

Perception of Parents and Teachers on the School Feeding Programme in Public Primary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigates the perception of parents and teachers on the school feeding programme (SFP) in public primary schools in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. A sample of two hundred and thirty three (233) parents and teachers selected by means of stratified random sampling from a target population of three thousand (3000) were administered a well structured and validated questionnaire. Data collected were analysed by means of frequency counts, percentages, standard deviation. Findings revealed that the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state include that the programme helps in increasing pupils' enrollment rate and attendance, reduction of school refusal, absenteeism, and dropout rate among pupils; provision of good meals to pupils. There was no significance difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits, it was therefore recommended that adequate funding must be provided by the government and a management committee for the SFP should put in place in each school.

Keywords: School feeding programme and Public primary schools.

Introduction

Primary education is the foundation for a child's learning on which every other level of learning depends (Saidu, 2008; & Sen, 2010). According to Sulemana, Ngal and Majid (2013), school feeding programme (SFP) is an activity aimed at providing food to children in schools. The children can be fed in the school or given take-away home rations and families are given food if their children attend school. Bundy, D., Burbano, C., Grosh, M., Gelli, A., Jukes, M., & Drakes, L (2009). opined that school feeding can be defined as the provision of food to school children. Agbozo, Atitto and Abubakari (2017), stated that more than 169 countries provide meals to school children globally. SFP is in operation in both developed and developing nations (Oganga, 2013). About 7.6 million children in 22 states across Nigeria were being fed daily (Federal Government of Nigeria as cited in Vanguard Media Limited, 2018). Although the SFP is available in primary schools in Kaduna state of Nigeria, but adequate documentation has not been provided officially pertaining to the programme.

Bundy et al. (2009), has identified three types of SFP. They include in-school feeding, fortified high-energy biscuits and snacks, and take-home rations. In-School Feeding is a situation whereby meals are provided to pupils. The primary objective is to provide breakfast, mid-morning meals, lunch, or a combination (depending on the duration of the school day) to alleviate short-term hunger, increase attention span, facilitate learning, and obviate the need for children to leave the school to find food. In-school meals also act as an incentive to increase school access. Fortified high-energy biscuits and snacks is similar in a way to in-school meals, alleviating short-term hunger and micronutrient deficiencies, and improving learning. They can be part of a meals program, particularly in full-day schools, in which case they are given early in the day to alleviate short-term hunger. They are cheaper and easier to distribute than meals, and often aim to act as an incentive for increased school access, but they are less substantial

and their financial value to families is lower. Take-Home Rations function in a similar manner to conditional cash transfers. They transfer food resources to families conditional upon school enrollment and regular attendance of children. Rations are given to families typically once a month or once a term. They increase school participation and probably learning. The SFP being offered in public primary schools in Kaduna state is similar to the In-School Feeding.

Oganga (2013) conducted a study on feeding students: Examining views of parents, students and teachers on the world food program's school feeding initiatives in Chamwino District in Tanzania. School feeding programs have become a worldwide phenomenon and an agenda pushed by the International Development Agencies such as the World Food Program (WFP) with the assumption that it may contribute towards addressing barriers to poor students' enrollment and retention in primary schools in developing countries (WFP.org, undated). Different studies have shown the effectiveness of the school-feeding program in increasing students' enrollments, reducing students' dropout and improving students' health. However, most available studies do not show how the parents, teachers and students who are the key stakeholders of the program perceive the school feeding program in increasing students' enrollment and reducing students' dropout rate in developing countries.

