Against All Odds: Communication Privacy Management of a lesbian Couple in a Conservative Society

Vidi Sukmayadi[1], Wan Norbani Wan Noordin[2], Eri Eka Pratiwi[3], Sufian Hadi Ayub

[1,3] Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
[2] Universiti Teknologi Mara, Malaysia
[4] Sunway University, Malaysia

Abstract— This study aims at exploring the process of female homosexuals (lesbian) in disclosing and negotiating their stigmatised identity. A lesbian couple participated in the study's in-depth interviews focusing on their experience and self-disclosing strategies on being a part sexual minority and living in Indonesia as a socially conservative religious-based country. The data were analysed within the guidelines of the Communication Privacy Management theory and idiographic approach. The analysis focuses on the process of coordinating the disclosing and closing acts that the lesbian couple carry out continuously in their relationships with others within their social life. The study is expected to assist in understanding how LGBT individuals negotiate and integrate their sexual identity within a socially conservative society.

A. INTRODUCTION

Identity management processes are especially salient for the LGBT community because being a minority in terms of sexual preference is a concealable identity (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Herek, 1998). These identities are not easily attributable and typically become known through a process of disclosure that allows or denies others access to this private information (Faulkner & Hecht, 2006). Globally, there are still many countries considered homosexuality as illegal, in fact, a total of 73 nations still have laws against LGBT practice (Fenton, 2016; Stewart, Tomlinson, & Daemon, 2019). Sexual minority life like LGBT in these countries is not easy, so is it in Indonesia. LGBT community in Indonesia cannot freely reveal their identities due to the social stigma toward homosexuality.

Traditionally, the LGBT identity and behaviour, is radically opposed by official Islamic doctrine in Indonesia (Bilancetti, 2011). Therefore LGBTs must navigate these conflicting identities and develop strategies to relieve the cognitive dissonance they experience from being simultaneously a citizen of a religious country on the one hand, and the other hand, a homosexual in a stigmatised social community.

Unlike some other personal identities that people feel confident expressing to others, Indonesian LGBTs are inseparably related in the process of negotiation management that involves stigma experience and an emotional state of being different. When a person is experiencing discrimination, stigma, and prejudice, it can cause stress, expectations of rejection, and the tendency for the person to

conceal identity (Knobloch & Knobloch-Fedders, 2010; Quinn & Chaudoir, 2015). As an example, Schnoor (2009) in his study of identity construction among gay Jewish men in Canada found that the gay Jewish men experienced difficulties in constructing a Jewish identity that was personally meaningful due to men's perceptions of stigmatisation within the Jewish community. The similar thing happened to Indonesian LGBT when they had to construct and express their identity as a member of the faith-based nation, which was in contrast with their avowed identity (Hartanto, 2016).

This concealable identity then provides an exciting opportunity to understand the nuances of privacy communication management at the intersection of multiple stigmatised identities. This led the LGBTs to use self-disclosure management strategies such as categorisation of privacy information management and changing the salience of being an Indonesian community member to manage identity threats. Based on this explanation, the study wants to focus on how the conceal process of LGBTs, particularly lesbian and how they implement the privacy communication management within daily life as a member of a social community. Lesbians are chosen as the subject of the study because within Islamic cultural and religious context that condemns robustly on gay or male homosexuality, and female homosexuality is more considered as a unique phenomenon (Habib, 2012). Men homosexuality is over-represented in comparison with female homosexuality, and even lesbians practice were scarcely described in religious literature (Ansor, 2014; Habib, 2012; MacIver, 2012).

Thus, the study also focuses on the lesbians' self-disclosure negotiation in hopes of gaining an in-depth understanding of the identity amalgamation of a female Muslim and homosexual identities in a religious-based social context like Indonesia

The primary research questions of this analysis divulge into (1) How do the study informants feel about being part of LGBT and Muslim? (2) How the Indonesian lesbians negotiate their privacy communication management in a personal and relational context. The authors attempt to response these questions by collecting the life stories of two Indonesian lesbians and critically engage their experiences of personal, relational, social alienation, and acceptance of being lesbian and a citizen of an Islamic majority country where homosexuality considered as sinful and illegal.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Homophobia and LGBT Existence

Different societies will differently recognise homosexual behaviours; even it can be considered that homosexuality is more of local conceptions of gender which shape the "cultural construct" instead of "sexual identity" (Bilancetti, 2011; Scull & Mousa, 2017). In this part, the authors attempt to explore the system of negative attitudes or homophobia toward LGBT in Islamic countries and Indonesia's neighbouring countries in order to see how LGBT practices are perceived among the region with a similar religious background and cultural construct.

Like many other religions, homosexuality is generally viewed negatively. The religious condemnation of LGBT acts and their actors was inarguable. The practice has been condemned by three of world's most significant religions as written on the Jewish's Torah, Christian holy books as well as the Quran for Muslims, although opinions differ as to interpretation (McGee, 2016).

