



## Assessing Parental Cooperation in School Meal Programs to Enhance Pupil Attendance in Primary Schools: A Case of Ilala Municipal, Tanzania

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### Abstract

This research aims to investigate the influence of school meal programs on the cognitive development and academic performance of primary school students in Ilala Municipal Council, Tanzania. This study seeks to evaluate the management of school meal provision, explore parental attitudes toward the program, and assess its impact on students' academic outcomes. Food insecurity is a significant issue in developing countries, affecting students' ability to achieve academic success and cognitive development. In Tanzania, school meal programs are intended to address these challenges, but their effectiveness in improving student outcomes remains underexplored. This study contextualizes the problem of food insecurity and its impact on education, emphasizing the role of school meal programs in mitigating these issues. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative data on student attendance and academic performance with qualitative insights from interviews with school staff, parents, and policymakers. This comprehensive approach allows for a thorough examination of the factors influencing the effectiveness of school meal programs. This research reveals that well-managed school meal programs, supported by active parental involvement, significantly enhance student attendance and academic performance. Nutritious meals help alleviate short-term hunger, leading to increased classroom engagement and improved learning outcomes. This study identifies key management practices and parental attitudes that contribute to the success of these programs. The findings underscore the critical importance of school meal programs in addressing food insecurity and supporting educational achievements. This study offers valuable insights for policymakers and educational stakeholders, advocating for continued investment in and expansion of school feeding programs. By showing the benefits of effective program management and parental involvement, the research contributes to the development of more effective strategies for improving student outcomes.

**Keywords:** Parental Cooperation, school meal programs, pupil attendance

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### 1. Introduction

Food insecurity is one of the major issues in developing countries which are debate seriously. The affected countries suffer from hunger and undernourishment, due to their incapability to provide sufficient nutritious food. Insufficiency of nutritious food is caused by several factors such as climate change, food crisis, and natural disaster problems (Farooq *et al.*, 2022) <sup>[28]</sup>. The United States Agency International Development (USAID) food policy highlights food availability, accessibility, and utilization as three major dimensions in achieving food security. The proxy for food insecurity is based on three important variables namely prevalence of food Inadequacy prevalence of undernourishment and Depth of Deficit (DFD) (Cafiero, 2019) <sup>[12]</sup>. This paper examines the impact of these dimensions on food insecurity in selected developing countries, using the country fixed effect model. The World Food Programmed has defined malnutrition as a situation where people have a difficulty in growing and fighting for disease. Malnutrition also affects the ability to learn and do physical work.

The State of food Insecurity in the World shows that the number of undernourished people based on the dietary Energy Supply (DES) is 870 million people, which is 12.5 percent of the global population, with 852 million people living in developing countries (FAO, 2012) <sup>[27]</sup>. Children and adolescents are in a crucial period of body growth and maturation. Adequate nutrition during this period is of great importance. Several studies have revealed that inappropriate nutrition in childhood is related to both the occurrence of diseases in youth and the risks of developing obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer in adulthood.

There is a problem or challenge at Ilala Municipality especially the low cooperation of parents for providing School Meals in Primary schools of Tanzania pupils which has not yet provided and discussed greatly as one of the great factors that can increase students' attendance hence raising the good performance of the schools. School feeding programmer is a challenge towards student's attendance and performance in many regions in Tanzania especial at Dar es Salaam in Ilala primary schools. An issue that the researcher was keen to establish was the sufficiency of the meals which is not provided. In order to make the school meals to be provided, the objective of the meals would be provided is to cater to both the psychological and physiological needs of the meals for school kids (Cardoso *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[13]</sup>.

Not only on that, but also there are some reasons which lead to increased problems including those which emanate from the society such as poverty, environment, attitude toward formal education and others. This effort is partly supported by the government through The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. In some cases, parents/ guidance supports this program by contributing food and some amount of money. In some schools of Tanzania pupils doesn't get any kind of food from morning up to end of day. Although many researchers have addressed on school feeding program, they have not paid attention on the cooperation of parents to the influence of food provision to primary pupil's academic performance. Therefore, this is the knowledge gap that needs the researcher to fill in. This study investigated the cooperation of parents to the influence of food provision to academic performance on primary schools' education in Ilala municipality which is basing on solving the problem by setting the good techniques for having the meal at the schools.

