

## SELF-DISCLOSURE WITHIN BUREAUCRACY IN THE NEW MEDIA ERA

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### Abstract

*Interpersonal communication in government has its own mechanism which is identical with formal situation. This situation can lead face-to-face communication becomes stiff and tense. New media creates a new way how to communicate and interaction between superior and subordinate within bureaucracy. However, although social media provides convenience and opportunity in interpersonal communication, the subordinates still felt that there is a boundary to communicate with the superior. This study aims to know behavior of self-disclosure between superior and subordinate in The Audit Board of the Republic Indonesia (BPK RI) through Facebook. This study used in-depth interview method and observation of selected informants for data collection. Informants selected based on position, how long the informants working, how long the informants have the Facebook account and liveliness to use Facebook to communicate. Based on analysis of data collection, it can be concluded that self-disclosure between superior and subordinate in social media, through Facebook, creates a new opportunity to establish interpersonal relations and changing the way to communicate each other. There are many factors that affect the speed of the development process of interpersonal relationship or instead decelerate. It is revealed that the disinclined also influence the way subordinate to disclosure themselves. Nevertheless, such barriers can be overcome through communication mediated by media social.*

**Keywords:** Bureaucracy, New Media, Self-Disclosure.

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### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, information and communication technology has grown rapidly, in particular internet and social media as a new media. The development is affecting all aspects in human life, including the way to communicate and interaction. Based on data from Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII), internet users in Indonesia has been increasing. In 2014, total the internet users in Indonesia is 88 million and in 2016 increased by 51% to 132.7 million and the largest users are worker or employees, both business and government. Data from Ministry of Communication and Informatics is shown that in 2015 the largest proportion of internet users is government employees/military/police totally 67,1% from 9.636 respondents. Employees use the internet to ease interpersonal communication between employees such as sending a work by an email, the delegation of task by social media, etc.

APJII's survey found that 97.4% the internet user in Indonesia used internet for social media. In government organization, the use of social media affects social relations between the employees, including relations between superior and subordinate. Interpersonal communication in government organization has its own mechanism which is identical with formal situation. There is an hierarchy that must pass on by the lower level of employee to communicate with the top level of management in organization. Through interpersonal communication in social media, the stiffness and tense relations between superior and subordinate within bureaucracy become thaw. The characteristic of social media allow the employees connected without face-to-face interaction, hence subordinate no need to use nonverbal communication. For an example, when feast days, subordinates can express their congratulating to superior directly through social media without any stiff or tense.

As a new media, there is a lot of social media can be use to mediated interpersonal communication, such as Whatsapp, Instagram, Path, Line, Wechat, Facebook, etc. APJII's survey says that social media content which is most frequently visited by internet users in Indonesia is Facebook that is equal to 71.6 million users. Facebook is a feature-rich and highly accessible application used by smartphone and tablet. A charger data of Facebook smaller than another social media application, contain more text, easier to upload video or picture. The interaction occurs in Facebook involve interpersonal communication process. Facebook user directly know what is being thought or done by their friends and at the same time directly can provide comment.

The most important form of interpersonal communication is when we can engage a conversation or reveal about ourself to other, often called self-disclosure. Level of openness through interaction in Facebook can determine the phase of interpersonal relations one to another. This phase can be seen from flexibility and depth of the subject. Some people are too open up themselves, it called over disclosure who inform everything about themselves but there are also people who shut themselves from others, it called under disclosure who rarely talk about themselves. The difference of self-disclosure's phase in Facebook can be seen through pictures uploading, video, comments or status updated of activities.

When we examined the openness of Facebook user through social penetration theory described as a gate of interpersonal communication which can contribute to the closeness of relationship. Self-disclosure in social penetration theory can increase the degree of intimacy within friendship as well as involving the disclosure of privacy matters that can cause inconvenience, worries and feelings threatened. Therefore, people will share their intimacy aspects only with people who they trust.

The Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia (BPK RI) is an institution that has a duty for audit the accountability of state finance. BPK has approximately 6.000 employees with various educational back ground. That's why it needs positive synergy from the entire employee to create an optimal performance. Positive synergy of the BPK's employees needs a good interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication in government organization has a role to maintain the sustainability of organization because communication is a main access to bridging the flow of information that directly concerned with daily activities in organization.

Some previous research suggests that self-disclosure through Facebook has an impact to the relations. However, according to business core of BPK as an auditor and in line with three basic values of BPK i.e. independency, integrity, and professionalism, then each auditor of BPK is expected not too open up in social media, especially related to sensitive issues relating to BPK's duty.

Start from this comprehension understanding, this study aims to know relation which is occuring within government organization based on self-disclosure concept. This study reveals how self-disclosure behavior exist in relationship between superior and subordinate in BPK through Facebook.

## **METHOD**

Interpersonal communication is a communication which occur in interpersonal relations (Littlejohn, 2009:547). Good and effective interpersonal communication skills are required in our daily activities, including activities within organization. Interpersonal communication in organization related to how to communicate between superior and subordinate.

Interpersonal communication between superior and subordinate needs to consider some of important criteria, such as: medium which is used in communication, is there any chance for feedback, adaptation or response, where the interactions occur, whether public or private, whether the focus of interpersonal communication on the achievement of the task or any other focus, how the reciprocal influence, whether the act of one affect the actions of someone else.

There are two types of interpersonal communication ie face-to-face communication and communication using media. Face-to-face communication has the advantage compared to mediated communication (Ruben & Stewart, 2006, in Kurniati, 2014:14). This is because face-to-face communication can use auditory, tactile, olfactory and auditory to capture hints or indirect messages which delivered by the speaker. While communication using media only can run mediated by

communication medium, whether it is an abstract material such as sociocultural context, mental, and symbolic or real technical equipment of communication technology such as television, radio, telephone, internet, etc.

Penetration social theory as a gate of interpersonal communication refers to a bonding process relationship where the movement of individuals' communication and superficial relationship leads to intimate relationship. Intimate relationship not only assumed by physical closeness, but also proximity intellectual and emotion when they divide information about their activities (West & Turner, 2011:168). Self-disclosure is a way to show that there is a progress in superficial relationship becomes intimate relationship. Self-disclosure in face-to-face communication is different with self-disclosure in cyberspace. In cyberspace, self-disclosure related to how much they speaks about their selves that indicated with list of personal desire, activities, attitudes, and so on. In Facebook, social expression showed on number of pictures posted, number of posting in wall-post, number of photos album and number of friends.

This study used in-depth interview method and observation of selected informants for data collection. Informants selected based on position, how long the informants working, how long the informants have the Facebook account and liveliness to use Facebook to communicate. In-depth interview used to gather information about communication between superior and subordinate as well as view of self-disclosure behavior in the development of relations between superior and subordinate. Observation used to see self-disclosure behavior because maybe self-disclosure behaviors showed are faked. Observation is done by analyzing communication superior and subordinate in Facebook, whether uploading and comments in text, pictures or emoticon.

Data analysis intended to seek an in-depth understanding of the social reality that examined as the social reality is understood by the research subject. Data analysis is required in order to interpretation the meaning behind the words and behavior of the research subject. After getting the result of in-depth interview with informants and then performs coding technique, start with open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

This study is presented in descriptive. A number of aspects or factors that underlying is expected occur in finding, so it can enrich the existing analysis. Therefore, this study used thematic analysis which focused in government organization setting and self-disclosure behavior superior and subordinate, whether face-to-face communication and through Facebook.

