The result in Table 3 shows that all the items had their mean (\( \bar{x} \)) scores above the cut-off point of 2.50 with their standard deviations ranging from .000 – 1.195; indicating that the opinions of the respondents were not far from each other and the respondents agreed that all the items are food habits exhibited by children in Delta North Senatorial District.

**Research**

**Question 3**
What is the relationship between the nutritional knowledge of mothers and the children’s food habits?

**Table 3**
*Mean (\( \bar{x} \)) Responses on the Relationship Between Nutritional Knowledge of Mothers and their Children’s Food Habits (n=268)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean (( \bar{x} ))</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nutritional knowledge enable mother train her children to develop positive eating habits</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Nutritional knowledge help the mother to select and cook foods based on their nutritional content rather that physical appeal/allure</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.826</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Nutritional knowledge helps the mother to prepare nutritious meals that meets the needs of each child</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The home maker should endeavour to regulate children’s sleep and nap times</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.817</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>When tired, bored, unhappy or under the weather, mother should offer food to boost the mood</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.284</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mother should always encourage children to eat breakfast everyday so as to build a positive eating habits</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>When a mother relate finishing the food in the plate to satisfaction, it affects the children’s food habits</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.356</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Work

Table 4 presents the responses of respondents on the relationship between the nutritional knowledge of mothers and the children’s food habits. Two (2) out of the seven (7) items had mean (\( \bar{x} \)) scores of 2.08 and 2.41, which is less than the benchmark of 2.50. This implies that the two items are not the relationship that exist between the nutritional knowledge of mothers and their children’s food habits. Others had mean (\( \bar{x} \)) values greater than 2.50; indicating that these are relationships that exist between the nutritional knowledge of mothers and their children’s food habits.

Source: Field Work


**Research Question 4**

What strategies can be employed for improving the nutritional habits of the children in Delta North Senatorial District?

**Table 4**

*Mean (x̄) Responses on the Strategies that can be Employed in Improving the Nutritional Habits of Children (n=268)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean (x̄)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Children should be exposed to nutrition related issues (Nutrition Education) early in life to positively influence their behaviour and attitude towards foods, nutrition and health</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Children should be involved in meal preparations to attract and strengthen their interest towards Foods and Nutrition</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Parents should be enlightened about and encouraged to practice planned parenthood; a practice which helps parent to have the number of children that they can competently cater for at the moment</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.091</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Daily exercise is necessary for the children for proper health and vitality</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.605</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Children should be encouraged and allowed to practice home gardening which is a very helpful means of attracting children to nutrition</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Parents especially mothers should practice and encourage children to practice mindful or intuitive eating and not binge or emotional eating</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.974</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Proper budgeting of family income should always be maintained to avoid economic tensions that might affect family nutrition</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Impulsive buying should not be practices in the home so as to teach children wise spending</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.967</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Parents especially mothers should always keep up with changing knowledge and ideas about Foods and Nutrition</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Work

Table 5 shows that all the items had mean values ranging from 3.24 – 3.92, greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, and standard deviation ranging from .275 – 1.091. This implies that respondents agreed that all the items are strategies that can be employed for improving the nutritional habits of the children in Delta North Senatorial District.

**Summary of Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Mothers’ Nutritional Knowledge and their Children’s Food Habits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (x̄)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>γ</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nut. Knw.</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>3.637</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fd. Habits</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: γ = Pearson correlation value; Sig = table value; P = level of significance.

Source: Field Work

**Discussion of Findings**

**Mothers’ Knowledge about Nutrition in Delta North Senatorial District**

The result in Table 1, shows the knowledge of mothers about nutrition in Delta North Senatorial District such as Nutrition Education entails an active enlightenment about nutrition, health and diseases, when it comes to nutrition education and health teachings, the mothers and young children are the most appreciated receivers, a nutritionally informed mother can always meet the nutritional needs of her family from cheap and locally available food items, among others. The finding is in line with McKinnon (2014), nutrition knowledge is broadly defined as a knowledge of concepts and processes related to nutrition in health including knowledge of diet and health, diet and diseases, foods representing major
Food Habits Exhibited by Children in Delta North Senatorial District

