



## The Ghana School Feeding Programme and Pupils' Enrolment in Selected Basic Schools

Mohammed Amakye

Senior Administrative Assistant,  
Ghana School Feeding Secretariat,  
Western North Region Ghana

Corresponding Author:  
Mohammed Amakye

Corresponding E-mail:  
[mohammedamakye720@gmail.com](mailto:mohammedamakye720@gmail.com)

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Managing Editors  
Prof. Kwadwo Adinkrah-Appiah  
Prof. Samuel Wiafe  
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Mohammed Amakye

**Abstract:** Education, as they say, is the key to success. However, school dropout and low participation have been a concern for some basic schools in Ghana. The aim of the study was to investigate the contribution of the Ghana School Feeding Programme to the progress of beneficial schools in some selected basic schools in the Sefwi Wiawso. The objectives of the study were: to assess how the GSFP motivates parents to enrol their wards in school; to ascertain whether the GSFP addresses socio-economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance, and retention of pupils; to find out how the GSFP contributes to the enrolment of girl child education; and to find out ways to improve upon the GSFP. The pragmatic paradigm was adopted with a mixed-methods research design, where questionnaires and interviews were administered through purposive sampling techniques to select the respondents for the study. The targeted population was 812 teachers, 11419 learners, 20,886 parents, and 140 caterers from 40 beneficiary schools in Sefwi Wiawso Constituency. A sample size of 87 was used for the study. The data obtained with the questionnaire and interview were analyzed using mean and standard deviation and thematic analysis, respectively. The findings depicted that some ways in which the school feeding program motivates parents to enrol their wards in school were: children now focus on learning when in school; and parents can redirect feeding money to other aspects of their children's lives. In addition, the study revealed that GSFP addresses socio-economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance, and retention of wards in basic schools by reducing school dropout, hunger, and poverty, among others. The findings of the study also revealed that some of the ways in which the GSFP encourages enrolment in girl-child education are by reducing the vulnerability of girls, boosting family income, and limiting the negative consequences of emergencies on health, nutrition, and education. The study recommended that there should be frequent monitoring of the program.

**Keywords:** Education, students, children, school feeding, basic schools, Ghana

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Oduro-Ofori and Adwoa-Yeboah (2014) claim that the right to an education is seen as a fundamental human right that is consequently unalienable and universal. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted in 1948, guarantees the right to education. Elementary and fundamental levels of

education must be free, at the very least. According to Bishop (1989:1 in Braimah and Oduro-Ofori, 2005), elementary education is required. Everyone has a right to it in accordance with these, regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, or status. It is once again a crucial condition for the growth of both a person and a country. Food is a necessary good that encourages students to

succeed academically. People find it difficult to understand concepts when they are hungry. Over the years, the distribution of meals or snacks at schools to lessen children's hunger throughout the school day has come to be known as "school feeding" (WFP, 2004). The phenomena only apply to situations where students are fed at school. In order to fulfill educational goals, school feeding has grown to reflect a more diverse and all-encompassing range of food-related uses (Boamah, 2020).

African Leaders were the driving force behind a completely new strategy for the social and economic development of Africa in 2004. A free basic education, a School Feeding Program (SFP), and other critical policies were enacted in an effort to transform Africa and fulfill the MDGs (Okae-Adjei, et al. 2016). The provision of meals or snacks at school to lessen children's hunger throughout the school day has been referred to as "school feeding" over the years (WFP, 2004), as noted in (Mahama, 2018; Mostert, 2021). The phenomena only applies to situations where students are fed at school.

In accordance with (FAO et al., 2014) as reported in (Mahama, 2018), roughly 805.1 million people worldwide go without adequate food to consume or suffer from hunger. At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, world leaders gathered to discuss how to address persistent problems with global development. Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established as a result of the meeting, including those to achieve gender equality, attain universal primary education, and empower women, among other things (The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2014). Multiple cross-sectoral goals are intended to be addressed by school meal programs. By lowering barriers to enrollment, increasing attendance and retention, helping students focus more during the school day, and improving learning outcomes, they hope to improve access to education (African Union, 2018). By tackling educational obstacles that females face in particular, they also want to close the gender gap in education (Gelli et al., 2007; Bundy et al., 2017). School food programs also provide as a social safety net by focusing on children from low-income households (African Union, 2021). By reducing hunger and enhancing children's micronutrient status with a variety of menus and food fortification, they address goals related to health and nutrition. Additionally, especially in high income settings, school meal programs frequently

aim to role-model healthy eating habits and influence kids' food preferences (Aliyar, et al., 2015).

In order to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG) on hunger, poverty, and primary education, Ghana has implemented the School Feeding Program (Kudoadzi, 2021). The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3 of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is responsible for the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) (Quaye et al., 2010). The program's goal is to offer one hot, nourishing meal per day to kids in a select group of public primary schools and kindergartens in the nation's most underprivileged neighborhoods (De Carvalho et al., 2011). The program's immediate goals include decreasing hunger and malnutrition, raising enrollment, attendance, and retention rates in schools, and improving domestic food production. These goals will be reached through a structured implementation procedure. Thus, under the NEPAD "Home Grown" SFP concept, the Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) pilot phase was introduced in 2005 (MUSA, 2021). The goal of this initiative is to improve the delivery of educational services while also promoting agricultural growth and lowering the prevalence of malnutrition among school-age children.

