

Chapter 5


The Future of Sustainable Marketing: Stakeholder Perspectives on Sustainable Agricultural Marketing

Sinothando Tshuma

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5726-9375>

Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe

Mercy Dube

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0429-8441>

Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

Delight Rufaro Hungwe

Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

Reason Masengu

Middle East College, Oman

ABSTRACT

The concept of sustainable agricultural marketing is gaining momentum with many countries seeking to sustainably increase their market access, with rising concerns of opening regional borders in the African continent or rather creating free trade zones. These initiatives have raised questions regarding the role of various stakeholders towards sustainable agricultural marketing. The thrust of the chapter is to determine the perspectives of various stakeholders such as the government, suppliers, farmers, and the customers in embracing sustainable agricultural practices. The chapter's methodology reviewed various literatures to determine the trends in the development, implementation, and the future life of sustainable agricultural marketing. The study was informed by the stakeholder theory by Freeman. The major findings were that sustainable agricultural marketing can only be achieved through stakeholder consensus in embracing the concept.

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INTRODUCTION

In the African continent, the main source of sustainable living is rooted in agriculture (Paull 2011) since the inception of planet earth however, It is noted that Africa has 25% of the world's arable land, and very fertile compared to other continents (Jones, Breuning-Madsen et al. 2013), yet it still has an output of 10% globally (Jayaram, J. Riese et al. 2010). The devastating part is that the rural population is dwindling as many migrants seek formal employment in towns leaving the agricultural sector very unsustainable. Many of the countries in the African continent are developing countries, with many of them prone to hunger, droughts, starvation, and corruption and up rise of climate change. It has been estimated by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) that if the agricultural sector is not redefined sustainably, the current food output can drop by more than 50% while the world's population will be over 9 billion by 2025. This mismatch in output and expected demand is likely to result in acute starvation worldwide. As many countries strive to implement sustainable agricultural practices, more debate in parliaments has escalated on the concern that a drive to increase crop productivity through the use of fertilizers and information technology based systems can lead a decline in soil fertility and destroy the thrust of sustainable agriculture (Gerles, 2018). These drawbacks of artificial inputs have led to the rise in demand of sustainable agricultural practices by embracing organic farming to cab environmental degradation (Pagliai et al. 2004).

The African continent's drive to embracing sustainable agriculture has seen some countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia receiving universal subsidy in the 1980s (Dorward, 2009). The initiated activities were mainly dominated government-controlled input (and output) marketing system, where farmers were supplied with inputs that befit their farms ain terms of soil type and rainfall levels (Baltzer and Hansen 2012). The government in turn then controlled the marketing of the produce with many of the produce sold at subsidised prices and sometimes subsidised credit. At the end of the program, sustainable input use by farmers was improved although many farmers complained of poor allocations, lengthy processes to access the inputs, and some government connected farmers got more inputs than they can use per season (corruption). On fertiliser distribution, there was an outcry by many farmers who were victims of being over charged, some made to declare receiving the inputs not received and some were at the mercy of government monopoly control (Banful, 2010).

The outcry by farmers on the in efficiencies of the subsidy liberalised the market place and sustainable input use declined and countries were forced back on the drawing board (Crawford et al, 2006).

For Africa as a continent to be self sufficient, it must focus on smallholder agricultural productivity through use of sustainable agricultural practices. Most of these small holder farmers have been ignored and their potential neglected over the years. Strategic plans of many African countries failed to insert smallholder farmers as back born to agricultural productivity increases. The major blow to limited agricultural marketing in Africa rests on the low productivity and poor African Adjustment Plans that happened in the 1980s as many of these nations claimed their independence. At this time, the new government failed to honour the new land barons with inputs to continue production which in turn led to corruption and abuse of office powers by many authorities. IN the early 2000 many NGO incepted to alleviated huger in the African continent, which saw the creation of AGRA by Rockefeller and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the centre of gravity of input supply began to shift steadily toward private sector, especially indigenous, "SME" private agri-businesses (Baltzer and Hansen 2012).

In this era, many private players entered the industry to supply sustainable inputs and offered innovative seeds and farming platforms and competed for farmers with the best inputs (AASR, 2013).

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