

From Intimacy to Currency: Self-Disclosure of Jak FM's *Sarapan Seru* Radio Presenters as a Business Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Amid the dominance of digital media, radio faces sustained pressure to retain audiences and demonstrate business relevance. One distinctive asset is the on-air presenter's capacity to build emotional closeness with listeners. This qualitative case study examines presenter self-disclosure as a communication strategy that converts into relationship currency for the industry. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with two main presenters of the morning prime-time program *Sarapan Seru* on Jak FM Jakarta and analyzed thematically using a framework informed by Social Penetration, Parasocial Interaction, and Uses & Gratifications perspectives. Findings show that self-disclosure operates along two dimensions, breadth (topic variety) and depth (calibrated personal vulnerability), that jointly signal authenticity, catalyze parasocial companionship, and translate into observable participation (call-ins, direct messages/WhatsApp, voice notes, and other user-generated content). Building on these insights, the article proposes a conceptual pathway in which disclosure-driven intimacy functions as "relationship currency" that can be translated into sponsor-facing value propositions such as perceived brand-audience fit and the credibility of integrated host-read messages. The study contributes to radio and audio-media scholarship by linking relational communication mechanisms to media-economics logics, while acknowledging that commercial outcomes are inferred from qualitative insight rather than empirically measured.

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, media consumption has been reshaped by internet-based technologies that emphasize speed, interactivity, and constant accessibility. As a result, audiences are increasingly moving away from linear broadcast channels toward digital and mobile platforms. Although a portion of young people still listen to the radio, it is no longer the primary gateway to information and entertainment. Listening practices are now split between analogue and digital devices, accounting for approximately 52% and 48%, respectively (Lubis, 2024). For legacy media such as radio, the main challenge is no longer limited to survival, but rather to redefining its value in an environment where audience attention is fragmented and monetization depends more on engagement quality than on broad reach. In this context, digital audio platforms such as Spotify and YouTube Music

have become dominant among millennials and Gen Z, offering on-demand access and fostering higher engagement than traditional radio formats (Mujahid & Mitra, 2025).

One distinctive asset that radio still possesses is the on-air presenter. Presenters are not merely script readers; they are recognizable voices who shape station identity and cultivate intimacy with listeners. Motivations reported by young audiences reinforce this role: radio serves to alleviate boredom (73.4%) and, for a substantial minority (21.2%), to follow favored presenters or artists; 48.5% report listening most often in vehicles or during commutes (Sugiarti, 2024). These figures frame radio as both a travel companion and a low-effort leisure activity, roles that depend heavily on presenters' social presence.

Concurrently, indicators of psychosocial strain in urban populations heighten the salience of companionship media. A Health Collaborative Center (HCC) survey of 1,299 respondents in Greater Jakarta found that nearly half (44% moderate; 6% severe) reported experiencing loneliness, with a higher prevalence among the productive-age groups (Jati, 2023). Globally, the WHO Commission on Social Connection estimates that one in six people experience loneliness and links it to more than 871,000 deaths annually (World Health Organization, 2025). Against this backdrop, the radio's consistent and familiar human voice can anchor a sense of connection during solitary, routine activities such as commuting. The case is particularly pronounced in Jakarta, where long travel times and congestion normalize radio listening as a background social presence.

Within this context, Jak FM stands out as a modern urban station targeting millennials and young adults. Its prime-time morning program, *Sarapan Seru Duo Bahlul* (launched January 2024; 06:00–10:00 AM), blends humor, bite-sized information, interactivity, and the presenters' personal narratives (Mahaka Radio Integra, 2024). Segments range from light pranks and listener games to curated music. Yet, the unifying thread is a personal speaking style and calibrated self-disclosure that make the experience feel conversational rather than broadcast. For an urban audience navigating busy roads and atomized routines, these features position radio less as a fast news feed than as a relationship medium.

Three theoretical lenses frame the scholarship underpinning this study. Social Penetration Theory (SPT) conceptualizes self-disclosure as unfolding along two interrelated dimensions—breadth (the variety of topics shared) and depth (the degree of personal vulnerability)—which together shape the pace and trajectory of relational development (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Parasocial Interaction (PSI) explains how mediated personalities can evoke feelings of intimacy and companionship despite the one-to-many nature of mass communication (Horton & Wohl, 2016). Finally, Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory situates radio use within audience motives, emphasizing companionship during commutes or solitary moments and highlighting listeners' active selection of content that aligns with personal needs and gratifications (Rubin, 2009).

