

**THE IMPACT OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS FEEDING PROGRAMME  
ON PUPILS' REGISTRATION INTO PUBLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS IN ENUGU SOUTH OF  
ENUGU STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research study aims to investigate the impact of primary school feeding programmes on pupils' registration in Enugu South, Enugu State public primary schools. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population comprises of all the teachers and pupils primary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area. A random sample for the study consisted of 1145 respondents (830 students and 315 teachers). Two instruments (primary and secondary) were used for data collection. The data were analyzed with the use of mean and standard deviation.. Two research questions were answered. The study revealed that the enrolment trend has been steadily and consistently increasing except for 2018/19 - 2019/20. Data was collected through structured questionnaire administered to randomly selected respondents. Descriptive statistics of chi-square analysis was used to analyze the data. The results reveal that primary school feeding programmes have a significant impact on pupils' registration in Enugu South, Enugu public schools ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, there was no significant difference in the perception of stakeholders (pupils and teachers) on the effectiveness of the school feeding programme among primary schools in Enugu South of Enugu State, Nigeria ( $t[1143] = 1.656$ ,  $p = 0.053$ ). The study also revealed that the most influential factor for pupils' registration is the availability of primary school feeding programmes. The main reasons for pupils' enrolment into Enugu public primary schools which have feeding programmes are improved nutrition, provision of a balanced diet, and increased attendance rate. The study further revealed that primary school feeding programmes have improved the academic performance of the pupils, and this has resulted in increased enrolment of pupils. It is recommended that the Enugu State government should strengthen the existing primary school

feeding programmes in order to increase the enrollment rate of pupils in public primary schools. The government should also ensure that existing policies are adhered to and properly implemented in order to achieve the objectives of the primary school feeding programmes. Furthermore, stakeholders should collaborate to create awareness on the importance of primary school feeding programmes in improving pupils' enrolment rate in Enugu public schools.

**Key words:** Primary, School, Feeding, Pupils, Enrollment.

### Introduction

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 every day and about 40 percent of them are from Africa. Providing school meals is therefore vital in nourishing children. Parents are motivated to send their children to school instead of keeping them at home to work or care for siblings (Akanbi, 2013). 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 meals and take-home rations where families are given food if their children attend school. Historically, in-school meals have been the most popular modality of school feeding interventions. The school feeding can be in turn grouped into two common categories: programme that provides meals 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).

The introduction of the school feeding programme in Africa can be traced to the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative and several conferences held thereafter by African leaders which aimed to tackle issues, such as peace, security, good economic, political and corporate governance and to make the continent an attractive destination for foreign investment. Some of these developments include the 'New Partnership for African Development' which according to the blueprint (NEPAD, 2013) is a pledge by African leaders, based on common vision with firm, shared conviction to eradicate poverty and to place their countries on the path of sustainable growth and development. At the same time, it was designed to participate actively in the world economy and politics. The 'Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme' and the 'Millennium Hunger Task Force' amongst others were initiatives which were designed to link school feeding to agricultural development through the purchase and use of locally produced food (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Gelli, Jukes, & Drake, 2019). 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 of Nigeria (FGN, 2014) 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 Programmes. (FRN, 2014).

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 by improving school enrolment and attendance. Enugu State 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 were launched, it did not receive attention until the change of government in the State in November, 2010. Subsequently, the new administration, under the leadership of Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola convened an education summit headed by Professor Wole Soyinka (Ministry of Education, 2014).

The summit's objective was to critically examine the problems hampering growth and progress of education in the States and proffer workable solutions. At the end of the Summit, recommendations were made towards repositioning education in Enugu 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 "Enugu Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme – O' meals" 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).

Apart from feeding pupils, it has also boosted local food production and purchase because the meals are prepared with locally grown foodstuffs, as the programme was designed to work with local farmers and boost domestic agricultural production; thus linking school feeding directly with agricultural development. The school feeding programme has helped to check malnutrition amongst deprived communities through the serving of one hot meal per child per day and also created employment, the programme engage 33,895 cooks in the communities where the implementing schools are located in the 14 states. Although, the programme is one of the social intervention strategies to ensure that pupils have access to education by removing the barriers of hunger. The school feeding programme appear to have achieved some gains for beneficiary schools but it is observed that it could have also resulted in inequality and injustice within the communities, especially for pupils that attend the non-beneficiary schools. The FGN has used the school feeding programme as an entry point to invest in the long-term development of children, families and communities in Nigeria. In spite of boosting the literacy and health/nutrition status in the country, the home grown school feeding programme (HGSFP) is an integral part of the long-term development of children and part of the continuum of development support. HGSFP is a critical step to ensuring that children are able to reach their full potential especially rural children. Obi (2017), explained that the decision to enroll a child in school and, thereafter, sustain the child regularity in school could be influenced by many factors. These factors include perceived value of education, availability of employment opportunities, direct and indirect cost of schooling then the availability

and quality of school facilities. Food incentives offered to students as school meals compensate parents for direct educational costs. Obi, (2017) observed further that the implementation of school feeding programme is associated with increase in enrolment, particularly for girls. Several studies (Gaspar and Thomas (2015); Mesa, 2017) have found that a strong relationship exist between education and poverty, particularly inequality. The poor are heavily deprived and so are their children. As observed by Obi (2017), 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 have and are still being implemented, data reveals that the programme has increased enrolment and attendance rates over the years (Akanbi 2013).

