

**EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME  
IN JOS SOUTH L.G.A OF PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

This study evaluated the implementation of the school feeding programme in Jos south local government area (LGA) of Plateau State, Nigeria. Five research questions were raised to guide the study. The study adopted evaluation research design and descriptive survey research design for the study. The population consisted of 200 participants comprising implementers, head teachers, teachers and pupils in Jos south LGA. A sample of 100 participants was selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection employed a likert- scale questionnaire, validated by two experts. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.76. Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation were used to address the research questions. Findings indicated that planning without the incorporation of key players did not facilitate the implementation of the Programme. The funds provided for meals at one hundred naira per child were unrealistic in this current dispensation that goods and services had skyrocketed. Adequate monitoring need to be strengthened and funding mechanism improved. Although, there was increase in school enrollment which may directly or indirectly be as a result of population or slightly due to the programme in place. The study recommends that Government should show more commitment in the area of sensitization of the public to the importance of the Programme. Promote inclusiveness; elaborate clearly the channels of funding. Robust funding mechanism to improve surveillance for proper documentation and accountability must be taken seriously. Government should collaborate with zealous Nigerians and Non-Governmental organizations in making the Programme more attractive and nutritious to the pupils therefore increasing the school enrollment and reducing dropout.

***Keywords: Evaluation, implementation, school feeding programme, implementers.***

**INTRODUCTION**

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental human right and crucial driver of social and economic development. It is crucial for individual and societal development in numerous ways. It equips individuals with knowledge, skills and critical thinking abilities necessary for personal growth, career advancement and active participation in society. Furthermore, Education fosters social cohesion, promotes economic prosperity and contributes to technological advancements. It is relevant for shaping a well-rounded and informed citizen capable of addressing contemporary challenges and serves as a driving force for progress. No country can develop without first developing her educational sector, for a nation to be recognized and contribute to the global world; there is a need to have a robust or quality education that is functionally effective in the society. However, certain things must be put in place such as quality teachers, quality instructional materials, adequate funding, well feed pupils as incentives to facilitate teaching and learning.

A lot of people in Nigeria are leaving below standard that they cannot meet their basic needs. Children go to school on an empty stomach, as a result of that sometimes, they cannot concentrate in class thereby denying them of exploring their full potentials, poor academic performance, absenteeism and increases dropout rates. For those negative indices to be addressed squarely, the

Nigeria Government as part of the implementation of a Universal Basic Education Programme. The school feeding programme was introduced to provide nutritional meals to public school pupils of primary 1, 2 and 3. This was to motivate them to be punctual in school and increase enrollment and concentration, reduce dropout rate and improve academic performance in the schools.

School feeding programmes are widely recognized as a strategic intervention to improve pupils' nutritional status, enhance school attendance, and boost learning outcomes. The school feeding programme was initiated by the president Muhammadu Buhari administration in 2016 which was under the office of the vice president in person of Professor Yemi Osinbanjo. In 2019, the ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development was created Twelve (12) states were the pioneers of the Programme with Plateau state inclusive, subsequently, all 36 states were onboard in the School Feeding Programme. Currently, the number of children enrolled in the Programme stands at 9,881,773 million, with 127,000 food vendors in over 53,000 schools of which 4.1 million pupils have so far been verified and captured on the School Feeding Programme database, in line with the Ministry's ongoing efforts at establishing a verifiable database of beneficiaries across all of its programmes and interventions. The Programme was designed to feed only pupils in primary one to three (1-3) in all the states with an approved cost of seventy naira to hundred naira per child.

In Plateau State, the School Feeding Programme was started on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017 with a population of about 290,000 pupils and about 1,400 vendors instead of 4,473 due to validation issues faced. Dr. Sumaye Fadimatu Hamzais the state focal person of the social investment programme (SIP) that is saddled with the responsibility of coordinating the feeding of primary school pupils in all 17 local government areas of Plateau state. In her interview with Nigerian tribune newspaper dated 8th August 2019, she said " on Mondays, students are served yam pottage, Tuesdays are pap and bananas, Wednesdays are for Tom brown, Thursdays are for potatoes and Fridays are for special NASCO biscuits respectively.

