

## **Leveraging Discord As A Communication Medium For Generation Z In Indonesia: A Study On The Future Of Media And Communication**

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### **Abstract**

Generation Z in Indonesia has increasingly embraced new digital platforms that offer more flexible, real-time, and community-oriented communication features. One platform that has shown rapid adoption among Gen Z is Discord, which has expanded beyond gaming circles into broader spaces, including study groups, creative communities, and social hangouts. Despite this growing trend, academic studies examining Discord's adoption process in the Indonesian context remain limited. This study aims to analyze how Discord is adopted by Indonesian Gen Z using Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The research explores the innovation attributes—relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability—that influence Gen Z's decision to use Discord as a primary communication medium. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method through utilizing semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. The findings are expected to explain why Discord is perceived as more efficient, organized, and socially engaging compared to mainstream platforms, as well as how opinion leaders, peer influence, and community dynamics accelerate its diffusion. This paper also discusses the implications of Discord's adoption pattern for the future of media and communication in Indonesia, particularly regarding emerging digital ecosystems preferred by younger users.

**Keywords:** *Discord, Generation Z, Digital Communication, Diffusion of Innovation, Media Adoption*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid development of digital communication technology has fundamentally changed the way individuals interact, build relationships, and participate in social life. Digital platforms are no longer limited to the mere exchange of information, but have evolved into interactive environments that support collaboration, identity formation, and community building. Several recent studies emphasize that digital media are now increasingly functioning as a social space, where users are actively involved in the communication process, rather than simply consuming information (IDN Research Institute, 2024). This transformation underscores the importance of examining not only the platforms used but also how and why they are adopted within specific social and cultural contexts.

This transformation is clearly visible in Generation Z, namely the group often referred to as digital natives because they have been exposed to the internet and mobile technology since early life. In Indonesia, Generation Z is one of the most active groups in terms of digital media use, with communication preferences that emphasize speed, flexibility, and interactivity. Empirical findings indicate that Generation Z users in Indonesia tend to prefer digital platforms that enable real-time interaction and foster a sense of community through online communities, compared to platforms that emphasize algorithm-based content distribution (IDN Research Institute, 2024). This preference indicates a shift in digital communication practices, where community-based platforms are increasingly playing a role in shaping how the younger generation connects, collaborates, and maintains social relationships.

In this context, Discord has emerged as a prominent communication platform among Generation Z in Indonesia. Initially, Discord was developed as a text and voice-based communication tool for gaming communities. However, over time, the platform has evolved beyond its original purpose and is now widely used for various purposes, such as study groups, creative collaboration, and various forms of community-based interaction. Several previous studies on virtual communities and Discord-based communication have shown that the structure of this platform's user-based approach supports organized interactions, sustained participation, and the formation of collective identities among its users (Jennifer et al., 2025; Eka et al., 2024). These characteristics distinguish Discord from mainstream social media platforms, which generally rely on algorithmic timelines and public visibility.

Despite Discord's growing popularity, academic research specifically examining Discord as a communication medium in the Indonesian context remains limited. Studies on digital media adoption in Indonesia generally focus on mainstream platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp, while community-based platforms like Discord have received relatively little academic attention. Furthermore, research systematically applying theoretical frameworks to explain Discord's adoption process is also rare. This gap highlights the need for studies that more deeply analyze how Discord is adopted by Generation Z and the factors influencing its acceptance as a primary communication medium within digital communities.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the adoption of Discord among Generation Z in Indonesia by using the Diffusion of Innovation Theory put forward by Everett Rogers. By examining the attributes of innovation, which include relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability study seeks to explain the factors influencing Discord adoption and the role of social systems in accelerating its diffusion. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute to the discourse on the future of media and communication in Indonesia by highlighting the growing importance of community-based digital platforms, which are preferred by the younger generation.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

This research employs Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory proposed by Everett Rogers as the primary theoretical framework to explain the adoption of Discord as a communication medium among Generation Z in Indonesia. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory conceptualizes diffusion as a process by which an innovation is communicated over time among members of a social system (Rogers, 1995). In this framework, adoption is not viewed as an isolated individual decision, but rather as a socially embedded process influenced by communication channels, interpersonal networks, and shared norms.

