

## NARCISSISM OF TEENAGE GIRLS IN THE DIGITAL ERA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF COMMUNICATION PSYCHOLOGY

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received: 25/06/2025

Revised: 05/12/2025

Accepted: 25/12/2025

Online

#### Kata-kata Kunci:

Narsisisme; Era Digital;  
Psikologi

#### Keywords:

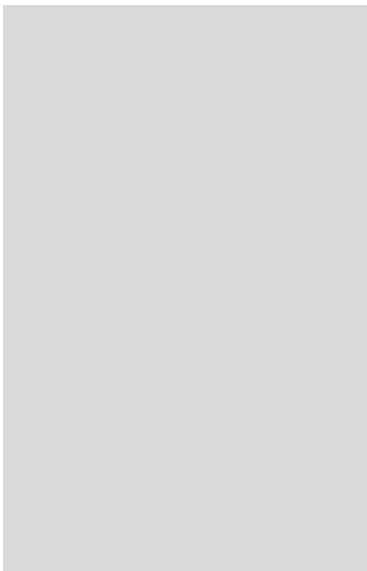
Narcissim; Digitak Era;  
Psychology

### Abstrak

Perkembangan media sosial di era digital telah mengubah cara teenager dalam berperilaku, khususnya wanita, dalam membangun dan menampilkan identitas diri. Fenomena narcissism di kalangan teenager wanita semakin meningkat, ditandai dengan perilaku pencitraan diri yang berlebihan dan kebutuhan tinggi akan validasi sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kecenderungan narsistik teenager wanita melalui pendekatan psychology komunikasi, dengan fokus pada bagaimana komunikasi intrapersonal dan interpersonal memengaruhi pembentukan citra diri di media social serta bagaimana peran media social memperkuat kecenderungan narsistik karena memberikan alat komunikasi yang sangat visual dan berorientasi pada pengakuan publik. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka dan observasi media. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teenager wanita menggunakan media sosial sebagai saluran untuk membentuk identitas ideal, memproyeksikan citra positif, serta membangun hubungan sosial yang memperkuat persepsi diri mereka. Komunikasi yang terjadi tidak hanya berdampak pada cara teenager berinteraksi dengan orang lain, tetapi juga pada bagaimana mereka memaknai diri sendiri. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa perilaku narsistik pada teenager wanita merupakan bentuk komunikasi simbolik yang dipengaruhi oleh kebutuhan akan penerimaan sosial dan tekanan budaya visual yang kuat di era digital.

### Abstract

The development of social media in the digital era has changed the way teenagers behave, especially women, in building and presenting their self-identity. The phenomenon of narcissism among teenage girls is increasing, characterized by excessive self-presentation behaviors and a high need for social validation. This research aims to analyze the narcissistic tendencies of teenage girls through a communication



*psychology approach, focusing on how intrapersonal and interpersonal communication influences self-image formation on social media and how social media reinforces narcissistic tendencies because it provides highly visual communication tools that are oriented towards public recognition. The method used is a descriptive qualitative study with a literature review and media observation approach. The research results show that teenage girls use social media as a channel to form an ideal identity, project a positive image, and build social relationships that strengthen their self-perception. The communication that occurs not only impacts the way teenagers interact with others but also how they perceive themselves. This study concludes that narcissistic behavior in adolescent girls is a form of symbolic communication influenced by the need for social acceptance and strong visual cultural pressures in the digital era.*

## INTRODUCTION

Teenage Year is a critical phase in the development of one's identity, during which one begins to explore and negotiate one's identity through social interactions, including online. Technological advancements and the prevalence of social media use have changed people's behaviour, especially women's behaviour, by allowing them to express themselves and create social identities. Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat are a major tool for young people to develop their own impressions, which frequently focus on physical appearance, social validation, and *keterkenalan* (Perloff, 2014).

