

Promoting Personal Hygiene and Health Awareness: The Role of Libraries in Enhancing Health Information Resources Utilisation for Community Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

Background: Libraries have evolved beyond information repositories to become proactive institutions in facilitating public health and behavioural change. This study examines how libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria, promote personal hygiene and health awareness among community members.

Objectives: To assess the level of knowledge and awareness of personal hygiene among library users, evaluate the role of libraries in promoting hygiene and health literacy, and identify challenges affecting their contribution to community well-being.

Methods: The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. A total of 99 respondents—including library users, librarians, and health professionals—from Bowen University and Ladoke Akintola University of Technology participated. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and thematic analysis. The study was guided by Wilson's (1996) Information-Seeking Behaviour Model and Nutbeam's (2000) Health Literacy Framework.

Results: Findings revealed a high level of knowledge of personal hygiene and health awareness among respondents. Libraries played a vital role through awareness campaigns, the provision of hygiene materials, and partnerships with health professionals. However, inadequate funding, limited digital activities, and insufficient staff training constrained optimal service delivery.

Conclusion: Libraries serve as strategic platforms for promoting health literacy and behavioural change. Enhancing funding, digital infrastructure, and intersectoral collaboration will strengthen their capacity to promote personal hygiene and community well-being.

Keywords: Libraries; Health awareness; Personal hygiene; Health literacy; Information behaviour

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Introduction

The health care and empowerment of the people in a community are what any successful community will be based on, in terms of enabling the people to make informed decisions as far as personal hygiene and health behaviour are concerned. The issue of being misinformed on health has been so extensive in an age that the need to have reliable and convenient sources of information has become even more urgent. Previously being silent learning platforms, libraries have now become arenas of community participation in health literacy provision, promotion of hygienic behaviour, and enhancement of the capacity to be responsible in respect of well-being (Karki et al., 2024; Morgan et al., 2019). Libraries are also reshaping themselves in terms of being the core agents of health awareness and disease prevention by using outreach programmes, health information resources, and collaborating with local medical organizations (WebJunction, 2024; National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health [NCCEH], 2023).

The new study has identified that the availability of credible health information can assist individuals to embrace preventive health habits and engage in hygienics (Nutbeam, 2020; Rubenstein et al., 2020). The significance of the information gap between health institutions and the general population is also explained by the role of libraries, particularly, the role of the public and academic ones in bridging the information gap through dissemination of reliable health information, support of hygiene education, and awareness campaigns (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018; Lankes, 2021). Their contribution has been not only fundamental in the post-pandemic world, where the importance of hand hygiene, sanitation, and

preventive care has been increased at a global scale (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023).

However, because of the lack of funds, the inadequate supply of libraries on promoting personal hygiene and health awareness is generally restricted (Aboyade, 2017; Edewor et al., 2016; Ngulube et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, the new initiatives in different countries point to the fact that libraries can be relied upon as collaborators in community health in the delivery of educational programmes, online health literacy, and safe environments where the community can connect (Goodman, 2018; Laurel Public Library, 2023).

There is poor awareness of the use of library-based health information services in Nigeria, particularly in the medical and public libraries, where the health information services can be augmented in the national health campaigns (Oyewusi and Oyeboade, 2009; Popoola and Haliso, 2009). This is one of the gaps that justify empirical assessment of the level of library efficacy towards promoting hygiene and health awareness knowledge among people in the community. Therefore, the paper will discuss the role of libraries in promoting personal hygiene and health awareness, the extent of utilizing the resources, the difficulties, and the ways that could be used to increase the contribution made by the libraries to the well-being of the community.

The significance of the study is that it enhances knowledge of the utilization of libraries as platforms of health promotion to the population, beyond the standard roles played by libraries. The findings will give information to policymakers, librarians, and medical professionals about the most appropriate practices to use in the integration of health information services within library systems. It also provides evidence about developing collaboration between libraries and health institutions in order to maximize community health education. This research to the librarians emphasizes capacity building and professional development of health communication as compared to the policy makers, who emphasize funding and infrastructure so that libraries can still become more active in health promotion.

