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IMPACT OF NATIONAL HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN SOBA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KADUNA STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the impact of National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) on poverty in Soba Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The study utilizes across sectional survey data collected from a sample of 187 service providers in the study area in 2023 both before the engagement in the programme and during the programme, while Foster Greerand Thorbecke poverty index and logit regression were employed in the data analyses. The study used 2 poverty lines (Z) of $2.15 and #369, which are the poverty thresholds recommended by the World Bank (2020) and National Bureau of Statistics (2019) respectively. The results of the computed FGT indices suggest that poverty status of service providers was higher before the programme (0.850) than during the programe (0.075). However, the result from the logit regression showed that household size is the only significant determinant of poverty among the selected service providers with P-values of 0.056. Accordingly, the study recommends the need for periodic review of the contract agreement for the actors' budget to reflect the current inflationary situation and also, the project should be on a contract basis lasting for a minimum of 2 to 3 years. Moreover, the study recommends the need for consistency of the programme, as the study found that it used to be suspended for some weeks before it later continued.

Keywords: Home grown, school feeding programme, poverty reduction, school enrollment, household income.

1. Introduction

Poverty remains one of the most pressing challenges in global development, affecting both developed and developing nations but with the heaviest burden on low-income countries. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI, 2020) report that more than 1.3 billion people in 107 countries live in multidimensional poverty,

lacking basic necessities such as food, healthcare, housing, and education. Sub-Saharan Africa is disproportionately affected, with structural drivers including conflict, weak institutions, rapid population growth, and climate shocks (Watkins & Quattri, 2019). Nigeria exemplifies this challenge: despite being Africa's largest economy, it has the world's highest number of extremely poor people, with about 40 percent of the population—83 million people—living below the poverty line, and another 25 percent classified as vulnerable (World Bank, 2020). This paradox of economic growth coexisting with deepening poverty underscores the urgent need for sustainable and inclusive poverty reduction strategies.

School feeding programmes have emerged globally as an effective social protection tool that addresses poverty from multiple dimensions. Beyond providing nutritional support to schoolchildren, such programmes stimulate local food production, create employment for caterers and farmers, and improve household incomes. The World Food Programme (2018) highlights that home-grown school feeding strengthens local economies by sourcing food from local farmers and engaging community-based service providers. Evidence across Africa suggests positive outcomes: Barnabas et al. (2023) reported that beneficiaries of Nigeria's school feeding programme had higher levels of household food security compared to non-beneficiaries; Appollim and Daniel (2021) found the programme boosted agricultural productivity and farm incomes in Gombe State; while Muriira (2020) showed that in Kenya, school feeding enhanced livelihoods when linked with participatory management and strong monitoring systems. These findings indicate that school feeding has potential not only to improve educational and nutritional outcomes but also to reduce poverty through income generation and economic empowerment.

In Nigeria, the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) was launched in 2016 under the National Social Investment Programme. Its objectives include increasing primary school enrollment, reducing dropout rates, improving child nutrition, and generating employment opportunities for local actors such as caterers, farmers, and food vendors (National Social Investment Office, 2019). The programme is aligned with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including poverty reduction (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), quality education (SDG 4), and decent work and economic growth (SDG 8). Despite its potential, evidence on the programme's poverty reduction impact remains mixed. Musa (2021) found that the NHGSFP had little significant effect on the incomes of farmers and traders, while Achoba and Saliu (2023) reported that it improved school attendance and food security but had modest effects on poverty reduction. These divergent findings suggest that the programme's impact may vary across local contexts, highlighting the need for localized empirical studies.

Despite being one of Nigeria's flagship social protection initiatives, the NHGSFP's effectiveness in reducing poverty among its direct participants—particularly caterers and other service providers—remains underexplored. Most existing studies focus on its effects on education and nutrition, with limited attention to whether service providers experience measurable improvements in their livelihoods. Moreover, few studies assess participants' poverty status before and during programme engagement, which is essential for understanding real programme outcomes. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the impact of the NHGSFP on poverty reduction in Soba Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Specifically, it evaluates the poverty status of service providers before and during their participation in the programme and identifies the socio-economic determinants of poverty among participants, thereby contributing fresh evidence for policy and practice.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Literature

2.1.1 Home Grown School Feeding Programme

Home Grown School feeding programmes have been defined by the World Bank, (2009) as "targeted social safety nets that provide both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children with locally produced food, thereby increasing enrollment rates, reducing absenteeism, improving food security and providing direct and indirect employment at the household level".

