Awareness and Practices of Healthy Lifestyle among Economics Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Delta North Senatorial District Nigeria

Nji, Ifeyinwa Awele

Department of Social Science Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. E-mail: ifeyinwa.nji@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

A paradigm shift rooted in re-orienting teachers for a healthy lifelong style is important for the creation of this awareness and practice among teachers. Hence, these studies' specific purpose are to determine the levels of awareness of teachers on healthy lifestyles and the levels of practices of Economics teachers on a healthy lifestyle. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Three research questions and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The population comprised all 2,266 secondary school teachers in 166 public secondary schools in Delta North Senatorial district of Nigeria. The sample was 206 teachers made up of 96 males and 110 females. A -25 item structured questionnaire titled, "Questionnaire on levels of awareness and practices of healthy lifestyle of Economics Teachers (QLAPHLET)" instrument which was developed by the researchers from the review of the literature was used for data collection. The questionnaire was face validated by 3 experts, 1 in nutrition and dietetics, 1 in health education, and 1 in measurement and evaluation. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to compute the internal consistency of the instrument and obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.86, 0.79, and overall of 0.83 Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test statistics were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that teachers were aware of a healthy lifestyle but few were not. It was also found that teachers practice these healthy lifestyles without consciousness that they are necessary for healthy living. The study further found that there was a significant difference in the level of practice among male and female teachers. Based on these findings, it was concluded that teachers should understand the need for healthy lifestyles not on through awareness but also by practicing them for long life and increased productivity. It was recommended among others that teachers need seminar on tips to healthy life practices.

Keywords: Economics, Health, Healthy lifestyle, Productivity, Long life

Introduction

The life expectancy of an individual is a yardstick for determining the level of survival rate of healthy living. The current life expectancy for Nigeria in 2022 is 55.44 years and this has increased to 0.57% from 2021 (Macro trends, 2022). It is expected that longer life expectations should be accompanied by good health (Sghari & Hamami, 2016). However, despite good health developing countries are faced with varieties of factors ranging from poverty, access to good health care, and healthy lifestyle choices which are determinants of long life.

Health is the ability to be physically and mentally fit. Sampson and Felman (2020) stressed health as a state of complete emotional and physical well-being. According to the world health organization (WHO) in Sartorius (2006) health is explained as an overall view of the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of any impairment or abnormal functioning of the body. In this context health is overall wellness

towards carrying out all activities effectively and efficiently. In other words eating right makes one healthy and fit for daily activity. There is need for regular exercise which makes the body more active and able to release pent up stress from the muscle (Firdausi & Shaik, 2022). Hence, health can only become a resource to support an individual to function effectively in society rather than an end in itself (WHO, 1996), the lifestyle of an individual determines greatly how effectively he or she can function in society.

Lifestyle is the way of living that reflects values and attitudes to life. Farhud (2022) referred to lifestyle as the characteristics of people in terms of day-to-day behavior and functions in terms of jobs, activities, funds, and diet. Lifestyle plays a significant role in the health of an individual by deciding the productivity level. According to WHO, 60% of related factors to individual health and quality of life are correlated to lifestyle. It becomes important that health should be part of an overall lifestyle of an individual (Foundation for peripheral neuropathy, 2022) therefore a healthy lifestyle will reduce the risk of underline diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and osteoporosis. Ayre (2022) opined that living a healthy lifestyle is necessary for everyone to have optimal healthier life and longevity.

A healthy lifestyle is a path of virtue that reduces the risk of being seriously ill or early death (WHO, 1999). Kumar (2017) opined that a healthy lifestyle has to do with the life pattern of an individual. Faikelack, Davila, and Mellor (2018) identified that 76% had no knowledge about a healthy diet which is an aspect of a healthy lifestyle. Hence, living healthy requires applying a good way of life such as food habits, exercise habits, and frequent body checks (Healthy lifestyle, 2018). The trend of society today towards technology has made people aware of measures that could help a healthy lifestyle. Also, the help of doctors and dieticians makes knowledge and awareness of healthy lifestyles easier and more accessible. Therefore, to have a healthy lifestyle people must develop a proper way of life such as eating healthy, adequate exercise, and enough rest in terms of reducing stress or a stress-free environment. Also, Reese (2016) opined that people should manage stress in the following ways listening to music, exercising, and eating balanced meals. Ridzuan, Karim, Marmaya, Razak, Khalid and Yusof (2018) further classified healthy lifestyle as follows food factors, exercise factors, and social factors. They explain that food factors are related to steps a person takes in having a healthy lifestyle by the care and intake of food, these tips are also related to 3 meals a day, controlling the level of cholesterol, and avoiding saturated fat in the body; exercise is another aspect of a healthy lifestyle that has to do with physical fitness; social factors are related to social experiences that affect the individual in terms of stress management, reduce intake of alcohol, avoid smoking and quantity of sleep. The American Heart Association (2022) identified that sleep is very important and relevant to all mankind and that the number of recommended hours per day is 7 – 9 hours. One relevant thing about a healthy lifestyle is being aware of how to be healthy and another aspect of it is practice.

