

Normalization of Adolescent Casual Sexual Behavior: A Peircean Semiotic Analysis of Bincang Ranjang YouTube Content

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Abstract. *The increasing prevalence of casual sexual behavior among Indonesian adolescents has become a pressing concern, especially as social media platforms like YouTube present open narratives about sexuality. In the context of limited sex education and persistent cultural taboos, this study analyzes how the normalization of adolescent casual sexual behavior is represented in the YouTube channel Bincang Ranjang, focusing on the episode “Yang Penting Tiap Hari.” Using a qualitative interpretive approach and Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic theory, this research examines eleven selected scenes to identify the sign (representamen), object, and interpretant. The study also incorporates symbolic interactionism to explore how meaning is constructed through social interaction and media engagement. The findings reveal that verbal and non-verbal signs, such as facial expressions, gestures, and casual dialogue, represent casual sex as enjoyable, ordinary, and an acceptable part of adolescents’ identity exploration. The open and permissive interaction between the guest and host reinforces these representations without critical reflection or educational framing. Audience responses further demonstrate how meaning is negotiated and contested, highlighting generational and cultural tensions as well as peer validation. Through symbolic interactionism, this study illustrates how adolescents may internalize such narratives as part of social learning and identity formation. This study concludes that the episode contributes to the normalization of adolescent casual sexual behavior by framing it as personal freedom and emotional autonomy. Therefore, the findings emphasize the urgency of strengthening media literacy and critical sex education, enabling adolescents to interpret sexual content more reflectively, ethically, and responsibly.*

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INTRODUCTION

Casual sexual behavior among Indonesian adolescents is becoming an increasingly worrying issue, along with the high rate of premarital sexual intercourse and the lack of comprehensive sexual education (Holzner & Oetomo, 2004; Fuadi & Irdalisa, 2024; Luthfiyah & Hayati, 2025). Based on data from the Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (2017), which was used because the latest data will not be released in full until 2025, it was found that 8% of adolescent boys and 2% of adolescent girls aged 15-24 years have had sexual intercourse before marriage.

The majority of them started this behavior at the age of 15-19 years, with 11% experiencing unwanted pregnancies, which contributed to the high number of adolescent abortions to around 700 thousand cases each year (Yusran et al., 2024). In addition, premarital sexual behavior also increases the risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, of which

20-25% of sufferers are adolescents and young adults (Mba, 2023). This phenomenon indicates that adolescents do not have an adequate understanding of healthy and responsible sexuality.

The high number of adolescents who engage in risky sexual behavior shows the importance of effective communication in sexual education. Research by Haglund & Fehring (2010) and Vivancos et al., 2013, showed that sex education by parents can protect adolescents from risky sexual behavior up to six times higher. Teachers also play a role in shaping the understanding of sexuality and guiding adolescents to understand the consequences (Vavrus, 2009). Proper sexual education can be an important tool to provide an in-depth understanding of reproductive health and the physical, emotional, and social impacts of casual sex (Macintyre et al., 2015; Helmer et al., 2015; Leekuan et al., 2022).

Unfortunately, talking about sexuality in the family and school environment is still considered taboo. Parents and teachers often feel awkward or do not have sufficient knowledge to provide sexual education openly and in depth (Wanje et al., 2017). This encourages adolescents to seek information from other sources, especially social media and the internet. Research by Eleuteri et al. (2017) shows that adolescents tend to rely on social media to find information about sexuality.

In this case, social media has a big role in shaping adolescents' understanding of sexuality. On the other hand, the content they consume is not always educative. Many of them explicitly present the narrative of casual sex as something natural and unproblematic, without including consequences or ethical values. YouTube, as one of the most popular digital platforms is the dominant space utilized by teenagers to access various forms of information and entertainment, including topics of sexuality. The Bincang Ranjang channel is one example of content that consistently discusses sexual issues openly, through personal narratives from the interviewees.

The episode "Yang Penting Tiap Hari" is one of the most popular, with millions of views and thousands of responses. In this episode, casual sex is portrayed as normal, part of the process of self-exploration, even as a habit that is no longer questioned. This representation is important to examine because it can influence the way adolescents interpret sexuality, especially in the context of Indonesian culture that holds eastern and religious values (Hasan et al., 2023).

