

# **LASU JOURNAL** **OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY** NIGERIAN STUDIES (LASUJMNS)

Vol 2(1) March 2026

ISSN (Print): 3121 9144

ISSN (Online): 3121-8407

Publications/Research Committee,  
i/c Centre for General Nigerian Studies,  
Lagos State University, P.M.B. 0001,  
Ojo, Lagos State, Nigeria.

© Lagos State University, (2026)

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electrical, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.*

ISSN (Print): 3121 9144

ISSN (Online): 3121-8407

*A publication of*  
**Lagos State University**  
P.M.B. 0001. LASU Post Office  
Ojo Lagos State, Nigeria.

## Editorial Board

### Editor-in-Chief

Prof. M. O. B. Mohammed, FNAEAP, Ph.D  
Director, Centre for General Nigerian Studies  
Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria  
**Email:** mubashiru.mohammed@lasu.edu.ng  
**Research Interests:** Educational  
Management, Higher Education, Politics of  
Education, Educational Policies

### Associate Editors

**Prof. Ronnie Frazer-Williams**  
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies  
University of Sierra Leone  
Research Interests: Postgraduate Education,  
Academic Administration

**Prof. Onoriode Collins Potokri**  
Education Leadership and Management  
University of the Free State, South Africa  
Research Interests: Educational Leadership,  
School Management

**Prof. Wangari Nwai**  
Communication Studies  
Presbyterian University of East Africa, Kenya  
Research Interests: Communication Studies,  
Media and Society

**Prof. Ayeni Abiodun Olumide**  
Educational Management  
University of Ibadan, Nigeria  
Research Interests: Educational  
Administration and Management

**Prof. George Oduro**  
Institute for Educational Planning and  
Administration  
University of Cape Coast, Ghana  
Research Interests: Educational Planning  
and Policy

**Prof. Bolanle Ola**  
Acute Mental Health Unit, Toowoomba Base  
Hospital  
Queensland, Australia  
Research Interests: Mental Health and  
Community Health

**Dr. Linda Sue Hammonds**  
Community Mental Health Nursing  
University of South Alabama, USA  
Research Interests: Community and Mental  
Health Nursing

**Dr. Aulia Luqman Aziz**  
Business Administration  
Universitas Brawijaya, Jakarta, Indonesia  
Research Interests: Business Administration  
and Management

### Editorial Board Members

**Dr. Sylvester Olajire Idowu (Ph.D)**  
Assistant Director, Centre for General  
Nigerian Studies, Lagos State University,  
Nigeria

**Dr. Omoteso Oluwa (Ph.D)**  
Assistant Director, Centre for General  
Nigerian Studies, Lagos State University,  
Nigeria

**Mr. Ademola Adekoya (MSc)**  
Deputy Registrar, Centre for General  
Nigerian Studies, Lagos State University,  
Nigeria

### Advisory Board

**Prof Dapo Asaju**  
Religion Studies  
Lagos State University  
Lagos, Nigeria

**Prof. Juliet Wambui Macharia**  
Communication Studies  
Karatina University, Kenya  
Nyeri County, Kenya

**Prof. Jonas A. S. Redwood-Sawyers**  
Executive Director, e-Learning Centre  
University of Sierra Leone  
Freetown, Sierraleone

### Editorial Desk

It is my distinct honour to present Volume 2 of the Lagos State University Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS), published in March 2026. This edition comprises twenty-one (21) rigorously researched and high-quality scholarly articles drawn from diverse disciplines, which all reflect the enduring commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship and academic excellence of the journal.

All submitted manuscripts underwent a thorough double-blind peer review process conducted by seasoned and highly respected scholars. In addition, stringent plagiarism screening procedures were implemented to ensure originality, credibility, and adherence to global best practices in scholarly publishing. These quality assurance measures were carried out in strict compliance with the directive of the Vice-Chancellor, Distinguished Professor Ibiyemi Ibilola Olatunji-Bello, mni, NPOM, GCGNS, whose unwavering commitment to academic integrity and excellence continues to guide the operations of the journal.

The successful publication of this volume further reinforces the reputation of Lagos State University as a hub of scholarly innovation and the dedication of the editorial board to maintaining high publication standards. LASUJMNS remains committed to providing a reputable platform for the dissemination of impactful research that addresses contemporary societal challenges and contributes meaningfully to knowledge production within Nigeria and beyond.

We are pleased to announce that the call for papers for Volume 3 is now open. The forthcoming edition is scheduled for publication before the third quarter of 2026. We encourage scholars, researchers, and practitioners to submit original and well-researched manuscripts for consideration.

Distinguished scholars, authors, and members of the academic community, we warmly invite you to continue supporting and subscribing to LASUJMNS as a credible outlet for quality research, enhanced visibility, and wider scholarly reach.

We appreciate your continued collaborations and contributions to contemporary academic discuss.

**Prof. M. O. B. Mohammed**, FNAEAP

Editor-in-Chief

*LASU Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS)*

Lagos State University.

