

Beauty Beyond Knowledge: Skincare Product Selection from Social Media Among Adolescents in Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract: Skincare has become a growing trend among adolescents, strongly influenced by social media platforms. However, limited knowledge regarding the safe selection of skincare products may increase the risk of harmful or illegal product use. This study aimed to analyze the relationship between knowledge and skincare product selection from social media among adolescents in an Islamic boarding school. This cross-sectional study was conducted from February to July 2024 at one of Islamic boarding school in Madura. A purposive sampling technique was applied, and 44 adolescents who used skincare products participated. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using the Fisher Exact Test. Results showed that the most respondents were female (65.9%), aged 16 years (36.4%), and in grade X (52.3%). Although most students had good knowledge (82.7%), the Fisher Exact Test showed no significant relationship between knowledge and skincare product selection ($p=0.461$). The main reasons for using skincare were to maintain skin health and protection from sun exposure (44%), with TikTok being the primary source of information (59%). In conclusion, knowledge alone does not significantly influence skincare selection among adolescents, as choices are shaped by multiple cultural, personal, and psychological factors. Strengthening health education and critical evaluation of social media content are essential to promote safe skincare practices among teenagers.

Keywords: Knowledge, skincare, social media, adolescents

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Introduction

In contemporary society, physical appearance plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' self-confidence, peer acceptance, and social identity. The increasing popularity of skincare products among adolescents reflects not only awareness of skin health but also growing concern about appearance management. Skincare products include cosmetic and

cosmeceutical formulations designed to protect, maintain, and improve skin condition, ranging from over-the-counter products to prescription-based treatments (Nahai & Miotto, 2022; Truswell, 2020). Among adolescents, skincare use is frequently motivated by both preventive health considerations and aesthetic expectations influenced by prevailing beauty standards (Putri, 2022).

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The rapid expansion of social media has fundamentally transformed how adolescents access information and make consumption decisions. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram provide visually engaging content, including product reviews, tutorials, and influencer endorsements. Influencers are often perceived as relatable and trustworthy sources of information, significantly affecting adolescents' attitudes and purchase intentions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Influencer marketing strategies specifically target young audiences through personalized and algorithm-driven exposure, reinforcing repeated engagement with cosmetic-related content (de Veirman et al., 2019). Moreover, social media exposure may influence adolescents' health-related behaviors through intensified peer interaction and digital engagement patterns (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2016).

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to appearance-based comparisons. Social comparison processes are amplified by curated and edited images on social media, potentially contributing to body dissatisfaction and heightened concern about skin appearance (Fardouly et al., 2017). Systematic reviews have demonstrated that frequent social media use is associated with body image disturbances, anxiety, and psychological distress among adolescents (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016; Keles et al., 2020). As a result, skincare consumption may function not only as a health-maintenance behavior but also as a response to perceived social and aesthetic pressures.

Despite the widespread availability of online information, misconceptions regarding skincare safety remain prevalent. The use of unregulated or illegal cosmetic products may expose adolescents to hazardous substances, including mercury and other toxic agents (Mohammed et al., 2017). Adverse dermatological effects related to inappropriate cosmetic use have been documented, such as contact dermatitis, allergic reactions, and long-term skin damage (Alghamdi et al., 2020; Bazaruddin et al., 2019). Therefore, informed and critical product selection is essential to prevent potential health risks among young consumers.

Knowledge is traditionally considered a fundamental determinant of health-related behavior.

However, previous studies indicate that cosmetic selection is influenced not only by knowledge but also by attitudes, peer influence, and environmental exposure (Adhellia et al., 2023; Qemha, 2016). In Islamic boarding school settings, where adolescents live in structured communal environments, peer norms and shared experiences may further shape consumption practices. Given the strong influence of social media and the multifactorial determinants of adolescent behavior, it is important to examine whether knowledge alone significantly correlates with skincare product selection.

Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the relationship between adolescents' knowledge and skincare product selection influenced by social media in an Islamic boarding school context. Understanding this relationship may contribute to the development of more comprehensive health education strategies that address both cognitive awareness and the broader social influences affecting adolescent skincare practices.

