



Labour Challenges Confronting Nigerian Fishing Industry

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ABSTRACT

The fishing sector in Nigeria is characterized by poor labour force due to the disinterestedness of the youths and literate citizen in the sector. The reason for the lack of interest in the sector even though the country is suffering of high rate of unemployment is connected with low-paid and high-risk associated with the industry. The study investigated the labour challenges confronting Nigerian fishing industry using a descriptive research survey, in which purposive sampling was used in selecting three fishing communities in Lagos state; Ikorodu, Epe and Makoko. From these communities, random sampling method was used in selecting 65 respondents comprising fish traders, fish men/women and fish processors. Questionnaire was used in obtaining data and was distributed with the aid of research assistants. The data collected was descriptively analyzed using frequency and percentages. The result of the study revealed the following challenges confronting the fishing industry: Inadequate storage facilities, High cost of fishing equipment, Inadequate technology, Obnoxious fishing methods, Credit facilities, Shortage of skilled fishery personnel, Inadequacy of extension agents, Poor management of resource use, Poor wages; and Poor working conditions. The result also revealed that the effect of labour challenges on productivity in Nigerian fishing industry include: Indiscriminate labour practises influences the mass movement of future labour; Unappealing work conditions causes a decline in the economic prosperity and opportunity for coastal communities; Labour challenges threatens the existence of the sector; and Lack of infrastructure minimizes the confidence, exploitation capacities and productivity of the fishers. Finally, the study indicated that tackling the labour challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing sector will: boosts confidence to make more exploits; reduces unemployment and underemployment amongst youth; gives access to facilities that enables growth in the sector; increases the sectors contribution to the economy; and enables the creation of better jobs and reduces income inequality and poverty. Based on these result, the study concluded that labour force is essential for the growth of fishing industry. The result also indicated that the disinterestedness in of the youth in the sector centers on low wages and high risks, harsh working condition, as well as crude or orthodox fishing equipment which makes fishing more challenging. Based on this outcome conclusions were drawn and recommendations made.

Keywords: Labour, challenges, fishing industry

Introduction

In Nigeria, an important aspect of agricultural production system is the fishing sector. The fishing sector is an employer of labour, either directly or indirectly, as people are employed in either the production output or other aspects which produces income for the various categories of people involved in the fish farming process. The fish farming sector contributes significantly to the economy of the country. In the effort to meet up with the demand for fish, the fishing sector is confronted by several challenges, despite the efforts by government to enhance the production of fish. The constraints facing fishing includes encroachment, unconventional fishing practice, pollution and overfishing (Olotu, 2014).

Olotu (2014) pointed out that only 50% demand for fish is met by local production, an indication that the inability to meet the increased demand is as a result of challenges. The challenges faced by the sector, if minimized can increase the sector's contribution to the economy as well as exploration of more opportunities. The sector comprises mainly of small scale farmers such as fish farmers, fish traders, and fish processors. In spite of the opportunities provided by the sector, the challenges experienced seem to overwhelm the available opportunities. Among the constraints hindering the productivity of the Nigerian fishing industry are insufficient and unskilled labour, high cost of feed, poor water quality, and insufficient technical knowledge (Adeoye, Akegbejo-Samsons, Omoniyi & Dipeolu, 2012). These challenges limit productivity and prevent growth. Based on the foregoing, the study examines labour challenges confronting Nigerian fishing industry.

Statement of research problem

Poor labour condition is a challenge confronting the fishing sector in Nigeria as well as a lot of other countries. Labour rights which include poor wages, poor working conditions, forced and underage labour, poor procedures for airing grievances amongst other are serious challenges that call for attention. The fishing sector is described as a low-paid and high-risk industry lacking in adequate worker's representation, thus threatening the survival of the sector. All of these challenges make the sector unappealing to new recruits who desire higher and more secure wages (Oruonye, 2014). Thus, given the

inability of the sector to attract a future workforce, the productivity of coastal communities seems to be diminishing, coupled with the existing problems faced such as unregulated fishing, pollution and overfishing. The unappealing work conditions of the sector influences the movement of younger workforce to more lucrative opportunities, causing a decline in the economic prosperity and opportunity for coastal communities. In view of the foregoing, the study examines labour challenges confronting Nigerian fishing industry.

Research objectives

1. Identify the challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing industry.
2. Determine the effect of labour challenges on productivity in the Nigerian fishing industry.
3. Examine the impact of tackling labour challenges in the Nigerian fishing industry.

