

# Parents' Perception Of The School-Based Feeding Program: Its Relation To Home-Meal-Related Practices

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## Abstract

Parents significantly impact how much their children learn, how well they do in school, how healthy they are, and what foods they eat. This study determined the level of perception among parents of the feeding beneficiary about the objectives and responsibilities of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and their home-meal-related practices in West II District, Division of Cagayan de Oro City, for the School Year 2022–2023. The relationship between the perception of the parents (n=109) of the SBFP and home-meal-related practices was also tested. It employed a quantitative research design using stratified random sampling in the selection of the respondents. The instrument utilized was researcher-made. On the findings, the home-meal-related practices of meal preparation, food preferences, food exposure, and mealtime among the parent respondents are similar regardless of their demographic profile. However, a significant relationship existed between the perception of the parent-respondents towards SBFP and their home-meal-related practices. Hence, it was concluded that the objectives of the SBFP have contributed to how the parent respondents prepared food, food preferences, exposure to their food, and the time to consume or eat their meals in the family. Parents' perception of their responsibilities during SBFP implementation is also found to be significant with home-meal-related practices. Therefore, this recommends further study on healthy eating habits in children and parents.

**Keywords:** feeding program, home-meal-related practices, perception of parents.

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## 1. Introduction

The family is the central unit of society. Parents are essential in ensuring their children grow up as good people in their family, community, and country. Most parents desire to give their children the best they have, including nutrition, education, and material things. Yet, it is a fact that some families are privileged enough to provide more in the basic needs and luxuries in life, while others consider it a dream to achieve their ideals because financial restraints bind them. To achieve these objectives, the government, through its various institutions and departments, worked to reduce poverty in the nation. The Department of Education's vision is to build lifelong learners with essential abilities in math, writing, and reading and be afterwards productive citizens with the DepEd initiative the School-based Feeding Program, make these possible.

Candelanza and Comighud (2020) brought attention to the widespread use of nutrition programs as social security networks in developing countries to achieve one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). School-Based Nutrition Programs (SBFP) aim to reduce children's feelings of hunger in the short term and improve their nutrition and ability to think.

According to Department Order No. 39 Series of 2017, School-Based Feeding Programs for school meals are considered an effective investment in education. Evidence shows that school feeding programs improve academic performance, cognition, and enrollment, particularly when combined with other measures like deworming and vitamin fortification or supplementation (DO No. 51, s. 2016). This is especially true when deworming and vitamin fortification or supplementation are administered simultaneously.

The feeding program plays a vital role in child retention, as attested by the majority of pupils (Kiilu

& Mugambi, 2019). They also practiced proper hygiene, including brushing their teeth, washing their hands before and after meals, and maintaining general grooming. The goal is to improve the beneficiaries' dietary status by at least 70 percent by the time the feeding days are over. Moreover, it points to improving children's well-being, stability, values, and behavior (DepEd Order No. 39, s. 2017). Classroom attendance should be increased from 85% to 100%.

Del Rosario (2021) points out that the predicament of many Filipinos is malnutrition in children who experience poor diet or a lack of food. As a result, the children's average growth was hindered. These children are given a modest, balanced meal through school feeding programs, which support their average growth and development. In most of the world's nations, hunger is one of the most prevalent issues. Malnutrition is now frequently cited as a barrier to children's academic success. To address this problem and assist undernourished students in improving their health and nutrition while attending school, school-based feeding programs were formed. Parents, including mothers and fathers, and caregivers who act as parents, are essential to the program.

Further, children rely on parents starting from conception to provide them with the care they require to be merry and healthy and to grow and develop properly. Parents also have a significant influence in learning, guiding, and providing their children's success in school and promoting their child's interests and the educational system's efficiency (Roy, 2018). Children benefit when the adults around them share fundamental values about childrearing, communicate with one another, and give the children consistent support and guidance. And as a parent, relation to home-meal-related practices has a greater significant impact on child health benefits and food choices. Parents' involvement and interest in the school feeding program is one more way checking their children's well-being contributes to their development and improvement.

The purpose of this study is for the researcher to gain insight into the parents' perspectives regarding the goals of the School-Based Feeding Program, their level of participation as parents, and how they prepare meals for their families in the comfort of their homes. In addition, the researcher is concerned about the impact of the school-based feeding program on the practices that families engage in regarding the preparation and consumption of meals at home.

This study was anchored on Gibson's Theory of Direct Perception. Gibson proposed an alternate theory: perception is innate rather than learned. Humans evolved to make accurate judgments based solely on the sensory information a person receives. For example, Gibson observed that as one moves, they receive rich information about depth and distance directly, without inference about the visual cues required (StudySmarter, 2020).

In addition, perception is the recognition and interpretation of sensory information. Perception also includes how a person responds to information. A person can think of perception as a process where he takes sensory information from his environment and uses that information to interact with the environment. Perception allows a person to take sensory information in and make it into something meaningful (Levitas, 2022).

Parents perceived healthy dietary patterns; however, ready-to-eat food is constantly available. Parents somewhat know and feel that they are their children's role models. They commented on the benefits of eating together as a family and the importance of improving their dietary habits. Parents reported using various methods to promote a healthy diet as part of their parenting role. However, they perceived their role as complex, as they had to deal with children's resistance and financial constraints arising from the current economic crisis and busy work schedules. Furthermore, children viewed the school feeding program as health-promoting, mirroring their parents' views on the program.

