

**Analysis of the full implementation of the School Feeding Program as basis
for a proposed enhanced feeding program**

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the full implementation of the School Feeding Program in Sacpil Elementary School. Specifically on the school-feeding program's implementation, financial budget monitoring, feedback and issues and challenges in its implementation. The study used basic qualitative research with the school nurse, school coordinator of the feeding program, and 6 parents of Sacpil Elementary School, Sacpil, Conner, Apayao as its respondents. The researcher concludes that the school feeding program is fully implemented in Sacpil Elementary School. It is also concluded that the budget and allocation came from the government-department of education. There was also a significant positive impact of the school feeding program to the parents and most especially the learners, in their overall well-being. Lastly, the challenges in its implementation are supply and budget problems, participation and engagement issues. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the school with the help of the principal and the assistance of the teachers are recommended to have their own vegetable farm in order to support the budget and materials being given by the department of education to the school. The parents are also encouraged to lend a helping hand in partnership with the programs of the school in order to further solidify the parent-teacher relationship as well as to aid in the implementation of the school feeding program. Future researchers are recommended to conduct a more thorough study on the school feeding program in the areas that needs improvement, not just focusing on the impact of school feeding program to the academic achievement of the learners.

Keywords: School Feeding Program, elementary school, implementation, challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

School feeding programs (SFPs) were originally initiated to address hunger among children in impoverished regions worldwide. Hunger remains a serious global issue, with millions of children unable to learn and develop to their full potential due to poor nutrition (UNICEF, 2020). In response, the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000) emphasized the eradication of poverty and hunger as key global goals (Saavedra & Prentice, 2023). Evidence shows that SFPs provide nutritional, health, and educational benefits, improving diets

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and learning outcomes for school-aged children (Appiah, 2024; Niyibizi et al., 2024). The World Food Programme (2020) estimates that chronic malnutrition affects around 30% of disadvantaged school-age children, underscoring the importance of initiatives aligned with WHO's vision of "Zero Hunger." These programs alleviate short-term hunger, incentivize school attendance, and enhance cognitive development (Adelman et al., 2008; Flores, 2023).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched the Breakfast Feeding Program (BFP) in 1997 to alleviate short-term hunger among public school children. By school year 2012–2013, the program was renamed the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP), expanding beyond breakfast meals. Between 2015–2017, both the budget and number of beneficiaries were scaled up. Current guidelines require schools to rehabilitate at least 70% of severely wasted learners to normal nutritional status within 100–200 feeding days, ensure 85–100% classroom attendance, and improve learners' health and nutrition behaviors (Mukhamedzhanov et al., 2023; Latino & Tafuri, 2023; Cohen et al., 2021). Studies highlight the SBFP's role in reducing hunger, improving educational quality, and addressing poverty-related factors influencing academic performance (Barnabas et al., 2023; Buyco et al., 2022; Dela Luna & Talavera, 2021).

Within the Cordillera Administrative Region, school feeding programs play a crucial role in addressing malnutrition among indigenous and rural learners. Research emphasizes the socioeconomic challenges in CAR, where poverty and limited access to nutritious food hinder academic performance. Feeding programs have been shown to improve attendance, health, and learning outcomes, while also supporting community-based nutrition initiatives (Aurino et al., 2023; Babaran et al., 2024). Flores' (2023) study on parents' and children's perspectives in CAR indicates positive feedback regarding the influence of feeding programs, while Sahagun (2022) reported favorable outcomes from DepEd's SBFP implementation in the region.

In Apayao, one of the provinces in CAR, malnutrition remains a pressing issue among school-aged children. Feeding programs are vital in combating hunger and ensuring learners' participation in school. Localized studies highlight that poverty-related factors strongly influence academic performance, making SBFP interventions essential in Apayao's public schools. The program contributes not only to improved nutritional status but also to better classroom attendance and overall well-being of learners, aligning with national and global goals of reducing hunger and promoting education.

Locally, learners at Sacpil Elementary School, a rural school with notable academic attainment and nutrition difficulties, go through the same thing. This research is important because it looks at how food programs are implemented in rural schools. WHO (2021) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2021) state that as school food environments can affect students' diets, they may be crucial in reducing body mass index (BMI). Although the results of specific studies may differ, prior research has shown that students' academic performance is positively impacted by consuming a nutritious diet. In remote schools, there might not be enough options for nutritious food, so students might not get the nutrition they need. This study is crucial to solving these issues. This study looks into the ways that better school food helps kids focus, learn, and participate.

