**Investigating the Impact of Food Fortification on Micro-nutrient Content among Internally Displaced Children in Northeast Nigeria**

**Abstract**

Micronutrient deficiencies remain a critical public health concern among internally displaced children (IDCs) in Northeast Nigeria, exacerbated by prolonged conflict, food insecurity, and inadequate nutrition. This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of food fortification interventions in reducing the prevalence of key micronutrient deficiencies specifically iron, vitamin A, iodine, and zinc among children aged 6 months to 15 years residing in IDP camps. A quasi-experimental research design was employed, comparing baseline and post-intervention nutritional status data over a six-month period. The study population consisted of 600 children selected through stratified random sampling across three major IDP camps in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. Data were collected through biochemical assessments (e.g., blood and urine samples), dietary intake surveys, and health records. Standard anthropometric measurements were also taken to monitor growth and development. Quantitative data were analyzed using **SPSS** and **STATA**, applying descriptive statistics, paired sample t-tests, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the impact of fortified food consumption on micronutrient status. Multivariate regression models further identified predictors of improved nutritional outcomes. The study’s findings provided evidence-based insights into the role of fortified foods in addressing child malnutrition in emergency settings and informed future nutrition and health policy interventions in Nigeria’s humanitarian contexts.

**Keywords:** Food fortification, Internally displaced children,Micronutrient deficiency, Public health nutrition.

**1.0 Introduction**

The protracted humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria driven by insurgency, communal conflict, and forced displacement has severely disrupted access to health services, food systems, and clean water for millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Among these populations, children represent the most nutritionally vulnerable subgroup. With their heightened nutritional needs and susceptibility to infection, children aged 6 months to 15 years face a significant risk of malnutrition, particularly in the form of micronutrient deficiencies (UNICEF, 2021). These “hidden hungers,” including deficiencies in vitamin A, iron, and zinc, can have devastating consequences such as impaired cognitive development, compromised immunity, delayed physical growth, and even death (FAO, 2022).

Internally displaced children in IDP camps face compounded barriers: monotonous food rations, irregular food distribution cycles, limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and overburdened health systems. In such settings, traditional nutrition interventions are often insufficient. **Food fortification**, defined as the addition of essential micronutrients to commonly consumed foods, has thus emerged as a promising and cost-effective strategy to address micronutrient malnutrition in vulnerable populations. Fortified foods such as vitamin A-fortified vegetable oil, iron-enriched cereal blends, and multiple micronutrient powders have been introduced by humanitarian agencies in partnership with the Nigerian government. These interventions are intended to increase the intake of critical nutrients and prevent deficiencies in emergency settings (World Health Organization, 2016; WFP, 2020).

Despite growing support for fortification as a public health strategy, its **effectiveness and impact in Nigerian IDP camps remain under-evaluated**. While previous studies in stable rural populations in Nigeria have demonstrated the bio-efficacy of bio-fortified crops and fortified food products (Maziya-Dixon et al., 2020), relatively few studies have explored how these interventions perform in humanitarian settings characterized by instability, poor storage infrastructure, limited caregiver awareness, and unpredictable distribution. Furthermore, little is known about **how caregivers and frontline health workers perceive the accessibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of fortified foods** in displacement settings. This study is therefore both timely and necessary, offering empirical insights into the real-world outcomes of fortified food interventions for displaced children in Northeast Nigeria.

The **significance of this study** lies in its multidimensional approach. It seeks not only to measure the biological impact of fortified foods on micronutrient levels among internally displaced children but also to understand the social, cultural, and operational contexts that shape program outcomes. By integrating quantitative biochemical assessments with qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, the study provides actionable evidence for policy makers, nutrition program designers, and humanitarian actors.

This research is conceptually grounded in two interlinked theoretical models. The first is **Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs,** which positions nutrition as a foundational physiological requirement for growth, development, and cognitive functioning (Maslow, 1943). Without the fulfillment of this need, higher-order goals such as learning, social functioning, and self-reliance become unattainable. The second is the **UNICEF Conceptual Framework on the Determinants of Malnutrition**, which identifies three levels of causation: immediate (inadequate dietary intake and disease), underlying (food insecurity, inadequate care, and poor services), and basic (structural and societal factors) (UNICEF, 2021). Food fortification, as implemented in IDP camps, operates at the immediate and underlying levels by improving dietary quality and addressing nutrient gaps that conventional food rations fail to meet.

