

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP WITH SELF-DISCLOSURE IN ADOLESCENTS WHO USE INSTAGRAM SOCIAL MEDIA

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Instagram use and self-disclosure among adolescents, focusing on how self-esteem and the quality of close personal relationships influence their online social expression. **Method:** A total of 204 adolescent Instagram users participated in this quantitative study. Data were collected using three validated psychological scales: the self-esteem scale ( $\alpha = 0.882$ ), the close friendship scale ( $\alpha = 0.896$ ), and the self-disclosure scale ( $\alpha = 0.853$ ). Data analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation with SPSS 25 for Windows. **Results:** The findings revealed a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.662, p < 0.05$ ) between self-esteem, close friendships, and self-disclosure. Furthermore, 64.3% of the variance in self-disclosure was explained by self-esteem and the quality of personal relationships, indicating that adolescents with higher self-esteem and stronger close friendships are more likely to engage in self-disclosure on Instagram. **Novelty:** This study highlights the role of Instagram as a digital space for adolescent self-expression and provides empirical evidence on the psychological factors that enhance self-disclosure in social media contexts, offering valuable insights for digital literacy and youth mental health initiatives.

## INTRODUCTION

Technological progress is currently increasingly rapid. Currently, technology has a significant impact on the communication and information sector. A country's economy, health services, education, and overall quality of life can benefit from the internet. Everyone can connect with each other, both locally and globally, thanks to the internet. According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association social media accounts for 51.5% of all internet traffic. The many features of social media platforms, such as the ability to create, share, and exchange materials in the form of photos, videos, and information, make them very attractive to the general public. Some examples of social media are YouTube, Instagram, Google+, Facebook, and Twitter [1]. Instagram is one of several social networking platforms where users can freely post visual content such as images and videos. Currently, you can get Instagram for Windows, Android, and Apple iOS. Every day, Instagram users share more than 80 million photos and videos, with more than 3.5 billion "likes" and 400 million activities distributed each month.

Instagram users span a wide age range, including teenagers. The years between childhood and adulthood are called adolescence. Biological, psychological, social, and cognitive changes are among the most significant changes that occur throughout adolescence. Gaining social skills and forming new friendships with classmates are

important developmental milestones for teenagers [2]. Teenagers no longer need to worry about location and time constraints in sharing stories and experiences with their followers on Instagram. People between the ages of 18 and 24 often use this site. Thus, social media becomes a means of expressing their unique sentiments. One possible motivation for utilizing Instagram is the ease of sharing personal information. The development of interpersonal interactions (35.9%), self-presentation (26%) and gaining recognition of one's existence (14.5%) and self-disclosure (34.4%) are things that arouse people's interest in using Instagram. This preliminary study also shows that the most common activities on Instagram are uploading stories (37.4% of all posts), followed by sharing (27.5%), commenting (21.1% of all posts), liking (3.8%), revealing things you don't want. Don't you dare say it to the person you're talking to (1.5% of all posts), watching other people (7.6% of all posts), and looking for entertainment (3% of all posts). The largest cumulative proportion is the ability to develop oneself through activities such as posting stories and Instagram posts [3].

According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health, adolescents are people aged between 10 and 19 years. Many changes will occur during this period, in several ways: physical, mental, emotional, and social. Rapid changes are taking place and will certainly affect the maturity and growth of adolescents. Adolescents are in the midst of an identity crisis that occurs before puberty [4]. One of the greatest risks in adolescence is the risk of developing identity or role confusion [5]. In their efforts to find their identity, adolescents have the choice to form close-knit groups or seek further isolation. The tendency for adolescents to withdraw from social interaction is just one way that the search for self-discovery shapes their development. Instagram allows adolescents to meet their social needs by allowing them to express themselves through widely shared images and videos. So, in order to fit in with their peers and make friends, adolescents try to shine and show their best qualities. As a result of these bonds, adolescents get affection and support from their environment. Instagram can meet these requirements. Consistent with the data mentioned above, 83% of the 182 Surakarta high school students surveyed online were Instagram users. At this stage, teenagers begin to develop more stable self-esteem, especially through social interactions, including on social media. Instagram has become one of the platforms for teenagers to express themselves, share experiences, and gain social validation or what is commonly called self-disclosure [6].

