

Prevalence and Determinants of Moderate Food Insecurity Status of Youths (18 To 30 Years) and the Coping Mechanisms Embraced in Moroto District, Karamoja Region of Uganda

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Abstract

Background: Youth face multiple challenges in achieving food security, such as limited access to land, credit, markets, education, skills, and employment opportunities. Though Karamoja region has the highest rates of food insecurity in Uganda, there is limited evidence on the prevalence and determinants of Moderate food insecurity status among youth in that region, especially in Moroto district. This study determined the prevalence and assessed determinants of moderate food insecurity among youths (18 to 30 years) in Moroto district, Karamoja region of Uganda.

Methods: The study utilized a cross-sectional design utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Multistage sampling was employed recruiting 744 youths aged 18 to 30 years from two of the 6 sub counties in Moroto district. Data was collected using a researcher-administered questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide via face-to-face interviews. Youths who participated in the qualitative interviews were selected purposively. Quantitative data was analyzed using STATA version 17 software. Determinants were assessed through multiple logistic regression analysis at 95% confidence level. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the copying strategies for youths and themes and codes were reported. The study obtained ethical approval from Lira University Research and Ethics Committee.

Results: The level of moderate food insecurity was 13.98% (104) with 0% food secure and 86.02% (640) severely food insecure youths. Majority of the respondents 472(63.4%) were female, and 606(81.4%) in a marital relationship. Most of the participants 702(94.4%) were Catholic, 471(63.3%) with no formal education. The factors associated with moderate food insecurity were no formal education (AOR: 0.187, 95% CI: 0.049 – 0.722, $p=0.015$), presence of agriculture extension services (AOR: 0.341, 95% CI: 0.201 – 0.576, $p<0.001$) having a backyard garden (AOR: 0.480, 95% CI: 0.247 – 0.934, $p=0.031$), common food taboos (AOR: 0.480, 95% CI: 0.279 – 0.825, $p=0.008$) and borrowing food (AOR: 3.858, 95% CI: 2.250 – 6.615, $p<0.001$).

Additionally, three main themes including food production and management, resource management, and alternative livelihoods were identified.

Conclusion: This study revealed that all youths in the region are food insecure, with a majority facing severe food insecurity and 13.98% moderately food insecure. There is a critical need for targeted interventions to address this issue and support the younger population's nutritional needs.

Keywords: Prevalence, Determinants, Moderate Food Insecurity Status, Youths (18 To 30 Years), The Coping Mechanisms, Moroto District, Karamoja Region, Uganda.