

The Nexus Between Food Security and Poverty Among Rural Households in Ankpa Local Government Area, Kogi State

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Abstract

The study investigates the link between food security and poverty in Ankpa LGA, North Central Nigeria. The study employed a quantitative approach, selecting 124 respondents through a multistage sampling technique. Data obtained were analysed descriptively via frequency tables and graphs. It found that the area's food consumption, access, and utilization are anomalies, with food security being a significant issue. The inter-ethnic rivalry between Fulani herdsmen and farmers further exacerbates the problem. Poverty negatively impacts food production, leading to inconsistent food supply, decreased family income, unbalanced nutrition, high food costs, persistent food shortages, and low-quality food. The study suggests that policies promoting agricultural sector growth and emphasizing locally consumed commodities could encourage capital for rural and community-based development. The researchers recommend encouraging subsistence farming to combat poverty and food security issues in the area.

Keywords: *Poverty-dimension, Agriculture, Food-production, Food-Security, Rural households and Income Level*

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Background to the Study

Food is a fundamental human necessity; has risen to the top of the global agenda as more and more people experience hunger and poverty. Food security has been a concern in recent years because of the global food crisis and the increase in food costs, according to Avidime and Obi (2020). Even though the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) rank eradicating hunger as their highest goal, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) predicts that the number of people who go to bed hungry is rising. In 2000 and 2015, the number of people who were considered undernourished was estimated to be at 820 million; now it exceeds 1 billion (Avidime and Obi, 2020). The idea of food security has advanced significantly since the 1990s, moving far beyond the conventional emphasis on the availability of food on a national scale. In the past, this term has received general definitions, but more recently, there has been disagreement over what exactly food security entails. The Committee on World Food Security defined it as all household members having physical and financial access to sufficient food without undue risk of losing that access. The definition, which was agreed upon by the nations present at the 1996 World Food Summit and reaffirmed in 2002, recognizes the USAID approach, which consists of three essential components: food availability, food access, and food use.

However, a fourth idea "the hazards that can disrupt anyone of the first three factors" is gaining acceptance, (Obi, Job, Isyaku, Letswa, and Kolawole, (2018). Food security consequently consists of four main components. They are food accessibility, food consumption, and maintaining such access. The nature of availability, access, and consumption is hierarchical. Food accessibility and usage are both dependent on food supply, which is necessary but insufficient for access. In a broader sense, two big categories of variables control food security. These are both demand- and supply-side issues. The variables that affect the availability or supply of food are those on the supply side. They so affect physical access to food at the national, household, and intra-household levels. The degree to which nations, households, and individuals have access to the food supply, on the other hand, is determined by factors on the demand side. In other words, they determine financial access to food or entitlement to food that is available. A country's or household's lack of access to a nutrient-dense food can manifest itself in a number of ways. For instance, chronic food insecurity occurs when there are consistently insufficient food resources to meet everyone's nutritional needs. When access to sufficient food temporarily declines due to unstable food production, rising food prices, or income fluctuations, this condition is known as transitory food insecurity, (Obi, and Uche 2018).

One of the Sustainable Development Goals is to reduce poverty, and the poverty dimension of food security is commonly regarded as a crucial indicator of how well a nation is doing (SDG, 2015). Despite efforts by governments around the world to ensure that every household can provide at least three-square meals for their family. Family, food insecurity still poses a serious threat to people's health, productivity, and sometimes even lives (Behnassi, Draggan and Yaya, (2011)). Global hunger is severe because about 30% of people worldwide are currently malnourished, including from insufficient calorie intake, protein deficiencies, poor food quality, and insufficient concentrations of protein and micronutrients (Otaha, 2013). Around

840 million people worldwide are undernourished or experience chronic food insecurity, and malnutrition in developing nations is responsible for up to 2.8 million child and 300,000-woman deaths per year.