High primary school dropout rates and poor overall participation are prevalent in many developing nations as well as disadvantaged areas in industrialized countries (Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014). To date, rather than increasing completion rates or student learning outcomes, efforts to achieve Education for All have placed a strong emphasis on enrolling children in school. The Ghanaian government has demonstrated its commitment to achieving universal primary education and giving its people access to high-quality education in a number of ways. Several policy interventions and directives, including the Education Trust Fund, the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) from 2003 to 2015, and the Free Compulsory Basic Education Programme have shown this commitment (Adamu-Issah et al., 2007). The School Feeding Program is becoming more and more recognized as a social safety net that might be used to keep kids in school (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014).

Additionally, empirical research on the program has been done in many regions of Ghana with a focus on how it has contributed to a rise in the number of girls attending school (Adjei Ampofo & Tetteh Pac 2020).

Many other empirical studies in Ghana on the topic center on educational access to elementary schools in the Tongu district of the Volta region (Milledzi, Kenney, & Owusu Amponsah 2017). This research examines the school feeding program from the perspective of enrollment generally for both boys and girls since the introduction of the program to examine its impact on basic school enrolment in selected areas of the sefwi wiawso area, in contrast to the studies mentioned above, which focused on specific topics such as increasing the education of girls and access to basic education. Besides empirical of the contribution and effect of this programme on school participating schools in the region is less researched. This paper therefore seeks to investigate the contribution of the Ghana School Feeding Programme to the progress of beneficially schools using enrolment, attendance and dropout as variables for assessment in some selected basic schools in the Sefwi Wiawso constituency in the Western North Region of Ghana.

The general aim of the study was to investigate the contribution of the Ghana School Feeding Programme to the progress of beneficially schools in some selected basic schools in the Sefwi Wiawso constituency in the Western North Region of Ghana.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Profile of study area

The Sefwi Wiawso Municipal is one of the 261 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana, and forms part of the twenty-two (22) of MMDAs in the Western North Region. On November 23, 1988, Legislative Instrument (L.I) 1386 formed the Municipality, with Wiawso as its administrative capital. The Sefwi Wiawso Municipality has a total size of 994 square kilometers and is located in the northern section of the Western Region between latitudes 60N and 60300N and longitudes 20450W and 20150W. Bodi District borders the municipality on the west, Bibiani Anhwiaso Bekwai Municipal on the east, Asunafo South District in the Ahafo Region on the north, and Aowin Municipal on the south. According to the 2021 population and housing census, there are 151,220 people living in the Municipality, including 75,905 men and 75,315 women (Ghana districts, 2022).

### Research Design

A research design is an organized plan of study that includes methods for gathering data for analysis and

interpretation, drawing conclusions and summarizing findings, as well as taking into account the limitations of the study (Wills, 2012; Waiganjo, 2013). According to the set of hypotheses and the research questions being investigated, it is the overall strategy for the gathering, measuring, analyzing, and interpreting of data (Welman et al., 2009; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). It also acts as a roadmap for achieving the goals and questions of a research approach (Kelliher, 2005; Burns & Bush, 2010). According to Mouton (1996), the major goals of a study design are to maximize the validity of prospective results, reduce errors, and assist the researcher in anticipating future decisions. As a result, the research issue and philosophical framework (Creswell, 2009) determine the study's design. The available literature groups various types of study design into categories. These include ethnography, grounded theory, experimental research, survey research, hermeneutics, and more (Sekaran & Bougie 2013). The choice of a design, however, is based on the objectives of the study, the research questions, the hypotheses that were developed, and the procedures and methods used to collect the data (Aaker et al., 2013).

This study used a mixed methods design. The use of either quantitative analysis or qualitative analysis is strengthened more by the mix technique, claim Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007). By demonstrating how the qualitative data provides explanations for the statistical data to increase the methodological rigor as findings in both phases could be checked for consistency, the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches is expected to increase the comprehensiveness of the overall findings (Creswell, 2009). The researcher was therefore helped by using a qualitative technique to avoid any potential bias and instead appreciate the occurrence through the eyes of the respondents, mediating such responses with his own experiences. The quantitative approach was chosen as a complementary force because other aspects of the GSFP's impact needed to be objectively measured or quantified in order to draw firm inferences or conclusions about the volume or extent of the effect (or lack of effect) thought to have been caused by the GSFP. The quantitative technique, in a similar way, allowed the researcher to "identify relationships between variables" connected to the GSFP and, as a result, allowed for the generalization of some observations or conclusions (Gray, 2009). Because the strengths of the two approaches more than make up for the weaknesses of the first, it was decided that the mixed approach was best for the study (Creswell, 2013).

### Target Population

The targeted population is forty (40) beneficiary schools in Sefwi Wiawso, with thirty-three thousand two hundred and fifty-seven (33257) people, made up of twenty thousand eight hundred and eighty-six (20,886) parents, eleven thousand four hundred and nineteen (11419) students, one hundred and forty (140) caterers and eight hundred and twelve (812) teachers in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality.

