

Original Research Report

Fathers' Involvement in Family Feeding in Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated the extent of the father's involvement in family feeding in Nsukka LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and was carried out in Nsukka LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria. The population of the study was indefinite and included all the fathers in the study area. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in the study of thirty (30) fathers from each of the randomly selected seven (7) communities totaling two hundred and ten (210) sample size. A structured questionnaire was used for the data collection. The major findings of the study, among others, are that fathers are meant to be the only financial provider of the family, and they should always be served meals first in big proportion before other members of the family. It is revealed that the ways fathers should participate in family feeding are procuring family foods and encouraging the production and storage of nutrient-dense foods, among others. Also, the study revealed that the income level of the father, the father's nature, and types of occupation, among others, are the major factors affecting the father's involvement in family feeding. It was agreed that good family relationships; sensitization of society using social media platforms, among others, are the major strategies to be adopted in order to enhance the participation of fathers in family feeding. It was recommended, among others, that nutrition intervention programs should target fathers in order to increase their involvement in family feeding.

Keywords: Fathers, Family, Feeding, Involvement, Perception

1. Introduction

Family is functionally, a social unit in which there exist; sharing of roles, resources and economic property, a caring and supportive relationship, commitment to or identification with other family members and preparation of children to become responsible members of the society (Bonci, 2011). There are different types of family with their respective compositions and these include nuclear family, single parent family, extended family, step family, grandparents' family and childless family which has parents who can't or nurturer don't want to have children. Barti (2019) when stating the roles of the various family members explained that the fathers is the major provider of the family finance and safety; the mother being the children's emotional security provider while children are the ones to obey, assist the parents and live up to the family standard. Family, though seems to be looked down upon, is where socialization and preparation of individuals for important life activities takes place (Anyakoha, 2013). As a result, adequate attention and care should be given to the family via quality education for better nation which is the major concern of Home Economics Education. It is worthy of note that in most part of the world, families are patriarchal in structure which means that the father is the head and the authority over all the members of the family (Ogundare, 2010). He provides financially and decides the implementation of the family decision matters (Gorgeni & Fallon, 2013). As matter of fact, any decision-making process that excludes the father is usually difficult to be implemented. In fact, the basic family needs such as clothing, shelter and feeding which the fathers are not aware of or that do not arouse their interest are not usually met easily.

Family feeding which tops first amongst the various needs of the family involves all the processes and activities that should be adopted to efficiently manage family resources in order to ensure the availability of healthy food choices and consumption patterns of every member of the family so that nutritional and health needs are met in the family (Julie, 2020). In family feeding, several factors like family income, seasonal foods, the age, sex, occupation, and health status of the family members are considered in order to meet adequately the nutritional needs of each member (Julie, 2020). Hence, it is very vital and should involve the full support and participation of the head of the family in order to tackle successfully the issues of malnutrition that is ravaging the globe especially at the family level. There has been a growing recognition that to reduce malnutrition among family members especially children, structures that will support fathers' involvement in family nutrition need to be introduced as they are the key players in providing support to the family. Nutrition intervention and most NGOs have for long focused on women as the only entry point to effect positive outcome of nutrition among families (McGadney-Douglas & Douglas, 2008; Shi & Zhang, 2011). This is because they are perceived to be the primary care givers for the children (Bilal et al., 2016). By default, men have been practically left out from the design and implementation of nutritional program in the society because it is traditionally believed that nutrition is typically a woman affair (Ruel, Alderman, & Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group, 2013). But women's empowerment through autonomy over household purchases and nutrition matters can't be actualized effectively without equitable involvement and contributions of men as they play the role of fathers, husband, household heads and prominent players in decision making on income, food purchases and consumption.

Unfortunately, there is a gender biased perspective developed through socio-cultural conditioning that certain roles in society or family such as food matters are for women (Aubel & Alvarez, 2011). Gender roles are practically determined by different expectations that individual, group or society has on them based on their sex, societal values and belief and this is why women are

traditionally believed to be responsible for nurturing children and food matters while men are meant to be providing financially for the family. Yogman et.al., (2016a) also stated that father's level of formal education and the nature and type of job he does affect his involvement in family feeding. That is to say that, the higher the formal education of a father, the higher his chances to participate and get involved in family feeding. Also, most fathers who are civil servants or whose jobs demands longer period of absence from home tends to give much attention to their job than their family matters.

