

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

**THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME ON PUPILS'  
ENROLLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION IN THE SEKYERE  
SOUTH DISTRICT OF THE ASHANTI REGION**

**BY**

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IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**SEPTEMBER 2023**

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature ..... Date .....

Name: Joyce Nana Esi Acquah

### Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the Christian Service University College

Supervisor's Signature ..... Date .....

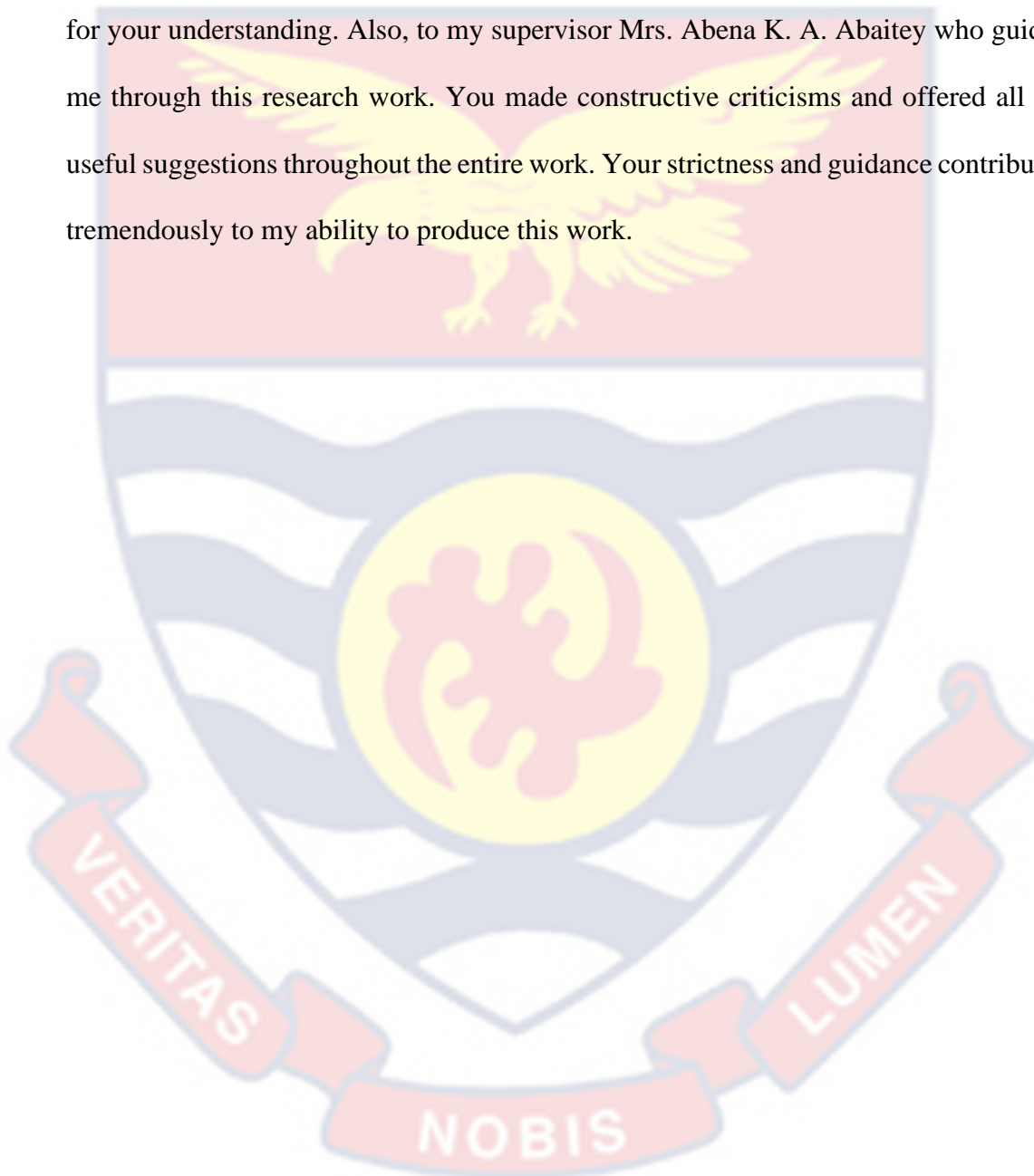
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## ABSTRACT

This study accessed the impact of School Feeding Programme on pupils' enrollment, attendance and retention in the Sekyere South District of the Ashanti Region. The change theory was adopted for the study with the conceptual framework stemming from the researcher's own construction. The study used a descriptive survey design embedded in the quantitative research methods. The target population were head teachers, teachers, and pupils from the beneficiary schools. Mixed method sampling was used to draw out two hundred and sixty-five (265) respondents the study. The secondary data was obtained from the Sekyere South District Education Office whilst the secondary data was obtained by the use of a semi-structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed by using by employing graphs, simple frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations. The study found that, schools within the Sekyere South District which are beneficiaries of the GSFP have recorded an increment in their pupils' enrollment, attendance and retention from 2008-2022 and are projected to upsurge in the years ahead. Finally, before the programme was not run in the District, pupils' welfare was not encouraging especially those from weak financial backgrounds thereby affecting their education negatively but after its implementation, significant changes were observed in pupils' attitudes towards schooling which in turn boosted their academic success, coping well at school just to mention but few. Therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ghana Educational Service should extend the program to all public basic schools to increase pupils' enrollment, attendance and retention the former and to achieve the MDGs the latter. Conclusively, the implementation committees at the Sekyere South District should continue to monitor the quality and quantity of the daily meals provided for pupils since it is a factor motivating parents to enroll and keep their children in school.

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## DEDICATION

To my late brother Emmanuel Nana Kweku Acquah.

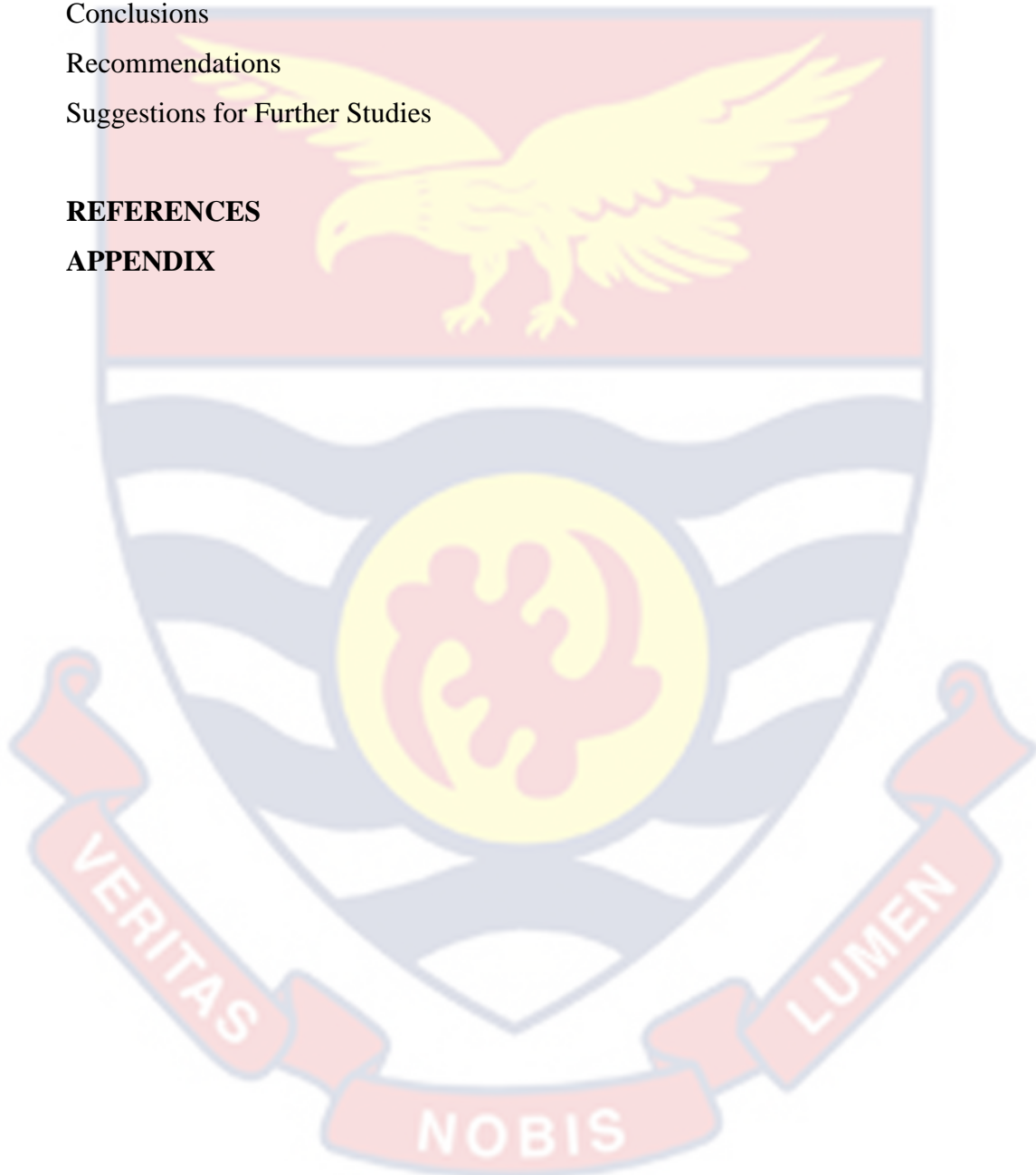


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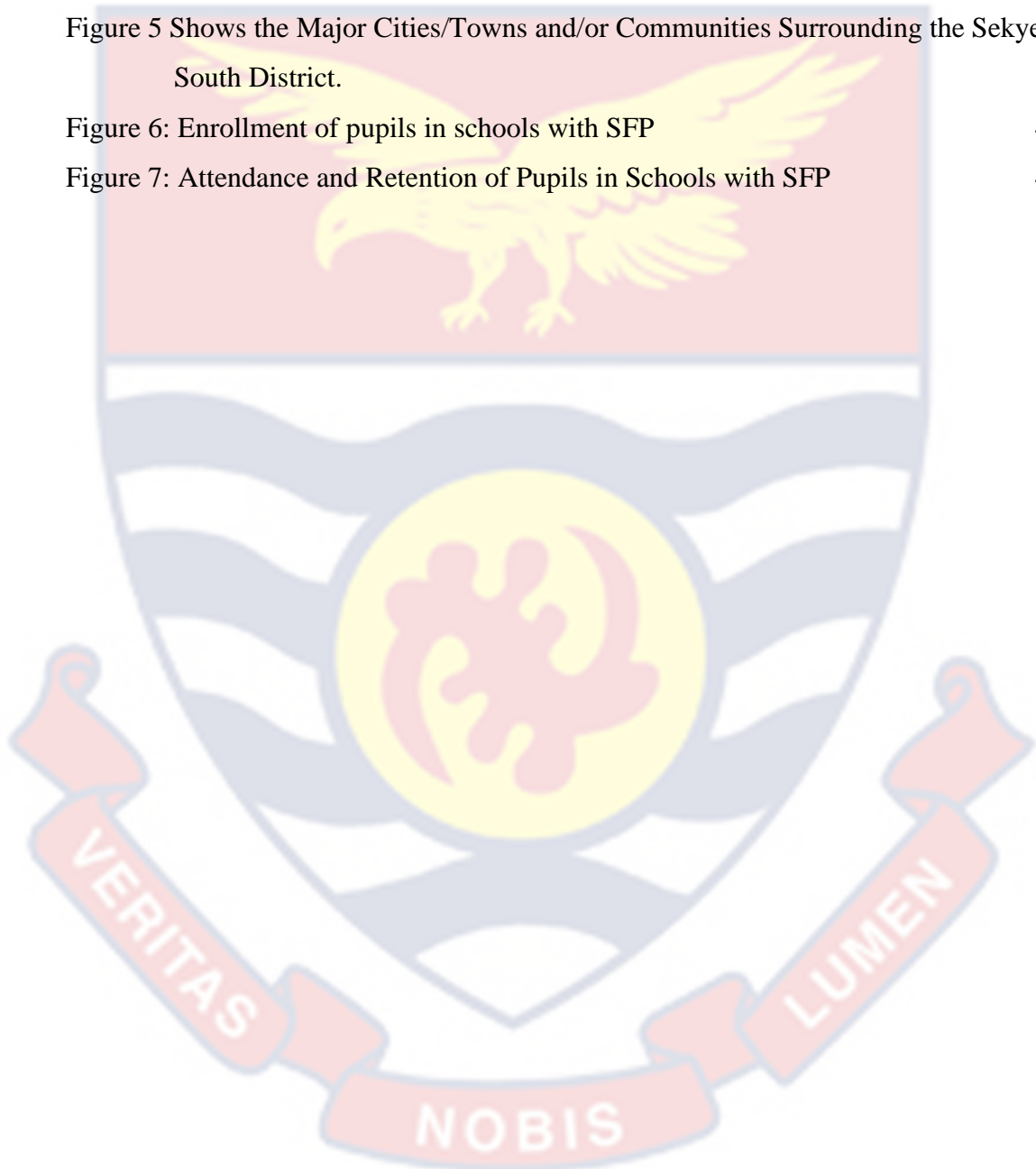
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**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AR	Ashanti Region
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GHI	Global Hunger Index
GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Programme
KEEA	Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem
NEPAD	African Union's New Partnership for African's Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFP	School Feeding Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-MDG	United Nations Millennium Development Goals

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the Study

“Education is the key”, a popular phrase albeit a myth, has been on the lips of people in many countries. This is because education has shown to play a tremendous role in the development of countries’ human capital and to many countries (Amon & Joviter, 2003). Nevertheless, there are about 57 million children over the world who are found to not have enrolled in schools, amongst most of which are found on the continent of Africa (UNESCO, 2012). Todaro and Smith (2009) observed that, young females rarely receive formal education as compared to their male age mates across almost all developing countries. Due to this discrimination against women in formal education, apart from reinforcing social inequality, economic development has been hindered. About 95 percent of children born and living in lower-and middle-income countries are not put through basic education amongst which 44 percent are from sub-Saharan Africa, 19 percent from South and West Asia as well as 14 percent from the Arab states. Girls are found to be the most (55%) amongst the children who are not enrolled in basic school and often subjected to rape and other sexual violence (Mzuza et al., 2014; UNICEF,2018).

It is the expectation of society that children and the youth in particular of Ghana who are considered the future leaders of the nation are able to grow in maturity and into responsible citizens who are capable and can contribute to the development of the country through ways within their capabilities. With good social environment and quality education, these expectations from society can be unraveled. As Hesse (1994) put it, educated individuals are better equipped to take care of themselves, their individual family members and the society at large. Education has been directly

contributing to the social advancement of society and that is why it is so treasured (Addae-Mensah, 2000). Therefore, the purpose of education is, hence, to raise the living conditions of individuals in the society. As Maslow (1943) opined, through the provision of certain psychological needs such as of food, air and water, humans are motivated. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) indicated a somewhat improvement as compared to that of 1990 GHI. However, the fact that hunger is categorized as serious was still maintained in the report.

The Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) was launched in the year 2005. It followed the recommendation by the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to make use of homegrown foods where possible to feed basic school pupils, particularly primary and kindergarten pupils. The program's introduction was part of the plan to realize the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) one and two. These goals include but not limited to the eradication of poverty and hunger as well as the achievement of the universal primary education respectively (Afoakwa, 2008). The ambition of all countries under the United Nations (UN) was to address the challenges emanating from advancing globalization. This resulted in the formulation of the MDGs in the year 2000. In the formulation of the MDGs, attention was paid to hunger and poverty as stated in the MDG number 1: To eradicate extreme hunger and poverty. SFPs are said to contribute to achieving this first MDG encouraging families to invest in children's education, send their children to school and retain them there (Chepwonky et al, 2013). SFPs have received particular attention and increasingly become a policy measure which has been adopted in both developed and developing countries (Jomaa et al, 2013; WFP, 2013). In low-income countries, poor health such as chronic protein energy malnutrition, iron-deficiency anemia contributes extensively to poor educational outcomes (Thomlison, 2017).

