

The Oversharing Phenomenon on TikTok and Instagram and Its Impact on Generation Z's Digital Privacy

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ABSTRACT

Oversharing has become an increasingly common form of digital communication behavior among Generation Z, particularly on TikTok and Instagram. The ease of sharing information, the need for social validation, and the culture of openness in digital spaces encourage users to disclose various personal information to a wide audience. This study aims to analyze the forms of oversharing behavior among Generation Z, identify the factors driving such behavior, and explain its impact on digital privacy. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a library research method. Data were collected from scholarly journals, books, and scientific publications related to oversharing, self-disclosure, digital privacy, social media, and Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing based on the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model. The findings indicate that the most common forms of oversharing among Generation Z include disclosing emotional conditions, daily activities, interpersonal relationships, real-time locations, and sensitive personal experiences. These behaviors are influenced by the need for social validation, self-expression, emotional support, social media algorithms, and low levels of digital privacy literacy. Although oversharing may provide benefits such as social support and personal branding opportunities, it also poses various risks, including cyberbullying, cyberstalking, misuse of personal data, identity theft, and the creation of permanent digital footprints. From the perspective of Communication Privacy Management Theory, oversharing reflects an ongoing negotiation between self-disclosure needs and the maintenance of privacy boundaries in digital environments. Therefore, improving digital literacy and privacy awareness is essential to promote safer and more responsible social media use.

Keywords: Oversharing, Generation Z, TikTok, Instagram, Digital Privacy, Communication Privacy Management Theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies has fundamentally transformed patterns of interaction in modern society. The widespread accessibility of the Internet through digital devices has eliminated the constraints of time and space in communication activities. One of the most prominent manifestations of this transformation is the increasing use of social media as a platform for communication, information exchange, entertainment, and identity construction. Social media has become an inseparable part of daily life, particularly for Generation Z, who have grown up and developed within the digital era (Sriwahyuni & Seprina, 2024).

In addition to being the generation most familiar with digital technology, Generation Z represents one of the most active social media user groups in Indonesia. According to the Digital 2025 Indonesia report published by DataReportal, approximately 143 million social media user identities were recorded in Indonesia at the beginning of 2025, representing 50.2%

of the country's total population. Of these, around 126 million users aged 18 years and above were actively engaged on social media platforms, with TikTok and Instagram emerging as the two platforms with the largest reach among young users. Globally, TikTok users also spend more than twice as much time using the application compared to Instagram users. This high intensity of social media engagement indicates that these platforms have become integral to the daily lives of Generation Z, thereby increasing the likelihood of self-disclosure and oversharing behaviors.



Figure 1. Social Media Users in Indonesia, 2025
Source: DataReportal. (2025). Digital 2025: Indonesia.

Generation Z refers to individuals born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s and is widely recognized as the first generation of digital natives, having been exposed to the Internet and digital technologies from an early age. This characteristic has contributed to their higher dependence on social media compared to previous generations. For Generation Z, social media functions not only as a communication medium but also as a space for identity construction, social recognition, self-expression, and relationship building with other users (Maheswari, Parahita, & Purwanto, 2022).

Among the various social media platforms available today, TikTok and Instagram have become the most popular among Generation Z. These platforms provide a wide range of features that enable users to instantly share photographs, videos, stories, live broadcasts, and personal experiences with a broad audience. Such convenience in content creation and dissemination has fostered a culture of self-disclosure within digital communication. Fundamentally, self-disclosure refers to the process by which individuals reveal personal information to others in order to establish closer social relationships. However, in practice,

self-disclosure on social media frequently develops into oversharing, defined as the excessive disclosure of personal information without adequate consideration of healthy privacy boundaries (Wildan & Kusuma, 2024).

