



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***EFFECTIVENESS OF TRIPLE BENEFIT HEALTH EDUCATION
INTERVENTION ON KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE
TOWARDS MALNUTRITION AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS,
BORNO STATE, NIGERIA***

CHARLES RUTH SHAPU

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STATE, NIGERIA**

By

CHARLES RUTH SHAPU

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

April 2021

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents Mr Charles Shapu and late Mrs Patum Charles Shapu, and to all adolescent girls, the future mothers.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

EFFECTIVENESS OF TRIPLE BENEFIT HEALTH EDUCATION INTERVENTION ON KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE TOWARDS MALNUTRITION AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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April 2021

Chairman : Associate Professor Suriani Ismail, PhD
Faculty : Medicine and Health Sciences

Addressing the gap in poor knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) among adolescent girls are important as malnutrition has a negative effect on their future generation. The adolescence phase comes with a rapid increase in height, changes in body composition, mental, reproductive system, and social development. The objectives of the study are to determine knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition and to develop, validate, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention to improve knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria. The methodology of this study was conducted in two phases, Phase I was a cross-sectional study while Phase II was a Randomised Control Trial (RCT). Data was collected using KoBo Toolbox in Government Girls College (GGC), Government Girls Secondary School (GGSS), Yerwa Girls Secondary School (YGSS), Zajeri Day Secondary School (ZDSS), Bulabulin Day Secondary School (BDSS), and Shehu Garbai Day Secondary School (SGDSS), 612 respondents were randomly selected based on the inclusion criteria of the study. Among the eligible respondents, 562 consented and were interviewed with a response rate of (92%) for Phase I. Majority of the respondents were in their middle adolescent stage (49.8%), (86.8%) resides in an urban area, while (55%) had a household size of ≥ 9 (nine) family members. Poor knowledge was reported among (80.2%) of respondents, more than half of respondents (57.3%) showed poor attitude, while about (49.5%) had poor practice towards malnutrition. Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention module was developed for Phase II according to the information, motivation and behavioural skills model (IMB). A two-stage random sampling technique was used. First stage four out of the six secondary schools in Phase I was randomly selected and two classes were randomly selected in each grade level/set. A total of 424 respondents were randomly selected and 417 were eligible

for participation (208 in the intervention group and 209 in the control group at baseline) using opaque sealed envelopes. Data were collected at baseline, at three and six months post-intervention and follow up using a questionnaire. There was no significant difference in sociodemographic characteristics, knowledge, attitude and practice between the intervention and control group at baseline. There was a significant difference between intervention and control group for knowledge (AOR = 9.595, 95% CI: 6.371 – 14.449, $p < 0.001$; AOR = 14.993, 95% CI: 9.919 – 22.662, $p < 0.001$), attitude (AOR = 1.949, 95% CI: 1.451 – 2.616, $p < 0.001$; AOR = 2.276, 95% CI: 1.692 – 3.060, $p < 0.001$) and practice (AOR = 1.545, 95% CI: 1.164 – 2.051, $p = 0.003$; AOR = 1.422, 95% CI: 1.083 – 1.867, $p = 0.011$) respectively from baseline to post-intervention and follow up after the Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention. The findings from this study provide evidence for the effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention in improving knowledge, attitude and practice among adolescent girls in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria. The study suggests that knowledge, attitude and practice towards malnutrition will reduce the burden of malnutrition, improve healthy lifestyle among adolescent girls and their future offspring.

Keywords: Malnutrition, adolescent girls, knowledge, attitude, practice, KoBo Toolbox

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KEBERKESANAN INTERVENSI PENDIDIKAN KESIHATAN TIGA
KEBAIKAN TERHADAP PENGETAHUAN, SIKAP DAN AMALAN
TERHADAP KEKURANGAN ZAT MAKANAN DI KALANGAN GADIS
REMAJA, NEGERI BORNO, NIGERIA**

Oleh

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Menangani jurang dalam pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan (KAP) di kalangan gadis remaja adalah penting kerana kekurangan zat makanan mempunyai kesan negatif kepada generasi masa depan mereka. Fasa remaja datang dengan peningkatan pesat dalam ketinggian, perubahan dalam komposisi badan, mental, sistem reproduksi, dan pembangunan sosial. Objektif kajian adalah untuk membangunkan, mengesahkan, melaksana dan menilai keberkesanan Intervensi Pendidikan Kesihatan Tiga Kebaikan untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan remaja perempuan terhadap kekurangan zat makanan di Majlis Metropolitan Maiduguri, Negeri Borno, Nigeria. Metodologi kajian ini dilakukan dalam dua fasa, Fasa I adalah kajian keratan rentas sementara Fasa II adalah Percubaan Kawalan Rawak (RCT). Data telah dikumpulkan melalui Kotak alat KoBo di Kolej Perempuan Kerajaan (GGC), Sekolah Menengah Perempuan Kerajaan (GGSS), Sekolah Menengah Perempuan Yerwa (YGSS), Sekolah Menengah Hari Zajeri (ZDSS), Sekolah Menengah Hari Bulabulin (BDSS), dan Sekolah Menengah Hari Shehu Garbai (SGDSS), 612 responden telah dipilih secara rawak berdasarkan kriteria kemasukan kajian. Di kalangan responden yang layak, 562 bersetuju dan telah ditemuramah dengan kadar tindakbalas sebanyak (92%) untuk Fasa I. Majoriti responden yang berada di peringkat remaja pertengahan mereka (49.8%), (86.8%) menetap di kawasan bandar, manakala (55%) mempunyai saiz isi rumah yang lebih besar daripada sembilan \geq 9 (sembilan) ahli keluarga. Pengetahuan yang lemah dilaporkan dikalangan (80.2%) responden, lebih daripada separuh responden (57.3%) menunjukkan sikap buruk, manakala kira-kira (49.5%) mempunyai amalan buruk terhadap kekurangan zat makanan. Modul intervensi pendidikan kesihatan tiga kebaikan dikembangkan dalam Fasa II mengikut maklumat, motivasi dan kemahiran tingkah laku (IMB). Satu teknik persampelan rawak dua peringkat telah digunakan. Peringkat pertama empat daripada enam buah sekolah menengah di Fasa I telah dipilih secara rawak dan dua

