

**SELF-DISCLOSURE AMONG  
MALAYSIAN BLOGGERS**

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$SD$	Standard deviation
$M$	Mean
$N$	Sample size
$\%$	Percentage
$\alpha$	Alpha

**PENDEDAHAN KENDIRI DALAM KALANGAN  
PENULIS BLOG MALAYSIA**

**ABSTRAK**

Dalam dunia siber yang semakin berkembang pesat kini, pelbagai bentuk rangkaian sosial dibentuk dan dijadikan media saluran bagi tujuan perhubungan manusia, termasuklah blog. Blog yang biasanya diwujudkan sebagai tempat pendedahan sendiri telah menimbulkan banyak perbincangan terutamanya dari segi faktor and akibat pendedahan sendiri di dalam blog. Kajian ini dijalankan bagi meneliti corak pendedahan sendiri di dalam blog serta kesan emosional dan juga sosialnya. Peserta untuk kajian berbentuk kuantitatif ini merupakan 325 orang penulis blog di Malaysia yang menjawab borang soal selidik yang disediakan secara atas talian. Para peserta mewakili pelbagai jantina, umur, bangsa, agama, tahap pendidikan, dan status perkahwinan. Soal selidik mengandungi bahagian-bahagian mengenai latar belakang penulis blog, corak penulisan blog, tahap pendedahan sendiri, faktor yang menggalakkan pendedahan sendiri, dan akhir sekali, persepsi peserta tentang kesan emosional dan kesan sosial pendedahan sendiri di dalam blog. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa: 1) tahap jumlah, valens dan kedalaman pendedahan sendiri di dalam blog adalah sederhana, sementara niat dan kejujuran dan ketepatan pendedahan adalah di tahap yang agak tinggi; 2) motivasi utama pendedahan sendiri di dalam blog adalah untuk berkongsi maklumat dengan orang lain; 3) pendedahan sendiri di dalam blog memberi kesan positif terhadap emosi penulis blog;

dan 4) penulisan blog tentang diri sendiri memberi kesan positif terhadap hubungan sosial penulis blog dengan keluarga, kawan-kawan bersemuka, dan juga kawan-kawan atas talian. Hasil kajian mencadangkan bahawa pendedahan sendiri di dalam blog patut digalakkan kerana ia dapat memberi kesan positif baik bagi emosi malahan sosial penulis blog. Kajian ini juga memberikan sokongan kepada teori yang sedia ada iaitu teori persamaan, teori persepsi diri, dan teori penembusan sosial. Penulis blog yang menzahirkan diri di dalam blog dapat menghubungkan dirinya kepada pembaca, seterusnya membawa kepada kesedaran diri yang positif serta tingkah laku yang lebih sosial.

(287 patah perkataan)



# **SELF-DISCLOSURE AMONG MALAYSIAN BLOGGERS**

## **ABSTRACT**

In this evolving world of cyber technology, different types of social networking sites are created and becoming the medium of communication between people, including blogs. Blogs which often serve as means of self-disclosure have already sparked a lot of debates especially on factors contributing to the behavior and the effects of such behavior. This study was conducted to examine patterns of self disclosure on blogs and their emotional and social consequences. Participants of this quantitative study were 325 blog writers in Malaysia who completed a Web-based questionnaire online. The participants represented people from different gender, age, race, religion, education level, and marital status. The questionnaire consisted of sections on the bloggers background information, blogging patterns, level of self-disclosure, factor of self-disclosure and finally perceptions of emotional and social consequences of self-disclosure on blogs. Findings indicated that: 1) participants in this study self-disclosed themselves in average amount, valence, and depth, with a rather high intent to self-disclose with honesty and accuracy on their blogs; 2) the top motivation for self-disclosure on blog is to share information with others; 3) self-disclosure on blog provides positive emotional consequences on the blogger; and 4) self-disclosure on blog have positive impacts on bloggers' social relationships with family, real life friends, and also online friends. These findings suggested that self-disclosure on blogs should be

encouraged because it provides positive effects to the blogger, emotionally as well as socially. This study also provided support to the existing theory of similarity theory, self-perception theory, and social penetration theory. A blogger who self-discloses on the blog can connect him/herself to the readers and thus will lead to positive self-awareness and more sociable behavior.

