

Home Grown School Feeding Programme: A Survey of Implementation in UBE Schools in North Central Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Providing school meals is not just vital in nourishing the children, but also keeps them stronger and healthier as well as sustains the desire for quality education. The study investigated the implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study, and three hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 169 respondents; (49 state officials and 120 local government desk officers from the 120 local government areas) in six states and FCT Abuja. The Census sampling technique was used to collect data from all the 169 respondents. Implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme Questionnaire (IHGSFPQ) and Key Informant Interview were developed by the researchers and used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts in the Faculties of Education in Benue State University, Makurdi and Nasarawa State University, Keffi and the questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing and analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to determine the internal consistency and reliability coefficient which yielded 0.85. The data collected were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions while Chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. To collaborate the findings from the questionnaire, the qualitative data were analyzed using simple percentages, tables, and bar charts. The study's findings revealed that the amount of funds provided for Home-Grown School Feeding Programme is significant for its implementation in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria. The finding also revealed a significant number of food vendors recruited to implement the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools. Furthermore, the finding indicated that there is a significant level of monitoring and evaluation of the success of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools. It was recommended among others that stakeholders including government agencies and international donors should prioritise increasing funding for the HGSFP to ensure sufficient provision of nutritious meals and necessary resources for its effective implementation.

Keywords: Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, Implementation, Provision of Funds, Recruitment of Food Vendors and Monitoring and Evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Education all over the world is one of the most effective investments in improving economies and creating literate, self-reliant and healthy societies. The goals of basic education as explained by the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) in the National Policy on Education, include, providing the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship; wealth generation and educational advancement; mould

patriotic citizens that will contribute to social development through performance of their civic responsibilities and inculcate values and raise morale and upright citizens capable of thinking independently and also appreciating the dignity of labour. Others include inspiring national consciousness and harmonious co-existence; irrespective of the difference in endowment, religion, colour, ethnic and socio-economic background; and provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable him/her function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability.

This could be the reasons why world leaders have desired so much to make basic education available to all citizens. However, 77 million children of basic school education age, 49% of them in sub-Saharan Africa, are not in school, and 57% of them are girls (Onah & Onah, 2021; UNESCO, 2006). In a bid to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for education, governments are faced with the need to identify and prioritize different educational policies within different national contexts. This led to the idea of introducing the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme to lure basic school-aged children to school to instil proper values in them for a better society. It has also been argued that school feeding programmes are effective in stimulating demand for education, particularly in settings where school attendance is low and children come from rural and relatively low socioeconomic backgrounds (Kazianga et al., 2009; Kearney, 2010; World Food Programme, 2013). However, this argument may not be entirely correct as rich and developed countries such as Europe and America are leading the way in school feeding programme to improve the health and educational status of children. As it stands, school feeding is being used to entice and spur children to attend school in both developed and developing countries.

The introduction of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) is traced to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative and several conferences held thereafter by African leaders. The aim was to ensure peace, security, food, economic, political and corporate governance and to make the continent an attractive destination for foreign investment (World Food Programme, 2020). Some of the developments that spawned this initiative include the New Partnership for African Development which according to the blueprint is a pledge by African leaders based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction to eradicate poverty, to place their countries on the path of sustainable growth and development and participate actively in the world economy and politics (Adekunle & Ogbogu, 2016). The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme and the Millennium Hunger Task Force among others were initiatives which were designed to link school feeding to agricultural value chain through the purchase and use of locally produced food which is one of the programme's primary goals (Onah & Onah, 2021; Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Gelli, Jukes & Drake, 2009).

The HGSFP is a critical intervention that has been introduced in many developed and developing countries of the world to provide food during school hours for the school children to address poverty, stimulate school enrolment and enhance pupils' performance. School feeding can be classified into two main groups based on their modalities: in-school feeding, where children are feed-in school; and take-home rations, where families are given food if their children attend school (World Food Programme, 2020). In-school feeding, which is in practice in Nigeria, can be divided into two common categories: programmes that provide meals and programmes that provide high energy biscuits or snacks to elementary school children. World Food Programme (2016) states that school feeding programmes are far more than food-giving. They are investments in the world's poorest children. The programmes are also investments in our common future and global stability. The essence of this programme is to bring children into school and out of hunger.

In developing countries, it is estimated that about 60 million children go to school hungry every day and about 40 per cent of them are from Africa where Nigeria is part of (Onah & Onah, 2021; Akanbi, 2013). In Nigeria, an estimated 40% of all school children go to school hungry and more than 10 million children do not attend school at all (Adekunle & Ogbogu, 2016). After an initial attempt to run a national school feeding programme in 2005, a redesigned programme was launched in 2016. The new National Home-Grown

School Feeding Programme is one of the five National Social

Investment Programmes (NSIPs) which have been launched by the President Buhari's administration. Its strategic plan stipulates that it will provide one meal that worth N70 per school day to all public primary school pupils in grades one to three in Nigeria. Providing school meals is not just vital in nourishing the children, but also keeps them stronger and healthier as well as sustains the desire for quality education (World Food Programme, 2020; Adekunle & Ogbogu, 2016; Drake, Woolnough, Bundy & Burbano, 2016; Adelman Alderman, Gilligan & Lehrer, 2008). Essentially, the poorest children who suffer most from hunger can attend school and learn while there. This ensures the human right to adequate food, further responds directly SDGs 1 and 2 related to ending poverty and hunger; SDGs 3, 4 and 10 which advocates for good health, wellbeing and quality education as well as reduced inequalities. The HGSFP typically aims to achieve four main objectives: enhancing PUPILS' attention span and learning capacity by alleviating short-term hunger, thereby improving academic performance; contributing to the nutritional intake of primary school children through consistent feeding initiatives; addressing regional disparities in enrolment and attendance rates; and preventing dropouts, increasing enrolment, and ensuring attendance and retention in public primary schools (Abotsi, 2013).

