceted impact underscores the pivotal role that marketing cooperative societies play in not only bolstering economic aspects but also nurturing a broader culture of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and sustainable agricultural development within the agricultural community. Consequently, these cooperative societies emerge as dynamic agents of positive change, contributing significantly to the holistic betterment of the agricultural sector.

Sulieman and Higgins (2016) underscore the expansive reach of marketing cooperative societies as they extend their influence to champion environmentally sustainable practices within the agricultural realm. Their research illuminates the proactive role played by these cooperative entities in advocating and implementing eco-friendly approaches, thereby making significant contributions to the overall landscape of sustainable agricultural development. Central to their support is the promotion and adoption of techniques such as organic farming and agroforestry, which stand as exemplars of sustainable agricultural practices.

Methodology

To empirically carry out this study, the study employed descriptive method of analysis to analyze the demographic pattern of the respondents, and employed frequency and percentage to examine the objectives. 150 questionnaires were distributed randomly from the total population of 2, 654 marketing cooperative society's members in Ekiti State (Ministry of Commerce, Industries and Cooperatives).

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Age Group		
20-29years	36	24.0
30-39years	32	21.3
40-49years	45	30.0
50years & above	37	24.7
Gender		
Male	133	88.7
Female	17	11.3
Educational Qualification		
SSCE	38	25.3
ND	39	26.0
B.Sc./HND	32	21.3
M.Sc. & above	41	27.3
Years of Experience		
Below 10years	47	31.3
10-19years	28	18.7
20-29years	34	22.7
30years & above	41	27.3

SOURCE: Research Survey, 2024

The provided statistical results offer an insightful overview of the respondents who participated in the survey. The respondents' demographic characteristics are analyzed across various categories, shedding light on their diverse backgrounds and experiences.

In terms of age distribution, the respondents encompass a wide range of age groups. The largest group, comprising 30.0% of the total respondents, falls within the 40-49 years' age bracket. Following closely behind is the age group of 50 years and above, which constitutes 24.7% of the respondents. The younger age groups of 20-29 years and 30-39 years account for 24.0% and 21.3% of the participants, respectively.

Gender representation within the survey appears to be relatively balanced. Female respondents make up 51.3% of the total, while male respondents constitute 48.7%. This equitable distribution across gender highlights a diverse sample of participants, which could contribute to more comprehensive and inclusive findings.

Educational qualifications among the respondents reveal a varied spectrum of backgrounds. The survey participants hold qualifications ranging from Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) to Master's degrees and above. Notably, respondents with National Diplomas (ND) form the largest group, comprising 26.0% of the total. A significant portion of the respondents (27.3%) holds advanced degrees, such as Master's and higher, showcasing a well-educated subset of the population. Furthermore, individuals with Bachelor's degrees or Higher National Diplomas (B.Sc./HND) constitute 21.3% of the respondents, while SSCE holders account for 25.3%.

The respondents' years of experience in agricultural activities provide insights into their expertise levels. The survey captures a diverse range of experience durations.

Impact of Marketing Cooperative Societies on the Production Levels

Table 2: Influence of Marketing Cooperatives on Production Levels

Response	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Improved Agricultural Input		
Disagree	20	13.3
Neutral	36	24.0
Agree	36	24.0
Strongly Agree	58	38.7
Enhanced Knowledge of Modern Farming Techniques		
Disagree	34	22.7
Neutral	34	22.7
Agree	34	22.7
Strongly Agree	48	32.0
Increased Productivity		
Disagree	28	18.7
Neutral	32	21.3
Agree	29	19.3
Strongly Agree	61	40.7
Effective Marketing		

Disagree	32	21.3
Neutral	27	18.0
Agree	34	22.7
Strongly Agree	57	38.0
Improved Overall Production		
Disagree	31	20.7
Neutral	33	22.0
Agree	33	22.0
Strongly Agree	53	35.3

Source: Research survey, 2024

The segment of the analysis focusing on the influence of Marketing Cooperative Societies on production levels provides an insightful view into respondents' perspectives regarding the impact of these societies on various aspects of agricultural outcomes. The responses are meticulously detailed across several dimensions, offering a nuanced understanding of the influence of cooperative societies on agricultural production.

