

Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices of Personal Hygiene among Senior High School Student

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ABSTRACT

This study utilized a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive research design to assess the personal hygiene knowledge, attitudes, and practices of senior high school students. The research aimed to evaluate current knowledge levels regarding proper hygiene practices, assess students' attitudes and beliefs about the importance of hygiene, and measure actual hygiene behaviors. The findings indicated a notably very high level of knowledge, positive attitudes, and effective practices, demonstrating a strong commitment to health and well-being and the success of previous hygiene education efforts. Furthermore, no significant difference was found in personal hygiene practices between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students, suggesting that key hygiene habits were established early or influenced by consistent factors independent of grade level. This highlighted the need for early and consistent interventions to reinforce positive hygiene behaviors throughout adolescence, ensuring these practices contributed to long-term health and well-being.

Keywords: Caregiving, Personal Hygiene, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Improper hygiene and sanitation contributed to significant economic losses globally, accounting for 4% of all deaths and 5.7% of disabilities, which negatively impacted economic productivity, particularly in countries like Nigeria. At the same time, the burden of treating hygiene-related diseases further limited these economies' growth potential (Delea et al., 2020). In Malaysia, personal hygiene in schools was a significant issue, increasing student absenteeism. Approximately 75% of student absences were linked to hygiene-related illnesses, negatively impacting educational outcomes and placing additional strain on families and the healthcare system (UNICEF, 2023). The burden of diseases related to poor hygiene in West Africa was exacerbated by underfunded healthcare systems and the rapid transmission of infectious diseases, leading to increased healthcare expenses and challenges in resource allocation (Erismann et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, understanding personal hygiene was crucial for enhancing public health and preventing the spread of transmissible diseases, as poor hygiene practices led to significant health issues like respiratory infections and diarrhea, particularly impacting children and those with limited resources (Vally et al., 2019). According to the Department of Health (2022), the Philippine government prioritized hygiene education in schools such as the WASH Program, recognizing its effectiveness in improving students' hygiene knowledge and behaviors, reducing illness-related absenteeism, and enhancing overall health outcomes. Hygiene education was essential for promoting health and well-being in communities nationwide because access to clean water and sanitation facilities was still a barrier (UNICEF, 2023).

In Region XI, particularly in Davao City, poor hygiene habits had been identified as a problem since it caused the spread of respiratory illnesses and diarrhea (Cabrerias, 2021). In Davao de Oro, particularly in Laak, a significant personal hygiene issue was the outbreak of hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD), which had been

attributed to a lack of sanitary facilities in the area (Mendoza, 2023). As of February 2023, Laak recorded 141 cases of HFMD out of a total of 418 cases in the province, highlighting the correlation between poor hygiene practices and disease transmission (SunStar, 2023). In Mawab, specifically in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School, the researchers also observed inadequate sanitation facilities and poor personal hygiene practices, with students frequently not washing their hands before meals or after using the restroom.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the level of personal hygiene among senior high school student in terms of:
 - 1.1 knowledge;
 - 1.2 attitude; and
 - 1.3 practices
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of personal hygiene among senior high school student when grouped by grade level:
 - 2.1 Grade 11; and
 - 2.2 Grade 12
3. On the basis of the result, what enhancement program can be crafted?

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a quantitative non-experimental research design was utilized, specifically employing descriptive techniques. This approach was suitable for depicting the current state of a situation while investigating the underlying causes of a particular phenomenon. The research involved collecting data to assess whether a measurable relationship existed between one quantifiable variable and the phenomenon being examined (Creswell & Creswell, 2019).

The survey dealt with quantitative data about the said phenomenon. The quantitative aspect was appropriately scheduled for gathering the data designed for the target respondents to answer the questions. The process of gathering the data was based on the use of questionnaires. The focus of the study was to determine the level of knowledge, attitude, and practices of personal hygiene among senior high school students in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School and whether they needed an enhancement program or not.