## CONTENTS

- Health Awareness and Socioeconomic Determinants of Food Consumption Among University Students: A Case Study of Lagos State University  
**Lawal-Arogundade, Samod Olayiwole; Salami, Lateef Olusegun; Mohammed, Abidat Oluwashola; Bashiru, Bilikis Omowunmi** 1-16
- Representation of Solutions of Radial Schrodinger Equation for The Double An-Harmonic Oscillator via Transformation to Biconfluent Heunsequation  
**Bisiriyu Babatunde Awesu; Aderibigbe Anjorin, Opeoluwa Joel Owodolu; & Oluwaseun Kunle Owodolu** 17-22
- Climate Change Impact and Indigenous Adaptation Strategies of Selected Coastal Communities in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos State  
**Agosu, Christopher Monday; Okafor, Chinenye Lilian; Adejobi, Mayowa John; Arove, Michael Adetunji; & Olatunbosun Eyitayo** 23-36
- Marketing Strategies, Student Engagement and Business Performance Among Student Entrepreneurs in University of Lagos  
**Bukola Amao-Taiwo; Oladimeji Odetunde; Cynthia Ada Chigioko** 37-53
- Effects Of Sex Education On Gender Expression And Academic Performance Of Senior Secondary School Students in Education District V of Lagos State, Nigeria  
**Ogunsakin, Ayodele Augustine Barnes; Isaac-Philips, Modupe Margaret & Abari, Ayodeji Olasunkanmi** 54-64
- Sociological Review of Moral Character Development and Social Interaction among Students  
**Onwuka, Martins Ikechukwu; Bello, Samaila & Lamus, Larai Usman** 65-75
- Cultural Degeneration and The Lost Harmony: A View on The Erosion of Traditional Family Systems In Contemporary Nigeria  
**Olubode, Ojajuni & Dairo, Taiwo Sunday** 76-87
- Deans' Administrative Leadership Styles and Organisational Performance of Lagos State-Owned Universities, Nigeria  
**Shittu, Taofeek Olawale; Fawole, Christiana Oluwatoyin & Mohammed, Mubashiru Olayiwola** 88-95

Teacher Recruitment Practices, Educational Quality, And Learning Poverty in Nigeria’s Public Secondary Schools <b>Yahya, Lateefat Oludare; Adekoya, Babatunde Adebowale &amp; Giwa, Yussuf Olaoye</b>	<b>96-102</b>
Conflict, Food Security, And Crisis Communication: South-West Nigeria Experience <b>Ajayi, Adewale; Okeowo, Taiwo Olatunde &amp; Arisoyin, Olanrewaju Amos</b>	<b>103-118</b>
Influence Of Political Empowerment in Fostering Skills Acquisition in Ojokoro Local Council Development Area, Lagos State, Nigeria <b>Salam, Afusat Omolara; Mohammed, Mubasiru Olawale B.; Rufai, Musiliu Dada &amp; Abudu, Abosedo Mariam</b>	<b>119-126</b>
Use Of Cloud Collaborative Tools by Librarians in Academic Universities: The Lasu Library Experience <b>Ogungbo, Wakilu O.<sup>1</sup> &amp; Amosun, Faith I.</b>	<b>127-140</b>
Reclaiming Traditional Nigerian Values: A Reflection on Widowhood and Family Systems <b>Olubode, Ojajuni &amp; Dairo, Taiwo Sunday</b>	<b>141-147</b>
Influence of Employee Wellness Programs in Schools on Teacher Well-Being in Public Primary School in Southwestern Nigeria <b>Temisanren, Olawumi Esther &amp; Aboki, Adamu Jibrin</b>	<b>148-157</b>
Servant Leadership Styles of Headteachers and Pupils’ Academic Performance in Lagos State Public Primary School, Nigeria <b>Shittu, Taofeek Olawale; Shittu, Aramide Ayorinde &amp; Mohammed, Mubashiru Olayiwola</b>	<b>158-164</b>
Effects of Monetary Policies on Stock Market Performance in Nigeria: Further Investigation <b>Bello, Hassan T.; Gbemisola, Olajide S. &amp; Asimi, Fatai</b>	<b>165-177</b>
Libraries as Gardens: Cultivating Inclusivity and Growth in Nigerian School Education <b>Ladipo, Sunday Olusola (Ph.D)<sup>1</sup> &amp; Adebosin, Walid Gbadebo</b>	<b>178-198</b>

Impact of Building Information Modelling (BIM) on Stakeholder-Induced Scope Changes in Construction Projects in Urban Area of Lagos State <b>Adeodu, Adefemi Omowole; Itanola, Taiwo Azeez &amp; Daniyan, Ilesanmi Afolabi</b>	<b>199-209</b>
Institutional Quality and Sustainable Development: A Quantitative Analysis <b>Oyovwi, Dickson &amp; Osho-Itsueli, Bomi</b>	<b>210-219</b>
A Review of The E-Medical Records Policy Implementation on Healthcare Service Delivery in Lagos State General Hospitals <b>Adu, Oluwatosin B.; Akinyinka, Modupeola R. &amp; Ibikunle, Busayo Qazeem</b>	<b>220-242</b>
Impacts of Personal Training Cost of Teachers on Job Quality and Productivity in Public Secondary Schools in Lagos State <b>Dairo, Taiwo Sunday; Beyioku, Joseph Bankole; Ayeni, Oluwapamilerin Paul &amp; Yahya, Lateefat Oludare</b>	<b>243-252</b>



## HEALTH AWARENESS AND SOCIOECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY

Lawal-Arogundade, Samod Olayiwole<sup>1</sup> Salami, Lateef Olusegun<sup>2</sup>, Mohammed, Abidat Oluwashola<sup>3</sup> Bashiru, Bilikis Omowunmi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Economics, Lagos State University; Department of Economics, Lagos State

