

MEDIA REALISM PERCEPTION AS A MEDIATOR OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTAGRAM CONTENT EXPOSURE AND THE NORMALIZATION OF OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCY

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the phenomenon of continuous exposure to social media content on Instagram, which has become a major force in shaping public perceptions and social norms. Through personalized algorithms and the concept of media realism perception, many users express support for influencers by posting positive comments, liking, reposting, and engaging with content related to premarital pregnancy. This phenomenon became increasingly evident following the viral case involving Erika Carlina, which sparked widespread public debate across digital platforms. This study aims to examine the mediating role of media realism perception in the relationship between Instagram content exposure and the normalization of premarital pregnancy. The study employed a quantitative explanatory approach using a cross-sectional research design. A total of 400 followers of the Instagram account @eri.carl were selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and path analysis with JASP and SPSS version 24. The findings indicate that all proposed hypotheses were supported. Instagram content exposure had a positive and significant effect on the normalization of premarital pregnancy ($\beta = 0.7876$) and on media realism perception ($\beta = 0.7605$). Media realism perception also had a significant effect and was found to partially mediate the relationship between Instagram content exposure and the normalization of premarital pregnancy. The proposed model explained 68.90% of the variance in the normalization of premarital pregnancy. In the Indonesian context, where religious values and conservative cultural norms remain deeply rooted, media realism perception plays a crucial role by fostering the belief that premarital pregnancy is a realistic and plausible social phenomenon. Over time, this process blurs the boundary between media representations and social reality, thereby contributing to a gradual and subtle shift in societal norms.

Keywords: Normalization of Premarital Pregnancy; Instagram Content Exposure; Media Realism Perception

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, continuous exposure to social media content, particularly on Instagram, has become a major force shaping public perceptions and social norms. Along with the rapid advancement of social media, personalized algorithms, and the concept of media realism perception, many individuals are increasingly influenced to indirectly support influencers and celebrities through positive comments, likes, reposts, shares, and various other forms of engagement with content depicting premarital pregnancy. This phenomenon has generated numerous positive responses that indirectly normalize premarital pregnancy as something ordinary, relatable, and even worthy of celebration in modern society. Repeated and intensive exposure to such content creates a cumulative effect in which users are continuously presented with specific narratives and visual representations through personalized algorithms, thereby increasing the frequency of interaction and reinforcing the belief that such content reflects actual social reality (Robertson et al., 2024). Media realism perception emerges as a crucial mechanism whereby individuals repeatedly exposed to visual and narrative content come to perceive media representations as accurate reflections of everyday life.

As a major agent in shaping public opinion and social norms in the digital age, social media plays a crucial role in accelerating this shift. It influences individuals' self-perceptions through mechanisms of social comparison, feedback, and social identity. Among various social media platforms, Instagram has emerged as a primary medium for exposure to highly influential visual and narrative content. As one of the world's most popular social networking platforms, Instagram is closely associated with this phenomenon. According to data reported by GoodStats (Agnes Z. Yonatan, 2025), Indonesia ranked fourth globally in the number of Instagram users, with more than 108.05 million active users as of April 2025. Consequently, Instagram plays a central role in shaping this phenomenon.

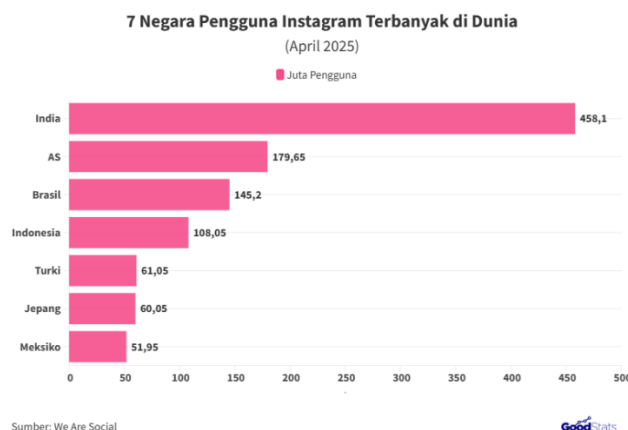


Figure 1.1. Countries with the Largest Number of Instagram Users
(Source: GoodStats.com)

