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Assessing the Impact of National Home-Grown School Feeding Program on Pupils Enrolment, Attendance, and Academic Performance of Some Selected Public Primary School Pupils in Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Over the years, successive governments at different levels have been directing efforts in the areas of increasing pupil/student enrolment and reducing dropout rates and the provision of infrastructural facilities to aid both learning and teaching but the desired result has not been achieved. In order to compliment the above menace, the Nigerian Government recently revived the Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) termed the National Home-Grown School Meal Program (NHSMP). Social Cognitive theory was used as a theoretical framework to guide this study. This paper adopted quantitative method. The study used a multistage sampling technique including non-probability sampling technique (purposive sampling technique) to select two (2) local government and two schools from the selected local government area in each of the three senatorial districts in the state. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 240 pupils and their parents from the selected schools. Each of the teachers was selected to represent the school and questionnaire administered to them aggregating to (12) head teachers. The instruments for data collection were structured questionnaire based on the research objectives. The study reveals that the School Feeding Programme (SFP) has had a positive impact on pupil enrolment, attendance and academic performance, as perceived and affirmed by the pupils themselves, teachers, and parents. However, it was recommended amongst other that government should ensure that there is an increase in the number and quality of teachers to accommodate the potential increase in enrolment. Additionally, there should be sufficient physical facilities, such as classrooms and other learning spaces, to avoid overcrowding and provide a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning.

Keywords: Home Grown, School Feeding Program, School Enrolment, Academic Performance

1. Introduction

Education is crucial to the economic and social development of every society. So, businesses and governments throughout the globe are continuously seeking ways to make learning more accessible and effective (Bashir et al., 2021). Okolo-Obasi & Uduji (2022), Adepoju& Johnson (2020), and Olutola & Aguh (2023) all attest to the fact that the Home become School Feeding Program (HGSFP) has become famous for its ability to both satisfy the nutritional needs of school-aged children and enhance their intellectual development. School feeding programs were also established as intervention programs to address poverty, increase enrolment in schools, and enhance students' academic performance. This is why a lot of countries have started school feeding programmes (SFPs). The United States and Britain improved children's health and increased school enrolment via Food for All (FFA) (Gokah, 2008). Students participating in the program will have access to one snack or lunch every class period. Aside from increasing enrolment, the provision of this lunch has also boosted children's performance and participation (WFP, 2019). Developed and developing nations were encouraged to adopt the School Feeding Program (SFP) as a strategy to eradicate hunger, poverty, and achieve Universal

Basic Education (UBE) by subsequent global initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Dakar Affirmation of 2000, the New Partnership for African Development, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Among the many components of the program are initiatives to improve health, education, agriculture, poverty, and the overall economy. The SFP aimed to establish a government-run, budget-friendly school lunch program that relied on food produced by smallholder farmers in the area, as stated in the 2019 report by NHGSF. Everybody wins: kids get a hot, well-balanced lunch at school, farmers get more customers from schools that feed their crops, and towns get more people to work in catering, processing, and food handling. Educational outcomes are enhanced and hunger is reduced. As a result, it stimulates the economy by means of a multiplier effect.

Even if we still haven't achieved our goal, several administrations at different levels have been working hard throughout the years to increase enrolment, decrease attrition, and build infrastructure that supports teaching and learning. There is still a need to address educational issues in Niger State, and one potential solution is to implement an HGSFP. In this research, we suggest studying the school feeding program's impact on three key indicators of educational advancement in Niger State: enrolment rates, academic achievement, and school attendance.

According to Lambet *et al*. (2020), individuals are better able to participate in their communities and careers when they have access to high-quality education. Despite this knowledge, Niger State is one of several states that struggles to provide equal access to quality education (Saba et al., 2022; Jacob & Musa, 2021; Alhassan, 2019). Poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-cultural norms all have a role in limiting kids' educational opportunities, which in turn leads to low enrolment rates and low academic attainment. In light of the many challenges that have slowed educational advancement, Sitao (2018) reports that several governments and businesses have turned to the HGSFP as a potential solution. Snilstveit *et al.* (2016) noted that the initiative's goals include influencing educational outcomes in addition to combating poverty and hunger. Offering nutritious meals to kids during class hours is part of the school food program's goal to increase their cognitive skills, attentiveness, and overall well-being. Additionally, it aims to improve school attendance rates by encouraging parents to regularly send their children to class (Jacob & Musa, 2021).

