



Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Strategies among Couples for Sustainable Family Survival in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examines healthy lifestyle strategies among 1,086,543 couples in Oyo State, Nigeria, focusing on feeding, physical well-being, and mental health. Data from 817 married respondents revealed that 73.6% prefer self-prepared meals, while 9.5% prefer fast food or processed food. Consumption of vegetables and fruits varied, with 55.4% following a balanced diet. The study reveals that people living in clean environments are generally satisfied with their living conditions, with a high percentage of those living in spacious, secure homes. Couples living in houses with cross ventilation are also satisfied. Physical exercise is also a significant factor. The study shows that 59.9% of respondents practice mindfulness and meditation, while 34.8% seek mental health advice. 21.7% are aware of local mental support services. Balancing work-life is a challenge, with 33.9% excelling and 37.3% good. Strong preferences for self-prepared meals and regular physical exercise support mental health. Healthy lifestyle can be encouraged through mindfulness, with secure communities and local mental support resources playing a key role. The results of the study will pave the way for new fields of research by providing material for health educators and educational researchers, as well as guidance on healthy lifestyles for individuals, couples, families, the government, and non-governmental organizations.

Keywords: Couples Lifestyle, Family Feeding, Mental Health, Physical-Well Being

1. Introduction

A balanced diet, regular exercise, enough sleep, stress management, and mental wellbeing are all components of a healthy lifestyle. Cardiovascular and mental health are enhanced by eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meat, taking less of processed foods, and exercising. Sleeping for seven to nine hours is essential for mental clarity, emotional regulation, and physical recuperation. Reduce stress by practicing mindfulness, meditation, or engaging in hobbies to avoid depression and heart disease. Lifestyles are everyday routines and actions of people, families, and communities that impact their physical, emotional, social, financial, and environmental well-being. A healthy lifestyle promotes good health and prevents diseases. Family, cultural customs, environmental practices, values, beliefs, attitude, and technology all have an impact on lifestyle choices. A healthy lifestyle leads to fitness and wellness and reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke (Cooper & Smyth, 2001). Healthy lifestyles encourage beneficial behaviors and overall well-being in families, couples, and individuals.

Keep up a healthy lifestyle by engaging in rewarding activities and nurturing relationships. A healthy lifestyle can be hampered by a number of variables, such as the availability of fast food, inactivity, and ongoing stress, which can result in poor eating habits, obesity, and negative coping mechanisms. Access to mental health care and physical activity may be impeded in less developed places by insecure populations and scarce resources. For instance, settlers in rural areas in Oyo State were faced with insecurities from herds men between 2015 and 2023 which has great impact in their physical, mental, economic and social lives. In order to encourage healthy lifestyles among couples in Oyo State, Nigeria, it is imperative that these inhibitions be addressed. Strategies pertaining to eating, physical health and mental health should be prioritized.

Okeke (2022) investigates how technology, such as wearables, smartphone apps, and online platforms, might encourage couples to lead healthier lives. Applications driven by artificial intelligence can assist couples in developing customized meal plans according to their preferences, health goals, and dietary needs. Apps make exercising more fun and regular by providing reminders, culinary ideas, and nutritious home-cooked meals. Applications can also be used to offer regular mental health assessments, mood tracking, and tailored wellness counsel. There are platforms that provide services such as public visits, virtual therapy, and meditation as ways to reduce stress and support mental health. These platforms also provide nutrition and meditation workshops in a friendly setting, fusing technology, education, and community service. A strategy is a thorough plan created by a person or organization to accomplish long-term objectives while maximizing options, actions, and assets for a competitive edge, (Grant & Jordan, 2022). Healthy lifestyle strategies are essential for the quality of life which will enhance family survival.

Afolabi (2019) investigates how Oyo State couples' choices for healthy lifestyles are influenced by socioeconomic circumstances. The study emphasizes the necessity of treatments that offer customized behavior modification tactics and consider the socioeconomic circumstances of couples. Olaoye (2017) highlighted how health education might encourage couples to adopt healthier lifestyles. According to Olaoye (2017), giving couples useful and pertinent health information might enable them to make better decisions and take up healthier habits. Adekunle (2019) investigates how couples see

dietary consumption and how it affects health. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to educate couples that good nutrition can repel common diseases. Social support from friends, family, coworkers, and one's own religious beliefs can lessen the strain of difficult work and daily life (Sahmicit, 2024). These support help couples deal with challenging days and challenges by helping with childcare, meal preparation, and flexibility. Oyekola (2018) looked at how couple-based physical activity treatments affect health outcomes. Participating in physical activities together as a couple may boost motivation, responsibility and general health outcomes. Adebayo (2017) explored how parenting obligations hinder moderate-to-vigorous physical exercise, leading to inactive habits like sitting and lying down, lasting into middle age.

