



## MARKETING STRATEGIES OF LOCAL PALM PRODUCTS (LPP) IN ONITSHA CITY, NIGERIA

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### **Abstract:**

This study examined the marketing strategies and challenges encountered by local palm product producers in Onitsha City, Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, it assessed the level of influence of marketing strategies on locally produced palm products in terms of distribution and promotion, and identified the challenges encountered by local palm producers in these two dimensions. The study was anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations theory. A descriptive-survey research design was employed, with data collected from 130 respondents selected through convenience sampling from a population of 194 registered small-scale palm product producers. A structured questionnaire measured on a four-point Likert scale served as the primary data collection instrument, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.933. Data were analyzed using weighted mean. The findings revealed that marketing strategies exerted a moderate level of influence on locally produced palm products, with distribution (WM = 3.07) and promotion (WM = 3.05) both contributing meaningfully to market performance. The study also found that local palm producers encountered considerable challenges in both promotion (WM = 3.39) and distribution (WM = 3.26), driven by financial constraints, limited access to modern promotional platforms, logistical difficulties, and competitive pressures. The study concluded that existing marketing strategies remain functional but have not reached their full potential, and that distribution and promotional challenges are interdependent. It recommended diversification of distribution channels, adoption of low-cost promotional strategies, improved market infrastructure, and accessible credit facilities for small-scale producers.

**JEL:** M31, M37, L11, Q13

**Keywords:** marketing strategies, distribution, promotion, challenges, palm products, Onitsha City

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## 1. Introduction

Nigeria remains the largest producer of palm products in Africa, with an output of about 1.4 million metric tons (Oluwole, 2024). The palm industry contributes meaningfully to the country's economy, supporting agricultural activities that account for nearly one-quarter of the national Gross Domestic Product and provide employment for a significant share of the population (Oxford Business Group, 2024). States such as Anambra depend heavily on palm products for household consumption, trade, and agro-based income generation. Despite this economic potential, the industry continues to struggle with marketing-related constraints that affect both distribution and promotional activities.

Many local producers rely on traditional marketing approaches such as word-of-mouth, informal community advertising, and simple market displays, which are insufficient in a competitive business environment (Nzeocha *et al.*, 2024). These approaches limit visibility and weaken the ability of locally produced palm products to compete with imported alternatives that benefit from structured branding and strategic promotional campaigns (Nse-Nelson, 2021). The limited adoption of modern promotional tools, such as digital marketing, visually appealing branding, and consumer-focused messaging, is often linked to financial challenges and inadequate training in contemporary marketing techniques. This situation reduces the perceived value of local palm products, especially in urban locations where consumers are more exposed to sophisticated advertisements.

Distribution remains another major constraint affecting the market performance of palm products in Nigeria. Poor transportation networks, limited storage facilities, and inefficient logistics systems restrict the movement of palm products from rural production areas to major urban markets (Omotoso *et al.*, 2022; Zakaree, 2022). These problems reduce access to wider market opportunities and restrict the ability of producers to build consistent supply channels. As long as distribution challenges persist, local palm products will continue to face difficulties in securing nationwide market penetration and competing against foreign brands that take advantage of stronger logistics systems.

At the local level, Onitsha City, one of the busiest commercial centers in Anambra State, offers a revealing context for understanding the marketing of locally produced palm-based products in Nigeria. Beyond banga, red palm oil, and vegetable oil, palm produce in Nigeria is processed and sold in diverse forms such as palm kernel oil, palm kernel cake, ogbono oil extract, palm wine, local soap (black soap), pomade and body creams, cooking margarine, and palm-oil-based foods, including ofe akwu (banga soup), akara, and fried snacks. These products are widely consumed across households, food vendors, and small restaurants, reflecting strong and consistent demand. However, despite this demand, many small-scale producers in Onitsha struggle to achieve sustained market visibility due to infrastructural limitations, weak branding, and restricted exposure to modern promotional platforms. Imported alternatives and large-scale domestic brands often dominate shelf spaces because they are attractively

packaged, standardized, and supported by intensive advertising and promotional campaigns that appeal to urban consumers (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2022).

