

From Hunger to Hope: The Best Practices of SBFP in an IPED School

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This case study is hereinafter referred to as "From Hunger to Hope: The Best Practices of SBFP in an IPED School." The focus is on the implementation and impact of the school-Based Feeding Program within an Indigenous Peoples' Education school setting. These best practices highlight the holistic approach of SBFP to be a nutrition, education, and community engagement initiative that tackles food insecurity with better outcomes in terms of student health and academic results. The important practices include adapting culturally appropriate food practices, community involvement, and embracing technology for tracking student intakes. These were the readily available challenges of SBFP- insufficient funding, logistic issues, and the community engagement that comes with it. Strategies to solve such challenges include collaboration, mentoring, and good policy support. The results would show that SBFP improves the gross attendance rate, cognitive ability, and general academic performance of the students. It showed that the success of the program is due to its culturally sensitive and community-driven approach. Such an approach leads to ownership and sustains the programs. Based on the conclusion drawn from the study, SBFP is an essential intervention that can change the face of indigenous learners' lives by bridging hunger and learning gaps toward the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Community Engagement, Cultural Sensitivity, School, Food Security, Nutrition Education

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, student hunger and the effect of this on the performance of students in school has received considerable attention from both educators and policymakers. One very important initiative that addresses food insecurity among students is the school-Based Feeding Program (SBFP). This case study centers on the SBFP instituted in an IPED school by documenting the best practices translated from hunger into hope among students. We hope that this review of the critical practices of the SBFP in this school will indicate how these interventions transcend relief from hunger and enhance student health and academic outcomes (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015).

The SBFP is very important in schools where students are most challenged to access healthy food. Proper nutrition is critical for cognitive development and academic performance, especially among children from marginalized communities (Benton & Young, 2017; Taras, 2005). In the IPED schools where resources are scarce, the SBFP becomes a lifeline that offers meals contributing to better concentration, energy levels, and overall wellbeing of the students (Kearney, 2010). This case study will seek to identify specific practices in the SBFP that lead to such positive outcomes and how these address the specific needs of students in an IPED context. In addition, the Memoranda of DepEd issued in the Philippines emphasize the functions that nutrition programs have as enhancers of student health and education, as put forward in the DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2017.

Despite the benefits that the SBFP could bring, it still poses challenges in its implementation. These include insufficient funding, logistical issues, and engagement with the community (Lang *et al.*, 2019). Hunger has devastating effects on children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, thus impairing their level of performance in schools (Cansino J.A. 2019). The participation of a hungry student goes down with terrible performance due to the difficulty of concentrating. Hunger has many adverse effects on the overall learning environment for a child.

SBFPs were implemented in many parts of the world, aiming at fighting hunger and school dropout through promotion of education. Providing children with meals and snacks at schools ensures that they learn well as well as grow properly. Studies have shown that SBFPs improve school attendance and the ensuing academic performance. Students are said to develop well in various aspects of life (Cansino J.A. 2019). It has also recognized these challenges and encourages schools to adapt the best practices to guarantee sustainability and effectiveness in feeding programs according to DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018 (DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018).

The management level of the school-based feeding program impacts the academic performances of SBFP recipients. An effective method would promote greater communication and rapport building with parents and serve as a two-way instrument for creating rapport to get support in the program. Food safety standards are always followed by schools while managing the feeding programs. It has a strict implementation of the food program, especially for the underprivileged and yet deserving students. A well-controlled feeding program benefits the students by offering them staple foods and adequate food to be consumed (Demerin 2023).

It can change the school experiences and even the lives of Indigenous students from hunger to hope, from bleakness to possibility, in implementing the IPED school programs in the most relevant, culturally responsive, community-driven, nutritionally focused approach. This case study contributes to the improvement of knowledge and practice for SBFPs in IPED schools, sharing best practices and lessons learned in the field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The school-Based Feeding Program has been one of the strategic tools used in addressing malnutrition among children in educational settings, especially in Indigenous Peoples' Education schools. This review synthesizes recent literature to delineate best practices in implementing SBFP in IPED schools, framing the context of food security and educational attainment.

