Assessment of the Implementation of School Feeding Programme in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper assessed the level of implementation of school feeding programme in Nasarawa State. The main objective of the study is to determine the effect of school feeding programme on the enrolment, performance and retention of pupil in selected schools. The paper adopted the primary method for the purpose of data collection and the population of the study is 2,728 pupils and a sample size of 400. Findings of the study revealed that school feeding programme is a critical intervention which has tremendous educational benefits to pupils and the parents at large. It has improved the enrolment and performance of elementary school pupils in Nasarawa State, as well as enhanced their retention. Funding was found to be a major challenge of the programme due to its expensive nature which undercover the policy objectives. The paper recommended that, there should be effective management of the school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State in a bid to enhancing the enrollment, retention and performance of pupils in schools.

Introduction

Schools feeding programmes (SFP) are planned series of activities or events that are put in place to assist vulnerable children particularly those in their early childhood. The programmes help children to acquire a good and firm foundation and help them to acquire the necessary skills to be used for social life. These skills may never be acquired by most children in Nigeria because not all of them will attend school particularly those from low income families. The programmes further help to alleviate children's hunger problems, ultimately and contribute

in the attainment of global poverty reduction (UN, 2009). The programmes encourage school enrolment and also learning (WFP, 2000). Studies conducted show that school feeding programmes can be used to reduce children's dropout rates and at the same time increase enrolment if well implemented (World Bank, 2011).

School feeding programmes constitute critical interventions that have been introduced in many developed and developing countries of the world to address the issue of poverty, stimulate school enrolment and enhance pupils' performance. In developing countries, almost 60million children go to school hungry everyday and about 40 percent of them are from Africa. Nigeria happened to be one of twelve (12) pilot countries invited to implement the programme. So far, Nigeria, Cote d'ivore, Ghana, Kenya and Mali commenced the implementation of the school feeding programme. As a result, the Federal Government came up with the Universal Basic Education Act in 2004, which provided the enabling legislative backing for the execution of the Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme. Towards the realization of the objectives of the Universal Basic Education programme and the central role of nutrition, the Federal Ministry of Education launched the Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme in 2005. The overall goal of the School Feeding Programme in Nigeria is to reduce hunger and malnutrition among school children and enhance the achievement of Universal Basic Education. Thus, to improve the nutritional status of school children, the Federal Government launched the Home-Grown School Feeding and Health programme in September 2005 under the coordination of the Federal Ministry of Education.

The programme aims to provide a nutritionally-adequate meal during the school day (UNICEF, 2006). The pilot phase (Sept, 2005-July, 2006) has involved twelve (12) States in the six geopolitical zones; Bauchi, Edo, Enugu, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Imo, Kano, Kogi, Nassarawa, Niger, Ogun, Yobe and Osun States. Nasarawa was among the twelve (12) States selected to begin a phased–pilot roll out implementation of the programme. Although The Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme was launched, it did not receive attention until the change of government in the State. Subsequently, the new administration, under the leadership of Alhaji Umaru Tanko Almakura convened an education summit. The summit's objective was to critically examine the problems hampering growth and progress of education in the State and to proffer workable solutions.

At the end of the Summit, recommendations were made towards repositioning education in Nasarawa State which among others included the School Feeding Programme transformation. Thereafter, a

comprehensive review of the old school feeding programme was undertaken. The Programme was re-packaged and christened "Nasarawa Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme" It was formally launched in the State on 30th April, 2012 with the pupils in Grades 1-3 of the Public Primary Schools in the State being fed with one meal per day (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Jomaa, (2011) posits that one of the motivations for establishing school feeding programmes is to provide targeted families and their children, including girls, an incentive to enroll and / or attend school. The introduction of school feeding programmes have been found to assist vulnerable groups of people particularly children during early years to acquire a good and firm foundation in preparation for future life. However, about 65% or there about of pre-school children in Nigeria do not attend school this is probably due to lack of food and hence the need to carry out this study. Although school feeding programmes exists in some few schools in Nigeria, sometimes before now but yet problems of delivery and proper policy implementation still exists. Also, the rate of enrolment, of pre-school children is very low which may be associated with food insecurity and poorly managed school feeding programme in the state, shortage of finance, untrained teachers and lack of the syllabus and policy framework, among others.

