

## Assessment of youth attitude towards fish production in Abeokuta metropolis, Ogun state, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study assessed the attitude of youth towards fish production in Ogun State, Nigeria. Data were obtained from randomly selected youths in Abeokuta metropolis using structured interview guide. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive (frequencies and percentages) and inferential (Chi square and PPMC) statistics. Results show that majority of respondents were male (82.0%), single (59.0%), had formal education (47.0%) and 64.0% had fish farming as their main source of income. Although 60.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that fish production activity was hard and stressful as it requires large capital (62.5%) youth had favourable disposition to fish production (55.8%). Inadequate capital and unfavourable government policy were identified as the top constraints towards involvement in fish production. Therefore, the study recommends that efforts should be put in place to make government policies favour youth involvement in fish production while credit schemes and or intervention funds specifically targeted at aquaculture and fish production development should be established to further encourage them.

**Keywords:** Youth attitude, Fish farming, Aquaculture development

### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria appears to be in what economists call a poverty trap, a vicious circle that takes hard work and massive investment to break. While the population continues to rise in the face of acute food shortage and massive unemployment, poverty continues to spread like wild fire (Gabriel, 2012). Poverty has almost become a generational culture in Nigeria. Unemployment which is synonymous with poverty has become an albatross around the necks of the average Nigerian. This phenomenon has increased the already high dependency syndrome since many able bodied youths are still dependent on the existing workforce. Thus, the only antidote to this unfortunate situation is the personal involvement of the able bodied generation of youth in income earning ventures. One way in which the energy of the teeming population of youth can be positively and profitably channelled is the promotion of fish farming and fish farming estate where the nation has huge untapped potentials.

Nigeria has been regarded as the biggest importer of fish in Africa considering the present per capita fish consumption level in the country (FAO, 2011). The problem is that total domestic fish production is far less than the total domestic demand (Bada and Rahji, 2010). The unsatisfied demand will continue to be met through importation unless policies and actions are geared towards improving domestic production in a sustainable way through aquaculture (Rahji *et al.*, 2001). A review of

aquaculture in Nigeria showed that only extremely small proportions of the resources available (both man and materials) were being utilised. Nonetheless, Nigeria has a great potential to increase the availability of fish by supporting and expanding aquaculture (Olomola, 1991; Ojo and Fagbenro, 2004).

Nigeria is capable of producing fish that can meet the standard protein requirement of her people. Nigeria is blessed with an estimated inland water mass of 12.5 million hectares capable of producing about 512,000 metric tonnes of fish annually (Ita *et al.*, 1985). There is a vast expanse of inland freshwater ecosystem from the coastal region in the South to the arid zone in the North. According to Inoni (2007), total domestic fish production fluctuated between 562,972 and 524,700 metric tonnes in 1983 to year 2003; while the output of fish farming during this period was 20,476 to 52,000 metric tonnes. Fish farming accounted for between 3.64 and 9.92% of total domestic fish production in Nigeria within this period, while the bulk of production came from artisanal fishing (Bamigboye *et al.*, 2010). Current statistics of fish production in Nigeria shows that aquaculture production has increased reasonably from 56,355MT in 2005 to 152,796 MT in 2009 (FAO, 2011). The increase is connected to increasing population and awareness of the benefits of fish as a source of protein for healthier living. Nonetheless, the continued apathy of able bodied youth in fish farming remains a bane for self-

sufficiency in fish production in Nigeria since fish production is an energy and time demanding venture.

Studies on agriculture have found that, in most parts of Nigeria people involved in farming are economically active and between the age range of 35 and 50 years (Oladoja and Adeokun, 2013; Umunna *et al.*, 2013; Adeokun *et al.*, 2008; Babatunde *et al.*, 2007; Ifejika *et al.*, 2007). In actual fact, attitude of the youth population (people less than 30 years old) to agriculture and agricultural related enterprise has not been encouraging. On fisheries and aquaculture, Ifejika *et al.* (2007) reported 20% participation of youth. This level of participation is considered as not encouraging, pointing out that the issue of succession will affect future fish food supply because the active workforce is ageing. Some of the problems identified with youths attitude towards fish farming are: poor government policies, wrong assumption of youths that fish farming is meant for grassroots, wrong perception and attitude of the principal implementers and facilitators such as government, teachers, parent and other consumers and half-digested knowledge on fish production (Dada, 2003). Thus, research on contribution of youth (people less than 30 years old) to fish production and ways to enhance their participation remain germane.

