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ASSESSMENT OF ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TOWARDS PERSONAL HYGIENE IN BOARDING JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GUSAU METROPOLIS, ZAMFARA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

Negative attitudes towards personal hygiene is one of the key foundations of infections such as gastroenteritis, colds, flu and COVID-19. The paper assessed the attitude of students towards personal hygiene in boarding junior secondary schools in Gusau Metropolis, Zamfara State Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprise all Junior Secondary School students in boarding public Secondary Schools in Gusau Zamfara State in the 2019/2020 academic session with a total population of eight hundred and thirty. A purposive sampling technique was used to select all three boarding junior public secondary schools in Gusau metropolis. A total of 310 respondents which was 40% of the population were used for this study. The instrument used for the study was questionnaire with an internal consistency of 0.760 after the pilot test. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance The findings revealed that the boarding JSS students in public junior secondary schools in Gusau have a negative attitude towards personal hygiene and there was a significant difference in the attitudes of boarding JSS students in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Gusau Metropolis on personal hygiene based on class difference. It was recommended that personal hygiene should be incorporated into the school curriculum to improve students' attitudes towards good hygiene in secondary schools.

Keywords: Attitude, Personal hygiene, Junior, boarding, student and Secondary school

Introduction

Maintaining good personal hygiene practices includes keeping your body clean, which helps ward against illnesses including COVID-19, the flu, colds, and gastroenteritis (Yanglin, 2022). Germs that can cause illness are eliminated when hands are cleaned with soap and water. Maintaining proper personal hygiene can also aid in halting the transmission of illnesses to others. Personal hygiene practices include cleansing one's body every day, using soap and water to wash one's hands after using the restroom, brushing and flossing one's teeth twice a day, covering one's mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and washing one's hands after handling pets and other animals (Çelik & Yüce, 2019).

A positive attitude toward personal hygiene is also essential since it prevents illness, which in turn prevents the spread of pathogens and infectious diseases. When providing holistic care for children and young people (CYPs) in good health as well as those with special needs or compromised health as a result of disease, surgery, or hospitalization, personal hygiene plays a critical role. Keeping oneself clean can also help the ill CYP return to normal, provide comfort, and support their mental health. The family's involvement is crucial for any hospital admission for all aspects of care maintaining a high degree of cleanliness is essential to day-to-day living and/or is required to avoid infection and preserve one's dignity and self-worth. CYPS must remain held to this standard while they are in the hospital (Akorede & Atanda, 2020; Sarah et al., 2023).

The results of a study conducted by Amukugo and Mitonga (2018) on the attitude toward personal hygiene among adolescents show that out of 158 responses, all of the participants were male, and the majority of them were enrolled in grade 12 (n=88,55.7%). Participants also demonstrated a moderate level of personal hygiene. In a similar vein, a UNICEF survey from 2021 on personal hygiene among students in primary schools found that the majority of the subjects—66.7% of whom were in grades 5 and 6—had a negative attitude toward cleanliness and hygiene. This showed that, regardless of their attitudes, younger students in lower school grades had worse attitudes about cleanliness and hygiene than older students in higher grades, both female students (50.7%) and male students (49.3%). No statistically significant correlation was found between the attitudes and the school circuits or locations. Research indicates that students are more likely to have positive attitudes and be responsible as they grow older and progress in their education. Even though many students had the proper attitude toward hand hygiene, 22.8% of them were unaware of or did not think that hand hygiene should begin after defecation. Additionally, 18.2% of people did not know or think that hands should be clean before eating, at home or school. This is concerning because learners who hold this belief won't try to wash their hands after using the restroom, even if water is accessible in the classroom. It implies that disease can spread through contact with other people (Choi, Jang, & Choi, 2014)