Over 10 million children in Nigeria do not attend school, and 40% of those who do attend go hungry every day, even though the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program has been in operation since 2016 (Cummings & Kulutuye, 2017). This is corroborated by the fact that this nation has the highest concentration of out-of-school children globally, ranging from 10 million to 13.2 million, according to a 2018 research by UNICEF.

Niger State is located in north central Nigeria, has significant educational issues due to its relatively low school enrolment and attendance rates. Consequently, there is a unique opportunity to examine the potential impact of nutritional support on academic achievement via the implementation of a school feeding program (Aurino, 2019). Finding out if the program boosts enrolment, attendance, and grades in Niger State might impact educational policies and programs throughout the country that deal with similar problems.

Studies in Niger State that looked at the Home-Grown School Feeding Program and its effects on primary school pupils' enrolment, attendance, and performance in the classroom found that the program had a negative effect on all three. The impact of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program on the academic growth of individual Niger State primary schools has been the subject of little research.

However, the most significant obstacle to this research This idea still hasn't been defined in a way that everyone can agree on. One such initiative that supplies children enrolled in public schools with food that is grown or bought inside the nation is known as "homegrown school feeding" (Munuhe, 2014). He brought up the fact that one of the World Food Programme's initiatives, Home Grown School Feeding, works with local smallholder farmers to both provide and procure food for school feeding programs. As Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler (2010) explain, HGSF aims to accomplish two separate policy goals at once: improving the nutritional and health status of school-aged children as a form of social protection, and transforming small-scale agriculture economically and technologically.

The availability and distribution of sufficient food for schoolchildren in terms of quantity, quality, safety, and social and cultural acceptability is defined as school feeding in Sustainable School Feeding throughout the African World (2018). It continues by saying that although certain supplementary feeding methods, including the take-home ratio (THR), do exist, "school feeding" is defined as meals provided on school grounds. While the term "in school meals" refers to students receiving food while they are enrolled in school, "take-home rations" are given to students whose families often require them to attend school. Home Grown School Feeding is also described as a program that encourages local economic growth and agricultural transformation by the African Union Commission.

Addressing malnutrition, food insecurity, and increasing educational results among school-age children is the cornerstone objective of the Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) in Nigeria (Adepoju& Johnson, 2020). Since its 2016 launch, the initiative has been the subject of much speculation about its scope and the changes it may bring to American education. This literature review looks at previous research on the HGSFP and how it was put into practice in Nigeria. All students in Nigerian public elementary schools are guaranteed access to a healthy lunch every school day under the HGSFP (Solomon & Yusuf, 2022). Some of the main goals of the program are to boost local agricultural growth, improve nutrition, and increase enrolment and school attendance. Finding out how much the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program improves enrolment, attendance, and academic performance of selected primary school pupils in Niger State is an important step, since early reviews have shown excellent benefits.

2. Conceptual Discourse

2.1 Concept of Home-Grown School Feeding

There is no one, definitive way to describe the concept. As an example, Munuhe (2014) states that homegrown school feeding is a program that distributes food purchased and cultivated inside a country to students enrolled in public schools. He brought attention to the fact that the World Food Program's Home Grown School Feeding program primarily deals with purchasing and preparing food for school lunch programs from local smallholder farmers. Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler (2010) state that the HGSF aims to integrate two distinct policy goals: one is to improve the nutritional and health condition of school-aged children, and the other is to change small-scale agriculture economically and technologically.