Youth according to Nigeria's National Youth Development Policy (2001), comprises all young persons of ages 18 to 35, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. People in this age bracket definitely constitute a sizeable chunk of a nation's population on which the burden of nation building falls. They also constitute the major resource base for any country that want to embark on any meaningful rural development projects. Laogun (2002) observes that investment in the youth is the only way to ensure the future growth and development of any country. He further asserts that increasing number of young people must be trained and as quickly as possible, to provide leadership in agriculture industry, government and rural development projects. Youth are energetic, exposed to modern computer technologies and are seen as "vital sources of manpower for development". Hence, the kind of education (formal or informal) that youth are exposed to or have access to will determine the nation's overall developments. With the youth involvement in fish farming, Nigeria can be self-sufficient in fish production, increase fish production thereby making the country a net exporter of fish and fisheries products (George *et al.*, 2010). If great emphasis and attention is placed on commercial fish farming and the government provide the enabling environment for it.

Youth in urban settlements were mainly into motor cycle riding and other quick money making

ventures but minority went into fish farming. The notion that agriculture is mainly the occupation of old people no longer holds because lot of youths are now encouraged into backyard farming as secondary occupation to augments their revenue, minimise unemployment, eliminate malnutrition and for food security. The specific objectives of this study were to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the youth towards fish production in Ogun State, youth's attitudes towards fish farming, and constraints to involvement in fish farming. The study also tested a hypothesis to know whether socioeconomic characteristics are predictors of youth attitude towards fish production.

## METHODOLOGY

**Study area:** Ogun State is a predominantly agrarian and maritime coastal state in Nigeria. The state is located in the rainforest vegetation belt of Nigeria within longitude 2° 45' E and 3° 55' E and latitudes 7° 01' N and 7° 8' N in the tropics. It is bounded to the west by the Benin Republic, to the south by Lagos State and the Atlantic Ocean to the east by Ondo state and the north by Oyo and Osun States (Olaoye *et al.*, 2007). It has a land area of 16,409.26 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 2,820,298.66. Ogun State is people mainly by the Awori, Egba, Ijebu Ikale, Ilaje, Remo and Yewa. All except the Egun belong to the Yoruba Language sub family (Olaoye *et al.*, 2010).

Abeokuta metropolis which is the capital city of Ogun State has only two (2) Local Government Areas namely; Abeokuta South Local Government Areas with the headquarters at Ake with 15 political wards and Abeokuta North Local Government areas having its headquarters at Akomoje with 17 political wards with a total population of 593,143 people as at 2006 census among which are predominantly youth (NPC, 2006).

**Population of the study:** The study population comprised of all male and female youth involved in fish farming in Abeokuta metropolis areas of Ogun State.

**Sampling Techniques:** Multi-stage random sampling procedure was used to select the youths. Firstly, Abeokuta metropolis was divided into two based on the local government areas. The first stage involved the random selection of 6 wards out of the existing 15 wards in Abeokuta South Local Government Areas and 7 wards from the existing 17 wards in Abeokuta North Local Government Areas (i. e 40% each) making a total of 13 wards for the survey. In the third stage, 10 youths were systematically selected to give 130 youths. At the end of the data collection exercise, 120 copies of the questionnaire were found suitable for data analysis.

The main instruments for primary data collection was well-structured questionnaires used to obtained data on the socioeconomic characteristics, youth's attitudes towards fish farming, and constraints to involvement in fish farming.

