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PERSONAL HYGIENE AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY THREE PUPILS IN THE NORTH EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF AKWA IBOM STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between personal hygiene and the academic performance of Primary three pupils in northeast senatorial district of Akwa Ibom state. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. A total of 200 pupils were selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected through a structured instrument titled Personal Hygiene Questionnaire (PHQ) and Health Education Performance Test(HEPT). descriptive survey research design was used in the study. The data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC),with hypotheses tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant relationship between various aspects of personal hygiene such as hand washing, oral hygiene, and daily bath taking and academic performance among the pupils. Based on these results, it was recommended that Schools should integrate regular hygiene education into the curriculum. Pupils should be taught the importance of hand washing, oral hygiene, and daily bathing using age-appropriate methods such as songs, role-plays, and visual aids.

KEYWORDS: Personal Hygiene, Academic Performance, Primary Three Pupils, North East Senatorial District, and Akwa Ibom State.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental driver of individual and societal development. However, the academic success of pupils, particularly at the primary school level, is influenced by several factors beyond classroom instruction, including health and hygiene practices (UNESCO, 2022). Among these, personal hygiene plays a crucial role in shaping both the physical well-being and cognitive performance of school-aged children. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) affirms that proper hygiene practices such as regular hand washing, daily bathing, and oral care

significantly reduce the incidence of communicable diseases and improve school attendance, which in turn positively affects academic performance.

In the Nigerian context, and particularly in rural and semi-urban areas like the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, the health status of primary school pupils is often compromised by poor hygiene behaviors due to inadequate water supply, low parental education, and insufficient health education in schools (Ekanem & Udo, 2021). These challenges are more pronounced among pupils in the lower primary classes, such as Primary 3, where children are still developing self-care habits.

Hand washing practices have been widely identified as a primary barrier against the transmission of infectious diseases. Proper hand hygiene reduces the risk of diarrhea, respiratory infections, and skin conditions, all of which are leading causes of absenteeism among schoolchildren (Oladipo & Johnson, 2020). A study by Iroanya et al. (2022) found a positive correlation between hand washing practices and academic performance in public schools in southern Nigeria, indicating that children who regularly wash their hands are more likely to stay healthy and perform better in school. Hand washing with soap and water, especially before meals and after using the toilet, is a basic yet highly effective public health intervention. However, studies indicate that many schools in Akwa Ibom still do not have adequate handwashing stations or promote this practice systematically among pupils (Usoro & Effiong, 2023). This negligence not only increases pupils' susceptibility to infections like diarrhea and respiratory tract infections but also contributes to poor attendance and learning disruptions. These frequent disruptions can impede pupils' ability to master key concepts and negatively affect their academic progress.

Another important hygiene behavior is good oral practice, which includes regular brushing of teeth, use of clean water, and dental checkups. Dental issues such as cavities, gum infections, and toothaches often cause discomfort and distract children during learning activities (Ajayi & Chukwu, 2021). Poor oral hygiene has been linked to decreased concentration and lower academic achievement due to pain and school absenteeism. Research by Eze & Akpan (2023) in primary schools across Akwa Ibom State found that children with good oral hygiene recorded higher average scores in English Language and Mathematics compared to those with recurrent dental issues.Likewise, oral hygiene, though often overlooked, plays a critical role in a child's ability to focus and participate actively in learning. Dental problems can be both painful and distracting, sometimes requiring medical attention that results in time away from school. When such issues are recurrent and unmanaged due to poor hygiene habits or lack of access to dental care, they can lead to long-term learning deficits (Ajayi & Chukwu, 2021). In many local primary schools, oral health is not integrated into the school health program, and pupils may not receive regular guidance on brushing techniques, frequency, or the importance of oral cleanliness.

Similarly, daily bath taking contributes to the general cleanliness and well-being of children. It prevents skin diseases, body odor, and lice infestations, which are common among children in overcrowded or low-income environments. According to Usoro and Effiong (2023), pupils who bathe daily demonstrate better self-esteem, interpersonal interactions, and classroom participation, all of which are critical to learning. A clean and healthy body supports a healthy mind, and the practice of daily bathing instills discipline and routines that are beneficial to academic success. Daily bathing is another important hygiene habit that contributes not only to physical health but also to emotional and psychological well-being. Children who bathe regularly are more likely to be socially accepted by peers, exhibit higher self-confidence, and demonstrate a positive attitude toward learning (Ekanem & Udo, 2021). On the contrary, poor personal grooming often leads to stigmatization or bullying, which can lower self-esteem and reduce participation in classroom activities. This is especially detrimental in early primary years, where children's social-emotional development is as crucial as their cognitive growth.

