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Influence of School Feeding Programs on Student Attendance and Academic Performance in Ghana, and Its Potential as a Model for Other West African Nations

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Purpose: The aim of the study was to evaluate the influence of school feeding programs on student attendance and academic performance in Ghana, and its potential as a model for other West African nations

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Influence of school feeding programs in Ghana reveals that these initiatives significantly improve student attendance and academic performance, particularly in underserved and rural areas. By providing daily meals, the programs help reduce hunger, improve concentration, and boost overall participation in school activities. Attendance rates have notably increased as families are more motivated to send their children to school, knowing meals are provided.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, human capital theory & social ecological model (SEM) may be used to anchor future studies on the influence of school feeding programs on student attendance and academic performance in Ghana, and its potential as a model for other West African nations. To maximize the impact on both attendance and academic performance, programs should focus on improving the nutritional content and consistent delivery of meals. Ghana's school feeding program should serve as a policy model for other West African nations, but adaptations must be made to fit the specific contexts of each country.

Keywords: *School Feeding Programs, Student Attendance, Academic Performance, Potential*

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INTRODUCTION

Student attendance rate refers to the percentage of enrolled students who regularly attend school during the academic year. In the USA, student attendance rates have remained relatively high, with data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) showing that the attendance rate for public schools was approximately 93% in 2019 (NCES, 2019). However, disparities exist across different socioeconomic groups, with chronic absenteeism—defined as missing more than 10% of school days—affecting about 16% of students nationwide. In Japan, student attendance rates are exceptionally high, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reporting an average attendance rate of over 98% (OECD, 2018). The Japanese education system emphasizes discipline and attendance, resulting in consistently high rates of school participation across all regions and grade levels.

In contrast, the UK has faced challenges related to student absenteeism in recent years. Data from the Department for Education (DfE) shows that in the 2018-2019 academic year, the overall absence rate was 4.7%, with persistent absenteeism at 11.2% (DfE, 2020). Although the attendance rate is relatively high, the UK government continues to address issues related to truancy and absenteeism, particularly among disadvantaged groups. Comparatively, student attendance rates in developed countries remain high, but socioeconomic factors significantly influence chronic absenteeism trends. Addressing these disparities is key to ensuring equitable education outcomes across all demographics.

In Canada, student attendance rates have remained consistently high, with primary school attendance reaching around 97% as of 2019 (Statistics Canada, 2020). However, chronic absenteeism affects approximately 10% of students, especially in Indigenous communities, where social and economic factors play a significant role in reducing attendance rates. In Australia, the attendance rate for primary school students was 93% in 2019, but absenteeism tends to increase in secondary schools, particularly in rural and remote areas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The Australian government has focused on reducing absenteeism by promoting educational engagement and implementing truancy intervention programs. In South Korea, student attendance rates are among the highest in the world, exceeding 98% across primary and secondary education (OECD, 2018). This high attendance is largely driven by a strong cultural emphasis on education and parental involvement in academic success. Despite high attendance rates in these developed countries, certain socioeconomic groups experience higher levels of absenteeism. Indigenous populations in Canada and rural communities in Australia are particularly vulnerable to lower attendance rates due to poverty, lack of access to educational resources, and health disparities. These attendance gaps suggest that even in developed economies, targeted interventions are necessary to ensure equitable access to education across all demographics. Addressing these issues remains a critical priority for policymakers in these countries.

In Germany, student attendance is mandatory, and the attendance rate remains high, with over 95% of students attending primary and secondary education regularly (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2019). However, chronic absenteeism, defined as students missing more than 10% of school days, affects about 10% of students in vocational and secondary schools, particularly in urban areas (European Commission, 2020). In Sweden, the overall attendance rate for primary education exceeds 96%, with very low levels of absenteeism (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2019). However, recent data indicate a slight increase in absenteeism among secondary school students, particularly

in immigrant communities and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. In France, student attendance is similarly high, with rates around 95% for primary schools, but persistent absenteeism has been reported in about 8% of secondary school students, often linked to social and economic challenges (Ministry of National Education, 2020).