The research problem being examined is the contribution of medical libraries in Bowen University and Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) in promoting personal hygiene and health awareness among the study population, staff, and communities in Oyo State. It talks about how these libraries can be utilized to retrieve credible health-related information, how hygiene and health education programs should be organised, and how collaboration with medical practitioners should be done to promote the well-being of the people. The study also focuses on the type of health-related materials available in the libraries, the usefulness of awareness programs, and difficulties involved in carrying out the awareness programs. This weakness assists the research in contextualising its discussion to the Nigerian academic library system and has a constrained yet representative view on how libraries may improve the personal hygiene and health outcomes of the populace.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How knowledgeable are the members of the community regarding personal hygiene?
2. How health-aware are the members of the community?
3. What are the positions of libraries in enhancing personal hygiene among society members?
4. Which information sources are offered by libraries to enhance practices of hygiene and health awareness?
5. What are the difficulties with providing health-related information provided by libraries and encouraging hygiene and health awareness among the community?
6. What are the strategies used by libraries to share reliable health and hygiene content and arrange programmes to facilitate behaviour change?

Literature Review

Libraries and Health Promotion

The contribution of libraries to the development of community health and well-being has changed substantially in the last decade. Libraries used to be viewed as passive information repositories, but nowadays it is acknowledged that they can be used as active institutions that can promote the health of people by helping them via community outreach, spreading information, and cooperating with health professionals (Karki et al., 2024; Morgan et al., 2019). Recent literature highlights the fact that libraries are strategic partners in promoting health literacy, disease prevention programmes, and misinformation in both developed and developing nations (WebJunction, 2024; WHO, 2023). This change is a trend at the international level toward the incorporation of health education into community institutions and the broadening of the notion of the library as a healthy environment (Nutbeam, 2020; NCCEH, 2023).

With the post-pandemic scenario, the library has become even more apparent in its contribution to the health of the population. Libraries have become reliable sources of COVID-19 awareness, vaccination efforts, and mental health education as health agencies utilize libraries as the mediating factor between the health agency and the local population (Laurel Public Library, 2023; Lankes, 2021). These efforts demonstrate the opportunity of libraries to fill the gaps in communication of the population through the use of their accessibility and social trust. Karki et al. (2024) have also noted that patrons who attended library-based health programmes had greater health literacy and changes in behaviour than those who did not receive any clinical intervention.

Libraries and Personal Hygiene Education

Libraries play an essential role in promoting hygiene education, particularly within school and academic environments. They curate health-related materials, provide access to credible digital resources, and organise hygiene awareness workshops to foster behavioural change (EBSCO, 2023; Nutbeam, 2020). According to Goodman (2018), library-led wellness initiatives such as

handwashing campaigns and community sanitation projects have contributed to improved public hygiene practices. Similarly, Ajiboye and Tella (2007) and Omekwu and Ugwuanyi (2015) found that university libraries with health collections influence students' understanding of sanitation and disease prevention.

In Nigeria, libraries are increasingly recognised for their potential to support hygiene education, though challenges such as funding limitations, outdated materials, and insufficient professional training persist (Edewor et al., 2016; Aboyade, 2017). However, innovations are emerging. For instance, Popoola and Haliso (2009) noted that integrating health education materials into library services enhances students' awareness of hygiene and preventive practices. Globally, similar trends are evident: in the United States and Canada, libraries now distribute hygiene kits, run wellness classes, and collaborate with local health agencies to deliver public health messages (CDC, 2018; NCCEH, 2023).

Digital Health Literacy and Access to Information

The increased digitisation of health resources has redefined the way libraries provide health information. Digital health literacy is the skill to gain access, perceive, and use health-related information in a digital format, which has become more and more important in the age of online misinformation (Rubenstein et al., 2020; WebJunction, 2024). In libraries, this is achieved through the provision of internet connectivity, electronic resources, and training in digital literacy, which enable users to approach information on health skeptically (Lankes, 2021). It has been highlighted by the WHO (2023) that enhancing civic access to reliable online health information is a key to disease prevention, especially in low- and middle-income nations where misinformation about health is propagated very quickly.

There is empirical evidence that users who are exposed to library-based eHealth programmes have better health-seeking behaviour and are less likely to use unconfirmed online information (Ngulube et al., 2019; Karki et al., 2024). This justifies why libraries should keep on changing as digital health

middlemen. In Nigeria, the weaknesses in infrastructure and insufficient ICT training of librarians constrain the complete implementation of digital literacy health programs (Edewor et al., 2016; Aboyade, 2017). This is critical in ensuring that libraries realise their digital health potential by addressing those challenges with the help of government funding and institutional partnerships.

