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ONLINE SELF-DISCLOSURE TENDENCIES AMONG STUDENTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR PERSONAL GUIDANCE SERVICES

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Abstract: Self-disclosure is one of the social skills that plays an important role in building interpersonal relationships. Along with the development of information and communication technology, the patterns of self-disclosure have shifted—initially occurring through face-to-face interactions offline, and later evolving into virtual or online interactions. This change presents both opportunities and risks for students, particularly adolescents who are in the stage of identity development. This study aims to describe the online self-disclosure tendencies of students at SMKN 1 Bandung and to formulate its implications for personal guidance services. The research employed a descriptive quantitative method using Jourard's Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ) as the instrument. The study population consisted of grade X and XI students, selected through non-probability sampling with a convenience sampling technique. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the general tendencies of online self-disclosure. The results indicate that most students fall into the "closed" category. These findings serve as the basis for designing personal guidance services through classical and group guidance strategies to help students develop online self-disclosure appropriately, responsibly, and in accordance with prevailing social norms.

Keywords: Self-disclosure, online self-disclosure, guidance and counseling, student

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INTRODUCTION

Humans as social beings cannot be separated from interactions with others. Such interactions not only fulfill emotional and social needs but also serve as

an essential means of identity formation. To establish healthy and meaningful relationships, individuals require social skills, one of which is effective communication. A crucial aspect of communication is self-disclosure, defined as an individual's ability to reveal thoughts, feelings, experiences, and personal information to others (Jourard, 1971; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). This skill is believed to strengthen interpersonal relationships, enhance self-confidence, and contribute to mental health (Buhrmester, 1998; Matsushima & Shiomi, 2001).

Self-disclosure plays a strategic role in supporting students' development, including self-awareness, the formation of positive social relationships, and the achievement of academic goals. Students who demonstrate higher levels of self-disclosure tend to be more confident, actively engaged in discussions, and more creative (Santosa, 2019; Goldstein & Benassi, 2009). Conversely, low levels of self-disclosure often lead to problems such as ineffective communication, anxiety, and difficulties in decision-making (Johnson, 1990; Nofembri et al., 2021). Moreover, the inability to express oneself may encourage adolescents to make poor decisions, such as engaging in risky behaviors or destructive actions (Setianingsih, 2015). This indicates that self-disclosure is not merely a communication skill but also a protective factor in adolescents' psychological development.

Advancements in information and communication technology have further expanded the dimensions of self-disclosure. While self-disclosure traditionally occurred through face-to-face interactions (offline self-disclosure), social media now facilitates online self-disclosure with a much broader reach (Kim & Dindia, 2016; Anshori, 2019). Social media enables adolescents to express themselves more flexibly, even those who are introverted or experience social anxiety (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007; Davis, 2012). However, this convenience also presents risks, particularly oversharing, which may threaten users' privacy and safety (Bazarova & Choi, 2014; Shabahang et al., 2022; Dwijaya et al., 2024). Data from the Digital Report 2025 indicate that social media users in Indonesia have reached 143 million, with an average usage time of 188 minutes per day (We Are Social, 2025), highlighting the extensive exposure of adolescents to the digital environment.

During adolescence, particularly among students of Vocational High Schools (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK), self-disclosure becomes a critical aspect of identity formation and peer relationships (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). The Student Independence Competency Standards (Standar Kompetensi

Kemandirian Peserta Didik/SKKPD) emphasize the importance of emotional maturity and the ability to express oneself in a healthy manner, which can be developed through self-disclosure. In this context, guidance and counseling services play a vital role. School counselors are not only academic facilitators but also companions in fostering students' social and emotional skills, including the management of self-disclosure in both offline and online settings (Yusuf, 2014; Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel, 2025).

Previous studies have examined self-disclosure among university students and senior high school students, both online and offline (Valkenburg et al., 2011; Meifilina, 2021; Dewi, 2024; Solehah, 2021). However, research on online self-disclosure among vocational high school students remains limited, particularly at SMKN 1 Bandung. In fact, understanding the tendencies of online self-disclosure among vocational students is essential for anticipating potential risks while optimizing its positive aspects. Therefore, this study aims to describe the tendencies of online self-disclosure among students of SMKN 1 Bandung and examine their implications for personal guidance services in schools. This research is expected to contribute to the development of guidance and counseling services, particularly in strengthening students' social-emotional skills in the digital era.

