

ARTÍCULO PRODUCTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

**Aplicación de la prohibición de importar arroz e implicaciones económicas
en el Estado de Akwa Ibom, Nigeria**

Implementation of Ban on Rice Import and Economic Implications
in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Resumen

A pesar de la prohibición de la importación de arroz en Nigeria, parece existir una preferencia predominante por el consumo de arroz extranjero/importado por parte de los consumidores del Estado de Akwa Ibom. Por lo tanto, esta preferencia motiva a los contrabandistas a introducir el arroz del país vecino (Camerún) en el Estado de Akwa Ibom a través del agua. Este estudio se centra en los gustos y disgustos de los consumidores de arroz, los cambios del mercado y los problemas a los que se enfrentan los productores locales de arroz. Proporcionará información útil a legisladores, productores de arroz, comercializadores e investigadores. El estudio revisó: la justificación de la prohibición de la importación de arroz en Nigeria, centrándose específicamente en el Estado de Akwa Ibom. También revisó la percepción de los consumidores sobre la calidad del arroz producido localmente, sus preferencias de actitud y los factores que influyen en su elección. También se examinaron los factores que

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contribuyen al limitado patrocinio del arroz nigeriano y las estrategias para alentar a los productores/comercializadores locales. Importantes descubrimientos revelan, entre otros, diversos factores que influyen en la producción de arroz, como el poder adquisitivo de los consumidores y la percepción de la calidad del arroz. Además, las leyes y reglamentos promulgados por el gobierno y las aptitudes publicitarias de los productores de arroz crean una situación difícil para los comercializadores. Los productores locales de arroz del Estado de Akwa Ibom tienen problemas como: no conseguir suficiente capital y carecer de otros recursos para producir en grandes cantidades. Esto demuestra que necesitan ayudas especiales para salir adelante. Hay que conceder más ayudas, como subvenciones a los agricultores, construir empresas y otras infraestructuras para ellos, suministrarles fertilizantes, etc. Esto hará que el negocio local del arroz sea más fuerte y viable. En la práctica, los productores y vendedores de arroz de Nigeria pueden concentrarse en la creación de marcas, asegurándose de que la calidad sea buena y mejorando las estrategias de marketing para aumentar el patrocinio del arroz producido en Nigeria. También es importante que los productores de arroz nigerianos estudien los gustos y preferencias de los consumidores, los programas gubernamentales para los arroceros locales y la exploración de métodos alternativos de cultivo de arroz que beneficien al medio ambiente. Si se ponen en práctica estas y otras medidas, es probable que mejore la vacilante fortuna de la industria arrocera de Nigeria al aumentar la demanda y desalentar la importación ilegal.

Palabras clave: consumidores, iniciativas gubernamentales, industria arrocera, patrocinio, sostenibilidad

Abstract

Despite the ban on the importation of rice into Nigeria, there seems to be a prevalent preference for consumption of foreign/imported rice by consumers in Akwa Ibom State. Hence, this preference motivates smugglers to bring in the rice from the neighbouring country (Cameroon) into Akwa Ibom State through water broader. This study focused on rice consumers likes/dislikes, market changes and problems faced by local rice produces. It will

provide useful information to legislators, producers of rice, marketers and researchers. The study reviewed: the rationale behind the ban on the importation of rice into Nigeria with specific focus on Akwa Ibom State. It also reviewed consumers perception of the quality of locally produced rice, their attitude preferences and factors influencing their choice. Factors contributing to limited patronage of Nigeria rice, strategies for encouraging local producers/marketers, were also examined. Important discoveries reveal among others various factors influencing rice production such as consumers likes purchasing power and the perception of the quality of the rice. Furthermore, laws rules and regulations made by the government and the advertising skills of rice producers create a challenging situation for marketers. Local rice producers in Akwa Ibom State have problems such as: not getting enough capital and lacking other resources to produce in large quantities. This shows that special aid is needed for them to succeed. More support needs to be put in place such as giving grants to farmers, building firms and other infrastructure for them, provision of fertilizer etc. This will make the local rice business stronger and viable. In practice, Nigeria rice producer and sellers can concentrate on branding, making sure the quality is good and improve on marketing strategies in order to increase the patronage of produced-in-Nigeria rice. It is also important for Nigeria rice producers to study consumers likes and preferences, government programmes on local rice farmers and exploring alternative methods of rice cultivation that benefit the environment. These and others if implemented are likely to improve the faltering fortune of the rice industry in Nigeria by way of improving demand and discouraging illegal importation.

Keywords: Consumer Preferences, Government Initiatives, Local Rice Industry, Rice Patronage, Sustainability in Rice Production

Introduction

In recent years, global rice production and consumption patterns have undergone significant transformations. Nigeria, a key player in Africa, has been an active participant in these changes. In 2015, the Nigerian Federal Government placed ban on rice importation, a move

primarily aimed at promoting the growth and consumption of locally produced rice (Nuraeni & Rolake, 2020). Despite this governmental intervention, Nigerian consumers continue to exhibit a preference for foreign rice over local varieties (Ekanem et al., 2020). This paper delves into various aspects of the rice importation ban's implementation and its impact on economic conditions, with a particular focus on Akwa Ibom State.