Several studies have confirmed that gender affects people's perception about feeding. Solomon (2013) stated that male and females have different consumption pattern. This is to assert that different genders have different attitude towards food and feeding patterns with women found to show more concern about what they eat than the men. Monge-Rojas et al. (2015) in line with Caine-Bish and Scheule (2009) stated that most men delight in some food practices which are detrimental to their health. Most fathers usually show less involvement in family feeding (Muraya et al., 2017). Sun, Horn and Merrit (2015) posit that women are found to be healthy eaters than men and this is due to the fact they better understanding and awareness of nutritional literacy than men. As a matter of fact, there is an urgent need to enlighten fathers on nutritional affairs of the family. Nguyen et al. (2018) stated that engaging fathers during pregnancy resulted in higher dietary and more positive pregnancy outcomes and produces optimal level of feeding practices in the family and affects children's attitude towards proper feeding (Anderson et al., 2010) and total wellbeing of the family members (Yogman et.al.,2016b). Meeri (2013) stated that father's diet before wife's conception is required for child's health. Also, in a study carried out by Ntoimo and Odimegwu (2014), it was found that there is higher prevalence of stunting in single mothers' children compared to children whose mothers were in union with their father. This validates the importance of fathers' involvement in complementary feeding. Ditekemena et al. (2012) identified that poor communication, shame associated with becoming, 'too involved', and inadequate services tailored for men in the health facilities are some of the factors that affect the father's engagement in family feeding. Meanwhile, the maternal and children health is likely to be in danger in a family where father is not involved nutritional management. This is an issue of concern as there ought to be an emergence of new of a new fatherhood that allows for balance between a workplace and home responsibilities in our society.

1.1. Statement of Problem

Cultural construction of masculinity and femininity has affected almost every area of life including the family feeding in the society. As a result of this, the fathers are usually not part of family feeding matters. They are usually not concerned about their own nutrition and that of the family members. Most of them don't even provide financially for the family. On a more serious note, most of them feel ashamed buying foodstuffs for the family consumption because of the misconception that family feeding is a woman's primary role. Also, most of the nutrition intervention schemes are usually targeted towards women and children leaving thereby leaving men. This has led to family feeding being left alone for the women to handle and the consequent suffering of most nutritional intervention schemes at implementation stage. Hence, malnutrition escalates among most families in Nsukka, LGA.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to analyze the extent of fathers' involvement in family feeding in Nsukka LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated:

- (a) The perception of fathers on family feeding.
- (b) Fathers' participation in family feeding
- (c) Factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family nutrition.
- (d) Strategies to be adopted in order to enhance participation of fathers in family feeding.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- (a) What are the perceptions of fathers on family feeding?
- (b) How do Fathers participate in family feeding?
- (c) What are the Factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding?
- (d) What are the strategies to be adopted in order to enhance participation of fathers in family feeding?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the fathers who are civil servants and those who are not on the perception of fathers on family feeding.

H₀₂: There is no significant different in the mean responses of fathers who have formal education and those who do not have formal education on the various factors affecting fathers' perception and participation in family feeding.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Design for the Study

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. As defined by Nworgu (2015), survey research can be used to carry out 'those studies which aim at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population'. Therefore, the study adopted survey design as it utilizes information obtained from a fraction of the fathers in Nsukka LGA to infer on the general population of fathers on the analysis of fathers' perception and participation in family feeding.

2.1.1. Ethics Approval of Research

Ethics approval of the research was done by the Reviewers Committee of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Informed consent was written by the author and approved by the supervisor, from department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka to the Department of Marriage Registry Nsukka for the release of Data for the study

2.2. Area of the Study

The area of the study was Nsukka, L.G.A, Enugu State, Nigeria. This was selected majorly because of the high socio-cultural beliefs by men in this area that family feeding is solely the responsibilities of the women folks thereby affecting their involvement in family feeding.

