

Social Media Effect on Divorce

1st Maria M Widiantari

Dept. of Communication

Sebelas Maret University

Surakarta, Indonesia

ryaristunugroho@student.uns.ac.id

3th Prahastiwi Utari

Dept. of Communication

Sebelas Maret University

Surakarta, Indonesia

prahastiwi@staff.uns.ac.id

2nd Pawito

Dept. of Communication Sebelas Maret

University

Surakarta, Indonesia

pawito_palimin@staff.uns.ac.id

4rd I.D.A Nurhaeni

Dept. of Sociology

Sebelas Maret University

Surakarta, Indonesia

ismidwiastuti@staff.uns.ac.id

Abstract— *Social network sites offer many advantages to interact and communicate. On the other side it also increased the risk especially on personal communication. In this descriptive qualitative study we examine the marital privacy information disclosure on Facebook, online infidelity, and the effect of both on divorce. We conducted online interviews to 16 Facebook users of single man/woman who have divorced in last 5 years. We investigated the content of their status and the disclosure on Facebook, their online infidelity, and the effect of both on divorce.*

The expected finding is to understand how the disclosure of marital privacy on Facebook encourage an online infidelity that eventually become the cause of divorce cases.

Keywords—*Social media, marital privacy disclosure, online infidelity, divorce*

I. INTRODUCTION

The daily lives of Indonesian people today are inseparable from the internet and social media. Social media is one of the results of technological developments that have a great contribution on communication and socialization. Everyone has a social media account, even more than one social media account, which allows one to communicate, interact, and establish relationships with other people around the world. This new technology has been widely accessed and has become a daily necessity, becoming a lifestyle, even increasing one's standard of living.

The development of gadgets and smartphones allows everyone to access information and interact whenever and wherever. Research conducted by We Are Social, a British media company that works with Hootsuite, shows that the average of Indonesian people takes 3 hours 23 minutes a day to access social media. Indonesia's total population is around 265.4 million, and 130 million are active social media users. The most downloaded applications are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Line. Facebook became the most visited social media with an average online duration of 12 minutes 27 seconds per visitor. The average age of Facebook users is 24-48 years old, 44% of them are women [1].

Every technological development produces two different sides. Social media is a very effective medium of communication and interaction to achieve communication goals. On the other hand, we cannot avoid the negative effects. Communication using internet media has an impact

not only on communication behavior but also on the flow and variety of communication message content. Every day, we face the invasion of messages in various forms, contents, and ways, even information that might not be useful for us [2].

The development of information and communication technology have a positive impact on build and maintain relationships with other people throughout the world. It can be used to share information anytime and anywhere, communicate without borders, fill the leisure time, or online learning. While the negative impacts are reducing face to face interactions, reducing physical activity so that it has a negative impact on health, costs both to buy gadgets and internet packages, eliminate some jobs because of being replaced by technology, and also loss of privacy especially on the use of social media [3].

Divorce rates in Indonesia increased rapidly year to year. Since 2000, the increase in divorce cases has reached 15-20 percent of total marriages each year. Many factors encourage increased divorce rates, such as economic problems, domestic violence, marital conflict, unpreparedness due to early marriage, and infidelity. The presence of social media is also suspected to be one of the factors supporting the increase of divorce cases in Indonesia. Although it is not the main factor that significantly causes divorce, online infidelity is one of the supporting factors. In several studies, it was found that infidelity both in real life and on social media can occur when a person faces problems in the household [4].

In this study we investigate the disclose of marital privacy information on Facebook, online infidelity, and the effect of both on divorce. The expected findings of this study is to understand how the disclosure of marital privacy on Facebook encourage an online infidelity that eventually become the cause of divorce cases.

We conducted online interviews to 16 Facebook users of single man/woman who have divorced in last 5 years, and investigated the content of their status and the disclosure on Facebook, their experience on online infidelity, and the effect of both on divorce

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Online Interpersonal Communication

Information technology allows everyone to communicate with each other wherever and in any situation. Since the world wide web era found by Tim Berners-Lee in 1991, communication patterns have changed from face to face communication and verbal communication, becoming media communication. The advantages of media communication include, in terms of time, being more effective and efficient, requiring no physical presence, and thus overcoming geographical constraints.

