

The Role of Instagram in Enhancing Student Self-Disclosure: A Mixed-Methods Study on Students at SMA of Palangka Raya

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Abstrack

Teenagers widely use Instagram to express themselves, including self-disclosure. This study aims to analyze the role of Instagram in encouraging students' self-disclosure and the factors that influence it. Referring to the theory of intensity of social media use, as well as the five dimensions of self-disclosure, this study employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, involving 111 students from class XI at SMAN 4 Palangka Raya. Quantitative results revealed a positive correlation between Instagram usage intensity and self-disclosure ($r = 0.476$), accounting for 22.6% of the variance. Qualitatively, four main factors were found: purpose of use, type of content, trust in followers, and perception of privacy. The findings confirm that Instagram can be a positive tool for self-disclosure when used with an emphasis on ethical and privacy awareness. Educators and parents are expected to play an active role in students' digital literacy.

Keywords: role, instagram media, self-disclosure, students

Abstrak

Instagram banyak dimanfaatkan remaja untuk mengekspresikan diri termasuk self-disclosure. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran Instagram dalam mendorong self-disclosure siswa dan faktor-faktor yang memengaruhinya. Mengacu pada teori intensitas penggunaan media sosial, serta lima dimensi self-disclosure, penelitian ini menggunakan metode mixed methods dengan desain sequential explanatory, melibatkan 111 siswa kelas XI SMAN 4 Palangka Raya. Hasil kuantitatif menunjukkan korelasi positif antara intensitas penggunaan Instagram dan self-disclosure ($r = 0,476$) dengan kontribusi 22,6%. Secara kualitatif, ditemukan empat faktor utama: tujuan penggunaan, jenis konten, kepercayaan terhadap pengikut, dan persepsi privasi. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa Instagram dapat menjadi sarana keterbukaan diri yang positif bila digunakan dengan kesadaran etika dan privasi. Pendidik dan orang tua diharapkan berperan aktif dalam literasi digital siswa.

Keywords: peran, media instagram, self-disclosure, siswa

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has led to the emergence of social media, which is now widely recognized and utilized by various groups (Nurrahmi et al., 2025). One of the most popular social media platforms among teenagers is Instagram (D.Green et al., 2018; Sikumbang et al., 2024). This platform provides various interesting features, including sharing photos, videos, stories, and live broadcasts via Instagram Live (Abidin et al., 2023). The diversity of these features makes this platform the main choice for interacting and sharing visual content (Nugroho et al., 2024). Apart from being a means of sharing visual content, Instagram is also used effectively in the dissemination of Islamic teachings, the formation of religious identity, and the improvement of religious attitudes and spiritual well-being of its users (Anwar & Surawan, 2024 Norhidayah et al., 2025). Instagram also provides an opportunity for individuals to cultivate personal relationships and reflect on themselves through the open expression of their thoughts and feelings. This makes Instagram a potential medium to support self-development, including the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and experiences openly, or what is known as self-disclosure (Sihombing & Aninda, 2022; Rahayu et al., 2023; Firmansyah et al., 2024).

Self-disclosure plays a crucial role in strengthening interpersonal relationships, fostering social ties, and supporting adolescent mental health (Nowell et al., 2023). In addition, Solehah et al., (2024) it also revealed that self-disclosure, whether carried out in person or online, plays a role in identity formation, strengthens social relationships, and increases psychological well-being, which supports adolescents' academic and career development. Furthermore, research by Nofembri et al., (2021) revealed that self-disclosure plays an important role in increasing students' confidence in expressing opinions. This is an important part of the learning process and social interaction in the school environment (Norvia et al., 2023; Hamdanah et al., 2024). In line with that, Khalda et al., (2025) it is asserted that open communication between teachers and students not only creates a more comfortable learning atmosphere, but also increases students' confidence in openly expressing their thoughts and experiences.

In education, self-disclosure is essential for students to develop good social skills as they enter the Era Society 5.0. The ability to openly convey feelings, personal experiences, and opinions can increase engagement in the learning process and encourage the creation of a supportive learning environment (Mazrur et al., 2024). Conversely, a lack of self-disclosure ability can lead to low social acceptance from the surrounding environment, which in turn can hinder the optimal development of students' personalities (Septiani et al., 2019 Pérez-Torres, 2024). Students with low levels of self-disclosure are at risk of experiencing various negative impacts, including feelings of alienation, weak social interaction skills, a lack of self-confidence, rejection anxiety, difficulty adapting to social environments, and feelings of inferiority (H. Y. Anggraini et al., 2024). Therefore, self-disclosure in students, especially at the senior high school level, is a crucial phase in the formation of self-identity and is a very important aspect to consider. Additionally, self-disclosure in this case can also be part of a coping strategy for the academic and social pressures experienced by students. A'ini et al., (2025) Showed that self-expression rooted in spiritual approaches can help individuals manage academic stress and build psychological well-being in a more reflective manner.

