



Strategies for Promoting Healthy Lifestyles among In-school Adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State

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Abstract

The study examines the strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government. Three research questions and one null hypothesis were formulated. Descriptive survey research design adopted for the study. The population of the study was in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise LGA, Imo State. A total number of (280) in school adolescents were sampled. Two stage sampling procedures of purposive sampling and simple random technique were used for the sampling. Self-developed Strategies for Promoting Healthy Lifestyle among in school adolescents Questionnaire (SPHEAQ) was used for data collection. The reliability index was 0.85. Descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, grand mean as well as inferential statistics of chi-square was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that majority of in school adolescents (30.29) % strongly agreed on adequate diet as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle while many of the respondents (28.1) % and (28.3) % of the respondents disagreed on regular exercise and stress management respectively as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents. There was significant difference of gender on the strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents. It is recommended among others that governments and non-governmental agencies as well as other health professional and teachers should periodically organize seminars, workshops; health talks as well as health counseling sections for the general public in order to sensitize them on the need for promoting healthy lifestyle.

Keywords: Strategies, Promoting, Healthy, Lifestyle, In-school adolescent.

Introduction

Research has proven that health problems of adolescence are mostly associated with the lifestyle they exhibit. According to Ewuzie (2017), lifestyle is a pattern of living which are determined by a reciprocal action and reaction between an individual's personal features, social relationships, socio-economic and environmental living conditions. It is a way of living that embraces all material surrounding attitudes, social and emotional behaviours as well as well as personal relationship with oneself Tamanal et al(2017), stated that lifestyle is the aggregation of decision by individuals which affects their health, and over which they more or less have control. It is a way of life of an individual which he deliberately adopt that may affect his health negatively or



positively. Iglesia (2019) stated that the behaviour and habit that are typical of a person or group that are chosen by them is termed "lifestyle". It is the pattern of life choice of an individual which displays the identity of that individual. Adolescence lifestyle is the pattern of living of adolescent which is usually characterized by desiring novelty that associates adolescence period. It includes the pattern of consumption, sleeping, handling stress and how one relates with peers and others. Suglia et al. (2018) stated that lifestyle in public health means a pattern of individual practices and personal behavioural choices that are related to elevation or reduction of health risk. This simply means that practices and personal conduct of an individual that has a relationship with his health is known as lifestyle. Therefore, lifestyle is a way of living which displays the individuality of a person and create cultural symbol for the way a person behaves. Benmadette et al. (2013) identified two classes of lifestyle as healthy and unhealthy lifestyle. Lifestyle can be unhealthy when it is negative and detrimental to health and wellbeing, Grancey (2020), defined healthy lifestyle as a valuable resource for reducing the incidence and impact of health problems, for recovery, for coping with life stressors and for improving quality of life. Healthy lifestyle is a pattern of living adopted by individuals or group which contributes to the promotion and maintenance of their wellbeing. Healthy lifestyle is a positive lifestyle that improves health status. Lifestyle can be promoted via so many strategies.

Strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle are a systematic plan of action towards the improvement of pattern of living. Healthy People (2020) identified certain strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle which include avoidance of substance use and abuse, abstinence from unsafe sex, safe driving, wearing of protective headgears and avoidance of listening to loud music. Healthy People (2020) identified the "four horsemen" of bad health which are poor diet, inactivity, poor stress coping strategies and excessive drinking. Kickbusch (2010) observed that all-cause of mortality risk rose to 85% with individuals with any of this health risk lifestyle and jumped nearly 3.5 times for those who are engaged in poor diet, inactivity, poor stress coping strategies and excessive drinking. He also observed that in the multivariate analysis, the mortality ratio was 1.43 with current smoking (95% confidential interval) 1.18 with high alcohol intake (95% CII.00 - 1.39), and 1.64 for physical inactivity (95% CI 1.24 - 2.16).

Healthy lifestyle can be achieved through education, hygienic practices, healthy exercise, safety precautions at home and schools, avoidance of smoking and safe sex. Strategies to which adolescents can promote their lifestyle includes, proper hygiene, adequate dieting, regular physical exercise,, avoidance of use of tobacco and alcohol, appropriate stress management, proper use of leisure time for mind relaxation activities, total abstinence from sexual practices and maintaining a healthy relationship with peers (Hackett, 2020).

