

## EXPLORING SELF-DISCLOSURE TRENDS AMONG STUDENTS: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the trend of self-disclosure owned by students. By using a quantitative approach and descriptive method and taking a comprehensive sample. The research participants consisted of 830 students in Indonesia, consisting of 322 male students and 508 female students. The measurement tool used was the Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ). The results showed that 60% of students tended to favor offline self-disclosure, while 39.4% preferred online self-disclosure.

**Keywords:** self-disclosure; offline and online self-disclosure; social media

### INTRODUCTION

As social beings, humans need interaction and relationships with others. Self-disclosure, is the key to the process of social interaction and relationships with others. Relationships will grow if there is good interpersonal communication, where self-disclosure is a basic element in such communication (Kustubayeva, et al., 2015). Providing information about oneself to others so that they know what one thinks, feels, and wants is called self-disclosure (Jourard, 1971). Self-disclosure helps individuals gain a view of themselves from the perspective of others that cannot be obtained from other sources. Through self-disclosure, individuals can learn more about themselves and clarify misconceptions that others may have about them.

High school students are in the adolescent development phase, where one of the main tasks is to develop identity through interaction with peers (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). However, to interact well, students need to have self-disclosure skills (Valkenburg, Sumter, & Peter, 2011). Self-openness is an important aspect in social relationships. Students who do not have this skill will have difficulty communicating with others. Ineffective communication is often the cause of problems at school (Gainau, 2009). Through self-disclosure, students can share their fears and worries with their friends, thereby reducing pent-up feelings of distress. This process also allows them to provide emotional support to each other (Buhrmester & Prager, 2009).

Over the past few decades, digital media has become an important part of students' lives and provides a new context for carrying out their developmental tasks. In Indonesia, the

number of social media users as of January 2021 reached 170 million people, about 61.8% of the total population (Kemp, 2021). Teenagers are the largest group of social media users (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2020). The development of digital technology affects the way students develop self-disclosure.

Currently, self-disclosure is not only done directly (offline) but also through social media (online). Social media is utilized by students to open up to their friends (Trepte, Masur, & Scharkow, 2017). Research shows that online and offline self-disclosure provides similar positive outcomes, such as increased relationship initiation, better friendship quality, greater social support, social self-esteem, and feelings of belonging (Antheunis, et al., 2014; Desjarlais, et al., 2015). Students who are shy, introverted, reserved, fearful of rejection, and socially anxious tend to prefer online self-disclosure because they feel more protected from the responses they may receive. However, online self-disclosure also comes with risks. Too much online self-disclosure but not enough offline self-disclosure can affect adolescents' social development and mental health (Chen, et al., 2017; George & Odgers, 2015). In addition, there are risks such as cyberbullying, identity abuse, online attacks and more (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011).

Self-disclosure can be a problem if students do not do it appropriately, i.e. do not consider the prevailing norms. Being open to the wrong people, at the wrong time, or revealing too much private information can cause problems for themselves (West & Turner, 2010). These circumstances can hinder the development of ethical behavior, which is based on decisions that consider ethical aspects. Criteria such as culture, norms, and religious values should always be considered before self-disclosure (West & Turner, 2010). Currently, students tend to underestimate the risks that may arise from their self-disclosure (Livingstone, 2008).

One way to do self-disclosure appropriately is to minimize the risks that may arise. In developing self-disclosure, students need to understand and consider the prevailing norms. This includes considering what, how, when, and to whom self-disclosure is done. With the new phenomenon of online self-disclosure, students need to set boundaries between what is public and what is private. Students must ensure that their self-disclosure is correct and safe for themselves and the surrounding environment, so that they can develop self-disclosure effectively based on these conditions, it is important to conduct this research to find out the actual situation regarding the tendency of students' offline and online self-disclosure, so that steps can be taken to develop effective self-disclosure.

