

The Role of State and Non-State Associations in facilitating Trading Opportunities in Fish - the Case of Ghana

Sarah Appiah and Emmanuel Abbey

Department of Economics , University of Ghana

Outline of the Presentation

- Background of the study
- Research Problem
- Research Objectives
- Justification of the Study
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusion
- References

Background of the Study

- Domestic and cross-border trade has been inadequate in stimulating large scale and widespread fishery activity in Ghana due to several reasons.
- These include constraints on market infrastructure, inadequate storage facilities, restrictive standards and the general informal nature of fishery activities.

Background Cont.

- While these concerns have been adequately explored in one way or the other, the important role that 'associations' of stakeholders into fishery products play in addressing these constraints to facilitate trading opportunities within the fishery sector of the country has not been adequately explored.
- These notable associations relate to fish producers, processors and traders.

Background Cont.

- In Ghana, there are many of such associations. For instance, there is the Ghana Aquaculture Association, National Fisheries Association of Ghana, Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association, Ghana Canoe Fishermen Association, Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association as well as several other smaller cooperatives of fishmongers, processors and traders at the various fish landing sites (in localities) and market centres throughout the country.

Background Cont.

- Though these associations have very different purposes, they have a common agenda of protecting the welfare of their members through the settlement of internal disputes, addressing market constraints as well as relating to fishery authorities on several issues.

Research Problem

- Even though these constraints facing domestic and cross border fish trade in Ghana have been somewhat adequately explored, the important role that associations of stakeholders in fishery products play in addressing these constraints to facilitate trading opportunities for their members, have not been adequately explored.

Research Objectives

- Explore the role of associations of fish producers, processors and traders in facilitating domestic and external trading opportunities within Ghana's fisheries sector
- Understand the structure of associations, the specific advantages offered members, links to international/local organizations and whether they receive any governmental support.
- Explore the awareness of associations about any certification procedures, standards and regulations pertaining to fish production and trade in Ghana.
- Recount any success stories about associations identifying trading opportunities for its members and any challenges thereof.

Justification of the Study

- Examining the role of the associations are very important for the longer-term sustainability of the entire fishing industry in terms of boosting networking activities as well as stimulating capacity within the fisheries sector.
- Results obtained from the survey will inform stakeholders in policy formulation to facilitate production and trading opportunities for actors within the fisheries sector of Ghana.

Methodology

- The data collection method employed was the interview of leaders of the associations and focus group discussions (FGDs), where some other members of the associations are available.
- In total, 12 major associations of fish producers, processors and traders, mostly in Accra, Tema, Denu, Kumasi and Techiman were interviewed. However, seven interviews and two focus group discussions were successfully completed.

Methodology Cont.

- Most of the information obtained was qualitative in nature. Therefore, the analysis of results was purely descriptive, making useful comparisons where necessary.
- SWOT analysis was performed to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in the activities of such associations in facilitating trading opportunities.

Findings

The main activities of the associations based on the interviews conducted are summarized as follows:

The Ghana Aquaculture Association

- The Ghana Aquaculture Association was established in 2009 as an association of fish producers with its main office located at the Fisheries Commission. The association has nine other affiliate associations throughout the country and is managed by an executive council that meets monthly.
- The main reason for the formation of the association was to promote the business of aquaculture in Ghana through advocacy and the communication of government policies to its members and provides training for its members as well.

Findings Cont.

- Cross-border trade is unpopular since domestic prices of aquaculture products were higher than their corresponding international prices, especially in neighbouring countries .
- The association was aware of regulatory standards regarding fish production in the country .
-
- Their major challenge is competition from imports mainly from Asia that undercuts their prices.

Findings Cont.

The Eastern Region Fish Farmers Association

- The Eastern Region Fish Farmers Association is relatively new and registered as a subsidiary of the Ghana Aquaculture Association in 2015.
- It serves as a mouthpiece for all fish farmers in the eastern region of Ghana and currently has about 120 members.
- The association was motivated by the huge deficits between domestic aquaculture production and consumption (current aquaculture production is estimated at 450,000MT but consumption is estimated at 900,000 MT) and sees this as an important opportunity .

Findings Cont.

- The specific benefits that accrue to members of the association was in respect to finance through the West Africa Regional Fisheries Programme.
- Members do not engage in cross border trade because of the high price of Tilapia in Ghana as compared to those in neighbouring countries.
- The Local Assembly (where members are located), the Volta River Authority, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Fisheries Commission play various roles in regulating their activities.

Findings Cont.

The National Fisheries Association of Ghana

- It was established around 1971 and has five other subsidiary groups: Ghana Tuna Association, the Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association, the Ghana Inshore Fishery Association, the Ghana Inland Canoe Fisheries Association and the Ghana National Marine Association.
- It is therefore mainly an association of fish producers.
-
- It coordinates the activities of the marine fisheries by liaising between the Ministry of Fisheries and the fishermen.

