

**IMPACT OF THE MARY'S MEALS PROGRAM ON PRIMARY PUBLIC-SCHOOL
EDUCATION IN BLANTYRE, MALAWI.**

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**A Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements
For The Master Of Arts In Monitoring And Evaluation At The
Business School Of Africa Nazarene University**


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DECLARATION

I affirm that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for academic credit at any other university.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Dinizulu and Jean Gangire and my husband, Thomas Wongani Nyirongo, whose support have been the root of my inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to determine the impact of school feeding program on primary school education in public schools in Blantyre, Malawi. As a result, the researcher basically looked at the following specific objectives: to determine how the design of feeding program influences access to primary school education in public schools in Malawi, to examine the influence of implementation of school feeding program on access to primary school education in public primary schools in Malawi and to establish the influence of monitoring school feeding program on access to primary school education in Malawi. Abraham Maslow's Human Motivation theory and the Theory of change served as theories guiding this study. In order to meet the study's objectives, the study used a descriptive design methodology, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size formula was used for a sample size which allows 373 respondents to participate in the study. The study's population size was comprised of headmasters/mistresses, teachers, volunteers (cooks) and learners. The research instruments used were questionnaires and interview. Microsoft Excel was used to carry out the analysis of the data. The analysis involved frequencies of particular responses which were presented using tables. Based on the research conducted a further study on the same topic is recommended since the findings of the study show that there is more to the outcomes of the school feeding program than thought. Some children do not attend lessons soon after receiving porridge thereby giving a false hope of education for all-thus access to education. The quality of education and teacher-pupil ratio should also be looked into since due to large population in class since there is high enrolment because of school meals.

The descriptive approaches were employed in the investigation through Krejcie and Morgan (1970) were assisted by 373 persons. Students, scholars, and chefs all took part. Surveys and interviews were conducted during the study. The data was analysed using Excel 365. Responses were counted using frequency analysis. Enrolment, on the other hand, remained stable. School feeding programs have more complex impacts than previously expected, necessitating additional research. SFP ensured that students came on time. School feeding improved the health, enrolment, and academic achievement of Malawian students. SFPs support school breakfast. Pre-schoolers were inspired by oatmeal. Despite the difficulties, volunteers serve breakfast to children. Supervisors line up children for porridge to avoid squabbles. Conversely, larger institutions must assess better participation and retention in food distribution because some children receive too many meals while others do not. SFPs increase attendance. SFPs performed better when monitored. School lunches and decisions are improved by structures. Leaders have an impact on stakeholders. SFP saves the time of the school committee. Dining hall attendance overloaded classrooms, necessitating a review of educational quality and student-to-teacher ratio. Therefore it is recommended that a research on school feeding program in rural areas should be conducted. In addition to that, stakeholders should consider early childhood centres where SFP is not provided as well as involving the community as a whole for the sake of decision making and supervisors to be assigned especially when porridge is given to pupils.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Enrolment rate: number of learners signed up in schools or classes

Health status: physical growth of a child in relation to food related diseases

Dropout rates: number of learners who do leave primary school without finishing the full primary course of 8 years

Performance: class average pass rate

Retention rate: number of learners that proceed with their primary education in the same school

Transition rate: number of learners progressing from one stage to the next in school system in each year

Food security: condition whereby families have sufficient food in the whole year

Household: the family

External funding: money or funding that comes from other sources other than (school/beneficiary country) to help in feeding program

Partnership: countries that have come together in agreement to help school feeding programs financially

National policy: statements of guidance adopted by governments and nongovernmental organizations in order to run projects in pursuit of national objectives

Implementation: application of a decision into practice

ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS

BODMAS: Bracket of Division, Multiplication, Addition and Subtraction

CI: Catholic Institute Primary school

DEM: District Education Manager

HGSF: Home Grown School Feeding

HHI: Henry Henderson Institute Primary school

SFP: School Feeding Program

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

ToC: Theory of Change

THR: Take Home Ratio

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This study aims to investigate the impact of a school feeding program on the availability of basic education in Malawi's public primary schools. This chapter comprises sections such as the problem statement, general and specific objectives, hypothesis, significance of the study, the study's scope, limitations, and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the study

The fourth objective of the Sustainable Development Goals pertains to the provision of fair and high-quality education, whereas the second objective of the Millennium Development Goals concerns the attainment of primary education for all (UN, 2019). The rationale behind this assertion is that education serves to attain sustainable development objectives over an extended period. According to the United Nations (2020), education plays a significant role in the economic advancement of nations. According to the United Nations (2020), the provision of primary education has been found to contribute to an increase in literacy rates, which consequently leads to an improvement in the overall living standards of individuals. Based on scholarly investigations, a significant number of Asian and African nations are encountering challenges in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because of impediments to primary education. The issue of universal primary education in African and Asian countries is fraught with several challenges, including but not limited to food insecurity, poverty, hunger, gender inequalities and disparities, armed conflict, insufficient resources, cultural barriers, poor sanitation, and geographical remoteness.

Various governments have established programs that provide free primary education to achieve the aim of universal primary education. Furthermore, non-governmental groups such as the World Food Program, UNICEF, STAR Fish, and Mary's Meals have developed school feeding efforts in

impoverished countries to improve children's access to primary education. According to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (2020), management in these organizations is based on a variety of designs, implementation techniques, and structures.

SFP operates in Africa within the framework of the country that benefits from it (African Union, Sustainable School Feeding, 2018). According to the World Bank (2019), SFP aims to deliver educational and health benefits to impoverished children in a variety of nations. It minimizes school hunger by boosting enrolment, improving nutrition, and decreasing absenteeism due to hunger (WFP, 2019). School feeding programs include features of social safety, education, and nutrition. Parents all over the world rely on SFP to ensure that their children always attend school. School lunches help children stay in school by providing nutrition and education (World Bank, 2019). According to WFP (2019), the deployment of SFP in Bangladesh led in significant improvements in first-grade kids' enrolment by 14.2 percent as well as minimising the possibility of drop out by 7.5 percent, attendance, and grade repetition rates. It has been discovered that providing high-calorie meals to schools with poor socioeconomic status has a positive impact on student enrolment and attendance rates. In Latin America and the Caribbean, SFP has reduced obesity due to calories given to children in primary schools (WFP, 2019)

Given that the School Feeding Program (SFP) represents a significant reform initiative pursued by the Malawian government in support of the Education for All millennium development goal, it is imperative that the program's design and implementation be characterized by efficiency and effectiveness to realize its intended outcomes.

Globally, Social Protection Floors (SFP) are initiatives that receive financial support from external actors and establish robust collaborations with governments and societies that reap the rewards of these schemes. The SFP program is designed to address issues related to hunger and malnutrition among children residing in impoverished nations. Various non-governmental organizations, such

as the World Food Program, UNICEF, FAO, Starfish, and Mary's Meals, have implemented school feeding programs in developing nations. These programs aim to facilitate access to education, particularly for female students, in public primary schools. The World Food Organization, (2019) highlights that there exists a variety of design, implementation, and management structures aimed at facilitating access to primary education. The implementation of School Feeding Programs (SFPs) in primary schools has resulted in significant improvements in various areas of interest, including enrolment rates, health statuses, dropout rates, retention rates, class transition rates, and class attendance, as reported by the World Food Programmes in 2016. This is since students are provided with daily meals, either prior to or following their academic sessions.

The Ugandan government is one of the recipients of the Social Fund for Poverty Alleviation (SFP). Prior to the SFP's creation in 1983, the male literacy rate was 12%, while the female literacy rate was 6%. It was observed that a considerable proportion of children in the geriatric age range were not enrolled in primary education in the Karamoja region, which served as the first location for the Supplementary Feeding Programmes (SFP), with figures ranging from 92-93% in 1991. However, by 1999, there had been a noticeable increase in enrolment rates, however absenteeism and dropout rates remained a persistent concern. According to a 2005 national study, the School Feeding Program (SFP) established in the Karamoja region increased enrolment to 63% and attendance to 40%, a considerable improvement over the pre-project attendance rate of 20%. Likewise, the program improved health and nutrition status, reduced gender inequities, and reduced dropout rates. The adoption of the school feeding program has resulted in the enrolment of children who are younger than the traditional age range for primary school entry into primary 1. Besides, the Chilean government's emphasis on educational performance in both public and rural schools has

produced favorable results. In light of this scenario, this study aimed to evaluate the impact of school feeding initiatives on the accessibility of primary education in public primary schools located in Blantyre Urban, Malawi.

1.2.1. Access to primary school education in public schools in Malawi

Within the realm of education, the concept of access commonly pertains to the measures implemented by educational establishments and policies to guarantee or at the very least endeavour to guarantee, that pupils are provided with comparable and impartial prospects to fully capitalize on their educational pursuits. During the period spanning from the 1960s to the early 1990s, Malawi experienced several obstacles that hindered access to primary school education, including school fees, long distances, and mandatory adherence to school uniform policies. In 1994, Malawi implemented a policy of free primary education in order to promote equal opportunities for pupils in their primary education. The implementation of free primary education was intended to enhance accessibility to primary education, resulting in a significant surge in primary school enrolment by over 50% between 1993/94 and 1994/95. This increase can be attributed to the elimination of school fees and the absence of mandatory school uniforms (Malawi Education Sector, 2019).

Nevertheless, the rate of students leaving school prematurely remained elevated owing to factors that extended beyond the purview of the Ministry of Education. Previous studies have indicated that factors such as long distance, overcrowding, extreme poverty, flooding, cultural traditions, rapid population growth and periods of food scarcity as well as limited classes continue to impede access to primary education. Consequently, Student Financial Programs (SFP) were implemented as a component of the educational policy with the aim of guaranteeing accessibility to education. The SFP focused on schools situated in regions with elevated levels of poverty and low rates of school enrolment, with the aim of providing educational opportunities to

all children, particularly those who are food insecure. In 1999, the Malawi Government made a formal request to the World Food Program to initiate a school feeding program in the country, which was subsequently implemented. According to a report by the World Food Programme in 2018, the provision of daily nutritious meals aims to alleviate short-term hunger and enhance the attention span of students in 783 primary schools located in 13 food insecure districts. These districts are characterized by low enrolment rates, high dropout and repetition rates, and significant gender disparities.

According to the 2020 Mary's Meals Annual Report, Mary's Meals began operations in Malawi in 2002 and currently serves a daily lunch to 1,838,859 children in 1011 primary schools and Early Childhood Development Centres. Australia, Austria, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States all contribute financially to the organization.

The country known as the United States of America is mentioned in the 2019 magazine "Mary's Meals Magazine." The programs' success is dependent on the involvement of the community, particularly parental figures, in the preparation and distribution of food during school days. Furthermore, whenever possible, the use of locally obtained agricultural products is prioritized (Mary's Meals, 2019). The major goal is to provide food to students and support to needy individuals suffering from destitution and malnourishment, among other problems.

1.2.2 Influence of school feeding program

SFP are available in three forms: on-site meals, take-home ratios, and home-grown meals. On-site meals are prepared meals served to students during the school day in the form of rice, porridge, and/or snacks. Children in Bangladesh receive cooked rice and fresh vegetables to supplement

their meals on school days (WFP, 2019). As a result, the meals serve as an incentive for them, resulting in a high enrolment and retention rate (WFP, 2019). On-site meals in Columbia have helped reintegrate Venezuelan immigrants and Colombian returns into schools, particularly among the kids. The method has resulted in increased social integration and student attendance (USAID, 2019). Home-grown school feeding (HMSF) programs, on the other hand, increase student nutrition. Students stay in school and perform well in class because of the nutritious food (WFP, 2019). Those who make food for the children in Nigeria obtain it from local SHF (WFP, 2020). Ever since SFP's were introduced in primary schools, there has been a great change in areas of concern like enrolment rate, health status, dropout rate, retention rate and class transition rate as well as class attendance (WFP Report, 2016). This is because pupils receive meals every school day, either before the lessons or after the lessons. Research has shown that school meals have a greater impact on school pupils world-wide. Hungry children do not perform in class and their ability to learn is minimal (WFP, 2020). The provision of school meals has changed the learners' state of learning as well as their nutrition status and class performance (WFP, 2020). School meals have also increased enrolment rate, improved retention rate, health and food security, reduced dropout rates and led to successful transition among school pupils since they are no longer hungry at school. Pupils are able to concentrate and focus in class since the intake of micro-nutrients is high hence improves retention due to decrease in absenteeism (Desilegn, T. et al, 2021). This also helps solve chronic hunger related issues since pupils are given food at school to enrich their health and education status. As a result, school Research has shown that school meals have a greater impact in school pupils world-wide. Hungry children do not perform in class and their ability to learn is minimal (WFP, 2020). The provision of school meals has changed the learners' state of

learning as well as their nutrition status and class performance (WFP, 2020). School meals have also increased enrolment rate, improved retention rate, health and food security, reduced dropout rates and led to successful transition among school pupils since they are no longer hungry at school. Pupils can concentrate and focus on class since the intake of micro- nutrients is high hence improves retention due to decrease in absenteeism (Desilegn, T. et al, 2021). This also helps solve chronic hunger related issues since pupils are given food at school to enrich their health and education status. As a result, school meals increased enrolment rate in primary schools as it keeps the pupils in school throughout the academic year. For instance, Cambodian and Nigerian primary schools' benefit from school meals hence their dropout rates have reduced whilst the program has increased enrolment rate and improved health status of the pupils (WFP, 20).

School meals increased enrolment rate in primary schools as it keeps the pupils in school throughout the academic year. For instance, Cambodian and Nigerian primary schools' benefit from school meals hence their dropout rates have reduced whilst the program has increased enrolment rate and improved health status of the pupils (WFP, 2020). In South Sudan, the ongoing civil war has “disrupted livelihoods, affecting food production, and has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe” (Mary Meals Portfolio, 2017). This resulted in starvation among school aged children (Mary Meals Portfolio, 2017). Mary's Meals provision of meals kept children in school despite the on-going conflict (Mary Meals Portfolio, 2017). More than 18,000 children in 33 primary schools receive nourished meals (Mary Meals Portfolio, 2017). However, monitoring and evaluation process seems to face challenges in Sudan because of the civil war (political instability). Impact Assessment on school feeding program in Zambia and Liberia has led to implementation of their Monitoring and Evaluation system of which they developed software to measure the

indicators used during the survey (Baiju, 2017). The survey showed that classroom hunger has been reduced and increased enrolment due to the meals received at school (Baiju, 2017).

Some research shows that there is still a high drop out in these countries where the school feeding program runs on every school day.

According to the research findings, the adoption of school food programs has had a substantial impact on educational accessibility in diverse communities. According to the 2018 Sustainable School Feeding Across the African Union report, school feeding programs have increased enrolment rates, improved attendance and retention rates, reduced repetition and dropout rates, and improved cognitive performance and primary school completion rates. According to Sustainable School Feeding Across the African Union (2018), school feeding program assessments have produced favorable results in terms of anthropometric measurements of schoolchildren, such as height, weight, and BMI, as well as their micronutrient status, reported short-term hunger, and frequency of illness.

1.2.2.1 The design of the school feeding program.

SFP are funded by NGO's, governments, bilateral and multilateral donors. Governments like USA, Canada, UK, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates (just to mention a few) have policy and budgetary commitments to SFP (European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian, 2009). They have partnered with WFP, World Bank and governments that provide SFP so much so that they run the SFP in various countries.