In Muslims majority countries, it is interpreted that both Islamic teachings and Islamic law suggest that LGBT related behaviours is a sin and should, therefore, be condemned. LGBT acts are illegal in countries heavily influenced by Islamic teachings. In Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) including Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait and some countries is punishable by death (Scull & Mousa, 2017). Furthermore, the study by Scull and Mousa (2017) described that apparently the Gulf countries and cultures often have a high degree of homosociality which means that

people tend to prefer same-sex relationships yet homosexuality tends to be culturally and legally forbidden. They added that Islamic societies and cultures that maintain strong attitudes against homosexual behaviour appear to shape peoples' attitudes. The statement is in line with Sherry et al. (2010) who found a connection between conservative religious beliefs and a higher sense of shame, internalised homophobia and guilt. Another study also claims that religion can be used to exclude LGBT individuals socially, and religious doctrines have been used to legitimise the idea that LGBT related acts are sinful (Halkitis et al., 2009). The study also found that Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and Jewish fundamentalists, they all shared authoritarian and negative attitudes towards LGBT acts. The fundamentalists believe in the philosophy that LGBTs can receive God's forgiveness only after they prove their sincere efforts to repent for the sin of their different sexual orientation.

In related to lesbians as a particular type of sexual orientation, female homosexuality is generally considered an unusual phenomenon within the Arab countries cultural and Islamic religious context. The religious literature strongly condemns gay or male homosexuality, but lesbians are barely mentioned in Islamic literature (Bilancetti, 2011; MacIver, 2012). Despite that, in Islamic countries, the salient point against female homosexuality is derived from the fact that lesbian and lesbian acts represent the antithesis of the ideal depict of a Muslim woman role as a mother and wife (MacIver, 2012). Moreover, although religious texts acclaim complementarity and equality between the two sexes, patriarchal culture is identical primarily to Muslim communities and women are generally in a condition of relative 'inferiority' and dependency to men who are culturally set as leaders and providers of the family. Hence women often do not have the complement of social access as broad as men and their voice is culturally minimal.

Different perspective for sexual minorities are also occur in the Southeast Asia region, which geographically in the same region as Indonesia. Manalastas et al. (2017) conducted a study on how LGBT people and their sexualities viewed in the various societies of Southeast Asia. The results showed that many Southeast Asians reject lesbians or gay men as their neighbours. From 9.182 respondents, the most homophobic attitudes were found in Indonesia (66%) and Malaysia (59%). Based on a moral justifiability measure, same-sex sexuality was not tolerable among Indonesians, followed by Vietnamese and Malaysians. While Thais, Filipinos and Singaporeans were the least refusing view of lesbian and gay sexual orientations in the region. However the study by Manastalas (2017) only includes six out of ten Southeast Asian countries, by broadening the analysis can provide a more extensive snapshot of homophobic view in the region, especially considering that same-sex relations are highly proscribed in countries like Brunei Darussalam where sharia law is incorporated, and LGBT acts are severely punishable (Ellis-Petterson, 2019; Rehman & Polymenopoulou, 2013). In the same vein, Indonesia is considered as one of the most refusing countries on LGBT in the region. The further description on how the country views LGBT issues is described in the following sub-chapter.

Indonesian Cultural and Legal Considerations of Homosexuality

Indonesia is well known for its national motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" or Unity in Diversity. Generally, with more than 700 ethnic groups, the country has a very tolerant culture toward cultural diversity (Sapiie, 2017). Aside from the country's reputation as a somewhat moderate Muslim majority country, in the past few years, the Indonesian sharia-supporting fundamentalist Muslim organisations have increasingly gained support, and as one of the consequences, LGBT communities have faced growing intolerance and hostility including discrimination (Hutton, 2016; Valdameri, 2017). Hence the country and society have a contrastive reaction towards LGBT's related issue. LGBT practices are not accepted, and they are stigmatised as a mental disorder and a social deviation in Indonesia.

Generally, the act of homosexuality in Indonesia is considered as a sexual orientation anomaly. Like other Muslim majority countries, homosexual behaviours are interpreted by Islamic teachings and Islamic law as a sin and should, therefore, be condemned (Scull & Mousa, 2017). Indonesia

does have a reputation as a relatively moderate and tolerant Muslim country. In Indonesian culture, sexuality in any form is regarded as a taboo subject and is often immediately judged as obscenity. Sexuality, let alone homosexuality, is considered a very personal thing that is limited to a deep private conversation. In Indonesian culture, the culture of shame is a common thing. Indonesian people are generally tolerant of homosexuality but choose not to talk about it because of the influential culture of shame in Indonesia (Gollmer, 2011). There are unique differences in homosexual life in Indonesia compared to LGBTs in Western countries. Indonesian gays and lesbians are more committed to heterosexual marriages. Most gay and lesbians claim to plan to marry women later, or even get married, but still live their homosexual lives secretly (Boellstorff, 2005). However, in recent years, various discriminatory actions began to be experienced by LGBT communities in Indonesia. Based on a survey conducted by an NGO; "Arus Pelangi" in 2015, 83.9% of LGBTs in Indonesia had experienced violence. As many as 79.1% of correspondents claimed to have experienced violence, 46.3% experienced physical violence, and 26.3% experienced economic violence. Consequently, 65.2% of the LGBT correspondents who experienced violence sought help from friends, and 17.3% of them attempted suicide (Hidayat, 2016)

In terms of legal consideration, Indonesian law does not criminalise homosexuality as a private act non-commercial conduct, and among adults. However, Indonesian law does not recognise gay marriage, civil unions or the benefits of domestic partnerships and same-sex couples do not qualify to adopt children in Indonesia. However, a recent survey reveals that intolerance towards minorities is growing, with the highest level of hostility directed at the gay and lesbian communities. A survey conducted by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) in 2018 indicated that the vast majority of respondents (81.5%) responded that homosexuality or LGBT was prohibited by religion. Some 79% of respondents felt they would object to having an LGBT neighbour, while around 89% said that they would not accept and support LGBT politicians in the parliament.

