

**School Feeding Program Implementation and Pupil's Retention in Primary Schools in
Akura Sub -County Alebtong District, Uganda**

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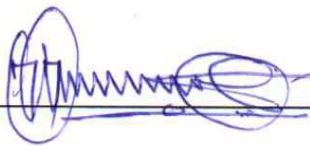
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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of
Education in Curriculum Studies and Foundations of Education of Gulu University**

July, 2026

Declaration

I Ojok Denish, hereby declare that this research report titled; “*School Feeding Program Implementation and Pupil’s Retention in Primary Schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District,*” submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of master of Education in Curriculum Studies and Foundations of Education of Gulu University is my original work and has not been submitted to any institution of learning for any academic award.

Sign  Date 25/07/2026.

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Approval

We hereby certify that this research report titled, "*School Feeding Programme Implementation and Pupil's Retention in Primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District*" was done under our supervision and ready for submission to the Faculty of Education and Humanities of Gulu University with our approval.

Sign _____

Date _____

George Ocho/Onono (Mr)

Sign _____

Date _____

Orace Tom David

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the loving memory of my late parents, Mr. Yowana Oculi Awio and Mrs. Akite Maria, whose values, sacrifices, and prayers laid the foundation for my academic journey. To my dear brothers and sisters, Alyela Richard Peter, Odongo Geoffrey, Apio Hellen, Akello Evaline, and Opio Thomas your support, encouragement, and unwavering faith in me have always been a source of strength. With profound gratitude, I dedicate this work to my beloved wife, Mrs Semmy Ojok, for her patience, love, and constant encouragement, and to my cherished children, Amongi Irene, Otim Emmanuel, Odongo Jonathan, Odyek Brian, and Apio Tracy whose love, prayers, and inspiration have given me reason to strive harder and persevere. I'm grateful for each of you all. May God bless and guide us always.

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Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Approval.....	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures	xi
List of Abbreviations/Acronyms	xii
Abstract	xiii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.2.1 Historical perspective.....	1
1.2.2 Theoretical perspective	3
1.2.3 Conceptual perspective	5
1.2.4 Contextual perspective.....	7
1.3 Problem Statement.....	11
1.4 Purpose of the Study.....	13
1.5 Specific Objectives.....	13
1.6 Research Questions	13
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	14
1.8 Scope of the Study.....	14
1.8.1 Geographical scope.....	14
1.8.2 Content scope.....	14

1.8.2 Time scope	15
1.9 Conceptual Framework	16
Chapter Two: Literature Review	17
2.0 Introduction	17
2.1 Level of School Feeding Program Implementation in Primary Schools	17
2.2 Rate of Pupil's Retention in Primary Schools	24
2.3 The Relationship between School Feeding Programs Implementation and Pupil's Retention	31
2.4. Summary of Literature Review	37
Chapter Three: Methodology	38
3.0 Introduction	38
3.1 Research Orientation	38
3.2 Research Design	39
3.3 Population of the Study	39
3.4 Sample Size	40
3.5 Sampling Procedures	40
3.6 Data Collection Methods	41
3.7 Data Collection Tools	41
3.8 Data Quality Control	42
3.8.1 Validity of instruments	42
3.8.2 Reliability of instrument	42
3.9 Control of Extraneous Variables	42
3.10 Data Analysis	43
3.11 Research Procedures	44
3.12 Ethical Considerations	45

3.13 Limitations/Delimitations.....	45
Chapter Four: Data presentation, Analysis and Interpretation	46
4.0 Introduction	46
4.1 Background Information	46
4.2. Exploratory factor analysis for School feeding programme implementation	47
4.4 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Community Mobilization with 9 items	50
4.5. Exploratory Factor Analysis for Pupil's Retention	52
4.6 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables	55
4.7 Research question one: What is the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District?	60
4.8 Research Question Two. What is the rate of pupil's retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District?	66
4.9. Research question three: What is the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District?.....	72
Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation	80
5.0 Introduction	80
5.1 To assess the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District	80
5.2 To assess the rate of pupil's retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District	85
5.3 To establish the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District	88
5.4 Conclusion.....	93
5.5 Recommendations	94

5.6 Suggestion for Further Research	96
References	97
Appendices	110
Appendix A: Informed Consent Letter	110
Appendix B: Research Questionnaire	111
Appendix C: Interview Guide for Head Teachers, SMC and PTA Executives.....	115
Appendix D: Introductory Letter	116
Appendix E: Map of Alebtong District showing the location of Akura Sub County.....	117
Appendix F: Table for Determining Sample Size for a Finite Population	118
Appendix G: Research Budget	119
Appendix H: Research Work Plan	120
Appendix I: Originality Report	121

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Primary school retention by class	10
Table 1.2: Primary school retention by class in Akura Sub County.....	11
Table 3.1: Sampling frame.....	40
Table 4.1 Showing background information of Respondents.....	46
Table 4.2: Exploratory Factor Analysis for Setting Guidelines for Implementation.....	48
Table 4.3: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Formation of Feeding Committee with 10 items.....	49
Table 4.4: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Community Mobilization with 9 items....	50
Table 4.5: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Budget Allocation for Schools with 11 items.....	51
Table 4.6: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for High Retention Rate with 10 items.	52
Table 4.7 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Moderate Retention Rate with 9 items.	53
Table 4.8: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Low Retention Rate with 8 items	54
Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics for Setting Guidelines for Implementation	55
Table 4.10 descriptive statistics for school feeding committee	56
Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics for Community Mobilization	56
Table 4.12: Descriptive Statistics for Budget Allocation for Schools	57
Table 4.13: Descriptive statistics for High Retention Rate (10 items)	58
Table 4.14: Descriptive Statistics for Moderate Retention Rate.....	58
Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics for Low Retention Rate.....	59
Table 4.16: Showing level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.....	60
Table 4.17: ANOVA test table comparing responses from Teachers (N=182), pupils (N=200), and PTA/SMC (N=30) on constructs of School Feeding Programme Implementation:	62

Table 4.18: Themes, Sub-themes, and Interpretation of School Feeding Programme Implementation	64
Table 4.19: showing Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for rate of pupils' retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.....	66
Table 4.20: ANOVA table comparing Teachers /headteachers(N=182), pupils (N=200), and PTA/SMC (N=30) on constructs of Retention rates in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.....	68
Table 4.21: Pearson correlation table showing Relationship between school feeding programme and Pupils Retention in primary schools	72
Table 4.22: multiple regression analysis table showing how the constructs of School Feeding Programme Implementation predict Retention	74
Table 4.23: hierarchical regression analysis table showing how Intervening Variables of poverty, school culture, and teacher irregularity influence the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and retention	76

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework 16

List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

DEO	District Education Officers
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
FAO	Food for Agricultural Organization
HGSF	Home Grown School Feeding
MOSE	Ministry of Education and Sports
MST	Martin's Ford Motivational Systems Theory
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization
PLE	Primary Leaving Examination
PTA	Parent Teacher's Association
SFP	School Feeding Program
SMC	School Management Committee
UACE	Uganda Advance Certificate of Education
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCE	Uganda Certificate of Education
UNEB	Uganda National Examination Board
UNESCO	United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United National International Children's Emergency Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USFP	Uganda School Feeding Program
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

This study examined the connection between the introduction of school food programs and the retention rate of pupils in primary schools in Akura Sub County in Alebtong District. The study was guided by the following specific objectives namely; to assess the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools; to determine pupil's retention rate in primary schools and to establish the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District. The study adopted a mixed method approach and convergent mixed method design. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews from a sample of 469 respondents and participants respectively (8 head teachers, 169 teachers, 260 pupils, 14 PTA and 16 SMC Executives). Quantitative data was sorted, coded and entered in SPSS version 25.0 and data was analyzed at descriptive and inferential statistical levels while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings for research question one revealed a high level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District ($M= 4.15$ $SD=0.61$). This high level of implementations was attributed to the establishment of clear guidelines, the formation of school feeding committee, active community mobilization, and adequate budget allocation. Results for the second research question likewise showed that Akura Sub -County Alebtong District's primary schools had a good pupil's retention rate ($M=4.4$ $SD=0.51$) and Findings for research question three revealed a strong positive significant relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District ($r=0.82$ $p<0.01$). The study concluded that school feeding programme implementation significantly enhanced pupil's retention rates in primary schools and it was recommended that government should design a policy to make school feeding compulsory in all primary schools

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study investigated School Feeding Program Implementation and Pupil's Retention rate in Primary Schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong. It investigated the level of school feeding program implementation, rate of pupil's retention and the relationship between school feeding program implementation and pupil's retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District. The World Food Program (2023) report indicated that the implementation of school feeding programs has emerged as a crucial strategy in improving retention rate in primary school. Akaambi (2013) also reported that by providing nutritious meals, these programs not only alleviate hunger and improve health but also enhance cognitive function, attendance, and academic performance. As a result, pupils are more likely to remain engaged and motivated, reducing the likelihood of dropout. This chapter presents background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and conceptual frame work.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Historical perspective

School feeding has been in place for generations and has changed throughout time. The first recorded instance of school feeding dates back to 1790, when American-born British inventor and physicist Benjamin Thompson started a program in Munich, Germany, that fed and educated hungry youngsters (WFP, 2022). School feeding has roots dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, where they were implemented primarily as a response to child malnutrition and hunger. The aim was not only to provide basic nutrition but also to improve attendance and performance in schools (WFP, 2020).

The majority of high-income nations had made school meals a common practice by the late 19th century. By the early 20th century, these nations started to see school feeding as a means of achieving social and agricultural objectives, increasing pupil's retention rates, and alleviating short-term hunger in schoolchildren (WFP, 2022). Since children were encouraged to attend school in order to receive meals, some early research conducted in the middle of the 20th century revealed a favorable correlation between school feeding and attendance. However, these early assessments did not always prioritize the effect on retention rates (WFP, 2022)

Just two years after its founding, in 1963, the World Food Programme launched its first school lunch programme in central and northern Togo (WFP, 2023). WFP is currently the biggest humanitarian organization in the world that runs school feeding programs (SFPs). WFP's early school feeding program focused on food assistance, primarily to reduce hunger, until the late 1990s, when the emphasis switched to food for education. Changes in the global financial and economic environment (such as the 2008 financial crisis), as well as changes and reforms within WFP and the United Nations overall (such as the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGS, and the transition from food aid to food assistance for WFP), led to a change in the way SFPs were conceived, planned, and carried out. The WFP introduced a new school feeding strategy in early 2020 to increase pupils' retention (WFP, 2020b).

In order to address the issue of pupil's retention in Universal Primary schools in developing nations, the World Food Programme and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the world's foremost charity and advocate for children, launched a school feeding program in underdeveloped nations in the second half of the 19th century. Nearly half of sub-Saharan Africa is covered by this program, which involves more

than 70 countries. Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi DRC, Cameroon, and Ethiopia are among the African nations that have benefited from the initiative (WFP, 2023).

In an attempt to enhance schoolchildren's education and nutrition, the Ugandan government launched the School Feeding Program in 1979. In order to address the problems of hunger and malnutrition that were influencing school attendance and performance, this program was created in partnership with the World Food Program (UNICEF 2023). The initiative aimed to provide meals to children in schools, especially in areas with high food insecurity, to encouraged enrollment, attendance, and retention, and enhance learning outcomes (UNICEF 2023).

1.2.2 Theoretical perspective

This study was underpinned by Motivational system theory which was developed by Martin Ford in 1992. This theory explains that motivation is influenced by goals, emotions, beliefs, and environmental conditions. The theory emphasizes that learners perform better when they have clear goals, positive emotions, confidence in their abilities, and supportive environments. In education, MST is important because it helps teachers design learning experiences that improve learner participation, achievement, and retention.

Motivational Systems Theory is relevant to the study of school feeding program implementation and pupils' retention because it explains how satisfaction of learners' physical, emotional, and social needs increases motivation for school attendance and persistence. The theory therefore helps researchers understand the relationship between effective school feeding programs and improved retention rates in primary schools."

According to Martin Ford's theory of motivation (1992), which served as the theoretical foundation for this study, an individual's biological, social, and environmental circumstances

are important for their growth and can also affect their behavior. Martin Ford's Motivational Systems Theory provided a complete method towards understanding motivation by bearing in mind the interrelated roles of personal goals, emotional states, perceived capabilities, and contextual influences. It emphasized the dynamic and evolving nature of motivation and offered insights into how individuals can develop adaptive motivational patterns to achieve their goals (Schunk & Greene, 2022).

On the foundation of this model, it was anticipated that retention rate of pupils is dependent on biological, social and environmental contexts such as school feeding. Thus, the retention rate being linked to school feeding was tied to the fact that ensuring students' basic needs are met to enhance their motivation, focus, and willingness to remain in school.

According to Ford's theory, pupils are more motivated to attend and stay in school when their basic needs, such as hunger, are addressed. The school feeding program serves as a concrete support that helps pupils achieve their educational goals by reducing the distraction of hunger, thereby increasing goal orientation.

When children receive regular meals at school, they are likely to develop positive emotional associations with schooling. This emotional satisfaction reinforces daily attendance and increases the likelihood of remaining in school until completion. This aligns with Ford's assertion that positive emotions enhance motivation.

The feeding program can indirectly boost self-efficacy and control beliefs. When pupils are well-fed, they perform better academically, which builds confidence in their capabilities. This sense of competence encourages retention and persistence in school. The feeling that attending school leads to both short-term and long-term rewards strengthens their belief in the usefulness of education.

Therefore, Martin Ford's theory was directly related to this study by explaining why and how the provision of school meals motivates pupils to attend and stay in school. The theory provides a framework to understand the psychological mechanisms goal setting, emotional response, and belief in personal agency that underpin improved pupil's retention rates as a result of the school feeding program implementation in Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District.

1.2.3 Conceptual perspective

The implementation of the school food program (an independent variable) and pupil's retention (a dependent variable) were the primary variables in this study. School feeding was conceived as a plan by school stakeholders to provide pupils meals on a set schedule throughout the term. The idea was further developed in terms of the quality and accessibility of meals. Additionally, retention was considered in terms of general enrollment (Joining), retention rate (Staying), and attendance pattern.

School is an institution or organization that provides education, instruction or training to individuals, typically children in a formal or structured setting (Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2022). While feeding refers to the process of consuming food or nutrients to sustained life, growth, and energy (Sizer & Whitney, 2020). It involves the ingestion, digestion, absorption, and utilization of nutrients from various sources, such as plants and animals (Campbell & Reece, 2008).

According to Aliyar et al. (2015) and Yendaw & Dayour (2015), school feeding is the practice of providing schoolchildren with either prepared or raw food in two ways: in-school feeding, which is served at school to alleviate hunger right away, and one that is taken home as a requirement for attending class. At the organization, sector, or national level, a program

is a collection of projects whose combined goals lead to a single, overarching goal (Schwalbe & Furlong, 2013).

SFP Policy, (2020), a school feeding program refers to an organized and sustained initiative that provides nutritious meals to students within schools to enhance their health, well-being, and learning outcomes. Such programs are typically established by governments, international organizations, or NGOs as part of a broader strategy to address issues of hunger, malnutrition, and educational access, particularly in underserved or low-income areas.

Implementation is the execution or application of any plan, or policy for accomplishing something (Ehrens, 2015). Thus, implementation is an action that must occur after the initial thought in order for something to occur (Ehrens, 2015).

Acaa (2023) defines school feeding as the provision of food on-site or to take home to increase school enrolment, attendance and retention and exist as a social safety net for households with low income. School feeding is intended to alleviate short-term hunger, improve nutrition and cognition of children, and transfer income to families (World Bank, 2023). The present review explores the impact of SF on nutritional, health, and educational outcomes of school-aged children in developing countries.

School feeding programme implementation refers to the specific set of actions, procedures, and protocols that is planning, preparation, distribution, monitoring & evaluation, community and stakeholder engagement put in place to execute and manage the provision of meals or nutritional support to students within an educational institution (WFP,2019).

Operationally School Feeding Program Implementation is the process of planning, organizing, and executing activities related to the provision of meals to students in educational settings, including the procurement of food supplies, preparation and distribution of meals, adherence

to nutritional standards, and the monitoring and evaluation of program effectiveness to ensure improved student health, attendance, and academic performance (MoES, 2021).

According to Alexander Astin (1993), retention is the extent to which students remain in school from admission through completion of a given educational program.

In a conceptual sense, retention refers to an educational institution's capacity to keep students enrolled from the point of admission through to completion. (Lee, 2025, March 27). It encompasses the continuation of engagement and enrollment whether from term to term or year to year.

In education context retention refers to the ability of an educational institution to keep students enrolled until they complete a given level of education program (UNESCO 2023). It indicates the percentage of student who continues their studies at the same institution over a specified period without dropping out.

While retention rate refers to the percentage of students who remain enrolled at an educational institution from one year to the next, particularly from the first year to the second year (NCFES, 2024) i.e. Low retention rate, Moderate retention rate, and High retention rate.

1.2.4 Contextual perspective

According to UNESCO (2019), about 258 million children and youth were out of school in 2018, indicating a substantial global retention problem. The retention rates vary significantly across regions, with Sub Saharan Africa, South Asia, and parts of Latin America experiencing the lowest rates (UNESCO, 2019). UNESCO's 2019 data on retention rates in Africa shows significant challenges in the region's education sector and the detailed statistics includes 18.8% of primary school-age children are out of school, 36.7% of lower secondary

school age children are out of school and 57.5% of upper secondary school age children are out of school.

Retention rates tend to decrease as students' progress through the education system. While primary school retention rates are concern, they often escalate at secondary level due to various factors such as increased academic pressure, puberty, and socioeconomic demands (World Bank, 2020).

WFP (2022) State of School Feeding Report shows 418 million children receive school meals globally. In low-income countries, school meals increase retention by 8% on average. UNESCO 2023 data indicates that school feeding reduces dropout rates by 1.5-3.5 percentage points. For every year a child stays in school due to feeding programs, lifetime earnings increase by 8-10%.

In Uganda, according to the MOES (2020), it was estimated that 240,000 pupils out of one million pupils who enrolled in primary one under the UPE drop out before reaching Primary four this number in terms of percentage is 24%. The study was carried out by the Ministry of Education and Sports and Education NGOs in 150 Uganda government funded primary school across the country (MoES, 2020).

MoES Guidelines on School Feeding and Nutrition Intervention Program 2013 mandates parent led feeding. The National Development Plan III 2020-2025 targets 80% of primary schools to have functional feeding programs by 2025. Currently, only 33% of UPE schools nationally provide meals daily according to UBOS 2022.

UBOS Statistics (2023) shows Uganda's primary retention rate at 53%. For every 100 pupils who join P.1, only 53 reach P.7. The primary dropout rate is 4.6% annually, with hunger cited by 27% of dropouts as a contributing factor in the UNHS 2019/20.

Northern Uganda & Lango Sub-Region Context IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis Feb 2024 classified 23% of households in Lango sub-region as facing Crisis IPC Phase 3 or worse. Alebtong is among the 8 Districts in Lango with chronic food deficits during May-August lean season. MoES School Census 2023: Lango sub-region primary completion rate = 45%, below national 53%. Pupil-classroom ratio.

WFP Uganda Country Brief Jan 2024 shows only 12% of primary schools in Lango sub-region receive WFP or government direct food support. The rest rely on parent contributions. In Districts without Karamoja-style support, 71% of parents report failure to consistently provide food at school per UWEZO (2021).

