

Socioeconomic Impacts Of Food Insecurity And The Government's Response In Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the socioeconomic implications of food insecurity and evaluates the government's responses in Anambra State, Nigeria. Employing Anambra as a case study, the research utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis. A thematic descriptive method was adopted to examine food insecurity and its socioeconomic effects on the population. Data sources included primary, secondary, and tertiary materials. Primary data were obtained through interviews and surveys, while secondary sources included historical records, books, and journal articles. Tertiary sources such as e-books and verified online resources complemented the dataset. The study sampled 1,200 respondents across six local government areas in Anambra State, utilizing oral interviews and structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that key drivers of food insecurity include government insincerity, flooding, inadequate training in modern agricultural techniques, language barriers in agricultural training, limited access to farm tools, insufficient investment in agriculture, and shortages of fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides. The study recommends that the government prioritize agriculture by addressing insecurity, reducing corruption, and ensuring equitable distribution of farming resources.

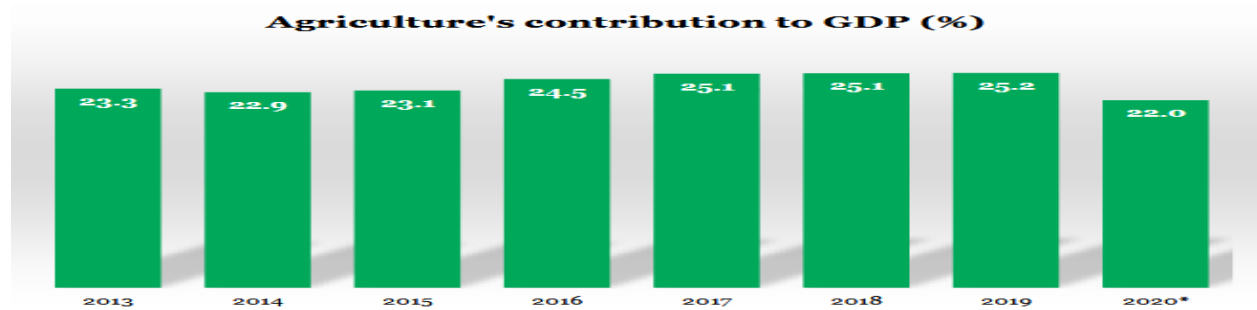
Key words: Agriculture, Food insecurity, socioeconomic development, poverty, language.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a country that is blessed with vast and arable land good for agricultural products. However, this country, for many years now, has been faced with serious food insecurity which has to a great extent led to an increase in poverty, hunger, malnutrition and diseases as many Nigerians cannot afford three meals a day. In discussing the challenges of government in handling food insecurity in Nigeria, Grandval & Douillet (2011) noted that Nigeria's agricultural policies were for a long time opportunistic and not coordinated among each other. The National Food Security Programme (NFSP) of August 2008 by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources is designed to attain food security by ensuring that all Nigerians have access to good-quality food while making Nigeria a major exporter of foodstuffs. The programme designates priority crops such as cassava, rice, and millet, wheat for achieving food security and outlines objectives for all stages of these supply chains. The aim is to create more value in production, particularly downstream in the chain, by improving storage, processing, and access to agricultural markets. The programme also plans the creation of irrigation schemes. But then this has not created food security in Nigeria. It is obvious that the major propelling forces for economic growth are the export-oriented section of the agriculture, petroleum and industrial sector. However the production of locally consumed food crops cannot be overlooked looking at level of food insecurity in Nigeria. This explains the overriding importance of food production for nutritional, health and socio-economic reasons. Thus, it is the insufficient and low agricultural yield production for consumption and the domestic market that is the major cause of food insecurity, high price of food items, and youth unemployment in Nigeria. These problems are occasioned mainly by the continued use of very primitive and traditional production methods, poor or inadequate

storage system, poor transportation system, lack of access to credit facilities by the farmers and lack of effective communication between the rural farmer and the extension agents. These scenarios have impacted on the agriculture's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 2013 – 2020 as epitomized in figure 1 below;

