

THE CHALLENGES FACING HEAD TEACHER'S ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS, IN NAIROBI PROVINCE, KENYA

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INTRODUCTION

Many programs have been implemented in developing countries to improve both the physical health and the psychosocial health of students. School feeding is a long standing and popular development assistance program; implemented in over 72 countries by the World Food Programs (WFP) alone in developing countries (WFP, 2008). In these developing countries, School Feeding Program (SFP) is offered by non-governmental organizations or other large organizations in collaboration with national governments (Bennett, 2003)

According to Dreze and Goyal (2003), school feeding program need urgent attention. This is owed to its benefits especially to developing countries. In India, an evaluation of the country's school feeding programme found out that girls in schools with SFP had higher chances of completing school compared to their counter parts in schools that do not have SFP (WFP 2005). In Pakistan, introduction of SFP saw 48 percent of parents take their children to school. The effect of SFP is greater in girls in terms of enrollment, attendance and completion of school (WFP 2006).

In Kenya school feeding programme was started due to chronic food insecurity and poverty which reduced opportunities for children to complete primary education in many parts of the country (UNESCO 2005). SFP was started in Kenya in 1980 by WFP and the ministry of education (MoE) but it picked well in 2003 after implementation of free primary education (FPE)

The program offers mid-day meals to pre-primary and primary school children in Arid and Semi Arid lands (ASALS). The programme grew over the years covering more than one million children in remote, arid regions and unplanned urban slums of Nairobi and Mombasa by the year 2010 (WFP, 2009).

The role of the head teacher in the school feeding programme is to ensure that the food supplied to the school is of good quality in terms of dietary needs of the pupils; availability of proper facilities for storage and preparation of the food and mobilization of parents to volunteer and prepare the meals for their children (WFP, 2003). However school administrators perceive their role of SFP implementation as expensive in terms of time, loaded with implementation problems and ineffective in meeting health nutrition and educational objectives (Levinger 2004)

In Kenya, the 2005 Sessional Paper on Policy Framework for Education highlights the need for school meals, calls for expansions of the programme and encourages communities to provide mid-day meals to needy children. There is also close and effective cooperation between the Ministry of Education and WFP staff; however the 2008 Food Security Policy on Nairobi's slums states that more than 70 percent of primary school age children are not enrolled in school, as compared to the national average of 8 percent. Over 95 percent of children attend classes in WFP assisted schools, while only 48 percent of people living in the slums complete primary school (Oxfam, 2009; National Nutrition and Food Security Policy, 2008).

According to Tolimson (2007), SFP faces a lot of challenges in spite of its benefits and projected success by stakeholders like WFP. In developing countries, politicians see SFP as a means of gaining popularity.

Furthermore, some SFP food is sold to generate money to supplement school income or supplement teacher's personal income.

The degree to which SFP is articulated in national policy framework helps strengthen its potential and sustainability and the quality of implementation. National planning for SFP should ensure that the government identifies the most appropriate role in its development agenda. SFP should be made a priority in sectoral plans with strong political support (WFP, 2009) this will make the work of the head teachers easier.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To establish how head teachers procure resources necessary for the implementation of the school feeding program in public primary schools in Nairobi province.
- ii. To identify the extent to which head teachers coordinate school activities in the implementation of the school feeding program in public primary schools in Nairobi province.

Research questions

The following were the research questions of the study

- i. How do head teachers procure resources necessary for the implementation of the school feeding program in public primary schools in Nairobi province?
- ii. To what extent do the head teachers coordinate school activities in the implementation of the school feeding program in public primary schools in Nairobi province?

Significance of the study

The findings of this study may provide useful information to the ministry of education, key donors, education policy makers and school managers/administrators on the perceived success of SFPs. It may help in assessing the challenges and factors of SFP as experienced by school managers.

Limitations of the study

The study sought information that could be classified as sensitive to school head teachers. The research assured the respondents of confidentiality to their identities and sought related information from the teachers. This ensured validity of responses given.

Delimitation of the study

The study was restricted to public primary schools feeding program in Nairobi province. The study was also delimited to head teachers and teachers as SFP implementers disregarding other stakeholders in SFP management.

Assumptions of the study

The study was guided by the following assumptions

- i. That all public primary schools have sound and established school administration constituted of professionals who are dedicated to their duties in day to day running of the school.
- ii. That respondents were honest and truthful as far as school management and coordination of school feeding program is concerned.

