Teachers' Perception towards Enhancement of Lower Basic Pupils' Academic Performance through Home-Grown School Feeding Programme

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Abstract

The study examined the perception of teachers towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home-grown school feeding programme in Irepo Local Government of Oyo state. The population was all the 134 lower basic teachers in the area of study. 100 teachers from 20 primary schools, 5 teachers were selected from each of the schools using Yaro Yamane's formula. Data were taken through the use of a structured questionnaire titled: Teachers Perception on Enhancement of Pupils Academic Performance through Home-grown School Feeding (TPEPAPHSF) and its psychometric properties were assessed through content validity and test-retest reliability with a coefficient value of 0.81 respectively. Data collected were analyzed using mean, 2.50 benchmark was used to answer research question while t-test and ANOVA were used to analyze research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results shown that teachers' perception was positive by the weighted mean of 2.61. However, their opinions on the practical aspect of academic were negative on the basis that home grown school feeding programme does not enhance pupils' abilities to undertake practical task independently. Also, it was shown that teachers' perception does not depend on age qualification except for gender. Consequently, it was recommended that teachers should be consistently involved in the schemes of system and drastically empowered through various capacity building programmes to explore and enjoy their best. More importantly, practical aspect in the system needs to be given workable attention.

Keywords: Teachers' Perception, Academic performance, Home-grown school feeding.

Introduction

Basic education is a bedrock of other educational levels. Series of action programmes have been carried out on it to ensure the fulfillment of its objectives. The recent programme at hand is National home-grown school feeding, that is done to provide free meals and high energy snacks for lower basic school children in schools. It constitutes critical interventions that have been introduced in many developed and developing countries of the world to address the issue of poverty, stimulate school enrolment and enhance pupils' performance. Access to universal primary

education has been a key policy priority for many countries trying to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the World Bank in 1999 affirmed that; when you give people a handout or a tool, they live a little better.

Despite the fact that access to education is steadily expanding across developing countries with enrollment in basic education rising sharply, a number obstacles such as poverty and hunger still kept about 67million children of primary-school age out of school. (Alabi, 2015). Also, in developing countries, almost 60 million children go to school in hungry every day and about 40 per cent of them are from Africa (World Food Report - WFR, 2006).

Many countries, both developing and developed, have invested large sums of money in school feeding programme to improve attendance, achievement levels, and nutritional status, and sometimes to provide extra income for poor families by reducing the amount of money they spend on food (Okunola, 2021).The introduction of the home grown school feeding programme is traced to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative and several conferences held thereafter by African leaders which aimed to tackle issues, such as peace, security, good economic, political and corporate governance and to make the continent an attractive destination for foreign investment (Adekunle & Christiana, 2016).

Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) could be seen as a vehicle to stimulate local economies of people by providing a market and source of income for local smallholder farmers. Also, it can be used as a strategy to ensure that home grown School feeding menus contain a variety of nutritious food that school children usually like (Aliyar, Gelliand & Hamdani, 2015; Bundy et al., 2018). Besides, HGSFP is intended to alleviate short-term hunger, improve nutrition and cognition of children and transfer income to families (Eugene, Gabriel & Mark, 2017). The causes of poor enrollment, high dropout rates in schools and low academic performance could be as a result of hunger, illness, frequent truancy, lack of school requirements, parent socio-economic status, laziness and among others causes. Providing school meals is therefore vital in nourishing children.

Home grown school feeding programmes have been defined as targeted social safety nets that provide both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing enrolment rates, reducing absenteeism, and improving food security at the household level (World Bank, 2013). According to WFR (2020), home grown school feeding programme can

significantly contribute to the achievement of the sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture) and SDG 4 (on quality education). In acknowledgement of this, numerous governments and regional organizations, including the African Union and the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States, are including these initiatives in their strategies for achieving food security and implementing the 2030 Development Agenda (Ayogu, et al., 2018; Issa, Willy & Mohamed, 2019).).

In 2004, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) piloted the implementation of Home-grown School Feeding programme beginning with 12 States selected from the six geo-political zone of the country (Ogun State Government, 2018). In 2016, the National Home-grown School Feeding Programme was inaugurated by the Federal Government of Nigeria to provide a nutritious and balanced meal to 5.5 million school children grades 1 to 3 (Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), 2016). The programme aims to improve the enrollment of primary school children and reduce the drop-out rate, currently estimated at over 30 percent (Taylor & Ogbogu, 2016). Most of this shortage is due to poverty and this programme is built to address the most important basic need of school children and provide the nutrition needed to enagage successfully with their education (Yunusa, et al., 2012; Adebisi et al, 2019; WFR, 2021; Uduji & Okolo-Obasi, 2021).

