

Perception of Teachers on Physiological Needs and the Collapse of Feeding Programme for Access to Education in Primary School Children

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to determine the perception of primary school teachers on physiological needs and collapse of feeding programme for access to education. The study was guided by two research questions and one hypothesis. A descriptive study design was adopted. A total number of one hundred and twelve (112) teachers from public schools made up the sample for the study. A ten-item questionnaire was developed, by the researcher after reviewing some related literature, validated and used in collecting data. Data collected was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The findings reveal the perception of teachers perceived that physiological needs such as immediate attention to feeding as a basis for education, hunger taking place of education and children lacking concentration without food. Besides teachers also perceive greed and selfishness, inadequate fund, lack of proper orientation, under estimation and change of policies on the part of government led to the collapse of the feeding programme. It also revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers based on location. Recommendations were made based on the findings.

Keywords: physiological needs, motivation, psychology, education

1. Introduction

The name of Abraham Maslow is always synonymous with need fulfillment theory which has to do with the hierarchy of needs. Maslow found that individual's responses to activities whether physical, psychological, social, or biological, depends on the satisfaction of the physiological needs which are the basic needs of every individual. This is especially so for children. Maslow argues that the physiological needs, when satisfied, motivate or is a step towards the achievement of other needs. He believes that people are often distracted from seeking self-actualization need because of their inability to meet the basic needs (Bernstein, Clarke-Stewart, Peanner, Ray, Wickens, 2000). This implies that the progress of the individual is basically predicated on the satisfaction of physiological needs or basic needs, such of food, shelter and security.

2. Physiological Needs

These needs are needs that take priority over other needs. These are the major needs among Maslow's hierarchy of needs which are characterized by Maslow as deficiency needs. When satisfied it permits the individual to avoid physical sickness and psychological maladjustment (Maslow, 1970 in Odemegwu 2005). Psychological needs are needs that require immediate attention. These needs are more important to all human beings more especially to children who are at the peak of their growth. When any of these needs goes unsatisfied, the individual becomes preoccupied and lacks concentration and co-ordination. A desperate hungry child who always think about what to eat, every other thing apart from food is not important or necessary to the child until he/she is satisfied. When other additional higher needs emerge, they start to dominate the child, taking the place of hunger (Allen, 2000).

It was on this basis that the issue of applying feed programme by Universal Basic Education as a means of enhancing access to education in primary and junior secondary schools for the achievement of millennium Development Goals arose. This was addressed during the launching of the Universal Basic Education in the year 1999 under the administration of past president Olusegun Obasanjo. With the introduction of feeding programme in the UBE, the disadvantaged children, in the rural areas had the opportunity to have access to education. This strategy helped to link nutrition and access to education for children in the selected states in Nigeria. This strategy helped to boost the enrolment in school and check malnutrition. With the feeding programme in the school system, the enrolment rate considerably increased (UNESCO, 2005). Generally, it also enhanced physical and cognitive capacities of the children while the programme lasted

Maslow (1970) argued that the individuals have a hierarchy of needs; which are in the following order; First the physiological needs which involve the needs to satisfy hunger, and thirst. Second; safety needs; need to feel safe, secure, and stable. Third; belongingness and love needs; needs to love and be loved, to belong and be accepted, to avoid loneliness and alienation. Fourth, esteem needs: needs for self-esteem, achievement, competence and independence, need for recognition and respect from others. Fifth, self-actualization needs: needs to live up to

one's fullest and unique potential (Myers, 2002). Going by this explanation, physiological needs are at the base, and it is when they are attended to or when they achieved that the desire to achieve the higher ones will become manifest.

Generally, physiological psychology is equally referred to as biological psychology. It has to do with the study of biological basis of behaviour (Martin, 2003). Physiological involves the causal events in individuals' physiology, especially in the nervous system and its interaction with glands that secrete hormones (Martin, Carlson and Buskist, 2007). This implies that studying, physiological needs of individual's has to do with the needs in relation to the individual's memory process, emotional reactions, motivation and learning capacity which if not properly handled can affect individuals negatively. It therefore, become necessary that the physiological needs which are the basic need for every individual should be met for proper co-ordination of the individual in relation to their thinking, perception and learning.