Definition of significant terms.

Primary school management – refers to organization and coordination of the activities of a school in accordance to stipulated guidance by the ministry of education and policies in achievement of all education goals.

School feeding program – refers to provision of meals in schools funded by donor partners, or national government; entrenched and managed by school management and parents associations.

School manager –refers to any person or body of persons responsible for the management of school affairs which include school feeding programme.

Role – refers to putting activities or procuring resources, coordinating school activities and integrating community activities to action.

Program- refers to plan of events.

Research methodology

The study used descriptive design. According to Orodho (2005) , descriptive design is conducted to establish the nature of the existing conditions, and determine relationships that exist between specific events. Therefore the study found the design relevant in establishing challenges facing head teachers role in SFP implementation.

Target Population

A population is an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common characteristic that conform to a given specification (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). The target population of this study was 65 head teachers in the 65 public primary schools in Nairobi province with SFP. All head teachers and the 870 teachers in these schools were also targeted

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample is a representative of a larger population Tuckman (1999). All the 65 head teachers were involved in the study. They were purposively sampled because they were privy to study information. Simple random sampling was used to select 2 teachers from each school. A total of 130 teachers therefore participated in the study. The research enumerated the teachers in each school randomly and picked the 5th and 10th teachers to participate in the study hence a total of 130 teachers.

Research Instruments

Head teachers questionnaire and teacher’s questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaire had both open ended and closed questions. The questionnaires sought information on procurement of SFP resources, coordination of school activities and SFP in schools, impact of SFP in schools and challenges facing head teachers in the implementation of SFP in school.

Data collection procedure

The study sought research authorization permit from relevant authorities and administered the questionnaires to schools under study. The respondents filled the questionnaires and handed them over to the researchers after one week.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was organized summarized and coded. The coded data was entered in statistical package for social sciences (spss) and results presented in form of frequency and percentage tables and charts. Conclusions were made based on the findings.

Data presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings

The findings of the study are presented as follows:

Background Information

The study sought to know head teachers administrative experience. findings are presented in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Administrative experience of head teachers in their present schools

Experience in years	Frequency	Percentage %
3 and below	5	7.7
4-6	5	7.7
7-9	40	61.6
10-15	14	21.6
More than 15	1	1.5
Total	65	100

From Table 4.1, majority of the head teachers (over 60%) have served in their respective schools for more than seven years. This indicates that most head teachers are conversant with SFP programmes and are experienced in coordinating the programs in their schools.

Researchers also sought to know head teachers professional qualifications. The findings are recorded in Table 4.2

Table 4.2 head teachers’ professional qualifications

Level	Frequency	Percentage %
Degree	20	30
Approved Teachers - scale 1	35	54
Approved teachers - scale 2	5	8
Approved teachers - scale	3	5
Certificates (P1)	2	3
Total	65	100

Majority of head teachers hold approved teacher scale 1 and degree qualifications. Given that most of these head teachers have long experience in teaching and leadership in their present schools; they are qualified to lead and successfully implement SFP hence realisation of education objectives.

Objective 1: procurement of resources

The study sought to know the frequency of food delivery to the schools or intervals at which food is delivered to schools. Findings, are recorded on Table 4.3

Table 4.3: head teachers response or food delivery to school

Period	Frequency	%
Termly	-	-
Monthly	60	92
Weekly	5	8
Daily	-	-
Total	65	100

From Table 4.3 majority of schools receive food on a monthly basis. The teachers though that this was a challenge because sometimes the food gets depleted in the stores before the end of the month. This leads to rationing of the little amount of food available.

Since schools receive SFP food free from donors, the study sought to know the parties involved in paying the cooks. Findings are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 head teachers and teachers’ responses on payments of cooks.

Payments of cooks	Frequency	Percentage %
Parents teachers associative	135	69.2
School administration	40	20.5
Parents	20	10.3
Governments	0	0
Total	195	100

From table 4.4, majority of cooks are paid by the parents and teachers association. This is because SFP is an activity coordinated by the parents and teachers association. The government does not pay cooks in any school. only 20% of the schools pay their cooks using a school find, which is budgeted for in the school budget.