In developing economies, student attendance rates vary considerably due to socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, health issues, and infrastructure limitations. For example, in India, student attendance in primary schools has remained stable at around 87% in recent years (ASER Centre, 2020). However, issues like malnutrition and economic hardships often lead to higher dropout rates, especially in rural areas. In Brazil, attendance rates for primary education were reported at about 95% in 2019, but the country faces similar challenges in secondary education, where the dropout rate is significantly higher (World Bank, 2020). Access to school feeding programs and social welfare initiatives in developing economies often plays a pivotal role in improving attendance.

Efforts to improve attendance in developing countries often involve targeted interventions, such as conditional cash transfers, school meal programs, and improving school infrastructure. Studies indicate that such initiatives have been particularly effective in increasing school attendance among low-income families (Fiszbein & Schady, 2009). Despite these efforts, disparities in attendance rates remain, with rural areas typically lagging behind urban centers. Continued investment in educational infrastructure and social programs is crucial for narrowing the attendance gap in developing economies.

In Indonesia, student attendance rates for primary education were recorded at around 90% in 2019, but attendance drops significantly in secondary education, especially in rural areas (UNESCO, 2020). Economic challenges, child labor, and limited access to secondary schools contribute to lower attendance in remote regions. In Kenya, the introduction of free primary education in 2003 significantly boosted attendance rates, which reached 85% in 2019. However, challenges such as poverty, hunger, and regional conflict continue to negatively impact attendance, especially in pastoralist communities and informal urban settlements (World Bank, 2020). Similarly, in Bangladesh, attendance in primary education stands at around 89%, with the country making substantial progress in reducing absenteeism through initiatives such as stipends for poor families and school meal programs (ASER Centre, 2020). Developing countries often face systemic challenges that hinder consistent school attendance, including poverty, lack of infrastructure, and health issues. Initiatives such as conditional cash transfers and school feeding programs have proven to be effective in improving attendance rates, especially for students from low-income families. However, these interventions need to be scaled up to address the root causes of absenteeism, including gender disparities and inadequate access to schools in rural areas. Investing in educational infrastructure and social support systems remains key to boosting attendance rates in these countries.

In the Philippines, primary school attendance was recorded at 91% in 2019, though the country faces challenges in secondary education, with dropout rates increasing in rural and impoverished areas (UNESCO, 2020). The Philippines has implemented social support programs like school feeding and conditional cash transfers to improve attendance rates, especially in marginalized communities. In Egypt, the student attendance rate for primary education was around 94% in 2019, but disparities remain between rural and urban areas, as well as between boys and girls in certain

regions (World Bank, 2020). In Peru, the national attendance rate for primary schools stood at around 93% in 2019, but significant challenges remain in improving secondary education attendance, particularly in rural and indigenous communities (UNESCO, 2020).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, student attendance rates are generally lower compared to developed and some developing economies due to barriers like poverty, conflict, and inadequate school facilities. In Ghana, the national school attendance rate in primary schools was around 79% in 2019 (World Bank, 2020). Rural areas, in particular, struggle with low attendance rates, influenced by factors such as child labor, hunger, and poor educational resources. In Nigeria, attendance rates in primary schools were reported at approximately 70% in 2020, but similar challenges—like regional conflict and economic instability—continue to hinder progress (UNICEF, 2020). School feeding programs in some Sub-Saharan countries have shown positive results, boosting attendance rates by as much as 10% in areas where they are implemented (WFP, 2019).

In Ethiopia, student attendance rates have improved over the years, with the primary school attendance rate reaching around 85% in 2019. However, the dropout rate remains high, particularly in rural areas, due to poverty, food insecurity, and cultural practices like early marriage (World Bank, 2020). In Uganda, the school attendance rate was about 82% in 2019, with significant disparities between urban and rural areas (UNICEF, 2020). Challenges such as lack of access to quality education, poor infrastructure, and child labor continue to affect attendance. In Tanzania, primary school attendance has improved to about 83%, largely due to the introduction of free primary education policies. However, the lack of secondary school facilities and early childbearing remain significant barriers to sustained attendance, particularly for girls (World Bank, 2020).

