

## Children Health Information on Instagram: The Perception of Parents from Y and Z Generation

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### ABSTRACT :

This study explores how Gen Y and Gen Z parents engage with children's health information on Instagram, a popular topic on the platform. Using qualitative methods, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with parents who actively follow health-focused accounts. Findings show that parents' content perception begins at the selection stage, with most preferring content created by doctors. They favor science-based, easily understood information and are drawn to doctors and influencers who communicate with empathy and clarity. Gen Z parents, typically with younger children, prioritize physical health, while Gen Y parents, often with older children, focus on psychological development. Gen Y is more open to longer text-based content, whereas Gen Z prefers audiovisual formats and still often refers to mom-influencers for children's health information aside from doctors. The study suggests that health institutions should equip doctors with content creation skills, policymakers should encourage reliance on scientifically backed information, and health educators should personalize messages to connect effectively with each generation. Further studies should explore how fathers perceive health-related information from social media since the parents represented in this article are all mothers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Health is one of the most important aspects of life. It is natural for people to do anything to keep themselves and their loved ones healthy. The advancement of technology has enabled people to access health information. Moreover, currently the level of internet penetration has risen each year. Based on the report of internet user from APJII, in 2022 Indonesia's internet user is 210 million. It has increased about 35 million compared to the previous year (Dewi, 2022).

Given the importance of health and the rise of information technology that results in various communication channels nowadays, health communication has gained more attention. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines health communication as “the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health”. It relies on different communication activities or action areas (Schiavo, 2014). Health communication encompasses a range of strategies designed to spread health-related information with the goal of influencing behaviour within a specific society or community (Moola, 2022)(Sutanto & Arifin, 2024).

One of the products of technological advancement that is very popular and widely used by almost everyone around the world today is social media. Social media is an online platform that allows users to interact, share content, and connect with others virtually(Sinaga et al., 2024). Social media is a platform that supports two-way social interaction between users, whether individually or in groups, and serves various purposes such as disseminating information, socialization, product promotion, improving image, and responding to emergency situations (Yavetz & Aharony, 2022).

Previous research highlighted that social media plays an important role in communicating health messages. Social media has changed the way people communicate about health. Social media use has indicated to impact a range of health-related behaviours, attitude and outcome both in positive and negative ways. The result of study reported that younger ages and women are associated with higher likelihood of engaging in social media activities regarding health (Chou et al., 2021). There was literature study highlighted that social media has a positive contribution towards health promotional efforts (Leonita & Jalinus, 2018). Health promotional effort was proven to be effective in changing behaviour when it used social media (TikTok) to disseminate the message (Al Hanif et al., 2023). Another analysis suggested that in terms of health care communication, media such as website and Instagram are the most potential channel in promoting health (Vionita & Prayoga, 2021).

There was a study that analyzed the role of Instagram in disseminating information about non-communicable disease by the official account of Indonesian Health Ministry through the account of @ p2ptmkemenkesri. That study implied that the information provided by the Instagram @ p2ptmkemenkesri account has an effect on increasing knowledge about health in followers of the Instagram @ p2ptmkemenkesri account(Sekarwulan et al., 2020). The effectiveness of Instagram as media in disseminating health messages was also shown on research about the E-Health Info on the prevention of Second-hand Vape Smoker risk at University of Muhammadiyah in East Kalimantan (UMKT). The study highlighted that there is an increased level of knowledge and attitude toward the risk of second-hand vape smokers after they are exposed to Instagram (Agusthin & Amalia, 2021).

Instagram content according to experts, includes (1) Photos, which have strong visual message and have both strong literal and symbolic messages that are captivating and interesting. (2) Videos, tools that can present information, demonstrate processes, explain complex concepts, teach skills, manipulate time by speeding up or slowing down, and influence attitudes. (3) Graphic design, an art form that applies several principles, including

simplicity, balance, unity, emphasis and repetition. The elements involved in graphic design include lines, shapes, space texture and colour. (4) Instagram caption, when the caption is interesting, readers will continue reading until the end. It can provide additional information, tell stories, provide descriptions, or convey deeper messages to enrich the user's experience (Nurmuhammad & Pamungkas, 2020)