Statement of the problem

DepEd's School-Based Feeding Program is primarily governed by DO 39, s. 2017, with DO 10, s. 2022 providing supplemental guidelines to adjust budgets and sustain its implementation. This study analyzed the full implementation of the School Feeding Program in Sacpil elementary School. Specifically on the school-feeding program's implementation, financial budget monitoring, feedback and issues and challenges in its implementation.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a basic qualitative research design. A quantitative approach was used in determining the profile of the learners. In contrast, the qualitative component examined the current implementation of the school feeding program, budget allocation, feedback, and the issues and challenges encountered in its implementation. This design allowed the study to address both the descriptive profile of the learners and the in depth examination of the feeding program as implemented in the research setting.

The participants of the study included the school nurse, the school coordinator of the feeding program, and 6 parents of the primary grade school pupils of Sacpil Elementary School, Sacpil, Conner, Apayao. These participants were selected because of their direct involvement in and knowledge of the school feeding program, making them appropriate sources of information regarding its implementation, allocation of resources, feedback, and the issues and challenges associated with the program.

The study used an interview as its primary research instrument. Interviews were conducted with the parents, the school nurse, and the school coordinator. Prior to the formal interview, the parents were asked about their profile in terms of sex, age, and highest educational attainment. After this, they were interviewed regarding the feeding program, particularly its current implementation, budget allocation, feedback, and the issues and challenges in its implementation. The same questions concerning the feeding program were asked of the school nurse and the school coordinator. However, their profile variables differed from those of the parents and included sex, age, position, and length in service. This ensured that relevant background information was obtained from each group of participants while maintaining consistency in the core interview content related to the school feeding program.

In gathering the data, permission to conduct the study was first sought from the school principal of Sacpil Elementary School. After the permit to conduct the study was granted, the researcher proceeded with the interviews. A one on one interview was conducted with the respondents to obtain detailed information regarding the subject of the study. In addition, the researcher used a separate focus group discussion with the teachers and parents to verify the validity of their responses. This procedure helped strengthen the credibility of the gathered data by allowing the researcher to confirm and compare the information shared during the individual interviews.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Consent forms were signed by the parents and teachers to ensure their willingness to participate in the study. They were also assured of the observance of health protocols during the gathering of data. These measures were undertaken to uphold voluntary participation and to safeguard the welfare of the respondents during the research process.

For the analysis of data, frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents. For the qualitative data, the responses were categorized into themes for a more objective analysis. Through thematic categorization, the study was able to organize the qualitative responses systematically and derive a clearer understanding of the current implementation of the school feeding program, budget allocation, feedback, and the issues and challenges in its implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion presented in this section are grounded in the data gathered from 8 participants composed of 1 school nurse, 1 school coordinator, and 6 parents of primary grade school pupils of Sacpil Elementary School, Sacpil, Conner, Apayao. Consistent with the

study's basic qualitative design, the findings primarily draw from interview data concerning the current implementation of the school feeding program, budget allocation and monitoring, feedback on program effectiveness, and the issues and challenges encountered in implementation. In addition, frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents, while the qualitative responses were categorized into themes for objective analysis. The discussion that follows interprets the results directly in relation to the objectives of the study and remains anchored in the actual data obtained from the respondents.

The profile of the respondents shows that, for the school nurse and school coordinator, both respondents were female, with a frequency of 2 and a percentage of 100, while male respondents had a frequency of 0 and a percentage of 0. In terms of age, 0 respondents or 0 belonged to the 20-29 age bracket, 1 respondent or 50.00 belonged to the 30-39 bracket, 1 respondent or 50.00 belonged to the 40-49 bracket, and 0 respondents or 0 were 50 and above. As to position, 1 respondent or 50.00 was the school nurse and 1 respondent or 50.00 was the school coordinator. For length of service, 0 respondents or 0 were in the 1-3 years category, while 2 respondents were in the 4 years and above category, with the percentage reported as 50.00. For the parents, 1 respondent or 16.67 was male and 5 respondents or 83.33 were female. In terms of age, 0 respondents or 0 were 20-24 years old, 1 respondent or 16.67 was 25-29 years old, 1 respondent or 16.67 was 30-34 years old, 2 respondents or 33.33 were 35-39 years old, 0 respondents or 0 were 40-44 years old, and 2 respondents or 33.33 were 45 and above. In terms of educational attainment, 1 respondent or 16.67 was an Elementary Graduate, 4 respondents or 66.67 were High School Graduate, and 1 respondent or 16.67 was a College Graduate. With respect to occupation, 0 respondents or 0 were Government Employee, 0 respondents or 0 were Private Employee, 0 respondents or 0 were Self-Employed, and 6 respondents or 100.00 were Housewife. These results indicate that the school-based implementers were both female personnel with administrative and health-related roles, while the parent respondents were predominantly female, mostly either 35-39 years old or 45 and above, generally high school graduates, and primarily housewives. This profile is important because it situates the findings within the lived realities of the respondents who directly observe, manage, and experience the school feeding program.