Moreover, 53.3% of the respondents stated that they could not accept one of their family members if they were practising LGBT behaviours (Ahmad, 2018). However, when asked whether the government should protect LGBT individuals, about 50% said they should. When asked whether LGBT citizens had the right to live in Indonesia, 57.7% of the respondents were agreed on the notion (Ahmad, 2018). In other words, although the majority of the public has a negative view of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT), the public still considers LGBT the have the right to live in Indonesia, and the government must protect the human rights of LGBT, but it does not mean that the government should legalize the LGBT practice.

Communication Privacy Management

The theory coined by Sandra Petronio in 1991 focuses on how a person negotiates information that is considered necessary his or her relationship with others. Petronio argued that in the process of communication between individuals, there is a complex negotiation process between privacy and self-disclosure decision making (Morr Serewicz & Petronio, 2006; Petronio, 1991). Since private information can be about a person personal life or others, the decision as to what is private information and whom to share it with plays a role when considering the idea of boundaries. Communication privacy management (CPM) theory is a rational theory designed to explain everyday human issues. Where expressing to others what can and cannot be disclosed is not a decision that can be taken directly by a person, but the person must go through the process of balancing actions that take place continuously (West, 2007).

As cited by West (2007), five core elements shape this theory. First is private information. This element refers to the traditional way of thinking about concealing or disclosing of private information through the process of telling stories and reflecting on the private information about other people and the individual itself. Secondly is the Private boundaries element. The assumption of private boundaries in CPM Theory depends on boundary metaphors to explain that there is a line between being open for public and being private (Petronio & Reierson, 2009). On one side of this limitation, people store private

information for themselves, and on the other hand, people disclose some private information to others in their social relations. The boundaries can also vary in nature. These boundaries can be relatively easily penetrated or relatively rigid and difficult to penetrate. These boundaries can also change about issues of life.

The third element is the Control and ownership. Communication privacy management theory considers information or also known as boundaries as something that is owned. Hence, each owner must decide whether or not they are willing to have a confidant, another owner (co-owner), to that specific information. In some cases, it is preferable for the information owner to have another person share the private information, even though this may not be the case for the close associate (confidant). Petronio (1991) added that joint ownership of information is characterised by two things: heavy responsibility and knowledge of the rules for a particular disclosure. The next assumption of CPM theory is Rule-based management system. As explained by West (2007), this system is a framework for understanding the decisions people make about their private information. A rule-based management system allows processing at individual and collective levels and is a complex arrangement consisting of three processes: characteristics of privacy rules, boundary coordination, and limit turbulence. Finally, the last component of CPM is management dialectics. Generally, management dialectics is the tensions between one's desire to disclose information or to conceal it. In other words, the management dialectics focuses on the idea that there are not only two contradictory stances within a relationship, but that at any given moment decisions are weighed using multiple viewpoints (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996)

This study employs CPM as an operational theory since sexual orientation, such as lesbian, is one of the most profound privacy spaces, where a person does not have an obligation to tell everyone about his sexual orientation. However, the private space can be shared with others when the intensity of the relationship is more profound than just an acquainted type of relationship. This process is known as a dialectic phase that occurs wherever the decision is made to express or conceal private information. Therefore, social risks must be weighed, and consideration must be given to how such information will be kept, used, and open out (Petronio & Reierson, 2009). The authors believe that the theory can give a theoretical foundation for the study since this theory explains the process of coordinating the disclosing and closing acts that people carry out continuously in their relationships with others within their social life.

Self-Disclosure of a Stigmatized Identity

Living in a Muslim majority country can put a significant pressure for LGBTs to reveal their avowed identity socially. In lesbian case, individuals who are being in a lesbian relationship of varying levels of openness results in boundary turbulence as sharing about the relationship gets blend with the dynamics of becoming part of a stigmatised social community (Cunill, 2015). In the current study, being a lesbian in Indonesia means that she has to live with the fact that the Indonesian community consider LGBT as a condemned behaviour. This rejection can bring stress, concealable act, and stimulate strategies for lesbians to cope with social pressure. A study by Quinn and Chaudoir (2015) showed that living with stigma encompasses issues of identity and self-definition like centrality, salience, and collective esteem. Subsequently, the stigma can trigger personal outcomes in forms of people's psychological well-being and health such as loneliness, psychological distress, and a feeling of discrimination (Al-Saggaf, 2017).

Self-disclosure negotiation processes point to areas where the lesbian or LGBTs feel an internal conflict due to their identity gaps. These gaps occur when their self-concepts and avowed identities conflict with others' perception and understanding creating dissonance and a need to negotiate how LBGTs individuals can disclose their different identities in their social relations as a part of the general community (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Schnoor, 2009). By having this study that focuses on how a lesbian negotiate their identity, it is expected that the study can gain more understanding of the lived experience of Indonesian lesbians who live in a religious-

based country. The authors assumed that the rejection of lesbian identity in a religious community could lead to internalising self-disclosure strategies for lesbians in negotiating their stigmatised identity.