In practice, most locally produced palm products in Onitsha are marketed through traditional channels such as open markets, roadside stalls, and direct sales to retailers or food vendors. For example, red palm oil and palm kernel oil are commonly sold in recycled plastic bottles, metal containers, or calabashes, while palm wine is distributed in kegs or jerrycans with little or no product labeling. Although these methods are culturally accepted and affordable, they limit product differentiation and reduce consumer trust among buyers who prioritize hygiene, certification, and consistent quality. Producers' restricted exposure to digital tools, low levels of technical training, and unreliable internet access further constrain the adoption of social media marketing, online order systems, or brand storytelling that could enhance product appeal and expand market reach (Ijje & Iyoriobhe, 2023).

Distribution and infrastructural challenges further compound these marketing difficulties. Poor rural-urban road networks affect the transportation of palm fruits and processed products such as palm kernel cake, soap, and cooking oil from processing communities to urban markets in Onitsha. Inconsistent electricity supply limits opportunities for improved processing, storage, and packaging, often leading to quality deterioration and supply shortages. As a result, locally produced palm-based products are less consistently available in supermarkets, pharmacies, and organized retail outlets, where consumers increasingly prefer to shop. In contrast, imported palm oil derivatives and branded domestic products enter the market through more reliable logistics and distribution systems, ensuring steady supply and visibility (Osondu *et al.*, 2024). Overall, the local experience in Onitsha illustrates how limited infrastructure, restricted promotional exposure, and weak distribution networks continue to shape the competitiveness of a wide range of palm-based products in Nigeria, despite their cultural relevance and economic importance.

### **1.1 Review of Empirical Studies**

The empirical literature on palm oil marketing in Nigeria has grown substantially in recent years, yet several important gaps remain that the present study on marketing strategies and challenges of local palm product producers in Onitsha City, Anambra State, is well-positioned to address. What follows is a continuous discussion of relevant empirical studies from 2020 to 2026, with in-text citations formatted in APA 7th edition style, organized around the study's two research questions and the literature gaps that the present study fills.

On the distribution dimension of marketing strategies, a number of recent studies have examined how palm oil moves through marketing channels across different Nigerian states. Ogebe *et al.* (2025) surveyed 120 palm oil marketers in Ogbadibo Local Government Area of Benue State and found that palm oil marketing operates through both wholesale (58.3%) and retail (41.7%) channels, with cooperative societies serving as the primary funding source for 61.1% of marketers. The business was profitable, but the major constraints were the high cost of transportation, lack of access to credit facilities,

and substitution by competing products. Similarly, Samuel *et al.* (2026), studying 120 respondents in Ile-Oluji/Oke-Igbo Local Government Area of Ondo State, reported a marketing efficiency of 135% and a return on investment of 1.35, confirming profitability, but identified seasonality, perishability, labour shortages, and high farm-gate prices as the key constraints limiting distribution effectiveness. Abasilim *et al.* (2025) took a structure-conduct-performance approach to palm oil marketing intermediaries in Edo State and found the market to be highly concentrated, with processors and wholesalers dominating sales while trade associations restrict entry and limit competition.

Wholesalers captured a disproportionate 63.16% of the profit share versus processors at 46.71%, and retailers at just 20.79%, and high transportation and storage costs accounted for about 23.8% of total variable costs, reflecting significant inefficiencies in the distribution chain. Matthew and Emaziye (2024) confirmed similar patterns in Delta State, where 108 oil palm marketers showed profitability with a benefit-cost ratio of 1.23, with cooperative societies again emerging as the dominant funding source. Edet *et al.* (2024) examined marketing channel choice among 300 oil palm fruit farmers in Akwa Ibom State and found that middlemen/agent marketing and direct sales in local markets were the most preferred channels. Education, experience, farm income, and access to credit were significant positive determinants of the choice of the middlemen channel, while household size and distance to market favoured direct sales, suggesting that socioeconomic factors shape distribution decisions in important ways (Edet *et al.*, 2024).

Nwankwo and Okeke (2020) compared the marketing efficiency of oil palm wine and raphia palm wine in South East Nigeria, identifying five marketing channels and noting that the constraints to palm wine marketing, in descending order of seriousness, were high cost of transportation, scarcity of modern storage facilities, low shelf life, seasonality of supply, and price instability. However, a clear gap across all these studies is their geographic focus: they cover Benue, Ondo, Edo, Delta, Akwa Ibom, and South East states broadly, but none examines distribution strategies specifically in Onitsha City or the broader Anambra commercial hub, despite Onitsha being one of the largest commercial centres in southeastern Nigeria with a distinctive urban market structure that may produce different distribution dynamics.

