

Use of anonymous social media accounts as self-disclosure media for Generation Z on postmodernism

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to see how anonymous social media accounts are used as a medium of self-disclosure and by adolescents in the era of postmodernism. This study uses a constructivist paradigm with a descriptive method through a qualitative approach. Data collection is done by using library research techniques. Data sources come from relevant literature, such as books, journals, or scientific articles. Data analysis was carried out by identifying problems that occurred related to the research topic, then analyzed with a postmodernism perspective to reveal social realities that occurred in adolescents in the use of anonymous social media from the standpoint of Jean Baudrillard's simulacra theory and conclusions were drawn. The results of the study show that both the positive and negative impacts of using anonymous social media accounts, in the view of postmodernism, put forward a very subjective truth. In the context of adolescent self-disclosure, limits will be determined by personal will, and the benefits of self-disclosure refer to individual satisfaction. Adolescents are forced to enter into hyperreality conditions that are intended to deceive adolescents in a subtle way, namely deceiving and believing that the simulation is the real reality so that adolescents become dependent on the simulation and possessive.

Keywords: Anonymous, Self-disclosure, Generation Z, Postmodernism.

INTRODUCTION

In the current era, it is undeniable that there has been a change in individual behavior in seeking information and carrying out communication activities. One of the factors that cause the change in behavior is the need for increased information which is supported by technological advances. We are currently in an era where communication can be easily done without the limitations of space and time, with the help of computer systems. Communication through computers (computer mediated communication) is a communication process with computer media which is the communication tool. According to John December (in Tjahyana, 2007) computer mediated communication can be interpreted as a communication process through computers that involves humans in various situations and conditions to achieve certain goals through the use of media.

Technological advances, especially in the field of information and communication, are marked by the presence of new media, one of which is social media which is a communication tool that offers convenience and speed. The use of the internet or social media has become the main means of communication with a very large number of users. The convenience provided by social

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media can be greatly enjoyed by Generation Z. Generation Z, most of whom are teenagers, are active social media users. Quoting from a report entitled "Digital 2021: The Latest Insights Into The State of Digital", it is stated that of a total 274.9 million population in Indonesia, 170 million of them use social media and the generation that dominates the use of social media in Indonesia comes from young people (*We Are Social Global*, 2021).

Social media can be a tool that can be used to carry out social roles and produce an impact on these social roles that occur in cyberspace. The main characteristic of social media is to form a network of friends, both between users they already know in the real world and form new friendship networks with strangers in cyberspace (Nasrullah, 2015).

In general, social media can be used through internet-based applications for the purpose of communicating and obtaining information. If we look at some of the characteristics that social media has, apart from forming a network of friends, we can also find that the content in it can be distributed without restrictions and the content of the message is conveyed directly. These contents can also be received in a fast time and make users as creators who allow themselves to actualize themselves. In addition, in social media there are interactions, sharing, existence, relationships, status or reputation and user groups.

Communicating using social media is an activity that is difficult to separate in the current era of information technology. Almost certainly, everyone today uses social media as a means of communication to interact with other people and the outside world. However, social media does not mean it has no weaknesses. Information that is quickly and easily accessible from social media is becoming less controlled. Many social media accounts or websites whose identity is unknown and cannot be accounted for.

The phenomenon that is so prevalent today is the emergence of many anonymous accounts without a clear identity. The existence of the internet encourages the emergence of social networks that provide space for users to be able to build their identity in the virtual world (Panjaitan et al., 2020). In addition, social media also offers freedom of expression, therefore social media can be a space and a means for anyone to create and construct himself to be what he wants.

In a previous study conducted by Luo & Hancock (2020) which examined intrapersonal motives in expressing oneself on social media, it was found that self-disclosure on social media was based on feelings or thoughts to release pent up ones. Social media is felt like a safe place for low self-esteem in expressing themselves. The feedback feature and the expectation of getting social support or wider attention are considered to be interesting features. Meanwhile, this study intends to find out how intrapersonal motives express themselves on social media but in anonymity.