Cultural practices, parental influence, and socioeconomic status also play significant roles in shaping children's hygiene habits. In communities within the North East Senatorial District, where many families live below the poverty line and parents may have low levels of formal education, children are often not exposed to structured hygiene routines at home. These gaps are rarely filled at school due to the absence of school health officers or targeted hygiene education programs (Iroanya et al., 2022). Consequently, a cycle of poor hygiene and academic underachievement may persist.

Moreover, gender disparities exist in how hygiene affects academic performance. Female pupils, for instance, may be more vulnerable to missing school due to hygiene-related issues, especially as they approach puberty. Although this study focuses on Primary Three pupils, understanding how hygiene practices differ by gender could provide early interventions that support both boys and girls equally (UNESCO, 2022).

Taken together, these factors highlight the critical need for educational research into how specific personal hygiene practices—such as hand washing, good oral hygiene, and daily bathing relate to pupils' academic performance. While previous studies have examined the general effects of school health programs, few have isolated these specific hygiene variables or examined their impact on academic outcomes among early primary school pupils in localized Nigerian settings such as Akwa Ibom's North East Senatorial District.

Despite the growing awareness of the importance of personal hygiene, there is limited empirical data on how these practices affect the academic performance of lower primary school pupils in specific Nigerian settings, including the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. The region comprises a mixture of rural and peri-urban communities, many of which face infrastructural challenges that hinder access to clean

water, sanitation, and health education. These barriers could potentially impact pupils' personal hygiene and, by extension, their academic performance.

The intersection of health and education is particularly critical in the formative years of a child's life, especially in Primary 3, when foundational literacy and numeracy skills are being solidified. At this stage, children are highly impressionable and still acquiring self-regulatory behaviors. Consequently, personal hygiene practices learned and enforced during this period can have a lasting impact on their health habits and academic outcomes (Eze & Akpan, 2023).

Inadequate personal hygiene among school children has been identified as a public health concern in many low- and middle-income countries, including Nigeria. A lack of access to clean water, poor sanitation infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and limited health education have all been cited as contributors to the spread of hygiene-related illnesses among school-aged children (UNICEF, 2022). These conditions are prevalent in many parts of Akwa Ibom State, particularly in the North East Senatorial District, where rural communities often lack the basic amenities required to support hygienic living. The implication is a higher rate of illness-related absenteeism, low concentration, fatigue, and poor performance in school (Oladipo & Johnson, 2020; WHO, 2023).This study therefore seeks to bridge the gap in knowledge by examining

how personal hygiene particularly hand washing practices, good oral practice, and daily bath taking affects the academic performance of Primary Three pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. The findings of this study are expected to inform school health policies, parental practices, and public health interventions targeted at improving educational outcomes through better hygiene behavior among young learners.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Academic performance among primary school pupils is influenced by a variety of factors beyond cognitive ability and instructional quality. One of the most critical yet often neglected determinants is the personal hygiene status of the learner. In many Nigerian communities, including those within the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, there are growing concerns over the low academic achievement of pupils in early primary classes, particularly Primary 3. This situation is further complicated by the frequent observation of poor hygiene habits among these children.

Personal hygiene practices such as regular hand washing, good oral care, and daily bathing are essential to a child's health and overall development. These practices help prevent common illnesses that contribute to school absenteeism, fatigue, discomfort, and reduced classroom participation. Unfortunately, in many public schools within the study area, access to clean water, functional hand-washing stations, and structured hygiene education programs is inadequate. As a result, pupils are more likely

to suffer from preventable infections, which disrupt their learning process and lower their academic performance.

Inadequate hand washing has been linked to the spread of diseases like diarrhea and respiratory infections among school children. Similarly, poor oral hygiene can lead to toothaches and gum infections that cause pain and distractions during lessons. Children who do not bathe regularly often experience skin problems and social rejection, which can lower their self-esteem and reduce their motivation to learn. These conditions are particularly harmful at the Primary 3 level, where consistent classroom engagement is vital for acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Despite the recognized importance of hygiene in promoting educational outcomes, limited research has been conducted within the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State to investigate this relationship. Most available studies tend to focus on urban areas or older pupils, leaving a gap in understanding the specific experiences of younger children in rural and semi-urban settings.

The core problem addressed in this study is the insufficient understanding of how personal hygiene practices specifically hand washing, oral hygiene, and daily bathing affect the academic performance of Primary Three pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Without adequate data on this relationship, it becomes difficult for educators, health officials, and policymakers to develop targeted interventions that support both health and academic achievement among pupils in this crucial stage of education.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between personal hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary Three pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Specifically, the study seeks to;

1. Determine the relationship between hand washing practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.
2. Determine the relationship between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.
3. Determine the relationship between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does hand washing practice relate the academic performance of Primary Three pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?