The practice of a healthy lifestyle requires knowing the right thing to do to become healthy. It could be a difficult task to table certain rules that restrict an individual to an old pattern of life. But adhering to a new lifestyle would better the life of an individual. The benefits of a healthy lifestyle include longevity, reduced risk of any form of diseases, energetic work capacity, and reduced depression which increases happiness. Proactive lifestyle (2019) explained that a healthy lifestyle can save money through the required frequency of visiting doctors and increase feelings of self-worth by having desirable body changes which can change the mood for better benefits of a healthy lifestyle among adults. In situations, healthy statue is neglected it becomes problematic to the physical, mental, and emotional being. This could result in serious illness due to poor healthy lifestyles, stress, poverty, poor nutrition eating pattern, and not exercising (SA Health, 2022; Bronson Healthcare 2022; Shirgh, 2008). Therefore, for an improved healthy lifestyle for Economics teachers, there should be a high level of awareness and practice toward healthy being.

The teacher is that vessel that ensures that the curriculum is implemented at the classroom level. The function of the teacher is very relevant. That any form of health challenge may affect the function of duty. The Economics teacher cannot be left out in the activity of the classroom because of the significant demanding role in the content taught which requires a healthy lifestyle. Also, teachers are not only relevant in classroom content delivery but also help with health education issues for students in the classroom (Cheng, & Wong, 2015). The teacher ensures that the teaching environment is clean thereby preventing diseases. Teachers' views in terms of a healthy lifestyle may differ in gender perspective. Gender norms, roles, and relations and gender inequality and inequity affect peoples' health all around the world (WHO, 2021).

Gender involves categorizing sexes in terms of physical, social, cultural, and ideological constructs. Mensh (2022), classified gender into two-dimensional concepts, firstly as a development paradigm where the variable can be used to analyze policies, programs, and projects and how these impact differences between man and woman towards accessibility and control over resources. Secondly, a social relationship, between men and women and a social construct by society. Hence, in this study gender is a variable that looks into class differentiation of characteristics that make up personality in terms of health-related issues. There are disparities identified by several authors exist. Based on these disparities this study tends to identify if there are differences between male and female Economics teachers' awareness and practices of a healthy lifestyle.

It is important to note studies such as Haschem, Rami, Ahmd, and Manar (2022) identified that there was high knowledge of healthy lifestyles among teachers in Cheng & Wong (2015) identified that the knowledge level of healthy lifestyles among teachers in Hong Kong was below average. Therefore, this study tends to know the levels of awareness and practices of healthy lifestyles among Economics teachers in Delta North Senatorial district of Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to:
1. Determine the level of awareness of healthy lifestyle of Economics teachers in public secondary schools in Delta North district; and
2. Determine the extent of differences in the levels of practices on healthy lifestyle among male and female Economics in public secondary schools in Delta North district .

Research Questions
1. What is the level of awareness of healthy lifestyle of Economics teachers in public secondary schools in Delta North district?
2. What is the extent of differences in the levels of practices on healthy lifestyle among male and female Economics in public secondary schools in Delta North district?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female economics teachers in the level of practice of a healthy lifestyle ($p \leq 0.05$).

Methods and Materials
The study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Nworgu (2015), a descriptive survey is a design in which a group of people is studied by collecting and analyzing data representing a considerable group. A descriptive survey is appropriate for this study because it sought to elicit information regarding the status of teachers on their awareness and practice

of healthy lifestyles. The study was conducted in Delta North senatorial district of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all 2,266 secondary school teachers from 166 public secondary schools in Delta North. A sample size of 206 Economics teachers was used of which 96 were male and 110 were female. A purposive sampling technique was used to select Economics teachers in the 166 public schools of the state. The study has two research questions which were answered using mean and Standard Deviation while one null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument for data collection was a 25-item structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on level of awareness and practice of healthy lifestyle of Economics teachers QLAPHLET" which was developed from the review of the literature.

