

Hustle-culture and Health Neglect: Sleep, Diet and Self-Care Practices of Gen Z Students and Entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State

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Abstract

This study explored hustle-culture and health neglect among students and entrepreneurs of the Gen Z generation in Ekeremor LGA in Bayelsa State. The study was guided by four objectives. The study adopted the theory of Work-Life Balance (WLB). The descriptive survey method of research was used. The projected population size for the study was 430,321 people, of which a sample size of 450 was determined by the application of Taro Yamane's formula. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select eligible respondents. Data were elicited from a structured questionnaire with the validity tested by expert review, and reliability was tested by the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha, which took a value of more than 0.7, within an acceptable limit. Data were subjected to descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The findings revealed that respondents are involved in hustle culture, which involves performing more than one line of work, working long hours, and having to be productive with both academic and entrepreneurial activities. The study also revealed that 'hustle culture' was linked to less sleep time, irregular sleep routines, fatigue during the day, and poor sleep quality. It also promoted unhealthy eating habits such as irregular eating patterns and poor nutritional status. Based on the findings, the study recommends heightened initiatives to raise awareness among young people about their health and fitness, and also suggests health practitioner association programmes, young people's economic empowerment, and promotion of responsible content for the digital creators to promote healthy life among them. Future research needs to employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to offer more in-depth information on the connection between hustle culture and health neglect among Generation Z.

Keywords: Hustle Culture, Health Neglect, Sleep Patterns, Generation Z.

1. Introduction

The coming-of-age transition is characterized by high cost of living, pressures for working in a digital competition, and the necessity to have financial independence. This attitude has led to the formation and acceptance of a lifestyle known as 'hustle culture', which involves constant productivity, multiple sources of income, long hours of work and sacrificing sleep and self-care for academic, work or financial achievement.

While hustle culture may serve a positive agenda, such as ambition, continued working is dangerous and can manifest itself as a proxy for personal value, and fatigue speaks for dedication. Adverse effects on health due to excessive workload are large: in 2024, working over 55 hours a week was responsible for 745,000 deaths from stroke and ischemic heart disease all over the world (WHO & ILO, 2025). Teenagers are not only at risk for illness

from their job, but they may also become laxer about sleeping, eating, exercising, lifestyle maintenance and medical care. According to WHO (2025), 31% of the adult population worldwide do not reach the recommended level of physical activity, and 80% of adolescents do not reach adequate physical activity levels. Beyond that, every 7th adolescent aged 10-19 years in the world suffers from mental health disorders, reflecting that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to pressures which could be exacerbated by academic, economic and social pressures (WHO, 2025).

The issue is exacerbated in sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria, where youth seem to have engaged in multiple strategies to cope with their economic uncertainties due to weak capacities in formal employment, inflation and the expansion of the digital economy. The situation in Nigeria is no exception to the high level of informal labour and self-employment in the country, as seen in the figures by the National Bureau of Statistics, where 92.3% of the employed population in Nigeria's labour market engages in informal employment, and 87% of employed persons are self-employed in the country in the third quarter of 2024 (NBS, 2025). In this context, "Generation Z" and young entrepreneurs can also engage in academic studies and work on what is referred to as online business or freelancing, trading, blogging and digital services at the same time, adding work in the evenings and on weekends. Digital platforms aggravate this pressure as they constantly expose images of entrepreneurial success, wealth, productivity and achievement, thereby setting expectations for youth to work constantly and to make their lives more productive and successful through their work. This has a direct impact on matters of health neglect. Extensive academic work and economic activity can cause a shift in sleep patterns, may lead to

insufficient hours of sleep, leaving out mealtimes, using fast food, avoidance of physical activity, as well as delay of positioning for medical care visits and ignoring minor ailments among young people. This is especially a concern for Bayelsa State and Ekeremor Local Government Area (LGA) as learners and young entrepreneurs must reconcile their schooling goals with economic survival in a general Nigerian context of inadequate formal job opportunities and mounting economic pressures. Of course, these youth are working hard, but the question is how much do they expect to become normalized and systematically forgo health-promoting behaviours and experiences? This research sets the backdrop in the 'hustle culture' and health neglect among the students and entrepreneurs in Generation Z in Ekeremor LGA.

Statement of the problem

The expectation on young people has been raised to do well academically, earn their own living and make their businesses successful, which is what is linked to a culture of overworking called hustle culture, especially affecting Generation Z students and entrepreneurs. To meet the escalating cost of living and employment problems, young people are now involved in several income generation activities, including online trading, Freelancing, small businesses, and other ride services, and creating content, especially in the urban and semi-urban communities of Bayelsa State, where employment is scarce (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024; International Labour Organization, 2024). The scenario is typical of the global context as young working adults resort to riskier and less formalized forms of employment to survive, and their health and well-being come under strain as a result.