2.3. Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised 4,450 married people from all the fourteen (14) communities (Alor-uno, Anuka, Ede-oballa, Edem, Eha-alumona, Ibagwa-ani, Lejja, Nsukka, Obimo, Obukpa, Okpaligbo, Okpuje, Okutu and Opi) which make up Nsukka LGA (Federal Republic of

Nigeria Official Gazette, 2007) who also registered their marriages at Nsukka Local Government Marriage Registry from the year 2010 to 2017 (Nsukka Local Government Marriage Registry Department, 2017).

The study adopted multi-stage sampling technique for the study. The first stage involved the random selection of seven (7) communities (Alor-uno, Edem, ibagwa-ani, Nsukka, Obukpa, Okpaligbo and Opi) out of the fourteen (14) communities that make up Nsukka LGA. The stage two involved the use of proportionate random stratified sampling procedure to select 10% of the population (445: 210 married males; 235 married females) from the fourteen (14) local government areas in the study area. This is to make sure that each of the fourteen (14) local government area has equal representativeness of the sample relative to the population. The final stage involved the use of convenient sampling to select 30 fathers from each of the seven (7) randomly selected communities totaling two hundred and ten (210). According to Lavrakas (2008), convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which people are sampled made up of two hundred and ten (210) married males or fathers who are the respondents.

2.4. Instrument for Data Collection and Study Procedure

Structured questionnaire titled Fathers' Involvement in Family Feeding Questionnaire (FIFFQ) was designed by the researchers based on the extensive literature review using research objective as a guide and was used to collect the data from the fathers. The questionnaire was made up of two parts; part A which was used to collect demographic data while part B was designed to collect data to answer the research questions posed by the research purposes. The questionnaire was made up of three (3) clusters. Each cluster sought for information on each of the research objectives. The instrument adopted four-point rating scale response categories. Cluster A, C and D adopted a four-point rating scale with response categories of; Strongly disagree (1.00-1.49), Disagree (1.50-2.49), Agree (2.50-3.49), and Strongly Agree (3.50-4.00). Hence, any item with mean score above 2.50 will be acceptable and adjudged to be above the criterion level of acceptance while items with mean score below 2.50 will be adjudged to be below the criterion level of acceptance and thus will be rejected. Items in cluster B were placed in Yes or No scale to determine the percentage of the responses. Data for the study was collected by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The researchers trained the two research assistants specifically on the best way to approach the respondents and on the need to explain anything necessary as may be requested by respondents.

To ensure validity of the instrument, the instrument was face and content validated by three experts from the Department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education. Their inputs and corrections were considered and appropriate corrections were made before administration to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Method and 0.86 internal consistency was achieved which showed that the instrument is reliable.

2.5. Data Collection Technique

Two hundred and ten (210) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents. All questionnaires were filled and collected by the researchers and two research assistants manually.

2.6. Data Analysis Technique

Mean and Standard Deviation were the techniques adopted for data analysis using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software version 20.0. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 significant level.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research question one: What are the perceptions of fathers on family feeding?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of respondents on the perceptions of fathers on family feeding

S/NO	Perceptions of fathers on family feeding?	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Fathers are meant to be only financial provider of the family	2.79	1.04	Agree
2	Mothers' role is plan and cook meals	2.60	1.17	Agree
3	Family feeding is mothers and children affair	2.21	0.96	Disagree
4	It is socially a shameful habit to see the husband in the kitchen.	2.28	1.09	Disagree
5	All about food is to eat and satisfy one's hunger	2.71	1.14	Agree
6	It is socially shameful for a man to be seen making food purchases for the family.	2.20	0.92	Disagree
7	A man who is involved in family feeding is a man who is controlled by a woman	2.18	0.72	Disagree
8	Fathers are not supposed to feed children.	2.18	1.06	Disagree
9	Fathers should always be served meals before other members in the family.	2.76	1.00	Agree
10	Fathers should be eating together with their families	3.64	0.71	Strongly Agree
11	Fathers should have the biggest portion size of meat and fish in the family	2.52	1.16	Agree
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	2.55	1.00	Agree