According to Kwatubana and Makhaleme (2017), the recruitment procedure for parents needed to be more precise, resulting in a lack of transparency in the process. Furthermore, there needed to be clear strategies to empower parents; thus, parents could not initiate and take ownership of the program. Again, stipulations of the policy regarding their roles are limiting to the extent that they cannot hold suppliers accountable for their inefficiency. Volunteering as food handlers was an eye-opener for some parents,

enabling them to realize the importance of their involvement in their children's education.

During the school-aged years, families can support children's development of health behaviors and family routines. This interdisciplinary study examined families' experiences of mealtimes and the factors that support or hinder mealtime participation. Families defined family mealtime as all family members being together at the kitchen or dining room table eating a meal. Families enjoyed being together, conversing, and connecting through family mealtime participation (Smith, 2019).

The perception of the School-Based Feeding Program stakeholders is of the most important; hence, this will contribute to better outcomes or results. Likewise, the parents' awareness is also a significant factor in the program's success. Thus, the concept is adapted in this study. The independent variables are the demographic profile of the respondents and parents' level of perception of the SBFP. The dependent variable, which is assumed to be correlated to the independent variables, is home-meal-related practices.

## 2. Methodology

The study used a quantitative research design. Quantitative research is the process of gathering and collecting numerical data. It is used to find patterns and trends, average, make predictions, causal relationships, and explore correlations. It also aims to acquire information to systematically describe a phenomenon, situation, or population.

This study explored the demographic profile of the respondents, their level of perceptions of the objectives of the School-Based Feeding Program and parents' responsibilities, and their home-meal-related practices. It describes the data that has been obtained. A test of the relationship was also done with the home-meal-related practices and level of perception of the objectives towards school-based feeding programs. Lastly, the design explained the descriptions of the variables and what kind of relationships are naturally occurring.

Statistical treatments were employed for the analysis and interpretation of data. For problem one, frequency and percentage were used to summarize the data. Mean and Standard Deviation were employed for problems two and three.

For the test of difference of home-meal-related practices when grouped according to the respondent's profile, Analysis of Variance was used. According to Connely (2021), a one-way ANOVA compares the means between the groups interested and finds out whether any of those means are statistically significantly different. Specifically, it tests the null hypothesis:

More so, Pearson r Correlation Test was applied to test the connection between the level of parents' perception of School-Based feeding program objectives and parents' responsibilities in SBFP and their home-meal-related practices. According to Akoglu (2018), correlation refers to a relationship that exists between phenomena or between mathematical or statistical variables that tends to vary, be associated with, or occur together in a way that is not predictable by chance alone.

## 3. Results and Discussion

**Problem 1.** What is the profile among the parents of the feeding beneficiaries in terms of:

- 1.1 Age;
- 1.2 Sex;
- 1.3 Educational Attainment;
- 1.4 Number of Children; and
- 1.5 Monthly Income?

Table 1 on the next page shows the distribution of the respondents' age. It can be noticeable from the results that most of the respondents (30.3%) are in their early 30's. This means that only a few of the respondents are in their late 40's (1.8%) and early 50's (5.5%). It implies that the parent-respondents were in

the prime years of their lives; they belong to middle age. Most of the parents of the feeding beneficiaries are old enough to understand the objectives and their responsibilities to the school feeding program and the home-meal-related practices. The study by Almeida (2021), which discovered that parents who are 30 years of age or older have a much more significant impact on their children's behavior modulation and active promotion skills for choosing/preparing healthy food and awareness regarding sugar and salt intake, supports this finding.

**Table 1**

*Respondents' Age, Sex, Educational Attainment, Number of Children and Monthly Income*

Demographic Profile	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Age	51-55	6	5.5
	46-50	2	1.8
	41-45	15	13.8
	36-40	25	22.9
	31-35	33	30.3
	26-30	28	25.7
	Total	109	100.0
Sex	Male	11	10.1
	Female	98	89.9
	Total	109	100.0
Educational Attainment	Elementary Level	8	7.3
	Elementary Graduate	2	1.8
	High School Level	21	19.3
	High School Graduate	34	31.2
	College Level	31	28.4
	College Graduate	13	11.9
	Total	109	100.0
Number of Children	1	23	21.1
	2	46	42.2
	3	25	22.9
	4	6	5.5
	5	5	4.6
	6	2	1.8
	7	2	1.8
	Total	109	100.0
Monthly Income	1000-4000	11	10.1
	5000-8000	44	40.4
	9000-12000	27	24.8
	13000-16000	8	7.3
	17000-20000	12	11.0
	21000-24000	1	.9
	25000-28000	6	5.5
	Total	109	100.0

The same table shows that most respondents are female(89.9%). Hence, the majority of the respondents are female. This means that mothers in the community usually take care of their children while fathers are at work. Therefore, it implies that maternal care can be more evident in the presence of mothers than fathers during the implementation of the school-feeding program. Moreover, it further implies that despite the equal opportunity for women to work nowadays, most couples still decide that wives will remain at home to care for the children. At the same time, the husband provides the living for the family. This reflects the Filipino culture of raising children with the mother's role as the "Ilaw ng Tahanan". It was supported by the claim of Almeida (2021) that mothers primarily support child activity during the week. Moreover,

Solomon et al. (2018) also claimed that mothers have a significantly more positive perception of fruit and vegies' satiety ability than fathers and less appetite for sweet beverages and salt.

