

# **Self-Disclosure on Students as Tumblr Blogging Users: A Descriptive Study in Indonesia**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to see a depiction of self-disclosure of Tumblr users. Self-disclosure is an interaction between individuals who want to present information about themselves intentionally to others to achieve a close relationship in which the individual give a lot of information about the past that is relevant to the future. Tumblr is a simple-designed blog which the blog service is free similar to Blogger and Wordpress in which the users are not only able to write posts but also photos, attention-grabbing quotes, videos, audios and share links. The data are collected from a questionnaire through a link website media (google doc) which includes self-disclosure scale adapted and modified from Konradus (2012) as well as some supporting identity data. Respondents in this study are Tumblr users with student specifications taken using purposive sampling technique (N=200). The data collected are then analyzed descriptively by using SPSS version 16.00. Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that in general the self-disclosure of Tumblr users tends to be moderate or normal with a mean value of 76.02. From the data that have been collected, the use of Tumblr in Indonesia is projected as a medium for expressing feelings, thoughts and ideas using literary language such as expressing feelings, thoughts and ideas by writing poetry, short stories or prose. In contrast to the use of Tumblr abroad such as in America which is more widely used as a marketing medium (Patel, 2014).

**Keywords:** Social Media, Self Disclosure, Tumblr User, Blogging.

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## **1. Introduction**

The extensive use of internet in Indonesia undoubtedly influences the system of social interaction that occurs in it. A virtual community is also growing into a new medium of interaction for the people in Indonesia. As a new medium of social interaction, the internet also offers opportunities for users to develop personal relationship with others and even share identities (Rheingold & Walthier in Karina & Suryanto, 2012).

Based on research conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers/Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (2015), Indonesian who use the internet spend more time accessing social media with a percentage of 87.4% and ranks first among others.

The more users who can access the internet, the more social media and miniblogs that being used to make friends with new people who have the same interests in cyberspace. One of the miniblog social media is Tumblr.

Tumblr has the concept of combination between blog and social network which is often also called a miniblog. The simple interface makes it easy for Tumblr users to share what users want to upload on Tumblr

via text, photos or videos. In addition to the writing, photos and videos features, Tumblr also provides direct features to post voices, share links from the internet and chat. Tumblr is also customizable with a simple interface so for people who are not skilled in customizing blogs, they can change the appearance of Tumblr with a display that is already available on the internet for free. In addition, Tumblr has a mutual follow feature where users who have followed other Tumblr users can see what that user posted that appears in the dashboard, similar to “home” on a Facebook account, so they can comment or reblog other users’ posts and discuss them. Other users who do not follow each other can still reblog other Tumblr accounts and discuss with the Tumblr owner who posted it.

On the Tumblr platform itself, many users share their thoughts, ideas, views, and how they feel about themselves to many people. Having a safe place and not being judged are the most common reason for users to post on Tumblr. Loads of the posts uploaded on the platform become works of novels or poetry books. Nowadays the books have received a good response from the public and the authors have been invited to participate in seminars at various campus and writing events (tumblr.com, 2015).

Expressing what they feel, writing down ideas and thoughts that come from their deeper self on social media has risks for everyone who accesses the internet. Everyone who accesses it can read what is written on the social media account, particularly on blogs where everyone whether they have a blog or others who cannot read the posts and everyone who uploads it must be conscious about this.

## 2. Literature Review

The activity of expressing what they feel, their ideas and thoughts that come from themselves is also called self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is an attitude in which a person interacts with others without feeling awkward. According to Morton (in Sears, Freedman & Peplau, 2009) self-disclosure is an activity to share feelings and information that is familiar with others. If the person is able to open-up themselves properly, then that person can express themselves properly. One of the ways that people use nowadays is to use a Tumblr account where everyone can portray the user from what they want to appear on someone’s blog.

There is a study conducted by Tang and Wang (2013) regarding the directness of blog users and comparing it with their behavior in the real world. The blog users revealed that they are more comfortable opening up to their friends first, then to their parents, and at last to their fellow blog users. Female bloggers tend to be more closed to their parents and friends than male bloggers. Blog users under the age of 20 tend to open a wider range of writing topics on social media.

This research is necessary since the aim is that the public and Tumblr users in particular can be more vigilant in expressing what they feel, their thoughts and opinions that will be uploaded on the internet. Mindful attitude in using social media must be shown by its user since the nature of social media is everyone can read it.

