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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL- BASED FEEDING PROGRAM

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#### Abstract

This descriptive-evaluative study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the school-Based Feeding Program in Secondary Schools in Cordon, Isabela. The respondents of the study were 50 stakeholders and 84 student beneficiaries from Grade 8 and Grade 9 who took part in the feeding program during the school year 2025-2026. This study used descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean to describe the data. It also used inferential statistics like chi-square, t-test, and ANOVA to find out if there were significant differences when the respondents were grouped according to their profile variables. The results of the study showed that the respondents believed the feeding program still needed improvement to maintain its effectiveness for the beneficiaries in secondary schools. The coordinators and students reported only slight improvements in school attendance, participation, and academic performance. The factors that supported the feeding program, such as financial and stakeholder support, were only at a moderate level. The school-based feeding program experienced challenges including problems with human resources, lack of stakeholder engagement, insufficient funding, and issues in student participation. These challenges affected the sustainability of the feeding program. Furthermore, there was a noticeable improvement in the nutritional condition of severely wasted and wasted students after they joined the feeding program. On the other hand, there were significant differences found in the respondents' profile based on their perception and experiences with the feeding program. The researcher recommended that to make the feeding programs in secondary schools in Cordon, Isabela more effective, the schools should continue improving their meal planning, regularly monitor the students' nutritional status, maintain the school garden, and encourage active participation among students. Lastly, addressing financial and other resource-related challenges, as well building strong partnerships with the schools, the local government unit, and other stakeholders, are essential to sustain the implementation of the feeding program.

Keywords: *School-based feeding program, program effectiveness, supports, challenges, nutritional status*

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## INTRODUCTION

Malnutrition is a big problem all over the world. It affects people of all ages. Many places still have many malnourished people. Because of this, students do not perform well in school, and their attendance drops. This problem does not only cause health issues. It also creates a cycle that keeps affecting the life of a malnourished person. It often leads back to poverty, lowers productivity, and hurts economic progress (Jesiel Mae B. Claros, et al., 2024). According to *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI 2025)*, hunger is still rising in parts of Africa and Western Asia.

In the Philippines, malnutrition is still a serious health and school problem, especially among students. Many students who do not get enough food have trouble growing, thinking clearly, and doing well in school. Around the world, governments run feeding programs to help children get better nutrition. These programs aim to show results through better grades, higher attendance, and more focus in class.

Students who come to school sick often miss classes. Research by Wang et al. (2021) shows that the SBFP works well in raising attendance and improving nutrition, such as height, weight, and body mass index. Good nutrition is linked to better school performance. Students become more focused and take part in class and school activities.

The SBFP has worked well in many places, but it only covers Kindergarten to Grade 6. Secondary schools are not included. The government gives separate funds for elementary schools, but secondary schools have very limited resources. Students who were in SBFP from Grade 6 and move to Grade 7 but are still malnourished may no longer get enough food from feeding programs. Studies show that feeding programs in secondary schools only rely on leftover school funds, efforts of school administrators, teachers, staff, canteen resources, or help from the community. All of these are limited. This causes the same problems of malnutrition to happen again, such as poor health, absenteeism, and falling grades.

Secondary schools in the Philippines face the same problems. Cordon, Isabela is one of the towns that struggle to keep feeding programs going. A student who finished Grade 6 and joined SBFP no longer has a chance to continue improving their nutrition through feeding programs when they enter secondary school. School administrators, teachers, and parents help run these programs, but resources are scarce. This leads to uneven results in keeping the program going and helping students.