2.1.2 Concept of poverty reduction

Various authors, scholars, experts and organizations made different attempts based on their perceptions and views on what constitutes poverty reduction. These views are too diverse and dynamic. According to Alamgiri (1975), the outlook of poverty reduction definition demonstrates a situation of an upgrade in the standard of living which is an increase in standards of nutrition and shelter.

2.2 Theoretical Literature

2.2.1 The basic needs approach

The basic needs approach in dealing with poverty emerged around the late 1970s. The approach shifted the focus from just reducing unemployment or poverty to actively ensuring that people have what they need to live decently. Instead of only trying to reduce poverty or inequality, it aimed to fulfil basic requirements for a better life. This approach suggested by Streeten (1979) highlighted the importance of meeting essential needs like food, shelter, and water to overcome poverty.

Streeten (1979) suggested different ways to interpret basic needs. One way is to see them as the minimum amount of things like food and shelter necessary to stay healthy. Another view is to consider

them as what people themselves see as essential. This idea emphasizes giving people opportunities to earn enough to buy what they need. Both views highlight the importance of letting individuals define their own needs, a fundamental aspect of freedom.

However, some critics, like Wong (2012) argued that this approach focuses too much on material things and consumption. They opined that it puts too much emphasis on having certain things and does not consider personal values or goals. They suggest that just fulfilling a set of material needs does not capture the whole picture of poverty.

In essence, the basic needs approach suggests that if we help people earn more so they can afford the essentials, they can escape poverty. Archibong (1997) highlighted that unless deliberate efforts are made to significantly increase the income of the poor, they might stay stuck in poverty. This approach underscores the importance of actively improving people's earnings to lift them out of poverty

2.3 Empirical Literature

Barnabas et al. (2023) examined the impact of Home Grown School Feeding Programme on small holder farmers in North Eastern Nigeria. The study used binary probit regression, propensity score matching, inverse probability weighted, adjusted regression and endogenous switching regression. The result of the study showed that about 40 per cent of the beneficiary small holder farmers are food-secured compared to 20 per cent of the non-beneficiaries households. The result also revealed that the HGSFP positively improved small folder farmers' food security status across the model.

Achoba and Saliu (2023) examined the impact of Home Grown School Feeding Programme on poverty reduction in Rijau Local Government, Niger state. The study employed descriptive statistics to analyse the data collected from primary sources. The study found that the programme led to a 5.2 per cent increase in school attendance and it also impacted positively on educational outcome. In addition, the study found that the programme has had a positive impact on house hold food security and it has also reduced poverty to a certain level.

Musa (2021) investigated the effect of National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on poverty reduction in Rijau Local Government, Niger State. The study used a mixed method of methodology for data collection. Primary data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The researcher used regression to analyze the data. The study found that, though the programme has reduced poverty among the caterers, there is no statistical evidence of its impact on poverty reduction among local farmers and traders.

Lamido et al. (2021) evaluated the impact and challenges of social investment programme in Nigeria using secondary data, group discussions and interviews. On one hand, the study found a positive impact of the programme on poverty level and on the other hand, it revealed that there is policy inconsistency, unwidely scope of the programme and inadequate funding among others.