(274 words)

# **CHAPTER ONE:**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

With the rising of computer-mediated communication such as emails, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social networking sites, people are capable of communicating in cyberspace devoid of the traditional face-to-face interactions nor physical contacts with one another. Blog has swiftly emerged as a tool for sharing information and self-expression for people across geographic distance. The usage of the Internet is also gradually growing each year. In 2009, there were vaguely more than 16.9 million Internet users in Malaysia, as the International Telecommunication Union reported, which account for almost 65.7% of the population (Ahmad, 2011). For a developing country such as Malaysia, the number is quite remarkable. Consistent with the social development of the rest of the world, Malaysians are also engaging themselves more into this cyber culture which has become tremendously popular.

Blogging provides an effective medium for disclosure and online interaction with others. There are many reasons for people to blog. One of them is to share information with other people on positive and negative things that have occurred to them, issues they are undergoing, and things that they do not like (Child, Pearson, & Petronio, 2009). In other words, people tend to feel at ease on disclosing information that is very personal and confidential to them online (Child & Agyeman-Budu, 2010; Lenhart, 2005; Lenhart & Madden, 2005). People make choices (whether to intentionally or unintentionally) expose or obscure information about themselves to others (Petronio, 2010). There is not much difference in bloggers making an online self-disclosure than those making face-to-

face revelations because, for both disclosures, the blogger feels that they hold in possession of their disclosed information and maintaining to have the right to control the flow of that information to third-parties (Child & Petronio, 2011).

Although recently, Facebook, Twitter, and other forms of social interaction network have gained popularity among the nations, blogs are still an important and effective tool for means of self-expression and self-disclosure. Near the end of 2013, Brandon Gaille, one of the leading small business bloggers in the world, posted on WPVirtuoso website (*www.wpvirtuoso.com*) declared that there are roughly more than 152 million blogs on the internet, and every half a second, a new blog is formed someplace in the earth. As such, it is possibly the foremost source of information on blogging patterns. However, the figures provided are not broken down by geographic location, so it is almost impossible to deduce how many Malaysian bloggers there are, and their blogging patterns. Although studies have focused on blogs in Western countries, our study targets specifically on Malaysian blogging community. As an attempt to build up a picture of Malaysian blogosphere (as the worldwide community of blogs is known), this study carried out a survey to targeted Malaysian bloggers to identify their motivations for blogging, level of self-disclosure on their blogs, and the emotional and social consequences of disclosing themselves on their blogs.

## **1.1 Problem statement**

Blogging is a social phenomena which becoming more and more popular throughout the whole wide world. As mentioned earlier, there are more than 152 million blogs on the Internet globally. Malaysia, as one of the developing countries, is also contributing to the number of blogs worldwide. Blogging, world-wide and in Malaysia can be considered a huge ‘social’ phenomenon that more research need to focus on this subject.

However, current studies on blogging have several limitations. One of the limitations is that many researches on blogs tend to focused too much on motivation and reasons of blogging (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright, 2004; Nardi, Schiano & Gumbrect, 2004a; Recuero, 2008). Studies on effects of having a blog, particularly on bloggers and their relationship with others are still limited. More studies are needed to focus on variety of aspects related to blogs including self-disclosure and emotional and social consequences of such behaviour. Inappropriate self-disclosure may lead to discomfort and conflicts with people around. These people may be family members, friends and people they met over the Internet (online friends). Therefore, it is important to look at blogging from wider aspects.