Munuhe (2014) assessed the challenges facing SFP in Isinya Division, Kajiado County, Kenya. Specifically, the study examined the impact of accessibility on the smooth running of the SFP; the effects of sustainability on the SFP; and to establish the management challenges to SFP arising from increased enrollment of pupils in the beneficiary schools in Kajiado County. The study employed a descriptive survey design to explore the challenges facing SFP in Kajiado County. Sampling was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, purposive sampling method was used in selection of the sample schools, while in the second stage the same technique was used in selection of the respondents / informants. All the head teachers (or deputies) and SFP managers from the 49 schools under SFP programme from Isinya Division were interviewed while five schools were purposively selected for the focus group discussions. Seven schools were excluded from the final sample tally due to inaccessibility and hostility. Survey data was conducted from 42 primary schools from within Isinya Division. The respondents were head teachers, SFP managers, education officers, as well as SFP programme managers from World food programme (WFP). The study found that the current state of infrastructure within and outside the beneficiary schools has hindered the extent to which the beneficiaries are able to access the benefits of the SFP. The other findings showed that ranking top on hindrance to accessibility is: lack of tarred roads; inaccessibility to clean drinking water sources; and lack of permanent dwelling structures within the schools. Secondly, the findings showed that the schools reliance on external support (donors and the government) is extremely high. In all the schools visited, it was evident that the donors and the government contribute most of the resources required in running the SFPs, with very little being drawn from the local communities (mainly the parents). Finally, the findings showed that increased enrollment as a result of the introduction of free primary education and the SFP had significantly constrained the capacity of schools to adequately manage the meals programmes; and that the challenges facing the implementation of SFPs are diverse. Jackson (2012) made a cross-cultural comparison of perceptions about school feeding programs from Ghanaian and U. S. adults. Because of an increase in food insecurity over the past decade, the U.S. and many developing countries are focusing efforts on issues relating to child hunger. School feeding programs have been in existence for roughly 220 years but modifications have been made over the years to improve the quality of food they serve. Jackson's findings was supported by Ramadhani (2014) who made an assessment of the effects of SFP on school enrollment, attendance and academic performance in primary schools in Singida District, Tanzania and found that there was an increase in school enrollment and attendance and modesty have been achieved due to SFPs;

and few schools noticed static in terms of school enrollment and attendance to due poverty, long distance and poor negative attitude towards education.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Federal Government of Nigeria as cited in Vanguard Media Limited (2018), SFP was aimed at providing free school meals with food procured from local small holder farmers, yet it could be used to strengthen communities across in the state by increasing school enrollment and completion (primary school dropout rate was high in Kaduna state); improving child nutrition and health (Kaduna state has a very large population of chronically undernourished children in the Nigeria). The SFP in public primary schools is also capable of developing the child's total mental and physical wellbeing through the provision of one rich meal a day. The programme could also strengthen local agricultural economies by providing a school feeding market in which farmer can sell their produce; and creating employment opportunities with job in catering, processing, farming and so on. It is pertinent to note that low enrollment and high dropout rate of pupils in public primary schools are some of the challenges facing education in Kaduna state (Ministry of Education, Kaduna State, 2014).

The United Nation's Millennium Development Goal on education (which Nigeria; and by implication, Kaduna state agreed with) requires an increased enrollment of students in primary schools, improvement in child nutrition, and the reduction of the gender gap in enrollment in primary schools to meet the objectives (UNDP as cited in Oganga, 2013). Program and policy options to achieve this goal range from teacher training, abolition of school fees, school feeding and gender based campaigns to mandate pupil's enrollments (UNESCO as cited in Oganga, 2013). The Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR), released in 2015 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which has tracked progress on the EFA goals for the past 15 years, found that the gap between the poor and the average in Nigeria (which Kaduna is included) has increased, with the number of children from the poorest households going to primary school falling from 35 percent to 25 per cent in 2013.

The role of the school feeding programme in public primary schools is beginning to be viewed differently by some stakeholders. It was at this background that this study intended to make an empirical investigation on the reactions of parents and teachers on the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine:

1. The perceptions of parents and teachers on the benefits of the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state.
2. The perceptions of parents and teachers on the challenges of the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state.
3. The perceptions of parents and teachers on the solutions to the challenges of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state

Research Questions

1. What are the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state?
2. What are the perception of parents and teachers on the challenges of the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state?
3. What are the perception of parents and teachers on the solutions to the challenges of the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the challenges of the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state.
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the solutions to the challenges of the SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher after reading related empirical studies. The target population used was 3,000 primary school parents and teachers in Kaduna State. All the public primary schools were included in the targeted population. Two hundred and thirty three (233) respondents from six (6) different local government areas, male or female, parents or teachers, who have pupils in public primary schools participated in the study. The samples for the study were selected by means of stratified random technique.