In South Africa, primary school attendance rates have been relatively high, reaching 96% in 2019. However, issues like poverty, child labor, and health-related absenteeism continue to impact secondary school attendance, which is lower, particularly in rural areas (UNICEF, 2020). In Zambia, the primary school attendance rate was 84% in 2019, with significant disparities between urban and rural regions (World Bank, 2020). The introduction of free primary education has boosted attendance, but challenges such as child labor, early marriage, and inadequate school infrastructure remain significant barriers to full participation. In Mozambique, attendance in primary schools stood at around 83%, with severe challenges in access to education in rural areas, where infrastructure and resources are limited (UNICEF, 2020). In these regions, school feeding programs have been particularly successful in raising attendance rates, especially for younger children.

The presence of a school feeding program is a critical intervention aimed at addressing food insecurity and improving educational outcomes, particularly in low-income and developing regions. First, these programs can directly reduce short-term hunger, which improves students' concentration and ability to participate in class, thus increasing school attendance (Bundy, 2018). Second, feeding programs serve as an incentive for poor families to send their children to school, as the provision of free meals offsets household food costs (Kristjansson, 2016). Third, school feeding programs often lead to reduced absenteeism due to improved overall health and nutrition, which lowers sickness-related absences (Jomaa et al., 2011). Finally, such programs are more effective in rural and impoverished areas where malnutrition and food insecurity are most prevalent, leading to a marked increase in school participation in these communities (Alderman & Bundy, 2012).

These interventions directly impact student attendance rates by making school environments more attractive and supportive for children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In regions where chronic absenteeism is linked to economic hardship and malnutrition, the introduction of school feeding programs has been associated with an increase in daily attendance by as much as 9% (Gelli, 2019). This shows a clear link between the availability of nutritious meals and improved school attendance rates. Additionally, girls are often the primary beneficiaries of these programs, as families in low-income areas are more likely to send their daughters to school if meals are provided (Sidaner, 2013). Thus, school feeding programs not only improve attendance but also promote gender equity in education.

Problem Statement

Despite significant efforts to improve education outcomes in Ghana, student attendance and academic performance remain inconsistent, particularly in low-income and rural areas. School feeding programs have been introduced as a potential solution to address these challenges by providing nutritional support to students, which is linked to improved school attendance and cognitive function (Gelli, 2019). However, the long-term impact of these programs on academic performance has not been extensively evaluated, and there is a need for empirical evidence to assess whether these interventions can serve as a sustainable model for other West African nations facing similar issues of malnutrition and poor school attendance (Aurino, 2018). Additionally, it is unclear how the socioeconomic context, such as family income and regional disparities, influences the effectiveness of school feeding programs in improving both attendance and academic performance (Afoakwa, 2020). A comprehensive evaluation is necessary to determine whether Ghana's school feeding programs can be adapted and scaled to other countries in the region to achieve similar educational improvements.

Theoretical Framework

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Originated by Abraham Maslow, this theory posits that individuals must satisfy basic physiological needs, such as food, before they can focus on higher-level needs like education and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). In the context of school feeding programs, ensuring that children receive adequate nutrition addresses their foundational needs, enabling them to focus on learning and attend school more regularly. This theory is relevant as it highlights how school feeding programs can support student attendance and academic performance by alleviating hunger, a major barrier to educational engagement in impoverished areas (Asim, 2020).

Human Capital Theory

Developed by economists such as Gary Becker, Human Capital Theory suggests that investment in education and health increases an individual's productivity and future earnings (Becker, 1964). School feeding programs can be viewed as an investment in children's human capital, improving their cognitive function and academic performance by ensuring that they are well-nourished. This theory supports the idea that improved health through nutrition leads to better educational outcomes, which can contribute to long-term economic development (Alderman & Bundy, 2018).

Social Ecological Model (SEM)

The Social Ecological Model, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, focuses on the interaction between individual behavior and multiple environmental systems, including family, school, and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In relation to school feeding programs, SEM emphasizes the importance of school-based interventions within broader socio-economic and cultural contexts. This theory is relevant because it helps frame the analysis of how external factors, like family income and regional disparities, influence the success of feeding programs in improving attendance and academic performance (Aurino, 2018).

