



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Assessing The Impact of School Feeding Program on Primary School In Urban Area of Blantyre District (Malawi)

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation was to assess the impact of school feeding program on four selected primary schools in Blantyre District. Three objectives that guided this study dissertation were: "To examine the levels of enrollment before and after commencement of School Feeding Programme", "to examine the effects of School Feeding Programme on pupils' attendance" and "to determine the effects of School Feeding Programme on pupils' academic performance". Data were collected using questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion. The analysis involved frequencies of particular responses which were presented using tables and graphs. The study sample was 200, comprising of 10 Head teachers, 90 teachers, 98 pupils, 1 supervisor of school feeding program and 1 District education officer. Sample random, purposive and snow ball procedures respectively were used to select the respondents. The findings of the study showed an increase in school enrolment and attendance and unsure have achieved due SFPs and few schools noticed static in terms of school enrolment and attendance due poverty and long distance, The study recommended that the government through MoEVT should expand and improve school infrastructure and encouraged parents to build the culture of contributing for proper implementation of the SFPs and also the teachers should find a way of motivating student in education despite school feeding program

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the statement of the problem, research gap, objectives of the study, scope of the study and research questions.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The introduction of the School Feeding Programs' (herein after SFPs) in Malawi started since 1956 during colonial era, but was strengthened shortly after independence under local governments which included Provision of mid-day meals and health services such as screening and first aid (Missan, 2005). But a decade after independence this programme of school feeding began to lose its popularity due to changing socio-economic policies at micro-level (WFP, 2004)

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

As one way of alleviating hunger while supporting education, health and community development (WFP, 2007) (Mary's meal, 2002) SFPs provides meals or snacks to be eaten during school hours or distributed as dry take home food rations to pupils at the end of each day, month or school term. According to School Feeding Programs and other organisations implemented with the aims of improving nutritional status, alleviating short term hunger, improving school attendance and class concentration and improving household food security. As such there is great need to understand why the existence of food provided by organisations to reduce hunger but there are still low attendance of school and academic performance and high levels of school dropout. Therefore there is great need to examine the effects of school feeding program on primary school in the rural area of Blantyre.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature about the history of the SFPs.

IMPACT OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM

SFP is essential in any country whether it is developed or developing. The primary assumption of SFP is that education and learning depend on good nutrition (Briggs, 2008). School health and nutrition also determine factors that keep children out of school and reduce their ability to learn effectively (Save the children USA, 2007). SFP is mainly implemented with the purpose of achieving the following results: Increase enrolment and attendance, Alleviate short term-hunger,

Improve nutritional status and Improve micronutrient status (WFP, 2004) and also increase learner's performance. A recently published report by the FAO (2019) reviewed nutrition guidelines and standards for school meals from 33 Low-and-Middle-Income-Countries (hereinafter Low-and-Middle-Income-Countries) through surveys targeted toward relevant stakeholders and found considerable variation between and within countries in terms of coordination, management, funding, objectives, and modalities of school feeding programs.

INCREASE ENROLMENT ATTENDANCE

According to Del Rosso (1999), the provision of food acts as a strong incentive for children to attend school on a regular basis. In many communities, girls mostly benefit from SFP because most of families, girls are culturally disadvantaged such that in hardship situations, male children are given opportunity to go to school over girls. SFP can provide a way in which parents can save money by spending less food and thereby allow the girls to attend school. In Jamaica the study carried out by Del Rosso (1999), showed that the provision of breakfast to primary school student significantly increased attendance.

ALLEVIATION OF SHORT-TERM HUNGER IN LEARNERS

The WFP (2004) reported that the effects of short-term hunger related to learning capacity in which learning ability is affected greatly by hunger due to skipped meals. Many factors contribute to hunger among school children. These include long distances Children have to travel, cultural meal practices that include no or small breakfasts due to lack of family time and resources to provide adequate meals to children before or during the school day. The provision of SFP, for example, small snack at the start of the day or mid-morning alleviates the short-term hunger and has been linked to increase awareness, activeness and improve learning capacity (Briggs, 2008).