C. METHOD

The study drew upon qualitative data analysis by using communication privacy management theory as its foundation. The communication privacy management approach to the study on Indonesian lesbian gives the framework to identify how participants negotiate their boundaries and enact their identities, social world, and culture (Petronio, 1991). In order to uncover how lesbians communicate and negotiate their privacy surrounding, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with two lesbians, and both of them are in a relationship. All participants were raised in Muslim families and educated in a public university.

Study Participants and Data Collection

The data collection was based on in-depth interviews. The interviews relied on a small number of participants, aiming at an emergent dialogue that could help elucidate and better understand the informants' experiences (Creswell, 2013). Due to the high social stigma and sensitivity in Indonesia towards the topic of study, it was not easy to recruit informants who wanted to disclose their sexual orientation. However the authors managed to approach an informant through a recommendation from one of the authors who were a social activist and able to build trust with the informant. This first informant then referred her partner to be participated as the second informant.

This study is an idiographic study in nature. Unlike the nomothetic approach, the idiographic approach focuses on the individual. It suggests that everyone is unique and therefore everyone should be studied in an individual way (Conner, Tennen, Fleeson, & Barrett, 2009) . Subsequently, the results of the current study are not to be generalized but serve as a source of concepts and propositions for future studies.

The authors spent approximately eight months in collecting information from the respondents. In terms of their social background, both informants are raised in a Muslim family, they are Muslims, and both have a bachelor degree. At the time of the study, the respondents have their professional job and share an apartment in a suburb of the third largest city in Indonesia; Bandung City.

The interviews stopped once saturated data is achieved. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that inquired about related areas of the participants' experience on their communication privacy management as a sexual minority in a conservative religious country. The first author conducted semi-structured interviews and to gain more in-depth information; the second author stayed at the same residential compound as the informants. All interviews were transcribed, the confidentiality identity of the informants was guaranteed, and the audio recordings were obliterated. Then, for the study, the authors use pseudo names "Luna" and "Kina" to represent the study participants.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using interpretive qualitative analysis adapted from Miles and Hubermann (1996) consist of data reduction, data display, and verified conclusions. This analysis approach allowed the authors to investigate essential moments in participants' lives, such as self-disclosure strategies and experiences on the topic of the study. The author conducted interviews with informally. One of the co-authors was able to get more comprehensive information since she has a close relationship with the participants and live in the same compound so that the second author can conduct the interviews frequently.

The interviews result were transcribed. After that, the authors coded the transcript and categorised the codes into broader conceptual themes. These themes were then categorised and organised chronologically according to the order in which they emerged. Once the transcripts were coded, and themes were identified, the frequency of the themes was examined across all of the transcripts. To up-scale, the data validity, the initial interpretation of the data was discussed with the participants as a form of member checking. The member

check interviews with the participants and expert informants were conducted to receive their feedback on the analysis interpretation (Creswell, 2013).

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the authors begin with the description of the LGBT movements in Indonesia and how they thrive within a country where religious are prominent. Then the analysis continued by presenting the analysis results based on the five suppositions under the theory of Communication Privacy Management (CPM). The suppositions are (1) private information; (2) the metaphor of boundaries to describe the distinction between private and public information; (3) The individual right to own and control his or her private information; (4) the rule-based management system; and (5) Management dialectics that focuses on the lesbians experience tensions on their willingness to disclose their identities in social life (Morr Serewicz & Petronio, 2006). As the authors explored through each aspect of the CPM theory, in this part of the paper, we present the themes that emerged on the prior analysis of the study interviews and transcripts.

Results

Private Information: Being a Lesbian and a Muslim

LGBT individuals in Indonesia are seldom to reach out to their friends and family as they are afraid of desertion and social backlash. In facing the discriminations, the LGBTs find it hard to disclose their identity. Especially for Lesbian cases, because most lesbians are more undetected and open. For ordinary people, seeing a lesbian with her nondescript appearance will be difficult to be identified whether she is a lesbian or not. Thus, lesbians tend to be more reluctant to reveal their identity. By conducting in-depth interviews to the respondents, the authors managed to explore how they disclosed themselves and analysed the results of the interview based on

the concept of communication privacy management (CPM).

Petronio (1991) stated that private information is the most dependable and consistent attribute reflecting private information that has a certain degree of vulnerability if others aware of such information. Behavioural enactments of privacy management confirm that a person categorises the information as very private and the decision to share ultimately depends on the person who holds the information. The findings indicated that there are three main strategies conducted by the participants in navigating their conflicting identities. Based on the interviews data, their private information disclosure strategy is described in table 1.

Table 1. Private Information Disclosure

CPM Elements	CPM Strategies	Description
Private Information	Internal Disclosure (What the informants feel about their most private information)	• The sexual orientation and sexual life as private information • No disclosure for Family, working colleagues and the neighborhood • Islam as an ascribed status • Believe that God will not only judge people by their sexual orientation
	Social Disclosure (How lesbians feel about society and how to thrive in the community)	• Fully aware that their sexual orientation is not accepted by their religion and society • Act firmly and following applicable behavior in the community as best as possible • Did not joining any LGBT community • Mingling within heterosexual communities
	Historical Disclosure (The Cause of their sexual orientation and the time when the respondents realize that they have a different sexual orientation)	• Past Trauma • Social influence • Felt different during childhood, affirmed when growing up.

