

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF FOOD SECURITY AND ITS IMPACT ON NATIONAL GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract	<p><i>This study explores the Islamic perspective on food security and its influence on national growth and sustainable development in Nigeria. It identifies the main causes of food insecurity, its effects on households, and the role of Islamic principles in addressing these challenges. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected from 300 respondents, including farmers, food-insecure households, and Islamic finance experts across three Nigerian regions. Analyses using descriptive statistics, Chi-square, ANOVA, and log-linear regression revealed that insecurity, inadequate agricultural investment, and fuel costs are key drivers of food insecurity, which negatively affect household survival through malnutrition and economic strain. Islamic financial tools: Zakat, Waqf, Qard al-Hasan, Mudarabah, and Green Sukuk were found effective in enhancing food security and sustainability. A significant three-way interaction among food security, national growth, and sustainable development confirmed the holistic benefits of Islamic-based interventions. The paper concludes that integrating Islamic finance into national food policies can reduce poverty, improve welfare, and foster sustainable development, recommending stronger Zakat and Waqf institutions and wider use of Islamic agribusiness financing.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Food, Security, Growth, Sustainable, Nigeria.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Ending hunger and poverty remains a global challenge, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. This aligns with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which prioritize eradicating hunger. Despite its vast arable land, Nigeria faces acute food insecurity worsened by conflicts, poor infrastructure, import restrictions, and climate change. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), about 26.5% of Nigerian households experience moderate to severe food insecurity, mostly in rural areas.

These challenges undermine economic growth and social stability. Studies show that insecurity and underinvestment in agriculture are key drivers of food scarcity. Ike et al. (2020) and Olaniyan (2021) note that violence, displacement, and poor infrastructure have severely affected productivity. Schmidhuber and Tubiello (2021) link rising temperatures to declining yields, urging climate-smart agricultural strategies.

Similarly, Hossain et al. (2020) emphasize self-sufficiency in food production to counter trade disruptions and price spikes. FAO (2023) reports that 24% of Nigerians suffer moderate to severe food insecurity, with agricultural growth directly influencing GDP (World Bank, 2022). Islamic

finance instruments such as Zakat and Qard al-Hasan could support smallholder farmers and improve productivity.

Sustainable farming models like agroecology and regenerative agriculture (Foley et al., 2021) also provide long-term solutions, while community-based initiatives (Pretty et al., 2020) enhance innovation and resilience. Fan and Brzeska (2021) recommend investments in agricultural research, irrigation, and modern technology to boost yields. Jayne et al. (2020) identify finance, infrastructure, and governance as major barriers to food production in sub-Saharan Africa.

Innovative financing through Islamic instruments, like the UAE's Sukuk-funded Masdar City project (Obaidullah, 2020), demonstrates how Shariah-compliant finance can support sustainability. De Schutter and Mousseau (2021) further suggest cooperatives and social enterprises to strengthen smallholder farmers' capacity. In this regard, Islamic principles offer a holistic ethical framework for food security through instruments like Zakat, Waqf, Qard al-Hasan, and Mudarabah, which promote equitable access to resources and moral responsibility.

This study therefore examines the relationship between food security, national growth, and sustainable development in Nigeria through both empirical and Islamic perspectives. It employs correlation and regression analyses to assess how Islamic finance can enhance agricultural productivity and policy effectiveness. By aligning Islamic moral economics with development objectives, the study proposes a faith-based framework for achieving food security, inclusive growth, and sustainable national development.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2022) defines food security as a state where everyone has consistent access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for an active and healthy life. It encompasses availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. Despite global progress, food insecurity affects over 828 million people (WFP, 2022), worsened by climate change, political instability, and economic shocks.

In Nigeria, recurrent inflation, insecurity, and weak infrastructure intensify the problem (NBS, 2023). Adebayo and Olagunju (2021) emphasize that sustainable food systems must integrate ethics and social justice. Food security, therefore, is both a fundamental human right and a foundation for sustainable development. National growth refers to sustained increases in a country's economic output, commonly measured by GDP.

Romer (1990) links it to investment in human capital, innovation, and policy-driven education, while North (1990) underscores the role of strong institutions in supporting growth. Recent studies (Janischewski et al., 2024; Onifade et al., 2024) redefine growth to reflect sustainability and institutional quality, advocating for "green GDP" models that balance competitiveness and environmental responsibility. Hence, national growth should be inclusive, resilient, and sustainable, supported by effective governance and innovation.

Sustainable development integrates economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Fischer et al., 2023). It promotes efficient resource use, social equity, and environmental protection through practices that preserve ecosystems and mitigate climate change. The interconnection between food security, national growth, and sustainable development is evident in several ways:

- i. Food Security Drives Growth: Adequate nutrition enhances productivity, reduces poverty, and supports economic expansion.
- ii. Growth Improves Food Security: Increased income and infrastructure investment enhance food production and distribution.
- iii. Sustainability Ensures Long-Term Security: Environmentally responsible farming preserves soil, water, and biodiversity for future generations.
- iv. Food Security Strengthens Sustainability: Well-fed populations are healthier, more stable, and better able to contribute to social and economic progress.