The principal aim of SFP is to provide meals or snacks in order to alleviate short term hunger through enabling children to learn (Nyakundi, 2017). Hunger and malnutrition are common in most developing countries, including Ghana. Most households are food insecure and children in those households usually go to school on empty stomachs (Del Rosso, 2020). Buttenheim et al. (2021) explained a potential impact of targeting children through SFP as to increase their educational achievement so as to improve their potential future productivity and earnings. Children affected by hunger and malnutrition as well as ill-health do not have the same potential to do well in school in comparison with well-nourished and healthy children (Aila, 2012). Evidence shows that high absenteeism, lack of concentration in class and early drop outs are a result of short-term hunger. All these lead to a conclusion that hunger in the long run poses major impacts on pupils' learning including diminishing cognitive abilities and reduced school performance. Therefore, SFP enhances school attendance by lowering the opportunity costs of attending school and providing additional motivation to engage in formal education which in turn leads to more time spent in school and more time spent towards learning (Buttenheim et al., 2021). Moreover, school feeding is a tool which effectively attracts millions of poor children worldwide to attend school in both developed and developing countries (WFP, 2014; UNESCO, 2010).

The main idea for the GSFP was to make sure children are fed with a hot nutritious meal each day using home grown foodstuffs. As part of the comprehensive African Agriculture Development program (CAADP) pillar three of NEPAD, the GSFP is has three key intermediate objectives; first, to reduce hunger and malnutrition amongst beneficiary schools by providing all pupils with a nutritious meal each school day, to increase enrolment and retention as well as attendance, and help to boost local

production of food by making sure the source of all foodstuffs for the GSFP come from the local food producers in the communities where the beneficiaries are based (Afoakwa, 2008).

According to a study conducted in Ghana, in just over six months of implementation of school feeding, enrolment in pilot schools rose by 20.3% compared to 2.8% in control (non-GSFP) schools in the same district. Equally, attendance was up by 39.9%, 5% and 13% in three pilot schools in the same communities/districts. All the schools enjoyed the capitation grants given to all primary schools to support their basic needs which rendered the task of attribution much easier (GSFP, 2007). Collaborating the findings as in above other authorities have suggested that school feeding improves education by increasing school enrolment/attendance, improve access to education, and by extension, enhancing children's future income-earning potentials (Hicks, 2016; Levinger, 2016). The results as in above settles the researchers research question on the impact of the feeding programme on enrolment of the pupils within the Sekyere South District (SSD) and the assertion by authorities that SF, used in combination, can increase school attendance by up to 30 percent, which in turn enhances learning opportunities and narrows the gender gap (Bennett, 2023; WFP, 2016).

Ghana is amongst the countries in Africa which have been touted to have made significant gains in the quest to poverty reduction as well as undernourishment over the last 20 years or more (Lamber, 2009). Amid these achievements, there is still a proportion of the people in Ghana living below the national poverty line. Notably, the subjects taught in Ghanaian basic schools aims at developing the citizens with the willingness as well as the ability to contribute to social development. In fact, it is of interest to note that the development of a nation is akin to the wellbeing of the citizens of that nation. The human development measure is realized as a result of the amount of

food available to an individual in a country (Kusi, 2006). Hence, it is important to reveal that the GSFP's introduction has helped increase nutritional food's availability and intake by pupils in primary and kindergarten schools. Again, the program has expanded the financial base, that is, the income of local farmers from the communities with schools that are benefiting from the GSFP as about 80 percent of foodstuffs are expected to be purchased from local farmers (Gyarko, 2011). Aside the farmers getting their foodstuffs purchased in the local fronts, there have been several jobs created for professionals such as caterers, matrons and also managers of the program in the selected schools. The program has hence helped orient the pupils and to a larger extent likewise most parents in Ghana.

Basic education is amongst the most valued investment that is tasked at improving and nurturing an economy if the country wants to create self-reliant and healthy society as well as well literate citizens. When children are fed with poor nutrition, their health deteriorates and it eventually affect their efficiency amid the educational system. It is also necessary to indicate that, children who suffer even short-term hunger stand the chance to have serious consequences on learning and adapting (Afoakwa, 2008). With education, a person is able to acquire some skills and abilities in order to help him deal with contemporary social and economic challenges. Children must be enrolled in schools and to be made to stay in school until they complete for this assertion on education to be achieved. In that way, they can contribute to their quota to the social and economic development of the nation. Over the years, Ghana has expressed concern for the health and nutritional status for primary school children due to the fact that there is a direct relationship between hunger and pupils' schooling. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is working together with the United Nations World Food Programme (UN-WFP) to eradicate child hunger through Food for Education (FFE)



programme, which aims at improving the quality of education which seems to be unsatisfactory. Sekyere South is among the districts where SFP is implemented. The district is mainly inhabited by pastoralist societies who have their unique ways of life according to their culture. Their lives are mainly characterized by uncertain mobility from one place to another in search of greener pastures for their animals. These family movements force children to drop out of school. That is why the government involved the district authority in SFPs implementation so as to minimize the problem. Despite these government efforts, there are still problems of truancy and low enrolment among school-aged children. This study therefore sought to identify the impact of the GSFP on enrollment, attendance, and retention of pupils in Sekyere South District of the Ashanti Region.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education has been recognized as a route to development of the country's human capital by various governments in Ghana. In order to pursue this agenda, there has been several educational policies by both government and non-governmental agencies. The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), the Northern Students Scholarship and the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) are some examples of the various educational policies which have been implemented by either the government in power and/or non-governmental agencies. These policies, as implemented, were to create avenues for the needy in the society and to enable the poor children be able to have better education. The GSFP was introduced by the government of Ghana in the year 2005 and was aimed at increasing the enrolment and retention in basic schools. It was also to reduce malnutrition and boost food production in the local communities (Modern Ghana, 2015; Akuamoah-Boateng & Sam-Tagoe, 2018). After 15 years since the GSFP has been enrolled, there has been serious concerns from various stakeholders

in line with the success of the policy and whether or not the objectives have been met so far. The major impediment to the implementation of the GSFP is cash flow constraints (Sulemana et al., 2013). Again, though the GSFP has increased enrollment as purported, it poses a challenge of overcrowding in the classrooms which compromises the quality of teaching especially where teachers are engaged in the supervision during mealtimes (Akuamoah-Boateng & Sam-Tagoe, 2018). In the last few years, SFPs have enjoyed massive support and attention from international organizations and many development partners, this can be attributed to the multi-faceted role of this social intervention (education, health, agriculture) in achieving development objectives in many countries and a 'perceived' demand for the programme (Birdsall et al, 2015). Yunusa (2012) noted that students in SFP have the potential for improving their performance because it enabled them to attend school regularly and studied more effectively. In a study carried out in Jamaica by the same author, children in Grade 2 scored higher in Arithmetic when they started being fed at school.

Arhin (2015) indicated that since the inception of the GSFP, public basic schools benefitting from the programme have recorded an appreciable increment in enrollment of pupils. According to Oduro-Ofori and Yeboah-Gyapong (2014), the GSFP has reduced the level of primary school drop-out in the Kwaebibrim District in the Eastern Region since it serves as a motivational tool for primary children to stay in school. A study conducted on the GSFP in the Garu-Tempene District in Ghana revealed that the programme increased gross enrollment rate by 24% among participating schools but decreased by 7% in non-participating schools (Bukari & Hajara, 2015, p. 301). The Ghana News Agency (2014) observed an increment of pupils from 413,493 since the implementation of the GSFP in the year 2006/2007 to 1,739,352 pupils in 2013/2014.s

Sulemana et al. (2013) studied the challenges and prospects of the SFP in Northern Ghana whereas Akuamoah-Boateng and Sam-Tagoe (2018) studied issues and challenges of GSFP in the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipality Ghana. However, none of these scholars studied the impact of SFP on enrollment, attendance and retention of pupils in Sekyere South District of the Ashanti Region. Therefore, there is a gap and this study fills it.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of the GSFP on pupils' enrollment, attendance and retention in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To assess the effect of GSFP on Pupils' enrolment, attendance and retention in Sekyere South District
2. To assess the welfare statuses of Pupils before and after the Implementation of the GSFP in Sekyere South District
3. To evaluate the benefits of GSFP to Pupils' in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region after its implementation

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the effect of GSFP on Pupils' enrolment, attendance and retention in Sekyere South District
2. What is the welfare statuses of Pupils before and after the Implementation of the GSFP in Sekyere South District
3. What are the benefits of GSFP to Pupils' in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region after its implementation

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provided its contribution to the development of the GSFP policy by way of the insights into enhancing the administration of the program. Added to this, stakeholders would understand better the impacts of the GSFP on the Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. It also provides proper orientation to the system that monitors indicators which reduce the effectiveness of meals, inter-school needs assessment indicators (school infrastructure, learning materials, kitchen and eating facilities), teachers and school management committee, opportunity for school administrators to come together and share information with regards to the GSFP. The findings from this study provided sufficient base to critique the management which is in charge of the GSFP currently in order to sustain the policy. Again, the study gives policy makers relevant information that can be transferred into other educational policies which seek to achieve a universal basic education in the long run. With a better understanding of the impact of the GSFP on enrolment and retention, there is a better avenue to create new structures which deliver on developmental aspirations of the schools which benefits from the program, the district and the entire country such as more children getting into schools without compromising on quality of education. Finally, the findings generated by the study shall serve as empirical literature to future researchers that shall delve into similar areas of study.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The scope of this research has been limited to enrollment, attendance, and retention of basic school pupils in the Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. It entails an exploration into the impact or influence of enrollment in public basic schools in the district which are benefiting from the GSFP. In the process, more attention was given to the actual role played by the GSFP amid enrolment and retention. Enrollment

and retention could be due to many factors and so this study focused its scope exclusively on the factors associated with the GSFP, a development intervention. The unit of analysis was therefore limited to people with knowledge of enrolment in public schools in the Sekyere South District as well as operations of the GSFP. Finally, only the sub-themes; Impacts of GSFP on Enrollment, Effects of GSFP on Attendance and Retention, Statuses of Pupils' Welfare before the Implementation of GSFP, and How GSFP Benefit Pupils were considered.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Due to time and financial constraints, the study was limited to a few of the schools in the Sekyere South District which could make the results less effective in terms of generalizing the findings, however, a thorough investigation was done on the selected schools and information gathered is believed to be of great importance to policy makers as well as the schools in the district.

### **Organization of the Study**

The study is structured under five chapters. Chapter one, which has the introduction of the study constituted the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study, as well as organization of the study Chapter two dealt with the review of relevant literature pertaining on the problem under investigation. Chapter three embodied the research methodology and explicates how the study was conducted. Chapter four constitutes the data analysis, findings and discussions. Chapter five puts together the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of the GSFP on the Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. This chapter looks at the theoretical review as well as the opinions and studies that relate to the topic under study. The assessment and evaluation of the GSFP in whole, its objectives and impact compared among others have all been reviewed in this chapter.

#### Theoretical Review

The theoretical review gives significant empirical information on SFP and other related concepts. The influence of GSFP on enrolling, attendance, and retention difficulties of the pupils under study was investigated using concepts from Change Theory. A framework is essential for guiding research, assuring coherence, and defining the study's bounds (Bak, 2004). Theories and constructs are similar to spectacles in that they allow the researcher to see the item of interest more clearly. This agrees with Vitahl et al. (2013) who defined theoretical review as a well-developed, coherent account of an event or phenomena. In other words, theoretical viewpoints and assumptions about what counts as knowledge, the nature of that knowledge, and how it is gained allow a set of data to be interpreted. Although theories come in a variety of shapes and sizes, many experts agree that they aid in the interpretation and comprehension of global events. One of the most important roles of theory is to use concepts to organize experience. It also selects pertinent elements and data from the vast array of "facts" that the social phenomenon researcher is confronted with (Coser, 1981). A theory's objective is to provide tools for interpreting collected facts, to minimize knowledge fragmentation by ordering, to focus the investigation, and to

provide theoretical explanations and a deeper understanding of what is being researched. Inconsistency is a major criticism addressed against the use of theories. In general, a study's primary concepts and constructs should be consistent with the theory's framework, which reduces the study's originality. Furthermore, because a theory establishes a standard for scholarly discourse that does not extend beyond the confines of an academic discipline, the logic of theoretical discourse is too abstract to be applicable to practitioners' experiences.

### *The Change Theory*

The change theory model is built on a three-step process that gives a high-level approach to change (i) Unfreeze; (ii) Transition; and (iii) Freeze. It provides a structure for a change agent to undertake a change endeavor which is always delicate and must be cohesive and feasible. The Kurt Lewin model's three phases outline how to encourage people to change: A change agent will implement new processes and reassign duties but change can only be successful if participants accept it and help put it into practice (Lewin, 1935). This may be observed in the GSFP's efforts to entice pupils to school by providing them with meals. Habits and routine develop naturally once a structure has been in place for a while. The organization as a whole will go in the right way thus, with the GSFP in place, the habit of coming to school will be created and the program's supervisors and implementers will likewise do the right thing. It's possible that people or systems have gotten off track. For example, actions that are no longer important or valuable are nevertheless performed out of habit, thus, even if learners are provided with food, they may choose to stay out of school because they are accustomed to absenting themselves under the guise of hunger without anybody challenging their justifications. The same can be true about the children's parents who may reassign their children rather than releasing them to school. There could be

blunders on the part of the management team. People may have learnt to perform things in a certain way without considering alternative, more efficient approaches. This conduct must be checked, resulting in the theory's unfreezing character.

Unfreezing entails helping people gain perspective on their daily activities, unlearn undesirable habits, and consider fresh approaches to achieving their goals (Lewin, 1935). This may have an impact on all or some of the GSFP's stakeholders. In order to set the wheels of change in action, there must be constant communication and an open-door policy. Change can begin if team members have prepared their thoughts and are willing to change. If a change process is to be effective, it must be very dynamic. It will most likely take some time and include a period of transition. People will have to take on new activities and responsibilities in order to enhance efficiency, which will need a learning curve. A change process must be viewed as an investment both in terms of time and resources. The full impact of change can only be realized if it is made permanent (Hussain et al., 2018). Once the organizational adjustments have been implemented and the structure has regained its efficacy, every effort should be taken to solidify the changes and ensure that the new situation becomes the norm.

More adjustments will be made in the future but once the structure has figured out how to better its operations, "freezing" will allow the individuals to thrive in the new environment and take full advantage of the shift. To avoid people reverting to old behaviors, a performance and reward system must be built, achievement must be acknowledged, and a force-field analysis must be performed to eliminate all possible barriers.



## Overview of the GSFP

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana is the first among the 10 nations to implement School Feeding Programme (SFP) formed to the standards of the New Partnership for Africa Development. The planning and establishment of the GSFP begun in 2004 and the programme have been in operation till date (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014; NEPAD, 2005). The GSFP is an enterprise of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3 of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The Programme is part of Ghana's efforts towards the attainment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN-MDGs) on hunger, poverty and primary education. GSFP is consistent with other major policies and development strategies of the Government (GSFP–AOP, 2011). The GSFP was envisioned to serve around a million school-going and potential school-going children in the 138 districts of the country in the year 2010 alone (NEPAD, 2005). The continuing purpose of the GSFP is to play its part in poverty reduction and food security and to grow school enrolment, attendance and retention (GSFP–AOP, 2011). The SFP is founded to rely on locally grown foods, which should support local food production and enhance market entrance for deprived resource farmers. The government aims to realise these objectives through an increase in jobs and income level of farmers at the community level and the entire nation at large (Ghana, 2006). Moreover, better availability, access and consumption of food crops at community level are expected to improve food safety.