Katiso et al. (2021) examined the impact of the National School Feeding Programme on child education and poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The study utilized primary survey data collected from programmes' beneficiaries and also employed econometric modelling to evaluate the relationship between meal provision and educational outcomes. The findings revealed that while the feeding programme improved school attendance rates, its impact on household income poverty was negligible. This was attributed to the limited scale of the programme and its inability to address structural poverty issues such as unemployment and low wages. The study recommended scaling up the programme and integrating it with broader poverty alleviation strategies.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The Basic Needs Theory, developed by Streeten (1979), provides a multidimensional perspective on poverty, emphasizing that deprivation is not only about lack of income but also about the inability to meet essential human requirements such as food, health, housing, and education. The theory highlights that for poverty alleviation to be sustainable, interventions must go beyond income transfers to ensure that individuals and households have access to fundamental resources that guarantee a decent quality of life. Critics such as Wong (2012) argue that the approach prioritizes material needs at the expense of social values and personal aspirations. However, the strength of the Basic Needs framework lies in its recognition that unless individuals have access to food, shelter, healthcare, and education, they remain trapped in cycles of deprivation despite economic growth or policy reforms.

The theoretical linkages can therefore be summarized as follows: NHGSFP improves food and nutrition security → enhanced child health and learning outcomes → higher educational attainment and human capital. At the same time, NHGSFP generates employment and household income through local procurement → households allocate income to other basic needs → poverty reduction. This dual pathway illustrates how school feeding programmes align with the Basic Needs approach by addressing immediate deprivations while also promoting long-term socio-economic resilience. Thus, the NHGSFP can be understood as a strategic intervention that links access to basic needs with sustainable poverty alleviation.

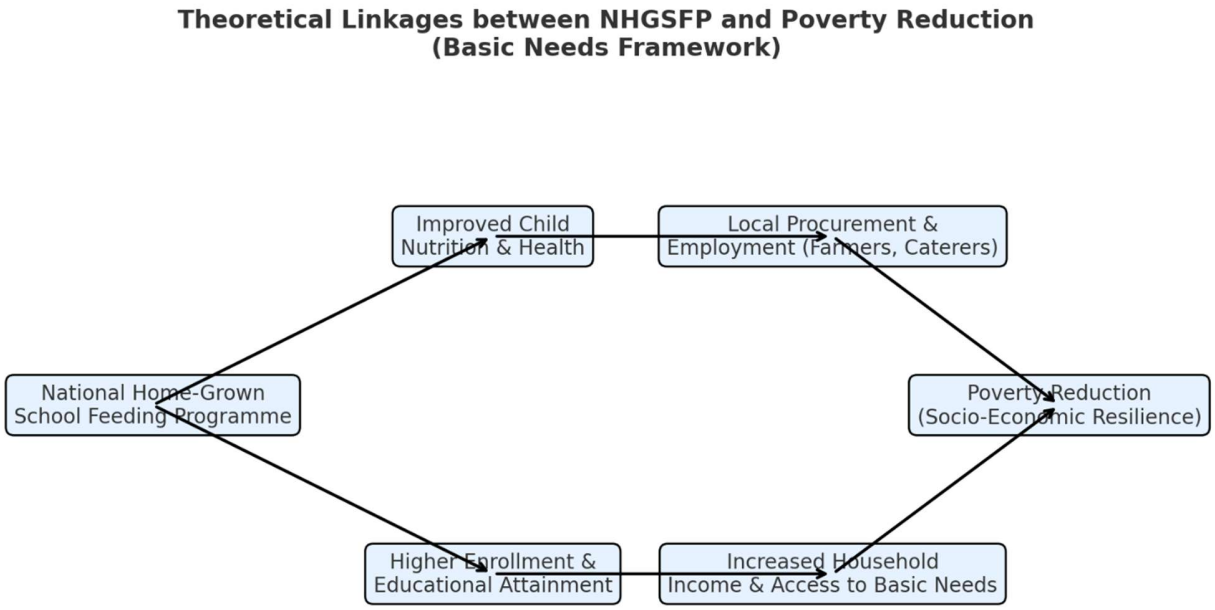


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

3.2 Model Specification

Measurement of poverty status

i. Foster,Greer, and Thorbecke Poverty Index

The Foster Gree Thorbecke (FGT) index is a poverty measuremen tindex based on the normalized income gap which is also known as poverty gap. It is the income short fall of an individual as compared to the conventional poverty line 〖Z〗_u.The index could be defined as, given the income distribution X, the censored income distribution$\bar{X}$, could be obtained by replacing the values above the poverty line 〖Z〗_u by the poverty line value Z_u itself and leaving the other values unchanged.