Historically, Nigeria's rice consumption has exceeded its domestic production capacity. To bridge this gap, the Nigerian government resorted to importing rice to meet the escalating demands of its populace. However, the influx of foreign rice negatively impacted local farming enterprises and the overall economy (Ajide et al., 2019). In response to these challenges, the government instituted a ban on rice importation in 2015, a strategic move designed to bolster domestic production and reduce dependence on foreign markets.

Despite the ban, the Nigerian rice market continues to grapple with issues. A significant concern is the illicit influx of foreign rice, a problem that is particularly pronounced in regions bordering other nations, such as Cameroon. Akwa Ibom, a southern Nigerian state, is experiencing difficulties due to the pervasive presence of foreign rice in its local markets (Olorunfemi, 2014).

The study aims to provide insights into the ban's effectiveness, its impact on local businesses, and public sentiment towards locally produced rice. It is crucial for policymakers, academics, and stakeholders in Akwa Ibom State's agricultural and economic growth to understand the implications of ceasing rice importation on their economy (Abbas et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the significance of this study extends beyond Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The findings can contribute to a broader understanding of the challenges associated with implementing import bans and their effects on local economies in less affluent countries. By examining Nigeria's situation, the study seeks to glean insights that could be applicable to other global contexts where governments are striving to strike a balance between domestic production and foreign trade (Peterson-Wilhelm et al., 2022).

This study looks at Nigeria's ban on bringing in rice and how it affects making and using rice locally. It also looks at how the ban affects Akwa Ibom State's economy. In terms of jobs and money from Gross Domestic Products (GDP). The study also focuses on the perception of locally produced rice by consumers in Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. It tries to find out why customers do not patronise these locally produce rice. This review looks at the time after a ban from 2015 to 2023 with particular focus on Akwa Ibom, Nigeria. The review highlights some challenges, provides a comprehensive analysis of the ban's implementation and its impact on financial aspects especially on the conomy of Akwa Ibom state. It will be very helpful for people making rules, study experts, and others involved in growing farms and businesses in that area.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Historical Perspective of Rice Importation in Nigeria

To understand the present problems and choices about importation and ban on importation of rice in Nigeria, it is important to look into the history of this staple food in Nigeria. Historically, Nigeria has been a big buyer of rice, and its production has not been able to keep up with the growing need. At first, the country depended a lot on buying and other grains from other places to close this gap (Onoh et al., 2020; Olasehinde et al., 2022). This made the weaknesses in farming clear. Bringing in rice was a big business move. It helped feed the growing population's food needs.

But this reliance on rice from other countries hurts Nigeria's home-grown farming. Many farmers who grow local rice were hurt by too much foreign rice coming in. This also stopped the growth of our own strong rice industry. In 2015, the federal government of Nigerian government stopped bringing rice from other countries (Onoh et al., 2020). They did this to help local farmers, make sure there's enough food for everyone, and boost economic growth.

1.2 Rationale Behind the Ban on Rice Importation

The reason for placing ban on the importation of rice into Nigeria is complex. One main goal was to help the homegrown rice business by giving local farmers an advantage over others. The government hoped to encourage farmers to grow more rice, rely less on other countries for food, and make sure the nation has enough food (rice) (Owoade et al., 2021; Mahmud et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the ban tried to save money by lowering the large amounts of cash spent on buying rice from other countries. Like other developing countries, Nigeria had a hard time keeping trade balanced (Ekanem, 2021; Owoade et al., 2021). The government thought limiting rice imports could help fix this money problem.

1.3 Previous Studies on the Economic Impact Ban on Importation of Rice

Several studies have examined the economic implications of implementing global restrictions on rice imports (Balié & Valera, 2020; Wang et al., 2021; Nunes et al., 2022). They assist us in comprehending the potential outcomes and issues associated with such regulations. Research have examined the impact on local enterprises, employment, and the agricultural sector. Research conducted in various locations have demonstrated divergent results (Ivanova, 2021; Geza et al., 2022). Several individuals have expressed positive opinions regarding it, citing increased production and reduced trade-related issues. Conversely, other individuals discuss concerns such as market disruptions, potential price increases, and the substantial financial resources required for local construction projects aimed at increasing production.

1.4 Challenges and Criticisms of the Ban

Despite its merit, Nigeria's prohibition on the importation of rice has encountered significant challenges and received substantial criticism. An important grievance is that Nigerians consistently opt for imported rice instead of domestic alternatives (Yusuf et al., 2020;

Ugochukwu et al., 2020; Owoade et al., 2021; Peterson-Wilhelm et al., 2022). The illicit importation of rice from foreign nations, particularly those in proximity, such as Cameroon, has posed a significant issue. This undermines the effectiveness of the ban. Sceptics argue that the prohibition could potentially give rise to unforeseen complications, such as a scarcity of sustenance. This holds particularly true if the local rice supply is insufficient to meet the demand of all individuals seeking it (Arouna et al., 2020; Epule et al., 2021). Inadequate infrastructure, limited access to agricultural finance, and sluggish regulatory reforms are identified as key factors contributing to these challenges.