However, in practice, not all students have the courage or safe space to conduct open self-disclosure in the school environment (Setianingsih, 2015 Goagosos et al., 2024). Several barriers, including social pressure, fear of judgment, and a lack of media



that support self-expression, are the primary obstacles. Therefore, an approach that is relevant to the characteristics of today's adolescents is needed, one of which is through the use of Instagram social media (Aisyah et al., 2022; R. D. Anggraini et al., 2024). Instagram, a popular platform rich in interactive features, can be an effective media alternative for supporting and improving student self-disclosure (Safira et al., 2023). In this context, the Uses and Gratifications theory is crucial for understanding students' motivation in choosing Instagram as a medium for self-disclosure. According to Ruggiero (2000) individuals, they actively choose media based on the psychological and social needs they want to fulfill. Instagram is used not solely for entertainment, but also as a means to fulfill the need for recognition, social relations, and expression of personal identity. Therefore, research related to the role of Instagram as a medium for increasing self-disclosure in students is important to conduct.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between social media and self-disclosure in adolescents, especially in the context of interpersonal communication. Devi & Siswati (2018) And Clarissa & Tamburian (2019) reviewed the use of WhatsApp, demonstrating how the platform facilitates open communication between students. Meanwhile, Widiyawati & Wulandari (2021) examined differences in self-disclosure based on gender on social media. Furthermore, studies by Wafiah et al., (2020) and Johana et al., (2020) began to explore self-disclosure practices through the Instagram Stories feature. However, these studies are still limited to a descriptive approach and have not examined in depth how Instagram can play a strategic role in increasing students' self-disclosure in the school environment.

Additionally, there is a lack of research that explicitly integrates mixed methods to understand students' experiences in utilizing Instagram as both a medium of self-expression and a means of developing social skills within the realm of formal education. Therefore, the fundamental difference of this research lies in its approach, which not only examines communication behavior but also delves in depth into the role of Instagram in encouraging students' self-disclosure within the educational environment. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its explicit focus on the role of Instagram as a potential media in encouraging students' self-disclosure in a positive and directed manner using mixed methods with the subjects studied being students of class XI of SMAN 4 Palangka Raya. This research seeks to understand the role of social media not only as a means of expression, but also as part of the process of developing adolescents' identity and social skills in the digital era.

The uniqueness of this research can also be seen from the subjects studied, namely grade XI students who are in a complex phase of identity development and are prone to social pressure. Instagram as a visual-based media allows students to express themselves in a creative and flexible way, thus providing a safer and more personalized alternative space compared to conventional forms of communication. Therefore, this study is interesting because it combines the realm of digital technology with psychological and educational aspects. Therefore, the importance of this study lies not only in its theoretical contribution, but also in its practical benefits. Teachers, counselors, and education personnel can use the results of this study as a basis for designing programs or activities that make targeted use of Instagram to build open communication among students. This research can also serve as a foundation for curriculum development that is adaptive to technological developments and students' psychosocial needs, so that education is not only cognitively oriented, but also supports students' emotional and social development in a balanced manner. Therefore, the use of Instagram has an important role in shaping



students' self-disclosure, both emotionally and socially. Based on this background, this study seeks to answer two main questions: (1) What is the role of Instagram in increasing students' self-disclosure in class XI of SMAN 4 Palangka Raya? and (2) What factors influence students' self-disclosure in using Instagram?

METHOD

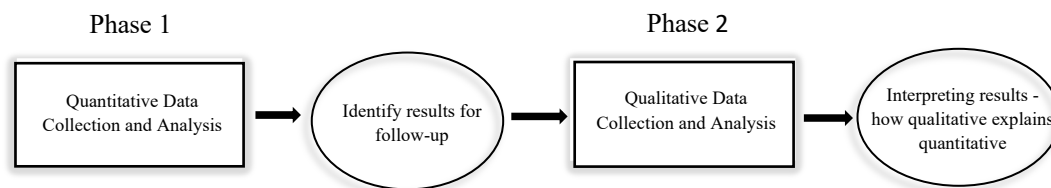
This research employed mixed methods, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches sequentially within a sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The type of research chosen for quantitative methods is correlational using product moment correlation analysis techniques. As for the qualitative method, the researcher employed a phenomenological approach to understand the experiences and subjective meanings of students as they expressed themselves through Instagram social media. The subjects who participated in this study were students of class XI SMAN 4 Palangka Raya with a total sample of 111 people selected using simple random sampling technique to provide equal opportunities to all members of the population in the selection process.