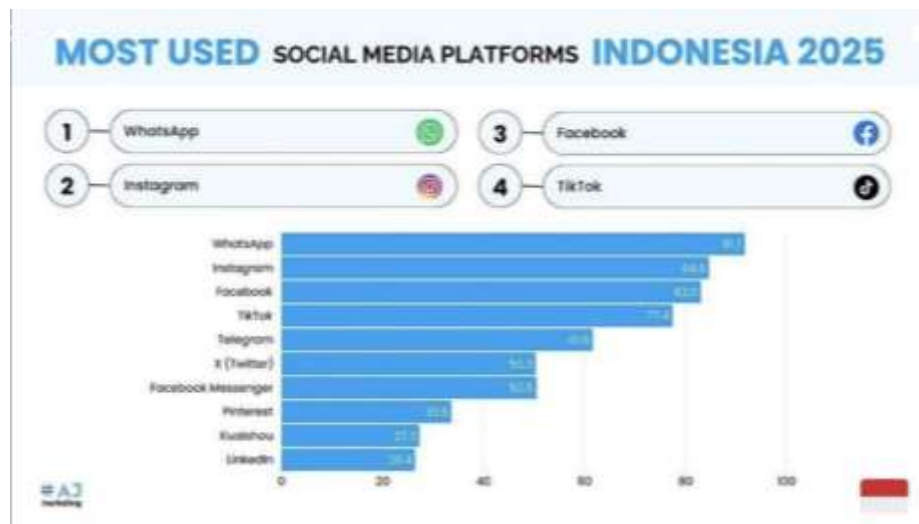


Figure 2. TikTok and Instagram Users in Indonesia, 2025

Source: DataReportal. (2025). Digital 2025: Indonesia.

Oversharing has emerged as one of the most prominent issues in digital communication over the past several years. This behavior encompasses not only the sharing of everyday activities but also the disclosure of emotional conditions, personal conflicts, family matters, romantic relationships, real-time locations, and other sensitive information that would ordinarily remain private. According to Dary, Saputra, and Setiawan (2025), oversharing among Generation Z functions as a means of self-expression, emotional release, social validation, and the pursuit of attention within digital social environments.

This phenomenon is further reinforced by the characteristics of social media algorithms, which tend to amplify highly personal and emotionally engaging content. Users who receive substantial engagement in the form of likes, comments, and shares are often encouraged to continue posting similar content. Consequently, the distinction between private and public spheres becomes increasingly blurred. Within this context, social media serves not only as a communication channel but also as a stage for identity performance, motivating individuals to continuously present various aspects of their personal lives to the public (Dary et al., 2025).

Despite the extensive use of social media, a high level of engagement is not always accompanied by sufficient awareness regarding the importance of protecting digital privacy. Research conducted by Sriwahyuni and Seprina (2024) indicates that Generation Z frequently experiences a dilemma between the desire to maintain openness on social media and the necessity of safeguarding personal information. Negative experiences, including unpleasant

comments, unauthorized use of personal photographs, and privacy violations, have encouraged some users to reduce their oversharing activities, particularly on Instagram.

The issue of digital privacy has become increasingly complex because information published online leaves digital footprints that are often difficult to erase. Ginting (2025) found that limited information literacy and insufficient understanding of digital ethics make Generation Z particularly vulnerable to impulsive disclosure of personal information. In addition to the desire for social validation, such behavior is influenced by social media culture, which increasingly normalizes excessive openness in everyday life.

The risks associated with oversharing should not be underestimated. Personal information disclosed publicly may be exploited for various malicious purposes, including identity theft, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, online fraud, and misuse of personal data. Veiga and Eickhoff (2016) further demonstrated that information appearing simple and harmless when shared on social media can be utilized to identify individuals and even predict the locations they frequently visit.

Previous studies have examined oversharing behavior from various perspectives, including motivations for social media use, digital literacy, self-disclosure, and its implications for user privacy. Nevertheless, most existing studies have either investigated social media platforms in general or focused exclusively on a single platform. Furthermore, studies that specifically compare Generation Z's oversharing behavior on TikTok and Instagram through the lens of Communication Privacy Management Theory remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study seeks to address this research gap by analyzing the forms of oversharing behavior, the factors influencing such behavior, and their implications for Generation Z's digital privacy management.

