

Improving school feeding through participation: should the teacher be actively involved?

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through
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Issah Iddrisu
*School of Public Affairs,
University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei, China*

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Abstract

Purpose – Maintaining the success of educational institutions largely depends on the teacher. It is the teacher whose main efforts and contribution help in achieving the goals in education. The purpose of this paper is to examine the current state of the programme delivery and how involving the active participation of the teacher will help enhance effective and efficient delivery of the school feeding programme at the school level.

Design/methodology/approach – A total of ten basic schools were purposefully selected for the study with the use of the case study method. Interviews and observations were made in all the selected schools using a semi-structured interview guide. It was also done for some selected stakeholders within the study area under the school feeding programme.

Findings – There is an indication that teachers as managers and administrators of the school system are not actively involved in the feeding programme leading to an ineffective and inefficient delivery. The school children do not get the best from the programme. There is a need to put teachers in charge of operations at the school level. This will improve trust and cooperation between caterers, students and opinion leaders. The structure at the school level should be redesigned making caterers answerable to the teacher. Teachers as implementers in the case of the capitation grant will enhance efficiency leading to the achievement of the goal of the programme.

Originality/value – The study underlines the importance, efficiency and influence of the teacher within the school system, in the operations of the school feeding programme and in the Ghanaian society.

Keywords Stakeholder participation, Educational programme, School feeding, Teacher participation

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Many developing countries are faced with the same problem in basic education with respect to low enrolment, retention, nutrition and high dropout rate in schools (Alderman *et al.*, 2012). Ghana as a developing country faces the same problem like others. Research has shown how school feeding around the world increased school enrolment, retention, nutrition and reduced dropout rate (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Gelli, Juke and Lesley, 2009).

The objective of the school feeding programme to increase enrolment and attendance is in line with the millennium development goals, which also include eliminating poverty and hunger. The programme was made possible by the United Nations Dakar Declaration (2000) to eradicate extreme hunger and to achieve universal primary education (Fiske, 2000). In response to that, the New Partnership for Africa Development under the African Union sampled a number of countries to pilot the programme. Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya, Senegal, Malawi, Mali, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Ghana were the countries selected (Gokah, 2008). School feeding programmes in many countries have different ways in which they are carried out. It is in itself a provision of food to school going children. This is mostly provided to

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children in poor areas with low enrolment, attendance, retention and high dropout rates. Due to poverty, children face the challenge of completing primary education (Gumus, 2014).

The school feeding programme was introduced in Ghana in 2005 to support the poor and the vulnerable in society and to overcome the challenges of completing primary education. The programme started with the collaboration of the Dutch Government (Gokah, 2008). This was in line with the basic education policy of Ghana. The basic education policy in Ghana when implemented saw an upward adjustment of enrolment and retention but still needed infrastructural development (Iddrisu, 2016). The Ghanaian Government therefore introduced the school feeding programme as a strategy to help achieve the basic education policy. The introduction of the feeding programme has doubled the rate of enrolment, retention, nutrition and reduced the dropout rates in most of the programme-operated schools (Gelli *et al.*, 2007). It is believed that the programme when effectively managed can yield more output than the current yield.

Studies have suggested that output of the school feeding programme can be better enhanced when there is partner participation (Galaa and Saaka, 2011). The involvement of all partners is needed to achieve the intended objectives. The current structure of the programme does not involve the teacher who is a key partner in the active management process. These teachers for no doubt whatsoever are the managers of the schools but know little about the feeding programme. The caterers therefore have the free will to operate (Sulemana *et al.*, 2013). The teacher and opinion leaders are always available at all times to monitor the implementation but have little to add. These teachers have little or no power to control or alter the operations of the caterer. Based on the current structure of the management, the feeding programme is faced with a lot of challenges which include, but not limited to, ineffective and inefficient management and delivery hurdles. It is therefore necessary to look at why the teacher should actively be involved in the operations of the programme for an effective and efficient management and delivery.

Much of the literature on participation in school feeding is based on stakeholder participation or how the stakeholder can or have helped improved delivery of the school feeding programme. Little research has been performed on how the teacher who is the administrator of the school system in which the school feeding programme operates can be actively involved to improve the delivery of the programme. This research looked into how the active participation of the teacher can improve the delivery of the school feeding programme. This was done by listening to the views of students, caterers, opinion leaders within the school catchment area, circuit supervisors and the teachers themselves.

