

# Sexual Education on Instagram, How is The Reception of Young People?

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## INFO ARTIKEL

### Keywords

Instagram  
Reception Analysis  
Sex Education

## ABSTRAK

Sexual education is a sensitive issue in Indonesia. Conservative groups claim that sex education is taboo. On the other hand, the high rates of pre-nuptial pregnancies shows a lack of sexual education. Reproductive health education is often considered inadequate as consideration of decision-making in sexual activities. Account @sisilism2.0 as an alternative media information about reproductive health through Instagram media. @sisilism2.0 aim to prevent an unplanned increase in pregnancies, abortions and the transmission of sexual diseases because sex education is now considered taboo. This study aims to know the audience's reception content of the sex education by @sisilism2.0 account. This study uses a descriptive qualitative type of research method with reception analysis. There are six informers in this research including men and women who follow @sisilism2.0 Instagram account and has a background and that has never been dating and has been dating. Four informers are in negotiating positions by stating the importance of sex education was delivered at school at an early age but cannot lower rates of abortion and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. The other two informants are in dominant position by stating that sex education is a must that can lower abortion rates and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. The background of the informants and their interaction with media, especially digital media, became the deciding factors in their encoding-decoding position. Young people who active and interact with social media get more sex education information and become a reference in looking at sex education.

## 1. Introduction

The results of the data recapitulation of the application for a marriage dispensation and the reasons for filing in 2020 issued by the Yogyakarta Religious High Court, there were 897 cases of filing for a marriage dispensation in Yogyakarta. Based on the data on the decision of the case for submitting a marriage dispensation, it was mostly due to the condition of being pregnant or having an unplanned pregnancy. Of the 897 cases of dispensation from marriage, the majority of the age group applied for 13-17 years, totaling 494 children. Referring to Marriage Law No. 22 of 2017 concerning marriage shows that this age is stated to have not met the age limit for marriage which should be at least 19 years old. In this study, it was revealed that children were involved in risky behavior, especially in premarital sexual relations which were encouraged to fulfill their curiosity about sexuality (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan Perlindungan Anak Dan Pengendalian Penduduk DIY, 2021).

Meanwhile, the topic of discussion regarding sex education is still considered taboo by many people, especially in Indonesia, many people think that sex teaching is related to sexual relations. Sex education is not always about sexual relations, but about naming sexual functions, other

physical organs, and even ways to prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. This kind of understanding then makes many people feel awkward (Clairine & Widayatmoko, 2019)

Society considers sexuality as something shameful. Their attitude towards sexuality is negative, therefore anything related to sexuality should be limited or prohibited. Even some people think that sex education or information about sexual reproductive rights and access to contraception can cause teenagers to have free sex. As a result, access to health information and sex education programs is limited, especially for young people (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan Perlindungan Anak Dan Pengendalian Penduduk DIY, 2021).

Realizing the lack of teaching sex education, the Instagram account @sisilism2.0 is here by sharing content on social media about sex education and becoming an influencer in Indonesia to focus on sharing information related to sex education since 2018. The Instagram account @sisilism2.0 uploads video content and photos that explain reproductive organs, the use of contraceptives, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and menstrual cycles, as well as explaining healthy sexual relationships so as not to contract diseases and not cause pregnancy before marriage, as well as other things that were previously considered taboo by some society in Indonesia in detail in easy-to-understand language for young adults. The production of @sisilism2.0 content is adapted from the sex education created by UNFPA (The United Nations Population Fund) which is adapted to the culture and culture in Indonesia. In addition to providing content, he also provides online listed in her Instagram bio.

Sisil in the Instagram account @sisilism2.0 constructing sex education is not something taboo. According to sex education is important to be conveyed to the public as a fundamental human right that everyone must know about *sex education*. The delivery of sex education will reduce the risk of abortion, making individuals more critical before having sex because they already know the impact of having sex outside of marriage and the number of infectious diseases such as HIV.

Researchers see the @sisilism2.0 account as an alternative source of sexual education information for young people that is not necessarily obtained in conventional schools as well as an effort to prevent risky sexual behavior. This research was conducted to see the audience of the content created by the @sisilism Instagram account regarding the importance and effectiveness of *sex education* for young people or "*preferred reading*" offered on the @sisilism2.0 account.

