THE IMPACT OF PRE-MARRIAGE PREGNANCY MEDIATIZATION IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INDONESIANS MORALITY HIERARCHY

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Abstract

Social media has greatly transformed humans’ perspectives into amoral behavior. Thus, pre-marriage pregnancy, long-term deviant morality, has been more considerably admissible. This study aims to explore how social media has mediatized immorality to be more reasonable. This study uses a content analysis approach that relies on the ontology hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer. It is used to analyze and comprehend the implicit meanings of young Indonesian celebrities’ pre-marriage pregnancy revealed on YouTube. Such perceived immorality shifts and reshapes the public's notion of morality value. The most important consideration is social media mediatization. Mediatization could inherently restructure social reality and moral values for the new social-cultural paradigm matrix’s media logic. The shift of social morality hierarchy is the most significant consequence, which is no longer imperative in pre-marriage pregnancy. It impacts morality structures that could be a new authority to challenge social-cultural tradition in expressing morality. It implies that the government should design regulations or policies to counteract those cases and get the public involved in media literacy.

Keywords: Imperative ethic, Media logic, Morality Structures, New Matrix, New Authority.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has restructured morality values. The reconstruction produces new perspectives on morality. Some famous people's public recognition of pre-marriage pregnancy is shifting moral values. Consequently, there is a morality hierarchy that is restructured, evident the case of pre-marriage pregnancy is not considered shameful and inappropriate anymore as it used to be. It can collapse a longstanding morality system already embedded communally [1], proving that social media can shift the community morality hierarchy.

The Ministry of Communication and Information shows that most Indonesians share their private information and like fruitless content on social media [2]. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia reports that most social media users in Asia-Pacific are unconcerned about their private life. These data strongly identify that natural ethic attitudes have been ignored. Due to ambiguity, moral and immoral behavior limitation is not considered a crisis aspect [3]. Nasrullah in Sugianto and Asrian states that social media has brought a new perspective on private life which is the crucial appearance on social value order that creates a permissive behavior[4]. It is potentially confronting longstanding traditions, myths, and religious values which are believed [5]. Social media has facilitated the shift of the public's viewpoint of aberrant morality.

Social media plays an important role in mediatization. Akram and Kumar [6] state how significant social media impacts positively and negatively to the younger generation. Social media may change one’s behavior. It has become an inseparable part of daily lives. Baruah [7] identifies that social media directly impacts individual and group communication skills. It is possible to create a free space for anybody who wants to share any discourse or idea. Social life has changed, including in educational institutions. The social proprioception due to social media encourages some changes in discourse rapidly. Public awareness is actualized through ever-changing information. It is appropriate to justify one object based on its view. The view is shifted from social values into the values of social media. Its recognition defies public morality values. Beliefs, values, and attitudes are transformed because of social media [8]. The people’s impressions about pre-marriage pregnancy which is considered dishonorable behavior, are particularly reflected recently.

The impact of this shifting is called mediatization. Hepp defines mediatization as a process of communication and information technology to control and determine the construction of communication and to shift the social culture of society [9]. Mediatization plays the role of conveying information and reconstructs radically and simultaneously on how the public should assess an event in the media [10]. Mediatization shifts from formal character, belief, and viewpoint into a new perspective through new media. Schultz [11] argues that mediatization has played a significant role of the media in the process of social change through extension, substitution, amalgamation, and
accommodation. In other words, the presentation of mass media, particularly new media in the context of technology of communication and information, recently has authorized a broader context that could determine reality and pattern of social interaction.

This article contends that social media has reshaped public morality values. It is different from both previous studies, which focus merely on evaluative effects on social media. Mubit [12] declares that the reconstructive effect is a symptom that attempts to overthrow the old perspective by building new modern constituents. Therefore, this article attempts to identify the reconstructive aspect of social media and explore how it changes the order of morality hierarchy.

This article argues that there has been a shift in identifying morality from social community to social media. This change goes against the morality hierarchy. Morality hierarchy is assumedly about reshaping moral perceptions on people’s behavior from aberrant to normalized morality. Dewantara [13] states that getting entangled with irregular morality will feasibly be seen as a common thing. Handayani et al. [14] also argue that social media can transform the socio-cultural order, including moral values, as an active social integration process. Therefore, pre-marriage pregnancy which was once considered dishonorable is now observed to be more considerably acceptable. The use of social media grants them to access and get emancipation to extend morality matters. In other words, this article aims to verify that social problems disrupt the order of morality hierarchy and public perceptions following the openness and independence of information exchange on social media. The disruption mediatized by social media impacts, challenges, and restructures social morality hierarchy. This phenomenon could displace people’s evaluation capacity and social sensitivity (apathetic organism).

II. METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative content analysis to discover the text’s implicit meanings: written and audio-visual texts. Kracauer in Kuckartz defines qualitative content analysis as the method to observe the text meanings and analyze its communicative content (text and context) [15]. The confessions of YouTubers about pre-marriage pregnancy are the subject of this study. There are four-channel YouTubes used in this study, i.e., Young Lex (28-year-old) [16], Rizky Firdaus Wijaksana or Uus (29) [17], Marcel Darwin (29) [18], and Keyza Karamoy (27) [19]. The choices of these young celebrities were purposively based on their recognition on YouTube, numbers of viewers, and their courage to challenge social-moral values, which are considered taboo and despicable by most Indonesians. The principles of social-moral values that the community has longstanding believed and practiced now seemed to have experienced inconstant values from that tradition. The understanding of this shift could be seen from the determination of social media and the reality existing in the Indonesian context. The context indicates the weakening of norms and values about interaction in public areas and the lack of individual and social control to evaluate any aberrant morality [20].

Those four YouTubers’ contents are analyzed. The contents indicate the existence of a sign system, communication system, and thinking system. It clarifies a reality that points out the attitude or position of the text producer [21]. In other words, the text described the real condition of the text producer. Hans Georg-Gadamer’s hermeneutic analysis method is used to describe this condition. Gadamer’s analysis method emphasized the importance of dialogue from the interpreter with the text being interpreted [22].

The dialogue activity is not intended to promote the interpreter’s subjective view but to express the text comprehensively. Getting closer to the meanings could not be a self-limitation—not dialogical—which makes the meanings of the text separate. In understanding the whole text, the interpreter confirms every part of the text that formed the text’s main purpose. Gadamer states that the whole and parts of a text have a natural coherent. Therefore, in interpreting a text, a researcher should consider its historical context, tradition, culture, language, and the practical interests of the interpreter [23]. Accordingly, Gadamer’s analysis technique notifies interpretative works, historical events, and prejudice, as shown in the Figure 1 [24].

[Diagram: Figure 2. Analysis Frame Work of Gadamer]
III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Being famous is not easy. A celebrity is expected to behave in a good manner as a public figure. A public figure should obey the regulation or ethical tradition in the entertainment industry and respect ethical traditions in social life. However, some celebrities ironically present immorality values as YouTube content, such as pre-marriage pregnancy. Some YouTubers defend their immoral act. They reckon they do not do wrong since they are responsible for it. It is a lesson-learn for other people. They do not trifle away to God's blessing for having a pre-marriage newborn baby (see Young Lex, Rizky Firdaus Wijaksana [Uus], Marcel Darwin, and Keyza Karamoy).

A. Why Famous People Reveal their Private Life on Social Media

Social media is a digital platform globally embraced by many people, including Indonesian celebrities. It is a tool for interacting with others by leaving behind the need to meet physically. However, the issue is not about the shift into the virtual world; rather, it has a lot to do with the perception that a new way of communication arises a new problem, i.e., moral decline. For instance, publicly taking an unfortunate event affecting someone's life to reach wider attention appears to be all the rage nowadays. Thanks to social media, what should remain hidden now became public consumption. People are more connected than ever, making them more permissive over many things. At the end of the day, when an incident falls upon someone, the takes on it reach out between it is a lesson-learned, and it is something to be grateful for.

The platform is a melting pot of a plethora of morally condescending actions, bullying, defamation, sarcasm, slander, hoax, and the distribution of pornographic contents, to name a few. The latest one on the list is when they took the courage to admit openly that their female partners had been pregnant before getting married. In the prime time of social media frenzy, most celebrities are tempted to open their privacy to the public. It proves that social media has no personal authority to evaluate some irregular issues directly. It is the place where people could express everything about their feelings and ideas by building up solidarity immediately through sympathetic things such as apologizing and taking charge of matters [25].

People continuously downgrade the sensation of having a baby before getting married. Young Lex admits once, saying that they are not good couples, but they are to take the consequences whole-heartedly by raising the baby. We have to give credit where credit is due, and for the brave gesture the couple has taken, they deserve it. Marcel Darwin in 2020 states that they are ready to shoulder the burden amidst their parents’ disliking their wrongdoing. In an interview with Hotman Paris in 2019, Kezia Karamoy indicates that they have had it before getting married. These famous figures are sending a clear message: you can do it but bear its consequences.