In Africa, Nigeria happened to be one of the 12 pilot countries selected for the programme. Others are Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. So far, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Mali have commenced the implementation of the school feeding programme (Akodu, 2019). Akodu (2019) postulates that in compliance to the above directives, the Federal Government of Nigeria came up with the Universal Basic Education Act in 2004, which provided the enabling legislative backing for the execution of the home-grown school feeding and health programme. Towards the realization of the objectives of the Universal Basic Education programme and the central role of nutrition, the Federal Ministry of Education launched the school feeding and health programme in 2005. The overall goal of the school feeding programme in Nigeria was to reduce hunger and malnutrition among school children and enhance the achievement of Universal Basic Education (Onah & Onah, 2021). The Federal Government of Nigeria had taken measures to support the successful execution of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, focusing on essential elements such as funding, local food procurement, utensil provision, food vendor recruitment and payment, and supervisory logistics.

Funding involves providing resources, typically financial or other forms of support such as time and effort, to fulfil a specific purpose (Pinga & Olatu, 2017). In some countries of the globe like Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, funding of school feeding programmes come in packages where there is a combination of international and national funding; and the donor-funded element may be in the form of cash or kind of donations. It has been noted that food for the programme has either been donated by developed countries or purchased from big traders in the region with money from donors.

In Nigeria, the design is for the federal government to fund the feeding of pupils in primary one to primary three, the funds are released through the Social Investment Account Unit in the Ministry of Budget and Planning. This unit monitors the use and disbursement of funds while the actual implementation is carried out by the food vendors and farmers who supply them the produce (Onah & Onah, 2021). These funds are remitted directly to the accounts of vendors every 20 days. The cost of a plate of meal is N70 and this is used to multiply the number of pupils to determine what a vendor receives (Oladele, Yahaya, Nwokolo & Adamu, 2020). The narrative highlights significant underfunding of the NHGSFP in Nigeria, evident in the provision of only N70 for a plate of food, which is widely regarded as inadequate for a balanced school meal. This has led to widespread criticism and calls for an upward review of the funding amount by various stakeholders (Oladele, Yahaya, Nwokolo & Adamu, 2020; Onah & Olise, 2020; Edeh, 2019). The inadequacy of N70.00 per meal is under scored by the fact that it is not adjusted for inflation. Since the cost was established in 2016, food inflation has risen, reaching a 4-year rate of 15.63% in January 2022 (CBN,

2022). Information gathered through KII reveals the prevalence of irregular payments to food vendors, which has resulted in a break in pupil feeding. This was confirmed by Onah and Olise (2020), as the feeding was irregular and cooks were not seen for weeks. The school feeding programme was put on hold for the first term of 2019, as no funds were released to the vendors (Edeh, 2019).

While the state governments provide counterpart funding in the form of personnel, logistics and provision of utensils as well as funds for the training of the personnels and vendors to facilitate effective implementation of the programme. However, it seems that some state governments are yet to provide their part of the funding on the bases of the paucity of funds and that they were not consulted at the initial stage of the programme. This is one of the reasons while some states like Benue, Kogi and Kwara started the programme around 2016, while Nasarawa and Abuja joined the programme in 2020. Sadly, in some states, the programme management team seems to have inflated the figure of pupils to attract more funds from the federal government and even recruit more cooks thereby sabotaging the implementation process. Also in Nigeria, donor agencies only contribute to deworming the pupils, whereas, in other nations, these donor agencies contribute funds for the implementation of this programme. One, therefore, wonders why it is different here in Nigeria.

Recruiting food vendors is a critical aspect that can impact the implementation of the HGSFP, this enables the state team in identifying and hiring suitable candidates, either internally or externally, for the job opening in a timely and cost-effective manner (Akpakwu, 2008). Recruitment of food vendors entails selecting qualified candidates or cooks to prepare and serve meals to primary school pupils during school hours, involving analyzing job requirements, attracting applicants, screening and selecting candidates, and hiring and training new vendors to integrate into the system.

All the food vendors are recruited from communities around the primary schools for the programme for the sake of convenience. They are verified and trained by the state governments through institutions/organisations like Centre for Food Technology and Research (CEFTER) and others to provide the catering service in the states. Generally, this programme is driven through community participation where residents in the community are engaged as cooks to provide feeding services. Even though the food vendors are very essential to the successful implementation of the programme, politicians and some officials at the social investment units are alleged to have sometimes influenced the recruitment of cooks who are not within the school area (Yunusa, Gumel, Adegbusi & Adegbusi, 2012). This may have affected the timely delivery of the food to the pupils. Worst still, some vendors do fail to provide the food as agreed and this may serve as a hindrance to the successful implementation of the programme. This, therefore, calls for an effective monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that the recruited food vendors are implementing the programme as planned to enhance its success. To ensure that the vendors are doing the right thing, one must monitor and ensure that what they provide to the children meets the specifications.

