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Akhriyadi Sofian

Sociology Program, Faculty of Social and Political Studies Universitas Islam Walisongo,
akhriyadi.sofian@walisongo.ac.id

Nia Auliani

Sociology Program, Faculty of Social and Political Studies Universitas Islam Walisongo

Naili Ni'matul Illiyun

Sociology Program, Faculty of Social and Political Studies

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Educating Adolescent Reproductive Health and Sexuality through the Instagram Account @tabu.id

Akhriyadi Sofian

Sociology Program, Faculty of Social and Political Studies
Universitas Islam Walisongo
akhriyadi.sofian@walisongo.ac.id

Nia Auliani

Sociology Program, Faculty of Social and Political Studies
Universitas Islam Walisongo

Naili Ni'matul Illiyun

Sociology Program, Faculty of Social and Political Studies
Universitas Islam Walisongo

Abstract

The @tabu.id Instagram account presents itself as a channel for young internet users to obtain various information that are of significance to their lives as adolescents, including on topics of reproductive health and sexuality. Conducted using qualitative methods, this research utilized a virtual ethnographic (netnographic) approach. Data pertaining to @tabu.id's treatment of adolescent reproductive health and sexuality was obtained through a participatory observation of their Instagram account, as well as interviews with the co-founders, administrators, and followers. This study found that educating issues of reproductive health and sexuality to adolescents was more effectively carried out visually through social media, as it is the space they spend most of their time in. Recognizing Instagram being among the five digital applications most accessed by Indonesians, @tabu.id has succeeded in educating adolescents by optimizing Instagram's feed and story features to convey three major issues: puberty, dating violence, and Sexually-Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

Keywords: Reproductive Health, Sexuality, Adolescents, Instagram, Social Media, Symbolic Interaction, Network Society

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is defined as a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. Various physical changes occur during this phase as an adolescent transitions into physiological maturity, including to their reproductive organs that carry reproductive functions. Such changes are

identified by the emergence of primary sex signs, namely the first menstruation in teenage girls and the occurrence of wet dreams in teenage boys. Secondary sex changes also take place. In males, this is indicated through the growth of the Adam's apple, penile length, facial hair, as well as hair around the armpits and genitals, while secondary change in females are characterized by widening hips, enlarged breasts, growth of the uterus and vagina, and hair growing around the armpits and genitals (Marmi 2013).

Puberty occurs when children transition into adolescents, which drives sexual attraction to others (Pavanel 2003). Such facts evince the importance of recognizing sexuality as a common development within every individual—a process that entails learning from themselves and their environment. However, the immediate people around an adolescent, such as their parents, might tend to consider sexual matters as private and taboo. This stands in sharp contrast with the wide availability of public information on sex and sexuality, which adolescents can access using modern communication technology.

In 2021, Hootsuite's We Are Social report revealed that as many as 202.6 million (73.7%) Indonesians are active internet users, with an average access time of 8 hours and 52 minutes per day. Meanwhile, the five most-accessed applications include YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (Riyanto 2021). Likewise, the Southeast Asian Freedom of Expression Network (SAFENet) reported that 96.4% of Indonesian citizens access the internet using mobile devices, and the total number of mobile devices in the country—around 345.3 million—exceeds 25.6% of its total population (Sanjaya et al. 2022).

The 2019 We Are Social report shows that young Indonesians are very active social media users. Their data, which was collected from social media profiles on Facebook ads, Instagram, and Facebook messenger, revealed that the most prominent age group in Indonesia on social media was those of 25-34 years old, followed by the 18-24 years old age group. Overall, Indonesia's millennial generation (defined as those aged 19-38) has already been recorded as the top-five social media users globally on several occasions (Lestari 2019).

These statistical data confirms that both the internet and digital devices are an important feature of life for many Indonesians. As such, information featured on social media assumes a crucial social role in representing identities, providing content, and allowing people to interact virtually with one another. Within the information society, informa-

tion is mutually-produced, exchanged, and consumed as a commodity. What is referred to as a “Cyberculture” is the reflection of the function of social media as a cultural production machine as well as its components (users, technology, devices, the contents being produced), and, at the same time, a commodification of this reflexively-generated culture itself (Nasrullah 2015).

Within the Cyberculture cycle of production and consumption, information on reproductive health and sexuality in social media helps adolescents to satiate their curiosity about their sexual nature and how sexuality permeates the social world they live in. One platform that provides this information is the Instagram account @tabu.id. Using an array of visualization techniques from images, animations, infographics, memes, and videos, the account presents itself as a welcoming, attractive source of information for young people to understand their own reproductive health and sexuality (Rinta, 2015).

There is an abundance of studies on Reproductive Health Education (RHE) for adolescents (Benita, Dewantiningrum, and Maharani 2012; Bulahari, Korah, and Lontaan 2015; Masfiah, Shaluhiyah, and Suryoputro 2013; Supit, Lumy, and Kulas 2019). For example, these studies reveal the importance of conducting RHE amongst teenage students, demonstrating that health instructors were able to convey their materials more effectively in schools with the help of teachers. Nonetheless, the role of social media as a provider of Reproductive Health Education has remained to be overlooked. By maximizing the features found on platforms such as Instagram, social media enables sophisticatedly-crafted, captivating visual presentations on RHE without reducing the depth of information. The extent of such advantages, both in its visual aspects and effectiveness for dissemination, becomes the point of novelty offered in this study. Furthermore, this study explores how certain features on Instagram, being the digital platform of our research, provides appeal on RHE to the teenage audience.