kelas dipilih secara rawak dalam setiap tahap/set gred. Sejumlah 424 responden telah dipilih secara rawak dan 417 layak untuk penyertaan (208 dalam kumpulan campuran dan 209 dalam kumpulan kawalan pada garis dasar) menggunakan sampul surat tertutup legap. Data dikumpulkan pada peringkat awal, pada tiga dan enam bulan selepas intervensi dan susulan menggunakan soal selidik. Tidak ada perbezaan yang ketara dalam ciri-ciri sosiodemografi, pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan antara intervensi dan kumpulan kawalan pada garis dasar. Terdapat perbezaan yang ketara di antara intervensi dan kumpulan kawalan untuk pengetahuan (AOR = 9.595, 95% CI: 6.371 – 14.449, $p < 0.001$; AOR = 14.993, 95% CI: 9.919 – 22.662, $p < 0.001$), sikap (AOR = 1.949, 95% CI: 1.451 – 2.616, $p < 0.001$; AOR = 2.276, 95% CI: 1.692 – 3.060, $p < 0.001$) and amalan (AOR = 1.545, 95% CI: 1.164 – 2.051, $p = 0.003$; AOR = 1.422, 95% CI: 1.083 – 1.867, $p = 0.011$) masing-masing dari peringkat awal hingga selepas intervensi dan susulan selepas Intervensi Pendidikan Kesihatan Tiga Kebaikan. Penemuan daripada kajian ini memberikan bukti untuk keberkesanan Intervensi Pendidikan Kesihatan Tiga Kebaikan dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan di kalangan gadis remaja di Majlis Metropolitan Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. Kajian menunjukkan bahawa pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan terhadap kekurangan zat makanan akan mengurangkan beban kekurangan zat makanan, meningkatkan gaya hidup sihat di kalangan gadis remaja dan keturunan mereka di masa depan.

Kata kunci: Kekurangan zat makanan, gadis remaja, pengetahuan, sikap, amalan, Kotak alat KoBo, Tiga Kebaikan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	i
ABSTRAK	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
APPROVAL	vii
DECLARATION	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xvii
LIST OF FIGURES	xxii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xxiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxiv
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Significance of the Study	7
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.4.1 Research Questions for Phase I (Cross-sectional study)	8
1.4.2 Research Questions for Phase II (Intervention study)	8
1.5 Research Objective	8
1.5.1 General Objectives	9
1.5.2 Specific Objectives	9
1.5.2.1 Phase I: Determine Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Adolescent Girls towards Malnutrition	9
1.5.2.2 Phase II: Develop, Validate, Implement and Evaluate the Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Malnutrition	10
1.6 Research Hypothesis	10
1.7 Operational Definition of Study Variables	11
1.7.1 Dependent Variable	11
1.7.2 Independent Variables	12
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1 Malnutrition	14
2.1.1 Definition	14
2.1.2 Under-nutrition	14
2.1.2.1 Protein Energy Malnutrition	15
2.1.2.2 Micronutrient Deficiencies	15
2.2 Prevalence of Malnutrition	18
2.2.1 Global Prevalence of Malnutrition	18

2.2.2	Prevalence of Malnutrition in Africa	19
2.2.3	Prevalence of Malnutrition in Nigeria	19
2.3	Causes of Malnutrition	20
2.3.1	Basic Causes of Malnutrition	22
2.3.2	Underlying Causes of Malnutrition	22
2.3.3	Immediate Causes of Malnutrition	23
2.4	Consequences of Malnutrition	24
2.4.1	Short-Term Consequences of Malnutrition	24
2.4.2	Long-Term Consequences of Malnutrition	24
2.5	Factors Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	25
2.5.1	Age of Respondents Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	25
2.5.2	Class in School of Respondents towards Malnutrition	26
2.5.3	Age of Parents Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	26
2.5.4	Education of Parents Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	27
2.5.5	Occupation of Parents Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	28
2.5.6	Household size Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	28
2.5.7	Household Income Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	29
2.5.8	Place of Residence Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	30
2.5.9	Dietary Intake Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	30
2.5.10	Healthy Diet Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	30
2.5.11	Dietary Diversity Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	31
2.6	Factors Associated with Attitude towards Malnutrition	32
2.6.1	Age Respondents Associated with Attitude towards Malnutrition	32
2.6.2	Fathers Education Associated with Attitude towards Malnutrition	32
2.6.3	Healthy Dietary Intake Associated with Attitude towards Malnutrition	32
2.7	Factors Associated with Practice towards Malnutrition	33
2.7.1	Parent's Education Associated with Practice towards Malnutrition	33
2.7.2	Place of Residence Associated with Practice towards Malnutrition	33
2.7.3	Healthy Dietary Intake Associated with Practice towards Malnutrition	33
2.8	Hygiene	35
2.9	Food Security	35
2.10	Effectiveness of Health Education Intervention	36

2.11	Systematic Review	38
2.11.1	Systematic Approach	38
2.11.2	Characteristics of Studies Included in the Systematic Review	39
2.12	Information Motivation Behavioural Skill Model	43
2.12.1	Construct of IMB Model	43
2.12.2	Conceptual Frame Work of the Study	44
3	METHODOLOGY	48
3.1	Study Location	48
3.2	Phase I Study (Cross-sectional Study)	49
3.2.1	Study Design	49
3.2.2	Study Duration	50
3.2.3	Study Population	50
3.2.4	Sampling Technique	50
3.2.5	Sample Size Calculation	51
3.2.6	Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	52
3.2.6.1	Inclusion Criteria:	52
3.2.6.2	Exclusion Criteria:	52
3.2.7	Study Instruments	52
3.2.7.1	Questionnaire	52
3.2.7.2	Anthropometric Measurement	56
3.2.8	Quality Control of the Questionnaire for Phase I	56
3.2.8.1	Validity of the Questionnaire	56
3.2.8.2	Reliability of the Questionnaire	57
3.2.9	KoBo Toolbox and Training of Enumerators	58
3.2.9.1	KoBo Toolbox	58
3.2.9.2	Training of Enumerators	59
3.2.10	Data Collection for Phase I	59
3.2.11	Data Analysis	60
3.3	Phase II (Intervention Study)	61
3.3.1	Study Design for Phase II	61
3.3.2	Study Duration for Phase II	61
3.3.3	Study Population for Phase II	61
3.3.4	Sampling Frame	61
3.3.5	Sampling Unit	61
3.3.6	Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	61
3.3.6.1	Inclusion Criteria for Cluster	61
3.3.6.2	Exclusion for Cluster	62
3.3.6.3	Inclusion Criteria for Participants	62
3.3.6.4	Exclusion Criteria for Participants	62
3.3.7	Sample Size Determination	62
3.3.8	Sampling Method	63
3.3.9	Study instruments	65
3.3.10	Quality Control of Intervention Module	65
3.3.10.1	Development of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention Module	65
3.3.10.2	Development of the Malaria Health Educational Module	67