Alebtong District Education Department Annual Report (2023): P.1-P.7 retention rate = 48%. Of 12,430 pupils who enrolled in P.1 in 2017, only 566 sat for PLE in 2023. Highest dropout occurs between P.3-P.5. Term 2 registers 22% higher absenteeism than Term 1 and 3, coinciding with peak hunger season.

District Inspector of Schools Report Q4 2023: Out of 67 government-aided primary schools, 28 (41.8%) report having “active school feeding.” Only 31 schools (46.3%) provide meals 5 days a week. Most depend on parents bringing 15kg maize + 10kg beans per term per child.

Akura Sub -County has 8 government-aided primary schools: Agoro P/S, Alira P/S, Aloiongom P/S, Oteno P/S, Omele P/S, Ocabu P/S, Akwangkel P/S, and Bardago P/S. Total enrollment 2024: 4,812 pupils.

Retention indicators according to Sub-County Education Office Data 2023; P.1-P.7 retention rate = 41%, lowest in Alebtong District, P.1 2017 cohort: 731 pupils enrolled to P.7 in 2023 only 300 sat PLE this is equal to 41% retention. Average annual dropout rate of 6.3% vs District 4.6% and national 4.6%.

School feeding implementation in Akura Sub -County SMC Records 2023 indicates that 8 of 8 schools claim to run school feeding provided meals for >60% of Term 2 2023 school days, 3 schools stopped mid-term due to parents' failure to contribute food staff. Documented correlation in Uganda according to EPRC, (2021) study of 120 UPE schools found schools with daily feeding had 11.2% higher retention P.1-P.7 than schools without feeding program.

While national and regional data confirm school feeding helps retention, Akura-specific data is missing. Which of the 8 schools have functional feeding, how consistent, and how that correlates with their specific retention rates from 2021-2024.

The table below presents a five-year overview of pupil's retention rates in primary school by class, from 2013 to 2017. This data highlighted persistent challenges and trends in pupil's retention rate, providing valuable insights for policy makers and educators.

Table 1.1: Primary school retention by class

Class	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
P1	1883803	1932489	1842006	1,888,847	1,965,606
P2	1307745	1389233	1277974	1,352,893	1,365,311
P3	1312592	1362786	1283194	1349293	1,363,947
P4	1317315	1359448	1272522	1128035	1,355,908
P5	1138789	1178273	1101698	1156465	1,090,640
P6	920045	963083	901939	958298	971,231
P7	579431	625343	584984	622098	623,946
TOTAL	8459720	8772655	8264317	8655924	8,840,589

Source: Annual School Census, Ministry of Education and Sports, 2013-2017

The above Table reveals a concerning pattern of high dropout of approximately 42% over the five-year period implying 58% pupil's retention, emphasizing the need for sustained efforts to address the underlying causes and improve student retention. (UBOS, 2017).

The table below presents a seven-year overview of dropout rates in primary school enrollment by class, from 2018 to 2024. This data highlighted persistent challenges and trends in student retention.

Table 1.2: Primary school retention by class in Akura Sub County

CLASS	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021	2023	2024
P1	895	986	943	998	897	985	899
P2	869	843	865	854	820	865	865
P3	784	786	789	765	785	787	842
P4	756	769	708	745	712	645	719
P5	694	687	674	682	658	589	754
P6	628	590	598	523	605	572	663
P7	513	486	507	458	524	489	552
TOTAL	5139	5147	5084	5025	5001	4932	5294

Source: Education secretary Akura Sub County report 2024

The above table shows dropout in enrollment from P1-P7. In 2018 895 pupils were registered in P1 and in 2024 when registering in P7 they were only 552 indicating a drop of 62% implying 48% pupil's retention.

1.3 Problem Statement

Pupils' retention in primary schools is a key indicator of education system efficiency and a prerequisite for achieving Universal Primary Education under SDG 4 (United Nation, 2015). In Uganda, despite free UPE since 1997, primary school completion rates remain low at 53%

nationally (World Bank, 2016), with Northern Uganda registering even lower rates due to poverty, food insecurity, and long distances to school. School feeding programs have been adopted globally and by the Government of Uganda as a strategy to improve enrollment, attendance, and retention by addressing short-term hunger that affects concentration and school participation. Ministry of Education and Sports (2013) Guidelines on school feeding require parents to contribute food for meals. Government and partners support schools in Karamoja and other food-insecure regions with fortified meals (WFP, 2022).

Alebtong District, and specifically Akura Sub -County, most households are subsistence farmers facing seasonal food shortages. Several primary schools in the sub-County have implemented school feeding programs either through government support, World Food Programme initiatives, or parent contributions (WFP, 2020). However, head teachers continue to report low pupils' retention rates, irregular attendance, and low completion rates, especially in lower primary classes.

Alebtong District Education Office reports (2023) show Akura Sub -County has 8 government-aided primary schools with average P.1 to P.7 retention rate of 41%, below the district average of 48%. All of these schools reported running some form of school feeding program implementation with mainly parental contributions of maize and beans.

While existing literature highlights the general positive relationship between well-implemented school feeding programmes and improved pupils' retention in other parts of Uganda, such as Karamoja, there is little documented information on the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupils' retention in primary schools in Akura Sub -County (MoES, 2023). Consequently, this makes it difficult for policymakers and education stakeholders to design appropriate interventions and effectively scale up school feeding programmes to improve pupil retention in the region (UNESCO, 2023). This study therefore intended to establish the relationship between school feeding program implementation and pupils' retention rates in Akura Sub -County primary schools in Alebtong District.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.

1.5 Specific Objectives

The following particular goals served as the basis for this investigation.

- i. To assess the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub -County Alebtong District.
- ii. To determine pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub -County Alebtong District.
- iii. To establish the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub -County Alebtong District.

1.6 Research Questions

This study answered the following questions.

- i. What is the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub -County Alebtong District?
- ii. What is the rate of pupil's retention in primary schools in Akura Sub -County Alebtong District?
- iii. What is the relationship between school feeding programs Implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The government would benefit from the study's findings by better implementing the school feeding program policy in the educational sector.

This study would also urge the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) to start and take part in the development of the school feeding program implementation in their schools through community support plans in order to increase enrollment and decrease child dropout rates.

The results of the study should also help other partners and donor organizations implement best practices and guiding principles for school meals.

The researcher hoped that study findings and recommendation would also influence policy makers to target all schools in the geographical area as opposed to individual schools in order to avoid potential political issues and inter-school shifts in enrolment.

1.8 Scope of the Study

1.8.1 Geographical scope

The study was conducted in Akura Sub County Alebtong District which is in Lango sub region Northern Uganda in eight (8) government headed primary schools.

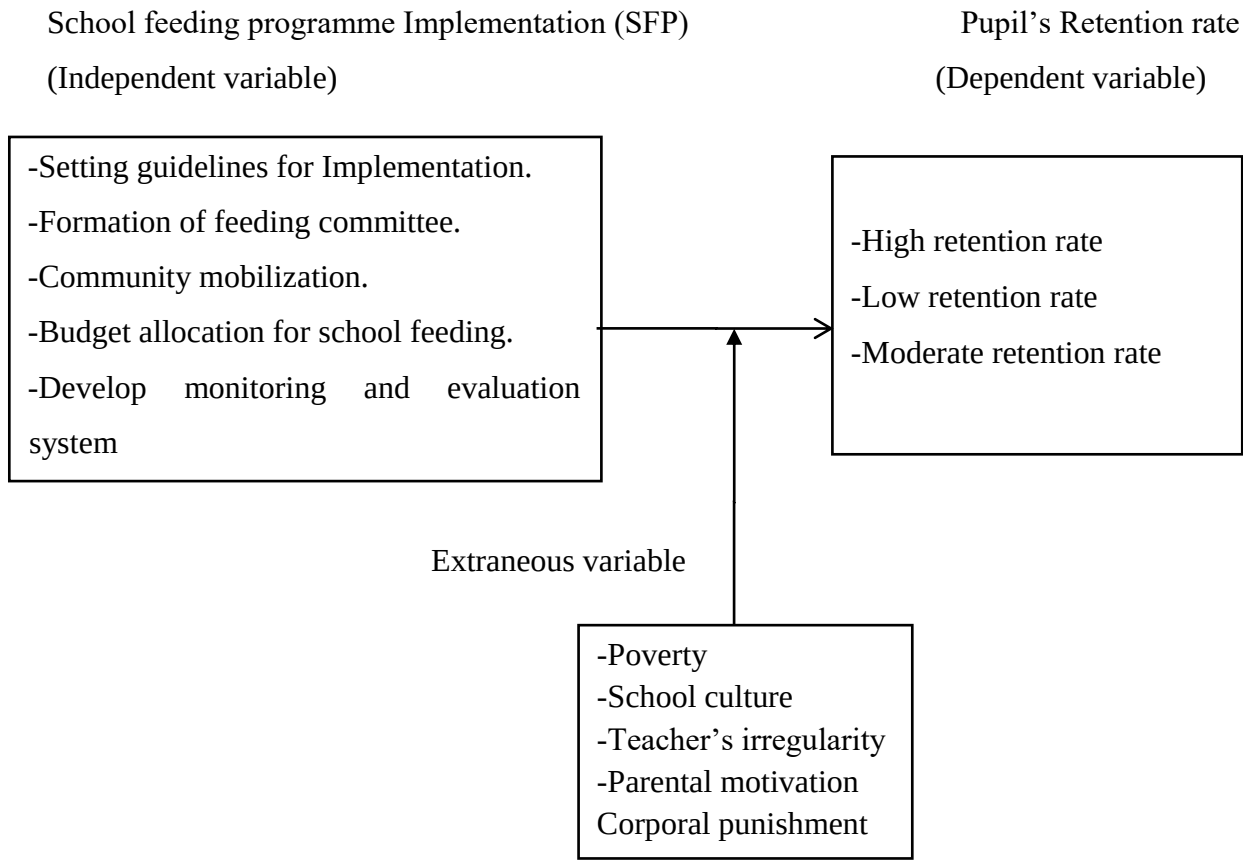
1.8.2 Content scope

The content scope of this study was to investigate the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District. Additionally, the study analyzed pupil's retention trends during the period of implementing school feeding program in targeted schools.

1.8.2 Time scope

The study period of 2020–2025 was chosen because it was marked by major socio-economic and educational challenges that affected school feeding programmes and pupils' retention in primary schools. The COVID-19 pandemic caused prolonged school closures, food insecurity, and disruption of feeding programmes, reducing attendance and retention. Poor harvests, drought, and rising food prices further weakened households' ability to support children's education. In addition, conflict-related vulnerabilities and economic instability in Northern Uganda negatively influenced school participation. Therefore, this period provided an appropriate context for examining the influence of school feeding programmes on pupils' retention in Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District.

1.9 Conceptual Framework



Source: Adapted from SFP Policy Document (1997) and modified by the researcher

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework above shows diagrammatical relationship between the independent variable (school feeding programme Implementation and the dependent variable pupil's retention). The independent variable SFP implementation was represented by setting guidelines for implementation, forming feeding committees, Budget allocation, Planning and preparation of food monitoring and evaluation and the dependent variable retention was represented by high retention rate, low retention rate, moderate retention rate. On the other hand, the vertical arrow originating from the moderating variable shows those factors which also influences the relationship between schools feeding and retention rate in primary schools. The working theory/assumption was that school feeding has a great influence on retention rate of learners in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This study reviews related literature thematically according to the study objectives: Level of school feeding program implementation in primary schools, pupil's retention in primary schools and relationship between school feeding program implementation and pupil's retention. Primary and secondary sources such as reports, articles, and newspapers were reviewed. Gaps and strengths in the theories, methodology, and findings in previous studies were explored.

2.1 Level of School Feeding Program Implementation in Primary Schools

Studies have shown that school feeding programmes have been implemented in various primary schools across Uganda. A study conducted by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES, 2020) through the National School Feeding Guidelines reported that school feeding programmes were implemented in 542 primary schools across 25 districts. Similarly, a study by the World Food Programme (WFP, 2019) found that school feeding programmes were implemented in 234 primary schools across 15 districts. However, these studies primarily documented the coverage and existence of school feeding programmes without comprehensively assessing the extent and quality of their implementation. In contrast, the present study employed standardized quantitative instruments to systematically assess the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District.

According to the study conducted by Muthoni&Muthaa (2021) in Kenya, found that the level of school feeding program implementation differed depending on whether it was supported by the government or external donors. The effectiveness was hindered by irregular food supply and inadequate kitchen infrastructure. The gap was that the study relied solely on

descriptive statistics and did not incorporate inferential data analysis to deepen understanding of the level of implementation of school feeding program whereas the current study employed inferential statistics in the study to incorporate inferential data analysis.

Alemayehu & Tesfaye (2022), in their study entitled ‘School Feeding Program Implementation and Student Outcomes in Ethiopia’ found that schools supported by the World Food Programme exhibited higher implementation rates and better student outcomes. However, in schools without WFP support, local ownership of the program was weak, with a high dependency on external aid, which raised concerns about sustainability. The study was restricted to urban areas and did not account for potential differences in implementation challenges between urban and rural schools.

Nakyagaba et al. (2023), in their research in northern Uganda reported that inadequate government funding and weak program monitoring significantly hindered the success of SFPs in northern Uganda. In schools that lacked NGO involvement, implementation was notably low, suggesting that external support remains essential in resource-poor regions. Theoretical Gap: The study did not utilize any conceptual frameworks to interpret the implementation process, making it difficult to generalize findings. This study used conceptual framework to generalize findings.

World Food Programme (2021), “State of School Feeding Worldwide”. According to the WFP, only about 32% of countries had structured and comprehensive school feeding programs in place. The report emphasized that effective school feeding initiatives are those that are well-integrated with national policies on health, education, and social protection. While the report offers a global perspective, it has limited data on rural District like Alebtong District where school feeding faces unique logistical and economic challenges. This study looked at the local area like Akura Sub County Alebtong District Uganda.

In order to holistically and sustainably address childhood malnutrition, the government of Uganda is now putting the school feeding and nutrition guidelines into practice (Government of Uganda, 2023). However, implementation of school feeding program in Uganda has seen significant development and progress, largely driven by initiatives from both the government and international organizations like the World Food programme (WFP, 2022). These programs aim to improve the nutritional status of children, enhance educational outcomes, and support local agriculture.

As of recent MoES report (2024), Uganda school feeding program are integrated into the national education policy framework, emphasizing the importance of sustainability and local sourcing. The programs prioritize cost effectiveness, strong institutional arrangements, and community involvement to ensure long term success. This approach aligns with the global standards set by the WFP, which emphasize stable funding, local production and strong partnerships among stakeholders (WFP, 2022).

The state of school feeding report worldwide (2022) highlights that Uganda, along with other countries, benefit from WFP's operational and technical support, which helps to address challenges such as food insecurity and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. These not only provide meals but also promote increased school enrollment and attendance, contributing to overall educational development (WFP, 2022). Overall, Uganda's school feeding programs are a vital part of the national strategy to improve child health and education, with ongoing efforts to enhance their effectiveness and reach (WFP & INEE, 2022). The study had a gap in methodology where it was conducted using qualitative method and this study used mixed methods of data collection.

According to a survey by Oburuto (2014) in the Nwoya District, 41.59% of elementary schools have school food programs in place. Many respondents (30.8%) agreed with the ordinances and bye-laws that support the execution of the school food program, and 26.9%

strongly agreed. This indicates that 30.8% of the school feeding program was implemented in the Nwoya District.

This study was intended to investigate whether packed lunch school feeding programme has a bearing on the management of pupils' participation in school activities in primary schools in Nwoya District against the background of declining level of pupils' participation in school activities. The study looks at the kinds of food, the state of school lunches, the degree of student participation management, and the relationships that have been created between the important variables. According to the study, there is no discernible correlation between controlling students' involvement in school activities and school food. The research gap in this study was limited focus on specific sub counties like Akura. This study was conducted in Akura Sub County.

Well-balanced menu is key to addressing nutritional deficiencies in children. According to a WFP (2021) report, about 50% of school feeding programmes includes at least three food groups in their meals to provide a balanced diet (WFP, 2021). Menu planning involves designing nutritious, balanced meals for students. In Uganda, locally available foods like posho and beans are common in school feeding. Alebtong District's feeding programme emphasizes the inclusion of locally grown foods such as millet and leafy greens, contributing to diversified diets that cater for children's dietary needs while supporting local agriculture (Alebtong DEO.2020).

Procurement and SFPS involves sourcing food from local suppliers to reduce costs and support local agriculture. Studies have shown that about 47% of feeding program in schools globally procures some of their food locally (GCNF, 2022). Procuring food locally helps boost local farmers' incomes and strengthens community ties with the programme. Contracts with suppliers are established to ensure consistency and quality. By supporting local

agriculture, school feeding programmes create a multiplier effect, benefiting both students and the wider community economically.

Adequacy of infrastructure, such as kitchens and storage facilities, is essential for effective implementation. In low-income countries, only about 40% of schools have proper kitchen facilities for meal preparation (WFP, 2019). Infrastructure improvements like energy-efficient stoves, water supply systems, and hygienic storage areas help in delivering safe and nutritious meals. Safe food preparation environments also minimize health risks. Investment in infrastructure not only enhances the effectiveness of feeding programmes but also creates a conducive environment for students to learn and grow. The success of school feeding programmes also depends on trained staff. A report in 2020 indicated that schools with well-trained cooks and food handlers had 30% fewer incidents of foodborne illness compared to those without training (FAO, 2020). Staff are trained in hygiene, portion control, and nutritional aspects of meal preparation. This training is crucial to maintain high standards of food safety and quality. Proper training also includes emergency response measures to handle incidents such as contamination, ensuring students' health and safety during meal times.

Community involvement has been shown to enhance the sustainability of feeding program. A study found that 60% of effective program included contributions from parents and local organizations (WFP, 2021). Community members may volunteer, contribute ingredients, or assist with logistics, creating a sense of ownership. This involvement reduces costs and promotes the programme's acceptance. By involving the community, school feeding becomes a shared responsibility, which increases its resilience and sustainability over time (WFP, 2021). Similarly, a study by (Redempta and Mugambi, (2019) in Kenya reveal that 70% of funding for the school feeding programme come from the community and this has rendered the initiative less effective as most of the parents in the targeted schools have limited resources.

Ensuring food reaches schools safely and is stored correctly to avoid spoilage is crucial for the success of the programme. Logistics planning includes determining the best routes and schedules for delivering food items. Vehicles used for transportation need to be well-maintained and adapted to carry perishable goods safely. Once food arrives at schools, proper storage is essential to protect it from pests, contamination, and spoilage. Schools must have clean, well-ventilated storage facilities to keep dry goods, while perishable items may require cold storage if feasible. Effective management of transportation and storage reduces waste and ensures meal quality. (Gelli, Masset & Folson (2019)). A study by MoES (2019) found that 60% of the schools in Uganda lack proper storage facilities for food and only 40% of the schools have proper storage facilities for food. This study was conducted in the whole country whereas this study was carried out in only Akura Sub County in Alebtong District.