According to Sustainable School Feeding across Africa (2018), school feeding is when kids have access to nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs in a way that is both socially and culturally acceptable. Thus, school feeding refers to meals served on school premises; nevertheless, there are other forms of feeding, such as the take-home ratio (THR), that are also in use. Unlike the concept of "in-school meals," which implies that pupils get food in the classroom, families usually receive take-home portions based on their children's attendance at school. A initiative that promotes agricultural transformation and local economic prosperity is Home Grown School Feeding, according to the African Union Commission.

The Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) in Nigeria is a flagship initiative with the goals of decreasing malnutrition and food insecurity and improving scholastic accomplishments among school-aged children. The initiative's magnitude and potential impact on the country's educational landscape have garnered considerable attention since its approval in 2016. This literature review delves into recent studies and research on the HGSFP, specifically focussing on its use in Nigeria. A social intervention, the HGSFP ensures that every elementary school student in Nigeria has access to a nutritious lunch every day (Solomon & Yusuf, 2022). Nutritional improvement, increased school enrolment, and support for local farmers are some of the primary aims of the program. Good outcomes have been shown in early evaluations.

2.2 Enrolment

Students are formally registered into a classroom setting throughout the enrolment process. It is an important indicator of educational opportunity since it shows how many school-aged children are using the educational system. The first step towards achieving universal basic education, according to UNESCO (2013), is for all children to attend school, as this reflects both the demand for and the availability of education. Enrolment is influenced by factors like as socio-economic

status, parental education, cultural views, the location of the school, and the presence of supportive services, such as school lunches. Increased enrolment has been associated with the introduction of school feeding programs, especially in low-income communities. Aurino et al. (2019) found that in regions with high rates of food poverty, parents register their children in response to school lunch delivery. Home Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) enrolment was much higher in Northern Nigerian public schools, according to Ibrahim et al. (2018).

2.3 Attendance

Students are considered to have good attendance if they regularly show up to class within the allotted school time. Regular school attendance is essential for academic achievement since it is linked to increased engagement, better retention of knowledge, and academic progress. Global Bank (2012) defines school attendance as the degree to which students are physically present in their classroom. Absenteeism is seen as a significant barrier to educational attainment. Factors such as illness, starvation, long travel hours, and family obligations sometimes contribute to low attendance. School feeding programs have shown to significantly reduce absenteeism by alleviating hunger and encouraging children to regularly attend class. In Nigeria's Benue State, for instance, Cletus et al. (2022) discovered that the NHGSFP increased regular attendance; in Calabar, Egwuasi et al. (2022) saw a same impact, attributing increases in daily attendance to the supply of school meals.

2.4 Academic Performance

Academic performance is the tangible outcome of a student's learning and is often evaluated by examinations, tests, continuous assessments, and overall school grades. It is a staple in determining how well students are learning and how effective teachers are. As stated by Eze et al. (2020), academic success is the extent to which a student achieves educational objectives and goals. Nutrition, home life, instructor quality, and study aids are just a few of the factors that could affect a student's performance in the classroom. Malnutrition may impact cognitive abilities like memory, concentration, and attention, making proper nutrition very important. Kperogi (2017) and Alabede et al. (2020) are only two of several studies that show how school feeding programs improve students' academic performance by increasing their nutrient intake, attention span, and energy levels during class activities.

2.5 Empirical Literature

The Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) was established in 2016 by the Buhari administration with the intention of becoming more than just a food distribution operation. The program's stated goal was to alleviate rural poverty, low school enrolment, and hunger by supplying daily meals to elementary school pupils in public schools and buying food locally to support smallholder farmers. For a long time, the program piqued the curiosity of researchers who wanted to discover its real-world impact.

Across the board in Nigeria, data points to a positive image, particularly when it comes to enrolment and school attendance. Ibrahim et al. (2018) and Cletus et al. (2022) demonstrate how providing school lunch has encouraged parents to enrol their children and ensure their frequent attendance. In Calabar, Egwuasi et al. (2022) found similar findings, proving that there is a strong correlation between daily attendance and food availability. Many families, particularly those struggling financially, find motivation in the knowledge that their children will have access to a nutritious school lunch on a daily basis.