Finally, there is still lack of study on Malaysian bloggers and blogosphere. Most studies were focused on the Western communities, especially United States, and only a small number of researches were done on Asian countries. More research is required to gain a comprehensive and representative picture of the blogging phenomenon including

research in Asian context such as Malaysia. The number of Internet users in Malaysia is expanding yet the number of bloggers is still remains unclear to all.

## **1.2 Significance of the study**

This study is important because of several reasons. Firstly, it provides additional information and knowledge on blogging patterns, especially considering how blogging can affect a large number of people.

Secondly, it gives a wider picture about blogging phenomenon that goes beyond motivation by focusing on the emotional and social impacts of blogging. The findings bring significant value to the society and academician, especially psychologist, on blogging attitudes and bloggers' self-disclosure. The general public can manipulate their motivations towards their own benefit. For example, a blogger disclosing his/her feelings can make use of the blog as a personal self-therapy.

Finally, this study provides the blogging phenomenon from Malaysian perspective. Therefore, the research findings can be contributed to the development of knowledge and research studies on blogging and bloggers in Malaysia as well as to promote more studies in Malaysia. This study provides localized theories and knowledge regarding blogging and focus on cultural perspectives on blogging and self-disclosure.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

Based on the above discussion, this study has six objectives as stated below:

- 1) To identify the level of self-disclosure in blogs among Malaysian bloggers;
- 2) To identify the motivations which lead Malaysian bloggers to self-disclose their personal information in their blogs;
- 3) To examine the emotional consequences of self-disclosure on Malaysian bloggers;
- 4) To examine the social consequences of self-disclosure on the relationship between Malaysian bloggers and family members;
- 5) To examine the social consequences of self-disclosure on the relationship between Malaysian bloggers and real life friends; and
- 6) To examine the social consequences of self-disclosure on the relationship between Malaysian bloggers and online friends.

## **1.4 Research questions**

Consistent with the above objectives, this study sets to address six research questions as stated below:

- 1) To what extent does Malaysian bloggers self-disclosed themselves in their blogs?
- 2) What are the motivations which lead Malaysian bloggers to self-disclose their personal information in their blogs?
- 3) What are the emotional consequences of self-disclosure on Malaysian bloggers?
- 4) What are the social consequences of self-disclosure on the relationship between Malaysian bloggers and family members?
- 5) What are the social consequences of self-disclosure on the relationship between Malaysian bloggers and real life friends?
- 6) What are the social consequences of self-disclosure on the relationship between Malaysian bloggers and online friends?



## **1.5 Scope of study**

In order to answer the research questions and to achieve the objectives of the study, a web-based survey was conducted using questionnaire on the internet (online) with related sections on blogging patterns and its consequences among Malaysian bloggers (details on the methodology is discussed in Chapter Three). 325 Malaysian bloggers from various range of age, gender, religion, and education level answered a set of questionnaire which consisted of their background and blogging information, level of self-disclosure on blog, motivation for self-disclosure, and emotional and social consequences of self-disclosure on blog.

## **1.6 Conceptual definitions of important terms**

### **1.6.1 Blog**

Blog is a webpage which contains various things that an individual wants to reveal, and it is presented in a reverse-chronological order. For the purpose of this study, the term “blog” is used in referring to personal webpage, and the writer of the personal webpage who maintains it from time to time, is known as the “blogger”. “Blogging” is the act of posting contents on a blog. Blogs provide an ideal opportunity to study the process of human interaction, particularly related to how they portray themselves to others.

### **1.6.2 Self-disclosure**

Self-disclosure is an act of voluntarily revealing or sharing any personal information, including thoughts, feelings, emotions and experiences, about oneself to other people. The five subscales measuring self-disclosure are intent, amount, valence, depth and honesty/accuracy.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

