

# Knowledge and Attitude towards Healthy Eating Practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South East Local Government Area, Ibadan

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## ABSTRACT

Healthy eating is essential for optimal growth, development, and the prevention of chronic diseases in adolescents. It involves consuming a well-balanced diet that provides essential nutrients while limiting the intake of unhealthy foods. Nutrition related health challenges have become a public health concern in many nations of the world. It accounted for approximately 3.1 billion globally with 27 million in Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>1</sup>. In Nigeria, prevalence of malnutrition at various phases accounted for 7.0%, 5.5% and 1.5% respectively. There is need to stem the tide among the teeming population of young children. . Therefore, this study is set to investigate knowledge and attitude towards healthy eating practices among secondary school students in Ibadan South East Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo state.

Descriptive survey research of correlation type design was used. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 313 respondents; while questionnaire was used for data collection. The descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage (%), mean and standard deviation was used for the demographic data and research questions, while inferential statistics of Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the stated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that the knowledge (mean=1.73), attitude (mean=2.43) was positive, while personal hygiene practice was good (mean=2.48). all the hypotheses in this study were accepted. There was no significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan. ( $r=0.026$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender. ( $t=0.561$ ,  $df=311$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). there was no gender difference in attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender ( $t=-1.688$ ,  $df=311$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). it was thereby recommended that the Ministries of Health and Education in Oyo State should ensure that periodic medical outreach is organized for Senior Secondary School Students on knowledge of healthy eating practice, specifically in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area. This is to ensure that such students have better understanding of healthy eating practice.

**Keywords:** Knowledge and Attitude towards Healthy Eating Practices

## INTRODUCTION

Healthy eating is essential for optimal growth, development, and the prevention of chronic diseases in adolescents. It involves consuming a well-balanced diet that provides essential nutrients while limiting the intake of unhealthy foods. Globally, the number of people that could not afford healthy food increased to approximately 3.1 billion in 2022, of which a wholesome diet was out of reach for 27 million in Sub-Saharan Africa as recorded by W H O, (2024), and stressed that, Children in Low-middle income countries (LMI) and poorer households bear the burden of stunting, wasting and anemia. The increasing global rate of malnutrition and diet-related chronic diseases that are of public health concern necessitated the United Nation Food Systems Summit 2022 to emphasize the urgent need for an effective food system and diet transformation that

will promote better and equitable access to nutrition.( Clark, Coll-Seek, Banerjee , Peterson, Dalglish & Ameratunga ,2020).

The Nigerian National Nutrition Health Survey (NNNHS) 2018 revealed that global acute malnutrition, moderate malnutrition and severe acute malnutrition prevalence for Nigerian children under the age of 5 years were 7.0%, 5.5%, and 1.5% respectively and National Bureau of station (2024) confirmed it that Nigeria has the second highest acute malnutrition rate with an estimated 3.78 million children suffering from wasting.

Adolescence plays a crucial role in the formation of dietary habits, underscoring the significance of health education. This period is characterized by rapid physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development occurring between the ages 10 and 19 years. During this stage, individuals tend to establish habits and behaviours that can have a profound impact on their long-term health outcomes which is healthy eating. Salama & Esmael(2018), buttressed it that, Young people are some of the main users of the internet and they spend a large part of their free time on the social networking websites. They affirmed that, the information they receive on the social network is not always reliable and could be detrimental to their health. It is obvious that perhaps unhealthy eating habits adopted during adolescence may lead to long-term health consequences such as non-communicable diseases (Obesity, Cardiovascular problems).

Studies have indicated that the eating behaviours of most adolescents fall short of healthy dietary recommendations. According to Zhou (2021), the Consumption of excessive sugary beverages snacks as well as inadequate intake of nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables remains a substandard public health concern, and this can potentially account for the increasing prevalence of adolescent obesity which in turn elevates the risk of non-communicable diseases in adulthood.