Many previous studies have highlighted the importance of sexual education and the influence of social media on adolescent sexual behavior, but no study has specifically examined how content such as Bincang Ranjang represents the normalization of promiscuous sexual behavior. The representation of sexuality in digital media does not occur neutrally, but through a complex process of meaning. In this case, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics provides a relevant approach to explore how signs in the media can represent certain social realities. Peirce divides signs into three main elements: the representamen (the sign itself), the object (what it refers to), and the interpretant (the resulting meaning).

Each sign can also be further classified into various types, such as qualisign, sinsign, legisign, icon, index, symbol, rheme, dicent, and argument (Fomin, 2023). To deepen the analysis of how these representations are interpreted and internalized by adolescents, this study also uses symbolic interactionism theory. According to this theory, meaning is formed and modified through social interaction. The concept of the "looking-glass self" introduced by Charles Horton Cooley explains how individuals shape their self-concept based on how they believe others perceive them.

In the context of media, adolescents are not passive viewers; they interpret and construct meaning from media content based on their interactions, values, and the social context they are part of. When casual sex is represented repeatedly in digital media as something normal, fun, and acceptable, adolescents may absorb and integrate these representations into their identity formation and behavioral norms. Symbolic interactionism is useful in understanding how media representations contribute to shaping adolescent self-concept and behavior.

Thus, this study aims to analyze how the signs, objects, and interpretants in the episode “Yang Penting Tiap Hari” represent the normalization of casual sexual behavior in teenagers. The focus of the research lies on how the cut scenes in the episode contribute to the formation of the meaning of casual sex as something commonplace and acceptable. By using Peirce's semiotic approach and enriched with symbolic interactionism theory, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the study of media representation and offer a critical understanding of the social dynamics of adolescents in the digital era who are increasingly permissive of sexuality issues.

METHODS

This research uses an interpretive paradigm that views social reality as a subjective construction, formed through individual experiences and interactions (Acharya, 2025). This paradigm is in accordance with the research objectives to understand the meanings that arise from the representation of adolescent casual sexual behavior in digital media content. The approach used is interpretive qualitative, which focuses on subjectivity in social world research and seeks to understand the way the object of research thinks (Gephart et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the method is semiotic textual analysis, which aims to understand the meaning in a media text (Dhaenens & Van, 2022; Kolodii et al., 2022). The approach and method were chosen to examine how verbal and non-verbal signs in the YouTube content of Bincang Ranjang episode “Yang Penting Tiap Hari” represent casual sex as something normalized in adolescent life. The unit of analysis in this research is a snippet of a scene in a 45-minute 13-second episode of Bincang Ranjang. The subjects of the research include the interviewees and hosts featured in the video, while the object of the study is the representation of normalization of casual sexual behavior. Data were collected through non-participatory observation and documentation techniques. Observation was conducted by repeatedly watching the episode while recording facial expressions, gestures, vocal intonations, and dialogue structure using an observation sheet. Documentation involved producing verbatim transcripts, capturing relevant screenshots, and compiling manual coding notes. All data were processed using Google Docs and systematically stored in an organized folder structure within Google Drive. Scene selection was carried out through an initial screening process based on speeches, expressions, or responses indicating that sex was performed without emotional attachment and perceived as normal. From this screening, manual coding was applied using five criteria: (1) thematic relevance to casual sex, (2) strong indication that the behavior or experience being discussed occurred during adolescence, (3) clarity and frequency of semiotic signs, (4) narrative significance within the content, and (5) illustrative strength or resonance with the audience. Based on this process, 11 scenes were selected for in-depth analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. The data analysis technique focused on the three main elements, namely the representamen (sign), object, and interpretant (Purwasih et al., 2024), to examine the semiosis process within the content and how it constructs the meaning of casual sex as part of adolescent lifestyle in digital media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 106th episode of the Bincang Ranjang YouTube channel titled “Yang Penting Tiap Hari” is the main focus of this research because it explicitly represents various forms of casual sexual behavior by adolescents and how it is normalized in the digital space. Released on April 8, 2023, the episode has garnered over 3.5 million views, 15 thousand likes, and 1.2 thousand audience comments. As the channel's ninth most popular video, it reflects the significant public engagement and interest in the topic. The title and thumbnail visually emphasize casual sexual behavior, which is reinforced by the interviewee's narratives of engaging in non-committed sexual relationships.

Bincang Ranjang is known for presenting sexual experiences through a relaxed, open and entertaining communication style. The setting of a bedroom, combined with informal attire such as pajamas and revealing clothing, contributes to an intimate atmosphere that de-stigmatizes discussions of sex. This visual context supports a semiotic transformation where the bed, a

symbol of privacy, is turned into a legitimate public forum to discuss sexuality, aligning with the concept of “bedroom culture” (Horne et al., 2022). Through this, the boundaries between the private and public realms are blurred, contributing to the normalization of intimate discourse.