In addition to boosting attendance, other research suggests that the HGSFP might potentially enhance learning outcomes. Eze et al. (2020) found that the program improved students' cognitive performance and academic advancement, especially in tasks that required continual attention. The ability of pupils to concentrate and perform well in class may be affected by the nutritional value and quality of the food served, claims Kperogi (2017).

On the other hand, not all outcomes are so promising. According to many studies, academic performance has remained relatively unchanged or has hardly altered while participating in the program (Denney et al., 2021; Atobatel and Okewale, 2021). Their research revealed serious issues, such as unequal food distribution, poor nutritional quality, and widespread corruption within the execution staff. The potential educational benefits of the curriculum have been diminished in certain contexts due to these concerns.

In addition to bolstering local businesses via the purchase of food from area farms and producers, the HGSFP was designed to enhance the educational experience. Many scholars, including Munuhe (2014) and Jev et al. (2023), consider the initiative not just as a means of feeding people, but as a tool for strategic agricultural and economic growth. This makes it a social safety net and a means of alleviating poverty, particularly in more remote places. Agu et al. (2023) provided more evidence of how the majority of Enugu head teachers believe the initiative is achieving its aims of decreasing hunger, improving engagement, and boosting enrolment.

The HGSFP has many challenges, despite its potential. Inconsistent food supply and quality, according to Dennis et al. (2021), and a lack of transparency about the use of funds pose a danger to the program's future. Demands for stricter regulation have been prompted by these issues. One suggestion is to strengthen alignment in order to assure better coordination, accountability, and long-term success by establishing a National School Feeding Commission.

2.6 Theoretical framework

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) offers a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the ways in which individuals' experiences, both internal and external to them, influence their conduct (Ab Abdullah et al., 2022). The interconnectedness of humans, their deeds, and their environments is brought to light by SCT. According to Sagenge (2015), SCT can help us understand the effects of the Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) on children' enrolment, attendance, and academic performance.

Personal aspects (such as beliefs, attitudes, and self-efficacy) and environmental factors (such as social support and resources) interact dynamically to determine behaviour, according to SCT. At least two contextual variables students' perceptions of the program's benefits and the level of support they get from family, peers, and instructors—may influence students' actions, or their level of engagement with the HGSFP. People may observe the actions of others and mimic them, if SCT is to be believed (McLeod, 2011). Students may be more motivated to attend class regularly if they see their peers making good use of the HGSFP's nutritious food program. confidence in one's abilities to carry out a certain action successfully. Students who have a higher opinion of their own academic abilities may be more motivated to attend class regularly and do well, especially if they think the HGSFP helps them concentrate and sharpen their brains.

According to SCT, children are more likely to believe that regular school attendance yields positive outcomes if they see their classmates routinely attending class and benefiting from the HGSFP. This positive reinforcement, together with the program's access to nutritious food, has the potential to increase students' belief in their own abilities and motivation to regularly attend class. According to SCT, the HGSFP's offer of nutritious meals might encourage parents to enroll their children in school. A greater primary school enrolment rate might be the result of a social norm that emphasises the importance of education and attendance, which could be reinforced when children see other children benefiting from the program. Students' self-efficacy and confidence in their academic abilities might be bolstered by regular HGSFP advantages, which could lead to improved nutrition and cognitive performance. They may thus be more likely to take an active role in class, contribute to discussions, and achieve higher levels of academic success.

Students from low-income families benefit more from the HGSFP's supplemental nutrition program, which influences many moderating factors in the association between the program and academic achievement. To maximize the HGSFP's beneficial impact on student achievement, high-quality instruction and adequate school infrastructure are essential. Niger State's Home-Grown School Feeding Program and its potential effects on pupils' enrolment, attendance, and performance in school may be better understood with the help of the Social Cognitive Theory.

