

Impact of School Feeding Program on Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools (A Case Study of Dutse Local Government Area of Jigawa State)

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This study investigates the impact of the School Feeding Program on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Dutse Local Government Area of Jigawa State. The program, designed to address hunger, improve school participation, and enhance learning outcomes, has been widely implemented across Nigeria, yet limited empirical evidence exists regarding its academic effectiveness in northern regions such as Jigawa State. The study specifically examines how the feeding program influences pupils' academic achievement, school attendance, class participation, and the perceptions of key stakeholders, including teachers and parents. A descriptive research design was employed, and data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, attendance records, and academic performance reports from selected schools that benefited from the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program. The study also reviewed relevant literature to establish theoretical and empirical foundations. Findings reveal that the school feeding program positively affects pupils' academic performance by improving concentration, motivation, and overall classroom participation. The results further indicate that regular meal provision enhances attendance rates and reduces absenteeism. Stakeholders expressed generally positive views about the program but highlighted challenges such as inconsistent food supply, limited funding, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms. The study concludes that the school feeding program contributes significantly to improved learning outcomes in public primary schools in Dutse LGA. It recommends strengthening the sustainability of the program through better financial management, community involvement, and a more reliable monitoring system to enhance its long-term educational impact.</i> Keywords: Feeding, Performance, Pupils, and Primary Schools.
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Background to the Study

Education plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of any nation. In Nigeria, public primary education is often challenged by issues such as poor infrastructure, underfunding, and malnutrition among pupils. To address some of these constraints, the Nigerian government, in collaboration with development partners, introduced the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program (NHGSFP) to provide one free, nutritious meal per school day for children in public primary schools.

School feeding programs, popularized under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative provide

regular, nutritious meals to children and adolescents. Their benefits include alleviating hunger, reducing micronutrient deficiencies, improving enrollment and attendance, enhancing cognitive performance, and promoting gender equity in education (WFP, 2007).

Hunger undermines learning by impairing attention, energy levels, and motivation (Senesie et al., 2022; Bekidusa & Kisimbii, 2020). In many poor households, children often prioritize immediate survival needs over schooling, leading to low enrollment, poor attendance, and high dropout rates.

Dutse LGA in Jigawa State, a predominantly rural and economically challenged region, provides a relevant context for evaluating the impact of school feeding on academic outcomes. Although attendance has reportedly improved, there is insufficient evidence on whether academic performance has also increased. This study seeks to fill that gap.

Statement of the Problem

Despite government investment in school feeding programs, questions linger about their academic effectiveness. The NHGSFP was launched with high expectations: to reduce hunger, improve enrollment, enhance attention spans, and ultimately boost academic outcomes. However, there is limited empirical data assessing whether these goals are being met in specific contexts like Dutse LGA. The Federal Government has spent ₦ 4.5 billion naira in 2016/17 and 6 billion naira in 2017/18 on school feeding in 14 States. From this feeding programme, over 6 million primary school pupils were fed and about 33,000 cooks were employed and paid. (Jumare, 2020).

Stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and policy planners, are concerned about the actual academic benefits of the program. Are students truly performing better academically, or is the program merely serving as a means to increase school enrollment without corresponding cognitive gains? A localized study is needed to answer these questions and provide policy-relevant evidence.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of the school feeding program on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Dutse Local Government Area, Jigawa State.

The specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the effect of the school feeding program on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools.
- ii. To evaluate the influence of the program on school attendance and class participation.
- iii. To identify stakeholders' (teachers and parents) perceptions regarding the benefits and challenges of the school feeding initiative.

Significance of the Study

This study holds immense significance for educational policy and child welfare in Nigeria. By focusing on Dutse LGA a rural, underserved region the study provides a grassroots perspective on the practical outcomes of a major national intervention. Findings from this research will guide educational planners, policy makers, NGOs, and

school administrators in refining and scaling up school feeding initiatives. It will also offer insights into the linkage between nutrition and learning outcomes, which could shape broader educational and health reforms.

Moreover, the study contributes to the academic discourse on social safety net programs in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially those targeting early childhood development and education. Understanding the successes and shortcomings of school feeding in real-life settings will support evidence-based policy making and improve the lives of millions of school children.