The main subject in this content is a 23-year-old interviewee who claims to have started sexual exploration at the age of 15 through dating apps. She represents an image of urban adolescent girls who are sexually active and interpret sexual relationships as part of freedom, self-discovery, and a form of control over relationships. Her experiences include one-night stands, threesomes, and partner sharing. The host of the show does not act as a neutral interviewer but instead affirms and validates the guest’s narrative, co-constructing a space of permissiveness and acceptance. This interaction forms a discursive environment where extreme sexual behavior is treated as normative, without critical reflection or balancing narratives.

Table 1. Thematic Overview of Casual Sex Normalization in Selected Scenes

Scene (Timecode)	Theme/Representation	Description of Normalization
5.15 – 5.32	Sexual autonomy vs. parental control	Interviewee links sexual freedom with distancing from strict parental authority.
8.08 – 8.35	Dating apps as gateways	Dating apps framed as enablers of sexual initiation and autonomy.
12.45 – 13.34	Exposure to pornography	Early exposure portrayed as contributing to early sexual initiation.
11.26 – 11.34	Sexual initiation	Casual entry into sexual activity is normalized through accessible pathways.
20.29 – 21.00	Sex as routine	Depicts sex as a near-daily, normalized activity.
22.54 – 23.41	Lack of emotional attachment	Casual sex presented as separate from emotional intimacy.
34.43 – 35.14	Self-imposed rules	Interviewee manages casual sex with personal boundaries and rules.
31.09 – 31.35	Sex as revenge/social power	Using multiple men as a form of revenge, framing sex as emotional and social control.
36.57 – 38.00	Sexual openness	Open discussion of preferences highlights normalization of sexual candidness.
38.58 – 39.28	Group sex	Depiction of group sex as part of candid narrative, reframing taboos.
43.23 – 43.40	Moral rationale	“As long as no harm is caused, any sexual practice is acceptable,” normalizing tolerance and personal freedom.

The normalization of casual sexual behavior emerges not as a single event but through a constellation of overlapping discursive strategies that transform stigma into acceptance. The selected scenes from the interview provide fertile ground for examining how normalization operates through autonomy, routinization, self-regulation, empowerment, openness, and moral justification. By situating these narrative elements within broader cultural and theoretical contexts, it becomes clear that normalization is not merely descriptive but deeply embedded in processes of social power, individual agency, and ethical reframing.

Autonomy and Resistance to Authority

The initial scenes situate sexual exploration within a narrative of resistance to parental control. At 5.15–5.32, the interviewee describes her pursuit of sexual freedom as a deliberate attempt to distance herself from restrictive parental oversight. This positions sex as more than a physical act; it becomes a symbolic marker of independence. Within the framework of Michel Foucault’s analysis of sexuality and power (1978), such narratives can be read as counter-discourses that resist disciplinary structures imposed by family and society. Sexual autonomy

thus becomes a language of liberation, situating the body as a site of self-determination rather than regulation.

The normalization process is further reinforced through the adoption of dating apps (8.08–8.35). These platforms, often criticized for facilitating risk-taking behaviors, are here framed as legitimate tools of empowerment, enabling individuals to assert choice and agency in their sexual encounters. The implicit normalization lies in the framing: what might be dismissed as morally questionable becomes celebrated as a means of self-expression and freedom. This parallels Giddens's (1992) notion of the "transformation of intimacy," where modern sexual practices are increasingly shaped by individual choice, detachment from tradition, and self-reflexivity.

Exposure to pornography at a young age (12.45–13.34) and subsequent sexual initiation (11.26–11.34) are also framed as inevitable and accessible pathways into sexuality. Instead of depicting pornography as corruptive or dangerous, the narrative suggests it functions as a gateway to sexual knowledge. By normalizing early exposure, the interviewee reinforces the idea that casual sexual initiation is not an aberration but part of a broader social trend in which digital media accelerates access to sexual scripts (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). This shift diminishes the stigma surrounding "premature" sexual knowledge, integrating it into narratives of autonomy and discovery.