Given the facts and situations described above caused by the lack of feeding programs in secondary schools, it is indeed a big challenge for secondary schools, especially in Cordon, Isabela, to continue giving nutrition help to students who are still malnourished after Grade 6. While it is true that the SBFP has many strengths, benefits, and advantages in elementary schools, the readiness, experiences, and opinions of secondary school stakeholders about the continuation and success of feeding programs are very important to know, yet they are not known. Thus, this study was conducted.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the school-based feeding program in secondary schools in Cordon, Isabela.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1.To what extent is the school-Based Feeding Program effective in terms of:
  - 1.1 Nutritional Status Assessment;
  - 1.2 School attendance and participation;
  - 1.3 Academic performance; and
  - 1.4 Overall effectiveness of the program
- 2.What is the nutritional status of the beneficiaries before and after their participation in the feeding program?
3. To what extent do the following factors support the sustainability of the school-Based Feeding Program:
  - 3.1 Financial Support;
  - 3.2 Administrative Support;
  - 3.3 Teachers' Support; and
  - 3.4 Stakeholders' Support
- 4.What challenges are identified in the implementation and sustainability of the school-based feeding program in secondary schools in terms of:
  - 4.1 Financial Challenges;
  - 4.2 Infrastructure and Logistics;
  - 4.3 Human Resources;
  - 4.4 Stakeholder Engagement; and
  - 4.5 Student Participation

## **METHODOLOGY**

The quantitative method was used to measure the effectiveness and sustainability of the school-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) in addressing malnutrition among secondary school students in Cordon, Isabela. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling for choosing schools and stratified random sampling for students and stakeholders involved in the feeding program. Schools were chosen based on their records of severely wasted and wasted students, active implementation of the feeding program, and available program documents. The number of stakeholders was based on their role in the feeding program, and the number of student respondents was based on the total recipients of the feeding program in Grades 8 and 9 from each selected school.

### **The Instrument of the Study**

A structured questionnaire on the effectiveness and sustainability of the school-based feeding program was adapted and modified from recent studies and DepEd guidelines. This is made up of two parts. Part I covers the profile of the respondents (role, gender, grade level, and nutritional status before the program). Part II focuses on the following variables: effectiveness in terms of nutritional status, school attendance, and academic performance; sustainability of the program; and challenges faced during implementation.

### **Statistical Tools**

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents. Weighted mean was used to determine the level of effectiveness of the feeding program. Paired t-test, Chi-Square, and ANOVA were used to compare pre- and post-program data and to find significant differences in effectiveness across different groups of respondents (students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders).

## RESULTS

Table 1: Level of effectiveness of the school-based feeding program (Coordinators)

No.	Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<b>Nutritional Status Assessment</b>			
<b><i>Katayuang Nutrisyonal</i></b>			
1.	Student weight gain. <i>Pagdagdag ng timbang ng mga mag-aaral.</i>	4.00	Slight Improvement
2.	Student height increase. <i>Pagtaas ng tangkad ng mga mag-aaral.</i>	3.90	Slight Improvement
3.	BMI classification improvement. <i>Pagbuti ng klasipikasyon ng BMI.</i>	3.94	Slight Improvement
		<b>Mean 3.95</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>
<b>School Attendance and Participation</b>			
<b><i>Pagpasok at Pakikilahok sa Paaralan</i></b>			
1.	Daily school attendance. <i>Araw-araw na pagpasok sa paaralan.</i>	3.82	Slight Improvement
2.	Punctuality/arrival time. <i>Pagiging maagap sa pagdating sa paaralan.</i>	3.76	Slight Improvement
3.	Reduction in absenteeism. <i>Pagbawas ng pagliban sa klase.</i>	3.78	Slight Improvement
4.	Increase participation to classroom and school activities. <i>Pagtaas ng pakikilahok sa mga gawain sa klase at paaralan.</i>	3.84	Slight Improvement
		<b>Mean 3.80</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>
<b>Academic Performance</b>			
<b><i>Pagganap sa Akademikong Aspekto</i></b>			
1.	Performance in classes has improved. <i>Pagbuti ng pagganap sa klase.</i>	3.90	Slight Improvement
2.	Class participation/engagement. <i>Pakikilahok sa klase.</i>	3.98	Slight Improvement
3.	Completion of assignments and other types of outputs. <i>Pagkumpleto ng takdang-aralin at iba pang gawain.</i>	3.74	Slight Improvement
4.	Increase interaction with classmates and teachers during classes. <i>Pagtaas ng pakikipag-ugnayan sa kaklase at guro sa klase.</i>	3.88	Slight Improvement
		<b>Mean 3.88</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>
<b>Effectiveness of the Program</b>			
<b><i>Bisa ng Programa</i></b>			
1.	The feeding program has improved the nutritional status of students. <i>Ang feeding program ay nakatulong sa pagpapabuti ng kalagayang nutrisyonal ng mga mag-aaral.</i>	4.16	Slight Improvement

