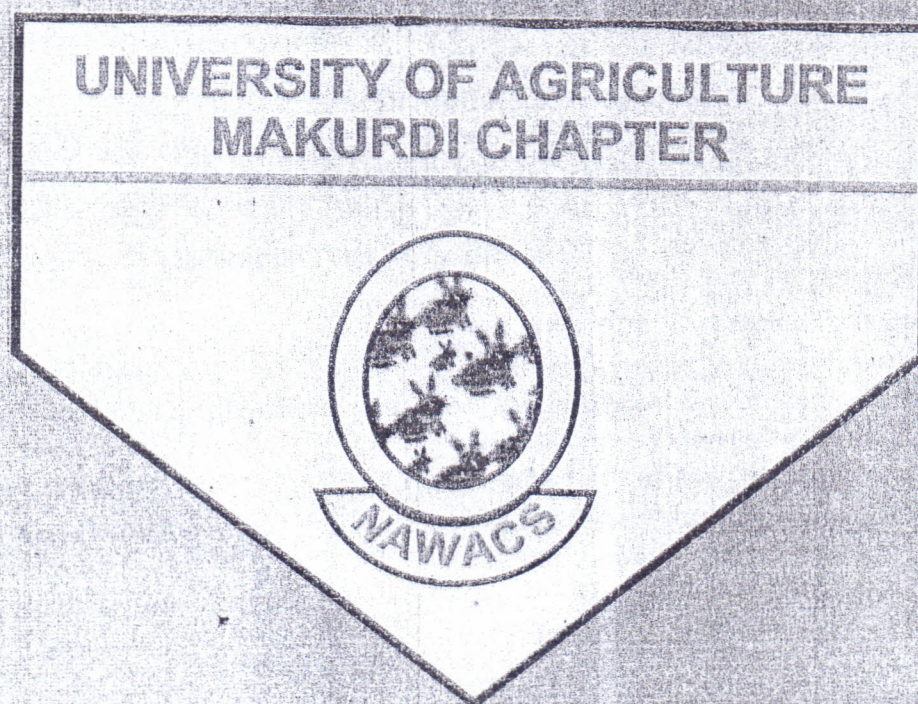


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ANALYSIS OF FISH MARKETING IN MAKURDI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

Lawal, W. L., IDega, I. O. and Ogebe, F. O.

Department of Agricultural Economics

University of Agriculture Makurdi

wuralawal@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in the two major fish markets in the study area, namely North Bank and Wadata Markets. The main objective of the study was to analyse fish marketing in the study area. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data randomly from 115 fish sellers. Simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the collected data.

The study revealed that membership of Fish Trader Association was optional and costs between N200.00 and N500.00 to be registered. Benefits from the Association include financial assistance to the bereaved or celebrating members. Smoked fish which comes mostly from outside the study area (Maiduguri, Taraba and Zamfara) was commonly sold in the study area. Fish was mostly preserved by smoking (74.78%) and freezing (24.35%). Supply of fish into the markets was mostly through the middlemen (50.45%). Most fish sellers (52.2%) earned between N2,000.00 – N3,000.00 as profit margin weekly.

INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have different opinion about marketing. Adekanye (1988) had the view that marketing is really a method of bringing the impersonal forces of demand and supply together irrespective of the location of the market. The view was that marketing functions are the major

specialized activities performed in the marketing system, processing, storage, transportation, standardization, financing, risk bearing and the provision of market information. According to Olukosi and Isisto (1990), marketing involves all those legal, physical and economic services which are necessary to make products

from the farm available to the creation of form, place, time and possession utilities.