According to Maslow (1970) human motivation for different activities passes through several levels with entrance to subsequent levels dependent on satisfying the needs in precious levels. If an individual's needs are not met at the basement level definitely they cannot scale the hierarchy and will fail to attain their true potential. Form Maslows findings if the first needs that is the physiological needs on the hierarchy of needs, such as food, shelter and water are not met the child ceases to operate well until these need are met. In line with this Mangal (2010) and Martin et al (2007) stated that the first category of biological or physiological needs individuals have to address are the needs of oxygen, food and water. These needs are the most fundamental for individuals' survival and existence. Therefore, individuals cannot survive beyond a limited period of time if they are deprived of these needs. This was basically, why the Nigerian government decided to minimize illiteracy by providing food for children at primary school level as access to acquire education for all. Children cannot be motivated unless they are well fed before desiring for higher levels of life fulfillment towards self-actualization. For Ramalingam (2006) physiological motive which involves motive stemming from a bodily need is very relevant in the lives of individuals. Whenever physiological needs are captured in individuals lives then equilibration is set for further actions.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government expenditure in education is an average of 5.1% of the annual budget. This is abysmally low in comparison with many other African countries such as Ghana with an average of 25.7%, Zimbabwe 23.4% and Kenya 19.8% among others (World Bank, 2004). It is not far from conclusion by stating that this unimaginable constraint in budget has led to slow pace and unfinished or incomplete implementation of the outlined programme of access to quality education.

Education is the cultivation of human minds and spirit. It is also the foundation of good and economically productive society. This means that the improvement of education is the basis for a better society. Education creates the ability to adapt, assimilate, and accommodate easily. This is because, education provides people with basic skills and knowledge that they would not have acquired if they did not go through the educational process. This is because education which involves acquisition of knowledge has to do with labour intensive industry. Recently, education has been seen as a type of social investment which enables people to be productive (World Bank, 2004). It is perceived as the building block for social, psychological, and economic reconstruction (Odumegwu, 2005). This implies that education helps to rebuild and remould individuals in different dimensions. It was based on this, that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2000) introduced the feeding programme as access to education for all Nigerian citizens at primary school level. Access to education is seen as the capacity and door way to penetrate or enter into formal learning. Food is one of the physiological needs that every individual needs to enable him/her to move on with life. Feeding programme as access to acquire education is one of the Federal Republic of Nigerian strategy to overcome the barriers in acquiring education in both rural and urban areas. This is meant to help to lead children to a level whereby they can independently realize their potential and overcome the challenges that might arise as a result of illiteracy. For Zwozdiak-Myers (2008) lack of education is the barriers to individuals achievement in life. According to Mittler (2000) the major obstacles to change lie in individuals attitudes towards education.

Basic education, which comprises primary and junior secondary education, is seen as the type of education that can hold the individual to function appropriately in the society. Feeding programme was introduced in the school system as a reform programme to enable children to acquire basic education. Without further investigation, it is clear that the implementation of this feeding programme witnessed a lot of problems that led to its collapse. The population explosion in the various schools created a major problem to the programme in the school system. It was found that in primary schools, the population was, 16,7799,08 (Dike, 2003). The point might be made that the government under-estimated the project and could not handle it any longer because of high costs resulting from the population explosion.

With the observation made by the researcher another related problem is the problem of unqualified and untrained personal to handle the project. In most schools the principals, headmasters and headmistress, sought for maximum gain in every opportunity that they came across. Therefore the tendency to operate the school as

business centres may have contributed to the apparent failure of the programme.

A recent research reviewed that a great number of Nigerian children that are of school age are out of school. According to Aja-Nwachukwu (2008), 10 million Nigeria children that are supposed to be either in primary or secondary school are out of school. About 4.7 million and 5.3 million are within primary and secondary school age respectively. It was also revealed that 62% of these children are female. This indicate the gender inequality in education. From the look of things, education in Nigeria has a very big gap to fill in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Initially, when Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) started the feeding programme in schools, to relieve parents form the burden, both male and female children of school age were released by parents to attend school. When FRN withdrew this offer, there were more dropouts than ever before (Afon and Akpobiri, 2007). It is emphatically stated that ensuring the health of children and encouraging them to learn by engaging in formal education are essential in every education system (World Bank, 2004). The effectiveness of this strategy helps to boost and improve educational outcomes and check malnutrition which generally decreases the physical and cognitive capacities of children in school.

In a study carried out by Myers (2002), on the effect of hungry in children. The findings indicated that as the subjects get hungers, they began to conserve energy, and appeared apathetic. Their body weights dropped rapidly and they lost 25% of their weights. Psychologically, they became obsessed with food and day dreamed food. They collected recipes on food, read cookbooks and feasted food books. They lost interest in physical and social activities. They were preoccupied with their unfulfilled basic or physiological needs. Their moods changed because they could not laugh at the funniest picture in the world and love senses were completely dull. Therefore, gratification of hunger releases children to chase higher needs. Deprivation of these needs can cause irritability and impatience, stifle creativity and originality and interfere with the ability to think and remember what they were taught (Collins, 2007).

3 Statement of problem

Lack of balanced diet and vitamin deficiencies can contribute to lack of concentration among children in primary and secondary schools who are at their developmental stages. These equally reduce the academic performance of the children, making them not to achieve much, even when they put in their best. There are indications that when one is hungry, there is no proper concentration and co-ordination in relation to cognitive perfection or memory work. It is by fulfilling these basic physiological needs that the pupils can then have the desire for self-esteem, achievement, recognition and appreciation.