As discussed above, the increase in internet penetration is followed by the emergence of online media that create content related to health information, children development, parenting and topics related to family (Prasanti, 2017). This situation facilitated parents to get answers from the questions quickly and easily (Jati, 2021). The trend of parental use of social media to acquire information about health has been popular not only in Indonesia, but also worldwide. A previous study in the United States noted that social media provided support for parents and was effective for communicating health information. The suggestion from this study was to have more researches to further identify demographic differences in social media use among parents (Pretorius et al., 2019)

Furthermore, there was a study that examined differences between mothers and fathers in their use of the internet for information on their own health and their child's health, feeding, and playing. This research also examined sociodemographic predictors of the use of the internet for information on these topics. The study found that, compared with fathers, mothers scored higher in terms of using the internet for information on their own health, child's health, feeding, and play and intended to use Facebook to connect with other parents. These findings supported the use of the internet and Facebook as an important potential avenue for reaching mothers with health-related information. However, further research is required to understand the best medium for engaging fathers with information (Laws et al., 2019)

The way parents seek information online is essential. There were two studies from the psychology perspective about how parents seek health information online. The findings from the first research suggested that parents worldwide are heavy online users of health-related information for their children across highly diverse circumstances. A total of 6 studies found high parental health anxiety, with prevalence ranging from 14% to 52%. Although parents reported wishing for more guidance from their paediatrician on how to find reliable information, they rarely discussed retrieved information from the web. This systematic review identifies important gaps regarding the influence of health-related information on parents' health behaviour and outcomes. (Kubb & Foran, 2020)

The next research from a psychological perspective has gone beyond measures of parents' individual mental health and explored social media use and its association with family well-being. Findings indicated that fathers' use of social media for entertainment and connecting with family and friends was associated with better family well-being and health resources. However, mothers' use of social media did not have a statistically meaningful relationship with family health variables. There was no evidence that parental social media use was associated with negative family health outcomes (Olpin et al., 2023)

This study aims to fill in the gaps of previous research on the field of children's health information on social media. Earlier studies have not discussed the perception of parents

toward children health-related contents on Instagram. Nevertheless, there are earlier studies that discussed on perception about health issues. The first two are regarding public perception towards Covid-19 pandemic and health protocols. One is about the perception of students of public health regarding communication about Covid-19 pandemic (Putri & Syakurah, 2022). The next one revealed the perception of traditional market visitor about health protocols in which they adhere to some of the rules like wearing masks but found it was difficult to maintain social distancing due to the narrow space of the market (Sanjaya et al., 2022). Another research about perception concerning health was about tuberculosis. The study revealed that the community understands that tuberculosis is a contagious disease, the current weaknesses of the media and media desired (Nur Kurniawan . K & Aswadi, 2020).

Perception involves recognizing and selecting various objects related to subsequent actions. After an individual conduct the interaction with the object, the result of perception would either be positive or negative. Positive perception represents all knowledge and favourable responses such as liking, happiness, joy and other positive feelings. Negative perception represents all knowledge and responses that are not in harmony with the perceived object such as dislike, displeasure, anger and other negative emotions (Maharani & Wulandari, 2021).

Perception requires an active process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting people, objects, events, situations, and activities. The first thing to notice in this definition is that perception is an active process. We are not passive receivers of what is “out there” in the external world. Instead, we select certain things to notice, and then we organize and interpret what we have selectively noticed. The process of perception starts with selection, organization and interpretation (Wood , 2014)

There are some factors that shape perception, namely expectation, cognitive skills and social role and membership of community. The different range of age and generational background would influence the way individuals perceive things. The way the public engages with and reacts to health messages is significantly shaped by the demographic characteristics of particular groups (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021). Indonesia’s demographics today indicate that parents of young children are categorized as both Generation Y (millennials) and Generation Z. Below is the infographic that shows the proportion of Indonesia’s demographic based on the data from Statistics Indonesia:



Picture 1: Indonesia’s Demographic and Generational Division

Many studies have demonstrated that traits and values vary across generations. Cohort theory by Karl Mannheim explains differences across generations. Values, attitudes, beliefs, and inclinations of individuals are affected by important past events and social changes in society (Okros, 2022). As stated by cohort theory, growing up and experiencing specific events, emotional progression, can lead to the figuration of common values and opinions among the members that make up each cohort.