Fish marketing involves all the various activities that direct the flow of fish whether fresh or processed from fish landing sites to the consumers. Fish quality deteriorate very fast due to the high temperature in Africa and must therefore be processed and marketed as soon as possible to maintain good quality to the consumers (Van Berkel et. al 1994). The relevance of marketing is to ensure the flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer in the form, time and place of need. Buyers are in need of goods and services, while the sellers need to improve their socio-economic status. Aquatic animals and products have to be processed to preserve the product, convert the raw materials to a desirable form, maintain the product quantity, utilize the raw materials fully and ensure consumer safety (Wheaton and Lawson 1995). Marketing thus provides the avenue to meet these necessities. An efficient marketing sector is an important multiplier of economic development. It does not only link the sellers and buyers but also stimulates output and consumption. It guides the producers

consumers, thus marketing leads to the towards new production opportunities and encourages innovation and improvement in response to demand and prices (Abbott, 1987).

The fisheries sector provides employment opportunities to many Nigerians in direct fishing, processing and marketing. It also provides research opportunities and manpower training development in fisheries. Nutritionally, fish provides high quality calories, proteins, fats and vitamins. Fish provides the cheapest source of protein in the world (Samson 1997). Fish oil contains unsaturated fatty acids which are low in cholesterol and thus a regular in-take of fish oil, faces no risk of having heart attack which might result from deposition of cholesterol in blood vessels. In recognition of this cardinal importance of fish and allied products in the diet and nutrition of man, the need to develop fisheries, as a food for the provision of adequate fish supply for human consumption was recognized very early in the life of Nigerians as a nation (Adikwu, 2001),

According to Abbott and Markhan (1992) the various crops, livestock, fisheries and poultry products have their different problems. The

marketing and distribution of fish in Benue State is not a simple direct commodity flow involving only the fishermen and the consumers since there are various channels through which fresh fish must pass before getting to the consumers. By implication, fish do not get to the consumers on time in the desired state of freshness. The price of fish is inflated as it passes through the marketing channels. The storage facilities in the State are poor. The consumers buy the fish in spoilt form and at a high prices. The fish marketing in is carried out on small-scale basis and most of the fish sellers are poor.

The study therefore examined the marketing performance of fish in Makurdi Local Government, Benue State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (i) examine some socio economic features of the fish marketers in the state,
- (ii) investigate the organization of fish sellers in association and the impact of the organization on the marketing performance.
- (iii) Identify the various credit sources available to the fish

sellers in association and the impact of the organization on the marketing performance.

- (iv) Identify the various credit sources available to the fish sellers and examine the extent of the accessibility to the credit sources.
- (v) Examine the various fish preservation technologies practiced by the fish sellers.
- (vi) Identify the storage facilities and
- (vii) Make policy recommendations based on the research findings.

The need for improving the level of efficiency of fish marketing and distribution in Nigeria fisheries sector necessitates this study. This will enable the producers and the marketers to derive benefits from the enterprise and also to improve the consumers' level of satisfaction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State of Nigeria. The respondents were selected randomly using the list of association of fish sellers in the study area. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data randomly from 115 fish sellers. Fifty fish sellers were

selected from the North Bank market, Makurdi while sixty five were from the Wadata market, Makurdi. The rainfall in the area lasts from mid March to November with an annual mean of 1350mm. Farming is the predominant socio-economic activity of the people of the study area. Hunting, fishing and palm wine tapping are other occupations. However, these are usually seasonal and are practiced along with farming. Aspects covered by the questionnaire include demographic data on the respondents, sources of fish, source of credit, membership in Association, constraints to fish marketing. The numerical aspects of the information gathered were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic features of the respondents

The results showed that majority of the fish sellers (89.56%) were females (Table 1). Most respondents (54.79%) were between 21- 40 year old. Few youths below 20 years old and old women who were above 50 years were engaged in fish marketing. This shows that adoption of technology in preservation and marketing can easily be achieved especially if such technology leads to increased income.

The result also showed that most fish sellers (44.30%) were Jukun from Taraba State, the neighboring States, who traditionally engaged in fishing activities. Majority of the respondent (49.60%) were also illiterate who did not attend any formal education. the implication of this is that the rate of adoption of innovation in fish marketing was very slow. Majority were married (56.50%) having large household size more than six. This implies that the use of family labour is abundant in fish marketing.