## **RESULT OF DISCUSSION**

Informant 1 is a man, echelon II, 48 years old, he has been working in BPK for 21 years and active user of Facebook for 8 years. He is an open minded, friendly, and authoritative. Informant 2 is a woman, echelon III, 53 years old, she has been working in BPK for 26 years and active user of Facebook for 7 years. She is an emphatic, serious, and authoritative. Informant 3 is a woman, staff, 30 years old, she has been working in BPK for 11 years and active user of Facebook for 8 years. She is a cautious person.

Result of the discussion founded that through Facebook, the informants exchanging breadth of information, while through face-to-face, the informants exchanging depth of information. Nonetheless, each informant has their own boundary about what is considered private or what is considered to share to public. Informant 1 and 2 are making the posting related to PR program, work performance, social life and hobbies. Informant 3 is just making a posting related to daily activities and social life. Informant 3 as a subordinate does not making posting related to her work. This interesting finding is triggered by the inconvenience as a subordinate, whether in position and occupation.

Related to self-disclosure, superior is felt that they have been opening with subordinate so there is an intimacy where the relations that built has reached in to stable phase. This is contrary to what is perceived by subordinates. They are felt that the development of relationship is not reach a stable phase. There is a different perceive between superior and subordinate related to intimacy. Intimacy is more shown through Facebook.

Formal and informal communication significantly occurring in employment in bureaucracy was very different. But when mediated by Facebook, boundary between formal and informal communication becomes blurred. Superior and subordinate are more freely to express their private life. When superior making a posting related to their work, supposed to be a formal communication, but when mediated by Facebook, using an informal communication subordinate can give a comment and feedback.

In superior point of view, intimacy in Facebook illustrated with giving comments or responses to subordinate's posting. Another example is giving a feedback to superior's comment when superior making a posting. It is reinforces the superior statement that intimacy in Facebook same as face-to-face communication. While from the subordinate point of view it is different. Intimacy is a things rarely perceived by superior when doing face-to-face communication.

There are similarities from all of informants. Communication which mediated by technology can bridging the difference of distance and time but there is a limitation to express emotion because it is just limited to text usage, emoticon, and picture. This study is shown that superior and subordinate as informants have different point of view about intimacy. Based on perceived of intimacy from informants, it was found that interpersonal communication in face-to-face more have a tendency to develop significantly compared to interpersonal relationship which is establish through Facebook communication.

## CONCLUSION

Superior and subordinate as a user can expressing their selves casually, open and convenience through social media compared to face-to-face communication. Self-disclosure in social media can encourage the development of relationship between superior and subordinate. The intimacy that is established through social media is different with the intimacy that is formed through face-to-face, especially for subordinate. The disinclined to superior is still felt by subordinate because of position and occupation.

Both superior and subordinate said that social media gave and created an opportunity to establish an intimacy interpersonal relationship. For them, social media is an expansion of communication networks.

Based on result of the discussion, it can conclude that interpersonal communications through face-to-face and social media are completed each other. Self-disclosure between superior and subordinate can occur in social media that is has an important role to develop the relationship. The development of relationship happens when has been pass on certain phase which is superficial exchange phase into intimacy exchange phase. This is based on the fact that the development of interpersonal relationship through face-to-face communication runs slow and complex, each individual must peel carefully private layer of another individual which wrapped tight.

Based on data analysis can be concluded that self-disclosure between superior and subordinate in social media, through Facebook, creates a new opportunity to establish interpersonal relations and changing the way to communicate each other. There are many factors that affect the speed of the development process of interpersonal relationship or instead decelerate. It is revealed that the disinclined also influence the way subordinate to disclosure themselves. Nevertheless, such barriers can be overcome through communication mediated by media social.

Recommendation for next research is the development of the theory, communication practices and research approach. From the theory, to be explained more complete about the development of relationship, for similar research can use Maintenance Relational Theory. From communication practices, a similar research can use to examine diagonal communication between employers in organization with another organization within the scope of the government organization. From research approach, a similar research can use quantitative approach to measure the impact of self-disclosure towards the development of relationship.

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