Through an anonymous account, a person can actualize by expressing himself more easily when compared to expressing himself directly because there is no need for physical presence. But of course this behavior can also produce a negative impact, namely making it easier for someone to carry out aggressive actions such as cyberbullying which is also the result of the pleasure (guilty pleasure) of anonymous account users (Rini, 2020). This condition makes self-disclosure on anonymous accounts on social media uncontrollable, whatever is revealed, uploaded and shared in cyberspace. A condition that raises concern, especially if the perpetrator is a teenager.

DeVito (2013) explains that self-disclosure in social penetration theory means communicating information about ourselves related to information that we usually hide from others. This self-disclosure may involve information about our values, beliefs, desires, and behaviors as well as qualities or characteristics of ourselves that we possess. In line with that, Wheelles (in Gainau, 2012) reveals that self-disclosure is the ability to disclose information about oneself to others. According to Derlega & Grzelak (in Dayakisni & Hudaniah, 2009) there are five functions of self-disclosure, namely:

- a. Expression: with this kind of self-disclosure, individuals have the opportunity to express the feelings they are feeling.
- b. Self-clarification: through self-disclosure we will reveal existing problems and in return we will accept other people's views so that they can be input and as self-clarification.

- c. Social validity (social validation): after self-disclosure, we will get verification and truth about the views we have from other people.
- d. Social control (social control): we can reveal and hide information about the state of the self as a function of social control to create a certain impression.
- e. Relationship development: self-disclosure will further increase the degree of intimacy in a relationship.

We can see that currently, the existence of the internet and social media has influenced information seeking activities and existing communication patterns, especially among young people of Generation Z who were born in the fertile era of information technology sophistication. This has led to a new change in behavior, namely the use of anonymous accounts on social media as hidden identities that are used as a means of self-disclosure for Generation Z. This condition has often termed the era of postmodernism which is represented by the tendency of people to consume information by not seeing the truth objectively so as to understanding a fact that exists becomes distant and mixed with pseudo-truths.

The author sees this phenomenon as an interesting discussion for further study. Based on the background of the problem, this paper aims to examine and analyze and theoretically formulate how the use of anonymous social media accounts as a medium of self-disclosure and its impact on the current generation of Z youth in the postmodern era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a constructivist paradigm. With this paradigm, the researcher interprets and acts according to various conceptual categories in his mind. According to this paradigm, reality does not show itself in its crude form, but must first be filtered through how a person sees things (Morissan, 2009).

The method in this study uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach that aims to describe the use of anonymous social media accounts as a medium for self-disclosure of Generation Z in the postmodern era. Collecting data in this study using literature study techniques and previous research. The data collection period is carried out in a span of 5 months, starting from February to June 2022. Data sources are obtained from relevant literature such as books, journals or scientific articles related to the topic under study. The subjects in the study came from secondary data in the form of previous research journals with research criteria carried out in the last 5 years, namely 2018 to 2022 related to the use of anonymous social media accounts and the object in this study was a description of the use of anonymous social media accounts in adolescents.

The data analysis technique in this study was carried out by identifying problems that occurred related to the research topic, then data was collected, then analyzed with a postmodernism perspective to reveal a social reality that occurs in adolescents in the use of anonymous social media accounts from the standpoint of Jean Baudrillard's simulacra theory, then presented in the discussion and concluded according to the needs related to the research topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Adolescence can be defined as the condition of individuals who are still in their teens and cannot be called adults. Adolescence is in the age range between 11-21 years. Adolescence can also be termed as puberty. The term refers to the transition period from childhood to adulthood (Ermayani, 2015).

In the Thematic Gender Statistics: Profile of the Indonesian Millennial Generation (Statistik, 2018) issued by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and the Central Statistics Agency, it is stated that the generation Z group was born between 2001 and 2010.

Generation Z is the generation that emerged in the era of information technology. Generation Z is often referred to as the "I generation" or the internet generation. The internet generation grows and develops along with digitalization in various aspects. They are experts in

operating various technology media (digital natives) and have unique characters such as multitasking character and this is very different from the previous generation (Christiani & Ikasari, 2020). Bencsik et al., (2016) explains that together with the emergence of the digitalization era, generation Z is very fast in accessing information and at the same time reacting quickly to the waves of information that surround it. Generation Z grows up to be intelligent, skilled in using technology, creative, and critical.

