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Food Security, Poverty Status and Their Determinants among Rural Farming Households in Ipokia Local Government Area, Ogun State

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Abstract

This study examined food security, poverty status and their determinants among rural farming households in Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State. A survey research design was adopted for this study. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents, and structured questionnaires were administered to elicit primary data on household food consumption, expenditure, and income. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, the Food Security Index, the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) poverty index, and binary Logit regression model. Results showed that 72.0% of the total respondents were male, 28.0% were female, 36.0% were aged 41-50 years, 80.0% had formal education, 45.3% had between 6-10 persons as household's size. The poverty incidence was 64.4%, depth (28.4%) and severity (7.2%). The monthly mean per capita food expenditure was ₦55,700.29 and 41.3% of the total respondents were food secure and 58.7% were not food secure while low farm income/output (1st) and limited access to credit (2nd) were ranked as the major constraints to food security in the study area. The coefficients of age (0.061), sex (0.014), marital status (0.645), farm size (0.030) and farming experience (0.036) are positive and significant at the 5% level. The Pseudo R^2 of 0.312 indicates that the model has a reasonably good explanatory power of achieving food security and escaping poverty in the study area. The study concluded that among other key determinants, household income, access to credit, and access to extension services increased the farmers' income and improved their household food security in the study area and recommended targeted income-generating interventions, improved access to productive resources, and food security programmes to alleviate poverty among rural farming households.

Keywords: Food security, poverty alleviation, rural farming households.

1. Introduction

Poverty and food insecurity remain among the most persistent developmental challenges facing rural communities in Nigeria, with rural farming households disproportionately affected despite their central role in national food production. Paradoxically, many households that produce food are themselves food insecure and poor, a situation attributable to low productivity, poor market access, inadequate storage and processing facilities, and limited access to productive resources such as land, credit, and modern inputs (Sasu, 2022).

Food security, defined as a situation in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life, is closely intertwined with poverty (Food & Agricultural Organization, 2026). Food-insecure households often experience reduced labour productivity, poor health outcomes, and limited capacity to invest in income-generating activities, all of which perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Conversely, improving household food security has the potential to break this cycle by improving health, productivity, and the capacity of household members to engage in income-earning activities, thereby serving as an alternative means or key remedy, for poverty alleviation (Adelani & Adams, 2025).

Globally, poverty remains a significant issue, affecting people across different regions and continents. Approximately 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than one dollar per day, with the majority residing in developing regions such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (92%) by United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2015). Despite Nigeria's wealth, the poverty level

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remains high, with around 7% of the global poor population residing in the country (Sasu, 2022). Several factors contribute to this, including corruption, mismanagement, unemployment, and social injustice (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2022). Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State is a predominantly rural, agrarian community bordering the Republic of Benin, with farming households engaged largely in the cultivation of arable crops, oil palm, and livestock rearing. Despite the agricultural potential of the area, many farming households continue to grapple with low incomes, seasonal food shortages, and poor living conditions, raising questions about the extent to which improving food security could serve as an effective pathway to alleviating poverty among these households.

Despite Nigeria's substantial agricultural potential and various government interventions aimed at poverty reduction, poverty and food insecurity remain widespread among rural farming households, including those in Ipokia Local Government Area. Many rural households continue to experience inadequate access to sufficient and nutritious food, particularly during the lean/planting season, while simultaneously living below the poverty line despite their engagement in agricultural production. A key policy question that remains inadequately addressed at the local level is the extent to which food security status is associated with the poverty status of rural farming households, and whether interventions targeted at improving food security could meaningfully contribute to poverty alleviation in such communities (Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security, 2026). Without empirical, location-specific evidence on this relationship, policy interventions risk being poorly targeted, potentially addressing either food insecurity or poverty in isolation rather than as the interrelated challenges that they are. This study therefore examines examine food security and poverty status determinants among rural farming households in Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study was to examine food security, poverty status and their determinants among rural farming households in Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State. The specific objectives were to:

1. Describe the socio-economic characteristics of rural farming households in the study area;
2. Determine the food security status of rural farming households in the study area;
3. Determine the incidence, depth, and severity of poverty among rural farming households in the study area;
4. Examine the food security, poverty status and their determinants among rural farming households; and
5. Identify the constraints to achieving food security and escaping poverty status among rural farming households in the study area.

