



Parental Involvement and Implementation of the Masustansyang Pagkain Para Sa Batang Pilipino act and its Program Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and its relationship with parental involvement at Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational quantitative design, data were gathered from 85 parent-respondents, most of whom belong to low-income households earning below ₱10,000 monthly. Findings revealed that while the SBFP is efficiently implemented across dimensions of food quality, delivery schedules, and information dissemination, parental involvement is selectively influenced by socio-economic factors. Spearman Correlation analysis demonstrated a highly significant positive relationship between administrative reliability (logistics and communication) and parental engagement, whereas food quality showed no significant impact on involvement. Despite positive ratings, parents encountered significant barriers, including extreme weather, high transportation costs (habal-habal), unstable mobile signals, and budget constraints for supplemental ingredients. As an output of the study, the Strategic Parental Engagement Program was developed. This proposed intervention framework institutionalizes decentralized distribution, multi-channel communication, and flexible partnership summits to bypass logistical and technical hurdles. The study concludes that strengthening the administrative framework and localized support systems is essential for transitioning parents from passive recipients to active collaborators in ensuring the nutritional welfare of students.

Keywords: School Based Feeding Program (SBFP), Parental Involvement, Nutritional Information Dissemination, Strategic Parental Engagement Program (SPEP), Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act, Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act marks a significant stride toward addressing malnutrition among Filipino children, particularly through the framework of school-based feeding programs (SBFP). As economic disparities continue to plague various regions in the Philippines, including Cebu, this Act aims to mitigate childhood undernutrition, promote school attendance, and enhance academic performance by providing nutritious meals to elementary school students [20]. Given that malnutrition can severely impair cognitive development and educational outcomes, the necessity of such initiatives cannot be overstated [1]. The effectiveness of these feeding programs, however, remains contingent not only on governmental policy but also on active parental involvement—a factor that has been empirically shown to influence children's academic achievements and nutritional health significantly [30].

Parental involvement, which encompasses various forms of engagement, is crucial in ensuring the success of educational and nutritional programs in schools. Recent research has indicated that the nature and degree of parental engagement can affect children's academic performance and participation in school-oriented health initiatives [21]. The disparity in parental involvement due to socioeconomic factors, cultural beliefs, and awareness levels presents a research gap concerning the intersectional impact of parental psychology on school-based nutritional interventions that this study aims to address. Existing literature predominantly focuses



on either academic support in educational settings or the implications of parental participation in defined programs, but lacks a comprehensive analysis that merges these areas, particularly in the context of school feeding programs like those initiated under the MPBPPA [26, 27].

Moreover, the timeliness of this study is underscored by the rising incidence of childhood obesity and malnutrition exacerbated by economic distress, which has uniquely impacted parental roles in children's dietary behaviors [13]. As schools in regions such as Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School in Luhod, Barili, Cebu, aim to implement these feeding programs, understanding the dynamics of parental engagement becomes essential for maximizing program effectiveness and sustaining beneficial outcomes for children. The researcher of this study seeks to explore this intersection of parental involvement and program success, thus illuminating paths for greater community collaboration and support in combating malnutrition.

In summary, while the Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act offers a robust framework for addressing childhood malnutrition, it necessitates strategic parental support for effective implementation. The synthesis of empirical data and stakeholder insights in this study aims to fill existing gaps in literature and practice—ultimately leading to improved participation and outcomes in school-based feeding programs. Thus, Strategic Parental Engagement Program is proposed to enhance the integration of parental involvement in the success of SBFP initiatives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Location of the Study

To systematically assess the implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) and its relationship with parental involvement at Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School, the researcher employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. This design was the most appropriate as it allowed the researcher to describe the level of program implementation and parental engagement while simultaneously testing the significant relationship between these two variables. The primary data collection tool was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire, which was created with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to ensure a robust and comprehensive set of indicators. Prior to the actual data collection, the instrument underwent stringent Language and Content Validations by a panel of experts to ensure clarity and appropriateness of the items. A pilot test was conducted to evaluate the consistency of the tool. The statistical analysis of the pilot test results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.982, which confirmed that the instrument possessed an excellent level of internal reliability. The questionnaire featured a 5-point Likert scale to measure parents' perceptions of food quality, delivery schedules, and nutritional dissemination, as well as their own level of participation in meal preparation and health orientations. Additionally, a specific section was included to gather demographic profiles and identify the qualitative challenges encountered by parents regarding food commodity distribution under RA 11037.

