Public Primary Schools Committee Strategies for Soliciting Stakeholders' Contributions to Enhance Food Availability in Moshi District, Tanzania

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Abstract:- The study examined the implementation of public primary schools committee strategies for soliciting stakeholders' contributions to enhance food availability in Moshi District, Tanzania. The issue of food availability is of paramount importance, particularly in the context of primary schools, as it directly impacts the well-being and education of the pupils. Effective strategies to engage stakeholders in this endeavor are crucial for sustainable and comprehensive solutions. The Public Primary Schools Committee recognizes the significance of collaboration and engagement with various stakeholders to address the challenge of food availability. The study utilized a convergent design under a mixed research approach. The target population consisted of 2061 population and the sample was 306 including public primary schools, meal coordinators, head teachers, chairperson of the school committee and pupils. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23, employing methods such as sorting, frequency, percentages, and means. Qualitative data underwent transcribing and contextual analysis. The findings revealed that school committees demonstrated a moderate agreement on the strategies for soliciting stakeholders' contributions to ensure food availability in public primary schools. The study concluded that school committees have promising strategies like announcing parent meetings, connecting parents to online platforms via What's Up where announcements regarding food contributions can be made, implementing self-reliance activities to add nutrition to the food, collaborating with stakeholders including community-based organizations among others for soliciting stakeholders' contributions to ensure food availability in public primary schools in Moshi district. The study recommended that school administrators should strengthen the role of school committees to encourage teamwork and oversee food-feeding programs through official education policies.

Keywords:- Strategies to Solicit, Primary School Committees, Stakeholders Contributions, Food Availability.

I. INTRODUCTION

Access to adequate and nutritious food is a fundamental right for children and is crucial for their physical and cognitive development. Cupertino et al., (2022) revealed that at a global level, school feeding programs have gained recognition as effective interventions to address food insecurity and improve educational outcomes. The study conducted by Abizari & Ali, (2019) and Sekiwu, (2020) demonstrates that such programs contribute to increased school enrollment, reducing absenteeism, and improving academic performance and nutrition among children. On top of that Michale (2021) highlighted the importance of nutritional quality, meal variety, and monitoring and evaluation systems in ensuring program effectiveness. Moreover, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 2 emphasizes the significance of school feeding programs in eradicating hunger and achieving food security (Souza & Silva, 2020). However, in many regions around the world, attention should be paid to school committees that play a vital role in ensuring food availability in public primary schools.

In Europe, various countries have implemented successful school feeding programs that highlight the effectiveness of strategies employed by school committees (Cupertino et al., 2022). Moreover, the benefits of school feeding programs succeeded due to collaboration with school committees which resulted in increased student attendance, improved nutrition, and enhanced academic performance (Ndayishimye & Dushimimana, 2024). On the other hand, the effectiveness of school committees in enhancing food availability relies on their ability to solicit stakeholder contributions and engage in participatory decision-making processes. For instance, the United Kingdom's Universal Infant Free School Meals program has shown positive impacts on children's health and educational attainment (Gorard et al., 2022). These examples provide the best practices that can be adapted and implemented in other regions, such as Africa. Despite the strategies employed by school committees, there is a great need to identify the strategies employed by school committees to ensure food availability in public primary schools.

In Africa, food insecurity remains a pressing issue, with millions of schoolchildren facing malnutrition and inadequate access to nutritious meals (Modjadji & Madiba, 2022). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of undernourishment in the world (FAO, 2021) also (Onyango et al., 2019). The report by FAO indicated that African countries have to establish and implement the National School Feeding Program (NSFP) to ensure food availability in public primary schools. The NSFP should provide guidelines, funding, and technical assistance to school committees to enhance food provision. Kiilu & Mugambi, (2019) indicated several challenges of policy initiatives for the implementation of school feeding programs. These initiatives demonstrate the potential of school committees to play a significant role in enhancing food availability and promoting child well-being in the region. Regardless, of these initiatives there is an urgent need for effective strategies to enhance food availability in schools and mitigate the impact of food insecurity on children's health and education.

