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THE ROLES OF HEAD TEACHERS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES IN PUBLIC INCLUSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CHUNYA DISTRICT COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT

This paper is on the roles of head teachers in the management of school feeding programmes in public inclusive primary schools in Chunya District Council. The theory of project implementation and collaboration guided the study. The study used a mixed research approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed. The sample size for the quantitative data was calculated using the 1967 Yamane formula. The key informants for qualitative data were selected purposively to enrich the study. The study used a convergent parallel research design to collect and analyse data from the respondents. The participants were selected by using simple random sampling and purposive sampling and data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and observation. Quantitative data were coded through Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 and were analyzed through the thematic analysis technique. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis and presented in figures and tables. The findings of the study indicate that the roles of head teachers are to formulate food committees, to supervise food committees and to involve the community in the SFP. Moreover, the government should provide funds for the implementation of the School Feeding Programme on time so that school management and School Food Committees can work effectively.

KEYWORDS: Role, Head Teacher, Management, School Feeding Programme, Inclusive Primary schools.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The School Feeding Programme (SFP) is the intervention that can address nutrition and health problems of school-age children. Food is considered among the important basic needs of every human being for the effective functioning of the body and proper performance of day-to-day activities United Nations (UN, 2023).

1.2 Background to the study

With the greater understanding that the world and Tanzania in particular have policies such as the Tanzania Education and Training Policy of 2014, which was edited in 2023 and the School Feeding Programme of 2020 that emphasize inclusive education, it is understood that pupils with diverse needs, especially those who are disabled, are considered for school feeding programs. As reported by the UN (2023), the world has realized the UN Agenda 2030, which aims to achieve inclusive, equitable and quality education for all. Similar to that, the Federal Government of the United States of America came up with

Head teachers play a crucial role in the success of School Feeding Programmes through resource allocation, stakeholder coordination and involvement. This was identified by Solomon and Yusuf (2022), who conducted a study in Abuja that head teachers have the role of monitoring and evaluating the School Feeding Programme.

Moreover, the African Union (2023) identified that head teachers in African countries were tasked to encourage the community to send orphans, vulnerable children and students with disabilities to school so they may get an education together with normal pupils because the government is responsible for financing their meals.

Moreover, a study conducted by Shukia (2020) on Fee-free Basic Education Policy Implementation in Tanzania added that head teachers in public primary schools that implement the School Feeding Programme have the role of putting in place a school feeding programme committee, which will run all the activities involved in school feeding.

Similar to that, Erukudi&Edabu (2020) conducted a study in Kenya and identified that the management of SFP is being done by both head teachers together with the School Feeding Committee. It was identified that head teachers in the schools are responsible for involving the community members to provide other materials that may not be available at school, such as water, firewood and human resources to help in the preparation of meals and distribution of food to pupils.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The government of Tanzania, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, has introduced the School Feeding Programmes in inclusive public primary schools to

support learners with disabilities to get meals when they are at school and SFP has increased access to primary education, especially for pupils with disabilities (URT, 2014).

This was also done for the aim of attracting learners with disabilities to get an education because previously, parents were hiding learners with disabilities. The government provides funds to facilitate meals for special needs pupils in inclusive primary schools and gives community members a chance to participate in the programme. Despite the fact that the programme is being managed by a special committee, there are inefficiencies and poor management of the programme, especially with funds that are being provided by the government in Chunya District. Most of the community members in the School Feeding Programme are not aware of the implementation of the programme and create chances for heads of schools to misuse the funds. Therefore, this study sought to assess the roles of head teachers in the management of school feeding programmes in public inclusive primary schools in Chunya District.

1.4 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the determinants of effective management of School Feeding Programmes in public inclusive primary schools in Chunya District Council.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

The paper was guided by the first specific objective, namely

1. Determine the roles of head teachers in the management of school feeding programmes in public inclusive primary schools in Chunya District Council.

1.5 Research Questions

2. What are the roles of head teachers in the management of school feeding programmes in public inclusive primary schools in Chunya District Council?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may inform the Ministry of Education, policymakers, planners and other related partners about the genuine challenges of managing school feeding programmes in inclusive public primary schools. The study's findings may provide directions for future researchers, policy developers and school feeding programme managers to scale up or to modify school feeding programmes.

1.7 Methodology

The study used a mixed research approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed. The sample size for the quantitative data was calculated using the 1967 Yamane formula. The key informants for qualitative data were selected purposively to enrich the study. The study used a convergent parallel research design to collect and analyse data from the respondents.

The participants were selected by using simple random sampling and purposive sampling and data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and observation. Quantitative data were coded through Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 and were analyzed through the thematic analysis technique. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis and presented in figures and tables.

1.8 Findings

the study determines the roles of head teachers in the management of the school feeding programme in Chunya District Council. The study used both interviews and questionnaires to identify the roles of head teachers in the management of the School Feeding Programme in Chunya District Council.

