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## **Opinion of Pupils, Teachers and Parents on School Feeding Programme in Public Primary Schools, Ede South Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The importance of School feeding Programme is well documented. However, it was discovered that just a few studies have been carried out that involve pupils, parents and teachers on their opinions on school feeding programme. Therefore, this research was aimed at identifying the opinion of pupils, parents and teachers on the benefits of school feeding programme in Osun- State, Nigeria. The research adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design. The sample size for the pupils was determined by Taro Yamane, which was 296. Random sampling technique was used to select 296 parents that represents each primary four pupils during the Parents, Teachers association meeting. Self-structured questionnaires were used to collect data. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the constructs ranged from 0.72 to 0.85. The research achieved a response rate of 80%. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that majority of the pupils, teachers and parents 197(65.7%), 14(63.6%), and 117(78.5%) agreed to know about the feeding programme respectively. Also, 161(53.7%) pupils agreed that food was available for all, 9(45%) of the teachers affirmed that they like the school feeding programme and should continue, while 296(100%) of the parents attested to that they have a child in school with school feeding programme. The research concluded that there were adequate awareness of school feeding programme to all stakeholders however, the feeding did not show much contribution to the academic performance and reduction in the dropout rate of pupils of the Ede south Local Government. It was therefore recommended that the government of Osun State can do more than the provision of free feeding, they should monitor the distribution processes, provide free academic textbooks for the pupils and make teaching creative.*

**KEYWORDS:** opinion, parents, teachers, pupils, school feeding programme

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The growth and development curve or slope shows that, children, most especially those within the primary school level occupy the exponential log stage. This implies that, children need higher

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nutritional values to grow and develop basic organs and tissues. Therefore, deficiencies in basic nutritional requirements of children at this stage leads to mal-development and malfunctioning of some organs and tissues, which in turn inhibit the performance of children at school with irreversible effects. Some area where this effect could be pronounced could be physical such as in stunted growth example, cretinism and poor mental ability leading to lower assimilation capacity of school work. These could be short term effects (Food & Agriculture Organization, 2019).

Nutritional related disorders common among primary school pupils, according to Ayogu, et al (2018) tooth decay, obesity, iron deficiency anaemia, calcium deficiency, iodine deficiency, bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa. Falade et al (2012) noted that, nutrition is a priority area for humans and healthy eating habits should be established and maintained during childhood and adolescence. This makes childhood a period of marked social and biological changes as part of the transition from childhood to adulthood characterized by an increase in consumption of food and its utilization for growth and development which if met leads to good nutritional status among pupils. Nutritional status varies widely between individual pupils and also displays some general trend over time reflecting socio-cultural trends in food availability and nutritional goals.

Children's nutritional status could be complimented through adequate school feeding programme. The poor nutritional status of pupils have been attributed to many factors including low meal frequency, high consumption of sweetened beverages, increased consumption of energy dense food, increased consumption of food away from home (with peers), skipping meals particularly breakfast, consumption of high dense fatty and sugary fast foods, eating meals characterized by low content of fruits and vegetables, adopting unconventional dietary practices such as cutting down the sizes of meal in an attempt to lose weight and attain a slim body figure particularly among females (Saeni, 2015). However, school feeding programme have been a key response to the recent food and economic crises and function to some degree in nearly every country in the world. Tijani, et al (2017), in their study at Maiduguri metropolis of north eastern Nigeria define school feeding as the provision of food on site or to take home, or the provision of food to school children. School feeding is a multi-sectorial intervention with effects across education, health and nutrition and with the potential for benefits across a life course. School feeding programme can improve school attendance and learning, as well as a child's physical and psycho-social health. According to the World Food Programme (WFP,2018), nearly every country in the world has a national school feeding programme, serving an estimated 368 million children worldwide with an investment of up to \$ 75 billion. As at 2019, the school feeding program is the second largest programme in terms of food beneficiaries (WFP, 2019). Therefore, school feeding programme has become of great importance to education.

School feeding programme have been introduced by most countries, with exceptionally large-scale program in China and India (WFP, 2018). India now feeds more than 100 million children; Brazil 48 million; China 44 million (WFP, 2019). In Africa, the school feeding programme had also been adopted for example, in Kenya, more than 1.5 million school children are fed with a hot lunch of corn and legumes each day, the only meal many of them may have (Saeni, 2015). South Africa school nutrition programme is designed to alleviate poverty, improve access to education and academic performance through good nutrition (Ademokun et al, 2014).