Self-disclosure is the behavior of exposing personal information to other individuals so that it can form a sense of mutual understanding, intimacy and mutual trust in undergoing interpersonal relationships [7]. According to Devito, self-disclosure is defined as sharing personal information [8]. The aspects of self-disclosure expressed by De Vito are Frequency (how often individuals disclose themselves), Valence (the quality of self-disclosure carried out in expressing feelings, experiences, or ideas), Accuracy (in the form of self-understanding and the level of individual honesty), Desire and Intimacy (such as Actions or deeds carried out intimately) [9].

Based on an initial survey conducted on teenagers who use Instagram social media, 30 people have low self-disclosure quality. This is in line with Harter's research which states that self-disclosure in 88 teenagers who use Instagram social media with a percentage range (58%) is included in the low category, and as many as 27 teenagers are included in the very low category with a percentage range (18%) [10].

Self-disclosure increases self-confidence and ignores other people's opinions. Although various phenomena have been explained, adolescents still experience limited self-scope and low self-confidence. Self-disclosure allows a person to communicate his thoughts and values, thus fostering openness in interpersonal interactions [11].

There are several internal factors that can influence self-disclosure in individuals, namely personality, self-confidence, values and beliefs, emotions and moods, self-esteem. Meanwhile, external factors of self-disclosure include social environment, intimate friendship, responses from others, social norms, technology and media, power dynamics [12]. The desire to be assessed influences self-disclosure. A person's assessment can increase or decrease self-esteem. Low self-esteem makes people less confident, while high self-esteem makes them more confident.

Self-esteem is the assessment and perception of oneself, especially attitudes toward acceptance and rejection, and indicates one's beliefs about one's talents, interests, success, and value [13]. Harter also views self-esteem as the gap between ideal and real self-evaluations, or what we want to be with what we believe. Individuals often feel guilty and punish themselves for their inadequacies. Low self-esteem leads to passive and aggressive attitudes, which are dangerous. Passive attitudes hesitate to do activities for fear of upsetting others, feeling educated, hating oneself, and feelings of abandonment [10].

Coopersmith identified four factors of self-esteem. Self-esteem begins with strength, which shows that people can manage themselves and others, generally shown by respect and praise. Strong people are aggressive. The second part is meaningfulness, which shows how others love and care for them. The third component is virtue, which shows moral, ethical, and religious obedience. This will increase self-esteem because they have very good values. Furthermore, the fourth aspect is ability, the ability to achieve the desired expectations so that individuals are able to meet needs and get what they want. Based on the explanation of the definition above, it can be concluded that self-esteem has several aspects, namely strength, virtue, and ability [14].

Self-esteem affects self-disclosure. Utomo and Laksimiwati said that self-esteem is the most important aspect in self-disclosure because it affects the way we interact. High self-esteem makes people more open and confident. People with low self-esteem can hinder them from being open to others [15]. Kristanti & Eva found a beneficial relationship between self-esteem and self-disclosure using Pearson product moment analysis. A significant relationship is indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.608. Thus, teenage Instagram users with higher self-esteem disclose more [16].

In addition to self-esteem, important topics in self-disclosure are also influenced by one of the external factors, namely intimate friendship. Self-disclosure is carried out by someone in introducing themselves to someone they feel close and can be trusted in order to keep information or secrets that have been disclosed from being widely spread to the general public, therefore an intimate friendship is needed in carrying out self-disclosure [14]. According to Zulfah et al., the definition related to intimate friendship or what is commonly referred to as friendship is a relationship that has a major influence on a person's behavior and lifestyle due to the existence of a strong relationship [17]. Desousa added that most individuals have intimate friendships with several people throughout their lives. Intimate friendship, reciprocity, and personal are possible [18].

Intimate friendship has eight aspects proposed by Sharabany. The first is honesty and spontaneity. Relationships that openly reveal strengths and weaknesses provide honest feedback on the actions of others. Understanding and empathy balanced with knowledge of each other's friends is the second factor. The third is attachment which means closeness and chemistry in friendship produce good encouragement. Fourth, exclusivity, namely better friendship relationships. The fifth is giving and sharing giving material things and social assistance to friends. The sixth part is acceptance and sacrifice, when someone prioritizes the interests of friends, ignores their own interests, and accepts their good and bad. The seventh is that the same activities increase interest and allow for enjoyable activities together. The eighth element, trust and loyalty, allows friends to keep secrets and protect themselves from others [14].