More than 1.4 billion adults worldwide do not achieve the recommended amount of physical activity, and a lack of sleep is

found in nearly one-third of the world's population, with young adults being the most affected group, because of academic and occupational demands (WHO, 2024). Moreover, long working hours have been associated with 745,000 deaths per year due to cardiovascular diseases, leading to grave health implications of overbearing working hours (WHO & ILO, 2021). With high youth unemployment and underemployment rates in Nigeria, many youth are forced to perform several non-formal jobs, thereby exposing them to lifestyle diseases and chronic stress and fatigue (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). In Bayelsa State in particular, the students of tertiary institutions and the youths involved in business enterprises in certain centres like Yenagoa and Amassoma have reported that they engage in both academic and business exercises late at night, which often results in less time for sleep and abnormal life patterns. While it appears that "Hustle Culture" is wonderful for strengthening a person's sense of resilience and helping them make it in the business world, the increasing pressure of the culture has led youth to neglect their health. Data indicate that people with heavy workloads are often sleep-deprived, have poor dietary habits, and spend less time exercising, relaxing, or visiting preventive care providers (Walker, 2018; Schor, 2023). Not only are fast foods often a variety of poor-quality and nutrient-poor foods, but many young people, especially students, are also over occupied with academic work and other productivity activities, leaving them susceptible to non-communicable diseases and mental illness due to their indiscriminate consumption of fast foods, from which they derive their energy, and irregular eating schedules (WHO, 2024). Likewise, habitual sleep loss, defined as obtaining less than 7-9 hours of sleep a night, has been linked to "cognitive impairment, diminished immune functioning, anxiety and chronic

cardiovascular consequences" (American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2023). Business owners who are also students in Bayelsa State are reportedly sacrificing their health, most especially sleep time and meals, for reasons of school/college and financial obligations. There are still not enough empirical studies that comprehensively explore how 'hustle culture' relates to health behaviours (such as sleep, nutrition and self-care) in Bayelsa State. The lack of empirical evidence makes it difficult for policymakers, educators, and health practitioners to create targeted interventions to help mitigate the effects of overwork on youth health. In light of this, this study fills the gap by investigating the prevalence of 'hustle culture' on sleep, diet and self-care among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.

Objectives of the study

The following objectives guided the study

- To examine the prevalence and patterns of hustle-culture among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.
- To assess the influence of hustle-culture on the sleep patterns and sleep quality of Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.
- To investigate how hustle-culture affects dietary practices among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.
- To evaluate how hustle-culture affects self-care practices, including physical exercise, relaxation, and routine health maintenance among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.

2. Literature Review

The Concept of Hustle Culture

'Hustle culture' is a lifestyle and a mindset in which workers must work hard, climb the career ladder and earn big sums to achieve success, sometimes at the cost of rest and indulgence in leisure. It has a clear faith in constant productivity and almost

workaholic habits as the sole means of success and achievement, and assumes that one goes with a desire to work, another. The concept of hustle culture encourages believing that self-worth is connected with productivity, so many people don't take rest and recovery seriously (American Psychological Association, 2024). Also, according to the World Health Organization (2024), engaging in work activities automatically causes stress; longer working hours in the workplace are emerging issues that affect physical and mental health and have become a serious problem of occupational health.

With the advent of digital technology and social media, hustle culture has become so prevalent that working around the clock, being an entrepreneur, and working on several income streams all come to represent success. This attitude can foster ambition, discipline, innovation, and even help people achieve greater success, but it can also leave them feeling burned out, anxious, lacking in at least work-life balance and/or feeling less well. According to the American Institute of Stress (2024), about 83% of workers report stress resulting from their work, and the World Health Organisation (2024) is conducting a study that estimated the number of deaths due to long working hours to be equivalent to more than 745,000 people suffering from stroke and/ or ischemic heart disease each year globally. The results indicate that hustle culture might show the importance of working hard, but putting in very hard work may, at the end of the day, make productivity lower and could lead to harming long-term health.