However various challenges in the recent times compacting the Nigeria economy as well as presence of insecurity has in one way or the other affected the nutritional content for children, either in quantity or quality. Therefore, free school feeding in some states in Nigeria is a way to supplement the existing food and nutritional ration among the children. The first – time school feeding programme was launched in Nigeria was in 2005 with the assistance of the United Nations’ Children Education Fund (UNICEF) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) (Ayodele, 2019). The goal was to provide one meal per school day to all primary school pupils in Nigeria aimed at improving the health of school children, increase their enrolment, retention and completion rate (Cummings & Kulutuye, 2017). The essence of free feeding with regards to public health objectives and educational development in Nigeria, is to address the quantity and quality challenges in children nutrition, as well promote enrolment, punctuality and performance among pupils. The programme also set to reduce the rate of dropout and child labour among pupils (Kiilu & Mugambi, 2019).

Eleven years after, in 2016 Nigeria re-lunched a National Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSGF) programme to address the issue of 40% of all school children that go to school hungry and as incentive for the participation of over 10 million out-of-school children in school (Bashir et al. 2018). Osun was among the twelve (12) States selected to begin a phased–pilot roll out implementation of the first launch of the school feeding programme. According to Adekunle and Ogboru (2016) in Osun State, the school feeding programme was given a comprehensive review in 2010 while coming up with an overhauled programme in 2012. The programme was re-packaged and christened “Osun Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme – O’ meals”. Yet, it is necessary that, school feeding programme in Osun State comply with World Health Organization’s (WHO) specification for healthy children and as well comply with public health standard for food hygiene. The government, pupils, teachers and parents are all stakeholders in the school feeding programme. Finding their opinions on its implementation becomes very necessary to be able to determine areas of effectiveness and that of improvements. The implication of this is that, although school feeding may compliment food eating at home, yet, food eating at home should as well compliment the food provided by government in schools. This reflected that, caregivers such as in school (mainly teachers) and at home (parents) need to be included, in the process of free school feeding programme for efficient implementation. If otherwise, the programme would not achieve the public health specifications on child nutrition without the consideration of the opinion of care givers and teachers who are also saddled with the responsibility of ensuring a child grows physically, mentally and academically.

Finally, it was also observed that this well-being by most learners resulted in improved attendance and raised learner’s class punctuality leading to increase time learners spent in school. According to the study conducted in Zambia by Sitali, et al (2020) the report showed that head teachers and teachers mentioned the benefit of school feeding programme when linked to the main stream curriculum; its priorities experiential education, integrates several subject areas, and extend its influence on the whole school, the family and the community. However, it was noted that while school feeding programme has led to an increase in enrolment and attendance, this increases the likelihood that educational quality may be low. Head teachers and teachers amplified that school feeding improved nutritional.

In a study conducted by Tijani et al, (2017) in Maiduguri, Nigeria emphasized that, when they noted that, the opinion of parents in sustaining school meal programme is key, in that, they will encourage

their children to come to school regularly so that, they will not miss their own ration of school meals. More so, an all-inclusive school feeding programme, such that include parents, could help them improve on the food they provide for their children at home. On the other hand, teacher's opinion could foster success in school feeding programme. For instance, Stephens and Shanks, (2015) found that, teachers could be a source of feedback about the programme. This is possible because, teachers have direct link with the pupils and could tell, if nutritional strength of the food affect intelligence of the pupils. However, most of the study conducted in this area does not combine the opinions of pupils, parents and teacher. This study therefore filled the gap, left in other studies. The main objective of this study is to identify the opinion of pupils, teachers and parents on school feeding programme in public schools in Osun State, Nigeria. Specific objectives of this study were as follow to:

1. identify the opinions of pupils in Osun State public primary schools' school regarding school feeding programme objectives;
2. identify the opinions of teachers in Osun State public primary schools' school regarding school feeding programme objectives and
3. identify the opinions of parents in Osun State public primary schools' school regarding school feeding programme objectives.