Quantitative data collection was done through a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, which was arranged based on two main indicators, namely: (1) Instagram social media utilization indicators, which are compiled by referring to the intensity of social media use scale according to Ajzen in Mattorang & Subardjo (2024) and (2) self-disclosure indicators which adapt the five dimensions of self-disclosure according to Wheelless & Grotz (1976) which were later developed by Leung (2002), namely: amount, depth, honesty, intent, and positiveness-negativeness in disclosing personal information through social media. This questionnaire aims to measure the relationship between Instagram utilization and the level of self-disclosure in students. The instrument validity test was conducted using SPSS version 25. Meanwhile, the reliability test used the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with the test results showing that variable X (Instagram utilization) had a value of $\alpha = 0.866$. Meanwhile, Variable Y (self-disclosure) has a value of $\alpha = 0.850$, which indicates a high level of reliability. Furthermore, quantitative data analysis techniques use product-moment correlation and the coefficient of determination to determine the relationship between variables.

Qualitative data was collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with class XI students of SMAN 4 Palangka Raya as research subjects, as well as with Islamic Religious Education teachers and class XI guardians as informants, to explore the factors that influence the level of students' self-disclosure through Instagram. Observation was conducted on students' activities in using social media, especially in the context of interaction and self-disclosure. Then, documentation was used to support observation and interview data, in the form of relevant uploads. Qualitative data validation techniques employ the triangulation of sources and methods. Qualitative data analysis techniques are carried out through three stages Miles et al., (2014), namely, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifications. The following is a description of the research flow that researchers will follow in accordance with the sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).



Chart 1.
 Research Flow with Sequential Explanatory Design



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Utilization of Instagram as a Medium to Increase Self-Disclosure

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms and is widely used as a means to share personal moments and express oneself openly (Nugraha et al., 2023). The utilization of this platform has a role in increasing self-disclosure among students, as shown in the following table of product-moment correlation analysis results.

Table 1.
 Results of Data Analysis with Product Moment Correlation

		Correlations	
		Instagram Media Utilization	Self-Disclosure
Instagram Media Utilization	Pearson Correlation	1	,476**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000
	N	111	111
Self-Disclosure	Pearson Correlation	,476**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	
	N	111	111

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the analysis in Table 1 indicate a positive and significant relationship between Instagram utilization and student self-disclosure, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.476$ and a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). The results indicate that the higher the intensity of Instagram utilization, the greater the tendency for students to self-disclose. Based on statistical interpretation, the value of $r = 0.476$ falls within the medium relationship category, indicating a fairly strong relationship between the two variables. These results not only yield quantitative findings but also have conceptual implications. Instagram utilization does not only represent entertainment activities, but also acts as a social space that allows students to openly express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In this context, Instagram can be understood as a medium that encourages the process of self-disclosure which includes emotional, cognitive, and social aspects. Furthermore, to determine the extent of the influence of Instagram utilization on self-disclosure, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is calculated as follows:

$$KD = r^2 \times 100\% = (0,476)^2 \times 100\% = 0,226 \times 100\% = 22,6\%$$

Based on the calculation of the coefficient of determination, it is evident that 22.6% of the variation in student self-disclosure is attributed to the use of Instagram,



while the remaining 77.4% is attributed to other factors outside the variables studied. This means that the intensity of Instagram use makes a significant contribution in explaining variations in students' self-disclosure behavior. This figure is practically significant, especially in the context of education in Indonesia, where adolescents often face limited space to express feelings and views directly in their social environment. Through various communicative and interactive features, Instagram offers a safe space for students to explore their identity and express themselves according to their personal preferences. However, the large proportion of the influence of other factors (77.4%) indicates the complexity of the self-disclosure process that cannot be explained solely by the use of social media. Some potential factors that could be the focus of further studies include social support from peers, family communication patterns, emotion regulation skills, and confidence in using digital technology (digital self-efficacy). In line with these findings, Bazarova & Choi (2014) it was shown that aspects of emotional attachment and perceptions of digital privacy play a role in determining the level of individual self-disclosure in cyberspace.

The findings of this study are also reinforced by the study of Purnamasari et al., (2024), which states that social media such as Instagram serves as a forum for self-disclosure, especially among adolescents. This is supported by Susanto & Anditawan, (2022) research that found that uploading photos and videos can trigger the self-disclosure process. Furthermore, Sihombing & Aninda (2022) highlighted the Close Friends feature as a relatively safer space to share personal content. Several other features, such as Instagram Stories (Maharani & Febriana, 2024), Direct Messages (Purnamasari et al., 2024), and Reels (Rahayu et al., 2023), are also considered to support self-disclosure because they provide flexibility in choosing audiences and forms of expression that suit users' convenience. Thus, Instagram can be understood not only as a means of digital social interaction but also as a medium that supports adolescents' psychosocial development through adaptive, selective, and contextual self-disclosure mechanisms.