This phenomenon is not a sign of a personality problem; rather, it is closely related to interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. According to the psychology of communication, narcissistic behaviour can be seen as a type of symbolic communication in which people use social media to express their ideal selves to the public. According to studies like those conducted by Buffardi and Campbell (2008), those with higher narcissistic traits are more active in expressing themselves positively on social media. However, there is still some difficulty in understanding how intrapersonal communication and self-perception work psychologically during adolescence.

Teenage years is a crucial period of psychological development during which people begin to search for and develop their own identities. Throughout this process, teenage is greatly impacted by the social environment, particularly by the increasing number of social interactions that take place through digital media. Teenage girl, in particular, emphasises self-expression through social media with a focus on physical attributes and self-confidence. (Perloff, R. M. 2014, 363–377.)

As a result of this phenomenon, narcissistic behaviour, which encourages self-improvement, hospitable homes, and a strong desire to be treated with respect by others, emerged. Personality this doesn't just happen; it has to do with how people communicate both intrapersonally and interpersonally. According to the psychology of communication, narcissism can be defined as a person's method of communicating with themselves with the aim of creating and enhancing positive emotions.

Based on the aforementioned, the research question in this study is: How does narcissism affect teenage girl look in digital communication through social media, and how can this be understood from a psychological perspective on communication? The purpose of this study is to analyse the many forms of narcissistic behaviour in young people using social media and to understand the psychological and communication factors that affect them.

According to some previous research, there is a positive correlation between narcissism and the frequency of selfies, the use of filter, and emotional reactions to the number of "likes" and comments (Fox & Rooney, 2015). In addition, Barry et al. (2017) found that narcissism in teenage frequently functions as a compensation mechanism for economic instability and

social unrest. For this reason, it is important to understand the teenager's motivation, self-expression style, and the impact of digital communication on the development of her self-concept through the use of psychology of communication. This study aims to analyse the narcissistic changes in teenager in the context of social media interactions and their relationship to the process of developing one's own identity via the prism of communication psychology.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Psychology narcissism**

In psychology, narcissism refers to a person's need to feel superior to others, their desire to be accepted, and their lack of empathy for others. In the real world, narcissistic behaviour frequently arises as a result of intense self-identification and the influence of social and digital environments. Sigmund Freud first introduced the concepts of primary and secondary narcissism as stages of the development of libido that are meaningful to oneself. (New York: Norton, 1914), hlm. 1-35.) Otto Kernberg then explains that pathological narcissism arises as a result of internalising *relasi*, which results in grandiosity and *palsu* as a form of *pertahanan*. However, Heinz Kohut asserts that narcissism is a normal aspect of healthy self-improvement; however, if a person's emotional needs are not met, they may be at risk of developing narcissistic *gangguan*.

Narcissism is not simply seen in psychology as a form of egoistic and *sombong kepribadian*, but rather as a complex psychological structure that manifests itself in the development of self and social *relasi* from childhood onwards. Sigmund Freud was the first to introduce the concept of narcissism in psychological analysis through his 1914 book *On Narcissism: An Introduction*. According to this theory, narcissism is a stage of human development known as *narcissism primer*, in which a child calmly affirms themselves before expressing their opinions to others. However, when *gangguan* occurs in an objective relationship, such as a *luka batin* or *kecewa*, narcissism then becomes active, which affects the return of libido from the outside world to the individual as a mechanism for ego maintenance.

Otto Kernberg continues his investigation into *narsis* in the context of object-relative theory. I suggest that narcissistic *disturban* arises from the internalisation of consistent and stable love objects during childhood. When the *nanny figure* is ambivalent—sometimes it is *adore*, but at other times it is *reject*—the child will structure himself as a form of compensation. This false illustrates the *greatnees* and superiority of the *citra*, but it also highlights the *fragil* and full of fear *rejection*. On the other hand, Heinz Kohut offers a more realistic perspective on *narsis*. It is evident as a byproduct of individual psychological development, particularly throughout childhood and adolescence, when a person's needs will be met and positively reflected by others (referred to as *self-objects*). When this need is

not met in a compassionate manner, people develop narcissistic needs that are typical throughout teenage periods.