Research shows that each generation has unique characteristics, values and attitudes (Ali Alferjany & Alias, 2020). The division of generation based on Cohort Theory are as follows: Traditionalists individuals born before 1946, Baby Boomers individuals born between 1946-1964, Generation X individuals born between 1965-1979, Generation Y individuals born between 1980 and 1991, Generation Z individuals born after 1991 (Ali Alferjany & Alias, 2020).

A generation is the mutual set of ideas, behaviours, attitudes, values, and life experiences that influence work-life (Lang, 2020). Previous research had explored about different work motivation between X, Y and Z generation (Mahmoud et al., 2021). The results showed that Generation Z is more sensitive to mitivation than Generation X and Generation Y. Extrinsic regulation-material is a valid source of overall work motivation for Generation Z only. Another study on differences between generation was conducted to find out how Generations Y and Z construct basic values during Covid-19 crisis. It was noted that Generation Y is more likely to conform and follow traditions while Generation Z values stimulation, hedonism, and achievement more (Azimi et al., 2022).

Based on those earlier studies, there were research about development of health communication on social media, the important role of Instagram in disseminating health information, digital literacy for health information, how parents seek health information online, perception about health issues and studies on generational motivation difference in working environment and handling crises. However, there was no existing study that focus on how parents from different generation perceive children's health information related on Instagram. Therefore, this research aims to bridge the void between past studies by proposing two research questions: (1) How do parents perceive information about children health on Instagram? and (2) How generational difference make a distinct perception towards children health information on Instagram?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the constructivist paradigm, which ontologically places reality as socially constructed (Neuman, 2014). The approach used on this study is qualitative method. It is defined as investigation to comprehend social problem (Hennink, 2020) This study aims to understand the social reality of health information content on Instagram from the perspective of gen-x and gen-y par

The strategy of this research is phenomenology by using in-depth interview as its main data collection method. However, other data, such as field observation and documentation, will also be taken into consideration (Cresswell, 2013). The Gen-Y and Gen-Z parents were interviewed to gain their perception about the information on children and family health on

Instagram. This strategy takes the basic concept of phenomenology in which the conscious perception of the subject is the key words in understanding the lived-experience.

The data source of this study are the informants who were selected purposively (Neuman, 2014)]. Researcher would determine these subjects who can share their perception as parents towards the information of children and family health on Instagram. The parents chosen are those who were born in between 1980 – 2010, thus they belong to Gen-Y and Gen-Z . They are active Instagram users and have followed several accounts that focus on sharing content related to children and family health.

The data analysis method of this study uses eclectic analysis method which will be adjusted to the condition and needs for discovery and information extraction through qualitative data processing. (Hennink, 2020). The interview result from both of Gen Y and Gen Z parents’ perception regarding children health information in Instagram, will be coded, categorized and classified based on the main concepts of this research. The main concepts of this study are the process of perception, children related information on Instagram and generational differences. After that, themes and sub-themes will be constructed, followed by data reduction to build a comprehensive understanding (Cresswell, 2013). In this part data saturation will be reached once the answers from sources show information redundancy. Furthermore, the findings will be displayed in accordance to interesting, significant and relevant structure of topics as the objective of this study. To ensure the validity of the gathered data, source triangulation techniques will be applied. By collecting data from different perspectives—such as various participants, time points, or contexts—researchers can cross-check findings to identify patterns and discrepancies, which helps ensure that conclusions are not biased or skewed by a single source. This method strengthens the credibility of the research by validating that the results are consistent across diverse data sources.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this article, the researchers interviewed six parents: three from Generation Y, born between 1985 and 1992, and three from Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2000. All of these parents are mothers who have followed certain account whose content are about children health-related information. The following is the table of informants’ background:

Informant	Age	Occupation
Informant 1 (A)	34 years old	Insurance agent
Informant 2 (KZ)	34 years old	Finance staff
Informant 3 (SD)	38 years old	Housewife
Informant 4 (RD)	23 years old	Student
Informant 5 (AR)	27 years old	Housewife
Informant 6 (DO)	22 years old	Student

Table 1: informant background

**a. Selection**

Based on interviews, each informant has a relatively similar way of selecting Instagram accounts with health-related content. All six informants considered it important for parents, especially mothers, to always be updated on information regarding children's health. When asked about the way obtaining this information, they refer to Instagram accounts as their primary source. These mothers said that they seldom talk about children's health with their parents and only sometimes talk about this issue with their peer mothers too but still rely mostly on Instagram account. During their conversation with peer mothers sometimes they exchange information about what account to follow. As expressed by these following resources:

*"I usually follow several accounts. They are usually combination between health and parenting. I follow two accounts that I check regularly so far: @tentanganakofficial and @kejora. These are accounts created by doctors"* (Informant 1, interview)

Informant 1, being the generation Y mother, said that she regularly checks on those two accounts, one of the reasons is because she feels confident in communicator behind the account. Both are created by doctors. She seldom discusses children health topic with her mother, because she feels that there is generational gap that may result in different point of view regarding an issue.

*"I follow @motherandbaby and @gaiaparenting account, because the information there is just easy to understand, and they also have some online talks show too for further discussion"* (Informant 6, interview)

Informant 6 also confirmed that she likes to follow Instagram account as her primary source of children's health information. The accounts she follows may not be created by doctors because they also discuss about parenting. However, they also invite some doctors whenever they discuss about health-related matters.

Informant 3, being the youngest among the siblings in her family, said that she got the recommendation from her older sisters. Furthermore, she also follows the "suggestion" account from the Instagram itself based on the information search. She also said that she only follows accounts that are "official" (meaning it has the blue checkmark) and based on medical science facts.

When talking about Instagram account related to children's health, most of the mothers followed the accounts that are collectively managed (i.e not the personal account of doctor), although some of them do follow doctors' personal Instagram account too. There are some accounts that are mentioned by informants namely: @kejora, @tentanganakofficial, @orami.circle, @motherandbaby, @gaiaparenting and @parentalk. For doctors, some follow their usual pediatrics @praktekdrsanderteddy and some other follow doctors who have been active in posting contents about health especially during pandemics like @adamprabta and @drningz. The account that are collectively managed also present other information like psychological aspects in children's development, parenting, and marriage relationship. Meanwhile doctors' account focuses specifically on health.

From the selection phase, informants first choose contents based on credibility of communicator behind the account or posts, recommendation from friends and family, personal relations with account creators and the alignment with personal preference. Furthermore, when asked about the criteria of the contents itself, the informants shared their views as follows:

*"I believe good health contents are those that are reliable, based on facts and science, the language used is easy to understand and displayed in compact, concise, and clear messages". (Informant 2, interview)*

Meanwhile informant 1 also has other considerations in choosing children health related contents:

*"I always try to find an account who has similar parenting style, the one with approaching style that feels comfortable. An account whose contents are easy to understand, not using too many medical terms, and the solutions offered are applicable to my children" (Informant 1, interview)*

What has been said by the informant 1 was also agreed by informant 4 who belongs to generation Z. According to her, she likes to follow doctors' personal account because she feels that the way this doctor communicates his messages are humble, empathetic and solution-oriented. Moreover, she also knows the doctors in person. Some informants from generation Y also mentioned that they know the doctors personally (founders of @kejora), while the other know the persons behind the collective account online (@kejora and @tentanganakofficial). The familiarity built between followers and the communicator has also been one of the essential things in selecting the account to follow.

### **b. Organization**

During the organization phase, there are some schemes to help an individual create a meaning towards phenomenon or an event. These four schemes are *prototypes, personal constructs, stereotypes, and scripts*. The first one, a prototype, is the best example in a category or the most representative sample of that category. With regards to prototypes of children's health account, some informants have mentioned some accounts that are perceived as reliable. They have been categorized "reliable" with these following criteria: First, they are run and managed by people with a medical background. Second, if not managed directly by doctors, they collaborate with doctors, psychologists, and experts. Third, the content is well-presented and based on science and medical facts.

With regards to personal constructs, informant 1 and 4 have expressed similar voices. Informant 1 believes that having a good role model and storytelling are the best technique in educating kids about health issues. Below are their statements regarding the context:

*"I don't really favor people who often threat kids when they try to get the kids doing the health-related habits. That technique may work once, but that will not be good in the long run." (Informant 4, interview).*

She added that when health-related habits are associated with threats, children are less likely to adopt them genuinely, as their actions are driven by fear rather than understanding.



