

Factors Influencing Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) Enrolment and Retention in Pru East District, Ghana

Prince Awini Apambilla^{1*}, Gaayire Robert²

¹ Department of Counselling Psychology; University of Education Winneba, Ghana

² Atebubu College of Education

*Corresponding

Author Prince Awini Apambilla

Department of Counselling Psychology;
University of Education Winneba,
Ghana.

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Abstract: This study focused on factors influencing Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) Enrolment and Retention in Pru East District, Ghana. The research employed positivist research paradigm. The present research used descriptive cross sectional research design with quantitative research approach to collect data for the study. Also, the study population were SHEP coordinator, GSFP Desk Officer, headteacher and teachers of beneficiary school feeding schools within Pru East district. The sample size of the research was 120 respondents comprising 96 teachers, 22 headteacher, 1 SHEP Coordinator and 1 Desk Officer. The researchers used purposive sampling method to select the headteachers, SHEP coordinator, GSFP desk officer while simple random sampling method was used to select the teachers for the study using lottery method. The instrument employed to collect data for the study was closed-ended questionnaire designed by the researcher. Data collected from the field for this study was captured, edited, coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v20) software programme into simple frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. The present finding revealed that GSFP increased enrollment in schools in Pru East district with (M=1.51; Std= 0.98) and 103(90%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion. Also, the present finding revealed that the major challenge confronting the GSFP was high caterer's turnover with (M=1.17, SD=1.12) and 101(84.2%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion. However, the study concluded that enrollment of school continue to increase since the introduction of the GSFP in the district and there is a need to increase the number to cover more school for all children to benefit equally. The study recommended that Government should timely release fund for payment of caterers to avoid high caterers turn-over rate.

Keywords: Retention, Enrollment, School Feeding Programme, Povert.

Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were developed in 2000 to address the issues of globalisation that the United Nations (UN) member states were facing at the time. As stated in MDG number 1, the primary goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was to end extreme poverty and hunger. The MDGs' sub-goal was to cut the proportion of the population experiencing hunger and poverty in half by 2030. But in order to help meet the first Millennium Development Goal, the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was established (Kedze (2013). Seven proposals were made by the United Nations Hunger Task Force (World Bank, 2004) to assist the United Nations in achieving the MDG's first goal. All of these tactics were covered in the "Halving Hunger" report, which was completed in 2004. Adopting homegrown food policy instead of imported commodities to implement School Feeding Prorammes (SFGs) in order to help reach the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) (World Bank, 2004). However, World Bank, (2004) believed that school feeding programmes combined teaching with agriculture in the surrounding villages.

Once more, (World Bank, 2004) concentrated on how School Feeding Programme (SFP) could help increase student attendance, particularly for girls. Furthermore, (World Bank, 2004) anticipated that as the School Feeding Programme (SFP) was implemented in the nearby areas, there would be a greater demand for foods produced locally. A comprehensive school and community-based SFP that includes other programmes including deworming exercises, nutrition supplements, take-home rations, a kitchen, clean water, and improved sanitation was also proposed by the task group. Once more, the programme covered health, nutrition, cleanliness, and HIV/AIDS education. The United Nations (2005a) determined the most crucial components required to offer a strong foundation for enhancing student health, improving schools, and fostering community involvement.

In addition, the World Food Programme (WFP, 2007a) delivered wholesome prepared meals to 122,000 primary school students in 304 schools every day to assist the government in achieving the goal of the SFP. Take-Home-Rations (THR) were provided to junior high school females as a means of encouraging their studies, which increased the program's effectiveness. The World Food

Programme (WFP, 2007a) mostly purchases food from Ghana in order to support local food production in accordance with SFP goals. This helps to raise farmers' incomes and enhances education in Ghana. In order to help accomplish MDG number 1, NEPAD, an organisation affiliated with AU, also adopted the UNHTF method, although it concentrated on the combination of agriculture and the School Feeding Programme (SFP).

Furthermore, Ghana was the first nation to adopt the NEPAD-modeled feeding programme, which is currently being implemented in twelve (12) Sub-Saharan countries. Starting as a trial programme in 2005, the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was completely implemented in schools from 2006 until the 2010–2011 academic year. In all 254 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) across the nation, there were around 1,739,357 GSFP enrolled participants. Reducing poverty, boosting local food production, and enhancing enrollment, retention, and attendance in all basic schools were the primary goals of the GSFP.

However, the Ghana School Feeding plan was established in response to the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development (CAAD) plan of the NEPAD in order to assist the MDGs-UN in achieving their objectives regarding hunger, poverty, and basic education. Furthermore, the GSFP is unaffected by the reports in Ghanaian newspapers that the caterers for the programme were not paid on a regular basis, with payment arrears amounting to six months or even a year. Due to a shortage of money to pay caterers, some caterers only cook once or twice a week, and some choose not to cook at all during the term (Bonney, 2013). Due to the fact that the GSFP is a national programme supported by an international organisation, the issue of caterers not receiving regular compensation raises severe concerns among stakeholders and has the potential to undermine the program's goals. Politicians in the MMDAs and Education Directorate are in charge of the GSFP.

Nonetheless, the major goal of the GSFP was to use home-grown food production policies to provide hot, nutrient-dense lunches to students in the public primary schools that were beneficiaries. In addition to easing the parents' financial load, using locally farmed food from nearby areas would increase food security nationwide. Once more, the long-term goal of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was to support community-based development via food security. On the other hand, the long-term goals of GSFP were to: (i) decrease student hunger and malnutrition in a short amount of time; (ii) raise student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates in schools; and (iii) enhance local food production. Nonetheless, the Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy and the Education Sector Plan (ESP)–(2018–2030) are two more educational framework policies that are connected to the GSFP policy.