Some experts say communication media has weaknesses in terms of expressing expressions, which are not easily represented in the form of words. This assumption is denied that the obstacle can be overcome by the presence of emoticons, even though the use of emoticons is still questionable. The use of emoticons can be for reasons of writing style, language preference, or ease of describing moods. Whatever the reason, communicating using media does not eliminate the essence of the meaning of the message.

Communication is not only about sending message but also about producing and exchanging meanings. While interpersonal communication refer to communication between two people that take place face-to-face (dyadic communication), where the process takes place spontaneously and informally, with maximum feedback between the participants, and the role of each participants are flexible.

Interpersonal communication can be viewed in a variety of ways, each of which can help us to better understand the overall communication process. Interpersonal communication can occur in any environment, be it formal or informal. Most of the interpersonal messages are informal and face-to face encounters. With the exception of telephone conversations, most of the interpersonal communication involves people close enough to see and touch each other [5].

In the era of internet, we connected with lot of essential things in our everyday life, and by the use of gadget, many task has becomes easier and social contacts has been increased. We can access and share any information anytime and anywhere, with people from different parts of the world together to communicate with each other across the world. It gives an opportunity to improving communication, to meet new people online and establish a friendship, even to share the personal information online.

The development of social networking sites has consequences on communication patterns using computer media. Communication with computer media can occur in the context of mass communication or interpersonal communication. In this study, the focus is on interpersonal communication through Facebook.

B. Social Media : Facebook

The new communication technologies are actually an extensions and convergences of communication technologies that make possible for human to do business, share information, even sustain personal relationship. It makes interconnectivity between various devices that enhance the convenience to interact with others around the world. In collaborate with internet technology, social media being one

of innovations in communication technology that also crucial in people's nowadays life. As noted before, Facebook became the most visited social media with an average online duration of 12 minutes 27 seconds per visitor [1].

The growth of social media users, has attracted the attention of researchers especially related to the effects of media on human life. Social media are used to find friends, (re)connect with old friends, family and relatives, maintain relationships, share information, join group, create and manage events, pass time, and much more. It is not only allows people to know more about others but also provides an opportunity to tell about themselves and socialize with others.[6] Facebook provide the user the ability to disclose and share their information including personal information such as birthday, favorite activities, hobbies, place of work, education, daily activities, status updates, photos/videos, wall posts, links to their favorite websites, associations and interactions with other user and groups, relayed thoughts and conversation between others users and more [6].

Many researcher noted social media has negative effect on people's life, such as reduced face to face interaction, enhance social cohesivity, and even loss of privacy [3]. Interpersonal disclosure used to be something that was intimate and private. Facebook has changed that perception

And Facebook become one of the causes of divorce because it provides an opportunity to disclose personal information to public areas including marital private information and the opportunities for online infidelity.

C. Privacy Disclosure on Social Media

Communication on social media complements face-to-face conversations and other mediated forms of communication, and even reinforce communication in other channels. However, it also involves privacy risk of sharing private information. Westin in [7] defined privacy as "the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about themselves in communicated to others". While Altman in [6] define privacy as "selective control of access to the self", or interpersonal boundary control through which individuals or larger social unit aims to achieve a temporarily desired level of interpersonal contact.

Privacy is necessary to maintain personal autonomy, emotional release, and self-evaluation as well as limited and protected communication, so it is linked to self-disclosure. Sandra Petronio have developed Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory that shows us how someone controls privacy information, whether it is hidden from others, how much information can be shared with others, and to whom privacy information will be shared [8].

Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory stated : (a) People believe that they own and have a right to control their private information; (b) People control their private information through personal privacy rules; (c) Others that given access for the private information become co-owners; (d) The owner and co-owners negotiate a mutual privacy rules of telling others; (e) Private turbulence occurs when the privacy rule is violated.