Under parents teachers association, children are asked to contribute fifty shillings each for payment of cook's failure to which a pupil is sent home to bring the money; lack of which may result to dropping out of school. The study further sought to know the type of fuel used in cooking SFP food. results are shown on Table 4.5

Table 4.5 Teachers and head teachers responses on types of fuel used for cooking SFP meals.

Fuel	Frequency	Percentage %
Firewood	157	95
Charcoal	8	5
Biogas	-	-
Gas	-	-
Kerosene	-	-
Total	165	100

Majority (95%) of respondents indicated that most schools cook SFP food using firewood. while (5%) of the schools use charcoal. most head teachers reported that firewood was cheaper to tender for as compared to other forms of energy.

The study further sought to know the donors of SFP in Nairobi province and findings are recorded on table 4.6.

Table 4.6 donors of the school feeding programme

Donor	Frequency	Percentage %
World food programme	94	48.2
Government	0	0
Feed the children	101	51.8
Others	0	0
Total	195	100

Table 4.6 indicates that feed the children is the major SFP food donor in public primary schools in Nairobi province. This is a Christian international non-governmental organization founded in 1979 whose mission is to deliver food, medicine, clothing and other necessities to individuals, children and families who lack essential needs due to poverty and natural disaster, WFP also suppliers SFP food to a good number of schools.

The study sought to know head teachers responses to food delivery to schools, their responses are recorded in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 Head teachers' responses to effectiveness of food delivery to the schools

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Ineffective	65	100
Effective	0	0
Total	65	100

All (100%) of the head teachers felt that food delivery was not effective at all. At times prices of the food stuffs go up posing a challenge to donors to procure enough food for the schools. The amount of food delivered to

schools is not sufficient as more children keep enrolling especially in dry months of the year when famine strikes in homes.

Objective 2: coordination of school feeding programme

This objective sought to establish the extent to which head teachers and teachers coordinate SFP in schools. The study sought to know the parties/individuals responsible for serving SFP meals. The findings are recorded on Table 4.8

Table 4.8 serving of meals

Person serving	Frequency	Percentage %
Teacher of duty	100	51.28
Prefects	30	15.38
Cooks	20	10.25
Both teacher on duty and prefects	45	23.07
Total	195	100

Findings on Table 4.8 clearly show that teachers on duty were responsible for serving SFP meals in most schools. Prefects also assisted the teachers on duty to serve the meals to fellow learners. Very few schools (10%) had cooks serving SFP meals. This clearly indicates that SFP consumed teachers’ time and effort instead of parents’ effort.

The study further sought to know the persons involved in food preparation. Findings are recorded a table 4.9

Table 4.9 Involvement in SFP food preparation

Persons involved	Frequency	Percentage %
Parents	175	89.75
Teachers	20	10.25
Total	195	100

Table 4.9 indicated that parents aid the schools in the implementation of the school feeding program by volunteering as cooks in schools where their children learn. a few schools (10.25%) still depend on teachers in food preparation. schools where teachers did the cooking saw SFP as a burden to the schools as teachers hardly balanced between teaching, cooking and serving SFP meals. more so, this was the situation in small schools which hardly had enough teachers for curriculum implementation.

The study sought to know benefits of SFP to the schools. Findings are recorded on Table 4.10

Table 4.10 benefits of the school feeding program

Descriptive of SFP	Frequency	Percentage
Highly beneficial	123	63.07
Beneficial	57	29.23
Fairly beneficial	15	8
Not beneficial at all	0	0
Total	195	100

Majority of the respondents felt that school feeding program is very beneficial. This is because it has improved the attendance and enrollment rates in most schools. Improvement in attendance and enrolment rates indicate

that food is indeed a factor that determines the willingness of children to attend school. Parents who cannot afford meals to their children sustainably, find schools that offer SFP a big relief.

The study sought to know the achievement of the school feeding program. Findings are shown on table 4.11

Table 4.11 achievement of the school feeding program

Achievement	Frequency	Percentage %
Increased pupil enrollment and attendance	112	51.43
Decreased gender disparity	3	1.53
Alleviation of short term hunger	60	30.76
Improved dietary status	0	0
Pupils average performance	20	10.25
Total	195	100

Majority of the respondents (57%) reported that SFP has increased pupils school attendance and enrolment in many schools, this is because parents have been enlightened on the benefits of the feeding program, in return they bring their children to school both to learn and eat.

