



## A Critical Discourse Analysis of Body Positivity and Female Sexuality Narratives on Social Media

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### A B S T R A C T

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This research examines critical discourse surrounding body positivity and women's sexuality on social media, with a focus on the Instagram account @ririebogar. The account was chosen because it has a significant influence on shaping the body positivity discourse among young women in Indonesia and actively discusses issues related to sexuality. Utilizing Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework, this study aims to examine how these narratives reflect, negotiate, and contest dominant norms related to body and sexuality in Indonesia. Data was collected from 25 posts during the period from January to December 2024, employing an in-depth qualitative approach. The findings suggest that this account actively challenges traditional beauty standards that often harm women, promoting self-acceptance through strong affirmative language and engaging visual representations. Text analysis reveals deliberate lexical choices that sharply contrast normative narratives with the transformative narratives offered by this

account. The identified discursive practices demonstrate structured content production strategies that effectively leverage the mechanisms and features of digital platforms. However, this research also reveals the complexities that arise between empowerment and commodification in the context of evolving digital capitalism. Overall, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of social media as both a space of resistance and an arena for the reproduction of hegemonic ideologies related to women's bodies and sexuality. This research is expected to provide new insights and a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationship between social media, body culture, and women's sexuality in Indonesia.

## Introduction

Social media has become a contemporary public space that facilitates the spread of discourse and narratives on various issues, including body positivity and women's sexuality. Over the past decade, the body positivity movement, which promotes acceptance and appreciation of diverse body shapes, has gained significant momentum across various social media platforms. In parallel, a more open and empowering discourse on women's sexuality has also grown. This phenomenon is interesting to study because it demonstrates a paradigm shift in the construction of women's identities and representations, potentially challenging established hegemonic norms in society (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018).

The discourse on body positivity and female sexuality on social media emerged as a response to dominant beauty standards and the objectification of women's bodies in popular culture. Narratives developed through hashtags like #bodypositive, #selflove, and #normalizenormalbodies represent an attempt to reactualize the meaning of women's bodies and sexuality to be more inclusive and progressive (Cohen, Fardouly, et al., 2019). However, various studies show that this discourse is not completely free from the logic of capitalism and the commodification of the body (Cwynar-Horta, 2016).

While most studies of body positivity focus on the use of hashtags like #bodypositive or #selflove, it's important to examine other forms of representation that aren't always explicitly marked by these symbols. One interesting example is the Instagram account @ririebogar, which consistently advocates for self-acceptance, body diversity, and critiques norms of beauty and female sexuality, though not always through the use of popular hashtags. This account represents a powerful narrative about the body and sexuality of adult women in the Indonesian context, which often faces the intersection of patriarchal values, religion, and modernity. Through its reflective, affirmative, and contextual posts, the @ririebogar account constructs an alternative discursive space worthy of critical analysis.

The reason for choosing this account as the research object is because of its consistency in voicing the issue of body positivity and female sexuality in the Indonesian context, which often faces a tug-of-war between traditional values, religion, and the influence of modernity. Furthermore, @ririebogar plays a role not only as an influencer, but also as a public figure who represents the diversity of bodies and experiences of adult women, a group often marginalized in mainstream discourse about the body. The presence of this account demonstrates the potential of social media as an alternative space to redefine women's body identity and sexuality more inclusively, while also raising critical questions about the boundaries between empowerment and commodification.

This research departs from a critical paradigm that views language and discourse as social practices that are not neutral, but rather are laden with ideological interests and power relations (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2021). By employing Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis approach, this study will analyze how the narratives constructed on the Instagram account @ririebogar reflect, negotiate, and contest dominant norms related to women's bodies and sexuality in Indonesia.

Several previous studies, such as by Fadhil et al. (2024) shows how the body positivity movement on Instagram is often trapped in the logic of capitalism, which idealizes certain body shapes. Meanwhile, Nuriani (2021) Through her study of the @tabu.id account, she highlighted how social media has become an alternative space for discussing sexuality, which was previously considered taboo. However, these studies tend to separate the themes of body positivity and sexuality, and few have employed an in-depth Critical Discourse Analysis approach to personal accounts, such as those of @ririebogar.

This research begins with the central question of how narratives of body positivity and women's sexuality are constructed, negotiated, and contested in social media accounts in Indonesia. This research aims to examine how representations of women's bodies and sexuality are constructed in these accounts' posts, and how these narratives reflect or challenge hegemonic social norms. This research also examines how ideological dynamics and power relations influence the production of these discourses, as well as the extent to which the emerging narratives reflect resistance to or reproduce hegemonic norms that regulate women's bodies and sexuality within Indonesia's sociocultural context.

This study collected data from purposively selected posts on the Instagram account @ririebogar between December 2024 and May 2025. This period was chosen to ensure narrative continuity and the relevance of body positivity and women's sexuality to the current context. Each post was analyzed through a close reading of the text (caption) and visual elements, then grouped thematically to uncover emerging narrative patterns. The analysis process drew on Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework, which encompasses three key aspects: text analysis, discursive practices, and social practices. The validity of the results was ensured through theoretical triangulation and confirmation with the account's active followers.