On the promotions dimension, the literature is comparatively thinner, and what exists tends to deal with agricultural products generally rather than palm products specifically. Afolayan *et al.* (2024) reviewed digital marketing adoption among oil palm farmers in Nigeria and found that while digital tools offer opportunities for reaching target audiences and building brand loyalty, adoption remains constrained by the high cost of advertising, infrastructure limitations, particularly internet access, and Nigeria's cultural and linguistic diversity. This is one of the few studies that directly connects promotion strategies to the palm oil sector, yet it is a general review rather than an empirical study of actual promotional practices among local producers.

Abua (2022) evaluated the effects of marketing promotion on farm products in Cross River State and found that awareness creation, social media use, branded promotional gifts, and customer loyalty all had positive impacts on farm product

sales. While this confirms the potential of promotional tools for agricultural products, it did not focus on palm products or explore the unique promotional challenges that local palm oil producers face. Akinbo and Olajumoke (2025), studying agribusinesses in Oyo State, found a strong correlation between human capital-driven promotional efforts, staff training, customer engagement capacity, and knowledge dissemination, and improved business outcomes, including profitability, market expansion, and customer loyalty. Eja-Osang *et al.* (2024) examined product strategies among agro-based SMEs in Aba, Abia State, and found that product quality, product image, and product packaging strategies all had significant effects on business performance. The gap here is clear: no study in the recent literature has empirically examined promotion strategies as adopted by local palm product producers in a specific urban commercial setting like Onitsha, nor has any study assessed the level of influence that these promotional activities have on local palm product marketing outcomes.

Regarding challenges, the recent literature has extensively documented the obstacles facing the Nigerian palm oil industry, though again with geographic and thematic blind spots. Shehu *et al.* (2021), using qualitative thematic analysis with semi-structured interviews analyzed through Atlas.ti software, identified a lack of good planting materials, poor funding, improper milling, and a lack of technology as the main challenges facing the palm oil industry in Nigeria. Ogunro (2023), studying palm oil companies in Akwa Ibom State with 45 employees, found that the high cost of land was the highest-ranked challenge, while currency devaluation was the leading factor causing value loss in production. Adikaibe *et al.* (2024), analyzing the oil palm value chain in Imo State, identified inflation, lack of finance, land constraints, the tenure system, limited market information, and pricing dynamics as the key challenges affecting value chain actors. Achoja (2020) analyzed threat factors facing small-scale palm oil enterprises in Delta State and found the most significant threats to be climate hazards, particularly bush burning, product competitiveness with substitutes, theft of palm bunches, non-participation of youth, and aging farmers.

Oyebode *et al.* (2025), studying disruptions in the oil palm value chain among 114 processors in Ondo State, similarly identified climate change and inadequate finance as the most prominent causes of disruption, with price forecasting and improving communication with suppliers being the most effective mitigation measures. Adewale *et al.* (2024) examined the seasonal price variation of palm oil in Nigeria from 2016 to 2022 and identified the need for biofuel, production growth, governmental regulations, market dynamics, and seasonality as important factors influencing price fluctuation. While these studies collectively paint a detailed picture of production-side and market-level challenges, they overwhelmingly focus on production constraints rather than on the specific challenges that local producers face in distributing and promoting their products within urban commercial environments.

Directly relevant to the Anambra State context, Chima *et al.* (2023) used structural equation modeling with a sample of 265 palm oil growers to examine value chain effects on product innovation in Anambra's palm oil industry, finding that customer focus, R&D management, process management, and supply management all had positive and