Generation Z and the Culture of Productivity

Generation Z are those born between the mid-90s and early 2010s and are the first generation to have been born in what's been dubbed the 'all-digital era' – where there's a constant presence of smartphones, social media and opportunities to access

the economy online. This exposure has greatly influenced their views of work, education and success, as well as an ethos of busyness—where striving to be busy and working is considered a means of demonstrating personal worth (Twenge, 2023; Pew Research Centre, 2022). Various factors are influencing young people to undertake several activities, including continuing their education, running more than one business, doing side work, and setting up online businesses, all in a bid to make money. Worries about the economic downturn, rising living expenses and employment insecurity are topping the list for them, according to the ILO (International Labour Organization, 2024). Social media is also an important driver of productivity culture - stories of young people that seemingly have made it to success without taking the time to discuss and advance health, even in the context of work and entrepreneurship (Deloitte, 2024). A large percentage of Gen Z globally feel pressured to always be productive, and more than half of them feel driven to always work by the expectation of financial security and career trajectory (Deloitte, 2024). Such disparity is even greater in Nigeria, where the unemployment rate, which on its own was over 40% and if combined with underemployment, amounts to more than 40% of the youth (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024), thus obligating them to engage in informal side hatches to survive. Gen Z students and young entrepreneurs in Bayelsa face the challenge of starting entrepreneurial activities such as micro-business, online trading, service-based business and educational activities, which can take up a lot of their time in the urban centres of the state with limited economic opportunities but increased competition for students.

Hustle-culture and Sleep Patterns

The tenets of hustle-culture have been correlated with sleep disorders, such as

short, irregular, and unfulfilling sleep; this is due to the focus on labour, productivity and earning as opposed to sleep. Sleep is a fundamental biological need necessary for physical recovery, cognitive abilities, emotional regulation and one's overall health: better sleep is recommended for youth aged 18-19 at 7–9 hours of sleep per day (World Health Organization, 2024). But those whose values are affected by hustle-culture often work late into the evening, have multiple jobs or make use of evening hours for academic or work, thereby decreasing hours spent sleeping.

Workers who work long hours are more sleep-deprived, have symptoms of insomnia and are at increased risk for fatigue, particularly young workers and students who are involved in more than one extended work. Long hours of work have been associated with sleep deprivation, insomnia symptoms and fatigue in workers, especially in students and young people who have more work experience over a long time (American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2023). According to research, almost one in three adults around the world complains of sleep deprivation, with rates being higher for younger age groups that are more likely to be taking on a digital side hustle and digital work habits (CDC, 2024). In Nigeria, irregular sleep is a common problem among young people, with many participating in informal activities, trading or engaging in online businesses, which often result in irregular sleep habits, especially amongst the students who work to generate income while also going to school (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Young entrepreneurs—especially those in the areas of Yenagoa and Amassoma—of Gen Z in Bayelsa State tend to complain of late-night working, due to meeting academic deadlines, serving customers and tending their online businesses, which leave them with less sleep time and poor quality of sleep. Another trend is the

increasing use of mobile phones and social media at night, further exacerbating issues of sleep neglect: there is a growing consensus that mobile phone and social media use has been reported to have a negative effect on sleep onset and sleep efficiency in youth.

Theoretical Review

Work-Life Balance Theory

Work-Life Balance Theory explains how people attempt to balance work and life demands and maintain well-being, productivity and life satisfaction. When the demands of the job persistently outweigh those of personal life, they experience imbalance in terms of stress, burnout and poor health outcomes (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Clark, 2000; Guest, 2002). The theory holds that if people aren't able to balance work demands and the care of their bodies and minds – including getting rest, eating healthy, and taking care of themselves – negative outcomes like being unable to sleep, eating poorly, and reduced quality of life are more likely to take place (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003; Allen et al., 2014). This imbalance is certainly perceived in the case of 'hustle culture' among students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, where many are found to participate in both academic and non-academic entrepreneurial activities, thereby getting less sleep (9-12 hrs) than recommended for young adults (WHO, 2024). Most students at higher institutions also stay out to manage their online enterprises late into the night, while in some areas like Yenagoa and Amassoma, the young entrepreneurs lack the time to prep healthy meals or turn to fast foods because they need to catch up with a stockpile of work.

Workload pressure also influences the capacity of young workers on a day-to-day basis to get a sufficient amount of rest and nutrition in their lives globally (Eurofound, 2021). In Nigeria, a high level of youth unemployment above 40% has driven

many youth into having multiple income-generating activities that again increase the work-life imbalance of the youth (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). In Bayelsa State, this is accompanied by a record of fatigue, stress, poor food habits and poor health habits among the youths whose engagements are in hustle culture. The Work-Life Balance Theory explains that as workload becomes more of a priority for students and entrepreneurs, students from the study area are inclined to neglect their health, especially regarding their sleep and diet habits, and their care for themselves.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey research design. This design was deemed suitable as it allowed for quantitative data collection from Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Ekeremor LGA, as well as the investigation of the presence of hustle-culture and its impact on sleep, nutrition, and other self-care activities.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Ekeremor Local Government Area (LGA) of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Ekeremor shares borders with Delta State, Southern Ijaw LGA and Sagbama LGA of Bayelsa State. The people are mainly the Ijaw ethnic group with several communities within the area, namely Ekeremor Town, Oporomor, Isampou, Peretorugbene, Ayamasa, Agge, Tamogbene and Aleibiri. Fishing, farming, petty trade, civil service and small-scale business are the key livelihoods of the population. The growing spread of digital technologies, economic strain and lower employment prospects have led to many young people within the region taking up education alongside hustle-based employment activities, making this suitable for the study of hustle-culture and health-related behaviours.