<sup>3</sup>University; Department of Language, Arts, and Social Science Education;

<sup>4</sup>Department of Economics, Lagos State University

samad.lawal@lasu.edu.ng; lateefsalami19@yahoo.com; abidat.mohammed@lasu.edu.ng;

Bashirubilik18@gmail.com

### Abstract

*Healthy dietary behaviour among university students is increasingly recognized as a public health concern, particularly in developing countries where socioeconomic constraints influence food choices. Although students often demonstrate adequate awareness of healthy eating, existing studies suggest a persistent gap between nutritional knowledge and actual dietary practices. However, limited empirical evidence explains how health awareness interacts with socioeconomic conditions to shape food consumption among Nigerian university students. This study examines the relationship between health awareness and socioeconomic determinants of food consumption among undergraduate students at Lagos State University (LASU). Guided by the Health Belief Model, a descriptive survey design was adopted, using primary data collected through structured questionnaires administered to 102 students across five faculties. The findings indicate that health awareness among students is relatively high, with 83.3% acknowledging the importance of good nutrition. Despite this awareness, a pronounced knowledge-behaviour gap persists. About 68.6% of respondents reported skipping meals due to financial and environmental constraints. Socioeconomic analysis shows that 52.9% of students subsist on monthly allowances between ₦10,000 and ₦30,000, mainly sourced from parents, limiting consistent access to nutritious foods. Students from lower-income backgrounds were more vulnerable to food insecurity, frequent fast-food consumption, and low fruit and vegetable intake. The study concludes that health awareness alone is insufficient to promote healthy dietary behaviour without addressing underlying socioeconomic and environmental barriers. It recommends integrated interventions combining nutrition education with policies that improve affordability and access to healthy food within university environments.*

### Keywords:

Dietary behaviour, Food consumption, Health awareness, Socioeconomic factors, University students.

### Citation:

Lawal-Arogundade, S. O., Salami, L. O., Mohammed, A. O., & Bashiru, B. O. (2026). Health awareness and socioeconomic determinants of food consumption among university students: a case study of Lagos State University. *LASU Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS)*, 2(1), 1-16

## **Introduction**

The issue of food consumption and nutritional behaviour among university students has gained increasing attention due to its implications for public health and human capital development. University students represent a critical population group, as dietary habits formed during this transitional stage often persist into adulthood and influence long-term health outcomes. In developing countries such as Nigeria, these concerns are further compounded by socioeconomic constraints, rising food prices, and changing food environments within and around university campuses. Understanding the interplay between health awareness and socioeconomic factors is therefore essential for designing effective interventions that promote healthy eating behaviours among students. This study contributes to this discourse by examining how health awareness and socioeconomic determinants jointly shape food consumption patterns among undergraduates at Lagos State University.

## **Background and Context**

The nutritional status and dietary behaviour of university students represent a critical public health concern globally, with particular significance in developing countries where socioeconomic constraints profoundly influence food choices and health outcomes (Afolabi et al., 2015). The transition to university life marks a pivotal developmental stage characterized by increased independence, exposure to new social environments, and significant lifestyle changes that fundamentally shape eating habits and long-term health behaviours (Harris, 2015). These formative years often establish dietary patterns that persist well into adulthood, potentially influencing lifetime health trajectories and chronic disease risk.

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948). Building on this holistic conceptualization, health awareness encompasses the extent to which individuals possess knowledge, understanding, and recognition of the importance of healthy behaviours, including nutritious dietary habits, regular physical activity, and avoidance of harmful substances (WHO, 2018). However, substantial evidence suggests that awareness and knowledge alone are insufficient to guarantee healthy eating practices. Socioeconomic determinants including income, education level, occupation, social class, and access to healthcare significantly mediate the translation of health knowledge into actual dietary behaviours (WHO, 2017).

The global burden of diet-related non-communicable diseases continues to rise, with poor dietary habits identified as a leading risk factor for premature mortality and morbidity. Among young adults, particularly university students, unhealthy eating patterns contribute to rising rates of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and other metabolic disorders. These trends are especially worrisome in sub-Saharan Africa, where the nutrition transition characterized by shifts from traditional diets toward processed, energy-dense foods is occurring rapidly alongside persistent under-nutrition in some populations.

Nigeria's higher education landscape comprises over 170 universities serving a student population exceeding 2.5 million (NUC, 2020), making it one of the largest university systems in Africa. Within this context, campus students face multifaceted challenges in maintaining healthy eating habits. These challenges are compounded by limited financial resources, as most students depend entirely on parental support or engage in part-time work to fund their education and living expenses. The economic pressures faced by Nigerian families, including high inflation rates and unemployment, further constrain students' food budgets and limit their access to diverse, nutritious food options.

The campus food environment in Nigerian universities is commonly characterized by the widespread presence of fast-food outlets, street food vendors, and small restaurants that prioritize affordability and convenience over nutritional quality. While these food options are readily accessible to students, they are low in essential nutrients. Fresh fruits, vegetables, and other nutrient-dense foods are frequently less accessible due to higher costs, limited availability, and inadequate storage facilities, particularly within campus and surrounding areas.