Materials and Methods

This type of research uses a quantitative method, with a cross-sectional study research model. The research was conducted at one of Islamic boarding school, Sampang, Madura in February-July 2024. Sampling is done purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were adolescents who use skin care products and are willing to fill out the questionnaire, while the exclusion was due to the questionnaire not being filled out completely. The total sample in this study was 44 adolescents. The type of data collected was primary data obtained directly from respondents through a questionnaire. Data processing and analysis using test analysis paired with *Fisher Exact Test* SPSS program. This study was approved by KEPK UNUSA, No. 0291/EC/KEPK/UNUSA/2024

Result and Discussion

There were 44 samples met the inclusion criteria. The characteristics of the samples are provided in Table 1. It can be seen that the distribution of samples in terms of age is evenly distributed between the ages of 15-19 years with the age group 16 years dominating (36.4%). Furthermore, the number of female samples (65.9%) is higher than the male (34.1%). The dominating grade is X grade (52.3%).

Table 1. Sample Characteristic

Sample Characteristic	Frequency (n=44)	Percentage (%)
Age	15	3,4
	16	36,4

		17	12	27,3
		18	10	22,7
		19	3	6,8
Gender	Male	15		34,1
	Female	29		65,9
Grade	X	23		52,3
	XI	20		45,5
	XII	1		2,3

From the SPSS statistical test results Table 2. The mean of knowledge is 82.72. The results of the Fisher Exact Test analysis show that the p-value is 0.461 ($p > 0.05$), which means that there is no significant relationship

between knowledge and the selection of skin care from social media among the students at PP. Darussalam Al-Faisholiah Madura.

Table 2. Analysis of the relationship between knowledge level and skincare selection from social media

Level of Knowledge	Correct selection	Percentage (%)	Incorrect selection	Percentage (%)
Good	28	63,6	6	13,6
Enough	6	13,6	2	4,6
Poor	1	2,3	1	2,3

Fisher Exact Test, p value = 0.461

From Figure 1. The main reason students use skincare is to maintain skin health and protect themselves from sun exposure, accounting for 44%. (24 students).

From Figure 2. Santri received information/advertisements about skin care primarily from social media, specifically TikTok, accounting for 59%. (27 santri).