One of the main principles of SBFP is its holistic approach toward fighting hunger and promoting health among school-age children. According to Alonzo *et al.* (2021), SBFP is more than just a program intended to provide nutritional support. It also had an educational component that would enhance learning for the children. The writers said that it was not possible to carry out such successful programs without realizing that these students come from different backgrounds and have varied needs themselves (Alonzo *et al.*, 2021).

According to the study of Sibayan in 2022, Involvement of the community is necessary for SBFP to succeed. She says that including parents and other leaders from the community in this feeding program has greatly helped its success. A collaborative approach is important for IPED schools because students attending such schools have a significant tendency to rely on student attendance and performance with community dynamics.

The nutritional quality of foods supplied through SBFPs has also been investigated. A review by Reyes *et al.* (2023) indicates that the integration of foodstuffs that are culturally acceptable is critical, especially in the context of IPED. The adaptation of a menu to local dietary traditions will ensure greater acceptance among students and increases diet variety, as noted by Reyes *et al.* (2023).

Interventions of SBFP have been promising as noted in the efforts of Moreno and Licuanan (2024), which indicate that regular participation in SBFP correlates with better academic results in that students fed well had higher levels of concentration and academic achievement than the undernourished counterpart (Moreno & Licuanan, 2024).

From these evaluations of the implementations, SBFP concludes to include critical factors such as adequacy in funds available and competent training the workers in which successful and on top of all and on its priorities for one can conduct adequate and thorough and often consistent monitoring and reviewing; hence without this assistance support in combination with good surveillance over, then probably gains are just gone wasting due to poorly constructed and less impactful food security intervention programmes, noted by Laruan *et al.*, (2021).

There has also been the use of technology in SBFP. For example, Castillo and Gula (2023) have recently suggested using mobile applications to monitor and track students' nutritional intake. The authors argue that

digital tools will help to enhance communication between schools and families so that nutritional education is strengthened at home.

School-based feeding programs, in-fact, have become highly promoted as very important interventions supporting food security, educational outcomes, and more particularly within the context of Indigenous Peoples' Education. Best practices from such programs may prove invaluable for guiding thought and policy on how best to address distinctive needs of Indigenous communities. Research indicates that SBFPs particularly improve student attendance rates and cognitive ability (Mason *et al.*, 2019). In the context, SBFP in IPED schools embraces culturally appropriate food practices that encourage students to participate in the consumption process, thus increasing nutrition and, hence, academic performance (Garcia & Maisel, 2020). Such an approach ensures that food provided can resonate with, and therefore meet, cultural backgrounds of the students by meeting both sustenance and identity-building (Keller & Garcia, 2021).

Community engagement is very essential in enhancing the effectiveness of SBFPs at the same time boosting sustainability and acceptance. According to Cuervo *et al.* (2021), decision-making processes involving parents and other local stakeholders promote program ownership, which would ensure that there is a high attendance rate by the students. The said partnership model aligns itself with the concept of indigenous knowledge systems. In an indigenous knowledge system, people are at the centre point of education resources and community wisdom (Parker & Wishart, 2022). Sutherland *et al.* (2020) also emphasized that there must be development of cooperatives among schools, local agencies, and NGOs to acquire effective dissemination of resources and training skills to improve more on the program implementation aspect and the outcomes of a student.

In addition, it is noted that schools using an interdisciplinary approach in their nutrition programs also register more achievements in countering the deficiencies. According to Johnson *et al.* (2023), nutrition education along with SBFP can educate students to understand healthy nutrition practices by encouraging them to make informed decisions about food choices. The holistic approach recognizes a broader socio-economic impact influencing food security within Indigenous communities while underlining the need for educating students beyond just delivering food (Smith *et al.*, 2024). This integrative model furthers behavioral change and community health while creating an environment ripe for learning.