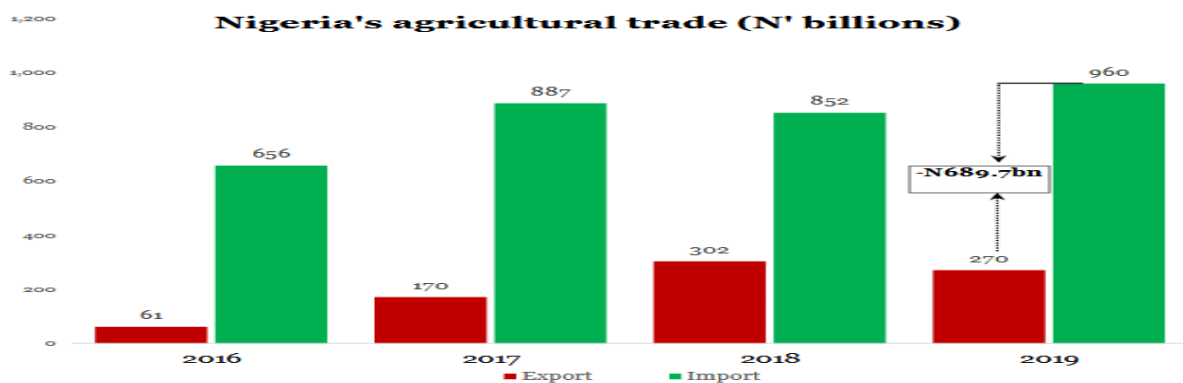
Figure 1: Agriculture's contribution to GDP (%)



Sources: NBS, PWC analysis. Retrieved from: <https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/afcfta-agribusiness-current-state-nigeria-agriculture-sector.pdf>

Nigerian government's interest in agricultural sector has manifested itself in the lack of sustainability and failures of most agricultural policies and programmes in the country creating serious food insecurity problems that is affecting Nigerians now. Hence, it revealed the basic weakness of agricultural policies in Nigeria and the inability of the successive administrations to solve the basic and fundamental problems of agricultural development. The decline in oil revenue and poor revenue from the agricultural sector led to emergence of many policies in agriculture that are targeted towards revamping the sector. They emphasize almost same objectives like: to provide food for the inhabitants of the nation (food security and sufficiency), employment for the unemployed youths, raw materials for the industries and export excess to other countries of the world. These laudable objectives appear as a mirage as though the figure 2 below indicated a slightly appreciable trade record between 2016 – 2019.

Figure 2: Nigeria's agricultural trade 2016 - 2019



Sources: NBS, PWC analysis. Retrieved from: <https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/afcfta-agribusiness-current-state-nigeria-agriculture-sector.pdf> Nigeria is one of the most food insecure countries in the world and highly affected by three major drivers. One, the country is vulnerable to price instability as prices of food items are determined by fuel price. The second point is the environmental issues like degradation, erosion, that impact negatively on people's livelihoods. The third is the issue of insurgency in the northeast,

and the general insecurity in the country. Important to note, that the sustainability in economic growth in Nigeria is dependent on achievement of food security (Manap and Ismail 2019). Without a food security strategy in place, Nigeria will bear a large portion cost. Thus, to sustain food security, a country must increase domestic production of food and minimize relying on food importation. It is arguable that relying highly on food import will cause food security problems with high levels of chronic malnutrition, limitation in human capital development, poverty problem, reduced labour productivity, reduction in life expectancy and decrease economic growth (Idisi 2024:10). The problem that stimulates this present research interest is the rate at which prices of food items are increasing on daily bases, following this therefore, it has implication on Nigerian economy. This calls for deep inquiry to unravel the causes, true implication and solution to the food insecurity in Nigeria. The objective of this paper is to identify the challenges of government in handling food security in Nigeria

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A thematic descriptive method was adopted to examine food insecurity and its socioeconomic effects on the population. Data sources included primary, secondary, and tertiary materials. Primary data were obtained through interviews and surveys, while secondary sources included historical records, books, and journal articles. Tertiary sources such as e-books and verified online resources complemented the dataset. The study sampled 1,200 respondents across six local government areas in Anambra State, utilizing oral interviews and structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including tabular and modal presentations. The study concentrated on examining 6 rural local governments from 3 senatorial zones in Anambra State. The reason was to ensure a geographical coverage of the State. Two rural and two Urban local governments from each senatorial zone were selected using simple random sampling technique.