Furthermore, the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) aligns with other important policies pertaining to education, including Imagine Ghana Free from Malnutrition, the Education Sector Plan (2018–2030), and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy. By the end of December 2006, the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) reported a total population of 234,800 in 598 schools, and by the end of 2007, it had registered 408,989 students in 975 schools. In 2016, 1.7 million elementary school students from all of the nation's districts benefited from the scheme. More than 2.8 million students in 9,495 underprivileged schools across all 254 Metropolitan, Municipal, and Districts in the sixteen administrative areas of the nation benefited from the GSFP in 2019, according to GSFP Acting National Coordinator (Bonney, 2013).

There are now 3.3 million Ghanaian children attending 9,001 basic schools who benefit from the GSFP as of 2023. Additionally, it has hired 19,400 cooks and nearly 9,700 caterers (Bonney, 2013). This makes it necessary to carry out the research on the effects of GSFP on student enrollment, attendance, and retention in the Pru East district's basic schools. Many researchers have studied the GSFP, however (Bukari et al., 2015; Mohammed, 2014; Kedze, 2013; Sulemana et al., 2013; Hauware, 2008; Bonney, 2013; Akanbi, 2011; Ahmed, 2004). However, their focus was on the GSFP's effect on students' academic performance, which is why a gap was identified for the current study.

Additionally, the goal of this article was to investigate how the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) influence student enrollment and retention in Yeji, Pru East region. Additionally, Yeji has never conducted research on student enrollment and retention in the Pru East district; as a result, there is still a research gap regarding the impact of the GSFP on students' attendance and enrollment, which is why the study in the district was justified. This study looked at how the GSFP influence students' enrolment and retention in basic schools in Yeji, Pru East District. The objectives of the study were to: 1. assess how GSFP can improve enrollment and retention in the Pru East District; 2. assess the challenges associated with GSFP implementation in the Pru East District.

Literature Review

Influence of GSFP on Enrolment and Retention

According to Kedze (2013), the GSFP has a positive impact on enrollment, attendance, and retention in beneficiary public primary schools throughout the county. Kedze (2013) also suggested that the main obstacles to Ghana's universal basic education are regular attendance, drop-out rates, and enrollment; however, the GSFP has encouraged students to attend class regularly in order to have access to school lunches. Bukari et al. (2015) found a positive correlation between the GSFP and students' attendance, enrollment, and academic performance in beneficiary primary schools in Ghana, thereby enhancing the program's primary goals.

Additionally, Mohammed et al (2014) said that because GSFP encourages students to stay in school and learn in order to achieve universal basic education, as stipulated in Ghana's constitution, it has contributed to increases in enrollment, attendance, retention, and student academic achievement. Mohammed et al (2014) proposed that in addition to the daily hot meal, students should also receive snacks. According to the Global Child Nutrition Forum (2014), Ghana's efforts to achieve universal basic education have resulted in improvements in food security, gender inclusivity, economic growth, high-quality education, and nutrition. Lastly, the study has offered empirical proof of the beneficial effects of school food programmes on basic school enrollment, attendance, and retention. According to available data, school feeding programmes boost student enrollment and retention while also considerably lowering dropout rates in the schools they benefit from.

Despite this apparent benefit, the actual state of affairs in the Pru East district is that enrollment, attendance, and retention in GSFP beneficiary schools have increased without a commensurate increase in educational resources to meet the current demands of the beneficiaries' schools. For example, rising school enrollments clearly necessitate raising the proportion of teachers, additional

instructional resources, and classrooms. These instructional materials don't seem to be on the way to the beneficiary schools in Pru East district. However, in her research on the GSFP, De Hauwere (2008) (n.d.:351) supports this claim by observing that "the only positive development in the GSFP is the increase in enrolment of beneficiary schools." Sadly, no further measures were taken to protect the standard of education, such as increasing school infrastructure in proportion or providing other teaching and learning material to the schools. The author goes on to claim that the GSFP compromised in its goal of enlisting more people by focusing the program's beneficiaries on the impoverished, as shown by the program's initial phase.

Again, the GSFP's most obvious long-term objective is to improve benefit children's enrollment, participation, and retention rates. Interestingly, despite these hopes, there have been very little additional measures taken to safeguard the beneficiaries' education in the KEEA municipality, even though the program's long-term objectives seem doable. Lynch (2013) attests to this fact in her research study on the GSFP in the KEEA Municipality's Ntranoa community. According to her study, there is sufficient data to imply that Ntranoa community stakeholders in education think the GSFP is doing an outstanding job of assisting students' attendance, participation, and retention rates in schools.

Although GSFP places a high value on teachers and school administrators. It is the duty of school heads to oversee the caterers on a daily basis at their institutions. To make sure the caterers fulfil their responsibilities as outlined, they keep an eye on them. For presentation to the Municipals/Districts Assembly, school heads compile reports on programming activities conducted in their various schools. To create a menu that is specific to their area, school administrators communicate with other programme participants. Yet, teachers are tasked with making sure the children just consume the food and show up to class—they are not allowed to carry out any program-related tasks during school hours. At the Municipal/District Education Directorate, the teachers draft reports on the programme for the Municipal/District Desk Officer of GSFP. Teachers are responsible for choosing a student representative for the School Implementation Committee. Contributions and recommendations are made to the school's (SIC) by the student representative. Additionally, teachers should work more closely with the caterer in conjunction with the head of the school (Kedze, 2013). Lynch (2013) noticed that the beneficiary schools in the KEEA municipality do not appear to be benefiting from these institutional arrangements.

Challenges of the School Feeding Programme (GSFP) in Ghana.

