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## Sexual Self-Disclosure: A Study on Communication Behaviors among Users in Online Dating Applications

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### **Abstract**

*The development of digital technology has changed the way people communicate. The existence of online media is no longer a medium of information but also has become a space for human interpersonal relationships. One of the phenomena is the shifted pattern of a group of people looking for a life partner virtually through dating applications. This emerging trend of online dating applications in the vast digital world has been contradicted with the values of the Eastern community including Indonesia. The communication pattern employed by the users, despite it being considered taboo to some extent, includes the sexual self-disclosure by users to targeted partners in the online dating apps. The study aims at understanding the process of communication of sexual self-exposure by the users in the online dating application. Additionally, this study examines how sexual behaviors as the implication of online interactions. There are some dynamics employed in sexual self-disclosure in the process of online communication, factors that influence the way to communicate in the online dating apps, including occupation, recent events, and sexual experiences*

**Keywords:** *sexual self-disclosure, online dating applications, sexual communication.*

**Paper type:** *Research paper*

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## INTRODUCTION

The communication process used by humans as social creatures cannot be separated from the social interaction with other people. The way to communicate with others has been influenced by the development of information and communication technology which accelerate the process of information becoming faster and easier to access. One of the major impacts of the changes in human communication behavior is the way people interact with others (Morissan 2010). The development of information technology and the Internet helps humans facilitate social interactions beyond time and space, especially during the pandemic that requires virtual interaction due to social restriction. In terms of communication, some individuals tend to engage with new friends online for various reasons (Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten 2005). Some common motives that encourage individuals to communicate through online media are the search for entertainment, social engagement, maintaining relationships, meeting new people, and social compensation. Online communication discusses various topics from occupation and activities at work, topics related to hobbies and interests, experimenting with new communication channels, fulfilling their social needs, making friends, engaging in virtual sex and affection, and efforts for romantic partners (Peris et al 2002).

One of the biggest implications in the development of digital technology and the Internet, especially Web 2.0 is the presence of user-based media like social media. Social media does not only function as a medium for exchanging information and connecting with others but has led to a place for finding partners due to social interaction on the platforms. In this case, some social media platforms specified for online dating applications can be found, such as Tinder, Bumble, OK Cupid, Coffee Meets Bagel, Match.com, and so forth; some countries have their own online dating platform or forums where people are connecting each other for similar discourse – looking for partners through online platforms.

During the pandemic since early 2020 when all social restrictions applied to curb the spread of the virus, the use of online dating applications has experienced a significant increase. One of them is Indonesia Tinder which experienced an increase in conversational traffic by an average of 23% and an increase in user conversation time of 19% longer in the period from February 20 to March 2020 as reported by CNN Indonesia. The dating applications are used by the users not only to meet and get acquainted digitally with other people but are also used to find partners in their respective contexts.

Different contexts may lead to different styles of interaction in dating which are tailored to each individual's goals. In traditional dating, there is a process called self-disclosure in exploring or initiating relationships. The process is carried out directly and involves face-to-face interaction. The tradition of dating culture makes people think about a stage in the life process. The presence of online dating applications is an alternative and practical solution for an easier partner-matching process. However, in the development of the online dating applications, they have turned into transactional tools, in which there are various communication activities carried out by the users not only for mate-matching but more than that, it turns its function into a means to find pleasure of communication in the process of getting the right partner.

The user-generated websites like social media allow informal communication between the users which shares complex features of natural communication to build interpersonal relationships (Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, 2011). In the process of interpersonal relationships through online dating, there are some aspects relevant with online communication discourse that may prompt the process of the closeness between two parties, such as the uses of adapted language depending on the group membership of their interlocutors (Tamburrini et al. 2015). Immediate closeness between the users have an impact on how the individual defines a relationship. This pattern has some implications for which forms of communication and interaction carried out in each pair fit into the application. Further forms of interaction also varied, ranging from those who succeeded in establishing a romantic relationship and ended up getting married, some seeking friends with the term FWB (friends with benefits), to transactional forms of sexual interaction.

