

Challenges and Impacts of Primary School Feeding: Implication for Selected Primary Schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

Primary School feeding programs are vital for the educational and health outcomes of children in a country like Ethiopia. This research is aimed at studying the challenges and impacts of primary school feeding in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The researcher deployed a descriptive survey research design. The study also employed quantitative and qualitative approaches. For triangulation purposes, a structured interview was conducted to get information from the school directors and three other personnel. The reliability and validity were found suitable. To choose five directors, a purposive sampling method was deployed whereas a simple random sampling technique was used to select 125 instructors and 150 students from the target population of five secondary schools. The initial search took place in January 2022, and an updated search was conducted in early March 2022. The study found that the school feeding program decreases student drop-out and increases students' enrolment. On the other hand, hygiene, and cleanliness at the target sample schools required improvement in regard to cooking and feeding places. In short, whenever necessary to actualize the school feeding program without major interruption and sustainability the concerned stakeholders should join hands together.

Background

In Ethiopia, the ministry of education gave significant emphasis on access and parity education starting from lower level schooling up to tertiary level. In support of this argument, Edwards (2015:26) suggests that students should be vigorously engaged in the learning-teaching course on an

academic, societal, and physical level in order to safeguard evocative learning that will advantage them for the rest of their life's endeavors.

To strengthen the education system, the Ministry of education launched a new teachers' training program for primary education with the aim of enriching teachers' acquaintance and skills to encourage lively learning and the enhancement of problem-solving strategy over an active learning approach by means of an integrated curriculum Frost & Little, (2014:91). To confirm the actual execution of active learning methods, for a better understanding of the learning teaching process at the primary schools.

Historically, the United Nations World Food Program has been effectively conducting school feeding programs in various places in the world starting from the year 1963. Food for education programs, comprising meals sponsored in school and takeaway rations to their residence provisional on their school attendance, Adelman, G., (2008). Further, as per the FAO, School Feeding Program is an instrument that allows children worldwide to attend school.

Education is a vital instrument for the socio-economic progress of each country in the world. In connection with this declaration, every government should take a critical measure in making education reachable to its natives. The Millennium development goal task force report on attaining the education MDG cites FFE programs as one significant tactic to appeal to children to school and progress in learning (UN 2005). Apart from lessening malnutrition, school feeding programs could also progress school enrollment, dropout, and being present at school.

Further, in support of the above views, Bundy, D, et.al. (2009) denotes that, school feeding programs, broadly accessible in developing countries nonetheless, normally have imperfect handlings in lower- middle-income countries, where the requirement is highest in terms of malnutrition and shortage of food. Furthermost countries in sub-Saharan Africa only have school feeding involvements that are targeted near the most food-insecure part of the country instead of being accessible to all needy ones.

On the other hand, World Food Program (2013) expressed the advantages of school feeding on children and adolescents embracing lessening malnutrition, dropping micronutrient shortage and anemia, averting overweight, enhancing school enrollment and attendance, augmenting intellectual and academic achievement, and supporting gender fairness in access to schooling.

In short, school feeding programs support children to manage their time at home directly and help to create learning opportunities for the children under the teacher's guidance and their parents' or guardians' care. Provide them with a favorable learning atmosphere and learning activities to be done independently at home.

Statements of the problem

The school feeding program is an intervention for primary school students' enrollment, increasing attendance and reducing teacher retention in primary schools. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia the school feeding program launched for the first time in 2017 within Addis Ababa and the surrounding special zone of Oromiya.

Many works of literature are signifying about the school feeding impact, for instance, Human Rights Watch, (2016). Denote that around 34 million girls are not present in secondary school; roughly 24 million girls may not have the prospect to join in school. Further, 25 million children of primary school students from low- and lower-middle-income countries didn't show up in a classroom.

On the other hand, the shortage of food consequences, EFA (2014, P: 47) noted that "The global burden of malnutrition is unequally distributed, with 38% of children in sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia suffering from malnutrition in 2012. These two regions account for three-quarters of the total population of malnourished children."

