Research Article

Factors Affecting Quality and Quantity of Fish Marketed in Abakaliki Urban

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out with the objective of determining the factors which affect the quality and quantity of fish marketed in Abakaliki Urban. Multistage sampling technique was employed to choose seventy (70) fish marketers in the study area. Well-structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data from the respondents of which the data collected were duly analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency, mean and percentage, as well as inferential statistics in the form of Likert scale derived from a fiver point Likert scale. The result obtained showed that; the most demanded fish species in Abakaliki urban is scomber (*Scomber japonictatus*) which recorded a 24% of the total sample size, while the least demanded fish species was Bonga (*Ethmalosa fimbriata*) which recorded 1.83% of the sample size. The result further showed that the best form the fish was sold was fresh (48.57%), the major source of fund used in marketing was from personal savings (62.86%) while the least was from bank loans (4.29%), while the accepted factors that affect quality and quantity of fish sold include; financial factor (3.8), consumers' choice (3.7) and availability of storage facilities (3.5), whereas the rejected factors were; access to cold room (2.2), fear of unknown (2.4) and level of fish supply (2.5). the recommendations include that there should be provision of storage facilities to aid proper storage of fish to increase the shelf-life.

Key words: Factors, Affecting, Fish, Quality, Quantity, Abakaliki urban

INTRODUCTION

Hunger and malnutrition remain amongst the most devastating problems facing the world poor and needy (FAO, 2002). About 80 to 90 million people have to be fed yearly and most reliable source of protein for many is fish, yet millions of people who depend on fish are faced daily with the fear of food shortage. With the population of Nigeria on the rise, there is a corresponding demand for fish consumption. Thus, there is the need for a suitable agricultural system to meet the increasing demand for food, and also maximize the utilization of the available limited resources without much wastage. In view of this, integrated fish farming fit exactly into this. Integrated fish farming is a diversified and coordinated way of farming with fish as the main target (Ayinla, 2003) along with other farm products. This integrated fish farming is practiced in line with the level of demand of fish products, though fish supply is affected by some several factors in the environment which have various impacts on fish marketing in Nigeria. These factors include: Economic factors: This is a situation where by majority of the population cannot meet up with their needs in terms of money resulting from falling incomes per head of household and unemployment, hence many people have less money to buy fish. Political factor: this has to do with people in power, if majority of people who are in control can circulate money, there will be enough money to buy fish, but if money is not circulated it will be difficult to buy fish. Demographic factor: this factor deals with the population of a given place, the increase in number of people in a place increases the demand for fish, while decrease in population decreases the demand for fish in a given place. The problem of this research was that despite the abundance of literatures on these factors that affect the quantity and quality of fish demanded, there seems to be bridge in knowledge on the specific factors that affect the quantity and quality of fish marketed in Abakaliki urban. Thus, the research seeks to address the questions; what are the species of fish marketed? What are the forms they are marketed? What are the sources of fund for fish marketing? And what are the factors that affect the quality and quantity of fish marketed in Abakaliki urban?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

Abakaliki urban, in Ebonyi state is the study area. It consists of two local government areas, Abakaliki and Ebonyi local government area. Abakaliki urban is the capital of Ebonyi state, the area is bounded in the east by Izzi local government area in the West by Ezza North and Ezza South local government areas and in the South by Cross River/Benue State. Abakaliki lies between longitude 7.30º and 8.30º East and latitudes 5.40º and 6.45º North. The main occupation of the people is farming. Geopolitically, Abakaliki urban belongs to the south-east zone but lies entirely in the cross river plains (EBSEEDS, 2006). Ebonyi State population based on the 1991 population census was estimated at1,523,000 people, which is about 2% of Nigeria's total population of 88,992,220 people in 1991 (NPC,2006). About 60% of the total population of Ebonyi State is made up of rural dwellers, while the urban population is estimated at about 40%. Abakaliki urban has many markets where fish are sold, it include; Abakpa market, Ekeaba market, Nkwegu market, Kpirikpiri market, Nwokpo market, Rice mill market, Ishieke market and other markets within the Abakaliki municipality.

Sampling techniques

Multi-stage sampling technique was employed in sampling the respondents for the study. It is a sampling method in which the population is divided into a number of groups or primary stages from which samples are drawn; these are then divided into groups or secondary stages from which samples are drawn, and so on. It is a type of surveys conducted face to face, using multi stage sampling methodology. The sampling was based on the number of the contact fish sellers within Abakaliki urban in Ebonyi state. Stage 1was selection of seven major markets noted for fish markets within Abakaliki urban, stage 2 was random selection of 10 contact fish sellers in the selected market.

Data collection

Primary data collection procedure was used for the study; the primary data was collected by the use of oral interview technique and questionnaire. The oral interviews technique was adopted because most of the fish sellers have low level of education and some did not attend school, while data were collected from the few that attended formal education through questionnaire.