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design, which is widely used in educational research to gather information about existing conditions and their relationships. This design is suitable for studies aimed at assessing perceptions, behaviors, and outcomes across a sample population.

According to Creswell (2014), descriptive survey design allows the researcher to collect data systematically and objectively from a population or sample to describe existing phenomena. In the context of this study, the design facilitates data collection on how the school feeding program influences pupils' academic performance, attendance, and stakeholders' perceptions without manipulating any variables. Questionnaires were employed to capture opinions and experiences in the participants' natural settings. The design allows for the use of questionnaires to collect opinions, behaviors, and experiences of respondents within their natural settings without manipulation.

Population of the Study

Bichi (2004) defines population "as possible objects of a particular type as defined by the aims and objectives of the study." The population can either be infinite or finite. The infinite population has an indefinite number of elements. In other words, population means the total number of items or events under consideration, or the range of research that is expected to be covered during the research work.

For this study, the target population comprises all Primary Six pupils, teachers, and parents in public primary schools participating in the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program (NHGSFP) in Dutse Local Government Area of Jigawa State.

According to data obtained from the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Jigawa State, in 2025, there are 117,906 Primary Six pupils benefiting from the school feeding program across the state. Out of these, 25,823 pupils are in Dutse LGA, consisting of 13,337 male beneficiaries and 12,486 female beneficiaries.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample Size Determination (Pupils)

The sample size for pupils was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

N = population size (25,823 Primary Six NHGSFP beneficiaries in Dutse LGA)

e = margin of error (0.05 for 95% confidence level)

Computation:

$$n = \frac{25,823}{1 + 25,823(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{25,823}{1 + 64.5575}$$

$$n = \frac{25,823}{65.5575}$$

$$n \approx 393.90 \text{ (rounded to 394)}$$

Gender Stratification (Dutse totals):

Males: 13,337 (51.65%) → target $\approx$ 226 of the 438 planned (effective $\approx$ 203 of 394)

Females: 12,486 (48.35%) → target $\approx$ 212 of the 438 planned (effective $\approx$ 191 of 394)

Sampling Technique (Pupils)

A multi-stage sampling approach was adopted:

Stage 1: School selection (Simple Random Sampling)

From the list of public primary schools in Dutse LGA implementing NHGSFP, three (3) schools were randomly selected, giving each eligible school an equal chance of inclusion.

Stage 2: Proportional allocation to schools

Let S_i be the number of Primary Six NHGSFP beneficiaries in school i , and $\sum S_i$ be the total beneficiaries across the three selected schools. The planned pupil sample for each school was:

$$n_i = \left(\frac{S_i}{\sum S_i} \right) \times 394$$

This ensures that schools with larger enrolment contribute proportionally more respondents.

Stage 3: Sex stratification within each school

Let M_i and F_i be the male and female Primary Six beneficiaries in school i . Allocate the school's n_i by sex:

$$n_i^{\text{male}} = \left(\frac{M_i}{S_i} \right) \times n_i$$

$$n_i^{\text{female}} = \left(\frac{F_i}{S_i} \right) \times n_i$$

Stage 4: Respondent selection (Systematic Sampling)

Within each sex stratum, pupils were selected using systematic sampling from the class register. The sampling interval k was:

$$k = \frac{\text{number on the list}}{\text{required } n \text{ for that stratum}}$$

A random start between 1 and k was chosen, then every k -th pupils were selected until the quota was met.

Teachers and Parents Sub-Samples

To capture stakeholder perspectives, the study purposively selected, per school:

5 teachers (directly involved with Primary Six and NHGSFP activities)

5 parents/guardians (of Primary Six beneficiaries)

This yields 15 teachers and 15 parents across the three schools. Selection ensures representation of both male and female pupils' parents where possible.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section A - demographic data, Section B focuses on the impact of the school feeding program on academic performance and attendance, and Section C explores stakeholders' (teachers and parents) perceptions of the school feeding program. The questionnaire included both closed-ended questions using a five-point Likert scale and some open-ended questions for detailed responses.