The same table reflects the distribution of the respondent's educational attainment. It can be glimpsed from the results that most of the respondents (31.2%) are high school graduates. This means that for the highest educational attainment which is college graduates, only 11.9% of the respondents could attain it. This further means that most parent-respondents could finish the basic education program, where they acquired the literacy skills to guide their children in their studies and in understanding their physical and nutritional needs. Hence, it explains that parents are educated enough to know the objectives of the School-Based Feeding Program. They are also expected to comprehend their roles as parents in home-meal-related practices.

This current study also confirms the study by Soliman et al. (2018) that the population of mothers and fathers in this country both had nine years of school attendance, equivalent to a Third Year High School or a year less from graduating under the Philippine educational system. Along with the level of education, income has been seen as a key factor in how people eat and how healthy they are. This link is more important when considering how parents set an example, and it is well-known that both adults and children from low-income. According to Almeida (2021), parents from the higher educational groups had a significantly more positive perception and practice of selection than those from the lower educational groups. The children of mothers with a high educational level consumed more fruit and vegetables and breakfast more frequently than those with a low level of education (Scagalon et al., 2018). On the contrary, parents with a higher education level are more aware of healthy food options. However, Hoque (2018) claimed that parents' education was not found to be significantly related to students' knowledge, attitude, and practices toward healthy eating habits.

The same table presents the distribution of the respondent's number of children. It can be glimpsed from the results that most of the respondents have two (42.2%) to three (22.9%) children. This means that respondents generally have small size family. Parents of the feeding beneficiaries represent the small family size. Further, it is significant to note that the locale of this study is an urban community where most families are already educated in family planning. Hence, it shows the small to medium size of the family. This implies that most parent-respondents have limited themselves to two to three pregnancies because parents were aware what would be the advantages of having small number of children in terms of family planning. As a result, parents are more aware of the ways of family planning and the advantages of having fewer children. As noted by Shao (2022), the effect of family size on children's learning and development. In contrast, Eginti (2016) found that unemployed respondents and civil servants preferred fewer children, with an average of 1–3 children. Consequently, respondents with tertiary and secondary education wished for fewer children than those with only elementary school or no education. As observed among Filipino families, the more children there are, the more likely they will not finish their schooling. Usually, the children help the family live, so sometimes they prefer not to go to school. With this, parent-respondent thoughts that their income, in one way or another, can increase the family's budget. And when their children grow up, they prefer to work rather than attend school.

The results of the respondents' monthly income distribution are presented in the same table in the table above. It means that most respondents have a range of P5,000.00–8,000.00 in monthly income (40.4%). Therefore, from the following information, one can glean that the parent of the feeding beneficiaries belongs to the cluster poor, meaning less than the official poverty threshold as an indicative range of monthly family income. According to the preliminary results of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey in 2021, poverty, defined as the ratio of Filipinos whose per capita income cannot sufficiently meet their primary food and non-food needs, was noted at 18.1 percent. This translates to around 19.99 million Filipinos who live below the poverty threshold of about Php12,030 per month for a family of five. According to estimates, a family of five requires at least Php8,379 monthly to meet its basic food demands. As suggested by Chenyu and Hu (2022), the children's opportunities, in a broad sense, may be limited by their parents' economic resources as well as

interventions that aim to boost the income of families that do not have a regular monthly income or whose income is below the average. Therefore, there could be benefits from programs that aim to improve coping skills and mental health despite poverty.

**Problem 2.** What is the parents' level of perception toward the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) in terms of:

2.1 Objectives of SBFP; and

2.2 Responsibilities of the Parents?

Table 2 on the next page presents the respondent's perceptions of the objectives of implementing the School-Based Feeding Program. It has an overall Mean of 4.53 with SD=.63, which is interpreted as Strongly Agree. This indicates that parents strongly agree with the program's goals and accepted the program because it improves their children's academic performance and health aspect. Parents assuredly noted the objectives of the SBFP have significantly impacted their children's participation in school, improved health, and affected their mental health. Just as the quote from Ken Hill, "*Food is your body's fuel. Without fuel, your body wants to shut down*". Also, parents believe that their children will feel physically and mentally full if their stomachs are full.

**Table 2**

Respondents' Perception on the Objectives of SBFP

	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	I agree that the main purpose of the program is to lessen absenteeism.	4.52	0.85	Strongly Agree
2.	I agree that the program is relevant because it enhances my child's physical well-being and health aspects.	4.70	0.76	Strongly Agree
3.	I agree that the SBFP provides undernourished children with a healthy meal, and it is efficient in providing nutritious meals.	4.63	0.74	Strongly Agree
4.	I agree that SBFP is a program that nourished the children for them to be physically active.	4.67	0.72	Strongly Agree
5.	I agree that SBFP improves children's health values and eating preferences.	4.67	0.73	Strongly Agree
6.	I believe that SBFP can affect children's mental capacities.	4.13	1.28	Agree
7.	I believe that SBFP helps children become more active and participative in the teaching and learning process.	4.56	0.75	Strongly Agree
8.	I believe that the SBFP is a remedy for short-term hunger.	4.42	0.94	Strongly Agree
9.	I believe that SBFP helps learners to be participative in their intellectual undertakings both in classroom settings and school contexts.	4.39	0.82	Strongly Agree
10.	I think the program not only improves classroom performance but also increases the school attendance of my child.	4.64	0.66	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>		<b>4.53</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

**Note:** 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.41 – 4.20 Agree, 2.61 – 3.40 Neither agree nor disagree, 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree, 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree

According to Zenebe et al. (2018), the safety net system aims to deliver health and educational benefits to needy children, especially in the body mass index measure. According to Day (2019), this implies that the program's objectives will uphold its mission, vision, and goal as part of the DepEd program's implementation. The program must be integrated into the curriculum and school policies over the long term, with sustained support from head teachers and staff.

