



Evaluating Marketing Strategies Impact on Yam Vendor Happiness in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of marketing strategies on yam vendor happiness in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. Employing a purposive sampling technique, 248 yam vendors were selected. Data were collected using a structured Likert scale questionnaire adapted from the World Values Survey (WVS). Factor analysis identified key factors influencing marketing strategies, contrasting traditional and modern methods. A probit regression model analyzed the relationships among these variables. The study found that modern marketing methods significantly enhance yam vendor happiness, with household size also having a marginal positive effect. Policy implications include promoting modern marketing strategies, such as online platforms and mobile communication, to improve vendor satisfaction. Additionally, training programs and incentives should support the adoption of modern methods. Support programs should also account for household size by tailoring resources to vendors' family contexts and providing extra assistance to those with larger families.

Keywords:

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1. Introduction

Globally, yam is ranked fourth most harvested root and tuber crop, with an annual production of approximately 74.9 million tons valued at \$14 billion, highlighting their economic importance

(Amponsah et al. 2023). Africa, particularly West Africa, stands as a dominant force in yam cultivation, with Nigeria emerging as the world's largest yam producer, contributing over 66% of the global production (Kalu, et al. 2023).

In Nigeria, yams play a critical role in food security and income generation, significantly impacting the lives of millions.

Despite their importance, traditional yam marketing practices in Nigeria are often marred by inefficiencies. These practices typically occur in open-air markets, where 65% of Nigerians prefer to purchase their goods from local traders and hawkers (Adetayo, et al. 2022). The yam supply chain involves various actors, including facilitators, brokers, transporters, wholesalers, and retailers, each playing distinct roles in the movement of goods (Akura, et al. 2023). However, recent efforts to improve yam marketing have seen the introduction of e-commerce windows, such as yam.ng, providing broader market access for yam producers (Ike, et al. 2021).

Understanding the relevance of yam marketing in Nigeria involves recognizing its potential to contribute to both economic growth and the happiness of the people. The "service economy" has been explicitly linked to "happiness" outcomes and as one way of enhancing the quality of service and engagement of both service provider and the served. Happiness, often synonymous with utility or welfare in economics, is a universal human aspiration. Policies aimed at growth and developments are essentially policies aimed at promoting happiness, the ultimate goal of human activity (Ewugi & AbdKarim, 2018). Happiness encompasses positive emotions, life satisfaction, and a sense of belonging, influencing productivity, creativity, and work-related behaviors (Shams & Kadow, 2023; Dwyer, 2023; Benjamin et al., 2023; Ballas & Thanis, 2022). It holds significant sway in bolstering individual decision-making and problem-solving capabilities, fostering career advancement, and enhancing overall quality of life and societal harmony (Zhu et al., 2021).

People are driven by the pursuit of happiness, guiding their decisions and actions, even though success in increasing happiness

may vary. Major life decisions, such as those in yam marketing involving production, processing, transportation, storage, marketing and Sales, distribution, technology and innovation, consumer preferences and trends, health management, infrastructure, market access, and environmental considerations, are influenced by the expectation of happiness. Understanding this motivation and uncovering hidden costs and benefits through the study of happiness offers insight into human behavior beyond economic analysis. The disparity between expected and experienced happiness, as explored in happiness economics, highlights the importance of studying both happiness and expectations for a comprehensive understanding of human behavior (Rojas, 2016).

While the economic significance of yam is well-documented, the relationship between yam marketing strategies and the happiness of vendors remains largely unexplored. Traditional practices, such as carrying yams on the head, coexist with modern methods like e-commerce, creating a complex landscape that could significantly affect the well-being of those involved in yam sales. These traditional practices often come with physical fatigue, occupational hazards, limited economic returns, lack of social support, restricted access to modern marketing platforms, cultural and social stigma, and unstable income (Busari et al., 2015). Although modern approaches offer potential economic benefits, the extent to which yam vendors adopt these strategies is unclear. The hypotheses suggest that yam vendors using modern marketing strategies, such as social media, experience greater happiness, reduced stress, and improved economic performance compared to those using traditional methods like hawking. Significant differences in job satisfaction and well-being are also expected between the two groups.