The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot study on twenty five (25) parents and teachers in Zaria city. The test-retest was analysed with Pearson Moment of Correlation Reliability Co-efficiency Statistics which yielded 0.87. Four senior lecturers declared the instrument to be having face and content validity. The researcher approached the heads of the selected public primary schools to seek their approval for conducting the research. The researcher distributed questionnaire to the teachers who completed and returned them on the spot. The teachers were required to distribute through their pupils to parents respondents and collect later. The data collected were analyzed by means of frequency counts, percentages, standard deviation, grand mean, figures and tables where necessary.

Presentation of the Results

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question 1: *What are the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state?*

Table 1: Responses on Benefits of Schools Feeding Programme in Kaduna state (N= 233)

S/n	Items On Benefits	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	School Feeding Programme helps in increasing pupils enrollment rate	3.08	0.82	Agreed
2	School Feeding Programme helps in increasing pupils attendance in school	3.18	0.79	Agreed
3	School Feeding Programme helps in providing meal to children in school	3.04	0.84	Agreed
4	School Feeding Programme helps to reduce the cost of feeding pupils on the parents	2.04	1.04	Disagreed

5	School Feeding Programme has help in ensuring balance diet to all pupils involve irrespective of social status of the children	2.09	1.04	Disagreed
6	School Feeding Programme provides employment opportunity to people in the society	3.06	0.72	Agreed
7	School Feeding Programme enables the Government to spread its welfare measures to citizens	3.01	0.86	Agreed
8	School Feeding Programme enables Government to comply with United Nations Development programme	2.95	0.89	Agreed
9	School Feeding Programme helps reduce school refusal, absenteeism and dropout rate.	2.92	0.96	Agreed
10	School Feeding Programme is a way of breaking poverty circle	2.12	1.14	Disagreed
11	School Feeding Programme is capable of improving students health status and cognition	2.24	0.76	Disagreed
	Grand Mean	2.70	0.89	Agreed

Source: Field Work (2018)

The data shown in Table 1 reveals responses of Parents and Teachers on the benefits of SFP among pupils in public primary schools in Kaduna state. Research data on SFP were rated through responses on the questionnaire with items/ statements on a 4-point Likert scale of 4= Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Scores ranged from 25 to 100. Mean and Standard deviation scores of parents and teachers on benefits are given in Table 1. According to the responses analysis, it could be seen that the respondents agreed to 7 items while disagreeing with 4 items. The items with the highest mean score is item no 2 which specified that SFP helps in increasing pupils attendance in schools while the item with lowest means scores is item no 4, disagreeing to the statement that SFP helps to reduce the cost of feeding pupils on the parents. The overall result indicates that the Grand mean is higher than the mean cut-off point of 2.50 indicating agreement to the benefits of schools feeding programme in public primary schools in Kaduna State.

Research Question 2: *What are the perception of parents and teachers on the challenges of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state?*

Table 2: Responses on Challenges of Schools Feeding Programme in Kaduna state (N= 233)

S/n	Items	Mean	S.D	Decision
12	Due to large number of children, the food ratios sometimes do not go round	3.08	0.71	Agreed
13	Many teachers in public primary school grumble against the program because of their non-inclusion.	2.04	1.09	Disagreed
14	Inadequate funding is a challenge to School Feeding Programme in public primary schools.	2.90	0.79	Agreed
15	Management of School Feeding Programme to meet the increasing enrollment of pupils is a challenge.	2.93	0.84	Agreed
16	The School Feeding Programme does not cover all the pupils in primary school poses a challenge.	3.17	0.75	Agreed
17	Inadequate management of School Feeding Programme in various schools may pose a challenge to the School Feeding Programme	3.12	0.77	Agreed

18	State of nation economy may pose a challenge to the Management of School Feeding Programme in public primary schools	3.17	0.76	Agreed
19	School Feeding Programme may divert the attention of some pupils during lesson,	3.33	0.79	Agreed
	Grand Mean	2.96	0.81	Agreed