### **Research Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between pupil's opinion on the school feeding programme and the pupils' attendance based on records.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between parent's opinion and the enrolment of pupils on school feeding programme.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teacher's opinion on the school feeding programme and the dropout rates of pupils.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study used quantitative cross-sectional method to examine the opinion of pupils, teachers and parents on school feeding programme in Ede South Local government, Ede, Osun State. The study made use of Primary four pupils of selected schools on the ground that they have been participating in the programme since their inception in their schools. Also, all head teachers, primary four teachers and parents in the selected public schools in the Local government constituted the population of the study. The total number of primary four Pupils in the selected Public Primary School in Ede South LGA is 1134 respectively. The population of the parents was based on sample size of Pupils (1134). While that of the teachers is 559 respectively. Sample for the pupils was calculated using population from State Universal Primary Education Board. Sample size of 296 was derived using Taro's formular. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the selection of the pupils. This sampling procedure combined purposive, stratified sampling technique, and random sampling technique. As for parents, random sampling techniques was used to select 296 parent that represents each primary four pupils during parent-teacher association (PTA) meeting while all primary four teachers from selected schools were purposively selected.

The instruments for data collection were structured questionnaire based on the research objectives. The questionnaires were designed for the three groups involved in the study- parents, teachers and pupils. For each group questionnaire is divided into two (2) sections. The validity of the instrument was established through face and content validity technique. The instrument was given to experts of Nursing Science and Tests & Measurement. Only question item that was deemed relevant to the study was retained. Test re-test reliability method was adopted in this study. The instrument was administered on twenty-nine (29) class four pupils as well as 29 parents and 4 teachers selected from two primary schools in Osogbo Local Government twice at an interval of two weeks. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to calculate the collected data which yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.719, 0.755 and 0.846 for opinion of pupils, teachers and parents respectively.

Two previously trained research assistants were employed for the distribution of questionnaire among respondents. Afterwards, researcher administered questionnaires to the respondents in their various schools one after the other. The completed questionnaires were retrieved upon completion and prepared for data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data. Hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Opinions of pupils regarding school feeding programme objectives**

S/N	Items	SD	D	IDK	A	SA
1	The feeding program is known by all	1(0.3%)	6(2.0%)	6(2.0%)	197(65.7%)	86(29.0%)
2	Food is available for all in school	1(0.3%)	3(1.0%)	2(0.7)	161(53.7%)	129(43.5%)
3	The quality and quantity of food is great and satisfactory	1(0.3%)	1(0.3%)	28(9.3%)	124(41.7%)	142(47.3%)
4	Getting food in school helps me understand my lessons	2(0.7%)	2(0.7%)	56(18.3%)	97(32.7%)	140(46.7%)
5	School feeding improves my health	9(3.0%)	2 (0.7%)	29(9.8)	142(47.3%)	114(38.0%)
6	School feeding makes me come to school every day	10(3.4%)	9(3%)	29(9.8%)	60(20.3%)	188(63.5%)
7	Provision of food in school has increase the number of students in my class	5(1.7%)	2(0.7%)	53(17.90%)	122(40.7%)	114(38%)
8	Do you like the feeding program to continue	4(1.3%)	7(2.3%)	27(9.12%)	130(43.3%)	129(43%)
9	The food distributed to us is usually small	81(27%)	89(29.7%)	84(28.4%)	21(7.0%)	20(6.7%)
10	I usually purge after taking the school meal	69(23.0%)	107(35.7 %)	83(28.0%)	24(8%)	13(4.3%)
11	My teachers are always served	104(34.7%)	72(24.0%)	108(36.0%)	5(1.7%)	8(2.7%)

**Key:** Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), I don't know (IDK), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA)

Table 1 shows the opinion of pupils regarding the feeding program of Osun State government. Majority of the respondents 197(65.7%) agreed knowing about the feeding program, 161(53.7%) affirms that food is available for all in all schools, 142(47.3%) agrees that the quality and quantity of food given is great and satisfactory, 140(46.7%) strongly disagree with getting food in school help me understand my lessons, 142(47.3%) agrees that school feeding improves their health, 188(63.5%) agrees that school feeding makes them go to school every day, 122(40.7%) agrees that provision of food in school has increased the number of students in their class, 130(43.3) agrees that they want the feeding program to continue, 89(29.7%) disagrees to the fact that food distributed to them are usually small, while 108(36%) strongly disagree that the food are not always served by their teachers.