2.	The feeding program has increased school attendance. <i>Ang feeding program ay nakatulong sa pagtaas ng pagpasok sa paaralan.</i>	3.78	Slight Improvement
3.	The feeding program has improved academic performance. <i>Ang feeding program ay nakatulong sa pagpapabuti ng akademikong pagganap.</i>	3.82	Slight Improvement
4.	The feeding program has encouraged participation in extracurricular activities. <i>Ang feeding program ay nakahikayat ng pakikilahok sa mga ekstrakurikular na gawain.</i>	3.78	Slight Improvement
5.	Feeding program has increase self-confidence among beneficiaries. <i>Ang feeding program ay nakatulong sa pagtaas ng tiwala sa sarili ng mga benepisyaryo.</i>	3.60	Slight Improvement
<b>Mean</b>		<b>3.83</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.86</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>

Table 1 discloses the numerical data on the effectiveness of the feeding program as rated by the coordinators. The table shows that all areas including Nutritional Status Assessment (3.95), School Attendance and Participation (3.80), Academic Performance (3.88), and the Program's Overall Effectiveness (3.83), have a qualitative description of "Slight Improvement." The grand mean of the table is 3.86, which is also interpreted as slight improvement. This implies that the feeding program is effective, but it still needs to be improved to become more effective.

Benard (2025) found that school feeding programs improve student nutrition, attendance, and school performance.

**Table 2: Level of effectiveness of the school-based feeding program (Students)**

No.	Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<b>Nutritional Status Assessment</b>			
<b><i>Pagtataya ng Pag-unlad</i></b>			
1.	I grew taller when I joined the feeding program. <i>Tumangkad ako nang sumali ako sa feeding program.</i>	3.46	Slight Improvement
2.	I feel healthier after joining the feeding program. <i>Mas malusog ang pakiramdam ko matapos sumali sa feeding program.</i>	3.80	Slight Improvement
3.	I gained weight after joining the feeding program. <i>Nadagdagan ang timbang ko matapos sumali sa feeding program.</i>	3.77	Slight Improvement
<b>Mean</b>		<b>3.68</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>
<b>School Attendance</b>			
<b><i>Pagpasok sa Paaralan</i></b>			
1.	I attend the school regularly. <i>Regular akong pumapasok sa paaralan.</i>	4.01	Slight Improvement
2.	I feel more motivated to go to school. <i>Mas ginaganahan akong pumasok sa paaralan.</i>	4.06	Slight Improvement
3.	My attendance improved. <i>Bumuti ang aking pagpasok sa paaralan.</i>	4.06	Slight Improvement

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>
<b>Academic Performance</b> <b>Pagganap sa Akademiko</b>			
1.	My grades improved after joining the feeding program. <i>Bumuti ang aking mga marka matapos sumali sa feeding program.</i>	3.95	Slight Improvement
2.	I participate more in class activities. <i>Mas nakikilahok ako sa mga gawain sa klase.</i>	3.92	Slight Improvement
3.	I can focus better during lessons. <i>Mas nakakapagpokus ako sa aralin.</i>	4.02	Slight Improvement
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>
<b>Effectiveness of the Program</b> <b>Bisa ng Programa</b>			
1.	The feeding program helped improve my health. <i>Nakatulong ang feeding program sa pagpapabuti ng aking kalusugan.</i>	4.26	Significant Improvement
2.	I became more confident in school. <i>Mas naging tiwala ako sa sarili sa paaralan.</i>	3.88	Slight Improvement
3.	I believe the feeding program should be continued in our school. <i>Naniniwala ako na dapat ipagpatuloy ang feeding program sa aming paaralan.</i>	4.39	Significant Improvement
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>Slight Improvement</b>

