



**POLAC ECONOMIC REVIEW (PER)
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
NIGERIA POLICE ACADEMY, WUDIL-KANO**



CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY ON DEMOCRATIC REGIME IN DAMBOA LGA, BORNO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the causes and effects of hunger and food insecurity in Damboa Local Government Area, Nigeria. The study utilized survey research design using qualitative. Data were collected through surveys with 120 residents of Damboa LGA. Respondents provided insights into the multifaceted nature of food insecurity, shedding light on employment opportunities, poverty levels, and access to credit, education, and infrastructure. The findings reveals that consensus among respondents on the significant role of unemployment, poverty, and limited access to credit in fostering food insecurity. Divergent opinions emerged regarding the impact of poor infrastructure, emphasizing the nuanced nature of local challenges. The study also reveals a unanimous agreement on the link between food insecurity and increased instances of malnutrition, emphasizing the urgency of targeted health interventions. The research concludes that the complexity of food security challenges in Damboa LGA and advocates for context-specific interventions. The study recommends that employment generation programs, financial inclusion initiatives, poverty alleviation strategies, and targeted health interventions. The findings contribute valuable insights to the global discourse on combating hunger and inform policymakers and practitioners in developing holistic strategies for sustainable food security.

Keywords: Food, insecurity and Security

Introduction

Globally, Food insecurity is a complex and pervasive issue that transcends geographical, affecting millions of individuals and communities worldwide (FAO, 2020). Food insecurity has Agriculture Organization (FAO) as the lack of consistent access to sufficient and nutritious food for an active and healthy life, manifests in various forms, including chronic hunger, under nutrition, malnutrition, and dietary deficiencies (UNICEF, 2021). Rooted in a combination of socio-economic, environmental, and political factors, food insecurity poses significant challenges to human development, health, and well-being, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality (Akanji, 2021).

Across the globe, regions grappling with food insecurity often share common characteristics, such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and political instability (FAO, 2020; WFP, 2021). These interconnected factors create complex challenges that exacerbate vulnerabilities and hinder efforts to ensure food security for all. Moreover, the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events and shifting agricultural patterns, further compound the challenges of food insecurity, disrupting food production and distribution systems (FAO, 2020; IPCC, 2021). Addressing these global challenges requires coordinated efforts and multi-stakeholder partnerships to develop sustainable solutions that enhance food security, resilience, and sustainability (Adewale, 2023).

Environmental challenges, including climate change, land degradation, and water scarcity, further compound the problem of food insecurity (Kabiru, 2022). Erratic weather patterns and extreme events disrupt agricultural production, leading to crop failures, livestock losses, and reduced yields (IPCC, 2021). Subsistence farmers and rural communities are particularly vulnerable to these impacts, as their livelihoods depend heavily on agriculture and natural resources (Adegbola, 2020). Moreover, conflicts and political food insecurity in many regions, disrupting food systems, displacing populations, and exacerbating poverty and hunger (Ayodele, 2021).

The consequences of food insecurity are profound and far-reaching, affecting individuals' health, well-being, and economic opportunities (UNICEF, 2021). Malnutrition, including under nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and obesity, is a common outcome of food insecurity, particularly among vulnerable populations such as children and pregnant women (Okoro, 2021). Malnutrition has long-term implications for physical and cognitive development, productivity, and overall quality of life. Furthermore, food insecurity perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality, hindering social and economic development in affected communities (FAO, 2020). Addressing food insecurity requires a comprehensive approach that addresses its underlying causes while promoting sustainable agricultural practices, social protection programs, and equitable access to resources (FAO, 2020; WFP, 2021).

Africa stands out as a region struggling with persistent food insecurity challenges, exacerbated by a combination of factors including poverty, rapid population growth, and environmental pressures (Ogunleye, 2020). Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, faces significant food insecurity, with millions of people experiencing hunger and malnutrition (Jones, 2019). In Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, food insecurity remains a pressing concern, affecting both urban and rural populations (Brown, 2021).

