

**SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME AND PUPILS' COMMITMENT TO
SCHOOLING IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN OYO-SOUTH
SENATORIAL DISTRICT, OYO STATE**

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between school feeding and pupils' commitment to schooling. Furthermore, the study foraged into the challenges facing the home-grown school feeding programme in the state with a view to making the programme effective and sustainable. Survey research design with a triangulated method of data collection was adopted for the research. The population of the study consisted of 4,900 teachers and 10 local inspectors of education in the study area. Stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select 1,590 teachers and head teachers. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 local inspectors of education. Two major instruments used for data collection were 'School Feeding Programme Scale' (SFPS) and 'Pupils' Commitment to Schooling Questionnaire' (PCSQ). The established reliability coefficients of the instruments were .78 and .89 respectively. The data collected were analysed by the use of descriptive and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics at .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between school feeding and pupils' commitment to schooling. Based on the findings, the study recommends amongst other things that the government in Nigeria should sustain and improve on the home-grown school feeding programme

Keywords: *School feeding, primary schools, pupils' commitment, schooling,*

Introduction

Education has become a huge investment and no country can afford to toy with its educational service delivery, as the only way to build a nation is to provide quality and adequate educational opportunities for the youths (Sen, 1999). The Federal Government of Nigeria recognised the fact that it is through education that the potentials of individuals can be developed and transformed to become future leaders in all ramifications of life. Hence, the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) in the national policy on education opined that education is an instrument per excellence to realise developmental needs of the nation. Several efforts have been made by the nations' leaders in Africa aimed at improving educational service delivery. Such efforts included expansion of access to all levels of education, improved funding and supervision of instruction. In spite of these efforts,

education industry in Nigeria and most of other African countries is still bedeviled with a myriad of problems. Moja (2000) listed hunger, dropout, poor enrolment, poor nutrition as some of the problems confronting education service delivery in Nigeria. School feeding programme (SFP) is therefore, one of the interventions the government deemed fit to confront head-long some of these problems especially in primary level of education in the country. School feeding programme, where it has been implemented, showed a strong correlation with student's/pupil's commitment to learning. Specifically, Ramadhani (2014) reported that provision of school-based meal to pupils increased their enrolment and attendance in Tanzania. The Federal Government of Nigeria has also adopted school feeding programme as an intervention to arrest dropout, absenteeism and to increase enrolment in schools. Oyo State in 2017 has also joined other states in the implementation of school feeding programme.

School feeding programme is an intervention which tries to reduce hunger among pupils with a view to improving pupils' enrolment, concentration and reduction of dropout rate. School feeding programme is also intended to improve farming and create jobs. According to Remadhani (2014) school feeding programme refers to provision of food to school-going children. Similarly, Bundy et al (2009) has defined school feeding programme as an intervention that is aimed at preventing short term hunger among school children, with a view to improving enrolment, attendance and even academic performance. Generally, there are two major types of school feeding programme. Yendaw and Dayour (2015) and Taylor and Ogbogu (2016) identified in-school feeding and take-home ration as the major modalities of school feeding programme. In-school or on-site school feeding occurs where children are fed at school. The second modality, that is, take-home ration, operates where families are given food if their children attend school. In-school feeding itself can be either real meal or snacks.

Review of extant literature on the origin of school feeding programme reveals that there is no consensus about when and how the phenomenon originated. Food and Agricultural Organisation (2005) believes that as early as 1790, teaching and feeding of hungry children had begun in Munich, Germany. According to the author, the programme later spread to France in 1867.

The Federal Government of Nigeria started what is known as Home-Grown School Feeding Programme with a phased pilot rollout beginning with 12 states and the Federal Capital Territory, selected from the six geo-political zones in the nation. It is noteworthy that Oyo State was among the states selected to pilot the programme.

The programme finally took off on January 30, 2017 in Oyo State. At its take-off, the state government intended to feed 158,450 pupils spread across 2,408 primary schools. (Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All, 2017). The programme covered the 33 local government areas in the state. The Oyo South Senatorial District comprising of 9 Local Government Areas of Ibadan Municipal and Ido was among the beneficiaries of the school feeding programme in the state. For smooth running of the programme, the state government provides overall policy. The 33

local government authorities were involved in the implementation process of the programme. The Oyo State Government pledged N72.2 million to 2,578 food vendors at the takeoff of the programme.