Table 1: Distribution of local government on senatorial zones

Senatorial Zones	Local Government Selected
Anambra Central	Awka North and Idemili South
Anambra South	Orumba North and Orumber South
Anambra North	Ayamelum and Ogbaru

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Food Insecurity: The absence of food security is food insecurity. Food insecurity represents lack of access to enough food and can either be chronic or temporary (Idisi 2021). Adeoti (cited by Metu et al., 2016) noted that chronic food insecurity arises from lack of resources to acquire and produce food, thereby leading to persistent inadequate diet possibly as a result of corrupt practices. Nigeria presents a typical case of a country whose development has been undermined and retarded by the menace of corrupt practices (Gbenga & Ariyo, 2006) in Nwankwo, Ananti, & Madubueze (2015). Similarly, the Food and Agriculture Organization (2010) commenting on food insecurity noted that beyond the devastating impact of corrupt practices in developing countries, food insecurity is the consequences of inadequate consumption of nutritious food bearing in mind that the physiological use of food is within the domain of nutrition and health. The World Food Summit plan of Action (cited by Attah, 2012) states that food insecurity occurs when:

- i. People experience a large reduction in their sources of food and are unable to make up the difference through new strategies;
- ii. The prevalence of malnutrition is abnormally high for most of the year, and this cannot be accounted for by either health or care factors; and

iii. A large proportion of the population or group is using marginal or unsuitable strategies, and people are using coping strategies that are damaging to their livelihoods in the longer term or incur some other unacceptable cost, such as acting illegally or immorally in order to get food.

Shaw (2007) defined food security as a situation ‘when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Elements of Food Security: These are the prevailing situations that characterize food security. The elements of food security are stated as follows:

Figure 3: Illustration of elements of food security



Sources: Nweke, Nweke, & Madubueze (2025)

1. Availability of food in terms of quantity and quality
2. Availability of sufficient food in households, communities, states and nation
3. Accessibility of food at all times
4. Affordability of food by the people
5. Stability of food prices
6. Increase in nutritional values
7. Reduction in poverty level
8. Creation of employment

We will look the different dimensions of food security and their explanations for easily identification

Table 2. Dimensions of Food Security

S/no	Dimensions of Food Security	Means of Identification
1	Physical Availability Of Food	Food availability addresses the “supply side” of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade.
2	Economic And Physical Access To Food	An adequate supply of food at the national or international level does not in itself guarantee household-level food security. Concerns about insufficient food access have resulted in a greater policy focus on incomes, expenditure, markets, and prices in achieving food security objectives.
3	Food Utilisation	Utilisation is commonly understood as the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food. Sufficient energy and nutrient intake by individuals are the result of good care and feeding practices, food preparation, diversity of the diet and intra-household distribution of food. Combined with good biological utilisation of food consumed, this determines the nutritional status of individuals.
4	Stability Of The Other Three Dimensions Over Time	Even if your food intake is adequate today, you are still considered to be food insecure if you have inadequate access to food on a periodic basis, risking a deterioration of your nutritional status. Adverse weather conditions, political instability, or economic factors (unemployment, rising food prices) may have an impact on your food security status.

Source: food and Agricultural organization 2008

The Challenges of Government in Handling Food Insecurity in Nigeria

Agricultural is important to the Nigerian economy as it engages about 70% of the labour force and contributes over 40% of the Gross Domestic product (GDP) (FMARD,2000). It provides food for the teeming population and raw materials for the industries and other production sectors. However, the sector is faced with mirage of problems which militate against optimizing its potential. Some of the constraints include low productivity, poor marketing and distribution infrastructures, inadequate access to credit, weak extension services and inadequate database among others (FMARD, 2000). It was argued that to achieve increased production and improved processing in all the sub-sectors of agricultural sector (crop, livestock, and fisheries), improvement of quality of life and promotion of environment friendly practices and other objectives require extension effort. The new policy thrust expanded the broad objective according to FMARD (2000) to include;

- Promoting farmer-friendly agricultural policy that will achieve food security, eradicates poverty, develops the rural economy and protects the environment
- Creating the conducive macro-environment to stimulate greater private sector involvement and investment in agriculture.
- Rationalizing the roles of the three tiers of government in their promotional and supportive activities to stimulate agricultural development.
- Reorganizing the institutional framework for government intervention in the agricultural sector.
- Articulating and implementing integrated rural development as a priority for national programme to raise the quality of life of the rural people.