IMPROVEMENT OF NUTRITIONAL STATUS IN LEARNERS

In terms of body composition, studies have also shown promising results. Grillenberger et al. (2003) conducted an RCT in 12 primary schools from a rural malaria-endemic area in Kenya (Embu District). Schools were assigned to one of three food supplement groups: 1) energy, 2) milk, or 3) meat supplement. In larger schools with more than one grade 1, classes were randomly assigned to one of the three isocaloric supplement groups. A total of 544 students participated in the study and, depending on the group to which their school or classroom was assigned, they were further randomly assigned to a food supplement group (treatment) or no supplement group (control).

The number of children in each group was relatively equal, approximately 140 children per group. Children in the treatment groups (receiving food supplements) were fed Githeri, a local vegetable stew, with meat, milk, or extra oil added, depending on the treatment group to which they were assigned, i.e., meat, milk, or snacks.

INCREASE LEARNERS PERFORMANCE

According to the research carried out by Ahmed (2004) in Bangladesh, the findings showed that there was an increase of enrollment and completion rates, improvement in achievement tests by children receiving meals/food at schools. Also Taras (2005) reviews research on micronutrient supplementation have shown that iron appears to improve cognitive performance in which the programme of providing food with micronutrient, helps to increase pupils' concentration span and learning capacity by reducing short term hunger in the classroom. School meals act as a good way to channel vital nourishment to poor children. Therefore providing pupils' food helps them to increase attention and concentration in their learning (Madeley, 2000). Also School Feeding Programme effectively reduces absenteeism and increases the duration (King and Burgess, 1995).

FACTORS AFFECTING SCHOOL ENROLMENT ATTENDANCE AND PERFORMANCE

The despite of increasing enrollment and attendance in many developing countries and fragile states these efforts are still affected by overcrowding of pupils in the classrooms, too few textbooks and insufficient instructional learning and teaching materials and also an increase in pupil-teacher ratios these are factors that have forced many children, especially girls, to drop out early in schools (UN, 2008). Also the study conducted in Kibera (the biggest slum in Nairobi), by CSO (2003) showed that poverty had been the major factor in preventing parents to enroll their children to schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to a complete scheme or a plan conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions or the problems (Sekaran, 2005). The research is survey study in which the researcher uses descriptive research design for descriptive purpose

STUDY AREA (Selection Criteria)

The study was conducted in Blantyre District The rationale of selecting those divisions as follows; firstly; the area is mostly affected by chronic

hunger, secondly, the area is conducting the SFPs in many primary schools in district. Therefore, it is for those reasons that Blantyre district is the best chosen for the in-depth study.

TARGET POPULATION

According to Best and Khan (2003), population is defined as any group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that is of interest to the researcher. The target Population of this study consisted of 10 Head teachers, 90 teachers, 98 pupils, 1 feeding supervisor and 1 District education officer.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In this study the researcher used interviews, Questionnaires, observation. The following section discusses each of the data collection instruments:

INTERVIEW

According to Gill. Stewart, treasure Chadwick (2008) state that an interview meant to record and analysis people, experiences, beliefs and ideal on relevant topic. it is also convenient to gather data when the researcher deals more selective topic about which the participants may not feel very comfortable to talk openly in group environment. Also questions gave the respondents room to answer freely and amplify the responses. The respondents were interviewed to their work places.

QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires have open and closed questions or statements to which respondents react upon (Kothari, 2004). Closed-ended questions were used where the answers were divided into categories such discrete, distinct and relatively few in number. It is easier for respondents to answer because they have only to choose categories. In that way a chance for irrelevant answers is limited to the minimum, because appropriate answer categories is provided.

OBSERVATION

Is a system description of events, behavior and articles in the social setting chosen for study (Marshall and Rossman.1998) through the mode of observation, the research gets to describe situation as exist by making use of five sense thus presenting a sketch of situation under study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

TO EXAMINE THE LEVELS OF ENROLMENT BEFORE AND AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SFPs.

TABLE 1 DESCRIBE ENROLMENT OF PUPILS BEFORE SFP

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Increased	20	10.0	10.0	10.0
Static	83	41.5	41.5	51.5
Decrease	97	48.5	48.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

This figure shows the enrolment before school feeding program started, the objective focuses on the levels of school enrolment before School Feeding Programme starts. All head teachers were asked to provide data which showed the levels of school enrolment before the introduction of the programme of school feeding. According to the head teacher explains that the school were decreasing in the number of pupils attending school, the enrolment was static and the performance was very low in all classes, the teachers also explains that their low increase of attendance of s pupils.

