

## Effects of School Feeding Programme (SFP) on Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State

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### Abstract

The study examined the Effect of School Feeding Programme (SFP) on Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The population of the study consisted of all teachers/head teachers, Local Government Education Authority staff, and Parent-Teacher Association members in the selected primary schools. The sample size of 341 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. The results showed a significant positive relationship between SFP and UBE, indicating that SFP has a positive effect on pupils' enrollment in the selected primary schools in Zaria. The study also revealed that SFP also has positive and significant effect on pupils' retention in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The study recommended among other things that the government should prioritize sustaining the SFP as an incentive for pupils to concentrate on their studies. This, in turn, can lead to improved learning outcomes and greater success in school. By sustaining and expanding the programme, policymakers and practitioners can work towards achieving greater academic success, higher enrolment rates, and improved pupil retention, ultimately leading to a more educated and prosperous society.

**Keywords:** School Feeding Programme, Universal Basic Education (UBE), Primary schools, Funding, Local government

### Introduction

Many nations aiming to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have made access to basic education a top priority in terms of policy. Education is a way of changing the world, according to the World Bank (1999), not merely a tool or a handout. As a result of its benefits for justice, diversity, and long-term peace, education is now regarded as a fundamental right for everyone (World Education Forum, 2000). As a social service with positive externalities that promotes economic, social, political, and technological change, it is widely acknowledged that a country's capacity to develop the skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies of its citizens is crucial and fundamentally linked to its educational system (Ogbodo & Nwaoku, 2007).

Dakar (2000) asserts that education is a fundamental component of human rights and necessary for the fulfillment of all other human rights for progress. According to Article 26 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), every child has the right to an education. Around 67 million primary-aged children are still not in school, despite improvements in access to education, particularly higher education, in developing nations. The main reasons for this are poverty and hunger. Of these kids, 53% are female and 43% are sub-Saharan Africans (UNESCO, 2011; World Food Programme, 2013). Dropout rates are reducing enrollment rates, especially in nations with active armed conflicts, where more than 40% of youngsters are not enrolled in school. Since 2005, the rate of primary-aged children who are not enrolled in school has slowed, and since 2008, it has

stayed unchanged, hovering at 61 million (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2005; UNESCO and Education for All, 2007). From 29 million in 2008 to 31 million in 2010, the estimated number of out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa (WFP, 2013).

Hunger is a major barrier to students' ability to attend school in many households and developing nations. A youngster who is hungry fails to learn well even if they are enrolled in school, in addition to having trouble entering at the appropriate age. These kids have a higher chance of dropping out of school because they must first attend to their immediate requirements for sustenance (Douben, 2006). Poor families frequently experience issues with their children's education, especially in locations where there is a significant level of food insecurity. These issues include low school enrolment, low class attendance, and high student dropout rates. Thus, emerging countries also have low levels of educational attainment (Adelman, Gillian, & Lehrer, 2009). Hunger has a big impact on students' ability to attend school, even though other signs of poverty also exist. According to Jaulmes (2005), there are 400 million school-aged children who are hungry around the world, with the bulk coming from rural areas where education is not a priority. A large number of Nigerian students are malnourished and may leave home without eating.

School feeding programs (SFPs) have significantly improved academic achievement, enrollment, and attentiveness in order to address these challenges and ensure healthy child development. Bavelly (1987) claims that SFPs can enhance a child's diet, health, and academic achievement. It has been shown that school meals enhance pupils' intellectual, physical, and dietary outcomes. The National School Nutrition Plan (NSNP) has helped to increase student achievement levels, promote active lifestyles among students, and encourage the growth of self-sustaining school gardens and other production ventures (Education Development, 2006). For poor children around the world, the World Food Programme (WFP) has evolved into the main provider of school meals. WFP encourages parents to send their kids to school by offering students take-home rations for their families in addition to free lunches. Initiatives to feed students in schools focus on the areas with the highest rates of primary school dropouts, low enrollment, and food insecurity.