The management of privacy consist of three main parts of model : *privacy ownership, privacy control, and privacy turbulence*. Privacy ownership refers to who owns the information, including the second party namely co-owner of

the private information. Privacy control is the negotiation among the owners of private information about the rule in order to keep or disclose to others. Moreover, privacy turbulence is the condition where the owners of private information lose control, break the rule and disclose the private information to other party.

In the context of social media, privacy turbulence may happen wider and faster because everyone may participate in the conversation. Once the private information disclosed via social media, the owner can not stop the spread. The different from human face-to face communication is that in the face-to-face communication, this private information can be managed by the rule negotiated between the owner and co-owners. In computer mediated communication, the control of privacy information-being disclose or not- is on the owner's hand. Once it is reveal, then the effort to stop the wider spread will be useless [9]

Greene in [6] define self-disclosure as an interaction between at least two individuals where one intends to deliberately divulge something personal to another. Meanwhile, Derlega in [6] said that self-disclosure acts are both voluntary and intentional and comprise verbal and non-verbal acts, thought, feelings, experiences, aspirations, fears, likes and dislikes. Self-disclosure has been reported to be generally rewarding in terms of forming intimate associations, social contacts and friends, receiving social acceptance and approval.

The degree of intimacy in communication shows on the amount of disclosure - the frequency and duration of user's disclosure- and the depth of disclosure. We assumed that if someone believe that the others with whom the information is being shared on social media will take appropriate decisions or not, the will develop a boundary structures with high ownership possibilities and disclose more information (amount and depth) about themselves.

In the CMC context, Jiang in [6] reported that the amount and depth of self-disclosure is directly related to their perceived value of the desire outcome. So did Cho and Walrave found that the motive of using social media influences the disclosure and privacy settings.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

In this qualitative descriptive research, we conducted online interviews to 16 Facebook users of single man/woman who have been divorced in last 5 years. We investigated the content of marital privacy information disclosure on Facebook, their experience on online infidelity, and the effect of both on divorce. The condition, process, and the connection of any important aspect that found in this research being studied and described in this paper.

This study applied Petronio's Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory and exploring the disclosure of marital privacy information of an active social media users and its consequences on online infidelity and divorce.

Data analyzed in 3 part. The first is the marital privacy disclosure, the second is online infidelity experience, and then the impact of both on divorce.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Social media that dominates nowadays human interaction, need to manage the privacy. The management of

privacy consist of three main parts of model : privacy ownership, privacy control, and privacy turbulence.

A. Marital Privacy Disclosure in Facebook

The privacy ownership refers to who owns the information about the person. It is not about the original owner, but also the second party that has shared information because the original owner reveals them [10]. Previous studies conducted by Chennamaneni and Taneja [6] found that self disclosure on social media is particularly rewarding in terms of forming and fostering relationship, building social capital, and managing identity.

According to boundary management perspective, a marital couple manage their talking about private matters each other, manage the ballancing need for disclosure and the need for privacy. Any prerequisite condition needed for disclosure and the strategies of disclosing may use to tell and to reply private information, such as setting, receiver, sender, and the relationship characteristic [11]

A personal information does not mean especially sensitive, privacy, or embarrassing [12]. In this study, marital privacy information refers to all information about the spouse relationship, that should be kept as unpublsh information. In relation with sharing information in Facebook, we asked participants to remember and describe a recent situation involving a marital privacy disclosure.

First, we asked participants about the information they considered as privacy information, including about the self (feeling, thoughts, opinion), family affairs and romantic relationship, problem and conflict of any kind, personal achievements and experiences, health conditions, and financial situation. Meanwhile, the concept of privacy information according to participants varies, between information that must be kept alone or may be shared with limited people

For example, Fitri (38)- two years divorcee- described privacy as keeping information to herself and not sharing to others at all : " There is so many things in our life that I want to keep on myself, and be my concern only... If I want to share this privacy information, I have to choose someone I trust". Contrast with Fitri, Dicky (34) – six months having an affair with an office mate- described privacy as a bounded sphere with limite person in this boundary, to whom he share privacy information.

Then, we asked participants about information they considered as marital privacy information, and the answers are sex and romantic (intimacy), achievements, and marital conflict. Some participants added work, personal information, and personal stuffs as privacy information that should not be share to public.