The growing digitisation of health resources has transformed how libraries disseminate health information. Digital health literacy involves the ability to access, understand, and apply health information from electronic sources, a skill increasingly essential in the era of online misinformation (Rubenstein et al., 2020; WebJunction, 2024). Libraries facilitate this by providing internet access, e-resources, and digital literacy training that empower users to evaluate health information critically (Lankes, 2021). The WHO (2023) has emphasised that improving public access to credible online health content is a cornerstone of disease prevention, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where health misinformation spreads rapidly.

Empirical evidence suggests that users who engage with library-based eHealth programmes demonstrate improved health-seeking behaviours and reduced reliance on unverified online sources (Ngulube et al., 2019; Karki et al., 2024). This reinforces the need for libraries to continue evolving as digital health mediators. In Nigeria, however, infrastructural deficits and inadequate ICT training for librarians limit the full adoption of digital health literacy initiatives (Edewor et al., 2016; Aboyade, 2017). Addressing these challenges through government funding and institutional partnerships remains crucial for libraries to realise their digital health potential.

Collaboration with Health Professionals and Community Engagement

Cooperation between libraries and health care organisations is becoming a key to good health promotion. A collaboration can also help libraries to organize wellness events, provide information on vaccination, and share public health materials together with local health agencies (CDC, 2018;

NCCEH, 2023). As an example, the Laredo Public Health program in Texas showed the use of libraries as sources of mental health in partnership with the public health departments (Laredo Morning Times, 2025). Equally, in South Africa, Ngulube et al. (2019) noted that community sanitation education was provided by the internet and community to the society through the collaboration of the public libraries and the health organisations to give out hygiene kits to the community. situation with library-health partnerships is still underdeveloped, yet the possibility of them is increasingly being acknowledged. Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) reasoned that when health professionals are incorporated into the outreach programmes of libraries, this may enhance the trust and involvement of the community. On this basis, Popoola and Haliso (2009) suggested that librarians should continue their training in the area of health communication as this would make them active players in the field of advocating public health.

Summary of Gaps in Literature

While global evidence confirms the role of libraries as health-promoting institutions, there is limited empirical research on how effectively libraries in Nigeria contribute to personal hygiene and health awareness. Most existing studies focus on library use for academic or information purposes, with little emphasis on health-related initiatives (Edewor et al., 2016; Aboyade, 2017). This study addresses that gap by exploring the roles, challenges, and strategies of medical libraries in Oyo State in promoting hygiene and health awareness. It contributes to the growing discourse on the integration of health education within library services and offers practical insights for strengthening community health literacy through information resource utilisation.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is based on Wilson's Information-Seeking Behaviour Model (1996) and the health literacy framework by Nutbeam (2000). These theories, when combined, form the conceptual frameworks of how people find and use library health information to enhance personal hygiene and health awareness.

The model presented by Wilson is used to describe the way individuals process information in order to find answers to certain requirements. The model has recognized that there are a number of interrelated constructs: information need, information seeking behaviour, intervening variables, and information use. The need for information, in the frame of the given research, is the tendency of the individual to obtain knowledge about personal hygiene and health consciousness, including the knowledge of the correct hand hygiene, cleanliness, and health hazards. The information-seeking behaviour is the mode of active searching of information related to health among the members of the community and the users of libraries by visiting libraries, taking part in awareness programmes, searching online databases, and consulting librarians. Intervening variables are those personal, social, and environmental agents, such as digital literacy, access to library resources, and socio-economic factors, that may facilitate or inhibit information seeking. Information use refers to the application of the acquired knowledge in real-life situations, like the adoption of better practices in hygiene or passing health information to peers and family members.

In this study, Wilson's model is operationalised by examining the level of knowledge of personal hygiene and health awareness, which reflects information need and information-seeking behaviour; the extent of utilisation of library health information resources, which represents information use; and the barriers and challenges faced by libraries and users, which capture the influence of intervening variables. This alignment makes Wilson's framework directly relevant to the study variables by linking the process of information acquisition through libraries with the behavioural outcomes of hygiene and health awareness.