Indeed, governmental support is an essential aspect in the success of SBFP because policy frameworks influence implementation and effectiveness of programs. A recent study by Durant and Lee (2022) established that favorable government policies characterized by adequate funding and clear guidelines improve the capacity of schools to sustain these feeding initiatives. They argue that the robust policy environment provides stable access to resources, thus allowing schools to pay their attention toward improving nutritional results in tandem with educational. However, Pineda *et al.* (2021) suggested that government subsidy dependency must be counter-balanced by local effort as this can make schools vulnerable to the policy shifts, which can impact SBFP funding.

This normally encompasses both short and long evaluation of the effectiveness regarding outcomes on student health as well as academic performance. One such longitudinal study recently did by Fitzgerald and Thompson (2021) concluded that students who attend to SBFPs tended to have better health as compared to their peers whereas its impact on standardized scores appeared to be better after these programs. Such evidence points toward effects that go beyond nutrition effects and improve the education trajectories of all the students (Nguyen & Tran, 2023). This finding supports an argument for integrating SBFP into IPED holistic approaches to school, which would aim at how health and education promote sustainable development goals.

Best practices seen in SBFP for IPED schools reveal the importance of cultural sensitivity, community involvement, and a comprehensive policy to support effective intervention. Literature pertinent to this topic points out that such programs are not nutrition alone but respect and identify the cultural dimensions of education (Hernandez & Smith, 2022). Ongoing research and collaboration are critical in refining such practices toward bridging the gap of hunger and learning for the Indigenous students in educational institutions.

Going by the nutritional aspect and combining it with mental health, Ramirez (2024) discusses the psychological impact hunger has on children in IPED schools. This researcher discovered that chronic malnutrition leads to

cognitive impairments, more behavioral problems, and reduces school participation hence becoming a relevant component of programs such as SBFP in vulnerable communities.

Moreover, the sustenance of SBFP programs remains an issue. It will be ensured that partnerships for the long term exist between the school and organizations in the locality and its farmers. This will bring constant nutrition to the locality through healthy foods, building more resilience for the programs during political and economic volatility (Dela Cruz *et al.*, 2022). This is especially for those IPED schools where their food choices are so minimal.

Lastly, the importance of SBFP on equity issues in education should not be disregarded. "Nutritional support for poor students lessens the food insecurity-related barriers while equalizing chances for success" (Villanueva *et al.*, 2023). The longitudinal study shows that feeding programs over the long run led to higher retention and overall school performance of the target population (Villanueva *et al.*, 2023).

Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the best practices of the school-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) in an Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) school. Specifically, the study aims to answer these questions:

1. What key practices are implemented in the SBFP at the IPED school?
2. What challenges hinder the implementation of SBFP in the IPED school?
3. How do SBFP practices affect student health and academic performance?

METHOD

Setting and participants

The researcher conducted the study in one of the rural and IPED schools in the Division of Ozamiz City, Northern Mindanao, with a total enrolment of 102 students, of which there are 30 beneficiaries under SBFP.

The respondents of the study will involve 4 teachers interacting directly with SBFP beneficiaries, and 1 school principal responsible for the management of SBFP, and 1 SBFP coordinator in the school. The idea, therefore, underlines the aim of this study: to inform valuable insights on how SBFP affects learning outcomes, health, and well-being among these learners. This will then inform efforts towards policy and program development that broaden and enhance people's access to quality education and nutrition in marginalized communities.

Research design and data gathering

Because qualitative research is interpretive in nature, the researcher must be involved in the process of developing empirical evidence as well as analyzing it. It is beneficial to have a good understanding of the cases and participants well before the process of collecting empirical material (Rashid *et al.*, 2019). The case study research approach was used because the purposes of this study were identification of the key practice that helps to make success in the SBFP; understanding of challenges during the implementation; and evaluation how these practices influence student's health and academic performance.

