

MEDIA INFORMATION ON NUTRITION AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS BY ADULTS LIVING IN BENIN METROPOLIS, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: media has an extremely powerful and challenging role to play in disseminating nutrition information. However, the media has not always increased the knowledge of the general population in Nigeria but due to the case of quack nutritionists, people are rather confused on the correct information.

Objective: The study examined the media information on nutrition and perceived benefits by adults living in Benin metropolis, Edo state.

Method: Survey research design was adopted for the study. Three (3) research questions were raised to guide the study. A total of four hundred and twenty eight thousand, six hundred and fifty (428,650) resident in Benin metropolis make up the population. Convenient sampling technique was used in selecting a sample size of five hundred and thirty (530) adults resident in Benin metropolis. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection and cronbach alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument, a coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. The questionnaire was administered and collected; the resulting data were presented using frequencies and percentages.

Result: Result showed that the media often used by respondents in Edo metropolis was the television/ radio followed by social and print media respectively. It was showed that the most sought information was on preventive and longevity/health issues.

Conclusion: Residents in Benin metropolis patronize the media for nutrition information. It was therefore recommended that enlightenment programmes should be organized for users of social media devices so as to get right information that are relevant to nutrition practices.

Keywords: **information, media, nutrition, perceived benefits**

INTRODUCTION

Current trend has shown that consumers are increasingly more than ever concerned about their health which has been demonstrated to be linked with diet and nutrition. Social media, in particular, has changed the way we see, perceive, interact, try and actually eat our food [1]. Maintaining proper nutritional status is paramount to avoiding chronic and preventable health problems hence adequate health and wellbeing, delaying and reducing the risk of developing diseases and maintaining functional independence among others. Food choices may undoubtedly be influenced primarily by acquired knowledge through information on nutrition benefits. Whitney and Rolfes [2] stated that four out of the top six leading causes of death in the U.S. has a link with diet. Thus, credible nutritional information has become more valuable to individuals. Information and communication technology (ICT) pervades almost all the aspects of human existence. Information became so handy that anything one wants to do, one can easily consult the ICT devices

to access such information, nutrition issues are not an exception. Nutrition information is constantly appearing at lightning speed with numerous claims and counter claims. This information is bound to affect consumers' beliefs and food choices. Eating habits have drastically changed over the years. Presently there is an increase in the number of overweight children and adults in the society, and several lifestyle related diseases and death are occurring daily.

Media is a major source of information or misinformation on nutritional sources, members of the public are often bombarded by messages about foods [3]. The media consists of campaigns that are aimed at communicating messages with the hope of influencing potential consumers [4]. Forms of media include television, radio, prints and social media, of which all have been linked to significantly impact individual's food choices and availability of nutrition information. Over the past century, the media has rapidly developed through the changes in technology [5] and the introduction of worldwide and portable

internet has made it easier for individuals to connect. The significant development of social media has had a huge impact on the way individuals communicate and share their views [5]. Researchers have shown that effective communication of nutrition and health information has been identified as a factor that can influence consumer acceptance of functional foods [6]. According to Clocksin et al, [7] prolonged exposure to media such as watching television is directly linked to increased body mass index (BMI) and increased consumption of low nutrient dense foods. Media has a huge impact on the consumers' food choices and preferences, which could be positive or negative [8]. Television advertisements have also been linked to creating brand preferences. It was found that almost all recorded food advertisements do not support the dietary recommendations to maintain healthy and balanced diet. Understanding the influence of information on consumers' perceived benefits may assist in creating and implementing media information approaches for establishing acceptable dietary behaviours, which may positively impact on the level of the development of nutrition related deceases.

The main purpose of the study was to investigate media information on nutrition and perceived benefits by adults living in Benin Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria. The study specifically studied: (1) type of media used by respondents, (2) respondents' opinion on media information on nutrition and (3) respondents' perceived benefits of media information on nutrition.

Methodology

Population of the study

The study population consisted of all adults (21years and above) residents in Benin Metropolis totally 428,650 (2006, Census).

Sample of the study

Convenient sampling technique was used to select 530 respondents from Benin Metropolis.

Instrument for Data Collection

A pre-tested self administered questionnaire was used to obtain data from the respondent. It was sectioned into 4 (A, B, C and D). Section A solicited data on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while sections B, C and D collected data on media used by the respondents, opinion on media information on nutrition, and perceived benefits of media information on nutrition respectively. The questionnaire was validated by two nutritionists and one expert in measurement and evaluation. Pilot test was conducted using the test-retest reliability technique by administering questionnaire to 20 adults who were not part of respondent. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and a score of 0.79 was obtained. The questionnaire were administered and collected immediately by the researchers and two trained research assistant.

Data analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics with statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 16.0. Result was presented in frequencies and percentages.

Results

Table 1 revealed that 384 (72%) were female, 146 (27%) male, out of which 220 (42%) were between 18 and 25years, 262 (49%) were between 26 and 40years while 48(9.0%) were 41years and above. The table also shows that 301(57%) had tertiary education, 165 (31%), secondary education and 64 (12%) had no formal /primary education. while 220 (41%) were self-employed, 165(31%) were public servants, another 117 (22%) civil servant and 30(6%) are full time housewives. The table also shows that 320 (60%) respondents got a monthly income of less than N50,000, 142 (27%) gets income of N50,000 – N100,000 while only 68 (13%) received income of N100,000 and above monthly.