From the perspective of communication studies, the phenomenon of oversharing can be examined through the Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory developed by Sandra Petronio. This theory posits that individuals possess the right to control their personal information. However, once such information is shared with others, individuals must negotiate privacy boundaries governing its ownership and dissemination. Violations of these negotiated boundaries may result in boundary turbulence, a condition in which personal information spreads beyond the control of its original owner (Wildan & Kusuma, 2024).

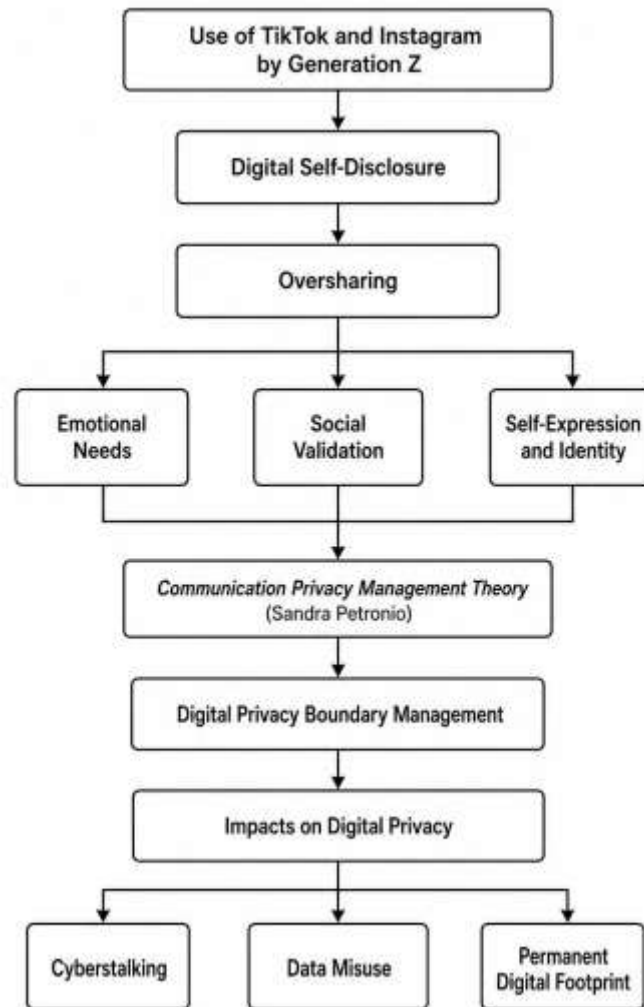


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework

Source: Processed by the authors (2026).

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of Generation Z's oversharing behavior across the two most dominant social media platforms, TikTok and Instagram, using the framework of Communication Privacy Management Theory. This study not only identifies the forms of oversharing and the factors motivating such behavior but also explains how Generation Z negotiates and manages digital privacy boundaries amid an increasingly pervasive culture of openness on social media. Consequently, this research is expected to contribute to the advancement of digital communication scholarship, particularly in the area of privacy management among Generation Z.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the phenomenon of oversharing on TikTok and Instagram warrants scholarly investigation because it reflects the evolving communication patterns of Generation Z in the digital era. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the forms

of oversharing behavior exhibited by Generation Z, identify the factors contributing to such behavior, and examine its implications for users' digital privacy. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of digital communication research, particularly in relation to privacy management and the communication behaviors of Generation Z on social media.

2. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using the library research method. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of oversharing among Generation Z on TikTok and Instagram, as well as its implications for digital privacy. This approach enables researchers to explore the meanings, motivations, experiences, and behaviors of social media users, which cannot be adequately explained through quantitative data alone (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

The library research method was conducted by collecting, identifying, evaluating, and analyzing various scholarly sources relevant to the research topic. The data sources consisted of national and international journal articles indexed in Google Scholar, academic books, conference proceedings, and other scholarly documents discussing oversharing, self-disclosure, digital privacy, Generation Z's social media use, and the Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory.