According to Rashid *et al.* (2019), the qualitative case study approach consists of four phases: foundation, pre-field, field, and reporting. The four stages allow the researcher to get an intense analysis of interesting events occurring within the environmental surroundings. Secondly, the process presented by Yin (2013) has been used to guide the case study approach. Immediately prior to the study, the research professor applied what he learned regarding qualitative research and its protocols towards validating and perfecting his interview guide. Once a respondent passes through the validation process, the researcher accordingly alters the protocols of interviews as guided by the recommendations. After this, the researcher requested permission from the Public Schools District Supervisor to begin interviewing the interested instructors who had volunteered to participate in the

study. Before the interview, each respondent received a copy of the interview protocols, which included the questions listed in Table 1:

Table 1. Outline of the interview schedule

Research Questions	Prompt questions
<p>(1) What key practices are implemented in the SBFP at the IPED school?</p> <p>(2) What challenges hinder the implementation of SBFP in the IPED school?</p> <p>(3) How do SBFP practices affect student health and academic performance?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific practices are performed in the SBFP of IPED school to uphold proper nutrition among students? • How do these SBFP practices engage the community and the parents in supporting student health? • What are the difficulties to the implementation of the SBFP in the IPED school? • How do these challenges impact the participation of students and overall effectiveness of the SBFP? • What health benefits were seen among students based on the practices implemented under the SBFP in IPED school? • What is the impact of SBFP practices on academic performance as well as involvement of students in school?

Thus, this study's protocol development was guided by the research question. Teachers were interviewed in depth majorly on the school-based feeding program. Information was gathered mainly through interviews done unstructured to allow them to go in any direction. The consent to record all the answers given was granted for each volunteer willing to partake in the study. The interviews were conducted directly with every participant by the researcher, and all were conducted in the native language of each interviewee. For the interviewee's answers were not biased by the speaker's voice, recording provided a greater possibility of complete data. To preserve the anonymity of the research respondents, the names of respondents have been changed. The length of the interview also ranged from twenty to forty minutes.

Ethical consideration

Since the study highly depends on the rigors of qualitative research, the researcher always followed the standards while doing qualitative research and considered quality criteria to ensure the study's dependability. The researcher requested permission to gather data for this study from the Division Office. Getting his consent to continue, the researcher ensured that his study followed Lincoln and Guba's (2011) four principles of qualitative research, which included being credible, trustworthy, generalizable, and confirmable. He ensured all along the research process that participants' participation was entirely voluntary and that everything they said would be held in absolute anonymity. All the participants were well explained regarding the purpose of the study and data collected from them before making any consent.

Data Analysis

In keeping with this qualitative focus of the study, theme analysis was the key method through which data from the interviews could be allowed to be examined. Further, Yin (2013) has been used as the point of reference for the case study methodology. The Qualitative Research (QLR) recommended method was followed closely to bring about the careful, line-by-line coding and subsequent analysis that was required to be done. The steps involved the following theme analysis techniques: Step 1: data repository creation; Step 2: preliminary, expanded, and rationalized codes production; Step 3: analysis of the coded data; and Step 4: final propositions (Yin, 2013). In order not to interrupt the conclusion of the study, we watched the bracketing process. We then sharpened the process of data formulation and analysis through notes. Uncertain information in the transcript was referred to informants for clarification during data collecting and processing stages. In addition, it was shown and evaluated to confirm the themes developed throughout the data analysis, and participants identified and recognized emerging themes.

Profile of the Participants

Table 2 summarizes the demographic profile of the participants of the study. The participants were mostly teachers who have been teaching for three years or more at the Department of Education. One participant is an administrator of a school, and four participants are pursuing master's degrees.