The importance of exercise in reducing rate of disease and unhealthy lifestyle has been established (Kramer et al., 2018). Poor physical activity caus 310,000 to 580,000 deaths per year and are major contributors to disabilities that result from diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and stroke (Nahas et al., 2019). The results of one study showed that 14% of all U.S deaths in 1990 could be attributed to lack of exercise and another study linked sedentary lifesyles to 23% of chronic disease-related deaths in the United States in 1986(Ball, 2019).

Stress management as a strategy of promoting healthy lifestyle is a wide spectrum of technique and psychotherapies aimed at controlling the rate of wear and tear within the human body. Ewuzie (2017) defined stress as the biological response to event that threatens to overwhelm the individual's capacity to cope satisfactorily with the environment. She also defined it as non-specific responses of the body to any demand or threat. It is any change in the environment that requires



your body to react and adjust in response. Stress is both objective reaction and physiological response. Stress is also considered medically as the reaction of man which occurs when the individual can no longer meet the demands of the environment (Carvers, 2011). Symptoms of stress including; increased anger, aggression in speech, frequent and Migraine headache. Stress may result to alcoholism and drug addiction, anorexia, heart attack and hypertension. Chronic stress may also cause disease, either because of changes in your body or the over-eating, smoking and other bad habits people use to cope with stress. Stress can be managed by having adequate amount of sleep necessary for strong immune system functioning, dietary management, regulate exercise therapy, music therapy and ecclesiastical therapy.

Adequate dieting as an important strategy for promoting healthy lifestyles simply refers as the intake of required amount of any kind or a particular food and drink taken by a person from day to day (Wahi et al., 2019). It is the acts of providing all the essential nutrients, fibre and energy in sufficient amount to maintain health and wellbeing. Colbert (2017) reported that adequate nutrition provides enough energy and all the nutrients needed for healthy living. According to FAOs (2015), adequate dieting Is an important factor in health and in etiology and management of several of the major causes of death and disability in our contemporary society which includes lifestyle (Hughes 2014).

A poor diet may cause health problems, causing deficiency such as blindness, anaemia, scurvy, preterm birth. It is against the, background of healthy promotion that the researcher was motivated towards ascertaining strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the strategies of promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the view of the respondent on:

1. adequate nutrition as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescent in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State
2. Exercise as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State.
3. Stress management as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

1. What are the adequate nutrition strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in-school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise local Government Area, Imo State?
2. What are the regular exercise strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in-school adolescence?
3. What are the stress management strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescence?



Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between male and female adolescents on Stress management as strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescent in in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area ($p < 0.05$).

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study adopted descriptive survey design.. Descriptive survey research design is a commonly used approach to research in which the researcher wants to explore or identify what is going on in the population of study in a location. Elizabeth (2010) explained that majority of the works in health education take the form of descriptive survey because such study seeks to determine the current health behaviour exhibited by a particular population in different settings, such as communities, workplaces and environments in Imo State.

Area of the Study

The study as carried out in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State. It has its headquarters in the town of Afor Oru. It has an area of 114km² and a population of 170,902 at the 2006 census and 235,200 according to 2016 population projection. Ahiazu Mbaise is bounded to the north by Isiala mbano and Ehime Mbano to the East by Obowo and Ihitte Uboma to the south by Ezinihitte Mbaise and Aboh Mbaise to the West by Ikeduru. It is made up of fourteen (14) towns and ten (10) autonomous communities in Ahiazu Mbaise LGA. There are many Health facilities in Ahiazu such as the primary Healthcare Centers in each community and other Health facilities. Ahiazu Mbaise lack recreational facilities, good water supply etc.

Population of the Study

Population of the study comprises of all adolescents from the fourteen (14) towns in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area (L.G.A) totaling five thousand six hundred (5,600) adolescents according to 2006 census.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of two hundred and eighty (280) in school adolescents representing 5% of the total population of in school adolescent in Ahiazu Mbaise L.G.A was used. The researcher used two stage sampling procedure for the selection of the sample size from the population. Stage one involved purposive sampling of seven communities that are accessible from the 14 communities in the area, other communities could not be assessed due to bad road. Stage two involved simple random selection of 40 in school adolescents from each of the seven communities selected to arrive at 280 as the sample size.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument for data collection was strategies for promoting promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescent questionnaire (SPHLAQ) covering the purpose of the study and the research questions to elicit responses from the respondents. The structured questionnaire was made



up of five sections. Section 'A' contained one (1) question that seeks information on gender of the respondents. Section 'B' contained nine (9) items on adequate nutrition; Section 'C' contained five (5) items on regular exercise while Section 'D' contained seven (7) item on stress management as strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle. The Sections was B-D were structured using the modified linkert rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A) Disagreed (D) Strongly Disagreed (SD).