Recent studies by Akura et al. (2023), Ema et al. (2023), Ike et al. (2021), Kanu et al. (2021), and Omotosho (2021) have focused on

the structure of yam marketing, production, public relations, yam sellers, and the transportation system of yam marketers. However, none have empirically examined the differences between the happiness of the traditional yam marketing strategy and the modern yam marketing strategies of yam vendors. To fill this gap, this paper aims to compare the happiness levels of yam vendors employing traditional marketing strategies like hawking of yam on the head with those utilizing modern approaches like social media platform.

2. Literature review

Theoretically, this study is anchored on two main theories: Crawford's Agricultural Marketing System Efficiency Theory and Bentham's Utility Theory. Crawford's Agricultural Marketing System Efficiency Theory emphasizes the importance of an efficient marketing system in enhancing the profitability and sustainability of agricultural businesses. According to this theory, efficiency can be achieved through improved marketing practices, better infrastructure, and the adoption of innovative technologies. This framework is particularly relevant to yam vendors, as it underscores the need for strategic marketing and digital tools to optimize their operations and maximize their returns.

Bentham's Utility Theory posits that individuals seek to maximize their happiness and satisfaction. In the context of yam vendors, this theory suggests that the adoption of innovative marketing strategies and digital tools can lead to increased profits, reduced stress, and ultimately, greater happiness. By enhancing their economic performance, vendors can achieve a higher level of utility, reflecting in improved well-being and life satisfaction.

The choice of Crawford's Agricultural Marketing System Efficiency Theory and Bentham's Utility Theory over other possible frameworks is based on their relevance and applicability to the study's focus. Crawford's

theory is particularly suited for agricultural markets, making it ideal for analyzing the efficiency of yam vendors' marketing strategies. It emphasizes the importance of improved marketing practices, infrastructure, and the adoption of technology to enhance profitability and sustainability, which are critical factors for yam vendors. Other marketing theories, such as Porter's Five Forces, are less focused on the specific dynamics of agricultural markets.

Bentham's Utility Theory, on the other hand, directly addresses the core concept of vendor happiness by focusing on maximizing individual satisfaction. This theory is well-suited for examining how different marketing strategies—traditional versus modern—can influence the happiness and well-being of yam vendors. While other psychological theories could explore happiness, they do not link as effectively to economic performance as Bentham's theory does. Therefore, the combination of these two theories provides a robust framework that integrates both marketing efficiency and personal satisfaction, offering a comprehensive approach to understanding the impact of marketing strategies on yam vendors' happiness.

Over the past decades, the definition and understanding of marketing have evolved across generations. Traditionally, marketing was viewed as a trading activity involving market analysis to meet customer needs, product development, identifying target audiences, and facilitating connections between products and customers. It included setting sales prices, organizing sales efforts, and efficiently using company resources to influence purchases (Gyenge et al., 2021). King (2001) described marketing as a managerial philosophy focused on mobilizing and controlling the entire corporate effort to solve consumer problems while enhancing profitability.

Marketing has expanded to include not-for-profit, political, and social sectors (Gamble et al., 2011). Technological advancements and

new media have redefined marketing, although this has sometimes diluted its meaning, conflating terms like sales, advertising, customer service, and interactions (Gamble et al., 2011). In the 21st century, marketing practices have radically changed, becoming more comprehensive, adaptable, and data-centric. Modern marketing blends creative thinking and execution with research, strategy, technology, and analysis to fulfill organizational goals (Erkin & Muborak, 2022).

2.1 Marketing Strategy and Happiness in Yam Marketing

Marketing strategy is a deliberate effort aimed at achieving sustainable well-being and is essential for any business to expand its reach. It serves as a guiding roadmap, outlining goals and directing efforts towards success. A well-crafted strategy empowers a business to achieve its objectives and ensures alignment with customer expectations (Mayureshnikam & Patil, 2018).

The concept of happiness is a relatively new area of interest within marketing, whereas satisfaction has long been a prominent topic, particularly in services marketing. Johnson & Stewart (2017) suggest that satisfaction has been the primary positive emotion studied in marketing because it was the first emotion examined in the context of post-purchase behavior. Despite the presence of other positive emotions like happiness, excitement, amusement, and pleasure, satisfaction has remained central to marketing research.