To make it worse, no study appears to have been undertaken in Nasarawa State to investigate whether poor implementation or lack of school feeding programme could be responsible for the low enrollment, poor retention rates of pupils in schools across the state. As such, the researchers intend to put this in questions form thus; has the Nasarawa Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme been fully implemented in the state?, what is the effect of school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State? and what are the challenges associated with school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State?

Objectives of the Paper

The main objectives of this paper are to:

i. find out the extent of the implementation of Nasarawa Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme.
ii. find out the effect of school feeding programme on enrolment, retention and performance of pupils in Nasarawa State.
iii. find out the challenges confronting the effective implementation of school feeding programme in Nasarawa State.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of School Feeding

The term school feeding has been used over the years to mean the provision of feeding or snacks at school to reduce children's hunger during the school day (WFP, 2004). School feeding is also defined as in-school feeding only. School feeding has increasingly come to represent a more varied and comprehensive set of uses of food for the achievement of educational goals and objectives.

School Feeding Programmes

School feeding programmes is a visible social safety net used by political leaders around the world (Adelman, S.; Alderman, H. D.; Gilligan, O. & Lehrer, K. 2009). Communities that participate in these programmes can see the tangible benefits to their children, such as their children being fed regularly or families supplied with additional food, and the visibility of such programmes can be attributed back to the politicians who support them.

School feeding is simply the provision of food to children through schools. According to Oyefade (2014), different countries have one or a combination of the two feeding modalities in place for various objectives. However, they can be grouped into two broad categories: in-school feeding and take-home rations, where families are given food if their children attend school. Historically, in-school feeding have been the most popular modality of school feeding interventions. The school feeding can be in turn grouped into two common categories: programmes that provides feeding and programme that provides high-energy biscuits or snacks to generate greater impacts on school enrolment, retention rates, and reduce gender or social gaps (Akanbi, 2013).

Uduku, (2011) contended that there are 'indications of a significant swing in thinking about school feeding and many elements of this new thinking are being promoted keenly under the rubric of "home grown school feeding". A School Feeding Programme (SFP) is a scheduled activity designed to provide food to children such as those in pre-school. Ideally, it is supposed provide enough nutritious and a balanced diet to a selected group of children in order to foster their holistic growth and development, including school enrolment, attendance and retention.

Origin of School Feeding Programme in Nigeria

The origin of school feeding programme can not be overemphasis as it amid towards stimulating school enrolment and enhancing pupils'

reduce the current dropout rates from primary school which is estimated at 30%. The programme aims to address the poor nutrition and health status of many children who have been affected as a result of poverty this has affected the learning outcomes of the children (Government of Nigeria 2018).

Also, linking the programme to local agricultural production has direct economic benefits and can potentially benefit the entire community as well as the children. The programme aims to stimulate local agricultural production and boost the income of farmers by creating a viable and ready market via the school feeding programme and it also helps in creating jobs along the value chain and provides a multiplier effect for economic growth and development (Government of Nigeria 2018).

Effect of School Feeding Programme on Pupils Enrollment

The effects of school feeding programme is capable of offering to retain or increase enrolment of the pupils in schools, as observed by Oyefade, (2014), the decision to enroll a child in school and, thereafter, for the child to attend regularly is influenced by many factors. These include the perceived value of education, the availability of employment opportunities, the direct and indirect cost of schooling and the availability and quality of school facilities. Food incentives offered to students such as school feeding compensate parents for direct educational costs.

Oyefade observed further that implementation of School Feeding Programme is associated with increase in enrolment, particularly for girls. As observed by Oyefade (2014), 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 etc where school feeding programmes are implemented, data reveals that the programme has increased enrolment and attendance rates over the years (Akanbi 2013).

In Bangladesh, the research carried out by The International Food Policy Research Institute on the effects of school feeding programme found that the programme raised school enrolment rates by 14.2%, reduced the probability of dropping out of school by 7.5% and increased school attendance by 1.3 days a month. Similarly, in Pakistan a programme provides an income in the form of one or two tins of oil to families whose girls attend school for twenty days per month. In its

pilot phase, the oil incentive programme demonstrated that it could make a significant contribution to full attendance. In participating schools, enrolment improved overall while attendance increased from 73% to 95% among participants.

