Using Promotion Strategies to Increase the Use of Miswak among Teenagers in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Background: Miswak is a chewing stick that has been connected with Muslim communities across the world for over 1500 years as an oral hygiene help. There is evidence to support its clinical effectiveness in plaque management when used solely or in conjunction with a conventional toothbrush, however evidence on deleterious effects on periodontal health is equivocal. To study culturally acceptable strategies to promote oral health practices and prevent illness among adolescents in Saudi Arabia, advertisements were assessed for their ability to engage and open up new communication channels for oral health messages. This research aimed to acquire a better understanding of the effect of Miswak commercials on adolescents' oral health behavior.

Methods: A descriptive, correlational cross-sectional design was employed for this study. Since this study aimed to assess the effectiveness of two type of advertisements regarding the use of Miswak, which is a tooth-cleaning twig, made from the Salvadora persica among teenagers in Saudi Arabia. After viewing the advertisements explaining the use of Miswak, participants expressed thoughts about the messages in an open-ended question and answered close-ended questions at a single point of time, this is the most appropriate design. This enables the researcher to measure the effect and the outcome at a single point of time. This study design gives reliable results with short time and less effort. The study was conducted at Saudi Arabia all regions. The participants were selected during the period from March to June 2022.

Results: Questionnaire of advertisement one was filled by 116 participants of teenagers. The mean age among study participants was 16.66 ± 0.943 years with median age of 17 years. Age ranged from 12 to 17 years. The study included 66 male (56.9%) and 50 female (43.1%). Male participants had higher mean about their perception than female participants (P= 0.003). Furthermore, participants who were aware about Miswak had higher mean (P<0.001). Questionnaire of advertisement two was filled by 103 participants of teenagers. The mean age among study participants 16.66 ± 0.943 years with median age of 17 years. Age ranged from 12 to 17 years. The study included 51 male (49.5%) and 52 female (50.5%). Male participants had higher mean about their perception than female participants (P= 0.043). Nearly half of participants finds the two ads motivating, grabs their attention, and worth remembering.
Though around 80% of participants expended effort looking at the content of Miswak use messages and paid attention to the content of the message in both ads. Furthermore, participants who were aware about Miswak had higher mean (P<0.001).

**Conclusion:** Study results showed that most of participants didn’t use Miswak during their regular daily lives. Furthermore, the overall mean of assessment scale of both advertisements were low due to several reasons concerning the design and use of pictures in the ads. To be able to speak effectively about oral health messaging, one must first have a solid understanding of the advertising messages that are relevant to oral health. As a result, youths in Saudi Arabia have become used to using miswak. The individuals who took part in the research were of the opinion that social media is the venue that is most suited to conveying the message of Miswak. As a consequence of this, one of the prerequisites for the creation of effective advertising is the development of a higher knowledge of media platforms and the impact that these platforms have on the behavior of teenagers.

**Keywords:** Promotion, health, behaviour, Saudi Arabia