

# EFFECT OF NATIONAL HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME ON RETENTION AND COMPLETION OF BASIC SCHOOL AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN IN KADUNA STATE NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The research assesses the effect of the National Home-Grown school feeding programme on the retention and completion of basic school among school children in Kaduna State Nigeria. A review of relevant literature and previous studies supports the adoption of Maslow's Theory of Motivation. The study employed both survey and documentary methods as its research methodology. The population of the study comprised all the parents and staff in the selected LEA primary schools, with a population of 798 using the taro Yamane formula a sample size of 400 was determined. Research questionnaires were employed in collecting primary data. Data analysis was executed using percentages and the test of hypotheses was done using a chi-square statistical model. Among the findings, it was revealed by this study that the availability of food in schools has motivated their children to attend school regularly and look forward to learning, a significant proportion expressed disagreement, suggesting that the programme alone may not be sufficient to ensure retention. It was therefore recommended that the government should complement the initiative with additional incentives such as educational materials, scholarships, and improved learning conditions to further encourage attendance. Also, awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate parents and communities on the importance of education, addressing socio-economic factors that may contribute to dropout rates despite the availability of school meals.*

**Keywords:** National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), School Feeding Programme, Retention, Completion.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right and a crucial driver of sustainable development. It empowers individuals, reduces poverty, and fosters economic growth (UNESCO, 2022). In line with this, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the need for inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations, 2020). However, access to basic education remains a challenge in many developing countries, including Nigeria, due to poverty, malnutrition, and inadequate educational infrastructure (UNICEF, 2023).

In Nigeria, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched in 1999 to address low enrollment, high dropout rates, and poor learning outcomes. However, persistent socio-economic issues have continued to hinder the achievement of its objectives (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020). Recognizing the link between hunger and educational outcomes, the Nigerian government introduced the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in 2016 to provide daily nutritious meals to primary school children. The programme aims to improve school enrollment, attendance, retention, and completion rates while stimulating local agricultural production (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, 2021).

The introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria was aimed at ensuring free and compulsory education for all children. However, the country continues to face significant challenges in achieving universal basic education, with millions of children still out of school (UNICEF Nigeria, 2022). Among the key issues contributing to this problem are poverty, malnutrition, and short-term hunger, which negatively impact school attendance, retention, and completion rates (Adamu et al., 2023).

Studies has shown that school feeding programmes play a crucial role in improving educational outcomes by addressing short-term hunger, increasing school enrollment, and reducing dropout rates (World Bank, 2011). The NHGSFP was introduced in Nigeria to tackle these issues by providing one free meal per day

to pupils in public primary schools. However, the extent to which this programme has influenced school retention and completion in Kaduna State remains largely unexplored.

Despite the implementation of NHGSFP, concerns remain about its effectiveness in addressing key educational challenges, particularly in Kaduna State, where dropout rates and malnutrition among schoolchildren are prevalent (Olaniyan & Akinola, 2022). Despite the potential benefits of NHGSFP, concerns about its implementation, funding sustainability, and overall impact on student retention and completion persist. There is also limited empirical evidence on whether the programme has significantly contributed to reducing dropout rates and improving the completion of basic education in Kaduna State. This study, therefore, seeks to assess the effect of NHGSFP on retention and completion of basic school among schoolchildren in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The general objectives of this study is to examine the effect of National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on Retention and Completion of Basic School among School Children in Kaduna State Nigeria. Specifically, this study attempts to achieve the following objectives which are to:

- i. examine whether the Federal Government Home Grown School Feeding Programme has encouraged retention among school children I Kaduna State.
- ii. access the effect of Federal Government Home Grown School Feeding Programme implementation has improved the completion of basic schooling among school children in Kaduna State.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

**H01:** The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has no significant effect on retention of school children in Kaduna State.

**H02:** The implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has no significant effect on the completion of basic schooling among school children in Kaduna State.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **School Feeding**

The term school feeding has been used over the years to mean the provision of feeding or snacks at school to reduce children's hunger during the school day (WFP, 2004). School feeding is also defined as in-school feeding only. School feeding has increasingly come to represent a more varied and comprehensive set of uses of food for the achievement of educational outcomes.

According to WFP (2007), school feeding was created to deal with short term hunger while supporting education, health and community development. School feeding can be in form of meals or snacks to be consumed by school children during school hours or distributed in form of raw food items to be taken home by school children if they attend school so that the meal will be prepared for them at home by parents or guardian.

School feeding programme deals with vital intervention that has been introduced in both developing and developed nations across the world to tackle the issue of poverty, encourage school attendance and to help the school children perform optimally in their academics. In third world countries, almost sixty million school children attend school hungry and forty percent of the said population comes from Africa and provision of food in school has motivated parent to send their children to school instead of staying at home doing petty jobs (Akanbi, 2013).

According to Bijimanda, (2021) School feeding is a versatile measure put in place to support children and their families to enjoy at least a decent and nutritional food daily.

School feeding programmes are initiatives that provide nutritious meals to students during the school day. These programmes aim to improve the health and well-being of children, alleviate hunger, and improve educational outcomes. School feeding programmes can take various forms, including providing free or subsidized meals to all students, targeting specific groups of students who are most in need, or partnering with local organizations to source and distribute food.