The programme also claims to put additional food in the hands of mothers to serve as a contact between mothers and teachers on distribution days. In another study in Bangladesh, a programme of school-based food distribution increased enrolment by 20% and a 2% decline in non-participating schools (Ahmed, 2004). Still on the issue of School Feeding Programme and enrolment, Oyeniran (2014) observed that schooling and institutions regulating access to enrolment in developing countries, to some extent, contribute to the class and social divide in urban areas.

Equally, educational opportunity is driven by unequal and asymmetric political decision-making structures whereby people from poorer backgrounds tend to bear the brunt of national and local policies. He contended that availability of schools does not automatically result in higher enrolment numbers and submitted that some families cannot send their children to school because the combined cost of fees, textbooks and uniforms is prohibitive.

However, studies have further revealed that provision of food must not be the only focal-point for improving access to education or education opportunity equality. Poor education environment can contribute to drop out rate, while quality education increases enrolment which can lead to classroom overcrowding. Psacharopouls (1998) indicated that the quantified benefits of investing in education are highest at primary levels. This view provides a strong case for expanding investment in primary rather than higher levels of education.

Influence of School Feeding Programmes on Pupils Enrolment

Pupils' enrolment was the first step towards them being in school but the extent to which School Feeding Programme (SFP) influenced this realization was an important subject under scrutiny. According to Sachs (2005) School Feeding Programme exclusively benefited poor children by creating incentives to enroll and attend schools as well as improve general attentiveness and capability to learn. School-based food distribution in Bangladesh increased enrolment to 20 percent at a time when enrollment at non-participating schools was 2 percent as (Gilligan, 2009) reports.

A study by Yendaw and Dayour (2015) which sought to assess the contribution of national school feeding programme towards pupils'

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A study by Yendaw and Dayour (2015) which sought to assess the contribution of national school feeding programme towards pupils'

enrolment and retention in Ghana examined enrolment by looking at two periods where parents enrolled their children in schools, before and after the implementation of the School Feeding Programmes (SFP). The findings of their study indicated that enrolment before the introduction of the SFP stood at 35.8%, but increased phenomenally to 64.2% after the implementation of the programme.

Osei-Fuso (2011) observed that school feeding programmes and other school-based nutrition and health programmes motivate parents to enroll their children in school and to see that they attend school regularly. World Food Programme case studies in some West African countries like Niger similarly documented strong improvements in enrolment when families received food incentives in return for good school attendance (WFP Report, 2010). This report advocated that school meal has significant positive effect on such indicators as primary completion rates, continuation to secondary and exam scores. Specifically, enrollment is higher, particularly in early grades in the schools that offered school feeding.

A study by Lamber (2009) in Burkina Faso based on School Feeding Programme revealed that school gross enrollment in rural schools in Sahel region was the lowest in the country at 48.8% with high gender disparity, especially at the beginning of School Feeding Programme in 2003. The programme began with 234 schools and 30,000 pupils in the statistics show that the admissions rate increased from 50.5% in 2003/4 the first year of the programme to 69.7% in 2008 while the gross rate enrollment also increased from 21.8% to 48.8% over the same period (Lamber& WFP, 2009).

Enrollments have been noticed to increase gradually and sometimes decline completely in some places in Kenya. School Feeding Programme have led to increase in enrollments in some schools due to its consistency, while in others there have been a decline in enrollment in spite of provision of School Feeding Programme. This proves that the School Feeding Programme should not be underestimated. Ouko (2012) found out that School Feeding Programmeare an incentive to pupils which make them attend school. Ouko (2012) further revealed that with the provision of School Feeding Programme, school attendance and enrollment may increase gradually or even decline due to other factors.