`   The QLAPHLET has two sections: A and B, A contains information on the personal characteristics of the respondents while section B contains information on healthy lifestyle awareness and practices. The instrument had a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with value options of 4,3,2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was face validated by three experts one from the Health Education unit, one from the Nutrition and Dietetics department, and one from measurement and evaluation units all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The corrections made were effected, and trial testing was done. The internal consistency was established after the collection of the trial testing using Cronbach Alpha statistical tool and a reliability of 0.86, and 0.79 for the two clusters and an overall of 0.83 were established. A mean of 2.50 and above was considered significant (aware / practiced) or acceptable while any means less than 2.50 was considered not significant (not aware/not practicable) or not accepted. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was acceptable for any cluster to mean whose t-calculated value is less than the probability level at 0.05 level of significance otherwise, reject.

Results

Table 1: Mean Responsse of Economics teachers on level of awareness of healthy lifestyle

S/N	ITEMS	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Taking breakfast daily	2.96	0.79	A
2	Reduce eating excessive snacks or greasy foods	2.59	0.63	A
3	Eat three times a day	3.28	0.81	A
4	Take enough water (8 cups per day	3.09	0.59	A
5	Adequate intake of fruits	3.11	0.77	A
6	Aware of the importance of exercise to keep fit	2.99	0.83	A
7	Health implication of smoking	2.58	0.75	A
8	Excessive consumption of alcohol0.84	2.58	0.69	A
9	Visiting doctors regularly	2.35	0.84	NA
10	Routine body check ups	1.76	0.72	NA
11	Stress management therapy	2.58	0.55	A
12	Accessibility to free health care	2.68	0.69	A

Grand Mean	**2.71**	**0.72**	A

Key: X-mean, SD-Standard
Deviation, A-Agree, NA- Not
Agree

The data presented in table 1, show that many Economics teachers are aware of a healthy lifestyle. However, the items identified by some teachers showed that healthy lifestyle in items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11, and 12 which has to mean above 2.50 indicating awareness while items 9 and 10 had mean scores of 2.35 and 1.76 below 2.50 showing that they were not aware of these items. Economics teachers had a mean score 2.50 in all items contained in the table except items 9 and 10. The grand mean was 2.71 indicating that Economic teachers were aware of a healthy lifestyle for long life.

Table 2: Mean Responses of male and female Economics teachers on the level of practice of healthy lifestyle

S/N	Items	Teachers Male			Female		
		$\overline{X}$	SD	Dec	$\overline{X}$	SD	Dec
1	I usually eat breakfast every morning	20.1	0.81	NA	2.23	0.69	NA
2	I often indulge in exercise at least 3 times a week	2.45	0.91	NA	2.01	0.71	NA
3	I cannot stay, without snakes and greasy foods	2.69	0.69	A	3.05	0.81	A
4	I eat three times a day	2.95	0.79	A	3.28	0.83	A
5	I take excess drinking water	2.41	0.45	NA	2.12	0.56	NA
6	I identify easy solutions when stressed	2.51	0.61	A	2.63	0.63	A
7	I do not smoke	3.01	0.81	A	3.35	0.71	A
8	I ensure that my meals are balanced diet	2.65	0.63	A	2.85	0.86	A
9	I go for wellness test once every 3 months	2.49	0.51	NA	2.13	0.71	NA
10	I visit the doctor once sick	2.51	0.52	A	2.62	0.82	A
11	Access free/subsidized/healthcare	2.51	0.83	A	2.89	0.69	A
12	Do not consume alcohol	2.49	0.71	NA	2.51	0.81	A
13	I try to practice a healthy lifestyle	2.59	0.61	A	2.95	0.71	A
	Grand Mean	2.56	0.69	A	2.66	0.73	A

Key: $\overline{X}$ -mean,SD-standard deviation, A-agree, NA- not agree

The data presented in table 2, show the mean responses of male and female Economics teachers on healthy lifestyle practices. Items 3, 4, 6,7,8,10,11, 12, and 13 were rated above 2.50 indicating a high level of practice for both male and female teachers. This indicated that Economics teachers had mean scores 2.50 in majority of the items contained in the table except items 1, 2, 5, & 9 with low level of practice. This means that breakfast was not usually taken every morning, no exercise, not take excess water, and routine body check-ups. However, the grand mean was 2.56 indicating that Economic teachers practiced healthy lifestyle practice among male and female Economic teachers.