Based on table 1, both participants had a different background story in term of their historical information. Based on the interviews in early June 2018, Luna admitted that she became a lesbian due to her family influence. Since she was in secondary school, Luna was raised by her aunt, who was a bisexual. The influence of her aunty LGBT's life affects her sexual preference, particularly when she tried to experiment with her sexual life during her secondary education. Kina had a different story. She believed that the cause of her sexual status was due to her past trauma. She was molested

multiple times when she was a child, and since then, she did not trust any men. She kept the tragedy to herself, and by the time she grew up, she affirmed that she has no interest sexually to men.

The lesbian participants considered their religion status, sexual life and preferences as the most profound private information. That private information can only be shared with limited friends and not families. Both of the respondents aware that their surrounding society does not take kindly to lesbians or other LGBTs. As a response to the situation, they kept their secret and act as firm as possible in their neighbourhood. One of the respondents (Luna) confirmed by stating that she tries to act naturally and firmly in a heterosexual community without disclosing her true identity with only a few of friends know the truth (L, Interview, June 2018).

Being a Muslim is also part of the respondents' life. Both respondents (Luna and Kina) admitted that they still believe in Islam values. Although they are not the pious type of persons, they are still practising the daily Islamic five-time prayers as confirmed by both participants: *", Of course, we try our best not to miss the prayers, God willing, but you know it is not easy"* (L&K, Interview, June 2018). At the following interview later that month, Lula and Kina aware that they are raised in religious families. They believe in God and know that LGBTs are considered sinful, but they have not been able to repent and leave life as lesbians. They believed that changes in their sexual orientation could not be separated from God's plan, thus being a lesbian is part of God's destiny, so, for now, they focus to be a decent person as best as possible (L&K, Interview, June 2018).

Also, Luna added: *"I am not a very religiously Muslim. So much of who I am does not have anything to do with being a lesbian. But how can I take that out of the equation? I can't; nobody can't. It's such a part of who I am; I was raised as a Muslim despite now I am a lesbian. It's so hard even to imagine what it would be to not be either one of those identities (a Muslim and a lesbian). Both identities are just so pivotal to who I am; I can't even think about separating them out"* (L, Interview, June 2018). In other words, although they are aware of their status in the eye of their religion, they still have the faith and believe that the core of religion is to become a better person and being a lesbian has nothing to do with becoming a better human.

Public-Private Boundary Management

The second element of Privacy Communication Management is the public-private boundary management. This supposition asserts the use of a boundary metaphor to illustrate a public/private distinction in social relationships. Besides, to negotiating their identity, all participants implied that they used a public-private boundary for both verbal and nonverbal public displays of their sexual preference. The findings on this supposition can be seen in table 2.

Table 2 - Public-Private Boundary Management

CPM Elements	Applied Strategies	Description
Public-Private Boundary Management	Transparent Internal Disclosure (within the inner circle)	• The partner and boon companion as the inner circle • Physical affection transparently expressed to the partner • Being true to their close friend to ease the pressure
	Thick External Disclosure (within the outer circle)	• Family, working environment and nearby society as the outer circle • Thick Boundary for the outer circle • The participants heavily monitored their physical interactions as a couple in public contexts • Act straight to guard the family honor

Table 2 shows that both Luna and Kina have demarcating strategies and special considerations in disclosing their identity to others within their socio-cultural environment. Inside the inner circle, the domestic couple could express their sexual preference and physical affection comfortably. They can express their affection openly to their partner

and comfortable being seen as a couple in front of their boon companion, particularly their close friends. According to both participants (L & K, Interview, July 2018), negotiating their identity in the surrounding environment did not benefit them socially. However, buy having companions that can understand their affection gives them a sense of relief and support.

However, the couple set moderate boundaries to their close friends since they realise that there is a strong stigma on lesbians in Indonesia. Kina described how the boundaries were set

"We are totally open and can do whatever we want as a couple. We are open to our close friends since they know who we are and have no problem with that. We feel more relaxed among them. We still can be what we are in front of them, telling them about our lives and problems, showing our hugs and holding hands in front of them, but no more than that. Since they are straight, I know that no matter how close they are, deep down it can probably bother them." (K, Interview, July 2018).

Thicker boundaries were set by the couple when dealing with the outer circle. Table 2 shows that the participants put a minimal public boundary. Based on the interviews, both agreed that the strict social norms, the fear of loss of family affection and the longing to protect their family from also being stigmatised became the main reasons for the couple for not disclosing their identity in front of their family and the surrounding social environment. Thus, in front of their outer circle, the respondents pretended as if they have a straight sexual orientation. Lula in a separate interview (Interview, August 2018) added that she and her significant other had expended significant strategies in seeking to conceal their sexual identity due to fear of hatred, discrimination, and in anticipation of disapproval from their family and the surrounding social community.