Gratification of these needs were serving as the most appropriate strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which include among others: eradication of poverty and hunger, achievement of Universal Primary Education and promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. The findings of Aja-Nwachukwu (2008) that 10 million primary and secondary school children are out of school, is a negative indication on the access to education in Nigeria. Therefore, the study was designed to clarify if there are some constraints in the application that led to the collapse of feeding programme as a strategy for access to education. in addition, it was meant to determine the influence of location on this programme.

4. Research Questions

1. What are the perception of primary school teachers on physiological needs and collapse of feeding programme as strategy for access to education?
2. Do location influence the perception of teachers on physiological needs and the collapse of feeding programme for access to education?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance

H₀1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of Urban and Rural school teachers on physiological needs and collapse of feeding programme for access to education in primary schools.

5. Research Method

5.1 Design of the Study

The design adopted in this study was survey design. This was found appropriate because it was made to collect data from a sample of an entire population.

5.2 Population of Study

The population of the study consisted of all the primary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area presently with a total teachers population of 1309. The researcher chose this Local Government Area because it is made up of urban and rural areas and because of easy accessibility.

5.3 Sample and sampling Technique

Purposive Random sampling technique was used in selecting 112 teachers from the fourteen (14) primary schools five in urban and nine in rural schools that were implementing the feeding programme before the collapse in primary schools.

5.4 Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher. A total of 112 questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher who waited for the completion of the questionnaires. The return rate was 100%.

5.5 Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Foundations. Some items were removed and other additions were made based on the research purpose of the study presented to the validators.

5.6 Reliability of the Instrument

Trial testing procedure was adopted using three schools in Udeno Local Government Area which is outside the study area. In computing the reliability coefficient of the instrument Cronbach Alpha method was used. It was found to be 0.71 and 0.75 for teachers response and response based on location. These were found suitable for the study.

5.7 Method of Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions, while t-test statistics was adopted in testing the hypothesis which are the descriptive and parametric statistics respectively. In deciding if the answer to the research questions were high or low, any mean ranging from 2.50 and above was regarded as high and categorized under "Agree". Any mean below 2.50 was regarded as low and was categorized under "Disagree". The hypothesis was tested at a $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The researcher used statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 17.0 to obtain the results

6. Results

Table 1 shows that items 1 to 8 are found to be above the acceptable means of 2.50. These indicate that impediments or constraints exist in the collapse of feeding programme in primary schools. Above all, the grand mean also agreed with the 8 individual item means. The table also revealed that items 9 and 10 have means below the acceptable mean. They are not accepted as contributors that led to the collapse of the feeding programme.

What are the perception of primary school teachers on the collapse of feeding programme as strategy for access to education?

Table 1: Mean scores on response of primary school teachers on the perception of the constraints that led to the collapse of the feeding programme.

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Greed and selfishness on the part of government officials	112	2.75	1.06	Agree
2	Inadequate funding from both federal and state governments	112	3.38	.86	Agree
3	Population explosion of children after the introduction of the feeding programme	112	3.19	.98	Agree
4	Hunger took the place of education	112	2.58	1.02	Agree
5	Government under estimated the project	112	3.24	.83	Agree
6	Change of government and policies change	112	2.97	.79	Agree
7	Immediate attention on feeding is the basis for education	112	3.04	.88	Agree
8	Children lack concentration without food	112	2.99	.91	Agree
9	Lack of mobility to get to rural areas	112	2.18	.99	Disagree
10	Greed on the part of the head teachers and principals	112	2.28	.98	Disagree
	Grand/overall mean		2.78	3.49	Agree

N = Number,

X = Mean,

SD = Standard deviation

Table 2 indicates grand mean of 3.05 and 2.70 for Urban and rural areas respectively. The individual mean ranged between 2.55 to 3.30 on the items with acceptable means. On the other hand, teachers in urban area disagreed on item 9, with means of 2.43. Teachers in rural area also disagreed with item 10, with a mean of 2.06.

Does location influence the perception of teachers on the collapse of feeding programme as strategy for access to education?