Empirical evidence supports the use of fortified foods to address child malnutrition, especially in low-resource and crisis contexts. In a randomized controlled trial, **Maziya-Dixon et al. (2020)** found that daily consumption of pro-vitamin A bio-fortified cassava significantly improved serum retinol concentrations in preschool children in Nigeria. Globally, the **World Food Programme (WFP, 2020)** has documented the success of fortified blended foods and lipid-based nutrient supplements (LNS) in reducing anemia and other deficiencies in children under five. Nevertheless, contextual variables such as cultural acceptability, caregiver knowledge, distribution reliability, and food safety often mediate program outcomes. For example, **Okeke et al. (2021)** reported that despite widespread distribution of fortified cereal blends in Borno State IDP camps, caregiver usage was inconsistent due to unfamiliarity with the products and lack of nutritional education.

This study seeks to address these gaps by employing a **quasi-experimental design** involving pre- and post-intervention comparisons of micronutrient status (vitamin A, zinc, and iron) among internally displaced children. The study further explores caregiver and health worker perceptions through interviews and focus groups, ensuring that both biomedical and experiential dimensions of nutrition are captured.

The **delimitations** of this study focus the inquiry on selected IDP camps in **Borno and Adamawa States**, where fortified food interventions have been active for a minimum of six months. The study population is limited to children aged **6 months to 15 years**, a critical developmental group. The research does not cover non-micronutrient aspects of malnutrition such as protein-energy deficiency, nor does it extend to IDPs living outside of formal camps. Furthermore, due to the challenges of long-term tracking in conflict zones, the study employs a cross-sectional and quasi-experimental design rather than a longitudinal cohort approach.

In sum, this study contributes to an urgent and under-explored area of public health nutrition—evaluating the **real-world impact of fortified foods** on the health of displaced children in Northeast Nigeria. Its mixed-methods approach, grounded in established theoretical frameworks and informed by regional evidence, ensures that its findings will be both contextually relevant and policy-informing.

**1.1Statement of the Problem**

Micronutrient deficiencies remain a critical challenge in humanitarian settings, particularly among internally displaced children (IDCs) in Northeast Nigeria. Prolonged conflict, insecurity, and displacement have led to severe disruptions in food systems, resulting in high levels of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. While national food fortification programs have been implemented to address these deficiencies such as the fortification of staples with essential vitamins and minerals their reach and impact within internally displaced persons (IDP) camps remain unclear.

Despite policy frameworks and guidelines supporting food fortification as a cost-effective public health intervention, there is a significant lack of empirical evidence assessing its effectiveness among IDCs in Northeast Nigeria. Most existing studies focus on general population outcomes, with limited data on how fortified foods affect the nutritional status of children living in displacement contexts. Consequently, humanitarian responses may not be sufficiently informed or tailored to meet the specific nutritional needs of these vulnerable groups.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this critical knowledge gap by empirically investigating the impact of food fortification on micronutrient deficiencies among internally displaced children in the region. Addressing this problem is essential for optimizing nutrition interventions and improving the overall health and development outcomes for IDCs in Northeast Nigeria.

**1.2 Research Objective**

This study critically examines the impact of food fortification interventions on micronutrient status among internally displaced children residing in selected IDP camps across Northeast Nigeria. It aims to evaluate the extent to which fortified food products have contributed to the reduction of deficiencies in key micronutrients such as vitamin A, zinc, and iron, utilizing both biochemical and dietary assessment methods. Furthermore, the research investigates the perceptions of frontline caregivers and health personnel regarding the effectiveness, acceptability, and logistical accessibility of fortified foods within the context of humanitarian nutrition programs, with the goal of informing evidence-based policy and programmatic strategies for improved nutritional outcomes in displacement settings.

### ****2.0 Methodology****

### ****a. Research Design****

This study adopted a **quasi-experimental mixed-methods design** involving pre- and post-intervention assessments to evaluate the impact of fortified food distribution on the micronutrient status of internally displaced children. The research included both **quantitative (biochemical assessments)** and **qualitative (interviews and focus groups)** components to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and contextual reception of food fortification programs in IDP camps.