Worldwide, SFP are projects funded by external stakeholders who build strong partnership with Governments and communities that benefit from such programs. They are funded by NGO's, Governments, bilateral and multilateral donors. Governments like USA, Canada, UK, Netherlands,

United Arab Emirates (just to mention a few) have policy and budgetary commitments to SFP (Mary's Meals, 2017). SFP have partnered with WFP, World Bank and governments that provide SFP so much so that they run the SFP in various countries. SFP aimed at hunger and nutrition in children who are from poor countries. Non-governmental organizations like World Food Program, UNICEF, FAO, Starfish and Mary's Meals introduced school feeding programs in the third world countries to help school pupils; girls inclusive, to have access to education especially in public Mary's Meals is one of providers of SFP in Africa. Malawi, Zambia, Liberia and Kenya are strong partner countries of Mary's Meals in Africa among others (Mary's Meals Annual report, 2016). The program relies on fundraising groups in different countries namely: Netherlands, Ireland, United Arab Emirates, Portugal, France, Germany, Croatia, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, Spain, Austria, Australia, Germany, United Kingdom, and United States of America of which much funding comes from America and United Kingdom. The funds are mainly used for building kitchens and providing meals in schools (Mary's Meal Annual Report, 2016) However, schools provide the meals to the learners at their convenient time. The funding is used for personnel and management of the project and the beneficiary countries are given different meals like porridge and rice depending upon their staple food.

1.2.2.2 Implementation of school feeding program and access to education

On a global scale, both governmental institutions and a range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) undertake School Feeding Programs (SFPs). The reference above is from the European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Protection in 2009.

CARE, and Save the Children are among the organizations that make up the group. According to WFP (202), school feeding program implementation heavily relies on community participation

in various aspects such as meal preparation and serving, provision of in-kind or monetary contributions, and procurement. Along with the activities, the cooperation of numerous agencies is a typical aspect in practically all school feeding programs.

The effectiveness of the Mary's Meals School Feeding Programmes is dependent on the cooperation of community volunteers who help with meal preparation, cooking, and serving at educational institutions on a volunteer basis. The statistics presented above was obtained from Mary's Meals' 2016 Annual Report. It is likely that the volunteers would rotate their roles in a methodical manner on a weekly or monthly basis. According to Mary's Meals (2016), the program is intended for schools with feeding committees comprised of parents, guardians, teachers, and volunteers who are trained to carry out their assigned roles properly. The initiative frequently aids adjacent communities by sourcing raw materials from them, with the goal of delivering locally sourced meals to children and boosting the community's economic prosperity.

1.2.2.3 Monitoring school feeding program.

It is estimated that it cost, Mary's Meals, 19.15 Euros to feed a child for the whole school year worldwide. The project manages to collect data from schools and keep it for the sake of monitoring especially the impact school feeding is having on the school children. Technical expertise on budgeting and research to meet the objectives of the project give feedback and support their production of which learning, and recommendations are drawn from there (Mary's Meals MEAL, 2022). Expertise offers training to the volunteers and the purchase of cooking resources for schools is imminent.

A hungry child finds it difficult to attend lessons and their ability to learn is minimal (WFP, 2019). As a result, students' attendance is low during lean season in Malawi since there is no food at home but with the SFP in public schools, learners' attendance has improved (WFP, 2019). The SFP has influenced parents' decision hence they sent their wards to school (Yohannes, A. 2017). The

improves attendance as the behavior of children changes-thus learners attend school regularly. As a result, class participation increases (Gruber, A. F. 2017). In Ghana, cocoa growing areas, there is an increase in attendance in schools that offer SFP and a decline in attendance in schools that are not beneficiaries of SFP (Gans-Lartey, G. E.. 2017). The implementation of SFP has resulted in an improved absenteeism, which has led to fluctuation of attendance rates in schools in Malawi (Mary's Meals, 2017). Children who withdrew from school have gone back to school just because of the provision of meals in schools thereby increasing attendance (Mary's meals, 2018

The School Feeding Program (SFP) works to offer meals to kids, especially those who are experiencing financial difficulties, food insecurity, or other associated issues. According to the Mary Meals Impact Assessment, conducted in Malawi on the school feeding program, the research that was done in Malawi with the goal of assessing the effects of porridge eating on the academic performance of schoolchildren from various educational institutions around the country. According to Fawzi (2020) research, there has been a significant improvement in primary education among poor children, as indicated by a drop-out rate reduction in the low and middle income countries each academic year. Based on the study's findings, it has been discovered that the well-being of disadvantaged children has improved. In particular, the proportion of children suffering from malaise as a result of poor nutrition has dropped from.

There has also been a decrease in absenteeism rates.

According to Fawzi (2020), the number of schoolchildren in low and middle income countries who are anxious about hunger while at school has fallen to 6.6%. As a result, pupils are more eager to participate in the learning process.

1.3. Statement of the problem

The rate of illiteracy in Malawi has been ascribed to a lack of access to primary education, which has resulted in a high incidence of poverty. School-aged youngsters worked in the economy to help support their families. As a result, in an effort to solve the issue, the government enacted a policy of offering free primary education. However, the strategy did not fulfil its intended goals since children continued to withdraw from school for reasons other than the provision of free primary education. Given the importance of education as a driver of development, the government and non-governmental groups have agreed to create a School Feeding Program (SFP) for primary schools. SFP measures have been established due to the importance of the sector in encouraging a country's economic growth. Individuals who have completed a full primary education are thought to have a different cognitive framework than those who have not had any type of formal education. Education has been found to lessen the possibility of child trafficking, alleviate poverty and hunger, reduce inequality and crime rates, reduce unemployment, and provide citizens with vital skills that help their country grow.

Economists believe that education fosters skills and enhances the labour force Lauder, H and Mayhe, K (2020). The labour productivity is what the market demand hence education brings about opportunities in a life of person thereby improving living standards (Patriros, 2016).

Education for all concepts has made education policy makers find a solution to education so that development takes its toll through SFP. In as much as countries have taken interventions towards education for all, population growth is a major concern. Africa and Asian countries are highly populated hence primary school enrolment is high. This leads to overcrowding in school which leads to a change of attitude toward education (Arnette, 2018). The increase of enrolment in primary school is also as result of rapid population growth (GIZ, 2018). This encourages learners to drop out hence people remain illiterate (Arnette, 2018). However, school feeding meals have

played a major role in keeping learners in school for a longer period of time. Issues of drop out and repetition of classes are addressed through the provision of daily school meals. Grade repetition is because of failure to monitor learners work due to overcrowding that overwhelms teachers (Oden, 2019).

1.4. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to assess the influence of school feeding efforts on primary education accessibility in public primary schools in Blantyre Urban, Malawi.

1.5. Objectives of the study

The study's exact aims are to:

1. To examine the impact of feeding program design on primary school education accessibility in Malawi.
2. To look into the influence of a school feeding program on access to primary school education in Malawi.
3. Determine how monitoring the school feeding program improves access to primary school education in Malawi.

1.6. Research Questions

1. How does the design of the school feeding program influence access to primary education in Malawi?
2. How does the implementation of school feeding program effectively influence access to primary education in Malawi?
3. How efficient is monitoring of school feeding program to enhance access to primary education in Malawi?

1.7. Significance of the study

The findings of this study are of benefit to the policy makers, Ministry of Education, feeding programmes stakeholders, teachers, parents, learners and the community as a whole. Firstly, policy makers will understand the gaps on access to education hence will make informed decision on public primary education and take actions and charge of schools. They will also take note of the importance of SFP and its influence on education. The Ministry of Education as a primary stakeholder is likely to compare the findings of this study to its own objectives since it is in partnership with the feeding Programme service providers (stakeholders) -thus help them decide toward their program especially if their objectives are met or not. Probably this study's findings will help the feeding program key stakeholders, who fund the programmes, validate their objectives, their activities and implementation and management of the project as well as the impact of feeding program at large. This will finally help them in decision making since there is a possibility of revealing the knowledge gap within the study. It will also eventually guide parents, teachers, and the community on how to conduct feeding program activities.

1.8. Scope of the study

The current study includes several elementary schools in Blantyre's metropolitan region, including Catholic Institute, HHI, Chitawira, Namiwawa, Namasimba, Chimwankhunda, Zingwangwa, and Mbayani 1. The scope of the study is to investigate the impact of school food program performance. As a result, the research is limited to certain schools that have received SFP advantages for at least five years to ensure the project's stability and findings. To ensure the creation of reliable data analysis, the study restricts data collection to primary schools within the Blantyre (East) urban school district that receive help from Mary's Meals School Feeding Programme (SFP). Because the neighboring districts of Blantyre Urban are already supplied by

other non-governmental organization supplementary food programs such as WFP and Star Fish, the focus of the research is limited to the urban area of Blantyre (East). Educational institutions are dispersed on the outskirts of Blantyre, providing issues in terms of timely accessibility due to distance and transit methods. The information was gathered in relation to two variables: the design and implementation of the school feeding program. The School Feeding Program (SFP), which is supported by various donors, aids the majority of public elementary schools in the United States. However, because these funding sources have different purposes, gathering data on SFP funding in Blantyre from multiple sources may be difficult.

1.9. Limitation of the study

The study has various limitations, including a lack of prior research on the topic, limited data availability, restricted access to data gathering exercises, cultural beliefs, sample size, and financial and time constraints. The study may face access difficulties in data collecting due to concerns about key informant confidentiality, as well as potential constraints presented by the distance to be travelled. Given that the student numbers in the research locations surpass 2000 per school, acquiring a large enough sample size that effectively depicts the distribution of participation across schools may be difficult to achieve statistically significant results. Prior to conducting the survey, the study developed methods to ensure effective and courteous communication, considering cultural norms and logistical challenges connected to accessing data collection sites and receiving funding. To acquire permission for the research study, the District Education Manager was approached.

1.10. Delimitations of the study

Initially, this study was conducted in Blantyre Urban to reduce the study population size and the area. The study is firstly delimited to the study area to Blantyre Urban since the area was the pilot

centre for Mary Meals SFP and has been in operation for more than a decade now before extending outside Blantyre and it has a good number of schools that benefit from the program compared to other districts. Furthermore, the schools in Blantyre are very accessible and the population per school is large compared to others thereby making sampling easy. The study also covers only Mary Meals SFP despite having World Food Program and others to avoid confusion since they operate differently, and their source of funds are different. In addition to that, the study focuses only on public primary school because it is where the large population of the nation attain primary education.

1.11. Assumptions of the study

The study makes every effort to protect the privacy and security of both the participants and the information obtained. The key informants were subjected to a battery of evaluations, including standardized tests, questionnaires, and direct observation, with the expectation of candid and truthful responses. It is likely that some participants will choose to withdraw from the study owing to circumstances beyond their control. The study made use of resources that were freely accessible in the surrounding area and were available to all participants. Despite the financial limits, the study's budget was untouched. Furthermore, SPSS and Microsoft Excel will be used as data documentation tools throughout the inquiry.

1.12. Theoretical framework

The theories of Abraham Maslow's Human Motivation (1943) and the theory of change lead the research. SFPs serve as a source of incentive for learners, while the theory of change chain depicts the project's interventions and outcomes. Meals serve as a motivator for children's learning since they respond quickly after acquiring nourishment. As a result, the expected result is observed. Abraham Maslow's 1943 Human Motivation model has five hierarchical levels: physiological

requirements, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Physiological prerequisites, such as sustenance and well-being, are the most basic requirements for human survival. Food consumption is usually regarded as an essential requirement for an individual's sustenance, as is the maintenance of good health. Food consumption has been demonstrated to improve an individual's energy levels, physical activity, and general health and well-being. Students respond positively to the act of delivering food. The supply of nutritious meals to undernourished students in educational institutions meets their basic physiological needs, namely sustenance and well-being. This, in turn, results in contented and motivated learners who are eager to study. The availability of food motivates children to attend lessons and seek admission in educational institutions. The provision of nutritious meals has been shown to have a favorable impact on people's health.

Furthermore, the change of theory showcases the interventions that are undertaken by the project (UN, 2017). The changes due to intervention contributes to the results of the project thereby producing intended outcomes (UN, 2017). Andrews and Reinholz (2020) stipulate that to do with evaluation and assessing the activities of the project. This means that the interventions and activities are identified to achieve the key changes in the program (UN, 2017). However, school feeding programs theory of change is based on primary education in Africa and Asian continent. The intervention to achieve access to primary education is the feeding program, which is believed to increase enrolment, attendance, reducing drop-out and improving cognition and learning achievement in schools and areas which suffer hunger and famine.

1. 13. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework depicts the interdependence of the independent and dependent variables under study. The current study is supported by a conceptual framework that thoroughly

explains the influence of the school feeding program on the accessibility of public primary education in Malawi. The school feeding program's variables include topics such as program design, finance, collaborations, implementation, and monitoring. The results of the school feeding program during the implementation phase are the independent variables.

Independent variables

Dependent variables

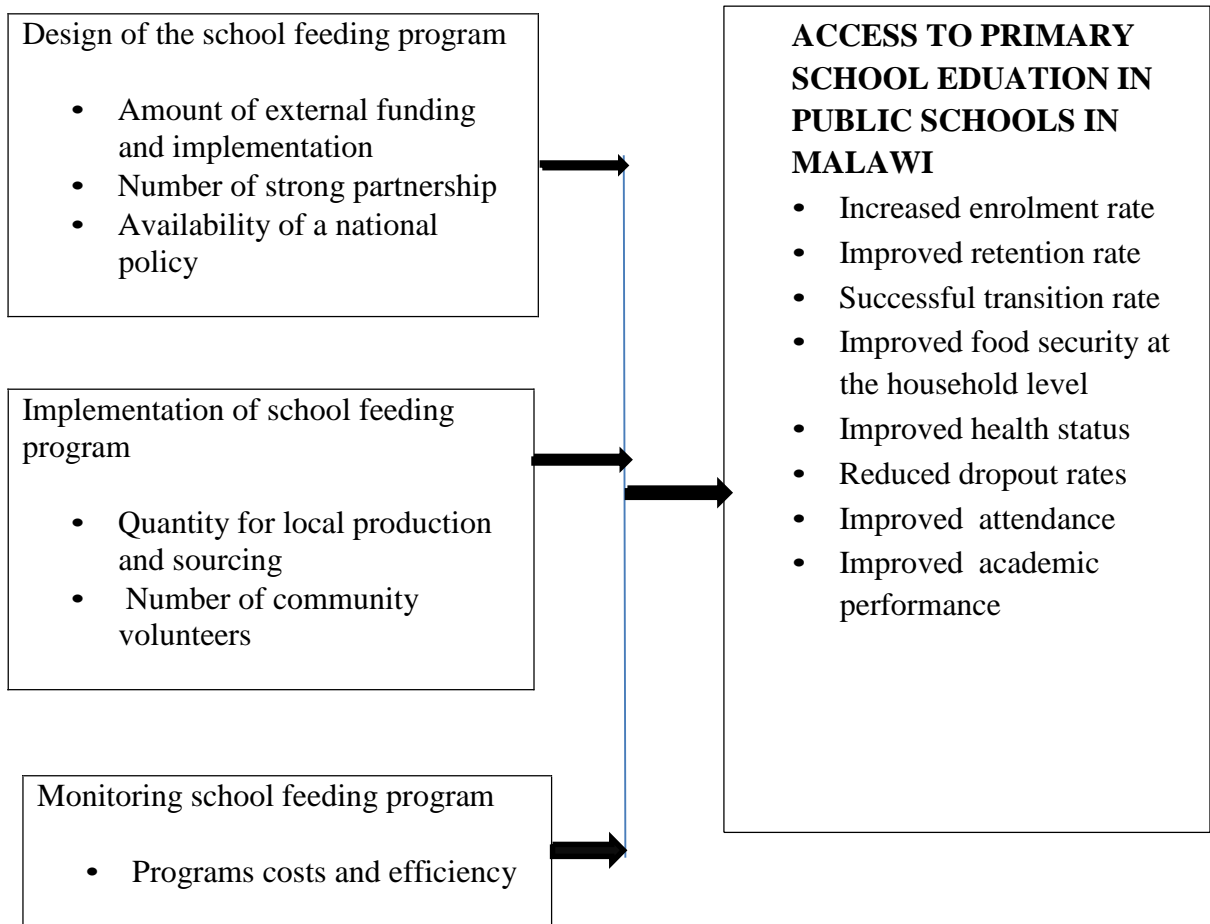


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The current chapter presented an overview of numerous academic works on the issue. A literature review, according to Shuttle (2009), is a complete and analytical appraisal of earlier research that includes the acquisition of material from numerous sources as well as its recording. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of a school food program on the accessibility of basic education in Malawian public schools. This chapter includes a thorough analysis of the theoretical and empirical literature, as well as a synopsis of existing knowledge and identification of any gaps in the literature.

