# 마이크로 블로그 사용자의 자기노출에 영향을 미치는 요인에 관한 연구☆

# Explicating Factors explaining Self-Disclosure in the Usage of Micro-blog

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## 요 약

본 논문의 목적은 마이크로 블로그를 사용함에 있어서 자발적인 자기 노출에 영향을 주는 요인을 살펴보는데 있다. 마이크로 블로그 사용이 폭발적으로 증가하고 있는 상황에서, 자신의 정보를 자발적으로 노출하는 사람들에 대한 연구는 아직도 부족한 실정이다. 이러한 측면에서 본 연구는 마이크로 블로그 상에서 자발적인 자기 노출의 과정을 계획된 행위이론에 근거하여 조사하였다. 이를 위해 본 연구는 자기노출에 대한 태도, 주관적 규범, 인지된 행위 통제 등의 변수를 자기 노출 행위의 선행변수로 설정하였다. 또 프라이버시 염려, 인지된 즐거움, 사회적 참여를 위한 정보 동기, 관계적 동기의 자기 노출 태도에 대한 영향 정도를 조사하였다. 본 연구의 결과는 다음과 같다. 우선 자기노출에 대한 태도, 주관적 규범, 인지된 행위 통제 등의 변수는 자기노출 행위에 대해 통계적으로 유의한 관계를 갖는 것으로 나타났다. 하지만 인지된 즐거움을 제외하곤 프라이버시 염려, 정보 동기 및 관계적 동기 등은 통계적으로 유의한 관계를 갖고 있지 않은 것으로 나타났다.

## ABSTRACT

The current study aims to examine what determinants have influences on voluntary self-disclosure in the usage of micro-blogging. Even though the usages of micro-blogging have increased at an exponential rate in South Korea, it has been not well understood the process in which people voluntarily disclose their self-information. In this regard, we tried to examine self-disclosure process on micro-blogging based on Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). For this purpose, attitudes towards self-disclosure, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control were set as the antecedents to self-disclosure behavior. The influences of factors including privacy concern, playfulness, informational motivation for social participation, and relational motivation on the attitude were also investigated. The results of an online survey revealed that attitude toward self-disclosure, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control anticipated the self-disclosure behavior at a statistically significant level. The attitude was not influenced by privacy concern, informational and relational motivation, but by playfulness. The implications of these results are also discussed.

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## 1. Introduction

A variety of social media are gaining momentum on the Internet and reshaping people's existing social relationships and communication patterns. Even though some different orientations among each social media exist, most of these allow users not

only to maintain the existing social relationships but also to expand their networks[1]. In especial, microblog as the latest type of social media is currently gaining popularity at an exponential rate worldwide. For example, users in Twitter, one of the most famous worldwide microblog services, have increased by more than 6 millions every month during the year 2009 on average[2].

Microblog is usually understood as a special blog where users upload short posts which, in turn, are distributed to their friends or connected people. Its easy communication mode enables users to spread and retrieve information in a rapid way across multiple access points(i.e., instant message, web, mobile device, etc.).

Microblog enables users to keep in touch with each other by allowing users to easily share their daily updates. By doing this, it creates special values to its users in a way that whom you know is highly correlated with what you come to know as many social scientists argue. It has also features that enables users to observe information flows among the members of its ecosystem[3].

In this context, a wide variety of groups have taken advantages of the unique functions in this new social media for diverse purposes. Corporate have started to transfer microblog into the commercial domain. They uses microblog to increase their sales figures, to communicate with their customers, and to boost their reputation. For example, the traditional media outlet such as New York Times and BBC used it to send headlines.

Politicians use it for their own political campaign. It is well known that Barack Obama's strategy can be contributed to his usage of twitter to a large extent. In addition, it is noteworthy that microblog has played a huge role in governmental changes in Tunisia and Egypt.

It has been also frequently witnessed that a broad spectrum of users from students to celebrities disclosure their private feelings and thoughts in their own microblogs, which can be understood as "self-disclosure" behavior. While this kind of "self-disclosure" has been rather widely studied in the context of offline relationship buildings[4], a little is known about why people take this kind of behavior in the microblog usages.