In studying RHE among adolescents, several researchers focused on the deliberate efforts to help them steer away from risky or unsafe sexual practices (Emilda 2021; Hasanah 2017; Yarza, Maesaroh, and Kartikawati 2019; Zakiyah, Prabandari, and Triratnawati 2016). Similarly, these studies highlighted the impact of RHE for adolescents who had little prior knowledge on the subject matter. On the other hand, studies that show Instagram as the preferred digital platform for adolescents to communicate and exchange information have also been conducted by

various researchers (Idaman and Kencana 2021; Prihatiningsih 2017; Putri and Mormes 2016; Sakti and Yulianto 2018; Sari 2018; Sitanggang 2020; Sofian, Ayuningtyas, and Safitri 2022). They all emphasize how Instagram becomes a means for young people to gain “self-existence” and enable them to show different identities virtually.

By focusing on the Instagram platform, this study situates adolescent reproductive health and sexuality education as contemporary issues faced by teenagers, and is reflected back as part of their lived experience. The topics presented by @tabu.id include dating, sexuality, reproductive health, reproductive organs, gender, contraceptive devices, and toxic relationships. While these issues might be considered taboo for some people, they are presented in a visually-attractive manner without ever being pornographic or exploiting sexuality. As such, the Instagram account can be safely accessed by adolescents through their gadgets.

To summarize: this research investigates how information on adolescent reproductive health and sexuality is presented on the @tabu.id Instagram account. We do this by exploring the forms of Instagram content in @tabu.id (such as Instagram feed, Stories, and Reels), as well outlining their content production process, including posting schedules, habits, and patterns. And while reproductive health and sexuality encompasses a broad range of issues, our focus shall fall on three particular discussions: puberty, dating violence, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Yasraf Amir Piliang (2012), social media presenting virtual spaces casts an important influence on social life along three distinct levels: the individual, inter-individual, and communal. While the individual level pertains to our understanding of identity, the intra-individual level defines our social relations in the virtual realm. Finally, the communal level implies a model of an open and democratic virtual society. The content we found on @tabu.id correlates to each of these three levels. *First*, information on sexuality and reproductive health are presented as something related to the identity of their teenage audience. *Second*, this information is conveyed in an interactive manner by utilizing features found on Instagram. *Third*, the openness of information normally considered as taboo or private demonstrates the democratic nature of @tabu.id.

Our findings are analyzed using the Symbolic Interactionism theory of George Herbert Mead. According to Mead (1934), symbols are integral to every social relationship. In a symbolic interaction, individuals exchange symbols that are mutually understood by all actors—and this process forms the basis for how each person behaves towards others. On social media, this symbolic interaction occurs through the mediation of digital devices, which allows users to interact with one another without requiring physical proximity (Arif, 2012). As such, the symbolic exchange that occurs in the recurring communication within a *network* of individuals will very likely be more complex, entail extended meanings, and is undoubtedly different from real-life interaction.

For Manuel Castells, the network is actually a long-established form of social organization. Historically, establishing networks had been helpful for fostering personal interaction, building solidarity, and enabling social actors to support one another. In the digital era, networks are increasingly intertwined with one another and more flexible. This “Network Society”, according to Castells, allows an adaptive structure and enables the network to present everything built within it (2000).

There are three dimensions that define the Network Society. First, a new *technological paradigm* which stems from massive dissemination of information. The second is *globalization*, which is marked by the increasing sophistication of technology and organization, and is considered to be the core component of systems. Finally, the enclosure of a dominant culture through the prominence of electronic *hypertexts*—a common frame of reference for digital interaction, through which every symbol of messages and information is processed (Fansuri 2012).

When interacting in social media, users are conducting symbolic exchange on a massive scale, which is why they increasingly rely on hypertexts. As Setiyawati, Sofian, and Parmudi (2019) pointed out, virtual symbolic exchange does not only occur in the form of written texts, but also images, sound, and video. These symbols, conveyed in various forms, are certainly imbued with specific meanings for each actor in the digital network, which might not necessarily be the same for every participant. Nonetheless, symbolic interactionism posits individuals as active and dynamic actors because they influence the values of the social world around them by interacting within it.

The transformation of social relations and values through continuous symbolic exchange is exactly what the theory of symbolic interactionism aims to capture (Ritzer 2014). From this perspective, @tabu.id functions

as a virtual arena for interaction among internet users to exchange symbols within a communication network. As such, participants of this virtual space are likely to interpret the symbols they encounter differently. While @tabu.id administrators assume the primary role of providing and disseminating information, its followers remain active in responding to the (audio)visual content in the platform, and the culmination of symbolic interaction within the Instagram account provides a new frame of reference for understanding sexuality and reproductive health.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative inquiry of social relations within a digital network. To conduct ethnography in the virtual realm, this study implements a “Virtual Community” approach that focuses on social networks, utilizing scientific traditions from the sub-discipline of cyber-sociology and anthropology in studying interactions and collective activities (Nasrullah 2014). Demartoto (2013) highlights that the recent emergence of digital reality has transformed the scientific subject of sociology to expand from “real” societies to also include virtual communities. To understand this new social reality, sociology must adapt its scientific concepts and methodology to effectively study the reality that occurs in cyberspace (Muttaqin 2019). Such adaptation process also applies to the sociological study of reproductive health and sexuality, in which @tabu.id showcases that these issues also exist in social media discourse.