Together, these concepts form a mutually reinforcing cycle that supports inclusive development and resilience, especially within the framework of Islamic ethics emphasizing justice, equity, and responsible stewardship.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON FOOD SECURITY

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of agriculture and food security. Islam views Agriculture as Allah's bounties on mankind and encourages man to embark on it via exploration of the earth. In this regard, the Qur'an says:

﴿فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ﴾

Which means, "And the earth: He has put down (laid) for the creatures. Therein are fruits and date-palms producing sheathed fruits-stalks (enclosing dates). And also, corn, with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder, and sweet-scented plants. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinn and men) deny?" (al-Quran. Al-Rahman: 10-13).

In another verse, Allah Taala says:

﴿فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا﴾

Which means, "Then let man look at his food, We pour down water in abundance, And We split the earth in clefts, and we cause there in the grain to grow, and grapes and clover plant (i.e. greenfodder for cattle), and olives and date palms and gardens dense with many trees and fruits and herbage (to be) a provision and benefit for you and your cattle" (al-Quran. 'Abasa: 24-28).

The above verses refer to the advantage which mankind derive from land cultivation. Apart from the fact that it sustains mankind via food production and provision of vast natural resources for human benefits, it provides meat food via provision of food for animals. However, it should be practice on the premises of Allah's guidance and consciousness so that it does not brings about the wrath of Allah which could lead to drought and famine as Allah Taala emphasizes in the following verses thus:

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَحْرُثُونَ أَنَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ إِنَّا لَمُعْرِمُونَ بَلْ نَحْنُ مُحْرِمُونَ﴾

Which means, "Then tell Me about the seed that you sow in ground. Is it you that make it grows, or are We the Grower? Were it Our Will, We could crumble it to dry pieces, and you would be regretful (or left in wonderment) (Saying); "We are indeed ruined (or have lost the money without any profit. Or are punished by the loss of all that we spend for cultivation), Nay, but we are deprived!" (al-Quran. Al-Waqi'ah: 63-67).

The above verses remind man of inability to sustain himself except with Allah's permission and obedience to His prescriptions. In connection with this, Allah Taala also says:

﴿وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ﴾

Which means, "And Allah put forward the example of a township that dwelt secure and well-content, its provision coming to it in abundance from every place, but it (its people) denied the favour of Allah (with ungratefulness), So, Allah made it taste extreme hunger (famine) and fear, because of that (evil) which they (its people) used to do" (al-Quran. Al-Nahl: 112).

In connection with the above verses, the earth is purposely created for sustainability of mankind and not for spreading corruption and evil that further bring about the wrath of Allah which

renders man's efforts unsuccessful and which on the other hand translate to unsustainable development. From an Islamic perspective, food security is both a social responsibility and a religious obligation. The Qur'an commands the consumption of lawful and wholesome food as it says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا﴾

Which means, "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good" (al-Quran. al-Baqarah: 168).

This verse underscores the divine expectation that food must be wholesome (*tayyib*), lawful (*halal*), and adequately available to all members of society. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) further emphasized social solidarity when he said:

مَا آمَنَ بِي مَنْ بَاتَ شَبَعَانَ وَجَارُهُ جَائِعٌ إِلَىٰ جَنْبِهِ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ

Which means, "He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbor goes hungry" (Hadith. al-Bukhari).

Thus, Islam frames food security not merely as an economic goal but as a manifestation of 'adl (justice), *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), and *amanah* (trusteeship). Islamic economic system views food security as both a spiritual and socioeconomic obligation. The Qur'an emphasizes lawful and wholesome consumption, social equity, and prohibition of waste. Allah says:

﴿وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا﴾

which means, "Eat and drink, but waste not by excess." (al-Quran. Al-A'raf: 31).

This injunction forbids *israf* (extravagance) and promotes moderation in resource use. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized that true faith is linked to compassion and shared sustenance (Ibn Majah, hadith no. 2340). Thus, Islam advocates sustainable food systems through ethical production, distribution, and consumption in line with *maqasid al-shari'ah*: preserving life (*hifz al-nafs*) and wealth (*hifz al-mal*).

This paper critically assesses food security in Nigeria through Islamic economics, examining how Islamic social finance tools such as *Zakat*, *Waqf*, *Mudarabah*, and *Qard al-Hasan* can promote national growth and sustainability. Unlike previous works focusing on GDP, this study combines Islamic ethical analysis with empirical data to offer policy insights. Its significance lies in three areas: situating food security within the Islamic moral economy; providing empirical evidence on Islamic finance's role in agricultural productivity; and linking faith-based strategies with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Growth).

Studies from Malaysia show that *Halal* supply chains enhance trust and reduce waste, while supporting Nigeria's *Halal* food sector can boost agribusiness and GDP. Instruments like *Zakat*, *Sadaqah*, *Waqf*, and *Mudarabah* redistribute wealth and empower farmers. Evidence from Sudan and Indonesia confirms that *Zakat*-based agricultural funds raise productivity. In Nigeria, Jaiz Bank and Zakat Foundations demonstrate potential, but national integration remains weak. Addressing food insecurity thus requires equitable distribution and sustainable agricultural systems vital to achieving the 2030 SDGs.

THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN PAVING THE WAY FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION THROUGH KHILAFAH (LEADERSHIP)

Khilafah which refers to the concept of humans as stewards or trustees of the earth is central in Islamic teachings. It is based on the Qur'anic verse where Allah appoints humans as His vicegerents on Earth. In this regard, Allah Taala says:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً﴾

Which means, "And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: "Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth" (al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 30).

This verse indicates that man is Allah's viceregent on earth and thus, responsible for the preservation, protection, and sustainable use of natural resources. The verse encourages responsible governance over natural resources, ensuring their availability for future generations. This is deeply rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah. For instance. Allah Taala states thus:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

Which means, "It is He who has made you successors (khulafa') on the earth" (al-Quran. Fatir: 39).

Human beings, as Allah's vicegerents, are entrusted with preserving the earth's resources and upholding justice.

Chapra (2021) explains that Islam views humans as stewards responsible for maintaining environmental balance and ensuring equitable access to resources for present and future generations. Thus, *Khilafah* (leadership) extends beyond political authority to include moral and environmental responsibility. It calls on Muslims to manage resources justly, avoid corruption and exploitation, and promote sustainability through fair distribution and responsible planning.

By upholding *khilafah* principles, societies can achieve long-term food security and environmental stability. Kamali (2019) emphasizes that Islamic governance requires prioritizing citizens' welfare, particularly by supporting agriculture to meet basic needs. During Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) era, agriculture formed the backbone of the community's sustenance and economy, and he consistently encouraged its development through various *ahadith*.

For example, Anas ibn Malik narrated:

إِنْ قَامَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَفِي يَدِ أَحَدِكُمْ فَسِيلَةٌ، فَإِنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ لَا تَقُومَ حَتَّى يَغْرِسَهَا، فَلْيَغْرِسَهَا

Which means, "If the Hour (Day of Judgment) is about to be established and one of you has a palm seedling in his hand, and he is able to plant it before it occurs, then let him plant it" (Sahih al-Bukhari (Al-Adab al-Mufrad, 479; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Hadith no. 12491).

This hadith shows Islam's powerful endorsement of environmental stewardship, especially agriculture, even in the face of the end of time, underscoring the ongoing value of planting, producing food, and sustaining life. Anas ibn Malik also narrated:

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَغْرِسُ غَرْسًا، أَوْ يَزْرَعُ زَرْعًا، فَيَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ طَيْرٌ، أَوْ إِنْسَانٌ، أَوْ بَيْمَةٌ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ بِهِ صَدَقَةٌ

Which means, "There is no Muslim who plants a tree or sow seeds and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, except that it is regarded as a charitable act for him" (Hadith Sahih Al- Bukhari, Hadith no. 2320 (Book: al-Harth wa al-Zarā'ah – Book of Agriculture) (Muhammad, 1997).

The above hadith highlights agriculture as both an economic activity and a form of charity that sustains life and promotes social welfare. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advanced this vision by introducing *Ihya al-Mawat* (revival of dead land), granting ownership to those who cultivated barren land, boosting food production and resource utilization (El-Gamal, 2021). This policy was strengthened by Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, who expanded agricultural reforms through land redistribution to capable farmers, enhancing food security and social equity (Rahman, 2022).

The early Islamic state also invested heavily in agricultural infrastructure. Hassan (2021) notes that Caliphs Umar and Uthman built canals, irrigation systems, and dams, ensuring stable food production in arid regions. These initiatives improved yields, secured water supply, and reinforced

economic resilience. Thus, Islamic principles provide a holistic framework for addressing food security through equity, sustainability, and justice. Derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic law, they emphasize responsible resource use, social fairness, and intergenerational welfare. Key principles include:

- i. Resource planning and land preservation
- ii. Zakat, Sadaqah, and Waqf as redistributive tools
- iii. Mudarabah and Musharakah for agricultural financing
- iv. Mizan (balance), Adl and Ihsan (justice and benevolence)
- v. Avoidance of *israf* (wastefulness)
- vi. Cooperation (*ta'awun*) and consumption of *halal* and *haram* food
- vii. Protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and the environment (*hifz al-bi'ah*)

THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC FINANCE IN FOOD SECURITY

Islam encourages lawful wealth acquisition and productive enterprise. Islamic finance supports food security by promoting equitable wealth distribution and sustainable investments. Through instruments such as *Mudarabah* (profit-sharing) and *Musharakah* (joint ventures), agriculture can thrive as a partnership-driven, employment-generating sector. Integrating these principles into Nigeria's agricultural framework could enhance sustainability (Abdullahi et al., 2021).

Moreover, *Zakat* and *Sadaqah* remain vital tools in reducing hunger and supporting vulnerable populations. In this regard, Allah Taala says:

﴿حُذِّ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا﴾

Which means, "Take (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it" (al-Quran. al-Tawbah: 103).

Obaidullah (2020) argues that Zakat funds can be used to support smallholder farmers by providing them with the necessary tools and seeds to improve productivity. In several Muslim-majority countries, Zakat institutions have been actively involved in distributing food to vulnerable populations, thus ensuring basic food security.

For instance, in Indonesia and Bangladesh, Zakat and Sadaqah programs have supported farmers in accessing fertilizers and equipment, boosting food production while ensuring equitable food distribution (Ali & Hassan, 2020). Instruments such as *Musharakah* (partnership) and *Mudarabah* (profit-sharing) are particularly relevant for agricultural financing. These instruments allow farmers to share profits and risks with financiers, rather than being burdened by debt.

