

Original article

Assessment of healthy lifestyle practices among teachers for healthy living implication for home economics

Bridget Esele Uwameiye*

Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to assess the healthy lifestyle practices by teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for the study. Four research questions and their corresponding hypotheses were answered by the study. Employing stratified random sampling technique, a sample of 108 respondents made up of 43 male teachers and 65 female teachers participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a 48-item self-structured questionnaire. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-statistics. Findings revealed that teachers do not have good eating habit, unable to engage in intense exercises, and do not engage in regular health and relaxation measures necessary for a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, one of the recommendations proffered was that government should design an intervention programme that will help to create awareness among teachers on healthy lifestyle practices.

Keywords: Awareness, Health, Measures, Teachers, Wellness

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INTRODUCTION

The significance of healthy living to the general performance of any worker cannot be overemphasized, a healthy body is able to accomplish tasks, while ill health brings set back to any worker. Healthy living is for the best interest of the individual or community, when effectively practiced can result to good health. Furthermore, good health enables one to take advantage of numerous opportunities that life offers. Globally, the occurrence of non-communicable disease is escalating at a disturbing rate, several people die every year from these diseases,^[1] and one of the major factors that has been said to be responsible is the lifestyle of the individual. Lifestyle includes everyday routine practices such as eating habit, exercise, attending to health issues, adequate sleep, and balancing the demand of work with relaxation.^[2] It has been widely acknowledged that a healthy lifestyle is fundamental for a healthy living. Therefore, importance must be placed on healthy practices to attain the best possible level of wellness toward a life of peace free from diseases. Healthy lifestyle practices are measures targeted at maintaining good health. These measures are demonstrated by

individuals as they carry out their daily activities in workplaces and homes. They are as follows:

Eating Habits

Eating habits are the varied behavior exhibited by persons toward foods. An emergent issue being discussed everywhere relating to healthy lifestyle is the food choices of people. Good food choices are the beginning point of healthy eating. Eating healthy involves the consumption of foods in moderation and the eating of unprocessed or natural foods. Unprocessed foods contain the complete nutrients in its creative state necessary to keep the body healthy. Also worthy of mention is the consumption of high fat diet known for increasing energy intake. In addition, literature abound on the link between eating of sugared beverages and the risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.^[3] Eating well entails the selection of foods from all the groups of foods, in that manner, the meal is said to be balanced. Eating disorder such as dieting, avoidance of breakfast, and indiscriminate intake of alcohol on an empty stomach is disadvantageous to health. Good health should be the determining factor in the choice of foods.

Address for correspondence: Bridget Esele Uwameiye, Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, Nigeria. E-mail: ineose05@yahoo.com

Exercise

Caloric harmonizing is one of the characteristics of healthy lifestyle. Overweight and obesity result from poor eating habit (excessive caloric intake) without routine exercise. Being able to maintain an ideal body weight entails taking part in daily routine exercise to balance calories consumed against calories used by normal bodily functions. The value of exercise includes an array of health benefits ranging from weight control, better sleep, to the avoidance and managing of chronic diseases.^[4] For fitness benefits, exercise is broken down into calisthenics, muscle training, and flexibility exercise.

Protective Health-care Practices

Protective health care practices are actions taken by individuals to safeguard health. They are taken to prevent the occurrences of diseases, as opposed to disease treatment. They are known as crucial screening tests that can save life. These crucial tests are preventive measures, an adage says a stitch in time saves nine, and for instance, the leading causes of death in the 21st century are coronary diseases, heart disease, diabetes cancers, and stroke. All these can be picked up at an early stage by screening test if done on time.

Relaxation Practices

Relaxation practices are measures put in place to release stress. Stress is a daily happening in the place of work and teachers are not left out. In the teaching field, a number of stressors consist of the lack of necessary resources to carry out duties, recessive official procedure, poor working environment, workloads, hostility among school children, large size of classrooms, and individual stressors resulting to low job satisfaction.

Teachers are the basis of worry, given the fact that, they make up a momentous portion of the Nigerian workforce. Pobebe *et al.*^[5] described teachers as sedentary workers, for their job allows more sitting with little physical activity. Furthermore, Siminialayi *et al.*^[6] reported the incidence of obesity at 31.7% and 16.3% using waist circumference and body mass index, respectively, among Nigerian adults in Rivers State. Likewise being adults, healthiness and way of life of teachers are important as teachers have the potential to influence children. They serve as models to their students; an also worthy of mention is the consumption of high fat diet known for increasing energy intake. They serve as role models to their students, in view of that are required to put on display an excellent lifestyle. Any unhealthy behavior exhibited in the presence of students may to a large extent influence the student's lifestyle in future. Teachers are regarded as perfect, therefore should live well for the purpose of changing their immediate community positively. This study was, therefore, undertaken to assess the healthy lifestyle practices adopted by teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo state.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to investigate the healthy lifestyle practices by teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District. Specifically, the study determines the following:

- Eating habits practiced by secondary school teachers in Edo central.
- Physical activities practiced by secondary school teachers in Edo central.
- Preventive health care practiced by secondary school teachers in Edo central.
- Relaxation measures adopted by secondary school teachers in Edo central.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers' responses on the healthy lifestyle practiced.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey research method.

