

Assessing Food Quality Delivery in the School Feeding Programme and Its Impacts on Enrolment: A Study of Some Public Basic Schools in Bawku Municipality of Ghana

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Abstract: School feeding has been an effective safety net that has prevented countries affected by economic challenges from adopting negative coping strategies. The study assessed the food quality of the Ghanaian School Feeding Programme in Bawku Municipality, in the Upper East Region. Some of the specific objectives were; to assess the wholesomeness of the foodstuffs used in the preparation of meals for the school pupils and also examining the impacts of the school feeding programme on the basic education in the Bawku Municipality. The study highlighted some of the challenges confronting caterers who are involved in the school feeding programme. A survey research design was employed to obtain the data from primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to 120 respondents in 10 randomly selected public primary six pupils and two caterers each from the selected schools in Bawku Municipality. The retrieved data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 and the results were presented in the form of tables and figures. The results showed that (70%) of the basic schools under the school feeding programme in Bawku Municipality enjoy quality food and this has led to an increased in pupils' enrolment, and class attendance. The major challenges were found to be the delay in releasing of funds to caterers. It was recommended that, the government of Ghana should provide the Municipal Assembly with resources to help monitor and evaluate the implementation of the program for improvement. Moreover, the municipal assembly should find a better storage facility for the schools under the GSFP to help keep the food safe for a longer period without introducing chemicals that has a longer effect on the food and harmful to pupils.

Keywords: Food Quality, School Feeding, Stakeholders, Caterers, Pupils, Bawku Municipality.

INTRODUCTION

Food is a principal product that plays important roles in the hospitality businesses Liu & Jang [1]. According to Bredahl [2] feeding quality includes the sensory, health, convenience and process dimensions. Consumers are clear about what kind of food quality they want, which has led to the growth of food industries as well as institution catering. Sulek & Hensley [3] pointed out that food quality as an ultimate component of a dining experience because his assumption is that people visit a food industry purposely for buying food. Thus, customers are satisfied if they get the food they want Andaleeb & Conway [4].

Wolfe *et al.*, [5] stated that a meal comprised of protein, fat, and sugar will prevent drops in blood

sugar for several hours, whereas, a meal of just starch and sugar will sustain a child for only about two hours. A meal that included food from several food groups was the best for a child who was expected to perform at his or her best in school, educationally and physically. Nsel *et al.* [6] asserted that particular attention should be given to the Nutritional and Academic Performance of the children in the school food programmes so that the meals given to them in their various schools will be able to supply them with the needed nutrient requirements which improve their academic performances.

Nutrients are not only essential for growth and development, but also provide young children with the energy to perform physical and metabolic functions. Nutrition also influences the efficiency of educational

programs, Kallman [7]. Adequate nutrition is therefore vital during the school-age years because nutrition and health influence a child's cognitive development. Nnakwe [8], Tineke [9], Oyefade [10] assessed the impact of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in 4 districts in Central Region, Ghana. He observed that the weekly meals consumed in the schools in the 4 districts consisted of the staple foods rice (9 out of 20 meals), beans or gari (3 out of 20 meals), yam or banku (twice of the 20 meals), and/or plantain (once alone, and once combined with beans). In addition, Fruits were only served as a dessert 3 times in Mfantseman district and meat was never included in the preparation of the school lunches. All stews, except for the groundnut soup, are made on the basis of oil (vegetable oil or palm oil), onion and tomatoes (fresh and/or tinned). When the stew is named e.g. garden egg-stew, this means a 4th ingredient has been added, namely garden eggs.

Education is a driving force for economic, social, and political development and prosperity. It creates avenues for people to reduce poverty, inequality and diseases, Adekunle & Ogbogu [11]. Nnakwe [8] asserted that education creates a dynamic workforce and well-informed citizen that is able to compete and participate in the global economy. Therefore, in the view of Nnakwe [8], the decision to send a child to school and to ensure his or her regular attendance to school is influenced by many factors. These factors include the perceived value of education, the availability of employment opportunities, the cost of schooling and the availability and quality of school facilities. According to Fumbar [12] food incentives offered to students in Osun State in Nigeria such as school meals compensate parents for direct educational costs. They further stated that the implementation of SFP is associated with increase in enrolment, particularly for girls. Oppong-Mensah [13], in his study on school feeding programme in Eastern Cape in South Africa indicated that school feeding program has actually increased school enrolment in the basic level of education and the performances levels of the school children.

