



## Awareness and Practice of Personal Hygiene among Primary School Children in Dutsin-Ma Town of Katsina State

**Badaki Olusegun, Saba Mohammed, & Zainab Bishir**

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education,  
Federal University Dutsin-Ma,  
Katsina State Nigeria

### **Abstract**

*This study assessed the awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-ma town of Katsina State, Nigeria. The population of this study comprise all the eleven-primary school in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State, and fifty percent of the schools were selected using simple random sampling of hat-draw method. A sample size of six primary schools out of eleven were selected. To select the respondents, two percent (2%) of the pupils from each selected school was used, totalling ninety-one (91) respondents as the sample for the study from the entire 4,535 pupils in the sampled schools. Researcher-developed questionnaire was used as instrument which was subjected to face and contents validity by experts in Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma. True or False type of measurement was used to collect necessary information for this study. The demographic characteristics of the respondents and the research questions were presented using descriptive statistics of frequency and simple percentage, while the hypothesis was analyzed using Pearson moment product at 0.05 significant level in order to establish the relationship. The result of the study shows that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State. It was recommended that school authorities should scale-up on providing adequate knowledge and training for the students in the schools on how to take care of their teeth, hair, feet, nose, eyes and hands in order to prevent some diseases associated with poor hygiene.*

**Keywords:** Awareness, Practice, Hygiene, Primary school, children

### **Introduction**

The practice of personal hygiene is fundamental in preventing and controlling the spread of diseases. It is also an important factor in maintaining good health. Hornby, (2014) defined hygiene as the practice of keeping oneself and one's living/working conditions and areas clean, in order to prevent illness and diseases. Personal hygiene is to make the body clean through bathing, hair grooming, care of the teeth, care of the feet, care of the eyes, care of the skin, ears, nose, hands and nails. Personal hygiene is associated with activities and actions aimed at preventing diseases, staying healthy, keeping fit and recovering faster from illnesses. Hence, personal hygiene refers to the care of every part of the body including but not limited to the hands, nails, feet, teeth, ears, hair, eyes, and nose.

One of the most effective ways of protecting ourselves and others from illness is good personal hygiene (Better Health Channel (BHC), 2015). The level of awareness is a

very important domain that determines a person's action. It is generally obtained through the sense of sight (the eyes) and hearing (the ears) as well as experience. Student's knowledge about personal hygiene is not entirely obtained through formal education, but some of the information they learn is collected from formal education sectors. (Balogun, 2015). Information from media may also provide the students with information to increase the level of their awareness on personal hygiene. These information media may include public service advertisements, broadcast in television or other mass media. Access to focused awareness on personal hygiene may also be gained from external factors such as friends, parents, and society members (Sarkar, 2013).

Balogun, (2015) conducted a cross sectional study to determine the knowledge, perception and practice of personal hygiene among secondary school students in Ibadan North West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The result indicated that personal hygiene knowledge of majority of the respondents was fair, only about a quarter had good personal hygiene- related level of awareness. This is not good enough as many of the health problems which involves students' health can be prevented or controlled through adequate level of awareness of personal hygiene in school children. The level of awareness of the respondents in the study indicated that much needs to be done by the various stakeholders in secondary education in Oyo State public schools in improving the status of personal hygiene education and personal hygiene practices. The hand washing related knowledge of majority of the respondents was in line with the scientific view that hands should be washed before eating and after defecation (Balogun, 2015).

A study of Ajay, Ranju, Krishna and Maginsh., (2018) on personal hygiene knowledge and practice of secondary school students of grade nine and ten shows that 88.5% of the students had good level of knowledge on personal hygiene. According to the researchers, higher knowledge in the findings of the study could be due to greater integration of personal hygiene component in school curriculum and school health program, including the urban setting of schools. However, female students obtained significantly higher average knowledge score (93.4%) than the males (83.7%) regarding the knowledge of personal hygiene. This discrepancy in knowledge score could be due to variation in family orientation, socio-cultural differences and physiologically higher need for cleanliness among adolescent female. In this study, the researcher assessed the knowledge and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-ma town of Katsina State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Poor level of awareness and practice toward personal hygiene plays a major role in high incidence of communicable diseases and which therefore has negative consequences for children overall development. Studies have shown that schools with better awareness and practices of personal hygiene have fewer children down with sickness and absenteeism in school and thereby achieve higher grades (Vivas etal, 2010).

The dearth of adequate information and awareness on personal hygiene in primary schools was observed to create negative attitude to the practice of essential personal hygiene; such as; brushing of teeth, washing of clothes, bathing, cleaning of hair and cutting low of nails. Therefore, to effectively address the issue of poor personal hygiene among school children; parents, teachers, and other stakeholders must work out modalities to take and encourage children to adopt good hygiene practices. This background therefore prompted the researcher to assess the level of awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-ma town of Katsina State, Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study:** To determine the level of awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between level of awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State.

