

FEEDING PRACTICES OF BANK WORKERS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: This study investigated the feeding practices of bank workers in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Methods: The study adopted descriptive survey design. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 250 bank workers for the study. Validated questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. A total of two hundred and thirty eight (238) questionnaires representing 95% distributed were filled and returned. The data collected were analyzed using mean, t- test was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results: Findings revealed that the bank workers are aware of the nutritive value of foods such as carbohydrates, provide energy for the body protein is needed for the budding and repair of body, fat and e are energy sources vitamin C helps prevent scurvy and water transports nutrients to cells in the body. Feeding practices commonly adopted by bank workers include skipping breakfast eating breakfast at work buying food at work from bank canteen eating in between meals buying snacks as meals and taking soft drink daily. Suggestions made was that Food guide pyramid with suitable graphics and pictures -should be hanged on bank canteen walls. Bank managers should set up nutrition monitoring teams for all their branches aimed at ensuring that adequate nutrition is provided for bank workers in bank canteens.

Conclusion: Awareness do not equal practice among bank workers in Lagos.

Keywords: *Nutrition, Awareness, Feeding, Practices, Bank workers*

INTRODUCTION

Adequate nutrition is one of the important aspects of lifestyle emphasized in this era and the trend towards health food has increased. Nutrition is the selection of foods, preparation and ingestion for appropriate body assimilation. Jogunola and Awoyemi (1) defined nutrition as the science that deals with the intake of food and how the body handles the substances (nutrients) in the foods consumed for growth, development and maintenance of life. Adequate nutrition is important for a variety of reasons including optimal cardiovascular function, muscle strength, respiratory ventilation, and protection from infection, wound healing and psychological well being (2). Adequate nutrition helps to prevent nutrition related diseases, obesity, hypertension etc.

Adequate nutrition entails a diet that contains food nutrients namely: carbohydrates, proteins, fats vitamins, minerals and water their right proportion for building and maintenance - of the body. The nutritional value of food is its ability to nourish the body with the substances needed to live, grow and develop. Hasler (3) stated that the body depends on food for fuel and to obtain the constituents it needs to function. The greater the quality of nutrient contained in a food, the better the nutritional value of such food.

Healthy diet life helps to wade off a lot of Nutritional and health problems.

Nutrition contained in foods are broadly classified into macro-nutrients (needed in relatively large amount) and micronutrients (needed in smaller quantities). When foods are not consumed in quantities commensurate with individuals' body needs, malnutrition or over-nutrition may set in. Dietary patterns are the habitual decisions an individual or culture makes when choosing what foods to consume. Individual's dietary patterns have profound effects on their health. Khanna, Kaushik and Kaur (4) noted that nutritional non-communicable diseases are accelerating globally, advancing across every region and pervading all socio-economic classes. Dietary intake in developing countries like Nigeria is undergoing transition from high fibre, calorie—sparse, low—protein diets to low fibre, calorie- dense, high-protein diets (5). This changing pattern particularly with respect to carbohydrate intake. Energy dense food, is contributing to increasing prevalence of obesity, which is a major risk factor. Many non-communicable disease worldwide including hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, stroke and nutrition-induced cancer (5). Change in nutrition habit can be noted as an important change.

World Health Organisation (6) described nutritional non-communicable diseases as chronic diseases and reported that it accounts for 60% of all deaths and 43% of the global burden of disease. WHO (7) reported that by 2020, the contribution of nutritional non-communicable diseases is expected to rise to 73% of all deaths and 60% of the global burden of diseases. WHO (8) highlighted conditions that promote unhealthy nutritional practices by individuals to include, lack of adequate health and nutritional knowledge, acquisition of misinformation about health and nutrition matters. Nutrition Education should therefore be a priority for everyone.

Nutrition education is the process by which people gain knowledge of nutrition and the knowledge is supposed to bring about required changes in the recipients' food habits. The goal of nutrition education is to motivate participants to eat a healthy diet (9). Nutrition education involves teaching clients about the importance of nutrition, providing educational materials that reinforce messages about healthy eating, teaching skills essential for making dietary change, providing information on how to sustain behaviour changes that occur as a result of the knowledge. The decision to eat and to eat a particular food, varies for different individuals and situations. Nutrition education as one of the important practical aspects of nutrition knowledge plays an important role in raising public awareness and ultimately health of society. The main goal of nutrition plans is to obtain the appropriate and necessary nutrition information to remain healthy and physically prepared to face life challenges (10). To promote the level of societies' health using Nutrition, the knowledge and attitudes of the people must be considered. The people must be made aware of their health and diet demands.

