A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: APPLICATION OF CO-CULTURAL THEORY TO THE COMING OUT PHENOMENON OF INDONESIAN LGBT

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ABSTRAK

keywords:

coming out, co-cultural, LGBT, Indonesia.

This study aims to determine the influence of culture on LGBT people's melela decision. In addition, the researcher also explores the application of co-cultural theory developed by Mark Orbe to the melela phenomenon, especially in the context of LGBT people in Indonesia. This research uses a qualitative approach with a narrative analysis method of 47 articles collected from the melela.org website. Researchers selected articles based on specific topics relevant to the research. The results of the research analysis show the dominance of cultural influences on the melela decision of LGBT people in Indonesia, also proving most of Orbe's claims, that to successfully survive in the midst of a dominant culture members of a co-cultural group will adopt one or more specific communication orientations in their daily interactions. In addition, the research also discusses the effect of melela on the quality of relationships and interpersonal communication of LGBT people with those closest to them, by analyzing their reactions.

INTRODUCTION

The term Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) is now increasingly being discussed and reaping controversy among the public. People who are pro LGBT sees them as human beings who must be respected and have the right to live, whereas people who are against it consider that LGBT people don't follow norms and religious beliefs, especially in Indonesia, with majority of the population being Muslim. Research (Astari et al., 2020) shows there is a correlation of religiosity level to the perception of LGBT. The rejection dynamics of LGBT people have also been demonstrated by the government starting from the New Order regime, when the ideology of homosexuality was condemned incompatible with the Indonesian culture. Police and public prosecutors are now using provisions of the 2008 Pornography Act to prosecute people who engage in same-sex relationships.

Not only the government, the media is increasingly showing unbalanced reporting to build negative public perceptions of LGBT people, through coverage of police raids on gay spas and parties (Pausacker, 2020). Indonesia's history and culture have further worsened the image of LGBT community in society, which makes them even more afraid of coming out. This is crucial when it comes to the process of forming oneself identity. Being gay also possesses the risk of relationship breakdown, where LGBT individuals often struggle to come out, worrying for the possible outcomes that might happen.

This research aims to document the living experiences of LGBT people when they come out to those closest to them, from parents, siblings, to friends. This study aims to investigate the coming out experience in Indonesia, where the country is dominated by homophobic values, customs and religious teachings. The data analyzed in this study are taken from stories collected from melela.org, a website for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) and non-LGBT people to share their coming out stories. There are 47 stories on the website that was analyzed using a qualitative approach with a narrative analysis method.

This research has four questions, RQ1: How does culture influence a person's decision to come out? Next, the researcher also wants to discuss the reactions of close people when someone announces their sexual

orientation. This makes the next research questions are - RQ2: How do the closest people react when LGBT people come out, and RQ3: How is the quality of LGBT people's relationship and communication with those closest to them after coming out? Last, the research also aims to investigate the influence of culture on the communication approach and outcome expectations of the LGBT community when coming out to those closest to them. In this context, the researcher applies Mark Orbe's theory of co-cultural communication to help analyze in depth. This leads to - RQ4: How does culture influence the communication strategies/approaches of LGBT people when come out? and RQ5: How does culture influence LGBT individuals' outcome expectations when they come out?

A research (Orne, 2011) found that individuals use different coming out strategies (e.g., direct disclosure, hints, speculation) depending on who their audience are (e.g., friends, family, coworkers). This is in line with the concept of communication approach in the co-cultural theory developed by Mark Orbe (Razzante & Orbe, 2018). There are three communication approaches that co-cultural or minority groups choose when dealing with the majority group, namely:

1. The non-assertive approach refers to communication practices that are seen as yielding and non-confrontational; placing the needs of others above one's own.
2. The aggressive approach refers to communication practices that are seen as expressive, promoting self-interest, assuming control over others' choices.
3. The assertive approach refers to communication practices that include expressive behaviors that are concerned with the needs of self and others.

Other than communication approach, Orbe also expressed another important concept in the theory called expected outcome. This aspect is the most influential predictor of one's decision to come out. In the theory, there are three outcome expectations that co-cultural groups expect when communicating with dominant groups, such as Assimilation is the process by which co-cultural groups conform to the dominant culture while relinquishing their 'cultural identity'. In order to effectively participate in the dominant society and achieve their goals, they feel they must conform, become like the dominant group, or at least support the dominant group's beliefs and practices. This approach is based on the principle of 'go along to get along'. However, assimilation rarely achieves 100% success. Accommodation occurs when the co-cultural group attempts to change the rules of the dominant culture by taking into account the life experiences of the co-cultural group members. Accommodation goes both ways. Convergence, or positive accommodation, is how co-cultural groups gain approval/respect in intercultural situations. Separatism occurs when co-cultural groups try to maintain an identity that is distinct from the dominant culture and promote solidarity within the group. Separatist members do not believe that society is a melting pot where people with different skin colors, ethnic backgrounds, classes, and sexual orientations blend together with members of the dominant culture.