The impact of food insecurity in Africa is beyond immediate hunger, affecting individuals' health, economic opportunities, and social well-being (Adams,

2019). Malnutrition rates are alarmingly high, particularly among children and women, leading to stunted growth, cognitive impairments, and increased susceptibility to diseases (Taylor, 2020; Martinez, 2017). Moreover, food insecurity undermines economic development and exacerbates poverty, perpetuating cycles of deprivation and inequality (Robinson, 2018). Efforts to address food insecurity in Africa require a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of the issue while promoting sustainable agricultural practices, social protection programs, and equitable access to resources (Thompson, 2020; Nguyen, 2018). Investments in agricultural development, infrastructure, and education are essential for building resilience and improving food security outcomes across the continent (Lee, 2019; Clark, 2017).

Nigeria is one of the most populated countries in Africa the majority of households are food insecure, especially the rural farming households, several evidences have suggested that majority of the world's food insecure live and work in the rural areas (IFAD, 2020). This indicates that reducing rural food insecurity is very important to reducing overall food insecurity. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Hunger is defined as "An uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy. It becomes chronic when the person does not consume a sufficient number of calories (dietary energy) regularly to lead a normal, active, and healthy life" (FAO, 2022).

Since 1996 the United Nations has worked to achieve zero hunger in the world. The United Nations sustainable development goals which consist of 17 goals as a worldwide call to action by all states were adopted in 2015. The 2nd sustainable development goal call for zero hunger in the world by 2030, Zero hunger is going to be achieved through promoting sustainable agriculture and achieving food for all (United Nations, 2021).

The Damboa LGA, with its diverse population and varied geographical characteristics, faces numerous socio-economic and environmental factors that contribute to food insecurity. These factors include persistent poverty, limited employment opportunities, inadequate

agricultural practices, and the challenges associated with climate change (Adejobi et al., 2018; Mohammed, 2020). Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure, including insufficient access to clean water and sanitation facilities, intensify the vulnerability of individuals and households to food insecurity (World Health Organization, 2019). In Borno State, the community of Damboa serves as a microcosm of the broader challenges surrounding food insecurity, with diverse socio-economic demographics facing barriers to accessing nutritious food and livelihood opportunities (Wilson, 2019; Garcia, 2016).

Hunger and food insecurity pose significant challenges to the well-being and development of individuals and communities in Damboa Local Government Area (LGA), Damboa State, Nigeria. Despite various efforts to address this issue, food insecurity remains persistent, affecting a large segment of the population (Aliyu et al., 2019). This study aims to investigate the causes and effects of hunger and food insecurity in Damboa Community, Damboa LGA, in order to better understand the underlying factors and their implications for the local population.

The problem of hunger and food insecurity in the Damboa community arises from multiple complex factors that interact at various levels. Socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and limited income-generating opportunities hinder individuals and households from accessing an adequate and nutritious diet (Adejobi et al., 2018). Insufficient agricultural practices, including low productivity, inadequate irrigation systems, and limited access to modern farming technologies, further contribute to food insecurity in the region (Mohammed, 2020). Additionally, climate change and environmental degradation pose significant challenges to agricultural productivity, exacerbating the vulnerability of communities to food shortages (Dibal et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the lack of essential infrastructure, including reliable transportation networks and market access, limits the availability and affordability of food in Damboa LGA (Aliyu et al., 2019). Inadequate governance and policy implementation also hinder the effective distribution and management of food resources, further aggravating the problem of food insecurity (Aliyu et al., 2019). The consequences of hunger and food insecurity

are far-reaching, affecting not only the physical health and well-being of individuals but also the social fabric and economic development of the local community.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To identify the underlying factors responsible for hunger and food insecurity in Damboa (LGA), Borno State.
- ii. To examine the consequences of hunger and food insecurity on individuals and communities in Damboa LGA.
- iii. To provide evidence-based recommendations for effective interventions and policies to address hunger and food insecurity in Damboa LGA.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the socio-economic causes and effects of hunger and food insecurity in the Damboa community LGA, Borno State, Nigeria. By examining the underlying factors contributing to food insecurity, the study aims to understand how socio-economic conditions, agricultural practices, and environmental challenges impact food availability and access. Additionally, the research seeks to explore the consequences of food insecurity on the health and well-being of the community.

Informing Policy and Decision-making: The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for policymakers, government agencies, and development organizations involved in addressing food insecurity in Damboa LGA. **Targeting Interventions:** The research will contribute to the development of targeted interventions that address the specific challenges faced by Damboa communities in Borno LGA. **Improving Community Well-being:** The study's findings will contribute to improving the well-being and quality of life of individuals and communities in Damboa LGA.