1.5 International Examples of Rice Importation Bans and Their Effects

Examining the imposition of rice import restrictions in various countries worldwide provides valuable insights for comparing their outcomes and difficulties. Thailand implemented restrictions on rice exports to ensure sufficient domestic availability and maintain stable pricing (Sriyakul & Jermsittiparsert, 2017). While this measure aimed to ensure the safety of domestic consumers, it also generated discontent and concern among individuals from foreign nations about potential alterations to global food markets (John, 2013). In contrast, South Korea has effectively implemented tactics to substitute imported rice with domestically cultivated rice. Through government assistance, improved technology, and targeted strategies, South Korea has successfully reduced its reliance on imported rice (Jeong et al., 2020; An et al., 2021). The significance of China's prohibition on rice imports is noteworthy. The Chinese government has employed a combination of purchasing restrictions, financial assistance, and strategic initiatives to bolster domestic rice production. This approach has facilitated the country's transition into a rice-exporting nation (Lu & Li, 2006; Sun & Li, 2021; Tang et al., 2022). These foreign instances provide diverse perspectives on the consequences of governments ceasing to purchase rice. However, it is important to acknowledge that each country's achievements and challenges in this regard are influenced by unique social and political factors.

2. The Implementation of the Ban on Rice Importation in Nigeria

2.1 Overview of the Ban's Implementation

In 2015, the federal government of Nigeria banned rice imports to improve farm operations, encourage local rice cultivation, reduce foreign import dependency, and promote self-sufficiency in rice production, thereby revolutionizing the country's agricultural landscape (Obi-Egbedi et al., 2021). Understanding the mechanics and intricacies of this prohibition is crucial for assessing its impact on Akwa Ibom State and the broader Nigerian context. The regulation was implemented as a component of a comprehensive strategy to transform agriculture, with particular emphasis on rice. Rice is a major food for Nigerians. The initiative encompassed legislation, regulations, and incentives designed to stimulate local farmers to increase rice cultivation. When initiating a task, it is crucial to consider the primary regulations and directives set forth by the government. Additionally, it is necessary to examine the techniques employed to ensure compliance with these laws.

2.2 Government Policies and Measures

An essential aspect of ensuring the effectiveness of the prohibition is the establishment and elucidation of beneficial governmental regulations and initiatives. The Nigerian government has implemented several regulations to promote and support domestic rice cultivation (Aliyu et al., 2021). These regulations were established to manage several aspects of the agricultural cycle, encompassing the cultivation of crops on farms and their subsequent processing and sale following harvest. One significant advancement was the provision of accessible loans to farmers. The government endeavoured to alleviate the financial difficulties faced by farmers by providing them with low-interest loans and credit initiatives. The purpose of this was to facilitate the purchase of seeds, fertilisers, and other necessary items for the cultivation of rice (Bello et al., 2020). To provide greater assistance to local farmers, the government implemented subsidies on agricultural goods. This encompassed providing financial assistance for essential items like fertilisers, seeds, and other necessary resources required for

rice cultivation. The government attempted to reduce the cost of rice production by using indigenous varieties (Ameh & Lee, 2022). This was hoped to render them superior to imported alternatives. The government's provision of services played a crucial role in disseminating effective agricultural practices and providing farmers with expert guidance. These services aimed to enhance the knowledge and expertise of farmers, thereby boosting the overall yield and efficiency of rice growing (Falola et al., 2022). Recognising the significance of water management in rice cultivation, the government allocated funds towards enhancing irrigation equipment. This plan sought to address seasonal variations in precipitation and enhance the reliability and stability of rice cultivation. The government also endeavoured to facilitate the marketing of locally produced rice. This facilitated the development of marketing strategies, assistance in establishing rice mills, and the establishment of an efficient transportation system to distribute locally cultivated rice to consumers across the states in Nigeria.

2.3 Enforcement Mechanisms

The success of stopping rice from being brought in depends a lot on how good the rules are for making sure they work. People in charge understood that without strong rules, the ban could be easily ignored by smuggling and not following the rules. So, a many-sided plan was used to make sure that the rules about bringing rice and other things into a country were followed carefully.

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) was very important in making sure the ban happened at places where borders meet. Strict inspections and monitoring were put in place to stop foreign rice from getting into Nigeria illegally (Ekanem, 2021). Even though these efforts were made, problems still existed. People reported smuggling activities at different border points. Working together, teams were formed with different safety groups to improve how rules are enforced (Nwozor & Oshewolo, 2020). This required teamwork between the NCS, police, military and other safety groups to stop smuggling groups from bringing in rice without permission.

The government made laws to make the ban's rules stronger. The punishment for smuggling and breaking the ban was made higher to stop people from doing it. Rules said that people or companies who brought rice into Nigeria wrongly could face fines and jail. The federal government of Nigeria saw that people needed to work together, so, they started awareness campaigns to teach people why the ban is necessary and what might happen if they break it (Nwozor & Oshewolo, 2020). These efforts tried to get people on their side and stop them from buying rice illegally imported. Using technology, more watchful systems were put in place. These included drones and equipment to keep an eye on borders. This helped stop the smuggling of rice and catch people doing bad things with it. Even with these steps, it was hard to get the ban fully enforced. Nigeria's big and easy-to-cross borders, along with the financial reasons to hide goods, made it hard to stop foreign rice from coming into the country completely.