### ****b. Study Area and Population****

The study was conducted in selected IDP camps located in **Borno and Adamawa States** two epicenters of displacement in Northeast Nigeria with established nutrition programs supported by government agencies and international humanitarian partners. The study population comprised **internally displaced children aged 6 months to 15 years**, selected using stratified random sampling. Eligibility was limited to children with no acute illness and whose caregivers gave informed consent.

### ****c. Sample Size and Sampling Technique****

A total of **600 children** were recruited across four IDP camps, based on power calculations for detecting micronutrient changes with 95% confidence and 5% margin of error. Stratified sampling ensured representation across age groups: (6 months–5 years, 6–10 years, and 11–15 years), gender, and camp locations. Each child's baseline nutritional status was assessed before fortified food distribution, and reassessed after 12 weeks of exposure.

### ****d. Fortified Food Preparation and Sourcing****

The fortified foods used in this study were **provided through official humanitarian nutrition supply chains**, primarily coordinated by the **National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), UNICEF**, and **WFP** partners. Products included:

* **Vitamin A-fortified vegetable oil**
* **Iron-fortified maize-soy blends (Super Cereal)**
* **Multiple micronutrient powders (MNPs)**

These products were procured from **certified manufacturers** vetted by UNICEF and WHO standards, and met **Codex Alimentarius guidelines** for food fortification. Food distribution records were verified through camp nutrition officers. All products were batch-coded, properly labeled, and stored in accordance with **standard humanitarian logistics protocols**. Caregivers received instructions and demonstrations on proper preparation and use through community nutrition outreach sessions led by trained health workers.

### ****e. Quantitative Procedures: Biochemical Laboratory Methods****

#### ****i. Sample Collection****

* **Fasting venous blood samples** (3–5 mL) were collected from each child at baseline (pre-intervention) and at endline (after 12 weeks).
* Blood was collected into **trace element-free vacutainer tubes** (EDTA and plain), ensuring sterility and cold-chain compliance.
* Samples were centrifuged on-site at 3000 rpm for 10 minutes within 2 hours of collection to separate serum, which was stored at −20°C and later transported to the reference laboratory in Abuja.

#### ****ii. Vitamin A (Serum Retinol) Analysis****

* Retinol concentration was measured using **High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)**.
* Serum samples were deproteinized with ethanol, extracted with hexane, and analyzed at 325 nm using a standard reference curve.
* Results were interpreted based on WHO cut-off values: <0.70 μmol/L indicates deficiency.

#### ****iii. Serum Ferritin and Zinc****

* **Iron status** was determined using **serum ferritin concentration**, measured by **Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA).**
	+ Ferritin <12 ng/mL in children under 5 and <15 ng/mL in older children was classified as iron deficiency.
* **Zinc levels** were measured via **Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometry (AAS).**
	+ Zinc deficiency was classified as <65 µg/dL for children under 10 and <70 µg/dL for those older.

#### ****iv. Inflammation Adjustment****

* **C-Reactive Protein (CRP)** and **Alpha-1-acid glycoprotein (AGP)** were also measured to correct for inflammation effects on serum ferritin and retinol, using the **BRINDA approach** (Biomarkers Reflecting Inflammation and Nutritional Determinants of Anemia).

### ****f. Qualitative Procedures****

Qualitative data were gathered through:

* **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with camp health workers, nutrition officers, and NGO program managers
* **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** with caregivers of sampled children
Discussion guides explored perceptions of fortified foods, cultural acceptability, observed benefits or concerns, and barriers to proper use.

All qualitative data were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded thematically using **NVivo 14 software**.

### ****g. Data Analysis****

* **Quantitative data** were analyzed using **SPSS v27** and **STATA 15**. Descriptive statistics summarized baseline and endline micronutrient values. A **paired sample t-test** was used to compare mean differences in serum retinol, ferritin, and zinc levels. Inflammation-adjusted results were also analyzed.
* **Multivariate regression** was conducted to identify predictors of micronutrient improvement (e.g., age, gender, initial status, caregiver compliance).
* **Qualitative data** were analyzed using thematic content analysis, with coding triangulated by two researchers to enhance reliability.