When communicating and interacting through online dating applications, someone may use communication strategy called self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is a communication behavior carried out by individuals intentionally making themselves known to other parties (Lukaningsih 2010) and it refers to communicating our information about ourselves to others, either descriptive or evaluative information from feeling of likes and dislikes to personal expectation (Ignatius & Marja 2007). Self-disclosure can also be understood as an expression of our reaction or response to the situation we are facing and provides information about the past that is relevant or useful for understanding our response in the present. In communication, self-disclosure is a process of presenting oneself which is manifested in activities of sharing feelings and information with others (Burhan Bungin 2006). Information in self-disclosure is descriptive or evaluative; descriptive is intended when individuals describe various facts about themselves that may not be known by listeners such as occupation, address, and age,

while evaluative means that individual's expression and attitudes towards their personal opinions or feelings such as people we like or things we like or hate.

Basically, the openness of individuals in the process of establishing a relationship is mainly affected by the process of communication of self-disclosure by each party. Selfdisclosure in a new relationship is determined through two processes, namely depth of penetration and breadth of penetration. Depth of penetration deals with the level of disclosure in certain areas or aspects of a person's life, while the breadth of disclosure is the range of areas or diversity in a person's life when the disclosure process is ongoing (Griffin 2018). In that context, when in the process there are sexual factors that accompany the selfdisclosure process, then in its understanding it can also be called sexual selfdisclosure.

Sexual self-disclosure is about how a person opens up to other people/partners regarding their sexual preference, that it is the desire and willingness of the people to communicate various sexual topics and preferences (Yang & Chiou 2010).

It can also be defined as part of a person's self-disclosure that is communicated to other people/partners regarding specific sexual activities and preferences that are relevant (likes or dislikes) to strengthen their expected relationships (Byers & Demmons 2010). In the context of virtual dating, sexual selfdisclosure can be interpreted as the extent to which a person from a romantic partner expresses his thoughts, feelings, and sexual behavior to his partner (Tang, Bensman, & Hatfield 2013).

This study aims to explore how the process of communication through sexual selfdisclosure among online dating application users. In addition, to what extent how does self-disclosure affect the interaction between the users.

## **METHOD**

This study used a qualitative method with a virtual ethnographic approach based on the increasing numbers of users of the online dating applications and the interaction patterns that took place in the context of sexual self-disclosure among the users. The use of this qualitative method is in line with the nature of the research focus related to the communication behavior used by the users of sexual selfdisclosure exploration in the online dating application. The ethnographic approach in this study was intended to examine and understand the pattern of the social reality that develop in a postmodern society that is experiencing an information and cultural revolution which aims to understand the context of virtual community life in cyberspace, so as to be able to describe a phenomenon in the virtual world.

According to Christine Hine (2015), virtual ethnography not only examines the entities (users) when using the Internet but also reflects the implications of communication on the Internet (computer-mediated communication). Therefore, this study intends to know and understand the extent to which sexual self-disclosure is carried out by the users in interactions and communication in online dating applications.

The research involved three Indonesian women as the active users of online dating application who had undergone a romantic relationship process by including sexual aspects and preference in the process of communication and interaction through online dating applications. Data in this study consisted of both primary and secondary data. The data were collected during the pandemic of covid-19, from January to December 2021, which shifted the intensive communication from traditional face-to-face interaction to online interaction. The primary data sources were obtained through interviews and direct observation of the users as the participants, in this case, the unit of analysis was online dating users. Data were analyzed using social penetration theory which is commonly used to understand the closeness of the relationship between two people from a superficial level to a deep or more personal closeness, especially in the self-disclosure stage which in this study is associated with the context of sexual self-disclosure. According to this theory, humans will know and get to know other people by going inside that person to find out various information about that person. Self-disclosure is at the heart of developing a relationship and the process has a specific purpose. The main assumption of Social Penetration Theory (SPT) is initially that in weighing the costs and rewards of self-disclosure, relational closeness is the best predictor of satisfaction and used to examine the depth and breadth of premarital counseling programs.

