

EXPLORING THE SYSTEMIC MECHANISIM OF HOME GROWN FEEDING TOWARDS REDUCTION OF POVERTY IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

BY

BALOGUN OLUKUNLE OLAGUNJU
TAI SOLARIN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
IJAGUN, IJEBU ODE, OGUN STATE
Email: speaktoa3@yahoo.com
Tel: 08060932337

Abstract

The study examined the systemic mechanism of home grown feeding towards the reduction of poverty in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises all primary schools in Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select fifteen (15) primary schools in Ogun State in which ten (10) teachers were randomly selected from each of the chosen primary schools in Ijebu East local government in Ogun State to make a total of one hundred and fifty (150) as sample for the study. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered in this study. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools. Findings revealed that, there is late payment of food vendors, inadequate funding and political/ bureaucratic corruption among programme administrators. It also showed that there is proper planning/management of the food vendors, increased budgetary provisions and improved standard and quality of food. The study concluded that the implementation of public policies for the execution of social services for the citizenry is a constitutional right of the latter. As such, any government that claims to have the mandate of the people and enjoy official legitimacy should strive to fulfill their constitutional obligation of implementation of social policies that would improve the living standard of the people. It therefore becomes apt for government at every level to try as much as possible to formulate people centered policies and as well put structures in place for policy implementation and actualization. It was recommended that federal and states government alike should review and increase the budgets made for existing policy programmes with particular reference to the home-grown school feeding programme so as to cater for the financial needs of the programme.

Keywords: *Home grown, Poverty, Mechanism, Reduction, Exploring*

Introduction

Adequate nutrition is the bed rock for optimal growth and development. It is a foundation for healthy living, helps in preventing and reducing the risk connected with both present and impending health problem in children (Ibianu, Okechuku & Eme-Okafor, 2017). In most developing countries, hunger and malnutrition have been found to continually affect general wellbeing, quality of life and survival of most children. As indicated by Food and Agricultural Organization (Stevens, & Nelson, 2011)), a child die at every six seconds from hunger interrelated causes. Also, Stevens, and Nelson, (2011) stated that one quarter of children from developing countries are underweight and school age children have been found to be vulnerable undernourished as indicated by (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Jukes, & Drake, 2009).

Adequate nutrition and health status can also influence academic performance and child learning ability. Access to a nutritious mid-day meal has been opined by Ibianu, Okechuku and Eme-Okafor (2017) to play a vital role in achieving good nutritional status, overall wellbeing, improve

cognitive, mental development and enhance academic performance of school age children. In view of these, school feeding program was implemented in many nations across the globe to fight short-term hunger by providing at least one daily nutritious meal to compliment the household food so as to improve student attentiveness in class as well as enhancing good academic performance (Rees, Richards, & Gregory, 2008)

In 2005, School feeding program was launched in Nigeria with the assistance of the United Nation' Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This program was designed to provide one meal per school day to all primary school pupils in Nigeria with the specific objectives of improving the health of school children, increase their enrolment, retention and completion rate (Mwaniki, & Makokha, 2013). Recently, this program was remodified in Nigeria so as to address some economic issue and tagged Home Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) which was officially inaugurated on the 9th of June 2016. School feeding programme is a global practice with over 368 million children receiving school meals in 169 countries (WFP, 2013). It is argued that school feeding programmes are effective in stimulating demand for schooling particularly in settings where school attendance is low and where children come from rural and relatively low socio-economic backgrounds (Stevens, & Nelson, 2011). Research has shown that both acute and chronic hunger affect children's attention span, behaviour in class and educational achievement. Since school children are vulnerable to short term hunger, developed and rich countries also adopt school meals to improve the health and educational status of children (Rufina, Ayogu, Afiaenyi, & Elizabeth, 2018). School feeding can be classified into two: In-school feeding where children take their meals in school and Take-home rations, where children who attend school are given food to take home to their families (Stevens, & Nelson, 2011). Governments recognize school meals as an essential tool for the development and growth of children, communities, and the entire society hence, its widespread adoption.