There are associated factors with unhealthy eating habits among young people. Some of these habits are listed by Nomura, Itakur, Minamizono, Okayama, Suzuki & Takemi (2021) in their study , that intake of low caloric diet, skipping meals and imitation of celebrities on social media. Study revealed that secondary school students observe episodic diets which can contribute to the development of eating disorders. They cited example of celebrities who appear slim, with flawless skin and hair tend, to have negative effect and unrealistic self-assessment among students. Girls more often follow this type of unhealthy diets such as reduced caloric intake, deprivation of one to several meals a day, in order to maintain a beauty bench mark while emasculative and sports figure are acceptable for boys.

Interestingly, male and female differ in their eating habits. As a result, there is gender influence on eating practice among students across various groups. In a cross-sectional study conducted among undergraduates of Business Administration in Kathmandu, Nepal, by Dahal, Basnet, Khanal, Baral & Dhakal (2021) revealed a gender difference in food choice between male and female students. It was established male students are more likely to eat fast food, whereas they are less likely to have breakfast and prepare their own food compared to female students. Moreover, Alkazemi (2019) affirmed it that, female students consume adequate quantities of fruits, vegetables, and milk substance compared to male students.

The fact remains that, food plays a key role in people's health, and achieving a healthy diet requires the internalization and implementation of daily healthy eating habits. The dietary practices of adolescents will carry over into later life, playing a long-term role in dietary practices and food consumption. Therefore, this study investigated the knowledge, attitude and healthy eating practices among secondary school students in Ibadan South East Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State.

## Research Questions

1. What is the knowledge level of healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan?
2. What is the attitude towards healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan?

## Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>.** There will be no significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan.

**H<sub>02</sub>.** There will be no significant difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender.

**H<sub>03</sub>.** There will be no significant difference in attitude of healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design of correlation type. The population for the study comprises all senior secondary school students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Oyo State. The sample for the study consists of 313 respondents. Respondents were selected using a multistage sampling technique. A self-developed and validated questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection in the study. This instrument was a closed ended format. The questionnaire was made up of four (4) sections, namely; sections A: Socio-Demographic Information, section B: Knowledge of Healthy Eating Practices Scale (KTHEPS), Section C: Attitude towards Healthy Eating Practices Scale (ATHEPS) and Section D: Healthy Eating Practices Scale (HEPS). To enhance the validity of the research instrument for this study, the researchers and other experts in the Department of Kinesiology, Sports Science and Health Education, scrutinized the questionnaire and their comments were used to modify the instrument. A pilot study was conducted using two schools that was not part of the selected schools in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Oyo State but shows the same characteristics for the purpose of establishing the reliability of the instrument. A Cronbach alpha reliability test was employed in order to estimate the reliability coefficient of the instrument for the pilot study, and it yielded 0.79. Questionnaire was administered by the researchers to all selected senior secondary school students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Oyo State. The completed questionnaire was retrieved immediately. The completed questionnaires were collected, coded and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage (%), mean and standard deviation was used for the demographic data and research questions, while inferential statistics of Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the stated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 1: Shows the five (5) schools and number of students from SSS 1 to SSS 2 classes.**

| S/N | Name of Schools                                    | SSS 1      | 20%        | SSS 2      | 20%        |
|-----|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1.  | St. David School 1                                 | 116        | 23         | 143        | 28         |
| 2.  | Community Grammar School Kudeti                    | 145        | 29         | 125        | 25         |
| 3.  | Ibadan Grammar School 3, off yejide avenue, Ibadan | 192        | 38         | 144        | 28         |
| 4.  | Anglican Grammar School, Molete, Ibadan.           | 195        | 39         | 267        | 53         |
| 5.  | St. Lukes College School, Molete                   | 143        | 27         | 117        | 23         |
|     | <b>Grand Total</b>                                 | <b>791</b> | <b>156</b> | <b>796</b> | <b>157</b> |

**Source:** Ibadan South-East Primary Education Board, 2024

## RESULTS

### Demographic Data Analysis

**Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender**

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Male   | 172       | 55.0    |
| Female | 141       | 45.0    |
| Total  | 313       | 100.0   |

Table 2, reveals that 172 (55.0%) respondents were male, while 141 (45.0%) were female. This means that, most of the respondents were male.

**Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Age**

| Age         | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| 13-15 years | 184       | 58.8    |
| 16-18 years | 127       | 40.6    |
| 19-21 years | 2         | 0.6     |
| Total       | 313       | 100.0   |

Table 3, reveals that 184 (58.8.0%) respondents were in the age range of 13-15 years, 127 (40.6%) were between 16-18 years, while 2 (0.6%) were in the age range of 19-21 years. This means that, most of the respondents were in the age range of 13-15 years.

**Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents by Religion**

| Religion     | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|
| Christianity | 158       | 50.5    |
| Islam        | 155       | 49.5    |
| Total        | 313       | 100.0   |

Table 4, reveals that 158 (50.5%) respondents were Christians, while 155 (49.5%) were Muslims.

**Table 5: Distribution of the Respondents by School**

| School                          | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| St. David School 1              | 102       | 32.6    |
| Community Grammar School Kudeti | 11        | 3.5     |
| Ibadan Grammar School 3         | 53        | 16.9    |
| Anglican Grammar School         | 147       | 47.0    |
| Total                           | 313       | 100.0   |

Table 5, reveals that 102 (32.6%) respondents were from St. David School 1, 11 (3.5%) were from Community Grammar School, Kudeti, 53 (16.9%) were from Ibadan Grammar School 3, while 147 (47.0%) were from Anglican Grammar School. This means that most of the respondents were from Anglican Grammar School.

**Research Question 1:** What is the knowledge level of healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan?

**Table 6: Summary of Result on Knowledge of Healthy Eating**

| S/n | Statement  | Yes            | I don't Know  | No             | Mean               | Stand. Dev. |
|-----|--|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1   | Whole grains like millet and rice supply fiber that prevent constipation           | 76<br>(24.3%)  | 56<br>(17.9%) | 181<br>(57.8%) | 1.66               | 0.84        |
| 2   | Proteins in excess of the bodily needs are stored in the body                      | 42<br>(13.4%)  | 70<br>(22.4%) | 201<br>(64.2%) | 1.49               | 0.72        |
| 3   | Serving of red meat, fish, egg is required every day to supply protein in the body | 41<br>(13.1%)  | 52<br>(16.6%) | 220<br>(70.3%) | 1.43               | 0.71        |
| 4   | Vitamins and minerals can provide energy   | 151<br>(48.2%) | 83<br>(26.5%) | 79<br>(25.2%)  | 2.23               | 0.83        |
| 5   | Eating fruits before meals can help to reduce weight                               | 80<br>(25.6%)  | 65<br>(20.8%) | 168<br>(53.7%) | 1.72               | 0.85        |
| 6   | Vegetables are an important dietary source of vitamins.                            | 57<br>(18.2%)  | 40<br>(12.8%) | 216<br>(69.0%) | 1.49               | 0.78        |
| 7   | Much salt is needed to supply mineral salt to the body                             | 121<br>(38.7%) | 95<br>(30.4%) | 97<br>(31.0%)  | 2.08               | 0.83        |
| 8   | I am aware of health risks associated with poor eating habits                      | 71<br>(22.7%)  | 86<br>(27.5%) | 156<br>(49.8%) | 1.73               | 0.81        |
|     |  |                |               |                | Weighted mean=1.73 |             |

