



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECT OF FARMING INSECURITIES ON FARMING MOTIVATION AMONG FARMERS IN UZO-UWANI, ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

Food production in Nigeria and other African countries has been hampered by persistent insecurities that cut across all aspects of society. The increasing rate of varying forms of attack in the farmlands has generated considerable concern about farmers' motivation to partake in farming. The present paper examined the variation in farmers' motivation based on Nigeria's growing farming insecurities. The study was conducted in the farming communities of Uzo-uwani in Enugu State, Nigeria. Two hundred and ninety-eight farmers randomly pooled from some volatile communities in the study location participated in the study. The respondents completed self-report measures of farming motivation. The regression analysis conducted on the data revealed a positive interaction between farming insecurities and farming motivation. Thus, the study concluded that farming insecurity is a significant predictor of farming motivation and recommended integrating psychologists and counselors in the fight against farming violence.

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Introduction:-

It is estimated that Nigeria has an arable land expanse of about 34 million hectares dedicated to farming (Simona, 2021). A massive part of its workforce is farmers (Enyiaz & Nwangwu, 2019), mainly for subsistence and commercial agriculture. Thus, making the nation primarily an agrarian society (Tersoo, 2012). Agriculture accounts for sufficient food availability for the country's increasing population, create employment opportunities and fosters foreign exchange earnings (Abubakar et al., 2018). Though Nigeria is mainly dependent on the oil sector for its budgetary revenues (Oluduro & Durojaye, 2013; Osah & Goodnews, 2016; Oseni, 2013), agriculture contributes substantially to the gross domestic product (GDP) (Mgbenka et al., 2015). The massive agricultural resource base in the country provides a boundless potential for the growth of its economy (Ogwumike & Akinnibosun, 2013). Thus, the country is endowed with food and agricultural resources (Karya & Otsanjugu, 2019). More so, the plentiful cash crops such as citrus, cocoa, groundnuts, cotton, palm oil, rubber, and palm kernel have been Nigeria's major export crops for many decades (Ajayi et al., 2010; Ayorinde et al., 2015). Accordingly, there is a wide intimation that Nigeria is self-contained in food production and has attained a position of exporter of numerous cash crops (Nwozor et al., 2019).

Consequently, there is a growing concern about the declining food production and agricultural activities (Anigbogu et al., 2015; Austin et al., 2011; Eze & Chinedu-Eze, 2016; Njoku, 2000; Okongor et al., 2021; Okoro et al., 2016; Onogwu et al., 2017). The phenomenon is implicated in increasing food insecurity and food dependency with massive

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food importation. While significant efforts are geared towards sustainable agricultural production (Sabo et al., 2017), there are indications that the growing security crisis bedeviling the country poses severe challenge to agricultural productivity. Indeed, it negatively impacts farmers' productivity and ability to participate in farming. Over the years, farming activities and food production have primarily depended on natural environmental resources such as rainfall, temperature, and relative humidity (Idumah et al., 2016). However, observing the current trend of insecurities relative to farming suggests that farm activities depend on security.

Farming insecurity describes the increasing scope and persistence of violent attacks on farmers and farming societies. The constant suspected herder's attacks, banditry, kidnapping, and other attacks in the farmlands witnessed across the nation reflect farming insecurity in the modern-day farming ecosystem. This situation entails a critical problem to the farming population and generally affects the country's food production. Several farmers within the rural settlements have doubts about visiting their farmlands due mainly to the concern of kidnapping or unwarranted attacks by herders (Abdulkareem, 2021). The increasing scope of farmer-herders clashes in various parts of Nigeria has led to numerous ruins of lives and farm products (Somtochukwu et al., 2018). Mostly, farming communities are compelled to abandon their farmlands and agricultural products in response to aggression from attackers (Anthony et al., 2020).