The state government and other stakeholders invested large sum of financial resources in school feeding programme because of the perceived benefits of school feeding programme in relation to improved enrolment, attendance, engagement and reduction in students' dropout rate. Furthermore, studies have postulated a strong relationship between school feeding and health status of school children (Ahmed, 2004).

Several studies have found a strong relationship between poverty and parents' inability to send their children to school. Oyefade (2014) observed that poverty in its different dimensions prevent school-age children from attending schools and keeping them there. Provision of school meal therefore, serves as incentive to parents to send their children to school. School feeding at least offset the indirect cost of education borne by parents. Akanbi (2013) also noted that positive results have been reported where school feeding had been carried out. For instance, studies carried out in Ghana, Mali, Cambodia to assess the impact of school feeding on enrolment and attendance showed an increase in enrolment and attendance as a result of school meals. Taylor and Ogbogu (2016) reported an interesting study carried out in Pakistan, where school meal and particularly take-home ration in form of a tin or two tins of oil improved enrolment and attendance. Similarly, Ahmed (2004) carried out a study in Bangladesh on impact of school feeding on commitment to schooling. Results found a positive relationship between school-based meal distribution and increased enrolment. Further, the result revealed a decline in dropout rate by 2%. In Jamaica, the study conducted by Del-Rosso (1999) and Gelli (2006) indicated that provision of school meal significantly increased school attendance particularly among girls.

The studies carried out by Lamber (2009) in Burkina Faso and World Food Programme (2006) in Zambia had similar results as far as the impact of school feeding on enrolment and attendance was concerned. The study carried out in Burkina Faso revealed that enrolment increased from 50.5% in 2003/2004 to 69.7% in 2008. The study carried out in Zambia revealed a striking resemblance to that of Burkina Faso as introduction of school meal increased enrolment in the basic school from 11.1% in 2002 to 20.1% in the year 2004. The study also reported that there was a reduction in the dropout rate from 6% to 3% in the period mentioned.

World Food Programme opined that there are 66 million children attending school with short-term hunger (WFP, 2013). The report went further to show that 48% of the hungry school children come from sub-Saharan Africa. No wonder WFP, (2006) noted that hunger is a pervasive and damaging phenomenon which prevents many children from attending and staying in schools. Yendaw and Dayour (2015) are of the opinion that hunger or even malnutrition have far reaching effects on child's cognitive development. Besides, when a child is hungry there is a little chance that he or she will be willing to attend school. Hunger is also a limiting factor to students' concentration in the classroom. Lending credence to the above assertion, Del-Rosso (1999) observed that children suffering from short-term hunger would have difficulty in concentrating and performing classroom

tasks. Children from rural areas in Africa are likely prone to short-term hunger and thereby unable to concentrate in class. Some children have to trek long distances from their homes to the location of the schools. Hence, they would have almost used up the calories in their body before they get to the school. Grantham, Gregory, Chang and Walker (1998) noted that provision of school meal will assist a hungry child to concentrate in the class as a hungry child is not likely to be interested in any classroom work. School-based food distribution if properly implemented, can alleviate hunger and malnutrition in school-going children, thus, helping the school children to concentrate and increase their attention span.

Statement of the Problem

This study is concerned with problem of hunger and general non-commitment to schooling among school-age children in Oyo State. Hunger has been identified as one of the major causes of students' lackadaisical attitude to schooling. As a result of poverty, or cultural meal practices, over 140 million children in Africa, south of Sahara experience hunger. Issue of hunger as a result of poverty, and other contextual factors had led to students dropping out of school, low enrolment and even lack of concentration in the classrooms. Maslow's (1943) theory of hierarchy of human needs cited in Olowo (2002) postulated that food is a physiological need, and until it is satisfied, an organism cannot aspire to other higher needs. Hence, adequate meals are essential for students' health status and mental alertness. In order to ameliorate the problem of low enrolment, poor attendance and lack of engagement on the part of the pupils, the Oyo State government has put in place school feeding programme to motivate pupils to schooling. This study is therefore set out to assess the relationship between school feeding programme and students' commitment to schooling in Oyo South Senatorial District, Oyo State.