This research presents a novel approach by integrating these two issues through a critical lens and examining the dynamics of discourse within a single account that contextually represents the experiences of Indonesian women. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to a critical understanding of how social media reproduces and challenges hegemonic norms regarding women's bodies and sexuality.

## Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model, to examine the narratives of body positivity and female sexuality presented on the Instagram account @ririebogar. This approach was chosen because it views discourse not merely as a linguistic representation, but as a social practice imbued with ideology and power relations (Fairclough, 2015).

The analysis will be conducted based on three main dimensions in Fairclough's framework, namely: (1) text analysis which includes the choice of diction, metaphor, style of language, and visualization; (2) analysis of discursive

practices which include the process of content production and consumption; and (3) analysis of social practices which link discourse to the broader sociocultural context (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2021). Thus, this research not only examines the textual content but also explores how the discourse operates within social structures, ideologies, and power dynamics in society.

Data was collected from 12 posts from the @ririebogar account between December 2024 and May 2025. This period was chosen because it demonstrates the consistency of the latest narratives and represents the dynamics of contemporary discourse in the context of Indonesian social media. During this period, issues of body positivity and female sexuality became prominent. Numerous discussions emerged about self-acceptance and rejecting beauty standards that often disadvantage women. Many women in Indonesia began sharing their stories and views on their bodies and sexuality, creating a more open and supportive space. Therefore, the data from this account is highly relevant. The analysis technique was carried out in stages, following the stages of CDA, and was supported by close reading and thematic categorization to identify discourse patterns and emerging ideological contradictions. A close reading was conducted through in-depth analysis of each linguistic and visual element in the captions and images, identifying key themes such as narratives of self-acceptance, critiques of beauty standards, and expressions of sexuality, based on approximately 2,500 words analyzed. Thematic categorization was then conducted to capture the implied meanings, intertextual relationships, and power dynamics that emerge in representations of the body and sexuality.

Data validity is maintained through theoretical triangulation and member checking to ensure depth and consistency of interpretation (Silverman, 2016). Theoretical triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of the analysis using Fairclough's critical discourse theory and digital media theory (Enli & Simonsen, 2018), and sociocultural theory (Ma et al., 2023) to gain a more comprehensive and valid understanding. Meanwhile, member checking was conducted by verifying interpretations with several active followers of the @ririebogar account who provide comments and regular interactions, to ensure the researcher's interpretations align with the audience's understanding of the analyzed content. Through this method, the research seeks to uncover how narratives about women's bodies and sexuality are constructed, negotiated and contested within the complex and diverse context of Indonesian social media.

## Results and Discussion

Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach that views language as a social practice, not neutral, but rather imbued with ideology and power relations. This approach consists of three interrelated dimensions of analysis: (1) text analysis that examines linguistic aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, and style in the representation of reality; (2) discursive practices that examine the processes of production, distribution, and consumption of texts based on the social context of the actors; and (3) socio-cultural practices that examine the broader context such as the social, cultural, and political structures that underlie the emergence of discourse. According to Fairclough (cited in Saraswati & Sartini, 2017), critical discourse analysis enables researchers to uncover how ideology and power operate within discourses distributed throughout society. In the context of body positivity and female sexuality on social media, this approach allows us to understand how language and visual representations are used to shape, maintain, or challenge social constructions related to women's bodies and sexuality. This analysis examines texts (captions, hashtags, comments), discursive practices (how content is produced and received), and socio-cultural practices (gender norms, patriarchy, digital capitalism) that underlie these discourses.

The phenomenon of body positivity, a crucial aspect of modern social discourse, aims to promote increased acceptance and appreciation for diverse body types. This movement began emerging on social media in 2012 with the mission of promoting self-love, inclusivity, and empowerment, while reshaping social norms regarding beauty and body image (Choi et al., 2024). Unlike traditional beauty standards that often idealize certain body types, body positivity seeks to challenge these norms by advocating for a holistic approach to health and well-being that celebrates the uniqueness and diversity of each individual. However, the issue of body positivity is becoming increasingly important in our society, especially for women, who often focus more on their physical appearance than men. Many women feel more confident when they have a body size and shape that is considered ideal. (Fachruddin & Suka, 2023). In a digital context, social media becomes an arena for negotiating ideology and power, where narratives of self-love and bodily freedom often seem liberating, but can also be commodified by algorithms and the media industry to attract attention or generate profit.

Digital media operates through three main mechanisms that influence the



production and distribution of discourse. According to Dijck in Enli & Simonsen (2018), These three mechanisms include datafication (the process of converting user activity into digital data that can be tracked and monetized), platformization (the dominant role of digital platforms in regulating the flow of information), and algorithmization (the role of algorithms in determining content visibility based on commercial interests). In the context of body positivity and female sexuality, algorithms play a role in providing content that aligns with user searches. Still, they can also reinforce and limit the spread of certain narratives. According to Jacobsen (2019) In her research on algorithmic power in social media, algorithms influence the visibility of content related to body positivity and female sexuality by determining the dominant narrative, limiting or expanding inclusive access for media users. The societal view that considers women as sexual objects or other negative stereotypes demonstrates the injustice experienced by women, which feminists believe is the result of social construction that separates masculine from feminine characteristics (Fujiati, 2016). In Indonesia, which has a socio-cultural culture with patriarchal norms and platform regulations, this has created a factor in shaping public acceptance of this issue.