Through questionnaires, respondents were asked to mention the roles of head teachers in the management of the School Feeding Programme in Chunya District Council. Respondents were positive and most of them mentioned the roles such as to supervise the food committee, to formulate the food committee and to inform the community on the progress of the programme through parents' meetings as presented in Table 4.2.

Table 1: The Roles of Head Teachers in School Feeding Programme.

The roles of head teachers in SFP	Head Teachers		Teachers		Parents	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
To formulate the food committee	15	71	30	71	140	95
To supervise the Food Committee	20	95	28	67	130	88
To involve the community in the implementation	10	48	15	36	30	20
Total	21	100	42	100	147	100

Source: Field Data. 2025

1.8.1 To formulate the food committee

The findings, as presented in Table 1, indicate that 71% of head teachers, 71% of teachers and 95 percent of parents/guardians who participated in the study identified that head teachers are responsible for formulating a food committee in schools that will implement the programme under the supervision of the school management.

Moreover, through interviews, the researcher asked the key informants about the roles of head teachers in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme in Public inclusive primary schools. One of the key informants said:

Head teachers have so many responsibilities in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme and one of their responsibilities is to make sure that the School Food Committee is formed. Head teachers have been given the responsibility of selecting members from the ward or village where pupils are coming to supervise the preparation and provision of food to learners with disabilities (Interviewee A, 2025, October 02).

Similar to that, another participant who was interviewed added that:

The implementation of the school feeding programme is complicated; therefore, I have instructed head teachers in each school that implement school feeding programme to formulate a committee that will work together with the school management in the provision of food to learners with disabilities (Interviewee B, 2025, October 02).

Based on the findings obtained through interviews with key informants, the findings indicate that head teachers were given instructions to formulate food committees that will work with the school in the preparation and distribution of food to learners with disabilities in public inclusive schools in Chunya District Council.

1.8.2 To supervise the Food committee

Also, Table 1 indicates that 95% of head teachers, 67% of teachers and 88% of parents/guardians identified that head teachers are responsible for supervising the food committee in schools. Food committees are being formed by parents, local leaders and teachers. Therefore, head teachers in all schools that implements School Feeding Programme are responsible for making close supervision on the implementation of the school food committee.

Moreover, the key informant who was interviewed on the roles of head teachers in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme added that:

...You should understand that head teachers are not only responsible for formulating food committees but they are also responsible of making sure that the committee is working effectively in the implementation of school feeding programme and learners benefit from the funds that are being provided by the government to make sure that learners with disabilities in public inclusive schools get meals (Interviewee A, 2025, October 02).

1.8.3 To involve the community members in the SFP

The study findings, as presented in Table 1 indicate that head teachers are supposed to involve the community members in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme. The Findings indicate that 48% of head teachers, 36% of teachers and 20% of parents/guardians identified that head teachers have to involve the community members in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme. Different from that, the majority of the participants, that was 52% of head teachers, 64% of teachers and 80 percent of parents/guardians, did not say head teachers have the role of involving the community members in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme.

Moreover, through an interview with participants, on the roles of head teachers in the management of the School Feeding Programme in Chunya District, one of the participants said:

We have been observing head teachers seek community participation in the implementation of various projects and programmes as directed by the government but sometimes they miss because the committeemembers in public institutions are not being paid. I want to say that community members are being involved, although their attendance is a problem. Head teachers perform their responsibilities well in inviting and involving the community members in school feeding programmes in Chunya District Council (Interviewee B, 2025, October 02).

In addition to that, another participant added that:

One of the roles of head teachers is to involve the owners of the school in the progress of their school. All these public schools belong to the community and we should know that nothing can be done without community involvement. In the school feeding programme, head teachers were informed to formulate small community committees that would work with teachers in schools to implement the school feeding programme. Therefore, I can assure you that there is no project in our primary schools that is being implemented without community participation (Interviewee A 2025, October 01).

Also, the study asked the respondents if the head teacher implements their roles in the management of the school feeding programme in Chunya District Council. The findings were as presented in Figure 1.