Based on these conditions, it is important to conduct this research to find out the actual situation regarding students' offline and online self-disclosure tendencies, so that steps can be taken to minimize potential risks that may occur. If not investigated, there is a concern that students may lack the skills to develop self-disclosure appropriately, thus interfering with their personal, social, learning and career development. Concerns about risks may lead to hesitation and reluctance to self-disclose, resulting in a choice to suppress problems.

This study aims to determine the true state of students' offline and online self-disclosure tendencies, so that steps can be taken to minimize potential risks that may occur. By knowing these tendencies, this study also aims to ensure that students have the necessary skills to develop self-disclosure appropriately, in order to support their personal, social, learning and career development. In addition, this study aims to reduce the fear of various

risks that can lead to students' hesitation and reluctance to open up, so that they no longer choose to suppress their problems.

## METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with the aim of empirically describing the tendency of self-disclosure of students of SMA Negeri 5 Tasikmalaya in the 2020/2021 academic year. This study involved 830 students, and data were collected through distributing questionnaires. The instrument used was Jourard's Self-disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ), which was customized in the form of paired comparisons to assess offline and online self-disclosure. Respondents were asked to choose one of the two statements provided, according to themselves (Bossuyt, 1990; David, 1969).

The data analysis procedure began with a literature review on self-disclosure to identify the problem and formulate the research objectives. The core stage involved the adaptation of the JSDQ instrument, previously developed by Shenny Dwi Anggraini (2019). Data were collected online via Google Form, and afterwards processed using Microsoft Excel for coding, then processed with the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 application. The results of data processing show the percentage of self-disclosure offline and online, as well as by other categorical variables.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. General Tendency of Students' Self-Disclosure

The general tendency of offline and online self-disclosure of students in class X and XI of SMAN 5 Tasikmalaya can be presented in the table as follows.

Table 1. General Tendency of Students' Self-Disclosure

| Type                    | Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------|
|                         | %          |
| Offline self-disclosure | 60,6       |
| Online self-disclosure  | 39,4       |
| Number                  | 100        |

Based on Table 1, 60.6% of students prefer offline self-disclosure, while 39.4% of students prefer online self-disclosure. This shows that students prefer to disclose information about themselves face-to-face. This may occur because offline self-disclosure allows for conversations with broader topics and more in-depth information. In accordance with the media richness theory of communication, offline communication allows for immediate feedback, as well as the use of paralinguistic cues such as voice volume, tone, and speech rate to convey thoughts and emotions (Nguyen, et al., 2012). Nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and voice make students feel a real physical presence, as well as an exchange of emotions and a sense of social presence (Mesch & Talmud, 2006).

Students who favor online self-disclosure feel that the lack of nonverbal cues (such as facial expressions and intonation) in online communication allows them to control what to say without being inhibited by the immediate reactions of others (Tidwell & Walther, 2002; Valkenburg et al., 2011). In the absence of an immediate reaction from the interlocutor, students tend to reveal more personal information (Nguyen et al., 2012). his leads to more

and deeper information being disclosed (Tidwell & Walther, 2002; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). Online self-disclosure with peers helps students make more friends, which supports their psychosocial development (Conde, at al., 2014; Ji, Wang, at al., 2014).

However, whether students engage in offline or online self-disclosure, both have similar benefits for students (Buhrmester & Prager, 2009). This process of self-disclosure has various advantages, including relationship development, identity formation, and psychological well-being (Davis, 2012; Johnson, 1972), assisting in overcoming various problems (Buhrmester & Prager, 2009), laying a role in developing interests, talents, and career potential, encouraging student participation in class discussions (Goldstein & Benassi, 2009), and being one way for students to overcome learning difficulties (Handarini & Wulandari, 2020).