Participation in school feeding

Participation is a process where one considers the well-being of others as part of his/her responsibility (Murray, 2009; Quick and Feldman, 2011). Effective participation therefore can be achieved when the purpose of participating in an activity is made known (Bryson *et al.*, 2013). Studies conducted so far proved how participation in the school feeding programme increased enrolment and retention (Abotsi, 2013). It has also shown how the school feeding programme is able to reduce school dropout rate (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Gelli, Juke and Lesley, 2009). In other studies, stakeholder participation has helped sustain the programme (Mirtcheva and Powell, 2009).

In the work of Abotsi (2013), participation can improve the performance of a programme. Sonnino *et al.* (2014) advocated the participation of communities' members in the school feeding programme which helped address the issue of food security. The potential to address the issue of food security in the view of Levinger (2005) lies in linking local farmers within the school feeding operated communities. Involving the participation of local farmers will help boost the local economy (Levinger, 2005; Masset and Gelli, 2013).

Participation in school feeding is therefore needed to achieve intended objective. Leaders in the community and the teacher are the closest when it comes to those who are considered key elements in the programme. Opinion leaders in the community, on the other hand, have done a lot to help sustain the performance of the programme in many parts of the world (Kretschmer *et al.*, 2014). These people contribute more to a programme when there is a sense of ownership on their part (Studdert *et al.*, 2004). It is also evident in the case of post-apartheid South African reconstruction and rebuilding efforts (Williams, 2006). Many community members prefer to own the programme where they can have their voiced heard in the implementation process. Similar findings by Khatete *et al.* (2013) indicated how stakeholders in their own means supported the school feeding programme in Kenya. Many parents contribute as little as salt to get the programme running. The commitment of stakeholders can be attributed to their involvement in the implementation process. As a partner in the programme, they feel that they are part of the programme in the success and failure. Members therefore are committed to its success rather than its failures. In addition, Alhassan and Alhassan (2015) concluded on how stakeholders in the absence of resources borrow to support the school feeding programme. They are the immediate beneficiaries of the programme for which reason their commitment is guaranteed.

To effectively benefit from the programme, there is a need for active participation of stakeholders. Veloso (2014) in his study conducted in Brazil outlined the need for stakeholder participation which has led to the scaling up of the programme. Galaa and Saaka (2011) also concluded on how effective stakeholder participation can enhance capacities. During the implementation process, participants share ideas and skills. It can improve or result in checks and balances in the programme delivery process. Stakeholder participation therefore is critical to the achievement of the school feeding programme (Gabriel and Harcourt, 2012).

Teacher participation

There is a high demand for the need for participation in school feeding. There is not only the need for key stakeholders' participation but also for community participation (Bundy *et al.*, 2011). The teacher as a key stakeholder in the feeding process has much to offer to make the programme effective and efficient. An important aspect of the programme is how to retain children in school after they are enrolled. Teachers play a significant role in retaining children in the school. Kim and Rouse (2011) showed that the teacher considers the personal and family factors of his/her students and treats them differently based on individual needs. This aspect of teachers makes them unique in their role as care givers, which is necessary to the objective of the school feeding programme. To enhance enrolment, retention and attendance, teachers inclusion in the decision making that surrounds their working environment and as well managing the food programme is necessary. Programmes like the success of the Madrasah education in Indonesia gained trust through the active involvement of teachers (Parker and Raihani, 2011). Others face implementation difficulties due to the lack of teacher involvement. In the work of Levinson *et al.* (2013) on the Mexico's Reforma de la Educacion Secundaria (SE), teachers neither felt as agents nor partners. Without a defined role in the implementation process of the food programme, they find it difficult to fully commit to the programme. This is a case of teachers' non-compliance to programmes within schools in which they are not given defined roles.

In view of teachers effectiveness in the management of related programmes like the school feeding programme, there have been a number of recommendations in the performance of teachers within the World Food Programme (WEP) implementation throughout the world (Alderman and Bundy, 2012). Teachers were used as the focal point in the implementation of the programme. The skill of the teacher in record keeping helped in the success of the World Food Programme (2013). Teachers are the main operating

component in the achievement of educational goals like the school feeding programme. Article 43 of the Law of Basic Education, numbered 1739, indicates that teaching is a professional job based on expertise related to educational and teaching and such duties of the government. Here, the teacher is regarded as a professional in raising the next generation of good citizens. He/She feels part and proud of performing his/her duties in such a manner which helps in the well-being of the children under his/her care. How come such a professional is not fully utilised when it comes to implementation of a vital programme like the school feeding programme under his/her watch?