Routinization and Detachment

Another powerful strategy of normalization is the routinization of sexual activity. In the scene at 20.29–21.00, sex is described as a near-daily activity. What stands out is the absence of sensationalism: the tone reduces sex to an ordinary event akin to other daily routines. Normalization here works through the logic of repetition. By presenting casual sex as frequent and unremarkable, it erodes its association with taboo or moral exceptionality. This routinization is complemented by detachment. At 22.54–23.41, casual encounters are explicitly framed as devoid of emotional intimacy. This separation between sex and affection aligns with Bauman's (2003) concept of "liquid love," where intimacy becomes increasingly transient, fragile, and decoupled from stable relationships in modernity. The narrative constructs casual sex as a pragmatic arrangement pleasurable yet unburdened by emotional entanglement.

Such framings perform normalization by redefining expectations: rather than portraying sex as necessarily sacred, relational, or emotionally profound, it becomes manageable and emotionally neutral. This detachment allows sex to circulate within broader consumerist logics, where relationships are fleeting and sexual gratification is one of many consumable experiences. In effect, routinization and detachment reposition casual sex as a normalized lifestyle choice, not a moral transgression.

Self-Regulation and Control

Normalization also emerges through depictions of self-management. In the scene at 34.43–35.14, the interviewee stresses the importance of setting personal rules and boundaries. Instead of representing casual sex as chaotic, she frames it as controllable through rational decision-making. This shift is crucial because it aligns casual sexual behavior with broader neoliberal discourses of self-responsibility and individual governance (Rose, 1999). The strategy of self-regulation reframes casual sex from a risky behavior into a responsible lifestyle. Boundaries and rules such as limiting partners, practicing safe sex, or defining emotional limits function as legitimizing mechanisms. They transform casual sex from something potentially stigmatized into a practice that can be undertaken safely and rationally. From the perspective of normalization theory, this functions as a form of "moral hygiene": the interviewee constructs her behavior as disciplined, not reckless, thereby aligning it with acceptable social practices.

Sex as Power and Social Influence

Perhaps the most striking element of normalization occurs when sex is framed as a mechanism of power. In the scene at 31.09–31.35, the interviewee describes using multiple men to hurt an ex-partner. This positioning of sex as a form of revenge reframes it as strategic action rather than mere indulgence. Within this framework, sex becomes a resource through which agency, control, and even dominance are exercised. This representation resonates with Foucault's (1978) argument that sexuality is deeply entangled with power relations. Here, the interviewee mobilizes sex as a weapon of emotional control, demonstrating that sexual activity can be socially intelligible beyond its physical dimension. The normalization effect is achieved by recontextualizing sex as a legitimate tool within the dynamics of social and emotional struggle. Rather than stigmatized, the act is legitimized as a form of agency and empowerment.

Moreover, this framing destabilizes traditional gender norms that often cast women as passive participants in sexual activity. By actively using sex for revenge, the interviewee challenges patriarchal assumptions, re-signifying sexual behavior as an expression of female agency. In doing so, normalization also intersects with feminist discourses of empowerment and self-determination.

Openness, Transparency, and the Reframing of Taboos

Another significant aspect of normalization lies in the candid articulation of sexual experiences. In the scenes at 36.57–38.00 and 38.58–39.28, the interviewee discusses personal preferences and group sex experiences with notable openness. What makes these scenes important is not the acts themselves but the willingness to disclose them. Openness functions as a normalization strategy by dismantling secrecy. Historically, as Foucault notes, sexuality was confined to silence and shame. By contrast, contemporary discourses encourage open conversation, often framing transparency as progressive and healthy. Within this cultural context, the act of speaking candidly about preferences or group sex becomes a way of signaling authenticity and modernity.

Furthermore, openness redefines taboos. Group sex, often stigmatized as deviant, is reframed as a legitimate practice when discussed casually and without shame. The normalization effect is not simply about the act but about its representation: by incorporating it into ordinary conversation, the boundaries between taboo and acceptable practice are blurred. The willingness to narrate such experiences without stigma contributes to a cultural climate where diverse sexual practices are increasingly normalized.

Moral Justification and Ethical Legitimacy

The final stage of normalization operates at the level of moral reasoning. In the scene at 43.23–43.40, the interviewee asserts: "as long as no harm is caused, any sexual practice is acceptable." This harm-reduction principle aligns with liberal ethics, where tolerance and freedom are central values. By grounding her defense of casual sex in moral reasoning, the interviewee elevates normalization beyond the personal and into the universal. This ethical stance reframes casual sex as not merely a lifestyle choice but as morally defensible within a pluralistic society. The justification echoes John Stuart Mill's harm principle, which argues that individual freedom should only be curtailed when it causes harm to others. By applying this rationale to sexual behavior, the interviewee situates casual sex within a broader framework of social tolerance and moral legitimacy.