According to Ma et al. (2023), Culture not only shapes an individual's thought patterns, emotions, motivations, and behaviors, but is also influenced by the individual's own psychological state. Within the framework of mutual constitution, individuals who lose personal control tend to seek out "tight" cultural environments with strong social norms and low tolerance for deviation, in order to regain predictability in their lives. Conversely, these strict cultures also reduce personal control but increase collective control within the community. In Indonesia, collectivism and patriarchal values shape beauty standards that prioritize women with fair skin, slim bodies, and modest appearances according to socio-religious norms. The study Cohen et al (2019) the body positivity movement found that, despite its aim to challenge traditional Indonesian beauty standards, its representations often reinforce existing standards. This emphasizes health and modesty, aligned with local cultural values, rather than fully challenging conventional beauty norms.

The Instagram account @ririebogar addresses the themes of body positivity and female sexuality through a consistent, powerful, and transformative narrative. Observations of posts from December 2024 to May 2025, including their content, visual style, and overall presentation, reveal recurring patterns of representation

related to how messages about self-acceptance and women's freedom to express themselves form and reinforce these narrative patterns and representations. To clarify the narrative patterns and representations, the following table presents twelve posts observed from December 2024 to May 2025 This serves as the basis for further analysis of how body positivity and female sexuality practices are constructed and negotiated through social media.

**Table 1. Data of Posts Analysed**

No.	Uploaded Date	Format	Caption Quotes	Engagement	Link
1.	7 December 2024	Video Reel	God created you special.. jadi coba belajar bersyukur.. menerima dan merawat apa yang sudah diciptakan Tuhan untuk kamu..	46 Likes 4 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DDR-h5XvVC5/?igsh=MWVtNnAzZXJcDBqMw==">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DDR-h5XvVC5/?igsh=MWVtNnAzZXJcDBqMw==</a>
2.	7 January 2025	Video Reel	Nah, intinya gini, akan ada saja orang yang bakal komentarin fisik manusia lainnya.. Bisa temen lama bahkan orang terdekatmu	95 Likes 7 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DEhBOvOvI2V/?igsh=MTU0ZWWhdWlwN3BpdA==">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DEhBOvOvI2V/?igsh=MTU0ZWWhdWlwN3BpdA==</a>
3.	13 January 2025	Video Reel	Aku mau bilang.. kalau ada teman-teman yang berusaha membuat konten positif terlepas dari bentuk badannya ya jangan dihina-hina fisiknya...	52 Likes 6 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DEwGLDnv30-/?igsh=MWwyN3Q0dHM3a2xweA==">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DEwGLDnv30-/?igsh=MWwyN3Q0dHM3a2xweA==</a>
4.	24 January 2025	Video Reel	Emang gak boleh yang gemuk olahraga biar SEHAT?	55 Likes 35 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DFMN4Wcz9vJ/?igsh=MTdlOHY5MGlyZmluaQ==">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DFMN4Wcz9vJ/?igsh=MTdlOHY5MGlyZmluaQ==</a>
5.	6 February 2025	Video Reel	Klau lihat plus size Sekarang keren2 ada yg berhasil menjadi influencer Model, bisnis woman dan semuanya saling support satu dengan yang lain dengan luar biasa. Percaya diri harus banget, Tapi menjaga kesehatan juga harus diperhatikan ya. Sehat jiwa dan raga itu HARUS <a href="#">#indonesiaplussizementor</a> <a href="#">#goodvibesonly</a>	48 Likes 3 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DFt503oPUOu/?igsh=b204cDltbGpmcGln">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DFt503oPUOu/?igsh=b204cDltbGpmcGln</a>



6.	21 February 2025	Video Reel	Yang masih semangat berproses. Nikmati prosesnya yaa.. Diet itu makan Makan yang bener Bukan sama sekali gak makan. Kamu bisa! <a href="#">#obesitasbutuhdukasibukanintimidasi</a> <a href="#">#obesitaswarior</a> <a href="#">#beranimakanberaniolahraga</a> <a href="#">#goodvibesonly</a>	28 Likes 0 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGUPBRWT8g6/?igsh=YXM4b3g4NmdpZWR1">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGUPBRWT8g6/?igsh=YXM4b3g4NmdpZWR1</a>
7.	7 March 2025	Video Reel	hei plus size woman... Ini bbrp ide ootd untuk kalian... yang penting cari sesuai ukuran tubuh, bahannya yang nyerap keringat fashion gak harus mahal kok...yang biasa2 aja juga bisa bagus klau pakain <a href="#">#rriebogar</a> <a href="#">#RBWorld</a> <a href="#">#rriebogarstyle</a> <a href="#">#smile</a> <a href="#">#ootdplussize</a> <a href="#">#goodvibesonly</a>	21 Likes 0 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DG5QsUgvuXf/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DG5QsUgvuXf/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a>
8.	13 March 2025	Video Reel	Apa adanya... Bukan ada apanya... <a href="#">#selflove</a> <a href="#">#indonesiaplussizementor</a> <a href="#">#goodvibesonly</a>	55 Likes 7 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DHJIIfRT7bc/?igsh=MWtrejh1MDZ5YXczcw==">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DHJIIfRT7bc/?igsh=MWtrejh1MDZ5YXczcw==</a>
9.	8 April 2025	Foto	Artinya apa sih body positivity?? Singkatnya ya.. Mampu respect terhadap bentuk fisik orang lain dan pastinya diri sendiri.	58 Likes 0 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DILL0IqT5Ik/?igsh=M3ZsbWg0cmV6dHo4">https://www.instagram.com/p/DILL0IqT5Ik/?igsh=M3ZsbWg0cmV6dHo4</a>
10.	15 April 2025	Video Reel	..Kita bisa bersama2 menyuarakan ini agar lebih banyak orang bisa paham apa itu obesitas dan cara2 menjadi lebih sehat..	84 Likes 0 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DIc3RF-zDb7/?igsh=NXFpYW4xZG9sdHht">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DIc3RF-zDb7/?igsh=NXFpYW4xZG9sdHht</a>