Analytical techniques

A number of analytical tools were employed in data analysis. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages and inferential statistics in the form of five (5) point Likert scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result obtained and shown in Table 1 showed that there were different species of fish sold within the study area, based on that different choices arise. The result obtained revealed that the major species of fish demanded mostly by the consumers was Scomber (*Scomber japonictatus*) (28.44%), followed by Mackerel (*Trachurus japonicus*) (21.10%). Other species are Spotted fish (14.68%), Sardine (*Sardinella aurita*) (13.76%), Catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*) (6.42%). Other species that were demanded though at low rate because of cost are stock fish (5.50%), Electric fish (*Malapterurus electricus*) (4.59%), Mangala (3.67%) and the least marketed was Bonga (*Ethmalosa fimbriata*) (1.83%). This did not meet the findings of Akinola (2013) who found out that the major fish species sold in Ogun state was Catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*).

Table 1: The percentage distribution of the different species of fish sold in Abakaliki urban.

Titles	Category	Respondents	Percentage
Types of fishes sold	Mackerel (*Trachurus japonicus)*	23	21.10%
	Sardine (*Sadinella aurita)*	15	13.76%
	Scomber (*Scomber Japonctatus)*	31	28.44%
	Catfish (*Clarias gariepinus)*	7	6.42%
	Mangala (*Bargi mangala)*	4	3.67%
	Stock fish (*Gadus morhua)*	6	5.50%
	Bonga (*Ethmalosa fimbriata)*	2	1.83%
	Electric fish (*Malapterurus electricus)*	5	4.59%
	Spotted fish	16	14.68%
Total		109	100
The form it is sold	Smoked	11	15.71%
	Fresh	34	48.57%
	Dry	16	22.86%
	All forms	9	12.86%
Total		70	100
Sources of fish sold	Fishermen	12	17.14%
	Wholesaler	43	61.43%
	Retailer	15	21.43%
Total		70	100
Sources of fund	Personal savings	44	62.86%
	Friends and relations	16	22.86%
	Banks	3	4.29%
	Cooperatives	7	10.00%
Total		70	100

Source: Field survey, 2014.

Table 2: Factors affecting the quality and quantity of species handled by fish marketers in Abakaliki market

Factors	Response	Scale	Decision
Financial factor	Yes	3.8	Accepted
Consumers choice	Yes	3.7	Accepted
Level of fish supply	No	2.5	Rejected
Cost of fishes	Yes	3.3	Accepted
Poverty status of the consumers	Yes	3.1	Accepted
Level of availability of fishes	No	2.7	Rejected
Level of access to cold rooms	No	2.2	Rejected
Fear on the side of marketers	No	2.4	Rejected
Cost of transportation	Yes	3.0	Accepted
Availability of storage facility	Yes	3.5	Accepted
Availability of power supply	Yes	3.0	Accepted
Cost of firewood	No	2.6	Rejected

Source: Field survey, 2014.

From Table 1, the result obtained showed that fish marketers within Abakaliki Urban sold their products in different form ranging from fresh, dry and those that sales both fresh and smoked fish. The result presented in Table 1 showed that majority of fish marketers within the study area sold their fishes in fresh form (48.57%) while the least (12.86%) sold in both fresh, smoked and dried.

The result obtained and presented in Table 1 revealed that there were three sources of fish found in Abakaliki market which were; the fisherman (17.14%), wholesaler (61.43%) and Retailer (21.43%). From the result it showed that majority of fish marketers in Abakaliki urban got their fish from wholesalers which is usually in a cold room.

The result obtained and presented in Table1 showed that the major source of fund for fish marketers within the study area was from their personal savings (62.86%), few of them sourced their fund from friends and relatives (22.86%), cooperatives (10.00%) and the least was Banks (4.29%).

The result presented on the Table 2 was based on 5-point Likert scale in which the decision rule was 3.0 and any value below it was rejected. Based on the analysis in table 2, it was observed that financial factor (3.8) was the major factor affecting the quality and quantity of fish marketed in Abakaliki Urban. Other major factors included; consumer's taste and preference (3.7), availability of storage facility (3.5), and cost of fishes (3.3). These were the main factors that determined the quality and quantity of fish that were sold in Abakaliki urban, other factors according to the respondents were poverty status of the consumers (3.1), cost of transportation (3.0) and availability of power supply affected the quality and quantity of fishes marketed in the study area.

Conclusions

It was found out that fish marketing in Abakaliki urban was controlled by some identified factors of which if these factors could be regulated, there would be increased fish marketing in good quality and high quantity which will increase fish production in the study area. The most accepted factors were; financial factor (3.8), such that if financial support could be given to the fish sellers through bank loans, there would be increased fish purchase from wholesalers which will increase the availability of fish in the market and possibly increase the marketing of fish.

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