Nutbeam's Health Literacy Framework (2000) complements Wilson's model by explaining how individuals understand and act upon health information. Nutbeam conceptualises health literacy in three levels: functional, interactive, and critical literacy. In this study, the framework

supports the exploration of how libraries enhance community members' capacity to access, interpret, and apply health information to improve hygiene and overall well-being. Functional literacy relates to understanding basic hygiene information, such as handwashing and sanitation guidelines. Interactive literacy involves engagement through library programmes, seminars, and workshops that promote discussion and shared learning experiences. Critical literacy represents the ability to evaluate, question, and apply credible health information in decision-making and advocacy within the community.

Together, Wilson's and Nutbeam's frameworks provide a comprehensive theoretical foundation. Wilson's model explains how health information is sought and used, while Nutbeam's framework clarifies how such information empowers individuals to act on what they learn. Their integration highlights the mechanisms through which libraries contribute to personal hygiene promotion and health awareness in Nigerian communities, demonstrating how information acquisition and health literacy interact to foster community well-being.

Methods

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the promotion of personal hygiene and health awareness in libraries. The quantitative aspect focused on collecting measurable data from library users and librarians through structured questionnaires, while the qualitative aspect involved semi-structured interviews designed to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and institutional practices. Using both approaches allowed triangulation of data and ensured that both user and librarian perspectives were adequately represented (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023).

The study participants included library users (students and general patrons), librarians, and health professionals from Bowen University and Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) in Oyo State, Nigeria. These institutions were selected because of their engagement in

health literacy and hygiene promotion activities within their libraries and communities.

A total of 99 respondents (50 library users and 49 librarians) formed the study's sample size. Sampling occurred in two stages: first, purposive sampling was used to select the two libraries based on their active involvement in health promotion programmes; second, stratified random sampling ensured representation from both library users and librarians. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents during library hours and were completed under the supervision of the researcher, achieving a 100 percent response rate.

Two instruments were used for data collection: (1) a structured questionnaire divided into user and librarian sections, and (2) a semi-structured interview guide for selected librarians and collaborating health professionals. The questionnaire for users focused on awareness, knowledge, and utilisation of hygiene and health information resources, while that for librarians explored strategies, challenges, and programme implementation.

The researcher personally visited both libraries for data collection after securing institutional consent. Quantitative data were coded and analysed using SPSS version 26, employing descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and percentages, and inferential analysis through independent t-tests to

compare user and librarian responses. Qualitative interview data were transcribed and analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase approach.

Instrument validity was established through expert review, while a pilot test conducted in another library produced a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.83, indicating high internal consistency. Ethical approval was obtained from the research ethics committees of Bowen University and LAUTECH. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from the participants, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

Results

Demographics

The demographic results show a fairly balanced gender distribution, with slightly more females (54.5%) than males (45.5%). Most respondents were young adults aged 26–35 years (41.4%), and the majority had a tertiary education (57.6%). Students formed the largest group (40.4%), followed by librarians (25.3%) and health professionals (18.2%). Over half of the respondents were single (56.6%), indicating that the study sample was largely youthful, educated, and drawn from groups relevant to the focus of the research.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable		Category	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		Male	45	45.5
		Female	54	54.5
		Total	99	100.0
Age		Group 18 – 25 years	32	32.3
		26 – 35 years	41	41.4
		36 – 45 years	17	17.2
		46 years and above	9	9.1
		Total	99	100.0
Educational Level		Secondary education	20	20.2
		Tertiary education	57	57.6
		Postgraduate	22	22.2
		Total	99	100.0

Occupation	Students	40	40.4
	Librarians	25	25.3
	Health professionals	18	18.2
	Others	16	16.1
Total		99	100.0
Marital Status	Single	56	56.6
	Married	38	38.4
	Others (divorced/widowed)	5	5.0
Total		99	100.0

Research Question 1

This question was answered by library users and health professionals. Their responses assessed awareness and understanding of hygiene practices, such as handwashing, sanitation, and infection prevention.