The forms of student self-disclosure on Instagram are very diverse. This depends on the purpose, individual convenience, and social context behind students' activities on the platform. Based on interviews and observations, it was found that students' forms of self-disclosure through Instagram can be categorized into four main forms, namely: (1) daily activities, (2) hobbies and personal interests, (3) spontaneous or idle expressions, and (4) emotional or reflective expressions. First, the most common form of self-disclosure by students is sharing their daily activities on Instagram. This is as revealed by MF, one of the XI grade students at SMAN 4 Palangka Raya who stated that he quite often uses the story feature on Instagram to share personal things:

I often share personal stories, usually one to two times a day, such as photos of food, scenery, or moments with friends. Sometimes also small positive things, for example when traveling or drawing (Interview with MF, grade XI student, March 6, 2025).

Saya sering berbagi cerita pribadi, biasanya satu hingga dua kali sehari, seperti foto makanan, pemandangan, atau momen bersama teman. Terkadang juga hal-hal positif kecil, misalnya saat bepergian atau menggambar (Wawancara dengan MF, siswa kelas XI, 6 Maret 2025).

The statement was also reinforced by Mr. YW as the 11th grade Islamic Religious Education teacher at SMAN 4 Palangka Raya who stated that:



Some students often share their daily activities, achievements, or moments with friends through Instastory or feed uploads (Interview with Mr. YW, PAI teacher grade XI, February 24, 2025).

Beberapa siswa sering membagikan aktivitas, prestasi, atau momen sehari-hari mereka kepada teman-teman melalui Instastory atau unggahan feed (Wawancara dengan Bapak YW, guru PAI kelas XI, 24 Februari 2025).

Students often share their daily activities on Instagram as a form of personal and social self-expression. This is in line with the findings of Wiyono & Muhid (2020) that adolescents use Instagram for self-actualization and interpersonal communication. Lu & Lin (2022) added that the Stories feature is used for entertainment, exploration, and social relationships that bring up positive emotions. Wang (2021) also points out that Stories are used to convey opinions, increase social awareness, and encourage interaction. Thus, sharing daily activities is an effective self-disclosure strategy to fulfill social affiliation needs and form a positive digital identity.

Second, a form of self-disclosure that is also found in student posts is content related to hobbies and personal interests. If in the first form students emphasize more on daily activities, then in this second form students tend to show a more directed and characterized side of themselves through content that represents students' interest in certain fields. A grade XI student named IM revealed that:

I mostly post about my K-pop bias and my drawings. The posts are usually positive and related to hobbies, such as concerts or drawing results, not personal things (Interview with IM, grade XI student, February 26, 2025).

Saya kebanyakan memposting tentang bias K-pop saya dan gambar saya. Postingan tersebut biasanya positif dan terkait dengan hobi, seperti konser atau hasil menggambar, bukan hal pribadi (Wawancara dengan IM, siswa kelas XI, 26 Februari 2025).

As a reinforcement of the above statement, one of IM's works posted on Instagram can be seen in the following picture:



Figure 1. Student's drawing named IM

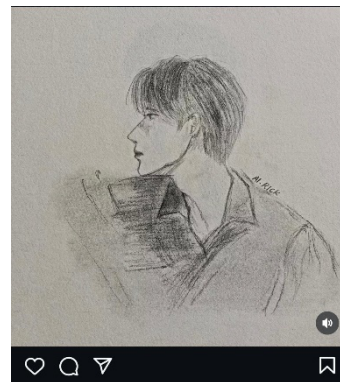


Figure 2. Student picture postings

Students' statements, as well as Figures 1 and 2, show that Instagram is used not only to share daily activities but also to express interests and hobbies. This reinforces the role of Instagram as a medium for self-actualization. This self-actualization is often not only aesthetic, but also part of the way students relieve stress through fun and meaningful activities. This finding is in line with the research results of Alvanajati et al., (2025) which shows that activities such as drawing and coloring are not only a means of releasing stress,



but also a form of self-expression that can increase students' emotional calmness and confidence in presenting their identity. Code (2015) States that social media helps shape students' virtual identities through the expression of interests and the formation of social relationships. Aulia & Putri (2024) Added that the consistency of visual content on Instagram contributes to the formation of self-image. In addition, Zillich & Riesmeyer (2021) emphasized that adolescents adjust their self-presentation based on social expectations for peer acceptance. Therefore, sharing hobbies and interests is a form of self-disclosure that helps shape students' self-identity.