2.1 Review of the Literature

2.1.1 Access to primary school education in public schools in Malawi

Despite the free education policy (in 1994), where parents do no longer pay school fees, still many children do not go to school. Parents and children's attitude toward access to education is a challenge. Their attitude toward education is based on cost-benefit analysis (Meke, et. Al. 2020) Most parents prefer that their children should go fishing and make money (Ripple Africa, 2016)

2.2 School Feeding Program

The effectiveness and efficiency of SFP performance are contingent upon various additional factors, as per scholarly investigations. As per a survey conducted in India, the rise in enrolment cannot be solely attributed to the implementation of the SFP, as there exist other factors that have a significant impact on the enrolment figures. The enhancement of infrastructure has also played a role in the increase of enrolment. Lower primary schools are situated within a one-kilometre

radius, and students from the lower section of the primary can readily reach such schools, increasing enrolment. There exists an additional upper primary school located within a radius of three kilometres. According to WDR (2020), the implementation of this particular design has resulted in a decrease in the distance that students are required to traverse in order to attend school, thereby leading to an increase in attendance.

The increase in teaching personnel is a secondary aspect that contributes to the increase in student enrolment. According to scholarly study, the availability of instructional materials has a considerable impact on the academic achievement of sufficiently nourished kids (Chakraborty & Jayaraman, 2016). Enrolment rates have increased in East and Central Europe, East Asia, and Latin America because of various factors such as the elimination of primary school fees, the construction of new schools, and the provision of sanitary facilities within educational institutions (WFP 2020). According to research, a variety of characteristics, including women' educational attainment, household wealth and size, and geographic location, all have a beneficial impact on enrolment rates. Despite the availability of school meals, the continuation of children's dropout rates can be related to household incomes. Furthermore, studies have shown that the existence of supplemental classrooms in schools might boost academic achievement. The establishment of community-based schools in Afghanistan has resulted in a 42 percent increase in enrolment rates and improved academic success. The aforementioned phenomena can be attributed to a reduction in the geographical expanse that students are needed to traverse, emphasizing the importance of distance as a causative factor (UNICEF, 2020). Tylor and Ognogu (2016) conducted a study in Osun State, Nigeria, and discovered that the implementation of various measures, such as the distribution of free school uniforms, well-motivated teachers, and improved school premises that are conducive to learners, has resulted in an increase in enrolment.

According to Reyes (2016), research conducted in Ethiopia has demonstrated that the presence of water has a positive correlation with school enrolment rates. Conversely, when water is scarce, a significant number of children, particularly girls, are forced to abandon their studies to assist with water collection. Additionally, boys may be compelled to relocate their family's livestock to areas with access to water and pasture, despite the existence of School Feeding Programs (SFPs) in primary schools.

The issue of child labour and gender disparities in Africa is also being tackled by SFP. The findings of a household survey carried out in regions of Mali that have been impacted by conflict, it's been observed that child labour plays a crucial role in causing absenteeism and dropouts from school. This contrasts with the objectives of the SFP, which primarily focus on addressing hunger and lean season (Aurino, et al, 2018). The School Feeding Program (SFP) has been observed to have a positive impact on the reduction of child labour particularly among female children. Notwithstanding male children persist in engaging in agricultural labour due to the perception of its profitability. Aurino et al. (2018) have reported that the attendance of certain female individuals in educational institutions has led to their disengagement from agricultural practices and animal husbandry, owing to the provision of sustenance. As a result, there has been an enhancement in the rates of enrolment and academic performance. As per the findings of Aurino et al. (2018), the effects of GFD are restricted to a decline in school attendance and do not exhibit any noteworthy correlation with enrolment and achievement. Furthermore, the introduction of School Feeding Programs (SFP) has led to a reduction in the attrition rate of female students in Madagascar and a rise in the enrolment of female students in Burkina-Faso. According to the World Food Programmes report in 2019, the implementation of school meal programs in Africa has resulted in a decrease in the prevalence of child marriages among female children. This phenomenon can be

attributed to the provision of food in educational institutions. Ozuogu et al (2023) conducted a survey in Nigeria found that the implementation of SFP has led to an increase in enrolment rates in specific schools. Nevertheless, in certain educational institutions, the number of students registering for classes has not shown any significant growth, primarily due to reasons such as considerable geographical distances and parental hesitancy towards admitting their offspring to academic institutions. Nevertheless, his findings regarding enrolment exhibit resemblance to those of Ramadhani. The findings of the study indicate that the implementation of SFP had varying effects on school enrolment, with some schools experiencing an increase in enrolment while others remained unchanged. The utilization of school feeding programs as a response to drought conditions addresses an urgent, albeit temporary, requirement. In Machakos county, Kenya, there is a noticeable trend where students exhibit low attendance rates in schools that lack provisions for meals, while high retention rates are observed in schools that offer such provisions. Kiilu and Mugambi (2019) conducted a study. It is noteworthy that the enrolment rate has risen due to parents transferring their children from private institutions to public schools to take advantage of the SFP. A descriptive study conducted in Kenya has demonstrated that the School Feeding Program (SFP) has a positive impact on the regular attendance of children in school, in contrast to schools without the SFP, where attendance is only moderate. The provision of School Feeding Programs (SFP) has resulted in a significant increase in the enrolment of school-aged children in schools that have implemented the program, as compared to those schools that have not. In the absence of SFP, school-aged children tend to exhibit reluctance towards enrolment, leading to moderate enrolment rates in such schools. According to Chelangat (2016), the program's outcome is influenced by the type of food and modality. Chelangat (2016) has identified several obstacles to the provision of SFP in Kenya's Chipalungu Sub-County of Bomet County, including famine-

related discontinuity, insufficient community participation, and inadequate financial management skills.

In Malawi, the introduction of free primary education and non-mandatory uniform rules in 1994 resulted in a large increase in primary school enrolment over the twentieth century. The study on education projects run by Ripple Africa and UNESCO is quite sensitive. The prevalent outlook of parents and children on educational accessibility is a critical factor, since parents value their children's participation in small-scale companies and fishing as a source of nutrition. In terms of access and equity, the primary education enrolment data for 2018 were 5,187,634, as shown in Figure 1. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) claimed in 2019 that enrolment figures had increased by 47.1% since 2008, with the current level standing at an unknown value. According to the data, the net intake rate (NIR) has increased significantly over the last decade, rising from 71% in 2008 to 84% in 2018. According to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) predictions for 2019, the number of school enrolment is predicted to increase and reach 7,098,827 by 2030, owing mostly to population growth. While the School Feeding Program (SFP) has produced positive results, its implementation has revealed several irregularities in school menus and in food distribution. According to the African Union Development Agency, in 2019. The findings of the qualitative analysis indicated the program's problems. According to Zenebe (2018), the transit of inputs and grain via the SFP is frequently disrupted. The agricultural union's obligations are influenced by financial limits and transportation difficulties. Academic or educational time is reduced throughout the implementation procedure. Zenebe (2018) indicates an increase in children's body mass index (BMI).

According to Bunday et al. (2016), school feeding programs that are tailored to the needs of the community, are owned by the local community, and entail some level of participation from parents

or the community such as monetary contributions or contributions of food or labour, have the greatest resilience and longevity. The community's involvement is critical to the successful implementation of these programs. The strategy is notable for its low cost, as it involves the deployment of volunteers to offer on-site meals, resulting in lower expenses. Furthermore, community participation is critical to the success of this effort. Active participation of parents, teachers, and community leaders can aid in the effective monitoring and assessment of a project. Unfortunately, certain stakeholders, including communities, are frequently excluded from decision-making processes, particularly when creating school feeding programs and conducting needs assessments (Chelangat, C. 2016). Nafula (2019) conducted a study in Fafi Sub County and Garissa County, Kenya, and found that community engagement in school feeding programs was 95%. This tendency can be ascribed to the large number of parents who volunteer their time to the program. According to a Namibian study, the indigenous population activities towards school feeding program helps (Daka, R, 2019).

Community service is not seen as a voluntary activity in Bangladesh. Instead of deploying volunteers to schools, the initiative in Bangladesh generated employment opportunities, according to the 2018 program report. Furthermore, it has been stated that in Cape Verde, cooks are paid through contributions provided by parents and guardians (Bunday, D. et al 2016). The programs aim to help small-scale farmers in the agricultural business by sourcing food locally, assuring cost-effectiveness and supporting economic development (WFP, 2019). SFP fosters the development of local agriculture in Brazil's implementation process. According to the findings of

Cupertino, et.al (2022), a significant number of school food items are derived from adjacent family-owned agricultural companies. According to Cupertino, et al (2022), public schools keep gardens to grow produce for their everyday needs. Furthermore, Cupertino et al (2022) adds that the domestic school feeding effort engages local small-scale farmers, which benefits the nation's economy.

Malawi's Mary's Meals program adheres to the country's national policy of fostering economic growth by sourcing maize soya blend from local farmers. According to a 2019 report by Mary's Meals, the corn soya blend is enhanced with important vitamins and minerals that are not readily available in Malawi and is then exported. School meals have a major contribution to tackling malnutrition and hunger, according to research undertaken in Latin America and the Caribbean utilizing mixed techniques (WFP, 2019). The supply of meals in schools has a demonstrable benefit for kids' physical and emotional health. Initially, children were given calorically dense food; but, in response to the prevalence of obesity and malnourishment in certain locations, there has been a trend toward providing nutrient-dense meals. According to the World Food Programme's 2020 report, there is still a gap in reaching Universal Primary Education. Despite the availability of school meals, the Latin American and Caribbean region continues to have a considerable proportion of primary school-aged children who are not enrolled, estimated at roughly 6%, owing primarily to poverty and inequality. In contrast, the community has effectively maintained a significant enrolment rate in elementary education and reduced the frequency of student attrition (WFP, 2019). Empirical data demonstrates that providing nutritional meals benefits children's cognitive development, resulting in improved academic performance and less class repetition. According to a study conducted in Peru and Colombia, providing nutritious meals has improved access to education as well as retention and attention levels in schools. Similarly, in

Honduras and Haiti, people's health has improved, and poverty alleviation efforts have been aided by the distribution of nutritious meals (WFP, 2017). According to McEwan's (2012) research in Chile, the School Feeding Program (SFP) prioritizes higher-calorie meals for rural schools, which are less affluent than urban schools. Cullan, (2019) discovered that SFP calorie meals have no significant impact on educational outcomes such as enrolment, attendance, repetition, and class performance, except in extreme malnutrition instances such as stunted development and weight. While there is no conclusive evidence to support the idea that certain foods can improve a child's cognitive abilities, it is widely accepted that malnutrition can have a negative impact on a child's physical and mental well-being, including decreased activity levels, impaired cognitive functioning, and decreased social interactions (Chulak, A. 2016). According to Penny and McIsaac (2016), improving academic achievement in schools is dependent on the schools' effective and robust functioning. Several research studies, on the other hand, show that there is no scientific evidence to support the concept that school-age children's academic achievement is favorably connected with their consumption of nutritious meals. Instead, it has been discovered that the micronutrients found in school meals play an important role in reducing the prevalence of stunted growth and supporting overall growth and development, hence lowering the occurrence of malnutrition and other food-related illnesses.

A study conducted in Indonesia, on the Asian continent, found that the School Feeding Program (SFP) had a positive impact on the nutritional well-being of school-aged children, their academic achievements, attendance rates, personal hygiene, and use of indigenous food and regional resources. The investigation was descriptive in nature. Sekiyama et al. published the relevant information in 2015. Regardless of the impact, it is critical to recognize that the attrition rate of female students remains high, and the enrolment rate is unsatisfactory, as Sekiyama et al. (2015)

claim. According to Jayaraman (2019), the implementation of the School Feeding Program (SFP) in India and Tamil Nadu has resulted in increased school attendance, the eradication of classroom hunger, and has indirectly facilitated the program's goal of mitigating caste-based prejudices by encouraging communal dining among children from diverse castes. According to Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2018), the introduction of SFP in India has resulted in beneficial nutritional outcomes for school-aged children, as well as a considerable improvement in their academic performance in Math and English evaluations. Positive outcomes were significantly more prevalent among students who had been exposed to the program's benefits for more than four years, as opposed to those who had entered more recently. According to Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2019), Math and English are universally integrated into primary school curricula, meaning that a child's nutritional health may be unimportant. According to Mendez et al (2019), the noticeable influence of school meals is confined to students who are afflicted by drought as opposed to those who are not. According to the study's findings, school-provided lunches play an important role in boosting the development and growth of children who have stunted growth or are underweight, consequently providing them with nutritional benefits. Working Paper No.75, an academic paper, exposed the knowledge. According to Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2016), the School Feeding Program (SFP) and increased nutrition have the potential to improve poor pupils' academic performance.

Previous research has shown that the efficacy and productivity of SFP are dependent on a variety of other parameters. According to a poll performed in India, while SFP has made a significant contribution to the increase in enrolment, there are other reasons that have also played a critical role in this escalation. According to A e n i a n d R u h y a n a (2019), infrastructure improvements such as strategically such as renovating the library

and sanitation in toilets have resulted in school learning outcomes and enrolment among school-aged children to access educational opportunities. As a result, the number of pupils enrolled has increased. The addition of teaching professionals has aided in the growth of student enrolment. The provision of educational resources has a good impact on the academic performance of well-fed kids, according to a study done by Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2016). The rise in enrolment rates in East and Central Europe, East Asia, and Latin America has been attributed to a variety of factors, including the elimination of primary school fees, the establishment of new schools, and the provision of sanitary facilities in educational institutions (WFP 2019). Furthermore, the implementation of school meal initiatives or the supply of take-home rations has aided in the facilitation of this process. Ahmed (2004) conducted a study in Bangladesh that used qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The study discovered a link between a variety of parameters, including the mother's educational level, household size and wealth, and geographic location, and an increase in enrolment rates. Despite the availability of school meals, children continue to drop out of school due to low household poverty. Furthermore, academic research indicates a beneficial relationship between the growth of classrooms in educational institutions and an improvement in academic performance (Wangare,2018). The implementation of community-based schools in Afghanistan resulted in a 42% increase in student enrolment and a considerable improvement in academic performance. Rogers and Neal (2019) explain the observed phenomena to a reduction in the geographical distance that students are expected to cover. According to a study conducted by Tylor and Ognogu (2016) in Osun State, Nigeria, the implementation of various measures such as the distribution of free school uniforms, well-motivated teachers, and improved and conducive school premises resulted in an increase in enrolment. A study conducted in Ethiopia discovered a positive correlation between water accessibility and enrolment rates in educational institutions;

however, when access to water is limited, a significant number of children, particularly girls, tend to discontinue their educational endeavours to help in obtaining water. Despite the implementation of School Feeding Programs (SFP) in elementary educational institutions, male students have been observed to take on the responsibility of relocating their guardians' domesticated animals to areas with access to water and grazing amenities (Reyes, G.A. 2016).