The research on self-disclosure in Asian blogosphere is still limited. This study aims to explore the self-disclosure among Malaysian bloggers and seek the answers to all the six research questions explained in the previous section.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the background of the topic, significance of the study, research questions and objectives, and scope of the study. Chapter Two presents the review of literatures related to the study, and the theoretical framework. Chapter Three describes the methodology of the study including the measurements and limitations of the study. Chapter Four reveals the results and findings of the study based on the questionnaire completed by the participants. And finally, Chapter Five discusses the important findings, implications, recommendations for future studies, and conclusion of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to review existing and current studies related to this research. Firstly, explanation on the definition of a weblog (blog) is presented to have a better understanding on the topic. The types of blog, blogging motivations, profile of bloggers, and the relationship between bloggers and followers are also reviewed. Secondly, discussion on the definition of self-disclosure, self-disclosure theories, factor for self-disclosing, and online-offline self-disclosure is presented. Finally, the chapter provides a conceptual framework for this study.

#### **2.1 Blogging**

##### **2.1.1 Definition of blog**

It was a little over a decade since the term “weblog” first appeared as a unique form of self-expression on the Internet. Its origins may be rather current but its expansion and access have been nothing short of exceptional. Even though the initial weblogs were operating since the late 1990s (Dearstyne, 2005) and it have begun to appear as “a remarkable artifact of the web” at that era (Yang, 2007; Kumar, Novak, Raghaven & Tomkins, 2004), weblogs have developed into an accepted instrument for interactive computer-mediated communications since the past few years and still

increasing in numbers, each day, internationally. Jorn Barger coined the term “weblog” in 1997, when he started to collect links to items that he likes, to which he added some of his own remarks to them (Varadarajan, 2007). In 1999, Peter Merholz created the term “blog” by breaking the word “weblog” to “we blog” (Boyd, 2006; Blood, 2006). Both terms were employed by the society to classify web pages that had a scrupulous look and feel – with a layout design of dated records like a personal journal – which was rather unusual from the more regular Internet web pages of that period of time. For the purpose of this study, the term “blog” is used in referring to the personal webpage, and the writer of the personal webpage who maintains it from time to time, is known as the “blogger”.

A blog is a web page that is regularly updated, consisting of reasonably concise entries which are presented and recorded in a reverse-chronological order (Blood, 2002; Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright, 2004; Schiano, Nardi, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004; Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005), meaning that the recent and newest posts will be shown at the top of the page. It is often created with trackbacks and comment functions (Blood, 2002; Schmidt, 2007), and has a mixture of text, images, and audio/video items to smooth down the progression of the interactive computer-mediated communication (Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007). Blog is a virtual space where opinions, feelings and experiences can be shared with other people in the World Wide Web (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004; Qian & Scott, 2007). The features and contents of a blog are varied according to the blogger’s usage (Ko, Yin, & Kuo, 2008). For a blogger, a blog can be managed as a shared space, a

compilation of links, a personal journal, a political soapbox, a daily platform, or a set of messages to the other people of the world” (Figueredo, 2005).

From the above discussion, blog can be seen as a web page which contains various things that the blogger wants to reveal or disclose, and is presented in a reverse-chronological order. Blogs therefore provide an ideal opportunity to study the process of human interaction, particularly related to how they portray themselves to others.

### **2.1.2 Types of blog**

Taking into account that blogs and blogging routines are mounting in recognition and popularity, numerous efforts have been made to classify blogs by its types. Krishnamurthy (2002) separated blogs into four fundamental categories, along two dimensions: personal vs. topical, and individual vs. community. Quadrant I (personal-individual) contains personal intimate journals and diaries; Quadrant II (personal-community) contains the support group type of blogs where a set of friends communally blog on special private topic; Quadrant III (individual-topical) contains filter blogs which display observations and analysis of understanding on certain information from the Internet; and Quadrant IV (community-topical) contains joint substance design such as community blog. A few years soon after Krishnamurthy published his blog classification; Herring et al. (2005) modified and improved Krishnamurthy’s categorization of blogs where they ascribe blogs into five categories according to the main purpose; (1) personal journal, (2) filter, (3) k-log, (4) mixed, and (5) other. In their qualitative content examination of 203 casual blogs, 70 % of the study samples were

personal journal type, where bloggers disclose their feelings, thoughts and experience. Only 12.6% of the sample are filter blogs, where bloggers relate to and make statements on the contents of other web pages, and k-logs (knowledge blogs), which functioned as an access of finding and allocation knowledge within a group of people (used generally within an association as information managing gear particularly for the staffs, are the most uncommon, only 3.0% of the sample. The combination functions of two or more of the first three types known as mixed blogs is 9.5% of the sample, and the rest 4.5% of blogs are 'other' which serve various other purposes.