Previous research conducted by Dian Pawaka and Wahyuni Choiriyati using reception analysis. Focusing on knowing the acceptance of followers in interpreting literacy content about feminism uploaded by @indonesiafeminis using reception analysis proposed by Stuart Hall (Pawaka & Choiriyati, 2020). Meanwhile, previous research conducted by Sofiana Santoso discussed the audience of the news of the meiliana case online with Stuart Hall's reception analysis. Researchers want to examine the understanding and acceptance of students as research informants on news about the case of meiliana of Chinese descent who complained about the volume of the call to prayer and was given a prison sentence (Santoso, 2021).

This is different from the research conducted by Dian Pawaka and Wahyuni Choiriyati which focused on the acceptance of followers to feminism content in the @indonesiafeminis Instagram account and research conducted by Sofiana Santoso which examined audience acceptance online regarding the Meiliana case with student informants. The author in this study focuses on how audiences who are followers of @sisilism2.0 interpret the text as an audience in the content of Instagram @sisilism2.0 regarding the importance of sex education to prevent risky sexual behavior.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach to describe the audience's reception of the delivery of sex education uploaded by the Instagram account @sisilism2.0. This method can help researchers in understanding social interactions because they are very complex and can only be described if researchers conduct qualitative research by taking part in conducting in-depth interviews on these social interactions (Sugiyono, 2013). The content of the Instagram account QnA @sisilism2.0 regarding the importance of sex education is used by researchers as objects in this study. The paradigm used in this study is an interpretive paradigm that is used to understand and provide an explanation of the social world through the eyes of the actors involved (Burrell & Morgan, 2019). This paradigm is used to seek explanations of social and cultural events based on the perspectives and experiences of research subjects. The interpretive paradigm assumes that social situations

contain great ambiguity so that behaviors and statements have multiple meanings and can be interpreted in different ways (Djamba & Neuman, 2002).

## 2.2. Data Collection

Researchers used descriptive reception data analysis techniques by involving *the audience* as informants. Collecting data using in-depth interviews with 6 people consisting of 3 men and 3 women with the background of never dating, dating once and dating more than once and then analyzing how the meaning of @sisilism2 Instagram content is analyzed about the importance of sex education. Furthermore, the categorization of audiences is grouped into three audience groups, namely whether they are included in the category of *dominant hegemonic positions*, *opposition code*, or *negotiating position* in interpreting the importance of *sex education* from @sisilism2.0.

## 3. Theory

The more advanced the times and the development of technology, the audience has qualified knowledge so that the audience becomes active in media and can process and interpret the messages conveyed by the media. Reception analysis focuses on audiences who perceive the text, observe, and draw conclusions (Alasuutari, 1999).

In the study of communication, the media is considered to have the power to influence the audience. This is revealed in the Hypodermic Needle theory or the magic bullet theory which considers the media to have a direct influence on the audience. In this theory, the audience is considered passive and acts or believes in what they see. However, the direct influence effect is not widely accepted by scholars. This is refuted by David Morley in his research, arguing that audiences are not passive but they actively process messages conveyed by the media and actively create meaning based on the process of consuming media content (Fauzi & Fasta, 2020).

In consuming media content, there is an encoding-decoding process. This encoding-decoding theory was put forward by Stuart Hall where the encoding process is the process of making meaning or messages played by the media. While decoding the meaning process carried out by the audience according to the background of each individual. In the process of receiving meaning or messages, according to Hall (in During, 1999), the first is the framework of knowledge, where the audience's meaning is based on background knowledge and can be measured by the type of educational interest. Second, relations of production from audiences is the process of receiving message construction, and producing a certain interpretation on this factor will consider the age and motivation of audiences in responding to information. Then lastly, technical infrastructure where the technical infrastructure factor is related to the audience's ability to receive a media text message and then interpret it. Receiving a message depends on the degree of understanding and misunderstanding of the audience in the meaning of the code that is motivated by these factors.

Messages from the media are a combination of codes, symbols, signs, and meanings where the "*preferred reading*" has been determined, but it is still possible for the message to be received differently from the message sent even though the media has made a preferred reading for the message created. Preferred reading is defined as the meaning that is dominantly offered in the text (Hall, 1991).

The response from the audience cannot be concluded whether the meaning obtained is wrong or right. There are three kinds of meaning or positions in the audience, a namely dominant hegemonic position where the position audience included in the classification can understand the message content as it is and fully accept the meaning offered by the text, negotiated position where the negotiation process or when the audience does not agree with the whole of encoding in the text but does not reject it, and oppositional code where the audience does not agree and rejects encoding that has been proposed by the text and then determines its description in interpreting the message from the media (Hall, 1991).

