

Analysis of the Forms and Motives of “Hyper Honest” Communication as Self Disclosure in the Tiktok Comment Section @Helobahgas

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aims to conduct an in depth analysis of the various forms of hyper-honest behavior that emerge as extreme forms of self disclosure, as well as to identify the communicative motives that drive individuals to share emotionally charged personal information or experiences in the comment section of the @helobagas account.

Method – This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. Primary data were collected through observation of the @helobagas comment section, digital documentation, and semi structured in depth interviews with six active TikTok users selected via purposive sampling specifically, those identified as sharing their emotional experiences on that account. Secondary data were obtained through a review of relevant literature. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, narrative data presentation, and drawing conclusions, the validity of which was tested using triangulation techniques.

Findings – The practice of hyper-honesty in the @helobagas comment section manifests in three main forms: the disclosure of traumatic experiences, the intense expression of emotions, and the revelation of personal vulnerability, with the disclosure of traumatic experiences being the most common form. Despite engaging in highly open disclosure, users continued to maintain control over their privacy boundaries by concealing their true identities. Four main communication motives were also identified: the need to be heard and understood, the search for emotional support, the attainment of emotional relief, and the emotional connection to the content. Emotional connection with @helobagas’ narrative-reflective content emerged as the dominant motive triggering the collapse of privacy boundaries and transforming the comment section into an alternative emotional support system.

Keywords: Hyper-honesty; Self disclosure; Johari Window; Interpersonal Communication; Hyper-honest Motives.

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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of interpersonal communication, shifting the dominant mode of interaction from direct physical encounters to mediated exchanges within virtual environments. Social media platforms, in particular, have emerged as primary spaces where individuals engage in reciprocal communicative acts that were once confined to private, face-to-face (*tatap muka*) settings (Chu et al., 2023). Within these digitally mediated environments, the boundaries between private and public spheres of communication have become increasingly porous, enabling users to express deeply personal emotions, vulnerabilities, and lived experiences before vast and largely anonymous audiences (Shabahang et al., 2022). This transformation has given rise to a distinctive communicative behavior characterized by emotional visibility (*visibilitas emosional*), wherein individuals disclose sensitive personal information spontaneously and extensively through public digital channels. Such a phenomenon necessitates scholarly attention, as it challenges the foundational assumptions of conventional interpersonal communication theories regarding the mechanisms of privacy regulation and emotional boundary management in human interaction.

The activity of extreme self-disclosure that has become increasingly common in TikTok comment sections reflects a significant shift in contemporary digital communication behavior. The characteristics of such content create a sense of emotional closeness, causing audiences to feel safe enough to openly share their traumatic experiences, emotional wounds, and internal conflicts. This particular communicative behavior has been conceptualized as '*hyper-honest*,' a term that refers to an extreme and unfiltered form of *self-disclosure* in which individuals spontaneously reveal highly personal, emotionally sensitive, or traumatic experiences within public digital spaces without engaging in the privacy filtering (*penyaringan privasi*) mechanisms that typically govern interpersonal communication (Hamzah & Putri, 2020; Lestari et al., 2024). Unlike conventional *self-disclosure*, which tends to occur gradually and deliberately as interpersonal trust develops, *hyper-honest* behavior bypasses this sequential process entirely, resulting in the immediate and extensive exposure of information that is ordinarily concealed within an individual's private domain.

Ideally, interpersonal communication should demonstrate that although communication continues to evolve, the fundamental elements forming the communication process remain consistent and universally applicable Devito (2019), where privacy filtering continues to operate as commonly practiced. However, real-world conditions show that the emotional closeness facilitated by digital communication channels has generated a phenomenon of excessive honesty, namely users' tendency to share personal information in an extremely open, honest, and unfiltered manner within online public spaces (Lestari et al., 2024). This unrestricted sharing behavior eventually creates a new communication dilemma: on one hand, it provides emotional relief, but on the other hand, it creates serious psychological vulnerability due to the exposure of personal privacy in public spaces. Such vulnerability may appear in the form of increased social anxiety, fear of digital judgment, and the risk of permanent digital footprints containing traumatic secrets that users can no longer fully control (Shabahang et al., 2022).

The characteristics of content play an important role in triggering this phenomenon, as seen on the TikTok account @helobagas, which consistently presents narrative and reflective content.

The account owner is the author of a book entitled "*Ibu, aku ga sekuat itu*". The book is characterized by a poetic and profound writing style, which directly influences the delivery style and language aesthetics of the visual content presented on TikTok. This account actively publishes approximately 25 in-depth narrative videos every month to engage viewers emotionally. With approximately 1.4 million followers and a substantial volume of audience engagement in its comment sections, this account presents a particularly relevant case for examining how narrative-reflective digital content stimulates emotionally charged *self-disclosure* among its viewers. Exposure to such content ultimately encourages individuals to respond through deeper personal disclosures (Farrah et al., 2023).

The phenomenon of sharing deep personal experiences in public spaces is fundamentally enabled by the rapid development of information technology. Human interaction, which previously relied heavily on physical proximity, has shifted into emotional connections within digital spaces. Social media plays an important role in this transformation as a platform for expression that is fast, transparent, and capable of crossing social boundaries (Sasfira & Salas, 2025). The phenomenon of disclosing deeply personal experiences within public digital spaces is fundamentally enabled by the rapid advancement of information and communication technology, which has shifted the primary mode of human interaction from physical proximity to emotionally mediated connections within virtual environments (Dary et al., 2025; Sasfira & Salas, 2025). Digital platforms such as TikTok, which currently serves approximately 180.11 million users in Indonesia (Dataloka, 2025), have evolved beyond their original function as content distribution channels into dynamic participatory spaces where comment sections function as arenas for sharing experiences, empathy, and emotional expression (Marsela & Asnawi, 2024).

