

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This thesis has been built on analyzing whether agricultural aid and food aid impacted selected food security indicators in 16 West African countries between 2009-2018. The research methodology was based on the Two-Stages Least Square (2SLS) instrumental variable approach. From the regressions, the result outcomes may not reflect the complete research expatriation but certainly explain the reality in West African countries, in which the result indicated a mixed finding. However, despite these mixed findings, a small degree of impact was found on the notion that donor aid, in general, would improve food security in West Africa. Although the degree of impact varies across the four estimated food security indicators, the regression indicated that there are factors that determine or contribute to the result's outcome.

The result in this study contributed to the significant concern about government effectiveness and control of corruption by suggesting that the impact of donor aid on food security is conditional on recipient countries' institutional qualities. The implications of the result suggest that countries with a low score on the government effectiveness index and a high score on corruption are more likely to be food insecure than countries with the opposite scores. These conclusions are in line with several studies on development assistance effectiveness in developing countries (Kaya & Kaya, 2019 and Petrikova, 2016). The result has shown that even though the average value of total aid disbursement to the agriculture sector was low in some countries, the result supported some of the hypotheses earlier developed.

The result stating that agricultural aid impacts the average value of food production does not support **H1**; it shows that agricultural aid negatively influences the average value of food availability. This result is inconsistent with previous evidence and theory discussed on the effect of agricultural aid and domestic food production. However, this may be explained by external factors highlighted in the result above. Since the government is the primary channel for receiving aid, the institutional capacity to facilitate effective agricultural policy management and aid-

related projects and programs to achieve its intended purpose could further explain the result. Furthermore, the variable of government effectiveness shows that the impact of aid is conditional on the recipient country's sound governance systems, which can be assessed by government institutional quality, corruption, and access to information.

The second regression, though not statistically significant, shows that an increase in agricultural aid in West Africa will decrease food accessibility. While the result in column three states that agricultural aid influences utilization is positively and statistically significant, suggesting that an increase in agriculture aid significantly improves access to clean drinking water facilities. This is not surprising, given the negative consequences of political instability and civil conflict on domestic food stability. The statistical result indicated a negatively and statistically significant coefficient, suggesting that agricultural aid negatively influences food stability in the study sample. This result did not support the fourth hypothesis. In line with the first objective and research question, the findings have shown that, to some extent, agricultural aid impacts food accessibility and utilization in West Africa.

Regarding food aid, in columns **1** and **2**, the result stating that food aid impacts food availability and accessibility were invalid, indicating that food aid cannot influence both dimensions. Supported by previous studies, one primary explanation for this result suggested that food aid provided in West Africa is a short-term policy instrument to support emergencies. On the other hand, **H2** was supported, suggesting that an increase in financial food aid reduces the prevalence of undernourishment. Similarly, finding the evidence in **H3** also positively impacted food utilization by improving access to essential drinking water and addressing short-term food stability in the sub-region. In essence, therefore, the research's second objective and question related to food aid have indicated that food aid has impacts food accessibility, utilization, and stability in West Africa.

Generally, the study found that the demand for official development assistance to improve food insecurity is very high, while the supply is very low within West African countries. However, the findings have suggested that donor aid does not have a sustainable long-run effect on food security because of the weak

government institution, high levels of corruption in some countries, and the inconsistency of aid flows. Moreover, the negative effect of aid on food availability shows that it is inconsistent with improving domestic food production. As a result, a considerable gap will always exist between domestic food production and food insecurity in the sub-region.

5.2 Policy Recommendation

In line with the findings, the government and donor aid providers require strong futuristic policies focusing on agricultural improvement and infrastructure development extension, especially in the rural areas where agricultural activities are the primary source of income.

The statistical result has shown that agriculture value-added has a significant short and long-run multiplier effect on food security indicators. To narrow this low domestic food production gap in food availability, the study suggests that governments across the region should re-prioritize agriculture value-added by increasing investment in technological innovation and modernization of agricultural systems.

Furthermore, government and development providers should pay attention and increase investment in climate mitigations and land irrigation to improve domestic food production in West Africa.

5.3 Direction for future research

The generalizability of these results is subject to certain limitations. First, food availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability dimension have many different indicators that can be used for analyses. In this study, one indicator was selected from each dimension for the analyzes. Second, the data collected for the study is only limited to ten years of observation, implying a short panel data. Therefore, the result precludes the final conclusion regarding the findings, which only suggest based on the outcome of the regression statistics.

Future research should build upon these limitations by utilizing data from multiple indicators of each dimension and be more objective in the years of observation.

Finally and most importantly, the study used panel data of 16 West African countries with different characteristics such as (geographical or demographic and socio-economic) which tends to affect production and food insecurity differently. Further, the study used the Two-Stage Least-Square, a fixed-effect model, to address two significant problems in the study sample. Firstly, the model has addressed and discussed the reverse causality between donor aid and food security variables.

Secondly, the endogeneity problems where the study assumed that donor aid is not exogenous to food insecurity. Implying that it's dependent on other determinant factors or variables such as (climate change, irrigations, poverty and others) that are very important but were not observed or have been omitted in the model due to lack of data. However, the author believes that those omitted variables have explanatory power in predicting the outcome variables. Therefore, considering the omitted variable bias, which has not been fully addressed in this study, the link between donor aid and food insecurity in individual countries could be analysed further when the data is fully available to improve those variables.

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