Benefit of School Feeding Programme

School Feeding Programme has the following effects;

i. Improvement in Education:

School Feeding Programme has improved in the education of the beneficiary schools because there has been an increase in pupils' enrolment and reduction of school drop-out rate. Yet its antecedent problems like shortage of furniture and high pupil to teacher ratio remain unsolved.

ii. Improvement in health:

The health of pupils in the beneficiary schools has improved as there is less complaints of pupils' ill-health. It could have improved better than it is now if de-worming has been regular and the quantity of food improved (UNDP Report 2003).

iii. Improvement in Food Production and Patronage of locally produced foodstuffs:

Farmers in the beneficiary schools have been encouraged to produce more to feed the GSFP and therefore it is likely to increase food production in the country. Yet the farmer groups complain that their farm produce are not patronized by the programme (Sen, 2009).

iv. Creation of Employment and Improvement in Living Standard:

Ghana School Feeding Programme has reduced unemployment rate by creating employment for farmers, caterers, cooks and food suppliers. This as a result has improved their living standard.

v. Participation of Stakeholders:

The programme has been able to bring stakeholders such as GES staff, District Assembly staff, Health staff, Farmers, Chiefs, Assembly members who were hitherto not doing things in common, are together in an effort to carry out government policy

Challenges of the School Feeding Programme

School Feeding Program (SFP) is a targeted safety net program designed to provide educational and health benefits to vulnerable children. However, limited evidence exists regarding the challenges of the school feeding programme are as follows;

i. Flaws in targeting cooks:

Some flaws in the cook criteria prescribed and/or non compliance with prescribed cook criteria has resulted in the contracting of cooks without

appropriate utensils. These cooks are not able to cook effectively (Government of Nigeria 2018).

ii. Slow payment:

There have been delays on the programme implementation due to delays in fund disbursement at various stages of the programmes. In some cases funds have not been disbursed from Federal to State Government; in some, from State to cooks. In some cases e.g. in Zamfara State, funds have been disbursed to the cooks however the cooks are unable to access the funds due to not being issued ATM cards or other fund withdrawing instruments by Heritage Bank, the bank engaged on HGSF in Gusau, Zamfara State.

Also poor agency and mobile banking structures mean that some of the cooks in remote areas have difficulties accessing their funds due to limited bank branches. This affects the ability of the cooks to feed. This defeats the purpose of the programme as children are not fed as frequently as they should and the economic viability for local producers on the value chain is reduced as well (Government of Nigeria 2018).

iii. Communication gaps:

Unclear or undocumented roles and responsibilities at various levels have led to a misunderstanding of responsibilities. For example there were complaints from the cooks that it was believed that the Home Grown School Feeding banks would be willing to offer loans to them to enable them to acquire cooking utensils. This however was not pre-agreed with the banks and the banks were not receptive to this (Government of Nigeria 2018).

iv. Limited resources:

The limited resource refers to both human, infrastructural and financial resource which delays operations on the field. The limited human resource makes it impossible to monitor what is going on in schools and even tracking the students fed and how often the cooks have done their jobs (Government of Nigeria 2018).

v. Pay for performance:

There have been complaints from some project monitoring teams that the payment of the cooks is directly controlled from NHGSFP notwithstanding their performance.

Empirical Review

A study by Yendaw and Dayour (2015) which sought to assess the contribution of national school feeding programme towards pupils' enrolment and retention in Ghana examined enrolment by looking at two periods where parents enrolled their children in schools, before and after the implementation of the School Feeding Programmes (SFP). The findings of their study indicated that enrolment before the introduction of the SFP stood at 35.8%, but increased phenomenally to 64.2% after the implementation of the programme.

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From the study of Adekunle, and Christiana (2016), which assessed the School Feeding Programme of public elementary school pupils in Osun State, Nigeria. It was done with a view to determine its effects on school enrolment, retention, and academic performance of the pupils. It also elicited the challenges encountered in the implementation of the programme. The results showed that pupils are fed daily through the school feeding programme (87%), which is funded through cost sharing between the State and local governments (78%). It was also found that the school feeding programme in Osun State has resulted in an increase in pupils' enrolment (78.4%), retention (44.8%), as well as regularity (58.6%) and punctuality (69%) in school attendance. It has also enhanced the pupils' performance in curricular and extracurricular activities (55.2%). The major challenges were found to be insufficient

funding (62.2%), insufficient classrooms and furniture to cope with increase in enrolment (60.86%), heavy workload for teachers (60.86%) and lack of effective monitoring and evaluation system (60.86%).The study concluded that the School Feeding Programme in Osun State has increased the enrolment and improved the performance of elementary school pupils in the state.