FAO (2020) report, highlight that the timing of meal preparation is critical to serve hot, fresh meals that are palatable to children. The food must be portioned fairly and served in a manner that respects cultural and personal preferences, reducing wastage. Distribution procedures need to be organized to minimize classroom disruptions and avoid long wait times. Teachers and staff may assist with ensuring discipline and smooth distribution, allowing all students to eat without issues. Proper meal preparation and distribution enhance the programme's efficiency and acceptability among students. A study found that teacher participation in food distribution varied across schools, with some schools reporting high levels of teacher involvement and others reporting little or no involvement (MoES, 2018). This study was conducted using qualitative method whereas the current study data was collected using mixed methods

Regular monitoring of the feeding programme helps track progress and identify areas for improvement. Data such as school attendance, enrolment rates, and students' health metrics are collected to evaluate impact. Observations during meal times help assess the quality of

food and identify any operational challenges. In Alebtong, data collection at the school level has shown a positive impact, with a 30% increase in school attendance after implementing the feeding programme (Alebtong District Education Office, 2023). Regular evaluations help in making necessary adjustments to enhance the programme's efficiency. UNHCR (2021).

Challenges such as irregular funding, food shortages, or lack of community support are common and need proactive management. Contingency plans are developed to handle supply disruptions, such as identifying alternative food sources or temporary funding. Regular communication with stakeholders ensures that any issues are identified early and addressed promptly. Involving the community more deeply during difficult times can help bridge gaps, such as encouraging local contributions of food or labor. Adaptability is key, and modifications may be necessary grounded on the evolving students' needs and the community. Addressing challenges head-on ensures continuity and effectiveness (FAO, 2020). Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) played a key role in mobilizing community support for school feeding programs. They helped to raise funds, provide labor, and distribute food.

Impact assessment involves systematic studies to evaluate the effects of the feeding programme on student outcomes. Surveys, interviews, and health screenings are conducted to understand changes in attendance, enrolment, academic performance, and student health. Comparing data before and after the program's implementation provides insight into its effectiveness. Impact assessment also identifies indirect benefits, such as improved concentration, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced community engagement. Results are shared with stakeholders to demonstrate success, justify continued funding, and identify areas for expansion or improvement. This level provides evidence for scaling the programme or implementing it in other regions. Espejo, Burbano and Galliano (2019)

2.2 Rate of Pupil's Retention in Primary Schools

Universally, a lot of investment in SFP has been made and this was elaborated by the US\$75 billion used yearly for school feeding by the US education department to less than 368 million children daily (WFP, 2013). In low-income countries, only 18% of school children receive free meals, and 83% of the resources are from donor funds (WFP, 2013). It is estimated that 73 million school-age children living in extreme poverty in 60 countries are not being reached by SFPs and are also likely not receiving other essential school based health intervention hence low retention in school (WFP, 2020b).

Around 1.4 billion children worldwide attend school, with around 75% living in developing nations (UNICEF & World Bank, 2021). School children have a greater requirement for nutrients due to their rapid physical development, health demands, and cognitive demands (Mak et al., 2023). Children who are underfed are greatly predisposed to poor health, reduced cognitive development, poor academic performance, and dropout (WFP, 2014

Muralidharan & Prakash (2023), in a study titled Education Attendance and Economic Constraints conducted in India, showed that children in larger families are more likely to drop out. Retention was 18% lower in families with more than three school-age children. While the findings are significant, they are from India and require contextual validation in Uganda especially Akura Sub County Alebtong District. The study was conducted in India whereas this study was carried out in Akura Uganda.

Poor educational quality and economic constraints in the home can both be blamed for low attendance rates (Muralidharan & Prakash, 2023). Due to poverty and food insecurity, only 55% of boys and 35% of girls of the students entering standard one made it to standard eight, according to UNICEF (2022). This study was limited to specific socio economic or age

groups, excluding key stakeholders while my study included the key stakeholders in primary schools like head teacher, PTA and SMC executives.

The COVID-19 pandemic's effects and other socioeconomic reasons made Uganda's low student retention rate even more concerning. According to reports, up to 30% of the 15 million students who were sent home during lockdown may have chosen not to return to class. Across all levels, this possible dropout rate equates to almost 4.5 million pupils. Poverty, teenage pregnancies, early marriages, and child labor are factors that contribute to this and have been made worse by the economic effects of the epidemic. (Independent Uganda July, 2021). This was for the whole country whereas this study looked at retention rate in Akura Sub County.

According to UNEB figures, in the just two decades, about 12.2 million pupils started primary one but only 6.95 million (57.2%) completed their primary schooling cycles. Over 5.2 million (42.8%) dropped out. This means that at least 43 out of 100 pupils, who started school, dropped out before completing P.7 implying 57% retention rate (UNEB Report, 2023). The gap in this report was limited analysis of underlying causes. While the report provides dropout rates, further analysis of underlying causes and contributing factors could inform targeted interventions.

Nyarko (2023), in a study conducted in Ghana titled Parental Involvement and School Retention, argued that retention improves when parents are actively involved in their children's education. There was a 25% improvement in completion rates where parents were engaged. The gap in this study was lack of integration of cultural and economic barriers to parental involvement in rural Ugandan settings and contributing factors could inform targeted interventions. The current study looked at parental contribution to retention in primary schools.

A study carried out by Nanyoga Margret (2009) to find out the factors responsible for school dropout in selected primary schools of Makindye Division Kampala District. The population studied was 80 pupils in ten selected primary schools. Findings were made where the study reveals that the existence of various factors leading to school dropout are; cultural practices which disregard girl child education, fear of sexual harassment by teachers, poverty and home cores among others. All the teachers therefore concurred that they do experience school dropout in their schools with a 50% dropout rate implying 50% retention. This study lacked longitudinal analysis that could have provide insights into the long term effects of dropout and the effectiveness of interventions analysis. However, this study investigated potential solutions and intervention to mitigate school dropout in primary schools in order to improve retention in primary school.

Factors such as violence, socioeconomic difficulties, and war all have an impact on the high learner's dropout rate in Northern Uganda. In primary schools, attendance reduced by almost 20% between 2013 and 2018, according to research by Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC, 2019). According to Tufts-Feinstein International Center (2019), attendance declined for boys and girls beyond the ages of thirteen and eight, respectively. The study also found that retention rate among girls is low. This study was conducted using a population of 4500 whereas the current study was conducted using a population of 1141

According to data from Senior Education Officer Adjumani District, just 39% of pupils who entered primary one finished their Primary Leaving Examinations, implying a 61% dropout rate (DEO Adjumani, 2018). Teenage pregnancies, early marriages, malnutrition, and brutality against youngsters were blamed for the high dropout rate. Since 2018, UNICEF and other groups have taken steps to leverage this trend by making schools safer and raising community knowledge of children's rights (UNICEF, 2020). The report was for Adjumani

District which does not include Akura Sub County. This study was carried in Akura Sub County.

The Ministry of Education and Sports Uganda (2022), through the Annual Education Sector Performance Report, acknowledged that despite Universal Primary Education (UPE), only 40% of pupils who begin in P1 complete P7 due to socio-economic barriers. The report was national in scope and lacks analysis of District-level implementation barriers. However, this study was conducted in Alebtong District to curb the gap of lacking District analysis.

Akyeampong (2017), in a DFID-funded report titled Teacher Motivation and Quality Education in Africa conducted in Ghana and Nigeria, demonstrated that teacher absenteeism and limited instructional materials negatively impact retention. Schools with adequate teaching staff had 20% higher retention rates. The findings were based on Teacher Motivation in West African contexts and need not to be validated in rural Ugandan schools a case of pupil motivation.

Poor facilities, high teacher pupil ratio, and shortage of teaching staff are some of the major issues that Northern Uganda, which includes Districts like Alebtong, faces. As an illustration, the teacher to pupil ratio in Oyam District is 1:97, which has a negative influence on the standard of instruction and lower retention rate to approximately 20.1% (Monitor, 2023). This was for Oyam District which was not a representation of Akura Sub County Alebtong District.

Early marriages and teenage pregnancies significantly impact girls' education across Uganda. Cultural norms often lead to girls being married off at a young age, with over 23% of girls in Uganda marrying before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2021). This cultural practice disrupts girls' education, as they are expected to take on household responsibilities. In Alebtong, the rate of school dropouts among pregnant teenagers is alarming, often resulting in isolation and

stigma. Programs that focus on reproductive health education and empowering girls are essential to mitigate this trend and encourage continued education (UNICEF, 2021).

Many children in Alebtong District must travel significant distances to reach their primary schools, which contributes to high dropout rates. In some cases, children walk over 5 kilometers each way, making daily attendance a daunting task. A survey indicated that about 45% of learners in the District cite long distances as a barrier to consistent attendance (District Education Office, Alebtong, 2022). The physical toll of such journeys can lead to fatigue and illness, further discouraging school attendance. Additionally, the lack of safe transportation options exacerbates this issue, particularly for girls who may face safety concerns on their way to and from school.

The condition of school facilities significantly affects student retention rates. Many schools are suffering from inadequate infrastructure, including insufficient classrooms, lack of sanitation facilities, and overcrowded environments. The progress on Drinking water, sanitation and Hygiene in Schools' reports indicate that nearly 40% of schools in the District lack basic sanitation, which disproportionately affects girls during menstruation (WFP, 2022). Poor learning environments lead to decreased motivation among students and can create health hazards. The average primary school dropout rate in Uganda stands at 45% with 8% of learners dropping out every year as a result of inadequate infrastructures and poor sanitation (MoES, 2019).

A survey conducted by Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda, (2022) indicate that a critical issue affecting primary education in Alebtong is the shortage of qualified teachers and their frequent absenteeism (MoES, 2022). The teacher-to-student ratio in rural areas can be as high as 1:70, making it challenging for teachers to provide individual attention. This shortage leads to poor learning outcomes and disengagement among students (MoES, 2022). Frequent teacher absenteeism disrupts the continuity of learning, causing frustration and

discouragement. A study by the World Bank (2018) estimate that teacher absenteeism contribute to a 10-15% retention rate in primary schools in Uganda. The gap in this survey is limited understanding of the intersectionality of factors, while existing research has identified various factors contributing to retention, there is need for more analysis of how these factors intersect and impact retention.

The absence of adequate learning materials, such as textbooks and writing supplies, significantly impacts students' ability to succeed in school. In Alebtong, nearly 35% of primary schools' report shortage of essential learning resources (District Education Office, Alebtong, 2022). Without proper materials, students find it challenging to keep up with their studies, leading to disengagement and eventual dropout. The government's efforts to supply learning materials often fall short, particularly in remote areas. Community involvement in resource mobilization can help bridge this gap and promote better learning outcomes.

Health problems, including common illnesses and malnutrition, severely affect children's ability to attend school consistently. In Uganda, nearly 38% of children under five are stunted due to malnutrition, which impacts their cognitive development and academic performance (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2022)). In Alebtong, the prevalence of diseases like malaria further exacerbates absenteeism, leading to low retention rates. Families facing health challenges may prioritize immediate medical needs over education. Implementing school health programs that provide nutrition and health services can help mitigate these effects and improve student retention.

Students often drop out of primary school due to lack of motivation and interest in academic activities. In Alebtong, many children feel disconnected from the curriculum, which they perceive as irrelevant to their needs. Surveys indicate that about 30% of learners' report lack of engagement in school activities Uganda Ministry of Health. (2021). The absence of co-curricular activities and practical learning opportunities further contributes to boredom and

disengagement. Introducing more relevant and engaging curricula, along with opportunities for hands-on learning, can enhance student motivation and improve retention rates.

A study by Atim, (2019) found that retention among boys and girls in Uganda between 2013 and 2018 was approximately 20% in northern Uganda. Conflict and internal displacement are significant factors contributing to school dropout rates in some regions of Uganda, including Alebtong. Past conflicts have disrupted education for many children, leading to decreased retention rates. According to UNHCR (2021), children from displaced families often prioritize survival over education, which further hampers their ability to continue schooling. The trauma associated with displacement also affects students' ability to learn and thrive in a school environment. However, lack of exploration of intersectional factors such as the interplay between poverty, disability, school feeding program and cultural factors and how they contribute to retention among boys and girls still remained a gap in this study. However, this study was conducted to find the relationship between school feeding program and retention rates.

Summary of the literature reviewed for theme two

The reviewed literature indicates that despite significant global investment in school feeding programmes (SFPs), coverage remains insufficient in many low-income countries, limiting their impact on pupils' retention. Research consistently identifies poverty, food insecurity, poor parental involvement, inadequate school infrastructure, teacher shortages, child labour, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, poor sanitation, health challenges, and weak learner motivation as key factors affecting retention. In Uganda, primary school dropout rates remain high despite Universal Primary Education (UPE), with retention further affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and other socio-economic challenges. However, most previous studies were conducted outside Alebtong District or examined only selected factors, leaving limited

empirical evidence on how school feeding programme implementation influences pupils' retention in Akura Sub -County. This gap provides the basis for the current study."

2.3 The Relationship between School Feeding Programs Implementation and Pupil's Retention

In Uganda, school feeding programs have a significant positive impact on the retention of pupils. These programs help to alleviate short-term hunger, which in turn enhances student's concentration and learning capabilities, leading to better academic performance and reduced absenteeism. For instance, schools in Buikwe District that participated in school feeding programs have reported improvements in both enrollment and retention rates, with more pupils staying in school and attending classes more regularly (World Vision International, 2024).

According to World Food Program report (2023), the impact of the school feeding program (SFP) on retention cannot be overemphasized. Kazianga et al. (2019) identified a positive relationship between the SFP and retention, academic performance, and cognitive development. Similarly, Akanbi (2021) identified a significant increase in the attendance and enrollment rates in schools after the introduction of the SFP in Nigeria. The study was conducted in Nigeria while this study was carried out in Uganda, specifically in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.

A research conducted by Alderman et al. (2021) assess the impacts of SFP in Northern Uganda, found a significant increase in school retention in primary schools as a result of the SFP in the first five years of implementation. Alderman et al. (2021) however discovered that the impact of the SFP varies by location depending on the type of SFP implemented. The authors assessed how implementation of the on-site SFP and the take-home ration differently impacts attendance rates among girls in Northern Uganda. The authors identified

that in schools where there is a combination of the on-site school feeding program and the take-home ration, retention rate among girls was increased by 30% after the first year. However, in schools that have the on-site school feeding program, the increment rate recorded after the first year reverted to that recorded before the implementation of the SFP. The study was conducted using qualitative method and this study used mixed approaches to collect data.

A study conducted by Esther Mongina Nyakundi (2017) to investigate the influence of school feeding programs on pupil's retention in Dagoretti south sub- County, Nairobi County Kenya reveals that there exists a high and positive relationship between school feeding programs and pupil's retention in public primary schools. The study used census where the entire population participated in the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Lack of quantitative insights was the gap in this study, while the study used a structured questionnaire and descriptive statistics to analyze data, it might benefit from incorporating quantitative methods to gain deeper insights into the experiences and perception of pupils, teachers, and parents regarding the school feeding program.

To meet the metabolic needs of body growth and brain development, children need a steady supply of food (Akanbi, 2021). Prioritizing the school meal program is essential to minimizing the short-term hunger, boosting the learning environment, and promoting learners' cognitive performance (Lawson, 2022). The school feeding program would provide students the chance to attend class more frequently, which would boost their grades. A school feeding program may have an impact on students' enrolment and retention. According to a study done in Malawi. The improvement in attendance reached 36%, while retention improved by 5% (WFP, 2022). Geographically the study was limited to Malawi which may

not be necessarily geographically applicable to Uganda and Akura Sub County in particular where this study was conducted.

The availability of school meals, according to Adelman, Gilligan, et al. (2023), can boost student retention if the program influences parents' decisions regarding their children's education for some kids who otherwise wouldn't have gone to school. In order for these households to retain their children in school, they must be persuaded that the program's net advantages outweigh the difference between the direct and opportunity costs of attending school and the anticipated value of doing so. The study was carried out in 2023 which is different from this study that was conducted from a time period of 2015 to 2025.

School feeding programs (SFPs) significantly enhance the nutritional status of students, which is vital for their overall health and cognitive development. In Uganda, approximately 38% of children under five years suffer from stunted growth due to malnutrition (World Bank, 2022). When children receive regular, nutritious meals at school, they are less likely to experience hunger-related distractions, allowing them to concentrate better on their studies. Studies show that schools with feeding programs experience a 20% reduction in absenteeism, which directly correlates with lower dropout rates. A well-nourished child is more likely to attend school consistently and engage actively in classroom activities.

In Uganda, schools that implement SFPs have reported attendance increases of 30% (WFP, 2021). When children know they will receive at least one nutritious meal each day, they are more motivated to attend school regularly. This is particularly true for families facing economic hardships, as school meals alleviate some financial burdens associated with feeding their children. As attendance improves, the likelihood of dropping out decreases, creating a positive cycle where consistent attendance fosters better learning outcomes. The scholar's study included schools in the entire Country whereas this study was conducted only in schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.

Research indicates that children who participate in school feeding programs often exhibit improved academic performance compared to their peers who do not receive such support. A study by the Ministry of Education in Uganda (2022) found that pupils in schools with feeding programs scored 15% higher on standardized tests than those without. Regular access to nutritious meals positively impacts cognitive functions, memory, and attention, which are critical for learning. Enhanced academic performance can boost children's confidence and motivation, further reducing the likelihood of dropout. As pupils perform better academically, they become more engaged in their education, leading to high retention rates. Thus, SFPs contribute not only to physical nourishment but also to intellectual growth (MoES, 2022).

School feeding programs can foster a sense of community partnership and belonging among pupils, which is essential for their emotional and social development. According to a study in Alebtong District, 70% of pupils reported feeling more connected to their peers because of shared meal times (District Education Office, Alebtong, 2022). When children gather for meals, it promotes social interactions and friendships, creating a supportive school environment. A positive school climate encourages children to stay in school, as they feel connected and valued. Additionally, when parents see their children thriving socially, they are more likely to keep them enrolled in school. Consequently, the social benefits of SFPs contribute to reducing dropout rates. The study focus on student emotional, social development and dropout whereas the current study was focus on feeding program implementation and pupil's retention.

School feeding programs specifically targeted vulnerable populations, including children from low-income families and those facing food insecurity. In Alebtong District, about 40% of households' experience food insecurity, making SFPs crucial for pupil's retention (UBOS, 2022). By providing meals, these programs help mitigate the challenges faced by disadvantaged learners, who are at a higher risk of dropping out. By addressing the basic

needs of these children, SFPs promote equity in education and help to level the playing field. As a result, the likelihood of dropout among vulnerable population's decreases, highlighting the importance of targeted support through feeding programs.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), malnutrition contributes to 45% of child mortality in Uganda. Regular meals improve children's overall health, reducing the incidence of illness and absenteeism (WHO, 2021). When children are healthier, they are more likely to attend school consistently and engage in their studies (WHO, 2021). By addressing health challenges through proper nutrition, school feeding programs contribute to better attendance and improve retention rates. This study was conducted in 2021 whereas this study was carried in 2025 to ascertain the relationship between school feeding program implementation and pupil's retention rate.

A survey conducted in Alebtong found that 65% of parents reported increased involvement in school activities due to their children's participation in feeding programs (DEO, Alebtong, 2022). When parents see that their children are receiving nutritious meals at school, they become more involved in school activities and more supportive of their children's education. This increased engagement can lead to higher attendance and retention and a greater emphasis on the importance of education within families. This was conducted in 2022 whereas this was conducted in 2025 to ascertain the relationship between school feeding program implementation and retention rate.

