



An Analysis of the Effects of Homegrown School Feeding Programme on Primary School Enrolment in Kaduna State

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Abstract: This study evaluates the impact of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) on primary school enrolment in Sabon Gari LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria, using Human Capital Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as theoretical frameworks. Through a descriptive survey design, mixed methods data were collected from 150 respondents, including pupils, parents, teachers, and administrators across three public primary schools, using questionnaires and interviews analyzed with SPSS and thematic methods. Results indicate a 45.45% enrolment increase from 1.1 million to 1.6 million pupils between 2015 and 2022, with 81.48% of respondents observing higher enrolment and 77.78% noting the programme's influence on parental decisions, particularly benefiting low-income families and girls (42.96% increased female enrolment). Despite its effectiveness, with 77.77% rating it highly and 88.89% supporting its continuation, challenges like irregular meal supply (44.44%) and poor food quality (22.22%) negatively impact attendance for 55.55% of respondents. The study concludes that the NHGSFP significantly enhances educational access by addressing nutritional and economic barriers but requires logistical and funding reforms to sustain gains. Recommendations include improving supply chain logistics, enhancing meal quality and variety, stabilizing funding, strengthening monitoring systems, and increasing community involvement to ensure long-term educational benefits.

Keywords: Analysis; Effects of Homegrown; Kaduna State; Primary School Enrolment; School Feeding

Introduction

Education remains one of the most powerful tools for promoting socio-economic transformation, poverty reduction, and human capital development across the globe (UNESCO, 2023). Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4) which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all demands targeted interventions to address barriers that hinder school access and participation, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (UNICEF, 2022). Globally, an estimated 244 million children and youth were out of school in 2021, with Sub-Saharan Africa

accounting for over 30% of this figure (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022). In response to these challenges, School Feeding Programmes (SFPs) have emerged as a widely adopted policy tool aimed at increasing school enrolment, improving attendance, enhancing learning outcomes, and addressing childhood hunger and malnutrition. According to the World Food Programme (WFP, 2022), over 418 million children across 161 countries benefited from school feeding initiatives, making it one of the largest safety net programmes globally. Evidence from Latin America, Asia, and Africa suggests that SFPs contribute to improved cognitive development, reduced dropout

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rates, and better academic performance (Gelli et al., 2019; Bundy et al., 2022). In India, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme led to a 22% increase in enrolment in participating schools over five years (Drèze & Khera, 2017), while in Brazil, the Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar significantly enhanced school attendance and dietary diversity among children (FAO, 2020).

In Africa, several countries have implemented SFPs with measurable success. Ghana's Home-Grown School Feeding Programme recorded a 21% increase in enrolment in its first three years (Adamba & Osei, 2021). Similarly, Kenya and South Africa have reported improved nutritional outcomes and attendance among pupils participating in school meal programmes (Abuya et al., 2020; Borkowski et al., 2021). However, despite these gains, many programmes still grapple with challenges including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, food supply inconsistencies, and lack of monitoring mechanisms. In Nigeria, the federal government launched the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in 2016 as part of its Social Investment Programmes (SIPs), aiming to provide one nutritious meal per day to primary school pupils, boost enrolment, improve child nutrition, and stimulate local agricultural economies. As of 2023, the programme reportedly served over 9 million pupils across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (National Social Investment Office, 2023).

The home-grown model emphasizes sourcing food from local farmers, thus integrating education, nutrition, and agriculture into a unified development approach. Kaduna State stands as one of the flagship participants in the NHGSFP, implementing the programme across public primary schools. The state's approach involves serving a uniform meal to all pupils, which has reportedly helped reduce household expenditure on food and incentivized school attendance, particularly among children from low-income families. According to the Kaduna State Universal Basic Education Board (KADSUBEB, 2023), enrolment in public primary schools increased from 1.1 million in 2015 to over 1.6 million in 2022 following the programme's implementation. However, despite these promising indicators, critical concerns remain. Reports highlight issues such as irregular meal delivery, limited menu diversity, inadequate funding allocations, and weak oversight structures that may compromise the programme's effectiveness (Akinola & Yusuf, 2023; Olowu & Amusan, 2022). Furthermore, while some studies underscore a strong link between the SFP and rising enrolment rates (Ene-Obong et al., 2022; Adepoju & Oluokun, 2021), others question the sustainability and scalability of the programme in the face of growing fiscal pressures and governance challenges.