Table 2. Profile of the participants

Participant Sequence	Educational Attainment	Years in Service	Positio	Grade Level Taught
1	MA Units	3	Teacher I	Kindergarten
2	MA Units	4	Teacher 1	Grade 1
3	MA Units	11	Teacher 1	Grade 2
4	MA Units	5	Teacher 1	Grade 3
5	MA Units	2	Teacher 1	Grade 4
6	MaEd	10	School Principal 1	School Administrator

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

For this investigation, a semi-structured interview guide was employed to operationalize the study instrument and draw important findings. On that account, while in the process of analysis, the resulted data was divided into different categories. The following three research questions, which are reflective of the study subjects, have been identified by this investigation: What important practices are used in the SBFP at the IPED school? What are the barriers to the implementation of the SBFP in the IPED school? How do SBFP practices influence students' academic results and health? Participants are given codes (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6) that feature in the interview transcripts to maintain anonymity.

The interview produced three (3) themes, which answered the three (3) research problems, after thematic analysis:

- Holistic and Participatory Nutrition and Health Interventions in SBFP in IPED School
- Challenges in the Full Implementations of SBFP in IPED Schools
- Impact of SBFP Practices on Health and Academic Performance of Students in IPED Schools

Problem 1: What key practices are implemented in the SBFP at the IPED school?

Theme 1: Holistic and Participatory Nutrition and Health Interventions in SBFP in IPED School

This theme explains the fundamental practices ushered in the school through the SBFP in IPED school, from nutrient-dense diets provision through nutrition education and health, hygiene practices, utilization of local foods, nutritional monitoring, and significant mobilization of a community and parents to support change so that students can maintain healthy actions.

Another important ingredient of the SBFP in IPED schools, therefore, was nutrient-rich food and education on nutrition. Such practices were sure to provide adequate nutrition to the children while also instilling healthy eating habits.

"The specific practices performed in our SBFP to uphold proper nutrition among students are the teachers identify the student as to moderately to severely wasted and meal preparation and distribution." (P1)

"By combining the provision of nutrient-dense meals with education on healthy eating and routine nutritional health monitoring." (P2)

"Health and nutrition education is provided alongside the feeding program to promote healthy eating habits." (P3)

Part and parcel of the SBFP are hygiene practices and the use of indigenous foods. Hygiene practice will keep students healthy, while the use of indigenous foods will incorporate cultural dietary practices into the program.

Before and after they eat their meals, they wash their hands. It's a way of taking good care of their health and minds. (P5)

The SBFP in our school promotes nutrition by incorporating indigenous foods, involving the community in meal preparation, establishing school garden and collaborating with health workers for regular monitoring. (P4)

What is important to facilitate the success of the SBFP is the monitoring of the nutritional status of students regularly with effective communication channels established and maintained with parents and all stakeholders and assessing the health of students having a transparent community-inclusive involvement.

Conduct regular monitoring of student's nutritional status. This may include weighing and measuring learners to identify undernutrition or other health concerns. Good communication and information dissemination to parents and stakeholders. Implement feeding activities that involve the provision of nutritious meals. (P6)

The success of SBFP hence demands that the program includes the community and parents in the actual preparation and distribution of meals. The training and education provided by the program enhances a collaborative and supportive environment for the health and nutrition of the students.

"These SBFP practices engage the community and the parents in supporting student health by getting involved in the preparation and distribution of food such as cooking the meals and even serving it to the students." (P1)

"By involving parents, in these ways, the SBFP not only addresses immediate nutrition needs but also builds a foundation for sustainable health habits by engaging parents. It promotes a sense of accountability for kids' health." (P2)

"Parents are invited to participate in preparing meals, fostering a sense of engagement in students' nutrition." (P3)

"The SBFP in our school engages the community and parents by involving them directly in meal planning and preparation, using locally grown ingredients. Additionally, school garden offers opportunities for parents to participate in cultivating food." (P4)

"The parents helped distribute the foods for the beneficiaries." (P5)

“Capacity building/training sessions for parents and community leaders on nutrition, food safety and hygiene to enhance their knowledge about the importance of healthy eating and equip them with skills to support their children’s health. Conduct health and nutrition education programs for students and their families. Involvement of parents and local communities in planning and preparing meals to promote the sustainability of the program and strengthen community support.” (P6)

Problem 2: What challenges hinder the implementation of SBFP in the IPED school?