Even so, the prevailing literature specifies a positive impact of the delivery of meals to primary schools' student enrolment. Challenge and impacts of primary school feeding programs In the sample school's adequate research has not been undertaken in line with challenge and impacts of primary school feeding in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It is due to this reason that this study is intended to be conducted. Thus, the researcher on this study would like to seek the challenges and impacts of primary school feeding based on the following research tool: What challenges do the secondary schools face in using instructional materials in the secondary schools?

Objective of the Study

Examine the challenges and impacts of primary school feeding program in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Research Question

What challenges and impacts does the primary school feeding program face in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

Significance of the studies

This paper is envisioned to support primary school children to focus on their learning and retention of primary school teachers. Enhance sustainability and create awareness among the ministry of education and the Addis Ababa city administration.

Further, to generate an educational system that is growing in an acceptable balance between nationwide and primary as well as secondary schools. Thus, this can be actualized through SFP advancement in a way that fits local settings and is adequate to stakeholders, curriculum developers, teachers, students, and the wider public interest in school attendance and quality of education.

Methodology

The research deployed descriptive survey design and a mixed-method approach which allows for a profound realization of the issue. Both qualitative and quantitative data are used to examine a single problem. In this regard, Creswell (2003:14) stated that “Researchers felt that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods”

The instruments for primary data collection were questionnaires, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews. In order to get an authentic response, the interview was conducted among the schools' principals, school feeding agency director, Addis Ababa regional education bureau SFP director and coordinator of cooks' representative, and FGD for teachers and students' discussants. Coding allows the investigator to launch shared themes in the data, which are called assertions, and permits which are the pieces of sign that support the themes or assertions (Ryan and Bernard, (2000). The assertions well-thought-out for this study was persistently focused on the research questions, interviews, and focus group discussions i.e. for principals (1-5) teachers FGD (1-5) Students FGD (1-5). In addition to this, secondary sources denote; Journals school feeding articles, SFP minutes at the school level, and books. Quantitative data were scrutinized using descriptive statistics, the mean, and SD.

From the target population that means out of ten sub cities five sub cities were chosen and subsequently five primary schools were selected from each sub city by way of random sampling method (New era, Meskerem, keranyo, Bisrat and Minilik primary schools). A simple random sampling method was employed to collect data from 50 teachers and 125 students from grades nine and ten.

The principals, teachers, and students were selected since they are key stakeholders and possess extraordinary knowledge in the study making their contribution very significant.

In the study, six stakeholders were included in the school feeding program. To select key informants for a semi-structured interview and FGDs purposive sampling technique was used. Three informants were selected for interview from the school feeding agency, one from the Addis Ababa regional education school feeding director office, five principals, and representatives of cooks who are facilitating and preparing food in the school feeding program. Purposive sampling techniques were used since participants were very few and responsible bodies for the study.

Similarly, participants of FGDs 5 to 6 members in each group were selected from 25 teacher and 30 student respondents to participate in the study.

Pilot study

The instrument was authenticated to maintain validity and to evaluate its aptness before it was managed. The validity and the reliability test were administered in one none sampled secondary school, encompassing

15 teachers and 25 students for the validity test. The aim of the reliability and validity test was to inspect whether the investigator and the subjects were correctly communicating through the questionnaire.

Further, add some worth to the content validity of the instrument on the basis of the comment obtained. Furthermore, reliability estimates for total closed-ended items were calculated using SPSS version 23, in order to know the internal consistency of the instrument. Hereafter, the reliability estimates for the total items using Cronbach alpha were found to be 0.751 for teachers and 0.755 for students closed-ended items. After getting all the four amended items, the questionnaires were distributed and shadowed up for gathering according to the timeline.

Quality of the Data

The data were authenticated by way of diverse levels and included the following: An emphasis was given to the instrument planning to obtain the purpose of the study, rationally sequenced, free of scientific terms and non-leading organized instrument, and pre-tested on 5% of teachers and students in selected government primary school of Addis Ababa city government education bureau.

