



DETERMINING YOUTH CHOICE OF ENTERPRISE IN AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION FOR JOB CREATION IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Aquaculture production provides an entry point to create jobs for youth which prompted the study to determine their choice of enterprise in aquaculture production across gender in Abia State. Interview schedule was used to elicit information from 171 randomly selected respondents in six local government areas which was analysed with cross tabulation along gender and t-test. The result affirmed that aquaculture met youth inspiration on economic drive as prime motive to seek for job and be independent. Both genders were attracted to aquaculture production enterprise for monetary purpose rather than food and pleasure. Interestingly, youths indicated more interest in rearing of table size fish production enterprise than fingerling and brood-stock enterprises. Also, youths got to know about aquaculture through eight information mediums mostly through mobile phone, television and friends. Result of t-test established that significant difference exists between the men and women gender as calculated t-ratio (2.18) was greater than the t-critical (.160). It indicates that men made better choices than women on motivation, information sources and on choice of enterprise in aquaculture production. Based on the finding, communication strategy for youth sensitization and promotion on aquaculture production enterprises should consider mobile phone in combination with other mass media, interpersonal and group methods. Meanwhile, emphasis should be placed on table size aquaculture production enterprise that most youths showed curiosity. Therefore, concerted effort should be directed towards promotion and empowerment of desiring youths with capacity building and credit facilities to realise the dream in aquaculture production enterprise for job creation.

Keywords: aquaculture, youth, gender, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Youth are young adult persons between the ages of 16 and 30 years and they constitute important segment of the society in political, economic and social development. But prevailing incidence of youth unemployment in the country is a source of concern due to its consequences on insecurity, weak economy and poverty. Report of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2011) found unemployment to be highest among youths between 15-24 years (37.7%) than young people between 25-44 years (22.4%) who are graduates of higher institutions. By implication, Nigeria is at the peak of unemployment crisis and joblessness among youth. Consequences of youth joblessness are loss of innovativeness, insecurity, rural urban migration, zero contribution to productivity and gross domestic product as well as liability to parents and relatives.

Agriculture has a lot of potentials for creating jobs and employment for youths for diversification of the economy. In this regard, aquaculture aspect of fisheries is a viable and promising enterprise for youths to seek livelihood to create wealth and contribute to food and nutrition security. According to Davies (2005), the establishment of small scale aquaculture projects in the towns and villages will

create employment and thereby alleviate poverty among youths. Job opportunities in aquaculture value chain exists at small, medium and large scales in fish production, marketing, processing, feed production, value added products, fabrication of equipments, software development, extension and advisory services. Recent study by Oluwemimo and Damilola (2013) revealed that small scale fishing gives an average net revenue of N318, 640.75 and monthly income of N26, 553.40 which is higher than the N19, 000 (US\$126.67) national minimum wage.

Moreover, viability of aquaculture is not in doubt as it is a profitable venture in the country (Okwu and Acheneje, 2011; Ugwumba and Okoh, 2010). Positive indicator of aquaculture are increasing number of fish farmers from 2,685 in 2004 to over 20,000 in the country; 20% growth since 2003; rise in domestic fish production from 5.50% to 24.75% in 2011 (Federal Department of Fisheries (FDF) (2008); Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) (2012). Other attributes of aquaculture production that can inspire youths are visible economic impact among aquapreneurs, prestigious status career, mechanized technologies in fish farm operations as well as organised farmers associations and professional body.

Investment opportunities to exploit are worth ₦100 billion in the production of 2billion fingerling production, 2.5 million tonnes of table size fish production and brood stock production.

Unfortunately, youths constitute only small proportion of active aquaculture producers which is about 10% that engage in fish farming enterprise (Ifejika et al, 2010). In Kaduna State, Jiriko et al (2015) found 35% engagement of youths in aquaculture as primary occupation. Oluwemimo and Damilola (2013) established that 38.9 years was the mean age of fish farmers. The situation is appalling in south east zone with low youth participation in aquaculture production. Youth apathy in aquaculture production has a linkage to the lagging behind of south east zone to south-west, south-south and north-central zones. Implication is high fish transportation from other zones to meet fish demand for consumption. Another rationale for the study was to fill the gap existing in literature on youth choice of enterprise in aquaculture production for advocates of youth empowerment as a guiding document for training, planning and policy formulation. Specific objectives pursued in the study were to:

1. ascertain factors that motivate youths to engage in fish farming enterprise
2. determine how youth source information on aquaculture awareness, and
3. ascertain their choice of enterprise in aquaculture production

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The focus of the study is on aquaculture production and excludes goods and services aspect in the value chain. Identified aquaculture production areas are fingerlings production, table size fish production and brood stock management production. Each of the production systems complements one

another. For instance, brood-stock producers’ supply matured male and female fish to fingerling producers who then breed and sell fingerlings to table size producers. Eventually, brood-stock growers buy from table size producers to enrich and restock their brood-stock bank.

