SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS & NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN 0-5 YEARS

By

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of socio-economic factors on nutritional status of children 0-5 years. To conduct the study, the researchers adopted Ex-post Facto research design. The population of this study consisted of all parents and children 2-5 years in Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. A sample size of 200 children was drawn from the population. This was obtained through systematic sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection were questionnaire and interview schedule duly validated by experts and were subjected to reliability tests suing test-retest method. The data collected were analysed and interpreted using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings of the study reveal that socio-economic factors influence nutritional status of children positively. From the result, it was concluded that significant influence on children's nutritional status. It was then recommended that all parents should endeavour to attend school beyond senior certificate level and secure a good source of income before making children. Government should constitute medical teams that will enhance provision of nutrition guides and should employ educator and counsellors that will give orientation to parents on how to give good nutrition to their children.

KEYWORDS: Socio-Economic Factors, Nutritional Status and Children 0-5 Years

INTRODUCTION

Feeding becomes the most needed and the most costly requirement for man. This is due to the fact that a lot of people lack the ability to feed themselves talkless of the other members of the family. The daily nutrient requirement in terms of protein, carbohydrates, fats and oils as well as vitamins, minerals and water cannot be satisfied due to a number of reasons. It is observed that the population growth especially in the area of better health care services continue to grow in a geometric proportion without the proportional balance in food production (Udoh, 2009). There is also high cost of living as one observes that the price of food items keep in inflating every day. In this circumstance the nutritional requirements cannot be essentially satisfied.

The most affected group are the children especially 0-5 years of age. This is because a child needs to be fed and nourished properly to meet his growth and development needs (Monday, 2012). In a situation whereby socio-economic set is negative, it affects the child

growth and development that lead to diseases and health problem such as: Vitamins A, B and D deficiency and calcium deficiency. A poor diet that lacks essential nutrients generally causes nutritional deficiencies (Daniel, 2005). Nutritional status is a measure of the health condition of children as affected primarily by the intake of food and utilization of nutrient (Cutler, 2011). He added that food is the only source of energy to the body and for proper growth and development of a child. For this to be achieved, Ebong (2012) noted that food must be served in the right quantity and quality and in varieties. WHO (2002) stated that for the realization of good nutritional status of children, there must be food security which has three dimensions' adequate availability of food supplies, assured access to sufficient food for all children and its proper utilization to provide a proper and balanced diet by parents.

Udoh (2009) suggested proper pattern of nutrition for children to overcome some health problems, source of these ways are:

- Giving babies only breast milk during the first 6 months
- Giving babies porridge enriched with energy –foods containing oil or fats as well as protein
- Adding fruit to at least one meal every day
- As the infant grows, the number of meals maybe increased at about 9 months of age, 4-5 meals may be served per day with breast feeding.
- Around 2 years of age, prepare balanced meals, use as many of the food types as are available. This will ensure a healthy nutritional status of the child as this stage is important for the development of cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of the child as nutrition plays a very important role in child development.

The socio-economic factors of parents influence the pattern of nutrition adopted by a household. These factors are influenced by education, occupation, income and interactions (Ekanem, 2010). According to Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention CDCP (2005), these factors may increase a child's risk for malnutrition, weight gain and obesity, which contribute to the development of other chronic disease, including cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Many socio-economic factors that affect nutritional status of a child are" parental education background, parental social class, parental occupation, income and parental interaction. According to Udom (2008), children born from uneducated parents especially (mothers) suffer severe malnutrition problem, example underweight and other health problem, which many lead to mortality and impaired cognitive development. Also poor feeding, unsafe water and poor sanitation are the acts of uneducated parents.

Parental interaction is an important way in which parents and caregivers create a good cordial relationship between them (parent) and children. In a situation where a child is not allowed to make choice of food but he/she is given or forced to eat any available food even without good nutrients, there is no parental interaction but can lead to poor nutritional status

