



The Self-Esteem Paradox in Communication Privacy Management of Body-Shaming Victims on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Body shaming on social media is an increasingly prevalent phenomenon alongside high social media penetration in Indonesia, yet discussions on victims' management of their communication privacy following traumatic experiences remains limited. This study explores interpersonal communication privacy management strategies of body shaming victims using the Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory. Through a qualitative descriptive approach involving five university students who experienced body shaming across social media platforms, this research reveals a self-esteem paradox phenomenon in digital privacy management contexts. The findings demonstrate three main discoveries. First, self-esteem levels significantly determine privacy management strategies developed by victims. High self-esteem does not automatically produce adaptive strategies, but is mediated by privacy turbulence severity, social support, and self-awareness. Informants with high self-esteem may exhibit maladaptive strategies such as extreme isolation, while those with low self-esteem can develop more adaptive strategies through self-acceptance. Second, coping mechanisms developed by victims are essentially manifestations of CPM strategies, showing that in digital trauma contexts, both are two sides of the same coin. Third, cultural contexts with strong Islamic values and customary traditions shape how victims develop privacy rules and boundary regulation. These findings contribute theoretically to CPM literature by highlighting the need for multi-platform and cross-cultural dimensions in privacy management frameworks, and practically by informing the development of culturally sensitive digital literacy interventions for body shaming victims.

Keywords: Aceh, body shaming, communication privacy management, coping mechanism, self-esteem, social media

INTRODUCTION

Social media has fundamentally influenced interpersonal communication practices (Osborn et al., 2016). Platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, and others no longer serve solely as primary spaces for information sharing; they now also function as stages for shaping identity and self-disclosure presented to the public (Schlosser, 2020). Self-presentation on social media can be performed through various digital information-sharing activities, including photos, videos, words, emojis, and other forms. This is made possible by the searchable, accessible, and replicable nature of social media for users (Steinfeld et al., 2013). However, attempts to present oneself in digital spaces are followed with consequences, such as users' vulnerability to encountering other users who attempt to criticize, evaluate, or comment without invitation, thereby creating issues of communication privacy violations.

This phenomenon of self-presentation on social media has opened opportunities for body shaming practices, where the boundaries between private and public spaces become blurred, and the displayed body becomes an object of evaluation without consent (Alluhidan et al., 2025). The number of social media users continues to increase across the world. In the Indonesian context, in 2024, the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) announced that the majority of digital device and internet users were dominated by Gen Z (APJII, 2024).

A year later, this pattern increased, aligning with data released by the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (KOMDIGI), indicating that internet users in Indonesia equal 79.5% of the population (Komdigi.go.id, 2025). This data represents an increase from 2024, which was only 73.7% of the population. The types of internet usage are diverse, one of which is social media. RRI summarized statistical data on social media usage in Indonesia, including YouTube (139 million users or 53.8% of the population), Instagram (122 million users or 47.3% of the population), Facebook (118 million users or 45.9% of the population), WhatsApp (116 million users or 45.2% of the population), and TikTok (89 million users or 34.7% of the population) (Panggabean, 2025). On the other hand, the high number of social media users also intersects with the continued emergence of negative impacts of user interactions on social media, one of which is body shaming. The characteristics of Gen Z as digital natives with a high tendency for self-disclosure on social media make them the most vulnerable group to body shaming (Seemiller & Grace, 2024).

Body shaming is defined as the act of expressing unsolicited opinions or comments (with negative connotations) made by someone about another person's body characteristics (Gilbert, 2014). Body shaming remains a critical and

important issue demonstrating the negative impact of online user interactions, particularly on social media. Body shaming is ranging from well-intentioned advice to malicious insults, both online and offline. However, both are given without being requested by the victim, leading victims to view them more as the perpetrator's malicious intent, which negatively impacts the victim (Schlüter et al., 2023).

In the Indonesian context, the body shaming issue intersects with strong cultural and religious values. For example, in 2020, a digital ethnographic study conducted by (Fitria & Febrianti, 2020) in Indonesia found that body shaming was most frequently experienced by Instagram users. In the Acehese context, body shaming experienced by many individuals through social media reflects the poor implementation of customary values and Islamic values among netizens (Dewi & Arsyi, 2022). The research results also show that perpetrators did not hesitate to analogize victims to animal body shapes, specifically cattle (lemoe). The Acehese cultural context with the implementation of Islamic Sharia and customary values emphasizing honor (*marmah*—dignity and honor in Acehese culture) and maintaining face (*taqwa*—piety) creates additional layers of complexity in body shaming experiences, where victims not only face general social stigma but also potential violations of religious and customary norms (Afrianty, 2015). Body shaming can potentially be experienced by anyone and is exacerbated by the long-term effects experienced by victims beyond social media.