## 1.2. Study specific objective

1. Assess the management of providing food to primary school pupils in Ilala municipality.
2. Investigate the parental attitude in the feeding program in primary school education in Ilala municipality.
3. Assess the influence of food provision to primary school's pupil's in Ilala municipality toward on school attendance

## 2. Past literature review

### 2.1. Empirical Studies in Developed Countries

The developed countries are those countries with high levels of technology and economy in the world. The rank of those countries had been categorized by the international organs like International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. In most of the developed countries food is given a greater all in primary schools and it is sponsored by the government under the ministries of Education. According to Rogers (1966) <sup>[63]</sup>, healthy individuals are open to experiences and academic achievements. Kubik (2003) <sup>[45]</sup>, argued that food is a major facet of education. The provision of food benefits pupils emotionally and enhances their academic performance. According to Basch (2011) <sup>[9]</sup>, argued that participation in

school breakfast programs has been associated with reduced absenteeism. Furthermore, breakfast has positive effect to learning in children in terms of behavior, cognitive, and school performance. School breakfast programs, further, improve attendance rates and decrease tardiness. Among severely undernourished populations, school breakfast programs seem to improve academic participation and cognitive functioning.

This means that the pupils with good healthy are comfortable in their learning. Consumption of a healthful food on a daily basis consisting of a variety of foods, especially high-fiber and nutrient-rich whole grains, fruits, and dairy products makes a pupil fit for the learning process. Failure to this, the process of learning became difficult.

### 2.2. Empirical Studies in Developing Countries

In developing countries this problem is dominant in many countries due to the different factors. But the greater factor lack of food provision for primary school students which discourages their studying well and hence poor attendance /performance.

According to Rosso *et al.* (2006) <sup>[65]</sup>, lack of food provision in schools leads to repetition and dropout rates. When children are provided with no or poor nutrition, their weakened condition reduces their learning capacity and forces them to end their school journey prematurely or stay out of school. Therefore, effective learning participation is hindered.

In developing countries where they are growing economically the problem of shortage of food is common and is one of the hindrance factors of development in educational sector. Not only food scarcity but also poor infrastructure like road that the student uses when they are going to school can cause the stunts to arrive late in school hence, they punished by their teachers hence they become discouraged to continue with studies. Other factors such as water scarcity and inadequate infrastructure continue to impede the full realization of the central goals of Kenya's school meal program (Munuhe, 2014) <sup>[54]</sup>. According to Grantham *et al.* (2005) <sup>[36]</sup>, there is an association between hunger, poor dietary intake, stunting, underweight, and poor school performance. In general, the developing countries family in corroboration with the government should make sure that their pupils' gates food during school time in order to improve school performance.

### 2.3. Empirical Studies in Tanzania

Education reform began in 1995 to ensure access and equality for all children. During the rate 1990s policy focused on development in primary education. Children in Tanzania attend seven years of compulsory primary education (ages 7-13, grades 1-7), four years of secondary education (ages 14-17, form 1-4), and two years of advanced secondary education (ages 18-19, grades form 5-6). The primary school pupils are in a little age hence they can't sustain to stay the whole day with ought taking food.

According to Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC) reports, School meals program in Tanzania was established in 1956 and strengthened shortly after independence under Local governments which included the provision of mid-day meals and health services such as screening and first aid. Available information shows that during the late 1970s, most of these activities had been abandoned. According to Felix the study has revealed that academic performance and attendance in schools in five regions in the country have improved tremendously, thanks to the School Feeding Programme (SFP) sponsored by the World Food Programme

(WFP). Early this year WFP commissioned the Economic Social Research Foundation (ESRF) to conduct a baseline for the SFP. The findings from the baseline survey showed that there were fewer dropouts, improved pupils' health and even children who dislike school enjoyed their studies. School attendance concentration enrollments have increased while dropouts have decreased, he said. Teachers reported that the academic performance in their schools had improved as a result of strides recording in the WFP School Feeding Programme. The programme is jointly implemented by the WFP and the government of Tanzania through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

The program was designed to support primary education in drought-prone and pastoral areas and is known as Food for Education (FFE). At the moment it is being implemented in 13 districts in the five regions of Arusha, Manyara, Shinyanga, Dodoma and Singida. Districts covered include Bahi, Kiteto, Kondoa, Monduli, Longido, Ngorongoro, Loliondo and Karatu. The World Food Programme (WFP) Tanzania supports school Feeding programmes in some schools and last year, WFP expanded its school Feeding Programme. Nowadays the number of primary school children receiving meals under WFP Programme has reached 640,000 from 600,000 in 2011. This programme aims to help pupils concentrate better in class. The programme also saved those pupils who come from a far place from schools. Regan noted that WFP and the government of Tanzania had embarked to ensuring that the school meals programme was sustainable by encouraging small farmers to produce more.

