AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (2), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

# ACCESS BARRIERS TO AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION AMONG FISH FARMERS IN ORLU AGRICULTURAL ZONE OF IMO STATE

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## ABSTRACT

*The study determined the challenges confronting access to agricultural information among fish farmers. Orlu agricultural zone saved as the area of the study. One hundred fish farmers were selected from the entire population of fish farmer in Orlu zone for sampling. The data for the study was obtained using their interview method and analyzed using the percentage method. The study revealed that the fish farmers in Orlu zone face challenges with inadequate power supply, time factor, mad equate accessing agricultural information other recommended that the study recommended among other things that mass media house should be relaying verified and reliable information considering the time the fish farmer must have retired their respective home, that farmer local languages should be used in transmitting the information among others.*

**Keywords**: Challenges; Confrontation; Access; Agricultural Information; Fish Farmers

## Introduction

Agriculture in present day Nigeria has become one of the fastest and highest aquaculture producing Countries in sub Saharan Africa and second to Egypt in Africa due to present pace of growth in Fish farming production (fejika, Uzokwe and Oladosu, 2013). Fish and fish products are Known widely as a very important diet because of their high nutritive quality and significant in improving human health (Olaoye, Ashley-Dejo and Adekoya, 2014). Fish plays a vital role in feeding the world's population and contributing significantly to the dietary protein intake of Hundreds of millions of the populace (Amao, Oluwatayo, and Osuntope, 2006). According to Nidhi (2015), fisheries sector has a significant strategic role in food security, international trade and employment generation Olaoye, Ezeri, Akegbejo-Samsons, Awotunde and Ojebiyi (2016) noted that fishery Sector has continued to maintain its crucial position through its contribution to agriculture's Share of Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) in Nigeria. Fish is relatively cheap and easily available source of protein in dietary supplement for the poor, who cannot afford animal protein and depend mainly on food of low nutritional value (Ume, Ebeniro, Ochiaka and Uche, 2016). Apart from dietary source, fish is source of fish oil, a raw material for pharmaceutical Companies, provision of livestock feeds, and provision of employment for different categories of people in the area of fisheries production, processing, packaging and marketing (Fleuren, 2006). According to Folayan and Folayan (2017), trials have shown that fish oil Supplementation is effective in the treatment of many disorders including rheumatoid, arthritis, Diabetes, ulcerative colitis and Reynard's disease.

According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2018), strong evidence underlines How consumption of fish and in particular oily fish. Lowers the risk of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) mortality. Similarly, it has been estimated that fish consumption reduces the risk of Dying of coronary heart diseases by up to 36 percent due to the long-chain omega3 fatty acids Found in fish and fishery products (FAO, 2019a). Fish farming has become an enviable Subsector which provides employment to a large proportion of the nation's population (about 65-70%), especially those in riverside areas (Olaoye, 2010; Shettima, Mohammed, Ghide and Zindam, 2014). Olaoye and Oluruntoba (2011) recorded that Nigerians are high fish consumers and offers the largest market for fish and fishery products in Africa. According to Federal Department of Fisheries (2014), the contribution of fishery subsector to agriculture Gross Domestic Product was estimated at 0.48% in the year 2014, out of the total estimate of 20.24% being contributed by agriculture to the GDP.

Asiru and Ahmed (2016) noted that among the different food production systems around the World, fish farming is widely seen as an essential weapon in the global fight against poverty, Nutritional disorder and food insecurity, particularly within a developing country like Nigeria and Imo State in particular. Fish farming is regarded as a vital domestic provider of much Needed high-quality animal protein and other important nutrients. Okoronkwo and Ume (2013) Noted that Imo State is crisscrossed by numerous rivers, swamps, abundant rainfall, Effective harvesting and storage surface water, run off undoubtedly favour fish farming. It is Pertinent to note that the bulk of fish production is in the hands of numerous landless, marginal and small farmers in the state. To most of them, fishing is only a supplementary or Complimentary enterprise. Hence, next to crop production, fish production has the largest employment capacity and income generating potential for the poor. This aligns with Nidhi (2015) who opined that the most important feature of fish production process is that it provides Subsidiary occupation, offer gainful employment at the location itself and make better Utilization of family labour.