Because Generation Z was born in an era of abundance of information and the internet is very easy to access and in your hands. Therefore, Generation Z uses the internet as a source of information and communication tool in everyday life. Generation Z has a more unique and interesting character compared to the previous generation. Generation Z can also be called a digital native.

Based on research by Valkenburg and Peter (in Sari, 2018) concluded that teenagers communicate more online than adults. There are special reasons why teenagers have to communicate online. Adolescents feel they can have more control over their self-disclosure and self-presentation if the communication is done online. These teens feel more free and confident to express themselves online than in face-to-face communication situations. Online self-disclosure itself has a positive influence on teenagers, such as maintaining relationships and sharing thoughts, feelings and experiences with their friends.

The study conducted by Yayasan Pengembangan Media Anak in Indonesia on 2011 showed to surf in cyberspace, digital native Indonesians use devices such as computers, laptops and smartphones. On average, they spend 1.5–3 hours on the internet every day. Currently, the social media site most frequently visited by teenagers is Twitter, which beats the popularity of other social media accounts such as Facebook. However, it can be said that the level of media literacy of digital natives is not directly proportional to the skills of navigating the internet (Nureni, 2013). This low level of media literacy among teenagers often results in abuse in the use of social media. One thing that is worrying is the behavior of using anonymous accounts by Generation Z teenagers.

Anonymous or anonymous is the condition of a person's identity being lost. Literally, anonymous comes from the word *anonymia* in Greek which means nameless or without identity (Prasetyo, 2018). The phenomenon that is currently rife in the use of social media is the emergence of the behavior of using anonymous accounts. In the context of anonymity in cyberspace, Pavlicek (2005) explains that the easier it is for outsiders to reach the identity of the account, the lower the level of anonymity. This means that the easier it is to reach the identity of an anonymous account, the verification of the truth will be more open.

There are three types of identity in interacting on the internet, namely real-life identity, pseudonymity, and anonymity. In real-life identity, it means that the individual will show who the individual really is. Whereas in pseudonymity, the original identity begins to blur and even becomes fake, although in some cases there are representations that can represent the real identity of the individual. And anonymity is a new form of identity that is completely separate and cannot be referred to who the identity belongs to (Nasrullah, 2014). Anonymity in cyberspace has made a person have a new identity. This identity is also used by certain groups of anonymous account users for the purpose of protecting the privacy of their real identity.

Anonymous accounts used by Generation Z teenagers are usually used to make self-disclosure, most of them do this for fun or expression but with a false identity, for reasons of convenience and security.

When there is no more truth in reality and society enters the realm of hyperreality, individuals will lose awareness that what is seen as a truth is actually a construction or engineering of reality through information technology. Therefore, there is a transition from the natural world of reality and socio-cultural order to the unnatural one. Teenagers in Indonesia have now become the most users and are active consumers in the use of virtual services. Adolescents' unconsciousness in using social media, which is driven by signs/symbols and codes, leads to confusion in identifying real and pseudo identities. Contemporary youth ultimately have two identities, namely a real identity and an anonymous virtual identity.

In the perspective of postmodernism, this situation can be explained by the term simulacra. The simulacra theory initiated by Jean Baudrillard (in Saumantri & Zikrillah, 2020) which explains a condition that humans do not exist in the presence of actual reality but always think imaginary and exist in delusions in seeing reality in the space where the simulation mechanism takes place. This situation makes the distances between truth and falsehood very close. Therefore, what is produced in this reality is a pseudo-state and a fake simulation result or what is called hyperreality.

In this discussion, several previous studies in accordance with the data criteria in this study, will be reviewed and analyzed with reference to the explanation of Derlega & Grzelak (ini Dayakisni & Hudaniah, 2009) which explains that there are five functions of self disclosure, namely expression, self-purification (self-clarification), social legitimacy (social-validity), social control, and as well as for relationship development, using a postmodernism perspective.

Use of anonymous accounts to express yourself

The phenomenon of anonymous accounts on social media is very common among teenagers of generation Z, this is a form of self-expression of these teenagers. The results of research conducted by Puspitasari (2019) show that social media users, especially Twitter, mostly come from teenagers. The use of Twitter social media has two impacts, namely, positive impacts and negative impacts. The positive impact that teenagers get is that they have the space to pour out their hearts without anyone knowing about the real identity of the anonymous account they use. In addition, they use anonymous social media accounts to develop their creativity in writing. However, on the other hand, there is a negative impact of an anonymous account owner, namely not having the confidence to show their identity and it is very possible that in the future anonymous social media accounts are used to blaspheme and spread hoaxes.

