

Agro-based export dynamics in Nigeria: Regional flows and determinants of export propensity

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the outflow and volume of agro-based commodities from Nigeria to other regions. Using cross-sectional data (2022 – 2023), 127 active agro-based firms engaged in the export of processed agricultural products were selected using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected with a Google Form and analyzed using descriptive and Probit regression models. Findings showed that 41.02% of agricultural produce, valued at ₦ 4.91 billion, was traded to the Asian region. The Western region (Europe and the USA) accounted for about 20%, while African countries' import of Nigeria's agro-based products was 37.27%. Probit model assessment of the propensity of agro-based manufacturing firms to export showed that the volume of export of agricultural commodities ($\beta = 0.974$, $p = 0.037$), firm size ($\beta = 0.0036$, $p = 0.008$), educational status of firms' managers ($\beta = 0.0113$, $p = 0.000$), firms' international experience ($\beta = 0.0078$, $p = 0.000$), firm characteristics ($\beta = 0.554$, $p = 0.001$) and export marketing strategy ($\beta = 0.295$, $p = 0.049$) increase significantly and consistently with firms' propensity to export agro-based commodities. Conversely, the propensity of agro-based firms to export decreases significantly with an increase in export destination ($\beta = -0.315$, $p = 0.029$), management characteristics ($\beta = -0.0123$, $p = 0.000$), and domestic market characteristics ($\beta = -0.129$, $p = 0.000$). Empirical evidence suggests appreciable volume of agricultural commodities to Asia and Europe, and the USA in spite of the dwindling share of agriculture in the nation's economy. Therefore, strengthening export policies and bilateral relationships with regions that showed appreciable interest in the importation of agro-based products from Nigeria will increase the competitiveness of Nigeria's commodities with the rest of the world.

Keywords: Export volume, Nigeria agro-based firms, Probit model, and propensity

INTRODUCTION

Export of agricultural commodities remains a vital source of Nigeria's foreign earnings despite the dominance of the oil sector. Nigeria ranks as the 49th largest export economy in the world (OECD, 2018), with the agro-based sector serving as an extension of agriculture through the

transformation of raw produce into value-added products. In developed countries, about 98% of agricultural production undergoes industrial processing, generating about US\$180 per tonne, compared to less than 30% in developing countries, where added value is below US\$50



per tonne (Adom & Simatele, 2022; Kingsley, 2016). Africa's food exports account for a small proportion of merchandise exports, which is low because Sub-Saharan African countries experience large post-harvest losses, especially for perishable commodities such as fruit and vegetables, with post-harvest losses above 50% of total attainable production, with grain losses below 25% (Kingsley, 2016). The key contributors of Nigeria to food exports share according to PWC (2019), include sesame seeds (N 112.8 billion), raw cocoa (N27.3 billion), cashew nuts in shells (N24.3 billion), cashew nuts (shelled) (N13.9 billion) and frozen shrimps and pawns (9.9 billion).

Nigeria's major agro-based exports include sesame seeds, cocoa, cashew nuts, and frozen shrimps (PWC, 2019). The sector contributes about 40–60% of manufacturing value-added and remains critical for employment and export diversification (Agriculture Nigeria, 2018). Agro-based exports integrate the domestic economy into global trade, enhance competitiveness, and serve as a strategy for economic growth (FAO & AUC, 2021).

Attempts to address these inadequacies require empirical data. However, there is a dearth of empirical studies on agro-based production and industry in general, especially regarding the volume and direction of agro-based exports from Nigeria to other regions of the world and the determinants of the propensity to export. Thus, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the volume and direction of agro-based exports from Nigeria to other regions of the world and the determinants of the propensity to export by focusing on the specific case of Nigeria, for which no study has been done directly. To the best of our knowledge, the only related study by Wiranthi & Mubarak (2017) examined the factors that affected the export volume of Indonesia's agro-based (canned pineapple) products using a panel data regression analysis approach. The findings showed that the factors that affected the export volume of Indonesia's agro-based (canned pineapple) products were prices to the export destination countries (the United States, Spain, Italy, Canada, Denmark, Austria, and China), real GDP and the population of destination countries. This study differs from the study of Wiranthi and Mubarak (2017), on the basis that it is a cross-sectional micro (firm level) data study focusing on the volume and direction of agro-based exports through a survey of questionnaires, while Wiranthi and Mubarak (2017) is a macroeconomic study using secondary data. Therefore, the proxies are different. No study in Nigeria, to the best of my knowledge, has examined the volume and direction of agro-based exports from Nigeria to other regions of the world. An effort to fill these gaps in Nigeria, therefore, makes this study different from earlier similar studies. This study, therefore, provides empirical evidence on the volume and regional direction of agro-based exports from Nigeria, as well as the determinants of firms' propensity to export. Findings are expected to inform policies aimed at strengthening export

competitiveness and promoting sustainable growth of the agro-processing sector. In the light of the above, the study seeks to;