The Nigerian constitution's Section 18 Subsection (3a) requires the government to offer free, universal, and obligatory elementary education. Also, the Federal Government is required by the Child Right Act of 2003 to provide universal, free basic education across the nation. The Compulsory Free and Universal Basic Education Act was passed in 2004 to fulfill this duty. The introduction of School Feeding Programs (SFPs), which are intended to enhance the nutritional intake of school-age children, by President Muhammadu Buhari's administration demonstrates his administration's dedication to upholding this right. The Home Grown School Feeding Project, which provides one meal a day to each child, is intended for 2.5 million children, or 10% of Nigeria's population, according to Xinhua (2005), which was mentioned in Muhammad (2021). Along with improving enrollment and completion rates, this initiative has also enhanced local food production and farmers' income, particularly among impoverished students in rural and urban areas. Nigeria began offering free basic education to all citizens in 1999, but implementation has been hampered by poverty, which includes hunger. In an endeavor to ensure that all children have access to free universal education, the SFP seeks to eliminate poverty as a barrier.

In order to combat childhood hunger, the Kaduna State Government launched the School Feeding Program on January 18, 2016, serving over 1.8 million primary school students in the state (Daily-Post, 4th April 2016). In order to solve the problem of low enrolment, retention, and academic performance, which was mostly brought on by hunger, the program was put into place. Many children who were capable and wanting to go to school were prevented from doing so because they

did not have access to food, and those who did go to school struggled to focus and perform well because of hunger. Primary school-aged youngsters were frequently observed begging or selling products on the streets rather than attending school in order to make ends meet. To ensure that all state residents of primary school age had access to educational opportunities, the School Feeding Project was launched in both urban and rural primary schools.

In an effort to carry out the program's goals, the Kaduna State Government and the federal government of Nigeria introduced the SFP on January 18, 2016. Increasing student enrollment, retention, academic achievement, and completion is the program's primary objective. The School Feeding Initiative seeks to provide free Universal Basic Education to kids who might otherwise miss school due to hunger. This study is being conducted to evaluate the effect of the feeding program on Universal Basic Education in Kaduna State's Zaria Local Government Area.

### **Statement of the problem**

Food is a vital necessity of life that significantly influences how people live and supports numerous areas of child development (Oniango, 1990). This demonstrates how supplying food at schools not only aids in eradicating children's temporary hunger but also motivates them to attend class and gives them a leg up on the road to a better future. Particularly in local areas with high rates of poverty, schools that offer school food programs see a considerable boost in enrollment, retention, and attendance rates. Because they can concentrate better when they are full, students stay in school for longer periods of time, and their academic performance increases (Levinger, 2005).

In Kaduna State, the circumstances are the same. Prior to the commencement of the School Food Program, Zaria Local Government had a very low enrollment of only 123,027 students. Nonetheless, after the School Food Program was put into place, enrollment shot up to 508,371. A lack of concentration caused by the students' poor retention and attendance at school had a negative impact on their academic performance. Teachers' capacity to conduct their duties well was also impaired by this condition, which made them take their employment less seriously. The aim of this study is to assess the impact of the school feeding program on Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) in the Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State in light of the aforementioned.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following objectives:

- i. To determine the impact of the school feeding programme on the enrollment of pupils in selected primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.
- ii. To investigate the impact of the school feeding programme on the retention of pupils in selected primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

H0<sub>1</sub>: School Feeding Programme has no significant effect on enrollment of pupils in the selected public primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

H0<sub>2</sub>: School Feeding Programme has no significant effect on retention of pupils in the selected public primary school in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