Research questions

1. What are the challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing industry?
2. What is the effect of labour challenges on productivity in the Nigerian fishing industry?
3. What is the impact of tackling labour challenges in the Nigerian fishing industry?

Literature review

Every industry is plagued with its own problems and the fishing industry in Nigeria is not exempted. The fishing industry plays a vital role in Nigeria's economic development and involves all the processes from capturing the fish from the water down to the final consumer (Oruonye, 2014). With a minimization in the challenges plaguing it, its contributions can be greatly augmented.

Challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing industry

Unorthodox and Obnoxious Fishing Practices: This involves very bad fishing methods, which are not good for the preservation of the aquatic resources. These are ancient methods used in harvesting fish in Nigeria and involve the use of poisons and dynamites for fishing and have been prohibited in Nigeria since 1992. These chemicals, which are usually in liquid forms, are simply poured on the water surface ponds, rivers and lakes to fish. Also, using explosives which are locally made dynamites and hand grenades is very dangerous (Ikape et al., 2015).

Absence of suitable shore facilities is a major constraint such as inadequate jetties, spare parts, service facilities comprising workshops, ice and cold storage facilities, and fuel facilities handicap fishing communities. The road infrastructures are very poor causing difficulties in supplying quality products to consumers. The physical deterioration of delivering quality products to consumers presents huge difficulties (Ikape et al., 2015).

Lack of access to credit facilities: agricultural credit facilities can take the form of a loan or overdraft which is made accessible for farmers to help boost their productive volume and increase their earnings, which in turn lessens socio-economic risks, susceptibility, lack and deprivation (Croppenstedt et al. 2017). The reliability and assurance of credit instruments help farmers to manage risks better and participate in more profitable livelihood and agricultural activities. Climate change causes an increase in water temperatures which can affect fish species.

Impact of labour challenges on productivity

Unorthodox fishing practices destroys important coastal habitats and indiscriminately kills all species within the radius of action of the explosion when explosives are used (Ikape et al., 2015).

Climate change causes changes in the quantity and type of species caught value-added opportunities, incomes, employment, profits, and food security. It can also affect the productivity of deep slope fishes, resulting in their movement to deeper waters, which will reduce abundance and catchability for fishers and result in less employment and service opportunities for fish processors (Monnereau & Oxenford, 2017). Lack of infrastructure has negative effects on the confidence, exploitation capacities and productivity of the fishers (Alhaji et al., 2015).

Empirical review

Wuyep and Rampedi (2018) investigated the role of small-scale fish farming as a livelihood strategy by urban farmers in Jos, Nigeria by analyzing data obtained from 50 randomly selected respondents. Results showed that some of the most limiting problems that work against operational effectiveness and efficiency are lack of reliable water supplies, high cost of production alongside poor marketing of produce and lack of preservation facilities. Lack of access to credit facilities was also cited as one of the problems hampering this activity. Similarly, in a study by Osabohien et al., (2020) that examined the relationship between households' access to credit and agricultural production in Nigeria, it was revealed that farmers who did not have a source of credit are frequently forced to adopt measures which in the long run exacerbate their poverty levels.

Monnereau and Oxenford (2017) assessed the impacts of climate change on fisheries in the coastal and marine environments of Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and revealed that climate change effects such as rise in sea level, storms, and hurricanes, are projected to impact piers and landing sites and requiring the need for safer harbours and calm moorings. Increased intensity and rate of recurrence of storms and hurricanes will influence the safety of fishers at sea and likely increase the number of accidents.

Ikape et al., (2015) in a study that investigated the present and expected future problems facing the fisheries sector in Nigeria, enumerated fish seed, education, disease, production and management, government policy, feed and feeding, veterinary care and breeding, infrastructure as the factors affecting aquaculture production.

Alhaji et al., (2015) steered a study among forty communities randomly selected from the coastal fishing communities of Ondo State, Nigeria, and revealed that the sub-sector is over loaded by absence of modern fishing technologies, poor access roads, jetties and poor marketing systems, poor fish handling systems, complete lack of cold storage facilities, lack of credit facilities and generally poor environment as depicted in the study areas.

Chilaka et al., (2014) studied the challenges of inland artisanal fish production in Nigeria from an economic perspective and revealed that challenges facing the fisheries subsector limit its production potentials and include inefficient management of fishing policy, decreasing yield, inadequate technical and commercial knowledge, etc.

Theoretical framework

The Schultz theory about traditional agriculture is adopted as the theoretical framework for this study in which fishermen base wholly on the kinds of factors of production that have been used for generations. This kind of fishing often displays disheartening results in that the incomes generated by it are very low. Traditional fishing can be changed into a highly productive type of fishing which involves a much wider system of production and consumption.