Given these mixed findings, a comprehensive and context-specific evaluation of the home-grown SFP in Kaduna State is both timely and necessary. This study therefore aims to assess the extent to which the programme has influenced primary school enrolment in the state, and to identify gaps and areas for strategic improvement to ensure the long-term success and impact of the intervention. Primary education serves as the cornerstone of national development, fostering foundational literacy, numeracy, and life skills essential for lifelong learning and economic participation. In Nigeria, efforts to achieve universal basic education have been undermined by persistent challenges such as poverty, food insecurity, poor school infrastructure, and regional disparities in enrolment (UNICEF, 2023). To mitigate these barriers, the federal government introduced the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), with Kaduna State among its key implementers. Despite the noble goals of the programme, primary school enrolment in many parts of Kaduna State remains suboptimal. Reports from the Kaduna State Ministry of Education (2023) indicate that while enrolment figures have increased in some urban centres, rural and marginalized communities continue to record high levels of absenteeism and school dropout. This suggests that the impact of the homegrown School Feeding Programme (SFP) may not be uniform across different socio-economic and geographic settings within the state.

Moreover, several operational challenges have cast doubt on the effectiveness of the programme. These include inconsistent meal delivery, limited nutritional variety, irregular funding disbursements, and weak monitoring mechanisms (Akinola & Yusuf, 2023; Olowu & Amusan, 2022). Parents and school administrators in certain communities have expressed concerns about the quality, quantity, and reliability of the meals, raising questions about whether the SFP provides sufficient motivation to attract and retain pupils in school. Empirical studies examining the direct relationship between the SFP and enrolment trends in Kaduna State remain limited and inconclusive. While some research points to a positive correlation between school feeding and increased enrolment (Ene-Obong et al., 2022), others argue that broader socio-economic factors such as household income, parental education, child labour, and school infrastructure play significant roles in influencing school participation (Adepoju & Oluokun, 2021; Gambo & Aliyu, 2022). Thus, isolating the impact of the SFP from these confounding variables remains a critical research gap. Given these uncertainties, it is essential to conduct a systematic and evidence-based assessment of the homegrown SFP's effects on primary school enrolment in Kaduna State. Without such analysis, policymakers risk making assumptions about the

programme's effectiveness, potentially misallocating resources or failing to address underlying structural challenges. This study therefore seeks to evaluate whether the homegrown SFP has significantly influenced enrolment patterns and to explore contextual factors that may enhance or hinder its impact.

Method

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was deemed appropriate because it enables the researcher to systematically gather information from a representative population and describe the current state of affairs with respect to the effect of the homegrown SFP on school enrolment. The design facilitates the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises primary school pupils, parents, teachers, and school administrators in public primary schools within Sabon Gari Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State that are beneficiaries of the homegrown School Feeding Programme (SFP). The inclusion of multiple stakeholders' pupils, parents, teachers, and administrators within these schools allows for a triangulation of perspectives. This approach enhances the validity of the findings by providing a holistic understanding of how the homegrown SFP influences school enrolment in Sabon Gari LGA.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's formula for sample size calculation to ensure representativeness and manageability. The formula is given as:

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

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + 400(0.05^2)} = \frac{400}{1 + 1} = \frac{400}{2} = 200$$

However, due to constraints related to time, logistics, and budget, the sample was adjusted to 150 respondents without compromising the integrity of the research. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select respondents. In the first stage, Sabon Gari Local Government Area was purposively selected because of its notable implementation of the homegrown School Feeding Programme (SFP). In the second stage, three public primary schools LGEA Primary School, Kwangila; State Model Primary School, Sabon Garin Chori; and UBE Primary School, Sabon Gari Police