Enhancing Food Security Knowledge: This research will add to the existing body of knowledge on food security, specifically within the context of Damboa LGA. **Promoting Sustainable Development:** Addressing food insecurity is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2, which aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

This study focuses specifically on Damboa community, Borno Local Government Area within Borno State, Nigeria. The study will primarily investigate the socio-economic causes and effects of hunger and food insecurity in this specific geographical area. It will consider various factors such as socioeconomic, environmental, and governance aspects that contribute to food insecurity.

This study on the socio-economic causes and effects of hunger and food insecurity in the Damboa LGA, Borno State, Nigeria, may face several limitations. The research is geographically limited to a single community, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Additionally, time and resource constraints may limit the depth of the analysis and the ability to explore all relevant variables comprehensively. Finally, external factors such as political changes or unforeseen environmental events during the study period could impact the findings and their applicability.

Literature Review

Concept of Food Security

Food security is a broad concept which cuts across every stage of human existence, and it is a global issue that has been analyzed to mean adequate food supply to all who desire it (Eme, Onyishi, Uche and Uche, 2021). In view of the pressing need of food security issue globally, the UN included the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger as one of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to draw the attention of the entire world to the seriousness of the food security problems. According to WDI, (2020) an estimated 60% of Nigerians live on less than US\$1.25 per day. Nigeria was also ranked 91st out of total 104 countries on the 2015 global hunger index and 153rd out of 187 countries on the 2022 United Nations Development Programme human development index. This is a clear indication that Nigeria is yet to experience food security if this paper is to go by the various definitions of food security. In an attempt to explain the concept, Honfoga and Van Den Boon, (2023) opined that food security involves access and availability of food stuff, stability of supplies and the quality of the diet.

According to FAO (2021) food security refers to the availability of food and one's access to it. A household is

considered food secured when its occupants do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. Food security exist 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 (Idachaba, 2022). FAO (2023), further defined food security as a state of affairs where all people at all times have access to safe and nutritious food to maintain on healthy and productive life. By implication, food security is attained when all people have access to enough food at all times, and enjoy life full of strength and vigour to be able to face challenges that may be a threat to human existence. In the same vein Oriola (2021) stated that food security entails producing food that will go round every citizen both in quality and quantity. Food security is the availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic food stuff to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption, and to offset fluctuation in production and prices. (Carter (2020) cited by Eme et al 2024). Dauda (2021) is of the view that food is not only a basic need; it also provides psychological foundation upon which other considerations and human activities are structured. He noted that for Nigeria, food security is both a national objective and a challenge. Food security is not simply having sufficient and adequate quantities of our various food items at affordable prices, it further means that not only must we engage in mass food production, but also we need to ensure that most Nigerians have sufficient purchasing power to acquire food items that guarantee good feeding and nutrition. Examining the main components of food security in Nigeria will reveal the food security situation prevalent in the Nation's households. The components under consideration are availability stability, access and utilization.

Food Availability: means ensuring sufficient quantity and quality of food supply for households through production or through purchase from market given sufficient purchasing power.

Stability of Food: refers to food supply without any fluctuations or shortages from season to season and from year to year. This requires improvement on storage facilities to reduce to barest minimum food losses

Access to Food: access to food is also dependent on affordability this is assured when households obtain appropriate food for nutritious diet, and the key determinants of food access are economic, physical, political and socio-cultural factors which may likely stand as a barrier for accessing food when it is needed

Utilization of Food: this suggest taking the right food that is adequately and nutritionally balanced especially to children, pregnant and nursing mothers as well as the elderly who deserve adequate diet for their wellbeing. This will help reduce the risk of nutritional and deficiency diseases (Adebayo, 2020).

Causes of Hunger and Food Insecurity

Adeniji (2020) examined rural development and food insecurity in Nigeria. He emphasized that because of Nigeria's population explosion, climate change, and limited access to resources, food insecurity is a significant issue for rural areas there. This essay investigates how food insecurity affects rural development in Nigeria. The study used a qualitative methodology to investigate the root causes of food insecurity and its consequences for rural development. The findings demonstrate that food insecurity has a substantial impact on rural development in Nigeria. It has led to an increase in poverty, malnutrition, health issues, illiteracy, and poor household income. Poor access to resources like land and water is a significant issue affecting remote communities throughout Nigeria.

