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KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF PHYSICAL EXERCISES AMONG AWKA NORTH L.G.A WORKERS OF ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this paper is to find out whether workers of Awka North L.G.A have ever been engaging in physical exercises for maintenance of good health. The researcher however, used Awka North as an analytical base to find out the types of physical exercises engaged by the workers, the awareness of the beneficial effects and barriers to these physical exercises. Descriptive survey research design was employed while 400 workers form the sample of the study. A 22 item structured and validated questions built on 4 point likert rating scale was used in gathering data. Mean and t-test were used to analyze the data at 0.05 level of significance. It was discovered that workers knowledge of types of various physical exercises, the accrued benefits and barriers to physical exercises had mean values above 2.50 except participation which had below 2.50 mean values. It was further discovered that gender did not significantly differ in the areas of exercise types, beneficial effects, and barriers in participating and engaging actually in any physical exercise. The researcher therefore recommended that the state and local governments should organize physical exercise by making user of physical education leaders for workers all over the state.

Keywords: *Workers, physical exercises, health*

INTRODUCTION

Physical exercises are very important for all peoples across the globe. At least, it enhances the person's capacity to enjoy life by helping the individual to manage coronary heart diseases, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, arthritis, lung diseases, and arteriosclerosis and improve longer life expectance.(Marrow, Fall and Kohl, 1994) (Colditz, 1999). It is very unfortunate to state that Nigerian Government has no plans of promoting the health of workers through vigorous physical activities. It was in 1983/1985 during the army regime of Buhari and Idiagbon that little efforts were made in promoting the health of Nigerian workers through every Friday jogging exercises. But everything was swept under the carpet immediately they were ousted in a palace coup organized by a military Junter, Badamosi Babangida in 1985. Every subsequent administration in Nigeria has never taken health promotion of workers through physical exercises seriously. In some industries and private sectors life shell petroleum Mandilas and other oil companies, efforts are made to promote the health of workers by mandating them to enroll in some recreation clubs, and others build sports facilities to enable their workers participate in some forms of physical exercises, rather than concentrating more on job demands with little or no attention to physical activities, hence awareness of the benefits of regular exercises is not completely lacking. Murray (2000) posited that industries, hospitals and other work settings have started adding health promotion programmes for their employees, which generally includes exercises, nutrition, weight reduction etc. The living pattern of working class Nigerian citizens in most cases is devoid of exercises habit is not

formed earlier enough; the practice becomes difficult at adult age (Okuneye 2006). As these workers are growing older coupled with inactive living, degenerative productivity. It is speculated that only few workers who have the knowledge of importance of physical exercises engage in active recreation. It is required that provision should be made to those individuals who do not form habit of engaging in physical fitness activities earlier in life. Suffice it to say that in developed world where recreation leisure time are effectively acknowledge, provision is made to equip the workers with the necessary skill for effective use of leisure time. In some European countries, time is being mapped out for workers to engage in activities of their interest at least, once a week. The developed worlds are more exercise conscious because they are aware that productivity of any organization improves when there is an improvement in health of their citizenry. That is why one time president of United State of American Association of Health Physical Education and Recreation took up the challenge and organized some physical fitness testing exercises which were published in Manuals (Bucher, 1975). These were tests of minimum muscular fitness which were further developed as basic means of measurement in the treatment of low back pain for American children. It is against this backdrop that this study apparently appraises the level of awareness, health benefits, impediments as well as the nature of physical activities engaged by Awka north L.G.A Workers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the workers levels of knowledge on various physical exercises?
2. Do they know the benefit accruable from participating in physical exercises?
3. What constitutes barriers in taking part in physical exercises?
4. What are natures of physical exercises engaged by the workers?

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference in the mean male and female level of knowledge of various physical exercises. There is no significant difference in the mean male and female workers knowledge on the benefits accruable form taking part in physical exercises. There is no significance difference in mean perception of male and female workers on the barriers of taking part in physical exercises. There is no significant difference in the mean perceptions of male and female workers on the nature of exercises engaged in.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The population of this study was drawn from various ministries within the Awka North cities of Anambra State. The subjects were all workers in adult age bracket. The subjects were randomly selected in their various squads during the workers day celebration in 1st May, 2011. Using cluster sampling technique, in all, 400 subjects were selected out of which 250 were males and 150 were females.

Instrument

A structure questionnaire was the instrument used for this study. This questionnaire was developed by the researcher and was given to other three colleagues for content validity. Their comments were however considered in the final draft. The items in the questionnaire focused on the knowledge level, health benefits, impediment and nature of physical exercises engaged by Awka North Workers of Anambra State. However, a reliability test result of r=0.85 (test and retest) was obtained on the questionnaire prior to its administration.

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Procedure

Selected subjects were visited at Ekwueme Square Arroma Junction (inside the parade ground) with copies of questionnaire. They were asked to respond to the questionnaire independently. The responses were retrieved immediately to ensure a hundred percent return rate. When they were tabulated, all were found usable.