Generation Z teenagers often use anonymous accounts as an escape from the original account, anonymous accounts are used to reveal bad expressions that are impossible to appear on the user's real account. Harmaningsih et al., (2021) concluded in his research that the news about the covid-19 vaccine carried out by the Ministry of Health on its social media accounts caused the phenomenon of deindividuation for netizens. Almost all the news that is published always gets a lot of comments, both positive and negative or rude. Anonymous account users have a tendency to give negative comments with impolite or even rude words compared to netizens who use clear names.

In the perspective of postmodernism, this hyperreality condition makes the visible symbol or image sign, actually has no reference and power over the truth. However, this simulation creates an image, sign, and symbol which then becomes part of a virtual reality that seems close to the truth

On the other hand, anonymity can also be an important tool for critics (whistleblowers) in democracy (Zajác, 2013). Over time, these young anonymous identity users not only use their social media accounts as a means of showing themselves or their positive self-expression, but also as a means of conveying political ideas, spreading religious values, to news that cannot be communicated. accountable for the truth, and the worst possibility is used as a means to corner people who are not liked. Triputra & Rewindinar (2020) suggest though every social media user wants to look more special than others. Social media users also want to get positive perceptions and responses from others for the publication of something good through their social media by considering the limitations of social rules in using social media, so that in the end someone should be able to realize what can or cannot be shared with the public.

Use of anonymous accounts for self purification

In addition to expressing themselves, self-disclosure through social media can also be used for self-purification for Generation Z teenagers. A research result conducted by Nurlaila (2021) reveals that although users of the “Bagikata” application consulting service understand that the consultant who serves is not an expert. psychologist or counselor, but they still feel comfortable and believe that the consultant at “BagiKata” is also a credible person to provide consultation. Through the “BagiKata” application, the culture of honesty among young people is increasingly becoming a

trend. The younger generations feel comfortable telling their problems even if it is bad behavior that should be kept a secret. They are easier to express and express themselves because of the identity and privacy restrictions with the anonymous character provided by the application for its users.

Reality that is not the actual situation which is then imaged in the form of a reality that determines public awareness, this is what is called pseudo reality or hyperreality. Realities like this are created by the types of media that are used as a reference for society in general. With the media, the world of imagination is formed and presented by the simulator and the pack finally leads people to a false consciousness created by the simulator. This is what Baudrillard says in the simulacra room (Saumantri & Zikrillah, 2020).

Use of anonymous accounts to establish relationship on social media

In conducting interpersonal communication using anonymous accounts through social media, it is strongly influenced by openness and the degree of trust and the rules that are built apply differently in anonymous friendship relationships. It really depends on the motive underlying the friendship with the anonymous account.

In a study conducted by Lestari & Laturrahmi (2021) it was concluded that the relationship that was built through social media Twitter using anonymous accounts by teenagers could be defined as a friendship relationship because of the emotional support between the informant and his partner, the existence of the same interests and interests, and the existence of mutual interest. trust though to varying degrees between partners in a relationship. In addition, there are rules that support the dynamics of friendship with anonymous accounts. The rules that exist in friendship relationships by anonymous accounts are the rules not to talk about personal life and romance, the rules about what topics are allowed and not allowed to be discussed, the rules for maintaining information, the rules about proper exchange meaning, and rules regarding conflicts and their potential. The rule is to maintain the relationship.

The reality produced by this new technology has overcome the real reality and has even become a new reference model for society, especially the younger generation of social media users. Images are more convincing than facts and dreams are more believable than everyday reality. Baudrillard (in Hidayat, 2019) explain this is a world of hyperreality, a reality that is more real than real. In the world of hyperreality, the original objects which are the product of artificial images are realities without reference, but appear closer and real than the existence of our own neighbors.

Use of anonymous accounts for self legitimacy

Being anonymous can be chosen when someone wants to access social media. By using anonymous accounts on social media, for example on Instagram, we can enjoy something we like (guilty pleasure) without being noticed by others in the form of stalking (Rini, 2020). Through this behavior, a teenager will certainly be able to make self-disclosure and gain self-legitimacy, although its use needs to be done carefully and wisely.