Self-disclosure is an interpersonal process in which individuals voluntarily share personal information, thoughts, feelings, experiences, or opinions that are previously unknown to the interlocutor. Altman and Taylor identify self-disclosure as a cornerstone of relational development: as the amount and intimacy of disclosed information increase, relationships tend to become closer and more personal, a trajectory often likened to peeling an onion from surface layers toward a person's core (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Social Penetration Theory (SPT) distinguishes two principal dimensions: breadth (the range of topics) and depth (the intimacy of information). Breadth captures how many life domains are opened, family, work, leisure, and values, while depth indexes the degree of candor and sensitivity. Shallow disclosures are general and lightweight; deeper disclosures may touch identity, convictions, trauma, or aspirations (Poh Low et al., 2022).

In broadcast practice, breadth broadens the entry points for heterogeneous audiences to find something relatable, while calibrated depth signals authenticity and trustworthiness. Social Penetration Theory clarifies why this works: breadth expands the topical "doors," enabling connections across disparate life domains, whereas depth indexes vulnerability and candor, accelerating perceived closeness. In audio-first settings, authenticity is also cued paralinguistically, through the ordinariness of talk, spontaneity, small confessions, and a consistent vocal persona, which together reinforce an aural sense of presence (Maloney

Yorganci & McMurtry, 2024). When presenters span multiple topical domains, they diversify content and broaden opportunities for emotional resonance; when they disclose in greater depth within professional boundaries, they model sincerity and vulnerability, making listeners feel personally addressed rather than mass-addressed (Schlutz & Hedder, 2021).

Crucially, this felt sincerity does not end at perception, but activates a well-documented mechanism of reciprocity. Experimental evidence shows that self-disclosure tends to elicit reciprocal disclosure and liking, turning an initially one-way interaction into a social exchange (Sprecher et al., 2013). Complementing this, experimental work on social media finds that repeated exposure to a communicator's disclosures can increase familiarity and perceived closeness when the disclosures are judged appropriate; disclosure intimacy also depends on perceived appropriateness, while narrativity fosters closeness to the extent that audiences experience the stories as entertaining (Lin & Utz, 2017). In practice, the presenter's calibrated depth serves as a social invitation. It legitimizes audience stories and questions, which surface through call-ins, direct messages/WhatsApp, voice notes, and other user-generated responses. Reciprocity, therefore, becomes the pathway by which monologic transmission converts into dialogic participation and, ultimately, community, especially when disclosure is timed and framed within norms that sustain attraction rather than discomfort.

Parasocial interaction (PSI) captures the asymmetrical yet meaningful bonds audiences form with media figures: listeners feel they "know" and are "known by" the persona despite one-to-many contact (Horton & Wohl, 2016). In audio media, continuity of voice, habitual time slots, and a consistent speaking style cultivate a sense of presence, as if the presenter were greeting listeners personally each day. Empirical work shows that presenter self-disclosure amplifies PSI while enhancing source credibility (Savage & Spence, 2014). When disclosure is perceived as authentic, it correlates with greater trust and responsiveness (Spence et al., 2020). However, audience reactions are not uniform. Disclosures that breach privacy norms, conflict with audience values, or appear contrived can elicit reactance or moral judgment (Rains & Brunner, 2018). In short, authenticity, relevance, and boundary-respect are prerequisites for disclosure to strengthen, rather than damage, perceived closeness.

Operationally, PSI becomes evident in behavioral cues: higher call-in rates, direct messages/voice notes, on-air callbacks to listener stories, and sustained participation in presenter-anchored communities. These cues suggest that listeners are not only consuming content but also relating to a persona, projecting expectations of continuity, reliability, and care. Presenters can scaffold PSI by adopting conversational forms (e.g., second-person address, "you and I" framing), referencing shared routines (e.g., the morning commute, school drop-off), and using micro-rituals (e.g., signature greetings, recurring segments) that stabilize the relationship over time.

The Uses & Gratifications (U&G) framework conceptualizes audiences as active agents who select media to satisfy specific motives, information, entertainment, identity, social integration, and companionship (Blumler & Katz, 1974). In audio contexts, companionship denotes the need for a symbolic friend that accompanies routine activities (e.g., driving, working, being alone). Classic U&G research finds that people use radio/television to alleviate loneliness, establish habits, and foster togetherness (Rubin, 2009). For radio specifically, companionship is intensified by live, recurring, and intimate formats, building stable familiarity with on-air personalities.