Data Analysis

Mean and T-test were used for data analysis. Item with mean values of 2.50 and above were regarded as being positive while those values less than 2.50 were regarded as being negative. The rule is that 2.50 is the critical point upon which a factor may reject or accepted.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1. Male and female workers level of knowledge on the various physical exercises, N 400

S.No	*Items*	*Male*		*female*	
		$\overline{X}$	σ	$\overline{X}$	σ
1.	I am aware about various physical exercises.	2.76	0.96	3.66	0.83
2.	I have a lot of information about physical exercise.	3.70	0.97	3.54	1.04
3.	I am aware of the benefits of physical exercise.	3.88	0.33	3.80	1.20
4.	I am conscious of the needs for physical exercise.	3.66	0.78	3.41	0.60
	Total	*3.50*	*0.68*	*3.60*	*0.91*

From the analysis in table 1, it could be seen that all items on both male and female have mean values above 2.50. These variables have a total mean score of 3.50 and standard deviation of 0.68 for male while that of female had a total mean score of 3.60 and standard deviation of 0.91. This implies that the workers are aware of various physical exercises.

Hypothesis 1

Table 2. The t-test summary examination the male and female workers level of knowledge on the awareness of various physical exercises

Respondent	*No*	$\overline{X}$	σ	*df*	*t-Cal*	*t-Crit*	*Decision*
Male	250	3.50	0.68	6	0.43	2.44	Ho_1 Accepted
Female	150	3.60	0.91				

P>0.05

From table 2 above, it could be deducted that the probability of difference being due to error is greater than 0.05. Also at 0.05 level of significance the calculated t-value is 0.43, which is less than the critical value of 2.44. It is therefore logical to conclude that the male and female workers do not significantly differ in their knowledge of awareness on various physical exercises.

S.No	Items	Male		Female	
		$\overline{X}$	σ	$\overline{X}$	σ
1.	Physical exercise prevents and reduces over weight.	3.74	0.61	3.63	0.94
2.	Physical exercises delay the onset of degenerative diseases.	3.58	3.85	3.68	0.88
3.	Physical exercises reduce strain, stress, tensions and anxieties.	3.91	0.37	3.61	1.32
4.	Physical exercises generally improve individual's health	3.87	0.41	3.60	0.75
	Total	*3.77*	*0.56*	*3.63*	*0.97*

N = 400

From the analysis in table 3, it could be seen that all items on both male and female have mean values above 2.50. These variables have a total mean score of 3.97 and standard deviation of 0.56 for male while that of female had a total mean score of 3.63 and standard deviation of 0.97. This implies that, the workers awareness of the benefits accruable from participating in physical exercises did not significantly differ.

Hypothesis 2

Table 4. The t-test summary examining the workers knowledge of the benefits accruable from taking part in physical exercises

Respondent	*No*	$\overline{X}$	σ	*df*	*t-Cal*	*t-Crit*	*Decision*
Male	250	3.77	0.56	6	0.33	2.44	Ho_1 Accepted
Female	150	3.63	0.97				

P>0.05

From the table 4 above, it could be deduced that the probability of difference being due to error is greater than 0.05. Also at0.05 level of significance the calculated t-value is 0.33, which is less than the critical value of 2.44. It is however logical to conclude that the male and female workers do no significantly differ in their knowledge of benefits accruable from taking part in physical exercises.

Table 5. Male and female mean perception of the barriers of participating in physical exercises, N = 400

S.No	Items	Male		Female	
		$\overline{X}$	σ	$\overline{X}$	σ
1.	I have poor attitude in participating in physical activities	3.71	0.38	3.73	0.58
2.	I think about work always without consideration to physical exercises	3.76	0.59	3.83	0.48
3.	I have no time to engage in physical exercises	3.68	0.81	3.80	1.53
4.	The government has not made any provision for workers to engage in physical activities	3.92	0.28	3.93	0.10

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5	No provision is made for facilitates, equipment and supplies to motivate us to participate in physical activities	3.89	1.28	3.77	0.38
6	Very poor salary has made one to struggle for existence without remembering the essence of exercise	3.94	1.74	3.94	2.03
	Total	*3.81*	*0.81*	*3.83*	*0.84*

From table 5, it could be seen that all items on both male and female have mean value above 2.50. The variables have total mean scores of 3.81 and standard deviation of 0.84, for male, and female had the total mean score of 3.83 and standard deviation of 0.84. This implies that the workers male and female mean perception of the barriers of participation in physical exercises did not significantly differ.

Hypothesis 3

Table 6. t-test summary on male and female workers mean perception of the barriers participating in physical exercise

Respondents	*No*	$\overline{X}$	σ	*df*	*t-Cal*	*t-Crit*	*Decision*
Male	250	3.81	0.84				
					0.28	2.22	Ho_3 Accepted
Female	150	3.83	0.84	10			

P>0.05

From table 6, it could be deduced that, the probability of different being due to error is greater than 0.05. Therefore at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated t-value is 0.28, which is less than the critical value of 2.22. It is, thereby very logical to conclude that the male and female workers mean perception of the barriers of participating in physical exercises did not significantly differ.

