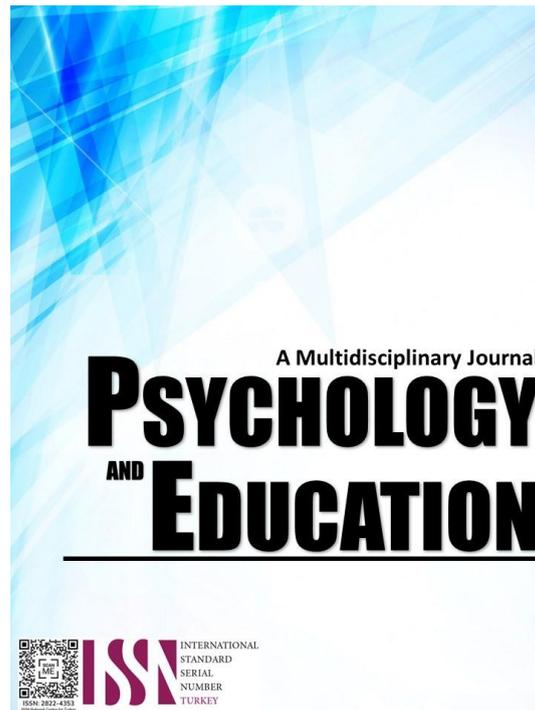


**IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-BASED FEEDING  
PROGRAM AMONG THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN  
THE SCHOOL DIVISION OF QUEZON: BASIS FOR  
AMENDMENTS ON THE SBFP OPERATIONAL  
GUIDELINES**



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## Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program Among the Elementary Schools in the School Division of Quezon: Basis for Amendments on the SBFP Operational Guidelines

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### Abstract

The main focus of the study was to determine the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon. Specifically, it aimed to answer the extent of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon, in terms of Stakeholders' Involvement, Budget Allocation and Spending, Strategies of Implementation, Nutritional Management, Sanitation Management, and Health and Nutrition Education; the challenges encountered in the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon; the significant relationship between the level of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the challenges encountered among the Districts in the School's Division of Quezon; and amendments on the existing manual of SBFP could be proposed to improve the implementation of the school-based feeding program among the elementary schools in the Division of Quezon. This research employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design. The study's respondents are the principals of particular elementary schools in the Division of Quezon. The researcher utilized a custom research questionnaire and weighted mean and Pearson Correlation Coefficient to analyze the data. According to the study, parents and instructors cooperate to some extent in order to maintain the wellbeing of their pupils. Additionally, it proved that the institution properly reported and liquidated SBFP costs. Moreover, schools offered orientation about the feeding program. In a similar vein, the school uses malunggay to a commendable extent in the preparation of meals for SBFP. According to the analysis, the school maintains a regular timetable for disinfection, which was, to a lesser extent, observed. Ultimately, it was discovered that teachers only somewhat encourage students to garden at home. The majority of the teachers agreed that the local government unit (LGU) did not support the schools where there is an epidemic of underweight pupils. Furthermore, the program's administrators moderately encountered challenges, coming to the same conclusion that the school misappropriates the money designated for the school feeding program. Also, it demonstrated that the Gulayan sa Paaralan Program was inactive, as the school heads fairly concurred. The survey showed that most school administrators agree that pupils are not properly assessed to determine their nutritional status. Additionally, it demonstrated that the school administrators had visited the SBFP kitchen. Moreover, all of the school administrators concurred that neither parents nor students are given seminars on the value of eating a balanced diet. The study further showed, there is a direct correlation between the degree of implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the difficulties faced by the districts in the Quezon school division. In light of the research's findings, the researcher came up with amendments to the existing Operational Guidelines, to which include the role and responsibilities of School Division of Quezon Personnel, Local Government Unit, Barangay Officials, School Heads, School Feeding Coordinators, Teachers, Parents, and other stakeholders

**Keywords:** *school-based feeding program, operational guidelines, nutritional management, challenges*

### Introduction

This chapter presents the problem, background of the study, and its significance to the Division of Quezon where the study was conducted.

Due to a multitude of global issues, including poverty and health systems, the majority of children today struggle to put food on the table, which makes them hungry and makes it difficult for them to focus on their academics. There are 828 million hungry people in the world, according to the World Food Program (WFP), after a significant increase in 2020 during the COVID-19 epidemic. With 11.7 percent of the world's population experiencing severe levels of food insecurity, severe food insecurity has become more

widespread. Another indicator that more people were unable to acquire sufficient, safe, and nutritious food was the increase of 112 million in the number of individuals worldwide who could not afford a decent diet, reaching about 3.1 billion. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, DC, in its World Nutrition Report for 2021, diets are not becoming healthier while placing a rising burden on the environment and unacceptably high rates of malnutrition.