Cultural and social factors also play an important role in shaping dietary behaviours among Nigerian university students. Traditional Nigerian diets are generally considered nutritionally balanced; however, they may require more time, resources, and cooking facilities than are readily available to students living in urban campus settings. In addition, social influences such as peer norms, eating habits within social groups, and the symbolic value attached to certain foods and eating venues can affect food choices. The growing influence of Western fast-food culture, reinforced through advertising, social media, and popular culture, further shapes students' food preferences and consumption patterns. These contextual factors highlight the complexity of food consumption decisions among university students and underscore the importance of examining both health awareness and socioeconomic determinants.

### **The Knowledge-Behaviour Gap**

A growing body of research has documented a persistent gap between nutrition knowledge and actual dietary behaviour among university students worldwide. Previous studies have shown that students' eating habits are influenced by multiple factors, including socioeconomic status, cultural background, peer influence, time constraints, and food availability (Laska et al., 2010; Nelson et al., 2008; Caspi et al., 2024). While many students possess basic nutritional knowledge and express positive attitudes toward healthy eating, their actual food choices often fail to align with this knowledge.

Research also consistently indicates that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have better access to healthy food options and are more likely to engage in healthy eating behaviours (Darmon & Drewnowski, 2008; Martinez et al., 2023). Conversely, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face compounded barriers, including financial constraints, limited access to food storage and preparation facilities, and reduced availability of diverse foods (Nelson & Bull, 2013; Yang & Park, 2025). In Nigeria, studies have shown that university

students often rely on low-cost, high-calorie foods, with diets high in refined carbohydrates, fried foods, and sugary beverages, and low in fruits, vegetables, and protein-rich foods (Afolabi et al., 2015). These patterns are associated with increased risks of micronutrient deficiencies, overweight/obesity, and other diet-related chronic diseases.

However, most existing studies have largely focused on descriptive assessments of dietary patterns or prevalence of unhealthy behaviours, without explicitly integrating both health awareness and socioeconomic determinants within a single analytical framework. Furthermore, few studies have explored how students' health awareness interacts with financial constraints, living arrangements, and the campus food environment to influence their actual dietary behaviours. This study integrates both cognitive factors (health awareness) and structural constraints (income, financial support, living arrangements, and food access) to identify the key barriers that prevent students from translating nutritional knowledge into healthy dietary behaviour.

### **Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

Examining dietary behaviours among university students requires a combination of theoretical guidance and empirical evidence. The theoretical framework provides a structured lens to understand how health awareness, socioeconomic factors, and environmental conditions interact to shape food consumption patterns, while the literature review situates the study within the context of existing research, identifying established findings, inconsistencies, and gaps that the present study seeks to address. This section first presents the Health Belief Model (HBM) as the guiding theory, illustrating how students' perceptions of susceptibility, severity, benefits, and barriers influence their health-related decisions. It then reviews relevant empirical studies on socioeconomic determinants, health awareness, and dietary behaviours among university students, highlighting the factors that contribute to the persistent knowledge behaviour gap.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored in the Health Belief Model (HBM), developed by Rosenstock (1974), which is widely used to explain and predict health-related behaviours based on individuals' perceptions of risk and benefits. The model posits that the adoption of health behaviours is influenced by individuals' perceptions of their susceptibility to health problems, the severity of potential consequences, the perceived benefits of taking preventive action, and the perceived barriers that may hinder such action. Additionally, cues to action and self-efficacy are critical in determining whether knowledge translates into consistent behaviour.

The HBM is particularly relevant to this study because it provides a framework for understanding the knowledge-behaviour gap observed among university students with respect to dietary practices. While many students demonstrate high health awareness, including understanding the importance of balanced nutrition and the health risks associated with poor dietary choices, their actual eating behaviours often do not align with this knowledge. The constructs of perceived susceptibility and perceived severity help explain students' recognition

of their risk of nutrition-related health problems, such as overweight, micronutrient deficiencies, and chronic diseases. Perceived benefits highlight students' understanding that adopting healthier eating practices, such as increasing fruit and vegetable intake and reducing fast-food consumption, can improve both immediate well-being and long-term health outcomes.

The HBM's perceived barriers construct is central to this study, as socioeconomic and environmental constraints such as limited financial resources, dependence on parental allowances, off-campus living arrangements, and the prevalence of inexpensive, unhealthy food options on and around campus prevent students from translating knowledge into practice. Furthermore, cues to action, including exposure to health information through social media and campus campaigns, and self-efficacy, such as confidence in preparing affordable nutritious meals, mediate the relationship between knowledge and behaviour.

### **Socioeconomic Determinants of Food Consumption**

Socioeconomic factors exert a well-documented influence on food consumption patterns, particularly among university students navigating financial limitations and complex food environments. Income level remains a central determinant of diet quality, with students from lower-income backgrounds facing disproportionate barriers to accessing nutrient-dense foods (Caspi et al, 2024). Also, Martinez et al. (2023) found that food insecurity, a key socioeconomic marker, was strongly associated with poorer diet quality, irregular eating schedules, and increased consumption of processed foods. Their work demonstrated that socioeconomic constraints not only limit access to healthy foods but also worsen behavioural outcomes, such as meal skipping and binge eating, in students worldwide.

Income level interacts with other socioeconomic factors, including employment status and living arrangement. However, Yang and Park (2025) reported that students who were financially independent or working part-time exhibited more irregular eating patterns and poorer diet quality compared with those supported by family, highlighting how financial stress and dual roles (work plus study) negatively affect healthy eating. Similarly, Aguirre et al. (2024) found that students living off-campus faced additional economic pressures, as they bore greater responsibility for food procurement and preparation costs, further constraining healthy choices.

