

## School Feeding Programme and Academics Performance of Primary School Pupils in Abeokuta South Local Government Area (LGA), Ogun State

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### **Abstract**

*Malnutrition is a significant problem all over the world, especially among children. It is harmful to children because it affects brain development and other growth. Children who suffer from malnutrition may have lifelong problems. The study examined the influence of school feeding programme on academics performance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South Local Government Area (LGA), Ogun State. Correlational research design was employed for this study. The population of the study comprised of nine thousand, eight hundred and fifty-three students and the target population made up of five thousand, five hundred and four students. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. A researcher structured questionnaire that had been validated by the three experts was used to collect data from the respondents. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used and result of .74r was obtained. Inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed that provision of school feeding programme had significant relationship on academics performance of primary school pupils calculated (r) value of (0.211) with significant probability value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance; provision of school feeding programme had significant relationship on attendance of primary school pupils calculated (r) value of (0.220) with significant probability of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance. It was concluded that provision of school feeding programme for primary school pupils had significant relationship on academics performance as well as increase their academics attendance rate. Therefore, it was recommended amongst others that government should extend the provision of free school meal for primary school pupils to all public primary schools in the study area so as to improve their academic performance.*

**Key Words:** Influence, School, Feeding, Pupils, Academics, Performance, Programme

### **Introduction**

Life is a continuous chemical process going on in the cells of the individual. The sum of all chemical processes in cells is termed metabolism. To maintain its life processes, a cell requires materials for energy, materials building, upkeep and protection, material for the regulation of cell functions. Any substance not injurious to cells that provides cells with energy or materials for building, upkeep, protection and regulates cellular functions is classed

as food. Most foods satisfy one or more of these requirements it is evident from the meaning of food that it is an essential factor of life besides and in addition to air, water, shelter and clothing. Food must be adequate and contain a sufficient amount of all substances necessary for the physiological demands of the body for energy, maintenance and replacement of body tissues to make meaning. What we eat, how we eat when we eat all have great implication for health (Oyerinde, 2010).

Food and drinks are substances that provide nourishment. They are eaten raw or after subjecting them to cooking, boiling, baking and frying. After such culinary treatment, food becomes diet or (meal). What goes into the cooking pot is food whereas what comes out of it is diet Balance diet is a diet that contains carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins and water in correct proportions and in quantity adequate for current requirement as well as for the needs in future emergencies. It satisfies the energy requirements of the person, it provides enough roughage to stimulate peristaltic activity of the intestines and it is palatable, pleasing in appearance and varied from day to day.

It conforms to the local customs and habits. Foods provide the raw materials for the growth of the body and substances for the replacement of dead tissue. Foods that principally serve these functions are called the body building foods. Examples are foods rich in high-class proteins such as milk, egg, meat and fish. Carbohydrates, derivatives of polyhydric alcohol are made up of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, the last two occurring in the same proportion as in water. In terms of the complexity of their molecules, they are divided into monosaccharides (an example include glucose), disaccharides (for instance, sucrose), trisaccharides (such as raffinose), tetrasaccharides (as for instance, stachose), and polysaccharides (such as starch). Fats are compounds of glycerol (glycerin) and fatty acids. The latter are organic acids made up only of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen. Fats that are liquid at room temperature are called oils. When oil is hydrogenated, its melting point is raised and it becomes solid at room temperature, it is then known as vanaspathi. Vitamins are organic substances that are essential for the vital functions of the body. They are classified into fat-soluble and water-soluble vitamins. Among the former are vitamins A, D, E and K. Among the latter are vitamins B and C. vitamin foods are good for man's physical and mental well-being (Sridhar, 2013).

Mathur (2011) opined that life is dependent on adequate supply and consumption of proper food and nutrients. In under developed countries of the world, major portion of time man spends in production or search for food. Nutrition plays an important role in health and diseases. One has to distinguish between diet and nutrition. Diet provides bulk or hunger satisfaction and nutrients. Nutrients cannot provide bulk to satisfy hunger. Diet plays an important role in a variety of disorders and diseases. During the period of starvation and famines, diarrhoea and other nutritional problems become prevalent.