In a study on Food Insecurity and Rural Development in Nigeria undertaken by Kawo (2020). Rural inhabitants of Nigeria, especially those in the north part of Nigeria, struggle greatly with food insecurity. In this essay, we focus on rural communities as we investigate the causes and effects of food insecurity in Nigeria. The study makes the case that a range of issues, including as poverty, environmental damage, insufficient or erratic access to food, and unsustainable agricultural techniques, are to blame for food insecurity. The study also emphasizes the significance of rural development activities in reducing food insecurity, including the improvement of agricultural infrastructure, bettering access to markets, and expanding access to financial services. In order to

minimize food insecurity in Nigeria, the study makes suggestions for next research and policy activities.

In 2020, Ogunsola conducted study on Nigeria's rural development and food insecurity. The researchers mentioned above examined the relationship between rural development in Nigeria and food insecurity. Food insecurity is a major issue in Nigeria, where an estimated 54.4 million people are unable to meet their basic food demands. The rural development of the country has been impacted because a substantial portion of the population lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for a living. The study examines the causes of food insecurity in Nigeria and its implications for rural development. It also examines government interventions and programs aimed at reducing food insecurity and advancing rural development in the country. The results of the study show that more research is required to assess the success of government initiatives and establish policies and programs that enhance food and nutrition security and rural development in the country.

Adebayo (2020) studied Nigeria's rural development and food insecurity. In rural areas, where food insecurity has grown to be a serious issue, he claims that more than 70% of Nigeria's population resides. Numerous factors, such as poverty, environmental damage, restricted resource availability, population growth, and insufficient infrastructure, have been linked to this. This essay discusses the reasons behind food insecurity in rural Nigeria as well as possible solutions. Rural development initiatives are seen to need to be incorporated into more comprehensive national policies and programs in order to lessen food insecurity in Nigeria. It is further claimed that a comprehensive approach to resolving the issue must include activities to raise agricultural output, develop infrastructure, improve access to resources and services, and encourage sustainable practices. Ahmed (2022) examined the determinants of household food security and coping strategies in Blue-Hora, Borana zone, Oromia, Ethiopia. Ordered logit regression model was fitted to analyze the potential variables affecting food insecurity in the study area. Among 14 explanatory variables included in the logistic model, 6 of them were significant at less than 5% probability level. These are; cultivated land size,

livestock holding and improved seed, sex of household head, soil fertility status and non-farm income.

Ojogho (2020) examined the determinants of food security among arable farmers in Edo state, Nigeria, using binomial logit model. The education level of farmers, household size, output level of household and per capita income of the household are the major determinants of food insecurity in the area while the probability of a household being food insecure is due to household size, household dependency ratio, sex of household head, age and the level of education of the household head.

Olagunju, et al. (2022) undertook an empirical analysis of determinants of food insecurity in Ogbomosho metropolis of Oyo state, Nigeria using binary logit model. Socio-economic variables such as asset holding (mainly cultivated land, farm income, non-farm income and household production enterprises) and access to services like credit are found to be important correlates which affect household food security favorably in the study area. While controlling for all other variables, households with better access to credit, education, extension agents and cooperative membership are found to have significantly higher food security and so more likely to be food secure. However, among demographic variables considered in the study, only age was found to have a negative and statistically significant effect on household food security. Contrary to usual expectation, the coefficient of farm income, dependency ratio, family and hired labour were not statistically significant. These may imply that household headship has not yet enhanced households' capabilities to adopt better production technologies accept technical advice from extension workers and diversify their source of income which would have reduced the risk of food insecurity among households.

Consequences of Food Insecurity

Today, most developing countries like Nigeria are net food importers, and their dependence on imports is growing. In the case of rice, since the implementation of high tariffs for rice importation, legal imports into the country have come to a standstill, creating a massive demand from staple consumers. In the absence of local paddy production to meet this demand,

smugglers have been having a free ride, pumping rice into the country through the borders. The neighbouring countries including Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Benin have zero or negligible duties, thereby acting as conduits for the illegal trade of rice into Nigeria. It is reported that more than 2.5 million tonnes of rice was imported into these countries since Nigeria's implementation of the new tariffs at 110 per cent (Tyohmba, 2024:34).