### **School Feeding and Enrollment of Pupil**

The enrollment in school is the quantity of students who have signed up as legitimate candidates. In many developing countries, school feeding programs (SFPs) are designed to increase enrolment and encourage students to attend class continuously throughout the day. SFPs have been discovered to increase enrollment and attendance, decrease absenteeism, and decrease drop-out rates, all of which are advantageous for educational achievement (Hutchinson, 2006). SFPs and other programs for nutrition and health education available in schools can motivate parents to enroll their children in classes. SFPs are just one of many interventions that can address some of the nutrition and health problems that school-age children face (WFP, 2010). The purpose of SFPs is to encourage students to enroll, attend class frequently, and participate in extracurricular activities. Food is used as a "magnet" to persuade students to enroll and attend frequently. According to study conducted in Ghana, children who are malnourished enroll in school later and graduate from high school for less years than children who are well-fed (Glewwe and Jacoby, 1994; Afoakwa, 2011).

Where beginning involvement rates are low, the most convincing outcomes for enrollment and attendance at school can be obtained (Ahmed, 2004; Alderman, Behrman, Lavy and Menon, 2001). As an illustration, Ahmed and Carlo (2002) present evidence of a 12% increase in attendance and an 8% rise in enrolment in a program aimed at underprivileged homes. Given prior studies on the significance of timely school entry for future academic and labor market success, the impact of SFPs on the age at which children start school is also intriguing.

According to a recent World Bank study on poverty in Bangladesh, only Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have high school enrollment rates in South Asia. It specifically highlights the importance of the Take Home Ratio (THR) in this situation. According to the study, Bangladesh's enrollment has been positively benefited by school feeding programs (SFPs). SFPs have been linked to higher enrollment and attendance in other studies (Walingo & Muslimali, 2008; Bultenheim, Alderman, & Friedman, 2011). The latter study also raised the possibility that providing school meals might persuade parents to enroll their children in school at a younger age. According to the United Nations and the World Food Program, a UN agency, giving food in schools can aid in boosting enrollment and lowering dropout rates in impoverished nations.

### **School Feeding Programme and Pupils' Retention**

Keeping something or someone close in order to prevent loss or stopping is referred to as retention. It has been discovered that the School Feeding Program affects the number of students quitting school. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) in Bangladesh recently began a program to feed students while they are in school to combat hunger in the classroom and increase school enrollment and retention in the nation's enduringly food poor regions. The initiative provides all students in intervention schools with nutrient-fortified biscuits, and a tiny trial project that started in 2002 provides students in project schools in one of Bangladesh's 64 districts with tetra pack milk and fortified biscuits. The dropout rate was reduced by 7.5%, according to an assessment of Bangladesh's school feeding program (Ahmed, 2004). This result confirms the findings of Moore and Kunze's (1994) study, which revealed that school feeding lowers the dropout rate in underdeveloped provinces, especially among girls.

### **School Feeding Programme on Pupil's Attendance**

It has been discovered that school feeding programs have a favorable effect on attendance rates. They can encourage parents to send their kids to school and make sure they go there regularly (Meyers,

Sampson, Weizman, Rogers, and Kayne, 1989; Moore and Kunze, 1994). Research in Nepal shows that malnourished children have a 5% likelihood of attending school, compared to 27% for well-nourished children, suggesting that giving school meals increases attendance (Moock and Leslie, 1986). During a three-month evaluation of a pilot school feeding program in Malawi, enrollment increased by 5% and attendance improved by up to 36% when compared to control schools (WFP, 1999). As evidenced by a program in Bangladesh that increased enrolment by 20% and lowered absenteeism by 2%, traditional school-based food distribution has also been effective in boosting attendance, particularly among girls (Ahmed and Billah, 1994). In a research conducted in West Bengal, Rana et al. (2004) discovered that schools with midday meal programs had higher attendance rates than those without, by a margin of 10.1%. Statistics of attendance revealed that in the month before the study, schools without the mid-day meal program had a 60.6% attendance rate, while schools with the program had a 71.9% attendance rate.