UNICEF estimates that 45 million children under the age of five are underweight, 149 million have stunted growth and development as a result of a chronic shortage of nutrient-rich foods in their diets, and 39 million are overweight. Moreover, adult obesity and

maternal anemia continue to be concerning trends. According to UNICEF (2022), 95 children in the Philippines die from malnutrition per day. One third of Filipino children are stunted, or small for their age, and 27 out of 1,000 do not live past the age of five. Stunting after the age of two can be lethal, permanent, and irreversible. During adolescence, children are faced with various challenges that impede their health and well-being. Teenage pregnancy, HIV infections, and violence are a few of the threats they face.

In order to combat hunger and undernutrition among Filipino children, Republic Act 11037, also known as the "Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act," institutionalizes a national feeding program for undernourished children in public daycare, kindergarten, and primary schools. With the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) assistance, the Department of Education (DepEd) created the School-Based Feeding Programs (SBFP) in order to support this program. It seeks to relieve hunger, improve nutritional status, raise academic achievement and school performance, and enhance cognitive function in students. The initiative distributes pasteurized or sterilized milk and nutrient-rich food items to malnourished students. DepEd chooses clients from regional offices who are determined to be malnourished. According to the department's database, there are 3.5 million beneficiaries in 34,375 public schools across the country for the academic year 2022–2023, ranging from kindergarten to grade 6.

As a member of the academic community, it is essential to provide students with a healthy diet because it has a big impact on how well they learn in class. Teachers in public schools have a responsibility to provide the best service possible by creating an environment that promotes learning and growth (Article III, Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers). As the second parent of the students who have been given to her, the researcher feels obligated to support the children in any way she can, including helping to ensure that they receive the nutrition they require in order to grow and concentrate on their studies. In the end, kids need to concentrate on their academics to improve their performance in class. The School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) is a great. Yet, this realization comes with some difficulties, particularly when it comes to stakeholder participation in the SBFP's operation.

Given the circumstances, this study was conducted in the hope of enhancing SBFP implementation in public schools and helping implementers identify strategies to reduce the number of wasted and severely wasted children.

## Research Questions

The main focus of this study was to determine the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon, in terms of:
  - 1.1. stakeholders' involvement,
  - 1.2. budget allocation and spending,
  - 1.3. strategies of implementation,
  - 1.4. nutritional management,
  - 1.5. sanitation management, and
  - 1.6. health and nutrition education?
2. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in terms of:
  - 2.1. stakeholders' involvement,
  - 2.2. budget allocation and spending,
  - 2.3. strategies of implementation,
  - 2.4. nutritional management,
  - 2.5. sanitation management, and
  - 2.6. health and nutrition education?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the challenges encountered by the implementers among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon?
4. Based from the findings of the study, what amendments on the Operational Guidelines of SBFP could be proposed to improve the implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) in Elementary Schools in the Schools Division of Quezon.

## Methodology

This chapter discusses the research method, population, sample size and sampling technique, respondent description, research instrument, data collection procedure, and statistical treatment of data.

## Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design to accurately and systematically describe a population,

situation, or phenomenon (McCombes, 2019). This design was used to describe and determine the level of implementation and the challenges encountered in the Implementation of School Based Feeding Program in the Districts, Schools Division of Quezon.

Descriptive-Survey design was the most suitable design for this study. Descriptive survey research uses surveys to gather data about varying subjects. It would help to describe and determine the level of implementation and the challenges encountered in implementing School Based Feeding Program in the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon.

### Research Locale

This study was conducted in selected schools in the Division of Quezon divided in to four (4) Congressional Districts. The office of the Division of Quezon is located at Brgy. Talipan, Pagbilao, Quezon headed by a Schools Division Superintendent. Currently, there are sub-offices already established in each Congressional Districts. The researcher selected because the schools in the Division of Quezon are grantees and practitioners of School-Based Feeding Program.

### Research Population and Sample

The respondents of this study were the 52 school heads, 52 teacher's feeding coordinator and 52 PTA representatives from all districts in selected elementary schools in the division of Quezon.

### Research Instrument

The researcher made use of a self-made questionnaire. It was crafted to elicit information on the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program among the Elementary Schools in the Schools Division of Quezon. The respondents were asked to check the corresponding column of their answers. The questionnaire was distributed in the respective schools of the respondents.

The questionnaire was extensively used as a means of collecting data for the crafting of intervention plan to be used.