In order to observe the process of sexual self-disclosure, the users as the informants were asked for the motivation of the users to use online dating applications, the reasons for choosing the social media, the functions and benefits derived from its use, the process and stages of communication and user interaction in the application, and how the pattern of the sexual self-disclosure was done in order to pursue the expected goals from following online dating. Therefore, the discussion is supported by the theory of computer-mediated communication.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION Patterns of the Self-Disclosure and Interactions of Individuals in the Online Dating Apps**

The process of the establishment of human relationships is studied through social penetration theory. The theory helps people think calmly about how the process of creating a relationship, communication of various types of information

(surface, peripheral, intermediary, and central), and behavioral interactions (orientation, exploratory affective exchange, effective exchange, and stable exchange). This theory also helps to predict the costs and efforts incurred in return for which whether will determine the development of a relationship (Manning 2019).

In the first stage of the theory of social penetration, it is stated that individuals would open themselves at the surface level. The implication in online dating applications is that a series of general information has been displayed on the profile such as name, profile picture, biography, and some brief information so that others have already gained basic information of the individual which is beneficial as a brief initial stage of a relationship. In its implementation, the surface stages can be managed to be displayed in various ways by the users. There are those who explicitly include their names, photos, and bios, but there are also those who only use initials of certain names with photos that show faces at a glance that are not very clear.

Self-presentation employed by online dating users is closely related to the theory of social information processing proposed by Joseph Walther (1992) which states that relationships only grow on the extent of the parties involved in obtaining information about each other and using that information to form interpersonal impressions about who they are. The impression that is more or less depicted in their minds, the related parties will be closer if they both like the image they have formed. This theory focuses on personal information available through computer-mediated communication and its effect on the mental images they form (Griffin 2016). In this regard, if a user does not have an urgent relationship involving their personal and social life, then they tend to display the profile as it is. In contrast, when these users have a certain correlation with the sensitivity of their personal and social life and are careful to display their private figures in public, these users tend to disguise and limit their identities by changing their names into initials and profile pictures that are not shown clearly.

The context of self-disclosure continues with the next pattern of interaction, namely how other individuals respond to the image and basic information displayed in someone's profile. The interaction patterns are further elaborated in the form of "swipe" and "chat". If the users find the targeted profile is preferable and attractive, they can swipe right, while if they do not like the profile, they can swipe left. If the individual does a right swipe response to the targeted user and the user responds with the right swipe as well, then there is a match. From this stage, both of them may carry out further communication through chat greetings.

The first stage of the social penetration process applies here, namely if one of the match pairs greets first and is responded to as an effort to establish further relationships.

### **Relationship Context and Words of Affirmation**

Conversations at this early stage of the process provide direction and information about their goals in regards to their finding a partner in the online dating apps. The motives and goals can be different for each individual, such as looking for friends, relationships, sex partners, or looking for a life partner to marry. In the early stages of opening up sexually, the first conversation becomes important as a benchmark. Someone who is serious about finding a life partner will be more careful at this stage and they likely tend to talk about general conversations like daily activities related to occupation, hobbies, where to live, and so on. Unlike those whose goal is to find a casual relationship or sex partner, they are likely more open and explicitly convey this message at the beginning of the conversation. In general, they will ask questions like “what kind of relationship are you looking for here?” or directly give an initial statement such as “what are you looking for here? I’m looking for an FWB”. In urban society, FWB or friends with benefits have the connotation of having casual and sexual relationships without the need to have a romantic and formal relationship.

Self-disclosure also has an influence on how the initial conversation might be started. In the context of intimate relationship, sexual self-disclosure has been found to be correlated with sexual and marital satisfaction (Tang, 2013). Even though it cannot be generalized, there is a tendency if the profile is shown in terms of pictures, place of residence, and bio that there is potential for casual or sexual relationships, the first conversation will usually be opened by the following statements:

“Hi, how’re you doing sexy?”