Ahmed (2004) conducted a study to assess the Bangladesh School Feeding Programme utilizing a combined cross-sectional survey and a retrospective cost-benefit analysis. One million kids were given a fortified wheat biscuit as a mid-morning snack as a result of the initiative, which increased enrollment in school by 14.2%, monthly attendance by around 1.3 days, and dropout risk by 7.5%. Girls tended to attend school more frequently in schools providing school feeding assistance in Northern Rural India, and their chances of finishing primary school were 30% higher. Although the program in Pakistan that provided conditional Take Home Rations had little impact on girls' grade attainment, it altered how parents felt and behaved. 48% of homes did not send any of their daughters to school prior to the program's launch, but once it began, every household did so (Bergeron & Del Rosso, 2001). In 2005, the WFP's Food for Education program fed 21.7 million children in 74 countries (WFP, 2006), and an examination of that program indicated that enrollment in school for both boys and girls increased by 14% annually in 4,175 WFP-assisted schools in 32 sub-Saharan African nations (Gelli, 2006). In order to achieve one of the Millennium Development Goals of delivering universal primary education by 2015, providing school feeding programs or take-home rations serves as an incentive for enrolling children in school and promoting daily attendance.

### **Empirical review of literature**

In their 2016 study, Taylor and Ogbogu looked at how enrollment and academic performance were affected by school food programs in public elementary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The study came to the conclusion that the State Government should address gaps in program execution to sustain its success in raising student enrolment and performance by using a survey research design and data from primary and secondary sources. While they are connected, this study and the present study are different in that the former examines the impact of school food programs on students' overall educational development while the latter examines enrollment and academic performance especially in Osun State.

Similar to this, Kidane (2012) investigated how enrolment and dropout rates were affected by school food programs in Jijiga Zone, Somali National Regional State, Ethiopia. The project attempted to satisfy the immediate desire for greater learning while increasing access, attendance, enrolment, and lowering dropout rates. The study discovered that school food programs had a favorable and significant impact on student enrolment using a survey research method and data collection through questionnaires and structured interviews. The study came to the conclusion that thorough awareness of the unique barriers to education that restrict access should serve as the foundation for efforts to increase enrolment and decrease dropout rates. While evaluating the effect of school nutrition programs on enrolment, it is similar to the current study but has a different focus and coverage region.

The effects of school food programs on student enrollment, attendance, and academic achievement in primary schools in Tanzania's Njombe District were evaluated by Evarist, Michael, and Chaula in their research from 2015. In an effort to improve them, the study looked at how school food programs impact these variables. A mixed-approach methodology that combined qualitative and quantitative techniques was employed in the research, which was carried out utilizing a descriptive research design. The results of the study demonstrated that although school feeding programs are essential for student enrollment, their efficacy also depends on other factors like the availability of a supportive teaching and learning environment, including good school infrastructure, an adequate number of teachers, and access to educational resources. This study, which also examines how school food policies affect student enrollment and academic performance, is relevant to the current investigation but differs from it in terms of the specific context and methods employed.

To assess the nutritional quality of the Universal Basic Education school lunch program and its impact on students' retention, Lawal (2011) conducted a study in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, Nigeria. For data analysis, the study used descriptive statistics including percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The study found that the school lunch program's pilot phase dramatically raised enrollment, attendance, and retention rates for students. The study suggested that all public elementary schools in FCT Abuja, Nigeria, should implement the lunch program, and that heads of schools should ensure that nutrition-related employees oversee and supervise the cooking of the school lunch. Despite the fact that this study and the current study are connected since they both concentrate on the nutritional value and educational benefits of school meals, this study did not employ interviews in the same way that the current study did.

Galaa and Saaka (2012) investigated the management of a successful and long-lasting school food program. Both qualitative and quantitative research techniques were employed to gather primary data for the study, which sought to determine the crucial elements for improving school feeding program outcomes. According to the study, school meals have the potential to boost student enrollment, retention rates, and academic performance. The study came to the conclusion that the school feeding program required a significant investment that could not be maintained indefinitely and that local communities, districts, and partners needed to collaborate to provide additional resources to make the program viable. Although this study is connected to it because it focuses on school nutrition, it does not explore how it affects educational growth and only uses primary sources of information.