Data were analyzed using descriptive (frequency counts, percentages, etc) and inferential statistics (Chi-square and PPMC).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 shows that majority (76.7%) of the respondents were within the active age group bracket of 25-30. Fish farming as a labour intensive business requires the involvement of enthusiastic, agile and innovative individual (Olaoye *et al.*, 2010). Thus, it was presumed that this age category of respondents in Abeokuta metropolis could easily cope with the rigors of fish farming business. Noting the importance of age on performances in agricultural enterprise development, Oladoja and Adeokun, (2013) stress the importance of young farmers' involvement in agriculture towards ensuring food security in Nigeria. Oluwasola and Ajayi (2013) point out that young farmer are in their prime age for production. Thus, the young age of the respondents should, all things being equal have positive impacts on enterprise size, earnings, and the ability to take risks and adopt modern innovation which they perceive to be capable of yielding higher incomes. Therefore, considering the positive correlation of age with acceptance of innovation and risk taking, if youth can be encouraged to be actively involved, there is hope for fish farming in Nigeria (Bello, 2000).

The gender, marital status and household size of the respondents are also important variables in the study as these variables determine to a large extent decision making on the fish farming system. The study found that 82.5% of the respondents were male and 59.2% single. This finding corroborates Ifejika *et al.* (2007) where he found only 20.0% of his respondents being involved in fish production in Borgu Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. Among the reasons given by Ifejika *et al.* (2007) for low involvement of female in fish production were oppressive land tenure system and lack of interest. It is noteworthy that, in Yoruba land where this study was carried out in Nigeria, female are not in most cases heirs to land as they are believed to have a share with their husband (when they marry) and not with their parents. However, this contravenes the findings of Dey *et al.* (2002) in

Ifejika *et al.* (2007) which reported 56.0% female involvement in aquaculture in China, Philippines, India, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Being mostly male and single is presumed to be a "plus" to the involvement in fish production since fish production requires physical/muscular strength exertion and also time demanding. Thus, it can be easily executed by youths in the study area.

Education plays a crucial role in influencing the youths and predispose them to new innovations. It was found that 93.3% of the respondents attained tertiary level education. The high literacy level of the respondents can be attributed to the presence of notable tertiary institutions in and around Abeokuta metropolis. Therefore, youth in the area are expected to explore the opportunity of the institutions of higher learning in the area to attain higher levels of education. Since youth in the study area are more enlightened, they can easily organise themselves into formal organisations. This will help them in innovation adoption and enhance their propensity for personal economic development through agri-entrepreneurship. In corollary, Ofuoku, *et al.* (2005) stressed that literacy level among farmers is a crucial factor in the adoption of innovation and technology.

Fish farming was the main source of income to 64.2% of the respondents while 45.8% ran their farms themselves. The respondents who run the operation themselves stand a chance of having higher profit margin but limited scale of operation. They are likely to commit more number of hours and efforts in order to succeed.

On sources of income, the study reveals that 55.0% of the respondents' source of income was from personal savings. This implies that only few may have the privilege of access to micro-credit. Most (91.7%) of the youth cultured catfish and 78.0% opined that fish seeds were readily available. This is good for aquaculture and fish production in the area. It was gathered that 98.0% of the youth had enough technical information about fish farming while most (96.7%) will recommend it to others. Most of the youth (64.2%) believed that fish farming will blossom in the area. The study also reveals that 82.5% of them did not belong to any fish farming association or cooperative society. This is a bane to capital acquisition for enhanced fish production among these young agripreneurs since they will continue to depend on the income pull from their agribusiness less personal upkeep expenses. This implies that the youth in this area have the propensity for a meagre plough backs into fish farming business.

