

**ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS PERSONAL
HYGIENE PRACTICES AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
OGBOMOSO SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OGBOMOSO, OYO STATE**

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Abstract

This study examined knowledge and attitude towards personal hygiene practices among public secondary schools in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area, Ogbomoso, Oyo State. Descriptive survey research design was used. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 160 respondents; while questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages and inferential statistics of t-test were used for the analysis. The result of the study revealed that the (mean=1.91), attitude (mean=1.98) was positive, while personal hygiene practice was good (mean=2.48). There was no significant difference in the knowledge of personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area ($t=0.384$, $df=158$, $p>0.05$). There was no significant difference in attitude towards personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area ($t=-0.895$, $df=158$, $p>0.05$). The authorities of Secondary Schools in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area therefore, should organize periodic sensitization programme on personal hygiene practices for students in the study area.

Keywords: Attitude, Hygiene, Knowledge, Personal, Practices.

Introduction

Hygiene refers to practices and conditions that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases. They include practices that deal with the preservation of health. Basic personal hygiene refers to the principles of maintaining cleanliness and grooming of the external body parts. It includes practices such as bathing regularly, washing hands whenever

necessary, trimming of finger and toe nails, wearing washed clothes daily, washing the hair and keeping clean from lice and dandruff, brushing the teeth and caring for the gums (oluwafemi, 2016). Hygiene is the study and practice of preventing illness or stopping it from spreading, by keeping things clean. Talinowa, (2018) sees the concept of hygiene as set of practices associated with the preservation of health and healthy living. It is a concept related to medicine as well as to personal, professional care and practices affecting most aspects of living; although it is most often associated with disease preventive measures. Hygiene can also be referred to as the science that deals with the promotion of health.

Personal hygiene involves personal attention by an individual to prevent diseases. Paul, (2017) ascertained that different habits such as washing hands, the entire body, hair care, nails trimming, clean clothing to warm and protect the skin as well as teeth brushing in effort to keep bacteria, virus and fungi away from direct or indirect contact with the body. The role of health education programme in the school is very important for cognitive, creative and social development of children. An education regarding proper sanitation and hygiene practices are very necessary for the safe, secure and healthy environment so that every child can learn better and face the challenges of future life. (WHO ,2020) . Since personal hygiene habits such as washing hands regularly as well as brushing and flossing teeth can help in keeping bacteria, viruses and illness at bay, there are several health guides that can help individuals to achieve healthy goals. Holt,(2018), affirmed that people who have poor hygiene habits such as disheveled hair and clothes as well as those with body odor, bad breath, dirty and missing teeth are often seen as unhealthy and may face social discrimination.

Personal hygiene can also be described as the principle of maintaining cleanliness and grooming of the external body. Personal Hygiene refers to all activities, actions and practices carried out by an individual to keep the body clean and healthy. There are so many benefits attached to personal hygiene such as prevention of diseases, quick recovery from illnesses, social acceptance by people, emotional satisfaction and good personal appearance. Personal Hygiene is the first step to good grooming and good health and this involves all measures taken by individuals to preserve his or her health. Improved standard of hygiene will prevent health problems like dandruff, athletes' foot, body odour, pin worms, excessive ear wax, gastro-intestinal diseases. (Jahan, 2021)

Body hygiene pertains to hygiene practices performed by an individual to care for one's bodily health and well-being. It is achieved by using personal hygiene products including: soap, hair shampoo, hair conditioner, cotton swabs, deodorant, chap stick, cream, lotion, facial tissue, hair clippers, nail clippers, nail files, skin cleansers, razors, shaving cream, skin cream and toilet paper. All these products are used to improve health and well-being. (boyce , 2021).

Despite the fact that personal hygiene can go a long way to prevent communicable diseases, many still do not take it seriously as they should. The reason is not farfetched. People believe there are some bad habits they can get away with; therefore, they do not desist from such bad habits). Among such are thumb-suckling, nail biting and picking the ears with objects. Some students have perception which may not promote desirable health behaviours. For instance, some are of the perception that the wearing of long nails improves one 's physical appearance, little do people realise that perceptions such as this could be harmful.

(Ogundele,2018). The idea of going to salons for pedicure and manicure is a habit that should be discouraged among students, unless they carry their own kit with them. Personal hygiene does not end at looking good, it also aids in preventing ill health caused by diseased pathogens.