“Hi there, I wonder what’s the skill you can do with your long tongue.”

“Hey, can we do some naughty stuff? I just get horny sometimes, we can have a video call and get naughty.”

“I want to have sex only. No drama. No strings attached.”

“I’m not looking for something serious, just for fun.”

Not all of the initial conversations are always addressed with explicit statements as mentioned above. There are also those who want to start the stage of opening themselves up by discussing general topics at first through a gradual pattern of conversational interactions. This relates to the disclosure of self-identity which is the initial stage in communicating

online, especially in building relationships in the context of online dating. Participation in such computer-mediated communication is closely related to information disclosure as it becomes an integral part of the identity formation process of related parties in communicating through computers or applications (Krasnova, Gunther, Spiekermann & Koroleva 2009). Sexual relations are not solely the ultimate goal of relationships in the context of online dating, when individuals start exploring the process of communication, they may have several reasons or factors, namely 1) trust that is the main reason because in online dating they communicate with new people or even anonymous figure and not everyone feels comfortable and safe to open conversations and sexual information related to him; 2) be aware of the potential for cybercrime and fraud carried out through dating applications; and 3) maintaining an image so that in the next process the relationship will be successful according to the purpose of the relationship.

These initial interactions do not just happen in the virtual messaging space within the dating applications. If the matching partner feels safe, trusts, and wants to move on to the next stage of communication, they will usually switch to personal instant messaging. This indicates that in the early stages of opening up, especially chats the sexual context—it can be categorized as sexting, they already feel confident and satisfied. Sexting can function as a means of sexual communication and activity and can therefore enhance sexual satisfaction (Oriza & Hanipraja 2020).

The matched couples are possible to move on to the next stage.

### **Sexual Communication within Stage of Online Relationship**

Romantic relationships established through online interaction by nature are usually superficial and less committed (Manning, 2006). In regards to the characteristics, the relationships experienced in online dating by the informants, in general, are not a long-lasting commitment, which is more likely in the form of temporary and incidental closeness. In other words, the relationship formed through online dating users is less a friendship with additional sexual relations rather than relationships with romantic commitment. This relationship can be categorized as a friend with benefit (FWB), a popular term of such relationship in the urban community, that is a relationship in which the individuals involved do not expect a long-term romantic relationship (Vanderdrif et al., 2012). Due to such a mindset, online dating is ultimately used more to find a partner who is willing to be invited to date in a relatively short time context. In the context of the desired relationship is without binding



commitment, the communication behavior by the users through sexual self-disclosure is considered easier and more open as the expected relationship is not leading into a deeper and binding direction.

In terms of the stages of communication, interpersonal relationships through online dating applications generally employ the same stages as it happens to inperson dating relationships. Some stages include curiosity, investigation, testing, increasing frequency of contact, anticipation, fantasy integration, face-to-face meeting, reconfiguration, already separated, and long-term relationship (Shedletsky & Aitken 2004). The initial stage of curiosity has been described in the previous discussion, which is expected to go further into the investigation process. This stage is intended to search for trust between the matched users, that the users perceive the importance of the identity of the match, whether he/she is a fake user with someone else's identity or profiles. In general, the profiles included in the bio are as shown on Instagram because the social media contains photos. This investigation process is an initial stage which is the key to success in moving to the next stage. At this stage of the investigation, the form of sexual selfdisclosure is communicated in the form of symbols which are translated into a visual display of the user's profile. A bio and profile may contain a detailed description of sexual relations, the type of photo displayed, and the purpose of looking for a relationship like what is written. Although not fully realized by the user, the display of the profile can be interpreted in such a way as a visual language that users expect to be in certain kinds of relationships in online dating. In the case of MySpace, another social media platform for users to engage, there is a relationship between the user's sex and nonverbal behaviors displayed in account's photographs (Kane 2009).

