

## Determinants of Pork Consumption among Rural Households in Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Pig production is a common feature in rural areas of Rivers State. This has influenced consumption level to a relatively high level. This study investigates the determinants of pork consumption among rural households in Ogba region of Rivers State. Data was collected from 100 randomly selected respondents. This study found that consumption level of pork is moderate and it was found that cultural belief, household size, cost and supply were the significant factors that influenced pork consumption.

**Key words:** Pork consumption, rural households, Rivers State, Nigeria

### INTRODUCTION

The domestication of pigs is a very common activity in the rural areas. This may be as a result of the relative low cost associated with the domestication and production. Goodwin (1973) stated that pigs are kept solely for the production of meat and it is claimed that pigs produce more edible dishes than any other type of livestock. According to him, pork is light in colour when compared with other red meats and has a fresh moist appearance. Pigs have the ability to convert a wider range of food materials into edible human food yielding a high calorific value and edible protein producing meat (pork) which differs from the flesh of the farm animals in texture, flavour and certain nutritive properties (Akinyosoye, 1976). Joy and Wibberley (1979) confirmed this when they reported that 3kg of food consumed by pig can produce 1kg of meat. Koreske (1971) emphasized the value of pork by asserting that it yields on the average 4-5 times more meat than cattle per ton of live-weight. Pork carcass is a local meat which has recently gained acceptability among Nigerians because of its palatability and high protein content and constitute an important component of the food of numerous Nigerian households, except for a few groups for personal reasons, that regard eaten pork as a taboo. Nodu *et al.* (1999) stated that two factors that affect the development of the swine industry include the fact that the swine industry does not have an increased prospect of expanding markets. However, Beynon (1990) noted that pig meat is the most versatile of all meats, marketed as fresh pork, bacon, ham and other added value products such as pate sauges and pies. Pork consumption in Britain, according to Beynon (1990), has risen by around 17% during the 1980s.

Pork meat is commonly consumed for its taste and tenderness. However, many people have other reasons for consuming it. The rural parts of Rivers State is adorned with piggeries. This is supposed to influence the consumption level but unfortunately it has not. This study, therefore, investigates the determinants of pork consumption among rural households in Rivers State.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Ogba district of the Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni local government area of Rivers State was chosen for this study because of the strategic importance of the district in the economy of the area. The district was stratified into 2 zones to include Usomini and Egi. A total of 25 households were selected from the 2 zones and 100 respondents were randomly selected from the 25 households identified. Data analysis was by the use of frequency, percentage and multiple regression.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents.

From Table 1, majority (51%) of the respondents were male while a relatively high percentage were married. Also most of the respondents were in the middle age category. The findings as revealed from the Table 1 shows that most respondents had household size of between 1 and 8.

The consumption level (frequency) of pork presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	(%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	51	51
Female	49	49
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	33	33
Divorced	13	13
Married	42	42
Widowed	12	12
<b>Age</b>		
<25	39	39
25-35	29	29
36-45	20	20
> 45	12	12
<b>Household size</b>		
None	33	33
1-3	23	23
4-6	21	21
7-8	13	13
> 8	10	10

Table 2: Consumption level of pork

Frequency of consumption	Not often	Often
Daily	75 (75)*	25 (25)
Once a week	29 (29)	71 (71)
Twice a week	20 (20)	80 (80)
More than twice a week	40 (40)	60 (60)

\*Figures in parentheses are percentages

Majority of the respondents indicated that they do not consume pork daily. However, a high percentage indicated that pork is consumed once a week while a greater majority indicated that they consume pork twice a week. This finding suggests that pork is consumed generally by most respondents twice in a week. This indicates that consumption is high relative to other types of meat.

Table 3 presents the estimates of the coefficients of the parameters of the multiple regression model.

The high  $R^2$  of 0.984 indicates that about 98.4% variation in the consumption of pork could be explained by the explanatory variables included in the equation. The coefficient of cultural belief was positively correlated with consumption of pork. This suggest that cultural belief significantly influenced consumption of pork. Several cultures in the study area do not consume pork because they perceive pig as unclean and unfit for consumption. However, there is no taboo associated with the consumption of pork in the area. The implication of the finding is that if culture favours pork consumption will likely increase otherwise it will decrease. Household size correlated positively with consumption suggesting that the higher the household size the higher the consumption.

Cost of pork correlated positively with consumption, suggesting that the higher the cost of pork, the higher the consumption and vice versa. This does not however, conform with theoretical expectation. Supply of pork correlated positively with consumption of pork

Table 3: Relationship between demographic characteristics and consumption of pork

Explanatory variables	Coefficient	T-ratio
Constant	4.09E-02	0.127
Age	0.257	1.089NS
Culture	1.123	5.175**
Household size	0.754	3.750**
Gender	0.327	0.756NS
Cost	0.651	3.126**
Supply	0.637	2.491*
Marital status	0.367	1.458NS
Multiple R	0.992	
$R^2$	0.984	
Adj $R^2$	0.981	
F-ratio	365.586**	

NS: Not Significant; \*Significant at 0.05 level; \*\*Significant at 0.01 level

suggesting that a higher supply will influence consumption and vice versa. This conforms with theoretical expectation. However, Age, gender and marital status were not significant factors in determining pork consumption in the study area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study formed that consumption level of pork meat was moderately high. It is however important to improve on the consumption by creating more awareness about the products from pig.
- Cultural belief significantly and positively influenced pork consumption. The nutritional importance of pork should be given more attention so that individuals would exploit the values therein.
- Household size influenced pork consumption. There is need to create more awareness on healthy ways of raising pigs so that more people will know and learn.
- Supply of pork influenced pork consumption. A higher production of pig should be the main concern of livestock extensionists so that there will be readily available pork for consumption.

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