The work of Aliu and Fawzia (2014) on assessing Ghana School Feeding Programme on the enrollment of beneficiary Schools in the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly of Northern Ghana. The case study design was used particularly targeting teachers, caterers, head teachers and key actors in the four selected beneficiary schools. Questionnaires and interview guides were used. The key findings revealed that, there has been a significant increase in enrolment of beneficiary schools. Pupils are motivated to stay in school, and as a result, there has been an improvement in the universal basic education.

The beneficiary schools of GSFP are not without challenges since the study revealed that there is lack of commitment from key actors in the implementation of the programme. The study recommends that, since the majority of the respondents are aware of the existence of the GSFP, they should be educated on its implementation to improve on the performance of the programme. Also the provision of the one hot nutritious meal should be supplemented with some snacks in other to make the GSFP better. Efforts should be made by government to increase the amount of money per child from fifty pesewas to one Ghana cedis to enable caterers provide nutritious feeding to the pupils.

A review on the work of John, Esther, and Aseta, (2018), whose purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of school feeding programme on enrolment and retention rates in public pre-primary schools in Sigor Division, Chepalungu District, Bomet County. Sigor division has low enrollment rates of children in pre-school; it is also evident that there are drop outs. The main objectives of the study included establishing availability of feeding programme and its effects on enrolment rates and retention, finding out how management and effectiveness of school feeding programmes affects enrolment and retention rates and also to give suggestions on how the feeding programmes could be improved so as to enhance enrolment and retention rates.

The study was guided by Abraham Maslow theory of hierarchy of needs, this theory postulates that SFP motivate and attract learners to enroll in preschool and be retained up to the end of the school calendar. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Findings showed that SFP is effective in enhancing enrollment and retention rates. The

biggest challenge to SFP as per findings include: - poverty, parental attitude and hardship area climatically. Chairpersons recommended education of parents as a way of enhancing SFP majority of teachers and head teacher mentioned parents and school committee as responsible for funding SFP. The study concluded that SFP exist in 26 schools out of 56. It also concluded that low enrollment rates and retention are caused by absence of SFP among other factors. It also concluded that effective management is recommended to achieve the objectives of school feeding programme. It also recommends that parents need to be educated on the importance SFP and also be empowered economically. The other recommendation is that there should be effective management of SFP for positive results. The study finally suggests further study to understand other factors affecting enrollment rates and retention.

A study conducted by Newton, (2018), on the impact of Feeding Programmes on Pre-School Childrens' Selected Performance Parameters in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The study was set to find out the impact of feeding programmes on selected performance parameters or indicators among children in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County which included: enrollment, attendance, retention and learning in pre-schools within the same zone. The feeding programs are normally put in place to help curb short term hunger problem among children from low socio-economic groups in order to ensure that they grow well in all areas of human development, thus boosting their enrolment, attendance, retention as well as learning.

In Kabare there are some pockets of poverty as well as food insecure areas and a good percentage of children come from poor socio-economic families. In addition, most of them are consistently out of school and this motivated the researcher to find out whether their out of school behavior, could be related to non-existence of feeding programs in pre-schools. The specific objectives of this study were: to establish the status of feeding programs in pre-schools in Kabare zone; establish the influence of feeding programs on pre-school children's enrolment, attendance, retention and learning. The theory of motivation by Maslow (1971) was employed to guide the descriptive survey study using a sample size of 8 (30%) pre-schools out of 26, 16 (40%) out of 40 teachers, and 264 (30%) parents of pres-school children out of 881. Data collection was conducted using observations as well as interviews for teachers and questionnaires for parents.

Data were analyzed quantitatively using frequency counts, percentages and means without going into establishing significant relationships between the study variables while qualitative data was

analyzed thematically using narratives based on study objectives. Thereafter, findings were presented using pie charts, graphs and frequency tables. The results obtained reveal that the meal that was provided the most involved a mixture of maize and beans "githeri" while the meal that was provided the least was porridge. There was gradual but steady increase in enrolment in pre-schools with feeding programmes from 2013 to 2016. The results showed that enrolment was excellent in 6 schools and fair in 2 schools.