By connecting the programme to local food supply chains, the community is engaged to create a social support beyond simply providing meals to certain children, and over 44, 000 cooks are engaged in the programme, feeding over 7 million school children in the 36 States of Nigeria and Federal Capital Territory (Federal Ministry of Education, 2016). The purpose is a cycle of productivity, sustaining and linking local farmers to nationwide and global markets while equipping the next generation with the sustenance essential for education and growth. As a result, local economies would be directly stimulated in various sectors, from education to the service industry to the agriculture sector; while education attainment and acquisition of skills would be encouraged and supported among the school children (FGN, 2016; Ahmed & Crosdale, 2021). According to FGN (2016), over 300 million meals have been served to more than 7.5 million pupils in 46, 000 public schools in Nigeria.

The home school feeding programme in Nigeria has done a lot in the improvement of quality of education at the lower basic school level. The achievement of the programme in Nigeria

include; increase in the enrolment of children in school, improvement in academic performances pupils and employment generation for men and women in our local communities.

Inspite of the above merits, the programme intensely probed at variants debates over its positivity and practical implications. While proponents view of Nigerian Home Grown School Feeding Programme as a way to help poor children get enough to eat while giving them an incentive to be in school, critics see it as a platform for new functions to be demanded of old institutions (Taylor & Ogbogu, 2020; Uduji & Okolo-Obasi, 2021). These differences in perceptions invariably sets the context for the NHGSFP debate, pitting those in favour of preserving a sustainable school feeding programme that will establish a safety net for the poor and eradicate malnutrition in school age children, and stimulating the national agricultural economy; against those who insist that lack of supporting infrastructure such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities should be addressed first to herald involvement and participation of rural communities.

The above submission is in agreement with the finding of Adekunle and Christiana (2016) who discovered in their study that majority (62.2%) of the respondents indicated that insufficient funding was identified as another challenge facing the programme implementation. This also accounts for the reason why there are insufficient classrooms and furniture to cope with the increase in enrolment. This has led to shortage of food items, irregularity in the preparation of food, inadequate cooking facilities, sub-standard quality of the meals and inadequate cooking staff. The participants believed that inadequate funding and delay in releasing funds have consequently resulted in delaying paying the remunerations of the cooks. Similarly, in Nigeria, Bosah, Chukwuebuka and Obumneke-Okeke (2019) identified some challenges such as insufficient fund for teeming population, delay in release of fund to the cooks. One of the Head teachers interviewed noted that sometimes some pupils have to share desks and chairs with their mates while some others sit on the floor or stand up while lessons are on due to exclusion of teachers from the implementation of the programme. However, home grown school feeding programme has been assessed in various ways to weigh its merit in different dimensions in line with its objectives. The parents and pupils' opinions have been sampled to be positive in various research works appraised, leaving the gap concerning teachers' opinions who are also major stakeholders in the line of implementation which informed the basis of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to determine teachers' perception towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home-grown school feeding programme. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. examine the perception of teachers towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme;
ii. determine whether teachers' perceptions towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme is based on gender;
iii. determine whether teachers' perceptions towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme is based on age;
iv. determine whether teachers' perceptions towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme is based on their qualifications.

Research Question

i. What is the perception of teachers towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme?

Research Hypotheses

i. There is no significant difference in teachers' perceptions towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme based on gender;
ii. There is no significant difference in teachers' perception towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grow school feeding programme based on age;
iii. There is no significant difference in teachers' perceptions towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home grow school feeding programme based on qualification.

Methodology

The study used the descriptive survey research design. This involves collecting data in order to answer the research questions concerning teachers' perception towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home-grown school feeding programme in Irepo Local Government Area of Oyo State. The population of the study comprises of all teachers of primary

schools in Irepo Local Government Area, Oyo State while the target population was all the 250 lower basic teachers in the Local Government. The study sample consisted of 160 teachers from 20 primary schools, five teachers were selected from each of the schools using Yaro Yamane's formula. Data were collected with the use of a structured questionnaire which was designed to elicit information on Teachers' perception towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme. The instrument titled: Teachers Perception on Enhancement of Pupils Academic Performance through Home-grown School Feeding (TPEPAPHSF consist of fifteen items with four likert response format (Strongly Agree (SD), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), & Disagree (D)) and was subjected to content validity and test-retest reliability. The reliability value of 0.81 was established. Data collected were analyzed using mean to answer the research question while the research hypotheses were tested with t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Results

The data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0). The result of the findings are shown below:

Table 1: Demographic Data of the Respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	86	54.0
Female	74	46.0
Total	**160**	**100**
Age Range		
20 – 30	43	27.0
31 – 40	74	46.0
41 – 50	30	19.0
51 and above	13	8.0
Total	**160**	**100**
Qualification		
Grade II	38	24.0
NCE/OND	77	48.0
Degree/HND	42	26.0
Masters Degree	3	2.0
Total	**160**	**100**