The utilisation or involvement of the teacher within the school feeding programme is vital for its success (Somech, 2010). Teachers have the most direct voice in the implementation process of the programme. They therefore need to be involved in the planning and implementation. This view finds support in the work of Tatto (1997), he believed that there should always be a dialogue and participation of teachers in any aspect of the programme process. Smylie (1992) also viewed teachers as the focal point for the success of all educational programmes. In his view, the teacher should be given full consideration when it comes to finding alternatives to achieving designed programmes. The teacher at the centre stage of the implementation will empower him/her to fully put to use his/her vast experience of resource allocation and monitoring to enhance the effectiveness of the programme.

Contrary to teacher active participation in the food programme delivery, Smylie (1992) showed teacher's participation as a desire for influence in the implementation process. Others also argued that overload of teachers work additional responsibility could lead to teacher turnover (Torres, 2016; Van Droogenbroeck *et al.*, 2014). The teacher's interest to protect the well-being of his/her students over shadows the concerns of workload. The feeling of belonging, job satisfaction and the motivation as a professional makes him/her an asset to the food programme (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011). He/She is therefore the best asset that can be used to better achieve the intended objective of the programme that is to increase enrolment, attendance and retention within his/her school system.

Roles of teachers as managers

Teachers have their own view on what they represent and what functions they play at their duty post (Farrell, 2013). They do understand who they are and what they represent in the context of the job they do. The role of the teacher is guided by his/her own image which is vital in the performance of his/her duties (Day, 2013). The teacher in this sense performs many roles to demonstrate who he/she is and what he/she really does. In support of what the teacher does, Stojiljković *et al.* (2012) identified some of the roles performed by teachers as managers. They include an evaluator, motivator and an organiser.

The teacher as a manager within the school system exhibits the same cultural features like any other human organisation. If a manager is anyone who possesses the authority in decision making which will lead to change of state in an organisation, the teacher therefore is a perfect manager. The teacher as manager performs the role of a monitor, resource allocator, entrepreneur, negotiator, liaison and a figurehead (Harris and Muijs, 2003; Harris and Clark, 1989). As shown in the studies by Sanders (2004) and Valli and Buese (2007), the teacher motivates students to work, evaluates the behaviours of his/her students, organises students in the performance of design task, regulates social relations in the classroom and becomes an emotional interaction partner. This gives the teacher control over the school as an organisation. As a good motivator, monitor and an evaluator to produce outcomes, students owe their allegiance to the teacher as the chief executive officer of the school.

In the Ghanaian context, the teacher is regarded as the second father. He/She exhibits the same characteristics as the father in the school. His/Her task is to manage the child to a successful life (Akyeampong and Lewin, 2002). This involves coaching and directing the life

of the student. This includes academic and non-academic aspects of the student's life. It therefore places the teacher at a respected position in the Ghanaian society (Osei, 2006). Within the school system, students do not challenge their teachers when orders are given. This order is respected in the classroom when teaching and learning is in process and also outside the school environment. Van der Geest (2002) held the view that not only teachers are respected but also all the leaders who are in authority in the Ghanaian society.

This structure empowers the teacher who sometimes make decisions concerning the future of their students which are respected by parents. It is a true reflection of the Ghanaian culture (Van der Geest, 2002, 2004). The culture of the Ghanaian is humility and respect for authority. The teacher in the Ghanaian context is seen as the embodiment of authority. He/She is tried and tested and therefore made in charge of all operations at the school level. In many small communities, the teacher is called upon for advice in community activities.

He/She is the accountant who is in charge of school finances and the planner of all school activities from the beginning to the end of the academic year. In certain circumstances, the teacher holds in trust the monies of his/her students provided by their parents for purposes of providing them food during lunch hours. How come such a person cannot be entrusted with the management of the school feeding programme within the school system in which he/she is the chief executive officer?

Within the school feeding, the teacher will be a perfect tool to effectively lead in the implementation at the school level. The role of the teacher as manager is in no doubt an advantage to enhance the effectiveness of the programme.