According to Aliyar, Gelli & Hamdani, (2015), homegrown school feeding is a conjoined word which is used to explain school feeding programs where goods and services for meal preparation are procured from small-holder farmers and businesses within the school locality. Also, this program has the potential of improving the economic status of its target communities by providing a market in which farmers can sell their produce so as to create employment opportunities and increase their source of income. This programme according to Falade, Otemuyiwa, Oluwasola, Israel, Oluwemimo, Oladipupo, and Adewusi, (2012) was also aimed at delivering, cost-effective program using food items that are locally grown by small-holder farmers so as to tackle hunger and improve nutrition, increase children access, participation and achievement in school and support local livelihoods. In addition, it can also be used as a means of incorporating varieties of nutritious foods that the students are accustomed to in to the school feeding menu.

In developing countries, 60 million children go to school hungry every day (Owusu, , Colecraft, , Aryeetey, , Vaccarol, & Huffman, 2016).). School feeding responds directly to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 2 related to ending poverty and hunger; SDG 3 and 4 which advocate good health and wellbeing as well as quality education respectively. Studies have also linked school feeding to SDG 5 which deals with the promotion of gender equality. Ruzky, Aulo, and Salha, (2015) addresses the issue of poverty by providing gainful employment to the food vendors. Generally, school feeding programme is targeted to end hunger, at least on short term basis. Perhaps, this explains why the Kenyan programme is specifically captioned "Njamarufuku Kenya" (eradicate hunger in Kenya) (Nelson, Lowes, & Hwang, 2007)). Meals served in schools cushion children from hunger and when it is in the form of take-home ration, other members of the family partake in the meals. According to Olusanya (2010), many caterers in Osun State Nigeria, serve part of the food to their families before taking it to school. However, a study carried out in Maiduguri metropolis on government feeding programme and hunger reduction shows that the meals do not sufficiently satisfy hunger (Runsewe-Abiodun, Tamramat., Sholeye, Olatunbosun, & Odusan, 2018). This can be attributed to the inadequacy of the meals since the idea of a meal stopping hunger even if temporarily, cannot be contentious.

School feeding can impact positively on gender equality by creating enabling environment for girls to participate effectively in school. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 advocates the elimination of gender disparity in education and equal access to all levels of education to all, including people with special needs (Ajuzie, Sanusi, & Makinde, 2018). Generally, girls struggle more than boys to access education. In poor households where resources are too lean to keep all children in school, girls are compelled to drop out and either married out or forced into labour to supplement family income. Interestingly, research shows that school feeding programme has led to a reduction in the number of girls forced into child labour (Ruzky, Aulo, & Salha, 2015)). The financial empowerment which the female vendors receive through school feeding programme enables them to contribute financially towards the education of their girls. Nigeria joined the train of countries engaged in school feeding through its National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) established in 2016. The objectives of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) is expected to be fully accomplished within four years which is 2020, hence the need for its assessment.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the mechanical of home grown feeding towards the reduction of poverty in Ogun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are:

- i. To establish the possible challenges militating against the successful implementation of the home-grown school feeding programme in Ogun State.
- ii. To examine the strategies that can be adopted to improve the home-grown school feeding programmes towards the reduction of poverty in Ogun State.

Research Questions

- i. What are the possible challenges militating against the successful implementation of the home-grown school feeding programme in Ogun State?
- ii. What are the strategies that can be adopted to improve the home-grown school feeding towards the reduction of poverty in Ogun State?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises all primary school in Ogun State. A random sampling technique was utilized to select fifteen (15) primary schools in Ijebu East local government area in Ogun State in which ten (10) teachers were randomly selected from each of the chosen school to make a total of one hundred and fifty (150) as sample for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contained items on the main title of the study. The instrument was given to experts for construct and content validation. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools.

Presentation of Data Analysis and Results Discussion

Table 1: What are the possible challenges militating against the successful implementation of the home-grown school feeding programme in Ogun State?