The African School Feeding Program (SFP) has been recognized for its potential to address issues such as gender inequality and child labour. Aurino et al.(2018) used a descriptive approach to perform a home survey in Mali's conflict zones. The study's findings imply that child labour's a significant influence to absenteeism and school dropout rates, calling into question SFP goals' assumptions that identify hunger and lean season as the primary factors. Empirical research reveals that the School Feeding Program (SFP) has had a positive impact on reducing child labour particularly among the female demographic. However, because of the perceived profitability, male offspring are more likely to be active in agricultural pursuits. According to Aurino et al. (2018), a particular subset of women has stopped participating in agricultural and animal husbandry techniques. This occurrence, according to the authors, is due to the availability of food resources in educational institutions. As a result, there has been an increase in both enrolment rates and academic performance. According to Aurino et al. (2018), the impact of GFD is restricted to a decrease in school attendance and does not show any meaningful association with enrolment or academic achievement. School Feeding Programs (SFP) adoption has resulted in a decrease in the rate of female student dropouts in Madagascar and an increase in female student enrolment in Burkina Faso. According to the World Food Programmes' 2019 report, the introduction of school meal programs in Africa has resulted in a decrease in the rate of child marriages among females. This behavior may be attributed to the availability of food within academic institutions. According

to research conducted in Kenya and Tanzania, the establishment of school feeding programs increased enrolment rates, particularly in low-income nations, hence enhancing access to education. However in Mauritius , the case was different. Mauritius Education statistics (2019) shows that enrolment in primary school has decreased over the years in as much as in other areas enrolment rates at some academic institutions have remained unchanged due to issues such as substantial geographical distances and parental unwillingness to enrol their children in school. The intellectual achievements of primary school students have increased, whilst academic performance at other educational institutions have decreased. According to Ramadhani (2014), the feeding program contributed to kids' improved academic performance by increasing their attentiveness during classroom instruction. In contrast, a Tanzanian study reveals that there is a link between improved student academic achievement and the quality of parent-teacher relationships, as well as the educational mind-set that parents hold. According to Chaula (2015), parents or guardians appreciate the value of education for both male and female children. His enrolment research findings are similar to those of Ramadhani's investigation. The study's findings suggest that the School Feeding Program (SFP) had varying effects on school enrolment, as some schools saw an increase in enrolment while others did not see a statistically significant change. The implementation of school feeding projects as a drought mitigation approach addresses a pressing, albeit temporary, need. A noteworthy tendency has been seen in Machakos County, Kenya, where students attend educational establishments that do not provide meals at a lower charge. Academic institutions that provide food services, on the other hand, have higher rates of student retention, with more than 50% of students attending frequently. The reference refers to a 2019 scientific work produced by Kiilu and Mugambi.

The findings of a mixed-methods study undertaken in Nigeria show a significant increase in examination pass rates, increasing from 20% to 80% (Awojobi & Tinubu, 2020). There has been a large increase in classroom involvement, as well as an increase in children's school attendance rates. The increase in enrolment rate can be attributed to a tendency of parents transferring their children from private academic institutions to public ones in order to take advantage of the SFP benefits. Consumption of healthy meals has been shown to reduce absenteeism caused by malnourishment-related illnesses. The adoption of the School Feeding Program (SFP) has had a favorable impact, including increased student punctuality and a decrease in attrition rates for elementary grades (1-4). Schools' provision of a balanced meal may be viewed as a potential contributing factor to proper blood supply among children. According to the findings of Awojobi and Tinubu (2020), the persons in question have a continuous inclination to attend their academic institution.

Analysis from Ministry of Education (2019) in Malawi over the twentieth century found a large rise in basic education attendance following the rapid population growth in Malawi. Heyman et,al (2018) observed a rapid increase in the enrolment rates is also associated with free primary education. According to the Ministry of Education's statistical report for 2013, the percentage was 45.9%. According to the Ministry of Education's report, there have been significant swings in Malawi's primary education dropout rate in recent years. The figures show a downward trend from 1991 to 2013, culminating in a rate of 45.9% in 2013. The study on education projects run by Ripple Africa and UNESCO is particularly delicate. The attitudes of parents and children toward educational access are critical in the goal of economic sustainability. As a means of safeguarding their children's livelihoods, parents frequently prioritize their children's participation in small-scale commercial enterprises and fishing.

The Impact Assessment resulted in the implementation of a Monitoring and Evaluation framework in Zambia and Liberia's school feeding programs. Baiju (2017) announced the creation of software geared to quantify the survey indicators. According to the survey results of Baiju (2017), the aforementioned program has showed efficacy in reducing classroom hunger, increasing enrolment, and decreasing self-reported levels of anxiety related with hunger. However, other research imply that in nations where the daily school lunch program is adopted, there is a significant degree of dropout. The use of SFP has been shown to improve students' ability to maintain sustained focus during educational lectures. Regardless of the circumstances, children of school-going age continue to face obstacles such as food insecurity, health concerns, and the need to engage in laborious activities to secure sustenance. The quality of the meal can explain this behavior. According to Zenebe L. et al. (2018), quantitative data show a lack of food inspection by certified individuals for schoolchildren. According to the findings of a quantitative study conducted in Ethiopia, persons who receive Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) support are more likely to conceal their beneficiary status due to fears of social ostracism from their peers. This affects their ability to concentrate during instructional sessions. According to Reta et al. (2019), in addition to food, impoverished young people are given educational materials.

While SFP has produced positive results, its implementation has exposed certain inconsistencies in school menus and discrepancies in food distribution. According to the African Union Development Agency's 2019 report. The findings of the qualitative analysis indicated the program's problems. According to Zenebe (2018), the Sustainable Farming Program (SFP) frequently encounters difficulties in the transfer of inputs and grains. The agricultural union has budgetary limits as well as transportation challenges. A reduction in educational or academic time

is related with the implementation process. Zenebe (2018) discovered an increase in children's body mass index (BMI).

According to Bunday et al. (2016), school feeding programs that are customized to meet the specific needs of the community, overseen by local authorities, and incorporate some level of parental or community participation, such as financial contributions or the provision of food or labor, have the greatest efficacy and longevity. The community's active participation is critical to the implementation process. The strategy is notable for its cost-effectiveness, as it involves the deployment of volunteers to offer on-site meals, lowering expenditures. Furthermore, community participation is critical in enabling the project's completion. The active participation of parents, teachers, and community leaders can aid in the efficient monitoring and evaluation of a project. Unfortunately, stakeholders, especially communities, are frequently excluded from decision-making processes, particularly when it comes to the establishment of school feeding programs and needs assessments (Chelangat, C. 2016).

Nafula (2015) conducted a study in Fafi Sub County and Garissa County, Kenya, and found that 95% of the population participated in school feeding programs. The substantial level of engagement can be linked to the work input of parents. According to a Namibian study, the indigenous population supplies essential resources such as gasoline, water, utensils, soap, lodging, and storage facilities (Namibian news, 2016).

Community involvement in Bangladesh is not entirely voluntary. According to Bangladesh's 2018 program report, the initiative has encouraged the creation of employment opportunities as opposed to the reliance on volunteers for school-related labor. Bunday et al. (2016) state that cash contributions from parents and guardians in Cape Verde are used to compensate the chefs. Bunday

et al. (2016) reported that in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province, local community members are hired as volunteers to handle food and are compensated with a pay.

2.2.1 To determine how the design of feeding program influences access to primary school education.

School Feeding Programs (SFPs) get funding from both public organizations and private donors. The project monitoring procedure is carried out to ensure the advancement and efficient implementation of projects. A team of primary and secondary stakeholders, managers, financial controllers, M&E officers, beneficiaries, project financing partners, and volunteers from multiple primary schools oversee the initiative.

According to the World Food Programme (2017), integrating education and nutrition requires a strong relationship at the policy, strategic, and operational levels, emphasizing the importance of program continuity. According to Chelangat (2016), the donors who offer the funding are responsible for acquiring food and creating storage facilities. The program's financial ramifications are a significant concern in other African educational institutions, leading to community involvement in generating funds for fuel and nourishment. Mary's Meals strives to administer its programs at a low cost, with a total cost of £13.90 / €15.60 / \$19.50 to feed a kid for a whole school year as part of the Mary's Meals Program (Mary's Meals, report, 2016).

The World Food Programme (WFP) and other similar organizations seek to complete the transfer of the School Feeding Programme (SFP) to the national governments, granting them entire ownership and facilitation. According to the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2020, a total of 44

national governments have assumed responsibility for school meal programs that were previously managed by the WFP since 1990, with the government of Botswana taking over a project that was previously managed by the WFP. The project now includes education, agriculture, and nutrition components. Bunday et al. (2016) observed that following the withdrawal of WFP in 1998, the government of Botswana provided full funding for the elementary school program. The government allocated a particular amount of US\$ 36,176,00 for the execution of the SFP in 2002. As a result, there has been an increase in the national budget allocation to this specific program. Ecuador is distinguished by a steady inflow of financial resources.

According to Bunday et al. (2016), the Sustainable Farming Program (SFP) is heavily reliant on funding from the federal budget, state governments, and local municipalities. Similarly, the World Food Programme handed over control of the Supplementary Feeding Programme to the Cape Verdean government. According to Bunday et al. (2016), the National School Nutrition Program was a success because to a combined effort involving the government, the United Nations Joint Office, Luxemburg, the Brazilian National Fund for Education Development, and parental donations. The SFP's financial resources are made up of contributions from several sources, including 6% from parents, 25% from external benefactors, and 65% from the government. According to the findings from Cote d'Ivoire, the government obtains its monetary funds from a variety of sources, including but not limited to the World Food Programme (WFP), Japan, the European Union, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). According to Bunday et al. (2016), the government of Cote d'Ivoire has created cooperation with external donors in response to its significant deployment of resources to the education sector.

According to the Mary Meals Strategy of 2018, the monitoring and evaluation team oversees the inputs and contributions provided by volunteers. The Mary's Meals team oversees the distribution of the program, assessing the efficiency and efficacy of volunteer training, food delivery, preparation, and consumption. This data is included in the 2018 Mary Meals Strategy report. As a result, a structure for monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning has been established. The team provides input based on their constant evaluation, which then impacts the decision-making processes of stakeholders such as the government and donors. As a result, SFP has achieved excellent academic performance.

Academic achievement of children in primary examinations has increased in the school, while it has decreased in other educational institutions. Ayodole (2019) attributed improved learner performance to the feeding program, which resulted in higher attentiveness throughout class. Learners' active participation and continuous attendance created an environment favorable to academic success. This phenomenon also has an effect on retention rates. According to Awojobi and Tinubu (2020), the pass rate of examinations in Nigeria has increased significantly, rising from 20% to 80%. There has been an increase in children's classroom participation, as well as an increase in school attendance rates. In contrast, a Tanzanian study discovered that the improvement in academic achievement among pupils can be ascribed to the quality of parent-teacher connections and parents' attitudes about education. This is especially noticeable when parents or guardians understand the importance of education for both male and female children (Chaula, E. M. 2015). Certain parents believe that education is only for male children and that female children should remain at home. Others, on the other hand, believe that the eight-year duration of elementary school is useless and, as a result, choose to introduce their children to family companies. According

to Ruiz, et. al (2019), improving school performance is dependent on schools' effective operation and academic strength. The research does not support the concept that schoolchildren's academic achievement is closely related to their eating of nutritious meals. It has been proved, however, that the micronutrients gained from such meals play an important role in preventing stunted growth and supporting general growth and development. As a result, the prevalence of malnutrition and other food-related illnesses is reduced. According to Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2016), providing School Feeding Programs (SFP) during lunchtime may be effective in improving the academic performance of impoverished pupils. This is since SFP helps to alleviate hunger among school-aged children.

Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2018) did a study and discovered that Indian students who have been engaged in the SFP for more than four years outperform their counterparts who have recently joined the program in Math and English Test results. A study conducted by Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2016) found that Mathematics and English are fully integrated into the elementary school curriculum. This means that a child's dietary status may not have a significant impact on their academic ability in these disciplines. This implies that a student's competency or ability, rather than the quality of food consumed in their home or educational institution, is the most important predictor. The adoption of School Feeding Programs (SFP) can offer pupils with an additional benefit. While there is no conclusive evidence to support the idea that certain foods can improve a child's cognitive abilities, it is widely acknowledged that malnutrition can have a negative impact on a child's cognitive performance, level of physical activity, and social interactions (Chulak, 2016). According to Ozcan (2020), the optimization of academic achievements in educational institutions is based on the institutions' efficient operation

and scholarly prowess. There is little scientific evidence to support the notion that academic achievement is favorably connected with the consumption of healthful foods among school-age children. According to research, consuming micronutrients through these meals can greatly help to the reduction of growth impairment and improve overall growth and advancement.

According to nutritionists' research, there is a link between breakfast consumption and better cognitive ability in children. Yohannes (2017) published the outcomes of a quasi-experimental study conducted in Ethiopia, which revealed that participants in the School Feeding Program (SFP) did not show statistically significant gains in the Arada sub-city's academic performance. According to Yohannes (2017), the experimental group consisting entirely of pupils in grades 3 and 6 revealed more significant mean differences than the other experimental groups. Overcrowding in classes, which is related to enrolment, may have a negative impact on academic performance since it might impede learning processes (Yohannes, A. 2017). According to the findings of a survey done in Malawi, the high teacher-pupil ratio observed in public elementary schools may be a contributing cause to lower academic attainment. Furthermore, the findings of the study suggest that the number of students present in a given classroom setting may play a role in these phenomena. In 2019, according to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. Landais and Sakho (2019) articulates that in Senegal the biggest issue for many primary schools is the cost consequences of implementing a canteen-based school nutrition program. Kidane (2012) reported a significant delay in the distribution of food rations, resulting in an unsustainable program. The World Food Programme (WFP) and other SFP agencies aim to complete the transfer of ownership and control of the SFP to the government. As announced by the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2020, the World Food Programme (WFP) has transferred full responsibility for school meal programs to 44 national governments since 1990. Botswana's

government has taken over management of a project that was previously managed by the World Food Programme. The project's execution presently covers education, agriculture, and nutrition components. Bunday et al. (2016) observed that following the withdrawal of WFP in 1998, the government of Botswana provided full funding for the elementary school program. The government allocated a large sum of US\$ 36,176,00 for the SFP program in 2002. As a result, the national funding allocated to this effort has been increased. Ecuador has a consistent allocation of financial resources. According to Bunday et al. (2016), the Sustainable Farming Program (SFP) is heavily reliant on funding from the federal budget, state governments, and municipalities. Similarly, the World Food Programme handed over control of the Supplementary Feeding Programme to Cape Verdean authorities. According to Bunday et al. (2016), the achievement of the National School Nutrition Program's aim was the result of a collaboration between the government, the United Nations Joint Office in Luxembourg, the Brazilian National Fund for Education Development, and parent donations. The SFP's financial plan includes funding from a variety of sources, including parental donations at a rate of 6%, external contributors at a rate of 25%, and government assistance at a rate of 65%. The findings from Cote d'Ivoire show that the government's financial resources come from a variety of sources, including the World Food Programme, Japan, the European Union, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme.