Methodology

The school feeding programme is run by a top-down approach. It is operated without special attention to the differences in geographical location and culture. The wholesale strategy without the teacher as the focal point faces a lot of challenges in the implementation and delivery. To ascertain the importance of the teacher in the programme delivery, a target group and a distribution of the sample size, including, but not limited to, teachers, students, circuit supervisors, opinion leaders/parents and caterers, were chosen. A total of 335 respondents were interviewed for this study. The reason for the large sample size in this study was to avoid the incidence of error in the process of making a valid inference. This did not come without a challenge. As the number of people to be interviewed was large, there was the need to establish relationship with the respondents and the schools under study. This was followed by a recognisance survey to map out the strategy on how to sample the population for the study.

Given this situation and to explore the facts on the ground, ten schools were selected in the Tamale Metropolis. The selection was done based on a purposeful sample. Each school was taken from the various educational circuits within the Metropolis. These schools were also included in the study due to their deprived nature in terms of school location, infrastructure and their previous experience in a feeding programme like the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and the WFP. For the purpose of selecting opinion leaders for this study, those selected were considered to have much information on the programme. They were also members of the school management committee. All circuit supervisors within which schools were located and all caterers in selected schools were interviewed due to their small number.

To achieve what the study sought to investigate, the case study approach was adopted. This was to understand how the programme was operated and who champions its implementation at the school. It was also to solicit the views of the various stakeholders on who runs the programme at the school level and who should be in charge. To achieve this objective, interviews and observations were conducted during the period of the study in all the selected schools. This was aided by the use of semi-structured interview guide. Most of the interview process was in the form of a conversation due to the relationship established

with various respondents. This made it possible to make follow-ups to some of the key informants within the study. It also gave the opportunity for probing questions to be asked in order to satisfy the research questions that were under study. All the people who mattered in the study were not left out during the interviews which also included the students and their parents. Observations were done mostly to see at first hand who was really in charge at the school level. It was also done to assess the level of participation of the teacher and to validate the responses of the various respondents at the school level.

Data management and analysis

To put the findings in a proper perspective, the study made use of the inductive process of analysis in order to establish the research themes. Transcription of interviews and observations notes was analysed with the help of an open coding system. To establish systematic steps in the coding of the data, memos were written to track the process of collection and analysis. After several rounds of going through the transcribed data, there was labelling and naming of concepts which led to the development of the research themes in consistence with the research questions. Initial codes developed across schools and participants included teachers' non-involvement, lack of programme awareness, trust and non-cooperation. It is evident that the programme suffered challenges which became worse from the non-involvement or the active participation of the teacher. The process indicated a concern by all who mattered that there was a system error in the running of the school feeding programme. The views expressed by stakeholders coupled with beneficiary concerns were compared with other perceptions with relevance to the issue under study.

Due to the nature of the research topic, the target group were not forthcoming with the right information. The reason has been that the school feeding programme has a lot of political interference which is an area of study yet to be commissioned after this research.

Findings and discussions

From the analysis, three themes emerged which signified the relevance of actively involving the teacher. The first issue involves trust between the caterer, the student and opinion leaders. The teacher who holds the trust of the student and the community members can easily bring on board the caterer if he/she has the lead role in the management of the programme.

The second theme was on cooperation among the participants which hindered the effective delivery of the programme. Due to the non-involvement of the teacher, the caterer finds it difficult to get opinion leaders actively involve. It is mainly due to the respect these people have for the teachers in view of their culture and experience.

Another theme identified was the lack of information about the programme on the part of the students, parents and even circuit supervisors, because students and their parents take their feed from the teacher. The gap created due to non-involvement of the teacher deepened the lack of information and also hindered information flow concerning the programme. Placing the teacher in an active role will bring on board opinion leaders, order of students and the active supervision of circuit supervisors.

These themes are echoed in the following responses.

Response from caterers

The provision of food to these children is not the issue of concern to these caterers but how and in which form should the food be provided. Providing food to students without the authorisation of their teacher raises a concern. The school system seems entirely new to these caterers. It takes a longer period to win the trust of these children. It is their teachers who already hold their trust.

A caterer at Wamale primary school indicated the following statement:

The children in this school only take instructions from their teachers. Here is the case when is break for us to serve the food, the teachers are not involved in the process. This makes it difficult to handle the children. There are certain occasions they struggle ending up pushing the food to the floor.

At Kalariga Islamic primary school the caterer said:

It is not easy for us in handling the children. We don't get support from the teachers not because they don't want to help but they feel not part of our programme. The only teacher in charge of the feeding programme sometimes passes by our kitchen to say hi.

