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AN APPRAISAL OF THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM ON RETENTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of school feeding programme on primary school pupils' enrolment, retention and motivation. The study was guided by three objectives from which three research questions converted to three null hypotheses were generated and analyzed. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 333 participants (313 teachers, 10 Head teachers and 10 parents) from the total population of 2,582. A four-point Likert scaled Impact of School feeding on enrolment, motivation and retention of Pupils Questionnaire (ISFEMRPQ). Split-half method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded reliability co-efficient of section A ($r = 0.809$), section B ($r = 0.703$) and Section C ($r = 0.810$) for the three (3) sections of the questionnaire. The research questions were answered using frequency count and percentage while the hypotheses were tested using Mann-Whitney u-test and chi-square test at 0.05 level of significance. Results of the study revealed that, there is significant impact of the School Feeding Programme and Retention of Primary School Pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority with p-value of 0.000. Based on these findings, it was concluded that, pupils' retention significantly improve due to the impact of school feeding programme in Katsina Local Education Authority Katsina State Nigeria. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that, School feeding programme should be sustained in all the public primary schools in Katsina Local Education Authority. The study also recommended that efforts should also be intensified in the continuation of the school feeding programme to motivate pupil's participation and facilitate pupils' enrolment in public primary schools in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Key words: Appraisal, School feeding, Retention, Pupils

1. Introduction

School feeding program has been adopted in many countries throughout the world to fight short-term hunger by ensuring at least one daily nutritious meal to support access to education. The programme aimed at improving the Students' enrolment, School Attendance and retention in primary schools. According to World Bank (2008) School feeding program is a targeted social safety nets that provide both educational

and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing Enrolment rates, reducing absenteeism, and improving food security at the household level (World Food Programme 2009). School feeding programme according to World Bank is a targeted school safety nets that provide both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing enrolment rates, reducing absenteeism and improving food security at the household level (World Food Programme, 2009). While Adelakun (2009) defined School Feeding Programme as the provision of at least one meal such as breakfast or lunch for pupils every day in the school.

School Feeding Programs have been used as a means to distribute food to the pre-school and school-age children, as a food security net to improve their nutrition status, and also improve the general socio-economic conditions of rural communities as well as providing educational and nutritional benefits of participants. Hunger has been identified as one of the major problems affecting children education which led to low school Enrolment, low school retention and high student drop-outs (Ahmed, 2014). As a result of these reasons, the level of education in most developing countries has become very low although both private and social returns to education are recognized to be high in the educational sector (Alderman, Gilligan & Lehrer 2010).

School Feeding Program was mainly implemented with the purpose of achieving the following results; increase children retention in schools, alleviate short term-hunger, improve nutritional status and improve micronutrient status and increase learner's academic performance (United Nations World Food Programme 2004). Hungry children encounter difficulties to concentrate and perform complex tasks than well-nourished ones. Because poor children do not get the basic nutritional building blocks from birth, they will be unable to learn easily. Studies show that by the time they grow to primary school age, most of the damages have occurred to them and in fact such damages are irreversible (Buhl, 2011).

The problem of pupils' poor retention in primary school becomes a major concern to the government in katsina state. School children have poor performance in primary schools in some cases they do not sustained studies at all; they drop out! Some pupils are compelled by the circumstances beyond they can adjust to retain themselves in schools because they are not provided with the food. School children continue to become habitual late comers or even play truancy which in most of the times do not augur well to their performance. This problem may not be unconnected to the lack of feeding as the basic need for retention of pupils in schools and for them to effectively study.

Hunger would not allow pupils to sustain schooling talk less of good performance. School feeding alone does not address the issue of quality of education but also boost the retaining of pupils in schools. This is because most of the children who go to public primary schools in both urban and rural areas in the state come from the vulnerable and low-income families. Retention as used in the study means keeping the pupils' in school. Retention in school is also referred to as being held back in which children are held in school to continue with their peers regardless of academic performance (Weinreb & Wehler, 2002).

The Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with some donor organizations such as New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), and other International Development Partners (IDPs); introduced Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme (HGSFHP) for the first time in Nigeria in 2005 with the aim of improving the primary schools' enrolment and regular attendance. The programme was officially launched on Monday 26th September, 2005. Twelve (12) states were selected by the Federal

Government for the pilot study of the programme and positive result was obtained. The states were Osun, Bauchi, Edo, Enugu, FCT, Imo, Kano, Kogi, Nassarawa, Niger, Ogun and Yobe. The present Government in collaboration with the states government re-introduced the programme as a social safety package for primary school education. In Katsina state however not all primary schools were enrol in the program but selection some across the state. The aim of this study is therefore to appraise the impact of the feeding on retention of pupils as one of the indices for designing the programme. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate on the impact of the implementation of school feeding program on retention of primary school pupils in Katsina State, Nigeria.

2. Objective of the Study

The study was guided by the following research objective;

To examine the impact of school feeding program on retention of primary school pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority, Katsina State

2.1 Research Question

What is the impact of the School feeding programme on retention of Primary School Pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority, Katsina State?

2.3 Hypothesis

There is no significant impact between school feeding programme and retention of primary school pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority, Katsina State, Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design was used because it allows the researcher to collect data at one point in time. Bhasin, (2019) buttressed descriptive research as the suitable choice if researcher wants to learn about the trends of a particular variable on a population. The population of the study covered participants of 582 public primary school teachers, 45 Head teachers and 108 School Board Management Committee members. The sample of the study as guided by the research advisor was 333. The participants were 256 classroom teachers, 10 head teachers and 67 SBMC members randomly selected. Chi-square was used in testing the null hypothesis.