In addition to the positive benefits that result from self-disclosure, it is also important to pay attention to the risks that may arise in both offline and online self-disclosure. These risks include the possibility of misunderstanding, criticism, rejection, misuse of information, and dislike. These risks often discourage students from being open. This can hinder emotional development, especially in expressing feelings freely and honestly. In addition, risks of online self-disclosure such as cyberbullying, sexting, content abuse (Burns & Gottschalk, 2019), restrictions on emotional expression (Farber, et al., 2012), and decreased communication with family, friends, and neighborhoods (Kraut et al., 1998) can interfere with student development. These risks will arise if self-disclosure is not done with due regard to the prevailing norms.

To overcome this problem, it is important to minimize the risks that arise by knowing when, how, in what context, and to whom self-disclosure should be done. One of the steps that schools can take is through guidance and counseling services. Guidance and counseling teachers have the responsibility to protect students from potential risks, encourage healthy development, and help students understand the principles of appropriate communication and boundaries. Thus, students who can appropriately engage in self-disclosure can avoid various associated risks, as they can make decisions that consider ethical aspects. Thus, students have the potential to achieve a happy, peaceful life, and can develop their potential optimally.

## 2. The Tendency of Self-disclosure Based on Aspects

Table 2. The tendency of self-disclosure based on aspects

| Aspects                | Offline self-disclosure | Online self-disclosure |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
|                        | %                       | %                      |
| Attitudes and Opinions | 57                      | 43                     |
| Tastes and Interests   | 59                      | 41                     |
| School                 | 62,3                    | 37,7                   |
| Finance                | 59,3                    | 40,7                   |
| Personality            | 62,7                    | 37,3                   |
| Attitudes and Opinions | 62,3                    | 37,7                   |
| Number                 | 100                     | 100                    |

### *Attitude and Opinion*

Based on table 2 on the aspect of attitude and opinion, overall, students tend to prefer face-to-face self-disclosure to reveal information about attitudes and opinions related to religious aspects, political views, social interactions, and family dynamics. A total of 57% of students showed a preference for face-to-face self-disclosure, while the remaining 43% were more inclined to online self-disclosure. This finding is in line with the results of Yu (2014) study which showed that topics related to attitudes and opinions were the most frequently expressed by students in face-to-face interactions. This may be due to the more inclusive nature of face-to-face self-disclosure in conveying information.

However, it cannot be ignored that students can also express their opinions online. The availability of digital technology today allows students to express their opinions not only in person, but also through social media platforms (Nasution, 2020). This provides an opportunity for students to freely express their views on social, political and economic issues and respond to them quickly. However, amidst this ease and freedom, there are various challenges that students face. The existence of boundaries and regulations can help them maintain ethical opinions, respect the feelings of others, and pay attention to politeness in communication (Alfiani et al., 2020).

### *Taste dan Interest*

Based on table 2 in the aspect of taste and interest, 59% of students showed a tendency to prefer direct self-disclosure, while the other 41% were more inclined to online self-disclosure. In this context, preferences and interests refer to students' expressions of their likes and interests in things such as fashion, food, drink, music, literature, movies, and activities of interest, which they convey to others. These topics, both tastes and interests, are often shared by students both face-to-face and online.

This finding is supported by the results of the study which show that the percentage of self-disclosure, both in person and online, in terms of preferences and interests is not too different. This means that students are able to express their preferences and interests both through in-person interactions and through online media. The findings of this study are in line with the results of Mesch & Talmud (2006) study which states that nonpersonal topics such as hobbies, favorite television programs, and style of dress can be expressed in both in-person and online interactions. Since topics of tastes and interests tend to be nonpersonal, there is no particular limit to their disclosure. Students often share information about their preferences as a way of getting to know each other (Davis, 2012). In the process of sharing this information, there is a sense of attraction between individuals due to similarities in tastes and interests, which is a strong basis for the formation of close social relationships.

### *School*

Based on Table 2 on the school aspect, 59.3% of students showed a preference for direct self-disclosure, while 40.7% preferred online self-disclosure. In daily life, students often reveal things related to the school environment (Davis, 2012). These topics belong to the private domain that may only be disclosed to certain people in certain situations. By its nature, in-person self-disclosure tends to display more in-depth information, which may not be relevant to everyone and is only conveyed to certain parties (Nguyen et al., 2012).