One major success in the Ghana school feeding program has been an increase in school enrolment by 20.3% in the pilot schools as against 2.8% in the schools without the feeding program Bukari *et al.*, [14]. For instance, children between the ages of 6-11 years saw an increase from 69.2% in 2005/2006 academic year to 81.1% in 2006/2007 academic year at the primary school level. Enrolments for pilot schools increased by 16% as compared to schools without the feeding programs, while attendance also rose to 15% more than the control Akanbi [15]. Similarly, Espejo *et al.* [16] in their study of the GSFP in the Garu-Tempene District in the Upper East region of Ghana observed that the program has increased "gross enrolment rate by 24% among participating schools but decreased by 7% in non-participating schools".

School feeding programmes institute intercessions that have been established in many developed and developing nations to address the issue of poverty, encourage school enrolment and enhance pupils' performance. In developing countries, almost 60 million children go to school hungry every day and about 40% of them are from Africa, Fumbar [12]. Neeser [17] stressed that parents are encouraged to allow their wards to go to school instead of keeping them at home to work or to take care for siblings. Alhassan, & Alhassan [18] stated that school feeding, is a well-known programme that relieves hunger while supporting education, health and community improvement. Oduro-Ofori, & Adwoa-Yeboah [19] says children who are healthy learn better. Therefore, school feeding interventions have been shown to have improved children's health and nutrition, their learning potential and career choices in the future.

Ghana happened to be one of twelve (12) pilot countries invited to implement the school feeding programme. So far, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya and Mali has the programme implemented, Fumbar [12]. The overall goal of the School Feeding Programme in Ghana is to reduce hunger and malnutrition among school children and enhance the achievement of Universal Basic Education. There are no methodical studies about whether the countries who have implemented these school feeding programmes have been able to achieve their objectives. There are assumptions from researchers, programme initiators, sponsors and politicians on the perceived direct benefits to the beneficiaries of the school feeding programmes without tangible data on the claims that the programme has been able to achieve its objectives. The contribution of various school feeding programmes is to ensure enrolment, attendance, and learning outcomes. However, there is flimsy research on the food quality of the school feeding programmes in Ghana, especially, the northern part of Ghana. The researcher in this study intends to investigate the food quality of the Ghana school feeding program in Bawku municipality.

In spite of the successes that the school feeding programme has chalked since its implementation, it is faced with numerous challenges. Atta & Manu [20], affirmed that the government of Ghana has demonstrated greater commitment to funding the programme through the national budget to ensure continuity and stability of the program. However, the programme is at the edge of collapsing as the government is finding it difficult to raise funds to continue with the programme. The government is unable to release funds regularly to schools/caterers, Rowley [21]. Again, Malhotra [22] perceived that the Ghanaian school feeding programme for the past decades has so many challenges, which include insufficient funds to the caterers, funds not released in time for the caterers, funds passing through a delayed system before getting to the caterers, lack of proper

supervision and monitoring of the school caterers. Also, the School Feeding Programme in Ghana has been politicised by politicians which makes the work so difficult to the caterers and stakeholders who are responsible to monitor the programme are failing to supervise and monitor the program as expected.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to Saunders *et al.* [23] a research designed is the logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of a study. It serves as an action plan for conducting any research work. Miller and Brewer [24] also suggest that the research design is a framework for conducting business research. This generally falls into the following three categories: descriptive, explanatory and exploratory, Saunders *et al.* [25].

A case study method was used by employing quantitative instruments for data collection and analysis. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. It may involve an intensive investigation of a single unit or the examination of multiple variables over an extended period of time in an attempt to understand the influences of social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviour, Sinyolo [26]. A case study was seen to be the appropriate approach to study a single phenomenon, namely Assessing the Food Quality Delivery in the School Feeding Programme and its impact on enrolment in the selected basic schools in Bawku municipality.