Daniel and Otieno looked at how school feeding programs affected the academic performance of preschoolers in Kayole Zone, Nairobi County (2014). In order to investigate the effects of school food programs on young children in Kayole Zone, the study used a descriptive survey approach with a deliberate sampling of private and public schools. In addition to conducting surveys with parents, students, and head teachers, data was also acquired through observation and interviews. The study found that school meals had a substantial impact on children's pre-academic performance and that insufficient school nutrition also contributed to poor pre-school student performance. The study found that it is crucial to inform the public about the importance of school feeding programs for young children. The study recommended that the community should be sensitized about the significance of school feeding programmes for pre-school pupils and the need for their support.

Mwavula (2014) investigated how school food programs affected students' attendance in public primary schools in flood-prone areas of Kenya's Tana Delta District (Garsen Division). The study chose 348 respondents who completed questionnaires using a descriptive survey design and stratified simple random sampling techniques. To present the data, the study used descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentage tables, pie charts, and graphs. According to the study, floods in

the Garsen Division had an impact on how many students choose to enroll in schools, but the school feeding program encouraged more students to do so. This study, which likewise focuses on school feeding, is connected to the current study, although it varies in that it does not use primary data.

In Nairobi's Bomet County's Kaplong Zone, Barnabas (2014) investigated how school feeding programs affected the academic achievement of young preschoolers. The purpose of the study was to assess, contrast, and compare how school food programs affected the academic performance of young children. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in the study, which included a survey research design. The entire pre-school student body and faculty in the pre-schools in the Kaplong Zone that provided school nutrition programs made up the study population. Tables and descriptive statistics like percentages were utilized in the study to analyze the data. Due to untrained teachers' lack of understanding of the importance of school food programs and the benefits of balanced diets for young children, the study discovered that certain preschools served unbalanced diets, which had a negative impact on young children's academic performance.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Human Capital Theory (HCT), which was first put forth by Smith (1776) and popularized by Becker (1975), Mincer (1958), and Schultz (1961), serves as the study's theoretical foundation. HCT investigates how education, growth, and social well-being are related, and it makes the case that investing in health, education, and student training is a type of capital investment that has positive economic and social returns for both the investor and the society as a whole. According to HCT, improved productivity is a result of education and training, which raises wages and boosts GDP. Heckman (2000) illustrates the benefits of early childhood education by using HCT to show how children who receive it gain knowledge and abilities that increase their production as investments progress. Heckman contends that although the US overinvests in individuals with poor skill sets, it underinvests in early children. Additionally, studies demonstrate that early childhood education benefits underprivileged kids in the long run by enhancing educational attainment, promoting special education, and lowering crime rates.

In the past, the human capital theory (HCT) has emphasized the connection between social returns, economic growth, and educational attainment. Recent advancements, however, underline the significance of the level of education and the timing of educational investments in the creation of human capital. A person's knowledge, skills, and life experience are combined to form their human capital, and it is anticipated that higher levels of human capital will raise GDP, which will be advantageous to both individuals and society as a whole. Babalola (2003) contends that education boosts labor force productivity in a variety of ways, which in turn promotes economic growth and development. In addition, policymakers can use HCT as a framework for gauging the effectiveness of public spending on initiatives to promote increased school enrollment. Furthermore, it can help in the establishment of more successful policies by giving decision-makers knowledge of the types and degrees of education and training that are most crucial for achieving desired results, such as economic growth and enhanced civic engagement. HCT's ability to provide a useful viewpoint on how policy might encourage people to invest in their own education is one of its main advantages.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study used a survey research design to collect information on respondents' perceptions of how the School Feeding Program (SFP) has affected Universal Basic Education in the Zaria Local

Government Area of Kaduna State (UBE). The goal of the study was to use questionnaire administration to systematically gather data from a representative sample of the community. When the goal is to gather opinions, attitudes, or perceptions from a sizable group of people, the survey research design is a particularly useful tool for gathering structured and organized data.