Theme: Challenges in the Full Implementations of SBFP in IPED Schools

This theme covers the various inhibitive factors of the school-Based Feeding Program at IPED schools about striking a balance between cultural and nutritional requirements and confrontation of logistical barriers, resource limitation, inadequacies of infrastructure, and the impact it has on student participation and program effectiveness.

Probably, the biggest challenge in implementing SBFP at IPED schools lies in not compromising the cultural dieting practices yet meeting the nutritional requirements of the students. This may require careful planning to ensure that what is served is culturally acceptable yet has the nutritional requirement.

The difficulties to the implementation of the SBFP in the IPED school are balancing nutritional needs with traditional food requires careful planning to ensure cultural acceptance and there are some learners may need specialized care that the program isn’t equipped to provide. (P1)

" Our School encountered several difficulties, the pupils may not get the right kind of nourishment, need additional support in terms of trainings, resources, infrastructure improvements like feeding room." (P2)

Logistical requirements, especially in a far-flung area from cities or even mountainous land, are the main hindrances to the successful implementation of SBFP in many IPED schools. Among them would be transportation of food supply and other logistics that would prevent regular meals.

“Many IPED schools are in remote or mountainous areas making it difficult to transport food supplies and other resources.” (P3)

“Implementing the SBFP in our school is challenging due to limited funding, difficulty accessing indigenous ingredients, logistical issues in our areas.” (P4)

“The challenge experienced in the IPED school is to transport the meals from the main office to school. But fortunately, the SBFP coordinator solves the transport problem.” (P5)

Another significant problem that cropped up was the inadequacy of resources and infrastructure. Most of the IPED schools didn’t have proper kitchen facilities, and some did not have storage equipment and funds to properly implement the feeding program. Such insufficiency complicates preparation and nutrition distribution within a safe setting.

“Limited resources and funding, insufficient infrastructure like many IPED schools may lack proper kitchen facilities, storage equipment to safety prepares and store food, making it challenging to implement the feeding program effectively. Transportation of the food products, unavailability of parents to attend regularly in the preparation and distribution of foods.” (P2)

Table 3: Challenges in Implementing SBFP

Challenge	Description	Strategies to Address Challenges
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Inadequate Funding	Lack of sufficient resources to fund the feeding program for all students who are in need	Coordination with local stakeholders; subsidies from the government (Durant & Lee, 2022)
Logistics Problems	Inability to distribute food to geographically isolated IPED schools	Collaboration with local farmers to provide food supplies (Dela Cruz <i>et al.</i> , 2022)
Community Involvement	Initial low response of parents and community members.	Launching awareness campaigns and engaging parents in decision-making (Sibayan, 2022)

Problem 3: How do SBFP practices affect student health and academic performance?

Theme: Impact of SBFP Practices on Health and Academic Performance of Students in IPED Schools

This theme captures how the school-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) benefits the health and academic performance of students. Such a program would improve nutritional status, boost energy levels, enhance concentration, reduce absenteeism, and ultimately result in better academic outcomes for an environment where students can thrive both academically and emotionally.

The SBFP practices adopted at the IPED schools have ensured significant improvements in students' health. Some of such improvements include a reduction in malnutrition cases, improvement in weight and BMI, energy levels, and healthy living.

“The benefits seen among students based on the practices implemented under SBFP in our school are the benefits of their health it helps reduce the rates of malnutrition and when it comes to their academic status, their attendance improves, concentration makes better, generally, it improves their academic performance.” (P1)

“It has shown health benefits among students, particularly those who are malnourished or at risk of undernutrition, they are now improved in terms of their weight, physical features, attendance and grades.” (P2)

Improvement in Weight and BMI:

“There is a significant improvement in weight and body mass index (BMI) after consistent participation in the program.” (P3)

Increased Energy and Reduced Absenteeism:

“The benefits were seen among students are improved nutrition, increased energy levels, better focus on class, and reduced absenteeism.” (P4)

“They become more active in the class discussion and their health status improved.” (P5)

“The health benefits seen among students participating in the SBFP in our school are broad ranging. These includes improved nutritional status, better academic performance, enhanced immune function, fewer hunger-related issues, and overall better health and improved hygiene and sanitation practices.” (P4)

The benefits realized by SBFP practices are directly translated to students' academic performance because their better attendance, concentration levels, participation, and overall outcome in studies show improvement because of better health and nutrition.