In East Africa, regional initiatives and collaborations have been established to tackle food uncertainty and enhance food availability in schools. Karaba et al., (2019) in Kenya highlighted the positive impact of the School Food Program (SFP) on pupils' class participation, emphasizing the importance of providing proper nutrition in early childhood education settings. Members of East African countries engaged in collaborative partnerships with local communities and organizations to enhance food availability. These partnerships involve various stakeholders, including parents, guardians, community members, and non-governmental organizations. For example, Banda, (2018) highlights the importance of school management establishing School Health and Nutrition (SHEN) committees to facilitate effective collaboration and mobilize community support. In this case, the East African Schools Feeding Network (EASFN) promotes knowledge sharing, capacity building, and policy advocacy to strengthen school feeding programs in the region (EASFN, 2014). However, such collaborative efforts raise the consciousness of school committees in the Moshi District Council to learn from experiences and best practices in neighbouring countries.

The government of Tanzania is among the East African countries that have implemented the National School Feeding Program (NSFP) to ensure food availability in public primary schools. Myamba (2022) indicated that while the government provides some funding for school meals, it is insufficient to meet the needs of all schools. The NSFP provides policy guidelines, funding, and technical support to school committees across the country. This national perspective policy of 2016 highlights the commitment of the Tanzanian government and other stakeholders like school committees to address food insecurity and improve educational outcomes through school feeding programs (Roothaert et al., 2021). The government tried to provide capacity building to school committees training strategies to enhance food availability in public primary schools. Training programs can equip committee members with

knowledge and skills in nutrition, program management, budgeting, and community engagement (Barroso et al., 2019). Capacity-building initiatives are facilitated by government agencies, non-governmental organizations, or local educational institutions (Shah-Nelson et al., 2020). However, having the policy still there is a great need to identify proper strategies employed by school committees to enhance food availability in public primary schools.

Creating awareness and fostering community engagement is crucial for the success of strategies employed by school committees. Regular communication channels, such as newsletters, meetings, or social media platforms, can be utilized to inform parents, guardians, and community members about food availability initiatives. Engaging community members as volunteers or advocates can strengthen their commitment and support. Despite the efforts of school committees, several challenges and constraints may impede the effectiveness of strategies to enhance food availability. Therefore, this study was conducted to describe the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by school committees in enhancing food availability in Moshi District Council, Tanzania.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study conducted by Michale (2021) explores the factors that contribute to the success of school feeding programs in Arada Sub City, Addis Ababa. The study investigates various elements that influence the effectiveness of these programs, such as funding, stakeholder collaboration, program management, and community engagement. The findings reveal that adequate funding, active involvement of stakeholders, efficient program management, and strong community engagement positively impact the success of school feeding programs. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of nutritional quality, meal variety, and monitoring and evaluation systems in ensuring program effectiveness. The conclusions emphasize the significance of addressing these factors to improve the outcomes of school feeding programs. The former study gave basic information regarding fund mechanisms, collaboration among stakeholders, management strategies, community participation, and the nutritional quality of meals to schools. However, the current study emerged to investigate the strategies employed by school committees to solicit stakeholders' contributions to improving food availability in public primary schools.

In Nyabihu District, Rwanda Ndayishimye & Dushimimana, (2024) conducted a study on the role of stakeholders' collaboration in the implementation of the School Feeding Program in Twelve Years Basic Education Schools to examine the collaborative efforts among stakeholders and ensure the success of the program. The study covers the period from 2020 to 2022 and employs a qualitative research approach. Through interviews, observations, and document analysis, the findings reveal that effective collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, school administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, plays a crucial

role in the successful implementation of the School Feeding Program. The study highlights the benefits of collaboration, such as increased student attendance, improved nutrition, and enhanced academic performance. The former study provided basic information regarding sustained collaboration and coordination among stakeholders as vital for the long-term sustainability and positive impact of the school feeding program. However, there is a great need to examine the impact of stakeholders' collaboration as it enables them to solicit their contributions to ensure food availability.

Kiilu & Mugambi, (2019) in Machakos County, Kenya conducted a study to examine the status of school feeding program policy initiatives in primary schools. Through a comprehensive analysis of policy documents and interviews with key stakeholders. The findings reveal that while there are policy initiatives in place to support school feeding programs, their implementation faces several challenges. Limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of coordination among stakeholders are identified as major barriers. Additionally, there is a lack of clear guidelines and monitoring mechanisms to ensure effective implementation and evaluation of the program. The study of Kiilu and Mugambi recognizes the importance of school feeding programs and improves their implementation of the school feeding program in Machakos County. However, policy alone without exploring strategies to solicit stakeholders' contributions might not solve the frequency availability of school meals hence the current study.