11.	20 May 2025	Video Reel	...You are Worth it! You are amazing! Jangan biarkan perkataan orang merusak mental kalian ya..	19 Likes 0 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DJ4cm6Ah9Au/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&amp;igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DJ4cm6Ah9Au/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&amp;igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==</a>
12.	29 May 2025	Video Reel	Klik aja.. ...#plussizefashion #smile #selflove #pedebukankepedean #goodvibesonly	11 Likes 0 Comments	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/DKNM6heBCDk/?igsh=MTA0M2d2cG5meGdpcQ%3D%3D">https://www.instagram.com/reel/DKNM6heBCDk/?igsh=MTA0M2d2cG5meGdpcQ%3D%3D</a>

Source: Researcher Documentation (2025)

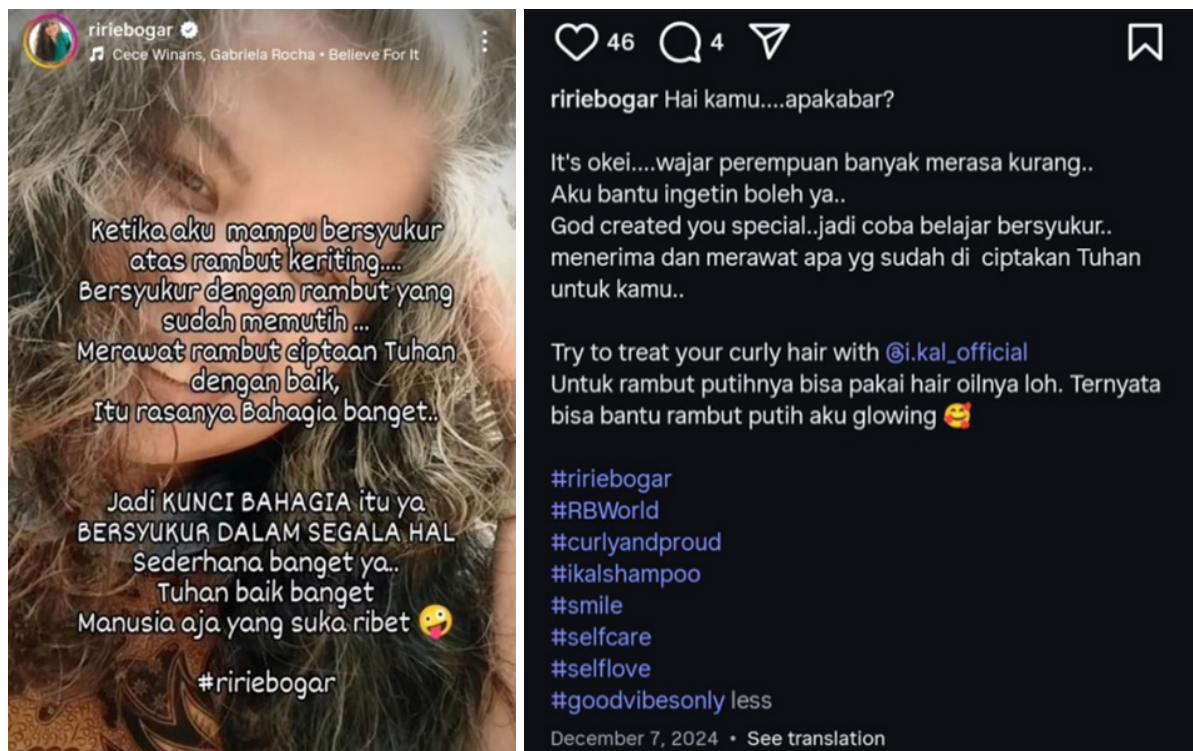
Based on data analysis of digital content posts produced by the Instagram account @ririebogar, a systematic and consistent narrative construction was identified in the creation of a self-affirmation discourse for women, particularly in the context of plus-size women's bodies. This research reveals that through various motivational quotes used in captions, such as "God created you special," "As is... not what is," and "You are worth it!," there is an attempt to construct a narrative that is not merely superficially motivational, but rather has a complex dimension with deep personal and spiritual reflection. The characteristics of these messages suggest a structured form of resistance to social pressures stemming from hegemonic and narrow beauty standards, consistently encouraging its audience to reorient their perspective and appreciate their bodies as gifts with intrinsic value.