Latzko-Toth, Bonneau, and Millette (2017) explains that data collection in qualitative social media research can be achieved in at least three ways: traced interviews, manual data collection, and agile long-term online observation. The primary data of this research was collected by observing the pictures, videos, and texts posted on the @tabu.id Instagram account, while we also conducted interviews with the administrator and founder of @tabu.id. Finally, further documentation data was obtained from various relevant references.

The data in this study were analyzed in three stages (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014): data condensation, data display, as well as conclusion drawing and verification. The first stage involves collecting, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming our collected data—including field notes, interview transcripts, documents, or other empirical materials. In the second stage, these information was organized and

condensed to be presented in the form of text descriptions. Finally, the last stage involves interpretation of these condensed descriptions by highlighting various patterns, explanations, and propositions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An Overview of @tabu.id

The @tabu.id Instagram account was created on February 26, 2018. It originated as an idea for a health innovation competition attended by its four co-founders: Neira Ardaneshwari, Alvin Theodorus, Adelina Kumala Sari, and Patricia Agatha. After identifying an information gap in which adolescents lack reliable sources for understanding reproductive health and sexuality, they created @tabu.id as a platform for Indonesian youth to explore these issues that—as the name suggests—remain largely taboo to be discussed in real-life interactions.

The main goal of @tabu.id is to be a communicator of these sensitive issues for adolescents. By educating young people, they aspire to raise the taboo on discussions pertaining to reproductive health and sexuality. One of the co-founders, Alvin Theodorus, explains that they finally settled on achieving this goal by creating an Instagram account. Above all, the Instagram platform provides an easy way for its users to create and disseminate information with an emphasis on the visual form (Satyadewi, Hafiar, and Nugraha 2017).

Operation-wise, the team working on @tabu.id uploads once or twice per day. Their content format varies from one post to the next—ranging from infographics, images, to short videos. Some of these posts are related to the topic of adolescent reproductive health and puberty. In total, we found 90 posts highlighting the issue of puberty, 47 on dating violence, and 116 on Sexually-Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

The administrators of @tabu.id manage their Instagram account collectively. In curating information and presenting them, the administrators consider their target audience, the *form* of the content, as well as the overall pattern of their recent posts.. These considerations illuminate our earlier discussion on Herbert Mead's theory, namely how the exchange of symbols helps to shape our collective understanding of social reality. Each individual interprets the exchanged symbols differently, which later determines their behaviors toward others (Mead, 1934). Likewise, the symbols presented by @tabu.id to its teenage audience carries the risk of being interpreted in multiple, even completely different ways. To

mitigate this, the administrators decided on delivering the symbols in visual-form so that they will be more digestible for their young users.

The Target Audience of @tabu.id

The decision of @tabu.id to utilize Instagram as a platform to disseminate information on reproductive health and sexuality seems to be effective in connecting them with their target audience, namely adolescents. In other words, @tabu.id implemented the strategy of deliberate media selection—surveying the platforms that would best enable them, as communicators, to align with the preferred medium of their target audience.

Accordingly, the largest age group who accessed @tabu.id was between 18–24 years old (53%). In the categorization of certain age groups as “generations”, the viewers of @tabu.id fall under the category of millennials—those born between the year 1980 and 2000. In the Indonesian context, the millennial generation distinguishes itself by the increased use of digital media and technology, as well as sharing certain characteristics, such as being creative, informative, passionate, and productive (Said and Gunawan, 2018).

As a major age-group of social media users in Indonesia, adolescents rely heavily on the internet and derive plenty of enjoyment from it. Their psychological digital profile paints the picture of a “variety seeker”: easily bored and very eager to try new things, which partially stems from an anxiety about their own identity. While these traits mean they find it harder to stay focused on a subject matter, adolescents are also likely to possess strong bonds with their social groups (Sosiawan and Wibowo, 2019).

Above all, social media is a space for adolescents to speak their own language. As such, the use of captivating, simple expositions and avoiding complex terminologies will help to lessen the weight of processing information. Furthermore, @tabu.id also communicates information about reproductive health and sexuality using various tones and languages. To cater to the personal-psychological development of teenage Instagram users @tabu.id would employ dictions used by young people in their everyday personal communication and a non-formal tone. These communication strategies have helped @tabu.id to pique the interest of young people on Instagram, encouraging them to explore issues of

reproductive health and sexuality that had previously been taboo, embarrassing, or delivered purely in formal education settings.

Audience metadata also shows that most viewers of the @tabu.id Instagram account came from Jakarta (24%). In their March 2019 national socio-economic survey, the Indonesian Central Statistics Body (BPS) mentioned that the number of adolescent internet users in urban areas (89,62%) was much higher than their rural counterparts (69,66%). Aside from their demographic similarities, urban residents born between 1980 and 2000 are also said to possess several main characteristics, namely: having considerable self-confidence, not reluctant to express their opinions, a propensity for thinking out-of-the-box, as well as a high level of sociability to be active in social media. Such attitudes are deemed to be heavily conditioned by the availability of telecommunication devices and internet access. Consequently, these digital resources have also led adolescents to rely on information obtained from the internet—particularly social media—in their decision-making (Said and Gunawan, 2018).