### 3. Study Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-method research approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, following the rationale that combining these methods offers deeper insights than either alone (Dawadi *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[20]</sup>. A descriptive research design was adopted to examine parental cooperation in the school meals program and its impact on pupil attendance within primary schools in Ilala Municipality, Tanzania. Ilala was selected as the study location due to its high population and frequent community complaints that school meal programs mainly benefit affluent students and that the programs may be profit-oriented. Ilala Municipality, part of Dar es Salaam Council, has a population of 1,368,881, with a growth rate of 6.6% annually, making it an ideal setting for examining the social dynamics of this program. The target population included teachers, parents, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), pupils, and heads of primary schools. Teachers were selected for their role in implementing and overseeing the school meals program and for their insights into its effects on pupils' attendance and engagement (Littlecott *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[46]</sup>. Parents were equally integral, as their support and perceptions shape the program's effectiveness, highlighting critical social and cultural influences (Kim *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[43]</sup>. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample from four primary schools, reflecting various socio-economic and geographical contexts within Ilala Municipality, ensuring a diverse perspective on the program (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020) <sup>[55]</sup>. Data collection combined quantitative surveys for teachers and pupils and

qualitative interviews and observations with school heads, parents, and WEOs. These methods ensured comprehensive data coverage of the study's focus, with well-planned data collection procedures to enhance accuracy, reliability, and response rates (Taherdoost, 2021) <sup>[72]</sup>. The careful selection of instruments and execution strategies enabled the collection of reliable, diverse, and valid data, supporting robust findings for this study.

## 4. Study Findings

### 4.1. Response Rate.

As cited by Curtin *et al* also known as completion rate or return rate, is the number of people who answered the survey divided by the number of people in the sample. It is usually expressed in the form of a percentage. The response rate can be calculated by dividing the number of completed survey responses by the number of people who viewed or started the survey.

In this study, 360 of questionnaires were distributed, 310 for pupils and 50 for teachers. In total, 340 questionnaires were returned; of these 20 questionnaires were removed from the analysis as several sections were not completed. This left 320 usable questionnaires. The total response rate for data is shown in the table below.

**Table 1:** Returned Rate

Distributed Questionnaires	Returned	Validly/ useful
360	340	320
100%	94%	89%

From the table above, The total number of distributed questionnaires was 360, returned questionnaires was 340, missed questionnaires was 20, so the return rate of all questionnaires worked questionnaires was 320 which is 89% which is acceptable rate to be analyzed.

### 4.1.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographics is defined as arithmetical data about the physiognomies of a population, such as the age, gender and income of the people within the population, this is according to the researcher's best knowledge.

**Table 2:** Teacher's demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age of teachers</b>		
25-35	26	43%
36-45	18	30%
46-and above	17	27%
<b>Education Level</b>		
-Certificates	28	46.7%
-Diploma	17	28%
-Degree	10	17%
Master degree	5	8.8%
<b>Gender</b>		
-Male	20	33%
-Female	40	67%
<b>Teaching Experience</b>		
1-5 years	13	22%
6-10 years	19	32%
11 and above	32	48%

Source: Field Data, 2023

**Table 3:** Pupil's demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
-Male	141	45%
-Female	170	55%
<b>Age</b>		
9-11	185	59%
12-15	126	41%
<b>Class level</b>		
-Standard 4	50	16%
-Standard 5	60	19%
-Standard 6	90	29%
-Standard 7	121	36%

Source: Field Data, 2023

Gender distribution among respondents was considered to be of the important factor in determining the critical factors for the study in secondary schools in Ilala Municipality. Findings of the study in table 2 indicates that 20(33%) of total respondents were Male and 40(67%) were female. This proved that gender was seriously taken into consideration to collect data from respondents and the study find that female teachers are many in the urban area than male teachers.

Age factor, the results also show age distribution of respondent. Majority of teachers (43%) were in between 25-35 years old category, followed by 18(30 %), and 17(27%) were above 45, this means that are more experienced compared to all. In general, age of teachers in Ilala are young and of medium age group of people. Moreover, the study indicates that 55% of teachers do not have any leadership skills due to limited number of leadership positions, but the rest (45%) have some position in school leadership. Having leadership experience helps teachers in managing school and teaching career.

Teaching experience is another demographic characteristic of teachers in the study. The study find out that, about 48% of respondents were experienced in teaching for more than 11 years while 30% are in between 1-4 and the rest were experienced by more than 15 years and above. Most of experienced teachers having more knowledge in dealing with pupils and nearby community and having tactics and techniques in guiding pupils.

#### **Pupils gender characteristics**

Gender distribution among pupils was considered to be of the important factor in determining the critical factors for the meals program provision in selected primary schools in Ilala Municipality. Findings from the table 4.1 above indicates that 141 of respondent were male that's mark 45% of total respondents and 170 female which is 55% were female. This indicates that gender was well considerable as woman/girls were not left behind.

Age was considered as an important variable in this study.