Moreover, the indicator, I agree that the program is relevant because it enhances my child's physical well-being and health aspects, got the highest Mean of 4.70 with SD=0.76, which is interpreted as Strongly Agree. This means that parent-respondents believe the objective of SBFP is to help improve their child's health and physical well-being. According to Chepkwony et al. (2016), the School Feeding Program (SFP) is all-important to children's growth and physical development. This implies that parents must be engaged in



every process to ensure the program's continued existence. Also, Cadelanza (2020) said that their understandings and views could provide crucial and valuable knowledge and, above all, push pupils in the educational setting.

On the other hand, the indicator, I believe that SBFP can affect *children's mental capacities*, has the lowest Mean of 4.13 with SD=1.28, which is interpreted as Agree. This means that parent-respondents think that SBFP may have an impact on children's cognitive abilities. As Wang (2020) cited, mental development is the formation of long-term dietary habits and lifestyle. This implies that SBFP can contribute to a child's growth and development by providing healthy food while in school, as cited by DepEd Order No. 36, s. 2019 improves the nutritional status of the SW and W learners at the end of feeding days, and DepEd acknowledges the relationship between student nutrition and academic performance. Their ability to learn is significantly impacted by their nutritional status and the time they spend in school. Therefore, the school-related healthy program will receive additional support from the milk-feeding program, which will also contribute to the efforts of the government to combat child malnutrition.

**Table 3**  
**Respondents' Perception of the Parent's Responsibilities on the Implementation of SBFP**

	Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	I feel a sense of belongingness in the purpose of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP).	4.39	0.77	Strongly Agree
2.	My participation in the SBFP will contribute to the success of the program.	4.35	0.84	Strongly Agree
3.	I am expecting a task to be assigned to me during the implementation of the SBFP.	4.16	0.75	Agree
4.	I know that I am responsible for providing a healthy and nutritious meal to my child in between SBFP schedules.	4.65	0.79	Strongly Agree
5.	I am responsible for my child becoming physically active.	4.74	0.52	Strongly Agree
6.	I am responsible for my child's school performance	4.60	0.75	Strongly Agree
7.	I am responsible for my child's nutrition and cognition.	4.70	0.69	Strongly Agree
8.	I am responsible for my child's eating pattern.	4.65	0.74	Strongly Agree
9.	I am responsible for my child's academic performance.	4.55	0.76	Strongly Agree
10.	I keep in-charge to the teacher of the behavioral changes of my child.	4.31	0.99	Strongly Agree
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

**Note:** 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.41 – 4.20 Agree, 2.61 – 3.40 Neither agree nor disagree, 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree, 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 3 reveals that perception of the respondents in terms of the responsibilities of the implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program. It has an overall Mean of 4.51 with SD=.59, which is interpreted as Strongly Agree. This means that parent-respondent strongly agreed that they have roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the SBFP as partners in school with the growth and development of their children. Parents displayed that they play a role in their children's academic growth by being part of the program. It denounce that parents should support their children's health and learning, help them navigate the school system successfully, and speak up for their children and the quality of their education (Matira, 2019). This implies that parent-respondents strongly perceived that they were responsible for the success of the attainment of the objectives of the school-feeding program. believed that they have roles in the SBFP implementation, Moreover, Accad and Caagbay (2017) submit that the parents of the program's beneficiaries should be a part of how it is carried out. They have responsibilities and obligations throughout the program. Therefore, engagement from parents will boost the success of the program.

Moreover, the indicator, I am responsible for my child becoming physically active, got the highest Mean of 4.74 with SD=0.52, which is interpreted as Strongly Agree. This signify that the parent-respondent strongly agreed that they are responsible for ensuring their child stays active.

According to Peverley (2020), a child acquires much knowledge in the first few years of life,

beginning with social interactions, emotional implications, and eating habits that shape their lifelong perspective on food. If a child sees their parents around them making responsible choices about healthy food, they will grow up knowing they will stay healthy and active. This implies that parents are more responsible for making their children physically active. Parents will help encourage their children to become physically healthy by providing physical activities. Similarly, Ha (2019) claimed parents are change mechanisms and critical socializers. Therefore, it is particularly important to reinforce their understanding of the benefits of an active lifestyle and provide them with the optimal support for children's physical activity to promote both psychological and physical health within families.

Otherwise, the indicator, I am expecting a task to be assigned to me during the implementation of the SBFP Program, has the lowest Mean of 4.16 with SD=0.75, which is interpreted as Agree. This signifies that parent-respondents were given a task throughout the SBFP Program. This implies that the parents observed that they did not share in the responsibility of feeding their children. As can be seen, the teacher leads and facilitates the program in schools. According to Caagbay (2017), parents' sense of belonging to the program corresponds with their partnership. This implies that the school principal and school feeding coordinators must bring the feeding recipient to the parents' attention and encourage them to participate in implementing the SBFP. Therefore, to sustain family food security, increase school retention and participation, and improve nutritional status, we must increase school retention, participation, and retention rates of children on a long-term basis, the schools may collaborate with other stakeholders to conduct training for parents (DepEd Order No. 39, s. 2017). Furthermore, parents should realize that their cooperation will significantly impact the performance of their children and the school.