The importance of monitoring and evaluation system in the implementation of programmes cannot be underestimated. Because of this, some of the respondents during KII noted that lack of adequate evaluation and monitoring mechanism is a major challenge of the programme. Some of the interviewees, however, noted that there exists some form of monitoring systems at the state, local government and school levels. At the state level, the state monitoring committee and state steering committee responsible for programme oversight, the state ministry of education and the State Universal Basic Education Board are responsible for collecting data on school enrolment and attendance on regular basis. The Ministry of Health is responsible for collecting state-wide data on general child health and nutritional status. Local Government Education Authority secretaries and planning officers are responsible for collecting weekly feeding forms that consist of the number of pupils that have been fed and for collating the data for the programme, and the Zonal inspectors of education are responsible for monitoring the feeding process, environmental health and enrolment data (Onah & Onah, 2021; Taylor & Ogbogu, 2016). Onah and Onah (2021) reported that at the school level, the SBMC are responsible for the programme oversight; the quality of the food is monitored by

the head-teacher or health teacher while the Parent Teacher Association's representative and the school prefects randomly inspect the food. Surprise checks are also conducted regularly by programme monitors otherwise known as independent monitors/ evaluators. Chabite, Garrine, Ferrão and Fernandes (2018) posits that monitoring and evaluation teams are faced with the challenge of mobility and logistics funds to carry out rigorous and consistent supervision. Most times, these people do not have a vehicle to visit the schools. Even when vehicles are available, the funds to fuel the cars and the feeding of the field staff are hardly provided on time which seems to have affected the smooth implementation of the programme.

It is important to note that if a timely assessment of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme is not done and problems identified and tackled, the programme may go the way other educational policies and programmes have gone; and the nation will continue to rollout increasing list of basic education programmes that do not meet their objectives fully and continue to waste her resources and wallow in underdevelopment. This is one of the reasons why this study is necessary or needful.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the efforts of world leaders, governments of various countries and organizations in ensuring conducive teaching and learning atmosphere by introducing National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme that would sustain pupils' enrolment, attendance, retention and performance rates, the factors associated with the implementation process in North Central Nigeria seem to hamper and overwhelm these efforts. Many factors appear to have been associated with effective implementation of home-grown school feeding programme in North Central Nigeria. One of these could be the provision of funds that are supposed to be the major element in the implementation process. The N70 mark as the cost of a plate of meal per day for each school child appears to be grossly inadequate, as inflation has taken hold, and that amount cannot feed a child every day. Even the N70, which we criticised, appears to be delayed at times.

Supervisors and school principals, who are responsible for ensuring that the limited funds available are used effectively, appear to have engaged in unethical behaviour by influencing the number of pupils in schools as well as vendors in order to secure additional funds from the federal government. Often, the social investment offices involved in the recruitment of food vendors could not follow due process and procedures. They sometimes introduce ghost vendors in the system or employ vendors who are not within the location of the school to cook for the pupils and this becomes difficult for such vendors to meet up with the enormous task of moving from their location to come cook for children in the schools assigned to them. This could be the reason why some schools have not benefited fully from the programme in North Central Nigeria. Besides, it seems that the recruitment of food vendors for the programme has been politicized, as some state coordinators of Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes are more concerned with vendors' political affiliation than their competence. Worst still, politicians may have influenced the process to ensure that their candidates are considered even if such candidates are not qualified or do not reside within the local government.

Besides, regular monitoring and evaluation practices which are essential and should serve as watchdogs for the effective implementation of the programme, are delayed and irregular in most states in North Central Nigeria due to lack of, or no logistics to go out and inspect food vendors, thereby compelling supervisors to play truancy and allow the food vendors to operate at their pace to the detriment of the pupils and the general programme. All these factors could hinder effective implementation and may make the programme to. The problem of this study, therefore, put in a question form is: What is the extent of implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding

Programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the extent of provision of funds for implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria.
2. ascertain the extent of recruitment of food vendors for implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools.
3. determine the extent of monitoring and evaluation of achievement in the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent have funds been provided for implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria?
2. To what extent are food vendors recruited for implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools?
3. To what extent have monitoring and evaluation of achievement been done for implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. The extent of funds provided for Home-Grown School Feeding Programme is not significant for the implementation of the programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria.
2. The extent of food vendors recruited for the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools is not significant.
3. The extent of monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools is not significant.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 169 respondents from six states and FCT Abuja (7 programme managers, 7 heads of operation, 7 nutritionists, 7 conflict addressors, 7 data managers, 7 store managers and 7 cook welfare officers that form the state officials and one desk officer from the 120 local government areas in North Central Nigeria). The census sampling technique was used to collect data from all the 169 respondents. The quantitative data was collected from 120 local government desk officers, while the qualitative data was collected from 49 state officials.

A researchers-structured questionnaire titled “Implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme Questionnaire (IHGSFPQ)” and “Key Informant Interview (KII)” were used for data collection. The instrument was divided into Sections A and B. Section A contained items on the personal data of the respondents, while Section B was divided into three clusters – 1, 2 and 3. Cluster 1 contained items 1-5 that bordered on the extent of provision of funds for implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria. Cluster 2 contained items 6-10 on the extent of recruitment of food vendors for implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools. While cluster 3 housed items 11-15 that deals with the extent of monitoring and evaluation of achievement in the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools. The decision was based on the real limits of numbers. Hence a mean response score of 3.50-400 was considered

Very High Extent (VHE), 2.50-3.49 High Extent (HE), 1.50 -2.49 Low Extent (LE), while 0.50-1.49 was considered as Very Low Extent (VLE).