Purpose of the Study

This study was undertaken to assess the relationship between school feeding programme and students' commitment to schooling with a view to;

1. Assess the relationship between school feeding programme and students' enrolment.
2. Assess the relationship between school feeding programme and students' attendance in schools
3. Assess the relationship between school feeding programme and students' engagement in schools
4. Identify challenges facing effective implementation of school feeding programme in Oyo State.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant for the following:

1. It will provide enlightenment or knowledge to school administrators elsewhere about how to implement or improve school feeding programme.
2. The study will serve as a feedback to the government of Oyo State about the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme in tackling issues of dropout, absenteeism and low enrolment.

Research Questions

1. Is the school feeding programme effectively implemented in the sampled area?
2. What are the challenges facing school feeding programme in Oyo State?

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between school feeding programme and pupils' commitment to school.

Method and Procedure

The study was conducted in the Oyo-South Senatorial District which comprised of all the nine local government areas in Ibadan Municipality and Ido. The areas can be described as the Ibadan core areas. Though, the area had been exposed to western education since time immemorial, families still suffer from poverty which may prevent them from sending their children to school. It is not uncommon to find school-age children hawking goods at motor parks and other areas when they should be in classrooms. Introduction of school feeding programme, is therefore, meant to stem this ugly situation. A survey research design was adopted for the study through a triangulated data collection. The population of the study consisted of teachers, headmasters, in the primary schools located in the 10 local government areas of the state. In addition, the local inspectors of education in the areas were part of the population of the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1,590 teachers out of 4,900. The 10 local inspectors of education were purposively selected and added to the teachers and headteachers sample. The total number of the respondents was 1,600.

The instrument developed by the researcher for data collection was tagged School Feeding Programme Questionnaire (SFPQ). The instrument has four sections. Section A requested for demographical information from the study participants. Section B elicited information about the school feeding programme in the state. The modus operandi, practice and administration of the programme were captured in this section of the questionnaire. Section C relates to the variable of pupils' commitment to schooling. As used in this study, the indicators of commitment to schooling are enrolment, attendance and student engagement in the classroom. Engagement is measured by pupils' attention, concentration and hands on task. Section D sought for information about the challenges facing the programme in the state. An adapted Likert rating scale was used for scoring of responses of the study participants

The instrument was validated by giving it to experts in Test and Measurements and Educational Management. As a result, some items were reframed while others were struck out. Test-retest method of reliability test was used. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics was used to analyse the data collected. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of .78. The instrument was administered on teachers, head teachers and the 10 local inspectors of education in the study area. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics were used for data analysis.

Results

Research Question 1

Is the school feeding programme effectively implemented in the sampled area?

Table 1: Responses of the Respondents on the Implementation Effectiveness of the SFP

S/N	Items Responses on the effective implementation of SFP	Mean	SD
1	The SFP covers all the classes in the primary schools	2.11	.89
2.	School meals are provided for the pupils every school day	3.19*	.64
3.	The SFP is properly funded by the government and other stakeholders	2.52*	.88
4.	The SFP caters for all the primary schools in the 33 local government areas of the state	2.54*	.77
5.	There is a policy framework which ensures sustain ability of the programme.	2.94*	.61
6.	The quality/quantity of the school meals is satisfactory	2.34	.66
7.	The school feeding programme is properly monitored and supervised	2.52*	.24
8.	The programme enjoys the support of international development partners	2.35	.54

The result on the above table indicated that the programme, on the average, has been effectively implemented as only five out of eight items that assessed the effectiveness of implementation scored above the criterion mean of 2.5.

Research Question Two

What are the challenges facing the school feeding programme in Oyo State?