### Sampling Technique and Sampling Size

A collection of non-probability sampling strategies known as "purposive sampling" involve choosing units for your sample based on their possession of specific qualities. In purposive sampling, units are thus chosen "on purpose" (Nikolopoulou, 2022). This sampling strategy was taken into consideration because it encompasses whoever is convenient for the study and has rich information. According to Kent (2007), purposive sampling entails hand-selecting the instances to be represented in the sample based on their assessments of the typicality of the problem that has been chosen for investigation. Finding the examples, people, or communities most suited to assisting you in answering your research issue is the major objective of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is therefore most effective when you have a lot of background knowledge on your research issue. The quality of your sample will be higher the more details you have. (2022) (Nikolopoulou). The sampling size for the study was 87. This was made up of 22 students, 25 teachers, 30 parents and 10 caterers. The main objective for this technique is that, the sample size should have reflection of certain features of the entire population such that the conclusion drawn can be generalized for the entire population. This technique was done by administering the questionnaires randomly to selected group of teachers, caterers, parents and students within the scope of the study.

### Data Collection

For the purpose of this study, primary source of data was collected to obtain first-hand information for the research objectives. Primary data is the data which the researcher collects through various methods like interviews, surveys, questionnaires etc. (Kent, 2007), The study sees questionnaire and interview techniques as the most appropriate to the research questions and objectives, because they can provide an efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample of respondents as well as giving better explanation, understanding, and

exploring better subjects' opinions, behavior or phenomenon.

The primary data was collected to cover every aspect of the study. Primary data is any information collected by a researcher specifically for a research assignment from the original source or field (location of the respondent). In other words, primary data is information that a researcher gather because no one has compiled and published the information in a forum accessible to the public. Researchers generally take their time and allocate the resources required to gather primary data only when a question, issue or problem presents itself that is sufficiently important or unique that it warrants the expenditure necessary to gather the primary data. Primary data is original in nature and directly related to the issue or problem and current data.

For ethical reasons permission was sought from the management of the various schools concerning the participation of the respondents. The purpose of the study was also explained to the individual respondents and their consent sought before the administration of the questionnaire in interview. The questionnaires were personally distributed to all the selected categories by the researcher. Two hundred and four (204) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, out of which 200 were duly completed and returned. Four of the completed questionnaires were not properly filled and were not included in the analysis. The response rate achieved was 98%.

### Data Analysis

Data gathered from respondents were sorted and categorized in groups like Gender, Age interval, educational background. Quantitative techniques were employed in the data analysis. The quantitative aspect measured data in the form of descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. The items on the 5-point Likert scale were measured using mean scale. The use of descriptive statistics that concerns the presentation of facts as they are without necessarily going beyond its existence was employed. In view of this, the results that was obtained from the data gathered was presented per the outcome without any other additions or omissions. Moreover, the use of content analysis was quantitatively applied on the reports from the respondents. To ensure effective, accurate, consistency and reliable results, the data was thoroughly checked for possible errors and if any, corrected before making the

final presentation of the findings in the form of tables. The statistics was generated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

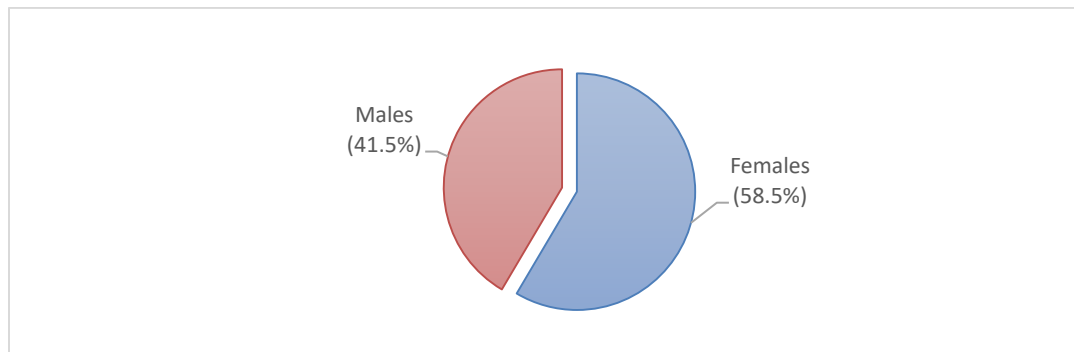
### 3. RESULTS

**Table 1: Gender of respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	27	41.5
Female	38	58.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table 1, the respondents were asked to indicate their gender by ticking the appropriate column they belonged, 38(58.5%) of the respondents indicated they are females whiles the rest, 27 (41.5%) of the respondents indicated they were males. This is also presented in figure 4.1 below.