Table 2 discloses the numerical data on the effectiveness of the feeding program as rated by the students. The table shows that all areas have a qualitative description of "Slight Improvement." The grand mean of the table is 3.97, which is also interpreted as slight improvement. This implies that the students had a good experience and saw positive changes, but the program still needs to be enhanced. Causapin (2025) proved that feeding programs improve both BMI and grades of students. Barnabas (2024) added that longer participation increases nutrition and learning outcomes.

**Table 3: Nutritional Status of the beneficiaries before and after their participation in the feeding program (Coordinators)**

No.	Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<b>Nutritional Status Assessment</b>			
<b>Pre-program nutritional status</b> (weight, height, BMI): <i>Katayang Nutrisyonal Bago ang Programa</i>			
1.	Most of the students in the school are severely underweight. <i>Karamihan sa mga mag-aaral ay lubhang kulang sa timbang.</i>	1.80	Disagree
2.	Most of the students are underweight. <i>Karamihan sa mga mag-aaral ay kulang sa timbang.</i>	1.80	Disagree
3.	The students' weight is not equal to their height.	2.80	Disagree

	<i>Hindi akma ang timbang ng mga mag-aaral sa kanilang tangkad.</i>		
4.	The students' weight is not appropriate for their age.		
	<i>Hindi akma ang timbang ng mga mag-aaral sa kanilang edad.</i>	2.80	Agree
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.30</b>
			<b>Disagree</b>
<b>Post-program nutritional status:</b>			
	<i>Katayang Nutrisyonal Pagkatapos ng Programa</i>		
1.	Most of the students improved their nutritional status after the feeding program.		
	<i>Karamihan sa mga mag-aaral ay nagpakita ng pagbuti ng kalagayang nutrisyonal matapos ang feeding program.</i>	3.20	Agree
2.	Most of the students did not show changes in their nutritional status.		
	<i>Karamihan sa mga mag-aaral ay walang ipinakitang pagbabago sa kalagayang nutrisyonal.</i>	2.20	Disagree
3.	The students increased their weight.		
	<i>Tumaas ang timbang ng mga mag-aaral.</i>	3.40	Agree
4.	The students increased their height.		
	<i>Tumaas ang tangkad ng mga mag-aaral.</i>	3.20	Agree
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.00</b>
		<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.65</b>
			<b>Agree</b>

As can be gleaned from the table, from the coordinators regarding the nutritional status of the students before and after the program. The pre-program status has a mean of 2.30, which means "Disagree." This indicates that before the program, most students had better nutritional status, and only some were chosen for the program. The post-program status has a mean of 3.00, which means "Agree." This shows that after the program, the students' nutritional status improved. The grand mean is 2.65, interpreted as "Agree," which implies the feeding program was effective in making the students healthier.

Wang (2021) reviewed 19 studies and found that after 12 months of feeding, students grew 0.32 cm taller and gained 0.58 kg of healthy weight.

**Table 4: Nutritional Status of the beneficiaries before and after their participation in the feeding program (Students)**

No.	Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<b>Nutritional Status Assessment</b>			
<b>Pre-program nutritional status</b> (weight, height, BMI):			
	<i>Katayang Nutrisyonal Bago ang Programa</i>		
1.	I was severely wasted before the feeding program.		
	<i>Lubha akong payat bago ang feeding program.</i>	2.85	Agree
2.	I was wasted before the feeding program.		
	<i>Payat ako bago ang feeding program.</i>	3.50	Strongly Agree
3.	My weight and height were not appropriate for my age before the feeding program.		
	<i>Hindi akma ang aking timbang at tangkad sa aking edad bago ang feeding program.</i>	3.68	Strongly Agree
4.	I often felt weak or easily tired before joining the feeding program.		
		2.51	Agree