Table3: Summary of t-test analysis of the difference between mean ratings of male and female Economics teachers on the level of practices on healthy lifestyle

S/N	Status	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	t-value	P-value
1	Male	96	2.58	0.52	11.126	0.00
2	Female	110	2.97	0.41		

Key: $\overline{X}$ - Mean, SD-standard deviation,

Table 3 showed that the t-value of 11.126 had a probability value of 0.000. Since this p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance at which the hypothesis was tested the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Economic teachers on the level of practice of healthy lifestyle. This means that female Economics teachers are significantly better at the practice of healthy lifestyles than male Economic teachers.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that most Economics teachers were aware of a healthy lifestyle and also practiced a healthy lifestyle. Also, the result indicated that male and female Economics teachers practiced healthy lifestyle.

Based on the finding of this study it could be explained that most Economics teachers have the idea of a healthy lifestyle but either resources, the willingness, or attitude to adhere strictly to these principles of a healthy lifestyle must have been a deterrent to most of the teachers accomplishing them. Therefore, teachers need to be well educated on appropriate measures needed to live a healthy lifestyle for effective teaching in the classroom. It could also be explained that regular visiting doctors should not only be during sickness but at least two to three times a year with routine check-ups (Proactive lifestyle, 2019). Most teachers feel that it is only during ill-healthy visiting the hospital that becomes relevant. Therefore, for Economics teachers to work effectively and efficiently there should need to adhere strictly to a healthy lifestyle.

The findings of this study are random with the studies of Ridzuan et al (2018) who identified that people were aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and also that it is a threat to health when mismanaged. In the same vein, Oke and Ojo (2020) identified that 60% of teachers had positive lifestyle behaviors toward physical activity as well as an aspect of wellness requirements in order words there was moderate knowledge of physical activity toward a healthy lifestyle. This indicates that there were traits of awareness of healthy lifestyles, despite a few low levels of awareness teachers are not ignorant and therefore suggest proper information and awareness of ways to live a healthy lifestyle. If they are properly aware its practice will not become difficult as reported in the literature.

Data in Tables 2 and 3 show that teachers embraced measures for the practice of a healthy lifestyle. This means that adopting these healthy lifestyle measures will reduce the chances of early death and also in cases of effective working capacity in the classroom. This finding was supported by that of Zakaria and Abidin (2014) who identified the high practice of healthy lifestyle among students but were only constrained to time, work burden, weak time management, and consciousness about healthy lifestyle. Therefore for effective practice of a healthy lifestyle, there is a need for teachers to become conscious of health and time management towards a healthy lifestyle.

Generally, it is proper for everyone to ensure a healthy lifestyle to increase productivity by adhering strictly to basic health tips. For instance, the WHO (2022) stressed on people live a balance of responsible and healthy life. This study showed that there is a

significant difference in the practice of male and female Economics teachers regarding the healthy lifestyle adopted. The findings were supported by that of Divine and Lepistol (2014) who identified that there was a significant difference between the male and females attained habit of healthy living. On the contrary Tana, Saadah, and Alemezi (2022) identified that there was no significant difference in the knowledge and attitude among gender on health. This means that probably females practiced healthy lifestyles because of attitude, experience, and time management towards health issues.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that most teachers are aware of healthy lifestyle practices only in a few cases such as the visitation of doctors regularly and routine check-ups being low. It is from these findings that the conclusion is that there should be more awareness on healthy lifestyle tips. Therefore, the need to practice a healthy lifestyle is vital to achieving a long life and active service in teaching especially among Economics teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions it is recommended that:
1. Teachers should be regularly oriented on healthy lifestyle practices through healthy educative tips that could be incorporated into the curriculum of teachers at the training levels in the course training and also workshops organized specifically for teachers.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to maintain and manage a healthy lifestyle by improving wages for teachers to help attain a healthy lifestyle.
3. There should be policies that will emphasize teachers living healthy lifestyles and the strategies that could help maintain a healthy lifestyle for both teachers and students.
4. Teachers should be engaged in weekly school exercises as students do in schools and also encourage healthy sports competitions with students.