Mark Orbe's co-cultural theory seeks to understand co-cultural communication, that is, communication between the dominant group and the co-cultural group from the perspective of the members of the co-cultural group. Orbe has found that, in order to successfully survive amidst the dominant culture and, members of the co-cultural group will adopt one or more specific communication orientations in their daily interactions. The three-by-three model by Orbe shows the framework of co-cultural theory and indicates nine possible communication orientations.

PREFERRED OUTCOME

	Assimilation	Accommodation	Separation
Nonassertive	Emphasizing commonalities Developing positive face Censoring self Averting controversy **1**	Increasing visibility Dispelling stereotypes **4**	Avoiding Maintaining personal barriers **7**
Assertive	Extensive preparation Overcompensating Manipulating stereotypes Bargaining **2**	Communicating self Intragroup networking Utilizing liaisons Educating others **5**	Exemplifying strengths Embracing stereotypes **8**
Aggressive	Dissociating Mirroring Strategic distancing Ridiculing self **3**	Confronting Gaining advantage **6**	Attacking Sabotaging others **9**

(COMMUNICATION APPROACH)

Figure 1. *Nine Communication Orientations in Co-Cultural Theory*
Source: (Razzante & Orbe, 2018)

RESEARCH METHOD

In 2013, melela.org first opened its website, specifically the "YOUR STORY" column, which is the story of melela LGBT people to those closest to them, and the "OUR STORY" column, which contains the stories of people around them who are able to accept the differences of LGBT people. The melela.org website was developed to provide a platform for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) and non-LGBT people to share their stories, as well as to increase public understanding of the LGBT minority in Indonesia. The melela.org story column is open not only to LGBT people telling their melela stories, but also to their colleagues, classmates, friends and parents. These stories are uploaded on the site to be widely accessed by internet users. For the purpose of this study, all written stories were downloaded (n=69) and analyzed. Each story was assigned an identity number to facilitate research analysis. Article posts on the melela.org website were collected and selected through an in-depth understanding of the article topics based on thematically created categories. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were also used in this study to obtain articles with appropriate and relevant topics.
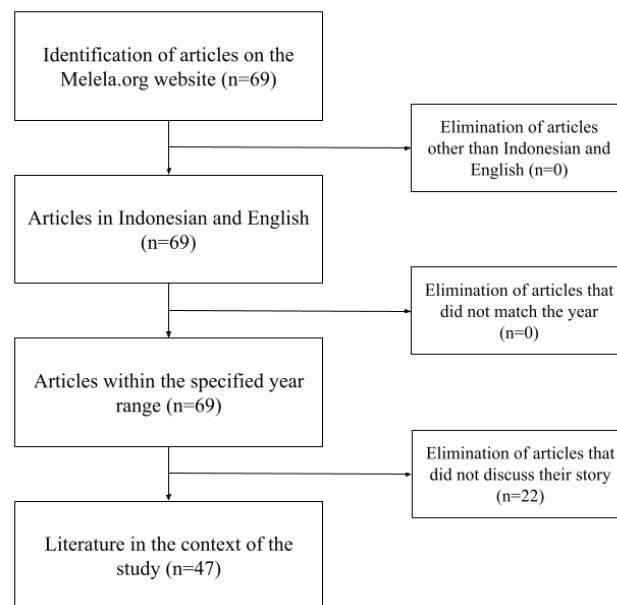
Figure 2. Literature Selection Process (PRISMA)
Source: Researcher's Process, (2023)

After searching for articles according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the search results were transferred into a table, each piece of literature was then validated and analyzed based on the appropriate research topic. The results of the selection stage referring to PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analysis) García-Feijoo et al., (2020) shown in Figure 1 above. From the PRISMA selection used above, it is known that the list of articles that have been selected can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. List of Articles

Code	Date	Title of The Article
A1	26 July 2013	Gunawan Strategically Chooses a Place (Wibisono, 2013)
A2	20 August 2013	Dena Rachman is Happy Being Herself (D. Rachman, 2013)
A3	28 August 2013	Anthony Refuses to be Considered 'Sick' (Tjokro, 2013)
A4	11 September 2013	Misty is Comfortable Hanging Out With Gays and Lesbians (Diansharira, 2013)
A5	16 September 2013	The Love of Siti Ngainten (Ngainten, 2013)
A6	18 September 2013	Tri Handoko Magnanimous and Forgiving (Handoko, 2013)
A7	21 September 2013	Acan Rachman's Recipe of Love (A. Rachman, 2013)
A8	2 October 20213	Friendship is not Aida Nurmala's Typical 'Chase for Broadcast' (Nurmala, 2013)

