

Influence of TikTok video consumption on personal hygiene awareness and practices among youths in Calabar, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the influence of TikTok video consumption on personal hygiene awareness and practices among youth in Calabar, Nigeria. The study was anchored on the Health Belief Model. A descriptive survey was adopted as the study's design. The population of the study was 741,000 residents of Calabar. A sample size of 384 was drawn for the study using Roger Wimmer's Sample Size Calculator. A multistage sampling technique was adopted for the study. A questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection, while data for the study were presented using frequency tables and simple percentages. Results showed that there was high consumption of TikTok video content on personal hygiene among youth in Calabar. Results also indicated that youth in Calabar mostly watched TikTok content on menstrual and hair hygiene. Results further showed that the consumption of TikTok personal hygiene videos by young people in Calabar had improved their personal hygiene practices. Results also revealed that TikTok videos were effective in enhancing young people's knowledge of personal hygiene in Calabar. The study concluded that TikTok video consumption had a significant influence on enhancing the personal hygiene practices of young people in Calabar. The study recommended, among other things, that TikTok content creators and public health stakeholders should continue producing and circulating accurate, credible personal hygiene messages, as they have the potential to improve young people's attitudes toward personal hygiene practices.

Keywords: Digital media, health promotion, health communication, hygiene habits.

INTRODUCTION

In every society of human existence, hygiene-related illnesses pose a significant threat to man's desire to live a healthy and productive life. There has been a surge in hygiene-related diseases such as scabies, ringworm, head lice infection, helminthiasis, gingivitis, diarrhoea and dysentery, ascariasis, among others, over the years. This, as Rahman *et al.* (2017) note, has negatively affected community health and development trajectories of nations across the globe. According to Mitcha *et al.* (2025), the lack of proper personal hygiene culture has contributed to

the loss of human lives and the rise of disabilities worldwide, particularly in Africa, where 62% of deaths are attributed to poor personal hygiene practices.

In communities with inadequate healthcare facilities and even where there are such facilities, good personal hygiene is adopted as a time-proven and cost-effective approach for preventing diseases and the maintenance of good health (Kuandyk *et al.*, 2025). Since prevention in every health situation is always more desirable than cure, good personal hygiene is seen as a viable approach to

disease prevention, particularly in vulnerable communities with poor sanitation and healthcare infrastructure. However, promoting good personal hygiene norms has always been a serious health burden to individuals, especially among young people. Scholars such as Swangla and Sharma (2024) are of the conviction that the inability of young people to adhere to good personal hygiene norms can be alluded to their lack of knowledge and awareness of personal hygiene.

Studies have shown that the exposure of young people to media content on personal hygiene can significantly influence their hygiene habits and reduce the spread of hygiene-related diseases among them (Rahman *et al.*, 2017). Thus, empowering young people with information on relevant hygiene practices, such as regular brushing of teeth, bathing, washing of hands with soap, haircare, cutting of nails, among others, through appropriate media spectrum, can instil hygiene-conscious habits in them that are capable of preventing diseases. Consequently, social media, with its growing young user base and unique interactive configurations, serves as a suitable platform for amplifying personal hygiene awareness messages and promoting positive personal hygiene practices among youth.

Social media applications such as TikTok have provided a reliable platform through which health intervention content is produced and shared among users. Through its automated message transmission efficiency, TikTok plays a substantial role in promoting young people's personal hygiene habits through awareness, using short demonstrative video content to instigate their change of attitude towards conforming to positive hygiene principles (Douglas *et al.*, 2025). TikTok provides a seamless platform through which personal hygiene tips can be rapidly shared, using visual and audio aesthetic elements or appeals to influence its young users to adopt good personal hygiene practices. In spite of the increasing use and prominence of TikTok as a youth-oriented digital media platform in Calabar, empirical studies which examined its influence on personal hygiene awareness and practices among young people in Calabar are almost non-existent. It is against this backdrop that this study is necessitated. As our statement of the problem, maintaining good personal hygiene is essential for improved health and disease prevention. However, research evidence suggests that poor knowledge of personal hygiene as a result of a lack of awareness contributes to the rising incidence of hygiene-related diseases among youth. This has created a dire need to sensitise young people on the importance of maintaining good personal hygiene. Consequently, social media applications, particularly TikTok, are regarded as one of the most suitable youth-compatible digital platforms for promoting personal hygiene awareness and practices. Several scholars have carried out studies which investigated the efficacy of social media in promoting

