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## Gen Z's Self-Disclosure Representation in Instagram Digital Interaction Bintang Emon

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the forms of self-disclosure carried out by Generation Z through the comment section of Instagram content on the @bintangemon account from the perspective of the Johari Window theory. Previous studies have generally discussed self-disclosure on social media in the context of interpersonal communication, online identity, and digital interaction patterns. However, studies specifically examining self-disclosure practices among Generation Z in Instagram comment sections using the Johari Window perspective remain limited. In addition, most previous research has focused on self-disclosure in private communication spaces, such as direct messages or personal accounts, rather than in public interactive spaces like comment columns. Therefore, this study is important because it explores how public digital interactions can become a medium for self-expression, emotional openness, and social reflection among Generation Z in contemporary communication environments. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research design with a phenomenological approach based on communication netnography. Data analysis was conducted through thematic coding of questionnaire data and netnographic observation results. The findings show that the Instagram comment section on the @bintangemon account has become a digital interaction space that enables Generation Z to engage in self-disclosure. Based on the Johari Window theory, the forms of self-disclosure identified include the open area, reflected in users' openness in relating content to personal experiences and feelings; the blind area, reflected in spontaneous comments that unconsciously reveal certain attitudes or emotions; the hidden area, reflected in users' efforts to maintain privacy boundaries by not sharing all personal information, including through the use of secondary accounts; and the unknown area, reflected in the emergence of new reflections and self-awareness through interactions with other users in the comment section. Thus, the Instagram comment section functions not only as a space for entertainment, but also as a medium for self-expression and social reflection for Generation Z in the digital communication environment.

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### Keywords

Self-disclosure, Gen Z, Instagram Digital interaction, Bintang Emon

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## 1. INTRODUCTION



The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has been progressive and massive in various parts of the world, including Indonesia. The internet, as a primary product of technological advancement, has fundamentally changed communication patterns, social interactions, and the way individuals build relationships and identities. We Are Social data shows that in January 2023, the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 213 million, or approximately 77 percent of the total population (Anggraeni, 2024; Fathoni et al., 2024). This data shows that the internet is no longer exclusive but has become an integral part of Indonesians' daily lives. The internet, as a modern communication medium, offers access without limitations of space and time, making it the primary means of daily communication activities (Srg & Usiono, 2024).

The internet enables communication without the constraints of space and time, with a very high level of accessibility, allowing it to be used by anyone, anytime, and anywhere (Rokhman, 2024). The majority of internet users in Indonesia access the network via mobile devices. Approximately 195.3 million users, or 96.4%, access the internet via smartphones, with the dominant age range being 16–64 years and an average usage duration of 5 hours and 4 minutes per day (Kompas.com, 2021). This high intensity of use confirms that social media has become a primary medium for communication and social interaction. This condition reinforces the formation of cyber culture, namely patterns of behavior, values, and communication practices that develop in the digital environment (Murfianti et al., 2019).

Cyberspace functions not only as a technological channel but also as a new social space where individuals construct identities, negotiate meaning, and express themselves publicly. In cyberspace culture, the boundaries between the private and public spheres are increasingly blurred, resulting in the open sharing of personal information through various social media platforms (Zuhri, 2021). This phenomenon makes social media a crucial arena for communication studies, particularly regarding self-disclosure behavior. Social media, as part of new media, provides opportunities for individuals to actively participate in the process of disseminating information. McQuail explains that new media is a form of communication technology that has been digitized and allows for both personal and interactive use (in Pardianti, 2022). DataReportal reports indicate that one of the primary motivations for Indonesians to use social media is to share daily activities and interact with others, with WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook being the most widely used platforms (Kemp, 2023). Social media functions not only as a means of communication but also as a space for self-actualization (self-expression) and self-branding (Tri & Dwi, 2020).