Numerous studies have examined the benefits of school feeding programmes including their positive influence on school attendance, academic performance and health outcomes. Solomon and Yusuf (2022), conducted a study on the "Impact of School Home-Grown Feeding Programme on Pupils' Enrollment and Performance in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Primary Schools". The study adopted the survey research design and obtained its data from primary and secondary sources through the administration of a structured questionnaire on 120 respondents in 12 selected public primary schools in FCT based on a random sampling technique. An in-depth face-to-face interview of 20 purposively selected people involved in the general implementation and assessment of the school feeding Programme complemented the questionnaire. Administrative bottlenecks relating to the processing of payments to vendors and suppliers, delays in crediting the accounts of the vendors and the inability of the government of the FCT to scale up the meals to senior classes in the schools were among the findings of the study. Based on the findings above, the following recommendations were proffered: The government should increase the fund allocation for the Programme to cater for the logistics problem associated with monitoring vehicles and to make provision for classroom furniture in schools to reduce classroom congestion. Periodic evaluation should be carried out and records of enrollment should be carefully taken and adequately kept by the teachers for future reference for planning. The government should arrange food vendors to prompt payment to reduce the rate at which some schools operate for a week or two without the pupils getting the one meal per day being provided by the government.

Agu (2023), conducted a study on "An Appraisal of the Implementation of the National School Feeding Programme and its Effect on Enrollment and Attendance in Public Primary Schools". They

conducted a cross-sectional study among 24 headmasters and headmistresses purposively selected from public primary schools in the Enugu metropolis. Qualitative data were collected through the use of a pretested key informant interview(KII) guide and analyzed using a thematic approach. Although the School Feeding Programme was implemented in every school in Enugu metropolis, Enugu State, Nigeria. Regular deworming of pupils was not carried out, and there were concerns about certain aspects of the implementation such as inadequate Funding,poor quality of school meals and the inability to cite kitchens for food vendors to cook on the school premises.

However, there is a pressing need for comprehensive evaluations that assess the actual implementation and outcomes of these programmes in which little or nothing has been done in that regard.However, the extent to which these objectives have been achieved remains underexplored. This study evaluates the implementation of the school feeding programme in Jos South, assessing its effectiveness, challenges, and implications for policy and practice.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the potential of school feeding programmes to enhance pupils' nutrition, increase enrolment, and improve learning outcomes, concerns have been raised about the quality, consistency, and management of the scheme in various parts of Nigeria. In Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State, anecdotal reports suggest irregular meal provision, inadequate portions, poor nutritional quality, and weak monitoring mechanisms, which may limit the programme's intended impact. Yet, there is limited empirical evidence on how effectively the programme was being implemented in this locality. Without such evaluation, policymakers and stakeholders may be unable to identify gaps or make informed improvements to ensure the scheme achieves its objectives.

The researchers could have delved into the evaluation of other educational programmes such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, Girl Child Education Initiatives, vocational and skill development programmes, but prioritized the school feeding programme because of its immediate tangible benefit to pupils while other programmes may have long-term outcomes that are robust to evaluate. It can also be used as a tool for alleviating poverty, fostering community engagement as well as improved academic performance.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How did the planning facilitate the implementation of the school feeding programme.
2. To what extent did management resources contribute to the school feeding programme.
3. What were the funding mechanism made available for the programme.
4. To what extent were the school feeding programme implemented?
5. How did the programme contribute to the improvement of school enrolment in Jos South Local Government Area.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted evaluation and survey research designs by obtaining data from both primary and secondary sources. The sample size for this study comprised of 100 participants, 2 public primary schools in each of the 5 districts, 3 teachers in each school with 10 head teachers from the five 5 districts, 10 implementers and 50 pupils.The sample size for this study comprised of 100 participants. The schools were selected using a simple random sampling technique which consisted of the implementers, teachers and pupils of Jos South local government area of Plateau State. Ten out of 127 schools that benefited from school feeding programme in Jos South LGA were selected. Thus, the simple random sampling technique was considered appropriate for this research

work and lottery method was adopted. Also, purposive sampling technique was used to select teachers for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of 32 items, each rated on a 5 – point likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (5). The content validity of the instrument was sought through the judgment of two experts from Research, Measurement and Evaluation unit of the University of Jos.

The split-half method of odd and even numbered items was used to determine the internal consistency. This was analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha method of internal consistency and an internal consistency reliability co-efficient of 0.76 was obtained which signifies that the instrument was valid. After the data collected process, they were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation for the research questions. The decision for all the research questions was based on the criterion mean of 3.0. The mean 3.0 and above indicated agree and accepted while those with less than 3.0 were rejected.

## Results

### Research Question 1:

How did the planning facilitate the implementation of the school feeding in Jos South L G A.?