**Table 2: Opinions of teachers regarding school feeding programme objectives**

	Statement Questions	SD	D	IDK	A	SA
1	You aware of school feeding program	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	2(10%)	18 (90%)
2	Are the pupils served with varieties of food regularly in your school	3(15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12(60%)	5(25%)
3	Do you like the school feeding programme to continue	3(15%)	4(20%)	2(10%)	5 (25%)	9(45%)
4	The quality and quantity of food been served to the pupils is good and satisfactory	2(10%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	12 (75%)	3(15%)
5	School feeding programme contributes to the students' enrolment in school?	0(0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	7 (35%)	12(60%)
6	School feeding has contributed to reduction of drop-out rate greatly?	0(0%)	1(5%)	0(0%)	4(20%)	15(75%)
7	As a teacher, are you fully involved in the school feeding program in your school?	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	0(0%)	7(35%)	4 (20%)
8	You involved in school feeding policy making	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	0(0%)	2(10%)	2 (10%)
9	Supervising the cooking of foods by the food vendors	3 (15%)	4(20%)	0(0%)	9(45%)	4(20%)
10	Poor funding render school feeding ineffective	12 (60%)	4(20%)	0(0%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)
11	Non- involvement of teachers in the programme contributes to ineffective of school feeding programme	1(5%)	3 (15%)	0(0%)	14(70%)	2 (2%)
12	Poor monitoring of the programme is the major factor affecting the effectiveness of the school feeding programme.	0(0%)	2(10%)	0(0%)	6 (30%)	12 (60%)

Table 2 shows the opinion of teachers on school feeding programme. It shows that majority of the respondents 18 (90%) affirm they are aware of school feeding program, 12(60%) agreed that the

pupils are served with varieties of food regularly in the school, 9(45%) strongly agreed they will like school feeding program to continue. 12(60%) rated the quality of the school feeding are satisfactory, 12(60%) agreed that the school feeding programme contributes to students' enrolment in schools, 15(75%) strongly agreed that school feeding program helps in reducing students dropout, 7(35%) agree that they are fully involved in the school feeding program in their school, 10(50%) strongly disagree that they are not fully involve in the school feeding policy making, 9(45%) disagree that they are supervising food prepared by the vendor 12(60%) of the respondent strongly disagree that poor funding render school feeding programme ineffective, 14(70%) of the respondent agree that non- involvement of teachers in the programme contributes to ineffective of school feeding programme while 12(60%) of the respondents strongly disagree that poor monitoring of the programme is the major factor affecting the effectiveness of the school feeding programme. respondent

**Table 3: Opinions of parents regarding school feeding programme objectives**

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>IDK</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
1	I am aware of school feeding program	0 (0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.7%)	294 (99.3%)
2	You have child in school feeding program	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	296 (100%)
3	Pupils under school feeding benefit from the programme.	44 (14.87%)	20 (6.8%)	35 (11.8%)	66 (22.3%)	131 (42.9%)
4	The quality and quantity of food been served to the pupils is good and satisfactory	84 (28.3%)	43 (14.5%)	22 (7.4)	27 (9.1%)	127 (49.9%)
5	School feeding programme contributed to the enrolment of your child (ren) enrolment in school	135 (45.6%)	64 (21.6%)	0 (0%)	44 (14.9%)	53 (17.9%)
6	School feeding programme contributes to the students' enrolment in school greatly	120 (40.5%)	42 (14.4%)	10 (3.8%)	66 (22.3%)	58 (19.6%)
7	School feeding helps in reducing pupils drop-out	74 (25%)	22 (7.4%)	0(0%)	66 (22.3%)	134 (45.8%)
8	Lack of community members in school feeding programme render school feeding ineffective	48 (16.2%)	33 (11.1%)	10 (3.8%)	63 (21.9%)	142 (48%)
9	Lack of proper hygiene from the side of the food vendor makes school feeding in-attractive to the pupils	156 (57.7%)	48 (16.2%)	2 (0.68%)	44 (14.9%)	46 (15.%)

Table 3 shows the opinions of parents in Osun State regarding school feeding programme. 294 (99.3) affirms strongly that they are aware of the school feeding program, 296 (100%) strongly confirm that

they have a child in school feeding program, 131(44.3%) affirmed that parent whose children are under school feeding program benefit from the program, 127(49.9%) strongly rated the quality of school feeding program satisfactorily, 135 (45.6%) strongly affirm that school feeding programme did not contributed to the enrolment of their child (ren) in school , 120(40.5%) strongly disagree in their opinion that school feeding program contributes to the enrollment of children in school, 134(45.8%) affirm that school feeding programme help in reducing pupils drop out- rate. 142(48%) strongly agreed that lack of community members in school feeding programme render school feeding ineffective while 156(57.7%) strongly disagree that lack of proper hygiene from the side of the food vendor makes school feeding in-attractive to the pupils

### Research Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between pupil's opinion of the school feeding programme and pupils attendance in school based on records.