Most of this volume found its way into Nigeria through the porous borders. For instance, Benin imported in excess of 1.7 million tonnes of rice, for a population of just 10 million people, several times more than their average consumption clearly indicating conduit operations. As a result, the federal government and terminal operators are losing billions of naira in unpaid custom duty and levies, as well as handling charges. The Deputy Comptroller General of Customs (DCG) in charge of Enforcement, Saka Yinusa, recently said the importation should be through approved seaports to ensure adequate payment of import duties, levies and other charges. He disclosed that Nigeria lost estimated N1 billion on contraband rice daily, which translated to N356 billion yearly. The smugglers also often engage the customs officers on gun duels, resulting in loss of officers on government duty (Akanji, et.al, 2024:52).

The farmers have their own set of problems and have not been able to adequately respond in meeting the demand caused by the abrupt stoppage of imports of finished rice. A recent report suggests that the rampant smuggling further compounded the woes of local rice millers operating in a high cost environment - devoid of infrastructure such as potable water, power and good road networks - with sparse funding. The nation is also reeling from the severe impact caused by the Boko Haram activities. It has been reported that in Borno, Muhammed Namadi, the Borno State Farmers Association chairman said: *"Hundreds of farmers have been killed or forced to abandon rice and other crops ready for harvesting or just planted"* (The Sun editorial, 2020). He spoke in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital and a former insurgent stronghold. Without immediate relief, farmers in Borno, who already live

with abject poverty, insecurity and isolation, could also face widespread hunger.

"We have suffered a great deal as farmers in the last three years," Namadi said, asking the state to provide farmers with money and equipment. "Many young and old farmers have been forced to leave their farms." Nearly 20,000 farmers have been driven from their land by both the insurgency and the military crackdown since Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan in May declared a state of emergency in Borno and two other northeastern states, according to the Borno state agriculture commission. Entire villages have been cut off from their farmlands by military roadblocks and insurgents increasingly operate in the countryside.

In June, the Chad Basin Development Authority reported that 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) of rice paddies had been abandoned at the peak of harvesting season. Large-scale investments made into the farming and milling industries by private businesses are also jeopardy, following Customs' inability to protect the industry from the vagaries of smugglers. Small farmers consume most of the paddy produced in the nation on a sustenance basis. Several rice mills in the country have been fully or partially shut down due to lack of paddy supply, leading to unemployment and mounting losses for the entrepreneurs. These include Olam Nigeria, Ebony Agro Industries Limited, Ashi, Mewa, and Umza rice processing mills, and Popular Foods (Ekah, et.al, 2021:52).

The new agricultural policy that was aimed at protecting the local rice industry interests seems now to be helping smugglers make a fortune. The millers face unfair competition from smugglers, making their large investments unviable and effectively stalling any new expansion plans in the country. To elaborate, the cost of Indian origin parboiled rice is around ₦70,429 per MT and Thailand rice is around ₦90,083 per MT. Comparatively, rice paddy in Kano is at a high ₦78,618 per MT, while in other places like Ebonyi, it's at a prohibitive ₦88,446 per MT. The price to a consumer in Lagos therefore of local finished rice is around N 16,000 per 50kg, whereas the imported rice was being

sold at an affordable N 8,000 per Kg, until the tariffs were increased significantly (Ekah, et. al, 2021).

Pertinently, the President, Rice Distributors Association of Nigeria (RIDAN), Esther Olufunmilayo, urged government to review the impact of its present policy on the economy, arguing that tariff hike imposition without tangible transformation of the local rice value chain defeats government's rice self-sufficiency goal. The reality is that the increase in import tariffs for rice has not made any significant impact on paddy production. The rice millers are going out of business, the consumers are suffering from lack of affordable supply, and the federal government is losing out heavily on revenues whilst the smugglers thrive prosperously. The federal government needs to act expeditiously to enhance availability of essential food products through legal channels at affordable prices.