This self-disclosure is very important for students because it helps them prepare for their careers, explore, and evaluate their potential and weaknesses. Talking about learning difficulties to high-achieving peers can help them overcome their learning problems, which can ultimately lead to better academic achievement in the future (Zhang et al., 2015). Not only that, sharing academic achievements can also motivate students to achieve success in their studies. However, disclosing learning difficulties can also lead to students being perceived as academically incapable. This suggests that in disclosing learning evaluations, students should pay attention to whom and in what situations they open up. Thus, students can reduce the risks that may arise as a result of self-disclosure.

#### *Money*

Based on Table 2 in the financial aspect, 62.7% of students showed a preference for in-person disclosure, while 37.3% preferred online disclosure. According to Yu (2014), research, finance is the only topic that men usually share online. However, for some students, sharing information about their financial situation is considered a private matter that no one should know about. Therefore, in this study, financial aspects were chosen by students to share in person. By sharing information about finances both face-to-face and online with their friends, students can learn from each other how to manage and use money wisely.

#### *Personality*

Based on table 2 on personality aspects, 62.7% of students showed a preference for in-person self-disclosure, while 37.3% preferred online self-disclosure. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Yu (2014) who stated that personality aspects tend to be expressed more often directly. When students convey their emotional states, they seek support and reinforcement through nonverbal responses, such as hugs (Dolin & Booth-Butterfield, dalam Li, et al., 2021). These types of responses cannot be obtained through online communication. Therefore, self-disclosure tends to be done in person rather than through social media or online (Choi & Toma, 2014).

High school adolescents are in an adolescent phase that is often full of challenges. Adolescence is characterized by various problems faced by students (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). The various emotional turmoil experienced during this period makes students feel the need to share with their friends. Hiding or holding back emotions, thoughts, and behaviors will only increase pressure and stress (Pennebaker, 2018). However students communicate their emotional state, whether in person or online, will help reduce psychological distress (Ignatius & Kokkonen, 2014). However, it is important to remember that in expressing aspects of personality such as emotional states and relationships with the opposite sex, etiquette of expression must be maintained. Students need to have an awareness of the right way to communicate, especially in expressing emotions on social media.

#### *Body*

Based on table 2 on the physical aspect, 62.3% of students showed a preference for in-person self-disclosure, while 37.7% favored online self-disclosure. According to Mesch & Talmud (2006), research, physical health topics tend to be shared directly with friends. This finding is in line with Yu (2014), research, which states that physical condition topics are often shared online by individuals. This is because revealing physical condition and health

means sharing one's physical imperfections. Therefore, it is something that not everyone will share. The key principle is that information shared through direct self-disclosure tends to be deeper, which means not everyone will know it (Nguyen et al., 2012).

### 3. Self-disclosure Tendency by Gender

Table 3. Self-disclosure tendency by gender

| Type                    | Male | Famale |
|-------------------------|------|--------|
|                         | %    | %      |
| Offline self-disclosure | 65,3 | 57,7   |
| Online self-disclosure  | 34,7 | 42,3   |
| Number                  | 100  | 100    |

Based on Table 3, 65.3% of male students prefer offline self-disclosure, while 34.7% prefer online self-disclosure. On the other hand, 57.7% of female students favored offline self-disclosure, while the other 42.3% preferred online. Overall, both female and male students preferred offline self-disclosure. This can happen because men tend to be bolder, assertive, straightforward, confident, and do not like small talk in communication (Nurhidayah & Nurhayati, 2018). Meanwhile, online self-disclosure requires time to read and type responses, which can cause delays in responding (Nguyen et al., 2012). This delay is perceived by men as a waste of time. In contrast, online self-disclosure is preferred by female students over males. The results of this study are consistent with the research of Davis (2012) dan Schouten, Valkenburg, & Peter (2007), which showed that women preferred online self-disclosure more than men. This could be due to women using social media more frequently than men (Kemp, 2021; Sheldon, 2008).