Every school feeding programme across the world varies based on the objectives because the government of those countries fashion out the school feeding programme to best suit the environment where it is implemented. In Brazil for instance, a higher percentage of the food items used for the school feeding programme was not purchased from local farmers before now (Bijimanda, 2021). A good consideration of Nigeria, the purchase of food items from local farmers is paramount and highly encouraged because the Nigerian government wishes not to only feed the school children but to also empower local farmers by creating a viable market to sale their farm produce thereby boosting farmers income. Again, the availability of viable market for locally produced food items will encourage local production.

### **School Feeding Programme**

A school feeding programme is a government or non-profit initiative that provides nutritious meals to students in schools. The aim of these programmes is to improve children's nutrition, educational outcomes, and overall well-being. School feeding programmes may vary in scope and implementation, but they typically involve providing free or subsidized meals to students during the school day. These meals are often high in nutrients such as protein, vitamins, and minerals to support children's growth and development.

School feeding programmes are a visible social safety net used by political leaders around the world (Adelman, Alderman, Gilligan, & Lehrer, 2009). Communities that participate in these programmes can see the tangible benefits to their children, such as their children being fed regularly or families supplied with additional food, and the visibility of such programmes can be attributed back to the politicians who support them. School feeding programmes are government- or NGO-sponsored initiatives that provide free or subsidized meals to schoolchildren to ensure they have access to nutritious food. School feeding programme can have multiple objectives, including improving children's nutrition, health, and educational attainment, while also promoting economic development and food security.

A School Feeding Programme (SFP) is a scheduled activity designed to provide food to children such as those in pre-school. Ideally, it is supposed to provide enough nutritious and a balanced diet to a selected group of children in order to foster their holistic growth and development, including school enrolment, attendance and retention.

Tomlinson (2007) traced the emergence of school feeding programme to the 1700's in the United Kingdom and the United States of America with a focus on improving the growth of children. In 1900 Netherlands became the first country to move the programme to a new level of incorporating school feeding into a national legislation. By the 1930s, the United Kingdom and the United States had also instituted the school feeding programme as part of their national programmes. A further account indicates that school feeding initiatives have been in existence since the late 1930s and originated as projects of donors in Europe (Tomlinson (2007). The United States of America began the practice of initiating school feeding programmes in Austria as an act of international aid focused on combating the severe malnutrition of children in the 1940s after the Second World War. Since then, school feeding programmes have become a key part of food assistance, relief emergency and development programmes. School Feeding Programme is a social safety net for children and as part of the national development goals. It provides an important new opportunity to assist poor families and feed hungry children. It provides incentive for poor families to send their children to school and keep them there (Tomlinson (2007).

In order to improve the nutritional status of school children, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched the Home-Grown School Feeding and Health Programme in September, 2005 under the coordination of the Federal Ministry of Education. The programme aimed to provide pupils with adequate meal during the school day (FME, 2007). The scheme, officially known as Home Grown School Feeding Programme insisted on buying the food stuffs from the local farmers. It therefore reduced the rate of malnutrition while it also provided the local farmers the opportunity to sell their produce to participating schools. According to the Federal Government's directive, Federal, State and Local

Governments were to fund the programme with the State and Local Governments providing the bulk (Akanbi, 2013).

Home grown school feeding programme deals with vital intervention that has been introduced in both developing and developed nations across the world to tackle the issue of poverty, encourage school attendance and to help the school children perform optimally in their academics. In third world countries, almost sixty million school children attend school hungry and forty percent of the said population comes from Africa and provision of food in school has motivated parent to send their children to school instead of staying at home doing petty jobs (Akanbi, 2013).

Espejo et al. (2009) say that school feeding, in its variant forms, is a well-recognized programme that alleviates hunger while supporting education, health and community development. Neeser, (2012) says healthy children learn better. School health and nutrition (SHN) interventions have been shown to improve not only children's health and nutrition, but also their learning potential and life choices both in the short and long term. The school feeding programme in Brazil according to Otsuki and Arce (2007) is part of the framework of food security policy and aims to reduce the number of malnourished children and the need to provide healthy, good quality food for children as a means to improve the population's eating habits.

### **School Feeding**

School feeding is simply the provision of food to children through schools. According to Oyefade (2014), different countries have one or a combination of the two feeding modalities in place for various objectives. However, they can be grouped into two broad categories: in-school feeding and take-home rations where families are given food if their children attend school. Historically, in-school feeding has been the most popular modality of school feeding interventions. The school feeding can be in turn grouped into two common categories: programme that provides feeding and programme that provides high-energy biscuits or snacks to generate greater impacts on school enrolment, retention rates, and reduce gender or social gaps (Akanbi, 2013). Uduku, (2011) contended that there are 'indications of a significant swing in thinking about school feeding and many elements of this new thinking are being promoted keenly under the rubric of "home grown school feeding"'.

In Nigeria, SFP is designed to increase school enrolment, attendance, retention and completion, particularly of rural children and children in poor urban neighborhoods. As noted, the 'SP' aspect results in a second beneficiary group participating farmers, whose livelihoods are supported through higher incomes and having a guaranteed buyer of their produce. Despite the announcement of the SF programme in 2015, the programme took more than a year to be established. The first funds were released in January 2017 to five states: Anambra, Ebonyi, Ogun, Osun and Oyo (Bijimada, 2021).