The two main dimensions of narcissism are grandiose narcissism and vulnerable narcissism. Narcissism is recognised as a tunggal in contemporary psychology to this day. Grandiose narcissism is characterised by a strong sense of superiority, social dominance, and a strong sense of self-worth, while vulnerable narcissism is characterised by a strong sense of self-worth, a lack of sensitivity to criticism, and a persistently fluctuating price. These two forms can coexist peacefully, especially during adolescence when one's identity is still developing and greatly impacted by the surrounding environment. Teenager is a crucial stage in developing one's self-concept and identity. According to Erik Erikson, teenager is characterised by the conflict between identity and peran, where people struggle to understand themselves in increasingly complex social situations. In this context, narcissism can serve as a protective mechanism against inferiority or unhappiness. When the social environment, especially digital media, provides resources that meet the needs of validation, narcissistic research continues to grow as a form of adaptation to the ideal and observable student.

Subsequent research indicates that narcissism is associated with a variety of psychological issues, including depression, anxiety, cognitive dissonance, and aggression. People that exhibit vulnerable narcissism tend to be more susceptible to depression since they have a more optimistic view of themselves and are not always depressed in social situations. Conversely, grandiose narcissism is more often associated with aggressive and manipulative behaviour, especially when their ego is weak or fails to produce the expected results. In both cases, narcissism is a reflection of the tension between the ideal self that is created in a cognitive manner and the emotional reality that is experienced within.

The presence of social media makes the narcissistic phenomenon in teenager more complex. Digital technology has become more than just a tool for communication; it is also a tool for self-improvement and self-expression. Jean Twenge referred to this era as an epidemic of narcissism, where the younger generation is characterised by a modern lifestyle that emphasises individualism, keunikan, and digital existence. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok support this kecenderungan by using an algorithmic algorithm that encourages users to continuously produce visually appealing content and validates it in the form of likes, followers, or comments. This digital validation is a new tool for determining one's own price, which in turn can lead to psychological effects and improve narcissistic accuracy (Christopher, 2012).

## **Narcissism in Mass and Digital Communication**

The concept of "narcissism digital" in teenager refers to the determination to create a hyperreal self through social media that promotes aesthetics, public opinion, and existence in general. Digital narrativism is characterised by the frequency of selfies, sensitivity to the number of "likes" and comments, and sensitivity to external validation. According to the psychology of communication, this is a type of symbolic and self-reporting communication that significantly affects social relasi and identity development (Izi, 2010).

The development of digital media has created new opportunities for narrative expression. Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok give people the tools they need to develop and manage their own lives. In this context, narcissism is not merely personality disorder; rather, it has become a social practice that is used, possibly facilitated by technology. External feedback through "likes," positive comments, and the number of participants creates a reward system for narsistic behaviour. This is a reference to performance-based and non-authentic communication. The communication that takes place is more akin to a self-presentation that is constructed in a calm manner rather than a really-like or reflective dialogue.

According to McLuhan (1964), "the medium is the message," which may be seen in the context of social media as the media itself influences how we communicate and express ourselves. Therefore, narcissism in digital communication is not deviation, indicating the consequences of the media's design itself. In the present era of communication, the phenomenon of narcissism faces significant challenges as a result of the growth of mass and digital media. Narcissism, which was once considered a psychological phenomenon, is now a social phenomenon that is evident in public and daring communication practices. Digital and mass communication provide individuals with the necessary resources to build, promote, and strengthen their desired self-image.

## **METODE**

This study employs a deskriptif qualitative approach using the content analysis method, which is combined with literary analysis. The main goal of this study is to understand how narsistic behaviour is represented in the use of social media by young people and to analyse its relationship to relevant psychology komunikasi theories. In this context, social media serves as a medium for intrapersonal and interpersonal communication that is consistent with self-expression, symbols, and identity construction.