Moreover not everyone can accept the uploaded content positively but there are also those who give negative comments when someone opens up on social media, especially on Tumblr. This is related to the norms adopted by Indonesian society in general. The confidentiality of personal matters also needs to be maintained in opening up to others, especially on social media, in order to be able to provide boundaries between things that can be given to other users for public consumption and ones that should only be known by themselves or those closest to them.

## 3. Research Method

Azwar (2013) states that the analysis in descriptive research only through on description stage which analyzes and presents facts systematically so that it can be easier to understand and conclude. Meanwhile,

according to Narbuko and Achmadi (2013) descriptive research is a research that seeks to describe existing problem solving based on data, so it also presents data, analyzes, and interprets.

The population of this study is Tumblr users, while the samples of this study are students using Tumblr, both male and female, with total of 200 people.

The method of sampling of this study is purposive sampling. To identify the description of self-disclosure, primary data is used where these data are obtained directly from respondents. The data collection method used in this study is by using questionnaire or survey method. The questionnaire in this study includes respondents' personal data and self-disclosure scale. Respondents' personal data includes gender, age, marital status, religion, ethnicity, how long have they been a user, the number of following and followers, their purpose of creating a Tumblr account, the frequency of posting Tumblr and several questions related to constructive factors that support the results of deeper self-identity.

#### 4. Result

From the results of calculating the empirical mean and the hypothetical mean of this study, it is found that the hypothetical mean value (MH) is 82.5 which is greater than the empirical mean (ME) which is 76.02. Based on these results, it can be categorized that the self-disclosure of Tumblr users has a moderate level of self-disclosure.

Scale	Item	Hypothetical Mean	Empirical Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-disclosure	33	82.5	76.02	16.5

Based on the results of descriptive analysis, it is found that Tumblr users have moderate or normal self-disclosure. This is because the purpose of using Tumblr in Indonesia is to make it as a medium to express feelings, thoughts and ideas using literary language such as expressing feelings, thoughts and ideas by writing a poetry, short stories or prose. It is in contrast to the use of Tumblr in other countries as in America which is more commonly used as a marketing medium (Patel, 2014).

#### 5. Discussion

The result of the research shows that Tumblr users are more dominated by women than men. The result of the mean value of women is higher than men, which is 89.90 in the moderate category. In a study conducted by Tüfekçi (2008), it was stated that the use of social media based on gender is different between men and women. Women use social media to connect with their friends either who live around neighborhood or keep in touch with schoolmates. Meanwhile, men use social media to make new friends and find people who have similar interests.

For age category, the researcher divides it into 2 categories; 18-20 that include in late adolescence stage and 21-30 that include in early adult stage. Age categorization is based on Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Papalia, 2009). The result is that the adolescents have a higher level of self-disclosure than users who are in the early adult category with a mean value of 91.20 and are in the medium category. According to research by Asandi and Rosyidi (2010), self-disclosure performed by adolescents is seen from depending on their trust and closeness. They get trust when a lot of support and attention is given. As a result, their self-confidence is higher that makes the information given is more and more detailed. The function of

self-disclosure in adolescents is for self-development, a forum as an indirect expression of feelings, a means of supporting themselves and facilitating communication.

Self-disclosure based on marital status shows that unmarried respondents have a higher mean value of self-disclosure than married respondents with a value of 89.82 which is in the moderate category. In the context of marriage, self-disclosure is an important element for individuals who want to step into marriage. Self-disclosure according to Laswell (1991) is one of the elements in marriage that is useful for getting to know each individual and solving problem that arise and to find the best solution to the problems at hand. It can be seen from the Tumblr posts that unmarried users post more about their feelings and opinions.

Furthermore, subjects who have been Tumblr users for 7-8 years have the largest mean value compared to other users, which is 96.50 and is in the moderate category. The longer someone becomes a user, the more comfortable the user is to post what they feel. According to Powell (in Supratiknya, 2006) there are five levels that measure depth where the first stage is the peak relationship where self-disclosure is performed in depth. The length of period in disclosing information is also one aspect that affects a person's self-disclosure.

Then for category of the purpose for creating Tumblr account, it shows that Tumblr is used as a medium to express feelings, thoughts and ideas. The mean value of the purpose of creating Tumblr account is 91.03 which is in the moderate category. Boyd and Heer (2006) suggest that self-disclosure in social media is useful as a means of presenting self-identity. Social media users will have more freedom to express their feeling and thoughts about their experiences without having to meet other people in personal.