personal hygiene awareness and practices among youth. However, empirical studies on the influence of TikTok video consumption on personal hygiene awareness and practices among youth in Calabar are nonexistent. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the influence of TikTok video consumption on personal hygiene awareness and practices among youth in Calabar.

Objectives of the study

The study sought to:

1. determine the extent to which TikTok videos on personal hygiene are consumed by youth in Calabar.
2. find out the kind of TikTok personal hygiene awareness videos mostly watched by youth in Calabar.
3. ascertain the influence of TikTok videos on the youth's attitude towards personal hygiene practices in Calabar.
4. assess the effectiveness of TikTok videos in increasing personal hygiene knowledge of youth in Calabar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual review

TikTok videos and personal hygiene awareness among youth

Use of TikTok videos in creating awareness about personal hygiene among youth is an innovative health communication approach which has yielded positive results on health and behaviour change interventions campaigns over time (Ahmed, 2023). Since its emergence as a digital media platform, Douglas *et al.* (2025) note that TikTok has been utilised as an effective interactive medium for amplifying personal hygiene awareness messages among its young users. These personal hygiene awareness messages empower the youth to become more conscious of hygiene and adopt impeccable personal hygiene habits for optimal health.

TikTok possesses some unique attributes which significantly contribute to influencing users' change of attitude towards public health messages. This underscores why the platform has been widely used over the years by public health stakeholders to successfully implement personal hygiene and health attitude change programmes, such as handwashing sensitization campaigns (Han *et al.*, 2020); promotion of clean and healthy living habits among adolescents (Doelvia *et al.*, 2023); promotion of menstrual hygiene awareness among young female adolescents (Olsson *et al.*, 2024), among others.

TikTok serves as a digital health communication platform through which young people gain access to various personal hygiene sensitisation messages. This is due to the fact that the majority of TikTok users are young adults, who are either creators or users of personal hygiene content. The outstanding attribute of TikTok as a health promotion channel, as Liu *et al.* (2025) argue, lies in its algorithmic-driven information transmission efficiency, edutainment-oriented creative content, and high interactive interface, which afford users the opportunity to like, make comments, and redistribute content with peers. This platform provides a hitch-free opportunity for personal hygiene tips, endorsements, testimonials and recommendations to be produced and circulated by TikTok content creators, who capitalise on the platform's algorithmic feature to amplify personal hygiene videos for increased visibility and access by users. Nwafor and Nnaemeka (2023) also contend that content creators on TikTok take advantage of its viral nature to share personal hygiene videos, repudiate misconceptions, cultural beliefs, and myths discouraging young people from adhering to good personal hygiene norms.

Within its short period of existence, TikTok has become a prominent and influential digital media platform that feeds young people with short interactive personal hygiene video content and entertainment-appealing features, capable of arousing their interest and engagement (Putri *et al.*, 2025). These unique action-packed attributes make TikTok a viable catalyst for circulating personal hygiene messages and promoting hygiene prevention practices among youth. TikTok provides a faster channel for young people to share and access personal hygiene video clips, even in remote terrains with limited conventional media coverage. The interactive attribute of TikTok affords young users the latitude to ask questions about personal hygiene-related content and comment on personal hygiene posts of interest.