The next stage is the testing. This stage is mainly indicated by a starting point to start a conversation to a more intense conversation through the chat feature in the online dating application. Furthermore, if the testing stage has gained positive attitudes and the users feel confident, it will proceed to a further stage, namely the frequency of the contacts between the users. In this phase, online conversations begin to be conducted more intensely and frequently, either through the built-in chat feature of the online application or alternative instant messenger applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram as it allows the users to deepen the processes by sending photos, videos, and calls. At this stage of the frequency, there will be a process of further self-disclosure, in particular, possible sexual communication as part of the self-disclosure. In addition to the general self-disclosure processes, users who intend to use dating applications to find FWB or sexual partners will carry out a meaningful transaction process at this stage.

In the conversations carried out at this stage, the common form of sexual self-disclosure is to reveal personal experiences, perceptions, and stories related to their previous relationships and about their sexual expectations for their partners. As revealed by Gordon & Snyder (1986) communication regarding relationships with previous relationships and about sexual expectations allows partners to inform each other about sexual needs, preferences, and desires. The process may also develop a dyadic script for their relationships (Metts & Cupach 1989). If someone follows an appropriate sexual script, they may decide the degree of appropriateness in the context of a sexual relationship.

In terms of variation, sexual communication might be in different types of variations. Hess and Coffelt (2012) divide sexual language into three categories, namely terms or colloquial or vernacular language, clinical/medical terms, and euphemism which is agreed in the context of phrases. In the study conducted on romantic partners, clinical/medical terms are likely used the least then the vernacular and euphemistic terms which are used more frequently. Based on the information provided by the informants and observations on the forms of their sexual communication through chats, there were several topics that are usually used by the users of the online dating applications as follows:

“How much do you like to be touched sexually?”

“Do you have any sexual problems?”

“How satisfied you feel about the sexual aspect of your life?”

“Types of sexual behaviour I’ve engaged in” “The sensations that are sexually exciting to me”

“the private beliefs about sexual responsibility and fantasy”

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Based on the statements, the process of sexual self-exposure by the users is by addressing their sexual preferences which they expect to know from their partners. Sexual self-disclosure that reveals one's sexual preferences is believed to contribute to sexual satisfaction, beyond the benefits gained by non-sexual communication in long-term relationships (Macneil & Byer 1997). Individuals tend to express more about their likes and dislikes sexually if their relationship involves high self-disclosure on other topics as well (Byers & Demomons 1999). Such sexual communication is considered important in creating a comfort zone among individuals. As shown in the Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor 1973), the more self-disclosure, breadth, and depth of topics in which the partners (interlocutors) are involved, the more comfortable they might feel with each other. In the case of the conversation in online dating, the comfortable feeling experienced by the users affects how much and how far the topic of sexual preference they express to each other.

In addition to the strategy used to open the conversation by the users, it was also found that equality in terms of socioeconomic and length of relationship duration may affect the sexual self-disclosure of the partners to each other because the level of comfort also determines the materials of the conversation. Information related to socioeconomic life is usually asked through several questions like the occupation, where they live, and their hobbies and interests. Parker and Ivanov (2012) reveal that the level of comfort with a partner and how long the introduction process takes are important factors that influence and determine whether or not sexual self-disclosure occurs among the individuals. If the communication has not been carried out in a relatively long time until there is comfort in communication, such sexual communication may not occur. On the other hand, if the individual finds comfortable in communicating with the partners, the chances of the employment of sexual self-disclosure in communication are bigger. Romantic partners have to choose whether to disclose sexual information (Hullman 2022).

According to Altman and Taylor (West & Turner 2014), sexual self-disclosure which is included in social penetration theory includes three stages, namely orientation stage, affective exploratory exchange, and exploratory exchange stage; therefore, there are several aspects of self-disclosure, namely thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Thought is concerned with the individual's openness to the things he/she thinks about. If the individuals have a high level of self-disclosure in communication behavior, they are likely to be open about the contents of

their minds when communicating with others. On the contrary, if the openness is low, they tend to close the contents of their mind as the expectation to share more information is limited. The second aspect is the feeling that when the information conveyed by the individuals is based on the contents of their own feelings so that they are responsible for all the information being disclosed. The third is behavior, that self-disclosure might be accommodated through real behaviors including actions, activities, and habits that show themselves to others.