Information Control and Ownership of the Lesbians

As stated by Petronio (2006), Information is something that is owned, and the owner has the control and obligation to decide whether or not they are willing to share that information to a co-owner or confidant. In this case, it is preferable for the lesbian respondents to share and conceal their private information to particular confidants. In the study, both participants consistently cited being raised in conservative religious roots and environment as the reason for demanding to control their information and identity as lesbians. In terms of giving a co-ownership of the private information, both Lula and kina have their preferences as described in the following table

Table 3 - Information Control and Ownership

CPM Elements	Participants	Applied Information Ownership Management
Information Control and Ownership	Luna	• Lula controls the disclosure of information by only open up to trusted friends. • The selected confidants are not part of her family or people who have relations with her family. • Most of her trusted confidants are males
	Kina	• Kina controls the disclosure of information by only open to her close high school friends because they were the ones who first accept her and take her sexual orientation as it comes • Most of her trusted confidants are males

In table 3, it can be seen that the participants have their own standard when it comes to sharing the co-ownership of information. Both of the participants prefer to share their private information with male confidants. In referring to the gender choice of confidants, the participants shared their thoughts that they have no problem with genders, but they believe that male confidants can be more trusted (L & K, Interview, July 2018).

Rule-Based Management System

In communication privacy management, boundary management is considered as a rule-based process, not an individual decision. The

rule-based management system relies on three points of privacy management to control the process of concealing and revealing private information: privacy rule characteristics, boundary coordination, and boundary turbulence. In the current study, the decision criteria taken by the lesbian participants for setting the boundary can be seen in table 4.

Table 4 - The Lesbian Couple's Rule-Based Management System

CPM Elements	Applied Attributes	Description
Rule-Based Management System	Privacy Rule Characteristics (This attribute refers to how a person obtain the rules of privacy)	• The participants made their privacy rules due to the socio-cultural pressure (Cultural Core) • The emerging issues of anti LGBT in the country have forced them to redefine their privacy rules (Context Catalyst)
	Boundary coordination (This attribute refers to setting limitations or borders regarding the shared piece of information)	• The participants built a strong boundary permeability toward non-confidant encounters (no disclosure for strangers) • The participants set frequent online or offline meetings with their confidants to mutually create the boundary of privacy
	Boundary Turbulence (This attribute occur when the management of private information comes into conflict with the expectations each owner had)	• Social media can cause unintentional leakage of privacy management (unclear pre-existing rules for a situation) • The confidants intentionally break the coordinated boundary of privacy due to personal conflicts • Travelling together as an effort in reestablishing and coordinating boundaries

Table 4 indicates that the participants have particular strategies in setting their rule-based privacy management. Three attributes were converted into coping strategies for the lesbian participants in deciding when and how to share the information. The participants set their rule-based management as a response to the heated anti-LGBT movements in the country. They designed a set of rules regarding self-disclosure as described by Luna, "no matter how strong our urge of being open to everyone, the stigma and the discrimination forced us to limit ourselves. "We are totally closed to outsiders. In Indonesia, there is no way we can expose ourselves like in other countries" (L, Interview, July 2018).

Subsequently, in front of their confidants, the participants set a loose permeability toward their trusted companions. To maintain boundary coordination, the participants stay in touch with their confidants by having regular meetings, whether it is conducted online or face to face meetings. By having those meetings, both the owner and co-owner of information can maintain and build mutual trust among them. However, as mentioned by the participants, boundaries turbulences happened when they have unclear pre-existing rules. *"Sometimes uncalled incidents happened when our friends posted our private activity on their IG stories, we know they (their confidants) probably don't mean it , but it made us irritated and worried that our family or other people that not supposed to know can see the postings"* (L&K, Interview, July 2018). However, as it can be seen on table 4, when boundary turbulence occurred, reestablishing efforts are needed by having the heart to heart talks and travelling to ease the tension and to coordinate a new set of boundary rules.

Management Dialectics of the Lesbian Couple

A dialectic exists whenever the decision is made to conceal private information. This way, one should weigh various costs and benefits and must consider how such information will be owned, used, and spread (Petronio & Reierson, 2009). In this study, the participants described their experience in managing their dialectical disclosure as can be seen in the following table.

Table 5 - the Lesbian Couple's Management Dialectics

CPM Elements	Applied Attributes	Description
Management Dialectics	Denial (Obscuring or subverting one side)	• Denial as a response to the stigma • Anxious for grew up in a religion or cultural environment that deems homosexuality to be sinful. • individual identity must be abandoned for the relationship to work
	Segmentation (the problem is being faced in a different circumstance)	• Weighing communication depends on the level of trust and social environment. • The participants may be open about specific topics and distant about their private information
	Reaffirmation (accepting the problem to maintain the relationship)	• Silent is gold in certain situations.

The findings in Table 5 imply that the participants' decision to concealing their secret identity is weighed based on the social situation that they are facing. Three main strategies were employed by the participants, and both partners expect to have openness in their communication, to be dependable and also to maintain a healthy social relationship. However, on the contrary, the individual demanded privacy when it comes to their sexual orientation closures.

The weighing strategies can be seen when the participants performed segmentation and denial strategies. "With this kind of social stigma, it is a must for us to think before we act and talk, to be frank, sometimes lies are the best medicine for us" (L, Interview, July 2018). In agreement with the statement, Kina (K, Interview, July 2018), believed that avoiding to express openly in their social life and social media engagement is the critical point if they want to maintain a relationship with their family and outer circle friends. Furthermore, to some extent, the participants remain silent and accept the stigma. As a case in point, both participants revealed that every time their friends or teachers talking bad about the LGBT issue in front of them, they just swallowed the pill and kept silent. They had no other choices because they knew the consequences of the stigma, and rather than ruining the relationship, they choose to accept their friends' act.