The primary source of the research is content from social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok, as well as scholarly articles that are current and relevant within the last few years (2019–2024). Analysis of social media is done through non-participatory observation of public accounts belonging to young people aged 15 to 19 who have high levels of activity on social media and display expressive content such as photos, self-admiration captions, filter usage, and digital interactions like likes and comments. Analysed data shows

trends over the last three months by examining posting frequency, visual content, and communication styles used in comments or captions.

In addition, this study explains a large number of scholarly articles derived from journal databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and SINTA. These articles are used to identify current issues related to digital narsis, teenager psychological development, and online communication. This study serves as a theoretical foundation and comparison tool for the lapangan, as well as a source of triangulation data.

Analyses are conducted through the use of theme analysis, which involves identifying the main themes in social media content related to narsistic phenomena, such as validation, ideal self-expression, and keterikatan with regard to social responses. Data from social media is then analysed with academic literature to understand communication patterns that influence narsistic lapses and their effects on the development of teenager wanita identities in the digital age. The results are validated using sumber triangulation and discussion with a representative in a range of situations while adhering to objectivity and interpretation.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Narcissism in Communication Psychology**

In psychology, narcissism refers to personality traits that are characterised by a strong sense of self-worth, a willingness to try new things, and a lack of empathy for other people. People with narsistic traits always have grandiose pandangan and are frequently astonished by other people's attempts to raise their own value.( Walgito, Bimo. *Psychology Sosial*. Yogyakarta: Andi, 2010). Sigmund Freud first introduced the concept of narcissism in 1914 as part of his theory of libidinal development, which states that every person must first learn to love themselves before they can love another person. In this study, narcissism is divided into two main forms: normal narcissism, which is a component of healthy psychological development, and pathological narcissism, which is associated with narsistic personality disorder.( Kernberg, Otto F. *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism*. New York: Jason Aronson, 1975)

According to DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, ), Personality Disorder narsistik is characterised (whether in fantasies or in real life), kebutuhan akan kekaguman, and kurangnya empati, which start from early childhood and continue in various life contexts. Narcissism frequently appears in teenager, especially wanita, in the form of self-evaluation through social media, self-validation, and comparison with other people. This is a part of the identity crisis that slowly develops during their psychological development. There are two communication psychology concepts to observe and analyse narsime phenomena, namely intrapersonal and interpersonal.

### **Intrapersonal communication**

is an internal process where a person communicates with themselves, develops their perceptions, and creates their identities. In this context, narcissism emerges as a psychological phenomenon that might impair an individual's communication quality (Joseph, 2016). This article examines the relationship between rhetoric and intrapersonal communication by describing how rhetorical structure may be both grandiose and vulnerable, and how it manifests itself in internal individual dialogue. This study aims to increase understanding of the dynamics of narcissistic psychology through communication, as well as its effects on self-confidence, empathy, and intrapersonal communication.

In intrapersonal communication, the individual is seen as a carer who develops their self-concept through reflective and interpretive processes. Because of this, a person with narcissistic reluctance gradually develops an internal narcissi that encourages independence and self-control. This conversation is not only about how an individual sees themselves, but also about how they behave in social situations. (Stephen, 2017). Communicating with oneself is the primary way for narcissistic people to understand and appreciate themselves. Narcissism is closely related to self-concept construction, which is the process by which an individual defines and understands themselves. Intrapersonal communication is the primary tool for developing one's self, which is then reflected in interpersonal and social communication. A narcissistic individual has an internal narcissi that is consistent with a superior, pure, and well-maintained self-image.

In this regard, intrapersonal communication serves as a psychological support tool. It is used to rationalize kegagalan, convey criticism, and strengthen weaker private narcissi. This process begins with ego-pertahanan mechanisms such as proyeksi and rasionalization in psychological theory. When one's self-esteem is shaken by negative experiences, narcissis uses an internal dialogue to reaffirm the ideal self-image. (Campbell and Miller, 2011).