3. Methodology

The researchers in this study used quantitative data gathering approaches to compile and analyse survey responses. From each of the state's three senatorial districts, two schools and two local governments were chosen using a multistage selection procedure that included a non-probability sampling method (purposive sampling). We used a basic random sample method to choose 240 students and their parents from the schools that were considered. A total of

twelve instructors were chosen to represent the school and given a questionnaire. To analyse the data acquired from the original source, descriptive and inferential statistics are used.

According to the aims of the study, structured questionnaires were used to gather data. The study's three participants such as parents, educators, and students were each given their own questionnaire. The questionnaire is split into two pieces for each category. Through the use of face and content validation techniques, the reliability and validity of the instrument were confirmed. Management research specialists were provided with the tool. We kept just the questions that were thought to be pertinent to the sturdy. This research used the test-retest reliability approach. Five (5) students, five (5) parents, and three (3) educators from two (2) elementary schools in Bida LGA were each given the instrument twice, two weeks apart. The data was analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics. The results showed that the reliability coefficient for student opinions was 0.719, for teacher opinions it was 0.755, and for parent opinions it was 0.846. After that, researchers sequentially distributed questionnaires to students at each school. After the surveys were finished, they were collected and set aside for examination. The data was summarised using descriptive statistics.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Data Presentation

Table 1: Opinions of pupils regarding school feeding programme objectives

S/N	Items	SD	D	UD	A	SA
1	I Know about the HGFP	1(0.42%)	3(1.2%)	5(2.1%)	183(76.3%)	**48(20.0%)**
2	HGSFP make available food for all in the school	1(0.42%)	3(1.2%)	2(0.83)	161(67.1%)	**73(30.4%)**
3	The food serve are enough and of great quality	1(0.42%)	1(0.42%)	12(5.0%)	102(42.5%)	**124(51.7%)**
4	The program affect my academic performance positively	2(0.83%)	2(0.83%)	9(3.7%)	97(40.4%)	**100(41.7%)**
5	My health status is impacted by the program through it nutritious meals	7(3.0%)	3 (1.2%)	14(5.8)	149(62.1%)	**67(27.9%)**
6	The program motivate me to attend school every school day	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	60(25.0%)	**180(75.0%)**
7	Students are enrolling in my school as a result of the feeding program	4(1.7%)	2(0.83%)	13(5.4%)	122(50.8%)	**99(41.3%)**
8	I want the feeding program to continue	4(1.6%)	7(2.9%)	7(2.9%)	138(57.5%)	**(35.0%)**
9	**The quantity of food distributed is small**	**64(26.7%)**	**97(40.4%)**	**15(6.3%)**	**38(15.8%)**	**26(10.8%)**

Key: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Undecided (UD), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA)
Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows the opinion of pupils regarding the school feeding program inNiger State. Majority of the pupilsin aggregate(96.3%) agreed knowing about the feeding program, 97.5% of the pupils affirms that food is available for all the schools, 94.2% agrees that the quality and quantity of food given is great and satisfactory, 82.1% agree since the inception of the school; majority of the pupils (90%) affirmed that there health status has improved due to the nutritious meal provided by the program; majority of the pupils (100% and 92.1%) affirmed that the program has improved their school attendance and also leads to increase in numbers of students in their classes respectively. Majority of them 67.1% and 92.5 affirmed that the quantity of food serves in minimal and want the program to continue respectively

Table 2: Opinions of teachers regarding school feeding programme objectives

S/N	Statement Questions	SD	D	UD	A	SA
1	You aware of school feeding program	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(%)	5(41.7%)	**7(58.3%)**
2	Are the pupils served with varieties of food regularly in your school	1(8.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9(75%)	**2(16.7%)**
3	I want the school feeding programtocontinue	1(8.3%)	2(16.7%)	0(0%)	4 (33.3%)	**5(41.7%)**
4	The quality and quantity of food been served to the pupils is good and satisfactory	2(16.7%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	7 (58.3%)	**1(8.3%)**
5	School feeding programme contributes to the students' enrolment rate in school	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (41.7%	**7(58.3%)**
6	School feeding has contributed to reduction of drop-out rate greatly?	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(33.3%)	**8(66.7%)**