Population of the study

The population comprised all the Generation Z students and entrepreneurs of Ekeremor LGA. The National Population Census of 2006 recorded 270,257 population in Ekeremor Local Government Area (LGA) (National Population Commission, 2006). In Nigeria, the population is expected to grow by 2.5% per year, as assumed by the national population commission, and is usually used in the projection of growth. Therefore, the population for 2025 can be calculated as:

$$P_t = P_o(1 + r)^n$$

Where:

P_t = projected population

P_o = base population (270,257)

r = annual growth rate (2.5% or 0.025)

n = number of years (19)

$$P_t = 270,257(1.025)^{19}$$

$$P_t = 430,321$$

The projected population of Ekeremor LGA as of 2025 was 430,321 persons.

The sample size for the study was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (430,321)

e = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{430,321}{1 + 430,321(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{430,321}{1 + 1,075.80}$$

$$n = \frac{430,321}{1,076.80}$$

$$n = 399.63$$

The sample size was approximately 400 respondents.

A sample size of about 400 respondents was worked out. Attrition allowance, however, was added to the calculated sample size at 12.5% of the initial sample size because the researcher was

anticipating that some might not return or complete the questionnaires owing to issues arising from non-response, damaged instruments and the exclusion of invalid questionnaires during the data screening process. The attrition allowance was based on the following:

$$400 \times 0.125 = 50$$

Thus, the adjusted number of questionnaires to be distributed was:

$$400 + 50 = 450$$

A multi-stage sampling technique was used in the research. The first stage involved stratification of Ekeremor LGA into the main geographical clusters. Ekeremor town, Oporomor, Isampou and Peretorugbene were selected in the study because of the high population size of their communities and the high concentration of students and young entrepreneurs. Selected communities were, in turn, split into houses and business associations in the second phase. The main streets, markets, schools and other commercial sites in each community where youth were likely to be found were determined. The questionnaires were subsequently allocated in an appropriate manner, according to the population size of each community. Lastly, purposive sampling was used to select eligible young respondents who matched the inclusion criteria of being a member of Generation Z (aged around 18-28 years) and also a student and/or entrepreneur. In this manner, only persons who had first-hand knowledge of the study were included in the survey

Method of data collection

The structured questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection; the instrument was developed based on the objectives of the study and the literature

review. This questionnaire included parts with questions related to socio-demographic factors, hustle culture, sleep habits, meal behaviours, and self-care routines. Answers were given on a 4-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The instrument was validated by face and content validations. The questionnaire was given for review to experts in sociology, public health and measurement and evaluation to view, for clarity, relevance, adequacy, and goal congruence. Their observations and corrections were made to the final draft of the questionnaire before it was administered.

The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot study involving 40 respondents comprising Gen Z Students/Entrepreneurs in Sagbama Local Government Area (LGA), who were not part of the study area. The data gathered from the pilot test were subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability test and found to have a reliability coefficient greater than 0.70, and thus showed satisfactory internal consistency and reliability for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered were analysed descriptively and inferentially with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. The results/counts, percentages, and mean scores were used to describe the characteristics of the respondents and to answer the research question.

4. Results and Discussion

This section involves the analysis of data gotten from the field. Four hundred and fifty copies of questionnaires (450) were distributed to respondents, out of which only four hundred (400) were returned.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 400)

Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Gender		
Male	240	60.0
Female	160	40.0
Age Distribution		
18–20 Years	91	22.8
21–23 Years	137	34.3
24–26 Years	109	27.3
27–29 Years	63	15.8
Occupation		
Student	160	40.0
Entrepreneur	114	28.5
Student and Entrepreneur	126	31.5
Marital Status		
Single		
Married	314	78.5
Others	74	18.5
	12	3.0
Educational Level		
Secondary School	57	14.3
Diploma/NCE	86	21.5
Undergraduate	206	51.5
Graduate	40	10.0
Others	11	2.7
Total	350	100

Source: Fieldwork (2026)