From a visual representation perspective, this account demonstrates courage in explicitly showcasing body diversity through a fashion style approach that reflects high self-confidence, while simultaneously demonstrating a representational strategy where plus-size bodies are not hidden but presented as subjects with equal validity and aesthetic value. Mainstream media have historically constructed visual standards that portray thin bodies as the normative ideal. However, Ririe's appearance in her posts consistently demonstrates a counter-narrative, proving that women's bodies, in their diverse forms, can be fashionable and reflect authentic self-confidence. This also strengthens the foundation of strong digital solidarity among women through the strategic use of hashtags such as #obesitasbutuhedukasibukanintimidasi, which reflect structured advocacy for health issues.

Of the twelve posts collected from the Instagram account @ririebogar between December 2024 and May 2025, researchers selected four posts for in-depth analysis using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis approach. This selection was made purposively based on considerations of the intensity of the discourse's meaning, the richness of the visuals and text, and the representation that most explicitly reflects the integration of body positivity narratives and female sexuality. The four selected posts (December 7, 2024, February 6, 2025, March 13, 2025, and April 8, 2025) demonstrate the diversity of discursive practices, the depth of affirmative narratives, and their connections to relevant social practices within the Indonesian cultural context. Focusing the analysis on these posts enables a deeper understanding of the more complex ideological aspects and power relations, without neglecting the overall narrative context of the account.

## Teks Analysis

Figure 1. Post by @ririebogar on December 7, 2024



Source: Researcher Documentation (2025)

A dimensional analysis of the text in the December 7, 2024, post reveals a complex and strategic narrative construction regarding body acceptance as an integral part of spirituality and self-esteem. The sentence “God created you special... so try to learn to be grateful... accept and care for what God has created for you...” is a concrete example of how the use of language in the caption not only provides simple motivational affirmations but also systematically links body acceptance to religious values rooted in Indonesian society. The choice of diction, such as “grateful,” “accept,” and “care,” demonstrates a linguistic strategy that builds a strong, meaningful relationship between the concepts of body, spirituality, and gratitude. In the context of Indonesian society, which has a high level of religiosity, the use of this spiritual framing strongly resonates with deeply rooted cultural and religious norms (Widyawati & Nugroho, 2019).

Structurally, this caption is declarative yet maintains a simple, non-patronizing tone. There are no imperative sentences that force or pressure the audience; instead, there is a personal, reflective invitation. The language used creates an intimate impression, as if addressed directly to the reader as a specific individual, rather than to an abstract, general audience. This approach reinforces the identification effect between the sender (Ririe Bogar) and the recipient (the audience), aligning with Fairclough’s (2015) theory regarding discourse as an instrument for forming meaningful social relationships. Research by Sari and Wijaya (2021) on the representation of women’s bodies in Indonesian social media reveals that a spiritual approach to body positivity narratives is more acceptable to local audiences than secular or confrontational approaches. This also aligns with a study by Trista and Andika (2024) on self-image on Instagram, which attempted to analyze and decipher the meaning of personal identity images related to behaviors that negatively impact health.

From a semantic perspective, this text strategically creates an implicit dichotomy between a spiritually positive narrative and the social pressures that tend to be destructive to women’s body perceptions. The caption subtly yet firmly rejects external beauty standards by asserting that the body is a gift that has possessed “special” value since its creation. This phrase reflects a contemporary form of resistance to the demands for massive body transformation voiced by the beauty industry and contemporary popular culture. From a modal perspective, the use of the phrase “try to learn” reflects a gentle, non-authoritative persuasive

approach, positioning the subject (audience) as an active agent in the process of self-acceptance, rather than a passive object governed by dominant narratives. This message suggests that the formation of body identity does not depend solely on external social validation or approval, but can be built through an authentic spiritual and personal relationship with oneself.

Overall, the text in the December 7, 2024, post demonstrates that a body positivity narrative can be constructed not only through direct discourse that resists dominant norms but also through culturally relevant spiritual and affective approaches. Kusuma and Pratiwi's (2020) research on discourse analysis of Indonesian body positivity content shows that the use of spiritual elements in body acceptance narratives is more effective in changing audience perceptions than a confrontational approach. This finding supports the analysis that the communication strategy chosen by @ririebogar has a solid theoretical basis. This strengthens the argument that unique local social and cultural contexts also influence the representation of women's bodies in social media and can give rise to more subtle forms of resistance that are no less ideologically powerful and transformative in changing public perceptions of the diversity of women's bodies.