Aside from the responsibility, another thing to ponder in an unfortunate event is the learning aspect. Rizky Firdaus Wijaksana in 2019 argues that their family needs to know it to prevent it soon. Through his YouTube channel, he states that his new family should learn to be thankful for everything they have in life, to kill the intention of having an abortion. In that regard, Young Lex in 2019 even further requests that his video be forwarded as many as possible to learn.

Known to be generally religious, Indonesians are expected to reflect it in their deeds; they need to situate God behind a bad day (Bauto, 2014 [26]; see also Mubit, 2016). The three aspiring young public figures clarify that God is behind the good and the bad; in the latter, to be honest, are opportunities to be more grateful. Being born beyond legal boundaries does not guarantee a baby's future. Every newborn has a path to life abundance. The bottom line is God reigns supreme in good and bad. Keyza Karamoy (Hotman Paris Salut Kezia Karamoy, 2019) declares that she finds more joy and strength to put more faith in God when life hits her hard with the event. Two cute boys are coming into her path; she thanks God for the new perspective. She famously wraps it up: “Unplanned pregnancy changes my mindset and deserves me to be more a grateful human being.”

B. Mediatization of Morality Hierarchy as an Artefact of Contemporary Institutionalized System of Social Practice

The incidence of several public figures who reveal pre-marriage pregnancy cases through social media has attracted attention and debate in the public sphere today. The celebrities’ statements have shocked the public and broken the morality of society. Nevertheless, the presence and judgment of the public seem no longer a major consideration in evaluating a person’s behavior. In social media, the value of morality has an ambiguous meaning. The view of morality is no longer singular, but it has other alternative values to single out. It, then, suggests a shift in the idea of morality, taboo or disgraceful, but it is perceived differently. Ligget and Ueberal[27] argue that:

“On social media, a set of recognized norms is not following the speed and which social media have been adopted into our lives, which leads to ambiguity regarding what behavior is appropriate online. That ambiguity means that the dangerous aspects of social media communication can be created and maintained.”
The recognition of a wife's pre-marriage pregnancy is like a motivation—if not inspiration—to at least bring up to a standard of that pre-marriage pregnancy. The words of responsibility, learning process, and God’s blessing seem to be conducting the new standard and a personal strategy to deserve a personal image. The standard and strategy could reshape morality perception, going through uncritical morality due to the pre-marriage pregnancy.

The word of responsibility, for instance, is philosophically an effort to build up the relationship with so humanistic for the collective interest and to be followed by elementary ethics cognition in a matter of social behavior appropriateness. Sobon [28] finds that responsibility is not admitting and accepting all consequences but, more importantly, keeping ourselves away from a personal interest in establishing human relationships.

Moral standards tend to be reshaped and are no longer the public's main concern regarding social media. This standard of morality becomes ambiguous and loses its imperative perception. This ambiguity is exacerbated by the interactive space that seems to experience a gap in interaction in communication. Some greetings and reprimands as evaluative matters do not work effectively. As a result, the reformed standards of morality had, in turn, become new standards. The limited interaction space on social media prevents the public from carrying out their social control function. Marwick and Boyd [29] argue that social media's limitations have forced individuals to experience limitations in carrying out their social control function instead of its advantages.

The indication above is a sign of social media freedom which would be going through in the middle of the morality image issue and its efforts to conquer people's perspectives and deal with engineering. Wattle[30] states that all forms of opinions, attitudes, and behaviors could be manipulated and agreed upon on social media. What is previously banned by society tends to appear regularly on social media. The demise of public ethical sensitivity is a real consequence of the stakes in the freedom offered by social media. The public seems to have lost its authority in evaluating any deviant behavior resulting from this freedom. This freedom could also be felt deeply by social media users when conveying all kinds of information, even though it is against the ethical instincts of the public in the name of personal interests and identities. Konrath et al. [31] argue that the issue of morality, which is in line with personal interests, makes it difficult—to ignore—to arouse their sympathy for the beliefs and comforts of other people regarding the moral values that developed in society. The freedom of social media has encouraged the reconstruction of a new logic or standard in determining the public's perceptions of any aberrant morality, which is then referred to as media logic. Social media is the new logic in re-standardizing perceptions and reshaping someone's identity because media logic is too prominent [32].

Media logic is the capacity of media institutions to determine and normalize a reality. Brants and Prag[33] state that the form, content, and meaning of news or information formed by the media becomes a real reference that determines the regularity of social facts. This social media regularity shifts the perspective of socio-cultural institutions, which has been the main reference for morality image in building, fostering, and assessing the appropriateness of social behavior.

