

Media Convergence And Peer Communication: An Analysis Of Digital Message Strategies Of North Sumatra Genre Ambassadors In Family Life Preparation Campaigns

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ABSTRACT

*The development of information technology triggers media convergence that redefines the information consumption patterns of the younger generation. Crucial issues such as Family Life Preparation for Adolescents (PKBR) and stunting prevention often experience communication resistance due to rigid socio-cultural message packaging. This study aims to examine and analyze the digital communication strategies implemented by GenRe (Generasi Berencana) Ambassadors of North Sumatra in conducting PKBR education and rejecting TRIAD KRR risks (Free Sex, Early Marriage, and Illegal Drugs). Grounded in Harold Lasswell's Communication Formula (Who Says What In Which Channel To Whom With What Effect) and Peer Group Communication Theory, this study uses a descriptive qualitative interpretative approach. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 10 main informants consisting of BKKBN North Sumatra officials and GenRe Ambassadors across generations (2018-2025), alongside document analysis of the @genresumut Instagram account. The results indicate that the elimination of communication barriers is driven by the status of GenRe Ambassadors as peer communicators who possess high socio-cultural homophily with the audience. Formulated messages use creative-popular narratives, dynamic infographics, and short audio-visual products (Reels and TikTok) to convert formal issues into casual conversations. Dissemination channels optimize interactive new social media algorithms to engage Generation Z and Alpha massively, resulting in cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes among youth in North Sumatra. **Keywords:** Communication Accommodation, Family Communication Patterns, Intimate Wedding, Negotiated Ritual Modernity.*

Keywords: Digital Communication Strategy, Harold Lasswell Formula, Peer Communication, GenRe Ambassador, Media Convergence.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of the modern digital media landscape have brought fundamental shifts in the way society, especially the younger generation, exchanges messages and absorbs information. Media convergence demands a transformation of communication channels from linear-conventional forms toward interactive and fast-paced digital network platforms. This phenomenon creates distinct challenges for government institutions, such as the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), which holds the major responsibility of disseminating national strategic programs. One essential program that serves as a pillar for national human resource development is the Preparation for Family Life for Adolescents (PKBR). In North Sumatra Province, this program faces relatively complex geographical and socio-cultural challenges. Bureaucratic-formal delivery styles often trigger communication fatigue and psychological resistance among youth. Furthermore, the educational material covers sensitive topics often stigmatized as taboo by

eastern sociocultural structures, such as reproductive health, sexuality, the dangers of free sex, child marriage, and drug abuse—collectively categorized under the term TRIAD KRR.

To overcome these communication barriers, BKKBN North Sumatra launched an initiative to empower strategic groups through the selection of GenRe (Generasi Berencana) Ambassadors. GenRe Ambassadors are trained and positioned as information bridges that adopt peer group communication principles. Appointing agents of change from the youth community itself is expected to reduce sociocultural and psychological distance through the concepts of shared identity, age, lifestyle, and language (homophily). Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to comprehensively dissect and analyze how the implementation of the digital communication strategies of North Sumatra GenRe Ambassadors is applied by adaptively utilizing Harold D. Lasswell's classic communication formula framework in the current era of media convergence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research focuses its analysis on the integration of two main pillars in the theoretical realm of communication science. The first pillar is Harold D. Lasswell's Communication Formula paradigm (1948). Lasswell formulated an approach to analyze the communication process through five continuous core questions: *Who* (the communicator), *Says What* (the content and structure of the message), *In Which Channel* (the convergent media platforms utilized), *To Whom* (the target audience segmentation), and *With What Effect* (the impact or changes manifested in the receiver). This five-element approach is highly relevant for structurally unraveling the effectiveness of digital message dissemination.

