

## **BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT SENSITIZATION OF PARENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MBOONI EAST SUB- COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

School Feeding Programmes (SFPs) are essential interventions for improving pupil welfare, nutrition, and educational outcomes, particularly in food-insecure regions. While national frameworks in Kenya support SFPs, regional disparities persist due to uneven governance and community engagement. This study examined the influence of Boards of Management (BoMs) in sensitising parents and how such outreach affects the implementation of SFPs in public primary schools in Mbooni East Sub-County. Guided by Stakeholder Theory and a descriptive survey design, the study targeted 115 head teachers, 115 BoM chairpersons, and three NGO programme officers. A purposive sample of 40 schools implementing SFPs yielded 83 respondents. Structured questionnaires were administered to head teachers and BoM chairpersons, while semi-structured interviews captured qualitative insights from NGO representatives. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential techniques. Specifically, Pearson's correlation was used to assess relationships between parental sensitisation and SFP outcomes, while One-Way ANOVA tested for significant differences in programme effectiveness across varying levels of BoM engagement. Tables were used to illustrate which BoM

practices, such as fundraising, dietary assessments, and resource mobilisation, most strongly influenced SFP implementation and to what extent. Findings revealed that 87.5% of schools reported active parental involvement, with frequent sensitisation on fundraising (85%), pupil well-being (80%), and dietary needs (75%). However, outreach on cooking materials and community resource mobilisation was less consistent. A strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.690$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and a regression coefficient ( $B = 0.523$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) confirmed that BoM-led sensitisation significantly predicts SFP implementation effectiveness. Gaps in outreach frequency and inclusivity were evident, aligning directly with the study's objectives. The study concludes that BoM-driven sensitisation is a foundational governance tool for sustainable SFP delivery and recommends capacity-building, structured engagement frameworks, and culturally responsive communication strategies to enhance programme viability.

**Key words;** Sensitisation, Attitudes, Capacity-Building, Training, Feedback Mechanisms

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globally, School Feeding Programmes (SFPs) serve as vital safety nets for vulnerable children, contributing to improved nutrition, school attendance, and educational outcomes. As of 2023, the World Food Programme supported over 90 million children in 76 countries through SFPs (WFP, 2023). Studies consistently show that children who receive regular meals through school feeding programmes perform better academically and exhibit lower dropout rates compared to their peers who do not participate in such programmes (Watkins et al., 2024; Fungo, 2023; Musolo, 2020). These programmes have also been linked to improved concentration, enhanced cognitive development, and increased classroom participation (FAO & WFP, 2023; Manea, 2020; Samson, Gwambene & Chaula, 2025). However, sustainability remains contingent on institutional coordination and community involvement, particularly in remote and resource-constrained settings (Mutale & Ngoma, 2023; Flores, 2023; AUDA-NEPAD, 2022). Parental engagement, fostered through school leadership structures, plays a significant role in programme uptake and continuity (Flores, 2023; Otieno et al., 2024; Muriithi & Kinyanjui, 2023).

In Africa, over 65 million children were reached by national school meal programmes by 2021, although disparities in coverage and implementation persist (AUDA-NEPAD, 2022; FAO & WFP, 2018; Watkins et al., 2024). Countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa have scaled their programmes nationally with mixed success due to challenges in funding, policy coherence, and community mobilisation (Manea, 2020; Musolo, 2020; Fungo, 2023). In East Africa, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda have demonstrated strong government commitment, yet programme outcomes vary widely across regions and counties (Kaburu et al., 2021; Mutale & Ngoma, 2023; Jean de Dieu et al., 2023). Research underscores the importance of school governance structures in catalysing community support and ensuring continuity (Wambua, 2022; Flores, 2023; Mwanja, 2023). Active Boards of Management have been found to influence parent participation, infrastructure provision, and local resource mobilisation—key components of sustained SFP delivery (Musolo, 2020; Otieno et al., 2024; AUDA-NEPAD, 2022).

