



A Study on the Effectiveness of School Feeding Programme on Attendance and Academic Performance of Learners in Kasungu District.

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Abstract: School feeding is the supply of food to children through schools (Adroque and Orlicki, 2013). It has been established that giving learners a daily meal at school might improve their academic achievement in several ways; by increasing attendance, improving certain cognitive function and attention to learning (Shabani N. Maijo, 2018). The purpose is to improve learning performance among learners but those schools under this programme still register school dropout cases and poor performance. Hence, this study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of school feeding programme on attendance and academic performance in public schools.

The study used quantitative research approach which determines relationships between collected data and observations based on mathematical calculations. The researcher used descriptive research design and random sampling method targeting a total of 100 respondents. Correlation findings further show that there was a significant correlation between school feeding program and pupils' retention rate. The findings show that improvement of school feeding program in terms of providing more and balanced meals would lead to better attendance and performance of pupils in class and other school activities

I. INTRODUCTION

School feeding program as a social safety net has been popular in developing countries as an instrument for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. These programs are frequently targeted towards populations that are food insecure and reside in areas with high concentrations of families from low socioeconomic status, or towards schools that face poor attendance and enrollment of

students. Every country across the globe strives to address the overwhelming social problems associated with globalization and social change (Husein, 2014). The United Nations formulated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to serve as a guide to member countries in addressing social problems. The first two goals of the SDG focus on the alleviation of extreme poverty and hunger. With these goals, the United Nations aimed at reducing the population of people who suffer from hunger and poverty across the world by more than 50% (United Nations, 2015).

According to the World Food Program (WFP, 2015), one of the ways to achieving the SDG 1 and 2 is by the implementation of the school feeding program (SFP). Additionally, the United Nations Hunger Task Force (UNHTF) proposed that the implementation of the SFP will help in reducing hunger among people and improve educational outcomes, specifically on school enrollment, attendance, completion and the academic performance of school children. Furthermore, the UNHTF also mentioned that implementing the SFP using locally produced goods rather than imported goods will provide employment opportunities to many people in the country which could eventually reduce the poverty rate. The SFP should include micronutrients supplements, improved sanitation, deworming and regular balanced diets necessary to ensure the growth and development of school children (Husein, 2014; WFP, 2013).

The current Malawi SFP is being implemented by the Ministry of Education with the support from WFP, Mary Meals and other NGO partners. It is operation in some of the districts in the country that includes Kasungu and as reached about 635,000 most vulnerable children who take a mid-morning Corn Soya Blend porridge which is locally



known as Likuni Phala (Lambers, WFP, 2009). Take home Relations are provided to girls and orphans to keep them in school. (WFP, 2009).

II. NEED OF THE STUDY.

The study will be important to several stakeholders, the National Government (Ministry of Education). Findings from the study will provide more information as to how to effectively implement School feeding programmes in public primary schools in Kasungu District.

Findings from the study will provide more information as to how to effectively implement School feeding programmes in public primary schools in Kasungu and that it will be significant to policy makers and policy implementers, as they would make use of the findings and recommendations of this study.

The study will also be important source of reference for future scholars and researchers. This study can be used as a guide for further research and adds to pool information on the subject of implementation of School feeding programmes. The future researchers may also use the findings of this study in getting related literature regarding this subject. It will also be of great value to tertiary institution students researching into similar area.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology outlines the plan and method that how the study is conducted. This includes Universe of the study, sample of the study, Data and Sources of Data, study's variables and analytical framework.

3.1 Population and Sample

According to Lavrakas-2008, target population refers to the group of individuals that the intervention intends to conduct research in and draw conclusions from, and the characteristics of the target population and any other subgroups should be described clearly. In this case the targeted population were teachers 100 in total.