2. Methodology

This study was carried out in Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Ipokia Local Government Area is a predominantly rural, agrarian community located along the Nigeria–Benin border, with a large proportion of its population engaged in the cultivation of crops such as maize, cassava, and vegetables, as well as oil palm production and livestock rearing.

Ipokia was created as a local government in 1996 from the former Egbado South (now Yewa South) LGA. lema. The area has large kaolin and red clay deposits and fertile land for agriculture. Ipokia was created as a local government in 1996 from the former Egbado South (now Yewa South) LGA. lema. The area has large kaolin and red clay deposits and fertile land for agriculture. It has a coordinates of 6°32′N, 2°51′E (about 6.533°N, 2.850°E), taken at Ipokia town, the LGA headquarters. The LGA is in the west of Ogun State and borders the Republic of Benin. It has a land area of 629 km² (about 243 sq mi). It has a population of 150,426 peoples as at the 2016 census. Some sources give 150,387, a small discrepancy in how the census figure is reported. Ipokia has a tropical wet-and-dry climate typical of the southwestern coastal plain. Official LGA-level climate data is scarce, so the rainfall figures below come from Idiroko, a major town in the LGA. It lies about 55 metres above sea level on the West African coastal plain, with average annual rainfall between 1,500 mm and 2,000 mm. The rainy season runs from about May to October. There is usually a short break in July or August, then a second peak around September and October. The dry season runs from about November to March, with harmattan haze in December and January. This is the standard pattern for the region and was not in the sources I found. Recent forecasts for the area show daytime highs of about 27–29°C and nights of about 22–24°C. Temperatures are warm and humid throughout the year. Ipokia LGA has 10 political wards and towns include Idiroko, Oniro, Ita Egbe, Tongeji Island, Aretedo, Ihunbo, Agosasa, Aseko, Maun, Koko, Ropo, Alaari, Tube and Ilashe. Ifonyintedo, Madoga and Ijofin (Ogun State Independent Electoral Commission (OGSIEC), 2026).

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design, involving the collection of data from a sample of rural farming households at a single point in time. This design was considered appropriate for capturing the socio-economic characteristics, food consumption and expenditure patterns, and income levels needed to assess food security and poverty status within a relatively short period.

2.2 Sampling Procedure and methods of Data Analysis

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 150 respondents for this study. In the first stage, three agrarian communities namely Tube, Agosasa and Ihunbo were purposively selected from Ipokia Local

Government Area based on the predominance of farming households. In the second stage, 10% of the registered rural farming households (1,542) were randomly selected as documented by the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) in the LGA. In the third stage, 50 farming households each were randomly selected from each of three communities based on their readiness to attend to the questionnaires totaling 150 respondents and this was used as sample size.

This study used primary data and complemented by secondary data sourced from literatures. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, administered through personal interviews with sampled household heads by trained enumerators. The questionnaire elicited information on household socio-economic characteristics, household food consumption and expenditure patterns, household income from farm and non-farm sources, and household assets. A pilot study was conducted among a small group of farming households outside (Oke-Odan) the study area and was subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis of 0.77.

Socio-economic characteristics of households were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviation. Food security status was determined using a Food Security Index, computed by comparing each household's per capita food expenditure to two-thirds of the mean per capita food expenditure of all sampled households; households at or above this benchmark were classified as food secure, and those below as food insecure. Poverty status was estimated using the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) poverty index, based on household per capita expenditure relative to a defined poverty line, to compute poverty incidence, depth, and severity. The relationship between food security status, poverty status and their determinants was examined using a binary Logit regression model. Logit regression model was specified as follows:

$$Li = \ln[Pi / (1 - Pi)] = \beta0 + \beta1X1 + \beta2X2 + \beta3X3 + \beta4X4 + \beta5X5 + \beta6X6 + \beta7X7 + \beta8X8 + \beta9X9 + \beta10X10 + \beta11X11 + \beta12X12 + e$$

where:
Pi = probability that a household is food secure
X1 = Age (years of age)
X2 = Sex (male = 1, female = 0)
X3 = Marital status (If married = 1, Otherwise = 0)
X4 = Farm size (acres = 1, less than an acre = 0)
X5 = Farming experience (years of experience)
X6 = Household size (number of persons)
X7 = Educational level of household head (formal = 1, no formal = 0)
X8 = Farm income (₦) including off-farm income (Total amount of income per household)
X9 = Expenditure (₦) including off-farm expenditure (Total amount spent per household)
X10 = Access to credit (Yes = 1, No = 0)
X11 = Access to extension services (Yes = 1, No = 0)
X12 = Cooperative membership (Yes = 1, No = 0)
β0 = Constant/intercept; β1–β12 = Regression coefficients; e = Error term