Rogers (1995) argued that individuals adopt an innovation based on their perceptions of the innovation, not on its objective characteristics. This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of digital communication platforms, where users' subjective experiences, such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, and social value, play a central role in shaping adoption decisions. Diffusion of Innovation Theory emphasizes that the success of an innovation depends on the extent to which it aligns with user needs and how it is communicated within a given social system.

In the context of technology and digital media, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory has been widely applied to explain the adoption of new platforms, applications, and communication tools. Sahin (2006) notes that the Diffusion of Innovations Theory facilitates analysis of technology adoption because it accounts for both individual perceptions and broader social influences. Rather than focusing solely on technical features, the theory emphasizes the role of communication processes, opinion leaders, and the influence of peers in accelerating or inhibiting the process of innovation diffusion.

### **Innovation Attributes in the Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

The central component in the Diffusion of Innovation Theory is the concept of innovation attributes. Five main attributes have been identified that significantly influence an individual's decision to adopt an innovation, namely: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. These attributes provide an analytical framework for understanding why some innovations are adopted more quickly than others.

Relative advantage refers to the extent to which an innovation is perceived as superior to the idea or technology it replaces. In the context of digital communications, relative advantage often relates to the innovation's efficiency, convenience, and ability to meet communication needs more effectively. Innovations perceived as offering clear benefits over existing platforms tend to be more readily adopted (Rogers, 1995).

Compatibility refers to the degree to which an innovation fits the values, experiences, and needs of potential users. Innovations that can be seamlessly integrated into users' daily routines and communication habits tend to experience faster diffusion. In studies of digital media adoption, compatibility is particularly important for young users, as their media choices are closely linked to the lifestyles and culture of their peers (Idris Kusumanegara et al., 2022).

Complexity describes the extent to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand or use. Innovations perceived as too complex are likely to face resistance, especially in the early stages of adoption. However, Rogers noted that perceived complexity can decrease over time as users gain experience and receive guidance from peers. This dynamic is particularly relevant for digital platforms that offer advanced features but rely on social learning for user adaptation.

Trialability refers to the extent to which an innovation can be tested on a limited scale before being fully adopted. Innovations that allow users to try features without significant risk tend to be more easily adopted. In a digital environment, trialability is facilitated through free access, low barriers to entry, and the ability to easily stop using the platform if it does not meet expectations (Sahin, 2006).

Observability refers to the extent to which the results of using an innovation can be observed by others. When users can easily see how their peers use and benefit from an innovation, the likelihood of adoption increases. Observability has a close relationship with social influence and the role of opinion leaders in a social system (Rogers, 1995). Overall, these five attributes provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing adoption decisions and diffusion patterns, particularly in the context of digital communication, where social interactions play a crucial role.

### **Diffusion of Innovation in Digital Communication and Youth Context**

In the contemporary digital communication environment, the diffusion process is heavily influenced by online communities and peer networks. Studies of digital societies show that technology adoption among young users is rarely driven by formal communication channels; instead, adoption is more influenced by interpersonal interactions, peer recommendations, and shared community experiences (Correa, 2015). For Generation Z, platforms are often adopted collectively, rather than individually, reinforcing the importance of social systems in the diffusion process.

Research on digital communities in Indonesia also highlights the role of peer groups and online communities in shaping media adoption. Idris Kusumanegara et al. (2022) argue that technology diffusion in digital communities is more rapid when platforms facilitate interaction, collaboration, and collective identity formation. These findings suggest that the Diffusion of Innovation Theory is well-suited to analyzing community-based platforms that emphasize active participation rather than passive consumption.