The provision of meals through school feeding programs acts as an incentive for families to retain their children in school. In Uganda, it is estimated that schools with feeding programs have retention rates that are 25% higher than those without (UNICEF, 2021). In regions where food insecurity is prevalent, the promise of daily meals can be a significant motivating factor for parents to prioritize education. As more children attend and stay in school, the overall educational landscape improves, contributing to community development. By offering

meals, schools can attract more students, leading to increased retention rates. However, the study was conducted in the whole of Uganda whereas this study was conducted in Akura Sub County Alebtong District in particular.

Successful implementation of school feeding programs often involves active community participation and support. In Alebtong, over 70% of community members have expressed support for local feeding initiatives, viewing them as essential for improving children's education (Uganda Ministry of Health., 2021). When communities are engaged in feeding initiatives, they become more invested in their schools and students' education. This involvement can lead to increased resources for schools, better facilities, and more effective programs. As community members work together to support education, retention rates tend to increase. Community support thus plays a vital role in the sustainability of school feeding initiatives. The study was conducted in the whole District whereas this study was carried out in Akura Sub County in particular.

In Uganda, national policies have increasingly recognized the importance of nutrition in education, leading to a 50% increase in funding for SFPs over the past five years (MoES, 2022). When governments prioritize SFPs, they provide the necessary funding and resources to implement effective programs in schools. This institutional support ensures that more children benefit from school feeding, ultimately leading to increased retention rates. As policies align with educational goals, the impact of SFPs becomes more pronounced in increasing retention rates. Strong policy frameworks are essential for the success of feeding programs in schools.

Children who receive regular nutritious meals through school feeding programs are better able to focus and absorb information. Research has shown that malnutrition negatively impacts cognitive development, leading to deficits in memory and attention span. A study conducted in Uganda found that children participating in feeding programs improved their

retention of classroom materials by 30% compared to those who did not receive meals (UNESCO, 2022). This cognitive boost translates into improved academic performance and reduces the likelihood of students feeling overwhelmed, which can lead to increased retention. Therefore, the relationship between SFPs and cognitive development is essential for understanding how to increase retention rates. This study had a methodological gap where a single method was used to collect data while the current study employed mixed methods.

Finally, school feeding programs can contribute to the sustainability of educational initiatives by creating a framework for continued investment in education. When schools demonstrate improved attendance and lower retention rates, they become more attractive to donors and government programs. Evidence shows that schools with effective SFPs are 30% more likely to receive additional funding for educational resources (UNICEF, 2021). This additional funding can be used to enhance school facilities, hire more qualified teachers, and implement co-curricular activities that engage students. Consequently, the success of SFPs not only addresses immediate food security needs but also paves the way for long-term educational improvements and increase retention rates.

2.4. Summary of Literature Review

The literature shows that while school feeding programs are widely implemented across Uganda and East Africa, most studies lack quantitative and inferential analysis, relying on descriptive or qualitative findings and does not use statistical methods to measure variables. Many are geographically restricted to specific Districts or urban areas, reducing generalizability to rural contexts like Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District. Research often omits conceptual frameworks and fails to examine institutional capacity or intersectional factors such as poverty, culture, and disability that affect implementation and retention. National reports document low retention rates but offer limited District-level analysis and causal insight.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter, comprised of approaches and methods of data collection, it covered the research orientation, research design, and population of the study, sample size determination, sampling procedures, data collection methods, instruments, quality control, administration procedure, ethical issues, data analysis and limitations/delimitations of the study.

3.1 Research Orientation

This study employed quantitative and qualitative research approaches in data collection and handling to provide comprehensive understanding (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The Quantitative research approach refers to objective measurement and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through surveys, questionnaires, observations, or existing statistical records (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This approach is grounded in the positivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is objective and can be measured and quantified. It involves testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative research approach was used to measure pupil's retention rate by collecting numerical data related to pupil enrollment, attendance, and progression over a specific period. It used structured tools such as surveys, school records, and enrollment registers to collect data, which was then analyzed statistically to determine trends and relationships (Creswell, 2023). The study also employed the qualitative research approach because it enabled the researcher to collect data on respondents' feelings, opinions, attitudes, perceptions and experiences as expressed in words (Patton, M.Q. 2015).

3.2 Research Design

To provide comprehensive information regarding school feeding program implementation and pupil's retention, a cross-sectional survey research design based on both quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed (Fishers, 2004). When evaluating the current status of variables like pupil's retention rates following the implementation of the School Feeding Program (SFP), a cross-sectional survey design is especially helpful because it allows for the capture of a snapshot of a population at a particular moment in time. (Thomas, 2023).

3.3 Population of the Study

The study population was 1141 consisting of 8 head teachers, 300 teachers, 800 pupils, 15 PTA executives, and 18 SMC executives in Akura Sub County Alebtong District (Alebtong DIS report, 2024). The choice of the population was based on the following factors; the head teacher as the principal administrative figure, oversees various aspects of school management, including programs implementation, budgeting, and policy enforcement (Bush & Glover, 2023). This administrative perspective was crucial for understanding how effectively the feeding program was being executed and its potential influence on pupil's retention.

Teachers may see patterns in pupil's attendance that correlate with the feeding program. They can provide quantitative data on whether the availability of meals influences pupil's attendance and retention.

Parents involved in the PTA executive offered feedback on how the feeding program affects their children's attendance and overall school experience. They have insights into the program's impact on pupil's health, well-being, and motivation to attend school.

The SMC is involved in the development and enforcement of school policies, including those related to feeding programs (Gichuru & Kibet, 2022). Their perspective shed light on how effectively these policies are being implemented and any issues affecting the program's success pupils are the consumers of the food at school (Sweeney & Martin, 2023). They articulated suggestions about the feeding program, which was crucial for understanding its implementation status and impact on retention rates.

3.4 Sample Size

Out of the 1141 target population, a sample of 467 respondents in the 8 schools was selected for the study based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table of sample size determination. Details of the sample size allocation to the various categories of respondents are shown in the sampling table below.

Table 1.1: Sampling table

Category	Target Population	Sample size	Percentage	Sampling Technique
Head teachers	8	8	1.71%	Purposive sampling
Teachers	300	169	36.19%	Simple Random
Pupils	800	260	55.57%	Simple Random
PTA Executives	15	14	3.00%	Simple Random Sampling
SMC Executive	18	16	3.45%	Simple Random Sampling
Total	1141	467	100%	

Source: Author, 2025.

3.5 Sampling Procedures

The study employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Random sampling was used to select respondents from the categories of head teachers, teachers, pupils, PTA and SMC Executives because this method gives every person in the target population an equal chance of being selected to avoid bias (Neuman, 2014). The purposive sampling techniques were used to select respondent from the category of Head teachers basing on the fact that they have the key information for the study (Chawla & Sondhi, 2018).

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The data for this study was obtained through questionnaire surveys and interviews. The selection of these methods was based on the nature of data collected, the time available as well as the study objectives (Cresswell, 2018). The questionnaire surveys used a set of questions with open-ended and closed-ended questions where participants were asked to respond based on their knowledge or experience (Egnyte, 2021). The study was mainly concerned with pupil's retention rates, attendance rates, meals served, and budget data towards the school feeding programme implementation. Such information was best obtained through the use of questionnaire surveys, interviews and statistical analysis for example, mean, standard deviation, percentage, t-test and regressions (WFP, 2021).

3.7 Data Collection Tools

In this study, questionnaire based on the 5-point Likert scale was used to collect quantitative data from respondents. The researcher chooses this data collection tool because questionnaires can facilitate the collection of data from literate participants which were suitable for respondents chosen for this study as they were all literate. This consisted of section A, Band C with 1-4 closed ended questions in section A and 5-12 closed ended questions in section B and C based on the Likert scale with 1-5 points of ordered options from which the respondent picks the best option that suits their views. The questions seek for the extent to which the respondent agrees or is satisfied with a particular statement (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). The researcher also developed and used an interview guide to collect qualitative data from the head teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) executives of selected primary schools in Akura Sub County, Alebtong District. The interview guide was used to obtain participants' views, experiences, and perceptions regarding the implementation of the school feeding programme

and its influence on pupils' retention. Information obtained through the interviews helped explain pupils' retention in terms of high, moderate, and low retention rates.

3.8 Data Quality Control

Research instruments validity and reliability are two vital components that a research instrument must meet if it is to be acceptable. (Oakland, 2003).

3.8.1 Validity of instruments

To determine validity, two questionnaire tools were given to two experts to evaluate the relevance of each item in the instruments to the objectives of the study and rating them on the scale of Relevant (2) and Not Relevant (1). Content Validity Index (C.V.I) was computed from number of items rated relevant by both judges divided by the total number of items in the Questionnaire (Kothari, 2004). The researcher then used the formula below to get the validity. The CVI value was 0.70 this shows that the instrument was valid.

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{Total number of items rated relevant by both judges}}{\text{Total number of items in the questionnaire}}$$

3.8.2 Reliability of instrument

A pilot study was carried out in two schools which were not part of the study and data collected was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Statistical Method in SPSS. The result obtained was 0.70 this shows that the instrument was reliable.

3.9 Control of Extraneous Variables

The researcher employed the following strategies to ensure control of extraneous variables. Randomly assigned/selected participants to reduce bias and ensures that extraneous variables are evenly distributed across groups (McLeod, 2023). Paired participants to increase internal validity by controlling for extraneous variables and reducing validity between groups for

example paired participant on relevant characteristics increases internal validity in a study (Cherry, 2013).

Standardize the Environment. The researcher standardized the research environment to minimize extraneous variables. For example, the researcher conducted interviews in a quiet, private room to minimize distractions and ensure consistency (Cherry, 2023).

Statistical Control. Use of statistical methods was helpful to control extraneous variables in this study. Example the use of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to control extraneous variables (Field, 2022). Clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure a homogeneous sample. The researcher conducted the study at the same time of day or during similar conditions to reduce external influences.

3.10 Data Analysis

The data collected were entered, cleaned, coded and analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS Version 25.0). Descriptive statistics inform of means; frequencies were used to summarize data.

To determine Level of school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) test is a statistical technique used to compare means of three or more groups (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). In the context of the level of school feeding program implementation ANOVA was used to analyze data collected. And by comparing the means, the test helps to determine level of implementation (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020).

To determine pupil's retention rate in primary schools

The ANOVA was used to analyze data collected. And by comparing the means, the test helps to determine pupil's retention rates and identify significant differences (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020).

To establish the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) is a statistical technique used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous scores of variables (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). In this context, PPMC was used to analyze data collected on school feeding program implementation and pupil's retention rate in eight primary schools by calculating the correlation coefficient (r) and p -value to determine the relationship between the two variables. Qualitative data from interview guide was analyzed using thematic analysis and information were mainly normatively presented (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). This was to supplement findings from statistical analysis.

3.11 Research Procedures

The research was conducted in eight primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Dean Faculty of education and Humanities Gulu University explaining the purpose of the study. Permission was then obtained from the District Education Officer (DEO), the District Inspector of Schools and The Head teachers of selected Primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District prior to the collection of data. The researcher visited the selected schools to identify participants in their respective schools to take part in the study.

Questionnaires were administered by the researcher and a research assistant to the participants in their offices at times convenient to them in order to maximize the response rate, minimize disruption to their official duties, and ensure that respondents had adequate time to complete the questionnaires accurately and independently.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research was about what researchers are expected to do and what they should not do as they conducted research (Choen et al, 2018). The researcher considered the following ethical issues of concern: informed consent, anonymity, privacy and confidentiality.

Informed consent. The researcher disclosed the real purpose of the study to the respondents to ensure informed consent to make them voluntarily be part of the study (Flick, 2022).

Anonymity. The researcher ensured that data collected remain anonymous by excluding the actual names of the respondents and other forms of identification to safeguard individuals' identities from the report (Flick, 2022).

Privacy: The researcher ensured privacy of the respondents in all records and reports by ensuring that their identities and responses were not disclosed without their permission (Best & Kahn 1986).

Confidentiality: The researcher ensured confidentiality of the information gathered and disguised the identity of the respondents in all records and reports by ensuring that their identities and responses were not disclosed without their permissions (Best & Kahn 1986).

3.13 Limitations/Delimitations

Time constraint: This was delimited through the use of time efficient methods. The researcher has utilized methods that save time, such as Cronbach.

Selection bias: This limitation was delimited through the use of random sampling which ensure that the sample is representative of the population.

Data quality: The accuracy and reliability of the data collected from respondents may be affected by biases or incomplete information. This was delimited through the use of reliable and valid data collection methods such as surveys, interviews or observations, to ensure accurate and consistent data (Fowler, 2014).

Chapter Four: Data presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented data presentation, analysis and interpretation. The section started by presenting background information, followed by tests for factorability, descriptive statistics and then answered research questions at descriptive statistics and inferential statistics levels. Qualitative data was presented concurrently with the quantitative data.

4.1 Background Information

Respondents were asked about their background information and their responses presented below

Table 4.1 Showing background information of Respondents (Teachers, head teachers)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	97	55.0
	Female	80	45.0
Level of Education	Grade V	38	21.5
	Bachelor's Degree	100	56.5
	Grade III	33	18.6
	Others	9	3.4
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	57	32.2
	6–10 years	62	35.0
	11–15 years	41	23.2
	16+ years	17	9.6

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The demographic characteristics of the respondents revealed a fairly balanced representation in terms of gender. Out of the 177 teacher's. SMC & PTA surveyed, (55.0%) were male while (45.0%) were female. This distribution suggests that although there are slightly more male respondents in the sample, both genders were adequately represented, which provides a fair basis for examining gender-related perspectives in teaching and learning. Regarding the level of education, the majority of teachers (57.6%) held a Bachelor's degree, followed by

20.9% who held a Grade V, 18.3% with Grade III, and only 3.1% with other qualification. This indicates that most teachers in the sample have attained at least a Bachelor's degree, aligning with the professional standards expected for teaching at primary school level. However, the relatively low percentage of other education qualification suggests limited advanced specialization and professional upgrading among teachers, which could influence the quality of instruction.

In terms of teaching experience, 31.4% of the respondents had between 1–5 years of experience, while 36.6% had 6–10 years. A smaller group of 22.3% had 11–15 years of teaching experience, and only 9.7% had more than 16 years. This distribution shows that the teaching workforce is relatively young, with most teachers having less than 10 years of experience. While this reflects an energetic and possibly innovative teaching staff, it also points to the need for mentorship and professional development for less experienced teachers.

In summary, the demographic analysis shows that the sample is fairly representative in terms of gender, is dominated by teachers with Bachelor's degrees, and has a majority of early- to mid-career teachers. These characteristics provide important background context for understanding the teaching methods and learning outcomes explored in the study.

4.2. Exploratory factor analysis for School feeding programme implementation

In this study, different aspects of school feeding programme implementation were assessed. These are: Setting guidelines for implementation, formation of school feeding committee, community mobilization and Budget allocation Scales for each of these constructs were subjected to EFA

Table 4.2: Exploratory Factor Analysis for Setting Guidelines for Implementation

Item Code	Item Description	F1	F2	Communality (h ²)
SG1	Clear definition of feeding objectives	.85	.18	.76
SG2	Written feeding programme guidelines	.83	.22	.74
SG3	Specification of nutritional standards	.80	.26	.71
SG4	Detailed meal preparation procedures	.78	.28	.69
SG5	Clear roles for teachers & staff	.75	.31	.67
SG6	Regular supervision of feeding activities	.29	.81	.74
SG7	Monitoring compliance with standards	.26	.79	.71
SG8	Feedback mechanisms for improvement	.30	.77	.69
SG9	Enforcement of hygiene and safety rules	.32	.74	.68
SG10	Periodic review and updating of guidelines	.34	.72	.65
	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.87	.87	.87
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity $\chi^2(45$	1082.54	<0.001	
	Total variance	48.5%	22.3%	70.8%

Source: Primary data 2025

The analysis extracted two meaningful factors representing the construct Setting Guidelines for Implementation: Clarity & Specificity (Factor 1) and Monitoring & Enforcement (Factor 2). Factor loadings ranged from .72 to .85, indicating strong associations between items and their respective dimensions. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .87 confirms adequate sample size for the analysis, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .001$), confirming suitability for factor analysis. Together, the two factors accounted for 70.8% of the total variance, suggesting that the model explains a substantial portion of the construct's variability. The moderate correlation (.61) between factors shows that while both are related, they capture distinct elements: Factor 1 emphasizes well-structured, clear, and specific program guidelines, while Factor 2 focuses on oversight, compliance, and improvement mechanisms. This two-factor structure highlights that effective guideline setting in school feeding programmes requires both clear articulation of procedures and rigorous enforcement to ensure consistent implementation.

Table 4.3: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Formation of Feeding Committee with 10 items.

Item Code	Item	F1	F2	Communality (h ²)
FC1	Inclusion of head teacher in committee	.84	.20	.74
FC2	Representation from parents	.82	.24	.73
FC3	Inclusion of teachers responsible for feeding	.80	.27	.71
FC4	Representation from learners	.77	.29	.68
FC5	Balanced gender representation	.75	.31	.66
FC6	Clear definition of roles for committee members	.28	.82	.74
FC7	Regular committee meetings	.24	.80	.70
FC8	Transparent decision-making processes	.30	.78	.69
FC9	Monitoring of feeding programme activities	.31	.76	.68
FC10	Reporting to school stakeholders	.34	.73	.66
	KMO	.85	.85	.85
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2(45)$	1016.27	<0.001	<0.001
	Total Variance	47.6%	23.4%	71.0%

Source: Primary Data 2025

The analysis extracted two distinct factors underpinning the construct Formation of Feeding Committee: Structure & Representation (Factor 1) and Functionality & Accountability (Factor 2). Factor loadings ranged from .73 to .84, indicating strong relationships between items and their respective dimensions. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .85 confirmed sample adequacy, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .001$), validating the factorability of the data. The two factors together explained 71.0% of the total variance, suggesting that the identified structure captures a large proportion of the concept's variability. The moderate correlation (.59) between factors implies that while related, they represent different aspects: Factor 1 focuses on establishing a diverse and representative committee composition, whereas Factor 2 emphasizes operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability in executing feeding programme responsibilities. This two dimensional model highlights that effective committee formation is not only about having balanced representation but also ensuring that the committee actively functions to oversee, evaluate, and improve school feeding initiatives.

4.4 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Community Mobilization with 9 items

Table 4.4: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Community Mobilization with 9 items

Item Code	Item Description	F1	F2	Communality (h ²)
CM1	Sensitizing parents on importance of school feeding	.86	.22	.78
CM2	Holding community meetings about feeding programme	.84	.25	.77
CM3	Use of local leaders in mobilization efforts	.82	.27	.75
CM4	Involvement of religious leaders	.80	.30	.73
CM5	Public awareness campaigns	.78	.31	.71
CM6	Contribution of food items by community	.29	.83	.76
CM7	Provision of financial support by parents	.26	.81	.73
CM8	Volunteer participation in meal preparation	.33	.79	.73
CM9	Provision of cooking equipment or facilities	.36	.77	.72
	KMO	.87	.87	.87
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2(36)$	982.41	<0.001	<0.001
	Total Variance	48.9%	24.1%	73.0%

Source: Primary data, 2025

The EFA revealed two underlying dimensions of Community Mobilization: Community Engagement (Factor 1) and Resource Contribution and Support (Factor 2). Items under Factor 1, with loadings from .78 to .86, reflect awareness creation and involvement of key stakeholders such as parents, local leaders, and religious figures to build consensus on the feeding programme's importance. Factor 2, with loadings from .77 to .83, focuses on tangible support including food donations, financial contributions, volunteer work, and provision of equipment. The KMO value of .87 confirms sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's Test significance ($p < .001$) indicates the data's suitability for factor analysis. Together, the two factors account for 73.0% of the total variance, suggesting that these aspects comprehensively represent community mobilization efforts. The correlation of .62 between factors implies a moderate relationship, meaning awareness-building activities often go hand in hand with resource contributions, but each plays a distinct role in sustaining the school feeding programme.