Building on these foundations, radio and audio studies show that presenter self-disclosure can strengthen parasocial bonds and perceived credibility (Savage & Spence, 2014) and that authenticity cues sustain trust (Spence et al., 2020). In adjacent literature, research on influencers and social media indicates that controlled self-disclosure improves credibility and loyalty (Azhar et al., 2024). However, effects are not uniformly positive; self-disclosure can backfire if perceived as inauthentic, boundary-violating, or strategically manipulative (Rains & Brunner, 2018).

Despite these insights, two limitations are salient. First, prior work on radio presenters frequently treats self-disclosure as a communication tactic without tracing how it becomes

a business lever: i.e., how intimacy and companionship translate into marketable value propositions such as brand–audience fit, ad-lib effectiveness, off-air activations, community growth, or pricing power for thematic slots. Studies in Indonesian contexts still commonly separate on-air openness from commercial outcomes. Second, while social media scholarship richly documents disclosure–engagement mechanisms, fewer studies examine hybrid pathways in commuter-city radio where on-air intimacy triggers cross-channel participation (e.g., WhatsApp groups, voice notes, and offline events), thereby raising psychological switching costs and deepening loyalty. Delport and Mulder show that radio personalities deliberately blend professional and private roles, move between “front stage” and “back stage,” and sustain cross-media interaction by connecting platforms and extending what is mentioned on air into social media and creating a continuous communication flow beyond the broadcast moment (Mardi & Dalme, 2023).

Prior research also shows that mediated self-disclosure can increase perceived authenticity, closeness, and engagement, yet its outcomes are not uniformly positive and may vary across audience segments and contexts. Recent experimental evidence helps clarify *why* mediated self-disclosure can be persuasive: disclosure increases perceived authenticity and interpersonal liking, which, in turn, raise audiences’ acceptance of the communicator’s message (Nah, 2022). This mechanism offers a parsimonious bridge between disclosure tactics and downstream relational outcomes. As a result, a key gap remains in linking (1) disclosure tactics and editorial guardrails, (2) parasocial companionship and participation behaviors, and (3) business-facing articulation (e.g., sponsor fit, community leverage, pricing power). This study addresses those gaps through a qualitative case analysis of Jak FM’s *Sarapan Seru*, based on in-depth interviews with its two main presenters and thematic analysis grounded in SPT, PSI, and U&G.

In short, there is an opening to connect micro-level communication practices (breadth–depth tactics, day-parting, boundary rules) with meso-level audience behaviors (participation, reciprocity, community formation) and macro-level commercial outcomes (fit, retention, pricing). By connecting these levels, radio is repositioned not merely as a cultural artifact but as a viable business sustained through relationship assets. The study offers three key contributions.

First, a mechanism model linking self-disclosure to business value. The study articulates a four-stage pathway: (a) breadth–depth disclosure tactics, (b) intimacy/PSI and companionship, (c) engagement and loyalty, (d) brand–audience fit and commercial leverage. Breadth opens multiple topical “doors” that resonate with heterogeneous commuters; calibrated depth signals authenticity, catalyzing companionship and prompting observable behaviors (call-ins, DMs/WhatsApp, voice notes, and other user-generated content). These behaviors, in turn, enable relationship currency, a form of relational capital that can be negotiated into advertiser value (e.g., better fit for integrated ad-libs, stronger off-air activations, premium pricing for thematic or personality-anchored slots).

Second, tactical grammar for on-air intimacy with professional guardrails. The study distills operational tactics that presenters use with minimal production overhead: crafting relatable/intriguing hooks; prioritizing family-centered narratives as a safe, high-resonance anchor; day-parting (lighter content on Mondays and Fridays; heavier discussions mid-week) to match listener energy; and maintaining boundary rules (e.g., avoid disparaging family) that protect credibility. This granular, practice-level description complements theory by showing how intimacy is produced consistently in a commuter setting.

Third, a hybrid participation pathway in a Global South metropolis. In Jakarta’s commuting culture, the study shows how on-air intimacy spills over into cross-channel communities (e.g., WhatsApp groups) and offline encounters (e.g., off-air events), raising psychological switching costs and stabilizing loyalty. This hybrid pathway, from on-air to offline, extends existing disclosure/PSI models that are typically examined in either purely broadcast or purely social media contexts.