In addition, Jayita (2017) carried out a cross-sectional study at a Government Secondary Girls school in a Kolkata slum. By full enumeration, 327 teenage girls from the class were included. The majority of responders exhibited appropriate personal hygiene behaviour. Care of hair (96.9%), covering of mouth during coughing or sneezing (59.3%), cleanliness

of mouth after feeding (47.4%), hand washing (90.8%), and requirement of dating (62.7%). The majority of the teenage girls showed appropriate views on personal hygiene, according to the study. One of the International Millennium Development Goals (goal 4) is to reduce child and youth mortality rates by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. This goal has been adopted by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and many other agencies. Because of this, it's important to improve the health of children and young people and lower death rates by applying all practical, efficient methods. To accomplish this admirable objective, it is now crucial to avoid illnesses like gastroenteritis and other conditions linked to inadequate hygiene, as well as to educate kids and young people about the need for hand washing (Rheingans, Dreibelbis & Freeman, 2016). Hand washing is essential for preventing diarrhoea (Najnin, et al., 2019), and wearing a face mask and minimising the spread of influenza have been shown to reduce the infection (Cowling, Chan & Fang et al., 2019).

Because of Nigeria's still-acceptably high rate of child and youth mortality, it is imperative to investigate the existing state of attitude on the relationship between hand washing and the risk of illness development in this age range. The purpose of this study was to determine how students felt about personal hygiene in Gusau Metropolis, a boarding junior secondary school in Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Objective: To examine the attitude of students towards personal hygiene in boarding junior secondary schools in Gusau Metropolis, Zamfara State Nigeria

Research question: what is the attitude of students towards personal hygiene in boarding junior secondary schools in Gusau Metropolis, Zamfara State Nigeria?

Hypothesis: There are no significant differences in the attitude of students towards personal hygiene in boarding junior secondary schools in Gusau Metropolis, Zamfara State Nigeria based on school

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised all JSS II junior students in boarding public secondaryschools in Gusau metropolis, Zamfara State, with a total population of eight hundred and thirty (830). A purposive sampling technique was used to select all three boarding junior public secondary schools in Gusau metropolis of Zamfara State, Nigeria. To select the respondents, forty per cent (40%) of the respondents in each of the schools were selected using a simple random sampling technique of the fish-bowl method. Thus, in the Government Science Secondary School with a population of 305, a sample of 122 was selected. In Government Girls Arabic Secondary School with a population of 345, a sample of 138 was selected. Likewise, in Federal Government Girls College with a population of 180, a sample size of 72 was selected at random using simple random sample fish-bowl method. Administration of 332 copies of the questionnaire was done with the help of three research assistants during the lunch break with the respondents with the permission of the Principals of the schools however, 310 questionnaires were recovered. Thus, a total of 310 respondents were used for this study. A self-developed questionnaire with 14 items structured on a four-point Likert scale type, Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) (with scale SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2 and SD = 1). However, any response with a mean score of 2.50 and above is considered accepted while below it is considered rejected. The instrument was validated by the experts in health education and was subjected to a pilot test with an internal consistency of 0.760 using the Guttman split-half test to determine the reliability coefficient test. The research question was answered using mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.-

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation scores of the responses on attitude towards personal hygiene

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	It is good to wash hands only with water	2.96	0.185	Accepted
2	It is good to wash hands with soap and water	2.79	0.593	Accepted
3	It is good to wash hands before the meals	2.68	0.519	Accepted
4	It is good to wash hands after meals	2.81	0.681	Accepted
5a	It is good to wash hands after using the toilets	2.93	0.347	Accepted
5b	It is good to wash hands after sanitation	2.99	0.220	Accepted
6	It is good to wash hands after coming to the Hostel	2.98	0.219	Accepted
7	It is good to wash hands after sneezing or contact with other student	2.96	0.185	Accepted
8	It is good to use toilet paper after using the toilet	2.79	0.593	Accepted
9	It is good to bath at least two times every day	2.68	0.519	Accepted
10	It is good to wash socks after class	2.81	0.681	Accepted
11	It is good to cover the mouth when coughing with Handkerchief	2.93	0.347	Accepted
12	It is good to daily change underwear	2.99	0.220	Accepted
13	It is good to cut the fingernails once a week	2.98	0.219	Accepted
14	It is good to brush your teeth at least two times every day	2.96	0.185	Accepted
	Weigted mean	**2.88**	0.394	