Regarding cyberspace culture, Generation Z is an interesting group to study. This generation grew up and developed alongside the rapid development of digital technology, thus having a high level of familiarity with social media. Generation Z's characteristics of being adaptable to technology,

accustomed to multitasking, and having a tendency to spontaneously share experiences make them key actors in the dynamics of digital communication. Social media, especially Instagram, has become an important arena for Generation Z to openly express opinions, emotions, and personal experiences. Therefore, Generation Z's self-disclosure behavior in the digital public sphere is a relevant and significant phenomenon worthy of scientific study (Laka et al., 2024).

Self-disclosure refers to the act of individuals sharing personal information, feelings, or experiences with others. In cyberspace, the process of self-disclosure is no longer limited to private interpersonal relationships but rather takes place in a digital public space accessible to a wide audience. Instagram's comment section has become a primary medium for self-disclosure, allowing users to respond to content directly, openly, and interactively. One concrete example of communication practices in cyberspace can be seen on the public Instagram account of comedian Bintang Emon. The uploaded content, particularly the DPO series, often contains social criticism and current issues that trigger a broad response from the audience. The interaction that occurs in the comments section shows high public participation, including the expression of opinions, personal experiences, and emotions by his followers, who are mostly from the Generation Z. This condition makes the @bintangemon account an interesting research subject, because it presents a digital public space that is active, critical, and full of self-disclosure practices.

The relevance of this research is reinforced by several previous studies. Syafira's (2021) research showed that IGTV content on the @bintangemon account encouraged audiences, particularly students, to think critically about social issues. The interactions were not passive, but rather formed two-way communication through the comments section. These findings indicate that the @bintangemon account has significant potential to facilitate active engagement and self-expression among audiences in the digital space.

Furthermore, research by Anggraini, Derivanti, and Andini (2022) on self-disclosure by children from broken homes in TikTok comments sections found that social media comment spaces serve as a significant platform for expressing personal experiences. Based on the Johari Window analysis, informants' self-disclosure was dominated by open and hidden areas, influenced by the dyadic effect, which is the tendency for individuals to open up when they see other users doing the same. This research confirms that communication in cyberspace represents a complex form of interpersonal communication, even though it occurs in a public space.

The phenomenon of self-disclosure on social media can be analyzed using the Johari Window Theory developed by Luft and Ingham (1955). This theory divides individual self-awareness into four areas: the open area (information known to oneself and others), the blind area (known to others but not recognized by the individual), the hidden area (known to the individual but hidden from others),

and the unknown area (unknown to both the individual and others). This framework is relevant for mapping the forms of self-disclosure that emerge in digital interactions, particularly in social media comment sections.

This research has a distinct position and unique novelty. While Syafira's (2021) research focused on the cognitive impact of critical thinking skills, Anggraini et al.'s (2022) focused on the affective aspects of self-disclosure on TikTok, this research has scientific urgency because it aims to systematically and theoretically understand the forms of self-disclosure of Generation Z in the digital public sphere, particularly through Instagram comment sections. Although the phenomenon of self-disclosure on social media is increasingly prevalent, existing studies generally focus on the impact or motivations of social media use, while mapping forms of self-disclosure in actual digital communication practices is still limited, particularly using the Johari Window Theory. Although this theory offers a relevant analytical framework to explain the dynamics of openness and closedness of personal information, it is rarely applied in the context of an open and interactive cyberspace culture. Generation Z, as a group that grew up with digital media, shows a high tendency to express themselves in public spaces, often without full awareness of the social implications of such disclosure. The Instagram account @bintangemon, with its high level of public engagement and socially critical content, provides a significant empirical context for observing how Generation Z's self-disclosure is constructed and negotiated through interactions in the comments section. Therefore, this research is important not only to fill the gap in theoretical and empirical studies in digital communication but also to enrich our understanding of Generation Z's self-disclosure patterns in cyberspace culture.

Nur Halimah Syafira's (2021) research using quantitative research methods, the population used was 361 students of the Communication Science study program, batch 2018, at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. Data were obtained through questionnaires. The results of this study are that Instagram Television (IGTV) broadcasts on the @bintangemon account have an effect on students' critical thinking skills regarding hot issues in Indonesia. The difference between Nur Halimah Syafira's research and this study is that Nur Halimah Syafira's research examines Critical Thinking skills on the @bintangemon IGTV account, while this study examines Self-Disclosure in the @bintangemon IGTV comment column.