The SF programme's strategic plan stipulates that it will provide one meal per school day to all primary school pupils in primary 1 to 3 in Nigeria. By doing so, it aims to:

- i. Improve the enrolment of primary school children in Nigeria and reduce dropout rates from primary school. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SFP</sub>
- ii. Improve the nutrition and health status of many children and thereby also improve learning outcomes.
- iii. Stimulate local agricultural production and boost the income of farmers by creating a viable market via the school feeding programme.
- iv. Create jobs along the value chain and provide a multiplier effect for economic growth and development (Bijimada, 2021).

School feeding programmes are a visible social safety net used by political leaders around the world (Adelman, Alderman, Gilligan, & Lehrer, 2009). Communities that participate in these programmes can see the tangible benefits to their children, such as their children being fed regularly or families supplied with additional food, and the visibility of such programmes can be attributed back to the politicians who support them.

### **School Attendance**

School attendance refers to the regular presence of students in school during the scheduled academic calendar. It is a critical indicator of the effectiveness of educational policies and programme, as consistent attendance is linked to better academic outcomes and reduced dropout rates. Factors influencing school attendance include socioeconomic conditions, accessibility to schools, and interventions like school feeding programme that incentivize attendance by addressing immediate needs such as hunger.

In 2000 the WFP fed over 12 million children in schools in 54 countries working with national governments, local authorities and NGO's. WFP used food to attract children to schools where enrolment ratios were lowest which has affected the attendance, retention and completion of basic school among pupils. The SFP is one of the most important ways of using food aid for education (Adelman, Gilligan, & Lehrer 2008). In 1993, the pre-primary and primary feeding project accounted for more than half of all WFP development commitments totalling to \$132m out of \$253m (WFP, 2001). In a review evaluation of US bilateral food aid programme spanning 1980-1985, the United States Bureau of Food, Peace, and Voluntary Assistance came to the conclusion that SFP programme improved enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of basic school. School feeding programmes are premised on the expectation that serving food at school will increase enrolment and daily attendance, retention and completion of basic school of students. Thus, school feeding programmes are hypothesized to alter the schooling decision for families who would not have sent their children to school otherwise (Adelman, Gilligan, & Lehrer 2008).

School attendance is a daily endeavor by schoolchildren to attend school throughout the weekdays for the purpose of education (Gottfried 2010). Through diligent attendance, school children get consistent access to good tutoring by class teachers' thereby giving them the opportunity to achieve educational success (Oghuvbu 2010). Honneth (1995) opined that with school frequent attendance school children get to figure out their identities and inter subject awareness of the personal and social capabilities. School attendance deals with class room commitment and activities right from enrollment to the day of educational attainment.

School attendance is a huge contributing factor to great academic performance in that school children are given adequate time and attention to learn and ask questions in class where the teacher gives adequate answers to those questions. In order to improve school attendance, the Nigerian government introduces the universal basic education which makes basic education mandatory at no cost that children of school age with no sponsorship can be given the opportunity to attend school and better equip them for a better life in the society. Afterwards, the government discovered despite the introduction of universal basic education, school attendance has not improved up to expectation hence the introduction of the home-grown school feeding programme which makes provision of meal daily to school children in school goes a long way to convince hungry children who see school attendance more of a punishment than a good endeavor (Gottfried 2010).

### **School Retention and Completion**

Retention in education refers to the ability of a school or education system to keep students enrolled from one academic year to the next until the completion of a program. High retention rates indicate a supportive learning environment and effective measures to prevent dropouts, such as financial support, inclusive policies, and programme that reduce absenteeism. School feeding programme have been shown to enhance retention by alleviating barriers like malnutrition, which directly affects students' ability to stay in school.

It is no new that not every school child that enrolls into school stays long enough to complete that academic pursuit and takes a certificate home because schooling is faced with a lot of challenges like financial constrain or lose of interest in academic pursuit. Retention advocates that a student remains active in school work and not neglecting his/primary duty which is to acquire knowledge for another thing. The issue of school retention has become an alarming issue in third world countries where school

children abandon school to source for a mean to survive; it is to this effect that student either dropout completely or momentarily dropout to make ends meet before coming back to finish (Oghuvbu 2010).

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Home Grown School Feeding Programme and Retention among School Children**

Onyechi, and Okeke, (2023), assess the impact of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) on school attendance and academic performance in selected primary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes the importance of investing in education and human resources for economic growth and development. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential impact of school feeding programme on promoting school attendance and academic performance, which can contribute to the development of human capital. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of attendance and academic performance data, as well as qualitative interviews with stakeholders. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the NHGSFP on school attendance and academic performance. The study targeted public primary schools in Anambra State that had implemented the NHGSFP. A sample of 20 schools was selected, with attendance and academic performance data analyzed, and interviews conducted with 40 teachers, 60 pupils, and 40 parents. The study found that the NHGSFP had a positive impact on increasing school attendance rates in participating schools. The provision of free meals acted as an incentive for parents to send their children to school regularly, reducing absenteeism. Additionally, improved attendance contributed to better academic performance among pupils who received the school meals. The study recommended expanding the NHGSFP to cover more primary schools in Anambra State and ensuring consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the program's impact on school attendance and academic performance, as well as implementing strategies to address other barriers to education.