3.3.10.3	Training of Facilitator and Enumerators	67
3.3.10.4	Face and Content Validity of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention Module	68
3.3.10.5	Reliability of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention Module	69
3.3.10.6	Implementation of Education Intervention Module	71
3.3.11	Data Collection	72
3.3.12	Data Analysis	73
3.4	Ethical Approval and Consent	74
4	RESULTS	75
4.1	Overview	75
4.2	Result of Phase I (Cross-sectional study)	75
4.2.1	Response Rate	75
4.2.2	Normality Test	75
4.2.3	Descriptive Analysis	75
4.2.3.1	Sociodemographic Characteristics Data Response	75
4.2.3.2	Knowledge of Respondents towards Malnutrition	78
4.2.3.3	Attitude of Respondents towards Malnutrition	80
4.2.3.4	Practice of Respondents towards Malnutrition	82
4.2.3.5	Food Security Distribution of Respondents	84
4.2.3.6	Hygiene Distribution of Respondents	85
4.2.3.7	Information, Motivation, and Behavioural Skills of Respondents on Malnutrition	86
4.2.3.8	Nutritional Status of Respondents	88
4.2.3.9	24-Hour Dietary Recall of Respondents	88
4.2.3.10	Sources of Information on Malnutrition	89
4.2.4	Association Between Factors with Knowledge, Attitude and Practice	90
4.2.4.1	Factors Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	90
4.2.4.2	Factors Associated with Attitude towards Malnutrition	92
4.2.4.3	Factors Associated with Practice towards Malnutrition	97
4.2.5	Predictors of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards Malnutrition	100
4.2.5.1	Predictors of Knowledge towards Malnutrition	100
4.2.5.2	Predictor of Attitude towards Malnutrition	101

4.2.5.3	Predictors of Practice towards Malnutrition	102
4.2.6	Association Between Factors with Food Security and Hygiene	103
4.2.6.1	Factors Associated with Food Security	103
4.2.6.2	Factors Associated with Hygiene	106
4.2.7	Predictors of Food Security and Hygiene	109
4.2.7.1	Predictors of Food Security	109
4.2.7.2	Predictors of Hygiene	113
4.3	Result of Phase II (Randomised Control Trial)	114
4.3.1	Response Rate	114
4.3.2	Normality test	115
4.3.3	Strategy for Analysis	116
4.3.4	Baseline Characteristics of Respondent Between Intervention and Control Group	116
4.3.4.1	Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents at Baseline	116
4.3.4.2	Nutritional Status of Respondents at Baseline	118
4.3.4.3	24-hour Dietary Recall of Respondents at Baseline	119
4.3.4.4	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Respondents at Baseline	119
4.3.4.5	Food Security and Hygiene of Respondents at Baseline	126
4.3.4.6	Information Motivation and Behavioural skill (IMB) of Respondents at Baseline	130
4.3.4.7	Source of Information of Respondents at Baseline	132
4.3.5	Evaluation of the Effectiveness Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention (Outcome of Intervention)	133
4.3.5.1	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Knowledge, Attitude and practice towards Malnutrition	133
4.3.5.2	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Food Security and Hygiene Practice towards Malnutrition	142
5	DISCUSSION	147
5.1	Phase I (Cross-sectional study)	147
5.1.1	Socio-demographic Characteristics	147
5.1.2	Knowledge of Respondents towards Malnutrition	148
5.1.3	Attitude of Respondent towards Malnutrition	149
5.1.4	Practice of Respondents towards Malnutrition	150
5.1.5	Food Security of Respondents towards Malnutrition	151

5.1.6	Hygiene Practice of Respondents on Malnutrition	152
5.1.7	Conclusion of Phase I (Cross-sectional study)	153
5.2	Phase II (Randomised Control Trial)	153
5.2.1	Socio-demographic Characteristics among Intervention and Control at Baseline	153
5.2.2	Nutritional Status and 24-hours Recall among Intervention and Control at Baseline	154
5.2.3	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice among Intervention and Control at Baseline	154
5.2.3.1	Knowledge of Respondents towards Malnutrition Between Intervention and Control	154
5.2.3.2	Attitude of Respondents towards Malnutrition Between Intervention and Control	155
5.2.3.3	Practice of Respondents towards Malnutrition Between Intervention and Control	155
5.2.4	Food Security and Hygiene between Intervention and Control at Baseline	156
5.2.4.1	Food Security between Intervention and Control at Baseline	156
5.2.4.2	Hygiene Between Intervention and Control at Baseline	156
5.2.5	Information, Motivation, Behavioural Skills	156
5.2.6	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice	157
5.2.6.1	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Knowledge towards Malnutrition	157
5.2.6.2	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Attitude towards Malnutrition	158
5.2.6.3	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Practice towards Malnutrition	159
5.2.7	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Food Security and Hygiene	159
5.2.7.1	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Food Security	159
5.2.7.2	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Hygiene Practice	160

6	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	162
6.1	Conclusion	162
6.2	Strength and Limitation of the Study	162
6.3	Recommendations for Future Studies	163
6.4	Recommendations for Stakeholders	164
	REFERENCES	166
	APPENDICES	197
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	326
	LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	327



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LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Summary of intervention to improve Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices among Adolescents on Malnutrition	41
3.1 List of Selected Schools in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria	49
3.2 Result of Cronbach's alpha of the Questionnaire	58
3.3 Random Assignment for AA1, BB1, AA2 and BB2	63
3.4 Selected Schools in MMC	63
3.5 Illustration of Triple Benefit Intervention Module by Theory Construct and Content	66
3.6 Illustration of Malaria Education by Theory Construct and Content	67
3.7 Face Validity of the Intervention Module (n = 10)	68
3.8 Evaluation of Expert Based Appropriateness, Relevance and Clarity	69
3.9 Evaluation of Expert Based Module Session	69
3.10 Change in Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Theory Construct	70
3.11 Criteria for Assessing Facilitator During the Delivery of Lecture in Pilot Study	70
3.12 Adherence of Respondents to Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention	71
3.13 Sequence of Data Collection and Intervention	72
4.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics (N = 562)	77
4.2 The Distribution of Correct and Incorrect Responses to Knowledge Questions towards Malnutrition (N =562)	79
4.3 Frequency on Level of Knowledge on Malnutrition among Respondents	80
4.4 Attitude towards Malnutrition (N = 562)	81
4.5 Frequency on Level of Attitude towards Malnutrition among Respondents	82
4.6 Meal Frequency among Respondents in Seven Days	83
4.7 Dietary Diversity of Food Groups Consumed by Respondents (N = 562)	84