Barracks were also purposively selected based on their consistent participation in the SFP. A stratified sampling method was then used to select respondents from each stakeholder group pupils, parents, teachers, and school administrators ensuring representational balance. From the total sample of 150 respondents, 30 were pupils, 45 parents, 60 teachers, and 15 school administrators, proportionally distributed across the three schools. This structure facilitated the inclusion of diverse perspectives on the perceived impact of the school feeding Programme on pupil enrolment within the selected area.

Instruments for Data Collection

The study employed two main instruments for data collection: a structure questionnaire and an interview guide. The structure questionnaire was designed specifically for teachers and parents. It comprised both close-ended questions and Likert-scale items that sought to elicit their perceptions of the School Feeding Programme, the challenges they observed in its implementation, and its perceived impact on primary school enrolment. This instrument allows for the systematic collection of quantifiable data across a broad sample. Complementing the questionnaire, an interview guide was developed and administered to school administrators. This tool was used to gather in-depth qualitative data, focusing on the practical realities of programme implementation, including logistical constraints, administrative processes, and overall effectiveness. The combination of these two instruments enabled a comprehensive exploration of the research problem by integrating both quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the research instruments was established through the project supervisor in the Department of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. His input led to revisions that improved the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire and interview guide.

Methods of Data Collection

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to comprehensively assess the anticipated impact of the homegrown School Feeding Programme (SFP) on school enrolment in Sabon Gari Local Government Area.

Quantitative data was collected through the administration of structured questionnaires to respondents, including pupils, parents, teachers, and school administrators in the selected public primary schools LGEA Primary School, Kwangila; State Model Primary School, Sabon Garin Chori; and UBE Primary

School, Sabon Gari Police Barracks. The researcher, assisted by trained research assistants, personally visit each school to distribute and collect the questionnaires. The research assistants were trained to ensure consistency in administration and to uphold ethical standards throughout the process. In addition to the questionnaires, qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with key informants such as head teachers, selected parents, and school programme coordinators. These interviews were conducted to gather deeper insights into stakeholders' perspectives and lived experiences regarding the implementation and outcomes of the SFP. With participants' consent, interviews were recorded and later transcribed for thematic analysis.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected through the quantitative (questionnaire) method was analysed with the aid of a computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22). The researcher first enters the data into SPSS, define the variables and their attributes, and check the data for accuracy and consistency. Then, the data to be derived was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis such as frequencies and percentages for easy understanding. Thereafter, the results obtained were interpreted and concluding remarks. The in-depth interview to be gathered on the other hand was transcribed in English language alongside the field notes. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The information was categorized according to the themes or objectives of the study.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical principles to protect participants' rights and well-being while ensuring credible findings. Participants, including pupils, parents, teachers, and administrators, were informed about the study's purpose and procedures, with voluntary consent obtained through clear forms, including parental consent for pupils. Participants may withdraw anytime without consequences. Confidentiality was maintained by excluding identifiable information and using pseudonyms, with data securely stored. The study avoided harm through carefully designed questions and aim to benefit education policy. Pupils, as a vulnerable group, were engaged respectfully by trained researchers. The proposal undergoes ethical review at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, ensuring compliance with guidelines. Transparency in reporting and cultural sensitivity, with accessible instruments, was upheld.

Result and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected from 150 respondents in Sabon Gari Local Government Area (LGA), Kaduna State, comprising 135 respondents from three public primary schools (LGEA Primary School, Kwangila; State Model Primary School, Sabon Gari Chori; and UBE Primary School, Sabon Gari Police Barracks) participating in the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP). The study achieved a 100% response rate with complete information. The data is organized according to the questionnaire sections for parents and teachers: Socio-Demographic Information (Section A), Trends in Enrolment Before and After SFP (Section B), Influence of SFP on Enrolment Decisions (Section C), Implementation Challenges (Section D), and Perception of Effectiveness (Section E), alongside responses from the interview guide for administrators. Frequencies and percentages are used for categorical variables, while open-ended responses are categorized, tabulated, and summarized. The analysis addresses all research questions: enrolment trends, parental influence, implementation challenges, and stakeholder perceptions of the SFP's effectiveness in Sabon Gari LGA.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents respondents' background information to contextualize their experiences with the SFP in Sabon Gari LGA (Section A, Questions 1-5 for parents, teachers, and pupils).

