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SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME AND PUPILS' ENROLLMENT IN OSUN CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, OSUN STATE PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effectiveness of the school feeding programme and primary school pupils' enrollment in Osun state. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The 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 2014/15 - 2015/16. Also, both teachers and students perceived that the school feeding programme organized in Osun State is effective .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 Osun central senatorial district of Osun State, Nigeria (t[1143]=1.656, p=0.053). The study therefore recommended that government should try to encourage other non-implementing states of the federation to replicate the

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school feeding programme. This may go a long way in enhancing the attainment of the objectives of UBE, EFA and MDGs.

Key words: 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). 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. Tomlinson (2007) traced the emergence of school feeding programme to the 1930s in the United Kingdom and the United States of America with a focus on improving the growth of children. In 1900 Netherlands became the first country to move the programme to a new level by incorporating school meals into a national legislation. By the 1930s, the United Kingdom and the United States had also instituted the school feeding programme as part of their national programmes. A further account

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indicates that school feeding initiatives have been in existence since the late 1700's and originated as projects of donors in Europe. The United States of America began the practice of initiating school feeding programmes in Austria as an act of international aid focused on combating the severe malnutrition of children in the 1940s after the Second World War. Since then, school feeding programmes have become a key part of food assistance, relief emergency and development programmes. School Feeding Programme is a social safety net for children and as part of the national development goals. It provides an important new opportunity to assist poor families and feed hungry children. It provides incentive for poor families to send their children to school and keep them there.

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, 2003) 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, 2009). 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,2004) 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, 2004).

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. Osun 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 Osun 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 "Osun 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

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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. Inspite 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.

Oyefade, (2014), 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. Oyefade, (2014) observed further that the implementation of school feeding programme is associated with increase in enrolment, particularly for girls. Several studies (Gaspart and Thomas (2012); Mesa, 2007) 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 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 have and are still being implemented, data reveals that the programme has increased enrolment and attendance rates over the years (Akanbi 2013).

Nutritional and health status are powerful influences on children's learning and how children perform in schools. Children who lack certain nutrients in their diet do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children. Children

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with cognitive and sensory impairments naturally perform less and are more likely to repeat grades. The irregular school attendance of malnourished and unhealthy children is one of the key factors for poor performance (Uduku, 2011). Yunusa (2012) noted that students in School Feeding Programmes have the potential for improving their performance because it enables them attend school regularly and study more effectively. Yunusa (2012) found further in a study carried out in Jamaica that, children in Grade 2 scored higher in Arithmetic when they started being fed at school. However, the impact of School Feeding Programme on the academic performance of pupils has been embraced with mixed feelings. It was observed that although SFPs motivate parents to enroll their children in school, its impact on academic performance is mixed and depends on various factors within the context in which the programme is set. Drawing from this, Uduku (2011) opined that SFPs would best improve the performance of pupils when coupled with adequate learning materials, physical facilities and teacher motivation.

In-school meals are effective at increasing school attendance rates because children receive the meals only on days when they attend school. The three aspects of nutrition which influence school attendance through in-school feeding include: short term impact which alleviates a child's short term hunger during the school day, by providing more nutrients to the child, providing the child with a meal when she/he would not have had one or replacing a meal that would have been received after school with one during school hours. A hungry child may not be able to perform well in class (Grantham et al 1998), hence the value of school feeding to attendance. The other nutrition related influence of school feeding on school attendance is through the long run benefits of program-induced improvements in nutrition. Nutrition improvements through feeding could improve a child's physiological capacity for learning. Finally in-school meals may improve attendance through nutrition by reducing morbidity (Scrimshaw and Sam Gino Vanni 1977). The first school feeding initiative in Africa was established under the auspices of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a vision and strategic framework for Africa's renewal that was

adopted by the organization for African unity (OAU) in 2001 (Tomlinson 2007). Among the activities or initiative of NEPAD is school feeding program. One of NEPAD's key programs are food security and nutrition. NEPAD's aims to increase children's direct access to food through school feeding program with a target of 50 million children of school going age by 2015. NEPAD's school feeding program is tailored to arouse and maintain local production through the purchase of locally produced food for school. Local small-scale famers were to be given the opportunity to provide schools with the necessary food products. The logic behind this kind of reasoning was that locally produced food products may be used comfortably by many local children. The home-grown school feeding program aimed at ensuring sufficient nutrition for school going children through diet supplementation was a complete meal that is adequate in energy, protein, vitamins and minerals (NEPAD 2003).