- i. Examine the volume and direction of agro-based exports from Nigeria,
- ii. Identify the determinants of the propensity to export among agro-based firms

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Nigeria, a sovereign country in West Africa. Nigeria is referred to as the "Giant of Africa" because of its large population and economy. With about 221 million people (www.worldometers.info, 2023), Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa and the seventh most populous country in the World. The agricultural products of Nigeria can be divided into two main groups: food crops, produced for home consumption, and cash/export products. Major cash crops include sesame, beans, cassava, cashew nuts, cocoa beans, groundnuts, kola nut, melon, maize (corn), millet, palm kernels, palm oil, plantains, rice, rubber, and soybeans.

Sampling procedure and sampling size

The population of this study comprises all registered agro-based exporting firms in Nigeria. It includes, among others, firms exporting agro-processed food, beverage and tobacco, wood and wood products, textile apparel and footwear, plastic and rubber products, and pulp paper and paper products. The total number of registered agro-based exporting firms (as at the time of writing this report), was 325 firms (Nigerian Export Promotion Council, NEPC, 2023). However, 186 agro-based exporting firms were accessible during the course of this study (2022 – 2023). A random sample of 127 agro-based firms out of the functional 186 firms were selected. This sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane method for sample size selection (Yamane, 1967), expressed as;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where n = corrected sample size, N = population size, and e = Margin of error (MoE), e = 0.05 based on the research condition.

A simple random sampling technique was employed to randomly select the 127 agro-based exporting firms. In applying this technique, the names of all the firms were written on identical pieces of paper, which were folded and put in a container, thoroughly reshuffled before a selection was made. Therefore, every firm of the population had an equal chance of being selected. Thus, it eliminates bias due to personal judgment or discretion of the researcher.

Data collection and analysis

The demand for data for this study was satisfied with the collection of primary data from the selected agro-based manufacturing firms using a Google form. The choice of Google Form for the survey was for convenience and ease of reaching out to the top managers of agro-based firms without distraction. The challenges associated with on-line data collection such as poor internet connectivity was however, minimal. In the course of the survey, export managers, firms' owners/founders and/or individuals who make decisions or play leading roles regarding export decisions were asked to complete the questionnaire (with the assumption that they are expected to have the experience and perspectives necessary to provide practical information about their firm's exports of agro-based products). Data collected consisted of information on the volume and direction of agro-based exports from Nigeria to other regions of the world, including what led to the choice of such destination. Descriptive statistics and Probit regression were used to examine the volume and direction of agro-based exports from Nigeria to other regions of the world and the determinants of the propensity to export among agro-based manufacturing firms.

Probit regression model

The Probit regression analysis was employed to determine the determinants of propensity to export among agro-based manufacturing firms in Nigeria. For robustness' sake, firm characteristics determinants, management characteristics determinants, and domestic and foreign market characteristics determinants of export propensity are considered concerning this objective.

Empirically, the Probit model is stated as;

$$p_i = \text{prob}(Y_i = 1|X) = \beta_0 + \phi X_{ij} + \vartheta X_{ik} + \varphi X_{il} + \dots \dots \varepsilon_i$$

Where; $\beta, \phi, \vartheta, \varphi$ = are vector parameters while X_i = export determinants.