Guided by this conceptual positioning, the study pursues the following research questions: (1) What self-disclosure strategies do presenters employ in Jak FM’s *Sarapan Seru* program? and (2) How does presenters’ self-disclosure foster interaction with listeners

within the program's primary topical segments? Moreover, the study aims to examine how prime-time radio presenters strategically calibrate self-disclosure in an urban commuter context, how such disclosures are interpreted as authenticity and parasocial presence, and how these relational dynamics are articulated in terms of audience engagement and potential commercial value within program and sales logics. By doing so, the study fills a gap in Indonesian media research by empirically linking presenters' disclosure practices to the ways "relationship assets" can be translated into business-relevant narratives and propositions.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of non-face-to-face communication practices, particularly presenters' self-disclosure, and its consequences for perceived listener closeness. In case study logic, a "case" is examined in its real-world context to generate analytic (not statistical) generalization, i.e., linking empirical observations to theory (e.g., SPT/PSI/U&G) rather than to a population parameter (Yin, 2018). The focal case, Jak FM's prime-time morning program *Sarapan Seru* (06:00–10:00 WIB), was purposively selected because (1) high interaction intensity and daily repetition facilitate parasocial intimacy; (2) the two on-air personalities are distinct yet complementary (topic breadth vs. narrative depth); and (3) community/off-air activations create opportunities to translate closeness into business value. The unit of analysis is the practice of self-disclosure at the level of content (themes, diction, breadth–depth).

Primary data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted in Bahasa Indonesia (with key quotations translated into English). In-depth interviewing treats the encounter as a research conversation that elicits rich, situated accounts while allowing flexible probing within a guided protocol (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2019). The interview guide comprised blocks on: (a) topic formulation; (b) a taxonomy of disclosure (breadth–depth) and editorial rationale; (c) relatable diction and tactics to elicit reciprocal disclosure; (d) ethical boundaries and risk mitigation (oversharing; privacy of family/children; brand safety); (e) interaction patterns (call-ins, WhatsApp/DMs, voice notes, UGC); and (f) business-relevant traces (sponsor fit, ad-lib effectiveness, community activations). All sessions were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim; potentially identifying details of third parties were masked during transcription.

Informants were recruited using purposive (purposeful) sampling, understood not simply as "hand-picking participants," but as a strategy to deliberately align the sample with the study's aims and objectives, thereby yielding more rigorous and trustworthy data. Purposive sampling can strengthen qualitative rigour by improving the match between participant selection and the research questions, and sampling decisions should be reported transparently because they underpin trustworthiness (Campbell et al., 2020). Accordingly, participants were intentionally selected as information-rich cases based on their direct relevance to the phenomenon of interest, their direct involvement in topic planning and on-air execution, and their reflective knowledge of disclosure strategy. Two primary presenters were interviewed: Sahil Mulachela (SM) and Kamal Rasyid (KR). With two presenter informants, the analysis foregrounds insider perspectives and therefore treats audience and business outcomes as exploratory inferences rather than independently measured effects.

Data were analyzed iteratively using thematic analysis, a flexible approach to qualitatively identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) across data, implemented through a hybrid codebook (a priori + inductive) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Steps included: (1) familiarization and memoing; (2) open coding with a hybrid codebook plus emergent codes; (3) category aggregation; (4) theme development explaining the mechanism of self-disclosure into relationship currency; and (5) linking themes to representative excerpts from interviews and on-air material. Guidance on transparency and rigor in thematic analysis informed the process.

Credibility was enhanced through member checking of thematic summaries and key quotations to ensure that interpretations aligned with informants' intended meanings. Dependability was supported by an audit trail (versions of the interview guide, dated coding

memos, and revisions to the thematic schema) and systematic file/version control. Confirmability was strengthened via reflexive memoing that documented the researcher's positionality, prior assumptions, and critical interpretive choices; periodic peer debriefing was used to challenge emergent interpretations and guard against confirmation bias. Transferability was addressed through a thick description of the context (time slot, commuter audience characteristics, on-air style, and routines), allowing readers to assess its applicability to other urban radio settings or adjacent audio formats.