### 4. Self-Disclosure Tendency by Grade Level

Table 4. Self-Disclosure Tendency by Grade Level

| Tipe                    | Class X | Class XI |
|-------------------------|---------|----------|
|                         | %       | %        |
| Offline self-disclosure | 59,8    | 61,4     |
| Online self-disclosure  | 40,2    | 38,6     |
| Number                  | 100     | 100      |

Based on table 4, 59.8% of grade X students prefer offline self-disclosure, while the other 40.2% prefer online self-disclosure. Meanwhile, 61.4% of grade XI students favored offline self-disclosure, and 38.6% preferred online. Overall, both grade X and XI students prefer offline self-disclosure. However, in particular, offline self-disclosure is preferred by grade XI students, while online self-disclosure is preferred by grade X students. This difference is caused by social development that continues to increase with age and association Ajhuri (2019), which includes social skills. Students with good social skills will be able to make friendships, interact, and have good communication skills (Istianti, 2018). Students' social skills differ according to age levels due to different social cognition abilities. These social skills are important in offline self-disclosure, which helps students become more courageous in talking, expressing feelings, or discussing problems faced (Anggraini, et al., 2017).

Reduced social interaction with peers during the pandemic has led to a decrease in students' social skills (Norkhalifah, 2020). One of the factors that influence social skills is

interaction with the school environment (Putri & Purnamasari, 2014). The restriction of social interaction with the school environment has decreased students' social skills. As a result, students turn to online communication to overcome deficiencies in their social skills (Desjarlais et al., 2015). Therefore, grade X students prefer online self-disclosure in conveying personal information to others.

5. Self-Disclosure Tendency Based on Specialization Class

Table 5. Self-Disclosure Tendency Based on Specialization Class

| Type                    | Social | science |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|
|                         | %      | %       |
| Offline self-disclosure | 62,1   | 59,5    |
| Online self-disclosure  | 37,9   | 40,5    |
| Number                  | 100    | 100     |

Based on Table 5, 62.1% of social studies specialization students prefer offline self-disclosure, while 37.9% prefer online self-disclosure. On the other hand, 59.5% of science students favored offline self-disclosure, and the other 40.5% preferred online. In general, both social studies and mathematics students prefer offline self-disclosure. However, offline self-disclosure is preferred by social studies students, while online self-disclosure is preferred by mathematics students. This is due to the superiority of social studies students in socializing. Sociability skills affect the level of self-disclosure (DeVito, 2016) as well as socialization skills that determine how to behave and communicate information about themselves mereka (Maharani & Hikmah, 2015). In contrast to the characteristics of social studies students, science students tend to lack social excellence, so they prefer online self-disclosure (Pratiwi, Yanzi, & Nurmalisa, 2016). Ue to the lack of social skills, students tend to turn to online communication (Desjarlais et al., 2015).