The study by Karaba et al., (2019) in Kenya aimed to assess the class participation of early childhood education (ECDE) pupils in centres with and without a school feeding program (SFP) in Kenya. The researchers used a descriptive survey research design and collected data through interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The findings revealed that pupils in ECDE centres with SFP had higher class participation compared to those without SFP. Based on the results, the study recommended the implementation of SFP in all schools. The study by Karaba highlighted the positive impact of SFP on pupils' class participation, emphasizing the importance of providing proper nutrition in early childhood education settings. However, the target was the strategies to solicit stakeholder contributions for improving food availability in public primary schools in Moshi District Council, Tanzania.

The study by Myamba (2022) in Tanzania titled "Sustainable Financing Initiative for School Health and Nutrition (SFI): School Meals Financing Rapid Assessment", investigates the financing mechanisms and sustainability of school meals programs in Tanzania. The researcher conducted a rapid assessment to understand the current financing landscape and identify opportunities for sustainable funding. The findings indicate that while the government provides some funding for school meals, it is insufficient to meet the needs of all schools. External funding sources, such as development partners and non-governmental organizations, play a crucial role but are often limited and unpredictable. The study emphasizes the importance of sustainable financing mechanisms to ensure the long-term viability of school meals programs. It recommends exploring innovative financing models, engaging local communities and private sector stakeholders, and advocating for increased government investment in school health and nutrition. The study by Myamba highlights the need for coordinated efforts and multi-sectoral partnerships to secure sustainable financing for school meals, ultimately benefiting the health and well-being of Tanzanian pupils. However, the current study focused on the strategies employed by schools' committees to solicit stakeholder contributions to ensure food availability in public primary schools in Moshi District Council.

Roothaert et al., (2021) conducted a study about Policies, Multi-Stakeholder Approaches and Home-Grown School Feeding Programs for Improving the Quality, Equity and Sustainability of School Meals in Northern Tanzania. The study employed a systematic review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions in Arumeru and Babati Districts, Tanzania. In total, 21 key informant interviews with 27 participants and 27 focus group discussions with 217 participants were conducted. The study revealed that Tanzania lacks a clear policy on school feeding; there are no guidelines for school meal quality, and participation in school feeding programs is not mandatory, leading to many students being left out and going hungry. The study recommended that policies and practices should be developed based on positive experiences of home-grown school feeding programs implemented in Tanzania by the World Food Program and Project Concern International and emphasized that these policies need to be developed in a multi-sectorial manner. The study of Roothaert et al., (2021) provides constructive ideas regarding the importance of policies, Multi-Stakeholder Approaches and Home-Grown in developing school feeding programs. However, policies themselves might not be suitable to ensure food availability without establishing strategies for the implementation. Therefore, there is a great need to investigate strategies employed by primary school committees for soliciting stakeholders' contributions to enhance food availability in public primary schools. Additionally, the study employed only the focus group discussion and key informant interview approach which influence social desirability bias, whereas the current study employed a mixed approach which allowed triangulation and cross-validation of findings from different sources specifically in Moshi District Council, Tanzania.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a convergent design under a mixed-methods research approach. In this design, the quantitative and qualitative evidence was collected and analyzed in the same phase of the research process in a parallel or complementary manner (Cresswell & Clark, 2018). The target population involved 229 public secondary schools, 229 meal coordinators, 229 head teachers, 229 Chair of School Committee and 1374 pupils' governments including 1 head boy, 1 head girl, 2 meal prefects and 2 health prefects' pupils from Moshi District Council in

Kilimanjaro Region. Multistage random sampling, a systematic and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select 34 public primary schools 34 meal coordinators, 34 chairpersons of the school committees, 34 head teachers, 204 pupils from whom 2 are head prefects, 2 are meal prefects and 2 health prefects making 15% as suggested by Cresswell & Clark, (2018) that a sample size of between 10-30% is commonly recommended. Data were collected through questionnaires for meal coordinators and head teachers while an interview guide was used for chairpersons of the school committees and focus group discussions for pupils. The validity of the instruments was ensured by requesting four research experts in the field of education from Mwenge Catholic University. The descriptive statistics were analyzed using mean, frequencies and percentages. Analysis of qualitative data was transcribed and contextually. The researcher adhered to ethical considerations in research by acknowledging all the sources of information from other researchers or respondents.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to assess strategies employed by School Committee to Solicit Stakeholder Contributions to Ensure Food Availability. The responses were collected from meal coordinators and head teachers who filled out the questionnaires. The interviewees were 16 chairpersons of school committees and 96 pupils who responded to focus group discussions. Regarding the points of circulation, the researcher thought 26 chairpersons and 196 pupils were enough for presenting the other in this study. The responses of meal coordinators and head teachers are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Responses of Meal Coordinators and Head Teachers (N=34) on the Strategies Employed by School Committee to Solicit Stakeholder Contributions to Ensure Food Availability at Public Primary Schools