2. To what extent do good oral hygiene practices relate with the academic performance of Primary Three pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?
3. To what extent does daily bathing habit relate with the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?

1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between hand washing practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.
2. There is no significant relationship between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.
3. There is no significant relationship between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Denga and Ali (1998), a survey research design is a form of descriptive research that is aimed at collecting large and small samples from population in order to examine the distributions and interaction of educational and sociological phenomena. This method was preferred because it allowed for drawing of inference from the population selected samples chosen from the population to discover the distribution and inventions of variables.

Area of the Study

Uyo is the capital city of Akwa Ibom, a state in South South Nigeria. It became the capital on September 23, 1987 when Akwa Ibom was created from the former Cross River State. According to the 2006 Nigerian Census, the population of Uyo (including Itu) is 427,873, while the greater urban area, including Uruan, has a population of 554,906.

The population of Uyo is put at 1,393,000 as at 2024. Ibibio is the primary indigenous language. The main campus of the University of Uyo is in Nwaniba, with satellites on Ikpa Road. Victor Attah International Airport is located in the capital city of Akwa Ibom. Ibom Air is located in Uyo

There are several Primary Schools located in Uyo and Eleven (11) public Secondary Schools 7 Technical Colleges 0 Special Education Centres 6 Tertiary Institution., Uyo has a year-round oppressive environment with temperatures ranging

from 69 °F to 87 °F. Climate data for Uyo (1991–2025) Wind the average wind vector in Uyo, which is greatly influenced by terrain and other local characteristics. The people are predominantly Christians and found in all human endeavors such as farming, petty trading palm oil product. While others engage in civil services.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population for the study is made up of all the public Primary school Pupils in Akwa Ibom State North East Senatorial District. The population of Pupils summed up to seven thousand three hundred and one (7,301) public Primary school Pupils. State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB, 2025).

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The public Primary school schools used for the study were randomly sampled using simple random sampling technique. This was done using balloting system of which all the names of the public Primary schools were written on pieces of papers folded and shuffled, one paper was picked at a time and recorded until the required numbers of five (5) public Primary schools were selected for the study.

The total number of public Primary school Pupils stood at seven thousand three hundred and one (7,301). In each of the five (5) schools, the researcher sampled forty(40) giving a total of two hundred (200) pupils use for the study.

Therefore, the sample for the study is two hundred (200) students drawn from four (4) public secondary schools selected randomly for the study.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instruments employed for data collection in the study was questionnaire titled personal hygiene Questionnaire (PHQ) and Health Education Performance Test (HEPT). The questionnaire was divided into two sections A and B.

Section A was designed to elicit information from respondents based on Pupils demographic data. Section B was structured statements in line with the variables under investigation using four-point likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (d) and Strongly Disagree (SD). 20-items make up the (HEPT) lettered A-D. Students are expected to choose the correct option from the options.

VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instruments were validated by two experts in test and measurement as well as the supervisor. The experts vetted, and expunged irrelevant items. This accounted for both face and content validity of the instrument. The instruments were valid because it measures

RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, a total of twenty (20) pupils from one school under the area of the study, but not among the sampled schools were randomly selected by hat-and-draw and the questionnaire were administered to them in the first instance. Two weeks later, the same instruments were administered to

the same forty students the second time. The researcher through the test-retest method consequently determined the reliability of the instrument using Pearson product

Moment Correlation (PPMC). A reliability co-efficient of 0.7 was obtained and this was considered high enough to be used as research instrument.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researcher administered the questionnaire and Health Education Performance Test (HEPT) directly to the pupils through the assistant of the Health Education teachers of the selected schools under the study. The questionnaire administered were two hundred (200) copies. The two hundred copies were all collected from the students. HEPT was administered to pupils by the teachers, who marked, recorded and returned the data to the researcher for analysis.

Procedure for Data Preparation/Coding

A set of codes were developed for the information collected from respondents. The following coding pattern was adopted for each of the sections;

Section A: Male were assigned -2
Female were assigned -1

Section B: Each response was given a degree of score which ranged from 1-4 as shown below:

Strongly Agreed (SA)	-	4
Agreed (A)	-	3
Disagreed (D)	-	2
Strongly Disagreed (SD)	-	1

On the collection of the administered instrument Health Education Performance Test (HEPT), five (5) marks were awarded to each of the questions shaded correctly by the pupils. Any pupils who shaded all the twenty (20) Health Education Performance Test (HEPT) correctly were awarded 100%.