**Problem 3.** What is the home-meal-related practices among the parent-respondents in terms of:

- 2.1 Meal Preparation;
- 2.2 Food Preferences;
- 2.3 Food Exposure; and
- 2.4 Mealtime?

**Table 4**

Respondents' Home-Meal-Related Practices in terms of Meal Preparation

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I prepare a nutritious meal for my family.	4.54	0.75	Always
2. I prepare food rich in protein and minerals.	4.49	0.80	Always
3. I prepare food before every meal	4.75	0.70	Always
4. My child eats the same meal as the rest of the family.	4.56	0.76	Always
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>Always</b>

**Note:** 4.21 – 5.00 Always, 3.41 – 4.20 Often, 2.61 – 3.40 Seldom, 1.81 – 2.60 Almost Never, 1.00 – 1.80 Never

Table 4 reflects the meal-related practices among the parent-respondents in terms of meal preparation. It has an overall Mean of 4.58 with SD=0.66, which is interpreted as Always. This means that the parent-respondent prepares a nutritious meal for the family. Also, parents emphasize that they provide healthy food for every meal because they believe that meal preparation—a collection of well-balanced meals on hand will help regulate what they eat and help them stay on track. As Ducrot et al. (2017) claimed, meal planning is influenced by many factors, such as cooking practices and the food available in the area. This means further the potential interest in promoting meal planning to improve dietary conditions and prevent overweight. This implies that healthy meal preparation is a good practice for the parent-respondent, as revealed by Angeles-Agdeppa (2022), which emphasizes the consumption of fruits, vegetables, fresh meat, and milk, which are the least consumed food groups during breakfast by the Filipino population.



Moreover, the indicator, I prepare food before every meal, got the highest Mean of 4.75 with  $SD=0.70$ , which is interpreted as Always. This means that parent-respondent prepares food three times a day or for every meal and ensures that their family eats healthy food (NCCDPHP, 2022). A healthy meal helps children grow and develop properly and lower the risk of chronic diseases.

Along the same line, Sogari (2018) also cited that helping with meal preparation at home is a youth behavior that is realistically modifiable and may substantially influence overall dietary quality. Identifying the potential benefits of this modifiable mealtime environment behavior contributes to a comprehensive strategy to improve nutrition, prevent obesity, and promote health and wellness among children and adolescents (Quelly, 2019). This implies that parent-respondents devote themselves to preparing food for the family and making sure that the food they prepare is clean, as believed by Mills (2017), who said that home food preparation behavior was often a balance between varied competing influences and demands in life. Also, Berge (2019), food preparation and cooking were more commonly performed by mothers. Otherwise, the indicator, I prepare food rich in protein and minerals, has the lowest Mean of 4.49 with  $SD=0.80$ , interpreted as Always. This means that parent-respondents always prepare food high in protein and minerals. Angeles-Agdeppa (2022) revealed that emphasis should be given to the consumption of fruits, vegetables, fresh meat, and milk, which are the least consumed food groups during breakfast among the Filipino population.

However, Bairagi (2022) notes that meat, dairy products, vegetables, and fruits are expensive items for Filipinos. This implies that fruits and milk products were found further down the list of most consumed food groups among Filipinos because of the high cost of the food and parent-respondent lower income, as revealed in the demographic profile in terms of family income, is not enough to supplement this need. As cited by Agdepoa (2022), the breakfast consumed regularly by Filipinos was found to be nutritionally inadequate. The results of this study present a unique opportunity to enhance the standard of breakfast food served throughout the Philippines by reinforcing the "Pinggang Pinoy" recommendations and promoting the intake of nutrient-dense foods.

**Table 5**  
 Respondents' Home-Meal-Related Practices in terms of Food Preferences

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. My child likes the nutritious food I serve in the family.	4.41	0.85	Always
2. My child consumes more fried foods.	3.75	1.09	Often
3. My child eats all kinds of vegetables serve every meal.	3.91	1.01	Often
4. My child prefers to eat "instant foods."	3.29	1.20	Seldom
5. My child enjoys eating while watching television.	3.38	1.32	Seldom
6. I like to prepare new menus of the same food for my family.	4.36	0.84	Always
7. I prepare food for my child so he will eat more.	4.67	0.72	Always
8. I prepare food that my child likes.	4.52	0.81	Always
9. My child eats a variety of food of his choice.	3.78	1.17	Often
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>Often</b>

**Note:** 4.21 – 5.00 Always, 3.41 – 4.20 Often, 2.61 – 3.40 Seldom, 1.81 – 2.60 Almost Never, 1.00 – 1.80 Never

Table 5 explains the meal-related practices among the parent-respondents in terms of meal preferences. It has an overall Mean of 4.01 with  $SD=0.58$ , which is interpreted as Often. This means that parents-respondents answered that their children often choose food based on what they prefer and often likely consume veggies served at the table. Parents know what to prepare on the table for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and even in their snacks. They knew the food preferences of each member of the family because they already knew what they liked and disliked. Although parents appear well-intentioned in their motives for selecting foods for their children, there are gaps to be addressed in the nature of such motives and the translation of health motives into

healthy food choices.