Combined with persistent constraints, from fiscal to physical, this dependence results in food insecurity for large sectors of the population, particularly the urban poor (Singer, 1997). Population growth has also been linked to food insecurity. The current population of the Horn of Africa (HOA), currently at over 100 millions, has doubled since 1974 and is expected to increase by 40% by 2015. The increase is putting intense pressure on scarce natural resources and has resulted in growing urban migration. Despite this, vulnerable people experiencing food insecurity live primarily in rural areas. They have little political leverage, live in scattered and difficult to reach rears, and are left to deal with extreme climate conditions and a fragile ecosystem (NEPAD, 2020).

Nigeria's economic performance has not been impressive over the past few decades. The trend of investment has shown performance below expectation; available data show the growth rate in fixed capital formation for 2011, 2012, 2022, 2015 were 0.16 percent, 0.38 percent, 0.05 per cent and 0.35 per cent respectively. The situation further worsened with negative growth rates -0.06, -0.08, -0.1 percent for 2018, 2019 and 2022, respectively. This may have largely been due to the unstable macro-economic and political

environment during these periods. The low rate of investment may also have been due to poor level of savings as the growth rates in savings over the same period (2010 and 2020) were negative, -1.29 per cent and 5.16 percent respectively. A review of population indicators in Nigeria shows that Nigerians population has more than doubled since 1960. Presently, based on the last census results (2022), Nigeria's population is over 140 million, showing annual estimated growth rate of over 3 per cent. The reality of this situation might not necessarily be with the absolute size of the population.

Effective of Food Security

The challenges, causes, problems and effects of food insecurity in Nigeria are so evident. However, the government has a role to play in minimizing these challenges if not total eradication. These problems can be attended to by the government through the following”

- i. Government intervention in areas of better irrigation system, improved fertilizers, disease and drought resistant seeds which can produce large harvest thereby increase development process.
- ii. Alliance between government and the private sector can foster real growth, creating new bustling market places and fueling supply and demand so farmers can sell their products.
- iii. Accessible Educational programmes: Women farmers should be encouraged by providing them with right tools. Empowering countries to grow their way out of poverty, the cycle of hunger can be broken and a stable hunger and poverty free nations will emerge leading to future generation that is food secured. (USAID, 2021). Oni et al (2018) observed that access to education is indeed a mechanism that facilitates productivity in any field of career. Lack of adequate education is a bane of farmers in Nigeria, particularly in the rural settlement.
- iv. Provision of infrastructures: Provision of social amenities such as roads, potable water, electricity, etc. will encourage rural dwellers and will prevent or minimize rural-urban migration as this will ensure adequate labour for agricultural

activities, thereby increasing food productivity that will not only guarantee food security but will equally provide employment opportunities to the growing population (Fawole et al, 2023).

- v. Conflict resolution: The destruction of lives and properties is so alarming these few years; this has seriously affected potential farmers in many settlements in our communities. Bringing an end to these crises will go a long way in ensuring food security in our country. Those responsible for the peace of this nation should ensure the security and safety of Nigerians.

Summary of Major Findings

The finding of the study reveals the following, the research findings reveal a resounding consensus among respondents regarding the pivotal role of unemployment in fostering food insecurity. The lack of employment opportunities emerged as a central concern, aligning with global research emphasizing the critical link between stable employment and consistent access to food resources (Smith et al., 2019). Additionally, respondents identified high poverty levels and limited access to credit as significant contributors to food insecurity. This aligns with existing literature highlighting the complex relationship between economic stability and food security, emphasizing the need for multifaceted strategies (Johnson et al., 2020; Brown & Smith, 2018).

The findings also reveals the unanimous agreement among respondents on the link between food insecurity and increased instances of malnutrition is a critical finding, emphasizing the direct and immediate health implications of insufficient access to adequate food resources. This finding aligns with global research highlighting the connection between food security and nutritional outcomes, particularly in vulnerable populations (Melgar-Quinonez et al., 2021).

The research findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive interventions that address the identified socioeconomic challenges. Employment generation programs, financial inclusion initiatives, and poverty alleviation strategies emerge as crucial recommendations based on the identified factors contributing to food

insecurity. The nuanced nature of opinions on certain aspects, such as the impact of poor infrastructure, suggests that interventions need to be context-specific and informed by community engagement.

