



Viral Content and Social Change in Rural Communities

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Abstract

The rise of viral content on social media has transformed social behaviour and value systems, particularly in rural Indonesian communities exposed to unfiltered digital information. This study examines how viral content shapes traditional values and intergenerational relations. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving content creators, housewives, civil servants, and rural youth. The analysis included data reduction, classification, and interpretation. Findings reveal that viral content exerts both positive and negative effects. While some content promotes education and creativity, much of it normalises unethical behaviour and fosters individualism. Content creators often prioritize popularity over ethics, parents and teachers struggle to monitor youth exposure, and younger generations increasingly perceive traditional values as obsolete. This shift weakens communal norms such as cooperation, respect, and collective responsibility. The study concludes that viral content accelerates cultural transformation and erodes moral education in rural settings. Therefore, strengthening media literacy, digital ethics, and cultural revitalisation programs is crucial to balancing modernisation with the preservation of local wisdom and social cohesion in the digital era.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern society today is highly familiar with viral content, which has a significant impact on the evolving social values across various communities, including those in rural settings. Digital content circulating widely on social media platforms (such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts) that gains popularity for its entertainment value but includes morally or socially inappropriate elements such as indecent gestures, vulgar language, or actions that demean oneself or others. Such content is often perceived as humorous or entertaining, yet it potentially normalises unethical behaviour and undermines local moral and cultural values. Viral content not only spreads rapidly but also changes the way individuals and communities interact and form social norms (Čábyová and Krajčovič 2024). This process can influence traditional values such as mutual cooperation, politeness and communication ethics, togetherness and a sense of family, religiosity and morality, as well as adherence to customs and social norms, shorten social distances, and create space for new ideas that may enhance social welfare. Previous research indicates that viral content serves as an information channel that can encourage community participation in social issues and raise awareness (Husak and Фіялка 2018). The social value changes brought about by viral content often create new dynamics within communities. In rural contexts, social media—being the main catalyst for the spread of viral content—enables communities to share stories, experiences, and knowledge without geographical limitations (Iannone 2018). On the other hand, it can also trigger negative reactions, such as social polarization or the spread of misleading information, which requires particular attention (Husak and Фіялка, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to understand how viral content affects and shapes social values in rural communities.

Social values such as mutual cooperation, politeness and communication ethics, togetherness and a sense of family, religiosity and morality, as well as adherence to customs and social norms. Rural areas are traditionally rich and usually more stable than those in urban settings. However, with the emergence of viral content, there is a shift in the approach to social issues such as health, education, and

political participation (Husak and Фіялка 2018; Aswani et al. 2017). This process becomes more complex because rural communities often have tightly knit social networks and strong cultural values, which may be influenced by the rapid and unpredictable flow of information (Čábyová and Krajčovič 2024; Erwin et al. 2023). Viral content becomes an issue in this study because it has a significant impact on social dynamics and value changes in rural communities, which were previously relatively stable and rooted in tradition. Through social media, we can observe broadcasts by content creators in rural areas that display inappropriate content, contradicting traditional values. Currently, many teenagers and housewives in rural areas are becoming content creators, sharing aspects of their private lives and producing content related to sexual themes, even if intended merely for entertainment, which can have negative effects on viewers. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of inappropriate viral content that exposes private areas and contains sexual material created by content creators in rural areas, and how this affects the transformation of social values such as mutual cooperation, togetherness, ethics, and manners in these rural communities.

Although there is research on the influence of social media on society, there is a lack of studies specifically addressing how viral content affects social values in rural communities. Much of the existing research focuses on urban contexts and the broader impacts of social media on individual behaviour (Michael and Ramtekkar, 2022; Hoang et al. 2011). These findings highlight the need for more focused studies in traditional, smaller-scale communities, where community-based methods might be more appropriate (Qian 2017). Moreover, existing social media theories often overlook the local context and cultural uniqueness of rural areas. While there have been efforts to apply urban theoretical models to rural environments, there are often gaps between theory and practice (Husak and Фіялка 2018; Aswani et al. 2017). Further research is needed to bridge these gaps by considering new factors and local impacts of viral content.