TikTok plays an essential role in raising awareness and dissemination of self-help personal hygiene tips, such as regular hand washing with soap, hair-care tips, the use of nose masks, and sneezing etiquette. These short personal hygiene educational videos are produced and circulated by public health stakeholders and TikTok content creators to promote good hygiene practices among youth. Thus, exposure of youth to TikTok video content on personal hygiene improves their hygiene knowledge and enables them to be aware of the benefits of maintaining positive hygiene standards.

TikTok videos and youth attitudes to personal hygiene practices

Mass media are widely recognised in every society as instruments for shaping individuals' health beliefs, convictions and habits, by increasing their health knowledge through awareness and mobilisation towards

adopting preventive and corrective practices for optimum well-being (Saawuan *et al.*, 2023). Thus, public exposure to media's personal hygiene messages empowers them with the requisite knowledge to adopt hygiene-protective practices for a healthy living. This suggests that, when young people are availed with vital personal hygiene information, it encourages them to take positive hygiene measures.

Social media platforms such as TikTok, as Alim *et al.* (2025) note, have become an immersive and routine part of youth's engagement, contributing substantially to shaping their hygiene habits. This implies that young people's consumption of TikTok personal hygiene videos has the propensity to improve their attitudes towards personal hygiene practices. TikTok video content conveying personal hygiene messages exerts significant influence on its consumers, as it tends to change their perceptions, misconceptions and beliefs about personal hygiene. This can also motivate them to abandon unhealthy hygiene habits and adopt good hygiene norms that guarantee their well-being. Conceding to this line of thought is Putri *et al.* (2025), who opine that personal hygiene awareness videos from TikTok can improve the hygiene knowledge of young users and enable them to adopt preventive hygiene practices. Thus, the effectiveness of a TikTok personal hygiene video is directly proportional to the quantum of influence such a video clip would exert on users' change of attitude towards adopting positive personal hygiene practices.

In this digital age, the Magic Bullet effect is no longer effective on the generation's active and creative young media content consumers. As such, young digital media users are no longer passive consumers of personal hygiene video content they access on TikTok; they are also actively involved in the production and distribution of such personal hygiene videos. The content, aesthetically created and shared, contains an educative and conscience-appealing tone capable of changing young people's perceptions and approach to personal hygiene practices. This change of perception through the consumption of TikTok personal hygiene videos can prevent youth from hygiene-related diseases. TikTok videos, therefore, influence the hygiene practices of young people by changing their attitudes towards maintaining good personal hygiene norms.

Notwithstanding, research evidence reveals that TikTok plays some negative roles in the course of raising personal hygiene awareness. TikTok has been indicted for circulating personal hygiene videos, which tend to misinform its young users to engage in risk-prone hygiene practices, resulting in devastating health outcomes, such as hair loss, skin burn, diarrhoea, among others. Corroborating this contention is Rumahorbo *et al.* (2025), who opine that TikTok, like any other social media platform, is a double-edged sword whose influence on the personal hygiene practices of young people can be both

negative and positive. This implies that, as TikTok videos on personal hygiene awareness instigate young people to adopt positive hygiene practices, it also encourages them to engage in unwholesome hygiene practices that are detrimental to their health. Thus, since most personal hygiene videos on TikTok are not accurate and credible to be consumed, young users are admonished to exercise some restraint in consuming personal hygiene content they obtain from the platform. This is against the backdrop that most TikTok video content about personal hygiene is only meant to generate online traffic, and not necessarily to solve users' hygiene-related problems. Besides, most personal hygiene posts on TikTok lack scientific or medical proof. As such, it should be consumed cautiously by its teeming gullible young users.

Empirical review

Fu (2023), in the article "The Impact of Short Videos on People's Consumption Habits", investigated how short video platforms like TikTok influenced consumer behaviour across different age groups and regions. It analysed platform-specific marketing strategies, types of sellers, and discount methods, highlighting both the advantages of enhanced marketing efficiency and challenges such as false advertising and trust issues. The study synthesised existing literature and platform data, concluding that short videos significantly shaped consumption habits, with a growing impact expected as internet use expanded.