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using frequency count and percentages as well as inferential statistics of chi-square. Frequency count and percentages was used to analysis the demographic characteristics of the respondents and research questions while the chi-square was use to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

This section deals with the result from the data analysis. This is based on the research questions and hypothesis.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents' on adequate nutrition as strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State

Adequate nutrition as Strategy for Promoting Healthy Lifestyle S/N	Responses								
	SA		A		D		SD	Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
1 Eating balance diet regularly (protein carbohydrate, Minerals, vitamins)	110	(42.8)	100	(38.9)	30	(11.6)	17	(6.6)	257(100)
2 Drinking at least six to eight glasses of water per day	98	(38.1)	64	(24.9)	55	(21.4)	40	(15.6)	257(100)
3 Avoid too much intake of sugar and junk food (processed foods such as cake, meat pie ice cream, food made saccharin etc)	48	(18.7)	60	(23.3)	86	(33.5)	63	(24.5)	257(100)
4 Consume more of natural fruit juice rather than carbonate									



drinks (e.g. coke, malt, etc)	69(26.8)	53(20.6)	68(26.5)	67(26.1)	
257(100)					
5 Avoid overfeeding	71(27.6)	01(39.3)	63(24.5)	22(8.6)	
257(100)					
6 Restricting the amount of fat consumption in your daily food (e.g. eat less red meat, cheese, pork meat, butter, margarine	56(21.7)	68(26.5)	65(25.3)	68(26.5)	257(100)
7 Avoid overcooking of vegetable	120(46.7)	98(38.1)	32(12.5)	7(2.7)	
257(100)					
8 Avoid eating with raw salt	64(24.9)	54(21)	73(28.4)	66(25.7)	
257(100)					
9 Eat more of food that are rich in minerals and vitamins such as fruits, nuts and vegetables	63(24.5)	61(23.7)	79(30.7)	54(21)	257(100)
Total	699	659	551	404	2313
Grand percentage	30.2%	28.5%	23.8%	17.5%	
Total Average	78	73	61	45	

Table 1 above shows the frequency distribution of the respondents responses on adequate nutrition as strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaize Local Government Area. Out of all the 280 respondents', 110 (43%) strongly agreed, 100 (39%) agreed, 30 (12%) disagreed and 17 (7%) strongly disagreed on eating balance diet regularly as strategy. On drinking at least eight glasses of water per day, 98 (38%) respondents strongly agreed, 64 (25%) agreed, 55 (21%) disagreed and 40 (15%) strongly disagreed. On avoiding too much intake of junk food 40 (19%) strongly agreed, 60 (23%) agreed, 86 (34%) disagreed and 63(25%) strongly disagreed. On consume more of natural foods rather than carbonated drinks 69(28%) strongly agreed, 53(21%) agreed, 68(27%) disagreed, 67(26%) strongly disagreed. On avoid overfeeding 71(28%) strongly agreed, 101(39%) agreed, 63(25%) disagreed and 22(9%) strongly disagreed. On restricting the amount of fat consumption 56(22%) strongly agreed, 68(27%) agreed, 65(25%) disagreed and 68(27%) strongly disagreed. On avoid overcooking of vegetables 120 (47%) strongly agreed, 98(38%) agreed, 32(13) disagreed and 7(3%) strongly disagreed. On avoid eating



with raw salt 64(25%) strongly agreed, 54(21%) agreed, 73 (28%) disagreed and 66(26%) strongly disagreed. On eat more of food that are rich in minerals and vitamins 63(25%) strongly agreed, 61(24%) agreed, 79 (31%) disagreed and 54(21%) strongly disagreed. The total average revealed that 78 of the respondents strongly agree, 73 agreed, 61 disagreed while 45 strongly disagree on adequate nutrition as strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle.

Research Question 2: What are the regular exercise strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in AhiazuMbaise Local Government Area Imo State?

Table 2: Frequency distribution of the respondents Responses on regular exercise as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle in school among adolescents in AhiazuMbaise Local Government Area, Imo State.