Code	Date	Title of The Article
A9	15 November 2013	The Ease of Honesty À La Paramita Mohamad (P. Mohamad, 2013)
A10	22 November 2013	Goenawan Mohamad: Notes of a Father (G. Mohamad, 2013)
A11	7 February 2014	Diaz's Responsibility (Diaz, 2014)
A12	13 February 2014	Dr. Ryu Hasan, Sp.BS Wants All Humans to Be Happy Being Themselves (Hasan, 2014)
A13	15 March 2014	The Story of Khrisna Siddharta (Siddharta, 2014)
A14	30 April 2014	Benefits of Coming Out for Hadi (Nugraha, 2014)
A15	11 July 2014	Ferdo always wanted to be different. (Agusta, 2014)
A16	4 January 2015	Bayu Rewards Those Who Dare to Be Open (Persada, 2015)
A17	10 January 2015	Suar Feels Connected (Sanubari, 2015)
A18	1 March 2015	Wisesa's Pursuit of Dreams (Wirayuda, 2015)
A19	26 June 2015	Farid's Changes After Coming Out (Hamka, 2015)
A20	11 October 2015	Chris's Story and the Happy Ending (North, 2015)
A21	25 November 2015	Hendri Yulius on, "The Art of Failure" (Yulius, 2015)
A22	8 December 2015	A Proper Understanding of Sexuality Helped Dimas When He Came Out (Mahendra, 2015)
A23	20 December 2015	Luna's experience as a Pansexual (Siagian, 2015)
A24	2 January 2016	The Key to Happiness in Ramadan (Ramadan, 2016)
A25	13 January 2016	Rizki Reluctant to Lie (Wibowo, 2016)
A26	18 January 2016	Coming Out Shows Firman His Real Friends (Firmansyah, 2016)
A27	30 January 2016	Queentries Regar Used to be Fanatical and Intolerant (Regar, 2016)
A28	19 February 2016	Egi's Reconciliation with Family Needs a Third Party (Septiadi, 2016)
A29	20 March 2016	Om Piring's Message to LGBT Friends (Manampiring, 2016)
A30	31 March 2016	Andika Talks about His Hopes and Fears (Budiman, 2016)
A31	7 March 2017	Compassion from Pastor Stephen Suleeman (Suleeman, 2017)
A32	2 May 2017	The Story of Melela Budi, Indonesia's Representative at Mr. Gay World 2017 (Winawan, 2018)
A33	25 October 2017	Ryan's Story of Gay Spa (Korbari, 2017)
A34	8 March 2018	Daniel's Story about Mama's Opor (Prasatyo, 2018)
A35	16 May 2018	What Budi Needs to Come Out (Aslan, 2018; Winawan, 2018)
A36	8 September 2018	Aslan's Story and Homophobia (Aslan, 2018)
A37	17 October 2018	Victor Kamang is Willing to be Reprimanded (Kamang, 2018)
A38	9 November 2018	Awan's Story at the Jakarta Women's March (Darmawan, 2018)
A39	5 January 2019	Dede Oetomo's True Self (Oetomo, 2019)
A40	8 July 2019	Removing the Ancient Mask (Widnyana, 2019)
A41	26 July 2019	Kevin Halim's Journey (Halim, 2019)
A42	5 September 2020	Polin Impola Likes to be Teased (Sitompul, 2020)
A43	19 May 2023	Erik Mubarack's Recipe for Success (Mubarack, 2021)
A44	28 May 2021	The Story of Wirakrisna Facing the Challenges of the Times (Wiedjatmika, 2021)
A45	24 June 2022	The Importance of LGBTIQ Community for Anggun Pradesha (Pradesha, 2022)
A46	30 October 2023	Denny's First Love Story and Family Forgiveness (Faj, 2023)
A47	7 December 2023	Angela Ienes Has Been Independent Since Childhood (Ienes, 2023)

Source: Researcher's Process, (2023)

The data was analyzed using the narrative analysis method of the 47 stories above. Narrative analysis is a qualitative research method that focuses on the verbal expression of human experience. The analysis of individual narratives allows researchers to understand the subjective experience of the narrator, as well as social roles, social structures, and cultural norms (Smith, 2000). Taken together, a group of narratives can function as a metastory that allows the researcher to gain greater insight into the 'coherent world in which social action occurs. Data analysis in this study was carried out in three stages, namely:

1. The researcher read all the stories several times to get an overview of the storylines, backgrounds and sociocultural meanings of events. We focused on the stories of LGBT people coming out to their family, friends and acquaintances.
2. In the second stage of reading, special attention was paid to the following five aspects of the story: how culture influences one's decision to come out, the reactions of loved ones to LGBT people's coming out testimonies, the influence of coming out on the quality of relationships and communication between LGBT people and loved ones, the influence of culture on the communication strategies LGBT people choose when coming out, and the expected outcomes of coming out for LGBT people.