In explicit terms, the model is rendered as;

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \dots \dots \beta_{12} X_{12} + \varepsilon_i$$

Where;

Y_i = the propensity to export (1 = willingness to export, 0 = otherwise)

β_0 = constant term

$\beta_1 - \beta_{13}$ = parameters to be estimated

X_1 = volume of export (Naira equivalent)

X_2 = destination of export (region/country's name)

X_3 = export sales (volume of sales in Naira equivalent)

X_4 = Firm size (No. of employees/sales employees' ratio)

X_5 = Years of education of the firm's manager (s) (No. of years of formal education spent by the firm's manager)

X_6 = firm's experience in foreign business (The number of years the firm has been involved in international sales)

X_7 = Firm age (Business experience the firm has acquired over a given period of time)

X_8 = Management characteristics (Four-point Likert rating of attitudinal, skill-based and behavioural characteristics)

X_9 = Firm characteristics (Four-point Likert rating of firm characteristics such as ownership, foreign networking, international experience etc)

X_{10} = Export marketing strategy (Four-point Likert rating of marketing mix, product, distribution and promotion capabilities)

X_{11} = Foreign market characteristics (Four-point Likert rating of cultural similarities, government regulations and market competitiveness)

X_{12} = Domestic market characteristics (Four-point Likert rating of export assistance and environmental hostility)

ε_i = error term.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Volume and direction of agro-based exports from Nigeria to other regions of the world

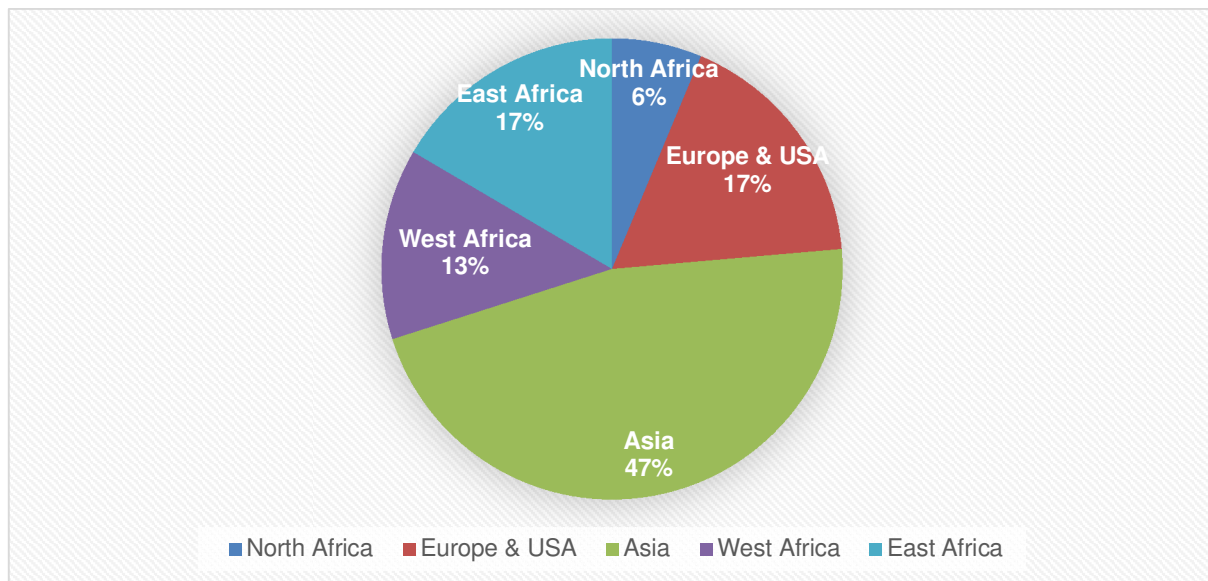
The volume and direction of selected agro-based exports from Nigeria to other regions of the world are presented in (Table 1 and Figure 1). The export value of agricultural commodities was used as a single denominator to express the volume of exports to other regions. The result showed that 41.02% of the volume of agricultural export from Nigeria has its destination in the Asian region (China, India, Japan, Vietnam, Myanmar, UAE, and Malaysia) with an estimated value of ₦4.91 billion. This finding is consistent with the reports of Prince Waterhouse Coppers, PWC (2019) that the Asia region is the leading importer of Nigeria's agricultural commodities, where about 59% of the total export from Nigeria is channelled. Furthermore, the volume of exports emanating from the selected agro-based entities in Nigeria to the West (Europe and America) stood at ₦ 2.36 billion (19.72%), which were regarded as the second largest export markets for agricultural commodities from Nigeria. This was noticeable with products like processed cocoa beans, shrimp and prawns to countries like the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, the United States and France. This result has some semblance with the findings from PWC (2019), where it was observed that Europe and the USA accounted for about 34 and 3.6% of the export of Nigeria's agricultural goods.