Pre-marriage pregnancy, for instance, is no longer seen as a matter of urgency in the perception of morality to be evaluated, but it is normal instead. It could be strange, but we encounter it on social media. Some people share content to be sarcastic and even provocative towards morality values but surprisingly get respect from some Indonesians. Kitroeff [34] figures out that the main thing about appearance in social media is the strong response and emotion shown by the audience regardless of whether it is sentiment or not. The logic of the media as a new normal has shifted the hierarchical order of morality from being reprehensible (pre-marriage pregnancy) to praiseworthy. The phenomenon of overturning morality hierarchy is caused by mediatization.

Mediatization is identified as how (social) media re-contextualized any social values perspective from the existing context and modernization, globalization, urbanization, and individualization process [35]. Mediatization of the morality hierarchy is a process to re-contextualize a peculiar morality to be more reasonable. Social media defines being as more reasonable and moderated, which has strong potential in shaping the public's perspective and even takes over the ethical and social tradition [36]. The potential aspect leads to permissive behavior. The assessment of the morality value has experienced a significant shift. The value of morality is no longer going through the structural hierarchy (good or bad behavior), but it is allowed or, even worse, eliminated. Those who do not have aberrant morality seem to get a proper place in line with the increasingly widespread use of social media to rationalize and declare it. Hamidy and Chizari[37] argue that it is not for judging but fixing up or enhancing the reputation.

It seems that social media has become an independent place in the 'transaction' of morality, with fewer boundaries. A convergence of social media has replaced the values of morality by involving anonymous persons and public figures who are inter-contextualized in building a new perspective related to the value of morality. We no longer need to wait or ask for the consideration of community or religious leaders, for instance, in determining whether a behavior was thought good or not. It is due to the agreement on morality values converging into
a medium called media technology. In turn, media technology takes all the roles of socio-cultural institutions, replacing it with media logic as the engine of mediatization [38]. The media logic contributes to an individual being a validated and outspoken person, encouraging the public's recognition and transformation of morality perception.

The public's recognition and transformation of the morality perception indicate strongly how the media logic reshapes a new perspective by removing traditional perspectives in interpreting morality aberrant behavior. Social changes, norms, and public expectations are the real product of excluding this traditional perspective. This exclusion points out that the presence of (social) media resulted in a new normal of social practices followed by norms, conventions, and public expectations, which have changed [39]. The public tends to lose its authority in evaluating every morality transgression. The limitation of the public as the authority of socio-cultural institutions is taken and replaced by the media logic as the authority. The media recently determines what is right and fair, not public.

In the end, the mediatization of the morality hierarchy is inevitable. It is presented in Figure 2. The figure illustrates the perception of aberrant morality (pre-marriage pregnancy) shifted meaning from a traditional ethical perspective considered amoral or despicable to the perspective of media logic, which tends to be appropriable. This change points out that social mediatization confronts morality and facilitates the new perspective of morality disorientation [40]. If it continues, human civilization would be replaced by the digital civilization that is more tolerant, open, free, permissive, and even sympathetic to every aberrant morality and would eventually become the artifact of the modern institutionalized system of social practice.

IV. CONCLUSION

This article points out explicitly at the beginning that there has been a shift in the value of morality due to the mediatization of social media. The emergence of positive and negative impacts is one of the evaluative consequences of social media, but the mediatization with its media logic is more than the evaluative issue. It is a reconstructive issue that could not be disproved. The media logic has normalized and even brought up to standard on what the public has now considered outrageous to be seen as normal and natural. This media logic results in the perception of morality losing its hierarchical relation. The context constructed on social media makes good or bad behavior no longer seen as a social emergency to be taken because it has been determined as a formality matter. The media logic, in turn, becomes the main reference not only in responding but also in determining how the public should give their viewpoints on aberrant morality.
Aberrant morality and pre-marriage pregnancy on social media revealed in celebrities’ YouTube channels offer the reconstructive perspective. A moral notion replaces the idea of immortality. It seems that behind the reconstruction of the promiscuity image, there have been so-called permissive conduct on social media. This condition emphasizes that social media reconstructs and re-contextualizes those who do the aberrant morality are tolerant through its media logic. Therefore, it would be pretty remarkable if the government designs regulations or policies to counteract this case and get the public more involved in every media literacy to make them reflect on it. The implication is that the social media logic disclaimed the logic of social-culture values as the institutionalized system of social practice.

There is a significant gap in the connectivity space between the traditional morality’s logic and the media logic in the status of aberrant morality. In that case, it would be great if there is a critical effort to find out about this gap through similar development research that could be started from this study as a reflective reference.

REFERENCES