Ethical Consideration

A research project involves human partaking, it is imperative to consider the ethical guidelines intended to protect the participants' views. Confirmed that the necessary care should be taken to safeguard that no one of the information collected would be against any one or harm them. Clearly communicated also to them that privacy would be upheld and the data collected used only for educational purposes, so that we all benefit from the research outcome. We also reached an understanding that they have the right to withdraw from the study if any one felt like doing so.

Presentation, Interpretation and Discussions

Table 1

Challenges and Impacts of Primary Schools Feeding

N	Item	No of Students	Mean	SD	No of Teachers	Mean	SD
Challenges							
1	The challenges of school feeding programs are high	121	3.63	.61	48	3.92	.40
2	The quality of the school feeding program is low	121	3.70	.70	48	3.75	.67
3	Enhance Parent drop-out and increase students' enrolment	121	3.73	.81	48	3.63	.87
4	Decreases student drop-out and increase students' enrolment	121	3.67	.70	48	3.81	.73

As indicated in the table 1, item 1, 'challenges of school feeding program are high' the mean 3.64 and SD=0.61 for students and the mean was 3.92 and SD=0.40 for teachers correspondingly. Both teachers and students agreed to the fact that the challenges of school feeding programs are high. The following interviewed principal declared the cooperation of other stakeholders for the sustainability of the school feeding program as follows: A principal interview indicated that "the school feeding program should strengthen its link with the Ministry of education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of water, electric city, water supply, and social services, and a strong structure from the coordinating office to the primary school level, should be in place for the betterment and good sustainability of the program." In regards to the school feeding smooth undertaking the Addis Ababa education bureau director suggested that "the education bureau is running the program with a couple of staff which is accountable for the school feeding program. However, the role is very much limited to the program. In a real sense, the agency should be a subsidiary of the education bureau as every aspect of the school is managed by the education bureau for better accountability and good performance.

A representative at each local education bureau should have a place in the structure in which the local level, in turn, gives immediate assistance whenever required from the school feeding center. Nonetheless, this is not the case at present. Further, he stated that at the regional education bureau as

a school feeding program representative we have a little responsibility in the facilitation of the program.” The school feeding project in Addis city administration should be grounded on the recognized aids of such a scheme. Especially, on explicit academic achievement and health outcomes of children at the primary school level for which efficient evidence base undertaking is required.

In the same vein, teacher FGDs₂ declared as to the challenges of the program that “the cooks are some of the students’ parents who organized themselves and facilitated the food and feeding the children. When they are buying foodstuff, they are collecting food items that they found cheap from the local market. This will help the cooks to reduce money because they are using the money left over for themselves. In this case, they are sometimes buying food items that are not healthy. Food poison is likely to happen among the beneficiaries.

Thus, there should be an association or organization that is accountable for supplying healthy food items for the school feeding center. Refrigerators to store some perishable food in each school center is also mandatory.” Furthermore, a number of teachers FGDs₄ voiced their intentions to the challenges of the program as follows: “Most of the students are coming only for food rather than attending class. Thus, there could be a monitoring and evaluation scheme developed by the school feeding facilitators and the school director. It should be only for those students who are attending their lesson and the aim is also for good quality of education and encouragement of students and a reduction of retention of teachers.”

Some participants were concerned about the cleanliness of the food preparation place and the health of the cooks as indicated below:

In this regard, students FGDs₁ "clarify that the food preparation and the health of the cooks are lacking cleanliness. We are in fear that one day we will be contracting food poison. Drinking water is not available during the course of lunchtime. They are always serving the same menu. We need to be treated with a variety of foods and most of the time they serve us salty food. In general, we are calling for the school feeding center improvement."

In line with the students’ concern about the health condition of the cooks, the investigator interviewed one of the school directors about the health condition of the cooks and he commented that “every cook is accountable to have a medical checkup every three months. We are not allowing them without a medical certificate even to show up at the kitchen.”

Of course, the medical checkup is necessary and will help to avoid unforeseen health problems created as a result of an unhygienic situation and take corrective measures before the condition is exasperating.

As can be seen in table 1 item 2, the teachers’ and student response for this item shows that the item ‘Quality of the school feeding program is low’ The mean was 3.7042 and SD .70247 for students and the mean was 3.7500 and

SD=0.67 for teachers correspondingly. This means that both the teachers and students agreed that the quality of the school feeding program was low.