Figure 1: Objectives and Expected Outputs

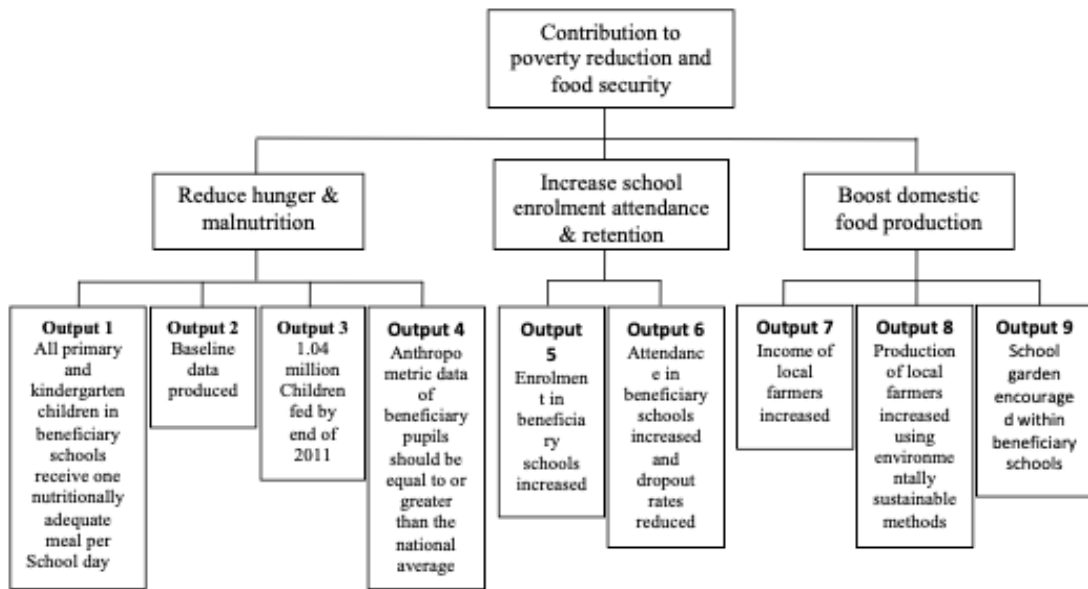


Figure 1: An illustration of the GSFP's full objectives and its anticipated output

Source: GSFP (2011)

### School Feeding and School Enrollment

According to the World Food Programme [WFP] (2004), school feeding has existed and used through the years to mean the delivery of meals or snacks at school to ease children's hunger and malnutrition during the school day. School feeding can also be stated as in-school meals only. School feeding has increasingly come to represent a more varied and comprehensive set of uses of food for the achievement of educational outcomes (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014). According to Collins Thesaurus, (2002) the term school enrollment means admission, enlisting, recruitment or signing in of students to undergo training. According to the WFP (2004), the effect of the SFP on enrolment cannot be overstated. Kazianga et al. (2009) found a positive association between the SFP and school enrollment, academic performance, and cognitive development. Likewise, Akanbi (2011) identified a significant growth in the rates of enrollment and attendance in schools after the introduction of the SFP in Nigeria.

National	No. of pupils	No. of pupils	No. of pupils	No. of pupils	No. of pupils
	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Ashanti Region	8972	119360	120093	154598	186,132
Brong Ahafo	5701	61921	63375	87632	105,845
Central	7796	26705	33730	40198	42,409
Eastern	10161	35154	38991	47547	50,316
Greater Accra	14817	97407	103002	121301	140,501
Northern	3084	14588	16191	33699	41,065
Upper West	2457	5598	6281	11687	19,781
Upper East	3886	11366	12012	19428	32,301
Volta	4531	11769	14671	20483	29,213
Western	3370	29630	32843	43452	49,853
Total	64,775	413,498	441,189	580,025	697,416

**Figure 2: An Enrollment Trend in Ghana by Regions from 2005 to 2010.**

**Source:** GSFP Annual Operating Plan (2011)

Alderman et al. (2012) understudied the impacts of SFP in Northern Uganda and found a substantial increase in school enrollment and attendance in primary schools as a result of the SFP in the first five years of implementation. Alderman et al. (2012) nonetheless, cited that the impact of the SFP varies by location depending on the type of SFP implemented. Moore and Kunze (1994) also found a positive relationship between school enrollment and school cafeterias. They reported that in Burkina Faso, schools with canteens have higher enrollment rates than schools without a canteen system. Moore and Kunze (1994) also found that school canteens have positive influence on school attendance, academic performance, and educational success. These results, however, contradict the findings of Meme et al. (1998) who reported that there is no difference in the enrollment rates among schools with canteens and schools without a canteen system in Kenya.

One significant objective of the GSFP is to increase basic school enrollment, attendance and retention of school pupils (Odame, 2014). Therefore, SFPs are hypothesized to change schooling decision for households who would not have sent their children to school (Adelman et al., 2008). This behavioural change by parents and their children is expressed in the rate of increase in such results as enrolment, attendance and retention (Lawson, 2012). The following studies among others recounted the positive impact of GSFP on behavioural outcomes (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014; Gyasi et al., 2018; Konzabre, 2018; Kudus, 2011; Mahama, 2017; Milledzi et al., 2017; Nyarko, 2014; Odame, 2014; Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014; Osei-Fosu, 2011; Serebour, 2017; Tagoe, 2018; Yendaw & Dayour, 2015). To buttress the notion, one of the beneficiary pupils stated “...When I eat, I become alert and able to concentrate. And when I eat, I become happy and able to focus on class activities” (Milledzi et al., 2017, p. 112). Aside from the increase in pass rate as a result of SFP, Nyarko (2014) found that the intervention improved students' thinking abilities, understanding, and concentration.

In the Tamale metropolis, one hot nutritious meal per day contributed to an increase in enrollment, attendance and retention (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014). However, there are other factors that also contributed to school enrollment, attendance and retention. In the Savelugu/Nantong, South Tongu, districts and WA municipality, apart from the increase in enrolment, attendance and retention, SFPs also led to girls having access to education and the reduction in the incidence of sexual activities among them (Kudus, 2011; Mahama, 2017; Milledzi et al., 2017; Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014). Some studies report on the impact of SFP on health and nutritional outcomes. Outcomes that these studies measured include calories, nutrients and morbidity and illness which they all almost found its positive impacts. Some sample studies reported other positive

impacts emanating from the SFP. For instance, short-term hunger was mentioned to have reduced by (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014; Kudus, 2011; Mahama, 2017; Tagoe, 2018). SFP had an impact on reducing school drop-out rate among beneficiaries of school meals (Mahama, 2017; Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014; Tagoe, 2018).

Households' income increases due to the supply of farm products to schools participating in the GSFP and the saving culture of parents who would have given their child's school feeding money if the SFP had not been in place was reported by (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014; Konzabre, 2018; Kudus, 2011; Mahama, 2017; Milledzi et al., 2017; Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014; Tagoe, 2018). Stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa are promoting girl-child education due to the many socioeconomic factors limiting the girl-child education. SFP is one social invention that has been used to encourage girls' enrolment in schools and it has been reported to have a positive impact on girls' enrolment (Konzabre, 2018; Kudus, 2011; Mahama, 2017). While Mahama (2017) reported that the SFP has decreased the incidence of sexual escapade and early child marriage among girls due to their continued stay in school, the study concluded that teenage pregnancy was the leading factor in the girls' school dropout in Ghana.

Kamaludeen (2014) investigated the effect of Ghana's school lunch program on enrolment, attendance, and retention in Ga south municipal schools. The study's goal was to see how the GSFP affected student enrollment, attendance, and retention in the beneficiary basic schools in Ga South Municipality. The study's target audience included participating schools as well as other program stakeholders. The GSFP public relations officer, district desk officer, school implementation committee member, circuit supervisor, and GES school health programme officer, school implementation committee member, head teacher, class teacher, students, parents, and caterers served as the units of analysis. Random and non-random sampling methods were employed to

select ten schools and a sample size of 105. Questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides, and observation were used to collect information from respondents. Questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides, and observation were used to collect information from respondents. The study highlighted some of the GSFP's successes and challenges. The following accomplishments stand out: an increase in enrolment, attendance, and retention; an increase in student interest in learning and cognitive capacity; and job creation. Meal quality and quantity, caterer recruitment and training, procurement and value chain, de-worming of benefit pupils, non-availability of school kitchens and canteens, and monitoring and evaluation are all topics that need to be addressed further.

However, the impact of SFPs on the academic performance of pupils has been embraced with mixed feelings. It was observed that although SFPs motivate parents to enroll their children in school, its impact on academic performance is mixed and depends on various factors within the context in which the programme is set. Uduku (2011) opined that SFPs would best improve the performance of pupils when coupled with adequate learning materials, physical facilities and teacher motivation. In Kenya, the SFP to public schools had shown to increase academic performance compared to schools with no SFP (Chepkwony et al., 2013). Further, the study carried in the private schools in Nigeria observed that providing food to learners during school time had contributed to learner's attention and academic performance. The supplied food in schools had increased school attendance and reduced dropout among the community schools. In Bangladesh a programme of school-based food distribution had increased attendance by 20% compared a 2% decline of non-feeding school (Ahmed, 2014). In Jamaica, it was indicated that the learners aged between 7-11 years in food insecure family unit scored lower in arithmetic test compared those supported by school meals.

The school feeding programme significantly had increased learners' performance. Adelman et al. (2018) pointed out that literacy scores had decreased to a sample of students who received home food than students who were received school food.

According to Jomaa et al. (2011), SFP are beneficial in increasing class attendance, decreasing student drop-out rates, and improving academic performance. According to Afridi (2021), enrolment (both gross and net) is not a real indication of participation. He emphasized the importance of using indicators such as daily attendance and absenteeism to accurately indicate involvement. He went on to say that low attendance rates can be a real representation of the school's quality. Improvements in attendance, according to Kristjansson et al. (2017) and Powell et al. (2018), can increase academic achievement because the school lunch serves as the foundation for students' attendance, lowering drop out and absenteeism. Galloway et al. (2019) observed that school feeding programs influenced what is served at home for families who can afford to buy some food, but for families who have a restricted food supply or lack finances, fewer changes are seen at home. It can be argued that even if their children are fed at school, very poor and vulnerable families may not see much of a difference in their situation.

Children from such backgrounds may be able to reduce their short-term hunger through the school meal program, but the program may not have a meaningful impact on their life. Kazianga et al. (2019) found that school feeding enhanced enrollment and attendance, particularly among girls, in Burkina Faso. Powell et al. (2018) and Jacoby et al. (2016) observed favorable attendance benefits in Jamaica, Peru, and Uganda, but negative attendance impacts in Burkina Faso, particularly for girls. This was due to the fact that, on average, girls would not have attended school if the program had not existed. Thus, as and when their services were required at home, they would not attend

school. Few studies on school feeding use randomized controlled evaluation, and for those that used RCT generated some mixed result on the impacts of School Feeding Programmes on learning outcomes (Bundy et al., 2019; Kristjansson et al., 2017). Adelman et al. (2018) identified an evidence gap of the effect of school feeding on age at school entry, and Alderman et al. (2010) indicated a higher impact of the programme on the age at which the child is enrolled and a lower impact on grade repetition but showed no effects on test scores.

Further, a study in Chile by McEwan (2010) on the impact of school meals on educational outcomes found very small effects of the programme on interschool poaching but showed high effects on attendance. Evidence on the impact of school feeding on learning and test scores have varying results. Ahmed (2014) for which the programme shows increasing effects in language and no impact on Mathematics. Whaley et al. (2013) showed that the pathway for which the impact of the meal influences outcomes can help to determine the level of impact. Generally, the consensus is that in-school feeding can take over teaching, instruction and learn time, but it is the most useful tool to ensure that not only are school children fed but also, they are able to learn on a full stomach. The effects of in-school meals tend to benefit children more.

School feeding can boost test results when children are trained in a cooperative learning atmosphere and are involved in daily activities that promote the child's talents. Some countries serve breakfast at school because it is considered that eating breakfast promotes cognitive development and learning outcomes. In a study on the impact of breakfast on cognitive development, Pollitt et al. (2018) discovered that having breakfast before class helps kids do better academically. Their research on school breakfast found that it improved cognition and test results. According to Edward and Evers (2021), eating breakfast enhances students' concentration and attentiveness.



Grantham-McGregor et al. (2018) discovered that providing breakfast boosted students' attention to the activity at hand significantly. Children who eat breakfast before heading to school are better able to engage and learn. Kremer and Vermeersch (2014) discovered that school meals improve test scores in schools where the instructor is experienced and regularly attends class. When schoolchildren are served a regular lunch before school, these arguments hold water. Some students from low-income families may not have breakfast before school and are more likely to go hungry until it is time for the school lunch or midday meal.

### **GSFP and Nutrition**

Malaria, vaccine-preventable diseases, diarrhea, and acute respiratory infections account for nearly 90% of morbidity and 80% of death in children under the age of five, according to the Federal Ministry of Education (2007). Malnutrition is a contributing factor in more than half of all deaths. Furthermore, for those children who survive, childhood entails exposure to other dangers, such as hunger. It was also discovered that in Nigeria, avoidable illness accounts for 49 percent of school absences. Not only does this condition have a detrimental impact on school enrollment (especially for girls), attendance, and retention, but it also has a negative impact on learning achievement. As a result, the SFP is an excellent remedy to malnutrition. Appropriately planned school feeding programs, according to Akanbi (2011), will expand access to education and learning while also improving children's health and nutrition, especially when integrated into a comprehensive school health and nutrition program.

Participating children's nutritional intake is predicted to improve as a result of the SFPs. For example, in a randomized, controlled trial in Jamaica, delivering breakfast to undernourished vs adequately nourished children yielded beneficial results: both height and weight improved significantly in the breakfast group compared to the

control group (Powell et al. 1998). Compared to the control group, children who got breakfast at school increased their dietary intake of energy by 2%, protein by 28%, and iron by 4% (Jacoby et al., 1996). A study of a big school lunch program in Sao Paulo, Brazil, looked at the influence of the program on calorie and protein consumption by students. Participation in the program was linked to an increase in calorie and protein availability of 357 calories and 8.5 grams (Dall Acqua, 1991).

Between 1978 and 1995, Pollit (1995) examined various research undertaken in Chile, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The author came to the conclusion that brain function is susceptible to short-term changes in nutrition sources. This is especially true for children who are malnourished. Omitting breakfast has an effect on young children's brain function, notably in terms of the speed and accuracy with which they retrieve information in working memory. This research has significant ramifications for the underdeveloped world, where a huge number of schoolchildren are malnourished.

In 1983, researchers looked at 115 youngsters aged 12 to 13 who were enrolled in three courses at a poor rural school. The other two classes functioned as controls while one class was provided school breakfast. School achievement, attendance, and weight growth were all assessed as part of the impact evaluation. A variety of examinations were used to assess student achievement, including arithmetic, spelling, and reading. Over the course of two semesters, the children were observed. After the first semester, the treatment group outperformed the control group in terms of school attendance and arithmetic scores, but there was no difference in weight increase. After accounting for school attendance, academic improvement remained significant, indicating that lowering hunger during school hours may have an impact on arithmetic learning (Powell & Grantham-McGregor 1998).