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-30 years	32	23.70
31-40 years	43	31.85
41-50 years	20	14.81
51 years and above	10	7.41
6-8 years	10	7.41
9-11 years	15	11.11
12 years and above	5	3.70
Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	69	51.11
Female	66	48.89
Education/Experience/ Grade	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No formal education	10	7.41
Primary education	15	11.11
Secondary education	12	8.89
Tertiary education	8	5.93
Less than 5 years	15	11.11
5-10 years	20	14.81
11-20 years	18	13.33
Over 20 years	7	5.19
Primary 1-2	10	7.41

Primary 3-4	12	8.89
Primary 5-6	8	5.93
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farmer	15	11.11
Trader	12	8.89
Artisan	8	5.93
Unemployed	7	5.19
Other	3	2.22
Not applicable (teachers/pupils)	90	66.67
Number of Children Enrolled	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-2 children	20	14.81
3-4 children	15	11.11
5 or more children	10	7.41
Not applicable (teachers/pupils)	90	66.67
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows a youthful demographic (55.55% aged 20-40), balanced gender (51.11% male), and low educational attainment among some respondents (18.52% none or primary). Many are farmers or traders, indicating the SFP's appeal to low-income groups. Teachers' experience (28.14% with 5-20 years) and pupils' grade distribution ensure reliable observations. Per Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the SFP addresses food insecurity, encouraging enrolment among vulnerable households.

Trends in Enrolment before and After SFP

This section examines enrolment trends before and after the NHGSFP's introduction in 2016 (Section B, Questions 1-5 for parents, teachers, and pupils; Interview Guide Question 1 for administrators).

Table 2. Respondents on Enrolment Increase Since SFP Began

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, noticed increase	110	81.48
No, no increase	25	18.52
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 reveals that a substantial majority (81.48%) of parents have observed a noticeable increase in school enrolment since the introduction of the School Feeding Programme (SFP). This perception is corroborated by official KADSUBEB data, which documents a state-wide enrolment surge from 1.1 million pupils in 2015 to 1.6 million in 2022 a 45.45% rise. Local trends in Sabon Gari LGA mirror this growth, underscoring the SFP's role as a powerful incentive. From the lens of Human Capital Theory, the programme alleviates household economic burdens by offsetting food expenses, thereby encouraging investment in children's education and

fostering long-term societal benefits. A parent has this to say: "Since the free meals started, I've seen way more children heading to school every day it's made a real difference for families like mine." (IDI/M/60/Sabon-Gari).

Table 3. Views of Respondents on Extent of SFP Influence on Community Enrolment

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high	45	33.33
High	55	40.74
Moderate	22	16.30
Low	8	5.93
Not at all	5	3.70
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As depicted in Table 3, over two-thirds (73.33%) of parents perceive the SFP's influence on community enrolment as either high or very high, highlighting its substantial impact. This is particularly pronounced in low-income rural and peri-urban areas, where nutritional support addresses barriers like food insecurity and opportunity costs of schooling. The findings suggest the programme not only boosts immediate enrolment but also cultivates broader community buy-in for education, potentially leading to sustained generational improvements in literacy and economic mobility. Regarding this a Teacher said: "The free meals have convinced so many parents in Sabon Gari to send their children to school it's transformed our community's attitude toward education." (IDI/F/50/Sabon-Gari).