The expansion of interpersonal communication into digital media is closely associated with the concept of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure refers to a communicative process through which individuals intentionally reveal personal information, including thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences, to others as a means of building relational trust and emotional closeness (Devito, 2019). This concept encompasses five interrelated dimensions: depth, breadth, honesty, purpose and awareness, as well as risk and vulnerability (Amelia et al., 2025). Existing studies within the digital communication field have predominantly examined self-disclosure from two broad thematic perspectives. The first perspective emphasizes its constructive contributions to psychosocial development. Scholars have demonstrated that self-disclosure on social media facilitates identity formation, strengthens interpersonal trust and empathy, and generates social support networks that enhance users' self-confidence, particularly among adolescents and young adults who are active on digital platforms (Fitriani & Andriani, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2023; K. E. Sari et al., 2025). A meta-analytical synthesis by Chu et al. (2023) further confirmed that the valence (*valensi*) and honesty of self-disclosure are moderately and positively associated with psychological well-being (*kesejahteraan psikologis*), underscoring the therapeutic potential of honest personal expression in digital environments.

However, a second and increasingly prominent stream of literature draws attention to the psychological risks accompanying excessive disclosure. The accessibility and immediacy of social media interaction have been shown to significantly blur the demarcation between private and public domains, enabling self-expression to evolve into patterns of communication that may generate anxiety, social vulnerability, and adverse effects on psychological well-being (Shabahang et al., 2022). This body of evidence suggests that while self-disclosure can serve beneficial psychosocial functions, its unregulated and excessive manifestation in public digital spaces presents a paradox: offering

emotional relief on one hand while simultaneously exposing individuals to heightened psychological vulnerability on the other.

Based on the Johari Window theory developed by Lutf & Ingham (1995), a person’s level of openness and self awareness is divided into four main areas: the open area, the hidden area, the blind area, and the unknown area. The open area consists of information known to both the individual and others, while the hidden area contains personal information known to the individual but which they do not wish to share with others. Furthermore, the blind area encompasses information or behaviors that the individual is unaware of but that can be observed and known by others, while the unknown area represents the deepest potentials or information that remain entirely unrecognized, both by the individual and others. Recent studies have highlighted the vulnerability of transparency practices within digital spaces. The accessibility and instantaneous interaction provided by social media significantly blur the boundaries between private and public domains, allowing self-expression to develop into forms of communication that may generate anxiety and negatively affect psychological well-being (Shabahang et al., 2022).

Despite growing academic interest in *self-disclosure* within digital environments, research specifically addressing the *hyper-honest* phenomenon remains notably scarce, revealing significant conceptual and empirical gaps that the present study seeks to address. Previous studies have predominantly conceptualized *self-disclosure* as a deliberate and strategic process through which individuals construct online identities, manage social impressions, and develop interpersonal relationships through primary content creation such as profile updates and personal posts (Apriyanti et al., 2024; Cahyani & Syaikhah, 2023). Consequently, limited scholarly attention has been directed toward understanding the spontaneous, emotionally driven, and excessive disclosure of traumatic personal experiences that occurs within secondary interaction spaces (*ruang interaksi sekunder*), particularly public comment sections. The present study addresses this gap by focusing on *hyper-honest* behavior as it manifests in the comment section of the TikTok account @helobagas, where users engage in extreme *self-disclosure* that surpasses conventional privacy boundaries. The conceptual novelty of this study lies in its application of the *Johari Window* theory to analyze the dynamics of contemporary digital communication, specifically to conceptualize how highly sensitive personal information undergoes a rapid and unfiltered transition from the *hidden area* to the *open area* without the gradual trust-building and privacy filtering processes characteristic of traditional interpersonal communication. This theoretical application offers a fresh perspective on how the boundaries of personal privacy are being fundamentally restructured within digitally mediated interaction spaces.

This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the various forms of *hyper-honest* behavior that emerge as extreme manifestations of *self-disclosure*, as well as to identify the communicative motives that drive individuals to share emotionally charged personal information within the comment section of the TikTok account @helobagas. The findings of this study are expected to contribute a theoretical enrichment in the field of digital interpersonal communication by providing empirical evidence regarding the shifting boundaries of privacy and emotional openness within contemporary digitally mediated interaction spaces.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to understand natural self disclosure behavior in digital public spaces (Sugiyono, 2023). The research was conducted from April to May 2026, with the comment section of the TikTok account @helobagas serving as the primary site of analysis. The subjects of this study are users who interact in the comment section of the TikTok account @helobagas, while the research objects consist of user comments on the TikTok account @helobagas that contain self disclosure practices as part of the “hyper-honest” phenomenon. Primary data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with six selected informants using purposive sampling. The selection of informants was guided by a set of predetermined criteria (*kriteria yang telah ditetapkan sebelumnya*) to ensure the relevance and depth of the data obtained (Miles et al., 2014). Specifically, the criteria for informant selection in this study were as follows: (1) the individual is an active TikTok user who has posted comments containing highly personal, emotionally sensitive, or traumatic experiences in the comment section of the @helobagas account; (2) the individual demonstrates a willingness to voluntarily participate in an in-depth interview regarding their commenting behavior; (3) the individual acknowledges an awareness that their comments are publicly accessible within the digital space; and (4) the individual falls within the age range of 18 to 25 years, representing the early adulthood demographic that is most actively engaged in emotional *self-disclosure* on social media platforms (Apriyanti et al., 2024). This interview approach is crucial for uncovering the deepest meanings behind users’ interactive experiences (Harahap et al., 2025). As a supporting tool, secondary data was collected from scientific articles, research journals, and relevant literature to strengthen the analysis of user behavior and compare it with previous research (Sulung & Muspawi, 2024).