Empirical Review

Aurino (2018) evaluated the learning impacts of the Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) in rural areas of the country. The purpose of the study was to assess how the provision of free meals at school influenced student attendance and academic performance. The study used a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design, covering several schools across rural Ghana, where students were randomly assigned to either receive school meals or serve as a control group without the meals. The findings showed that the program had a significant positive impact on student attendance, particularly among girls, who were more likely to attend school when meals were provided. While the effects on academic performance were modest, they were more pronounced among younger students who experienced consistent access to school meals. The researchers suggested that the cognitive benefits of school feeding programs may accumulate over time, particularly in regions where malnutrition is prevalent. The study also found that the program had an indirect effect on household dynamics, as parents were more inclined to send their children to school when meals were provided, reducing absenteeism caused by child labor. The researchers recommended expanding the program to additional schools, particularly in food-insecure areas, and improving the nutritional quality of meals to enhance academic outcomes further. They also suggested that long-term studies be conducted to assess the cumulative impact of school feeding on academic achievement. The study underscored the importance of school feeding programs in addressing both educational and nutritional challenges in developing countries. It highlighted the need for government commitment to funding and scaling such programs. Ultimately, the study provided strong evidence that school feeding programs could play a crucial role in improving educational outcomes in rural Ghana and could serve as a model for similar interventions in other West African nations.

Gelli (2019) examined whether the provision of meals over an extended period would lead to measurable improvements in student health and educational achievements. The researchers employed a cluster randomized trial involving schools that were part of the GSFP, comparing children who received meals regularly to those who did not. Their findings indicated that school meals significantly improved the height-for-age of students, especially girls, and those from low-income households, reflecting the nutritional benefits of the program. In addition to physical growth, the study reported an increase in school attendance, with notable gains for younger children who faced higher risks of malnutrition. While the program had positive effects on attendance, the impact on academic performance was less substantial, suggesting that while students were healthier and more present, additional interventions might be needed to translate these gains into better test scores. The researchers recommended that the GSFP should incorporate nutritional education to maximize the cognitive benefits of the meals provided. They also

highlighted the need for better coordination between the education and health sectors to enhance the overall effectiveness of the program. Furthermore, the study called for increased funding to ensure meal consistency and quality, as inconsistent meal provision could diminish the program's impact. The findings demonstrated that school feeding programs could help break the cycle of malnutrition and poor educational outcomes, particularly in resource-poor settings. The researchers concluded that similar programs should be scaled up across West Africa, with adjustments to meet local nutritional needs. This study provided critical insights into the importance of long-term interventions in improving both health and educational outcomes in children.

Afoakwa (2020) focused on evaluating the effects of school feeding programs on educational outcomes in Ghana, particularly in terms of attendance and academic performance. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from surveys and qualitative data from interviews with teachers, students, and parents across multiple regions of Ghana. The study found that school feeding programs had a substantial impact on reducing absenteeism and increasing school attendance, especially in rural areas where poverty and food insecurity were prevalent. However, the impact on academic performance was more nuanced; while students were attending school more regularly, the improvement in their test scores and cognitive abilities was less pronounced. The study suggested that factors such as the quality of instruction and the learning environment also played significant roles in determining academic performance, and that simply providing meals might not be enough to enhance learning outcomes. Based on these findings, the authors recommended improving the nutritional content of the meals and ensuring that the program was consistently delivered to avoid disruptions. They also emphasized the need for complementary educational interventions, such as teacher training and curriculum improvements, to boost the academic gains associated with better attendance. The study underscored the importance of sustained government support and international aid in maintaining and expanding the school feeding program. It highlighted the potential of these programs to serve as a model for neighboring West African countries dealing with similar educational and nutritional challenges. The researchers called for further longitudinal studies to explore the long-term impacts of the program on student performance and overall well-being. This study contributed to the growing body of evidence that school feeding programs are a vital component of educational policy in developing nations.