Table 7. Male and female workers nature of the Physical exercises engaged in, N=400

S.No	*Items*	$\overline{X}$	σ	$\overline{X}$	σ
1.	Walking	3.84	0.77	3.62	0.87
2.	Jogging	1.31	1.33	0.96	0.68
3.	Play racket games, e.g Tennis, badminton, table tennis	1.26	1.48	1.62	0.96
4.	Cycling	1.13	0.34	1.06	0.50
5.	Aerobic Dance	1.05	0.24	1.24	0.79
6.	Swimming	1.04	0.20	1.04	0.24
7.	Working out on machine at fitness club	1.01	0.42	1.26	0.70
8.	Playing ball games B/ball and other	1.62	0.55	1.67	0.51
	Total	*1.53*	*0.66*	*1.55*	*0.65*

From the above table, it could be seen that all items on both male and female have mean values below 2.50. The variables have total mean score of 1.53 and standard deviation of0.65. This implies that the workers have never taken exercise very seriously.

Hypothesis 4

Table 8. t-test summary on the physical exercises taken by the male and female workers

Respondents	*No*	$\overline{X}$	σ	*df*	*t-Cal*	*t-Crit*	*Decision*
Male	250	1.53	0.66	14	0.13	2.145	Ho_4 Accepted
Female	150	1.55	0.65				

P>0.05

From the above table at 0.05 level of significance the calculated t-value is 0.13, this is less than the critical value of 2.145. It is therefore logical to conclude that the male and female workers do not significantly differ in the nature of physical exercises engaged in.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study on the awareness of physical exercises are not far from expectations because workers are aware of various types of physical exercises. What might facilitate this awareness is information flow in the media and availability of many sports clubs, recreation centers, playground and popularity of physical exercises, particularly of Aroma junction in Anambra State capital where few workers converge every Saturday for little physical exercises. Hence, similar finding of high level of awareness were reported by Okuneye (1996), Moore (1997) stating that there was continuous improvement in society awareness on physical exercises. Similar on the level of awareness, the study reveals that the workers have good knowledge of the benefit of engaging in physical exercises. The respondents were unanimous in confirming this. They, however, unanimously agreed that taking part in physical exercises generally improved individuals health, which is never wasteful. Okuneye (2002) however reported similar findings. Young and Dinan (1998) acknowledged the benefits of physical exercises which are so numerous particularly for adults and even the ageing. However, at one time or the other individuals would have encountered some of their job. The findings of the study also showed that, there were some constraints in workers participations in physical exercises irrespective of high level of knowledge and benefit accruable from exercises. The findings showed that there were problems of poor attitude and workers thought more of their benefits. Inadequate time, equipment facilities and sports supplies, non-challant attitude of the Government in investing on physical exercises for workers, coupled with very poor salaries and allowance constituted some hindrances. It was even observed that, it was difficult to persuade workers to engage in regular physical exercises even when there was a necessity for it; hence, it has never been part of them. It was in 1983 during Buhari and Idiagbon regime that little efforts were made to map out a-Friday for physical exercisers for Nigerian workers. This happened about 26 years ago. Okuneye (2006) opined that good habit on regular physical exercises needed to be formed early in life so that it wouldn't be a problem during adult age. Gutzwiller, Martin and Lehmann (1987) stated that it was very unfortunate to point out that as long as the body is working, people do not feel it necessary to take part in physical exercises. The finding in table 7 showed that various forms of physical activities abound for workers for purposes of health maintenance. But unfortunately this study discovered that irrespective of the benefit accruable from physical exercises workers shied away from them. It is only walking that they

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found interest in but very unfortunately, this walking is done unconsciously and not taken seriously because there is no deliberate attempt to walk at a particular time for a period of time in a day. Bonfigilo (1994) prescribed walking at about 2 kilometer per hour for 40-60 minutes a day, for 4 days a week, for most healthy individuals. Even if majority of worker never involved themselves in other activities they should have engaged themselves in walking and jogging. Okuneye (2006) found walking and jogging very preferable physical activities for Adults. He stated that the activities have to be carried in a manner that their impact on sustaining health would be felt hence, the principals of exercise dosage, which centre around intensity, duration and frequency must be followed.

CONCLUSION

The Awka North workers have poor habit of engaging in regular physical exercises. Most of these workers participate in exercise after their retirement. One can see them in some mini recreation and sports clubs, trying their hands on racket games without the knowledge that racket games are strenuous for their ages. Though poor salaries, lack of physical exercises for workers coupled with poor orientation of physical exercises compounded the workers problem. Such exercises that would help to improve movements at the joints are as follows:

a. Lower back stretch
b. Slight bend/stretching
c. Ham it up
d. Rock' n' roll
e. Sphinx
f. Pelvic Tilt
g. Prone Rocking
h. Alternate toe touch Supine Position
i. Jumping Jack.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher therefore commend that the state and local governments should organize physical exercise by making use of physical education leaders for workers in the state. A day should also be mapped for physical exercises in every local government area of the state for the entire workers and some exercises that would enhance such days in order to improve the movement at the joints include; lower back stretch, slight bend/stretching, ham it up, rock and roll, sphinx, pelvic tilt, prone rocking, alternated toe touch supine position, jumping jack, etc.

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