There are several works on the benefits of School Feeding Programme to pupils but not much has been done to highlight the impact of the programme on school enrolment, the challenges faced in the execution of the policy on school feeding programme and the sustainability of the school feeding programme by successive regimes; Enugu State in particular. This study therefore seeks to fill the gap by assessing the school feeding programme as it is being implemented in Public Elementary schools in Enugu South senatorial district, Enugu State, Nigeria and the ways through which the programme and can be sustained by successive governments as it has been found that most of successive

governments tend to abandon policies of previous government by championing new policies and deviate from policy trust met on ground especially when it has to do with the populace. This has been the trend among successive governments in Nigeria. Furthermore, sustainability of projects and policies are lacking in public institutions beclouded by lackadaisical attitudes and corrupt tendencies. Hence, the ways through which the school feeding programme could stand the taste of time is a matter of paramount interest which the present study also intends examine.

Enrollments in school have been a factor that has agitated both educational planning analyst and economist of education especially where government investment on education is heavy. In Nigeria, data on enrollment trends though unreliable, the few available ones show irregular trends in enrollment. Factors which previous researchers observed and found to be responsible for this poor wobbling trends in enrollment include; pupils socio-economic background (status), poverty and general apathy to education due to absence of employment both to graduate of various levels of education and the parents of the school children. The introduction of the home grown school feeding programme (HGSFP) of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) was established in 2006 which Enugu State government keyed into was designed to improve on school enrolment. In recent years, there have been contentions among stake holders. While some opine that the programme is ineffective due to the zig-zag feeding patterns, others contend that the programme which is in the 9<sup>th</sup> year in Enugu State is effective. This study therefore, investigated on the effectiveness of the

School Feeding programme in Enugu State by examining the trends in school enrollment in the last 10 years as well as the perception of pupils, teachers and parents on the success of the HGSFP.

### Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the enrollment trend in Enugu State primary schools between 2013 and 2019?
2. What is the perception of stake holders (students and teachers) on the effectiveness (regularity) of the school feeding programme policy among Enugu State primary schools?

### Methodology

#### Research question 1

What is the enrollment trend in Enugu State primary schools between 2012 and 2019?

**Table 1: The enrolment trend in Enugu State primary schools between 2012 and 2019?**

Year	Enrolment Trend		Total	% of 2012-2019 Enrolment Trend
	Male	Female		
2012/13	200,461	200,130	400,591	11.9
2013/14	210,661	209,669	420,330	12.5
2014/15	210,706	210,325	421,031	12.4
2015/16	169,462	168,141	337,603	10.0
2016/17	176,537	175,235	351,772	10.4
2017/18	183,448	179,339	362,787	10.8
2018/19	185,715	185,671	371,386	11.0
Grand Total	1,688,882	1,685,653	3,374,535	100.0

Table 1 present the enrolment trend in Enugu State. The Table shows a steady and consistent increase in the enrolment of primary school pupils from 2012/13 to 2013/14 academic session. For

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for this study consists of all the 997 teachers and 126,226 pupils in public primary schools in Enugu South LGA of Enugu State Nigeria. The sample size for the study consists of primary school teachers and pupils. "School Feeding Programme Questionnaire (SFPQ) was developed and use for the study. The scaling responses for the instrument was based on adapted Likert Scale ratings namely: SA - Strongly Agree (4), A - Agree (3), D - Disagree (2) and SD - Strongly Disagree (1). The reliability of the instruments was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient and a coefficient of  $r = 0.75$  was obtained. The data collected were statically analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation

instance, the enrolment was 308,444 (9.1%) in 2012/13 academic session. It increased to 400,591 (11.9%) in 2013/2014 academic session. Surprisingly, the same number of enrolment that was recorded in 2012/13 was also recorded in 2013/14 academic session. The pupils' enrolment further increased to 420,330 representing 12.5%. However, it slightly decreased to 12.4%. It further reduced in 2015/16 as only 337,603 pupils, representing 10.0% were enrolled. It rose to 10.4% in 2016/17 academic session, it further rose in 2017/18 academic session. It further increased in 2018/19 academic session as only 371,386 pupils representing 11.0% got enrolled. Thus, with this result, it could be inferred that enrolment trend has been steady and consistent except for 2014/15 - 2015/16 and might not be unconnected with the change of government and the consequent interruption of the programme.