Awodele (2021) showed how cultural influences influence Nigerian couples' health choices, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive treatments and the significance of cultural norms and beliefs. Salvo, Garcia, Reis, Stankov, Goel, Schipperijn, Hallal, Ding and Pratt (2021) advocate for a synergistic strategy that uses physical activity promotion as a lever for a better planet and involves numerous sectors beyond health. Adegbola (2021) focused on community-based strategies aimed at encouraging couples in Oyo State to live healthier lives. Exercise and mindfulness-based interventions are beneficial for enhancing mental health and wellness, potentially even more so than either strategy alone (Remskar, Western, Osborne, Maynard & Ainsworth, 2024). This study intends to propose strategies couples in Oyo State can adopt to have healthy lifestyle in areas of feeding, physical well-being and mental health.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

For couples to keep their relationship strong, health is essential. While regular exercise encourages fitness and longevity, proper nutrition guarantees physical vitality and immune power. Illness, exhaustion, and a lower quality of life can result from neglecting these. Relationship dynamics can be adversely affected by poor mental health, which can lead to stress, communication breakdowns, and emotional distance. Unhealthy lifestyle practices include poor diet, drug abuse and infidelity is growing among couples and families in Oyo State, Nigeria. The report of a study carried out among couples in Oyo state in 2024 revealed that couples' declining health in Oyo State has been linked to a number of issues, including increased stress brought on by difficult economic times and limited access to healthcare, particularly in rural regions, (Cadmus, Adebuseye & Owoaje, 2022). Contributing variables include unhealthy eating patterns, insufficient physical activity, a lack of mental health support and healthcare inequalities between urban and rural locations (Balogun, Adeladan & Adeyemo, 2024).

Mental health alone is a serious health challenge and there are recorded cases of suicidal ideation, psychosis, and mental disorders on the increase. This has necessitated this study to investigate into the relevant strategies that can alleviate these problems.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this research is to promote healthy lifestyle among couples for sustainable family survival in Oyo State. The specific purpose are to:

- (a) Know the feeding related strategies among couples in Oyo State
- (b) Know the related strategies for physical wellbeing among couples in Oyo State
- (c) Know the related strategies for mental health among couples in Oyo State

1.3 Research Questions

- (a) What is the feeding related strategies among couples in Oyo State?
- (b) What are the related strategies for physical wellbeing among couples in Oyo State?
- (c) What are the related strategies for mental health among couples in Oyo State?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Design for the Study

A descriptive survey research design was used to gather data from the population. It is the best method because it facilitates the collection of general data from large population which was suitable in studies on feeding, physical wellbeing, and mental health strategies. This approach offers insights into contemporary behaviours, attitudes, and results, which makes it appropriate for seeing patterns and connections and guiding interventions in areas including feeding, physical wellbeing and mental health.

2.1.1. Ethics Statement

Before distributing the questionnaire, this study received consent from the participants. The goal of the study, the methods used to collect data, and its advantages were all explained in detail to the participants. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their data and the transparent presentation of findings to encourage harm-free healthy living practices.

2.2 Area of the study

The area of study was Oyo State with 33 Local Government Areas. Oyo State is divided into three senatorial districts namely, Oyo South, Oyo North and Oyo Central. The study is pertinent to the population of Oyo State, Nigeria, because of the rising rates of bad lifestyle choices among couples and families, such as drug addiction, smoking, alcoholism, poor diet, cybercrime, and infidelity. These actions lead to social instability, damaged relationships, and declining mental and physical health. It is essential to understand and address the increasing health and social challenges in the area by looking into this population because it helps address the underlying causes of these problems and offers focused interventions that may enhance proper nutrition, lower mental health risks, and enhance physical wellbeing.

2.3 Population for the study

The population for this study was made up of the entire 1,086, 543 couples in Oyo State (National Population Commission, 2006). The respondents were public servants, civil servants, traders and

artisans that live in both urban and rural areas of Oyo State.

2.4 Sample and sampling techniques

The sample for the study was 817 married respondents. Multistage sampling techniques was used in obtaining a representative sample of the couples in the three senatorial zones in the state which include Oyo South, Oyo North and Oyo Central. Simple random sampling was used to select four Local Government Areas (LGAs) in each of the three zones making 12 LGAs for the research. Thirdly, from each of the selected 12 LGAs, purposive random sampling was used to select two communities (one rural and one urban) making 24 communities for the study (12 rural and 12 urban communities).