There is also a need to understand the mechanisms behind the spread of viral content and how this relates to social change. Most previous studies have debated the nature of viral content itself but have not sufficiently focused on how this process affects norms and values (Aswani et al. 2017; Duman 2021). This relationship needs to be explored more deeply, especially in rural communities that may differ significantly from urban contexts. In theoretical terms, clarification is needed on how social values are transformed through social media. The relationship between social media and value formation needs to be further explained, including the contributing factors to this process (Iannone 2018; Erwin et al. 2023). By addressing this gap, this study aims to offer a new perspective on how viral content shapes and alters existing social norms.

Overall, research on viral content and social value change in rural communities has not been fully explored in the existing literature. This study is expected to produce new insights and demonstrate the importance of contextual analysis in examining the influence of social media on society (Čábyová and Krajčovič 2024; Michael and Ramtekkar 2022). This research seeks to provide a better understanding of the social dynamics influenced by viral content, as well as the factors that mediate this process. The primary objective is to understand how viral content influences changes in social values within rural communities. The study will explore several aspects, including how potentially viral content is identified, disseminated, and received by society (Husak and Фіялка 2018; Iannone 2018). Additionally, the research will consider the influence of social interactions among social media users in rural contexts (Aswani et al. 2017; Binggeser et al. 2014).

Another objective is to identify concrete changes in social values resulting from the spread of viral content. This includes analyzing traditional values versus newly emerging values in the community (Čábyová and Krajčovič 2024; Iannone 2018). By understanding these changes, this study aims to provide deeper insights into how viral content influences social norms, behaviors, and interactions in society. While several studies have addressed the impact of social media on society, few have specifically identified the influence of viral content in rural communities. For

instance, Iannone's study shows that viral content can stimulate social discussion and serve as a tool for advocacy (Iannone 2018), but does not delve deeply into its impact in rural contexts. Li et al. discuss the variation of content on social media platforms and its diverse impact on community interaction (Husak and Фіялка, 2018), yet they do not focus on how social values are affected in rural settings. Thongmak's research suggests that not all viral content has a positive impact (Erwin et al. 2023); emotionally charged content tends to spread more widely but can also lead to societal polarisation—a dimension often ignored in studies focusing on the positive aspects of social media.

Behfar argues that engagement on social platforms can disseminate important knowledge and information at the community level, but its long-term impact on social values remains unclear (Iannone 2018). This underscores the need for in-depth research on how viral content influences social norms in specific communities. A study by Souza et al. highlights community collaboration in social change, but does not specifically address how social media and viral content contribute to value shifts (Erwin et al. 2023). There is a need to integrate findings on collaboration with viral content analysis in rural contexts. Research on “gendertrolling” by Mantilla reflects its effect on feminist values in modern society, but again lacks focus on absorption within rural communities (Markantoni et al. 2023). Čábyová and Krajčovič explore TikTok's influence on popular culture, yet do not examine how this phenomenon is received and responded to by rural communities with distinct cultural values (Čábyová and Krajčovič 2024).

Nevertheless, several earlier studies suggest that social media can be a platform to advocate for changes in values and norms (Husak and Фіялка 2018). This research aims to deepen the understanding of viral content as a driver of value change in rural contexts. Despite the varied styles and substance of existing studies, these findings collectively highlight the need for further research integrating viral content with social values. This forms the essential foundation of the present study.

This research is crucial for understanding the impact of viral content on social values in rural communities (This rural community refers to TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook content creators who are based in rural areas) which are often overlooked in current social literature. By examining this influence, the study is expected to provide clearer insight into how social values evolve alongside the development of communication technologies (Husak and Фіялка 2018; Aswani et al. 2017). Understanding this phenomenon is a valuable contribution to the social sciences and media studies, where local components of social dynamics are key to crafting more effective policy recommendations. The importance of this study also lies in its potential to explain the interactions between older and younger generations in rural communities, showing how social values can be influenced by social media and viral content across age groups (Husak and Фіялка 2018; Michael and Ramtekkar 2022). It also aims to explore how social tensions may arise from heterogeneous value changes.