Validation of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to expert review. It was vetted by two professionals in the field of Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Their suggestions and corrections were incorporated to enhance the face and content validity of the instrument.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher, with the assistance of two (2) trained research assistants, who personally distribute the questionnaires to the selected respondents. Appropriate arrangements was made with the head teachers of each selected school for proper access to the pupils and their parents. Instructions was given to respondents to ensure that they understand the purpose of the research and how to complete the questionnaire. Data collection was conducted in the span of two weeks.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations was used to summarize the demographic data and responses to the research questions. Inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and independent t-tests was used to test the research hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Answers to Research Questions

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	105	70.5%
High Extent	27	18.1%
Neutral	6	4.0%
Low Extent	8	5.4%
Very Low Extent	2	1.3%
Total	149	100%

The table add that 105 respondents (70.5%) believe the programme improves concentration to a very high extent, 27 respondents (18.1%) agree to a high extent, 6 respondents (4.0%) are neutral, 8 respondents (5.4%) agree to a low extent, and 2 respondents (1.3%) perceive a very low impact, making a total of 149 respondents (100%). The combined 88.6% in the “very high” and “high” categories strongly indicates that adequate nutrition significantly

enhances pupils’ attention span during lessons. The low neutral and negative responses show that only a small minority fail to observe noticeable improvements, possibly due to individual differences or external factors. Overall, the data shows that the programme effectively reduces hunger-related distraction and supports better instructional engagement.

Table 2: Pupils Show Better Understanding of Lessons After Having School Meals

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	82	55.0%
High Extent	53	35.6%
Neutral	7	4.7%
Low Extent	5	3.4%
Very Low Extent	2	1.3%
Total	149	100%

The data shows that 82 respondents (55.0%) believe that pupils show a better understanding of lessons after receiving school meals to a very high extent, while 53 respondents (35.6%) agree to a high extent, indicating that a combined 90.6% strongly perceive improvements in comprehension. Additionally, 7 respondents (4.7%) were neutral, 5 respondents (3.4%) reported a low extent, and 2 respondents (1.3%) observed a very low extent of

improvement, totaling 149 respondents (100%). These findings suggest that proper nutrition enhances cognitive functioning, enabling children to process, retain, and apply instructional content more effectively. The minimal negative responses reflect rare cases where other factors such as fatigue or health conditions may influence lesson understanding.

Table 3: The Programme Has Led to Improved Performance in Class Tests

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	99	66.4%
Very High Extent	30	20.1%
Neutral	11	7.4%
Low Extent	9	6.0%
Total	149	100%

This table indicates that 99 respondents (66.4%) believe the programme improves pupils' class test performance to a high extent, and 30 respondents (20.1%) agree to a very high extent, producing a combined positive response of 86.5%. Meanwhile, 11 respondents (7.4%) remained neutral, and 9 respondents (6.0%) believe improvements occur only to a low extent, summing to a total of 149

respondents (100%). These results imply that access to regular meals likely enhances energy levels, memory function, and sustained focus, which translate into improved assessment outcomes. The low percentage of negative perceptions reinforces the academic relevance of feeding policies in basic education.

Table 4: Pupils Who Benefit Demonstrate Higher Academic Achievement Than Those Who Don't

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	87	58.4%
High Extent	38	25.5%
Neutral	12	8.1%
Low Extent	11	7.4%
Very Low Extent	1	0.7%
Total	149	100%

The results show that 87 respondents (58.4%) believe beneficiaries demonstrate higher academic achievement to a very high extent, and 38 respondents (25.5%) agree to a high extent, creating a strong majority of 83.9% in favour of the statement. Additionally, 12 respondents (8.1%) were neutral, 11 respondents (7.4%) indicated a low extent, and only 1 respondent (0.7%) reported a very low extent,

totaling 149 respondents (100%). This suggests that consistent feeding provides nutritional benefits that contribute to superior academic competitiveness compared to non-beneficiaries. The minimal negative perception further strengthens evidence that the programme reduces performance disparities in the classroom.