Formally, 〖$\bar{X}$〗_i =X_i if X_i <Z_u and 〖$\bar{X}$〗_i=Z_u if 〖$\bar{X}$〗_i ≥ Z_u Then, the normalized income gap is given by:

$$g_i = (Z_u - X_i)/Z_u \quad \text{----------(1)}$$

The normalized incomegap of individual i,is the income short fall expressed as a share of the poverty threshol.The income gap of those who are non poor is equal to 0The income gap of individual scan be

collecte dinann dimensional vector gα=(g1α,g2α,…,gnα) where by each giα element is the normalized poverty gap raised to the power α≥0 and it can be taken as a measure of individual poverty where α is a parameter of poverty a version.The FGT poverty measure is defined as:

P_α= ∑_(i=1)^n▒〖gi〗^α/n----------(2)

The FGT measures can also be expressed synthetically as Pα=μ(gα), where μ is the mean operator and thus μ (gα) denote stheave rageormean of the elements of vector gα which indicate sthehead count ratio, or the mean of the deprivation vector. Itindicate the proportion of poor people also frequently called the incidence of poverty. Also,from the FGT measures, the reareth reemeasurement indicators whereby the power α of vector g takes different values of 0, 1, and 2. It sassociated measure P0=μ(g0), reflects the head countratio, or the average number of poor persons (H) of the deprivation vector, P1=μ(g1), the poverty gap (G) measure, represents the average depth of poverty across the population and the P2=μ(g2), squared gap vector, g2 replace seach poorpersons income with the squared normalized income.

ii. Logit Regression model

Binary Logit regression was used to assess the determinants (orcorrelates) of the poverty status of the participants. The logit model determines the like lihood that aparticipant is poor if its per capita consumption expenditure (monthlyaverageincome) is below the constructed poverty line given its socio economic characteristics. Inline with Gowanetal.(2014), the logit model for this study is specified as:

In(Pi)=βkX1+Uis----------(3)

Equation 3 is a log-likelihood function showing the log likelihood that a household is poor given it ssocio economic characteristics X,where:

Pi=1 if percapita expenditure < Zand Pi =0 I fotherwise.

β k=vector of parameters to be estimated.

X=vector of explanatory variables (povertycorrelates).

Thus, forth epurpose of this study, monthly average income was used as a proxy for per capita expenditure and the poverty model is stated as follows:

POV=βo+β1SHH+β2FME+β3SQM+β4ICH+β5NDS+β6MJO+Ui----------(4)

Where:

POV is dependent variable (poverty), calculated as:

POV=Average monthly income of household from NHGSFP----------(5)

Total number of days in a month (31)

If a participants income is less than 2.15 dollars (naira equivalent), it means the participant is poor and in that case, 1 is assigned to him/her. Whereas, if the income is 2.15 dollar sand above (naira equivalent), it means the participant is non-poor and in tha tcase 0 is assigned to him/her.

β 0=constant intercept

β 1-β6=parameters

SHH=size of household, which is a dummy variable that takes 1 if at most 6 persons perhousehold or 0 if otherwise.

FME=Respondent's access to formal education, which is a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if the respondent had formal education or 0 if otherwise.

SQM=Number of square meals taken per day, which is a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if atleast three times per day or 0 if otherwise.

ICH=Access to improved health care facilities, which is a dummy variabe that takes the value of 1 if a beneficiary visits either a General or specialist hospital or 0 if otherwise.

NDS=Number of dependents are spondents ponsors in school,which is a dummy variable that takes thevalue of 1 if are spondent sponsors at most 3 people or 0 if otherwise.

MJO=major occupation, which is also a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if the participant's major occupation is NHGSFP or 0 if otherwise.