Note: \bar{X} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 1 shows that the respondents strongly agreed to item 10 with mean of 3.64. Similarly, they agreed to items 1, 2, 5, 9 and 11 with mean ranging from 2.52 – 2.79. However, the respondents disagreed to items 3, 4, 6 – 8 with a mean range of 2.18 – 2.28. In addition, the standard deviation ranged from 0.71 – 1.17 indicating that the responses of the respondents were close to one another in their opinion on the perceptions of fathers on family feeding.

3.2. Research question two: How do fathers participate in family feeding?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of respondents on the How fathers participate in family feeding

N/S	How do fathers participate in family feeding?	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
12	Procurement of family foods	3.78	0.41	Strongly Agree
13	Assisting in meal preparation when the need arises	2.74	1.09	Agree
14	Modeling of healthy eating behaviors to the family	2.70	1.12	Agree
15	Shunning the family of any detected bad feeding practices.	2.77	1.29	Agree
16	Assists in meal services when the need arises	2.71	1.20	Agree
17	Supports the wife in exclusive breastfeeding of the infants.	2.49	1.14	Disagree
18	Encourages the production and storage of nutrient-dense foods	3.32	0.83	Agree
19	Feeding baby when the mother is not at home.	2.64	1.29	Agree

Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	2.90	1.05	Agree
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Note: \bar{X} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows that the respondents strongly agreed to item 12 with mean of 3.78. Similarly, they agreed to items 13 – 16, 18 and 19 with mean ranging from 2.64 – 3.32. However, the respondents disagreed to items 17 with a mean of 2.49. In addition, the standard deviation ranged from 0.41 – 1.29 indicating that the responses of the respondents were close to one another in their opinion on the how fathers participate in family feeding. With the grand mean of 2.90 and standard deviation of 1.05, the Table indicated that the respondents generally agreed that all the presented item statements are how fathers participate in family feeding.

3.3. Research question three: What are the Factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of respondents on the factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding

S/No	Factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
20	Traditions and culture	3.23	1.16	Agree
21	Income level of the father	3.60	0.64	Strongly Agree
22	Religious belief	3.37	0.86	Agree
23	Fathers nature and types of occupation	3.66	0.65	Strongly Agree
24	Fathers' type of family and friends	3.53	0.65	Strongly Agree
25	Wives' knowledge of nutrition	3.15	0.96	Agree
26	Age of the father	3.20	0.90	Agree
27	Level of literacy	3.22	0.66	Agree
28	Ego	3.22	1.07	Agree
29	Husband-wife relationship	3.50	0.81	Strongly Agree
30	Environment	3.07	1.08	Agree
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		3.34	0.86	Agree

Note: \bar{X} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 3 shows that the respondents strongly agreed to items 21, 23, 24 and 29 with mean of 3.50 – 3.66. Similarly, they agreed to items 20, 22, 25 – 28 and 30 with mean ranging from 3.07 – 3.37. In addition, the standard deviation ranged from 0.65 – 1.16 indicating that the responses of the respondents were close to one another in their opinion on the factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding. With the grand mean of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.86, the Table indicated that the respondents generally agreed that all the presented item are the factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding.

3.4. Research question four: What are the strategies to be adopted in order to enhance participation of fathers in family feeding?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of respondents on the strategies to be adopted in order to enhance participation of fathers in family feeding

S/N	Strategies to be adopted in order to enhance participation of fathers in family	SA	A	SD
31	Nutrition intervention program should target the fathers	3.43	0.84	Agree
32	Workshops and seminars that will educate fathers on	3.61	0.49	Strongly Agree

	importance of their involvement in family nutrition.				
33	Engaging the churches and other religious centers to uphold the notion.	3.64	0.55	Strongly Agree	
34	Inclusion of fathers' involvement in family nutrition into home economics education program	3.58	0.56	Strongly Agree	
35	Sensitization of the society using social media platforms, magazine and television programs.	3.63	0.66	Strongly Agree	
36	Educate wives on the role of fathers in family nutrition	3.52	0.79	Strongly Agree	
37	Good family relationship	3.78	0.42	Strongly Agree	
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	3.60	0.61	Strongly Agree	