All procedures adhered to social-research ethics. Informed consent was obtained before interviews; participation was voluntary, and informants could decline to answer or withdraw statements without consequence. Personal identities of third parties (family members, friends, listeners) were anonymized; quotations that could reveal sensitive identities were masked or paraphrased with semantic fidelity. Brand-safety considerations were observed to avoid reputational risk to institutions/clients; commercial references were obfuscated where nonessential to the analysis. The study posed minimal risk: no intervention in broadcasts and no manipulation of commercial content occurred. When required by journals or affiliations, these procedures are prepared for submission to an institutional ethics committee to confirm compliance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Presenters' Self-Disclosure Strategies in the Morning Prime-Time Program

Topic selection is the cornerstone of the self-disclosure strategy in Jak FM's *Sarapan Seru*, the station's morning prime-time program. The production team—comprising the producer and presenters—jointly deliberates on potential topics, aligning them with current trends and news to signal timeliness and relevance. Topic planning also follows a day-of-week logic: as Kamal explained, “We program light, relatable content on Monday and Friday, reserving heavier discussions for the mid-week window, Tuesday to Thursday.” Decisions are made through consensus, including which personal stories may or may not be shared. When a topic makes a presenter uncomfortable, the team negotiates a middle ground, underscoring the collective agreement that defines the permissible scope of self-disclosure.

Diction and narrative framing are intentionally crafted to spark emotional engagement. Kamal emphasized that “relatability is non-negotiable,” noting that stories must contain “a spark—something that nudges people to share their own version.” Sahil echoed this sentiment, explaining that “to hook listeners, we often lean on family angles, stories about kids or wives.” The presenters recognize radio as an inherently personal medium and deploy self-disclosure to cultivate trust and intimacy with listeners. They frequently share facets of their private lives, everyday routines, personal opinions, and emotional states to project authenticity and foster connection. As Kamal noted, “Presenters must have an on-air personality,” while Sahil added, “We are their friends.”

Reciprocity and boundaries emerge as central dynamics in this communicative process. Consistent with self-disclosure theory, presenters' openness tends to elicit reciprocal sharing from listeners, who often respond with emotional stories or actively participate in the station's offline fan spaces. “Without our own openness, there's no reciprocal disclosure,” Kamal reflected, while Sahil affirmed that “listeners tune in for the personal bits; that's what prompts them to share their own.” However, the presenters remain mindful of the risks of oversharing and potential privacy violations. As Kamal explained, “...presenters must understand the importance of open communication by sharing personal stories that can deepen the connection with listeners. But the boundaries still need to be maintained.” Ultimately, strategic self-disclosure is understood not only as a relational practice but also as a driver of listener loyalty—with direct implications for sustaining audience size and, consequently, the station's commercial value in engaging advertisers.

Breadth and Depth in the Morning Prime-Time Program

Self-disclosure—revealing personal information to others—is central to building intimacy between radio presenters and their audiences. In radio, this process is distinctive because it unfolds in a public medium yet is framed as a private exchange with an imagined individual listener, reflecting the “theater of the mind.” Drawing on Altman and Taylor’s Social Penetration Theory, this study maps how the two presenters of *Sarapan Seru* strategically calibrate the *breadth* and *depth* of their self-disclosure to cultivate authenticity, intimacy, and engagement.

Breadth. Both presenters open multiple life domains, with family and work serving as dominant themes. Stories about children and spouses are frequently shared, as Sahil described: “Some chosen topics are very personal—like this morning’s broadcast felt really personal because we discussed family, wives. What’s the first thing you sacrifice when you get home to your child? Yes, because the topic was related to Children’s Day.” Workplace narratives are equally familiar, ranging from early internship experiences and previous jobs to current responsibilities and office friendships. Such topics invite reciprocal sharing from listeners, as Kamal noted, “...family relationships are always open. Employee–boss dynamics are what we discuss most. If the topic is workplace relationships, that’s always lively.” This breadth allows presenters to engage heterogeneous commuter audiences through multiple topical entry points while maintaining a conversational and inclusive tone.

Depth. The two presenters also differ in the intensity of their self-disclosure, ranging from light to deep. “Light” disclosures involve everyday matters such as weekend activities, office humor, home repairs, or housing purchases. “Moderate” disclosures include sharing a spouse’s routines or children’s school activities—stories that begin to reveal personal identifiers such as occupation or residence. “Deep” disclosures touch on emotionally sensitive experiences, such as childhood wounds or parental conflicts. Kamal illustrated this when reflecting, “The topic was about ego getting pricked. I told a story about something my mother said... That’s very personal. It might be the first time I ever told even a friend.”