The data collected were analyzed using Mean Scores and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. Any item with less than 2.50 was rejected and considered as having low or negative impact. On the other hand, it was accepted as having high and positive impact if it was 2.50 and above. Chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The qualitative data were analyzed using simple percentages, tables, and bar charts.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data were analyzed and interpreted in response to the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1: To what extent have funds been provided for implementation of home-grown school feeding programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Extent of Funds been Provided for Implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE Schools

S/No	Item Description	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	M	SD	Dec.
1	The federal government frequently provides funds to vendors for the feeding of pupils in UBE schools in my area.	31	55	20	14	2.86	0.94	High Extent
2	Funds provided by federal government for the feeding of pupils in UBE schools in my area are not adequate.	29	61	23	7	2.93	0.82	High Extent
3	State government has been providing adequate personnel for the implementation of the programme in my area.	37	49	19	15	2.90	0.98	High Extent
4	State government has been providing funds for the provision of utensils and training of vendors in my area.	18	60	25	17	2.66	0.90	High Extent
5	Donor agencies have not been providing funds to support the feeding of schools in my area.	39	70	11	0	3.23	0.60	High Extent
	Cluster Mean					2.92		High Extent

Source: Researchers' Field Survey Results (2022)

Table 1 revealed that the mean ratings of items 1-5 are 2.86, 2.93, 2.90, 2.66 and 3.23 with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.94, 0.82, 0.98, 0.90 and 0.60. Item by item analysis shows that the respondents unanimously agreed that the federal government frequently provides funds to vendors for the feeding of pupils in UBE schools. Although funds were provided, respondents stated that they were inadequate. The respondents were of the opinion that state government has been providing adequate personnel for the implementation of the programme. In addition, they also agreed that state government has been providing funds for the provision of utensils and training of vendors. Moreover, the respondents agreed that donor agencies have not been providing funds to support the feeding of schools. The table also showed that the respondents had a cluster mean of 2.92, which is above the cut-off point of 2.50; and the standard deviations were closely related, indicating homogeneity. This demonstrated that substantial funds were provided for the implementation of a home-grown school feeding programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria.

Interview Question 1: Who provides funds for the implementation of home-grown school feeding

programme? Are the funds adequate? What other alternative means do you think funds should be sourced to complement the existing channels?

Table 2: Interview Schedule of Respondents on the Alternative Means of Sourcing Funds to Complement Existing Channels HGSFP

S/No	Items	Freq.	Percent(%)
1	The federal and state government	49	100%
2	No, the funds are not adequate	49	100%
3	Collaborating with NGOs.	15	30.6%
4	State government should draw specific line budgets for NHGSFP.	16	32.7%
5	Local government should also provide funding support.	10	20.4%
6	Well to do citizens should support the funding of NHGSFP.	8	16.3%
Total		49	100%

Source: Researchers’ Field Survey Results (2022)