s/n	Statement	Category	SD		D		U		A		SA		MS
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Seeks input from stakeholders effectively regarding food availability.	MC	9	26.5	13	38.2	4	11.8	8	23.5	-	-	2.44
		HT	10	29.4	9	26.5	5	14.7	10	29.4	-	-	2.32
2	Communicate effectively with stakeholders about the importance of food availability.	MC	9	26.5	-	-	16	47.1	9	23.5	-	-	2.76
		HT	10	29.4	-	-	12	35.3	12	35.3	-	-	2.74
3	Encourages stakeholders effectively to contribute ideas and suggestions to improve food availability.	MC	9	26.5	13	38.2	-	-	8	23.5	4	11.8	2.74
		HT	10	29.4	9	26.5	-	-	10	29.4	5	14.7	2.56
4	Uses stakeholder feedback effectively when making decisions about food availability.	MC	9	26.5	13	38.2	-	-	12	35.3	-	-	2.59
		HT	10	29.4	9	26.5	-	-	15	44.1	-	-	2.44
5	Involves parents/guardians effectively in ensuring food availability.	MC	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	20.6	27	79.4	4.21
		HT	-	-	-	-	6	17.6	15	44.2	13	38.2	4.79
6	Collaborates effectively with local communities and organizations to enhance food availability.	MC	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	64.7	12	35.3	4.56
		HT	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	44.1	19	55.9	4.65
7	Provides regular updates to stakeholders on the progress of food availability initiatives.	MC	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	23.5	26	76.5	4.76
		HT	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	23.5	26	76.5	4.76
8	Utilizes effectively stakeholder contributions to implement practical strategies for improving food availability.	MC	9	26.5	-	-	-	-	8	23.5	17	50	3.47
		HT	10	29.4	-	-	-	-	12	35.3	12	35.3	3.71
9	Ensures effective transparency in the allocation and utilization of resources for food availability.	MC	9	26.5	-	-	4	11.8	8	23.5	13	38.2	3.29
		HT	10	29.4	-	-	3	8.8	12	35.3	9	26.5	3.47
10	Soliciting stakeholder contributions to ensure food availability.	MC	9	26.5	-	-	4	11.8	8	23.5	13	38.2	3.24
		HT	10	29.4	-	-	5	14.7	10	29.4	9	26.5	3.47
											GMS	MC	3.49
												HT	3.41

Source: Field Data (2024)

Key: Category: MC=Meal Coordinator, HT=Head Teacher Choices = SD =Strongly Disagree, D=disagree, U= Undecided, A=Agree, SA=Strongly agree, Responses: *f=frequency, %=percentage, MS=Mean Score, GMS=Grand Mean Score*

Mean Score interpretation: 4.30-5.00=Very high, 3.50-4.29=High, 2.70-3.49=Moderate, 1.90-2.69=Low, 1.00-1.89=Very low. (Hashim et al., 2022)

Data in Table 1 shows that, the overwhelming majority 100% of meal coordinators and head teachers agreed and strongly agreed that school committees collaborate effectively with local communities and organizations to enhance food availability, while none of the respondents indicated undecided or disagree on the same statement. This implies that all the participants acknowledged the effective collaboration between school committees and local communities and organizations in improving food availability. Importantly, none of the respondents indicated being undecided or disagreeing with the statement. This suggests a high level of agreement and consensus among the participants regarding the positive impact of collaboration in enhancing food availability. The active involvement of these stakeholders and local communities has facilitated the provision of meals to pupils in public primary schools. Consequently, this creates the potential for public primary schools in the Moshi district council to implement a meal policy for their students. It appears that meal coordinators and head teachers were aware of the importance of collaborating with local communities and organizations as a major approach to ensuring food availability.