The school feeding centers are responsible to keep the quality of the food and by doing this guide learners' learning and help teachers become actively engaged in their own learning-teaching process. One of the principal interviews₂ forwarded the following suggestion:

"It is vital even to extend the acquaintance of the school feeding program to the secondary school level. The existing primary school feeding program quality should be improved with a nutritious and balanced diet, if possible to help beneficiaries' health and to decrease the teacher's retention and the student attendances."

In support of the principals' view, students FGDs₁ reported on the quality of the food as follows:" the food they are serving us at the feeding center is not tasty, very cold, and no drinking water service. The place where we are dining is not hygienic and comfortable for eating food. This needs improvement by the concerned body." In addition to this, students FGDs₃ stated that, "we are not content with the lunch they are serving. Especially the quantity of the rice is too small and we are urging for good quality and proportion of it to be served."

In support of students' concern, teacher FGDs₄ indicated that the budget is very meager (birr 20 per day per student for breakfast and lunch) because of the budget of the school feeding program they are not serving quality food. For better quality of the food, the budget needs an amendment as per the existing situation of the country. The preparation also lacks sanitation, the quantity is too small, the meal serving time is too short and the dining place also needs improvement."

Further, the other group of teachers FGDs₁ felt strongly about the need for improvement of the quality of food and they expressed their feeling as follows: "we teachers and students at the feeding center, most of the time they serve us the same type of food. From such service, one can tell that the nutrition aspect might be in question. It is advisable at least to include nutritious food for better health and to enable students to participate in their learning and the teacher to teach as expected."

On top of this, student FGDs₂ indicated their complaint that "there is no variety of food, always they are serving us the same menu, lack nutritious value and are not tasty. During the course of dining also, they are not serving us drinking water."

Another student FGDs₄ stated their views that "the food is not tasty, salty, breakfast is always bread and tea and the food lacks hygiene in its preparation. During lunchtime when they are serving rice the quantity for one meal is not enough. Thus, the feeding center should improve the content or the quantity of the food. Otherwise, how can we continue feeding ourselves and pursuing our education? We know we are poor but as human beings, we have our own taste that should be respected for the sake of school

feeding sustainability and to reduce irregularity of attendance". From this analysis, both the teachers and students were in a position that the school feeding program need improvement.

As indicated in Table 1, item 3 that "Enhance parents' awareness and value to education" The teacher and student statistics were teachers mean of 3.73 and SD=0.81 and students mean of 3.63 and SD=0.87 correspondingly. Both teachers and student's responses justify that parents' awareness of education can enhance the worth of education and learners' learning interest.

The principal interview_{4&5} summary denotes that, "starting from the school feeding agency up to the school feeding center systematic monitoring and evaluation of the program at all levels is necessary. For the smooth functioning of the school feeding program, various forums and workshops are mandatory. Frequent visits to the center are important and on all these visits, written reports need to be made available for further measure and understanding of the program"

The school feeding program positively will help students learn with the help of their parent's day-to-day follow-up. In line with their learning, Rafiq, et.al., 2013: 211) suggested the involvement of parents in students' school affairs will have a vital role "If parents are aware of their day-to-day involvement in their children's academic affairs and school feeding program to work energetically, one needs to support these goals strongly"

On the other hand, teacher FGDs₃ indicated that "school feeding programs will enhance students' enrollment and decrease absenteeism. But, it is strongly advised to call for the participation of parents, teachers, and the community in the management and supervision of the program for the sustainability of the program". In support of teaches discussants Pena (2000:42) "indicates that the primary factor for the child's academic achievements and learning progress is the result of parent interest and support."

Thus, for a better end of learners' academic achievement and school attendance, the participation of parents and society are vital and their school connection can powerfully enrich learning progress endeavors.

Teachers FGDs₅ denotes that "parents or guardians do not have awareness about the school feeding program. Thus, awareness training should be given for the parents or guardians in order to visit and support the feeding center at their respective nearby schools"

Students FGDs₅ further contend that, at the school feeding center "parent association committee who are facilitating during breakfast and lunchtime, they are not treating us like their own child. They are not serving us drinking water. The community and our parents are not participating.