With regard to the current implementation of the School Feeding Program in Sacpil Elementary School, the analysis of the 89 responses from the respondents generated three themes: Effective Implementation, Stakeholder Involvement, and Continuous Implementation. The first theme, Effective Implementation, reflects the respondents' perception that the school feeding program is functioning well and is beneficial to the pupils. This is evident in the statement of T1, who said, "SBFP is well implemented in the school." This perspective was reinforced by the parents. P1 stated, "Naipatungpal ti school feeding program iti Sacpil Elementary School a nasayaat ken naurnos," translated as "The school feeding program at Sacpil Elementary School is well and orderly implemented." P2 shared, "Awan dadduma nga maibagak nu diket mayat ta matulungan dagituy ubbing mi nga beneficiary iti daytuy nga feeding program," or "I have nothing else to say but it's good because it helps our children who are beneficiaries of this feeding program." P3 expressed gratitude by saying, "Dakkel nga pasalamat mi iti daytuy nga feeding program iti skwelaan," meaning "We are very thankful for this feeding program in the school." Likewise, P4 said, "Mayat iti dytuy nga feeding program nga inpatungpal da ditoy Sacpil Elementary School ta addaan iti maawat dagituy ubbing mi a makan," translated as "This feeding program implemented here in Sacpil Elementary School is good because our children receive food." P5 added, "Napintas iti daytuy nga programa nga para iti kaimbagan dagituy anak mi," or "This program is good because it is for the well-being of our children," while P6 stated, "Mayat met iti daytuy nga program nga impaay ti skwelaan ta addaan nga maikan dagituy ubbing ti nasayaat nga nutrition," translated as "This program given by the school is also good because it provides good nutrition to the children."

Collectively, these responses show that the program is perceived as organized, nourishing, and responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries.

The second theme, Stakeholder Involvement, emphasizes the collaborative nature of the program's implementation. T2 stated, "The school based feeding program was implemented in the school to the feeding beneficiaries with the help of the teacher, parents and the school head." This view was echoed by the parents. P1 noted, "Namayat ken nasayaat ti pannakaipatungpal ti school feeding program iti Sacpil Elementary School gapu iti liderato dagiti mangidalan," meaning "The school feeding program is well implemented due to the leadership of the school administrators." P2 stated, "Dakkil nga tulong kanyami nga nagannak daytoy a feeding ta maikan iti nutrisyon iti annak mi," or "This feeding is a big help to us parents because it gives nutrition to our child." P3 shared, "Mayat ti school feeding nga programa ditoy Sacpil Elementary ta talaga nga ipatungpal dagiti memestra ken kanagannak," translated as "The school feeding program here in Sacpil Elementary is good because it is truly implemented by the teachers and parents." P4 added, "Dakkel nga tulong daytuy ta intungpal sa ditoy Sacpil elementary school babaen ti tulong dagiti manursurun ken nagannak," or "This is a big help because it was implemented here in Sacpil Elementary School through the help of teachers and parents." P5 emphasized parental benefit through the statement, "Mayat ta matulungan kami nga nagannak nangruna dagituy nga feeding program iti skwelaan," translated as "It's good that we parents are helped especially by this feeding program in the school." P6 likewise said, "Akas maysa nga nagannak ket maragsakanak dituy nga programa," meaning "As a parent, I am happy with this program." These responses suggest that the school feeding program is not carried by the school alone but is sustained through the involvement of school personnel, parents, and leadership. Such shared responsibility supports smoother implementation and strengthens community ownership of the program.