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Feature	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	12	10.44
Female	103	89.56
Age (years)		
<20	17	14.78
21-30	34	29.57
31-40	29	25.22
41-50	18	15.65
>50	17	14.78
Ethnic Groups		
Etilo	6	5.20
Igala	2	1.70
Idoma	18	15.70
Yoruba	-	-
Tiv	12	10.40
Hausa	2	1.70
Jukun	51	44.30
Ibo	21	18.30
Others	3	2.60
Educational Status		
No schooling at all	57	49.60
Started primary school and stopped	27	23.50
Completed primary school	17	14.80
OND/NCE	9	7.80
HND/University	5	4.30
Marital Status		
Single	31	27.00
Married	65	56.50
Widowed	15	13.0
Divorced	4	3.50
Family Size		
≤ 3	9	7.80
4 – 6	45	39.10
7 – 10	36	31.40
>10	25	21.70

Source: Field survey, 2008

Occupational Distribution and Sources of fish supply

The result (Table 2) also revealed that most fish sellers (81.70%) were engaged in the fish marketing on full time basis and had above two years of

experience. The supply of smoked fish is more available (50.40%) in the market. Fresh fish, smoked frozen fish and fresh frozen fish accounted for 24.30%, 14.00% and 11.30%, respectively. Most respondents

(94.80%) indicated that fish was regularly supplied into the market. The dried fish were mostly obtained from Maiduguri, Taraba and Zamfara States.

The local supply from River Benue is seasonal depending on the water level.

Table 2: Occupational Distribution and Sources of fish supply

Performance Fish selling as the major occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	94	81.70
No	21	18.30
Years of Experience		
< 1	3	2.60
3 – 6	38	31.30
7 – 10	25	21.70
10 years and above	43	37.40
Type of Fish Sold		
Fresh fish only	28	24.30
Smoked fish	58	50.40
Smoked frozen fish	16	14.00
Fresh frozen fish	13	11.30
Regularity of Fish Supply		
Very regular	109	94.8
Not regular	6	5.20
Seasonal	-	-
Source of Fish Supply		
Direct from fishermen (artisan sources)	28	24.35
From cold rooms store (improved fish)	28	24.35
From other states	59	51.30

Furthermore the results revealed that the most commonly fish preservation method practiced in the study area was by smoking (74.78%). Unsold fresh fish at the close of market and spoiling ones were smoked immediately (71.30%) or kept in the fridge/freezer and later sold at a lower price (Table 3).

The result also showed that most fish sellers (78.26%) consumed fish products in their homes daily and this formed part of the business profit. It was also discovered that family labour (children, relatives and spouses) was mostly used in fish marketing (99.14%). This indicated that labour cost was free in fish marketing.

Table 3: Fish preservation, consumption pattern and sources of labour/marketing performance

Performance	Frequency	Percentage
Method of Fish Preservation		
Smoking	86	74.78
Salting	-	-
Salting/Drying	1	0.87
Sun drying	-	-
Freezing	28	24.35
Fish Consumption pattern of family members		
They don't eat fish daily	1	0.86
They eat fish daily	-	-
Twice in a week	90	78.26
Thrice in a week	4	3.47
Once in a week	18	15.65
Unsold fish at the close of market		
Smoke them immediately	82	71.3
Keep in fridge/freeze	31	26.9
Throw them away	-	-
Consume them	1	0.86
I don't have left-overs	1	0.86
Labour use in Selling Fish		
Family labour	114	99.14
Hired labour	1	0.86

Source: Field survey, 2008.

Membership in Fish Trade Association

Table 4 shows the nature of trade association in the study area. Most respondents (71.30%) belonged to Fish Traders Association which was believed to have legitimate rights to restrict sales of fish by unregistered members. However, membership in the association is optional. The registration fee was between N2000.00.- N500.00 in addition to provision of refreshments which included two crates of minerals and

colanuts. The Association meets fortnightly, during this time the official registration of members takes place.