### Content Validity of the Research Instrument

To determine the level of implementation of SBFP program in all districts in the Division of Quezon, a Likert scale type of questionnaire was utilized in this study. The content of the questionnaire was validated by the expert in the field of education with the

specialization in health and nutrition, especially in feeding program. The three School heads who are in-charge in the district feeding program. The district nurse who take responsibility in checking the beneficiaries of SBFP, and the one English Master Teacher who validated the grammar in the research instrument.

### Data Gathering Procedures

The self-made questionnaire was first subjected to a reliability test which was conducted in the Third Congressional District, with the permission of all the district supervisors. After this, the questionnaire was subjected to another reliability test which was conducted in the Fourth Congressional District in Quezon province, with the permission of their respective school district supervisors and their school heads. After gathering the answered questionnaire, the researcher consulted with her statistician regarding the result of reliability analysis. After gaining the results, the researcher then distributed the questionnaire to the school heads, teacher/ feeding coordinators and to the parent volunteers in all schools from the districts of the Division of Quezon. After retrieval of the questionnaire, the researcher then tallied and analyzed the data that had been collected.

### Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation on the gathered data relative to the the extent of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the problems encountered in its implementation.

#### Extent of Implementation` of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon

Table 1 shows the extent of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) in terms of stakeholder's involvement. With a weighted mean of 3.15, having a verbal interpretation of *to a fair extent implemented*, parents and teachers work together to maintain good health among the learners. This means that both teachers and parents support the children at school to improve their health status. The study also revealed that parents always support the SBFP. This indicator got a mean of 2.87, with the same verbal interpretation of *to a fair extent implemented*. This means that some parents give time and effort to be part of the program and they embrace the school program

especially when it will benefit the learners.

Table 1. *Extent of Implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Stakeholders' Involvement*

<i>Stakeholder's Involvement</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. Parents and teachers work together to maintain good health among the learners	1.185	3.15
2. Parents always support the school-based feeding program.	1.408	2.87
3. Barangay Health Workers always coordinate with the school regarding the status of learners.	1.224	2.43
4. The local government unit (LGU) provides the necessary tools and equipment to materialize the SBFP.	1.023	2.19
5. Private sectors donate foods and other needs in the implementation of feeding program in the school.	1.044	2.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>2.63</b>

On the other hand, there is less assistance from the commercial sector, the health sector, and local government entities. This indicates that the schools rarely pay attention to the involvement of the outside stakeholders. Thus, the average mean of 2.63 denotes that the participation of the stakeholders in the SBFP is *to a fair extent implemented*. This means that even there are less support coming from external stakeholders, the schools together with the parents work together to meet the standards of the program.

A child's experience and environment can be enriched by the applicability of social ties and educational standards and the degree of parental and student involvement at a school (Warwick et al., 2015). For instance, if parents and teachers work together to create a consistent plan for enhancing food, it may save kids from hearing conflicting signals, which will likely undermine the success of healthy eating initiatives. Yet, as more social agents participate in an intervention, the web of relationships in play becomes more intricate. This complexity becomes clearer when attempting to evaluate the results of projects in this circumstance. Given that school-based programs (and

the interventions within them) rely on various stakeholders, the extent to which these specific stakeholders engage in any intervention can impact the program's overall direction and outcome. Teachers and parents are two important stakeholder groups. A parent-contributed intervention, for example, would have a different focus, design, and potential for sustainability than one that does not. As a result, stakeholder input and relationships should be included as an important aspect of complicated school-based program formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Pettigrew et al., 2021). The role of parents and teachers, in particular, is crucial for ensuring any intervention's feasibility, acceptability, and overall performance (Downs et al., 2021).

Table 2. *Extent of Implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in terms of Budget Allocation and Spending*

<i>Budget Allocation and Spending</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. DepEd provides budget for school feeding program	.996	1.97
2. The canteen shares the 10% budget for feeding program	1.076	1.90
3. Parents and other stakeholders share monetary and material aids for school feeding program	1.071	1.92
4. The school properly disburses the allocated fund for the school feeding program.	1.231	2.27
5. School properly liquidates and reported the expenditures of SBFP.	1.168	2.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>2.08</b>

Table 2 shows the extent of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the

Elementary Schools in the division of Quezon in terms of budget allocation and spending. With the highest weighted mean of 2.35, having a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*, the schools properly liquidate and reports the expenditures of SBFP. This signifies that there are schools in the Quezon Division that have properly liquidated and reported SBFP expenses, while some do not. In addition, the schools properly disburse the allocated fund for the school feeding program. This indicator got a mean of 2.27, with a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*. This indicates that some schools redirected SBFP funds to other school programs.