This finding aligns with a study conducted by Ndayishimye and Dushimimana (2024) in Rwanda which highlights the benefits of collaboration, such as increased student attendance, improved nutrition, and enhanced academic performance. In addition, school committees are charged with the role of mobilizing the community to participate in the school feeding program by educating them information about their roles and responsibilities. These systems contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how school committees strive to ensure food availability in public primary schools. Consequently, public primary schools receive support from parents, local communities, and organizations, all of which contribute to the goal of ensuring food availability.

During personal discussions with P3, a majority of them responded that.

"…Yes, the school committee engages parents, guardians, and local communities in several ways. They organize meetings where they discuss food availability and involve parents and community members in decision-making. They also encourage parents to contribute by providing ingredients or volunteering in the provision of foodstuff" (FGD with P3: march 11,2024).

Another P5 shared that, *"collaboration fosters a sense of ownership and engagement among stakeholders. When school committees involve local communities and organizations, it creates a shared responsibility for the success of the program"* (FGD with P5: March 12, 2024).

The information shared by the P5 highlighted the positive impact of collaboration between school committees, parents, and local communities in improving food availability. Their observations emphasize the importance of involving stakeholders, fostering engagement, and creating shared responsibility for the program's success. This implies that school leaders are involving different stakeholders to ensure food is available for the children in public primary schools. During the in-person interview with the chairpersons of the school committees, things were made more straightforward. The CP5 reported: *"The school committee uses various mechanisms and platforms to solicit stakeholder contributions such as announcing regular school meeting calendar. Also seeks input, suggestions, and feedback on matters concerning food availability in public primary schools through online platforms such as What's Up group"* (CP5: Personal communication, March 12, 2024). Another CP had this to say:

"...The school committee recognizes the importance of involving parents, guardians, local communities, and organizations in ensuring food availability. They actively collaborate with these stakeholders by organizing awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars to educate them about the significance of proper nutrition and the role they can play in supporting food services in schools. The committee encourages their active participation in activities such as fundraising, volunteering, and offering expertise and resources to improve food availability" (CP2: Personal communication, March 11, 2024).

The information provided by the CP suggests that the school committees actively engage stakeholders, seek their input and suggestions, and involve them in various activities aimed at improving food availability. These efforts reflect a commitment to collaboration, stakeholder involvement, and a shared responsibility in ensuring the success of food availability initiatives. The responses from the Chair Persons of the school committees imply that they provided regular updates to stakeholders on the progress of food availability initiatives. School committees use various mechanisms and platforms including encouraging parents to contribute to food contributions by either fees or food, calling regular parent meetings, sharing their ideas regarding food availability, providing their concerns, and presence suggestion boxes to help teachers and parents understand pupil's need, open what's up chart forums, and regular sending letters to keep stakeholders informed and engaged regarding food availability.

Headteachers and meal coordinators follow government guideline policy to ensure food contributions are available as members of the school committees apply different strategies to ensure food is available in public primary schools. This has been proven in the focus group discussion with "P" who responded that.

"…Yes, we have heard about the school committee's efforts to involve different people in decision-making about food availability in schools. They seek input and contributions from various stakeholders like our parents and guardians to ensure that food is available for us" (FGD with P5: March 12, 2024).

Similarly, the study of Michale (2021) in Addis Ababa reveals that the involvement of stakeholders, efficient program management, and strong community engagement positively impact the success of school feeding programs. Another pupil commented, *"When school committees actively involve local communities and organizations, it creates a shared responsibility for the success of the program. This shared responsibility promotes a sense of ownership, accountability, and commitment among all stakeholders, leading to increased effectiveness and sustainability of the food availability initiatives"* (FGD with P2: March 11, 2024).

The information provided implies that following government guidelines and involving different stakeholders in decision-making about food availability in schools is crucial. The efforts of head teachers, meal coordinators, and school committees in applying various strategies to ensure food is available in public primary schools have proven to be effective. This inclusive and collaborative approach fosters a sense of shared responsibility and commitment, leading to improved outcomes in terms of food availability initiatives in public primary schools. The findings go well with Maslow's theory that suggests that individuals must fulfil lower-level needs such as food which is fundamental for their physical well-being and growth before progressing to higher-level needs like esteem needs, and belongingness, as pupils feel cared for and part of a community that provides for their needs.