South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are the two regions where the situation is most concerning. While the absence of persistent economic growth is a significant factor in the persistence of hunger also serves to constrain economic growth. According to empirical evidence presented by Gimba and Kumshe (2001), hunger and malnutrition have a detrimental effect on labor productivity, health, and education, which eventually results in slower rates of total economic growth. So, hunger is both a cause and a result of poverty. According to this research, hunger directly contributes to poverty, and healthy eating is an investment in human capital that increases output and the returns on investments in education and healthcare. When considered collectively, these findings offer compelling evidence that public expenditure on decreasing hunger is an investment with high returns and should rank highly among developing nations' priorities.

Owolabi, Ashaolu, and Twumasi-Ankrah, (2016) posit that the idea of food security has changed throughout time, sometimes ahead of and sometimes behind parallel changes in poverty. Food security paradigms have changed from the global and national levels to the household and individual. Level since the World Food Conference (WFC) in 1974. The more conventional technique of defining food insecurity as the inadequacy of aggregate supply of and accessibility to food and measuring food insecurity at the individual/household level as opposed to the national level differs. Given the shortcomings of the supply-side strategy to addressing food insecurity, a number of approaches have been proposed, including monitoring factors that are typically believed to be connected to food insecurity, such as household income and height to weight ratios. However, in recent years, dissatisfaction with these indicators has encouraged the development of qualitative and direct measures of food insecurity, such as information on household food consumption and expenditures (based on recalls).

We can make a distinction between family and national food security. This distinction is required because a country's ability to feed its population, whether through local production, imports, or both, is a necessary but by no means sufficient condition. To put it another way, having enough food available on a per-capita basis in Nigeria does not necessarily mean that every citizen will have enough food. A subset of national food security, food security at the home level calls for all people and households to have access to enough food, either through self-production or by the generation of adequate revenue to meet the demand for it. Measuring and evaluating food insecurity, according to Owolabi, Ashaolu, and Twumasi-Ankrah, (2016), rested on two opposing views: objective-quantitative methodologies and subjective qualitative procedures for the evaluation of food insecurity. But in recent years, these two approaches have come to be seen as increasingly complementary, and it has become clear that a range of indicators It is necessary to depict the intricate nature of food security. To this purpose, the use of household expenditure and consumption surveys, which may offer a useful working environment for this study by containing both objective and subjective data on the

same home. It is important to remember that food security is made up of four elements: (i) food availability, which refers to having enough food available consistently; (ii) food access, which refers to having enough money to buy the right foods for a healthy diet; (iii) food use, which refers to using food in the right way based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care; and (iv) stability in food availability, access, and utilization.

There is evidence that Nigeria's food production is growing at a rate of less than 2% per year, while the rate of population growth is thought to be 2.5% per year (National Population Commission 2022 projection). So, the growing evidence of changes in population and the amount of food that can be grown has led to disagreements and empirical questions. This possible theoretical difference shows that a low rate of food production and a high rate of population growth will lead to a high rate of food demand, which can lead to food insecurity. According to World Bank, (2012), Nigeria spends more than 3 trillion Naira every year to import basic foods like wheat, rice, sugar, and fish. Also, malnutrition is common throughout the country, and rural areas are especially at risk for chronic food shortages, poor nutrition, inconsistent food supply, low-quality foods, high food costs, and even total lack of food. A lot of children in rural Nigeria are malnourished, and the numbers vary depending on where they live. For example, 56 percent of children in a rural area of the South West are malnourished, but 84.3 percent of children in three rural communities in the North are malnourished. But these numbers aren't the same in every state in Nigeria. The number of people living in Ankpa Local Government is expected to grow by 2.5% each year, but food production is only growing at a slow rate. According to Obi and Uche (2018), 2.1% of children in Ankpa LGA are severely malnourished, and 18% of children under the age of 5 are stunted. Also, 14% of children are wasted, 23% are underweight, and 13.7% of babies are born with a birth weight of less than 2500 grams.