The gathered data were subjected to statistical treatments to answer the research objectives. The weighted mean was used for descriptive questions to determine the levels of implementation and involvement. To determine the correlation between program implementation and parental involvement, Spearman's rho was applied, as it was the most suitable statistical test for the ordinal data gathered from the Likert scales.

The study was conducted at Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School, located in Barili, Cebu. Situated in the rural landscape of southern Cebu, this educational institution served as the primary hub for the implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) for its local community. The selection of this site was intentional, as it provided a relevant setting for examining the challenges of food commodity distribution under RA 11037, particularly for a population facing geographical and socio-economic hurdles.

The school environment offered a direct vantage point into the interaction between school administrators and parents, making it a suitable venue for examining the practical execution of nutritional programs and the actual levels of parental engagement in a provincial context.



Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process commenced after securing formal permission from the School Head of Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School. Upon receiving approval, the researcher coordinated with the SBFP focal person to identify the target parent- respondents during the 2025-2026 school year. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to ensure that instructions were clearly understood and to provide immediate assistance for any clarifications. The final dataset consisted of 85 parent-respondents. The manuscript reports the number of respondents but does not provide a complete sampling frame, the total number of eligible parents, or a response-rate calculation; therefore, the findings are interpreted as reflecting the participating respondents rather than the entire parent population. Once the respondents completed the survey, the forms were collected, and the resulting data were systematically tallied and tabulated to prepare for comprehensive statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The gathered data were encoded and analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequencies and Percentages were used to summarize the demographic profile of the respondents. Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation were utilized to determine the perceived level of SBFP implementation and the extent of parental involvement, interpreted using a five-point Likert scale (4.21–5.00 = Very High Level/Strongly Agree; 3.41–4.20 = High Level/Agree; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate Level; 1.81–2.60 = Low Level; 1.00–1.80 = Very Low Level). Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the significant relationship between program implementation and parental involvement, while the Kruskal-Wallis Test determined significant differences in levels of implementation and involvement when respondents were grouped according to socio- demographic profiles. Thematic Analysis was applied to categorize and interpret qualitative challenges. The researcher-developed questionnaire yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.982, confirming excellent internal reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program as Perceived by the Parents

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present the perceived level of SBFP implementation across three dimensions. Food Quality (Table 1) yielded an overall weighted mean of 3.986 (Agree), with the highest rating for "The meals served follow a balanced menu" ($M = 4.012$) and the lowest for "The taste of the food is appealing to the children" ($M = 3.965$), suggesting that while the program meets nutritional and safety requirements, there is minor room for improvement in meal variety and presentation [22]. Delivery Schedule (Table 2) obtained an overall mean of 3.77 (Agree), with "pick-up/delivery times convenient for parents" receiving the highest score ($M = 3.91$), indicating a well-coordinated, parent-friendly logistics system that fosters trust and ensures timely nutritional service [12]. Nutritional Information Dissemination (Table 3) yielded an overall mean of 3.81 (Agree), with the highest score for the use of social media or SMS ($M = 3.85$), reflecting that the school effectively leverages modern technology to maintain consistent communication and empower parents with knowledge needed to maintain nutritional standards at home [19].

Table 1. Food Quality

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
The food commodities provided are of good quality.	3.988	0.664	Agree
The meals served follow a balanced menu	4.012	0.475	Agree
The taste of the food is appealing to the children	3.965	0.698	Agree

The food items are stored in a hygienic manner.	3.976	0.534	Agree
The portion sizes are sufficient to meet the children's needs.	3.988	0.567	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.986		Agree

Table 2. Delivery Schedule

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
The distribution of food commodities follows a consistent schedule.	3.61	0.69	Agree
Parents are informed ahead of time regarding the delivery dates.	3.73	0.71	Agree
The pick-up/delivery times are convenient for the parents.	3.91	0.53	Agree
There are no significant delays in the distribution of the food.	3.75	0.63	Agree
The school has an organized system for releasing the commodities.	3.84	0.63	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.77		Agree

Table 3. Nutrition Information Dissemination

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
The school provides clear materials (flyers/posters) about nutrition.	3.79	0.638	Agree
Information regarding the benefits of the feeding program is shared.	3.84	0.67	Agree
Guidelines on how to prepare the commodities at home are provided.	3.79	0.619	Agree
The school uses social media or SMS to update parents on nutrition.	3.85	0.681	Agree
Nutritional orientations are conducted regularly for the parents.	3.78	0.564	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.81		Agree