Note: \bar{X} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 4 shows that the respondents strongly agreed to items 32 – 37 with a mean range of 3.52 – 3.78. Similarly, they agreed to item 31 with a mean of 3.43. In addition, the standard deviation ranged from 0.42 – 0.84 indicating that the responses of the respondents were close to one another in their opinion on the strategies to be adopted in order to enhance participation of fathers in family. With the grand mean of 3.60 and standard deviation of 0.61, the Table indicated that the respondents generally agreed strongly that all the presented item are the strategies to be adopted in order to enhance participation of fathers in family.

3.5. H_{01} : There is no significant difference between the fathers who are civil servants and those who are not on the perception of fathers on family feeding.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance of the mean responses of fathers who are civil servants and those who are not on the perception of fathers on family feeding

S/N	Perceptions of fathers on family feeding?	Sources of Variance	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F-Value	p-value	Rem.
1	Fathers are meant to be only financial provider of the family	Between Groups	7.390	2	3.70	3.51	0.03	S
		Within Groups	217.967	207	1.05			
		Total	225.357	209				
2	Mothers' role is plan and cook meals	Between Groups	2.138	2	1.07	0.78	0.46	NS
		Within Groups	284.057	207	1.37			
		Total	286.195	209				
3	Family feeding is mothers and children affair	Between Groups	7.320	2	3.66	4.07	0.02	S
		Within Groups	186.037	207	0.90			
		Total	193.357	209				
4	It is socially a shameful habit to see the husband in the kitchen.	Between Groups	4.463	2	2.23	1.88	0.16	NS
		Within Groups	245.961	207	1.19			
		Total	250.424	209				

5	All about food is to eat and satisfy one's hunger	Between Groups	3.323	2	1.66	1.29	0.28	NS
		Within Groups	267.534	207	1.29			
		Total	270.857	209				
6	It is socially shameful for a man to be seen making food purchases for the family.	Between Groups	10.252	2	5.13	6.39	0.00	S
		Within Groups	165.943	207	0.80			
		Total	176.195	209				
7	A man who is involved in family feeding is a man who is controlled by a woman	Between Groups	7.768	2	3.88	8.09	0.00	S
		Within Groups	99.355	207	0.48			
		Total	107.124	209				
8	Fathers are not supposed to feed children.	Between Groups	28.073	2	14.04	14.17	0.00	S
		Within Groups	205.051	207	0.99			
		Total	233.124	209				
9	Fathers should always be served meals before other members in the family.	Between Groups	.374	2	0.19	0.18	0.83	NS
		Within Groups	210.240	207	1.02			
		Total	210.614	209				
10	Fathers should be eating together with their families	Between Groups	7.465	2	3.73	7.99	0.00	S
		Within Groups	96.749	207	0.47			
		Total	104.214	209				
11	Fathers should have the biggest portion size of meat and fish in the family	Between Groups	17.058	2	8.53	6.70	0.00	S
		Within Groups	263.366	207	1.27			
		Total	280.424	209				
	Cluster p-value	Between Groups	1.122	2	0.56	1.35	0.26	NS
	F-value and	Within Groups	85.857	207	0.41			
		Total	86.979	209				

Table 5 shows that there is a no significant difference in the mean responses of fathers who are civil servants and those who are not on 4 out of 11 perception items of fathers on family feeding with

their F-value which range from 0.18 – 1.88, at 207 degree of freedom and a p-value range of 0.16- 0.83 which is higher than 0.05 level of significance, indicating that there is no significance difference in the mean responses of fathers who are civil servants and those who are not on perception items of fathers on family feeding. On the other hand, there is there is a significant difference in the mean responses of fathers who are civil servants and those who are not on 6 out of 11 perception items of fathers on family feeding with their F-value which range from 3.51 – 14.17, at 207 degree of freedom and a p-value range of 0.00- 0.03 which is lower than 0.05 level of significance, indicating that there is a significance difference in the mean responses of fathers who are civil servants and those who are not on perception items of fathers on family feeding. However, the cluster F-value and p-value and p-value 1.35 and 0.26 respectively is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld.