Methodology

The study is a descriptive research survey, in which purposive sampling was used in selecting three fishing communities in Lagos state; Ikorodu, Epe and Makoko. From these communities, random sampling method was used in selecting 70 respondents comprising fish traders, fish men/women and fish processors. Questionnaire was used in obtaining data and was distributed with the aid of research assistants. The data collected was descriptively analyzed using frequency and percentages.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

70 questionnaires were distributed but only 65 were retrieved and thus constitute the sample size for this study.

What are the challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing industry?'

Table 1: The challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing industry

Statement		SA	A	UN	D	SD	% in agreement
Inadequate storage facilities							89.1
	%	69.2	20.0	6.2	1.5	3.1	
High cost of equipment	F						100.0
	%	84.6	15.4	0	0	0	
Inadequate technology	F						90.7
	%	24.6	66.2	9.2	0	0	
Obnoxious fishing methods	F						100.0
	%	89.2	10.8	0	0	0	
Credit facilities	F						93.8
	%	44.6	49.2	6.2	0	0	
Shortage of skilled fishery personnel	F						76.9
	%	29.2	47.7	13.8	6.2	3.1	
Inadequacy of extension agents	F						86.1
	%	32.3	53.8	0	13.8	0	
Poor management of resource use.	F						100
	%	100	0	0	0	0	
Poor wages	F						73.8
	%	29.2	44.6	13.8	0	12.3	
Poor working conditions	F						100
	%	100	0	0	0	0	

Field survey, 2021

Table 1 above presents the outcome of the analysis with respect to the challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing industry. As indicated in the table, more than 73% are in agreement to the items in the table indicating that the Nigerian fishing industry is confronted with the following changes: Inadequate storage facilities, High cost of fishing equipment, Inadequate technology, Obnoxious fishing methods, Credit facilities, Shortage of skilled fishery personnel, Inadequacy of extension agents, Poor management of resource use, Poor wages; and Poor working conditions. This study supports the results from Croppenstedt et al. (2017), Ikape et al., (2015), Adeoye et al. (2012) respectively.

What is the effect of labour challenges on productivity in the Nigerian fishing industry?

Table 2: The effect of labour challenges on productivity in the Nigerian fishing industry

Statement		SA	A	UN	D	SD	% in agreement
Indiscriminate labour practises influences the mass movement of future labour	F	65	0	0	0	0	100
	%	100	0	0	0	0	
Unappealing work conditions causes a decline in the economic prosperity and opportunity for coastal communities	F	19	29	9	0	8	73.8
	%	29.2	44.6	13.8	0	12.3	
Labour challenges threatens the existence of the sector	F	19	31	9	4	2	76.9
	%	29.2	47.7	13.8	6.2	3.1	
Lack of infrastructure minimizes the confidence, exploitation capacities and productivity of the fishers	F	4	22	40	0	0	40.0
	%	6.2	33.8	61.5	0	0	

Field Survey, 2021

The research question was formulated to elicit response from the respondents' opinion on the effect of labour challenges on productivity in the Nigerian fishing industry. With above 80% agreements, the respondents identified the following as the effect of labour challenges on productivity in Nigerian fishing industry: Indiscriminate labour practises influences the mass movement of future labour; Unappealing work conditions causes a decline in the economic prosperity and opportunity for coastal communities; Labour challenges threatens the existence of the sector; and Lack of infrastructure minimizes the confidence, exploitation capacities and productivity of the fishers. The result of this study supports that from earlier studies such as: Monnereau and Oxenford (2017); and Alhaji et al., (2015) respectively.

RQ3: What is the impact of tackling labour challenges in the Nigerian fishing industry?

Table 3: The impact of tackling labour challenges in the Nigerian fishing industry

Statement		SA	A	UN	D	SD	% in agreement
Tackling labour challenges boosts confidence to make more exploits	F	55	10	0	0	0	100.0
	%	84.6	15.4	0	0	0	
Tackling labour challenge reduces unemployment and underemployment amongst youth	F	16	43	6	0	0	90.7
	%	24.6	66.2	9.2	0	0	
Tackling labour challenge gives access to facilities that enables growth in the sector	F	58	7	0	0	0	100.0
	%	89.2	10.8	0	0	0	
Tackling labour challenges increases the sectors contribution to the economy	F	19	31	9	4	2	76.9
	%	29.2	47.7	13.8	6.2	3.1	
Tackling labour challenges enables the creation of better jobs and reduces income inequality and poverty.	F	33	29	3	0	0	95.4
	%	50.8	44.6	4.6	0	0	