### **Analysis of Discursive Practices**

In the context of the dimensions of discursive practice, the post published by Ririe Bogar on February 6, 2025, provides a significant illustration of the complex mechanisms by which the production and consumption of body positivity discourse are strategically designed with full awareness of the characteristics of digital platforms. In the post, Ririe constructs a caption that explicitly voices the spirit of maintaining self-confidence for women who have plus-size bodies, but at the same time carefully inserts a warning that the aspect of health is also a fundamental element that should not be ignored through the caption, "confidence is necessary, but maintaining health must also be considered, okay." The constructed narrative does not merely emphasize the concept of self-acceptance in its purest form, but also strategically aligns the affirmative message with health values perceived as neutral and universal in society. This communicative strategy can be interpreted as a sophisticated form of adaptation to social norms that still predominantly consider large bodies as an indicator of unhealthiness, as well as a way to avoid resistance from audience segments



with conservative tendencies. Through this approach, Ririe successfully positions herself as a communicator capable of navigating the complexities of Indonesian social media audiences, who straddle the spectrum between progressive and traditional values still deeply embedded in the social fabric.

Figure 2. Post by @ririebogar, Februari 6, 2025



Source: Researcher Documentation (2025)

The content production process demonstrates a carefully balanced narrative planning that aligns ideological message delivery with effective communication. The captions for these posts are presented in a relaxed yet supportive tone, complemented by the strategic use of hashtags such as #indonesiaplussizementor and #goodvibesonly. These hashtags not only serve to strengthen Ririe's position as an inspirational figure within the plus-size community but also intelligently utilize the platform's algorithmic logic to expand the content's reach and visibility. The consistent and structured use of hashtags demonstrates a deep understanding of the concept of social media platformization proposed by Enli & Simonsen (2018), namely, how content visibility is determined not only by the substantial quality of the message delivered but also by how strategically the content is packaged to be compatible with the algorithmic distribution system that governs engagement



and reach. In this context, Ririe goes beyond simply conveying a message, but also engages in complex curatorial work to determine how the message will be “read” and interpreted by the algorithmic system and the audience simultaneously in a mutually influential process. The responses provided by the audience in the comments section also became a fundamental element of the discursive practices that occurred in this post. Although the number of recorded comments was relatively limited, the majority showed consistent support, emotional reinforcement, and personal identification with the message conveyed by Ririe. This aligns with the explanation put forward by Illahi (2024) in her article, which conceptualizes a support group as a form of support from individuals experiencing similar issues, functioning to create an atmosphere of mutual empowerment, both as a group and individually. Some users wrote sincere expressions of gratitude for feeling represented and supported in their experiences.

In contrast, others stated that this message had a profoundly positive impact, making them feel better and more empowered about their own body condition. The interactions that occurred in this form created a strong community effect, strengthening a deep emotional connection between the content producer (Ririe) and the content consumer (the audience). Within the framework of digital participation theory developed by Wiryatami (2025), this phenomenon can be analyzed as a form of transformative affective participation, where the audience not only acts as passive consumers who receive information, but actively participates in interpreting, strengthening, and reproducing narratives through intense and continuous emotional involvement.

Furthermore, this post also incorporates highly strategic intertextual practices to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the message conveyed. In the caption, Ririe specifically mentions several professions, such as influencers, models, and businesswomen who come from the plus-size community, as empirical evidence that large bodies are not a structural barrier to achieving success in various fields. This reference can be understood as the implementation of a sophisticated intertextual strategy, namely linking personal messages to broader collective narratives that have social resonance. Ririe does not solely discuss her own subjective experiences, but strategically links her discourse with the experiences and achievements of other women as a form of objective legitimacy and validation. Within Fairclough’s discourse analysis framework, this demonstrates the existence of complex inter-

discourse relationships that expand the authority of the message and encourage readers to position their bodies within the larger social landscape, namely as part of a legitimate, valid, and potentially transformative movement. This discursive practice demonstrates that message production on social media is not merely about conveying personal opinions but about building a sustainable and socially connected ecosystem of meaning within a broader network.

### **Analysis of Social Practices**

The narrative developed by the account @ririebogar through a series of strategic posts on March 13, 2025, with the provocative caption, “As is... not what is...” and April 8, 2025, which explicitly defined “What does body positivity mean? In short, it’s... being able to respect the physical form of others and of course oneself,” illustrates a systematic deconstruction of the social structure that has hegemonically regulated and controlled women’s bodies in Indonesian society. In a cultural context still deeply entrenched in patriarchal norms and conservative religious values, this statement serves as a powerful symbolic manifestation of resistance to dominant views that tend to reduce women’s bodies to mere objects of aesthetic or moral judgment. The caption, constructed with concise language but containing profound discursive power, firmly asserts that women’s bodies do not have to meet certain normative criteria to be worthy of respect and recognition. An individual’s intrinsic worth does not come from biologically inherent physical attributes, but from a process of complete, personal, and authentic self-acceptance.

The statement that has become the signature tagline, “as is... not what is,” serves as a modern counter-discourse to the dominant narrative that often systematically judges and categorizes women based on parameters such as body slimness, skin color, or the degree of conformity to conventional standards of socially constructed beauty. The post on March 13th fundamentally reflects a form of resubjectification of women’s own bodies, a transformative process in which the body no longer functions as an external measure of social value, but is interpreted as an autonomous entity with existential and emotional legitimacy. Within the broader framework of social practices, this phenomenon indicates a significant shift in women’s position from objects to active subjects in the construction of body discourse. Ririe Bogar consistently rejects the idea that the body is only

worthy of being seen, proud of, or represented when it meets certain socially determined aesthetic requirements, and replaces it with an alternative narrative that the courage to display and celebrate the body “as is” is the most fundamental and transformative form of empowerment.