Akinola, and Olaniyan, (2023), investigate the role of school feeding programmes, specifically the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), in promoting school attendance in public primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Social Protection Theory, which emphasizes the importance of providing social safety nets and support systems to vulnerable populations. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential impact of school feeding programmes as a social protection mechanism for increasing school attendance among children from low-income households. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with stakeholders. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of pupils, parents, teachers, and school administrators regarding the impact of the NHGSFP on school attendance. The study focused on public primary schools in Ogun State that had implemented the NHGSFP. A total of 12 schools were selected, with focus group discussions conducted with 48 pupils and 36 parents, and in-depth interviews conducted with 24 teachers and 12 school administrators. The study found that the NHGSFP played a significant role in promoting school attendance in participating schools. The provision of free meals acted as an incentive for parents to send their children to school regularly, reducing absenteeism. Additionally, the program contributed to improving punctuality and reducing dropouts among enrolled pupils. The study recommended expanding the NHGSFP to cover more primary schools in Ogun State and ensuring consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating awareness campaigns and community engagement strategies to further promote the program and encourage school attendance.

Omoera, and Iyoha, (2021), evaluate the economic impact of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in Nigeria, with a focus on its implications for enrolment and attendance in basic education. The study was guided by the Human Capital Investment Theory, which posits that investments in education and human resources can lead to economic growth and development. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential economic impact of school feeding programme and their role in increasing enrolment and attendance, which can contribute to the development of human capital. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of economic and enrolment data, as well as qualitative interviews with stakeholders. This

approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the economic impact of the NHGSFP and its implications for enrolment and attendance in basic education. The study covered public primary schools across six states in Nigeria that had implemented the NHGSFP. A sample of 100 schools was selected, with economic and enrolment data analyzed and interviews conducted with 50 school administrators, 100 teachers, and 200 parents. The study found that the NHGSFP had a positive economic impact by increasing local agricultural production and creating employment opportunities. Additionally, the provision of free meals through the program contributed to an increase in enrolment and attendance rates in participating schools, particularly among children from low-income households. The study recommended expanding the NHGSFP to cover more schools and communities across Nigeria, while also strengthening the local agricultural value chain and promoting entrepreneurship opportunities related to the program. It also suggested incorporating strategies to improve the quality and nutritional value of the meals to maximize the program's impact on educational outcomes.

Eme, and Okeke, (2023), explore the challenges and prospects of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in Nigeria, with a focus on its impact on enrolment and attendance in basic education in Enugu State. The study was guided by the Sustainable Development Theory, which emphasizes the importance of addressing social, economic, and environmental issues in a holistic and integrated manner. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential role of school feeding programme, such as the NHGSFP, in promoting sustainable development by improving access to education and addressing issues of hunger and poverty. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of enrolment and attendance data, as well as qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and prospects of the NHGSFP, as well as its impact on enrolment and attendance in basic education. The study focused on public primary schools in Enugu State that had implemented the NHGSFP. A sample of 30 schools was selected, with enrolment and attendance data analyzed and interviews/focus group discussions conducted with 20 school administrators, 40 teachers, 60 pupils, and 45 parents. The study identified several challenges faced by the NHGSFP, such as irregular meal delivery, inadequate funding, and lack of infrastructure. However, it also found that the program had a positive impact on increasing enrolment and attendance rates in participating schools, particularly among children from low-income households. The qualitative data revealed that the provision of free meals acted as an incentive for parents to send their children to school and reduce absenteeism. The study recommended addressing the logistical and funding challenges faced by the NHGSFP to ensure consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating strategies to improve infrastructure and facilities in schools, as well as community engagement and awareness campaigns to further promote the program and encourage enrolment and attendance in basic education.

A review on the work of John, Esther, and Aseta, (2018), whose purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of school feeding programme on enrolment and retention rates in public pre-primary schools in Sigor Division, Chepalungu District, Bomet County. Sigor division has low enrollment rates of children in pre-school; it is also evident that there are drop outs. The research was carried out in Sigor Division in Chepalungu District in the 56 public preschools amongst pre-school teachers, pre-school SMC chairpersons and head teachers. The main objectives of the study included establishing availability of feeding programme and its effects on enrolment rates and retention, finding out how management and effectiveness of school feeding programme affects enrolment and retention rates and also to give suggestions on how the feeding programme could be improved so as to enhance enrolment and retention rates. The study was guided by Abraham Maslow theory of hierarchy of needs, this theory postulates that SFP motivate and attract learners to enroll in preschool and be retained up to the end of the school calendar. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population was 560 subjects including 56 Head teachers 112 teachers and 56 SMC chairpersons. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, observation check list and interview schedule. Data collected was analyzed for descriptive statistics (percentage, means and frequencies). Pre-school teachers, parents, Ministry of Education, health sector players and other key stakeholders in early childhood development and education sector may use the information collected to enhance the effectiveness of the feeding programmes as a strategy for improving enrolment and retention rates. Data was analyzed using statistics (frequencies and