3.6. H_{02} : There is no significant different in the mean responses of fathers who have formal education and those who do not have formal education on the various factors affecting fathers' perception and participation in family feeding.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance of the mean responses of fathers who have formal education and those who do not have on the various Factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding

S/N	Factors affecting the perception and participation in family feeding	Sources of Variance	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F-Value	p-value	Rem.
1	Traditions and culture	Between Groups	98.265	6	16.38	17.99	0.00	S
		Within Groups	184.763	203	0.91			
		Total	283.029	209				
2	Income level of the father	Between Groups	13.971	6	2.33	6.51	0.00	S
		Within Groups	72.624	203	0.36			
		Total	86.595	209				
3	Religious belief	Between Groups	41.395	6	6.90	12.55	0.00	S
		Within Groups	111.634	203	0.55			
		Total	153.029	209				
4	Fathers nature and types of occupation	Between Groups	25.028	6	4.17	13.17	0.00	S
		Within Groups	64.286	203	0.32			
		Total	89.314	209				
5	Fathers' type of family and friends	Between Groups	15.873	6	2.65	7.41	0.00	S
		Within Groups	72.455	203	0.36			
		Total	88.329	209				
6	Wives' knowledge of nutrition	Between Groups	42.624	6	7.10	9.71	0.00	S
		Within Groups	148.499	203	0.73			
		Total	191.124	209				
7	Age of the father	Between Groups	64.777	6	10.80	20.63	0.00	S
		Within Groups	106.218	203	0.52			
		Total	170.995	209				
8	Level of literacy	Between Groups	27.751	6	4.63	14.63	0.00	S
		Within Groups	64.173	203	0.32			

		Total	91.924	209					
9	Ego	Between Groups	67.271	6	11.21	13.18	0.00	S	
		Within Groups	172.652	203	0.85				
		Total	239.924	209					
10	Husband-wife relationship	Between Groups	33.250	6	5.54	10.90	0.00	S	
		Within Groups	103.245	203	0.51				
		Total	136.495	209					
11	Environment.	Between Groups	137.664	6	22.94	43.02	0.00	S	
		Within Groups	108.264	203	0.53				
		Total	245.929	209					
	Cluster F-value and p-value	Between Groups	28.960	6	4.83	25.61	0.00	S	
		Within Groups	38.264	203	0.19				
		Total	67.224	209					

The Table 5 above shows that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of fathers who have formal education and those who do not have on the various factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding with their F-value which range from 6.51 – 43.02, at 203 degree of freedom and p-value of 0.00 which is lower than 0.05 level of significance, indicating that there is a significance difference in the mean responses of fathers who have formal education and those who do not have on the various Factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding. Furthermore, the cluster F-value and p-value and p-value 25.61 and 0.00 respectively is lower than 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected.

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent of the fathers' involvement in family feeding. The study found out that respondents strongly agreed in the perceptions of the fathers on family feeding that father should be eating together with their families; fathers are meant to be only financial provider of the family; mothers' role is to plan and cook meals; all about food is to eat and satisfy one's hunger, fathers should always be served meals first before other members in the family and fathers should have the biggest portion size of meat and fish in family. The finding gives credence to work of Gorgeni and Fallon (2013) that fathers are the major financial provider in the family. The findings also agreed with the work of Solomon (2013) that male and female have different consumption pattern with females showing more concern about what they eat than their males' counterpart. Therefore, the findings show poor perception of fathers in Nsukka LGA in the issue of family feeding. Furthermore, there is no significance in the mean response of fathers who are civil servants and those who are not on perception of fathers on family feeding.