According to the definition above, honesty, spontaneity, sensitivity, understanding, exclusive attachment, giving and sharing, receiving and sacrificing, common activities, and trust and loyalty can affect intimate friendship. This study supports previous research that shows a beneficial contribution to intimate friendship on self-disclosure from the R Square value. The R Square in the study was 0.505. This score shows that personal relationships contribute 50.5% while other elements affect self-influence by 49.5%. When people feel compatible, friendships will grow stronger, not only among those who know each other or need each other [19].

Good self-esteem based on strength, interests, morality, and skills can increase self-disclosure [20]. Ferdiana said that people with low self-esteem have difficulty expressing themselves and their opinions. Negative self-assessments and those of others make people think that relationships with others are dangerous [21]. Ghifari said that intimate relationships make it easier for someone to express themselves, and reciprocal relationships encourage open self-disclosure [22]. Setyawati said that negative feelings related to conflict can cause teenagers to show unhealthy anger. Bad friendships can reduce self-disclosure [23].

Self-disclosure research in adolescents who use Instagram social media is important for the general public to know, especially Instagram social media users. Adolescents with low self-disclosure will experience obstacles in being open on social media, especially on Instagram. Based on the phenomenon of self-disclosure in adolescents, it has an impact

on adolescents, especially adolescents who use Instagram social media. In addition, this research is still minimal, so it is important to study it. Following up on the phenomenon that occurred, this study aims to see whether there is a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and intimate friendship with self-disclosure in adolescents who use Instagram social media. This study hypothesizes that self-esteem and intimate friendship of Instagram users influence their self-disclosure.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a quantitative correlational research. The quantitative approach analyzes numerical data collected through measurement and processed using statistical analysis. Correlation research examines the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. Correlation studies use tools to measure whether and how two or more variables are related. Researchers make conclusions from a population of items or people with certain quantities and features. This survey involved Instagram users aged 16-19 years, although the exact number is unknown. Based on the research methodology, Sugiyono defines a sample as a small part of the population or part of a large population used for research. With the Jacob Cohent formula, the sample size is  $N = 19.76 / 0.1 + 5 + 1 = 23.6$  and rounded up to 24, so that the sample of this study amounted to 204 respondents [24].

Self-esteem, intimate friendship, and self-disclosure scales were used to collect data in this study. This researcher measured using the Likert scale. This scale is composed of positive and negative statements. Each question has four answers: Very Appropriate (4), Appropriate (3), Inappropriate (2), and Very Inappropriate (1).

Based on Coopersmith's self-esteem aspects, namely strength, interests, money, and talent, the researcher used the Wulandari scale. Based on the Corrected Total Item Correlation value  $r \geq 0.30$ , the trial of the self-esteem scale items produced 26 valid items and 6 invalid items out of 32 items. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.882 with 26 items certified valid, indicating that the self-esteem measure is dependent because its reliability coefficient is  $> 0.6$ . Twelve things were liked and fourteen things were hated, so the final choice scale totaled 26 [25].

The researcher used Pohan's Intimate friendship scale, aspects based on Sharabany are honesty, spontaneity, sensitivity, understanding, attachment, exclusivity, giving and sharing, acceptance and sacrifice, same activities, trust, and loyalty. The item trial of the close relationship scale included 45 items, 33 of which were valid and 12 were invalid. The correlation value ranged from 0.261 to 0.672. The Cronbach's Alpha score of the close relationship scale was 0.896 with 33 valid items, indicating dependency. With 15 preferred and 18 disliked options, the final decision scale had 33 items [14].

The researcher used Pohan's self-disclosure scale, aspects based on De Vito, namely quantity, valence, truth, intention, and closeness. According to the trial findings, 31 of the 42 items were valid and 11 were invalid in the trial of the self-coverage scale items. The correlation value ranged from 0.261 to 0.644. The reliability test on the self-coverage scale

showed a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.853 with 31 valid items, indicating reliability. The likes numbered 19 and the dislikes numbered 12, so the final choice scale totaled 31 [14]. This study used Pearson Correlations. This study used SPSS 25 for

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

Based on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk Technique normality test on SPSS version 25 for Windows. Data is normally distributed if  $p > 0.05$ . The normality test shows that the Self-Esteem Variable (X1) has a significance value of 0.370, Intimate friendship (X2) has a significance value of 0.112, and Self-Disclosure (Y) has a significance value of 0.130. So, the data of the three variables are normally distributed. The researcher also used ANOVA for the linearity test.

