

Social Media as an Educational Tool for Promoting Herbal Mouthwash Among Teenagers

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ABSTRACT

ARTICLE DETAILS

Background: In today's digital era, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, especially among teenagers. Teenagers are using social media to find health information, but it is not fully used to teach them about herbal mouthwash. The main problem is that there are not enough fun and easy-to-understand educational videos or posts that catch teenagers' attention or share information well. Also, there is a lack of research on what kinds of content teenagers prefer and what works best to teach them. Teenagers are at risk for dental problems like cavities and gum disease. Their lack of knowledge about oral health makes these problems worse. Right now, social media is the main way teenagers get information, but using it better for dental health education has not been studied enough.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to determine the role of social media as an educational tool in increasing knowledge and utilization of herbal mouthwash among teenagers. This study also aimed to identify the most effective types of social media content in conveying education and evaluate its influence on teenagers' behavior regarding the use of herbal mouthwash.

Method: The research employed a descriptive, cross-sectional design. The population consisted of teenagers aged 18-19 years. This study involved a total of 35 subjects who fulfilled the inclusion criteria. The research used a questionnaire to assess how social media helps educate people about herbal mouthwash, including their knowledge, benefits, use, and opinions on social media's effectiveness. The questionnaire was tested for validity using Corrected Item-Total Correlation, and all items were valid after some revisions. The reliability was tested with Cronbach's Alpha, which was above 0.70, showing that the questionnaire is reliable and consistent.

Results: The study shows that social media is effective in improving teenagers' knowledge about herbal mouthwash's benefits and uses. Additionally, educational content that matches teenagers' interests encourages them to use herbal mouthwash more.

Conclusion: Social media plays a key role as a primary source of information and education in promoting the use of herbal mouthwash among teenagers. Most teenagers access social media platforms to seek health information and demonstrate a fairly good level of knowledge about the benefits and proper use of herbal mouthwash.

KEYWORD: Social media, educational media, herbal mouthwash, teenagers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Dental and oral health problems in Indonesia remain a critical issue with high prevalence, particularly dental caries and periodontal disease. According to data from the 2018 Riskesdas and the 2023 SKI, more than 50% of the population

suffers from dental caries. ^{1,2,3,4} Dental caries, or cavities, is a disease of the hard tissues of the teeth characterized by damage to the enamel and dentin caused by the metabolic activity of bacteria in dental plaque. ⁵ Health is the most important aspect of human life—both physical and mental

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well-being. Children are no exception; every parent wants their child to grow and develop optimally, which can be achieved if their bodies are healthy.^{6,7} Oral health problems commonly experienced by teenagers include cavities, misaligned or crooked teeth, tooth discoloration, and dental injuries or trauma.⁸ Children and teenagers are the age groups most vulnerable to oral health problems. Understanding how to maintain oral health and how to prevent problems is crucial during this period. One way to improve this understanding is to educate them using appropriate resources or media.⁹

Advances in information and communication technology have brought about significant changes in communication patterns and the dissemination of information within society. One such innovation is social media, which has become the primary platform for various groups particularly teenagers to obtain information, interact, and share experiences. Oral health promotion is the process of providing information based on oral health needs to maintain good oral health. Social media is not only used for communication and information sharing but also serves as a tool for education and the dissemination of knowledge regarding various aspects of life, including health and self-care.^{10,11} The use of social media as a health education tool is becoming increasingly popular in the digital age.^{12,11} Social media provides fast, easy, and widespread access, enabling it to reach diverse groups of people without geographical or time constraints.¹² This phenomenon highlights the important role of social media as an educational tool, including in the fields of health and the use of natural herbal products such as herbal mouthwash.¹³ Health promotion raises awareness about maintaining oral health.¹⁴ Teenagers frequently use social media in their daily activities; social media has the potential to serve as a medium for delivering behavioral change interventions and can also help improve oral health among teenagers.¹⁵

Currently, mouthwashes are available with a wide variety of active ingredients, including both chemical and natural (herbal) ingredients.¹⁶ One alternative that is gaining popularity is the use of herbal mouthwashes, which are considered safer and offer additional benefits for oral health. Herbal mouthwashes are gaining popularity because they are considered safer and more natural than synthetic chemical products. The use of herbal mouthwashes to maintain oral and dental health is an attractive alternative, especially among teenagers who are looking for natural and healthy self-care solutions. A lack of accurate and reliable information often leads teenagers to have a misconception about the importance of using herbal mouthwashes properly.¹⁷

Social media has great potential as an effective educational tool for increasing teenagers' knowledge and awareness of the benefits of herbal mouthwash. Through educational content such as articles, videos, infographics, and interactive discussions, social media can convey information

in an engaging and easy-to-understand way. In addition, social media also facilitates direct communication between users and healthcare professionals or herbal experts, thereby strengthening teenagers' trust in and understanding of these herbal products.^{18,19}

However, the use of social media as an educational tool also faces various challenges, such as the spread of inaccurate information and hoaxes, as well as a lack of adequate digital literacy among teenagers.²⁰ Therefore, it is important to understand the extent to which social media plays a role in education about herbal mouthwashes and how it influences teenagers' knowledge, perceptions, and behaviors.