## **GSFP and Attendance and Retention**

According to Akanbi (2011), the program has increased the confidence of pupils in public primary schools, resulting in regular and punctual school attendance, reduced truancy and absenteeism, increased retention and participation in curricular activities by pupils because they know they will be given free meals during recess. UNICEF country representative Akanbi (2011) stated that feeding each kid with a balanced meal that is enough in calories, protein, vitamin, and minerals will not only help them prepare for effective learning but will also encourage improved attendance. In terms of attendance and retention, ESP schools had a 56 percent average attendance rate in 1997. As of now, this has risen to an average of 89 percent. In 1997, there were 55,624 pupils enrolled in 423 elementary schools that received a hot meal. Currently, 274,200 children attend school and enjoy a hot lunch every day in 1,096 primary schools and 50,200 children in 342 pre-schools (DAP, 1997-2001). A review of a school food program in Jamaica indicated that the treatment class had better school attendance and retention after the first semester than the control classes (Powell & Grantham-McGregor, 1998). Ahmed (2004) discovered that in Bangladesh, mothers' perceptions of SFP are positive, with a high percentage of responses indicating that SFP has a beneficial impact on participating children's concentration on academics, interest in attending school, health, and morbidity.

In a study of the school lunch program in Orissa, India, Levinger (1986) discovered positive relationships between SFPs, attendance, retention, and enrolment. However, in both cases, the choice of schools for the feeding program may have influenced this. The researchers from Orissa compared data on enrollment, attendance, absenteeism, and dropout rates between schools with and without feeding programs. Based on the survey and other official records, the researchers divided the state into

two strata: (1) four predominantly tribal districts where virtually all accessible schools were in the feeding program, making it impossible to draw a comparative sample of schools without SFPs; and (2) nine nontribal districts where schools with and without SFPs could be selected at random and matched on various criteria.

### **Challenges of SFP**

Chelangat (2011) opined that there are numerous factors that affect the successful implementation of the SFP in schools. Some of these factors include lack of adequate financial resources to sustain the program, problems associated with the policy and regulatory framework in charge of the SFP implementation, and the lack of community and parental involvement in the program. Various literatures have been reviewed on the challenges facing the implementation of the SFP in schools.

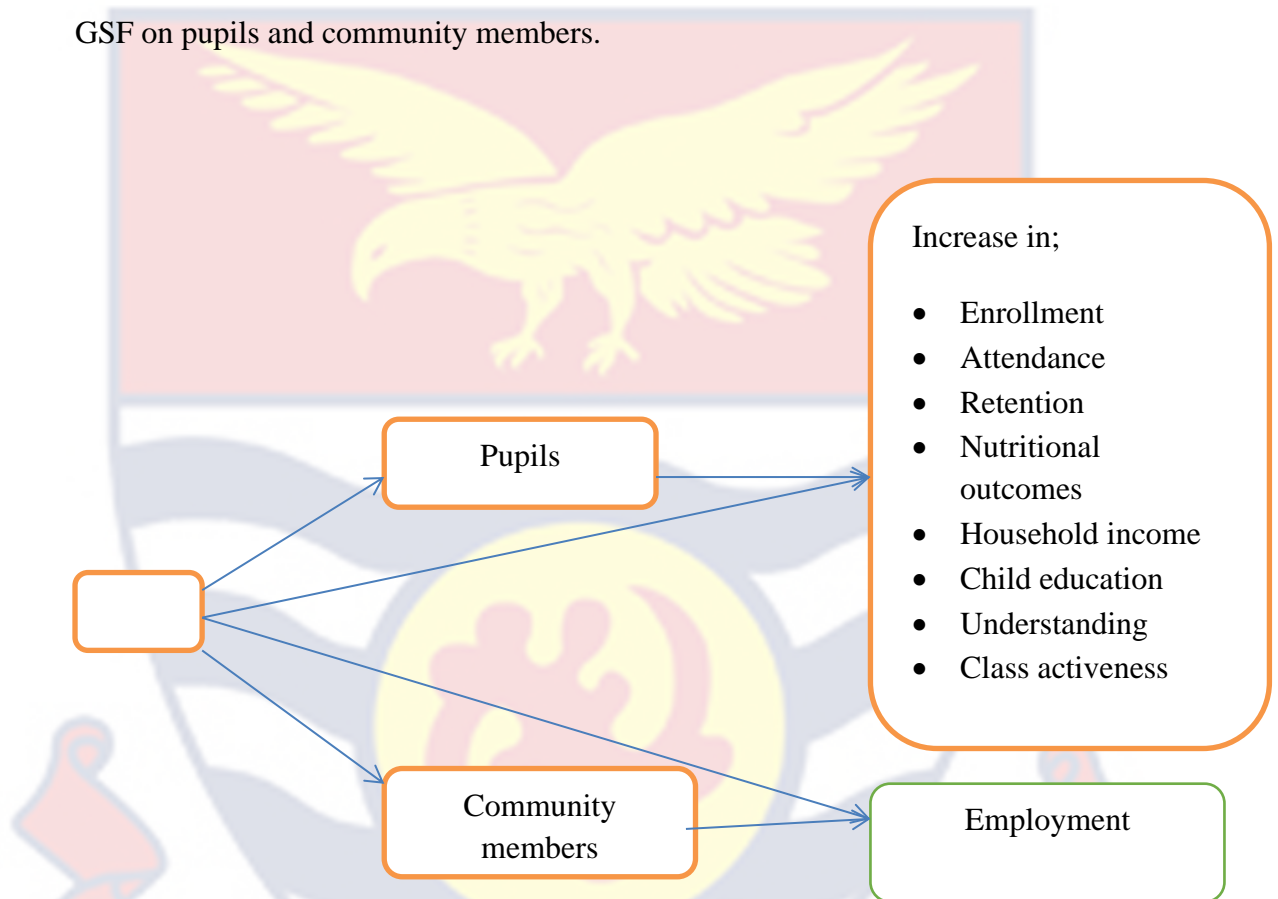
***Lack of Financial Resources;*** According to Koontz and Weirich (2001), the availability of financial resources is a major factor to consider when implementing a national program or policy. Just like any other national program, the successful implementation of a school feeding program depends on a strong financial commitment typically by the government and all other interested parties to fund the program. Ayieke (2005) also mentioned that national programs like the SFP should be included in the government fiscal budget spending for the year according to the national planning process. In addition to this, money allocated to the program must also be distributed to the appropriate institutions on a timely basis to support the program (Ayieke, 2005; Nkethia, 2011). However, according to Kootnz and Wierch (2001), the unstable source of funding for SFPs continues to be one of the major challenges of the program. Similarly, Olubayo et al. (2013) also found that even though there are resources allocated to the spending on the SFP, there is no proper spending plan on how the funds are distributed in Nigeria.

*Institutional Coordination and Sustainability:* Collaboration with key institutions of the GSFP including DICs, SICs and the technical ministries has not been very effective. Although the SICs have been established most of them are not functional. Reporting by the DICs to their respective DAs and the national secretariat has not been effective. Collaboration with the decentralized structures of the technical ministries needs strengthening (GSFP Annual Operating Plan, 2011) Similarly, Nkethia (2011) found that schools in Kenya that receive resources directly from the government to carry out the SFP reported delay in the timely distribution of funds to them affecting their ability to implement the SFP successfully and in a timely manner. As a result of this, some of the children in these schools are not able to receive adequate meals to sustain them. Furthermore, the few schools that provide enough food for the children are usually not able to meet the basic nutritional elements specified under the program (Nkethia, 2011).

Also, several studies show that food alone does not guarantee improved nutritional status. For instance, a study in Ethiopia found that differences in food availability and access had limited effect on the differences observed in child nutritional status (Pelletier et al., 1995). This could be because a child's nutritional status is a function of not only the quality and quantity of the dietary intake but also a function of morbidity, child caring and feeding practices, and household variables such as income and parental education. Additionally, in developing countries, poor health status of children is exacerbated by poor and inadequate health facilities and services, immunization, safe water and sanitation, and health education programmes. Some reviews even show that food-based interventions alone have little measurable impact on nutritional status, morbidity or mortality levels except in crisis situations (Clay & Stokke, 2000).

### Conceptual Framework for the Study

A conceptual framework is a graphical representation of the things to be studied comprising key variables and constructs and their presumed relationship (Miles et al., 2014). The framework presented in Figure 2.3 demonstrates the perceived impact of GSF on pupils and community members.



**Figure 3: Conceptual Framework for the Study**

**Source:** Researcher's Own Construction (2022)

While the GSFP creates jobs for community members (cooks, secretariats, etc.), it also increases enrolment, attendance, retention, nutritional results, household income, female child education, understanding, and classroom activity for students. All of the preceding are positive ramifications of the GSFP. However, the focus of this study is solely on the impact of the GSFP on pupils.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This part of the study deals with the procedures of carrying out the study. It deals with research design, profile of the study area, population, sampling and sampling procedure, the types and sources of data. It further considered the validity, piloting, and reliability of the questionnaire, data collection procedures, its analysis likewise ethical issues that were considered.

#### Research Design

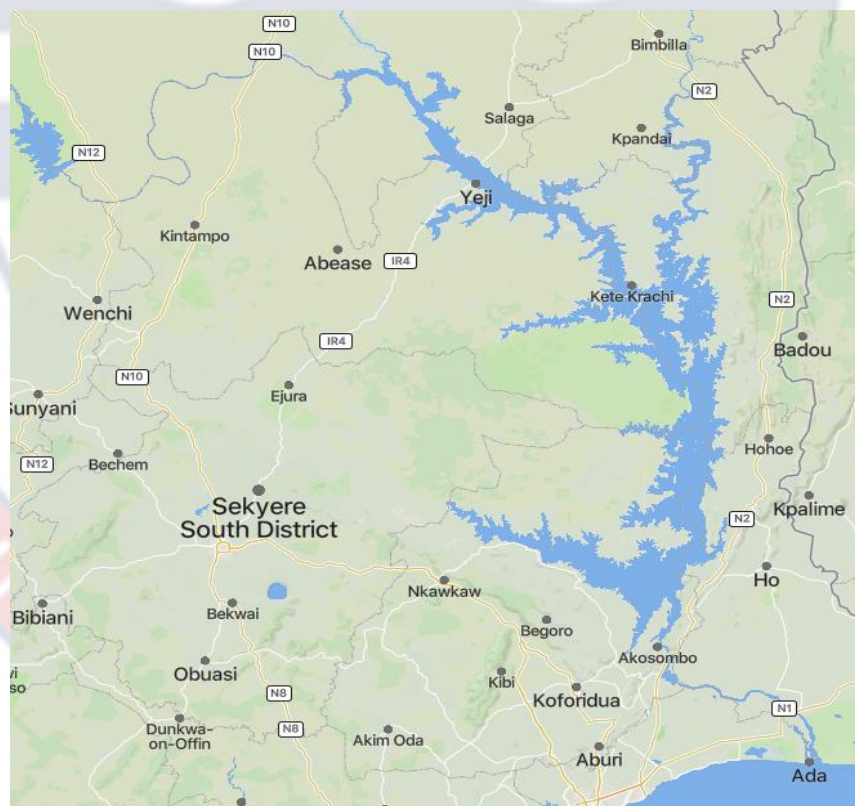
A research design refers to the plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). The study used a descriptive survey design to analyze data collected on the impact of SFP on enrollment, attendance and retention of pupils in Sekyere South District of the Ashanti Region. Descriptive survey research design is about “what is, how and why certain things happen (Borg & Gall, 2009). Descriptive research design uses observational and survey method in data collection (Borg & Gall, 2009) to address research objectives. Therefore, with the descriptive survey design, this study was able to identify the impact of the GSFP on enrollment of pupils into benefited schools, the impact of the GSFP on retention and attendance of pupils in beneficial schools, and the impact of the GSFP before and after its implementation in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region.

The approach is a typical tentative method used by all scientific disciplines. According to Harwell (2011), this method enhances objectivity, generalizations with regards to findings, and are naturally concerned with prediction. The approach was used because it is rigorous and helps for easy comprehension of relationships between

variables. Further justification for adopting this method is in its inherent flexibility and interactive nature which makes it ideal in data collection on the problem under review.

### Study Area

The study was conducted in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The Sekyere South District, formerly the Afigya-Sekyere District, is one of the District Assemblies that make up the Ashanti Region (AR) of Ghana. The district shares administrative boundaries with the Ajura Sekyedumasi District to the North, the Mampong Municipal and Sekyere East to the East, Kwabere East to the South and the Offinso Municipal to the West. It lies within latitudes  $60^{\circ}50'N$  to  $70^{\circ}10'N$  and longitudes  $10^{\circ}40'$  to  $10^{\circ}25'W$  (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).



**Figure 4: District map of Sekyere South**

**Source:** Ghana Statistical Service (2010)





**Figure 5 Shows the Major Cities/Towns and/or Communities Surrounding the Sekyere South District.**

**Source:** Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 Population and Housing Census

All these communities have access to at least basic education infrastructure and hence basic education. The Agona township serves as the capital of the Sekyere south District. Due to that, it contains several educational units under the district assembly with Presbyterian, Catholic, Methodist and Islamic all having units there. All these categories of schools have the opportunity to benefit from the GSFP.

### **Population**

Zikmund and Babin (2013) defined a population as a collection of units aimed to be investigated by the research effort. The population for this study were the entire schools in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. The target population comprised head teachers, teachers and pupils from the beneficiary schools in the Sekyere South District.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedures**

Sampling is defined as a subset or collection of some units of the universe or population (Amoah & Eshun, 2015). In this study, the researcher employed mixed method sampling to select the respondents. Mixed method sampling strategies involve the selection of units or members for a piece of research by using both probability sampling and non-probability (purposive) sampling strategies (Teddlie & Yu, 2017). Five (5) towns namely Wiamoase, Bipoa, Agona, Kona and Tano Odumase were purposively selected for the study because they were the prominent towns with highest number of pupils who were beneficiaries of the GSFP. In all, four (4) schools each were selected for the research using a simple random method where all schools were tagged with numbers and handpicked. Using a sample size calculator with confidence level of 95% and a population size of 2460 pupils and teachers, a sample size of 333 was obtained. Through quota sampling, teachers, headteachers and pupils were randomly selected for each cluster of schools in each town. Out of the 350 questionnaires

distributed (additional 17 added to cater for nonresponse) a total of two hundred and sixty-five (265) responses were obtained representing 79.6% response rate.

### **Sources of Data**

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. The secondary data was obtained from the Sekyere South District Education Office. The extant data retrieved from the office included; raw enrollment, attendance and retention of pupils in schools with GSFP from 2008 to 2019. Also, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed for data collection. Amedahe (2008) indicated that a questionnaire consists of a list of questions or statements relating to the aims of the study and research questions to be verified and answered to which the respondent is required to answer by writing. The questionnaire consisted of Three Sections. Section A considered the Biography of Respondents, Section B considered Statuses of Pupils' Welfare before the Implementation of GSFP, whilst Section C focused on How GSFP Benefit Pupils after implementation. The instrument was designed using a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses made of STRONGLY AGREE=5, AGREE=4, UNCERTAIN=3, DISAGREE=2, and STRONGLY DISAGREE=1. The primary reason for using a Likert scale is that it enables researchers to code data with ease (Colosi, 2016).

On the other hand, a questionnaire provided an efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample size prior to quantitative analysis (Saunders et al., 2012). Jankowicz (2020, p. 222) asserted that “questionnaires are particularly useful when you want to contact relatively large numbers of people to obtain data on the same issue or issues often by posing the same questions to all”. With hand-delivery as used in this study, the researcher was able to check to find out who actually responded to the questionnaire at the collection point (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 420). Finally, the

questionnaire enabled the researcher to collect data in a pre-arranged form which can be readily analyzed (Kumar, 2015).

