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Original Research Article

# Practical Effects of Recession among Urban Women Farmers in Edo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The study focused on the effect of recession on women participation in urban farming in Benin metropolis of Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to; identify the socio economic characteristic of urban women farmers in the study area before and during recession; examine the practical effects of recession among urban women farmers during recession; identify the urban agricultural enterprises of urban women farmers in the study area. Simple random procedure was used to select 100 women for the study and data was collected using structured questionnaire. The results revealed that respondents had mean age of 49 years, had lived in the urban area for about 8 years and engaged more in crop production enterprise; with cassava, yam and maize as major crops. The study also revealed that household size ( $t = -4.03, P \leq 0.01$ ) and length of stay in cities ( $t = -5.02, P \leq 0.01$ ) had negative significance on the practical effects of recession. It was recommended that the women should be encouraged to form cooperatives so as to easily assess production resources. They should also explore more of animal husbandry especially snailery, piggery and fish farming.

**Keywords:** urban women, farmers, animal husbandry, recession

## INTRODUCTION

Recession is a negative economic growth for two consecutive quarters. It is also a business cycle contraction which result in general slowdown in economic activity. Macroeconomic indicators such as GDP (gross domestic product), investment spending capacity utilization, household income, business profit and inflation fall while bankruptcies and unemployment rate rise during recession. Recession generally occurs when there is a wide spread drop in spending (an advance demand shock). This may be triggered by various events, such as financial crisis and external trade shock, an adverse supply shock or busting of an economic bubble. Governments usually respond to recession by adopting expansionary macroeconomics policies such as increasing money supply, increasing government spending, decreasing taxation.

Nigeria economy has experienced all the phases of a typical business cycle (decline, depression or recession, recovery and boom). However, none of the boom (agriculture, oil and financial) resulted in any significant restructuring and transformation of the economy (Ufuomadu, 2011).

According to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) report of 2016, Nigeria's non-oil sector was driven by the agriculture, information and communication, water supply, art and science, education and services sectors. But overall, the non-oil sector of the economy declined by 0.38% in the second quarter of 2016. Also, the Nigerian economy plunged into recession, as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) disclosed that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by 2.06% in the second quarter of 2016 (Eboh, 2016). Historically, the country has experienced recession according to the World Bank data in 1987, 1991, 1995 and recently in 2016 (Tijani, 2017).

Nearly, one billion people in the world are now hungry, and an additional hundred and fifteen million people are suffering from hunger especially in developing countries Nigeria inclusive as a result of the combined impact of rising food prices and global economic recession, around 98 percent of the world's under nourished people live in developing countries (United Nations, 2012).

### Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the practical effects of recession among urban women farmers in Edo State. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the demographic characteristic of urban women farmers in the study area during recession;
2. examine the practical effects of recession among urban women farmers during recession;
3. identify the urban agricultural enterprises of urban women farmers in the study area;

### Hypothesis of the Study

The following hypothesis was tested in the study;

- i. There is no significant difference between the demographic characteristics of urban women farmers and practical effect of recession.

## METHODOLOGY

### Area and scope of study

The study was carried out in Edo State. The State was created 27<sup>th</sup> August 1991, located in latitude 6°30'N 6°00'E and longitude 6.50°N 6.00°E. Benin is the capital of Edo State with a total area of 17,802km<sup>2</sup> (6,873 sq mi) and estimated population of 3,479,502 according to 2006 population census figure. Edo State is bounded in the North and East by Kogi State, in the South by Delta State and in the West by Ondo State. Edo State consists of eighteen (18) Local Government Areas.

The State is endowed with abundant natural resources. The predominant occupation of people in Edo State is Agriculture. The study was carried out in Benin metropolis of Edo State. And it comprises of seven local government areas which include Ovia North East, Ovia South West, Uhumwonde, Egor, Ikpoba-okha, Oredo and Orhionmwon.

### Sampling procedure and Sample size

A three stage sampling technique was employed in selecting women in the study area.

**Stage one:** two local government areas were purposively selected which are Ikpoba-Okha and Oredo because of the prevalence of women in urban farming in the area.

**Stage two:** two communities were selected from each of the two selected local government areas, giving a total of 4 communities.

**Stage three:** 25 urban women farmers was randomly selected from the various selected communities giving a total of 100 respondents that was used for the study.

### Data collection

Primary and secondary data was employed in this study. Primary data was collected with the aid of a

structured questionnaire and interview schedule. Secondary data was collected from agricultural journals, internet, conference/workshop/seminar papers, text and other periodicals.