The effect is powerful: what might otherwise be stigmatized is not only accepted but framed as ethically consistent with modern values of freedom, consent, and responsibility. Normalization here is achieved by embedding casual sex within a philosophical framework that validates its legitimacy.

Synthesis: Intersections of Normalization Strategies

Taken together, the scenes illustrate that normalization does not operate through a single pathway but through an intricate layering of strategies. Autonomy challenges restrictive authority; routinization and detachment reduce stigma by presenting sex as ordinary; self-regulation reframes it as responsible; sex as power repositions it as agency; openness dismantles taboos; and moral justification anchors it in ethical reasoning. These strategies reflect broader cultural shifts in late modernity. Sexuality is increasingly framed through discourses of choice, agency, and freedom, rather than repression or morality. Normalization thus operates both at the personal level, through the interviewee's lived experiences, and at the cultural level, through broader social narratives that legitimate casual sex.

In this way, the episode illustrates how sexual behavior once stigmatized is re-signified as a legitimate, rational, and socially acceptable aspect of contemporary life. Normalization, far from being a neutral process, is deeply entangled with cultural logics of autonomy, neoliberal self-management, empowerment, openness, and liberal morality. These overlapping discourses demonstrate the complexity of how sexuality is socially constructed and legitimized in the present context.

From a Peircean semiotic perspective, the representamen appears through explicit dialogues, facial expressions, bodily gestures, and the relaxed tone of the conversation. The object of these signs is the narrative of casual sexual experiences framed as natural, fun, and socially acceptable. The interpretant is the conclusion that casual sex is not only an activity that is not taboo, but also part of adolescent self-discovery and freedom. This meaning is not static, but is formed continuously through the process of semiosis, which is the interaction between the representamen, object, and interpretant (Sáenz-Ludlow, 2007), that takes place dynamically while watching and interpreting content.

Without adequate education, the consumption of pornography leads to the interpretation that sex is an exciting and legitimate activity to try at an early age. This is reinforced by research by Wang et al. (2021) which states that social media has a major role in the formation of adolescent self-identity. Widespread sexual content, including in the form of experiential stories or education based on personal experiences, forms a narrative that casual sex is a form of freedom of expression and a modern lifestyle. In this case, exposure to such content creates the perception that casual sexual behavior is normal and no longer needs to be hidden (Mutaqin & Ediyono, 2024). Adolescents are indeed in a phase of identity exploration, including in terms of sexuality, as explained by Kågesten & van (2021) in the concept of the genital phase. Adolescents are encouraged to experiment, especially when there is no safe space to discuss sex in a healthy way.

Digital media such as dating apps provide easy access to early sexual exploration, while pornography shapes false perceptions of sexual readiness and expectations. On the other hand, peer pressure reinforces the idea that casual sex is a recognized part of social existence (Kreager & Staff, 2009). In this representation, sex appears not as a form of emotional intimacy, but as a habit, a need, and a means of control over relationships. The literature supports this phenomenon by mentioning that casual sex is now seen as part of the modern lifestyle in urban areas, along with the loosening of social norms and the flow of modernization. This behavioral representation also confirms that sexual relationships are no longer based on commitment or moral values, but on personal autonomy and the desire for pleasure and social validation.

Audience responses on YouTube further validate the interpretive process. These responses offer a window into how normalization narratives are received, accepted, or contested by the public. Many comments express admiration or agreement, such as "I'm happy to listen to this so it becomes knowledge for me" or "This is the most interesting story." Others echo similar sentiments "Wow, that's awesome, same here, if I don't do it even for a day, I feel uncomfortable. I just end up feeling irritated all the time." or "A girl who shares her experiences and is open is better than one who's fake and just tries to look good in front of others." These supportive

comments suggest that casual sexual narratives are received not only as entertainment but as empowering, honest, or even relatable content.

Some audiences, especially from older generations, expressed a stark contrast by referencing past norms "Back in the 90s, dating was so innocent, just holding hands would make your heart race. Nowadays, if you're not getting naked together, it's like the relationship isn't official." Another commenter reflected societal consequences, stating "Many Indonesian women now live together without being married and get into careless marriages... Even elementary and middle school girls are already getting pregnant. With the rise of promiscuity, delinquency and street violence are also increasing." One user compared generational experiences more directly "Back when I was in college in the 1980s, almost all of my female friends were still virgins. But nowadays, many high school girls have already lost their virginity." These responses reflect deep generational tensions and cultural anxieties about shifting norms, and reveal how symbolic interpretations of sexuality are influenced by temporal, moral, and social context. Another viewer commented, "Wow, that's cool. I used to be in an open relationship too. Here in Southeast Asia, it's still something most people can't fully accept, but it definitely exists. We used to call it a No-Strings Commitment," indicating regional and cross-cultural engagement with casual sex narratives, and affirming how digital spaces facilitate the normalization of behaviors still considered taboo in many Southeast Asian societies.