Table 2: Mean scores of primary school Teachers response on location

S/N	Items	Location	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Greed and selfishness on the part of the government	Urban	44	3.00	1.13	Agree
		Rural	68	2.78	1.01	Agree
2	Inadequate funding from both the federal and state government	Urban	44	3.30	.93	Agree
		Rural	68	3.43	.81	Agree
3	Population explosion of children after the introduction of the feeding programme	Urban	44	3.09	1.03	Agree
		Rural	68	3.25	.95	Agree
4	Hunger took the place of education	Urban	44	2.61	.97	Agree
		Rural	68	2.56	1.07	Agree
5	Government under estimated the project	Urban	44	3.18	.84	Agree
		Rural	68	3.28	.82	Agree
6	Change of government and policies change	Urban	44	2.98	.73	Agree
		Rural	68	2.97	.84	Agree
7	Immediate attention on feeding is the basis for education	Urban	44	3.14	.85	Agree
		Rural	68	2.97	.90	Agree
8	Children lack concentration without food	Urban	44	3.05	.86	Agree
		Rural	68	2.96	.94	Agree
9	Lack of mobility to get rural areas	Urban	44	2.43	.97	Disagree
		Rural	68	2.91	.98	Disagree
10	Greed on the part of the head teachers and principals	Urban	44	2.55	.96	Agree
		Rural	68	2.06	.94	Disagree
	Grand mean	Urban	44	3.05	.40	Agree
		Rural	68	2.70	.30	Agree

N = Numbers

X = Mean

SD = Standard deviation

2.50 = Agree

Below 2.50 = Disagree

Table 3 shows the result of t-analysis between urban and rural primary school teachers' opinions. The mean score observed for t-calculated is 1.60 while the critical value is 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value is less than t-critical, the null hypothesis is accepted. The result indicates that there is no significant difference between the responses of primary school teachers in urban and rural areas as to the perception the application of feeding programme as a means for access to education.

Table 3

H₀: There is no significant difference in the mean rating scores of Urban and Rural teachers on physiological needs and collapse of feeding programmes for access to education in primary school.

Summary of t-test analysis of the influence of location on teacher's opinions on physiological needs and the collapse of feeding programme needs for access to education.

Location	N	\bar{X}	t-	t-critical	Decision
Urban	44	3.05	1.60	1.96	Accepted
Rural	68	2.70			(NS)

N = Number

\bar{X} = Mean

T = t-calculated

NS = Not significant

6.1 Discussion of Results

Table 1 indicated that there are some constraints in the application of feeding programme as a means for access to education. A close look at the table shows the perception of teachers on the collapse in ranking order. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Dike (2003) which indicated that population explosion during the period the feeding programme was implemented in the school system created a major problem. This could be as a result of lack of appropriate foresight on the part of the Federal and State Government. They would have envisaged the possibility of the increase in population as a result of the use of feeding programme for access to education which was introduced. Knowing fully well that the physiological needs which involve food, water and shelter among others are the most relevant needs in the life of every individual including children, it is

appropriate to reconsider the application in the school system. In line with this, Collins (2007) added that deprivation of these needs tend to stifle the ability to think and co-ordinate properly in the classroom. Therefore, for communication to be effective, the children or learners' physiological needs must be satisfied to enable them move to the other levels, because these needs are seen as the first step to successful academic achievement. On the other hand, the table indicates that lack of mobility to get to rural areas and greed on the parts of the head teachers and principals do not constitute major constraints in the collapse of the feeding programme.

Table 2 also revealed the position of teachers in urban and rural areas in relation to constraints or reasons for the collapse experienced as against the application of feeding programme as a means for access to education. From the table, the overall or grand mean indicates that teachers from the areas are in agreement in their responses. A close look at the table indicates that inadequate funding by the government is a major constraint of the problem. This is in agreement with the World Bank (2004) finding that Nigerian government spend little or nothing in financing the education of the children. It is therefore necessary for the government to study the situation appropriately before engaging in any project of this nature.

A critical look at table 3 indicated a higher mean for the opinion of teachers in urban area than the opinion of teachers in rural areas, but it is not significant. This means that the stated hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted, due to the fact that t-calculated is less than t-critical. This is an indication that location has no influence in the application of feeding programme for access to education. This finding is in line with other findings that location is not a significant variable.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study explored the perception of teachers on the collapse of feeding programme and the influence of location on the application of this programme for access to education. Access to education has to do with the ability of individuals to have opportunities to be educated irrespective of their socio-economic background, gender (male or female) and culture. Access to education on this study specifically focused on the Nigerian government plan in helping to make sure children get basic qualification through the provision of food as a means of drawing children back to school, more especially the school drop outs. It was perceived as a means that can change children's lives forever or improve their life styles. It is a project designed to help to minimize the rate of poverty in the country. The findings of the study indicate that there are some constraints or reasons behind the collapse of the feeding programme for access to education. Among others are the explosion of children after the introduction of the strategy and lack of orientation by the government. Both teachers in urban and rural areas show no significant difference in their opinions on the constraints against the collapse of this programme.

There is need, for the government to do proper home work before carrying out such project in future, for the fact that, there was population explosion, government should revisit the project, reorient stakeholders involved and continue the project, because the gain from it is significant.

The government should try as much as possible to revisit and strengthen the application of the feeding programme as it is the basis for actualizing one's objectives in life.

Government should equally realize that physiological needs such as food and shelter which are the basic needs should be address in order to create provision for the subsequent needs.

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