Among early adolescents in Indonesia, a study shows that victims often bear psychological impacts such as mental health disorders, including excessive anxiety and even depression (Deviantony et al., 2024). This research also indicates that in body shaming studies, this phenomenon still requires deep investigation because existing research focuses on the experiences of urban adolescents and neglects body shaming phenomena in rural areas or regions with specific cultural contexts such as Aceh.

In 2024, a systematic review research on body shaming in various parts of the world through journal article publications, conferences, book chapters, and reports published in reputable publishers such as Elsevier, Sage Journal, and others from October 2023 to May 2024. The findings show that body shaming victims often experience decreased self-esteem, anxiety, feelings of shame, insecurity, and even depression (Kudlová et al., 2024). The research results also recommend media literacy and critical thinking literacy as one solution to prevent body shaming behavior, particularly occurring in digital spaces. Although this systematic review provides a comprehensive picture of body shaming impacts, it is limited in exploring how victims manage their communication privacy on social media as a form of coping strategy.

To fill this gap, this research purposively selected students from Teuku

Umar University in West Aceh as research subjects based on three main considerations. First, from a demographic aspect, students represent the Gen Z group, which is the most active social media user in Indonesia (APJII, 2024), thus having direct and intense experience in interacting in digital spaces. Second, from geographical and cultural aspects, West Aceh as a district with semi-urban characteristics in Aceh Province offers a unique context where strong Islamic religiosity values, customary norms (*adat*—traditional customary law in Aceh), and the implementation of Islamic Sharia interact with global social media culture. Third, from a theoretical aspect, this context provides an ideal setting to explore communication privacy management, where students must negotiate between demands for openness and self-presentation on social media with local values emphasizing caution in self-disclosure, especially after experiencing traumatic experiences such as body shaming. Thus, the selection of this research subject not only expands the geographical scope of body-shaming literature but also provides new perspectives on how specific cultural contexts shape communication privacy management strategies and coping mechanisms of body-shaming victims.

In Indonesia, research related to body shaming occurring on social media shows that the impact of such behavior on victims can include negative effects on victims' body positivity and self-love (Fitria & Febrianti, 2020), affecting victims' self-esteem, mental health, and self-image (Halim et al., 2024), and victims often experience worse impacts due to feeling unsafe and doubting themselves (Mirza et al., 2025). Body shaming is closely related to self-esteem. Victims with low self-esteem will more strongly feel the negative impacts of body shaming (Liyarovitasari & Setyoningrum, 2022). However, in general, research on body shaming and self-esteem shows that the most visible negative impact on informants is the decline in victims' self-esteem (Melizza et al., 2023); (Annah & Heriteluna, 2023). This decline in self-esteem then triggers various coping mechanisms that victims undertake to manage the psychological impacts and their interpersonal communication on social media. This decline in self-esteem not only impacts victims' psychological condition but also significantly determines how they manage communication privacy on social media as a form of coping mechanism.

The issue of interpersonal communication and self-esteem in digital media remains an interesting point for investigation, particularly regarding how self-esteem influences the emergence of diverse coping mechanisms. Coping mechanism itself is a defense mechanism undergone by individuals to manage stressful situations, both to reduce and tolerate the stress (Algorani & Gupta, 2023). In the Indonesian context, research conducted by (Khoir et al., 2021) shows that high self-esteem does not always influence coping mechanisms when experiencing body shaming. However, other research shows that coping mechanisms are closely related to the self-esteem and self-efficacy of body

shaming victims (Novitasari & Hamid, 2021). The same findings were also evident in 2025, showing that certain self-esteem still influences their victims' coping mechanisms, both adaptively and maladaptively (Radho & Tambunan, 2025). Self-esteem and coping mechanisms experienced by victims are influenced by certain factors, including how victims manage their interpersonal communication privacy on social media.

In the social media context, coping mechanism often manifests as decisions about communication privacy management, such as regulating who can view content, limiting interactions, or even withdrawing from certain platforms. Thus, self-esteem becomes an important determinant of the boundary regulation strategies chosen by body-shaming victims. Therefore, coping mechanisms are communicative processes involving meaning negotiation, relationship management, and identity reconstruction through interaction with others and with the communication platforms they use. These efforts are closely related to the Communication Privacy Management (CPM) framework, which explains how individuals actively manage the complexity of disclosure and protection processes of personal information in their daily lives (Petronio & Child, 2020). In the context of body shaming on social media, victims are confronted with dilemmas between how to maintain open interaction and how to protect themselves from criticism and negative comments. Through CPM, we can understand how privacy is negotiated and maintained in situational contexts and diverse experiences. This negotiation and maintenance of privacy do not occur in a vacuum but are influenced by belief systems and social norms adhered to by individuals and social groups in their environment. Within the CPM framework, self-esteem is one of the important criteria influencing how individuals make decisions about their privacy rules and boundary regulation. Individuals with different levels of self-esteem will develop different privacy management strategies in responding to privacy turbulence caused by body shaming.

