

# EXPLORING WHOLESALERS' SATISFACTION WITH FARMERS ASSOCIATION MARKETING STRATEGIES IN BUKIDNON

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## ABSTRACT

*This research explored the satisfaction of six (6) wholesalers in Managok and Linabo, Malaybalay City, with the marketing strategies of farmers' associations. Since these associations play a key role in connecting farmers to markets, exploring wholesaler satisfaction is vital for improving agricultural sales. The study used a qualitative approach, employing purposive sampling to select participants and gathering data through semi-structured interviews using an interview guide questionnaire. The study found that wholesalers were satisfied with the farmers' associations' focus on fair pricing, value satisfaction, reliable quality, income generation, competent service, and quality improvement. The research suggests that associations may continue prioritizing these areas to improve communication and address any concerns raised by wholesalers. By focusing on these improvements, farmers' associations can strengthen their relationships with wholesalers and support the growth of the agricultural sector.*

**Keyword:** *Reliable Quality, Fair pricing, Value Satisfaction, Income generation, Competent Service, Quality Improvement*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Wholesalers' satisfaction is a critical factor in the success of any business, including farmers' associations in the agriculture sector. As intermediaries between local farmers and wholesalers, these associations are vital in promoting agricultural products and ensuring they reach the market effectively. Exploring wholesalers' satisfaction can significantly enhance the marketing strategies employed by farmers' associations, leading to improved relationships and increased sales.

Studies worldwide emphasize that effective marketing strategies, such as proper product quality management, reliable distribution, competitive pricing, and good relationship marketing, directly influence buyer satisfaction. Strong communication and value delivery increase customer loyalty among business clients, including wholesalers. International research also highlights that customer-oriented marketing and quality assurance enhance long-term business relationships (Huang, 2018).

Globally, farmers face challenges in meeting wholesalers' needs with marketing strategies due

to inconsistent product quality, limited access to technology, and weak supply chain coordination. Wholesalers are often dissatisfied when marketing strategies fail to ensure product consistency, timely delivery, and competitive pricing. International studies highlight the need for strong producer organizations and marketing systems to maintain buyer confidence (Jake & Khan, 2021).

Filipino scholars claim that the success of agricultural marketing depends on farmers' ability to meet buyers' expectations in product quality and consistency. Personalization in marketing and trust-building efforts improved buyer satisfaction and retention. Philippine studies also show that organized groups like farmers' associations increase bargaining power and improve marketing performance because they operate collectively (Nakelse et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, farmers' associations struggle with limited market access, fluctuating product prices, and inadequate marketing strategies. Wholesalers sometimes find agricultural products unreliable due to poor post-harvest handling, inadequate packaging, and a lack of standard grading systems. These issues reduce wholesaler

satisfaction and limit the market potential of the farmers' associations. The national challenge is to build stronger farmer-buyer relationships through improved marketing strategies (Perenio & Amor, 2019).

Despite the existence of farmers' associations and their marketing efforts, there is limited exploration of how wholesalers evaluate these strategies. Some associations are facing difficulties in maintaining long-term partnerships with wholesalers, possibly due to issues in product consistency, pricing competitiveness, delivery reliability, and relationship management.

The significance of the study provides farmers' associations with valuable insights to improve their marketing strategies, based on direct feedback from wholesalers. By exploring what wholesalers need and expect, farmers can strengthen their relationships with buyers and establish stable partnerships. The study also guides farmers in enhancing essential aspects of their operations, such as product quality, pricing systems, and customer service. Wholesalers benefit from improved marketing strategies because these lead to a more consistent supply of products, better quality, and smoother business transactions.

This study explored and assessed wholesalers' satisfaction with the marketing strategies implemented by farmers' associations in Bukidnon, described the current marketing strategies these associations employ, and examined wholesalers' satisfaction with product quality, pricing, customer service, and overall service performance. It also sought to understand the key factors that influence wholesalers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with farmers' associations' marketing strategies. It aimed to address this gap by providing a focused exploration of wholesalers' specific needs and expectations that are currently unmet, for improving marketing practices to enhance overall satisfaction and market effectiveness.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

This study focused on exploring wholesalers' satisfaction with farmers' association marketing strategies in Managok and Linabo Basakan District of Malaybalay, Bukidnon.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do wholesalers perceive their satisfaction with product quality and pricing?
2. How do wholesalers in Bukidnon describe their experiences and satisfaction with the marketing strategies employed by the farmers' association?