According to Beckerman (2017), parents play a crucial role in shaping food preferences, especially in early childhood—their choices of what to serve to influence their offspring's food preferences. So, parent-respondents were responsible for the food preferences of their family meal. This implies that the SBFP information drives the parents of the feeding beneficiaries to the ideal food intake for children. Glorioso (2018) cited that by providing Filipino customers with correct nutrition information, they will be guided appropriately in selecting healthy and nutritious meals when eating or dining out. In addition, schools can collaborate with affiliate groups to conduct training for parents to maintain family food security (DepEd Order No. 39, s. 2017).

Moreover, the indicator, I prepare food for my child so he will eat more, got the highest Mean of 4.67 with  $SD=0.72$ , which is interpreted as Always. This means that the parent-respondent always cooks food for their child to get him to eat more. This research by Olfert (2019) provides insight into parents' and children's food preparation cognitions (e.g., attitudes and beliefs) and behaviors and gathers results into recommendations that may guide choices during nutrition intervention development and potentially improve nutrition intervention. This implies that children may acquire a greater understanding of food preferences when they are involved in home-meal-related practices. Children echoed their parents' beliefs and said they would be obliged to know how to cook later in life, according to Olfert (2019). Many children acknowledged their participation in meal preparation by setting up the table and helping with grocery shopping. However, parents or children did not mention how food preparation is linked to improving diet quality. To increase involvement, children suggested that parents demonstrate skills, select age-appropriate tasks, and reward them for helping.

On the other hand, the indicator, My child prefers to eat instant food, has the lowest Mean of 3.29 with  $SD=1.20$ , which is interpreted as Seldom. This implies that the children of the parent respondents rarely eat instant food. This further means that parent-respondents often expose their children to food. As Ravikuma (2022) believed, parents tried to feed their children nutritious foods, and parents reported that food rules, such as limiting the number of unhealthy snacks, benefit their children's health. Furthermore, this implies that parents will plant fruits, vegetables and root crops in their homes or backyards like green leafy vegies, sweet potato, yam and bananas that children love to eat. This limits the source of consuming instant food. Furthermore, enjoying their fruit and veggies is a much healthier food preference.

**Table 6**  
Respondents' Home-Meal-Related Practices in Terms of Food Exposure

Indicators		Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	My child is familiar with every vegetable I serve.	3.99	1.10	Often
2.	I allow my child to help me choose the food for the family.	3.16	1.34	Seldom
3.	I prepare a variety of food for the family.	3.95	1.11	Often
4.	My child loves to eat rice.	4.40	1.05	Always
5.	I encourage my child to try new foods.	4.39	0.94	Always
Overall		3.98	0.78	Often

**Note:** 4.21 – 5.00 Always, 3.41 – 4.20 Often, 2.61 – 3.40 Seldom, 1.81 – 2.60 Almost Never, 1.00 – 1.80 Never

Table 6 reflects the meal-related practices among the parent-respondents in terms of Food Exposure. It has an overall Mean of 3.98 with  $SD=0.78$ , which is interpreted as Often. This means that parents-respondents answered that their children were often exposed to food. Children seem to be not given an activity to be part of food preparation, maybe because of their age. Parents may find it difficult to encourage their children to consume vegetables because the flavor of the vegetable is not pleasing to them; however, as parents, we really find many ways to encourage our children to try new foods like vegetable soup. Parents should be creative and innovative to help their children consume healthy food and expose them to nutritive food choices.

As Gibson (2017) claimed, parent-child correlational aspects of the family environment remain influential in young children. For example, parental strategies based on repeat tasting opportunities can improve the acceptance of disliked foods in even the fussiest children. In addition, Savage (2007) stated that children's appetites develop in the early cultural connections and interactions of feeding; selecting the foods in the family's diet constitute eating examples for children to learn to replicate, and feeding practices promote the emergence of suitable eating routines and habits in children. The statement says that parent has a great role in acquiring children understanding of food choices and food exposure. Notably, this implies that parents will consistently encourage their children to new food and continuously expose their children to fruits and veggies, so their children can understand healthy eating habits. Haines (2019) believes that a healthy home food environment — explores the impact on eating practices of family resources, food availability/accessibility, parental modelling, and cues for eating.

Moreover, the indicator, My Child loves to eat rice, got the highest Mean of 4.40 with SD=1.05, which is interpreted as Always. This means that parent-respondent children like to eat rice, or there is always rice in every meal. Eating rice in every meal is the norm for Filipino and has been part of their culture and history. It reveals that respondents always prefer to prepare rice in their meal plans.

However, the indicator, I allow my child to help me choose the food for the family, got the lowest Mean of 3.16 with SD=1.34, which is interpreted as Seldom. This means that parent-respondent rarely ask their children what to cook for the family. Parents prepare food for the family without asking their children because they need to budget their food for the whole month. Parents also assume that their children will eat the food that they serve on the table. Buyco (2022) study confirmed that mothers' perception of their children's eating attitudes and behavior was close to the actual foods commonly consumed by the children. This implies that parents may allow or expose their children to the market to buy food for the family and to better understand the food available in the market. Also, Driessen (2022) found that parents consistently report that marketing unhealthy foods undermines their efforts to provide their children with healthy and nutritious foods. This finding was uncovered by looking at parent reports. Parents who have a comprehensive understanding of the breadth of food marketing to children and the adverse effects of this practice are more likely to support efforts to reduce the visibility of the marketing of unhealthy foods to children.