Table 2: Respondent Knowledge of Personal Hygiene in University Libraries

S/N	Items	Response	N	Percent (%)
1	I often disinfect and clean library materials (laptops, books etc.) before using them.	Yes	73	73.7
		No	26	26.3
2	Do you think personal hygiene practices affect the overall cleanliness of the public space like libraries.	Yes	34	34.3
		No	65	65.7
3	Are you aware of any hygiene-related guidelines or policies followed in the library	Yes	61	61.6
		No	38	38.4
4	I usually sanitise my hand anytime I want to use library	Yes	46	46.5
		No	53	53.5
5	I usually practice social distancing or wear of mask while in the library	Yes	78	78.8
		No	21	21.2

The result in Table 2 shows the respondents' knowledge of personal hygiene in university libraries. This study observes that 73% of the respondents know that disinfecting and cleaning library materials (laptops, books, etc.) is compulsory before using them. While 34.35% think personal hygiene practices affect the overall cleanliness of the public space, like libraries. Further findings show that 46.5% of respondents are aware of any hygiene-related guidelines or policies followed in the library, and 78.8% of

respondents usually sanitize their hands anytime they want to use the library. This study observes that the respondents are knowledgeable about hygiene practices (59%).

Research Question 2

Responses were obtained from library users and health professionals on their understanding of preventive health, disease symptoms, and general wellness information.

Table 3: Respondents' Awareness of Personal hygiene and health practices

S/N	Items	Response	N	Percentage (%)
1.	Are you aware any health-related programs or initiatives such as wellness workshop or mental health resources offered by the library?	Yes	39	39.4
		No	60	60.6
		Total	99	100
2.	Does the library provide resources (e.g., hand sanitizers, disinfecting wipes) to help maintain cleanliness	Yes	70	70.7
		No	29	29.3
		Total	99	100
3.	I am satisfied with the cleanliness of library shared resources (e.g. chairs, books, and computers).	Yes	65	65.7
		No	34	34.3
		Total	99	100
4.	Would you participate in a library-sponsored hygiene or wellness program if offered,	Yes	57	57.6
		No	42	42.4
		Total	99	100
5.	In your opinion, should the library offer more health programs or initiative related to hygiene and wellness?	Yes	37	37.4
		No	62	62.6
		Total	99	100
6.	I have participated in at least three to four personal hygiene workshops in the last two years	Yes	73	73.7
		No	26	26.3
		Total	99	100

Table 3 is a presentation of the respondents' level of awareness of personal hygiene and health practices. This study shows that 39.4% of the respondents are aware that the library offers health-related programs or initiatives, such as wellness workshops or mental health resources, while 70.7% confirm that the library provides resources (e.g., hand sanitisers, disinfecting wipes) to help maintain cleanliness in the library environment. 65.7% are satisfied with the cleanliness of library shared resources (e.g., chairs, books, and computers), while 57.6% ascertain they will participate in a library-sponsored hygiene or wellness program if offered. I have participated in

at least three to four personal hygiene workshops in the last two years. 73.7% of respondents affirm they have participated in at least three to four personal hygiene workshops in the last two years. The result of this study reveals that the respondents practice of hygiene is moderate (57.41%).

Research Question 3

This question was directed to librarians, as they are directly responsible for planning and implementing health and hygiene information services.

Table 4: The role of libraries in promoting personal hygiene and health awareness within the library for community wellbeing

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	SD	D	M	SD	Rank
1	Does your library provide any information about personal hygiene e.g. posters,	50 (50.3%)	30 (30.3%)	10 (10.3%)	09 (9.3%)	3.22	0.96	2nd
2	Personal hygiene is an essential part of library activities	50 (50.3%)	40 (40.3%)	05 (5.3%)	04 (4.3%)	3.37	0.76	1st
3	Does your library provide hygiene resources e.g hand sanitizer	40 (40.3%)	30 (30.3%)	20 (20.3%)	09 (9.3%)	3.02	0.98	4th
4	Do you think library should offer health and hygiene education programmes	48(48.5%)	28(28.3%)	12 (12.1%)	11 (11.1%)	3.14	1.02	3rd
5	I often see library staffs remanding people to follow hygiene practices	30 (30.3%)	30 (30.3%)	30 (30.3%)	09 (9.3%)	2.82	0.97	5th

Table 4 reveals that integrating personal hygiene into library activities ranked highest (3.37), with strong agreement from respondents. Providing information on personal hygiene (3.22) and organising health and hygiene education programmes (3.14) were also well accepted, though some noted limited initiatives. Provision of hygiene resources (3.02) was rated moderately, while staff reminders about hygiene (2.82) ranked lowest, reflecting mixed opinions. This suggests

that libraries are recognised as key platforms for promoting hygiene, though their efforts are more visible in education and awareness than in direct resource provision or staff-led reminders.

