

# Relationship Between School Feeding Programmes And the Pupils' School Attendance In Public Primary Schools in Kitui County, Kenya

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## Abstract

*Education can be achieved successfully if hunger is controlled. This can be done if SFPs are introduced and implemented in schools. School Feeding Programme was initiated in Kenya in 1979 with provision of milk packets to the pupils and it was fully implemented in 1980 by the government of Kenya with collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP). The objective of this study was to assess the relationship between SFPs and the pupils' effectiveness in learning in public primary schools in Kitui County. The study intended to assess attendance as an indicators of effectiveness in learning. The study used Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunity and Maslow's Theory of Human motivation. The researcher used Survey Research Design. The target population was 374 primary schools under feeding Programme in Kitui County. The sample size was 112 schools which are 30% of the target population. These schools were sampled randomly. The researcher also randomly sampled five percent (19) class seven teachers to get a total of 131 respondents. The research instruments used by the researcher were the questionnaires for head teachers and the interviews for class seven teachers' representatives. To test validity of the research instruments, the researcher did piloting in two schools (10%) of the sample target, 19 class seven teachers. The researcher also discussed the instruments with her supervisors and was advised accordingly. Reliability of the research instruments was calculated using test-retest method. Quantitatively collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson r with the help of SPSS software while qualitatively collected data was analyzed using Focus by Question Analyses Strategy. Analyzed results were presented using tables, graphs and pie-charts. The findings of the study may help the administrators and policy makers in laying their strategies successfully. Results show that there was a significant relationship between school feeding program and the pupils' school attendance. Findings from the interviews further confirmed that there was unwavering agreement among class seven teachers' representatives that school feeding program was positively associated with pupils' school attendance. The study concludes that SFP has significant influence on effectiveness in learning in relation to attendance among primary school pupils, hence the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between school feeding Programme and the pupils' attendance was therefore, rejected. The study recommends that the county government should liaise with parents and guardians of primary school pupils so as to expand SFPs*

*to retain pupils at school. These findings will be beneficial to the Ministry of Education and the school administrators while laying their strategies.*

## **1. Introduction**

School Feeding Programme (SFP) can be used to curb temporary hunger to make a significant contribution in the improvement of effectiveness in learning. Kenya is a signatory to many international agreements that have among other things recommended the attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE). School feeding Programme is aimed at achieving this course in Kenya. When pupils feed in schools, their attendance will be enhanced and they will be confined in schools.

## **2. Background of the Study**

The availability of school meals is considered to have a positive effect on cognitive development and learning. Investing in education is a key component which leads to the development of a country. Education is a fundamental right for a person for effective contribution to the development of a country since it enhances equity, diversity and lasting peace as stipulated by World Education Forum Education for all in 2000. Successful school attendance which is an indicator of effectiveness in learning can be sustained through provision of food which can be done through implementation of feeding programmes in schools. The programmes have been established to positively impact educational outcomes for learners. School feeding programmes have been implemented in both developed and developing countries across the world. In developing Nations, school feeding programs have a major goal of ensuring that there is increased learners' concentration span by reducing short-term hunger. In Kenya, school feeding programmes have been implemented since 1980s with varying degrees of success. They were originally focused in promoting enrollment and retention of pupils in schools especially in rural areas. The Kenyan Home Grown School Meals Program (HGSM) is designed as a safety net strategy to increase food supply, improve incomes and reduce hunger and malnutrition.

## **3. Statement of the Problem**

Food has been acknowledged as one of the tools that help in the effectiveness in learning of primary school pupils. Education is one of the economic developmental factors in the world; therefore effective strategies for providing education to pupils should be well formulated especially in primary schools since they lay the learning foundation worldwide. Effectiveness in learning in Kitui County was not achieved positively as evidenced by the 2016 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) results; Kitui County was ranked position 37 out of the 47 counties in the Nation. The enrolment rate was very high but the completion rate was very low (EMIS 2005). The county has low retention rates and attendance rates.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

This study was set to assess the relationship between school feeding programmes (SFP) and the pupils' effectiveness in learning in relation to attendance in public primary schools in Kitui County, Kenya.

##### **Objective of the study**

This study was guided by the following objective. "To establish the value of school Feeding Programmes on pupils attendance in Public Primary schools in kitui County.