Researchers have underscored the prevalence and pattern of the constant violence on farmers across many farming zones in Nigeria (e.g., Enor et al., 2019; George et al., 2021; Haman & Haruna, 2018; Li, 2019; Kolawole et al., 2018; Morjisola, 2019; Oghuvbu & Oghubu, 2020; Olu-Adeyemi, 2017). Although farming is applauded due to its importance, it seems less attractive recently due to the fear occasioned by continued insecurities in the farmland. Nevertheless, farming motivation denotes the determination, attitudes, and enthusiasm that propels individuals to participate in farming activities. Consequently, the motivation to engage in farming activities seems to be influenced by the current insecurities. Perhaps, many farmers could be demotivated based on anxiety and other associated psychological features. The experience of socioeconomic damage and its pattern enforce hardship on the farming societies. The present-day financial challenges in the country have instigated farmers in the abandoned farmlands to scuffle for ends meet. Regrettably, efforts geared towards ameliorating the economic burden through agriculture appear ineffective due to the rising insecurities in farmland (Omodero, 2021).

Motivation reflects a psychological state that propels individuals to engage in certain behavioral activities to achieve the desired goal. It entails the processes that instigate and sustain goal-directed actions (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Motivation is an essential component of human behavior influenced by numerous personal, social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors. The construct of farming motivation is operationalized as the willingness and passion for consistently engaging in farming. Perhaps, various variables significantly affect the farmer's motivation. The continuous violent attacks on farmers have undoubtedly affected the farmer's psychological wellbeing and have triggered levels of anxiousness that can potentially decrease farming motivation. Consistent with this assertion, previous research indicates a higher anxiety level among farmers than in other occupations (Rudolphi et al., 2020; Sanne et al., 2004; Torske et al., 2016). While most farmers, especially in remote communities, encounter different farming uncertainties, they have a series of psychological challenges and stressors, predominately leading to low motivation.

In this period of rising insecurities, the motivation to work on the farm may be dampened by severe anxiety, affecting motivation, performance, productivity, and physical and mental wellbeing. Researchers have examined various factors influencing farming intention in different agricultural domains (Caffaro et al., 2020; Haden et al., 2012; Kahramanoglu et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021; Raza et al., 2019; Tama et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2019). For example, farmer's education (Cao et al., 2020), perceived risk (Han & Li, 2020), attitudes, and social norms (Rezaei et al., 2018) have been found to determine farmer's intention. However, the role of perceived insecurities in the farm and its effect on farming motivation is scarce in the literature, thus justifying the present study.

Uzo-uwani in Enugu State is naturally gifted with vast agricultural lands with all-embracing rainfed flood areas and forest products such as timber and oil palm. Agricultural activity in the communities is predominantly subsistence, except the flood plain agriculture, which is based on the comparatively large-scale, yam, and fish farming. The community has witnessed a massive migration of farmers from other communities in the southeast interested in exploiting the vast agricultural potentialities of the area, which are beyond the capability of the local people. Moreover, several agricultural enterprises have been established to tap the fertility of the Uzo-uwani soils. Nevertheless, there has been a growing threat of attacks and sustained clashes between the herders and the farmers, including the 2016 invasion of the Nimbo community (Jasper & Iwuamadi, 2018), ongoing kidnappings, and other insecurities bedeviling

the farming communities. There has been concern that the psychological state of the farmers could be in jeopardy, reflecting a probable decline of farming motivation among the farmers. Although the trend is prevalent across the country, this study is focused on Uzo-uwani because of the observed decrease in farmers' motivation to continue their farming.