From a practical standpoint, this research could offer effective strategies for policymakers to utilize social media as a platform for public education and social advocacy, allowing important issues to be discussed in rural communities (Aswani et al. 2017; Binggeser et al. 2014). This presents an opportunity to enhance civic participation and social awareness through constructive use of viral content. More broadly, this study is expected to contribute to the development of theories concerning social media and social values. By delving into value change, the research may serve as a guide for academics and policymakers to design more relevant and responsive programs addressing ongoing societal dynamics (Erwin et al. 2023; Binggeser et al. 2014). Engaging the community in the research process will also strengthen their sense of ownership and awareness of the changes taking place, ensuring a more meaningful impact in rural society (Erwin et al. 2023; Husak and Фіялка 2018). This study has the potential to contribute to the development of more active and engaged rural communities in addressing local issues.

METHODS

This study employs qualitative research with a case study design. The case study is conducted by thoroughly exploring several instances of viral content considered inappropriate, exposing private areas, and containing sexual material, created by content creators in rural areas on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. Denzin and Lincoln emphasize that qualitative approaches aim to understand individuals' subjective experiences (Informants/participants) and the meaning they assign to the situations they encounter (Docherty 2021; Tsephe 2023). They assert that qualitative methodology is interpretive and naturalistic, emphasizing the importance of understanding the social, cultural, and environmental contexts of the research subjects (Suzuki and Quizon 2012; Trotta et al. 2021). This study explores how the viral content currently circulating on social media is capable of eroding traditional culture and the Eastern character (which contains values of ethics, manners, harmony, religiosity, patience, wisdom, a sense of shame, and obedience to social norms) of society in today's digital era.

In a case study design, the researcher investigates a phenomenon through one or more specific cases, selected based on their relevance to the research questions (Trotta et al. 2021; Carter 2020). This method is particularly useful when exploring complex ideas and variables that cannot be measured quantitatively. For example, through this approach, researchers can explore the relationship between individual experiences and their social contexts (Fifitnova et al. 2023; Wati et al. 2022). Denzin and Lincoln also highlight the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research, where researchers must consider how their position and perspective might influence the study (Prichard et al. 2004; Tsephe 2023). This study aims to gather information on how changes occur due to the proliferation of content creators displaying viral content that may sometimes be inappropriate to view, as it violates ethics, morality, and cultural decorum.

The case study in this research employed a variety of data collection techniques, such as interviews conducted with 10 key informants selected from

different age groups and occupations in rural areas who had watched or viewed inappropriate viral content on social media. Supporting informants consisted of five content creators residing in rural areas who had previously posted inappropriate viral content on social media. Other techniques included observation by the researcher on social media to examine the changes resulting from the widespread use of viral content and as well as document analysis. All of these methods aimed to produce rich and diverse data (Docherty 2021; Nagata et al. 2012). This is particularly relevant in cases where the phenomena under study are inseparable from their social and cultural contexts.

Qualitative data analysis techniques include (1) data reduction, (2) data classification, and (3) data interpretation. Data reduction involves summarizing and organizing the collected data to identify common themes and emerging patterns. Data classification groups the data based on the identified themes and patterns to facilitate analysis and interpretation. The final stage, data interpretation, involves providing meaning and explanation to the collected data based on the discovered themes and patterns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perspectives on Viral Content

The interview results, conducted with 10 key informants from various age groups and professions, such as adolescents, housewives, and professional workers, as well as 5 supporting informants who were content creators, revealed diverse opinions regarding viral content. Content creators stated that they strive to produce engaging and socially relevant content, even though this sometimes comes at the expense of ethical considerations (Kurniawan and Maknun 2023). From the creators' perspective, many feel that viral content often pressures them to continuously raise their standards and enhance their creativity in order to remain competitive on increasingly saturated platforms. Creators frequently find themselves caught in a cycle where they must constantly produce more captivating content to attract audience attention, which at times leads to the neglect of ethical boundaries in content

production. This highlights a conflict between creating quality content and the need to go viral—an ongoing dilemma for many content creators.

On the other hand, people from various walks of life experience (housewives, civil servants, entrepreneurs, and school-aged adolescents) both the positive and negative impacts of viral content. For instance, housewives perceive that viral content can offer new inspiration or knowledge, but they also express concern over its potential negative influence on their children (Falah and Aptasari 2023). Interviewed housewives noted that certain viral content which contains positive content, such as daily activities like cooking, tidying the house, and taking care of children and household chores, provides useful ideas and information, such as cooking tips or craft projects. However, they also voiced anxiety over the abundance of content displaying inappropriate behavior or violating social norms, which could be imitated by their children. This illustrates how viral content not only accelerates information dissemination but also triggers shifts in values among younger audiences. Many teenagers imitate fashion styles or slang trends from TikTok or Instagram, even though they differ from the norms or ethics taught at home or school. This shows that viral content not only accelerates information dissemination but also influences the values and behaviour of young people. A housewife watches viral content about child-rearing methods that appear funny or extreme, then tries to imitate them without realising that some methods may contradict manners or child safety. This illustrates how viral content can affect changes in values and everyday behaviour.