##### **Research Hypothesis**

This study was guided by the following hypothesis:

There is no significant relationship between school feeding programmes and the pupils' attendance rates in public primary schools in Kitui County.

##### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study may help the educational policy makers to make relevant policies pertaining SFPs. The findings of this study could also be used by the WFP to improve on their effectiveness and efficiency when laying their strategies. The findings may also assist the school administrators in their administration especially when planning about issues concerning feeding. The findings of this study could be used by the policy makers in the education sector when formulating policies on the pupils' effectiveness in learning in the nation. The findings of this study could become a base for further researches related to this subject matter. The findings of this study may also benefit the key educational stakeholders for instance, parents, primary school managers, teachers, as well as other researchers by equipping them with enough information on matters pertaining school feeding. Teachers and pupils will also greatly benefit from this study. The study will enhance their perception and understanding of factors promoting effective learning. It may also help to determine strategies teachers use in teaching.

#### **5. Justification of the Study**

Empirical studies reveal that SFPs have significant positive impact on learning effectiveness (See He, 2009). According to WFP 2008; SFP is an incentive for vulnerable families to retain children at school. Therefore, this study intended to assess the relationship between school feeding programmes and the pupils' effectiveness in learning in relation to attendance. Effectiveness in learning in Kitui County is decelerating, completion of the primary school course is negatively affected therefore the researcher chose to carry out the study in Kitui County to assess the relationship between the SFP and effectiveness in learning in relation to attendance. Quality education is considered the key to economic development of any country.

## **6. Limitation of the Study**

The results of the sample taken in this study may not be generalized to cover other counties in the republic since the study did not include all the schools such as the private schools and the schools not under Feeding Programme. The researcher recommended another study to be done covering all the primary schools. The study involved different categories of respondents who were required to give the required information through answering the set questions, availing the required documents and answering the set questions for the interviews. The researcher encouraged the respondents through creating rapport and simplifying the research instruments. Research tools and the research instruments were developed in English language to enable the respondents to respond appropriately but some respondents did not respond appropriately due to biasness. Some head teachers did not have some of the documents needed by the researcher. The researcher encouraged the respondents to provide appropriate responses.

## **7. Literature review**

It is about the literature related to school feeding programmes and its effects on effectiveness in learning in relation to attendance in various parts of the world. The other areas that were discussed and reviewed included conceptual and theoretical framework of the study.

## **8. Theoretical Framework**

The study under investigation was guided by Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunity and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory which is also known as Human Motivation.

### **Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunity**

This Theory was advanced by John Dewey in 1946. The theory expresses that there should be equal opportunities of similar treatment of people in every area including education. The basic assumption of this theory is that every child is born with innate talents and capabilities therefore; education systems should be planned with a view of a pupil taking advantage of the inborn talents that could accelerate social promotion (Sherman & Wood 1982). This would enable the pupils to be more effective in learning and it will enhance pupils' attendance. This Theory suits this study because the independent variable (School Feeding Programme) will have effect on dependent variable (Pupils' Attendance). When food is provided to schools it will enable pupils from different family backgrounds to access education equally and at ease.

### **Abraham Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation**

The other theory that has been used in this study is Abraham Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation which was developed in 1943. This theory explains that, human beings target to meet their basic needs, they equally aim to meet successfully higher needs in the form of a pyramid as established by Maslow. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs has often been presented in a hierarchical pyramid which have five levels with the largest and most fundamental at the bottom and the need for self-actualization at the top. At the base of the

hierarchy are the physiological needs, followed by safety needs, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, which is the topmost need at the top of the pyramid (Jerome, 2013).

In this study, Maslow`s theory of Human Motivation was used due to its analysis of physiological needs. In this case, physiological needs which include food have an impact on various aspects of children`s learning such as attendance. Parents have inadequate finances to buy food; hence children have to help them work to get food instead of being in school. Therefore, as explained by Maslow, provision of food leads to satisfaction of hunger, which is a physiological need that ought to be satisfied before others are done.