Blood (2002) differentiates blogs by its functions: (1) filters, which have contents that is external to the blogger (example: news, local or international events); (2) personal journals, which have content that is internal to the blogger (example: blogger's feelings and experiences); and (3) notebooks, which have both internal and external contents, and can be recognized by more in-depth and longer composition.

As to Recuero (2003), blogs could be categorized as: (1) personal diaries – it deals basically on author's personal life; (2) publications – more on commentaries about various information; (3) literary – the posts are on short stories, essays or poems; (4) clippings – author adds links or clippings from other publications; and finally (5) mixed – mixing personal and informative posts, commented by the author.

This study used personal blogs/journals as sample because this category of blog is the most commonly focused by researchers as they portrayed the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of the blogger, which will certainly fit for our study on blogger's self-disclosure in the blog. Majority of the blogs, about 70 percent, are detected as personal blogs (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright, 2004) which serves as a medium to disclose intimate and internal feelings and thoughts of the blogger to others.

### **2.1.3 Blogging motivations**

Numerous studies and research have explored the motivation on why people blog and the content of their blogs. People blog for several of different reasons such as:

- i. political (Drezner & Farrell, 2004; Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005)
- ii. educational (Deitering & Huston, 2004; Trammell & Ferdig, 2004)
- iii. business and marketing (Dearstyne, 2005; Kelleher & Miller, 2006)
- iv. conversation media (Efinova & de Moor, 2005)
- v. communities (Chin & Chignell, 2006)
- vi. personal blogs (Miura & Yamashita, 2007)

Parker and Plank (2000) revealed reasons to utilize media as distraction or amusement, special relations, individual personality, information, and social communications. While Efinova's study (2003) uncovered that the purpose of bloggers blog consist of inquisitiveness, the joy of sharing information with other people, and also enhance the bloggers' information supervision and learning capability.

Although the figures might differ, the foremost reason mentioned for sustaining a blog is to convey personal information, and majority of blogs have only one writer (blogger) (Herring et al., 2004; Lenhart & Fox, 2006). Further surveys investigated the reasons which lead a user to create a personal blog (Nardi et al., 2004c; Schroeder, 2003). Five main motivations have been observed: (1) talking about the blogger's life,

(2) expressing comments and opinions on topics, (3) expressing emotions, (4) organizing thoughts through writing, and (5) creating a community.

Nardi et al. (2004a) suggested five reasons that encourage bloggers to blog. Bloggers are motivated in blog for the purpose of: (1) updating their life events and activities to other people, (2) expressing their thoughts and views in order to influence others, (3) seeking feedback and opinions from others, (4) articulating their ideas by writing, and (5) discharging and releasing emotional strain. Huang et al. (2007) had also achieved similar outcome with their research. In spite of this, they noticed that conveying ones feelings and thoughts and generating ideas through writing can be combined as one under “self-expression”. They also initiated a significant factor of blogging motivation, which has been ignored upon the discussion: information seeking. Hence, they established a newly enhanced form of bloggers’ purposes of blogging: (1) expressing oneself, (2) documenting life, (3) giving feedbacks, (4) participating in forum, and (5) pursuit of information (Huang et al., 2007). In another research, Recuero (2008) proposed five key motivations for blogging: (1) creating a personal space, in which the blogger wishes to form a personal existence and publish themselves in the Internet, (2) sharing interaction, in which the blogger operates the blog to be in contact with friends and communicating with other people, (3) sharing knowledge, in which the blogger desires to share information with others, (4) authority, in which the blogger has the yearning to be acknowledged as an “authority” on specified topic which they contributed on their blogs, and (5) popularity, in which the blogger craves to be well-known and popular.