Although there have been various studies on self-esteem, body shaming, and coping mechanisms, understanding of how these three elements interact in the communication privacy management process on social media still has a significant gap in communication studies. First, most previous research on self-esteem and coping mechanisms has not integrated them within the framework of interpersonal communication and privacy management on social media. Second, cultural and religiosity contexts, particularly in Aceh with strong Islamic and customary values, have not been extensively explored in relation to how these values influence communication privacy management decisions of body shaming victims. Third, there has been no research, to the extent of the researchers' exploration, specifically exploring how different levels of self-esteem determine variations in communication privacy management strategies within the CPM

framework among body shaming victims on social media.

Understanding how self-esteem influences the communication privacy management process in the context of body shaming has important implications both theoretically and practically, which can contribute to the development of communication science and practical applications in digital life. This research explores the experiences of Teuku Umar University students in Aceh who have experienced different types of body shaming on social media and how they manage their interpersonal communication privacy after such experiences. Specifically, it aims to: (1) analyze how the self-esteem level of body shaming victims determines strategies for managing communication privacy on social media, (2) identify coping mechanism strategies manifested through communication privacy management practices, and (3) explore the possibility of paradoxical relationships between self-esteem, coping strategies, and privacy management decisions within the Acehnese cultural context.

To address this issue, the researchers employ Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory as the main theoretical framework, which develops evidence-based understanding of how people regulate the disclosure and concealment of personal information (Petronio et al., 2021). Given the complex nature of privacy management, situations often arise in which information owners or other parties granted authority to access such information experience “privacy turbulence.” In the imperfect context of real life, disruptions or violations frequently emerge in the way personal information is managed and protected. Individuals can violate privacy rules either intentionally or unintentionally, which can then trigger significant changes, such as decreased satisfaction in interpersonal relationships or changes in their communication practice patterns (Petronio & Child, 2020). In the context of body shaming on social media, CPM Theory can explain how victims make privacy decisions influenced by their self-esteem, cultural values, and coping strategies to manage the psychological and social impacts of negative experiences. More specifically, victims’ self-esteem levels significantly determine their privacy decisions, including the development of privacy rules, boundary regulation, and coping strategies employed to manage privacy turbulence resulting from those experiences.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach aimed at understanding and analyzing the subjective experiences of Teuku Umar University students who have experienced body shaming on social media. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables researchers to explore in depth the complexity of experiences, emotions, and strategies used by informants in navigating themselves after such experiences occur, and provides access to subjective meanings that cannot be measured through quantitative methods, particularly for sensitive

topics involving trauma and stigma (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The researchers selected this subject considering the strong background of religious values and Acehese culture, which can provide new insights and variations regarding the body shaming phenomenon and social media, particularly in Indonesia.

To gather initial information about students who had experienced body shaming on social media, the researchers first distributed an online questionnaire (Google Form) throughout October 2024. From 40 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 8 informants were willing to be interviewed in depth. To ensure the achievement of research objectives, the researchers employed purposive sampling technique considered appropriate for sensitive research as it allows for the selection of informants based on specific experiences and willingness to share traumatic experiences (Palinkas et al., 2015), by establishing inclusion criteria for the informants. The criteria included: a) active students of Teuku Umar University, b) aged 18-25 years, c) having experience of body shaming on social media within the last 3-5 years so that the experience could still be recalled relatively clearly, d) still actively using social media, and e) willing to participate in this research by signing a consent form. This research did not limit the involvement of specific genders as informants. However, in this study, out of 8 potential informants, 5 informants who met all research criteria were female. The remaining three potential informants, regardless of gender, were excluded because they did not meet one or more of the established purposive sampling criteria, such as the required age range, active social media use, or the specified timeframe of body shaming experience. These five informants committed to participating until completion in this research. The following is the data of informants involved in this research:

Table 1. Informants Involved in the Research

No	Initial	Type of Body Shaming	Social Media Platform	Frequency
1	KC (24 years old)	Petite Shaming	Facebook	Repeated
2	MTS (20 years old)	Skin Tone Shaming, Face Shaming	Facebook, Telegram	Very high (almost every post)
3	YY (23 years old)	Glasses Shaming, Height Shaming	Facebook	Serious and repeated
4	IN (19 years old)	Fat Shaming	Instagram	Several times
5	VM (19 years old)	Petite Shaming	TikTok	Repeated and viral

Source: Author's Document

To understand the complexity of these experiences and their relationship with self-management efforts, the researchers used primary data obtained through

in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide to enable the researchers to explore each unique experience of the five informants (Leavy & Brinkmann, 2014). The interview guide was developed based on literature review and covered main dimensions to be explored, including: informants' self-assessment before experiencing body shaming (initial self-esteem position), chronology and context of the body shaming experience, psychological impacts and changes in self-esteem after body shaming, and coping strategies used to manage the experience. Interview locations were chosen based on informants' comfort and privacy, mutually agreed upon to ensure that they felt safe and comfortable sharing their sensitive experiences. All interviews were recorded using an audio recorder with informants' permission, then transcribed verbatim to ensure data accuracy.

