

Biological and Social Approaches To Nutrition: Impact on the Productivity of the Aged

Ezeh Chidinma - Federal University of Technology Owerri Imo state Nigeria

Ezeh Chidinma

Abstract

There is a lot of emphasis/concern in Nigeria today towards the consumption of a healthy diet especially among the elderly or aged, the major concern being in the area of weight reduction, maintaining normal levels of cholesterol, blood sugar, and blood pressure. However, research has shown that a healthy diet will also improve one's productivity through increase in alertness, concentration, problem solving skills etc. Surveying these aspects may require a biological or a social approach.

Biological approach looks at the genetic variation in individual nutrient requirement, dietary pattern, hunger, satiety, mood etc. While the social approach focuses on social, cultural, religious, economic and political aspects of eating. All these influence the nutrition of the aged which in turn affect their mental clarity, alertness, energy level and stamina. Poor feeding habit decreases productivity as a result of lost time occasioned by chronic illness and obesity. It also causes mental sluggishness that leads to mistakes, lack of interest and even accident in the work place. This paper therefore studied the feeding habit of the aged as it influences their productivity.

A survey of 200 aged workers in different offices in Owerri West L.G.A of Imo State by means of a stratified cluster sampling was employed in the study. The result showed that long established feeding habit, ignorance, social economic status were indicated as the factors for food choice. Also 60% of them that had good feeding habit performed better than others.

Biological approach looks at the genetic variation in individual's nutrient requirement, dietary pattern, hunger, satiety, mood etc. while the social approach focuses on social, cultural, religious, economic and political aspects of eating (Intili health 2013).

The way individuals satisfy their hunger and appetite daily has a direct effect on their well being. Research has proved that certain kind of foods play a very significant role in improving memory and keeping the brain cells active. The food we eat everyday has a massive influence on the functioning of the brain and keeping fit for performance (Tanushree 2012).

According to (Shrinandan 2010), a lot of people follow a diet characterized by excessive caloric consumption and frequent nutritional imbalances. The consumption of animal derived food highly refined or processed product and alcoholic continues to increase with its accompanying increase in saturated fats and cholesterol. Most people eat food several times daily and there is undoubtedly no practice or habit which can influence the health of an individual as much the decision that are made with regards to the kind and amount of foods consumed (Krause et al, 2012).

The body is made up of many materials. These can be supplied by a wide variety of foods. Broadly speaking, the body is a product of its nutrition. You are what you eat (Tanushree 2012). Biological approach looks at the genetic variation in individual nutrient requirement, dietary pattern, hunger, satiety, mood etc. While the social approach focuses on social, cultural, religious, economic and political aspects of eating. All these influence the nutrition of the aged which in turn affect their mental clarity, alertness, energy level and stamina. Poor feeding habit decreases productivity as a result of lost time occasioned by chronic illness and obesity. It also causes mental sluggishness that leads to mistakes, lack of interest and even accident in the work place. This paper therefore studied the feeding habit of the aged as it influences their productivity.

The aim of this research therefore is to investigate how biological and social approaches to nutritional will impact on the productivity of the aged. It is expected that at the end of this work, the data obtained will reveal how feeding habits of the aged workers in Imo State affect their performance and productivity in the work place.

Majority of our respondents lack knowledge of the facts of Food and Nutrition. However, due to their exposure and level of education, they are aware of nutrition related diseases and as a result of that, the focus on eating food that will help them maintain ideal weight, reduce the risk of developing high cholesterol, diabetics, high blood pressure etc. What they don't know is that, a healthy diet can also improve concentration, alertness, problem solving skills and productivity.

Bottom Note: This work is partly presented at 17th International Conference on Food & Nutrition May 22-24, 2017 Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Ezeh Chidinma

Federal University of Technology Owerri Imo state Nigeria, Email: ezehnke@aquinas.edu