percentages), the findings revealed that there are 26 pre-schools with SFP, while 30 pre-schools did not have the said programmes. There were 147 teachers and head teachers who responded and also 56 chairpersons, making total respondents 203. Most of the teachers and head teachers were male and likewise to chairpersons. The feeding modality in the schools with SFP was the school feeding. Majority of teachers were of the opinion that SFP affects enrollment rates positively. It was evident that enrollment was low prior to implementation of SFP and changed to high upon implementation. Findings showed that SFP is effective in enhancing enrollment and retention rates. The biggest challenge to SFP as per findings includes: - poverty, parental attitude and hardship area climatically. Chairpersons recommended education of parents as a way of enhancing SFP majority of teachers and head teacher mentioned parents and school committee as responsible for funding SFP. The study concluded that SFP exist in 26 schools out of 56. It also concluded that low enrollment rates and retention are caused by absence of SFP among other factors. It also concluded that effective management is recommended to achieve the objectives of school feeding programme. It also recommends that parents need to be educated on the importance SFP and also be empowered economically. The other recommendation is that there should be effective management of SFP for positive results (John, Esther, and Aseta, 2018). Onyechi, and Okeke, (2022), assess the impact of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) on retention and dropout rates in primary education in Imo State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes the importance of investing in education and human resources for economic growth and development. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential impact of school feeding programme on improving retention rates and reducing dropouts, which can contribute to the development of human capital. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing secondary data analysis of retention and dropout rates, as well as program implementation data. This approach allowed for an objective assessment of the changes in retention and dropout rates before and after the implementation of the NHGSFP. The study analyzed retention and dropout data from 100 public primary schools across Imo State that had implemented the NHGSFP. The study found a significant improvement in retention rates and a reduction in dropout rates in primary schools that implemented the NHGSFP. The authors attributed these positive outcomes to the program's ability to incentivize parents to keep their children enrolled, particularly those from low-income households who may have previously struggled to provide meals for their children. The study recommended expanding the NHGSFP to cover more primary schools across Imo State and ensuring consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the program's impact on retention and dropout rates, as well as implementing strategies to address other barriers to education.

Akinola, and Olaniyan, (2024), investigate the impact of school feeding programmes, specifically the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), on retention and dropout rates in basic education in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Social Inclusion Theory, which emphasizes the importance of ensuring equal access and participation in social, economic, and educational opportunities for all members of society. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential impact of school feeding programme in promoting social inclusion by improving retention rates and reducing dropouts among disadvantaged groups. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with stakeholders. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of pupils, parents, teachers, and school administrators regarding the impact of the NHGSFP on retention and dropout rates. The study focused on public primary and secondary schools in Lagos State that had implemented the NHGSFP. A total of 20 schools were selected, with focus group discussions conducted with 80 pupils and 60 parents, and in-depth interviews conducted with 40 teachers and 20 school administrators. The study found that the NHGSFP played a crucial role in improving retention rates and reducing dropout rates in participating schools. The provision of free meals acted as an incentive for parents to keep their children enrolled, particularly in low-income communities where financial constraints and hunger were significant barriers to education. The study recommended expanding the NHGSFP to cover more schools in Lagos State and ensuring consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating awareness campaigns and community engagement strategies to further promote the program and encourage retention and reduce dropouts in basic education.



### **Home Grown School Feeding Programme implementation and Completion of Basic Schooling among School Children**

Eme, and Okeke, (2024), explore the challenges and prospects of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in promoting retention and reducing dropout rates in basic education in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Sustainable Development Theory, which emphasizes the importance of addressing social, economic, and environmental issues in a holistic and integrated manner. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential role of school feeding programme, such as the NHGSFP, in promoting sustainable development by improving educational outcomes and addressing issues of hunger and poverty. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of retention and dropout data, as well as qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and prospects of the NHGSFP, as well as its impact on retention and dropout rates in basic education. The study focused on public primary and secondary schools in Enugu State that had implemented the NHGSFP. A sample of 30 schools was selected, with retention and dropout data analyzed, and interviews/focus group discussions conducted with 30 school administrators, 60 teachers, 90 pupils, and 60 parents. The study identified several challenges faced by the NHGSFP, such as irregular meal delivery, inadequate funding, and lack of infrastructure. However, it also found that the program had a positive impact on improving retention rates and reducing dropout rates in participating schools, particularly among children from low-income households. The qualitative data revealed that the provision of free meals acted as an incentive for parents to keep their children enrolled. The study recommended addressing the logistical and funding challenges faced by the NHGSFP to ensure consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating strategies to improve infrastructure and facilities in schools, as well as community engagement and awareness campaigns to further promote the program and encourage retention and reduce dropouts in basic education.

Adamu, and Ajayi, (2022), investigate the impact of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) on basic education completion rates, with a focus on rural primary schools in Kano State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes the importance of investing in education and human resources for economic growth and development. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential impact of school feeding programme on improving basic education completion rates, which can contribute to the development of human capital. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of completion rate data and qualitative interviews with stakeholders. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the changes in completion rates and the perceptions and experiences of those involved in the implementation of the NHGSFP. The study focused on rural public primary schools in Kano State that had implemented the NHGSFP. A sample of 40 schools was selected, with completion rate data analyzed and interviews conducted with 20 school administrators, 40 teachers, and 60 parents. The study found that the NHGSFP had a positive impact on improving basic education completion rates in participating rural primary schools. The provision of free meals acted as an incentive for parents to keep their children enrolled until the completion of basic education, reducing the likelihood of dropouts due to financial constraints or hunger-related issues. The study recommended expanding the NHGSFP to cover more rural primary schools in Kano State and ensuring consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating strategies to address other barriers to education, such as lack of infrastructure and socio-cultural factors, to further enhance the program's impact on basic education completion rates.