Lee, Im, and Taylor (2008) in their published paper entitled “Voluntary Self-Disclosure of Information on the Internet” discovered seven primary motives of voluntary disclosure on the Internet by conducting qualitative interviews and questionnaire. The seven motivations are self-presentation, relationship management, keeping up with trends, information sharing, information storage, entertainment, and showing off. This study is based on these seven motivations as they represent overall the motivations in the previous literature, and determine which, among the seven, is the main motivation among the seven motivations for bloggers to blog about themselves.

#### **2.1.4 Profile of bloggers**

Based on the Technorati’s State of the Blogosphere 2009 statement, among the 2,828 U.S. bloggers studied, most were men; age ranged from 18 to 44 years old, and possessed a quite high level of educational education and income (McLean, 2009). Nevertheless, the bloggers’ demographics differed significantly by some aspects such as language, region, individual usage community, location, and country, making it crucial for the investigation of blogging practices within their own cultural environments. Thus, this study is conducted to enlighten the Malaysian blogosphere on its own settings.

In order to investigate the connection between the blog’s content and design with blogger’s gender and age, a language-based method was conducted by Argamon et al. (2007) centered on stylometric analysis. The researchers secluded 20 thematic lexical factors which were correlated to the dimensions of gender and age using *meaning*

*extraction* process (Chung and Pennebaker, 2007). The results of their study were recapped by mentioning:

*We find that older bloggers tend to write about externally-focused topics, while younger bloggers tend to write about more personally-focused topics; changes in writing style with age are closely related. Perhaps surprisingly, similar patterns also characterize gender-linked differences in language style. In fact, the linguistic factors that increase in use with age are just those used more by males of any age, and conversely, those that decrease in use with age are those used more by females of any age. (Argamon et al. 2007: para 4)*

Argamon et al. (2007) testified that female bloggers tend to be more into personal and private issues whereas male bloggers are interested into blogging on external matters such as business and politics (Argamon et al., 2007). Herring, et al.'s (2004) study found that there are differences on the type of blog with the age of blogger. According to their results, adult bloggers tend to maintain filter blogs whereas younger bloggers are prone to maintain personal blogs. Puschmann (2011) proposed that both males' and females' bloggers, and the bloggers' age might all be inspired by various perceived remuneration of blogging, thus will affect the writing style of the blog managed.

According to Lenhart and Madden (2005), roughly one out of five youth (ages 12–17) who uses the Internet have their personal online journal or blog. This means

there are approximately 4 million of youth bloggers in worldwide. The younger generation is to be expected to maintain their blog compared to adults. Mitchell, Wolak and Finkelhor (2008) reported that among the daily Internet users, 27 % keep a blog and are more likely to use their own private computer in their home.

As for the gender of the blogger, there are mixed findings on whether majority of the bloggers are male (McLean, 2009; Herring et al., 2004) or female (Hollenbaugh, 2011; Tang & Wang, 2012). Herring et al. (2005) reported that teenagers and female bloggers are inclined to use blog as a medium of self-disclosure, where they blog about personal and private topics.

From the prior literature, this study expects to obtain balanced number of gender, young adults and bloggers who are from a well education background.

### **2.1.5 Bloggers and followers**

Many studies have shown that receiving comments from blog readers are valued and motivates bloggers to continue writing on their blogs (Miura & Yamashita, 2007; Nardi et al., 2004c). When there is any comment on the post in the blog, it shows that there is someone acknowledging the existence of the blog and the blogger. Apart from that, citations are especially significant for the bloggers and readers to evaluate the bloggers' popularity (Ali-Hasan & Adamic, 2007) and also citation, in a way, can be a means to store communication and interactions between several blogs (Recuero, 2008).