### **Validity, Piloting, and Reliability**

The researcher embarked on the process of validation to ensure that the instrument measures what they ought to measure and reliability to ensure the consistency of the instrument.

#### ***Validity of Questionnaire***

Validity is essential for evaluating the quality and acceptability of research. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Agyedu et al., 2013). Generally, researchers use different instruments to collect data. Therefore, the quality of these instrument is very critical because the conclusions researchers draw are based on the information they obtain using these instruments (Frankel & Wallen, 2013). Thus, it is imperative that the data and the instruments to be validated. To ensure the face validity of the instrument, it was constructed in close consultation with my supervisor and two other lecturers within the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation to help me eliminate or revise unclear and obscure premises while rewording complex items. Content validity of the questionnaire was obtained by presenting them to three professional people, including the researcher's supervisor and other senior lecturers in Department of Monitoring and Evaluation to check out for how it appears readable to the participants. The researcher embarked on this process validity of any instrument is determined by expert judgments (Punch, 2015).

### *Piloting of Questionnaire*

Accidental sampling was employed to select thirty respondents from Bantama constituency, an area of similar characteristics as that of the study area and the instrument was piloted on them. This was done to determine reliability of the instrument and to assist the researcher to identify the setbacks that may result from the instrument as well to make the necessary corrections before they are administrated to the actual research respondents.

### *Reliability of Questionnaire*

Reliability refers to the extent to which results are consistent over time (Joppe, 2020). This attribute of the instrument is referred to as stability. A high degree of stability indicates a high degree of reliability implying that the results are repeatable. After the piloting, the result was computed by using Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) by employing Cronbach Alpha and a co-efficient value of 0.80 was obtained. This suggests that the instrument is reliable enough for data collection since its value falls within the acceptable benchmarks of all reliable instruments (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Permission from the security personnel were sought using an introductory letter from the Head, Department of Monitoring and Evaluation. On the researcher's first visit, she established positive rapport with them and also explained the purpose of the study to them. During her second visit, the sampling process was done and also solicited for their views concerning the time and duration she would come to retrieve the secondary data likewise the time(s) and date(s) to administer the research instrument. Afterwards, the secondary data were retrieved and thereafter, the questionnaire was personally administered to the respondents by the researcher to ensure maximum

response rate. The instructions and the various items on the questionnaire were explained to the respondents. This helped the researcher to obtain desired responses. A maximum of forty-five minutes was used by respondents to respond to the items and were retrieved the same day. The administration of questionnaire was completed in three (3) weeks.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis is important for interpreting raw data in order to obtain its meaning and pattern (Bell, 2010). The secondary data were cleaned and arranged serially in accordance with the years and were subjected to SPSS and by employing graphs, the first and second research questions were addressed. The answered questionnaires were grouped according to the categories of respondents. Questionnaires for the respondents were numbered serially to ensure easy coding and checked for blank options and out of range responses. The demography of the respondents was analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages. However, in answering research questions 3 and 4, the items on the questionnaire were coded in line with the Likert scale. The coded responses were fed into SPSS for Windows and the data was summarized into Tables (means and standard deviations). Finally, the researcher's views based on the data gathered from the respondents were elaborated on and backed with related literature.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Research ethics deals with identifying certain norms and standards of behaviour researchers are expected to follow (Connolly, 2013). In carrying out this research, the researcher took cognisance of certain ethical guidelines in order to protect the respondents, the researcher, and to ensure credibility of the findings. The following issues were addressed:

### ***Informed consent***

According to Taylor et al. (2012), informed consent implies the agreement to participate in research after learning about the study, including possible risks and benefits. This implies that participants must be aware of what the research entails and how they are going to benefit from the research. As a result, the researcher gave the respondents ample time to consider the risks and benefits of being involved in this research and to decide whether to take part or not.

### ***Confidentiality***

WHO (2013) defined confidentiality as not disclosing information from research respondents in a way the individual might be traced. As a result, the researcher used coding abstracted data with unique identifiers rather than names and masking features of specific cases, institutions or settings that may make them recognisable even without names. Finally, the researcher protected the data from unauthorised persons by using passwords to protect the data soft copies.

### ***Anonymity***

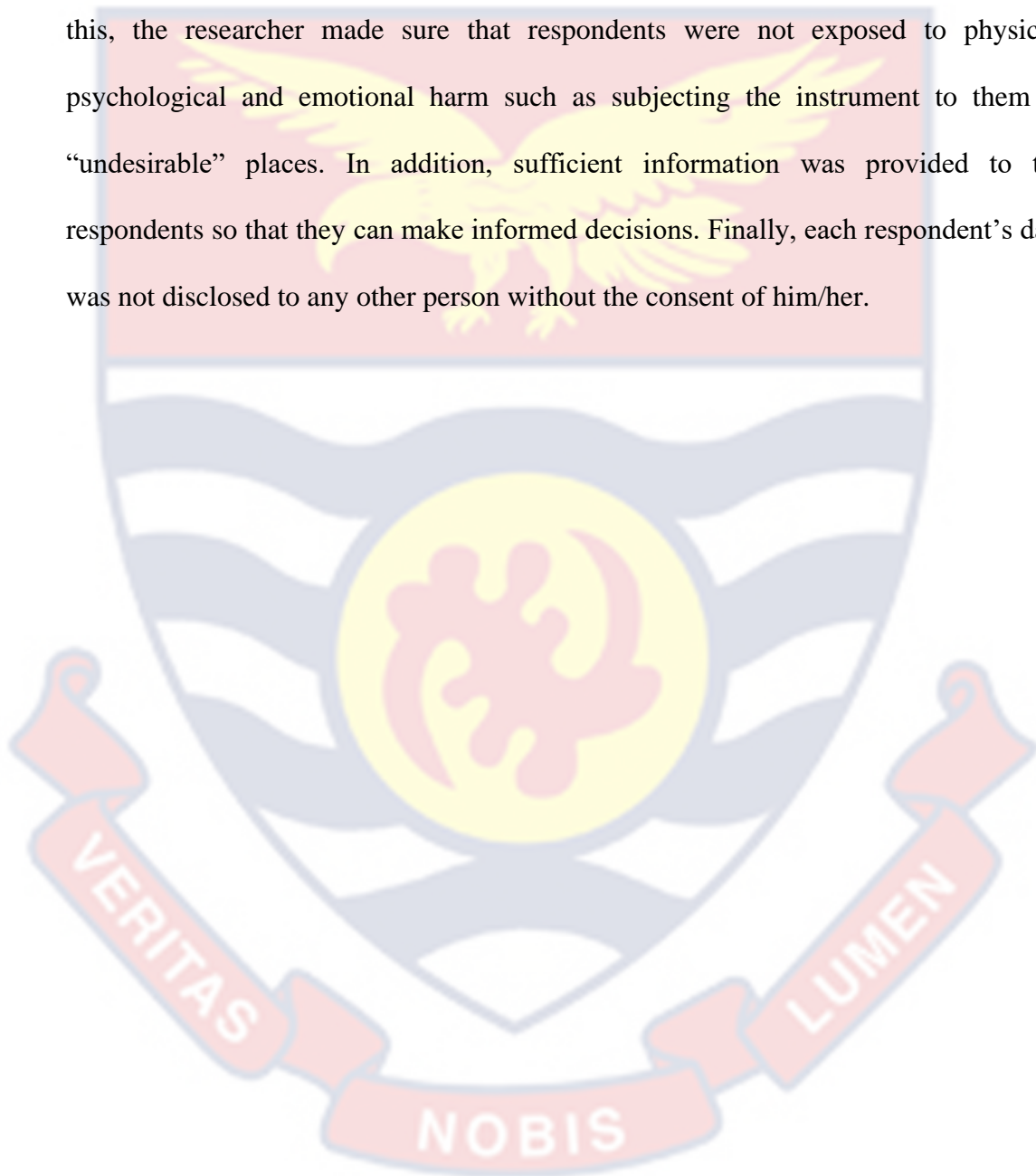
Anonymity means deals with researchers refraining from attaching participants name and at times certain geographical sites in a study to be identified by others (Walford, 2015). In the current study, numbers were used on questionnaires in place of participants names and party names.

### ***Permission***

An introductory letter from the Head, Department of Monitoring and Evaluation was obtained to gain approval from the party executives and respondents that participated in the study.

### *Harm to Participants*

The balance of protecting respondents from harm by hiding their identity while at the same time preventing “loss of ownership” are issues that need to be addressed by each researcher on an individual basis with each respondent (Grinyer, 2012). In due of this, the researcher made sure that respondents were not exposed to physical, psychological and emotional harm such as subjecting the instrument to them in “undesirable” places. In addition, sufficient information was provided to the respondents so that they can make informed decisions. Finally, each respondent’s data was not disclosed to any other person without the consent of him/her.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter presents results and the discussion of the data obtained from the respondents for the purpose of answering the research questions. It is in Two Sections; A and B. Section A considers the demographic information of the respondents whilst Section B presents the analysis and discussion of the research questions.

#### Background of Respondents

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents**

Demography	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	147	55.5
	Female	118	44.5
Age (in years)	Less than 30 years	52	19.6
	31-40 years	87	32.8
	41-50 years	79	29.8
	51-60 years	47	17.7
	Others	0	0.0
Highest Educational Level	Diploma	126	47.5
	HND	17	6.4
	Degree	87	32.8
	Masters	35	13.2
	Others	0	0.0
	Others	0	0.0
Years of Working Experience	1-5 years	18	6.8
	6-10 years	41	15.5
	11-15 years	149	56.2
	16-20 years	21	7.9
	21 years and above	36	13.6

**Source:** Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

It can be deduced from the data in Table 1 that, out of the 265 teachers who took part in the study, majority, 55.5% (n=147) were females and the remaining 45.5% (n=118) were males. It suggests that in basic schools in Sekyere South District, female teachers dominate their staff. As a result of this unequal distribution of males and females, the findings generated by the study is likely to be tilted toward the perspective of females. The age distribution of the respondents is shown also in Table 4.1. The outcome revealed that majority, 32.8% (n=87) were between 31-40 years. Also, 19.6% (n=52) were less than 30 years, 29.8% (n=79) were between ages 41-50 whilst the remaining 17.7% (n =47) were between ages 50-60. From the above data, majority of the respondents are less than 51 years. As a result, they are considered energetic enough. Hence, they are suitable for the study because they are likely to be in school frequently so they are well versed with all the conditions that prevailed before and after the implementation of the GSFP.

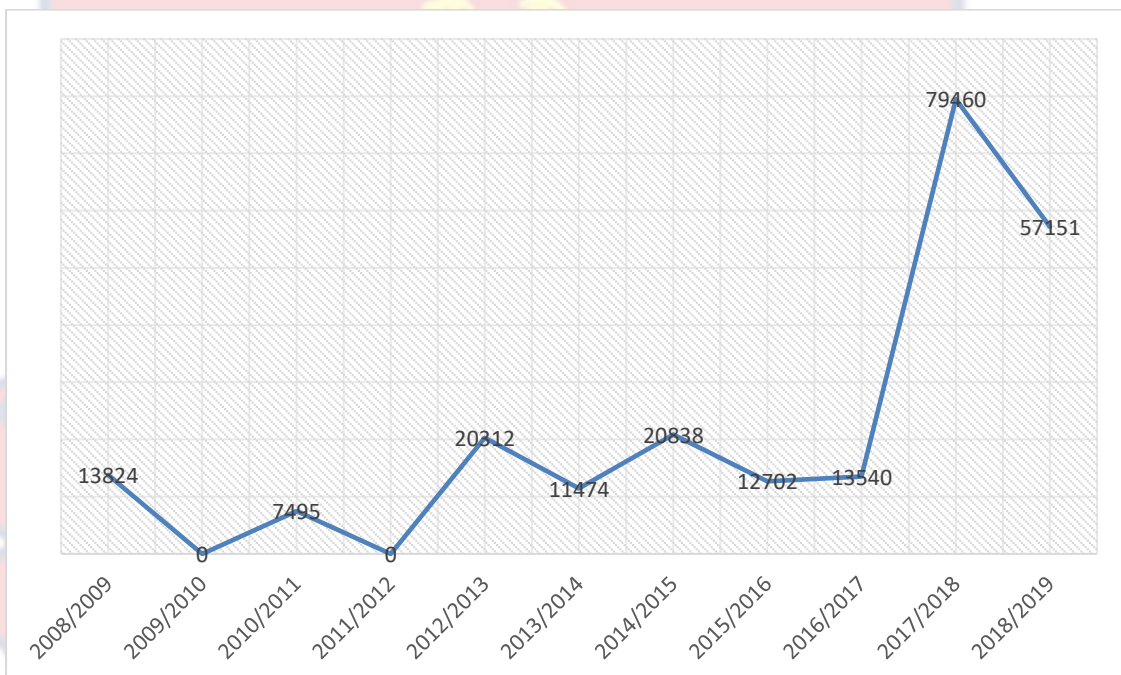
The highest educational level of the respondents is shown further in Table 4.1. The outcome revealed that majority of them 47.5% (n=126) are diploma holders, 6.4% (n=17) have the HND certificate, 32.8% (n=87) are bachelor degree holders, 8.2% (n=35) have their master's certificate whilst none of them held any other certificate. Considering the above data, majority of them have a solid educational background. This makes them suitable for the study considering the instrument employed in this study because they were able to read and respond to the questionnaire with ease.

Moreover, the respondents were asked to indicate their number of years of experience within the profession and the responses are shown in Table 1. The outcome portrayed that majority 56.2% (n=149) of them have worked for 11-15 years, 6.8% (n=18) have worked for 1-5 years, and 15.5% (n=41) had worked between 6-10 years. Finally, 13.6% (n=36) had worked over 21 years. It can be inferred from this data that,

majority of the respondents have at least 6 years of working experience. Considering this, it makes them apt for the study since they have witnessed numerous issues of the impacts of the GSFP on pupils' welfare. As a result, they will be able to give adequate information concerning the problem under investigation.

### Impacts of the GSFP on Enrollment of Pupils in Sekyere South District

The primary intent of this research question was to outline the impacts of the GSFP on trends of pupils' enrollment in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. The outcome is presented graphically in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Enrollment of pupils in schools with SFP**

**Source:** Sekyere South District Education Office (2020)

Figure 6 indicates the dynamics of trend in enrolment in Sekyere South District, when it comes to schools on GSFP. The figure shows a steady increase in pupils' enrollment from the 2008/2009 academic year but declined gradually in 2010/2011 and upsurged sharply in 2012/2013 but suffered a decrease in the 2013/2014 academic year.

The enrolment further increased in the 2014/2015 academic year but decreased again in the 2015/2016 academic years which further increased slightly again in the 2016/2017 academic year. The enrolment saw a huge increase in the 2017/2018 academic year but again suffered a dip in the 2018/2019 academic year. In brief, with reference to Figure 4.1, enrollment increases at least every two years; therefore, it can be projected that the GSFP shall increase the enrollment rates of beneficial schools nationwide.