Hypothesis:

Farming insecurity will significantly predict farming motivation among farmers in Uzo-uwani, Enugu state of Nigeria

Method:-

The present study was conducted in the Uzo-uwani local government of Enugu State, Nigeria. Uzo-uwani is widely considered a volatile community in terms of the growing dispute between the farmers and the herders, including the activities of other actors constituting insecurities in the area. Male and female farmers were recruited as the study participants using a simple random sampling method. Three hundred and twenty-three farmers were approached between August and November 2021 and were asked to participate in the study. They were briefed on the study's objectives and were equally informed that participation in the survey was voluntary, and they could withdraw any time they wanted. In particular, 318 participants consented and completed a consent form. Hence, the study questionnaire was given to them to fill at the spot. Three hundred and eighteen questionnaires were distributed. However, only the adequately filled ones (298) were used for the study. The remaining 20 questionnaires were discarded due to wrong filling or unreturned.

Instrument

Farmers' motivation was measured with a scale designed to assess respondents' motivation and eagerness to engage in farming at a time of security uncertainties. The instrument consists of 17 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always). A higher score on this scale indicates a high motivation. The instrument was validated following a pilot study, and 0.77 Cronbach's alpha was obtained.

Result:-

It is expected that farming insecurity would predict farming motivation. The analysis conducted on the data using a simple linear regression model demonstrated a statistically significant effect of farming insecurity on the farmers' motivation $F(1,296), 24.34 P < .05$ with adjusted R^2 of 218.

Table 1:- The table shows the linear regression analysis of the effect of farming insecurity on farming motivation.

	B	SEB	β	t	R^2	Sig
Constant	1.81	.043		37.72.	218	.000
Farming motivation	-.67	.066	-.67	-12.16		.000

Note: B = Unstandardized regression coefficient; SEB = Standardized error of the coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient; R^2 = Coefficient of determination. * $P < .000$.

Discussion:-

The present study examined farming motivation based on farming insecurities in a sample of farmers recruited from Uzo-uwani in Enugu state, Nigeria. A single hypothesis was tested using data from the respondents. It was found that farming insecurity statistically predicted farmers' motivation. In particular, the result revealed that farming insecurity accounted for 21.8% of the variation in farmers' motivation. Due to the recent rise in insecurities, many farmers are compelled to exit their farmlands and suspend farming activities. The immense burden of farmers' inactivity in the long or short-term is typically confronted with a psychological state of reduced motivation. Thus, the absence of agricultural activities and lack of inspiration seems to emerge as a common characteristic in today's heightened farming insecurities. This work presents evidence that the trend of farming insecurity triggers a certain level of nervousness that interferes with the motivation of the farmers. Accordingly, in recent research, Greig et al. (2020) reported that stress and anxiety are significant variables that influence farmers. Thus, this finding presupposes that many farmers within the volatile farming areas attempt to avoid the dangers associated with farm work, thereby experiencing series of psychological challenges and stressors, predominately involving increased anxiety relative to insecurity. In particular, such experiences affect farmers' motivation to partake in farm activities.

Conclusion:-

The present research examined the farmers' motivation based on the farming insecurities. Two hundred and ninety-eight farmers in the volatile farming communities of Uzo-uwani were recruited for the study. A linear regression analysis performed on the data supports the hypothesis that farming insecurities are positive predictors of farmers' motivation. Thus, the research finding provides insight into the psychological state of the farmers during the era of growing insecurities in Nigeria. Consequently, the study concludes that the tension occasioned by the heightened rate of attacks on the farm negatively impacts the farmers' psychological wellbeing. In other words, the finding demonstrated a positive interaction between farming insecurity and farming motivation.

However, the study encountered certain limitations that are necessary to report. For example, the mechanism through which insecurities correlate farming motivation remains unclear and requires further research. Also, the sample size and the self-reporting of farming motivation pose potential limitations to the generalization of the result. Future research should use more comprehensive samples and employ multiple means of data collection. Nonetheless, the present finding contributes to the farming literature by revealing farming insecurity as a potential contributor to farmers' low motivations, which is implicated in the ongoing food insecurities in Nigeria. Also, the study broadens our knowledge of the psychological disposition of many farmers in an era of persistent attacks, given the importance of farmers to food production and economic growth. Psychologists and counselors should be integrated in the effort to combat insecurities in the volatile farming communities.

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