Comparing to identify recurring themes and sub-themes in the five aspects of the story identified above.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The Influence of Culture on The Decision to Come Out
Stereotypes and Stigmas Attached by Indonesian Society to LGBT People

The customs of Indonesian society only allow heterogeneous relationships (different genders), not homogeneous relationships (same sex) (Khanis, 2013). As a result, Indonesian society still shows a lot of opposition to LGBT people because they have a sexual orientation that is not in accordance with religious norms and values in society. Not infrequently, various stigmas are attached to LGBT people, one of which is that they have a great potential to transmit HIV/AIDS is also still widely circulated in the community, which was popular in the 1990s (Pratiwi, 2012).

Customs, Social Norms & Homophobia in Indonesian Society

Often gayness is associated with the West and not part of Eastern and Indonesian culture (Khanis, 2013). With Indonesia still full of social values and norms, coupled with a low level of education, there are still many people who think LGBT is a disease that can be cured by going to the doctor. This statement is often made by people who are not even well known by LGBT people. This is in line with the character of Indonesians who are notorious for being 'snarky', as evidenced by the Digital Civility Index (DCI) Report, where Indonesian netizens rank at the bottom of Southeast Asia, aka the least polite in the region (Finaka, 2021).

The Influence of Religious Conservatism on Perceptions of LGBT Groups

Indonesia with its majority religious population, especially Islam, appears to be strongly opposed to LGBT. This is supported by research (Astari et al., 2020) which shows the correlation of religiosity level to the perception of LGBT as a form of deviance. Research results (Arli et al., 2020) revealed that religion and acceptance of lesbians and gays will continue to be a difficult issue to resolve. Individuals with high levels of intrinsic religiosity and religious fundamentalism tend to view lesbians and gays negatively. Most countries that consider homosexual behavior illegal are dominated by societies that have a dominant Islamic culture (Astari et al., 2020), especially since Islam specifically teaches that homosexual acts are forbidden.

Discriminatory Behavior Toward LGBT People from the Public at Large

As a result of society's strong negative perceptions of LGBT people, the level of violence experienced by this marginalized group seems to be getting worse (Masli, 2018). They became increasingly marginalized and experienced a lot of violence and discriminatory treatment from the government, community and family. These range from physical torture, beatings, killings and arrests - carried out in raids by the local government. Once arrested, they are harassed and forced to comply with gender-constructed rules to fit in with their families and society. Discriminatory behavior can come from:

LGBT Group Movement

With the discrimination and violence that LGBT people often receive, they choose not to remain silent and try to fight for their rights. Research results (Arli et al., 2020) also shows that a concerted effort is needed from the international community, local governments, social marketers and religious leaders to change attitudes towards the LGBT community. Indonesia should support to affirm that human rights cannot be denied on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Portrayal of LGBT People by Media Indonesia

Today, the Indonesian media is a major cause of a hostile environment for marginalized groups in Indonesia (Thaniago, 2020). Journalists, social media users, and others who engage with images in Indonesian news media are active participants in shaping the conventions of the LGBT crime evidence genre (Hegarty,

2022). Often, various labels are attached to LGBT people by the media, which are then disseminated - and ultimately shape the image of LGBT people in the public eye.

Closest People's Reaction to LGBT Coming Out Confession

Coming Out to Parents

Acceptance is important for LGBT people, especially young ones. Young LGBT people, who are still in the process of self-identity formation, have the additional task of forming a positive self-image and identity in relation to their sexual orientation, despite societal pressure to be heterosexual. Nonetheless, coming out to family for the first time can be considered one of the most significant of the key events in the coming out process (Ben-Ari, 1995). For most of them, revealing themselves to their families, especially their parents, is the most nerve-wracking thing they can do (Charbonnier & Graziani, 2016). Unfortunately, research suggests that the family's initial reaction to an adolescent member becoming gay or lesbian is usually negative (Coenen, 1998). As in this study, a variety of parental reactions were found when their children melted down, with dominant negative reactions such as feelings of sadness, fear, unacceptance, and even kicking their children out of the house.

Sad and Terrified

A5 - The reason for my sadness was that I was worried about Gunawan's future. If Gunawan had no descendants, what would happen? Who will take care of Gunawan? (Ngainten, 2013).

A14 - Mom's reaction wasn't too surprised, but I think there was a bit of disappointment. I think it's normal and normal (Nugraha, 2014).

Not Accepted

A7 - I have to be honest, it wasn't easy to accept Dena's situation at first. Dena is the only boy in our family. I had to follow my ego as a parent, trying to direct him to be what I wanted him to be (A. Rachman, 2013).

A40 - As a result, we had an argument in front of the store. "Gays are like the transvestites on the streets. What if the police arrest you? (Widnyana, 2019).

A44 - Every time I make a mistake, it's linked to my sexual orientation, which has nothing to do with it (Wiedjatmika, 2021).