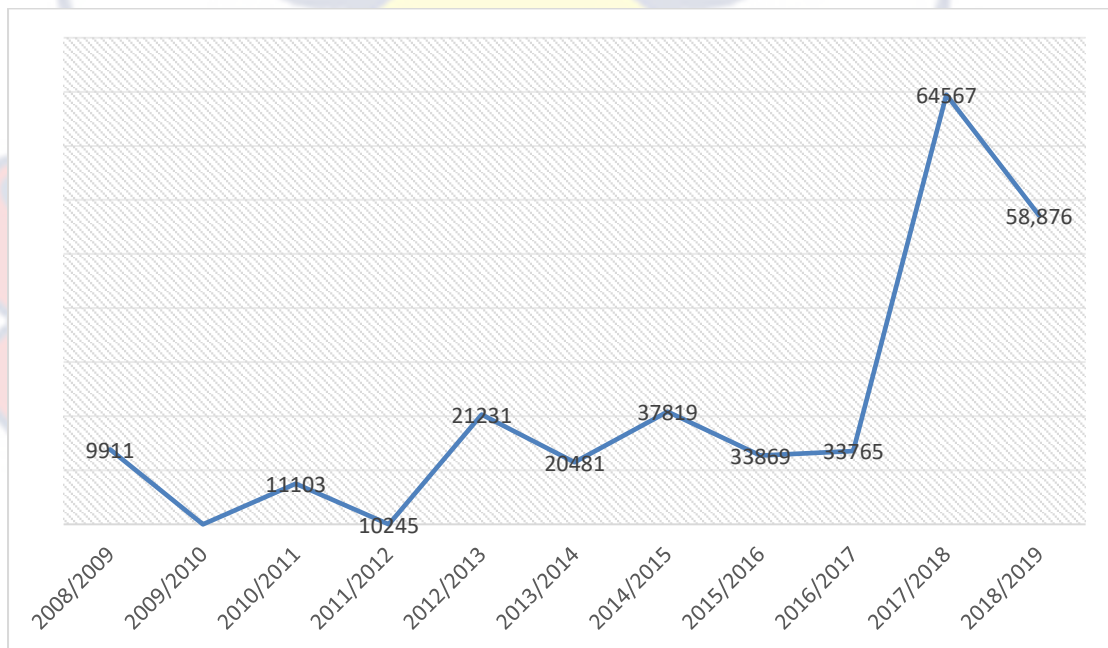
This finding is consistent with previous literature. For instance, GSFP (2007) reported that, in just over six months of implementation of school feeding, enrolment in pilot schools had risen by 20.3% compared to 2.8% in control (non-GSFP) schools in the same district. Equally, attendance was up by 39.9%, 5% and 13% in three pilot schools in the same communities/districts. All the schools enjoyed the capitation grants given to all primary schools to support their basic needs which rendered the task of attribution much easier (GSFP, 2007). SFP improves education by increasing school enrolment/attendance, improve access to education, and by extension, enhancing children's future income-earning potentials (Hicks, 2016; Levinger, 2016). The results as in above settles the researchers research question on the impact of the feeding programme on enrolment of the pupils within the SND and the assertion by authorities that SFPs and take-home rations, used in combination, can increase school enrollment and attendance by up to 30 percent, which in turn enhances learning opportunities and narrows the gender gap (Bennett, 2023; WFP, 2016).

Arhin (2015) indicated that since the inception of the GSFP, public basic schools benefitting from the programme have recorded an appreciable increment in enrollment of pupils. A study conducted in Garu-Tempane District in Ghana revealed that the programme increased gross enrollment rate by 24% among participating

schools but decreased by 7% in non-participating schools (Bukari & Hajara, 2015, p. 301). The Ghana News Agency (2014) observed an increment of pupils from 413,493 since the implementation of the GSFP in the year 2006/2007 to 1,739,352 pupils in 2013/2014. Additionally, Alderman et al. (2012) understudied the impacts of the SFP in Northern Uganda found a substantial increase in school enrolment and attendance in primary schools as a result of the SFP in the first five years of implementation.

### *Effects of GSFP on Pupils' Attendance and Retention in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region*

The core intent of this research question was to present the effects of the GSFP on the trends of pupils' attendance and retention in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. The result is presented graphically in Figure 7.



**Figure 7: Attendance and Retention of Pupils in Schools with SFP**

**Source:** Sekyere South District Education Office (2020)

It can be deduced from the data in Figure 7 that the trend in school attendance and retention of pupils in Sekyere South District mimicked their rates of enrollment but

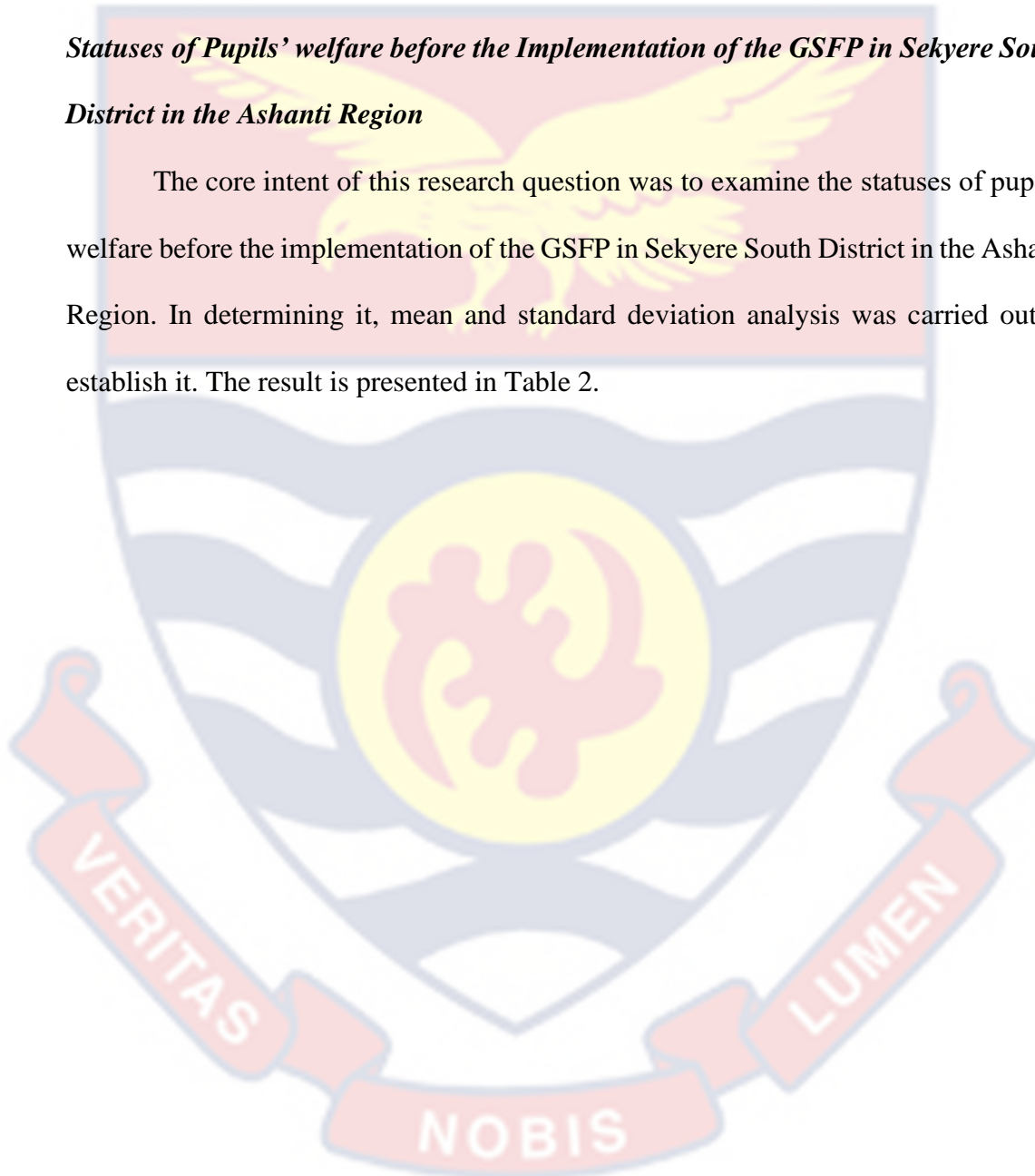
the difference stemmed from their numbers. The figure reveals clearly that pupils' school attendance and retention was above average in 2008/2009 academic year and followed similarly in 2010 but declined gradually in 2011/2012 and upsurged sharply in 2012/2013 but suffered a decrease in the 2013/2014 academic year. Pupils' school attendance and retention rose in the 2014/2015 academic year but decreased sharply in the 2015/2016 academic years which further increased slightly again in the 2016/2017 academic year. School attendance and retention saw a massive increment in the 2017/2018 academic year but declined in the 2018/2019 academic year. Though 2019 suffered a decline, but it can be confirmed by the data in Figure 4.2 that at least attendance and retention in at least every two years. Even with the decrease in school attendance and retention in 2019, comparing it to that of 2008 reveals GSFPs ability in increasing basic school pupils school attendance and retention in in Sekyere South District.

This finding is consistent with earlier research. According to Akanbi (2011), SFP has increased pupils' confidence in public primary schools, resulting in regular and punctual school attendance, reduced truancy and absenteeism, increased retention and participation in curricular activities by pupils who know they will be given free meals during recess. According to Akanbi (2011), providing each child with a nutritious lunch rich in calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals will not only help them prepare for better learning, but will also encourage improved attendance. Kazianga et al. (2019) conducted experimental investigations on school feeding in Burkina Faso and found that school feeding enhanced enrolment, retention, and attendance, particularly among girls. Powell et al. (2018) and Jacoby et al. (2016) discovered favorable attendance benefits in Jamaica, Peru, and Uganda, but negative attendance impacts in Burkina Faso, particularly for girls. This was due to the fact that, on average, girls would not

have attended school if the program had not existed. As a result, they would not attend school until their services were necessary at home. Whaley et al. (2013) shown that determining the channel by which the impact of the meal changes outcomes can aid in determining the magnitude of impact.

***Statuses of Pupils' welfare before the Implementation of the GSFP in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region***

The core intent of this research question was to examine the statuses of pupils' welfare before the implementation of the GSFP in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. In determining it, mean and standard deviation analysis was carried out to establish it. The result is presented in Table 2.



**Table 2: Statuses of Pupils' Welfare before Implementation of the GSFP**

Premise	M	SD
The dropout rate was high, especially on the part of girls	4.07	1.22
Malnourished children faced several problems that affected their learning	3.50	1.28
The number of learners who were anxious, unhappy, jealous, angry or vulnerable was high	3.53	1.41
The school tended to record low attendance rates	3.47	1.41
The retention rates were very low in the school	3.43	1.43
Teachers have to cajole learners to complete homework and return books and equipment to class	2.93	1.48
Most children especially those from food-insecure households always scored lower on tests	4.17	1.08
Most children had difficulties getting along with other children	3.70	1.30
Children who were malnourished or even experiencing short-term hunger had a limited capacity to learn	4.27	.90
There was a decrease in pupils' retention in school because of no provision of meals	3.93	1.16
Most children were not enrolled in school at an early stage	3.60	1.40
Pupils' punctuality was low	3.60	1.45
Most parents fail to enroll their children in school at all	3.90	1.68

**Source:** Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2022) M= Mean SD=Standard Deviation  
Decision Agreed when  $M \geq 3.41$

Data in Table 2 establishes vividly that respondents view concerning the assertion "The dropout rate was high, especially on the part of girls" as a status of pupils' welfare before the implementation of the GSFP yielded (M=4.07, SD=1.22). It reveals that majority of the respondents verified that before the implementation of the programme, pupils' dropout rate increased especially females. This signals that females' dropout rate in basic schools in Sekyere South District was raising before the implementation of the GSFP.



In addition, it came into light that the statement “Malnourished children faced several problems that affected their learning” produced ( $M=3.50$ ,  $SD=1.28$ ). This suggests that majority of the respondents documented that pupils who were underfed faced challenges that affected their learning. It makes it evident that since certain children from weak socio-economic backgrounds were victims of malnutrition and the GSFP was not run in their school, they faced difficulties which in turn, affected educational outcomes negatively.

Moreover, respondents’ view concerning the assertion “The number of learners who were anxious, unhappy, jealous, angry or vulnerable was high” resulted in ( $M=3.53$ ,  $SD=1.41$ ). It depicts clearly that majority of the respondents noted that there was a rise in the number of pupils who were worried, ill-fated, envious, irritated or helpless before the implementation of the GSFP. It is therefore worthwhile to validate that before the implementation of the GSFP, most public basic school children in Ghana felt nervous, hopeless, resentful, and or annoyed at school owing that they were not fed by their parents/caretakers.

“The school tended to record low attendance rates” as another way of ensuring human rights ended up with ( $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=1.41$ ). It points out clearly that majority of the respondents indicated that their school started to experience that few pupils used do attend school. This implies that before the implementation of the GSFP, most public basic school children were feeling reluctant in attending schools. Furthermore, the assertion “The retention rates were very low in the school” came out with ( $M=3.43$ ,  $SD=1.43$ ). It suggests that majority of the respondents documented that pupils rate of retention rates were very low in their respective schools before the implementation of the GSFP. It establishes that most basic schools across the country experienced less pupils’ rate of retention when the GSFP was not functioning within their schools.

In addition, respondents view on “Teachers have to cajole learners to complete homework and return books and equipment to class” yielded ( $M=2.93$ ,  $SD=1.48$ ) makes it evident that the respondents cherished that teachers failed to coax pupils to complete their assignments and likewise to present them in class with respect to the fact that no SFP is being run within their school. It establishes that teachers in public basic schools in Ghana whose schools weren’t running the SFP do not persuade the children to undertake their assignments and submit them in and or on time by using the programme’s underlying facts as means.

Subsequently, it came into light that the assertion “Children especially those from food-insecure households always scored lower on tests” produced ( $M=4.17$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ) suggests that majority of the respondents attested to the fact that most children specifically, those belonging to food-insecure homes often perform low when tested. This suggests that public basic schools in Ghana whose schools weren’t running the SFP experienced decreases in the academic achievement of pupils especially, those from food-insecure families.

Moreover, on respondents’ view with regards to the statement “Most children had difficulties getting along with other children” resulted in ( $M=3.70$ ,  $SD=1.30$ ) depicts clearly that the respondents noted that most children had problems on how to associate themselves with their colleagues. This authenticates that majority of public basic schoolchildren faced challenges of socializing and or coping well with their peers when the SFP was absent in their schools.

“Children who were malnourished or even experiencing short-term hunger had a limited capacity to learn” responses from the respondents ended up with ( $M=4.27$ ,  $SD=.90$ ). It points out clearly that majority of the respondents indicated that pupils who

were undernourished or even facing temporary hunger had partial capacities to learn. This authenticates before the implementation of the GSFP, pupils who were underfed or even suffering from temporal hunger had limited abilities to learn.

Furthermore, the statement “There was a decrease in pupils’ retention in school because of no provision of meals” opinions from respondents came out with ( $M=3.93$ ,  $SD=1.16$ ). It signals that the respondents attested to the fact that when their schools weren’t running the SFP, they experienced declines in pupils’ retention. This confirms that most public basic schools in Ghana whose schools lacked the SFP recorded massive decrease in pupils’ retention. It was further revealed that respondents view regarding the statement “Most children were not enrolled in school at an early stage” yielded ( $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=1.40$ ). This establishes the fact that majority of the respondents validated that majority of school-going children were not enrolled in school at the appropriate time. This implies that when the SFP was absent in schools, most parents/caregivers failed to enroll their children in school at an early stage.

In addition, respondents’ idea about the assertion “Pupils’ punctuality was low” produced ( $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=1.45$ ). It shows that majority of the respondents were in support that pupils’ regularity in school was low when they were without SFP. This depicts that public basic school children display cold attitudes toward schooling when SFP was not available in their schools. Finally, it came into light that the statement “Most parents fail to enroll their children in school at all” produced ( $M=3.90$ ,  $SD=1.68$ ). It means that majority of the respondents indicated that most parents fail to send their children to school at all because they cannot afford. This signals that before the implementation of the SFP, most children were deprived of schooling by their parents because they cannot bear the cost.