Awareness is the knowledge of existence of a phenomenon. Biesta and Osberg (11) stated that awareness is one's ability to notice things, a state of being fully conscious of what one knows or what one has learned. Nutritional awareness is having nutritional knowledge, attitudes and actions or knowledge, which can have an effect on people's attitudes towards nutritional life style (12). Nutritional awareness could also be one's knowledge of the interrelationship between nutritional issues as it affects life (13). Nutritional awareness entails being cognizant of the food that is being consumed. Awareness entitles some to be careful in making diet decisions that will be conducive to one's health.

Simon, Ndaghu and Yohanna (14) stated that to create awareness on government policies and programs, public enlightenment organs such as the mass media,

National Orientation Agency (NOA), Ministry of Information and Agricultural Extension Service were formed, funded and charged with the responsibility of information dissemination. Without awareness campaigns, knowledge and ideas may hardly reach those in need of it. Ani (15) explained that awareness is the first step in the adoption process when considering new ideas, information, knowledge and technology. Simon Ndiaghata & Yohanna (14) stated that at the awareness level, mass media tools such as radio, newspaper, magazine, television, motion pictures, slide shows and printed materials are used to disseminate information, introduce new ideas and practices and alert people on emergencies such as the urgent need for improvement in nutritional status.

Most times, people's occupation are determinants of their sources of information and nutrition awareness level. Bank workers in Lagos State especially those in Apapa Local Government Area, are burdened with the problem of traffic congestion caused by the overpopulated nature of Lagos State. The bank workers do not have time for themselves. It is a common practice for bank workers in Lagos State to leave home by 4am to 5am in order to get to their places of work on time. The bank workers are compelled to eat what is available in and around their workplaces. However, adequate knowledge of nutritional awareness would enable them to make informed nutritional choices and engage in right nutritional practices. Eating cafe is available in many banks in Lagos where the bankers are allowed to buy and eat foods. There is no regulation for the bank canteens and mostly carbohydrate rich foods and drinks are sold in most of the canteens. Moyses and Collare (16) noted that bank workers are consuming protein, calcium, iron, riboflavin and niacin lower than the recommended amount. Bank workers (especially the cashiers) tend to live a sedentary lifestyle. They spend long periods of time (several hours) on their way to and from work; while at work they spend most of their office hours sitting down. People who engage in sedentary lifestyles burn fewer calories than those who are active, they need fewer total calories as well as fewer grams of protein, carbohydrate and fat. Robinson (17) observed that people who did not consume sufficient nutrients do not usually replenish those nutrients and this could result to fatigue and inability of the people to actively be involved in activities.

The challenges bank workers face in an attempt to satisfy their appetites include taste and quality, cost and health and more importantly nutrition awareness and knowledge of foods. The nature of their jobs in Lagos State subject them to eat whatever is readily available around their workplaces (canteens,

restaurants and fast foods) Since nutritional awareness entails nutritional literacy, an ideal nutritional awareness would enable bank workers make informed nutritional choices and engage in right nutritional practices WHO (6) asserted that reasonable knowledge of nutrition is the main factor with good feeding practices. Upon this backdrop, the study is to ascertain the nutritional awareness level of bank workers in Lagos State and to investigate the feeding practices of bank workers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design: The study adopted a descriptive survey design.

Study Area: The study was carried out in Apapa Local Government Area, Lagos State. Apapa Local Government Area was used because it is a Local Government Area that is made up of several banks as a result of its commercial nature.

Study Population: The population of study was the entire Bank Workers in Apapa Local Government Area. The total population was 5,490 bank workers. The data was obtained from Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), 2014 report. The banks were chosen because they have many branches concentrated around the study area

Sample and Sampling Technique: Sample size for the study was 250 bank workers made up of 40 staff of Diamond Bank, 35 staff of GTB, 35 staff of UBA, 50 staff of Zenith Bank, 40 staff of Eco Bank and 50 staff of First Bank. The sample size was determined using 'Taro Yamane' statistical formula for determining sample size. The participants chosen for the study was determined through purposeful sampling.

