

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the economics of fish marketing in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria using primary data. Purposive and multistage random sampling technique was used to collect the data from 105 respondents using well-structured and pre-tested questionnaire. These data were analysed using descriptive statistics, concentration ratio, price spread, net profit margins, marketing margins analyses and multinomial logit (MNL) models. Tests of significant differences and effects were carried out using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test techniques. Research results showed that average age for the fish marketers were 38 years for producers, 42 years for wholesalers and 46 years for retailers, and also that majority of them were married. The results further showed that majority of the fish producers and retailers had West African Senior School Certificate while most wholesalers had First School Leaving Certificate. Also, the all marketers had average household size of 5 members with 18 years marketing experience for the producers, and 15 years for the wholesalers and retailers, respectively. Furthermore, the study found that the marketers made use of referrals, price discount and home delivery to attract customers. The results showed that the market was under weak oligopoly at concentration ratio of 47%. This implies that the activities of the largest four fish marketers affected the price and demand for fish in the market. Further results showed that fish marketing was profitable with channel 2 having the highest net margin of N141,095 per annum per processing firm compared to channel 1 (N127,850) and channel 3 (N137,030) while channel 1 had the highest marketing efficiency of 342% relative to channels 2 and 3 with marketing efficiencies of 144% and 97%, respectively. The results indicated that these differences in marketing efficiency among the channels were significant at $P < 0.01$. This implied that the longer the chain of distribution, the higher the marketing cost and hence, the lower the marketing efficiency. Furthermore, the study found that smoke-drying was the predominant method of processing fish at frequencies of 64% for the producers, 90% for the wholesalers and 92% for the retailers. Use of hangovers was the dominant method of storing fish at frequencies of 40% for the producers, 76% for the wholesalers and 83% for the retailers. Also, motor-cycle was the dominant method of transportation of fish for the producers and wholesalers at frequencies of 73% and 61%, respectively, while use of bus/taxi was dominant for the retailers at frequency of 76%. Further results showed that there were challenges facing fish marketing at an average of 2.74 on a 4-Point Likert rating scale. Lack of capital, seasonality of fish business, lack of government assistance, produce deterioration, lack of storage facilities, poor extension services and debt were the factors indicted for challenging fish marketing. More so, the results showed that socioeconomic characteristics accounted for the vertical differentiation of fish marketing into channels 1, 2 and 3 by 68%, 87% and 92%, respectively. Marital status, household size, value of fish and membership of cooperative unions were the factors that significantly drove vertical differentiation of fish marketing positively at $P < 0.05$ while the effects of age and sex were significant and negative at $P < 0.05$. Firewood splitting, fish transportation, loading/off-loading of fish, fish packaging, fish processing and fish smoking were the activities that both males and females participated in. This implied that the participation of both males and females will enhance the marketing of fish. The study recommended policies that will enhance that profitability and efficiency of fish marketing.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Agriculture is the major economic activity of developing economies. In Nigeria, agriculture provides food for the increasing population; supplies adequate raw materials to growing industrial sector; is a major source of employment; generates foreign exchange earnings; and provides market for the products of the industrial sector (Okumadewa, 1997; World Bank, 1998; Winters, Janvry, Sadoulet and Stamoulis, 1998; Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO (2006) as cited in Eze, Lemchi, Ugochukwu, Eze, Awulonu and Okon 2010).

Fish is a very important agricultural product in the country as it occupies a prime place in the economy of the country. The term fish is a diverse group of animal that live and breathe in water by means of gill. Fish is one of the most diverse groups of animals known to man with over two thousand five hundred species. There are more species of fish than all other vertebrate (Eyo, 1992). The fishery sector is estimated to contribute about 3.5% to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and also provides direct and indirect employment to over six million people (Kwara State Government, 2010). The employment opportunities come from different fishing activities such as production, processing, preservation and transportation (Ali, Gaya and Jampada, 2008). The Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN (2005) report shows that the contribution of the fishery sector to the GDP of Nigeria rose from N76.76 billion in 2001 to N162.61 billion in 2005.

Fish is a very important agricultural product in Nigeria, and is largely consumed in the country especially due to its rich nutritional and medicinal values. More so, the large coastal area and continental shelf available in the country makes diverse varieties available in different areas at affordable prices. Despite these rich coastal and continental resource base of the country, demand for fish far exceeds production, resulting in the importation of over 800,000 metric tonnes of fish annually (FBS, 2007). This trend may not change in the nearby future considering the rising population of the country and the increasing distance between fish producers and consumers. This therefore calls for efficiency in fish marketing. Furthermore, fish is the most important animal protein food available in the tropics, and this could account for its large consumption in the country. In Nigeria, fish constitutes 40% of protein intake (Eyo, 1992: Federal Department of Fishery, FDF, 2000), while, according to Adekoya and Miller (2004), fish and fish products contribute more than 60% of total protein intake in adults especially in rural areas. Amienheme (2005) asserts that nutrient from fish is superior to all terrestrial meats such as beef, mutton, pork and chicken being a rich source of high quality animal protein and also contains highly digestible energy. More so, it is a good source of sulphur and essential amino acids such as lysine, leucine, valine and arginine. Fish is a good source of thiamine and polyunsaturated fatty acids, fat soluble vitamins such as vitamins A, D E and K, and water soluble vitamins for example, B complex, and minerals, such as, calcium, phosphorous, iron, iodine and selenium. According to Ovie and Raji (2006), Fish contains omega 11 fatty acids that are known to reduce cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and arteriosclerosis, thus becoming a preferred source of protein for those nearing 50 years and above. These fatty acids are also known to enhance good brain cell development in developing foetus, (thus vital diet for pregnant women) and intelligent quotient (IQ) in developing children (FDF, 2005). Hence it is evident that fish and fisheries are crucial to the economy and health of the nation.

ECONOMICS OF FISH MARKETING IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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