Table 1. Comparison of Breadth and Depth of JakFM Morning Primetime Presenters

Aspect	Presenters	
	<i>Sahil Mulachela (SM)</i>	<i>Kamal Rasyid (KR)</i>
Breadth	Very broad: family, children, partner, childhood, friendships, work, and personal conflicts.	Moderately broad: family (children/wife), social phenomena, friendships, work.
Depth	High—frequently discloses emotionally personal experiences.	Medium—shares personal matters selectively, maintaining boundaries to avoid offending family members.
Example of Light Personal Stories	Weekend activities, humorous anecdotes, “hanging out” experiences.	Everyday activities such as shopping and minor home damage/repairs.
Example of Moderately Personal Stories	Stories about children and wife; daily routines.	Stories about his child and his wife; opinions on social phenomena.
Example of Deep Personal Stories	Childhood wounds; feelings of being a “doormat”; loss of private moments.	Ego feeling slighted by a mother’s remark; sensitive family stories.
Objective	To strengthen psychological closeness and position himself as the audience’s ‘conversation partner.’	To foster reciprocal openness

Source: Primary Data (2025)

Interview data also reveal stylistic differences in how breadth and depth are balanced. Sahil tends toward greater emotional depth, sharing both joyful and painful experiences to catalyze intimacy and trust. His approach aligns with interpersonal communication theory, which holds that deeper self-disclosure serves as a bridge to psychological closeness. Sahil’s style positions him as a “conversational friend” rather than merely a presenter. In contrast, Kamal maintains a broader topical range and tends to manage depth more

strategically. He often draws on others' experiences—typically friends'—when addressing sensitive issues or unrelatable scenarios, while still inserting personal anecdotes when appropriate. His strength lies in maintaining a versatile, audience-sensitive approach without compromising authenticity: "My rule is simple," Kamal explained. "If it's funny, it goes on air; anything that demeans the family doesn't."

Table 1 summarizes these complementary roles: Sahil serves as the expressive, emotionally open narrator, while Kamal serves as the rational counterbalance, structuring the storytelling and maintaining boundaries. Together, their dynamic exemplifies how calibrated breadth and depth of disclosure can jointly sustain intimacy, credibility, and listener loyalty within the commuter radio format.

Drawing on Table 1, Sahil and Kamal demonstrate two equally effective approaches to crafting an on-air personality through self-disclosure. Differences in depth and breadth are not deficits but expressions of distinct communicative styles for building audience closeness. Authenticity in broadcasting can be realized through multiple strategies, provided presenters sustain audience connection while remaining mindful of professional boundaries. Work on audio-first creators shows that listeners rely on recognizable "authenticity markers" to gauge whether a host feels genuinely relatable, helping cultivate parasocial closeness even without visual cues. These findings align with a previous study that found authenticity can be strategically produced through different on-air styles rather than a single persona template (Yargonci & McMurtry, 2024).

Intimacy as Relationship Currency in Radio's Business Model

Relationship currency denotes the strategic value of emotionally grounded ties. In contemporary media ecosystems, where advertisers prize engagement quality over undifferentiated reach, intimacy cultivated through disclosure becomes a tradable asset. Research on influencers shows that self-disclosure enhances credibility, which in turn fosters loyalty and brand trust (Azhar et al., 2024). Although centered on social platforms, the underlying logic generalizes to radio: disciplined, authentic disclosure can elevate a presenter from content conduit to trusted companion, thereby improving the conditions for persuasion for integrated reads, endorsements, and thematic sponsorships. Evidence from podcast advertising suggests that host trust, credibility, and perceived authenticity, often intertwined with parasocial relationships, shape listeners' brand attitudes and behavioral responses. Where relationship-building translates into commercial value only when sponsor messages are delivered through an "authentic voice" and clear fit criteria (Brinson & Lemon, 2023).

Translating intimacy into currency requires operational articulation. Recent evidence on host-read, integrated placements indicates that listeners' parasocial relationship with the host, together with perceived host authenticity, trust, and expertise, predicts brand attitudes, recall, and behavioral intentions (Milovan et al., 2024). These findings mirror our "relationship currency" logic: relational equity becomes commercially actionable when execution emphasizes host-brand congruence and credible delivery. Stations can frame presenter-audience ties as value propositions, e.g., brand-audience fit (the presenter's persona aligns with the advertiser's category), integration quality (ad-libs that naturally fuse with narrative), community leverage (fan groups, off-air activations), and pricing power (premium slots anchored by personality). Indicators may include participation volume and diversity (types of UGC), retention (repeat listening across weeks), cross-channel stickiness (migration to WhatsApp/IG communities), and sponsor renewal rates. Not every disclosure yields positive returns; the station must maintain editorial guardrails and monitor sentiment to avoid fatigue or backlash. Yet when calibrated, intimacy transforms from a "feel-good" feature into relational capital that sustains business relevance amid digital dominance.