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Socio-economic characteristics of rural farming households in the study area

The results in Table 1 shows that 8.0% of the respondents were between 21 and 30 years of age, 25.3% were between 31 and 40 years, 36.0% were between 41 and 50 years, while 30.7% were above 50 years. The modal age class was therefore 41–50 years, and the mean age was 45 years. About 69.3% of the respondents were 50 years or younger, which means that most of the households are headed by people in their economically active years, who are physically able to meet the demands of farm work and are likely to be receptive to new ideas. This result supports the findings of Adelani & Adams (2025) who found out young adult farmers are physically fit to meet the demands of farm work and are more productive. Males constituted 72.0% (108 respondents) of the sample while females made up 28.0% (42 respondents). This result corroborates the findings of Awotide et al (2021) that farming activities are mostly male-dominated, which may reflect gender differences in land ownership and inheritance, access to capital and the labour-intensive nature of farm operations in Nigeria. The majority of the respondents (81.3%) were married, followed by those who were single (8.0%), divorced (6.7%) and widowed (4.0%). This result is in agreement with the findings of Ako (2021) that farming is largely dominated by married people in order to assist themselves on the farm. Twenty per cent of the respondents had no formal education, 32.0% had primary education, 34.7% had secondary education and 13.3% had tertiary education. The mean values for household size was 6 persons, farming experience was 9 years, monthly income was ₦121,984.34, monthly expenditure was ₦55,700.29, which is lower than the mean monthly income. This result agrees with the findings of Central Bank of Nigeria (2022) that farmer's household size, education, farm and off-farm income, and access to credit and extension services were significant determinants of food security. This result is in consonance with the findings of Arouna (2021) who found out that on average, farming households were able to spend less than they earned, with the difference possibly being saved or reinvested in farm operations in Nigeria. Only 45.3% of the respondents had received credit facilities, while the majority (54.7%) had not. Most of the respondents (64.0%) belonged to a cooperative society, while 36.0% did not. About 25.3% of the respondents had frequent contact with extension agents, 56.7% had occasional contact, and 18.0% had never been visited. Thus 82.0% of the households had at least some contact with extension personnel. This result is in line with the findings of Ayanlade & Radney (2020) who found out that the intensity of contact between farmers and extension agents is liable to boost food production and farmers' income.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of the rural farming households (n=150)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Age (years)			45	16
21 - 30	12	8.0		
31- 40	38	25.3		
41- 50	54	36.0		
Above 50	46	30.7		
Sex				
Male	108	72.0		
Female	42	28.0		
Marital status				
Single	12	8.0		
Married	122	81.3		
Divorced	10	6.7		
Widowed	6	4.0		
Education				
No Formal	30	20.0		
Primary	48	32.0		
Secondary	52	34.7		
Tertiary	20	13.3		
Household size (persons)			6	2
1 - 5	62	41.3		
6 - 10	68	45.3		
> 10	20	13.3		
Farm size (acre)				
< 1 acre	23	15.3		
1-2 acres	100	66.7		
3 acres & above	27	18.0		
Farming experience (years)			9	3
1 - 5 yrs	34	22.7		
6 – 10 yrs	45	30.0		
> 10 yrs	71	47.3		
Monthly Income (₦)			121,984.34	41,739
< 50,000	5	3.3		
50,000 - 100,000	28	18.7		
100,001 - 150,000	45	30.0		
150, 001– 200,000	36	24.0		
> 200,001	36	24.0		
Monthly Expenditure (₦)			55,700.29	18,566
< 50,000	24	16.0		
50,000 - 100,000	51	34.0		
100,001 - 150,000	60	40.0		
150,001 – 200,000	10	6.7		
> 200,001	5	3.3		
Credit facilities received				
Yes	68	45.3		
No	82	54.7		
Membership of Cooperative				
Yes	96	64.0		
No	54	36.0		
Contact with Extension Agents				
Frequently	38	25.3		
Occasionally	85	56.7		
Never	27	18.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2: Food security status of the rural farming households in the study area