Third, another form of self-disclosure found in students' activities on Instagram is spontaneous or idle expression, which is sharing random content without special planning and is not directly related to personal identity. One of the eleventh-grade students named RR explained that he was more comfortable sharing content that was spontaneous and did not show too much of his personal side:

Usually I just share random things that I find interesting, without having to include personal information (Interview with RR as a grade XI student on Friday, March 7, 2025).

Biasanya saya hanya membagikan hal-hal acak yang saya temukan menarik, tanpa harus menyertakan informasi pribadi (Wawancara dengan RR sebagai siswa kelas XI pada hari Jumat, 7 Maret 2025).

The above statement suggests that some students prefer to share content that does not contain personal information, but rather things they find interesting and relevant, as a form of light expression that arises by chance or for entertainment. This behavior reflects a mild form of self-disclosure that is oriented towards personal comfort. This is in line with the findings of Zillich & Riesmeyer (2021) which show that adolescents tend to prioritize personal norms in sharing content on social media. In addition, Kim et al., (2024) in their research on the BeReal application showed that teenagers feel more comfortable presenting themselves as they are without pressure to appear perfect or share deeply personal things. In this context, Petronio (2002) nication Privacy Management theory is relevant to explain how individuals consciously manage privacy boundaries in interacting in the digital world. Spontaneous expressions such as those made by students can be understood as a strategy to maintain a balance between the need to express themselves and maintain privacy.

Fourth, a form of self-disclosure also found in student posts is emotional or reflective expression, which involves sharing content that is more directed at expressing personal feelings or thoughts related to something considered essential or interesting to the individual. One grade XI student named CL explained that he often uses the story feature on Instagram to share spontaneous expressions of feelings or thoughts, especially related to his interest or passion for something he is passionate about:

If I'm happy, I'll make an Instagram story, then I'll talk about it. Then make posts like I really like this, like that. But it's not about liking people, it's more like liking something, for example a movie (Interview with CL as a grade XI student on Thursday, March 6, 2025).

Kalau lagi seneng, aku bikin Instagram Story, terus aku ceritain. Terus aku bikin postingan kayak aku suka banget ini, itu. Tapi ini bukan soal suka sama orang, lebih ke suka sesuatu, misalnya film (Wawancara dengan CL sebagai siswa kelas XI, Kamis, 6 Maret 2025).



This statement shows that Instagram is used as a medium to express personal feelings and thoughts that reflect the emotional dimension of self-disclosure. This phenomenon is in line with the findings of Rahardjo et al., (2020) which state that adolescents tend to self-disclose on social media to build self-image and maintain social relationships, especially if they have extroverted personalities and low privacy risk perceptions. In addition, a study by Wiyono & Muhid (2020) found that adolescents use Instagram as a means of self-actualization and emotional reflection, which can have positive or negative impacts depending on the context and individual self-control. Furthermore, research Zhao et al., (2022) showed that adolescents have a complex understanding of privacy on Instagram, and tend to adjust privacy settings to express themselves more freely in features such as Instagram Stories. Therefore, the use of story features by students, such as CL is not only a means of sharing interests but also shows the function of Instagram as a place for emotion regulation and strengthening self-identity in the digital social sphere.

Based on the forms of self-disclosure that have been identified, it can be concluded that the way students express themselves on Instagram reflects their need for social recognition, personal comfort, and regulation of privacy. Each form has its own characteristics and meaning in shaping their digital identity. To provide a more systematic overview, the following is a summary of students' forms of self-disclosure on Instagram in the form of a table:

Table 1.
 Forms of Student Self-Disclosure on Instagram

No.	Forms of Self-Disclosure	Brief Explanation	Theoretical/Research Support
1.	Daily Activities	Share daily activities, such as meals, outings, or moments with friends.	Wiyono & Muhid (2020); Lu & Lin, (2022); Wang (2021)- Instagram is used for self-actualization and social affiliation through everyday stories.
2.	Hobbies and Personal Interests	Demonstrate self-identity through content that showcases hobbies, works, or randoms.	Code (2015); Aulia & Putri (2024); Zillich & Riesmeyer (2021) - Social media shapes self-image through interest and visual consistency.
3.	Spontaneous Expression	Randomly shared content without personal content, just for entertainment.	Zillich & Riesmeyer, (2021); Kim et al., (2024); Petronio (2002)-Teens maintain privacy boundaries by sharing light and unplanned content.
4.	Emotional/Reflective Expression	Spontaneous expression of feelings, thoughts, or preferences towards a certain thing.	Rahardjo et al., (2020); Wiyono & Muhid (2020); Zhao et al., (2022)- Instagram is used for emotional reflection and self-regulation in a digital social context.

