Self Disclosure Analysis of Alter Account Users on Twitter: A Social Media Study

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ABSTRACT: Social media is something that cannot be separated from the life of a society that is very attached to technology. With social media, people can easily build new identities and express themselves within them. This study aims to analyze Alter account users on Twitter social media to conduct self-disclosure. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with social media analysis. The results of the study show that individuals who use alter accounts do self-disclosure because of social influence, new benefits, privacy risks, and a tendency for reciprocity.

Keywords: Social Media, Alter Accounts, Self-Disclosure

INTRODUCTION

Like an addiction, social media is something that is owned by almost all humans in this technological era. Even in an era where the digital native generation was born, most minors can still access social media. In 2017, Databoks (2022) released data stating that there were as many as 96 million social media users in Indonesia. This data has jumped to as many as 191 million active users in 2022. This data set is also supported by data reports from the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers that the percentage of penetration of social media users in the age range 13-18 years is 99.16%, aged 19-34 years as much as 98.64%, aged 35-54 years as much as 87.3%, aged 5-12 years as much as 62.43%, and aged over 55 years as much as 51.73%. These data are concrete evidence that there is an increase in social media users at every age. What also proves that the phrase about social media is an effective place to bring distant people closer is valid (Jang & Park, 2020; Lee et al., 2023; Pai et al., 2022; Simonet et al., 2015).

Talking about social media is inseparable from explaining the true definition of social media. Nasrullah (2015) defines social media as an internet medium where users are allowed to interact, communicate in order to form social bonds with users, and even represent themselves. The concept of social media that is open to anyone makes a place which according to Kerpen (2011) contains images, text, and videos as a safe space that can allow individuals to create whatever identity they want. Furthermore, Turkle (2015) states that in the digital space, anyone can be anything. Which means that there are many accounts on social media that do not use real identities.
This data is also supported by data reports from the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers that the percentage of penetration of social media users in the age range of 13-18 years is 99.16%, aged 19 -34 years old was 98.64%, aged 35-54 years was 87.3%, aged 5-12 years was 62.43%, and aged over 55 years was 51.73%. These data are concrete evidence that there is an increase in social media users at every age. What also proves that the phrase about social media is an effective place to bring distant people closer is valid (Arkema et al., 2021; Belova et al., 2022; Messeter, 2015).

In 2022, the Global Web Index will conduct a survey and report trends related to social media in Indonesia. Consecutively, the social media with the most users falls on WhatsApp, followed by Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Telegram, Twitter, Pinterest, and Line (GWI, 2022). Among all social media that have recently become popular among Indonesians, Twitter is one of the social media that tends to be used without the user's real identity (Panjaitan, Tayo, Lubis, 2020). Usually the name used in the accounts concerned is not the original name, this is what is then known as an Alter account (Maulani and Priyambodo, 2021). It is through these accounts that an individual usually grows another personality (both the real personality or the new personality that is created). Hesadiwana and Syafitri (2022) explain that an Alter account is generally a place where individuals carry out a process of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure by Wood (2012) is defined as a situation in which an individual discloses something that is unknown to others about himself. The concept of self-disclosure is also explained by Maryam (2018) as a psychological response shown by an individual by disclosing personal aspects to others through various media (Gabel et al., 2022; McGill et al., 2018).

Based on this explanation, the researcher wants to know how the process of self-disclosure occurs among Alter account users on Twitter social media. The fact that there is no clear identity on the Alter account makes information on self-disclosure tends to be vague and difficult to detect its association with certain individuals personally. So by directly obtaining data through Twitter social media, researchers are trying to explore the process and motivation for using Alter accounts by individuals.

METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative method (Moleong & J., 2014). This method is combined with the content analysis method. In general, content analysis is a scientific technique that is carried out in an effort to make sense of a text that is made in the form of content. Berelson (in Krippendorff, 2004) states that content analysis using qualitative methods focuses on physically visible content. Content analysis is emphasized to develop interpretable data so that theoretical significance can be found (Fields, 1988).

The primary data from this study are tweets related to self-disclosure to Alter account owners on Twitter social media. The primary data collection technique was carried out with the help of MAXQDA. The application used is MAXQDA Analytic Pro 2020. The advantage of this application lies in the package in which users are given the flexibility to retrieve data as well as perform data cleaning and create themes based on existing data.
Programming Interface data is downloaded using the MAXQDA application.

