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Interpersonal Communication Style of Generation Z: The Role of Social Media in Relationship Patterns, Trust, and Self-Disclosure.

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Abstract

This study examines how social media influences interpersonal communication among Generation Z by focusing on three fundamental dimensions: digital relational patterns, trust formation, and self-disclosure mechanisms. Utilising a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with eight informants aged 18–27 who actively utilise social media for interpersonal communication. The findings reveal that digital relationships develop rapidly through intense communication rhythms, yet remain fluctuating and highly contingent upon the continuity of messaging. Trust in digital interactions is established through the consistency between an individual's online persona and offline behaviour, positioning authenticity as a crucial indicator of interpersonal credibility. Conversely, self-disclosure occurs selectively through audience-control features such as close friends, private messages, or secondary accounts, enabling users to express themselves in a sense of emotional security. The study concludes that social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a social space that influences the dynamics of closeness, trust, and self-expression among Generation Z. These findings integrate Social Information Processing Theory, Social Penetration Theory, Impression Management, Warranting Theory, and the Online Disinhibition Effect to provide a more comprehensive understanding of digital interpersonal relationships among young generations.

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Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant transformations to human communication patterns, especially in the generation that grows and develops in the midst of the current era of technological modernisation. Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is the group that uses social media primarily for social interaction. Social media not only serves as a means of sharing information but also as a medium for the formation of personal identity, expression of emotions, and management of interpersonal relationships (Susilo et al., 2025). The paradigm shift in communication from face-to-face to digital-based communication shows a shift in the orientation of interpersonal communication that affects the dynamics of social relations among this generation (Budiawan et al., 2025).

According to Sukmana et al. (2025), the development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the global communication landscape. Human interaction that previously relied on face-to-face is now shifting to virtual spaces, where various digital platforms are the main medium for exchanging information, expressing oneself, and building social relationships. This shift has broad implications for people's communication patterns, including interpersonal interaction patterns that are now increasingly influenced by the dynamics of digital media.

In this context, social media emerged as a dominant communication instrument that significantly impacted daily life. Its presence not only facilitates rapid information dissemination but also serves as a social space that shapes identities, perceptions, and interpersonal relationships. The high intensity of social media usage influences the manner in which individuals establish emotional closeness, assess trust, and share personal information. This phenomenon suggests that interpersonal communication patterns are no longer independent of algorithmic influences, interaction features, and the digital culture cultivated on social media platforms.

Generation Z, a group born and raised in the digital era, is the group most affected by this communication transformation. They are known to have high digital literacy, a preference for quick communication, and a tendency to use social media as their main medium for interaction (Laka et al., 2024). Their interpersonal interactions not only take place in the real world but also extend into the digital space through instant messaging, comments, story uploads, and participation in virtual communities. This gives rise to new relationship patterns that are different from previous generations, both in the form of closeness, communication intensity, and expectations in relationships.

In interpersonal relationships, trust and self-disclosure are important indicators of relationship quality. However, in the social media environment, both aspects are also influenced by digital norms such as self-image management, anonymity, and the need for social validation. Generation Z, which is very active on social media, may experience changes in how they express their beliefs and share personal information. Interpersonal interactions are not only determined by emotional closeness, but also by communication patterns structured through technology (Fauzi, 2022).

Several previous studies have explained that the use of social media has direct implications for the quality of interpersonal communication, including the formation of psychological closeness and social connectedness. Communication through instant messaging, *stories*, comments, and visual content has been proven to form flexible, fast, and dynamic relationships. According to Suryani et al. (2025), Digital communication can cause potential relationship instability due to the absence of nonverbal cues and the possibility of misunderstandings in message interpretation. The literature shows that interpersonal relationships in the digital context tend to depend heavily on online communication activity rather than physical presence or direct interaction (Zis et al., 2021).

In addition to interpersonal relationships, aspects of trust and self-disclosure are influenced by social media use. Interpersonal trust is now not only built through the consistency of real behaviour, but also through the digital self-image displayed. Information selection, content curation, and online identity construction can affect perceptions of authenticity and trust in interpersonal relationships (Zis et al., 2021). On the other hand, social media facilitates self-expression by enabling people to share thoughts, personal experiences, and emotional expressions in the digital space. While self-disclosure can lead to emotional closeness and improve the quality of relationships, the practice also risks creating vulnerabilities, such as the misuse of personal information, privacy violations, and misaligned perceptions between users.