In Kenya, the national school feeding framework integrates government resources, donor partnerships, and community involvement (MoE, 2022; FAO & WFP, 2018; AUDA-NEPAD, 2022). The Ministry of Education reports that approximately 2.5 million learners were served daily meals under government programmes in arid and semi-arid counties by 2022 (MoE, 2022; Watkins et al., 2024; Manea, 2020). Despite this success, regions with limited parental support experience inconsistent delivery, which negatively affects pupil retention and learning outcomes (Flores, 2023; Samson et al., 2025; Musolo, 2020). Mbooni East Sub-County is a prime example, where SFP coverage stands at 52%, far below the national average (Makueni County Education Office, 2023; Mutale & Ngoma, 2023; Jean de Dieu et al., 2023). Challenges include inadequate parental commitment, poor awareness, and gaps in local resource mobilisation (Flores, 2023; Wambua, 2022;

AUDA-NEPAD, 2022). Boards of Management are therefore critical actors in sensitising parents and fostering programme sustainability at the school level (Samson et al., 2025; Musolo, 2020; Watkins et al., 2024).

In Mbooni East Sub-County, for instance, SFP coverage stands at 52%, significantly below the national average, with schools reporting erratic feeding schedules and inconsistent community support (Makueni County Education Office, 2023; Mutale & Ngoma, 2023; Jean de Dieu et al., 2023). These challenges are compounded by limited awareness, inadequate sensitisation efforts, and fragmented coordination between school leadership and external partners (Flores, 2023; Musolo, 2020; Wambua, 2022). Boards of Management (BoMs), mandated under Kenya's Basic Education Act to facilitate stakeholder engagement, play a pivotal role in bridging these gaps through targeted communication and mobilisation strategies (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Muriithi & Kinyanjui, 2023; Watkins et al., 2024). Schools with active BoMs have demonstrated improved parental responsiveness, more consistent meal delivery, and stronger programme sustainability (Samson et al., 2025; AUDA-NEPAD, 2022; Harrison & Wicks, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

School feeding programmes are essential for ensuring educational equity in food-insecure regions. Despite Kenya's policy emphasis, uneven implementation persists across counties. In Mbooni East Sub-County, only 52% of public primary schools operate consistent feeding schedules, largely due to poor parental involvement and under-resourced Boards of Management (BoMs) (Makueni County Education Office, 2023). Over 40% of pupils miss meals monthly, affecting academic performance and enrolment (Mwania, 2023). These challenges are compounded by inconsistent sensitisation activities targeting parents, who are critical stakeholders in community-driven programme models. If BoMs fail to mobilise and educate families on the benefits and roles in SFPs, programme effectiveness risks further decline, affecting holistic learner development (Muasya & Nzomo, 2024).

The need to explore BoM-led parental sensitisation in Mbooni East is urgent given persistent implementation disparities. Several schools rely solely on donor support, which fluctuates seasonally, while parental contributions remain low due to inadequate awareness. According to Muia and Muli (2023), schools with proactive BoMs—those conducting regular meetings and feedback sessions—exhibit higher food consistency and better retention rates. However, more than 45% of BoM members lack formal training in community mobilisation, limiting their ability to influence parent participation. The problem necessitates focused research to unpack how BoM sensitisation strategies affect parental attitudes, ownership, and overall feeding programme sustainability in public primary schools.

Previous studies have engaged this concept but left critical gaps. Wambua (2022) examined governance roles in SFP delivery but did not distinguish sensitization from other managerial activities. Kaburu et al. (2021) studied East African programme disparities but did not focus on localized governance structures. Mwania (2023) reviewed community responses but

lacked detailed analysis of BoM influence. Thus, existing literature fails to link BoM-led sensitization directly to parental engagement and SFP success. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on influence of sensitization of parents by board of management on implementation of School Feeding Programmes in public Primary schools in Mbooni East Sub- County.

### **Specific Objectives**

The study was guided by the following research objective.

- i) To establish the level of sensitization of parents undertaken by board of management on implementation of School Feeding Programmes in public Primary schools in Mbooni East Sub- County.
- ii) To investigate influence of BoM-led sensitization on parents' attitudes towards implementation of School Feeding Programmes in public Primary schools in Mbooni East Sub- County.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Level of Sensitization Undertaken by Boards of Management to engage parents**

Parental sensitisation is widely acknowledged as essential for the success of School Feeding Programmes (SFPs), particularly in low-income regions where external support is often limited. When parents understand the programme's goals, they are more likely to contribute resources and actively support implementation. In Kenya, community engagement has been shown to improve programme sustainability and student retention (Okal et al., 2024). Sensitisation efforts typically include workshops, school meetings, and local media campaigns to educate parents on the nutritional and educational benefits of SFPs. Active parental involvement fosters ownership, reduces dropout rates, and enhances communication between schools and families. Without targeted sensitisation, communities may remain passive, limiting programme reach and effectiveness (KIPPRA, 2024). However, existing studies have not adequately examined the extent to which boards of management institutionalise sensitisation activities in specific regions, creating a gap this study seeks to address.