There are several rationales for scholars and practitioners to need paying more attention to this "self-disclosure" process in the microblog usage. First, it has a close relationship to the issues of online privacy infringement. Many online privacy infringement case happen when people with malicious intentions take advantages of what others voluntarily disclose in their own online media. In other words, self-disclosure can be a cause for any possible infringement. With deep understanding of "self-disclosure" process, more productive solutions for privacy infringement may be conceivable.

Second, "self-disclosure" is one of the major activities in the microblog. Then, examining this process can provide important clues for what microbloggers need. In turn, microblog service providers or other relevant practitioners can use these information to improve their services or develop new kinds of services.

Third, an examination on "self-disclosure" process in the microblog usage can provide useful insights into the unique features of online communication compared to offline communication.

The major purpose of this study is to examine the process where people voluntarily disclose their private thoughts and information in the usage of micro-blog by integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)[5-6] into self-disclosure theories. The TPB has been the widely used framework for explicating the process of human behaviors.

Moreover, the current study investigates the extents to which several other factors have influences on the self-disclosure behaviors in the context of microblogging. These factors includes privacy concern, perceived enjoyment, informational motivation for social participation, and relational motivations.

# 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

## 2.1 Self-disclosure and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The previous literature has defined self-disclosure as the act of revealing one's own information, private thoughts, feelings and experiences[7-8]. In especial, this concept has been treated importantly in the context of relationship developments. It has been argued that self-disclosure has been found to have positive influences on relational developments [9]. The concept has been also related to individual mental well-beings. That is, the deeper self-disclosure people make the higher level of mental well-beings people have.

Self-disclosure in online settings attract particular attentions from academic field as well. The previous literature shows that people have more tendency to disclosure  online than offline. For example, Greist et al. found out that patients have more tendency to report more symptoms and adverse behaviors when they were interviewed by the internet rather than face-to-face[10]. Park and Floyd also argue that people show high-levels of self-disclosure in on-line relationships[11]. In this regards, the existing study widely discusses the correlation between  self-disclosure behavior and the unique features of online settings such as anonymity and limited social cues[12].

However, almost none of research has investigated what leads to self-disclosure in social media, especially in the microblog usage. In this context, the current study modified and employed the TPB as the framework to explicate this.

The TPB is an modified version of the theory of reasoned action (TRA). The TRA states that two determinants, attitude toward behavior and subjective norms, lead to intentions, and finally to behaviors. The TPB modifies the TRA in a way that it incorporates the construct "perceived behavioral control" to describe situations where individuals are short of substantial control over a specific behavior. It has been one of the most influential theories in explaining and analyzing human behaviors from a wide range of topics. For example, Pavlou and Fygenson  used the TPB to predict electronic commerce adoption[13]. It has been also employed to explicate the organ donation behaviors[14].

The underlying concept of the TPB is that one's behavior is predicted by behavioral intention, and that the intention is determined by the person's attitude(i.e., an individual's positive or negative evaluation of self-performance of the certain behaviors), subjective norm(i.e., the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior), and perceived behavioral control(i.e., the individual's perceived ease or difficulty of performing the particular behavior along with their belief about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior altogether.

Applied the TPB to the individual self-disclosure behavior context, it can be conceivable that attitude toward self-disclosure, subjective norm , and perceived behavioral control jointly predict self-disclosure intention, and in turn, the intention predicts self-disclosure behavior. Thus, the following

hypotheses can be proposed:

H 1 : Attitude toward self-disclosure has an influence on self-disclosure intention.

H 2 : Subjective norm has an influence on self-disclosure intention.

H 3 : Perceived behavioral control has an influence on self-disclosure intention.

H 4 : Self-disclosure intention has an influence on self-disclosure behavior.

## 2.2 Factors influencing attitude on self-disclosure

### 2.2.1 Privacy Concern

Privacy, "the right to be left alone", has gotten many scholarly attentions. In especial, the fast development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) but with its vulnerability to many different types of privacy attacks have triggered increasing interests in this issue in online context.