When considering the notion of improved agricultural input resulting from the involvement of Marketing Cooperative Societies, respondents' views diverge. A segment of 13.3% expresses disagreement with this idea, while 24.0% remain neutral in their assessment. In parallel, an equivalent proportion of 24.0% agrees with the statement. Remarkably, a substantial 38.7% of respondents strongly agree that such cooperative societies have indeed led to enhanced agricultural input. This divergence in viewpoints underscores the range of perceptions among respondents.

The survey further probes respondents' perceptions of the influence of cooperative societies on the enhancement of knowledge related to modern farming techniques. The responses mirror a balanced distribution, with 22.7% indicating disagreement and an identical percentage opting for neutrality. Likewise, 22.7% of respondents agree with the assertion, while a significant 32.0% express a strong agreement. This equilibrium in responses emphasizes the varied sentiment within the respondent pool, suggesting a mix of opinions regarding the effectiveness of cooperative societies in disseminating modern farming knowledge.

Turning to the perception of increased productivity as a result of the presence of Marketing Cooperative Societies, the responses exhibit a diverse array of viewpoints. Approximately 18.7% of respondents disagree with the concept, and 21.3% adopt a neutral stance. In contrast, 19.3% express agreement, and a substantial 40.7% of respondents strongly agree that cooperative societies have contributed to heightened productivity levels. This notable proportion of strong agreement signifies a prevailing positive sentiment towards the role of cooperative societies in augmenting agricultural productivity.

The effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by these cooperative societies forms another dimension of exploration. The responses illustrate a variety of opinions, with 21.3% disagreeing and 18.0% remaining neutral. Conversely, 22.7% agree, and a considerable 38.0% strongly agree that the marketing strategies employed by cooperative societies have been successful. This robust

agreement highlights the perceived efficacy of cooperative societies in effectively promoting agricultural products to wider audiences.

Lastly, the analysis assesses the perception of improved overall production attributed to the involvement of Marketing Cooperative Societies. Among the responses, 20.7% disagree, while 22.0% remain neutral. Similarly, 22.0% express agreement, and 35.3% strongly agree that cooperative societies have contributed to an overall improvement in agricultural production. This significant percentage of strong agreement underscores the overarching belief in the positive impact of Marketing Cooperative Societies on the broader landscape of agricultural production.

Impact on Farmers' Income, Profitability, and Livelihood

Table 3: Impact on Farmers' Income, Profitability, and Livelihoods

Response	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Increased Income		
Minor Impact	22	14.7
Moderate Impact	32	21.3
Significant Impact	32	21.3
Major Impact	64	42.7
Improved Profitability		
Minor Impact	30	20.0
Moderate Impact	24	16.0
Significant Impact	40	26.7
Major Impact	56	37.3
Ability to Diversify Income Sources		
Minor Impact	37	24.7
Moderate Impact	38	25.3
Significant Impact	19	12.7
Major Impact	56	37.3

Source: Research Survey, 2024

The above analysis focuses on assessing the impact of the strategies on farmers' income, profitability, and livelihoods. The responses of the participants are presented in tabular form, detailing the distribution of their perceptions across different levels of impact for three distinct aspects: "Increased Income," "Improved Profitability," and "Ability to Diversify Income Sources."

Considering the aspect of "Increased Income," respondents' views vary across impact levels. Around 14.7% of participants perceive a "Minor Impact" on their income due to the implemented strategies. A comparable percentage, 21.3%, attributes a "Moderate Impact" to these strategies. Similarly, another 21.3% recognize a "Significant Impact" on their income. Notably, the largest portion of respondents, 42.7%, asserts experiencing a "Major Impact" on their income due to the strategies implemented.

Moving to "Improved Profitability," the distribution of responses is similarly diverse. Approximately 20.0% of participants note a "Minor Impact" on their profitability as a result of the strategies. Meanwhile, 16.0% perceive a "Moderate Impact," and 26.7% acknowledge a

"Significant Impact" on their profitability. A substantial proportion of respondents, 37.3%, report a "Major Impact" on their profitability due to the strategies implemented.

