

**IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION EDUCATION IN CATERING AND FAST FOOD BUSINESS (CASE STUDY OF SWEET SAVOUR EATERY AND ROYAL BIRDS MOTEL, AKURE ONDO STATE, NIGERIA).**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper examined the importance of Nutrition Education in Catering and Fast Food Businesses. People prefer eat out day –by-day as they have taken it to be a part of life. Everyone is getting busier in order to find means for survival and so hardly have time to prepare nutritious meals with appropriate calories. Secondary sources of data collection were employed to get relevant information. The result revealed that many live on fast food and catering products, hence the need for Nutrition Education, to help in the dietary intake. Various recommendations on how to achieve the objective of this research work were also highlighted.*

**KEYWORDS:** Education, Food, Catering, Nutrition Education, Health, Nigeria

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Nutritional knowledge is important, particularly in the light of the rapidly expanding work population and threat of food population imbalance. The world we live in is changing constantly. People prefer to eat out day-by-day as they have taken it to be a part of life. Everyone is getting busier in order to find ends meet for survival and so hardly have time to prepare nutrition meals with appropriate calories.

For many people, eateries have become their kitchen where all they need is to order something from the menu, which is very 'fast' and convenient. Nutritionally, fast food is the main source of obesity epidemic around the globe today. Puff-puff, buns, burgers, sandwiches etc are fall products fast foods business and these have the adverse effects of obesity.

For some, all they need is not the nutrient in food but just to fill the empty and hungry stomach, which can lead to malnutrition. It is important to acquaint consumers with nutrition issues, problems of malnutrition, nutrient content of meal etc. What to take at right time.

The absence of Nutrition Education or adequate information about fast food Nutrition in the past was what prevented people from knowing how much fat or calories they were consuming with each bite that was taken from a burger as an example. As a result of good education on nutrition on how certain foods can cause obesity and other ill-effects, nobody wants to die, so they want to know how much saturated fat, cholesterol, carbohydrate, sugar etc they are consuming in the fast foods they eat. Hence, there is the need to educate consumers of products from catering and fast food business.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Role of Nutrition Education to the Development of Catering and Fast Food Industry

Since there is rapid advancement and development of catering and fast food industry in the society today, it is important to provide general awareness of the role of Nutrition Education in catering and fast food business; Olatunji (2013) ascribes the role of Nutrition -Education as to acquainting the consumers of fast food and catering products to the benefit of eating healthy and balanced diet. He further stated that it is the enlightenment of consumer and people food therapy and the explanation of danger in mal-nutrition. Nutrition Education Stresses the need for people to take nutrition into consideration when planning menu and making menu choices (Iyiola, 2014).

Importantly, people are educated on the fact that fast food eating, impacts so much on individual's health (Olaoluwa, 2010).Eziogwu (2012) explained that the role nutrition plays in the eradication of chronic diseases cannot be underemphasized, hence the need to sensitize the public, the benefit in making healthy selections when eating.

### Balance Diet

A diet is said to be balanced when it contains all the necessary nutrients required for the body metabolism (Adebayo, 2013). It must be able to provide heat and energy, contain the necessary nutrients to build and repair the worn out tissues and supply nutrients to regulate the body process.

The nutrients are: carbohydrates, fats and oil, proteins, minerals, water and vitamins.

### Chemical Composition of Nutrients

Nutrients	Components
Proteins	Nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon, oxygen, sulphur, iron and phosphorus.
Carbohydrates	Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen
Fat and oil	Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen
Vitamins	Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen
Minerals	Iron, calcium, phosphorus etc.

*Source: Olatunji, (2013). Nutritional needs for Adults*

### Deficiency of Improper Assimilation of Food

Malnutrition has three sub-classes which are the roots of malnutrition in the diet as stated earlier. These are:

- ❖ **Under nutrition:** This occurs when there is not enough nutrients in the food consumed which results to body weakness especially in children and so they have low or no immunity to infections.
- ❖ **Over Nutrition:** This is the result of over eating. It happens when an individual is over-nourished when one eats much of wrong food, it also causes this problem. Over-weight people become ill easily, get older than the age and obese if care is not taken.