Population

The target population of the study was all the 1084 secondary school teachers in the 69 public secondary schools in Esan Central Senatorial District of Edo State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The proportionate random sampling method was employed to select a sample of 108 teachers for the study. The figure represents 10% of the entire population of teachers in the district. The simple random sampling technique (balloting) was used to draw out two local government areas of the five local governments in the district. From the two local government areas, six schools each were randomly selected. From the 12 schools, 9 teachers were randomly selected from each school yielding a total of 108 teachers (65 female) and (43 male). The 108 teachers were utilized for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The self-structured questionnaire was used for the study. The questionnaire had five sections, (a) Demographic characteristics of the respondents consisting items, name of school, and sex of respondent; (b) eating habits having 14 items; (c) physical activities having 9 items; (d) preventive health-care practices having 12 items; and (e) relaxation measures having 11 items. The questionnaire was made up of 48 items. Respondents were asked to rate each of the items on a five-point Likert-type scale as follows: Not practiced (NP) - 1, sometimes practiced - 2, practiced (P) - 3, very practiced - 4, and very much practiced - 5. The instrument was face-validated by five experts including three home economic lecturers and two health education lecturers

from the University of Benin, Benin City, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha procedure as it dealt with multiple scored items. A reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained.

Data Collection Technique

Distribution and collection of the instrument were by hand. Two research assistants were trained and used for data collection. Of the 108 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents, 106 were returned and consisted the same for the study. This represents 98% return rate.

Data Analysis

The data generated from the questionnaire were analyzed using mean, standard deviation (SD), and *t*-test statistics at a significant level at 0.05. The calculated *t* is compared to table *t* value in each of the cases. If item *t* calculated is less than the table *t*, the hypothesis of no significant differences was upheld at the probability of 0.05 level of significance, but where the calculated *t* is greater than the table *t*, the hypotheses of no significant difference were rejected at 0.05 level of significance at an appropriate degree of freedom.

Findings

Research Question 1

What are the eating habits practiced by secondary school teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State?

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the eating habits practiced by

secondary school teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State.

Table 1 shows a response to research question 1 and indicates that the respondents perceived that they practice items 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 14. This implies that respondents practice bad eating habits. Respondents do not take enough healthy foods in items 4, 6, and 7. The results of the hypothesis 1 revealed no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents in all other items except for items 10 and 12, which were significant since their calculated *t* is >1.96 at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 2

What are the physical activities practiced by teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State?

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the physical exercises practiced in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State.

In response to research question 2, Table 2 indicates that respondents do NP the actual exercises listed in items (2, 3, 6, and 7) which are indications of intensive exercise necessary for healthy lifestyle. The result in Table 2 reveals that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on items 2 and 3. Therefore, the null hypotheses of no significance at 0.05 level of significance are rejected. The results for items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 revealed that there is no significant difference in their mean responses; therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is retained for those items.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation, and *t*-test of the eating habits of secondary school teachers

S. No.	Items	X_1	X_2	SD_1	SD_2	t-Cal	Remark
1	Skip breakfast to meet up with work time	2.01	2.03	0.41	0.51	0.82	NS
2	Watch television sometimes while eating	3.23	3.60	0.95	0.61	1.58	NS
3	Meals rich in calories (Pounded yam, Eba, Akpu) are eaten before bedtime	3.02	3.08	0.56	0.98	1.18	NS
4	Consume a lot of fruits and vegetables (5 at least portions) daily	2.02	2.04	0.61	0.67	1.62	NS
5	Eat meals rich in cheese regularly	2.02	2.01	0.67	0.98	1.25	NS
6	Drink four glasses of milk/yoghurt every week	2.00	2.02	0.54	0.53	1.18	NS
7	Consume raw vegetables (carrots, cucumber, and cabbage) everyday	2.01	2.00	0.59	0.70	1.17	NS
8	Consume three meals daily	3.36	3.08	0.54	0.96	1.08	NS
9	Consume fried foods daily	2.84	2.63	0.95	0.64	1.25	NS
10	Take alcoholic drinks on empty stomach	3.42	2.03	0.81	0.75	2.61	S
11	Take canned foods regularly	3.24	3.06	0.96	0.66	2.42	NS
12	Smoke cigarette	2.48	1.08	0.49	0.72	2.08	S
13	Eat in between meals	3.02	3.46	0.51	0.67	1.48	NS
14	Eat straight from packets	3.24	3.22	0.67	0.98	1.49	NS

X_1 : Male respondents, X_2 : Female respondents, SD_1 : Standard deviation for male respondents, SD_2 : Standard deviation for female, t-Cal: Calculated *t* values of each item, S: Significant, NS: Not significant

Research Question 3

What are the health measures practiced by secondary school teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State?