### 9. Conceptual Framework

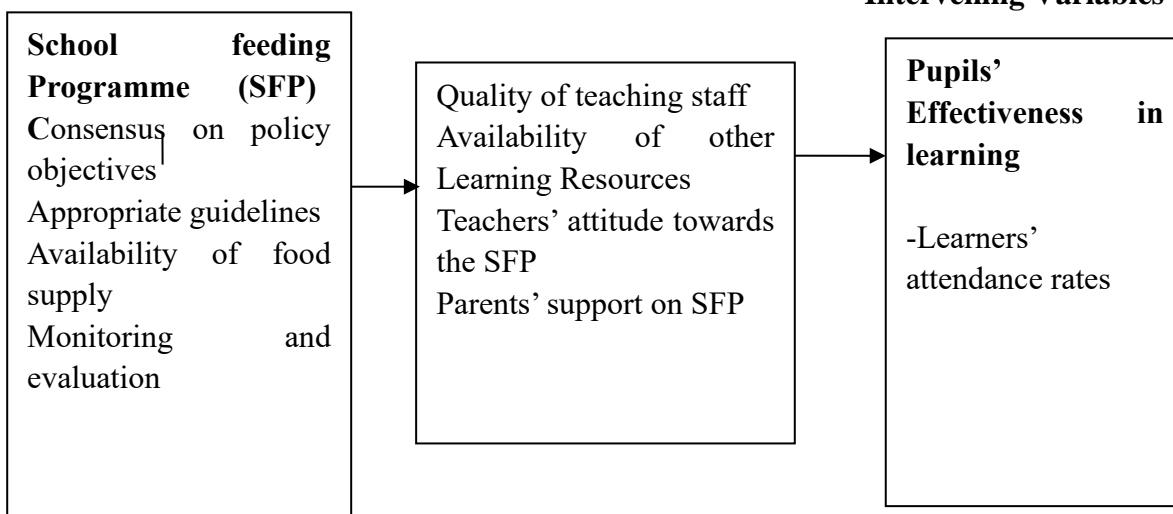
A conceptual framework shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The interaction of the variables is indicated by the arrows. In this study, the conceptual framework was based on the relationship between school feeding programme and the pupils` effectiveness in learning. The feeding programme is the independent variable, while the factor affecting effectiveness in learning, attendance is the dependent variable as shown in figure 1. The study conceptualized on the relationship between SFP and pupils` effectiveness in learning of the children attending primary schools. With food provided at school theoretically, pupils would be expected to be receptive to learning. This would enhance positive effectiveness in learning. Pupils would desire to stay at school learning. There could be a few drop-outs or any unplanned transfers, retention level will be optimal at all times. As observed in the figure above, a number of factors ensure effective learning of school children through school feeding programs.

Figure 1

**Independent Variable**

**Dependent Variable**

**Intervening Variables**



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## **10. Research Design**

The study adopted survey research design. The use of surveys refers to an approach of collecting information through asking questions. It also uses approaches such as focus group discussions, interviews, and questionnaires to ensure that questions are answered. Further, since it is difficult to ask questions to every individual in the population under study, a survey research design allows selection of a representative sample of participants that will be involved in the study, and the findings of the study applied to the larger population. Therefore, in a study such as this covering all primary schools in Kitui County, a survey research design is the most appropriate. To conduct a survey research design, the first step involves identification of the study population. This is followed by sampling the study population to identify a representative sample that will take part in the study. After identification of the study sample, a data collection tool is identified and designed to suit the identified respondent characteristics. Data collection is then scheduled and performed, while data is analyzed through appropriate techniques. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the head teachers and left them to work at their own phase however the researcher was there for any clarification. The researcher also interviewed the class seven teachers' representatives and recorded down the responses given by the teachers. These responses were later used by the researcher for analyzing the qualitative data. This created high response rates as well as good return rate. The researcher compared responses from the head teachers and the ones from the class seven teachers; he then got similarities and differences that helped the researcher to get the relationship between school feeding programme and the pupils' effectiveness in learning in relation to attendance. The Survey research design was a very valuable tool for assessing opinions and trends and also judging opinions, in this case it was effective in assessing the relationship between SFPs and the pupil' effectiveness in learning. The survey research design was convenient for respondents and it yielded good response rates. It was relatively easy to administer, numerous questions were asked about a subject allowing extensive flexibility in data analysis. It was capable of collecting data from a large number of respondents. Collected data can be generalized to a population. This prompted the researcher to choose this research design. Survey research design is less time consuming and it is not expensive as compared to other designs.