According to NapoleonCat (2025), the number of Instagram users in Indonesia reached 92.6 million in January 2025, with the majority belonging to the 25–34-year-old age group. This demographic represents a generation that is more adaptive to global and modern values and is more likely to challenge traditional norms through digital interactions. Instagram provides extensive opportunities for indirect communication (Bowo et al., 2023). The platform facilitates various forms of content, including aesthetically curated photographs, short-form videos (Reels), temporary posts (Stories), and long-form posts that frequently showcase the personal lives of celebrities, influencers, and ordinary users. Such content often includes intimate disclosures, such as pregnancy experiences, emotional struggles, and expressions of support from online communities. With an average usage time of 15.4 hours per month, or approximately 924 minutes (Agnes Z. Yonatan, 2025), intensive exposure to Instagram content may influence users' attitudes and behaviors, making the issue of premarital pregnancy appear more relatable, socially acceptable, and less taboo.

This phenomenon further highlights that digital spaces, particularly social media, serve as arenas for constructing new meanings surrounding moral and social issues. Support expressed through appreciative comments, praise for postnatal physical appearance, and affectionate responses toward children ultimately contributes to the perception that such experiences are no longer viewed as social deviations but rather as ordinary events and even worthy of celebration. Consequently, repeated exposure to these forms of positive engagement may gradually reshape public perceptions and contribute to the normalization of premarital pregnancy within digital culture.

Supporting this perspective, Bień et al. (2026) found that exposure to social media portraying unrealistic representations of pregnancy—characterized as excessively idealized, aesthetically perfect, and free from imperfections—was negatively associated with healthy maternal behaviors through the mediating roles of body image and perceptions of media representation. This cross-sectional study involving pregnant women in Poland demonstrated that the stronger the perception that the media presents unrealistic images of pregnancy, the lower the respondents' engagement in healthy pregnancy-related behaviors. The regression model explained up to 87% of the variance in maternal health behaviors. However, the study has several limitations. Its sample was limited to pregnant women in a European country, its primary focus was restricted to physical health behaviors, and it neither specifically measured the frequency of Instagram exposure nor examined social attitudes or the normalization of premarital pregnancy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teori Kultivasi

Cultivation Theory was developed by George Gerbner, a Hungarian-born scholar who retired from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. Gerbner argued that because television is saturated with violent scenes, individuals who spend considerable time watching it are more likely to develop an exaggerated belief that the world is a dangerous and frightening place (Widiastuti & Si, 2013). According to West and Turner, Gerbner and Gross initiated the Cultural Indicators Project by systematically monitoring television programming and examining the public's conception of social reality. Gerbner proposed that mass communication, particularly television, cultivates specific beliefs about reality that gradually become accepted as normal by

audiences. He further argued that much of our knowledge about the world is derived not from direct personal experience but from media exposure. For habitual viewers, violence on television becomes perceived as ordinary because it represents one of the simplest and least expensive forms of dramatic content to produce.

Cultivation Theory is not limited to television violence but can also be applied to understanding how various forms of media influence public perceptions of social reality. Gerbner distinguished between two primary perspectives: the transmissional perspective, which views media as a channel for transmitting messages, and the ritual perspective, which regards media as a vehicle for representing shared beliefs and cultural values within society (Widiastuti & Si, 2013). West and Turner (2010, as cited in Widiastuti & Si, 2013) identified three fundamental assumptions of Cultivation Theory:

- 1) Television is fundamentally different from other forms of mass media. It does not require literacy skills, is freely accessible, combines visual and auditory information, requires no travel, and can be enjoyed by audiences of all ages. These characteristics make television a powerful cultural instrument in shaping societal values and culture.
- 2) Television shapes patterns of thought and social understanding. Rather than directly persuading audiences, television presents a version of the world that appears convincing and realistic. Its primary function is to stabilize existing social patterns, reinforce resistance to social change, and serve as a medium of socialization and enculturation.
- 3) The influence of television is gradual but cumulative. Gerbner illustrated this concept through the ice age analogy, suggesting that although television's effects may appear insignificant at any given moment, their consistent and widespread nature ultimately produces substantial long-term changes in individuals' perceptions of reality (Widiastuti & Si, 2013).