Contrasting voices emerge in the comment section, highlighting social tension and moral resistance. Some criticize the content as culturally inappropriate, such as "Free sex is a Western culture, and now it has spread to the youth of our nation, who even talk about it proudly," or "Oh God. They commit sins and feel proud instead of ashamed. They even brag about it on social media." Others express nuanced concerns, for example "This content is good, but its negative impact outweighs the entertainment value," and "To be honest, this content has more negative aspects than positive ones." Comments like "Crazy how much the environment influences our lives... kids born in the 2000s are already like this. The lesson here is that we have to be smart in protecting ourselves and able to filter what's good and what's bad," suggest that audiences are not passive recipients but reflective individuals who interpret and react based on their values and cultural frameworks.

Viewed through the lens of symbolic interactionism, these audience responses represent a social process where meaning is negotiated rather than fixed. The diverse range of comments; supportive, critical, or reflective, demonstrates how viewers use their interactions with media content and with other commenters to construct individual and collective meaning. According to the "looking-glass self" concept, these interactions can influence how viewers assess their own values and behaviors in relation to the content. Thus, the comment section becomes a symbolic space where social norms, cultural anxieties, and identity positions are continuously constructed and contested. Integrating symbolic interactionism into this analysis helps reveal how digital media platforms, such as YouTube, mediate identity formation and normalize certain behaviors. The repeated exposure to permissive sexual discourse creates a collective understanding that such behavior is part of adolescent culture, further reinforced by peer commentary and online validation.

To counterbalance the effect of such normalization, concrete recommendations are needed. First, critical media literacy programs should be incorporated into school curricula to help adolescents deconstruct media messages and understand the socio-cultural agendas behind them. Second, educators and parents must be trained to initiate non-judgmental discussions about sexuality, allowing youth to process content critically. Lastly, digital platforms like YouTube should be encouraged to add content warnings, provide context, and promote more balanced narratives. These steps are essential to mitigate unintended harms and ensure that adolescent sexual development occurs within informed, ethical, and culturally sensitive frameworks.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that casual sexual behavior among adolescents is represented openly and affirmatively in the Bincang Ranjang YouTube episode “Yang Penting Tiap Hari.” Through verbal and non-verbal signs such as relaxed dialogue, expressive gestures, and intimate settings, the episode frames casual sex as something enjoyable, non-taboo, and part of teenage self-expression. Using Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic theory, the analysis of eleven selected scenes demonstrates a triadic process where the representamen (signs), object (casual sexual experiences), and interpretant (the perceived meaning) interact to produce an understanding that casual sex is a legitimate part of adolescent identity exploration, autonomy, and personal control. This representation is not delivered in a critical or educational frame, but rather through a light, permissive, and supportive tone. The host not only facilitates but actively validates the interviewee’s experiences, contributing to the construction of a permissive discourse. When viewed through the lens of symbolic interactionism, this interaction reflects a broader process of meaning negotiation where adolescents might internalize such content as socially accepted behavior, especially when reinforced by supportive peer commentary and the absence of counter-narratives. Audience responses show a wide range of interpretations, from supportive and empathetic reactions to strong generational resistance and cultural concerns. This diversity reflects that normalization is not linear, but is continuously contested in the public discourse. The comment section itself becomes a symbolic arena where values, identities, and moral boundaries are challenged, affirmed, or redefined. This content illustrates a clear process of normalization of adolescent casual sexual behavior in digital media, particularly when signs are presented without ethical reflection or critical framing. If not accompanied by adequate media literacy, such exposure can shape adolescent perceptions and behavior toward sexuality in ways that may ignore potential emotional, social, and health-related consequences.

SUGGESTION

Therefore, strengthening digital literacy is crucial, not only in equipping adolescents with the ability to critically assess media messages, but also in fostering reflective thinking about values, boundaries, and long-term implications. Schools, families, and digital platforms all have a role to play in ensuring that youth encounter sexual content in contexts that are informed, ethical, and culturally sensitive.

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