Within many social science disciplines, the concept of privacy has been usually operationalized as "privacy concern", which can be understood as perceived future possibility of privacy loss[15-16]. The amount of privacy concern varies from individual to individual based on the person's own perception and values. Many existing studies suggest that a person's privacy concern influences his behavioral intention in online communication settings in a negative way[17]. For example, Stewart and Segars argues that users' intention to purchase a product online decrease as their privacy concern increase[18]. Awad and Krishnan found out that users are less willing to post online profiles as they have a higher level of privacy concern[19].

Likewise, the self-disclosure behavior in the microbog can be influenced by this privacy concern

especially in the realm of individual attitudes. Thus, the following hypothesis can be proposed.

H5 : Privacy concern has an negative influence on attitude toward self-disclosure.

### 2.2.2 Extrinsic(Utilitarian) and Intrisic (Hedonic) Motivation

Motivation has been identified as a key determinant of general behavior. In this regard, Davis et al. suggests that there are extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in people's value system. Extrinsic motivation leads people to do some activities in a way that it is instrumental in achieving other outcomes that are distinguished from the activity itself[20]. The clearest examples of extrinsically motivated behaviors are those performed to obtain a tangible reward. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation guides people's activities in a manner that their activities themselves are an final end.

In other words, when people are intrinsically motivated, they are moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external products, pressures or reward. Together, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations influence individual intentions regarding an activity as well as their actual behavior[20].

The previous literature suggests that informational motivation for social participation and relational motivation are major motivations in the usage of micro-blog[21]. It is expected that these two major motivations as extrinsic motivation can shape attitude toward self-disclosure.

It has been also argued that perceived enjoyment as intrinsic motivation has an positive influence on the usage of webblog[20]. In this regard, it is also conceivable that this motivation also shapes attitude toward self-disclosure. Based on the discussions

above, three more hypotheses are proposed as follows:

H 6 : Informational motivation for social participation has a positive influence on attitude toward self-disclosure.

H 7 : Relational motivation has a positive

influence on attitude toward self-disclosure

H 8 : Perceived enjoyment has a positive influence on attitude toward self-disclosure.

〈Table 1〉 The detail description of items used for 9 constructs in this study

| Variables (Constructs) | Description |
|---|---|
| Privacy Concerns | - I am concerned that my private information and thoughts in my microblog can be misused by others without my consent.<br>- I am concerned that my private information and thoughts in my microblog can be exploited by third parties without my consent.<br>- Generally, I am interested in the issues related to privacy infringement. |
| Perceived Enjoyment | - I feel that time goes fast when I use my microblog.<br>- I use my microblog to remove boredom.<br>- It is fun and enjoyable to use  microblog. |
| Informational Motivations for Social Participation | - I use microblog to share information and opinions with others.<br>- I use microblog to gather professional knowledge and information.<br>- I use microblog to figure out what is happening in our society. |
| Relational Motivations | - I use microblog to build relationships with those have common interests with me.<br>- I use microblog to feel bonding with those whom I can share interests with.<br>- I use microblog to build new relationships with those whom I can't meet on a daily basis. |
| Attitude toward Self-disclosure | - I like disclosing my private feelings and thoughts in my microblog.<br>- It's pleasant to disclose my private feelings and thoughts in my microblog.<br>- I feel good when I disclose my private feelings and thoughts in my microblog. |
| Subjective Norm | - Those who are important to me think that I need to disclosure my private thoughts and feelings in my microblog.<br>- Those who are important to me have already disclosed their private thoughts and feelings in their microblog.<br>- Many people have already disclosed their private thoughts and feelings in their microblog. |
| Perceived Behavioral Control | - I have enough time to disclose my private feelings and thoughts in my microblog.<br>- I can spend my time in disclosing my private feelings and thoughts in my microblog.<br>- I can spend my time in disclosing my private feelings and thoughts in my microblog.<br>- I am confident of learning how to use microblog.<br>- I am confident of explaining the functions of microblog. |
| Self-disclosure Intention | - I am willing to disclose my private feelings and thoughts in my microblog.<br>- I am going to disclosure my private feelings and thoughts continuously in my microblog.<br>- I am going to use my microblog more often for the purpose of disclosing my private feelings and thoughts. |
| Self-disclosure Behavior | - I disclosure my private feelings and thoughts to the extent that I can't control myself in my microblog.<br>- I disclosure my private feelings and thoughts very frankly in my microblog.<br>- The private feelings and thoughts written in my microblog are from my deep hearts. |