**Table 1: Distribution of youth fish farmers by their socioeconomic profile**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Age (years)</b>				
25 – 30	92	76.7		
31 – 40	26	21.7	29.32	3.73
41 – 48	2	1.6		
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	99	82.5		
Female	21	17.5		
<b>Marital status</b>				
Single	71	59.2		
Married	47	39.2		
Divorced	2	1.7		
<b>Highest level of Education</b>				
Secondary	7	5.8		
Polytechnic	57	47.5		
University	55	45.8		
Others	1	0.8		
<b>Years of Schooling</b>				
2-6	15	12.4		
7-14	60	50.1	13.49	4.14
>15	45	37.5		
<b>Farm main source of income (N)</b>				
Yes	77	64.2		
No	43	35.8		
<b>Other sources of income (N)</b>				
Broiler production	2	1.7		
Business	21	17.5		
Civil defence	2	1.7		
Civil servant	2	1.7		
P.T.A teacher	1	0.8		
Snailery	1	0.8		
Teaching	2	1.7		
Trading	12	10.0		
<b>Do you belong to any fish farmers association</b>				
Yes	21	17.5		
No	99	82.5		

**Source:** Field survey, 2013

### Youth attitude towards fish production

Table 2 shows that 60.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that fish production activity was hard and stressful, 62.5% of the respondents strongly agree that fish production requires large capital and they could not afford it. However, 47.5% of the

respondents disagreed that fish production provides low income while 54.2% of the respondents disagree that fish farming is not sustainable means of livelihood, 51.7% of the respondents disagree that fish production is meant for illiterate people.

**Table 2: Distribution of youth by their attitudinal disposition to fish farming**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I Do Not Know
Fish production activity is hard and stressful	73 (60.8)	33 (27.5)	1 (0.8)	13 (10.8)	
Fish production is meant for illiterate people	1 (0.8)	4 (3.3)	62 (51.7)	53 (44.2)	
It makes someone older than other	4 (3.3)	47 (39.2)	38 (31.7)	25 (20.8)	6 (5.0)
Fish farming is not sustainable means of livelihood	1 (0.8)	7 (5.8)	65 (54.2)	47 (39.2)	
Fish farming should not be practiced by youth but old age	6 (5.0)	12 (10.0)	35 (29.2)	67 (55.6)	
It requires large capital and not affordable	75 (62.5)	24 (20.0)	11 (9.2)	10 (8.3)	
It activities has negative effect on health	8 (6.7)	50 (41.7)	34 (28.3)	19 (15.8)	9 (7.5)
It is meant only for rural people	6 (5.0)	7 (5.8)	45 (37.5)	62 (51.7)	
Fish farming involves working for long hours	2 (1.7)	21 (17.5)	73 (60.8)	22 (18.3)	2 (1.7)
Fish farming provides low income	5(4.2)	7 (5.8)	57 (47.5)	51(42.5)	
Fish farming is too risky	65 (65.7)	11(9.2)	19 (15.8)	20 (16.7)	

**Source:** Field survey, 2013

**Factors that influenced respondents' career choice of fish production**

Table 3 shows the factors that influenced the respondents' career choice in fish production. Means of survival was ranked first by 90.0% of respondents among the various factors that influenced their choice of fish production as a career. Other reasons included environmental factors (70.0%), influence of parents or guardians (65.0%), influence by career guidance

and counsellor (50.0%), influence by menace of unemployment (41.7%) and influence of friends (44.0%). However, poverty and government policy ranked among the least factors influencing youth career choice in fish production. This implies that, government policy on fish production is not stimulating enough so as to spur the youth towards making a career in fish production.

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents by factors that influence their career choice of fish production**

Factors	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
<b>Parent or Guardian</b>			
Yes	78	65.0	3 <sup>rd</sup>
No	42	35.0	
<b>Family</b>			
Yes	3	30.0	7 <sup>th</sup>
No	84	70.0	

Factors	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
<b>Friends or peer group</b>			
Yes	44	36.7	6 <sup>th</sup>
No	76	63.3	
<b>Unemployment</b>			
Yes	50	41.7	5 <sup>th</sup>
No	70	58.3	
<b>Means of survival</b>			
Yes	108	90.0	1 <sup>st</sup>
No	12	10.0	
<b>Career guardians or counselling</b>			
Yes	60	50.0	4 <sup>th</sup>
No	60	50.0	
<b>Poverty</b>			
Yes	31	25.8	8 <sup>th</sup>
No	89	74.2	
<b>Environmental influence</b>			
Yes	84	70.0	2 <sup>nd</sup>
No	36	30.0	
<b>Government policy</b>			
Yes	27	22.5	9 <sup>th</sup>
No	93	77.5	