4.8	Food Security Distribution among Respondents (N = 562)	85
4.9	Food Security Level of Respondents (N = 562)	85
4.10	Hygiene Distribution of Respondents (N = 562)	86
4.11	Frequency on Level of Hygiene among Respondents	86
4.12	Information, Motivation and Behavioural Skills of on Malnutrition (N = 562)	87
4.13	Frequency on Level of Information, Motivation and Behavioural Skill (IMB)	88
4.14	Nutritional Status of Respondents	88
4.15	24-Hour Dietary Recall of Respondents (N= 562)	89
4.16	Sources of Information (N = 562)	89
4.17	Factors Associated with Knowledge towards Malnutrition	90
4.18	Factors Associated Attitude towards Malnutrition	93
4.19	Factors Associated with Practice towards Malnutrition	98
4.20	Predictors of Knowledge towards Malnutrition	100
4.21	Predictors of Attitude towards Malnutrition	102
4.22	Predictors of Practice towards Malnutrition	103
4.23	Factors Associated with Food Security on Malnutrition	104
4.24	Factors Associated with Hygiene	107
4.25	Predictors of Food Security using Multinomial Logistic Regression	111
4.26	Predictors of Hygiene on Malnutrition	114
4.27	Baseline Comparison of Sociodemographic Characteristics Between Intervention and Control Groups	117
4.28	Baseline Comparison of Nutritional Status between Intervention and Control Groups	118
4.29	Nutritional Status between Intervention and Control	119
4.30	Baseline Comparison of 24-hour Dietary Recall between Intervention and Control Groups	119
4.31	Knowledge towards Malnutrition at Baseline	120

4.32	Mean Scores of Knowledge towards Malnutrition	121
4.33	Attitude Towards Malnutrition at Baseline	122
4.34	Mean Scores of Attitude towards Malnutrition	123
4.35	Food Frequency Questionnaire for Respondents at Baseline	124
4.36	Meal Frequency of Respondents in Seven Days at Baseline	125
4.37	Mean Scores of Practice towards Malnutrition	126
4.38	Food security of Respondents at Baseline	127
4.39	Mean Scores of Food Security towards Malnutrition	128
4.40	Hygiene of Respondents at Baseline	129
4.41	Mean Scores of Hygiene towards Malnutrition	129
4.42	Information Motivation and Behavioural skill of Respondents at Baseline	131
4.43	Source of Information of Respondents at Baseline	133
4.44	Comparison of Knowledge towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline to post-intervention and follow up) respectively using GEE	134
4.45	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Knowledge towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline, post-intervention and follow up) adjusted with Covariates using GEE	135
4.46	Comparison of Attitude towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline to post-intervention and follow up) respectively using GEE	136
4.47	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Attitude towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline, post-intervention and follow up) adjusted with Covariates using GEE	137
4.48	Comparison of Practice towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline to post-intervention and follow up) respectively using GEE	138
4.49	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Practice towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline, post-intervention and follow up) adjusted with Covariates using GEE	140

4.50	Comparison of Food Security towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline to post-intervention and follow up) respectively using GEE	142
4.51	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Food Security towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline, post-intervention and follow up) adjusted with Covariates using GEE	144
4.52	Comparison of Hygiene Practice towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline to post-intervention and follow up) respectively using GEE	145
4.53	Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Hygiene Practice towards Malnutrition between Groups (intervention and control) and Time Points (baseline, post-intervention and follow up) adjusted with Covariates using GEE	146

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Nutrition throughout the life cycle	3
2.1 Causes of Malnutrition	21
2.2 Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Review and Meta-analysis (PRISMA) 2009, Flow of Diagram for Literature Search	40
2.3 Information Motivation Behavioural skills	44
2.4 Conceptual framework on the effect of a health education intervention on knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition using IMB model	47
3.1 The map of Nigeria showing Borno state and the city of Maiduguri	49
3.2 Sampling Method	51
3.3 Flow chart for data collection	60
3.4 Flow Chart on Study Design and Outcome Evaluation	64
3.5 Consort Flow chart of the Study	73
4.1 Flow of respondent's recruitment and retention during the study	115

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page	
1	Questionnaire	197
2	Face validity	208
3	Test re-test reliability for each knowledge item	211
4	Training time table	214
5	Triple Benefit Intervention Module	215
6	Malaria	249
7	Ethical Approval from Jawatankuasa Etika Universiti Putra Malaysia	259
8	Permission from the Ministry of Education Maiduguri, Borno State	263
9	Pan Africa Clinical Trail	266
10	Respondent's Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form	267
11	Respondent's Information Sheet and Guardian's/Parent's Consent	271
12	Phase I: Normality test (Histogram)	274
13	List of each Factor for Predictors of Knowledge towards Malnutrition	278
14	List of each Factor for Predictors of Attitude towards Malnutrition	281
15	List of each Factor for Predictors of Practice towards Malnutrition	284
16	List of each factor for Predictors of food security towards Malnutrition	287
17	List of each Factors for Predictors of Hygiene on Malnutrition	292
18	Phase II: Normality test (Histogram) at Baseline	295
19	List of each Factor on Knowledge towards Malnutrition	303
20	List of each Factor on Attitude Towards Malnutrition	306
21	List of each Factor on Practice Towards Malnutrition	309
22	List of each Factor on Food Security Towards Malnutrition	312
23	List of each Factor on Hygiene Towards Malnutrition	315
24	Intervention Pictures	318

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RCT	Randomised Control Trial
CRCT	Cluster Randomised Control
GGC	Government Girls College
GGSS	Government Girls Secondary School
GGSS Yerwa	Government Girls Secondary School Yerwa
SGDSS	Shehu Garbai Day Secondary School
BDSS	Bulabulin Day Secondary School
ZDSS	Zajeri Day Secondary School
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
BMI	Body Mass Index
MMC	Maiduguri Metropolitan Council
IMB	Information Motivation Behavioural
OR	Odds Ratio
AOR	Adjusted Odds Ratio
CI	Confidence Interval
UNICEF	United Nations Children Funds
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
WHO	World Health Organisation
ACC/SCN	Administrative Committee on Coordination/Sub-Committee on Nutrition
UN	United Nations
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
FMoH	Federal Ministry of Health
NPC	National Population Commission

WFP	World Food Program
DFID	Department of International Development
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SD	Standard Deviation
SE	Standard Error
IQR	Inter-Quartile Range
JSS	Junior Secondary School
SSS	Senior Secondary School
HFIAS	Household Food Security Access Scale
ND	No Data
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FFQ	Food Frequency Questionnaire
DD	Dietary Diversity
DDS	Dietary Diversity Score
UBE	Universal Basic Education
GPS	Global Positioning System
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
ITT	Intention to Treat
GEE	Generalised Estimating Equation
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
AMDR	Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Range
PTA	Parents Teachers Association

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Adolescents are young individuals that are between the ages of 10 and 19 years- old that can be affected by malnutrition which is insufficiency, excess, or inequality in an individual energy intake or nutrients. Inadequate food consumption is the greatest cause of malnutrition, the burden is increasingly becoming difficult to ignore most especially in the case of adolescent girls in underdeveloped and developing countries, this is relevant to maternal nutrition, child survival, chronic diseases and unhealthy development affecting individual and community's economic productivity (Robert et al., 2013; World Health Organization, 2018).