**Decision Rule:** <0.49=Low; 1.50–1.99=Moderate; 2.00-2.50= High; 2.51–3.0=Very High,

Table 6: reveals that 76 (24.3%) respondents affirmed that whole grains like millet and rice supply fiber can prevent constipation, 56 (17.9%) were neutral on it, while 181 (57.8%) disagreed. In addition, 42 (13.4%) respondents established that proteins in excess of the bodily needs are stored in the body, 70 (22.4%) were neutral on it, while 201 (64.2%) disagreed. Furthermore, 41 (13.1%) respondents admitted that serving of red meat, fish, egg is required every day to supply protein in the body, 52 (16.6%) were neutral on it, while 220 (70.3%) disagreed. Besides, 151 (48.2%) respondents disclosed that vitamins and minerals can provide energy, 83 (26.5%) were neutral on it, while 79 (25.2%) disagreed. Moreover, 80 (25.6%) respondents revealed that eating fruits before meals can help to reduce weight, 65 (20.8%) were neutral on it, while 168 (53.7%) disagreed. Additionally, 57 (18.2%) respondents revealed that vegetables is an important dietary source of vitamins, 40 (12.8%) were neutral on it, while 216 (69.0%) disagreed. Furthermore, 121 (38.7%) respondents revealed that much salt is needed to supply mineral salt to the body, 95 (30.4%) were neutral on it, while 97 (31.0%) disagreed. Furthermore, 71 (22.7%) respondents revealed that they were aware of health risks associated with poor eating habits, 86 (27.5%) were neutral on it, while 156 (49.8%) disagreed. Table 4.6 further revealed that the weighted mean was 1.73 which indicated that the score was moderate based on the decision rule. This means that the level of knowledge of healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan was moderate.

**Research Question 2:** What is the attitude towards healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan?



**Table 7: Summary of Result on Attitude towards Healthy Eating**

| S/n | Statement  | SA             | A             | D              | SD             | Mean               | Stand. Dev. |
|-----|--|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1.  | I prefer eating fried foods because of taste and colour      | 78<br>(24.9%)  | 66<br>(21.1%) | 163<br>(52.1%) | 6<br>(1.9%)    | 2.13               | 0.87        |
| 2.  | Most healthy foods do not taste well                         | 61<br>(19.5%)  | 62<br>(19.8%) | 100<br>(31.9%) | 90<br>(28.8%)  | 2.70               | 1.09        |
| 3.  | I believe fruits cannot satisfy my hunger                    | 92<br>(29.4%)  | 64<br>(20.4%) | 108<br>(34.5%) | 49<br>(15.7%)  | 2.36               | 1.07        |
| 4.  | I prefer taking soft drinks to water                         | 58<br>(18.5%)  | 76<br>(24.3%) | 73<br>(23.3%)  | 106<br>(33.9%) | 2.73               | 1.12        |
| 5.  | I prefer eating grains to fruits                             | 66<br>(21.1%)  | 46<br>(14.7%) | 113<br>(36.1%) | 88<br>(28.1%)  | 2.71               | 1.09        |
| 6.  | I prefer eating fast foods because they are healthy foods    | 98<br>(31.3%)  | 69<br>(22.0%) | 99<br>(31.6%)  | 47<br>(15.0%)  | 2.30               | 1.07        |
| 7.  | I prefer taking snacks to school every day to prevent hunger | 106<br>(33.9%) | 76<br>(24.3%) | 68<br>(21.7%)  | 63<br>(20.1%)  | 2.28               | 1.13        |
| 8.  | I prefer to eat anything that comes way to fill my tummy     | 90<br>(28.8%)  | 73<br>(23.3%) | 91<br>(29.1%)  | 59<br>(18.8%)  | 2.38               | 1.09        |
|     |  |                |               |                |                | Weighted mean=2.43 |             |

**Decision Rule:** Highly positive=4.00-3.00, Positive=2.99-2.00, Negative=1.99-0.99, Highly negative= 0.01-0.00.

Table 7, reveals that 78 (24.9%) respondents strongly agreed that they preferred eating fried foods because of taste and color, 66 (21.1%) agreed, 163 (52.1%) disagreed, while 6 (1.9%) strongly disagreed. In addition, 61 (19.5%) respondents strongly agreed that most healthy foods do not taste well, 62 (19.8%) agreed, 100 (31.9%) disagreed, while 90 (28.8%) strongly disagreed. Moreover, 92 (29.4%) respondents strongly agreed that they believed fruits cannot satisfy their hunger, 64 (20.4%) agreed, 108 (34.5%) disagreed, while 49 (15.7%) strongly disagreed. Besides, 58 (18.5%) respondents strongly agreed that they preferred taking soft drinks to water, 76 (24.3%) agreed, 73 (23.3%) disagreed, while 106 (33.9%) strongly disagreed.