The third theme, Continuous Implementation, points to the regular and uninterrupted delivery of the feeding program. P1 said, "Ti agdama a pannakaipatungpal ti school feeding program iti Sacpil elementary school ay tuloy-tuloy ang pamimigay ng feeding sa Sacpil elementary," translated as "The current implementation of the school feeding program at Sacpil Elementary School is ongoing." P2 stated, "Ti school feeding program iti Sacpil Elementary School ket maipatungpal Tunggal aldaw babaen ti tulong dagiti manursuru ken nagannak," meaning "The school feeding program in Sacpil Elementary School is implemented every day through the help of teachers and parents." P3 expressed appreciation through the statement, "Agyaman kami ta adda iti yuloy-tuloy nga programa para iti kalusugan dagituy ubing," or "We are thankful that there is a continuous program for the health of the children." P4 similarly said, "Mayat mit ta kanayun nga adda feeding nga ited ti pagadalan kadagiti ubbing mi ket tuloy-tuloy," translated as "It's also good that the school always gives feeding to our children and it is continuous." P5 added, "Agyaman kami iti tuloy-tuloy iti panangited da iti feeding kadagiti annak mi a benepisyari. Dakkel nga tulong kadakami daytuy nga feeding lalu kadagituy ubing mi," meaning "We are thankful for the continuous feeding given to our children who are beneficiaries. This feeding is a big help to us, especially for our children." P6 expressed hope for sustainability by stating, "Mayat ti feeding program ti Sacpil Elementary School. Dayta nga programa nga inlukat yuk et sapay kuma ta haan kuma nga agpatengnga," or "The feeding program of Sacpil Elementary School is good. That program you started, I hope it won't stop." These responses indicate that continuity is one of the most valued characteristics of the program because regular provision of meals is directly associated with children's ongoing nourishment and family support. The three themes, Effective Implementation, Stakeholder Involvement, and Continuous Implementation, therefore show that the feeding program is perceived positively in terms of organization, shared implementation, and consistency. This supports the view of WHO (2021) that schools are

essential spaces for the development of knowledge, socioemotional skills, self-regulation, resilience, and critical thinking, and that access to education and safe and supportive school environments is linked to better health outcomes. The findings also align with Wang et al. (2021), who noted that school feeding is an important approach to improving the health and education outcomes of children and adolescents living in low and middle income countries. The positive descriptions of the program further resonate with Aurino et al. (2023), who reported moderate average increases in math and literacy standardized scores after two years of program exposure, especially among girls and disadvantaged children and regions, and with Babaran et al. (2024), who found that a nutrition program helped children experiencing lack of nutrients and supported their daily lives and academic journey.

In relation to budget allocation and monitoring for the feeding program, the analysis yielded three themes: Identification and Approval, Budget Source and Oversight, and Transparency and Community Involvement. The first theme, Identification and Approval, describes how beneficiaries are determined and how approval proceeds through the proper channels. T1 explained, “School nurse will identify the feeding beneficiaries and the data is submitted to the D.O. for review. After reviewing the data is transmitted to the national office for allocation.” T2 similarly stated, “The school nurse together with the SBFP coordinator identify the beneficiaries and there the list is submitted to the division office for approval.” Among the parents, P1 said, “Bilangen dagiti mestra nu manu iti ubing nga agkailangan iti daytuy nga feeding,” translated as “The teachers count how many children need this feeding program.” P2 added, “Iti daytuy a programa ket ipatungpal dagiti addaan iti concern kadagiti ubing nga kurang iti kilo na,” meaning “This program is implemented by those concerned for children who are underweight.” These responses demonstrate that the identification of beneficiaries follows a procedural and need-based process, beginning at the school level and moving upward for review and allocation. This indicates that the school feeding program is not randomly administered but is guided by screening and approval procedures intended to target pupils who need nutritional intervention.