This indicated that age factor is very crucial in determine the level of understanding of the respondents. Table 4.1 indicated that, the majority of respondents are in range of 9-12 years which is adolescent stage and disturbing stage and pupils have the ability to judge things.

Respondent's level or class is one of the crucial attribute in assessing the contribution of meals program provision in public primary schools in Ilala Municipality. A study focused much on upper classes rather than lower classes. The study found that 121 of respondents were standard seven pupils which is almost 36% while 90 of respondents were standard six which is 29% and the rest were just 16%, and 19% of standard five and four. In table 4.2.1 classification was clearly proved.

#### **4.2. Research Findings According to Research Objectives**

Under this section, findings were presented according to study-specific objectives.

#### **4.3 Management of providing food to primary school pupils in Ilala municipality.**

The first research objective sought to access the management of provision of food to primary schools in Ilala Municipality and their role in enhancing pupils' learning effectiveness among Pupils in Ilala primary school. Open-ended questionnaires were administrated and interviews conducted. The data collected were obtained from students, teachers, and head of school, parents and Ward Executive Officer. Research through questionnaires to students, teachers and interviews to head of schools along with observation has revealed that the management of the provision of food services to students is not good and causes a lot of inconvenience to students, bad order to arrange students, cleanliness of dining areas, order to clean dishes food service is not very good and needs correction and effective management of quality and standards that will make students enjoy the food service.

**Table 4:** Management of providing food to primary school pupils in Ilala municipality

Variables		S.A	A	N	D	S.D
We provide breakfast in our school.	Frequency	0	0	0	60	14
	%	0	0	0	40	60
We provide lunch in our school	Frequency	40	5	0	15	0
	%	66.7	33.3	0	33.3	0
The availability of breakfast/lunch promotes pupils' attendance	Frequency	4	8	0	5	2
	%	20	40	0	33.3	6.7
The school food feeding program improve pupils learning concentrations	Frequency	45	5	0	2	1
	%	75	10	0	6.7	3.3
Food program in school reduce truancy in school	Frequency	21	39	0	0	
	%	46.7	53.3	0	0	0
Parents are contributing for school feeding program willingly.	Frequency	2	35	2	4	2
	%	6.7	60	6.7	20	6.7



The program is well supervised and monitored perfect.	Frequency	15	6	3	2	30
	%	25	13	6.5	4.5	50
All teachers are working as a team in making program effectively.	Frequency	9	11	0	0	0
	%	46.7	53.3	0	0	0
We have safe store for storing food collected from parents	Frequency	6	9	2	3	0
	%	26.7	53.3	0	0	0
We gave a safe kitchen for preparing food	Frequency	2	3	0	5	10
	%	6.7	13.3	0	20	60
Our pupils eat balanced diet in this program.	Frequency	2	3	0	5	10
	%	6.7	13.3	0	20	60

Source: Field Data, 2023

**Percentage, SD- strongly disagree, D = Disagree, U= undecided, A=agree, SA=strongly agree**

From the table 3 findings above, the study leveled that, about the breakfast was not provided to pupils as rather than lunch to all who have contributed. The issue of providing breakfast has been the wish of a parent and his or her child; teachers are not involved in ensuring that children get two meals even though they are at school. The breakfast service is provided by individuals who contribute to the tax costs to provide the service. Some students go all the way to find very cheap breakfasts. The effects of students not having effective management of where they can have a safe breakfast has become a challenge especially for endangering the health of students, evidence of students suffering from cholera and diarrhea in some primary schools in Ilala Municipality as reported by the Dar es Salaam Regional Health Committee that dirty environment leads children to get infections.

As shown in table 3 above and agreed by 66.7% of respondents, all the schools that the researcher visited has lunch service for students who have contributed to the service. The delivery of lunch is managed by the teachers on duty as well as the committees of the service with representatives who are parents analyzed by the committee of all parents in the school domains. Involving parents is to provide an opportunity for the implementation of good services and government policy that emphasizes participation in ongoing matters, especially involving parents in certain contributions or services. The researcher witnessed children competing to line up to get food service in some of the schools he visited; this clearly confirms the provision of lunch service to students in primary schools in Ilala Municipality.

Results from table 3 shows that about 78% of teachers strongly agreed that providing students with breakfast increases the ability of students to be interested in studying and to be attentive in class. Students need a healthy diet at all times to support mental health development. Scholars and Politicians also emphasize the importance of good nutrition for children to overcome mental retardation. Eating foods rich in omega 3 increases the growth and mental capacity of the child. The municipality of Ilala has set aside a special day to feed on nutrition week for children and more emphasis is given to schools that provide food service to focus on good nutrition (balanced diet).