Nineteen (19) years on from its inception, the GSFP has had a beneficial impact on student enrolment, retention, and academic achievement in all beneficiary schools in Ghana. Like other projects in Ghana, GSFP is not without its challenges. The beneficiaries' schools typically experience a wide range of effects from these difficulties. Lack of a policy framework, a lack of financing, the inability to integrate the local community in the GSFP, unskilled kitchen workers, caterers' model supply, and inefficient monitoring and evaluation by Ghana Education Service officials and the GSFP secretariat were a few of the program's issues. Since the GSFP was introduced, there have been no policy guidelines, which presents a significant obstacle to the program's implementation.

Despite being in line with the government's main development plans and strategies, Kedze (2013) claims that the GFSP lacks a

legislative instrument (L.I.) or policy framework for its implementation and sustainability. However, given the significance of the programme, its broader scope, and its connections with other sectors like the departments of education, health, and agriculture, it is wise that GSFP be supported by Legislation Instrument (LI). Additionally, the Ghanaian government funds GSFP through the national budget in order to guarantee the program's sustainability and to show a stronger commitment to the feeding program's continuation for the benefit of Ghanaian students enrolled in public basic schools. The Dutch government had been sponsoring the projects from their inception, but that assistance ceased in 2010, and the Ghanaian government has since taken on a major financial role in the GSFP. The only authority is the government of Ghana. The government's failure to provide funds to the MMDAs for caterer payments has occasionally resulted in payment to school caterers being delayed, which has led to a number of days of strikes by the caterers Kedze (2013).

However, Ghanaian government bears a major portion of the cost of the GFSP; nonetheless, programme funding has been irregular, which has caused delays in the distribution of feeding payments to the district (Kedze (2013). Beneficiary children are impacted when feeding funds are delayed in being released. This suggests that caterers might not have access to money to buy, cook, and serve the youngsters who are the beneficiaries of their services. However, even if the caterer is successful in prefunding the pupil's meals, the amount and quality of food provided would suffer. It's possible that the food won't be sufficient and nourishing. It appears that the schoolchildren are directly impacted by the caterers' payment delays since they will take for granted the amount and quality of the meals provided (Bonney, 2013). When caterers try to pre-finance the meal preparation, certain stakeholders in the beneficiary communities worry about the low nutritional value of the meals. The Lynch (2013) research study provides support for this. In the end, the GSFP scheme would not improve the beneficiaries' academic performance as planned.

According to a Ghanaian newspaper, caterers participating in the GSFP initiative are not always paid promptly; occasionally, payments are not made for six months after the arrears are accumulated. The article also disclosed that some caterers are being forced to feed the beneficiaries twice or three times a week instead of the five times per week that was originally planned due to programme funding shortages (Bonney, 2013). This is concerning because the programme is a national initiative supported by additional development partners. One could argue that the programme is being undermined by the issue this position brings.

However, Morgan and Sonnino (2008) state that the goal of the GSFP is to increase local engagement in the initiative by having the School Implementation Committee (SIC) collaborate with nearby farmers to supply food commodities from the local communities to the feeding schools. The intention of local farmers participating in the plan has been defeated by the entry of food suppliers, which has damaged this initiative at the MMDA level. The GSFP faces difficulties because private sector food suppliers obtained imported food items from sources other than the neighbourhood, depriving nearby farmers of the chance to sell their produce directly to consumers. When it comes to the decision-making process regarding the purchase of food for the feeding programme, the food suppliers, however, disregard the local committee. According to Sulemana et al; (2013), the "Home-Grown" foodstuffs policy program's goal of developing a market for the local population is being defeated because not even a tiny percentage of the food supplied to the beneficiary is purchased from the local populations.

Despite the program's goal of using locally grown produce, De Hauwere (2008) (n.d: 353) noted in her paper that a significant obstacle has been successfully and efficiently tying the GSFP to Ghana's local agriculture economy. According to her, the local farmers in the beneficiary communities provide a limited quantity of food commodities for the programme. It is crucial to create connections between the local farmers the programme seeks to support and the consistent demand for food commodities needed by the programme, as the caterer model of the programme is unable to link small-scale farmers with caterers of the beneficiary schools for food supply.

Furthermore, Lynch (2013) provided evidence to strengthen De Hauwere's (2008) assertion based on a research study she conducted exclusively on GSFP in the Natrona community in the KEEA municipality. In line with the implementation document, she also suggested that food commodities for the GSFP in the KEEA municipality be acquired from nearby farmers in the neighbourhoods where beneficiary schools are situated. The two research projects' findings indicate that, in order to support local food production and consumption within the school communities of the beneficiaries, this issue needs to be addressed immediately. This will greatly aid in promoting regional economic development once it is completed. Beneficiary primary schools in Ghana have shown improvements in student enrollment, attendance, retention, and academic achievement thanks to the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP). On the other hand, infrastructures in schools have not grown in tandem with the rise in student enrollment. In addition, the majority of the feeding schools that get subsidies do not have adequate dining halls, store rooms, or kitchens, which puts further strain on the school's already limited resources. Due to this difficulty, classrooms are now overcrowded and instruction is of high quality Kedze (2013).

Furthermore, according to (Sam-Tagoe & Akuamoah-Boateng, 2013), the absence of facilities and other logistical support, such as kitchens, storage rooms, dining halls, serving utensils, cups, and spoons, water supplies, and adequate cleanliness, has made it difficult for the GSFP to have a beneficial impact. Nonetheless, the majority of feeding elementary schools prepare their meals outside under trees, in classroom hallways during rainy weather, and in run-down buildings without kitchens (Sulemana et al, 2013). This problem has led to unsanitary conditions in schools, which has affected students' and instructors' health in school programmes schools across the nation. According to Oduro-Ofori et al. (2014), the majority of beneficiary schools lack dining halls, which forces headteachers to serve meals in some student classrooms. Because students consistently spill food oil on their books and leave their classrooms messy and disorganised after meals, this has a detrimental effect on their academic achievement.