In the context of contemporary digital communication, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory remains relevant because it emphasizes the roles of communication channels and social systems rather than technological determinism. Although digital platforms continue to evolve rapidly, the process of evaluating, adopting, and normalizing new technologies still relies heavily on interpersonal communication and co-constructed social meanings. This perspective is critical in analyzing community-based platforms, where adoption is influenced less by mass media exposure than by peer interactions and collective practices within digital communities. For Generation Z, whose communication behavior is deeply embedded in online social networks, the diffusion of innovation occurs through ongoing interaction, observation, and participation, rather than through formal persuasion mechanisms.

Furthermore, applying the Diffusion of Innovation Theory in a digital context highlights the evolving role of opinion leaders in online environments. Unlike traditional diffusion processes that often involve formal authority figures, digital communities allow influence to emerge organically through active participation and credibility within the group. On platforms like Discord, users who manage servers, moderate discussions, or provide technical guidance often serve as opinion leaders in formal factors that influence adoption decisions. This dynamic reaffirms the importance of social systems in the diffusion process. It supports the use of Diffusion of Innovations Theory as a framework for analyzing platform adoption among digitally connected young people.

Within this framework, Discord can be conceptualized as a digital innovation whose adoption is driven by both functional and social considerations simultaneously. Its structure is based on Discord's server features, which support community building and ongoing interactions, thus aligning with Generation Z's communication preferences. Previous research on Discord-based communities has shown that users perceive the platform as a space for an organized communication medium (Teresa & Priliantari, 2025; Yurianto & Febriana, 2024).

By applying the Diffusion of Innovation Theory to Discord adoption among Generation Z in Indonesia, this study seeks to explain not only individual adoption decisions but also broader diffusion processes within digital communities. This theoretical framework provides a foundation for analyzing how innovation attributes and social dynamics interact to shape future media and communication practices.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Approach and Design**

This research employs a descriptive qualitative study to examine how Discord is adopted as a communication medium among Generation Z in Indonesia. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on exploring users' experiences, perceptions, and subjective meanings as they adopt digital platforms. Through this approach, the research can delve deeply into the dynamics of Discord use within community-based communication, which quantitative methods cannot fully explain.

A descriptive research design was used to map the Discord adoption process, with Diffusion of Innovation Theory as the primary analytical framework. Five attributes of innovation—*relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability*—are used to examine how Discord is perceived and used by Generation Z. This design allows researchers to systematically link empirical findings to theoretical concepts without ignoring the social and cultural context of platform use.

## **Research Subjects**

The subject of this research is five Generation Z individuals who actively use Discord in their daily communication. Participant selection employed purposive sampling, with participants selected based on the suitability of their characteristics to the research objectives. Selection criteria included individuals within the Generation Z age range who reside in Indonesia and have regular experience using Discord for communication outside gaming, such as study group discussions, community interactions, and coordinating collaborative activities.

The relatively small number of participants is consistent with the characteristics of qualitative research, which emphasizes depth of data rather than the number of respondents. In the data collection process, interviews with five participants showed a recurring pattern of experiences and themes, so the data was considered to have reached a saturation point (data saturation). In addition, participants had diverse backgrounds, including students, recent graduates, and young professionals, with an age range of 22 to 27 years. The diverse backgrounds and contexts of Discord use—whether for academic, professional, or social community activities—provide a rich perspective on the platform’s adoption among Indonesian Generation Z.

## **Data Collection Techniques**

Data are collected through semi-structured online interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they provided researchers with the flexibility to explore participants’ experiences in depth while maintaining consistency in discussions on key themes relevant to the Diffusion of Innovation Theory framework. Interview questions were designed to explore participants’ initial experiences using Discord, reasons for adoption, the role of the social environment in the adoption process, and their views on Discord compared to other digital communication platforms.

All interviews were conducted with the participants’ consent and recorded for transcription and data analysis. The use of online-interviews was deemed appropriate for the research context because the topics studied directly relate to digital communication practices that have become integral to participants’ daily lives. Participants’ durations of Discord use ranged from a few months to over a year, allowing them to reflect on their adoption experiences from the initial stages to ongoing use.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process began with a thorough reading of all interview transcripts to gain an initial understanding of the participants' experiences. Next, the researchers coded the data to identify key emerging themes.