2.1 Data Sources

The study utilized secondary data obtained from scholarly publications published between 2020 and 2025. This publication period was selected to ensure that the data reflected the most recent developments in social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram.

The literature included in this study met the following criteria:

1. Articles discussing the phenomenon of oversharing on social media.
2. Articles examining the communication behaviors of Generation Z.
3. Articles addressing digital privacy and personal data security.
4. Articles employing the Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory as their theoretical framework.
5. Full-text articles accessible through Google Scholar.

The principal references used in this study include the work of Melati and Adiyanto (2025), which examines oversharing communication and privacy management among Generation Z through Instagram's Close Friends feature; Wildan and Kusuma (2024), which investigates oversharing behavior on Instagram Stories; and Ginting (2025), which analyzes the relationship between information literacy and oversharing behavior among Generation Z on Instagram.

2.2 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through literature documentation. Relevant publications were identified using the following keywords:

1. Oversharing
2. Self-disclosure
3. Digital privacy
4. Communication Privacy Management
5. Generation Z (Gen Z)
6. Instagram
7. TikTok
8. Social media behavior

The literature search was conducted through Google Scholar and other academic journal databases. The identified publications were subsequently screened based on their relevance, publication quality, topical suitability, and contribution to discussions concerning oversharing and digital privacy.

2.3 Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

1. Data Reduction

At this stage, the collected literature was carefully reviewed and screened. Publications that were not directly relevant to the research objectives were excluded. The remaining literature was then categorized according to key themes, including the factors contributing to oversharing, the various forms of oversharing behavior, and their implications for digital privacy.

2. Data Display

The reduced data were systematically organized into descriptive narratives. The findings from previous studies were grouped according to similar themes to facilitate interpretation, comparison, and synthesis across the selected literature.

3. Conclusion Drawing

The final stage involved interpreting the patterns emerging from the reviewed studies. These findings were subsequently analyzed using Sandra Petronio's Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory to explain how Generation Z negotiates and manages privacy boundaries when engaging in oversharing behaviors on social media.

2.4 Data Validity

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation. The triangulation process involved comparing findings from previous studies addressing similar research topics but conducted by different researchers, in different settings, and within different contexts. This approach enhances the credibility of the analysis and

provides a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of oversharing among Generation Z.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Forms of Oversharing Behavior on TikTok and Instagram

The phenomenon of oversharing among Generation Z is closely associated with the extensive use of social media as a platform for self-expression. TikTok and Instagram have evolved beyond platforms for sharing photographs and videos to become spaces for constructing digital identities and gaining social recognition. Within this context, many users consciously or unconsciously disclose personal information that would otherwise remain private to a broad public audience.

Sriwahyuni and Seprina (2024) found that Generation Z frequently experiences a dilemma between the desire for self-expression and the need to protect personal privacy. Several participants reported sharing personal experiences, emotional conditions, and everyday life challenges through Instagram Stories, Reels, and the Close Friends feature. Nevertheless, negative experiences, including unpleasant comments and the unauthorized use of personal photographs, have encouraged users to establish clearer privacy boundaries in their social media activities (Sriwahyuni & Seprina, 2024).

Common forms of oversharing include posts about romantic relationships, interpersonal conflicts, mental health conditions, real-time location sharing, and highly detailed descriptions of daily activities. Sigalingging, Elsera, and Syafitri (2023) found that young people frequently use Instagram to demonstrate their social existence through symbolic representations of lifestyle, daily routines, and personal preferences. These findings indicate that social media functions not only as a communication medium but also as a platform for public self-representation (Sigalingging et al., 2023).