Data in Table 1 shows that a majority 73.5% of meal coordinators and 70.6% of head teachers agreed that school committees utilize effectively stakeholder contributions to implement practical strategies for improving food availability whereas a minority 26.5% of meal coordinators and 29.4% of head teachers indicated to disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement and none of them undecided to the same statement. The data indicated that meal coordinators and head teachers acknowledge the positive impact of involving stakeholders in the process of enhancing food availability. The contributions of stakeholders, such as parents, community members, and organizations, school committees implement practical strategies that address food availability challenges more effectively although there is a portion of meal coordinators and head teachers who may have reservations or differing opinions about the effectiveness of utilizing stakeholder contributions for improving food availability. These findings emphasize the importance of ongoing collaboration and dialogue between school committees and stakeholders to ensure an inclusive and effective approach to improving food availability in public primary schools. During group discussions with P1, they shared, *"School committees are actively seeking and utilizing stakeholder contributions to implement practical strategies for improving food availability"* (FGD with P1: March 11, 2024). Similarly, another group commented that:

"…The school committee can conduct surveys or create suggestion boxes to gather our feedback and ideas regarding food availability. By incorporating our suggestions and involving local communities in the decision-making process, the school committee can implement strategies that better meet the needs and preferences" (FGD with P4: March 12, 2024).

The information from pupils implies that by involving the stakeholders in decision-making processes, the school committee actively seeks and utilises stakeholder contributions, especially from parents, and local community members to enhance relevance and effectiveness, empowerment and ownership. By valuing the community's perspectives and involving them in decision-making, the school committee can create a more inclusive, responsive, and successful food availability program. During a personal interview with the chairperson commented that:

"…Our school committee actively seeks input, suggestions, and expertise from stakeholders, including parents, teachers, students, and community members. We believe in a collaborative approach where all stakeholders are encouraged to share their insights and ideas" (CP7: Personal communication. March 13, 2024).

Another "CP4", shared that, *"We value the contributions of stakeholders in our efforts to enhance food availability. Our school committee actively seeks and utilizes stakeholder contributions to implement practical strategies"* (CP4: Personal communication. March 12, 2024).

The information from the chairpersons during the personal interviews implies that the school committees prioritize collaboration and stakeholder engagement in their efforts to enhance food availability. They actively seek input, suggestions, and expertise from a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, students, and community members. The committees value the contributions of stakeholders and believe in implementing practical strategies based on their insights and ideas. By fostering a collaborative approach and utilizing stakeholder contributions, the committees aim to create effective and inclusive initiatives that address the needs and preferences of those involved.

The information provided in the context of involving stakeholders in decision-making processes, seeking their input and utilizing their contributions to improve food availability aligns with Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. Maslow's theory suggests that individuals have a hierarchy of needs, starting from basic physiological needs and progressing to higher-level needs such as social belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. In the case of improving food availability, the involvement of stakeholders, including meal coordinators, head teachers, pupils, parents, and community members, addresses different levels of needs within Maslow's hierarchy. By actively seeking and utilizing stakeholder contributions, the school committees are recognizing and addressing the

physiological need for food availability. The committees acknowledge that involving stakeholders leads to practical strategies that better meet the needs and preferences of the individuals involved, aligning with the need for esteem and belonging. Moreover, the collaborative approach and stakeholder engagement emphasized by the chairpersons reflect the higher-level needs of social belonging and self-actualization. By valuing the contributions of stakeholders, encouraging their insights and ideas, and involving them in decision-making, the school committees foster a sense of empowerment, ownership, and active participation. This empowerment and involvement satisfy the need for self-actualization, allowing stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to the improvement of food availability in their respective communities.

Data in Table 1 shows that a slight majority 61.7% of meal coordinators and 61.8% of head teachers strongly agreed and agreed that school committees ensured transparency in the allocation and utilization of resources for food availability whereas a minority of 26.5% of meal coordinators and 29.4% of head teachers strongly disagreed with the statement while 11.8% of meal coordinators and 8.8% of head teachers were undecided on the same statement. The data imply that to a great extent, the members of the committees worked transparently in allocating and utilizing resources in the course of ensuring the availability of food in schools. This means that meal coordinators and head teachers perceived the 2016 policy to have given school committees a mandate to perform their work independently without being interfered with by school management. In this scenario, the school committees may involve the school management when there is a need to meet the pupil's parents when they want to send a letter to remind them of food contributions, when collecting food contribution fees and when they want to inform about food contribution changes. Meanwhile, teachers' focus remains on involving pupils in establishing vegetable gardens as a means of implementing education for self-reliance in schools and ensuring pupils' well-being is fulfilled. The findings were supported by responses from a focus group discussion with the "P1", who majority said:

"…The involvement of stakeholders can make a big difference in ensuring food availability at our school. When parents, guardians, and community members actively participate, they bring valuable resources and ideas that help improve the meals we receive. Their contributions ensure that we have nutritious and sufficient food to support our learning and well-being" (FGD with P1: March 11, 2024).