Moreover, the Informant 1 stressed the importance of good storytelling in persuading children:

*"I believe a good storytelling will work better in teaching the kids to apply healthy habits daily. That is why I often buy and read my kids storybooks related to daily health routines" (Informant 1, interview).*

Another aspect of personal construct is doctors' personality traits; Informants 3,4, and 6 have something in common. They do not like doctors who show superior attitudes and lack of emphatic. In their view, doctors should be able to put their position on their patient's shoes, especially mothers. Below is the explanation from Informant 3:

*"Sometimes I find that there are doctors tend to blame and judge the mothers when things go wrong. When the kids are skinny, doctors will blame mothers that she did not feed the kids well and the list goes on. These are reflected in the way they say in the content they produce" (Informant 3, interview).*

When doctors show judgmental tendencies towards the mothers, the informants feel negative about that. In contrast, when they perceive doctors as humble and empathetic, they will not doubt follow the doctors' Instagram account and listen to what they said.

Informant 1 also added that she likes to make some observations of the personal accounts of the doctors behind the official account. For example, she knows the doctors behind the accounts of @kejora and @tentanganakofficial by researching their personal life online through each doctor's personal account. She makes judgement that when these doctors are really practicing what they "preach" to their own family, then she can believe these doctors.

*Personal construct* is a mental judgement which enables individual to measure other individuals or objects based on bipolar dimension, in this case "trustworthy – not trustworthy account". Based on what these informants have said about the prototypes, stereotypes about children's health-related account. The stereotypes shaped from this prototype are that accounts with background of doctors with credibility, contents that are humble, empathetic and non-judgmental are the accounts worth following and listening. These are the accounts that are reliable as the reference whenever they need information about children and family health.

In the final step of organization, scripts are a series of mental activities that outline what we are expected to do in certain situations. In this study, researcher makes meaning towards the script as the way informants treat those contents and how they choose to execute those ideas in daily life. Each informant has selected which accounts to follow and use as a reference. The next process is organizing the information. Some informants agree that they should forward the information they have to their husbands.

*"I usually save and sometimes share the info on IG stories. But mostly I will share with my husband, because sometimes we have differences in raising child, thus I would like him to know what the experts say" (Informant 5, interview).*

Informant 1 also gave similar answer. She keeps some important contents and share them to her husband and sisters. She also explained how she practiced the knowledge she

had from the account to her daily life.

*"For example, when I face the tantrum episodes with my child, I have found some tips and tricks from the experts online and we use trial and error first to see if they work towards my kids"* (Informant 1, interview).

Other than that, informants said that they all choose contents based on the phase of their children's health and development. In this case, informants from Generation Y all have children aged three years and older. Meanwhile, informants from Generation Z have children under the age of three. This age difference also resulted in their focus in finding the right contents. For informant 4, 5 and 6 whose kid is still below 2 years old, knowledge on pregnancy, baby's basic health, children's nutrition and feeding rules are the topics they really look for.

*"Sometimes I think scrolling at your IG feeds during pregnancy could somehow trigger anxiety, especially when you see children with special needs. You are afraid that your baby will turn out like that. But then I shifted my attention to the accounts I believe will bring me peace like those doctors and health account to look for important knowledge"* (Informant 4, interview)

Another informant said that she likes to search for menu of complementary foods for breastfeeding (MPASI) for her child and also look for some parenting tips in handling toddler.

*"The things I searched most often are menus for MPASI, because I want give my kid various and delicious menus to boost his weight. As he is getting older, I also need information about parenting."* (Informant 5, interview)

Informant 6 also mentioned that for her, MPASI and child nutrition are the main topic she was looking for. She has 9-months-old baby who was considered overweight, so she tried to find information about a more balanced nutrition for her kids.

Meanwhile for informant 1,2, and 3, their focus shifted to more about children's psychological development rather than physical ones. The issues they concern the most are the right stimulation for toddlers, school readiness, motivation for study, bullying prevention, and preparation for handling challenges in early teenagers. There are some health topics they still concern about too, like what these informants say below:

*"I usually search for information about the current trend of illness, like Singapore flu, and how to prevent and cure that. Besides, I also like to explore content about creating ways to stimulate my toddler, my child is being super curious about anything now"* (informant 2, interview)

Informant 1 has acknowledged too about the difference health topic she was searching for in every phase of her children's life:

*"When my child was toddler, I focus on the way to overcome her tantrum and teach her toilet training. But now that she is bigger, I focus more on her school readiness. There is health issue I am also interested in, it is vaccinations. Especially in the post-pandemic period, I would like to catch up on vaccinations that my child has not received yet"* (informan 1, wawancara)

Informant 3, who has a 10-year-old daughter said that currently she is interested in

maintaining her daughter's mental health as she is soon entering the teenagers' phase. Below is her explanation:

*"From my observation, I see that sometimes my eldest shows lack of motivation for study. She also starts to have her own world, like she chooses to stay at home and watch YouTube rather than go to the malls with the whole family. I understand she is almost teens, but I need guidance to get along well with her"* (informant 3, interview).