3. Economic Implications on Akwa Ibom State

Assessing the impact of the rice importation ban in Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State on its economy necessitates examining key economic indicators prior to and following its implementation in 2015. By examining the financial implications of this policy change, we may gain a more comprehensive understanding of its total influence on the state's economy. Prior to the prohibition, Akwa Ibom State, like several other regions in Nigeria, encountered difficulties in achieving favourable outcomes and productivity from their agricultural endeavours (Akaninyene & Ngozi, 2022). The dependence on imported rice has adversely affected the livelihoods of local farmers. This hindered agricultural productivity and halted the expansion of the farming industry. Following the implementation of the prohibition, initiatives were undertaken to promote the domestic cultivation of rice. The government enacted legislation, helped, and allocated funds to facilitate agricultural expansion, enabling farmers to increase food production. Following the prohibition, it is crucial to assess the quantity and quality of rice cultivation in the state. This enables us to assess the efficacy of these programmes. To improve its trade balance and conserve foreign currency reserves, Nigeria has implemented a ban on the importation of rice. Prior to the prohibition, a substantial

amount of money was allocated towards the procurement of rice from foreign nations. Consequently, trade imbalances arose. Following the prohibition, a decrease in demand for imported rice was anticipated. This might potentially facilitate the inflow of foreign funds into Nigeria. Analysing trade surplus or deficit and foreign currency reserves provides insights into the impact of the embargo on its economy.

4. Employment Trends in the Rice Industry

The economic implications of the rice import ban, particularly its impact on employment within the state's rice sector, are significant. Employment is not merely a means of earning income; it also serves as an indicator of a community's well-being and quality of life.

Prior to the ban, the rice industry in Akwa Ibom State faced challenges due to insufficient local production. The dependence on imported rice resulted in less-than-optimal engagement of local farmers in rice cultivation, potentially leading to underutilised agricultural labor (Etim et al., 2022). The import ban was implemented with the intention of bolstering local rice production. An anticipated outcome of this policy is an increase in employment opportunities within the rice sector. This includes not only farmers and mill workers but also others involved in the rice supply chain, who were expected to see increased demand for their services (Arimi, 2014). Post-ban job analysis involves assessing the number of new jobs created in rice cultivation and processing, as well as indirect employment in related areas such as logistics, sales, and distribution. Evaluating the quality of these jobs, their remuneration, and overall job satisfaction provides a comprehensive understanding of their societal and economic impact.

In terms of figures, the Akwa Ibom has cultivated more than 1,200 hectares of rice under the Central Bank of Nigeria's Anchor Borrowers' Programme. Over 20,000 rice farmers have been registered across 15 local government areas of the state. The state has also inaugurated a 1.5 million-metric-ton rice mill, which had already produced over 10,000, 50-kg bags ready for the market at the time of its inauguration. Furthermore, over 80 hectares of the 290 hectares

of farmland acquired for the exercise have been cultivated, and 176,000 metric tonnes of rice have been produced from the mill(Etim & Ndaeyo, 2020).

5. Contribution to the State's GDP

Another crucial economic consideration is the contribution of the rice industry to Akwa Ibom State's gross domestic product (GDP). Gross Domestic Product (GDP) serves as a primary indicator of the economic performance of a region, and variations in its components can reflect shifts in its functioning.

Pre-Ban GDP Composition: Before the ban, rice might have done little for Akwa Ibom State's money because it did not grow much locally. The way money is made in a state would have changed because of other businesses. The rice industry's help could be less important than businesses like oil and gas.

Post-Ban GDP Composition: If the restriction is effective, it is likely that the rice business will contribute significantly to the economic prosperity of Akwa Ibom State. Examining the situation of the economy following its prohibition allows us to ascertain whether its actions have resulted in increased monetary diversity. This measure would reduce reliance on imported rice for consumption and enhance the significance of domestic rice production. When considering the impact of money on Akwa Ibom State, it is crucial to collectively analyse these indicators. An in-depth analysis of rice production, employment, and GDP equilibrium provides valuable insights into the impact of halting rice imports on the state's financial landscape (Bassey, 2013). Contemplating their financial circumstances and potential challenges significantly enhances the study. This facilitates more effective strategic planning and discusses principles and decision-making for upcoming situations.

6. Consumer Perception of Locally Produced Rice

Understanding the public perception of locally produced rice in Akwa Ibom State is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of the rice importation ban. The market dynamics can be significantly influenced by individuals' perspectives, preferences, and evaluations of the quality of the local rice. This section discusses the various components of human cognition, highlighting their strong correlation with the cultivation of rice in the vicinity.