The second theme, Budget Source and Oversight, explains where the budget originates and who oversees its use. P1 stated, “Nay badyet nga nausar idjy feeding program ket naggapu ti gobyerno dagiti nangidaulo ket nay school head ken nay coordinator iti program,” translated as “The budget used in the feeding program comes from the government and is managed by the school head and program coordinator.” P2 said, “Ti badyet ket aggapu iti gobyerno ken ti panangusar ket maiyeg iti panangidaulo iti school head ken feeding coordinator. Amin a gastos ket mairaman iti report tapno makita ti nalawag,” meaning “The budget comes from the government and is managed by the school head and feeding coordinator. All expenses are reported for transparency.” P3 shared, “Ti badget ket ti ammu aggapu iti deped ket ti principal ken diay coordinator ti feeding ti mangkita wennu mangimaton ti umnu nga pannakausar ti feeding,” or “The budget is known to come from DepEd, and the principal and feeding coordinator oversee its proper use.” P4 stated, “Agyaman kami ta manipud nang rugi iti klase, inggana tatta ket tuloy-tuloy ti panangited iti deped ti feeding,” translated as “We are thankful that since the start of classes until now, DepEd has continuously provided the feeding.” P5 added, “Ti ammo ket ited ti DepEd ti budget dagiti beneficiaries iti feeding ket ipatungpal met dagiti coordinator ti feeding iti school,” meaning “It is known that DepEd provides the budget for the feeding beneficiaries, and the feeding coordinators implement it in school.” P6 likewise said, “DepEd met paggapuan nak et dagiti memestra met ti agitated iti feeding. Ket adda nurse nga umay mangkita nu kusto,” translated as “The source is DepEd, and the teachers are active in the feeding. A nurse also comes to check if everything is proper.” These statements consistently identify the government, particularly the Department of Education, as the source of funding, while school level personnel such as the principal, coordinator, teachers, and nurse are seen as key figures in implementation and oversight. The emphasis on reporting and proper

checking suggests awareness among respondents that accountability is central to program credibility.

The third theme, Transparency and Community Involvement, highlights the participation of teachers, parents, and administrators in carrying out and monitoring the feeding program. P1 said, “Dagiti mangimatum ken mangipatungpal ken mangiyaramid ti dytuy ket dagiti nagannak ken mangisursuro iti nasao nga school,” which means “Those who implement and carry out the program include the parents and teachers of the said school.” P2 stated, “Ti mangidadaulo iti dyta ket ni ma’am N.H. ken J. naanus ken masiguradu ti kinalusog ken kinapudno ti pannakausar ti pondo,” translated as “The program is led by Ma’am N.H. and J., who diligently ensure the health and proper use of the funds.” P3 added, “Dagita mangimatum ket memestra, ket matungpal amin,” meaning “Those who oversee it are the teachers, and everything is carried out.” P4 expressed gratitude by saying, “Agyaman kami ta adda nga tuloy tuloy ti panangted da ti feeding kadagiti annak mi,” or “We are thankful that the feeding continues to be provided to our children.” P5 stated, “Iti daytuy a feeding program ket nagapu kadagituy taga DepEd, ket mapan dagituy mistral ibingabingay kadagituy ubbing mi,” meaning “This feeding program comes from DepEd, and the teachers distribute it to our children.” P6 emphasized cooperation through the statement, “First ket kaylangan tayu iti unity or pagkakaisa tapnu daytuy nga program kit maitultuluy ken kaylangan nga pagtutulungan tayu dayta nga program kas ammu tayu nga haan nalaka nga ag manage ti kasta,” translated as “First, we need unity so this program can continue, and we must work together because we know managing it is not easy.” These responses show that transparency is not understood merely as financial disclosure but also as visible participation, shared labor, and collective accountability. The respondents all agreed that the budget and allocation came from the government, most specifically from the Department of Education. This finding is meaningful because it confirms that the school level implementation of feeding relies heavily on public sector support and localized monitoring systems. In relation to prior literature, Barnabas et al. (2023) revealed that the Homegrown school feeding program positively improved smallholder farmers household food security status across all the models, suggesting that school feeding has broader economic and food security implications beyond the classroom. The present findings similarly point to the importance of strengthening school level systems, and the discussion in the study notes that aside from the budget allocated, it is also encouraged to establish a vegetable farm in school for a more nourishing menu. This perspective finds support in Lundborg et al. (2022), who showed that the school lunch program generated substantial long term benefits, with pupils exposed during their entire primary school period having 3% higher lifetime income, greater effects for pupils exposed at earlier ages, and improved educational attainment and health.

With respect to the feedback received from students, parents, and teachers regarding the program’s effectiveness, two themes emerged: Positive Outcomes and Program Improvements. The first theme, Positive Outcomes, centers on the beneficial effects of the school feeding program as perceived by teachers, parents, and pupils. T1 stated, “Feedback from the beneficiaries – some are very happy when they receive their meals. Feedback from teachers – the program improved pupils’ attendance. Feedback from parents – the program is a big help to them.” T2 added, “Some teachers mentioned improved class participation. Some pupils do not like the taste of the meals. Parents are thankful for the added food for their children.” From the parents’ perspective, P1 said, “Mayet met dagiti feedback dagiti estudyante ken nagannak ta nakatulong kadagiti estudyante atu nga programa,” meaning “The feedback from students and parents is good because this program helped the students.” P2 stated, “Adda nasayaat nga epektu na para kadagiti studyante ti nasao nga feeding program ta simayaat ti kilo ken tayag dagiti nasao nga benepisyaris,” translated as “There is a good effect on the students from the said feeding program because the weight and height of the beneficiaries improved.”