The data collection process was conducted systematically through observation, in depth interviews, and documentation. The initial observational phase was conducted over a two-week period, during which the researchers systematically examined approximately 500 comments across 15 narrative-reflective video posts on the @helobagas account. This observation identified recurring behavioral patterns indicative of *hyper-honest* disclosure, including lengthy personal narratives recounting family conflicts, spontaneous emotional outbursts in response to video content, and explicit admissions of psychological vulnerability. The patterns identified during this observational stage served a dual function: they provided the empirical basis for establishing the initial categories of *hyper-honest* behavior, and they informed the development of the semi-structured interview guide (*panduan wawancara semi-terstruktur*) by highlighting the specific thematic domains requiring further exploration, namely the forms of disclosure, the emotional triggers, and the underlying communicative motives.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were subsequently conducted with each of the six informants individually. The interview guide comprised 15 open-ended questions organized around three core thematic clusters: (a) the forms and characteristics of personal information disclosed in the comment section; (b) the emotional and psychological states experienced before, during, and after the act of commenting; and (c) the communicative motives and contextual triggers that prompted the disclosure. Each interview session lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, conducted through online video call platforms to accommodate the geographical distribution of the

informants. All interview sessions were digitally recorded with the explicit consent of each participant, and the audio recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim to preserve the integrity and authenticity of the informants' expressions. The transcription process was completed within 48 hours of each interview to ensure the accuracy of contextual nuances (Claresta & Tamburian, 2021).

In parallel with the interview process, documented evidence in the form of *screenshots* of user comments was systematically collected and archived to support the triangulation of findings. Not all personal comments were automatically classified as *hyper-honest*; rather, a systematic screening process was applied to distinguish *hyper-honest* disclosure from ordinary *self-disclosure* or casual personal sharing. Comments were selected for analysis based on three defining criteria derived from the theoretical framework: (a) the comment contains the disclosure of deeply personal, traumatic, or emotionally painful experiences that would typically be concealed from public audiences; (b) the comment demonstrates an unfiltered and spontaneous quality, indicating the absence of deliberate impression management; and (c) the comment exceeds conventional privacy boundaries by revealing information that belongs within the individual's *bidden area* as conceptualized by the *Johari Window* theory (Luft & Ingham, 1955). Comments meeting all three criteria were subsequently coded using a two-cycle coding process following the analytical framework of Miles et al. (2014). The first-cycle coding employed descriptive and *in vivo* codes to capture the manifest content and the informants' own language, while the second-cycle coding utilized pattern coding to synthesize the initial codes into broader thematic categories representing the forms and motives of *hyper-honest* behavior.

The *Johari Window* theory was operationalized not merely as a conceptual framework within the literature review but as an active analytical lens applied throughout the data interpretation process. Specifically, each identified instance of *hyper-honest* behavior was mapped onto the four quadrants of the *Johari Window* to trace the trajectory of information movement. The analysis focused primarily on identifying empirical indicators of the transition from the *bidden area*, representing personal experiences known only to the individual and deliberately concealed from others, to the *open area*, representing information that becomes known to both the individual and the public audience through the act of commenting. This analytical mapping enabled the researchers to systematically examine the extent to which users' privacy boundaries were restructured during the *hyper-honest* disclosure process, as well as to identify the communicative conditions under which such boundary shifts occurred.

The overall data analysis procedure followed the interactive model developed by Miles et al. (2014), which comprises three concurrent and iterative stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation stage, raw data from interview transcripts, observational field notes, and documented comments were selectively reduced through the coding process described above, retaining only information directly relevant to the research questions. The condensed data were then organized into thematic matrices and narrative displays that enabled the researchers to identify relationships between the forms of *hyper-honest* behavior, the informants' emotional states, and their communicative motives. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring patterns across the three data sources and were verified through continuous

cross-referencing between the coded data and the original transcripts to ensure interpretive accuracy.

To strengthen the credibility and consistency of the findings, this study employed methodological triangulation as a strategy for enhancing the trustworthiness of the research outcomes, rather than as a mechanism for definitive confirmation (Enworo, 2023). Triangulation was operationalized by systematically cross-examining the data obtained from three distinct sources: observational records of comment patterns, verbatim interview transcripts, and documented *screenshots* of user comments. Specifically, themes and categories that emerged from the interview data were compared with the behavioral patterns identified during the observational phase to assess the degree of convergence between what informants reported and what was empirically observable in the comment section. Where inconsistencies arose between data sources, the researchers conducted follow-up examinations of the documented evidence to determine whether the discrepancy reflected genuine variation in user behavior or a limitation in the data collection process. This approach ensured that the findings were grounded in multiple evidentiary bases, thereby enhancing their credibility and reducing the potential for interpretive bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study are derived from the triangulation of three data sources: systematic observation of user comments in the @helobagas comment section, semi-structured in-depth interviews with six informants, and documented evidence in the form of anonymized *screenshots* of user comments. The results are organized around two central analytical dimensions: the forms of *hyper-honest* behavior and the communicative motives underlying such behavior. Each finding is presented by integrating observational patterns, interview narratives, and documentary evidence to ensure that the conclusions are grounded in multiple evidentiary sources rather than relying on a single data collection method.