6. Tendency Based on Mobile Phone Usage

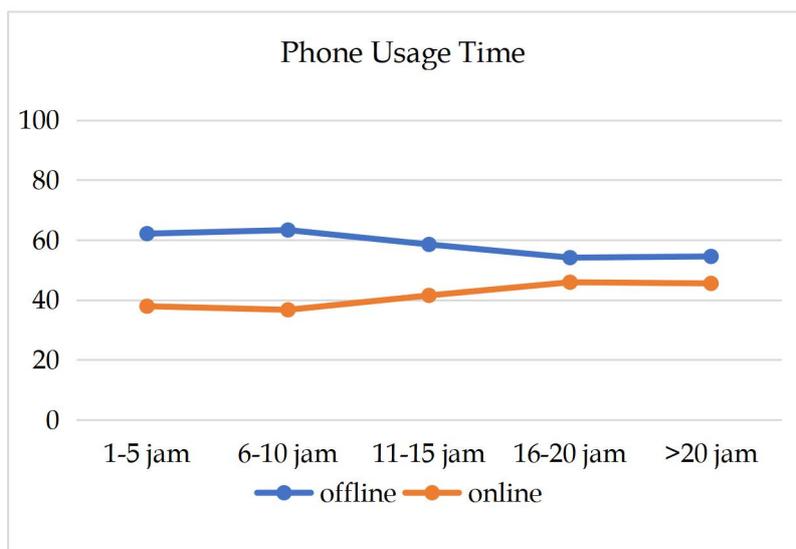


Figure 1  
Graph of Length of Time Using *Handphone*

Based on Figure 1 on the duration of mobile phone use, students who prefer offline self-disclosure show a decrease in the number of users with the shortest to the longest usage time. In contrast, students who like online self-disclosure show an increase in the duration of use from the shortest time to 11-15 hours, then decreases in the longer duration. The results revealed that students who preferred online self-disclosure used their mobile phones more frequently than those who preferred offline self-disclosure. This means that these students use cellphones more often to access the internet and social media as a means of communication. Currently, social media is the center of interaction for students, including to disclose personal information. The level of social media utilization in daily life is related to the intensity of its use, which affects individual self-disclosure. Ariani (2018) shows that 37.3% of the intensity of social media use affects self-disclosure. Yuniar & Nurwidati (2013) research also showed a relationship between the intensity of Facebook use and self-disclosure, namely the more time spent on Facebook, the greater the opportunity for students to carry out self-disclosure.

Students who favor offline self-disclosure tend to have high social skills. These social skills make them more willing to talk and express their feelings or problems (Anggraini, et al., 2017). Students with good social skills may see social media as an additional means of connecting with peers (Kraut dkk. dalam Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). Although mobile phones as a communication medium can encourage self-disclosure, students are expected to use mobile phones and social media creatively, wisely, and carefully.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study shows that overall, SMA Negeri 5 Tasikmalaya students tend to prefer direct self-disclosure. Nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, eye contact, voice, and body movements provide a sense of physical, emotional, and social presence that is important to students. Both in-person and online self-disclosure have a positive impact on students' self-identity formation, relationship development, and psychological well-being, including in supporting their academic and career achievements.

In terms of aspects, students are more likely to talk about personal information such as attitudes, interests, and finances in person, while general topics can be discussed both in person and online. Personal guidance services are an effective alternative in helping students develop appropriate self-disclosure, by understanding and complying with applicable norms and having boundaries between public and private information. Through service strategies such as group discussions and role plays, students are expected to live a happy, peaceful life, and be able to optimize their potential.

Based on the results of the research and analysis conducted on the self-disclosure of X and XI grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Tasikmalaya, the author suggests several steps that can be taken by school staff and counseling guidance teachers, as well as providing some suggestions for researchers who will conduct further research, as follows:

1. For the School and Counseling Guidance Teachers

The school and educators in the field of counseling guidance are expected to be able to implement and expand the development of personal guidance services aimed at increasing the self-disclosure of X and XI grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Tasikmalaya. This can be

done through the provision of classical guidance services, groups, and individual or group counseling. The goal is to help students develop self-disclosure appropriately so as to reduce the risks that may arise.

## 2. For Further Researchers

For researchers who are interested in conducting further research on self-disclosure, it is recommended to consider the following steps:

- a. Develop additional data collection methods, such as interviews and observations, to strengthen the research results in accordance with the actual conditions.
- b. Investigate various aspects of self-disclosure using different research methods and techniques, such as correlation, comparison, and difference tests, especially in the context of variables such as gender, class, interest, technology use, and other relevant variables.
- c. Investigate different aspects of self-disclosure using different research methods and techniques, such as correlation, comparison, and difference tests, especially in the context of variables such as gender, class, interests, technology use, and other relevant variables
- d. Develop a new design for personal guidance services with a hypothetical approach, and future researchers can use other methods such as experiments to evaluate the effectiveness of such services in developing students' self-disclosure.

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