As they are forging their own path to be integrated into society, adolescents (understandably) do not enjoy feeling inferior to adults. While young people are likely to regard themselves as equals to older people, they are still developing their mental capacities and behavioral inclinations, which generally makes them more emotionally unstable than individuals of an adult age. As their underlying sense of uncertainty regarding their position in the social world propels them to always be curious, the internet and social media also drive adolescents to keep following trends in order to avoid “getting left behind”. These combinations of psychological and social factors are what makes social media very important for adolescents (Mahendra, 2017).

Typology of Instagram Content on @tabu.id

In his discussion on the digital era, Nicholas Mirzoeff (1999) claimed that we are becoming “more visual and visualized” than ever before. As telecommunication technologies and online platforms allow visual content to be produced and reproduced on a mass scale, we have come to be very dependent on the visual aspects of an information. The use of visual media is also widely regarded as a far more engaging means of communication: messages will be more easily understood when received

in a visual form, enabling visual media to be able to transcend socio-cultural boundaries (Hardiyarso 2020).

The content on @tabu.id Instagram account—from infographics to memes—generally encompasses both textual (as in words) and visual aspects. Roland Barthes (in Elizabeth, 2017) designates two elements of the visual, namely *Studium* and *Punctum*. The former pertains to the cultural, linguistic, and political interpretation of an artwork—it is the logical connection between the visual work and the world it inhabits, the reason why something has to be presented in visual form in the first place. Meanwhile, the latter refers to the specific details in a visual work that “hooks” its audience; an *emotional response* that is elicited from the particular objects in the field of perception. On @tabu.id, both *Studium* and *Punctum* are found in their use of two Instagram features, namely Instagram feed and Instagram stories.

1. Instagram Feed

As mentioned before, co-founders of @tabu.id regard Instagram as the most suitable platform for presenting information to adolescents due to its platform design that focuses on presenting visual aspects. The account administrators would utilize these features, such as sharing content “teasers” to attract the initial curiosity of their audience. Each content was presented in visual graphic form using a selection of colors, concepts, and images to build a consistent visual identity on the @tabu.id profile page. This visual identity is considered quintessential so that both followers and other Instagram users can easily recognize their account.

In general, the content production activity on @tabu.id follows this action plan:

1. Long-term planning: determining which issues to cover in the Instagram account for the next 3 to 6 months.
2. Planning weekly content: selecting around two topics to be discussed per week, from each three to four contents will be produced.
3. Planning daily content by discussing aspects (such as angle and tone), as well as scientific sources.
4. Assigning content writers to specific Instagram posts, in which they are required to review scientific sources and draft visual captions to be worked on by the design team.

5. Finally, content writers write accompanying captions for each post on the Instagram feed.

Content activity data of the @tabu.id Instagram account from 26 February to 5 March 2019 shows a consistent pattern. For example, daily posts on Instagram feed are uploaded following a similar structure: the first uploaded post introduces a certain theme or issue, while the second upload complements this by providing further discussion. Each content was accompanied by specific visual markers such as logos, illustrations, texts, and colors.

Image selection is an important part of content planning in @tabu.id. The images they choose to help illustrate a particular issue—from the stigmatization of HIV-positive people to dating violence—need to adhere to the visual identity of their profile page. Furthermore, the images also need to aid Instagram users in remembering and recognizing their content. In other words, the visual guidelines of @tabu.id seek to build a consistent *symbolic* representation. While symbols are conveyed because they carry certain meanings and values, the efficacy of the symbolic interaction pertains to the successful actualization of symbolic meanings; for actors to arrive at a common symbolic frame of reference (Sobur 2003).

2. Instagram Stories

In general, the notion of “content” on @tabu.id, both on the Instagram feed and stories, comprises two aspects: the appearance of uploaded photos or videos that went through an editing process, as well as a message that is intended to be conveyed to followers. Like the content on their Instagram feed, @tabu.id’s Instagram stories are also crafted by their content writers. For optimizing the Instagram stories feature, content writers in @tabu.id would operate more flexibly by bringing up recent news or information and presenting them using elements of popular culture.

To optimize the Instagram stories feature, @tabu.id would craft each story post, quite literally, in the form of a story. Each Instagram story content consists of several posts, knitted together to form a narrative. By clicking on each story post, users would gradually understand better the issue of reproductive health and sexuality being presented, allowing them to put themselves in another person’s shoes. This mode of partici-

pation emphasizes *communicability*, in which individuals are able to connect the idea of how they signify themselves to the perception of others.

Another way to define “communicability” is by referring to a facet of Mead’s symbolic interaction, namely one’s ability to adjust their behavior in response to specific social situations. This process is also known as “Role-Taking”. When an individual performs a particular action or behaves in a certain way, they understand themselves to the meaning or response given by others (Sobur, 2003). In Mead’s theoretical edifice, the self-formation of one’s identity is inseparable from the ability to take on the roles of others. In this sense, the self is nothing but the composite effects of the response to, and understanding of, one’s own actions. These actions are also guided by one’s meaning-system, which is manifested by how one appropriately communicates and interacts in social situations (Mead, 1934).

These codes are reflected in how @tabu.id utilizes the feature of Instagram stories: they invite their users to participate in a social interaction by *relating* to the narrative of reproductive health and sexuality being presented. This mode of interactive learning, which emphasizes people to take certain social roles in response to a social phenomena, enables their Instagram followers to understand what it means to be adolescents or young people.