Characteristics of the Informants

The phenomenon of “hyper-honesty” in TikTok comment sections emerges as an extreme form of self disclosure driven by various user communication motivations. Results from in-depth interviews with six informants and observations of comments indicate that this behavior is characterized by the sharing of personal experiences that go beyond the bounds of what is considered reasonable. Users confidently share the emotional realities of their lives including sensitive traumas that are typically private for public consumption. This practice serves as clear evidence of a shift in privacy boundaries, where users no longer hesitate to reveal their most vulnerable sides on platforms that allow for anonymous interaction.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Informants

Informants	Age	Story Focus
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RP	19	Family conflict and mental exhaustion
KA	23	Family conflict and emotional stress
AM	22	Family pressure and an arranged marriage
ZS	24	Unequal treatment within the family and a lack of parental attention
NM	20	Past trauma and bullying
RI	21	Betrayal and Disappointment in Relationships

Referring to the table above, the participants in this study were between the ages of 19 and 24, which falls within early adulthood. This age group is relevant to the study’s findings because, during this transitional phase, individuals are generally confronted with social dynamics and family expectations. Hyper-honest behavior on social media serves as a way for them to vent the emotional burdens they find difficult to express within their immediate social circles.

Forms of *Hyper-Honesty*

The results of the study show that three main forms of hyper-honesty were identified in the informants’ activities: the disclosure of traumatic experiences, the intense expression of emotions, and the disclosure of personal vulnerability. Each of these forms demonstrates an extreme level of depth and honesty that is typically concealed from one’s immediate social circle. These three forms were initially identified through the observational analysis of comment patterns across 15 narrative-reflective video posts on the @helobagas account. During the observation phase, comments exhibiting characteristics of *hyper-honest* disclosure were systematically screened and categorized based on the criteria established in the methodology. The observational findings were subsequently deepened and validated through in-depth interview narratives, in which the informants provided elaborated accounts of their emotional experiences and motivations. Documented *screenshots* of representative comments, with all identifying information anonymized to protect users' privacy, served as supplementary evidence to corroborate the convergence between the observational and interview data.

Table 2. Forms of *Hyper-Honesty* Among TikTok User @helobagas

Forms of <i>Hyper-Honesty</i>	Findings
Disclosure of Traumatic Experiences	Family conflicts, bullying, and life pressures
Intense emotional expression	Sadness, disappointment, despair, and feelings of exhaustion/frustration.
Disclosure of personal vulnerability	Feelings of being unappreciated, fear, and the need for attention and support

Expressions of Traumatic Experiences

The first and most dominant form involves the disclosure of traumatic

experiences or severe internal conflicts. Digital spaces are utilized as a medium to release emotional burdens that have been suppressed for years. AM (22 years old) and NM (20 years old) demonstrated similar patterns, in which they used the comment section as a space to reveal past emotional wounds related to family pressure, forced marriage, unequal treatment since childhood, and traumatic experiences caused by bullying. Observational records indicated that traumatic disclosure constituted the most frequently occurring form of *hyper-honest* behavior, accounting for the largest proportion of comments that met the screening criteria. Users were observed composing lengthy, detailed narratives recounting experiences of family conflict, parental neglect, and emotional abuse, often without any evident attempt to conceal their identities or soften the emotional intensity of their accounts. This pattern was confirmed and elaborated through the interview data, as illustrated by the following informant statements by RP (19 years old):

"Most of the time, it is about family. About being scolded, compared, and sometimes i feel jealous when i see other people's families who are warm, while i feel that within my family, i am always the one who has to understand the situation. i feel useless because i am often criticized. Sometimes it is also about feeling mentally exhausted with myself. i have even shared about feeling like giving up and constantly expressing how tired i am of being the child who always has to be strong... Things like that are difficult to talk about in real life." (RP, 19 years old)

RP's statement illustrates emotional distress caused by continuous expectations to understand others' situations while experiencing repeated criticism, leading the informant to develop feelings of worthlessness. The inability to discuss these issues in real life due to fear of being seen as overly sensitive or even judged drives RP to share this trauma with a foreign audience. This makes TikTok a channel for catharsis regarding the psychological pressure that has long been suppressed. Regarding specific traumatic experiences such as bullying, NM (20 years old) also openly shares her past, as she explains: "*The heavy topics are usually about bullying. I've actually been a victim of bullying for a long time.*" NM's disclosure demonstrates that the information shared involves highly vulnerable psychological aspects. Experiences as a bullying victim, which are often associated with stigma in real-life environments, are instead openly acknowledged in anonymous public spaces due to the perceived safety from direct judgment.