Regular exercise as strategy for S/N promoting healthy lifestyle	SA		A		D		SD		Total
	f	%.	f	%.	f	%.	f	%.	
1 Engaging in moderate exercise likebrick walking up to 30- 40 minutesto as help promote longevity.	44	(17.1)	67	(26.1)	70	(27.2)	76	(29,6?)	257(100)
2 Engaging in vigorous rope skipping for 20 minutes at least 3 days per week promotes health and wellbeing.	59	(30)	66	(25.7)	69	(26.9)	63	(24.5)	257(100)
3 Engaging in regular swimming at least 3 times per week	64	(24.9)	39	(15.2)	99	(48.5)	55	(21.4)	257(100)
4 Regular participation in indoors Activities such as playing ludo, scrabbles,			87	(33.9)	98	(38.1)	52	(20.2)	20(7.8)
	257(100)								
5 Regular participation varieties of aerobic activities such as jo going, running, dancing and playing									



football helps to remove waste and toxic substances from the body	83(32.3)	41(16)	71(27.6)	62(24.1)	257(100)
Total	337	311	361	276.	1285
Grand percentage	26.2%	24.2%	28.1%	21.5%	
Total Average	67	62	72	55	

Table 2 above shows the frequency distribution of the respondent’s responses on regular exercise as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among adolescents in AhiazuMbaise Local Government Area. 44 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 67(26%) agreed, 70 (27%) disagreed and 76(30%) strongly disagreed that engaging in moderate exercise like as brick walking up to 30- 40 minutes help to promote longevity. 59(23%) strongly agreed, 66(26%) agreed, 69(27%) disagreed and 63(25%) strongly disagreed engaging in vigorous rope skipping for 20 minutes at least 3 days per week promotes health and wellbeing. 64 (25%) strongly agreed 39(12%) agreed, 99(38.5%) disagreed and 55(21%) strongly disagreed on Engaging in regular swimming at least 3 times per week. 87(39%) strongly agreed, 98(38%) agreed, 52(20%) disagreed and 20(8%) strongly disagreed on Regular participation in indoors activities such as playing lido, scrabbles, whot. 83(32%) strongly agreed, 41(16%) agreed, 71(28%) disagreed and 62(24%) strongly disagreed that Regular participation varieties of aerobic activities such as jogging , running, dancing and playing football helps to remove waste and toxic substances from the body- The total average revealed that 67 of the respondents strongly agreed, 66 agreed, 72 disagreed while 55 strongly disagreed on regular exercise as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle.

Research Question 3: What are the stress management strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State?



Table 3: Frequency distribution of the respondents responses on stress management as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State

Stress Management as a Strategy Responses

for Promoting healthy Lifestyle among in school adolescents	SA	A	DSDTotal		
	f%	f %	f%	f %	%
1.Engaging in regular exercise	41(16.)46(17.9)	102(39.7)	68(26.5)	257(100)	
2.Taking time out during the day to relax	121(47.1)	80(31.1)	31(12.1)	25(9.7)	257(100)
3. Finding time to stay with friends	45(17.5)	57(22.2)	88(34.2)	67(26.1)	257(100)
4.Engagein worthwhile recreational activities)	69(26.9)	90(35)	65(25.3)	53(20.6)	257(100)
5. Habitual listening to music of choiceand interest	65(25.3)	50(19.5)	85(33.1)	57(22.2)	257(100)
6.Using ecclesiastical means (praying)	43(16.7)	54(21)	90(35)	70(27.2)	257(100)
7. Having adequate sleep and rest helpsto reduce anxiety and depression	103(40.1)	71(27.6)	48(18.7)	35(13.6)	257(100)
Total	467	448	509	375	1799
Grand percentage	25.9%	24.9%	28.3%	20.9%	TotalAverage
Total Average	67	64	73	4	

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents responses on stress management as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents in AhiazuMbaise Local Government Area. The responses revealed that 41 (16%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 46 (18%) agreed, 102(40%) disagreed and 68(27%) strongly disagreed on Engaging in regular exercise as a strategy. 121(47.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 80 (31%) agreed, 31(12%) disagreed and 25(10%) strongly disagreed on taking time out during the day to relax as a strategy.