These themes were then grouped and analyzed based on the five attributes of innovation in the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The analysis process was iterative, with researchers repeatedly reviewing the data and resulting interpretations to ensure alignment between the empirical findings and the theoretical framework. This approach allowed for reflective analysis and maintained the link between field data and theoretical concepts.

### **Data Validity and Research Ethics**

To ensure data validity, this study relied on the consistency of findings across interviews and on the use of direct quotations in the results and discussion sections. Direct quotations were used to strengthen interpretations and increase the transparency of the analysis. Furthermore, the context in which participants used Discord was carefully recorded to avoid overgeneralization.

From a research ethics perspective, all participants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives and their rights as respondents before the interviews. Participants' identities were anonymized using codes (e.g., P1, P2) to maintain confidentiality and privacy. The data obtained was used solely for academic purposes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents and discusses the study's findings from semi-structured interviews with Generation Z users in Indonesia. The analysis is structured around the five innovation attributes of Diffusion of Innovation Theory: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. By integrating empirical evidence with theoretical perspectives and previous studies, this section explains how Discord is adopted as a communication medium and how its diffusion is shaped within digital communities.

## Relative Advantage

The findings indicate that relative advantage is one of the most influential factors driving Discord adoption among Generation Z in Indonesia. Participants consistently described Discord as more efficient and functional than mainstream communication platforms, including WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram. Discord's ability to integrate text-based channels, voice communication, file sharing, and real-time interaction within a single server environment was perceived as a significant advantage.

To further support this finding, participants' experiences illustrate how Discord's structural features translate into practical communication benefits. One participant noted that Discord allows discussions to remain focused because conversations are separated into specific channels, stating, *"On Discord, discussions don't overlap. Each topic has its own place, so it's easier to follow"* (P3). Another participant similarly emphasized that Discord feels more organized compared to mainstream messaging platforms, explaining that *"group communication is clearer because everything is already categorized"* (P1). These accounts reinforce the argument that Discord's perceived relative advantage lies not only in its technical features but also in how those features support efficient and purposeful group communication.

Several participants emphasized that Discord enables them to organize conversations by topic or activity, thereby reducing communication clutter and improving coordination. One participant explained that Discord *"feels more structured and organized, especially for group discussions and projects,"* highlighting how channel-based communication supports focused interaction. This perception aligns with Rogers' (1995) argument that innovations offering clear functional benefits are more likely to be adopted.

In addition to functional efficiency, the perceived relative advantage of Discord is closely linked to users' experience of control and intentionality in communication. Participants emphasized that Discord allows them to engage in conversations with clear purposes, such as project coordination or community discussions, without the distractions commonly found on mainstream social media platforms. This sense of control enhances users' perception that Discord is not merely another messaging application, but a communication space designed to support goal-oriented interaction.

This finding reinforces Rogers' (1995) argument that relative advantage is shaped by users' subjective evaluations rather than objective technological features. In the case of Discord, relative advantage arises from the combination of its structural design and the social practices that develop within the platform. For Generation Z users, the ability to manage communication flows and maintain focus within community spaces contributes significantly to Discord's perceived superiority over other platforms.

Beyond efficiency, Discord's perceived relative advantage lies in its capacity to support sustained communication within structured communities. Participants frequently described Discord as *"organized"* and *"purpose-driven,"* suggesting that its communicative value extends beyond immediate functionality. This indicates that relative advantage is determined not solely by technical features but also by the platform's ability to facilitate meaningful interaction and collective engagement over time.

Moreover, Discord's relative advantage is closely associated with its role as a community-based platform. Unlike mainstream social media platforms that prioritize visibility and algorithm-driven engagement, Discord is perceived as a space for intentional and goal-oriented communication. This finding is consistent with studies on virtual communities, which argue that platforms enabling sustained interaction and collective identity are perceived as more meaningful communication spaces (Jennifer et al., 2025; Yurianto & Febriana, 2024).

### **Compatibility**

Compatibility emerged as another critical factor influencing Discord adoption. Participants reported that Discord aligns well with their daily communication habits, digital lifestyles, and social needs. As members of Generation Z, participants are accustomed to multitasking, constant connectivity, and participating in multiple online communities simultaneously. Discord's flexible structure allows users to engage in various activities—such as studying, gaming, and socializing—within a single platform.