Research by Cyntia Dewi Anggraini, Azizah Des Derivanti, Miftia Andini (2022) using qualitative methods, descriptive studies, interpretive paradigms, source triangulation and in-depth interviews with 5 informants selected based on characteristics or criteria determined by the researcher (Purposive Sampling). The results of the study revealed that self-disclosure carried out by informants through the comments page on @akuisann content based on the Johari Window Theory is included in two areas, namely open areas and hidden areas, if based on factors that influence self-disclosure then

the thing that encourages TikTok followers on the comments page on @akuisann content to make comments is the dyadic effect where informants do self-disclosure because they see many people who do the same thing. The difference between the above research and this research is, the above research focuses on Tiktok social media, while this research focuses on Instagram social media.

Based on the background above, the formulation of the research problem is: What is the form of self-disclosure carried out by generation Z through the comment column on Instagram content @bintangemon seen from the perspective of the Johari Window theory?. The purpose of this study is to describe the form of self-disclosure carried out by generation Z through the comment column on Instagram content @bintangemon seen from the perspective of the Johari Window theory.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a phenomenological approach based on communication netnography. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the subjective meaning and experiences of social media users in conducting self-disclosure in the digital public space. The focus of the research is directed at the communication practices of Generation Z in the comments column of the Instagram account @bintangemon, which is seen as a Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)-based communication arena where online interpersonal and social interactions take place. Qualitative methods are used because they allow researchers to interpret symbols, narratives, and communication patterns that emerge in social media interactions contextually (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Data collection was conducted through netnographic observation and documentation, specifically through direct observation of the comments sections of several @bintangemon posts relevant to the research focus. Observations were conducted systematically to identify interaction patterns, communication styles, and forms of personal information disclosure in the digital public space. The research subjects were Generation Z Instagram users aged 21–27. The research object included self-disclosure practices manifested in comments on @bintangemon's Instagram content, particularly posts that raised social issues and public criticism. The comment section is understood as an arena for interpersonal and social communication that reflects the level of openness, self-awareness, and audience response to the creator's message.

The selection of research subjects used a purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: (1) being part of Generation Z (aged 21–27 years), (2) actively using Instagram, (3) being a follower of the @bintangemon account, and (4) having commented on the account's content, particularly regarding social issues. A total of 15 informants were involved in this study, consisting of 8 female and 7 male participants who met all predetermined criteria. This technique was used to

ensure the involvement of relevant informants who had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. Data analysis was conducted through thematic coding of questionnaire data and netnographic observation results. Thematic coding was carried out by identifying patterns of self-disclosure behavior shown in the informants' comments and responses, which were then categorized based on the four dimensions of the Johari Window theory: open area, blind area, hidden area, and unknown area. The data were first reduced and grouped based on emerging self-disclosure themes, then mapped into the four quadrants of the Johari Window theory: open area, blind area, hidden area, and unknown area (Luft & Ingham, 1955). This mapping aimed to identify Generation Z's self-disclosure patterns and the dynamics of openness and self-awareness in social media interactions.

Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques by comparing questionnaire data and observation results. Furthermore, repeated readings of the data and consistency testing of interpretations based on communication theory were conducted to ensure the accuracy of the meaning and relevance of the findings to the empirical context of the study.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This study analyzes how Generation Z self-discloses through the comments section on the Instagram account @bintangemon on DPO (Dewan Perwakilan Omon-Omon) content. The analysis was conducted using the Johari Window perspective, which divides self-disclosure into four areas: open area, blind area, hidden area, and unknown area. Based on the results of netnographic observations of user comments and interviews with several Generation Z informants, it was found that the forms of self-disclosure that appear in the Instagram comment section show a unique digital communication dynamic.