Lack of personal hygiene resources or facilities can prevent students from adopting personal hygiene practices. Lack of resources such as soap and water are two of the main reasons why children do not wash their hands. In addition to personal hygiene resources, it is necessary to equip students with adequate knowledge relating to personal hygiene. Personal hygiene- related knowledge has great potential in enhancing student capacity to adopt health promoting behaviours as well as equipping them with skills to serve as peer educators and community educators.

Good personal hygiene promotes good health therefore all external or open wounds should be properly treated and protected from dangerous micro-organisms. For such reasons, children need to be taught the importance of good personal hygiene and the dangers associated with poor hygiene practices so that they can live well in future. It has therefore become necessary to do an assessment of personal hygiene practices among public secondary schools in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State

Statement of the Problem

Human environments are unsafe for healthy living due to prevalence of germs, bacteria, infections viruses and fungi. Some of these harmful micro-organisms are present in foods, water, sand in the air, and have the potentials of contacting the body through the teeth inside the mouth, hair, finger and toe nails, the nose as well as the eyes and skin. So many gastro intestinal diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid and cholera can be prevented through personal hygiene. In the past, there was regular inspection of students which is no longer a common practice. Other barriers to control infectious diseases in the community include inadequate sanitation, lack of knowledge about the biology and ecology of some microbiology causing the diseases. The enabling conditions for improving the personal hygiene of students are not available in some schools.

The researcher observed that most students are involved in bad habits like nail biting, sneezing without covering their mouth, washing hands only with water after leaving the toilet and cleaning their ears with hair pins. There is dearth of information on the present facilities that will make the students observe their personal hygiene properly. This research work is therefore designed to investigate on the assessment of knowledge and attitude towards personal hygiene practices among public secondary schools in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area, Ogbomoso, Oyo State

Objectives of the Study

1. Assess knowledge of personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State
2. determine attitude towards personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State

3. investigate the personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered.

- i. What is the level of knowledge of personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State?
- ii. What is the attitude towards personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State?
- iii. What are the personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State?

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in attitude towards personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The study was delimited to the public junior and senior secondary schools in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State. The geographical scope of the study was Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State. The population of the study comprised of students in public secondary schools in Ogbomosho South Local Government Area, Osun state, which include: Baptist Grammar School, Care-taker Community High School, Baptist Secondary Grammar School, Ogbomoso Baptist High School, Baptist Comprehensive High School, Emmanuel Agboola Baptist Grammar School, Molete Community High School and Methodist Secondary Grammar School (Source: Oyo State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Ogbomoso South Local Education 2024)

The sample for the study was drawn from the population using random sampling technique. Random Sampling was used to select the eight (8) public secondary schools from the study area. Twenty (20) JSS1 to SS2 students was selected through simple random selection method from each of the eight (8) schools making a total of 160 students selected for this study. The sample comprised of both male and female student

A self-designed questionnaire tagged “Secondary School Students’ Personal Hygiene Practices Questionnaire (SSPHPQ)” and School Resources and Student Appearance Checklist (SRSAC) will be used to collect necessary data and information from the respondents and was validated by experts in the field of Health Education. The respondents were guided to provide their responses to the questions outlined in the questionnaire. The questionnaires were collected on the spot after completion from the respondents. The completed copies of the questionnaire

were collected, coded and analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, mean and percentages to analyse the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and research questions. Inferential statistics of t-test was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of knowledge of personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State?

Table 1: Summary of Result on Knowledge of Personal Hygiene Practices

S/n	Statement	True	False	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	Covering one's nostrils while sneezing is part of personal hygiene	160 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2.00	0.0
2	Sharing one's clothes with others can lead to infection of the skin	153 (95.6%)	7 (4.4%)	1.96	0.21
3.	One's hands should be washed with soap and water after using the toilet	153 (95.6%)	7 (4.4%)	1.98	0.14
4	One's hands should be washed before preparing food.	160 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2.00	0.0
5	Bathing regularly can help to make our skin to be smooth.	160 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2.00	0.0
6	Taking one's bath daily can prevent skin diseases	156 (97.5%)	4 (2.5%)	1.98	0.16
7	Brushing of the teeth can prevent diseases that can affect the teeth	156 (97.5%)	4 (2.5%)	1.98	0.16
8	Taking sweet cannot damage ones' teeth	29 (18.1%)	131 (81.9%)	1.18	0.39
9	While brushing the teeth, the tongue should also be cleaned	147 (91.9%)	13 (8.1%)	1.92	0.27
10	Too much sweat on the body can lead to bad odour	155 (96.9%)	5 (3.1%)	1.97	0.17
11	Keeping long fingernails is will attract infection?	159 (99.4%)	1 (0.6%)	1.99	0.08
				Weighted mean=1.91	