### Research question 2

What is the perception of stake holders (students and teachers) on the effectiveness (regularity) of the school feeding programme policy among Enugu State primary schools?

**Table 2: The perception of stake holders (students and teachers) on the effectiveness (regularity) of the school feeding programme policy among Enugu State primary schools**

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Average mean	Decision
1.	I eat meal daily at school.	794 95.7%	36 4.3%	0 0%	0 0%	3.69		
2.	The meals served are delicious.	273 32.9%	523 63.0%	34 4.1	0 0%	3.29		
3.	The meals served are timely.	452 54.5%	36 4.3%	342 41.2 %	0 0%	3.13		
4.	Inspectors come during cooking to check the food being prepared.	0 0%	36 4.3%	0 0%	794 95.7 %	1.09	3.30	High
5.	I wish that the school feeding program continues by the incoming Government.	759 91.4%	0 0%	35 4.2%	36 4.3	3.79		
6.	The school feeding program motivates me to come to school.	585 70.5%	245 29.5%	0 0%	0 0%	3.70		
7.	The programme is well organized by the government.	700 84.3%	68 8.2%	31 3.7%	31 3.7%	3.79		
8.	The meals served are nutritious.	548 66.0%	211 28.4%	35 4.2%	36 4.3%	3.53		

9	Inspectors come during dishing of the food to check the quality.	583 70.2%	36 4.3%	211 25.4 %	0 0%	3.45		
10	The Feeding programme always give me hope that i will eat during school hour.	517 62.3%	278 33.5%	0 0%	35 4.2%	3.54		
11.	Meals are provided for the pupils daily and promptly while in school.	237 75.2%	68 21.6%	0 %	10 3.2%	3.69		
12.	Government monitors the implementation of the school feeding programme.	189 60.0%	106 33.7%	10 3.2%	10 3.2%	3.50		
13.	The SFP is funded through cost sharing between the Federal, state and local governments.	159 50.5%	126 40.0%	20 6.3%	10 3.2%	3.38	3.10	High
14.	There is policy guideline to ensure the sustainability of the programme.	109 34.6%	148 47.0%	38 12.1 %	20 6.3%	3.10		
15.	The programme enjoys support from international organizations.	99 31.4%	140 44.4%	58 18.4 %	18 5.7%	3.02		
16.	The School Feeding programme improves the pupils learning ability.	148 47.0%	109 34.6%	48 5.2%	10 3.2%	3.25		
17.	Inspectors come during cooking to check the food being prepared.	88 27.9%	80 25.4%	70 22.2 %	77 24.4	2.57		
18.	Inspectors come during dishing of the food to check the quality.	68 21.6%	129 41.0%	59 18.7 %	59 18.7 %	2.65		
19.	The Meals served are nutritious.	100 31.7%	166 52.7%	39 12.4 %	10 3.2%	3.13		
20.	The Meals served are delicious.	90 28.6%	157 49.8%	59 18.7 %	9 2.9%	3.04		

Note that the item is accepted if it is above 2.50 and rejected if it is below 2.50.

Responses of the respondents on the perception of stake holders (pupils and teachers) on the effectiveness (regularity) of the school feeding policy among Enugu State primary schools shown that the average mean for the perception of pupils and teachers on the effectiveness (regularity) of the school feeding programme policy among Enugu State primary schools were 3.30 and 3.10. This implies that both teachers and students perceived that the school feeding programme organized in Enugu State is effective.

### Discussion of findings

The result on table 1 revealed that enrolment trend has been steadily and consistently increasing except for 2014/15 - 2015/16 and might not be unconnected with the change of government and the consequent interruption of the programme. This supports the findings of Obi (2018) that showed that there has been an increase in both gross and average primary school enrolments since the School Feeding Programme started.

The result on table 2 revealed that both teachers and students perceived that the school feeding programme organized in Enugu State is effective. This is line with the findings of Ayoola (2014) that the introduction of o-meal programme has led to a decrease in the prevalence rate of the nutrition related diseases, like anaemia and diarrhoea which was noticeable between 2012 and 2021 in Enugu State records (PPSMB, 2021).

### Conclusion

The school feeding programme is one of the social intervention strategies to ensure that pupils have access to education by removing the barriers of hunger. In other words, school feeding programme is an initiative of the government that has helped in increasing school enrolment over the years.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the study therefore put the following recommendation forward:

- i. The Federal Government should try to encourage other non-implementing states of the federation to replicate the school feeding programme. This may go a long way in enhancing the attainment of the objectives of UBE, EFA and MDGs.
- ii. Each state government should strive to replicate the Enugu School Feeding Programme for the enhancement of educational and economic development. This will bring about the much desired national development.
- iii. Educational managers at different levels should ensure that such programme introduced is executed with the spirit of commitment and loyalty it deserves, for successful implementation.
- iv. Teachers should endeavour to keep adequate records that are expected of them. Records of enrolment should be carefully taken and adequately kept for future reference.

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