Source: Field survey, 2013

#### Constraints faced by youth fish producers

Table 4 shows the opinion of the youth on constraints they faced in their fish production enterprise. It was found that majority (78.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that inadequate capital affects fish production. This situation was further aggravated by the unwillingness of financial institutions to grant loans to the farmers. In cases where loans are given; it is usually at very high interest rate (Omitoyin, 2007). Other constraints being faced includes land problem (63.3%), unavailable/ poor quality fish feed (70.0%) and poor quality fish seed (61.7%). These were strongly agreed upon by respondents as personal constraints being faced in fish production.

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents by constraints in fish production enterprise**

Variables	Yes	No
Inadequate capital	120	0
Problem of land	108	12
Unavailability/poor quality fish feed	107	13
Poor quality fish seed	107	9
Lack of credit facilities	114	6
Inadequate agricultural extension services	99	21
Market price instability	113	5
Parental restriction	93	27
Peer group	93	37
Spouse restriction	91	51

Source: Field survey, 2013

#### Hypotheses testing (Ho1)

Table 5 shows a significant association between some socioeconomic characteristics (sex, marital status and education) of respondents and their attitude towards fish production. This implies that, involvement of youth in fish farming is significantly based on the characteristics like sex, marital status and education. The finding on marital status and educational level corroborates Otufale (2013) that found marital status and educational level to have significant relationship with the attitude of the respondents towards farming activities. However, with this study on youth and their involvement in fish farming in Abeokuta metropolis, the non-significant relationship between age (Table 6) and attitude of youth towards fish farming negates Otufale (2013).

**Table 5: Associations between socioeconomic profile and youth attitudes towards fish production**

Variables	$\chi^2$	df	CC	Decision
<b>Sex</b>	35.710	15	0.002	S
<b>Marital Status</b>	101.430	30	0.000	S
<b>Education</b>	76.615	45	0.002	S

**Table 6: correlation between socioeconomic profile and youth attitudes towards fish production**

Variables	R	P	Decision
Age	0.147	0.111	NS
Years of school	0.156	0.84	NS
Involvement in fish farming	0.120	0.191	NS
Average catch	0.004	0.965	NS

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that majority of respondents were male, single, had formal education, non-member of fish farming association and had fish farming as their main source of income. The respondents strongly agreed that fish production activity was hard and stressful as well as that fish production requires large capital and they could not afford it. Means of survival, environmental factors, influence of parents or guardians, influence by career guidance and counsellor, influence by menace of unemployment and influence of friends were the various factors that influenced their choice of fish production as a career. The constraint to youth's involvement in fish farming activities were inadequate capital, lack of credit facilities, market price instability, problem of land availability and poor quality fish seed. Involvement of youth in fish farming is significantly based on the characteristics like sex, marital status and education.

Consequently, the poverty situation can be and should be tackled effectively. Favourable governmental policies and credit facilities with ease of its acquisition by youth has been found to be an encouraging factor towards involving youth in fish production in Nigeria. Therefore, efforts should be put in place to make government policies favour youth involvement in fish production. Also, credit schemes and or intervention funds specifically targeted at aquaculture and fish production development should be established. This will further encourage youth to involve in fish production in Nigeria. It is therefore expedient that credit should be made available to this category of youth to enhance their levels of production. However, such credit should attract pocket friendly interest. Moreover, the procedure for access to such credit should be relaxed and encouraging so that youth could easily access it.

Besides these, in order to further encourage youth to take to fish farming, special intervention fund/scheme should be organised by government whereby funds would be disbursed basically to youths with feasible fish production project while Project Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Intervention should be on hand to monitor and assess the performance of such intervention funds in fish

production. Considering the urgent need to boost fish production level in Nigeria, government of Nigeria at various levels should enact policies that will further encourage the involvement of youth in fish production.

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