On the African continent, East African, West African and North African sub-regions were ranked the third, fourth and fifth export markets with about ₦ 2.08 billion (17.38%), ₦ 1.38 billion (11.61%) and ₦1.23 billion (10.28%), respectively, of the total export from agriculture in Nigeria.

Table 1: Volume of exports of the selected agro-based firms from Nigeria to other regions of the world.

Destination	Volume of Export (₦ Billion)	Percentage (%)
Europe and USA	2.36	19.72
North Africa	1.23	10.28
East African	2.08	17.38
West African	1.39	11.61
Asian region	4.91	41.02
Total	11.59	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

**Figure 1:** Direction of Exports from the Selected Agro-based manufacturing firms to other Regions of the World
Source: Field Survey, 2023

The share of agricultural export from Nigeria to other African sub-regions, like South Africa, was, however, negligible among the export firms under investigation. Cumulatively, the volume of agro-based exports to the African region stood at 39.27% of the total export volume among the sampled agro-based manufacturing firms. The findings of this study are congruent with the assertion that trade in agricultural goods between Nigeria and the rest of Africa is still relatively small compared to other regions of the world. However, these results are at variance with the statistics of export value of agricultural products from Nigeria in 2021, by region of destination (Statista, 2022), where Europe was Nigeria's main trade destination in terms of agricultural product exports, followed by Asia and America, respectively. This deviation could be attributed to the renewed efforts of African sub-regions in trade liberalization policies initiatives such as the Nigeria-Africa Trade and Investment Promotion Programme (NATIPP), Agriculture Promotion, Zero Reject Initiative, Agricultural Promotion Policy and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which are aimed at creating a common market and encouraging the unhindered flow of Nigeria's agricultural goods to key markets in Africa. Secondly, the dominance of Nigeria and Africa's agricultural export to non-African markets by primary or semi-processed products could be seen as another probable reason for the

emergence of the African markets that are more easily accessible. The implication of this paradigm shift in export destinations will bring economic development to Nigeria and the African sub-region. This view is substantiated by Remos (2003), who posited that export growth is a major contributor to productivity and the growth of employment of an economy, adding that increase in agricultural exports can greatly benefit Nigeria and Africa at large, thus accelerating the overall progress of the continent.

The direction and frequency of agricultural export from Nigeria to other regions of the world as shown in (Figure 2) depicts that the frequency (46.46%) of agricultural export was pointed to the Asian sub-region, while 17.32% of Nigeria export was directed toward Europe and USA, while African sub-regions accounted for the remaining 36.13%. This distribution agrees with the report from Nigeria Export Promotion Council, NEPC (2023) that no African country was among Nigeria's top export destinations in the year 2022. Similarly, this result shows a marked conformity with the analysis of PWC (2019) of the direction of agricultural export to other regions where the Asia region was the leading importer of Nigeria's agricultural commodities in which the region accounted for 59% of total exports. Europe (34.5%) and America (3.6%) were the second and third biggest markets for Nigeria's agricultural goods in 2019. Nonetheless, as noted earlier,

