

INFLUENCE OF CREATIVE APPROACHES IN HEALTH EDUCATION ON EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Ifeanyi Benneth Nsofor

Abstract

The study examined the influence of creative approaches in health education on empowering individuals in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 2,521 health practitioners in Anambra State. The sample of 252 health practitioners was used for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was titled: Influence of Creative Approaches in Health Education on Empowering Individuals Questionnaire (ICAHEEIQ). The instrument has a total of 24-items which was structured on a 5-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. The application of the Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the data collected from the pilot study yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.78. Simple linear regression analysis was used for the study. The study revealed that behavioral and educational approach in health education has a positive and significant influence on empowering individuals in Anambra State to a very low extent while social or societal change approach in health education positively and significantly influence individuals' empowerment in Anambra State to a moderate extent. The study concluded that creative approaches in health education have positive and significant influence on individuals' empowering in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that the applications and practices of various creative approaches in health education should be improved in order to close the loopholes and negative healthy lifestyles of individuals in Anambra State.

Keywords: Creative approaches; health education; empowering individuals

Introduction

Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. In health and social care, empowerment is defined as a process through which people gain greater control over the decisions and actions that affect their lives. Empowerment is important for everyone involved in care, including the service users, their families, loved ones and care workers. Isaruk *et al.* (2023)

asserted that empowerment in health and social care can be key to the success and happiness of people in health service users. In life, there are things people cannot control. These situations can make people feel frustrated, powerless and disheartened. Over time, this can chip away at people's confidence and self-esteem, leading to negativity and poor decision-making. People can make decisions and plans because they have personal power and are in control of their own lives, so what about the people we care for? Socially isolated people, those with poor or declining health or less autonomy can become fearful of positive risk-taking. The frustrations of not being able to do the things they once loved or simple daily tasks can lead to a loss of independence, assurance and self-empowerment. Fortunately, there are things people can do to help promote empowerment and reduce the risk of these feelings developing in their health care service. Cottrell *et al.* (2019) opined that empowerment in health and social care is a process that gives people more control over the decisions and actions that impact their lives. This can include things like expressing sexuality, religious beliefs and aspirations while feeling supported and protected when doing so. So, empowerment is important in health and social care as it provides service users with a greater sense of how to navigate the care system. Ugwuegede *et al.* (2021) noted that individual empowerment is extremely important for their confidence, self-esteem and sense of self and value, which can impact their abilities to make positive choices about what they want in life. On the other hand, people in healthcare will need to make choices when it comes to managing their health and care. Uduak *et al.* (2024) asserted that healthcare is not the most important influence on health and proposed a wider 'health field concept', which encompasses four core elements that must be addressed to prevent illness and maintain population health: individuals' lifestyles, the environment, healthcare organizations and biology. They further noted that that all people who are concerned with health-related decisions including healthcare professionals, the scientific community, governments and the public - should work together with the aim of preventing ill health, rather than merely responding to illness by the use of several creative approaches in health education in the society. In the realm of health education, the utilization of creative approaches has emerged as a promising avenue for empowering individuals and communities to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. Creative approaches in health education are various ways or activities which have benefits for people's health and wellbeing. Activities can include visual and performing arts, crafts, film, literature, cooking and creative activities in nature, such as gardening; approaches may involve creative and innovative ways to approach health and care services, co-production, education and workforce development. Creative approaches in health education can contribute to prevention of ill-health, promotion of healthy behaviours, management of

long-term conditions, treatment and recovery across the life course. Ewles and Simnett (2017) distinguish five creative approaches to health promotion, each necessitating the use of different kinds of activities. These approaches are: medical, behavioural change, client-centered, educational and societal change. Similarly, Nwafor (2019) included educational, behavioural, moral, social and mass media approach to the health education for inducing the health promotion and well-being of the people. In the course of this study, three creative approaches in health education including behavioural approach, educational approach and social or societal change approach in health education were adopted and their influence in empowering individuals determined.

Behavioural change approach in health education is based upon changing people's individual attitudes and behaviours so that they adopt a "healthy lifestyle" (Nwafor, 2019). Examples include teaching people how to stop smoking, look after their teeth, eat the "right food", and so on. In this approach, Brown *et al.* (2021) argued that a healthy lifestyle is in the best interest of individuals and health professionals promoting this approach will see it as their responsibility to encourage as many people as possible to adopt the healthy lifestyle they advocate. Thus, promotion of healthy lifestyle through behavioural change approach may have great influence on individual life. Educational approach in health education is to provide individuals with information, ensure knowledge and understanding of health issues, and to enable well-informed decisions to be made (Ewles & Simnett, 2017). Information about health is presented, and people are helped to explore their values and attitudes and to make their own decisions. Help in carrying out those decisions and adopting new health practices may also be offered. Nutbeam (2020) advocated that the educational approach encourages individuals to make their own decisions and at the same time health professionals will see it as their responsibility to raise with clients the health issues which they think will be in the client's best interests.