- Increasing agricultural production through increased budgetary allocation and promotion of the necessary development.
- Provision of supportive and service-oriented activities and opportunities for youth employment.
- Promoting the increased use of agricultural machinery and inputs.

Koyenikan (2008) argued that Agricultural extension was addressed under support services in the Agricultural Policy under the heading “Agricultural technology Development and Transfer”. The Objective was “to teach rural people to raise their standard of living with minimum assistance and by their personal efforts” The document recognized that the extension system was plagued by administrative, manpower and financial problems. Phillip, Nkonya, Pender, & Oni (2008) noted that increasing and sustaining agricultural productivity should be a critical component of programs that seek to reduce poverty and attain food security in Nigeria. Grandval & Douillet (2011) are of the view that Nigeria’s agricultural policies were for a long time opportunistic and not coordinated among each other. It is important to note that some critics argued that, the absence of continuity in policy, and the fact that the successes, failures and lessons learned in preceding programmes have not been analyzed and utilized for effective development of agricultural sector. It was also argued that strategies have not always been transposed into action in the agricultural field. The absence of indicators makes it hard or difficult to track and evaluate the agricultural policy implementation to identify the extent of achievement of its objective. In terms of cross-sector policy coherence, little has been done to link agricultural policy with rural development policy, support for small and medium sized enterprises, and management of water and natural resources. Also, at the institutional level, one will observe that roles are not clearly divided between the various administrative offices responsible for agricultural development. The sharing of responsibilities between the federal, state and local governments does not appear to be optimal, either in terms of areas of intervention or resources allocated. Generally speaking, while agricultural programmes managed by the states seem to be more effective than the one managed by the federal government agency. Many observers noted that agricultural policy is elaborated from the top down, with little participation by stakeholders.

Phillip, Nkonya, Pender, and Oni (2008) noted that agriculture is the principal source of food and livelihood in Nigeria, and employs nearly three-quarters of the nation’s work force. Over the past two decades, agricultural yields have stayed the same or declined. Thus, Increasing and sustaining agricultural productivity should be a critical component of programs that seek to reduce poverty and attain food security in Nigeria.

Table 3. The challenges of government in handling food Insecurity in Nigeria

S/N	Item	Mean \pm Standard Deviation	T-value	p-value
1	Do insincerity of the government causes food insecurity in N	4.97 \pm 0.16	417.65	0.00
2	Low agricultural yield is the major cause of food insecurity	4.75 \pm 0.43	139.06	0.00
3	Do issues of unknown gunmen contribute to food insecurity	4.68 \pm 0.77	75.80	0.00
4	Is the activities of Fulani herdsmen creates food insecurity	4.67 \pm 0.77	74.45	0.00
5	Do menace of flood creates food insecurity	4.79 \pm 0.47	131.88	0.00
6	Do Poor or lack of adequate training on the use of modern farm tools causes food insecurity	4.77 \pm 0.42	146.41	0.00
7	Is it difficult to understand the language of the agricultural	3.68 \pm 1.23	19.01	0.00
8	Lack of access to modern farm tools leads to food insecurity	4.28 \pm 0.68	65.27	0.00
9	Poor government investment in Agriculture creates food insecurity	4.92 \pm 0.28	241.33	0.00
10	Lack of access to fertilizer, herbicide and insecticide leads to poor harvest	4.84 \pm 0.36	175.6	0.00