Source: Field Survey, 2024, Decision Rule: <0.49=Low; 1.50–1.99=High; 2.00=Very High

Research Question 2: What is the attitude towards personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State?

Table 2: Summary of Result on Attitude towards Personal Hygiene Practices

S/n	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Always	Mean	SD
	<i>How often do you do the following:</i>					
1.	Use of personal hair clipper when cutting hair in the barbing salon	59 (36.9%)	35 (21.9%)	66 (41.3%)	2.04	0.89
2	Sharing of clothes and towels with other family members	154 (96.3%)	2 (1.3%)	4 (2.5%)	1.06	0.33
3	Washing of your towels, underwear and socks	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.9%)	156 (97.5%)	2.97	0.21
4	Keeping long nails	140 (87.5%)	4 (2.5%)	16 (10.0%)	1.23	0.61
5	Use of sharp objects in cleaning the ear	114 (71.3%)	5 (3.1%)	41 (25.6%)	1.54	0.87
6	Covering the nose with hands/ handkerchief when sneezing	14 (8.8%)	1 (0.6%)	145 (90.6%)	2.82	0.57
7	Use of toothbrush in cleaning the mouth	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	160 (100.0%)	3.00	0.00
8	Bathing with soap and water	1 (0.6%)	6 (3.8%)	153 (95.6%)	2.95	0.25
9	Flushing eyes with water when something gets there mistakenly	145 (90.6%)	7 (4.4%)	8 (5.0%)	1.14	0.47
10	Eating fruits without washing them	158 (98.8%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	1.02	0.18
					Weighted mean=1.98	

Source: Field Survey, 2024, Decision Rule: <0.49=Negative; 1.50>=Positive

Research Question 3: What is the personal hygiene practice among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogbomoso, Oyo State?

Table 3 Summary of Result on Personal Hygiene Practice

S/n	Behaviour	Everyday	Once in a week	Twice in a week	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Bathing	154 (96.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (3.8%)	2.96	0.19
2	Brushing of hair	156 (97.5%)	2 (1.3%)	2 (1.3%)	2.96	0.25
3	Washing of underwears	24 (15.0%)	54 (33.8%)	82 (51.3%)	1.81	0.67
4	Biting of fingernails with teeth	128 (80.0%)	28 (17.5%)	4 (2.5%)	2.63	0.77
5	Use of body cream /lotion	19	29	112	1.94	0.55

		(11.9%)	(18.1%)	(70.0%)		
6	Cutting/ Plaiting of hair (Males and Females)	114 (90.0%)	10 (6.3%)	6 (3.8%)	2.84	0.51
7	Cleaning/ Brushing of teeth	20 (12.5%)	30 (18.8%)	110 (68.8%)	1.94	0.55
8	Cutting of fingernails	82 (51.3%)	37 (23.1%)	41 (25.6%)	2.28	0.82
9	Cleaning of ears with cotton buds	89 (55.6%)	15 (9.4%)	56 (35.0%)	2.46	0.66
10	Exposure of shoes to sunlight.	156 (97.5%)	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.9%)	2.97	0.21
					Weighted Mean=2.48	

Source: Field Survey, 2024, Decision Rule: Poor =0.99-1.99, Good=2.00-2.99, Very Good=3.00

Hypotheses: The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area

Table 4: Summary of Result on Difference in Knowledge of Personal Hygiene Practices

	Sex	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t.test Value	Sig (p value)	Remark
Knowledge of personal hygiene practices	Male	79	20.94	0.58	158	-0.384	0.702	Not Significant
	Female	81	20.96	0.19				

Table 4 reveals that there was no significant difference in the knowledge of personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area ($t=0.384$, $df=158$, $p>0.05$). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. The table further revealed that female had a greater mean of 20.96, while male had a mean of 20.94. It implied that, female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area had better understanding of personal hygiene practices than their male counterparts.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in attitude towards personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area