Parental income/occupation is another factor in promoting child health and nutrition. UNICEF (2002) emphasized that parental income has a significant with nutritional health of children. UNAID (2002) stated that parents with low income or insecure job provides less food to their children, the food sometimes may not contain necessary nutrients for children healthy survival, growth and development. Parental social class is another factor that affects children's nutrition positively and negatively. Parents who are extremely busy and engaged do not have time for their children in-terms of their food and health. Also, these children will

looked after by maids who may not know the right types of nutrients and correct amount of nutrient needed by the body. Saviour (2003) noted that low class parents never provides their children with foods that contain all the nutrients because that may not afford them. While high-class parents have so much money to provide for a child's kind and type of foods needed with the correct nutrients available as required by the body. Therefore, it is necessary to examine socio-economic factors and nutritional status of children (0-5) years; this will have implication for improving children's health in general.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Nutritional disorder or malnutrition in children 0-5 years has specific micronutrient deficiencies that cause disease, disabilities and death. WHO (2002) observed that nutritional deficiencies in children are caused by socio-economic factors of parents. It has been observed that some children lack the necessary nutrients needed for proper growth and development, which brings about the following symptoms of nutritional deficiency as pale skin, fatigue, weakness, trouble breathing, hairlessness, constipation, heart palpitation, numbness of the joints and poor concentration in school among others.

Also, many socio-economic factors of parents such as parental income, occupation, interaction, educational background and social class play vital roles in acquiring the right information to act upon the nutritional status of children, where essential information is lacking it leads to poor nutrient and heath of the children. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how socio-economic factors of parents influence nutritional status of children 0-5 years.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To what extent does parental education background influence children's nutritional status?
- How does parental income influence children's nutritional status?
- To what extent does parental social class relate to children's nutritional status?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated based on the research questions raised:

1. There is no significant influence of parental education background on nutritional status of children 0-5 years
2. There is no significant influence of parental income on nutritional status of children 0-5 years
3. There is no significant relationship between parental social class and nutritional status of children 0-5 years

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers adopted ex-post facto design for the study. The population of the study consisted of all parents and children under the age of five years in Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. One hundred homes were selected from the total population using systematic sampling technique. From each home, two (2) children below the age of five years and two (2) parent were sampled giving a sample size of two hundred (200) parents and two hundred (200) children making up four hundred (400)

respondents altogether. To have a fair representation of the total population, four (4) wards were randomly selected from the ten (10) political wards in the Local Government Area, two (2) from each clan, then out of the four wards randomly selected, twenty five (25) homes from each war with fifty (50) parents and fifty (50) children from the twenty chosen using systematic sampling techniques, that is every fifth house on the right of the various streets visited were selected for the study. Two sets of instruments were used for the study namely: (a) Questionnaire for parent and interview schedule for children 2-5 years. The questionnaire was distributed to parents who could read and the items on the questionnaire were read and interpret to parent who could not read. Children between 2-5 years were interviewed based on the interview schedule. The completed questionnaire were retrieved the checklist interview schedule collected. The instrument was subjected to a test-retest analysis using Cronbach's Alpha techniques on twenty (20) respondents who did not form part of the main study. The reliability for the instrument was 0.78. This value was high enough to justify the use of the research instrument.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) (PPMC) and Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of parental education background on nutritional status of children 0-5 years

Table 1: One-way Analysis of variance of influence of parent education background on nutritional status of children 0-5 years

Education	N	X	SD
Low (FSLC & SSCE)	85	28.19	3.23
Average (OND/NCE & HND/BSC)	76	32.83	2.73
High (M.Sc./Ph.D)	39	38.05	2.60
Total	**200**	**31.88**	**4.70**

Source of variance	SS	Df	Ms	f
Between group	2712.21	2	1356.11	
			8.58	158.11*
With group	1689.66	197		
Total	**4401.88**	**199**		

***Significant at 0.05 level; DF=2&197; critical f-value=2.99**

Table 1 above presents the obtained f-value as (158.11). This value was tested for significant by comparing it with the critical f-value of (2.99) at 0.05 level with 2 & 197 degree of freedom. The obtained f-value (158.11) was greater than the critical f-value (2.99). Hence, the result was significant, meaning that there is significant influence of parental education background on nutritional status of children 0-5 years

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of parental income on nutritional status of children 0-5 years

Table 2: One-Way Analysis of Variance of the influence of parental income on nutritional status of children 0-5 years

INCOME IN NIGERIA	**N**	**X**	**SD**
Low (less than) ₦100,000	89	28.34	3.33
Average ₦100,000 to ₦400,000	81	33.25	2.67
High ₦401,000 and above	30	38.67	2.67
Total	**200**	**31.88**	**4.70**

Source of variance	**SS**	**Df**	**Ms**	**F**
Between group	2650.26	2		
			8.89	149.03*
With group	1751.62	197		
Total	**4401.86**	**199**		