This phenomenon is further reinforced by digital culture, which encourages individuals to remain visible, active, and socially relevant online. Consequently, users often feel compelled to continuously share aspects of their personal lives to maintain attention and engagement from their online communities. As a result, the distinction between private and public spheres becomes increasingly blurred.

3.2 Factors Influencing Oversharing Behavior Among Generation Z

The Need for Social Validation

One of the primary factors driving oversharing behavior is the need for social validation. Social validation refers to an individual's desire to obtain recognition, attention, and acceptance from others. Within social media environments, this validation is reflected through indicators such as likes, views, comments, reposts, and follower counts.

Generation Z has grown up in a digital environment where these engagement metrics function as indicators of social appreciation. The greater the interaction received, the stronger the perception of being accepted and valued by one's social network. Consequently, many users are motivated to disclose increasingly personal information in order to generate higher levels of audience engagement.

Research on the visibility of Instagram likes also demonstrates that digital interactions significantly influence users' self-confidence. Individuals tend to associate the level of social acceptance with the amount of engagement their posts receive (Susilawaty et al., 2023).

The Need for Self-Expression and Emotional Support

In addition to social validation, oversharing is also driven by the need for self-expression. Social media provides users with relatively unrestricted spaces to express their emotions, experiences, and opinions regarding various life events.

Many Generation Z users utilize TikTok and Instagram as platforms for expressing emotions during periods of psychological stress, interpersonal conflict, academic challenges, or workplace difficulties. In certain circumstances, social media is perceived as more accessible than seeking direct emotional support from family members or friends.

This phenomenon aligns with the concept of **self-disclosure**, which suggests that individuals naturally possess the need to reveal personal information as part of establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. However, when such disclosures become excessive and occur without careful consideration of potential risks, self-disclosure may develop into oversharing (Chiquita & Febriana, 2024).

The Influence of Social Media Algorithms

Another important contributing factor is the algorithmic system employed by TikTok and Instagram. These algorithms are designed to promote content that generates high levels of user engagement.

Content that is personal, emotional, and perceived as authentic generally attracts greater interaction than purely informational content. Consequently, users become increasingly motivated to share more aspects of their personal lives after observing that such content receives greater public attention.

This mechanism creates a self-reinforcing cycle. The more engagement users receive, the greater their motivation to disclose additional personal information in subsequent posts. Over time, this habit may gradually diminish users' sensitivity toward maintaining appropriate digital privacy boundaries.

3.3 The Implications of Oversharing for Digital Privacy

Positive Implications

Although oversharing is frequently viewed as problematic, it may also produce several positive outcomes. Self-disclosure can facilitate emotional support, strengthen social networks, and foster a sense of belonging among individuals who share similar experiences.

For many members of Generation Z, social media serves as a safe space for expressing experiences that may be difficult to communicate through face-to-face interactions. Support received from other users can alleviate feelings of loneliness and contribute positively to psychological well-being.

Furthermore, openness on social media may contribute to the development of personal branding. Many users successfully establish strong digital identities through the consistent sharing of authentic personal narratives with their audiences.

Negative Implications

Despite these benefits, existing studies suggest that the negative consequences of oversharing are considerably more complex and may produce long-term implications.

One of the most significant risks is the loss of control over personal information. Once information has been published online, users no longer possess complete control over how that information is distributed, stored, reproduced, or utilized by others.

Sriwahyuni and Seprina (2024) reported that negative experiences, including photo misuse, harmful comments, and toxic online interactions, have become major reasons why Generation Z users increasingly restrict their activities on Instagram.

Users are also vulnerable to cyberstalking, in which third parties monitor or track individuals using information publicly available on social media. Real-time location data, daily routines, and other personal information shared online may be exploited by malicious actors.

Another significant risk is cyberbullying. Individuals who disclose sensitive personal experiences become more susceptible to negative comments, ridicule, harassment, and verbal attacks from other users. Such experiences may adversely affect mental health and reduce users' sense of security while engaging with social media platforms.