TABLE 3. EXAMPLE OF ATTENDANCE IN AUGUST 2022 HHI PRIMARY SCHOOL

DATA ANALYSIS ATTENDANCE

COMPARING ATTENDANCE				
	CURRENT	PREVIOUS	DIFFERENCE	VARIANCE
BOYS	408	395	13	3.3
GIRLS	158	151	7	4.6
TOTAL	566	546	20	3.7

HHI primary in 2008 the many pupils were enroll but currently there's a low enrolment of school because HHI is the middle of schools for example namalimmwe, nyambadwe, Blantyre girls including HHI primary so all the schools marys meal they provide food despite the enrolment is low but their attendance is higher so according to supervisor from marys meals state that the attendance is effective in way that out of 638 pupils the enrollment at school 638 and 566 student attend classes every day. In Chirimba primary school at first the enrolment was low, attendance and the performance and now the enrolment and attendance is higher through the existence of food in school and lastly the head teacher kameza explains that the existence of food makes many children work hard eating food is not a problem and many students are able to attend school

TO EXAMINE THE EFFECTS OF SFP ON PUPILS' ATTENDANCE

This is the second research objective which focused to find out the effects of SFP on student attendance. The following is the information provided by different respondents. Head teachers from selected schools indicated that the attendance went up since the commencement of the School Feeding Programme.

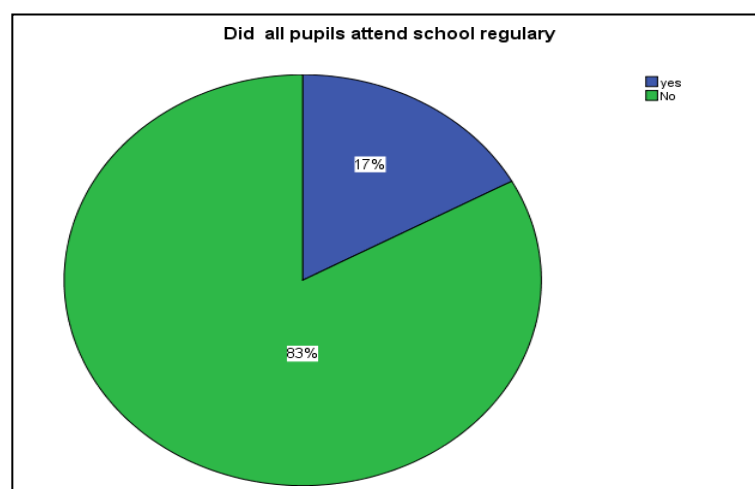


Figure 1 DID ALL THE PUPILS ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY

The figure show the effects of pupils on school attendance after feeding program, 83% shows that pupils started attending school regularly which means the community was lacking food that makes higher attendance of school regularly in pupils and 17% of pupils shows the low school attendance of pupils. Meaning that the total number of 4 schools undergo to school because of existence of food meaning that in community people are lacking food to feed their children because of poverty with introduction of school feeding program has improve and encourage many pupils to attend school regularly and less number of pupil they attend school but not regularly meaning that they attend class no every day and they come to school but not attending classes