Many studies, like Godfray, Ch. Crute, Haddad, Lawrence, Muir, Nisbett, Pretty, Robinson, Toulmin, and Whiteley (2010), Behnassi, Draggan, and Yaya (2011), Otaha, (2013), Obi and Uche, (2018), Owolabi, Ashaolu, and Twumasi-Ankrah, (2016), have not tried to find a link between Poverty and food security are prevalent in rural households. So, the relationship between the two needs to be looked into or looked at. So, in Ankpa LGA, not much or any work has been done on the relationship between poverty and food security among rural households. This gives researchers a chance to try to figure out what the likely connection between the two ideas is in Nigeria, with a focus on Ankpa LGA. So, what has been said above is a practical knowledge gap that will help solve this problem.

This study seeks to find answer to the following research questions:

- i. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents?
- ii. What is the food security status in the rural households in the study area?
- iii. What is the degree of poverty among the respondents?
- iv. What is the relationship between food insecurity and poverty in the study area?
- v. What are the respondents' coping strategies or mechanism?

The study is predicated on the following hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant relationship between poverty and food security among household in the study area.

Material and Methods

The survey design was used to embrace the quantitative methodology. Structured questions served as the tool for gathering data. The researchers made a pre-study visit to the study area to get a sense of how the study area was laid out. It identifies rural families, poverty levels, and food availability in the study area, providing the researcher with guidelines for the study. The 124 study participants were chosen using the multi-stage sampling technique, and the study's population consisted of every family in the Ankpa LGA, Kogi State. Using the descriptive and inferential statistical method, the data obtained were analyzed by coding and displaying the information in tables and charts, which allows for accuracy and good classification of the information to make it meaningful. The analysis was completed using SPSS Software version 23 with frequency tables and percentages. Ankpa LGA in Kogi State is situated near the Anambara/Plateau region geologically. The gently undulating ground is mostly covered by soil and has little exposed bedrock. The Igala natives as well as other ethnic settlers including the Igbo, Nupe, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani, and others make up the majority of the population in Ankpa. The Ata of Igala is the main traditional monarch. One of the major Fadama lowlands in the state, the Local Government Area is situated along the banks of the Niger River, which serves as the region's main water supply. In Ankpa LGA, there are two main seasons: dry and rainy. The dry season, which lasts from November to March, is characterized by dry windy harmattan.

Result

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table: 1 Percentage Distribution of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (N=124)	Percent (%)
Sex	Male	54	43.5
	Female	70	56.5
Age (in years)	Less than 18 years	12	9.7
	18-27 years	34	27.4
	28-37 years	29	23.4
	38-47 years	19	15.3
	48 years and above	30	24.2
Religion Affiliation	Christian	89	71.8
	Islamic	35	28.2
	ATR	-	-
Educational Qualification	Primary School Certificate	51	41.1
	Secondary School Certificate	61	49.2
	Tertiary School	12	9.7
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	19	15.3
	1-5 years	24	19.4
	6-10 years	34	27.4
	10 years and above	47	37.9
Income Level (monthly)	Less than 10,000	49	39.5
	10,000-30,000	22	17.7
	31,000-50,000	21	16.9
	51,000-70,000	19	15.3
	71,000 above	13	10.4
Number per house holds	Less than 3	14	11.3
	3-5	39	31.5
	6-8	44	35.5
	9-10	19	15.3
	10 above	8	6.5

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 detailed the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. From the findings, it can be construed that majority of the respondents were male with 56.5%, were within the age range of 18-27 years (27.4%). The dominant religion among the respondents was Christianity (71.8%), and also, the respondents had secondary school certificate (49.2%). Majority of the respondents also claimed that they have been residing in the study area for about 6-10 years (27.4%). The income level of the respondents on monthly bases indicated that 39.5% of the respondents earned less than 10,000 naira monthly. It can be inferred that the poverty index rate in Ankpa Local Government Area was relatively high. Majority of the respondents were from a house hold of 6-10 people.