Malnutrition has become a huge global burden, its prevalence differs between nation and also within regions of the same country (Abdulkarim et al., 2014). In advanced countries, overnutrition (overweight and obesity) is the major concern while undernutrition has become a major burden to the underdeveloped and developing countries. Malnutrition is on the increase due to the rising trend of poverty, inadequate knowledge, attitude, practice and inadequate food, especially in the northeastern part of Nigeria where humanitarian crises have persisted since 2009 exposing most of its citizens to untold hardship and malnutrition (Abdulkarim et al., 2014; Oggunyi et al., 2016; United Nations Development Programm, 2017).

The adolescence stage is one of the challenging periods in life as it is the era of speedy growth and maturation from the phase of childhood to adulthood, adolescents gain about 15 to 20% of their height, and 25 to 50% of their weight between the ages of 10 to 19 years old. Adolescent girls do not gain weight during pregnancy and lactation but rather lose weight leading to stunting, underweight and anaemia, to meet their growth and development requirements there is a need to improve their knowledge, attitude, and practice on malnutrition, nutritional intake and healthy lifestyle through multi-sectoral health education intervention (Abdulkarim et al., 2014; Christian & Smith, 2018; Mokhtari et al., 2017).

The burden of malnutrition harms the adolescents in poor growth and development, morbidity, poor cognition, poor school performance, poor economic productivity in the future, and even mortality (Ghosh Smritikana, 2020; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2019). While the importance of having good knowledge, attitude and practice on nutrition are irrefutable to prevent malnutrition, there is little or no doubt that monthly household income and household infrastructure are a critical factor in determining the health and nutrition of children and adolescent. In developing and underdeveloped countries, low household income earners are prone to malnutrition due to the tendency of consuming less nutritious whereas, inadequate household infrastructures such as poor water sanitation and hygiene facilities have

proven to increase exposure to faecal pathogens and in the long run increasing the burden of disease and malnutrition (Alice Goisis & Melissa Martinson, 2019; Thomas et al., 2014). Children and adolescents living in urban settings were found to be healthier with better nutritional status compared to their counterparts residing in the rural settings, as a result of the more improved health care system and other socioeconomic factors peculiar to urban-rural difference (Charmarbagwala et al., 2004; Ghosh, 2011). The dietary habit of adolescents in low and middle-income countries are poor generally, as half the number of adolescent girls in low and middle-income countries eat less than three times a day with the majority of them missing meals and skipping breakfast (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2019). Early marriage also adds to the burden of malnutrition among adolescent girls as the impact is compounded yearly by 2.5 million birth among under 16 years and 16 million birth among 15 to 19 years old placing the adolescent girl and her child in a disadvantaged state (WHO, 2018).

Other factors such as poor access, availability, utilization, and stability of food in both macro and micronutrient expose adolescent girls to deficiencies especially during their reproductive years which may have short and long term negative impact on the individual and the society as it relates to gender discrimination for the girl child (Asian Development Bank, 2013; Oxfam, 2019). The price of food in Nigeria has increased since 2003, reaching its peak in 2010, this has impacted negatively on the populace (Matemilola & Elegbede, 2017; Samuels et al., 2011). It is observed in Nigeria that women have been reduced to second class citizens, where they are seen by the general belief system that the best place for women is the kitchen. This has misrepresented the right of women at both the family and societal level since the societal structure enables men to dominate women. Women are discriminated against in most cases, especially in acquiring formal education and decision making which has reduced their cultural values, thereby influencing their contribution to nutrition-related issues within the family cycle (Makama, 2013).

Though malnutrition itself is a problem found among both boys and girls, the adverse effect is more on the girl child. If an adolescent girl enters into the reproductive cycle in a malnourished state, she will grow up into a malnourished adult and give birth to a malnourished child, as shown in Figure 1, contributing to an unproductive community and the cycle of intergenerational transfer of malnutrition. The key to breaking the cycle of intergenerational transmission of malnutrition is to improve the nutrition of adolescent girls, in general, to ensure longer-term sustainable results in reducing malnutrition, poverty, and food insecurity. Without adequate knowledge, attitude, and practice towards malnutrition among adolescent girls and young women before, during and after pregnancy, it will be impossible to have a healthy community (Administrative Committee on Coordination/Sub-Committee on Nutrition (ACC/SCN) The UN system forum for Nutrition, 2000; John et al., 2015; John et al., 2013; Zulfiqar et al., 2013). Evidence has shown that health education intervention is key to improving the health and nutrition needs of adolescent girls (Ramakrishnan et al., 2012)