However, in most feeding schools, students must leave their classes during certain hours to find firewood and drinkable water so that caterers may cook food, which has an adverse effect on students' academic performance. To address these problems, the school feeding secretariat did, however, offer water tanks; but, because there was no water supply available to connect the tanks to, the water tanks were not being used. Furthermore, the majority of cooks working for the GSFP lack a health certificate and are not trained in food and nutrition, environmental sanitation, or kitchen cleanliness. To improve their effectiveness at work, the majority do not receive in-service training while they are employed. According to Kedze (2013), there are inadequate sanitary facilities at recipient schools under the GSFP in the MMDAs. For example, 87% of the GSFP beneficiary schools lack hand washing facilities, and

between 26% and 35% of the schools lack access to restrooms. The aforementioned phenomenon has resulted in health issues for the schoolchildren who are the beneficiaries, as they typically play in unsanitary environments and neglect to wash their hands before eating meals provided to them.

Methodology

This paper focused on examining the impact of GSFP on enrolment, attendance and retention of pupils in basic schools in the Pru East District, Yeji. The research employed positivist research paradigm. The present research used descriptive cross sectional research design with quantitative research approach to collect data for the study. Mulaik, (1995) suggested that quantitative research is mainly about collecting numerical data to explain a particular situation. The study population were SHEP coordinator, GSFP desk officer, headteacher and teachers of beneficiary school feeding schools within Pru East district. However, the accessible population for the study were, one (1) SHEP coordinator, one (1) GSFP desk officer, twenty-two (22) headteacher of beneficiary schools and two hundred and thirty-one (231) teachers in beneficiary feeding schools. The sample size of the research was 120 respondents comprising 96 teachers, 22 headteacher, 1 SHEP Coordinator and 1 Desk Officer. The researchers used purposive sampling method to select the headteachers, SHEP coordinator, GSFP desk officer while simple random sampling method was used to select the teachers for the study.

However, the main instrument employed to collect data for the study was closed-ended questionnaire designed by the researcher. The researcher used five-point Likert scale to measure the items in the various sections into; Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Uncertain (U), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA). Also, the questionnaire was made up of three sections. Section 'A' highlighter on respondents' demographic data, section 'B' concentrated on the influence of school feeding programme whilst Section 'C' elicited responses on problems confronting Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP). Additionally, questionnaire was used because of the following important; (a) cost effectiveness, (b) questionnaire can be used to cover larger sample than the interview method. To ensure validity of the research instrument, pilot survey conducted in two (2) non beneficiary school feeding schools with the purpose of pretesting the questionnaire. This pilot test assisted the researcher to removed ambiguous questions, established the feasibility of the study, and tested the data collection instruments and established if there were issues in the questionnaire. Data collected from the field for this study was captured, edited, coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v20) software programme. Data collected from the field was then analyzed quantitatively into simple frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. Ethical issues such as anonymity and confidentiality were taken into consideration in this paper.

Results and Discussions

Table 1.1: Biodata of Respondents

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender of Respondents		
Male	65	54.2%
Female	55	45.8%
Total	120	100%
Age of Respondents		
20-30 Years	32	26.7%
31-40 Years	52	43.3%
41-50 Years	20	16.7%
51-60 Years	16	13.3%
Total	120	100%
Marital Status of Respondents		
Married	73	60.8%
Single	31	25.8%
Divorce	6	13.3%
Total	120	100%
Educational Background of Respondents		
Cert "A"	12	10.0%
Diploma	69	57.3%
Degree	32	26.7%
Masters	7	5.8%
Total	120	100%
Religious Background of Respondents		
Christianity	82	68.3%
Islamic	30	25.0%
Traditional Believer	8	6.7%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024

Based on sex of pupils, the results depicted in Table 1.1 shows that 65 (54.2%) of the respondents were males while 55 (45.8%) of the respondents were females. This shows that there were more males teachers that involved in the study than females teacher.

Also, results in Table 1.1 indicate that out of a total of 120 respondents, 32 (26.7%) were within ages 20-30 years, 52 (43.3%) were between 31-40 years, while 20 (16.7%) were within 41-50 years and 16(13.3%) were within the age 51-60 years. This finding implied that majority of the respondents were within the active working age group of 31-40 years.

Furthermore, based on marital status of teachers, the results displayed in Table 1.1 shows that 73 (60.8%) of the teachers were married, 31(25.8%) of the teachers were single and 6 (13.3%) were divorcees. This finding implied that there

were more marriage teachers who participated in the research than single and divorce teachers.

However, based on educational background of teachers, the results in Table 1.1 shows that 12(10.0%) of the teachers obtained Cert 'A', 69 (57.3%) of the teachers had obtained diploma while 32 (26.7%) of the teachers had obtained degree and only 7(5.8%) of the teachers had obtained master degree. This finding implied that majority of teachers in Yeji had degree qualification and very few teachers had obtained master degree.

Finally, on the issues of religious believe, the study indicated that 82(68.3%) of the respondents were from the Christianity background, 30(25.0%) of the respondents were Muslims and 8(6.7%) of the respondents were traditional believers. This current finding implied that majority of were Christians.