Equally important is the creation of a permanent digital footprint. Information shared today may remain accessible for many years, even after users delete the original content. These digital traces may influence an individual's reputation in educational, professional, and social contexts in the future (Zhao, Inaba, & Monroy-Hernández, 2022).

3.4 Analysis Based on Communication Privacy Management Theory

The phenomenon of oversharing among Generation Z can be effectively explained using Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory, developed by Sandra Petronio. According to this theory, individuals possess the right to control their personal information and determine who is permitted to access it.

In practice, Generation Z employs various privacy management strategies, including setting accounts to private, utilizing Instagram's Close Friends feature, restricting comments,

and selectively determining the audience permitted to view their posts. These strategies reflect deliberate efforts to establish and maintain privacy boundaries.

However, these boundaries are frequently disrupted through boundary turbulence, a condition in which personal information spreads beyond the control of its original owner. Examples include screenshots of private posts being redistributed without permission, unauthorized use of personal photographs, or the dissemination of personal information to unintended audiences.

The findings of Sriwahyuni and Seprina (2024) indicate that experiences of boundary turbulence constitute an important factor motivating Generation Z to become more selective when sharing personal information on social media. These experiences encourage users to recognize that not every aspect of their personal lives should be disclosed to a broad public audience.

Overall, the phenomenon of oversharing among Generation Z reflects a continuous process of negotiation between the desire for openness and the need to safeguard personal privacy. The greater an individual's awareness of digital privacy, the more effectively they are able to establish, negotiate, and maintain appropriate boundaries regarding the personal information they disclose on social media.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the literature review, it can be concluded that oversharing has become one of the defining characteristics of Generation Z's digital communication practices on TikTok and Instagram. The accessibility of digital technologies, the high intensity of social media use, and the growing culture of openness within digital environments have encouraged Generation Z to disclose personal information more frequently to a broad audience. Such disclosures extend beyond sharing everyday activities to include emotional states, personal problems, interpersonal relationships, real-time locations, and other sensitive life experiences. This phenomenon demonstrates that the boundary between private and public spheres has become increasingly blurred in Generation Z's digital communication practices.

The review also indicates that oversharing behavior is influenced by multiple factors, including the need for social validation, the desire for attention and social recognition, the need for self-expression, the pursuit of emotional support, and the influence of social media algorithms that tend to amplify personal and emotionally engaging content. Furthermore, limited digital privacy literacy contributes to users' tendency to disclose personal information without adequately considering the potential long-term consequences of such disclosures.

On the other hand, oversharing does not always produce negative outcomes. Under certain circumstances, self-disclosure on social media may facilitate emotional support, expand social networks, foster communities of individuals with shared experiences, and contribute to personal branding. Nevertheless, existing studies consistently demonstrate that the negative consequences of oversharing are more substantial, particularly regarding threats to digital

privacy. Personal information disclosed online may be exploited for various harmful purposes, including cyberstalking, cyberbullying, identity theft, misuse of personal data, and the creation of permanent digital footprints that may adversely affect an individual's reputation in educational, professional, and social contexts.

From the perspective of Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory, proposed by Sandra Petronio, oversharing can be understood as a process of negotiating privacy boundaries within digital environments. Although Generation Z generally recognizes the importance of protecting personal privacy, they frequently encounter tensions between the desire for self-expression and the need to safeguard personal information. When shared information extends beyond the owner's control and reaches unintended audiences, boundary turbulence occurs. This condition illustrates that effective digital privacy management involves not only the technical use of social media privacy features but also the ability to make informed and responsible communication decisions.

Therefore, this study highlights the importance of strengthening digital literacy, particularly with respect to privacy awareness and personal data protection on social media platforms. Continuous educational initiatives concerning responsible management of personal information should be provided to Generation Z to enable them to utilize TikTok and Instagram as platforms for communication and self-expression without compromising their digital privacy. Achieving an appropriate balance between self-disclosure and privacy protection will ultimately promote safer, healthier, and more responsible social media practices.

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