Source: Field Work (2018)

The data reveals in Table 2 is in relation to challenges of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state. The grand mean and standard deviation indicated are 2.96 and 0.81 respectively. Out of the 8 items under this construct, the respondents agreed to 7 items while disagreeing to one item. The item with the highest mean is item no 19 that SFP may divert the attention of some pupils during lesson while the item with the lowest mean score is item no 13 which specifies that many teachers in public primary schools grumble against the program because of their non-inclusion. However the Grand Mean is above the mean cut – off point of 2.50, indicating agreement to the challenges militating against the SFP in public Primary schools in Kaduna state.

Research Question 3: *What are the perception of parents and teachers on the solution to challenges on SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state?*

Table 3: Solutions to challenges on Schools Feeding Programme in Kaduna state (N=233)

S/n	Items on Solutions	Mean	S.D	Decision
20	There is need for adequate funding by Government.	3.45	0.78	Agreed
21	Government should ensure adequate monitoring and supervision	3.15	0.86	Agreed
22	Private organizations can assist government in achieving the aim of the School Feeding Programme	2.61	0.94	Agreed
23	Adequate management committee of School Feeding Programme in each public school should be established.	2.86	0.84	Agreed
24	Regular review of School Feeding Programme in public primary schools may be necessary to tackle the challenges.	3.01	0.75	Agreed
25	The need to improve on the physical infrastructure so that the targeted beneficiary schools can be accessed easily will help reduce some of the challenges.	3.48	0.74	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.09	0.82	Agreed

Source: Field Work (2018)

The data reveals in Table 3 shows the grand mean of 3.09 and S.D. of 0.82 respectively. In terms of solutions to challenges of SFP in the study area, questionnaire item No 25 tends to have the highest mean of (M = 3.48, SD = 0.74) which specifies the need to improve on the physical infrastructures so that the targeted beneficiary schools can be accessed easily. This will help to reduce some of the challenges. In the final analysis, all other items are above the cut-off mean point of 2.50 indicating agreement to the items that they are the solutions to the challenges facing SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state, Nigeria.

HO1: *There is no significant difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of school feeding programme in public primary schools in Kaduna state.*

Table 4: An independent t-test analysis on the difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of school feeding programme in public primary schools in Kaduna state

Designation	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Remark
Parents	66	29.00	7.32	.61	.54	
Teachers	167	28.40	5.18			

Source: Field Work (2018)

An independent sample t-test was explored to determine the difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state. The analysis presented in Table 4 revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the perception of parents (M= 29.00, SD = 7.32) compared to the Teachers (M= 28.40, SD =5.18), $t(231) = .61$, $p = .54$. The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = .805, 95% CL: -1.35 to 2.56) was very small (eta squared = .004). With the results of this analysis, the first null hypothesis of this research was supported and thus retained. This then implies that there is no difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna State.

HO2: *There is no significant difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the challenges of school feeding programme in public primary schools in Kaduna state.*

Table 5: An independent t-test analysis on the difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the challenges of school feeding programme in public schools in Kaduna state

Designation	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Remark
Parents	66	23.62	5.27	.59	.55	
Teachers	167	23.20	3.38			

Source: Field Work (2018)

An independent sample t-test was explored to determine the difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the challenges of school feeding programme in public primary schools in Kaduna state. The analysis presented in Table 5 revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the perception of parents (M= 23.62, SD = 5.27) compared to the Teachers (M= 23.20, SD =3.38), $t(231) = .59$, $p = .55$. The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = .699, 95% CL: .73 to 1.57) was very small (eta squared = .004). With the results of this analysis, the second null hypothesis of this research was supported and thus retained. This then implies that there is no difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the challenges of school feeding programme in public primary schools in Kaduna state.