When it comes to romantic relationships, there are three components described by Stenberg (1986) in the Love Triangle Model. The model states that love can be understood in terms of three components which together can be seen as forming the vertices of a triangle. The three components are intimacy (the peak of the triangle), arousal (the left corner of the triangle), and commitment (the right corner of the triangle). In relation to the context of sexual self-disclosure in communication by online dating users, it was found that the intimacy component refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bonding in a love relationship. It includes feelings that lead to the experience of warmth in a romantic relationship with a previous relationship as well as expectations for future relationships. Furthermore, the arousal component refers to the drive that leads to romance, physical attraction, motivation, and the context of a love relationship although in online dating these relationships are more likely to be non-binding. The last component of commitment refers to the decision in the short-term relationship that someone loves another person and in the long-term relationship by maintaining that love. These three components will be in a committed romantic relationship.

### **Hyperpersonal and Selective Sexual Self-Disclosure**

In the context of relationships in online dating, it involves computermediated communication (CMC) which basically is classified into two types of communication, namely synchronous and asynchronous communication (Pearson et al 2006). Synchronous communication occurs when the involved users are interacting in a real-time manner, such as direct chats through the chat feature of the application. For asynchronous communication, the interaction is delayed and each user should take turns being the sender and receiver. Communication in online dating applications, the synchronous mode is more widely used, not limited to online chat, but video calls and voice calls are also part of synchronous computermediated communication.

There are two aspects of CMC that distinguish it from face-to-face communication, namely verbal cues and extended time (Griffin 2006). In contrast to face-to-face communication that uses verbal symbols through language and nonverbal symbols through

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body language, CMC uses a sign system that is integrated into computer applications, for example through emoticons. CMC also tends to be longer than face-to-face communication because communicators in CMC cannot immediately understand the meaning of the message conveyed because of the limitations and characters on the computer. Referring to this, communication between match pairs in online dating is carried out through various symbols contained in the computer; not only emoticons but also contextual in nature to facilitate mutual understanding. The development of the Internet and communication technology has been increasing from time to time that in turn lead into bigger opportunity for users to connect with others through social media as part of hyperpersonal communication (Tengah 2019). The increased interpersonal attributions observed in computer-mediated interactions intensify the association between self-disclosure and intimacy (Jiang 2011). Self-disclosure conducted through computer-mediated communication is categorized as hyperpersonal, namely selective self-presentation behavior, where online dating users prefer to select which things they want to present to their potential partners, including how their sexual self-disclosure is being addressed during the communication. Although some users use it in a straightforward, accurate, and original manner according to themselves, there is a limit that they will stop at general things, that what is being presented is about their identities such as name, age, domicile, or other things such as profession or daily activities. The rest will be presented and communicated in stages depending on how the relationship is managed properly among the match pairs.

In its implementation through computer-mediated communication, sexual self-disclosure is often found in the form of codes with the intention of sending a message that there is a purpose of wanting to have sexual intercourse. However, how the codes are captured depends on how the quality of the communication is built. In addition, there are factors such as intuition and feeling that can be felt from the small things that are communicated. This process, what is also called fantasy integration is about how the person will be imagined when they enter a further stage. Fantasy and the code are built from things like sexting, which is a conversation that leads to sexuality with seductive tones. It can also be done by sending sexy images, naughty videos, or using simple codes in words or phrases.

The next process in online dating is a face-to-face meeting, either to meet in person or only through video calls due to distance restrictions. After the face-to-face meeting, the match

pairs may carry out the reconfiguration stage and possibly enter one of the stages either already separated –namely discontinuing the relationship, or to the long-term relationship stage (Shedletsky & Aitken 2004).