Study Area - Bawku Municipality

The Bawku Municipal District is one of the thirteen (13) districts in the Upper East Region of Ghana, with Bawku as its capital. The capital is Bawku. The Kusasis are the indigenous inhabitants of the Bawku area. There are however large immigrant populations from other locations in northern and southern Ghana as well as from Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Togo, Niger and Nigeria. The district is characterized by agriculture, with tomatoes, soya beans and onions being amongst the main crops. The district contains the following towns and villages: Bawku, Pusiga, Denugu/Danvorga, KongoZorsi, Wuriyanga, Narango, Mognori (Gumbo) Widana, Yabrago, Missiga, Bugri-Bulpielse, Manga Basyonde,

BinduriNatinga, Kulugungu, Gozesi, and Bugri. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the population of the municipality is estimated at 217,791 which represent 20.8% of the total population of the region. By sex aggregation the male population constitutes 47.9% while the female population is 52%. The municipality is sparsely populated with a population density of 169 persons per sq km. Formal education in the Bawku Municipality is provided by both public and private sectors with the public sector dominating in the provision of educational facilities. There are educational institutions in the District ranging from KG (39), Primary (57), JHS (25), SHS (6), vocational/technical (3) to Tertiary (1).

Population of Study

Population of a research is the total number of all the individual(s) who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher. According to McMillan and Schumacher [27], a population is a full set of cases or elements from which a sample is taken which may comprise objects, animals, people or other units. All the participants selected from the Primary Schools in Bawku municipality were perceived to be potential and experienced in the school feeding programme. The participants selected for the study comprised of pupils and caterers from the Primary Schools.

Sample Size

The total number of pupils that formed the study sample was determined using the relation below:

$$n = \frac{z_{\alpha/2}^2 \times \sigma^2 (1 - \sigma)}{e^2}$$

Where e is the margin of error, $z_{\alpha/2}$ is the critical value of the standard normal distribution, σ is the population standard deviation and n is the desired sample size. Using a very small error margin of 0.05 with a standard deviation of 0.07 and at the 5% level of significance, the desired sample size for the study is estimated to be 100 pupils. Including two (2) caterers from each of the 10 selected primary schools, the total sample size for the study becomes 120. The number of pupils from each selected school was done using equal allocation as indicated in Table 1.

Table-1: Details of School

Name	Number of Respondents
Mognori R/C Primary School	10
Aminiya E/A Primary School	10
Gingande Primary School	10
Methodist Primary School Block “A”	10
Azhariya E/A Primary School	10
Watania E/A Primary School	10
Ansarul Islam Primary School	10
Mustaphiat E/A Primary School	10
Kpalwega Primary School	10
Daduri R/C Primary School	10
Total	100

Field Survey, 2017

Sampling Technique

A sample is a representation of a small and unique group of “rich informants” that would enable the study to understand a phenomenon in depth, McMillan and Schumacher [27]. The criteria for choosing such an information-rich sample were based on participants who were knowledgeable, informative and willing to take part in the study.

In this study the simple random sampling approach was used to select pupils from each of the selected schools whilst the purposive sampling technique was used to select the caterers. The simple random sample is a probability sampling technique which is based on randomisation, thereby given every participant an equal opportunity of being selected. Probability sampling as a method was considered to be useful for the study because the researcher was not interested in generalising the findings, except for getting an in-depth understanding of the observable facts, McMillan and Schumacher [27]. The use of

sampling provided an opportunity to explore, analyse and describe the perspectives and views on the topic under study, which is the assessment of the sensory food quality of the school feeding program in the Bawku municipality.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The main instrument of data collection used was the questionnaire for the sensory food quality analysis. In the research instrument respondents were allowed to indicate the food quality provided on the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

After completion of the data collection, the instrument was coded and the data were entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of respondents

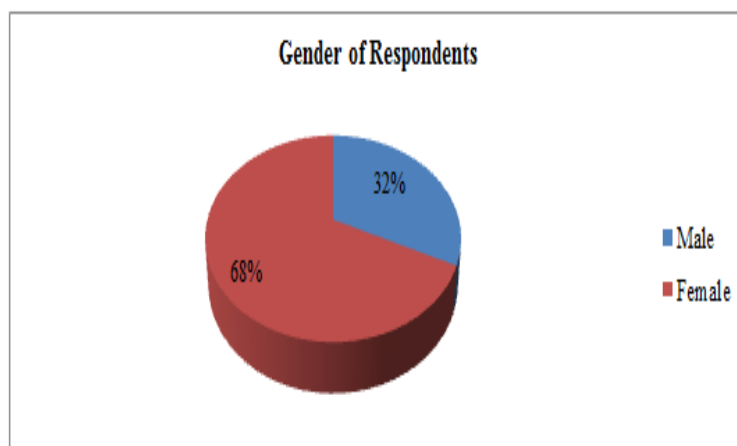


Fig-1: The gender of the respondents
Field Survey, 2017

The results in Figure 1 indicate that 32% of the respondents were male whilst 68% of the respondents were female pupils. This suggests that there were more females who took part in the questionnaire answering than males. However, since the type of responses