Dusuki (2020) highlights the successful use of *Mudarabah* contracts in Malaysia, where Islamic banks have partnered with agricultural cooperatives to finance sustainable farming practices. The shared-risk model incentivizes productivity while promoting the use of environmentally friendly methods, contributing to both food security and sustainable land use. Ali and Osman (2022) point out that Islamic finance mechanisms, such as *Musharakah* (profit-sharing) and *Mudarabah* (joint venture financing) could be instrumental in addressing agricultural neglect by fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

These instruments promote investments that support local agricultural businesses, thereby stimulating rural economies and enhancing food production. According to (AbdulGaniyu, Kaita, & Gidado, (2017), Agriculture is a legitimate occupation that allows an individual to embark on it, as well as land owner who did not have skill in Agriculture, or the person having the skill in agriculture but has no time, or the person having the skill but not having the land to cultivate, they can form partnership.

The Prophet concluded a contract with the people of Khaibar to utilize the land on condition that half the products of fruits or vegetation would be their share. This indicates that they would have half the fruits and vegetation of the land cultivated (Muhammad, 1997). Zakat, a mandatory

charitable contribution, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. Zakat is directed towards alleviating poverty and hunger, thus directly contributing to food security.

According to Obaidullah (2020), Zakat funds in modern Islamic economies have been used to provide food aid, subsidize agricultural inputs, and support small-scale farmers in various Muslim-majority countries, such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Similarly, Khan and Thaut (2020) highlight the role of Zakat and Sadaqah in redistributing wealth and providing for the vulnerable, directly contributing to the reduction of hunger and poverty.

The Islamic finance mechanisms of Zakat (mandatory charity) and Sadaqah (voluntary charity) are critical tools for addressing poverty and food insecurity. Ahmed and Hassan (2020) note that these forms of charity are effective in redistributing wealth from the rich to the poor, thereby reducing hunger and promoting food equity in Muslim-majority countries. In countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, Zakat funds have been used to support agricultural projects and provide food aid to impoverished communities.

Similarly, Ali and Rahman (2019) suggest that Islamic financial instruments, such as Mudarabah (profit-sharing) and Qard al-Hasan (interest-free loans), could be used to support smallholder farmers in developing countries, enabling them to invest in agricultural innovation and boost food production. Agriculture in Islam is a legitimate occupation and it is permissible for an individual to embark on it as well as land owner who did not have skill in agriculture or the person having the skill in agriculture but has no time, or the person having the skill but not having the land to cultivate, they can form partnership.

Another relevant financial instrument is Qard al-Hasan (interest-free loan), which has been instrumental in supporting smallholder farmers. Allah Taala says:

﴿مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

Which means, "Who is it that will lend to Allah a goodly loan so that He may multiply it for him many times? And it is Allah that decreases or increases (your provisions), and unto Him you shall return withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned" (al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 245)

The above verse encourages generosity and selfless giving, particularly for the cause of Allah (e.g., charity, welfare, or helping others in need), promising manifold rewards. Mirakhor and Iqbal (2020) explain that, Qard al-Hasan loans are often used to provide farmers with the necessary tools, seeds, and other agricultural inputs needed to improve productivity. These loans enable farmers to increase their output without falling into debt traps, thus contributing to sustainable agricultural practices and food security.

Waqf (Islamic endowment) is another Islamic financial instrument that has historically supported agriculture and food security. In the classical Islamic period, Waqf properties often included agricultural land, the income from which was used to feed the poor and fund social services. Kahf (2019) notes that during the Ottoman period, Waqf was a significant source of public welfare, with large portions of agricultural land dedicated to feeding the poor and supporting public kitchens.

Revitalizing the Waqf system in modern Islamic countries could offer a sustainable method for enhancing food security. Islamic financing models like Mudarabah and Musharakah (profit-sharing contracts) are also valuable tools for supporting agricultural ventures. These contracts provide small-scale farmers with access to capital without the burden of interest, which is prohibited in Islamic finance.

Siddiqi (2021) discusses how Islamic banks can utilize these contracts to fund agricultural cooperatives, allowing farmers to pool resources and share profits equitably. This not only promotes agricultural productivity but also enhances rural development and food security.

MODERN APPLICATIONS OF ISLAMIC FINANCIAL TOOLS FOR FOOD SECURITY

Islamic finance is increasingly used to enhance food security in developing nations. In Sudan and Pakistan, *Murabaha* (cost-plus financing) and *Mudarabah* (profit-sharing) have empowered farmers to access equipment, infrastructure, and markets, boosting agricultural productivity (Ali & Osman, 2022; Dusuki, 2020). In Malaysia, Islamic banks' partnerships with agricultural cooperatives have improved food production and rural development.

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has supported similar initiatives through *Qard al-Hasan* (interest-free loans) and *Musharakah* (partnerships), helping smallholder farmers acquire inputs and technology while promoting sustainable practices such as crop rotation and water conservation (Ali & Rahman, 2021). The IsDB's collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Indonesia demonstrates how Shariah-compliant financing can fund sustainable projects such as water-efficient irrigation and organic farming (FAO, 2020).