## **Major Causes of Malnutrition**

Inadequate food or deficiency in the diet may be caused by the following factors:

- ❖ Bad eating habits
- ❖ Economic inability to buy a variety of foods
- ❖ Increased activity of the body metabolism due to sudden individuals increased activity or responsibilities at places of work.

## **Nutrition Induced Deficiencies**

An under or over nourished diet has a tremendous bearing on a person's vitality, health, emotional stability and enthusiasm for life. Both under and well-nourished individuals reflects from personal appearances.

Some of these deficiencies are as follow:

- ❖ Marasmus which is caused by insufficient food
- ❖ Kwashiorkor is caused by insufficient protein intake
- ❖ Anemia is an impoverished condition of the blood. Good nutrition helps to alleviate the condition.
- ❖ Goiter: Is a shortage of iodine causing the thyroid gland to swell
- ❖ Beriberi which is caused by thiamine deficiency

## **Uses of Nutrition In Alleviating Nutrition Induced Deficiencies Carbohydrates:**

This is broken down by the body to release heat and energy. It helps in complete oxidation of fats and *oils* in the body. Sugar and starch give tastes and flavor to foods. Dietary fibre helps to absorb and hold water aiding intestinal elimination of stool.

## **Protein**

Completed protein contains all the essential amino acids and in turn is useful for promoting growth and repair of muscles and tissues in the body, in helping the formation of enzymes, hormones and antibodies, in maintaining water balance and responsible for the transmission of the dietary characteristics from parents to the offsprings. Food Sources: Milk, fish, legumes, meat, egg, poultry, beans, Excess protein leads to obesity.

## **Fat and Oil**

This is an inevitable nutrient in the body which maintains constant body temperature, acts as lubricant and more satisfying than others, facilitates the absorption of vitamin A, D, E & K.

## **Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Nutritional Status of People**

In controlling nutritional deficiencies, there are some factors that determine individuals eating habit. These Factors are:

## **Cultural Factors**

This is the way of life of a group of people usually of one nationality or from a particular locality that form a bait deeply noted in many aspects because culture determines the basic ecological needs that are similar for all people.

Economic Factors: Rising in food costs and food shortage have been the major problems in the developing areas. Increase in price makes the selection of food for the family, a real challenge.

## **Social Factor**

If one recognizes that individual belong to various social groups like church, clubs, union or fraternal organization, the effect of group behavior cannot be overlooked when considering factors that influence food habits.

## **Psychological Factor**

Food habit is an important part of human behavior. Individuals are more motivated to act in terms of what they previewed as been relevant to meet their needs.

## **Nutritional Education in Catering and Fast Food Industry**

In converting nutrition theory into a meaningful practice in terms of food on the plate, which is sociological, it is important that certain things are considered during meal planning and this should be strictly followed.

When planning meal, it is a good rule to decide first on the main dish which is to provide the protein and then to select the accompaniment.

- ❖ Provide a balance to provide all the essential nutrients
  - ❖ Consider the needs of the consumer ranging from industrial worker, nursing mother, expectant mother, diabetic, old age etc.
  - ❖ Make full use of food which are in season as they are usually of good value and reasonably cheap.
  - ❖ Serve fresh fruits for their richness in vitamins.
  - ❖ Choose suitable method of cooking to avoid loss of food
- Problem of Nutritional Education

## **The Problems of Nutritional Education**

The problems of Nutritional Education are highlighted below:

- ❖ The purchasing power of the people is very low due to low income earning.
- ❖ Physical problems remitting from climatological and ecological aspects.
- ❖ Problems also arriving from the length of time it will take people to understand the knowledge of nutrition.
- ❖ Nutritional survey is not widely spread
- ❖ Political obstacle;; i.e. government policies that do not favour nutritional grounds.
- ❖ Financial limitation as a result of the low need and little attachment assigned to evaluation by the government.
- ❖ Inadequacy of nutritional textbooks for the students to seek information on the need for invitation.