Table 5: The Feeding Programme Helps Reduce Classroom Fatigue and Sleepiness

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	63	42.3%
High Extent	62	41.6%
Neutral	18	12.1%
Low Extent	5	3.4%
Very Low Extent	1	0.7%
Total	149	100%

The table reveals that 63 respondents (42.3%) believe the feeding programme reduces classroom fatigue to a very high extent, while 62 respondents (41.6%) agree to a high extent, giving a total of 83.9% positive agreement. In addition, 18 respondents (12.1%) were neutral, 5 respondents (3.4%) rated the impact low, and 1 respondent (0.7%) rated it very low, summing to 149 respondents

(100%). The distribution highlights that hunger-induced tiredness, inattentiveness, and drowsiness are significantly minimized when pupils are fed adequately. The low negative responses demonstrate that classroom alertness improves meaningfully, enabling better participation and lesson absorption.

Table 6: Pupils' Ability to Complete Class Assignments Has Improved

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	76	51.0%
Very High Extent	44	29.5%
Neutral	18	12.1%
Low Extent	8	5.4%
Very Low Extent	3	2.0%
Total	149	100%

The data shows that 76 respondents (51.0%) believe pupils' assignment completion has improved to a high extent, while 44 respondents (29.5%) agree to a very high extent, bringing the combined positive perception to 80.5%. Additionally, 18 respondents (12.1%) were neutral, 8 respondents (5.4%) selected low extent, and 3 respondents (2.0%) rated very low extent, totaling 149 respondents

(100%). These results imply that proper nutrition enhances stamina, cognitive processing, and perseverance required to finish academic tasks. The low proportion of negative responses suggests that feeding plays an essential role in sustaining academic productivity throughout the school day.

Table 7: The School Feeding Programme Enhances Pupils' Motivation to Learn

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	69	46.3%
High Extent	56	37.6%
Neutral	13	8.7%
Low Extent	7	4.7%
Very Low Extent	3	2.0%
Total	149	100%

The data shows that 69 respondents (46.3%) believe the programme enhances pupils' motivation to learn to a very high extent, and 56 respondents (37.6%) agree to a high extent, while 13 respondents (8.7%) remain neutral, 7 respondents (4.7%) indicate a low extent, and only 3 respondents (2.0%) report a very low extent, making a total of 149 respondents (100%). The combined high and very

high responses of 83.9% indicate that school meals encourage learners to participate actively and develop greater academic interest. The limited negative perceptions suggest the programme successfully reduces hunger-induced disinterest, enhancing overall learning morale in most classrooms.

Table 8: Teachers Have Observed Noticeable Academic Improvement Since the Introduction of the Programme

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	69	46.3%
Very High Extent	57	38.3%
Neutral	13	8.7%
Low Extent	7	4.7%
Very Low Extent	3	2.0%
Total	149	100%

This table reveals that 69 respondents (46.3%) believe academic improvement has been recorded to a high extent, while 57 respondents (38.3%) indicate a very high extent, 13 respondents (8.7%) are neutral, 7 respondents (4.7%) rate it low, and 3 respondents (2.0%) rate it very low, totaling 149 respondents (100%). The strong combined positive response of 84.6% suggests that access to

nutritious meals contributes to stronger academic performance indicators such as test scores, lesson comprehension, and task engagement. The low negative feedback implies that only isolated cases may not reflect clear improvement, likely due to unique learner circumstances.

Table 9: The School Feeding Programme Has Increased Pupils' Daily Attendance

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	72	48.3%
High Extent	61	40.9%
Neutral	12	8.1%
Low Extent	4	2.7%
Total	149	100%

The table indicates that 72 respondents (48.3%) believe daily attendance has improved to a very high extent and 61 respondents (40.9%) agree to a high extent, while 12 respondents (8.1%) are neutral and 4 respondents (2.7%) perceive a low extent of improvement, totaling 149 respondents (100%). The high combined positive outcome

of 89.2% suggests that the assurance of receiving meals motivates children to attend school consistently. The low negative feedback demonstrates that absenteeism due to hunger has decreased substantially, supporting the programme's objective of improving school access.