This subsection advances "intimacy as relationship currency" as a conceptual interpretation grounded in qualitative insight from the case, rather than as a tested causal model. The pathway presented in Figure 1 summarizes how presenters' disclosure tactics are experienced and described as generating authenticity cues and parasocial presence, which, in turn, invite participation and may consolidate loyalty in ways that can be articulated

as business-relevant value propositions. Because the study relies on two presenter informants and does not directly measure audience metrics or advertiser outcomes, claims about commercial leverage should be read as inferential and exploratory: they reflect how relationship assets are narrated, managed, and packaged within production and sales logs, not as verified effects.

Findings indicate that self-disclosure exceeds an interpersonal rhetorical tactic; it operates as relationship currency, relational capital that can be negotiated into business value. Conceptually, the pathway is: (1) self-disclosure tactics; (2) perceived authenticity and parasocial interaction (PSI) as mediators; (3) engagement behaviors; (4) loyalty outcomes; and (5) business leverage (see Figure 1). This mapping is consistent with Social Penetration Theory: breadth widens cross-segment relevance, whereas calibrated depth cultivates perceived authenticity.

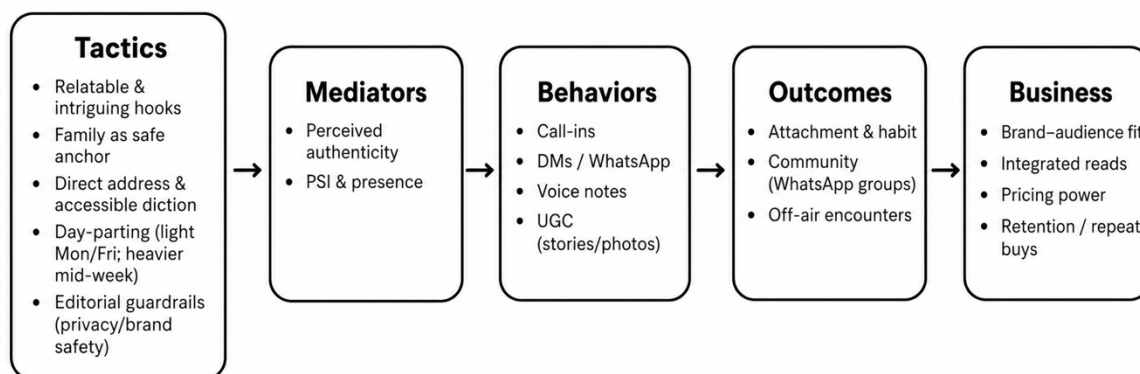


Figure 1. From Tactics to Business Levers
Source: Researcher (2025)

At the tactics level, presenters use curated self-disclosure to feel personal yet safe. They open with relatable, intriguing hooks and often anchor their stories in “safe” domains, such as family or everyday routines, that audiences can easily recognize. They speak directly to listeners and use accessible diction, so the talk sounds like a conversation rather than a broadcast. Disclosure is also paced through day-parting, lighter, low-risk intimacy in some segments and more profound narrative moments in others, while editorial guardrails (privacy limits, risk checks, brand safety) keep content within acceptable boundaries. The core aim at this level is calibrated intimacy: enough personal openness to invite connection without crossing lines that could trigger discomfort or reputational risk.

These tactics operate through two main psychological mediators: perceived authenticity and parasocial interaction/presence. When disclosure feels appropriate, consistent, and bounded, audiences interpret it as sincere rather than performative, increasing perceived authenticity. Authenticity cues then strengthen parasocial interaction and a sense of presence; listeners feel the hosts are “there with them” in daily life, especially during commuting or routine listening. This mediated presence is the bridge between one-way transmission and a relationship-like experience. Once authenticity and presence are established, listeners respond behaviorally (behavioral level). They call in, send DMs/WhatsApp messages, leave voice notes, and contribute user-generated content (stories, photos, reactions). These behaviors signal a shift from passive listening to participation: the audience treats the program as a social space and reciprocates the invitation implied by the presenters’ disclosure.