The data collection related to self-disclosure was carried out within one week from March 5, 2023 to March 12, 2023. Due to the researchers' limited knowledge, the MAXQDA application was used only to retrieve raw data, not text analysis. Withdrawal of data is carried out limited by three types of keywords, namely "Alter account", "second account", and "non-account". These three words are predominantly used by Twitter users to express their openness in their Alter account. In addition, the main goal is to enrich the categorization of data from predetermined keywords.

This study uses qualitative content analysis based on the content that has been obtained (Summative Content Analysis). This technique is generally used to get the essence of a complex text. Rapport (2010) also added that this analysis as a whole can find the impact of a content on the audience. The main thing that is sought from a summative analysis is not about the experience of meaning, but how people make sense of the experience they have through narrative. Based on the analysis that has been carried out, at least four major themes have emerged, namely: (a) Social Influence for choosing to use Online Communities, (b) Social Benefits, (c) Privacy Risks, (d) Reciprocity Tendencies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Twitter social media limits its users to create content limited to only 140 characters in one tweet so that the contents tend to be short. After the keywords “Alter account”, “second account”, and “not account” were entered, 1,004 tweets were obtained containing all of these keywords. After the data is obtained, then the data is cleaned. Data cleaning is done first by grouping the existing data into three categories including retweets, weblinks, and personal content (contained in Table 1). Cleaning is then carried out by skimming all the data that has been entered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>The Tweets Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Retweet (RT)</td>
<td>Is an information diffusion mechanism that allows an individual to make tweets reach a wider audience network (Body, 2010).</td>
<td>&quot;RT @izacmeowton: Ya kali akun Alter buka identitas.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Retweeted @genuinebun: Vibes akun ini kayak akun Alter. Thanks base.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Weblinks (https://…)</td>
<td>Links shared by Twitter users</td>
<td>&quot;Pertama, itu akun pribadi dia dan dia bisa dengan bebas post apapun disana. Kedua, mungkin dengan bercerita di akun 0 followers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Content Category Groups
3. Personal Content

Tweets that contain personal content and are shared by individual accounts. This content is specifically described by:

- pure opinions or other people’s opinions on certain topics (either directly or from other platforms) which are re-dissemination via Twitter
- messages between Twitter users regarding a particular topic (@userID “message content)
- Content in the form of photos, videos and other social media that are shared on Twitter and contain certain topics

"Gue tuh kayak expektasi gue ke diri sendiri tinggi gitu. Point kedua juga. Gue kalo lagi masanya cemas banget gue bakalan takut sama yang namanya notif di mentab. Sampe beberapa kali, mutual di akun gue yang ini gue unfoll saking takutnya."

“Akun sosmed bebas lah mau pakai foto asli atau tidak. Gak ada larangan bukan KTP juga. Ngapa lu yang ribet. Iya pamerin aja muka anehnya 7-0 7-0.”

After grouping the tweet data which contains the keywords "Alter account", "second account", and "not account" it is found that the dominating content is weblinks (both shared by individual accounts, institutions, and institutions), the total number is as much as 41.6% or as many as 418 tweets. The second place is occupied by retweet content which covers 30.8% (ie as many as 310 tweets). The least data is found on personal content (without retweets or weblinks), namely 27.4% or 276 tweets. The data is presented in the form of a pie chart in Figure 1.
This research only analyzes data that is included in the personal content category which contains three keywords "Alter account", "second account", and "non-account". Overall it was found that there were 556 data tweets that were relevant to the research topic and were then analyzed. This is done because retweets and weblinks do not reflect actual individual opinions (tend to contain promotions and other individual opinions). The next step is to categorize the tweets with personal content into five categories: (1) Expressing pure opinions without commenting or sharing online news links, (2) Tweets commenting on or sharing online news links, (3) Loading private messages to other Twitter users. (i.e., @userID “fill content”), (4) share non-media online news links, and (5) Share photos, other content, and videos from non-twitter social media. After that, data cleaning containing relevant tweets is obtained. The following is an example of a tweet that is considered irrelevant from the research topic:

- “9 Potret Rinni Wulandari Pamer Baby Bump Sebulan Jelang Melahirkan Anak, Kedua: Dalam beberapa foto yang diunggahnya di akun media sosial miliknya, baby bump Rinni sudah terlihat membubung’.”