**Table 1: Result of the Responses on How Planning Facilitated School Feeding Programme**

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The planned activities align with the objectives and goals of the programme	4.06	1.22	Accepted
2	Collaboration and communication among stakeholders during the planning phase are efficient	2.20	1.07	Rejected
3	Adequate time allocated for planning positively impacts the successful execution of the programme	2.74	1.05	Rejected
4	Feedback from teachers is considered and incorporated into the planning process	2.34	1.39	Rejected
5	The planning process allows for flexibility in adapting to unforeseen circumstances	3.48	1.20	Accepted
6	Teachers were given access to necessary resources and support during the planning stage	2.22	1.33	Rejected
<b>GRAND OVERALL MEAN</b>		2.84		

The result in Table 1 reveals that item 1 has 4.06, (2) 2.20, (3) 2.74, (4) 2.34 (5) 3.48 and (6) 2.22. The result in Table 1 reveals a higher calculated mean of only two items. Item (1) is 4.06 and (5) is 3.48 higher than the criterion mean of 3.0 while items 2, 3, 4 and 6 have a lower calculated mean than the criterion mean. The statement raised for the research question one asserts that it was not the planning that helped to facilitate the implementation of the school feeding programme.

### Research Question 2

To what extent did the management of financial resources contribute to the programme?

**Table 2: Results of the Responses on the Management of Financial Resources of the School Feeding Programme.**

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
7	The allocation of funds for the programme is transparent and well-communicated	2.38	1.19	Rejected
8	Teachers were adequately informed about the budget allocation for the programme	1.94	1.34	Rejected

9	Financial management decisions for the programme align with the overall goal and objectives	2.74	1.21	Rejected
10	Financial resources were effectively utilized to provide nutritious and balanced meals to pupils	1.96	1.28	Rejected
11	There were clear systems in place for addressing any financial challenges related to the programme	1.80	1.0	Rejected
12	Implementers sought feedback from teachers regarding the financial transactions related to the programme	2.18	1.16	Rejected
13	There were mechanisms in place to track and account for all financial transaction related to the programme	2.04	1.09	Rejected
GRAND OVERALL MEAN		2.15		

Table 2 indicates that the calculated mean for the seven (7) items is lesser than the criterion mean of 3.0.

Item 1 has 2.38, (2) 1.94, (3) 2.74 (4) 1.96 (5) 1.80 (6) 2.18 and (7) 2.04. The result indicates an overall mean of 2.15 which is lower than the criterion mean of 3.0. Therefore, all the statements raised for research question two (2) did not contribute to the management of financial resources of the school feeding programme.

### Research Question 3

Is the funding mechanism made available for the programme?

**Table 3: Results of the Responses on Funding Mechanisms Available for the Programme**

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
14	I am aware of the various funding sources for the programme	2.34	1.86	Rejected
15	Teachers felt empowered to provide feedback on the funding mechanisms for the programme	2.08	1.14	Rejected
16	The funding mechanisms were transparent and easy to understand	2.16	1.18	Rejected
17	Teachers believe that an increase in funding would positively impact the programmes outcome	3.46	1.27	Accepted
18	Funds were disbursed on time to ensure smooth implementation of the programme	2.48	1.30	Rejected
19	The funding mechanisms contributed positively to the overall success of the programme	2.12	1.44	Rejected
GRAND OVERALL MEAN		2.44		

The result in Table 3 reveals that item 1 has 2.34, (2) 2.08 (3) 2.16 (4) 3.46 (5) 2.48 and (6) 2.12. The result revealed a higher calculated mean from only one item which is item 4, 3.46 higher than the criterion mean of 3.0 while items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 have a lower mean than the criterion mean. The result indicates that the statement raised for research question three obtained an overall mean of 2.44 which is lower than the criterion mean. This indicates that funding mechanisms are not made available for teachers/implementers of the programme.

### Research Question 4

To what extent has the school feeding programme been implemented?

**Table 4: Results of the Responses on the Extent to which School Feeding Programme in Jos South L G A has been implemented**

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
20	There were adequate communication and coordination between the school and the food service providers	2.46	1.27	Rejected

21	The financial resources allocated for the programme were adequate to meet the needs of all pupils	2.46	1.39	Rejected
22	The programme caused disruptions to the regular school schedule	3.92	1.19	Accepted
23	The programme was consistently well-organized	2.34	1.19	Rejected
24	Teachers received adequate training and support related to the programme	2.10	1.27	Rejected
25	External factors such as weather, transportation or other unforeseen circumstances did not significantly disrupt the programme	2.16	1.10	Rejected
26	Parental involvement in supporting the programme was a hindrance	2.52	1.59	Rejected
<b>GRAND OVERALL MEAN</b>		2.57		

The result of the findings in the table revealed that the respondents on the programme implementation indicated a low extent with mean scores of 2.46, 2.46, 2.34, 2.10, 2.16, and 2.52 except item 3 which indicated a higher mean score of 3.92. The grand overall mean of 2.57 is lower than the criterion mean of 3.0 for decision-making, the implication is that the respondent rejected the statement that the programme implementation was ineffective as a result of poor coordination.

### Research Question 5

#### Teachers/implementers Responses

How did the programme contribute to the improvement of the school enrollment rate in Jos South L. G. A.?