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Food secure (FSI ≥ 1)	62	41.3
Food insecure (FSI < 1)	88	58.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3: Poverty Status of Respondents Based on FGT Indices

Status	Value	Percentage
Poverty incidence (headcount ratio, P0)	0.644 (64.4%)	64.4
Poverty depth (poverty gap, P1)	0.284	28.4
Poverty severity (squared poverty gap, P2)	0.72	7.2

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Food Security Status and Poverty Status

Food Security Status	Poor	Not Poor	Mean CapExp.	2/3 Mean CapExp (Poverty line per household)
Food Insecure	63 (42.0)	25 (16.7)	55,700.29	37,133.53
Food secure	50 (33.3)	12 (8.0)		
Total	116 (75.3)	34 (24.7)		

Source: Field Survey, 2026 % in parenthesis

3.2 Food security status of rural farming households in the study area

Results in Table 2 show that 62 households (41.3%) were food secure, while 88 households (58.7%) were food insecure. Thus, nearly six out of every ten households could not attain the food security threshold, and there were about 1.4 food-insecure households for every food-secure household. This result corroborates the findings of Zawya (2026) that food insecurity is widespread among the households that engaged in producing food. Olasehinde et al (2022) reported that the issue of food insecurity within arable farming households calls for targeted interventions, such as improved access to farm inputs and credit, promotion of household-level food storage and processing, and support for income diversification, to move the food-insecure households across the food security threshold.

3.3 The incidence, depth, and severity of poverty among rural farming households in the study area

Results in Table 3 shows that the headcount ratio (P0) of 0.644 (64.4%) of the households were below the poverty line, that is, about two out of every three households. The poverty gap (P1) of 0.284 indicates that, on average, the expenditure of households falls 28.4% short of the poverty line when the shortfall is averaged over all households (with non-poor households contributing zero). Put differently, dividing P1 by P0 (0.284 / 0.644) shows that the average poor household lives about 44.1% below the poverty line. The squared poverty gap (P2) of 0.72 (7.2%) measures the severity of poverty, since it gives greater weight to households that are furthest below the poverty line. Its value is much lower than that of the poverty gap, with P2 being about a quarter of P1. This result supports the findings of Food Security Cluster (2026) that poverty is widespread and reasonably deep, extreme deprivation is concentrated in a smaller group of households in Nigeria. Farming Early Warning Systems Network (2026) reported that poverty is more pervasive than it is severe and that a substantial proportion of rural farming households in Nigeria fell below the minimum wage. National Bureau of Statics (2025) reported that poverty is widespread among the rural farming households and affects a larger share of them than the food insecurity rate.

3.4 Food security and poverty status of the households in the study area

Results in Table 4 shows that 42.0% of the total households were both poor and food insecure, while 16.7% were food insecure but not poor. Among the food-secure households, 33.3% were poor and 8.0% were not poor. This result is in consensus with the findings of United Nations Development Programme (2022) that the concentration of poor households in the food-insecure category across southwestern states indicates that poverty and food insecurity tend to coexist in Nigeria. World Bank (2025) reported that households whose per capita expenditure falls below the minimum wage have limited purchasing power to obtain adequate and nutritious food, so that low expenditure capacity translates directly into poor access to food.

3.5 Constraints to Food Security and Poverty Status among Rural Farming Households

Results in Table 5 clearly shows the all six constraints had mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark, which shows that each of them is a serious barrier to food security and poverty reduction in the study area. Low

Table 5: Constraints to food security and poverty status among rural farming households

Barriers	Mean	Rank
Low farm income/output	3.68	1st
Limited access to credit	3.55	2nd
High cost of farm inputs	3.39	3rd
Limited off-farm income opportunities	3.10	4th
Poor access to markets/infrastructure	2.82	5th
Large household size	2.61	6th

Source: Field Survey, 2026 Mean = 2.5 cut-off based on 4-point Likert scale (SA, A, D, SD)

Table 6: Binary Logit Regression Result of Food Security and Poverty Status Determinants

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z-value	Sig.
Constant	-1.842	0.621	-2.966	0.003***
Age	0.061	0.045	1.36	0.013**
Sex	0.014	0.011	1.27	0.016**
Marital status	0.645	1.129	0.57	0.022**
Farm size	0.030	0.028	1.07	0.010**
Farm experience	0.036	0.200	1.80	0.020**
Household size	-0.312	0.098	-3.184	0.001***
Education of household head	0.145	0.052	2.788	0.005***
Farm income	0.086	0.031	2.774	0.006***
Expenditure	0.061	0.028	2.179	0.029**
Access to credit	0.734	0.284	2.585	0.010**
Contact with extension agents	0.412	0.219	1.881	0.060*
Log-likelihood	-68.34			
No of observation	150.00			
LR chi²(6)	41.26			
Pseudo R^2	0.312			