The result of the analysis presented in Table 3 identifies significant challenges faced by the government in addressing food security in Nigeria, with all items showing high mean scores and statistically significant results ($p < 0.05$). The insincerity of the government (Mean \pm SD = 4.97 ± 0.16 , $t = 417.65$, $p = 0.00$) emerges as the most critical factor, highlighting a trust deficit in governance. Poor government investment in agriculture (4.92 ± 0.28 , $t = 241.33$, $p = 0.00$) and lack of access to essential inputs like fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides (4.84 ± 0.36 , $t = 175.60$, $p = 0.00$) further exacerbate food insecurity. Additionally, low agricultural yield (4.75 ± 0.43 , $t = 139.06$, $p = 0.00$), the menace of floods (4.79 ± 0.47 , $t = 131.88$, $p = 0.00$), and insecurity caused by unknown gunmen (4.68 ± 0.77 , $t = 75.80$, $p = 0.00$) and Fulani herdsmen (4.67 ± 0.77 , $t = 74.45$, $p = 0.00$) are significant contributors. Challenges related to inadequate training on modern farm tools (4.77 ± 0.42 , $t = 146.41$, $p = 0.00$) and lack of access to these tools (4.28 ± 0.68 , $t = 65.27$, $p = 0.00$) also hinder productivity. Notably, language barriers in agricultural training (3.68 ± 1.23 , $t = 19.01$, $p = 0.00$) are less impactful but still significant. These findings underscore the need for enhanced investment, security, and infrastructure to tackle food insecurity effectively.

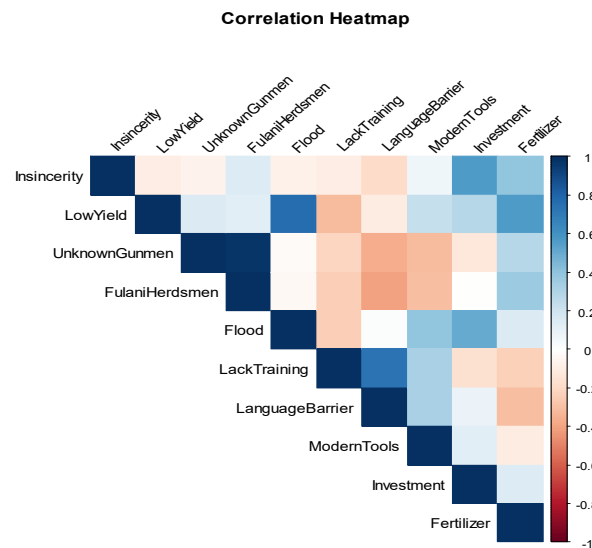


Fig. 1: Correlation Heat map of the challenges of government in handling food security in Nigeria

The result presented in Figure 1 showed that Insincerity and Investment have a correlation measure of 0.561, which indicates that respondents who perceive insincerity in the government also associate poor investment in agriculture with food insecurity. This result suggests a perception that government integrity and resource allocation are interlinked challenges. The correlation measure between Low Agricultural Yield and Flood was obtained as 0.767. This result indicates a strongly positive correlation that implies that flooding is closely tied to low agricultural yields, reinforcing the need for effective disaster management to improve food production. The correlation measure between Unknown Gunmen and Fulani Herdsmen was found to be 0.971. This near-perfect correlation suggests that respondents perceive the activities of unknown gunmen and Fulani herdsmen as highly interrelated threats to food security. This could indicate an overlap in geographical or operational contexts for these issues. The correlation measure between Lack of Training and Language Barrier was obtained as 0.735. This result indicates a strong relationship between these two suggesting that difficulties in agricultural training are often compounded by language barriers, highlighting the importance of culturally and linguistically accessible training programs. Further findings showed that the correlation measure between Flood and Investment was 0.504. This result indicates a moderate link between flooding and perceptions of poor investment in agriculture, suggesting that respondents may see better infrastructure investment as a solution to mitigate flood impacts.