significant effects on product innovation. Ikenga (2025), studying gender-based constraints in oil palm value chains in Anambra and Enugu States with 108 respondents, found that women face particular difficulties accessing land, credit, and technology, resulting in lower resource efficiency, with cultural restrictions further limiting their participation. Olatunbosun and Okunlola (2025), studying 120 respondents in Ondo State, confirmed that women are more actively involved in processing and marketing activities of palm oil, and recommended strengthening cooperative societies with extension services to enhance knowledge on effective processing and marketing strategies. Obot *et al.* (2022), studying 210 rural women in Akwa Ibom State's oil palm value chain, found that lack of finance was the topmost constraint, followed by high cost of labour and high cost of transportation. Ikuenobe *et al.* (2021) provided a broader policy review, noting that the growth of Nigeria's palm oil industry has been largely driven by government policies with little private sector involvement, and that despite enormous potential, suitable land, climate, a large domestic market, and skilled labour, the concerted industrial-scale expansion seen in Southeast Asia has not been replicated in Nigeria. Shehu and Salleh (2020) traced the necessitating factors behind Nigeria's failure in palm oil to the oil boom and decline in agriculture, the civil war, and the persistence of traditional production systems.

Overall, the literature reveals several distinct gaps that the present study addresses. First, there is a geographic gap: while palm oil marketing has been studied in Delta, Benue, Ondo, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Imo, and Enugu States, no recent study has focused on Onitsha City, which is a major commercial nerve centre in southeastern Nigeria with unique market dynamics shaped by its position as a trading hub. Second, there is a thematic gap regarding promotions: the existing literature overwhelmingly focuses on distribution channels, market structure, and profitability, with very limited empirical attention to how local palm product producers actually promote their products and what influence these promotional activities have on marketing outcomes. The few studies that address promotion do so at the level of general agricultural products or manufactured goods (Abua, 2022; Akinbo & Olajumoke, 2025), not specifically for locally produced palm products.

Third, the literature tends to treat challenges in aggregate or from the perspective of large-scale industry actors, rather than examining the specific distribution and promotion challenges faced by small-scale local producers operating within a particular urban market environment. Fourth, while some Anambra-focused studies exist, particularly on value chains (Chima *et al.*, 2023) and gender dynamics (Ikenga, 2025), none have combined the analysis of marketing strategies (both distribution and promotions) with the identification of challenges within a single study design focused on local palm product producers. The present study thus fills these gaps by providing location-specific empirical evidence from Onitsha City, addressing both dimensions of marketing strategy, and disaggregating challenges by distribution and promotion, a structure that the existing literature has not pursued.

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory proposed by Rogers (1962), which provides a useful lens for understanding how local palm producers respond to changing marketing demands. Rogers explained that individuals and groups adopt new practices based on perceived usefulness, compatibility with existing routines, and the clarity with which the outcomes of an innovation can be observed. The theory further posits that adoption occurs at different rates across various groups: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards, depending on factors such as access to information, exposure to new approaches, and willingness to take risks (Boora, 2023). In agricultural contexts, adoption patterns often reflect the realities of rural production systems, where decisions are shaped by perceived economic benefits, communication networks, and social influences (Becerra-Encinales *et al.*, 2024; John *et al.*, 2023).

Nasir *et al.* (2025) noted that considerations such as cost, expected returns, and availability of reliable information strongly influence whether producers accept new methods, while Peng *et al.* (2024) added that communication channels, ranging from interpersonal networks to mass media, play a major role in determining how quickly new practices spread. For local palm producers in competitive markets, the platforms through which they receive information and the influence of peers can shape their willingness to adopt more advanced promotional tools or strengthen their distribution systems. Grounding this study in the DOI theory is appropriate because many producers of local palm products still operate within traditional marketing structures, even as the market increasingly demands modern promotional practices and more efficient distribution systems. The theory supports an understanding of why some producers adopt digital promotion, improved branding, or structured distribution networks, while others remain dependent on older methods.

## 1.3 Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the marketing strategies and the challenges encountered by local palm product producers in Onitsha City, Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, it sought to address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of influence of marketing strategies on locally produced palm products in terms of:
  - a. distribution; and
  - b. promotions?
2. What are the challenges encountered by local palm producers in terms of:
  - a. distribution; and
  - b. promotions?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design and Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-survey research design to examine the influence of marketing strategies on locally produced palm products and to identify the challenges encountered by local palm producers. This design was appropriate for gathering structured quantitative data reflecting respondents' perspectives and experiences (Mursa *et al.*, 2025).