Participants also highlighted that Discord matches their preference for semi-private digital spaces. Unlike public-facing social media platforms, Discord servers provide controlled environments in which users primarily interact with familiar community members. This pattern reflects broader trends in Generation Z's media behavior in Indonesia, where young users increasingly seek platforms that foster intimacy, a sense of belonging, and shared interests (IDN Research Institute, 2024).

From a Diffusion of Innovation perspective, high compatibility reduces resistance to adoption by minimizing disruption to existing practices (Rogers, 1995). The findings support previous research indicating that compatibility plays a central role in digital platform adoption among young users, particularly when platforms align with peer culture and community norms (Kusumanegara et al., 2022).

The high level of compatibility observed in this study also reflects Generation Z's broader orientation toward selective and context-specific communication. Rather than relying on a single platform for all interactions, participants tended to compartmentalize their communication across platforms by purpose and audience. Discord fits this pattern by enabling users to maintain multiple servers for different aspects of their lives, such as academic collaboration, creative communities, or leisure activities.

This selective use of platforms suggests that compatibility extends beyond technical usability to include identity management. For Generation Z, Discord functions as a space where communication norms are collectively negotiated and aligned with shared interests. Such alignment strengthens users' emotional attachment to the platform and supports sustained adoption over time, consistent with prior studies on youth digital behavior (IDN Research Institute, 2024; Kusumanegara et al., 2022).

Additionally, the high level of compatibility identified in this study reflects broader cultural shifts in the communication preferences of Generation Z. As digital natives, Generation Z users increasingly seek platforms that allow them to manage

multiple identities across different communities. Discord's server-based architecture enables users to participate in diverse interest-based groups without collapsing multiple social contexts into a single public profile. This flexibility reinforces Discord's compatibility with the values and everyday communication practices of Generation Z.

## **Complexity**

Although Discord was generally perceived positively, participants acknowledged initial challenges related to complexity, particularly during the early stages of use. Several participants described Discord as "confusing at first" due to its interface, server structure, and wide range of features. However, this perceived complexity did not impede adoption; rather, it gradually diminished as users became more familiar with the platform.

Although Discord was initially perceived as complex, participants described how this difficulty diminished through peer support and repeated use. One participant recalled, *"At first I was confused because there were many features, but after my friends showed me how to use it, it became much easier"* (P4). This statement illustrates how perceived complexity is mitigated through social learning, supporting the view that technological challenges are often overcome within community-based environments.

Participants reported that learning how to use Discord often occurred through peer guidance rather than formal instruction. Friends, community members, or server administrators played a key role in explaining features and usage norms. This process illustrates Rogers' (1995) argument that perceived complexity can be mitigated through social learning and interpersonal communication.

The findings suggest that complexity does not function as a significant barrier when adequate social support is present. This observation aligns with studies on technology adoption in digital communities, which emphasize the role of peer interaction in facilitating learning and adaptation (Sahin, 2006). For Generation Z users, collective learning within online communities offsets the initial complexity of advanced digital platforms.

## **Trialability**

Trialability was identified as an essential factor encouraging Discord adoption. Participants highlighted that Discord is easy to try without significant commitment or risk. The platform allows users to join servers via invitation links, explore features freely, and disengage if the platform does not meet their needs. This low entry barrier was perceived as particularly appealing to Generation Z users, who tend to experiment with multiple digital platforms.

Participants also highlighted that their initial engagement with Discord involved minimal risk and commitment. One participant described their early experience by stating, *"I joined a server just to try it out. I didn't plan to stay, but after using it for a while, I found it useful"* (P5). This account demonstrates how trialability allows users to experiment with the platform before fully adopting it, thereby reducing uncertainty during the adoption process.

Several participants reported that their initial exposure to Discord involved casual experimentation, such as joining a friend's server or observing interactions before becoming active contributors. This trial phase enabled users to assess the platform's usefulness and compatibility with their communication needs. According to Rogers (1995), innovations that allow experimentation are more likely to be adopted because they reduce uncertainty.