Table 10: Pupils are More Punctual since the Introduction of the Feeding Programme

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	97	65.1%
High Extent	38	25.5%
Neutral	11	7.4%
Low Extent	3	2.0%
Total	149	100%

The results show that 97 respondents (65.1%) believe punctuality has improved to a very high extent, 38 respondents (25.5%) agree to a high extent, 11 respondents (7.4%) remain neutral, and 3 respondents (2.0%) indicate a low extent, summing to 149 respondents (100%). With a combined positivity of 90.6%, the findings strongly

indicate that pupils arrive earlier to avoid missing their meals, thereby supporting more effective lesson commencement. The minimal negative responses reflect that punctuality challenges may persist for only a few pupils due to distance or household factors.

Table 11: The Number of Dropouts Has Reduced Due to the Feeding Programme

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	68	45.6%
Very High Extent	57	38.3%
Neutral	11	7.4%
Low Extent	9	6.0%
Very Low Extent	3	2.0%
Total	149	100%

The table reveals that 68 respondents (45.6%) believe dropout reduction has occurred to a high extent, 57 respondents (38.3%) agree to a very high extent, 11 respondents (7.4%) are neutral, 9 respondents (6.0%) indicate a low extent, and 3 respondents (2.0%) report a very low extent, totaling 149 respondents (100%). The

combined 83.9% positive perception suggests that providing meals removes financial pressure from parents, encouraging continued school attendance. The limited negative responses indicate that dropout cases observed may be tied to external socioeconomic factors rather than the feeding programme itself.

Table 12: Pupils Remain in School Until Closing Time Because of the Feeding Programme

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	54	36.2%
Very High Extent	53	35.6%
Neutral	27	18.1%
Low Extent	8	5.4%
Very Low Extent	5	3.4%
Total	149	100%

The results show that 54 respondents (36.2%) believe pupils remain in school until closing time to a high extent and 53 respondents (35.6%) agree to a very high extent, while 27 respondents (18.1%) remain neutral, 8 respondents (5.4%) indicate a low extent, and 5 respondents (3.4%) report a very low extent, making a total of 149 respondents (100%). The combined 71.8% positive

perception suggests that meals motivate learners to stay longer in school rather than leaving early due to hunger or fatigue. The neutral responses may reflect schools where this pattern is inconsistent, while the small percentage of low responses implies a minority of pupils may still leave early due to household responsibilities or distance challenges.

Table 13: Teachers Find Pupils More Attentive During Lessons Due to the Feeding Programme

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	65	43.6%
Very High Extent	53	35.6%
Neutral	18	12.1%
Low Extent	10	6.7%
Very Low Extent	3	2.0%
Total	149	100%

The table reveals that 65 respondents (43.6%) believe attentiveness has improved to a high extent and 53 respondents (35.6%) agree to a very high extent, while 18 respondents (12.1%) remain neutral, 10 respondents (6.7%) perceive a low extent, and 3 respondents (2.0%) report a very low extent, summing to 149 respondents (100%). The

combined 79.2% positive responses demonstrate that feeding reduces distraction, increases sustained focus, and supports lesson engagement. The limited low and very low responses may be linked to behavioural issues unrelated to hunger, such as learning difficulties or sleep deprivation.

Table 14: The Programme Has Reduced Absenteeism in My School

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	68	45.6%
High Extent	55	36.9%
Neutral	24	16.1%
Low Extent	2	1.3%
Total	149	100%

The findings show that 68 respondents (45.6%) believe absenteeism has reduced to a very high extent and 55 respondents (36.9%) agree to a high extent, while 24 respondents (16.1%) remain neutral and 2 respondents (1.3%) indicate a low extent, totaling 149 respondents (100%). The combined 82.5% positive response rate

suggests that pupils are more motivated to attend school regularly to receive meals. The small number of low responses indicates that absenteeism caused by personal illness, distance, or parental factors still persists for a few learners.

Table 15: Teachers Believe the Programme Improves Pupils' Overall Learning Environment

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	73	49.0%
Very High Extent	54	36.2%
Neutral	16	10.7%
Low Extent	3	2.0%
Very Low Extent	3	2.0%
Total	149	100%

The table indicates that 73 respondents (49.0%) believe the programme improves the overall learning environment to a high extent and 54 respondents (36.2%) agree to a very high extent, while 16 respondents (10.7%) remain neutral, 3 respondents (2.0%) indicate a low extent, and another 3 respondents (2.0%) rate a very low extent, totaling 149

respondents (100%). The combined 85.2% positive perception reflects that feeding reduces hunger-driven disturbances, increases calmness, and promotes healthier classroom climates. The small number of negative responses may stem from schools where overcrowding or facility challenges undermine expected outcomes.