With an anonymous account, teenagers can share their private messages as freely as possible. They are not afraid to say anything, because there is a guarantee that their real identity is safe, so it seems as if what has been disclosed is not their responsibility. On the other hand, if they display an identity, it will be difficult to achieve deeper discretion, and tend to be limited. There is a feeling of fear of what is being said, maybe they will never be able to convey it.

In the research conducted by Sipahutar, Calvin Moniaga & Ana Fitriana Poerana (2017) on the communication experience of anonymous account users on Twitter in the form of anonymous outpouring on the @18autobase account, it can be concluded that anonymous accounts who vent on @18autobase generally share sensitive stories or issues. This research finds that there are three main purposes for informants to share their stories on @18autobase. First, to get a solution to their problem, they want a response that can help their personal problems. Second, the motive is to obtain various quality points of view related to the problem. Third, to ensure yourself and eliminate negative thoughts and relieve feelings. Things they don't get in face-to-face friendships.

We can mean that communication through anonymous social media accounts keeps teenagers trapped in a simulacra game that is not related to external reality. This new reality or called hyperreality is filled with images or markers of an event and has replaced the real experience.

Use of anonymous accounts for social control

Based on the results of a study entitled "Digital Reputation" conducted by Kaspersky in November 2020, from 1,240 respondents, 49% of respondents are known to use anonymous accounts to be able to speak freely without affecting their reputation. Then another 48% of respondents answered that their anonymous social media accounts were intentionally used for fun or to pursue their secret interests so that their friends would not know. Then, as many as 30% of respondents said that using anonymous accounts to share information that is not too dangerous such as information about favorite artists, as well as search for their interests. Meanwhile, 22% of respondents answered that anonymous accounts were used for online stalking (*Digital Reputation Economy Report | Kaspersky Official Blog, 2020*). It can be seen from the results of a survey conducted by Kaspersky that 49% of respondents want freedom of speech without damaging their reputation, meaning that most anonymous account users are very concerned about their reputation.

This phenomenon in the study of postmodernism as an era of "information mode", means that the way of producing information in the terminology of Marxism is now no longer relevant. The current era is the "information age" or "post-industrial era" (Lubis, 2014).

Rini (2020) in her research concludes that there are differences in the original account and the second account, which is caused by the needs of each account. The second account, which is anonymous or disguised, becomes a personal need for its users. Unlike the original account, this anonymous account can sometimes be a place for the existence of its users. More than that, the main need for this anonymous account is as a form of escapism from the main account which is considered too crowded and often boring and also full of social pressure.

For some people, the anonymous account they use provides more protection and with that anonymity they don't feel threatened or discriminated against when they open up to others so that it can result in social control. But on the other hand, the presence of anonymity also has a negative motive, which reduces social morality. When in an anonymous account, everyone is free to do various things regardless of the effects that occur for good or bad. Simulacra has no reference to truth. In this space, it is no longer recognizable which are genuine and which are fake, which are production and which are reproductions, which are objects and which are subjects, or which are markers and which are signifieds. In the context of self-disclosure, it allows teenagers to explore various fragments of reality, both real and fictitious so that they are able to reproduce, manipulate and simulate existing boundaries according to their own will.

The impact of using anonymous accounts on social media for youth of Generation Z

The emergence of social media which is increasingly in demand by many people in the world is also able to trigger a shift in social values in society, especially teenagers. Social media has become part of the experience of growing up for teenagers (Briggs & Burke, 2006). Anonymity is a way for these generation Z teens to "hide" in protecting the boundaries of their privacy to be able to act freely in media. Fensi (2018) explain The birth of Law no. 11 of 2008 in Indonesia, related to information and Electronic Transactions, it became a momentum to regulate social media to be on par with other media. As we know, unlimited freedom does not occur in mainstream media, but in social media. So it is an obligation to constitutionally regulate the rights of citizens to obtain educational information.

The use of anonymous accounts on social media often brings impact and conflict when we communicate online. Floyd (in Nurbani, 2018) states that one of the reasons for the emergence of conflict through online media is because communication with online media has a disinhibition effect, meaning that it can remove boundaries, therefore it can invite others to say what they should not express when communicating face-to-face. advance.