On the other hands, social or societal change approach in health education deal with the modification of immediate environment to promote healthy lifestyle. Nwafor (2019) submitted that, rather than changing the behaviour of individuals, the societal change approach modifies the physical and social environment in order to make it more conducive to good health. Marmot (2021) argued that those using social change approaches will value their democratic right to change society, and will be committed to putting health on the political agenda at all levels and to the importance of shaping the health environment instead of shaping the individual lives of people who live in it. Furthermore, the fusion of creative approaches in health education as obtainable in Anambra State represents a dynamic intersection where creativity serves as a catalyst for engaging audiences, fostering

emotional connections, and enhancing learning experiences. By exploring the diverse forms of individual expression through various means of creative approaches and techniques, this study aims to shed light on how these creative modalities can effectively convey complex health information and inspire positive health-related behaviours. The researcher embarked on this exploration of the influence of creative approaches in health education, it becomes evident that the integration of health education not only enriches educational experiences but also provides a platform for self-expression, reflection, and empowerment. By examining the synergies among various creative approaches in health education, the study intended to uncover valuable insights that can inform the design of innovative and culturally relevant health education interventions aimed at promoting holistic well-being and empowering individuals to take charge of their health.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of the potential benefits of creative approaches in health education, there remains a gap in understanding the specific mechanisms through which creative methods can empower individuals and enhance health outcomes. While there are scanty of studies that highlighted the positive effects of integrating creative approaches into educational programmes for empowering individuals, there is need for empirical exploration into how creative modalities influence the overall empowerment of individuals in the context of health education. This research seeks to address this gap by investigating the extent creative approaches in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to examine the influence of creative approaches in health education on empowering individuals in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent:

1. Behavioral approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State.
2. Educational approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State.
3. social change approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does behavioral approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State?
2. To what extent does educational approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State?
3. To what extent does social change approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State?

Research Methodology

The study will adopt descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. Anambra State is one of the States in South East, Nigeria. The State is one of the educationally advantaged states in Nigeria. The population of the study was 2,521 health practitioners in Anambra State. The sample of 252 (10% of the population) health practitioners was used for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was titled: Influence of Creative Approaches in Health Education on Empowering Individuals Questionnaire (ICAHEEIQ). The instrument has a total of 24-items spread across three Clusters which 8-items on behavioral approach, 8-items on educational approach and 8-items on the social change approach respectively. The instrument was structured on a 5-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by presenting the instrument to three experts. Three of the experts were lecturers at the Department of Human Kinetic and Health Promotion Education, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. The application of the Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the data collected from the pilot study yielded coefficient values of 0.78, 0.81 and 0.75 for Clusters 1 to 3 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.78. Simple linear regression analysis was used for the study. In answering the research questions, the regression coefficient rule suggested by Robinson and Ragin (2021) was used for judgment as thus:

Very Low Extent	0.00- 0.20
Low Extent	0.20 - 0.40
Moderate Extent	0.40- 0.60
High Extent	0.60 - 0.80
Very High Extent	0.80-1.00

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does behavioral approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State?

Table 1: *Summary of simple regression analysis with behavioral approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State*

	Unstandardized	Std. Dev.	Standardized
	β	B	β
Constant	18.421	6.198	
Behavioural Approach	.336	.509	.318
R	.318		
R ²	.147		
Adj. R ²	.109		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 1 indicated that behavioral approach in health education positively influence individual empowerment in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.318$). This implies that a unit practice in behavioral approach in health education led to 0.318(32%) practices in empowering individuals in Anambra State. Nevertheless, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.147 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was very low. This implies that 15% of the variations in individual empowerment in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in behavioral approach in health education. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.109 indicating that 11% of the total variation in the dependent variable (individual empowerment) was explained by the independent variable (behavioral approach in health education). Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of behavioral approach in health education is very low in determining the individual empowerment in Anambra State.

Research Question 2: To what extent does educational approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State?

Table 2: *Summary of simple regression analysis with educational approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State*

	Unstandardized	Std. Dev.	Standardized
	β	β	β
Constant	21.015	5.824	
Educational Approach	.358	.471	.337
R	.337		
R ²	.168		
Adj. R ²	.125		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 2 indicated that educational approach in health education positively influence individual empowerment in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.337$). This implies that a unit practice in educational approach in health education led to 0.337(34%) practices in empowering individuals in Anambra State. However, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.168 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was very low. This implies that 17% of the variations in individual empowerment in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in educational approach in health education. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.125 indicating that 13% of the total variation in the dependent variable (individual empowerment) was explained by the independent variable (educational approach in health education). Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of educational approach in health education is very low in determining the individual empowerment in Anambra State.

