

IMPACT OF O'MEAL SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILESHA EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the impact of O'MEAL School Feeding Programme on Academic Performance. A casual comparative research design was used for the study. Population of the study consisted of all the pupil and teachers of the public primary schools in Ilesa East Local Government, Osun state. Multi-stage sampling technique consisted of accidental and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 175 teachers and to pick class 3 from the two selected schools for the study. Primary data of students' cumulative record folder was used for data collection and Researcher-designed questionnaire which was validated and tested for reliability was used. Percentages were used to compare pre and post feeding intervention by O'MEAL while inferential statistics of one sample t-test was used for testing hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The findings showed that, O'MEAL school feeding programme had impact on pupils' academic performance in primary schools of Ilesa East Local Government. There is a significant impact of O'MEAL school feeding programme on pupils' academic performance in Ilesa East Local Government (p value $0.000 < \text{sig. value of } 0.05$). Based on the finding of this study, it was concluded that there is an impact of O'MEAL school feeding programme on pupils' academic performance. Based on the conclusion, it was recommended that O'MEAL school feeding programme should be practiced in primary schools so as to increase students learning performances.

Keywords: O'Meal, school feeding, academic performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement which is synonymously to academic performance refers to the extent to which students have achieve mastery of the objectives of the subjects they are exposed to in the schools. According to Ward, Stocker and Murray-Ward (2006) academic performance refers to the outcome of education; the extent to which the student, teacher or institution have achieved their educational goals. Similarly, Academic performance according to the Cambridge University Reporter (2003) is frequently defined in terms of examination performance. Academic performance refers to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies (Scott's, 2012).

There are many factors that contribute to academic performance, one of them is proper nutrition. Nutrition plays a role in academic performance. Nutrition also indirectly impacts school performance. Poor nutrition can leave students' susceptible to illness or lead to headaches and stomachaches, resulting in school absences (Brown, Beardslee, & Prothrow-Stith, 2008). Access to nutrition that incorporates protein, carbohydrates, and glucose has been shown to improve students' cognition, concentration, and energy levels.

According to Garram (2010) school feeding contributes to the education and well-being of children. A hungry child does not grow, cannot learn as well and faces many health risks in the future. School feeding programme is an organized programme that alleviates hunger while supporting education, health and community development (WFP, 2007). School feeding programmes are defined as interventions that deliver a meal or snack to children in the school setting, with the intent of improving attendance, enrolment, nutritional status and learning outcomes. In line with this, the Federal Government of Nigeria initiated the Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme (HGSFHP) in conjunction with the United Nation Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in order to address the gaps in basic education.

It must be noted that Provision of proper nutrition and stimulation of a child's sense are vital components of children in the sense that they enhance the development and organization of the brain. Many studies on nutrition have shown that under nutrition in children stunts their growth and mental development. Hence, the relationship between nutrition and academic performance cannot be over emphasized (Alabi, 2003).

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Nutritional and health status are powerful influence on a child's learning and how a child performs in school. Children who lack certain nutrients in their diet do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children. Children with cognitive and sensory impairments naturally perform less and are more likely to repeat classes. The irregular school attendance of malnourished and unhealthy children is being adjudged to be one of the key factors for poor performance (Uduku, 2011).

Huge investment had been over the past few years placed on feeding school children at least one meal a day in the state of Osun. The same trend is moving across states of the federation, most recently Imo State and the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme platform on Twitter was bold enough to ask the public to inform them through the very many social media platforms if any school exist without school children being fed. This shows the huge amount of resources the government is ready to spend to ensure the sustenance of the programme. Currently more 23 states of the federation are feeding kids in school.

Appropriate nutrition no doubt is one of the basic human need that should be primarily met by individuals according to Abraham Maslow's theory. Adequate and sufficient healthy intake of food is essential to brain function and helps in retention. Food has been acknowledged as life and a power in activating people's life as well as supporting various aspects of child development and that is depended upon correct amount and quality.

O'MEAL School Feeding Programme has been one of the project intervention of nutritional programmes created by Osun state Government in conjunction with the Federal Government to help schools at elementary level to yield better educational outcomes. It is created to establish positive learning result and to contribute to the better academic performance by regular provision of meals and highly nutritious diets for the pupils. It is seen to help the pupils to maximize their performances while in school and help them to achieve better in all round development.

As at today, the federal government is feeding 8.5 million children across the country. Based on the above assertions, the researcher wanted to evaluate the significant impact of Osun State school feeding program known (O'MEAL) on pupils' academic performance in primary schools of Ilesa East Local Government, Osun State.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was casual-comparative. It is a non-experimental research design which pre-existing groups are compared to see whether the independent variable has caused a change in a dependent variable. The population used for the study consists of two categories: the teacher's population which is three hundred and twenty-two and the pupil's population of elementary schools in Ilesa East Local Government, Osun State.