*Madalas akong nanghihina o madaling mapagod bago sumali sa feeding program.*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Post-program nutritional status:</b>			
<i>Katayuang Nutrisyonal Pagkatapos ng Programa</i>			
1.	My nutritional status improved after the feeding program. <i>Bumuti ang aking kalagayang nutrisyonal matapos ang feeding program.</i>	3.46	Strongly Agree
2.	I feel healthier after the feeding program. <i>Mas malusog ang pakiramdam ko matapos ang feeding program.</i>	3.45	Strongly Agree
3.	My BMI remains the same before the program. <i>Hindi nagbago ang aking BMI bago ang programa.</i>	2.54	Disagree
4.	My BMI improved after the feeding program. <i>Bumuti ang aking BMI matapos ang feeding program.</i>	3.26	Agree
5.	I am more energized after the feeding program. <i>Mas masigla ako matapos ang feeding program.</i>	3.40	Agree
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.22</b>
		<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.18</b>
			<b>Agree</b>

Table 4 shows the data from the students regarding their own nutritional status. The pre-program status has a mean of 3.14, interpreted as "Agree," meaning their weight and height were not appropriate. The post-program status has a mean of 3.22, also interpreted as "Agree," meaning they felt healthier and more energetic after the program. The grand mean is 3.18, interpreted as "Agree," which implies the students felt a positive change in their nutrition after joining the program.

**Table 5: Level of consistency support the continuity and sustainability of the school-based feeding program (Coordinators)**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Statement Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Qualitative Description</b>
<b>Financial Support</b> <b><i>Supportang Pinansyal</i></b>			
1.	The school-based feeding program receives enough financial support to continue its implementation. <i>Ang feeding program ay tumatanggap ng sapat na pondong pinansyal upang maipagpatuloy ang implementasyon.</i>	3.24	Supportive
2.	Funds for the feeding program are released on time. <i>Ang pondo para sa feeding program ay naibibigay sa tamang oras.</i>	3.14	Supportive
3.	The available budget is properly managed and used for the feeding program. <i>Ang badyet ay maayos na napamamahalaan at nagagamit para sa feeding program.</i>	3.38	Supportive
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.25</b>
			<b>Supportive</b>
<b>Administrative Support</b> <b><i>Supportang Administratibo</i></b>			
1.	The school administration actively supports the feeding program.	<b>3.86</b>	Strongly Supportive

	<i>Aktibong sinusupportahan ng administrasyon ng paaralan ang feeding program.</i>		
2.	The school head ensures proper monitoring of the feeding program. <i>Tinitiyak ng punong-guro ang maayos na pagmamanman ng feeding program.</i>	3.82	Strongly Supportive
3.	Clear guidelines and policies are followed in implementing the feeding program. <i>Sinusunod ang malinaw na patakaran at alituntunin sa pagpapatupad ng feeding program.</i>	<b>3.82</b>	Strongly Supportive
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.83</b>
			<b>Strongly Supportive</b>
<b>Teachers' Support</b>			
<b>Suporta ng mga Guro</b>			
1.	Teachers actively participate in the implementation of the feeding program. <i>Aktibong nakikilahok ang mga guro sa pagpapatupad ng feeding program.</i>	3.76	Strongly Supportive
2.	Teachers help monitor the attendance and nutritional progress of the students. <i>Tinutulungan ng mga guro ang pagmamanman sa pagpasok at kalagayang nutrisyonal ng mga mag-aaral.</i>	3.80	Strongly Supportive
3.	Teachers encourage students to participate in the feeding program regularly. <i>Hinihikayat ng mga guro ang mga mag-aaral na regular na makilahok sa feeding program.</i>	3.84	Strongly Supportive
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.80</b>
			<b>Strongly Supportive</b>
<b>Stakeholders Support</b>			
<b>Suporta ng mga Stakeholder</b>			
1.	Parents and community members actively support the feeding program. <i>Aktibong sinusupportahan ng mga magulang at komunidad ang feeding program.</i>	<b>3.16</b>	Supportive
2.	Stakeholders provide assistance such as food supplies, funds, or volunteer services. <i>Nagbibigay ng tulong ang mga stakeholder tulad ng pagkain, pondo, o boluntaryong serbisyo.</i>	<b>3.06</b>	Supportive
3.	There is strong cooperation between the school and the community in sustaining the feeding program. <i>May matibay na ugnayan ang paaralan at komunidad sa pagpapatuloy ng feeding program.</i>	<b>3.36</b>	Supportive
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.19</b>
		<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.52</b>
			<b>Supportive</b>
			<b>Strongly Supportive</b>