Table 4: Relationship between pupil's opinion of the school feeding programme and the attendance of the pupil based on records

		Pupils Opinion	Attendance of pupils
Pupils Opinion	Pearson Correlation	1	.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	296	296
Attendance of pupils	Pearson Correlation	.100	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	296	

\*\*. $P < 0.05$  level (2-tailed),  $N=296$ .

Table 4 shows that the opinion of pupil's based on the feeding programme and their attendance has a perfect positive but weak correlation between both variables. However, there was also a significant relationship between the opinions of pupils and their attendance  $r=.1$ ,  $P<0.000$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that the feeding programme with respect to their opinion has influence on the pupil's attendance in classes.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between parents' opinion about the school feeding programme and pupils' enrolment in school.

**Table 5: Relationship between parents' opinion about the school feeding programme and the enrolment of pupils**

		Parents opinion	Enrolment
Parents opinion	Pearson Correlation	1	.250
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020
	N	296	296
	Pearson Correlation	.250	1
Enrolment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	
	N	296	296

\*\*. $P > 0.05$  level (2-tailed),  $N=296$ .

Table 5 shows that the Pearson Product Moment correlation between the opinion of parents on the school feeding program and the enrolment based of record. There was a positive but weak correlation between the opinion of pupils based on the feeding program and the enrolment. However, there was significant relationship between them at  $r=.250$ ,  $P>0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that in opinion of parents regarding the school feeding programme has influence on the enrolment of the pupils.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teacher's opinion on the school feeding programme and the dropout rates of pupils.

**Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlations between teachers' opinion on the school feeding programme and the dropout rates of pupils**

		Teachers' opinion	Dropout rate
Teachers' opinion	Pearson Correlation	1	.340
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002*
	N	296	296
	Pearson Correlation	.340	1
Dropout	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002*	
	N	296	296

\*. $P < 0.05$  level (2-tailed),  $N=296$ .

Table 6 shows that the Pearson Product Moment correlation between the teacher's opinion about the school feeding programme and the dropout rates. There was a significant relationship between teachers

opinion and the dropout rates of pupils regarding the school feeding at  $r=.340$ ,  $P<0.05$  which was positive but a weak correlation. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that the opinion of the teachers was influential on the dropout rates of the pupils.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The outcome of the study shows that pupils are aware of school feeding programme and established it that that food is always available for them when in school. It was shown clearly from the study that the school feeding programme with respect to pupils opinion has influence on their attendance in classes as 188(63.5%) pupils affirm that school feeding makes them to come to The findings agreed with the findings of Oduro-Ofori and Adwoa-Yeboah (2014) and Saeni (2015) which revealed that SFP has increased pupils' attendance to schools and is an effective tool for students' enrollment and means of reducing dropout. Therefore, SFP could be explained in the context of Abraham Maslow's theory of Motivation (theory of needs) that SFP provides pupils the opportunity to satisfying their physiological needs when they attend schools. When viewed from learning theories (either classical or operant conditioning theory; or social learning theory), it could be explained that the SFP has enhanced or encouraged the acquisition of school enrollment and attendance among pupils in public primary schools in the study area.

Again, Yunusa, et al (2012) observed in his study that although SFPs motivate parents to enroll their children in school, its impact on academic performance is mixed and depends on various factors within the context in which the programme is set. Drawing from this, Saeni (2015) opined that SFPs would best improve the performance of pupils when coupled with adequate learning materials, physical facilities and teacher motivation. In-school meals are effective at increasing school attendance rates because children receive the meals only on days when they attend school. Studies have shown that 'magnetic effect' of the school feeding meal program has greatly increased school attendance rates especially among young children. In rural areas schools that provide meals have higher attendance rates and low drop-out rates than schools that do not (Espejo et al, 2009).

The opinion of teachers on school feeding programme with respect to its objective shows that majority of the respondents 18(60%) affirm they are aware of school feeding program, and that they like the school feeding programme to continue as it makes the pupils to be committed to school thereby reducing dropout rate among the pupils. vendors. All these are in conformity with the opinion and findings of Karaba et al (2019) Midday meal can play an important facilitating role in the universalization of elementary education by enhancing enrolment, attention and retention and also contribute to better educational achievement by at least eliminate classroom hunger; Ajani (2009), documented the beneficial effect of the school feeding program on school attendance in Lagos State, advocating that the program be extended to all the states and all primary school classes in Nigeria so as to increase attendance of school age children and improve enrolment of children in schools.