Intense Expression of Emotions

The second form is characterized by intense, highly reactive, and unfiltered emotional outbursts. This often occurs spontaneously when the interviewee's psychological state is unstable or at its lowest point due to emotional stress. RP (19 years old) and ZS (24 years old) demonstrated similar patterns regarding this condition, in which they often replied to comments when negative emotions were building up to the point of causing uncontrolled

physical reactions, such as trembling hands, blurred vision from crying, and numerous typos due to the emotional outburst at that moment. The statement that best represents this form of intense emotional disclosure without concern for self-image was expressed by KA (23 years old): *“Because i wrote it very spontaneously. Sometimes i was even crying while writing. So i didn’t think about whether i looked sad or anything. i just really felt hurt at that moment.”* (KA, 23 years old). Comment observation revealed that a number of users engaged in spontaneous emotional outbursts within the comment section, characterized by the use of highly affective language, incomplete sentence structures, and expressions indicative of acute psychological distress. These comments appeared to be written during moments of emotional instability, as evidenced by their reactive and unstructured nature. The interview data provided further insight into this pattern by ZS (24 years old) through her experience:

“There was a moment when i just couldn’t hold it in anymore. It was late at night, right after a huge fight, and i was typing in that comment section while i was literally shaking. i didn’t care if the sentences were jumbled or full of typos my tears were blurring my phone screen. i just wanted to get all that weight off my chest that very night.” (ZS, 24 years old)

The statements by KA and ZS demonstrate that at the peak of exhaustion or sadness, the speakers no longer have the energy or desire to fabricate stories or project a certain image in front of others. Physical reactions such as crying, trembling hands, and even disregarding proper sentence structure indicate that comment sections are used in real time as a space for emergency catharsis. This impulsive writing serves to relieve urgent emotions without going through a process of logical filtering, because for them, momentary emotional release is far more important than the digital public’s aesthetic judgment of their writing.

Disclosure of Personal Vulnerability

The third form involves acknowledging personal weaknesses, inadequacies, and failures. The interviewees did not hesitate to discuss the painful realities that led to feelings of low self-esteem. The third form of *hyper-honest* behavior identified through observation involved users openly acknowledging personal failures, feelings of inadequacy, and perceived weaknesses, aspects of the self that are typically guarded within conventional social interactions. Documented comments in this category frequently contained explicit admissions of helplessness and self-doubt. The following interview excerpts illustrate the depth of this vulnerability from ZS (24 years old):

“Because I’m too embarrassed to talk about it directly. I’m afraid my parents would be hurt if they found out that i actually feel like a total failure as their child. So i feel braver sharing on TikTok because people don’t know me... I’ve gone too far before. i once talked about my income and how i felt my education was a waste. But when i think about it now, that’s really personal.” (ZS, 24 years old)

In addition to ZS, feelings of inferiority, fear, and the family’s economic vulnerability were also candidly expressed by AM (22 years old), who felt trapped in the complex challenges of adulthood:

“I don’t really mind if other people know that i am dealing with quite complicated problems, such as family relationships, love, or things like that... Things about my exhaustion, working after graduating from school, and often feeling tired of life are things that i usually show.” (AM, 22 years old)

Similar emotional vulnerability stemming from exhaustion with life’s demands is further underscored by a written statement from RP (19 years old) when she had hit rock bottom: *“Most of the time it’s about family... Sometimes it’s also about being mentally exhausted with myself. I’ve also shared stories about feeling like giving up and how i often vent when I’m tired of having to be the strong one.”* (RP, 19 years old)

ZS, AM, and RP represent extreme levels of emotional vulnerability in early adulthood. They go to great lengths to maintain their image and emotions in the real world, yet in TikTok comment sections, they reveal their vulnerabilities ranging from feelings of failure as children, disappointment with their educational outcomes, and financial problems, to mental exhaustion and the desire to give up. This indicates that unfamiliar audiences are perceived as having no expectations or demands regarding their lives, allowing informants to feel safer admitting personal struggles on TikTok compared to facing potential social consequences in real-life interactions.

A notable empirical pattern that emerged consistently across all three forms of *hyper-honest* behavior was that the personal information disclosed by the informants had been deliberately concealed from their immediate social circles prior to the act of commenting. All six informants confirmed during the interviews that the experiences they shared in the @helobagas comment section, whether traumatic events, emotional struggles, or personal vulnerabilities, had never been previously communicated to family members, close friends, or romantic partners. RP (19 years old) described her family conflicts as something she had 'kept entirely to herself for years,' while AM (22 years old) stated that the pressure surrounding her arranged marriage was 'a secret she had never revealed to anyone, including her closest companion.' These findings indicate that the disclosed information resided exclusively within each individual's private knowledge domain and entered the publicly accessible sphere for the first time through the medium of the TikTok comment section.

Motives Behind *Hyper-Honest* Behavior

Based on the interview results, there are four main motives that drive users to engage in hyper-honest behavior in digital spaces, particularly in the TikTok comment section of @helobagas. The comment section has transformed into a safe space that fulfills psychological needs they cannot satisfy in the real world.