Brinker (2006) defines sampling as a systematic selection of representative cases from the larger population. The Universe of the study consisted of ten public primary schools in Kasungu District. The minimum school sample size was set to 10 participants per school where within each participating school 10 teachers were randomly sampled from individuals. In cases where there were fewer teachers, all were selected

3.2 Data and Sources of Data

Research instrument are simply devices for obtaining information relevant to research project,

and there are many alternatives from which to choose from (Easwaramoorthy.M, et al-2006). Primary data was collected from respondents and the major instrument used for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed on four key points. 1. Strongly Agree (SD) 2. Agree (A) 3. Disagree (D) 4. Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A covers primary/demographic data about the teachers such as age, sex, marital status, level of education and experience, while Section B covers items eliciting responses on the variables of the study.

3.3 Theoretical framework

It has been claimed that school feeding programmes (SFPs) increase school participation among people who are poor or facing food insecurity. Three goals are associated with SFPs as the pathways by which school meals could affect pupil learning (Levinger, 1986; Kazianga et al., 2009; Bundy et al., 2009). Firstly, SFPs are a conditional transfer to pupils. They may induce families and motivate parents to enroll their children, to enroll them sooner or, following enrolment, encourage regular attendance.

Secondly, SFPs improve the nutritional status of school-age children over time, and alleviate short-term hunger in malnourished or otherwise well-nourished school children. As malnourishment has been shown to affect learning (Taras, 2005), SFPs can be expected to improve educational outcomes.

Thirdly, SFPs improve cognitive functions and academic performance via reduced absenteeism and increased attention and concentration due to improved nutritional status. Indirectly, by increasing the amount of food available to the household, SFPs could improve the nutritional status of household members who are not in school. In this way, SFPs are appealing because if properly designed and implemented they lead to an increased number of children being enrolled and improve their academic performance (Kazianga et al., 2009).

The impact has been backed by the theory of Maslow hierarchy of needs which is a theory in psychology propounded by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 book "A Theory of Human Motivation" explains human needs and the general patterns of motivating human beings. According to Maslow, human needs can be categorized under different levels of hierarchy ranging from the basic to the higher levels. These levels include the physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. The theory establishes



that certain needs, the basic needs such as food, water, air, and shelter must be met before the other higher-level needs

The basic physiological needs are probably fairly apparent—these include the things that are vital to our survival. Some examples of physiological needs include: Food, Water. In addition to the basic requirements of nutrition, air and temperature regulation, the physiological needs also include such things as shelter and clothing. Maslow also included sexual reproduction in this level of the hierarchy of needs since it is essential to the survival and propagation of the species. (Maslow 1943)

As we move up to the second level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the requirements start to become a bit more complex. At this level, the needs for security and safety become primary. People want control and order in their lives. So, this need for safety and security contributes largely to behaviours at this level. Some of the basic security and safety needs include financial security, health and wellness, Safety against accidents and injury. Finding a job, obtaining health insurance and health care, contributing money to a savings account, and moving into a safer neighborhood are all examples of actions motivated by the security and safety needs. Together, the safety and physiological levels of the hierarchy make up what is often referred to as the basic needs. (Martin, 2007)

The social needs in Maslow's hierarchy include such things as love, acceptance, and belonging. At this level, the need for emotional relationships drives human behavior. Some of the things that satisfy this need include friendships romantic attachments, family, social groups, community groups, churches and religious organizations. (Maslow 1943)

In order to avoid problems such as loneliness, depression, and anxiety, it is important for people to feel loved and accepted by other people. Personal relationships with friends, family, and lovers play an important role, as does involvement in other groups that might include religious groups, sports teams, book clubs, and other group activities.

At the fourth level in Maslow's hierarchy is the need for appreciation and respect. When the needs at the bottom three levels have been satisfied, the esteem needs begin to play a more prominent role in motivating behavior. (Martin, 2007)

At this point, it becomes increasingly important to gain the respect and appreciation of others. People have a need to accomplish things and then have their efforts recognized. In addition to the

need for feelings of accomplishment and prestige, esteem needs include such things as self-esteem and personal worth. People need to sense that they are valued and by others and feel that they are making a contribution to the world. Participation in professional activities, academic accomplishments, athletic or team participation, and personal hobbies can all play a role in fulfilling the esteem needs. People who are able to satisfy the esteem needs by achieving good self-esteem and the recognition of others tend to feel confident in their abilities. (Martin, 2007)

Those who lack self-esteem and the respect of others can develop feelings of inferiority. Together, the esteem and social levels make up what is known as the psychological needs of the hierarchy.

