



ATTITUDE TOWARDS MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRACTICES AMONG FEMALE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KHANA, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined attitude towards menstrual hygiene practices among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area. The descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of female senior secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of two hundred and fifty participants for the study. Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and analyzed using simple frequencies, percentages, chart and chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed that more than half (81%) of the population agreed that girls should bath regularly during their menstrual period. All the respondents (100%) indicated that girls should always change their pads during their menstrual period. 84.3% of the population agreed that hands should always be washed during menstruation. 73.6% agreed that girls should eat properly during menstruation while 34.3% indicated that girls should be restricted from house work and other activities during menstruation. However, the assessment on attitude revealed that 204(84.3%) of the respondents had positive attitude towards menstrual hygiene while 38(15.7%) had negative attitude towards menstrual hygiene. The tested hypothesis showed a significant relationship between attitude and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students ($p < 0.05$, $df = 1$, $X^2 = 18.401$). It was concluded that 204(84.3%) of the respondents had positive attitude towards menstrual hygiene. It was recommended amongst others that the Government, federal, state, and local authorities and stakeholders should put in place special programmes targeting young girls including students on how to prevent behaviours that put them at risk of poor menstrual hygiene.

Keywords: *Attitude, menstrual hygiene practice, female, secondary school*

Introduction:

Menstruation comes with a lot of changes in the life of a developing girl child during puberty. Poureslami and Osati-Ashtiani (2002) stated that it involves the cyclical shedding of the inner lining of the uterus which is controlled by the hormones produced by the hypothalamus and pituitary glands located in the brain. This alone creates a form of burden in the life of a girl child which in turn affects her daily living during the menstrual cycle. Several studies conducted among students especially adolescents across the world have rather shown inadequate knowledge of menstruation and poor menstrual hygiene practices which has led to negative attitude (Water Aid, 2009). However, so many factors have been associated with this attitude among young girls.

Good menstrual hygienic practices such as use of sanitary pads and adequate washing of the genital areas are essential during menstruation period. Having a good menstrual hygienic practice will enhance the confidence of females in many aspects. On the other hand, Poor menstrual hygienic practices will increase susceptibility to reproductive health related problems (Prajapati, Shah & Kedia, 2015).

Poor menstrual hygiene practice is very common, and is widely regarded as one of the most common problems of adolescents especially among rural female students. Most societies has viewed menstruation as a religiously impure and culturally shameful occurrence (Prajapati et al, 2015), and in some society, it is a traditional practice in which females are forbidden to touch anything and are forced to live in isolation (shed) during menstruation with reported incidents of rapes and physical assaults and has caused adverse effect on females' capacity to manage their periods (Sudheshna & Dasgupta, 2012).

Many schools do not support adolescent girls or female teachers in managing menstrual hygiene with dignity. Inadequate water and sanitation facilities make managing menstruation very difficult, and poor sanitary protection materials can result in blood-stained clothes causing stress and embarrassment. Even at the household level, they generally have little control over access to a private latrine or money for sanitary materials (Vidiya & Rekha, 2016).

Attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience exerting a direct or dynamic influence upon the individuals' response to all objectives and situations with which it is related. Hence, it is very needed among secondary school girls to practice proper menstrual hygiene (Anand,Singh & Unisa, 2015). However, researchers will use this study as a reference point on addressing and planning better strategies to offer counselling and quality

information and communication services to students and strengthen their practice of menstrual hygiene both in awareness and campaigns. Therefore, the study intends to examine attitude towards menstrual hygiene practices among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area.

Research Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample size of two hundred and fifty was determined using a random sampling method. A self-developed and structured questionnaire was composed to extract information on the variables of the study. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to respondents. The questionnaire was designed to obtain responses using alternative responses pattern. Data collected were entered into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20.0) software for analysis and data were presented using frequency, percentages and chi-square.

Results

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics*	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Age		
10-15	151	62.4
16-20	69	28.5
21-25	22	9.1
Total	242	100
Class		
SS1	107	44.2
SS2	114	47.1
SS3	21	8.7
Total	242	100.0
Religion		
Christianity	218	90.1
Islam	-	-
Traditional	24	9.9
Total	242	100.0
Ethnicity		
Ogoni	133	55
Igbo	69	28.5
Hausa	16	6.6
Yoruba	24	9.9

Others	-	-
Total	242	100.0
Who do you live with		
Parents	197	81.4
Guidance	45	18.6
Total	242	100.0

*Non responses excluded.

Table 4.1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The table revealed that 62.4% of the respondents were within the ages of 10-15 years, 28.5% 16-20 years and 9.1% 21-25years. 44.2% were in SS1, 47.1% SS2 while 8.7% were in SS3. Majority (90.1%) the respondents were Christians. while 9.9% were traditional worshipers. Majority (55%) of the population were Ogonis, 28.5% were Igbos, 6.6 were Hausa while 9.9% were Yoruba. 81.4% of the respondents' lives with their parents while 18.6% lives with guidance.