The information provided by the pupils implies that they recognize and appreciate the impact of stakeholder involvement in ensuring food availability at their school. Their comments highlight the importance of collaboration, the value of resources and ideas contributed by stakeholders, and the positive effects on their learning and well-being. This information contradicts the findings of Roothaert et al., (2021) in Northern Tanzania who revealed that Tanzania lacks sufficient clear policy on school feeding; there are no guidelines for school meal quality, and participation in

school feeding programs is not mandatory, leading to many students being left out and going hungry. Roothaert et al., (2021) contradicted the findings of Kiilu and Mugambi (2019) in Kenya who revealed that while there are policy initiatives in place to support school feeding programs, their implementation faces several challenges. This indicates that while there may be policies in place, the actual execution and effectiveness of these programs can be hindered by practical difficulties.

Having a program seems to solve the case suggested by Karaba et al. (2019) in Kenya the findings revealed that pupils in Early Childhood Education (ECDE) centres with School Feeding Programs (SFP) had higher class participation compared to those without SFP, suggesting that such programs can have a beneficial impact. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2021) in Boston concurs with Shanko (2020) in Tanzania who indicated that teamwork among school administrators, teachers and parents to create supportive environments that promote healthy eating habits in public primary schools.

The information provided by the pupils implies that they have firsthand experience and positive perceptions of the impact of stakeholder involvement in ensuring food availability at their school. They recognize the importance of collaboration and the valuable contributions made by stakeholders in terms of resources and ideas. The students also highlight the positive effects of food availability on their learning and overall well-being. The information suggested that school committees performed their work following the circular 2016 policy in managing food availability in public primary schools as supported by interviews by "CP11", who said:

"…To implement effective strategies for effectively improving food availability, the school committee requires several key elements. These include adequate funding and resources, collaboration with relevant government departments and agencies, partnerships with local businesses and organizations, well-defined circulars, policies and guidelines for food procurement and distribution, trained committee and staff to handle food services, proper infrastructure and facilities for food storage and preparation, and regular monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies" (CP11: Personal communication. March 14, 2024).

The information provided by the chairpersons suggested that they recognize the importance of these key elements to effectively improve food availability. These elements encompass various aspects such as financial support, collaboration, partnerships, policies and guidelines, training, infrastructure, and monitoring. By addressing these elements, the school committees aim to establish a robust framework for enhancing food availability in their respective schools.

There is a similarity in perspective between teachers, pupils and parents regarding the solicitation of the stakeholders in ensuring the availability of food in public primary schools. The school management and committees tended to have a broader perspective, considering multiple strategies to ensure food is available in public primary schools such as collaborations with stakeholders, involving local communities in students' parent meetings, work transparency and ensuring proper resource utilization and allocation. School committees recognized that collaboration with different stakeholders is just one aspect among many that can influence the availability of food in public primary schools. On the other hand, teachers' transparency allowed the committees to perform their work without disturbance from any other group. Pupils believed that once school management and school committees work together their wellbeing at school will be improved.

Data in Table 1 shows that all 100% of meal coordinators and the majority 82.4% of head teachers agreed on the statement that school committees involve pupils' parents or guardians effectively in ensuring food availability while the extreme minority 17.6% of head teachers remained undecided on the item. This implies that schools' management had active school committees that formulated food committees fora to ensure pupils were getting their basic needs as well as ensure their well-being. Primary schools with school committees perform their activities in collaboration with parents effectively to ensure meals are available to the pupils. This makes it easy for the schools' committees to manage pupil's well-being at school and maintain the food status at public primary schools. Through this involvement, school committees and parents are made aware of the situation going on in primary schools regarding food availability. These findings are in line with those by Myamba (2022) in Tanzania who discovered that while the government provides some funding for school meals, it is insufficient to meet the needs of all schools. The findings of Myamba indicate that the government's funding for school meals falls short of meeting the requirements of all schools. This highlighted the importance of collaboration among various stakeholders, such as the government, organizations, and communities, to address the funding gap and ensure that all schools can adequately meet the nutritional needs of their students. Collaboration can facilitate the pooling of resources, expertise, and efforts to find sustainable solutions and provide sufficient support for school meal programs.