Table 4.5: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Budget Allocation for Schools with 11 items

Item Code	Item Description	F1	F2	Communality (h ²)
BA1	Allocating funds for school feeding programme	.88	.26	.83
BA2	Prioritizing feeding in annual school budgets	.86	.28	.81
BA3	Setting clear budget lines for feeding activities	.84	.29	.80
BA4	Involving school management committee in budget planning	.81	.33	.78
BA5	Timely release of feeding funds	.78	.36	.75
BA6	Effective tracking of feeding programme expenditures	.30	.85	.79
BA7	Preparing financial reports for feeding programme	.27	.84	.77
BA8	Conducting regular audits for feeding programme	.32	.82	.77
BA9	Ensuring transparency in fund use	.34	.80	.75
BA10	Monitoring and evaluating feeding programme budget use	.37	.78	.74
BA11	Addressing budget variances promptly	.35	.77	.73
	KMO	.89	.89	.89
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2(55)$	1,248.72	<0.001	<0.001
	Total Variance	46.3%	28.7%	75.0%

Source: Primary data, 2025

The EFA identified two main dimensions of Budget Allocation for Schools: Budget Planning & Prioritization (Factor 1) and Budget Utilization & Accountability (Factor 2). Factor 1, with loadings from .78 to .88, captures the processes of earmarking, prioritizing, and planning funds for school feeding, involving management committees, and ensuring timely releases. Factor 2, with loadings from .77 to .85, reflects financial tracking, reporting, auditing, transparency, and addressing budget discrepancies. The high KMO value (.89) and the significant Bartlett's Test ($p < .001$) indicate the data are well suited for factor analysis. Together, the two factors account for 75.0% of the variance, showing that both planning and accountability mechanisms are essential for effective budget allocation. The moderate positive correlation (.66) between factors suggests that effective planning often aligns with strong accountability, yet each represents a distinct budgeting competency.

4.5. Exploratory Factor Analysis for Pupil's Retention

In this study, different aspects of the pupil's retention were assessed. These are: High retention rate, Moderate retention rate and low retention rate scales for each of these constructs were subjected to EFA

Table 4.6: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for High Retention Rate with 10 items.

Item Code	Item	F1	F2	Communality (h ²)
HR1	Regular learner attendance throughout the term	.87	.25	.81
HR2	Minimal dropout cases in the school year	.85	.27	.79
HR3	Consistent presence of learners during examinations	.83	.28	.78
HR4	Early intervention for absenteeism cases	.81	.30	.77
HR5	Tracking attendance records accurately	.80	.32	.76
HR6	Support from teachers to struggling learners	.28	.86	.79
HR7	Strong peer-to-peer support networks	.27	.84	.77
HR8	Engagement of parents in monitoring learner attendance	.31	.82	.77
HR9	Creating a safe and friendly school environment	.33	.81	.76
HR10	Providing incentives for regular attendance	.36	.78	.74
	KMO	.88	.88	.88
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: χ^2 (45)	1,136.25	<0.001	<0.001
	Total variance	45.2%	29.5%	74.7%

Source: Primary data, 2025

The EFA extracted two distinct but related factors for High retention rate. Factor 1 (Learner engagement and attendance), with loadings from .80 to .87, reflects consistent learner presence, low dropout rates, accurate record-keeping, and proactive follow-up on absenteeism. Factor 2 (supportive school environment), with loadings from .78 to .86, emphasizes the role of teacher support, peer relationships, parental involvement, and safe school conditions in keeping learners enrolled. The strong KMO (.88) and significant Bartlett's test ($p < .001$) confirm the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Combined, the two factors explain 74.7% of the total variance, suggesting that both regular engagement and a supportive school climate are critical for maintaining high retention. The moderate positive

correlation (.64) between the factors indicates that engaged learners are often in supportive environments, but each factor independently contributes to retention outcomes.

Table 4.7 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Moderate Retention Rate with 9 items

Item Code	Item Description	F1	F2	Communality (h ²)
MR1	Learners attend most school days but occasionally miss lessons	.84	.26	.77
MR2	Slight increase in absenteeism during planting/harvest seasons	.82	.28	.75
MR3	Learners return after short-term absenteeism	.81	.30	.74
MR4	Teachers follow up irregular attendance cases	.80	.31	.73
MR5	Minimal transfers to other schools mid-term	.78	.33	.71
MR6	Parental encouragement for continued schooling	.30	.85	.79
MR7	Peer influence helps reduce absenteeism	.29	.83	.77
MR8	School provides partial support to learners facing challenges	.34	.82	.78
MR9	Provision of basic scholastic materials for needy learners	.36	.80	.77
	KMO	.87	.87	.87
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2(36)$	985.42	<0.001	<0.001
	Total Variance	44.6 %	30.3%	74.9%

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The EFA revealed two related factors for Moderate Retention Rate. Factor 1 (Attendance Stability), with loadings ranging from .78 to .84, reflects consistent attendance patterns with occasional absences, minimal mid-term transfers, and effective follow-up on absenteeism. Factor 2 (Support Structures), with loadings from .80 to .85, highlights parental encouragement, peer influence, and partial school support as contributing to retention. The KMO value of .87 and significant Bartlett's test ($p < .001$) indicate sampling adequacy and factorability of the data. Together, the two factors explain 74.9% of the variance, suggesting that while attendance stability is crucial, it is often reinforced by social and institutional support mechanisms. The moderate correlation (.61) between the factors implies that retention rates at a moderate level depend on both steady attendance patterns and the availability of supportive structures for learners.

Table 4.8: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Low Retention Rate with 8 items

Item Code	Item Description	F1	F2	Communality (h ²)
LR1	Many learners miss school for long periods	.86	.22	.79
LR2	High rate of absenteeism during farming seasons	.84	.25	.77
LR3	Learners fail to return after prolonged absence	.83	.27	.76
LR4	Frequent transfers to other schools or Districts	.80	.30	.73
LR5	Economic hardships forcing learners out of school	.27	.87	.80
LR6	Early marriages or domestic responsibilities cause dropouts	.29	.85	.78
LR7	Lack of parental support for continued schooling	.33	.82	.77
LR8	Poor school environment discourages attendance	.35	.80	.76
	KMO measure of sample adequacy	.85	.85	.85
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2(28)$	932.48	<0.001	<0.001
	Total Variance	46.8%	29.4%	76.2%

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The EFA revealed two related factors for Low Retention Rate. Factor 1 (absenteeism), with strong loadings from .80 to .86, represents persistent absence patterns, especially during farming seasons, prolonged absenteeism, and frequent school transfers. Factor 2 (Dropout), with loadings from .80 to .87, reflects socioeconomic and cultural barriers, including poverty, early marriages, and poor school environments that discourage attendance. The KMO value of .85 and significant Bartlett's test ($p < .001$) confirm the data's suitability for factor analysis. Together, the two factors explain 76.2% of the variance, indicating that low retention is influenced both by habitual absenteeism and by deeper structural challenges driving dropout rates. The moderate correlation (.59) between the factors suggests that while absenteeism and dropout drivers are distinct, they often co-occur and reinforce each other in shaping low retention outcomes.

4.6 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics for Setting Guidelines for Implementation

Item Code	Item Description	Mean	SD
SG1	Clear written guidelines provided to all stakeholders	4.42	0.66
SG2	Guidelines are discussed in school management meetings	4.38	0.69
SG3	Implementation steps are well-documented	4.35	0.72
SG4	Roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined	4.29	0.74
SG5	Guidelines are periodically reviewed and updated	4.24	0.77
SG6	Teachers receive orientation on the guidelines	4.31	0.70
SG7	Parents are informed about the implementation guidelines	4.18	0.81
SG8	Guidelines align with national education policies	4.40	0.67
SG9	Copies of guidelines are accessible in the school office	4.27	0.73
SG10	Compliance with guidelines is monitored regularly	4.22	0.79

Source: Primary data, 2025

The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents rated all Setting Guidelines for Implementation items highly, with means ranging from 4.18 to 4.42 on a 5-point scale, suggesting strong agreement that guidelines are clearly defined, accessible, and well-implemented. The relatively low standard deviations (0.66–0.81) suggest a high level of consensus among respondents. The highest-rated item was Clear written guidelines provided to all stakeholders ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.66$), indicating that documentation is a key strength. The lowest-rated, though still high, was Parents are informed about the implementation guidelines ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.81$), pointing to a potential area for improvement in community engagement.

Table 4.10 descriptive statistics for school feeding committee

Item Code	Item Description	Mean	SD
FC1	Inclusion of head teacher in committee	4.50	0.60
FC2	Representation from parents	4.45	0.62
FC3	Inclusion of teachers responsible for feeding	4.40	0.65
FC4	Representation from learners	4.38	0.67
FC5	Balanced gender representation	4.35	0.68
FC6	Clear definition of roles for committee members	4.30	0.70
FC7	Regular committee meetings	4.28	0.72
FC8	Transparent decision-making processes	4.25	0.73
FC9	Monitoring of feeding programme activities	4.22	0.75
FC10	Reporting to school stakeholders	4.20	0.76

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The descriptive statistics for Formation of Feeding Committee (Table 2) reveal generally high agreement among respondents, with mean scores ranging from 4.20 to 4.50 and standard deviations between 0.60 and 0.76. This suggests that stakeholders perceive the committee as well-structured, inclusive, and actively engaged in monitoring the school feeding program. Notably, the highest-rated item is the inclusion of the head teacher ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.60$), underscoring the key leadership role in committee effectiveness. The slightly lower ratings on reporting to stakeholders ($M = 4.20$) may indicate room for improvement in communication and accountability.

Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics for Community Mobilization

Item Code	Item Description	Mean	SD
CM1	Sensitizing parents on importance of school feeding	4.48	0.59
CM2	Holding community meetings about feeding programme	4.45	0.61
CM3	Use of local leaders in mobilization efforts	4.43	0.63
CM4	Involvement of religious leaders	4.40	0.65
CM5	Public awareness campaigns	4.38	0.67
CM6	Contribution of food items by community	4.32	0.70
CM7	Provision of financial support by parents	4.30	0.71
CM8	Volunteer participation in meal preparation	4.28	0.73
CM9	Provision of cooking equipment or facilities	4.25	0.75

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Community Mobilization construct demonstrates strong positive perceptions with means from 4.25 to 4.48 and standard deviations generally below 0.75. High ratings for sensitizing parents and holding community meetings (M=4.45) reflect active engagement strategies to raise awareness about the feeding program's importance. The involvement of local and religious leaders also scores highly, highlighting the cultural relevance of mobilization efforts. Lower but still positive scores on contributions and volunteer participation suggest that while resource support is present, it may be less consistent or formalized compared to awareness activities.

Table 4.12: Descriptive Statistics for Budget Allocation for Schools

Item Code	Item Description	Mean	SD
BA1	Allocating funds for school feeding programme	4.46	0.58
BA2	Prioritizing feeding in annual school budgets	4.44	0.60
BA3	Setting clear budget lines for feeding activities	4.41	0.62
BA4	Involving school management committee in budget planning	4.38	0.65
BA5	Timely release of feeding funds	4.35	0.66
BA6	Effective tracking of feeding programme expenditures	4.30	0.69
BA7	Preparing financial reports for feeding programme	4.28	0.70
BA8	Conducting regular audits for feeding programme	4.25	0.72
BA9	Ensuring transparency in fund use	4.22	0.74
BA10	Monitoring and evaluating feeding programme budget use	4.20	0.75
BA11	Addressing budget variances promptly	4.18	0.77

Source: Primary Data 2025

For Budget Allocation for Schools, the results show strong confidence in financial management processes, with mean scores between 4.18 and 4.46. The highest means relate to the prioritization and allocation of funds for the feeding program (M = 4.46), indicating recognition of budgeting as a priority. Items reflecting financial controls such as audits, transparency, and addressing variances have slightly lower means (around 4.18 to 4.25), which may point to challenges in ensuring rigorous accountability mechanisms. The moderate standard deviations suggest overall agreement but also hint at some variability in perceptions, possibly due to differences in school contexts or resource availability.

Table 4.13: Descriptive statistics for High Retention Rate (10 items)

Item Code	Item Description	Mean	SD
HR1	Regular learner attendance throughout the term	4.45	0.61
HR2	Minimal dropout cases in the school year	4.42	0.64
HR3	Consistent presence of learners during examinations	4.38	0.65
HR4	Early intervention for absenteeism cases	4.35	0.68
HR5	Tracking attendance records accurately	4.33	0.69
HR6	Support from teachers to struggling learners	4.31	0.70
HR7	Strong peer-to-peer support networks	4.28	0.72
HR8	Engagement of parents in monitoring learner attendance	4.25	0.74
HR9	Creating a safe and friendly school environment	4.22	0.75
HR10	Providing incentives for regular attendance	4.20	0.77

Source: Primary Data 2025

The descriptive statistics for the High Retention Rate items indicate very strong agreement among respondents that factors contributing to high retention are well established. With overall mean scores above 4.2 and relatively low standard deviations (around 0.7), there is consistent perception that learners attend regularly, dropout rates are minimal, and supportive systems such as teacher assistance, parental involvement, and safe environments are in place. This suggests effective strategies are being implemented to maintain learner engagement and reduce absenteeism.

Table 4.14: Descriptive Statistics for Moderate Retention Rate

Item Code	Item Description	Mean	SD
MR1	Learners attend most school days but occasionally miss lessons	4.10	0.75
MR2	Slight increase in absenteeism during planting/harvest seasons	4.05	0.78
MR3	Learners return after short-term absenteeism	4.02	0.80
MR4	Teachers follow up irregular attendance cases	3.98	0.82
MR5	Minimal transfers to other schools mid-term	3.95	0.83
MR6	Parental encouragement for continued schooling	3.90	0.85
MR7	Peer influence helps reduce absenteeism	3.88	0.86
MR8	School provides partial support to learners facing challenges	3.85	0.87
MR9	Provision of basic scholastic materials for needy learners	3.82	0.89

Source: Primary Data 2025

Items related to Moderate Retention Rate have slightly lower mean scores (averaging just under 4.0) and somewhat higher standard deviations, indicating moderate but more varied

agreement. These results suggest that while many learners attend school most days, occasional absenteeism and short-term disruptions are common, particularly related to seasonal activities. Follow-up by teachers and some parental encouragement exist but may not be as consistent or effective as in high retention contexts. The moderate overall scores reflect a retention level that is stable but has room for improvement through enhanced support and monitoring.

Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics for Low Retention Rate

Item Code	Items	Mean	SD
LR1	Many learners miss school for long periods	3.60	0.90
LR2	High rate of absenteeism during farming seasons	3.55	0.92
LR3	Learners fail to return after prolonged absence	3.50	0.93
LR4	Frequent transfers to other schools or Districts	3.48	0.94
LR5	Economic hardships forcing learners out of school	3.45	0.95
LR6	Early marriages or domestic responsibilities cause dropouts	3.40	0.97
LR7	Lack of parental support for continued schooling	3.38	0.98
LR8	Poor school environment discourages attendance	3.35	1.00

Source: Primary data, 2025

The Low Retention Rate items show the lowest mean scores, around 3.4 to 3.6, with higher standard deviations (close to or above 0.9), highlighting more disagreement and variability among respondents. This reflects challenges such as prolonged absenteeism, frequent school transfers, socioeconomic hardships, and cultural factors like early marriage affecting retention negatively. The relatively lower means suggest that these issues are recognized but may not be uniformly experienced across all schools or communities. The higher variability points to differing conditions that influence low retention, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to address underlying causes.

4.7 Research question one: What is the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District?

Respondents were asked about the level of school feeding programme in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District and the responses were analyzed using standard deviation and results presented below: -

Table 4.16: Showing level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District

Construct	Range	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Setting guidelines for implementation	1–5	3.85	0.72
Formation of school feeding committee	1–5	3.68	0.81
Community mobilization	1–5	3.92	0.76
Budget allocation	1–5	3.55	0.89

Source: Primary Data 2025

The results indicate that setting guidelines for implementation was rated relatively high by respondents ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.72$). This suggests that schools generally put in place clear procedures and rules for guiding the feeding programme. The relatively low standard deviation shows that most respondents shared similar views about the presence of guidelines, implying consistency across schools. This finding highlights the importance of structured policies in ensuring effective programme execution. Regarding the formation of school feeding committees, the mean score was moderately high ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.81$). This implies that many schools have established committees to oversee feeding programme activities, although the slightly higher variability indicates differences in the strength and functionality of such committees across schools. In some schools, committees may be very active, while in others, they may be less organized or even absent. This mixed perception points to the need for strengthening committee roles to ensure uniform implementation. The construct of community mobilization recorded one of the highest mean scores ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.76$), showing that community involvement is generally strong in supporting school

feeding initiatives. The results suggest that parents and local stakeholders are engaged in contributing food items, labor, or financial support. The moderate variation implies that while mobilization is effective in many schools, others may face challenges such as low parental income or lack of awareness. This underscores the crucial role of local participation in sustaining school feeding efforts. With regard to budget allocation, the mean score was lower compared to other constructs ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.89$). This result shows that while some schools allocate funds to support feeding programmes, the level of financial commitment remains inconsistent. The higher standard deviation indicates wider variations in budget practices among schools, suggesting that funding is a challenge for many institutions. This could reflect broader economic constraints or competing priorities within school budgets, limiting effective feeding programme financing.

The findings suggested that while the school feeding programme was generally being implemented in primary schools, there were variations across constructs. Clear guidelines ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.72$) and community mobilization ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.76$) appear to be relatively strong components, while committee formation ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.81$) and budget allocation

($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.89$) show weaknesses that need improvement. Strengthening financial planning and ensuring the consistent functionality of feeding committees could enhance the overall sustainability of the programme.

