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Gender and effects of seafood and fruit enterprise performance on household access to food in Nigeria

Abstract

This study examines gender dynamics within seafood and fruit SMEs and their influence on household food security and dietary diversity. To achieve the study objectives, we employed a mixed-methods research design utilizing the Havard framework in collecting the data. We conducted focus group discussions and analyzed quantitative data from a field survey of 720 gender disaggregated seafood and fruit enterprise owners. The data for this study is sourced from the structured survey questionnaire and also incorporated Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) standard questionnaires on Household Dietary Diversity and Food Insecurity Experience for the field surveys. Information in the questionnaire was collected using the KoBoCollect Toolbox application. This mobile-based questionnaire was pre-tested with 20 men and women seafood and fruit enterprise owners at the Ogige market in Nsukka, Enugu State. Information collected in the survey questionnaire was within the Havard analysis framework and includes a gender-disaggregated demographic information of the respondents, employment and business participation, challenges and business influences, marketing network, business information, household food consumption patterns, household access to food, gender dynamics of food consumption, the economic impact of seafood and fruits enterprises, nutritional benefits and health outcomes, and perceived benefits and challenges.

The findings reflect a gendered economic landscape where disparities in education, income, and resource access influence enterprise performance and household nutrition outcomes. This age distribution suggests potential for economic growth and resilience but may also signal vulnerability if younger individuals lack adequate resources and support to scale their enterprises. The analysis of gender roles within seafood and fruit SMEs in Nigeria highlights significant disparities in family commitments, decision-making, and productive roles between men and women, reflecting broader gendered dynamics common in agricultural enterprises. The analysis of gender disparities in access to resources, control over resources, and decision-making power within Nigerian seafood and fruit SMEs highlights significant inequalities, underscoring challenges for women in achieving equitable participation and performance in these sectors. Overall, these results underscore the pervasive gender inequalities within the seafood and fruit SME sector in Nigeria, where women shoulder more family-oriented responsibilities and are underrepresented in leadership yet play critical roles in household food security. Overall, these results underscore the pervasive gender inequalities within the seafood and fruit SME sector in Nigeria, where women shoulder more family-oriented responsibilities and are underrepresented in leadership yet play critical roles in household food security.

Keywords: Gender dynamics, gender disparities, labor productivity, small and medium-scale food enterprises performance.

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