Self-disclosure is seen through the frequency of uploading Tumblr posts in a week that will have an impact on the number of followings and followers. Users who post in Tumblr for more than three times a week have more following and followers than users who post in Tumblr for 1-3 times a week. According to Kilamanka (2010), based on the Uses and Gratification theory and the Technology Acceptance Model defined by some experts, the frequency of using social media may be influenced by several reasons, these include the use of media and the satisfaction of needs for media use, one of which is social identity and relationships which can be related to the level of need for affiliation and self-disclosure, the ease and usefulness of using computer technology, the long-term experience in using the internet or the time since the first use of the internet, availability of time, cost, and network speed.

Self-disclosure on Tumblr based on the how often to post on Tumblr is in the moderate or normal category with an empirical mean value of 91.91 for upload the posts more than 3 times. This shows that respondents who post more often on Tumblr about their feeling and express their opinions and ideas will be more open about information about them and perform more self-disclosure (Juwita, 2011).

Subsequently, self-disclosure is reviewed from the theme of Tumblr account of the users. The use of Tumblr in Indonesia is dominated by literary themes with a percentage of 27.72%. Meanwhile, in terms of following Tumblr accounts, respondents follow literary accounts with a percentage of 22.89%. Literature, in this case poetry, short stories or prose, is an expressive language that has the beauty and powerful meaning in the choice of words. Literary work is the expression of feelings through words that are arranged delightfully by the author. According to Wiyatni (2011), poetry is the work that comes from expressing the feelings and thoughts of a person as a product of imagination that works together with perceptions, thoughts and feelings. Writing literature, in this case poetry, has benefits for the author, namely being able to express thoughts through heavenly language, a medium for expressing everything they feel and enhance their creativity in writing skills (Sulistiyorini, 2010).

Self-disclosure based on the beliefs factor has a mean value of 90.70 with a moderate category where respondents answered "yes" to questions related to post about their beliefs on their Tumblr account. Moreover, the type of post used by Tumblr users for expressing their opinions about their beliefs is using reblog text mode with a percentage of 16.44%.

Self-disclosure based on relationships, Tumblr users express their relationships with others using text posting mode to tell the user's relationships with others has a percentage value of 38.69%.

Based on the results of research in personal matters factor, the mean result is 92.12 which is moderate category where respondents answered "yes" to questions related to posting about personal life to other people on Tumblr. Revealing their problems by posting it on Tumblr can decrease their level of anxiety and stress especially if the post gets a response from other users. Even if they only get a little support by commenting on the posts, this may increase their confidence to face and solve their problems (Asandi & Rosyidi, 2010).

Based on the results of research in interest factor, Tumblr users are more likely to follow accounts that post about literature. The literature referred to in this Tumblr account is accounts that post poetry, prose and short stories with a percentage value of 22.89%. According to Tidwell and Walther (in Sheldon, 2009), users who express their interest in anything via the internet tend to have a high level of self-disclosure compared to people who express their interest in direct communication.

The results of the research for intimate feeling factor, it is found that the mean result is 91.18 with a moderate category where respondents answered "yes" to questions related to posting about their deepest feelings on Tumblr. The type of post that Tumblr users use to express their deepest feelings is to use quote posting mode with a percentage of 20.93%. According to Derlega and Girzelak (in Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2009), expressing emotions, in this case expressing the deepest feelings, is one of the functions of self-disclosure. Expressing their deepest feelings, expressing what they feel or expressing opinions is a way to relieve disappointment or show their happiness. By releasing their emotions, the user will feel a little ease even though only expressing their deepest feelings does not necessarily mean the problem they are facing will be resolved.

## 6. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the supporting factors or in other words the dimensions of self-disclosure, the five supporting factors have an empirical mean that is in the medium category. These five categories are belief factor, relationships factor, personal matters factor, interest factor (interest) and intimate feelings factor (deepest feelings). However, among the five factors, there is one factor that stands out the most, namely the intimate feelings factor. This is because the intimate feelings factor is a factor that shows the deepest feelings or emotions felt by Tumblr users where users express their feelings using poetry, short stories or prose on Tumblr.

In Southeast Asian countries, especially Indonesia, the Tumblr is still used, by far, as a medium to express feelings, thoughts and opinions where the self-disclosure activities usually use literary language. The literary language in here is posting poetry, prose and short stories.

In Based on the results of this research, there will be some suggestions for further research. For the subject, it is hoped that Tumblr users can use Tumblr not only as a medium to express feelings, thoughts and ideas but also as a self-branding medium to explore their potential talent such as being a writer or others. Suggestions for further research is to make further research on differences in self-disclosure on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr for early adulthood users.

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