### Data analysis

Data was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency count, percentage, variance, standard deviation and bar charts to measure the socio economic characteristics of women that engaged in urban farming as well as practical effect of recession. Hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

### Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

#### Age

Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, the results showed that higher proportion (29.0%) of the respondents were between the age of 40-49years, followed by (26.0%) of the respondents who were in the range of 60years and above with a mean age of 49years. This result indicates that respondents in the study area were in the average or middle age of production and being in the middle age, the result suggests that the respondents are highly productive in agricultural production in the study area. This finding is in agreement with that of Idowu *et al.*, 2012 who reported that the farming population is dominated by middle age men and women in urban areas, according to them, this age category represents the active labour force that is exploring urban agriculture as a livelihood option. This finding is also in agreement with Edeoghon and Ajayi (2009), that urban women farmers are more active in farming in their youthful age. This disagrees with the findings of Edeoghon, Ajayi and Ugboya (2008) which shows that majority (44.4%) of the respondents were above the age of 50, which indicates that a good number of older respondents were involved in farming.

#### Marital Status

Result in Table 1 shows that majority (83.0%) of the respondents were married. This result is expected considering the mean age (49years) of the respondents in the study area and being married, respondents are more responsible and have family to cater for which may translate into their active participation in agricultural production in the study area. This finding agrees with that of Ekong (2003) which implies that the society encourages matured people to get married as a result of their tradition in this part of the world. This findings is also similar to that of Aina, Oladapo, Adebosin and Ajijola (2012) on their report on urban livelihood: urban implication in food security, a case study in Ibadan metropolis where it was shown that 84% of urban farmers were married. This finding is also in agreement with Edeoghon, Ajayi and

Ugboya (2008) that agriculture is very much practiced by married people to make ends meet and cater for their children.

#### Household size

The result in Table 1 also shows the household size of the respondents, with higher proportion (64.0%) of the respondents had a household size of 5-9 persons, followed by (21.0%), of respondents had household size of less than 5 persons with a mean household size of 7 persons. This result may indicate the high population growth rate in the study area and also implying that respondents had large family size. This finding agrees with Edeoghon (2017) in her study on “economic empowerment of urban farmers in Benin metropolis”, that the respondents in the study area have an average household size of 9 which indicates a large household size and suggesting that they have more people to cater for. This also aligns with the findings of Edeoghon and Izekor (2017) that majority (46.7%) of the respondents have an average household size of 7, suggesting that they have more people to cater for, with a good source of family which is very significant to urban agriculture in terms of labour provision. The result however contradicts that of Aina et al., (2012) who observed that majority (78.57%) of the urban farmers in Ibadan metropolis had small family size of 1 to 3 persons.

#### Length of stay in the city (years)

The result shows the length of stay in urban city with higher proportion (36.0%) of the respondents have been in the urban city between 10-19 years, followed by 26.0% of the respondents in the study have stayed in the urban city for less than 10years with a mean of 22 years stay in urban city. This result may suggest that respondents in the study area may have a good agricultural background having migrated from the rural area to urban area, may have good farming experience that may help them increase agricultural output in the urban area. This is in consonance with Edeoghon and Ori-Arebutun (2011), who found out that majority of urban women farmers have stayed or lived in the city for more than ten years.

#### Numbers of years in urban agriculture

The Table 1 also shows the number of years in urban agriculture by the respondents with a higher proportion (39.0%) of the respondents had been in urban agriculture for less than 10years, followed by (22.0%) of the respondents who also had been in urban agriculture for 10-19years with a mean of 20 years. This result may suggest that having been in urban agriculture for over 20years, respondents may have the experience in agriculture that may be useful to them to thrive in harsh economic situations (recession). Also, they seem to have come to the city to continue farming for survival since the mean stay in the city is 22 years. This agrees with Edeoghon (2017) that respondents with more years of experience in urban agriculture are more likely to be productive because of the skills and knowledge acquired over the years.

#### Membership of social group and cooperatives

Table 1 also shows membership of social group of the respondents, the Table showed that Majority (84.0%) of the respondents do not belong to any social group and with only (6.0%) of the respondents belonging to Urban women farmer organization in the study area. This non-participation in groups (84.0%) and cooperatives (90%) is not encouraging as women may not be able to access vital information and other agricultural benefits such as formal agricultural credits or farm inputs. This result corroborated with the findings of Edeoghon and Ajayi (2009) in their study on “assessment of Agricultural enterprise owned by women in Ikpoba-okha Local Government Area, Edo State”, that women are frequently hampered from membership in social groups and cooperatives because membership was usually restricted to recognized land owners or heads of households. Edeoghon and Anozie (2017) researched on “the effect of vegetable profitability on the living standards of urban farmers in Lagos State”, gave an opinion, that women involvement in social groups and cooperatives can encourage collective proffering of solutions to constraints of farm input and use of social facilities/places which cannot be addressed individually.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study area**