solicited through the questionnaire demanded objectivity, the gender orientations of the respondents did not affect the validity and reliability of the responses.

Table-2: Age of Respondents

Age (years)	Number of Respondents	Percent
11-15	96	96.0
16 +	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Field Survey, 2017

As shown in Table 2, out of the total number of 100 Primary six pupils sampled for the research, 96 respondents representing 96% fell between the age group of 11-15 years, 4 respondents accounting to 4% were 16 years and above. This finding is expected

because most primary six pupils in Ghana are normally between the ages of 11-15 years.

Findings on the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) in Bawku Municipality

Table-3: Daily Provision of Food for School Pupils

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	100	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	100	100.0

Field Survey, 2017

From the analysis in Table 3, all the respondents (100%) confirmed that meals given to them are being provided every day in their respective schools

because of the availability of ingredients for food preparation.

Table-4: Adequacy of Food Served to Pupil

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Enough	79	79.0
Not enough	21	21.0
Total	100	100.0

Field Survey, 2017

From Table 4, 79 respondents representing 79% said the food were enough while 21 respondents representing 21% also were of the view that the food given to them is inadequate. The result indicates that

majority (79%) of the respondents are satisfied with the GSFP because of the quantity they get in a day and this helps them to stay on campus up to the closing time.

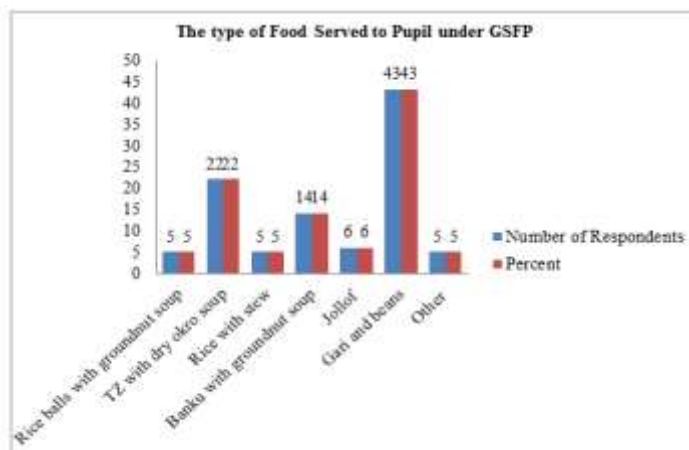


Fig-2: The type of food to pupil under the GSFP

Field Survey, 2017

The results in Figure 2 shows that gari and beans are mostly served at schools. This was evidenced by 43% of the respondents in the study. The second dominant food that the GSFP provide for the pupils in the Bawku Municipality is TZ with dry Okro as indicated by 22% of the pupils. Other types of foods that are equally served but a minor scale are rice balls with groundnut soup (5.0%); rice and stew (5.0%) and

Jollof (6.0%). However, the schools serve pupils with other types of foods (5.0%) that give the pupils some nutritional value. It can be deduced from the analysis that the pupils are given more protein than carbohydrate and the other food nutrients and that the GSFP patronises locally produced foods since majority of the populace in Bawku are predominantly farmers, producing beans and millet/maize.

Table-5: Appearance of Food and taste

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Very good	0	0.0
Good	48	48.0
Bad	52	52.0
Very bad	0	0.0
Total	100	100.0

Field Survey, 2017

From table 5, 48 respondents representing 48% said the appearance of the food was good, while 52 respondents representing 52% indicated it was bad. The respondents who indicated negatively about the appearance were of the view that, little cooking oil has

been used to prepare the meals which makes it look pale. They also stressed on the bad presentation of the food as well as the taste. This could be as a result of the amount and quality of ingredients used in the meal preparation.