With a weighted mean of 2.08, having a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*, it can be inferred that the program is perceived as less important in terms of budget allocation and spending. This suggests that the SBFP is not the school's top priority in terms of financial allocation, despite the fact that there are DepEd memoranda governing its implementation in the school.

One of the problems of this process, according to Bundy et al., (2018), is establishing arrangements that would obtain the necessary money while simultaneously supporting program sustainability. School feeding is conducted in several nations to achieve multiple objectives, giving a wide range of entry points to generate financial support for programs as a social development intervention with benefits in other areas. This policy brief outlines examples of national school feeding program financing strategies that use various regulatory frameworks and partnering structures. Each of the ideas depicted in this document has a unique financing aspect that deserves to be highlighted as an innovative approach to securing finance for school feeding. These countries have successfully used the numerous benefits of school meals as levers to increase investment in national programs.

Table 3 presents the extent of implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program in terms of strategies of implementation. With a weighted mean of 2.47, having a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*, the schools conduct program orientation on the feeding program. This suggests that majority of schools in the division of Quezon do not adequately explain the importance of having SBFP in their school. As a result, less stakeholders participate in the program.

Table 3. *Extent of Implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Strategies of Implementation*

<i>Strategies of Implementation</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. School utilizes the nutritional assessment	.979	1.94
2. School properly identifies the beneficiaries of SBFP	1.048	2.33
3. School create the SBFP core group through school memorandum	1.075	1.84
4. School conducts program orientation on feeding program	1.434	2.47
5. School integrates other program such as <i>Gulayan sa Paaralan</i> to lessen the expenditures under SBFP.	1.383	1.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>2.07</b>

Similarly, the survey reveals that schools have a lower priority for implementing similar programs such as *Gulayan sa Paaralan* to reduce SBFP expenditures. This got a weighted mean of 1.76, with a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*. This suggests that schools in the division of Quezon are not fully implementing other programs that will aid in the implementation of the SBFP.

The average mean of 2.07, with a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented* indicates that SBFP is some schools in the division of Quezon are less implemented in terms of implementation strategies. These findings may impede the goal of the Department of Education to improve school attendance and the nutritional status of the target beneficiaries through food provision.

Every school in the country began identifying wasted and seriously wasted learners with the release of DepEd Order No. 39, s.2017, or the Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program for School Years 2017-2022. The SBFP's primary beneficiaries are these students. For the 2017-2018 school year, the SBFP covers all Severely Wasted (SW) and Wasted (W) Kindergarten



through Grade 6 students. The program's primary goal is to enhance recipients' nutritional status by at least 70% at the end of 120 feeding days. Second, it intends to raise classroom attendance by 85% to 100% while also improving children's health, nutrition, and behavior values (Briones, 2017).

Table 4. *Extent of Implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Nutritional Management*

<i>Nutritional Management</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. School children are assessed properly to determine the nutritional status.	1.283	2.49
2. School children under the program are regularly checked-up by the school health personnel.	1.350	2.46
3. The school provides only foods under Green Category	1.271	2.29
4. Foods prepared by the school always have malunggay.	1.203	3.06
5. The school children under the SBFP receive multivitamins as part of the feeding program.	1.327	2.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>2.50</b>

Table 5 shows the extent of implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program in terms of nutritional management. With a weighted mean of 3.06, having a verbal interpretation of *to a fair extent implemented*, the food prepared by schools always has malunggay. This suggests that certain schools in the division of Quezon make snacks for malnourished students using malunggay leaves.

However, the study found out that only *to a less extent implemented* do the schools in the division of Quezon

give school children multivitamins. Only *to a less extent implemented* also do the schools provide them with food under green category, give their school children regular check-up by the school health personnel. With an average mean of 2.50, having a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*, this suggests that some schools are implementing the SBFP ineffectively. It also indicates that majority of the schools in the division have a poor implementation of the program especially in terms of nutritional status of the children.

Children must be given every opportunity to learn in order to acquire skills and abilities that will allow them to reach their greatest potential. Good health and nutrition enable children to learn and do more, boosting their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development. Children that are nutritionally vulnerable are already disadvantaged in terms of learning ability and even chances (TeacherPh, 2019).