“The SBFP has a direct impact that go beyond physical health and nutrition. It creates an environment in which students can excel academically and emotionally that leads to a better education.” (P1)

“SBFP not only improves health outcomes for the students but also has a transformative impact on academic performance and overall involvement in the school activities. Students show improvement in attendance, participation and academic achievement.” (P2)

In addition, Motivation to Attend School:

“It motivates pupils to attend school regularly since they know they will receive nutritious meals that are not readily available at home.” (P3)

Aside from this, “Improved Focus and Energy:

“The SBFP positively impacts academic performance by improving student’s focus and energy due to better nutrition. Students are more likely to attend school.” (P4)

“Some of the beneficiaries participated well in the class discussion which is a good way for them to earn plus points.” (P5)

Increased Engagement in Classroom Activities:

“The SBFP directly improves academic performance and student involvement in school through better health, higher attendance, and increased engagement in classroom activities.” (P6)

Table 4. Outcomes of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP)

Category	Outcomes	Supporting Literature
Student Health	Enhanced student health in terms of improved energy levels and mental acuity	Benton & Young (2017); Gundersen & Ziliak (2015)
Academic Performance	Improved academic performance in terms of improved grades and increased concentration levels	Moreno & Licuanan (2024); Mason <i>et al.</i> (2019)
Attendance	Increased attendance rates of SBFP beneficiaries	Villanueva <i>et al.</i> (2023); Mason <i>et al.</i> (2019)
Community Engagement	Involvement of parents and local stakeholders in the implementation of the program	Sibayan (2022); Cuervo <i>et al.</i> (2021)
Cultural Sensitivity	Incorporation of culturally sensitive food practices to enable wider acceptance	Reyes <i>et al.</i> (2023); Keller & Garcia (2021)
Policy Support	Government policies and fund support to aid program sustainability	Durant & Lee (2022); DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018
Technology Integration	Utilization of mobile apps to monitor student nutrition and promote family communication	Castillo & Gula (2023)

DISCUSSION

The School-Based Feeding Program has been one of the cornerstones of educational and nutritional interventions for a long time, particularly in indigenous peoples' education settings. This case study aims to identify the best practices of implementing SBFP in an IPED school through highlighting its impacts on health, nutrition, and educational results of its students (Adebayo, 2021).

Since 1997, the DepED in the Philippines has initiated school feeding programs. Under the school feeding scheme, the program has evolved and grown to include deworming, nutrition education, and sustainable food production alongside nutrition education as key inputs for improving the nutritional status and educational performance of the students.

Community engagement forms a significant pillar in the implementation of successful SBFP. The involvement of volunteer parents in preparing and feeding meals ensures the quality of the meals provided, giving an added value to creating a sense of ownership by the community. This participatory approach was proved to upgrade school feeding effectiveness for indigenous communities. (Khan & Ramakrishnan, 2023).

Nutrition education is a crucial aspect of the SBFP as it equips students and their families with the awareness on the health consequences of good food, health, and nutrition behaviors. All of these are targeted at the situation of the poor indigenous community. Other health-focused activities such as deworming, weighing, and taking measurements of the students' heights are used to complement the program. (Cameron & Goldstein, 2022).

The inclusion of traditional food systems into school dietary programs serves as an essential element for cultural appropriateness and sustainability. It will ensure that the nutrition quality of the meals served is also met, answering to the concerns of community-based traditional food systems. Evidence proves that integration will enhance reception and effectiveness of school feeding programs. (De Silva & Peiris, 2024) (Wong & Kwan, 2022).