4. Data Presentation

Table 1: Summary of Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire

No. of Questionnaire Dispatched	No. of Questionnaire Retrieved
333 (100%)	333 (100%)

Table 1, Shows the number of questionnaires dispatched and returned for the analysis. Three hundred and thirty three (100%) copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the same number of respondents and same number 333 (100%) was retrieved and used for the data analysis.

4.1 Data Analysis

Research question: What is the impact of the School feeding programme on retention of Primary School Pupils in Katsina State?

With regard to the impact of school feeding program in retaining the attendance of primary school pupils, the following items were used to survey how the participants experienced it. Hence their responses were used to address the research question of the study as contained on table 2.

Table 2: School Feeding Programme on Retention of Primary School Pupils in Katsina State

	SA(%)	A(%)	U(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	Total(%)
Free school meals attract and retain pupils in school	165(43.7%)	193(51.1%)	19(5%)	0	1(0.3%)	333(100%)
Free meals in public primary school increases retention level of pupils in school	140(37%)	214(56.6%)	20(5.3%)	3(0.8%)	3(0.8%)	333(100%)
Free school meals helps in retaining pupils to complete the academic session and proceed to another class	130(34.4%)	215(56.9%)	30(7.9%)	1(0.3%)	2(0.5%)	333(100%)
The free school meals makes pupils to reduce truancy in school	134(35.4%)	204(54%)	36(9.5%)	3(0.8%)	1(0.3%)	333(100%)
A large group of pupils run away from school when they realized there is no meal in the school for the day	134(35.4%)	194(51.3%)	41(10.8%)	3(0.8%)	6(1.6%)	333(100%)
Before the introduction of school meal, children hardly stay in school to closing hours	131(34.7%)	204(54%)	35(9.3%)	0	8(2.1%)	333(100%)
Free school meal may help in retaining pupils and gives them room for active class participation	126(33.3%)	219(57.9%)	28(7.4%)	1(0.3%)	4(1.1%)	333(100%)
Free school meal builds good relationship among pupils in school	137(36.2%)	203(53.7%)	35(9.3%)	1(0.3%)	2(0.5%)	333(100%)
Free school meal programme helps in controlling pupils to abide by the school rules and regulations effectively	143(37.8%)	191(50.5%)	43(11.4%)	0	1(0.3%)	333(100%)
Free school meal in public primary schools makes pupils to be punctual	133(35.2%)	213(56.3%)	32(8.5%)	.0	0	333(100%)
Free school meal develops interest of learning among pupils which improves their retention in school	119(31.5%)	213(56.3%)	46(12.2%)	0	0	333(100%)
Free school meal improves parents teachers relationship which motivates pupils retention	120(31.7%)	186(49.2%)	72(19%)	0	0	333(100%)
Total	1612(35.5%)	2449(54%)	437(9.6%)	12(0.3%)	28(0.6%)	

In response to the question above, the overall responses on the impact of school feeding programme on retention of primary school pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority Katsina State, 35.5% and 54% strongly agreed or agreed, 9.6% undecided while 0.3% and 0.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed on the impact of school feeding programme on retention of primary school pupils in in Katsina Educational Authority of Katsina State. To sum it all, 89.5% of the respondents indicated that pupils staying in school was influenced by the provision of feeding by the government. By implication, there seems to be positive impact of school feeding programme on retention of primary school pupils in Katsina State.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis of the study stated that there is no significant relationship between school feeding programme and retention of primary school pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square Statistics of Relationship Between School Feeding Programme and Retention of Primary School Pupils in Katsina State

	N	Median	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Remark
Feeding Programme						
Retention	333	21.00	296.552	377	0.000	Sig.

Table 3 presents the chi-square test of the Relationship between the School Feeding Programme and Retention of Primary School Pupils in Katsina State. The median value is 21.00, the chi-square calculated is 296.552, degree of freedom is 377 and the p-value is 0.000. Since the p-value obtained was less than the alpha value, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This means that, there is significant relationship between the school feeding programme and retention of primary school pupils in Katsina State. Thus, school feeding programme retains primary school pupils in Katsina State.

4.3 Summary of the Findings

In the nutshell, the study found positive relationship between the school feeding programme and retention of primary school pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority of Katsina State.

5. Discussion of the Findings

The hypothesis of the study stated in clear term that there is no significant relationship between school feeding programme and retention of primary school pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority, Katsina State, Nigeria. Contrary to this assertion, the finding of the study buttressed the fact that there is relationship between school feeding and retention of pupils in primary schools of Katsina Education Authority. The result agrees with the finding of Ogbogu and Taylor (2016) who found the school feeding programme has resulted in an increase in pupils' retention, regularity and punctuality in school attendance. Also Dogara (2018) revealed that there is significant influence of school feeding programme on retention and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kaduna State. It was also revealed in some studies that, school feeding programme enhanced active participation of the pupils in class; and influenced the dropout rate of the pupils (Mkanyika, 2014). Certain factors such as illness, work for money/food, domestic

work, school hour hunger and long distance to school usually affect students' retention (Dheressa, 2011). However, the studies have shown that, school feeding programme has the power to annul the negative effect of such factors on pupils' retention. It is possible that school feeding improves the retention of pupils because some school children have to find the necessity of subsistence to themselves before going to classes. As a result of this feeding program, such pupils' burden of hawking or engaging in one sort of hustling or another is reduced because they eat in school and this eventually retained them regularly in schools.

6. Conclusion

It is worth noting that the study concluded that pupils' retention improves due to the impact of school feeding programme in Katsina Local Education Authority, Katsina State, Nigeria.

7. Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended that School feeding programme was found to be a positive factor for the retention of pupils in Katsina Local Education Authority, Katsina state. It should therefore be implemented and sustained across all schools in the state. An agency can be assigned to back up its implementation so as to maintain accountability and efficiency in the other parts of the state or the nation at large.

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