**Table 5: Results of the Responses on how School Feeding Programme Improved School Enrolment Rate in Jos South L. G. A?**

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
27	The programme has positively influenced the overall school atmosphere	3.84	1.20	Accepted
28	The programme has encouraged parents to enroll their children in our school	3.94	1.10	Accepted
29	The programme has played a role in reducing dropout rates among pupils	4.14	1.0	Accepted
30	Teachers have observed a correlation between the programme and an increase in student enrolment	4.20	1.21	Accepted
31	Parents are more likely to engage in school-related activities because of the programme	3.90	1.02	Accepted
32	I believe that the programme had positive impact on the improvement of school enrollment rates in Jos South Local Government Area.	4.32	1.11	Accepted
<b>GRAND OVERALL MEAN</b>		4.06		

Table 5 indicates that the calculated mean for the six (6) items is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0. Table 5 has items and mean as: 3.84 (2) 3.94 (3) 4.14 (4) 4.20 (5) 3.90 and (6) 4.32. The result indicates that all statements raised for the research question five (5) are responsible for the improvement of school enrolment in Jos South L. G. A. Since the mean of all the items are higher than the criterion mean we accept the statements.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study revealed that planning without incorporating key players does not facilitate the implementation of the school feeding programme in Jos South LGA. Planned activities align with the objectives and goals of the programme but teachers' inputs are not incorporated into the planning process thereby contributing to the ineffectiveness of facilitation. The findings were supported by Ngussa and Twarira (2020) who reported that though the planned activities were laudably designed but the negligence or partial isolation of teachers contribution from the initial planning has hindered the successes of the school feeding programme in Zambia.

The study revealed that there is mismanagement of financial resources allocated to the programme as all items' responses do not contribute to the management of financial resources. This was collaborated by Edeh (2019) and Onah and Olise (2020) as well as reports from in-depth interview of vendors in selected schools in Enugu State. In Kano, it was reported that only 9,000 out of 13,000 food vendors recruited were paid regularly. The school feeding programme was on-hold for the first term of 2019, has no funds were released to the food vendors. Such are some of the irregularities associated with managing the funds of the programme. Adekunle and Ogbogu (2016) also established that there are a lot of loopholes and poor management of funds that aggravates the problem of inadequate budgetary release for the smooth running of the programme.

The study established that funding mechanisms were not made available for teachers/implementers of the school feeding programme. This is in agreement with the findings of Felix and Onah (2021) which state that monitoring of the programme is the responsibility of desk officers from all relevant departments and agencies in the state but meager or no logistics are provided for proper supervision. According to Adelman, et al., (2018) also assert in collaboration to our views that general set back of school feeding programme is that it usually fails in implementation due to unpredictable food availability or unorganized meals that interrupt academic activity. The findings was also in agreement with Makoji (2018) who stated in his study on the challenges of the school feeding programme in North Central Nigeria that corruption, poor monitoring and lack of kitchen and cafeteria were identified as high level of challenges bedeviling its' execution.

The research findings realized that the programme implementation is partially or not in existence as a result of some challenges such as poor coordination, poor monitoring, logistical problems, misappropriation of funds, poor feedback mechanisms, lack of inclusiveness, and inadequate communication. Onah and Olise (2020) also assert in agreement that school feeding programme is marred with irregularities such as inadequate dissemination of information, lack of transparency and accountability which slow down the impact of its successes.

Finally, the study found that all the statements raised for research question five are responsible for the improvement of the school enrolment rate in Jos South LGA. This is in line with the findings of Adekunle and Ogbogu (2016) in their study discovered that the school feeding programme in Osun State has increased the enrolment and improved the performance of elementary school pupils. This is similar to the findings of the world food programme (2010); who reported levels of increase in enrolment and attendance, promote retention, reducing absenteeism, drop outs and improving learning outcomes among primary school pupils.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that school feeding programme initiated by the government was laudable as it enhanced pupil's enrollment and reduced the rate of dropouts within the study area. However, the researchers realized a lot of loopholes such as lack of proper sensitization and coordination, misappropriation of funds, insufficient logistics, infrastructural decay,

shortage of man power. There has also not been demonstrable political will by successive administrations in the country to retain this laudable policy for its impact to be grossly actualized.

### RECOMMENDATION

In line with the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. All stakeholders should be carried along in the planning process of the programme
2. The government should provide logistics such as vehicles for effective monitoring.
3. Budgeting for the programme should be more transparent.
4. Adequate funding should be provided to cater for all funding mechanisms.
5. Provision of adequate awareness as many citizens are left in the dark as to the continuity of the programme in Jos South L G A.
6. Pre-primary classes should also be captured in the school feeding programme.
7. The need for sustainable funding to be solicited from all stakeholders, corporate bodies and multi-national companies

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