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According to Gerster-Bentaya and Hoffmann (2011), training need assessment is a gap between the present and the desired future. Benefits of training need assessment include determining Telt need, categorization of trainees, identification of adequate training methodology and knowing the appropriate time to deliver. Whereas, Famuyiwa, Adesoji and Lawal (2012) opined that training programmes in agriculture are aimed at developing farmers to make them better entrepreneurs and decision makers. Similarly, Sajeev, Singha and Venkatasubramanian (2012) highlighted that training plays an important role in the advancement of human Performance in a given situation. In order words, training provides a systematic improvement of knowledge and skills, which in turn helps the trainees to function effectively and efficient in their given task on completion of the training. According to Osei, Bakang and Nimoh (2013), Farmers' training is conducted with view to changing their behavior and improving their performance through the acquisition of increased knowledge, improved skills and positive changes in attitude and aspirations. However, Iwuchukwu, Udoye and Onwubuya.(2013) observed that it is counterproductive to offer training to individuals who do not need it or to offer the wrong kind of training to farmers. Fish farming effectiveness production depends on the several factors this study assist to identify the factors that hidden fish farming since all the effort by way of huge investment made by the government has not guided the expected result of fish product availability in Nigeria and Imo State in particular. One of the identified several factors that hinder effective fish farming are inadequate agricultural information. They are a lot of avenues through which farms can access agricultural information including the fish farmers. Desperate this fish farmers still complain in adequate agricultural information according to previous researchers such as (Alaribe 2023). The purpose of this study is to find out the barriers to accessing agricultural information among fish farmers specifically in the Orlu area of Imo State.

**Population of the study**

The 120 fish farmers in Orlu agricultural zone make the population of the study and only 100 farmers were available as at the time of the study.

**Method of data collection**

The data for the study was obtained through the interview technique. The items border on various sources of agricultural information.

**Method of data analysis**

The data obtained was anlaysed through the percentage method.

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## Data Analysis

**Sources of agricultural information**

| Responses | Agree | Disagree | % agree | % disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time factors | 80 | 20 | 80% | 20% |
| Inadequate power | 98 | 2 | 98% | 2% |
| Unreliable sources | 86 | 14 | 86% | 14% |
| Language constraint | 80 | 20 | 80% | 20% |
| Inadequate access to extension agents | 96 | 4 | 96% | 4% |
| Farm location and distant to information sources | 87 | 13 | 87% | 13% |
| Not relevant to immediate needs | | | | |
| Inconsistent information | 92 | 8 | 92% | 8% |
| | 80 | 20 | 80% | 20% |

## Result Discussion

The data analysis above shows that 80% of the fish faced face the barrier of time factors on accessing agricultural information while only 20% do not. 98% of the fish farmers are barriered with inadequate power supply while only 2% do not. 86% of them claim that the information sources are unreliable while 14% of them did not. 80% of the farmers are barriered by language constraint while only 20% are not 96% of them face the barriers of inadequate access to extension agents while only 4% of them do not. 86% of the fish farmers are faced with the challenge of farm location and distance to sources of information while only 13% are not. 92% of the farmers claim that the information obtained are not relevant to the immediate needs of the farmers while only 2% did not. Finally, 80% of the fish farmers claim that the information they receive are inconstant while only 20% of them disagreed to that.

## Conclusion

The study revealed that fish farmers in Orlu agricultural zone if Imo State are faced with the barriers of time factors, in adequate power supply and in reliable sources of information language barriers, inadequate access to extension agents, farm location and distant to information sources also pose as challenges to the fish farmers. The information transmitted to the fish farmers are not relevant to their immediate needs and finally, the information provided are inconsistent which make the farmers confused. It is however recommended that the mass media houses to that transmit agricultural information should do the broadcast on fish farming during the night hours when the farmers are expected to have retired to their respective homes. The mass media stations should ensure that information relayed are duly verified and reliability. The power supply stations should ensure that electricity in made available during the stipulated agricultural information broadcast hours. Information relaying personnel should make use of the farmers local languages to bridges any language communication barrier. Information to be transmitted should be relevant to the immediate farmers. finally, the

government should assist the agricultural extension agents and the fish farmer financially to enhance easy transition and access to agricultural information due to the fact that farmers productivity would not be improved if their knowledge base is low.

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