The cultivation process involves three major branches of analysis (Widiastuti & Si, 2013):

- 1) Institutional Process Analysis, which examines why media institutions produce particular types of messages.
- 2) Message System Analysis, which employs content analysis to measure media content, particularly the prevalence of dramatic violence.
- 3) Cultivation Analysis, which investigates how media content shapes audience perceptions by comparing the perceptions of heavy viewers and light viewers.

West and Turner (2010, as cited in Widiastuti & Si, 2013) further described this process as consisting of four stages: analyzing the media message system, formulating questions regarding audiences' perceptions of social reality, conducting audience surveys, and comparing the perceived social realities of heavy and light viewers through what they termed the cultivation differential. Cultivation occurs through two primary mechanisms:

- 1) Mainstreaming: Penonton berat cenderung memiliki pandangan dunia yang lebih homogen dan mendekati gambaran yang disajikan media, meskipun berbeda dengan realitas objektif (Widiastuti & Si, 2013)
- 2) Resonance: Efek kultivasi menjadi lebih kuat ketika pengalaman pribadi penonton sesuai dengan apa yang digambarkan oleh media (Widiastuti & Si, 2013)

These mechanisms produce both first-order effects, involving beliefs about factual aspects of reality, and second-order effects, involving beliefs, values, and assumptions about the social world (Widiastuti & Si, 2013). In today's digital era, Cultivation Theory remains highly relevant and has been extended to social media platforms such as Instagram. Social media has become a primary source of information and entertainment, continuously exposing users to visual, emotional, and repetitive content. Repeated exposure to particular types of content may gradually influence how users interpret and construct their understanding of social reality (Shrum, 2017).

Social Media

a. The Basic Concept of Social Media

Today, social media has become an integral part of everyday life for people around the world. The abundance of information and the wide range of functions offered by social media have made it a primary necessity in responding to the challenges of globalization. The term *social media* consists of two words: *media* and *social*. *Media* refers to a means or tool of communication that can be used by individuals, whereas *social* is derived from the Latin word *socius*, meaning to grow and develop within a collective social life (Kurnia et al., 2018). Kaplan and Haenlein (as cited in Cahyono, 2016) define social media as a group of Internet-based applications built upon the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Similarly, Ainiyah et al. (2018) describe social media as online platforms through which users can participate, share information, and create content for blogs, social networking sites, wikis, forums, and virtual communities. Thus,

social media can be understood as a virtual environment where individuals create online identities, connect with others, exchange information, and communicate. Currently, the largest social media platforms include Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter.

b. Characteristics and Functions of Social Media in the Digital Era

The characteristics of social media in the digital era can be understood through the framework proposed by Mayfield (2008, as cited in Hajah et al., 2017), who identified five key characteristics of social media: participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness. These characteristics distinguish social media from traditional media because users are no longer passive recipients of information but actively participate in the production, distribution, and consumption of content. Consistent with this perspective, Cahyono (2016) states that "social media is an online medium through which users can easily participate, share, and create content, including blogs, social networking sites, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds." These characteristics of participation and content sharing enable information to spread rapidly, inexpensively, and beyond geographical and temporal boundaries.

The functions of social media in the digital era can be further explained using the Honeycomb Framework proposed by Kietzmann et al. (2011). This framework identifies seven functional building blocks of social media:

1. Identity – Users present themselves through profiles, photographs, and personal information.
2. Conversations – Social media facilitates two-way communication and interaction among users.
3. Sharing – It enables the exchange of various forms of content, including text, images, and videos.
4. Presence – It indicates users' availability and real-time online presence.
5. Relationships – It supports the creation and maintenance of social connections.
6. Reputation – It shapes users' credibility, status, and public perception.
7. Groups – It facilitates the formation of communities based on shared interests.

These functions position social media as a social infrastructure that supports a wide range of activities, from interpersonal communication to collective mobilization. Within the Indonesian context, Cahyono (2016) explains that the positive functions of social media include facilitating interaction with many people, expanding social networks, eliminating barriers of distance and time, providing opportunities for self-expression, accelerating information dissemination, and reducing communication costs.