When parents are informed about the objectives, nutritional benefits, and operational structure of SFPs, they are more likely to support and participate in programme activities (Okal et al., 2024). The School Meals Coalition (2024) emphasises that sensitisation fosters community ownership, which is essential for programme sustainability and accountability. Kamau, Otieno and Mwangi (2025) found that schools with active parental engagement reported higher attendance and reduced resistance to feeding initiatives. Sensitisation also helps dispel misconceptions about food quality and programme intentions, especially in rural and marginalised communities. Structured communication channels such as meetings, flyers, and local radio enable Boards of Management to build trust and transparency. Yet, while these studies highlight the importance of sensitisation, they do not provide detailed evidence on the level of BoM-led sensitisation leaving a gap in understanding that this study aims to fill.

Mainje et al. (2024) conducted a regional review on the sustainability of African school feeding programmes, focusing on community engagement. Their findings showed that parental sensitisation was positively correlated with programme continuity, especially in areas with limited donor support. Communities that understood the nutritional and educational benefits of SFPs were more likely to contribute resources and advocate for policy support. The review concluded that sensitisation is a foundational pillar for long-term sustainability and recommended integrating parental education into national school feeding frameworks. However, this meta-analysis was regional in scope and did not disaggregate findings to the county level. As such, the specific role of boards of management in sensitising parents remains underexplored, necessitating the current study.

Kibet (2020) explored factors influencing the implementation of SFPs in public primary schools in Baringo Central Sub-County. The study revealed that lack of parental sensitisation hindered programme effectiveness, with many parents unaware of their roles in supporting SFP logistics and oversight. Schools that conducted regular sensitisation meetings experienced better attendance and food contribution rates. The study concluded that parental awareness is a critical determinant of SFP success and recommended that Boards of Management institutionalise sensitisation strategies to ensure consistent parental involvement. Nevertheless, this research was limited to Baringo Central and did not investigate Mbooni East, where similar challenges persist. The absence of county-specific evidence on BoM-led sensitisation creates a gap that this study intends to address.

Chahilu, Chemagosi and Lusweti (2022) found that parental sensitisation significantly improved programme uptake in public pre-primary schools in Mombasa County. Informed parents contributed food items and monitored feeding activities, while teachers reported enhanced learner participation and reduced absenteeism in schools where parents were actively engaged. The findings concluded that sensitisation fosters community ownership and strengthens programme sustainability. However, this study focused on pre-primary schools in an urban setting, leaving rural areas understudied. The extent to which boards of management in Mbooni East sensitise parents remains unclear, highlighting the need for the present study.

Okal et al. (2024) investigated Kenya's national school feeding programme, emphasising community participation and parental engagement. The study found that sensitised parents were more likely to support SFPs through food donations, monitoring, and advocacy. In areas with limited sensitisation, programmes faced resistance and logistical breakdowns. The researchers recommended structured communication strategies, including community forums and culturally tailored messaging, to improve parental understanding and participation. Yet, while this national-level study underscores the importance of sensitisation, it does not provide county-specific insights into BoM-led efforts in rural areas such as Mbooni East. This gap necessitates a focused investigation into the level of sensitisation undertaken by Boards of Management in the sub-county.

### **BoM-led sensitization on parental attitudes toward feeding programme support**

Effective parental sensitisation enhances programme monitoring and accountability. When parents understand the goals and logistics of SFPs, they are more likely to participate in oversight activities such as food quality checks and attendance tracking (Kamau et al., 2025). The Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report (Republic of Kenya, 2023) recommends involving parents in procurement and budgeting processes to improve transparency and reduce misuse of resources. Sensitised parents contribute to programme resilience by advocating for improvements and reporting irregularities. This participatory approach strengthens governance and empowers parents to hold school administrators accountable. However, while these findings demonstrate the influence of sensitisation on parental behaviour, they do not specifically examine how BoM-led sensitisation shapes parental attitudes leaving a gap this study seeks to address.

