Difference of Self-disclosure on Social Media Users with Anonymous and Non-anonymous Identity

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Abstract: Social networks facilitate individuals to express personal opinions and feelings through status, photos/videos, or comments called self-disclosure. Users also have the freedom of choice to use both anonymous and non-anonymous identities on their accounts so that any information disclosed has minimal consequences and risks. The purpose of this research is to determine the differences of self-disclosure on social network users with anonymous and non-anonymous identities using quantitative approach with comparative research method. A total of 150 social network users with anonymous identities and 150 users with non-anonymous identity (N=300) aged 18-34 years were sampled and selected using non-probability sampling method through purposive sampling technique. The research data were collected using the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS) developed by Wheeless in 1978. The result of the analysis using independent sample t-test showed p=0,034 (p<0,05), so it can be concluded that there is the differences of self-disclosure on social media users with anonymous and non-anonymous identities, in which anonymous identity users more disclose than non-anonymous identity users and female subjects with anonymous identity have higher self-disclosure than males. In addition, younger social network users reveal more personal information than older users.

1 INTRODUCTION

Survey by Indonesia Internet Service Association (APJII, 2016) showed that there were 132.7 million of active internet users, 97.4% of whom (129.2 million users) were the most-frequently-internet accessing users. Social media is website-based service on internet in which users can make public content or semi-public content and build a relationship with other users on the same website (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). At the present, Facebook is the most demanded social media, followed by Instagram, Youtube, Google, Twitter, and LinkedIn (APJII, 2016).

Besides the most demanded social media, Facebook and Instagram are the media which could stimulate self-disclosure (Schouten, 2007) because both may emerge interaction with people known in real life or online platform. An individual could connect with other users, create a community, send personal or open messages through status, comments, likes, or uploaded photo/video which are called self-disclosure.

Self-disclosure is that all information about oneself is communicated with other people (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976), including personal information, ideas, feelings, and experiences (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, dalam Knoll & Bronstein, 2013). Wheeless and Grotz (1976) state five dimensions of self-disclosure i.e. intent to disclose, amount of disclosure, positive-negative nature of disclosure, general depth-control of disclosure), and honesty-accuracy of disclosure. People could release their feelings publicly through internet, so that they are more encouraged to do self-disclosure (Christopherson, 2006).

Internet may make an individual use identified identity (non-anonymous) or unidentified identity (anonymous) (Marx, 1999). Non-anoymous is a condition in which an individual put their real name in a message that they send or one's identity can be known through the name (McKenna & Bargh, 2000), meanwhile anonymous is a condition in which an individual cannot be identified (Marx, 1999). Morio and Buchholz (2009) mention three levels of anonymity, namely (a) visual anonymity in which no physical appearance attached to an

individual's message; (b) disassociation of identity is an unmatched identity between online identity and real identity; (c) *lack of identifiability* which is no information referring to message sender. However, anonymous or non-anonymous action does not depend on technology, it depends on users' will and preference (Kang & Yang, 2004).

A survey conducted in 68 countries, including Indonesia, found that 59% of media social users became more open to express themselves and say anything they want as anonymous users (*Childnet International*, 2013). Suler (2004) states that in anonymity condition, an individual tends to reveal more personal information than one does in face-to-face condition. An individual tends to do self-revealing when using anonymous identity in order to avoid social risk such as mockery or rejection from other people (Kang, Dabbish, & Sutton, 2016).

Although almost 95% of online users refuse to reveal their personal information on website (Hoffman, Novak, & Peralta, 1999), many individuals prefer to keep using real name and not afraid to reveal one's personal information on social media, the cause of which is because of personality factor in which an introvert individual hardly does self-revealing which is in contrary with an extrovert one who willingly reveals about oneself by using real identity (DeVito, 2013). In addition, the need of existence and obtaining an acknowledgement from other people make it possible to be braver to reveal personal identity on social media like sharing certain contents through image, video, or article uploaded on their personal accounts.

Both anonymous and non-anonymous users have common chances and wishes to do self-disclosure, while social media only acts as a facilitator of an individual's social needs to do self-disclosure, so that hypothesis of this study was there is difference of self-disclosure of anonymous and non-anonymous social media users.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

This study used quantitative approach with comparative method. The subjects were selected using non-probability sampling through purposive sampling. The number of samples was 300 subjects which were selected based on several characteristics i.e. age ranged 18-34-year-old, accessing social media Instagram or Facebook once a day with anonymous or non-anonymous identity, living in Banda Aceh.