P3 shared, “Kas maysa nga nagannak mayat met iti ibaga dagiti ubbing nga benipisyonu iti feeding ken uray dagiti memestra ta adda nagbaliwan ti kilo ubbing,” or “As a parent, I also find it good that the children beneficiaries and even the teachers say the children gained weight.” P4 said, “Mayat ta adudagiti ubing a nagbalin nga nasayaat iti bagbagi da babaen iti daytuy nga feeding program, ken naragsak kami a nagannak ta makatulong daytuy iti gastu mi,” translated as “It’s good that many children became healthier through this feeding program, and we parents are happy because it helps with our expenses.” P5 added, “Kas maysa nga nagannak yaman ko Launay ta kuna ti anak ko ket mayat ti feeding ket isu ti maysa nga manganan na iti gulay iti kanayun nga ibagbaga ti teachers na,” meaning “As a parent, I’m very thankful because my child said the feeding is good, and now eats vegetables as the teachers always encourage.” P6 concluded, “Nasayaat met ti makita kasi adda umimprovan dagiti ubbing,” or “It’s good to see because there are improvements in the children.” These responses demonstrate that the program is associated with perceived gains in weight, height, energy, class participation, attendance, healthier eating habits, and reduced household burden. The breadth of these outcomes suggests that respondents view the program not only as a feeding intervention but also as a contributor to children’s health behavior, school engagement, and family welfare.

The second theme, Program Improvements, reflects suggestions and observations concerning ways the program has been refined and should be sustained. P1 stated, “Ti feedback ket naawatanmi manipud programa ti feeding keta da nagbaliwan na napipintas ti programa ti feedback panagbalbaliw ken napapintas ti programa ti feeding,” translated as “The feedback we understood from the feeding program led to changes that improved the program.” P2 similarly said, “Adda iti nagbaliwana, napapintas ti feedback panagbalbaliw iti annak mi,” meaning “There were changes made; the feedback led to improvements for our child.” P3 offered a more comprehensive response: “Naimbag ken naragsak dagiti feedback manipud kadagiti estudyante nagannak ken manursuru adu dagiti ubbing a nagbalin a nasiglat papigsaan ken aktibu tik lase. Dagiti nagannak ket agyaman ta makatulong iti gastusda. Gapu na napapintas pay ti programa babaen ti panagurnos ti skedul ken panagipataray ti nasayaat a menu,” which translates to “The feedback from students, parents, and teachers is good and joyful. Many children became more energetic, stronger, and active in class. Parents are thankful because it helps with their expenses. Because of this, the program improved through better scheduling and implementation of a good menu.” P4 and P6 stated, “Mayat ta alerto dagiti taga Department of Education, ket alisto a naikan dagituy ubing iti dayta a feeding program,” meaning “It’s good that the Department of Education is alert and quickly provided the children with this feeding program.” P5 emphasized sustainability through the statement, “Iti feedback ko wenno maibagak ket mayat ken maysa pay ket sapay kuma ta tuloy-tuloy tapnu kasta keta du pay iti matulungan tayu karu kadagiti studyante. Isu nga daytuy nga program yuk et sapay kuma ta maitultuloy haan kuma nga agpatengnga,” translated as “My feedback or what I can say is that it’s good, and I hope it continues so more students can be helped. I hope this program continues and doesn’t stop.” These responses show that respondents value a program that is well maintained, responsive to feedback, organized in terms of scheduling and menu planning, and sustained over time. They also show that positive feedback is not merely descriptive but can serve as a basis for operational improvement.

Taken together, the themes Positive Outcomes and Program Improvements indicate that the school feeding program is widely perceived as effective and meaningful by those who experience it directly. The reported improvements in weight, height, energy, attendance, and class participation, along with the reduced expense burden on families, affirm the practical relevance of the program in the daily lives of the beneficiaries. These findings are consistent with WHO (2021), which emphasized that safe and supportive school environments are linked to better health outcomes and that better health is associated with reduced drop out rates, greater

educational attainment, educational performance, employment, and productivity. The findings also align with Buyco et al. (2022), who concluded that family involvement, particularly of mothers or caregivers, is an important factor in shaping children's eating behavior and that an intervention package with lunch feeding and nutrition classes resulted in substantial improvement in children's behavior and actual food intake, including increased levels of vegetables and milk while lowering sugar consumption. In the present study, parental responses indicating that children now eat vegetables and that parents appreciate the program's role in reducing expenses show how school feeding can influence both food intake and family level support systems.