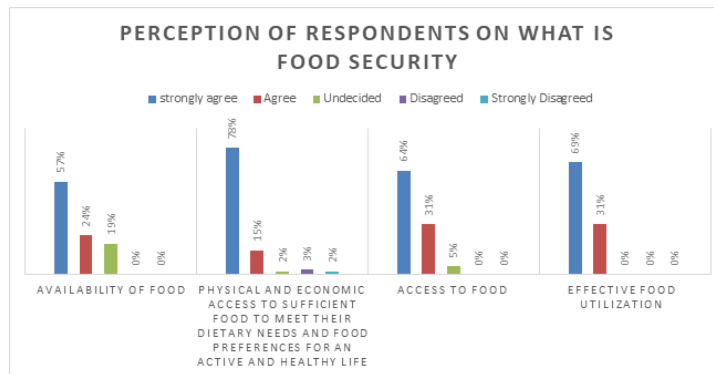


Figure 1.

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From the chart above, it can be deduced that the respondents have different perspective of what food security is. 57% of the respondents identified that food security means availability food, 78% of the respondents indicated food security to be physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life. While 64% affirmed that food security is access to food and 69% claimed that food security is effective food utilization. This finding conforms with Avidime and Obi, (2020) position that food security involves interconnected domains, with questions of agriculture, society, environment, employment and income, marketing, health and nutrition, and public policy that all make food sufficient. From the various perspective of the respondents, it shows that food security revolves around making food available, access to food and effective food utilization.

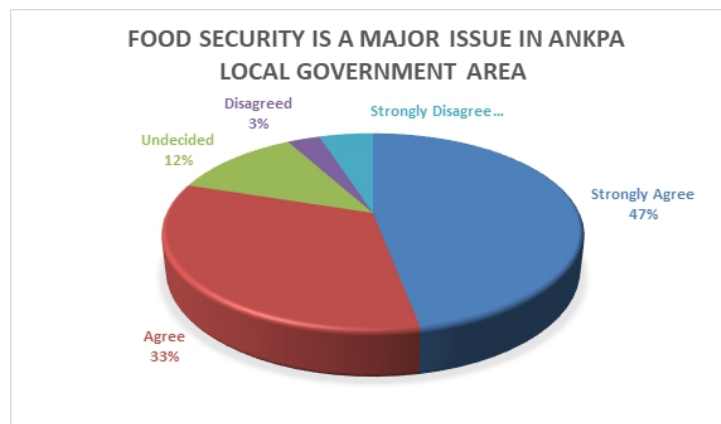


Figure 2.

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The chart above indicates that 47% of the respondents strongly agreed that food security is a major issue in Ankpa Local Government Area. According to Robertson (1990), the concept of food security has expanded beyond the strict biological requirements of sustenance for

survival. Food security does include consuming at a level adequate for physical and mental health and also includes the right to cultural preferences. It also includes obtaining the food in appropriate proportion. The findings therefore showed that the consumption and access to food, availability to food and utilization of food is abnormal in Ankpa Local Government Area.

Table 2: Percentage distribution showing issues associated with food security in Ankpa

Issues associated with food security in Ankpa	Category (N=124)					Total (%)
	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	
Non availability of food	52 (41.8)	29 (23.2)	18 (14.9)	11 (9.1)	14 (11.0)	124 (100)
Lack of access to food	12 (9.9)	30 (24.5)	21 (16.7)	6 (4.7)	55 (44.1)	124 (100)
Lack of effective food utilization	56 (45.2)	33 (26.6)	6 (4.7)	18 (14.6)	11 (8.9)	124 (100)
Improper distribution of food	36 (28.7)	37 (30.0)	14 (11.5)	14 (22.5)	9 (7.3)	124 (100)
Income level of households	66 (53.2)	41 (33.1)	5 (4.0)	12 (9.6)	0 (0)	124 (100)
Inter-ethnic rivalry (Fulani herdsmen and farmers)	56 (45.2)	39 (31.5)	15 (12.1)	10 (8.1)	4 (3.2)	124 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 indicated the issues associated with food security in Ankpa Local Government Area. The issues identified were non-availability of food (41.8%), lack of effective food utilization (45.2%), improper distribution of food (30.0%), income level of households (53.2%), inter-ethnic rivalry between Fulani herdsmen and farmers was also identified as issue associated with food security in Ankpa (45.2%). Although majority of the respondent disagreed that lack of access to food is an issue associated with food production in Ankpa.