Sensitisation of parents plays a critical role in promoting equity and inclusion within SFPs. The School Meals Coalition (2023) highlights that targeted messaging can ensure that vulnerable groups, including girls and children with disabilities, are not excluded from programme benefits. Okal et al. (2024) found that culturally sensitive sensitisation strategies improve outreach and reduce stigma. Kamau et al. (2025) emphasise that inclusive communication fosters trust and encourages participation from traditionally marginalised households. Sensitisation helps normalise school feeding as a right rather than a privilege, reinforcing its role in achieving educational equity. Yet, despite these insights, there is limited evidence on how BoM-led sensitisation specifically influences parental attitudes necessitating further study.

SNV (2025) examined parent-led school feeding initiatives in Uganda and Ethiopia, focusing on community-driven models. The findings revealed that sensitised parents contributed food, labour, and oversight, significantly improving programme reliability and learner nutrition. In Ethiopia, parental awareness campaigns led to the establishment of school gardens and livestock projects. The study concluded that parental sensitisation transforms SFPs from externally driven interventions into locally sustained systems, demonstrating how attitudes shift when parents perceive themselves as co-owners. However, this evidence is drawn from Uganda and Ethiopia and does not address how BoM-led sensitisation influences parental attitudes in Kenya, particularly in Mbooni East. This gap necessitates the current study.

Busara Global (2024) conducted a case study on the school milk feeding programme in rural Kenya, focusing on caregiver motivation and community engagement. Findings showed that sensitised caregivers were more likely to enrol children in schools offering milk, and they actively participated in programme monitoring. Behavioural nudges such as storytelling and peer influence increased parental commitment to feeding initiatives. The study concluded that parental sensitisation enhances programme uptake and sustainability, showing how attitudes evolve positively when sensitisation is effective. Nonetheless, this study

concentrated on milk feeding programmes and did not explore the broader role of BoM-led sensitisation in shaping parental attitudes towards SFPs leaving a gap for this research.

The World Food Programme (2024) published a global report on school feeding, with a particular focus on East Africa. The report highlighted parental sensitisation as a critical success factor in community-based feeding programmes. In Uganda, sensitised parents contributed food and labour, while in Ethiopia, awareness campaigns significantly improved programme retention. These findings underscore the importance of caregiver engagement in scaling and sustaining School Feeding Programmes (SFPs). Sensitisation was shown to influence parental attitudes, shifting them towards ownership and active participation. The report concluded that without consistent parental involvement, feeding initiatives risk stagnation or collapse. However, while this global evidence demonstrates the value of sensitisation, it does not provide county-specific insights into how Boards of Management in Kenya, structure and implement sensitisation. This gap necessitates the current study to contextualise BoM-led parental engagement.

Kamau et al. (2025) and Okal et al. (2024) emphasise that sensitised parents are more likely to advocate for improvements, report irregularities, and support programme adjustments. Their findings illustrate how sensitisation creates a feedback loop, shifting parental attitudes from passive acceptance to active involvement. Parents who are well informed become proactive stakeholders, ensuring that feeding programmes remain responsive and sustainable. This transformation is crucial in contexts where external funding is inconsistent, and community ownership determines continuity. Sensitisation thus empowers parents to demand accountability and contribute meaningfully to programme success. Yet, while these studies highlight the general influence of sensitisation on parental behaviour, they do not isolate the role of Boards of Management in shaping these attitudes within Kenyan counties. This gap calls for focused research to examine BoM-led sensitisation as a determinant of parental responsiveness.

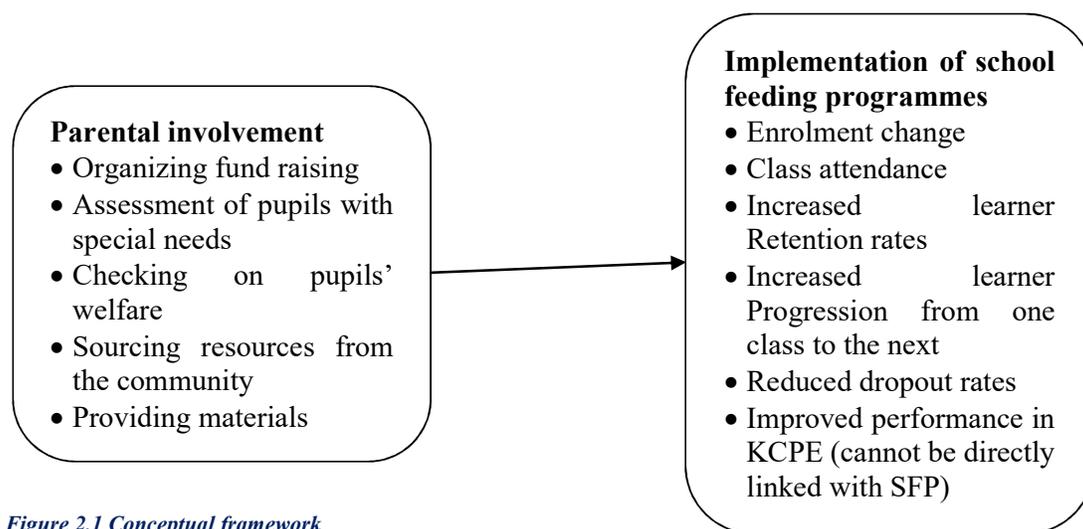
### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts the stakeholder theory developed by Edward Freeman in 1984. The theory argues that organizations must address the interests of all parties affected by their operations, including those who do not have formal control. It posits that long-term success and sustainability depend on balancing stakeholder interests and fostering inclusive decision-making (Freeman, 1984). In the school context, parents, Boards of Management, NGOs, and learners are key stakeholders whose needs and cooperation determine the viability of feeding programmes. The theory is valuable in understanding how relational dynamics among school stakeholders influence programme outcomes.