Studies on Generation Z's interpersonal communication on social media have been extensive. However, most previous studies have focused on a single aspect, such as relationship patterns, trust, or self-disclosure, separately. Although the authors previously identified research gaps, they did not explicitly explain where the limitations of the previous study lay. In particular, previous studies have not integrated the three main dimensions of interpersonal communication—relationship patterns, trust, and self-disclosure—into a single comprehensive analytical framework. In addition, most studies review only one platform or a specific type of relationship, or use methodological approaches that cannot capture Generation Z's subjective experiences in the digital space. This gap is what this study aims to fill through an integrated analysis to better how social media shapes the communication behaviour of the digital generation. Therefore, this study aims to simultaneously examine the influence of social media on interpersonal relationship patterns, trust formation, and self-disclosure mechanisms in interpersonal communication of Generation Z.

Based on this description, it is important to examine how social media shapes Generation Z's interpersonal communication style, particularly regarding relationship patterns, trust, and self-disclosure. This focus is then formulated in three research questions: (1) how the pattern of interpersonal relationships of Generation Z is formed and maintained through digital interaction; (2) how the consistency of digital identities affects the formation of interpersonal trust; and (3) how Generation Z selectively manages self-disclosure through audience management features on social media. Thus, this study not only seeks to address the shortcomings of previous studies but also presents a more complete, contextual, and relevant model of the meaning of interpersonal communication for today's digital generation.

Method

This study employs a phenomenological qualitative design to elucidate the subjective interpretations that Generation Z individuals derive from interpersonal communication facilitated through social media platforms. The phenomenological approach was selected to investigate how individuals perceive and interpret the process of interpersonal interaction in the digital realm and how these interactions subsequently influence relationship dynamics, trust, and self-disclosure (Ramdhan, 2021).

The research participants comprised eight informants aged 18–27 years, who belong to the Generation Z demographic. The selection of informants was conducted using purposive sampling, based on the following criteria: (1) active utilisation of social media for interpersonal communication; (2) daily engagement with social media platforms; and (3) prior experience in maintaining interpersonal relationships through social media.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth semi-structured interviews using a question protocol that focused on three themes: patterns of interpersonal relationships on social media, trust formation, and self-disclosure practices. The interviews were conducted online, lasting 45–70 minutes, and were recorded with the informants' consent (Rukin, 2019).

Data analysis followed phenomenological steps (Rukajat, 2018):

1. Transcription of Interviews

In the initial stage, all interview recordings were listened to repeatedly to ensure accuracy and then transcribed word-for-word without altering the informants' original language structure. This process included noting pauses, word emphasis, emotional expressions, and the interview context to capture subjective meaning comprehensively.

2. Data Reduction and Initial Coding

At this stage, *open coding* was conducted by giving initial codes to statements that reflect the informants' experiences, perceptions, emotions, or behavioural patterns in digital interactions. These initial codes may consist of short words or phrases such as "feels close due to intense chatting," "doubting digital identity," or "feeling more comfortable confiding through close friends."

3. Grouping Codes into Thematic Categories (Categorisation)

The initial codes were then analysed to identify patterns, similarities in meaning, and relationships between codes. This process produced more structured thematic categories. These categories reflect recurring themes across all interviews and form the foundation for understanding each informant's experience.

4. Formulation of Essential Themes and Phenomenological Meaning Extraction

In the final stage, the researcher synthesised thematic categories to formulate the essence of the informants' experiences related to interpersonal communication on social media. This process involved *interpretative phenomenological analysis*, interpreting how the informants give meaning to digital closeness, trust assessment, and self-disclosure practices. The synthesis produced a complete depiction of relational patterns, trust dynamics, and self-disclosure strategies among Generation Z in digital interactions. This formulation of phenomenological essence became the basis for the study's main findings.

To ensure data validity, the analysis process was supported by *member checking*, *peer debriefing*, and an *audit trail* as recommended in phenomenological approaches.

Findings

Relationship Patterns in Digital Interaction

Social media facilitates the formation of interpersonal relationships quickly through intense message responses and continuous digital contact. Generation Z experiences emotional closeness primarily through the frequency of consistent digital interactions, even when there is no face-to-face interaction at all. This is demonstrated by informants who reported feeling close simply because they often exchanged messages, even though they had never met in person.