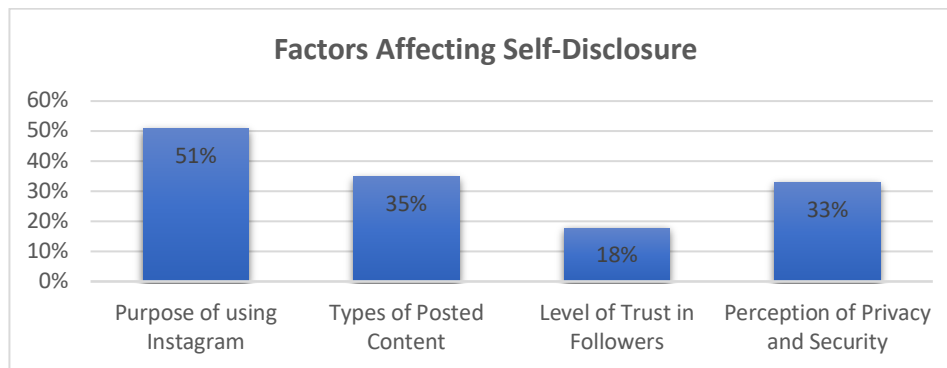


Factors Affecting Student Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure is a crucial process in identity formation and social relationships, particularly during adolescence (Vijayakumar & Pfeifer, 2020). Based on the questionnaire distributed to students in class XI of SMAN 4 Palangka Raya, four main factors that influence students' self-disclosure on Instagram were found:

Chart 1.

Percentage Diagram of Factors Affecting Self-Disclosure



Based on the chart above, four factors influence students' self-disclosure on Instagram. First, the purpose of using Instagram is the most dominant factor (51%). Second, the type of content uploaded also has a significant influence (35%). Third, perceptions of privacy and security also contributed (33%). Finally, the level of trust in followers had the least influence (18%). These findings suggest that personal motivation tends to determine students' openness on social media more than external factors.

Purpose of using Instagram

Based on the observation, students of class XI of SMAN 4 Palangka Raya use Instagram not only for entertainment, but also as a means of self-expression. Students actively upload personal content such as photos of daily activities, short stories in captions, and random words. This shows that Instagram is utilized as a medium to share experiences and build social connections. This is as documented below.

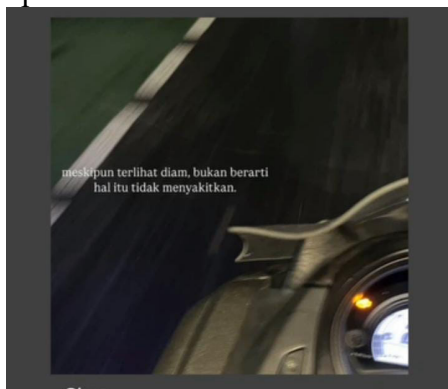


Figure 3. Random Words Post



Figure 4. Student Activity Posts in the Student Council

The documentation in Figure 3 and Figure 4 reinforces that the content shared by students through Instagram has both personal and social nuances. Figure 3 illustrates



posts in the form of reflective words that describe emotional states or personal thoughts, while Figure 4 displays student activities within the student council organization, showcasing a desire to share meaningful experiences. Both reflect that students utilize Instagram as a space to express themselves and build connections with their surroundings. Furthermore, this finding is reinforced through an interview with AR, a grade XI student, who stated:

My purpose of using Instagram is to share stories with friends, express myself, and see other people's posts (Interview, Monday, March 10, 2025).

Tujuan saya menggunakan Instagram adalah untuk berbagi cerita dengan teman, mengekspresikan diri, dan melihat postingan orang lain (Wawancara, Senin, 10 Maret 2025).

This statement reflects that students' main motivation for using Instagram is for self-expression and social interaction. The theoretical support for this finding is in line with the Uses and Gratifications theory Ruggiero (2000), which explains that media is used to fulfill personal needs, such as self-expression and building relationships. Menon (2022) research also shows that sharing photos on Instagram is driven by self-image and social relationship needs. In addition, Al-Kandari et al., (2016) and Luo & Hancock (2020) confirmed that self-disclosure on social media provides psychological benefits when done positively and honestly.

Types of Posted Content

Observations of students' Instagram accounts show that most of the students actively share content that reflects their personal and social lives, such as activities with friends, personal photos and activities that are considered interesting or memorable. The uploaded content tends to showcase the positive and informal aspects of students' lives, featuring expressions that seem spontaneous and light, yet still reflect certain social meanings. This indicates that students feel comfortable revealing some of their personal aspects on Instagram. This is also reinforced by the documentation below.