6.1 Quality Perception

The perception of rice's quality determines whether locals or visitors purchase it. An essential aspect of comprehending market dynamics is to analyse people's perceptions regarding the quality attributes of rice. The sensory aspects of rice, such as its flavour, texture, and aroma, significantly influence our perception of it. They determine the quality of the rice. Evaluating the flavour and texture of rice sourced from various regions enables us to assess its quality, regardless of its origin. Understanding the impact of these senses on consumer purchasing behaviour enables the development of strategies to enhance product quality. In order to establish credibility, it is imperative that we consistently maintain a high standard of rice quality. Artisans face a challenging endeavour in maintaining high quality standards (Gondal et al., 2021). The outcome can be influenced by the cultivation techniques employed and the methodologies employed in the production process. Adhering to stringent quality control measures and establishing precise standards is of utmost importance. This can alleviate concerns regarding the reliability of locally sourced rice. The visual appearance of a brand can significantly influence people's perception of its quality. Prominent international brands often acquire a favourable reputation associated with reliability and consistency. Local artisans must establish a strong brand image by demonstrating explicit behaviour and adhering to stringent quality standards. Examining the impact of a company's reputation on customers' perceptions of quality provides insights into their opinions. An in-depth examination is required to discern the disparities between purchasing rice from local and overseas markets (Oladejo, 2022). Understanding factors like consumer preferences, willingness to pay, and

rice quality is crucial for rice cultivation in regions. Understanding the influence of culture, economy, and public sentiment is essential for enhancing the value of locally produced rice. Familiarity with the rice market allows individuals to strategize astute maneuvers that align with consumer preferences, facilitating sustainable expansion within the sector (Ugwuja & Chukwukere, 2021). This knowledge provides valuable guidance and aids in enhancing the value of locally produced rice.

6.2 Consumer attitudes and Preferences

The sentiment towards locally produced rice in Akwa Ibom State serves as an indicator of the government's success in promoting domestic cultivation. These emotions are influenced by various factors, including preferences in culture, financial concerns, and the effectiveness of local advertising. Nigeria, characterised by its diverse ethnicities, boasts a plethora of culinary techniques for food preparation (Etim et al., 2022). In Nigeria, rice is a staple cuisine that elicits strong opinions from the population. Typically, their thoughts are grounded in tradition and culture. Gaining insight into the impact of these cultural disparities on consumer preferences is highly valuable in assessing the reception of indigenous rice (Okpiaifo et al., 2020; Peterson-Wilhelm et al., 2022). The financial circumstances and societal standing of individuals in Akwa Ibom State significantly influence their perceptions regarding locally produced rice (Ekanem et al., 2020). Factors such as individuals' income levels, their ability to acquire staple foods like rice, and their preferences for local versus foreign options significantly influence their decision-making process. Examining the influence of financial and societal factors on individuals' perspectives towards rice provides insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by local rice growers. The preference for locally produced rice is heavily influenced by the sales strategies employed by local farmers. Advertising campaigns, brand development, and communication channels collectively influence consumers' perceptions of the products they purchase. Examining the performance of various strategies facilitates a comprehensive comprehension of the fluctuations associated with purchasing and selling commodities.

6.3 Quality Assessment of Local Rice

The quality of local rice, encompassing taste, feel, smell, and cooking ability, significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions. Understanding how people evaluate local rice quality is crucial as it reveals its popularity among buyers.

A major thing that determines how good rice is its taste and feel when it's cooked. People's likes and dislikes about these feeling parts are very important to how they see local rice. Tasting and judging rice helps us measure the quality of locally made rice. The smell of cooked rice and how it cooks, like being soft or sticky, makes people think it is really good quality. People often link certain smells and cooking qualities to how fresh or real rice is (Wang et al., 2022). Checking these things gives a complete view of the quality situation. People often think about locally made rice compared to imported types when they buy food. Looking at what people think about home-grown rice compared to foreign kinds helps find ways to make it better and highlights the good things about locally made choices.

Factors like financial resources and cultural background influence individual decisions, making it crucial for farmers, legislators, and others to understand these aspects. Engaging in rice production is essential to improve local acceptance, as the price of rice significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions. To effectively compete, domestically produced rice must strike a harmonious equilibrium between affordability and aesthetic appeal. Examining the extent to which individuals are impacted by fluctuations in prices allows us to gauge their willingness to pay for domestically produced rice (Azifuaku et al., 2020). Increasingly, individuals' purchasing decisions are influenced by their well-being. Domestically cultivated rice, which is commonly perceived to have fewer additives and a shorter supply chain, may be considered a superior option for promoting health. Examining individuals' cognitive processes for health influences their dietary preferences, enabling us to identify novel food preferences. Purchasing locally sourced rice is highly significant due to its convenience and proximity. Factors such as availability in retail outlets, convenient purchasing, and user-friendly packaging collectively contribute to the overall satisfaction of

customers. The study identifies opportunities for improving logistics and marketing strategies for commodity transportation and promotion. It highlights the growing concern about trust in manufacturing and the need for transparent information about product origin and transformation, particularly among rice farmers. Transparency in operational methods is crucial for trust and honesty in consumer purchasing decisions (Beer et al., 2021). Understanding local rice preferences and opinions among Akwa Ibom State residents is essential for understanding their preferences and aversions. Factors influencing rice preference should also be considered. This comprehensive analysis offers a comprehensive view of the rice market, benefiting rice cultivation professionals, policymakers, and stakeholders in shaping the future of rice farming (Porter, 2020). It provides valuable insights into consumer behavior and brand loyalty.