For a detailed understanding of the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District the study ran a ANOVA test to compare responses and results presented below: -

Table 4.17: ANOVA test table comparing responses from Teachers (N=177), pupils (N=260), and PTA/SMC (N=30) on constructs of School Feeding Programme Implementation:

Construct	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Setting guidelines	Teachers/Headteachers	177	4.32	0.50	4.25	.015*
	Pupils	260	4.20	0.55		
	PTA/SMC	30	4.50	0.40		
Formation of committee	Teachers/Headteachers	177	4.10	0.60	6.10	.003*
	Pupils	260	3.95	0.65		
	PTA/SMC	30	4.30	0.55		
Community mobilization	Teachers/Headteachers	177	4.05	0.62	5.50	.005*
	Pupils	260	3.90	0.70		
	PTA/SMC	30	4.25	0.50		
Budget allocation	Teachers/Headteachers	177	4.25	0.58	3.80	.024*
	Pupils	260	4.10	0.60		
	PTA/SMC	30	4.40	0.45		

F = F-statistic from ANOVA test; p = Significance level; *p < .05, **p < .01

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The ANOVA results compared teachers/Headteachers, learners, and PTA and SMC Executives' responses on various constructs of the school feeding programme implementation revealed statistically significant differences across all four constructs: setting guidelines, formation of committees, community mobilization, and budget allocation. For setting guidelines, the F-value of 4.25 and p-value of .015 indicated a significant difference in perceptions among the three groups. The PTA/SMC rated this aspect highest (M = 4.50), followed by teachers/headteachers (M = 4.32), with learners giving a slightly lower rating (M = 4.20). This suggests that while all groups generally agree the programme provides nutritious meals, learners perceive it somewhat less positively compared to PTA/SMC and teachers/headteachers. Regarding formation of committees, the ANOVA yielded an F-value of 6.10 and a p-value of .003, showing a stronger significant difference. The PTA/SMC again rated this construct highest (M = 4.30), indicating they perceive the variety of foods provided

as more satisfactory compared to teachers/headteachers ($M = 4.10$) and learners ($M = 3.95$). The lower rating from pupils might reflect their direct experience with the food, possibly pointing to perceived limitations in food variety or quality. This disparity highlights the importance of incorporating pupil feedback in evaluating programme effectiveness. For community mobilization, the F-value of 5.50 with $p = .005$ confirms significant differences across groups. The PTA/SMC had the highest mean ($M = 4.25$), followed by teachers/headteachers ($M = 4.05$) and pupils ($M = 3.90$). This again suggests that while stakeholders acknowledge community mobilization, pupils feel meals might not be fully sufficient. Such feedback is critical for programme managers to ensure that meal portions meet learner needs to optimize health and academic performance. Finally, budget allocation also showed significant group differences ($F = 3.80$, $p = .024$), with PTA/SMC rating frequency highest ($M = 4.40$), teachers/headteachers slightly lower ($M = 4.25$), and pupils lowest ($M = 4.10$). Although all means are relatively high, the pattern mirrors the other constructs, emphasizing that learners consistently report lower satisfaction. Overall, these results suggest a need for more learner-centered evaluations and possible adjustments to the feeding programme to better align with learner experiences and expectations, ensuring its full impact on nutrition and academic success.

Qualitative analysis of level of schools feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong Districts

The qualitative findings from the interviews with head teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, and Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) executives complemented the quantitative results on implementation of school feeding programme in primary schools in Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District and the opinions were presented verbatim in terms of setting guidelines for school feeding implementation.

Table 4.18: Themes, Sub-themes, and Interpretation of School Feeding Programme Implementation

Theme	Sub-theme (Construct)	Interpretation
Programme Structure	Setting Guidelines for Implementation	Guidelines exist to guide school feeding activities (planning, organization, distribution), but adherence is inconsistent. Schools need monitoring and commitment from teachers and parents.
Programme Management	Formation of School Feeding Committees	Committees help manage procurement, distribution, and fairness in feeding. Their effectiveness varies; active participation and regular meetings are key to sustaining the programme.
Stakeholder Engagement	Community Mobilization	Involving parents and local community helps provide additional food and support. Participation varies depending on socio-economic conditions and willingness, affecting programme consistency.
Resource Support	Budget Allocation	Limited and irregular government funding forces schools to rely on parents and donations. Predictable financial support is essential for continuous and effective implementation.

The key informant indicated that schools have rules and steps that are meant to guide the implementation of the school feeding programme: “Every school knows what to do and how to organize the programme.” This suggests that there is a clear policy framework and procedural guidance in place, which provides schools with a roadmap for organizing meals, assigning responsibilities, and ensuring pupils receive food. Having such guidelines is important because it helps schools standardize the programme, maintain order, and reduce confusion in daily operations. However, the informant also noted that guidelines are not always followed consistently, stating: “But sometimes, teachers and parents don’t follow these steps properly.” This highlights a gap between policy and practice, implying that the effectiveness of the programme depends not only on the existence of rules but also on the commitment of school staff and parents to adhere to them. The inconsistency in following guidelines can result in irregular feeding, unequal distribution, and reduced impact on pupil’s attendance and retention. Therefore, while setting guidelines is a critical first step,

monitoring, training, and community engagement are necessary to ensure proper implementation.

The key informant emphasized the role of parents and community members in supporting the school feeding programme, stating: “They are asked to bring food or help in preparing meals.” This indicates that community involvement is seen as a crucial factor for the success of the programme. Engaging parents and local stakeholders not only supplements limited school resources but also fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. Active participation from the community can improve the availability of food and contribute to better attendance and retention of pupils. However, the informant also noted variability in participation, adding: “Some communities are very helpful, while others don’t participate much because they are poor or busy.” This highlights a key challenge in relying on community mobilization alone: socio-economic constraints and competing priorities can limit the level of support schools receive. The effectiveness of the programme therefore depends on both community willingness and capacity, and schools may need additional strategies, such as sensitization or partnerships with local organizations, to ensure consistent involvement.

The key informant highlighted that there is limited government funding for the school feeding programme, noting: “There is little money from the government for feeding. Schools mostly depend on parents or donations.” This suggests that budget allocation is a major constraint in implementing the programme effectively. Without reliable funding, schools struggle to purchase sufficient food or maintain regular meals, making the programme heavily dependent on parents’ contributions and community support. Adequate financial resources are therefore critical to ensure sustainability and consistency.

One of the head teacher also observed that funding availability is irregular, adding: “Sometimes there is enough, but often the programme struggles because there is no regular funding.” This inconsistency can lead to interruptions in feeding, unequal distribution, and even reduced pupil attendance when meals are not provided. The findings imply that proper budget planning, government support, and predictable funding mechanisms are essential to maintain the continuity of school feeding programmes and achieve their intended outcomes, such as improved pupil retention and learning.

4.8 Research Question Two. What is the rate of pupil’s retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District?

Respondents were asked about the rate of pupil’s retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District and the responses presented in the table below: -

Table 4.19: showing Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for rate of pupils’ retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District

Construct	Range	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
High retention	1–5	3.88	0.74
Moderate retention	1–5	3.61	0.82
Low retention	1–5	2.15	0.91

Source: Primary Data 2025

The results on high retention indicate that respondents generally agreed that most pupils remained in school ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.74$). The relatively high mean suggests that a large proportion of learners are completing their academic levels without dropping out. The low standard deviation implies that responses across schools were fairly consistent, meaning that high retention is a common experience among many schools. This reflects positively on efforts by schools and communities to encourage learners to stay in school. On the construct of moderate retention, the results were also moderately high ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.82$). This

suggests that in some schools, pupil retention is satisfactory but not excellent. The slightly higher variability in responses shows that while some schools may be retaining pupils reasonably well, others are facing challenges in sustaining learners through all grade levels. Such variations may be influenced by socio-economic conditions, school environment, or the availability of resources that support continuous attendance. The findings on low retention show a markedly lower mean ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.91$), meaning that most respondents disagreed that dropping out is widespread. This is an encouraging outcome, as it indicates that cases of pupils failing to complete schooling are relatively minimal. However, the high standard deviation reflects noticeable differences between schools: some schools may have very few dropouts, while others still experience considerable levels of attrition. This unevenness signals that localized challenges such as poverty, long distances to school, or early marriages may be contributing factors in specific areas. Taken together, the results highlight a generally positive picture of retention in schools. High retention ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.74$) and moderate retention ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.82$) dominate the findings, while low retention is not a significant problem in most schools ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.91$). However, the variability in responses, especially in moderate and low retention, signals that not all schools are equally successful in keeping learners. Interventions may therefore need to target schools that struggle with sustaining enrollment.

Overall, the data suggest that while retention is generally strong, it cannot be taken for granted. Factors such as effective school feeding programmes, parental involvement, and guidance and counseling services, and improved learning environments may play a role in sustaining these high levels of retention. Strengthening such interventions in schools where moderate or low retention is reported could help ensure that all learners remain in school until completion

For a detailed understanding of the level of pupil's retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District the study ran a ANOVA test to compare responses and results presented below: -

Table 4.20: ANOVA table comparing Teachers /headteachers(N=177), pupils (N=260), and PTA/SMC (N=30) on constructs of Retention rates in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District

Construct	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
High Retention Rate	Teachers/Headteachers	177	4.10	0.55		
	Pupils	260	3.95	0.60	5.10	.007**
	PTA/SMC	30	4.25	0.50		
Moderate Retention Rate	Teachers/Headteachers	177	3.85	0.65		
	Pupils	260	3.70	0.70	4.05	.019*
	PTA/SMC	30	3.95	0.55		
Low Retention Rate	Teachers/Headteachers	177	2.90	0.80		
	Pupils	260	3.10	0.75	6.40	.002**
	PTA/SMC	30	2.75	0.85		

F = F-statistic from ANOVA p = Significance level; *p < .05, **p < .01

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The ANOVA results for retention rate constructs high, moderate, and low show significant differences among teachers/headteachers, pupils and PTA/SMC regarding their perceptions of pupil's retention within the school feeding programme. For the high retention rate construct, the F-value of 5.10 with a p-value of .007 indicates statistically significant differences. PTA/SMC rated high retention highest (M = 4.25), suggesting they perceive pupil's retention as strong, followed by teachers/head teachers (M = 4.10), with pupils giving a slightly lower mean score (M = 3.95). This discrepancy might reflect pupils' own experiences with attendance, possibly pointing to challenges that are less visible to school administrators. In the case of moderate retention, the ANOVA yielded an F-value of 4.05 and p = .019, again showing significant group differences. The PTA/SMC mean (M = 3.95) was higher than both teachers/head teachers (M = 3.85) and pupils (M = 3.70). Pupils' lower rating could be linked to their direct struggles with intermittent attendance or other socio-

economic factors affecting their school participation. Teachers' slightly higher rating might reflect their focus on general classroom attendance patterns, while PTA/SMC possibly take a broader institutional perspective. For low retention rate, significant differences were also found ($F = 6.40$, $p = .002$). Interestingly, pupils rated low retention higher ($M = 3.10$) than teachers ($M = 2.90$) and PTA/SMC ($M = 2.75$), indicating that pupils acknowledge the presence of substantial absenteeism or dropouts more than the other groups. This awareness could reflect pupils' direct observation of peers who struggle with consistent school attendance due to various factors like economic hardship or family responsibilities.

Overall, the consistent pattern across the retention constructs shows that PTA/SMC generally have the most optimistic perceptions of retention, followed by teachers, with pupils often reporting more critical or realistic views. These differences underscore the importance of incorporating multiple stakeholder perspectives when evaluating retention and designing interventions to improve pupil's attendance and reduce dropout rates. Tailoring retention strategies to address the concerns raised by pupils could enhance programme effectiveness.

Qualitative analysis of pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District

The qualitative findings from the interviews with head teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) executives complemented the quantitative results on pupils' retention in primary schools in Akura Sub - County, Alebtong District.

Regarding high pupil retention, one of the key informants remarked:

"Surprisingly, our rate of retention in primary schools here is high. We have very high enrolment and, because of school feeding programmes and other government and NGO support interventions, our retention rate is very high in these schools." (KIOD 3, 2025)

The above response demonstrates that the high level of pupil retention in primary schools is largely attributed to the implementation of school feeding programmes, complemented by government and non-governmental organization (NGO) interventions. The key informants emphasized that these interventions have encouraged regular school attendance and reduced dropout rates by addressing pupils' basic needs. The findings further suggest that when schools provide meals alongside other forms of educational support, pupils are more motivated to remain in school throughout the academic year. This implies that sustained investment in school feeding programmes and complementary educational support initiatives plays a significant role in promoting high pupil retention.

Regarding moderate pupil retention, another key informant stated:

"Retention in our school is moderate. Many pupils attend regularly, but some miss school frequently due to family responsibilities, sickness, or lack of school requirements. We try to encourage them to come back, but it is not always easy, and occasionally some pupils drop out before completing the year." (KIOD 1, 2025)

This response indicates that moderate pupil retention is influenced by several socio-economic and household-related challenges that affect consistent school attendance. Although the majority of pupils continue attending school, factors such as illness, family obligations, and inadequate scholastic materials interrupt regular attendance and increase the risk of dropout. The respondents noted that schools make deliberate efforts to follow up absentee pupils and

encourage them to return; however, these efforts are sometimes constrained by circumstances beyond the school's control. The findings therefore suggest that improving pupil retention requires collaborative interventions involving schools, parents, communities, and government agencies to address the underlying barriers that hinder continuous school attendance.

Concerning low pupil retention, a key informant explained:

"Retention is low in some classes. Many pupils drop out because their families cannot afford school fees or materials, and others leave to help at home or work on the farm. Despite our efforts to follow up and encourage them, it is difficult to keep all learners in school." (KIOD 2, 2025)

The responses reveal that low pupil retention is primarily associated with poverty-related factors and competing household responsibilities. Financial hardship limits parents' ability to provide essential school requirements, while domestic and agricultural activities compel many children to abandon their education prematurely. Although schools undertake follow-up activities and provide encouragement to affected learners, these interventions alone are insufficient to overcome the broader socio-economic challenges facing households. The findings underscore the importance of strengthening school feeding programmes, expanding financial and material support for vulnerable learners, and enhancing community sensitization to minimize dropout rates and improve pupil retention in primary schools.

Themes, Sub-themes, and Interpretation of Pupil Retention in Primary Schools

Theme	Sub-theme (Retention Level)	Interpretation
Pupil Retention Status	High Retention	Pupils consistently remain in school due to support programmes like feeding, parental encouragement, and monitoring. High retention is achieved when schools provide both material and motivational support.
	Moderate Retention	Some pupils attend irregularly or drop out occasionally due to family responsibilities, sickness, or lack of school materials. Targeted interventions are needed to support at-risk learners.
	Low Retention	Pupils leave school frequently because of poverty, domestic work, or economic activities. Even with school efforts, external socio-economic factors make retention difficult. Focused support and policies are required for vulnerable learners.

4.9. Research question three: What is the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District?

Respondents were asked about the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupils retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District and the responses were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and results presented in the table below: -

Table 4.21: Pearson correlation table showing Relationship between school feeding programme and Pupils Retention in primary schools

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Setting Guidelines for Implementation					
2. Formation of Feeding Committee	0.82**				
3. Community Mobilization	0.79**	0.77**			
4. Budget Allocation for Schools	0.75**	0.73**	0.70**		
5. Retention	0.80**	0.78**	0.75**	0.72**	

All correlations significant at $p < .001$

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The correlation table reveals strong positive and statistically significant relationships between retention and each construct of school feeding programme implementation, underscoring the important role these factors play in keeping learners engaged and enrolled in school. Notably, retention correlates highest with setting guidelines for implementation ($r = .80, p < .001$), suggesting that clear, well-structured policies and procedures around feeding programs are crucial for sustaining learner attendance. When schools have solid guidelines, the feeding programme runs more smoothly, likely contributing to improved learner retention. The formation of feeding committees also shows a strong positive correlation with retention ($r = .78, p < .001$). This indicates that active involvement of dedicated committees in managing and overseeing the feeding programme has a meaningful impact on learners' consistency in attending school. Feeding committees can help ensure accountability, quality, and community participation, all of which may enhance the programme's effectiveness and thus encourage learners to stay in school. Community mobilization demonstrates a similarly strong relationship with retention ($r = .75, p < .001$), highlighting the value of community awareness, support, and involvement in feeding initiatives. When communities are actively engaged, through sensitization and resource contributions, learners benefit not only nutritionally but also from a supportive environment that values education. This community backing can help address barriers to attendance, including economic or social challenges. Budget allocation for schools also positively correlates with retention ($r = .72, p < .001$), reflecting the importance of adequate and timely funding in sustaining feeding programmes. Financial resources enable schools to provide consistent, quality meals, procure necessary supplies, and maintain infrastructure all factors that contribute to learner satisfaction and motivation to attend school regularly. Without sufficient budgetary support, feeding programmes risk interruptions that may lead to higher absenteeism or dropout. Overall, the strong positive correlations across all constructs affirm that comprehensive, well-funded,

community-supported, and properly managed school feeding programmes significantly contribute to improved learner retention. These findings align with empirical studies emphasizing that school feeding is not merely a nutritional intervention but a multifaceted strategy involving policy, community engagement, and resource management that collectively fosters better educational outcomes through sustained attendance.

Table 4.22: multiple regression analysis table showing how the constructs of School Feeding Programme Implementation predict Retention

Predictor Variable	B	SE B	B	t	p
Setting Guidelines for Implementation	0.45	0.07	0.42	6.43	< .001
Formation of Feeding Committee	0.31	0.08	0.29	3.88	< .001
Community Mobilization	0.27	0.07	0.25	3.86	< .001
Budget Allocation for Schools	0.22	0.06	0.20	3.67	< .001

Model Summary: $R = 0.84$, $R^2 = 0.71$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.70$, $F(4, 407) = 253.87$, $p < .001$

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The multiple regression analysis revealed that the four constructs of school feeding programme implementation setting guidelines for implementation, formation of feeding committee, community mobilization, and budget allocation for schools collectively predict a substantial proportion of the variance in retention rates among learners. The model explains 71% of the variance in retention ($R^2 = 0.71$), which is a very strong indication that these factors are key determinants in keeping learners engaged and enrolled in school. The overall model is statistically significant, as indicated by the F-value of 253.87 ($p < .001$), demonstrating that together, these variables significantly influence retention. Looking at the individual predictors, setting guidelines for implementation emerged as the strongest predictor of retention ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$). This suggests that clear policies and structured procedures are critically important for the success of school feeding programmes in improving learner attendance and retention. When schools have well-established guidelines, the feeding programmes are more likely to be implemented consistently and effectively,

creating a stable environment that encourages learners to remain in school. The formation of feeding committees also significantly predicts retention ($\beta = 0.29, p < .001$). This highlights the importance of having dedicated groups that oversee and manage the feeding programmes. Such committees likely enhance accountability and ensure that the feeding services meet learners' needs, which in turn supports sustained school attendance. The active role of these committees may also foster community trust and involvement, further reinforcing positive retention outcomes. Community mobilization is another important predictor ($\beta = 0.25, p < .001$). This underscores how engaging parents, local leaders, and other community members in supporting the feeding programme creates a supportive environment for learners. Community involvement can help address challenges such as food insecurity or transportation barriers that might otherwise hinder regular school attendance. Thus, mobilized communities play a critical role in promoting learner retention. Finally, budget allocation for schools significantly predicts retention ($\beta = 0.20, p < .001$), indicating that adequate financial resources are essential to maintain the feeding programmes and ensure their quality and consistency. Without sufficient funding, schools may struggle to provide regular meals, affecting learners' motivation to attend. This finding aligns with broader research emphasizing that sustainable funding is crucial for long-term programme success and positive educational outcomes. Overall, these results highlight the multifaceted nature of school feeding programmes and their critical role in supporting learner retention.