Field Survey, 2021

From the result presented in the Table above, it is revealed that all the items in the table were accepted as constitutes major impacts of tackling labour challenges in the Nigerian fishing industry with more than an average of 76% in agreement. This indicates that tackling the labour challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing sector will: boosts confidence to make more exploits; reduces unemployment and underemployment amongst youth; gives access to facilities that enables growth in the sector; increases the sectors contribution to the economy; and enables the creation of better jobs and reduces income inequality and poverty. This result confirms the outcomes from some earlier studies such as Wuyep and Rampedi (2018) and Monnereau and Oxenford (2017) respectively who shared similar outcome.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Labour force is a primary determinant of business success even in the fishing industry. Like agriculture and any other sectors, the fishing sector is also employer of labour, either directly or indirectly, as people are employed in either the production output or other aspects which produces income for the various categories of people involved in the fish farming process. However, over the year, the youths are no longer interested in the sector as they preferred white collar jobs, leaving the sector to the elderly whose strengths can no longer equate the demand of fish in Nigeria. The reason for the lack of interest in the sector even though there is no job in Nigeria is connected with low-paid and high-risk associated with the industry. This made the sector unattractive to the youths (Oruonye, 2014). This study investigated the labour challenges confronting the sector and the outcome outlined several challenges facing the sector including: Inadequate storage facilities, High cost of fishing equipment, Inadequate technology, Obnoxious fishing methods, Credit facilities, Shortage of skilled fishery personnel, Inadequacy of extension agents, Poor management of resource use, Poor wages; and Poor working conditions. The result also revealed that the effect of labour challenges on productivity in Nigerian fishing industry include: Indiscriminate labour practises influences the mass movement of future labour; Unappealing work conditions causes a decline in the economic prosperity and opportunity for coastal communities; Labour challenges threatens the existence of the sector; and Lack of infrastructure minimizes the confidence, exploitation capacities and productivity of the fishers. Finally, the study indicated that tackling the labour challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing sector will: boosts confidence to make more exploits; reduces unemployment and underemployment amongst youth; gives access to facilities that enables growth in the sector; increases the sectors contribution to the economy; and enables the creation of better jobs and reduces income inequality and poverty. Based on these result, the study concluded that labour force is essential for the growth of fishing industry. The result also indicated that the disinterestedness in of the youth in the sector centers on low wages and high risks, harsh working condition, as well as crude fishing equipment which makes fishing more challenging. Based on this outcome, the study recommends that the sector be subsidize by the government to support youths who are willing to join the fishing team by paying them some allowance to complement their meagre salaries. Modernized fishing equipment should be sold to fishermen at subsidize price to improve quality harvest, low risk, improved profitability.

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Appendix**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Dear Respondent,

I am carrying out a study on “labour challenges confronting Nigerian fishing industry”, and you have been chosen to be part of the study. This questionnaire is only for academic purposes. Kindly select the response which applies to you and all information will be kept confidential

Instructions: Please tick (√) as appropriate where

SA = Strongly Agree (SA), A = Agree, UN=Undecided, D = Disagree (D), SD = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Key: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	UN	D	SD
RQ1	What are the challenges confronting the Nigerian fishing industry?					
1	Inadequate storage facilities					
2	High cost of equipment					
3	Inadequate technology					
4	Obnoxious fishing methods					
5	Credit facilities					
6	Shortage of skilled fishery personnel					
7	Inadequacy of extension agents					
8	Poor management of resource use.					
9	Poor wages					
10	Poor working conditions					
RQ2	What is the effect of labour challenges on productivity in the Nigerian fishing industry?					
11	Indiscriminate labour practises influences the mass movement of future labour					
12	Unappealing work conditions causes a decline in the economic prosperity and opportunity for coastal communities					
13	Labour challenges threatens the existence of the sector					
14	Lack of infrastructure minimizes the confidence, exploitation capacities and productivity of the fishers					
RQ3	What is the impact of tackling labour challenges in the Nigerian fishing industry?					
14	Tackling labour challenges boosts confidence to make more exploits					
15	Tackling labour challenge reduces unemployment and underemployment amongst youth					
16	Tackling labour challenge gives access to facilities that enables growth in the sector					
17	Tackling labour challenges increases the sectors contribution to the economy					
18	Tackling labour challenges enables the creation of better jobs and reduce income inequality and poverty.					