## Methodology

The population of this study comprise all the primary school pupils in the eleven schools in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State. Specifically, pupils in primary four, five and six were used for this study. To select the sample of the schools, fifty percent of the schools was selected using simple random sampling of hat-draw method. A sample size of six primary schools out of eleven were selected. To select the respondents from the population of 4,535 students, two percent (2%) of the students from each selected school was used, totalling ninety-one (91) respondents as the sample for the study. Researcher-developed questionnaire tagged “Awareness and Practice of Personal Hygiene (APPH)” was used as instrument and which was subjected to face validity by experts in Human Kinetics and Health Education in Federal University Dutsin-Ma. The items on the questionnaire was measured using aware or not aware options to collect necessary information for this study. The demographic characteristics of the respondents and the research questions were presented using descriptive statistics of frequency and simple percentage, while the hypothesis was analyzed using Pearson Moment Product Correlation at 0.05 significant level in order to establish the relationship.

## The Result of the Study

The results of this study are indicated below;

**Table I.** Frequency Distribution of the respondents according to their awareness on personal Hygiene

S/NO	ITEMS	true Frequency (%)	false Frequency (%)	Total Frequency (%)
1	Personal hygiene is self-care of maintaining good health	80(87.9%)	11(12.1%)	91(100%)
2	The purpose of maintaining personal hygiene is to be healthy	79(86.8%)	12(13.2%)	91(100%)
3	The first thing to do before eating is washing hands with soap and water	40(44.0%)	51(56.0%)	91(100%)
4	Long and dirty nails shows lack of attention to personal hygiene	79(86.8%)	12(13.2%)	91(100%)
5	Washing hands with soap can kill germs	50(54.9%)	41(45.1%)	91(100%)
6	Brushing one’s teeth regularly prevents mouth odour	70(76.9%)	21(23.1%)	91(100%)
7	Maintaining good personal hygiene includes bathing regularly	79(86.8%)	12(13.2%)	91(100%)
8	Clothes are to be washed only when they appear dirty	43(47.3%)	48(52.7%)	91(100%)

Table I revealed that majority of the respondents shows a remarkable evidence of having awareness and practice of personal hygiene. 87.9% of the respondents agreed that personal hygiene is a self-care to maintaining good health. 86.8% of them agreed that the purpose of maintaining personal hygiene is to be healthy. More than 80% also accept that long and dirty nails shows lack of attention to personal hygiene, and 76.9% of them agreed that brushing once teeth regularly prevents mouth odour. The only item that most of the respondents did not answer correctly was item 3 where more than 50% of the respondents did not agree that the first thing to do before eating is washing hands with soap.

**Table 2:** Relationship between awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State.

Variables		Awareness	Practice
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	.930
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	91	91
Practice	Pearson Correlation	.930	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	91	91

(Significant ( $P < 0.05$ ))

Table 2 reveals r-value of 0.930, which is significantly higher than 0.05 alpha level ( $r = 0.930, p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State is rejected. This means there is a significant relationship between awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State.

### Discussion of the Findings

This study was carried out to assess the awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State. The result of the study shows that there is a significant relationship between awareness and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-Ma town of Katsina State.

The findings of the study reveals that majority of the pupils agreed (true) to having awareness and also practice personal hygiene in order to maintain good health. This is a very good finding as it was stated that when students are aware of basic skills related to personal hygiene at different stages of their lives, it will not be difficult for them to continue it throughout their life (Ademuwagun et al, 2002). This finding is also in line with a similar study conducted among primary school students by Vivas et al (2010) in Ethiopia; it revealed that more than half of the respondents were classified as having adequate knowledge of personal hygiene. The findings are at variance with the study conducted by Balogun (2015) which revealed that personal hygiene knowledge of majority of the respondents was fair, only about a quarter had good personal hygiene- related knowledge. This is not good enough as many of the health problems which compromise student's health can be prevented or controlled through adequate knowledge of personal hygiene. Likewise,

Kajang and Jatau (2003) concurred that human beings have evolved many ways to live a worthy life free from diseases. The purpose of personal hygiene is aimed at achieving good health most especially at home and the school environment, which must be embedded in daily living of school children. Balogun (2015) also agreed to the findings that personal hygiene involves taking care of every part of human body including the hair, skin teeth, ears, nails, eyes and nose. Also Al-Rifaai, Al-Haddam and Qasem (2018) concurred that awareness of personal hygiene is particularly important among students because they spend most of their time in public places such as schools in proximity with each other. The transmission of infections such as diarrhea, respiratory infection and scabies may contribute to their absence from school, which may in-turn affect their academic productivity.

Alyssa, et al (2010) agreed that having proper resources and facilities, hygiene practices are heavily influenced by students' knowledge and attitudes towards hygiene. They furthered that in a study conducted in Senegal, shows reasons given for not washing hands which included stubbornness (not wanting to follow what adults say), laziness, the rush to go to breaks, the time it takes away from playing, and the dirt and smell of the toilets.

## Conclusion

The study shows that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and practice of personal hygiene among primary school children in Dutsin-ma town of Katsina State. It could therefore be concluded that personal hygiene knowledge of the respondents was satisfactory.

## Recommendations

It was recommended that;

1. School authorities to create awareness and training for the students in the schools on how to take care of their teeth, hair, feet, nose, eyes and hands in order to prevent some diseases associated with poor hygiene.
2. The Universal Basic Education Commission at the Local Government Area of Dutsin-Ma to provide and sponsor mass media channels (posters, leaflet, billboard, TV and Radio) on personal hygiene in order to create positive awareness for school children under their supervision.

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