However, these relationship patterns are not homogeneous. The dynamics of digital closeness vary depending on the type of relationship, and this study identifies three relational contexts that exhibit distinct interaction patterns:

1. Relationships with Close Friends

In established friendships, social media strengthens closeness by providing flexible communication channels. Close friends exchange signals of presence (such as short messages, emojis, or reactions) that serve as substitutes for physical presence. Closeness may increase when digital conversations include personal stories or emotional support. However, this type of relationship remains vulnerable to weakening if the intensity of communication decreases, as the digital rhythm becomes the primary support of the relationship. These findings align with the rhythm-dependent nature of such relationships, as described in the research data.

2. Family Relationships

Family relationships show different dynamics. Generation Z's use of social media with family is more functional and informative rather than emotional. Nevertheless, a sense of connectedness still emerges through short messages or public activity updates.

Communication intensity within families is usually lower than with close friends or partners, but the relationships tend to be more stable and less affected by message rhythm. In other words, social media helps maintain closeness but is not the main factor shaping family relationships.

3. New Relationships Formed on the Internet

Relationships formed entirely in digital spaces exhibit the fastest and most intense closeness. Profile information, shared interests, and the ease of initiating conversations on social media accelerate the formation of perceived closeness. Informants stated that digital interactions can make them feel “close” within a short time, even without meeting directly. However, this type of relationship is also the most vulnerable to instability. When the communication rhythm is disrupted, emotional closeness quickly fades, suggesting that digital relationships lack the durability of face-to-face relationships without continuous interaction.

Consistency of Digital Identity and the Formation of Trust

The findings reveal that alignment between digital and real identities significantly influences interpersonal trust in digital relationships among Generation Z. The consistency of these two aspects serves as a primary basis for assessing trustworthiness. Informants emphasised that discrepancies between online and offline behaviour raise suspicion about an individual’s authenticity, as expressed by Informant D: “If someone is very different online compared to their daily life, it becomes hard to trust them.”

This indicates that digital identity authenticity is not merely a preference but a moral evaluation standard within digital generation relationships. Informants perceive digital identity as a representation of personal character; when the persona displayed does not align with everyday behaviour, it becomes challenging to establish meaningful relationships.

Trust increases when behaviours, communication styles, values, and activities displayed on social media correspond with offline reality. Informants consider such consistency an indicator of personal integrity. Conversely, fundamental inconsistencies—such as portraying oneself as friendly and active on social media but being passive or closed off in real life—are perceived as signs of inauthenticity. These inconsistencies raise doubts about motives and honesty.

Generation Z assesses trust not only through direct interaction but also through various digital footprints visible on a person’s profile. The following features are used as “social parameters” in evaluating credibility:

1. Profile and biography, including clarity of basic information
2. Visual uploads, such as photos consistent with daily life
3. Digital activity history, such as stories, reposts, or public interactions
4. Social interactions, such as how someone communicates in comment sections

Informants emphasised that the stability of digital identity—both in content and in public interactions—reflects personal character. If someone displays a persona that is drastically different from their real-life behaviour, they are perceived as untrustworthy.

Self-Disclosure through Audience Selection Mechanisms

The study reveals that Generation Z’s self-disclosure on social media occurs through a selective and controlled process. Social media provides a psychologically safer space than face-to-face communication, offering emotional distance and flexibility in deciding when and how to respond.

Informants described feeling more comfortable sharing personal experiences online, especially because they do not have to face others' emotional reactions directly. This makes the process of opening up feel lighter and less threatening.

One key factor contributing to this sense of safety is the ability to choose audiences using features such as close friends, private messages, or second accounts. These features enable users to control who can access the personal information they share. Sensitive information or deeper emotions are typically shared only with a small group of highly trustworthy people. Therefore, self-disclosure is not done carelessly but through deliberate filtering mechanisms designed to protect individuals from social or emotional risks.

Informants interpret digital self-disclosure as a form of emotional expression that is easier to manage. Social media becomes a space where they can craft their personal narratives and express their feelings in the most comfortable ways. As one informant stated: “Venting on social media is easier because we can choose who sees it.” — Informant F. This quote illustrates that comfort comes not only from the platform itself but especially from the ability to select trusted audiences.

