



Tropentag, September 15-17, 2021, hybrid conference

“Towards shifting paradigms in agriculture
for a healthy and sustainable future”

Gendered Perceptions in Maize Supply Chains: Evidence from Uganda

ANUSHA DE¹, BJORN VAN CAMPENHOUT²

¹*KU Leuven, LICOS Centre for Institutions and Economic Performance (FEB), Belgium*

²*International Food Policy Research Institute, Development Strategy and Governance Division, Uganda*

Abstract

Faced with imperfect information, economic actors use judgment and perceptions in decision-making. Inaccurate perceptions or false beliefs may result in inefficient value chains and systematic bias in perceptions may affect inclusiveness. In this paper, we study perceptions in Ugandan maize supply chains. A random sample of maize farmers was asked to rate other value chain actors—agro-input dealers, assembly traders, and maize millers—on a set of important attributes such as service quality, price competitiveness, ease of access, and overall reputation. These other value chain actors are tracked and asked to assess themselves (provide self-ratings) on the same attributes. These ratings are used as a proxy measure for perceptions and beliefs. Interestingly, price competitiveness is scored the lowest and we find that input dealers, traders, and millers assess themselves more favourably than farmers do. Traditionally, women have not been playing a significant role in the input dealing, processing, and trading activities for maize in Uganda. Systemic gender bias in perceptions can demotivate the entry of women into the food supply chains, creating better opportunities for men to flourish in these industries. Issues like discrimination against women, barriers to market access for women, mistrust, lower credit availabilities, etc. are some of the consequences of such gender bias in perceptions. Thus, we also zoom in on heterogeneity in perceptions related to gender and find that women rate higher than men. The sex of the actor being rated does not affect the rating and gender-based homophily is not present in the perceptions of the farmers.

Keywords: Gender, maize supply chain, perceptions, ratings