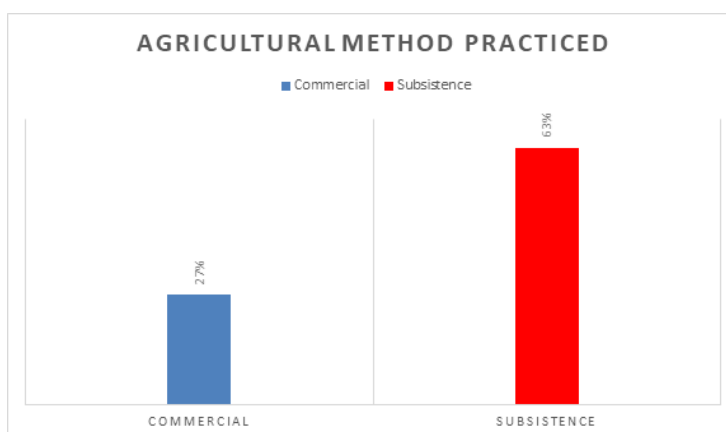


Figure 3.

Source: Field Survey, 2024

It can be deduced that majority of the respondents claimed to practice subsistence type of farming with (63%). This has great impact on food security since majority of the respondent's

produced food for self-consumption and not for commercial purpose. Behnassi, Draggan and Yaya (2011), modern agriculture has become so highly industrialized and dependent on energy. Mechanized farmers are very reliant on consistent power supply which has eluded us has become a mirage for successive government to achieve. Now, much of the agricultural products we consume are produced in farms located far away and processed other distant location before being imported via air, water or land. The whole of these processes requires a lot of power and fuel to keep food price low and affordable for the common man.

Table 3: Percentage distribution showing determinants of food production

Determinants of food production	Category (N=124)					
	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Total (%)
Income Level	39 (31.3)	42 (33.7)	11 (9.1)	19 (15.1)	13 (10.7)	124 (100)
Gender	57 (45.7)	30 (24.5)	21 (16.7)	6 (4.7)	12 (9.9)	124 (100)
Age	39 (31.6)	50 (40.2)	8 (6.3)	12 (9.9)	15 (12.0)	124 (100)
Access to Basic amenities	32 (25.6)	41 (33.2)	15 (12.0)	30 (23.8)	9 (5.5)	124 (100)
Access to Market	31 (25.3)	59 (47.5)	9 (7.3)	18 (14.9)	6 (5.0)	124 (100)
Ethnicity	7 (5.6)	28 (22.6)	4 (3.2%)	16 (12.9)	69 (55.6)	124 (100)
Population Growth	58 (46.8)	29 (23.4)	18 (14.5)	9 (7.3)	12 (9.9)	124 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The determinants of food security identified table 3 were income level 33.7%, gender (45.7%), age (40.2%), access to basic amenities (33.2%), access to market (47.5%) and population growth (46.8%). Majority of the respondents did not identified ethnicity has a major determinants of food security. This indicated that the major determinants of food security were income level, gender, age, access to basic amenities, access to market and population growth. Otaha (2013), stated that Nigerians lack enthusiasm for local products and often consider them inferior to imported food products. The emergence of oil sector marked the imminent end of the agriculture sector as the huge revenue generated from the petroleum products shifted attention from agriculture. The government embarked on importation food and local production shrunk away, especially as wealth from oil has changed the status and tastes of many Nigeria in favour of foreign goods.

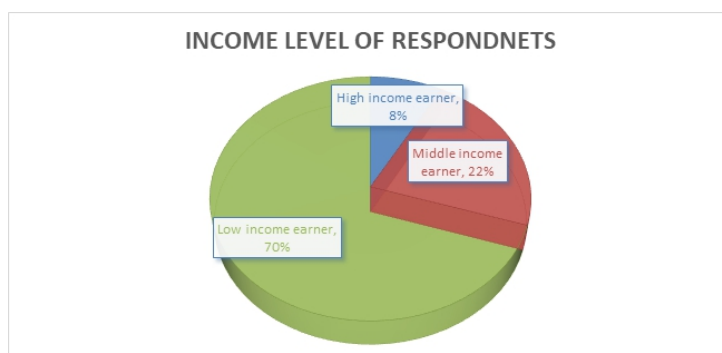


Figure 4.