Population and Sample

The subject of the study was the 272 senior high school students, grade 11 or grade 12, regardless of gender and age, who were currently enrolled in the first semester of the school year 2024-2025 at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School. The researchers did not include students from Junior High School. The respondents could withdraw at any time when they felt threatened by the survey.

Senior high school students were considered the best respondents for this study because they were at a crucial developmental stage where they became increasingly aware of their health and hygiene practices. Typically, aged 16 to 18, these students were transitioning into adulthood, making them more receptive to understanding the implications of personal hygiene on their overall well-being and social interactions. Their curriculum often included health education components that equipped them with relevant knowledge, allowing for meaningful insights into their attitudes and practices regarding personal hygiene. Additionally, involving senior high school students as respondents could yield data that was not only pertinent to their immediate environment but also beneficial for future public health initiatives.

Sample sizes larger than 50 and less than 500 was considered appropriate for quantitative research (Sharma et al.,2020). Since it was impossible and impractical to survey every member of the population, the Raosoft sample size calculator was used to get a sample that represented the population being studied (Raosoft, 2004).

Table 1. Population and Sample size of Respondents

Section	Population	Respondents
A	39	12
B	39	12
C	57	17
D	42	13
E	50	15
F	47	14
G	52	16
H	53	16
I	52	16
J	48	14
K	48	14
L	57	17
M	55	17
N	46	14
O	45	13
P	46	14
Q	45	13
R	38	11
S	38	11
Total	905	272

Statistical Tool

The following statistical tools were utilized for the data analysis and interpretation.

Mean. This statistical tool was used to determine the level of personal hygiene of Senior High School Students of Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School.

Mann-Whitney U Test. This statistical tool was used to determine the significant difference between the level of writing skills of grade 11 and grade 12 students.

RESULTS

Level of Personal Hygiene

Table 2 displays the mean scores for the indicators of Personal Hygiene among senior high school students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School, revealing an overall mean of 4.58, characterized as very high, with a standard deviation of 0.98. The very high level is accredited to the outstanding ratings provided by respondents across all indicators. This suggests that respondents exhibit knowledge, attitude and practices of personal hygiene.

Moreover, the previously mentioned overall mean score resulted from computed mean scores, ranked from highest to lowest as follows: 4.67, indicating a very high level for practices with a standard deviation of 2.68; 4.54, signifying a very high level for attitude, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.47; 4.53, reflecting a very high level for knowledge, with a standard deviation of 0.47.

Table 2. Level of Personal Hygiene

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
Knowledge	4.53	0.47	Very High
Attitude	4.54	0.47	Very High
Practices	4.67	2.68	Very High
Overall	4.58	0.98	Very High

Significant Difference of Personal Hygiene between Grade 11 and Grade 12 Students

One key objective of this study is to determine whether there is a significant difference in the levels of public speaking anxiety between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School. The appended table 3.1 shows that the Shapiros-Wilk Test for Test Normality has a p-value of <.001, indicating that the distribution is not normal. Hence, a Mann-Whitney U test is suited for this distribution.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the level of personal hygiene between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students exhibit a no significant difference. This determination is based on a p-value of 0.462, which does not exceed the significance threshold of $p < 0.05$. Consequently, the null hypothesis suggesting no significant difference in personal hygiene between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School, is not rejected.

Table 3. Significant Difference of Personal Hygiene between Grade 11 and Grade 12 Students

Grade Level	N	Mean	SD
Grade 11	144	4.61	1.38
Grade 12	127	4.56	0.37

Examining Table 3 closely reveals a detailed comparison of Knowledge, attitude and practices of personal hygiene among Grade 11 and Grade 12 students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School. The table includes essential metrics such as the number of participants (N), mean scores, and standard deviations (SD) for

each group. Notably, the mean scores for Grade 11 and Grade 12 students are 4.6 and 4.5, respectively, indicating a small numerical difference in personal hygiene. Moreover, the statistical analysis, represented by a U-value of 8372 and a p-value of 0.462, suggests that this difference is statistically not significant.