**Figure 4.1. Gender of respondents**



Source: Field survey, 2023

#### The age category of respondents

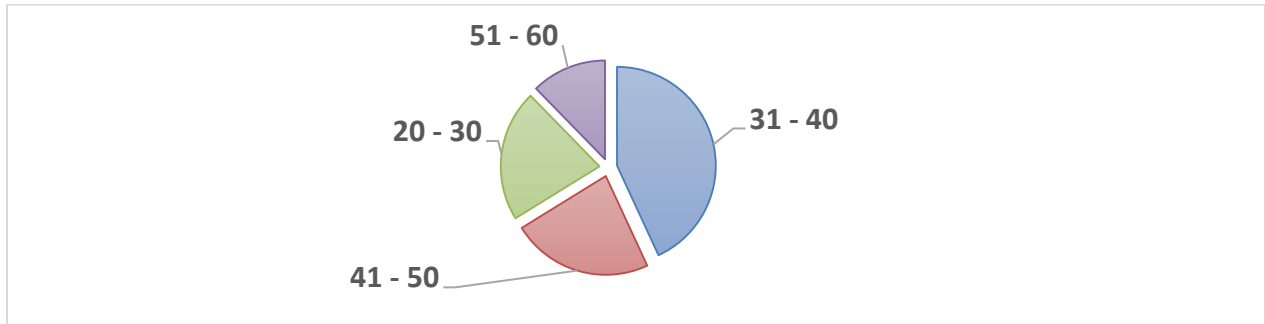
With the age category of respondents, 14 (21.5%) of the respondents indicated they are between 20-30 years, 28 (43.1%) of the respondents indicated they are between 31-40 years, 15 (23.1%) of the respondents indicated they are between 41-50 years and eight 8 (12.3%) of the respondents, indicated they are between 51-60 years as shown in table 4.2 and figure 2 below.

**Table: 2 Age category of respondents**

Age category	Frequency	Percent
20 - 30	14	21.5
31 - 40	28	43.1

41 - 50	15	23.1
51 - 60	8	12.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 2. Age category of respondents



Source: field survey, 2023

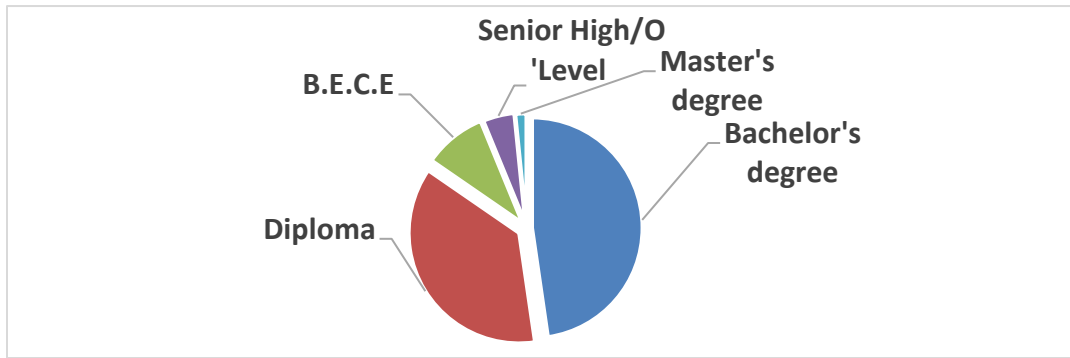
### Highest academic qualification

The objective was to determine the highest academic qualification of the respondents. The data gathered shows that, six (6) (9.2%) of the respondents indicated they had B.E.C.E, three (3) (4.6%) of the respondents indicated they had Senior High/O' Level certificate, 24(36.9%) of the respondents indicated they had Diploma, 31(47.7%) of the respondents indicated they had Bachelor's degree, and One (1) (1.6%) of the respondents indicated Master's degree. The data is presented in table 3 the figure 2 below.

Table 3: Highest academic qualification

Academic qualification	Frequency	Percent
B. E. C. E	6	9.2
Senior High/O' Level	3	4.6
Diploma	24	36.9
Bachelor's degree	31	47.7
Master's degree	1	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Figure 3. Highest academic qualification of respondents



Source: field survey, 2023

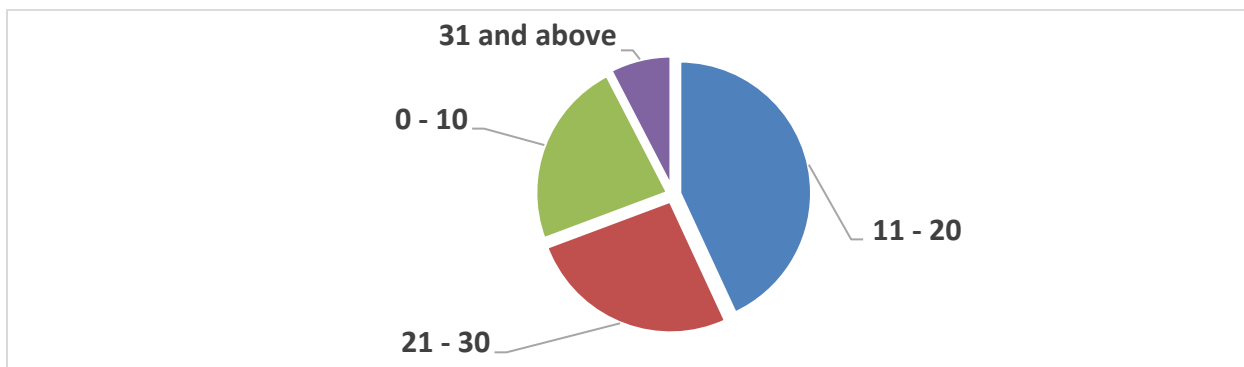
### Years spent in the school

The objective was to determine how long respondents have worked or child been in the school. The data gathered shows that 15 (23.1%) of the respondents indicated between 0-10 years, 28 (43.1%) of the respondents indicated between 11-20 years, 17 (26.2%) of the respondents indicated between 21-30 years and four (5) (7.6%) of the respondents indicated 31 or more years. This is seen in table 4, as well as figure 4 below.