Normalization of Premarital Pregnancy

a. The Concept of the Normalization of Premarital Pregnancy

The normalization of premarital pregnancy is defined as a social and cognitive process through which pregnancy occurring before or outside marriage (*premarital* or *out-of-wedlock pregnancy*) is increasingly perceived as ordinary, socially acceptable, or even desirable within society. Consequently, the moral, social, and religious stigma that has traditionally been associated with such pregnancies becomes diminished or disappears altogether. This normalization encompasses not only changes in individual perceptions but also broader shifts in collective social norms that make the behavior appear no longer deviant from prevailing societal standards.

b. The Social Dynamics of the Normalization of Premarital Pregnancy

The normalization of premarital pregnancy is a dynamic social phenomenon influenced by interactions among norms operating at multiple levels of the social structure. According to Mollborn et al. (2014), pregnancy-related norms operate multidimensionally at the individual, peer-group, and institutional levels. They argue that differences in the configuration of norms across these levels result in varying degrees of acceptance of premarital pregnancy, causing the normalization process to occur unevenly across different social groups.

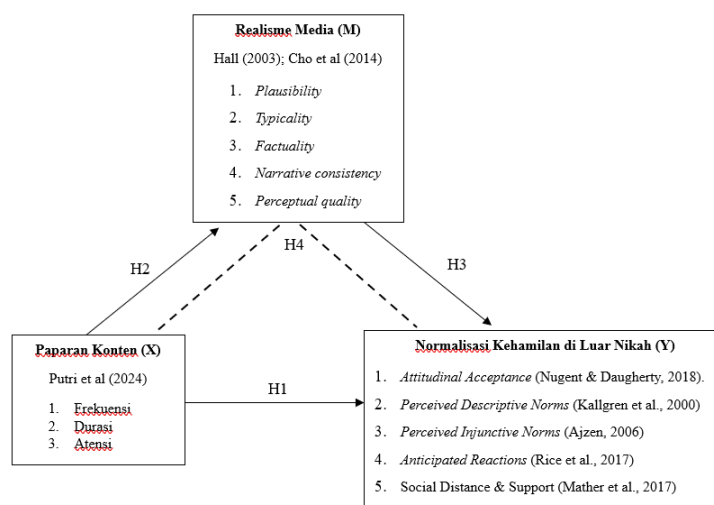


Figure 2.1. Research Framework
Source: Prepared by the Author (2026)

Research Hypotheses

A hypothesis is defined as a tentative yet testable statement that predicts what is expected to be found in empirical data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It represents a logically derived relationship between two or more variables expressed in the form of a testable proposition. By testing hypotheses and confirming the proposed relationships, researchers seek to identify solutions to the research problem. Based on the theoretical framework, the hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

H1: Instagram content exposure has a significant effect on the normalization of premarital pregnancy.

H2: Instagram content exposure has a significant effect on media realism perception.

H3: Media realism perception has a significant effect on the normalization of premarital pregnancy.

H4: Media realism perception mediates the relationship between Instagram content exposure and the normalization of premarital pregnancy.

Scope of the Study

Research Variables

This study is confined to a specific scope to ensure that the research remains focused and empirically testable. Broadly, the study examines the mediating relationship among three principal variables: Instagram content exposure as the independent variable, media realism perception as the mediating variable, and the normalization of premarital pregnancy as the dependent variable.

The variables and their respective dimensions are defined as follows:

1. Instagram Content Exposure (X) is limited to three dimensions: frequency, duration, and attention toward Instagram content related to premarital pregnancy.
2. Media Realism Perception (M) is limited to five dimensions: plausibility, typicality, factuality, narrative consistency, and perceptual quality.
3. Normalization of Premarital Pregnancy (Y) is limited to five dimensions: personal acceptance, descriptive norms, injunctive norms, anticipated social reactions and stigma, and social distance and support.
- 4.

Research Location and Research Object

The object of this study consists of Instagram content discussing or portraying the phenomenon of premarital pregnancy, particularly content circulated during 2025, including the viral Erika Carlina case. The research subjects are active Instagram users in Indonesia who have been exposed to such content, with the primary sample drawn from followers of Erika Carlina's Instagram account.