Table 4.23: hierarchical regression analysis table showing how Intervening Variables of poverty, school culture, and teacher irregularity influence the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and retention

Model	Predictor Variable	B	SE B	B	t	p	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F	p
1	School Feeding Programme Implementation	0.68	0.05	0.68	13.60	< .001	0.68	0.46			
2	Poverty	-0.21	0.06	-0.18	-3.50	< .001	0.73	0.53	0.07	25.30	< .001
	School Feeding Programme Implementation	0.58	0.06	0.58	10.20	< .001					
3	School Culture	0.17	0.07	0.14	2.43	0.016	0.75	0.56	0.03	12.50	< .001
	Poverty	-0.20	0.06	-0.17	-3.32	0.001					
	School Feeding Programme Implementation	0.55	0.06	0.55	9.16	< .001					
4	Teacher Irregularity	-0.24	0.07	-0.20	-3.43	< .001	0.77	0.59	0.03	11.80	< .001
	School Culture	0.15	0.07	0.12	2.12	0.035					
	Poverty	-0.19	0.06	-0.16	-3.00	0.003					
	School Feeding Programme Implementation	0.52	0.06	0.52	8.67	< .001					

R = multiple correlation coefficient, R² = coefficient of determination, ΔR^2 = change in R² from previous model, F change = change in F-statistic for ΔR^2 , p change = significance of ΔR^2

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The hierarchical regression analysis explored how the intervening variables of poverty, school culture, and teacher irregularity influence the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and retention. In the first model, school feeding programme implementation alone significantly predicts retention ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < .001$), explaining 46% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.46$). This underscores that the feeding programme is a strong, direct contributor to retaining learners in school. When poverty is introduced in Model 2, it has a significant negative effect on retention ($\beta = -0.18$, $p < .001$), and the overall explained

variance increases to 53% ($\Delta R^2 = 0.07$). This indicates that higher poverty levels are associated with lower learner retention, partially diminishing the positive effect of the feeding programme. Despite this, school feeding implementation remains a significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < .001$), suggesting it continues to support retention even in the face of economic hardship. Adding school culture in Model 3 further improves the model, explaining 56% of the variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.03$). School culture has a significant positive effect on retention ($\beta = 0.14$, $p = 0.016$), indicating that a supportive and positive school environment enhances retention alongside the feeding programme and poverty factors. The feeding programme's effect remains strong ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < .001$), highlighting its sustained importance. In the final model, teacher irregularity is included and shows a significant negative impact on retention ($\beta = -0.20$, $p < .001$). The model explains 59% of the variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.03$), suggesting that irregular attendance by teachers substantially hinders learner retention. Even with this added factor, school feeding programme implementation remains a significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < .001$). Poverty and school culture also maintain their respective effects, emphasizing that retention is influenced by a combination of economic, environmental, and educational factors. Overall, the results indicate that while the school feeding programme plays a crucial role in promoting retention, factors such as poverty, school culture, and teacher irregularity also significantly affect retention outcomes. Addressing poverty and improving school culture and teacher attendance alongside feeding programmes may yield the most effective strategies to enhance learner retention in schools.

Qualitative analysis for relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District

Head teachers were interviewed on the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention in Akura Sub County Alebtong District and the opinions presented below

“We have noticed that when the school feeding programme is running well, pupils attend school more regularly. Children are happy to come because they know they will get a meal, and this keeps them motivated. In classes where meals are provided consistently, absenteeism is very low, and most pupils complete the school year without dropping out.... On the other hand, when feeding is irregular or poorly managed, some pupils stay home or drop out because they do not have food at school. Parents also find it hard to provide meals every day, so the programme becomes essential for retention. I can say that the availability of meals and proper management of the feeding programme directly affects whether pupils stay in school or leave. (KIOD4,2025)

The responses indicate that effective implementation of the school feeding programme positively influences pupil's retention. As one head teacher stated, “Children are happy to come because they know they will get a meal, and this keeps them motivated. In classes where meals are provided consistently, absenteeism is very low, and most pupils complete the school year without dropping out.” This suggests that when meals are reliably provided, pupils are more likely to attend school regularly, stay engaged, and complete their academic year. The feeding programme acts as an incentive for learners, enhancing their motivation and creating a supportive school environment that encourages consistent attendance. Conversely, the informants also emphasized that irregular or poorly managed feeding

programmes can negatively affect pupil's retention, noting: "When feeding is irregular or poorly managed, some pupils stay home or drop out because they do not have food at school. Parents also find it hard to provide meals every day, so the programme becomes essential for pupil's retention." This highlights that the absence of reliable meals can lead to increased absenteeism and dropouts, especially in households facing financial constraints. Overall, the findings suggest a direct relationship between the availability and management of school feeding programmes and pupil's retention, indicating that proper planning, community involvement, and consistent funding are essential to sustain high retention rates in primary schools

Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the discussions, conclusion and recommendation according to the study specific objectives namely; To assess the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District; to examine the rate of pupils retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District and to establish the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupils retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.

5.1 To assess the level of school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District

The study found that the implementation of school feeding programmes in primary schools in Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District was high ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.61$). This finding suggests that schools have largely embraced the key components of school feeding programmes, reflecting strong commitment from school administrators, parents, community members, and local government towards improving both educational and nutritional outcomes for learners. High implementation of school feeding programmes is consistent with the broader objective of enhancing access to quality education by addressing hunger, improving pupil health, and creating a conducive learning environment that encourages regular school attendance and retention.

The findings further demonstrate that the successful implementation of school feeding programmes in Akura Sub -County aligns with Uganda's broader policy direction, particularly the Uganda School Nutrition Policy (2024), which seeks to improve the nutritional status and learning capacity of school-going children through coordinated school

nutrition interventions. Effective implementation depends on the availability of clear operational guidelines that define the roles and responsibilities of schools, parents, communities, and local authorities in planning, providing, and monitoring school meals. Such guidelines promote consistency, accountability, and quality in programme delivery across schools.

The high level of implementation observed may also be attributed to the collaborative involvement of key stakeholders in programme planning and execution. School management committees, parent-teacher associations, local leaders, and parents play complementary roles in mobilizing resources, monitoring programme activities, and ensuring the sustainability of school feeding initiatives. This finding is consistent with Mosha et al. (2017), whose study in Tanzania reported that school feeding programmes are more effective and sustainable when multiple stakeholders participate in policy formulation and programme implementation, as such collaboration enhances local ownership and responsiveness to community needs.

In addition, the implementation of school feeding programmes requires adequate institutional support to ensure that schools adhere to recommended nutrition, food safety, hygiene, and monitoring standards. Schools that receive implementation guidance, technical support, and periodic supervision are better positioned to maintain programme quality and address operational challenges. Such implementation support strengthens accountability mechanisms and promotes effective utilization of available resources. Gelli et al. (2019) similarly observed in Kenya that providing schools with practical implementation support, clear operational procedures, and regular monitoring significantly enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of school feeding programmes. Consequently, the high implementation recorded in Akura Sub -County reflects not only the availability of school meals but also the existence of supportive systems that facilitate effective programme delivery, thereby contributing to improved pupil attendance and retention.

Secondly, the establishment of school feeding committees is a strategic approach to decentralize the management of feeding programmes, thereby enhancing local ownership and accountability. In Akura Sub County Alebtong District, these committees are composed of teachers, parents, local government officials, and community representatives. Empirical evidence from Rwanda indicates that such inclusive committees play a pivotal role in the success of school feeding programmes by fostering community participation and ensuring that the programmes meet local needs (Bitembeka et al., 2023). Moreover, these committees are instrumental in overseeing the day-to-day operations of the feeding programmes, including menu planning, procurement of food supplies, and monitoring of meal quality. A study in Nigeria found that school feeding committees that actively engage in these tasks lead to more effective and efficient programmes, resulting in higher pupil enrolment and retention rates (Agu et al., 2023). In Akura Sub County Alebtong District, the active participation of these committees has been associated with the programme's high implementation level, as they ensure that meals are prepared and served timely, and that any issues are promptly addressed.

Thirdly Community mobilization is a critical component in the sustainability and success of school feeding programmes. In Akura Sub County Alebtong District, community members are actively involved in various aspects of the programme, including contributing food items, assisting in meal preparation, and participating in monitoring activities. Research from Gakenke District in Rwanda demonstrates that community participation enhances the performance of school feeding programmes by increasing pupil enrolment and attendance rates (Bitembeka et al., 2023). Additionally, community mobilization fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among local residents, which is essential for the long-term sustainability of the programme. A study in India highlighted that when communities are engaged in the planning and implementation phases, school feeding programmes are more

likely to be successful and sustainable (Babu & Hallam, 1989). In Akura Sub County Alebtong District, the active involvement of the community has contributed to the programme's high implementation level, as evidenced by the consistent provision of meals and the positive impact on pupil retention rates.

Finally, adequate and consistent school budget allocation is a fundamental determinant of the effective implementation and long-term sustainability of school feeding programmes. The findings of this study suggest that primary schools in Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District have made deliberate efforts to allocate financial resources towards school feeding activities, including food procurement, meal preparation, transportation of supplies, and programme supervision. Such budgetary commitments reflect the recognition by school management, local authorities, and communities that school feeding is not merely a welfare intervention but an essential investment in improving pupils' attendance, retention, academic participation, and overall educational outcomes.

Effective budget allocation also enables schools to maintain a regular supply of food, procure quality food items, and meet operational costs associated with programme implementation. Consequently, schools with well-planned and adequately funded budgets are better positioned to provide meals consistently, thereby minimizing interruptions that could negatively affect pupils' school attendance and retention. This finding complements the broader evidence that successful implementation of school feeding programmes depends not only on food availability but also on sound financial planning and efficient utilization of available resources.

Despite these positive efforts, challenges associated with delayed release of funds continue to undermine programme efficiency in some settings. Similar experiences have been reported internationally. For example, a study conducted in Indonesia found that less than 3% of the

allocated budget for school feeding programmes was disbursed during the first half of the financial year, resulting in delays in food procurement and programme implementation (Reuters, 2025). Such delays may disrupt meal provision, reduce programme reliability, and weaken the intended educational benefits of school feeding initiatives.

To enhance programme sustainability, school feeding budgets should be prioritized within school financial plans and safeguarded against reductions or delays in disbursement. According to Bundy et al. (2024), adequate and predictable financing is essential because school feeding programmes constitute an important component of social protection systems that simultaneously improve children's nutrition, health, learning, and school retention. Therefore, strengthening school budget allocation mechanisms, ensuring timely release of funds, and improving financial accountability are critical strategies for sustaining effective implementation of school feeding programmes. In the context of Akura Sub -County, continued commitment by schools, local government, and development partners to adequate budget allocation is likely to enhance the quality and consistency of school feeding services, thereby contributing to improved pupil retention and the attainment of broader educational goals.

In conclusion, the high level of school feeding programme implementation in Akura Sub County Alebtong District can be attributed to the establishment of clear guidelines, the formation of inclusive school feeding committees, active community mobilization, and adequate budget allocation. These components, supported by empirical evidence, have collectively contributed to the programme's success in improving pupil retention and educational outcomes.

5.2 To assess the rate of pupil's retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District

The study established that the rate of pupil retention in primary schools in Akura Sub - County, Alebtong District varied across schools, with the majority recording high retention($M=4.4$ $SD=0.51$). While a few exhibited moderate and low retention levels. These variations can be explained by differences in the implementation of school feeding programmes, the extent of community and government support, socioeconomic conditions, and school-level institutional factors.

Firstly, schools that recorded high pupil retention were characterized by effective implementation of school feeding programmes, strong community participation, and adequate government support. School feeding programmes reduce short-term hunger, improve learners' concentration, encourage regular attendance, and motivate pupils to remain in school throughout the academic year. According to Bundy et al. (2024), governments play a critical role in financing, coordinating, and monitoring school feeding programmes. The World Bank emphasizes that sustainable government investment in school meals is essential for ensuring programme continuity, improving educational participation, and enhancing learning outcomes. Where governments allocate sufficient financial resources, establish supportive policies, and strengthen implementation mechanisms, school feeding programmes become more reliable and effective in retaining learners. This finding implies that the relatively high pupil retention observed in many schools within Akura Sub -County may partly be attributed to consistent government support combined with effective local implementation of school feeding initiatives.

Secondly, some schools in Akura Sub -County experienced moderate pupil retention due to several implementation and contextual challenges. One major factor is inconsistent meal

provision. Although school feeding programmes exist in some schools, irregular supply of food reduces pupils' motivation to attend school consistently because learners and parents cannot rely on the programme as a dependable source of daily nutrition. Mwendwa (2019), in a study conducted in Kitui County, Kenya, found that interruptions in school meal provision resulted in irregular attendance and fluctuations in pupil enrolment and retention. The current finding is consistent with this study, suggesting that the effectiveness of school feeding programmes depends not merely on their existence but also on their consistency and reliability.

Another factor contributing to moderate pupil retention is limited community participation. School feeding programmes require active involvement of parents, School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), local leaders, and other stakeholders in mobilizing resources, monitoring programme implementation, and ensuring sustainability. Kiilu (2019) observed that schools with weak community participation experienced lower retention rates because inadequate local ownership reduced the programme's effectiveness. In the context of Akura Sub -County, moderate retention in some schools may therefore reflect varying levels of parental commitment and community engagement in supporting school feeding activities.

Furthermore, resource constraints contribute significantly to moderate pupil retention. Schools experiencing shortages of classrooms, desks, sanitation facilities, teaching and learning materials, safe water, and adequate staffing often struggle to provide an environment that encourages pupils to remain in school. The Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC, 2022) reported that inadequate educational resources negatively affect learner participation, attendance, and retention in Ugandan primary schools. Even where school feeding programmes are available, inadequate learning facilities may diminish pupils' overall school experience, thereby limiting the programmes' impact on long-term retention.

Thirdly, a number of schools in Akura Sub -County recorded low pupil retention owing to more severe socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional challenges. Cultural practices remain significant barriers to sustained school attendance in some communities. Okumu (2008), in a study conducted in Kotido District, Uganda, identified practices such as early marriage, child labour, and pastoral lifestyles as major contributors to school dropout and poor pupil retention. Similar cultural practices may influence some communities within Akura Sub -County, particularly where children's education competes with traditional responsibilities and household labor demands.

Economic constraints also continue to undermine pupil retention. Poverty limits parents' ability to meet both direct and indirect educational costs, including scholastic materials, uniforms, transport, and contributions towards school feeding programmes where parental support is required. Consequently, many children from economically disadvantaged households experience irregular attendance and are at greater risk of dropping out of school. Chimfwembe (2019) found that household poverty and financial hardships significantly contributed to learner dropout and reduced retention, particularly in rural communities. This finding corroborates the present study, suggesting that socioeconomic deprivation remains a critical determinant of pupil retention despite the presence of school feeding interventions.

In addition, inadequate institutional support contributes to low pupil retention. Schools with poorly trained teachers, weak administrative leadership, inadequate supervision, insufficient instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms, and poor physical infrastructure often fail to provide an enabling learning environment. According to EPRC (2022), institutional weaknesses reduce education quality and negatively influence learners' motivation to remain in school. In such schools, the benefits of school feeding programmes may be insufficient to overcome broader systemic challenges affecting learner retention.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that pupil retention in primary schools in Akura Sub - County is influenced by a combination of school feeding implementation, government commitment, community participation, socioeconomic conditions, cultural practices, and institutional capacity. While effective school feeding programmes supported by adequate government financing and active community involvement are associated with high pupil retention, inconsistencies in programme implementation, resource limitations, poverty, cultural barriers, and weak institutional support continue to constrain retention in some schools. Therefore, improving pupil retention requires a comprehensive approach that strengthens school feeding programmes through sustainable government financing, promotes greater parental and community participation, addresses household poverty, improves school infrastructure and learning resources, and enhances institutional capacity for effective programme implementation and educational service delivery.

5.3 To establish the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil retention in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District

The study established a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil retention in primary schools in Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District ($r = .85$, $p < .001$). The correlation coefficient of 0.85 indicates a very strong positive association, implying that improvements in the implementation of school feeding programmes are associated with corresponding improvements in pupil retention. The significance level ($p < .001$) further indicates that the observed relationship was highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. This finding suggests that school feeding programme implementation is one of the major factors influencing pupils' retention in primary schools in the study area.

The findings imply that schools which consistently provide meals, maintain effective programme management, ensure regular food supply, and involve parents and the community in programme implementation are more likely to retain pupils until completion of the primary education cycle. This can be attributed to the fact that school meals address one of the major barriers to education among children from economically disadvantaged households—hunger. Hunger reduces pupils’ ability to concentrate, increases absenteeism, lowers academic motivation, and ultimately contributes to school dropout. Therefore, when pupils receive nutritious meals at school, they are more motivated to attend school regularly, participate actively in classroom activities, and remain enrolled until completion.

The strong positive relationship found in this study agrees with the findings of Sekiswa, Zigira, Sekito, and Namatovu (2024), who reported that implementation of school feeding programmes significantly increased school attendance and reduced dropout rates among primary school pupils in Mukono District, Uganda. Their study revealed that schools providing daily meals recorded higher attendance and lower dropout rates than schools without feeding programmes. The similarity between the two studies suggests that regardless of geographical differences within Uganda, school feeding programmes remain an effective intervention for improving pupil retention. The consistency of these findings strengthens confidence that nutritional support plays a fundamental role in promoting continuous school participation.

Similarly, the present findings corroborate those of Benard and Namatovu (2025), who found that well-managed school feeding programmes in the Karamoja sub-region significantly enhanced pupil retention through improved attendance and increased parental confidence in schools. Their study emphasized that regular meal provision, proper programme coordination, and community participation encouraged parents to keep children in school even during periods of household food shortages. Comparable conditions exist in Akura Sub -

County, where many households experience seasonal food insecurity and poverty. Consequently, school meals become an important incentive for school attendance and continuous enrolment.

The findings are further consistent with those of Bitembeka, Irechukwu, and Niyibizi (2023), who established that school feeding programmes contribute to increased pupil retention by reducing household education costs while improving children's nutritional status and classroom participation. Their study argued that when families know that children will receive meals at school, the financial burden of providing daily food is reduced, making it easier for parents to maintain children's school attendance. This explanation is particularly relevant to Akura Sub -County, where many households depend on subsistence agriculture and often struggle to meet both educational and nutritional needs simultaneously.

The study also supports global evidence presented by Bundy, Burbano, Gelli, Jukes, and Drake (2024), who argued that school feeding programmes are among the most effective social protection interventions for improving educational access, retention, equity, and learning outcomes in low- and middle-income countries. According to their findings, school feeding programmes improve enrolment and retention because they simultaneously address malnutrition, poverty, and educational inequalities. The current study therefore contributes local empirical evidence supporting these international findings within the context of rural primary schools in Uganda.

The findings can further be interpreted using the Human Capital Theory, which guided this study. The theory argues that investment in children's health, nutrition, and education improves their productivity and educational outcomes. School feeding programmes represent an investment in human capital because they improve pupils' nutritional status, physical health, cognitive functioning, and school participation. Well-nourished pupils are better able to concentrate during lessons, understand classroom content, complete learning activities, and

achieve better academic performance. Improved academic achievement subsequently motivates pupils to remain in school, thereby increasing retention rates. The strong positive relationship observed in this study therefore provides empirical support for the Human Capital Theory by demonstrating that investment in school nutrition contributes significantly to educational continuity.

The strong relationship can also be explained through several practical mechanisms. First, school feeding programmes reduce short-term hunger during school hours, thereby improving concentration, attention span, memory, and classroom participation. Pupils who are not distracted by hunger are more capable of engaging effectively in learning activities, which increases their likelihood of remaining in school. Second, school meals serve as an economic incentive for poor households. In communities where food insecurity is common, parents are encouraged to send children to school because doing so guarantees at least one nutritious meal each day. Consequently, absenteeism declines while school attendance and retention improve.