As mentioned earlier, the willingness to disclose privacy information depended on the need for disclosure, trust in the partner, and the availability of alternative communication channels. The rules of sharing information is different between online and face-to-face communication. In online context, participants seem like stronger to control their privacy than in face-to-face context, because of the risk being wider spread and the opportunity to reconsider before disclose. Social media audiences are potentially large and anonym even can not be physically perceived. And as a digital data, the information shared in social media are persistent, replicable, searchable so that the concept of co-owners in this context is unavailable, except they consider the depth and breadth of disclosure through interpersonal communication with trusted online friends, and moving to

private channels such as Messenger. This following paragraph will discuss about marital privacy information disclosure in Facebook according to participants.

Sex and romantic (intimacy)

Sex and romantic (intimacy) considered as the most private of marital privacy information which must be carefully considered before disclose it in social media. For couples, sex and romantic relationships (intimacy) is something that is not feasible to disclose to public. According to some participants, speaking about sex, romanticism, and intimacy even though in a relationship with a married couple is culturally taboo. They are more comfortable discussing about this with close friends in face-to-face communication context, with limited boundaries.

Furthermore, participants also considered that disclosing sex, romantic, and intimacy issues on Facebook must consider the norms adopted by the community, what was generally accepted by public, considered the politeness, and did not result moral and law problems. For example uploading images or intimate photos, or expressing romantic feelings for their spouse.

This participant's view also applies to the relationship of cheating partner, in a much more controlled level. Usually information about relationship status with spouses and cheating partners is expressed differently. The status of spouse is usually revealed in a Facebook account profile, while information about a special relationship with a cheating partner is usually revealed from comments or "likes" on someone's status, or not responding at all but communicating in private through private channels.

Achievements

Achievements are also described as a privacy information, but not really connected with marital status or marital privacy information. For some people, assets are not need to be revealed on social media. Besides unethical, they don't want to invite criminals. Some participants argued, revealing personal achievements arouse pride, show family success, and get praise. But it feels better to keep it as private information and it is not something that should be known by public.

In the family, husband and wife may have their own income. One of the participant's considerations to avoid revealing income and property through social media is not to create a feeling of rivalry between husband and wife

Marital Conflict

Many studies found that disclosing domestic conflicts can lead to divorce. As mentioned earlier, the participants in this study were divorcee who have been divorced in the last 5 years, both men and women.

We explore participant's experiences in using social media before, during the process, and after divorce, whether they reveal marital conflicts on Facebook or not. Participants argued that revealing a husband and wife conflict on Facebook is embarrassing and also opened the chance for a third party to involve in conflict which might actually make things worst.

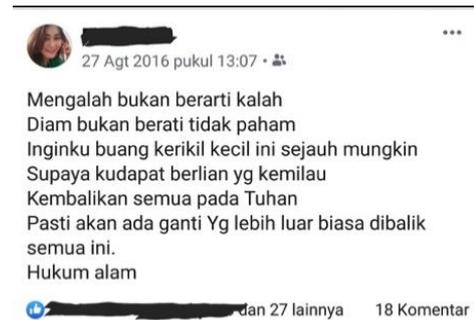


Fig 1. How participant express their felling on Facebook

Instead of revealing on Facebook, participants choose to talk to their closest friends - not close family - in a face-to-face communication.

Three participants said that during and until the divorce process, they chose to close their Facebook account in order to avoid the divorce process being known by public, because divorce always considered as a failed marriage and it is embarrassing, and did not want to involve many people (even close friends or family) during the problem.

During a marital conflict, participants express feelings on Facebook with symbolic language, wise words, or emoticons that represent feelings. For example, Fitri, who just found her husband being involved with another woman, wrote a status like shows on Fig. 1.

That symbolic sentences represent her feeling. Although did not disclose clearly, public could suspect that this participant was in conflict with her husband, but can not be sure whether Fitri was truly in marital conflict or not.

Meanwhile, a different way to disclose done by Nissya who prefers to share a link that represents her feeling when she were in conflict with her husband. According to Nissya, the links she shared not only to express feelings but also to motivate herself to be stronger. Sometimes she also hopes that her husband will read the shared link - although it is less likely- to see what Nissya feels.