Traditionally, marketing's impact on happiness-related concepts has been examined through economics-based approaches, focusing on the relationship between marketing and "quality of life," often measured using economic indicators (Reynolds & Barksdale, 1978; Samli, 1987). Day (1987) identifies thirteen domains used to measure overall quality of life, with two—"Purchase and Consumption of Goods and Services" and "Material Possessions"—being influenced by marketing. In developing

countries, these domains are translated into satisfaction measures to study the relationship between marketing and overall life satisfaction (Krasnikov et al., 2024). Marketing strategies often emphasize choice, which is more associated with the acquisition process than with the consumption or enjoyment of goods or services.

Happiness has become a significant topic in academia, politics, and daily life over the past three decades (Stoia, 2016). The term "happiness" evolved in English during the early 16th century, initially meaning being fortunate or favored by luck (McMahon, 2006). In contemporary psychology, happiness is conceptualized as subjective well-being, encompassing life satisfaction, positive affect, and low negative affect (Ballas & Thanis, 2022). Yams hold cultural importance in many parts of the world. Recognizing and celebrating this heritage through marketing can foster consumer pride and connection, potentially increasing happiness. Studies show that yams symbolize abundance, fertility, and social unity in West African societies (Nweze et al., 2023). Marketing yams as products of sustainable practices can attract environmentally conscious consumers, enhancing their happiness and fulfillment.

Akura et al. (2023) conducted an empirical analysis on the structure, conduct, costs, and returns of yam marketing in Benue State, Nigeria. Data from 350 market actors were analyzed using methods like the Gini Coefficient and Herfindal Index. The study revealed significant differences between the market margins of wholesalers and retailers, with yam marketers suffering low gross margins and negative returns on investment.

Ema et al. (2023) explored the socio-cultural dimensions shaping yam production and marketing in southern Nigeria. Using a multi-method approach, the study found a heavy reliance on traditional farming practices and tools among farmers, most of whom were aged

60 and above. The study highlighted the significant role of indigenous wisdom and ritual practices in yam farming.

Chima (2023) examined the relationship between agricultural marketing and economic growth in Nigeria. Data from 225 professionals were analyzed using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation and SPSS. The study found positive and significant relationships between agricultural marketing and key economic indicators, concluding that agricultural marketing enhances economic growth in Nigeria.

Ihemeje et al. (2023) investigated the correlation between marketing strategies and SME performance in Kogi State. Using Multiple Regression and correlation matrix techniques, the study found that specialization, promotion, and price strategies significantly influence SME performance. Additionally, customer satisfaction was positively related to differentiation strategy.

Mendoza et al. (2021) employed a simple linear regression model to explore factors affecting happiness at work. Using a questionnaire adapted to measure quality of working life, job satisfaction, and workplace happiness, the study identified key factors influencing employees' perception of happiness. Omotosho (2021) analyzed yam marketing in Lagos State using data from 171 participants. The study revealed that 83% of respondents engaged in yam marketing as their primary occupation, using various public relations strategies to connect with customers. The most frequently used strategy was phone calls, while the least used was Facebook.

The above empirical reviews highlight key gaps in the literature, including a lack of focus on vendor happiness, limited exploration of modern marketing strategies, neglect of younger farmers and marketers, geographical concentration in regions like Lagos and Benue, and the absence of a multidimensional analysis of how economic factors affect the happiness

and well-being of yam vendors. Addressing these gaps would lead to a more comprehensive understanding of yam marketing and its broader implications.

3. Methodology

This study employed purposive sampling to select 248 yam vendors from a target population of 700 in Minna Metropolis, using a structured Likert scale questionnaire adapted from the World Values Survey (WVS) to collect data on marketing strategies and happiness. Factor analysis was conducted to identify underlying constructs—traditional marketing strategy (TRAMKS) and modern marketing strategy (MODMKS)—with factors having loadings of 0.3 and above retained. The study utilized probit regression analysis to explore the relationship between these marketing strategies and vendor happiness, with happiness (Happy = 1) and unhappiness (Unhappy = 0) as binary responses.

$$Pr(Hp_i=1/p) = \Phi\beta_0 + \beta_1tramktst_i + \beta_2modmktst_i + \beta_3edu_i + \beta_4ag_i + \beta_5hhz_i + \beta_6mst_i + u_i \quad 1$$

where $Pr(Hp_i=1/p)$ denotes vendor happiness; $tramktst$ = Traditional Marketing Strategies, $modmktst$ = Modern Marketing Strategies, edu = Education, ag = Age, hhz = Household Size, and mst = Marital Status, and u = error term.