Similarly, 66 (21.1%) respondents strongly agreed that they preferred eating grains to fruits, 46 (14.7%) agreed, 113 (36.1%) disagreed, while 88 (28.1%) strongly disagreed. Likewise, 98 (31.3%) respondents strongly agreed that they preferred eating fast foods because they are healthy foods, 69 (22.0%) agreed, 99 (31.6%) disagreed, while 47 (15.0%) strongly disagreed. Additionally, 106 (33.9%) respondents strongly agreed that they preferred taking snacks to school every day to prevent hunger, 76 (24.3%) agreed, 68 (21.7%) disagreed, while 63 (20.1%) strongly disagreed. In addition, 90 (28.8%) respondents strongly agreed that they preferred to eat anything that comes way to fill my tummy, 73 (23.3%) agreed, 91 (29.1%) disagreed, while 59 (18.8%) strongly disagreed. Table 4.7 further revealed that the weighted mean was 2.43 which indicated that the score was positive based on the decision rule. This means that there was a positive attitude towards healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan.

## Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There will be no significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan.

**Table 8: Summary of Result on Relationship between Knowledge and Attitude towards Healthy Eating Practices**

| Variables                                 | Mean  | Std. Dev. | Knowledge of healthy eating practices | Attitude towards healthy eating practices | N   | Sig. (p value) | Remark          |
|---|-------|-----------|---------------------------------------|---|-----|----------------|-----------------|
| Knowledge of healthy eating practices     | 13.83 | 2.81      | 1                                     | 0.026                                     | 313 | 0.647          | Not Significant |
| Attitude towards healthy eating practices | 19.78 | 4.22      | 0.026                                 | 1   |     |                |                 |

Correlation is Significant at 0.05 alpha level ( $p < 0.05$ )

Table 8, shows that knowledge was not tested significant on attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan ( $r = 0.026$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. It was further established that the correlation coefficient's magnitude was weak. The implication of this study is that the knowledge of the respondents about healthy eating practices did not significant influence on attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area. It shows that the knowledge of the respondents could not influence their attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There will be no significant difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender.

**Table 9: t-test Analysis on Gender Difference in Knowledge of Healthy Eating Practices**

|                                       | Gender | N   | Mean  | Std. Dev. | df  | t-test value | Sig. (p value) | Remark          |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|-----------|-----|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Knowledge of Healthy Eating Practices | Male   | 172 | 13.75 | 2.87      | 311 | -0.561       | 0.575          | Not Significant |
|                                       | Female | 141 | 13.93 | 2.74      |     |              |                |                 |

Table 9, reveals that there was no gender difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender ( $t = 0.561$ ,  $df = 311$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This means that there was no significant difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices between male and female Senior Secondary School Students in the study area. The null hypothesis was

therefore accepted. Table 4.9 further reveals that female Senior Secondary School Students had a greater mean of 13.93, while male had 13.75. It implies that, female Senior Secondary School Students had a better understanding of healthy eating practices than their male counterparts.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There will be no significant difference in attitude of healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender.

**Table 10: t-test Analysis on Gender Difference in Attitude towards Healthy Eating Practices**

|   | Gender | N   | Mean  | Std. Dev. | df  | t-test value | Sig. (p value) | Remark          |
|---|--------|-----|-------|-----------|-----|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Attitude towards Healthy Eating Practices | Male   | 172 | 19.41 | 3.86      | 311 | -1.688       | 0.092          | Not Significant |
|   | Female | 141 | 20.22 | 4.60      |     |              |                |                 |