As mention earlier, privacy disclosure needs any conditions and strategies for participants, not only when uploading status, but also in responding by comments or answering questions. Likewise in responding the status of others, it also need any conditions that support whether to clearly disclose privacy information, use symbols, or share links.

The relationship closeness with someone is also one of the factors that influence the disclosure of marital privacy information. Being closer and more often communicating with friends by online, increasing the trust to others so that more convenient to disclose their privacy information.

B. Online Infidelity

Internet brings the change on today's personal relationship in the context of social media. The uses of social media had given arise to a new challenge in married, namely online infidelity. Commonly, infidelity understood as a violation of the marital agreement, a betrayal of one's trust, and a threat to the marital bond. There were two types of infidelity: sexual and emotional infidelity. The increasing of the use of social media, produced a new type of infidelity: online infidelity.



Fig. 2. Express feeling by share a link

The concept of online infidelity refers to a romantic and/or sexual relationship with someone other than the spouse, which begins with an online contact and is maintained mainly through electronic conversations that occur through online media.

First, we asked participants about their concept of online infidelity, then we classified the answer on three condition : (1) Violations of marriage institutions that exclusively involve emotional and sexual aspects, so that engaging emotionally and sexually with other people who are not their spouse is a form of infidelity ; (2) Intimate conversations carried out in a confidential context and hidden from their spouse are a form of infidelity ; (3) Intimate relationships that involve intimate conversation and/or sexual intercourse with other people that hidden from their spouse and violate the principles of trust between husband and wife are a form of infidelity.

From the definition above, then we asked the participants about their experience with online infidelity. Four participants -they are men- said that they have an experience on online infidelity. Aldo (37) had his infidelity ended in divorce but he did not marry his cheating partner. The remaining three participants claimed that they have an affair by online, but their affair considered as not a serious affair, only in the form of intimate chat. When this infidelity caught by their wife, it cause a temporary quarrel but it have not been ending in divorce.

While another six participants were women, and had experience with online affairs. The two women participants (Fany, 29 & Yuli, 34) committed an online infidelity and ended in divorce. Nevertheless, they remain in a secret relationship, but they did not marry with their cheating partner who is still in marriage with another woman.

The remaining 4 participants claimed that they have never involved in an affair, but they ask for divorced because they found their husbands having an affair and two husband finally marry the women with whom they had an affair.

Further, the participants were asked, when they were in conflict with their spouse -in relation with online infidelity- to whom they disclosed their privacy and whether they expressed their feelings by uploading status on Facebook. Most participants claimed not to disclose the conflict through a Facebook account. Even if they want to write status, they use certain sentences that they thought will not directly understood by public. Fig. 3 shows the way participants express their feelings on Facebook while they were in marital conflict.

When they were in marital conflict with spouse, usually the participant disclosed to their closest friend -not to one of their family members- in the context of face-to-face communication. Generally, the information they reveal to closest friends was not detail about the conflict except they did it to a friends who are very close and someone they can trust.

In the context of online disclosure, they disclose just a little information about this marriage conflict only to online friends they can trust based on their experiences before and through personal message. When participants asked whether participants chose same-sex friends or not while they disclose their marital conflict, most participants chose the



Fig. 3. Feeling expression while in marital conflict

same-sex friends, but some participants chose based on trust in close friends whether they were same-sex or not.

Then we asked participants their opinions about the risk of disclosing privacy information in Facebook about online infidelity and furthermore the risk of online infidelity towards divorce. Most participants stated that not all disclosures of marital privacy information could lead to online infidelity. But it can happen if it is followed by intensive personal communication and involves emotional aspects. According to participants, the risk of privacy disclosure on Facebook on online infidelity is not significant.

While the participants' opinions about the risk of online infidelity on divorce were also not significant. Infidelity is believed cause hurt and eliminate trust, but it is not a main factor in causing divorce. Only online infidelity that involves emotional and sexual aspects has the potential to cause divorce, unless the spouse cannot accept the online infidelity and ask for divorce.