Moreover, about 75% of respondents strongly agreed that, providing food to pupils stimulate the tendency of pupils to attain school. The distribution of food in schools has shown great effectiveness in reducing absenteeism in schools, many children like to eat together, so the distribution of food brings unity and happiness to students because instead of going to look for food in dangerous places, it will help to find safe food in the right quality and good management from parents and the organizing committee.

From the table 3 as shown above, 65% of respondents agreed that there is poor management of the program hence the program is leading to lament from parents and students.

Despite this service being provided in primary schools in Ilala Council, the management of this service to be effective has been a very big challenge because parents have been complaining and many students, despite their small size, have shown dissatisfaction with the food service provided in schools because they have been getting problems in getting food, some lack food despite donating and some even get little food, students also clearly pointed out that there are teachers who use that food especially if it is better food than others and cause some students to lack food.

This research has revealed that there are no good stores to store food, there is also a big challenge in places where food is cooked because it is narrow and dirty, thus endangering the health of students. A bad food service environment is an obstacle to the provision of good school food services. Many government schools in the municipality of Ilala do not have cafeterias or dining halls for students to get food service. Many students use outdoor areas that are dusty and not very safe for students.

When interviewed by the researcher one of head teacher in school A commented that:

Food service for students is good and important, as school principals we saw the need for students to eat at school, children spend a long time without eating and falling asleep in class, we saw the need to have food service in schools, if children are well fed they study well and calm down in class unlike being hungry. We always urge parents to contribute to this service because it is for the benefit of their children and not only for us.( Interview, June, 2023)

Another head of school B said that:

Our school offers food service as well as other schools here. The school committee and parents are the main coordinators of this service, we through the teachers of education and independent education together with the teachers of projects and economics manage all the food delivery services so that every student can get what he contributed. Despite the challenges of this service in schools, we still see the great importance of students getting food service for proper growth and productive teaching. If a student is well fed, he must understand well and be attentive in this situation, this increases the success of students.

Commented on the program of food services in his school the head teacher of school C said in Swahili that:

Mpango huu wa kutoa Chakula kwa wanfunzi hasa kwa Manispaa yetu ya Ilala ni utekelezaji wa sera ya wizara ya afya ya lishe kwa watoto. Wanafunzi hawa wanatoka katika mazingira tofauti na mbali sana tu, muda mwingi hutumia shule kujifunza sasa wakikaa muda mrefu bila kuapata Chakula wanakosa hamu na utulivu wakati wa kijifunza, njaa ina madhara makubwa katika kujifunza kwa watoto kwanza huleta mchoko, hasira, hamu ya

kusoma na huzuni kwa wanafunzi. Nijukumu letu kama walimu pia wazazi kuhakikisha watoto wetu wanapata lishe bora wakiwa shuleni. Wapo wazazi ambao wanawapa watoto hela ya Chakula ama wengine huwafungashia watoto wao Chakula lakini bado kuna wengine huwezo huo hawana hivyo watoto wakipatiwa Chakula na kula kwa pamoja husaidia hata kuondoa unyonge na matabaka miongoni mwao.

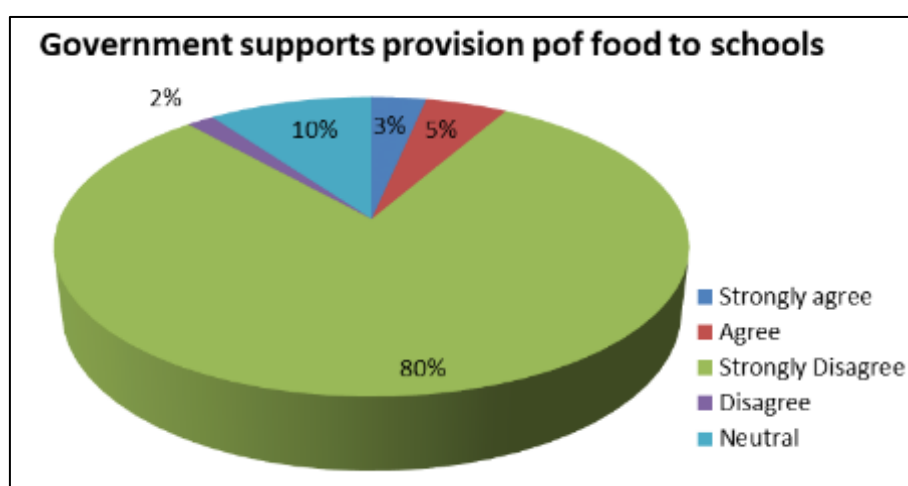
#### Translation

This plan to provide food for students especially for our Ilala Municipality is the implementation of the Ministry of Health's nutrition policy for children. These students come from different and far away environments, they spend a lot of time at school studying now, staying for a long time without getting food, they lack interest and calmness during learning, hunger has great effects on

children's learning, first it brings boredom, anger, desire to study and sadness for students. It is our responsibility as teachers as well as parents to ensure that our children get good nutrition while at school. There are parents who give their children money for food or others pack food for their children, but there are still others who do not have that ability, so if children are given food and eat together, it even helps to remove poverty and class among them. (Interview, June 2023)