These findings corroborate existing literature. Aila (2012) for instance, reported that children affected by hunger and malnutrition as well as ill-health do not have the same potential to do well in school in comparison with well-nourished and healthy children. Evidence shows that high absenteeism, lack of concentration in class and early drop outs are a result of short-term hunger. All these lead to a conclusion that hunger in the long run poses major impacts on pupils' learning including diminishing cognitive abilities and reduced school performance (Buttenheim et al., 2021). In contrast, Oduro-Ofori and Yeboah-Gyapong (2014) reported that the GSFP has reduced the level of primary school drop-out in the Kwaebibrim District in the Eastern Region since it serves as a motivational tool for primary children to stay in school. In the Tamale metropolis, one hot nutritious meal per day contributed to an increase in enrolment, attendance and retention (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014). However, there are other factors that also contributed to school enrolment, attendance and retention. In the Savelugu/Nantong, South Tongu, districts and Wa municipality, apart from the increase in enrollment, attendance and retention, SFPs also led to girls having access to education and the reduction in the incidence of sexual activities among them (Mahama, 2017; Milledzi et al., 2017; Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014).

#### ***4.3.4. Benefit of GSFP to Pupils' in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region after its Implementation***

Central to this research was to examine the ways the GSFP benefited pupils' in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region after its implementation. The outcome is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Benefits of the GSFP after Implementation**

Premise	M	SD
It has contributed to children's regular attendance at school	4.47	.83
There is an increase in pupils' retention in school because of the provision of meals	4.33	.89
It has reduced the dropout rate among pupils	4.20	1.06
There has been an improvement in pupils' performance in both curricular and extra-curricular activities	3.90	1.30
The performance scores of the children have risen	3.40	1.27
The food that children are receiving at school is a critical source of nutrition	3.47	1.67
It has led to improved concentration and performance of children in school	3.80	1.20
It has offset the social and economic costs of education for parents	4.13	1.06
Parents motivate their children to attend school because of the meals	3.50	1.09
It has addressed micronutrient deficiencies like iron and iodine among the children	3.43	1.60
It has increased community involvement in schools because parents of the children prepare and serve the meals	4.23	.79
It has provided health and education benefits to poor and vulnerable children and their families	4.10	.98
The meals have the added benefit of being fortified with other necessary nutrients which have made massive improvements in the children's mental development	3.80	1.37

**Source:** Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2022) M= Mean SD=Standard Deviation  
Decision Agreed when  $M \geq 3.41$

It can be deduced from the data in Table 3 that the statement "It has contributed to children's regular attendance at school" as a benefit of the GSFP after its implementation on the welfare of pupils produced ( $M=4.47$ ,  $SD=0.83$ ). This makes it evident that majority the respondents documented that the SFP has improved pupils' regular attendance to school. It signals that pupils regularity to school has increased due

to the SFP. In addition, the statement “There is an increase in pupils’ retention in school because of the provision of meals” resulted in ( $M=4.33$ ,  $SD=.89$ ). It points out clearly that majority of the respondents noted that the SFP has improved pupils’ retention in school due to the provision of meals. This connotes that, public basic schools’ pupils’ rates of retention in schools improved because of the provision of meals.

It was further revealed by the data that the statement “It has reduced the dropout rate among pupils” came out with ( $M=4.20$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ). This signals that majority of the respondents’ cherished that another benefit is that, it has reduced dropout rate amongst pupils. It confirms that with the SFP, pupils’ dropout rates have reduced drastically. The data again shows that the assertion “There has been an improvement in pupils’ performance in both curricular and extra-curricular activities” yielded ( $M=3.90$ ,  $SD=1.30$ ). The implication is that majority of the respondents indicated that the SFP, pupils’ performance in both curricular and extra-curricular activities have increased. This authenticates that with the GSFP, pupils’ performance in both curricular and extra-curricular activities have improved in most public basic schools.

Furthermore, it was established that the statement “The performance scores of the children have risen” produced ( $M=3.40$ ,  $SD=1.27$ ). It means that majority of the respondents attested to the fact that with SFP, the achievement scores of their children have risen. This implies that schools running SFPs had experienced significant increases in the academic achievement scores of their pupils’. Moreover, it was confirmed that the statement “The food that children are receiving at school is a critical source of nutrition” came out with ( $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=1.67$ ). It purports that majority of the respondents indicated that a potential benefit of the SFP is that, the meals they serve the children are critical sources of nutrition. This establishes that the meals served under the GSFP are crucial sources of nutrition that can safeguard their health.

Furthermore, the statement “It has led to improved concentration and performance of children in school” as another kind of benefit ended up with (M=3.80, SD=1.20). The implication is that majority of the respondents documented that the SFP in their school has led to better concentration and performance amongst pupils. This makes it evident that basic school children’s concentration and performance rose as a result of the GSFP. Moreover, the statement “It has offset the social and economic costs of education for parents” yielded (M=4.13, SD=1.06). It illustrates that majority of the respondents attested to the fact that the programme has relieved parents from the social and economic costs of their children’s education. It implies that the introduction of the GSFP in basic schools has reduced the social and economic costs of education for parents.

To add, it came into light that the assertion “Parents motivate their children to attend school because of the meals” produced (M=3.50, SD=1.09). This establishes the fact that majority of the respondents appreciate that the SFP had paved ways for parents to inspire their children to attend school regularly. It suggests that the SFP hasten parents to imbibe in their children on the need to attend school always.

Furthermore, respondents view on “It has addressed micronutrient deficiencies like iron and iodine among the children” yielded (M=3.43, SD=1.60) makes it evident that the respondents verified that the meals served under the programme addresses micronutrient deficiencies like iron and iodine among the children. This suggests that in Ghanaian basic schools, a means of catering for micronutrient deficiencies such as iron and iodine among the pupils was through the introduction of the SFP.

Subsequently, it came into light that the assertion “It has increased community involvement in schools because parents of the children prepare and serve the meals”

produced ( $M=4.23$ ,  $SD=.79$ ) suggests that majority of the respondents attested to the fact that the programme has increased community participation in schools because parents of the children prepare and serve the meals. This suggests that the GSFP enhances community participation in basic schools because parents and relatives of these pupils prepare and serve the meals.

Moreover, on respondents' view with regards to the statement "It has provided health and education benefits to poor and vulnerable children and their families" resulted in ( $M=4.10$ ,  $SD=.98$ ). It suggests clearly that the respondents noted that the GSFP has provided health and education benefits to underprivileged and helpless children and their families. This authenticates that GSFP has provided health and education benefits to poor and vulnerable pupils and their families across the country. Finally, the statement "The meals have the added benefit of being fortified with other necessary nutrients which have made massive improvements in the children's mental development" responses from the respondents ended up with ( $M=3.80$ ,  $SD=1.37$ ). It points out clearly that majority of the respondents cherished that the food that are given to the pupils have added benefits of being fortified with other necessary nutrients which have made massive improvements in their pupils' mental development. This authenticates that the foods served under the GSFP benefits basic school pupils in terms of advancing their mental processes because they are well fortified with the necessary nutrients.

Consistent with these findings is Afoakwa (2008) who stated that as part of the comprehensive African Agriculture Development program (CAADP) pillar three of NEPAD, the GSFP is has three key intermediate objectives; first, to reduce hunger and malnutrition amongst beneficiary schools by providing all pupils with a nutritious meal each school day, to increase enrolment and retention as well as attendance, and help to



boost local production of food by making sure the source of all foodstuffs for the GSFP come from the local food producers in the communities where the beneficiaries are based (Afoakwa, 2008). The principal aim of SFP is to provide meals or snacks in order to alleviate short term hunger through enabling children to learn (Nyakundi, 2017).

Therefore, SFP enhances school attendance by lowering the opportunity costs of attending school and providing additional motivation to engage in formal education which in turn leads to more time spent in school and more time spent towards learning (Buttenheim et al., 2021). Moreover, school feeding is a tool which effectively attracts millions of poor children worldwide to attend school in both developed and developing countries (WFP, 2014; UNESCO, 2010). Yunusa (2012) noted that students in SFP have the potential for improving their performance because it enabled them attend school regularly and studied more effectively. He found that in a study carried out in Jamaica, children in Grade 2 scored higher in arithmetic when they started being fed at school. The following studies among others recounted the positive impact of GSFP on behavioural outcomes (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014; Gyasi et al., 2018; Konzabre, 2018; Kudus, 2011; Mahama, 2017; Milledzi et al., 2017; Nyarko, 2014; Odame, 2014; Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014; Osei-Fosu, 2011; Serebour, 2017; Tagoe, 2018; Yendaw & Dayour, 2015). To buttress the notion, one of the beneficiary pupils stated “...When I eat, I become alert and able to concentrate. And when I eat, I become happy and able to focus on class activities” (Milledzi et al., 2017, p. 112).

Aside from the increase in pass rate as a result of SFP, Nyarko (2014) found that the intervention improved students' thinking abilities, understanding, and concentration. Some studies report on the impact of SFP on health and nutritional outcomes. Outcomes that these studies measured include calories, nutrients and morbidity and illness which they all almost found its positive impacts. Some sample

studies reported other positive impacts emanating from the SFP. For instance, short-term hunger was mentioned to have reduced by (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014; Kudus, 2011; Mahama, 2017; Tagoe, 2018). SFP had an impact on reducing school drop-out rate among beneficiaries of school meals (Mahama, 2017; Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014; Tagoe, 2018).

Households' income increases due to the supply of farm products to schools participating in the GSFP and the saving culture of parents who would have given their child's school feeding money if the SFP had not been in place was reported by (Aliu & Fawzia, 2014; Konzabre, 2018; Kudus, 2011; Mahama, 2017; Milledzi et al., 2017; Oduro-Ofori & Adwoa-Yeboah, 2014; Tagoe, 2018). Stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa are promoting girl-child education due to the many socioeconomic factors limiting the girl-child education. SFP is one social invention that has been used to encourage girls' enrolment in schools and it has been reported to have a positive impact on girls' enrolment (Konzabre, 2018; Mahama, 2017). While Mahama (2017) reported that the SFP has decreased the incidence of sexual escapade and early child marriage among girls due to their continued stay in school, the study concluded that teenage pregnancy was the leading factor in the girls' school dropout in Ghana.

Kamaludeen (2014) evaluated the impact of the Ghana school meal program on enrolment, attendance, and retention in Ga south municipal schools. The study's purpose was to determine how the GSFP impacted student enrolment, attendance, and retention in Ga South Municipality's recipient basic schools. The study found a moderate increase in enrollment, attendance, and retention among pupils. However, the impact of SFPs on the academic performance of pupils has been embraced with mixed feelings. It was observed that although SFPs motivate parents to enroll their children in school, its impact on academic performance is mixed and depends on various factors

within the context in which the programme is set. Drawing from this, Uduku (2011) opined that SFPs would best improve the performance of pupils when coupled with adequate learning materials, physical facilities and teacher motivation. In Kenya, the SFP to public schools had shown to increase academic performance compared to schools with no SFP (Chepkwony et al., 2013). Further, the study carried in the private schools in Nigeria observed that providing food to learners during school time had contributed to learner's attention and academic performance. The supplied food in schools had increased school attendance and reduced dropout among the community schools.

In Bangladesh a programme of school-based food distribution had increased attendance by 20% compared a 2% decline of non-feeding school (Ahmed, 2014). In Jamaica, it was indicated that the learners aged between 7-11 years in food insecure family unit scored lower in arithmetic test compared those supported by school meals. The school feeding programme significantly had increased learners' performance. Adelman et al. (2018) pointed out that literacy scores had decreased to a sample of students who received home food than students who were received school food. According to Jomaa et al. (2011), SFP are beneficial in increasing class attendance, decreasing student drop-out rates, and improving academic performance. Further, Afridi (2021), asserts that enrolment (both gross and net) is not a real indication of participation. He emphasized the importance of using indicators such as daily attendance and absenteeism to accurately indicate involvement. He went on to say that low attendance rates can be a real representation of the school's quality. Improvements in attendance, according to Kristjansson et al. (2017) and Powell et al. (2018), can increase academic achievement because the school lunch serves as the foundation for students' attendance, lowering drop out and absenteeism. Galloway et

al. (2019) provided evidence to show that School feeding programs influence what is served at home for families who can afford to buy some food, but for families who have a restricted food supply or lack finances, there are fewer adjustments at home as a result of the SFP. It can be argued that even if their children are fed at school, very poor and vulnerable families may not see much of a change in their situation.

Participation in school meal programs could reduce short-term hunger for children from such economic backgrounds, but it has no significant impact on the rest of their lives. A 2012 research undertaken by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Malawi found that school feeding efforts had the potential to increase school attendance rates by a significant 36 percent. Although it is widely acknowledged that in-school feeding interventions have the potential to replace teaching, instructional, and learning time, it has equally emerged as a critical tool in ensuring not only schoolchildren's nutrition but also their ability to engage in learning with satiated stomachs. The effects of in-school meals tend to benefit children more. School feeding can boost test results when children are trained in a cooperative learning atmosphere and are involved in daily activities that promote the child's talents. In a study on the impact of breakfast on cognitive development, Pollitt et al. (2018) discovered that having breakfast before class helps kids do better academically. Their research on school breakfast found that it improved cognition and test results. According to Edward and Evers (2021), eating breakfast enhances students' concentration and attentiveness.

Grantham-McGregor et al. (2018) noted that providing breakfast boosted students' attention to whatever task was at hand significantly. Children who eat breakfast before heading to school are better able to engage and learn. Kremer and Vermeersch (2014) observed that school meals improve test scores in schools where the instructor is experienced and consistently attends class. When schoolchildren are

served a daily meal before school, these arguments hold water. Some students from low-income families may not have breakfast before school and are more likely to go hungry until it is time for the school lunch or midday meal. The SFP is an excellent remedy to malnutrition. Appropriately planned school feeding programs, according to Akanbi (2011), will expand access to education and learning while also improving children's health and nutrition, especially when integrated into a comprehensive school health and nutrition program.

### **Summary of Chapter and Conclusions**

The findings revealed that the documents displayed that the increment in pupils' enrollment, retention, and attendance from 2008-2019 could be accredited to the presence of the GSFP though there were few declines during certain years. Indeed, this points that it is empirically worthwhile to validate that the programme as far as it continues to be implemented in schools there is no way most pupils will not show up in school. Also as indicated by the findings, before the implementation of the GSFP within the schools, pupils' welfare was nothing good to write home about but it appeared that the welfare of the pupils' appeared had to undergo tremendous improvements. Since most children from low socio-economic backgrounds were finding challenges in terms of affording meals at school, most tend not to attend and or learn with empty stomach's which resulted in declines in their academic success. Notwithstanding, the challenges that GSFP erects in basic schools concerning the quantity and quality of meals served, the contrast manifested in this study. Since the presence of the GSFP leads to better welfare amongst pupils, it will be prudent to replicate the programme in all public basic schools within the District. This is particularly very important owing to the fact that this research has proven that the food pupils eat in schools contribute significantly to a positive improvement in their learning.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study and its key findings, conclusions, recommendations based on the results, and other suggested areas to be studied.