Findings Cont.

- Cross border trade is popular with this association as its members do travel or do business with people from Abidjan, the European Union, Britain and France.
- The association is abreast with the standards and requirements of such trade and liaises with the appropriate authorities (Ghana Standards Board and the Fisheries Commission) in meeting such standards.
- Currently, the association aims to explore trading with the East and other sub-Saharan African Countries giving the many restrictions on trade from the European Union.

Findings Cont.

The following associations summarizes the list of processors and traders interviewed:

- The Techiman Market Co-operative Fish Mongers Association
- The Greater Accra Market Association
- The Kumasi Asafo Market Association Frocen Fish Sellers Association

The main purpose of these associations are to foster unity among its members and do advocacy on behalf of its members at both local and national levels.

Findings Cont.

The Techiman Market Co-operative Fish Mongers Association

- It was established to settle disputes and promote the welfare of members in the Techiman market, to assist the Chiefs in the management of the market, and to support women to earn a living through fish trade and in times of needs.
- It is by far, the most well-structured association of fish traders in the country which is solely governed by women.
- Though women in the market do not engage in fish trade outside the country, their counterpart women from Ivory Coast bring beans and other foodstuffs to sell in the Techiman market and in return, buy fish to their home country.
- Their well-established structure allows them to engage in several informal financing schemes. For instance, they buy their fish from other fish folks on credit, sell and pay back weekly.

Finding Cont.

The Greater Accra Market Association

- The main purpose for the establishment of the association was to foster unity and also do advocacy on behalf of its members in the market.
- Fish traders from some neighbouring countries, especially Benin and Togo, bring dried or smoked shrimp and lobsters to sell at the market and purchase cured fish for their home country market.
- The association is also planning to introduce fishmongers to other products that they can sell in the market to complement their fish trade especially in the lean season for fish.

Findings Cont.

The Kumasi Asafo Market Frozen Fish Sellers Association

- It is the mother body of all coldstore operators and fish processors in Kumasi.
- The association was formed to ensure regular supply of fresh and frozen fish at all times to the Asafo market, build a foundation of unity and love among members, assist members in times of need, being it financial, bereavement and in distress and to promote the welfare of members.
- It ensures regular supply of frozen and smoke fish to the whole of Kumasi and its environs as well as some parts of Northern region(Tamale, Bolgatanga) and Brong Ahafo regions(Goaso, Sunyani, Techiman)

Findings Cont.

- In terms of standards and regulations, the association of fish processors and traders are not well abreast with them.
- However, they are aware of certain conventions and norms that they should abide by in their trading activities through the help of sanitation officer who occasionally visit the market.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis of Domestic Trade

<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Lack of storage facilities at Market Centres</p>	<p>High demand for Tilapia</p>	<p>Legal uncertainty and bureaucracy with respect to decision making at market centres</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<p>High electricity bills and taxes</p>	<p>Possibilities of increasing market infrastructure</p>	<p>Competition from imported fish products</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Dishonesty on the part of suppliers (fishes packed in cartoons sometimes are of bad quality)</p>	<p>Address high unemployment of the youth</p>	<p>Higher cost of production especially for aquaculture farmers</p>
<p>Threats</p>	<p>High production cost (fish feed)</p> <p>Multiple roles of different regulatory authorities</p>	<p>Address the high domestic deficit of fish production</p>	<p>Non-enforcement of standards and regulations</p> <p>Difficulties coordinating activities of non-members</p> <p>Producers obtain a lower share of the total value of fish products</p>

SWOT Analysis of Cross Border

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
New markets for fish	Restrictive Standards for instance from the European Union and other Advanced Countries	Increased fish consumption in the East and other Sub-Saharan African Countries	Attack from armed robbers; Accidents due to bad road network; Poor security on the roads
Increased availability of fish	Vessels catching fish in one country and landing in another	Earn foreign exchange	Poor mobile networks at some areas
	Illegal Fishing (light fishing, use of chemicals and the violation of IEU)	Address high unemployment of the youth	Transfer of fish at sea or vessels landing in other countries thereby not recorded in official statistics
	Fish with low quality left for domestic market		Transport of processed fish to market centres outside the country
			Difficulties coordinating activities of non-members

Conclusion

- The study showed that the associations play a major role in both domestic and cross border trade .
- Therefore if they are strengthened, they can help improve the inter regional trade and also improve food security and nutrition needs of the sub region.
- We recommend that the Ministry of Fisheries and Acquaculture and Ministry of Local government and Rural Development should facilitate the establishment and proper functioning of these associations at both national and district levels.



Thank you.