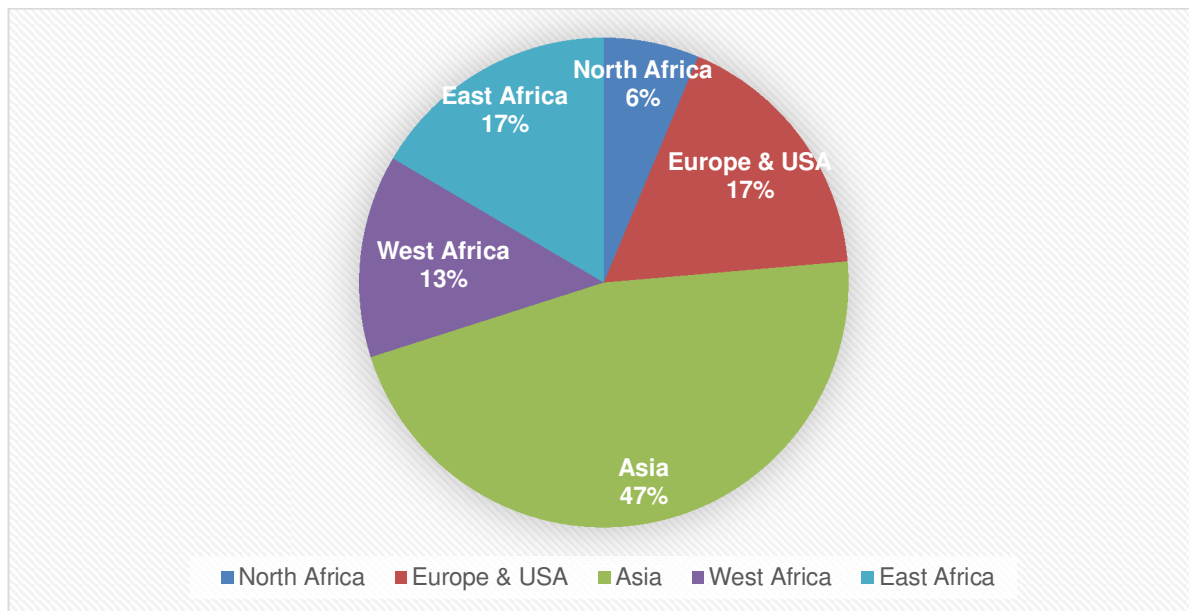


Figure 2: Direction of Exports from the Selected Agro-based manufacturing firms to other Regions of the World.
Source: Field Survey, 2023

the catalytic effect of AfCFTA and other similar initiatives, the trend in the direction of agricultural export is tilted toward Africa. Also, the recent rejection of agricultural products exported from the country to European and other international markets, especially in the west could be a probable reason for a shift in direction to African countries. The rejection according to Youssouf (2022) on behalf of the exporters is stemmed from the neglect and lack of product quality and improper packaging. For instance, the European Union's policies and regulations governing the export of food and agricultural commodities from Nigeria to the EU have several requirements or hurdles that must be passed on specific to agricultural products before acceptance into the EU market.

Determinants of the Propensity to Export among Agro - based Manufacturing Firms

Result of the determinants of the propensity to export among agro - based manufacturing firms in (Table 2) showed that the model (Probit model) had Pseudo R^2 values of 0.3940 (39.40%). The R^2 value is low however, according to Gujarati (2009) binary dependent models are not chosen to maximize R^2 . The consistencies of the explanatory variables with the *a priori* expectation and the statistical significance provide useful insights into the determinants of the propensity to export. The log-likelihood ratio (LR) significance test from the model confirmed the variables of interest are statistically jointly significant at 95% confidence level (p -value<0.05). The threshold (willingness to export = 0.00) that is, the constant term in the model 0.5229. This means that if all of the predictors

included in the model are evaluated at zero, the predicted probability of firms exporting will be 0.5229. The interpretation of the relationship between the propensity to export (outcome) and the determinants of the propensity to export (predictors) is based on the means of the marginal effect which accounts for the partial change in the probability (the tendency of the likelihood of a firm to export). The marginal effects provide insights into how the explanatory variables change the predicted probability of the firm's tendency to export (success) and are interpreted as the nature of association, rather than causation, between the determinants and export propensity.

Result in (Table 2) showed that the coefficient of export volume is positive (0.974) and statistically significant at 5%, implying that export volume increases the propensity to export *ceteris paribus*. The implication is that agro-based firms with a higher volume of export have a higher propensity to export and *vice versa*. Also, they are likely to earn more revenue with the capacity to make more investments and hence profit that is characteristically inclined to increase their export potentialities. This result is corroborated by the findings of FAO (2015), Tũaño *et al.*, (2014) and Fonchamnyo (2014) that the volume of trade exerts a positive effect on both the likelihood to export and the export intensity. The positive (0.0036) and statistically significant ($p = 0.008$) estimate of the coefficient of firm size implies that as the size of the exporting firm increases (number of workers/employees, plant size or sales volume), the probability to export also increases when other determinants are held constant. Further implications are that agro-based firms with the larger work force, plant and infrastructural base for instance, will have a higher

Table 2: Determinants of the propensity to export among agro based manufacturing firms.

Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P > Z
Volume of export	0.9739	0.46612	2.09	0.037**
Destination of export	-0.3150	0.14393	-2.19	0.029**
Export Sales	2.54e – 09	1.49e-10	-1.17	0.087
Firm Size	0.0036	0.00134	2.60	0.008***
Years of education of firm's manager	0.0113	0.00369	3.15	0.000***
Firm's international experience	0.0078	0.00223	-3.47	0.000***
Age of Firm	-0.0157	0.01860	-0.84	0.399
Management Characteristics (MCH)	-0.0123	0.00314	-3.92	0.000***
Firm Characteristics (FCH)	0.5541	0.16716	3.32	0.001***
Export Marketing Strategy (EMS)	0.2946	0.15008	1.96	0.049**
Foreign Market Characteristics (FMCH)	0.1225	0.13921	0.88	0.379
Domestic Market Characteristics (DMCH)	-0.1294	0.03582	-3.61	0.000***
Constant	0.5229	1.3495	0.39	0.698
Number of Observation		127		
LR Chi ²		13		
Prob > F		0.000***		
R-Squared		0.394		
Adj R-Squared		0.324		
Root MSE		16.299		

***, and ** indicate statistical significance at 1 and 5% levels, respectively. Source: Field Survey, 2023

propensity to export through performance-based indicators and are better than those with relatively low capacity in terms of labour, plant and another infrastructure requirement. Thus, small firms are less likely to export than large ones because, unlike large companies, small firms cannot easily harness the necessary resources to cover the sunk costs associated with breaking into export markets. On the other hand, large firms have the resources to develop marketing channels, new product testing and standard compliance procedures, which are important when penetrating export markets. This result shares a common ground with the findings of Tũaño *et al.*, (2014) who affirmed through the use of Heckman selection model that firm size is a robust determinant of both of export propensity and intensity. In the same vein, the findings by Saxena and Sawalkar (2017) who examined the export growth determinants of small-sized agro-based firms in the Indian agro-industry totally agreed with the findings of this study affirming that firm size is a useful and manageable estimation of firm resources, which are held to influence export behavior.

The negative (-0.3150) but statistically significant ($p = 0.029$) coefficient of export destination depicts that as export destination (irrespective of the choice destination) increases the firm's propensity to export decreases. This implies that the propensity to export to distance countries (such USA, Europe, China etc) will be lower as compared to export to West African countries. This result is in conformity with the *a priori* expectation that export to far destination lowers the propensity to export agricultural produce. This result is not surprising because of the nature of agricultural produce which are characteristically perishable, bulky and seasonal in nature. These attributes are capable of lowering the probability of agricultural firms to export to distance destinations. This result is consistent with the findings of FAO (2015) which affirmed that the form of volume requirements (for shipping), the risk of poor

sales or rejection by regulators in the destination market, and large fixed investments (treatment plant or processing plant) are probable reasons that impacted negatively to agricultural exports in developing countries. Skilled-based characteristics like language proficiency and education level are known to enhance export propensity (the firm's choice of whether or not to export) and intensity (the proportion of firms' sales that are exported). Thus, it is not surprising that the coefficient of years of education of the firm's manager is positive (0.0113) and highly significant ($p < 0.001$). This result implies that as the education level (years spent in acquiring formal education) of the firm manager(s) increases, there is a likelihood of boosting the firm's propensity to export, connoting that firms with skilled workforce are knowledgeable in marketing, and related fields and can perform better than others without these skills. Also, international experience or foreign contacts and networking can create personal contacts to expand foreign trade, since managers who travel to different parts of the world are likely to be more successful exporters. Besides, they are most familiar with foreign cultures, thus, clairvoyance to the distance separating them from other countries, putting them on the advantage to engage in exporting (Reis & Forte, 2014' Nazar & Saleem, 2009). The above assertion is strongly supported by the findings of FAO (2015) and Tũaño *et al.*, (2014) that export propensity is positively correlated with managerial education, skill level of employees, the education level of workers/ managers, the total number of years in business, and the ability to link with other firms. Similarly, the years of operational experience of the firm's manager or employees showed significant ($p < 0.001$) and positive correlation (0.0078) with agro-based firms' propensity to export. This means that increase in the years of doing export business (sales) increases the probability to export, suggesting that older firms have experience and familiarity with the production process, which will make them more

efficient than younger firms. Supporting this view further, the age of the firm, which is mostly used to measure business experience which is considered as a determinant of the export performance of firms. This school of thought holds that age of the firms is related to the experience gathered in the international market that helps firms to develop the important capabilities needed to adapt to export marketing strategies to create competitive advantage in foreign markets (Ruzo *et al.*, 2011, Sui & Baum, 2014). Therefore, it is expected that the older a firm is, the more the financial and human resources holdings and higher economies of scale, which facilitate their acceleration into international markets (Arteaga-Ortiz and Fernández-Ortiz, 2010).