For the apriori expectations of the parameters, only β1 and β5 are expected to have positive signs indicating a positive relationship between poverty level and household size and number of dependents. This implies that an increase in household size and number of dependents sponsored in school would increase their likelihood of being poor and vice versa. Conversely, β2 ,β3, and β4, are expected to have negative signs signifying a negative relationship between poverty and the respective predictor variables.

The results of the loglikelihood ratio were used to test the null hypothesis that all the slope coefficients are simultaneously equal to zero (i.e.,β1,β2β3,β4,β5,β6=0) and the decision rule is that the null hypothesis is rejected if the likelihood ratio (LR) is lower than the probability value and vice-versa.

The model is adopted from the work of Oladimeji (2020)

4.0 Result and Discussion

FGT is an income poverty analysis index based on household expenditure. The FTG consists of a series of indices such as the headcount index, poverty gap index and poverty severity index (square poverty gap index). These indices are computed for the actors prior to the NHGSFP and during the

NHGSFP, in order to know whether the poverty situation of the actors has change Table4.5: Poverty Status Index for Caterers

Variables	Values	Before	During
World bank (2020) poverty line (Z) per day	$2.15		
NBS (2019) poverty line	₦369		
Above poverty line (Z) not poor		0.150	0.925
Below poverty line (Z) poor		0.850	0.075
Poverty gap (G)		0.585	0.015
Poverty severity		0.435	0.003

Source: Author's Computation from Survey Data, 20234.3.3.2 Logit Regression of Social Poverty Indices Correlates

Table 4.9: Logit Regression of Social Poverty Indices Correlates

Variables	Coefficients	Standard Error	Wald	Sig	Exp (B)	Lower	Upper
Health Access	-0.275	1.007	0.075	0.785	0.759	0.105	5.470
DependentsSponsored	0.684	0.643	1.1330	0.287	1.982	0.562	6.986
MealTaken	-0.303	0.994	0.093	0.760	0.738	0.105	5.178
HHS	1.331	0.698	3.659	0.056	3.783	0.968	14.787
MajorOccupation	-0.062	0.621	0.010	0.920	0.940	0.279	3.172
FormalEducation	-0.455	0.697	0.426	0.514	0.634	0.162	2.487
Constant	-9.725	4.468	4.737	0.030	0.000		

Source: Author's Computation from Survey Data, 2024

To complement the empirical findings, the study also examines other social determinants of income poverty among actors in the NHGSFP supply chain by including multiple variables in a regression model.These variable she l passess the programme' impact on poverty status.The results,reported in Table 4.9, provide insights in to how various social and economic factors influence income poverty,drawing comparison swith existing literature.

The first variable, HealthAccess, measures the level of access to health care services. Although the coefficient (- 0.275) implies that improved access reduces the likelihood of being poor, the result is not statistically significant (p=0.785). This aligns with Kruketal. (2018), who noted that healthcare access is vital but may not directly reduce poverty due to the influence of other factors like education and employment.

The second variable, Dependents Sponsored, reflects the number of dependents supported in school through income from NHGSFP. The positive coefficient (0.684) implies that supporting more

dependents could increase poverty odds, although this effect is not significant(p=0.287). This finding supports Jayne and Mather's (2002) conclusion in Malawi that dependency ratio has no significant link to poverty status.

The third variable, Meal Taken, indicates the number of meals afforded through NHGSFP income. Its coefficient(-0.303) shows a negative, insignificant relationship (p=0.760), consistent with Katisoetal. (2021), who found limited impact of school meals on house hold poverty levels.

The fourth variable, HouseholdSize (HHS), has a coefficient of 1.331, suggesting that larger households are more likely to be poor. This is marginally significant (p=0.056) and in line with Duflo (2003), who found a similar relationshipin South Africa.

The fifth variable, Major Occupation, has a negative coefficient(-0.062) but is not statistically significant (p=0.920), with limited existing literature linking it directly to poverty in the NHGSFP context.

Lastly,Formal Education has a coefficient of-0.455, indicating that higher educational attainment reduces thelike lihood of poverty. However, this result is also not statistically significant (p=0.514), aligning with Chen and Ravallion (2010), who found that formal education had no clear impact on poverty in China.