Nurbani (2018) explains that the advantage of dealing with conflict in online media is that we will have the opportunity to think for a moment when the conflict heats up. In contrast to face-to-face conflicts, it is difficult to take a break because they are face-to-face. However, with online media it is also possible for conflicts to escalate if not handled properly, because online media makes it easier for us to share messages quickly.

Based on this phenomenon, the writer tries to describe the reality that is happening among the youth of Generation Z. That the youth of this generation really need the media for self-disclosure, although sometimes it brings positive and negative impacts. Generation Z, who has anonymous accounts on social media and actively uses these accounts, will of course feel the difference between self-disclosure through original social media accounts that will be different from revealing themselves through anonymous accounts. With an anonymous account, the user will use a new identity, therefore its use must be done wisely and not excessively to lead to negative actions.

The positive thing that we can take from this use is that anonymous accounts will help Generation Z to get a space to learn to express themselves in a social and social environment. In addition, it helps them to find all the information, find old friends and new friends they want. By actively using anonymous accounts, they will feel that they can express themselves and get new experiences.

In addition to having a positive impact, anonymity also has a negative impact such as anti-normative, anti-social behavior, and aggressive behavior such as cyberbullying (Christopherson, 2007). Anonymous social media accounts do have benefits, but they can also have a negative impact on Generation Z teens. It really depends on the individual user of the account, how competence in using social media will be a determining factor for what impact these teens get. Generation Z teenagers who overuse social media such as Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and others to surf for information and express themselves will have a bad influence. This excess will lead to addiction and difficulty controlling yourself. However, the negative impact of using anonymous social media accounts on the real life of Generation Z teenagers is the most dangerous and needs to be anticipated. In addition to disrupting physical health and learning concentration power at school, it will certainly have an impact on the ability to interact and get along, because it is too comfortable and too late to make self-disclosure using anonymous accounts on social media.

Generation Z teenagers have a different way of thinking from the previous generation. The development of technological advances and the internet shape the mindset of these teenagers. Therefore, Generation Z teenagers must receive the right education, so as not to get negative impacts due to technological advances and the development of the current era (Zega, 2021). The use of anonymous social media accounts in a wise and careful manner and respecting others produces a positive impact in the real life of Generation Z teenagers, teenagers will be more confident and better trained to express themselves in real life so as to gain self-existence in order to avoid hyperreality and simulacral traps due to the use of anonymous social media accounts.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the author concludes how self-disclosure by Generation Z teenagers through social media using anonymous accounts can occur. Generation Z who are still teenagers, sometimes find it more difficult to open up and express their heart about what they feel both about ideas, ideas, thoughts, tastes, and desires or their anxiety about the reality that exists in real life. This can happen due to a shift in behavior that occurs in these digital native generations. By using anonymous accounts on social media, they are easier to express and express themselves because of the ease and flexibility in communicating. The use of an anonymous account makes users feel safe, thus guaranteeing the protection of their identity and privacy.

Anonymity will have a positive and negative impact on Generation Z teenagers. The positive impact obtained will help Generation Z to get a learning space to express themselves in a social and friendly environment. It also helps them to find all the information. By actively using anonymous accounts, they will feel that they can express themselves and get new experiences.

Behind the convenience and security of using an anonymous account, there are still negative impacts and risks that are unpleasant or detrimental from anonymous behavior. There will be bad impacts if the use of this anonymous account is not used properly and wisely. Teenagers may also lose control of personal information that has been disclosed on social media, because since the information is publicly disclosed, anyone can access and use it. Vulnerability to biased information, cases of fraud, personal attacks for bullying, and sexual exploitation are risks that need to be considered by teenagers in establishing friendship networks and social relationships using anonymous accounts on social media.

In the end, both the positive and negative impacts of using anonymous social media accounts, in the view of postmodernism put forward the very and subjective truth. In the context of self-disclosure of adolescents, boundaries will be set by personal will, and the benefits of self-disclosure will also refer to individual satisfaction. Teenagers are forced to enter into hyperreality or simulacra conditions intended to deceive teens in a subtle way, namely deceiving and believing that the simulation is the real reality so that teenagers become dependent on the simulation and possessive.

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