Research question 4

Responses from librarians showed how libraries contribute to enhancing health literacy through information services and educational outreach.

Table 5: Respondents' extent of utilization of information resources provided by libraries for improving hygiene and health practices

S/N	Items	Response	N	Percent (%)
1.	I make use of information on notice boards for personal hygiene	Yes No Total	68 31 99	68.7 31.3 100
2.	Library environment is very hygienic	Yes No Total	80 19 99	80.8 19.2 100
	Health workers usually come to library for hygiene sensitizations	Yes No Total	80 19 99	80.8 19.2 100

3.	There is usually hand sanitiser and disinfecting materials at library receptions	Yes	57	57.6
		No	42	42.4
		Total	99	100
4.	Are there any aspects of library usage that you believe should be improved for better user comfort and hygiene?	Yes	69	69.7
		No	30	30.3
		Total	99	100
5.		Yes	78	78.8
		No	21	21.2
		Total	99	100

The result in Table 4 shows Respondent Usage of Library Hygiene. The result shows that all factors listed in the study influence hygiene practice. This includes regular supervision and inspection of library workers by the appropriate management of medical personnel. Others are knowledge about the importance of personal and environmental hygiene; training of library workers on proper ways

of carrying out their activities in a hygienic way includes hand sanitization

Research Question 5:

Research Question 5: Table 6: Challenges faced by libraries in delivering health-related information and promoting community well-being.

Table 6: Challenges faced by libraries in delivering health-related information and promoting community well-being

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	SD	D	M	SD	Rank
1	Lack of Awareness and Education.	50 (50.3%)	30 (30.5%)	10 (10.5%)	09 (9.1%)	3.22	0.96	6th
2	Poor Access to Clean Water and Sanitation.	50 (50.3%)	25 (25.3%)	15 (19.3%)	09 (9.1%)	3.17	0.99	8th
3	Behavioral and Lifestyle Barriers	40 (40.3%)	40 (40.3%)	10 (10.3%)	09 (9.1%)	3.12	0.92	9th
4	Economic constraints	60 (60.3%)	20 (20.3%)	15 (15.3%)	04 (4.1%)	3.37	0.88	2nd
5	Poor Hygiene Infrastructure	48 (48.5%)	38 (38.4%)	07 (7.1%)	06 (6%)	3.29	0.84	5th
6	Inconsistent Enforcement and Hygiene Policies	50 (50.3%)	40 (40.3%)	04 (4.3%)	05 (5.1%)	3.36	0.78	3rd
7	Health Conditions and Physical Limitations	50 (50.3%)	40 (40.3%)	7 (7.3%)	2 (2.1%)	3.39	0.71	1st
8	Cultural and social stigmas	35 (35.4%)	33 (33.3%)	18 (18.2%)	13 (13.1%)	2.91	1.03	10th
9	Misinformation and myths	43 (43.4%)	38 (38.4%)	11 (11.1%)	7 (7.1%)	3.18	0.89	7th
10	Impact of pandemics and health crisis	60 (60.6%)	20 (20.2%)	8 (8.1%)	11 (11.1%)	3.30	1.02	4th

Table 6 reveals that physical health limitations ranked highest (3.50), with over 90% of respondents agreeing they hinder access to health resources. Economic constraints (3.37) and inconsistent enforcement of hygiene policies (3.36) followed closely, both widely recognised as barriers. Other challenges, such as pandemics and health crises (3.30), poor hygiene infrastructure

(3.29), and lack of awareness (3.22), were also accepted. However, misinformation (3.18), poor sanitation facilities (3.17), lifestyle barriers (3.12), and cultural stigmas (2.91) ranked lower. This suggests structural and economic challenges are seen as more critical than social or behavioural factors in limiting libraries' role in promoting health information.

Research Question 6

This question was answered by librarians and health professionals to capture institutional and collaborative perspectives.