HO3: *There is no significant difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the solutions of school feeding programme in public primary schools in Kaduna state.*

Table 6: An independent t-test analysis on the difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the solutions to school feeding programme in public schools in Kaduna state

Designation	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Remark
Parents	66	17.98	4.38	.43	.67	
Teachers	167	18.23	2.49			

Source: Field Work (2018)

An independent sample t-test was explored to determine the difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the solutions of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state. The analysis presented in Table 6 revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the perception of parents (M= 17.98, SD = 4.38) compared to the Teachers (M= 18.23, SD =2.49), $t(231) = .43$, $p = .67$. The

magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = $-.249$, 95% CL: -1.38 to $.89$) was very small ($\eta^2 = .004$). With the results of this analysis, the third null hypothesis of this research was supported and thus upheld. This then implies that there is no difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the solutions to SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study have revealed that there is no difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna State.

parents and teachers perceived the benefits of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state as helping in increasing pupils' enrollment rate and attendance, reduction of school refusal, absenteeism, and dropout rate among pupils; provision of good meals to pupils, welfare to citizens and employment to people in the state; as well as enhancing compliance with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on one hand and global best practises. The findings agreed with the findings of Jackson (2012), Oganga (2013), and Ramadhani (2014). Jackson (2012) and Ramadhani (2014) have revealed that SFP has increased pupils' attendance to schools and is an effective tool for students' enrollment and means of reducing dropout. Therefore, SFP could be explained in the context of Abraham Maslow's theory of Motivation (theory of needs) that SFP provides pupils the opportunity to satisfying their physiological needs when they attend schools.

Another finding has revealed that there is no difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the challenges of school feeding programme in public primary schools in Kaduna state the respondents perceived the challenges of SFP in the study area were that food ratios sometimes do not go round due to large number of pupils; inadequate funding; inadequate management of SFP to meet increasing enrollment; SFP do not cover all the primary school pupils; and that school feeding diverts pupils' attention during lessons. These findings agree with the findings of Munuhe (2014) who found that SFP was being hampered by inadequate management and implementation, and that increased enrollment of pupils was incapacitating schools from adequate management of the programme. It should be noted that lack of good management and adequate funding are sure threats to the success of the programme. Furthermore, respondents perceived solutions to the challenges of SFP as more adequate funding by the government, assistance from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), establishment of schools' SFP committees, regular of review of SFP, and improvement of infrastructures of the beneficiary schools. Adequate funding could be provided if NGOs assist.

The study revealed that, there is no difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the solutions to SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state. However, the establishment of SFP committee under the supervision of head teachers would be helpful. And when there is a regular revision of the programme, this would cater any eventualities that might occur any time. The three hypotheses were retained showing that there was no significance difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits, challenges and solution to challenges of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it was hereby concluded that the benefits of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna state include helping in increasing pupils' enrollment rate and attendance, reduction of school refusal, absenteeism, and dropout rate among pupils; provision of good meals to pupils, welfare to citizens and employment to people in the state; as well as an avenue for the government to comply with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The perceived challenges of SFP in the

study area were that food ratios sometimes do not go round due to large number of pupils; inadequate funding; inadequate management of SFP to meet increasing enrollment; SFP do not cover all the primary school pupils; and that school feeding diverts pupils' attention during lessons. Furthermore, the perceived solutions to the challenges of SFP were adequate funding by the government, assistance from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), establishment of schools' SFP committees, regular review of SFP, and improvement of infrastructures of the beneficiary schools; and there was no significance difference in the perception of parents and teachers on the benefits, challenges and solution to challenges of SFP in public primary schools in Kaduna State.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have serious implications for parents, teachers, pupils, government, researchers and all stakeholders involved in the affairs of public primary schools in Kaduna state.

Parents and teachers need to ensure that the SFP continues to thrive and give more encouragement to the children to attend school regularly. The government all stakeholders may need to find means of ensuring that SFP is sustained and well managed.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, we hereby made the following recommendations:

1. Each school should put in place a management committee for efficient and effective management of the school feeding programme.
2. Non-governmental organisations and well to do individuals should be allowed to assist the programme financially.
3. There should be regular review of the school feeding programme should embarked upon with a view to meet the challenges in the area.

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