Meg (2016) explained that, nutrition is an important factor in health and in the etiology and management of several of the major causes of death and disability in our contemporary society. In the developing countries of the world, malnutrition of early childhood due to calories – protein deficiencies as well as host of nutritional diseases such as blindness due to lack of vitamin A, iron deficiency anaemia and dental caries are wide spread of inadequate nutrition which have neither geographic nor socio-economic

boundaries. Even in highly developed societies, there may be segment of the population in which hunger and under-nutrition impair physical and mental performance.

Samuel and Nwimo (2012) opined that, naturally what the body requires is food and not drugs, this necessary because food promote proper growth and absence of adequate nutrition result to diseases. When disease set in drug is needed to cure it, even though in some instances proper food can still save the disease situation. For example, in kwarshiokor, children with adequate protein can recover from the deficiency. The human body needs these food nutrients to maintain health. Promotion of proper nutrition is one of the eight elements of primary health.

Malnutrition is the condition that develops when the body does not obtain right amount of the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients it needs to maintain healthy tissues and organ function. Malnutrition is a broad term which refers to both under nutrition (sub nutrition) and over nutrition. Individuals are malnourished, or suffer from under nutrition if their diet does not provide them with adequate calories and protein for maintenance and growth, or they cannot fully utilize the food they eat due to illness. People are also malnourished, or suffer from over nutrition if they consume too many calories Malnutrition can also be defined as the insufficient, excessive or imbalanced consumption of nutrients. Several different nutrition disorders may develop, depending on which nutrients are lacking or consumed in excess. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), malnutrition is the gravest single threat to global public health (Christian, 2016).

World Health Organization (2017) explained that, Malnutrition is estimated to contribute to more than one third of all child deaths, although it is rarely listed as the direct cause. Lack of access to highly nutritious foods, especially in the present context of rising food prices, is a common cause of malnutrition. Poor feeding practices, such as inadequate breastfeeding, offering the wrong foods, and not ensuring that the child gets enough nutritious food, contribute to malnutrition. Infection – particularly frequent or persistent diarrhoea, pneumonia, measles and malaria – also undermines a child's nutritional status.

Christian (2016) pointed out that malnourished person finds that their body has difficulty doing normal things such as growing and resisting disease. Physical work becomes problematic and even learning abilities can be diminished. For women, pregnancy becomes risky and they cannot be sure of producing nourishing breast milk. When a person is not getting enough food or not getting the right sort of food, malnutrition is just around the corner. Even if people get enough to eat, they will become malnourished if the food they eat does not provide the proper amounts of micronutrients - vitamins and minerals - to meet daily nutritional requirements. Disease and malnutrition are closely linked. Sometimes disease is the result of malnutrition, sometimes it is a contributing cause. In fact, malnutrition is the largest single contributor to disease in the world. Malnutrition is the condition that occurs when your body does not get enough nutrients. There are many types of malnutrition, and they have different causes. Some causes include:

- Poor diet,
- Starvation due to food not being available,
- Eating disorders,

- Problems with digesting food or absorbing nutrients from food, or
- Certain medical conditions that make a person unable to eat.

Poor nutrition causes health problems. Malnutrition is a poor condition that occurs when people consistently do not consume or absorb the right amounts and types of food and essential nutrients. Malnourished children have an increased risk of disability and premature death and are highly predisposed to infectious diseases. Nigeria has one of the highest burdens of malnutrition in Africa and globally (Oyerinde, 2010)

Pupils may develop malnutrition if they lack a single vitamin in the diet. Lacking a vitamin or other nutrient is called a deficiency. Sometimes malnutrition is very mild and causes no symptoms. Other times it can be so severe that the damage it does to the body is permanent, even though you survive. Poverty, natural disasters, political problems, and war can all contribute to malnutrition and starvation, and not just in developing countries (Linda, 2015).