This study used Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (RSDS) developed by Wheeless in 1978 based on five dimensions of self-disclosure namely intent to disclose, amount of disclosure, positive-negative nature of disclosure, general depth-control of disclosure), honesty-accuracy of disclosure, the instrument consists of 31 items favourable and unfavourable.

This study starts with preparing the instrument, translating and modifying it into Bahasa Indonesia, trying it out to gain Cronbach's Alpha score at 0.843 with item discrimination index at approximately -0.373-0.606, so that 6 items were aborted. Data were collected using online platform by distributing RSDS scale which consisted 25 items to 300 samples, therefore Cronbach's Alpha score was 0.856. The collected data were analysed by using independent sample t-test in order to see the difference of self-disclosure on anonymous or non-anonymous social media users.

3 RESULT

Table 1: Analysis of Independent Sample T-Test

Self-disclosure	N	Mean	Sig
Non-Anonim	150	95.27	0.034
Anonim	150	99.65	

Statistical analysis of independent sample t-test showed significance score at 0.034 ($p<0.05$) so that it proved that the hypothesis was accepted meaning that there was significant difference of self-disclosure on anonymous and non-anonymous social media users. In addition, social media users with anonymous identity had higher mean score (99.65) than those with non-anonymous identity did (95.27). It showed that users with anonymous identity had higher self-disclosure than those with non-anonymous identity.

A survey on social media users was conducted in 68 countries showed that 59% of social media users felt more open to express themselves and say anything they want when they used anonymous identity (Childnet International, 2013). The survey is in accordance with Joinson, Woodley, and Reips (2007) that found that individuals tended to reveal more thoughts and feelings when their interlocutors did not know their identity. Anonymous presence makes individuals not responsible for online communication that they does, so that they could reveal more intimate information than they do face-to-face (Suler, 2004).

Table 2: Self-disclosure Categorization of the Subjects

Category	Non-anonymous		Anonymous	
	n	%	n	%
High	61	40,7	79	52,7
Moderate	88	58,7	70	46,7
Low	1	0,7	1	0,7

The study resulted that of 300 subjects, 79 (52.7%) were from anonymous group with high self-disclosure. Barak and Gluck-Ofri (2007) explain that high self-disclosure means revealing personal information which contains about oneself and the closer companions, from physical appearance (body weight, acne, hair, body shape, scar, cheek and so on) to psychological condition (addiction, bulimia, anorexia, alcoholic, drugs and so on). Individuals also reveal their thoughts that are related to their personal characteristics, health, or secret idea and dream on social media. Moreover, there is a deep expressed feeling including insult, misery, anxiety, depression, fear, pain and so on.

Non-anonymous subjects were dominantly at moderate category of self-disclosure for 88 subjects (58.7%). It means that they reveal general information about oneself like name, birthday, location, contact, occupation, education, and family (Bak, Lin, & Oh, 2014). Individuals reveal personal thought related to personal experience, past event or future plan. Furthermore, individuals also express some light feeling like confusing, inconvenience, common worry, or weakness (Barak & Gluck-Ofri, 2007).

Table 3: Categorization of Anonymous Subject based on Sex

Category	Male	%	Female	%
High	19	12.7	60	40
Moderate	13	8.7	57	38
Low	1	0.7	0	0

Table 4: Categorization of Non-Anonymous Subject Based on Sex

Category	Male	%	Female	%
High	17	11.3	44	29.3
Moderate	28	18.7	60	40
Low	0	0	1	0.7

60 subjects (40%) in anonymous group who were at high category of self-disclosure were females and 19 (12.7%) were males. Meanwhile, in non-anonymous category, 60 female subjects (40%) were at moderate category of self-disclosure, only 28 male subjects (18.7%) were at moderate. Different level of high self-disclosure in anonymous

group and non-anonymous group can be explained through several factors like sex, culture, age, personality, and interlocutor. DeVito (2013) explains that it occurs because woman tends to be more open than man that woman commonly reveal their romantic relationship, friendship, the biggest fear, and unpleasant things from partners.

Table 5: Categorization of Anonymous Subject age 18-26-Year-Old.

Category	Male	%	Female	%
High	77	51,3	55	36,7
Moderate	68	45,3	85	56,7
Low	1	0,7	1	0,7

77 subjects (51.3%) using social media with anonymous identity at 18 to 26-year-old were at high category of self-disclosure and 68 subjects (45.3%) were at moderate category of self-disclosure. Not really different, 55 subjects (36.7%) from non-anonymous group were at high category of s and 85 subjects (56.7%) were at moderate. It is in accordance with study by Goodstein (2007) finding that the younger adult revealed more personal matters on social media because they were less cautious and became more convenient to do online communication.