#### **1. Generation Z's Self-Disclosure Patterns in Instagram Comments**

Based on netnographic observations of the comments section of several posts on the Instagram account @bintangemon, Generation Z was found to be actively engaging in digital interactions through various forms of commenting. These interactions not only consist of responses to humorous content or social criticism delivered by Bintang Emon, but also include elements of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure in social media, "posting" refers to an individual's actions in expressing personal thoughts, feelings, experiences, or views to others through digital communication spaces. Instagram's comments section is one such public interaction space that allows users to express themselves openly to a wide audience.

Observations show that comments written by Generation Z are not merely reactive to content but also reflect their personal experiences, emotions, and attitudes toward the social issues discussed in the content. This demonstrates that social media can be a communication space that allows

individuals to construct their identities and share their perspectives with others. One example of a comment found in the netnographic observations is as follows.

"This content is very relatable to life today. Sometimes we can only laugh when we're actually sad." (Comment.P.1)

These comments demonstrate that users are not simply responding to content but also connecting it to personal emotional experiences. This represents a form of self-disclosure that occurs spontaneously in digital interactions. This finding is further supported by interviews with informants who are Generation Z Instagram users.

"Usually, if I feel the content is close to my personal experiences, I want to comment. It feels like I'm chatting with someone who shares my feelings." (Informant 1)

This statement shows that the comments column not only functions as a space for responding to content, but also becomes a medium for self-expression for Generation Z.

Audience engagement is also influenced by the content creator's delivery style. Informants believe that a socially critical approach laced with humor and sarcasm makes complex issues feel more relatable and understandable, thus encouraging active audience engagement. This is reflected in the following informant's statement:

"It's more entertaining, because Emon's delivery is funny yet sarcastic. But it also raises awareness of social issues, like unreasonable government policies. It's educational, but wrapped in comedy." (Informant 2)

The statement shows that DPO content not only serves as entertainment, but also encourages audiences to reflect on social realities and express their attitudes openly in the comments section.

So, Gen-Z's self-disclosure pattern in the comments column on Instagram is that the comments column is a means of entertainment, a reflection of social reality, and a means of open self-expression.

## 2. Analysis of Generation Z Self-Disclosure Based on Johari Window Theory

To understand the forms of self-disclosure that emerge in Instagram comment sections, this study utilized the Johari Window framework developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. This model divides human self-awareness into four areas: the open area, the blind area, the hidden area, and the unknown area. These four areas help explain how individuals express themselves in social interactions, including in digital communication spaces.

### a. Open Area

The open area is the part of an individual's self that is known to them and also known to others. In the context of social media, this area is seen when users consciously share personal experiences, feelings, or views with the public. Based on observations, many comments from Generation Z demonstrate openness in expressing their experiences or feelings on the issues discussed by Bintang Emon. Examples of comments found in the netnographic documentation are as follows.

"This oath really represents the feelings of today's youth." (Comment.OA.1)

"I often feel like this when I watch the news. Sometimes I just laugh to relieve the stress."(Comment.OA.2)

The comments indicate that users openly relate the content to their experiences or feelings. This demonstrates that the comment section can be a public space that allows individuals to consciously disclose themselves. Research findings indicate that Generation Z's self-disclosure practices in the @bintangemon comment section are dominated by open areas within the Johari Window Theory framework. Informants consciously express opinions, feelings, and personal experiences relevant to the social issues discussed in the content. This disclosure is done openly and is accessible to the wider public, indicating that the information shared is within the realm of knowledge for both the individual and others. This is also supported by the results of interviews with informants.

"I think comments are like a place to vent. We can express what we're feeling without having to go into detail."(Informant 1)

From this statement, it can be understood that Generation Z sees the comments column as a space that allows them to express themselves openly, even if in a short form.

One important finding is the use of second accounts as a primary strategy for expressing opinions more openly. Informants view second accounts as a relatively free and safe space, as Informant 2 stated, "If the comments are clear, especially using second accounts, it allows for more openness and freedom." This finding indicates that Generation Z's openness on social media allows for more honest and spontaneous expression of opinions.