The study sought to know how the school head teacher manages the increased pupil population. Findings are indicated on Table 4.12

Table 4.12 management of the increased pupil population

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage %
Employing untrained teachers	90	46.15
Constructing more classes	6	3
Merging of classes	67	33.83
Delegating duties to teaching staff	30	15.38
Total	195	100

SFP has lead to increased enrolment in most schools. Majority of the schools (46.15%) now employ untrained teachers to assist in teaching. They are paid by schools committees and parents in their respective schools.

About 33 percent merge, their classes which indicate that the classes are so congested hence the teachers to pupil attention is never achieved. This is a contributing factor to poor performance in these schools.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of the findings

From the research findings, it was established that the increase in pupils population is a challenge that head teachers face in the implementation of the school feeding program. Many parents take their children to school because of SFP and introduction of free primary education. This can be blamed on widespread poverty and hunger in the study area. Many families spend days without food and seek the benefit of SFP to have food and an opportunity to learn.

The study also established that SFP is perceived as a burden to teachers who have to teach, and coordinate the cooking and serving of the meals. Therefore, a teacher is compelled by circumstances to miss some classes to ensure proper coordination of SFP; affecting academic performance of the school.

Study findings indicate that 46 percent of the schools employ untrained teachers to manage the increased pupil’s population; and about 34 percent merge their classes. Untrained teachers lack teaching methodology and are

ineffective in content delivery. Pupils who grow up in the hands of untrained teachers encounter challenges later such as poor reading and writing skills.

The study also established that head teachers lacked money to pay or hire cooks in the school kitchen; leaving teachers to supervise, cook and serve meals. Most teachers found SFP to be burdensome and demanding in terms of time. They could hardly balance teaching and SFP coordination.

In some schools, there was poor cooperation and coordination between the parents and the teachers on SFP implementation. Parents were supposed to volunteer and cook the meals for learners. Most schools benefited from parents services but where they lacked especially in small schools, teachers had to cook and serve the meals. This was done at the expense of teaching time.

Conclusion

Head teachers face many challenges in implementing SFP in schools. Stakeholder and donors have a responsibility of minimizing the challenges by apportioning a supportive kitty to the program and offering voluntary service especially in food preparation.

Recommendations

The current Kenyan education policies relating to free primary education financing has no provision for SFPs in schools. This is an anomaly given that public schools are found in varied geographic locations that face different socio-economic challenges. Education policies should integrate SFP in schools addressing regional differences/ challenges in a location of a supportive fund for SFP.

Parents need sensitization on their role in support of SFP in order for schools to realize academic excellence. This will free the teachers from preparing and serving SFP food hence remain focused to teaching only.

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APPENDIX A. Head teachers Questionnaire

1. When was the school feeding program introduced in your school?
2. How was the school attendance rate before and after the feeding scheme introduction (Quantify)
 - Number of students before _____
 - number of students after _____
3. To what extent has the school feeding program achieved its goals in public primary schools?

School feeding program	1	2	3	4	5
Increased gender disparity					
Alleviation of short term hunger					
Improved average performance					
Pupils average performance					

1. – very high extent
 2. – high extent
 3. – moderately high extent
 4. – low extent
 5. – very low extent
4. Who serves the food?
- School prefects
- Teachers on duty
- School prefects and teachers on duty
5. How often is food delivered to the school?
 6. How would you rate the school feeding program in terms of enhancing learner performance?
 Excellent [] Very Good [] Good [] Average [] Poor []
 7. In your opinion do you think the management and administration of school feeding program is a major management burden in your school?
 Yes [] No []
 8. How do you manage the increased pupil population realized from the increased enrollment?
 Employing untrained teachers []
 Constructing more classes []
 Merging of classes []
 Delegating duties to teaching staff []
 9. How would you rate the challenges that come with the school feeding program?
 Very challenging []
 Challenging []
 Fairly challenging []
 Not challenging []

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire for Teachers

1. Who are the donors of SFP in your school?
World food program []
Government []
Feed the children []
Others []
2. How often do they provide the food stuffs?
3. What sources of fuel do you use for cooking?
4. Where do you get funds for purchasing the fuels?
5. How effective is the delivery of the food stuff?
6. How does the community aid in the implantation of SFP?
7. What challenges do you face in the implementation of SFP?