Environmental and structural determinants also intersect with income to shape students' dietary behaviour. The density of low-cost fast-food outlets and limited availability of affordable healthy options around campuses reinforce unhealthy dietary habits among lower-income students (Johnson & Lee, 2024). These contextual factors compound economic limitations by making convenience foods more accessible and affordable relative to nutrient-rich meals. Moyo et al. (2025) reported that strong socioeconomic gradients in diet quality persisted even among health-aware students, underscoring the dominant role of financial resources and access in shaping food consumption.

Despite this growing body of research, there remains a gap in Nigerian scholarship specifically examining the multifaceted relationship between socioeconomic determinants and food choice behaviours among university students. Existing studies often describe prevalence patterns without fully unpacking how income, financial support structures, and food environment dynamics interact to influence eating practices. This study addresses this gap by integrating these socioeconomic determinants within an analytical framework that also considers health awareness, thereby providing deeper insight into the complexities of food consumption behaviour among Lagos State University students.

### **Health Awareness and Dietary Behaviour**

Health awareness is widely acknowledged as a foundational element in promoting healthy dietary behaviour among young adults, including university students. Higher levels of nutritional knowledge are associated with positive dietary attitudes, including greater recognition of the importance of fruit and vegetable intake and avoidance of unhealthy foods (Yi & Lee, 2024). Moreso, Sahadeo et al. (2025) further emphasise that while awareness can motivate healthier intentions, structural barriers such as limited financial resources and an unsupportive food environment frequently prevent students from acting on their knowledge. These findings suggest that health awareness alone is insufficient to guarantee healthy dietary behaviours. Afolabi et al. (2015) found that Nigerian undergraduates demonstrated moderate to high awareness of healthy eating, many still relied on low-cost, high-calorie foods due to financial constraints, time limitations, and the prevalence of convenient fast-food options on campus. This aligns with evidence that socioeconomic and environmental factors, including living arrangements and income levels, strongly influence the translation of awareness into practice (Oyedemi et al., 2018).

### **Methodology**

The methodological approach was designed to capture students' health awareness, socioeconomic characteristics, and food consumption behaviours in a systematic and reliable manner. This section therefore describes the research design and study area, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and statistical techniques adopted to analyse the data and address the study objectives.

### **Research Design and Study Area**

This study employed a descriptive survey design to investigate the relationship between health awareness, socioeconomic status, and food consumption patterns among undergraduate students at Lagos State University. LASU, located in Ojo, Lagos State, Nigeria, is a large public university with a diverse student population exceeding 30,000 students. The institution comprises several faculties including Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Arts, Education, and Science, providing a representative environment for assessing health awareness and food consumption patterns in an urban campus setting.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, which is suitable for finite populations and allows for a specified margin of error. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed across the five faculties using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across different academic disciplines. Of these, 102 completed questionnaires were retrieved, yielding a response rate of 68%. The distribution across faculties was: Social Sciences (47.1%), Management Sciences (25.5%), Arts (11.8%), Science (9.8%), and Education (5.9%).

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

Primary data were collected through a structured, self-administered questionnaire distributed digitally via Google Forms. The questionnaire comprised four sections: (A) demographic information, (B) health awareness indicators measured on a 5-point Likert scale, (C) socioeconomic factors including income level and living arrangements, and (D) food consumption patterns and behaviours. The instrument was validated by the research supervisor and underwent pilot testing with 10 students not included in the main sample. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and participation was entirely voluntary.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations were employed to summarize demographic characteristics, health awareness levels, socioeconomic status, and food consumption behaviours. Inferential analysis was conducted using chi-square tests to examine relationships between variables. All statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 and Microsoft Excel. A significant level of  $p < 0.05$  was adopted for hypothesis testing.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 102 respondents who participated in this study. The sample consisted predominantly of female students (62.7%), which may reflect either higher female enrolment at LASU or greater willingness among female students to participate in health-related surveys. The age distribution showed that the majority (72.5%) were between 18-22 years, representing the typical age range for undergraduate students in Nigeria. Nearly half of the respondents (47.1%) were in their final year (400 level and above), and those who are advancing into adulthood.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=102)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	38	37.3
	Female	64	62.7
<b>Age</b>	18-22 years	74	72.5
	23-27 years	26	25.5
	28 and above	2	2.0
<b>Level of Study</b>	100 Level	11	10.8
	200 Level	18	17.6
	300 Level	25	25.5
	400 Level and above	48	47.1
<b>Faculty</b>	Social Sciences	48	47.1
	Management Sciences	26	25.5
	Arts	12	11.8
	Science	10	9.8
	Education	6	5.9

Table 1 summarized the demographic characteristics of the 102 respondents. The majority were females (62.7%), while males accounted for 37.3%. Most participants (72.5%) were aged 18–22 years, with 25.5% aged 23–27 years, indicating a predominantly young sample. In terms of academic level, 47.1% were in 400 Level and above, followed by 25.5% in 300 Level, suggesting that most respondents were in the advanced stages of their studies. Faculty distribution showed that nearly half (47.1%) were from the Social Sciences, 25.5% from Management Sciences, and fewer from Arts (11.8%), Science (9.8%), and Education (5.9%). This showed that the sample largely comprised senior-level female undergraduates from social science-oriented disciplines.