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research Design**

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. A qualitative, exploratory, descriptive design describes the phenomenon by exploring the perspectives of participants. The study was used this design to conduct interviews and investigate wholesalers' satisfaction with farmers' association marketing strategies in Basakan District, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon. A qualitative research design is useful for collecting new ideas, exploring phenomena, and understanding the perspectives or experiences of individuals or groups of people.

### **2.2 Locale of the Study**

This study was conducted in the Barangay of Managok and Barangay Linabo, located in the Basakan District of Malaybalay City, Bukidnon. Both Managok and Linabo are considered urbanizing communities, where agricultural activities continue to thrive despite the gradual growth of residential and commercial developments. These areas are known for their active farmers' associations and diverse agricultural production, making them suitable locations for research involving farming practices, marketing strategies, and community-based agrarian systems.

### **2.3 Participants of the Study**

The participants of the study were selected six (6) wholesalers who are members of farmer associations in Managok and Linabo Basakan District, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon.

### **2.4 Data Gathering Procedures**

The research was conducted in Linabo and Managok follows established research guidelines and ethical protocols. Before initiating any data-gathering activities, the researcher secured all required permissions from the appropriate local authorities, including the barangay offices,

farmers' association leaders, and other relevant institutions in both communities. The researchers ensured that the study was officially recognized and supported within the two areas.

To ensure ethical compliance, the researchers prepared comprehensive documentation, including consent forms, participant information sheets, semi-structured interview guides, and questionnaires. These materials align with ethical and legal standards, ensuring that the rights, safety, and well-being of participants from Linabo and Managok were fully protected throughout the research process (Renoy & Rens, 2017).

Before each interview, participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and their rights as voluntary contributors. They were assured of confidentiality and informed that they could withdraw at any time without consequences. Only after understanding these details did they provide their informed consent to participate. By following these procedures in both Linabo and Managok, the researchers maintained a high level of transparency, respect, and professionalism, ensuring that the data collection process was ethically and aligned with accepted research standards (Ramos & Leo, 2021).

### 2.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved transcribing the audio-recorded interviews, coding the transcripts with predetermined codes aligned with the research questions, and organizing the coded data to identify patterns and themes, thereby creating a narrative report describing the participants' experiences and perspectives. This thorough and rigorous process enabled the reliable and meaningful identification of key themes and patterns in the data, providing valuable insights into participants' experiences and perspectives.

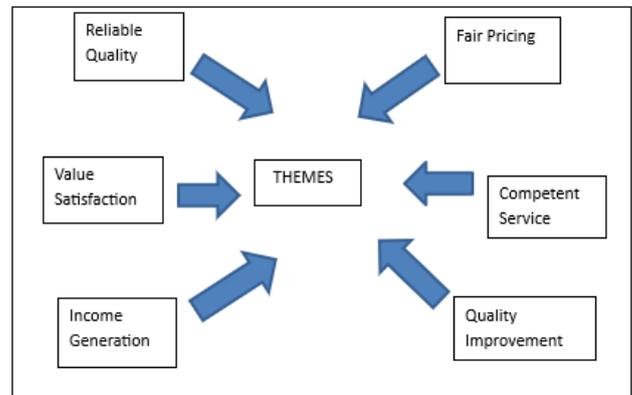
## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter analyzed and examined the findings based on narratives of exploring wholesalers' satisfaction with farmers' association marketing strategies in Basakan District, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon. The information presented came from an interview with six (6) participants.

Six (6) main themes emerged that show the main effects of the intervention: (i) reliable quality, (ii)

fair pricing, (iii) value satisfaction, (iv) competent service, (v) income generation, and (vi) quality improvement.

Figure 2



*Yes, I can tell you the quality is good: the rice is fragrant, delicious to eat, soft, not hard, and doesn't spoil easily even when stored. Some other rice gets hard and spoils quickly. (R1 L7-9 P1)*

*Their products are good because they last a long time and are affordably priced. (R3 L13-14 P1)*

*Yes, their product quality is really good. That's what's important for us wholesalers, so we can also make a profit. (R4 L14-15 P1)*

Participant 1 said that the quality was good, the rice, it has a fragrant smell it is also soft, delicious taste, and stays fresh longer than other types of products. The response highlights reliability in terms of product freshness and shelf life, maintaining good quality over time, which builds trust in its dependability. Participant 3 stated that the products are durable and affordably priced, which makes them more attractive to wholesalers. When a product remains suitable for a long period and retains its value, it reflects reliable quality that consistently meets wholesalers' expectations. For them, good product quality is essential because it helps them earn profit and ensures wholesalers' satisfaction.