7	Students attend regularly as compare with when the was not in practices	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (41.7%	**7(58.3%)**
8	Academic performance of the students has increase since the commencement of the program	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(25.0%)	**9(75%)**
9	Poor funding is a major challenge of the school feeding program	1(8.3%)	1(8.3%)	0(0%)	4 (33.3%)	**6 (50%)**
10	**Poor monitoring is a major challenge of the program**	**0(0%)**	**2(16.7%)**	**1(8.3%)**	**4 (33.3%)**	**5 (41.7%)**

Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

Table 2 above provide head teachers response on the school feeding program in Niger State; all (100%) of the staff affirmed they are aware of the program and affirmed that variety of foods are served on a regular basis. Majority 75% of the teacher affirmed that they want the program to continue while affirming (58.5%) of them affirming that the quality of food serve is satisfactory. From the perception of the head teachers all of them (100%) affirmed that the program has leads to increase in pupil's enrolment in their respective schools while dropout rate reduces. All the head teachers (100%) affirmed that attendance rate of students has increase due to the program of the school feeding program while also affirming that the pupils' academic performance has increased. Base on the response from majority of the head teachers poor funding and monitoring are the major challenges facing the program effectiveness in the state.

Table 3: Opinions of parents regarding school feeding programme objectives

	Statement	**SD**	**D**	**UD**	**A**	**SA**
1	I am aware of school feeding program	0 (0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	13(5.4%)	**227 (94.6%)**
2	You have child in school feeding program	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**240(100%)**
3	Pupils under school feeding benefitfrom the program.	7 (2.9%)	6 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	66 (27.5%)	**161(67.1%)**
4	The quality and quantity of foodbeen served to the pupils is good and Satisfactory	19 (7.9%)	21(8.7%)	93 (38.7)	52 (21.7%)	**55(22.9%)**
5	School feeding program contributed to the enrolment of your child in school	13 (5.4%)	16(6.7%)	193 (80.4%)	7 (2.9%)	**11(4.6%)**
6	School feeding helps in reducing pupils drop-out	13 (5.4%)	5 (2.1%)	108(45%)	32 (13.3%)	**82(34.2%)**
7	My children's attends school regularly as compare with when the program was not in practices	9 (3.7%)	18 (7.5%)	32 (13.3%)	106 (44.2%	**75(31.3%)**
8	Academic performance of my child has increase since the commencement of the program	11(4.6%)	15(6.3%)	8(3.3%)	89(37.1%)	**117(48.8%)**
9	Poor funding is a major challenge of the school feeding program	13(5.4%)	26(10.8%)	52(21.7%)	63 (26.3%)	**86 (35.8%)**
10	**Poor monitoring is a major challenge of the program**	**17 (7.1%)**	**32 (13.3%)**	**82(34.2%)**	**54 (22.5%)**	**55 (22.9%)**

Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

The table above shows the response of pupils' parents who were selected for the program on the program effectiveness and it impact on attendance, enrollment and academic performance; all the parents affirmed they are away of the program and have children's benefiting from the program. However, on the quality and quantity of food served majority of them (44.6%) affirmed the quality and quantity of the foods serve are satisfactory while 38.7% of them affirm not having idea on the food quantity and quality.

Majority of the parents (80.4%) affirmed that they could not say if the program contributed to the enrolment of their children and other children their currents school while majority of them affirmed that the program reduce dropout rate; majority of the parents (75.5% and 85.9%) affirmed that the attendance rate and performance of their children has increase with the introduction of the program respectively while the affirm funding and monitoring being the major problem of the program.