7. Factors Contributing to Limited Patronage of Nigeria Rice

The reasons that make Nigerians buy less rice include a mix of market forces, problems with money, and social issues. It also includes the difficulties faced by people who grow or sell this rice in Nigeria. In this look, we go deep into the many parts that make it hard to accept rice made near us in Nigeria's market.

7.1 Market Analysis of Rice Consumption Patterns

The study of rice consumption in Nigeria offers insights into consumer preferences and behavior, highlighting the unique characteristics of the market influenced by cultural, economic, and global factors, and the varying culinary practices across different locations. The diversity of rice varieties, cooking techniques, and individual preferences highlights the necessity for farmers to align their produce with the local cultures. Shifts in rice consumption patterns are driven by urbanisation and evolving lifestyles. Urban dwellers seek rice varieties that are convenient to prepare and have a short cooking time. This has an impact on the functioning of the market (Loko et al., 2021). Local producers must adapt to these changes, recognising the importance of convenience in urban areas. The Nigerian market is enriched

with a diverse range of rice varieties due to globalisation. The availability of foreign rice and the utilisation of marketing strategies by major brands can potentially influence consumer purchasing decisions (Okoro et al., 2023). An understanding of how global forces influence rice consumption patterns enables local producers to thrive in a challenging market (Amolegbe et al., 2021).

7.2 Socioeconomic Factors Influencing Rice Purchases

The process of purchasing rice in Nigeria is intricately linked to both financial considerations and societal factors. Comprehending these components aids in discerning the market's approach to rice sales. Financial resources are crucial for the acquisition of rice. Affluent households may opt for extravagant or imported varieties of rice, whereas less privileged families may prioritise economical options. Examining the correlation between wealth and the purchase of rice can provide insights into various socioeconomic segments within the market (Lijie et al., 2022). Cost is a crucial factor for individuals to consider when choosing between locally produced rice and imported rice. The extent to which consumers are willing to pay significantly influences their decisions. Local artisans should assess the perceived value in relation to the price to identify potential barriers to increased consumer demand (Mamiit et al., 2021). Gaining knowledge about the advantages of rice and actively promoting local vendors can influence purchasing decisions regarding rice. Individuals with extensive knowledge of consumerism may opt to purchase locally produced rice due to its freshness, environmental friendliness, and support for local agriculturalists. The impact of educating and disseminating information on consumer behaviour enables us to gauge the effectiveness of these endeavours.

7.3 Challenges Faced by Local Rice Producers and Marketers

Local rice producers and vendors encounter numerous obstacles that hinder their success in marketing their product. It is crucial to identify and rectify these issues. This would enhance the overall competitiveness of locally cultivated rice. Securing loans and financing for

expanding their business poses a persistent challenge for small-scale rice producers. Insufficient funds hinder our ability to acquire new agricultural equipment, establish food processing facilities, and strategize our sales approach. Addressing these financial issues is crucial for the sustained expansion of the local rice industry. The lack of sufficient infrastructure, including roads and warehouses, poses significant challenges for local rice growers in selling their produce. Efficient transportation networks are essential for mitigating issues and minimising losses during the process of relocation. Spending money on infrastructure is crucial to fixing these problems with transporting stuff. How people see the quality of rice made in their location is very crucial for them to accept it in stores. Local artisans struggle to maintain high standards of quality and adhere to regulations (Chandel et al., 2022). Establishing robust quality control measures and standardised protocols is essential for building confidence and credibility in the industry. The influx of affordable, imported rice poses a significant challenge for indigenous growers. Foreign rice may possess superior quality or offer lower prices, hence creating challenges for the indigenous rice industry in terms of market competitiveness. Local artisans must understand the factors that influence consumers' choices when they are presented with imported alternatives.

The procurement of rice from Nigeria is a significant challenge that is influenced by market dynamics, economic factors, and difficulties encountered by local rice producers and vendors. We must have a comprehensive understanding of all these matters (Ugochukwu et al., 2020). Subsequently, we may devise strategies to eliminate obstacles in the market, enhance the competitiveness of domestically produced rice, and foster sustainable growth in Nigeria's rice sector. These interconnected elements necessitate the collaboration of all those involved, including those responsible for food production, policymakers, and individuals who demonstrate concern for the matter. This will enable us to optimise our utilisation of the local rice market.

8. Comparison of Local and Foreign Rice Patronage

Examining the rice purchasing habits of individuals from various regions and nations necessitates meticulous consideration of factors that influence their culinary preferences. This comparison discusses the determining factors, which encompass considerations of cost and assessment of its superior quality. It aids in illustrating the intricacies involved in consumers' selection of rice in supermarkets.