**Table 4: Years spent in the school**

Years	Frequency	Percent
0-10	15	23.1
11-20	28	43.1
21-30	17	26.2
31 and above	5	7.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 4. Years spent in the teaching profession**



Source: field survey, 2023

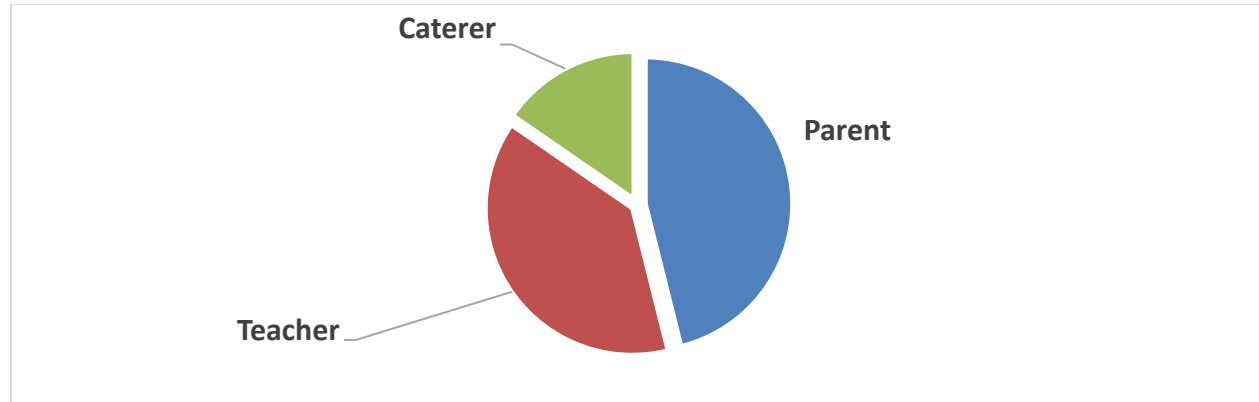
### Role in the school

From the table 4.5, 30 (46.1%) of the total respondents indicated they were parents, 25 (38.5%) of the total respondents indicated they were teachers, and 12 (21.8%) of the respondents indicated they were caterers. This is also presented in the figure 5.

**Table 5: Role in the school**

Level	Frequency	Percent
Teacher	25	38.5
Parent	30	46.1
Caterer	10	15.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 5. Level of basic education taught.**



Source: Field survey, 2023

### How the GSFP motivates parents to enroll their children in school

The table 6 shows the analysis from the respondents on how the GSFP motivates parents to enroll their children in school. The mean score and standard deviation of the various responses were calculated to help identify the relationships between various data. A hypothesized mean value of 4.5 or above was adopted as the major way the GSFP motivates parents to enroll their ward.

**Table 6. Mean score and Standard deviation of respondents on how the GSFP motivates parents to enroll their children in school**

Item statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
Children now focus on learning when in school	4.785	0.484	1 <sup>st</sup>
Parents can redirect feeding money to other aspect of children's life	4.738	0.443	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Children are always willing to go to school	4.446	1.439	3 <sup>rd</sup>
The GSFP relief parents of some feeding burden	4.277	0.801	4 <sup>th</sup>
Students don't complain about hunger to parents after school	3.785	1.352	5 <sup>th</sup>
Financially challenged parents have hope that their wards can be educated	3.600	1.487	6 <sup>th</sup>



As can be noted from the results, there are two major ways in which the GSFP motivates parents to enroll their children in school since all the two variables had their mean values above the hypothesized mean value of 4.5. The two items include “Children now focus on learning when in school (M = 4.785, SD = 0.484)”, “Parents can redirect feeding money to other aspect of children’s life (M = 4.738, SD = 0.443)”. This finding is in line with (Oyefade, 2014), who opined that giving learners a daily meal at school will improve attention to learning, increase attendance, improve certain cognitive functions and might improve their academic achievement. Darko (2014) observes that in Kenya, school meals have an impact on families by reducing the amount of money families spend to buy food, which has automatically increased their savings for other purposes. Other statements which received high mean values were “Children are always willing to go to school (M = 4.446, SD = 1.439)”, and “The GSFP relief parents of some feeding burden (M = 4.277, SD = 0.801)”. (Yunusa et al., 2012), indicated that learners involved in the school feeding programme has the opportunity to enhance their academic performance because it enabled them to attend school frequently and learn more efficiently.

The results from the interview also provides a clear understanding of the views of parents on this facet of the study. The data from the interview were coded and sorted into themes and verbal extracts were used to support the analysis of the data. The themes below were developed from the interview administered on parents on how the Ghana school feeding programme motivate parents to enroll their wards in school.

**Interest in school:** Some of the respondents said they are motivated to enroll their wards to school because their children and other children who are in primary school have great intent in school. This is backed by a remark made by one parent that, *“My son is in a primary school, and because of the school feeding programme, he always wants to go to school. And when he goes, he doesn’t come home until they close”*.

### **How the GSFP addresses socio – economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance and retention of wards in basic schools.**

This part of the study sort to investigate how the GSFP addresses socio – economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance and retention of wards in basic schools. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement

In addition, another parent said, *“I have two sons. The older is 9 years old and the younger one is 4 years. Old. My older son enjoys school feeding programme. He always wants to go to school. He has developed a great admiration for school. Moreover, the reason is that he is fed in school free. This has encouraged me to enroll my other son in school as soon as possible”*.