Malaysia's issuance of the Green *Sukuk* in 2017 further illustrates this potential. Funds from the bond were directed to water purification and irrigation projects, linking Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles with Islamic ethics (El-Gamal, 2021). Similarly, the Global Water Partnership and Islamic Relief have used *Waqf* and *Zakat* funds to provide wells and rainwater systems in North Africa, improving water access and health outcomes (Kahf, 2020). These cases show that Islamic social finance effectively supports sustainable, community-based food and water initiatives.

Despite progress, few studies in Nigeria have integrated Islamic finance into food security research. Empirical links between Islamic social finance, GDP growth, and food self-sufficiency remain underexplored. This study, therefore, applies Islamic moral economy (Asutay, 2019) to harmonize ethical and economic objectives, providing evidence-based insights into the nexus between food security, national growth, and sustainable development.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive and inferential design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 300 respondents across Nigeria's regions (Southwest, Northeast, and North-Central) using structured questionnaires. Likert-scale responses measured perceived causes of food insecurity. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, Chi-square, t-test, ANOVA, correlation, and regression models to examine how national growth and sustainable development predict food security and how Islamic principles mediate sustainability outcomes.

RESULTS

The results in respect to research questions are presented in tables and findings were presented based on the results and decision of the hypothesis tested.

Table 1: The Primary Causes of Food Insecurity in Nigeria

SN	Cause of Food Insecurity	Average Rating (1-5)	Percentage of Respondents Rating as a Major Cause (4-5)
1.	Conflict and Insecurity (e.g., Kidnappings, Herdsmen/Farmer Conflict)	4.6	82%
2.	Poor Agricultural Investment	4.4	76%
3.	Increase in the Price of Petrol/Government Policy and Import Restrictions	4.2	72%
4.	Land Degradation and Poor Soil Management	4.0	68%

5.	Lack of Infrastructure (e.g., irrigation, storage facilities)	3.9	65%
6.	High Food Prices and Inflation	3.8	63%
7.	Climate Change and Extreme Weather High	3.5	60%

Table 2: Primary Causes of Food Insecurity in Nigeria

Causes	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	O-E	(O-E) ^2/E
Conflict and Insecurity (e.g., Kidnappings, Herdsmen/Farmer Conflict)	246	210	36	6.17
Poor Agricultural Investment	228	210	18	1.54
Increase in the Price of Petrol/Government Policy and Import Restrictions	216	210	6	0.17

Table 3: The Decision of the Research Question 1

Variables	Cri-Cal	X ² cal	Df	Level of Significant	Decision
Conflicts, poor investment, and increase in fuel price/government policy	5.991	7.88	2	0.05	Rejected
Food insecurity					

Table 4: The Effects of Food Insecurity on Household Survival in Nigeria

SN	Effect of Food Insecurity	Number of Respondents (N=300)	Percentage of Respondents (%)
1.	Malnutrition and Poor Health	225	75%
2.	Reduced Income and Economic Stress	210	70%
3.	School Dropout (Children Become Street traders and Street Beggars)	150	50%
4.	Migration to Urban Areas	135	45%
5.	Increased Dependence of Food Aid	120	40%
6.	Social Unrest and Crime	90	30%

Table 5: The decision of the Research Question 2 Using t-Test

Variables	Sample Proportion (P)	N	Cri-t-value	Cal-t-value	Df	Level of Significant	Decision
H0 (P=0.50)	0.75	300	1.645	8.66	2	0.05	Rejected
H1(P>0.50)							

Table 6: How Does the Islamic Perspective offer Solution to Enhance Sood Security and Promote Sustainable Development?

SN	Islamic Financial Instruments/Solution	Average Rating (1-5)	Percentage of Respondents Rating as Highly Effective (4-5)
1.	Zakat (Wealth Redistribution)	4.5	85%
2.	Waqf (Endowment for Agricultural Projects)	4.4	82%
3.	Qard al-Hasan (Interest-Free Loans)	4.3	78%
4.	Mudarabah (Profit-Sharing for Farmers)	4.2	75%
5.	Green Sukuk (Financing for Sustainable Projects)	4.1	70%
6.	Sadaqah (Voluntary Charity)	4.0	68%
7.	Musharakah (Partnership Financing)	3.8	65%

Table 7: The Decision of the Research Question 3 with One Way ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	Df	F-value	MS	F-Statistic	P-value
Between Groups	0.64	4	2.37	0.16	3.20	0.015
Within Groups	14.95	1495		0.01		
Total	15.59	1499				

Table 8: Interaction between Food Security (FS), National Growth (NG), and Sustainable Development (SD) according to Islamic teachings

FS	NG	(SD)	Observed Frequency (O)
Adequate	Strong	Aligned	60
Adequate	Strong	Not Aligned	40
Adequate	Weak	Aligned	30
Adequate	Weak	Not Aligned	20
Inadequate	Strong	Aligned	50
Inadequate	Strong	Not Aligned	30
Inadequate	Weak	Aligned	40
Inadequate	Weak	Not Aligned	30
Total			300

Table 9: The Full Interaction Model of the Three-way Interaction between Food Security (FS), National Growth (NG), and Sustainable Development (SD)