Onyechi, and Okeke, (2023), assess the role of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in improving basic education completion rates in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Social Protection Theory, which emphasizes the importance of providing social safety nets and support systems to vulnerable populations. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential impact of school feeding programme as a social protection mechanism for improving basic education completion rates among children from low-income households. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing secondary data analysis of completion rate data, as well as

program implementation data. This approach allowed for an objective assessment of the changes in completion rates before and after the implementation of the NHGSFP. The study analyzed completion rate data from 150 public primary and secondary schools across Anambra State that had implemented the NHGSFP. The study found a significant improvement in basic education completion rates in schools that implemented the NHGSFP. The authors attributed these positive outcomes to the program's ability to incentivize parents to keep their children enrolled until the completion of basic education, particularly those from low-income households who may have previously struggled to provide meals for their children. The study recommended expanding the NHGSFP to cover more primary and secondary schools across Anambra State and ensuring consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the program's impact on basic education completion rates, as well as implementing strategies to address other barriers to education.

Akinola, and Olaniyan, (2023), investigate the impact of school feeding programmes, specifically the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), on basic education completion rates in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes the importance of investing in education and human resources for economic growth and development. This theory is relevant as it provides a framework for understanding the potential impact of school feeding programme on improving basic education completion rates, which can contribute to the development of human capital. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with stakeholders. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of pupils, parents, teachers, and school administrators regarding the impact of the NHGSFP on basic education completion rates. The study focused on public primary and secondary schools in Ogun State that had implemented the NHGSFP. A total of 25 schools were selected, with focus group discussions conducted with 100 pupils and 75 parents, and in-depth interviews conducted with 50 teachers and 25 school administrators. The study found that the NHGSFP played a crucial role in improving basic education completion rates in participating schools. The provision of free meals acted as an incentive for parents to keep their children enrolled until the completion of basic education, particularly in low-income communities where financial constraints and hunger were significant barriers to education. The study recommended expanding the NHGSFP to cover more schools in Ogun State and ensuring consistent delivery of nutritious meals. It also suggested incorporating awareness campaigns and community engagement strategies to further promote the program and encourage basic education completion.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Abraham Maslow (1971) theory of motivation and hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow, naturally good physical shape and development in a person will occur in a healthy society. Maslow further shows that the environment should allow people to express their ideas, needs and also make their own resolutions. The surrounding should similarly provide the necessary materials to satisfy and sustain the needs. Maslow placed needs in an ascending order of importance starting from biological needs to need for self-actualization and that the lower or basic needs must be attained before the child can focus on the next level of needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs posits that human motivation is driven by a series of hierarchical needs, starting from physiological needs (e.g., food, water) to self-actualization. At the base of the hierarchy, physiological needs are foundational because they must be met before individuals can focus on higher-level goals, including education.

Biological needs according to Maslow, sustain human life and they include: food, warmth, water, health care, rest and/ or sleep. These needs should be satisfied in order for a child to develop properly and to achieve other needs. Biological needs are followed by security needs in children which may involve stability or being free from danger and fear of losing friends, play toys, being abducted and shelter. Social belongingness or acceptance needs, such as being loved and not discriminated or segregated upon but embraced well by others come next. Fourth in the hierarchy are esteem needs which cause satisfaction among children like having a feeling of prestige or importance, power, recognition and self-confidence.

The final need according to Maslow is that for self-actualization. This is the desire in the child to become self-developed or the best of what they can be.

This theory shows that food is a basic need, thus in applying the theory in pre-school settings, a hungry child is likely to be physically, mentally and socio-emotionally unhealthy, since aspects of growth and development (Berndt, 1997; Ingule, Rono and Ndambuki, 1996; Piaget, 1983; Freud, 1965); Erikson, 1963) are interrelated and inter properly as (Murungi, 2012) reveals. Such a child is miserable, weak and cannot concentrate nor retain learning content in school and he/she is likely to perform poorly.

Lack of basic needs mentioned above can also make a child absent himself or herself from school and this may lead to the child dropping out of school. The researcher chose the theory of motivation and hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow (1971) because it fits very well with the intended study variables. Children in school must be fed with good quality food which is balanced and also adequate.

The theory highlights the importance of meeting basic needs (e.g., nutrition) for effective learning. The school feeding program directly addresses physiological needs, enabling children to focus on learning, thereby improving attendance, retention, and completion rates.

The theory is broad and does not account for specific socio-economic or systemic barriers that might affect school participation, such as infrastructure, teacher quality, or cultural factors.

### **Human Capital Theory (1961)**

Theodore Schultz, (1961), This theory views education as an investment in human capital, where knowledge and skills acquired through schooling enhance an individual's productivity and future earning potential. It argues that investing in children's education, health, and well-being yields economic and social returns.

The school feeding program is an investment in children's nutrition and education, aligning with the concept of building human capital. Improved nutrition leads to better cognitive functioning and academic performance, which strengthens human capital development.

This theory emphasizes the economic outcomes of education but may overlook the immediate social and systemic challenges, such as the availability of resources to sustain the program.