These identity-building (or identity-confirming) responses are, in turn, showcased to other users through comment features on Instagram, or by reposting the Direct Messages (DMs) or Instagram stories made by their followers as a response to @tabu.id’s content. By providing the information space to these responses, administrators of @tabu.id have stimulated their followers to engage in a public discourse on reproductive health and sexuality. The various modalities of communication provided by Instagram—such as texts, photos, videos, emoticons, stickers, GIFs, and other creative tools—have also enabled the account’s young audience to communicate faster, more expressively, and more attractive to other users.

By initiating and fostering these participatory discourses on their Instagram account, @tabu.id is able to challenge the stigmas, assumptions, and entrenched biases on reproductive health and sexuality. Each followers of @tabu.id are allowed to access their platform, sort information, and interact with fellow followers. In communicating, these young people exchange symbols, hence presenting their own nuance to the meanings being circulated. In Mead’s terminology, this discursive space

engenders a new self-concept in @tabu.id's followers that arise from their interaction with others. On their Instagram account, young people are able to confront their own issues by communicating with one another with an open mind, freed from the pressures of societal taboo. They are able to learn to accept attitudes, values, and feelings experienced by other people from a particular social environment. Mutual acts of appraising one another lead them to perceive themselves in a specific direction, reconfiguring how they relate to their own sexuality and personal reproductive health (Sobur 2003). Accordingly, this reciprocal symbolic interaction might also lead to the transformation of societal norms and understandings.

Pattern of Instagram Content on @tabu.id

Content production in @tabu.id's Instagram account is guided by the ethos that youth must be able to obtain information they need on reproductive health and sexuality. They do this by representing the self as a learning space, in which every user is expected to be able to understand better about themselves. These principles echo the point made by Piliang (2012) that technological mediation results in various self-images within an individual. While social media allows users to represent themselves as well as interact, share, collaborate with one another, therefore forming social bonds in the virtual realm (Nasrullah 2015, 2018), the *truth value* of information one obtains from the media also has actual effects on one's behavior. As such, the interplay between open communicative practices and information being conveyed within @tabu.id will affect the overall understanding of one's reproductive health and sexuality.

Due to their transitional status between children and adults, adolescents seek their own self-concept in their process of integrating into society. In Instagram, the formation of these self-concepts are influenced by "moods of production" within the digital platform such as imaging behavior, speech styles, fashion styles, and particular actions. Furthermore, as a visual-oriented platform, Instagram also incorporates the use of certain visual symbols as a means of producing the meanings of certain identities. Therefore, the content discussing reproductive health and sexuality on @tabu.id also reflects larger cultural codes, values, and beliefs (Kertamukti, Nugroho, and Wahyono, 2019).

The interactions between Instagram users, as well as between users and administrators on @tabu.id forms a social interaction network with

a steady stream of exchange of symbols and meanings. This description is not unlike what is known as the “Virtual Society”, in which digital technology facilitates social relations and allows individuals to indulge in their need fulfillment (Laimheheriwa, 2018). In the virtual society, interaction between community members shapes the self-identity of the community, in which the content provided by @tabu.id functions as a catalyst and fulcrum for these interactions, providing a common frame of reference and sense of shared interest.

The content archive of @tabu.id also shows that their posts invoked a consistent feeling, namely a modern nuance exemplified by the contemporary youth style of their Instagram posts and stories. Issues on adolescent reproductive health and sexuality were presented using a language familiar for teenagers, while the discussions were enhanced by often referring to recently-popular internet topics.

It is important to note that language use on the internet is also often different from everyday life, incorporating traditional languages, slangs, as well as other forms of non-standard word use and grammar (Demartoto 2013). The availability of visual forms of expressive modalities on Instagram such as stickers, memes, and emoticons on Instagram also allow users to convey their ideas and emotions with various symbols, hence opening up new understanding and nuances.

For @tabu.id administrators, the dissemination of information pertaining to reproductive health and sexuality relies on several established patterns, such as posting strategies, caption writing, and image selection. A portrait of their content landscape, captured from January 2019 to May 2020, can be seen as follows:

Table 1. Content Landscape of @tabu.id: February 2019 - May 2020

Issue	Amount	Discussion Topic	Date
Teenage Puberty	4 Contents	Development Stages of Sexuality	April 12, 2019
	4 Contents	Management of Menstrual Hygiene	March 16, 2019
	4 Contents	Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Children	November 21, 2019
	4 Contents	Menstrual Cycle	December 5, 2019
	3 Contents	Wet Dreams	December 23, 2019
Abuse and Violence in Relationships	4 Contents	Economic Intimate Partner Violence	February 7, 2019
	4 Contents	Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships	March 19, 2020
	4 Contents	Support towards Sexual Violence Survivors	April 16, 2020

STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)	2 Contents	STD on Adolescents of Indonesia	January 2, 2019
	3 Contents	Stigma and Discrimination against HIV-Positive People	March 1, 2019
	3 Contents	Myths about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (HIV)	November 1, 2019
	3 Contents	The stigma against HIV-Positive People	November 15, 2019
	1 Content	Celebration of World AIDS Day	December 2, 2019

Source: Data collection and analysis

However, the posts on @tabu.id do not *always* follow a content plan as shown in the table above. At times, administrators would bring up random topics and discussions, such as posting a screenshot of a Direct Message talk with their followers. These contents that are based on (anonymized) interaction with followers function as an example that could lead to further engagement with other users, such as talking about tips and tricks or myths and facts on sexuality and reproductive health. As such, this content strategy also aligns with Mead's concept on Role-Taking, or learning from another person's shoes.