Table 5. *Extent of Implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Sanitation Management*

<i>Sanitation Management</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. The school has a clean workplace for preparation of food in SBFP	1.180	2.00
2. Each child under the program has their own utensils.	1.184	1.80
3. The school provides a clean and conducive place to eat for the children under the program.	1.056	2.09
4. School has a regular schedule of disinfection.	1.163	2.05
5. Raw materials used in the feeding program are placed into a safe and clean storage.	.918	1.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>1.95</b>



Table 6. *Extent of Implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Health and Nutrition Education*

	<i>Health and Nutrition Education</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1.	School conducts seminar for children and parents on the importance of eating healthy foods.	1.265	2.32
2.	School teachers encourage the children to plant vegetables at home	1.424	1.81
3.	Teachers integrate health and nutrition education in their subjects	1.243	2.19
4.	School provides infographics materials about SBFP	1.150	1.84
5.	School orients every learner on how to have health minds.	1.152	2.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.14</b>	<b>2.10</b>

Table 5 shows the extent of implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program in terms of sanitation management. With an average mean of 1.95, having a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*, it can be inferred that the sanitation management on SBFP in some schools in the division of Quezon is limited. It could be seen that there are schools which do not disinfect the SBFP room on a regular basis, while there are others who do. This implies that proper cleanliness in the preparation of food for students is not observed by teachers and parents. Moreover, these findings could also suggest that some schools are not a safe workplace for preparing nourishment for malnourished students.

Food hygiene is one of the most important health concerns for local governments, as is the health and safety of children at school. Naturally, this means that food hygiene safety is taken very seriously in school settings. This means that it is critical for everyone that schools are safe and sanitary places to prepare, store, and enjoy food (Vespa, 2022). However, this contradicts the findings of the study where sanitation is implemented only to a less extent.

Table 6 shows the extent of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program in terms of health and nutrition education. With the lowest weighted mean of 2.33, having a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*, though there are school teachers encourage children to plant vegetables at home, the result means that the teachers' encouragement among parents and school children is limited only, implying that no intervention program in relation to healthy lifestyle has been implemented in the learners' homes. With the average mean of 2.10, indicating a verbal interpretation of *to a less extent implemented*, the SBFP is only being implemented to a limited level in terms of health and nutrition education.

The findings of this study is opposite to the study of Galema (2020) where SBFP views nutritional education concurrent with feeding as a complimentary program. In order to create a learning atmosphere that is also child-friendly in sentinel schools, spaces where feeding was held underwent a number of improvements. In these feeding centers, visual elements that encourage nutritional information were also made available. Other schools established facilities with learning resources available that act as "mini-nutrition libraries" for the use of the school instead of just depending on feeding centers. Materials were primarily supported by outsiders, as was the idea behind the establishment of these institutes to draw potential outside efforts for nutrition and education.

In order for the Department to have instruments available for future program and research development, as well as to be more in line with the standards of other organizations like the Food and Nutrition Research Institute Department of Science and Technology, which is more accessible, aligned, and data-driven for policy-making made more purposefully, it is suggested that tools and indicators that were anthropometric in nature be aligned to

national standards that are currently existing.

### Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon

Table 7. *Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary School in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Stakeholders' Involvement*

<i>Stakeholder's Involvement</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. Parents and teachers have no plan for the improvement of learners with health issues.	1.221	2.49
2. Parents have no time to support the feeding program of the school.	1.311	2.57
3. Barangay Health Workers have no coordination with the school feeding coordinator with regards to the nutritional status of the learners.	1.151	2.65
4. The local government unit (LGU) does not help the schools who have rampant malnourished children/learners.	1.351	3.20
5. School have limited access to private stakeholders that is why there is resources in school feeding program.	1.317	2.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.68</b>

Table 7 shows the challenges encountered in the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program in terms of stakeholder's involvement. The respondents fairly agree that the local government unit (LGU) does not help the schools which have rampant malnourished children/learners. This indicates that the LGU does not support the school feeding program to be implemented fully. This is also because barangay health workers do not coordinate with the school food coordinator the nutritional status of the children. This got a weighted mean of 2.65, considered as *moderately encountered*. This indicates that not even the community's local chief executive has issued instructions to the health professionals to assist the local school in enhancing the lives of malnourished and undernourished students.

On the other hand, despite the challenges faced in its implementation due to lack of money allocation, teachers and parents collaborate with private partners to undertake a school-based feeding program. The instructors generally agreed that the stakeholders' involvement in the operation of the school-based feeding program is problematic, as indicated by the average mean of 2.68.

School feeding programs have been hailed as an effective way to boost student enrollment, retention, and satisfaction while also resolving issues that are prevalent in less developed countries (Acheampong, 2022). Contrary to the policy's principles, stakeholders were not included in any official monitoring methods and were mainly uninformed of the selection criteria for caterers and recipient schools. This estrangement compromised the program's stability and accountability by preventing community ownership and resource involvement.