Participants consistently stated that the product has reliable, high-quality characteristics, which strongly contribute to wholesalers' satisfaction. Highlighted qualities such as fragrance, softness, and long-lasting freshness show that the product maintains its good condition over time. Reliability builds trust because wholesalers can depend on the product to remain fresh and appealing. Products are durable and affordable—a combination of long-lasting quality and

reasonable cost makes the product more attractive and beneficial for wholesalers. Since wholesalers rely on quality products to earn a profit, a product's consistency and dependability are essential in meeting their expectations.

These findings, supported by Gladys et al. (2023), state that wholesalers' satisfaction depends on how farmers' association marketing strategies support stable quality, competitive pricing, consistent products, and overall profitability. When strategies align with the wholesaler business needs and market realities, they strongly agree and express satisfaction. If strategies create challenges such as inconsistent quality or weak practices, they may disagree or express dissatisfaction.

### **Theme 2: Fair Pricing**

*Yes, I'm satisfied with what they offered to me. I'm satisfied with their product; the quality is good, the price is right, and I don't feel cheated. (R2 L28-29 P1)*

*Yes, they achieved it. The quality is good, the price is right, and their products are excellent. It's something to be happy about, especially for small business owners like me. (R3 L30-32 P1)*

Participants 2 and 3 expressed intense satisfaction with the products they received. They highlighted that the quality is consistently good, the price is fair, and they felt being treated honestly as customers. The combination of good quality and reasonable pricing makes the products especially valuable and beneficial, particularly for small business owners who rely on affordable yet reliable goods. It revealed that wholesalers were satisfied with the farmers' associations' pricing, finding it both reasonable and balanced. This satisfaction stems from prices that align well with product quality, ensuring fair pricing.

It showed a strong satisfaction with the products and pricing offered by the farmers' association. They consistently emphasized three essential factors: good product quality, fair pricing, and honest treatment of customers. This results in a positive experience for wholesalers, especially for small business owners who depend on affordable yet dependable products to sustain their livelihood. When wholesalers feel that the price they pay matches the quality they receive, they view the transaction as fair and worthwhile. Their feedback showed that the farmers' association's

pricing strategy was effective because it balances affordability with quality, making wholesalers feel valued and respected. Overall, participants' satisfaction reflects the farmers' association's success in providing fair prices and reliable products, which in turn leads to stronger trust and better business relationships.

These findings were supported by Kardes et al. (2018), who found that wholesalers' perceptions of dissatisfaction with fair pricing strategies depend on whether the pricing supports profitability, competitiveness, and trust in the supplier. Fair, transparent, and consistent prices can lead to satisfaction, while unfair, unpredictable, or unjustified prices lead to dissatisfaction. This statement illustrates the central importance of pricing strategies in shaping wholesalers' perceptions of farmer associations and their overall satisfaction with the marketing strategies.

### **Theme 3: Value Satisfaction**

*Yes, I'm also satisfied with their prices because they're not expensive for the quality. They match the price to the product's quality. The more expensive ones are imported, while the cheaper ones are locally sourced. Their prices are really proportionate to the quality. ( R1 L42-45 P2)*

*Yes, their prices are very fair. They set their prices at the minimum, and the quality is good. They make a small profit, and we make a profit too. (R2 L46-47 P2)*

*Yes, but sometimes their prices are too high. But it's not a big deal because if you ask for a discount or negotiate a lower price, they're okay with it. (R4 L50-51 P2)*

Participant 1 said that the prices are fair and reasonable, especially when compared to the quality of the product. They recognized that higher prices usually correspond to better or imported products, while cheaper options are locally sourced showing that the pricing is proportionate to quality.

This participant perceived that they were getting good value for their money, as price and quality are well matched. Participant 2 expressed her appreciation that the seller keeps prices at a level where both sides can earn profit, which is important for their businesses. Indicating that satisfaction is not only with product value, but

also with the mutual benefit and fairness in the pricing structure. Although participant 4 stated that prices can be high at times, this is not a major issue because the farmers associations is open to negotiation or giving discounts when requested, which maintain a sense of good value despite occasional price concerns.