2.5 Instrument for Data Collection

Two sets of instruments were used for data collection for the study. These include Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Structured Questionnaires titled Strategies for Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Questionnaire (SPHLQ). Opened-ended questions were created for the Focus Group Discussion with 30 discussants, 10 from each of the 3 senatorial districts in Oyo State while a closed-ended structured questions were created and were administered to both literate and illiterate spouses with the help of seven assistants. Out of the 840 copies of the questionnaire administered, 817 copies were completely filled and returned representing 97.3% return rate.

2.6 Data Analysis Technique

Chi-square and Anova were used for inferential statistics and Exploratory Data Analytic (EDA) and Python programming was used for visualization.

3. Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the feeding related strategies among couples in Oyo State?

Table 1: Feeding related strategies among couples in Oyo State

S/N	Items		Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Couples prefer self-prepared meal to fast food	Yes	601	73.60%
		Maybe	138	16.90%
		Never	78	9.50%
2	Couples consume fruits and vegetables	Always	218	26.70%
		Sometime	378	46.30%
		Often	143	17.50%
3	Couples are confident of consuming balanced/nutritional value	Never	78	9.50%
		Always	453	55.40%
		Sometime	227	27.80%
		Often	114	14.00%

	of food	Never	23	2.80%
		Always	344	42.10%
4	Couples' conscious of adequate drinking of water	Sometime	227	27.80%
		Often	223	27.30%
		Never	23	2.80%

Research Question 2: What are the related strategies for physical wellbeing among couples in Oyo State?

Table 2: Related strategies for physical wellbeing among couples in Oyo State

S/N	Strategy	Rank	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Rating of overall cleanliness and sanitation of living environment	Excellent	292	35.70%
		Good	365	44.70%
		Fair	98	12.00%
		Poor	62	7.60%
2	Adequate space for family needs	Excellent	198	24.20%
		Good	228	27.90%
		Fair	203	24.80%
		Poor	188	23.00%
3	Safety of home and security of family	Excellent	225	27.50%
		Good	212	25.90%
		Fair	177	21.70%
		Poor	203	24.80%
4	Cross ventilation/natural lighting of rooms at home	Excellent	355	43.50%
		Good	186	22.80%
		Fair	165	20.20%
		Poor	111	13.60%
5	Satisfaction with Noise level in the environment	Excellent	433	53.00%
		Good	177	21.70%
		Fair	165	20.20%
		Poor	42	5.10%
6	Deliberately engage in physical exercise	Always	122	14.90%
		Sometime	282	34.50%



Often	116	14.20%
Never	297	36.40%

Research Question 3: What are the related strategies for mental health among couples in Oyo State?

Table 3: Related strategies for mental health among couples in Oyo State

S/N	Strategy	Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Do you engage in mindfulness/ meditation?	Yes	489	59.90%
		Maybe	284	34.80%
		No	44	5.40%
2	How often do you seek professional help or counseling for managing mental health?	Always	122	14.90%
		Sometime	312	38.20%
		Often	317	38.80%
		Never	66	8.10%
3	Are you familiar with local support services available for mental health in your community?	Yes	177	21.70%
		Not Sure	238	29.10%
		No	402	49.20%
4	Do you engage in activities such as playing of indoor games that promote relaxation and reduce stress levels?	Yes	122	14.90%
		Maybe	284	34.80%
		No	411	50.30%
5	How do you rate your management of work-life balance to ensure better mental health?	Excellent	277	33.90%
		Good	305	37.30%
		Fair	156	19.10%
		Poor	79	9.70%

3.1 Discussion of Findings: Feeding Strategies

A list of feeding-related columns is specified, covering various aspects of dietary behaviours such as the consumption of fruits and vegetables, preferences for home-cooked meals, and awareness of nutritional values. In Table 1 above, 55.4% of the respondents are aware and confident of the nutritional value of the foods they consume on a regular basis and 2.8% of the respondents are not concerned about the nutritional value of their foods. while 1.1% of the respondents are never conscious of the nutritional value of the foods they consume on a regular basis. The result in Table 1 shows that 73.6% self-prepare their meals and are conscious of consuming meals that are prepared in hygienic way while 9.5% depends on fast foods. Some that are busy with office work or private businesses engage family

members or house-help that assist in preparation of meals that give nutritional value for healthy living. This corroborates the study of Sahmicit (2024), where family members assist commuter couples in house chores like child care and meal preparation. In Table 1, 42.1% always drink water regularly as against 2.8% that don't care about importance of regular intake of water. In addition, 26.7% take fruits or vegetables regularly as part of their food ingredients and 9.5% don't take fruits and vegetables as ingredients that can nourish their body.