### **Interpersonal Communication**

The phenomenon of narcissis has become one of the main topics in contemporary psychology, especially when it comes to interpersonal communication. In communication, narcissism is not only evident in the words that are spoken, but also in the way that people express their perceptions of themselves and other people. Narcissism, in its simplest form, is a pola kepribadian that is characterised by superiority complexes, a need for consistency in a person's behaviour, and a lack of empathy towards other people (APA, 2013).

In interpersonal communication, people with ciri-ciri narcissistik consistently control their behaviour and pay more attention to themselves. They frequently discuss personal struggles, draw attention to themselves, and portray themselves as the object of ongoing debates (Campbell & Foster, 2007). This has a negative impact on the quality of the



relationship, because communication is difficult because it only involves one party. People with a high narcissistic tendency typically have egocentric communication styles. They are more likely to control the conversation, to be considerate of others, and to show the least amount of patience with the conversation. When it comes to interpersonal communication, this condition creates obstacles (barriers) because of fundamental needs including engagement, validation, and emotional stability.

Interpersonal communication theory states that effective communication requires empathy (empathy), kepercayaan (trust), and keterbukaan (openness). In a narcissistic individual, this component's ketiga frequently does not function at its best. When a person is more focused on self-improvement than on communication, the communication process becomes lengthy and frequently results in distortions. According to Erving Goffman's impression management theory, people always try to present their best selves in every social interaction (Goffman, E. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books, 1959). Individuals with narcissistic tendency frequently use strategic communication to strengthen their public image. They use words, conversation, and even facial expressions to create "pangung" that strengthens their self-care.

Narcissism also affects a person's ability to receive criticism. Narcissistic individuals are often not tolerant of criticism that is negative, possibly in the form of constructive feedback. This promotes a healthy communication process by providing a platform for collaboration and exchange of opinions (Lester, 2010). states that they continue to use manipulative communication techniques such as gaslighting, denial, or denial of reality that deceive conversation. In more intimate relationships, such as romantic relationships or romantic relationships, narcissism can lead to toxic communication. Narcissistic individuals may appear charismatic and self-assured at first, but they gradually develop self-control and a lack of ability to provide emotional support in a timely manner. This results in relationship as a weakness and a decrease in psychological abilities.

Despite this, not every type of narcissism has a pathological basis. A few researchers have distinguished between grandiose and vulnerable narcissism. Grandiose narcissism consistently makes people more trusting of themselves, whereas vulnerable narcissism is more hidden but still has an impact on communication. (Pincus and Lukowitsky, 2010). Both of them can contribute to effective communication since they are equally focused on the private ego. Accordingly, understanding narcissism in interpersonal communication is crucial to creating a healthy and productive relationship. Awareness of the characteristics of narcissistic communication is necessary so that people can understand and develop strong and empathic communication skills.

## CONCLUSION

In communication psychology, narcissism affects both intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. In an intrapersonal context, a person with a narcissistic tendency frequently engages in distorted internal dialogue, evaluating themselves and their shortcomings as an obstacle to their ego. However, in interpersonal communication, narcissism can weaken social bonds because people tend to view other people as objects of validation rather than as constant subjects. This deterioration makes communication less attentive, less effective, and more likely to cause social alienation.

Thus, narcissism is not a complete phenomenon of individual personality, resulting from social-psychological dynamics influenced by the environment of growth and interpersonal relationships, as well as digital technology that more emphasises impression and existence. Research on teenager narcissism from a psychological communication perspective provides insight into how communication structure, context, and social support contribute to the development of identity and mental health in this generation.

According to the results of the research, it can be concluded that social media has a significant impact on the development of teenager narcissistic traits, whether they be grandiose or vulnerable. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook are the primary means for teenagers to develop and evaluate their ideal selves, which are frequently influenced by the need for social validation through likes, follows, comments, and visual interactions.

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