Instrument for Data Collection: Validated questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was titled "Feeding Practices of Bank Workers Nutritional Awareness Questionnaire" (FPOBWNAQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections; A and B. Section A sought information for the bank workers' demographic data while section B was sub-divided into parts based on the purpose of the study. Section B was structured on

a four point scale. The response options were: Extremely Aware (EA) = 4, Moderately Aware (MA) = 3, Slightly Aware (SA) = 2 and Not Aware (NA) = 1. The reliability of the instrument was carried out through test re-test method and it yielded a coefficient of 0.98. Out of the 250 copies of questionnaires distributed, 238 copies were retrieved showing 95% return rate.

Method of Data Analysis: The data collected was analysed using mean and t-test. Mean was used to analyse the responses for the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance difference between the awareness level of male and female bank workers on feeding practices that is commonly adopted by bank workers at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1 revealed the awareness level of the bank workers on nutritive value of foods. The nutritive values with extreme awareness levels include: carbohydrates provides energy for the body (3.96), carbohydrates raise blood-sugar levels (3.67), protein is needed for the building and repair of body tissues (3.63), fat and oils are energy sources (3.92), foods from vitamins and minerals sources are protective foods (3.62), Vitamin C helps prevent scurvy (3.57), calcium helps to maintain and build strong bones and teeth (3.74), Milk and other dairy products are important for bone health (3.63) and water assists in removing waste products from the body (3.66). The nutritive values of food with moderate awareness levels are: glucose stimulates the production of insulin (3.49), Vitamin D helps to maintain calcium homeostasis (3.10), water helps to maintain homeostasis in the body (3.22), water transport nutrients to cells in the body (3.36) and excess energy is stored in the body in form of fat or adipose tissue (3.40). This implies that the bank workers are aware of the nutritive value of foods. The table also showed that the standard deviations (SD) of the items are within the range of 0.01 to 1.06; this indicated that the mean values of the respondents were not far from one another in their responses.

Table 1: Bank Workers Awareness Level on Nutritive Value of Foods

S/N	Nutritive Value of Foods	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Carbohydrates provides energy for the study	3.96	0.18	EA
2.	Carbohydrates raise blood-sugar levels	3.67	0.47	EA
3.	Glucose stimulates the product of insulin	3.49	0.66	MA
4.	Protein is needed for the building and repair of body tissues	3.63	0.63	EA
5.	Fat and oils are energy sources	3.92	0.26	EA
6.	Foods from Vitamins and minerals sources are protective foods	3.62	0.73	EA
7.	Vitamin C helps prevent scurvy	3.57	0.71	EA
8.	Vitamin D helps to maintain calcium homeostasis.	3.10	0.16	MA
9.	Calcium helps to maintain and build strong bones and teeth	3.74	0.75	EA
10.	Milk and other dairy products are important for bone health.	3.63	0.62	EA
11.	Water assists in removing waste products from the body	3.66	0.62	EA
12.	Water helps to maintain homeostasis in the body.	3.22	1.02	MA
13.	Water transports nutrients to cells in the body.	3.36	1.02	MA
14.	Excess energy is stored in the body in form of fat or adipose tissue.	3.40	1.01	MA

Key: Extremely Aware (EA)=4, Moderately Aware (MA) = 3, Slightly Aware (SA) = 2 and Not Aware (NA) =1.

Table 2 shows the mean responses on awareness level of bank workers on feeding practice. Eating breakfast at home score least (1.75) among the bank workers,

buying food from bank canteen score highest mean (3.62) while take soft drink daily had a slightly aware score (2.34).

Table 2: Mean Responses on Awareness Level of bank Workers on Feeding Practice

S/N	Nutritive Value of Foods	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Skipping breakfast and take lunch and dinner only	2.66	1.16	MA
2.	Skipping lunch	2.61	1.07	MA
3.	Eat breakfast at home before going to work	1.76	1.35	NA
4.	Eat breakfast at work	3.40	1.01	MA
5.	Take prepared breakfast from home to work	3.21	1.14	MA
6.	Buy food at work from bank canteen	3.62	0.73	EA
7.	Buy food from fast foods and restaurants	2.89	1.16	MA
8.	Eat in-between meals	3.26	1.10	MA
9.	Eat balanced meals three times daily	3.20	0.99	MA
10.	Buy snacks as meals or lunch	2.59	1.19	MA
11.	Take soft drinks daily	2.31	1.24	SA
12.	Take dinner at 6pm daily	2.93	1.25	MA
13.	Buy breakfast or lunch from food vendors	2.70	1.33	MA

Key: Extremely Aware (EA)=4, Moderately Aware (MA) = 3, Slightly Aware (SA) = 2 and Not Aware (NA) =1.