Table 5 Summary of Result on Difference in Attitude towards Personal Hygiene Practices

	Sex	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-test value	Sig (p value)	Remark
Attitude towards personal hygiene practices	Male	79	19.66	1.56	158	-0.895	0.372	Not Significant
	Female	81	19.89	1.70				

Table 5 reveals that there was no significant difference in attitude towards personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area ($t=-0.895$, $df=158$, $p>0.05$). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. The Table further revealed that female had a greater mean of 19.89, while male had a mean of 19.66. It implied that, female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area had better attitude towards personal hygiene practices than their male counterparts.

Discussion of Findings:

The finding of this study revealed that the level of knowledge of personal hygiene practices was high among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. This was further established through the responses of majority of the respondents that covering one's nostrils while sneezing is part of personal hygiene. In addition, most respondents expressed that sharing one's clothes with others can lead to infection of the skin. Furthermore, majority of the respondents stated that one's hands should be washed with soap and water after using the toilet.

Moreover, all the respondents affirmed that one's hands should be washed before preparing food. Furthermore, all the respondents expressed that bathing regularly can help to make our skin to be smooth. Additionally, most respondents stated that taking one's bath daily could prevent skin diseases. Likewise, most respondents stated that brushing of the teeth can prevent diseases that can affect the teeth. Besides, most respondents did not acknowledge that taking sweet cannot damage ones' teeth. Similarly, most respondents indicated that while brushing the teeth, the tongue should also be cleaned. Moreover, majority of the respondents expressed that too much sweat on the body can lead to bad odour. Besides, most respondents stated that keeping long fingernails will attract infection. The finding of this study is in agreement with Oluwafemi ,(2016) assertion that set of practices associated with the preservation of health and healthy living.

The finding of this study revealed that the attitude towards personal hygiene practices was positive among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. This was further established through the responses of majority of the respondents that they never use personal hair clipper when cutting hair in the barbing salon. Besides, most respondents never shared clothes and towels with other family members. Moreover, always washed towels, underwear and socks. Moreover, most respondents never kept long nails. Furthermore, most respondents never used sharp objects in cleaning the ear. Equally, most respondents always covered the nose with hands/ handkerchief when sneezing. Similarly, all

respondents always used toothbrush in cleaning the mouth. Furthermore, most respondents always bathed with soap and water. Additionally, most respondents never flushed eyes with water when something gets there mistakenly. Moreover, most respondents never eat fruits without washing them. The finding of this study is in contrast to Takeda, (2018), assertion that people 's attitude towards diseases does not always lead to hygienic living.

The finding of this study revealed that personal hygiene practice was good among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. This was further established through the responses of majority of the respondents that they bath every day. Most respondents brush hair every day. Moreover, most respondents wash under wears twice in a week. Besides, most respondents bite fingernails with teeth. Similarly, most respondents use body cream /lotion twice in a week. Furthermore, respondents cut / plait hair every day. Additionally, most respondents clean / brush teeth twice in a week. Besides, most respondents cut / fingernails every day. Furthermore, most respondents clean ears with cotton buds every day. Also, most respondents expose shoes to sunlight.

The finding of this study revealed that there was no significant difference in the knowledge of personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. It was further revealed that female had a greater mean over male. It implied that, female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area had better understanding of personal hygiene practices than their male counterparts. The finding of this study revealed that there was no significant difference in attitude towards personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. It was further revealed that female had a greater mean over male. It implied that, female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area had better attitude towards personal hygiene practices than their male counterparts.

Conclusion

It was concluded in this study that the level of knowledge of personal hygiene practices was high among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. This study established that the attitude towards personal hygiene practices was positive among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. Conclusion was made that personal hygiene practice was good among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. The finding of this study revealed that there was no significant difference in the knowledge of personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area. The finding of this study revealed that there was no significant difference in attitude towards personal hygiene practices between male and female public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The authorities of Secondary Schools in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area should organize periodic sensitization programme on personal hygiene practices for students in the study area.
2. The authorities of Secondary Schools in collaboration with State Ministry of Health should collaborate to organize periodic Health Education programmes specifically on knowledge and attitude towards personal hygiene practices among public secondary school students in Ogbomoso South Local Government Area.

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