The study findings further revealed that there was inconsistence in class attendance in schools which did not have SFP. The schools with no SFP had poor retention rate. The study concludes that feeding programme is one of the factors influencing the enrolment, attendance and retention of the pre-scholars. The study recommended that policies that guide the need to make SFP compulsory in pre-schools should be established since it improves children's enrolment, attendance and performance. There exist some empirical studies on school feeding programme although the existing evidence suggests that research in this area is still coming up.

Thus, most of the studies reviewed were carried out outside Nigeria, while the ones done in Nigeria none was on School Feeding Programme on the enrollment of pupils in Nasarawa State. Unlike the Nasarawa State, most Nigerian State government schools could not overcome the challenges of School Feeding Programme due to financial constraint, corruption and nepotism which in a way affect the quality of the programme in the state. As such, this study is therefore motivated by the need to fill these gaps.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Abraham Maslow (1971) theory of motivation and hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow, naturally good physical shape and development in a person will occur in a healthy society. Maslow further shows that the environment should allow people to express their ideas, needs and also make their own resolutions. The surrounding should similarly provide the necessary materials to satisfy and sustain the needs. Maslow placed needs in an ascending order of importance starting from biological needs to need for self-actualization and that the lower or basic needs must be attained before the child can focus on the next level of needs.

This theory shows that food is a basic need, thus in applying the theory in pre-school settings, a hungry child is likely to be physically, mentally and socio-emotionally unhealthy, since aspects of growth and development (Berndt,1997; Ingule, Rono and Ndambuki, 1996;

Piaget, 1983; Freud, 1965); Erikson, 1963) are interrelated and inter properly as (Murungi, 2012) reveals. Such a child is miserable, weak and cannot concentrate nor retain learning content in school and he/she is likely to perform poorly.

Lack of basic needs mentioned above can also make a child absentee himself or herself from school and this may lead to the child dropping out of school. The researcher chose the theory of motivation and hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow (1971) because it fits very well with the intended study variables. Pupils in school must be fed with good quality food which is balanced and also adequate. After satisfying this basic need, they will be healthy and then be motivated to look forward to their enrolment into pre-school, attend school regularly, remain in school as needed hence positively enhancing their learning performance too.

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is survey method and content analysis. The population of the study comprises of one (1) government Primary Schools from the three (3) geo political zones of Nasarawa State. They include Ta'al Model Primary School Bukan Sidi, Lafia, with a population of (2673 pupils) from the Southern Zone, Ta'al Model Primary School Wamba, with a population of (1761 pupils) from the Northern Zone and Kofar Hausa Primary School Keffi, with a population of (2250 pupils) from the Western Zone. Thus, these make a total population of 2,728 pupils from the three schools.

Table 1: Analysis of the population

Names of School	Population of Pupils per School
Ta'al Model Primary School Bukan Sidi, Lafia	2673
Ta'al Model Primary School Wamba	1761
Kofar Hausa Primary School Keffi	2728
Total	7,162

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The technique used in drawing the sample size is Taro Yamane (1967) formula defined as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size
N = total population size
1 is constant
e = the assume error margin or tolerable error which is specified as 5% (0.05) in this study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{6684}{1 + 6684(0.05)^2} = \frac{6684}{16.7125} = 399.9 \text{ (400 sample size)}$$

The sample size of 400 was chosen to effectively carry out the research study. The questionnaires were distributed in such a way that the entire school will be represented and also base on their population. Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were utilized for the study. The primary data for the study were collected through the administration of self-constructed questionnaire which were administered to the respondents in the selected school mentioned. The secondary data was collected through the review of previous studies, employment legislation and existing literature on the subject matter.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Total number of questionnaires administered was Four hundred (400) questionnaires; Three hundred and forty nine (349) questionnaires were properly filled and returned, while fifty one (51) questionnaires were not returned. In order to accomplish the objectives of this paper, relevant questions that capture the research objectives were asked in the questionnaire to gather information from the respondents of the selected school mentioned. The questionnaire was meticulously filled and returned. The results of the data collected, there from are presented in table two.