Nurida (2024) examined the effectiveness of social media in enhancing personal hygiene knowledge and vaginitis symptoms among adolescent girls at SMP Negeri 1 Rupert, Utara, Bengkalis. Findings revealed a significant increase in the knowledge of personal hygiene and vaginitis symptoms among adolescent girls in SMP Negeri 1, due to their exposure to social media personal hygiene messages. The study found social media to be a suitable platform for enhancing adolescents' knowledge of personal hygiene and prevention of reproductive diseases such as vaginitis.

Opod *et al.* (2025) investigated the role of social media in changing urban adolescents' behaviour towards enhancing a clean and healthy living in South Minahasa Regency. The study found social media to be a viable channel through which the majority of the respondents had access to clean and healthy living behaviour messages. The study also found a significant improvement in the attitude of respondents towards personal hygiene practices, such as regular washing of hands and oral care, after gaining access to social media posts on clean and healthy living behaviour. It was also found that social media is an effective medium for shaping adolescents' daily hygiene behaviour and practices.

Putri *et al.* (2025) examined the effect of TikTok on enhancing knowledge and attitude change in early

hypertension prevention among adolescents in SMK Negeri 1 Jambi City. The study found TikTok to be an effective health communication platform for raising adolescents' understanding of hypertension prevention practices and adoption of positive attitudes. High interactivity and ease of accessibility of TikTok were found to make it a strategic platform for disseminating health promotion messages and prevention of infectious diseases.

Fikry *et al.* (2026) investigated cyber hygiene awareness among Malaysian youth by analysing the roles played by individual knowledge, awareness, attitudes, gender differences, and educational level. An online survey was conducted with 414 respondents in Peninsular Malaysia. The results showed no significant differences in cyber hygiene awareness based on gender and educational level. This suggested equal access to cybersecurity information and training across genders and education levels in Malaysia. The study also found significant relationships between individual characteristics (knowledge, rationality, and attitude) and cyber hygiene awareness. These findings indicated that individuals who were more knowledgeable, had positive attitudes, and made rational decisions tended to have higher cyber hygiene awareness.

Arif *et al.* in their 2026 study, "The Assessment of Awareness and Practices About Menstrual Hygiene Among College Students," conducted a descriptive cross-sectional analysis at KIPS College, Kasur, Pakistan, from January to June 2025. The study involved 171 female intermediate-level students and assessed menstrual hygiene awareness and practices using structured questionnaires. Results showed that 55.6% of students had moderate awareness and 21.6% had high awareness of menstrual hygiene. Most participants were knowledgeable about menstrual products (74.2%) and the importance of regularly changing them (92.4%). Hygienic practices were generally satisfactory, with 87.1% consistently using hygienic absorbents and 86.5% cleaning with water and soap during menstruation. However, only 16.4% bathed daily during menstruation, and 39.8% reported that their college consistently provided adequate menstrual hygiene facilities. The study concluded that while awareness and practices were moderate and generally satisfactory, gaps remained in certain behaviours and institutional support, highlighting the need for enhanced menstrual health education and improved sanitation facilities in educational institutions.

Theoretical framework

Health Belief Model

The Health Belief Model (HBM) was developed in the 1950s by Irwin Rosenstock, Godfrey Hochbaum, Stephen

Kegeles and Howard Leventhal at the U.S Public Health Service to understand why tuberculosis screening programmes were largely unsuccessful (Glanz *et al.*, 2008). The Health Belief Model states that an individual's perception of disease risk, along with their belief in the efficacy of preventive measures, influences their likelihood of adopting recommended health practices. The Health Belief Model believes that compliance with recommended health practices can help prevent or cure illness. However, an individual's adherence to the recommended disease prevention practices depends on the person's perceptions of the inherent benefits and barriers he/she would incur in the course of performing the health behaviour, including his/her desire to be safe from diseases or get healed (Glanz *et al.*, 2008). Thus, the higher the perceived threat to illness, the higher the likelihood of an individual engaging in health promotion practices.