Level of Parental Involvement in the Implementation of the Program

Tables 4 present the level of parental involvement. Food Preparation and Support (Table 4) yielded an overall mean of 3.52 (Agree), with the highest score for "I ensure that the food is prepared in a clean environment" ($M = 3.73$), reflecting strong awareness of food safety standards and a reliable community support system [22]. Monitoring of Children's Nutrition and Health (Table 5) achieved an overall mean of 3.84 (Agree), with the highest score for "I encourage my child to eat all the food provided by the school" ($M = 3.98$), indicating active and consistent parental supervision [22]. Attendance in Nutrition-Related Activities (Table 6) yielded an

overall mean of 3.83 (Agree), with the highest score for "I ask questions to clarify the guidelines of the feeding program" ($M = 3.94$), suggesting a proactive attitude toward program compliance and a positive culture of health literacy within the community [4]. Collaboration with School Personnel (Table 7) achieved the highest overall mean of 3.94 (Agree), with the highest scores for coordinating with the teacher-in-charge and responding promptly to communications (both $M = 4.02$), indicating a strong and functional partnership between parents and school administration [14].

Table 4. Food Preparation and Support

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
I voluntarily assist in the preparation of meals at the school.	3.41	0.66	Agree
I help in cleaning the cooking area and utensils used for feeding.	3.48	0.63	Agree
I contribute resources (e.g., firewood, spices, water) when needed.	3.47	0.63	Agree
I follow the prescribed recipes when preparing commodities at home.	3.49	0.68	Agree
I ensure that the food is prepared in a clean environment.	3.73	0.66	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.52		Agree

Table 5. Monitoring of Children's Nutrition and Health

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
I regularly check my child's weight and height progress.	3.87	0.65	Agree
I observe changes in my child's appetite during the program.	3.73	0.90	Agree
I keep a record of the food my child consumes from the program.	3.81	0.78	Agree
I report any health improvements or issues to the school teacher.	3.80	0.72	Agree
I encourage my child to eat all the food provided by the school.	3.98	0.79	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.84		Agree

Table 6. Nutrition information dissemination attendance

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
I attend all meetings called by the school regarding the SBFP.	3.91	0.81	Agree
I participate in webinars or seminars about health and nutrition.	3.66	0.73	Agree
I listen actively during briefings on food distribution.	3.80	0.70	Agree
I share the nutritional info I learned with other family members.	3.84	0.70	Agree
I ask questions to clarify the guidelines of the feeding program.	3.94	0.66	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.83		Agree

Table 7. Collaboration with School Personnel

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
I coordinate closely with the teacher-in-charge of the feeding.	4.02	0.72	Agree
I provide suggestions to improve the delivery of the program.	3.71	0.91	Agree
I support school activities related to "Brigada Eskwela" for health.	3.92	0.66	Agree
I respond promptly to communications from school authorities.	4.02	0.53	Agree
I work harmoniously with other parents to ensure program success.	4.01	0.55	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.94		Agree

Significant Relationship Between the Level of Implementation of the School-Based Feeding Program and the Level of Parental Involvement

Table 8 presents the Spearman Correlation results. Food Quality showed no significant relationship with any dimension of parental involvement ($r_s = 0.174, 0.031, 0.069, 0.117$; all ns), whereas Delivery Schedule and Program Management and Communication demonstrated highly significant positive relationships ($p < 0.01$) across all parental involvement indicators. Program Management and Communication exhibited the strongest



associations with Collaboration with School Personnel ($r_s = 0.734^{**}$) and Attendance in Nutrition-Related Activities ($r_s = 0.709^{**}$). These findings imply that logistical and administrative efficiency serves as the primary driver of parental participation, as reliability of delivery schedules and clarity of communication build the necessary trust and structure for sustained engagement [29].

Table 8. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Implementation of The School-Based Feeding Program and the Level of Parental Involvement

Food Participation in Preparation and Support		Monitoring of Children's Nutrition and Health	Attendance in Nutrition-Related Activities	Collaboration with School Personnel
	Spearman Correlation	Spearman Correlation	Spearman Correlation	Spearman Correlation
Food Quality	0.174 ^{ns}	0.031 ^{ns}	0.069 ^{ns}	0.117 ^{ns}
Delivery Schedule	.515 ^{**}	.499 ^{**}	.574 ^{**}	.571 ^{**}
Program management and Communication	.482 ^{**}	.618 ^{**}	.709 ^{**}	.734 ^{**}

Legend: ** highly significant *significant ns-not significant

Significant Difference in the Level of Implementation of SBFP Implementation When Respondents Are Grouped According to Their Profile

Table 9 reveals that among all demographic variables tested, only occupation yielded a significant difference in the perception of food quality ($p = .042$). A post-hoc Dunn-Bonferroni analysis (Table 10) identified that the significant pairwise difference exists exclusively between Unemployed/Houseparents and Self-employed/Vendors (Adj. Sig. = .026), suggesting that daily work environments and budget management practices influence specific quality expectations regarding food. All other demographic variables—age, monthly household income, educational attainment, and number of children enrolled—showed no significant differences across any program component (all $p > 0.05$), indicating that the SBFP is implemented with a high degree of consistency and uniformity across diverse socio-economic backgrounds [22].