Source: Field Survey, 2026 Note: ($p < 0.01$) Significance: ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10

farm income/output (3.68, 1st), limited access to credit (3.55, 2nd) and high cost of farm inputs (3.39, 3rd) were the major constraints facing food security and poverty status among rural farming households in the study area. These results aligns with the findings of World Food Programme (2026) that poor access to credit and land matters bring about low output and income from farming and this directly reduces farming households' purchasing power and their ability to meet food needs and stay above the poverty line.

3.6 Food security, poverty status and their determinants among sampled households in the study area

Result in Table 6 reveals that the likelihood ratio statistic, LR $\chi^2(6) = 41.26$, exceeds the critical value at the 1% level of significance (16.81 for six degrees of freedom). This means that the explanatory variables jointly have a significant influence on household food security status. The Pseudo R^2 of 0.312 indicates that the model has a reasonably good explanatory power; it should not be read as the proportion of variance explained, as in linear regression, and pseudo R^2 values of 0.2–0.4 are conventionally regarded as a satisfactory fit for logit models. The log-likelihood is −68.34. The coefficients of age (0.061), sex (0.014), marital status (0.645), farm size (0.030) and farming experience (0.036) are positive and significant at the 5% level. This indicates that an increase in these determinant factors is capable of achieving food security and reduced poverty status in the study. The coefficient of household size is negative (−0.312) and significant at the 1% level. Holding other factors constant, each additional household member reduces the odds of the household being food secure by about 26.8% (odds ratio = 0.732). Larger households have more mouths to feed, a higher total food requirement and a lower per capita expenditure, so that food security is harder to attain. This result agrees with the findings of Kalagbor & Harry (2021) who found out that better-educated farming household heads are better able to access and use information, adopt improved farm technologies, manage household resources and obtain higher-paying opportunities, all of which support access to adequate food. Farm income has a positive coefficient (0.086) and is significant at the 1% level. Increase in farm income improves the household food security and escapes from poverty. This result is line with the findings of Adelani & Adams (2025) who found out that higher farm income increases the household's purchasing power for food and its ability to meet other basic needs, which is consistent with the ranking of low farm income as the most serious constraint. The coefficient of expenditure is positive (0.061) and significant at the 5% level. A unit increase in expenditure increases the odds of food security by about 6.3% (odds ratio = 1.063). This result supports the findings of Ako (2021) found out that households with a greater capacity to spend can afford more and better food, and expenditure serves as an indicator of a household's welfare and command over resources.

Access to credit has a positive coefficient (0.734) and is significant at the 5% level. It has the largest

coefficient among the variables, with an odds ratio of 2.083, which implies that households with access to credit have about twice the odds of being food secure compared with those without. Contacts with extension agents has a positive coefficient (0.412) and is significant at 10% level which means that the more the contacts with extension agents, the more the likelihood of being food secure by the households in the study area.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that food security is closely linked to the poverty status of rural farming households in Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State, such that improving household food security has the potential to serve as an effective pathway to alleviating poverty among these households. However, achieving this requires deliberate interventions targeted at the key determinants of food security such as age, sex, marital status, farm size, farming experience and education identified in this study area encouraged achieving food security and escaping poverty, particularly household income, access to credit, and access to extension services increased the farmers' income and improved their household food security in the study area.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government and relevant agencies should implement targeted income-generating interventions to boost household income among rural farming households in Ipokia Local Government Area.
2. Financial institutions and microfinance schemes should design affordable, accessible credit facilities specifically targeted at rural farming households to enable investment in productive activities.
3. Government and extension agencies should strengthen agricultural extension service delivery to improve farm productivity and household income among farming households in the study area.
4. Family planning and reproductive health education should be promoted to help households manage household size in relation to available resources.
5. Education and adult literacy programmes should be expanded, given the significant role of household head education in food security status.
6. Food security and poverty alleviation interventions should be designed and implemented jointly, given the demonstrated relationship between the two, rather than as separate, unrelated policy areas.

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