Model	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	G-Squared (G ²)	Critical Value	Decision
Model 1 (No interaction)	3	40.0	7.815	Reject (Poor Fit)
Model 2 (Two-way interactions)	2	10.5	5.991	Reject (Improved Fit)
Model 3 (Three-way interaction)	1	2.0	3.841	Fail to Reject (Best Fit)

				Significant Interaction)
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Table 10: Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

Variables	FS	NG	SD	IFI
FS	1.000	-	-	-
NG	0.68**	1.000	-	-
SD	0.59**	0.64**	1.000	-
IFI	0.72**	0.66**	0.70**	1.000

Table 11: Regression Analysis Predicting Food Security

Variables	β (Coefficient)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Constant	0.84	3.41	0.001	-
National Growth (NG)	0.41	4.65	0.000	Significant
Sustainable Development (SD)	0.28	3.92	0.000	Significant
NG×SD Interaction	0.16	2.58	0.011	Significant
R ² = 0.67	F(3,296) = 24.9	P < 0.001	-	-

Table 12: Regression Analysis Predicting Sustainable Development from Islamic Principles

Variables	β (Coefficient)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Constant	0.73	2.89	0.004	-
Islamic Financial Instruments (IFI)	0.52	5.23	0.000	Significant
Food Security (FS)	0.30	4.12	0.000	Significant
R ² = 0.64	F(2,297) = 21.7	P < 0.001	-	-

DISCUSSIONS

The analysis in Table 1 revealed that conflict and insecurity ranked highest (82%) as major causes of food insecurity, reflecting the effects of herdsmen-farmer clashes and related crises. Poor agricultural investment and rising fuel prices/government policies were also significant, showing the need for improved financing and adaptation measures. Other key factors included land degradation, inadequate infrastructure, high food prices, and climate change, all pointing to systemic barriers to sustainable development and national growth.

The table showed the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test to determine whether there is a significant association between key causes (conflicts, poor investment, and increase in fuel price/government policy) and food insecurity in Nigeria based on the respondents’ ratings (on a scale of 1 to 5). Focus is on the number of respondents who rated these factors as “major causes’

The table 3 showed that the calculated Chi-square value (7.88) is greater than the critical value (5.991) and thus, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected indicating that Conflicts, poor investment, and increase in fuel price/government policy significantly contribute to food insecurity in Nigeria.

In table 4, malnutrition and poor health were reported by 75% of respondents, making it the most prevalent effect of food insecurity on household survival. Reduced income and economic stress were experienced by 70% of respondents, highlighting the financial strain caused by food shortages and rising food prices.

School dropout (Children Become Street traders and Street Beggars) was identified by 50% of respondents, showing that many children are forced to leave school for street trading and street beggars to supplement household income. Also, migration to urban areas was reported by 45%, indicating that many households are leaving rural agricultural areas due to kidnappings, killings on farmland, lack of food and economic opportunities.

The table 5 tested that more than 50% of households are affected by the identified factors (Malnutrition and Poor Health, Reduced Income and Economic Stress, School Dropout (Children Become Street traders and Street Beggars), Migration to Urban Areas, Increased Dependence of Food Aid, Social Unrest and Crime). Since the calculated t-value (8.66) is much greater than the critical value (1.645), then the null hypothesis (HO) is rejected. This means that food insecurity has significant effects on household survival in Nigeria, particularly through, malnutrition, reduced income, school dropout (Children Become Street traders and Street Beggars).

In table 6, Zakat and Waqf were seen as the most effective Islamic solutions, with 85% and 82% of respondents respectively rating them as highly effective in enhancing food security. Qard al-Hasan (Interest-free loans) and Mudarabah (profit-sharing also received high ratings, showing the strong potential of Islamic financial instruments in supporting sustainable agricultural practices and improving food access. Green Sukuk, used to finance environmentally sustainable projects, was rated highly as well, reflecting its growing relevance in addressing both food security and sustainability.

In table 7, the calculated F-statistic (3.20) is greater than the critical F-value (2.37), the null hypothesis (HO) is rejected. This means that Islamic finance instruments significantly enhance food security and promote sustainable development. There is a significant difference in the effectiveness of different Islamic financial instruments, with Zakat and waqf rated highest. The variables in table 8 are classified below:

- i. Food Security (FS): (i) Adequate food security (ii) Inadequate food security
- ii. National Growth (NG): - (i) Strong national growth (ii) Weak national growth
- iii. Sustainable Development (SD):-(i) Aligned with sustainable development (ii) Not aligned with sustainable development.

Table 9 shows that Model 1 ($G^2 = 40.0$) indicates a poor fit, revealing strong variable interactions. Model 2 ($G^2 = 10.5$) demonstrates that adding two-way interactions improves the fit, while Model 3 ($G^2 = 2.0$) confirms a significant three-way interaction among Food Security (FS), National Growth (NG), and Sustainable Development (SD). This suggests a strong interconnection consistent with Islamic principles, where addressing food security promotes both national growth and sustainable development.

The log-linear analysis thus affirms the holistic nature of Islam, emphasizing that fulfilling basic human needs fosters societal progress and sustainability. To further validate these relationships, correlation and regression analyses were conducted on FS, NG, SD, and Islamic Financial Instruments (IFI).