By understanding the role of social media as an educational tool, it is hoped that more effective and targeted communication strategies can be developed to promote the proper and safe use of herbal mouthwash among teenagers. This study will provide insight into how social media can be optimally utilized as a health education tool, particularly in the context of herbal mouthwash use among teenagers.

II. METHODS

This study employed a cross-sectional, descriptive design, with a population of teenagers aged 18–19 who served as respondents through the distribution of a Google Forms-based questionnaire. The research tool was a questionnaire designed to measure the role of social media as a medium for educating the public about herbal mouthwash, including knowledge, benefits, and use of herbal mouthwash, as well as perceptions of social media's effectiveness. The instrument's validity was tested using Corrected Item-Total Correlation analysis, and the results showed that all items were valid after revising those that did not fully meet the criteria. The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha yielded a value above 0.70, indicating that the instrument is reliable and can be used consistently. The study was conducted in February 2026, with data analyzed descriptively through data entry and univariate analysis, presented in tabular form.

III. RESULTS

This research was conducted on 35 subjects who met the inclusion criteria. The research procedure began with research preparation such as the preparation of a research permit letter and an ethical clearance letter (No: 118/KEPK/FKGUPDMB/XI/2025). Furthermore, the research was carried out by administering questionnaires to research subjects to be filled out and collecting questionnaires via Google Form. Data collection began with subjects reading and agreeing to the PSP (Consent After Explanation) sheet, as well as completing the research consent form (informed consent). The data obtained were presented in tables and pie charts. The research results are as follows:

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Table 1 Frequency distribution based on gender

Gender	Frequency	%
Female	16	45,7
Male	19	54,3
Total	35	100

Table 2 Frequency distribution based on age

Age (year)	Frequency	%
18	31	88,6
19	4	11,4
Total	35	100

Table 3 Frequency distribution based on level of educational status

Level of education	Frequency	%
Student	31	88,6
College student	4	11,4
Total	35	100

Table 4 Frequency distribution based on employment status

Social Media Platforms Used	Frequency	%
Instagram	16	45,7
TikTok	11	31,4
Facebook	1	2,9
WhatsApp	5	14,3
X	2	5,7
Total	35	100

Table 5 Frequency distribution based on how many hours do you spend on social media each day

Active on Social Media	Frequency	%
Less than 1 hour	2	5,7
1–3 hours	19	54,3
4–6 hours	11	31,4
More than 6 hours	3	8,6
Total	35	100

Table 6 Frequency distribution based on have you ever heard of herbal mouthwash

Have You Ever Heard of Herbal Mouthwash	Frequency	%
Yes	34	97,1
No	1	2,9
Total	35	100

Table 7 Frequency distribution based on receiving information about herbal mouthwash

Receive Information about Herbal Mouthwash	Frequency	%
Social media	28	82,4
Friends/family	5	14,7

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Personal experience	1	2,9
Total	34	100

Table 8 Frequency distribution of based on their believe that herbal mouthwash is safe to use

Herbal Mouthwash Is Safe to Use	Frequency	%
Strongly Believe	11	31,4
Believe	20	57,1
Not Sure	4	11,4
Do Not Believe	0	0
Total	35	100

Table 9 Frequency distribution based on the benefits of herbal mouthwash

Benefits of Herbal Mouthwash	Frequency	%
Reduces bad breath	7	20
Helps maintain dental and oral hygiene	21	60
Promotes healthy gums	1	2,9
Serves as an alternative to chemical-based mouthwash	6	17,1
Total	35	100

Table 10 Frequency distribution based on whether they have seen educational content about herbal mouthwash on social media

Have You Ever Seen Educational Content About Herbal Mouthwash	Frequency	%
Yes	28	80
No	7	20
Total	35	100

Table 11 Frequency distribution based on how often you follow health education content on social media

Follow Health Education Content on Social Media	Frequency	%
Very often	1	2,9
Often	9	25,7
Sometimes	25	71,4
Never	0	0
Total	35	100