The stability and efficiency of the program were threatened by a number of issues caused by inadequate institutional functioning and stakeholder involvement. The subsequent delay in money repayment and the insufficient budgetary allotment had an effect on the quality and quantity of the food. Effective program monitoring was challenging due to the disengagement of key partners. Supporting children's health through educational initiatives is the combined responsibility of the government's departments of health and education. These regulations can be enhanced by including stakeholders like educators, students, parents or guardians, medical professionals, the non-profit sector, and business. Despite the dearth of evidence-based literature on the roles of stakeholders in the development and implementation of school policies, stakeholder involvement seems to be essential throughout the policy process (Pan Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2020).

Table 8. *Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Budget Allocation and Spending*

<i>Budget Allocation and Spending</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. The budget for school feeding is not properly utilized by the school.	1.118	3.26
2. The 10% canteen fund for feeding program is not available.	1.185	3.03
3. Parents and other stakeholders do not share any financial or material things in the school feeding program.	1.247	3.31
4. The school does not properly disburse the allocated funds for the school feeding program.	1.271	3.22
5. School does not properly liquidate and reported the expenditures of SBFP.	1.287	3.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>3.17</b>

Table 8 shows the challenges encountered in the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program in terms of budget allocation and spending. The program implementers fairly agree that parents and other stakeholders do not provide any money or other materials to the program. This got the highest mean of 3.31 which has a verbal interpretation of *moderately encountered*. This indicates that one of the issues with the school-based feeding program's implementation was this.

With the average mean of 3.17, having a verbal interpretation of *moderately encountered*, the findings suggest that the budget allocation and expenditure was in some way an issue in the implementation of the SBFP for the reason that a portion of the program's funding has not been used entirely. Also, the 10% canteen budget for the said program was unavailable. Moreover, the school improperly disburses the funds allotted for the school feeding program, and the school does not properly liquidate and report the expenditures of SBFP. As they restructure their operations, schools are experiencing unforeseen costs to purchase personal protective equipment, packaging materials, and additional freezer space. Districts are unsure about their ability to recoup those expenses, though. This is partially due to the fact that schools are reimbursed under the standard school breakfast and lunch program

guidelines at a fixed cost per student meal. When schools provide meals in large quantities to families with numerous children, it may be challenging to keep track of how many meal equivalents are being offered.

Table 9. *Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in terms of Strategies of Implementation*

<i>Strategies of Implementation</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. School has no nutritional assessment for learners	1.240	3.19
2. School does not properly identify the beneficiaries of SBFP	1.320	2.97
3. School has no SBFP core group that make sure the implementation of SBFP	1.244	2.77
4. School does not conduct program orientation on feeding program	1.370	3.34
5. School has inactive <i>Gulayan sa Paaralan</i> Program.	1.436	3.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>3.13</b>

Table 9 shows the challenges encountered in the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program in terms of strategies of implementation. With the highest weighted mean of 3.35, the respondents *moderately encountered* that the schools have inactive *Gulayan sa Paaralan* Program. This means that the coordinators of the said program have no concrete implementation plan to address the health issues of the learners with lack of nutrition. The respondents also *moderately encountered* that the schools do not conduct program orientation on feeding program. This means that there are schools who do not conduct orientation on the school-based feeding program resulting to lack of understanding of parents and other stakeholders regarding the program. With an average mean of 3.13, interpreted as *moderately encountered*, there are some schools who find implementing SBFP difficulty.

Table 10. *Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Nutritional Management*

<i>Nutritional Management</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. School children are not assessed properly to determine the nutritional status.	1.237	2.21
2. School children under the program are not regularly check-up by the school health personnel.	1.113	2.22
3. The school has no daily menu for SBFP	1.253	2.21
4. Since school has no <i>Gulayan sa Paaralan</i> Program, limited green leafy vegetables has given to the SBFP recipients.	1.387	2.43
5. The school children under the SBFP does not receive multivitamins as part of the feeding program.	1.204	2.76
Total	0.88	2.37

Table 10 shows the challenges encountered in the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program in terms of nutritional management. With the highest weighted mean of 2.76, the respondents *moderately encountered* that the school children under the SBFP does not receive multivitamins as part of the feeding program. This indicates that program implementers could have done sufficient initiatives to improve more the children's nutritional status.

However, with an average mean of 2.37, the respondents *least encountered* that recipients of the SBFP are not regularly examined by school health staff, and that there is no daily menu for the SBFP. This indicates that the program implementers of the SBFP find ways to provide the required activities despite the lack of budgetary support. Also, this suggests that the challenges with program implementation are addressed by the schools through the use of intervention programs.