Table 3. Users’ Motives for Engaging in *Hyper-Honest Behavior*

Motive	Findings
The need to be heard and understood	Wants their experiences and feelings to be known and understood by others
Emotional support	Expects empathy, attention, and support from other users
Emotional relief	Reducing mental burden and emotional stress
Emotional connection with the content	Feeling a shared experience with the content being watched

The need to be heard and understood

Both observational and interview data converged in identifying the need to be heard and understood as a primary communicative motive. Observed comments frequently contained explicit appeals for acknowledgment, with users writing phrases such as 'I just need someone to know this' or 'finally someone who understands.' RP (19 years old) described her awareness and exhaustion in depth:

“Yeah, sometimes i just want someone to respond with ‘I totally get how you feel.’ That calms me down because what’s exhausting isn’t the problem itself, but feeling like no one around me understands... i realized that all this time, i wasn’t actually tired i was just thirsty for someone to listen to me. It was only through those interactions in the comments that i realized i need to be understood by others.” (RP, 19 years old)

The feeling of relief at finally being understood by others was also fully expressed by AM (22) and ZS (24) when they received a validating response: *“It makes me happier because it feels like... well, it’s like, ‘Oh, finally, there’s someone who understands what I’m feeling, when no one in real life gets it.’”* (AM, 22 years old) *“I was immediately moved because i felt like someone understood me... It was more like proof that there’s someone out there who reads and understands how exhausted i am.”* (ZS, 24 years old)

The transcript above shows that the mental exhaustion users experience often stems from a lack of validation in the real world. They write long comments purely to seek acknowledgment that their feelings and suffering are valid. It is this basic need that drives them to open up.

Emotional Support

Beyond the desire to be heard, the informants also seek emotional support so they don’t feel alone in facing life’s problems. KA (23 years old) directly compared how the responses from strangers were far better than those from the people closest to her:

"Because strangers on TikTok sometimes understand me better than the people closest to me. In real life, I’m often interrupted when i talk or even compared to others. Whereas in the TikTok comments, people sometimes just say, ‘I’ve been there too,’ and that alone makes me feel like I’m not alone." (KA, 23 years old)

This support from complete strangers turns out to have a powerful psychological impact in alleviating loneliness, as RI (21 years old) explained at length:

"I feel safer because people are more supportive of me, care about me, and are more aware of me. Maybe my friends do the same thing, but in the comments section I've discovered something new: it turns out there are strangers who don't know us at all, yet they're going through the same thing, and that makes me feel more empowered and less alone." (RI, 21 years old)

This statement highlights an interesting phenomenon where digital spaces have effectively taken on the role of support systems in real life. Affection from strangers feels more genuine because it comes without expectations or judgmental tendencies

Emotional Relief

Another reason is to use the comments section as a way to vent momentary emotions. Although this doesn't solve the underlying problem, typing a comment provides an instant sense of calm that relieves feelings of distress. This is described very realistically by RP (19) and ZS (24)

"Maybe it's because I'm tired of keeping everything to myself I've reached a breaking point where i just want to talk to anyone, even a stranger. i just want a place to vent without having to overthink things. The relief didn't last long, but at least after i talked it out, my head felt lighter even though the problem wasn't solved, at least i felt like my feelings had finally come out." (RP, 19 years old) "Just for a little while, though. The next day, i still woke up early, went back to work, and got tired all over again. But at least that night, i was able to let it all out." (ZS, 24 years old)

Based on the interviewees' responses, TikTok functions as a coping mechanism during emotionally overwhelming situations. They recognize that their problems remain unresolved and that daily routines continue afterward; however, the temporary emotional relief experienced becomes a sufficient reason for them to continue expressing their feelings through the platform.

Emotional Connection to Content

The final factor and also the main one that caused users' privacy defenses to shift is the power of the content itself. @helobagas's content served as a spontaneous trigger that broke down users' emotional barriers. RP (19) and AM (22) explained how elements within the content sparked an overwhelming curiosity that was difficult to resist.

"Honestly, it happens quite often. Sometimes i only hear the narration for a few seconds about something that feels relatable, and i immediately feel the urge to write as if the video is speaking directly to me. The impact is very strong because the combination of words and audio makes emotions that i have been holding back suddenly come out or get

triggered.” (RP, 19 years old)

“You could say it’s really powerful, sis it makes you feel a deep connection, like a ‘click,’ and you get this urge to share your story, to open up, you know? It’s happened a few times, sis. At first, i just wanted to watch it for fun, but then I’d end up wanting to express what i was feeling that happens often, sis. i didn’t intend to comment, but after watching the video until the end, especially near the ending part, i usually feel the desire to express my feelings.” (AM, 22 years old)

RI (21 years old) also felt an irresistible emotional urge caused by the resonance of the content while in a physically exhausted state:

“I’d say 80%, sis. The fact that i was able to express my emotions like that means it really hit home though that’s aside from how tired i was from work. i didn’t want to comment at first, but since the content resonated with me and i was already emotional, i felt compelled to share my story.” (RI, 21 years old)

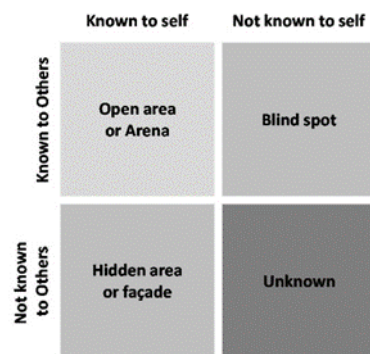
The interviewees stated that this self disclosure usually occurs spontaneously. The combination of real-life exhaustion and the visual and audio narratives in the content which reflect their own lives creates a very deep emotional response. Ultimately, privacy concerns are completely set aside because they’re driven by feelings that arise from within.