Table 1 illustrates the demographic characteristics of the 400 respondents. Males accounted for the majority of the sample (N=240, 60.0%), whereas females constituted 40% (N=160). The largest category according to age distribution was found among those who were between the ages of 21-23years (N=137, 34.3%), then came those who were between the ages of 24-26years (N=109, 27.3%). Other age groups included 18-20year olds at N=91(22.8%) and 27–29-year-olds at N=63(15.8%). With regards to occupation, the results indicated that there were more students (N=160, 40.0%), than those that were both student and entrepreneur (N=126, 31.5%), which is quite common as most youth have to start from scratch when venturing into entrepreneurship. Finally, we had only 114 entrepreneurs (N=114, 28.5%).

In terms of marital statuses, most of our sample were singles (N=314, 78.5%). Only few individuals (N=74, 18.5%) were married while some fell under others' categories (N=12, 3.0%). In terms of Educational Qualification, most were undergraduates (N=206,51.5%) which formed the biggest category, trailed by Diploma/NCE qualifiers (N=86, 21.5%) and secondary school leavers (N=57,14.3%). Graduates composed N=40 (10.0%) while few individuals (N=11, 2.7%) qualified beyond these categories. The results show that the demographics used to represent this specific cohort were adequately reflected through the sample thus ensuring that all necessary subgroups were considered during data collection process. These indicators suggest that the target population consisted of mainly young people who are either involved in

educational pursuits or engaging themselves in entrepreneurial ventures.

Table 2. The prevalence and patterns of hustle-culture among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.

Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Decision
1. Multiple income activities	160	140	60	50	3.07	Accepted
2. Pressure to be productive	140	150	75	35	2.99	Accepted
3. Long working hours daily	130	175	50	45	2.97	Accepted
4. Combine study and hustles	135	145	95	25	2.98	Accepted
5. Social media influence	100	150	70	80	2.67	Accepted

Source: Field work (2026)

As shown in the first segment, out of 405 respondents, there were 160 (39.5%) strong agreements on this statement, 140 (34.6%) agreement, hence 300 (74.1%) in total, while only 60 (14.8%) and 50 (12.3%) disagreed and strongly disagree respectively on how multiple income activities had played their part towards 'hustling culture'. However, the mean scores obtained for this question are 3.07, thus the item was accepted. Out of 405 respondents, there were 140 (35%) and 150 (37.5%) respondents who strongly agree and agree on how pressure to be productive influence 'hustle culture'. Combining these numbers, we have 290 (72.5%) respondents who agree with the statement that pressure to be productive influence 'hustle-culture'. Contrarily, only 75 (18.8%) disagreed and 35 (8.8%) respondents strongly disagreed. Given the fact that the mean scores obtained here is 2.99 which implies that the statement should be accepted. Long working hours daily. There were 130 (32.5%) and 175 (43.8%) respondents who strongly agree and agree about having worked for long time each day contributing to 'hustle culture'. Thus, combining the two gives us 305 (76.3%) who agreed with the given statement on how one's work duration per day affects their 'hustle-culture'. Only 50 (12.5%) and 45 (11.3%) respondents

disagreed and strongly disagree. Since the average score is 2.97, then the item must be accepted.

Further results showed that combining academic activities and hustles as well as social media influence had also been attributed to contributing factors of 'hustle-culture'. A total number of 135 (33.8%) participants strongly agree while 145 (36.3%) agrees that they combine their studies with hustles giving a total of 280 (70.1%). Contrarily, 95(23.8%) did disagree while 25(6.3%) strongly disagree. With a mean score of 2.98 which was acceptable based on the scale used hence acceptability of the item was made. In terms of social media influence, 100(25.0%) and 150(37.5%) strongly agree and agree respectively showing that altogether 250(62.5%) participants acknowledge social media's role on hustle culture. On the other hand, 70(17.5%) disagreed whereas 80(20.0%) strongly disagree. Henceforth, results indicated that 'hustle culture' among Gen Z students/entrepreneurs are mainly influenced by the nature of carrying out multiple income activities, longer duration working hours, being pressured into always producing quality works, merging of studies with hustles and lastly influence from social media.

Table 3. The influence of hustle-culture on the sleep patterns and sleep quality of Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.

Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Decision
6. Reduced sleep hours	177	137	50	36	3.14	Accepted
7. Irregular sleep schedule	143	161	57	39	3.02	Accepted
8. Daytime fatigue	150	120	50	80	2.85	Accepted
9. Stay awake late	157	125	77	41	2.99	Accepted
10. Poor sleep quality	145	136	55	64	2.91	Accepted

Source: Fieldwork (2026)

From Table 3 above, we can see how the impact of ‘hustle culture’ affects the sleep patterns and quality of life for Gen Z students and entrepreneurs. The first question relates to whether hustle culture has caused a reduction in hours slept. As seen from this table, there were 177 (44.3%) respondents who “Strongly Agreed” and another 137(34.3%) respondents “Agreed”, making up 314 (78.6%) who agree with this statement. However, as expected, there were still some individuals who did not feel that ‘hustle culture’ impacted their sleeping hours – these consisted of 50 (12.5%) people who ‘Disagreed’, alongside 36 (9.0%) who ‘Strongly Disagreed’. In the second segment, when examining questions related to irregularities within the general schedule associated with sleeping, it’s clear that many participants have been influenced by hustle culture. A total of 143 (35.8%) respondents indicated they “Strongly Agreed”, while another 161 (40.3%) responded with an agreement. This equates to those who believe their involvement in both academics and entrepreneurship has affected their own sleeping schedules consisting of 304 (76.1%). Conversely, those who didn’t experience such disruptions consisted of those who disagreed about this concept including those that found themselves disagreeing entirely about what ‘hustle culture’ means when talking specifically about one’s personal schedule - this group

contained 57 (14.2%) individuals who believed themselves not agreeing at all whatsoever, whilst others only mildly felt conflicted enough around certain aspects. Accordingly, 150 respondents (37.5%) strongly agreed and 120 respondents (30.0%) agreed to experiencing daytime fatigue, indicating 270 respondents (67.5%). However, only 50 respondents (12.5%) disagreed with this statement and 80 respondents (20.0%) strongly disagreed. Mean of 2.85 for this item indicates its acceptance. Regarding staying awake late to engage in activities related to academia and/or businesses, there were 157 (39.3%) and 125 (31.3%) respondents who strongly agreed and agreed respectively, signifying a total number of 282 (70.6%). Whereas, only 77 (19.3%) disagreed and 41 (10.3%) strongly disagreed. Further support for the acceptance of this item was offered by a mean of 2.99 obtained. Poor Sleep Quality: On average, 145 (36.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 136 (34.0%) agreed about poor quality of their sleep as shown in Table 3, which represents a total of 281 (70.3%) respondents who have reported on the declining quality of their sleep. Conversely, only 55 (13.8%) and 64 (16.0%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. A mean score of 2.91 has been achieved for this item, showing its acceptance.

Table 4. Hustle-culture and dietary practices among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.

Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Decision
11. Skipping meals	127	138	70	65	2.82	Accepted
12. Reliance on fast food	131	135	86	48	2.87	Accepted
13. Irregular eating schedule	164	130	76	30	3.07	Accepted
14. Poor nutritional intake	125	135	60	80	2.76	Accepted
15. Hustle affects diet	148	130	58	64	2.91	Accepted

Source: Fieldwork (2026)

As shown by the table above, ‘hustle culture’ has some impact on how much Gen Z students and entrepreneurs skip meals since its mean score of 2.82 indicates that the item was accepted. First, the findings indicated that out of 127 people who strongly agreed and 138 who agreed that they skip meals because of their academic and entrepreneurial engagement, there was a total of 265 people (66.3%) who agreed with the statement. Contrarily, only 70 (17.5%) did not agree with the statement, including those who strongly disagreed, which is only 65 (16.3%). Out of 131 Gen Zs who strongly agreed that they rely on fast food, there are another 135 (33.8%) who also agreed with them, for a total of 266 (66.6%) agreeing with the statement that they depend on fast food. Only 86 (21.5%) and 48 (12%) do not agree with such an approach, either because of disagreement or strong disagreement, respectively. The mean score of 2.87 means that this item was accepted. Regarding irregularity of eating schedules, out of 164 respondents who strongly agree and 130 who agree, we can say that 294 (73.5%) of all the Gen Z participants believe their eating schedules have been affected due to hustle culture. 76 (19.0%) of them do not agree with this notion of irregular schedule, while only 30 (7.5%) strongly disagree. Irregular schedule remains the most common dietary practice of ‘hustle culture’ among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State, having gotten the highest mean score of 3.07.