The reason NEPAD gives for this focus on school going children is the improvement of nutritional status in the formative years. Since primary education is compulsory in most African countries, children can be easily reached through the school. Therefore primary schools feeding enhances enrolment and attendance, which improves literacy (particularly for girls), an improve component of poverty reduction (Bowley, 2005, Tomlinson 2007). Studies have shown that 'magnetic effect' of the school feeding meal program has greatly increased school attendance rates especially among young children. In rural areas schools that provide meals have higher attendance rates and low drop-out rates than schools that do not (Espejo 2009). On average studies show that participating families save between four and nine percent of their annual income by taking advantage of school meals and avoiding added food expenditure (Finan 2010).

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; osun 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 Osun central senatorial

district, Osun 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.

Statement of the Problem

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 Osun 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 9th year in Osun state is effective. This study therefore, investigated on the effectiveness of the School Feeding programme in Osun 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 Osun state primary schools between 2010 and 2018?
2. What is the perception of stake holders (students and teachers) on the effectiveness (regularity) of the school feeding programme policy among Osun state primary schools?

Methodology

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 Osun Central Senatorial District of Osun State Nigeria.The sample size for the study consists of primary school teachers and pupils. "School Feeding Programme Questionnaire (SFPQ) was developed and used 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.

Research question 1

What is the enrollment trend in Osun state primary schools between 2010 and 2018?

Table 1: The enrolment trend in Osun state primary schools between 2010 and 2018?

	Enrolment Trend			
Year	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**% of 2010-2018 Enrolment Trend**
2010/11	151,431	157,013	308,444	9.1
2011/12	200,461	200,130	400,591	11.9
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 Osun State. The Table shows a steady and consistent increase in the enrolment of primary school pupils from 2010/11 to 2014/15 academic session. For instance, the enrolment was 308,444 (9.1%) in 2010/11 academic session. It increased to 400,591 (11.9%) in 2011/2012 academic session. Surprisingly, the same number of enrolment that was recorded in 2011/12 was also recorded in 2012/13 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 Osun state primary schools?

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Table 2: The perception of stake holders (students and teachers) on the effectiveness (regularity) of the school feeding programme policy among Osun 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	700	68	31	31	3.79		

	programme is well organized by the government.	84.3%	8.2%	3.7 %	3.7 %			
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		
1.	Meals are provided for the pupils daily and promptly while in school.	237 75.2%	68 21.6%	0 %	10 3.2 %	3.69		
2.	Government monitors the implementation of the school feeding programme.	189 60.0%	106 33.7%	10 3.2 %	10 3.2 %	3.50	3.10	High
3.	The SFP is funded through	159 50.5%	126 40.0%	20 6.3	10 3.2	3.38		

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	cost sharing between the Federal, state and local governments.			%	%			
4.	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		
5.	The programme enjoys support from international organizations.	99 31.4%	140 44.4%	58 18. 4%	18 5.7 %	3.02		
6	The School Feeding programme improves the pupils learning ability.	148 47.0%	109 34.6%	48 5.2 %	10 3.2 %	3.25		
7	Inspectors come during cooking to check the food being prepared.	88 27.9%	80 25.4%	70 22. 2%	77 24. 4	2.57		
8	Inspectors come during dishing of the food to check	68 21.6%	129 41.0%	59 18. 7%	59 18. 7%	2.65		

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	the quality.							
9	The Meals served are nutritious.	100 31.7%	166 52.7%	39 12. 4%	10 3.2 %	3.13		
10	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 Osun 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 Osun state primary schools were 3.30 and 3.10. This implies that both teachers and students perceived that the school feeding programme organized in Osun 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 Walingo and Musamali (2008) 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 Osun State is effective. This is line with the findings of Ayoola (2014) that the introduction of meal programme has led to a decrease in the prevalence rate of the nutrition related diseases, like anaemia and diarrhoea which was noticeable between 2007 and 2010 in Osun State hospitals records (Osun State Hospital Management Board, 2011).

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 Osun 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.
v. Parents' participation should be encouraged to give more support for the programme.
vi. There should be a continuous sensitization and training of the stakeholders. This is necessary to assist the programme to achieve much better results.
vii. Periodic evaluation should be carried out.

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