For SBFP to become sustainable, effective budget and resource management shall be very crucial. With the collaboration of school MOOE, SBFP budget, and school canteen funds, successful implementation of the program shall be possible. Fresh vegetables and other ingredients for the school cafeteria can also be sourced from partnering projects such as Gulayan sa Paaralan (School Garden) while reducing costs and improving nutritional quality.

Proper supervision and monitoring ensure the quality and safety of the meals prepared. On this regard, participation from the School Canteen Teacher, Bids and Awards Committee, or School Head as they monitor the preparation of meals, keeps the food handling and hygiene under the proposed contract of meal preparations at a high standard.

The impact of SBFP on the health and nutrition of pupils is significant. Reduction of malnourished students and overall health status may be improved among pupils due to such programs. For example, in San Juan Elementary School, 64.79% of the pupils experienced a decrease in the need for health attention after attaining the program of SBFP. (Fitzgerald & Spence, 2022).

The SBFP also positively promotes educational outcomes. Better nutrition improves attendance and academic performance. According to the program, classroom attendance shall be achieved from 85 percent to 100 percent—that is largely on par with international standards. Better nutrition that had improved academic engagement was found in most school-based studies on feeding programs of indigenous schools. (Tziomalos & Spanou, 2024).

Thus, SBFP success is vital and depends on the degree of culture competency it should give in an IPED setting. Therefore, in such a manner, cultural practices and traditions should be respected and taken part of the program. This would bridge the gap between nutrition and tradition, and hence the program would most likely accept and be effective. (Garcia, 2020).

Despite these benefits, there are other disadvantages of implementing SBFP which include mistaken measurement of nutrition status variables, wrong documentation, and leakage rates. There are also barriers that involve teachers and parents based on the lack of resources, inadequate training, and logistical issues. (Nhemachena & Moyo, 2023).

The SBFP is an important intervention in that it shall be helpful in dealing with the hunger and malnutrition issues of students in IPED schools, hence improved health, nutrition, and education. Some of the best practice recommendations are community engagement, nutrition education, integration of indigenous food systems, proper budget and resource management, and cultural competence. Continuous evaluation and improvement will be essential in overcoming the challenges and barriers that face the program so that it can sustain itself in the long run.

CONCLUSION

From Hunger to Hope: The Best Practices of SBFP in an IPED School" once more proves the landmark role of SBFP in alleviating hunger and improving educational outcomes among indigenous students. Nutrition, education, and community participation again are closely intertwined. Adaptation to appropriately cultural food practices, community involvement, and the use of technology in monitoring and tracking the intake of students; these are some key practices that ensure higher acceptance and nutritional intake, which leads to healthy student health and academic performance.

However, the implementation of SBFP in IPED schools faces numerous problems. The biggest ones include finance, logistics, and community involvement. The above studies recommend collaboration, mentoring, sharing expertise, resources, administrative support, and time management practices to overcome these challenges. Good communication, rapport building with parents also ensure success and sustainability of the programs.

The effect of SBFP is critical on students' health and academic performance. Continuous involvement in the program is related to a better academic outcome, higher attendance rate, and cognitive function. Nutrition education provided within the holistic approach contributes to better facilitation of appropriate nutrition practices among the students and better choices of food products. This integrated model generates behavioral change with community health enhancement, thus providing a learning environment.

The success of SBFP depends on policy and program development. Confiscatory government policies with funds that support and guidelines that are clear for nourishing these feeding programs are essentials that shall work together in sustaining the feeding efforts. Not to be last are the local efforts, the collaboration among schools, local agencies, and NGOs, which shall ensure long-term effectiveness. The elements of best-practice cultural sensitivity, community involvement, and comprehensive policy support in the study find that there is an indispensable bridge between hunger and learning, leading to the sustainable development of marginalized communities.

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