Accordingly, the scope of this study is specifically designed to provide a comprehensive and empirically measurable understanding of the role of media realism perception in mediating the relationship between Instagram content exposure and the normalization of premarital pregnancy.

METHOD

Operationalization of Variables and Measurement Scale

The independent variable is a single characteristic that cannot be altered by other variables in the study and is presumed to influence the dependent variable (Rianto Rahadi & Farid, 2021). In this study, Instagram Content Exposure serves as the independent variable (X) and is operationalized as the level of respondents' exposure to Instagram content discussing or portraying premarital pregnancy. This variable is measured using three primary dimensions adapted from Putri et al. (2024):

1. Frequency
2. Duration
3. Attention

The dependent variable is a variable whose value is influenced by other variables within the research model (Rianto Rahadi & Farid, 2021). In this study, the Normalization of Premarital Pregnancy serves as the dependent variable (Y), representing the degree to which respondents perceive premarital pregnancy as an acceptable and socially non-stigmatized phenomenon. This variable is measured using the following five dimensions:

1. Personal Acceptance (Nugent & Daugherty, 2018): Measures respondents' personal attitudes toward premarital pregnancy.
2. Descriptive Norms (Kallgren et al., 2000): Assess respondents' perceptions regarding how common premarital pregnancy is within their social environment.
3. Injunctive Norms (Ajzen, 2006): Measure the extent to which significant others approve of or support premarital pregnancy.
4. Anticipated Social Reactions and Stigma (Rice et al., 2017): Assess respondents' expectations regarding society's reactions if premarital pregnancy occurs.
5. Social Distance and Support (Mather et al., 2017; Cho et al., 2014): Measure respondents' level of comfort with and willingness to provide support to women experiencing premarital pregnancy.

These five dimensions enable the study to capture the normalization process comprehensively, ranging from individual attitudes to actual supportive behaviors. This multidimensional approach is particularly relevant within the Indonesian context, where religious values and conservative cultural norms remain influential, allowing for a more accurate assessment of shifts in social norms as the dependent variable in the proposed mediation model.

The mediating variable (M) is Media Realism Perception, defined as respondents' perceptions of the extent to which Instagram content realistically represents real-life situations related to premarital pregnancy. This variable is measured using the five dimensions proposed by Hall (2003) and operationalized through the validated measurement scale developed by Cho et al. (2014):

1. Plausibility
2. Typicality
3. Factuality
4. Narrative Consistency
5. Perceptual Quality

Population and Sample

In this study, the population serves as the primary reference for the research, as all followers of Erika Carlina's Instagram account (@eri.carl) constitute the basis for measuring all variables under investigation. The study population comprises all followers of the Instagram account @eri.carl. According to Instagram data in 2026, the account had approximately 5,039,495 followers (HypeAuditor, 2026). Erika Carlina is an influencer based in Jakarta with a substantial following among adolescents and young adults in Indonesia.

Given the very large population size (approximately five million followers) and the absence of a complete sampling frame (i.e., a comprehensive list of followers and their identities), the population is considered an infinite population for the purposes of this study. According to Sugiyono (2019), an infinite population is one whose members cannot be quantitatively enumerated with certainty, making it impractical to specify the exact number of population elements.

This study employed a non-probability sampling technique by combining purposive sampling and convenience sampling (Priyono, 2016). Purposive sampling was used because respondents were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, namely individuals who had been exposed to Instagram content

related to the study. Convenience sampling was applied to facilitate data collection, as the questionnaire was distributed through digital platforms connected to Erika Carlina's follower community.

The inclusion criteria for respondents were as follows:

1. Active followers of the Instagram account @eri.carl.
2. Aged 18–25 years (late adolescents and young adults).
3. Active Instagram users who frequently view or follow content from @eri.carl or similar Instagram content related to pregnancy.