Table 1.2: Influence of GSFP on improving enrolment and retention Pru East District

Item	S. A	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std
Ghana School Feeding Programme increase enrollment in schools	85 (70.8%)	23(19.1%)	0(0%)	10(8.3%)	2(1.7%)	1.51	0.98
Ghana School Feeding Programme increase retention in schools	98(81.7%)	15(12.5%)	2(1.7%)	3(2.5%)	2(1.7%)	1.30	0.77
Learners now stay in school until closing because of the food prepare in my school	65(54.2%)	38(31.6%)	3(2.5%)	7(5.8%)	7(5.8%)	1.78	1.13
Learner's school drop-out rate had reduced because of the feeding programme	51(42.5%)	48(40.5%)	6(5%)	8(6.7%)	7(5.8%)	1.93	1.23
GSFP provide learning opportunities for learners	47(39.2%)	51(42.5%)	3(2.5%)	7(5.8%)	12(10%)	2.05	1.25
Students participate actively during teaching & learning after meal	61(50.8%)	38(31.2%)	4(3.3%)	13(10.8%)	4(3.3%)	1.84	1.12
Provision of meals increase learner's academic performance	92(75.8%)	21(17.5%)	0(0%)	4(3.3%)	4(3.3%)	1.42	0.92

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 1.2 above shows that 85 (70.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the GSFP increased enrollment in schools, 23(19.1%) of the respondents agreed that the GSFP increased enrollment in schools, 0(0%) of the respondents remained neutral to the assertion, 10(8.3%) of the respondents disagreed that the GSFP increased enrollment in school and 2(1.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the GSFP increased enrollment in schools. The present finding revealed that GSFP increased enrollment in schools in Pru East district with (M=1.51; Std= 0.98). This present finding supported (Musah & Imoro, 2015) that GSFP has increase enrollment, attendance and retention in Garu Tempene district in the Bawku West district. Kedze, (2013) indicates that Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) has positive impact on enrollment, attendance and retention in public primary schools. Lynch (2013) attests to this fact in her research study on the GSFP in the KEEA Municipality's Ntranoa community. According to her study, there is sufficient data to imply that Ntranoa community stakeholders in education think the GSFP is doing an outstanding job of assisting students' attendance, participation, and retention rates in schools.

Moreover, table 1.2 above shows that 98(81.7%) of the respondents strongly agree that GSFP increase retention in schools, 15(12.5%) of the respondents agree that GSFP increase retention in schools, 2(1.7%) of the respondents remained neutral to the assertion whilst 3(2.5%) of the respondents strongly disagree that GSFP increase retention in schools and 2(1.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree that GSFP increase retention in schools. The current finding depicts that GSFP increase retention in schools in Pru East district with (M=1.30, Std=0.77). the current finding concurs Abotsi, (2013) GSFP has not only increase enrollment, attendance, and retention but also improved nutrition and health status of pupil. This finding agreed to Powell and Grantham-McGregor, (1998) that there is improvement in attendance, retention and academic performance as compare to the control class. Additionally, Ahmed, (2004) carried out research in Bangladesh and found out that mothers have high perception about the school feeding programme because of its positive impact on academic performance, attendance, reduced morality rate and improve health of children.

Additionally, table.1.2 above indicates that 65(54.2%) of the respondents strongly agree that learners stayed in school until closing because of the food prepare in my school, 38(31.6%) of the respondents agree that learners stayed in school until closing because of the food prepare in my school, 3(2.5%) of the respondents remained neutral to this assertion whilst 7(5.8%) of the respondents disagree that learners stayed in school until closing because of the food prepare in my school and 7(5.8%) of the respondents strongly disagree that learners stayed in school until closing because of the food prepare in my school. The present finding shows that GSFP had made learners to stayed at school until closing with the (M=1.78; Std= 1.13). The present finding supports Grantham-McGregor, (1989) that providing breakfasts to school children positively increase attendance, retention and arithmetic scores in Jamacia. Kedze, (2013) indicates that Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) has positive impact on enrollment, attendance and retention in public primary schools.

Furthermore, table 1.2 above shows that 51(42.5%) of the respondents strongly agree that learner's school drop-out rate had reduced because of the GSFP, 48(40.5%) of the respondents agree that learner's school drop-out rate had reduced because of the GSFP, 6(5%) of the respondents remained neutral to this assertion whilst 8(6.7%) of the respondents disagree that learner's school drop-out rate had reduced because of the GSFP and 7(5.8%) of the respondents strongly disagree that learner's school drop-out rate had reduced because of the GSFP. The present finding revealed that GSFP reduced school drop-out among learners in Pru

East district with the (M=1.93; Std=1.23). The present finding supports Grantham-McGregor, (1989) that providing breakfasts to school children positively increase attendance, retention and arithmetic scores in Jamacia. GSFP (2007) carried out research in Ghana found put that the enrollment of piloted school feeding schools increase by 20.3% while the non-school feeding programmes schools increase by only 2.8% in the same district.

In the other hand, table 1.2 above revealed that 47(39.2%) of the respondents strongly agree that GSFP provide learning opportunities for learners, 51(42.5%) of the respondents agree that GSFP provide learning opportunities for learners, 3(2.5%) of the respondents remained neutral to this assertion whilst 7(5.8%) of the respondents disagree that GSFP provide learning opportunities for learners and 12(10%) of the respondents strongly disagree that GSFP provide learning opportunities for learners. The present study revealed that GSFP provide learning opportunities for learners in Pru East district with (M=2.05; Std=1.25). The present finding supports Grantham-McGregor, (1989) that providing breakfasts to school children positively increase attendance, retention and arithmetic scores in Jamacia. GSFP (2007) carried out research in Ghana found put that the enrollment of piloted school feeding schools increase by 20.3% while the non-school feeding programmes schools increase by only 2.8% in the same district.

More so, table 1.2 above highlighted that 61(50.8%) of the respondents strongly agree that students participate actively during teaching & learning after meal, 38(31.2%) of the respondents agree that students participate actively during teaching & learning after meal, 4(3.3%) of the respondents remained neutral to this assertion whilst 13(10.8%) of the respondents disagree that students participate actively during teaching & learning after meal and 4(3.3%) of the respondents strongly disagree that students participate actively during teaching & learning after meal. The present finding shows that of the that students participate actively during teaching & learning after eating launch provided under the GSFP with (M=1.84; Std=1.12). This present revelation is in line with (Grantham & Powel,1983), that provision of food to learners engages them in the teaching and learning process. Also, it is found out in the present finding there is positive correlation between GFSP and learning opportunities for learning in schools. Kedze, (2013) indicates that Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) has positive impact on enrollment, attendance and retention in public primary schools.