### **Population and Sample Size of the Study**

The Local Government Education Authority, Parent-Teacher Association, and all teachers in the chosen elementary schools in Kaduna State's Zaria Local Government Areas are participants in the study. Nevertheless, the study purposefully omitted the number of elementary school students. In order to gather crucial data for making informed decisions on the subject, it was decided to concentrate primarily on those who are knowledgeable about School Feeding Programs and the activities of the Universal Basic Education program.

**Table 1: Population Distribution of the Study**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Category of population</b>	<b>Population</b>
1	Teachers/head teachers	1,669
2	LGEA staff	33
3	PTA	1,160
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,862</b>

**Source:** Field survey

Table 1, which details the study's sample, shows that Zaria had 1,669 teachers and head teachers in total, 33 employees from the Zaria Local Government Area, and 1,160 PTA members. These three groupings together consist of 2,862 people. The researcher used the Krejcie and Morgan Table to establish the proper sample size, and 341 was suggested as a representative sample size.

### **Administration of instruments and methods of data analysis**

The researcher trained research assistants to administer the data collecting instruments to the chosen respondents in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State in order to gather accurate and authentic data on the Influence of School Feeding Programs on Universal Basic Education. To evaluate the hypotheses regarding the effect of the SFP on Universal Basic Education in the selected public primary schools located in Zaria, the data acquired was then put through a simple linear regression analysis.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Hypothesis one Testing**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between school feeding programme and enrollment of pupils in the selected public primary schools in Zaria LGA.



**Table 2** Summary of regression result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	8.426	1.151		7.320	.000
SFP	.424	.035	.320	12.148	.000
R				.745	
R <sup>2</sup>				.645	
F-stat				363.370	
P-value f-stat					.000 <sup>b</sup>

a. Dependent Variable: enrollment

Source: SPSS output version 25

The regression result is summarized in the second table, which is displayed as Table 2. Based on a fitness statistic value of 363.370 significant at a 5% significance level, it is shown that the selected factors effectively describe variations in the dependent variable. In the event that all other factors remain constant, the predictor will account for 64.5% of the school enrollment, according to the R-squared value of .645, which represents the coefficient of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The School Feeding Program and student enrollment in particular schools within the Zaria LGA are significantly and positively correlated, as evidenced by the P-value being less than 5% level of significance. In other words, the enrollment of pupils increases by 42.4% as the school food program expands. The null hypothesis, according to which there is no significant correlation between the school food program and pupils' enrolment in the selected public primary schools, is rejected, is also supported by the F-Statistic of 363.370 and the P-Value of 0.00 in the ANOVA table. This outcome is consistent with Kidane (2012) findings which showed that SFP significantly and favorably impacted student enrollment. The study suggests focusing on understanding the particular educational barriers that prevent access to education in order to boost student enrollment and minimize dropout rates. Overall, the results indicate that SFP positively and significantly affects Zaria LGA.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between school feeding programme and retention of pupils in the selected public primary schools in Zaria LGA.

**Table 3** Summary of regression result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.161	.043		3.710	.000
SFP	.533	.046	.520	11.569	.000
R				.674	
R <sup>2</sup>				.454	
F-stat				254.221	
P-value f-stat					.000 <sup>b</sup>

a. Dependent Variable: retention

Source: SPSS output version 25

The regression result is summarized in the third table. According to a fitness statistic value of 254.221, which is significant at a 5% level, the chosen factors accurately describe variations in the dependent variable. The independent variable's coefficient on the dependent variable, which is represented by the R-squared value of .454, accounts for 45.4% of school retention, if all other variables remain constant. The P-value is less than 5%, which indicates a substantial and favorable link between the School Feeding Program and student retention in particular schools within the Zaria

LGA. Together with the expansion of the school food program, the retention rate of students increases by 45%. The F-Statistic of 254.221 and P-Value of 0.000 in the ANOVA table demonstrate that the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant association between the school food program and children' retention in the selected public primary schools, is rejected. This study's findings are in line with those of Taylor and Ogbogu's (2016) investigation, which found that school feeding improved enrollment and academic performance among primary school pupils in Osogbo Local Government Area of Osun State, among other things.