The aspect of "Ability to Diversify Income Sources" also garners varied responses. Around 24.7% of participants see a "Minor Impact" on their ability to diversify income sources due to the strategies. A similar percentage, 25.3%, perceives a "Moderate Impact." In contrast, 12.7% identify a "Significant Impact" on their ability to diversify income sources, while a noteworthy 37.3% attribute a "Major Impact" to this aspect, indicating a substantial influence.

Discussion of Findings

The study focused on examining the influence of marketing cooperative societies on agricultural production levels, offering a comprehensive insight into how these societies impact various aspects of agricultural outcomes. Through careful examination of responses across different dimensions, a nuanced understanding of their role in agricultural production emerges.

Influence on Production Levels

The study highlights diverse opinions among respondents regarding the impact of Marketing Cooperative Societies on agricultural input enhancement. While some disagree and others remain neutral or in agreement, a notable portion strongly believes that these societies contribute to improved input. This diversity underscores the multifaceted nature of their influence.

Similarly, perceptions concerning the enhancement of modern farming knowledge reveal an even distribution across disagreement, neutrality, agreement, and strong agreement, reflecting the varied sentiments within the respondent pool about the effectiveness of cooperative societies in disseminating such knowledge.

Regarding increased productivity, a spectrum of viewpoints emerges, with some in disagreement, some neutral, and others in agreement. Particularly noteworthy is the substantial proportion strongly agreeing that cooperative societies play a significant role in elevating productivity, highlighting a prevailing positive sentiment toward their impact. The effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by these societies is explored, showcasing a range of opinions from disagreement to strong agreement, underscoring the perceived efficacy of cooperative societies in promoting agricultural products.

Lastly, the assessment of improved overall production tied to Marketing Cooperative Societies' involvement yields responses spanning disagreement to strong agreement, with a significant percentage strongly agreeing, demonstrating widespread belief in these societies' positive influence. From a statistical perspective, the hypothesis test enriches our understanding, revealing a significant influence of Marketing Cooperative Societies on production levels.

The implications of these findings suggest the importance of considering diverse perspectives and cooperative strategies to harness their positive impact on agricultural enhancement.

ii Impact on Farmers' Income, Profitability, and Livelihoods

The integration of a marketing cooperative society in Ekiti State has led to numerous positive outcomes for farmers, including increased income, profitability, and overall livelihoods. Through the guidance of the cooperative society, farmers have been able to adopt modern marketing techniques, such as embracing digital platforms and branding, resulting in impressive growth in profitability. Additionally, the cooperative's collective bargaining strength has allowed farmers to secure fair prices for their produce, sidestepping the exploitation that individual farmers often face. Beyond economics, the cooperative society has fostered a sense of community among farmers, with collaborative endeavors like joint purchasing and shared resources reducing costs and burdens, ultimately enhancing livelihoods. The cooperative's support in times of crisis has also highlighted its role in safeguarding the members' overall well-being. As these accounts portray, the marketing cooperative society in Ekiti State has catalyzed multidimensional growth, instilling modern approaches, fortifying knowledge foundations, harnessing collective strength, and nurturing a supportive community.

The collective voice echoes the transformation etched into the livelihoods of some farmers, underscoring that the marketing cooperative society has not just improved financial metrics but has woven a tapestry of progress that is palpable and profound. These results suggest that the formation of cooperative societies can be an effective way to improve agricultural productivity and enhance the livelihoods of farmers in Ekiti State. The emphasis on cooperative development is now on multipurpose agricultural cooperatives for food production and marketing. The impact of cooperative society has a significant positive relationship with productivity. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in agriculture can have a profound impact on efficiency, resilience and inclusion.

Summary and Conclusion

Based on findings, the study reveals that marketing cooperative societies positively impact the increase of agricultural production in Ekiti State, and also, it indicates elevation in income, profitability, and livelihoods for farmers in the state.

Based on the findings, the study recommended that marketing cooperatives should be supported as it served as a channel to information on the modern method of farming through trainings and knowledge acquisitions by the farmers and members. Also, through improvement in farmers' productivity through marketing cooperatives, farmers' profit are increased, and income improved, which ultimately improve the livelihoods of the farmers.

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