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Opinion Article

# The Evolution of Aquaculture with Multimodality Fusion

**Wanchao Cui***

*Department of Harbor, Coastal and Inshore Engineering, Jiaotong University, Chongqing, China*

## DESCRIPTION

Aquaculture, the practice of cultivating aquatic organisms such as fish, shellfish, and plants in controlled environments, has seen tremendous growth over the last few decades. As global seafood demand continues to rise, aquaculture has become a foundation of the world's food supply. However, this rapid expansion necessitates improvements not only in farming efficiency but also in sustainability and environmental impact. Technological advancements have played an important role in the evolution of aquaculture, particularly in the shift from single modality analysis to multimodality fusion.

Traditionally, aquaculture management relied on single modality analysis, which focuses on measuring and assessing a single data source, such as water quality parameters (temperature, oxygen levels, pH) or fish health indicators (growth rates, feed conversion ratios). Early aquaculture systems depended on manual monitoring and basic sensor technologies to gather data on these variables. While single modality analysis provided essential insights, it had inherent limitations. Isolated examination of individual factors failed to capture complex interactions within aquaculture systems, often leading to suboptimal decision-making and resource management. For instance, monitoring water quality solely through temperature might offer valuable information, but it overlooks the interplay between temperature, oxygen levels, and ammonia concentration, all of which affect fish health and productivity. This limited perspective hindered aquaculture managers' ability to predict and respond to issues like disease outbreaks and environmental fluctuations in a timely manner.

The advent of digital technologies and sophisticated sensor networks has ushered in a new era in aquaculture management of multimodality fusion. This approach integrates data from multiple sources to create a comprehensive understanding of aquaculture systems. It allows managers and researchers to analyze dynamic relationships among different variables and make informed decisions to optimize production, minimize environmental impact, and ensure the health of farmed species.

A key driver of multimodality fusion in aquaculture is the development of advanced monitoring systems. Modern aquaculture farms utilize a wide array of sensors to continuously collect data on water quality (temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH), fish behavior (movement patterns, feeding activity), and external factors like weather conditions. Analyzing these data points in isolation provides useful but incomplete information. When combined, they reveal valuable patterns and correlations that might otherwise go unnoticed.

For example, multimodality fusion can help managers understand how temperature fluctuations affect dissolved oxygen levels and fish activity, leading to more precise adjustments in feeding schedules and aeration systems. Integrating data on fish behavior with water quality parameters can help detect early signs of disease or stress, allowing for prompt interventions that minimize losses and improve animal welfare. This shift toward data fusion represents a significant advancement in aquaculture's ability to adapt to complex, real-time conditions. Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are tools in facilitating multimodality fusion. These technologies process vast amounts of data from multiple sources and identify patterns that may not be apparent through traditional analysis. AI algorithms can predict outcomes like growth rates, disease outbreaks, or water quality deterioration based on historical data from numerous modalities. By continuously learning from new data, AI systems enhance their accuracy and efficiency in supporting aquaculture managers' decisions.

For instance, AI models can fuse data from sensors monitoring water temperature, oxygen levels, and fish feeding patterns to predict when ammonia buildup a major cause of poor water quality, will occur. Armed with this information, managers can take preventive actions, such as adjusting feed quantities or increasing water exchange rates, to mitigate negative impacts. This proactive decision-making capability is a key advantage of multimodality fusion powered by AI. Beyond operational improvements, multimodality fusion also promotes the sustainability of aquaculture practices. The industry faces

**Correspondence to:** Wanchao Cui, Department of Harbor, Coastal and Inshore Engineering, Jiaotong University, Chongqing, China, E-mail: wacui@cau.edu.cn

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challenges in minimizing its environmental footprint regarding water usage, nutrient management, and waste disposal. Multi-modality fusion enables efficient resource use; for example, nutrient levels in water can be monitored and adjusted in real time to avoid excesses that lead to pollution. This reduces the environmental impact of aquaculture while maintaining optimal growing conditions for fish and improving productivity.

Furthermore, multimodality fusion supports the development of integrated aquaculture systems, such as Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) and Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA), designed to recycle water and nutrients within the farm. By integrating data on water quality, fish health, and nutrient levels, these systems can maximize efficiency while minimizing waste. For example, fish waste can be captured and used as fertilizer for aquatic plants, which in turn help filter and purify the water. Another important application of multimodality fusion is in disease management. Disease outbreaks can devastate aquaculture operations, leading to significant financial losses. Traditional disease management strategies often rely on visual inspection or single-parameter monitoring, which may miss early warning signs. By fusing data from multiple sources-such as water quality, fish behavior, and health indicators early signs of disease can be detected before widespread outbreaks occur. AI-driven systems can flag anomalies in the data, prompting immediate action to mitigate disease impacts and reduce reliance on antibiotics or chemicals.

As the aquaculture industry continues to evolve, transitioning from single modality analysis to multimodality fusion represents a significant step forward. Integrating data from various sources, combined with advances in AI and machine learning, offers a more holistic approach to managing aquaculture systems. This information fusion enhances operational efficiency and sustainability while addressing pressing challenges like disease control and environmental protection.

In conclusion, multimodality fusion is transforming aquaculture from a traditional, resource-intensive industry into a more sustainable and data-driven enterprise. By integrating data from diverse sources and applying advanced analytical techniques, aquaculture managers can better understand their systems and make informed, proactive decisions. This shift toward multimodal analysis is essential for meeting the growing seafood demand while balancing economic viability with environmental stewardship. As technology advances, the benefits of multimodality fusion will become increasingly pronounced, securing the future of aquaculture as a sustainable and productive industry.