Residualdiagnostic

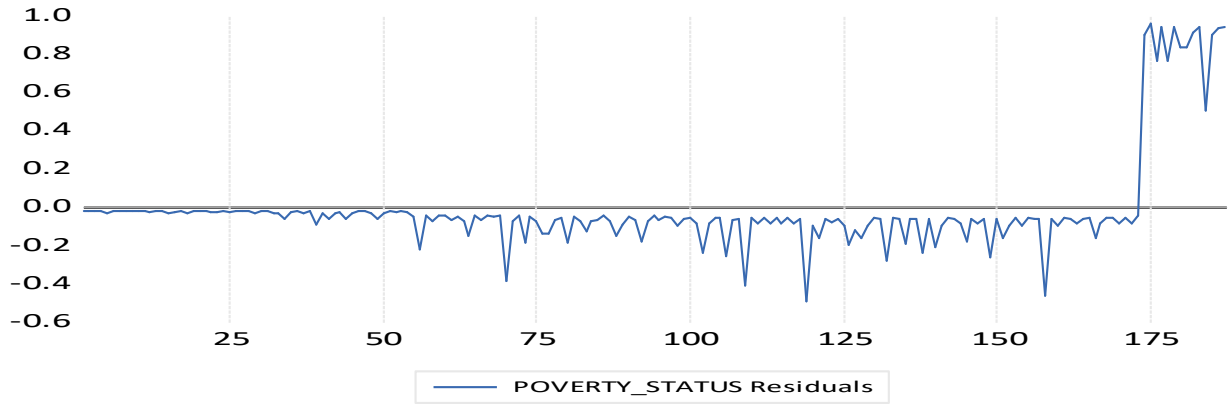


Figure4.4: Residual diagnostic

Source: Author's Computation from Survey Data, 2024

Figure 4.4 displays the residuals of the binary logit model for the variable over the 187 observations. The residuals represent the difference between observed and predicted values. Most residuals hove close to zero, indicating that the model predictions are generally accurate for those observations. However, there is a notable increase in residuals for the observations towards the end, indicating a poor fit for those datapoints. This suggests the model's predictions are less reliable for these

observations, potentially due to outliers or variables not accounted for in the model.The spikes indicate prediction errors, pointing to potential are as for model improvement.

5.0 Conclusion

This study concludes that the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) has a significant positive impact on poverty reduction among participants in Soba Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The programme effectively addresses multidimensional poverty by improving food and nutrition security, increasing school enrollment, and generating income for local farmers, caterers, and food vendors. Findings from the Foster, Greer, and Thorbecke (FGT) indices indicate that poverty levels declined substantially among service providers during programme participation compared to before the intervention. Moreover, household size emerged as a key determinant of poverty, suggesting that larger households are more vulnerable to economic deprivation. Overall, the NHGSFP demonstrates strong potential as a social protection mechanism that integrates nutrition, education, and livelihood empowerment. Sustaining and expanding the programme through consistent funding, effective monitoring, and periodic policy review can enhance its long-term contribution to poverty alleviation and community development.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the impact of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) on poverty reduction:

i. The government should periodically review and adjust the NHGSFP budget to reflect inflationary trends and current market prices. This will ensure that service providers receive fair compensation and maintain food quality standards.
ii. Payments to caterers and suppliers should be made promptly to prevent interruptions in service delivery and to sustain participants' livelihoods.
iii. Programme actors such as caterers and suppliers should be engaged on renewable two- to three-year contracts to promote efficiency, stability, and long-term planning.
iv. A robust monitoring system should be established to ensure compliance with food quality, hygiene, and nutritional standards, and to assess programme effectiveness periodically.
v. Training programmes for caterers, farmers, and local coordinators should be institutionalized to improve food handling, record keeping, and business management skills.
vi. The NHGSFP should be scaled up to include complementary poverty-alleviation initiatives such as vocational training, microfinance support, and women empowerment schemes to enhance beneficiaries' long-term economic resilience.

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