**h. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) Test Result**

Table 1: MANOVA Test of Between-Subjects Effects using Wilks' Lambda

| Effect | Wilks' Lambda | F | Hypothesis df | Error df | Sig. (p-value) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Intercept | 0.850 | 19.023 | 3 | 592 | < 0.001 |
| Gender | 0.987 | 2.643 | 3 | 592 | 0.049 |
| Age Group | 0.981 | 3.778 | 6 | 1184 | 0.001 |
| State of Displacement | 0.969 | 3.103 | 6 | 1184 | 0.005 |
| Duration in Camp | 0.961 | 4.020 | 6 | 1184 | < 0.001 |

(Source: Spss v 27)

This table summarizes the multivariate effects of the demographic factors on the combined dependent variables (e.g., micronutrient levels such as vitamin A, iron, and zinc status.

**i. Logistic Regression Analysis**

Objective:
To identify predictors of improvement in micronutrient status among IDPs.

Dependent Variable:

* Improved Nutritional Status (0 = No, 1 = Yes)

Significant Predictors:

* Age Group 9–10 years was statistically significant (p = 0.015)
* Zinc level had marginal significance (p = 0.085), suggesting it might predict nutritional improvement.

Table 2. Logistic Regression

| Predictor | Coefficient | p-value | Significance |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age Group [9–10 yrs] | 0.507 | 0.015 | ✓ |
| Zinc Level | -0.054 | 0.085 | ~ (marginal) |
| Other Predictors (gender, iron, vitamin A, etc.) | Not significant | >0.05 | ✗ |

(Source: Spss v 27)

Table 3: Summary of Multivariate and Logistic Regression Analyses

| Analysis Type | Variables | Significant Findings | Statistical Output |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MANOVA | Independent: Gender, Age Group, State, Camp Duration, Diet Score Dependent: Vitamin A, Iron, Zinc levels | Age Group (p < 0.05) Diet Score (p < 0.05) | Wilks’ Lambda indicates multivariate significance |
| Logistic Regression | Dependent: Nutritional Improvement (Yes/No) Predictors: Age Group, Gender, Vitamin A, Iron, Zinc Levels, Camp Duration | Age Group 10–12yrs (p = 0.015) Zinc Level (p = 0.085, marginal) | Age 10–12Coeff. = 0.507 Zinc Coeff. = -0.054 |
|  |  | Gender, Iron, Vitamin A: Not Significant | p > 0.05 for non-significant variables |

### **(Source: Researcher’s Computation, 2025).**

### ****3.0 Interpretation of Results****

#### ****3.1 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)****

The MANOVA was conducted to assess whether **socio-demographic variables** (such as gender, age group, state of displacement, duration in camp, and dietary diversity score) had statistically significant effects on **micronutrient status** (Vitamin A, Iron, and Zinc levels).

* The results showed that **age group** and **dietary diversity score** had a**statistically significant effect**on the overall micronutrient levels of internally displaced children (Wilks’ Lambda, p< 0.05).
* This indicates that the children's **age** and the **quality and variety of food** they consume are critical determinants of their vitamin and mineral status.
* Other factors such as **gender, state of displacement,** and **camp duration** did not show significant multivariate effects (p> 0.05), meaning these variables did not jointly influence the combined nutrient outcomes in a statistically significant way.

#### ****3.1.1 Logistic Regression Analysis****

A logistic regression was performed to identify **predictors of nutritional improvement** among the children (coded as 1 = improved status, 0 = no improvement) after exposure to fortified foods.

* The **age group 9–10 years** was a **significant predictor** of nutritional improvement (p = 0.015), suggesting that children within this age range were more likely to show positive changes in micronutrient levels.
* **Zinc level** was found to be a **marginally significant predictor** (p = 0.085), meaning it approached statistical significance and could still be biologically meaningful.
* Other variables such as **gender, Vitamin A level, Iron level,** and **camp duration**were**not statistically significant**predictors (p> 0.05), indicating they did not strongly influence whether or not children improved nutritionally in this study context.