Repeated participation yields more durable outcomes: attachment and habit (returning to the show as part of a routine), community formation (e.g., active WhatsApp groups), and off-air encounters (events, meet-ups, on-ground activations). At this stage, the bond is no longer episodic; it becomes a stable form of companionship with higher psychological switching costs and stronger loyalty. In radio’s hybrid ecosystem, these closed-group dynamics translate into durable communities that advertisers can activate through

presenter-led integrations and off-air encounters, making the relationship asset both visible and tradable in sponsor conversations (Raihani & Kurnia, 2025).

When attachment and community are in place, closeness becomes commercially legible (at the business level). Stations can articulate a clearer brand–audience fit, execute integrated host-read messages more naturally (ad-libs feel credible because they ride on relational trust), and justify pricing power for thematic slots. Over time, these dynamics support advertiser retention and repeat purchases by translating intimacy into measurable engagement and access to a committed audience, turning relational closeness into a business lever. In this sense, presenters’ personal storytelling functions as more than “content”; it is a meaning-making cue that tunes audience interpretation toward acceptance and identification, reinforcing brand–audience fit (Fithria & Sarwono, 2025).

These results extend prior accounts of presenter credibility in ad-lib effectiveness (Kertanegara, 2018). While credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness help explain persuasive outcomes, the intimacy generated by self-disclosure enriches credibility, turning it into relational capital that can be converted into commercial opportunities: tighter brand–audience fit, narrative-integrated content, and pricing power for thematic slots. The pattern parallels influencer research showing that self-disclosure enhances credibility and loyalty across media.

The literature also cautions that disclosure can produce mixed effects. In practice, the team applies guardrails to balance intimacy with professionalism. Conceptually, the results link communication and media economics. Self-disclosure and PSI explain why closeness forms; U&G explains why audiences stay (companionship); and relationship currency explains how closeness is exchanged for business value (community engagement, repeat buys, premium pricing for integrated content, and measurable brand lift). Under this framework, intimacy is not a “feel-good” embellishment but a quantifiable, negotiable asset for sustaining the urban radio business.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that when radio presenters’ self-disclosure is deliberately planned and editorially managed, it can foster a sense of perceived closeness even within a predominantly one-way medium. Across the case, calibrated disclosure enables listeners to perceive presenters as psychologically present and personally relatable, thereby strengthening parasocial companionship and stimulating participatory behaviors. This cultivated intimacy manifests in observable actions—such as repeated listening, interactive responses, community engagement, and off-air participation—that collectively reinforce program sustainability in an increasingly competitive digital-audio environment.

Theoretically, this study reframes on-air intimacy as *relationship currency*—a tradable asset generated through a mechanism that links self-disclosure tactics to market leverage. The presenters’ calibrated breadth and depth of disclosure, moderated by editorial guardrails, produce cues of authenticity and reciprocity that foster parasocial interaction and companionship. This psychological bond translates into observable engagement and loyalty, which can be leveraged in sponsor-facing narratives and commercial negotiations. Practically, the findings highlight that self-disclosure should be treated as a managed strategic resource rather than an ad-hoc personal habit. Producers can institutionalize guardrails (topic boundaries, risk checks, alignment with brand voice) and apply day-parting to synchronize disclosure intensity with commuting rhythms. Meanwhile, sales and account teams can articulate more straightforward value propositions by linking disclosure-driven closeness to audience access, sponsor fit, and retention potential—supported by measurable indicators such as interaction volume, sentiment, and repeat sponsor engagement. Collectively, these insights position *relationship currency* as a plausible micro-foundation of radio sustainability in hybrid audio markets.

Despite these contributions, this study’s scope is limited to a single case—*Sarapan Seru*—with two presenters, constraining generalizability across formats or markets. Relationship currency, as conceptualized here, remains only partially operationalized;

business indicators such as sales uplift, premium pricing, and retention were not observed longitudinally. Future research should adopt multi-case, mixed-method designs to test transferability and contextual variation. Recommended approaches include listener surveys (parasocial interaction, loyalty), social listening (WhatsApp/Instagram), and time-series commercial metrics (spot rates, sponsor retention). Experimental and longitudinal studies could further trace the causal pathway from intimacy to engagement and business outcomes. At the same time, cross-platform analyses (broadcast–podcast) and automated analytics (ASR with topic or emotion classification) can reveal the narrative tactics that balance effectiveness with ethical and brand-safety considerations.

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