Table 5 presents the data on the support that helps sustain the feeding program. The table shows that Administrative Support (3.83) and Teachers' Support (3.80) are "Strongly Supportive," while Financial Support (3.25) and Stakeholders Support (3.19) are "Supportive." The grand mean is 3.52, which is "Strongly Supportive." This implies that while the program is well-supported, especially by the school administration and teachers, the financial and stakeholder support still needs to be improved.

Mideska et al. (2024) found that lack of financial support and poor stakeholder engagement

are common challenges that affect feeding program sustainability.

**Table 6: Level of consistency support the continuity and sustainability of the school-based feeding program (Students)**

No.	Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<b>Sustainability and Support</b>			
1.	I observed that the feeding program was done regularly in the school. <i>Napansin kong regular na isinasagawa ang feeding program sa paaralan.</i>	3.40	Agree
2.	I observed that the faculty, staff, and stakeholders participate regularly in providing the needs for the feeding program. <i>Napansin kong regular na nakikilahok ang mga guro, kawani, at stakeholders sa feeding program.</i>	3.60	Strongly Agree
3.	Our parents/guardians cooperate for the betterment of the feeding program. <i>Nakikipagtulungan ang aming mga magulang/tagapagalaga sa pagpapabuti ng feeding program.</i>	2.95	Agree
4.	The community (LGUs, barangays, stakeholders) is involved in the feeding program. <i>Nakikilahok ang komunidad sa feeding program.</i>	3.13	Agree
5.	The school have different resources to implement the feeding program. <i>May sapat na mapagkukunan ang paaralan para maipatupad ang feeding program.</i>	3.58	Strongly Agree
6.	The school maintain its Gulayan sa Paaralan program to help in the implementation of the Feeding program <i>Pinananatili ng paaralan ang Gulayan sa Paaralan Program upang makatulong sa feeding program.</i>	3.12	Agree
7.	The school maintain a strong community relationship. <i>Pinananatili ng paaralan ang mgandang ugnayan sa komunidad.</i>	3.39	Agree
8.	Nutrition, hygiene and health education is link to school curriculum <i>Ang nutrisyon, kalinisan, at kalusugan ay bahagi ng kurikulum.</i>	3.74	Strongly Agree
9.	There is school management strongly implement the feeding program. <i>Mahigpit na ipinapatupad ng pamunuan ng paaralan ang feeding program.</i>	3.81	Strongly Agree
10.	There is a continuous monitoring and evaluation of the feeding program <i>May tuloy-tuloy na pagmamanman at ebalwasyon ng feeding program.</i>	3.57	Strongly Agree
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
		<b>3.43</b>	

Table 6 presents the data from the students on the continuity of the feeding program. The overall mean is 3.43, which is interpreted as "Strongly Agree." This implies that the students observed that the program is well-supported, properly implemented, and that everyone involved shows cooperation, which allows the program to continue.

Niyibizi (2024) reported that delays in food supply due to money problems and poor administration cause irregular feeding schedules.