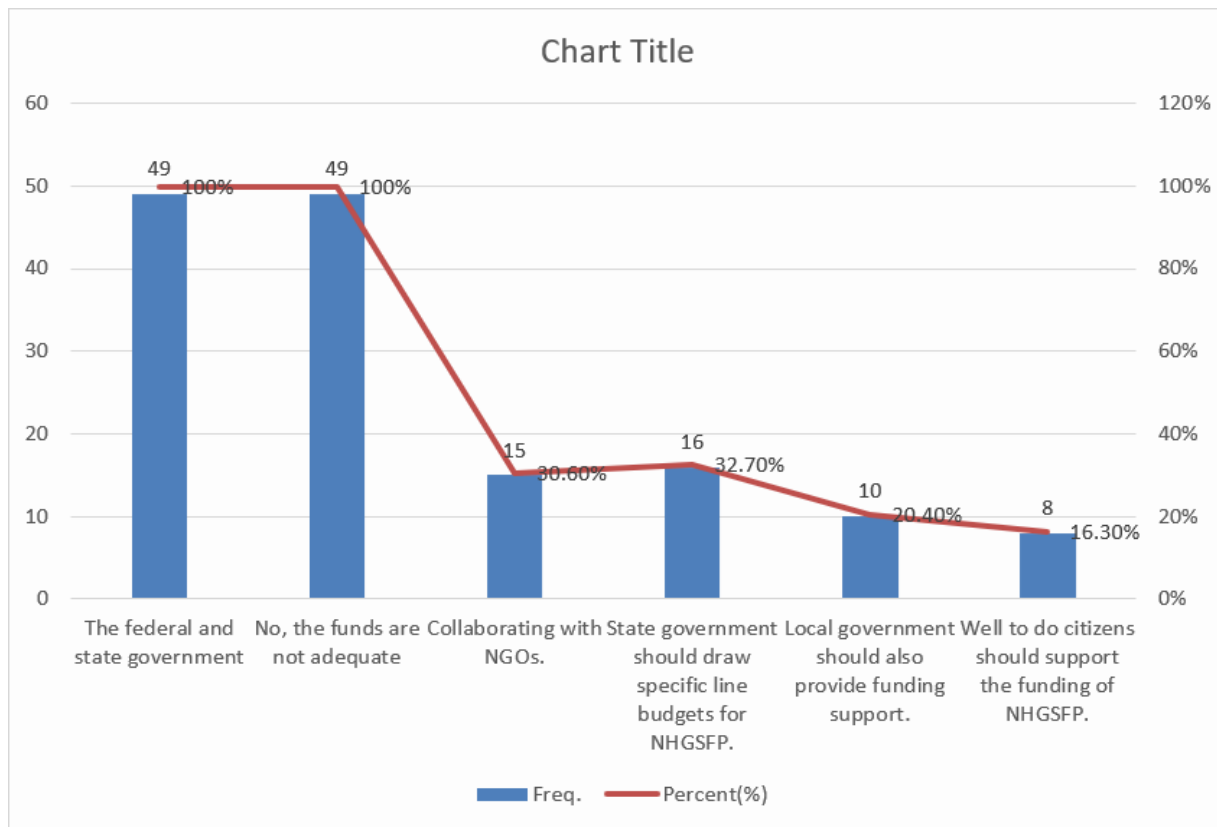


Figure 1: A bar chart depicting respondents’ opinions on who provides funds, how adequate the funds are, and alternative methods of sourcing funds to supplement existing channels of funding HGSFP.

Table 2 and figure 1 shows that 49 (100%) respondents agreed that the federal and state governments have been providing funds for the implementation of HGSFP. In addition, 49 (100%) said the funds were not enough for effective implementation of the programme. Furthermore, 30.6% identified NGOs as an alternative source that should support the implementation of HGSFP, while 32.7% responses identified that state governments should draw specific line budget to enhance the effective implementation of HGSFP. In addition, 20.4% also suggested that local governments should provide funds to support HGSFP, while

16.3% suggested that well to do citizens should support the funding of NHGSFP.

Research Question 2: To what extent are food vendors recruited for implementation of home-grown school feeding programme in UBE schools?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Extent Food Vendors are Recruited for the Implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE Schools

S/No	Item Description	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	M	SD	Dec.
6	Vendors recruited are adequate for the implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in my area.	50	38	19	13	3.04	0.91	High Extent
7	In my area vendors are drawn from the communities where these schools are located.	23	51	26	20	2.63	0.97	High Extent
8	Political interference has influenced the recruitment of unqualified vendors into the system in my area.	32	46	25	17	2.78	0.99	High Extent
9	In my area vendors are recruited based on political affiliations rather than merit.	35	62	14	9	3.03	0.85	High Extent
10	Officials from the state social investment unit do influence the recruitment of their relatives into the system.	16	72	20	12	2.77	0.81	High Extent
	Cluster Mean					2.85		High Extent

Source: Researchers’ Field Survey Results (2022)

Table 3 showed that the mean ratings of items 6-10 are 3.04, 2.63, 2.78, 3.03 and 2.77 with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.91, 0.97, 0.99, 0.85 and 0.81. The table revealed that respondents had agreed that vendors recruited are adequate for the implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme and that vendors are drawn from the communities where these schools are located. They also agreed that political interference had influenced the recruitment of unqualified vendors into the system. The respondents unanimously agreed that vendors are recruited on the basis of political affiliations rather than merit. Moreso, that officials from the state social investment unit do influence the recruitment of their relatives into the system. The cluster mean of 2.85 was found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviations were closely related, suggesting homogeneity. Thus, indicating high level of food vendors been recruited for implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools.

Interview Question 2: What are the criteria used for the recruitment of food vendors?

Table 4: Interview Schedule of Respondents on the Criteria used for the Recruitment of Food Vendors

S/No	Items	Freq.	Percent(%)
7	The vendor must know how to cook.	8	16.3%
8	Who must reside within the LGA and the area of the school.	18	36.7%
9	Must be within certain age bracket.	11	22.5%
10	Must be healthy to be able to cook for the children.	12	24.5%
Total		49	100%

Source: Researchers’ Field Survey Results (2022)

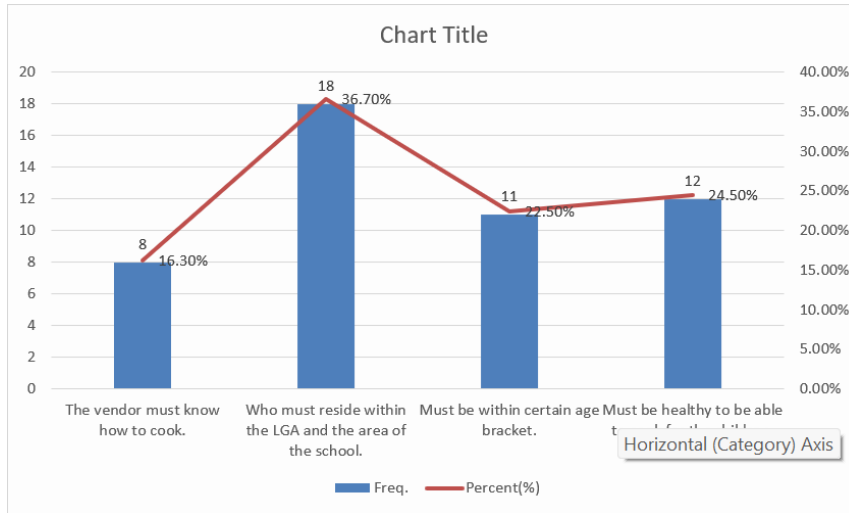


Figure 2: Bar chart showing respondents opinion on the criteria used for the recruitment of food vendors.