According to Guadagno et al. (2008), the reduced of self-awareness in computer-mediated communication is applicable to blogging practices. Online communications

can encourage intimacy due to the reduced public awareness and simultaneously intensify private awareness of both sides. The reduced social cues during the disclosure may be considered an advantage for individuals who tend to avoid face-to-face communications because of the anonymity. Particularly, there is evidence in some studies which proved that persons who use online interaction felt a reduced on the awareness of the other person whom they are connecting with (Joinson, 2001; Matheson & Zanna, 1988).

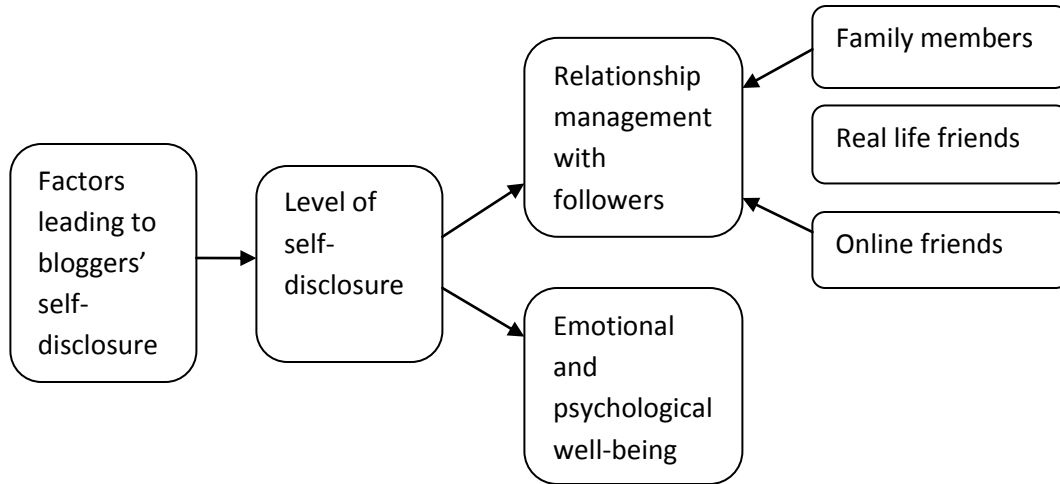
There is prove that supports the theory which pronounced journal writing as a beneficial tool that helps to improve the psychological well-being and overall physical health (Smyth, 1998). The presence of feedbacks from others is the foremost distinction between traditional paper diaries and blogs (Baker & Moore, 2008). A blog presents the chance for online interactions and a means of communication with others which the traditional journal could not offer (Gumbrecht, 2004). The commentaries from blog readers can provide as an acceptance and recognition of the bloggers' thoughts, feelings, and sense of self (Snider, 2003). Some sociology-based studies tried to assess the blog population and their demographic data and to list possible users' profiles (Herring et al., 2004; Huffaker, 2006; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005). These studies agree that blogging is not just a teenager habit but it generally involves other age groups.

Di Blasi, Ferraro, & Conti's (2008) aim of study is to mainly understand the relationship between a person and his blog, using the theoretical construct of presence and experience in the virtual space. Their research is focused on the process of meaning of the blog and especially the particular relationship between the blogger and the other people on the Net. The three fields of the interview are: (1) bloggers/other in the Net

(relationship), this sphere analyzes the author's choice to show or to leave hidden some aspects of himself, (2) blogger/blog (post), this field analyzes the motivation for writing and the effects of this practice on the author, referring to self-reflection and identity building, and (3) blog/other on the Net, this field analyze the effects of comments on the interviewee. The traditional diary, an ancestor of blog, responds to needs of secrecy, intimacy and self-knowledge. However, the diary on the Net intercepts these individual needs and weave them with the possibility of "being there" with the other on the Net. The presence of others creates awareness to the blogger that others (blog readers) will be reading the blogger's life events and thoughts, which will leads to different style of expressing oneself on the diary itself.