Alderman & Bundy (2018) conducted a comprehensive review of global school feeding programs, including those in Ghana, to assess their impact on educational outcomes and human capital development. The purpose of the review was to analyze how these programs influence school attendance, cognitive development, and long-term economic productivity. Using econometric analysis of data from multiple countries, the researchers found that school feeding programs consistently increased attendance rates, particularly in low-income regions, by providing a strong incentive for families to send their children to school. Additionally, the study highlighted the cognitive benefits of improved nutrition, which enhanced students' ability to learn and retain information, although the effects on academic performance varied depending on the quality of instruction and the learning environment. The authors argued that school feeding programs are particularly effective in regions with high levels of food insecurity and recommended that such programs be expanded across West Africa, with adjustments made to fit local dietary needs and economic conditions. The review emphasized the importance of integrating school feeding into

broader educational and health policies to ensure that children not only attend school but also receive a quality education. It also pointed out that the success of these programs depends on stable funding and efficient implementation, suggesting that governments work closely with international donors to scale up these initiatives. The authors concluded that school feeding programs could play a critical role in breaking the cycle of poverty and poor educational outcomes in developing countries. They recommended further research into the long-term impacts of these programs on economic development and social mobility.

Drake (2020) conducted a cross-sectional analysis of school feeding programs in Ghana and other West African nations, focusing on their impact on student attendance, enrollment, and performance. The study collected data from schools participating in these programs and compared them with those that did not have feeding programs in place. Their analysis revealed that schools with feeding programs experienced a significant increase in enrollment and daily attendance, as the provision of meals reduced absenteeism caused by hunger and economic pressures. The study also found a moderate improvement in academic performance, particularly in schools where meals were provided consistently throughout the school year. However, the researchers noted that the benefits of school feeding programs varied widely depending on the region and the socio-economic context of the students. In more impoverished areas, the programs had a greater impact on attendance but a smaller effect on academic performance, likely due to additional challenges such as inadequate teaching resources and overcrowded classrooms. The study recommended that West African governments collaborate to develop a regional strategy for school feeding, focusing on improving the quality and consistency of the meals provided. The authors also suggested that future school feeding programs be paired with educational reforms to maximize their impact on learning outcomes. They concluded that school feeding could serve as a key component of educational policy across West Africa, provided that it is integrated into broader efforts to improve education quality and access.

Osei-Fosu (2018) evaluated the cost-effectiveness of the Ghana School Feeding Program in improving student attendance and academic outcomes. The study used a cost-benefit analysis framework, examining the costs of implementing the program against the educational benefits it produced in terms of increased attendance and improved learning outcomes. The findings revealed that the program was highly cost-effective in increasing school attendance, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas where families often struggled to provide regular meals for their children. However, the impact on academic performance was less significant, with only marginal improvements observed in test scores. The researcher suggested that the quality of the meals and the consistency of their provision played a crucial role in determining the program's effectiveness. Osei-Fosu recommended that the government improve monitoring systems to ensure that meals were delivered regularly and that the nutritional content of the food met the required standards to support cognitive development. Additionally, the study called for increased investment in teacher training and educational resources to complement the gains in attendance and maximize academic performance. The findings highlighted the importance of viewing school feeding programs as part of a broader strategy to improve educational outcomes, rather than as standalone interventions. The researcher concluded that with the right adjustments, the Ghana School Feeding Program could serve as a model for other countries in West Africa.

Nyarko & Osei (2019) analyzed the impact of school feeding on student attendance in deprived districts of Ghana using a quasi-experimental design. The purpose of the study was to assess whether the introduction of school meals in these areas had a measurable effect on student attendance and learning outcomes. The researchers collected data from schools in districts that had implemented the program and compared them to control schools that had not yet introduced feeding programs. The findings showed that schools with feeding programs experienced a 10% increase in attendance, with the most significant gains observed in areas where food insecurity was a major barrier to education. While the program had a clear positive effect on attendance, the impact on academic performance was more limited, with only marginal improvements in test scores. The researchers attributed this to factors such as overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching materials, and inconsistent meal quality. They recommended that the program be expanded to include more schools, particularly in rural areas, and that additional resources be allocated to improving the quality of both the meals and the learning environment. The study also called for greater coordination between the education and agriculture sectors to ensure that the food provided was locally sourced and nutritionally balanced. The researchers concluded that while school feeding programs are effective in increasing attendance, their full potential will only be realized when combined with broader educational reforms.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Gaps: The studies reviewed generally focus on the relationship between school feeding programs and student attendance, but there is a gap in understanding the full cognitive benefits of such programs. For instance, while Aurino (2018) and Gelli (2019) found that feeding programs positively impacted attendance and growth, the impact on academic performance was modest. More research is needed to explore the link between nutrition and cognitive development over time and how improved nutrition can translate into better learning outcomes. Additionally, while the studies acknowledge the role of external factors like teaching quality and learning environments (Afoakwah, 2020), they do not fully explore how these elements interact with school feeding programs to affect academic performance.