Therefore, for the purpose of this research work, which center on effect of National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on Retention and Completion of Basic School among School Children in Kaduna State Nigeria, theory of motivation and hierarchy of needs has been adopted because of its relevance in terms of motivating an individual towards a positive action. Relating the relevance of this theory to this study, it shows that, the importance of the theory shows that food is a basic need which an average individual cannot do without, thus in relations to the study, the theory in pre-school settings, a hungry child is likely to be physically, mentally and socio-emotionally unhealthy, unstable, miserable and cannot concentrate nor retain learning content in school and he/she is likely to perform poorly. But with the present of food, this pupil is most likely to pay attention, concentrate and be mentally, socially and emotionally stable as he/ she is convinced that the next meal will be given to him.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The design of this study is a mixed-methods approach, combining both survey and documentary methods. This approach is selected to gather comprehensive and in-depth data from various sources to address the research objectives. The population of this study comprises of all the total number of staff and parents.

**Table 1. Population of the study**

S/N	Schools	Staff	Parents	Vendors
1	LEA Primary School, Angwan Sarki, Kaduna	8	91	1
2	LEA Primary School, Malali, Kaduna	6	63	1
3	LEA Primary School, Kawo, Kaduna	9	79	1
4	LEA Primary School, Rigasa Igabi	8	78	1
5	LEA Primary School, Sabon Tasha Chikun LGA	10	91	1
6	LEA Primary School, Kabala Costain Kaduna	8	56	1
7	LEA Primary School, Kafanchan Jama'a LGA	6	82	1
8	LEA Primary School, Zonkwa Zangon Kataf LGA	7	97	1
9	LEA Primary School, Kagoro Kaura LGA	5	85	1
10	Total	67	722	9

**Source:** Ministry of Education, Kaduna (2025).

As a result, the population of this study is **798**. The technique used in drawing the sample size is Taro Yamane (1967) formula defined as:

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

Where n = sample size

N = total population size

1 is constant

e = the assume error margin or tolerable error which is specified as 5% (0.05) in this study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} = \frac{798}{1+798(0.05)^2} = \frac{798}{1.9975} = 399.5 = 400$$

The questionnaires were distributed using stratified sampling techniques in such a way that both the parents, staff and vendors were represented and captured because of their participation and experience with the school feeding programme in Kaduna State.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data Presentation

This section presents and discusses the result obtained from the data collected from the field with particular reference to the questionnaire administered to the respondents and the report from the interview conducted. The findings obtained from the questionnaires are presented in a tabular form and cross tabulations while the qualitative data is reported under appropriate analytical themes as supportive and sometimes as narratives. The presentation is done in sections based on the objectives of the study. In the survey area, 10 percent of the 400 that was added and we have Four hundred and forty (440) copies of questionnaires were administered to the 9 LEA primary school across the three senatorial zones of the State; four hundred and one (401) of the questionnaires were returned and are being used for analysis. The qualitative data generated from the in-depth interview were presented to supplement the quantitative data as appropriate.

**Table 1: Analysis of Questionnaire Administered**

Questionnaires	Data of Respondent	Percentage %
Questionnaires returned	401	91.13%
Questionnaires not returned	39	8.87%
Total	440	100%

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024.

As shown on the table, the first threshold shows that out of the 440 copies of the questionnaire administered because of the 10 percent of the 400 that was added, only 401 were returned representing 91.13% of the targeted population, while 39 questionnaires were not returned representing 8.87% of the entire study population.

**Table 1: Respondents responses on whether the Federal Government Home Grown School Feeding Programme has effect on retention among school children in Kaduna States.**

Option	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	%
The school feeding programme has motivated my child to attend school regularly.	38	65	119	168	11	401
The availability of food at school has reduced the likelihood of my child leaving school before closing time.	61	50	101	140	49	401
The school feeding program has helped my child concentrate better during classes.	67	90	66	153	25	401
The school feeding program has made my child look forward to going to school.	117	74	49	131	30	401
The school feeding program has encouraged my child to continue going to school.	69	168	55	68	41	401

**Source: Field Survey, 2025.**

The table presents the results of a field survey examining the impact of the Federal Government Home Grown School Feeding Programme on retention among school children. The findings suggest that a significant proportion of respondents believe the program has had a positive effect. For instance, 117 respondents (29.2%) strongly agree that the program has made their child look forward to going to school, while 69 respondents (17.2%) strongly agree that it has encouraged their child to continue their education. However, the opinions are not uniformly positive. A substantial number of respondents express disagreement or uncertainty. For example, 168 respondents (41.9%) disagree with the statement that the school feeding program has motivated their child to attend school regularly, while 49 respondents (12.2%) are undecided about whether the program has helped their child concentrate better during classes. Overall, the findings indicate that while the program has had some positive effects, its impact is not universal, and some parents remain skeptical.