The sample size for this study was determined using the Slovin formula, which is commonly employed to calculate the required sample size from a known population while considering a specified margin of error. The Slovin formula is expressed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Margin of error (level of precision)

Data Collection Techniques

Primary data were obtained directly from respondents who served as the research subjects, namely followers of Erika Carlina's Instagram account (@eri.carl) who met the established sampling criteria. In this study, a questionnaire was employed as the primary instrument for collecting primary data. The questionnaire was developed using Google Forms and consisted of a series of statements and measurement scales corresponding to the study variables, particularly Instagram content exposure, media realism perception, and respondents' attitudes toward premarital pregnancy. The questionnaire was distributed online through Instagram Stories, Direct Messages (DMs) to active followers, and a Google Forms link shared via relevant digital channels. Primary data were collected between May and June 2026. A screening question was included at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure that respondents met the inclusion criteria, namely being active followers of @eri.carl, aged 18–25 years, and frequent viewers of similar Instagram content. Secondary data refer to data obtained indirectly from existing documents and published sources. These data were used to strengthen the analysis, provide contextual background, and support the interpretation of the primary data. In this study, secondary data were collected from several sources, including national and international scholarly journal articles addressing topics related to this research, as well as academic books and relevant theoretical literature. The use of secondary data was essential for supporting the discussion of Erika Carlina's Instagram content related to premarital pregnancy, enabling the study to better explain the relationship between media exposure, media realism perception, and social norms among the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Path analysis of 400 respondents showed that Instagram content exposure had a positive and significant effect on the normalization of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. The direct effect was 0.4806 ($p < 0.001$), while the total effect reached 0.7876, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.7876. This relatively high beta value indicates that the influence of Instagram content exposure on the normalization of out-of-wedlock pregnancy falls into the strong category. Each one-unit increase in the intensity of content exposure increases the normalization score of out-of-wedlock pregnancy by 0.7876 units. This finding is further supported by the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 68.90%, indicating that the research model explains most of the variation in respondents' normalization of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1), stating that Instagram content exposure influences the normalization of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, is supported. These findings suggest that exposure to Instagram content plays a substantial role in shaping shifts in attitudes and social perceptions among younger generations. Unlike traditional media, Instagram delivers content through highly visual and interactive features such as Reels, Stories, and comment sections. Erika Carlina's pregnancy-related content, presented with aesthetically appealing visuals and emotional narratives, is more likely to be accepted because it is framed in a way that closely reflects the audience's everyday experiences. Effect of Content Exposure on Media Realism

The path analysis of 400 respondents also demonstrated that Instagram content exposure had a positive and significant effect on media realism perception. The estimated path coefficient was 0.7605, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This relatively high beta coefficient indicates that the effect of Instagram content exposure on media realism perception is strong. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) for the media realism model was

57.84%, indicating that Instagram content exposure explained 57.84% of the variance in respondents' perceptions of media realism. In other words, the greater the intensity of Instagram content exposure experienced by respondents, the stronger their perception that the content reflects real-life situations.

Analysis Results

a.) Normality Test for Variable X

Fit Assessment ▼

Fit Statistics ▼

Test	Statistic	p
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.05162	.237

Figure 4.22. Normality Test Results for Variable X in JASP

(Source: Processed by the Researcher, 2026)

Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test conducted for Variable X, the significance value obtained was 0.237, which is greater than the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the data for Variable X are normally distributed.

b.) Normality Test for Variable M

Fit Assessment

Fit Statistics

Test	Statistic	p
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.03657	.658

Figure 4.23. Normality Test Results for Variable M in JASP

(Source: Processed by the Researcher, 2026)

Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test conducted for Variable M, the significance value obtained was 0.658, which is greater than the significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the data for Variable M are normally distributed.

c.) Normality Test for Variable Y

Fit Assessment

Fit Statistics

Test	Statistic	p
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.03973	.553

Figure 4.24. Normality Test Results for Variable Y in JASP

(Source: Processed by the Researcher, 2026)

Based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test conducted for Variable Y, the significance value obtained was 0.553, which is greater than the significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the data for Variable Y are normally distributed.