## **Discussion of findings**

### **Relationship between SFP and Pupil's Enrolment in Public Primary School in Zaria LGA**

The study, which looked at how the School Feeding Program and student enrollment in public primary schools in Zaria LGA, Kaduna State, relate to one another, is discussed along with the findings shown in table 2. A 42% increase in student enrollment is predicted to result from any increase in the school feeding program, according to the Beta value of 0.424 and the P-Value of 0.000, which show a positive and significant linear association between the school feeding program and student enrollment. The supplementary explanation in the paragraph claims that this finding shows a positive and substantial linear relationship between the School Feeding Program and student enrollment in selected public elementary schools in Zaria LGA, Kaduna State. Also, expanding the School Feeding Program increases enrolment in public elementary schools in Zaria LGA, Kaduna State, underscoring the importance of the program in promoting enrollment. The paragraph suggests that the government continuing enhancing the School Feeding Plan in order to increase enrolment in certain public primary schools in both Zaria LGA. The reference to Taylor and Ogbogu (2016) highlights the necessity of continuing to strengthen the School Feeding Programme while also emphasizing the importance of retaining student enrollment through government measures.

### **Relationship between SFP and Pupil's Retention in Public Primary School in Zaria LGA**

According to Table 3's findings, there is a negative correlation between the School Feeding Program and students' retention in a subset of public primary schools in Zaria LGA, with a beta value of 0.533 and a P-Value of 0.000. The two variables may have a significant and positive linear relationship, according to this. In particular, an increase in the School Nutrition Program is associated with a 53% increase in student retention. These results have significant ramifications for practitioners and policymakers trying to enhance educational outcomes in Zaria LGA. They claim that enhancing the school feeding program can significantly affect how long students stay in some local public primary schools. Higher retention rates are linked to better academic performance and larger learning gains, which can help to enhance educational outcomes generally. The study's findings are in line with other studies, such as that done by Gaala and Saaka (2012), who emphasized the significance of ongoing investment in the School Feeding Programme to maximize its influence on student retention. The findings of the current study support this message and indicate that further efforts are required to maintain and enhance the School Feeding Programme in Zaria LGA. In summary, the findings of this study show a favorable and substantial linear link between the School Feeding Programme and students' retention in a subset of public primary schools in Zaria LGA. This underlines the necessity of ongoing funding for the program in order to maximize its impact and emphasizes the significant role that the program may play in enhancing educational achievements in the area.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study's findings demonstrate that the School Feeding Programme (SFP) significantly improves students' academic achievement, enrollment, and retention in a chosen group of public primary schools in Kaduna State's Zaria LGA. In particular, it has been discovered that the SFP encourages students to do better academically, boosts enrollment in public primary schools, and enhances student retention. The study made the following recommendation:

- i. According to the report, maintaining the SFP as a motivator for students to focus on their studies will assist greater academic performance and should be a government priority. Improved learning outcomes and increased academic achievement may follow from this. Policymakers and practitioners can endeavor to increase academic success, enrollment rates, and student retention by sustaining and growing the program, which will ultimately result in a society with a higher level of education and prosperity.
- ii. According to the report, the state government should continue the SFP in all 23 Local Government Areas of the state to increase enrollment. In addition to increasing enrollment and participation in elementary schools, expanding the program's scope will allow more students to take advantage of its benefits.
- iii. In order to promote retention, the report advises the government to consider extending the School Food Plan to encompass pupils up to primary level six. By providing incentives for students to continue in school, the SFP can reduce dropout rates, boost retention, and enhance long-term educational outcomes.

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