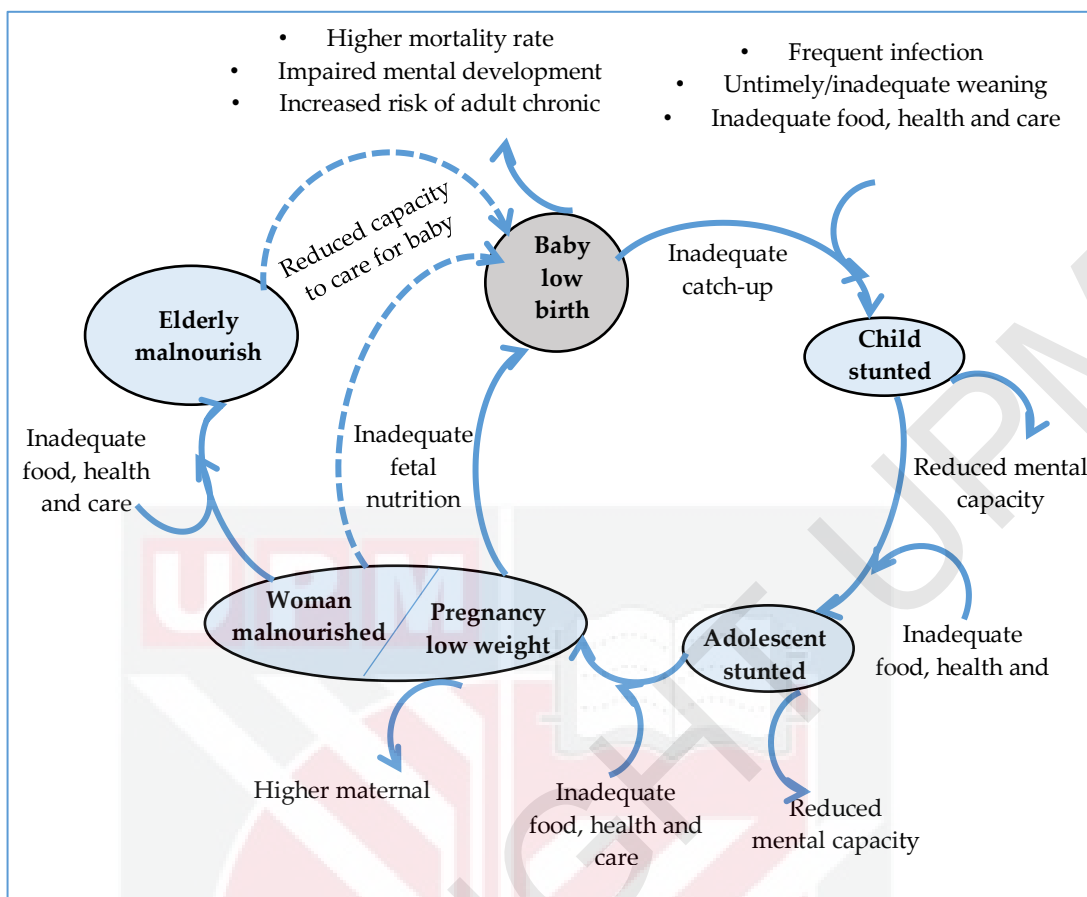


Figure 1.1 : Nutrition throughout the life cycle showing the effect of malnutrition on the adolescent girl and her unborn child (Administrative Committee on Coordination/Sub-Committee on Nutrition (ACC/SCN) The UN system forum for Nutrition, 2000)

Earlier studies have revealed that acquiring more knowledge has a greater effect on the change of attitude and practice. Nutrition knowledge is a critical basis for adequate dietary practice (Spendlove et al., 2012). Nutritional knowledge alone will only change dietary practice, therefore, it is essential to tackle malnutrition and unhealthy lifestyle through the different multi-sectoral approach. WHO, 2006 stated that providing the health and nutritional needs of adolescents will reduce their vulnerability as their health at this critical period is very sensitive and will have a significant impact during their adult life. Adolescents make up about 1.25 billion a quarter of the world's population with about 90% living in middle and low-income countries (Christian & Smith, 2018; Save the Children, 2015; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2011, 2019). In Nigeria adolescents constitute about 23% of the nation's population (Abdulkarim et al., 2014).

Most times researchers incorporate a theory-based approach into the study for the research to be successful. The information, motivation, behavioural skills model (IMB) has been used in promoting nutrition-related practices and also the development of the preventive intervention (Peyman & Monireh, 2016). Although

the IMB model works at the individual level, the construct of the theory is useful in presenting health behavioural changes through making individuals well informed by using their attitude and perception as motivation to make them comply with other wishes and act, possessing the essential behavioural skills for effective achievement. Information, motivation, behavioural skills model was used in developing the Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention to improve knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) of adolescent girls towards malnutrition. The intervention study was named Triple Benefit because it will better the health of adolescent girl now, improved well-being and productivity in her future adult life and reduced health risks better nutritional status and wellbeing of her future offspring. The school system in Nigeria was updated to 6-3-3-4 (6 years in primary school, 3 years in junior secondary school, 3 years in senior secondary school, and 4 years in tertiary education) similar to the American system. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced in 1999 to replace the 6-3-3-4 educational system to a 9-3-4 system involving 6 years primary school, 3 years junior secondary school (culminating in 9 years of interrupting schooling), 3 years in senior secondary school and 4 years in tertiary education. There are primary schools with UBE (6 years primary school and 3 years junior secondary school), and then full secondary school (3 years in junior secondary school, 3 years in senior secondary school) (Amaghionyeodiwe & Osinubi, 2006).

Educating adolescent girls to increase their knowledge, attitude and practice towards malnutrition might have a positive impact on reducing the burden of malnutrition, morbidity, mortality, intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and thus enhance survival. The effort of health education programs and the campaign is needed to highlight the nature of the causes, symptoms, consequences and the benefit of early prevention of malnutrition.

1.2 Problem Statement

Malnutrition is a global burden that every country is facing, one (1) in every three (3) individual suffer from one form of malnutrition or the other (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2015). In 2016, over 2.8 billion people suffer from malnutrition/undernutrition, over 1.2 million adolescent between the ages of 10 to 19 years old died in 2015 due to preventable and treatable burden like malnutrition globally (International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2016; World Health Organization, 2017).

The prevalence of malnutrition increases from 11% in 2003 to 18% in 2013, Nigerian demographic and health survey 2013 reveals that about 23% of adolescent girls are malnourished similar to a study in Ibadan which shows that 23% of them are malnourished (FMOH, 2013; National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] and ICF International, 2014; Omobuwa et al., 2014; UNICEF, 2013, 2017). A study among adolescent in Ibadan, Nigeria reveals that 42% were underweight and 1.6% were stunted in private schools while 25% were underweight and 5.8% were stunted in public schools. The differences in the prevalence of high stunting in Government than private schools may suggest chronic malnutrition slowing the metabolic process

of maturation (Senbanjo et al., 2011). The existence of a high prevalence of underweight among respondents in private school was really surprising, but it may be due to poor social and health services in developing countries (Boma et al., 2014). Wide range of age groups in the two schools (Asiegbu et al., 2017). Skipping of meals as children from private schools are mostly children of the elites who rely on candies neglecting their meals (Faith & Prosper, 2016). Inadequate KAP, geographic area and the timing gap during data collection (Yisak et al., 2021). Studies in Port Harcourt reveals that 33.7% of adolescent girls were underweight and 34.7% were stunted respectively (Bolanle et al., 2017; Esimai, & Ojofeitimi, 2015). This may be due to lifestyle, sociodemographic characteristics of children and their parents as well as poor social and health facilities (Adesuwa et al., 2012; Syahrul et al., 2016).

There is no existing data on the overall current prevalence of malnutrition, knowledge, attitude and practice related issues among adolescents in Nigeria. The trend of malnutrition among women aged 15-49 years with adolescents inclusive has been stable for the past 10 years reporting 12% from 2008 to 2018 (National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] & ICF, 2019). Overall, based on mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC), about 6.9% of Nigerian women aged 15-49 years were reported to be acutely malnourished while 3.8% were severely malnourished. Furthermore, the prevalence of acute malnutrition among older adolescents was 19% about four times higher compared to 4% among adult women aged 20-49 years in Nigeria. About 6.1% out of 14% of women between 15-49 years pregnant particularly in the northeast and northwest Nigeria were adolescent girls aged 15-19 years old. More so, anaemia is also a trending concern among 58% of women aged 15-49 years leading to increased burden of maternal mortality, poor birth outcome and reduced productivity (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2018; National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] & ICF, 2019). Childbearing among adolescent girls is significantly associated with a high risk of pregnancy complication outcome (Christian & Smith, 2018). The findings from the 2018 national survey call for urgency in the development of an intervention to improve nutrition among adolescent girls for better health, birth outcome and nutrition throughout their life cycle. Taming malnutrition among adolescent girls is key to improving the nutritional status of the family and the entire population.