Variable	F	%	Mean	Std. Dev
<b>Age</b>				
<30.00	4	4.0		
30 – 39 yrs	21	21.0		
40 – 49 yrs	29	29.0	49.32	14.23
50 – 59 yrs	20	20.0		
60 yrs+	26	26.0		
<b>Marital status</b>				
Married	83	83.0		
Single	5	5.0		
Divorced	1	1.0		
Widowed	11	11.0		

<b>Household size</b>				
<5.00	21	21.0		
5.00 - 9.00	64	64.0		
10.00 - 14.00	9	9.0	6.81	3.38
15.00+	6	6.0		
<b>Length of stay in the city (years)</b>				
<10.00	26	26.0		
10.00 - 19.00	36	36.0		
20.00 - 29.00	7	7.0		
30.00 - 39.00	7	7.0	22.46	7.77
40.00 - 49.00	12	12.0		
50.00+	12	12.0		
<b>Numbers of years in urban agriculture</b>				
<10.00	39	39.0		
10.00 - 19.00	22	22.0		
20.00 - 29.00	11	11.0		
30.00 - 39.00	9	9.0	19.59	6.79
40.00+	19	19.0		
<b>Membership of agricultural co-operative</b>				
Yes	10	10.0		
No	90	90.0		

### Effects of Recession on Women Participation in Urban Farming

Table 2 shows the effects of recession on urban farming participation by respondents in the study area, the result indicated that recession had significant effect on the increase in the prices of all commodities with a mean of 2.94, which may be due to a slowdown in the demand for agricultural products in the domestic and oversea market (Chand, Raju & Pandey, 2010). This was closely followed by increase in prices of agricultural input (Mean=2.91) which may be due to the increase in the prices of all commodities; high food prices (Mean=2.86) owing to the increase in the prices of agricultural inputs/raw materials and agricultural products; increase in unemployment (Mean=2.34) as a result of recession causing part-time farmers that are involved in other jobs to support their families because of the low cash in the society; hence using urban agriculture as a means of livelihood; decrease in demand for goods and services (Mean=2.67) which may be as a result of the economic meltdown which has led to the hike in prices of all goods and services.

Lack of access to modern equipment (Mean = 2.52) which indicates that they mostly use crude tools which in turn reduce the participation of urban women in the study area. The reason could be because of the increase in price of all commodities and agricultural input and inadequate cash in circulation during the recession has hindered farmers from gaining access to modern equipment.

Low cash in the society (Mean = 2.65) has a significantly high effect on the participation of the urban farmers. The reason may be that due to recession, there is a wide drop in spending in the society which makes farmers rather prefer to produce their own food than to buy.

Strained family relationship to meet basic family needs (Mean = 2.18). This has a significant high effect on the respondents in the study area. The reason could be due to the current economic meltdown making farmers to be involved in other jobs apart from agriculture like petty trading, cleaners and the likes to meet up with basic family needs as well as food security as a coping strategy for the recession; hence, they hardly have time for a healthy family relationship.

These results may suggest that the current recession being experienced in the country has a negative effect on the nation's economy arising to increased prices of agricultural input; which also has a great influence on the output of agricultural produce leading to high cost of food commodities in the market. This finding is affirmed by World Bank (2008) that while the high food prices directly threatened to aggravate persisting hunger and malnutrition problem, the global meltdown was threatening to cause a slowdown in the economic activities and consequent loss of employment opportunities. The year 2007 and 2008 witnessed an unprecedented rise in food prices, which forced the global community to pay more attention to the agricultural sector (Chand, 2008).

**Table 2: Effects of recession on women participation in urban farming in the study area**

<b>Effects of recession</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev</b>
Food insecurity	1.97	0.89
Poverty	1.91	0.79
Malnutrition	1.59	0.73
Undernourishment	1.57	0.61
Lack of access to modern equipment	2.52*	0.77
Hunger	1.75	0.76
Perishability of crops due to reduced access to storage facilities	1.35	0.72
Low standard of living	1.88	0.57
Reduced household income	1.90	0.92
High food prices	2.86*	0.51
Increase in prices of agricultural input	2.91*	0.38
Reduction in farm size	1.64	0.75
Increase in unemployment	2.34*	0.83
Decrease in demand for goods and services	2.67*	0.68
Strained family relationship to meet basic family needs	2.18*	0.83
Increase in prices of all commodities	2.94*	0.34
Low cash in the society	2.65*	0.72

Source: Field data, 2017.

\*Mean  $\geq$  2.0= High

### **Enterprises carried out by Women in urban farming Crop Production**

Table 3 shows the enterprises carried out by respondents in the study area. The result showed that majority (91.0%) of the respondents are into cassava farming followed by 89.0% respondents in yam production. As for maize, 79.0% of the respondents are involved. This result may suggest that respondents (women) are deeply involved in crop production in the study area since these crops are regarded as hunger crops and a solace for recession. This finding reveals that over 86.3% of urban women farmers are engaged in cassava, yam and maize production. The reasons could be that they had to combat the recession by producing hunger or food crops to reduce hunger and increase food security especially in their families. The findings corroborate with that of (Nnadozie and Ibe, 2000), which stated that women play very significant roles in Nigeria agricultural production, processing and utilization.