Table 2 presents the results of the questions on the Nasarawa Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme in the state as well as the interviews conducted with the staff of the mention schools and officers involved in implementing and facilitating the school feeding programme in the state. A majority 93 respondents representing 26.6% agreed that the Nasarawa State government formulates the policy objectives and monitors the implementation of the school feeding and health programme, 67 respondents representing 19.2% indicated that the meals are provided for the pupils daily and promptly while in

school.

Also, 74 respondents representing 21.2% agreed that the school feeding and health programme is funded through cost sharing between the state and local government, 32 respondents representing 9.2% said that the meals served are assorted and nutritious towards improving their mental health while a sizeable number 83 representing 23.7% of the respondents indicated that there is policy guideline to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the state.

Table 2: The Nasarawa Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme in the state

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
The Nasarawa State government formulates the policy objectives and monitors the implementation of the school feeding and health programme.	93	26.60%
The meals are provided for the pupils daily and promptly while in school	67	19.20%
The school feeding and health programme is funded through cost sharing between the state and local	74	21.20%
The meals served are assorted and nutritious towards improving their	32	9.20%
There is policy guideline to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the	83	23.70%
Total	**349**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The results in Table 3 show that 92 respondents representing 26.3% agree that there has been a steady increase in school enrolment due to the provision of school meals, 75 respondents representing 21.4% indicate that the feeding programme encourages punctuality of pupils in various schools.

However, 61 respondents representing 17.4% agree that the school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State has reduced the dropout rate of pupils, also, 73 respondents representing 20.9%indicated that the school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State has contributed to students' regular

attendance in class whereas, 48 respondents representing 13.7% said it has increase pupils' retention in school because of meals provision.

Table 3: Effect of school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
It lead to increase in school enrolment due to the provision of school meals	92	26.30%
It encourages Punctuality in the various school	75	21.40%
It has reduced the dropout rate of pupils	61	17.40%
It has contributed to students' regular attendance in class	73	20.90%
It increase pupils' retention in school because of meals provision	48	13.70%
Total	349	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 4: Opportunities that the Nasarawa State School Feeding Programme is capable of offering to retain or increase enrolment of the pupils in the state

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Provide contract and job opportunities to food vendors and food suppliers	69	19.80%
Provide availability of food in the schools	77	22.10%
Create conducive learning environment	53	15.10%
Introduction of Free primary education	68	19.50%
Provide good health of pupils	52	14.90%
Making pupils good role models in their community	30	8.60%
Total	349	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 4 shows that when respondents were asked on the opportunities that the Nasarawa State School Feeding Programme is capable of offering to retain or increase enrolment of the pupils in the state 69 respondents representing 19.8% indicated that the programme provide contract and job opportunities to food vendors and food suppliers, 77 respondents representing 22.1% agreed that it provide availability of food in the schools. However, 53 respondents representing 15.1% said that the programme create conducive learning environment, 68 respondents representing 19.5% indicated that the programme offer free primary education also, 52 respondents representing 14.9% agree that the programme provide good health to pupils whereas 30 respondents representing 8.6% agree that the programme makes pupils good role models in their community.

Table 5 presents the results of the questions on the challenges associated with school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State. Data on the table shows that 58 of the respondents representing 16.6% indicated that insufficient funding was a challenge facing the programme implementation in the state, 37 respondents representing 10.6% said that the challenge is the absence of a legal framework and policy to support the school feeding programme, 15 respondents representing 4.3% said that overcrowded classrooms has been the challenges.

Also, 51 representing 14.6%of the respondents indicated that loss of concentration during classes due to anticipation of the expected meals was another challenge, 24 respondents representing 6.8% agree that insufficient classrooms and furniture to cope with increased enrolment has been the challenge facing the programme implementation in the state and 32 respondents representing 9.1% believe that the challenge facing the programme implementation in the state is the quantity of food served is small.