Another question asked by researcher based on the same objective one aimed to find out if government contributes anything in the program. When analyzing the questionnaires from teachers, pupils and then interview from the head teacher, parents and WEOs, the results shows that government have nothing to do with the program.

#### “Did the government contribute anything from the program?”



Source: Field Data, 2023

Fig 1: Government supports the provision of food to schools

From the figure 4.1 above about 89% of teachers strongly disagree that government contribute anything in the program, 5% agreed, 4% strongly agreed while 2% were undecided. The food service in the school belongs to the parents and teachers, so the government has no role in managing or collecting donations. The policy of free education aimed to relieve parents of the cost of education, so these food donations must be approved by the relevant authorities and the school board under the head of the region must accept and be satisfied with this service. The primary schools in Ilala Municipality that provide this service have been approved and the procedure is recognized as explained by the head of school D in Ilala Municipality.

Serikali haitoi mchango wowote katika kuendesha hii huduma ya chakula hapa shuleni na hata katika shule zingine, kama itakubukwa wakati wa awamu ya tano Hayati Dr. Magufuli alifuta mchango yote mashuleni na ili mtekeleze jambo kama hili ilikuwa ni lazima mpitie mlolongo mrefu sana lakini awamu hii ya sita kamati ya shule ikikaa na wazazi na kukubaliana juu ya jambo fulani linalo hitaji mchango ya hiyari basi jambo hilo hupitishwa na kukubaliwa ndio maana na sisi tunajambo hili katika shule yetu.

#### Translation.

The government does not make any contribution in running this food service here in the school and even in

other schools, if it will be seen during the fifth phase Late (Hayati) Dr. Magufuli canceled all donations in schools and in order to implement something like this, we had to go through a very long process, but this sixth phase, if the school committee sits with the parents and agrees on something that needs voluntary donations, then the matter is passed and accepted, that's why we have this program in our school.

When responding to the question above Ward Executive Officer of Ward A in Ilala Municipality didn't agree with the views of one of head of school that government have nothing to do with the program and quoted that;

Awali ya yote nashukuru kwa kunitembelea na kujua maendeleo ya shule katika kata yangu. Suala la wanafunzi kula shuleni ni jema na linapaswa kuungwa mkono na kila Mtanzania. Kusema kuwa serikali haichangii chochote ni upotoshaji wa makusudi na wenyenia ovu kwa nchi yetu. Serikali hii ambayo imejenga madarasa kila eneo, imeweka miundombinu bora katika shule, imepeleka huduma za maji, umeme unasema haijachangia hii huduma kwani bila kupeleka maji chakula wangepikia nini? kuna namna tu hatuweli serikali inatoa hela ya madaraka kwa walimu ili mambo kama haya pia yafanikiwe ndio mchango wake sio lazima itoe mchele au unga ama maharage kwani pia ni jukumu la mzazi kwa sehemu yake nadhani ndicho nacho weza kusema juu ya

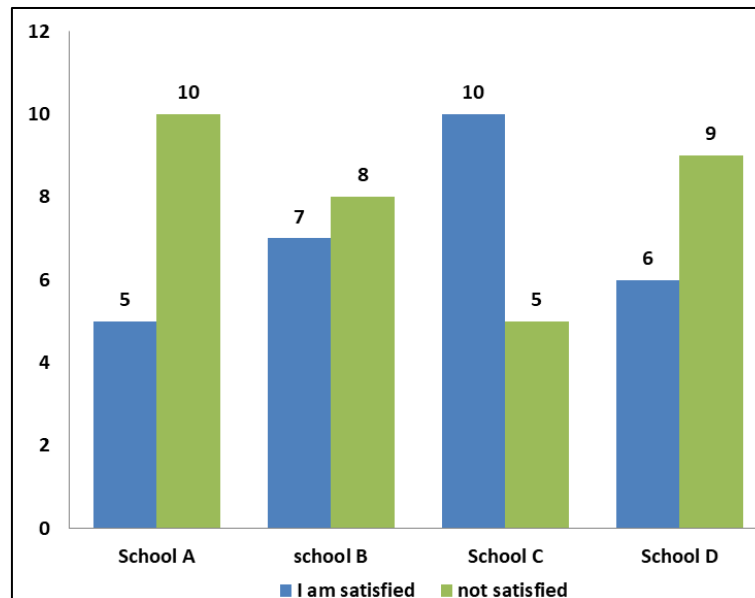
hili pasi na shaka.