Examples of tweets that contain promotions:

- “Assalamualaikum kakak, boleh saya minta tolong bantu promosiin akun kami? Kami ingin berkarya juga membanggakan kedua orang tua saya. Dengan support kakak siapa tabu aspirasi kami bisa di dengar banyak orang.”

With the main goal of data cleaning being done to get "pure" opinions, it means that the tweets that are analyzed are indeed personal opinions of Twitter users related to feelings of anxiety that arise when looking for a job. Independently, the researcher carried out data analysis following the stages described by Bengtsson (2016), namely the decontextualisation, continuing at the recontextualisation stage (these two stages are carried out simultaneously to look for units of meaning and take their essence), the next stage is the categorization (a procedure that conducted to identify themes), and the compilation.

After the process of searching for units of meaning has been completed, the next stage is coding consistency checks by means of Independent Parallel Coding. In this process two other coders are voluntarily involved to conduct content analysis in a blind review of all content included in personal content. The main goal is to re-test the categories that have been compiled by previous researchers. This is also done to simultaneously get other categories that might have been overlooked. Furthermore, the researchers compared and analyzed the similarity of the categories between the different coders.

Based on the stages of the procedures carried out and considering the categories that emerge from each procedure, there are at least two major themes revealed in this content analysis (Table 2).
Table 2.
Theme Definitions and Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Social Influence</td>
<td>Content that includes how social influence can influence a person's decision to use Twitter as a medium for self-disclosure</td>
<td>Change in attitude to be negative; Change in attitude to be positive; The presence of pressing conditions; Doing self-effect; Doing it for other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Social Benefits</td>
<td>Content that contains the benefits that users get when disclosing themselves on Twitter social media</td>
<td>A sense of shared destiny; The joy of sharing perspectives; Feel more welcome environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Privacy Risk</td>
<td>Content that contains the tendency to maintain / not protect user privacy when disclosing themselves on Twitter</td>
<td>Secure privacy; Privacy is threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Reciprocal Tendencies</td>
<td>Content containing two-way communication between Twitter users regarding self-disclosure tweets</td>
<td>Negative Tones; Positive Tone; Neutral Tones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Socially Influenced Twitter Users to Use Alter accounts on Social Media Twitter as a place for self-disclosure is dominated by calls stating that social media Twitter tends to be used when stressful conditions occur in the real world and there is no place to tell stories in the real world. This is the main reason why then Twitter was chosen. These tweets include the following:

[T497] “Kayaknya emang udah gak ada tempat aman buat kita melampiaskan perasaan kita. Bahkan akun medsos pun yg kita kira bisa jadi tempat ternyaman kita ternyata susah.”
Not only that, Twitter users also use this social media to find various information related to how to manage good emotions. There are various studies that have proven that social media Twitter is useful for sharing information (Holton, 2014) or in general forming and internalizing tacit knowledge, a knowledge that is very personal and difficult to be explicit like general knowledge (Panahi, 2016). Self-disclosure through safe space is not something new in Indonesia (Nadlyfah and Kustanti, 2018), but it is a new thing to do on Twitter social media by using an account that is not an individual's personal account. This is also related to the Twitter social media which tends to maintain the privacy of its users so that it can be used properly to add tacit knowledge about how good emotional management can be done.

In addition to social influence, the use of Twitter media accounts as a place for self-disclosure also fosters social benefits. The majority of Alter account owners state that a sense of shared destiny is found more on social media Twitter than in the real world. These tweets include the following:

> “Hahaha mostly temenku kerja pada begini. Alhasil mereka bikin 2 akun tiktok. Iya gak akun tiktok doang sih, akun sosmed yg lainpun kalo niatnya udah jelek pasti ada aja akun alter atau anonym nya. Bilangnya sib 'Wajarlah, cowo normal inittuh'; iya iya ajalah.”