According to Bunday et al. (2016), the government of Cote d'Ivoire has formed relationships with external donors because of its significant investment in the education sector. Mary Meals Strategy of 2017, present the team in charge of monitoring and evaluation is in charge of supervising the inputs and contributions made by volunteers. The Mary's Meals organization monitors the distribution process of its program, with a focus on evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of

volunteer training, food delivery, preparation, and consumption. This monitoring is done in accordance with the Mary Meals Strategy, which runs from 2014 to 2017. As a result, the organization's system now includes a framework for Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning. Based on their continual evaluation, the team provides input, which in turn informs decision-making processes among many stakeholders, including government officials and donors.

2.2.2 The effect of school feeding program implementation on access to primary school education.

Today, educational institutions play an important role in promoting both health and education. The rationale for this is that multiple entities, including governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations, have identified schools as a viable avenue for carrying out programs designed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals. In comparison to affluent countries, the implementation of SFP in underdeveloped countries differs slightly. Meal distribution in schools in industrialized countries serves as a tool for delivering nutrients. In poor nations, on the other hand, it provides as an incentive for youngsters to pursue their educational goals (WFP, 2019). Meals serve as a motivator for children from varied backgrounds to enrol in educational institutions and continue their academic pursuits until the end of the school year. Food options are available at the dining facilities.

The importance of educational institutions in developing countries cannot be emphasized, as they act as a safeguard by encouraging the welfare of their students and assuring food security during times of crisis. As stated by the World Food Programme in 2020, this contributes to the decrease of poverty and child malnutrition. According to the World Food Programme (2018), a child's

academic underperformance may be attributed to malnourishment, which can lead to decreased levels of physical activity. Geographic inequalities and the necessity to meet the needs of the recipients are attributed to the diversity of educational institution meal initiatives. According to Probart et, al (2019), integrating SFP results has a major impact on cognition, and health.

The implementation of Sustainable Farming Practices (SFP) involves the engagement of farmers who live near the community. The goal of these programs is to provide food obtained from local farmers to preserve fair pricing and promote economic growth by assisting small-scale farmers in the agricultural sector (WFP, 2018). SFP promotes local agriculture as part of the implementation process in Brazil. According to Chatterjee's (2016) results, a significant portion of the ingredients used in school meals are derived from local family-owned farms. According to Chatterjee (2016), public schools maintain gardens in order to cultivate produce for use in their daily meals. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Mali's indigenous school feeding policy involves the participation of local small-scale farmers, which benefits the nation's economy (AU, 2019).

Malawi's Mary's Meals program adheres to the country's national policy of fostering economic growth by buying maize soya blend from local farmers. According to Mary's Meals' 2018 report, the maize soya blend is packed with essential vitamins and minerals that are difficult to find in Malawi, resulting in the exports of these nutrients.

2.2.3 Monitoring the school nutrition program and primary school education access.

According to a World Food Programmes report from 2016, the supply of meals can serve as an incentive for children from diverse communities to enrol in schools and continue their academic aspirations throughout the academic year. According to research undertaken in Latin America and the Caribbean utilizing varied techniques, school meals provide a major contribution to addressing the issue of hunger (WFP, 2017). However, there remains a disparity in the attainment of Universal

Primary Education. Despite the provision of meals in educational institutions, the Latin American and Caribbean region faces a significant difficulty in that a considerable proportion of primary school-aged children are not enrolled in formal education. Poverty and inequality harm approximately 6% of children in this area. According to the World Food Programme, the region has effectively maintained a considerable rate of enrolment in basic education and reduced the prevalence of early school dropout. Based on empirical facts, it can be concluded that providing nutritious meals has a positive effect on children's attendance and academic achievement. According to the findings of research conducted in Peru and Colombia, meals have a significant impact on improving educational accessibility as well as increasing retention and attendance rates at educational institutions. According to the World Food Programme, meal distribution has been an important element in reducing poverty in communities like Honduras and Haiti.

A descriptive study conducted in the Asian country of Indonesia revealed that the School Feeding Program (SFP) had various positive outcomes. Implementing school-based nutrition programs has a variety of positive outcomes, including increased classroom attendance, improved nutritional status among students, lower absenteeism rates, increased academic achievement, improved personal hygiene, and increased use of local resources and traditional foods. The 2015 study conducted by Sekiyama et al. is cited. Meals are an important motivator for children from diverse backgrounds to enroll in educational institutions and sustain regular attendance throughout the school year. Meals served in educational institutions in poor countries are an important component of food security during times of crisis. This is because these types of meals serve as a form of social protection, allowing for increased rates of attendance (WFP, 2020).

Meals provided in educational institutions have been shown to reduce absenteeism caused by illnesses connected with inadequate nutrition. The School Feeding Program (SFP) has resulted in good effects such as increased punctuality among students and a decrease in the attrition rate of lower grade levels (1-4). Awojobi and Tinubu (2020) exhibit a pattern of consistent school attendance. Gans-Lartey (2017) conducted a study in Ghana and discovered that educational facilities that did not receive help from the School Feeding Program saw a decrease in student attendance. According to Gans-Lartey (2017), educational institutions equipped with SFP have seen a decrease in absenteeism.

Yohannes (2017) conducted a quasi-experimental study in Araba sub-city, Addis Abeba, Ghana, and discovered that the Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) had no statistically significant impact on children's attendance rates in the region. Although statistical significance was not obtained, the program had a positive influence on attendance rates, as seen by a 0.58 percent increase. According to Yohannes (2017), attendance could be influenced by a variety of circumstances, including poor health and low household income.

Solania and Cubillas (2019) conducted a mixed-method study in Gulayan sa Paaralan, demonstrating that effective implementation of SFP resulted in a significant increase in classroom attendance. According to Solania and Cubillas (2019), the implementation of SFP resulted in a significant increase in weekly attendance rates, which increased from 22% to 64.7%. The improvement has had a positive impact on academic benchmarks. According to the findings of a descriptive study conducted in Ethiopia, female pupils attend school more frequently than their male counterparts on days when meals are not provided. Male students, on the other hand, have been found to be more likely to attend school on days when meals are provided (Gallenbacher, H,

2018). The gender-specific incentive scheme is credited with increasing the number of female pupils attending school on days when non-serving meals are available. Female pupils, in particular, are given a take-home reward in the form of vegetable oil.

According to Gallenbacher's (2018) results, pupils are required to meet the minimum attendance criteria on a monthly basis. Gallenbacher (2018) found that the regions of Afar and Somalia have relatively high rates of attendance. Sufficient human resource capability is critical for the successful implementation of school feeding projects. According to Gartenstein (2019), optimizing human resource capacity is a significant aspect in boosting a program's efficacy and efficiency. This is due to the fact that it is required for both program planning and ongoing operations. The phrase "human resources" refers to a wide range of activities, including staffing, strategizing, coordinating, and meeting other personnel-related needs, which may include training and specialized knowledge.

Sufficient technical expertise and educational training in the field permit effective monitoring and evaluation of school food projects. According to the 2019 Mary's Meals Report, volunteers are trained in a variety of areas, including food preparation, sanitation and health regulations, and planning and organizing skills. The goal of this training is to make it easier to provide meals on school days. According to Kidane's (2016) results, the individuals under research participate in a variety of activities, including as the construction of reservoirs, kitchens, and feeding shades. Feedback to diverse stakeholders, including as partners, funders, beneficiaries, government, and communities, is critical to ensuring effective program control. The project frameworks were designed with the requisite proficiency and teaching in mind for both volunteers and staff people.

The development of technical committees is a critical component in increasing human resource capacity. Technical committees oversee monitoring activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Individuals with technical expertise make up the technical committees. According to FAO (2020), SFP offers on-site training. Furthermore, as stated by the World Food Programme in 2021, the implementation of nutrition education and competent administration of food service facilities has a significant influence on the system of receiving and responding to criticism.

2.3. Summary of the reviewed literature and research gap

The synthesis of existing scholarly works demonstrates that the integration of education and health activities within the educational domain is aimed at achieving positive socioeconomic advancement outcomes. It has been observed that children enrol in schools with the expectation of receiving meals, notwithstanding the absence of food accessibility at home. According to the existing literature, SFP has been found to be a source of motivation for children from economically challenged households, as opposed to their more affluent counterparts. Based on the results of the cost-benefit analysis study, it has been determined that the adoption of SFP is insignificant in other locations. As a result, it would be prudent to redistribute resources appropriately. According to the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2019, it is advised that SFP food resources be diverted towards more vulnerable schools in order to deliver long-term educational benefits to underprivileged pupils. While school feeding programs (SFPs) have shown positive effects on health, academic success, and classroom behavior, it is critical to remember that education in Africa is influenced by a variety of issues that go beyond the scope of SFPs. Scholars have mostly concentrated on educational theories centred on problem-solving and motivation. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the school feeding program on the availability of basic education in Malawi's public schools, with a focus on the Mary's Meals initiative in Blantyre's metropolitan area.

According to the reviewed literature, the elimination of school fees, which had previously functioned as a barrier, in conjunction with the introduction of school food initiatives and free primary education in 1994, has significantly enhanced child enrolment in primary schools. A large proportion of youngsters enrol in school with the expectation of receiving meals, even if they do not have access to food at home. The existing literature indicates that there is educational disparity in Malawi. Despite the availability of nutritious food and a desirable cost-free environment, the phenomenon of children dropping out of school remains a persistent challenge. The phenomena of high dropout rates in educational institutions, particularly among students aged five to eight, cannot be attributed solely to financial constraints such as tuition fees or insufficient food access. The aforementioned parameters show some degree of association, similar to the link discovered between free primary education and the introduction of school food initiatives. Furthermore, based on the evaluation of cost-benefit analyses, it can be deduced that the adoption of SFP is irrelevant in other areas. As a result, resource reallocation is seen as the most efficient course of action. In Somalia, the World Food Programme (WFP) chose to reallocate resources intended for the Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) to schools that were not originally included in the program but were assessed to have a greater need for food aid. The aforementioned determination was conducted with the goal of establishing a long-term influence on the sphere of education. (WFP, 2019). This practice is likely to occur in other African countries, especially in isolated locations where children have little access to formal schooling. The implementation of school feeding initiatives has increased elementary school kids' access to education. Meals have been found as a substantial incentive for students, resulting in higher enrolment and retention rates, increased physical health, improved academic achievement, lower student attrition, and lower absenteeism.

This occurrence can be ascribed to the fact that youngsters, particularly those who are served on-site meals during school days, look forward to eating breakfast when they arrive at school. However, this viewpoint is contentious in other parts of the world. However, it is critical to recognize that the African educational system is influenced by issues other than the introduction of school food programs, emphasizing the need for additional measures. As a pedagogical method, problem-based and motivational theories have been the primary focus of scholarly investigation in the field of education. The purpose of this study is to look into how two educational policies affect enrolment rates, gender equality in educational institutions, and absenteeism. It is suggested that these policies contributed significantly to the observed outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A research design is defined by Leed and Omrid as a researcher's chosen framework of research methodologies and techniques, whereas research methodology refers to the precise procedures or techniques used to find, select, process, and analyse information relevant to a certain topic. This chapter looks at research design, research site, target population, study sample, data collecting, data analysis, and legal and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Design

The study focused on examining the impact of a school feeding program on enrolment and academic achievement in public primary education. To achieve this objective, a descriptive research design was employed. The study places its central focus on the characteristics of the population with the aim of providing a clear explanation of the variable (Mishra & Alok, 2017). The study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection and analysis. Kabir (2016) employed quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive explication of the "what" phenomenon during the research, while qualitative methods were utilized to elucidate the "how" and "why" aspects. The utilization of qualitative research methods, such as interviews, is centred on exploring the attitudes and emotions of the participants. The study employed systematic quantitative methods such as questionnaires and observations to collect data that could be quantified numerically. This approach was utilized to establish the relationship between School Feeding Programs (SFP) and access to primary education in public schools.

3.3 Research Site

The research was carried out in the Blantyre peri-urban area of Malawi's southern region. This is because the school meal program was initially introduced as a pilot venture, and this centre was chosen as a project observation location. Following further studies, the feeding program was expanded to additional schools throughout the country, with the goal of expanding its advantages to the children of Malawi. Blantyre has a considerable business presence, which has resulted in a high population density due to urbanization. Because of this, it is an ideal place for research, as its population may serve as a representative sample of the entire nation.

3.4 Target Population

According to Barnsbee and Nghiem (2018), a target population is the precise group of people on whom an intervention intends to perform research and draw conclusions. In this case, the subject population was sourced from Blantyre, which is in the Southwest Division. According to SNDP (2010), the Division is divided into districts, one of which is Blantyre. Each district is further subdivided into zones, each with 6-10 primary schools. As a result, the study's sample was chosen from a particular geographic area and comprised of only eight schools, totalling 24,707.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Strata	Target population	Percentage
---------------	--------------------------	-------------------

Number of primary school pupils	24,317	98.4
Number of teachers and headmasters	350	1.4
Number of volunteers (cooks)	40	0.16
Total	24,707	100.00

Sources: Primary schools data base.

3.5 Study Sample

In research, the term "sample" refers to the individuals or groups of individuals chosen to participate in a study. A sample, according to Cherry and Swaim (2020), is a subset of a population chosen to represent the full group.

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure

Sampling, according to Chandran (2004), is a technique used by researchers to select a subset from a larger population with the goal of ensuring that the subset effectively represents the characteristics of the entire population. In statistical parlance, a specific group of individuals is hypothesized to manifest characteristics referred to as parameters. The term "statistic" is used to define a property that is exemplified by the selected sample from the larger population. According to Chandran (2004), a sample is deemed to adequately represent the population when its statistical measures correlate closely with the parameters of the population. Utilizing inferential statistical methods permits researchers to make accurate estimates of the numerical characteristics of a population.

Kothari (2019) classifies sample designs into two primary categories: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In addition, Chandran (2004) asserts that there are research scenarios in which probability sampling techniques are appropriate, particularly when the population exhibits homogeneous characteristics. This would ensure the sample is representative of the entire population. To achieve proper representation of the target population, the research used a random

sample technique. As a result, the study will include both male and female volunteers from each educational institution. To reduce any biases, researchers will use a random number table they created. Individuals in the classroom, both students and teachers, were given numerical designations based on their class responsibilities. These designations were used in the selection process in conjunction with a matching table.

3.5.2 Study sample size

According to Taherdoost (2018), the sample size is determined by the size of the population. The proportion of the sample size reduces proportionally as the population size grows. As a result, the research had a sample size of 373 people because the selected educational institutions had a total population of 24,707. To achieve both validity and reliability, a sample size that includes all schools represented in the total population was chosen. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula was used in this study.

Sample size formula

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

$$d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)$$

Where;

S= required sample size

X= Value

N= population size (24,707)

P= population proportion (assumed to be 0.5)

d=the degree of accuracy 5%) expressed as a proportion (0.05)

Therefore:

$$\frac{1.96^2 \times 24707 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2 \times (24707 - 1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}$$

$$S=373$$

Thus, the sample size of the respondents was 373 was shown in the table 3.2.

Table 3.2: sample size

Strata	Target population	Sample size
Number of primary school pupils	24,317	234
Number of teachers and headmasters	350	120
Number of volunteers (cooks)	40	19
Total	24,707	373

Source: researcher (2021)

3.6 Data Collection

One on one assessment is one of the data collection procedures to be undertaken in this study. Learners will be followed at their respective schools and so as parents/guardians. Pens and pencils will be provided to avoid inconveniences.

