



# Stakeholder's Perception on the Impact of School Feeding Programme on Health Status and Achievement of Primary School Pupils in Bauchi State, Nigeria

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which SFP has an impact on Health status and academic achievement in public primary schools. The study sample was comprising 375 teachers and 341 head teachers drawn from public primary schools benefitting from SFP in Bauchi state. To get the sample of 375 teachers across all primary schools in Bauchi state, one central primary school was purposively selected based on its characteristics of having teachers and pupils from various socioeconomic backgrounds. In each of the central primary schools, a total of 18 teachers were selected at random to serve as respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Stakeholder's' Perception on the impact of the School Feeding Program Questionnaire (SHPSIFPQ) developed by the researcher. The data was analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation. The study revealed that Stakeholders perceived to a great extent that SFP impacts primary school pupils' Health status and academic achievement and their perception does not differ significantly. Stakeholders perceived to a great extent that SFP impacts the pupil's Health status and academic achievement in Bauchi state primary schools, and their perception does not significantly differ. Government should sustain SFP, which will, in turn, reduce the cost or replace the Health status and academic achievement drive campaign carried out every school year by the Ministry of Education (MOE), State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). Government should deploy necessary mechanisms that will ensure a timely and uninterrupted supply of meals to the benefitting primary schools. Government should devise a sustainability and improvement plan for SFP so that pupils' Health status and academic achievement would be retained in primary schools.

### INTRODUCTION

Primary education fundamental human right as recognized by the international law of human rights.

It is one of the most effective investments in improving economies and creating literate, self-reliant, healthy societies. The child's early years are the

### ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: December, 2021

Received in revised form: February, 2022

Accepted: March, 2023 Published online: March, 2023

#### **KEYWORDS**

School Feeding Program, Health Status, Achievement, Primary Schools, Bauchi State

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most important in his/her life as they determine their future. It is such a delicate stage that all efforts are geared towards seeing that nothing happens that will hinder the provision of the requirements for attaining their total development.

The Nigeria federal ministry of science and technology (2004) stated that provision of food, adequate nutrition, and promotion of good health constitute the foundation of proper growth of the children. Early childhood education (ECE) lays a foundation for creativity, imagination, self-reliance, and survival. According to science and technology (2005), early childhood education has been integrative in nurturing the child's whole personality. It encompasses the growth of the child's physical, mental, socio-emotional and attributes. Children's physical and mental abilities can also be enhanced with nutrition whenever the need arises. Therefore, providing nutrition (food) to school-age children helps their physical and mental growth and development. This notion paves the way for the introduction of school feeding programs by the federal government of Nigeria. According to Bravely (1987), a school feeding program (SFP) enriches the child's diet, improves health, and increases academic performance. Therefore, food is used as a "magnet" to attract school children to enroll and consistently stay in schools until they reach completion (Benjamin, 2013).

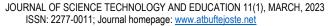
School feeding means provision of food to primary school children during school hours. According to Ovefade (2014), different countries combine the two school feeding modalities for various objectives. However, they have categorized them into two broad classes; in-school meals and take-home rations.

The idea of the school meal or school feeding program is not a new phenomenon. In Europe, the history of school feeding programs "dates back to the mid-19th century". (Evans, Harper, 2009) it is due to the effects of both the industrial revolution and World War II. Most families were unable to meet food costs in which schoolchildren were also affected (Bryant, 1913; Burnett, 2008).

During the colonial era and before introducing the school feeding program in Nigeria, students in day schools did not get food; instead, they carried cooked foods that they had to eat during lunch hours (noon hours). They had to carry food because schools were scarce and sometimes not available to their nearby villages. Thus, students had to travel a long distance, like five or more kilometers, to schools. The situation continued even after independence until the 1990s when the United Nations introduced school meals under the World Food Program and international organizations like Save the Oxfam. Christian Children, Services, and the like.

School feeding programs have become a worldwide phenomenon and an agenda pushed by the International Development Agencies such as the World Food Program (WFP). This development assumes that it may address barriers to poor students' enrollment and retention in primary schools in developing countries (Drakes, 2009). The school feeding program plays a crucial role in pupils' mental and promotes physical development, growth, and reduces many associated with immediate and longterm health problems (Bordi, 2015).