Table 4 and figure 2 shows that 16.3% respondents posited that vendors must know how to cook before being engaged, while 36.7% responses identified that to engage a vendor, such a vendor must reside within the Local Government Area and the area of the school. Furthermore, 22.5% of respondents stated that to be qualified as a vendor, such person must be within a certain age range. In addition, 24.5% also pointed out that in order to qualify as a vendor, one must be healthy enough to cook for children.

Research Question 3: To what extent have monitoring and evaluation of achievement been done for implementation of home-grown school feeding programme in UBE schools?

Table 5: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Extent of Monitoring and Evaluation of Achievement for Implementation of HGSFP in UBE Schools

S/No	Item Description	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	M	SD	Dec.
11	Vehicles are not provided for supervisors to frequently visit schools to ensure that pupils are served appropriately.	43	71	6	0	3.31	0.66	High Extent
12	In my area allowances are also made available to motivate supervisors to carry out their work.	27	50	26	17	2.73	0.97	High Extent
13	In my area supervisors are always in the field to ensure vendors provide adequate meal for the pupils.	29	43	28	20	2.84	0.79	High Extent
14	In my area supervisors are also concerned about the nutritional status of the food vendors provided to pupils in UBE schools.	37	42	21	20	2.80	0.95	High Extent
15	In my area some supervisors do collect kickbacks from the vendors to cover them.	34	49	22	15	2.85	0.96	High Extent
	Cluster Mean					2.91		High Extent

Source: Researchers' Field Survey Results (2022)

Table 5 showed that the mean ratings of items 11-15 are 3.31, 2.73, 2.84, 2.80 and 2.85 with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.66, 0.97, 0.79, 0.95 and 0.96. The table showed that the respondents

had agreed that vehicles are not provided for supervisors to frequently visit schools to ensure that pupils are served appropriately and that in their areas, allowances are also made available to motivate supervisors to carry out their work. They also agreed that supervisors are always in the field to ensure vendors provide adequate meal for the pupils. The respondents unanimously agreed that supervisors are also concerned about the nutritional status of the food vendors provided to pupils in UBE schools. Furthermore, some supervisors accept kickbacks from vendors in order to cover their expenses. The cluster mean of 2.91 was discovered to be higher than the cut-off point of 2.50, and the standard deviations were closely related, indicating that there exist high level of homogeneity. This indicates that a high level of monitoring and evaluation of achievement has been carried out for the implementation of Home-Grown School Feeding programme in UBE schools.

Interview Question 3: Is supervision of HGSFP effective? If not, what are the challenges?

Table 6: Interview Schedule of Respondents on the Challenges Confronting Effective Supervision of HGSFP in UBE schools

S/No	Items	Freq.	Percent(%)
11	Inadequate funding for supervision/monitoring at state level and no federal government support.	13	26.5%
12	Lack of unified monitoring structure by Federal and State.	5	10.2%
13	Lack of mobility.	7	14.3%
14	Attitude of some school supervisors, as they were demanding kickbacks from the vendors.	8	16.3%
15	Absence of SBMCs in some schools/Weak SBMC.	6	12.3%
16	Inadequate number of supervisors.	5	10.2%
17	The monthly stipend meant for the independent monitors was small.	5	10.2%
Total		49	100%

Source: Researchers’ Field Survey Results (2022)

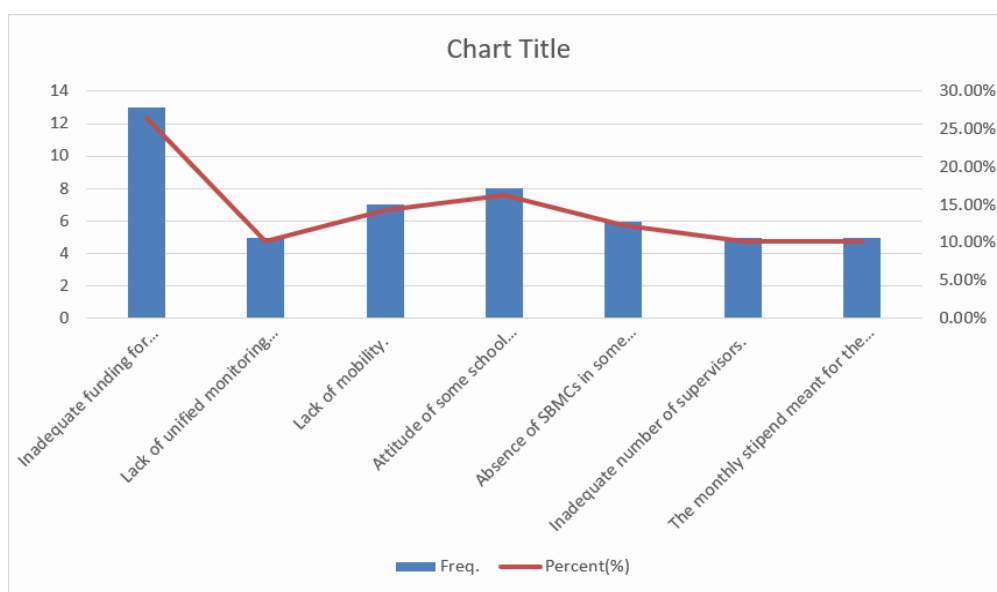


Figure 3: Bar chart showing respondents opinion on the challenges confronting effective supervision of HGSFP in UBE schools.