METHOD

This study is grounded in the positivist paradigm, which emphasizes objective and systematic measurement through a quantitative approach. The research employed a descriptive method with a cross-sectional survey design, involving data collection at a single point in time to obtain an overview of students' tendencies in online self-disclosure. The research population consisted of all Grade X and XI students of SMKN 1 Bandung in the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 919 students, comprising 82 male students and 837 female students from 26 classes across various vocational programs. From this population, the research sample was determined using a convenience sampling technique, selected based on ease of access and respondents' willingness to participate. As a result, a total of 834 social media–using students were recruited as active respondents. The research instrument used was Jourard's Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ). This instrument consists of 54 items measured on a five-point Likert scale (0 = never to 4 = always), assessing students' levels of self-disclosure in an online context. The validity and

reliability of the instrument were analyzed using the Rasch model with Winsteps software version 3.73, which allows for a more in-depth and accurate evaluation of item functioning. Subsequently, the collected data were processed using SPSS version 25 to generate descriptive statistical analyses.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

General Tendencies of Online Self-Disclosure among Students of SMKN 1 Bandung

Based on the data collection and analysis conducted with 834 Grade X and XI students of SMKN 1 Bandung, the following is the frequency distribution of the overall tendencies of online self-disclosure among students of SMK Negeri 1 Bandung.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Online Self-Disclosure Tendencies among Students of SMKN 1 Bandung

No	Kecenderungan	N	%
1	Disclosure	290	34,8
2	Closure	544	65,2
Total		**834**	**100**

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the majority of students demonstrated a closed tendency in online self-disclosure, with 544 students (65.2%). These findings indicate that students' self-disclosure needs to be further developed so that they can express themselves appropriately through personal guidance services. Such services are expected to enhance students' ability to share personal information with others via social media, covering aspects such as attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, educational background, personality characteristics, financial conditions, and physical aspects. Meanwhile, the remaining 290 students exhibited an open tendency in online self-disclosure, which should be maintained and supported.

Online Self-Disclosure Tendencies among Students of SMKN 1 Bandung

Based on the research findings, the majority of Grade X and XI students of SMK Negeri 1 Bandung generally demonstrated online self-disclosure tendencies categorized as closure or closed. In other words, most students have not yet been able to openly express their attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, educational background, financial conditions, personality traits, or

physical aspects in online settings. These findings are consistent with the study by Dewi (2024), which reported that university students' self-disclosure on social media also tended to fall within the closed category. Together, these results suggest that across both secondary and higher education levels, online self-disclosure has not yet developed into an optimally established practice. Furthermore, this finding is reinforced by Solehah (2021), who revealed that senior high school students prefer offline self-disclosure to online self-disclosure. Although digital platforms offer flexibility and convenience in communication, they do not necessarily guarantee comfort in personal self-expression. Many students remain hesitant, lack self-confidence, or experience anxiety regarding potential social risks associated with self-disclosure on social media.

According to Devito (2016), there are several factors that influence the extent to which a person is willing to open up. First, personality is very influential. Individuals who are extroverted, confident, and have high self-esteem tend to be more open than those who are shy or feel anxious when speaking. In addition to personality, cultural background also plays an important role. For example, American society is more open in sharing personal stories than Japanese or German society, due to different cultural norms regarding communication and privacy. Furthermore, gender also plays a role, with women generally more accustomed to verbally expressing their feelings and personal experiences, while men tend to express closeness through actions or shared activities. In addition, the quality of interpersonal relationships is also an important determinant. People are more likely to open up to those they trust, like, or feel comfortable with, especially if the other person also shows openness. As the relationship develops, the topics of conversation also change; at first, people tend to talk about general things, then gradually move on to more personal topics. The media or communication channels used also determine the pattern of openness. Some people feel more comfortable talking face-to-face, while others feel more at ease expressing themselves through social media or text messages.

Self-disclosure is generally based on considerations of potential risks and benefits, where individuals often experience tension between the urge to share personal information and the desire to maintain privacy (Taddicken, 2014). Tominaga, Hijakata & Konstan (2018) state that social media users face difficulties in controlling the extent to which their personal information is shared, due to the need to balance the risks to privacy with the potential social

benefits they wish to obtain. In line with this, Teutsch, Masur, & Trepte (2018) show that individuals tend to adjust the intensity of self-disclosure to the level of privacy they perceive in a digital platform.

In response to students' tendency to be reserved in expressing themselves on social media, services are needed that can raise their awareness of the importance of good and responsible communication in the digital space. Although students generally show a tendency to be reserved in expressing themselves online, this does not necessarily mean that they have an adequate understanding of the norms and ethics of interacting on social media. Therefore, students need to be equipped with the awareness that even though social media provides a space to express opinions freely, there are still ethical boundaries that must be maintained. The ability to express oneself wisely and carefully is crucial, especially in dealing with the complexity of digital communication that can have an impact on social relationships and self-image in the online public sphere.