From the above table, it showed that out of 160 respondents that participated in this study, 86 (54.0%) were males, while 74(46.0%) were females. From this, it can be deduced that majority of

the respondents were male teachers. More so, it was revealed that out of the 160 respondents, 43(27.0%) were between the age range of 20–30, 74(46.0%) were between the age range of 31–40, 30(19.0%) was between the age range of 41–50, while 13(8.0%) were 51years and above teacher. It was then deduced that majority of the respondents were teachers between the age range of 31–40years. Furthermore, the table above showed that out of the 160 respondents, 38(24.0%) were grade II teachers, 77(48.0%) were NCE/OND holders, 42(26.0%) were Degree/HND holders, while 3(2.0%) were teachers with Master's degree. It was therefore affirmed that majority of the respondents were NCE/OND holders.

Research Question: *What is the perception of teachers towards enhancement of lower basic pupils academic performance through home grown school feeding programme?*

One research question was generated, and was answered with the use of mean. Mean of responses of the teachers to each items on the questionnaire were computed, having four likert scale format of Strongly Agreed (4 points), Agreed (3 points), Disagreed (2 points), and Strongly Disagreed (1 point). In other to get the cut-off mark, the average of the total point was calculated to be 2.50 (That is; 4+3+2+1 = 10: 10/4 = 2.50). Therefore, any mean point below 2.50 was tagged negative while mean score above 2.5 is tagged positive. The result is presented in the table below:

Table 2: Mean of Teachers' perception towards enhancement of Lower Basic Pupils academic performance through Home-grown School feeding programme

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Rank	Remarks
1.	Provision of meals to lower basic pupils enhanced their attention span in school	2.77	1st	Positive
2.	Home grown feeding programmes make pupils more focused in school especially lower basic pupils	2.67	3rd	Positive
3.	The enhancement of lower basic pupils' performance in schools aids by its design and implementation	2.59	9th	Positive
4.	Home grown feeding programme makes child to have better retain of information	2.52	14th	Positive
5.	Regular meals given to school lower basic children enhances their proper cognitive function	2.63	5th	Positive
6	Provision of meals in school enhances the nutritious status of pupils which is essential for cognitive development	2.76	2nd	Positive
7	School feeding enhances pupils of lower basic classes attitudes and habits to study	2.64	4th	Positive
8	School feeding enhances pupils at lower basic classes proper understanding of instructional subject matter	2.53	13th	Positive

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Rank	Remarks
9	Home grown school feeding programmes has potential of preventing drop-out among lower basic school children	2.61	7th	Positive
10	School feeding programme reduces perpetual absenteeism among lower basic pupils	2.57	10th	Positive
11	Home grown school feeding enhances lower basic pupils motivation to learning	2.63	5th	Positive
12	Home grown school feeding enhances lower basic pupils ability to undertake practical academic task independently	2.48	15th	Negative
13	Home grown feeding programme makes school a home for children thus enhances their attitude to schooling	2.61	7th	Positive
14	Feeding programme can serve as an incentive for lower basic pupils to attend school, leading to higher attendance and concentration rates	2.55	12th	Positive
15	Home grow school feeding programme has enhancement potentiality to aid the attainment of objectives of lower basic education.	2.56	11th	Positive
	Weighted Mean	2.61		

The above table revealed that the teachers' perception on the enhancement of lower basic pupils' performance through home grown feeding programme is positive. This is evidence from the table where the mean value of all the items are greater than 2.50 except the mean value on item 12 which was less than 2.50. From the data collected, teachers perceived that provision of meals to lower basic pupils enhanced their attention span in school, the nutritious status of pupils which is essential for cognitive development, makes lower basic pupils more focused in school, enhances pupils class attitudes and habits to study, and also enhances pupils motivation to learning which are all ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 15th respectively in accordance to the mean values. However, the teachers' responses revealed that home grown school feeding does not enhance lower basic pupils' ability to undertake practical academic task independently which has the lowest response mean value (2.48). The response weighted mean value of 2.61 is greater than the bench-mark mean of 2.50 which indicates that there is positive perception of teachers towards enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme.

Testing the Research Hypotheses

Three research hypotheses were formulated, and were tested with the use of t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a significant level of 0.05.

H_{O1}: *There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers towards enhancement pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme based on gender.*

Table 3: Summary of t-test showing the difference in the perception of teachers on the basis of gender.

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t. value	Sig.	Decision
Male	54	36.48	3.65	158	3.19	0.04	*Significant
Female	46	38.17	4.69				

From the table 3 above, it was revealed that the t-test value of 3.19 is significant at 0.05 alpha level (p value of $0.04 \leq 0.05$), therefore, the stated null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the perception of teachers towards enhancement pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme based on gender. It means that gender of the teachers determines their perception towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme.