The health of learners at all levels of education is very important if they are to benefit from the school offerings and taken care of at home, school or community settings, but the school being the second home of learners must also take learners' health seriously. The health programme in the school setting that takes care of the health need of both staff and more importantly that of students is known as school health programme. The school health programme is both an educational and a health programme directed to meet the health need of students and staff now and laying good foundation for the future health status with the support of the home, community and the government (Moronkola, 2012).

Sridhar (2013) explained that nutrition supplementation is the provision of foods by government and non-profit organizations to poor and vulnerable people in addition to what they have at their homes. Nutrition supplementation involved provision of milk powder, uppit and midday meals for the benefit of pregnant women, lactating mothers and school children.

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academics potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases as adults. The school feeding service is recognized as a strong means of improving enrolment, attendance, retention, completion and learning achievement among pupils, therefore to assist with the realization of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria, the Federal Republic of Nigeria launches the Home-Grown School Feeding and Health Programme (HGSHP) in September, 2005 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006).

Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF), by partnership, the World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) developed this initiative with the goal of integrating school garden initiatives with the school feeding programmes and at the same time promoting and increasing local food production in the rural and insecure areas (Moronkola, 2017).

Onuoha (2017) explained that, the National Home Grown school feeding programme of the president Muhammed Buhari led administration, aimed at providing balanced diet meals for primary school pupils across the country has been flagged off in Ogun State. Deputy Governor, Yetunde Onanuga, who launched the scheme tagged: Ogun meals; at St. Pauls demonstration school, Onikolobo, Abeokuta, said it is targeted at increasing enrolment and retaining students in schools. The author added that the programme will ensure a balanced diet meal at least once per day for primary one to three pupils in all the 1,554 schools, starting with 874. She said 680 will soon be added to the list of the beneficiaries.

Gbenga (2017) opined that, the Ogun State government began implementing the free meal programme for pupils in public primary schools as part of the federal government's social intervention scheme. The scheme, under the Ogun Home Grown School Feeding programme will be carried out in 1,554 primary schools with pupils in primary 1-3 beneficiaries. The pupils were served porridge garnished with vegetables and fish. The deputy governor Mrs. Yetunde Onanuga, inaugurated the programme at St. Paul's demonstration school, Onikolobo, Abeokuta, promised that it would be implemented simultaneously in 874 schools. According to her 2,968 women were enrolled and trained as food vendors, the benefits of the programme include provision of nutritional balanced diet to pupils, improved school performance and health status, boost in enrolment figure, job creation and poverty alleviation. The programme manager, Tinoola Shopeju, said preparation for the take-off started eight months ago.

Moronkola (2012) opined that, the school feeding services is a very important component of school health programme because a sizeable proportion of the learners who do not eat well at home can at least have an adequate diet at school to promote their health and learning. Learners who are well fed are more likely to perform well in academics than poorly fed learners. Also, nutrition education learnt in school empower learners on how to eat well to improve their health and overall well being.

Frederick, Olukunmi and Ogunwale (2014) explained that, nutritional level affects overall health and consequently the pace of learning among the students. Nutritional inputs can increase attendance and quality of education. School feeding programmes or school lunch programmes are nutritional interventions that may be implemented in schools to improve the health status of students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Nigeria, poor nutritional habit is usually attributable to poverty, lack of information on good diet and negligence on the part of food handlers and parents. Poor nutrition has also been shown to be an underlying cause for poor attendance, retention and achievement in education among children of school age. Malnourish children do not concentrate to their study in the class, have problem of low retention, not regular in the school as a result of attending treatment in hospital due to nutritional problems.

Due to economic recessions that affecting many people in Nigeria, some parents find it difficult to provide enough good diet for their children and this affect their academic performance. The numbers of students enroll in primary schools that enjoy free meals



increasing every day because some parents prefer to enroll their children in the school benefited from the programme..

