

# The Untold Export Story of Lake Tanganyika's Sardine and Perch

## INTRODUCTION

- Lake Tanganyika, the second-largest freshwater lake in Africa, provides vital resources to Tanzania.
- Fish species such as the commercially valuable sardine (*Stolothrissa tanganicae*) and perch (*Lates stappersii*) are important export commodities.
- However, Tanzania's fish export industry has seen erratic export results despite the considerable potential of species like sardine and perch in both domestic and foreign markets.
- The study aimed to assess the export performance trends of Lake Tanganyika's sardine and perch from Tanzania, focusing on the key factors influencing export performance.

## OBJECTIVES

- To examine the socioeconomic impacts of fish exports on local fishing communities.
- To evaluate the impact of large scale and small-scale exporters of Lake Tanganyika sardines and perch.
- To identify the implications of export trends on fisheries management practices.

## METHODOLOGY

- A combination of cross-sectional and time-series designs was employed.
- SWOT analysis was conducted to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the fish export value chain.

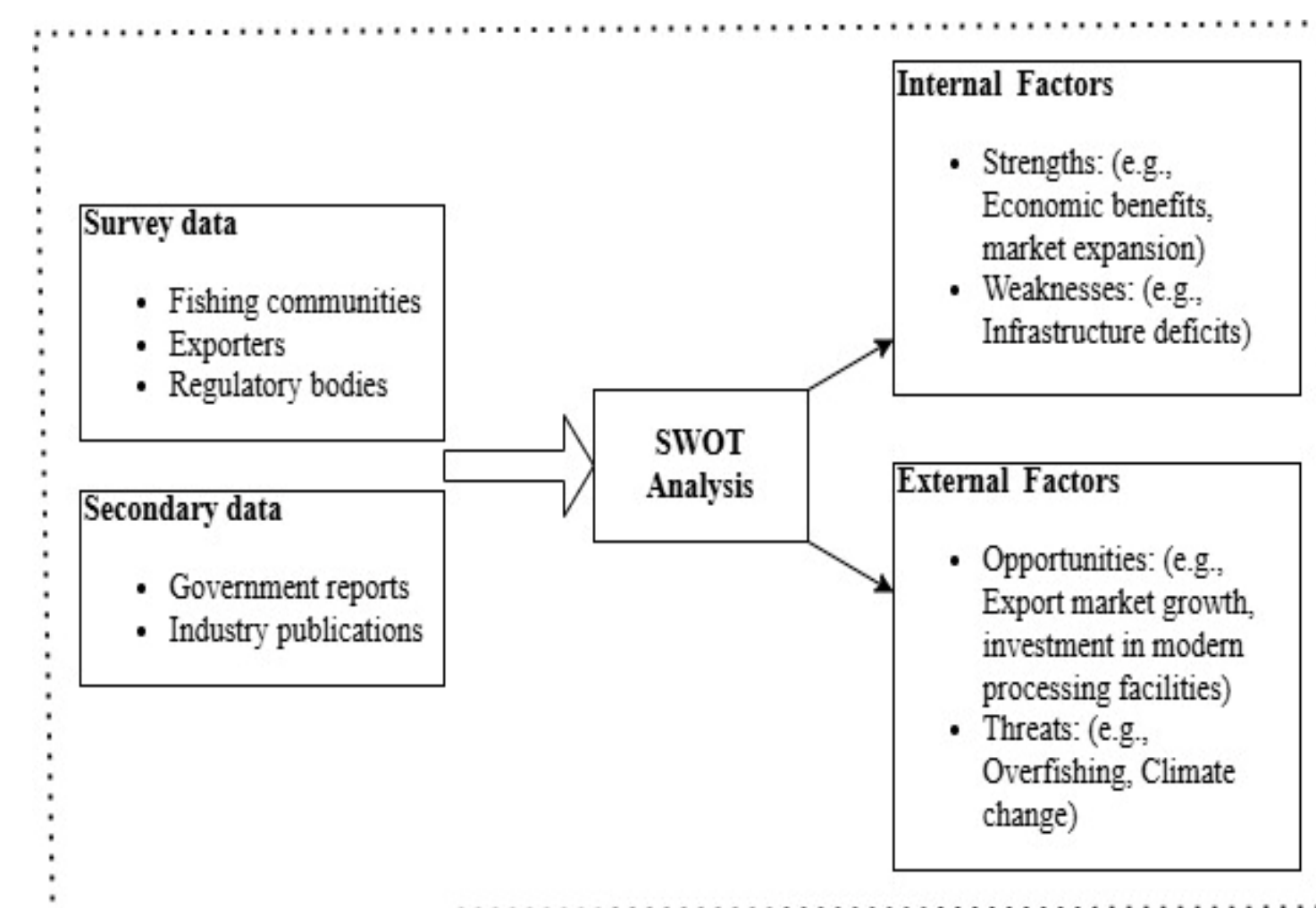


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

## RESULTS

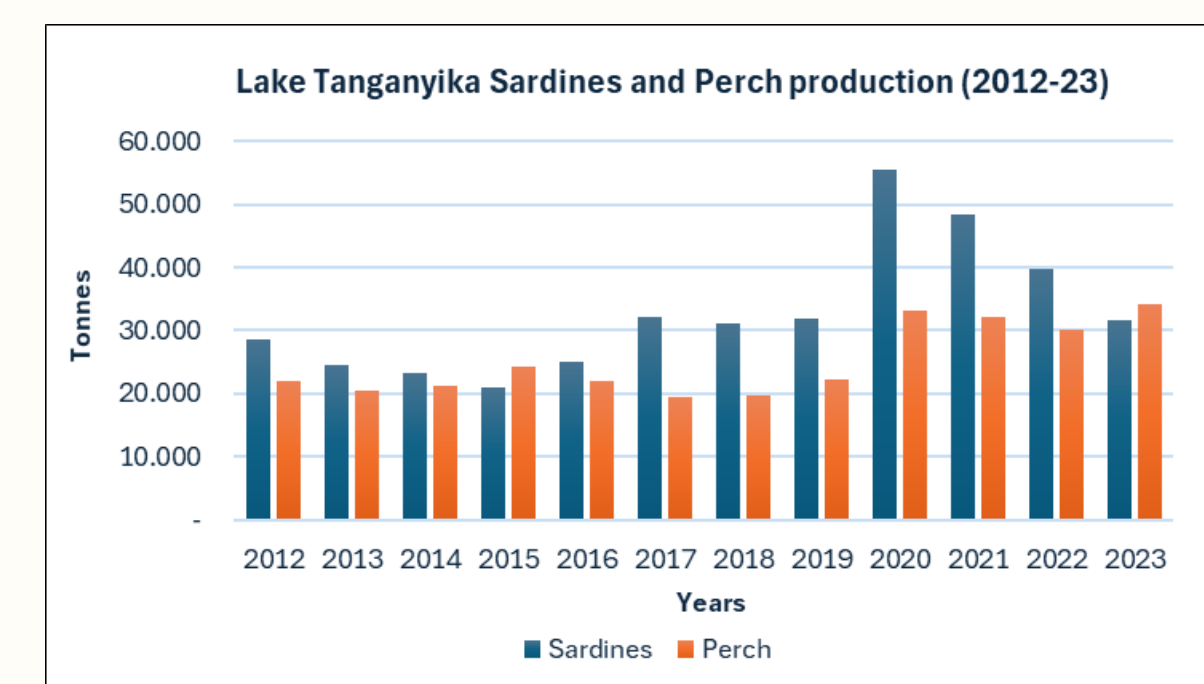


Figure 2: Fish production trends (2012-23)

Fig. 2 reveals:

- A notable surge in sardine production occurred in 2020, followed by a decline.
- A steady but moderate increase in perch production.