References

American Heart Association (2022) Health lifestyle Retrieved on 20th November from *https://-www.heart.org>healthy-living*

Ayres, N. (2022). The importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Retrieved on 20th November from *https://www.prime-health.co.uk>...*

Bronson Healthcare (2022). Bronson Health Foundation equity initiatives. Retrieved on 20th November from *https://www.bronsonhealth.com>c...*

Cheng N-Y.I &Worg M.Y.E. (2015). Knowledge and attitude of school teachers towards promoting healthy lifestyle to students. *Health 7(1), 119-126*.

Divine, R.I. & Lepisto, L (2014).Analysis of healthy lifestyle of consumers. *Journal of Consumer marketing 22(5), 275-283*.

Falkenbach, D. Davila, H.F.& Mello, E.D (2018) knowledge, attitude and practices of primary school teaching on nutrition and food. *International journal of Nutrology11 (1), 22-30*.

Farhud D.D (2022). Impact of lifestly on Health. Retrieved on 20th November from *http://www.ncbi.nim.nih.gov.pmc*

Firdausi A &Sahlk N. (2022).Essay on healthy lifestyle for students and children. Retrieved on 20th November from *https://www.toppr.com>essays>es*...

Foundation for peripheral neuropathy (2022) maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Retrieved on 20th November from *https://www.coundation forpn.org>...*

Haschem K, Rami, S. Ahmed Z, &Manar, A. (2022) Knowledge attitude and practice of healthy eating among public school teachers in Kuwait. *Journal of Public Health Research 11(2), 1-8.*

Healthy lifestyle (2018).How to eat balanced diet. Retrieved on 21st November from *https://www.heatlthdirect.giv.au/healthy-lifestyle.*

Kumar, K. (2017) importance of healthy lifestyle in Healthy living.Juniper online. *Journal of public Health 2(5), 1-3.*

Macrotrends, (2022). Nigeria life expectancy 1950-2022/macrotrends. Retrieved on 20th November from *https//www.macrotrend.netsNGA*

Mensh S.A. (2022) Concept in gender and energy.Retrieved on 21 st November from *http://www.un.org.csd//pdf.*

Nworgu, B.G. (2015) *Educational Research, basic issues and methodology.* Nigeria: University trust Publishers.

Oke, K.I. & Ojo, J.O. (2020).Assessment of Health and wellness. Lifestyle practices of tertiary institution workers in the phase of prevalent lifestyle related diseases. *African journal of health sciences and technology 2(1), 75-82.*

Proactive lifestyle (2019) 5 benefits of living a healthy lifestyle Retrieved on 20th November from.*https://www.proactivelifestyle.com*>...

Reese, N. (2016). 10 simple ways to relieve stress. Retrieved on 20th November from *http://www.healt.hlive.com/health10-waystorelieve-stress#1*

Ridzuan, A.R, Karim, R.A., Marmaya ,N.H., Razak, N.A. Khalid, N.K.N,& Yusof, K.N (2018). Public awareness towards healthy lifestyle.*International journal of Academic research in Business & Social Science 8(10), 927-936.*

S.A Health (2022). The risks of poor nutrition Retrieved on 20th November from *https://www.Sahealth.Sa.gov.au>wcm.*

Sampson, S. & Felman A. (2020) what is good Health? Retrieved on 21th November from *https://www.medicalnewstoday.com*

Sartorius,N. (2006). The meaning of Health and its promotion. *Croatian Medical Journal 47,(4). 662-664.*

Sghari M.B.A &Hammani P.S. (2016).The relationship between life expectancy and health spending.*International Journal of Development and Economic substantiability 4(6), 45 – 53.*

Singh, A..R. (2008) Diseases of poverty and lifestyle wellbeing and human. Retrieved on 20th November from *https;//www.ncbi.nim.nih.gov.*

World Health Organization (WHO). (1996). The world health report 1996: fighting diseases foster development WHO. Retrieved on 20th November from *https://apps.who.int/iris/hangle/10665/17848/*

World Health Organization (WHO). (1999). What is healthy lifestyle? Retrieved on 20th November from *https://apps.WHO.int>handle* PDF

World Health Organization (WHO). (2021). 10 global health issues to tackle. Retrieved on 20th November from *https://www,WHO.int>..>spotlight*

Zakaria, A. & Abidin, Z.S. (2014). Knowledge and practices of health of healthy lifestyle among higher institution Retrieved on 20th November from *https://ideas.repec.org>sek>/iacpro*