### ****3.1.2 Summary of Interpretation****

These findings suggest that:

* **Targeted interventions** focusing on specific **age brackets** (especially 10–12 years old) and **improving diet diversity** were likely to be more effective.
* Nutritional programs should consider tailoring food fortification strategies based on **age-specific metabolic needs.**
* While gender and displacement location may affect broader health outcomes, they **do not significantly predict nutritional improvements** from food fortification alone in this sample.

## ****4.0 Results and Findings****

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 600 internally displaced children (IDCs) participated in the study. The demographic characteristics are presented below:

**Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

| **Variable** | **Category** | **Frequency (n)** | **Percentage (%)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Male | 308 | 51.3% |
|  | Female | 292 | 48.7% |
| Age Group (years) | 6–9 | 210 | 35.0% |
|  | 10–12 | 255 | 42.5% |
|  | 13–15 | 135 | 22.5% |
| State of Displacement | Borno | 240 | 40.0% |
|  | Adamawa | 198 | 33.0% |
|  | Yobe | 162 | 27.0% |
| Duration in Camp | < 6 months | 174 | 29.0% |
|  | 6–12 months | 246 | 41.0% |
|  | > 12 months | 180 | 30.0% |

(Source: Researcher’s Computation, 2025)

**4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Micronutrients**

The table below presents the mean and standard deviation of key micronutrients before and after the fortification intervention.

**Table 5: Pre- and Post-Fortification Mean and Standard Deviation of Micronutrients**

| **Micronutrient** | **Mean (Pre)** | **SD (Pre)** | **Mean (Post)** | **SD (Post)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hemoglobin (g/dL) | 9.48 | 1.17 | 10.33 | 1.25 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vitamin A (μg/dL) | 15.27 | 3.96 | 18.23 | 4.47 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Zinc (μg/dL) | 55.34 | 9.91 | 61.34 | 11.37 |

## (Source: Desk Research, 2025).

**4.3 Inferential Statistics: Paired Sample t-Tests**

To assess the impact of the food fortification intervention, paired sample t-tests were conducted comparing pre- and post-intervention micronutrient levels.

**Table 6: Paired Sample t-Test Results**

| **Micronutrient** | **t-statistic** | **p-value** | **Significance** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hemoglobin | 41.30 | < .001 | Highly significant |
| Vitamin A | 37.21 | < .001 | Highly significant |
| Zinc | 27.87 | < .001 | Highly significant |

(Source: SPSS Version 27)

These results show statistically significant improvements in all three micronutrients post-fortification (p < 0.001).

## ****4.4 Discussion of Findings****

The results of this study show that food fortification significantly improved the micronutrient status of internally displaced children (IDCs) in Northeast Nigeria. Using paired sample t-tests, significant increases were recorded in hemoglobin, vitamin A, and zinc levels post-intervention. These outcomes underscore the efficacy of targeted nutrition programs in humanitarian emergencies and reaffirm the role of fortification in addressing micronutrient deficiencies in vulnerable populations.

**Hemoglobin (Iron) Levels**

The increase in hemoglobin levels from a mean of 9.48 g/dL to 10.33 g/dL is statistically and clinically significant. This indicates a measurable reduction in iron-deficiency anemia among the children. Iron deficiency is a common nutritional problem in displaced populations, where access to iron-rich foods (e.g., red meat, legumes, green leafy vegetables) is often limited due to supply chain disruptions and poverty (FAO, 2021). Low hemoglobin levels are associated with fatigue, poor concentration, and stunted cognitive development, especially in growing children (WHO, 2022).

This study’s findings align with the randomized controlled trial by Maziya-Dixon et al. (2020), which demonstrated that daily consumption of pro-vitamin A bio-fortified cassava improved iron and vitamin A levels in Nigerian preschoolers. Furthermore, the Global Nutrition Report (2021) emphasizes that anemia among displaced children can be cut significantly through fortified rations, especially when supported by consistent distribution and caregiver sensitization.

**Vitamin A Levels**

The rise in vitamin A levels from 15.27 μg/dL to 18.23 μg/dL reflects improved dietary intake or absorption. Vitamin A deficiency is a critical public health concern in sub-Saharan Africa and is responsible for visual impairment, compromised immunity, and increased child mortality (Sommer & West, 2002; UNICEF, 2023). Children in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps face heightened risk due to limited access to vitamin A-rich foods and reduced immunization coverage.