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Findings shows that majority of the respondents were low-income earner (70%). 8% were high income earner and 22% were middle income earner. These findings indicated that the poverty level among the respondents was relatively high.

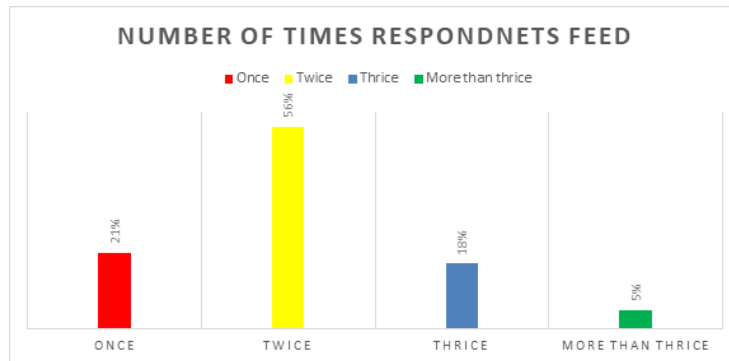


Figure 5.
Source: Field Survey, 2024

From figure seven, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents (56%) feed twice daily, 21% feed once, 18% feed thrice daily and 5% feed more than three times daily. They may be as a result of low income among the respondents.

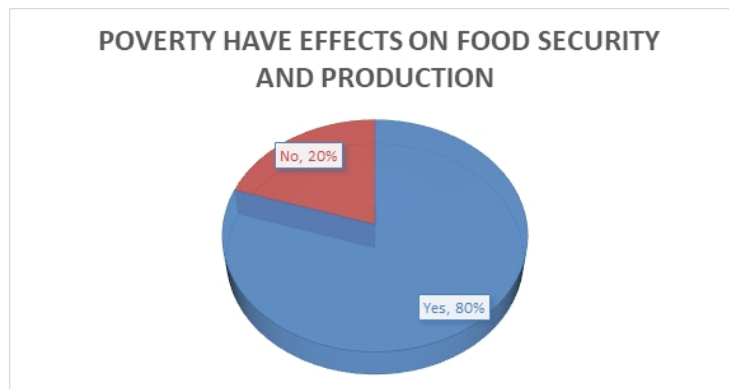


Figure 6.
Source: Field Survey, 2024

Findings in figure seven indicated that 80% affirmed that poverty have effects on food security and production in Ankpa Local Governments Area of Kogi State. According to the Sustainable Development Goal (2015), poverty dimension of food security is one of the targets of the sustainable Developmental Goals and is widely considered as important measure for evaluating the progress of a country in terms of wellbeing.

Table 4: Percentage distribution on effect of poverty on food security and production

Effect of poverty on food security and production	Category (N=124)					
	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Total (%)
Erratic food supply	40 (34.4)	29 (24.1)	31 (23.1)	19 (13.8)	5 (4.6)	124 (100)
Affect family income	25 (20.5)	33 (27.7)	29 (24.1)	23 (18.5)	14 (9.2)	124 (100)
Unbalanced nutrition	31 (24.1)	41 (33.3)	44 (37.9)	8 (4.6)	0 (0)	124 (100)
High food cost	45 (39.0)	27 (19.5)	33 (27.7)	14 (9.2)	5 (4.6)	124 (100)
Chronic food shortage	36 (28.7)	29 (23.6)	33 (23.6)	21 (14.9)	5 (9.2)	124 (100)
Poor quality foods	57 (45.7)	30 (24.5)	21 (16.7)	6 (4.7)	12 (9.9)	124 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The effect of poverty on food production as indicated in table 4 were erratic food supply (34.4), affect family income (27.7%), unbalanced nutrition (33.3%), high food cost (39%), chronic food shortage (28.7%) and poor-quality foods (45.7%). In the words of Obi, Job, Isyaku, Letswa, and Kolawole, (2018) the twin problem of hunger and malnutrition is closely linked with poverty. While hunger may be occasioned mostly by lack of jobs, or hyper – inflation that causes reduced purchasing power among others, which may be eliminated or reduced with sound management of the national economy, malnutrition is caused by poor diet and has a very long-term devastating effect as people in many poor countries. Medical and anthropometric evidence has shown, for instance, a very close link between malnutrition and infant mortality, poor growth in children as well as reduced adults' immune system to fight some diseases. To be sure, malnutrition saps the working strength of an economy, cripples the mind and body of children and consequently deprives the society of its greatest potential that is, its future productive human resources.