Thus, self-disclosure among Generation Z in digital spaces is a structured and reflective process. They open up not out of impulsiveness or spontaneous emotional urges but based on careful consideration of who will see the content and how it may affect interpersonal relationships. Audience selection is an important strategy for maintaining privacy boundaries, helping people feel safe even when sharing information in public digital spaces. This mechanism shows that Generation Z's self-disclosure is not merely an expression of online disinhibition but a conscious effort to balance emotional expression with self-protection.

Discussion

Formation of Interpersonal Relationships through Social Media

Research findings show that social media fundamentally shapes Generation Z's interpersonal communication style in three key ways. Interpersonal relationship patterns accelerate through the intensity of digital messaging, allowing emotional closeness to form even without physical proximity. This is consistent with contemporary studies indicating that social media can accelerate the development of emotional connectedness. However, such relationships tend to be unstable due to reliance on continuous digital communication.

According to Andira & Mesra (2025), social media provides a space where individuals can feel emotionally close even before meeting in person, as illustrated by informants who felt close simply because they frequently communicated via messages. This phenomenon shows that interpersonal closeness in digital spaces is more determined by communication rhythm than physical proximity. However, this closeness is also fluctuating, as it depends on the continuity of interaction; when communication intensity decreases, closeness quickly weakens.

These findings align with Walther's Social Information Processing (SIP) theory, which explains that interpersonal relationships can develop significantly through computer-mediated communication as long as interaction frequency is maintained (Nagara, 2023). However, the study also reveals the fragile and shifting nature of digital relationships, as described in the concept of hyperpersonal communication, in which emotional closeness in digital spaces relies heavily on sustained, consistent communication. The findings also support Zamzami (2024), who found that young people build interpersonal relationships through intense online interactions that are often unstable.

Communication Rhythm as the Foundation of Digital Closeness

The formation of interpersonal closeness in digital communication spaces is still rooted in the principles of face-to-face communication, but has undergone significant adaptation to media characteristics. According to Sulianta (2021), interpersonal communication theory states that closeness grows through repeated message exchange, symbolic warmth, and continuous interaction. In this study, informants indicated that digital messages—text, voice notes, emojis, photos, or reactions—are not merely tools for conveying information but function as indicators of social presence. In other words, consistent message flow acts as a substitute for physical presence.

Communication rhythm becomes the main determinant of relational stability: the more regular the message exchange, the stronger the closeness that forms. Conversely, when frequency decreases, closeness fades, even if the relationship previously felt intense. This indicates that digital interpersonal relationships are rhythm-dependent, not because they are inauthentic but because an individual's presence in digital spaces only “exists” as long as they interact (Fakhriyyah Asmay Aidha et al., 2025).

These findings gain further strength when analysed through Social Penetration Theory (SPT), which emphasises that closeness develops from superficial communication to deeper self-disclosure (Agustin Wulandari, 2013). Informants' emotional responses were shaped not only by communication frequency but also by message depth. As conversations shifted to personal stories, life experiences, and emotional expressions, emotional closeness increased, reflecting SPT's relevance in digital environments. Social media and instant messaging apps provide spaces with minimal psychological barriers—no eye contact, no situational pressure—allowing social penetration to occur far more rapidly than in offline settings. Intimacy through digital messages often forms within days, whereas similar intimacy in face-to-face interactions may require weeks. This explains why some informants felt intense emotional closeness even when the relationship existed only digitally.

However, SPT also highlights depenetration, the decline of closeness when self-disclosure stops, or interactions decrease (Habibah et al., 2021). This is clearly observed in the findings: when communication intensity drops—messages are replied to slowly, responses become brief, or attention becomes inconsistent—interpersonal closeness weakens sharply. Even previously deep conversations cannot sustain the relationship. This reinforces the idea that digital closeness lacks strong inertia; it does not operate on historical grounds but on current engagement, as described in *Era Disruptif* (Halik et al., 2024). Emotional relationships in digital networks resemble “fussy cactus plants”—they seem easy to maintain but quickly wither when “not watered” with messages, a metaphor consistent with Teguh et al. (2025).

Overall, interpersonal communication theory and SPT remain relevant in the digital age but operate under new dynamics. Closeness is not only the result of self-disclosure and symbolic warmth but also heavily dependent on continuous interaction (Rustan et al., 2025). When the communication rhythm is stable, digital closeness is strong; when it is disrupted, the relationship becomes shaky. Digital relationships thus tend to be intense yet fragile—easy to form but just as easy to weaken without ongoing interaction. Like a phone battery, digital closeness does not last long without consistent “charging.”