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments

For collecting the relevant data, the research used various evaluation tools such as tests, questionnaires, and observation devices, as described by Bhandari (2020). The students were handed written English and Math tests before being randomly separated was into two classes (per school) for the purpose of taking the assessments. The examination papers were collected and graded by the researcher and his helpers. The annotated scripts have been evaluated and documented. Following its capture, the acquired data was immediately quantified. The questionnaires include both closed-ended and open-ended questions. To assess behavior, attitude, and attributes, the study used a Likert scale methodology. The Likert scale format was created to aid with systematic observations conducted at educational institutions. The study was carried out at a given period, and only observable behaviours were coded (Teachers College, Columbia University, 2007).

3.6.2 Pilot of Research Instruments

The researcher provided questionnaires to a set of people who had acquired SFP education in a distinct geographic region outside of the research site in Blantyre in order to conduct a pre-test. The study's sample size was 1% of all responses. The questionnaires were distributed to educators and principals, and pupils were given tests in Mathematics and English. The research assistants who allocated the individuals in a randomized manner attentively monitored them. Prior to the start of regular data collection, the obstacles were noted to improve the instrument.

3.6.3 Instruments Reliability

The present inquiry intended to evaluate the instrument's test-retest dependability, as it is scheduled to go through a pilot phase. The test-retest method, according to Yue (2016), evaluates the correlation between scores gained from administering an instrument on two separate occasions, often within two to three weeks. It can be deduced that participants are expected to deliver consistent responses after completing the same evaluation on two distinct occasions within a certain timeframe. The questionnaires were distributed to participants immediately upon the start of school operations, and they were completed again after two weeks to confirm the dependability of the results. As a result of the use of a Likert-type scale in the questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was done for it was regarded appropriate for forming inferences.

3.6.4 Instrument Validity

The quality of being both logically and factually sound is referred to as validity. To collect data, the current study used the face validity approach. According to Taherdoost (2016), the look of the questionnaire is evaluated by assessing its practicality, readability, uniformity of style, and formatting. The data was gathered through focus group discussions and observation. The research tool was administered twice, with a three-week gap between administrations, to assess its validity. According to Taherdoost (2016), this will help the researcher determine whether the

text's content is aligned with its intended objectives. The study will use a targeted sample of informants, consisting of five people from each public elementary school, who will take part in a focus group discussion to evaluate the instrument's test-retest validity.

3.6.5 Data Collection Procedure

The data collecting technique was consistent because the assistants ensured that data was collected under same settings to reduce the possibility of bias (Bhandari, 2020). All data obtained during the observations was properly documented by the research team. The questionnaires were distributed to the major sources of information, with some being collected on the same day and others being collected after one to two weeks. The assessments were conducted and gathered on the same day, and were completed within the timeframe specified.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

Kennedy (2018) rationally analysed the given facts using both inductive and deductive reasoning. To extract conclusions from the collected results, reasoning abilities and critical thinking were used. The data has been organized in a sequential order depending on its importance and visually depicted using a chart or spreadsheet format created with the Microsoft 365 Excel software.

3.8 Legal and Ethical Consideration

The permit to conduct research and data collection in public primary schools was obtained from Blantyre Urban's Education Division Manager. The researcher and their team got informed consent from the subjects prior to performing the study, which was supplied willingly upon receipt of an approved letter from the headmaster or deputy head. Yip (2016) stressed the need of considering the study participants' anonymity, informed permission, and privacy. The use of numerical values for children and educational institution titles for volunteers and educators was established to make it easier to provide accurate and relevant information while avoiding the usage of proper nouns for the individuals involved. Yip (2016) made certain that both

participants and researchers maintained a high level of objectivity throughout the data collection procedure, especially during observations.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analyses and scrutinizes the findings in line with the study's objectives. Additionally, the findings were evaluated in the context of the existing body of literature. The objective of the research was to evaluate the impact of school feeding initiatives on primary school education accessibility among students in the Blantyre Urban district of Malawi. The objective of the study is to achieve the following aims: firstly, to ascertain the influence of the design of the school feeding program on the academic performance of learners; secondly, to examine the effect of the implementation of a school feeding program on the enrolment of students in school; and thirdly, to determine the impact of the school feeding program on the health status of students in Malawi. A report was generated utilizing the objectives of the investigation as a framework, according to the results. The study employed frequency tables, percentages, and graphs as visual aids to present and analyse the results.

4.2 Response Rate

The researcher employed various instruments such as tests, questionnaires, and observation tools to gather the requisite data utilizing nominal measurement (dichotomous). The sample size comprised 234 students, all of whom responded, resulting in a response rate of 100% for this stratification. The response rate for the stratum was 99.2%, with only a single teacher out of the 120 targeted failing to provide a response. Nonetheless, the study questionnaire was only responded to by 12 out of the 19 chefs who were initially targeted, resulting in a response rate of 63.2% for this stratum. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Cooper and Schindler (2011) have

established that a response rate of 50% is deemed satisfactory, 60% is considered acceptable, and a response rate of 70% or higher is exceptional and can provide a reliable basis for statistical analysis. The lowest response rate of the study, which was recorded at 63.2%, suggests that the study's response rate was satisfactory to excellent. Consequently, the findings of the study are a reliable reflection of the viewpoints of the study population. Subsequently, the investigator determined that the pre-arranged interviews exhibited a significant level of responsiveness. The research concludes that the outcomes of this inquiry will accurately reflect the perspective of the general population. The response rate across all strata is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4:1 response rate

Strata	Actual Sample Size	Actual Response	Response Rate
Number of primary school pupils	234	234	100
Number of teachers and headmasters	120	119	99.2
Number of cooks	19	12	63.2
Total	373	365	97.9

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

The sample population of teachers only included a solitary male respondent, while the group of chefs had a total of three male respondents. The study, nevertheless, comprised a sample of 122 female and 112 male students. See Table 4.2 presents Figures 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.

Table 4.2 Gender of the teachers

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	1	0.4
Gender	233	99.6
Total	234	100

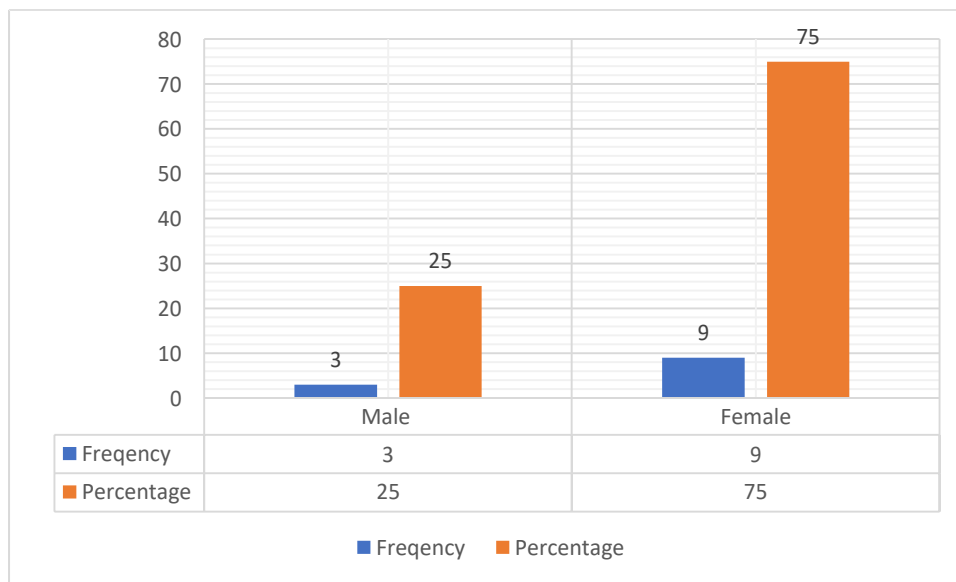


Figure 4.1 Gender of the cooks

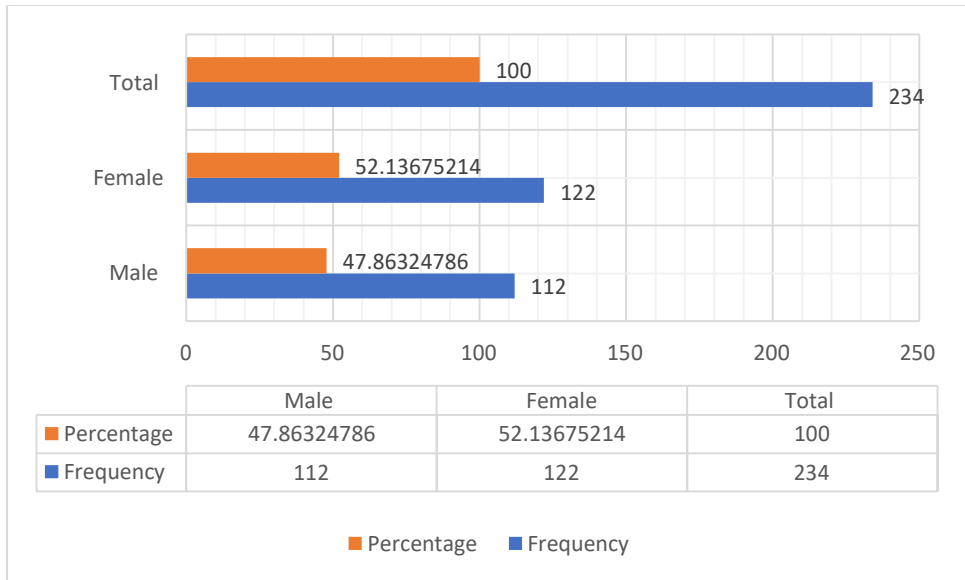


Figure 4.2 Students Gender

4.3 Data Reliability

The reliability of the data was assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha test. The development of the coefficient of internal consistency was aimed at assessing the reliability of measurements within a range of values between 0 and 1, and its application was primarily focused on the evaluation of Likert scale items. The data was obtained from the three objectives of the questionnaire. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the mean correlation or internal consistency of a survey instrument. The study yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.789 for all Likert scale items. Kothari (2019) asserts that Cronbach's alpha is the most used metric to assess the internal reliability of multiple Likert-type items in a questionnaire, which is the type of instrument that will be employed in the study. A positive correlation exists between the score and the level of trustworthiness of the scale developed. Kothari (2019) determined that a reliability coefficient of 0.7 was deemed acceptable and appropriate for the purposes of

the present study. The researcher posits that the study's four objectives can be effectively evaluated based on the well-designed study questions, as indicated by the finding.

4.4 Presentation of Research Analysis, Findings, and Interpretation

The research findings from eight public elementary schools were drawn from the study's predetermined objectives. The following discussion provides an analysis of the research, its findings, and their interpretation.

4.4.1 Teachers views on Malawi's school food program and basic education accessibility.

What is the impact of the school feeding program's structure on primary school completion rates, as perceived by teachers in Malawi. The teacher opinion on how influential the feeding program was in ensuring and influence access to primary education in Malawi. The results are summarized in Table 4.3. All 119 participants provided responses to all four of the inquiries.

Table 4.3 Teachers the experts' views on Malawi's school food program and basic education accessibility

Responses	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Daily school meals keep children awake in class and strong	6	5	9	57	42	119
Daily school meals keep children active in school every day	4	1	10	70	34	119
School meals improve cognitive skills and behaviour of the children	6	27	38	31	17	119
School feeding program process helps learners concentrate in class	8	8	21	63	19	119

The present study examines the relationship between the interconnectedness of feeding programs and their impact on primary school education access in Malawi. The study's inquiries were subjected to a Relative Importance Index (RII) computation utilizing Microsoft Excel, based on

the respondents' outcomes. The RII was computed using the formula,

$$RII = \frac{5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1}{A \times N}$$

Where; n₅- Is the number of respondents who strongly agreed

n₄ – Is the number of respondents who agreed.

n₃- The number of respondents undecided

n₂ –The number of respondents who disagreed.

n₁ –The number of respondents who strongly disagreed.

A – Highest possible score in Likert scale in this study =5

N -total number of respondents in this study it was =119

The study's results indicate that when the Relative Importance Index (RII) value reached 0.904 (90.4%), the respondents expressed a strong conviction that daily school meals contribute to children's alertness and physical strength. Similarly, at a RII value of 0.816 (81.6%), the participants believed that school meals are instrumental in keeping children active and engaged in their academic pursuits daily. Additionally, the study participants held the belief that the implementation of the School Feeding Program contributes to an improvement in students' ability to focus during classroom instruction, as evidenced by a Relative Importance Index (RII) score of 0.729 (72.9%). The respondent's perception is that school meals have a positive impact on children's cognitive abilities and behaviour, as evidenced by a RII of 0.643 (64.3%). Please refer to Table 4. As per the findings of the research, a significant proportion of teaching participants, ranging from 64.3% to 90.4%, expressed their belief that the configuration of the school feeding initiative implementation had an impact on the availability of primary education in Malawi.

Table 4.4 Respondents' Opinions on how does the design of the school feed program influence access to primary education in Malawi

¹ S C. Gupta and V.K. Kapoor, *Fundamentals of mathematical statistics*, (Sultan Chand & Sons Educational Publishers New Delhi Tenth Revised Edition ,2002),568-9

Responses	Total	Mean	A	P	R11	Rank
Daily school meals keep children awake in class and strong	538	107.6	5	119	0.904201681	1
Daily school meals keep children active in school every day	486	97.2	5	119	0.816806723	2
School meals improve cognitive skills and behaviour of the children	383	76.6	5	119	0.643697479	4
School feeding program process helps learners concentrate in class	434	86.8	5	119	0.729411765	3

4.42. How the implementation rate of school feeding program improves access to primary education in Malawi.

In the study, participants were requested to evaluate the impact of a school feeding program on primary education accessibility in Malawi the results are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Respondent opinion on how the implementation of school feeding program influence access to primary education in Malawi.

Responses	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
School feeding program flows smoothly	9	16	30	46	18	119
School feeding program is beneficial to the targeted population	9	10	19	59	22	119
Daily meals influence schools process	17	13	14	40	35	119
Daily school meals increase enrolment	8	5	14	47	45	119

Based on the available data, the mean values pertaining to the influence of school feeding initiatives on primary education accessibility in Malawi exhibited a range. The study's results indicate that respondents exhibited a robust conviction regarding the influence of daily meals on school processes when the Relative Importance Index (RII) score fell within the range of 0.680670 (68.1%) to 0.836 (83.7%). The study's participants reported a significant positive correlation between daily school lunches and enrolment, with an increase of 0.79496 (79.5%). In addition, the study's participants held the belief that the school meal program provided advantages to the specific demographic, as evidenced by a Relative Importance Index (RII) score of 0.72605 (72.6%). The obtained Relative Importance Index (RII) value of 0.68067, which corresponds to 68.1%, suggests that the participants hold the perception that the school meal program operates efficiently. Kindly refer to Table 4.6. The results of the study indicate that a significant proportion of teaching participants, ranging from 68.1% to 83.7%, held the view that the configuration of the school feeding initiative had an impact on the delivery of elementary education in Malawi.

Table 4.6 RII Values, ranking and averages on opinion of teachers on implementation rate of feeding program

Responses	Total	A	P	RII	Rank
School feeding program flows smoothly	405	5	119	0.68067	4
School feeding program is beneficial to the targeted population	432	5	119	0.72605	3
Daily meals influence schools process	498	5	119	0.83697	1
Daily school meals increase enrolment	473	5	119	0.79496	2

4.43. Effective is the monitoring mechanism for the school feeding program in improving access to basic education in Malawi.