Accepted at 2.50

Table 1 revealed that the weighted mean of the responses of respondents was 2.88 out of the weighted mean of 4.00, which implies that the attitude towards personal hygiene of JSS II students in public junior boarding secondary schools in Gusau Metropolis was negative.

Table 2. Showing ANOVA to analyze student's attitude towards personal hygiene

Attitude	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	37.537	2	18.768	8.090	0.000
Within group	712.218	307	2.320		
Total	749.755	309			

Table 2 revealed that the f-value computed was 8.090 and the p-value was observed since the obtained p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, hence the study rejected the null hypothesis that says there is no significant difference in attitude toward personal hygiene among boarding JSS II students in public junior secondary schools in Gusau metropolis bytheir school type. The decision implies that there is a significant difference in the attitude toward personal hygiene among boarding JSS II students in public junior secondary schools in Gusau metropolis by school type. To find where the differences occur, the post-hoc test was carried out as presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Post Hoc Test Analyses on the Students' Attitude towards Personal Hygiene

GROUP (A)	GROUP (B)	Mean Difference (A-B)	Std. Error	Sig.
Government Science Secondary SchoolsGusau	Government Arabic Secondary SchoolGusau	0.727*	0.197	**0.000**
	Federal Government Girls College, Gusau	0.727*	0.233	**0.002**
Government ArabicSecondary School Gusau	Government ScienceSecondary Schools Gusau	0-.727*	0.197	**0.000**
	Federal Government Girls College, Gusau	0.000	0.226	**1.000**
Federal GovernmentGirls College, Gusau	Government Science Secondary Schools Gusau	0-.727*	0.233	**0.002**
	Government Arabic Secondary School Gusau	0.000	0.226	**1.000**

Table 3 revealed that the significant difference occurs only between Government Science Secondary Schools Gusau and Government Arabic Secondary School Gusau and then between Government Science Secondary Schools Gusau and Federal Government Girls College. While between Government Arabic Secondary School Gusau and Federal Government Girls College, Gusau there was no significant difference.

Discussions

The finding revealed that the level of students' attitude towards personal hygiene of boarding JSS II students in public junior secondary schools in Gusau was negative, and there is a significant difference in their attitude towards personal hygiene based on school type. The result agreed with that of Shilunga, Amukugo and Mitongo, (2018) on personal hygiene among primary school learners. Their result revealed that the majority of the learners (66.7%) had a poor attitude towards hygiene and sanitation of which 78.7% were in grades 5 and 6.

However, the findings disagree with those of Innocent, Obani, Ezejindu, Uwaezuoke and Vasavada (2022) who revealed that 81.4% of secondary school students engage in the attitude of brushing their teeth and cutting their nails. The finding was in line with several studies as suggested by Innocent, et al (2022) which have found that poor personal hygiene among boarding students contributes to the spread of germs, gum infections, a higher risk of infectious illnesses, the incidence of foodborne outbreaks, and reproductive tract infections.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that: the attitude towards personal hygiene of JSS II students in public junior boarding secondary schools in Gusau Metropolis was negative. The Government Science Secondary Schools Gusau significantly have better positive attitudes towards personal hygiene.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that;

1. Personal hygiene as a core subject should be introduced in the junior secondary school curriculum to improve the attitude of students at the junior secondary school levels
2. Personal hygiene should be incorporated into teacher training institution's curriculum to facilitate students' attitude towards personal hygiene in secondary schools
3. Training programmes should be organized for students in secondary schools on how to take care of teeth, hair, feet, nose, eyes and hands.

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