In summary, the empirical findings demonstrate that *hyper-honest* behavior in the @helobagas comment section is characterized by two interconnected dimensions: the forms through which disclosure manifests and the communicative motives that drive it. Across all identified forms and motives, the data consistently indicate that the information disclosed by the informants originated from their most guarded personal domains, representing experiences that had been deliberately withheld from their closest social environments. The comment section served as the first and only medium through which this private information entered the publicly accessible domain, a process that occurred without the gradual trust-building mechanism typically associated with conventional interpersonal *self-disclosure*. These empirical patterns establish the foundation for a theoretical analysis through the *Johari Window* framework, which will be elaborated in the following section.

Discussion

The thematic categories identified in this study emerged through a systematic two-cycle coding process applied to three triangulated data sources: observational records of comment patterns, verbatim interview transcripts, and documented screenshots of user comments. The convergence of evidence across these sources confirmed that the phenomenon of hyper-honesty in the @helobagas TikTok comment section manifests through three distinct forms of extreme *self-disclosure* the disclosure of traumatic experiences, the intense expression of emotions, and the acknowledgment of personal vulnerability each driven by identifiable communicative motives. The following discussion examines these findings through the analytical lens of the *Johari Window* theory

and positions them within the broader landscape of existing literature on digital *self-disclosure*.



The Johari Window Model

Figure 1. Johari Window

Source: Communication Theory (www.communicationtheory.org)

Through the framework of the *Johari Window* (Lutf & Ingham, 1995), the empirical findings of this study can be interpreted as evidence of a rapid and unfiltered informational transition from the *hidden area* to the *open area*. The interview data consistently demonstrated that all six informants had deliberately concealed the disclosed experiences from their closest social environments prior to the act of commenting, confirming that such information resided exclusively within the *hidden area*. RP (19 years old) described her family conflicts as experiences she had suppressed for years without ever communicating them to anyone, while AM (22 years old) confirmed that the familial pressure she faced had remained entirely undisclosed even to her closest companion. The observational data corroborated this interpretation by revealing that the disclosed content possessed characteristics of first-time revelation: the comments were lengthy, emotionally raw, and devoid of the cautious self-presentation typical of gradual *self-disclosure* processes. Documented screenshots provided additional confirmatory evidence, showing that users disclosed information of comparable depth and sensitivity to what was reported during the interviews. This triangulated evidence indicates that the TikTok comment section functioned as the specific medium through which private information transitioned into the publicly accessible domain, bypassing the incremental trust-building process that conventionally governs the expansion of the *open area* in face-to-face interpersonal communication.

The three forms of *hyper-honest* behavior identified in this study align with and extend the *self-disclosure* theory proposed by Devito (2019), particularly regarding the dimensions of depth and honesty. The coding analysis revealed that the informants' disclosures consistently met the depth criterion, as the shared content involved psychologically painful and deeply personal narratives encompassing family conflicts, emotional abuse, bullying, and arranged marriages. Simultaneously, the unfiltered manner of expression demonstrated the honesty dimension, as the informants reported making no attempt to embellish, minimize, or reframe their experiences for public consumption. These findings are congruent with previous studies documenting the transformation of TikTok into a medium for authentic self-expression among Generation Z (Anggraini et al., 2022;

Hidayat, 2023), and corroborate the observations of Claresta & Tamburian (2021) and Nawangsari et al. (2024) that digital platforms enable users to express personal experiences without the impression management constraints present in offline interactions.

The findings further align with and substantiate the conceptualization of *hyper-honesty* proposed by Hamzah & Putri (2020), who characterized this phenomenon as users' tendency to disclose excessive amounts of personal information as a form of uninhibited self-expression on social media. The informants in this study demonstrated a level of openness that exceeded the conventional boundaries of *self-disclosure*, sharing not merely everyday experiences but deeply traumatic events and emotionally volatile states. This correspondence suggests that *hyper-honesty* constitutes a distinctive communicative behavior that is fundamentally more profound than ordinary *self-disclosure* and involves personal experiences that individuals find exceedingly difficult to articulate within their immediate social environments. These results are further supported by Lestari et al. (2024), who defined *hyper-honesty* in digital communication as an individual's capacity to express their authentic self without filtering information, and by Shabahang et al. (2022), who demonstrated that *oversharing* behavior on social media is associated with an individual's tendency to share deeply personal information with a broad and largely anonymous audience. The convergence of these findings across multiple studies reinforces the interpretation that the blurring of private and public boundaries in digital spaces has become an increasingly pervasive characteristic of contemporary social media communication.

Regarding the communicative motives, the triangulation of data sources provided analytical clarity regarding the relationship between psychological needs and the *Jobari Window* dynamics. The participants' desire to receive validation that their pain is real and their need to be heard and understood align with the findings of Lee & Attablayo (2023), who confirmed that the need to maintain social connectedness and receive support constitutes a primary reason individuals engage in online *self-disclosure*. The sense of relief derived from feeling less isolated after receiving empathetic responses from strangers reinforces the findings of Rahayu et al. (2023) and W. P. Sari & Irena (2023), both of whom concluded that interactions on TikTok function not merely as one-directional communicative acts but as safe spaces for building social support networks where Generation Z feels free to share their vulnerabilities with a wide audience.