Further analysis indicated that ‘hustle culture’ had significant effects on both poor nutritional intakes as well as overall negative impacts on diet. Of the 125 respondents (31.3%), they strongly agreed, while another group of 135 (33.8%) agreed that hustle-related activities caused them poor nutritional intake. The total number of participants who either agreed or strongly agreed amounted to a total of 260 (65.1%). Contrarily, only 60 (15.0%) participants did not agree, whereas others only strongly disagreed with the question, as 80 (20.0%) of the participants. As shown above, this particular question obtained a mean score of 2.76, which indicates its acceptability. Similarly, from the figure provided above, those 148 (37.0%) participants who strongly agree and 130 (32.5%) who agree made up 278 (69.5%) that agreed with the statement about ‘hustle-culture’ affecting their diets negatively. However, there were other participants who did not agree on the matter at all with 58 (14.5%) participants disagreeing while another 64 (16%) strongly disagreed with the statement. With a mean score of 2.91, we can infer the fact that the item was acceptable. From our analysis, it is clear that ‘hustle culture’ has a great influence on the dietary practices of Gen Z students and entrepreneurs through creating irregularities in their eating schedule, skipping meals, preferring fast food and therefore leading to poor nutritional intakes among themselves.

Table 5. Hustle-culture and self-care practices, including physical exercise, relaxation, and routine health maintenance, among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State.

Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Decision
16. No time for exercise	141	126	60	73	2.84	Accepted
17. No relaxation time	125	142	74	59	2.83	Accepted
18. Ignoring minor illness	120	140	60	80	2.75	Accepted
19. No medical check-ups	117	161	65	57	2.84	Accepted
20. Poor self-care due to hustle	140	180	50	30	3.08	Accepted

Source: Field work (2026)

From the results above, hustle culture significantly influences the self-care practices of Gen Z Students and Entrepreneurs in Bayelsa state as seen below: Physical Exercise: There were 141 respondents (35.3%) who strongly agree and 126 respondents (31.5%) who agreed that they do not have time to engage in exercise due to hustle related activities totaling up to 267 respondents (66.8%) thus making this statement acceptable. On the contrary, there are 60 respondents (15.0%) who disagree and 73 respondents (18.3%) who strongly disagree with this statement. The mean score of this question is 2.84. No time for Relaxation: From the data collected, we can see that 125 respondents (31.3%) strongly agree and 142 respondents (35.5%) agree that they have no time for relaxation due to hustle related activities thus accounting to 267 respondents (66.8%). However, from the table, there are those that disagree such as 74 respondents (18.5%) and 59 respondents (14.8%) who strongly disagree with the statement thus recording a mean score of 2.83 leading us to accept this statement. Ignoring Minor Illnesses: 120 respondents (30.0%) strongly agree while 140 respondents (35.0%) agree that they ignore minor illnesses as a result of hustle related activities totaling up to 260 respondents (65.0%). Oppositely, 60 respondents (15.0%) disagree while 80 respondents (20.0%) strongly disagree with the statement.

The result further revealed that ‘hustle-culture’ impacts on the health maintenance and general self-care of the participants as revealed below. Firstly, out of all the participants, only 117 (29.3%) strongly agreed and another 161 (40.3%) also agreed that they did not go through any medical check-up thus totalling 278 (69.6%) participants who agreed. On the other hand, 65 (16.3%) participants disagreed while 57 (14.3%) strongly disagreed. As such, this particular question attained an average score of 2.84 which implies its acceptance. Secondly, there were 140 (35.0%) participants who strongly agreed and 180 (45.0%) also agreed that their inability to practice good self-care was attributed to various hustle-related activities. Thus, combining these two categories gives us a total of 320 (80.0%) participants who agreed with the above-mentioned assertion regarding hustle culture's negative impact on self-care practices. Moreover, the rest of the participants who had different views were only 50 (12.5%) who disagreed with the above statements whereas only 30 (7.5%) participants strongly disagreed. Therefore, it can be noted that poor self-care is the most prominent challenge among GenZs because of ‘hustle culture’. It must however be noted that ‘hustle-culture’ has a lot of adverse effects on self-care among both students and entrepreneurs including lack of time for exercises and relaxing, ignoring minor

Discussion of Findings

The first objective examined the prevalence and patterns of hustle-culture among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State. Responses from the questionnaire indicate that most Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in the study area are adjusted towards the hustle culture, which is evident from their multiple income-generating activities, the pressure they are under to remain productive and their lengthy working hours on educational and business-related pursuits. The results also indicate that several respondents are involved in academic pursuits and other business ideas, and thus have normal behaviour patterns of balancing their education with other ventures, either for profit or other purposes. This points to the fact that financial needs and the need to work for themselves have grown to be a large element of young people's lives, forcing them to lead an economic lifestyle as opposed to a life with leisure time. The findings also noted that social media has a role to play, as many of the respondents admitted that they feel inspired to work harder and gain extra income due to exposure to online content that encourages these elements of success, wealth and productivity. Overall, the results indicated that hustle-culture deeply influences the lived experiences of students and entrepreneurs, as they strive for productivity, multitasking in academic and economic activities.