The result in Table 3, shows the food habits exhibited by children in Delta North Senatorial District. These include: when allowed to make their own choices, children always show greater preference for sugary foods, eating and playing is a common trait of children, it is not proper for children to eat and watch television at the same time, just as ice-cream, children also love milk shakes and fruity smoothies, among others. This finding is in line with Perry (2014), who asserted that during childhood and school age years, children begin to establish habits for eating and exercising that stick with them for their entire lives; if children establish healthy habits, their risk for developing many chronic diseases will be greatly decreased, on the other hand, poor eating habits and physical inactivity during childhood set the stage for problems in adulthood. This finding is also in line with Eze and Njoku (2018) who stated that the way fruits and vegetables look on the plate influences should be considered, as children prefer a fun shaped fruits or vegetables to a regular shred.

The Relationship that Exist Between the Nutritional Knowledge of Mothers and their Children’s Food Habits

The result in Table 4, shows the relationship that exist between the nutritional knowledge of mothers and their children’s food habits. This finding is in line with Eme (2015) who stated that the way fruits and vegetables look on the plate influences should be considered, as children prefer a fun shaped fruits or vegetables to a regular shred. By improving their nutritional knowledge, their children are greatly influenced by the way fruits and vegetables look on the plate. This finding is also in line with Copp (2013) who suggested exposing children to Nutrition Education at an early stage. According to Copp, when children are exposed to Nutrition Education, they understand the relationship between nutrition and health which helps to improve the dietary behaviours of the children. Bowman (2006) suggested positive role modeling; that children also learn about food by observing the eating behavior modeled by others, especially their parents. It is advisable for parents to have positive nutritional traits which the children can emulate.

The Strategies that can be Employed for Improving the Nutritional Habits of the Children in Delta North Senatorial District

The findings from Table 5, shows the strategies that can be employed for improving the nutritional habits of the children in Delta North Senatorial District. The identified strategies amongst others include exposing children to nutrition related issues (Nutrition Education) early in life to positively influence their behaviour and attitude towards Foods, Nutrition and Health, involving children in meal preparations to attract and strengthen their interest towards Foods and Nutrition, encouraging and allowing children to practice home gardening which is a very helpful means of attracting children to Nutrition. This finding is in line with European Food Investigation Council (EUFIC) (2012) who stated that one of the strategies that help children in developing healthy dietary patterns is by encouraging them to grow their own foods, as they will be enthusiastic in eating their food since they are responsible for the production. Others include eating together as family, as children who eat meals with their families tends to eat healthier foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains, it reduces snacking and helps to build positive food habits and choices as well as inculcate valuable traits. This finding is also in line with Copp (2013) who suggested exposing children to Nutrition Education at an early stage. According to Copp, when children are exposed to Nutrition Education, they understand the relationship between nutrition and health which helps to improve the dietary behaviours of the children. Bowman (2006) suggested positive role modeling; that children also learn about food by observing the eating behavior modeled by others, especially their parents. It is advisable for parents to have positive nutritional traits which the children can emulate.

The null hypothesis tested show that there is a significant relationship between mother’s nutritional knowledge in children’s food habits in the study area.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that mothers have a good knowledge of Nutrition and they practice healthy nutritional methods which their children are copying from. The study revealed that a relationship exists between mothers’ knowledge, nutritional practices and their children’s food habits. At this point, it is established that children food habits are greatly influenced by the nutritional practices of people around them, especially their mothers. Mothers play a crucial role in influencing their children’s dietary behaviours therefore they are expected to serve as good models to their children.
by adopting the relevant nutritional practices and habits that their children can learn from.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. Public health messages should be geared towards enabling mothers to make healthy food choices for both themselves and their children.
2. Mothers should spend time to know the likes and dislikes of their children to avoid turning mealtimes to battleground.
3. Government should organize nutritional seminars and workshops for mothers to enable them keep up with the changing knowledge and ideas about foods and nutrition.
4. Mothers should expose their children to nutrition related issues early in life to build their behaviours, attitudes and knowledge towards Foods and Nutrition.
5. Mothers should serve as good models to their children to enable them adopt good nutritional practices.
6. In as much as mothers are trying to adopt healthy nutritional practices for their family, they should also put the family income into consideration to avoid economic tension that might affect family nutrition.

**References**