Wholesalers' perception highlighted of the farmers association's pricing as fair, reasonable, and aligned with product quality. Clearly stated that the prices match the quality, understanding that higher-priced products are often better or imported, while cheaper ones are locally produced. That statement shows that the participant feels confident they are receiving good value for the amount they pay. Further emphasized fairness by appreciating that the farmers' association sets prices in a way that allows both sellers and buyers to earn a profit. The statement reflects a balanced and mutually beneficial pricing system, which strengthens trust and supports long-term business relationships. Although one participant stated that prices can sometimes be high, this concern is reduced because the farmers' association is open to negotiation and willing to offer discounts when needed. Such strategy helps maintain wholesaler satisfaction by showing that the association values its customers and is willing to adjust prices to support them, the participants' feedback highlights that fair pricing, good value, and the association's willingness to negotiate all contribute to wholesalers' positive satisfaction with the pricing strategies.

These findings supported by SanJose et al. (2019) found that customers evaluate their satisfaction with a company's marketing strategies based on how effectively these strategies meet or exceed their expectations, deliver benefits, and create positive experiences throughout the buying process. Satisfaction is essentially for customers emotion and cognitive response to what they receive compared to what they expect. When marketing strategies are aligned with customer needs such as fair pricing, reliable product quality, accessibility, and trustworthy communication customers tend to perceive higher value.

#### **Theme 4: Competent Service**

*I can share my experience. They sell good products, and their strategy is good unlike others who just focus on making a profit and don't care if the*

*customer is satisfied. The farmers' association, on the other hand, thinks about their customers whether they are satisfied, happy, and didn't regret their purchase or waste their money. The farmers' association has a different perspective; they know it's not easy to earn money and they won't scam customers like other businesses. (R1 L67-72 P2&3)*

*My experience is that their service is excellent. They're attentive until you buy their product, and their products are good and worth the price. (R2 L73-74 P3)*

*From my experience buying from them, I've become a loyal customer of the farmers' association. They have good implementation in their association, they are united, and they help each other to provide good service to their customers. I've also experienced that they are disciplined as a farmers' association. (R6 L84-87 P3)*

Participant 1 shared positive experiences with the farmers' association. The response consistently highlighted that the association not only offers good-quality products but also shows a strong commitment to customer satisfaction, unlike other sellers who focus mainly on profit. The farmers' association was described as honest, considerate, and aware of how hard customers work to earn their money, which is why they avoid dishonest practices.

This participant perceived the association as ethical, trustworthy, and considerate, understanding customers situations and ensuring they don't feel cheated. These reflect competence through honesty, empathy, and wholesalers care results of a good service. Participants 2 also emphasized the association's excellent customer service that they are attentive, supportive, and ensure that customers feel satisfied with their purchase. Combined with good quality products, this attentiveness contributes to their perception of excellent and competent services where the wholesaler feels valued and well-assisted.

Participant 6 stated the important of the unity, discipline, and good management within the association. This internal unity and discipline translate into consistent, reliable, and high-quality service for wholesalers, demonstrating competence not just at the individual level but as a collective association. Because of these positive experiences, quality products, genuine care for wholesalers, and strong associations values, some

wholesalers have even become loyal buyers to the farmer associations (Participant 1,2, & 6).

These findings supported by Khan (2017) Who asserted that customers express satisfaction with a companies marketing strategies that emphasize competent services through positive feedback, repeat purchases, recommendations, online reviews, strong engagement, fewer complaints, and long-term loyalty. These expressions reflect that the company not only promoted service competence but also demonstrated it in practice.

#### **Theme 5: Income Generation**

*Yes, it helps not only our business but also our livelihood. We earn a profit, we can buy food and necessities, and we can provide for our needs. (R1 L90-91 P3)*

*Yes, it's a big help as a business owner. The farmers' association has helped me earn income from the products I bought from them because their prices are affordable, and I make a profit. (R4 L97-99 P3)*

*For me, farmer's associations are a big help to business owners like me, in order for my business to thrive. Especially if the quality of the product that I sell to my loyal customers is good, so that, I can earn a lot of profit. (R5 L100-102 P3)*

Participant 1 said that the farmers' association provides significant financial and livelihood support to their businesses. The response emphasized that the association's affordable prices and high-quality products enable them to earn a profit consistently. This profit enables them to support their livelihood.