The relationship between the three responses cannot be separated to get meaning from the audience. The meaning produced by the audience for a text is a form of reproduction of a meaning

where the audience does not completely accept a message given by the sender of the message but the audience participates in processing the message so that it produces or emerges a new meaning.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

Instagram @sisilism2.0 is one of the social media that often discuss sex education which is still considered taboo by the people of Indonesia. Judging from Sisil's upload in @sisilism2.0, she conveyed the issue of sexuality and sex education which is considered taboo by many people in a language that is easily understood by young people.

Sisil is here to break the construction of a society that considers sex education a taboo subject to be conveyed from an early age. Discussions about sex education are considered taboo in society because they are afraid that children who receive sex education will have sex outside of marriage. Society considers sexuality as something shameful, their attitude towards sexuality is negative, therefore everything related to sexuality must be limited or even prohibited. Some people think that sex education or information about sexual reproductive rights and access to contraception can cause teenagers to have free sex (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan Perlindungan Anak Dan Pengendalian Penduduk DIY, 2021). As a result, access to health information and sex education programs is limited, especially for young people, even though the purpose of sex education is to equip and make children aware of the importance of maintaining their health, well-being, and dignity by naming ways of self-protection in developing good social and sexual relationships (UNESCO, 2018).

##### 4.1 Sex Education as an effort to reduce the transmitted diseases and reduce abortion rate

Young people naturally have a very large sex drive, and they often get the experience of having sex. If there is no control, young people can fall into premarital sex which if done freely can cause sexually transmitted diseases and various other negative consequences (Zalbawi, 2002). In addition, there is a high level of trust in partners, and does not think long about the effects of having sex outside of marriage. Due to a lack of sexual education, perpetrators violate the law, namely abortion. Sexual education must be improved from an early age to avoid sex outside of marriage (Mayendri & Prihantoro, 2021). In the content, Sisil said that sex education was very important to be conveyed in the school curriculum with the delivery of good and correct sex education, it could reduce the rate of transmission of infectious diseases such as HIV and be able to emphasize the abortion rate in Indonesia.

Has a background that has never been in a dating relationship and has never had sexual activity in pairs. Informant 1 is a 22-year-old male student from Pontianak who is included in the oppositional code. Because he did not get information about sex education from his parents, he often opened social media about sex education, one of which was through the Instagram account @sisilism2.0 which appeared on Instagram several times and only opened it out of curiosity. Based on this experience, sex education should be delivered in schools, so that it can reduce the rate of transmission of infectious diseases but has not been able to reduce the number of abortions in Indonesia. As his statement follows: "in my opinion, sex education is not necessarily able to reduce the transmission of infectious diseases or abortion because it comes back to the choice of each individual, that we also know that there are prohibitions in religion not to have sexual relations before marriage or adultery and also prohibitions against sexual intercourse. not to kill is tantamount to having an abortion."

Informant 2 is a 19-year-old student who was born in Yogyakarta. Informant 2 usually gets information related to sex education from articles he gets on the internet, besides he also quite often listens to podcasts that discuss sex education. Based on his experience, he has been in a relationship once when he was in high school and has never had sexual activity, he is in the oppositional code which considers that sex education is very important to be delivered in schools but has not been able to reduce infectious diseases and abortion. Like the following statement: "sex education should have started from elementary school because young children are now starting to use cell phones, which is expensive enough. That way the child can also avoid sexual predators that can cause severe trauma later. But according to sex education, it does not guarantee to reduce the abortion rate for sexually transmitted diseases, the percentage may be 50% because there are still many people who continue to do it because they cannot control their lust and when they have to face the problem of getting

pregnant out of wedlock, many also continue to have abortions, especially for those who are pregnant. those who have a fear of family and social sanctions”.

The informants are 3 men from Samarinda who are 21-year-old students. He got information about sex education from his parents, as well as through Instagram and Tiktok. From his experience, who has been in a relationship more than once and has also had sexual activity, this differs from the dominant hegemonic position which considers knowledge about sex important to be conveyed in schools because it can reduce the rate of infectious diseases and also abortion, as he stated in the following statement: "according to sex education, it has It has a big influence on the formation of children's mindsets, so children can be more *aware* and mature in responding to things that smell about sex. The transmission rate of sexually transmitted diseases and abortion will also decrease because education has been given about the dangers of free sex”.