Kicked Out of The House

A18 - Mom gave me a very difficult choice in my life. 'Get well', or leave home. I chose to leave my home at that time on the grounds that I didn't feel like I was thriving when I was at home, especially after hearing that I would be sent to boarding school (Wirayuda, 2015).

A25 - My mother cried and begged me to change. I was kicked out of the house. I thought about going over the railroad tracks at Depok Baru station (Wibowo, 2016).

A34 - Papa's words that I still remember are, "If you want to return to the right path, we as a family will definitely help you. If not, this house is not your home anymore." (Prasatyo, 2018).

Accepted and Welcomed

A14 - Papa rubbed my back while saying "It's okay". I was hugged. There was an overwhelming feeling of relief after the meltdown, an overwhelming feeling, a collapse of burdens to the point of wanting to jump up and down all the time (Nugraha, 2014).

Coming Out to Siblings

The nuclear family is usually one's original home, supported by the relationships that develop between oneself, parents, as well as siblings. Siblings play an important and supportive role in the lives of lesbian and gay teens (Haxhe et al., 2018), especially in the development of social and relational skills. The study captures the reactions of siblings when LGBT people decide to come out to them, which tend to be balanced between negative and positive reactions.

Sad and Terrified

A3 - My sister was afraid that society was not ready to accept people like me. During the conversation, she asked me to change (Tjokro, 2013).

Not Accepted

A15 - I also felt ashamed at times when my twin brother behaved in an excessively girly manner (Agusta, 2014).

A41 - My brother said, "Why spend money on Kevin's education if he's going to end up living and working on the streets?" (Halim, 2019).

Accepted and Welcomed

A13 - On the way home, he suddenly said, "I know, again, you are now dating Si A. It's okay, really. If you're happy, I'm happy too. (Siddharta, 2014).

Coming Out to Friends

Not only family, the role of peers is also important in the process of forming a homosexual's self-identity. Research shows that a person is more likely to come out to a wider group of friends if those friends are more accepting and supportive individuals from the start (Deluty & Jordan, 1998). Ironically, homosexual youth face a lack of support from peers, especially from same-sex peers, when they acknowledge their sexual orientation. When homophobia is a common attitude among peers, this can erode the homosexual youth's view of their own orientation. Here are some of the reactions of friends when LGBT people come out, where acceptance and welcoming are the most common reactions found in this study.

Not Accepted

A1 - Various stigmas were attached to me, such as changing partners, or approaching all guys, regardless of whether they were gay or not (Wibisono, 2013).

A26 - My best friend didn't want to talk to me for a long time (Firmansyah, 2016).

Accepted and Welcomed

A4 - Making friends with gays and lesbians makes life more colorful. Their presence provides additional information about the diversity of life (Diansharira, 2013).

A8 - We may not always see each other or communicate, but when it matters, he's always there for me (Nurmala, 2013).

A12 - I once defended her when a student at our school insulted her. I am uncomfortable if someone who is actually good should be marginalized just because of the way he carries himself (Hasan, 2014).

A16 - When it comes to principles, we may not completely agree on one thing. However, I believe that our friendship is worth much more than a disagreement (Persada, 2015).

A16 - There was no fear of sleeping in the same bed with him even though I knew he was gay. I believe friendship is built on trust (Persada, 2015).

A17 - I don't think sexual orientation is a factor to become friends. You become friends because you feel connected (Sanubari, 2015).

A20 - He even wanted to help me do a big mela. I finally managed to denounce all my classmates (North, 2015).

The Influence of Melela on Relationship Quality and Interpersonal Communication of LGBT People

Being gay and lesbian not only carries the potential for empowerment, but also the risk of interpersonal relationship breakdown. The experience of melancholy, specifically, can result in greater closeness between lesbian and gay people and their families on the one hand, or on the other hand, a complete severance of family ties. Many LGBT youth experience anxiety about possible rejection by friends and family, and often refrain from disclosing their identity to those close to them. This fear is due to the fact that orientation disclosure has the potential to produce a major crisis in the family - as there are no rules in the family system to deal with disclosure, no roles relevant to homosexuality, no constructive language to describe the issue, and a strong cultural bias against homosexuality (Coenen, 1998). However, this study found that meltdowns actually improve relationships with loved ones.

A2 - When I told the truth, that was the first time I felt my mom's closeness and affection. After being honest and open about my identity, I became closer to my family. In the past, I avoided attending family events. Since then, I feel like my door is open to come to big family events (D. Rachman, 2013).

A14 - After melela, there were many changes in the atmosphere of the house, positive changes. Papa, who used to be stiff, joked more often and told funny stories when we gathered, mom was more open to any story (Nugraha, 2014).

A22 - In fact, our relationship is now even closer because I feel that my mom loves me without me having to pretend anymore (Mahendra, 2015).

A14 - After melela, the relationship with my younger brother became more intimate. We can support each other and discuss a lot, whereas before we rarely talked (Nugraha, 2014).