Another caterer at Fathul-Mubeen Islamic school said:

I don't blame the teachers but the programme secretariat and the programme design. Why should they help or support us when the programme secretariat stopped us from serving them the food?

Each caterer interviewed had a concern on the need for the teacher to take the centre stage in the programme implementation. Many had the conviction that opinion leaders who represent the community were not supporting because there was no active involvement of the teacher. The society holds these teachers in high esteem. They take advice and sometimes instructions when it comes to the welfare of their children. It is therefore not possible to have active community participation without active teacher participation.

Another issue of concern for which the teacher's participation was needed is the provision of kitchen and a storage facility. As per the programme demand, the community in which a beneficiary school is located provides the kitchen and a storage facility in all schools. In almost all the schools we visited, there was no standard kitchen or store room. Only Fathul-Mubeen, Souf Watul and Sobriya Islamic schools had mini structures or shelters where they cook. The caterers always had to convey the food stuffs every day from home to the school.

When the opinion leaders were contacted, they expressed shock on the issue. I was told they only take part in school activities when invited by the teacher. In their view, it is only the teacher who has been entrusted with the future of their children. The teacher is also considered the administrator of the school system. How come the teacher is not actively involved in the process?

Response from opinion leaders

Members of the community who were selected as part of the school management committees did not even know their roles. It was revealed during the study that these members went through many training programmes to enhance their skills on school management but failed to perform their oversight responsibilities. When these selected few were contacted, many had this to say:

As a member of the committee I can perform my duty only if what we are ask do is available. How can I monitor the feeding programme in the school when I don't even know the caterer? Even teachers in the school don't know the caterer.

This indicated the level of participation of a community member. The view was consistent with almost all opinion leaders interviewed. The issue of cooperation between the caterer and the school teacher is in question.

Another community member had this to say:

We sometimes visit the school kitchen but have nothing to do with the process. When we ask questions on the type of food they are to cook we are told they cook only what is available or provided them by the caterer.

Another comment was:

What we were told as members of the committee is not what is happening on the ground. We don't know where the food is stored and who provides the food. But in the case of the world food programme when it was in this school, the process was transparent. The school had a store room for the food. A teacher was made in charge with the support of the community. There was a tally card which we all could verify how the food was used, the quantity left and who provided the food.

These were frustrations from the community members on how the school feeding programme is operated. The responses indicated their trust on the teacher in managing the programme. Their views emanate from their past experience with the teacher in handling the same programme which was successful.

Teachers' response on the feeding programme

It was not in the interest of most teachers to take part in this study. Upon several visits and my interaction with some of them, they decided to express their concerns. From my field observations in most of the schools visited before, during and after the food is being served, teachers seem not to be involved in any aspect of the process. My checks revealed that a teacher is made a member of the committee in charge of the school feeding. His/Her role is to provide the enrolment figures to the caterer and to monitor the food that is being prepared to meet good standards. Many teachers did not take it kindly on the issue of providing enrolment figures to the caterer.

A teacher at Tuutingli Nuru-Iman said:

Why should I provide my enrolment figures to someone who is not my head teacher or an officer from the Ghana Education Service? What reason should I do that?

The teachers in most of the schools consider the caterer as a business man/woman. On the part of the teacher's, the teaching profession is not a profit-making venture. It is the welfare of the students which is important. Anyone who puts profit at the forefront of his/her activities is not welcome. This explains their lack of trust and some of the reasons they cannot cooperate with the caterer.

An interaction with teachers at Zogbeli T.I. Ahmadiya, a teacher said:

How sure are you that the enrolment figures we provide the caterer are the exact she forwards to the feeding secretariat for her monies?

Another teacher also had this to say:

When we had the world food programme, it was run from within the school system. How come the current school feeding programme is run without the teacher at the forefront?

This was also a confirmation of the role teachers played in the WEP. This programme was declared a success in the success stories written across the world (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Gelli, Jukes and Drake, 2009; Bundy *et al.*, 2011). It is believed that the success of the WEP partly came from the active role of the teacher. The teacher was at the centre of the programme. Food was only supplied to WEP-operated schools. The teacher took care of the cooks and the students. This was done because it is the teacher who knows the school system and the students better. No one can cater for the students in the school better than the teacher due to the trust and cooperation between the teacher, parents and students.