### **c. Interpretation**

Interpretation is a subjective process in creating explanation about what has been observed and experienced by an individual. On this research interpretation means the subjective process experienced by each informant to explain about the observation and experience regarding child health information searching on Instagram accounts.

Almost all of informants convey their perspective about their expected health information account. They have their own personal construct, prototype, stereotype and scripts of what it takes for an account to be considered reliable and favorite. There are some informants who strongly expressed their personal views regarding their expectation of health-related information account.

First, informants 1 and informant 4, despite coming from different generations, both believe that health habits should be developed using a friendly and logical approach for children. For example, if kids refuse to brush their teeth, some adults tend to threaten them that they will be injected by doctors. According to them, it is always better to give logical reason as the real-life consequences if kids refuse to brush their teeth. Informant 1 added the following statement:

*"I follow @kejora account and I had known earlier that Kejora also published series of children book in relation to building health habits. Therefore, she feels confident to follow this account because she had known the publication earlier."* (Informant 1, interview)

It is also interesting to note that combining the social media content with the more conventional media like story book is perceived positively by the parents, especially those who have made book reading as a general habit in the family like Informant 1.

Second, informant 3 and informant 4 both emphasized the importance of a personal approach of doctors who communicate messages. Although the rest of other informants also have their preference but these two informants have expressed their idea more bluntly. They feel comfortable listening to doctors that are humble, caring, empathetic, and non-judgmental.

There are also more practical informants who interpret their reliable and favorable accounts based on the content as explained by the following three informants:

*"When I choose the children health information account on IG, I simply choose the ones that are concise, clear and easy to understand like @tentanganakofficial and @kejora. I don't mind to read longer explanation when the issues are attractive enough for me"* (Informant 2, interview).

Informant 5 said that she likes the content from @tentanganakofficial because it is always based on facts and knowledge and is presented in clear, simple narratives. Moreover, informant 6 confirmed this opinion stating that she likes to follow @motherandbaby and @gaiaparenting because their writing style suits her. On top of that these accounts also often hold online talk show in which the informant 6 like to join.

### ***Factors in Shaping Perception***

In the series of studies conducted by John Bargh in 1999, it was reported how individual's reaction is influenced by first expectation in their subconscious mind. Expectation influence perception in various communication situations. For example, if individual was told earlier that a speaker is trustworthy, then individual tend to listen with less critical manner (Wood, 2017). There are four factors that shape individual's perception, as follows:

**First: expectation.** Each informants has their own expectation regarding child health information provider. This expectation come from their experience in having interaction with the person behind the account. Here are the explanations from the informant:

*"I have known the track record of @kejora founder from the book they published and have followed the doctors behind the account for quite long time. I know that these doctors really practice what they preach on the content. So, I believe in them" (Informant 1, interview).*

Meanwhile, Informant 2 knows the founder of @kejora personally as they were school friends, thus she feels confident to follow their official account. Informant 3 build expectation from the doctors and account she follows based on her previous experience in consuming the contents there.

*"During covid pandemic I have followed several accounts like @drnings, @adamprabata and @pandemictalks. Pandemic is over, but these doctors are still active in spreading the current trends of illness, including for children. I like them best. Plus, having 3 children, I am already tired so I don't need doctors who are showing their superiority, I like doctors who are caring and humble, those who can put themselves in mothers' shoes" (Informant 3, interview).*

The expectation of parents from Z generation are similar. Informant 4 also knows in person some of doctors she follows on Instagram as they are her regular pediatrics. Other than that, she also joins online community like @orami.circle. She follows the account and join the community as well therefore her expectation was built from this interaction. Informant 4 said that the account has met her expectation well. Informant 5 follows the account based on recommendation from her older sisters whom she regarded as successful in raising their children. She is the loyal follower of account @tentanganakofficial.