Finally, table 1.2 above revealed that 92(75.8%) of the respondents strongly agree that provision of meals under GSFP increase learner's academic performance, 21(17.5%) of the respondents agree that provision of meals under GSFP increase learner's academic performance, 4(3.3%) of the respondents disagree that provision of meals under GSFP increase learner's academic performance and few 4(3.3%) of the respondents strongly disagree that provision of meals under GSFP increase learner's academic performance. The present study revealed that of that provision of meals under GSFP increase learner's academic performance in Pru East district with (M=1.42; Std=0.92). This present revelation is in line with (Grantham & Powel,1983), that provision of food to learners engages them in the teaching and learning process. Also, it is found out in the present finding there is positive correlation between GFSP and learning opportunities for learning in schools. However, in her research on the GSFP, De Hauwere (2008) (n.d:351) supports this claim by observing that "the only positive development in the GSFP is the increase in enrolment of beneficiary schools." Sadly, no further measures were taken to protect the standard of education, such as increasing school infrastructure in proportion or providing other teaching and learning material to the schools.

Table 1.3: Trend of GSFP on Enrolment from 2020/2021-2023/2024 Academic Years

School	Enrolment before (2020/2021)	Current Enrolment (2023/24)	Different	Percentage change
Parambo D/A Primary	313	818	505	61.74
Kobre D/A Primary	111	345	234	67.83
Parambo R/C Primary	212	676	464	68.64
Vutidke D/A Primary	190	455	265	58.24
Yeji Methodist D/A Primary	210	923	713	77.25
Fante Akura D/A Primary	121	500	379	75.80
Labo D/A Primary	215	656	441	67.23
Kwayease D/A Primary	152	465	313	67.31
Yeji D/A No. D/A Primary	193	666	473	71.02
Parambo Nsuano D/A Primary	134	585	451	77.09
Total	1851	6089	4238	69.60

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 1.3 above shows that enrollment of learners in GSFP beneficiary schools generally increase across the district after the introduction of the Ghana School Feeding. The percentage changes are respectively recorded with Parambo D/A Primary and Kobre D/A Primary having 61.7 and 67.8 percent points. Parambo R/C Primary School recorded minimal percentage change of 68.6, Vutideke D/A Primary also recorded a percentage change of 58.24% while Yeji Methodist Primary School recorded a maximum percentage change of 77.25%. However, Fante Akura Primary, Labo Primary and Kwayease D/A Primary Schools recorded 75.80, 67.23 and 67.31 percentage change respectively. Also Yeji D/A No. Primary “B” recorded a percentage change of 71.02% and Parambo-Nsuano D/A recorded a percentage change of 77.02%. These findings implied that GSFP has positive impact on pupil’s enrolment, attendance, and retention in Pru East District. The present research concurs (Akanbi, 2011) research conducted

on HGSFP in Osun State in Nigeria revealed that outcome of the SFP has increase attendance, enrollment and retention in schools over the years. Bukari et al (2015) revealed that there is positive relationship between the GSFP and attendance, enrollment and academic performance of pupils the beneficiary primary school in Ghana hence the programme has met it main objectives based on this revelation. Also, Mohammed, (2014) highlighted that GSFP has contributed to increase in enrollment, attendance, retention and pupil academic performance because GSFP motivates learners to stay at school and learn leading to achieve universal basic education as stated in the constitution of Ghana. Also, Global Child Nutrition Forum, (2014) posited that the GSFP has led to improvement of food security, quality education, economic growth, quality nutrition and gender inclusiveness and these efforts has directed towards achieving the universal basic education in Ghana.

Table 1.4: Challenges Confronting GSFP in Pru East Districts

Item	S. A	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std
Caterers’ high turnover rate	72(60%)	29(21%)	5(4.2%)	9(7.5%)	7(5.8%)	1.72	1.12
Delay in payment to the caterers	102(85%)	13(10.8%)	0(0%)	5(4.2%)	0(0%)	1.23	0.66
Lack of suitable kitchen and student’s canteen	65(54.2%)	34(28.3%)	2(1.7%)	16(13.3%)	3(2.5%)	1.8	1.14
Not linking the local farmers to programme	76(63.3%)	24(20%)	2(1.7%)	10(8.3%)	8(6.7%)	1.75	1.24
Lack of effective monitoring of the GSFP at the district level	51(42.5%)	43(35.8%)	6(5%)	15(12.5%)	5(4.2%)	2.00	1.17
My school prepared food on school re-opening day	1(0.8%)	4(3.3%)	12(10%)	48(40%)	55(45.8%)	4.27	0.84
Their is overcrowding in the classroom due to GSFP	70(58.3%)	30(25%)	3(2.5%)	7(5.8%)	10(8.3%)	1.83	1.29
GFSP have no policy framework or Legislation Instrument (L.I) regarding it’s implementation and sustainability.	87(72.5%)	22(18.3%)	2(1.7%)	6(5%)	3(2.5%)	1.47	0.94

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 1.4 above shows that 72(60%) strongly agree that the major challenge confronting the GSFP was caterers high turnover rate, 29(21%) agree that challenge confronting GSFP was high caterers turnover, 5(4.2%) of the respondents remained neutral to the assertion, 9(7.5%) of the respondents disagree that high caterers turnover is a challenge confronting GSFP and 7(5.8%) of the respondent strongly disagree to the assertion that high caterers turnover is the major challenge confronting GSFP in the Pru East district. The present finding implied that the major challenge confronting the GSFP was caterer's high turnover with ($M=1.17$, $SD=1.12$) in the Pru East district. This present finding support Kedze (2013) that government's failure to provide funds to the MMDAs for caterer payments and high caterers turnover has occasionally resulted in payment to school caterers being delayed, which has led to a number of days of strikes by the caterers.