Discussion

Self-Concept as a Minority within a Religious-Based Majority

The findings of the study indicate that lesbians in Indonesia are experiencing interrelation conflicts regarding their sexuality, religion, and family. Homosexuality is highly stigmatised in Indonesia and other culturally religious countries. Stigma exists when negative stereotypes are linked to aspects of one's identity, with accompanying isolation and devaluation by members of the dominant culture such as religious culture (Bilancetti, 2011; White, Sandfort, Morgan, Carpenter, & Pierre, 2016). Being a Muslim and a lesbian is contradictory.

However, as mentioned previously by the participants, they are facing a psychological conflict since they cannot separate their life of being both a Muslim and a lesbian. Instead of shifting the identity, they came up with another identity by relabeling themselves as decent persons rather than religious ones. The participants enacted their new identity through their participation in various community organisations. The interpersonal process of relabeling was one of searching for potential response cues from another in order to generate a situation within which to be comfortable with disclosing and enacting identity (Faulkner &

Hecht, 2011). Hence, the lesbian individuals displayed an identity negotiation strategy to reconcile the gap between their enacted identity and true sexual identity.

Moderate and Thick Boundaries as the Best Choice for the Moment

Petronio (2002) explains that boundaries can be transparent, moderate, or thick. The level of permeability is related to the amount of control of private information present in a relationship. It is apparent from the findings that the lesbians in this study have set their privacy management in a moderate and thick level of information boundaries. For instance, the study participants have set a moderate boundary toward their boon companion (the inner circle), both participants might feel slightly comfortable and reveal the true identity so they can experience the feeling of being accepted. The experience is supported by Boon and Miller (1999) who stated that the motivation for disclosing one's sexual identity might also be driven by a strong feeling to enhance trust in their interpersonal relationships with others, or to avoid the psychological cost of leading double lives. However, due to the fear of social consequences, they were closed to their parents and the outer social circle.

As a matter of fact, we can see those lesbian individuals' identity development and disclosure depending on their current life circumstances, social environment, and the personal value placed on disclosure. Indeed, rather than being considered to be in regression according to such models, an individual who chooses not to disclose his or her sexual identity in some or all aspects of life may find a balance appropriate for oneself, depending on the prominence of sexual identity relative to other aspects of identity and social relations (Cunill, 2015; White et al., 2016).

In line with the boundaries setting, a disclosure of sexual orientation is a part of the dynamic process of identity development that takes place along a continuum involving self-awareness, clarification, acceptance, negotiation, and the consolidation and integration of one's sexual identity into various aspects of one's social life (Troiden, 1989; White et al., 2016). Current models of sexual

identity development put the disclosure phase as the pinnacle, but, whether they like it or not, the lesbian individuals are continually coming out to new people in different community circle of their lives to live as a part of the Indonesian citizen.

Moreover, Public display of affection for homosexuals is not recommended in Indonesia or other countries that have a strong religious, cultural context. It is less likely for homosexuals in the country to express their public display of affection because of the stigma. Stigmatisation has potentially harmful implications for life chances due to discrimination and related structural and social barriers (Link & Phelan, 2001). Hence, due to the current social stigma, the participants set the boundary within the moderate and thick level as their best way of negotiating their sexual identity in the Indonesian cultural society.

E. CONCLUSION

As a country that deeply influenced by a strict definition of gender roles derived by religious assumptions, Indonesia is not an ideal place for LGBTs to express their identity publicly. Therefore, the study underlines the notion that even people with different sexual orientation need to disclosure themselves for their social lives.

In a stigmatised environment, LGBT identity disclosure has to be performed in a balancing act of openness and closeness. In this article, the balancing act of disclosing and identity negotiation was described by the study participants in the form of their communication privacy management (CPM). Since this study did not empirically test the effectiveness of the CPM in negotiating identities, this may suggest that future study can overlook this part of the study. Lastly, it is expected that the study could give alternative insights for academicians and practitioners to focus on improving the study and lives of individuals with stigmatised identities.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, S. (2018). *Survey Nasional Tentang LGBT 2016-2017*. Jakarta. Retrieved from http://www.saifulmujani.com/search/node/LGBT

Al-Saggaf, Y. (2017). Information sharing on facebook by alone, single and lonely female users. *SEARCH (Malaysia)*, *9*(1), 97–116.

Ansor, M. (2014). Being Woman in the Land of Shari'a: Politics of the Female Body, Piety, and Resistance in Langsa, Aceh. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*. https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2014.521.59-83

Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1996). *Relating: Dialogues and Dialectics*. Guilford Publications. Retrieved from https://books.google.co.ls/books?id=A8imvgEACAAJ

Bilancetti, I. (2011). The hidden existence of female homosexuality in Islam. *Jura Gentium*, *8*(2), 64–74. Retrieved from https://www.juragentium.org/Centro_Jura_Gentium/la_Rivista_files/JG_2011_2.pdf

Boellstorff, T. (2005). *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*. Princeton University Press. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.my/books?id=Whr4Tb0EuZUC

Boon, S. D., & Miller, R. J. (1999). Exploring the links between interpersonal trust and the reasons underlying gay and bisexual males' disclosure of their sexual orientation to their mothers. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *37*(3), 45–68. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v37n03_04

Conner, T. S., Tennen, H., Fleeson, W., & Barrett, L. F. (2009). Experience Sampling Methods: A Modern Idiographic Approach to Personality Research. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2009.00170.x

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches [Fourth Edition]* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Cunill, M. L. (2015). *Keeping Love "under cover": Communication Privacy Management Strategies in lesbian Relationships with Varying Levels of*

Partner Openness in the Southern United States. The University of Georgia.