Informants from civil servant backgrounds expressed the view that viral content has the potential to influence public opinion and even policy-making. Moreover, they shared a more skeptical outlook regarding the effect of viral content on societal values. According to them, much viral content contains inaccurate information, contributing to misinformation and hindering the development of fact-based public opinion. They emphasized the importance of media literacy among the public to help them discern truthful and beneficial content, and they pointed out that

ethically problematic viral content can diminish the quality of social interactions in society.

The study also found that adolescents believe viral content frequently affects their behaviors and the values they hold (Musfeptial et al. 2023). School-aged youth have a distinct perspective on viral content. Based on interview results, many of them spend several hours daily on social media, exposed to a wide range of content, including educational and entertainment material. They reported that viral content often shapes their preferences for popular values that may conflict with teachings from their parents or schools.

One significant finding from observation is that ethically problematic viral content often receives more attention than positive content. This indicates a major shift in social values, where negative or controversial content is more appreciated than educational or constructive material (Antono and Lutfi, 2022). Research shows that increased exposure to negative content can reduce public awareness of proper social norms, leading to behavioral changes that diverge from traditional values (Johannesson et al., 2019). For example, teenagers exposed to deviant behavior in viral content may come to see such behavior as normal and socially acceptable (Humaedi and Hakim, 2023).

Table 1.
Aspects of Research Findings

No	Aspects of Findings	Field Findings	Theoretical Analysis / Journal References
1	Content Creator's View	Content creators create engaging content for the sake of virality, sometimes at the expense of ethics. There's a dilemma	Kurniawan and Maknun (2023): There is pressure to follow the logic of virality, forcing creators to ignore ethics for the sake of digital existence. This aligns with Adorno and Horkheimer's (1944)

		between content quality and the demands of popularity.	theory of the commodification of culture, which states that culture becomes a commodity under the logic of the market.
2	Housewife's Viewpoint	Viral content is inspiring (for example, cooking tips), but there are also concerns that it can have a negative impact on children (indecent content, normalizing deviant behavior).	Falah and Aptasari (2023): Virality accelerates information transfer, but also increases the potential for value distortion. Gerbner's (1976) theory of media effects refers to this as cultivation theory, where media exposure shapes social perceptions.
3	Officer/ASN's Viewpoint	Viral content can influence public opinion and even policy. Disinformation spreads widely, reducing the quality of social interactions and public ethical values.	Media literacy is crucial for combating disinformation (Antono and Lutfi, 2022). A critical media literacy approach (Kellner and Share, 2005) is needed to filter content based on educational and social value.
4	School Teenagers' Views	Teenagers are exposed to viral content every day. They adopt popular values even if they conflict with parental or school teachings.	Musfeptial et al. (2023): Viral content shapes adolescent behavior and value preferences. Humaedi and Hakim (2023) stated that the normalization of deviant behavior through content makes deviance seem normal.
5	Ethical	Viral content that	Johannesson et al. (2019):

	Observations in Viral Content	violates ethics actually spreads faster than educational content. This demonstrates a shift in society's social values.	Negative content attracts more attention due to its emotional resonance. Negativity bias theory explains that humans are more responsive to negative information.
6	Changes in Social Values in Rural Communities	Traditional social norms such as good manners and mutual cooperation are being displaced by popular values displayed in viral content.	Inglehart and Welzel (2005): Cultural shift theory explains that modernization brings a shift from communal values to individual and expressive ones. Viral content is a channel accelerating this change.

Normalization of Viral Content Among Social Media Users

In today's digital era, viral content holds tremendous power in influencing the way people think and behave, particularly in rural communities that are often more exposed to unfiltered information streams. Through interviews and observations across various social strata, several key findings emerged, showing how viral content can lead to a shift in everyday values. Viral content often disregards prevailing ethics and norms. For instance, videos showcasing aggressive behaviour or insults toward individuals or specific groups can spread rapidly and influence public perception (Antonovsky et al. 2022). Findings from interviews revealed that although many residents felt such content was inappropriate, the appeal and sensationalism compelled them to keep watching and even share it (Willis and Jarrahi 2019). The danger lies in how negative content becomes part of a new norm accepted in social interactions, posing serious risks to the development of moral values in society.