In Nigeria, a School feeding program means providing food to primary school children daily through the school's hours. In the realization of the central role of school feeding programs to education, the Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), World Food Program (WFP), United **Nations** International Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other International Development Partners (IDPs), launched the Program in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) on September 27th, 2005.

The Program, officially known as Home Grown School Feeding Program (SFP). The Program mainly practices in-school meals, where pupils or students are given meals during school hours if they attend school.

The School Feeding Program started in Bauchi State in April 2017. It began with 304,175 pupils in primary 1-3 being feed by 3,261 vendors across 1,221 primary schools. Despite the successes recorded, about 500,000 primaries 1-3 pupils were out of the Program. Presently, the figure has increased to 445,789 pupils, 7,584 vendors across 2,233 primary schools out of the 3,126 public primary schools in the state, leaving 893 Schools, not Fed. Cooks in the state only feed minimum of 70 a maximum of 90 pupils each as their number of pupils are feeding.

Agricultural Transformation Agenda promotes local consumption, creates local markets for agriculture, increases farmers' income, and employment (News Agency of Nigeria, 2016).

Despite participating in the Program since 2017, only 70 percent of the about 3,126 public primary schools in the state are currently covered, with about 445,879 school children beneficiaries. The Program is primarily a that will new project support government action to deliver costeffective school feeding. Therefore, its secondary objective is to promote local agriculture and benefit rural farmers by using locally sourced food. It provides regular orders and a reliable income for local farmers while improving children's education, health, and nutrition (UNICEF, 2006).

The program's overall goal in Nigeria is to reduce hunger and malnutrition among school children and enhance the achievement of Universal Basic Education. Therefore, all the objectives focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to WFP (2014) in Bridget (2016), the specific objectives of the Program include but are not limited to the following:

- 1. Reduce hunger among Nigerian School Children
- 2. Improve the nutritional health status of school children;
- Increase school enrolment, attendance, retention, completion, particularly children in rural communities and poor urban neighborhoods;
- 4. Enhance comprehension and learning achievements of pupils. The school feeding program essentially provides a balanced diet to children, increasing their attention span and better academic achievement. In addition, school feeding serves as a powerful and effective intervention that can help fight chronic hunger while reducing poverty and inequality in schools (Oyefade, 2014).

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Proper and frequent provision of food to primary pupils during school hours improves their performance and reduces absenteeism and tardiness. While relieves hunger and improves children's ability to succeed at school, improves academic, behavioral, and emotional functioning, and leads to increased attendance, lowered absenteeism. Therefore, food increases physical activity leading to greater academic achievement (Teras, 2015).

The sustainability of school programs depends feeding stakeholders' opinions on the expected outcome of the program's strengths and weaknesses. This achievement can be possible when close monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are implemented and will function effectively. Thus, the objectives of SFP are achievable through collective efforts by stakeholders at all levels at the level of state social investment coordinating office. The regular supply of food and effective distribution chain should have be maintained. While stakeholders, such as head-teachers and teachers, are to give regular feedback on the impact of the Program on school children. In that, regular feedback from stakeholders play a significant role in quality and sustainability of school feeding program (Finan, 2007 Waukesha, 2015)

All public primary schools in Bauchi state benefit from the school feeding program; the need to have regular feedback from stakeholders (head-teachers and teachers) on the program's impact is essential.

Despite the relevance and importance of feedback **SFP** development from head-teachers and teachers of public primary schools,

researchers have not given that area the attention it deserves. Consequently, the researcher's effort to identify relevant research that documented stakeholders' perceptions on the impact of SFP is abortive. Specifically, there is nonavailability of information on Health status and pupils' academic achievement due to SFP in Bauchi state. Hence, the present research is needed (stakeholders' perception of the impact of SFP on enrollment. attendance, retention. completion, and academic achievement of primary school pupils in Bauchi state).

# Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to find out the perception of stakeholders on the impact of the school feeding program in Bauchi State. The followings are specific objectives of the study:

- To find out the perception of i. stakeholders on the impact of SFP on improving the health status of primary school pupils in Bauchi State.
- ii. To find out the perception of stakeholders on the impact of SFP on improving the academic achievement of primary school pupils in Bauchi state.
- To find out if there is any iii. significance difference between the perception head teachers and teachers on the impact of school feeding program on enrollment and attendance of primary school pupils in Bauchi state

# **Research Questions**

The study will answer the following research question in line with the specific objectives of the study:





- i) To what extent do stakeholders perceive the impact of SFP on the health status of primary school pupils in Bauchi State?
- ii) To what extent do stakeholders perceive the impact of SFP on the achievement academic primary school pupils in Bauchi State?
- Is iii) there any significance difference between the perception head teachers and teachers on the impact of school feeding program on enrollment and attendance of primary school pupils in Bauchi state?

# Research hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were subject to test at a 0.05 level of significance.

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of headteachers and teachers on the impact of SFP on the health status of primary school pupils in Bauchi state.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between head-teachers' and teachers' perceptions of the impact of SFP on the academic achievement of primary school pupils in Bauchi state.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The research determines stakeholders' perception of the impact of school feeding programs on improving health status, and enhancing performance public in primary schools in Bauchi state.

Trend if one variable directly impacts and causes another, a popular format used to describe the characteristic or behavior of the population or phenomenon in the study and relates to

employing several variables. Α descriptive survey is an appropriate choice when the research aims to determine or identify characteristics and frequencies. It can also apply by using specific methods. Therefore, surveys research gathered data about varying how subjects to know different conditions among the subjects.

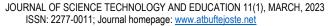
The area of the study is Bauchi which comprises 20 state government areas. The state covers an area of 45,837 square kilometers of land. Kano and Jigawa bound it to the north, Yobe, and Gombe to the east, Kaduna State to the west, and Plateau and the Taraba States to the south.

Bauchi state is one of the Northern parts of Nigeria that spans two distinctive vegetation zones, namely, the Sudan Savannah and the Sahel Savannah. Two main rivers transverse the state, the Gongola and Hadejia Rivers. The climatic condition of Bauchi State is boiling in April and May, while December and January are the coldest months.

The total population of the study is 21,864, comprised of 18,755 primary school teachers 3,109 public primary school head-teachers in primary schools that are currently benefitting from SFP in Bauchi state (SUBEB, 2020). The headteachers and teachers are stakeholders that have an active or direct connection with the primary school pupils benefiting the school feeding program. They are the ones that know and give information on the impact of SFP on health status, and academic achievement.

The study sample comprises of 375 teachers and 341 head-teachers, were drawn from public primary schools benefitting from SFP in Bauchi state. To







get the sample of 375 teachers across all primary schools in Bauchi state, one central primary school purposively selected based on characteristics of having teachers and pupils from various socio-economic backgrounds. In each of the central primary schools, a total of 18 teachers were randomly selected and served as respondents. The sample of headteachers (341) across Bauchi state primary schools, a total of 17 schools were selected at random in each of the 20 LGAs in Bauchi State. Therefore, 17 head-teachers of the 17 selected schools automatically served respondents representing head-teachers as stakeholders.

The instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled Stakeholder's' Perception on the impact of School Feeding Program Questionnaire (SHPSIFPQ) developed by the researcher. The instrument for the study was validated into to face and content validation procedure by four experts. One expert in educational administration and planning, one expert in measurement, evaluation, one expert in statistics, and the Program Manager, Bauchi state Home Grown School Feeding Program Office, validates the instrument. Their comments observations were including in the final version of the instrument before data collection.

Data collected was analyze using Mean (x) and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions 1-6. In contrast, the hypotheses analyzed by using an independent sample t-test at a 0.05 significance level. The data was analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

#### RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do stakeholders perceive the impact of SFP on the health status of primary school pupils in Bauchi State?