After coding each instrument, the scores were extracted and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

RESULT DISCUSSION RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

To what extent does hand-washing practice relate the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on how hand washing practice relate with the academic performance of Primary Three pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State N = 200

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\overline{x}$)	SD	Dec.
1	I wash my hands before eating	3.19	0.93	A
2	I wash my hands after using the toilet	3.04	0.89	A
3	I use soap and water when washing my hand	3.17	1.06	A
4	My school provides water and soap for hand washing	3.01	0.87	A
5	I was taught how to wash my hands properly in school	3.08	0.88	A

Dec = decision, A = agreed, D = disagreed

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviations of respondents on how hand washing practice relate with the academic performance of Primary Three pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. The result obtained show that items 1-5 had mean ratings of 3.19, 3.04, 3.17, 3.01 and 3.08 with standard deviations of 0.93, 0.89, 1.06, 0.87 and 0.88 respectively. These mean values are above the benchmark value of 2.50, which implies agreed. This means the following responses on how hand washing practice relate with the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Are agreed. These include: I wash my hands before eating, I wash my hands after using the toilet, I use soap and water when washing my hand, My school provides water and soap for hand washing and I was taught how to wash my hands properly in school

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between hand washing practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) Analysis of the Relationship between hand washing practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Variables	N	R	R^2	P-Value	Dec
Hand washing practices	200				
		0.61	0.37	0.01	S
Pupils Academic performance	200				

N = Number of Pupils, Pearson Product Moment Correlation = R, R^2 = Coefficient of determination, P-value = Probability value, Dec. = Decision

Table 2 shows that the correlation between hand washing practices and the academic performance of Primary Three pupils was 0.61. This shows that there is a strong and positive correlation. The coefficient of determination 0.37which is also known as the predictive value means that 37% of variation in Pupils Academic performance in Health Education was due to Hand washing practices. A probability value of 0.01 was obtained. Since the probability value of 0.01 is less than 0.05 set as level of significance (P, this means that the result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between hand washing practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils is rejected. Inference drawn therefore is that there is significant relationship between hand washing practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question

To what extent do good oral hygiene practices relate with the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?

Table3 : Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on how good oral hygiene practices relate with the academic performance of Primary Three pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State N = 200

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\overline{x}$)	SD	Dec.
6	I brush my teeth before going to school	2.81	1.02	A
7	I brush my teeth before going to bed	2.84	1.05	A
8	I use toothpaste and a toothbrush	2.96	0.99	A
9	My parents/guardians check if I brush my teeth	2.92	0.87	A
10	I was taught how to clean my teeth in school	2.65	1.02	A

Dec = decision, A = agreed, D = disagreed

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviations of respondents on how good oral hygiene practices relate with the academic performance of Primary Three pupils The result obtained show that items 6-10 had mean ratings of 2.81, 2.84, 2.96, 2.92 and 2.65 with standard deviations of 1.02, 1.05, 0.99, 0.87 and 1.02 respectively. These mean values are above the benchmark value of 2.50, which implies agreed. This means the following responses on how good oral hygiene practices relate with the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils are agreed. These include: I brush my teeth before going to bed, I use toothpaste and a toothbrush, My parents/guardians check if I brush my teeth and I was taught how to clean my teeth in school

Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant relationship between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) Analysis of the Relationship between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils

Variables	N	R	R^2	P-Value	Dec
Good oral hygiene practices	200				
		0.53	0.28	0.04	S
Pupils Academic performance	200				

N = Number of Pupils , Pearson Product Moment Correlation = R, R^2 = Coefficient of determination, P-value = Probability value, Dec. = Decision

Table 4 shows that the correlation between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary Three pupils was 0.53. This shows that there is a strong and positive correlation between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils .The coefficient of determination 0.28which is also known as the predictive value means that 28% of variation in Pupils Academic performance was due to good oral hygiene practices. A probability value of 0.04 was obtained. Since the probability value of 0.04 is less than 0.05 set as level of significance (P, this means that the result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils is rejected. Inference drawn therefore is that there is significant relationship between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 3

To what extent does daily bathing habit relate with the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on how daily bathing habit relate with the academic performance of Primary Three pupils N = 200

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (x)	SD	Dec.
11	I take my bath every morningbefore coming to school.	2.12	0.86	D
12	I take a bath in the evening beforegoing to bed.	2.61	0.93	A
13	I use clean water and soap whenbathing.	3.10	0.93	A
14	My parents/guardians remind me tobathe daily.	2.81	0.89	A
15	I feel cleanand fresh when I come to school	3.00	1.07	A