Research Question 3: To what extent does social or societal approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State?

Table 3: *Summary of simple regression analysis with social or societal approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State*

	Unstandardized	Std. Dev.	Standardized
	β	B	β
Constant	25.753	5.114	
Social or Societal Approach	.494	.382	.431
R	.431		
R ²	.243		
Adj. R ²	.211		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 3 indicated that social or societal approach in health education positively influence individual empowerment in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.431$). This implies that a unit increase in social or societal approach in health education led to 0.431(43%) increase in empowering individuals in Anambra State. More so, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.243 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderate. This implies that 24% of the variations in individual empowerment in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in social or societal approach in health education. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.211 indicating that 21% of the total variation in the dependent variable (individual empowerment) was explained by the independent variable (social or societal approach in health education). Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of social or societal approach in health education is very low in determining the individual empowerment in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on the extent behavior approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State revealed that behavior approach in health education positively and significantly influences individual empowerment in Anambra State to a very low extent. This finding is in line with the findings of Nwafor (2019) that behavioral approach makes the fundamental assumption that healthy lifestyles are crucial to maintaining good health which is a positive source of empowerment to individuals to improve on their healthy lifestyle. Similarly, Keyworth *et al.* (2018) findings portrayed that

which is a call to action for all healthcare professionals to maximize their effect on improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities. Ewles and Simnett (2017) proposed that through the adoption of behavior approach, all healthcare professionals can adopt a proactive approach to preventing ill health, irrespective of their role. Brown *et al.* (2021) findings indicated that healthcare professionals who adopt the behavioral approach in their practice seek to provide individual patients with information concerning their unhealthy lifestyle behaviors and motivate them to change.

Findings on the extent educational approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State revealed that educational approach in health education positively and significantly influences individual empowerment in Anambra State to a very low extent. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Nwafor (2019) that the educational approach to health promotion revealed that increasing people's knowledge about their health will lead to healthier behavior. Nutbeam (2020) findings agreed with the current findings of the study that healthcare professionals who adopt an educational approach provide people with knowledge and information about their health. This differs from the behavior change approach in that it does not seek to attempt to motivate the individual to change their behavior in a specific direction decided by the professional, for example, to quit smoking, reduce alcohol intake or consume more fruit and vegetables. Similarly, the findings of Armstrong and Harries (2021) averred that the focus of the educational approach is on learning and comprises: cognitive (addresses people's understanding concerning a health topic), affective (considers an individual's feelings and attitudes towards a health topic) and behavioral (concerned with people's skills, for example, their ability to cook).

Findings on the extent social or societal approach in health education influence individual empowerment in Anambra State showed that social or societal approach in health education positively and significantly influences individual empowerment in Anambra State to a moderate extent. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Ewles and Simnett (2017) that social change approach focuses on making changes to the physical, social and economic environment to increase their health promoting capacity. Naidoo and Wills (2019) agreed that this approach assumed that if the healthier choice is made the easier choice, it will become increasingly realistic for individuals to make decisions to improve their health and wellbeing. Marmot (2021) therefore noted that, health promotion is a social and political process that regards health as a human right and considers the maintenance of population health to be a prerequisite for social progress.

Conclusion

The findings of the study have shown that creative approaches in health education are driving force that positively and significantly influence on healthy lifestyle and well-being of individuals through empowering them in Anambra State. The study therefore concluded that creative approaches in health education have positive and significant influence on individuals' empowering in Anambra State.

Recommendations

The recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The study recommended that the applications and practices of various creative approaches in health education should be improved in order to close the loopholes and negative healthy lifestyles of individuals in Anambra State
2. The study recommended that creating good behavior and proper wellbeing of the people, health professionals should not only focus on avoiding or reducing risk factors to create a safe environment, but also on the quality of life and wellbeing of the people. This can be done by taking account of the way the people endow meaning to the demanding circumstances they find themselves in, their perceived feelings of control, and their motivation to comprehend and manage events.
3. A very low level of educational approach in health education towards the empowerment of individuals in Anambra State has been revealed. Thus, the state government needs to invest more on education to enable for improvement towards promoting good healthy lifestyle in the state.
4. The state government of Anambra State should invest more in mass media in order to use that means to pass information to it citizens as a means of empowering them with useful information about their health and appropriate healthy lifestyle.

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