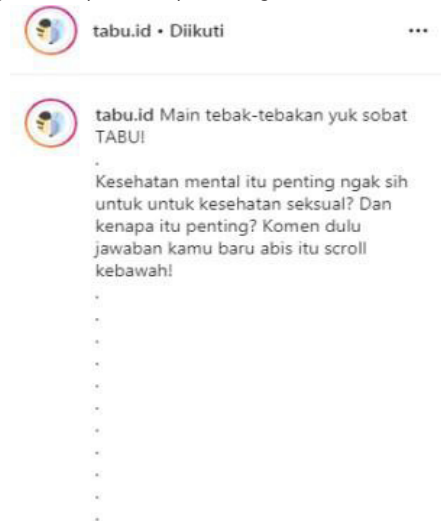
By piquing the curiosity of young Instagram users towards the ideas and experiences of their adolescent peers (which @tabu.id further contextualizes by connecting them to the points made on their previous posts), administrators are able to achieve three things: to provide a holistic understanding on a particular topic by moving from scientific understanding and personal experience; to invite "controversies", support, or disagreements by other users, which functions as a way to get them engaged; and from these responses, to generate ideas on further content that is needed by their followers.

One pattern of content-creation on @tabu.id is their constant utilization of captions—a short textual description which accompanies a visual image and provides additional information to the visual content (Rizal 2019). These captions are quintessential to make information on adolescent reproductive health and sexuality more elaborate yet appealing to followers. To foster interactivity through their captions, @tabu.id implements three language strategies: namely by presenting either a *narrative*, *provocative*, or *editorial* style (Permassanty and Muntiani 2018).

- a. Narrative-style: captions are written using storytelling techniques to describe an event as clearly as possible to the viewers. This is done, for example, by highlighting various cases and examples to a topic.

- b. Provocative-style: messages are conveyed through the use of poetic language, interrogative language, emoticons—and even quizzes, as shown in the @tabu.id post example below:

Image 1. Example of a Caption using a Quiz Format on @tabu.id



Source: @tabu.id Instagram account, 2020

This caption, presented in the quiz format, invites interaction with the audience by asking their opinion on whether mental health was significant for sexual health. Afterwards, the audience were invited to scroll the image carousel to find further information.

- c. Editorial-style: these captions contained quotes or greetings. Such direct gestures of hospitality and friendliness from the @tabu.id administrators serve the purpose of building rapport with followers (Permassanty and Muntiani 2018).

For the co-founders and administrators of @tabu.id, the use of captions are important to tone-down the sensitive issues or difficult information material, which are the kernel of information provided by their platform:

“Usually, in the beginning, we use popular cultural references such as song lyrics or movies. So we relate the things teenagers like with the content on adolescent reproductive health and sexuality itself in the

hope that they will pay more attention to what we write” (Interview with Alvin, Co-founder of @tabu.id).

In their captions, @tabu.id attempts to dissolve the boundaries between the platform administrators and followers by addressing their audience informally and collectively as “*kita*” (us), “*sobat*” (buddy), and “*teman-teman*” (fellas). This stems from the recognition that the platform’s mission requires it to be hospitable and enjoyable for young people. As stated by Kahn and Kellner (YEAR), the contemporary culture amongst teenagers is influenced by a complex process of media proliferation, in which products of global popular culture such as films, television series, music, and popular novels permeate the everyday life of young people, facilitated by the internet.

The lives of teenagers cannot be separated from their intensive use of digital technology, and social media is a driving force that further agglomerates and heightens the complexity of these global cultural references (Sugihartati, 2017). These cultural symbols are conveyed through a specific use of language in the virtual realm. In this sense, language practices in social media is not merely a tool for communicating “offline reality”; it can also function as a tool for constructing a new reality in-itself (Sobur 2003).

The Topics and Content Messages on @tabu.id

Aside from @tabu.id’s Instagram audience, their content format, and pattern of content production, the final element of our ethnographic inquiry of their platform pertains to the topics they cover. Topics on reproductive health and sexuality can widely vary, and the @tabu.id platform adopts a specific standpoint, namely to cater to a young, or specifically adolescent, audience.