Benefits derived from membership in the Trade Association were classified into social and economic benefits. Socially, the Association supports members with cash and visits when bereaved or given birth to children (53.04%). Economically, the Association defends the members' interest with local government (20.86%) or protects members from excessive taxes and charges.

However, the association gave little or no assistance in loans or capital acquisition.

Table 4: Membership of Trade association in fish marketing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Membership of trade association		
Yes	82	71.3
No	33	28.7
Time taken to be registered		
Within a week	87	75.6
Within a month	2	1.7
I don't know	26	22.6
More than a month	-	-
Registration fee (N)		
Between 50 – 100	13	11.3
Between 100 – 200	3	2.6
Between 200 – 500	75	65.2
I cant say	24	20.9
Is it compulsory to join?		
Compulsory	38	33.0
Option	70	60.9
Compulsory but refused to join	3	2.6
No association exists	4	3.5
Benefits derived from membership		
Assist with loan or capital	2	1.70
Defend member's interest with Local Government	24	20.86
Protect members from excessive tax/charges	3	2.60
Support members with cash when bereaved /celebrate	61	53.04
No benefits	25	21.74

Source: Field survey 2008.

Source of Credit

Table 5 presents the source of credit/capital in fish marketing in the study area. The results indicated that the source of credit/capital in fish marketing was mostly from non institutional source, especially through personal savings (63.0%). Other sources included donations from spouse or relatives (17.0%) and money lenders (10%). Esusu (9.0%).

(Table 5). The institutional credit sources from the Nigerian Agricultural Credit and Rural Development Banks, Commercial Banks and Micro Finance Banks had offered no assistance in fish marketing in the study area as none of the respondents obtained loans from these sources. There was a higher preference for the non-institution credit sources because bank loans

were assumed to be too bureaucratic to process.

Table 5: Source of Capital

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Source of fund for the Business		
Personal savings	73	63
Donations from spouse/relatives	20	17
Esusu/Ajo contribution	10	9
Trade Association	1	1
Money Leaders	11	10
Commercial Banks	-	-
NACB	-	-

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Profit Margin in Fish Marketing

The results indicated that most fish sellers (37.40%) earned a profit margin between N2,000.00 - N3,000.00 weekly (Table 6). The size

of the profit margin depends greatly on handling and processing techniques, perishability, seasonal and institutional factors such as market performance.

Table 6: Weekly Profit from Fish Marketing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I don't know	8	7.0
No profit	9	2.6
< N2,000.00	9	7.8
N2,000.00 - N3,000.00	43	37.4
N4,000.00 - N5,000.00	17	14.8
N5,000.00 and above	32	27.8

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Problems Encountered in Fish Marketing

The major problem associated with fish marketing were of those spoilage of fish (42.0%), lack of storage and preservation facilities (39.0%) and too much revenue charged by the Local Government (8.0%) (Table 7). Other

problems included inadequate funds for the business, lack of market facilities and inconsistent electric power supply. Despite all these problems, most respondents, (88.0%) still preferred to continue in the fish business.

Table 7: Problems of fish marketing in Makurdi Local Government Area

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No problems	4	3
No ready market for the product	-	-
The ease of spoilage of fish commodity	49	42
Problem of storage/preservation	45	39
Problem of too much revenue/charge by LGA	9	8
Fish sellers association give us problem	5	4
Others	3	3
Do you want to continue		
Yes	101	88
No	6	5
Indecision	8	7

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Despite all the problems encountered in fish marketing in the study area, the supply of fish into the market is regular. Little or no hired labour cost was incurred and the business was viable. The fish marketing was carried out mostly by women who were energetic to conduct the business. However, they were educationally backward.

Policy Recommendations

In order to promote the performance in fish marketing in the study area, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Women education should be improved to facilitate faster adoption of new technologies in fish marketing.

- (ii) The government should also improve the conditions of the market facilities by providing hygienic store and cold rooms to reduced fish post harvest/spoilage losses.

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