Table Two: Challenges Facing School Feeding Programme in Oyo State

S/N	ITEMS	SD	MEAN
1.	Irregular and inefficient funding	3.38	.89
2	Lack of structured community participation	3.37	.91
3	Lack of framework for data collection, collation and analysis	1.94	.24
4	Overcrowded classrooms as a result of increased enrolment	2.57	.78
5.	Over workload for teachers	2.64	.61
6	Water is not served along with the meals and students to don't have access to quality water in most school premises	2.56	.89
7	Quantity of the meals is grossly small	1.61	.76

There are a number of challenges facing implementation of school feeding programme in the state as indicated in the above table. Five items out of seven scored 2.50 and above the criterion mean is

2.50. This implies that the five items listed are valid challenges facing school feeding programme in Oyo State

Hypothesis

Ho₁. There is no significant relationship between school feeding programme and pupils' commitment to schooling in Oyo State.

Table 3: Relationship Between School Feeding Programme and Pupils' Commitment to Schooling.

Variable	X	S.D	N	Df	r.cal	t.tab
School Feeding Programmes	4.15	3.49	1600	1598	.144	.088
Pupils' Commitment to Schooling	16.14	3.64				

The result as shown on the above table indicated that there is a significant relationship between school feeding programme and pupils' commitment to schooling ($r_{cal}=.144$, $df=1598$, $t_{tab}=.088$)

Discussion

The result of the first research question indicated that the majority of the respondents agree that school feeding programme was effectively implemented though there are areas for improvement. This finding agrees with the report of the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (2018). This finding is also in tandem with the report of Taylor and Ogbogu (2016) who opined that school feeding programme recorded success in the sister state of Osun. The success of the school meal probably resulted from long time planning. While Osun state started the programme in 2012, Oyo did not start until 2017. Experience borrowed from the sister state of Osun might have helped Oyo State to plan and execute the programme well.

The result of the second research question revealed that there were a number of challenges facing the scheme in Oyo State. This finding is supported by the report of Taylor and Ogbogu (2016) who identified some challenges facing the scheme in Oyo and Osun States respectively. Similarly, Ayoola (2014) found a number of challenges confronting provision of school meal in Nigeria particularly in Osun State. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2017) also espoused a number of challenges facing the execution of school feeding programme in Nigeria. Among other things, problems of flaws in targeting cooks, slow payment, communication gaps, limited resources as some of the challenges facing school feeding programme in Nigeria. The government has taken steps to address some of these challenges by proposing to fast track procedure for payment of cooks, provision of operation manual and policy, alternative sources of funding and need for monitoring and evaluation framework.

The result of the only hypothesis which probed whether there is a significant relationship

between school feeding programme and pupils' commitment to schooling, revealed that there is strong positive relationship between school feeding programme and pupils' commitment to schooling. This finding is in agreement with Akanbi (2013) who posited that when meals are provided in schools, parents are usually motivated to send their children to school and keep them there. Taylor and Ogbogu (2016) in a study that investigated impact of school feeding on pupils' enrolment and performance in Osun State, Nigeria, concluded that school feeding is a critical intervention which can improve enrolment, attendance and concentration in the classroom. Del-Rosso (1999) also opines that properly designed and effectively implemented school meal can alleviate short-term hunger and thereby induce school enrolment and attendance. Furthermore, the author maintains that school feeding programme also improves pupils' attention and concentration in the classroom. Corroborating the observation of Del-Rosso, Yendaw and Dayour (2015), in a study on the impact of school feeding on attendance, enrolment and retention, concluded that school feeding programme had significant impact on school enrolment and attendance. In addition, provision of school meal has contributed to reduction in dropout rate. In several studies, researchers found a strong positive relationship between provision of school meal and pupils' commitment to schooling. For instance, Ramadhani (2014) and Salee (2013) all reported a significant impact of school feeding on pupils' enrolment, attendance and a reduction in dropout rate.

Conclusion

The study examined the impact of school feeding programme on pupil's commitment to schooling. Commitment to schooling is measured in the study through enrolment, attendance and engagement. The study came to a conclusion, after review of extant literature and data analysis, that provision of school meal to children is a potent factor to stimulate enrolment, attendance and concentration in the classrooms.

Recommendations

In view of the conclusion of the study and the findings that emanated from data analysis, the following recommendations are made:

1. School feeding programme in Oyo State should be sustained irrespective of the political party in power because of the benefits of the programme.
2. The quality and quantity of the meal should be improved so as to further motivate the pupils to enroll, attend and be engaged in the classrooms.

Support of international development partners for sustained funding of the programme should be sought.

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