5. Data Analysis

Table 4: Impact of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on Attendance of Selected Primary School Pupils in Niger State

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-stat	p-value
(Constant)	5.327	.092		58.206	.000
ATTENDENCE	.215	.024	.371	8.856	.000
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
.371[a]	.138	.136	.53388	1.198	
F	Sig.				
78.432	.000[b]				

Source: *Questionnaire Administered, 2025*

Table 4 show the outcome of the regression analysis done to ascertain how the Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) affects the attendance of certain primary school students in Niger State. A regression coefficient (B) of 0.215, a standardized beta (β) of 0.371, a t-value of 8.856, and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold for significance, demonstrated in the study a statistically significant positive association between HGSFP and student attendance. This suggests that student attendance is much improved by the HGSFP in a statistically significant manner.

With an R-squared value of 0.138, the model offers to explain around 13.8% of the variation in school attendance across the students. Though small, in educational studies this proportion is significant given the multivariate character of attendance. With p =.000, the F-statistic of 78.432 shows that the general regression model fits the data quite well. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.198 indicates no indication of autocorrelation in the residuals, therefore verifying the dependability of the model within the reasonable range of 1.5–2.5.

Table 5: Impact of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on Enrolment of Selected Primary School Pupils in Niger State

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-stat	p-value
(Constant)	5.128	.126		40.668	.000
ENROLMENT	.134	.028	.209	4.725	.000
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
.209[a]	.044	.042	.56235	.981	
F	Sig.				
22.322	.000[b]				

Source: *Questionnaire Administered, 2025*

Table 5 presents the regression analysis conducted to evaluate the impact of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) on pupil enrolment in selected primary schools in Niger State. The findings indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation between the programme and enrolment. The unstandardized coefficient (B) stands at 0.134, accompanied by a standardized beta (β) of 0.209, a t-value of 4.725, and a p-value of 0.000. Given that the p-value falls below the 0.05 threshold, we can determine that the relationship holds statistical significance. This indicates that involvement in the HGSFP results in higher enrolment levels, suggesting that with effective implementation of the programme, a greater number of children are attending school.

The R-squared value of 0.044 suggests that the HGSFP accounts for roughly 4.4% of the variation observed in school enrolment. Although this percentage may seem minor, it holds significance within the framework of educational interventions, which are frequently shaped by various socio-economic and institutional elements. The model demonstrates statistical significance, indicated by an F-statistic of 22.322 (p = .000). The Durbin-Watson statistic of 0.981 is situated within the acceptable range (1.5–2.5), suggesting that there is no indication of autocorrelation in the residuals, which supports the model's reliability.

Table 6: Impact of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on Academics Performance of Selected Primary School Pupils in Niger State

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-stat	p-value
(Constant)	4.931	.103		48.018	.000
ACAD_PERFORM	.091	.025	.167	3.596	.000
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
.167[a]	.028	.026	.53934	.966	
F	Sig.				
12.929	.000[b]				

Source: *Questionnaire Administered, 2025*

Table 6 presents the regression results that reveal the impact of the homegrown school feeding program on the academic performance of selected primary school pupils in Niger State. The findings indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation between the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) and the academic performance of pupils. The unstandardized coefficient (B) stands at 0.091, suggesting that with each unit increase in the HGSFP, there is a corresponding improvement in academic performance by 0.091 units. The standardized beta coefficient (β) stands at 0.167, accompanied by a t-value of 3.596 and a p-value of 0.000, clearly indicating a result that is significantly below the 0.05 threshold for statistical significance. This establishes that the relationship is not a result of random occurrence.

The R-squared value of 0.028 indicates that the HGSFP accounts for roughly 2.8% of the variance in students' academic performance. While this figure may appear modest, it is not uncommon in educational research, where various external factors influence learning outcomes. The overall regression model demonstrates statistical significance, evidenced by an F-statistic of 12.929 ($p = .000$). The Durbin-Watson statistic of 0.966 indicates a slight degree of positive autocorrelation, yet it stays within acceptable limits.

6. Discussion of findings

This research found that primary school students in Niger State benefited greatly from the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), especially in terms of attendance, enrolment, and academic achievement. The program is a crucial intervention for improving educational results for students in public schools, according to regression analysis and stakeholder views from students, parents, and educators.