4. Results

4.1 Reliability Test

This study employed Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of various dimensions. According to George and Mallery (2003), Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with values below 0.5 considered unacceptable.

Table 2 shows that most vendors are aged between 26-35 (33%) and 36-45 (35%), with younger vendor's likely bringing energy and enthusiasm to their work but also facing stress from balancing family and societal obligations. Older vendors, though more experienced, may

deal with physical fatigue, which could affect their well-being.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Reliability

Measure	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Marketing Strategy	6	0.51

Source: Field Survey, 2023 using Stata/SE 14.2

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Yam Vendors

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
< 25	61	25
26 – 35	82	33
36 – 45	88	35
46 – 55	15	6
56 & above	2	1
Edu level:		
Non-formal	93	37.50
Formal	155	62.50
Marital Status:		
Single	41	16.53
Married	206	81.02
Widow/Divorcee	1	2.42
Hhold Size		
< 3	172	69.36
4-6	73	29.44
7-10	3	1.21

Source: Field Survey, 2023 using Stata/SE 14.2

Educationally, 62.50% of vendors have formal schooling, potentially improving their business decision-making, communication, and marketing strategies, leading to increased happiness. In contrast, the 37.50% of non-formally educated vendors may face challenges in business expansion and securing loans, potentially reducing their satisfaction.

Marital status shows that 81.02% of vendors are married, with singles making up 16.53%, and 2.42% widowed or divorced. While married vendors may benefit from family support, financial pressures could affect their happiness. Single and widowed/divorced vendors may experience emotional strain and financial challenges. Regarding household size, 69.36% of vendors have fewer than three household members, likely reducing financial stress and leading to greater contentment, whereas larger

households (29.44% with 4-6 members) may increase the financial burden, potentially lowering happiness.

4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

This study utilized Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the common factors influencing each construct, as it facilitates understanding the covariances among the constructs (Kahn, 2006). The Kaiser eigenvalue criterion (1960) was applied, with eigenvalues less than 1.0 being discarded and items with loading factors below 0.30 being removed from the analysis. The total number of interacting variables, based on their factor loading values, was grouped into identifiable factors. Each factor retained homogeneous variables that are strongly correlated with one another within a construct.

Table 3. Rotated factor loadings for Traditional Marketing Strategy

Variables	Factor loading	Loading Point	Factor renamed
I am satisfied with my marketing method (mks1)	0.4108	1	TRADM KS
My marketing strategy commiserate with my profit making (mks2)	0.4120	2	
My marketing strategy is beneficial to yam buyers (mks3)	0.5543	2	

Note: Extraction Method: Exploratory Factor Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization at .3 loading and above.

Table 3 shows mks1 ("I am satisfied with my marketing method"), has a factor loading of 0.4108 on Factor 1 indicates a low positive correlation. This suggests that satisfaction with the marketing method is lowly associated with the traditional marketing strategies represented by Factor 1. For mks2 ("My marketing strategy commiserates with my profit making"), the factor loading of 0.4120 on Factor 2 indicates a low positive correlation. This shows that the

alignment of the marketing strategy with profit making is lowly associated with the traditional marketing strategies represented by Factor 2. For mks3 ("My marketing strategy is beneficial to yam buyers"), the factor loading of 0.5543 on Factor 2 reveals a moderate positive correlation compared to the other items. This suggests that the perceived benefit to yam buyers is more moderately associated with the traditional marketing strategies represented by Factor 2.

Table 4. Rotated factor loadings for Modern Marketing Strategy

Variables	Factor loading	Loading Point	Factor renamed
I am aware of new ways or method of selling yam like online business, mobile phone contact, supper market etc (mks4)	0.4141	2	MODMK S
I am willing to embrace the modern marketing method (mks5)	0.778	1	
I have embraced new methods (mks6)	0.4342	1	

Note: Extraction Method: Exploratory Factor Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization at .3 loading and above.

Table 4 revealed that mks4 ("I am aware of new ways or methods of selling yam, such as online business, mobile phone contact, supermarket, etc."), has factor loading of 0.4141 on Factor 2 indicates a low positive correlation. This suggests that awareness of new marketing methods is lowly associated with modern marketing strategies represented by Factor 2.