The coefficient of management characteristics determinants is negatively (-0.0123) but statistically significant ($p < 0.000$). Management characteristics have mixed effect on the propensity to export. It could impact positively if the management attributes are properly harness and vice versa where management is considered to be accountable for either excellent or poor export performance. However, the case of Nigeria's export performance remains abysmally poor. This according to Workman (2019) and World atlas (2019), the manufactured exports performance in Nigeria has been poor and the exports percentage of the country's share of the continent's (Africa) total exports was just 9.2% as of 2018, as compared with South Africa, which was 21%. This result is not surprising especially in situations where management of firms is defective. The attainment of high performance and tendency to export is dependent on management characteristics such as the managers perceptions about export barriers, perceived export advantages, export commitment, international vision, and orientation, the fashion of managers' involvement in export sales, planning, export sales presentation, adaptive selling and sales support, language proficiency, education level, International or export experience. These characteristics are needed to improve revenue and economic growth. Nevertheless, most of these attributes are lacking in the Nigeria's export performance. This finding is consistent with the views of Fikreselassie (2018) where the firm-level determinants of export performance of Ethiopian textile and garment sectors of the agro-based industry were examined where management characteristics remained an insignificant determinant of export performance. Firm characteristics determinants were found to be highly significant ($p < 0.001$) and positively correlated with propensity to export (0.5541). This result implies that if all other factors are held constant and firm characteristics are increased, the propensity to export will also increase. Similarly, foreign ownership and domestic ownership, labour and supplier market (domestic networking), customer market and capital market (foreign networking), firms' export market knowledge, number of years in business, number of years in exporting, information centers and level of investment are key to enhanced export

performance. Therefore, the sign and influence of firm characteristics determinants on export propensity is indicative of inherent possession of these features among the exporting firms. This result shows semblance with the submission of Davidson (2009) who identified firm characteristics, perceived marketing conditions and information constraints, and financial aspects on the export of agro-food processing firms in Kentucky as prime determinants of export propensity.

The coefficient of export marketing strategy is positive (0.2946) and statistically significant at 1% level of significance. This means that increase in the export marketing strategy determinants increases the probability to export. The implication is that, the product, promotion, price adaptation, and channel adaptation (channel type – e.g., direct channels such as the use of corporate distribution channels, export sales representative's office and direct buying in foreign markets, channel relationship, delivery time), firm's capability to adapt the prices and to offer low prices (that is, penetration pricing strategy), firm's capability to use advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, promotion adaptation and use of export promotion programs in their export markets, product strengths (product uniqueness, patents, exposure to the market, distribution, After-sales service), warranty and customer services, (warranty and provisions for pre- and after-sales services), product adaptation, contribute collectively to enhance the firms' propensity to export. However, most of the Nigerian agro-based export firms are small-scale ventures and empirical evidence attests that firms' size determine the volume of export. For instance, larger firms are most probably endowed with substantial resources to suit the export marketing mix strategy of the firm because of economies of scale in production, advantages from bulk purchasing, and the privilege to increase financing at low cost whereas smaller firms lack such privileges (Sraha, 2016). The coefficient of domestic market characteristics determinants is significant ($p < 0.001$) but negatively (-0.1294) correlated to export propensity. This connotes that an increase in domestic market characteristics determinants decreases the probability to export. The implication is that export assistance (institutions), national export policy on export, as well as the country's currency status are key ingredients in promoting agricultural export. Therefore, improvement in these institutions and policies can impact positively on the firm's export propensity.

Conclusion

Exports of agro-based commodities from Nigeria to the rest of the world is of significant importance to economic growth. Akin to the inabilities of developing countries to export finished agricultural products, Nigeria's share of agro-based export has contributed appreciably to the nation's GDP. Attempts to x-ray the volume and directional

flow of these products led to this study. Findings revealed that the Asian sub-region remains the leading export destination of agricultural products from Nigeria. The propensity to export was a function of the export volume, education of firms' managers, firm size, years of experience in export business, firm characteristics, and foreign market characteristics. Nonetheless, firms' propensity to export could be affected adversely export destination, management characteristics, and domestic market characteristics. The study recommends therefore, the strengthening of export policies and bilateral relationships with regions that showed appreciable interest in the importation of agro-based products from Nigeria in addition to improved technological and infrastructural bases that will increase the competitiveness of Nigeria's commodities with the rest of the world. The gains highlighted here can be actualized if the capacities of the key players in agro-based enterprises are strengthened.

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