Table 9. Significant Difference in the Level of Implementation of SBFP Implementation When Respondents are Grouped According to their Profile

Demographic Profile	Food Quality	Delivery Schedule	Program Management
Age	0.479 ^{ns}	0.479 ^{ns}	0.479 ^{ns}
Monthly Household Income	0.682 ^{ns}	0.308 ^{ns}	0.41 ^{ns}
Educational Attainment	0.289 ^{ns}	0.395 ^{ns}	0.341 ^{ns}
Occupation	.042 [*]	0.85 ^{ns}	0.58 ^{ns}
Number of Children Enrolled	0.519 ^{ns}	0.774 ^{ns}	0.698 ^{ns}

Legend: ** highly significant *significant ns-not significant

Table 10: Pairwise Comparison of Food Quality Perceptions Across Occupational Groups

Occupational Comparison	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig. (p-value)
Unemployed/Houseparent vs. Private Sector Employee	-6.721	10.014	-0.671	0.502	1.000
Unemployed/Houseparent vs. Government Employee	-13.078	24.371	-0.537	0.592	1.000
Unemployed/Houseparent vs. Self-employed/Vendor	-15.811	5.55	-2.849	0.004	.026*
Private Sector Employee vs. Government Employee	-6.357	25.656	-0.248	0.804	1.000
Private Sector Employee vs. Self-employed/Vendor	9.09	9.751	0.932	0.351	1.000
Government Employee vs. Self-employed/Vendor	2.733	24.264	0.113	0.91	1.000

Significant Difference in the Level of Parental Involvement When Respondents Are Grouped According to Their Profile

Table 11 reveals that parental involvement is selectively influenced by specific socio-economic factors rather than being uniformly affected by all demographic variables. Monthly household income showed a significant difference in nutrition monitoring ($p = 0.036$); educational attainment was significant for food preparation participation ($p = 0.046$); occupation was significant for attendance in activities ($p = 0.011$); and the number of children enrolled was significant for collaboration with personnel ($p = 0.044$). Age showed no significant impact on any dimension ($p = 0.479$ uniformly). These findings suggest that economic considerations, work schedules, and educational backgrounds act as practical enablers or barriers to specific types of parental engagement, underscoring the need for flexible, context-sensitive program designs [9].

Table 11. Significant Difference in the Level of Parental Involvement When Respondents are Grouped According to their Profile

Demographic Profiles	Participation in Preparation	Monitoring of Nutrition	Attendance in Activities	Collaboration with Personnel
Age	0.479	0.479	0.479	0.479
Monthly Household Income	0.506	0.036*	0.108	0.706
Educational Attainment	0.046*	0.217	0.177	0.14
Occupation	0.275	0.376	0.011*	0.247
Number of Children Enrolled	0.063	0.062	0.14	0.044*

Challenges That Are Encountered by Parents in the Implementation of the SBFP Particularly in Food Distribution and Preparation

Thematic analysis of parents' qualitative responses identified three overarching challenge domains, each subdivided into specific sub-themes (Tables 12–15). Regarding barriers to food commodity distribution (Table 12), the dominant themes were: (1) Weather and Environmental Barriers, including extreme heat and rain

disrupting travel schedules; (2) Transportation Access and Distance, involving high habal-habal fare costs, lack of public transport in remote areas, and long travel distances; and (3) Scheduling and Time Constraints, encompassing conflicts between distribution schedules and household duties. Concerning obstacles in preparing nutritious food at home (Table 13), three themes emerged: (1) Economic and Resource Constraints, including budget limitations, lack of cooking equipment, and storage challenges; (2) Time Pressure and Competing Responsibilities, where busy schedules drive parents to prioritize speed over nutrition; and (3) Knowledge, Skills, and Cooking Practices, involving confusion over recipes, overcooking, and food safety concerns. Communication challenges between parents and the school administration (Table 14) centered on: (1) Communication Gaps involving unstable mobile signals and lack of direct contact channels; (2) Impacts on Program Execution including late or unclear updates affecting distribution adherence; and (3) Strategies for Improvement, with parents calling for structured multi-channel notification systems, more accessible orientations, and inclusive physical meetings [4].