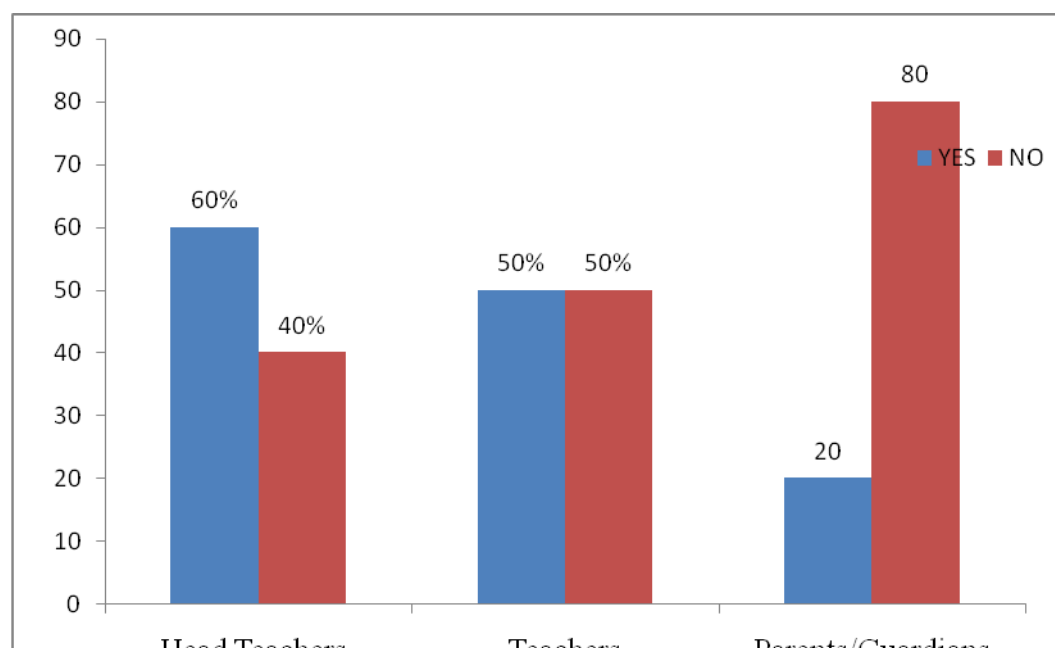


Figure 1: The response if head teachers implement their roles in SFP.

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings, as presented in Figure 1, indicate that 60% of head teachers, 50% of teachers and 20% of parents/guardians said head teachers in Chunya District Council implement their roles well in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme. Different from that, 40% of head teachers, 50% of teachers and 80% of parents/guardians said head teachers do not implement their roles well in the implementation of the School Feeding programme.

1.9 DISCUSSION

1.9.1 To formulate the food committee

The findings, as presented in Table 1 indicate that 71% of head teachers, 71% of teachers and 95 percent of parents/guardians who participated in the study identified that head teachers are responsible for formulating a food committee in schools that will implement the programme under the supervision of the school management.

The findings indicate that head teachers are responsible for formulating the food committees that will work together with the school management so as to implement the project. The findings are similar to what was discovered in the study that was conducted by Shukia (2020) on Fee-free Basic Education Policy Implementation in Tanzania that head teachers in public primary schools that implement the School Feeding Programme have the role of putting in place a school feeding programme committee, which will run all the activities involved in school feeding. According to the Fee-free Basic Education Policy, head teachers have been

instructed to work with the community members/parents in any project that is being implemented in the school. It should be noted that all community schools should be managed in the presence of the community members who are the owners of the community schools.

Also, the study conducted by Mketoe *et al* (2022) in Ethiopia identified that the School Feeding Programme is being run by a program committee at the school level, which consists of the principal, teachers and parents' representatives, with the responsibility of collecting the contributions from parents and monitoring the whole programme of school feeding to pupils. This indicates that head teachers are responsible for formulating school food committees that will be responsible for running all food activities in public inclusive schools so as to facilitate the implementation of the School Feeding Programme.

Based on the findings obtained through interviews with key informants, the findings indicate that head teachers were given instructions to formulate food committees that will work with the school in the preparation and distribution of food to learners with disabilities in public inclusive schools in Chunya District Council. This shows that head teachers were responsible for formulating food committees in all public primary schools that were implementing the School Feeding Programme.

1.9.2 To supervise the Food Committee

Also, Table 1 indicates that 95% of head teachers, 67% of teachers and 88% of parents/guardians identified that head teachers are responsible for supervising the food committee in schools. Food committees are being formed by parents, local leaders and teachers. Therefore, head teachers in all schools that implement the School Feeding Programme are responsible for ensuring close supervision of the implementation of the school food committee.

These findings are in line with the findings collected by Solomon and Yusuf (2022), who conducted a study in Abuja that head teachers have the role of monitoring and evaluating the School Feeding Programme. Moreover, URT (2020) identified that inclusive schools will be provided funds for school feeding programs for students with special needs, while normal students will be financed by their parents and the implementation of the programme will involve the school and community members. Head teachers will be responsible for supervising the implementation of the School Feeding Programme at a school level through monitoring and evaluation of the programme based on the funds that are being provided by the government.

Also, Myamba (2022) conducted a study in Tanzania and came up with the findings that the School Feeding Program (SFP) is currently serving 296 children with special needs in

inclusive schools in Chunya District Council and SFP is currently managed by school administration by mobilizing funds from parents, school revenue, the central government and donors. The implementation of the School Feeding Programme in Chunya District is being done by the special food committee, which is being supervised by head teachers.