Response of students

The children were very strong in their response to this research topic. When asked who was responsible for the food in the school? At Souf Watul Islamic school a student had this to say:

One woman with her NGO everyday prepares food for us. But our mothers come to help her prepare the food. That woman comes with the food in her car every morning to the school for our mothers to cook.

The students see the caterer as an outsider who needs cooperation from the teachers to operate in a good manner. Due to the lack of cooperation, he/she is not finding the place easy to operate.

At Sobriya Islamic school another student had this to say:

We don't see our teacher near the food. We only go for the food during break. Sometimes we see our mothers helping to cook the food. May be is our fathers who provide the food.

At Markaziya Islamic school another student said:

Our "Uztaz" provides the food. During break our Uztaz always asked us to go for the food.

Uztaz is the name of an Arabic instructor. He also stands in for the proprietor. This explains why he is concern about the plight of students. He took up the responsibility to always ask students to go for the food. The classroom teacher on the other hand had nothing to do with the whole process of the feeding programme. An early morning visit to the kitchen to witness who was in charge before meals are prepared revealed that there was no monitoring either by the teacher or caterer. The teacher during our visits was always the first to arrive in the school before the cooks but never showed interest in the kitchen. The caterer after handing over the daily food stuffs to the cooks only stayed at the kitchen for not more than 30 minutes.

When asked whether they like the food, many students had this to say.

A student at Zogbeli Ansuariya said:

We like, because if we don't eat it we will not get food for the afternoon at home unless evening.

Another student at Tua Sunia said:

Our mother always asks us to come to school because she has no money to cook so if we don't come we will not get food.

Also a student at Kalariga said:

Because we don't bring food to school so we like it. Because our teachers are not in charge of the food, we sometimes don't get because we struggle for the food ending up pouring the food down. Sometimes too the food they cook is very small and not everyone will get food that day.

The views of the children indicated the need for the food programme and also the need for active teacher participation in the delivery process. There are a lot of procedural inefficiencies due to the non-participation of the teacher.

Circuit supervisors' response

These supervisors are in charge of schools under their circuits which all fall within the Ministry of Education. Schools under the Tamale metropolis are classified under circuits to facilitate monitoring and supervision of teacher's work. The role of the circuit supervisor includes, but not limited to, enforcing teaching rules and regulations and any other curricular activities in the schools under his or her circuit. When some of the circuit supervisors were contacted for this study, it came out that many of them did not know much about the programme. Many of the circuit supervisors had this same concern throughout the interview process:

Monitoring the feeding programme is not considered part of my schedule. Even if I do who do I report to?

The feeding programme has got its own secretariat which is not under our ministry.

The explanation given by the supervisors indicated lack of cooperation within the programme delivery process. The programme is under the District Assemblies which are under the Ministry of Local Government. It has been recently moved to the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection but still run by the district assemblies which are under the Ministry of Local Government. The frequent shift of the programme from one ministry to

the other makes it difficult to operate and monitor. To them, any observation made could not be reported properly as it was a function of the feeding secretariat which falls under a different ministry from which they work.

These supervisors do not even have any data on the feeding programme within the schools they supervise. In one of our visits, we wanted to have a discussion with the supervisor and the caterer to see if he/she could listen to the caterer's point of view on his/her problems. The supervisors decline the meeting with the view that he/she has nothing to do even if he/she hears them. He/she rather advised that we contact the feeding secretariat. Unfortunately, the feeding secretariat does not also have control over the teachers. They therefore cannot force a collaboration of the teachers and the caterers. The supervisors and the feeding secretariat do not also collaborate. The question therefore is how can there be an effective implementation of the feeding programme when there is no collaboration. There is a disjointed allocation of the functions of the feeding programme. What could be the reason for the non-involvement of the teacher in the active implementation of the programme?

Summary

There is an indication of teacher's non-involvement in the programme delivery. This is also an indication of some of the reasons why the school feeding programme is facing a lot of challenges in the implementation process. From the target group interviewed, all have recognised the importance of the teacher in the effective management of the programme. Since he/she has managed such a programme before, it was right for him to be at the forefront of the school feeding programme.

In the view of caterers, the teachers should have been given the administrative role. The role performed by the feeding secretariat should have been assign to the teacher with the supervisory role given to the Ghana Education Service. One caterer cited the capitation grant as an example of an effective management by the teacher with the supervisory role of the Ghana education Service. If such a programme covers the whole nation involving huge sums of monies, how come such a procedure cannot be followed when it comes to the school feeding programme? If all caterers were to be directly answerable to the teacher in the various schools we operate, there will be operational effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of the programme.

