The Relationship Between Self-Disclosure and Anonymity in Online Social Media Users

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Keywords	Abstract
Self disclosure, anonymity, social media.	The more widespread the use of social media, the easier it is for individuals to disclose themselves (self disclosure). One of the factors that influence self disclosure is personality which plays a role in shaping a person's behavior on social media, including behavior to present themselves anonymously. These factors cause the phenomenon of anonymity in social media. This study aims to determine the correlation between self disclosure and anonymity in online social media users. This study uses quantitative methods with correlation techniques. The population of this study are active users of anonymous accounts on social media. The sampling technique for this study is incidental sampling. The amount of samples obtained was 184 people. The self disclosure scale uses the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS) consists of 14 items adopted from Nugroho (2018) based on the theory developed by Leung (2002). The anonymity scale consists of 14 items adopted from Chairunnisa (2018) based on the scale compiled by Lee et al. (2013). The reliability coefficient of the self disclosure scale is 0.808 and the reliability coefficient of the anonymity scale is 0.855. Hypothesis testing was carried out with the pearson product moment correlation test and resulted a significance value of 0.727. This means that there is no relationship between self disclosure and anonymity in online social media users. Further research is suggested to examine more specifically based on one type of social media.

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INTRODUCTION

The existence of the internet has affected changes in human interaction patterns (Purbohastuti, 2017). Initially, the interaction pattern could only be carried out in the same space and time (Purbohastuti, 2017). Now, these limitations in interaction have finally produced a new pattern of interaction without having to meet physically and face-to-face by presenting social media (Purbohastuti, 2017). As described by Kietzmann, et al. (in Rahadi, 2017), one of the functions of social media is as a sharing medium to exchange, share, and receive content in the form of text, images, audio, or video between users. Social media also serves as a medium to express the opinions, thoughts, and feelings of its users. The term to mention a person's self-disclosure is self-disclosure.

According to Sears (2001 in Sagiyanto & Ardiyanti, 2018), *self-disclosure* is defined as the activity of expressing oneself by sharing information and feelings intimately with others. A person engages *in self-disclosure* with the aim of deepening relationships with others (Krämer & Schäwel, 2019) and creating connections with new people (Komori et al., 2019). *Self disclosure* important to do because it can help a person communicate with others, help increase self-confidence, and make relationships with others more intimate (Lumsden, 1996 in Gainau, 2009). Research conducted by Johnson (1981 in Gainau, 2009) also shows the same thing that a person who is able to do *self-disclosure* appropriately, can adjust himself (*adaptive*), trust himself more, is more competent, reliable, has a positive attitude and has trust in others, is more objective, and is more open.

Self-disclosure does not only occur when communicating and interacting directly between people in the real world, but can also occur through social media intermediaries (Febriani et al., 2021). Self-disclosure on social media generally includes how a person shares information in the form of statuses, photos, videos, messages, comments, and so on (Fauzia et al., 2019). Self-disclosure can be in the form of various topics such as information about behaviors, attitudes, feelings, desires, motivations, and ideas that are in accordance with the person concerned (Yunita, 2019).

Self-disclosure on social media generally includes how a person shares information in the form of statuses, photos, videos, messages, comments, and so on (Fauzia et al., 2019). Based on the results of research conducted by Pratiwi (2015), the use of online social media has an influence on individual self-disclosure. One of the consequences of self-disclosure carried out by individuals online (Maulani & Priyambodo, 2021) is that individuals tend to be more comfortable doing self-disclosure through online media than directly (Rizal & Rizal, 2021).

One of the factors that affect self-disclosure according to Devito (2011) is personality. Eysenck (in Widiyastuti, 2016) states that personality is the overall pattern of a person's behavior, both potentially (covert) and actually (overt) that affects behavior in his environment, which in this case is the social media environment. These behaviors ultimately also affect how a person presents themselves on social media, including the choice to present themselves anonymously on social media.

Another thing that causes someone to present themselves anonymously is because online social media provides convenience to its features. Kowalski (2010 in Watiningsih, 2020) states that online social media makes it easier for its users to have a social media account just by using a User ID or username and does not require a real identity. For this reason, many users create anonymous accounts on online social media. This statement is supported by research from Mukhoyyaroh (2020) which found that from a number of social media users around the world, many anonymous accounts were found. Anonymous accounts are used by a person to be able to express their opinions on online social media without knowing their true identity where this phenomenon is referred to as anonymity. Anonymity is a term that refers to the unknown and unknown identity of the sender of the message (Scott, 1998 in Clark-Gordon et

al., 2019). Meanwhile, anonymity in the context of social media, according to Sitorus (2014 in Mukhoyyaroh, 2020), is a social media user who does not include his identity at all on his social media account.

The phenomenon of anonymity can have both positive and negative impacts. Anonymity that has a positive impact can provide benefits (benign dibiovisibility) if used to help a person to better recognize himself so that it can increase his understanding and development (Suler, 2004). On the other hand, negatively impactful anonymity can be toxic disinhibition if it traps users to explore their dark side, causes negative behaviors such as bullying, displays pornographic things, or provokes other people's reactions through visual and verbal violence (Ardi, 2018).