Concerning the issues and challenges encountered in the implementation of the School Feeding Program, the thematic analysis generated two themes: Supply and Budget Problems and Engagement Issues. The first theme, Supply and Budget Problems, captures constraints related to material adequacy, food preparation, and meal acceptability. T2 stated, "Others refuse to eat the meals due to bad taste." P1 said, "Awan met masyadu nga problema, nay panagkulang ti supplies ken badyet ngem mayat ken naurmos met iti programa," translated as "There aren't many problems, just some lack of supplies and budget, but the program is still good and organized." P2 added, "Dagiti karit ket kas iti kinakulang ti supply ken bassit a badyet, ngem araramiden ti pagadalan ti amin tapno agtuloy ti programa," meaning "The challenges are the lack of supplies and small budget, but the school does everything to continue the program." P3 shared, "Adda rigat na bassit gapu ta addu ti prosesos iti panagluto," or "There's a bit of difficulty because the cooking process has many steps." P4 and P6 stated, "Dagita ubing nga haan nasanay ti masustansiya nga makan ket madi da kayat daytuy feeding nga para kinyada," translated as "Those children who are not used to nutritious food do not like this feeding intended for them." P5 said, "Iti isyu base sa nakitak ket dapat pantay pantay kuma ken dapat kuma ket dagijay ubbing ket nadalus kuma dagijay imimada before nga alanda dagijay kaninda," meaning "Based on what I saw, the issue is that things should be equal and the children should have clean hands before getting their food." These responses indicate that while respondents generally perceive the program positively, they also recognize real operational constraints. Limited supplies and budget can place pressure on implementation, the preparation process can be laborious, and food acceptability remains a challenge when children are unfamiliar with nutritious meals. In addition, concerns about equal distribution and hygiene suggest that implementation quality is judged not only by meal provision but also by fairness and health practices.

The second theme, Engagement Issues, focuses on uneven participation among parents and the additional responsibilities assumed by teachers when parental support is lacking. P1 and P3 stated, "Ti na experyans ku iti pannakaitungpal ti feeding program ket ti rotasyon mi nga agluto ken agpakan, ta saan matungpal ti iskedyul ti dadduma nga nagannak," translated as "My experience in implementing the feeding program is our rotation in cooking and feeding, but some parents don't follow the schedule." P2 likewise said, "Adda dadduma nga parents nga saan tumulong iti pannakaisagana ti makan," meaning "Some parents do not help in preparing the food." P4, P5, and P6 also pointed back to food acceptability in the statement, "Akas maysa ah nagannak ti makitak nga maysa nga isyu maipangngep iti daytuy nga feeding program ket addaan dagituy ubbing nga haan da kayat iti raman na," translated as "As a parent, one issue I see in this feeding program is that some children don't like the taste." These responses show that implementation is affected not only by material limitations but also by human participation. Since the program relies on rotational involvement in cooking and feeding, noncompliance with schedules can shift the burden to teachers and participating parents, potentially affecting sustainability and consistency. The repetition of meal taste as a

concern across themes further indicates that children's acceptance of the food is one of the most persistent barriers to full program effectiveness.

The issues and challenges identified in the study are significant because they reveal that successful implementation depends on more than funding and policy intent. It also requires sustained community engagement, acceptable and appealing meal preparation, hygienic food handling, and sufficient logistical support. These findings are consistent with Solomon and Yusuf (2022), who recommended that the government should increase the fund allocation for the programme to address logistics problems associated with monitoring vehicles, provide classroom furniture to reduce congestion, carry out periodic evaluation, and ensure accurate record keeping for future planning, as well as make arrangements for food vendors' prompt payment so that schools do not operate for a week or two without pupils receiving the one meal per day provided by the government. The present study similarly shows that limited budget and supply are practical concerns at the school level. The results also reflect the broader significance of undernutrition discussed by Mbuya et al. (2021), who stated that high levels of childhood undernutrition can lead to a staggering loss of a country's human and economic potential through increased morbidity and mortality, decreased lifelong income earning potential and labor force productivity, cognitive delays, lower educational attainment, increased cost of health care and social safety nets, and reduced efficacy of investments in education. In the context of the present study, the identified challenges highlight why school feeding remains a critical intervention and why its weaknesses must be addressed if its full educational and nutritional benefits are to be realized.