Table 5: Percentage distribution on coping strategies to issues of food security

Options	Category (N=111)					
	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Total (%)
Taking up loans	48 (39.0)	36 (27.7)	14 (9.2)	9 (5.6)	24 (18.5)	124 (100)
Engaging in subsistence farming	40 (32.3)	27 (20.0)	28 (23.6)	31 (24.1)	0 (0)	124 (100)
Purchasing less preferred food	25 (19.5)	51 (42.1)	21 (15.4)	8 (4.6)	24 (18.5)	124 (100)
Reducing meal size	37 (28.7)	39 (33.8)	9 (5.1)	14 (9.2)	27 (23.1)	124 (100)
Skipping meals	40 (29.7)	37 (28.2)	35 (28.2)	0 (0)	19 (13.8)	124 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 detailed the coping strategies suggested by the respondents. Majority of the respondents suggested taking up loans (39.0%), engaging in subsistence farming (32.3%), purchasing less preferred food (42.1%), purchasing meal size (33.8) and skipping meals (29.7%) as possible means of curbing the issue of food security in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Test Hypotheses

The research was guided by the following hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between poverty and food security among household in the study area

H₁: There is significant relationship between poverty and food security among household in the study area

The research hypotheses were tested by using chi-square statistical method which enables us reach a final conclusion in this research study. Hypotheses will be tested at 5% level of significance.

The formula for chi square is:
$$X^2 = \sum \frac{fo - fe}{fe}$$

Where O = Observed frequencies

E = Expected frequencies

N = Number of categories/options

X² = Calculated chi-square

Decision Rule:

If the computed value of chi-square (x²) calculated is less than the value of x² tabulated, the null hypothesis (H₀) will be accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected (H₁). Also, if the null hypothesis (H₀) calculated is greater than X² tabulated the alternative hypothesis will be accepted and the null hypothesis will be rejected.

Table 6: Cross tabulation on poverty and food security among household in the study area

Poverty and Food Security	Number of households					Total
	Less than 3	3-5	6-8	9-10	10 above	
Yes	56	2	10	4	29	89
No	10	0	0	1	4	26
Total	66	2	10	5	32	115

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 7: Result of Chi-Square Test

Chi square	10.4
Df	4
Assumption. Sig	.05
Critical X ² value	9.49

Decision and Conclusion

Since the X² (calculated) 10.4 is greater than the critical value X² = 9.49 we reject the Null hypothesis (H₀) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H₁) and conclude that there is significant relationship between poverty and food security among household in the study area.

Discussion of Findings

The results provided sociodemographic information on the respondents. The research found that the majority of respondents were female, between the ages of 18 and 27, and had lived in the study area for at least five years. According to the respondents, the biggest problem in the Ankpa Local Government Area is food security. The idea of food security has evolved beyond the fundamental biological necessities of nutrition for living, claims Robertson (1990). Food security does entail the right to cultural preferences as well as eating at a level suitable for physical and mental health. Obtaining the food in the proper quantities is another component. The results indicated that there are abnormalities in the consumption, availability, and utilization of food in the Ankpa Local Government Area. The lack of food availability, inefficient food distribution, inequitable food distribution, low household income levels, and inter-ethnic antagonism between Fulani herdsmen and farmers were all challenges related to food security in Ankpa Local Government Area. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents disagreed, Idah's food production is one of the problems.