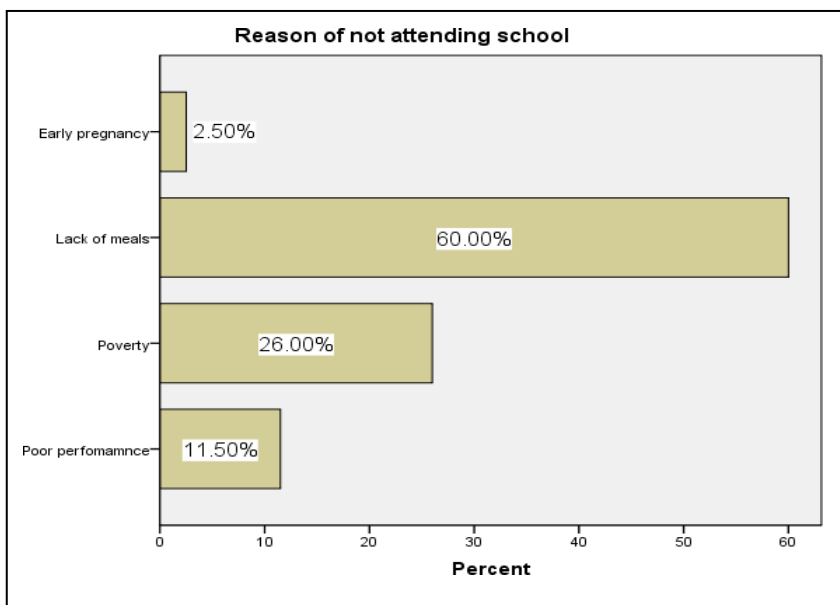


Figure 2 Reasons for pupils not attending school

The figure2 shows the reason of not attending school the focus group was used to hear the views of the teacher and the head teacher on what they get in the community that in 100 percent of pupils some of them are in poverty (26%) shows that many families cannot be able to pay school fund for the children to learn, cannot go to school hungry and also without school uniform secondly lack of meal (62%) shows that the head teachers state that most of pupils of school are not attending school because of lack of meals, Thirdly is early pregnancy (2.50%) shows students' interest in education but with poverty many pupils are encouraged to get married to reduce poverty in their family' and lastly is poor performance (11.50%) shows student who do not perform well in class because of poor performance of not attending class because they found their friends are in the middle of class, some of the pupils they just write exams

TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTS OF SFP ON PUPILS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

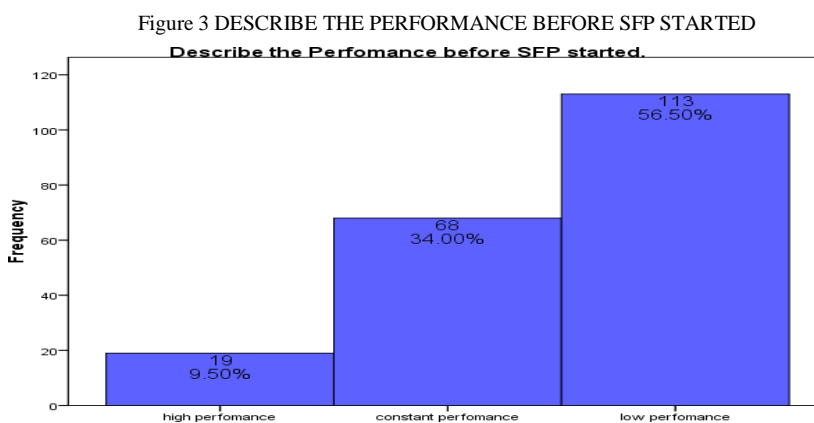


Figure 3 describe the performance before school feeding with the discussion 9.50% shows high performance of pupils meaning that the performance was highly with lower number of pupil attending school frequently, secondly the constant performance(34.00%) meaning that some of the pupils have low performance because many families in the community are not educated so some pupils are encourage to drop out from school because of bad advice they receive in family and friends some of pupils they choose not to listen in class so the performance became static, lastly (56%) shows lack of performance of pupils the teachers explains that in poor performance arises with poor understanding, lack of concentration and laziness of the students most of students have lack of willingness in education the pupils they do not perform well in class.

FIGURE 4 DESCRIBE PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS

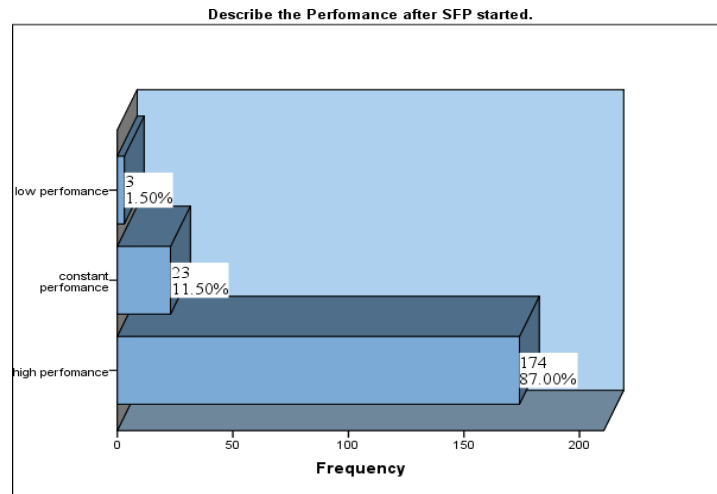


Fig 4

The graph describe the performance of pupils after the school feeding program started, the coming in of the school feeding programs there was a low performance which is 3% shows that it is true that school feeding program arises at school but not all who performing well, 11.50% shows a constant performance meaning that student was having better performance than before lastly 87.00% shows many students they perform well in class because a number pupils has been encourage of school because of feeding program and many students the perform well because encouragement teachers and other students