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A qualitative discourse analysis of various tweets with the keywords "Alter account", "second account", and "not account" found a critical discourse, meaning that there is also a privacy risk that must be borne by the owners of the Alter account. Most of the critical discourse indicates that some Alter accounts using fake identities can be found intentionally or unintentionally by real-world acquaintances. Some accounts are also not only fixated on disclosing themselves regarding specific matters, but their privacy regarding individuals in the real world is also spread through Alter accounts (both in the form of photos, complete personal data, screenshots of chats, and so on). This can be seen through the example tweet below:

> “Di posisi yang sama, sampe sekaran akun manapun sosmed sampe pribadi gak ada foto karena takut. Tapi kalo akun gak ada foto dikatain mental pengecut atau akun alter yang berani debat tanpa liatin muka. Padabad gara-gara ini.”

> “Iyaa, sempet jdi akun real klo ga salah, trus beralih akun alter, ngerinya dia tau alamat rumah kan padabad aku ga ngasih tau.”

> “Tipikal akun tolol, berlindung di balik alter. Dikira orang gak bisa ngelacak siapa dia.”

Synergy International Journal of Psychology

https://journal.sinergi.or.id/
There is a very important thing in self-disclosure which is also not missed and found in social media data by researchers. The data relates to how the responses from other people who read the self-disclosure behavior of an individual on Twitter social media are clearly uploaded publicly. Sasmita, Rahayudi, and Muflikhah (2022) stated that on social media Twitter, there are various types of tones that are the color for any feedback related to content. In previous research by Gainau (2009), it was stated that the main problem when someone does self-disclosure lies in what the individual is trying to express. The extensive social media allows anyone to respond to what is trying to be expressed, including attempts to blame oneself, attempts to shift the blame on others, to things that should just be an outlet for emotions. This study then found that most of the self-disclosure efforts made by individuals on social media Twitter were responded to neutrally by other users. This is because most of them tend to feel that it is not the right business to deal with. So that the direction of the tone tends to be neutral compared to negative or positive. Examples of these tweets are as follows:

T465  “Yang pertama, dia pake second account dengan 0 followers, berarti dia emang bener-bener curhat tanpa pengen diketahui siapa-siapa. Yang kedua, berarti kamu yang ga ada kerjaan stalk akun dia, dia gak cari perhatian tapi kamu yang terlalu perhatian. Gws deh.”

T466  “Gini deh, pertama dia curhat begitu di sosmed mungkin karna emang dia gak punya temen cerita. Kedua dia curhat gitu di akun kosongan yang 0 folks tapi kamu malah bilang caper karna akunnya ga private. Ya mungkin dia mikir siapa juga yang mau nyari akun nya. Ketiga kamu gatau apa2 mending diem.”

T467  “First thing first, kata kamu followers dia 0, tapi kamu tau story itu, artinya kamu yang keko. Kedua, kamu gaperah ada di posisi dia, jadi kamu ga punya bak untuk judge dia. Ketiga, itu sosmed dia, jadi bak dia buat post apapun di sosmed dia, apalagi itu akun tanpa followers.”

The theory of self-disclosure is a framework for understanding how an individual tries to express what they have been holding back so far. Salsabila and Maryatmi (2019) explain that in a society that actually expresses itself is valued as an effort to get peace. The same thing is also done by individuals in cyberspace. Self-disclosure is trying to be done in an individual effort to foster good emotional management. This emotional management is carried out by removing negative emotions in the form of splice through the Alter account or by trying to create positive emotions by giving positive affirmations in the form of tweets with a positive tone.

CONCLUSION

Content analysis using a qualitative method was carried out on 558 tweets with pure opinions containing the keywords “Alter account”, “second account”, and “not account” collected as of March 5-12 2023 using the 2020 version of the MAXQDA Pro application. The main goal of qualitative analysis is to look for major themes for self-disclosure efforts from Twitter users on their Alter accounts in 2023. The analysis approach is carried out inductively, meaning that themes
and categories emerge from the results of reading individual content. Credibility is maintained in the data analysis process by carrying out a coding consistency check, namely independent parallel coding with two other coders.

The results of qualitative discourse analysis found four major themes that use these keywords. The first is the presence of social influence in the form of emotional pressure that makes users self-disclose on Twitter social media. Apart from that, there are main benefits that can be obtained by doing self-disclosure on Twitter, namely that users can find friends who share the same fate. Furthermore, it was found that there is a risk of spreading the privacy of users and other people uploaded by users. And the main tendency of the given reciprocity is neutral. Where people don't think of Alter accounts as disturbing accounts with the release of emotions that are carried out.

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