Parents' involvement in the school affair is of importance in enhancing learners' learning engagement of parents. Parents have to share the lion part of school activity to support their children's healthy learning.

As depicted in Table 1 item 4, the School feeding program 'decreases students' drop-out and increases their enrolment.' That students' mean of 3.6694 and $SD=0.70$ and teachers' mean of 3.81 and $SD=0.73$ correspondingly. From this we can conclude that, both the teachers and students witnessed that the school feeding program decrease students' drop-out and increase their enrolments

.The qualitative part of the analysis on item 4 principal interview₁ designates the importance of the school feeding program "the primary school working conditions which make teachers change the school or even leave the profession at all, because of job dissatisfaction and low salaries. Therefore, a school feeding program at least will soothe such problems to some extent" principal interview₂ denotes that, "as one can easily see from the school feeding program, it has a good future in retaining the rate of attrition of teachers, especially newly employed one. As a consequence, in the future, the number of skilled and active instructors also will be shortened. This in turn positively will have an impact on the academic achievement of the students."

The need for school feeding was a big concern of the agency. The agency understood that school feeding would qualify the beneficiaries towards effective teaching, and improving learners' learning. In line with this, the Addis Ababa school feeding agency director from Addis Ababa city administration in her interview responded to the following remarks: "She focused on the importance of school feeding program that, "the agency is facilitating the school feeding program from the center, grade 1-8 government school students, about 605,446 students in Addis Ababa and 194,484 students from Oromya special zone around Addis Ababa and for about 33,047 teachers teaching from grade 1-8. The budget was allotted by the Addis Ababa city administration and also from a concerned stakeholder. The scheme and execution of primary school feeding programs in Addis Ababa and the surrounding area should be based on the sympathetic benefits of such plans. The director further noted that "we are calling for the sustainability of the school feeding program stakeholders to give hands."

This effort can afford a critical evidence base for the learners' learning, health benefits, and teacher's effectiveness in teaching at the primary schools and for school feeding sustainability. On the other hand, FAO, (2011) denotes the importance of school feeding programs "On top of reducing malnutrition, school feeding program can progress school enrolment, irregularity of attendance and student dropout" This school feeding program can enhance learners learning and in reducing irregularity of attendance and effective teaching of teachers. In addition, this study can deliver an inclusive sign of forthcoming school feeding programs focused on the improvement of students' learning and teachers' effective teaching.

Conclusions

Once school feeding commitment has been established, there could be deliberation about strategies that would be most effective in increasing and sustaining the participation of all stakeholders for the sustainability of the program. What is needed is an understanding of how to run the program smoothly and effectively with the available resources so as to meet the purpose of the school feeding program on the basis of its own paradigm of advancement. On the other hand, a school feeding policy should be framed based on research findings that sketches the purpose, justifications, opportunity, and sustainability. The Addis Ababa city administration has an optimistic outlook in running the school feeding program for Addis Ababa primary schools and Oromia special zone.

In short, the fund is made available by the Addis Ababa city administration from different stakeholders whenever necessary to actualize the school feeding without major interruption of the program, to make the program stable the concerned stakeholders should join hands together.

Recommendations

1. Hygiene and cleanliness of the target schools cooking and feeding places required to be improved and one has to check the washing of hands of the students before eating because during breakfast and lunchtime children are rushing towards the dining place without giving due care
2. The school feeding program nearly improved irregular attendance and attracted the primary school students to enrol, and reduced the attrition rate of teachers and joining the school regularly, empowering their understanding in the teaching and learning process and improving the health condition of the student and the teachers.
3. Addis Ababa city administration school feeding agency and regional education bureau should establish a proper organizational structure which runs from the city administration down to the school which also allows stakeholders active participation.
4. Hitherto, it is obvious that the school community's obligation is to raise and run the teaching learning process and to have a strong school feeding program so as to look after their student's all-round development. However, those issues which no one else is in a position to raise effectively. In this regard, senses of understanding and working together among the stakeholders are very vital.

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