**Reduced hunger:** Some of the parents indicated that the school feeding programme has reduced the hunger some children go through in school. Moreover, this has been a major motivating factor for parents to enroll their wards in school.

One parent said, *“The school feeding programme provides parents with the hope in bringing their children to school. This is because, most children in primary schools whose parents cannot afford three meals a day will be given free lunch.*

**Children do not disturb parents after school:** Some of the parents were of the view that, their children do not disturb them to buy them food in the afternoons when they close. This could be seen in one parent who stated that, *“At first, before I enrolled my child in this school, he always disturbs me to buy him food in the afternoon. But now, whenever he comes home from school, he doesn’t disturb me”*.

Malila (2015) observed that school meals could encourage students to focus and learn more effectively in order to increase learning capacity and performance. Parents are encouraged to enroll their children in school and make regular attendance a priority via school feeding programs. Additionally, educational outcomes (performance, dropout, and repetition) improve when programs are successful in lowering absenteeism and lengthening the length of schooling (Del Rosso, 1999).

or disagreement on underlying statements on a five-point Likert scale. The hypothesized mean of 4.5 was considered as the most important factor. The results obtained are presented in table 7.

**Table 7 Mean score and standard deviation on how the GSFP address socio – economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance and retention of wards in basic schools.**

Item statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
School drop – out has been minimized	4.846	0.364	1 <sup>st</sup>
Poverty has been reduced through selling of local foods to school	4.431	0.847	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Hunger has been reduced	4.415	0.900	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Parents can help provide education resources for children	4.369	0.741	4 <sup>th</sup>
Child labor has been discouraged	3.846	1.202	5 <sup>th</sup>
Early marriage of girls has been reduced	3.815	1.457	6 <sup>th</sup>
Improved food security	3.708	1.114	7 <sup>th</sup>

From table 7, it could be seen that only one variable had a mean value above the hypothesized mean of 4.5 and it is considered as the major way the GSFP address socio-economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance and retention of wards in basic schools. The item is “School drop – out has been minimized (M = 4.846, SD = 0.364)”. This is in line with the findings of Oduro-Ofori and Yeboah Gyapong (2014), who noted that the GSFP has reduced the level of primary School dropout in the Kwaebibrim District in the Eastern Region since it serves as a motivational tool for primary children to stay in school. In addition, Dua (2011) points out that one of the major aims of the Ghana School Feeding programme is to increase enrolment and retention in the basic school level. It is to serve as a magnet that will attract schoolchildren to be in school every day and be consistent throughout the stages of learning. Thus, improve feeding increase enrolment and reduce school dropout. Other important ways the GSFP address socio – economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance and retention of wards in basic schools include, “Poverty has been reduced through selling of local foods to school (M = 4.431, SD = 0.847)”, “Hunger has been reduced (M = 4.415, SD = 0.900)”, and “Parents can help provide education resources for children (M = 4.369, SD = 0.741). These points are in line with Allen and Gillespie, (2001) who claim; that the purpose of school feeding

programme usually differs includes alleviating short-term hunger and enhancing health. This was also backed by Ofoe (2011), who stated that school feeding programmes are to reduce hunger, attain universal primary education, and equality and empowerment of women (Ofoe, 2011).

The results from the interview also provides a clear understanding of the views of parents on this facet of the study. The data from the interview were coded and sorted into themes and verbal extracts were used to support the analysis of the data. The themes below were developed from the interview administered on parents on how the Ghana school feeding programme motivate parents to enroll their wards in school.

### Reduction of poverty

Some of the respondents who responded to this section of the study revealed that, the GSFP has reduced abject poverty. A teacher, responded that; “*This school feeding programme has provided employment for some people who could not even afford a meal in a day. These people get something to eat in the school as well as some money at the end of the month*”. Another teacher also stated that; “*The school feeding programme initiative has*

enabled people to get employed to earn a living”.

Supporting these statements, one caterer mentioned that, “The programme has provided us with the opportunity to earn something at the end of the month. In addition, this has reduced poverty in the community.

### School drop – out has been reduced

Most respondents were of the view that, the GSFP has reduced school drop – out drastically. One teacher indicated that, “The school feeding programme has been able to

reduce school drop – out drastically. Most pupils are retained in school and they do not stop school. This is because they are fed freely when they come to school.

One headmaster, elaborated on how the enrolment of his school has increased since the introduction of the GSFP. He stated that, “In my school, the enrolment figure has almost doubled since the introduction of the GSFP in the school. Initially, the student population at the primary level was about 200. Now it has increased to over 350, and the number continues to increase every term”.

### How the GSFP has encouraged the enrollment of girl-child education

This part of the study sort to investigate how the GSFP has encouraged the enrollment of girl-child education in Sefwi Wiawso. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on underlying statements on a five-point Likert scale. The hypothesized mean of 4.5 was considered as the most important factor. The results obtained are presented in table 8.