Figure 5. Posts Of Students' Togetherness With Their Friends



Figure 6. Student Posts With The Marching Band Team During School Activities

The documentation in Figure 5 and Figure 6 reinforces the observation that students tend to share moments of togetherness and social activities as a form of positive



self-disclosure. These posts are not just documentation, but also reflect social identity, friendships, and experiences that are meaningful to students. This finding is in line with the results of an interview conducted with MD, a grade XI student, who stated:

Yes, I quite often post about personal things such as photos with family, myself, and friends (Interview, Thursday, March 6, 2025).

Ya, saya cukup sering memposting tentang hal-hal pribadi seperti foto bersama keluarga, diri saya sendiri, dan teman-teman (Wawancara, Kamis, 6 Maret 2025).

This statement confirms that some students feel comfortable and have a need to share personal aspects through Instagram as a form of self-disclosure. The content that students share on Instagram, such as photos with family or friends, not only serves as documentation, but also reflects visual self-disclosure that represents self-identity and the need for social closeness. Bazarova & Choi (2014) Emphasized that the level of self-disclosure is influenced by perceptions of the audience and privacy features, while Bazarova (2012) showed that the perception of social media as a private space encourages freer self-expression. Adolescents, although less likely to use privacy settings, share more personal information than other age groups Christofides et al., (2012), influenced by factors such as duration of use and self-esteem. Riesmeyer et al., (2021) Identified five visual self-presentation strategies that adolescents use strategically to shape their self-image, often mimicking digital influencers. The findings Angelini et al., (2024) and Taylor & Armes (2024) suggest that sharing personal content can strengthen social relationships and impact psychological well-being, depending on the social comparison process and level of self-esteem. Thus, students' engagement in sharing personal content on Instagram can be understood as a form of visual self-disclosure that is influenced by perceptions of privacy, self-expression needs, self-image strategies, and other psychosocial factors. While this practice shows benefits in building identity and social relationships, it also demands awareness of privacy risks and the importance of adequate digital literacy.

Level of Trust in Followers

Observations indicate that some students tend to selectively manage their personal information. Some students' Instagram accounts appear open, but others appear more closed or even inactive to the public. This phenomenon leads to the use of a second account that is more private, which is only followed by the closest people. As documented below.



Figure 7. Private Student Second Account



The documentation in Figure 7 illustrates the use of a private account, accessible only to those closest to them. This is in line with the results of an interview with AZ, an XI grade student who stated:

I more often share stories, experiences, and personal information on the second account, because on that account only close friends are allowed to follow (Interview, Saturday, March 8, 2025).

Saya lebih sering membagikan cerita, pengalaman, dan informasi pribadi pada akun kedua, karena pada akun tersebut hanya teman dekat saja yang boleh mengikuti (Wawancara, Sabtu, 8 Maret 2025).

The statement makes it clear that the level of trust in followers is a major consideration in determining self-disclosure. The use of private accounts reflects students' strategies in maintaining privacy boundaries while still fulfilling the need to express themselves openly to trusted audiences. From a theoretical point of view, this finding is in line with Petronio (2002) Communication Privacy Management Theory, which states that individuals regulate the limits of openness based on perceptions of risk and trust in message recipients. Bazarova & Choi (2014) also assert that social media users adjust the content and intensity of disclosure based on who is accessing the information. In this case, the use of a second account reflects a form of strategic audience management.

Furthermore, Choi & Sung (2018) found that self-disclosure increases when individuals feel safe from negative judgment, while Rahmaningtyas & Riswari (2022) trust and comfort are the main bases for self-disclosure in social relationships. Thus, the level of trust in followers is an important factor in determining the intensity and depth of students' self-disclosure. The strategy of using the second account reflects a form of psychological adaptation that aims to balance the need to express oneself and maintain privacy amid the digital social dynamics of adolescents.

Perception of Privacy and Security

Observations of each student account on Instagram showed that not all accounts displayed personal information or posts. Some accounts seemed very limited in terms of both content and interaction, indicating a tendency to refrain from sharing information. This indicates an awareness of the importance of maintaining privacy in an open digital space. As documented below.



Figure 8. Student Instagram Accounts With Limited Number Of Posts And interactions



Figure 9. Private student personal account



The documentation in Figure 8 and Figure 9 shows that students consciously limit self-disclosure on social media. The lack of posts and private accounts are concrete forms of students' caution in sharing personal information. This attitude reflects an awareness of digital risks and a desire to maintain privacy. This finding is reinforced through an interview with CI, a grade XI student, who stated:

As for personal information, I don't really share it, because I think personal information is quite sensitive if uploaded. On Instagram there are a lot of scams by taking people's personal data, so I prefer to maintain privacy (Interview, Thursday, March 6, 2025).