To begin, there was a robust and statistically significant correlation between students' use of the NHGSFP and their regular attendance at school. A beta coefficient of 0.371 and a p-value of 0.000 were shown by the regression analysis, demonstrating that providing meals considerably enhances students' daily attendance. The fact that more than three quarters of the students and all of the instructors agreed that the program encourages students to show up to class on time lends credence to this claim. Theoretically, this result lends credence to the Social Cognitive Theory, which states that things like food availability in the environment may reward behaviour by producing favourable consequences. With food on the table, parents have less to lose by sending their children to school, and kids no longer have to worry about being hungry. This agrees with the results of two empirical studies that looked at the same topic: Cletus et al. (2022) in Benue State and Egwuasi et al. (2022) in Cross River State.

The research discovered a strong positive correlation between the school feeding program and student enrolment, which was statistically significant but somewhat smaller than the correlation between better attendance and enrolment. With a beta value of 0.209 and a p-value of 0.000, the regression findings showed that the program had successfully increased the number of children enrolled in school. The twelve principals who participated in the survey all agreed that enrolment has grown noticeably since the NHGSFP went into effect. It is worth mentioning, nevertheless, that 80.4% of parents were unsure as to whether or not the program had any direct impact on their children's enrolment. This may be because there are a lot of factors that go into deciding who gets into a certain school, such as how close it is, the family's financial situation, the level of education of the parents, and cultural norms and expectations. However, this finding is in line with previous research that found

that the school feeding effort led to higher enrolment rates, such as Ibrahim et al. (2018) and Agu et al. (2023). According to these results, while the program does help get more people enrolled, other measures, including raising awareness in the community and fighting poverty, are necessary to keep the gains going.

In addition, the research found that the school food program had a favourable effect on academic achievement, albeit a small one. The regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.167$, $p = 0.000$) suggests that higher nutrition from regular meals helps students study better. A whole hundred percent of educators and eighty-five percent of parents agreed that the program had a favourable effect on students' academic achievement. Additionally, students acknowledged the program's worth; 82.1 percent said it improved their capacity to study. Within the realm of educational research, where several factors such as the family environment, teacher quality, and instructional resources impact learning, the 2.8% R-squared number makes sense, despite its seeming lowness. Both Eze et al. (2020) and Kperogi (2017) found that students' focus, memory, and general cognitive development were increased after eating healthy meals, which in turn led to better academic accomplishment.

The results show that the NHGSFP is helping kids in Niger State who are old enough to attend school by meeting their basic requirements, which is a huge step towards better education for everyone. In addition to boosting enrolment and attendance, the program has a significant impact on students' academic performance. Nevertheless, responders from all demographics have pointed out problems like insufficient financing and oversight, so clearly there is space for development. The program's viability and effectiveness in the long run could be jeopardised unless these systemic difficulties are resolved.

7. Conclusion

This study concludes that the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in Niger State has made a statistically significant and positive contribution to the educational development of pupils in public primary schools, particularly in the areas of school attendance, enrolment, and academic performance. The strongest impact was observed in school attendance, where daily provision of meals served as a direct incentive for pupils to come to school. The programme also fostered improved enrolment, albeit more prominently recognized by school administrators than parents. Academic performance showed measurable improvements, highlighting the role of nutrition in cognitive development and classroom engagement.

8. Recommendations

Base on the conclusion of the study the following recommendation made:

To enhance the effectiveness of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in Niger State, the government should increase funding to ensure consistent provision of quality and nutritious meals. Partnerships with local farmers, NGOs, and private organizations should be encouraged to support the programme's sustainability.

Effective monitoring mechanisms should also be established. This includes regular supervision, transparent reporting systems, and the use of digital tools to track food supply, quality, and distribution across participating schools.

The coverage of the programme should be expanded to include more public schools, particularly in underserved rural areas. In addition, the menu should be diversified to improve nutritional value and meet children's dietary needs.

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