### 2.2 Population and Locale of the Study

The study population consisted of owners and managers of small, home-based palm product businesses operating within Onitsha City, Anambra State, Nigeria. These micro- and small-scale enterprises typically employ ten to fifteen workers, rely on personal savings or cooperative contributions for capitalization, and have been in operation for five to fifteen years. Their products include red palm oil, banga oil, palm kernel oil, palm kernel cake, palm wine, local black soap, and palm-oil-based food ingredients. These businesses are concentrated in commercial areas such as Ochanja Market, Main Market, Bridge Head, Fegge, Woliwo, and Inland Town. According to the Palm Producers Association of Nigeria (Onitsha branch), there were 194 registered small-scale palm product producers in the area at the time of the study. A sample of 130 respondents was determined using the Raosoft (2004) sample size calculator. Convenience sampling was employed to select respondents who were readily accessible (Golzar *et al.*, 2022). Inclusion criteria required that respondents were owners or managers actively involved in daily operations, operated within Onitsha City, and had been in business for at least one year. Individuals not directly involved in production, marketing, or distribution, those operating outside Onitsha City, businesses less than one year old, and non-managerial employees were excluded.

### 2.3 Data Gathering Tools and Procedures

A structured survey questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire comprised two parts. The first part assessed the influence of marketing strategies on locally produced palm products in terms of distribution (6 items) and promotion (6 items), measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 4 (very high) to 1 (very low). Items were adapted from Njeru (2022), Kasiso (2017), and Odhiambo (2015). The second part identified challenges faced by local palm producers in distribution (6 items) and promotion (6 items), also on a four-point Likert scale, with items developed from the reviewed literature. A pilot test was administered to 15 local palm product producers in Aba City from November 7 to 8, 2025. Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.933, indicating very high internal consistency.

Following approval from the research adviser and thesis panel, the questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms from November 9 to 15, 2025. A research proxy residing in the study area distributed the survey link to eligible respondents through social media platforms and email. Ethical considerations were observed

throughout the study, including anonymity, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the assurance of no harm to participants. Upon completion of data analysis, all raw data files were permanently deleted in accordance with applicable data protection regulations. Weighted mean was used to analyze the level of influence of marketing strategies on locally produced palm products and the challenges encountered by local palm producers.

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Level of Influence of Marketing Strategies on Locally Produced Palm Products

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Distribution	3.07	Moderate level of influence
2	Promotion	3.05	Moderate level of influence
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>Moderate level of influence</b>

Presented in Table 1 are the results of the level of influence of marketing strategies on locally produced palm products. The overall weighted mean of 3.05 indicates a moderate level of influence, showing that while marketing strategies contribute meaningfully to the market performance of palm products, their effects differ across specific dimensions. Distribution, with a weighted mean of 3.07, and promotion, with a weighted mean of 3.05, both fall under a moderate level of influence, suggesting that these two strategic areas serve as central mechanisms through which local palm producers position their products in the market. Although both indicators are strong, their combined overall rating settles at a moderate influence, which reflects uneven application or inconsistent effectiveness among producers, possibly driven by variations in resources, market access, and familiarity with different marketing tools.

The findings of this study imply that distribution and promotion jointly shape how palm products circulate and gain visibility within local markets. For local palm producers, this creates a marketing environment where effective distribution networks and socially grounded promotional efforts can lead to increased demand. Conversely, those unable to access reliable distribution channels or community-based promotional pathways may experience limited market penetration. For distributors and wholesalers, the results imply dependence on producers who can consistently supply products through structured channels, making distribution reliability a determining factor in market stability. For agricultural cooperatives, insufficient coordination may restrict their capacity to help members achieve broader exposure, while strong coordination allows members to benefit from shared promotional influence and pooled distribution systems. These implications influence not only short-term sales but also long-term market positioning, competitive advantage, and the potential for expansion.

The findings support the use of Rogers' (1962) diffusion of innovations theory, which framed this study. The dominance of distribution and promotion as influential strategies reflects the theory's assertion that innovations spread through channels that users perceive as advantageous, observable, and compatible with existing practices. Palm producers appear more inclined to adopt strategies that align with their established

operational routines, such as community-oriented promotion and familiar distribution arrangements, while more novel or technologically intensive strategies may diffuse more slowly due to perceptions of complexity or limited accessibility. The results illustrate how innovation adoption within traditional agricultural markets progresses through stages shaped by cultural fit, shared norms, and interpersonal networks, all of which Rogers (1962) identified as foundational to diffusion outcomes.