Table 7: Strategies to disseminate credible health information and organize hygiene awareness programs

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	SD	D	M	SD	Rank
1	Health information from doctors and nurses is the most reliable	50 (50.3%)	30 (30.3%)	10 (10.3%)	09 (9.1%)	3.22	0.96	3rd
2	Social media is a trustworthy source of health information	40 (40.3%)	40 (40.3%)	10 (10.3%)	09 (9.1%)	3.12	0.92	5rh
3	It is essential to verify health information from credible sources before trusting it	60 (50.3%)	30 (30.3%)	05 (5.3%)	04 (4.1%)	3.47	0.77	1st
4	Government should be the main source of health information	48 (48.5%)	28 (28.3%)	12 (12.1%)	11 (11.1%)	3.14	1.02	4th
5	I feel there is too much of misinformation about health online	58 (58.6%)	28 (28.3%)	07(7.1%)	06 (6%)	3.39	0.86	2nd

Table 7 reveals that verifying health information from credible sources ranked highest (3.47), with over 80% of respondents agreeing on the importance of fact-checking before trusting health content. Misinformation about health online (3.39) followed closely, confirming that false information is a widespread concern. Trust in doctors and nurses as the most reliable sources (3.22) was also accepted, highlighting the central role of health professionals. Government institutions as primary sources (3.14) ranked fourth, showing moderate support but some scepticism. Social media as a trustworthy health information source (3.12)

ranked lowest, suggesting that while some see its potential, concerns about credibility remain. This indicates that users prioritise fact-checking, professional advice, and credible institutional sources over informal or unregulated platforms.

Interview Report

The interview was conducted to explore the role of libraries in promoting personal hygiene and health awareness within communities. The analysis is presented thematically, with illustrative quotes from the respondent and interpretations provided by the researcher.

The respondent described libraries as essential spaces for disseminating reliable health information. According to the interviewee, “Libraries are no longer just about books; they are where people can come and get practical knowledge about how to live healthy, keep clean, and prevent diseases.” This perspective highlights the evolving role of libraries as hubs for community health, suggesting that health information services in libraries extend beyond traditional reference roles to include targeted health promotion.

Personal Hygiene Education

The respondent stressed that libraries actively engage communities through hygiene education programmes. In their words, “We usually organise storytelling for children on how to wash their hands, and for adults we hold workshops on food hygiene and oral health.” This illustrates the practical strategies libraries employ to embed health literacy into community life.

Digital Resources and Health Campaigns

The use of digital platforms emerged as another theme in the interview. The respondent explained: “With social media and online databases, we can reach people outside the library. Even in rural areas, people now join our webinars and get e-resources on health.”

Collaboration with Health Organisations

The interviewee further highlighted partnerships as a key strength, stating: “We partner with local hospitals and NGOs to organise free medical check-ups and vaccination campaigns in the library space.” This indicates that libraries function not only as information providers but also as facilitators of healthcare delivery.

Challenges in Health Information Dissemination

Despite these successes, the respondent acknowledged persisting barriers. As noted, “The biggest problems are misinformation, lack of funds, and even digital illiteracy. Some people cannot make use of the online resources we provide.”

Discussion of Findings

The results of this research offer some effective ideas about the importance of libraries in enhancing personal hygiene and health consciousness among the Oyo State in Nigeria. Applying Wilson’s Information-seeking Behaviour Model (1996) and Nutbeam Health Literacy Framework (2000) as conceptual frameworks, the research has shown how library information services may help to achieve positive health literacy, behaviour change, and well-being of the people.

The research findings show that the knowledge of personal hygiene among the library users and the health professionals is relatively high, with the health professions being more knowledgeable about personal hygiene. This justifies the claim by Nutbeam that exposure to reliable sources of health information improves the level of functional and critical literacy. The average level of knowledge of library users is relatively high, as well, which suggests libraries act as a very effective channel of spreading health-related information, as both Karki et al. (2024) and Morgan et al. (2019) have shown that the health promotion programs led by libraries do have a substantial impact on the health awareness of the community.

Likewise, the findings indicated that the community members possess moderate to high health awareness regarding the level of community-based awareness, which indicates that libraries play a positive role in knowledge acquisition and information seeking behaviour. This is in line with the model by Wilson, where seeking behaviour is prompted by information needs and put into application. The research therefore proves the applicability of libraries as intermediary structures that enable individuals to access and utilize health information effectively, as stated by Rubenstein et al. (2020) and WebJunction (2024).