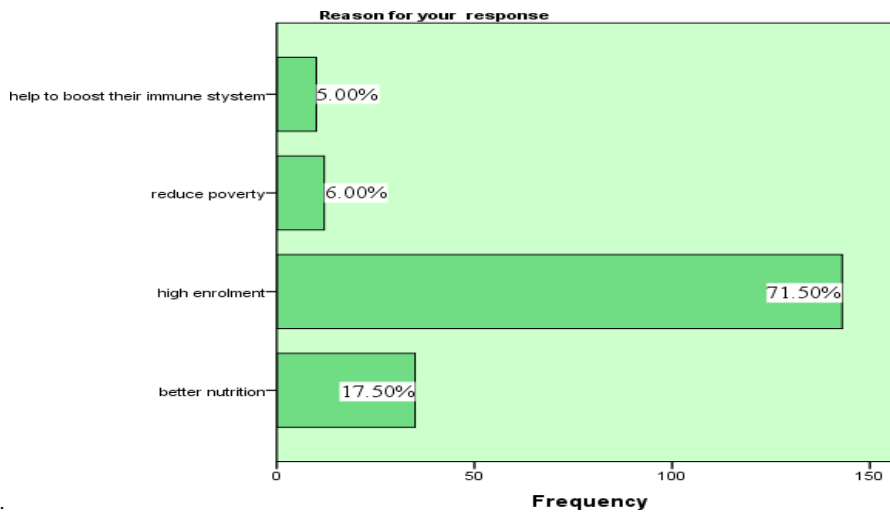


Figure 5 REASON FOR THE RESPONSE T5?%O THE ABOVE QUESTION

The figure 5 teachers explains he reason on performance, 5% shows that feeding helps to boost the immune system that means feeding programs help the many students to boost their immune system,6.00% shows that feeding reduce poverty in pupils since that many student they go to school so that they should receive food to eat meaning that poverty has been reduce because of school feeding,71.50 % shows feeding program increases high enrollment pupils many student attended school because of existence of porridge in school and 17.00% shows school feeding provide better nutrition to many pupils since that theirs higher attendances.

FINDING

The findings of the study have shown increase in school enrolment, attendance and academic performance attributed this with SFPs. The findings some schools and few has indicated that school enrolment and attendance were static and The academic performance was uncertain due several

factors such as pupils travelling long distances from home to school and back; poverty of the community members especially parents who could not pay money needed to sustain the SFP. The findings have also indicated that children were involved in household chores at the expense of attending school and other involvement in income generating activities. The findings have also indicated that some parents have negative attitudes towards education thus they are unwilling to allow their children to attend school on a regular basis. Indicated that some parents have negative attitudes towards education thus they are unwilling to allow their children to attend school on a regular basis.

Assumption and Conclusion

The study findings have indicated that there were recorded positive outcomes accredited to School Feeding Programmes where four schools in the sample had positive outcomes as regards to school enrolment and attendance. And there was modest achievement in academic performance. SFP has been capable of addressing the issue of low school enrolment and attendance; however, modest has been achieved in terms of academic performance of pupils. There was an increase in school enrolment and attendance in most selected primary schools after the commencement of the SFPs and other factors was parental encouragement of their pupils. However, few schools recorded static in school enrolment and attendance due to poverty, parent's negative attitude towards education. However, despite the positive impacts that SFPs had increased school enrolment, attendance and even academic performance to some of the schools, negative impact recorded to affect the objective of this study because SFPs had increased enrolment which caused overcrowded classes and led to other obstacles such as limited space, inadequate teaching and learning materials and inadequate furniture and this suggested to affect effective teaching and learning hence, yielded modest academic performance.

Recommendation

The government of Malawi in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) should expand and improve school infrastructure so that those pupils. Another recommendation is not all students who can afford buying school uniforms so with a kindred heart with what other organisations do they should be an agreement in collaboration when writing proposals they should guide the needs of the schools. The school feeding program they should continue helping the government by feeding the pupils for better education and good health for better Malawi and the government of Malawi should continue to encourage the community to depend on agriculture so that when school feeding ends they should provide food themselves to their families and children to continue education.

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