#### Summary of the Study

This study accessed the impact of School Feeding Programme on pupils' enrollment, attendance and retention in the Sekyere South District of the Ashanti Region.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. To assess the effect of GSFP on Pupils' enrolment, attendance and retention in Sekyere South District
2. To assess the welfare statuses of Pupils before and after the Implementation of the GSFP in Sekyere South District
3. To evaluate the benefits of GSFP to Pupils' in Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region after its implementation

The change theory was adopted for the study with the conceptual framework stemming from the researcher's own construction. The study used a descriptive survey design embedded in the quantitative research methods. The target population consisted only teachers from the beneficiary schools. Mixed method sampling were used to draw out two hundred and sixty-five (265) respondents the study. The study utilized both primary and secondary data. The secondary data was obtained from the Sekyere South District Education Office whilst the secondary data was obtained by the use of a semi-

structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed by using by employing graphs, simple frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations.

### Summary of Key Findings

The study established that schools within the Sekyere South District who are beneficiaries of the GSFP have recorded an increment in their pupils' enrollment, attendance and retention between 2008-2019 and are projected to upsurge in the years ahead. On the impacts of the GSFP on the welfare of pupils before its implementation, it was found that pupils' dropout rate was high, especially on the part of girls, malnourished children were facing several problems that affected their learning, with most of the learners being anxious, unhappy, jealous, angry or vulnerable. It was also established that the schools tended to record low attendance and retention rates, food-insecure children always scored lower on tests, and also had difficulties getting along with other children. Finally, children who were malnourished or even experiencing short-term hunger had a limited capacity to learn, most children were not enrolled in school at an early stage entangled with lower punctuality amongst pupils with most parents failing to enroll their children in school at all.

On the welfare of pupils after its implementation, it was found that it has contributed to children's regular attendance at school, increased pupils' retention, has reduced the dropout rate among pupils, likewise an improvement in pupils' performance in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the performance scores of the children have risen, provides children a critical source of nutrition, and improved concentration and performance of children. Moreover, it was found that it has offset the social and economic costs of education for parents, motivate parents to drive their children to schools, had addressed micronutrient deficiencies like iron and iodine among the children, and has increased community involvement in

schools. Conclusively, it has provided health and education benefits to poor and vulnerable children and their families and has made massive improvements in the children's mental development.

### Conclusions

In Ghana's effort to transform its nation and achieve the MDGs, it adopted Free Basic education, SFP, and other strategies. The consensus of the results presented in this review suggests that school meal interventions improve educational outcomes in at least one aspect; attendance, enrollment, retention or learning capabilities. Providing children with a meal during the school day may encourage participation and increase concentration by reducing hunger as a distraction as established by the findings. With the development of more SFPs, it is also imperative to establish program goals and objectives at the start of implementation. Measuring outcomes against defined objectives would be more effective in measuring changes. The findings revealed that pupils' welfare was nothing good to write about before the implementation of the GSFP but after implementing it, it was able to feed some of the school children from very poor homes who do not eat before they go to school. since a child's experiences as they grow has the capacity to influence their learning outcomes. A child's environment has the ability to influence the child abilities, especially the forms of interactions that occur in the environment and can determine how well a child will perform academically. A good relationship among the peers at home, school and the community at large influence the outcomes of the child. A healthy, satisfied emotionally sound child builds the foundation for better human capital development. As a human capital development tool, school feeding addresses the problem of short-term hunger and malnutrition.



## Recommendations

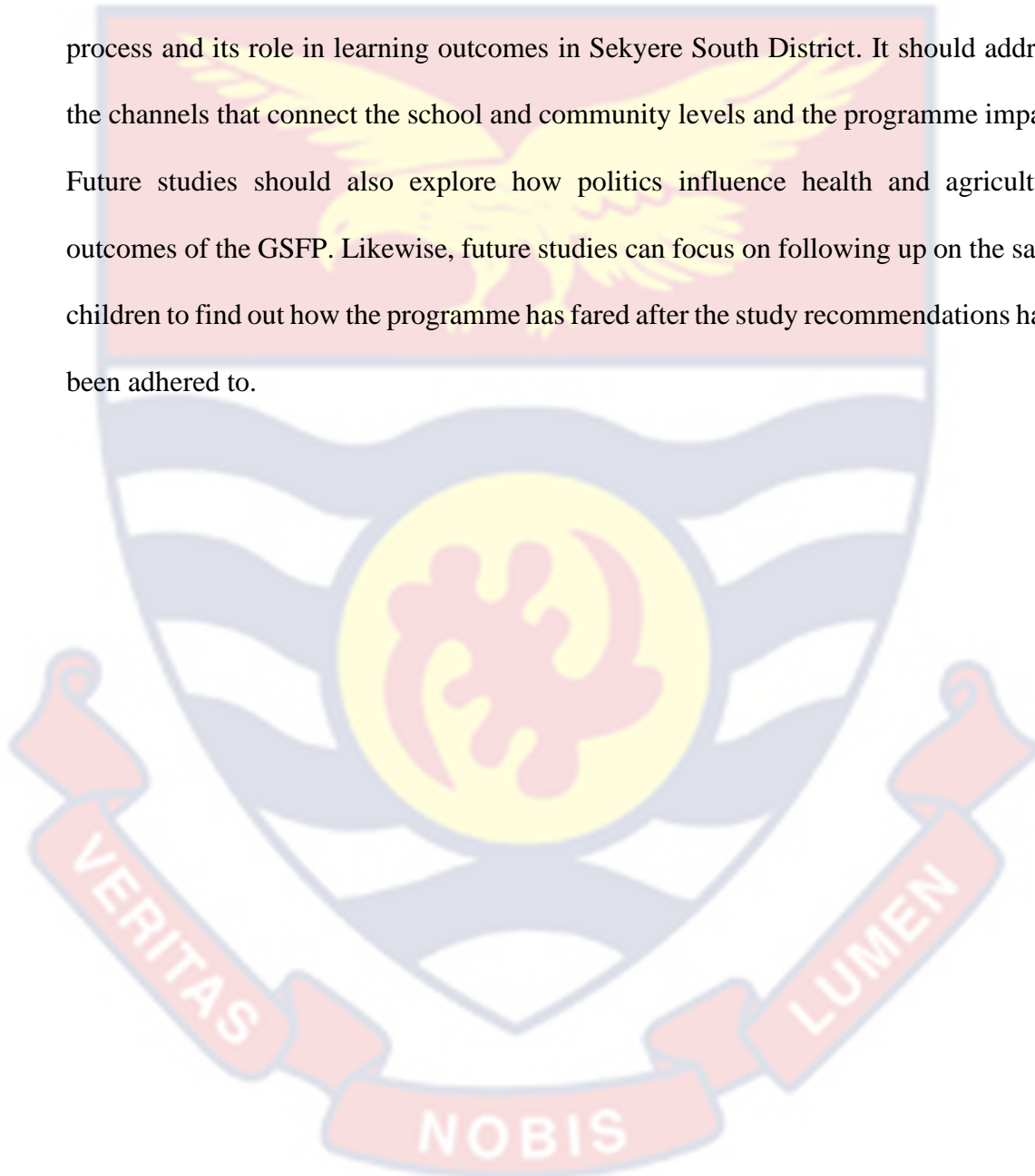
The following are some recommendations outlined by the researcher based on the study;

1. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ghana Educational Service should extend the program to all public basic schools to increase pupils' enrollment, attendance and retention the former and to achieve the MDGs the latter.
2. Targeting the beneficiary schools in Sekyere South District should be done if the programme is to succeed in achieving its objectives. To this end, the selection criteria should be clearly spelt out and efforts made to put some mechanisms that can make the programme withstand political control or interference.
3. GSFP should be fortified in the sense that, GSFP facilitated the retention of pupil in the Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region according to the study. This is to ensure effective teaching and learning because through the intervention of the GSFP, pupils are not able to boost their retention level which is a progress in education.
4. For the sustainability of the feeding programme in Sekyere South District, a reliable and guaranteed source of funding is required. The spirit of volunteerism among beneficiary communities and school farms or gardens should be encouraged.
5. The implementation committees at the Sekyere South District should continue to monitor the quality and quantity of the daily meals provided for pupils. This is necessary since the quality of the food such as its nutritional value is a factor motivating parents to enroll and keep their children in school.

6. There is the urgent need to enhance community participation and collaboration in the programme to better serve schools on GSFP in their communities.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

Future studies should investigate the role of politics in the SFPs implementation process and its role in learning outcomes in Sekyere South District. It should address the channels that connect the school and community levels and the programme impact. Future studies should also explore how politics influence health and agriculture outcomes of the GSFP. Likewise, future studies can focus on following up on the same children to find out how the programme has fared after the study recommendations have been adhered to.



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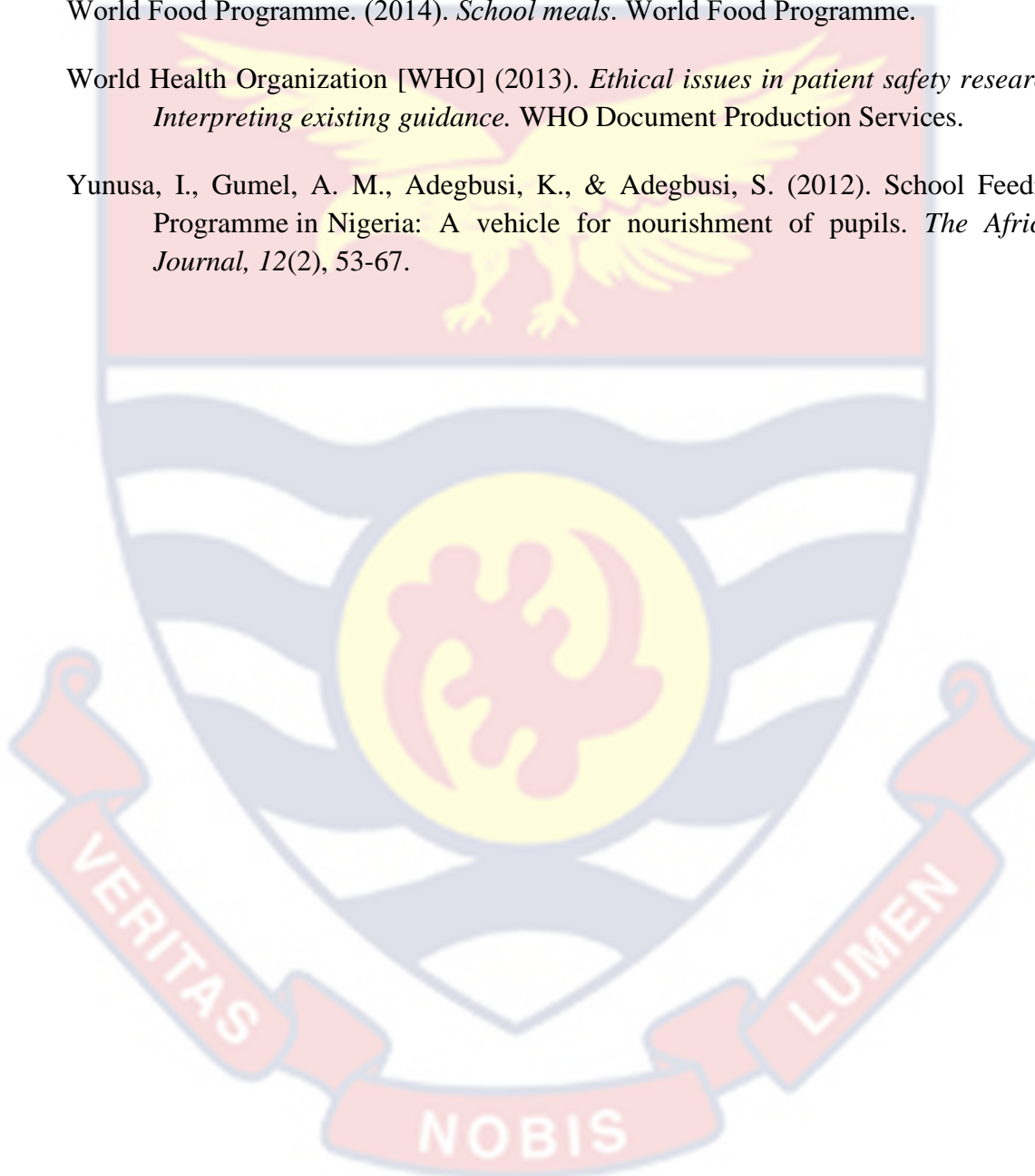
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## APPENDIX

## CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## Questionnaire for Respondents

**Topic: The Impact of School Feeding Programme on Enrollment, Attendance and Retention in the Sekyere South District of the Ashanti Region**

Dear respondent,

You are please, being invited to participate in the study “The Impact of School Feeding Programme on Enrollment, Attendance and Retention in some selected basic schools in the Sekyere South District of the Ashanti Region”.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. Your responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Please take time to read each item or statement on the questionnaire attentively and give the response that best reflects what you currently think. Please place the mark (√) in the box that best reflects your opinion and or observation.

Sincerely yours

Joyce Nana Esi Acquah

**Section A: Demography oof Respondents****1. Gender**

a. Male [ ] b. Female [ ]

**2. Age Group**

a. Less than 30 years [ ] b. 31–440 [ ] c. 41 - 50 [ ] d. 51-60 [ ]

**3. Highest Educational Level**

a. Diploma [ ] b. HND [ ] c. Bachelor’s Degree [ ] d. Master’s Degree

**4. Years of Working Experience**

a. 1-5 [ ] b. 6-10 [ ] c. 11-15 [ ] d. 16-20 [ ] e. 21 years and above [ ]

**SECTION B: Status of Pupils Welfare before the Implementation of the School Feeding Programme (SFP)**

In your opinion, what were the statuses of pupils' welfare before the implementation of the School Feeding Programme (SFP) in your school?

Please indicate the extent to which you **Agree, being Neutral, or Disagree** with the following statements. Kindly tick [✓] the most appropriate; Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree =2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

**Pupils' Welfare before the Implementation of the School Feeding Programme**

<b>PREMISE</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
The dropout rate was high, especially on the part of girls					
Malnourished children faced several problems that affected their learning					
The number of learners who were anxious, unhappy, jealous, angry or vulnerable was high					
The school tended to record low attendance rates					
The retention rates were very low in the school					
Teachers have to cajole learners to complete homework and return books and equipment to class					
Most children especially those from food-insecure households always scored lower on tests					
Most children had difficulties getting along with other children					
Children who were malnourished or even experiencing short term hunger had a limited capacity to learn					
There was a decrease in pupils' retention in school because of no provision of meals					
Most children were not enrolled in school at an early stage					
Pupils' punctuality was low					
Most parents fail to enrol their children in school at all					

**Others:** Please specify .....

**SECTION C: Impacts of the School Feeding Programme (SFP) on the Welfare of Children after its Implementation**

In your view, what are the impacts of the School Feeding Programme (SFP) on the welfare of children after its implementation in this school?

Please indicate the extent to which you **Agree, being Neutral, or Disagree** with the following statements. Kindly tick [√] the most appropriate Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree =2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

**Impacts of School Feeding Programme (SFP) on the Welfare of Children after Implementation**

PREMISE	SA	A	N	D	SD
It has contributed to children’s regular attendance at school					
There is an increase in pupils’ retention in school because of the provision of meals					
It has reduced the dropout rate among pupils					
There has been an improvement in pupils’ performance in both curricular and extra-curricular activities					
The performance scores of the children have risen					
The food that children are receiving at school is a critical source of nutrition					
It has led to improved concentration and performance of children in school					
It has offset the social and economic costs of education for parents					
Parents motivate their children to attend school because of the meals					
It has addressed micronutrient deficiencies like iron and iodine among the children					
It has increased community involvement in schools because parents of the children prepare and serve the meals					
It has provided health and education benefits to poor and vulnerable children and their families					
The meals have the added benefit of being fortified with other necessary nutrients which have made massive improvements in the children’s mental development					

**Others:** Please specify .....

**THANK YOU**