45 (18%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 57 (22%) agreed, 65 (25%) disagreed and 67 (26%) strongly disagreed on finding time to stay with friends as a strategy. 69 (27%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 90 (35%) agreed, 47(18%) disagreed and 53 (206%) strongly disagreed on doing things you enjoy doing most (worthwhile recreational activities) as a strategy. 65(25%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 50(20%) agreed, 85 (33%) disagreed and 57(22%) strongly disagreed on habitual listening to music of choice and interest as a strategy. 43 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 54 (21%) agreed, 90(36%) disagreed and 70 (27%) strongly disagreed on using ecclesiastical means (i.e praying always) as a strategy. 103 (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 71 (28%) agreed, 48(19%) disagreed and 35 (17%) strongly disagreed on having adequate sleep and rest helps to reduce anxiety and depression as a strategy. The total average revealed that 67 of the respondents strongly agreed, 64 agreed, 73 disagreed 54 while strongly disagreed on stress management as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle.

Table 4 Chi-square analysis verifying the hypothesis of no significant difference between male and female adolescents on stress management and strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among adolescents.

Variable	x ² cal value	x ² table value	Level of significance	df	Decision
Gender difference	9.47	7.81`	0.05	3	Rejected

Table 4 shows the chi-square analysis verifying the hypothesis of no significant different between male and female on stress management as strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle among in school adolescents. The table shows that x² calculated value of 9.47 was greater than x² tabulated value of 7.81 at 3 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance; the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The above result simply implies that there is a significant different between male and female adolescents on their strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle. This may be as a result of the male believe that the female counterpart are at much risk contracting health- related problems that are associated with stress management as a lifestyle

Discussion

The discussion of findings was based on the results of the research questions and hypothesis. Results in table one revealed the responses of the adolescence on the strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle. The result revealed that many of the respondents (30.2%) strongly agreed and (28.5%) agreed on adequate dieting as a strategy. This shows that many of the respondents were aware of some adequate nutrition strategies for the promotion of healthy lifestyle. The responses were not surprising but expected because the findings indicated that the adolescents were aware of some implications of unhealthy eating pattern and the benefit of healthy eating pattern. It was in line with the findings of Colbert et al. (2017) on the awareness of the public towards healthy lifestyle. Their responses were in agreement with the identified steps to good and adequate



nutrition such as eating variety of healthy food groups each day, avoid sugary drinks, drunk at least eight glasses of water daily. Good pattern of dieting promotes and maintains health.

Results in table two revealed the responses of the respondents on regular exercise. The result revealed that many of the respondents (28.1%) disagreed on regular exercise as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle. This was not surprising as most adolescents thought that exercise activities are for individuals who wants to Ward-off fat or those who wants to build up their muscle packs. This may be as a result of ignorance on exercise strategies for promoting health and wellbeing. This shows that most of the adolescence are not aware of the health benefit of exercise. Regular exercise helps one to be physically and mentally alert. Related literature confirmed the values of exercise for wellness (Ewuzie, 2017). Ignorant of the exercise strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle may expose the adolescents to sedentary lifestyle and certain health problems that associates it such as obesity, diabetes, and many other healthy problems. Bell (2016) pointed out some benefit of exercise such as maintenance of flexibility, joint stability, weight maintenance and stress reduction and some health risk. Therefore exercise as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle should made known to all adolescent of various gender and age.

Results in table four revealed that there is no significant difference among male and female adolescents on stress management as strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle. This was expected because the human body of every gender is action oriented and its meant to treated with dignity and respect which requires the adoption of appropriate measures or strategies to promote and maintain health and wellbeing through worthwhile/ healthy lifestyle.

Conclusions

The findings have shown that many of the respondents strongly agreed on adequate nutrition as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle. Many of the respondents disagreed on regular exercise as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle. Many (28.3%) of the respondents disagreed on stress management as a strategy for promoting healthy lifestyle.

No significant difference exists between male and female respondents on strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle.

Recommendations

1. Health education enlightenment on strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle should be organized for adolescents to sensitize them on the need for adequate promotion of this lifestyle
2. Health education on healthy lifestyle concept should be integrated into primary, secondary and tertiary school health education curriculum by curriculum planners in order to enlighten the masses from primary school level on the basic health and wellbeing concept
3. Seminars, workshops on health as well as counseling should be organized for the general public by Government, Non-government agencies and Health professionals in order to sensitize them on the need for promoting healthy lifestyles.
4. Print and electronic media programs should be sponsored by Government and non-governmental organization in order to educate the masses on the strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle.



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