### **2.3 Current study**

Having reviewed the work of a number of authors and evaluating the outcomes of existing studies done on related topics, the study presents a model/conceptual framework which explains the research and the relationship between the variables as follows.



*Figure 2.0.* Conceptual framework

For the purpose of this study, conceptual framework is modified from Lee et al. (2008) model of study. It consists of factors leading to bloggers' self-disclosure, level of self-disclosure, and consequences of self-disclosure (relationship management with followers, and emotional and psychological well-being of the bloggers (see Figure 2.0). In this study, relationships between the variables are based on self-report analysis made by the participants and data mainly describes this analysis.

### **2.3.1 Factors leading to bloggers' self-disclosure**

Many factors lead to self-disclosure on blogs. For our study, this study will be using the main seven factors as used in Lee et al.'s (2008) study which are:

1. Self-Presentation – refers to bloggers' purpose of self-disclosure is to reveal and portray themselves to others.
2. Relationship Management – refers to bloggers' purpose of self-disclosure is to develop and maintain their relationships with other people.
3. Keeping Up with Trends – refers to bloggers' purpose of self-disclosure is so that they have something in common with others.
4. Information Sharing – refers to bloggers' purpose of self-disclosure is motivated by the need to impart and pass on their knowledge and information with others.
5. Information Storage – refers to bloggers' purpose of self-disclosure is to record personal information (for example: daily life experience).
6. Entertainment – refers to bloggers' purpose of self-disclosure is to bring personal pleasure.
7. Showing Off – refers to bloggers' purpose of self-disclosure is to display their own popularity, talent and ability to others.

All of these factors are assumed to have positive influence on the level of bloggers' self-disclosure on their blogs.

### **2.3.2 Level of self-disclosure**

Level of self-disclosure is measured by five categories: Intent, Amount, Valence, Depth, and Honesty/Accuracy. The questions will be based on Wheelless and Grotz's (1976) Revised Self-Disclosure Scale.

1. Intent – refers to the bloggers' intention to reveal what they want in their blogs.
2. Amount – refers to the quantity or length of information does the bloggers share on their blogs.
3. Valence – refers to the positive things the bloggers disclose on their blogs.
4. Depth – refers to the quality/deepness or how personal and intimate of bloggers' disclosure on their blogs.
5. Honesty/Accuracy – refers to the sincerity and truth the bloggers share on their blogs.

### **2.3.3 Consequences of self-disclosure**

In this study, this study will examine two consequences of self-disclosing on blog: relationship management with followers (family members, real life friends, and online friends), and emotional and psychological well-being of the blogger. Both are assumed to have positive relations with the level of self-disclosure: the more a blogger disclose oneself, the better the relationship management and his/her emotional well-being. The questions emotional effects of self-disclosure will be based on combination



of McKenzie's (2008) and Lee et al.'s (2008) questionnaires, while the social effect (relationship management with followers) questions will be based on Bean's (2006) study.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Based on the previous literatures, it can be concluded that studies on self-disclosure in blogging are increasing because of the positive effects it provides. Self-disclosure can promote positive well-being and hyper escalate the relationship and bonds between people when used properly. The following chapter discusses on a more detailed description on the methodology used in the present study.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides discussion on the methodology used in the study. It consists of respondents' information, research design and procedures, measurements, pilot study findings, limitations of present study, and ethical issues related to this research.

#### **3.1 Respondents**

The respondents in this study were 325 Malaysian bloggers whose blogs were registered and listed in the *BlogMalaysia: Malaysian Bloggers Directory* (<http://blogmalaysia.com>) under *Personal* blogs category. Respondents were from various age groups, occupation, religion, and race (see *Chapter Four: Results* for details).

#### **3.2 Research design and procedure**

The study was conducted using quantitative method. Research data was gathered using Web-based survey which was created on online survey software called *KwikSurveys.com*. Originally, attempt was made by using direct email attachment