Figure 3. Post by @ririebogar, March 13, 2025



Source: Researcher Documentation (2025)

The April 8th post explicitly and systematically defined the concept of body positivity as a strategic form of public education, bridging the gap between often elitist academic narratives and the everyday social realities experienced by the wider community. Ririe employed a straightforward, accessible, and down-to-earth language approach, as evident in the caption, “being able to respect the physical form of others and certainly oneself,” to explain a concept that is actually deeply theoretical in complexity, yet often appears elitist and unrelatable within the context of Indonesian mainstream media discourse. In this context, she effectively acted as a cultural mediator with the ability to transform progressive ideas into narratives that can be understood, accepted, and internalized by a heterogeneous audience with diverse backgrounds. This discursive translation effort demonstrates how critical and transformative narratives can be reassembled and contextualized to be compatible with the specific socio-cultural conditions of Indonesia, where the values of politeness, social harmony, and collectivism still strongly regulate social interactions.

Figure 4. Post by @ririebogar, April 8, 2025



Source: Researcher Documentation (2025)

From a macro-level social structural perspective, these two strategic posts consistently position the @ririebogar account as an agent of change, actively and consciously challenging the naturalization of certain body standards that have crystallized in society. Ririe utilizes digital platforms not only as a medium to showcase plus-size bodies as normal and acceptable, but also as an instrument of legitimacy for women's existence across a spectrum of authentic body diversity, not confined to narrow categories. These constructed narratives are not only relevant and important for plus-size women specifically, but also for those who feel their bodies do not conform to or meet the ideal norms constructed and propagated by mainstream media and conservative society. Within a broader, systemic social practice, these posts demonstrate that social media has evolved into a vital counter-public sphere, an alternative space that enables the emergence of counter-discourses denied a platform in mainstream media or conservative and gatekeeping social environments.

However, this form of discursive resistance does not occur in a neutral space or free from power contestations. She must navigate the complex power dynamics of the digital economy, which tend to demand specific aesthetics and marketable visual standards to achieve high visibility and engagement. This means that even though the message conveyed substantively rejects and challenges mainstream beauty standards, it must still be delivered and packaged in a visual format that

remains aesthetically pleasing, clean, and visually appealing to compete in the highly competitive attention economy. This phenomenon reflects the inherent ambiguity of contemporary digital social practices: to significantly influence the public and create social change, resistive narratives must adapt to the logic of platforms and attention capitalism that govern algorithms and content distribution. In this paradoxical context, Ririe plays a complex dual role as both a producer of progressive, critical content and an actor in an ecosystem that structurally requires engagement with capitalist market logic and commodification.

Finally, these two strategic posts also highlight the importance of an intersectional approach in the social practices carried out by the @ririebogar account, representing a comprehensive form of digital activism. As an adult woman with a plus-size body and an established public presence, Ririe speaks not only from a single, monolithic identity but also from a complex intersection of age, body, gender, and multidimensional social position. Her message is more authentic and credible because she directly represents a group that has been marginalized at multiple levels within a hierarchical social structure. By prioritizing genuine empathy, deep reflection, and authentic, non-performative representation, these posts successfully construct an inclusive and empowering social discourse that enables Indonesian women, with all their complex intersectional identities, to renegotiate the meaning of beauty, health, and self-worth amidst established social pressures and dominant structures.

## **Discussion and Synthesis of Findings**

The findings of this study demonstrate significant alignment with several previous studies regarding the complexity of body positivity discourse on social media, while also providing a more comprehensive perspective through a critical discourse analysis approach. The analysis of the @ririebogar account supports the findings of Fadhil et al. (2024) Which reveals that the body positivity movement on Instagram is often trapped within the logic of capitalism that idealizes certain body shapes. This study strengthens this argument by identifying discursive practices that show how Ririe must adapt her content to the logic of algorithms and the attention economy to gain visibility, even though her substantive message rejects mainstream beauty standards. However, these findings also complement Fadhil et al.'s perspective by showing that resistance to digital capitalism can be strategically



implemented through the use of spiritual and personal framing that resonates with Indonesian culture. Unlike previous research that tends to view commodification as an absolute obstacle, this study reveals that actors can navigate the capitalist system while maintaining a transformative message through sophisticated communicative strategies. These findings also align with the research of Cohen, Fardouly, et al (2019) This suggests that body positivity content has varying effects depending on the delivery method and cultural context. However, this study deepens our understanding by analyzing how the Indonesian sociocultural context specifically shapes unique discursive strategies.