In this case, Waskul and Douglas (1997 in Ardi, 2018) explain that the higher the level of anonymity that individuals have in interacting online, it can make individuals feel free from their social responsibilities in daily life (Waskul & Douglas, 1997 in Ardi, 2018). Ardi (2018) also mentioned the same thing that visual anonymity in public spaces has an impact on the way a person experiences what they do not get during face-to-face interactions, thus making a person able to get out of themselves more intimately in online media. Other research states that even so, anonymity in social media has a positive impact, including making individuals more confident and have space to express their hearts while still paying attention to ethics in social media (Utari, 2024). Another study found anonymity in social media can increase prosocial behavior and moral courage in online interactions (Lysenstoen et.al., 2021).

Based on the phenomena and previous research that has been described, this study was conducted with the aim of finding out how the relationship between self-disclosure and anonymity in online social media users is explained. The results of this study are expected to increase information and knowledge to related parties regarding self-disclosure and its relationship with anonymity in online social media users.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study is quantitative with a correlational design. The bound variable in this study is anonymity which is defined as a degree of non-identification of the real identity of the user or sender of the message. The independent variable in this study is self-disclosure which is interpreted as the process of disclosing information about oneself that is personal to others which is done deliberately and without coercion. Self-disclosure is measured using the Revised Self Disclosure Scale (RSDS) adopted from Nugroho (2018) based on a measuring tool developed by Leung (2002) and taken from Wheeless and Grotz's research in 1976.

The self-disclosure scale amounted to 19 items from 5 dimensions, namely control of depth, accuracy, amount of disclosure, valence, and intent of disclosure. Meanwhile, the measurement of the anonymity variable is carried out by adopting a measuring tool compiled by Chairunnnisa (2018) based on a measuring tool developed from Lee et al. (2013) and taken from the theory put forward by Pfitzmann and Hansen (2008). The anonymity scale amounted to 18 items from 3 dimensions, namely the dimensions of unlinkability, unobservability, and pseudonymity. Based on the discrimination test on the self-disclosure scale, there were 5 items that were eliminated and 14 items that were valid. Meanwhile, the discrimination test on the anonymity scale, there were 4 items that were eliminated so that 14 items were valid.

The validity that is enforced in the two measuring tools of this study is the validity of the construct using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) analysis. The reliability of the measuring instrument was enforced by the alpha cronbach reliability test. The results of the reliability test on the self-disclosure variable obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.808. Meanwhile, in the anonymity variable, a reliability coefficient of 0.855 was obtained.

The subjects in this study are anonymous account users on social media who actively interact on anonymous accounts (posts, comments/replies, chats/direct messages). The sampling technique used for this study is non-probability sampling in the form of incidental sampling or convenience sampling. The data analysis technique used in this study is parametric inferential statistical analysis using product moment correlation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on research data, the subjects obtained were 184 people. It is known that the three most widely used social media by the subject is Twitter with a percentage of 45% or as many as 166 people. Then Instagram with a percentage of 21% or as many as 76 people, and Tiktok with 16% or as many as 57 people.

The following are the results of the normality test using *the Kolmogorov Smirnov one-sample technique*.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

One - Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandarized Residual
N		184
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	6.40258609
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.096
	Positif	.096
	Negatif	-.053
Test Statistic		.096
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000[c,d]

a. Test distribution is normal

b. Calculated from data

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction

In the table of normality test results above, it can be seen that the significance value is $0.000 < 0.05$ so that the data is declared not normally distributed. In overcoming this, researchers transform data using natural logarithms (Ghozali, 2011):

Table 2. Results of the Normality Test After Transformation

One - Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandarized Residual
N		184
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	.15268293
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.056
	Positif	.056
	Negatif	-.053
Test Statistic		.056
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200[c,d]

a. Test distribution is normal

b. Calculated from data
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction
d. This is lower bound of the true significance

The table of normality test results after being transformed shows a significance result of 0.200 > 0.05 so that the data can be declared to have been distributed normally.

The following is a table of correlation test results using the Pearson product moment correlation technique

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

Correlations		Self Disclosure	Anonimitas
Self Disclosure	Pearson Correlation	1	-.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.727
	N	184	184
Anonimitas	Person Correlation	-.026.	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.727	
	N	184	184

Based on table 3 above, it can be seen that the significance value is 0.727 > 0.05, which means that there is no relationship between the self-disclosure variable and the anonymity variable.