The HBM is relevant to this study as it shows that an individual's adherence to TikTok personal hygiene messages depends on how severe they perceive the health threat. Thus, individuals, especially youth, would adhere to TikTok hygiene messages only if such messages portend risk to their health. Therefore, youth who do not feel threatened by hygiene-related diseases are unlikely to take hygiene videos on TikTok seriously and are also less likely to comply with the recommended hygiene practices.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey as its design. The population of the study comprised all the residents of Calabar. The metro population of Calabar in 2026 is estimated to be 741,000 people. A sample size of 384 was statistically drawn using Roger Wimmer's Sample Size Calculator. A multistage sampling technique was used to draw respondents from the two local government areas that constitute Calabar metropolis, namely Calabar South and Calabar Municipal. A questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection, while data generated for the study were presented using frequency tables and simple percentages.

DATA PRESENTATION

A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents to enable the researchers to elicit quantitative data for the study. Out of the 384 (100%) copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents, 372 (97%) copies were successfully retrieved, while 12 (3%) copies of the questionnaire were not returned. The 372 retrieved copies of the questionnaire were used for analyses and presented as shown below.

Data presented in Table 1, Section 1, shows that the

majority, 213 (57%) of the respondents agreed that they consumed TikTok personal hygiene videos to a large extent. This finding implies that youth in Calabar are avid consumers of TikTok video content on personal hygiene.

Table 1, Section 2, indicates that the majority, 233 (63%) of the respondents are female consumers of TikTok videos content about personal hygiene, while 139 (37%) of the respondents are male consumers of TikTok videos on personal hygiene. This result suggests that young female adults consume TikTok personal hygiene videos in Calabar more than their male counterparts.

Table 1, Section 3, indicates that 161 (43%) of the respondents agreed watching menstrual care videos most, followed by hair care videos with 103 (28%) responses. This finding suggests that youth in Calabar are more interested in watching TikTok personal hygiene video content on menstrual and haircare-related themes.

Data in Table 1, Section 4, shows that the majority, 188 (51%) of the respondents agreed that their attitude towards personal hygiene practices had improved after watching TikTok personal hygiene videos. Another 124 (33%) of the respondents admitted to neglecting the recommended personal hygiene practices after watching TikTok personal hygiene awareness videos. The implication of this result is that there is a significant change in the attitude of Calabar youth after watching TikTok personal hygiene videos. The result also suggests that consumption of personal hygiene video content on TikTok encourages youth to adopt positive hygiene practices.

Table 1, Section 5, shows that the majority, 291 (78%) of the respondents agreed that TikTok videos were effective in increasing their knowledge about personal hygiene. This result suggests that TikTok videos are effective in enhancing young users' knowledge of personal hygiene in Calabar metropolis.

DISCUSSION

There was a high consumption of TikTok videos on personal hygiene among youth in Calabar. This is evident as the majority (57%) of the respondents admitted they consumed TikTok personal hygiene videos to a large extent, while another (32%) of the respondents agreed they consumed personal hygiene videos to an average extent. Young female adults in Calabar consumed TikTok personal hygiene videos more than their male counterparts. This is shown as the majority of the respondents (63%) were female consumers of TikTok video content on personal hygiene, while male consumers of TikTok videos on personal hygiene constituted (37%) of the respondents. This finding was supported by Rumahorbo *et al.* (2025), who reported that youth are increasingly dependent on social media and use the platforms on a daily basis to access or seek out information of interest. Similarly, Ramsden and Talbot (2025) also

Table 1. Responses of the participants.