The data used to analyze research question five revealed that school feeding improves the neatness status of the primary school pupils with a mean score of 3.17. At the same time, item 2 shows that SFP improves sanitation in schools where it is implementing with a mean score of 3.26. Also, item 3 revealed that SFP is an excellent way to channel nourishment to primary school pupils, with a mean score of 2.93. The table 1 also indicated that the meal provided is adequately hygienic. In such a way that it has improved pupil's health with a mean of 2.88, which indicates the low extent of stakeholder's perception of the impact of SFP on pupils Health. The data collected shows that SFP served as the substitute to some other interventions on pupils' health with a mean score of 3.19. Other items indicated that pupils are physically more active due to SFP, with a mean score of 3.34. Item 7 revealed that malnutrition has reduced in primary school pupils in the state with a mean score of 3.05. Item 8 shows that with SFP intensity of worm infections in children enhances the nutritional status of pupils reduced with a mean of 2.95. Item 9 revealed that SFP enhances the diet and increases the energy available to pupils, with a mean score of 3.11. Item 10 indicated SFP prevents poor nutrition in early childhood of primary school pupils with a mean score of 3.39. The grand mean of 3.12 indicates the opinion of stakeholders on how SFP impacted primary school pupils' health status to a great extent.





Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of stakeholders on their perception of the impact of SFP on the health status of primary school pupils in Bauchi state.

	Items	N	Mean	Std.	Remark
				deviation	
1.	School feeding improves the neatness status of	360	3.17	.692	GE
	primary school pupils.				
2.	Environmental sanitation improves where school	360	3.26	.738	GE
	feeding programs are implements.				
3.	School meal is the excellent way to channel vital	360	2.93	.912	LE
	nourishment to primary school pupils.				
4.	The meal is adequately hygienic to improve pupil's	360	2.88	.661	LΕ
	health.				
5.	The SFP served as the substitute to some other	360	3.19	.660	GE
	interventions on the pupil's health program.				
6.	Pupils are physically more active as a result of the	360	3.34	.473	GE
	school feeding program.				
7.	Since the school feeding started, the incidence of	360	3.05	.794	GE
	malnutrition has reduced in primary school pupils				
8.	SFP reducing the prevalence and intensity of worm	360	2.95	.708	LΕ
	infections in children enhances the nutritional				
	status of pupils				
9.	School feeding enhances the diet and increases the	360	3.11	.942	GE
	energy available to pupils.				
10	SFP prevents poor nutrition in the early childhood	360	3.39	.591	GE
	of primary school pupils.				
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	360	3.12	.717	GE

Source: Fieldwork 2021.

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of headteachers and teachers on the impact of SFP on Health status among primary school pupils in Bauchi state.

The results in table 2 revealed the t-value of 1.192, at df= 21.728 with a P-value of .246 was obtained (p>0.05). Therefore, no significant difference exists between the mean responses of Teachers and Head-teachers on the impact of SFP on Health status among the primary school pupils in Bauchi state was also retained. Therefore, the null hypothesis remains.

Table 2: Independent t-test of difference between the perception of teachers and headteachers on the impact of SFP on Health status of primary school pupils in Bauchi state

Variable	N	Mean	Std.	T	Df	P	Remark
			Deviation				
Teachers	340	3.1315	.38032				_
Head-				1.192	21.728	.246	Accepted
teachers	20	3.0350	.34985				_
0 (1.1.1	1 00						

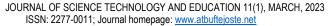
Source: fieldwork 2021

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Research Question 2: To what extent do stakeholders perceive the impact of SFP on the academic achievement of primary school pupils in Bauchi State?