The study also revealed that the fathers in Nsukka LGA agreed that procurement of family foods; assisting in meal preparation when the need arises; modeling of healthy eating behaviors to the family; shunning the family of any detected bad feeding practices; assist in meal services when the need arises; encourages the production and storage of nutrient-dense foods and feeding baby when the mother is not at home are how fathers should participate in family feeding. This is in line with the study of Ditekemena et.al. (2012) which posited that most fathers know how and would like to show concern in the family feeding but due to shame associate with being too involved, they would draw back. However, the respondents disagreed that fathers' support to wife in exclusive breastfeeding of

the infants is how fathers participate in family feeding. This according to Yogman.et.al., (2016c) would affect the optimal growth and development of the baby. Thus, fathers should not only know the various of ways of involving family feeding and practice them too.

The findings also revealed that the fathers agreed that income level; fathers 'nature and types of occupation; fathers' type of family and friends; husband-wife relationship, traditions and culture; religious belief; wife's knowledge of nutrition; age of the father; level of literacy; ego and environment are the factors that affect fathers' perception and participation in the family feeding. In addition, there is a significant difference in the mean responses of fathers who have formal education and those who do not have on the various factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding. This agrees with the findings of Aubel and Alvarez (2011) and Ruel, Alderman and Maternal and Child Nutrition Group (2013) that due to many factors like, traditions and culture, ego, belief among others, fathers' participation in family feeding has been dangerously affected.

Lastly, the study found out that the respondents strongly agreed that strategies to be adopted to enhance fathers' involvement in family are workshops and seminars; engaging the religious leaders to uphold the notion in their various centers; inclusion of fathers' involvement in family nutrition in Home Economics Education program; sensitization of the society using various social media platforms; magazines and television program and good family relationship. According to Ruel, Alderman and Maternal and Child Nutrition Group, (2013) and Shi and Zhang (2011), mothers and children and not the fathers are usually the major target of nutrition intervention schemes. To correct this situation, the work of Bila et al. (2014) which asserted that fathers should be included in any nutrition intervention program as they are the key player in family decision making should be upheld and this is in line with the findings of the study.

From the findings, the research implications would be channeled to policy making in Ministry of Education of a Nation for developing Home Economics or Food and Nutrition curriculum. It can also be useful in different religion centers, schools and colleges to equip youths who are preparing for marriage. It is also useful in the hands of Home Economics teachers, Extension workers and Nutritionists for educating the Masses. However, certain factors limited the entire research process such as poor availability of finance in transportation during data collection, data analysis and publication fees, bad road, refusal of Nsukka Marriage Registry officers to provide data on time, and ill-health of one of the research assistants during data collection. As a result, the researchers suggests that the study be carried out in different location, or with different research design, different method of data collection, sample size or sampling technique for further study.

4. Conclusion

The study investigated the extent of father's involvement in family feeding in Nsukka, LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, there is poor perception and participation of fathers in family feeding due to some socio-economic and cultural factors like belief system, income level, nature and types of fathers' occupation among others. Also based on the test of test of hypothesis, it was concluded that opinions of fathers who have formal education and those who do not have formal education vary significantly on the various factors affecting the fathers' perception and participation in family feeding. The study therefore emphasized that to enhance fathers' participation in family feeding, good family relationship, targeting fathers in nutrition intervention schemes, sensitization of the society using social media platforms among others should be encouraged. In the light of the findings, the study recommended that nutrition intervention programs should also target the fathers

and this will help change their wrong perception towards family feeding and bridge the gap existing between formerly educated fathers and their formerly non educated counterparts in family feeding. Fathers should be enlightened on various ways of participating in family feeding such as financial provision, encouraging the production and consumption of nutrient-dense foods, correcting bad eating habits of the members among others. Fathers should be encouraged to diversify their source of income to enhance their level of involvement in family feeding. Fathers who are civil servants should learn how to balance home responsibilities and their workplace duties to enable them get involved in family feeding matters.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest as they harmoniously executed the research process.

Author Contributions

The research was conducted and written by Nnaemeka A. Ugwuanyi under the auspices of Chiamaka A. Chukwuone who supervised the whole research process, proof-read and corrected the articles where and when necessary.

Data availability Statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

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