Table 12 Frequency distribution based on the impact of educational content about herbal mouthwash on social media influences the decision to use such products

Educational Content About Herbal Mouthwash on Social Media Influences the Decision to Use Such Products	Frequency	%
Significant	31	91,2
Not significant	3	8,8
Total	34	100

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Table 13 Frequency distribution based on how effective social media is in educating people about the benefits of herbal mouthwash

How Effective Social Media Is in Educating People About the Benefits of Herbal Mouthwash	Frequency	%
Very effective	13	37,1
Effective	16	45,7
Fairly effective	6	17,1
Not effective	0	0
Total	35	100

Table 14 Frequency distribution based on their expectations of educational content about herbal mouthwash on social media

Expectations for Educational Content on Herbal Mouthwash on Social Media	Frekuensi	Persentase (%)
Comprehensive information about the ingredients and benefits of herbal mouthwash	15	42,9
Testimonials from users who have tried the product	6	17,1
Video tutorials on how to use herbal mouthwash	2	5,7
Explanations of potential side effects or risks	2	5,7
A comparison between herbal and chemical mouthwashes	4	11,4
The latest updates on trending herbal products	0	0
Discussions or live Q&A sessions with health experts	6	17,1
Total	35	100

IV. DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of social media as an educational tool in improving knowledge and use of herbal mouthwash among teenagers. This study also aims to identify the types of social media most frequently used by teenagers to obtain information about herbal mouthwash, as well as to assess teenagers' level of knowledge regarding the benefits and use of herbal mouthwash through social media.

Oral health is an aspect of overall health that is interrelated with the rest of the body, as the condition of the teeth and mouth can impact overall physical health.¹² The mouth can reflect the state of oral health because many signs of dental and oral diseases are generally caused by a lack of attention, particularly among teenagers. Teenagers are in a phase that marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood, known as puberty. During this stage of puberty, teenagers will experience various significant changes on their journey toward maturity, which require adjustments in their attitudes, mental state, and behavior.⁹

Understanding how to maintain oral health and prevent dental problems is crucial today. One way to deepen this understanding is through education using appropriate resources or media.⁹ Social media is one medium that can be used to promote health among teenagers.¹⁵

Social media is a platform that continues to innovate, offering a wide range of options and reaching millions of users. Social media apps such as Facebook and X have achieved high levels of popularity due to their ease in connecting with people in one's social circle—including friends and family—as well as providing a space for users to create and share information.¹⁵

Social media is a platform that offers people the opportunity to interact through mutually beneficial communication. Dentists' use of social media can serve as a means to promote oral health on a very broad scale.¹¹

There are many social media platforms accessible online that offer a variety of functions. With regular use of social media, there is great potential to utilize it as a tool for implementing behavioral change interventions and for supporting improvements in oral health. High usage

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frequency and the wide range of available features make social media highly effective for delivering health promotion programs.¹⁵

Many people want to access health information available on their smartphones. There are more than 500 million people worldwide who have used health apps on their phones. Social media activity is one of the most common activities among teenagers today. Searching for health information online makes users feel more comfortable sharing their problems because their identities remain anonymous and their privacy is protected. Various types of health information can be accessed through social media, including blogs, podcasts, Facebook pages, YouTube videos, and more.¹⁵

The findings of this study show that 16 (45.7%) of the respondents were female, while 19 (54.3%) were male. These results are consistent with a study conducted by Hasrinid et al. in 2022, in which 56% of the respondents were male.¹² In another study conducted by Saputri D et al. in 2022, 66% of the respondents were female.⁹ The largest age group consisted of 18 year olds, with 31 respondents (88.6%), while only 4 (11.4%) were 19 years old. A 2023 study by Nasution RPO et al. showed that the largest group of respondents was 21 years old.¹⁰ The most common educational status among respondents was high school student, with 31 (88.6%), while the remaining 4 (11.4%) were college students. The 2022 study by Hasrini et al. also focused on high school students.¹²

The most frequently used social media platform was Instagram, with 16 users (45.7%). The second most frequently used social media platform was TikTok, with 11 users (31.4%). This study appears to align with research conducted by Nasution RPO et al., which found that Instagram is the social media platform most widely used by college students.¹⁰ A study by Hasrini et al. also utilized Instagram to promote oral health among students.¹² The social media platform most frequently used by respondents in Mayasari Y's 2021 study was Instagram.¹¹ Meanwhile, Saputri D et al. utilized WhatsApp as a medium for educating adolescents about oral health.⁹ A study by Nopryan Ekadinata and Doni Widyandana on health promotion using images and text in the WhatsApp app among Posbindu cadres concluded that WhatsApp has the potential to be an effective educational tool as part of an educational program.¹⁸