Despite huge amount of money spend by government on primary schools in the study area, the result obtained from the final year pupils registered for common entrance examination for the past five years are yet to achieved expected result. Poor nutrition is one of the problems affecting academics performance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South LGA, Ogun State. This condition prompted researcher to find out whether provision of school feeding programme for primary school pupils have relationship on their academic performance as well as their regularity in the school.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were poised to guide the study.

1. What is the relationship between the provision of school feeding programme and academic performance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South LGA, Ogun State.
2. What is the relationship between the provision of school feeding programme and attendance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South LGA, Ogun State

### **Null Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses raised were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Provision of school feeding programme will not have significant relationship on academic performance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South LGA, Ogun State.
2. Provision of school feeding programme will not have significant relationship on attendance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South LGA, Ogun State.

### **Methodology**

Correlational research design was used for this study. The population of this study comprised of nine thousand, eight hundred and fifty three students and target population made up of five thousand, five hundred and four students. Purposive sampling technique was used to select thirty three (33) public primary schools that providing school feeding programme out of fifty nine (59) public primary schools in the study area. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select one public primary school in each of the fifteen (15) wards that providing school feeding programme and fifteen primary schools were selected. Simple random sampling technique was also used to select ten (10) students from those that had poor academic performance in each of the selected schools before the implementation of the school feeding programme. Both the academic performance and attendance register of the selected students were obtained and used for this study. Hence, one hundred and fifty respondents participated in the study

The instrument used for this study was structured questionnaire that have been validated by three experts in the Department of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument using Person's Product Moment Correlation and correlation coefficient of .74r was achieved. Inferential statistical of Person Product Moment Correlation was used to test the result of stated Null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. .

### Findings and Discussion

The results obtained from the two hypotheses for the study were shown on the tables below:

**Table 1:** The relationship between provision of school feeding programme and academic performance of primary school pupils

Variables		X <sup>2</sup>	XY	r	Sig	Decision
Provision of school feeding programme (X)	150	1124				
academic performance of primary school pupils (Y)	150	1241	1359	0.21	0.000	Sig

The result obtained from table one shows the calculated r-value of 0.211 with significant probability value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis one is rejected and alternative hypothesis upheld, this implies that, provision of school feeding programme have relationship on academics performance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State.

**Table 2:** The relationship between provision of school feeding programme and attendance of primary school pupils

Variables		X <sup>2</sup>	XY	r	Sig	Decision
Provision of school feeding programme (X)	150	1812				
attendance of primary school pupils (Y)	150	1512	1359	0.22	0.000	Sig

The result obtained from table two shows the calculated r-value of 0.220 with significant probability value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis two is rejected and alternative hypothesis upheld, this implies that, provision of school feeding programme have relationship on attendance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State.

### Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one states that provision of school feeding programme has significant relationship on academics performance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State. The result of this finding agreed with the finding of Morokonla (2012) who opined that, the school feeding services is a very important component of school health programme because a sizeable proportion of the learners who do not eat well at home can at least have an adequate diet at school to promote their health and learning. Learners who are well fed are more likely to perform well in academics than poorly fed learners. Also, nutrition educations learnt in school empower learners on how to eat well to improve their health and overall well being.

The finding of hypothesis two revealed that provision of school feeding programme has significant relationship on attendance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State. The result of this finding is in line with the view of Frederick,

Olukunmi and Ogunwale (2014) explained that nutritional level affects overall health and consequently the pace of learning among students. Nutritional inputs can increase attendance and quality of education. School feeding programme or school lunch programmes are nutritional interventions that may be implemented in schools and this will increase students' attendance and also improve their health status.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made; provision of school feeding programme have relationship on academic performance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State, provision of school feeding programme have relationship on attendance of primary school pupils in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State.

### Recommendations

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

1. Federal government should extend the provision of free school meal for primary school pupils to all public primary schools in the study area so as to improve their academic performance.
2. Parents should devote time to monitor the attendance of their children in school so as to enable them achieve maximum benefit from their education.

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