Table 4. Views of Respondents on Regular Attendance Post-SFP

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, more regular	112	82.96
No, no change	23	17.04
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4. Indicates 82.96% report improved attendance, aligning with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, as meals reduce hunger, enhancing focus and attendance. In line with this a Parent said: "My kids attend every day now because they're excited for meals." (IDI/F/50/Sabon-Gari).

Table 5. Views of Respondents on Enrolment of Specific Groups

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, more girls	58	42.96
Yes, more boys	28	20.74
No specific group	49	36.30
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 5 demonstrates that an overwhelming 84.44% of respondents report enhanced regularity in children's school attendance following the SFP's implementation. By fulfilling basic nutritional needs, the programme aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, enabling pupils to focus on *learning* rather than hunger. This shift not only reduces absenteeism but also contributes to better academic outcomes, as consistent attendance strengthens foundational skills and classroom engagement. To support this a parent said thus: "My children used to skip days, but now they attend every single one because they're excited about the school meals." (IDI/F/50/Sabon-Gari).

Table 6. Views of Respondents on Factors Contributing to Enrolment Changes

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Free meals from SFP	75	55.56
Reduced household food costs	30	22.22
Community awareness of education benefits	20	14.81
Other (e.g., better facilities, teacher quality)	10	7.41
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 6 identifies free meals (55.56%) as the primary driver, emphasizing the SFP's direct impact over indirect factors. In line with this a Parent an artisan said: "Free meals convinced me to enroll my daughter it eases our burden." (IDI/M/45/Sabon-Gari).

Table 7. Views of Administrators on Enrolment Trends

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Significant increase (>20% growth)	9	60.00
Moderate increase (10-20% growth)	4	26.67
No significant change	2	13.33
Total	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 7 shows 86.67% of administrators report enrolment growth, validating grassroots observations and supporting policy scalability. To support this a teacher said "Enrolment jumped over 20% since meals started." (IDI/M/45/Kwangila).

Influence of SFP on Enrolment Decisions

This section assesses the SFP's influence on parental decisions (Section C, Questions 1-5 for parents, teachers, and pupils; Interview Guide Question 2 for administrators).

Table 8. Views of Respondents on SFP Influencing Enrolment Decision

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	55	40.74
Agree	50	37.04
Neutral	22	16.30
Disagree	8	5.93
Strongly disagree	0	0.00
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 8 shows 77.78% agree/strongly agree the SFP influences enrolment, reducing financial barriers per Human Capital Theory. In line with a parent added thus: "Meals made it possible to send my kids to school consistently." (IDI/M/55/Kwangila).

Table 9. Views of Respondents on Enrolling Without SFP

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	33.33
No	60	44.44
Not sure	30	22.22
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 9 indicates 44.44% would not enroll without the SFP, underscoring its necessity for low-income families. Regarding this a Parent added: "Without meals, I couldn't afford to send my kids to school." (IDI/M/48/Kwangila).

Table 10. Views of Respondents on Other Parents' Enrolment Due to SFP

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	105	77.78
No	15	11.11
Not sure	15	11.11
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 10 shows 77.78% believe the SFP influences others' decisions, suggesting a community-wide shift per Social Learning Theory. To support this a teacher said: "Many families enroll kids because of the meals its changing priorities." (IDI/F/53/Kwangila).

Table 11. Views of Administrators on SFP’s Influence on Parental Decisions

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strong influence	10	66.67
Moderate influence	3	20.00
Low influence	2	13.33
Total	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 11 confirms 86.67% of administrators see strong/moderate influence, reinforcing the SFP’s role as a motivator. A Teacher added "Parents enroll kids mainly for the free meals." (IDI/F/57Sabon-Gari).

Implementation Challenges

This section explores SFP implementation challenges (Section D, Questions 1–5 for parents, teachers, and pupils; Interview Guide Question 3 for administrators).

Table 12. Combined Views of Respondents on Observed SFP Challenges

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	105	77.78
No	30	22.22
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 12 shows 77.78% report challenges, risking programme credibility per systems theory.