8.1 Factors Influencing Consumer Preferences

Individuals' choices wield significant influence over the market demand for both domestic and imported rice. Understanding people's preferences requires examining all the factors that contribute to decision-making. Individuals' culinary preferences are greatly influenced by their cultural background and customary dining choices. Frequently, the decision to consume a certain type of rice is closely associated with cultural practices and customary culinary methods. Small company owners and multinational corporations from other nations must navigate this intricate domain to align their offerings with the preferences of the local culture (Mann, 2020). Customers place significant importance on the aesthetics and age of a product. Local rice, which is typically perceived as having fewer additives and a shorter supply chain from farm to store, is commonly associated with freshness and potentially higher quality (Kovács et al., 2022). Gaining insight into individuals' perspectives on these attributes is crucial, as it facilitates comprehension of their preferences and the factors that contribute to their preferences. Individuals typically prioritise their dietary choices based on their health and nutritional requirements. Local rice, produced using traditional agricultural methods, may be perceived as a more advantageous option for one's well-being. Understanding the impact of health and nutrition on consumer purchasing behaviour provides valuable insights for effective business management. Individuals consistently choose companies they have confidence in, which is a crucial factor in their selection of products. Major multinational corporations typically garner global confidence and reliance (Lanuhu et al., 2021; Onyeneke et al., 2021). Conversely, small-scale local enterprises may need to establish credibility by

being transparent about their operations and ensuring the excellence of their products. Examining the level of consumer trust and brand loyalty is crucial to formulating robust marketing strategies. This can serve as a blueprint for effectively convincing customers to make repeat purchases from the same company and foster trust in their brand.

8.2 Price Comparison

The cost of rice, whether it's from a nearby town or another country, is a very important thing that affects how much people buy. People think about value compared to cost. A basic understanding of price changes helps in knowing things about markets.

For many shoppers, especially in places where cost matters a lot, price is an important thing to consider. Local rice can seem cheaper because of lower transportation costs and possible help or support. Looking at the price of local rice compared to foreign types helps us understand what people buy. They make choices based on their money. The cost differences between local and foreign rice can affect how businesses compete. It's very important for local producers and people in charge of rules to know why prices are different (Azuka et al., 2020; Ekanem et al., 2020). This includes the costs of making things, taxes on bringing goods from other countries, and the big help that some are giving but others aren't. This helps them make better decisions. A thorough study of cost differences helps to improve the market value of local rice. When buying things, people look at how much they think something is worth before spending their money on it. This means looking at how well, in great numbers, and overall happiness you get from buying something. Rice sellers need to clearly show why their product is better than imported types (Azuka et al., 2020). This will help them win against foreign rice. Studying what customers think about getting value for their money gives us an understanding of how they decide things.

8.3 Strategies for Encouraging Local Producers/Marketers

Assisting individuals involved in the production and distribution of rice within the food sector holds significant importance. This will enhance the economy, ensure food security, and manage resources in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and avoids depletion. This section discusses strategies that facilitate the promotion and marketing of domestically cultivated rice. These encompass governmental strategies, promotional concepts, and educational initiatives aimed at instructing consumers on optimising the utilisation of locally produced rice in markets.

8.3.1 Government Initiatives and Support

The government plays a crucial role in supporting local individuals in the production and commercialization of their commodities, including regulations, financial assistance, and location advancement. However, local artisans face challenges in securing funding, which can be addressed by providing favorable agricultural loans to promote the expansion of local rice farming. Accessible loans with favourable interest rates enable farmers to acquire modern agricultural equipment, expand their crop cultivation, and enhance the overall productivity of their farming operations (Olufemi & Oyom, 2019). To enhance the competitiveness of domestically produced rice, it is advisable for the government to provide subsidies for agricultural inputs. This encompasses the provision of complimentary funds for the acquisition of essential items such as fertiliser, seeds, and other necessities required for the cultivation of rice (Ameh & Lee, 2022). Subsidies reduce the production expenses of rice, resulting in a more affordable and superior product relative to others available on the market (Lucky, 2020). The accessibility of rice produced within the local area has improved for consumers. Government assistance has a crucial role in enhancing the productivity, flavour, and handling techniques of rice through research. Investing in initiatives that promote high-yielding and disease-resistant rice cultivars enables local farmers to enhance their agricultural output. This enables them to fulfil the demands of the food market. Addressing structural problems is crucial for the expansion of the local rice industry. The government can allocate

funds towards infrastructure development, including the construction and improvement of roads, trains, and storage facilities for products. Improved transportation infrastructure and effective business guidelines are crucial for the efficient delivery of locally cultivated rice to consumers. The government can formulate and execute strategies to assist local farmers and establish regulations for the sale of goods, restricting the influx of cheap, subsidized rice from foreign nations. These policies protect domestic producers from unjust competition and promote fairness for all.