The improved levels post-fortification demonstrate that even short-term interventions can reverse subclinical deficiencies. These findings corroborate WHO guidelines that promote food fortification with vitamin A as a cost-effective strategy, especially where supplementation programs are inconsistent (WHO, 2006). The results also resonate with the outcomes reported in similar interventions in South Sudan and Bangladesh, where fortified staple foods were associated with significant increases in serum retinol among displaced children (UNHCR, 2022).

**Zinc Levels**

Zinc levels increased from 55.34 μg/dL to 61.34 μg/dL, highlighting fortification’s contribution to improving immunity and growth. Zinc deficiency is common among children in IDP settings, often due to poor dietary diversity, diarrheal diseases, and mal-absorption (Wessells & Brown, 2012). Adequate zinc is essential for wound healing, immune response, and cognitive performance.

Studies such as that by Bhutta et al. (2013), show that zinc supplementation and fortification can reduce diarrheal incidence by up to 25%, which is vital in crowded, sanitation-poor environments like IDP camps. In this study, anecdotal reports from caregivers also noted reductions in the frequency of common illnesses and improved physical activity in children, reinforcing the biochemical evidence.

**Comparative and Contextual Relevance**

Unlike stable rural communities, displaced populations experience extreme nutritional vulnerability due to sudden disruptions in food access, income sources, and health services. This makes fortification not just beneficial, but necessary. Previous food programs in Northeast Nigeria have focused more on quantity than quality. However, as this study demonstrates, fortifying food staples with essential micronutrients can have transformative health outcomes, even in the short term.

The present findings complement those of Muthayya et al. (2013), who emphasized that large-scale food fortification can significantly enhance nutrient intake in vulnerable groups when implemented systematically. Similarly, the FAO (2022) stresses that food fortification is particularly important in conflict and post-conflict zones, where normal market systems are broken.

**Policy Implications and Programmatic Relevance**

These results call for the institutionalization of fortified feeding programs within Nigeria’s humanitarian response frameworks. Agencies such as NEMA, WFP, and UNICEF should prioritize nutrient-enriched food distribution in IDP camps. Additionally, local fortification facilities (e.g., micronutrient premix centers near IDP clusters) could reduce reliance on imported products and improve sustainability.

Nutrition education for caregivers is also essential to maximize the benefits of fortification. If caregivers understand the role of specific nutrients, they are more likely to support such interventions and complement fortified foods with locally available options.

## ****4.5 Recommendations****

1. **Scale-Up Fortified Food Distribution**: Expand fortified food programs to cover all IDP camps in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. This should include rice, flour, oil, and bouillon fortified with iron, vitamin A, folate, and zinc (GAIN, 2020).
2. **Routine Nutritional Surveillance**: Establish routine biochemical screening at IDP camp clinics to monitor and evaluate micronutrient status among children (UNHCR Public Health Strategy).
3. **Nutrition Education for Caregivers**: Train caregivers and local food vendors on the importance of fortified foods and complementary feeding practices using community health workers ([FAO, 2017](https://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/en/)).
4. **Policy Integration and Funding**: Embed food fortification in Nigeria’s national emergency nutrition response framework with sustainable budgetary allocation (Nigeria Food Fortification Standards, 2020).
5. **Multi-sectoral Collaboration**: Encourage public-private partnerships to enhance supply chains and local production of fortified food ([World Bank, 2018](https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/203271531030419522/nutrition-in-nigeria)).

## ****4.6 Conclusion****

This study provides empirical evidence that **food fortification significantly reduces micronutrient deficiencies** among internally displaced children in Northeast Nigeria. Using a **quasi-experimental design**, the research observed improvements in hemoglobin, vitamin A, and zinc status following the introduction of fortified foods. These findings validate the importance of integrating food fortification in **emergency nutrition responses**, particularly in humanitarian crises characterized by chronic food insecurity.

Fortified food interventions must be sustained and expanded through strategic policies, community education, and coordinated support from NGOs, private sector partners, and governmental agencies. In resource-constrained settings like IDP camps, such interventions are not only lifesaving but also critical for long-term human capital development.

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Option 1:

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

Consent

As per international standards, parental written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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