Table 16: Parents Perceive the Programme as Reducing Their Financial Burden for Children's Meals

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	83	55.7%
High Extent	49	32.9%
Neutral	15	10.1%
Low Extent	2	1.3%
Total	149	100%

The data shows that 83 respondents (55.7%) believe the programme reduces parental financial burden to a very high extent, and 49 respondents (32.9%) agree to a high extent, while 15 respondents (10.1%) remain neutral and 2 respondents (1.3%) perceive a low extent, summing to 149 respondents (100%). The combined 88.6% positive responses indicate that families save money that would

otherwise be spent on daily snacks or lunch packs, particularly in low-income households. Neutral responses may come from parents who already provide lunch, while the small negative percentage suggests rare cases where the meal provided may not fully substitute home feeding expectations.

Table 17: Community Members View the Programme as Beneficial to Educational Development

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	71	47.7%
Very High Extent	61	40.9%
Neutral	16	10.7%
Low Extent	1	0.7%
Total	149	100%

The table reveals that 71 respondents (47.7%) perceive community members as viewing the programme as beneficial to educational development to a high extent and 61 respondents (40.9%) agree to a very high extent, while 16 respondents (10.7%) are neutral and 1 respondent (0.7%) reports a low extent, totaling 149 respondents (100%). With a combined positive perception of 88.6%, this

indicates strong community support, likely because feeding encourages school attendance, improves learner wellbeing, and enhances academic performance. The minimal negative feedback implies that only a small number of stakeholders may be concerned with issues such as funding consistency or food quality.

Table 18: The School Feeding Programme Has Improved the Relationship Between Parents and Schools

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	65	43.6%
Very High Extent	53	35.6%
Neutral	24	16.1%
Low Extent	6	4.0%
Very Low Extent	1	0.7%
Total	149	100%

The data shows that 65 respondents (43.6%) believe the programme has improved parent–school relationships to a high extent and 53 respondents (35.6%) agree to a very high extent, while 24 respondents (16.1%) remain neutral, 6 respondents (4.0%) indicate a low extent, and 1 respondent (0.7%) reports a very low extent, totaling 149 respondents (100%). The combined positive response of 79.2% suggests

that parents appreciate the reduced feeding burden and therefore engage more positively with school authorities. Neutral responses may come from parents with limited school interaction, and the small negative percentage may reflect communities where parental involvement remains traditionally low.

Table 19: Teachers Face Challenges in Managing Pupils during Meal Times

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	87	58.4%
High Extent	48	32.2%
Neutral	13	8.7%
Very Low Extent	1	0.7%
Total	149	100%

The results show that 87 respondents (58.4%) believe teachers experience meal-time management challenges to a very high extent and 48 respondents (32.2%) agree to a high extent, while 13 respondents (8.7%) remain neutral and 1 respondent (0.7%) reports a very low extent, totaling 149 respondents (100%). The combined 90.6% positive perception suggests that feeding periods require additional

supervision to control crowding, impatience, noise, and possible conflict among pupils. Neutral respondents may teach classes with smaller population sizes or better behavioural compliance, while the single negative response reflects rare instances where feeding is highly structured and orderly.

Table 20: Inconsistency in Food Supply Reduces the Effectiveness of the Programme

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	70	47.0%
High Extent	62	41.6%
Neutral	14	9.4%
Low Extent	1	0.7%
Very Low Extent	1	0.7%
Total	149	100%

The table indicates that 70 respondents (47.0%) believe inconsistency in food supply reduces programme effectiveness to a very high extent and 62 respondents (41.6%) agree to a high extent, while 14 respondents (9.4%) are neutral, 1 respondent (0.7%) indicates a low extent, and another 1 respondent (0.7%) reports a very low extent,

summing to 149 respondents (100%). The combined 88.6% positive responses highlight that irregular meal provision negatively affects attendance, motivation, and trust in the programme. The low negative responses suggest only rare cases where inconsistency may not be perceived as problematic due to adequate home feeding support.