2.2 Sample and Sampling

Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study consisting of purposive and accidental sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique was used to arrive at picking two primary schools. The name of the primary schools selected for primary data based on class three school records with year range of 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2015/16, 2016/17 academic session were (i) Local Authority Elementary Government School (ii) Methodist Elementary Government School. Accidental sampling technique was also used to arrive at one hundred and seventy-five sample from the teacher's population (322) for the secondary data. Accidental sampling technique was used for administering the questionnaires to the 175 respondents from the population around the primary schools whereby only those who are seen in the schools at that moment will be used as the respondents during the administration of instrument. According to Research Advisor (2006), for a population of three hundred and twenty-two (322), a sample size of one hundred and sixty-nine was appropriate at 5 percent level of precision and 95 percent confidence level for the teacher's population. However, the researcher decided to use a sample of one hundred and seventy-five (175) to cover more of the population to yield effective outcomes.

2.3 Tools for the Study

The researcher developed structured questionnaire for the study. The questionnaire consists of two sections, section A and B. Section A consists of the demographic data and was used to obtained information of the respondents, which includes age, gender, religion, position hold in school and name of school. The

questionnaire contained statements on Impact of O’MEAL School Feeding Programme on Pupil’s Academic Performance in Ilesa East Local Government, Osun State. Section B contained items assessing the impact of O’MEAL School Feeding Programme on academic performance based on the improvement, their mental ability, their retention span, failure rate and increase in academic performance. The researcher also developed two different column tables for the school records used for primary data in research instrumentation to obtain information on the impact of the O’MEAL SFP on the academic performance two years before O’MEAL SFP started and two years after the programme commencement.

2.4 Data Collection

The researcher proceeded to the field to administer 175 questionnaires to the respondents (school teachers). The sampled schools were informed about the purpose of gathering the data. The research instruments already made were used to collect the primary prepared template to generate data from cumulative record folder, specifically class 3 in two different schools. The information for the school records were also obtained to the satisfaction of the researcher through the cumulative record folders of the pupils in primary three in Methodist Elementary Government School and Local Authority Elementary Schools of Ilesa East Local Government of Osun State.

2.5 Data Analysis

The method of data analysis used to analyze the two data gotten from the study were parametric and non-parametric statistics. Descriptive statistics of mean score was used to analyze the information collected from the primary data (cumulative record folders of pupils) which was used to answer the research question. Parametric statistics of one sample t-test was used to analyze the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0.

3. RESULTS

The impact of O’MEAL school feeding on pupils’ academic performance in primary schools of Ilesa East Local Government is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Class average academic performance score

O’MEAL school feeding programme	Years/session	Class	Class average academic performance
Before	2010-2011	3	52.79%
	2011-2012	3	58.50%
After	2015-2016	3	76.67%
	2016-2017	3	80.24%

Table 1 revealed that the average class academic performance before the establishment of O’MEAL school feeding programme within the two years of academic session were 52.79% and 58.5% respectively while the average academic performance of 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 session increased after the administration of the school feeding programme with 76.67% and 80.24%. This shows that O’MEAL school feeding programme has significant impact on pupils’ academic performance in primary schools of Ilesa East Local Government.

Further, the data collected from the study was analyzed using one sample t-test statistics as perceived by the school stakeholders.

Table 2: t-test analysis of O’MEAL SFP and pupils’ academic performance

Variable	N	Mean	t	df	p value/sig.
O’MEAL and Academic performance	175	15.10	110.56	174	0.000

@ 0.05 alpha level

Table 2 shows; the *p* value: 0.000 is lesser than the significant value (0.05) with the degree of freedom of 174 at 0.05 alpha level so it is found that significant difference existed. This implies that O’MEAL feeding programme has significant impact on pupils’ academic performance in primary schools of Ilesa East Local Government.

4. DISCUSSION

It is found that O’MEAL school feeding programme have significant impact on pupils’ academic performance in primary schools of Ilesa East Local Government. This implies that O’MEAL SFP has significant impact on academic performance. This finding goes with Yunusa (2012) who noted that students in School Feeding Programmes have the potential for improving their performance because it enables them to attend school regularly and studied more effectively. Also, it is opined by Uduku (2011) that SFPs would best improve the performance of pupils when coupled with adequate learning materials, physical facilities and teacher motivation.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that O’MEAL feeding programme has significant impact on pupils’ academic performance in primary schools of Ilesa East Local Government. Furthermore, it is recommended that O’MEAL school feeding programme should be implemented in schools where the programme is currently not ongoing especially elementary schools to enhance the effectiveness of learning process and yielding good educational outcomes. Since malnutrition affects any school-aged children below 6yrs based on the physical and cognitive development as child continues growing in life. It is therefore significant that O’MEAL school feeding programme should be administered effectively in schools.

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