### **Intercultural Sexual Communication in Online Relationship**

The way a person communicates is largely determined by his/her cultural background. Besides that, another prominent factor that determines the way people communicate is the situational context (Mustajoki, 2010). In the context of sexual communication in online dating, the cultural background of the users is influential as the users may get a date from any area according to the location they pinned. In Indonesia, sexual communication that underlies the process of sexual self-disclosure is more considered a taboo conversation and is not explicitly discussed. Sexual communication that often occurs in Indonesian culture is nonverbal because verbal expression is often considered unacceptable. Therefore, the form of sexual self-disclosure among users from such cultural backgrounds is often a private matter and is often covered up.

In contrast, sexual communication in online dating applications is easier to express as it is considered mutualism. Some factors in the context of cyberspace are that users may hide their identity behind anonymous names or they may communicate more freely without fear of being judged because they are not in the same time and place. The online dating application is by nature growing from Western culture, spreading worldwide giving opportunity for users from any cultures or different countries. It creates a bigger opportunity for users from different cultures and countries to interact or meet each other. Thus, the way to communicate, including their strategy to express sexual self-disclosure is different for each individual.

Based on the results of interviews with informants who have used online dating for a long time and have communicated and interacted with users from various cultures and countries, there are things that can be observed from the users' sexual self-disclosure strategy. For users who mostly come from Indonesia, the average conversation process and sexual self-disclosure is done by giving a lot of epilogue and small talks at the beginning. This process is usually done by building a general conversation first, topics like hobbies, interests, and personal things. This is a common practice in Indonesian culture, considering that sexual topics are not easy to discuss. Talking about sexual matters to sexual self-disclosure in advance will be considered rude and harassing. However, in online dating, that culture is blurred as anyone may talk about it frankly and firmly about the needs and desire for sex. Furthermore, chats may lead to conversations mostly about sex and compliments to their partners. The compliment is seen as a sign that they are sexually attracted to the other person. Users from

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Indonesia are very concerned about pleasing their partners by giving lots of compliments to attract attention.

In contrast to users from several other countries whose strategy to communicate their sexual self-disclosure is more open and more direct, although the content is different. Users from the Middle East are more likely to say the intention upfront that they enjoy virtual sex. Meanwhile, users from Europe like to build relationships and sexual openness through videos and asynchronous texts. As users who live in Australia or in Indonesia, they prefer to plan face-to-face meetings and bring the context of sexual self-disclosure in a more concrete direction. The communication about sexuality can be concluded that differences in cultural background and nationality have an influence on how they view sexual self-disclosure in online dating and how they want further action after they communicate on the platform.

## **CONCLUSION**

Sexual self-disclosure as the process of expressing oneself sexually to a partner that occurs in online dating is open and varied, depending on the type of context of the relationships being carried out by the users. Sexual self-disclosure between these users has several unique attributions and intimate communication strategies despite the implementation in online dating have become an interaction that has been widely and commonly practiced. Sexual self-disclosure also has an influence on how the initial conversation might be started. It cannot be generalized but there is a tendency if the profile is shown in terms of pictures, place of residence, and bio that there is potential for casual or sexual relationships. In a further their interactions do not just happen in the virtual messaging space within the dating applications. If the matching partner feels safe, trusts, and wants to move on to the next stage of communication, they will usually switch to personal instant messaging. This indicates that in the early stages of opening up, especially in the sexual context, they already feel confident and want to move on to the next stage. Sexual self-disclosure found in the form of codes with the intention of sending a message that there is a purpose of wanting to have sexual intercourse. However, how the codes are captured depends on how the quality of the communication is built.

Sexual communication in online dating applications is easier to express as it is considered mutualism, since it communicated and interacted with users from various cultures and

countries, as well it has some sexual self-disclosure strategy. Differences cultural background and nationality have an influence on how they view sexual selfdisclosure and further action later.

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