Present study was carried out in Abia State which was purposively selected due to low level of aquaculture production in the south east geo-political. Out of 17 Local Government Areas (LGA) in the State, six with youth farmers’ user associations was randomly selected for the investigation namely Umuahia North, Umuahia South, Ikwuano, Aba North, Aba South, and Bende. The population for the study comprised of all youth in the selected six council areas. On sample size, it comprised of 360 youths that belong to various youth associations in the selected six LGAs in Abia State. From the sample size of 360, 48% were randomly selected as respondents (171) for the study. Instrument for data collection was interview schedule whereas the sampling procedure was interview to elicit primary data in 2009. Generated data was analysed with descriptive tools of cross tabulation along gender, frequency, percentage while inferential tool was two tail t-test. Obtained results were presented in tables and chart.

RESULTS

Table 1 displays factors that motivate youths’ to venture into fish farming enterprise. Pooled score revealed that the most attractive factor was to make money (42.2%) distantly followed by money and pleasure (28.6%) whereas the least was food and pleasure (1.7%) and food only (2.3). Both gender agreed that money (21.1%) was the primary motive to entice them into fish farming enterprise compared to issues of food and pleasure.

Table 1: Factors motivating youths towards engaging in aquaculture enterprise

Factors	Men	%	Women	%	Pool score	%
	Frequency		Frequency			
Make money	36	21.1	36	21.1	72	42.2
Food	2	1.2	2	1.2	4	2.3
Pleasure	7	4.1	6	3.5	13	7.6
Money and food	15	8.8	15	8.8	30	17.6
Money and pleasure	24	14	25	14.5	49	28.6
Food and pleasure	1	0.5	2	1.2	3	1.7

Source: Field data (2009)

Figure 1 shows respondents' sources of information on aquaculture awareness. Majority (74.2%) of the respondents became aware through mass media sources of mobile phone, newspaper, radio, school, seminar and television compared to few (25.8%) that utilised interpersonal sources of fish farmers and friends. Pooled score revealed that most youths were aware through mobile phone (37.4%) followed by friends (20.5%) and television (14.0%), whereas the least used sources were school (2.3%)

and radio (4.1%). Despite slight difference on gender sources of information, they maximised the usage of mobile phone (men: 23.4%; women: 14.1%), friends (men: 10.6%; women: 9.9%) but at par on the use of television (men and women, 7.0%) and newspaper (men and women, 5.8%). Women respondents' made better use of fish farmers (4.0%) than men (1.1%), but the reverse was the case for seminar (men: 3.5% and women: 1.2%).

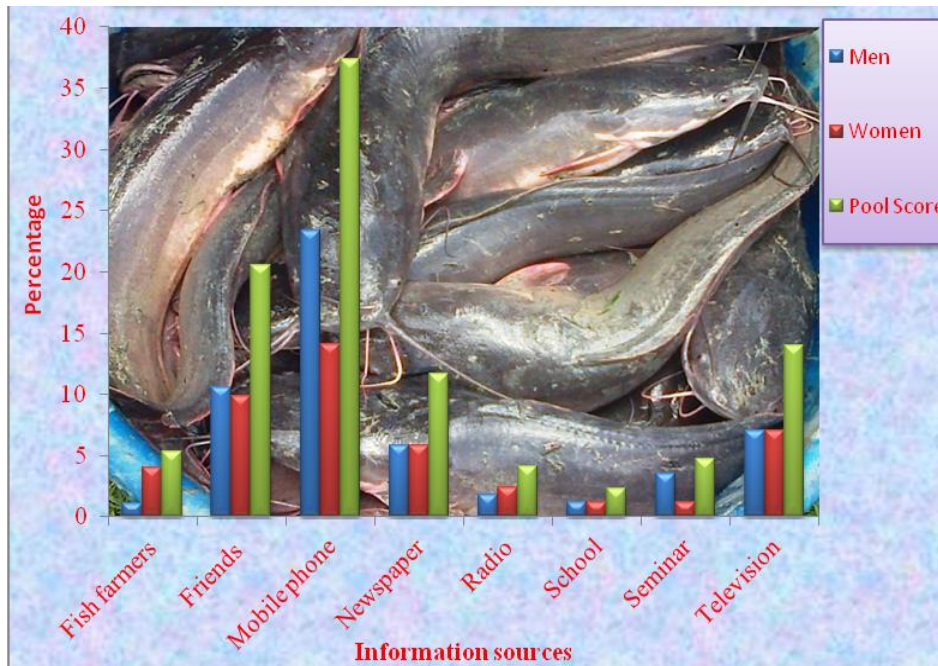


Fig. 1: Sources of information on aquaculture awareness

Table 2 relates to youth choice of enterprise in aquaculture production enterprise. Pooled score established that youths have overwhelming interest in table size fish production enterprise (40.9%) followed by combination of table size and brood-stock enterprises (26.3%) over sole fingerling enterprise (14.7%) and brood-stock enterprises (9.4%). Respondents expressed low interest in combination of

table size with fingerling (4.0%) as well as fingerling with brood stock enterprises (4.7%). Across gender, majority (24.0%) and (16.9%) of men and women respectively showed high interest in table size production enterprise. For combined enterprise of table size with brood stock women (15.6%) surpassed men (10.5%).