Ellis-Petterson, H. (2019, March 28). Brunei introduces death by stoning as punishment for gay sex. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/28/brunei-brings-in-death-by-stoning-as-punishment-for-gay-sex

Faulkner, S. L., & Hecht, M. L. (2011). The negotiation of closetable identities: A narrative analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered queer jewish identity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *28*(6), 829–847. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407510391338

Fenton, S. (2016, May). LGBT relationships are illegal in 74 countries, research finds. *The Independent*. Retrieved from https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/gay-lesbian-bisexual-relationships-illegal-in-74-countries-a7033666.html

Gollmer, A. (2011). "It's OK to be gay in Indonesia so long as you keep it quiet." Retrieved March 1, 2019, from https://www.dw.com/en/its-ok-to-be-gay-in-indonesia-so-long-as-you-keep-it-quiet/a-6456222

Habib, S. (2012). *Female homosexuality in the middle east: Histories and representations. Female Homosexuality in the Middle East: Histories and Representations*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203941454

Halkitis, P. N., Mattis, J. S., Sahadath, J. K., Massie, D., Ladyzhenskaya, L., Pitrelli, K., … Cowie, S. A. E. (2009). The meanings and manifestations of religion and spirituality among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adults. *Journal of Adult Development*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-009-9071-1

Hartanto. (2016). Hegemoni dalam Emansipatory : Studi Kasus Advokasi Legalisasi Lesbian , Gay , Biseksual , dan Transgender. *Indonesian Perspective,.*

Herek, G. (1998). Stigma and Sexual Orientation: Understanding Prejudice against Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals. Thousand Oaks, California. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452243818

NV - 4

Knobloch, L. K., & Knobloch-Fedders, L. M. (2010). The role of relational uncertainty in depressive symptoms and relationship quality: An actor-partner interdependence model. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509348809

Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing Stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *27*(1), 363–385. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.363

MacIver, E. (2012). Homosexuality in Islam: critical reflection on gay, lesbian and transgender Muslims. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2012.732745

McGee, R. W. (2016). Does Religion Influence Views Toward Homosexuality: An Empirical Study of 16 Countries. *SSRN*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2799871

Miles, M. B. & H. A. M. (1996). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. Evaluation and Program Planning*. https://doi.org/10.1016/0149-7189(96)88232-2

Morr Serewicz, M. C., & Petronio, S. (2006). Communication privacy management theory. In *Explaining Communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410614308

Petronio, S. (1991). Communication Boundary Management: A Theoretical Model of Managing Disclosure of Private Information Between Marital Couples. *Communication Theory*, *1*(4), 311–335. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.1991.tb00023.x

Petronio, S. (2006). Communication Boundary Management: A Theoretical Model of Managing Disclosure of Private Information between Marital Couples. *Communication Theory*, *1*(4), 311–335. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.1991.tb00023.x

Petronio, S. (2010). Communication Privacy Management Theory: What Do We Know About Family Privacy Regulation? *Journal of Family Theory & Review*.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-2589.2010.00052.x

Petronio, S. (2014). *Balancing the Secrets of Private Disclosures. Balancing the Secrets of Private Disclosures.* https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410604606

Petronio, S., & Reierson, J. (2009). Regulating the privacy of confidentiality: Grasping the complexities through communication privacy management theory. *Uncertainty, Information Management, and Disclosure Decisions: Theories and Applications.*, 365–383. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2008-17760-018&site=ehost-live

Quinn, D. M., & Chaudoir, S. R. (2015). Living With a Concealable Stigmatized Identity: The Impact of Anticipated Stigma, Centrality, Salience, and Cultural Stigma on Psychological Distress and Health, *97*(4), 634–651. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015815.Living

Rehman, J., & Polymenopoulou, E. (2013). Is Green a Part of the Rainbow? Sharia, Homosexuality and LGBT Rights in the Muslim World. *Fordham International Law Journal F*, *37*(1). https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2180807

Schnoor, R. F. (2009). *Finding one's place: Ethnic identity construction among gay Jewish men. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences.*

Scull, N. C., & Mousa, K. (2017). A Phenomenological Study of Identifying as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual in an Islamic Country. *Sexuality and Culture*, *21*(4), 1215–1233. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-017-9447-5

Sherry, A., Adelman, A., Whilde, M. R., & Quick, D. (2010). Competing selves: Negotiating the intersection of spiritual and sexual identities. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *41*(2), 112–119. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017471

Stewart, C., Tomlinson, M., & Daemon, M. (2019). 73 countries where homosexuality is illegal. Retrieved March 12, 2019, from https://76crimes.com/76-countries-where-homosexuality-is-illegal/

Troiden, R. (1989). The Formation of Homosexual Identities. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *17*(1–2), 43–74. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v17n01_02

West, R. L. (2007). *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application.* New York, NY, USA: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

White, Y., Sandfort, T., Morgan, K., Carpenter, K., & Pierre, R. (2016). Family Relationships and Sexual Orientation Disclosure to Family by Gay and Bisexual Men in Jamaica. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, *28*(4), 306–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/19317611.2016.1227015.