The findings validate the idea of Anh (2025), who found that distribution efficiency and promotional familiarity were major determinants of consumer engagement with local agricultural products in Vietnam, demonstrating that traditional market structures continue to guide purchasing patterns. The findings also correspond with those of Keefe *et al.* (2024), who established that Indonesian agricultural enterprises relied heavily on interpersonal promotion and localized distribution systems due to limited exposure to digital marketing options and constrained logistics infrastructures. This follows similar observations made by Deka and Goswami (2024), where small-scale organic tea growers in Darjeeling and Assam in India benefited most from distribution models embedded in community markets and promotion conducted through trusted social networks, showing that embedded practices remain powerful drivers of consumer response.

However, the findings are in contrast with that of Lakshanaakamali and Arul (2023) whose study on agri-foodpreneurs revealed that digital distribution platforms and online promotional campaigns exerted a strong influence on market reach and sales performance. Their results reflected a more technologically integrated agricultural sector in which digital innovations had already achieved widespread adoption, a pattern not reflected in the present context. Overall, these patterns depict a marketing landscape in which traditional mechanisms continue to influence local palm producer strategies and consumer responses, while newer innovations enter gradually rather than abruptly. The continued strength of interpersonal and distribution-based practices suggests an evolving but still transitional marketing environment for locally produced palm products.

**Table 2:** Summary of the Challenges Encountered by Local Palm Producers

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1	Promotions	3.39	Considerable challenges
2	Distribution	3.26	Considerable challenges
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>Considerable challenges</b>

Presented in Table 2 are the results of the overall challenges encountered by local palm producers. The overall weighted mean of 3.33 reflects considerable challenges, indicating that both promotional and distribution activities face substantial barriers that collectively affect the market performance of locally produced palm products in Onitsha City. Among the individual indicators, challenges in promotions received a weighted mean of 3.39, while distribution-related challenges registered 3.26, both classified as considerable. These results suggest that promotional and distribution inefficiencies operate together to constrain producers' ability to enhance product visibility, reach wider markets, and

maintain competitive positioning. The combined effect of financial limitations, knowledge gaps, logistical constraints, and competitive pressures presents a complex operational environment for producers. The findings imply that local palm producers experience limitations that restrict market expansion and revenue generation. Producers facing financial and logistical barriers may struggle to sustain a consistent product supply, adequately promote their products, or respond to competitive pressures. Distributors and wholesalers encounter challenges in planning and coordinating supply due to unpredictability in both distribution efficiency and promotional effectiveness, potentially leading to inventory inconsistencies or reduced market coverage. Agricultural cooperatives are similarly affected; limited member capacity in addressing promotion and distribution challenges constrains collective marketing efforts and reduces the cooperative's ability to leverage group strength for market penetration, potentially affecting member profitability and long-term sustainability.

The findings further lend credence to Rogers' (1962) Diffusion of Innovations theory, which guided this study. The persistence of considerable challenges in both promotion and distribution illustrates how the adoption of innovative practices is influenced by perceived complexity, compatibility with existing practices, and availability of supportive resources. While producers may recognize the advantages of modern marketing techniques or efficient distribution methods, structural and resource-related barriers slow the diffusion of these practices, resulting in uneven adoption across the local palm production sector. The study shows that the characteristics of the innovation, combined with socio-economic and infrastructural contexts, play a crucial role in shaping adoption patterns. The findings follow similar observations by Hoang (2021), who reported that agricultural producers in Vietnam were constrained by both financial limitations and logistical difficulties, which simultaneously restricted their ability to implement effective promotional and distribution strategies. His study revealed that insufficient funds limited investment in advertising, participation in community events, and development of marketing materials, while logistical challenges, including unreliable transport and fragmented distribution networks, delayed the delivery of products to markets. This combination of financial and operational constraints significantly reduced market reach, slowed product turnover, and weakened overall market efficiency, mirroring the considerable challenges faced by local palm producers in the present study.