**Table 2: Respondents responses on the effect on the implementation of Home Grown School Feeding Programme on the completion of basic schooling among school children in Kaduna State.**

Option	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	%
The school feeding program has increased the likelihood of my child completing primary education.	49	34	169	148	1	401
The availability of food at school has motivated my child to continue his/her basic education.	71	144	80	46	60	401
The school feeding program has reduced the dropout rate among children in my community.	57	45	56	200	43	401
The school feeding program has encouraged children in my community to complete their basic schooling.	54	191	74	70	13	401
The school feeding program has improved the overall completion rate of basic education in my area.	80	105	51	99	66	401

**Source: Field Survey, 2025.**

The table presents the results of a field survey examining the impact of the Federal Government's Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on the completion of basic schooling among school children. The findings suggest that opinions are mixed, with some respondents attributing positive effects to the program. For instance, 71 respondents (17.7%) strongly agree that the availability of food at school has motivated their child to continue their basic education, while 80 respondents (20%) strongly agree that the program has improved the overall completion rate of basic education in their area. However, a significant proportion of respondents' express skepticism or disagreement. For example, 169 respondents (42.1%) strongly disagree that the school feeding program has increased the likelihood of their child completing primary education, while 200 respondents (50%) disagree that the program has

reduced the dropout rate among children in their community. Overall, the findings indicate that the program's impact on completing basic schooling is uncertain and varies among respondents.

**Test of Hypothesis**

In this research work, chi-square statistics model was used to test the hypothesis.

**H01:** The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has no significant effect on encouraging retention among school children in Kaduna State.

**H02:** The implementation of the Home Grown School Feeding Programme has no significant effect on the completion of basic schooling among children in Kaduna State.

(A) **Observed Frequently.**

Variable	Strong Agree	Agree	Strong Disagree	disagree	Undecided	Total Responses
The availability of food at school has reduced the likelihood of my child retention rate.	61	50	101	140	49	401
The school feeding programme has improved the overall completion rate of basic education in my area.	80	105	51	99	66	401
Grand Total	141	155	152	239	115	802

Source: Underlying data from field survey 2025.

$$Fe = \frac{\text{Row total} \times \text{Column total}}{\text{Grand total}}$$

$$Fe = \frac{401 \times 141}{802} = 70.5 \quad Fe = \frac{401 \times 239}{802} = 119.5$$

$$Fe = \frac{401 \times 155}{802} = 129 \quad Fe = \frac{401 \times 115}{802} = 57.5$$

$$Fe = \frac{401 \times 152}{802} = 60.5$$

(B) **Computation of (Chi-Square)**

Fo	Fe	Fo- Fe	(Fo - Fe)2	$\frac{E(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$
141	70.5	70.5	4970.25	70.5
155	77.5	77.5	6006.25	77.5
152	76	76	5776	76
239	119.5	119.5	14280.25	119.5
115	57.5	57.5	3306.25	57.5

Source: Field Survey 2025

$$DF = (Nr-1) (NC-1)$$

Where DF = Degree of freedom

Nr = Numbers of rows in contingent table

NC = Numbers of column in contingent table

$$DF = (Nr-4) (NC-6)$$

$$= (4-1) (6-1)$$

$$= 3 (5)$$

15 under 0.5 (level of significance)

$$= 24.996$$

**Decision Rule**

The chi-square calculated above value is 401. On the other hand, using 0.05 level of significant tabulated chi-square value with 15 degree of freedom is 24.996.

Therefore, the researcher concludes that, the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in Kaduna State has significant effect on retention among school children and that the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has improve the completion of basic schooling among children in Kaduna State.

## **Findings**

- i. The findings of the study indicate that the Federal Government's Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has had a mixed impact on school retention among children in Kaduna State. While a notable number of respondents acknowledged that the availability of food in schools has motivated their children to attend school regularly and look forward to learning, a significant proportion expressed disagreement, suggesting that the programme alone may not be sufficient to ensure retention. However, while some parents noted improvements in their children's concentration and willingness to continue education, others did not perceive a strong connection between the feeding initiative and reduced dropout rates.
- ii. The findings shows that the Federal Government's Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has had a limited impact on the completion of basic education among school children in Kaduna State. While some respondents agreed that the availability of food in schools has motivated children to continue their education and increased the likelihood of completing primary school, a significant number disagreed, indicating that other challenges may hinder school completion. Also, some parents acknowledged a reduction in dropout rates and an improvement in completion rates, many respondents did not perceive the programme as a major factor in ensuring that children complete their basic education.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study examined the effect of the Federal Government's Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on school retention and completion of basic education among children in Kaduna State. The findings revealed that while the programme has positively influenced school attendance and motivation among pupils, it has not been entirely effective in ensuring long-term retention, as a significant number of respondents did not perceive a strong connection between the initiative and reduced dropout rates. Similarly, the impact of the programme on the completion of basic education remains limited, with many respondents indicating that other socio-economic challenges hinder school continuity. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the government enhance the programme by incorporating additional educational incentives and financial support mechanisms to address factors beyond school meals that affect retention and completion. Furthermore, improved monitoring and evaluation of the programme's implementation will be crucial in ensuring its effectiveness in achieving its intended educational outcomes.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. To enhance the impact of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on school retention, the government should complement the initiative with additional incentives such as educational materials, scholarships, and improved learning conditions to further encourage attendance. However, awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate parents and communities on the importance of education, addressing socio-economic factors that may contribute to dropout rates despite the availability of school meals.
- ii. To improve the completion rate of basic education, the government should integrate the school feeding programme with broader educational support initiatives, such as mentorship programs and conditional cash transfers for low-income families to reduce financial barriers to schooling. Furthermore, regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme should be conducted to identify gaps and ensure that the feeding initiative is effectively implemented in a way that maximizes its impact on school completion.

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