The Influence of Culture on the Communication Strategies Selected by LGBT People when Speaking Out

The Communication Approach LGBT People Choose When Speaking Out

Mark Orbe's co-cultural theory is proven to be practiced by LGBT Indonesians in choosing communication strategies when speaking out in front of those closest to them. This is in accordance with the core of co-cultural theory that seeks to understand communication between dominant groups and co-cultural (minority, marginalized) groups from the perspective of members of the co-cultural group. Orbe found that, to successfully survive in the dominant culture. Members of co-cultural groups will adopt one or more specific communication orientations in their daily interactions (Orbe, 2018), which corresponds to one LGBT person's post on the Melela website, below.

A35 - Sometimes fighting back and struggling to free ourselves from discrimination and oppression requires shouting, but there are also times when we have to blend in and talk nicely, and there are even times when we have to be quiet and rest (Winawan, 2018).

There are various approaches to communication according to co-cultural theory, but the approach that has proven to be most widely used by LGBT people when outing is the aggressive approach. The aggressive approach refers to communication practices that are seen as expressive, promoting self-interest, assuming control over the choices of others (Orbe, 2018), which is shown by LGBT people explaining slowly when introducing the LGBT world to those closest to them. Verbal communication strategies such as talking and discussing are predominantly used when they speak out.

A2 - I explained my true identity from heart to heart (D. Rachman, 2013).

A22 - I then asked my mom to let me explain what I knew about sexual orientation. I also asked my mom to respond only after I had finished telling her what I knew and what was in my heart. I started to say what I knew about sexuality in a language that my mother could understand (Mahendra, 2015).

A22 - My mother also said that, "Mama wants Dimas to be like the old Dimas." Slowly, I explained that the Dimas of today is still the Dimas of yesterday, who my mother can always be proud of, not determined by my sexual orientation (Mahendra, 2015).

A23 - When I was about to enter university, I opened a discussion about sexuality with my parents. The discussion I had with my parents was to give me an idea of how they felt about sexuality and gender, before I was sure I would open up to them. I made a Power Point and connected it to the television so that we could all see the presentation clearly (Siagian, 2015).

A35 - However, I answered every question my mother asked me. I kept reassuring her that I wasn't doing anything negative like she thought I was (Winawan, 2018).

A nonassertive approach is also seen by some LGBT people, especially when dealing with those closest to them who are denial or have difficulty accepting their outspokenness. Non-assertive approaches refer to communication practices that are conciliatory and non-confrontational; placing the needs of others above one's own (Orbe, 2018). The non-assertive approach in this study is shown by the behavior of LGBT people who tend to be patient and give in to offensive questions or statements from the majority group.

A11 - It turns out that Mommy still doesn't use the word "gay", but if it makes her comfortable, I should be able to understand (Diaz, 2014).

A14 - My mom had said, "One day you have to get married and have children", but at that time I preferred not to argue with my mom (Nugraha, 2014).

A44 - He said it was the influence of relationships and the work environment, and that it was only a temporary phase. I didn't resist, but I didn't condone it either (Wiedjatmika, 2021).

The assertive approach is also seen on several occasions, when LGBT people show resistance, fighting for their identity and rights as humans, despite having a different sexual orientation. Theoretically, the assertive approach refers to communication practices that include expressive behaviors that are concerned with the needs of self and others (Orbe, 2018).

A22 - Before answering their questions, I expressed my desire not to be judged after I revealed the reason why (Mahendra, 2015).

A26 - This may be a debatable method of defending, but being ambitious really helped me to defend myself in the campus environment (Firmansyah, 2016).

Creativity in Communication Strategies for Coming Out

An interesting finding in the study is demonstrated by the creativity of LGBT people in coming out to those closest to them. Being out requires gays and lesbians to confront socially constructed and personally internalized anti-gay shame and negativity that is perpetuated by society and lived out by families and

communities. Being LGBT is often a traumatic time for young people, which makes them more creative in expressing their identity.

Movies & Books

A19 - I took my parents to see an LGBT movie called "Pride". This is one way of introducing them to my world (Hamka, 2015).

A32 - When Mama visited my brother and I in Melbourne for a few months, I put on "Modern Family" and watched it with her. I wanted to see Mama's view of a large family that included a gay man and an adopted child, as portrayed in the series (Alamsyah, 2017).

A40 - I also happened to have the book Giving Voice to the Mute with me, so I said to Mom, "You should read this too." I gave her the book in the hope that she would be able to better understand who I am through it. I hoped that she would understand that being gay is what it is and has nothing to do with sin at all (Widnyana, 2019).

Non-Verbal Strategy

A13 - Up until now, my approach has been to expose myself and introduce my real world to my sister (Siddharta, 2014).

A20 - I left a note confessing my confession to my parents and my brother on my bed, and I tucked in a picture of our family touring on big motorcycles (North, 2015).