Table 11 shows the challenges encountered in the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program in terms of sanitation management. With

the highest mean of 3.40, the respondents *highly encountered*

Table 11. *Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in Terms of Sanitation Management*

<i>Sanitation Management</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. The school has no clean workplace for preparation of food in SBFP	1.076	3.40
2. School children have no personal utensils.	1.492	2.99
3. The school have no clean and conducive place to eat for the children under the program.	.958	3.17
4. School has no regular schedule of disinfection.	1.185	3.31
5. School has no proper and clean storage of raw materials using in SBFP.	1.536	3.08
Total	0.99	3.19

that schools have no clean workplace for preparation of food under SBFP. This suggests that the place is not safe to learners and even among the program implementers. On the same thing, the school heads also admitted that there is no regular schedule on disinfection in the workplace. This got a weighted mean of 3.31, interpreted as *moderately encountered*. With the average mean of 3.19, the respondents *moderately encountered* that sanitation management is one of the problems in the implementation of SBFP.

It is important to pay attention to the integrity and wholesomeness of the food provided to schoolchildren, especially in light of the seriousness of the health and sanitation problems. Hygiene is a key concern, thus it is crucial to focus on the children's health, the safety of the food items used in meal preparation, and the hygienic conditions the products go through before they get on the plates of these kids.

Young children are more susceptible to developing a foodborne illness, according to Bolton (2017), since their immune systems (the body's defense system against illness) have not yet developed to a sufficient level to deal with specific diseases. Therefore, maintaining good personal hygiene is crucial since the majority of food contamination is caused by feces or



bacteria that are transferred through contact with contaminated hands, cooking surfaces, utensils, ground dirt, or inadequately washed dishes and silverware.

Table 12. *Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) Among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon in terms of Health and Nutrition Education*

<i>Health and Nutrition Education</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1. School does not conduct seminar for children and parents on the importance of eating healthy foods.	1.538	2.94
2. School teachers do not encourage the children to plant vegetables at home	1.449	3.38
3. Teachers do not integrate health and nutrition education in their subjects	1.632	3.09
4. School has no infographics materials about SBFP	1.230	3.10
5. School does not orient every learner on how to have health minds.	1.398	2.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>3.08</b>

Table 12 shows the challenges encountered in the implementation of School-Based Feeding Program in terms of health and nutrition education. The respondents *moderately encountered* that school teachers do not encourage the children to plant vegetables at home and school has no infographics materials about SBFP. This got the highest mean of 3.38 and 3.10 respectively.

With an average mean of 3.08, interpreted as *moderately encountered*, it can be said that there are difficulties encountered in the implementation of SBFP in terms of health and nutrition education. This could be attributed to not conducting seminar for children and parents on the importance of eating healthy foods and because teachers do not incorporate health and nutrition education in their subject areas in a regular basis.

The Department Order No. 43, series of 2011 reinforced the school health and nutrition programs in order to support the accomplishment of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals. (MDGs). With the creation of the DO requiring the participation of government organizations (GOs), local government units (LGUs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional organizations, other private groups and individuals who are concerned, DepEd promotes the encouragement of participating sectors in both the public and private in order to help combat the problems with nutrition present at the school level. (DepED, 2013)

**Relationship between the Level of Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the Challenges Encountered among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon**

Table 13. *Significant Relationship between Level of Implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the Challenges Encountered among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon*

<i>VARIABLES</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>P-VALUE</i>	<i>REMARKS</i>
Stakeholder’s Involvement	.302**	.000	Significant
Budget Allocation and Spending	.603**	.000	Significant
Strategies of Implementation	.638**	.000	Significant
Nutritional Management	.796**	.000	Significant
Sanitation Management	.498**	.000	Significant
Health and Nutrition Education	.647**	.000	Significant

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13 shows the significant relationship between the level of implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the challenges encountered among the elementary schools in the division of Quezon. It presents the computed correlation coefficient r for two independent samples with p-value

and significance at 5 percent level. Furthermore, data analysis from SPSS shows that the computed  $r$  with \*\* is significant at 1 percent level.

The data shows that the level of implementation of SBFP has significant relationship with the challenges encountered in terms of stakeholder's involvement with a computed  $r$  of .302 with a  $p$ -value of 0.000 which is significant at 5 percent level and 1 percent level. In terms of budget allocation and spending, the level of implementation of SBFP also has significant relationship with the challenges encountered, with a computed  $r$  of .603 with a  $p$ -value of 0.000 which is significant at 5 percent level and 1 percent level. Furthermore, in terms of strategies of implementation, the data analysis shows that the level of implementation of SBFP has significant relationship with the challenges encountered, with a computed  $r$  of .638 with a  $p$ -value of 0.000 which is significant at 5 percent level and 1 percent level. Meanwhile, the level of implementation of SBFP also has significant relationship with the challenges encountered in terms of nutritional management with a computed  $r$  of .796 with a  $p$ -value of 0.000 which is significant at 5 percent level and 1 percent level. Additionally, the level of implementation of SBFP also has significant relationship between the challenges encountered in terms of sanitation management with a computed  $r$  of .498 with a  $p$ -value of 0.000 which is significant at 5 percent level and 1 percent level. Finally, the level of implementation of SBFP also has significant relationship between the challenges encountered in terms of health and nutrition education with a computed  $r$  of .647 with a  $p$ -value of 0.000 which is significant at 5 percent level and 1 percent level.