Table 21: Parents Express Concern about the Quality and Nutritional Value of the Meals

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	45	30.2%
High Extent	44	29.5%
Neutral	27	18.1%
Low Extent	13	8.7%
Very Low Extent	19	12.8%
Total	149	100%

The table shows that 45 respondents (30.2%) believe parents express concern about meal quality and nutritional value to a very high extent and 44 respondents (29.5%) agree to a high extent, while 27 respondents (18.1%) are neutral, 13 respondents (8.7%) perceive concerns to a low extent, and 19 respondents (12.8%) indicate a very low extent, bringing the total number of respondents to 149 (100%). With a combined 59.7% positive perception, the

findings imply that some meals may lack adequate variety, hygiene, or balanced nutritional content, raising parental anxiety. The relatively high neutral percentage suggests that some parents rarely interact with schools to evaluate meal quality firsthand, while the 21.5% negative feedback indicates that certain households trust the programme's dietary standards.

Table 22: Teachers Express Concern about Sustainability of the Programme for Greater Impact

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	46	30.9%
Very High Extent	40	26.8%
Neutral	28	18.8%
Low Extent	28	18.8%
Very Low Extent	5	3.4%
Total	149	100%

The results indicate that 46 respondents (30.9%) express concerns about long-term sustainability to a high extent and 40 respondents (26.8%) agree to a very high extent, while 28 respondents (18.8%) are neutral, another 28 respondents (18.8%) perceive concerns to a low extent, and 5 respondents (3.4%) rate such concerns at a very low extent, totaling 149 respondents (100%). The combined positive

reflection of 57.7% suggests worries about funding continuity, supply chain reliability, and administrative consistency. The equal proportion of neutral and low responses shows that some teachers may not have enough information about policy funding timelines, while the small negative percentage reflects confidence in government commitment among a minority of educators.

Table 23: Community Members View the Programme as Beneficial to Educational Development

Response	Frequency	Percent
High Extent	71	47.7%
Very High Extent	61	40.9%
Neutral	16	10.7%
Low Extent	1	0.7%
Total	149	100%

The table reveals that 71 respondents (47.7%) believe community members find the programme beneficial to educational development to a high extent and 61 respondents (40.9%) agree to a very high extent, while 16 respondents (10.7%) remain neutral and 1 respondent (0.7%) reports a low extent, giving a total of 149 respondents (100%). The combined 88.6% positive

agreement suggests widespread community recognition of the programme's role in reducing absenteeism, improving learning outcomes, and promoting child welfare. Neutral responses may reflect limited parental interaction with school processes, and the rare negative feedback may be linked to isolated concerns about funding transparency or food quality.

Table 24: Teachers Face Challenges in Managing Pupils during Meal Times

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	87	58.4%
High Extent	48	32.2%
Neutral	13	8.7%
Very Low Extent	1	0.7%
Total	149	100%

The results show that 87 respondents (58.4%) believe that teachers face meal-time management challenges to a very high extent and 48 respondents (32.2%) agree to a high extent, while 13 respondents (8.7%) are neutral and 1 respondent (0.7%) reports a very low extent, totaling 149 respondents (100%). The combined high agreement of 90.6% highlights that feeding sessions can lead to noise, crowding, impatience, disorder, and competition for food among pupils, thereby increasing the supervisory burden on teachers. The few neutral responses may reflect schools with regulated distribution procedures, and the low negative feedback indicates minimal cases where feeding time remains calm and well-structured.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that the teaching workforce in the sampled schools was predominantly female (67.8%), with the majority aged between 30–39 years (57.7%), possessing 5–10 years of teaching experience (53.7%), and holding a Degree or Higher National Diploma qualification (61.7%). This demographic composition suggests that the respondents were sufficiently experienced and professionally qualified to provide reliable insights into the effects of the school feeding initiative.