Third, effective implementation of school feeding programmes strengthens relationships between schools and surrounding communities. Parents become more involved in supporting school activities through contributions of food items, labour, firewood, cooking utensils, or financial resources. Such community participation increases local ownership of school programmes, enhances accountability, and promotes collective responsibility for children's education. As a result, pupils are more likely to remain in school because both schools and communities actively support their educational progress.

The findings further demonstrate that schools with high-quality implementation of school feeding programmes are more likely to achieve high pupil retention. High retention is characterized by regular attendance, minimal dropout, and successful completion of Primary Seven. In these schools, meals are provided consistently, food quality is maintained, and

programme management is effective. These findings suggest that consistency rather than mere existence of a feeding programme determines its effectiveness. Schools that experience frequent interruptions in meal provision may not achieve similar retention outcomes.

The study equally acknowledges that moderate pupil retention may occur where feeding programmes are implemented inconsistently. Delayed food deliveries, inadequate food storage facilities, insufficient cooking equipment, and limited financial resources may interrupt meal provision. Such inconsistencies reduce pupils' motivation to attend school regularly and weaken the programme's influence on retention. This observation agrees with findings from Kitui County, Kenya (Mwendwa, 2019), where irregular food supply resulted in fluctuating attendance patterns and only moderate improvements in pupil retention.

Although the study established a strong positive relationship, it also recognizes that school feeding programmes alone cannot completely eliminate school dropout. Low retention may still occur because of poverty, child labour, early marriage, long walking distances to school, illness, orphanhood, domestic responsibilities, and negative cultural practices. These factors may force pupils to leave school despite the availability of meals. Consequently, the effectiveness of school feeding programmes depends on complementary interventions aimed at addressing broader socioeconomic barriers to education.

The findings therefore suggest that improving pupil retention in Akura Sub -County requires a comprehensive approach. Government should ensure adequate and predictable funding for school feeding programmes to guarantee uninterrupted meal provision throughout the school year. Schools should strengthen accountability systems for programme management, while local governments and development partners should invest in food storage facilities, kitchens, clean water sources, and cooking equipment. Furthermore, schools should encourage active participation of parents, School Management Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations, and

community leaders in planning, implementing, and monitoring school feeding activities to enhance programme sustainability.

Overall, the strong positive correlation ($r = .85$, $p < .001$) demonstrates that effective implementation of school feeding programmes is a major determinant of pupil retention in primary schools in Akura Sub -County, Alebtong District. The findings reinforce existing national and international evidence that school feeding programmes improve school attendance, reduce dropout, and promote completion of primary education. However, maximum benefits can only be achieved when school feeding programmes are implemented consistently and supported by broader interventions addressing poverty, inadequate school infrastructure, parental involvement, and other socioeconomic barriers affecting children's education. Consequently, strengthening school feeding programmes should remain a key policy priority for improving educational access, equity, and retention in primary schools within Alebtong District and Uganda generally.

5.4 Conclusion

- I. The findings of the study indicated that school feeding programme implementation in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District is generally at a high level. Key constructs such as setting clear guidelines, formation of school feeding committees, community mobilization, and adequate budget allocation have been effectively addressed in most schools. The programmes provide regular, nutritious meals, which improve pupil engagement, reduce absenteeism, and create a supportive learning environment. Empirical literature confirms that well-implemented school feeding programmes enhance educational participation, particularly for children from low-income households (Sekiswa, Zigira, Sekito, & Namatovu, 2024; Benard&Namatovu, 2025).

- II. Regarding pupil's retention, the study found that retention levels are generally high in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District, with most pupils regularly attending school and completing their academic terms. High retention is closely linked to the availability of school feeding programmes, community involvement, and supportive institutional and governmental structures. Moderate and low retention cases were mainly influenced by irregular programme implementation, limited resources, cultural practices, and socioeconomic constraints, consistent with findings from previous studies in Uganda and other Sub-Saharan African contexts (Bitembeka, Irechukwu, & Niyibizi, 2023; EPRC, 2022; Chimfwembe, 2019).
- III. The study further establishes a strong positive significant relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention in primary schools. Regular and well-managed feeding programmes serve as an incentive for pupils to attend school consistently. They also enhance cognitive performance, engagement, and learning outcomes, which collectively contribute to improved retention rates. Empirical literature supports this relationship, emphasizing that feeding programmes, when combined with community support and institutional effectiveness, can substantially reduce absenteeism and dropout rates (Bundy, Burbano, Gelli, Jukes, & Drake, 2024; Benard & Namatovu, 2025).

5.5 Recommendations

- I. Strengthen School Feeding Programme Implementation: Schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District should continue to ensure the consistent and effective implementation of feeding programmes. This includes setting clear guidelines for programme operations, forming functional school feeding committees, and ensuring

that meals are nutritious and served regularly. Strengthening these elements will help sustain high levels of pupil attendance and engagement

- II. Active involvement of parents, local leaders, and other community stakeholders is crucial for the success of school feeding programmes. Communities should be encouraged to contribute resources, participate in monitoring activities, and support meal provision to ensure sustainability. Evidence shows that strong community engagement significantly improves programme outcomes and pupil retention
- III. Ensure Adequate Budget Allocation: Government and non-governmental agencies should prioritize adequate budgetary support for school feeding programmes. Sufficient funding is essential to procure food supplies, maintain infrastructure, and support programme management. Proper resource allocation has been shown to enhance programme effectiveness and, consequently, pupil's retention
- IV. Address Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors: Policies and interventions should target socioeconomic and cultural factors that hinder pupil's retention, such as poverty, early marriages, and domestic labor. Complementing feeding programmes with support mechanisms, such as school uniforms, learning materials, and awareness campaigns, can help reduce dropout rates and improve retention outcomes
- V. Improve Monitoring and Evaluation: Regular monitoring and evaluation of feeding programmes should be implemented to ensure compliance with guidelines, assess programme effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement. Data-driven decision-making will enable schools to adjust strategies to maximize pupil's retention

5.6 Suggestion for Further Research

- I. Future research could investigate how school feeding programmes influence not only pupil's retention but also long-term academic outcomes, such as literacy, numeracy, and overall cognitive development. A longitudinal study would help establish causal links between nutrition, attendance, and learning achievement over multiple years.
- II. While this study highlighted the positive effects of feeding programmes, other socioeconomic and cultural factors such as poverty, child labor, early marriages, and community attitudes also influence retention. Further research could explore how these factors interact with school feeding programmes to affect pupils' decision to remain in school.
- III. Future studies could examine the cost-effectiveness and long-term sustainability of school feeding programmes in different Districts of Uganda. This research could assess how financial resources, government policies, and community contributions impact programme continuity and pupil's retention, providing evidence for policy improvements.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Informed Consent Letter

Dear participant, you are being asked to participate in this research project being conducted by Ojok Denish for a dissertation that is being done to fulfill requirements for a master’s degree in Education Foundation. This study is on “school feeding program implementation and Pupil’s Retention Rates in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District”. Hope to learn about the level of school feeding programme implementation and the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and the Pupil’s retention rates in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to answering a set of questionnaires.

There are no risks to your participation in this study. To protect your privacy and guarantee your confidentiality, your real name will not be used anywhere in the analysis, writing, presentation or publication of this study. It’s possible that you will not benefit directly by participating in this study. Others may benefit by increasing knowledge about school feeding program policy which may help in future. The information collected will be protected from all in appropriate disclosure under the law. All the data will be kept in a secure location. Ant information that is obtained in connection to the study that can be linked to you will be kept confidential. Access to data will be disclosed to the researcher and dissertation chair. There is no cost to you beyond the time and effort required to complete the procedures described above. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate to this study will involve no penalty. If you agree to participate in this study, please indicate this decision by signing below. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me on this numbers 0775602654/ 0741894324

By signing this consent form, I certify that I agree

To the terms of this agreement.

Sign.....Date.....

Appendix B: Research Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear sir/Madam,

I am Ojok Denish, a student of Gulu University carrying out a study on the topic entitled “school feeding programme implementation and pupil’s retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District”. Your insights are invaluable to this study, please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Thank you for your participation.

Section A: Demographic information

Designation.....

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age: Under 25 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 34-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐

55 and above ☐

3. Years of teaching experience:

0-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ 11-15 years ☐ 16-21 years and above ☐

4. Grade Level of education:

Bachelor ☐ Grade v ☐ Grade III ☐ Others ☐

Please rate the following statements based on your experiences and observations in your school. Your input will help us understand the relationship between school feeding programme implementation and pupil's retention rate in primary schools in Akura Sub County Alebtong District.

For each statement, please indicate your answer using the following scale:

Section B: Level of school feeding program implementation

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	NS	A	SA

Item Description	SD	D	NS	A	SA
The school has clear guidelines for implementing the feeding programme					
Feeding committees are formed and functional					
Community members are actively mobilized to support the feeding programme					
Adequate budget is allocated and utilized for the feeding programme					
Nutritious meals are regularly provided to learners					
The types of food given meet the nutritional needs of learners					
Meals provided are sufficient in quantity for all learners					
Meals are served with appropriate frequency throughout the school term					
Monitoring and evaluation of the feeding programme is conducted regularly					
Feedback from learners and parents is incorporated to improve the feeding programme					
The feeding programme contributes to improved learner attendance and performance					
School staff and volunteers are adequately trained to manage the feeding programme					

Formation of Feeding Committee

Item Description	SD	D	NS	A	SA
The head teacher is included in the feeding committee					
Parents are represented on the feeding committee					
Teachers responsible for feeding are committee members					
Learners have representatives on the feeding committee					
The committee has balanced gender representation					
Roles of committee members are clearly defined					
The committee meets regularly					
Decision-making within the committee is transparent					
The committee monitors feeding programme activities					
The committee reports to school stakeholders					

Community Mobilization

Item Description	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Parents are sensitized on the importance of school feeding					
Community meetings are held about the feeding programme					
Local leaders are involved in mobilization efforts					
Religious leaders participate in community mobilization					
Public awareness campaigns support the feeding programme					
Community members contribute food items					
Parents provide financial support					
Volunteers help with meal preparation					
The community provides cooking equipment or facilities					

Budget Allocation

Item Description	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Funds are allocated for the school feeding programme					
Feeding is prioritized in annual school budgets					
Clear budget lines exist for feeding activities					
School management committee is involved in budget planning					
Funds for feeding are released timely					
Feeding programme expenditures are tracked effectively					
Financial reports for feeding programme are prepared					
Regular audits are conducted on feeding programme funds					
Transparency in use of feeding funds is ensured					
Budget use for feeding is monitored and evaluated					
Budget variances are addressed promptly					

Section C: Level of retention rate in primary schools**High Retention Rate**

Item Description	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Learners attend school regularly throughout the term					
There are minimal dropout cases during the school year					
Learners are consistently present during examinations					
Absenteeism is identified and addressed early					
Attendance records are accurately kept					
Teachers support learners who struggle to attend regularly					
Peers encourage one another to attend school					
Parents are engaged in monitoring learner attendance					
The school provides a safe and friendly environment					
Incentives are given to learners for regular attendance					

Moderate Retention Rate

Item Description	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Learners attend most school days but sometimes miss lessons					
Absenteeism increases slightly during planting/harvest seasons					
Learners return promptly after short absences					
Teachers follow up on irregular attendance					
Few learners transfer to other schools mid-term					
Parents encourage learners to continue schooling					
Peers positively influence attendance					
The school provides some support for learners with challenges					
Basic scholastic materials are provided to needy learners					

Low Retention Rate

Item Description	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Many learners miss school for long periods					
Absenteeism is high during farming seasons					
Learners often fail to return after prolonged absence					
There are frequent transfers to other schools or Districts					
Economic hardships force learners out of school					
Early marriages or domestic duties cause dropouts					
Lack of parental support discourages continued schooling					
Poor school environment discourages attendance					

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Head Teachers, SMC and PTA Executives

- 1) What is the level of school feeding program implementation in your school?
- 2) What is the rate of pupil's retention in your school?
- 3) What is the relationship between school feeding program implementation and pupil's retention in your school?

Thanks for your contribution

Appendix D: Introductory Letter

GULU

P.O. BOX 166 GULU



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TEL: +256471432922;

**OFFICE OF THE DEAN, FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND
HUMANITIES**

July 31st, 2025

TO : WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to introduce to you Mr. Ojok Denish (Reg No. 22/U/1585/MFC/PS) a student pursuing a programme of study leading to an award Master of Education in Curriculum Studies and Foundation of Education of Gulu University, Master of Gulu University.

He is undertaking research on the Topic:

**SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND PUPIL'S RETENTION IN
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AKURA SUB-COUNTY ALEBTONG DISTRICT, UGANDA**

Which is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award.

Any assistance rendered to him in relation to this research work will be highly appreciated.

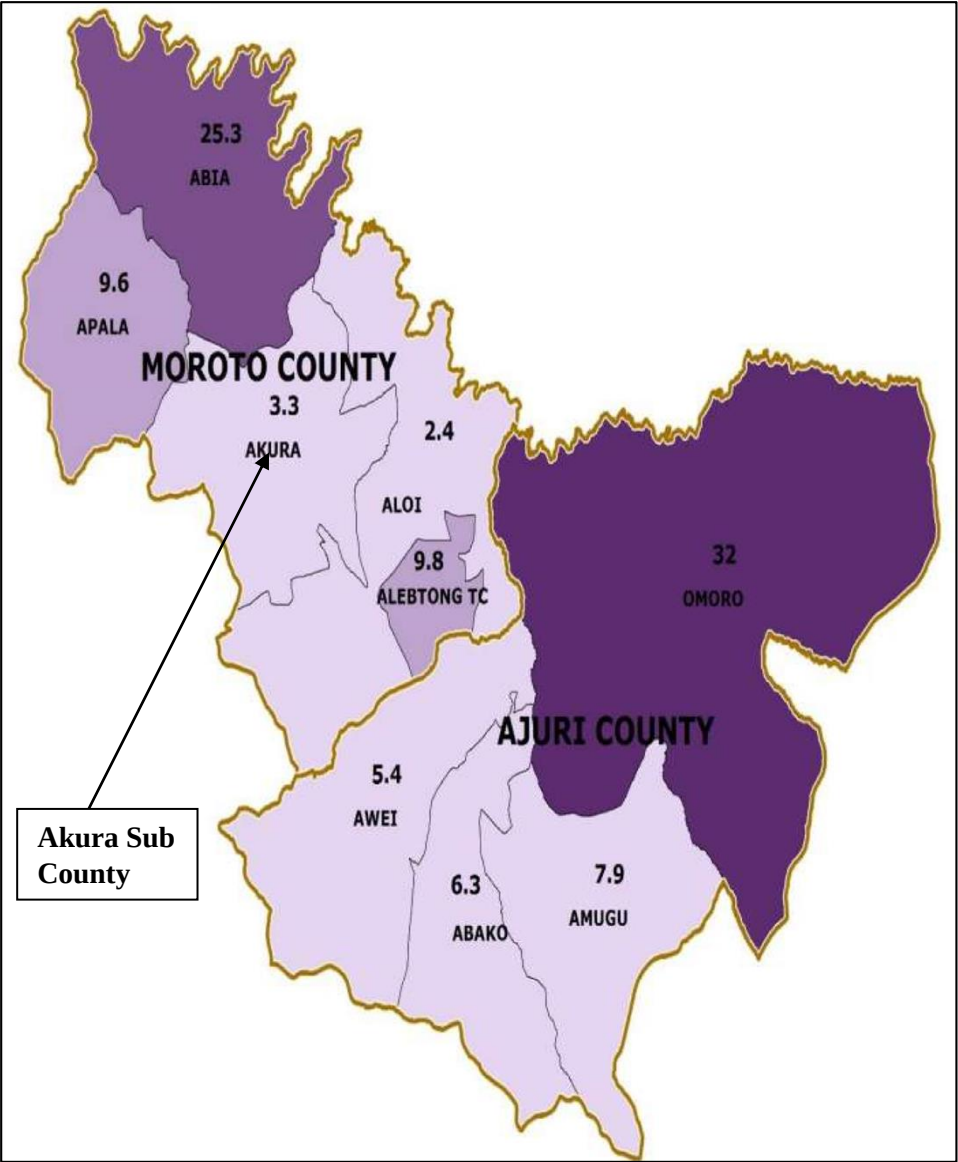
Yours faithfully,

Dr. Denis Thaddeus Ofoyuru

Dean, Faculty of Education and Humanities



Appendix E: Map of Alebtong District showing the location of Akura Sub County



Appendix F: Table for Determining Sample Size for a Finite Population

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Appendix G: Research Budget

S/NO	ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT COST	AMOUNT
1	<i>EQUIPMENT</i> Laptop computer Flask disc Diskettes Voice recorder Digital camera	1 1 1 1 1	80,000 35,000 10,000 300,000 400,000	800,000 35,000 10,000 300,000 400,000
2	<i>STATIONARY</i> Paper Envelops Pens Box files & springs	4 reams 2 packets 100 46	10,000 10,000 300 6,000	40,000 20,000 30,000 36,000
3	Typesetting, printing & photocopying	400 pages	10,00	400,000
4	Binding	15	20,000	300,000
5	Internet services modem	6 months	50,000	300,000
6	Consultancy	1	200,000	200,000
7	Training research assistant	1	50,000	50,000
8	Research assistant data collection facilitation	1	50,000	50,000
9	TRAVEL Alebtong to Kampala for Literature review In Kampala during literature review	2 7 days	30,000 50,000	60,000 350,000
10	Transport		200,000	200,000
11	Contingency			400,000
	TOTAL			4,431,000

Appendix H: Research Work Plan

Activities	Apri- Jun 2024	Jul 2024- Apri- 2025	May 2025	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025
Developing and defending concept paper							
Proposal writing and defense							
Developing tools							
Testing tools							
Data collection							
Data analysis							
Report writing							
Publication							

Appendix I: Originality Report

GULU

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PLAGIARISM CHECK

Declaration for Originality Form

This form must be completed and signed for all scholarly work produced.

Name: _____ **OJOK DENISH (MR.)** _____

Personal File No.(staff) Reg. (student). _____ **REG. NO. 22/U/1585/MFC/PS** _____

Faculty/Institute: _____ **FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES, GULU UNIVERSITY**

Department: _____ **CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY** _____

Title and bibliographic description of the work

SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND PUPIL'S RETENTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AKURA SUB-COUNTY ALEBTONG DISTRICT, UGANDA

Declaration.

1. I understand what plagiarism is and I am aware of the University policy on this regard,
2. I declare that this ... **Dissertation** ... (Proposal, thesis, essay, assignment, paper, report etc.) is my original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for examination, award of a degree or publication. Where other people's work or my work has been used, this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with Gulu University requirements,
3. I have not sought or used the services of any professional agency to produce this work,
4. I have not allowed, and shall not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his/her own,
5. I understand that any false claim of this work shall result in disciplinary action in accordance with University Policy on Plagiarism.

Signature _____

Date 25/08/2025

Originality Report

The article/thesis/document titled above have been subjected to plagiarism check and the level was found to be.....**18%** (percent) this is classified as:

- ☒ Minor
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Serious

Yours sincerely,

Manana N Herbert
Ag. University Librarian