3.2 Discussion of Findings: Physical Well-being Strategies

Factors such as overall cleanliness and sanitation of living environment, adequate space for family needs, safety of home and security of family, cross ventilation/natural lighting of rooms at home, satisfaction with noise level in the environment and deliberately engage in physical exercise are displayed in this result. From the results in table 2, 44.7% of the respondents admitted they live in a clean and habitable environment while 7.6% live in environments that pose threats to human lives. The 25% of the respondents on access to space for family needs and security of lives and properties show concerns which should be addressed. The result shows 43.5% of the respondents have excellent cross ventilation and natural lighting in their rooms against 13.6% who have poor ventilation. Also, 53% experience low noise pollution in their environment against 5.1% who are not comfortable with the level of noise in their environment. It is observed from the results that 29% of the respondents are always conscious of physical exercise and have excellent physical fitness. They deliberately designed and subjected to routines such as jogging, walking, sporting activities in promoting the United Nations sustainable development goals in (Salvo et al, 2021). Also, 14.9% respondents always take physical exercise seriously and have satisfactory report on their physical fitness. The results also show that 34.5.9% of the respondents always engage in physical exercise while 36.4% are not bothered about physical exercises. Some of the respondents gave reasons that the time for physical exercises would be devoted to go extra mile to fend for the family. Some identified their poor state of health could not afford them having a physical exercise.

3.3 Discussion of Findings: Mental Health Strategies

The relevant factors such as engaging in activities such as playing of indoor games that promote relaxation and reduce stress levels, familiarization with local support services available for mental health in the community, frequency of seeking professional help, practice of mindfulness or meditation and management of work-life balance to ensure better mental health. Table 3 shows that 59.9% of the respondents practice mindfulness or meditation to improve mental health, 34.8% are indifferent while 5.4% don't practice mindfulness or meditation. Additionally, 14.9% always seek professional help or counselling, 38.8% sometime seek help while 8.1% never consider professional intervention in managing their mental health. It is not far fetch as the table 3 shows that 21.7% are familiar with local mental health service providers in their communities, 29.1% are not sure and 49.2% claim ignorance of the mental health professionals or facilities in their communities. Relaxation as a strategy in managing mental health in table 3, only 14.9% engage in the act, 34.8% often do it, and 50.3% are not

interested in it all. Furthermore, table 3 shows that 71% are able to balance work-life and mental health excellently while 9.7% are unable to manage the challenge. This result shows the impact of mindfulness as a psychosocial factor that promoted healthy life style as opined in the work of (Balogun et al., 2024). In addition, Sahmicit (2024) emphasized the emotional support of family members to ease the burden on couples. Some of the respondents said they engage in physical exercise to take off their burdens to manage their mental health. This give credence to the work of (Remskar et al., 2024), they opined that combination of physical exercise and mindfulness show promise for psychological health.

4. Conclusion

The findings from the study concludes that promoting a healthy lifestyle among couples in Oyo State is supported by strong preferences for self-prepared while results for nutritious meals, fruits and vegetables and adequate water intake are below average. Sanitation or cleanliness of living environment I below average which pose a threat to physical and mental wellbeing. Furthermore, the below-average results from the findings on safety of home and living environment, adequate space for family needs, cross ventilation at homes, and physical exercises call for urgent intervention. To restore normalcy, governments at all levels and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to formulate and implement policies that improve healthy lifestyle. Less than 15% consciously play indoor games to improve their mental wellbeing. The findings also show that more than 60% are overwhelmed by their works and pressure to fend for daily living which impact their physical and mental wellbeing. Couples should be encouraged to eat balanced diets with fruits, vegetables and drink adequate water. Government and individuals should provide enough sporting facilities such as gyms, swimming pools among others to enhance physical well-being. Government and Non-Governmental organizations should collaborate to provide more mental health management facilities in the communities and citizens should be sensitized to access such facilities to enhance healthy lifestyle among couples in Oyo State.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: TAA

Formal Analysis: TOA, OOA, HOT

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Investigation: TAA, OOA, HOT

Methodology: TAA, OOA

Writing original draft, review and editing: TAA, OOA, HOT

The authors approved the final draft.

Data Availability Statement

The data generated for this research can be accessed in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

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