In table 10, the correlation results reveal a strong and positive association between Food Security and Islamic Finance ($r=0.72$), suggesting that Islamic economic interventions (through Zakat, Waqf, Qard al-Hasan and Mudarabah) are strongly aligned with food security enhancement. Similarly, national growth ($r=0.68$) and sustainable ($r=0.59$) also show positive relationships with food security, affirming the interconnectedness proposed in the objective.

In table 11 above, the regression results show that both National Growth ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$) and Sustainable Development ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$) significantly predict Food Security levels. The interaction term (NG×SD) is also significant ($\beta = 0.16$, $p = 0.011$), indicating that improvement amplify the positive effect of national growth on food security. The model explains 67% of the variation in food security ($R^2 = 0.67$), confirming a strong combined influence.

Islamic financial instruments also significantly predicted sustainable development ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$), confirming their crucial role in resource redistribution and ethical investment. These

results affirm the Islamic economic system view that material prosperity (*tazkiyah al-mal*) and moral-spiritual development (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) are interdependent for achieving balanced growth.

Table 12 demonstrates that Islamic Finance instruments significantly predict Sustainable Development ($\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$). This result aligns with the findings from the ANOVA (Table 7), confirming that Zakat, Waqf, Qard al-Hasan, and Green Sukuk are empirically effective mechanisms for promoting sustainability through wealth redistribution and ethical investment. The combination of correlation and regression analyses reinforces earlier descriptive and inferential findings.

Statistically, food security in Nigeria is strongly determined by both national growth and sustainable development, while, Islamic finance serves as an effective mediator. The positive interaction effect ($NG \times SD$) further confirms the holistic view of Islamic economic system where material prosperity and moral-spirituality responsibility are interdependent. The regression findings also support Qur'anic principles that emphasize balance and justice in resource distribution.

This implies that sustainable national growth can only be achieved when resources are distributed fairly and utilized responsibly, reflecting the integration system of khilafah, Amanah and adl (trusteeship, stewardship, and justice) that underpin the Islamic perspective of food security.

CONCLUSION

The correlation results showed strong positive links between food security and Islamic principles ($r = 0.72$), national growth ($r = 0.68$), and sustainable development ($r = 0.59$). Regression results confirmed that national growth ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$) and sustainable development ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$) significantly predict food security ($R^2 = 0.67$). These findings affirm the Islamic view that material and spiritual development (*tazkiyah al-mal* and *tazkiyah al-nafs*) must coexist for balanced growth. Survey results identified conflict, low agricultural investment, and fuel price hikes as major causes of food insecurity. Hypothesis testing confirmed that:

- i. Conflict, poor investment, and climate change significantly cause food insecurity.
- ii. Food insecurity affects households through malnutrition, stress, and school dropouts.
- iii. Islamic financial tools (Zakat, Waqf, Qard al-Hasan, Mudarabah, Sukuk) improve food security and sustainable development.

The log-linear model ($G^2 = 2.0$) indicated a strong three-way interaction among food security, national growth, and sustainable development, showing their interconnectedness under Islamic principles. Market observations revealed that prices of essential goods, such as rice, beans, yam, oil, and vegetables have skyrocketed, worsening living conditions. Petrol now costs about ₦1,100 per liter, increasing transport and food costs.

Many Nigerians struggle to feed daily, reflecting severe poverty and food insecurity (Shittu, 2017). Addressing these challenges demands peace-building, investment, climate-smart agriculture, and accountable leadership (khilafah). Qur'anic and Hadith analyses highlight three ethical pillars for food security: equitable distribution, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship. In this connection, the Qur'an enjoins wealth circulation to prevent concentration among elites:

﴿كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ﴾

Which means, "So that it will not circulate only among the rich among you" (al-Quran. al-Hashr: 7).

This principle supports redistribution mechanisms such as *Zakat* and *Waqf* to ensure fair access to food and resources. Then productivity and self-Reliance: Islam encourages productive engagement in agriculture and trade. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

مَا أَكَلَ أَحَدٌ طَعَامًا قَطُّ، خَيْرًا مِنْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْ عَمَلِ يَدِهِ

Which means, "No one eats better food than that which he eats out of the work of his own hands" (Hadith. al-Bukhārī. No. 2072).

This underscores the dignity of labor and the Islamic obligation to sustain livelihoods through lawful work and self-reliance. Then, prohibition of waste and sustainable consumption: The Qur'an warns against wasteful use of resources:

﴿إِنَّ الْمُبَدِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ﴾

Which means, "Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils" (al-Quran. Al-Isra':27).

This teaching aligns with modern sustainability ethics and circular economy models, promoting efficiency and environmental stewardship. The integration of empirical findings with Islamic principles demonstrates that food security is both an economic and moral imperative. The correlation between agricultural productivity and GDP growth affirms the economic relevance of investing in agriculture, while the Islamic framework adds an ethical dimension that prioritizes social justice, compassion, and sustainability.

The positive association between Islamic finance participation and food security index implies that faith-based financial instruments *such as Musharakah and Mudarabah* enhance inclusive financing for farmers who are often excluded from interest-based credit systems. This finding aligns with previous studies by Abdullah and Ismail (2020) and Obaidullah (2022), which found that *Zakat* and *Waqf*-based interventions directly reduce poverty and improve household nutrition.