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		Mean (?)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Late payment of food vendors.	108	72	42	28	3.8	.79
2.	Inadequate funding	81	54	69	46	3.5	.77
3.	Political/ bureaucratic corruption among programme administrators	77	51.3	73	48.6	3.4	.75
Overall Total		Mean (?) = 3.57 and STD = 0.79					

Table 1 above shows the possible challenges militating against the successful implementation of the home-grown school feeding programme in Ogun State. This findings indicate that there is late payment of food vendors ($\bar{x} = 3.8$, $SD = 0.79$), inadequate funding ($\bar{x} = 3.5$, $SD = 0.77$), and political/bureaucratic corruption among programme administrators ($\bar{x} = 3.4$, $SD = 0.75$). This reveals that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, $SD = 0.79$) showing there is numerous possible challenges militating against the successful implementation of the home-grown school feeding programme in Ogun State. The result is in line with the submission of

Lawal, Njoku, Adewale, Alabi, Akingboye, Godwin, Osayande, Agbor,, Nzeagwu, Abdulsalami. Udejah and Godswill, (2021) who reports that most parents were reported to have instructed their children not to partake in the school feeding programme because of the poor quality of meal served to the children, while others were seen lamenting that the programme did not cover their local government areas respectively. This means that the government needs to improve on the quality of meal served to the target population and as well increase the coverage of the programme to those states that are yet to feel the programme.

Table 2: What are the strategies that can be adopted to improve the home-grown school feeding towards the reduction of poverty in Ogun State?

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		Mean (?)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Proper planning/management of the food vendors	101	67.3	49	32.7	3.7	0.77
2.	Increased budgetary provisions	107	71.3	43	28.7	3.9	0.78
3.	Improved standard and quality of food	98	65.3	52	34.7	3.8	0.77
Overall Total		Mean (?) = 3.57 and STD = 0.77					

Table 2 above shows the strategies that can be adopted to improve the home-grown school feeding towards the reduction of poverty in Ogun State. This findings indicate that proper planning/management of the food vendors ($\bar{x} = 3.7$, $SD = 0.77$), increased budgetary provisions ($\bar{x} = 3.9$, $SD = 0.78$) and improved standard and quality of food ($\bar{x} = 3.8$, $SD = 0.77$). This shows there are strategies that can be adopted to improve the home-grown school feeding towards the reduction of poverty in Ogun State. The findings is in line with the view of Kabiru (2017) who state that policy implementation in Nigeria is plagued by lack of a sincerely expressed political will and commitment on the part of the leadership, political/bureaucratic corruption, and deliberate bureaucratic poor performances. Thus, if and when the government establishes institutions to properly manage existing policy programmes like the national home-grown school feeding programme, the programme will succeed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was revealed that there is late payment of food vendors, inadequate funding and political/ bureaucratic corruption among programme administrators. It also showed that there is proper planning/management of the food vendors, increased budgetary provisions and improved standard and quality of food. The study concluded that the implementation of public policies for the execution of social services for the citizenry is a constitutional right of the latter. As such, any government that claims to have the mandate of the people and enjoy official legitimacy should strive to fulfil their constitutional obligation of implementation of social policies that would

improve the living standard of the people. It therefore becomes apt for government at every level to try as much as possible formulate people centered policies and as well put structures in place for policy implementation and actualization.

Recommendations

From the foregoing discussion, the following recommendations were made;

- 1) The federal and states government alike should review and increase the budgets made for existing policy programmes with particular reference to the home grown school feeding programme so as to cater for the financial needs of the programme.
- 2) There should be proper planning mechanism with a coordinated framework for national programmes so as to avoid programme distraction and bureaucratic corruption. There is need for the government to plan adequately before embarking on state and national programmes so as to avoid administrative lapses.
- 3) The government at all levels should have policy commitment and will so as to achieve the purpose of the programme. Without political will and commitment, the government will pay lip service to the success of the programmes.
- 4) The government should expand the programme coverage of the national home-grown school feeding programme so as to cover the remaining states and local government in the federation.

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