For mks5 ("I am willing to embrace modern marketing methods"), the factor loading of 0.7780 on Factor 1 reveals a strong positive correlation. This indicates that willingness to adopt modern marketing methods is strongly associated with modern marketing strategies represented by Factor 1. For mks6 ("I have embraced new methods"), the factor loading of

0.4342 on Factor 1 shows a low positive correlation. This suggests that having adopted

new methods is lowly associated with modern marketing strategies represented by Factor 1.

Table 5. Probit estimation on Marketing Strategy and Happiness of yam Vendors

Variables	Coefficient	Marginal Effect
Trad. Mkt. Strategy	.02537 (0.938)	.00451 (0.938)
Mord. Mkt. Strategy	.37818 (0.040)**	.06725 (0.035)**
Household Size	.17819 (0.069)*	0.3168 (0.069)*
Marital Status	-.01805 (0.954)	-.00321 (0.954)
Education Level	.00711 (0.975)	.00126 (0.975)
Age	-.0249 (0.123)	-.00443 (0.122)
Chi ² (6)	8.75	
Prob> Chi ²	0.1882	
Rpseudo R ²		

Notes: P values are in parentheses, significance level: *10%; **5%; ***1%

The probit estimation results on table 4 reveal that modern marketing strategies have a significant positive effect on the happiness of yam vendors. Specifically, the coefficient of 0.37818, with a p-value of 0.040, indicates that modern marketing strategies enhance vendor happiness. This is further supported by the marginal effect of 0.06725, with a p-value of 0.035, which confirms that the adoption of modern marketing methods is associated with increased happiness among vendors. Household Size has a coefficient of 0.17819 with a p-value of 0.069 suggests a marginally significant positive effect on vendor happiness. The marginal effect of 0.3168, with a p-value of 0.069, indicates that a larger household size is associated with increased happiness among yam vendors, though the significance is close to the conventional 5% threshold.

While, variables such as traditional marketing strategy, marital status, education level, and age were found to be insignificant in affecting the happiness of yam vendors. The

traditional marketing strategy had a coefficient of 0.02537 and a marginal effect of 0.00451, both with p-values of 0.938, indicating no significant impact. Marital status, with a coefficient of -0.01805 and a marginal effect of -0.00321, also showed no significant effect, as reflected in the high p-value of 0.954. Education level had a coefficient of 0.00711 and a marginal effect of 0.00126, both with p-values of 0.975, suggesting it does not significantly influence vendor happiness. Age was not included in the results but was not significant based on the given p-values.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The study concludes that modern marketing strategies have a significant positive impact on the happiness of yam vendors with household size also showing a marginally significant positive effect, whereas traditional marketing strategies do not show a statistically significant effect. Specifically, the Probit estimation indicates that adopting modern marketing

methods, such as online selling, mobile contacts, and supermarkets, has a strong correlation with increased happiness and satisfaction among yam vendors. Vendors who are willing to embrace modern techniques experience greater financial returns and reduced stress, aligning with Bentham's Utility Theory that links increased satisfaction to enhanced economic performance. Traditional marketing methods, on the other hand, do not significantly contribute to vendor happiness, possibly due to inefficiencies in profit-making and market expansion.

The findings support the literature on the relevance of modern marketing strategies in enhancing business performance and personal satisfaction. Studies like Johnson & Stewart (2017) and Krasnikov et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of innovative approaches in marketing and their positive effects on well-being, which this study corroborates. However, the study also partially refutes literature like Akura et al. (2023), which reported low returns on traditional marketing efforts, as this study finds traditional methods have negligible effects on yam vendor happiness. Recommendations:

1. Promotion of Modern Marketing Infrastructure: Government and private sector stakeholders should focus on enhancing access to digital tools, online platforms, and supermarkets, particularly in rural areas. This would support vendors in adopting more efficient marketing practices, leading to increased income and satisfaction.
2. Education and Training Programs: Given the significant role education plays in improving marketing strategies, policies aimed at educating yam vendors about digital marketing and modern sales techniques could have a positive effect on their well-being. This should include training programs to enhance digital literacy and marketing innovation.

3. Support for Technological Integration: Subsidized or low-cost technological infrastructure for yam vendors, such as mobile apps or e-commerce platforms, would enhance the adoption of modern marketing methods, increasing vendor profitability and happiness.

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