The findings indicate that head teachers are responsible for making sure that pupils with disabilities get food when they are at school. Funds for the implementation of the programme are being provided to the specific school for implementation as directed in the Fee-free Basic Education Policy that all-inclusive public primary schools will be given funds to support meals to learners with disabilities. The head teacher must have ability to involve the community members as supervise all the community members in the implementation of the project as reported by Fullan & Quinn (2016) that the success of collaboration relies on school leaders' ability to foster unity among stakeholders, regularly assess the collaborative spirit and provide necessary support in terms of funds, expertise and other resources.

1.9.3 Involvement of community members in the SFP

The study findings, as presented in Table 1 indicate that head teachers are supposed to involve the community members in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme. The Findings indicate that 48% of head teachers, 36% of teachers and 20% of parents/guardians identified that head teachers have to involve the community members in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme. Different from that, the majority of the participants, that was 52% of head teachers, 64% of teachers and 80 percent of parents/guardians, did not say head teachers have the role of involving the community members in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme.

The findings indicate that head teachers are supposed to involve the community members in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme, although the community members do not want to be involved in the implementation, as most of the parents are busy with their economic activities. Similar to that, Erukudi & Edabu (2020) conducted a study in Kenya and came up with the findings that the management of SFP is being done by both head teachers together with the School Feeding Committee as the representative of the community members. The school cannot involve all the members, but through the representation of a few members in a school food committee. It was identified that head teachers in the schools are responsible for involving the community members to provide other materials that may not be available at school, such as water, firewood and human resources to help in the preparation of meals and distribution of food to pupils.

The findings collected through interviews indicate that head teachers in Chunya District are implementing their responsibilities well, especially in involving the community members in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme. This study identified that some of the schools had no School Feeding Programme, whereby not all members were coming to school to implement their responsibilities. It was identified that teachers had decided to take on their responsibilities.

Moreover, it is very difficult to take care of learners with disabilities, which is why head teachers decided to involve the community members and parents to come to school so as to support teachers in the implementation of the School Feeding programme. According to the Chunya District Council Report (2024), head teachers decide to involve the community members and parents to assist teachers in a public inclusive primary school to assist pupils with disabilities, because some of the students cannot access food. Community members are invited to be involved because some school children are unable to access food in the programme as expected due to their disabilities. Therefore, parents may help teachers to take care of pupils with disabilities, especially during lunch break.

The findings, as presented in Figure 1, indicate that 60% of head teachers, 50% of teachers and 20% of parents/guardians said head teachers in Chunya District Council implement their roles as head teachers in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme. Different from that, 40% of head teachers, 50% of teachers and 80% of parents/guardians said head teachers do not implement their roles well in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme.

The findings in indicate that teachers 50% and parents/guardians 80% said that head teachers in Chunya District Council do not implement their responsibilities well in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme to learners with disabilities. This was also identified in Chunya District Council, where some of the Inclusive Public primary schools had no School Feeding Programme despite having students with disabilities. This was also identified in the study that was conducted by URT (2020): that most of the special needs pupils in Tanzania were not in schools that had special lunch arrangements. This indicates that not all schools manage to implement the School Feeding programme to learners with disabilities.

Some of the primary school pupils in Chunya District Council leave the school because they do not get food when they are at school. The School Feeding Programme was initiated so as to promote learners with disability to be attracted to learn in public inclusive schools. This was also supported by URT (2014) that the government of Tanzania decided to introduce the School Feeding Programme to learners with disabilities in inclusive public primary schools to

support learners with disabilities to get meals when they are at school and SFP has increased access to primary education, especially for pupils with disabilities. This was also done for the aim of attracting learners with disabilities to get an education because previously, parents were hiding learners with disabilities.

1.10 CONCLUSIONS

Head teachers in inclusive primary schools do not implement their responsibilities well because they don't get enough support from the community members, as directed by the government that community members should participate in the implementation of SFP. The study identified that School Food Committees that are being formed to implement the School Feeding Programme in Public inclusive schools in Chunya District Council are not functioning and their roles are being implemented by teachers teaching learners with disabilities.

1.11 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study on the roles of head teachers in the implementation of the School Feeding Programmes in public inclusive primary schools in Chunya District Council. The researcher recommends that:

1. Chunya District Council should insist that head teachers should conduct parents' meetings and discuss how the School Feeding Programme can be implemented for learners with disabilities in cooperation with parents.
2. Teachers teaching learners with disabilities should not be given responsibilities in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme because they are assigned duties of teaching learners with disabilities.
3. The government should hire qualified cooks in all schools that implement the School Feeding Programme in the Chunya District Council.
4. The government should provide funds for the implementation of the School Feeding Programme on time so that school management and School Food Committees can work effectively.

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