These findings are consistent with research on virtual learning communities and digital platforms, which suggests that trialability enhances user confidence and accelerates adoption processes (Xie, 2022). In the case of Discord, trialability functions as a gateway to deeper engagement within digital communities.

### **Observability**

Observability plays a significant role in the diffusion of Discord among Generation Z in Indonesia. Participants frequently reported learning about Discord through friends, peers, or online communities. Observing others actively using Discord for communication, collaboration, or social interaction motivated participants to adopt the platform themselves.

Observability was further reflected in how participants encountered Discord through their social networks. One participant explained that adoption occurred almost naturally because peers had already migrated to the platform, stating, *"Everyone in my community was already using Discord, so I just followed"* (P1). This example underscores the role of peer influence and shared practices in accelerating the diffusion of Discord within Generation Z communities.

The visibility of Discord usage within peer networks reinforces its legitimacy as a communication medium. Participants described situations where Discord became the default platform within a community, making adoption almost inevitable. This pattern reflects Rogers' (1995) emphasis on the influence of opinion leaders and social systems in shaping diffusion processes.

Previous studies on youth and technology adoption support this finding, indicating that peer influence and social proof are central drivers of adoption among young users (Correa, 2015; Amali & Pudrianisa, 2025). In digital communities, observability extends beyond direct observation to include shared experiences and collective endorsement, further accelerating diffusion.

### **Implications for the Future of Media and Communication**

The findings of this study suggest that Discord represents a broader shift in digital communication practices toward community-driven media ecosystems. Unlike mainstream platforms that rely heavily on algorithmic content distribution, Discord prioritizes interaction, organization, and collective participation. This shift aligns with emerging preferences among Generation Z for platforms that support meaningful

communication and sustained community engagement.

From a media studies perspective, the adoption of Discord highlights changing notions of media consumption and participation. Communication is no longer centered on content visibility but on interaction quality and social connection. These findings contribute to discussions on the future of media and communication, particularly in Indonesia, where young users play a significant role in shaping digital trends.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings suggest that future media platforms increasingly prioritize community-centered architectures over mass-oriented communication models. While mainstream social media platforms emphasize visibility and reach, platforms like Discord demonstrate that users—particularly younger generations—value structured interaction and social cohesion. This shift highlights the need for media scholars to reconsider traditional assumptions about audience engagement and platform success.

In relation to the Diffusion of Innovation theory, this study indicates that innovation diffusion in digital communication contexts is deeply embedded in social systems and collective practices. The adoption of Discord illustrates how innovation attributes interact with community dynamics, reinforcing Rogers' (1995) emphasis on the social nature of diffusion. Thus, the future of media and communication is likely to be shaped not only by technological advancement but also by how platforms facilitate sustainable social interaction.

### **Complementary Discussion: Community Dynamics and Perceived Risk**

Beyond functional attributes, Discord's adoption among Generation Z is also shaped by broader community dynamics and users' perceptions of risk. Several participants indicated that Discord feels "safer" and more controlled compared to mainstream social media platforms. This perception is closely related to Discord's semi-private server structure, where access is limited to invited members and interactions are governed by community norms.

This finding aligns with previous studies on virtual community adoption, which suggest that lower perceived risk and higher trust within digital environments positively influence users' willingness to adopt and remain active on a platform (Dao, 2022). In contrast to open social media platforms, community-based systems allow users to control visibility and participation, reducing concerns about privacy and unwanted exposure.

Participants also associated Discord with a greater sense of control and safety compared to public social media platforms. One participant expressed this by stating, "*I feel more comfortable sharing my opinions on Discord because it's not open to everyone*" (P4). This perception of safety reflects how semi-private community structures reduce perceived risk and encourage sustained participation, particularly among Generation Z users who are cautious about public self-disclosure.