DISCUSSIONS

Level of Personal Hygiene

The level of knowledge, attitude, and practices of personal hygiene among senior high school students is assessed as very high, indicating that students possess a strong understanding of essential hygiene principles and consistently engage in effective hygiene behaviors. This assessment reflects their awareness of the importance of personal cleanliness in promoting health and preventing illness. Furthermore, the positive attitudes displayed by the students towards hygiene underscore their commitment to maintaining good practices such as regular handwashing, oral care, and personal grooming. Overall, these findings suggest that senior high school students are well-informed and proactive in their approach to personal hygiene, contributing significantly to their overall well-being and health consciousness within the school environment.

The very high level of knowledge, attitude, and practices of personal hygiene among senior high school students was implied to the study of Temitayo (2019). Temitayo's study on personal hygiene among senior secondary school students at Ambassadors College indicate a strong correlation between knowledge, attitude, and practices of personal hygiene. The students exhibited a high level of understanding regarding personal hygiene, which directly influenced their engagement in good hygiene practices. This aligns with the results from this study that emphasized the importance of knowledge and attitude in shaping hygiene behaviors. The strong understanding of personal hygiene among students not only reflects their educational background but also serves as a foundation for promoting healthier behaviors. This relationship between knowledge, attitude, and practice was crucial for informing future health education initiatives aimed at improving public health outcomes among young populations.

Findings that the knowledge of personal hygiene is rated as very high among senior high students reflects their awareness of the importance of personal hygiene in preventing illness and promoting overall health. This result was derived to Begum et al., that proper knowledge and practice of personal hygiene play a critical role in maintaining health and supporting academic performance among students (Begum et al., 2019).

Transitioning to generating, the context of attitude towards personal hygiene was also very high among students and is a crucial factor in maintaining good health and well-being. This favorable mindset not only reflects their understanding of the importance of personal hygiene but also demonstrates their willingness to adopt practices that prevent illnesses and promote a healthy lifestyle. As noted by Cairncross et al., improved hygiene practices can significantly reduce the incidence of infectious diseases, which aligns with students' recognition of habits such as regular handwashing, oral care, and proper grooming as essential components of personal hygiene (Cairncross et al., 2020).

Lastly, the high manifestation of hygiene practices among students can be closely related to the findings of Ismail et al. (2024), which demonstrate that school-based hygiene intervention programs significantly enhance knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding personal hygiene. The study emphasizes that when students are educated about the importance of hygiene and provided with the necessary resources and support, they are more likely to adopt effective hygiene behaviors, such as regular handwashing and proper grooming.

Significant Difference of Personal Hygiene between Grade 11 and Grade 12

The study's finding that there is no significant difference in personal hygiene practices between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students suggests that these habits are likely established earlier in life and are influenced more by long-term socialization and learned behaviors than by grade level. This aligns with Rosenstock's Health Belief Model (1974), which posits that health behaviors are shaped by perceptions of disease susceptibility, severity, benefits of action, and barriers to action. It is plausible that students in both grades share similar perceptions of these factors, leading to consistent hygiene practices. Additionally, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986)

emphasizes the role of observational learning and shared social environments in shaping behaviors. Since Grade 11 and Grade 12 students are exposed to similar peer groups, role models, and social settings, their hygiene practices may converge. These findings suggest that many hygiene routines become habitual over time, and by the time students reach these grade levels, their behaviors are relatively stable, making grade-specific interventions less impactful.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study reveals that senior high school students demonstrate a notably very high level of knowledge, positive attitudes, and effective practices regarding personal hygiene, reflecting a strong commitment to their health and well-being. These findings underscore the success of current hygiene education efforts in fostering a proactive approach to health management among students, highlighting the importance of continuing to cultivate a culture of hygiene awareness within the school environment.

Furthermore, the absence of a significant difference in personal hygiene practices between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students suggests that key hygiene habits are likely established earlier in life or are influenced by consistent, pervasive factors independent of grade level. This insight emphasizes the critical need for early and consistent interventions to reinforce positive hygiene behaviors throughout adolescence, ensuring that these practices become deeply ingrained habits that contribute to long-term health and well-being.

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