Proponents of stakeholder theory include Donaldson and Preston (1995), who support their normative applications in promoting moral responsibility in decision-making. Harrison and Wicks (2013) extend this argument by asserting that mutual stakeholder engagement leads to higher organizational performance. Opponents like Jensen (2001) criticize the theory for

lacking precise operational boundaries, arguing it weakens accountability. Heath (2006) also questioned its effectiveness in competitive environments. While these debates exist, the theory remains useful in social service delivery models like school feeding, where community ownership and cooperation are pivotal to programme success.

Stakeholder Theory aligns well with this study by framing the BoM as a central actor tasked with addressing parent concerns, interests, and capacities. Effective sensitization reflects stakeholder alignment, where parents understand their roles and contribute meaningfully to programme success. By analysing how BoMs communicate, engage, and coordinate parental inputs, the study reveals critical dimensions of governance impact. In settings like Mbooni East, sensitization is not merely a procedural task but a relational strategy to galvanize community ownership. Thus, Stakeholder Theory helps interpret leadership dynamics, cooperation levels, and trust-building efforts critical to successful SFPs (Wambua, 2022).



*Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework*

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the research methodology that guided this study. It outlines the research design, target population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, procedures for ensuring validity and reliability, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. The methodology was carefully selected to ensure that the research objectives were addressed effectively and that the findings would be both credible and applicable to policy and practice in school feeding governance.

### **Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is appropriate for collecting data from a large population to describe existing conditions, relationships, and practices without manipulating variables. This design enabled the researcher to explore how Boards of Management (BoMs) engage in sensitising parents and how such efforts influence the

implementation of School Feeding Programmes (SFPs). Descriptive surveys are particularly useful in educational research where the goal is to understand stakeholder perceptions, behaviours, and programme outcomes in natural settings. The design also allowed for the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, thereby enriching the analysis and interpretation of findings.

### **Target Population**

The target population for this study comprised key stakeholders involved in the implementation of SFPs in Mbooni East Sub-County. Specifically, the population included all 115 public primary school head teachers and 115 chairpersons of Boards of Management (BoMs), each representing one school. These individuals were selected because of their direct involvement in school governance and parental engagement. Additionally, three Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)—Anglican Development Services (ADS), World Vision (WV), and the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF)—were included due to their active role in supporting school feeding initiatives in the region. The total target population was therefore 233 individuals, all of whom were considered to possess relevant knowledge and experience regarding the governance and implementation of SFPs.

### **Sampling Procedure**

A combination of purposive and census sampling techniques was employed to select the study sample. Forty public primary schools actively implementing SFPs were purposively selected from the two administrative divisions of Mbooni East Sub-County. From each of these schools, the head teacher and BoM chairperson were purposively sampled based on their leadership roles and direct involvement in programme implementation and parental sensitisation. This approach ensured that the respondents had the requisite experience to provide meaningful insights. In addition, a census sampling technique was used to include all three NGOs operating in the sub-county, given their small number and strategic importance. The final sample therefore consisted of 83 respondents: 40 head teachers, 40 BoM chairpersons, and 3 NGO representatives.