## **11. Target Population**

The target population for this study was 374 schools, the only schools under feeding Programme in Kitui County. The study targeted the head teachers and the class seven teachers from these schools.

## 12. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The researcher used simple random sampling to sample the schools. According to the rule of thumb as stated by John Curry professor for Educational research, 30% is convenient for sampling a big population like the 374 schools to be studied. This translated to 112 schools out of which the researcher used the 112 head teachers of these schools. The researcher wrote the names of the 374 schools in separate pieces of papers, put them in a container and mixed them thoroughly. The researcher randomly picked 112 pieces which is 30% of the target population. The head teachers of these schools were the sample size who answered questionnaires for the quantitative data. The researcher sampled 5% of the class seven teachers that translated to 19 class teachers. The researcher gave numbers to all schools among the 374 schools which had class seven and randomly picked 19 schools. The class seven teachers from these schools formed the other part of the sample to be interviewed for the qualitative data. This totaled to 131 respondents. According to Gall, Gall & Borg (2003), a smaller percentage for the qualitative study is allowed provided the respondents are the key informants. As in this study, the head teachers and the teachers are the key informants.

Table 1

*Sample for the study*

	Target Population	Sampling%	Sample
Head teachers	374	30	
Class seven teachers	374	5	112
			19
<b>Total</b>	748	35	131

## 13. Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires because they can yield quantitative data and the interview guide because they can yield qualitative data. To collect the quantitative data, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the 112 head teachers. From their responses, the researcher collected quantitative data. The researcher conducted face-face interviews to the 19 class seven teachers and also listened to their verbatims. From their responses the researcher got the qualitative data that was required for the study.

## 14. Findings and Presentations

First, the survey findings pertaining responses from the head teachers’ concerning the head teachers’ opinions assessing the relationship between school feeding programme and the learners’ effectiveness in

learning was presented using tables. The information in these tables showed the head teachers' views pertaining the relationship between school feeding programme and the learners' effectiveness in learning. The quantitative data was presented in a more manageable form. Qualitative data was also presented by analyzing the answers given by various teachers pertaining various interview questions comparison was made and a certain conclusion was arrived at.

## 15. Data Analysis

This study used Pearson  $r$  to test quantitatively data collected from the head teachers. Correlation method of hypothesis testing is applied in testing whether there is a linear association between two variables. In this study, the main objective was to investigate whether there was a relationship between school feeding program and the effectiveness of learning in public primary schools in Kitui County. Therefore, the two main variables involved are the school feeding programs and the effectiveness of learning among primary school pupils. The correlation method was therefore used to identify existence of a linear correlation between the two variables. To analyze the collected data, the researcher used statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software; the software performed data entry and analyze it. This software helps to analyze data based on Pearson. The coded data was calculated to determine the relationship between school feeding Programme and effectiveness in learning. This data was also analyzed using descriptive statistics from the responses given by the head teachers. Qualitative data was also obtained from interviews and was analyzed thematically. Qualitative analysis involves classification of data into patterns in order to produce results. It is essential for the analysis of attitudes, behaviors, or feelings. In this study, the use of qualitative analysis was necessary because it fully lead to understand different aspects of the study objective. For instance, qualitative analysis was used in evaluating the attitude of teachers towards school feeding program. Qualitative data was recorded after interviewing the class seven teachers and it was analyzed using Focus by Question Analysis strategy. With this method, the researcher had all the answers given by each respondent for each question then comparison was done to get out similarities and differences. Percentages based on the 19 respondents were sought to help in the analysis.

## 16. Data presentations

The researcher presents the findings of the study in line with the research objective. Based on the findings, the researcher further presents the discussion of the results detailing both quantitative and qualitative analysis. To establish existence of relationship, Pearson  $r$  was employed at 95% confidence interval. The  $p$ -values obtained from the Pearson  $r$  formed the basis for rejecting or failing to reject the null hypothesis of this study. Results have been presented using tables and graphs. The head teachers' responses have been compared with the interview results using verbatim.