Table 4.2: Attitude towards Menstrual Hygiene

Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Girls should bath regularly during their menstrual period		
True	196	81.0
False	46	19
Total	242	100.0
Girls should always change their pads during their menstrual period		
True	242	100.0
False	-	-
Total	242	100.0
Hands should always be washed during menstruation		
True	204	84.3
False	38	15.7
Total	242	100.0
Girls should eat properly during menstruation		
True	178	73.6
False	64	26.4
Total	242	100.0

Girls should be restricted from house work and other activities during menstruation		
True	83	34.3
False	159	65.7
Total	242	100.0

**Multiple responses excluded

Table 4.2 investigated attitude towards menstrual hygiene. The table showed that more than half (81%) of the population agreed that girls should bath regularly during their menstrual period. All the respondents (100%) indicated that girls should always change their pads during their menstrual period. 84.3% of the population agreed that hands should always be washed during menstruation. 73.6% agreed that girls should eat properly during menstruation while 34.3% indicated that girls should be restricted from house work and other activities during menstruation. However, 65.7% disagreed to the fact.

Assessment of attitude towards menstrual hygiene

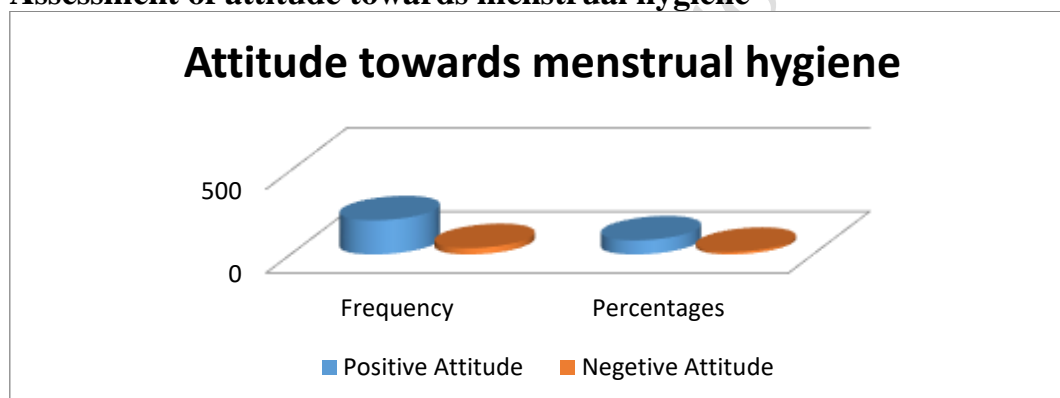


Figure 4.1 showed the assessment of attitude towards menstrual hygiene among participants. The result revealed that 204(84.3%) of the respondents had positive attitude towards menstrual hygiene while 38(15.7%) had negative attitude towards menstrual hygiene.

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between attitude and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area

Table 4.3: Chi-squared test showing the relationship between attitude and practice of menstrual hygiene

Attitude	Practice of Hygiene	Total	df	X ² -value	P-value	Decision
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	Yes	No					
Positive	156(76.5)	48(23.5)	204(100)	1	18.401	.000	Rejected
Negative	16(42.1)	22(57.9)	38(100)				
Total	172(71.1)	70(28.9)	242(100)				
Significant	p<0.000						

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between attitude and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area. The finding of the study revealed a significant relationship attitude and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students ($p < 0.05$, $df = 1$, $X^2 = 18.401$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that more than half (81%) of the population agreed that girls should bath regularly during their menstrual period. All the respondents (100%) indicated that girls should always change their pads during their menstrual period. 84.3% of the population agreed that hands should always be washed during menstruation. 73.6% agreed that girls should eat properly during menstruation while 34.3% indicated that girls should be restricted from house work and other activities during menstruation. However, the assessment on attitude revealed that 204(84.3%) of the respondents had positive attitude towards menstrual hygiene while 38(15.7%) had negative attitude towards menstrual hygiene. The finding is in line with that of Gulti et al (2014) who reported that students had good attitude towards menstrual hygiene. The study is also in line with that of Anand et al (2015) who noted that there was positive attitude towards menstrual hygiene among female teens. Cultural practices among these populations might be the contributing factor towards this attitude among students. However, teacher's involvement, educational status of mothers and sisters may also play an important role towards this attitude among students. The finding of the study revealed a significant relationship between attitude and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students ($p < 0.05$, $df = 1$, $X^2 = 18.401$). The finding of the study is in keeping with the studies of Paris et al (2014) and that of Afzal et al (2017) whose studies found that attitude influences the practice of menstrual hygiene as most of the population who knows their next menstrual period prepared adequately, bought their sanitary pads and others washing materials. This also indicates that girls who have positive attitude towards menstruation will practice menstrual hygiene.

Conclusion

Based on the data and findings, it was concluded that 204(84.3%) of the respondents had positive attitude towards menstrual hygiene. However, it was discovered that attitude influences the practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the finding, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government, federal, state, and local authorities and stakeholders should put in place special programmes targeting young girls including students on how to prevent behaviours that put them at risk of poor menstrual hygiene.
2. The government through relevant health authorities should develop and disseminate reproductive health programmes on menstrual hygiene management among girls in secondary schools including primary schools in order to create in them positive attitude towards menstruation
3. There is need for the government, ministries of health and other relevant health agencies to embark on health education and awareness campaign on the proper menstrual hygiene.

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