The functions of libraries in facilitating hygiene and health awareness were also discovered to be complex. The role of librarians entails the provision of health-related resources, organising health-related awareness, liaising with health professionals, as well as offering online health

resources. The findings are in line with prior studies by Edewor et al. (2016) and Goodman (2018), who found libraries to be involved in health literacy promotion. Nevertheless, the current research puts a twist on this by indicating that even though the old dissemination tools (posters and seminars) have not been displaced, the digital dissemination of information via social media sites has not been well established yet in the libraries of Nigeria. This is contrary to results in the developed setting (Laurel Public Library, 2023; NCCEH, 2023), where web-based communication is an inseparable component of library-based provision of health education.

The findings also show that poor funding, insufficient training of staff, and poor partnership with the health agencies are some of the barriers to good health information service provision. The discovery is consistent with Aboyade (2017) and Ngulube et al. (2019), who pointed to the same systemic constraints of African libraries. These factors, according to the Wilson model, are intervening variables that either enable or inhibit information-seeking behaviour. Therefore, the capacity to contribute to achieving the public health goals by libraries should be improved by enhancing resource distribution, digital infrastructure, and collaboration between educational institutions.

Regarding the strategies being applied, the study concluded that the libraries mostly apply the direct engagement approaches, i.e., health talks, workshops, posters, and health professional collaboration to enhance hygiene and health literacy. Such strategies are in line with interactive and critical literacy levels presented by Nutbeam (2000), in which participatory and community-based learning is underlined. Nevertheless, the comparatively low level of digital platform use can be regarded as a persistent technology adoption gap, implying that there is a need to develop digital health communication in capacity building. The process of changing libraries into digital health information hubs demands technical means and strategic alliances, as Lankes (2021) explains.

Generally, the results support the theoretical hypothesis that the availability of trustworthy information in libraries improves the health

knowledge of individuals and promotes behavioural change. The combination of the Wilson and Nutbeam frameworks offers a logical explanation of how the need to seek information, and its use, is converted into health-promoting behavior. This paper thus adds to the existing body of knowledge that libraries are essential collaborators in promoting the public health agenda, especially in developing regions where there is an unequal distribution of healthcare access and healthcare awareness.

Another contextual finding that is made by the results is that even though the libraries of Nigeria are limited by resources, they are highly dedicated to promoting community health. Their participation in health promotion and hygiene sensitisation processes puts them as untapped but strategic stakeholders in advocating for the national health. Libraries can contribute positively to the enhancement of health literacy, misinformation reduction, and sustainable behavioural change in their communities through support from policy, training, and financing.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, it is possible to suggest some recommendations on how libraries can be improved to encourage personal hygiene and health towards the well-being of a community:

1. The libraries must also improve collaboration with the healthcare givers, government bodies, and community-based organisations to plan and implement effective health promotion programmes. These partnerships will aid in resource availability and quality, and coverage of hygiene education programs.
2. It is also necessary to invest in digital platforms and infrastructure in order to increase access to credible health information. By utilizing e-books, web databases, webinars, and social media, libraries will be able to access larger audiences, such as those in underserved or remote locations.
3. Librarians should be trained on capacity building so as to enhance their performance in health promotion. Ongoing health literacy, programme delivery, and digital resource management will

make the librarians ready to be active participants in community health and not passive information custodians.

Implications for Library and Information Professionals

The contribution of library and information professionals to community health and hygiene has gained even greater importance because libraries are no longer a mere storage place of books but a space where health literacy and wellness can be taught. By actively participating, the professionals can help close the gap between the available health resources and the awareness of the users by developing specific outreach, user education, and collaboration programmes with health stakeholders. The problem of under-utilisation of health resources needs to be resolved by providing librarians with health communication, programme design, and digital dissemination skills to address the changing needs of the communities. Maintaining this will also require institutional backup such as proper funding, facilities, and policy guidelines formally defining how libraries should be incorporated in the promotion of health in the populace. Although it might not be the case with every librarian, the need to specialise in health information services is necessary, but more importantly, librarians need to evolve with the transforming demands of their profession and take up more responsibilities to support their contribution to promoting the objectives of public health. By so doing, library and information professionals reiterate their usefulness as agents of social change and community welfare.

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