This study also expands on Nuriani's (2021) findings regarding the role of social media as an alternative space for discussing sexuality, which was previously considered taboo. While Nuriani focused on the @tabu.id account, which explicitly discusses sexuality education, this study's findings suggest that discourse on women's sexuality can be constructed more implicitly and integrated with body positivity narratives within a single personal platform. The @ririebogar account successfully created a discursive space that allows for discussion of women's sexuality through body representation and self-acceptance, without relying on a formal educational approach like @tabu.id. This demonstrates a diversified strategy for addressing women's sexuality on Indonesian social media, where a personal and relatable approach can be an effective alternative to challenging dominant norms. These findings also enhance our understanding of how Indonesian women utilize digital platforms to redefine their identity and sexuality in a broader context, extending beyond formal education. This study complements Nuriani's findings by revealing that integrating body positivity and sexuality discourses can have a more holistic impact on changing public perceptions of women's bodies and identities. In contrast to educational approaches that tend to be directive, the narrative strategy developed by @ririebogar is more empowering and encourages deep self-reflection in its audience.

However, this study also presents findings that differ from several previous studies, particularly regarding the effectiveness of a spiritual approach in body positivity narratives. Cohen et al (2019) A study on content analysis of body-positive accounts on Instagram found that existing representations often reinforce established beauty standards, rendering the movement less than fully transformative. Conversely, the findings suggest that the use of spiritual and religious framing in



constructing body positivity narratives may be a more effective strategy for creating authentic perceptual change in the Indonesian context. Through the use of terms such as “grateful,” “accepting,” and “caring for what God has created,” the @ririebogar account successfully created a counter-narrative that not only challenged dominant beauty standards but also established strong spiritual legitimacy. This distinction highlights the significance of cultural and religious context in shaping the effectiveness of body positivity communication strategies. While international research, such as Cohen et al., may identify limitations in common body positivity approaches, the Indonesian context, with its high level of religiosity, allows spiritual approaches to be more resonant and transformative. These findings also contradict the assumption that body positivity discourse must be secular to be progressive, and instead suggest that cultural adaptation can strengthen the movement’s transformative impact. This research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how body positivity can be articulated differently across cultural contexts without diminishing its critical power against dominant norms that disadvantage women.

## Conclusion

This research shows that the Instagram account @ririebogar strategically constructs a narrative of body positivity and female sexuality through a combination of affirmative language and empowering visual representations. Analysis of four key posts reveals that the bodies of plus-size women are constructed as a space of self-acceptance, spirituality, and authentic expression, challenging dominant beauty standards through a non-confrontational yet transformative approach. The use of spiritual and personal framing that resonates with the Indonesian cultural context, such as the diction “bersyukur,” “menerima,” and “merawat bahwa yang punya Tuhan” (caring for what God created), proved effective in establishing the legitimacy and credibility of the message. Discursively, the content is designed with comprehensive consideration of audience responses and social media algorithmic mechanisms through a consistent hashtag strategy, accessible language selection, and collective references that build a supportive community.

At the level of social practice, this account successfully creates an alternative discursive space that challenges the dominance of patriarchal and capitalist norms in Indonesian society. Despite operating within a digital system influenced by market

logic and the attention economy, Ririe Bogar effectively conveys a transformative message while navigating the complexities of the platform's algorithms. This research identifies an intriguing paradox between resistance to mainstream beauty standards and the imperative to maintain visual aesthetics for digital visibility. The findings suggest that social media can function as a counter-public sphere, enabling the articulation of counter-discourses, while also serving as an arena for the reproduction of hegemonic ideologies, requiring sophisticated communicative strategies to create a sustainable and transformative impact.

Limitations of this research include its focus on a single account with a limited analysis period, the lack of in-depth interviews with content creators and audiences, and the limited analysis of textual and visual aspects, as well as the absence of a long-term study of interactions. Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to explore comparisons across platforms and multiple accounts, employ a more comprehensive digital ethnographic methodology, and involve comparative studies across various Indonesian demographic contexts. For practitioners, this research recommends cultural adaptations in communication strategies, a deeper understanding of platform algorithms, and the development of critical awareness of the potential for commodification. For policymakers, developing more comprehensive media literacy and integrating inclusive body representation education into educational curricula are necessary to equip young people with the skills to consume and produce social media content responsibly.

Suggestions for future research include expanding the study's scope to encompass multiple social media accounts and platforms, such as TikTok, X, or YouTube, to facilitate cross-platform and cross-community comparisons. A more in-depth digital ethnography approach could be employed to observe interactions between content creators and audiences over a longer period, including the dynamics of comments, private messages, and other forms of engagement. Furthermore, in-depth interviews with creators and followers could provide a richer understanding of the motivations, perceptions, and narrative negotiation processes that occur behind the scenes. Furthermore, future research could also focus on platform users and measure the impact of such content on changing their mindsets and self-image. Research could also include quantitative analysis, such as measuring reach, engagement rate, or narrative dissemination through social networks, to complement the qualitative analysis.

Suggestions for digital communication and social media content management practitioners include the need to implement strategies that combine the relevance of social issues with cultural adaptations that are sensitive to the local context. Understanding platform algorithms must be combined with communication ethics, so that content optimization does not compromise message integrity. Practitioners are also advised to build sustainable community engagement through two-way interactions, rather than solely focusing on content production. Responsible social media management requires awareness of the potential commodification of sensitive narratives, as well as a commitment to inclusive and non-discriminatory representation of bodies.

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