Redefining Trust in Digital Relationships

The formation of trust undergoes redefinition. Trust is no longer rooted solely in direct interaction but also in the consistency of digital identity performance. Individuals are perceived as

credible when their digital persona aligns with their real-life behaviour. This supports computer-mediated communication theories that emphasise the importance of online identity as an interpersonal cue (Mukhlizar & Ikom, 2025).

The study also finds that the alignment between online and offline identity heavily influences interpersonal trust in digital interactions. Informants stated that trust increases when behaviours displayed on social media match everyday character and activities. When significant differences emerge between an online persona and reality, doubts arise about authenticity, a finding reinforced by Salsabila & Nur (2025), who examined the gap between real and virtual identities on social media.

In the context of Goffman's Impression Management theory, social media acts as a stage where individuals manage their personal image through posts, communication styles, and public interactions. When this curated identity aligns with offline behaviour, users perceive the individual as trustworthy. This can also be explained by Walther's Warranting Theory (Liu & Zhang, 2020), which states that externally verifiable information—such as comments, public activity, and traceable digital footprints—holds high warranting value in trust formation (Mutmainnah et al., 2025).

Trust in digital relationships depends not only on communication frequency or emotional intimacy but also on how a person presents and manages their identity online. Trust increases significantly when the displayed digital identity aligns with offline identity. Conversely, inconsistencies create suspicion, even in long-standing digital relationships. Authenticity becomes the principal currency in digital relationships: the more stable the displayed self-image, the higher the trust granted (Lubis, 2024).

Goffman's concept of impression management is deeply reflected in these findings. Social media functions as the *front stage*, where users display curated identities through photos, captions, stories, and public interactions, while the *back stage* is a private space for more authentic expression. Generation Z is highly sensitive to discrepancies between the two stages; they assess whether real behaviour aligns with their digital persona. Consistency is a key indicator of trust: the smaller the gap between “online self” and “real self,” the higher the perceived credibility. Inconsistencies—such as over-cured self-images or persona shifts that follow trends—lead to perceptions of dishonesty because there are no nonverbal cues to verify communication intent, thereby weakening interpersonal relationships.

Conversely, consistent impression management strengthens digital relationships. When individuals display reasonable vulnerability, realistic daily life, and values consistent with offline behaviour, trust increases because identity appears transparent and predictable. In this sense, digital identity becomes not only a self-representation but a strategic tool for building moral reliability in relationships. Digital-era trust becomes identity-driven: relationships persist when alignment between front stage and back stage is maintained, but become fragile when the two diverge. Thus, in the vast stream of virtual interactions, the most trusted users are not those who appear most frequently, but those who consistently show who they truly are.

Selective and Structured Self-Disclosure

Social media encourages increased self-disclosure through audience control and psychological distance. Self-disclosure in digital spaces can strengthen emotional closeness while simultaneously increasing vulnerability to information misuse. This demonstrates the dialectic between the need for emotional connection and the risk of privacy violations in digital communication.

Findings show that social media provides a space where Generation Z can express personal experiences more freely. Informants felt more comfortable revealing their thoughts and emotions digitally than in face-to-face conversations. This is influenced by psychological distance, which allows users to avoid directly facing emotional reactions from interlocutors. Features such as close friends, private messages, or second accounts enable selective audience filtering, making self-disclosure a controlled and intentional process rather than an impulsive outburst. This aligns with Suler's Online Disinhibition Effect, which explains why individuals feel freer to disclose themselves in digital spaces due to reduced social pressure (Sulianta, 2021). However, the study indicates that Generation Z's self-disclosure is not full disinhibition but rather controlled disinhibition achieved through audience selection. This connects with Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory (Sahan et al., 2025), which emphasises personal boundary rules in determining who has access to private information.

Self-disclosure among Generation Z is more complex than the assumption that social media promotes unrestricted openness. Self-disclosure plays an important role in building closeness but is conducted selectively through features such as close friends, private messages, and second accounts. This aligns with Social Penetration Theory, which explains that closeness develops gradually from superficial information to deeper levels of personal disclosure. In digital contexts, this process occurs in private spaces controlled by users to minimise misinterpretation or misuse.