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the health measures practiced by secondary school teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State.

Research question 3, Table 3 indicates that the respondents do NP all the 12 items as a lifestyle with mean score ranging from 1.02 to 2.22. This implies that the respondents agreed that they do NP all the health measures needed to be practiced for a healthy lifestyle. The results of the hypothesis 3 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents in all the 12 items. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was retained.

Research Question 4

What are the relaxation measures practiced by secondary school teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State?

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the relaxation measures practiced by secondary school teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State.

The analysis in Table 4 revealed that respondents both male and female do NP items 1, 3, 4, and 10 but practice items 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11. Their mean in the first ranges from 2.02 to 2.24, while the second set ranges from 2.63 to 3.50. This implies that the respondents do NP enough item that will give them good relaxation for healthy lifestyle. The SD ranges from 0.41 to 0.75, showing that respondents were close in their ratings. Table 4 further reveals that the value of the calculated t for the 11 items was less than the t table values of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) was upheld.

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation, and t-test responses of male and female secondary school teachers on the physical activities practiced

S. No.	Items	X_1	X_2	SD_1	SD_2	t-Cal	Remark
1	Walk round the house daily free time	3.47	3.25	0.41	0.50	0.51	NS
2	Sweeping around the house	2.87	3.20	0.72	0.45	2.01	S
3	Washing of clothes, plates, and home cleaning or house chores	2.28	3.34	0.61	0.42	2.61	S
4	Intensive walking for 30 min daily	2.20	2.09	0.63	0.72	1.58	NS
5	I practice yoga for 30 min daily	2.01	2.02	0.42	0.55	1.48	NS
6	Do some indoor exercises such as press up, chest fly, squats, and push up	2.00	2.08	0.61	0.58	0.63	NS
7	Have exercise facilities at home and use them regularly	2.02	2.06	0.45	0.62	0.63	NS
8	I prefer to watch T.V and listen to music and computer during the free time	3.48	3.47	0.55	0.61	1.33	NS
9	I spend at least 1 h watching T.V. a day	3.45	3.40	0.69	0.72	1.18	NS

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation, and t-test of responses of male and female secondary school teachers on the health measures practiced

S. No.	Items	X_1	X_2	SD_1	SD_2	t-Cal	Remark
1	Measure blood pressure weekly	2.20	2.14	0.72	0.68	0.83	NS
2	Maintain weight for a healthy BMI	2.09	2.20	0.56	0.62	0.69	NS
3	Have eye sight checkup yearly	2.05	2.02	0.63	0.70	1.25	NS
4	Do bone density test yearly	2.08	2.05	0.39	0.72	1.08	NS
5	Cancer checkup yearly	2.09	2.08	0.57	0.82	1.17	NS
6	Dental examination/cleaning every 6 months	2.22	2.08	0.77	0.88	1.18	NS
7	Have sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy done yearly	2.13	2.21	0.70	0.68	1.08	NS
8	Fasting blood sugar every 3 years	2.28	2.08	0.69	0.70	1.17	NS
9	Cholesterol measurement yearly	2.05	2.05	0.42	0.88	1.25	NS
10	Have thyroid function tests done	1.60	1.80	0.55	0.84	1.42	NS
11	Have chest X-ray done yearly	2.10	1.55	0.50	0.70	1.17	NS
12	Have the ears examined yearly	1.02	1.08	0.63	0.70	1.17	NS

BMI: Body mass index

Table 4: Mean, standard deviation, and t-test of responses of male and female secondary school teachers on the relaxation measures practiced

S. No.	Relaxation measures	X ₁	X ₂	SD ₁	SD ₂	t-Cal	Remark
1	Go on vacation during the long holidays	2.02	2.02	0.61	0.41	0.51	NS
2	Attends parties and ceremonies	3.23	3.50	0.95	0.50	0.72	NS
3	Engage in outdoor games/other activities	2.00	2.05	0.56	0.66	0.61	NS
4	Visit friends and play games	2.02	2.00	0.61	0.56	0.96	NS
5	Get enough sleep always	2.84	2.65	0.67	0.75	0.61	NS
6	Watch movies/drama	3.50	3.63	0.54	0.73	0.89	NS
7	Listen to good music	2.64	2.55	0.54	0.50	0.54	NS
8	Read novels/newspapers	2.48	2.05	0.59	0.66	0.63	NS
9	Do more of praying	2.08	3.08	0.54	0.56	1.23	NS
10	Go shopping	2.24	2.14	0.95	0.75	0.89	NS
11	Eat and drink whatever I like	3.24	3.14	0.54	0.66	0.77	NS