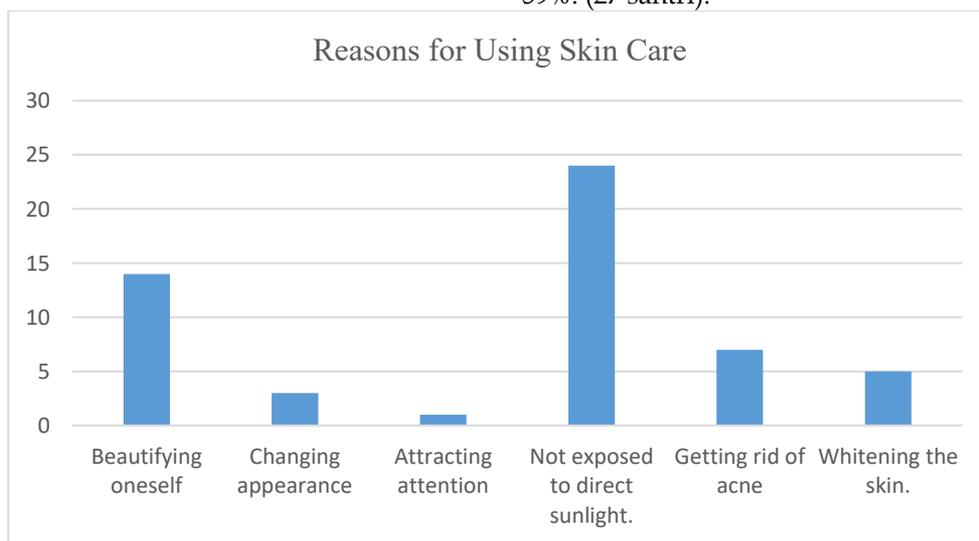


Figure 1. Reasons for Using Skin Care

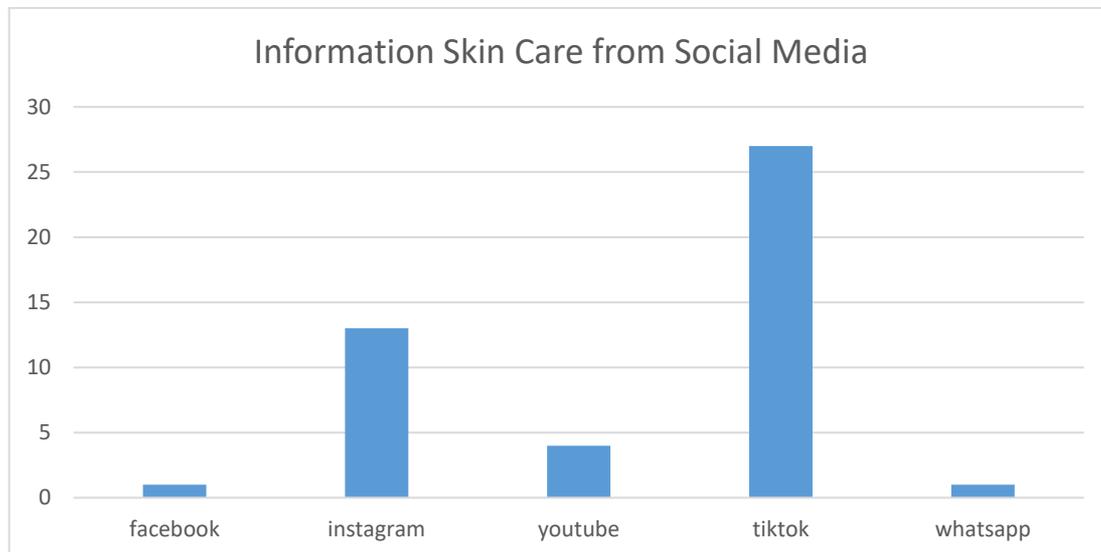


Figure 2. Information Skin Care from Social Media

Discussion

This study found that although most adolescents demonstrated good knowledge regarding skincare products, there was no statistically significant relationship between knowledge level and skincare product selection influenced by social media ($p = 0.461$). These findings suggest that knowledge alone may not be sufficient to determine adolescents' consumption behavior in a digitally mediated environment.

The absence of a significant association may reflect the complex nature of adolescent decision-making. Influencer credibility and message value have been shown to strongly affect consumer trust and purchase intention, often overriding analytical evaluation processes (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). In visually driven platforms such as TikTok, product recommendations are frequently presented through short-form, persuasive content that emphasizes rapid results and aesthetic transformation. Such exposure may encourage heuristic processing rather than critical assessment of product safety and suitability (de Veirman et al., 2019).

Additionally, adolescents are highly susceptible to social comparison mechanisms. Exposure to idealized skin representations may increase appearance-related concerns, prompting skincare use as a strategy to align with perceived beauty standards (Fardouly et al., 2017). Previous research has consistently demonstrated associations between social media use, body dissatisfaction, and psychological distress among adolescents (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016; Keles et al., 2020). Therefore, skincare behavior may be driven more

by emotional and social motivations than by knowledge-based reasoning.

From a health perspective, inappropriate skincare selection carries potential risks. The continued availability of unregulated cosmetic products containing harmful substances remains a public health concern (Mohammed et al., 2017). Dermatological complications linked to improper cosmetic use have been documented, including allergic reactions and long-term skin damage (Alghamdi et al., 2020). Although most respondents in this study demonstrated good knowledge, the findings imply that awareness alone does not necessarily translate into protective behavior.

The Islamic boarding school environment may also contribute to peer conformity effects. Shared living spaces and strong peer networks may reinforce collective beauty norms and product preferences. Previous studies indicate that adolescents' cosmetic behaviors are influenced by social and attitudinal factors beyond knowledge (Adhellia et al., 2023; Qemha, 2016). This contextual factor may partially explain why knowledge did not significantly predict product selection.

Overall, these findings highlight the importance of adopting a multidimensional approach to adolescent health promotion. Educational interventions should not focus solely on increasing knowledge but should also enhance media literacy, critical evaluation skills, and awareness of persuasive marketing strategies. Strengthening adolescents' ability to critically assess social media content may be more effective in promoting

safe skincare practices than knowledge-based education alone.

Conclusion

There is no significant relationship between knowledge and skincare product selection among adolescents. Despite having good knowledge levels, students often fail to apply this knowledge in practice. Multiple factors—including cultural, social, and psychological influences—shape skincare decisions. Health promotion strategies should therefore combine education with efforts to strengthen adolescents' ability to critically assess information and resist unsafe social media-driven trends.

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