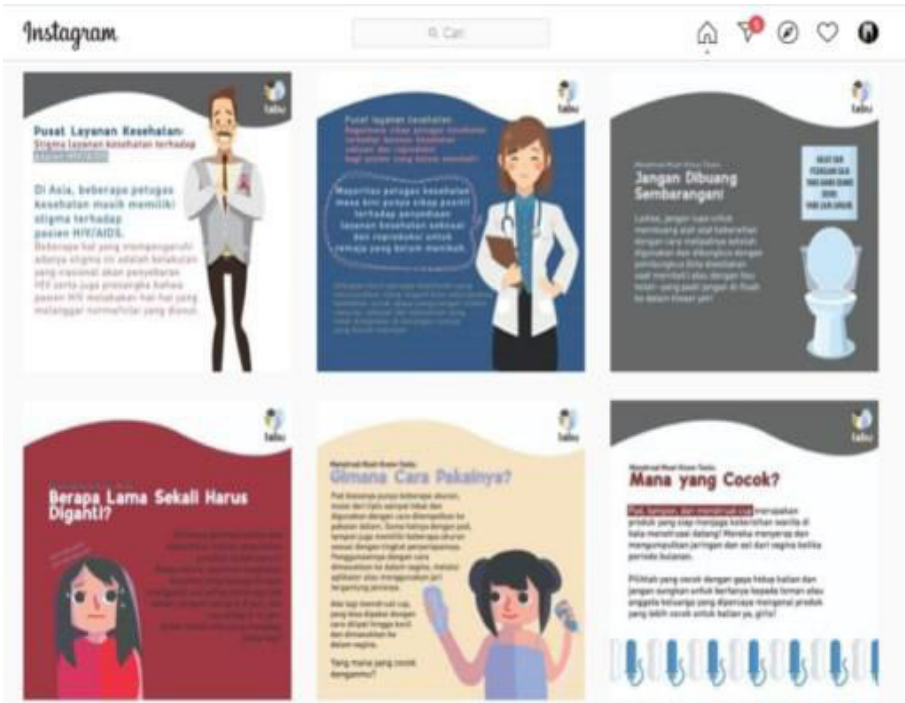
At this point, it might be beneficial to describe two distinct types of digital data: digitized and natively-digital data-objects. The former encompasses originally analog (non-digital) materials that are transformed into digital form, while the latter is produced from various digital materials, and are deliberately formulated as a part of a digital site or platform (Lupton, 2015). Having utilized various methods of content creation, the digital data produced by @tabu.id are native digital data-objects. It is information designed thematically and purposefully disseminated through Instagram’s unique features.

As such, the topics covered on @tabu.id reflexively recognizes its nature as a digital discourse, which operates in a different symbolic reality from offline forms of communication. Such reflexivity of their digital status is also reflected in how they present their information as seen through three topic examples: teenage puberty, dating violence, and Sexually-Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

1. How to Navigate Teenage Puberty

The data collected from @tabu.id’s Instagram account shows a series of posts focusing on the topic of teenage puberty from 16 to 22 September 2019, with approximately 1 to 2 content posts uploaded per day.

Image 2. Posts in @tabu.id on Teenage Puberty



Source: @tabu.id Instagram account, 2020

Some contents were aided by the symbolic visualization of illustrated teenage characters with confused expressions, complemented by various image icons pertaining to menstrual hygiene and care such as menstrual cups, pad, tampons, and toilets. These posts contain the symbolic mean-

ing asserting the importance of female reproductive health in adolescents. In particular, the content encourages teenage girls to manage their menstrual hygiene by providing sufficient information on self-care.

2. Helping Adolescents Understand Dating Violence

The National Commission on Violence against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) recorded 2.073 cases of dating violence in 2019. This number is just the tip of the iceberg, as it only contains the reports handled by the commission and other Women's rights organizations. Such high rates of dating violence imply there is great urgency for Indonesian adolescents, who are beginning to experience sexual attraction and forge romantic relationships, to understand this issue in depth. A greater understanding of dating violence by adolescents of all genders is vital to efforts in reducing the number of perpetrators and victims, in which teenagers are an at-risk group.

Sexuality education aims to provide guidelines and insights to adolescents, empowering them with relationship skills that enable them to make responsible decisions in their development to become sexually healthy adults (Sari, 2018). The co-founders and administrators of @tabu.id realize this urgency, and decided to assume the role of educator:

“We see many friends who experience dating violence. Physical violence is seen quite clearly. However, dating violence is a type of abuse that many people are not aware that it is violence. For example, economic violence or restriction in the relationship to interact with other people” (Interview with Alvin, founder of @tabu.id).

The content on dating violence represented by @tabu.id represents the lived reality of Indonesian youth. By presenting portraits of abusive relationships that really happened and went viral on social media, @tabu.id encourages its young audience to foster healthy romantic relationships by learning the pitfalls of others—taking notes of the do-s and don't-s. including defining and understanding the boundaries that must be respected between partners. Through these presentations, the @tabu.id Instagram account challenges the entrenched ideologies and values of dating life amongst young people, teaching their adolescent followers to break abusive and harmful practices.

3. Breaking the Discursive Taboos Surrounding Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

A 2017 survey conducted by KRR IDHS suggested that 8% of males and 2% of female adolescents have engaged in sexual intercourse. The lack of knowledge surrounding reproductive health and sexuality might lead young people to engage in risky sexual behavior. On the other hand, the immoral stigma and social taboo surrounding sex have prevented the subject from being discussed openly, leading to the lack of accessible crucial information pertaining to healthy and responsible sexual behavior (Helmi and Paramastri, 1998).

One of the risks that befalls sexually-active teenagers is the possibility of being exposed to Sexually-Transmitted Diseases (STDs). By definition, STDs are venereal diseases transmitted through sexual contact or sexual intercourse with a partner. They are one of the top ten causes of illness amongst adult men and the second-biggest cause of illness for adult women in developing countries (Nurhapipa, Alhidayati, and Ayunda, 2017). As such, STDs is a crucial topic that @tabu.id urgently needs to communicate to their young followers. However, the platform co-founders and administrators found that the topic remains a taboo for many:

“We also have to face the fact that there are already quite a lot of teenagers who are sexually active, and sometimes they don’t even know that sexually transmitted diseases exist. They don’t know that they can get the disease by engaging in unsafe sex. And when they are exposed to it, they regret it. Therefore, through the content about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), we hope that they become more aware of the existence of STDs which are transmitted through sexual intercourse” (Interview with an administrator of @tabu.id)

It is against these discursive barriers that the @tabu.id Instagram account realizes their role in social intervention. Adolescents have the rights to access reliable information that help them to navigate their transitional period of physical and psychological development. Yet when it comes to the thorny topics of reproductive health and sexuality, there is a case to be made that such discussions are best fostered through platforms that are familiar to adolescents, such as Instagram.