The study's participants were tasked with assessing the efficacy of the monitoring process for the school feeding program in enhancing the accessibility of primary education in Malawi. The results are available in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Responses on How efficient of school feeding program monitoring process in improves access to primary education in Malawi.

Responses	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
School meals keep children in School	4	5	10	48	52	119
School attendance is good because they eat in school	2	5	12	50	50	119
Meal motivates school children to attend & perform well in school	7	1	3	60	48	119

Drawing from the mean values, this study examines the efficacy of the school feeding program monitoring procedure in enhancing access to primary education in Malawi. The results indicate that the participants held a robust conviction regarding the efficacy of the monitoring procedure for the school feeding initiative in enhancing the availability of primary education in Malawi.

The Relative Importance Index (RII) values ranged from 0.83361 (83.3%) to 0.836970.68067 (83.6%). The study's findings reveal a noteworthy positive correlation as reported by the informants, indicating a robust conviction among the participants regarding the efficacy of the monitoring mechanism for the school lunch program. The provision of school meals has been shown to have a positive impact on student attendance, retention, and academic performance by fostering a conducive learning environment. Kindly refer to Table 4.8. As per the results of the study, a significant portion.

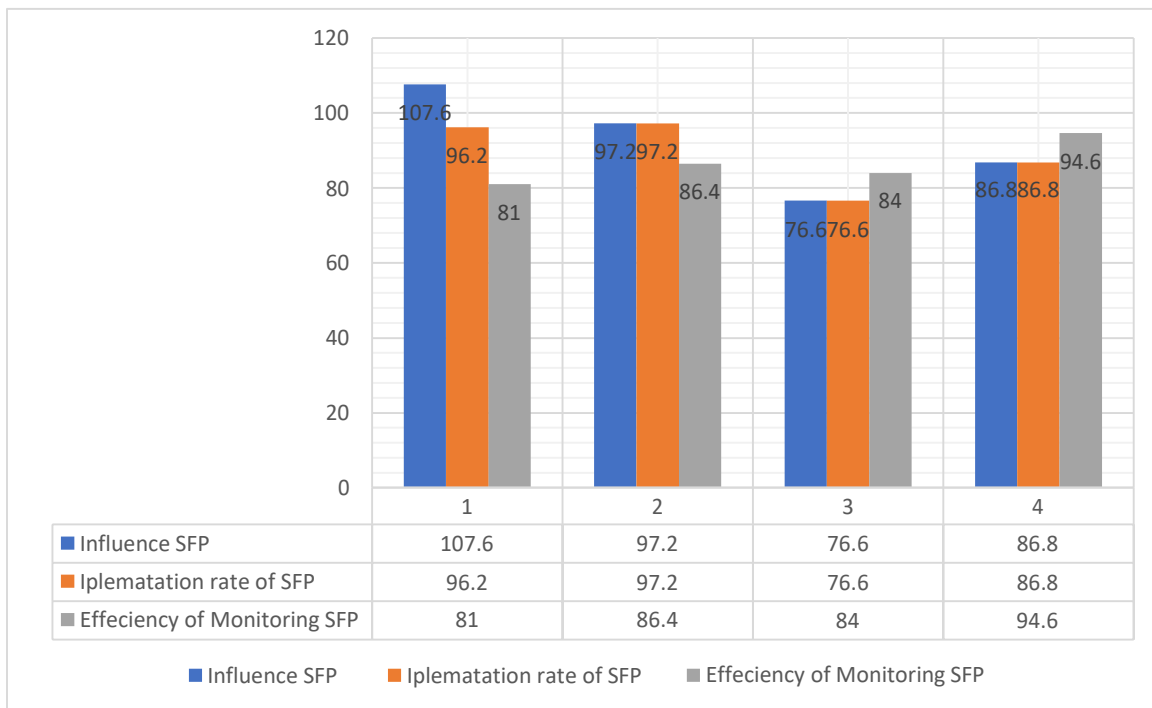
4.8 Relative Importance Index (RII), a measure of the effectiveness of the monitoring procedure for the school feeding program in improving access to primary education in Malawi.

Responses	Total	Mean	A	P	RII	Rank
School meals keep children in School	496	99.2	5	119	0.83361	2
School attendance is good because they eat in school	498	99.6	5	119	0.83697	1
Meal motivates school children to attend & perform well in school	498	99.6	5	119	0.83697	1

The enhancement of access to primary education in Malawi is facilitated by the means of influence, implementation, and an efficient monitoring procedure for the school feeding program. The mean values of the responses were found to be below the grand mean of 199, with a range of

11.4 to 42.4. The data indicates that the viewpoints expressed by the participants were marginally lower than their initial expectations, falling within the spectrum of 9.6% to 35.6%. Table 4.9 and Figure 4.3. The study revealed that the respondents held a predominantly positive perspective regarding the execution of the educational nourishment initiative in Malawi, coupled with effective supervision of the project's advancement in enhancing elementary education.

Figure 4.3 Comparing influence , Implementation and efficiency of monitoring SFP



In general, the influence, implementation, and efficient monitoring of the school feeding program execution and efficient monitoring in Malawi to improve primary education were

critical, and the value -26.95% to 32.5% deviation from the grand mean of the respondents' opinion indicates that the process of implementation, and efficient monitoring still require improvement to ensure the sustenance and retention of children while simultaneously improving the children's participatory abilities. See Table 4.9

Figure 4.9 comparing respondent expectations to the grand mean on school feeding program execution and efficient monitoring in Malawi to improve primary education.

Responses	1	2	3	4	Me	Grand	Difference Group mean and
					an	mean	grand mean
Influence SFP	107	97.	76.	86.	92.	119	-26.95
	.6	2	6	8	05		
Implementation rate	96.	97.	76.	86.	89.		-29.8
of SFP	2	2	6	8	2		
Efficiency of	81	86.	84	94.	86.		-32.5
Monitoring SFP		4		6	5		

The elevation of the institution's performance to a superior level during the period spanning from 2016 to 2021 provides support for the inferences made in this analysis. The data suggests that

there has been a noteworthy enhancement in both the collective outcomes of the pupils and their personal achievements during the last five years, after the initiation of the school's feeding program. The observed enhancement can be ascribed to the augmented nutritional consumption of the pupils. Subsequently, Table 4.10 can be observed.

Table 4.10 demonstrates the percentage performance of seventh-grade students over the past five years, from 2016 to 2021.

NAME OF A SCHOOL	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Chimwankhunda	61	62	50	81	45	45
Mbayani 1	30	40	61	43	66	55
Zingwangwa	62	57	62	58	60	70
HHI	54	62	45	63	65	34
Catholic Institute	79	73	85	65	81	80
Namiwawa	64	72	74	68	62	72
Namasimba	67	76	82	76	81	78

Chitawira	72	79	79	73	89	74
Mean	61.125	65.125	67.25	65.875	68.625	63.5
Stdev	14.64277	12.74405	15.00238	11.83744	14.23213	16.86923

Source: Schools' records books (from 2016-2021 October)

In addition, primary data gathered during the same time period (2016–2021) show that, with the exception of one school, the number of students enrolled in the chosen schools has significantly decreased. This trend was observed across all of the schools. See the information in Table 4.11. This shows that the school meal program may not have a significant impact in particular schools due to the nature of the data presented here. They need to undertake additional research to discover the exact cause of the fall in enrolment, but in the meantime, they are beginning to develop feeding programs in a few of the institutions that have seen a decline in student numbers.

Table 4.11 shows number of students enrolled each academic year from 2016 to 2021

NAME OF A SCHOOL	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Mbayani 1	10248	9110	9172	8484	7963	8480
Namasimba	5057	4745	4892	4720	5335	5238
Zingwangwa	2138	2114	2097	1847	1921	1860
Chimwankhunda	2390	2432	2255	2487	2494	2300
HHI	1388	1207	1014	1120	880	794
Namiwawa	2461	2523	2291	2251	2184	2019
Catholic Institute	4010	3921	3689	3580	3433	3351
Chitawira	306	289	279	290	270	274

Source: Schools' enrolment registers books (2016-2021 October)

After doing an analysis on the findings and presenting them with the assistance of tables, figures, and graphs, the results were reviewed in this chapter. In the following section, the outcomes of the study will be discussed considering the major objective of the research.

Table 4.1 2 presents the academic performance of students in selected schools with respect to mandatory subjects such as mathematics and English. This data indicates a clear trend. The data presented in the table was collected through a survey administered to the principals and vice principals of each primary school. Except for the 2021 school year's conclusion, the outcomes are expressed in percentages and pertain to the conclusion of the academic year. The academic performance of students exhibits variability, yet a positive trend towards improvement is observed across most educational institutions. The rise and fall of class performance is linked to a variety of different factors (Ramadhan, 2014). Based on empirical evidence, the decline in academic performance during the years 2020 and 2021 can be attributed to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, the prolonged closure of schools and the adoption of alternative modes of instruction, such as radio-based learning, have been identified as contributing factors to this phenomenon. In contrast, the Catholic Institute has demonstrated a consistent trend of improvement in its performance over the years, with the sole exception of a decline to 65 percent in 2019. Likewise, the academic institution known as Mbayani 1 Primary School has experienced an enhancement in academic achievement subsequent to the execution of the school feeding initiative. Table 4.12 presents the percentage performance of standard seven students in Math and English examinations, categorized according to their respective test scores.

Table 4.12 indicates pupils' test scores and percentage performance in standard seven (Mathematics and English test)

SUBJECT	No. of learners entered	No. of learners passed	No. of learners failed	Pass rate percentage
English	234	143	91	61
Mathematics	234	97	137	41

Source: Research Data (2021)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter discusses the study's objectives in relation to the findings. It also includes a summary of the main findings, conclusion remarks, and recommendations for what should be done next to improve school food programs. The study's goal was to determine how the design of the feeding program influences learners' class performance in Malawi; public primary schools in Blantyre urban, to investigate the impact of school feeding program implementation on school enrolment, and to establish the impact of school feeding program on learners' health status among school children in Malawi.

5.2 Discussion.

The study's findings are explored in depth in connection to the study's aims and what other scholars discovered in other regions or schools outside of this study.

5.2.1 To determine how the influence of the design of school feeding program on access to primary school education in Malawi.

Primary data was provided by respondents based on their knowledge and experience. The participants' replies were analyzed to determine how the design of the food program influences learners' class performance in public primary schools in Malawi, Blantyre urban.

First, according to the forms filled out by headmasters and deputy heads on schoolchildren's performance, research has demonstrated that performance is neither static nor skyrocketing; rather, it is dynamic. The performance fluctuates, increasing and decreasing at the same time. Several factors contribute to these variations in academic achievement. This is evident in the findings of the study group, where the pass rate fluctuates, increasing and dropping. For example, Chimwankhunda High School had a higher pass rate percentage in 2016, which grew by 1% in 2017 and decreased by 12% in 2018. It climbed by 31% in 2019 and declined by 36% in 2020 and 2021, becoming stagnant in those two years. The same pattern may be found at HHI and Mbayani 1 primary schools. Except for Zingwangwa Primary, every schools' performance in 2021 fell. Overall, each study school has received a skewed response on pupil performance. According to Chaula (2015), one of the elements influencing positive student performance is school feeding programs. Grade repetition has also been minimized since students' performance has improved (Reta, 2019). A comparable study in Tanzania found that there are numerous factors that have a detrimental impact on performance, but a school feeding program had a beneficial impact (Ramadhan, 2015). This implies that changes in children's performance in schools are dynamic as a result of circumstances beyond the school food program's control. Even if schoolchildren are fed on school days, this does not guarantee that they will perform better in class. Penny and McIsaac (2016) discovered that when school structures such as teacher pupil ratio, textbook, practice book, and other learning material are modified, students' performance

improves. This demonstrates that the school food program adds to the performance of the learners in part because there are various elements that contribute to such. For example, between 2020 and 2021, Covid19 implemented numerous reforms, including school feeding. Programs. During the epidemic, Mary's Meals delivered nutritious porridge flour to their clients, and parents were summoned to collect the flour even when schools were closed until things returned to normal. Despite such measures, performance in other schools on the study declined dramatically, with only two experiencing an increase during those years.

Second, the results of the English and Math's exam scores for 234 students are represented in table 4.1.2, which illustrates the performance of students in primary schools. English exam scores are higher than math test scores. English was passed by 61 percent of students, while Math was cleared by 37.5 percent. This implies that learners performed better in English than in Math, implying that performance is independent of the school meal program. According to Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2016), learners who are exposed to school meals sooner are more capable of reading a short paragraph than those who are not. This is consistent with the English test results, which showed that the students could not only read but also write a paragraph. However, on the Maths test, they argue that there is no convincing evidence that performance is reliant on school meals (Chakraborty and Jayaraman, 2016). The respondents were standard seven students who had attended the same schools for the previous six years and had received meals during the school day, although their pass percentage was lower than the national average of 50%. This does not support the notion that school meals greatly improved academic achievement. According to Tinubu and Awabonji (2020), students perform exceptionally well in school as a result of the school food program; however, this is not the case in this study. Learners only did well on the English test and not in the Math test. A comparable study in Egypt found

that SFP beneficiaries outperformed non-beneficiaries in terms of academic performance (Matwally et al 2020).

According to observations, all primary school pupils in this study's schools in Malawi are beneficiaries, except that schoolchildren choose whether to get the porridge. Third, the respondents demonstrated a negligible link between feeding programs and class performance. The World Food (2017) program supports the concept that feeding programs are expensive to execute, particularly in Africa, where there are a huge number of hungry primary school pupils. This could also explain why Marys' Meals strives to keep their program as low-cost as possible because they rely on donor financing from many countries. Furthermore, 57 respondents agreed that regular school lunches keep youngsters alert and strong in class, while just 4 disagreed. Statement A, which received 70 responses, stated that regular school lunches keep youngsters engaged in school every day. A2 has a higher standard deviation than the composite mean. This implies that the statement agrees with the goal of improving children's academic performance through school feeding programs. The size of a child's family influences his or her behavior at school, such as activeness in class (Matwally et al., 2020). Some children are engaged in class because they are energized enough to participate because of the meals provided by their schools (Awojobi, and Tinubu, 2020). Schoolchildren concentrate in class because their attention span improves as a result of the school meals (Chaula, 2015). School meals, on the other hand, encourage children to participate in extracurricular activities such as athletics, which can serve as a stimulant to children's interest during lessons. (2016) (Penny and McIsaac). This implies that class performance is unrelated to school meals. The intrapersonal relationship between parent and teacher, as well as the parent/guardian's attitude toward education, are examined. Some of the elements that influence how well schoolchildren succeed academically (Chaula, E. M. 2015).

A proportion of respondents were undecided on statement A3. 38 respondents were undecided on whether school meals boost children's cognitive skills and behavior. Brain growth is scientifically dependent on diet, thus nutritious food is part of brain development that leads to cognitive development. However, SFP is most likely beneficial in enhancing the performance of vulnerable children (Chakraborty and Jayaraman 2016).

5.2.2 To examine the influence of implementation of school feeding program on access to primary school education.

The number of children enrolled in primary schools in Blantyre's metropolitan regions is not consistent, according to the conclusions of this study. The number of students registered for a given academic year varies from year to year. During the 2015-2016 academic year, Mbayani 1 had a total enrolment of 10,248 pupils. Even though this school had an adequate supply of meals, enrolment fell for the next five years in a row. According to Chakraborty and Jayaraman (2016), there was an increase in enrolment in India following the building of new infrastructure that serviced other adjacent lower primary schools. Similarly, the population of Mbayani 1 has been falling for some time, which might be attributed to the development of Mbayani II, a primary school in the nearby region. Students came to the new school in droves as a result of Mbayani 1's capacity issues. As a consequence, the population reduction might be attributed to the new school built to minimize the number of pupils in Mbayani 1. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), other factors that impact school enrolment include family size (population) and economic issues such as urbanization.