Table 4. Categorization *of Self Disclosure* in general

Score Interval	Interval	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	$42 \leq X$	High	24	13%
$(\mu - \sigma) \leq X < (\mu + \sigma)$	$28 \leq X < 42$	Medium	142	77,2%
$X < (\mu - \sigma)$	$X < 28$	Low	18	9,8%
	Total		184	100%

Table 5. Categorization of Anonymity in general

Score Interval	Interval	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	$42 \leq X$	High	112	60,9%
$(\mu - \sigma) \leq X < (\mu + \sigma)$	$28 \leq X < 42$	Medium	71	38,6%
$X < (\mu - \sigma)$	$X < 28$	Low	1	0,5%
	Total		184	100%

This study aims to determine the relationship between self-disclosure and anonymity in online social media users. After conducting research, it was found that the hypothesis that "there is a relationship between self-disclosure and anonymity in online social media users" was rejected. Based on the results of descriptive statistical calculations, it is known that the categorization in table 4 shows that the average level of self-disclosure of subjects is in the medium category of 142 people with a percentage of 77.2%. Meanwhile, the categorization in table 5 shows that the average result of the level of anonymity of the subjects is in the high category of 112 people with a percentage of 60.9%. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the lower the self-disclosure, the higher the anonymity.

The findings of this study are different from previous studies. Research conducted by Joinson (2001) shows that a person will be more open to revealing information about themselves during

interaction through computer mediated communication (CMC) than when interacting face-to-face. The study also confirms that a person who communicates anonymously through online media will be more open to revealing himself than communicating non-anonymously.

In line with the results of the study, Retelas (2008) also found that social media accounts containing usernames with anonymous profiles revealed more about themselves than profiles containing identified profile names. This shows that anonymity is increasingly encouraging a person to reveal himself more. The results of the latest research conducted by Nugrahani (2021) also show that there is a relationship between anonymity and self-disclosure in Twitter users and has a negative relationship direction. The direction of the negative relationship is in line with the results of this study that the more anonymous and unidentified the user, the less he or she is able to reveal himself.

This study shows a high level of anonymity in the subjects. According to Suler (2004), the anonymity that occurs on online social media can make a person lose more control over himself and make his behavior tend to be freer. Waskul and Douglas (1997 in Mukhoyyaroh, 2020) also stated that the higher the anonymity in online interactions, the more freedom and courage a person will have in expressing themselves. However, in the findings of this study, the high anonymity of the subject did not cause the subject to be more open in expressing himself.

Santi and Damariswara (2017) revealed that the principle of anonymity causes a high level of uncertainty about information when in the online world. The high uncertainty of information can be one of the factors that cause a person to be dishonest when communicating (deceptive) so that it affects the ineffectiveness of self-disclosure that occurs in it. This is what allows the subject to have a moderate level of self-disclosure.

The possibilities make the findings of this study different from previous studies. The first possibility is that each social media has different characteristics so the purpose of its use is also different. Each social media has its own uses and uniqueness, so not all social media is suitable if used as a means of self-expression. This is also supported by the existence of different purposes for using social media. Based on observations of digital natives conducted by Supratman (2018), it was found that social media is used to get information, conduct virtual communication, explore hobbies, seek entertainment and fun, as a means to support tasks, shop online, and find inspiration related to dress and lifestyle. The use of diverse social media certainly does not always involve self-disclosure so this is one of the factors the subject has self-disclosure at a moderate level

The second possibility is because the high level of anonymity and medium level of self-disclosure on the subject can be caused by privacy and security issues in social media. Trepte and Masur (2017 in Krämer & Schäwel, 2019) explain that privacy is the need for a person to control who can have access to their personal information. A person's need for privacy varies and results in different behaviors. As mentioned by Millham and Aktin (2018 in Krämer & Schäwel, 2019) that maintaining personal data privacy strongly can reduce the self-disclosure of social media users on the internet.

Paramithasari and Dewi (2013 in Widiyawati & Wulandari, 2021) also said that the risk of self-disclosure will be greater if someone does it on social media because other users will be able to easily access and read the information and personal data that is disclosed. From these risks, it is what allows the subject to maintain his behavior on social media and not do much self-disclosure to maintain information about real personal data by displaying anonymous personal data to avoid things that can interfere with his security in the online world.

The third possibility is because self-disclosure that occurs in the real world is not necessarily the same as self-disclosure that occurs on social media. The difference in self-disclosure in offline and online contexts can differ as well as from the practice and motive of the disclosure (Krämer & Schäwel 2019). This difference is especially noticeable in social media users who have more time to plan for self-disclosure. In an online context, self-disclosure can occur when a person uploads

information about themselves or their activities and makes comments (Krämer & Schäwel, 2019). Even clicking the like button is also a subtle form of self-expression even if it is potentially unintentional (Krämer & Schäwel, 2019)

After knowing the above possibilities, there are other things that can cause the self-disclosure and anonymity variables in this study to be unrelated. So the findings in this study are different from previous studies and are increasingly interesting to be studied further. The limitation of this study lies in the incompleteness of the research data based on demographic conditions so that there is no analysis of the data from the demographic perspective of the subject.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between self-disclosure and anonymity in online social media users. Based on the descriptive analysis of self-disclosure variables in general, the results were obtained that self-disclosure in online social media users was in the medium category. Meanwhile, the descriptive analysis of anonymity variables in general, the results were obtained that the anonymity of online social media users was in the high category. Therefore, the lower the self-disclosure, the higher the anonymity, and vice versa.

The next research should be conducted by specializing in one type of online social media so that the research can be more focused and in accordance with the characteristics of the online social media being researched.

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