**Second: cognitive skill.** It is how individual can explain such situation, people and how much knowledge they have regarding others or other objects would affect how a person select, organize and interpret experience (Wood, 2017). Based on interview with all informants, the cognitive skills seem to have improved in accordance with age and education.

Four out of six parents in this study have graduated with bachelor degree. While two of them are still studying and now on the last year of finishing their bachelor degree too.

However, age has played certain role in terms of habits of getting the information. The mothers from generation Z are still referring to mother influencer in order to get insights about health and parenting, as they mentioned below:

*"I like to follow the Instagram of mom influencers like @rachelvenya @rensiasavira and @jenniferbachdim. I think they are just cool, the way they handle their kids and still have style of their own." (Informant 6, interview).*

Moreover, another Gen Z said that, she followed the recommendation from mother influencer with regards to the choice of health-related product for their children:

*"When mom influencer shared the information about the products they use for their children especially when it is related to health, I trust them and I buy the same thing too. Like the air purifier once promoted by @rensiasavira that was claimed good for your kids breath problems" (Informant 4, interview).*

They did not put so much emphasis on educational background for the communicator of the account comparing to mothers from Generation Y, who only followed health and parenting account with the base of expert background. As long as these communicators can share their opinion in a way that suits them, they will listen to them. They do follow doctors and other official account of health and parenting expert too. But other than that, they also still believe in what the social media influencers say, regardless the fact that these influencers do not have expertise or professional background.

**Third: social role and membership in community.** This one also shapes the perception and the way individual communicate among each other. Training, occupation and daily social activities have affected how individual focus, interpret, evaluate and respond certain object, people or situation. How they would think and react would also be influenced by these background (Wood , 2014) . In this study, only one parent from Generation Y has a permanent job. Other informants from Generation Y include one who works freelance as an insurance agent and another who sells meals via online media. Meanwhile from Generation Z, one has graduated from college and now she becomes a housewife, while the other two are still university students.

Given this background, parents who have tighter schedule tend to choose concise, clear and compact information. Below is the explanation from some informants:

*"As I have entered new permanent job and a toddler, I only have little time to spend on searching of new information on children health. So, I don't search for new account; I tend to stick with the old IG account I know like @kejora" (Informant 2, interview).*

Meanwhile Informant 4 being student and a mother of one toddler also seems to be having quite flexible times as she described below:

*"I follow various account regarding children health, from personal paediatricians, collective health account, community and mom-influencer. Not only that, I also join the motherhood community activities to gather insights about children health and parenting". (Informant 4, interview).*

Based on the informants' explanation, the more time the mothers have, the more opportunity for them to explore more resources and communicate with peer mothers to gain knowledge about children health.

### **Health communication on Instagram**

Communication plays a key role in determining the effectiveness of medical research and health programs in applying evidence-based knowledge to solve health problems. The presence of Instagram now facilitates communication between healthcare experts and the public. The existence of Instagram as a social media platform also serves as a means of public health education. The nature of social media, which is easy, fast and efficient allows healthcare professionals to convey health-related information to a wide range of audiences.

According to Kingsnorth, there are seven indicators of good Instagram content, they are: credibility, how easy one content can be shared, the advantage for audience, significance, relevance, uniqueness, and strong identity (Kingsnorth, 2016). In this study, the informants have, on average owned Instagram accounts for several years and have indeed made Instagram as one of their sources of information for various topic. According to informants' responses, they pay close attention to the credibility of the individuals or expert behind a health account. For example, the accounts they follow are the those created by doctors or those who have medical and psychological expertise background like @kejora, @tentanganakofficial, @pandemictalks, @parentalk, @orami.circle, @motherandbaby and @gaiaparenting, @prakteksandersteddy, @drmingz and @adamprabata. Below are the examples of the Instagram posts of the children-related information accounts:



Picture 2: Instagram @kejora



Picture 3: Instagram @tentanganakofficial

However, the differences between parents from the two generations are that, gen z parents also listen to the opinion of mom-influencer on top of the official children health related accounts or doctors account.