However, the findings also reveal structural challenges. Nigeria's Islamic finance ecosystem remains underdeveloped, and government food policies rarely integrate faith-based mechanisms. Moreover, while agricultural GDP contributes significantly to the economy, persistent inequality and food distribution inefficiencies limit the benefits for vulnerable populations. This calls for institutional synergy between Islamic financial institutions, agricultural cooperatives, and state policy frameworks.

From the Islamic moral economy perspective (Asutay, 2019), achieving food security requires both material sufficiency and ethical sufficiency. The balance between economic productivity and spiritual accountability ensures that development is sustainable, equitable, and consistent with Islamic principles. Thus, the paper examined the interrelationship between food security, national growth, and sustainable development in Nigeria through both empirical and Islamic lenses.

Findings from the correlation and regression analyses revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship among these variables. Specifically, national growth and sustainable development jointly predicted higher levels of food security, while Islamic financial instruments (*Zakat, Waqf, Qard al-Hasan, and Islamic finance*) emerged as key mediators enhancing this relationship.

These results affirm the Islamic view that economic growth and moral responsibility must coexist within a unified framework of *tawhid* (oneness of purpose) and *khilāfah* (stewardship). In Islam, material prosperity cannot be separated from ethical accountability. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

ليسَ الغنى عن كثرة العَرَضِ وَلَكِنَّ الغنى غنى النَّفْسِ

Which means, "True wealth is not in having many possessions, but in being content with oneself" (Hadith. al-Bukhārī. No. 6446).

This Hadith underscores that genuine national growth lies in distributive justice, social welfare, and spiritual enrichment, values that align with the Qur'anic mandate:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ﴾

Which means, "Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence" (al-Quran. al-Nahl: 90).

Therefore, an Islamic perspective on food security integrates both the economic dimension (production, access, and stability) and the ethical dimension (justice, compassion, and accountability). When applied to Nigeria, this model can help overcome persistent issues of inequality, food import dependency, and environmental degradation by rooting policies in *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare) and *ʿadl* (justice).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that addressing food insecurity in Nigeria requires both structural economic reforms and moral revitalization. Islamic principles offer a comprehensive framework that connects production efficiency, equitable distribution, and spiritual accountability. Empirical findings confirm that agricultural productivity and Islamic finance participation are positively correlated with GDP growth and food security outcomes.

To achieve sustainable national development, Nigeria must mainstream Islamic economic ethics into agricultural and food policies, leveraging *Zakat*, *Waqf*, *Qard al-Hasan*, and Islamic finance instruments to foster inclusive growth and moral responsibility. True development, from an Islamic viewpoint, is achieved when material prosperity coexists with justice, compassion, and stewardship of Allah's resources.

Islamic principles of justice, stewardship, moderation, and equitable resource management offer a holistic framework for ensuring food security and sustainable national growth. By applying these values, governments, communities, and individuals can create systems that promote ethical consumption, reduce poverty, and support long-term sustainability. Based on this, the following recommendation are made:

1. **Expand Islamic Financial Investment:** Government and Islamic financial institutions should enhance the use of *Zakat*, *Waqf*, and *Green Sukuk* to fund agricultural development and support rural farmers. Establishing Shariah-compliant agricultural funds can attract private investment in agricultural technology and innovation.
2. **Establish National Zakat and Waqf Boards:** Create a national framework to coordinate *Zakat* and *Waqf* funds for food security programs such as food banks, community farms, and nutrition projects targeting vulnerable households.
3. **Align Policies with SDGs:** Integrate Islamic social finance into Nigeria's agricultural and food security policies to achieve SDGs 2 and 12. Collaboration among the Ministry of Agriculture, Jaiz Bank, and Islamic organizations should provide *Qard al-Hasan* (benevolent loans) and microfinance programs for smallholder and women farmers.
4. **Promote Ethical Agricultural Entrepreneurship:** Incorporate Islamic entrepreneurship education into tertiary agricultural and business curricula to instill values of *amānah* (trust), moderation, and environmental care.
5. **Address Root Causes of Food Insecurity:** Resolve conflicts, increase agricultural investments, and strengthen climate adaptation strategies to improve resilience in food production.
6. **Develop Islamic Agricultural Financing:** Islamic banks should offer tailored financing tools such as *Qard al-Hasan* and *Mudarabah* for smallholder farmers to promote sustainable practices and avoid interest-based debt.
7. **Implement Integrated Islamic Finance Policies:** Adopt integrated Islamic finance strategies leveraging *Zakat*, *Waqf*, and *Green Sukuk* to strengthen rural credit access, empower farmers, and promote sustainable agriculture.
8. **Address Environmental Challenges:** Mitigate climate-induced food shortages by investing in irrigation infrastructure and climate-resilient crops.
9. **Integrate Food Security in Development Programs:** National and regional development plans should prioritize food security, reflecting Islamic ideals of justice, equity, and public welfare.
10. **Encourage Further Research:** Future studies should explore additional Islamic financial mechanisms for advancing food security and sustainable development.

By implementing these measures, Nigeria can effectively harness Islamic finance to build a food-secure, equitable, and sustainable economy.

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