Simultaneously, this practice aligns with Goffman's impression management strategies. Social media serves as the *front stage* for curated public identities, while private features serve as the *backstage* for personal emotional expression. Therefore, self-disclosure for Generation Z is not impulsive but intentional—an investment in relationships granted only to trusted individuals. Closeness is built not only through communication frequency but also through careful management of identity and audience boundaries.

Understanding Generation Z's Digital Relationship Dynamics

These findings deepen the understanding of digital relationships among Generation Z. Self-disclosure remains a foundation of interpersonal closeness, consistent with SPT, but is always accompanied by impression management strategies as described by Goffman (Rustan et al., 2025). Both theories work together to explain how individuals navigate closeness, vulnerability, and self-presentation in highly transparent yet risky digital spaces (Mokos, 2025).

Furthermore, self-disclosure aligns with Suler's Online Disinhibition Effect (Susanto et al., 2025), which posits that text-based digital environments reduce social pressure, allowing individuals to express themselves more freely through anonymity, the absence of nonverbal cues, and flexible response timing. However, the study shows that Generation Z's self-disclosure cannot be simplified as impulsive or total disinhibition (toxic or benign). Instead, it reflects *regulated disinhibition*: openness that is free but strategically controlled.

Generation Z does not randomly share sensitive information with their entire digital network. They use audience-filtering features—close friends, private messages, and second accounts—to limit disclosure to emotionally safe individuals. Thus, self-disclosure is driven not only by digital freedom but by strategic awareness to balance emotional needs with self-protection.

Audience selection indicates that Generation Z has developed emotional and technological literacy in managing identity (Siswatibudi et al., 2025). They understand that digital spaces are ambivalent, offering opportunities for expression but also risks such as misinterpretation, information

leakage, or social pressure. Therefore, audience control becomes a psychological safeguard, allowing individuals to open up without losing a sense of safety.

Overall, these findings show that Generation Z's self-disclosure is shaped by an interaction of psychological characteristics, technological affordances, and social dynamics within digital networks. Social media enables expressive freedom through disinhibition, but Generation Z manages this with caution, making self-disclosure a thoughtful communication practice aimed at maintaining emotional well-being. The findings emphasise that digital self-disclosure is influenced not only by internal psychological factors but also by users' ability to manage relational context and audience boundaries—distinguishing them from previous internet-using generations (Salsabila & Nur, 2025).

Conceptually, the study integrates these three dimensions into a model of digital interpersonal communication among Generation Z. The model affirms a paradigm shift: social media is no longer merely a communication tool but has become the primary social space where interpersonal relationships are formed and sustained.

Conclusion

This study shows that social media shapes the interpersonal communication style of Generation Z through three main dimensions: the acceleration of relational patterns, the redefinition of trust, and controlled self-disclosure. First, interpersonal closeness no longer depends on face-to-face interaction but is driven by an intense, continuous rhythm of digital communication. Message frequency, interaction consistency, and symbolic flows such as emojis, photos, and voice notes serve as substitutes for physical presence. However, this closeness is fluctuating and fragile because it relies entirely on the continuity of digital communication, reinforcing the rhythm-dependent nature of these relationships.

Second, the study finds that interpersonal trust in digital spaces is identity-driven. Generation Z evaluates a person's credibility based on the consistency between their digital identity and their real identity. Impression Management Theory and Warranting Theory explain that the smaller the gap between one's online persona and offline behaviour, the higher the interpersonal trust granted. Conversely, identity inconsistencies create doubt and weaken relationships, indicating that authenticity is the foundational element of digital trust.

Third, self-disclosure among Generation Z is not a form of impulsive disinhibition but rather a selective and controlled practice. Although social media creates psychological distance that facilitates self-expression, as described in the Online Disinhibition Effect, users actively manage audience boundaries by communicating with close friends, using private messages, or creating second accounts. This mechanism demonstrates an integration between the need for emotional closeness and strategies for self-protection, as explained in Communication Privacy Management (CPM). Thus, self-disclosure is a relational investment, not an unrestricted emotional expression.

Overall, these findings formulate a model of digital-based interpersonal communication for Generation Z. The model emphasises that social media has transformed into the primary social space where interpersonal relationships are formed, negotiated, and sustained. The three dimensions—communication rhythm, identity consistency, and controlled self-disclosure—work simultaneously to construct relationships that are intense yet vulnerable, quickly formed yet easily weakened when interactions stop.

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