#### b. Blind Area

Blind areas are a part of an individual's self that is known to others but not recognized by the individual. In digital communication, this area can emerge when someone writes a comment that unconsciously conveys a certain attitude, emotion, or viewpoint.

Some of the comments in this study indicate that users often write comments spontaneously without thinking deeply about the meaning that others might perceive.

"It's funny, but it's actually really sarcastic."(Comment.BA.1)

"Laugh first so you don't cry."(Comment. BA.2)

These comments indirectly convey disappointment or criticism of certain social conditions. However, the commenter may have simply interpreted these expressions as a spontaneous response to the humor conveyed in the content. This was explained by one of the interviewees.

"Sometimes I comment just because it's funny. But when someone replies to my comment, I realize it can be interpreted in various ways."(Informant 1)

From this statement, it can be understood that interaction with other users can help individuals become aware of aspects of themselves that were previously unconscious.

#### c. Hidden Area

Hidden area is a part of an individual's self that is known to them but intentionally not

revealed to others. In the context of social media, this area is evident when users choose to limit the personal information they share. Based on research results, most Generation Z users remain cautious about disclosing overly personal information in the comments section. Examples of comments found in the netnographic observations include the following.

“Agree with what is said in this video.”(Comment HA.1)

“Problems like this happen often.” (Comment HA.2)

These comments indicate that users are still participating in the discussion, but not directly sharing more in-depth personal experiences. This is also supported by the results of interviews with informants. “If it's too personal, I usually don't write in the comments. I'm afraid it will be read by many people.” (Informant 1).

This statement demonstrates that although Generation Z is known to be active on social media, they still have limitations when it comes to disclosing personal information in digital public spaces. Informants consciously limit the personal information they share in digital public spaces, considering the risks of negative judgment, online conflict, and long-term digital footprints.

Hidden Area This study shows that Generation Z consciously maintains boundaries around personal information that is not shared in digital public spaces. Despite actively commenting and engaging in social discourse, informants understand that not all aspects of themselves are appropriate or safe to reveal to a wider audience. This awareness is closely related to social risks such as negative judgment, verbal attacks, online conflict, and the sustainability of digital footprints.

Data shows that the use of second accounts is a key mechanism in managing Hidden Areas. Through these accounts, informants can express their opinions more openly without having to directly link them to their primary identity.

#### d. Unknown Area

Unknown areas are a part of an individual's self that is unknown to themselves or others. In digital interactions, this area can emerge when someone discovers a new perspective about themselves after interacting with others. In this study, several comments indicated that users experienced self-reflection after reading content or comments from other users. Examples of netnographic comments are as follows.

“Just thought about it after watching this video.” (Comment UA.1)

“It turns out that many people have the same experience.” (Comment UA.2)

These comments demonstrate that digital interactions can trigger a process of self-reflection that individuals were previously unaware of. This was also explained by one informant in an interview: “Sometimes after reading other people's comments, I think again. It turns out that many people have had similar experiences.” (Informant 2)

These findings suggest that the comments section is not only a space for self-expression but also

a platform for building self-awareness through digital social interactions. Commenting encouraged informants to recognize courage, social awareness, and critical positions they had previously been unaware of. The activity of commenting encouraged informants to recognize their courage in voicing criticism, increased awareness of social issues, and previously unknown argumentative skills. This awareness did not arise prior to the interaction but rather developed through repeated communication experiences.

Based on the results of the analysis using the Johari Window theory, this study shows that the Instagram comment column on the @bintangemon account on the DPO (Omon-Omon Representative Council) content has become a digital communication space that allows generation Z to carry out various forms of self-disclosure. Research findings indicate that Generation Z's self-disclosure in the comments section is not always explicit. Some users express experiences or feelings directly, while others choose to share their opinions more generally. Furthermore, interactions between users also play a crucial role in expanding an individual's self-awareness. Responses from other users can help someone become aware of previously unnoticed aspects of themselves. This demonstrates that digital communication serves not only as a means of sharing information but also as a process of identity formation. Thus, the Instagram comments column can be understood as a digital social space that allows Generation Z to express themselves, share experiences, and build new understandings about themselves through interactions with other users. The form of self-disclosure of Generation Z in the Instagram comment column @bintangemon is classified based on four areas in the Johari Window theory as explained in the following table.