At the very peak of Maslow's hierarchy are the self-actualization needs. "What a man can be, he must be," Maslow explained, referring to the need people have to achieve their full potential as human beings.

According to Maslow's definition of self-actualization, "It may be loosely described as the full use and exploitation of talents, capabilities, potentialities, etc. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best that they are capable of doing. They are people who have developed or are developing to the full stature of which they capable." (Maslow 1943)

Self-actualizing people are self-aware, concerned with personal growth, less concerned with the opinions of others, and interested in fulfilling their potential.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides a basic understanding of human needs and the order in which they should be met. In doing so, the theory also establishes the fundamental connection between the physiological needs of humans which include food and water and higher-order needs such as academic successes. The theory draws a fine line between food and academic success and implicates that the desire of the human body to maintain homeostasis of salt, water, minerals, and micronutrients through the consumption of food are all part of the physiological needs of humans.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Gender of Respondents

This researcher sought to find out the gender distribution of the various respondents. The results showed that 52% of the respondents were female and 48% of the respondents were male.



Table 1. Showing the Gender of Respondents

Sex					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	48	48.0	48.0	48.0
	female	52	52.0	52.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.2 Age of the respondents

The study sought to find out the age of respondents. The results show that 10% are between the age of 20-30, 24% of the respondents between the ages of 31-40 years, 60 % of the respondents are between the age of 41-50 years and 6% are above 50 years of age.

Table 2. Age of the respondents

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
	31-40	24	24.0	24.0	34.0
	41-50	60	60.0	60.0	94.0
	Above 51	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.3. Class

This question aimed at finding out the class which the respondents teach, The results show 35% was from the infant classes, 40% of the respondents were from the junior where by 25% of the respondents where from senior class

Table 3. Class taught by respondents

Class					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	infant	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	junior	40	40.0	40.0	75.0
	senior	25	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.4. Marital status

The researcher aimed to find out the marital status of the respondents. The results shows that 70% of the respondents were married while 30 % of the respondents were single due to different reasons.



Table 4. Marital status of the respondents

		Marital			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	single	29	29.0	29.0	29.0
	married	71	71.0	71.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

4.5. Education level

The researcher aimed at finding out the level of education of the respondents. The results shows that 31% of the respondents were from PT4, followed by 30% who are from PT2, then 20 % of the respondents were from PT3 and 19 % of the respondents were from PT1.

Table 5. Level of Education

		Education			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	PT4	31	31.0	31.0	31.0
	PT3	20	20.0	20.0	51.0
	PT2	30	30.0	30.0	81.0
	PT1	19	19.0	19.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

4.6 Years of experience

The study aimed at finding out the experience of the respondents. The results showed that those respondents who had 1-10 years of experience were of 50% followed by those who had 21-30 years' experience were of 30% then 11-20 years' experience had 12% and then those respondents who had 31-40 years' experience represented 8%.

Table 6. Years of experience

		Experience			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1-10	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
	11-20	12	12.0	12.0	62.0
	21-30	31	31.0	31.0	93.0
	31-40	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
Valid	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.7. An increase in school enrolment due to the provision of school meals

The question sought to find out if there is an increase of enrolment due to the provision of school meals.



Table 7. *An increase in school enrolment due to the provision of school meals*

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	48	48%
Agree	40	40%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Disagree	10	10%
Total	100	100

From the table above, 48% of the respondents strongly agree, 40% agree, 2% strongly disagree and 10% of the respondents disagree to the question. Therefore 88% of the respondents agree that there is an increase in enrolment due to the provision of school meals which is in line with what Ahmed and del Ninno (2002) found in their study where they wanted to find out on the importance of school feeding on enrolment and attendance of pupils in

public primary school. The authors found that enrolment increased by 35 per cent over the one-year period between the programme start date and the end of its first year.

