The challenges of food security access, food preference and dietary diversity in rural households in Nigeria

Ijeoma Ukonu, Carol Wallace, Nicola Lowe, Karen Whittaker and Heather Ohly

Introduction
The United Nation’s Committee on world food security (2012) defined food security as “the condition in which all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". Nigeria’s Gross Domestic Products (GDP) fell from 6.5% in 2014 to less than 1.8% in 2018 increasing poverty and severe household food insecurity especially in the rural areas. Thus, households are faced with the challenges of food insecurity access. Nsukka LGA in Enugu State Nigeria recorded a poverty level of 69.2% (Ali and Agbogbu, 2014) and 70% of Nsukka residents live below the poverty line of $1.25 per day (Ataguba, Williams and Ichoku, 2011). The issue remains, how Nigeria will achieve zero hunger by 2030 as part of her SDG mandate. The aim of this research is to investigate household food security access and its challenging factors, food preference and household dietary diversity in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Research Objectives

• To measure the level of food security access in Nsukka LGA.
• To examine food security challenging factors.
• To investigate household food preference and dietary diversity.

Method

• Adopting Yamane (1967) and Glenn (2013) sampling method three hundred and ninety women from the 20 local communities of Nsukka were randomly sampled and asked to complete a survey from which the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (Kennedy, Barllard and Dop, 2010) and the Household Dietary Diversity Score (Swindale and Bilinsky, 2007) were determined.
• Data was analysing using household food insecurity access score and household dietary diversity score.
• Chi-squared and descriptive statistics (Veal, 2011) determined the factors challenging food security and food preference respectively.

Food security level in Nsukka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence questions</th>
<th>Degree of food insecurity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No (%)</td>
<td>Rarely (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors challenging Food security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Implication at Sig. level (0.05) Pearson chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>FACTOR (20-30 years old women’s household were more food insecure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s education</td>
<td>FACTOR (Approx. 69% had some education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s education level</td>
<td>FACTOR (About 76% had some form of education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s work status</td>
<td>FACTOR (40% were farmers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s work status</td>
<td>FACTOR (40.5% were farmers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s income</td>
<td>FACTOR (51% earn ₦18,000 (€46) - below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s income</td>
<td>FACTOR (49% earn ₦18,000 - below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household size</td>
<td>NOT A FACTOR (52% had household 2-4 members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of household head</td>
<td>NOT A FACTOR (71% had men as household heads)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>NOT A FACTOR (71% were married)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

House hold dietary diversity score

Access to food preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eaten limited variety of food</th>
<th>Unable to eat preferred food</th>
<th>Eaten any available food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

The food security access level in Nsukka LGA is low. This study confirms the high poverty level in the area. Although, some households had good dietary diversity, but the population lack access to enough food and choice of what to eat. Age, education, work status, and income were food security challenging factors. Household size, marital status and gender of household head were not factors challenging food security in Nsukka Local Government Area.

To achieve food security, this area needs interventions and support programs from international, non-governmental, government and private agencies.

Reference
Kennedy, G., T. Ballant, M. Dop (2010). Guidelines for measuring Household and Dietary Diversity-FAO, Italy