Partial Hypothesis (T- test)

a.) T-Test Results for the Effects of Variables X and M on Variable Y

Coefficients ▼

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
M ₀	(Intercept)	69.76	0.5300		131.6	< .001
M ₁	(Intercept)	28.49	1.799		15.83	< .001
	Paparan Konten	1.387	0.05936	0.7605	23.37	< .001

Figure 4.26. T-Test Results for the Effect of Variable X on Variable M in JASP

(Source: Processed by the Researcher, 2026)

Based on the t-test examining the effect of Instagram Content Exposure (variable X) on Media Realism (variable M), the regression coefficient was 1.387, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. The t-value of 23.37 indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. The regression coefficient suggests that each one-unit increase in Instagram Content Exposure is associated with a 1.387-unit increase in the Media Realism score. Furthermore, the standardized beta coefficient of 0.7605 indicates that the effect of Instagram Content Exposure on Media Realism falls within the strong category.

b.) T-Test Results for the Effects of Variables X and M on Variable Y

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
M ₀	(Intercept)	63.32	0.4452		142.2	< .001
M ₁	(Intercept)	17.77	1.659		10.71	< .001
	Paparan Konten	0.7362	0.06603	0.4806	11.15	< .001
	Realisme media	0.3391	0.03620	0.4037	9.366	< .001

Figure 4.27. T-Test Results for the Effects of Variables X and M on Variable Y in JASP

(Source: Processed by the Researcher, 2026)

Based on the T-test examining the effects of Instagram Content Exposure (variable X) and Media Realism (variable M) on the Normalization of Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy (variable Y), the regression coefficient for Instagram Content Exposure was 0.7362, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. The t-value of 11.15 indicates that the effect of Instagram Content Exposure on the Normalization of Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy is statistically significant. In addition, the regression coefficient for Media Realism was 0.3391, with a t-value of 9.366 and a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicating a statistically significant effect as well. The standardized beta coefficients of 0.4806 for Instagram Content Exposure and 0.4037 for Media Realism suggest that the effects of both variables fall within the moderate category.

c.) T-Test Results for the Effect of Variable X on Variable Y

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
M ₀	(Intercept)	63.32	0.4452		142.2	< .001
M ₁	(Intercept)	27.43	1.434		19.12	< .001
	Paparan Konten	1.207	0.04732	0.7876	25.50	< .001

Figure 4.28. T-Test Results for the Effect of Variable X on Variable Y in JASP

(Source: Processed by the Researcher, 2026)

Based on the regression analysis examining the effect of Instagram Content Exposure (variable X) on the Normalization of Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy (variable Y), the regression coefficient was 1.207, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. The t-value of 25.50 indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. The regression

coefficient suggests that each one-unit increase in Instagram Content Exposure is associated with a 1.207-unit increase in the Normalization of Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy score. Furthermore, the standardized beta coefficient of 0.7876 indicates that the effect of Instagram Content Exposure on the Normalization of Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy is strong.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that media realism perception serves as a mediator in the relationship between Instagram content exposure and the normalization of premarital pregnancy among followers of the @eri.carl Instagram account. All proposed hypotheses were supported. The results of the path analysis indicate that Instagram content exposure has a positive and significant effect on the normalization of premarital pregnancy, both directly and indirectly through media realism perception. Instagram content exposure was also found to have a significant positive effect on media realism perception, while media realism perception significantly influenced the normalization of premarital pregnancy. These findings suggest that the more frequently respondents were exposed to Erika Carlina's pregnancy-related content on Instagram, the greater their tendency to perceive premarital pregnancy as socially acceptable. The significant indirect effect through media realism perception indicates that the content presented on Instagram encourages audiences to perceive such situations as realistic and plausible in everyday life. Since the mediation effect was partial rather than full, Instagram content exposure continued to exert a substantial direct influence on the normalization of premarital pregnancy beyond its indirect effect through media realism perception.

In the Indonesian context, where religious values and conservative cultural norms remain influential, the findings suggest that Instagram may contribute to a gradual shift in social norms. The platform's highly visual content, frequent exposure, and personalized algorithmic recommendations intensify users' exposure to narratives of premarital pregnancy, thereby facilitating the cultivation of media realism perception. Although premarital pregnancy is still generally regarded as inconsistent with prevailing moral values, respondents who were actively exposed to this content demonstrated relatively high levels of acceptance. An additional finding revealed that there were no significant differences in the level of normalization based on gender or occupation. This indicates that the effects of Instagram content exposure on media realism perception and the normalization of premarital pregnancy were relatively consistent across different demographic groups. Overall, this study confirms that social media platforms such as Instagram play an important role in shaping the perceptions and social norms of young people, particularly through repeated exposure that makes media content appear increasingly realistic.

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