The efficiency of the programme can be guaranteed when teachers commit their service. It is in the same vein that opinion leaders and circuit supervisors will commit to the programme if they feel some kind of ownership and recognition. This is supported in the work of Studdert *et al.* (2004) that stakeholders like the teacher to contribute more to a programme when there is a sense of ownership. Teachers will also do more as they have done before to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the school feeding programme only if they feel that they are in control of the programme in their various schools.

From the views of opinion leaders in the various communities, there was a strong reservation in the operations of the school feeding programme. Many could not understand why the teacher who the society holds in high esteem was not in charge of the programme. In an attempt to verify the trust of the community in the teacher in managing such a programme, we requested for the past records of the WFP from the head teacher. We cross-checked what we had from the head teacher with that of the WFP office in Tamale. Some members of the staff of the WEP were also interviewed to solicit their views on the teacher's effectiveness in the management of the programme. They indicated the willingness of teachers when it comes to the welfare of their students. They also gave instances when teachers returned food stuffs at the end of the academic year. This was also supported in the work of Alderman and Bundy (2012). They indicated how effective and efficient the teacher was in the full implementation of the WEP. Why then should the teacher not be in charge if he/she has already demonstrated his/her ability and capability of effectively and efficiently managing such a programme.

In view of their own past experience with similar programme, teachers raised the concern of accountability within the school feeding programme. For the current situation, caterers are to pre-finance the feeding. Caterers have to present the enrolment figures of the students fed for the term. The concern of many teachers was in the procedure of accounting for the number of students fed. Instead of the feeding secretariat asking for the enrolment figures from the various schools, the caterer is rather asked to forward the enrolment figures. Another concern of teachers was on issue of pre-financing by caterers. This they believe gave the caterer the choice of feeding the children with low-quality food with low nutrients level. This is because the caterers do not get their monies regularly. All these justified the need for the teacher to take control and to apply his/her previous experience in the programme.

The biggest question many teachers asked throughout the study in almost all the schools visited was why the teacher is not given a key role like the WEP. Also of concern was why the feeding programme which only benefits the students is not under the ministry of education. These questions when examined demanded a further research which was not the focus of this paper.

Conclusion

The school feeding programme has come to stay and no government no matter the resource constraints will wish to put a stop to the programme. It is a social safety policy which is globally accepted by all and will face resistance when an attempt is made to halt the programme in any country. This can be due to the protection it gives to the poor and the vulnerable in the society. It makes room for the poor to have a meal a day even if they cannot provide. The assurance of a single meal a day has helped increased the enrolment, attendance and retention in schools across the country (Abotsi, 2013; Essuman and Bosumtwi-Sam, 2013). This is a manifestation of the impact of the programme. To better enhance the operations of the programme in order to meet its objective:

- There should be a deliberate attempt to develop cooperation between the teacher and the caterer. This can be done when the teacher is given a key role in the implementation at the school level.
- There should be a move to develop trust between caterers, students and opinion leaders by actively involving the teacher in its operations.
- The operational structure should be redesigned to empower the teacher in the management of the school feeding programme. It will motivate the teacher to disseminate information to opinion leaders and to students and also ensure order of students during its daily operations.
- The caterer should be made to report to the teacher in every school they operate and also be made a permanent staff in the school. This will reduce the friction between the caterer, opinion leaders and the teacher.
- The teacher should be in charge of the resources for the programme in all programme-operated schools and not the caterer to ensure efficient resource utilisation and participation of opinion leaders.
- The teacher upon resuming control of the school feeding programme at the school level should also be directly supervised by the Ghana Education Service through the circuit supervisors in their various circuits to allay the fears of teachers' desire to be influenced by others.
- The school feeding programme should be placed under the Ministry of Education as a beneficiary ministry. It will give greater meaning to the need for teachers' active involvement. It will also enhance cooperation, trust and efficiency of the programme.

The objective of the school feeding programme to increase enrolment, attendance and retention could have been better achieved if the programme was managed with the active involvement of the teacher. The issue of trust, cooperation and lack of information flow to opinion leaders and students could easily be handled by the teacher. Taking the centre stage as has been the case with the implementation of the capitation grant, the CRS food programme and the WFP will be the best option if the school feeding is to succeed.

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Corresponding author

Issah Iddrisu can be contacted at: issah@mail.ustc.edu.cn

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