- ❖ Inadequacy of grailfical professional nutritionists.

### **Solution to Nutritional Problems**

- ❖ Sensitizing people especially in remote areas of the fact that they can still eat good and nourish food with little income they earn. Fresh vegetables, beans, millet, fresh fruits are still available in such areas.
- ❖ The government should include Nutritional Education in her policies as a matter of compulsion
- ❖ Advertisement of the importance of good nutrition should not be left out in all ways.
- ❖ The course-Nutrition should be made available in all higher learning institutions.
- ❖ The government school ensure the expansion of all agricultural sectors, producing more nutritive valued products, so that the common man can afford to buy.
- ❖ Community campaigns on nutrition is very important.
- ❖ Nutrition counsellors must focus on the education on food habit on nutritional requirement which promotes good health at all ages.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Information generated in this study were obtained from related literature, published and unpublished materials including documentary papers. Interviews were also conducted among respondents drawn from nutritional educationists e.g. Zmdane Nutrition Education Institute in Akure, Fast Food Staffers and owners, hotel staffers and owners.

Responses from the interviews, personal observations and questionnaires were used to confirm and corroborate the facts obtained from the literature.

For the purpose of research work, structured and structured and unstructured questionnaires were designed and employed. The population of the study comprised both staff and guests of Sweet Savour Eatery. Alagbaka, Akure and Royal Birds Motel all 350 copies. The questionnaires were distributed, and only 300 were retrieved.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Findings from the various interviews conducted revealed that the role of Nutrition Education in catering and fast food business, cannot be overruled as confirmed by Eziwogwu (2012).

It also revealed that Nutrition education should be made clear to people on the fact that eating of fast food, impacts so much on individual's nutritional healt ( Olaoluwa 2010).

According to the findings, nutrition education stresses the need for people to take nutrition into consideration when planning menu and making menu choices as also confirmed by Iyiola (2011).

**Table 1: Summary of Questionnaire items**

Item		Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Is good planning of menu important in catering business and fast food?	Yes	250	83
		No	30	10
		No Idea	20	7
2	Does eating of fast food have any impact on the individuals nutritional health?	Yes	262	87
		No	262	7
		No Idea	20	6
3	Can Nutritional Education be acceptable by people?	Yes	250	83
		No	30	10
		No Idea	20	7
4	Is nutritional education important in fast food and catering business	Yes	255	85
		No	30	10
		No Idea	15	5

Source: Field Survey (2015)

From the Table above, the information shows that 250 respondents representing 83% said that good planning of menu is important in catering business, while 30 respondents representing 10% is said it not true, but 20 respondents representing 7% ? have no idea.

Also 262 respondents representing 87% said that eating fast food has impact on individual's intufmial health, 20 respondents representing 7% said it is not true and 18 respondents representing 6% said nothing.

In the same vein, 250 respondents representing 83% said that nutrition education can be acceptable by people, 30 respondents representing 10% said it is not true end 20 respondents representing 7% had nothing to say.

Finally, 255 respondents representing 85% said that nutritional education is important in fast food and catering business, 30 respondents representing 10% said it is not true and 15 respondents representing 5% said nothing.

To answer this question items 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the questionnaire were used as shown in the above table. The summation of the overall "YES" option prints is

$$\begin{aligned}
 &250 + 262 + + 250 + 255. \\
 &= \underline{1017} \times 100 \quad 1200 \\
 &1200 = \quad 84.7\%
 \end{aligned}$$

The question has scored above the total points obtained for acceptance. As such, the question is considered answered in the affirmative.

## CONCLUSION

It is pertinent to note that nutrition education is important in fast food and catering business. The basic need of human race is food because it contains the essential nutrients for life.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Nutritional Education Programme should be intensely directed and be encouraged to students of Hotel and Catering, hotel workers fast food workers and the public at large. The catering, fast food outlet managers or any food handlers should Endeavour to put into consideration different people under different condition of health when planning menu. The government at all levels must promote nutritional education.

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