Table 6 and Figure 3 demonstrate that 26.5% respondents believed that inadequate funding for supervision/monitoring at state level without federal government support is one of the great challenges confronting effective supervision of HGSFP in UBE schools. While 10.2% responses identified lack of unified monitoring structure by federal and state as a challenge. Also, 14.3%-pointed lack of mobility is one of the challenges. In addition, 16.3% also pointed at the attitude of some school supervisors, as they were demanding kickbacks from the vendors. Furthermore, 12.3% of respondents believed that lack of SBMCs in some schools/Weak SBMC was to be blamed for the poor supervision of HGSFP in UBE schools. Moreover, 10.2% of respondents reported inadequate number of supervisors to be part of the problem as well as 10.2% also stated that the low monthly stipend for independent monitors was responsible for poor supervision.

Interview Question 4: What strategies can be put in place to enhance effective supervision?

Table 7: Interview Schedule of Respondents on the Strategies to be Implemented to Improve Effective Supervision.

S/No	Items	Freq.	Percent(%)
19	Provide additional funds for supervision at the state, local government and ward levels.	15	30.6%
20	Make sure that all schools have formidable SBMC.	10	20.4%
21	Recruit more supervisors to boast staff strength.	11	22.5%
22	Increase the monthly stipend of independent monitors.	13	26.5%
Total		49	100%

Source: Researchers’ Field Survey Results (2022)

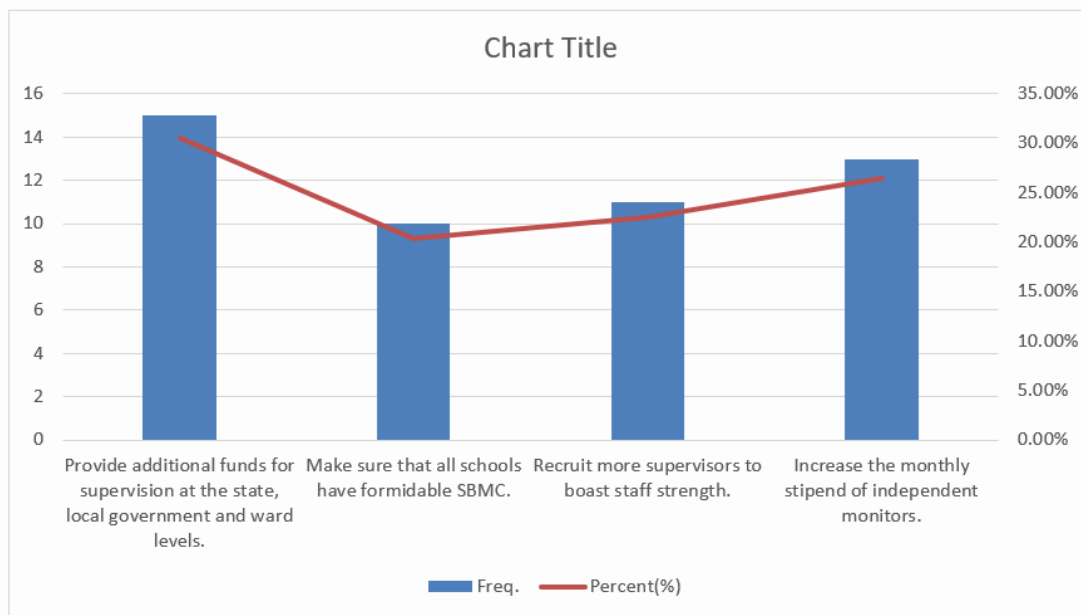


Figure 4: Bar chart showing respondents opinion on the strategies to be implemented to improve effective supervision of HGSFP in UBE schools.

Table 7 and figure 4 shows that 30.6% suggested provide additional funds for supervision at the state, local

government and ward levels, while 20.4% responses suggested that SUBEB should make sure that all schools have formidable SBMC teams. Also, 22.5% respondents noted that more supervisors should be recruited to boost staff strength. In addition, 26.5% respondents suggested increasing the monthly stipend for independent monitors to improve supervision of the programme.

Hypothesis 1: The extent of funds provided for Home-Grown School Feeding Programme is not significant for the implementation of the programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria.

Table 8: Chi-Square Analysis of the Extent of Funds Provided for Home-Grown School Feeding Programme Implementation in UBE schools

Responses	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	df	χ^2 cal.	P-val.	Remark
Observed	31	59	20	10					
					120	3	44.733 ^a	.000	Significant
Expected	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0					

Table 8 shows that χ^2 -cal.= 44.733^a; P<.05 with 3 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that the extent of funds provided for Home-Grown School Feeding Programme is not significant for the implementation of the programme in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria was rejected. This result clearly shows that the amount of funds provided for Home-Grown School Feeding Programme is significant for its implementation in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: The extent of food vendors recruited for the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools is not significant.

Table 9: Chi-Square Analysis of the Extent of Food Vendors Recruited for the Implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE Schools

Responses	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	df	χ^2 cal.	P-val.	Remark
Observed	31	54	21	14					
					120	3	30.467 ^a	.000	Significant
Expected	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0					

Table 9 shows that χ^2 -cal.= 30.467^a; P<.05 with 3 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that the extent of food vendors recruited for the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools is not significant was rejected. This reveals a significant number of food vendors recruited to implement the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools.