Table-6: Texture and Aroma of Food/overall likeness

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Very good	0	0.0
Good	56	56.0
Bad	44	44.0
Very bad	0	0.0
Total	100	100.0
Overall likeness		
Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Very good	0	0.0
Good	52	52.0
Bad	46	46.0
Very bad	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Field Survey, 2017

Analysis from table 6 specifies that 44% said the texture and aroma of the food was good, while 44 respondents representing 56% indicated it was bad. However, no respondent gave a very good or very bad perception about the texture of the food served to them. This confirmed the comment passed by Adisa Morro, a class 6 pupil that caterers do not report to work on time and as such, forced themselves to complete the food on

time. This lateness could attribute to the deficiencies in their meal preparations.

Responses from Caterers involved in the Ghana School Feeding Programme

This section helped in getting some clear cut responses which aided the researcher to supplement and compare the opinions of the Caterers with that of the pupils about the study objectives. All the 20 questionnaires administered were retrieved.

Table-7: Provision of Balance Meals

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	48	60.0
No	0	0
Not at all times	40	40
Total	100	100.0

Regarding whether the children have been giving balanced meals, 70% of the respondents indicated they give balanced meals to the children, while 30% were of the view pupils were not provided balanced diet most of the times. A closed interview with the children revealed that they had knowledge on a

balanced diet; which should contain all the essential food elements in their right proportions. However, they do take lunch sometimes without proteins and vegetables due to shortage of funds and therefore gives what is available to the school pupil.

Table-8: Preparation of meals using wholesome ingredients

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	70	70.0
No	0	0.0
Not at all times	30	30
Total	100	100.0

A question was asked to ascertain the level of wholesomeness of ingredients involved in the preparation of the school children meals. Out of the total number of respondents who answered the questionnaire, 70% were of the view that the ingredients are wholesome while the remaining 30% had different views about the statement. Respondents further explained that, their foodstuffs are procured in large quantities to cover a specific duration in their respective schools but due to inadequate storage space

or facility, some of the ingredients are infected with weevils and insects attack which in the end, have to be used quickly to minimise wastage and losses.

Improvement in School Attendance and enrolment

The researcher further tried to find out whether the GSFP had an impact on improving school attendance of pupils. The finding is presented in Table 9.

Table-9: Improvement in School Attendance and enrolment

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Strongly Agree	11	55.0
Agree	8	40.0
Neutral	1	5.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	20	100.0
Improvement in Academic Performance		
Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Strongly Agree	7	35.0
Agree	6	30.0
Neutral	3	15.0
Disagree	3	15.0
Strongly Disagree	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Field Survey, 2017

Analysis from Table 9 revealed that majority 95% of the respondents were of the view that the GSFP has an impact on school attendance and enrolment because when the school feeding programme was not introduced, some of the pupils were truant and the enrolment level was also low but when the school feeding programme was introduced in the municipality, there has been an increase in enrolments while 5% of the respondents were neutral. This can be said that, Ghana school Feeding Programme has become a great benefit to the schools in the Bawku Municipality since its inception.

performance. 15% of the respondents were neutral, while 25% of the respondents disagreed to the statement.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has revealed that the Ghana School Feeding Programme is a critical intervention which has tremendous education benefits. It has improved the enrolment and attendance of basic school pupils in Bawku municipality in the Upper East region. It was however found that delays in release of funds for cooks, inadequate quantity and quality of food provided to pupils, and delays in cooking and dishing of food were the main challenges crippling the programme in Bawku municipality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made;

- School Management Committees should institute an internal monitoring and inspection team to monitor the meal preparations as well as the ingredients to ascertain its wholesomeness before usage.
- The Government of Ghana should release funds on time and the right amount should be given to the prospective Caterers to enable them procure foodstuffs for the pupils.
- The Municipal Assembly should find a better storage facility for the schools under the GSFP to help keep the food safe for a longer period without introducing chemicals that has a longer effect on the food and harmful to pupils
- There is the need for strong commitment on the part of government, community leaders, caterers, and other stakeholders to ensure that food is purchased from local farmers instead of purchasing imported food to ensure regular income for farmers to continue production to sustain the program.
- The government of Ghana should provide the Municipal Assembly with resources to help monitor and evaluate the implementation of the program for improvement.

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