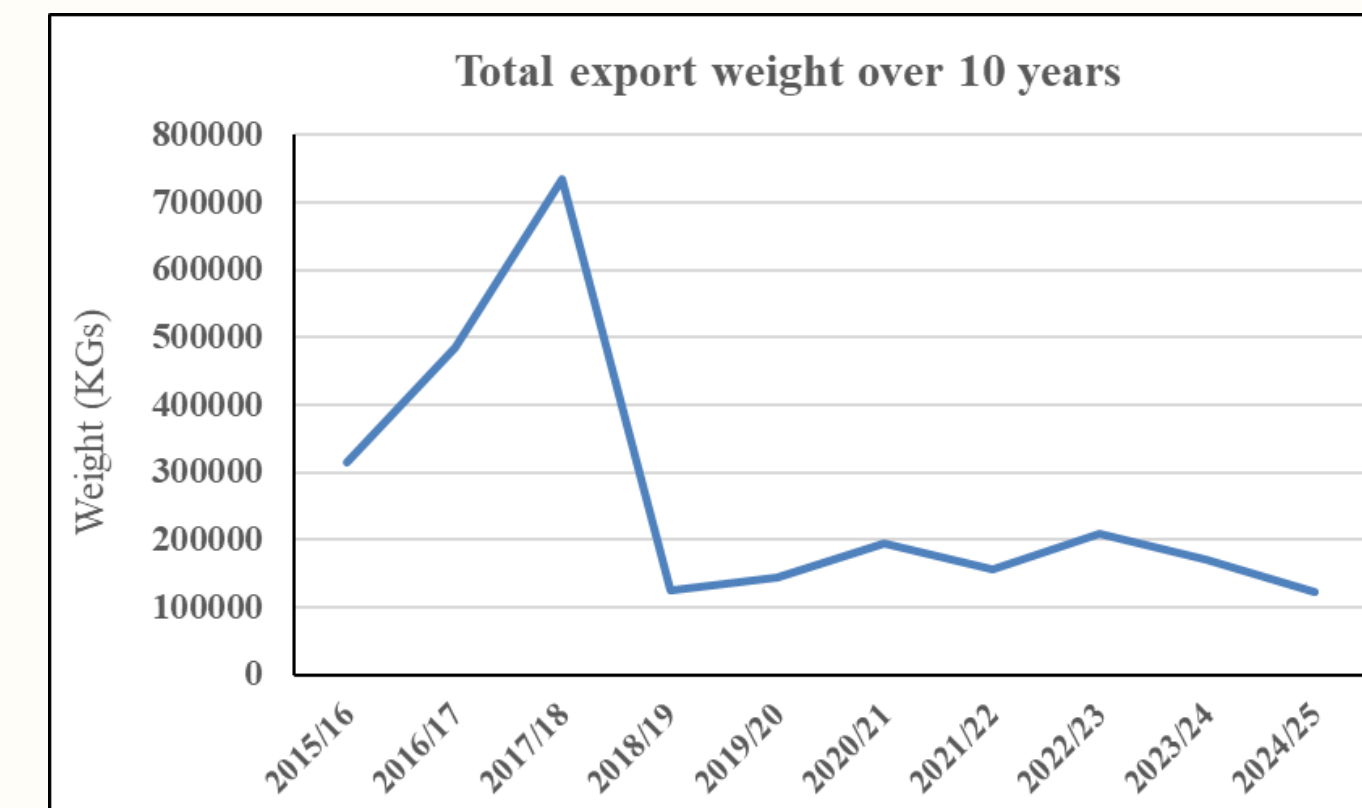


Figure 3: Fish export trend (2015/16-24/25)

Fig. 3 shows:

- The peak in 2017/18 indicating a period of strong demand, favorable trade conditions, and potentially higher fish availability.
- The sharp decline in the following years due to logistical disruptions, regulatory shifts, enforcement, and Covid 19.

Table 1: SWOT analysis for the fish export industry in Kigoma

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High fish availability</li><li>• Growing demand of fish</li><li>• Government support</li><li>• Established export markets</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor infrastructure</li><li>• Inefficient technology</li><li>• Limited access to finance</li><li>• High operational costs</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing investments</li><li>• Expanding to new markets</li><li>• Improving processing facilities</li><li>• Strengthening policies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Climate change</li><li>• Market fluctuations</li><li>• Regulatory challenges</li><li>• Overfishing</li></ul>

The SWOT analysis shows that;

- Strengths contribute to the growth of the fish export market.
- Weaknesses limit competitiveness.
- Opportunities offer paths for growth and enhanced competitiveness.
- Threats pose risks to the long-term sustainability of fish export.

## CONCLUSION

- Fish exports have been instrumental in improving household incomes and overall living standards of many community members.
- Price instability, competition, reduced availability of fish for local markets, and concerns about overfishing threaten the sustainability of the industry.
- To ensure long-term sustainability, stricter fisheries management rules, methods to balance the demands of domestic and export markets, and price regulating systems are required.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government should prioritize investing in infrastructure improvements, such as cold storage facilities.
- Capacity-building initiatives should be implemented to support small-scale exporters.
- Policies aimed at ensuring sustainable fishing practices must be actively enforced.
- Regulatory reforms should be enacted to make the fish export process more efficient and transparent.

## Acknowledgements