The rising trend of poverty and low income has remained a complex, chronic and pervasive problem, an estimated 40.1% of the Nigerian population live below the poverty line where children from the poorest economic quartile were reported to be four times likely to be malnourished compared with children from the rich households. Malnutrition is a serious consequence of food insecurity (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020; Owoo, 2020). The level and dimension of hunger and food insecurity have become a public health concern in Nigeria. Agricultural production in Nigeria is largely dependent on rainfall at a subsistent level on a small scale. Government investment in agricultural production has not contributed to the reduction of malnutrition significantly to meet the national development goal, as the inadequate storage system, crop seasonality, inadequate transport system has significantly influenced the food distribution system in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020; Nwozor et al., 2019; The Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2016). Persistent humanitarian crises especially in the northeastern part of Nigeria has

greatly exposed the people to untold hardship. Knowledge, attitude and practice towards malnutrition and nutrition-related studies among adolescents have not yet been studied in the northeastern part of Nigeria (comprising of six states).

There are several policies and programmes put in place by the Nigerian to address the problem of malnutrition among children including national policy on food and nutrition in Nigeria (International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2019; Ministry of Budget and National Planning, 2016), national strategic plan of action (health sector response), the food security bill, National Plan of Action on Food and Nutrition in Nigeria and the micronutrients control programme among others to address the issue of malnutrition and food insecurity at all level in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Health, 2005). Nevertheless, the implementation of these programmes and policies continue to be a challenge with a persistently high level of malnutrition among children (Adinma, 2017; Federal Ministry of Health, 2005; Save the Children, 2016). There are no existing nutrition programmes and policies for adolescents as the national food and nutrition policy in Nigeria made little or no reference to nutrition-related issues of the important aspect of the population (adolescents). The strategic plan of action and most of the intervention are geared towards under-five children, pregnant and lactating mothers overlooking the plight of the adolescents. There is a need to revisit the national strategic plan of action in Nigeria to include interventions targeting adolescent for good of the future in all seriousness. Nonetheless, amid the trending burden of malnutrition, there is no existing comprehensive health education program on malnutrition targeting adolescents in Nigeria, though there are policies to reduce the burden of malnutrition, the implementation is yet a challenge. The triple benefit health education intervention was introduced to look beyond the 1000 days of the little one's life (from conception to the 2nd birthday), before the preconception period to productive adult life in the future and the health and wellbeing of their offspring.

In a study conducted in Sokoto, Nigeria only 8.3% of girls had excellent nutritional knowledge (Essien et al., 2014). Poor knowledge, attitude and practice on nutrition-related information place the future of the adolescent girls and their unborn child at risk of malnutrition, pregnancy-related complication, morbidity, mortality and also an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition. Adolescent especially girls are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition due to the increased requirement of iron for both growth and replacement of menstrual blood losses. Pregnancy and lactation at an early stage before they are fully grown can seriously affect their development and that of the unborn child (Bindra, 2017; Essien et al., 2014; John et al., 2013).

The majority of interventions and policies in underdeveloped and developing countries with Nigeria inclusive are targeting pregnant and lactating mothers with children under 5, overlooking the wellbeing of the adolescent girls (Krebs et al., 2017). Previous studies on nutrition-sensitive health education intervention have suggested integrating nutrition-related interventions with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in addressing the nutrition-related problem and for a healthy generation (Abdur Razzak et al., 2016). Nigeria losses over US\$ 1.5 billion (equivalent to ₦611,235,000,000.00, RM6,189,750,000.00) in gross domestic

product to the treatment of only vitamin and mineral deficiencies annually (WorldBank, 2018).

Identification of gaps in knowledge, attitude and practice related to malnutrition and the evidence-based intervention will reduce malnutrition and promote healthy behaviour. Adolescent girls should be informed about the forms, causes, symptoms, consequences and preventive measures of malnutrition to enable them to live a healthy and productive life (Krebs et al., 2017).

There is a need for educational interventions among adolescent girls to raise awareness on malnutrition-related forms, causes, symptoms, consequences and preventive measures to reduce its burden and improve their confidence and the ability to better recognise and act on the symptoms. To the best of our knowledge, the Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention study is the first to be conducted among adolescent girls in trying to increase their knowledge, attitude and practice towards malnutrition in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study attempted to determine the knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition, this can play an essential role in designing and implementing appropriate interventions to reduce the burden of malnutrition and improve health outcome among adolescent girls. The study further tried to evaluate the effectiveness of triple benefit health education intervention on improving knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition.

The findings from this study are useful to the public health experts in Nigeria and Borno State as the population under study are adolescents in Nigeria. This study explores the knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls on the forms, causes, symptoms, consequences and preventive measures of malnutrition. The study further discovers food security and hygiene practice of adolescent girls. This intervention tried to improve the knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls by improving their understanding of the forms, causes, symptoms, consequences, preventive measures of malnutrition, food security and hygiene and also enhancing their confidence and personal abilities to improve healthy practice.

Findings from this study will play a significant role in empowering primary and secondary schools' community to engage in the transfer of evidence-based knowledge, attitude and practice on the forms, causes, symptoms, consequences, preventive measures of malnutrition, hygiene and food security. Alongside, the findings will be useful in helping the government to better understand the need to target adolescent girls in the planning and implementation of effective and efficient health education intervention strategies that aimed at reducing malnutrition for long-term survival and future health outcome.

Identifying the level of knowledge, attitude, practice, food security and hygiene among adolescent girls in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council provide an opportunity for both national and international comparative purposes. More so, the study had the opportunity to evaluate information motivation and behavioural skills theory in improving knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council. The outcome of this study can provide substantial practical support of the model and can also add more evidence on the performance of the model.

The result from this study can be useful for national nutrition strategy and programs in promoting optimal nutrition feeding practices in boarding schools in Borno state and Nigeria at large. The findings can be useful to the work of developers of public health and education project in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

There is a clear evidence gap and dearth of information on adolescent malnutrition including factors contributing to malnutrition in north-eastern Nigeria and Borno state. The study was conducted in two Phases, Phase I cross-sectional study to ascertain the level of knowledge, attitude and practice towards malnutrition, and also factors that needed to be addressed during the triple benefit health education intervention for Phase II of the study.