4.8 Improvement in pupil's performance

The question sought to find out if there is an improvement in performance of the students due to the school feeding program

Table 8. *Improvement in pupil's performance*

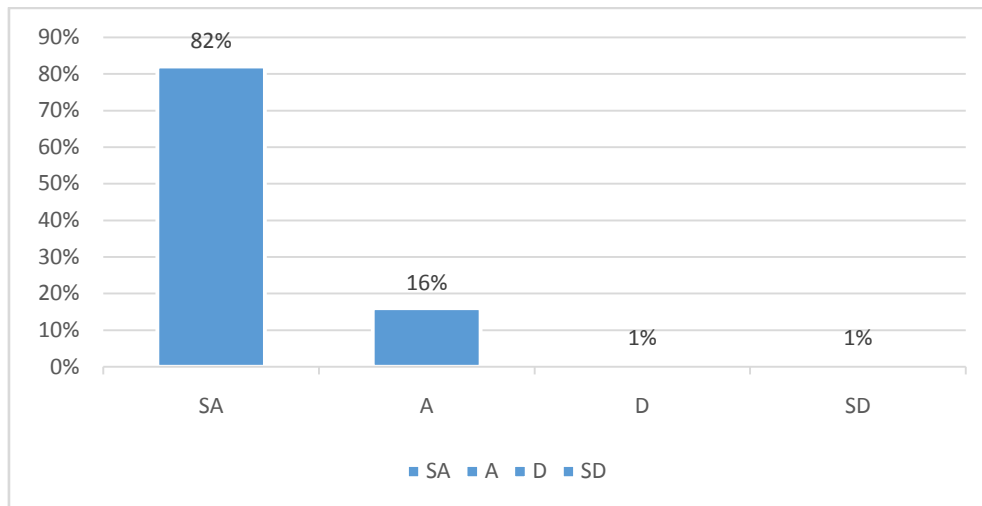
	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	55	55%
Agree	40	40%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Disagree	3	3%
Total	100	100

From the table above, the results show that 55% of the respondents strongly agree to the question, 40% of the respondents agree, 3% of the respondents strongly disagree and 2% of the respondents disagree. The results are similar with what Oyefade (2015) found in his study the author found that several factors with significant impact on many dimensions of poverty on school attendance and education quality, particularly early childhood malnutrition, deprivation based on gender and income inequality tend to be responsible. In many countries, such as Brazil, Philippines, Cambodia, Mali, El Salvador, Indonesia, Ghana, Bangladesh,

Ecuador, where school feeding programmes are implemented, data reveals that the programme has increased enrolment and attendance rates and performance of students over the years (Akanbi, 2015).

4.9. Insufficient classrooms and furniture to cope with increased enrolment

The researcher aimed to find out if there are sufficient of classroom and furniture to cope with increased enrolment



From the figure above, the results show that 82% of the respondents strongly agree to the question, 16% of the respondents agree, 1% of the respondents strongly disagree and 1% of the respondents disagree. The results are in line with what the (UNESCO, 2004) found in their study of timing of meals disrupts learning by taking away hours meant for school activities. The provision of meals early is not easy due to the long distances to

fetch water for food preparation, utilizing volunteers and lack of resources. An offsite prepared meal was adopted by countries like Peru, Lesotho and Nigeria to deal with problems associated with time taken from learning and other logistical disturbances. However, the challenge with this arrangement was the monotony of the food provided, quality and hygiene which needed to be addressed.

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
PT4	31	35.10	4.198	.754	33.56	36.64	26	46
PT3	20	33.75	4.064	.909	31.85	35.65	25	45
PT2	30	32.50	4.150	.758	30.95	34.05	24	42
PT1	19	34.16	6.021	1.381	31.26	37.06	27	52
Total	100	33.87	4.605	.460	32.96	34.78	24	52

ANOVA

OVERALL						
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Between Groups	104.824	3	34.941	1.682	.176	
Within Groups	1994.486	96	20.776			
Total	2099.310	99				

V. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The gender of the respondents in the first place indicated that females showed more dominance than Male respondents. Age ranged from

20 years to 50 and above and it indicated that respondents within the range of 41-60 were in good number compared to others. In the same line many of them were teachers who taught in infant levels, it has also shown that a larger group is married and



that PT4 Level respondents were in good number than others. Finally, the results showed that those who were more experienced were those within the range of 11-20 years of teaching.