### **Health Awareness and Dietary Knowledge**

Table 2 presents the health awareness indicators among respondents. The results reveal generally high levels of nutritional knowledge, with 83.3% of students recognizing the importance of good nutrition for their health. This finding suggests that nutrition education efforts, whether through formal curricula, social media, or other channels, have successfully raised awareness about the fundamental importance of diet for health.

**Table 2: Health Awareness Indicators (N=102)**

Health Awareness Indicator	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe good nutrition is important for my health	37 (36.3%)	48 (47.1%)	15 (14.7%)	2 (2.0%)	0 (0%)
I consider the health implications when choosing foods	30 (29.4%)	54 (52.9%)	16 (15.7%)	2 (2.0%)	0 (0%)
I regularly read food labels before purchasing	23 (22.5%)	43 (42.2%)	24 (23.5%)	12 (11.8%)	0 (0%)
I try to balance my meals with fruits and vegetables	17 (16.7%)	44 (43.1%)	33 (32.4%)	8 (7.8%)	0 (0%)
I get health information from social media or other platforms	37 (36.3%)	48 (47.1%)	15 (14.7%)	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.0%)

Notably, 82.4% of students reported that they actively consider the health implications when choosing foods. However, the translation of this awareness into specific behaviours shows variation. While 64.7% report regularly reading food labels, a substantial proportion (23.5%) remained neutral, suggesting that label-reading is not yet a universal practice. Regarding dietary balance, 59.8% indicated they try to incorporate fruits and vegetables into their meals, though 32.4% remained neutral, indicating room for improvement in actual consumption of these nutrient-dense foods.

A striking finding is that 83.3% of students obtain health information from social media and digital platforms, highlighting the dominance of online channels in shaping health perceptions among young adults. This has important implications for health promotion strategies, suggesting that digital interventions could effectively reach this demographic.

### **Socioeconomic Factors and Food Accessibility**

Table 3 presents the socioeconomic profile of respondents, revealing significant financial constraints that impact food choices. Most students (52.9%) operate on monthly allowances between ₦10,000-₦30,000, which translates to approximately \$12-\$36 USD at current exchange rates. This limited budget must cover not only food but also transportation, academic materials, and other living expenses. Only 18.6% of students receive allowances above ₦50,000, while 15.7% subsist on less than ₦10,000 monthly a situation that severely constrains access to nutritious foods.

**Table 3: Socioeconomic Characteristics and Food Access (N=102)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Estimated Monthly Allowance</b>	Less than ₦10,000	16	15.7
	₦10,000 - ₦30,000	54	52.9
	₦30,001 - ₦50,000	13	12.7
	Above ₦50,000	19	18.6
<b>Source of Financial Support</b>	Parents/Guardians	83	81.4
	Personal job/income	15	14.7
	Scholarship	2	2.0
	Other	2	2.0
<b>Living Arrangement</b>	Off-campus	78	76.5
	With family	14	13.7
	School hostel	10	9.8
<b>Meal Preparation</b>	Cook own meals	73	71.5
	Do not cook	29	28.5
<b>Frequency of Meal Skipping</b>	Skip meals due to constraints	70	68.6
	Rarely skip meals	32	31.4

The data reveal that 81.4% of students depend primarily on parental or guardian support, while only 14.7% supplement or fully support themselves through employment. This heavy dependence on family support makes students vulnerable to economic fluctuations affecting their households. The living arrangement data shows that 76.5% of students live off-campus, placing responsibility on them to manage their own food procurement and preparation. While 71.5% report cooking their own meals, a concerning 68.6% admit to frequently skipping meals due to time constraints, academic pressures, or financial limitations. This pattern indicates that even students who prepare their own meals struggle to maintain regular, adequate eating patterns.

### **Food Consumption Patterns**

Table 4 presents actual dietary behaviours, revealing concerning patterns despite the high health awareness documented earlier. The knowledge-behaviour gap is particularly evident in fast food and soft drink consumption. Nearly half of respondents (49%) consume fast food at least weekly, with 25.5% consuming it 4-6 times per week and 23.5% consuming it 1-3 times weekly. This high frequency of fast-food consumption contradicts the expressed health awareness and likely reflects the combination of time constraints, convenience, and affordability that makes fast food an attractive option despite its known health risks.

**Table 4: Food Consumption Patterns and Dietary Behaviours (N=102)**

Food Consumption Variable	Category/Frequency	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
<b>Fast Food Consumption Frequency</b>	Daily (7 times/week)	10	9.8
	4-6 times per week	26	25.5
	1-3 times per week	24	23.5
	Occasionally	26	25.5
	Never	16	15.7
<b>Soft Drink Consumption</b>	Daily	18	17.6
	Several times a week	32	31.4
	Once a week	24	23.5
	Rarely/Never	28	27.5
<b>Dietary Variety</b>	Eat wide variety daily	18	17.6
	Occasionally diverse	44	43.1
	Limited variety	40	39.2
<b>Fruit and Vegetable Intake</b>	Daily consumption	22	21.6
	2-3 times per week	38	37.3
	Rarely/Never	42	41.2

Soft drink consumption shows similar concern patterns, with 72.5% of students consuming sugary beverages at least weekly (17.6% daily, 31.4% several times per week, and 23.5% once weekly). Only 27.5% rarely or never consume soft drinks. These patterns are particularly troubling given students expressed awareness of health implications. Dietary variety data reveal that only 17.6% of students report eating a wide variety of foods daily, while 43.1% have occasional dietary diversity and 39.2% maintain limited variety in their diets. Perhaps most concerning, 41.2% of students rarely or never consume fruits and vegetables, with only 21.6% incorporating these nutrient-dense foods into their daily diet. These consumption patterns collectively illustrate the substantial gap between nutritional knowledge and actual eating behaviours among LASU students.