**Table 8 Mean score and Standard deviation of how the GSFP has encouraged the enrolment of girl-child education**

Item statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
The programme reduces vulnerability of girls and boost family income	4.846	0.364	1 <sup>st</sup>
School feeding programme limits the negetive consequences of emergencies on health, nutrition and education	4.754	0.434	2 <sup>nd</sup>
The programme improves the overall micronutrient status of girls	4.569	0.865	3 <sup>rd</sup>
The programme encourages quality of schooling environment	4.400	0.844	4 <sup>th</sup>
The programme improves quality of schooling of environment	4.415	0.900	5 <sup>th</sup>

It can be noticed from table 8 that, three major ways in which the GSFP has encouraged the enrollment of girl-child education in Sefwi Wiawso for people of Sefwi Wiawso since all the three variables had their mean values above the hypothesized mean value of 4.5. The three items include “The programme reduces vulnerability of girls and boost family income (M = 4.846, SD = 0.364)”, “School feeding programme limits the negetive consequences of emergencies on health, nutrition and education (M = 4.754, SD = 0.434)”, and “The programme improves the overall micronutrient

stutus of girls (M = 4.569, SD = 0.865)”. These are in line with Shrestha et al., (2020), who elaborated that, providing healthy balanced meals can improve overall micronutrient status and reduce anaemia prevalence in primary school aged children and adolescent girls. Also, Aurino et al., (2020) also indicated that, the school feeding programme can limit the negative consequences of emergencies on health, nutrition and education, thus, lowering barriers to accessing and completing education, especially girls. The themes below were developed from the interview administered on parents on

how the Ghana school feeding programme motivate parents to enroll their wards in school.

### Improves the health of girls

Respondents from the interview conducted on this aspect of the study were of the view that, the GSFP has encouraged the enrollment of Girl-Child Education in Sefwi Wiawso by improving the health of girls. A caterer stated that; *“Girls requires special attention during their transition to adolescent. The programme ensures that, these girls get balanced diet to eat at least once a day, and this has improved their health. With this, they are encouraged to come to school”*. A teacher also added that, *“More girls are enrolled in my school than before due to the programme. Now they know, that, issues like Obesity, and other ailments are reduced. This of course has encouraged the parents to enroll their girls in school”*

### Curbed immoral activities of girls to get food

The respondents argued that the programme also encourages girls not to engage in immoral activities to feed. A parent remarked that, *“This programme has*

*protected our girls from engaging in sexual immorality for money to feed. At least, she knows she will get food to feed when in school, so they are not easily convinced. This has encouraged them to go to school. A teacher also supported this argument by saying “When a girl is hungry, she can do anything just to get food. This school feeding programme has helped solved this issue by making sure girls get food to eat”*.

A caterer also added her view on this facet by saying: *“Girls can steal or take a boyfriend to get money to buy food to eat. The programme has reduced these immoral behaviours drastically and has encouraged them to come to school, because they know, when in school, they will get free food to eat”*.

According to the World Bank (2020), young girls and adolescents may participate in transactional sex when they are not fed while in school. During the COVID 19 pandemic, the World Food Programme (WFP), (2020), warned that since the program was universally suspended, children and their families would be deprived of crucial safety nets and a vital source of nourishing food.

### How the GSFP can be improved

This facet of the study sort to investigate how the GSFP can be improved. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on underlying statements on a five-point Likert scale. The hypothesized mean of 4.5 was considered as the most important factor. The results obtained are presented in table 9.

**Table 9 How the GSFP can be improved**

Item statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
Improve the quality and quantity of food	4.923	0.269	1 <sup>st</sup>
Frequent monitoring of beneficiary schools	4.892	0.312	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Regular feeding of pupils in all beneficiary schools	4.862	0.348	3 <sup>rd</sup>
There should be adequate, regular and predictable payments for services of caterers	4.800	0.565	4 <sup>th</sup>
Inclusion of deserving schools	4.769	0.580	5 <sup>th</sup>
Local actors should be involved in the programme	4.723	0.573	6 <sup>th</sup>
Exclusion of non – deserving schools	4.677	0.687	7 <sup>th</sup>

There should be transparency in the programme	4.662	0.619	8 <sup>th</sup>
Constant provision of needed resources by government	4.646	0.513	9 <sup>th</sup>
Full support and participation of the beneficiary communities	4.462	0.709	10 <sup>th</sup>

It can be noticed from table 9 that, there are nine major ways in which the GSFP can be improved in Sefwi Wiawso since all the nine variables had their mean values above the hypothesized mean value of 4.5. The nine items include “Improve the quality and quantity of food (M = 4.923, SD = 0.269)”, “Frequent monitoring of beneficiary schools (M = 4.892, SD = 0.312)”, “Regular feeding of pupils in all beneficiary schools (M = 862, SD = 0.348)”, “There should be adequate, regular and predictable payments for services of caterers (M = 4.800, SD = 0.565)”, “Inclusion of deserving schools (M = 4.723, SD = 0.580)”, “Local actors should be involved in the programme (M = 4.892, SD = 0.312)”, “Regular feeding of pupils in all beneficiary schools (M = 4.862, SD = 0.348)”, “There should be adequate, regular and predictable payments for services of caterers (M = 4.800, SD = 0.565)”, “Inclusion of deserving schools (M = 4.769, SD = 0.580)”, “Local actors should be involved in the programme (M = 4.723, SD = 0.573)”, “Exclusion of non – deserving schools (M = 4.677, SD = 0.687)”, “There should be transparency in the programme (M = 4.662, SD = 0.619)”, and “Constant provision of needed resources by government (M = 4.462, SD = 0.709)”. According to the World Food Programme (2013), SFPs have made a significant contribution to the fight against obesity in Japan and Mexico. With the hire of expert nutritionists in the various schools, foods that were low in calories and comprised of vegetables, fruits, and milk were essentially prepared according to local preferences.