A25 - On the eve of the National Examination (UN) for high school, I wrote a letter to my parents. The letter contained an apology, a thank you, and my honesty that I was gay. In other words, I came out (Wibowo, 2016).

A35 - A few hours later, I sent a text message to my brother and vented through the message (Winawan, 2018).

A38 - I could only cry. I then gave the letter I had written to my mom and dad. It was about my grievances and my confession as a transman (Darmawan, 2018).

Third Party Strategy

A28 - I also suggested involving a neutral third party to help with the situation. My psychiatrist who had treated me could be the one to explain my situation better. I then met the psychiatrist along with my mother and siblings (Septiadi, 2016).

Doing It One by One

A32 - I came out to family members one by one. This way, I can see a more open reaction from each person, rather than several people at once (Alamsyah, 2017).

Cultural Influences on Outcome Expectations for LGBT People

The outcome expectation that almost every LGBT person uses in telling their story on melela.org is accommodation. Accommodation is the process by which a co-cultural group attempts to change the rules of the dominant culture by taking into account the lived experiences of members of the co-cultural group. Accommodation goes both ways. Convergence, or positive accommodation, is how co-cultural groups gain approval/approval in intercultural situations (Razzante & Orbe, 2018). Accommodation is made by taking into account the concerns of those closest to them when LGBT people come out. They are willing to listen and respect the feelings and reactions of family members or friends who have difficulty accepting. But at the same time, LGBT people still fight for their identity, because they are tired of having to keep pretending. The results also show that most LGBT people choose people they can trust when coming out for the first time. This is because they can predict the reactions of those closest to them, who can also accommodate their interests and desires.

A1 - It was to him that I first revealed my true self. Incidentally, he had the authority of a big brother and that's what made me comfortable. He was used to openness, candor, and discussion (Wibisono, 2013).

A3 - I thought of telling my older sister. Of all my family members, she is the closest to me (Tjokro, 2013).

A19 - My older brother was the first family member to know my identity because he was the most able to make me comfortable being myself (Hamka, 2015).

A22 - The reason I chose to confide in him was because of his background. I was confident that, being of the same sexual orientation, he could understand my situation and feelings (Mahendra, 2015).

A30 - They are the first people I tell because I feel comfortable around them (Budiman, 2016).

A43 - And the person I choose to know first is my mother. This is because I feel comfortable with my mother. My mother is a beautiful woman and because of her wide social circle, she has an idea of people like me (Van Niekerk, 2017).

However, there are also those who expect and prepare themselves for the possibility of separatism after defending themselves in front of their closest people, especially their families. Theoretically, separatism (Orbe, 2018) occurs when co-cultural groups try to maintain an identity distinct from the dominant culture and promote solidarity within the group. Non-assertive separatism adherents even feel their lives will be better if they avoid being with people from the dominant culture, as evidenced by the testimonies in one of the articles. A2 - When I told my parents about my identity, I was ready to leave home (Azmi et al., 2023).

This research provides evidence for the assertion that most countries that consider homosexual behavior illegal are dominated by societies that have a dominant Islamic culture (Astari et al., 2020), Indonesia is one of them. In more detail, this research seeks to explore the influence of culture on the decision to come out to LGBT people living in Indonesia, an Eastern country where social life is full of customs, norms and religious teachings. The fear of coming out by LGBT people is due to the culture of Indonesian society. Therefore, they tend to wait until their teenage years to come out, but only to those closest to them. The reactions of those closest to them vary. According to this study, parents tend to show negative reactions, while siblings and close friends show many positive reactions. The communication strategies that LGBT people use when coming out also vary, depending on their observations of the conditions and figures to be faced.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Coming Out for an LGBT Person

For an LGBT person, self-acceptance by both oneself and those closest to them is very important to their psychological development, especially those who are young. The process of self-disclosure of one's sexual identity helps a homosexual to build authentic interpersonal relationships, validate their lifestyle, and present an authentic self. Coming out has also been shown to improve psychological well-being (Magruder & Waldner, 1999). If they continue to harbor and hide their true identity, LGBT people can be trapped in a spiral of sadness, anger, frustration, self-hatred, loss of zest for life, depressive disorders, anxiety, and even on a larger scale, can lead to suicide attempts. They feel like they are imprisoned, unable to live honestly. This is also evidenced in the testimonies of LGBT people who wrote articles on the website melela.org, where they just realized that the inner conflict they felt since adolescence came from their inability to reveal their true identity.

On the other hand, self-disclosure of sexual orientation also opens individuals up to greater criticism from society, which tends to be homophobic and reject homosexual orientation. The main reason LGBT people tend not to come out is that society will react punitively through sanctions, which can be economic sanctions, violence, or social disapproval and loss of prestige (Harry, 1993). The results showed that LGBT people tend to close themselves off for fear of becoming the butt of jokes. Their self-confidence plummets due to the constant intimidation directed by the masses. They are increasingly ostracized and shunned from friendships, which makes them feel lonely. In addition, the process of coming out is something that LGBT people have to do for the rest of their lives. Coming out is a never-ending process for gay or lesbian individuals; every time one makes a new friend, enters a new school, or gets a new job, one is faced with the task of deciding whether or not to come out (Deluty & Jordan, 1998).