8.3.2 Marketing Strategies for Local Rice

Effective marketing strategies enhance the visibility, desirability, and sales of locally produced rice. These encompass strategies to enhance its visibility at retail establishments or other locations where it can be located. Local artisans and vendors have various methods at their disposal to effectively showcase their items. Investing in branding and packaging for locally produced rice is crucial. This attribute contributes to its distinctive appearance (Bello et al., 2020). Employing vibrant packaging with very visible branding effectively conveys the product's quality and authenticity. Local artisans can collaborate with designers to produce packaging that is aesthetically pleasing and unique, thereby standing out on store shelves. Ensuring consistent quality is crucial for gaining the trust of consumers. Producers in the region should implement robust measures to ensure they are delivering high-quality products. This entails adhering to industry regulations and obtaining certifications. Obtaining documents certifying the organic nature or environmental friendliness of their rice enhances its appeal (Aiyedun et al., 2021). This contributes to the increased sales of locally produced rice. Collaborating with other stakeholders in the food industry helps expand the market reach of locally produced rice. By collaborating with retailers, restaurants, and renowned culinary figures, you may effectively promote your product. By adopting this approach, it will gain popularity. Collaborating to market locally produced rice can use the strengths of multiple groups. This serves to demonstrate the exceptional quality of our locally cultivated rice and significantly contributes to its promotion within our region (Peterson-Wilhelm et al., 2022). In the present era, the advent of the internet has provided numerous opportunities for business

promotion. Small enterprises could establish an online presence by means of websites and social media profiles. E-commerce platforms facilitate direct transactions between buyers and sellers, providing a convenient and expeditious buying experience. Providing discounts and cost reductions might pique clients' curiosity and motivate them to give them a try. Local artisans can collaborate with retailers in order to develop unique promotional initiatives. They may provide competitive pricing, bundled offers, or loyalty programmes for frequent shoppers. These efforts instigate a stronger inclination among individuals to purchase domestically produced rice as opposed to rice imported from other nations. Its significance lies in its ability to enhance agricultural practices and improve the quality of food for the entire population.

8.3.3 Consumer Education and Awareness Programs

It is crucial to educate individuals about the benefits derived from purchasing locally sourced rice. This will facilitate a shift in their perspective towards these options and promote the use of safer methods of shopping. Providing clients with information and knowledge about products enhances their affinity for a brand. Using the demonstration of the nutritional benefits of locally grown rice is an effective method for teaching. Individuals are increasingly developing a heightened consciousness regarding their dietary choices. Local producers can prioritise the inherent, uncomplicated characteristics of their rice (Verma & Srivastav, 2020). Collaborating with culinary experts and health specialists can provide the genuine endorsement required. Contemporary individuals have a heightened concern for the environment, which might be used by rice growers located near them. Informing individuals about the environmentally sustainable qualities of rice sourced from local growers, such as its positive impact on air quality and contribution to nearby ecosystems, resonates with those who have a strong concern for ecological matters. Engaging in social gatherings, educational courses, and study groups fosters a sense of proximity and connection with the local community. Local farmers could establish marketplaces to sell freshly produced commodities, demonstrate cooking techniques to educate people about food preparation, and provide education on the nutritional value of the food we consume. This enables them to engage in

direct communication with customers. Establishing trust necessitates the practice of being open and honest (Schoolman et al., 2021). Local artisans could educate individuals about the origins of their belongings. They provide information about the cultivation, production, and packaging processes before sale. Transparent and direct communication fosters confidence by assuring individuals of the reliability and integrity of nearby rice production. Collaborating with educational institutions enables extensive engagement with individuals. Local artisans could collaborate with educational institutions such as schools and universities to implement educational initiatives focused on the agricultural practices in the vicinity. These workshops educate individuals on the extent to which they contribute to the well-being of local farmers by supporting them, as well as the advantages of selecting locally sourced homemade rice. Strategies for increasing the involvement of local makers and sellers require a comprehensive approach that includes government assistance, effective marketing techniques, and educational initiatives to enhance people's knowledge. By aligning these strategies, individuals can establish a thriving region conducive to the expansion of rice cultivation in the vicinity. This also enhances people's awareness regarding the purchase of this food type and promotes favourable practices for all its consumers. To strengthen the local rice sector, it is imperative for governments, producers, sellers, and consumers to collaborate.

Conclusion

This review studies the way local and foreign rice markets work. It shows the different forces that affect what people buy and how their tastes change over time. Student enjoyment in cool things, money employment, and quality are asked to play big parts in deciding what people like to buy. The way rice is grown and sold around the world affects who is selling it, including laws made by governments and the marketing plans of foreigners as well. Local producers have to deal with a few problems. They do not always get enough money to borrow easily; they often struggle with building facilities like roads and bridges; and people sometimes think their products are not of good quality.

The review recommends that the government should bring in helpful steps like loans for farmers, money help, and building useful facilities to aid the production of local rice. Making clear rules and trading laws is very important for creating fair competition. Local rice producers and advertisers can work on issues like improving their brand, making sure the rice quality is good, and joining together in their marketing efforts. This will encourage consumers to see more value in buying locally made rice. Education programmes can be used for consumers to build a sustainable group of buyers.

More studies should look at how money and work background affect buying rice, different ways of using culture to make choices about food, and what makes certain ways of advertising work better than others. Studies that follow changes in people's choices and market shifts over a long time could give more complete details.

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