The second objective assessed the influence of hustle-culture on the sleep patterns and sleep quality of Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State. The findings revealed that students and entrepreneurs in the study area have sleep disturbances due to their academic workload and business activity. This means that many young people living in the study area do not have a fixed sleeping pattern because of their engagements late

into the night, such as work, curriculum, and business activities. The findings also indicate that the late-night activities are often carried out by respondents to fulfil the requirements of their work and study activities, which then leads to a decrease in the length of sleep and disturbances of the circadian rhythm. The study further reveals that a poor sleeping routine resulted in daytime fatigue and less energy when performing daily activities. The pressure associated with having to wear multiple hats has a direct effect on a person's body as well as their mind, which indicates that this pressure could be detrimental.

The third objective investigated how hustle-culture affects dietary practices among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State. Responses from the survey revealed that inattention to food was high, partly because their school or business activities consume a lot of time; thus, eating comes second to getting their work done and earning income. It suggests that as youth start to take up several responsibilities, they tend to eat irregularly, which may affect their diet. It also found that fast food and snack consumption were prevalent among the respondents due to a lack of time to make a well-balanced meal. This may indicate a trend towards increasingly relying on convenience foods, which tend to be less healthy. Additionally, a significant number of respondents reported that their consumption of imbalanced and nutritious meals happened infrequently, further accentuating the nutritional implications of the hustle-culture as a way of living. In general, the results showed that hustle-culture had a significant impact on Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in the study area, as Gustavsen and Kolkata (2018) stated that it may lead to skipping meals, fast food dependency, irregular eating habits, and not having access to balanced nutrition, which resulted in generally poor dietary behaviours among respondents.

The fourth objective evaluated how hustle-culture affects self-care practices, including physical exercise, relaxation, and routine health maintenance among Gen Z students and entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State. The findings revealed that many Gen Z students and entrepreneurs are faced with high levels of self-neglect because of their academic and entrepreneurial obligations. The findings revealed that many respondents lacked time for physical activity; this indicates that 'daily exercise' was often taken for granted due to involvement with work and education. This pattern suggests that life goes on with an attitude of getting things done, rather than concerns for maintaining good health, resulting in lower participation in activities geared toward personal fitness and health. The results also show that many respondents feel they don't have enough time for relaxation and leisure either, suggesting that remaining busy with hustle activities leaves little time to relax and recover. This makes it more likely that healthy self-care behaviours that are critical for managing stress and mental wellness will not be pursued. The study further found that a significant proportion of respondents prefer to overlook minor ailments as a result of time constraints, indicating health neglect and delay in response to medical needs. Furthermore, many respondents rarely visit the hospital for check-ups unless their health condition is very poor, which is a sign of low preventive health-seeking behaviour. The results indicated that there seems to be a large impact of hustle-culture on hindering self-care activities related practices for the students and entrepreneurs, such as making time for exercise and relaxation, leaving little time to manage minor health issues and to have regular medical check-ups, etc.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that 'hustle-culture' among students and entrepreneurs is very

prominent among Gen Z students in Bayelsa State, and it poses a significant impact on the health and well-being of the students and entrepreneurs. The results indicate that most youth have multiple livelihood activities, work long hours and that both school-based and entrepreneurial income-generating activities are undertaken at the same time in an attempt to secure personal and economic well-being. This lifestyle was shown to be associated with decreasing sleep hours, irregular sleep habits, inadequate nutrition and neglect of health issues, including proper exercise, relaxation and timely medical check-ups.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

- i. The Bayelsa State Ministry of Health, along with Primary and Secondary Healthcare Agencies, should intensify campaigns that raise awareness of the risks of overwork, late nights, unhealthy eating habits and ignoring self-care habits due to hustle culture.
- ii. There is an urgent need for Tertiary Education in Bayelsa to create a planned wellness and time management programme in student life. This should include working with required orientation regarding work-life balance, stress management training and the creation of student wellness centres with counselling, health screening and relaxation facilities.
- iii. Bayelsa State Ministry of Youth Development and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) need to create and execute programs of youth economic empowerment, which will help eliminate over-dependence on various informal employment. Structured Entrepreneurship training, soft loan facilities, entering into sustainable business, etc., will reduce the craze of multi-tasking to make ends meet.
- iv. The promotion of responsible online/hustle-culture content in Nigeria should be regulated and encouraged by the

Ministry of Information and Digital Economy in collaboration with social media influencers/digital platforms, and content. The campaign should challenge

unrealistic messages about nonstop productivity and encourage a more harmonious lifestyle with proper sleep, nutrition and self-care.

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