Table 12: Perception of Barriers in Food Commodity Distribution

Themes	Sub-Themes	Most Frequent Codes
Weather and Environmental Barriers	Weather conditions (extreme heat, rain, etc.)	weather (14); heat (6); rain (5)
	Weather-related timing and uncertainty	time (10); schedule (9); seasonality (2)
Transportation Access and Distance	Lack of transportation options	transportation (15); no vehicle (7); no public transport nearby (2)
	Distance and travel time	distance (6); long distance (4); travel time (3)
	Vehicle costs and fuel constraints	fuel (4); fare (4); cost (4)
Scheduling and Time Constraints	Scheduling conflicts	schedule (9); conflict with schedule (5)
	Household/workload time pressures	busy (5); time (3); work (3)
	Physical burden and travel fatigue	heavy bags (3); load (2); walk (2)

Table 13: Perception of Obstacles in Preparing Nutritious Food

Themes	Sub-Themes	Most Frequent Codes
1) Economic and Resource Constraints	1a) Budget constraints and affordability	budget (15)
	1b) Limited ingredients and equipment	ingredients (12); equipment (4)

	1c) Storage and preservation challenges	storage (4); fridge (2); spoilage (2)
2) Time Pressure and Competing Responsibilities	2a) Time constraints and busy schedules	time (9); busy (6)
	2b) Balancing household duties and meal priorities	balance (3)
3) Knowledge, Skills, and Cooking Practices	3a) Knowledge gaps about nutritious cooking and planning	knowledge (7); planning (3); confusion (4)
	3b) Limited recipe availability and need for guidance	recipe (9); simple (6); guidance (3)
	3c) Food safety, hygiene, and cooking quality	expiry (3); contaminate (2); spoilage (3)

Table 14: Parent and Administration Communication in Feeding Programs

Themes	Sub-Themes	Most Frequent Codes
Communication gaps regarding feeding program requirements	Inconsistent and delayed updates	updates (4); meeting (3); information (3)
	Unstable and limited communication channels	signal (6); contact (3); messenger (2)
	Ambiguity in information and lack of feedback	feedback (2); clarity (3); instruction (1)
Impacts of communication gaps on program execution	Delivery disruptions and schedule adherence	pickuptime (3); lastminutecancel (1); latechanges (1)
	Information quality affecting feeding portions	information (3); wrong_info (2); portions (1)
	Trust and responsiveness issues	listening (1); contact (2); trust (1)
Strategies to improve school–parent communication	Sub-theme 3.1: Structured multi-channel notification systems	alerts (4); announcement (3); timing (2)
	Sub-theme 3.2: Accessibility and inclusivity (parent	attendance (3); role (1); inclusion (1)



	attendance)	
	Sub-theme 3.3: Orientation and training for staff and parents	orientations (2); instruction (1); feedback (1)

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) was positively perceived at Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School, with positive ratings across food quality, delivery schedules, and nutritional information dissemination. The program serves a high-need demographic of young to middle-aged parents who face severe economic and educational limitations despite their availability. The SBFP is efficiently implemented, successfully balancing nutritional service, organized logistics, and proactive communication. Parents are active collaborators who prioritize health monitoring and institutional coordination. Parental involvement depends heavily on administrative consistency and operational efficiency rather than perceived food quality. Program implementation is perceived as uniform, though occupational backgrounds significantly influence food quality evaluations. Socio- economic factors (income, education, and occupation) act as practical barriers to specific types of parental involvement, while age is irrelevant. Engagement is hindered by environmental volatility, transportation costs, kitchen infrastructure gaps, and technical communication failures.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author Arlene C. Sebugero designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, formulated the research protocol, and wrote the initial draft of the manuscript. Author Janeth L. Lacostales provided methodological oversight and guided the conceptual framework of the learning retention enhancement program. Authors Ma. GERALYN C. BALATUCAN, MARILOU D. ELEW, and AMANCIA T. ATIL and AMIEL J. VILLARMENTE managed the literature review, instrument validation, and data collection procedures. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

To protect participants at Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School, formal DepEd clearance was secured, and signed informed consent was obtained from parents, guaranteeing voluntary participation without risking their child's feeding program enrollment. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, sensitive information like income and nutritional status was anonymized using pseudonyms and reported in aggregate form to prevent stigmatization. Upholding beneficence, the inquiry was conducted



sensitively to avoid distress, ensuring the findings serve as an empowering foundation for a Strategic Parental Engagement Program.

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