Table 3 showed the awareness level of bank workers on feeding practices which is believed to be what the bank workers actually practice. Data presented in table 3 revealed that each of the itemized feeding practices had their calculated t-values ranging from 0.01 to 0.55

which were less than t-table value of 1.56 at 0.05 level of significance and at 236 degree of freedom. This indicated that there was no significant difference between the awareness level of the male and female bank workers on feeding practice commonly adopted.

Table 1: T-test Analysis of the awareness level of the Male and Female Bank Workers on feeding practices commonly adopted by bank workers

S/N	Nutritive Value of Foods	X ₁	S ² ₁	X ₂	S ² ₂	t-cal	Remark
1.	Skipping breakfast and take lunch and dinner only	3.30	0.99	3.33	0.75	0.21	NA
2.	Skipping lunch	3.70	1.07	3.80	1.24	0.47	NS
3.	Eat breakfast at home before going to work	2.83	1.10	3.10	1.26	0.38	NS
4.	Eat breakfast at work	3.56	1.30	3.70	1.39	0.04	NS
5.	Take prepared breakfast from home to work	3.61	1.34	3.66	1.21	0.45	NS
6.	Buy food at work from bank canteen	2.98	1.33	3.44	1.47	0.46	NS
7.	Buy food from fast foods and restaurants	3.25	1.34	3.56	1.19	0.33	NS
8.	Eat in-between meals	3.80	1.12	3.90	1.26	0.55	NS
9.	Eat balanced meals three times daily	3.20	0.99	2.98	1.09	0.49	NS
10.	Buy snacks as meals or lunch	2.59	1.19	2.31	1.24	0.37	NS
11.	Take soft drinks daily	2.86	1.07	3.80	1.03	0.43	NS
12.	Take dinner at 6pm daily	2.93	1.25	2.70	1.35	0.52	NS
13.	Buy breakfast or lunch from food vendors	3.20	1.01	3.43	1.23	0.41	NS

Key:
 X₁ = Mean of Male Bank Workers
 S₁² = Variance of Male Bank Workers
 X₂ = Mean of Female Bank Workers
 S₂² = Variance of Female Bank Workers
 Df = 236
 P = 0.05
 t-tab = 1.56
 S = Significant
 NS = Not Significant

Discussion

Findings of this study indicated that the bank workers were aware of nutritive value of foods. The nutritive values of food include carbohydrates provide energy for the body and also raises blood sugar. In line with this finding, Schenk, Saberi and Olefsky (18) explained that carbohydrates constitute a large part of most foods such as rice, bread and other grain and tuberous products that are needed by the body for supply of energy. Also in support of their finding, Jenkins, Jenkins, Wolever, Thompson and Rao (19) mentioned that carbohydrates are believed to be absorbed quickly by the body and therefore tends to raise blood glucose levels. Finding of this study revealed that the bank workers are aware that glucose stimulates the production of insulin in the body. This finding is supported by the American Dietetic Association (20) who stated that the digestion of carbohydrate, increases blood glucose; glucose on the other hand, stimulates the production of insulin.

The outcome of this research showed that the bank workers are aware that protein is needed for the building and repair of body. In support of this finding, Berg, Tymoczko and Stryer (21) stated that the body requires proteins for growth and production of new tissues and also to replace damaged tissues. Fuhrman (22) opined that there is no storage of protein by the body since excess is discarded typically as urine; hence there is need to include protein in every meal. Mahan & Escot (23) stated that proteins are needed for

growth and maintenance of muscle. Findings of this study revealed that the bank workers are aware that fat and oils are energy sources and that excess energy is stored in the body in form of fat or adipose tissue. Montouri, Triassi and Pasquale (24) explained that fats and oils are energy sources and their excess in the body are stored as adipose tissue.

This study also indicated that bank workers are aware that foods from vitamins and minerals sources are protective foods, Vitamin C helps prevent scurvy, Vitamin D helps to maintain calcium homeostasis and calcium helps to maintain and build strong bones and teeth. This aligns with the opinion of Young and Pellet (25) that calcium is needed for building strong bones and teeth especially from childhood and adolescence. Also, in line with this, FAO (26) stated that inadequate calcium intake during adolescence and young adulthood puts individuals at risk for developing osteoporosis later in life.

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