The correlation measure between Fertilizer and Low Agricultural Yield was 0.566. Suggesting that limited access to fertilizers is perceived as a significant factor contributing to low yields. The correlation measure between Language Barrier and Unknown Gunmen was -0.366. The negative correlation implies that respondents do not perceive these two factors as interrelated challenges. The correlation measure between Flood and Fulani Herdsmen was -0.035. The near-zero correlation indicates little to no perceived relationship between these issues, suggesting distinct impacts on food security. The correlation measure between Insincerity and Language Barrier was -0.181. Suggesting that insincerity in government is perceived as largely unrelated to language barriers in agricultural training. Hence, it was revealed that Flooding is a critical challenge tied to agricultural productivity, requiring infrastructure investment. Activities of unknown gunmen and Fulani herdsmen are perceived as strongly interrelated, suggesting the need for unified strategies to address security concerns. Addressing language barriers and providing adequate training are closely linked and require targeted policy interventions. Insincerity and investment in agriculture are perceived as central, reinforcing the importance of trust and resource allocation.

Table 4. Radar Analysis of the responses of the challenges of government in handling food insecurity in Nigeria

	Insincerity	Low Yield	Unknown Gunmen	Fulani Herdsmen	Flood	Lack Training	Language Barrier	Modern Tools	Investment	Fertilizer
mean values	4.97	4.74	4.68	4.65	4.79	4.77	3.67	4.28	4.91	4.84

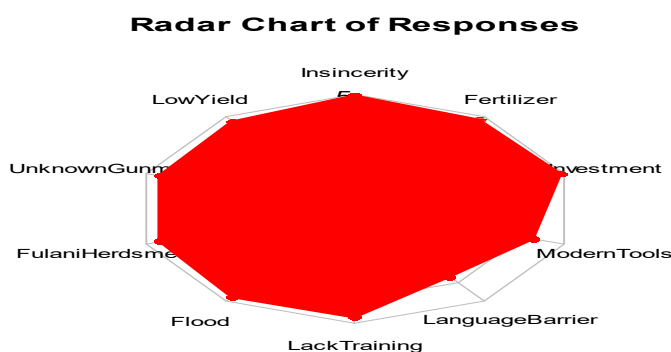


Fig 2: Radar Chart of the responses of the challenges of government in handling food security in Nigeria

The result of the radar analysis presented in Table 4 and Figure 2 shows the Insincerity of the Government scored a mean value of 4.97. This result implies that almost all respondents strongly agree that insincerity in governance is a significant contributor to food insecurity. It was found that Investment in Agriculture has a mean value of 4.92. This reflects a strong agreement on the role of poor government investment in agriculture in exacerbating food insecurity. Also, Fertilizer Access was found to have a mean value of 4.84. This highlights that limited access to fertilizers is seen as a critical issue affecting food production. Flood has a mean value of 4.79. This indicates high agreement that flooding has a major impact on food security. Low Agricultural Yield has a mean value of 4.75. The result was perceived as a prominent challenge, likely connected to other factors like floods and access to inputs. Modern Farm Tools has a mean value of 4.28.

This indicates that lack of access to modern tools is viewed as a significant but slightly less critical issue compared to others. The language Barrier had a mean value of 3.68. While still a concern, it is perceived as a lesser issue compared to other challenges like insincerity or resource access. The findings of the security-related Challenges showed that Unknown Gunmen recorded a mean value of 4.68 and Fulani Herdsmen had a mean value of 4.66. These scores indicate that respondents strongly associate these security issues with food insecurity, though they rank slightly lower than challenges related to governance and resources. Hence, it was found that insincerity, poor investment, and access to inputs like fertilizer are the most pressing issues perceived by respondents. Also, Flooding and low agricultural yields are seen as critical barriers to food security. Security threats such as activities by unknown gunmen and Fulani herdsmen are also major contributors. Challenges like lack of training and language barriers, though significant, are relatively less emphasized. We therefore argue that insincerity of the government, issues of flooding, lack of adequate training on the use of modern farm tools, difficulty to understand the language of the agricultural training, Lack of access to modern farm tools, Poor government investment in Agriculture, Lack of access to fertilizer, herbicide and insecticide are the major factors that leads to low agricultural yields and food insecurity. We will group this into six categories as the major challenges in handling food insecurity in Nigeria