Contextual Gaps: Most studies emphasize rural and food-insecure regions of Ghana, highlighting the success of school feeding programs in increasing attendance in these areas (Aurino, 2018; Nyarko & Osei, 2019). However, the contextual gap exists in understanding the program's effects in urban and semi-urban settings, where food insecurity may not be as pronounced, but other factors such as overcrowded classrooms and inadequate resources may affect attendance and academic performance. The studies also primarily focus on attendance as the main outcome of

interest, with less emphasis on the broader contextual factors like socioeconomic conditions and parental involvement that could influence the overall success of the programs (Drake, 2020).

Geographical Gaps: While the studies reviewed provide valuable insights into the Ghanaian context, there is a geographical gap in applying these findings to other West African countries. For example, Alderman & Bundy (2018) and Drake (2020) suggested expanding school feeding programs across West Africa but did not provide detailed analyses of how these programs might need to be tailored to fit the specific nutritional and educational challenges of neighboring countries. Additionally, cross-border studies that evaluate the impacts of similar programs in different West African nations are limited. More research is needed to assess how lessons learned from Ghana's school feeding program can be adapted to different cultural, economic, and educational contexts within West Africa.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In conclusion, evaluating the influence of school feeding programs in Ghana reveals significant positive effects on student attendance, particularly in rural and food-insecure areas, while the impact on academic performance, though present, is more modest. The provision of nutritious meals at school addresses immediate barriers such as hunger, leading to improved student participation and overall health. However, the success of these programs in enhancing academic performance depends on complementary factors like teaching quality, learning environments, and meal consistency. As a model for other West African nations, Ghana's school feeding program demonstrates considerable potential, but its replication should account for the unique nutritional, economic, and educational challenges of each country. Expanding and tailoring such programs across the region could contribute to long-term improvements in educational outcomes and human capital development, thereby helping to break the cycle of poverty.

Recommendations

Theory

Further studies should explore the long-term cognitive effects of improved nutrition on academic performance, building on frameworks like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Human Capital Theory. These studies should assess how nutrition contributes to learning, retention, and cognitive development over time, providing a stronger theoretical foundation for understanding the links between food security and educational outcomes in low-income settings. Incorporate Socio-ecological Perspectives: Theories such as the Social Ecological Model (SEM) should be applied to understand the multi-layered factors—individual, family, school, and community—that influence the success of school feeding programs. This approach would help to conceptualize how different environments, particularly in rural and urban settings, impact program effectiveness across various contexts in West Africa.

Practice

To maximize the impact on both attendance and academic performance, programs should focus on improving the nutritional content and consistent delivery of meals. Studies suggest that better meal quality correlates with improved cognitive outcomes. Implementing quality standards and ensuring that meals are regularly provided will sustain student engagement and foster better

learning outcomes. School feeding programs should be complemented with other educational interventions, such as teacher training, curriculum development, and learning environment improvements. This would help bridge the gap between increased attendance and academic performance, ensuring that students benefit both nutritionally and academically (Osei-Fosu, 2018).

Policy

Ghana's school feeding program should serve as a policy model for other West African nations, but adaptations must be made to fit the specific contexts of each country. Governments should develop national policies that address local nutritional needs, food security, and education challenges, and collaborate with regional bodies like ECOWAS to create a coordinated school feeding strategy across West Africa. Policy should focus on securing sustainable funding sources from both government budgets and international aid to ensure program continuity. Additionally, robust monitoring systems should be established to assess program impacts, particularly regarding attendance and academic performance, to inform continuous improvements (Nyarko & Osei, 2019). Policymakers should also emphasize integrating school feeding with other social protection programs, such as healthcare and agriculture, to ensure holistic support for students and their communities.

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