Research on virtual learning communities also highlights the role of perceived risk in technology adoption. Users are more likely to adopt platforms that allow gradual engagement and experimentation without high social or psychological costs (Xie, 2022). In the case of Discord, trialability and observability operate alongside low perceived

risk, enabling users to explore the platform before committing to long-term participation.

Furthermore, Generation Z's preference for semi-private communication spaces is closely linked to patterns of self-disclosure. Studies on Generation Z's social media behavior in Indonesia indicate that young users tend to be selective in sharing personal information and prefer platforms that offer greater control over audience boundaries (Purnama Sari et al., 2023). This tendency helps explain why Discord is perceived as compatible with Generation Z's communication values.

Community sustainability also emerged as an implicit theme in participants' accounts. Beyond initial adoption, continued use of Discord was influenced by how communities managed participation, conflict, and member engagement. Participants expressed greater commitment to servers that maintained clear guidelines and active moderation, suggesting that long-term adoption depends on effective community governance.

This finding supports existing research on digital communities, which emphasizes that technological adoption is closely tied to social regulation and trust-building mechanisms (Dao, 2022). In Discord-based communities, moderation practices help mitigate perceived risks and reinforce users' sense of belonging, thereby contributing to platform sustainability.

Taken together, these findings reinforce the argument that Discord's adoption cannot be explained solely through technical features. Instead, its diffusion is driven by a combination of innovation attributes, social influence, community sustainability, and perceived safety. This perspective supports the Diffusion of Innovation theory's emphasis on social systems and communication processes in shaping adoption outcomes (Rogers, 1995).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined the adoption of Discord as a communication medium among Generation Z in Indonesia by applying Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and semi-structured interviews, the research explored how innovation attributes and social dynamics shape Gen Z's decision to adopt Discord beyond its original association with gaming.

The findings indicate that Discord is adopted not merely because of its technical features, but due to how those features are experienced within community-based communication contexts. Relative advantage emerged through Discord's ability to support organized, focused, and purpose-driven interaction. Compatibility was reflected in the platform's alignment with Generation Z's communication preferences, particularly their tendency to engage in selective, interest-based, and semi-private digital spaces. Although initial complexity was acknowledged, it did not function as a significant barrier, as users were able to overcome it through peer support and social learning. Trialability and observability further accelerated adoption by allowing users to experiment with the platform and observe its use within their social networks.

Beyond the core innovation attributes, this study highlights the importance of community dynamics and perceived risk in shaping sustained adoption. Discord's server-based structure enables users to participate in controlled environments where communication norms are collectively negotiated. This structure contributes to a sense of safety and trust, which is particularly important for Generation Z users who are cautious about public self-disclosure. As a result, Discord is perceived not only as a functional communication tool but also as a socially supportive space that encourages continued participation.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reaffirm the relevance of the Diffusion of Innovation theory in explaining the adoption of digital communication platforms. However, this study also suggests that, in the context of community-driven platforms, innovation attributes interact closely with social systems, peer influence, and governance practices. This interaction enriches the application of Diffusion of Innovation theory by demonstrating that adoption in digital environments is not solely a technological process, but a socially embedded one.

In terms of media and communication studies, the adoption of Discord reflects a broader shift toward platforms that prioritize interaction quality and community engagement over visibility and mass reach. For Generation Z in Indonesia, communication platforms are increasingly evaluated on their ability to support meaningful interaction within trusted communities. This shift has implications for media practitioners, educators, and policymakers seeking to understand and engage younger audiences within the evolving digital landscape.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The findings are based on a qualitative sample within a specific national context, which limits broader generalization. Future research could employ mixed-methods approaches or cross-cultural comparisons further to examine the adoption of Discord and similar community-based platforms. Longitudinal studies may also provide deeper insight into how adoption patterns evolve alongside changes in digital communication ecosystems.

Overall, this study concludes that Discord's adoption among Generation Z in Indonesia represents a meaningful transformation in digital communication practices. By emphasizing structure, community, and controlled interaction, Discord illustrates how emerging platforms can reshape the ways young users connect, collaborate, and build digital communities. Understanding these shifts is essential for anticipating the future direction of media and communication in increasingly networked societies.

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