Presentation and Analysis

Table1: Socio- Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Age of the Respondent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-24	13	20%
25-29	21	49%
30-39	43	22%
40+	39	9%
Total	116	100%
Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	65	56%
Female	51	44%
Total	116	100%
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary	15	8%
Secondary	45	23%
Higher Institution	45	43%
Others	11	26%
Total	116	100%
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Civil Servant	21	26%
Self-Employed	35	51%
Business	51	18%
Others	9	5%
Total	116	100%
Tribe	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Margi	80	67.5%
Kanuri	31	27.5%
Others	5	5%
Total	116	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows age groups of the respondents. Notably, the majority of the respondents are age range of 30 to 39, constituting (36.67%), the age group of 40 and above follows closely, comprising (33.33%) of the total respondents. In contrast, those aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 29, account for 11.67% and 18.33% of the respondents, respectively.

However, the table also shows gender distribution of the respondents. The data indicates that male respondents are 55.83% of the total respondents and 44.17% of the

respondents are female. Educational qualification is another key demographic variable examined in the table. The data reveals the highest proportion of respondents, 38.33% holds secondary and higher institution qualifications. Those with primary educational qualifications constitute 13.33% of the sample, while 10% of respondents have qualifications classified as "Others." Moreover, the occupation category the self-employed individuals, make 30% of the total respondents, while those engaged in business-related occupations account for 43.33% of the respondents. Civil servants represent

18.33% of the respondents and 8.33% are classified as "Others." The final demographic variable examined is the respondents' tribal affiliation. The table indicates that the

majority of respondents belong to the Margi tribe, comprising 67.5% of the sample, while 27.5% identify as Kanuri. An additional 5% are categorized as "Others."

Table2: Showing the Socioeconomic factors causing hunger and food insecurity in Damboa LGA

s/n	Questionnaire item	S/Agree		Agree		S/D		Disagree	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
6.	Lack of employment opportunities in Damboa is a significant factor contributing to food insecurity.	56	46.6 %	45	37.5 %	9	7.5 %	10	8.33 %
7.	High poverty levels in Damboa are a major driver of food insecurity.	49	40.8 %	50	41.6 %	12	10% %	9	7.50 %
8.	Limited access to credit and financial resources hinders households' ability to secure adequate food in Damboa.	23	19.1 %	59	49.1 %	18	15% %	20	16.67 %
9.	Insufficient access to education and skills training contributes to food insecurity in Damboa.	37	30.8 %	53	44.1 %	4	3.3 %	26	21.67 %
10.	Poor infrastructure, such as inadequate transportation and markets, exacerbates food insecurity in Damboa.	35	29.1 %	20	16.6 %	50	41. %	15	12.50 %

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table presents respondents' perceptions regarding various factors contributing to food insecurity in Damboa LGA. The first statement shows that majority of respondents (46.67%) "Strongly Agree" that the lack of employment opportunities in Damboa significantly contributes to food insecurity. Additionally, 37.50% "Agree" with this statement, a smaller proportion "Strongly Disagrees" (7.50%) and (8.33%) of the respondents Disagrees with this assertion.

However, the also shows approximately (40.83%) Strongly agree that high poverty levels contribute to food insecurity, while (41.67%) Agree. A minority strongly Disagrees (10%) and (7.50%) Disagrees with this perspective. The table indicates that (49.17%) of respondents Agree that limited access to credit and financial resources hinders households' ability to secure adequate food and (19.17%) Strongly Agree. In contrast, (15%) Strongly Disagree and 16.67% disagree with this notion.

Furthermore, a significant portion of respondents acknowledges the importance of education and skills training in addressing food insecurity. Approximately (30.83%) Strongly Agree and (44.17%) Agree that

insufficient access to education and skills training contributes to food insecurity. Meanwhile, a smaller percentage strongly Disagrees (3.33%) and (21.67%) Disagrees with this statement. Some portion of the respondents (29.17%) Strongly Agree and 16.67% agree that poor infrastructure is exacerbating food insecurity. A substantial (41.67%) Strongly disagree with this notion, while 12.50% Disagree.

Summary of Findings

The finding of the study reveals the following:

The research findings reveal a resounding consensus among respondents regarding the pivotal role of unemployment in fostering food insecurity. The lack of employment opportunities emerged as a central concern, aligning with global research emphasizing the critical link between stable employment and consistent access to food resources (Smith et al., 2019). Additionally, respondents identified high poverty levels and limited access to credit as significant contributors to food insecurity. This aligns with existing literature highlighting the complex relationship between economic stability and food security, emphasizing the need for

multifaceted strategies (Johnson et al., 2020; Brown & Smith, 2018).