Soal informasi pribadi, saya tidak terlalu suka membagikannya, karena menurut saya informasi pribadi cukup sensitif jika diunggah. Di Instagram banyak penipuan dengan mengambil data pribadi orang, jadi saya lebih suka menjaga privasi (Wawancara, Kamis, 6 Maret 2025).

This statement reflects a high level of digital awareness, where students realize that personal information is vulnerable to misuse, such as data theft or cybercrime. This precautionary attitude is the basis for restrictions in self-disclosure. Theoretically, this finding is supported by Jaidka (2024) who state that perceived threats to privacy can inhibit user openness in online interactions. When the platform is perceived as not safe enough, users tend to reset their disclosure limits. Research by Ampong et al., (2018) also confirms that privacy risk perception is a major predictor of self-disclosure behavior, especially when users have high awareness of personal data protection. Furthermore, the study of Kim et al., (2025) emphasized that boundary regulation is the main strategy used by adolescents to control the information they share. This strategy is a form of self-management to maintain comfort and safety when interacting online. Lahti et al., (2024) also mentioned that negative experiences such as cyberbullying or misuse of information reinforce adolescents' tendency to limit digital openness. In the same context, Fejes-Vékássy et al., (2024) identified that perceived control and risk mutually influence online information sharing decisions. Thus, perceptions of privacy and safety serve as cognitive filters that influence students' decisions to open up on social media. Information restraint is not a form of closure, but an adaptive strategy to maintain psychological well-being in a risk-prone digital environment. Based on data analysis from observations, interviews, and documentation of students in class XI of SMAN 4 Palangka Raya, four main themes that influence students' self-disclosure in using Instagram were found. The four themes are then grouped into the following thematic model:



Table 3.
 Thematic Model of Student Self-Disclosure Factors on Instagram

Main Theme	Integrated Subtheme	Psychosocial Dimension	Model Visualization
Purpose of using Instagram	1. Self-expression and emotional reflection 2. Sharing personal stories and daily activities 3. Building social connections	Self-actualization, social recognition, emotional connectedness needs	Personal and social motivation (Expression)
Types of Posted Content	1. Personal, family and friends photos 2. Activities with friends/school 3. Positive narratives and light visual expressions	Social identity representation, visual narrative control, and the need for warm social relations	Visual self-representation (Representation)
Level of Trust in Followers	1. Second account usage 2. Limited followers	Audience management strategies based on interpersonal trust and risk perception	Audience Management and Privacy (Audience)
Perception of Privacy and Security	1. Private account to avoid digital risk 2. Caution in sharing personal information 3. Cyber threat awareness	Self-protection mechanisms, digital risk management, and regulation of personal information disclosure limits	Risk Management and Digital Awareness (Digital Risk)

The table above illustrates that there are four primary factors influencing students' self-disclosure on Instagram, which have complementary dimensions between the need for self-expression and protection against digital risks. The presentation in the form of themes and conceptual mapping strengthens the phenomenological approach in understanding teenagers' digital behavior. Thus, Instagram not only functions as a medium of expression, but also as a space for negotiating identity and self-security online.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the research location was limited to one school in Palangka Raya, so the results cannot be generalized to a wider context. Second,



the mixed approach used was cross-temporal rather than longitudinal, which meant it could not describe the long-term dynamics in students' self-disclosure behavior. Third, the qualitative analysis process was carried out manually without the support of analysis software such as NVivo. Hence, the interpretation of data is entirely dependent on the consistency and accuracy of the researcher. Recommendations for future research include: (1) exploring other psychological factors such as social validation needs, self-concept, or social anxiety; (2) expanding the context to other platforms such as TikTok or YouTube Shorts; and (3) taking a longitudinal approach to see the dynamics of self-disclosure as students' age and digital experiences evolve.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed a significant positive correlation between Instagram use and student self-disclosure ($r = 0.476$), accounting for 22.6% of the variance. Factors that influence self-disclosure include: purpose of use (51%), type of content (35%), trust in followers (18%), and perception of privacy (33%). Qualitatively, it was found that Instagram Stories are more often used to share daily spontaneity, while Feeds are used to display a more structured self-identity. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing digital literacy, particularly in areas such as media ethics, privacy awareness, and audience management. Schools are advised to integrate self-reflection-based digital literacy programs, while educators and parents need to create a supportive and safe digital environment for adolescents.

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