This situation is consistent with Anggraeni *et al.* (2022), who revealed that local food producers struggled with inadequacies in both promotional channels and distribution networks. Their research showed that despite producing high-quality products, producers were unable to consistently reach their target audiences due to limited access to marketing platforms and unstable logistics systems. These deficiencies resulted in reduced product visibility, delayed deliveries, and constrained opportunities for market expansion, reflecting similar dynamics observed in the current study. This also aligns with the results of Qwabe *et al.* (2025), who found that traditional agricultural producers in rural South Africa faced intertwined challenges related to competing with larger, well-resourced brands and accessing reliable distribution systems. Their study

revealed that the inability to efficiently distribute products compounded the difficulties of promoting them in competitive markets, restricting consumer engagement and limiting the potential for scaling operations. This closely corresponds with the present study's findings, where local palm producers encounter both promotional and distribution barriers that interact to reduce market penetration, hinder sales growth, and affect overall operational sustainability. However, the findings contradict those of Chykurkova *et al.* (2025), who found that agribusiness enterprises experienced high effectiveness in both promotion and distribution due to advanced digital marketing integration and well-established logistics systems, illustrating a context in which innovations had been widely adopted and operational barriers were largely mitigated. Overall, the results suggest that local palm producers operate within a context of compounded challenges, where limitations in both promotion and distribution reinforce each other, shaping the market dynamics and operational strategies of producers, distributors, and cooperatives.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1) Marketing strategies exert a moderate level of influence on locally produced palm products in Onitsha City, with both distribution and promotion contributing meaningfully to market performance. Distribution strategies, though slightly more influential, operate alongside promotional efforts to shape how palm products circulate and gain visibility within local markets. The moderate influence suggests that while existing marketing strategies are functional, they have not yet reached their full potential due to uneven application, resource limitations, and producers' reliance on traditional marketing approaches over more innovative or technologically driven methods.
- 2) Local palm producers in Onitsha City encounter considerable challenges in both distribution and promotion, with promotional challenges being slightly more pronounced. Financial constraints, limited access to modern promotional platforms, logistical difficulties, knowledge gaps, and competitive pressures collectively hinder producers' ability to expand their market reach, maintain consistent product supply, and effectively communicate the value of their products to consumers. These challenges are compounded by their interdependence, as inefficiencies in distribution reduce the effectiveness of promotional efforts, and inadequate promotion limits the returns on distribution investments.

#### **5. Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1) Local palm producers should diversify their distribution channels by exploring partnerships with cooperative societies, market associations, and local retailers

beyond their immediate trading areas to broaden market coverage and reduce dependence on a single distribution route. Cooperative groups should facilitate the development of shared distribution networks that allow members to pool transportation and logistics resources, thereby reducing individual costs and improving delivery consistency.

- 2) Local palm producers should adopt low-cost promotional strategies such as social media marketing, product branding, and participation in local trade fairs and community events to increase product visibility and consumer awareness. Agricultural extension agencies and cooperative associations should organize training workshops on basic marketing and promotional skills tailored to the needs and capacities of small-scale palm product producers.
- 3) Local and state government agencies should improve market infrastructure, including road networks, storage facilities, and market spaces, to reduce the logistical barriers that constrain both distribution and promotional effectiveness for local palm producers in Onitsha City.
- 4) Financial institutions and microfinance organizations should develop accessible and affordable credit facilities targeted at small-scale palm product producers to address the capital constraints that limit their ability to invest in both distribution expansion and promotional activities.
- 5) The Palm Producers Association of Nigeria (Onitsha branch) should serve as a coordinating body for collective marketing initiatives, including bulk purchasing of packaging materials, joint promotional campaigns, and negotiation of favorable distribution terms with transporters and wholesalers.
- 6) Future researchers should conduct comparative studies across different commercial cities in southeastern Nigeria to determine whether the challenges and marketing strategy influences identified in Onitsha City are consistent with those experienced by palm producers in other urban markets. Additionally, studies employing qualitative or mixed-method designs could provide deeper insight into the specific decision-making processes that shape producers' adoption of marketing strategies.

### **Conflict of Interest Declaration**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study. No financial, personal, or institutional relationships influenced the research process or its outcomes.

### **About the Author**

Ngwu Philip Onyekachi is a goal-oriented business professional with strong expertise in operations, strategic planning, and leadership. He is currently completing his Master's in Business Administration at the University of the Cordilleras, Baguio City, in 2026, after earning his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Marketing Management from the same institution in 2022. Philip is recognized for his analytical thinking, problem-solving ability, and commitment to organizational growth. He is

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