### **Knowledge-Behaviour Gap**

The findings reveal a substantial disconnect between health awareness and dietary behaviour among LASU students. While 83.3% of students acknowledged the importance of nutrition and 82.4% claimed to consider health implications when choosing foods, actual behaviours showed frequent meal skipping (68.6%), high fast-food consumption (49%), and limited dietary variety. This knowledge-behaviour gap can be attributed to multiple factors identified in the study: limited financial resources (68.6% receiving  $\leq$  ₦30,000 monthly), time constraints from academic demands, convenience of unhealthy food options, and the predominantly off-campus living situation (76.5%) which reduces structured meal access. These findings align with the Health Belief Model's concept of perceived barriers overwhelming the perceived benefits of healthy eating, even when awareness is present.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal a complex interplay between health awareness, socioeconomic factors, and food consumption behaviours among LASU students. The high level of health awareness observed (83.3% recognizing the importance of nutrition) contrasts sharply with poor dietary practices, including frequent meal skipping and high consumption of fast foods and sugary beverages. This paradox supports previous research by Afolabi et al. (2015) and Nelson and Bull (2013), who found that awareness alone is insufficient to drive behavioural change when structural barriers exist.

The socioeconomic constraints identified in this study are particularly striking. With over half of students (52.9%) living on monthly allowances between ₦10,000-₦30,000 and 81.4% dependent on parental support, financial limitations significantly restrict access to nutritious foods. This finding corroborates the work of Darmon and Drewnowski (2008), who demonstrated that economic factors are primary determinants of diet quality. The prevalence of off-campus living (76.5%) further compounds these challenges, as students must navigate an urban food environment dominated by cheap, energy-dense options while managing limited budgets and time constraints.

The significant role of social media as a source of health information (83.3% of students) presents both opportunities and challenges. While digital platforms can disseminate nutritional education widely and cost-effectively, they may also promote misleading information or unrealistic dietary standards. This finding suggests that interventions should leverage social media channels while ensuring the accuracy and appropriateness of health messages for the student population.

The prevalence of meal skipping (68.6%) due to time constraints and academic pressures highlights how the university environment itself may inadvertently undermine healthy eating. This finding aligns with Harris's (2015) observation that the transition to university life often disrupts established dietary patterns. The combination of academic demands, financial limitations, and limited access to healthy food options creates a perfect storm for poor dietary habits that may have long-term health implications.

From a policy perspective, these findings suggest that health promotion efforts must address multiple levels of influence simultaneously. Individual-level interventions focused solely on education are unlikely to succeed without addressing the structural barriers of affordability, accessibility, and time constraints. The Health Belief Model framework employed in this study helps explain why perceived barriers (cost, time, convenience) override the perceived benefits of healthy eating, even among health-aware students.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of this study provide important insights into the relationship between health awareness, socioeconomic conditions, and food consumption behaviours among undergraduate

students at Lagos State University. Despite relatively high levels of nutritional awareness, the results demonstrate that economic constraints, time pressures, and environmental factors significantly shape students' dietary practices. Building on these empirical outcomes, the concluding discussion synthesises the key results and outlines policy-relevant recommendations aimed at improving access to nutritious food, strengthening institutional support systems, and promoting sustainable healthy eating behaviours among university students.

### **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that while health awareness among LASU students is relatively high, it is insufficient to overcome the socioeconomic and environmental barriers to healthy eating. The knowledge-behaviour gap observed among students reflects the complex reality of university life, where financial constraints, academic demands, and limited access to healthy food options undermine even the best nutritional intentions. Students from lower-income backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and poor dietary choices, highlighting the need for equity-focused interventions.

The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on student health in Nigerian universities by providing empirical evidence of the factors shaping dietary behaviours in this context. The study confirms that addressing student nutrition requires more than awareness campaigns; it demands systemic interventions that tackle affordability, accessibility, and the broader campus food environment. Only through such comprehensive approaches can universities effectively support students in developing and maintaining healthy dietary habits that will serve them throughout their lives.

### **Recommendations**

Based on these findings, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. **Institutional Policy Interventions:** University authorities should implement subsidized healthy meal programmes targeting students from low-income backgrounds. This could include meal vouchers, campus food banks, or weekly subsidized meal plans for eligible students. Such programmes would directly address the financial barriers preventing access to nutritious foods.
2. **Campus Food Environment Restructuring:** LASU should collaborate with food vendors to ensure healthy food options are available, affordable, and convenient. This includes Firstly, regulating food pricing on campus to improve students' access to nutritious meals. The university should collaborate with food vendors to establish pricing guidelines that make healthy food options affordable, particularly for students with limited financial resources. Secondly, the university should incentivize vendors who offer nutritious and balanced meals. Incentives such as reduced stall fees, preferential licensing, and promotional support can encourage vendors to prioritize healthier food options. Thirdly, designated healthy food zones should be established across the campus. These zones can be strategically located near lecture halls, hostels, and high-traffic student areas to improve convenience and visibility.