Also, table 1.4 above shows that 102(85%) strongly agree to the assertion that delay in payment to the caterers was a challenge confronting the GSFP, 13(10.8%) of the respondents agree that delay in payment to the caterers was a challenge confronting the GSFP, 0(0%) of the respondents remained neutral to the assertion whilst 5(4.2%) of the respondents disagree to the assertion that delay in payment to the caterers was a challenge confronting the GSFP and 0(0%) of the respondent strongly disagree to the assertion that delay in payment to the caterers was a challenge confronting the GSFP. The present finding implied that delay in payment to the caterers was a challenge confronting the GSFP in Pru East district with ($M=1.23$, $SD=0.66$). This present finding support Kedze (2013) that government's failure to provide funds to the MMDAs for caterer payments and high caterers turnover has occasionally resulted in payment to school caterers being delayed, which has led to a number of days of strikes by the caterers. It appears that the school children are directly impacted by the caterers' payment delays since they will take for granted the amount and quality of the meals provided (Bonney, 2013). When caterers try to pre-finance the meal preparation, certain stakeholders in the beneficiary communities worry about the low nutritional value of the meals. The Lynch (2013) research study provides support for this. In the end, the GSFP scheme would not improve the beneficiaries' academic performance as planned.

According to a Ghanaian newspaper, caterers participating in the GSFP initiative are not always paid promptly; occasionally, payments are not made for six months after the arrears are accumulated. The article also disclosed that some caterers are being forced to feed the beneficiaries twice or three times a week instead of the five times per week that was originally planned due to programme funding shortages (Bonney, 2013). This is concerning because the programme is a national initiative supported by additional development partners. One could argue that the programme is being undermined by the issue this position brings.

However, on the issues of suitable kitchen and student's canteen, 65(54.2%) of the respondents strongly agree to the assertion that lack suitable kitchen and student's canteen was a challenge confronting the GSFP, 34(28.3%) agree lack of suitable kitchen and student's canteen was a challenge confronting the GSFP, 2(1.7%) of the respondent remained neutral to the assertion whilst 16(13.3%) of the respondents disagree to the assertion that lack of suitable kitchen and student's canteen was a challenge confronting the GSFP and 3(2.5%) strongly disagree to the assertion that lack of suitable kitchen and student's canteen was a challenge confronting the GSFP. This finding revealed that lack of suitable kitchen and student's canteen was a challenge confronting the GSFP in Pru East district with ($M=1.82$, $SD=1.14$).

This present finding was inline with Akuamoah-Boateng & Sam-Tagoe (2013) opined that the positive influence of the GSFP has

being challenge with lack of infrastructure and other logistical support such as kitchens, store rooms, dining halls, serving plates, cups, spoons, water supply and proper sanitations. However, most feeding primary schools cook their food under trees, classrooms corridors when it is raining and dilapidated structures due to lack of kitchen (Sulemana et al, 2013). This challenge has contributed to poor hygienic conditions in the schools leading to health issues of the people and teachers in the school programme schools across the country. Furthermore, Oduro-Ofori et al, (2014) indicates that most where beneficiary schools lack dining halls and this force the headteachers to use some pupil classrooms dining halls to serve meals. This has negative consequence on academic performance because pupil always soil their books with the food oil and their classroom be untidy and dirty after the meals.

Additionally, table 1.4 above shows that 76(63.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that not linking the local farmers to GSFP was a challenge confronting the GSFP, 24(20%) agree to the assertion that not linking the local farmers to GSFP was a challenge confronting the GSFP, 2(1.7%) of the respondents remained neutral to the assertion whilst 10(8.3%) of the respondents disagree to the assertion that not linking the local farmers to GSFP was a challenge confronting the GSFP and 8(6.7%) of the respondents also strongly disagree to the assertion that not linking the local farmers to GSFP was a challenge confronting the GSFP in Pru East District. The current finding implied that not linking the local farmers to GSFP was a challenge confronting the GSFP in Pru East district with ($M=1.75$, $SD=1.24$). This present finding concurs to Morgan and Sonnino, (2008) that the aim of the GSFP is to involve School Implementation Committee (SIC) to work together with local farmers to supply food commodities from the local communities to the feeding schools to enhance local participation to the programme. The introduction of food suppliers has compromised this initiative at MMDAs level defeating the goal of local farmers participation in the programme. The GSFP is challenge with private sector food suppliers who procured imported food commodities outside the local communities denying the local farmers opportunities to have direct market access for their local produces. However, the food suppliers do not respect the local committee regard to the decision making on the procurement of food for the feeding programme. Sulemana, (2013) supports that not even small portion of the food supplied to the beneficiary is being bought from the local communities and this is defeating the purpose of the programme "Home-Grown" foodstuffs policy for creating market for the local people.

Furthermore, table 1.4 above indicates that 51(42.5%) of the respondents strongly agree that lack of effective monitoring of the GSFP at the district level was a challenge confronting the implementation of the GSFP, 43(35.8%) agree that lack of effective monitoring of the GSFP at the district level was a challenge confronting the implementation of the GSFP, 6(5%) of the respondents remained neutral to the assertion, whilst 15(12.5%) of the respondents disagree to the assertion that lack of effective monitoring of the GSFP at the district level was a challenge confronting the implementation of the GSFP and only 5(4.2%) of the respondents strongly disagree to the assertion that that lack of effective monitoring of the GSFP at the district level was a challenge confronting the implementation of the GSFP in Pru East district. The present findings implied that lack of effective monitoring of the GSFP at the district level was a challenge confronting the implementation of the GSFP in Pru East district with ($M=2.00$, $SD=1.17$).