The motive of seeking emotional relief through *hyper-honesty* suggests that comment sections serve as spaces for temporary psychological unburdening. Although the informants acknowledged that their underlying problems remained unresolved, the act of expressing their thoughts provided momentary psychological comfort. This finding is consistent with Zehrung & Chen (2023), who found that TikTok users frequently share emotional experiences as a mechanism for stress alleviation and as an effort to connect with others facing similar circumstances. Furthermore, the dominance of emotional connection to content as a motive demonstrates that the narrative and audiovisual elements of @helobagas's content possess the capacity to dismantle the audience's privacy defenses. This result aligns with Andriani et al. (2024), who established that TikTok has facilitated transformations in the communication patterns of the younger generation by stimulating self-expression triggered by emotionally resonant content.

The interview data revealed that the informants' primary motives, particularly the need to be heard, the desire for emotional support, and the pursuit of emotional relief, functioned as psychological catalysts that accelerated the transition of information from the *hidden area* to the *open area*. When individuals move information from the *hidden area* to the *open area*, they create opportunities for others to understand their circumstances and offer relevant responses. This process was empirically evident in the experiences of informants who reported feeling more relieved after receiving empathy from other users in the comment section (Mardiana & Zi'ni, 2020). The increase in information known to others creates opportunities for the formation of more open social relationships, even when such relationships take place within digital spaces (Sasfira & Salas, 2025). Observational data confirmed that the most emotionally expressive comments were concentrated beneath video content characterized by narrative-reflective themes, suggesting that content characteristics served as contextual triggers that lowered the informants' privacy boundaries. The convergence of these findings across all three data sources substantiates the interpretation that *hyper-honest* disclosure is not merely an impulsive act but rather a behavior driven by identifiable psychological needs that interact with specific content characteristics to produce a measurable shift in the boundaries of personal privacy.

These findings are further supported by Apriyanti et al. (2024), who found that *self-disclosure* among Generation Z is closely linked to the need for self-expression and the desire to gain understanding from their social environment. The participants in this study engaged in *hyper-honesty* to create a space that allowed them to freely share their life experiences and release emotional burdens that had been difficult to convey to others. Cahyani & Syaikhah (2023) additionally demonstrated that social media users tend to engage in *self-disclosure* when they perceive themselves as safe from the risk of social judgment that characterizes face-to-face communication, a finding that aligns with the present study's results, as several informants reported feeling more comfortable sharing personal experiences with strangers online than with those closest to them. Rothschild & Aharony (2023) further established that individuals are motivated to share personal information when they hope to receive emotional support from a community with similar experiences, a pattern clearly reflected in the informants' accounts of feeling validated and less alone after receiving empathetic responses from fellow users.

Although this study demonstrates that emotional connection to content is the primary trigger for *hyper-honesty*, alternative explanations may also contribute to amplifying this phenomenon. The inherent nature of social media, which enables non-face-to-face interaction, creates a communicative distance that makes individuals feel less threatened by immediate judgment. Furthermore, the anonymous characteristics of communication through social media render users as unknown individuals, thereby providing a layer of identity protection that tangibly encourages the disclosure of deeply guarded personal experiences.

In synthesis, the phenomenon of *hyper-honest* behavior on TikTok represents a convergence between individual psychological needs and media-specific affordances. The coding and triangulation processes applied in this study revealed that the forms and motives of *hyper-honest* disclosure are not isolated phenomena but rather interconnected dimensions of a single communicative process in which deeply private information transitions rapidly from the *hidden area*

to the *open area* of the *Johari Window*. The content characteristics of the @helobagas account, combined with the perceived anonymity and emotional safety of the comment section, collectively create communicative conditions that facilitate this boundary shift. These findings carry important implications for the broader understanding of contemporary digital interpersonal communication, demonstrating that social media comment sections have evolved beyond their conventional function as secondary interaction spaces into arenas for affective communication and alternative emotional support systems. Nevertheless, this study acknowledges certain limitations: the scope of analysis was confined to six informants and focused specifically on a single content creator account (@helobagas), which constrains the transferability of the findings. Future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample, compare *hyper-honest* phenomena across various social media platforms such as X/Twitter or Instagram, and examine the long-term psychological consequences of this disclosure behavior through an interdisciplinary clinical psychology lens.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, this study directly addresses two main objectives related to the phenomenon of hyper-honest behavior in the comment section of the TikTok account @helobagas. This extreme practice of self disclosure in the digital space manifests in three main forms: the disclosure of traumatic experiences (such as family conflicts and bullying), the intense expression of emotions (spontaneous outbursts during periods of psychological instability), and the disclosure of personal vulnerability (acknowledgment of personal failures), with the disclosure of traumatic experiences being the most frequently observed manifestation. This unfiltered honesty is driven by four primary communication motives: the need to be heard and understood, the search for emotional support, the pursuit of emotional relief, and emotional connection to the content. These four motives emotional connection to the narrative-reflective content @helobagas have proven to be the most dominant factor in triggering the breakdown of the audience’s privacy boundaries, as they provide a sense of validation through the reflection of their own life stories.

Theoretically, through the Johari Window approach, this phenomenon indicates a shift in the boundaries of modern privacy, where sensitive information moves drastically from the hidden area directly to the open area within the secondary interaction space. Nevertheless, users can still maintain control over their personal space; contributors continue to seek ways to protect their privacy through anonymity by concealing their real names, last names, and locations to avoid the risk of tracking or real-world social consequences. Through these dynamics, the TikTok comment section @helobagas no longer functions merely as secondary interaction space but has also evolved into a place for emotional release, a medium for expressing feelings, and a space for providing emotional support that offers comfort, authenticity in expression, and freedom from judgment for its users.

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