*Table 1 Sample Size*

<b>Division</b>	<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Head teachers</b>	<b>BOM Chairpersons</b>	<b>Total</b>
Kalawa	2	13	13	28
Kisau	1	27	27	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>83</b>

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The study relied primarily on structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data from head teachers and BoM chairpersons. The questionnaires were designed to capture information on the frequency and nature of parental sensitisation activities, the types of contributions made by parents, and the perceived effectiveness of SFP implementation. Items were organised into thematic sections aligned with the study's specific objectives, including resource mobilisation, inclusivity, and pupil outcomes. The instruments included both

closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items to allow for standardised responses and ease of analysis. For the NGO representatives, a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data on community engagement strategies, logistical challenges, and sustainability mechanisms. This mixed approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

### **Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, the questionnaires and interview guides were reviewed by experts in educational research and school feeding policy. Their feedback was used to refine the wording, structure, and relevance of the items to ensure they accurately captured the intended constructs. A pilot study was conducted in five schools outside the main sample to test the clarity and reliability of the instruments. The internal consistency of the Likert-scale items was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.78 indicating acceptable reliability. Adjustments were made based on pilot results to improve the coherence and usability of the tools before full-scale data collection commenced.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection began after obtaining ethical clearance from the university and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher also secured authorisation from the County Director of Education and the respective school heads. Prior to administering the questionnaires, the researcher visited each selected school to establish rapport and explain the purpose of the study. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and informed consent was obtained. Questionnaires were self-administered, with the researcher present to clarify any ambiguities. For the NGO representatives, interviews were conducted in person using a semi-structured guide. This approach ensured the collection of both standardised and in-depth data.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Quantitative data was coded and entered the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were used to summarise the data and describe patterns in parental sensitisation and SFP implementation. To examine the relationships between variables, inferential statistics were employed. Specifically, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the strength and direction of associations between parental sensitisation activities (independent variable) and SFP implementation outcomes (dependent variables). In addition, linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of BoM-led sensitisation on programme effectiveness. Qualitative data from NGO interviews were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and contextual insights that complemented the quantitative findings.

## **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **Response rate**

Out of 83 instruments administered, 77 were successfully returned, marking a response rate of 92.8%. This high return rate affirms strong engagement among respondents and reliability in the study's findings. Full participation from headteachers enabled consistent insights across school management perspectives. The slightly lower BoM response rate reflects logistical constraints, yet the sample remained valid and representative. NGO managers offered rich qualitative insights, corroborating trends observed from the school-level respondents. The robust dataset provided a balanced platform for analysing the link between BoM sensitization and parent involvement in SFP implementation in Mbooni East Sub-County.

*Table 2 Results*

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Questionnaires Issued</b>	<b>Returned</b>
Head Teachers	40	40
BoM Chairpersons	40	35
NGO Managers	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>77</b>

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Parents' Involvement in School Feeding Programme**

Parental sensitization is widely recognised as a foundational strategy for building community ownership and sustaining School Feeding Programmes (SFPs). The findings from Mbooni East Sub-County affirm this, with high levels of reported parental involvement and frequent sensitization activities led by Boards of Management (BoMs). A substantial 87.5% of head teachers confirmed active parental involvement in SFPs. This suggests that BoMs have successfully engaged parents beyond passive participation, involving them in food preparation, provision of cooking materials, and monitoring of feeding schedules. Okal et al. (2024) emphasise that sensitized parents contribute both materially and morally, enhancing transparency and learner outcomes. Masila (2025) further argues that sensitization must accommodate both monetary and non-monetary contributions, especially in economically constrained settings.

*Table 3 Parents' Involvement in School Feeding Programme*

<b>Parents Involvement</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	35	87.5%
No	5	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### **Frequency of Parents’ Sensitization on SFP Activities**

The data shows that BoMs frequently sensitized parents on fundraising (85%), pupil well-being (80%), and dietary needs (75%). These activities reflect strong outreach efforts. However, sensitization on cooking materials and resource sourcing was less consistent, indicating gaps in outreach breadth. According to SNV (2025), parent-led fundraising initiatives significantly boost programme sustainability. Souza et al. (2021) and UNICEF & WFP (2025) highlight the importance of sensitizing parents on dietary diversity to ensure inclusive feeding practices.