Disclosing marital privacy information on Facebook and online infidelity is considered not the direct cause of divorce. Other conditions are needed that encourage divorce.

V. CONCLUSION

In this article, we examine the marital privacy information disclosure on Facebook, online infidelity, and the effect of both on divorce. The expected findings of this study is an understanding of how the disclosure of marital privacy on Facebook encourage an online infidelity that eventually become the cause of divorce cases.

The result suggest the disclosure of marital privacy information have no relation with online infidelity and there are many other conditions needed before social media is considered as the cause of divorce.

Our participants define the most privacy information in marital relationship is sex and romantic (intimacy), achievements, and marital conflict. The reveal of these on Facebook considered as taboo, useless, and have any negative impact. The disclosure of marital privacy information done using symbolic language, sentences that are not vulgar or share links that represent the feelings. Disclosure of marital privacy information is not directly related to online infidelity, unless followed by intensive

interpersonal communication through private message. And the online infidelity is not directly causing divorce, unless involving emotional and sexual aspects, or the spouse could not accept the infidelity and asked for divorce.

In sum, this study demonstrates the importances of investigating management disclosure of marital privacy information by marital couples on social media, disclosure of private information between marital couples, and communication strategy to improve relations that have been damaged by online infidelity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank my committee members Prof. Pawito, Prahastiwi Utari, PhD., and Prof. I.D.A Nurhaeni who have guided the research process and writing this article.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all participants who gave me the trust to hear their privacy information regarding the issue of marriage and divorce for the sake of the continuation of my dissertation research process.

REFERENCES

- [1] "Riset Ungkap Pola Pemakaian Medsos Orang Indonesia", <https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2018/03/01/10340027/riset-ungkap-pola-pemakaian-medsos-orang-indonesia>, accessed in June 5, 2019
- [2] M.P Bosamia, "Positive and Negative Impacts of Information and Communication Technology in our Everyday Life" <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325570282> Conference Paper · December 2013
- [3] E. Drago, "The Effect of Technology on Face-to-Face Communication", in *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, Vol. 6, No.1, Spring 2015, pp.13-19
- [4] Kustini and Ida Rosyidah, "Ketika Perempuan Bersikap: Tren Cerai Gugat Masyarakat Muslim", Ed. 1, Cet. 1.— Jakarta: Puslitbang Kehidupan Keagamaan 2016, p. 2
- [5] T. J. Yesudhasan, "Communication Principles" http://164.100.133.129:81/econtent/Uploads/Communication_Principles.pdf, Malaysia: Rai Technology University Campus (handout)
- [6] A. Chennamani, A. Taneja, "Communication Privacy Management and Self-Disclosure on Social Media – A Case of Facebook", in *Twenty-first Americas Conference on Information Systems*, Puerto Rico, 2015, pp. 1-11
- [7] D. Teutsch, Masur, and Trepte, "Privacy in Mediated and Non Mediated Interpersonal Communication : How Subjective Concepts and Situational Perceptions Influence Behaviors", <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2056305118767134>
- [8] S. Petronio, "Communication Privacy Management" in *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 8th Ed. E.M. Griffin (Eds). New York : Mc-Graw Hill, 2012, pp. 168-180
- [9] M.S. Yulianti, L.S. Anggreni, and P. Utari, "Privacy and Social Media : Conceptual Review on Private Turbulence in Communication Privacy Management of Social Media", *ICOMACS 2018, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, Vol. 260, pp.199-202
- [10] S.W Littlejohn, K.A. Foss, and J.G. Oetzel, "Theories of Human Communication Theory" ,11th Ed., Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2017
- [11] S. Petronio, "Communication Boundary Management: A Theoretical Model of Managing Disclosure of Private Information between Marital Couples", *Communication Theory*, Volume 1, Issue 4, November 1991, Pages 311–335, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.1991.tb00023.x>, Published:17 March 2006
- [12] William A. Parent, "Privacy : A brief Survey of The Conceptual Landscape", *II Santa Clara Computer & High Tech*, L.J, 21,23, 1995
- [13] S. Trepte & P. K. Masur, "Need for Privacy", <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316330228>, January 2017 DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_540-1