# 3. Research Methodology

## 3.1 Materials and methods

This study used the current microblog users in South Korea as the subjects. An online survey was administrated to collect data. The survey questionnaires consisted of 38 items among which 30 7-point Likert scale items were used for measuring 9 constructs in the model. The detail explanations about these 30 items are shown in Table 1. The collected data were analyzed employing structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM has advantages over analysis procedures such as regression analysis in a way that it takes measurement errors into accounts. The reliability and validity of constructs were also checked.

# 4. Results

## 4.1 Demographic Analysis

The respondent rate was 34.3%. The final numbers of valid respondents was 307. In the

finalized sample, 51.8% were males and 48.2% were female. In terms of ages, 14% were between 10 and 19, 41.4% between 20 and 29, 30.9% between 30-39, and 40-49 between 13.7%. In terms of educational levels, college graduates were 58.3% followed by high school graduates(26.4%) and graduate school(6.8%). 21.2% of respondents' annual houses incomes are between about 3000 and 4000 dollars followed by between 2000 and 3000 dollars(19.9%) and Between 1000 and 2000 dollars (14.0%). Most of respondents were students(31.9%) and office workers (31.6%).

## 4.2 Analysis of Reliability and Validity

The cronbach's alphas for measurements of each construct were calculated. Generally, scholars argue that the requirement for reliability score should be above 0.8[22], Nunnally insists that it is also acceptable as long as the reliability score is higher than 0.6, specially in the case of exploratory studies. In this regards, all of measurements met the reliability requirements as shown in Table 2.

The goodness of fit for the measurement model

(Table 2) The results of reliability and validity tests

| Var | MD(SD) | α | AVE | CR | PC | IM | RM | PE | AT | SN | PBC | INT | BEH |
|-----|--------|---|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| PC | 4.98(1.12) | .871 | .699 | .874 | .836 | | | | | | | | |
| IM | 4.47(1.04) | .803 | .521 | .763 | .278 | .722 | | | | | | | |
| RM | 4.72(1.03) | .864 | .700 | .874 | .291 | .583 | .836 | | | | | | |
| PE | 4.44(1.11) | .870 | 704. | .877 | .249 | .531 | .619 | .839 | | | | | |
| AT | 4.39(1.01) | .871 | .808 | .926 | .157 | .367 | .422 | .528 | .899 | | | | |
| SN | 4.70(0.92) | .754 | .539 | .761 | .241 | .369 | .414 | .492 | .605 | .734 | | | |
| PBC | 4.46(1.04) | .866 | .714 | .880 | .084 | .434 | .483 | .588 | .506 | .508 | .845 | | |
| INT | 4.61(1.02) | .866 | .700 | .875 | .200 | .440 | .529 | .613 | .725 | .641 | .584 | .836 | |
| BEH | 4.12(0.96) | .693 | .759 | .803 | .093 | .385 | .345 | .531 | .631 | .490 | .531 | .658 | .759 |

Note. PC=Privacy concern, IM=Informational motivation, RM=Relational Motivation, PE=Perceived Enjoyment, AT=Attitude toward self-disclosure, SN=Subjective Norm, PBC=Percevied Behavioral Control, INT=Self-disclosure Intention, BEH=Self-disclosure behavior
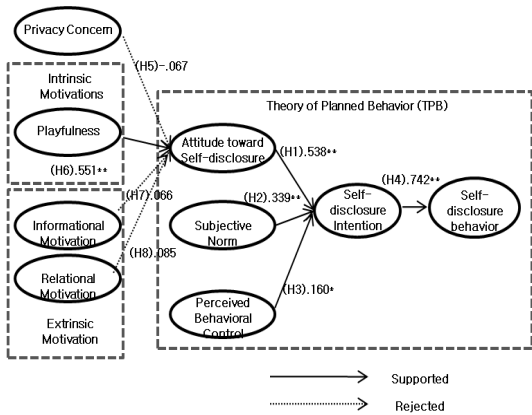
Note: *p<0.05,**p<0.0

(Figure 1) SEM results

were tested. All the fit statistics showed that the measurement model had a fit to the data($\chi 2$ =750.08 , df = 288     NNFI= .901 CFI= .919 ; RMSR= 0.072).