The significance and relevance of Instagram content are shown through the messages of the content. The parents said that those accounts they refer to have fulfilled these two criteria. The information presented is significant because it is closely related to their children health especially on the issues that are in line with each children's phase. For informants who are pregnant and have young babies, information like breastfeeding and newborn care is essentials. For those whose children start to eat solid foods, issues like complementary foods

(MPASI), feeding option and rules, and general baby and toddler issue are important. When the kids are older, building good health habits like toilet training, teeth-brushing, choosing the healthy snacks, as well as psychological development seem to be more relevant. For mothers of school-age kids, issues like preparing school readiness, bullying prevention, studying motivation and challenges in pre-teen are central to their attention. The difference between the two generations are only shown on their interest based on the age of their respective children.

The uniqueness, how easy one content to share, and strong identity of the account can be built based on the choice of visual appearance of the account. Visual-oriented nature of Instagram, emphasizing conciseness and providing space for visual exploration, helps communicate various medical research in a way that is easily understandable to the general public. Instead of long written captions, images, graphs, and videos are used, which captivate the informants and make them interested in viewing and reading child health information despite their time constraints.

Gen Y parents have varied preferences for visual content, with some favoring vibrant colors and others preferring softer tones. They're generally open to long captions and willing to read additional information. In contrast, Gen Z parents prefer Instagram posts rich in visuals, infographics, and engaging videos, often choosing to read information directly from images rather than lengthy captions. This could be challenges for policymakers to make sure that the children health related content on Instagram come from credible source. The Indonesian Medical Association (Ikatan Dokter Indonesia) has created the regular workshops for doctors to become content creators. This is one of the positive initiatives from the medical society to respond to the people's demand regarding health related content on digital platform (Prawira, 2024)

Gen Y and Gen Z parents share similarities and differences in how they perceive children's health information on Instagram (Putra, 2016). Both generations are tech-savvy and critically evaluate sources, checking the backgrounds of health accounts and expecting clear, effective communication from doctors. Gen Y parents are generally more patient with longer, text-based content and use multiple sources to verify health information. In contrast, Gen Z parents prefer audiovisual content and, influenced by growing up in a highly digital environment, often rely on stylish Instagram influencers for health guidance—even if these influencers lack medical credentials. This aligns with findings that Gen Z seeks more visual and stimulating content than previous generations (Azimi et al., 2022).

In the future, the informants hope that social media, especially healthcare content providers, will always stay updated and refer to accurate references based on research, considering the ever-changing times. This aligns with the main benefits of using social media for health, including increased accessibility and expanded access to health information, as well as social and emotional support, especially among fellow social media followers (Chou et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

Parents generally see the information about children health on Instagram positively. The perception process starts with selection in which parents sought information on Instagram based on their personal preference and recommendation from friends and family. Then parents assess and select information based on their child's developmental stage. The last phase is the interpretation stage, in which parents make the final decision on which Instagram content is valuable, deciding which accounts to follow and rely on for children's health-related information

Generational differences create different ways of perceiving children-health related information in terms of the message format, the length of messages and the source of the information. Generation Y parents are willing to read longer captions and include books as their other reference. Meanwhile, Generation Z parents prefer contents with more attractive audio visual and include mom-influencer as their other source of information.

This study highlights that parents' preferences in children-health related information on Instagram are in accordance with the background of the communicator. Those with medical and related education background will always be top priority. Parents perceive information provided by doctors, psychologists and experts as credible and relevant. When the communicators' do not have relevant background, they should share similar life phase or experience as the parents for example mom-influencers.

The way communicator shares their content plays crucial roles in making the parents attracted to the content. The empathic nature, non-judgemental approach and the ability to simplify complicated medical terms are the positive traits they are looking for from the source. The message itself should have medical approach to earn the audience trust.

However, there is limitation on this study. The parents represented are only mothers. The future research could focus on the fathers' perception and involvement in getting children health related information from social media. Furthermore, exploring about the fathers' role on this topic would be interesting since traditionally, children health is more of mothers' domain rather than father's.

With the insights from the findings of this study, the health institution should equip doctors with better skills in creating content online because parents do listen to them regarding children's health. However, there is still also challenge ahead as some parents from younger generation also listen to mom influencers who do not have any medical background. The policymakers should ensure that the critical thinking and media literacy skills should always be taught to avoid younger generation from misinformation especially regarding health-related content. As for the health content creators, they should always learn and understand their followers better in order to be more persuasive.

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