DISCUSSION

In response to research question 1, Table 1 indicates that the respondents skip breakfast and do not consume meals rich in fruits and vegetables with mean ranging between 2.01 and 2.03. This implies that the respondents practice poor eating habits. This finding is in line with Fadupin *et al.*^[7] who opined that a healthy lifestyle is known to include adequate nutrition such as taking at slightest five portions of fruits and vegetables daily. Poor eating habit is known to expose persons to non-communicable diseases. Fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidants and micronutrients that have anti-inflammatory properties that may offer protection.^[8] The results of hypothesis 1 reveal that alcohol and smoking of cigarette were significant by gender where the male respondents consume more alcohol than the female respondents, and this collaborates the assertion of Gureje *et al.*^[9] that Nigerian males use alcohol and smoke cigarettes than the females. Alcohol has been associated with a strong risk factor for stroke in adults. In this study, female respondents take supplement than the male respondents. Supporting this view, Adegoke^[10] posited that the healthy female's lifestyle tends to be better than males. However, this is in contrast with the findings of Singh *et al.*^[11] that most females tend to exhibit poorer health than men.

Table 2 indicates that the respondents do NP regular physical activities listed in as items 2, 3, 6, and 7 apart from items 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9 (walking around their compound, washing of clothes [females], and watching of television). This implies that respondents are categorized as those living sedentary lifestyle. This finding is in line with Famodu and Awodu^[12] who asserted that most workers practice sedentary lifestyle. Thus, sedentary lifestyle has been shown to predispose people to nutrition-related chronic diseases, and it is also a risk factor for increased morbidity and mortality. Bodily activity has been recommended as having a defensive effect.

Researchers have shown that engaging in exercises helps in weight management, decrease risk for numerous diseases, and healthiness conditions. It also improves one's overall worth of life. The study showed that the physical activities that teachers employ are light and fitness benefits have been associated with moderate-to-energetic intensity bodily activity.

Research question 3, Table 3 indicates that the respondents do NP most of the expected health preventive measures, such as regular check of blood pressure, maintenance of weight, eyesight checkup, cancer checkup, dental checkup, fasting blood sugar, and cholesterol measurement. This finding is in line with Mokdad *et al.*^[13] who highlighted that a lot of people die from preventable diseases since they refuse to do regular checkup. This is capable of detecting diseases at an early stage. This is supported by the World Health Organization^[1] that reported that about 55 million people died worldwide in 2014 from preventable diseases. Although the females scored above the normal mean in the routine checkup for blood pressure supporting, the findings of Ejechi^[14] who found that females were better at routine medical checkups than their male counterparts. This finding could be attributed to the fact that women seek more health information more than men as confirmed by Rice^[15] and Fox.^[16] Thus, they do for societal reasons and contentment.

Going by the mean score in relaxation measures practiced by teachers to stay healthy, majority of the respondents attend parties, get enough sleep, watch TV and movies, listen to music, pray, go shopping, and then eat and drink but do not go on vacation at all as a major relaxation measure. This could be attributed to poverty and lack of awareness as reported by Adegoke^[10] in Ejechi^[14] who attributed the deprived adherence to healthy lifestyle to poverty, deprived schooling, and ignorance as associated factors. Stress can weaken the health of older people. It is also a common knowledge that most

Nigerian workers do not go on vacation. Teachers are poorly paid with irregular salaries.^[17] Their lean resources may be responsible for their inability to go on vacation.

Implication for the Teaching and Learning of Home Economics

This study has provided an empirical basis for the expansion of the curriculum of home economics in schools to include topics on healthy lifestyle practices. This will equip all children who go through these levels of education to adhere to these facts of life and even teach others too.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The health of teachers is of utmost importance since teachers have enormous potential to influence a child's health than any other person outside the child's home. Hence, teachers require being healthy to be able to impart knowledge and reduce absenteeism. For teachers to be fit, he/she should be able to make healthy food choices, do regular health checkup, involve in physical activities, and also relax when necessary. This standard of living when well practiced may increase their productivity and also decrease the occurrence of non-communicable disease later in life.

From the results of the study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Government should plan an intervention programme that will create awareness on how to practice healthy lifestyle.
 2. The curriculum experts should introduce those topics on healthy lifestyle in various levels of education.
 3. Regular bodily aerobics and leisure measures should be prepared for teachers by school heads at regular intervals.
 4. Community fitness powers that be and other health officials in Edo State should be made to visit schools for enlightenment campaign on healthy lifestyle measures.
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