Informants 4 female 21-year-old students from Malang. This informant has never had any dating experience to date and has never had sexual activity. Informant 4 is a person who is quite passive in accessing social media to find out about sex education, but he started to find out through Instagram @sisilism2.0 and also movies. Informant 4 is in a dominant hegemonic position where from his experience and background, informant 4 thinks that the delivery of sex education in schools will certainly reduce the rate of transmission of infectious diseases and also the rate of abortion in Indonesia. As his statement follows: "even if only by being taught how to use condoms, it can also help reduce the number of abortions and detect sexually transmitted diseases, besides that, sex education also helps children to protect themselves”.

Informants 5 female 22-year-old students from Tangerang have had experience in dating once and have had sexual activity. Because he never got sex education at school and his parents, so he found out through Instagram, especially the @sisilism2.0 account which often appears on his Instagram page. Based on his experience, informant 5 is in the oppositional code position and thinks that sex education is important to be delivered in the school curriculum but has not been able to reduce the transmission of infectious diseases and abortion in Indonesia. As his statement follows: “in my experience, I have never received any education about sex so I looked it up myself on the internet even though I think sex education is very important. However, sex education is not necessarily able to reduce the number of abortions and transmission of infectious diseases because according to my own experience, when you are faced with lust and desire, it is very difficult not to do that. pregnancy prevention pills in anticipation of getting pregnant out of wedlock”.

Informants are 6 female students aged 21 years who have been in a relationship 3 times and have had sexual activity with their partners. He information about sex education he got not from school but through Instagram and Youtube which he often accessed. From his experience, informant 6 is included in the negotiated position and thinks that sex education is important to be delivered from an early age, including in the school curriculum so that it can reduce the level of transmission of sexually transmitted diseases but not for abortion in Indonesia. As the following statement: “according to sex education, it is not always about sexual relations, yes, but also the introduction of venereal diseases such as uterine cancer, which should have been educated from an early age. Sex education may be able to reduce the number of sexually transmitted diseases but as for the abortion rate, I don't think so, because even now abortion is allowed and it's back to each individual's decision”.

#### **4.2 Sex Education as an prevention of sexual behavior outside marriage in Indonesia**

The teaching of sex education to children is expected to prevent children from negative risks of sexual behavior and deviant behavior. By itself, the child is expected to know about sexuality and the consequences if it is done without complying. Sex education is needed to bridge the child's curiosity about it and various offers of vulgar information by providing correct, honest, complete information about sexuality, of course, according to his age (Panjaitan et al., 2015). Different understandings of sex education depend on the point of view they use. In this context, Sisil said that if a child already knows the impact and risks of having premarital sex, it makes the child more critical to decide whether to do it or not instead of having premarital sex.

Based on the experiences of informants 1 and 4 who have never had sexual activity and have never been in a relationship, they are included in the dominant hegemonic position. Informants 1



and 4 responded that if children already know the impact of the risks of having premarital sexual intercourse, they think long and avoid this behavior.

Meanwhile, from his experience, informants 2 and 3 are included in the oppositional code. Based on the experience of informant 2 who has been in a relationship once and has never had sexual activity, informant 3 has been in a relationship more than once and continues to have sexual relations with his partner even though he already knows the impacts and risks caused by doing it premaritally. The results of in-depth interviews with informants 2 and 3 stated that if the individual already knows the impact and risks of having sexual intercourse, it is possible to continue to have premarital sexual relations because the peaked libido is usually still reckless so it depends on the individual because there are more critical and certain ones. seek information about safe ways to have sexual intercourse that does not cause pregnancy outside of marriage.

## 5. Conclusion

Result of this study, researches categorize the results of in-depth interview with six informants into two categories of discussion; first, the reception of sex education as an effort to reduce sexually transmitted diseases and reduce abortion rates. Second, the reception of sex education as prevention of sexual behavior outside marriage in Indonesia. The results of the interview show that the receptions of six informants in interpreting the content of @sisilism2.0, entitled the importance of sex education are different. The difference in meaning between informants is due to differences in background, experience, and knowledge of sex education, which affects informants in responding to the content of @sisilism2.0. The background of the informants and their interactions with the media, especially digital media, are the determining factors in their encoding-decoding position. Teenagers who are active and interact with social media get more information on sex education and become a reference in viewing sex education. So the anticipation of the impact of sex itself can be minimized.

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