#### Translation

First of all, I thank you for visiting me and knowing the progress of the school in my ward. The issue of students eating at school is good and should be supported by every Tanzanian. Saying that the government does not contribute anything is a deliberate misrepresentation by those who have bad intentions for our country. This government which has built classrooms in every area, has

put good infrastructure in schools, has provided water services, electricity, you say it has not contributed to this service because without providing water, what would they cook? There is only one way we don't understand that the government gives a lot of power to teachers so that things like this can also be successful. It's their contribution, it's not necessary to give rice or flour or beans because it's also the parent's responsibility. I think that's what you I can say about this without a doubt.

#### Satisfaction of providing services to pupils in Ilala Municipality



Source: Field Data, 2023

Fig 2: Satisfaction of providing services to pupils in Ilala Municipality

From the figure above approximately 60% of respondents are not satisfied with the program supervision by school head or teachers who have been selected to conduct the problem. Research shows that there is a monopoly of some school head in providing food services to students, first of all there is no transparency in the collection of donations from parents, there has also been a preference for some teachers to appoint their people to be cooks for their benefit, also teachers who receives donations and uses them without any permission and thus delays or degrades the food service in schools.

When responding to the question one of parents argued that; I am not completely satisfied with the service provided by the school even though I contribute, first of all the teachers themselves eat the food of our children, they eat the donations that is every day and complaints from the students, I think the biggest problem is the bad management of the teachers but in general this is very good.

Another parents during an interview he explained about food provide in school by outsiders and pupils like most as he was quoted;

As a parent, I have witnessed children fighting for food, pushing each other and endangering their safety while teachers fight and beat them, we know the difficulty in students but to a large extent our teachers care about their interests more than the best service for our children in schools. Despite the government canceling the donations, we have willingly agreed to contribute towards the

corrections, the food allowance now the children must be treated equally and not otherwise, we should also ask the government to review the donations to find out if they are being used properly or if the teachers are diverting investments. (Interview, June, 2023)

Other parents from Ilala Mchikichini added that,

I don't have much problem with the way the teachers organized themselves to manage this service. The problem is that the children eat one meal, there is no balanced diet at all, they only eat beans and one day they eat rice and beans, there is no fruit, no vegetables, no meat, they even drink water that is not boiled, this is what causes some parents to give their children money to eat at school. even though the foods that are eaten are dangerous, especially the environment in which the food is prepared. ( Interview, June, 2023)

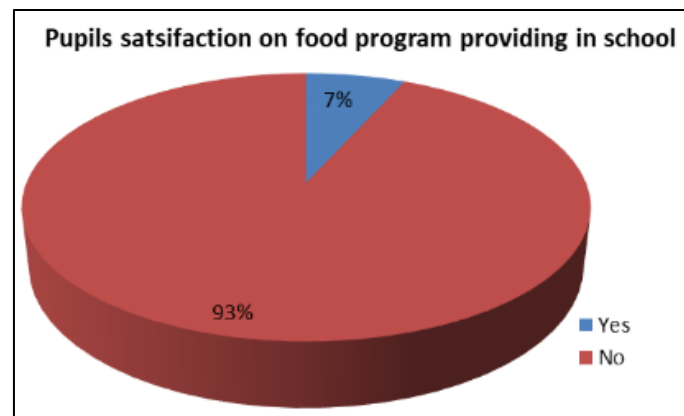
Another parent during an interview added that;

The school food delivery service has not started today, when we were studying we used to farm and eat at school and the society realized that, the problem of these times is the knowledge of people, politics everywhere, corruption everywhere now the society has completely lost trust in everything that people want to do first they think you are benefiting from it or it is an opportunity for them, the teachers who only manage this food service and they have a hard time from their fellow teachers, we know this because we live with them on the streets, that is, they are fighting with each other why a certain teacher should

manage this service and not him, concept this just proves how the society does not trust each other even though the parents are the ones who organize these donations and the teachers to collect even those who collect there are times when they steal part of these donations and in this situation many conflicts arise because the children are not fed or they are given food that does not have any merit, it is all due to a lack of patriotism and full of hypocrisy.