Overall, the findings show that the School Feeding Program in Sacpil Elementary School is generally perceived as effectively implemented, collaboratively managed, and continuously delivered, with respondents recognizing its benefits for pupils' nutrition, health, attendance, participation, and family support. The profile data contextualize the findings by showing that the respondents were composed of 2 female school-based implementers and 6 parents who were mostly female, largely high school graduates, and primarily housewives. The thematic results further reveal that the program's strengths lie in its organized implementation, stakeholder involvement, government-supported budget allocation, visible monitoring, and positive outcomes for beneficiaries, while its challenges center on supply and budget limitations, food taste and acceptability, hygiene concerns, and inconsistent parental participation. These findings directly address the objectives of the study by describing how the program is currently implemented, how its budget is allocated and monitored, what feedback stakeholders provide regarding its effectiveness, and what issues and challenges arise during implementation. As such, the study contributes to the field by providing grounded, school-based evidence on the operational realities of the feeding program in a local elementary school context. The results also provide a clear basis for program enhancement, especially in terms of sustainability, resource adequacy, stakeholder coordination, and menu acceptability, thereby preparing the way for the next chapter or section on conclusions, implications, and proposed improvements to the program.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study lead to the conclusion that the school feeding program is fully implemented in Sacpil Elementary School. The results consistently showed that the program is carried out in an organized, sustained, and collaborative manner, as reflected in the themes of effective implementation, stakeholder involvement, and continuous implementation. The responses of the participants demonstrated that the program has become an active and functioning component of school support for learners, particularly in addressing their nutritional needs. The evidence further showed that the feeding program is not only operational

in form but also meaningful in practice because it is experienced by respondents as helpful, orderly, and beneficial to the children who serve as its primary beneficiaries.

The study also concludes that the budget and allocation for the program came from the government, particularly the Department of Education. The results on budget allocation and monitoring revealed that the identification of beneficiaries follows a process involving the school nurse, the feeding coordinator, and the submission of data to higher offices for review and approval. At the same time, the management of resources at the school level is carried out through the participation of the school head, coordinator, teachers, and other stakeholders who help ensure that the program is implemented properly. This suggests that the school feeding program operates within a structured system of government support and school level oversight, with transparency and community involvement serving as important features of its implementation.

Moreover, the study establishes that the school feeding program has a significant positive impact on the parents and, most especially, on the learners in terms of their overall well-being. The results indicated that the program contributed to improvements observed by respondents in the children's condition, including better nutrition, increased energy, improved weight, healthier eating behavior, stronger class participation, and better attendance. The parents likewise viewed the program as a meaningful form of assistance because it helped ease household food related expenses while supporting the health of their children. These findings affirm that the program functions not only as a nutritional intervention but also as a support mechanism for families and as a factor that can positively influence the learners' school experience and general welfare.

Despite these positive conclusions, the study also determined that challenges remain in the implementation of the program. The major difficulties identified were supply and budget problems, as well as participation and engagement issues. The findings showed that limitations in supplies and available budget sometimes affect the delivery of meals, while food taste and preparation concerns can influence the willingness of some learners to consume the meals provided. In addition, the study revealed that not all parents are able to participate consistently in the preparation and implementation processes, which can place additional responsibility on teachers and other school personnel. These realities suggest that while the program is fully implemented and beneficial, it still requires practical improvements to strengthen its sustainability and overall effectiveness.

In view of these findings, it is concluded that further support and cooperation among stakeholders are necessary to enhance the implementation of the school feeding program. The school, with the help of the principal and the assistance of the teachers, is encouraged to establish its own vegetable farm in order to support the budget and materials being given by the Department of Education to the school. Such an initiative may help supplement available resources and contribute to a more sustainable and nourishing feeding menu. The parents are likewise encouraged to lend a helping hand in partnership with the programs of the school in order to further solidify the parent-teacher relationship and to aid in the implementation of the school feeding program. Their continued participation is essential in sustaining collaborative implementation and ensuring shared responsibility for the welfare of the learners. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct a more thorough study on the school feeding program in the areas that need improvement, rather than focusing only on the impact of the school feeding program on the academic achievement of the learners. This direction may provide a deeper understanding of operational concerns, program quality, stakeholder participation, and other dimensions that can further improve the effectiveness of school feeding initiatives.

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