## 17. Relationship Between School Feeding Programme and School Learners' Attendance in Public Primary Schools

A Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) was calculated at 95% confidence interval, and its significance used to determine whether there existed a significant relationship between the two variables. Findings from the correlation were also supported by other findings from the interviews, where class seven teachers' representatives were requested to give their opinions regarding the relationship between provision of school meals and learners' attendance. Head teachers were subjected to a series of likert scale statements. In the scale, 1 was strongly agree while 4 was strongly disagree. It was deemed important that issues of attendance be assessed since they are part of effective learning in primary schools. Failure to attend classes and other academic activities adequately disadvantages the learners, hence making learning process ineffective.

Table 2

*Respondents' opinions on School Feeding and learners' attendance in school*

Variable	F	strongly agree	disagree	strongly disagree	Total
	%				
Absenteeism rate has increased since the introduction of the School Feeding Programme	6	0	44	58	108
	5.6	0	40.7	53.7	100.0
Despite the introduction of the School Feeding Programme in your school, attendance level has decreased.	2	2	34	70	108
	1.9	1.9	31.5	64.8	100
Pupils do not miss classes after the introduction of School Feeding Programme in your school	42	58	4	4	108
	38.9	53.7	3.7	3.7	100
Cases of sneaking have increased after introducing the School Feeding Programme in your school	26	36	30	16	108
	24.1	33.3	27.8	14.8	100

The above results show that School Feeding Programme have a positive relationship with pupils learning effectiveness as pertains their attendance. For instance majority of the head teachers 70(64.8%) of them strongly disagreed that attendance level had decreased after the introduction of the School Feeding Programme. The results also show that pupils were no longer missing classes after the introduction of School Feeding Programme since 58(53.7%) strongly agreed on this statement. In support of the positive relationship between school feeding programme and the pupils' effectiveness in learning, only 6(5.6%) of the head teachers opined that absenteeism had increased after the introduction of the school feeding

programme .Meanwhile,42(38.9%) agreed that pupils were not missing classes since school feeding Programme was introduced in kitui County.

Table 3

*Relationship between School Feeding Program and pupils’ attendance*

			School feeding program	Attendance
School feeding program	Pearson Correlation		1	.46
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.047
	N		108	108
Transition	Pearson Correlation		.46	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.047	
	N		108	108

P< 0.05 df = 106

p=0.047<0.05), hence the hypothesis that ‘there is no significant relationship between school feeding program and pupils’ attendance is rejected. The results from the interviews with class seven teachers’ representatives were similar to those of head teachers. Most of the teachers opined that class attendance rates had increased after introduction of School Feeding Program.

### 18. Summary of the Findings

#### Relationship Between School Feeding Programmes and the Pupils’ School Attendance Rates

The study found that school attendance improved tremendously after introduction of school feeding program. Both head teachers and class seven teachers’ representatives were of the opinion that attendance rates increased after introduction of school feeding programme. The results from the interviews show that there was a significant difference in absenteeism rates before and after school feeding program was introduced.

### 19. Conclusion

On whether school feeding program has a significant relationship with pupils’ school attendance rates, this study concludes that there was tremendous improvement in class attendance and participation in other learning activities after introduction of school feeding programme. The findings have shown that data on absenteeism and pupils’ rates of sneaking changed significantly after introduction of school feeding programme in public primary schools in Kitui County. The finds show a positive significant relationship hence, the hypothesis that ‘there is no significant relationship between school feedings program and pupils’ school attendance and in class is hereby rejected.

## 20. Recommendations

- i. The study recommends that the county government to liaise with parents and guardians of primary school pupils in order to expand the school feeding programme and include breakfast and supper so that more learners can attend and be retained in school.
- ii. The researcher further recommends that the head teachers and teachers to take advantage of school feeding program to ensure that more learners complete their studies within their respective cohorts.
- iii. The study further recommends that the National government improvise more strategies that will ensure more learners are enrolled and attend school regularly.
- iv. The researcher recommends that the County government ensure that all the schools in Kitui County have school feeding programmes and support them fully.

## 21. Suggestions for Further Study

- i. The researcher suggests that further studies should be conducted on methods used to implement the school feeding program, in order to ensure that the intended purpose is fulfilled.
- ii. The study further recommends further studies to be conducted on school feeding program disparities existing between boarding and day primary schools. Various studies pertaining effectiveness in learning should be conducted to improve effective learning in Kitui County.

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