Since 2007, Germany has had voluntary quality requirements for school meals; in some federal areas, they are required. Many schools in Sweden are currently making changes to their meal plans to make meals healthier and more sustainable, and they continuously check the quality of their meals (School Food Sweden (SFS), 2019), but there are still no tools in place to systematically lessen the environmental impact of school meals while ensuring that they meet nutritional requirements, are acceptable, and are affordable.

The SICs handle the implementation and supervision in each school, while the DICs are in responsibility of

planning and monitoring the program in all the recipient schools (Duah, 2011).

There is little evidence from high-income countries that school meals and school food policies significantly improve children's and subsequently adults' physical health status or eating habits, despite the fact that school meals can have a significant impact on children's intake of calories and essential nutrients (Oostindjer et al., 2017). Local school food initiatives (such as school gardens or farm-to-school programs) make the origin of food clear to children in various ways, according to The Swedish National Agency for Education (SNAE) (2020), and as a result, they have an impact on nutrition education.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### How the GSFP motivates parents to enroll their children in school

The first objective was proposed to investigate how the GSFP motivates parents to enroll their children in school in Sefwi Wiawso Constituency. The views from respondents were solicited through questionnaire and interview. The response from the questionnaire were analyzed using mean and standard deviation and were ranked. The following are some of the main factors which received the highest ranking with their mean and standard deviation values; “Children now focus on learning when in school (M = 4.785, SD = 0.484)”, “Parents can redirect feeding money to other aspect of children’s life (M = 4.738, SD = 0.443)”.

The results from the interview administered also provides a complementing information to the questionnaire administered on how the GSFP motivates parents to enroll their children in school. The themes that were derived from the interview and were discussed were, Interest in school, reduce hunger and children don't disturb their parents after school. These were some of the main reasons parents are motivated by the GSFP to enroll their children in school.

### **How the GSFP addresses socio – economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance and retention of wards in basic schools**

This section sought to investigate how the GSFP addresses socio – economic factors that affect enrolment, attendance and retention of wards in basic schools. This objective was also achieved by using mean and standard deviation, as well as thematic analysis of the interview. Only one item had a mean value equal to or more than the hypothesis mean of 4.5. This was; “School drop – out has been minimized (M = 4.846, SD = 0.364)”. Another item that had a significant mean value was, “Poverty has been reduced through selling of local foods to school (M = 4.431, SD = 0.847)”. From the interview conducted, most respondents provided their views, which were put under the themes: Reduce hunger and School drop – out has been reduced.

### **How the GSFP has encouraged the enrollment of girl-child education**

This part of the study sort to investigate how the GSFP has encouraged the enrollment of girl-child education. Mean and standard deviation were again used to the responses from the questionnaire to generate the order of importance. Thematic analysis was also employed to analyze the responses from the interview on this facet of the study. From the questionnaire, some of the items that received the highest mean values were; “The programme reduces vulnerability of girls and boost family income (M = 4.846, SD = 0.364)”, “School feeding programme limits the negative consequences of emergencies on health, nutrition and education (M = 4.754, SD = 0.434)”, and “The programme improves the overall micronutrient status of girls (M = 4.569, SD = 0.865)”. The themes generated from the interview conducted were; Improves the health of girls; and Curbed immoral activities of girls to get food.

### **How the GSFP can be improved**

This aspect of the study also sorts to identify some of the ways of improving the GSFP. Again, the responses from the respondents from the questionnaire were analyzed and ranked using mean score and standard deviation and the results from the interview were analyzed using thematic analysis. Some of the items that received the highest values in descending order were; “Improve the quality and quantity of food (M = 4.923, SD = 0.269)”, “Frequent monitoring of beneficiary schools (M = 4.892, SD = 0.312)”, “Regular feeding of pupils in all beneficiary schools (M = 4.862, SD = 0.348)”, “There should be

adequate, regular and predictable payments for services of caterers (M = 4.800, SD = 0.565)”, also the themes generated from the interview conducted were; Regular feeding of learners; Monitoring of programme; Provision of required resources; and Adequate payment of services.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

It is obvious from the analysis done in chapter four that, the contribution of the Ghana School Feeding programme to the progress of beneficiary schools in Sefwi Wiawso is immense. The programme has increased enrollment, reduced school drop – out, and improved retention of students at the basic level. The programme has also encouraged the enrollment of girl-child education by improving the health status and reducing the vulnerability of girls and boosting family income. However, there are some challenges that the study unraveled such as government not paying workers on time, not providing the needed resources needed for the programme, among others.

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### **Data Availability**

Data used for this research is available upon request from the corresponding author.

### **Notes**

1. We appreciate the anonymous reviewer's comments, which i have noted and worked on to improve the manuscript's scholarly caliber and visibility.
2. All references to "ratings" or "levels" emphasize news-ness variability and apply to quantitative and qualitative measurements of news-ness.

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