George Herbert Mead (1934) stipulates that knowledge comes from experience. However, the individual that “experiences” are also irrevoc-

cably social subjects, and this entails that experiences contain an unmistakable social dimension. As such, the communicability of experiences is what awakens the self: it implies that an experience can be universalized from the standpoint of other social actors, and such realization is what determines the subject. Finally, this understanding of the universality of experiences is confirmed through social interaction, which shapes both the individual and other actors involved in it.

The adolescent followers of @tabu.id are confronted with such universality of experience when they receive information on STDs. They realize that anyone, without exception, can be exposed to it. However, their interpretation of this information also depends on how much they are able to understand the texts and symbols communicated by @tabu.id. A successful intervention—in this case, to help adolescents avoid the negative repercussions of risky behavior—relies on the appropriate use of symbols so that they can be interpreted as significant by adolescent Instagram users.

Aside from the plethora of potentially misleading information, the main challenge for publicly advocating and communicating issues of reproductive health in Indonesia is the contradictory responses it engenders. On one hand, the more openly it is discussed, the higher the possibility that people will refrain from engaging with it due to the discursive taboo it currently possesses. On the other hand, knowledge on reproductive health must also be taught in a scientific manner, as this scientific understanding is what provides the objective necessity for adolescents to be responsible for their sexual behavior (Faswita and Suarni 2019).

Nonetheless, the educational content surrounding STDs on @tabu.id's Instagram account do not solely focus on the disease-in-itself. They also explore the symptoms, myths, and tips to avoid STDs, and often present relevant survey results to situate the information as a social phenomenon. These content strategies are guided by the initial goal of @tabu.id, namely to break the stigma surrounding reproductive health and sexuality amongst young people. They do this by increasing the understanding of their followers in a holistic manner. Stigmas and lack of understanding, after all, are often the result of seeing these issues from a singular, isolated point of view. As educators, one effective way to break stigmas is thus to open up various new horizons of understanding.

Finally, it is worthwhile to reinstate that the overall discourse on @tabu.id's digital platform is the result of communication processes

between administrators and their Instagram followers, as well as interactions between followers. These online dialogues involve the exchange of both texts as well as various visual symbols (GIFs, stickers, emoticons). While both the textual and visual symbols in these engagements are interpreted subjectively by each actor, what remains certain is that these interactions undoubtedly contain social value. After all, the theory of Symbolic Interactionism emphasizes that symbols, as a sociocultural construction, are present in every human interaction. By being communicated, these symbols are interpreted as objects related to the daily life of each individual, and contribute to their frame of reference as social beings.

The @tabu.id Instagram account has emerged as an authoritative source of information for young people to understand reproductive health and sexuality. By combining insightful messages with a content form tailored for their young audience, @tabu.id has played an important role in encouraging their followers to take full responsibility for their reproductive health and sexuality.

CONCLUSION

The @tabu.id Instagram account was effective in educating reproductive health and sexuality for adolescents. As a social media platform, Instagram focuses on the visual presentation of information, which makes them more attractive and understandable for young social media users. To optimize the visual features of Instagram, @tabu.id constructed their own distinctive visual identity by carefully curating the use of colors, visual concepts, and images. This social media strategy is aimed to attract the curiosity of young millennials towards their account and the contents they present.

Initially, @tabu.id co-founders chose to disseminate information on reproductive health and sexuality through Instagram as they consider the platform to be popular amongst teenagers, while its visual features allow them to communicate in an engaging way for young people. This emphasis on communicability is reflected in @tabu.id's content production, which often connects the issues they advocate with other up-to-date and viral discourse on social media. In their posts, @tabu.id also engages with users in an approachable manner, and conveys information using language popular amongst young internet users.

The Symbolic Interactionism theory espoused by George Herbert Mead (1934) asserts that each individual interprets symbols conveyed in communication differently, which later determines their understanding of the social world and guides their behavior towards others. Likewise, the symbols exchanged in the interaction between @tabu.id and their adolescent audience is likely to be interpreted differently between different young people. To mitigate this possible failure in communication, @tabu.id opts to deliver their content in the visual form that is more approachable for their young target audience.

Finally, @tabu.id utilizes an array of Instagram features, such as Instagram feed and stories, to share their content. The intention behind these varied channels of content display is to facilitate an all-encompassing virtual space for adolescents to have mutual discussions on reproductive health and sexuality. This study affirms that @tabu.id has a clear goal: to educate the public and youth so that they can overcome assumptions, stigmas, and discursive taboos on reproductive health and sexuality, fostering open minds that are able to accept different views on these issues.

The significance of this study lies in its examination of social media as an effective tool and communication channel to educate young people about reproductive health (RHE) and sexuality. Instagram, being one of the most popular social media platforms in recent years, ensures that these crucial information is able to be widely disseminated to the public.

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