The data in table 3 used to answer research question 6 revealed that the mean scores ranged between 2.94 to 3.49. The grand mean of 3.26 revealed that stakeholders perceived that SFP impacted the academic achievement of primary school pupils in Bauchi state to a great extent. Therefore, based on the results obtained in the item respondents indicated that the meals provided motivates pupils to concentrate on their lessons with mean score of 2.94, item 2 shows that SFP encourage pupils to learning with mean score of 3.23, item 3 indicated that SFP increased pupils performance in examination with mean score of 3.16, item 4 revealed that in SFP brain sharply foods are incorporated in the meal provided in schools with mean

score of 3.56, item 5 also shows that the provision of meals in schools, help improve pupils' understanding with mean score of 3.15, item 6 indicated that SFP make pupils feel motivated and happy with their performance with mean score of 3.49, item 7 revealed that SFP encourage pupils to pay more attention and have greater cognitive abilities with mean score of 3.23, item 8 revealed that with SFP Pupils use to completing homework on time with mean score of 3.38, item 9 indicate that with SFP pupils are engaged more in their academic activities with mean score of 3.05, item 10 shows that with SFP the overall results of the pupils in the final exams is increase with mean score of 3.49. Grand Mean scores of 3.26 were obtained from the respondents), stakeholders (the indicating that SFP has improved pupils' academic achievement to a great extent.

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores of stakeholders on their perception of the impact of SFP on the academic achievement of primary school pupils in Bauchi state.

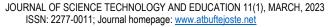
S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std.	Remark
				deviation	
1.	Meals provided motivates pupils to concentrate on	360	2.94	.917	LE
	their lessons.				
2.	School feeding facilitates pupils' positive learning.	360	3.23	.788	GE
3.	Pupils' performance in examination significantly	360	3.16	.611	GE
	increases within the period of the school feeding				
	program.				
4.	Brain sharply foods are incorporated in the meal	360	3.56	.498	GE
	provided by the school feeding program.				
5.	The provision of meals in schools helps improve	360	3.15	.620	GE
	pupils' understanding.				
6.	SFP makes pupils feel motivated and happy with	360	3.49	.517	GE
	their performance.				
7.	SFP encourages pupils to pay more attention and	340	3.23	.655	GE
	have greater cognitive abilities.				
8.	Pupils use to completing homework on time due to	360	3.38	.690.	GE
	school feeding expectations.				

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9.	With the introduction of SFP, pupils engage more	360	3.05	.917	GE
	in their academic activities.				
10.	The overall results of the pupils in the final exams	360	3.49	.712	GE
	are increasing since the SFP is implementing.				
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	340	3.26	.692	GE

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of headteachers and teachers on the impact of SFP on academic achievement among primary school pupils in Bauchi state.

The results in table 4 revealed the t-value of .277, at df= 20.970 with Pvalue of .785 was obtained (p>0.05).

Therefore, the null hypothesis shows no significant difference between the mean responses of Teachers and head-teachers' mean responses on the impact of SFP on achievement among the academic primary school pupils in Bauchi state. The null hypothesis also retains.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the difference between the perception of teachers and headteachers on the impact of SFP on academic achievement among primary school pupils in Bauchi state

Variable	N	Mean	Std.	T	Df	P	Remark
			Deviation				
Teachers	340	3.2699	.32288				
Head-				.277	20.970	.785	Accepted
teachers	20	3.2478	.34798				-

Source: fieldwork 2021

#### **SUMMARY OF FINDING**

The following are the findings of the study based on the result of research questions and their corresponding hypotheses: -

- 1. Stakeholders perceived to the great extent that SFP impacts improving the health status of primary school pupils in Bauchi state, and their perception does not differ significantly.
- Stakeholders perceived to the great extent that SFP impacts increasing pupil's academic achievement in Bauchi state primary schools, and their perception does not significantly differ.

#### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study's finding shows which stakeholders perceived the impact of school feeding programs in terms of health status, and academic achievement of primary school pupils in Bauchi state.

The finding of research question five confirmed by its corresponding null hypothesis between the perception of teachers and head-teachers revealed SFP impacts the health status of primary school pupils in Bauchi state. The finding is in line with that of Simeon and McGregor (1989) on the effects of breakfast children's on cognitive development between the ages of 9 and 10 years. The authors utilized a crossover design on three groups comprised of

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malnourished, stunted, and non-stunted children. They found that serving breakfast for children is crucial to their cognitive development. The impact is even more significant among malnourished children.