With increased exposure to viral content that contains negative elements, communities begin to perceive the behaviors portrayed as normal. Research findings among several teenagers in rural areas indicated that they attempt to emulate the

"bold" behavior often featured in these videos (Alamäki et al. 2018). This not only alters how they interact but also shifts them toward a mindset that undermines traditional values that emphasize respect and empathy. One reason unethical viral content spreads so freely is the weak regulation of circulating information on social media. Interviews with informants revealed that many parents and educators expressed deep concern about the effects of such content on children. They felt powerless to control what their children see and consume, making them more vulnerable to adopting and imitating harmful behaviors (Juhaevah 2023).

Most teenagers interviewed admitted to being influenced by the viral content they viewed on social media. They stated that videos depicting "bold" behaviors—such as confronting authority or engaging in extreme acts—served as inspiration in their daily lives. One teenager commented, "I feel like I can do anything if I see someone doing it online. It makes me feel brave to try new things, even if they're not always safe."

When asked about the traditional values upheld by their parents, most teenagers claimed that these values often felt "outdated." They argued that many of the rules set by parents were not aligned with the modern lifestyle portrayed on social media. For example, one teenager stated, "I think our parents don't understand that our world has changed. We can't just follow the old ways when everything is so different now."

Observations in children's play areas revealed that interactions among teenagers have changed. They are highly influenced by behaviors they watch on social media. During play, they frequently mimic movements or speech patterns from videos without considering the consequences or values behind those actions. For instance, while playing soccer, they would imitate daring or provocative moves seen in videos, sometimes risking their safety or that of their peers.

In informal conversations with several parents, many expressed concern about what their children were absorbing. One father stated, "I often feel like I can't control what they see. They're more influenced by what they watch on their phones than by

my advice.” Other parents also reported difficulties in guiding their children on what should be considered good or bad behavior.

Teachers at local schools also voiced concerns over students' behavior. They observed that many students were more interested in viral content than in the lessons being taught in class. It was evident that during teaching sessions, students' attention was frequently diverted by their smartphones. One teacher noted, “We try to teach moral values, but when they spend time on social media, they're exposed to things that go against what we teach.”

Observations also showed that people began responding to viral content differently. In some cases, the community no longer criticized negative content and was more likely to ignore it, indicating a growing desensitization to social issues that can negatively affect interpersonal relationships (Santie et al. 2023). There was a sense of fatigue among community members in dealing with the constant stream of negative content, leading to a lack of response.

More profound value shifts were seen within family and community contexts. In traditionally close-knit rural communities, values of togetherness and family are gradually eroding due to new norms introduced by viral content. Many parents found it difficult to explain the importance of these values to their children in the face of more attention-grabbing digital content (Sabdey et al. 2023). Consequently, a gap and shift emerged in intergenerational relationships.

Viral content also affects how individuals shape their social identities. Teenagers, for example, tend to adopt the values and behaviors they see in viral content, which often contradict their cultural and familial norms. This leads to a cycle where increasingly unethical content becomes attractive in forming a self-identity that diverges from traditionally taught values (Lichtner et al. 2024).

Interviews with community members revealed a tendency to neglect ethical values that were once important. Viral content often promotes individualistic attitudes and disregard for collective norms, altering public perceptions of social responsibility (Zhang et al. 2010). This poses challenges in creating space for constructive discussions on the values individuals should uphold in society.

However, there are efforts by some community leaders to foster discussions on the importance of values amid these changes. Some organize discussion groups to talk about the impact of viral content and the need to uphold ethics in content creation and consumption. This reflects a collective awareness in the community to re-emphasize moral and cultural values (Mudra et al. 2023). Nevertheless, these efforts are often hindered by the low participation of individuals who are more exposed to negative content.

Given the growing challenges, many educators and activists are striving to raise awareness about media literacy in society. Education on how to critically approach social media content is crucial to reduce its negative impact. It is hoped that through this approach, communities can become more discerning in selecting and responding to content they access online (Alhaboby et al. 2021).