1. **Government Insincerity:** The high level of corruption in the government circle is the major problem facing effective implementation of agricultural policies in Nigeria. Obasanjo (2000) in Nweke (2012) maintains that corruption covers a wide range of acts and not just the simple act of giving and receiving bribes. Corruption, according to him covers a wide spectrum of act like; use of one's office for peculiarly advantage, gratification, influence peddling, insincerity in advice with the aim of gaining advantage, putting in less than a full day work for a full day pay, tiredness and slovenliness. Nweke (2022:212) argued that the massive corruptions of public organization managers in collaboration with officials of the supervising ministries are the major problems facing government organizations in Nigeria. Any form of operational activity either in the public or private organization, will definitely need finance for its success. The finance that is needed in the organization, will surely come from somewhere and it is expected that the provider of the these money will require to know the extent in which the money has been effectively and efficiently manage with regard to the purpose in which it was provided (Nweke 2022:215). The primitive capital accumulation by the public office holders has negated this principle.
2. **Natural Disaster:** It is pertinent to note that most of agricultural products in Nigeria are lost to flood. The Government has implemented several initiatives and programmes to address the situation including the Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP), Nigeria-Africa Trade and Investment Promotion Programme, Presidential Economic Diversification Initiative, Economic and Export Promotion Incentives and the Zero Reject Initiative, Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+); Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP); Action Against Desertification (AAD) Programme, among others. All these efforts aim to increase agricultural productivity in order to provide sufficient quantities of food to meet domestic demand as well as an abundance of commodity crops for export in the international market (Tsokar 2024). However, they aim at reversing forest loss and degradation; promoting sustainable management of natural resources; rehabilitation of degraded lands and reducing erosion and climate vulnerability has not made any significant improvement in agricultural sector.
3. **Poor Access to Modern Farm Tools:** Lack of access to modern farm tools, fertilizer, herbicide and insecticide etc is a major factor that is contributing to food insecurity in Nigeria. Making food available goes beyond increasing on farm production to include year-round storage and processing. Due to a combination of low productivity and post-harvest losses, year-round grain availability is low in Nigeria. Grains in storage are partially lost to storage pests and diseases. It has been estimated that 10 percent of the total production of grains and 20 percent of the total production of tubers are lost or wasted annually to

poor or non-storage. There are also everyday challenges faced by the various levels of tuber and grain processing. Medium to large scale processors face problems such as inadequate equipment and fabricators. Problems that cut across all processors include unstable market conditions, unstable government trade policies and difficulty sustaining the supply of raw materials to processors (Phillip, Nkonya, Pender, and Oni 2008).

4. **Poor Government Investment in Agriculture:** the Nigerian government has not invested substantially on agriculture. The federal government's agricultural credit guarantee scheme, which seeks to guarantee various cadres of loans to farmers, needs to be strengthened in order to reawaken commercial banks' confidence in the scheme (Phillip, Nkonya, Pender, and Oni 2008)

5. **Language Barrier:** Difficult in understand the language of the agricultural training officers by the rural farmers. In stressing the place of language in training Nweke (2024) noted that language enables us to participate in communicative acts with other people; to take on roles, to express and understand feelings, attitudes and judgments; to relate what is said (or written) to the real world. As human beings, we communicate our ideas using language. This expects obedience to the structure rules of the chosen language for our listeners or readers to clearly understand our message (Nweke 2021). Thus, the interpersonal metafunction is about the social world, especially the relationship between speaker and hearer (Nweke 2024:41). Language is put together to communicate meaning for a particular purpose. This feature characterizes the model of functional grammar in its manner of looking at how language works (Nweke and Okeke 2023).

6. **General Insecurity:** the security challenges in Nigeria are alarming. Ranging from the insurgence in the northeast, the Fulani herdsmen and the general insecurity in the country is a serious problem that requires serious government attention. Many Nigerian farmers are afraid to go to farm these days as a result of insecurity.