**Table 7**  
Respondents' Home-Meal-Related Practices in Terms of Mealtime

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I cook food earlier the mealtime.	4.66	0.83	Always
2. We eat our meals on time.	4.11	4.88	Often
3. We eat more than three times a day.	3.94	1.24	Often
4. We have snacks between mealtimes.	3.90	1.15	Often
5. My child is happy during mealtime.	4.52	0.80	Always
6. My child is excited to eat his meal during mealtime.	4.39	0.92	Often
7. We eat together as a family at mealtime.	4.59	0.77	Always
8. During mealtime, my child will not play with a cell phone.	3.90	1.28	Often
9. My child likes to eat together with the family.	4.76	0.62	Always
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>Always</b>

**Note:** 4.21 – 5.00 Always, 3.41 – 4.20 Often, 2.61 – 3.40 Seldom, 1.81 – 2.60 Almost Never, 1.00 – 1.80 Never

Table 7 from the previous page showcases the meal-related practices among the parent-respondents in terms of Mealtime. It has an overall Mean of 4.30 with SD=, 0.74 which is interpreted as Always. This means respondents always cook earlier than mealtime, ensuring they eat together. Also, parents should make sure they have time to make the meal and eat it with the family. This gives them a chance to show their children how to eat healthily. They can also talk about how to eat well and what is good for them about the meal. Cooking at home is the best way to make and pass down family traditions. White (2022) claimed that mothers' perceptions of their capability to implement what they view as successful mealtimes might be related

to their behavior. This implies that implementing strategies for parenting that target healthy family food and mealtime practices is essential because Watts (2018) believes that children's parenting behavior has an opportunity for long-term effects.

Moreover, the indicator, My child is happy during mealtime, got the highest Mean of 4.52 with SD=80, which is interpreted as Always. This means that children were happy when they ate together with their families. In this way, Litterback (2017)'s evidence that parents share meals with their children and place a high value on mealtimes with their children offers crucial opportunities for promoting healthy family behaviors. This implies that a family should value meal time because children will become happier, and if the children are happy the more they will have a strong relationship with their parents, and this routine may result in a long-term bond. According to Mudrick (2023), mealtime practice provides a greater understanding of the interactions between young children and their parents during family meals. These interactional processes may be crucial to understanding how family meals affect the health and well-being of young children.

On the other hand, the indicator, During mealtime, my child will not play with a cell phone, got the lowest Mean of 3.90 with SD=1.28, which is interpreted as Often. This means respondent children used cell phones during mealtime, which may lead to decreased meal enjoyment. According to Radesky (2018), maternal mental representations of their child were significantly associated with using mobile devices during eating encounters. More research is needed to understand directionality and longer-term associations between mobile device use and parent-child relationship characteristics. This practice is considered not good. Notably, this coincides with Knobl (2022), that creating a positive atmosphere and turning the TV and smartphones off were reported most often. Parents' vegetable and fruit intake and creating a positive mealtime atmosphere were the best predictors of children's better nutrition (i.e., more fruit and vegetables eaten); parental modeling and a positive mealtime atmosphere were the best predictors of healthier child nutrition at daily family meals.

Further, this implies that parents and children agree that parents should also unplug when spending time with family, especially meal time, as Nelson (2019) believes that family meals foster a sense of closeness. Also, while technology use at the dinner table is unrelated to mothers' reports of closeness to their children, it is negatively associated with fathers' reports. Also, using a cell phone during family time can make things harder on the family and cause more stress. When parents are on their phones, they talk to their children less, answer more slowly, and get angry when interrupted. These may loosen the bond parents and children.

**Problem 4.** Is there a significant difference in the home-meal-related practices of the parent-respondents when grouped according to their profile?

Table 8 presents the data on the difference in the respondents' home-meal-related practices when grouped according to their profile. Again, the parent of the feeding beneficiary demographic profile is statistically proportionate when grouped according to their profile. It means that on the other hand of their age, sex, educational background, number of children, and monthly family income, their home-meal-related practices do not significantly vary from one group to another.

Moreover, the findings of the study show that parental meal practices are important for children's healthy development and nutrition. Regardless of their profile as a parent, these home-meal practices are observed. As also supported by the results of this study family members eat meals together, so it is important for all family members to enjoy good nutrition regardless of their socio-demographic profile.

These findings were further supported by Van et al. (2022), who explained social and economic differences in food preference and consumption. The behaviors associated with food-related discussions and meals vary among families, but the outcomes of these behaviors are significant and can have a lasting effect on children's attitudes toward food and eating habits.

**Table 8**

Test on Difference of the Home-Meal-Related Practices when Grouped according to their Profile

Test on Difference of the Home-Meal-Related Practices when Grouped according to their Profile															
	Age		Sex		Demographic Profile				Number of Children		Monthly Income				
	f-value	p-value	f-value	p-value	f-value	p-value	f-value	p-value	f-value	p-value	f-value	p-value			
Home Related Practices															
Home Preparation	.720	.610	NS	1.670	.148	NS	.720	.610	NS	.268	.951	NS	.916	.336	NS
Food Preference	2.14	.066	NS	.085	.994	NS	2.144	.066	NS	.782	.586	NS	.387	1.06	NS
Food Exposure	.785	.562	NS	.555	.734	NS	.785	.562	NS	.757	.605	NS	.154	1.60	NS
Mealtime	.750	.588	NS	1.202	.314	NS	.750	.588	NS	.495	.811	NS	.409	1.03	NS

Note: \*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) \*\*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) S= significant, NS=not significant

Also, according to Astbury et al. (2019), sociodemographic factors did not mediate the association between the intake of home-prepared food and dietary quality. Therefore, it is worth continuing to think about diet not only in nutritional terms but in behavioral ones reflecting people's daily practices and understanding how this drives dietary intake.