1.4.1 Research Questions for Phase I (Cross-sectional study)

1. What are the predictors of knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition?
2. What is the nutritional status of adolescent girls?
3. What are the predictors of food security among adolescent girls?
4. What are the predictors of hygiene practice among adolescent girls?

1.4.2 Research Questions for Phase II (Intervention study)

What is the effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on knowledge, attitude, and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition?

1.5 Research Objective

The study consists of two (2) phases.

1.5.1 General Objectives

Phase I: To determine knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC).

Phase II: To develop, validate, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention in improving knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

1.5.2.1 Phase I: Determine Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Adolescent Girls towards Malnutrition

1. To describe the characteristics of the respondents
 - a. Socio-demographic (age, class in school, ethnicity, religion, place of residence, household size, household income, head of household, age of father, father's education, father's occupation, age of mother, mother's education, mother's occupation, family type).
 - b. Knowledge, attitude and practice towards malnutrition.
 - c. Food security.
 - d. Hygiene
 - e. Information-motivation-behavioural skills
 - f. Nutritional status
 - g. 24-hours dietary recall
 - h. Source of information
2. To determine the association between knowledge, attitude and practice towards malnutrition and respondent's characteristics.
3. To determine the predictors of knowledge, attitude and practice, towards malnutrition.
4. To determine the association between food security, hygiene and respondent's characteristics.
5. To determine the predictors of food security and hygiene.

1.5.2.2 Phase II: Develop, Validate, Implement and Evaluate the Effectiveness of Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Adolescent girls towards Malnutrition

1. To develop, validate, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of Triple Benefit health education intervention on improving knowledge, attitude and practice of adolescent girls towards malnutrition.
2. To determine the baseline differences between intervention and control groups in
 - a. Respondents' characteristics
 - b. Respondents' nutritional status
 - c. Respondents' 24-hours dietary recall
 - d. Respondents' knowledge, attitude and practice towards malnutrition.
 - e. Food security and hygiene.
 - f. Information, motivation and behavioural skills
 - g. Source of information.
3. To determine the changes in knowledge, attitude, practice, food security and hygiene towards malnutrition among adolescent girls between and within the intervention and control group at three (3) month's post-intervention and three (3) months follow up.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

Phase I

1. Respondent's characteristics have a significant association with knowledge, attitude, practice, food security and hygiene towards malnutrition respectively.

Phase II

2. There is no significant difference in respondents' characteristics, knowledge, attitude, practice, food security and hygiene towards malnutrition between intervention and control group at baseline.
3. There is a significant difference between and within intervention and control groups on knowledge, attitude, practice, food security and hygiene towards malnutrition at three (3) month's post-intervention and three (3) months follow up.

1.7 Operational Definition of Study Variables

1.7.1 Dependent Variable

I. Primary Variable

Knowledge Towards Malnutrition

In this study, knowledge towards malnutrition was defined as the ability of the respondents to identify malnutrition as insufficiency, excess, or inequality in an individual energy intake or nutrients, forms, causes, symptoms, consequences and the preventive measures of malnutrition.

Attitude Towards malnutrition

Malnutrition related belief, feelings and orientation towards malnutrition to describe the respondents' attitude towards malnutrition concerning poverty, the seriousness of malnutrition, what they think in regards to a certain food, the contribution of these foods to their health and wellbeing, and their views on expensive food.

Practice Towards Malnutrition

Practice in this study has to do with the actual behaviour or the application of ideas by respondents' relation to the number of times they eat in seven days and recalling what they have eaten within 24-hours.

II. Secondary Variables

Food security

Food security is when all people at all-time have economic, social, and physical access to sufficient and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life, that is food must be available, accessible, utilized properly and in stable condition (Ghattas, 2014; Global Network Against Food Crisis, 2020a).

Hygiene

Hygiene in this study refers to situation and practices that help to maintain good health, well-being and prevent the spread of diseases concerning handwashing, source of water, water storage, and local treatment of water.

1.7.2 Independent Variables

I. Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention

Triple Benefit health education intervention is a program design to provide information related to understanding malnutrition, definition, forms, causes, sign, and consequences of malnutrition, food groups, dietary diversity, local snacks, breaking the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene. This information is provided to respondents during the intervention phase in such a package to close the knowledge gap. The Triple Benefit Health Education Intervention package is composed of six modules in the printed form delivered through teaching, interactive session, brainstorming, role-play and practicals.

II. Sociodemographic Characteristics

Age of Respondents

Age refers to how old the respondent was in years at the time of the study.

Ethnicity of Respondents

This refers to the specific local dialect of the respondents including Bura/Kanuri/Hausa/Marghi, Shuwa/Fulani/Chibok, Gwoza and others).

Religion of Respondents

This is the respondent's self-reported faith or way of worship either Christianity or Islam.

Place of Residence

This refers to where the respondents' families are staying (Rural/ Urban area).

Household Size

This is the number of persons in the respondent family living together as a family.

Household Monthly Income

This refers to the monthly household income of respondent's family less than ₦18,000 (RM 150); ₦18,000-₦30,000 (RM 150-250); ₦310,000- ₦50,000 (RM 258-417); ₦51,000 (RM 425) and above.

Head of Household of Respondents

This refers to any person responsible for taking care of the respondent's family including father, mother, other relations (child-headed, grandmother, grandfather, uncle, aunty, others).

Age of Father/Mother

This refers to the age of the respondent's father/mother at the time of the study.

Education (Father/Mother)

This refers to the level of education of the respondent's father/mother as no education/primary education/secondary education/tertiary education.

Occupation (Father/Mother)

This refers to the current employment status of respondent father/mother to be civil servant/ trader/business/farmer/ others.

Information

This refers to the facts the respondent has on malnutrition related to preventive measures on what they eat, signs and what can be done to prevent malnutrition.

Motivation

This refers to support and encouragements the respondents receive from family, friends and the surrounding environment on eating nutritious food.

Behavioural Skills

In this study, this refers to the actual behaviour of respondents to how hard or easy it is to buy, store and cook nutritious food for themselves and their families.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Shapu, R. C., Ismail, S., Ahmad, N., Lim, P. Y., & Njodi, I. A. (2020). Food Security and Hygiene Practice among Adolescent Girls in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria. *Foods*, 9(9), 1–21.
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Submitted for Publication

- Nutritional Status and Dietary Diversity Among Adolescent Girls in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State Nigeria: Cross-sectional Study.
- Effectiveness of Health Education Intervention on Dietary Practice and Nutritional Status Among Adolescent Girls in Government Secondary Schools Maiduguri: A Cluster Randomised Control Trial.



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