**Table 1.** Normality Test

	Shapiro-Wilk	Sig.
Self Esteem	0,992	0,370
Intimate Friendship	0,989	0,112
Self Disclosure	0,989	0,130

Based on the results of the linearity test with the ANOVA technique, the Self-Esteem Variable (X1) and the Intimate Friendship variable (X2) with the Self-Disclosure variable (Y) have a significance value of 0.001, this value is less than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the Self-Esteem Variable (X1) and the Intimate Friendship variable (X2) with the Self-Disclosure variable (Y) have a linear relationship.

**Table 2.** Linearity Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1598,863	2	799,432	183,549	.001
	Residual	875,439	201	4,355		
Total		2474,302	203			

The results of the correlation data analysis using Pearson correlation show that the Self-Esteem variable (X1) with the Self-Disclosure variable (Y) has a correlation of 0.800 with a significance value of 0.000. Then, the Intimate Friendship variable (X2) with the Self-Disclosure variable (Y) has a correlation of 0.662 with a significance value of 0.000. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between Self-Esteem (X1) with Self-Disclosure (Y) and Intimate Friendship (X2) with Self-Disclosure (Y).

**Table 3.** Pearson Correlation Test

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Self Esteem - Intimate Friendship	0,766	0,000
Self Esteem - Self Disclosure	0,800	0,000

Intimate Friendship – Self Disclosure	0,662	0,000
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In addition, the determination coefficient R Square found that the R Square value was 0.646, meaning that the Self-Esteem variable (X1) and the Intimate Friendship variable (X2) influenced 65% of the Self-Disclosure variable (Y) and 35 other variables.

**Table 4.** R Square Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0,804	0,646	0,643

The data categorization table shows that it is divided into five categories, namely very low, low, medium, high and very high. In the self-esteem variable, there are 46 teenagers (22.55%) in the low category, there are 115 teenagers (56.37%) in the medium category, and there are 43 teenagers (21.08%) in the high category. Furthermore, in the Intimate Friendship variable, there are 40 teenagers (19.61%) included in the low category, there are 102 teenagers (50.00%) included in the medium category, there are 62 teenagers (30.39%) included in the high category. Then in the self-disclosure variable there are 51 teenagers (25.00%) included in the low category, there are 90 teenagers (44.12%) included in the medium category, there are 63 teenagers (30.88%) included in the high category.

**Table 5.** Data Categorization

Category	Subject Score					
	Self Esteem		Intimate Friendship		Self Disclosure	
	$\Sigma$ Teenager	%	$\Sigma$ Teenager	%	$\Sigma$ Teenager	%
Very Low	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Low	46	22,55%	40	19,61%	51	25,00%
Medium	115	56,37%	102	50,00%	90	44,12%
High	43	21,08%	62	30,39%	63	30,88%
Very High	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	204	100%	204	100%	204	100%

### Discussion

This study examined self-esteem and intimate friendship with self-distance in adolescent Instagram users. Self-esteem, intimate friendship, and close distance of adolescent Instagram users are positively correlated. The above study produced a correlation of 0.800 and a significance value of 0.000. Then Intimate friendship (X2) and Self-disclosure (Y) have a relationship of 0.662 with a significance value of 0.000. Thus, Self-Esteem (X1) and Intimate friendship (X2) are related to Self-Disclosure (Y). This reveals that adolescent Instagram users disclose more when they have good self-esteem

and close friends. Adolescent Instagram users with poor self-esteem and deep friendships disclose less. This study found that the relative contribution of Self-Esteem (X1) and Intimate friendship (X2) affects 65% of Self-Disclosure (Y) and 35% of other variables.

Based on the results of the data categorization that has been carried out, the researcher stated that in the self-esteem variable there were 46 teenagers (22.55%) in the low category, there were 115 teenagers (56.37%) in the medium category, and there were 43 teenagers (21.08%) in the high category. Furthermore, in the Intimate Friendship variable, there are 40 teenagers (19.61%) included in the low category, there are 102 teenagers (50.00%) included in the medium category, there are 62 teenagers (30.39%) included in the high category. Then in the self-disclosure variable there are 51 teenagers (25.00%) included in the low category, there are 90 teenagers (44.12%) included in the medium category, there are 63 teenagers (30.88%) included in the high category.