Items/Categories	Frequency	Percentage%
Section 1: Extent to which respondents consume TikTok personal hygiene videos		
Large extent	213	57%
Average extent	119	32%
Little extent	40	11%
Never consumed TikTok videos	--	--
Total	372	100%
Section 2: TikTok personal hygiene video consumption based on gender		
Male	139	37%
Female	233	63%
Total	372	100%
Section 3: TikTok personal hygiene videos mostly watched by respondents		
Hand-washing videos	29	8%
Hair care videos	103	28%
Dental care videos	21	6%
Bathing videos	16	4%
Menstrual care videos	161	43%
Skin care videos	42	11%
Total	372	100%
Section 4: Respondents' attitudes after watching TikTok personal hygiene videos		
Improved my hygiene practices	188	51%
Has no impact on my hygiene practices	38	10%
I neglect the recommended hygiene practices	124	33%
I feel entertained	22	6%
Total	372	100%
Section 5: Effectiveness of TikTok videos in increasing respondents' knowledge about personal hygiene		
TikTok videos are effective in increasing my hygiene knowledge	291	78%
TikTok videos are not effective in increasing my hygiene knowledge	29	8%
I did not gain any hygiene knowledge from TikTok	41	11%
TikTok is not a credible platform for personal hygiene awareness	11	3%
Total	372	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

reported that social media is predominantly used by young people, who also take advantage of it to acquire diverse knowledge, including information on personal hygiene practices. Fuad *et al.* (2023) are also of the submission that the TikTok user base is overwhelmingly made up of young females who account for 60 % of users, while males represent the remaining 40%.

Young people in Calabar were mostly interested in watching TikTok personal hygiene video content on

menstrual hygiene and hair care. This is shown as most (43%) of the respondents agreed that they mostly watched menstrual hygiene videos on TikTok, followed by another (28%) of the respondents who mostly watched hair care videos on TikTok. This finding agrees with the submission of Olsson *et al.* (2024), who reported that young female adults dominate the platform's content, serving the interests of its dominant users.

The exposure of Calabar youth to TikTok videos on

personal hygiene awareness has improved their personal hygiene practices. This is evident as the majority (51%) of the respondents agreed that their attitude towards personal hygiene practices had improved after watching TikTok personal hygiene videos. This was followed by (33%) of the respondents who admitted that they neglected the recommended personal hygiene practices after watching TikTok personal hygiene awareness videos. This finding is supported by Rumahorbo *et al.* (2025), who also found that young people are influenced to maintain good hygiene after watching TikTok content that promotes healthy habits. Opod *et al.* (2025) also reported that TikTok has become an integral part of young people's lives, significantly influencing their attitudes, including their approach to personal hygiene practices.

TikTok videos were effective in enhancing young people's knowledge of personal hygiene in Calabar. This is shown as the majority (78%) of the respondents agreed that TikTok videos were effective in increasing their personal hygiene knowledge. Corroborating this finding is Nwafor and Nnaemeka (2023), who found that exposure to social media can enhance users' knowledge of personal hygiene practices. Singh *et al.* (2023) also reported that improved personal hygiene practices are significantly influenced by an individual's level of awareness and their compliance with the recommended hygiene tips.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of TikTok video consumption on personal hygiene awareness and practices among youth in Calabar. Based on the findings, it was concluded that there was a high consumption of TikTok videos on personal hygiene among youth in Calabar. TikTok video content on personal hygiene is predominantly consumed by young female adults. The study also concluded that TikTok personal hygiene videos on menstrual care and hair care are mostly watched by young people in Calabar. It was also concluded that TikTok videos have a significant influence on enhancing the personal hygiene practices of youth in Calabar, as it has proven to be an effective platform for increasing their knowledge of personal.

Recommendations

The study recommended as follow:

1. Since TikTok videos are largely used by young people for personal hygiene awareness, public health stakeholders should also encourage their use in other health intervention programmes to enable easy access to health promotion messages.
2. Public health organisations, NGOs, educators and

content creators should produce engaging and appealing content that would also arouse the interest of young male users.

3. TikTok content creators and public health stakeholders should continue creating and circulating accurate, credible personal hygiene messages, as they have the potential to improve young people's attitudes toward personal hygiene practices.
4. Public health stakeholders and content creators should increase the use of TikTok to disseminate reliable personal hygiene content to young people.

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