Table 6: Categorization of Anonymous Subjects age 27 to 34-Year-Old.

Category	Male	%	Female	%
High	3	2	5	3,3
Moderate	1	0.7	4	2,7
Low	0	0	0	0

27 to 34-year-old subjects in anonymous group who were at high category of self-disclosure were 3 subjects (2%) and 1 subject (0.7%) was at moderate. Similarly, 5 subjects (3.3%) at 27 to 34-year-old in non-anonymous group were at high category of self-disclosure 4 subjects (2.7%) were at moderate. Kisilevich, Ang, and Last (2012) in a research they did to Facebook users found that the higher the age was, the less information was revealed on Social media. The cause was that the elder rarely used technology and felt uncomfortable to interact on online platform (Bucur, Renold, & Henke, 1999).

Besides the factors explained above, social-cultural and neighborhood factor, Aceh Province, caused self-disclosure. Sharia implementation indirectly makes Aceh people have limitation in behaving, especially for some things considered as culture and norm-violating. Therefore, to avoid risk

and consequence, subjects preferred to be an anonymous.

DeVito (2013) states that personality is a factor that could influence self-disclosure. An introvert individual tends to be difficult to do self-disclosure, in contrary with the extrovert one who does not mind disclosing oneself despite using real identity. In addition, an individual's self-disclosure behaviour is also affected by interlocutors, so that one tends to do self-disclosure to those one likes, trusts or loves.

Table 7: subjects' intent to use social media.

Intents	Anonymous	Non-anonymous
Entertainment	108	102
Communication	62	76
Accessing Information	97	94
online shop	27	17
Others	5	7

108 subjects (72%) from anonymous group and 102 subjects (68%) from non-anonymous group in this study used social media for entertainment. Accordingly, a respondent in research by Lee, Im, and Taylor (2008) stated that self-disclosure sometimes could create self-pleasure, thus an individual enjoyed what they did and considered social media as a recreation facility.

In addition, 97 subjects (64.7%) from anonymous and 94 subjects (62.7%) from non-anonymous also utilized social media to access information. It is in accordance with a survey by APJII (2016) that 129.3 million (97.5%) individuals used social media to share information, it was because social media could facilitate information-sharing rapidly. An individual is also motivated to do so because one has a psychological need to share information or knowledge to others on social media (Lee et al., 2008).

62 subjects (41.3%) in anonymous group used social media as media to communicate, and 76 subjects (50.7%) from non-anonymous did so. Derlega and Grzelak (in Yang & Tan, 2012) explain several reasons why an individual do self-disclosure on social media, one of which is creating closeness and communication in interpersonal relationship either with old friends or with new friends. Lee et al. (2008) add that developing and maintaining a relationship with the close people becomes a motivation for an individual to do self-disclosure.

Other intents are for online shopping for 27 subjects (18%) from anonymous group and 17 subjects (11.3%) from non-anonymous groups. Accordingly, a survey by APJII (2016) found

that 125.5 million (94.6%) people used social media to trade and 82.2 million (62%) of internet users often visited online shop. Mulawarman and Nurfitri (2017) add that at first, social media like Facebook and Instagram was friendship and exchanging information site, but today they become places for marketing for a company or small-scale online shop.

There were only few subjects using social media for certain intents such as a platform to show their hobbies to others, to do promotion, to stalk, to update new information, a media to support job and task, learning facility, a platform to reveal a feeling or to find information, or just following others.

4 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to know the difference of self-disclosure on social media users with anonymous and non-anonymous identity. The result showed that there was difference of self-disclosure on social media users with anonymous and non-anonymous identity that those with anonymous identity had more self-disclosure than those with non-anonymous identity and female subjects had higher self-disclosure than male subjects did. Moreover, the younger users revealed more personal information on social media than the elder did.

For this research subjects who are social media users, either those with anonymous or non-anonymous, it is important to be more selective and cautious before revealing information on social media, particularly personal-related information. For those who use social media with anonymous identity, it is expected to understand that a decision and preference has a positive or negative impact, including law consequence. Therefore, it is better to not use social media account to share hate speech and other negative actions.

Future research can categorize required demographic data using rating system in order to ease data analysis, so that result does not broaden and can be quantified. Moreover, future research can use qualitative approach to deepen result, especially about activity and content that are revealed by users on social media.

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