It seems that Instagram is quite popular among teenagers today. Instagram has emerged as one of the platforms used to educate the public about oral health. This is because Instagram provides its users with opportunities to share and interact, as well as to express themselves and convey messages to the public through photos, videos, and captions, in addition to the comments section. Instagram is one of the most widely used social media platforms among millennials - individuals born from 1998 to the present. It seems as though Instagram has become an integral part of the daily lives of millennials. With its various engaging features,

Instagram makes millennials feel comfortable and at home, encouraging them to spend long periods of time on the platform.¹⁰

A total of 19 respondents (54.3%) actively used social media for 1 to 3 hours each day. The second most common duration of social media use was 4-6 hours, reported by 11 (31.4%) respondents. A total of 34 (97.1%) respondents had heard of herbal mouthwash. It appears that a significant number of respondents are familiar with herbal mouthwash, indicating a fairly high level of awareness among respondents regarding the use of this product for maintaining oral hygiene and dental health.

The majority of respondents 28 subjects (82.4%) - reported obtained information about herbal mouthwash through social media. This indicates that social media is the primary source of knowledge for respondents regarding herbal mouthwash, highlighting the important role of digital media in spreading health information among teenagers.

A total of 20 respondents (57.1%) believed that herbal mouthwash is safe to use. This survey revealed that some respondents have a fairly high level of confidence in the safety of herbal mouthwash, although there are still some who are hesitant or unsure, indicating the need for further education regarding the benefits and safety of these products.

Regarding the benefits of herbal mouthwash, 21 respondents (60%) selected the option that it helps maintain dental and oral hygiene. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents understand the role of herbal mouthwash in maintaining oral health, and thus its use is considered important as part of a daily dental and oral hygiene routine.

A total of 28 (80%) respondents had seen educational content about herbal mouthwash on social media. It can therefore be concluded that the majority of respondents have access to and are interested in educational information about herbal mouthwash via social media, which has the potential to increase teenagers' knowledge and awareness of the benefits and use of these products.

The survey revealed that 25 respondents (71.4%) occasionally engage with health education content on social media. Meanwhile, the second largest group of respondents 9 subjects (25.7%) - regularly engaged with such content. This indicates that the majority of respondents have a moderate to high level of interest in health education content on social media, which can positively influence their knowledge and awareness of the importance of maintaining good health.

A total of 31 respondents (91.2%) believed that educational content about herbal mouthwash on social media influenced their decision to use such products. This indicates that information shared via social media plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' perceptions and decisions regarding the use of herbal mouthwash; therefore, appropriate marketing and educational strategies can increase interest in and trust toward these products.

In response to the questionnaire question regarding how effective social media is in educating the community about the benefits of herbal mouthwash, 16 respondents (45.7%) answered that it is effective. This indicates that nearly half of the respondents believe social media is quite successful in conveying educational information about the benefits of herbal mouthwash, which could serve as an important indicator for improving communication and promotional strategies through social media platforms to reach a wider audience.

In response to a question about expectations for educational content on herbal mouthwash on social media, 15 respondents (42.9%) indicated that they wanted comprehensive information regarding the ingredients and benefits of herbal mouthwash. This suggests that the majority of respondents expect detailed and comprehensive educational content so they can clearly understand the ingredients and benefits of the product, thereby helping them make informed decisions before using herbal mouthwash.

Based on the results and findings of this study, it can be concluded that social media plays a crucial role as an effective educational tool in increasing knowledge and use of herbal mouthwash among teenagers. The use of platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which are popular among teenagers, demonstrates significant potential for conveying health messages in an engaging and interactive manner. Furthermore, the high level of access to and interest in educational content via social media among respondents underscores that digital media can serve as a strategic tool for disseminating accurate and reliable information. Therefore, the development of comprehensive and engaging educational content on social media must continue to be enhanced to support efforts to raise awareness and promote healthy behaviors among teenagers.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that social media serves an important role as a source of information and education regarding the use of herbal mouthwash among teenagers. Most teenagers access social media to search for health information and demonstrate a fairly good level of knowledge about the benefits and use of herbal mouthwash. Additionally, respondents exhibit a high level of knowledge and interest in these products, which is reinforced by their access to educational content on social media platforms and their confidence in the safety and efficacy of herbal mouthwashes. To further improve oral health awareness among teenagers, it is essential to develop engaging and informative communication strategies. These strategies should aim to increase knowledge, raise awareness, and promote positive behaviors - particularly by providing comprehensive information about the ingredients, benefits, and safe use of herbal mouthwashes.

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