*Table 4 Frequency of Parents’ Sensitization on SFP Activities*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Always (%)</b>	<b>Often (%)</b>	<b>Sometimes (%)</b>
Organizing fundraising	55.0	30.0	10.0
Assessment of special dietary needs	25.0	50.0	17.5
Checking on pupils’ well-being	30.0	50.0	15.0
Sourcing community resources	27.5	42.5	20.0
Providing cooking materials	20.0	47.5	15.0

### **Community Involvement vs SFP Implementation**

The table reveals a clear relationship: schools with “Very Effective” community involvement all reported “Effective” SFP implementation. This suggests that BoM-led sensitization directly influences parental attitudes and engagement. Jean de Dieu et al. (2023) found similar results in Rwanda, where sensitized communities actively contributed foodstuffs and oversight, enhancing programme legitimacy. Tamiru et al. (2024) caution that without culturally responsive sensitization, community involvement may remain symbolic and fail to translate into tangible support.

*Table 5 Community Involvement vs SFP Implementation*

<b>Community Involvement</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<b>Fairly Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fairly Effective	2	3	0	5
Effective	0	24	3	27
Very Effective	0	0	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>35</b>

### **Correlation Analysis**

The Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.690$  with  $p = 0.000$  indicates a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between parental sensitization and SFP implementation. This confirms that BoM outreach efforts meaningfully influence programme success. According to Okal et al. (2024), sensitization fosters programme

ownership and accountability, while KIPPRA (2024) notes that institutionalized sensitization reduces dropout rates and improves programme consistency.

### **Regression Analysis**

The regression coefficient for sensitization of parents ( $B = 0.523$ ,  $p = .000$ ) confirms that BoM-led sensitization is a statistically significant predictor of SFP implementation effectiveness. This means that for every unit increase in sensitization efforts, programme effectiveness improves by 0.523 units. The standardized Beta (.276) reflects a moderate but meaningful contribution relative to other BoM practices.

### **Summary of the findings**

The findings demonstrate that BoM-led sensitization significantly influences parental involvement and programme success. High levels of sensitization correlate with increased contributions, improved pupil retention, and stronger community ownership. However, gaps remain in outreach related to cooking materials and resource mobilisation. These findings affirm the relevance of Stakeholder Theory, which emphasises inclusive governance and relational engagement. BoMs must therefore prioritise culturally responsive and sustained sensitization strategies to embed SFPs within community values and ensure long-term viability.

### **Conclusion**

The study established that the level of sensitization undertaken by Boards of Management (BoMs) significantly affects parental awareness and engagement in School Feeding Programmes (SFPs). Schools where BoMs proactively conducted regular meetings, shared updates, and held inclusive forums saw marked improvement in parental understanding of programme goals. This, in turn, fostered transparency and ownership among parents, encouraging them to support SFPs materially and emotionally. Conversely, low levels of sensitization correlated with poor parental involvement and inconsistent programme execution. Therefore, BoM sensitization is a critical governance function that influences not just community participation but also the sustainability of SFPs in resource-constrained school environments.

The findings revealed that BoM-led sensitization has a tangible impact on parental attitudes toward feeding programme support. Where BoMs communicated consistently and framed SFPs as community-driven solutions, parents demonstrated increased willingness to contribute foodstuff, monitor implementation, and volunteer during preparation. This shift from passive to active involvement promoted a shared sense of responsibility, positively reinforcing programme outcomes. In contrast, in schools lacking structured communication efforts, parents appeared disengaged, and the burden of implementation often fell entirely on external donors. BoM sensitization, therefore, emerges not just as a managerial task but as a powerful influence on community perception and behavioral change.

The study also showed that sensitization efforts influence the consistency and overall success of feeding programme implementation. Schools with engaged and well-informed parents maintained more reliable feeding schedules, leading to improved attendance and reduced absenteeism. Children consistently receiving meals showed better focus and retention. Conversely, low parental awareness contributed to erratic food supply and interrupted meal service, compromising programme effectiveness. BoMs that prioritized dialogue and clarity enabled smoother coordination and resource mobilization. These results underscore that parent sensitization when strategically executed by BoMs is essential to the operational success and long-term viability of school feeding programmes.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Strengthen BoM-led sensitisation strategies by institutionalising regular forums such as parent meetings, workshops, and local media campaigns to ensure consistent outreach and engagement.
- ii. Train BoM members in culturally responsive communication to improve the relevance and effectiveness of sensitisation efforts, ensuring that outreach resonates with diverse community norms and values.
- iii. Establish feedback mechanisms to monitor the impact of sensitisation on parental attitudes and SFP outcomes, allowing BoMs to adjust strategies based on community response and participation levels.

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