The analysis demonstrated that the school feeding programme significantly enhances pupils' concentration, lesson comprehension, and overall academic performance. A large proportion of teachers (88.6%) agreed that feeding improves concentration during lessons, while 90.6% believed pupils show better understanding after having school meals. Similarly, 86.5% of respondents affirmed that pupils' class test performance had improved, and 83.9% indicated that beneficiaries demonstrate higher academic achievement than their non-beneficiary counterparts. These results collectively show that proper nutrition has a strong

positive influence on cognitive functioning, attention span, and academic outcomes.

Findings also revealed that the programme contributes to reducing classroom fatigue and increasing pupils' task completion rates. Approximately 83.9% of teachers agreed that feeding minimizes tiredness and sleepiness during lessons, while 80.5% noted that pupils now complete assignments more effectively. In addition, 83.9% of respondents observed that the feeding programme has significantly enhanced pupils' motivation to learn, as it encourages active participation and sustains interest in classroom activities.

Furthermore, the data indicated that the programme positively affects attendance, punctuality, and retention. About 89.2% of respondents reported improved daily attendance, 90.6% observed better punctuality, and 83.9% noted a reduction in dropout rates since the introduction of the feeding programme. Similarly, 71.8% of teachers agreed that pupils now remain in school until closing time, suggesting that school meals help sustain learners' presence throughout the school day. These outcomes collectively demonstrate that feeding reduces absenteeism and strengthens pupils' commitment to education.

In addition to enhancing individual learning outcomes, the programme has contributed to creating a more conducive classroom and school environment. A majority of teachers (79.2%) reported improved attentiveness among pupils, while 85.2% agreed that the overall learning environment had become calmer and more productive. The programme also positively influenced community perceptions and relationships. About 88.6% of respondents stated that parents viewed the feeding initiative as reducing their financial burden, while the same percentage indicated that community members considered it beneficial to educational development. Moreover, 79.2% of respondents believed

that the programme had improved the relationship between parents and schools, fostering stronger home–school collaboration.

Despite these benefits, several challenges were identified. Approximately 90.6% of respondents reported that teachers face difficulties managing pupils during mealtimes due to issues such as noise, crowding, and impatience. Furthermore, 88.6% agreed that inconsistency in food supply reduces the programme's effectiveness, while 57.7% expressed concerns about the sustainability of the initiative in the long term. Additionally, 59.7% of teachers observed that parents expressed concerns about the nutritional quality and variety of the meals served. These challenges highlight the need for greater administrative consistency, improved meal quality, and long-term funding assurance.

In summary, the findings of this study show that the school feeding programme has had a substantial positive impact on pupils' academic performance, attendance, motivation, and classroom behaviour. It has also strengthened the relationship between schools, parents, and the wider community. However, challenges such as inconsistent food supply, sustainability issues, and meal-time management difficulties must be addressed to enhance the programme's long-term effectiveness and educational impact.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the School Feeding Programme has made a substantial contribution to improving educational outcomes in public primary schools in Dutse LGA. The programme has enhanced pupils' academic performance by increasing their concentration, comprehension, and test results. It has also contributed to improved attendance, punctuality, and classroom participation, creating a more effective learning environment. These positive outcomes demonstrate that the feeding programme is achieving its core objectives and is an essential social intervention for children from economically disadvantaged households.

The programme has strengthened relationships between schools and community members by reducing the financial burden on parents and enhancing trust in the educational system. Despite the operational challenges identified, the programme remains a critical tool in improving pupils' wellbeing and academic success. Thus, the School Feeding Programme stands as a powerful driver of educational improvement and equity, especially in underserved communities.

Recommendations

In light of the findings, several recommendations are proposed to improve the implementation and sustainability of the School Feeding Programme.

- i. There is a need for stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure quality, consistency, and nutritional adequacy of the meals provided.
- ii. State and local authorities should conduct regular inspections and maintain clear standards for food hygiene, preparation, and delivery.
- iii. Strengthening monitoring will minimize inconsistencies and improve accountability among vendors and cooks.
- iv. Schools require additional support personnel to manage meal times effectively. The reliance on teachers alone for supervision increases their workload and affects instructional time.
- v. The variety and nutritional value of meals should be improved by incorporating more protein-rich foods, vegetables, and fruits. This will not only enhance cognitive performance but also address hidden hunger and micronutrient deficiencies among pupils.

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