Nigeria's agricultural sector faces many challenges which impact on its productivity. These include; poor land tenure system, low level of irrigation farming, climate change and land degradation. Others are low technology, high production cost and poor distribution of inputs, limited financing, high post-harvest losses and poor access to markets. These challenges have stifled agricultural productivity affecting the sector's contribution to the country's GDP as well as increased food imports due to population rise hence declining levels of food sufficiency. For instance, between 2016 and 2019 Nigeria's cumulative agricultural imports stood at N3.35 trillion, four times higher than the agricultural export of N803 billion within the same period (Tsokar 2024). Another challenge faced by Nigeria agricultural sector is the issue of rural-urban migration. Thus, Nweke (2021) contended that, the implication of migrating from rural areas to urban centres on Nigeria economy to include: increase in poverty in urban centres; increase in poverty in rural areas; shortage of agricultural products; and poor government attention in rural development

Nigeria has 70.8 million hectares of agriculture land area with maize, cassava, guinea corn, yam beans, millet and rice being the major crops. Nigeria's rice production rose from 3.7 million metric tons in 2017 to 4.0 million metric tons in 2018. In spite of this, only 57percent of the 6.7 million metric tons of rice consumed in Nigeria annually is locally produced leading to a deficit of about 3 million metric tons, which is either imported or smuggled into the country illegally (Tsokar 2024). With the increasing population, estimated to reach 400 million by 2050, enhanced agriculture productivity through adaptation of new technologies and innovations is necessary to ensure food security and nutrition. Support from all partners to the efforts by the federal and state governments is central for achieving this goal (Tsokar 2024). Also youths involvement in agriculture is important for meaningful development in agricultural sector. Second National Youth Policy Document of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2009 stated that Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development (Nweke and Nweke 2020).

Although the Nigerian government has provided several facilities through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) such as the Anchor Borrower's Programme to help provide small-scale farmers with adequate financing, the farming industry still lacks adequate access to finance (Oyaniran 2020). To handle food insecurity in Nigeria, Yusuf (2021:181) argued for effective agricultural subsidy strategies that will include public-private-partnership in agricultural subsidy, appropriate subsidy redemption mechanism and due timing in implementing agricultural subsidies. Contingent on implementation of the identified new agricultural subsidy possibilities will help improve food security by ensuring availability of food, enhanced physical and economic access to food, improved food utilisation and sustained stability of food security in Nigeria. In discussing a vision for sustainable food and agriculture, the FAO (2018) pointed out that a world where food is nutritious and accessible for everyone, in which natural resources are managed in a way that maintains ecosystem functions to support current and future human needs. In this vision, farmers, pastoralists, fisher-folk, foresters and other rural dwellers actively participate in, and benefit from, economic development, have decent employment conditions and work in a fair price environment. Women, men and communities live in food security, and have control over their livelihoods and equitable access to resources which they use in an efficient way.

CONCLUSION

We argued that food insecurity is a serious challenge to Nigerian government and needs to be adequately handled. We have established that flooding is a critical challenge tied to agricultural productivity, requiring infrastructure investment to handle it. Activities of unknown gunmen and Fulani herdsmen are perceived as strongly interrelated factors militating against food security in Nigeria, suggesting the need for unified strategies to address security concerns. Addressing language barriers and providing adequate training are ways of increasing productivity in agricultural sector of the economy. Hence, it requires targeted policy interventions. Also, we observed that, the insincerity, poor investment, and access to inputs like fertilizer are the most pressing issues with regards to food insecurity in Nigeria. Low agricultural yields are seen as critical barriers to food security. This study therefore, will add to the existing literature on the subject of investigation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We therefore recommend that Nigeria government should pay serious attention to the issue of general insecurity in the country through restructuring of the country's security architecture. The government should as a matter of necessity pay serious attention to agriculture through provision of loan/credit facilities to farmers, provision of high farm inputs yields, modern agricultural tools et cetera. The extension officers and all who are involved in agricultural training should adopt and make use of the language of the rural community in training them. The correlation measure between Lack of Training and Language Barrier was obtained as 0.735. This result indicates a strong relationship between these two suggesting that difficulties in agricultural training are often compounded by language barriers, highlighting the importance of culturally and linguistically accessible training programs.

declarations

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Conflict of Interest: There are no conflicts of interest to this study.

Author contributions: Author 1 - handled the grammatical editing of the study as well as vetting of the language during the data gathering to ensure consistency and improved understanding of the research instrument. Author 2 - handled the introduction as well as the review of relevant literature. Author 3 - handled research instrument design, administering, collation, data analyses, and discussion of findings as well as the references of the study.

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