Indonesian Society's Imposition of Negative Stereotypes for LGBT People

Young LGBT people, who are still in the process of self-identity formation, must be burdened with the additional task of forming a positive self-image and identity in relation to their sexual orientation, despite societal pressure to be heterosexual. Coming out to society requires gays and lesbians to confront socially constructed shame and anti-gay negativity. Especially in the context of Indonesia, where eastern values are still strong. Stakeholders even mobilize propaganda to shape negative perceptions of LGBT people in Indonesia. Mass organizations put up physical banners and posts on social media to influence people's perceptions of LGBT people, ostensibly from 'the people' to claim legitimacy for the people's interests. Laws protecting LGBT people are 'products of Dutch colonialism' (Butt, 2019) and therefore 'too liberal' for Indonesian society (Wijaya, 2022).

Not to mention the issue of societal customs that only allow heterogeneous (different-sex) relationships, the association of the LGBT movement, the negative stigma of LGBT people carrying the infectious disease HIV/AIDS, and excessive religious conservatism-all of which make recognizing the identity of LGBT people in Indonesia even more unlikely. With 66% of Indonesians rejecting homosexuality (Manalastas et al., 2017), supported by the correlation of religiosity level to the perception of LGBT as a form

of deviation Astari et al., (2020), religion and acceptance of lesbians and gays will continue to be difficult issues to resolve. These add to the pressure of coming out, which is often already a traumatic time for young LGBT people.

Interpersonal Relationships and Co-Cultural Communication

The results of the study show the variety of reactions of people closest to them when LGBT people decide to come out to them. Coming out is more than just an internal process, it will also affect interpersonal relationships. When someone decides to come out, be it to family or close friends, they are already preparing themselves for the possibility of damage to their interpersonal relationships. This is because homosexual ideology is not uncommon, in the midst of society's demand for heterosexuality. The process of coming out for the first time to family is one of the most significant of the key events in the coming out process (Ben-Ari, 1995). For most of them, revealing themselves to their families, especially their parents, is the most nerve-wracking thing they can do Charbonnier & Graziani,(2016), in accordance with the results of this study.

LGBT people on melela.org often highlight the difficulty of explaining their sexuality to their families, especially their parents. This is because they come from different generations, with different access to information and media. These differences influence gaps in thinking and worldviews (Alamsyah, 2017). On the other hand, confiding in family can release the heaviest burden on the heart because they no longer need to make up and lie (Siswanggono, 2021) . Ironically, the research results are in line with the statement (Coenen, 1998) that the family's initial reaction to an adolescent's LGBT confession is usually negative, shown by parents who are sad, worried, unaccepting, rejecting, and even throwing the child out of the house, forcing them to 'recover'. Additionally, this research also shows that peers tend to react positively when their friend melts down. Another interesting finding from this study is that family relationships actually become closer with coming out. This is because LGBT people can be themselves, without having to pretend in front of those closest to them.

Researchers also found that the aggressive communication approach is most commonly used by LGBT people when coming out to those closest to them. This is because LGBT people are trying to express and promote their own interests, through the recognition of their long-held identity. But at the same time, they also still care about the response of the person they are dealing with, be it parents, siblings, or close friends. The communication strategies used also vary, both verbal and non-verbal, through direct acknowledgment or subtly through certain media. In a study Orne, (2011) It was found that individuals use different coming out strategies (e.g., direct disclosure, hints, speculation) depending on their audience (e.g., friends, family, coworkers). Researchers also found that LGBT people tend to expect an accommodation outcome, dreaming of a world where those closest to them can fully accept them, despite their different sexual orientation. Assimilation outcomes are not seen because LGBT people are tired of lying and covering up who they are, while separation outcomes are seen when some are ready to be kicked out of their homes after coming out.

CONCLUSSION

Culture has a big influence on a person's coming out decision. With Indonesia still full of strong religious norms and values, it becomes even more difficult for LGBT people to come out. They fear the possible sanctions that society will give them. In addition, culture also influences communication strategies and outcome expectations when LGBT people come out to those closest to them. Mark Orbe Petronio's co-cultural theory is supported by this research, with LGBT people using a predominantly aggressive communication approach, with the expectation of accommodation outcomes. This is because they hope that their closest family and friends can fully accept themselves. The communication strategies used also accommodate the interests and needs of both parties, both LGBT people, as well as family and/or friends, so that they can build better quality relationships and interpersonal communication. By coming out, LGBT people can feel fully loved by their parents, siblings, and closest friends.

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