Finally, to address this issue, it is important to encourage participation from all sectors of society in creating a more positive social media ecosystem. Content creators, artists, and influencers are expected to take greater responsibility in producing content that is not only engaging but also meaningful and ethical (Lestari and Sutama 2023). This will ease the transition toward a more ethical and respectful society.

Through an in-depth discussion on the shifting social values resulting from unethical and inappropriate viral content, it is evident that social media significantly influences behavior and public perception. To ensure the sustainability of ethical and cultural values, cooperation and commitment from all parties are needed to control the spread of content on social networks while empowering the public to be more critical in consuming information.

Tabel 2.
Aspects of Research Findings

Field Findings	Theoretical / Literature Support	Thematic Analysis
People from various professions (housewives, civil servants, entrepreneurs, youth) actively consume and share viral content, despite being aware that the content is unethical.	Willis and Jarrahi (2019) state that society often prioritizes sensationalism over ethics in the fast-changing digital media environment.	Demonstrates a dilemma between local cultural norms and the more permissive global digital culture.
Unethical viral content is considered normal and begins to be imitated, especially by teenagers.	Alamäki et al. (2018) show that digital media fosters imitative behavior among the younger generation.	A shift in values from collectivism to individualism; from politeness to unrestricted self-expression.
Parents and teachers feel a loss of control over children's exposure to content that erodes values.	Juhaevah (2023) and Zhang et al. (2010) affirm the weak social control over digital information access in family and school environments.	A crisis of authority and weakening role of traditional social institutions in educating the youth.
Traditional values are seen as outdated by the younger generation.	Antonovsky et al. (2022) mention that digitalization creates value gaps between generations.	Intergenerational conflict in defining morality and modernity.
Observations show	Lichtner et al. (2024) note	Media becomes a "new

imitation of social media behaviors in children's and teenagers' daily lives.	that social media shapes identity and social actions in a real and direct way, especially among younger age groups.	agent of socialization” competing with the family and local community.
Society is becoming desensitized to unethical content.	Santie et al. (2023) explain the public desensitization process toward symbolic violence in digital media.	A shift in moral perception from reactive to passive toward social deviance.
Family and communal values in rural communities are increasingly replaced by media-driven values.	Sabdey et al. (2023) state that media establishes new norms that often conflict with local values.	A shift in rural social structures from community-based to media consumption-based.
Viral content shapes adolescent identity in contrast to family values.	Lichtner et al. (2024) argue that digital identity now dominates over local identity in youth self-formation.	Cultural identity fragmentation due to the penetration of global content.
People tend to ignore collective ethical values in favor of personal enjoyment from digital content.	Zhang et al. (2010) show that digitalization strengthens individualism in traditional communities.	A shift from public values to private ones; dominance of personal narratives in digital public spaces.
A shift from public values to private ones; dominance of personal narratives in digital public spaces.	Mudra et al. (2023) suggest a community-based approach is needed to build ethical and collective digital awareness.	Collective awareness is emerging, but is hindered by the stronger influence of consumerist digital culture.

Efforts to improve media literacy through education and social campaigns are carried out by teachers and local activists.	Alhaboby et al. (2021) and Lestari and Utama (2023) emphasize the importance of media literacy in facing the era of disinformation and unethical viral content.	Media literacy becomes an alternative path to restore community control over values and social behavior.
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Rural Community Life and the Modern Values Replacing Traditional Social Norms

In the context of rural communities, many feel that traditional social values (mutual cooperation, politeness and communication ethics, togetherness and a sense of family, religiosity and morality, as well as adherence to customs and social norms) are gradually being eroded by modern values brought about by viral content on social media. Interviews with members of rural communities indicate that adapting to modern lifestyles sometimes comes at the cost of family and communal values that are characteristic of village life (Sapawuryandari 2023). This evidence aligns with findings suggesting that the pressure of modernization can trigger an identity crisis in traditional societies as modern values (disregarding ethics, manners, and politeness, distant from religion, lacking a sense of shame, violating social norms), increasingly dominate daily life (Johannesson et al. 2019). Therefore, it is important for communities to find a balance between embracing modern values and preserving traditional ones as part of their identity (Riza et al. 2023).