However, 28 representing 8% of the respondents said that heavy workload for teachers is the challenge, 43 respondents representing 12.3% of the sample population said inability to effectively monitor the food preparation to ascertain the quality of food and the environment is the challenge, 14 respondents representing 4% said that Food is prepared outside the school premises by vendors, also, 25 respondents representing 7.1% indicate that there is no central place for the pupils to take their meals whereas, 22 respondents representing 6.3% agree that the pupils have no access to good source of water after meals and this has been the challenge facing the programme implementation in the state.

Table 5: To find out the challenges associated with school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State?

Responses	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Insufficient funding	58	16.60%
Absence of a legal framework and policy to support the school feeding programme	37	10.60%
Overcrowded classrooms	15	4.30%
Loss of concentration during classes due to anticipation of the expected meals	51	14.60%
Insufficient classrooms and furniture to cope with increased enrolment	24	6.80%
Quantity of food served is small	32	9.10%
Heavy workload for teachers	28	8%
Inability to effectively monitor the food preparation to ascertain the quality of food and the environment	43	12.30%
Food is prepared outside the school premises by vendors	14	4%
There is no central place for the pupils to take their meals	25	7.10%
Pupils have no access to good source of water after meals	22	6.30%
Total	349	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Discussion

From the analysis shown above, the results of the study revealed that Nasarawa State government formulates the policy objectives and monitors the implementation of the school feeding and health programme, which has brought about steady increase in school enrolment due to the provision of school meals provided by the programme although insufficient funding was indicated as the major challenge facing the programme implementation in the state.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that school feeding programme policy is a critical intervention which has tremendous educational benefits. It has improved the enrolment and performance of elementary school pupils in Nasarawa State Nigeria, as well as enhanced their retention. This study also found that the Nasarawa State government formulates the policy objectives and monitors the implementation of the school feeding and health programme through the use of a policy guideline to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the state. However, the operation of the programme has resulted in an increase in school enrolment due to the provision of school meals as well as the regular and punctual attendanceof pupils in school and class because, when the programme was first launched, most pupils comes to school only for the meals prepared and not because they need to attend classes in any case.

Also, the school feeding programme policy and implementation in Nasarawa State Nigeria has drastically reduced hunger among the pupils since they are sure of being provided with free meals in school. Furthermore, the opportunities that the Nasarawa State School Feeding Programme is capable of offering to retain or increase enrolment of the pupils in the state, could be seen from the availability of food in the schools as well as the contract and job opportunities to food vendors and food suppliers and has equally offered free primary education to the pupils in the state.

This study equally shows that, funding was a major challenge due to its expensive nature as there had been an influx of pupils from the private schools to public schools as results of the free school meals and this has made most pupils loss concentration during classes, due to anticipation of the expected meals. This is because the meals meant for the pupils is not sufficient as the policy provide 20 vendors per school with70 pupils per each vendor making a total of1400 pupils to be fed every day, but because of the absence of a legal framework and policy to support the school feeding programme in the state, the meals provided to the pupils is not enough to cover the entire population in the schools, due to inability of policy makers to effectively monitor the food preparation to ascertain the quality of food and the environment thus, creating a heavy workload for teachers as they battle with overcrowded classrooms.

Recommendations

There is need as a matter of priority for government to meets the following recommendations.

i. To ensure consistent provision of school feeding and health programme in the state, policies that guide the need to make school feeding programme compulsory in pre-schools should be provided to ensure the sustainability of the programme as it will help improves pupils enrolment, attendance, health and performance in Nasarawa State.
ii. There should be effective management of the school feeding programme on enrolment of pupils in Nasarawa State as when this is effectively done it will contributes greatly in enhancing enrollment rates, retention and encourages punctuality of pupils in various schools.
iii. Since the opportunities that the Nasarawa State School Feeding Programme has brought about benefits such as providing contract and job opportunities to food vendors and food suppliers, it made food available in the schools, create conducive learning environment, offer free primary education among others, the above successes should be set as benchmark in not only the beneficiary schools but also in other schools where the school feeding programme is being implemented.
iv. Efforts should be made by government to increase the amount of money budgeted per pupil for this policy to enable policy implementers have the proper logistics to facilitate their monitoring activities for more and better improvement in the implementation of the policy in the state, as this will undoubtedly increase the enrolment of pupils as well as their health and also to further motivate them to stay in school.

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