Hypothesis 3: The extent of monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools is not significant.

Table 10: Chi-Square Analysis of the Extent of Monitoring and Evaluation of the Achievement of the Implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE Schools

Responses	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	df	χ^2 cal.	P-val.	Remark
Observed	34	51	21	14					
					120	3	26.467 ^a	.000	Significant
Expected	97.0	97.0	97.0	97.0					

Table 10 shows that χ^2 -cal.= 26.467^a; $P < .05$ with 3 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that the extent of monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools is not significant was rejected. This means that there is a significant level of monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first finding of this study revealed that the amount of funds provided for Home-Grown School Feeding Programme is significant for its implementation in UBE schools in North Central Nigeria. This finding is so because federal government have been sending funds directly to the vendors for the feeding of pupils in UBE schools why state governments provide office accommodations, utensils, personnel, sponsor training of vendors and provide logistics for the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools. This finding is consistent with Onah and Onah's (2021) report, which states that the federal government, through the Ministry of Budget and Planning's Social Investment Account Unit, monitors the use and disbursement of funds to food vendors and farmers who supply them with produce. These funds are remitted directly to the accounts of vendors every 20 days. However, contrasting perspectives from Oladele, Yahaya, Nwokolo and Adamu (2020) and Onah and Olise (2020) highlight concerns about underfunding, evidenced by inadequate per-meal allocations and irregularities in payment, leading to disruptions in programme implementation. These discrepancies reflect a nuanced understanding of the NHGSFP's financial dynamics, emphasizing the need for comprehensive evaluation and reform to ensure effective and sustainable school feeding initiatives in the region.

The second finding also revealed a significant number of food vendors recruited to implement the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools. This is to say that the number of vendors on ground were sufficient to take care of the pupils as regards the number pupils shared per vendor. This finding is in agreement with Drake, Woolnough, Bundy and Burbano (2016) who reported that the substantial number of food vendors enlisted for the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in schools indicates adequacy in vendor coverage to cater to the nutritional needs of pupils. Yunusa, Gumel, Adegbusi and Adegbusi (2012) highlighted the crucial role of food vendors in the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme but raised concerns about alleged political and bureaucratic influence in the recruitment process, leading to delays in food delivery to pupils and instances of vendors failing to fulfil their obligations, potentially impeding the programme's success. Yunusa, Gumel, Adegbusi and Adegbusi's positions were also observed during data collection for the current study, as some of the food vendors were not in the same area as the schools. This could cause a delay in food delivery to pupils, compromising the programme's effectiveness.

Furthermore, the third and final finding indicated that there is a significant level of monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in UBE schools. This demonstrates that there are evaluators on the ground to oversee the programme's implementation. This finding is in consonance with Onah and Onah (2021) who reported that at the school level, the SBMCs are responsible for the programme oversight; the quality of the food is monitored by the head-teacher or health teacher while the Parent Teacher Association's representative and the school prefects randomly inspect the food. Surprise checks are also conducted regularly by programme monitors otherwise known as independent monitors/ evaluators. On the contrary, Chabite, Garrine, Ferrão and Fernandes (2018) study report that monitoring and evaluation teams are faced with the challenge of mobility and logistics funds to carry out rigorous and consistent supervision. Most times, these people do not have a vehicle to visit the schools. Even when vehicles are available, the funds to fuel the cars and the feeding of the field staff are hardly provided on time which seems to have affected the smooth implementation of the programme. During

fieldwork, the researchers discovered that evaluators faced mobility and logistics challenges.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) in Universal Basic Education (UBE) schools in North Central Nigeria has been beneficial in terms of reducing hunger and malnutrition while also encouraging students to attend and actively participate in classroom instruction and learning. However, its implementation has been hampered by issues such as insufficient funding, irregular payments to food vendors, and political influence over vendor recruitment. These issues hinder the programme's effectiveness and require urgent attention and strategic interventions to ensure its success in enhancing school enrolment, attendance, retention, and academic performance. Efforts from government agencies, educational stakeholders, and communities are crucial to address these challenges and maximize the programme's impact on the region's educational landscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this study recommended that:

1. To ensure the successful implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, the government should consider increasing the N70 per plate of meal per child. It was programmed four years ago, when inflation was lower than it is now.
2. Stakeholders, particularly local and international donors, should support the government's efforts by providing funds to improve programme implementation in the region.
3. With a large number of food vendors recruited to carry out the programme, it is critical to optimize the recruitment process. This can be accomplished by enforcing strict selection criteria to ensure that recruited vendors have the necessary qualifications, skills, and commitment to providing quality meals to students. Furthermore, ongoing training and support should be provided to help vendors improve their capacity and maintain high food preparation and service standards.
4. The significant level of monitoring and evaluation identified in the study is commendable; however, it is essential to strengthen these mechanisms further. Regular and systematic monitoring should be conducted at various levels of the programme to track progress, identify challenges and implement corrective measures promptly. Moreover, robust evaluation frameworks should be established to assess the overall impact and effectiveness of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme on the nutritional status and academic performance of pupils in UBE schools.
5. Generally, the food vendors purchase virtually all their foodstuff from the open market, and this does not promote the establishment of the agricultural value chain which is a major sub objective of the programme. The local term should ensure that vendors buy all of their food locally in order to promote the agricultural value chain.

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