Participants 4 and 5 highlighted that reliable product quality keeps their businesses competitive, especially when selling to loyal customers who expect good products. Because the products are both affordable and dependable, wholesalers can confidently resell them and generate a steady income. Overall, the participants agree that the association's fair, flexible, and quality-based pricing directly supports income generation, business sustainability, and growth, demonstrating the positive impact of the association's marketing strategies on wholesalers' livelihoods.

These findings, supported by Nazari et al. (2020) described that customers express their satisfaction when a company helps them to generate income or profit by emphasizing how the

products or services can improve their sales, reduce costs, and support consistent business operations. They may prioritize reliable supply, strong product quality, or fair pricing as key reasons why the partnership boosts their income and supports a business partner that enables them to meet market demands and sustain profitability.

#### **Theme 6: Quality Improvement**

*As a wholesaler, I suggest to the farmers' associations that they continue and properly take care of their plants so that they can harvest good-quality products. This way, they can also recover their capital, earn a profit, and have the wholesalers satisfied with their products. (R5 L126-129 P4)*

*I hope they continue to improve their association and take care of their plants or products so that their association will grow even more, and they can meet the needs of their customers. They should produce good products and further satisfy their members or wholesalers. They can help many more business owners. They should improve their good service so that their association will prosper even more. (R6 L130-135 P4)*

Participant 5 encouraged the farmers' association to continue improving and maintaining the quality of their products by properly taking care of their plants and ensuring good production practices. Participants believe that consistently producing high-quality products will allow the association to recover costs, earn profit, and satisfy wholesalers and customers. Participant 6 also emphasized the importance of strengthening the association across its operations and customer service. By continuing to enhance their service, meeting wholesalers' needs, and supporting their members, the association can grow, prosper, and help more business owners.

Participants' feedback highlights the importance of continuous improvement for the farmers' association to maintain wholesaler satisfaction and business success. It was emphasized that taking care of plants and following proper production practices ensures high-quality products. Consistently good products not only satisfy wholesalers and customers but also help the association recover costs and earn profit. Improving the association's operations and customer service is equally important. By meeting the needs of wholesalers, supporting its members, and providing excellent service, the association

can grow, prosper, and benefit more business owners. The statement showed that both product quality and organizational improvement are key to sustaining wholesaler satisfaction and the long-term success of the farmers' association.

These findings, supported by Zeithaml (2019), explained that farmers develop their plants through careful cultivation practices such as proper land preparation, consistent watering, pest control, and nutrient management, ensuring that crops grow healthy and of high quality. By harvesting at the right time and properly handling post-harvest, they maintain freshness, appearance, and flavor, which customers highly value. These practices enable farmers to provide reliable, consistent products, reduce product defects, and deliver produce that meets market standards, resulting in customers feeling greater satisfaction because the farmers' careful plant management directly contributes to the quality, safety, and marketability of the products.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The farmers' association successfully meets wholesalers' expectations by providing high-quality products at fair prices, fostering trust, satisfaction, and a strong sense of value among participants. Their pricing strategies, combined with the willingness to negotiate, reinforce positive perceptions and long-term relationships.

The overall experience of the wholesalers with the farmers' association was highly positive; participants were satisfied with the association's excellent customer service, ethical practices, teamwork, and discipline. These practices not only enhance satisfaction but also contribute significantly to the business growth, income generation, and livelihoods of wholesalers.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proposed to enhance the farmers' association's sustainability:

1. Farmers' association may continue maintaining high-quality products and fair pricing, as a key factor in customer satisfaction. Strengthening communication with wholesalers and being responsive to feedback will further enhance trust and loyalty. Emphasizing ethical business practices, teamwork, and disciplined service

should remain a priority, as they foster strong customer relationships.

2. Wholesalers may continue to provide regular feedback to the association to help improve products and services. They should take advantage of negotiation opportunities and maintain ethical practices in transactions, ensuring mutually beneficial relationships. Building strong, long-term connections with the association will help secure a consistent supply of quality products.
3. Researchers may explore the impact of farmers' associations on local business performance, livelihood sustainability, and customer satisfaction. Exploring the effects of product quality, pricing, and ethical practices can provide insights into strategies that foster trust, loyalty, and profitability in cooperative business settings.
4. Future researchers may conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of farmers' associations on wholesalers' businesses and livelihoods. Exploring different associations can help identify best practices and innovative strategies to enhance value creation, customer satisfaction, and economic development in local communities, thereby guiding improvements to cooperative models.

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