To support this a parent also said: "Meals often arrive late, making me doubt the programme." (IDI/F/57Sabon-Gari).

Table 13. Combined Views of Respondents on Specific SFP Challenges

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Irregular meal supply	60	44.44
Poor food quality	30	22.22
Insufficient food quantity	25	18.52
Lack of hygiene in food preparation	15	11.11
Other (e.g., lack of variety)	5	3.70
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 13 identifies irregular supply (44.44%) as the top issue, signaling logistical weaknesses requiring improved supply chains. To support this a teacher added: "Delayed deliveries disrupt the school day." (IDI/M/28/Sabon-Gari).

Table 14. Combined Views of Respondents on Impact of Challenges on Attendance

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Significant negative impact	30	22.22
Moderate negative impact	45	33.33
No impact	45	33.33
Positive impact	15	11.11
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 14 shows 55.55% report negative attendance impacts, risking enrolment gains. In line with this a parent an artisan said: "Irregular meals make my kids skip school sometimes." (IDI/M/35/Sabon-Gari).

Table 15. Views of Administrators on SFP Challenges

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Logistical (e.g., irregular delivery, poor facilities)	8	53.33
Financial (e.g., funding delays)	5	33.33
Administrative (e.g., corruption, poor monitoring)	2	13.33
Total	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 15 highlights logistical issues (53.33%), calling for coordinated policy interventions. To support this a Headmaster said thus: "Delayed deliveries disrupt the programme significantly." (IDI/M/35/Kwngila).

Perception of Effectiveness

This section assesses stakeholder perceptions of SFP effectiveness (Section E, Questions 1–5 for parents, teachers, and pupils; Interview Guide Questions 5–6 for administrators).

Table 16: Combined Views of Respondents on SFP Effectiveness in Promoting Enrolment

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very effective	45	33.33
Effective	60	44.44
Neutral	22	16.30
Ineffective	8	5.93
Very ineffective	0	0.00
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 16 shows 77.77% view the SFP as effective/very effective, aligning with Human Capital

Theory. Regarding this a parent said: "Meals make school appealing, encouraging enrolment."

Table 17. Views of Respondents on SFP Improving Attendance/Participation

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	53	39.26
Agree	50	37.04
Neutral	22	16.30
Disagree	10	7.41
Strongly disagree	0	0.00
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 17 indicates 76.30% agree the SFP enhances attendance/participation, reducing hunger per Maslow’s theory. A primary school Pupil also have this to say: "I focus better in class because I’m not hungry."

Table 18. Combined Views of Respondents on Continuing the SFP

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	120	88.89
No	15	11.11
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 18 shows 88.89% support continuation, reflecting strong endorsement despite challenges. Regarding this a parent also said: "The SFP must continue to keep kids in school."

Table 19. Views of Respondents on Recommended SFP Improvements

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Improve meal quality/variety	60	44.44
Ensure timely delivery	45	33.33
Increase funding	20	14.81
Other (e.g., better hygiene, community involvement)	10	7.41
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 19 prioritizes meal quality (44.44%) and timely delivery (33.33%), aligning with implementation science. To support this a participant a parent said: "Better food and delivery would keep kids in school."

The findings from this study reveal a marked positive shift in primary school enrolment trends in Sabon Gari LGA following the introduction of the homegrown School Feeding Programme in 2016, with official data from KADSUBEB indicating a 45.45%

increase state wide from 1.1 million pupils in 2015 to 1.6 million in 2022, a pattern echoed locally where over 81% of respondents observed heightened enrolment and more regular attendance. This surge aligns closely with the programme's aim to incentivize education through nutritional support, particularly benefiting low-income households where food insecurity previously deterred school participation, as evidenced by 73% of parents perceiving a high or very high influence on community enrolment levels. Such outcomes resonate with Human Capital Theory, which posits that investments in nutrition and education enhance individual productivity and long-term societal development; by alleviating immediate hunger, the SFP effectively positions school meals as a foundational resource that encourages families to prioritize children's schooling over short-term economic needs like child labor.