During the personal interview with the CP of the school's committees, various responses in line with the heads of schools and food coordinators surfaced. "CP3" said: "*We recognize the importance of involving parents, guardians, local communities, and organizations in ensuring food availability.*" (CP3: Personal communication, March 11, 2024). Another CP maintained:

"…Actively collaborate with stakeholders like parents to create awareness of the presence of school meetings, and seminars to educate them about the significance of proper nutrition conducted by government officials and the role they can play in supporting food services in schools for the sake of their children. The committee encourages their active participation campaigns in activities such as fundraising, volunteering, and offering expertise and resources to improve food availability" (Another CP13: Personal communication, March 15, 2024).

The information provided by the chairpersons of the school committees implied that the school committees prioritize involving parents, guardians, local communities, and organizations in their efforts to improve food availability. Their recognition of the significance of stakeholder engagement and collaboration demonstrates their commitment to creating a collaborative and inclusive approach to address food availability challenges. These responses also indicated that school committees actively solicit stakeholders to ensure food is available in public primary schools. Additionally, the responses from teachers and schools' committees are in line with the first level of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs which recognizes the significance of fulfilling the basic physiological needs of the pupils, such as providing nutritious meals to pupils, as an essential foundation for their overall well-being and development. By addressing the physiological needs of the students through food availability, the school committee can contribute to the satisfaction of the basic needs of the pupils.

The data presented in Table 1 reveals that the majority of meal coordinators 64.7% and head teachers 55.9% disagreed with the statements that school committees seek input from stakeholders effectively regarding food availability, Communicate effectively with stakeholders about the importance of food availability, encourage stakeholders effectively to contribute ideas and suggestions to improve food availability and uses stakeholder feedback effectively when making decisions about food availability based in their mean scores range from 2.32 and 2.7 respectively. This implies that school committees although encouraged, sought and communicated with stakeholders to a small extent most depend on the pupils' parent's involvement in the development of feeding programs in public primary schools.

The data presented in Table 4.4 revealed the grand mean scores of 3.49 for meal coordinators' responses and 3.41 for head teachers' responses indicating a moderate agreement that school committees use different strategies to ensure food availability in public primary schools. The moderate agreement level implies that there is a consensus among both meal coordinators and head teachers that employing different strategies is important for ensuring food availability in public primary schools. However, it also suggests that there may be some variations in the extent of agreement among individual respondents within each group. It is important to note that a moderate level of agreement does not imply that all respondents share the same opinion or that there is a complete implementation of strategies to ensure food availability. It indicates that, on average, respondents from both groups recognize the significance of employing diverse approaches in addressing this issue.

The study found moderate agreement among both meal coordinators and head teachers that school committees use different strategies to ensure food availability in public primary schools. Meal coordinators and head teachers' moderate agreement level implies that school committees employ different strategies in ensuring food availability in public primary schools. It's worth noting that head teachers perform better in collaborating with local communities and organizations and providing regular updates to stakeholders. However, there are key areas that require attention including seeking input from stakeholders, communicating the importance of food availability, encouraging stakeholder contributions, utilizing feedback in decision-making, collaborating with local communities and organizations, and ensuring transparency in resource allocation. These findings can guide efforts to enhance stakeholder involvement and improve food availability initiatives in the future.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the study concluded that school management acknowledges the importance of School committees in supervising food-feeding programs in public primary schools. Pupils, meal coordinators and head teachers recognize the strong effort made by schools' committees in collaboration with different stakeholders to ensure the provision of meals to pupils. The active involvement of stakeholders including parents, guardians, involvement of local communities and organizations strategies, has facilitated the implementation of meal policy in public primary schools. School committees also mobilize and engage these stakeholders through various mechanisms and platforms such as awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars in the villages. Additionally, actively providing regular updates on food availability initiatives, transparency in resource allocation and utilization, seeking input, suggestions, and feedback from stakeholders, encouraging their participation in fundraising, volunteering, and offering expertise and resources. The study recommends that the government should Recognize and strengthen the role of school committees in supervising food-feeding programs by incorporating it into official education policies. Parents should participate in school committee activities and initiatives related to food availability. Parents' involvement can significantly contribute to the success of food availability initiatives. School Management should Recognize and acknowledge the crucial role of school committees in supervising and managing food-feeding programs. Provide necessary administrative support and resources to ensure their effective functioning.

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