This study found a positive correlation between self-esteem and self-disclosure. This finding supports the findings of Kristanti and Eva who stated that self-esteem and self-disclosure are positively correlated with a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.608 and a significance of 0.000. According to this study, adolescents with strong self-esteem feel more comfortable expressing themselves on Instagram. According to Anindyajati and Karima, individuals with high self-esteem have low social anxiety, which increases their ability to express themselves. This makes them more open in communicating, including on Instagram social media. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem tend to be more withdrawn because they are afraid of negative judgment from others. Adolescence is a phase in which individuals experience a search for self-identity. At this stage, they begin to develop more stable self-esteem, especially through social interactions, including on social media. Instagram is a platform for adolescents to express themselves, share experiences, and gain social validation. If their self-esteem is high, then they will be more comfortable expressing themselves without fear of negative responses from their social environment [16].

Good self-esteem will reflect how individuals assess and value themselves in their social life. According to previous research conducted by Baumeister et al, individuals with high self-esteem can develop self-expression skills. Adolescents with good self-expression skills can communicate with others and express themselves more openly. Adolescents tend to find it easier to express their views, emotions, and experiences when they feel valued and accepted by society. According to Safitri et al., adolescents with high self-esteem find it easier to express themselves because they feel valued and accepted [26].

However, adolescents with low self-esteem tend to be reluctant to close themselves, especially on Instagram. Adolescents with low self-esteem tend to be less confident and afraid of negative judgment, so they are more careful in sharing personal information. According to Anindyajati and Karima, people with low self-esteem have low self-confidence and cannot express themselves in social environments, or they avoid closing

themselves off to avoid social pressure. Thus, high self-esteem plays an important role in increasing adolescents' courage to express themselves more openly on social media [27].

The results of this study also show that there is a positive relationship between intimate friendship and self-disclosure. These results are in line with research by Febriani that there is a positive relationship between intimate friendship and self-disclosure with a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.165 with a significance of 0.046. The results of this study indicate that individuals with close friendships provide a safe environment for individuals to express themselves [28]. According to Tolstedt and Stokes (1984) in Social Penetration Theory, self-disclosure develops in relationships that are based on intimacy. This means that when the relationship becomes more intimate, self-disclosure becomes deeper. Likewise, when the relationship changes from very intimate to not intimate, self-disclosure is certainly not intimate. This indicates that when a teenager has close friends who can be trusted, they are more likely to express their personal feelings and experiences [29]. On the other hand, according to Gultoman, if they feel they do not have strong social support, then they are more closed and reluctant to share experiences on Instagram social media and of course close friendships are one of the main sources of emotional support, especially in facing social and emotional challenges in adolescence. With close friends who support them, they are more comfortable expressing themselves, both in real life and on social media [30].

A good intimate friendship describes a close emotional closeness between an individual and their close friends. According to previous research conducted by Buhrmester & Furman, individuals who have intimate friendships tend to be more willing to share personal experiences and feelings. When individuals feel comfortable and have close relationships with their close friends, they will be more open in expressing themselves, including in the context of social media. Conversely, individuals who do not have close friendships tend to have more difficulty expressing themselves. Thus, strong intimate friendships play a role in providing a sense of security and comfort for adolescents to express themselves more openly in everyday life and in the use of social media such as Instagram [31].

This study also found a positive correlation between self-esteem and intimate friendship with self-disclosure. The positive relationship between self-esteem and close friendship predicts self-disclosure in this study. This is evidenced by the R-Square value of 64.3%, meaning that self-esteem and intimate friendship contribute 64.3% to self-disclosure, and there are 35.7% other factors or variables that are correlated and predict self-disclosure. This study is in line with research by Dayanti and Yulianita that self-esteem and intimate friendship together influence self-disclosure by 69.2%, 30.8% is influenced by other factors [32].

The sample of this study only included teenagers who use Instagram, therefore the findings cannot be applied to other age groups or social media users. Due to differences in knowledge, ideas, and assumptions, respondents' questionnaire completion was even less successful in this study.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding :** This study found a significant positive relationship between self-esteem, intimate friendship, and self-disclosure among adolescent Instagram users, with self-esteem and intimate friendship jointly contributing to 65% of the variation in self-disclosure behavior. **Implication :** These results highlight the crucial role of psychological and social factors in shaping adolescents' online self-expression, suggesting that strengthening self-esteem and fostering close peer relationships can promote healthier and more open communication in digital environments. **Limitation :** However, the study's reliance on a single quantitative method and a relatively homogeneous sample may limit the generalizability of the findings across different adolescent populations and cultural contexts. **Future Research :** Future studies are encouraged to utilize a mixed-methods design incorporating qualitative interviews to gain deeper insight into the nuances of self-disclosure and to explore additional variables such as emotional regulation and perceived social norms that may influence adolescent behavior on social media platforms.

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