Furthermore, this study shows that 42.2% or 352 students have a tendency toward online self-disclosure in the open category, meaning that some students are able to show openness online in expressing their attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, educational background, financial conditions, personality aspects, and physical characteristics. Research conducted by Liu et al. (2023) shows that positive self-disclosure on social media can improve the quality of adolescent friendships through positive feedback mechanisms, especially in individuals with low levels of social anxiety. Adolescents who are more open and have high self-confidence in interacting online tend to receive supportive responses from peers, such as positive comments, empathetic messages, or other forms of social validation, which ultimately strengthen their self-confidence and the quality of their interpersonal relationships. Van der Wal et al. (2024) found that adolescents use social media to fulfill various socio-affective needs, such as maintaining social connections, seeking entertainment, gaining inspiration, accessing information, and expressing themselves. These findings support the understanding that students with a tendency toward online openness utilize social media as a means to strengthen their identity and build positive social relationships. Thus, online self-disclosure is not only influenced by personality factors and perceptions of privacy risks, but also by strong social and emotional motivations to feel accepted and connected interpersonally (Liu et al., 2023; Van der Wal et al., 2024).

Thus, both learners who fall into the closure and disclosure categories have the same responsibility to understand the concept of self-disclosure. This understanding is necessary so that learners can develop and optimize self-disclosure appropriately, safely, and comfortably when communicating through social media.

Personal Guidance Services

Personal guidance services play a critical role in mitigating the risks associated with students' online self-disclosure tendencies. One of the primary functions of personal guidance is to educate students about privacy boundaries and ethical considerations in sharing personal information in digital spaces. From a theoretical perspective, self-disclosure is not merely a communicative act but a developmental process that requires awareness, intentionality, and contextual judgment (Jourard, 1971). In online environments, the absence of immediate social cues and the presence of an invisible audience often increase the likelihood of excessive or inappropriate self-disclosure, commonly referred to as oversharing (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Personal guidance services are therefore essential in helping students understand the emotional and social consequences of oversharing, including vulnerability to misinterpretation, social rejection, and long-term digital footprints. In addition, personal guidance services contribute to the development of students' risk assessment skills and healthy decision-making in digital interactions. According to social-cognitive theory, individuals' online behaviors are influenced by self-regulation, perceived norms, and anticipated outcomes (Bandura, 1986). Without adequate guidance, students may underestimate online risks and overestimate social rewards, leading to impulsive disclosure of sensitive information. Through structured guidance interventions, counselors can assist students in evaluating potential risks, such as privacy breaches, identity misuse, and relational conflicts, while grounding digital decision-making in moral reasoning, ethical standards, and sociocultural values. This approach aligns with digital literacy frameworks that emphasize critical awareness, responsibility, and ethical participation in online spaces (Livingstone et al., 2017). Furthermore, personal guidance services provide emotional support for students who experience negative outcomes of online self-disclosure, including cyberbullying, stigmatization, or interpersonal conflicts. Empirical studies indicate that negative online experiences can significantly affect students' psychological well-being, increasing levels of anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal (Hinduja

& Patchin, 2018). Personal guidance interventions, such as individual counseling and reflective dialogue, enable students to process emotional distress, reconstruct self-concepts, and develop adaptive coping strategies. From a humanistic counseling perspective, such support fosters self-acceptance and resilience, which are crucial for maintaining psychological health in digitally mediated social environments (Rogers, 1961). Overall, personal guidance services extend beyond traditional character education by incorporating digital literacy, ethical awareness, and socio-emotional competence as core components of student development. In the era of pervasive digital communication, personal guidance must be integrated holistically within comprehensive guidance and counseling programs to equip students with the capacity for responsible self-disclosure, informed decision-making, and healthy interpersonal relationships both online and offline.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and discussions involving 834 students in grades X and XI at SMKN 1 Bandung, it can be concluded that, in general, students show a tendency toward closed online self-disclosure. Most of them have not shared much personal information, including their attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, educational background, financial conditions, personality aspects, or physical characteristics. Self-disclosure through digital media has not become part of a communication pattern that is developing evenly among students. However, there are some students who are beginning to show a tendency to be open in expressing themselves online, particularly through the use of social media to convey personal views, share experiences, and establish social interactions. This phenomenon reflects the dynamics of the process of adjusting to developments in communication technology and the importance of understanding digital communication behavior as part of students' social and emotional growth.

A personal guidance program has been developed to help students develop appropriate openness, accompanied by an understanding of and compliance with applicable norms, so that students are able to avoid various risks that may arise from the use of online media, while building healthy, safe, and meaningful digital communication.

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