Based on the findings, the researcher further presents the discussion of the results detailing quantitative analysis. To establish existence of relationship, Pearson r was employed at 95% confidence interval. The p -values obtained were compared with an alpha level of 0.05 and used as a basis for rejecting or failing to reject the null hypotheses, the statistical value of 1.682 against the critical value of 215.71. Therefore, the hypothesis (H_0) that there is significant impact of School feeding programmes on pupils' attendance and academic performance in public primary schools in Kasungu District has failed to be rejected and (H_1) that there is no significant relationship between school feeding programme and the pupils' attendance and performance is therefore rejected.

However, respondents also believe that the SFP promote retention and academic performance of children. This aligns with the Maslow hierarchy of needs that when the basic needs of people are met, they are able to focus on other higher-level needs such as academic success. Children are also able to spend more time in school and focus on their studies because they do not have to worry about food. This has improved their academic performance in school. Also, hunger and malnutrition which inhibit educational outcomes of primary school children were perceived to be reduced by the SFP.

The study on the challenges realized that due to growing number of students different schools face challenges of infrastructure and furniture that can support the population. Many also were in agreement that sometimes community members are not involved. The study also revealed that there is lack of proper monitoring if it comes to food cooking to ascertain the quality of food prepared. It has also been indicated that there are descent places in many primary schools in Kasungu used by pupils to take their meals. Contrary, the researcher realized that many disagreed to the opinion that there is lack of effective monitoring and evaluation on feeding program.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the government and other non-governmental organizations look into the issues of adequate space and infrastructure and staff per given number or ratio against the number of students at the school benefitting from the programme.

Secondly, the government must ensure that there are increased collaborations and partnerships for the program. The government can also involve community members and local farmers to ensure the successful implementation of the program. Community members and local farmers can also contribute to the program through donations, labor, and the provision of food materials. It is also necessary for social mobilization and for growing community ownership. Furthermore, periodic monitoring and evaluation could ensure that the objectives of the program are met. The government must put in place measures and outcomes for the program and these outcomes can serve as a benchmark when implementing the program. Moreover, the government can set up a committee that will periodically monitor and evaluate the implementation process and ensures that the program is in line with its objectives.

The study also recommends that transparency and accountability should be observed in the implementation of the program at each stage by the community, government and other stakeholders. The government must put in place measures and outcomes for the program and these outcomes can serve as a benchmark when implementing the program. Moreover, the government can set up a committee that will periodically monitor and evaluate the implementation process and ensures that the program is in line with its objectives to ensure transparency.

The actors of the SFP must also ensure that the program provides adequate dining space and also clean water and other facilities that will ensure hygienic approach to the program. School feeding has also become a health hazard in some countries like Kenya and Malawi which do not order offsite prepared meals but have issues of inadequate dining space, no hand washing facilities and general poor hygiene during meal preparation.

Finally, the study recommends that timing should be observed by the school heads and government. There is a problem of timing of meals which disrupts learning by taking away hours meant for school activities. The provision of meals early is not easy due to the long distances to fetch water for food preparation, utilizing volunteers and lack of resources

AREA FOR FURTHER STUDY

Secondly, future research could also include policy actors from the Ministry of Education and administrators from the Ghana Education Services to explore the program implementation plan and the factors that affect money allocation for



the program. The criteria used in the selection of schools who can participate in the program can also be explored. This will help enlighten schools and the public on how schools can participate in the program and what they will have to do.

Furthermore, this research may not have exhausted all the approaches to conducting qualitative research. Future research can look at ways in which responses can be improved. These include face-to-face interviews, and focused group discussions among other methods.

Finally, this research focused only on teachers who are not direct recipients of the program. Future research, however, could consider the children who are direct recipients of the program. This will provide a better understanding of how the program directly affects them.

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