During the 2017 academic year, school enrolment decreased in the majority of study areas, including HHI, CI, Chitawira, and Zingwangwa. This was the scenario, notwithstanding the introduction of feeding programs in these locations. Poverty and a negative attitude toward

education on the part of parents and guardians, according to Chaula (2016), are two factors that contribute to poor school attendance. As a direct result of the effects of poverty, children are commonly exposed to small family enterprises at an early age as a method of creating cash for their families (Chaula, 2016). Elementary school enrolment in Africa is lower than it should be due to socioeconomic factors. Children wear uniforms to school to eat porridge, but their parents refuse to enrol them since the schools are underfunded (Chaula, 2016). This was discovered during an elementary school inspection. Because of limited money, parents refuse to enrol their children in school. Children are compelled to participate in farm activities and child labor to provide for their families, according to the findings of a similar study done in Mali (Aurino et al, 2018). As a result, fewer children are enrolling in school since they are required as a source of work and money in their homes. However, socioeconomic issues like as poverty and development may be fuelling an increase in enrolment at other institutions due to parents' favorable attitude about education. This is because education has a positive effect on children. This, however, demonstrates that fluctuations in school enrolment are influenced by reasons other than the school feeding program, which aims to eradicate childhood hunger. Furthermore, the study revealed that statement B1 did not contribute to goal attainment since the composite mean of the study is larger than the standard deviation of the statement. The statement that "the school meal program functions smoothly" garnered 46 yes votes and 143 no votes. According to the World Food Programme (2017), small food producers may keep their programs running efficiently while keeping prices down by sourcing food from local farmers.

5.2.3 To establish the influence of monitoring of school feeding program on access to primary school education.

With respect to the third objective, participants utilized a survey instrument to communicate their experiences and knowledge. The assertion that school meals serve as a means of retaining students in educational institutions aligns with the objective at hand. The provision of meals throughout the school day resulted in an improvement in the attendance of schoolchildren. According to Killu and Mugambi (2019), in the absence of available meals, students are less likely to attend school. According to Chulak (2016), the reduction of undernutrition in schools has resulted in an increase in student attendance. According to Awabonji and Tinubu (2020), the incidence of schoolchildren being absent from school for prolonged periods due to food-borne illnesses has significantly reduced. This suggests that students are compelled to remain in school due to their reliance on food as a basic necessity. According to the findings, porridge is distributed during three distinct time periods - prior to the commencement of classes, during designated breaks, and at the conclusion of the day - due to the scheduling constraints imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, children are obligated to enrol in educational institutions to acquire porridge. In Mbayani 1, it was observed that certain children in the lower primary level were provided with porridge both in the morning and upon completion of their classes. Additionally, some students chose to bring the porridge home for their younger siblings. However, in other schools, it was noted that some students departed from school premises immediately after receiving their porridge, without attending any classes.

Regarding C3, it is noteworthy that, apart from the positive impact of school meals on attendance, the provision of educational resources to underprivileged students is also a significant contributing factor, as indicated by Reta et al (2019). According to Awabonji and Tinubu's study conducted in

2004, the students in lower grades (1-4) exhibit punctuality and a low rate of school dropouts. This finding remains relevant in the year 2020. In contrast, the findings of Working Paper No.75 suggest that the provision of school meals is only significant for children who are affected by drought, as it contributes to their growth and development (WFP, 2017). According to the World Food Programme (2017), the provision of meals serves as an incentive for children from diverse regions to enrol in school and remain in attendance until the culmination of the academic term.

5.3 Summary of Main Finding

The study's results indicate that School Feeding Programs (SFPs) have had a certain degree of impact on the academic performance, enrolment rates, and health status of students. While it is true that factors such as class performance, enrolment, and health status are not entirely reliant on School Feeding Programs (SFPs), it is noteworthy that SFPs have played a significant role in facilitating such enhancements. The provision of School Feeding Programs (SFPs) has effectively addressed the issue of hunger among school-aged children, thereby serving as a source of motivation for the children. The implementation of School Feeding Programs (SFPs) has demonstrated that students' attendance is positively influenced by the provision of school meals, which serves as a motivational factor for them. There is a positive correlation between the frequency of receiving school meals and attendance and academic performance, as students who receive regular meals are more likely to attend school and engage in learning activities. The provision of soya bean blended porridge to learners has resulted in an improvement in the health status of school children. This is attributed to the recommendation of soya beans for children, particularly in cases where health issues are present.

5.4 Conclusion

Conclusions were deduced based on the data that was gathered, scrutinized, and deliberated upon.

The utilization of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and the theory of change has facilitated the interpretation of data by providing guidance to the researcher throughout the research process. In the context of motivational theory, it is noteworthy that communities have recognized the importance of food security and have consequently developed a heightened appreciation for education. This is evidenced by their ability to ensure timely attendance of their children in school, with the assurance that their basic needs will be met.

Provision of breakfast at educational institutions on weekdays. In the process of implementing the theory of change, the beneficiaries, who are the communities, are actively involved as volunteers in the preparation of meals for learners.

The School Feeding Program (SFP) has been instrumental in exerting a significant impact on the academic achievement, enrollment rates, and overall health status of schoolchildren in Malawi. The provision of meals to students has facilitated regular breakfast consumption during school days and has significantly contributed to the betterment of communities surrounding schools that are recipients of School Feeding Programs (SFPs). The provision of meals serves as a source of incentive for students, as evidenced by the fact that children exhibit a preference for arriving at school early in order to partake in the consumption of porridge. Despite the challenges, the volunteers' eagerness to provide porridge for children is a praiseworthy endeavour.

The supervising teachers ensure that the children are properly queued up for the provision of porridge, to prevent any potential harm or complications. According to a report by the World Food Programme in 2017, the provision of meals in schools has resulted in a decrease in hunger among students. It is imperative to involve primary stakeholders, including parents/guardians, teachers, and communities, in decision-making processes due to their direct involvement and impact on the

matter at hand. Supervision is necessary when distributing meals to students, as larger schools may result in some children receiving multiple portions while others are left without sustenance.

5.5 Recommendations

The study's results indicate that stakeholders bear a significant responsibility in facilitating the successful enhancement of school feeding initiatives. It is recommended that primary stakeholders consider the time frame for the provision of porridge to school pupils, particularly in schools with a substantial student population. This will be beneficial for the recipients as they will be allotted sufficient time for the consumption of the morning meal.

The individual will attend school punctually and be present for the initial lesson. It is recommended that each class be assigned a supervisor to ensure the appropriate reception of meals. This would be beneficial for students who are experiencing significant need for porridge, as not all pupils are provided with meals and may opt for homemade breakfast instead. Given the current Covid19 situation, it is imperative for stakeholders to collaborate on devising appropriate modalities and procedures for timely meal distribution, considering the staggered class schedules. This intervention has the potential to increase school attendance and retention rates among students. Currently, many students arrive at school early in the morning solely to receive porridge, despite classes not commencing until late morning. Furthermore, some students only attend school to receive porridge and do not participate in lessons.

It is imperative for the Malawian government to extend support to School Feeding Programs (SFPs) by providing necessary infrastructure and personnel, as the surge in enrolment has led to overcrowding in certain educational institutions. Enhancing class performance and attendance in educational institutions are key indicators of Student-Focused Policies (SFPs). Furthermore, the establishment of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks can enhance the optimal

performance of the SFPs. The implementation of structures can effectively govern the quality of School Food Programs (SFPs) and facilitate the process of informed decision-making with regards to school meals.

It is imperative that communities are integrated into the decision-making process, rather than solely being relegated to voluntary work participation. Community leaders are more effective in advocating for projects and exerting influence over their constituents. As they are the ones who maintain a longer-term presence among the population, they possess the capacity to establish norms and oversee procedures. The responsibility of overseeing the implementation of SFPs at the school level is typically delegated to entities such as school committees, with the aim of promoting efficient execution of the SFPs.

5.6 Areas of Further Research.

The study was limited to eight schools and was exclusively carried out within the urban areas of Blantyre. This specific research project surveyed solely eight primary schools located in the Blantyre urban. Thus, it is advisable to conduct a study akin to this one in rural regions where Mary's Meals SFPs are situated or in other rural areas that host SFPs in general.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire formed part of a master's program in Monitoring and Evaluation in the Department of Business Administration of Africa Nazarene University. It is developed to address the research topic by gathering relevant information. This is part of an academic requirement of

the final research project, for the completion of the Master of Arts Degree in Monitoring and Evaluation.

Section A

Objective 1: To determine how the design of feeding program influences access to primary school education.

Dear responded,

You have been picked in this study to help survey of the above topic. Please note that this is purely academic, and your responses will be treated as confidential. There are 3 sections in this questionnaire.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to the influence of school feeding program on access to primary school education in public schools by ticking (√) on the choice preferred from the scale given below.

The scale is from **1** to **5**; where 1= Strongly Disagree (**SD**), 2= Disagree (**D**), 3= Neutral (**N**), 4= Agree (**A**), 5= Strongly Agree (**SA**)

Please, do not indicate your name.

Section A1

	Statement	SD 1	SD 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
A1	Daily school meals keep children awake in class and strong.					
A2	Daily school meals keeps children active in school every day.					
A3	School meals improve cognitive skills and behaviour of the children.					

A4	School feeding program process helps learners concentrate in class.					
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Appendix 2: objective 2: To examine the influence of implementation of school feeding program and access to primary school education.

SECTION B

You have been picked in this study to help survey of the above topic. Please note that this is purely academic and your responses will be treated as confidential. Please tick in the box of your choice in any questions in all sections.

Please fill the boxes below and do not indicate your name.

	statement	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
B1	School feeding program process flows more smoothly.					
B2	The school feeding program is beneficial to the targeted population.					
B3	Daily school meals influence the school's process.					
B4	School feeding program process increases as enrolment increases.					

School enrollment sheet for teachers and head masters

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Please write the number of children's enrolled in each academic year in the boxes below

2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 Enrolment; Boys Girls

	Sex	2015/2016 Academic year	2016/2017 Academic year	2017/2018 Academic year	2018/2019 Academic year	2019- 2020 Academic year	2021 January Academic year

Enrolment	Boys						
	Girls						

APPENDIX 2: PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

SENIOR PRIMARY EDUCATION MATHEMATICS TEST

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Answer all questions on this question paper on the space provided
2. Do not write your name
3. Indicate the name of your school
4. This exam is for 30 minutes.

Section A

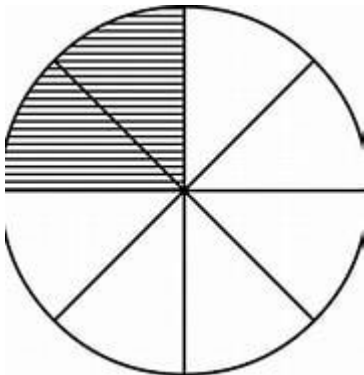
Equivalent fraction by multiplication.

1. Multiply the numerator and the denominator by the same number to find the equivalent fractions for the following:
(a) $\frac{1}{7}$ (b) $\frac{2}{9}$
(c) $\frac{3}{4}$ (d) $\frac{7}{11}$

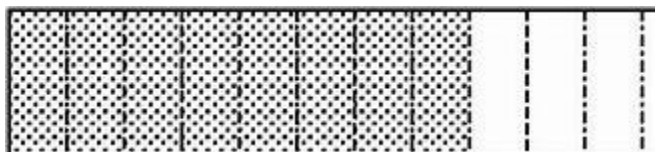
Section B

Expressing vulgar fractions as decimals

2. Write down the fraction and decimal for the shaded part of the diagram below
(a)



(c)



Section C

Reading time on a digital clock face. Draw and write in words

What is the time?

(a) 11:45

(b) 6:15

(c) 2:30

(d) 4:50

Section D.

The following were ages of pupils in a mathematics club:

10, 13, 12, 10, 9, 13, 14, 15, 13, 9, 11, 11, 13, 14, 12, 10, 10, 9, 13 and 10 years old. Complete the table. Below.

Age (years)	Number of year

The end.

APPENDIX 2: PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

SENIOR PROMARY EDUCATION ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Answer all questions on this question paper on the space provided
2. Do not write your name
3. Indicate the name of your school on top of this question paper
4. There are 4 sections, please check
5. This exam is for 30 minutes.

Section A: completing sentences

Complete the sentences below using any of the following conjunctions; **and, but, although, while, until, since**

1. Do not go to school-----I come.
2. Chisomo has been in standard 4 -----last year.
3. Chisomo will take tea.....cold drink today
4. Chisomo.....her uncle live together.
5. I will go to the marketi am sick

Section B: writing

Form new words by adding suffixes to the following words below.

Complement	
Compare	
Employ	
Happy	
Assess	

Section C
Re-ordering a paragraph

Re-order the following paragraph.

Finally, she cooked nsima. After sweeping, she cleared kitchen utensils. Firstly, Atipatsa woke up early in the morning. Immediately after cleaning the utensils, she cooked relish for the house. Then she swept the surrounding of the house.

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Section D: writing a paragraph

Write a paragraph about water. You may include the following:

1. Uses of water
2. How some people misuse water.

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.....

Appendix 3: objective 3: To establish how monitoring school feeding program enhances access to primary education

SECTION C

Dear responded,

You have been picked in this study to help survey of the above topic. Please not that this is purely academic and your responses will be treated as confidential. Please fill the boxes below and do not indicate your name.

	Statement	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
C1	School meals keep children in school					
C2	School attendance is good because they eat at school					
C3	School meals motivates school children					

School examination performance results

84

Please fill out the table below by indicating the pass rate percentage of standard 5 to 7 learners.

2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 Examinations results for standard five to standard seven boys and girls

	Sex	2015/2016			2016/2017			2017/2018			2018/2019			2019/2020			2021		
Acad emic year exa mina tions perfo rman ce		Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7
	Boys																		
	Girls																		

APPENDIX 11 RESEARCH PERMIT AND AUTHORIZATION



11th Sep, 2021

E-mail: researchwriting.mba.anu@gmail.com / monitoringandevaluation@anu.ac.ke

Our Ref: 16S03DMME007

Dear Sir/Madam:

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR: ANNY GANGIRE

ANNY GANGIRE (16S03DMME007) is a postgraduate student of Africa Nazarene University, Kenya; in the Master OF ARTS IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION (MME) Program.

In order to complete her program, Anny is conducting a research entitled: ***INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM ON CLASS PERFORMANCE, ENROLLMENT AND HEALTH STATUS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI: A CASE OF MARYS MEALS PROJECT IN BLANTYRE URBAN; MALAWI***

Any assistance offered to her will be highly appreciated. The schools to visit are:

Yours Faithfully,

Dr. Wanjiru Nderitu
Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator; School of Business Studies,
Africa Nazarene University.

- 1 Catholic Institute Primary School
- 2 Nomasamba Primary School
- 3 Nomilawa Primary School
- 4 HHI primary school
- 5 Mbayani Primary School
- 6 Chitwara primary school
- 7 Zingwangwa Primary School
- 8 Chumwankhunde Primary School

Cc: Dean; School of Business Studies (Dr. Simon Obwatho)

Approved
District Education Manager
Blantyre Urban
30 SEP 2021
P.O. Box 30217
Blantyre