The identified factors that affect food security include income level, gender, age, access to necessities, market accessibility, and population increase. The majority of respondents did not say that ethnicity was a significant factor in determining food security. According to this, the main factors influencing food security were income level, gender, age, access to necessities, market accessibility, and population increase. According to Otaha (2013), Nigerians lack passion for homegrown goods and frequently view them as inferior to imported food items. The rise of the oil industry signaled the agriculture industry's impending demise because of the enormous revenue created by petroleum goods, which diverted attention away from agriculture. Food imports were started by the government, and local food production decreased, particularly when oil money transformed the position and preferences of many Nigerians in favor of imported items. Food production was negatively impacted by poverty in several ways, including inconsistent food supply, decreased family income, unbalanced nutrition, high food costs, persistent food shortages, and low-quality food. This implies that poverty is directly related to the twin issues of hunger and malnutrition.

While malnutrition is caused by poor diet and has a very long-term devastating effect on people in many poor countries, hunger is primarily caused by poor diet and can be eliminated or reduced with sound management of the national economy. Hunger is primarily caused by a lack of jobs, hyper-inflation, or other factors that reduce purchasing power. Medical and anthropometric data, for instance, have demonstrated a strong correlation between undernourishment and infant mortality, children's stunted growth, and adults' impaired ability to fight certain diseases. Malnutrition cripples children's minds and bodies, which robs society of its greatest potential—that is, its future productive human resources—and weakens an economy's ability to function. The hypothesis was investigated, and the results showed a substantial correlation between household food security and poverty in the research area. We reject the null hypothesis (H_0) since the calculated X^2 value of 10.4 is higher than the crucial value of $X^2 = 9.49$ and accept the alternative hypothesis instead (H_1).

Conclusion

The study aims to examine the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, food security status in the rural households in the study area, the degree of poverty among the respondents and the relationship between food insecurity and poverty in the study area, and the respondents' coping strategies or mechanism. Although food insecurity is a global issue, it is particularly widespread in developing countries such as Nigeria. Fortunately, Nigeria is endowed with an abundance of fertile agricultural land as well as a vast human resource. Nigeria has a long history of agricultural practice, but that all changed with the discovery of oil in the nation's now-unenviable oil-rich Niger-delta region. The potential of large financial resources provided by the oil resource shifted the nation's attention away from its agricultural blessing. Government officials constantly distort and divert the so-called financial gains from oil resources, and the common man suffers as a result. Hunger, famine, and malnutrition are wreaking havoc on the country. Food security can still be restored in the country, but some factors, such as insufficient production, gender inequality, inefficient policies and corruption, conflicts and civil insecurity, climate change and natural disasters, and low technology for processing and storage, are still working against it. To address these issues, the government must go back to the drawing board and create an enabling environment by promoting decent employment in the agricultural and non-farm sectors, as well as providing credit facilities to help the most vulnerable cope with economic realities, particularly in rural areas. While social networking and cooperation among smallholder farmers will give them a voice, the government must provide basic infrastructure such as access roads and electricity, as well as making education more accessible, to help farmers gain capacity.

Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Promoting growth in agricultural sectors that are focused on locally consumed crops rather than export markets may result in an infusion of rural and community-based development funds and the creation of a national market. Such projects would need to be founded on local structure, knowledge, and priorities, as well as work within the ecosystem's capabilities.
- ii. Individuals in Ankpa Local Government Area should be encouraged to engage in subsistence farming in order to eradicate the issue of poverty and food security. This will aid in the eradication of food insecurity issues in the Local Government Area.
- iii. To boost agricultural output in Ankpa Local Government, modern science and technology must be implemented.
- iv. To address the challenges of food insecurity in Ankpa Local Government Area, the government must go back to the drawing board and create an enabling environment by promoting decent employment in the agricultural and non-farm sectors, as well as providing credit facilities to help the most vulnerable cope with economic realities, particularly in rural areas.

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