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Domains of Miswak practice among Malaysian Dental Educators: insights from a focus group discussion

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Abstract This study aimed to explore dental educators' perceptions of the domains influencing the practice of miswak among dental educators. Dental educators from the International Islamic University Malaysia, representing diverse socio-religious backgrounds, participated in focus group discussions (FGDs) guided by a pre-tested topic framework. The discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the framework analysis approach. A total of 11 dental educators participated in four FGD sessions conducted. The analysis identified four interrelated domains influencing miswak practice: self-care, conventional teaching, research evidence, and political or policy context. Participants described miswak primarily as a culturally and religiously embedded oral hygiene practice, while also highlighting uncertainties regarding its integration into the dental education due to limited curriculum guidance and perceived gaps in evidence dissemination. Some participants argued that their Western-oriented dental training also influenced how miswak is perceived within the education system. Overall, the findings suggest that educators' education and training background, together with their levels of knowledge and awareness, shape perceptions of miswak and influence its acceptance within dental education and practice. Further research may help inform educational guidance to support the appropriate integration of Miswak as a complementary oral hygiene practice.

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Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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