This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the level of implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the challenges encountered among the elementary schools in the division of Quezon in terms of stakeholder's involvement, budget allocation and spending, strategies of implementation, nutritional management, sanitation management, and health and nutrition education.

### **Amendments on the School- Based Feeding Program Operational Guidelines**

Based on the research findings, the researcher proposed amendments from the existing SBFP operational guidelines of the Department of Education, to which include the role and responsibilities of School Division of Quezon Personnel, Local Government Unit, Barangay Officials, School Heads, School

Feeding Coordinators, Teachers, Parents, and other stakeholders. In addition, the amendments wish to encourage internal and external stakeholders to participate in decision-making and program implementation. A range of capacity-building activities will take place among parents.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were derived: (1)The level of implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon was to a less extent implemented. (2) The status of challenges encountered in implementing the School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon was moderately encountered. (3) The study showed the significant relationship between the level of implementation of School- Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and the challenges encountered among the Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon, therefore the hypothesis was rejected. (4) The researcher proposed amendments from the existing SBFP operational guidelines of Department of Education, to which include the role and responsibilities of School Division of Quezon Personnel, Local Government Unit, Barangay Officials, School Heads, School Feeding Coordinators, Teachers, Parents, and other stakeholders.

Based on the summary of findings and conclusions of the study the following recommendations are offered:

1. As the research findings shown that the extent of implementation of School-Based Feeding Program among the Schools in the Division of Quezon was to less extent implemented, the schools may establish clear guidelines and nutritional standards for the program. Collaborate with local government units and community organizations for funding and resources. Train staff on food preparation, hygiene practices, and safety protocols. Regularly monitor and evaluate the program's impact on student well-being and academic performance. And, foster partnerships with local farmers and suppliers to source fresh and locally produced food.
2. Since the School-Based Feeding Program implementers moderately encountered challenges, school leaders may provide leadership and support by actively promoting and advocating for the program among teachers, students, parents, and the wider community. They collaborate with the Schools Division Office and relevant stakeholders to ensure

compliance with guidelines and nutritional standards. The principal oversees the selection and training of staff involved in food preparation and distribution, ensuring adherence to hygiene and safety protocols. They also coordinate with the kitchen staff to develop nutritious and balanced menus. Additionally, the principal monitors the program's implementation, evaluates its impact, and addresses any issues or challenges that arise. Ultimately, the principal's commitment and effective management contribute significantly to the smooth functioning of the school-based feeding program.

3. Since the findings of the study demonstrated the significant relationship between the extent of implementation and the challenges encountered in the implementation of School- Based Feeding Program, school heads may also communicate to the local leaders of the community and consult with them on the possible tie ups with the different programs of the school. Through open communication, the problems encountered in the implementation of any programs may be addressed. The local government plays a crucial role in implementing and supporting school-based feeding programs. Firstly, they can allocate funds and resources to ensure the sustainability of the program. This includes budgeting for nutritious meals, kitchen equipment, and trained personnel. Additionally, the local government can collaborate with relevant stakeholders such as school administrators, nutritionists, and community organizations to design and monitor the program effectively. They can also establish partnerships with local farmers and suppliers to source fresh and locally produced food, promoting the development of the local economy. Furthermore, the local government can conduct regular evaluations to assess the program's impact and make necessary adjustments for its success. Overall, their active involvement and support are essential for the smooth operation of school-based feeding programs.

4. Since this undertaking was conducted in Division of Quezon, the researcher recommends that the future researchers may examine its implementation in the whole Division. Schools Division Offices (SDOs) have a crucial role to play in the implementation of school-based feeding programs. Firstly, SDOs can provide guidance and support to schools in planning and executing the program effectively. They can disseminate relevant guidelines and policies, ensuring that schools adhere to nutritional standards and safety protocols. SDOs can also facilitate capacity-building initiatives for school personnel involved in the program, including training on menu planning, food preparation, and hygiene practices. Furthermore, SDOs can monitor the progress and impact of the feeding

program through regular inspections and evaluations. They can also collaborate with local government units, NGOs, and other stakeholders to secure funding and resources for sustainable program implementation. Overall, SDOs serve as critical facilitators and overseers, ensuring the success and quality of school-based feeding programs.

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