Table 1: Socio -demographic characterises of the respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
18 -25	220	42.0
26 – 40	262	49.0
40 and above	48	9.0
Gender		
Men	146	27.5
Women	384	72.5
Income /monthly		
Less than N50,000	320	60.0
N50,000 – N100,000	142	27.0
N100 and above	68	13.0
Educational qualification		
No formal/primary	64	12.0
Secondary	165	31.0
Tertiary	301	57.0
Job Type		
Self employed	220	41.0
Public servant	165	31.0
Civil servant	117	22.0
House wife	30	6.0

Table 2 shows that 254 (47.9%) respondent often use the television/radio, 206 (38.9%) use social media while print was the least used media 70(13.2%). The study also revealed that social media 350 (66%) ranked highest on nutrition information, followed by print 140(26%) while television 40(7.5%) ranked lowest on nutrition information. The table also shows the nutrition information often sought by the respondents. It shows that 300 (56.6%) often sought information on preventive nutrition, 230 (43%) on longevity/health while 100(18.8%) on curative nutrition.

Table 2: Frequency of the Media used by the Respondents.

Items	Frequency	Percentages
Television /Radio	254	47.9
Social	206	38.9
Print	70	13.2
Ranking (Nutrition information)		
Social	350	66.0
Print	140	26.0
Television	40	7.5
Information sought (Nutrition)		
Curative	100	18.8
Preventive	300	56.6
Longevity /healthy	230	43.0

Table 3 shows respondents opinion on media information on Nutrition. All respondents have various opinions on media information, 472(89%) believes that information on nutrition creates awareness,330(62.2%) focuses on foreign foods, 54.7% says the information is contradictory,310(58.4%), too many and frequent, 225(42%) no clarity of information, and 290(54.7%) focuses on marketing.

Table 3: Opinion on Media Information on Nutrition

S/N	Opinion	Yes	%	No	%
1	Creates awareness	472	89.0	58	10.9
2	Focuses on marketing	290	54.7	340	64.1
3	Clarity of information	225	42.0	305	57.5
4	Too many and frequent	310	58.4	220	41.5
5	No proof of information	243	45.8	287	54.1
6	Creates confusion	190	35.8	340	64.1
7	Contradictory	290	54.7	240	45.2
8	Focuses on foreign foods	330	62.2	200	37.7

Table 4 revealed the benefits of media information on nutrition as perceived by the respondents, 517 (97.5%) ensures healthy living, 500 (94.3%) encourages use of local foods, 422 (79.6%) agreed to cut down use of supplements, 370 (72%) maintain adequate weight, 362 (68.3%) control onset of diseases, 340 (64.1%) cure diseases and 312 (58.8%) slows down ageing process.

Table 4: Perceived benefits of Media Information on Nutrition

S/N	Opinion	Yes	%	No	%
1	Control onset of disease	362	68.3	168	32.0
2	Maintain adequate weight	370	72.0	150	28.0
3	Increase longevity	268	50.5	262	49.4
4	Slow down ageing process	312	58.8	218	41.1
5	Cure diseases	340	64.1	190	35.8
6	Cut down use of supplements	422	79.6	108	20.4
7	Encourages use of local foods	500	94.3	30	5.7
8	Ensures healthy living	517	97.5	13	2.5

Discussion

The study revealed that more than half of the respondents were women, majority had tertiary education and were mainly public servants with regular income. Media often used by respondents in Edo metropolis was the television/ radio followed by social and print media respectively. This could be attributed to increase in access to various media by the people. Social media serves many purposes, one of which is to share everyday experiences with friends, family, even the wider world, of course, nutrition is one of those everyday experiences. This study corroborates the study of Bii and Otike [9], who reported in their studies that nutrition information has been made available through diverse social media. However the social media ranked first in providing nutrition information, followed by the Print and television, this may be attributed to the social revolution boom of social media. According to Yadavali and Jones [8]; Johanson et al., [10] one is apt to try a recipe when you see a picture of it.

The most sought information was on preventive and longevity/health issues. This may be as a result of the fact that people believe in the saying, prevention is better than cure and health is wealth, as there is this strong instinct that people wants to remain healthy beyond the education, hence eating good food has become a way of life for so many. The findings corroborates with the studies of Andrawes et al, [11]; Klieman et al, [12]; Aronson, [13], who reported that people in their 70s and 80s who change their diets and other lifestyle factors show improved markers for disease risk, particularly heart disease. Thus, everyone, even those already at risk from years of unhealthy eating, can benefit from improved eating habits as a result of the information from the social media.

Findings also revealed that the respondents have different opinion about media nutrition information, more than half of the respondents believed media

information creates nutrition awareness, 62%, clarity of information on nutrition, 42% feel that nutrition information is rather too many and frequent, others believed that media information is contradictory, and no proof of information thereby creating confusion while some feel it focuses on foreign foods respectively. This may be attributed to peoples' attitude and behaviour toward nutrition which is basically as a result of lack of adequate knowledge of nutrition and practices. The studies of Triches and Giugliani [14] lay credence to this finding. They reported in their study that positive attitude and behaviour developed toward healthy eating early in childhood contributes immensely in good nutritional habit.

The perceived benefits of nutrition information by the respondents are; control onset of disease, increase longevity, slow down ageing process and ensures healthy living, this is indicative that respondents are well informed of numerous benefits of nutrition information .The possible reason for this may be due to the fact much awareness on information on nutrition has gotten to the grass root through numerous avenues; social media, prints, television, radio and even through street hawkers of food supplements. This is coherent with the studies of Rojas et al, [15]; Pawlak and Colby,[16], who at various times reported that nutrition information increases awareness of nutrition benefits.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that adults' residents in Benin metropolis patronize the media for nutrition information as this is exhibited in their concerns about nutrition information creating awareness and helping in clarity of nutrition information.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that:

- More emphases should be laid on information leading to healthy eating intentions and behaviours of media consumers on web sites.

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