3. Integrate nutritional education in the curriculum: Nutrition education should be institutionalized within the curriculum, either as part of general studies or through periodic health seminars. This should be complemented by practical workshops teaching students how to prepare simple, affordable, and nutritious meals within their budget constraints.

4. Digital Health Interventions: Given that 83.3% of students obtain health information from social media, universities should develop mobile health platforms or apps tailored to students' needs. Such platforms could provide daily meal tips, budget-friendly recipes, nutritional guidance, and real-time information about healthy food options around campus.

5. Holistic Student Support Services: Mental health services and time management training should incorporate dietary guidance. Counselling services should address the emotional aspects of eating, while time management workshops should help students integrate regular meals into their daily routines without compromising academic responsibilities.

6. Community Engagement Programs: Establishing campus community gardens where students can grow and harvest basic food items like vegetables and herbs could provide both a practical food source and a form of nutritional education while fostering community engagement.

### **Study Limitations and Future Research**

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design provides only a snapshot of behaviour at a single point in time and cannot establish causality. The study's confinement to LASU limits generalizability to other universities with different contexts. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability and recall biases. The relatively low Cronbach's Alpha (0.208) suggests that some measurement instruments require refinement in future studies.

Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track behavioural changes over time, include qualitative methods such as focus groups to capture deeper insights into students lived experiences, conduct comparative studies across multiple universities to assess contextual variations, and investigate the effectiveness of specific interventions in changing dietary behaviours. Additionally, research examining gender differences, cultural influences, and the role of physical activity in conjunction with dietary behaviour would provide a more comprehensive understanding of student health.

## References

- Afolabi, W. A. O., Popoola, P. B., & Oyawoye, O. O. (2015). Food choices and eating habits of students in a Nigerian university. *African Journal of Food Science*, 9(2), 70–76.
- American College Health Association. (2020). *National College Health Assessment*. Silver Spring, MD: American College Health Association.
- Aguirre, L., Johnson, K., & Smith, R. (2024). Socioeconomic determinants and dietary behaviours in university students: A comparative study. *Journal of Nutrition and Health*, 12(3), 210–225.
- Caspi, C. E., Laska, M. N., & Powell, L. M. (2024). Socioeconomic inequalities in college student diets: A systematic review. *Public Health Nutrition*, 27(4), 565–578.
- Darmon, N., & Drewnowski, A. (2008). Does social class predict diet quality? *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 87(5), 1107–1117.
- Harris, C. (2015). Transitions and student experiences in higher education. In J. Case & J. Huisman (Eds.), *Researching Higher Education* (pp. 155–168). Routledge.
- Johnson, T., & Lee, S. (2024). Campus food environment and its impact on student dietary behaviour. *Journal of College Health*, 72(1), 45–56.
- Lagos State University. (2020). *University statistics and demographics*. Ojo, Lagos: LASU Publications.
- Laska, M. N., Larson, N. I., Neumark-Sztainer, D., & Story, M. (2010). Dietary patterns and home food availability during emerging adulthood: Do they differ by living situation? *Public Health Nutrition*, 13(2), 222–228.
- Martinez, S., Wang, Y., & Rodriguez, A. (2023). Food insecurity and diet quality among university students: Evidence from multiple countries. *Nutrition Research*, 64(2), 112–124.
- Moyo, T., Patel, R., & Singh, P. (2025). Socioeconomic gradients in diet quality among young adults. *Journal of Public Health*, 47(1), 88–99.
- National Universities Commission. (2020). *Nigerian university system statistical digest*. Abuja, Nigeria: NUC.
- Nelson, M. C., & Bull, S. S. (2013). Weight, waist, and wellness: Exploring the heterogeneity of health behaviours among college students. *American Journal of Health Education*, 44(1), 40–49.
- Nelson, M. C., Story, M., Larson, N. I., Neumark-Sztainer, D., & Lytle, L. A. (2008). Emerging adulthood and college-aged youth: An overlooked age for weight-related behaviour change. *Obesity*, 16(10), 2205–2211.

- Oyedeji, O., Esimai, O. A., & Oyedeji, G. A. (2018). Food insecurity and nutritional status among undergraduates in a Nigerian university. *Journal of Community Medicine and Primary Health Care*, 30(2), 67–78.
- Rosenstock, I. M. (1974). The Health Belief Model and preventive health behaviour. *Health Education Monographs*, 2(4), 354–386.
- Sahadeo, N., Chen, L., & Patel, K. (2025). Health awareness versus behaviour: Understanding the nutrition gap among college students. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 57(1), 33–45.
- World Health Organization. (1948). *Constitution of the World Health Organization*. Geneva: WHO.
- World Health Organization. (2017). *Social determinants of health*. Geneva: WHO. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health>
- World Health Organization. (2018). *Health promotion and disease prevention through population-based interventions*. Geneva: WHO.
- Yang, J., & Park, H. (2025). The impact of employment and financial independence on college students' dietary habits. *Nutrition & Health*, 31(2), 150–162.
- Yi, J., & Lee, K. (2024). Health awareness and dietary behaviour among university students. *Journal of Health Promotion*, 38(3), 210–222.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper and Row.