***Significant at 0.05 level; DF=2&197; critical f-value=2.99**

Table 2 above presents the obtained f-value as (149.03). This value was tested for significant by comparing it with the critical f-value of (2.99) at 0.05 level with 2 & 197 degree of freedom. The obtained f-value (149.03) was greater than the critical f-value (2.99). Hence, the result was significant, meaning that there is significant influence of parental income on nutritional status of children 0-5 years.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between parental social class and nutritional status of children 0-5 years

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between parental social class and nutritional status of children 0-5 years

Variable	**Σx**	**Σx^2**	**Σxy**	**r**
	(x) 2147	23531	69733	0.811
	(y) 6375	207605		
Social class of parents	(x) 2147	23531		
			69733	0.81
Nutritional status of children 0-5 years	(y) 6375	207605		

*Significant at 0.05 level; DF=200; critical f-value= 0.139

Table 3 presents the obtained r-value of (0.811). This value was tested for significant by comparing it with the critical r-value of (0.139) at 0.05 levels with 198 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value of (0.811) was greater than the critical r-value of (0.139). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between social class parents and nutritional status of children 0-5 years

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the study as presented in table 1 was significant because they obtained f-value (158.11) was higher than the critical f-value (2.99) at 0.05 level with 2 & 197 degree of freedom. This result implies that parental education background has significant influence on nutritional status of children 0-5 years. The significant of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Essien (2007) who reported that mother who have improved educational,

nutritional information and reduced poverty have been found to reduce the prevalence of abnormal growth and malnourishment in their children. Also, the result has confirmed the earlier observation by Saviour (2003) that educated parents have knowledge as the significant impact on children's diet. He added that educated parents often have the opportunity of attending nutritional workshop and nutritional orientation in order to try it out for their children's growth and healthy development. Udom (2008) status that parents with no educational background lack nutritional ideas and practices to feed their children with food containing good nutrients and good taste. The result of the data analysis in table 2 was significant because they obtained f-vale (149.03) was higher than the critical f-value (2.99) at 0.05 levels with 2 & 197 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant influence of parental income on nutritional status of children 0-5 years. The significance of the result is in agreement with the Idea of Hall (2006) who reported that the people from poor background, living below poverty have many forms of disease associated with malnutrition. Chinedu (2008) supported this assertion that families without adequate income are more likely lack sufficient resources to support minimum standard of living and the most vulnerable groups are women and children. Similarly, Chika (2011) maintained that families with higher income earns and parents with job security provide their children with a healthy diet while low income earners feed their families with grains, sugar and fats.

The result of the data analysis in table 3 was significant due to the fact that the obtained r-vale (0.811) was higher than the critical r-value (0.139) at 0.05 levels with 198 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant relationship between social class parents and nutritional status of children 0-5 years. The result has confirmed the earlier observation by Daniel (2005) that families with higher social class provide maximum nutritious food for their children. He added that children of middle class parents also have equal opportunity as that of the upper class with healthy and balance diet provided for them. The significance of the result is also in agreement with the findings of Ogden (2012) that children form low class background have stunted growth, iron deficiency and other health problems due to lack of good nutrients in their foods. He added that parents with low class always produce so many which which contribute to food shortage in the family. Thompson (2009) revealed that high and middle class parents provide meals with good nutrient balance as many times, as they desire to eat while low class parents hardly provide one square meal daily and if they do, it contains one class of food like carbohydrate or fat, which may lead to malnutrition.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be said that educational level of parents tends to influence the nutrition status of children significantly as parents with above average education had knowledge on how to feed their children with balanced meals while parent with low education level lack adequate nutritious meals for their children.

Parents' income also influences children's nutritional status significantly as those with high-income level and the highest adequate nutrition for their children. It can finally be concluded that parental social class significantly relate to nutritional status of children as the children with the most adequate nutritional status belong to parents of upper and middle class.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should constitute medical teams that will enhance provision of nutrition guides and should employ educators and counsellors that will orientate parents and pregnant women especially about the necessity to adhere to good nutrition during and after pregnancy and how to manage limited resource available.
- All parents should endeavour to attend school beyond SSCE and secure a good source of income before making children.
- Couples should try their best to have a fewer number of children to commensurate with their sources of income in order to be able to cater for them.

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