H_{O2}: *There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers towards enhancement of lower basic pupils academic performance through home grown school feeding programme based on age.*

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA showing the difference on the perception of teachers on the basis of age.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	63.55	3	21.18	1.19	0.32	*Not significant
Within Groups	1705.69	156	17.77			
Total	1769.24	159				

From the above table 4, it was revealed that the F-value of 1.19 is not significant at 0.05 level of significant (p value of $0.32 \geq 0.05$), therefore, the stated null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers towards enhancement pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme based on age. It means that age of the teachers do not determines their perception towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme.

H_{O3}: *There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme based on qualification.*

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA showing the difference on the perception of teachers on the basis of qualification.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	96.09	3	32.01	1.84	0.15	*Not significant
Within Groups	1673.15	156	17.43			
Total	1769.24	159				

Table 5 above reveal that the F-value of 1.84 is not significant at 0.05 level of significant (p value of 0.15 ≥ 0.05), therefore, the stated null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers towards enhancement pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme based on qualification. It means that the teachers' qualification do not determines their perception towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme.

Discussion of findings

The result of this study revealed that teachers' perception towards the enhancement of lower basic pupils' academic performance through home grown feeding programme is positive. From the data collected, teachers perceived that provision of meals to lower basic pupils enhanced their attention span in school, improve the nutritious status of pupils which is essential for cognitive development and make pupils more focused in school. Also, it was perceived that the school feeding enhances pupils' attitudes and habits to study, and motivate them to learning. However, the teachers perceived that home grown school feeding does not enhance pupils' ability to undertake practical academic task independently. The possible reason behind this findings is not far-fetched from the fact that eating food in school is a good way to ensure vital nutrient to the pupils which in turn helps promote their academic performance, attendance, and enrolment, compared to non-beneficiary schools. School feeding programs (SFPs) reduces children's short-term hunger, enhance their nutritional status and cognition. This finding was corroborated by Igboji et al., (2022) who reported that head teachers perception on home grown school feeding programme was good on its effect on pupils' enrolment, attendance, retention, and dropout. Also, Kwatubana and Molaodi (2021) reported that school feeding is an important and widely distributed safety net for needy children and their families. The balanced meals served at school play a part in reducing the triple burden of malnutrition - under nutrition, hidden hunger, and obesity that afflicts school children particularly in developing nations.

Also, this study found out that teachers' gender determined their perceptions towards the enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme. This implies that, what was perceived by the male teachers is different from their female counterpart. The possible reasons behind this finding may not be far fetched from the fact that the mothers' role in the family structure and the society played by the female teachers might likely make them to perceive home-grown school feeding programme differently from their male counterpart. The good perception observed was found more among female teachers than male. This is in line with the result of Day, et al. (2015), Hussein, et al., (2015) who stated that female parents were more satisfied than male parents concerning the school feeding programme.

In addition, the result of this study showed that teachers' age and qualification does not determine their perception. It means that perception of teachers towards enhancement of pupils' academic performance through home grown school feeding programme does not depend on age qualifications of the teachers. It can be explained that sociodemographic factors such as age and qualification of the teachers were not significant in their perceptions. The findings might be an indication of the widespread nature of the programme, being one of the key elements of the social investment programme (SIP) of the government of Nigeria.

Conclusion

It is very important for home grown school feeding programmes to be in operation in the basic schools as these meals supply up to 30–50 percent of the child's daily nutritional needs through meals that are healthier than those cooked at home for the same expense. The perception of teachers towards enhancement of lower basic pupils academic performance through home grown school feeding programme were positive on the basis of attention span, learners focus in school, cognitive development, attitude to schooling, concentration rate and motivation for learning of the pupils but were indifference on the pupils abilities to undertake practical task independently. Though, there was gender disparity in their perception on the study matter but their perception did not differ based on age and qualifications. Therefore, home grown school feeding programme enhances lower basic pupils' academic performance. The implication of this study concluded that if school feeding programme is sustained, there will be an increase and improvement of direct pupil's enrolment, attendance, retention, health status, and academic achievement in lower basic schools.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of this study the followings are hereby recommended for improvement of the system:

i. teachers should be consistently involved in the scheme of things and empowered through various capacity building programmes to make them positive in the system;
ii. every teacher irrespective his/her gender should be well informed on the rudiments of home-grown school feeding programme so as to have uniform ideology on the programme;
iii. participation of teachers in the programme should not be determined by age;
iv. teachers' opinion on the programme should be taken into consideration irrespective of their qualifications.
v. Program implementation agencies should improve funding, monitoring, and educational infrastructure for the Program's smooth running.

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