Table 2: Respondents choice of enterprise in aquaculture production

Enterprises	Men	(%)	Women	(%)	Pooled score	(%)
Table size fish production	41	24	29	16.9	70	40.9
Fingerlings enterprise	14	8.2	11	1.8	25	14.7
Brood stock enterprise	11	6.4	5	2.9	16	9.4
Table size and fingerlings enterprises	3	1.8	4	2.3	7	4.0
Table size and brood stock enterprises	18	10.5	27	15.6	45	26.3
Fingerling and brood stock enterprises	7	4.1	1	0.5	8	4.7

Source: Field data (2009)

Table 3 shows the result of t-test on difference between the mean scores of men and women on basis for motivation, information sources and choice of aquaculture enterprises. As shown, calculated t-ratio

(2.18) is greater than the t-critical (.160). It established that significant difference exists between the men and women gender mean scores in relation to the examined variables.

Table 3: Two- tailed t-test mean scores of men and women gender on motivation, information sources and aquaculture enterprise choice

Method	Mean	SD	N	Standard error	DF	t-cal	t-critical
Men	91.00	4.35	3	2.51	2	2.18	.160
Women	80.00	4.35	3				

Source: computer generated from field data, (2009).

DISCUSSION

From the perspective of management, motivation is defined as forces within a person that affects the person’s direction, intensity and persistence of voluntary behaviour (Mary in Abba et al, 2004). Youth inquisitiveness for money is not abnormal as the sole aim of every enterprise is economic prosperity. In this regard, Ugwumba and Okoh (2010) confirmed economic viability of fish farming in different pond systems in the zone. Also, Ifejika et al (2007) confirmed that primary motive of practising fish farmers’ is to make money. Meanwhile, youths need money to be independent and to acquire good things of life like their contemporaries in other sectors of the economy. Evidence from the study attests that aquaculture production enterprises meet youth inspiration on economic drive as a prime motive. As such, economic viability of aquaculture production enterprises is an incentive to attract youths to seek livelihood and job creation.

On information sources, youths became aware of aquaculture through eight different information mediums classified as interpersonal and mass media.

Study revealed youth pattern of information sourcing which showed better use of electronic media than contact mediums. The finding agreed with the statement of Oakley and Garforth (1985: 45p) that ‘mass media in extension are good medium for spreading awareness of new ideas and creating interest in farming’. Also, Jiriko et al (2015) empirically established that youth fish farmers’ personal characteristics of education and age had positive correlation with utilization of information communication technology. Corroborating youth activeness on the use of information was Ifejika et al (2010) finding that information was one of the top youth trainees’ strength in fisheries enterprise. Probably, high usage of mobile phone by youths as a prime information source can be attributed to its popularity, ownership, accessibility and multimedia functions. Observed diverse sources of information on aquaculture awareness attest to influence of youth tertiary education, exuberance, innovativeness and curiosity to resolve complexity in decision making. Recorded pattern of information sourcing affirm effectiveness of mass media to promote and sensitize youths on aquaculture enterprise.

Growing popularity of table size enterprise among practicing fish farmers might have influence youth choice of enterprise in the study area. Perhaps, youth choice of enterprise in table size production can be attributed to simplicity of operation, less technicality and profitability. Studies carried out in different parts of the country by Oluwemimo and Damilola (2013), Ugwumba and Okoh (2010) and Kudi et al (2008) have attested to the profitability of catfish production. Low attractiveness of fingerlings production enterprise to youths suggests their lack of skill and knowledge on technicalities of fish seedlings breeding and risk aversion even though it yields income fast. Fingerlings production though gives quick money within 6 to 9 weeks, it is highly technical and risky enterprise whereas brood stock requires longer gestation period to attain maturity with huge financial implications on feeding. To buttress the point, youths agreed that lack of experience and impatience to learn were part of their weakness to practice fisheries enterprise (Ifejika et al, 2010). Moreover, youths showed that gender will not be a barrier to adoption and participation in any aspect of aquaculture production venture in the area. Hence, empowerment, motivation and training are needed to boost knowledge and skill to enable youths venture into aquaculture production enterprise in the state.

Based on the statistical result, observed higher mean value indicates that men were more determined than women on motivation, information sources and choice of aquaculture production enterprise. Likely reason for the difference might be due to gender disparity towards fish farming and consciousness of men as future head of the families. Ogunlade, (2007) and Jiriko et al (2015) confirmed that men dominate women in aquaculture production enterprise of table size, fingerling and brood stock in the country.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that both gender had positive disposition to fish farming with slight difference in their choice of enterprise, motivating factor and sources of information. Respondents were inspired by economic derive in aquaculture production and became aware of aquaculture through eight information sources. Also, both gender among the youths showed overwhelming interest in table size fish production enterprise than fingerlings production and brood stock production enterprises. Observed pattern of information sources affirm that electronic mass media will be more effective to promote and sensitize youths on aquaculture production. Its achievement in the State depends on collaboration and partnership among key actors in aquaculture development.

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