**Problem 5.** Is there a significant relationship between the perception of the parents towards the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and their home-meal-related practice?

Table 9 on the next page explains the relationship between respondents' home-meal-related practices and perception towards SBFP. It can be gleaned from the table that there is a significantly high correlation between all the home-meal-related practices and parents' perception towards SBFP implementation. The higher the positive perception of the parents towards SBFP implementation, it also follows that their practices of good meal preparation, food preference, food exposure, and mealtime are highly positive. As part of a school-wide approach to SBFP, the implementation has been implemented with clear objectives and responsibilities for parents.

**Table 9**

Test of Relationship between Perception of the Parents towards the School-

Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and Home-Meal-Related Practices

Home-Meal-Related Practices	Perception of the Parents towards the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP)		
	f-value	p-value	Interpretation
Home Preparation	.384**	.000	Significant Relationship Exists
Food Preference	.520**	.000	Significant Relationship Exists
Food Exposure	.417**	.000	Significant Relationship Exists
Mealtime	.419**	.000	Significant Relationship Exists

\*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) \*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Notably, this process can be considered a good practice because it enhances parents' awareness regarding their role in their school-age child's development. The findings of this study suggest, moreover, that once parents have a complete comprehension of the communication between schools and parents. As a result, they will actively participate while implementing SBFP, specifically in home-meal-related practices. Zenebe

et al. (2016), who stated that this feeding program is essential to children's advancement and holistic development, also support it. In order to build a functional SFP, parents must participate in all program procedures.

Furthermore, according to Roothaert (2021), nutrition, health, and food production must be included in the school curriculum. In school, pupils can learn how to choose a healthy and appropriate diet through the meals and snacks provided at school and can develop a range of consumer-based skills, including food handling, growing, preparation, and cooking. Schools should not only be recipients of these initiatives, but they also have a role to play in influencing the community that they serve by stressing the importance of healthy diets. It also requires parents' effort and commitment. Planning and implementation of home-grown feeding food require a multi-stakeholder approach involving parents, farmers, schools, students, and local government. Through this, it addresses food safety in home-meal-related practices.

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The majority of the parent-respondents belonged to middle age, and most of them were female with one- or two-member children in the family. They earn basic education and have a low monthly income.

2. All respondents have a positive view of both the goals of the SBFP and their roles as parents in implementing the program. Therefore, the implementation of the SBFP is supported by parents. They also strongly agree regarding their perception of their responsibilities as parents of the children who are beneficiaries of the program.

3. The home-meal-related practices among parents respondents in terms of meal preparation are that parents prepare a nutritious meal for the family because they believe it is a good practice. They want to keep their children on track. Regarding meal preferences, parents prefer to prepare food that their children like; they also know the food preferences of each family member. In addition, children are not exposed to food, so parents may need help encouraging them to eat new, healthy foods. Before mealtime, parents plan what to cook for the family because this is their chance to show their children how to eat healthily. Also, they value mealtime because children will become happier, which may result in a long-term bond.

4. There is no significant difference between the home-meal-related practices when correlated to the demographic profile of the parent respondents. It does not matter who the respondents are; every family must adhere to fair practices regarding their meals at home.

5. There is a significant relationship existed between the level of parents' perception of the objectives of the (SBFP) and their home-meal-related practices of preparation, food preferences, food exposure, and mealtime. A well-informed parent-beneficiary who understands the objectives of the SBFP and their roles as parents are associated with good meal practices at home.

The major findings and conclusions drawn from the study lead to the following recommendations:

1. The parents will continue to set and prepare healthy meals for the family because it is beneficial to their children in all aspects.

2. There must be sustainability in the feeding program in the school because parents believe that it is essential to children's growth and development in learning and nutrition. And ought parent to be part of the feeding orientation. They need to be aware of their responsibilities as a parent- of the feeding beneficiary.

3. Parents might have a small vegetable garden in their backyard as a source of high-protein and mineral-rich food to be prepared in the family and limit buying or preparing unhealthy snacks. Parents may expose their children to the market to buy food for the family, understand that there are still other food choices, and continue to prohibit their children from using gadgets during mealtime.



4. Regardless of their profile as a parent, these home-meal practices are observed. As also supported by the results of this study family members eat meals together, so it is important for all family members to enjoy good nutrition regardless of their socio-demographic profile.

5. The findings of this study suggest, moreover, that once parents have a complete comprehension of the communication between schools and parents. As a result, they will actively participate while implementing SBFP, specifically in home-meal-related practices.

6. School administrators should make sure that school canteens can provide nutritious food for schoolchildren. The canteen vendors should be compliant with the policy and guidelines on healthy food and beverages for school canteens set by the National Nutrition Council.

7. Implementing schools of SBFP should intensify its orientation process for parent beneficiaries. This is to ensure that parents really comprehend the objective of the program during the process of implementation.

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