The findings of the study shows that majority of our respondents 117(78.5%) affirms that they are aware of the school feeding program, 112(75.2%) have a child in school feeding program school, 113(75.8%) thinks that parent whose children are under school feeding program benefit from the program, 72(48.3%) rated the quality of school feeding program more than average, 204(70%)

strongly agree in their opinion that school feeding program contributes to the enrollment of children in school, 188(63.5%) on average thinks school feeding program help to reduce students' dropout, This is supported by Kosilei et al, (2018), who explained that the decision to enroll a child in school and, thereafter, sustain the child regularity in school could be influenced by many factors. These factors include perceived value of education, availability of employment opportunities, direct and indirect cost of schooling then the availability and quality of school facilities. Food incentives offered to students as school meals compensate parents for direct educational costs.

The study also reveals that the opinion of pupil's based on the feeding programme and their attendance has a perfect positive but weak correlation between both variables. There was a significant relationship between the opinions of pupils and their attendance  $r=0.1$ ,  $P<0.000$ . This implies that the feeding programme with respect to their opinion has influence on the pupil's attendance in classes. The findings of this study were similar to findings of Mastewal, et al (2018) that shows a significant difference between attendance of school feeding beneficiary pupils and non- beneficiary. The mean ( $\pm$ SD) number of days a child absent from school in the preceding 2 weeks of the survey among SFP non-beneficiaries ( $2.6 \pm 1.6$ ) was significantly higher than the corresponding number of days for beneficiaries ( $1.3 \pm 1.7$ ) ( $P < 0.001$ ). The mean difference was  $-1.30$  (95% CI:  $-1.68, -0.91$ ) days. Furthermore, research conducted by Alderman et al. (2012) to assess the impacts of the SFP in Northern Uganda found a significant increase in school enrollment and attendance in primary schools as a result of the SFP in the first five years of implementation.

The findings of the study also revealed positive but weak correlation between the opinion of pupils based on the feeding program and the enrolment observed. There was significant relationship between them at  $r=0.250$ ,  $P>0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that in opinion of parents regarding the school feeding programme has influence on the enrolment of the pupils. This is in consonance with findings by Agbor (2018) that school feeding programme resulted in an increase in pupils' enrolment. Assefa and Tefera (2016) posited that School Feeding Programme is vital in nourishing children as well as promoting enrolment and regular attendance because parents are motivated to send their children to school rather than keeping them at home to work or care for siblings.

The study also revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' opinion and the dropout rates of pupils regarding the school feeding at  $r=0.340$ ,  $P<0.05$  which was positive but a weak correlation. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that the opinion of the teachers was influential on the dropout rates of the pupils. The study was in support of the finding of Yendaw and Dayour (2015) In Ghana that the SFP has contributed to a significant reduction in school dropout rate in the study area. That is, while dropout rate before the programme implementation stood at 73.8%, it dropped phenomenally after the programme implementation to as low as 26.2%. The current evidence was also supported with results from a Chi-square test statistic ( $\chi^2 = 29.767$ ,  $df= 4$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) of the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the implementation of the SFP and school dropout rate among pupils.

## CONCLUSION

The poor pupils' enrolment situation previously experienced in Osun state witnessed an improvement after the introduction of school feeding programme even though the pupils and teachers claimed that this does not add to much value to their retention or academic performance. Although food incentives, alongside health challenge and peer influence were major factors affecting school attendance, still, more than half of the respondents had unfavourable opinion towards the Osun Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme (O-MEALS). This was attributed to the poor food quality and unsatisfactory services rendered by the food vendors as disclosed by the parents, teachers and pupils.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were suggested to further help the parents, teachers and pupils and government of Osun State and other states planning to adopt the feeding technique.

1. Effective monitoring system should be put in place to ensure that the food vendors comply with the programme plan of serving fruits to the pupils on a daily basis.
2. Adequate measures should also be put in place to checkmate the activities of food vendors so as to ensure that a satisfactory quantity of food is being served to the pupils.
3. Primary education should be made completely free in rural government schools.
4. The re-structuring of public primary schools into elementary school (primary 1-4) and middle school (primary 5, 6 and junior secondary 1-3) in Osun State should be reviewed considering its counterproductive effect on pupils' enrolment and retention.

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