For the convergent validity, it was tested whether the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct was more than 0.5 or not. The results demonstrated that the AVE scores in all of constructs  were higher than 0.5.

In terms of discriminant validity, it was tested whether the correlations between items in any two construct are lower than the square root of the AVE shared by items within a construct. The results suggest that the measurement model in the current study met the requirement criteria.

## 4.3 SEM Results

A SEM was adopted to test hypotheses proposed. Even though  some scholars perceive 0.9 as the cutoff criteria for NNFI and CFI[23], Chau argues that it is also acceptable as long as NNFI and CFI score are above 0.8 respectively[24]. In this regards, all the fit measures in the structural model had a moderate fit to the data( $\chi 2$=840.09, df = 301 ;

NNFI=.889 ; CFI =.889 ; RMSR= .077)

Fig. 1 shows the results indicating that all of attitude toward self-disclosure( $\beta$ =.538, p<0.01, R2= .409), subjective norm( $\beta$ =.339, p<0.01, R2=.722), and perceived behavioral controls( $\beta$ =.160, p<0.05, R2=.551) are significant predictors of self-disclosure intention. This supports H1, H2, and H3. In addition, self-disclosure intention is a significant predictor of self-disclosure behavior( $\beta$ =.742, p<0.01).

Among the proposed antecedents on attitude toward self-disclosure, only perceived enjoyment is a significant predictor ( $\beta$ =.551, p<0.01) while privacy concern( $\beta$ =-.067, p>0.05), informational motivation for social participation( $\beta$ =.066, p>0.05), and relational motivation( $\beta$ =.085, p>0.05) are not.

## 5. Discussion

This study examined the process where microbloggers disclose their feelings, thoughts and information based on the TPB and self-disclosure theories. The results demonstrate that all of attitude toward self-disclosure, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control have significant influences on self-disclosure intention, which, in turn, effects self-disclosure behavior. It implies that the TPB can be also applicable even in the explication of the self-disclosure process in the micro-blog as in the case of other human behaviors[5].

When their influences on attitude toward self-disclosure were examined,  it was found out that only perceived enjoyment has an significant effect on attitude toward self-disclosure. On the other hand, privacy concern does not have an significant effect on attitude though microbloggers perceived the risk of self-disclosure as relatively high. The plausible explanation for this is as follows: the gains which they will get is greater

than the cost they have to pay by disclosing their self-information in the microblog usage to many users. In addition, it implies that perceived risk does not necessarily restrict people's behaviors incertain contexts.

It was also shown that neither informational motivation nor relational motivation has a significant effect on attitude toward self-disclosure as opposed to the significant influence of perceived enjoyment. One feasible explanation for this is that microblog as a social media does not provide enough user environment (or interface) where people can post contents for professional knowledge and meaningful relationships. In other words, microblog users have difficulties in posting those kinds of contents because of the short word limit in many microblog services. On the other hand, the user environment of microblog fits into trivial fragments of thoughts. That is, even when microbloggers write their private feelings and thoughts, it is likely that most of what they write are about less sensitive issues such as expression of preference for celebrities.

The limitation and the direction for the future study need to be discussed. This study used the online survey to collect data. In this regard, the samples used in the current study might be skewed toward those who are familiar with online survey. The future study needs to get over this limitation.

In addition, we only found one antecedent that have a significant influence on attitude toward self-disclosure. However, it is highly likely that there are more variables affecting attitude toward self-disclosure. In this context, a more closer examination on this in the future study is needed.

Moreover, the future research needs to take a look at the differences in factors influencing self-disclosure in the usage of micor-blog across many different countries.

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