More over, preparing food on the schools re-opening days, 1(0.8%) of the respondents strongly agree that their schools preparing food

on the schools re-opening days, 4(3.3%) agree that their school preparing food on the schools re-opening days, 12(10%) of the respondents remained neutral to the assertion, whilst 48(40%) of the respondents disagree to the assertion that their schools prepared food on the schools re-opening days and 55(45.8%) of the respondents strongly disagree that their schools prepared food on the schools re-opening days. This present finding implied that majority of the schools does not prepared food on the schools re-opening days in Pru East with (M=4.27, SD=0.84). This revelation implied that most caterers do not provided meals during reopening days and this has affect attendance on the reopening days but the GSFP is generally making an impact in schools in the district Abotsi, (2013).

Additionally, table 1.4 above revealed that 70(58.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that their were overcrowding in the classroom due to GSFP, 30(25%) of the respondent agree that their were overcrowding in the classroom due to GSFP, 3(2.5%) of the respondents remained neutral to the assertion, whilst 7(5.8%) of the respondents disagree to the assertion that that their were overcrowding in the classroom due to GSFP and only 10(8.3%) of the respondents strongly disagree that their schools were overcrowded due to the GSFP. This finding implied that most of GSFP schools were experiencing overcrowded due the GSFP in Pru East district with (M=1.83, SD=1.29). This current fining support Kedze (2013 that infrastructures in schools have not grown in tandem with the rise in student enrollment. In addition, the majority of the feeding schools that get subsidies do not have adequate dining halls, store rooms, or kitchens, which puts further strain on the school's already limited resources. Due to this difficulty, classrooms are now overcrowded and instruction is of high quality.

Finally, table 1.4 above revealed that 87(72.5%) of the respondents strongly agree that GFSP have no policy framework regarding it's implementation and sustainability, 22(18.3%) of the respondents agree that GFSP have no policy framework regarding it's implementation and sustainability, 2(1.7%) of the respondents remain neutral to this assertion whilst 6(5%) of the respondents disagree that GFSP have no policy framework regarding it's implementation and sustainability and 5(4.2%) of the respondents strongly disagree that GFSP have no policy framework regarding it's implementation and sustainability. The present finding revealed that GSFP have no policy framework regarding it's implementation and sustainability with (M=1.47, SD=0.94). The present findings support Kedze, (2013) that GFSP have no policy framework or Legislation Instrument (L.I) regarding it's implementation and sustainability although it is consistent with government major development policies and strategies. However, it is prudent that GSFP is backed by Legislation Instrument (LI) considering the important of the programme, its wider coverage and its linkages with various sectors such as education, health and agriculture departments.

Findings

Research Question 1: Influence of GSFP on Improving Enrolment and Retention

The following findings were drawn from the study

1. The present finding revealed that GSFP increased enrollment in schools in Pru East district with (M=1.51; Std= 0.98) and 103(90%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion.
2. The current finding depicts that GSFP increase retention in schools in Pru East district with (M=1.30, Std=0.77) and 113(94.2%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion

3. The present finding shows that GSFP had made learners to stayed at school until closing with the (M=1.78; Std=1.13) and 103 (85.8%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion.

4. The present finding revealed that GSFP reduced school drop-out among learners in Pru East district with the (M=1.93; Std=1.23) and 99 (82.5%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion.

5. The present study revealed that of that provision of meals under GSFP increase learner's academic performance in Pru East district with (M=1.42; Std=0.92) and 113(94.2%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion.

Research Question 2: Challenges encountered by the GSFP in Pru East District.

The following findings were drawn from the study

1. The present finding revealed that the major challenge confronting the GSFP was high caterer's turnover with (M=1.17, SD=1.12) and 101(84.2%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion.

2. The present finding implied that delay in payment to the caterers was a challenge confronting the GSFP in Pru East district with (M=1.23, SD=0.66) and 115(95.8%) of the respondents confirmed the assertion.

3. The current findings suggested that one of the challenges facing the GSFP in the Pru East district was not connecting the local farmers with the programme (M=1.75, SD=1.24), and 100(83.3%) of the respondent agreed with the statement.

4. The present findings implied that lack of effective monitoring of the GSFP at the district level was a challenge confronting the implementation of the GSFP in Pru East district with (M=2.00, SD=1.17) and 94(78.3%) of the respondent agreed with the statement.

5. The present study depicts that majority of GSFP schools in the Pru East district were overcrowded as a result of the GSFP (M=1.83, SD=1.29) and 100(83.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement.

6. The present finding revealed that GSFP have no policy framework or Legislation Instrument (L.I) regarding it's implementation and sustainability with (M=1.47, SD=0.94) and 109(98.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement.

Conclusion

The present research concluded that Ghana School feeding programme has tremendous impact on pupil enrollment and retention in beneficiary schools across the district. Enrollment of school continue to increase since the introduction of the GSFP in the district and there is a need to increase the number to cover more school for all children to benefit equally and will promote inclusive universal education for all children. More so, since the introduction of the GSFP, children were able to stayed at school until closing because of the meals and children school drop-out rate

has reduced due to the positive impact of the school feeding programme.

In addition, the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) is without a challenge just as the other government programmes. The GSFP is confronted with many problems such as lack of policy framework or Legislation Instrument (LI) to ensure regular funding and sustainability of programme to continue to impact on the lives of Ghana children, high caterers turnover, delayed in payment to caterers. Also, the introduction of the caterer model system has resulted into the neglect of the local farmers which is integral part of the GSFP programme implementation to promote local farmers to supply food to the feeding schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendation were made from the study

1. The study recommended that Government of Ghana should prudently develop GSFP policy guideline and Legislative Instrument to ensure regular funding to sustained the programmes.
2. The study recommended that Government should timely release fund for payment of caterers to avoid high caterers turn-over rate.
3. The study recommended that Government should review the caterers model system to enforce procurement of food from the local communities to improve home-grown policy of the programme.

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