Table 10, reveals that there was no gender difference in attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender ( $t=-1.688$ ,  $df=311$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). This means that there was no significant difference in attitude towards healthy eating practices between male and female Senior Secondary School Students in the study area. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. Table 4.10 further reveals that female Senior Secondary School Students had a greater mean of 20.22, while male had 19.41. It implies that, female Senior Secondary School Students had a better attitude towards healthy eating practices than their male counterparts.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study on socio-demographic characteristics revealed that, most of the respondents were male, while majority were in the age range of 13-15 years. Similarly, most of the respondents were Christians. Furthermore, most of the respondents were from Anglican Grammar School, while majority were in SS 2. The finding on knowledge revealed that the level of knowledge of healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan was moderate. This was established through the weighted mean that which indicated that the score was moderate based on the decision rule. This was further affirmed through the responses of some of the respondents which revealed that whole grains like millet and rice supply fiber can prevent constipation. In addition, few respondents established that proteins in excess of the bodily needs are stored in the body. Furthermore, few respondents admitted that serving of red meat, fish, egg is required every day to supply protein in the body. Besides, significant number of respondents disclosed that vitamins and minerals can provide energy. Moreover, a few respondents revealed that eating fruits before meals can help to reduce weight. Additionally, few respondents revealed that vegetables are an important dietary source of vitamins. Furthermore, some respondents revealed that much salt is needed to supply mineral salt to the body. Furthermore, some respondents revealed that they were aware of health risks associated with poor eating habits.

In relation to attitude, there was a positive attitude towards healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan. This was further established through weighted mean of 2.43 which indicated that the score was positive based on the decision rule. This was further established through the responses which revealed some respondents strongly agreed that they preferred eating fried foods because of taste and colour. In addition, some respondents strongly agreed that most healthy foods do not taste well. Moreover, some respondents strongly agreed that they believed fruits cannot satisfy their hunger. Besides, some respondents strongly agreed that they preferred taking soft drinks to water. Similarly, a



considerable number of respondents agreed that they preferred eating grains to fruits. Likewise, most respondents agreed that they preferred eating fast foods because they are healthy foods. Additionally, majority of the respondents agreed that they preferred taking snacks to school every day to prevent hunger. Moreover, most respondents agreed that they preferred to eat anything that comes way to fill my tummy.

The finding on relationship between knowledge and attitude towards healthy eating practices showed that knowledge was not tested significant on attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan. It was further established that the correlation coefficient's magnitude was weak. The implication of this study is that the knowledge of the respondents about healthy eating practices did not significant influence on attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area. It showed that the knowledge of the respondents could not influence their attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area.

The finding of this study on gender difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices revealed that there was no gender difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender. This means that there was no significant difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices between male and female Senior Secondary School Students in the study area. It was further revealed that female Senior Secondary School Students had a greater mean than male. It implied that, female Senior Secondary School Students had a better understanding of healthy eating practices than their male counterparts.

The finding of this study on gender difference in attitude of healthy eating practices revealed that there was no gender difference in attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan based on gender. This means that there was no significant difference in attitude towards healthy eating practices between male and female Senior Secondary School Students in the study area. It was further revealed that female Senior Secondary School Students had a greater mean than male had. It implied that, female Senior Secondary School Students had a better attitude towards healthy eating practices than their male counterparts.

## **CONCLUSION**

It was concluded in this study that the level of knowledge of healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan was moderate. There was a positive attitude towards healthy eating practice among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan. There was no significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards healthy eating practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area, Ibadan. This means that there was no significant difference in knowledge of healthy eating practices between male and female Senior Secondary School Students in the study area. There was no significant difference in attitude towards healthy eating practices between male and female Senior Secondary School Students in the study area.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ministries of Health and Education in Oyo State should ensure that periodic medical outreach is organized for Senior Secondary School Students on knowledge of healthy eating practice, specifically in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area. This is to ensure that such students have better understanding of healthy eating practice.
2. The Department of Health in Ibadan South-East Local Government Area of Oyo State should intensify efforts to organize sensitization programme for Senior Secondary School Students on.

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