

Review of: "Socioeconomic Drivers of Food Insecurity Among Rural Households: Evidence from Participating Farmers in the Integrated Rice-Fish System in Ebonyi State, Nigeria"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear editor...

The paper titled "Socioeconomic Drivers of Food Insecurity Among Rural Households: Evidence from Participating Farmers in the Integrated Rice-Fish System in Ebonyi State, Nigeria" explores key drivers of food insecurity among rural rice farmers in the context of Nigeria's ongoing food crisis. It is structured into several key sections, with data drawn from the USAID-funded Feed the Future Innovation Lab.

This paper is well-structured and provides valuable insights into food insecurity in Nigeria. However, several weaknesses can be noted:

1- Limited Geographic Scope: The study focuses solely on Ebonyi State, which may limit the generalizability of its findings to other regions in Nigeria or Sub-Saharan Africa. Factors influencing food security can vary widely across different states, making it difficult to apply the conclusions universally.

2- Sample Size: With only 143 rice farmers selected, the sample size seems relatively small given the scale of food insecurity in the state. A larger, more diverse sample might have provided a more robust and representative analysis of the factors driving food insecurity.

3- Lack of Consideration for Climate and Environmental Factors: While socioeconomic factors are thoroughly examined, the paper does not adequately consider the role of environmental issues such as climate change, soil degradation, or natural disasters, all of which could significantly impact food security in rural farming communities.

Overreliance on Quantitative Methods: The study primarily uses the FGT and ESR models, focusing on quantitative data. A mixed-methods approach incorporating qualitative data (e.g., interviews with farmers) could have provided a richer, more nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of food insecurity and the sociocultural factors at play.

4- Gender Analysis: While the study mentions gender inclusivity, it does not delve deeply into gender-specific challenges. A more thorough gender-based analysis could help identify unique barriers faced by female-headed households in achieving food security, beyond the general statements provided.

5- Policy Recommendations Lack Specificity: The recommendations, while important, are somewhat broad. For instance, suggesting the importance of education without providing specific strategies or actionable steps to improve educational

access in rural areas weakens the impact of the policy recommendations.