Similarly, a study by Chandler (1995) on two groups from four primary schools in Jamaica discovers that the group benefits SFP pupils, which is the experimental group, and another group with nourished children that serves as a control group. The researchers performed four cognitive tests; verbal fluency, information processing, visual search, and digit span on both groups after breakfast serves to the experimental group. The authors found improvement in the verbal fluency of the experiment group. At the same time, there was no change in the control group. The authors then concluded that providing breakfast to children helps improve their cognitive development.

Similarly, Bravely (1999) school feeding program (SFP) enriches the child's diet, improves health, and increases academic performance.

(1999)Lopez found contradictory result when they assessed the impacts of breakfast on the cognitive development of primary school children. The authors found a disassociation between breakfast and cognitive development, specifically in children's problem-solving, visual memory, and attention tasks. The authors concluded that missing breakfast does not affect the cognitive development of children in the short run.

Jukes (2008) reported that, despite the benefits of SFP in improving pupil's health status. He noted that SFP should not consider as a substitute for nutrition interventions such as mother and child health and supplementary and therapeutic feeding interventions.

line with this finding, UNESCO (2015) reports that SFP not only eradicates severe hunger among school children but, more importantly, enhances child growth development. According to WFP (2015), the SFP serves as a safety net that provides health and socioeconomic benefits to children and their families.

Similarly, Bordi (2015) reveals that the school feeding program plays a crucial role in pupils' mental and physical development. Promotes growth and reduces many risks associated with immediate and long-term health problems.

In support of this finding, the WFP (2015) also indicated that SFP should include nutritious meals to support optimal growth in height and weight of children in schools.

Another research by WFP (2015) reported that school feeding programs had impacted primary school pupils' health status and powerful influences on a child's learning and performance. Children who lack certain nutrients in their diet do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and wellnourished children.

The finding of research question and its corresponding hypothesis. Between the perception of teachers and head-teachers of the primary school. We discovered that SFP had improved the academic achievement of primary school pupils in Bauchi state.

The finding of this study is also in line with Jacoby (1996). The provision of micronutrients in the SFP supports children's cognitive development and academic performance in primary schools. This result implies that





implementing the SFP to malnourished children is a significant step children's improving academic cognitive performance and development.

Similarly, Simeon (1998)observed that the meal should be served as early as possible during the school day, for maximum benefit primary school age while in school. Thus, the timing of the meal is essential for addressing hunger and reaping cognitive benefits.

Similarly, Adelman (2008) states that hunger has an overwhelming impact on the performance of school children in school. This result is because it affects brain development and impedes the intellectual capacity of primary school pupils.

In support of this finding, Bloom (2009) reported that many scientists and psychologists, acute and chronic hunger affects children's ability to stay attentive and perform well academically in school.

This finding is in line with Teras (2015), which indicates that the Proper and frequent provision of food to primary pupils during school hours can improve their performance and reduces absenteeism and tardiness. While relieves hunger and improves children's ability to succeed at school, improves academic, behavioral, and emotional functioning, and leads to increased attendance, lowered absenteeism. Therefore, food increases physical activity leading to greater academic achievement.

Similarly, Adelman (2015) states that hunger has an overwhelming impact on the performance of school children in school. This result confirmed that it affects brain development and impedes the intellectual capacity of children.

Furthermore, by research Alderman (2017) assesses the impacts of the SFP in Northern Nigeria. Found a in significant increase academic performance of primary school pupils in the first two years of implementation of SFP.

# CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of this research, it concluded that SFP was very effective and impacts enrolment, retention, attendance, hunger alleviation, health status, and academic achievement of primary school in Bauchi state. The implication of this study concluded that if SFP sustains, there will be an increase and improvement of direct pupil's enrolment, attendance, retention, health status, and academic achievement in Bauchi state.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were outlines:

- 1. Government should sustain SFP, which will, in turn, reduce the cost or replace the enrolment drive campaign carried every school year by Ministry of Education (MOE), State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA).
- Government should make adequate provisions to enrich the nutritional content of meals **SFP** supplied under for enhancing health care delivery among primary school pupils.
- The Government should provide snacks during a short break to keep pupils in school hours

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(opening to closing hours) to achieve excellent academic performance.

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