Based on the same objective number one that aimed to access

### Are pupils satisfied with the food provided in school?



Source: Field Data, 2023

Fig 3: Pupils satisfaction on food program

97% of the students in the study clearly said that they are not satisfied with the food service in school because they eat the same type of food that is not well organized as the health regulations also say that the environment in which they prepare their food is not safe and not completely satisfactory so it is also dangerous to their health. In a focused group discussion, the students discussed the importance of the government establishing a food system in all schools in the country in collaboration with various stakeholders in education and non-governmental institutions in order to further support children in difficult family situations, some of whom even drop out of school due to lack of certainty of food and find themselves in the wave of being employed before time or engaging in criminal activities such as theft, drug use and selling themselves to minors.

Conclusively, this finding in objective number one supported the idea Rosso and Marek (2006) [65], who assert that, lack of food provision in schools leads to repetition and dropout rates. When children are provided with no or poor nutrition, their weakened condition reduces their learning capacity and forces them to end their school journey prematurely or stay out of schools. Therefore, effective learning participation is hindered.

In developing countries where they are growing economically the problem of shortage of food is common and is one of the hindrance factor of development in educational sector. Not only food scarcity but also poor infrastructure like road that the student uses when they are going to school can cause the student to arrive late in school hence they are punished by their teachers hence they become discouraged to continue with studies. Other factors such as water scarcity and inadequate infrastructure continue to impede full realization of the central goals of Tanzania's school meal program. Grantham and McGregor (2005) [36], said that, there is an association between hunger, poor dietary intakes, stunting, underweight, and poor school performance that is why schools in Ilala Municipality introduced the program of food provision to pupils.

the management of providing food to primary school pupils in Ilala municipality. During focused group discussion pupils were not happy with the food as one of pupils said, "*Chakula kinachosha yani ni ugali na magarage kila siki kasoro ijumaa tu ndo wali magarage napo tunagombea na kuumizana ndo mana wazazi wengi hawachangii maana wanaona watoto tunateseka tu*" (We are bored of Ugali and beans that we eat everyday especial on Friday when we eat rice with beans but we struggled in a queue to get food, this is not what our parents want that is why some parents do not contribute).

Implication of this findings to the government based on objective number one that aimed to access the school management of food services in school indicates the problem of governance and transparency in providing this service, so there is a need for the government to cast a close eye on the performance and management of this service to remove complaints and mistrust between parents and teachers.

### 5. Conclusion

This study focuses on the cooperation of parents for school meals to increase students attendance in Ilala Municipality, in Tanzania. The study employed Structure strains theory by Bttin, the theory states that demographic factors of school attendance are based on socioeconomic status.

In other words, children from better social status are more likely to attend school; which means poor children are likely to drop out of school, unless measures are put in place. The poor family socialization theory relates that the tendency to drop out of school is due to lack of high expectations from parents and/ or lack of parental education. This means then that schools are better positioned to address school attending issues than the parents.

In relation to the first research objective which aimed to access the management of provision of food to primary schools in Ilala, this study concluded that a teacher's role is not only to impart knowledge but to also help in the managing students to achieve the attained goal by helping them to get balance diet for better cognitive development. The study concludes that while there are cases of children missing school due to the feeding program in place, there are also cases where children miss school due to illness, family obligations, a lack of a school uniform and food at home, subpar performances that cause them to withdraw, a lack of parental support and guidance, as well as poor characteristics developed by students. There are only a few meals provided throughout the day, so students do not fully participate in class work, which results in low performance. The healthy



students in the center are always active and perform well in the exam, and a feeding program is more important than other factors towards the improved performance.

Secondly, in line with objective number two which aimed to investigate the parents' attitude in the feeding program in primary schools in Ilala Municipality. The study concluded that, there is enough proofing that lack of little understanding of parents on the importance of contributing to the cost of food for their children at school believing that children go to school to read and not eat if it is food they will find at home forgetting that a hungry child cannot do well in class.

Also, the concept of free education and its interpretation is taken wrongly by parents, many parents immediately after the government announced the cancellation of donations in schools give them a difficult time to contribute again to the food service at school because they believe that the government can withhold food and other services for students without them contributing anything.

Moreover, the difference in income in the family is also a problem in contributing to the food service at school, many parents complain about the difficulty of life and the difficult economic situation as an obstacle to contribute 1000 shillings every day for food in the school. This research has clearly concluded that the level given by agreement with parents is not a barrier as it is the level that most parents can afford.

Thirdly, in relation to the specific objective number three which sought to access the influence of food provision to primary school's pupils in Ilala Municipality towards on school feeding program. The study concluded that, food feeding for students in primary schools is very important because it increases the students' ability to learn, increases the ability of students to think especially when they are not hungry at school, helps to reduce absenteeism at school, removes the behavior of students from leaving school and going to look for food outside the areas of school which is dangerous for their health, it helps students to get a long time to stay at school and correct the mistakes they made during regular class sessions but it also brings unity and happiness to students as research has clearly found that students are happier when they sit together and get food together.

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