The findings also reveals the unanimous agreement among respondents on the link between food insecurity and increased instances of malnutrition is a critical finding, emphasizing the direct and immediate health implications of insufficient access to adequate food resources. This finding aligns with global research highlighting the connection between food security and nutritional outcomes, particularly in vulnerable populations (Melgar-Quinonez et al., 2021).

The research findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive interventions that address the identified socioeconomic challenges. Employment generation programs, financial inclusion initiatives, and poverty alleviation strategies emerge as crucial recommendations based on the identified factors contributing to food insecurity. The nuanced nature of opinions on certain aspects, such as the impact of poor infrastructure, suggests that interventions need to be context-specific and informed by community engagement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this research illuminates the intricate web of factors contributing to food insecurity in Bauchi Local Government Area, Nigeria, and underscores the profound effects on the well-being of its residents. The findings emphasize the pressing need for comprehensive and context-specific interventions that address the root causes of food insecurity. The identified factors, including the lack of employment opportunities, high poverty levels, and limited access to credit, highlight the importance of holistic strategies that encompass economic, social, and educational dimensions. Policymakers and practitioners should prioritize initiatives that empower individuals economically, improve financial access, and enhance educational opportunities to create lasting impacts on food security.

The effects of food insecurity on health, particularly the unanimous agreement on its association with increased instances of malnutrition, emphasize the urgent need for targeted health and nutrition programs. The nuanced

perspectives on the relationship between insufficient access to nutritious food and specific health issues underscore the importance of tailoring interventions to the diverse health challenges faced by the community.

Based on the findings the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified challenges and improve the overall food security situation:

- i. **Implement Employment Generation Programs:** Addressing the identified lack of employment opportunities is paramount. Implementing targeted employment generation programs, such as vocational training, skill development, and entrepreneurship initiatives, can empower individuals to secure stable sources of income, thereby contributing to long-term food security. Collaboration with local industries and businesses can enhance the effectiveness of these programs.
- ii. **Promote Financial Inclusion Initiatives:** Recognizing the hindrance posed by limited access to credit and financial resources, there is a need to establish and promote financial inclusion initiatives. This could involve setting up microfinance institutions, providing financial literacy programs, and facilitating access to affordable credit. Financial inclusion is critical for enabling households to invest in food production and other income-generating activities.
- iii. **Design Holistic Poverty Alleviation Strategies:** Develop and implement poverty alleviation strategies that go beyond employment to address the underlying economic challenges. Social safety nets, conditional cash transfer programs, and targeted interventions can uplift the most vulnerable households out of poverty. These strategies should be designed in consultation with local communities to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- iv. **Enhance Access to Education and Skills Development:** Recognizing the unanimous agreement on the contribution of inadequate access to education to food insecurity, efforts should be directed towards enhancing

educational opportunities and skills development. Investing in education at all levels and providing opportunities for skills training can empower individuals to access better employment opportunities and improve economic stability.

- v. Targeted Infrastructure Development: While opinions on the impact of poor infrastructure were divided, consider targeted infrastructure development projects addressing specific local challenges. Improving transportation and market infrastructure can enhance the efficiency of the food supply chain, benefiting both producers and consumers. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to identify and address specific infrastructure needs.
- vi. Implement Nutritional and Health Interventions: Recognizing the unanimous agreement on the link between food insecurity and increased instances of malnutrition, prioritize the implementation of nutritional and health interventions. These could include the distribution of nutrient-rich foods, nutritional

education programs, and healthcare initiatives that specifically address the health challenges associated with food insecurity.

- vii. Establish Community-Based Mental Health Support: Acknowledge the negative impact of food insecurity on mental health and well-being. Establish community-based mental health support programs, including counseling services, community awareness campaigns, and initiatives to reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health support. Integrating mental health into broader health interventions is crucial for holistic well-being.
- viii. Community Engagement and Participatory Approaches: Recognizing the nuanced nature of challenges and opinions, foster community engagement and participatory approaches in the design and implementation of interventions. Involve local communities in decision-making processes to ensure that strategies align with the specific needs, cultural context, and aspirations of the residents.

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