In the past, values traditional such as mutual cooperation, respect, and harmony within the community were the foundation of rural social life. However, the rise of viral content that often promotes individualistic behavior or glamorous lifestyles has led many community members to adopt new perspectives that prioritize personal interests over collective well-being. This shift creates tension between the older generation, who still uphold traditions, and the younger generation, who are driven to follow the trends shown on social media.

Social media not only serves as a communication tool but also as a source of inspiration and a reference point for new values among youth. Flashy and often sensational viral content can shape views and behaviors, leading many young people to imitate what they see on screen rather than learning from the social experiences developed within their communities. This creates a complex dynamic in which existing norms start to lose their influence.

In light of these changes, social relationships within rural communities have begun to disintegrate. Gatherings and social activities that once strengthened bonds among villagers have diminished. The focus on social media has led individuals to spend more time online than engaging in face-to-face interactions. This trend poses a risk of producing a generation with poor social skills and difficulties in building healthy interpersonal relationships.

Education in rural communities has also been affected by the influence of viral content. Children are more drawn to easily accessible digital material than to academic lessons, which are perceived as outdated. Many teachers report difficulties in capturing students' attention, as they are more interested in YouTube videos or other social media content, which often conflict with the noble values educators seek to impart. This not only affects the quality of education but also character development.

Amid these changes, various efforts are being made by communities to revive and preserve traditional values. Some villages have embraced technology by organizing events aimed at connecting younger generations with their local customs and culture. For example, cultural festivals featuring traditional arts or local sports are held to engage young people, with the hope that experiencing their cultural roots firsthand will foster greater appreciation for their cultural identity.

Many teenagers experience identity crises due to the influence of foreign cultures associated with viral content. They are caught in a dilemma between wanting to be accepted in the digital world by adopting modern, contemporary values, and the

traditional teachings instilled by their families. This imbalance often leads to confusion about their true identity, which can impact their mental well-being.

Intergenerational interaction also faces challenges due to shifts in worldviews caused by viral content. Many parents struggle to communicate with and understand the values held by their children. Some even feel alienated by their children's externally influenced thinking, which falls short of the expectations surrounding the importance of tradition in character building.

Despite the veneer of modern culture, there remains an opportunity to create constructive dialogue between generations. The effort to listen to and understand one another—between the old and the young—becomes crucial to achieving social harmony. Through discussion forums and collaborative educational initiatives, communities can find shared understandings that respect the positive aspects of tradition while remaining open to progress.

The importance of local wisdom in navigating the tides of change is also being recognized by many community leaders. They advocate for the need for education that emphasizes the importance of understanding the local context amid globalization so that young people become not only inheritors but also innovators who can blend traditional values with modern solutions. This leads to the development of a stronger and more relevant cultural identity.

If this shift in values is not addressed properly, there is a risk to the sustainability of long-standing social norms. Rural communities must develop strategies that not only protect traditional values but also integrate them with new innovations relevant to today's context. This is a challenge that can be met through collaboration and shared commitment within the community to build a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Thus, the shift in social values in rural communities due to viral content highlights the importance of balanced learning and adaptation in cultural contexts. Open dialogue and the courage to face existing challenges will guide communities toward a more inclusive path.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that viral content on social media significantly influences the values, behaviors, and social interactions within rural communities. Content that disregards ethics, manners, and social norms spreads rapidly, often overshadowing positive and educational material. Teenagers and young people are particularly susceptible to adopting behaviors and values portrayed in viral content, sometimes conflicting with traditional teachings from their families and communities. This has contributed to shifts in intergenerational relationships, weakening of communal bonds, and erosion of long standing social norms such as mutual cooperation, politeness, and respect for tradition. At the same time, exposure to positive viral content, such as practical tips for daily life, can provide inspiration and knowledge. However, the dominance of sensational and ethically questionable content presents challenges in maintaining moral standards and cultural values. Parents, educators, and community leaders express concern over the influence of such content, emphasizing the need for media literacy and critical engagement with social media. Overall, the study highlights the dual role of social media as both a source of innovation and a potential threat to traditional social values. It underscores the importance of fostering a balance between embracing modern digital culture and preserving local wisdom and communal norms. Encouraging dialogue, promoting media literacy, and developing collaborative initiatives are essential strategies to mitigate the negative impact of viral content while supporting the sustainable preservation of cultural and ethical values in rural communities.

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