### **Animal Production**

Result in Table 3 reveals that majority of urban women farmers are involved in poultry farming (37%). The reason may be due to the fact that it requires little space and can be easily managed at home. However, the result also reveals that urban women participation in other animal production is 63%. The major reason could be that most urban women farmers

are part-time farmers, thus they may not have the time to rear animals that requires high attention against pest and diseases. These findings agree with Edeoghon and Ajayi (2009) that animal production is not popular among Edo State urban women farmers in their study on assessment of Agricultural enterprises owned by women in Ikpoba-okha Local Government Area, Edo State.

### **Horticulture**

The Table also shows that respondents (women) in the study area were also involved in horticulture with a high proportion (31.0%) of the respondents involving in tomatoes production, while (21.0%) of the respondents who are into vegetable farming. This result could be attributed to fact that tomatoes and vegetables are annual crops that can be harvested up to three or four times a year, and are in high demand, affordable and easy to cultivate. This supports the finding of Khan (2001) that most poverty studies tend to be linked to farming and FAO (2000) that vegetables are important means of improving the nutritive level of families. Their higher participation (31%) in tomatoes could be because the price of tomatoes increased by over 300% of recent (Okojie, 2017). Their participation in tomatoes will not only save them the cost of buying but also give them more income from sales.

**Table 3: Enterprises carried out by Women in urban farming**

<b>Enterprises</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Crop production</b>		
Yam	89	89.0
Cassava	91	91.0
Cocoyam	43	43.0
Maize	79	79.0
Beans	28	28.0
Sweet Potato	35	35.0
Plantain	51	51.0
Others		
<b>Animal Production</b>		
Poultry	37	37.0
Snailery	9	9.0
Fish farming	12	12.0
Piggery	2	2.0
Sheep	17	17.0
Goat	23	23.0
Others		
<b>Horticulture</b>		
Vegetables	21	21.0
Fruits	14	14.0
Tomatoes	31	31.0
Garden egg	3	3.0
Pepper	16	16.0

Source: Field data, 2017.

#### **Relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics and practical effects of recession**

Result in Table 4 shows the socio-economic variable such as age, sex, household size, years of farming experience have been adjudged as factors influencing certain family characteristics. In this study, the findings revealed that household size ( $t = -4.03$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and length of stay in cities ( $t = -5.02$ ,  $P \leq 0.01$ ) were the socio-economic characteristics of farmers that influences the practical effect of recession among urban women farmers in the study area. The finding revealed that inverse relationship existed between the significant variable. The inverse relationship in urban household shows that farmers with large household sizes experience less effect of recession. This agrees with Hovorka (2003), that urban women went into farming so as to maintain livelihood and contribute to household income through subsistence production and they even sell surplus for cash. The reason could be due to the fact that they work together and use more of family labour than hired labour which saves cost, and working

together makes it easy for them to achieve their set objective and produce more output/yield and secure food for the family and generate more income.

The inverse relationship that existed in the length of stay in the cities shows that farmers that have stayed longer in the cities experience less effect of recession. The reason could be that they have adjusted and adapted to the urban environment and lifestyle and probably had practiced farming for a relatively long time thereby making them professional in the field and hence were more economically empowered to make better decision in order to avoid food insecurity and experience less effect of recession. The study conforms with that of Obosu-Mensah (2001), who discovered that increased revenue in vegetable farming was associated or directly proportional to longer stay in Accra City. This however disagrees with Binns and Lynch (2001), who found out that in Tanzania many urban practitioners with short stay in the cities were more economically empowered.

**Table 4: Results of Multiple Regression showing the relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics of respondents and practical effects of recession**

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	38.57	1.76		21.89**	0.01
Age	0.07	0.04	0.02	0.16	0.87
household size	-2.13	0.53	-0.10	-4.03**	.01
length of stay in cities	-2.96	0.59	-0.37	-5.02**	0.01
experience in urban farming	0.05	0.07	0.17	0.71	0.48

Source: Field data, 2017.

\*\*Significant at 0.01 probability level

R= 0.56; R<sup>2</sup>= 0.314

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings concluded that the effect of recession has a positive influence/effect on the level of participation of urban women in agricultural enterprises by middle aged women. Women participated more in food crops production serving as hunger crops to combat the negative effects of recession.

The women should be encouraged to form cooperatives so as to easily assess production resources. They should also explore more of animal husbandry especially snailery, piggery and fish farming.

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