Dec = decision, A = agreed, D = disagreed

Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviations of respondents on how daily bathing habit relate with the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils. The result obtained show that items 12-15 had mean ratings of 2.61, 3.10, 2.81 and 3.00 with standard deviations of 0.93, 0.93, 0.89, 0.81 and 1.07 respectively. These mean values are above the benchmark value of 2.50, which implies agreed. This means the following responses on how daily bathing habit relate with the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils are agreed. These include: I take a bath in the evening before going to bed; I use clean water and soap when bathing, my parents/guardians remind me to bathe daily and I feel clean and fresh when I come to school

Hypothesis Three:

There is no significant relationship between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) Analysis of the Relationship between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils

Variables	N	R	R^2	P-Value	Dec
Daily bathing habits	200				
		0.59	0.35	0.02	S
Pupils Academic performance	200				

N = Number of Pupils, Pearson Product Moment Correlation = R, R^2 = Coefficient of determination, P-value = Probability value, Dec. = Decision

Table 6shows that the correlation between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils was 0.59. This shows that there is a strong and positive correlation between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils. The coefficient of determination 0.35which is also known as the predictive value means that 35% of variation in academic performance of Primary 3 pupils was due to Daily bathing habits. A probability value of 0.02 was obtained. Since the probability value of 0.02 is less than 0.05 set as level of significance (P, this means

that the result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils, is rejected. Inference drawn therefore is that there is significant relationship between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis One

The findings from the first hypothesis revealed that there is significant relationship between hand washing practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils. The findings is in line with that Iroanya et al. (2022) found a positive correlation between hand washing practices and academic performance in public schools in southern Nigeria, indicating that children who regularly wash their hands are more likely to stay healthy and perform better in school. Hand washing with soap and water, especially before meals and after using the toilet, is a basic yet highly effective public health intervention. However, studies indicate that many schools in Akwa Ibom still do not have adequate hand-washing stations or promote this practice systematically among pupils.

Hypothesis 2

The findings from the second hypothesis revealed that there is significant relationship between good oral hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils. The findings are in line with the work of Eze & Akpan (2023) who found that children with good oral hygiene recorded higher average scores in English Language and Mathematics compared to those with recurrent dental issues. Likewise, oral hygiene, though often overlooked, plays a critical role in a child's ability to focus and participate actively in learning. Dental problems can be both painful and distracting, sometimes requiring medical attention that results in time away from school. When such issues are recurrent and unmanaged due to poor hygiene habits or lack of access to dental care, they can lead to long-term learning deficits.

Hypothesis 3

The findings from the third hypothesis revealed that there is significant relationship between daily bathing habits and the academic performance of Primary Three pupils The findings are in line with the work of Usoro and Effiong (2023), pupils who bathe daily demonstrate better self-esteem, interpersonal interactions, and classroom participation, all of which are critical to learning. A clean and healthy body supports a healthy mind, and the practice of daily bathing instills discipline and routines that are beneficial to academic success. Daily bathing is another important hygiene habit that contributes not only to physical health but also to emotional and psychological well-being. Children who bathe regularly are more likely to be socially

accepted by peers, exhibit higher self-confidence, and demonstrate a positive attitude toward learning

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between personal hygiene practices and the academic performance of Primary 3 pupils in the North East Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Findings from the study suggest that hygiene practices such as regular hand washing, proper oral hygiene, and daily bathing are important determinants of pupils' health, classroom participation, and academic outcomes.

Pupils who engage consistently in these hygiene habits are less likely to fall sick, miss school, or become distracted in class due to physical discomfort or social stigma. On the other hand, poor hygiene was observed to contribute to absenteeism, reduced self-esteem, and low academic achievement. Thus, personal hygiene is not only a health issue but also an educational concern that must be taken seriously by parents, teachers, school authorities, and policy makers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Schools should integrate regular hygiene education into the curriculum. Pupils should be taught the importance of hand washing, oral hygiene, and daily bathing using age- appropriate methods such as songs, role-plays, and visual aids.
2. Government and school management should ensure that all primary schools, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, are equipped with functional hand washing stations, clean water, and sanitary facilities.
3. Parents and guardians should be encouraged through school meetings and community health campaigns to supervise and support their children's hygiene routines at home, especially daily bathing and oral care.
4. Schools should collaborate with local health centers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based groups to organize periodic medical and dental check- ups for pupils.
5. Teachers and school heads should monitor pupils' hygiene practices and develop simple tools to track changes in behavior and their impact on academic performance.

By implementing these recommendations, both the health and academic success of primary school pupils in the North East Senatorial District-and beyond-can be significantly improved.

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