**Table 7. Level of challenges identified in the implementation and sustainability of the school-based feeding program (Coordinators)**

No.	Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<b>Financial Challenges</b>			
<b><i>Mga Hamong Pinansyal</i></b>			
1.	Inadequate funding for food supplies. <i>Hindi sapat ang pondo para sa suplay ng pagkain.</i>	2.90	Moderate Challenge
2.	Delayed release of funds. <i>Nahuhuli ang paglabas ng pondo.</i>	2.94	Moderate Challenge
3.	Rising food prices affects budget. <i>Nakaaapekto ang pagtaas ng presyo ng pagkain sa badyet.</i>	2.38	Moderate Challenge
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Moderate Challenge</b>
		<b>2.74</b>	
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Logistics Challenges</b>			
<b><i>Mga Hamon sa Pasilidad at Logistik</i></b>			
1.	Lack of proper kitchen/cooking facilities. <i>Kakulangan ng maayos na kusina o lutuan.</i>	<b>3.82</b>	Minor Challenge
2.	Insufficient food storage/refrigeration. <i>Hindi sapat na imbakan o refrigerator ng pagkain.</i>	3.78	Minor Challenge
3.	Shortage of cooking utensils/equipment. <i>Kakulangan ng kagamitang pangluto.</i>	3.90	Minor Challenge
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Minor Challenge</b>
		<b>3.83</b>	
<b>Human Resource Challenges</b>			
<b><i>Mga Hamon sa Human Resources</i></b>			
1.	Insufficient volunteers for meal preparation. <i>Kakulangan ng boluntaryo sa paghanda ng pagkain.</i>	3.10	Moderate Challenge
2.	High turnover of program coordinators. <i>Madalas na pagpapalit ng program coordinator.</i>	3.54	Minor Challenge
3.	Overworked teaching staff managing the program. <i>Sobrang dami ng gawain ng mga guro na nangangasiwa sa programa.</i>	3.30	Moderate Challenge
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Moderate Challenge</b>
		<b>3.31</b>	
<b>Stakeholder Engagement Challenges</b>			
<b><i>Mga Hamon sa Pakikilahok ng Stakeholders</i></b>			
1.	Low parental involvement/participation. <i>Mababang pakikilahok ng mga magulang.</i>	2.64	Moderate Challenge
2.	Limited support from Local Government Units. <i>Limitadong suporta mula sa Lokal na Pamahalaan.</i>	2.90	Moderate Challenge
3.	Poor coordination among school departments. <i>Mahinang koordinasyon ng mga departamento sa paaralan.</i>	3.24	Moderate Challenge

	Mean	2.93	Moderate Challenge
<b>Student Participation Challenges</b>			
<b>Mga Hamon sa Pakikilahok ng Mag-aaral</b>			
1.	Student absenteeism on feeding days. <i>Pagliban ng mga mag-aaral sa araw ng feeding.</i>	2.84	Moderate Challenge
2.	Students rejecting/food preferences. <i>Hindi gusto ng mga mag-aaral ang pagkain.</i>	3.18	Moderate Challenge
3.	Lack of student nutritional awareness. <i>Kakulangan ng kaalaman ng mga mag-aaral tungkol sa nutrisyon.</i>	3.48	Minor Challenge
	Mean	3.17	Moderate Challenge
	Grand Mean	3.20	Moderate Challenge

The table reveals the challenges identified by the coordinators. The grand mean is 3.20, which is a "Moderate Challenge." Only Infrastructure & Logistics was a "Minor Challenge" (3.83), while all other areas were "Moderate Challenges." This implies that the program has problems that need to be addressed, especially in finances, human resources, stakeholder engagement, and student participation.

Paglinawan (2025) found common challenges include limited budget, delay in payments, heavy workload for staff, lack of volunteers, low parent involvement, and picky eaters.