**Table 1.** Gen Z Self-Disclosure Categorization Table Based on Johari Window Theory

No	Johari Window Categories	Characteristics of Self-Disclosure	Example of Netnography Comments	Interpretation	Meaning in Digital Communication	Relation to Social Identity	Form of Social Validation
1	Open Area	Users consciously express personal feelings, experiences, or opinions that can be known by others	“Very relevant to life today.”	Users openly associate content with personal experiences	Instagram comment sections function as open spaces for participatory communication and emotional expression	Users construct a digital identity as socially aware individuals	Validation is obtained through likes, replies, and agreement from other users
2	Open Area	Expression of emotions	“Sometimes we can only laugh when	Comments become a form of	Humor and satire become	Users position themselves	Emotional support and

		toward the social issues discussed	we see news like this.”	public emotional expression	communication tools to express collective anxiety in digital spaces	ves as part of a community experiencing similar social concerns	empathy from other users strengthen feelings of acceptance
3	Blind Area	Spontaneous comments that unconsciously show social attitudes or criticism	“It’s funny, but it’s actually really sarcastic.”	The author may intend humor, but readers perceive social criticism	Digital communication enables implicit meanings to emerge through audience interpretation	Users unintentionally reveal critical or cynical social identities	Validation appears when other users reinforce the implied criticism through interactions
4	Blind Area	Humor that indirectly shows negative emotions	“Laugh first before crying.”	Demonstrates social frustration that the author may not fully realize	Meme culture and humor act as indirect emotional communication in online interactions	Users are perceived as part of a generation familiar with ironic expression	Shared reactions indicate collective understanding of emotional struggles
5	Hidden Area	Users limit personal information	“Agree with what is said in this video.”	Users participate without revealing personal experiences	Digital communication allows selective self-presentation in public spaces	Users maintain boundaries between public identity and private identity	Validation occurs through participation without the need for personal exposure
6	Hidden Area	Public opinion without explicit self-disclosure	“Problems like this happen often.”	Users maintain privacy while still engaging in discussion	Social media provides opportunities for anonymous or semi-	Users negotiate their social identity carefully to	Agreement from others confirms opinions without requiring personal

				s	anonymous interaction	avoid vulnerability	openness
7	Unknown Area	Self-reflection after viewing content or comments	"Just thought about it after watching this video."	Content stimulates new awareness and reflection	Digital interactions encourage reflective communication and meaning-making	Users discover new perspectives about themselves and their social environment	Validation emerges from realizing that others share similar reflections
8	Unknown Area	Collective awareness after reading other comments	"It turns out that many people feel the same way."	Digital interaction creates collective social reflection	Comment sections become spaces for collaborative interpretation of social reality	Users develop a sense of belonging within a digital community	Social validation is formed through collective agreement and shared experiences among users

## 1. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the description shows that the Instagram comment column, especially on the @bintangemon account, has developed into a multifunctional digital social space for Generation Z. The comment column is no longer just used to respond to content, but has also become a means of entertainment, reflection of social reality, and a place for open self-expression. Generation Z actively engages in self-disclosure by linking the issues discussed to their personal experiences, feelings, and views. This pattern often appears in the form of spontaneous, humorous, or emotional comments, thus reflecting the authenticity of expression while also revealing aspects of themselves that are sometimes not fully realized by the individual. On the other hand, despite being open in interacting, Generation Z remains aware of maintaining privacy boundaries. They tend to be selective in sharing sensitive information and use certain strategies, such as second accounts, to control the level of self-disclosure. Interaction in the comment column also plays a role in building self-awareness. By reading and responding to other users' comments, individuals can discover new understandings about their own experiences and feelings that were previously unknown. Overall, the Instagram comment column functions as a digital social communication space that allows Generation Z to express themselves,

interact dynamically, maintain personal boundaries, and develop self-awareness through the process of online social interaction.

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