The second theoretical pillar is Peer Group Communication Theory and the concept of *Homophily* developed by Everett Rogers (2003). Rogers argues that the transfer of information and adoption of innovations run much more effectively when the communicator and receiver share similar personal characteristics, educational backgrounds, social classes, or age (homophilous). Conversely, heterophilous communication (notable differences in social strata or age) tends to create psychological distrust, message distortion, and persuasive failure. In this context, GenRe Ambassadors act as homophilous bridges that simplify state regulations into casual sociocultural dialects easily accepted by their peer communities.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive interpretative approach aimed at deeply portraying the actual communication strategies of the observed object without laboratory intervention. The locus of this research is centered in the Province of North Sumatra, focusing on digital campaign activities from mid-2018 to early 2026. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 10 main informants selected using a purposive sampling technique. The profiles of the 10 main informants include: 2 functional officials managing the Adolescent Resilience program at BKKBN North Sumatra, and 8 cross-generational North Sumatra GenRe Ambassadors who are actively serving or are

alumni affiliated with the North Sumatra GenRe Forum. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained through digital participant observation and document analysis of the timeline, feed content, Reels, and comment interactions on the official social media account @genresumut. Data validity and credibility were tested periodically through source and technique triangulation methods before drawing final conclusions using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through the transcription of in-depth interview data with the 10 informants and social media content analysis of @genresumut, the dynamics of the digital communication strategy of North Sumatra GenRe Ambassadors are broken down into five linear dimensions according to the Lasswell formula:

A. Who Dimension (GenRe Ambassadors as Credible Peer Communicators)

Field findings show that North Sumatra GenRe Ambassadors do not merely function as institutional ornaments (tokenism) but actively engage as core communicators. They are equipped with intensive capacity building regarding GenRe substances, public speaking techniques, and basic digital content creativity. Physical attributes such as ambassador sashes, GenRe batik uniforms, and a trendy yet high-achieving persona are intentionally constructed to project academic charisma alongside personal proximity. This age-proximity factor successfully breaks down the sociocultural resistance of youth, who typically reject discussing sexuality issues when conveyed by parents or teachers.

B. Says What Dimension (Creative Message Formulation Against TRIAD KRR)

The core substance of the messages covers the three major threats to youth (TRIAD KRR) and upstream stunting prevention starting from the adolescent phase through balanced nutrition fulfillment, as well as planning the marriage age to a minimum of 21 for women and 25 for men. Informants revealed that message construction strategies are carried out using "issue taming" techniques. Complex medical or legal terms are transformed into popular narratives. The use of storytelling content, reality comedy sketches of youth life in Medan, bright-colored infographics, and local North Sumatran jargon proved effective in generating high engagement.

C. In Which Channel Dimension (Optimizing Convergent Digital Platforms)

The public relations of BKKBN North Sumatra, along with GenRe Ambassadors, executed a radical shift from one-way brochures and socialization to utilizing convergent platforms. Instagram is utilized as the primary corridor for visual information and activity galleries; TikTok is leveraged to tap into the FYP (For You Page) algorithm through dance or trending video challenges embedded with PKBR messages; while YouTube functions as a repository for deep-dive documentaries and podcasts. This convergence allows a single core material to be reproduced into various media formats matching digital audience characteristics.

D. To Whom Dimension (Youth Target Audience Segmentation)

The target audience is meticulously classified by informants based on the psychological age brackets of BKKBN: Early Adolescents (10-14 years old), Mid-Adolescents (15-19 years old), and Late Adolescents/University Students (20-24

years old). GenRe Ambassadors differentiate their approach strategies where early adolescents are given more interactive animated content, while mid and late adolescents are provided with more open, two-way discussion spaces through Instagram Story "Question Boxes" and live streaming sessions.

E. With What Effect Dimension (Manifestation of Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Impacts)

Impact evaluation demonstrates progressive results. Cognitively, there is an increase in reproductive health literacy among followers of GenRe North Sumatra's social media. Affectively, a collective consciousness has been built that planning the future is not embarrassing but rather a modern lifestyle. Behaviorally, based on supporting internal secondary data from BKKBN, this massive campaign contributed positively to an increased understanding of delaying the first marriage age across several urban spots in North Sumatra.

CONCLUSION

The digital communication strategy deployed by the GenRe Ambassadors of North Sumatra Province highlights a successful integration model between the power of interpersonal peer group communication and the dynamism of convergent new media technologies. By functioning as highly capable homophilous communicators, the psychological, bureaucratic, and sociocultural barriers previously attached to family planning and PKBR programs have been significantly reduced. The Lasswell formula approach proves that precision in selecting communicators, formulating casual-educational messages, selecting visual social media, and mapping audience age segmentations correlates directly with achieving positive behavioral changes among the younger generation in North Sumatra..

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