**Table 8. Level of challenges identified in the implementation and sustainability of the school-based feeding program (Students)**

No.	Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Description
<b>Challenges Encountered</b>			
1.	I feel ashamed to be identified as feeding program beneficiary. <i>Nahihiya akong makilala bilang benepisyaryo ng feeding program.</i>	2.46	Serious Challenge
2.	The food served is insufficient in amount. <i>Hindi sapat ang dami ng pagkaing ibinibigay.</i>	3.62	Minor Challenge
3.	The sources of fund for food are insufficient. <i>Hindi sapat ang pondo para sa pagkain.</i>	3.25	Moderate Challenge
4.	Foods are of poor nutritional quality. <i>Mahina ang kalidad ng nutrisyon ng pagkain.</i>	3.90	Minor Challenge
5.	There are limited food choices which leads to boredom and lower consumption. <i>Limitado ang pagpipiliang pagkain kaya nakakasawa.</i>	3.46	Minor Challenge
6.	Foods served are unappealing. <i>Hindi kaaya-aya ang pagkain.</i>	4.10	Minor Challenge
7.	Low parental participation/ support from the community and stakeholders. <i>Mababang pakikilahok ng magulang at komunidad.</i>	3.24	Moderate Challenge
8.	Lack of proper kitchen equipment and insufficient space or sanitation <i>Kakulangan ng kagamitan at espasyo sa kusina.</i>	3.88	Minor Challenge
9.	The feeding program schedule is mostly interrupted by some activities of school. <i>Madalas naantala ang feeding program dahil sa ibang gawain sa paaralan.</i>	3.76	Minor Challenge
	Mean	3.52	Minor Challenge

The Table shows the level of challenges based on the students' perception. The overall mean is 3.52, which is interpreted as a "Minor Challenge." This implies that while most challenges are minor to moderate, one serious challenge is that students feel ashamed to be identified as beneficiaries of the program.

Aleman et al. (2026) proved that students in feeding programs feel stigma and embarrassment, especially when receiving free meals in front of others.

## CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn from this study:

The feeding program in Secondary Schools in Cordon, Isabela was effective. It improved the nutritional status of the students. Students became active and participated in school activities, such as attendance, as they were motivated to come to school regularly and were able to submit requirements such as projects and assignments, and focus on their studies to achieve better academic performance. Meanwhile, slight improvement was the result revealed in the level of effectiveness. This indicated that the feeding program continuously sought betterment or improvement. The analysis of the study presented that the feeding program was important in reducing malnutrition. It helped the students improve their nutrition, particularly those identified as severely wasted and wasted. The success in continuously sustaining the needs of the feeding program and maintaining its implementation from the start depended on the support received from parents, teachers, administrators, stakeholders, and members of the community. Challenges such as limited resources like financial support, and voluntary participation and engagement of stakeholders affected the continuous implementation of the program. The individual differences of the respondents, such as experience, duration of involvement, and personal characteristics, influenced their insight on the effectiveness of the feeding program.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Schools should improve their existing feeding program activities and provide a new plan and execution for the next school year and compare the changes to achieve better results for the beneficiaries. Schools may revise the old meal plans and use updated and structured meal plans, and maintain continuous and regular monitoring of the beneficiaries' BMI or nutritional status.
2. Communication, information sharing, and involvement of Local Government Units (LGUs), parents, and stakeholders in the planning of the feeding program in secondary schools can help increase financial and material support to sustain the feeding program. Schools should conduct regular meetings to discuss feeding program activities.
3. School administrators must address the challenges encountered in the implementation of the feeding program and provide solutions to problems such as lack of resources.
4. Teachers must conduct a regular monitoring and evaluation on the nutritional status of the students who were identified as severely wasted and wasted to update the nutrition needs of the students and to prepare appropriate meal plans for faster improvement of their BMI, reduce the number of identified beneficiaries, and promote zero hunger.
5. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies on the school-based feeding program in secondary schools in their municipality. Further studies should explore

additional factors such as students' health and academic performance in the long term and the psychological effects after they are no longer identified as beneficiaries of the program. Comparing the feeding program in secondary schools across multiple schools or regions may help identify better practices.

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