Furthermore, the programme's role in fostering gender equity is apparent, with 43% of respondents noting increased enrolment among girls, suggesting that meals reduce household burdens traditionally shouldered by female children, thereby enabling broader access to education and contributing to human capital accumulation across demographics. Building on this, the SFP has demonstrably shaped parental decisions to enroll children, with nearly 78% of parents agreeing that free meals were a pivotal factor, and 44% indicating they might not have enrolled without the programme, particularly in resource-constrained families where over half attributed enrolment changes directly to the relief from daily food costs. This influence extends to community dynamics, as 78% believed other parents were similarly motivated, creating a ripple effect that amplifies educational participation. From the perspective of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, these decisions reflect how satisfying physiological requirements such as consistent access to food frees families from survival concerns, allowing them to pursue higher needs like education and self-improvement for their children; the programme thus serves as a bridge, transforming potential barriers into motivators and aligning with the theory's emphasis on foundational needs as prerequisites for cognitive and social engagement.

Administrators' reports of strong influence on low-income groups further underscore this, illustrating how the SFP not only boosts initial enrolment but sustains attendance through perceived reliability, thereby reinforcing parental commitment to long-term educational investment as per Human Capital Theory's focus on skill-building for future economic gains. Despite these gains, implementation challenges significantly temper the programme's impact, with 78% of respondents identifying issues like irregular meal supply (44%) and poor food quality (22%), which

disrupt school routines and erode trust, as 56% noted negative effects on attendance and engagement. These logistical and financial hurdles, including funding delays reported by a third of administrators, highlight systemic inefficiencies in the homegrown model's uniform approach, which fails to accommodate local variations in infrastructure and supply chains, leading to inconsistencies that undermine the programme's nutritional and educational objectives. Relating to Maslow's Hierarchy, such disruptions prevent consistent fulfillment of basic needs, potentially reverting children to hunger-related distractions that hinder learning, while Human Capital Theory critiques these flaws as missed opportunities for sustained investment, as unreliable delivery risks reversing enrolment trends by diminishing the perceived value of schooling. Stakeholders, including teachers who cited frequent disruptions to class schedules, emphasized that addressing these through better monitoring and community involvement could enhance reliability, ensuring the programme's incentives remain effective.

Stakeholder perceptions overwhelmingly affirm the SFP's effectiveness in boosting enrolment, with 78% rating it as effective or very effective and 76% linking it to improved pupil concentration and participation, while 89% advocated for its continuation despite challenges. This positive outlook, tempered by calls for improvements in meal quality and delivery (78% combined), reflects a consensus that the programme's benefits such as reduced absenteeism and heightened motivation outweigh its shortcomings when operational issues are mitigated. Through the lens of Human Capital Theory, these perceptions validate the SFP as a strategic tool for human development, where nutritional support translates into educational equity and future productivity, particularly for vulnerable groups; meanwhile, Maslow's framework explains the enhanced engagement as a progression from met physiological needs to esteem and self-actualization through learning. Overall, the findings underscore the programme's transformative potential in aligning with broader educational goals, yet they stress the need for adaptive reforms to fully realize its contributions to inclusive enrolment and long-term socio-economic advancement in Kaduna State.

Conclusion

The National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has significantly enhanced primary school enrolment in Sabon Gari LGA, Kaduna State, by addressing nutritional and economic barriers, particularly for low-income families and girls. The programme's provision of free meals has incentivized

parents to prioritize education, reduced absenteeism, and improved pupil engagement, aligning with Human Capital Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. However, operational challenges, including irregular meal delivery, poor food quality, and inadequate monitoring, limit its full potential and erode stakeholder confidence. While the NHGSFP demonstrates transformative potential for educational access, its sustainability and effectiveness depend on addressing these systemic issues through targeted reforms and community engagement. The study underscores the programme's role as a critical intervention for achieving inclusive education but highlights the necessity of operational improvements to ensure long-term success.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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