To maintain ethical principles, the researchers and informants agreed on the protection of informants' personal data through a consent form (Perrault & Nazione, 2016), which explained the research objectives, interview procedures, informants' rights to withdraw at any time, potential benefits and risks, and guarantees of identity confidentiality. Furthermore, considering the psychological condition and sensitivity of the topic, the researchers provided broad opportunities for informants to determine what information could be shared in this research and emphasized that they could skip questions deemed too personal or painful. Interview data in the form of audio recordings and interview transcripts were stored in an encrypted folder accessible only by the researchers and would be deleted after research publication in accordance with data protection principles. Interview results were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, data verification, and conclusion drawing with an inductive approach (Huberman & Miles, 2002). This analytical technique was used to help researchers manage findings data systematically and measurably. In the data reduction stage, the researchers conducted coding on interview transcripts by reading repeatedly to identify meaning units relevant to the research questions. To ensure coding credibility, the coding process was conducted independently by the first and second authors, followed by discussion and consensus to resolve any differences in interpretation, thereby strengthening the trustworthiness of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Body Shaming and Communication Privacy Management Strategies

This research aims to analyze how the self-esteem level of body shaming victims determines their communication privacy management strategies on social media. The research findings indicate that the five informants with different levels of

self-esteem developed varied privacy management strategies in response to their body-shaming experiences. The body-shaming experiences of the five informants showed significant variation, ranging from direct mockery about physical appearance to comparisons between social media appearance and real life. These experiences also resulted in impacts with varying degrees of severity, influenced by the type of comments, frequency, platform characteristics, and even the dynamics of content dissemination.

Among the five informants, MTS experienced body shaming with very high frequency, occurring in almost every post for several years, creating prolonged psychological pressure. However, informant VM experienced layered body shaming that even spread to other platforms, specifically spreading to WhatsApp groups. The TikTok content that VM posted with friends was shared without permission to WhatsApp groups, so negative comments not only occurred on one platform but spread and were discussed in digital spaces that she could not access or control. This phenomenon creates what is called cross-platform harassment, violations occurring across platforms that result in the owner losing total control over the narrative and having traumatic impacts (Marwick & Miller, 2014). The following are the forms of body-shaming comments received by the five informants:

Table 2. Forms of Body Shaming Comments

Informant	Form of Comment
KC	"Why is a kindergarten kid going to MAN school (high school level education) lol"
MTS	"You look pretty on social media but in real life you're ugly"
YY	" <i>Ya lage ureueng buta pakek-pakek kacamata</i> " (Like a blind person wearing glasses), " <i>Ka lage ranjen kab</i> " (Already look slim)
IN	"Why do you look fat now? It's not good to be fat"
VM	"bocil" (kid)

Source: Author's Document

These body shaming experiences illustrate violations of privacy boundaries over their bodies. These violations impacted the strategies they employed to "protect" themselves after experiencing body shaming. (Petronio et al., 2021) explain that within the privacy management framework, each individual has their own perspective regarding their efforts to disclose themselves between individuals. To understand this, Petronio explains it through 8 important axioms in CPM theory. First, privacy ownership, where each individual feels they have full rights over their personal information, including the right to determine who may access it. The five informants in this research also showed similar indications, particularly before experiencing body shaming. When they posted content on social media, they did it voluntarily with the expectation that although this content

was published, they still had rights over the meaning and narrative about their bodies. However, after experiencing body shaming, all five informants felt that perpetrators had taken over the right to judge, define, and interpret their bodies. The research findings, particularly in the case of informant VM, show that the informant even felt she had lost rights over the content she published because it was repeatedly published by many people across platforms without consent. This privacy ownership issue triggered all five informants to regulate their responses to these experiences.

Second, privacy ownership & co-ownership. When individuals share personal information with information recipients (co-owners), co-owners are considered to have the responsibility to safeguard that information. However, in the context of these research findings, there were informants who experienced layered violations as experienced by VM, where the content she shared on social media was disseminated by co-owners without her consent. This phenomenon illustrates that there are expectations that conflict with violations committed by co-owners, which simultaneously reflects differences in understanding privacy norms on social media between information owners and audiences (Vidak, 2012).

Third, privacy control, which refers to efforts made by individuals to control their privacy after experiencing violations. The five informants undertook varied control efforts that impacted their lives beyond social media. Interestingly, the informants' self-esteem level determined the intensity and type of privacy control they chose. Informants with high self-esteem such as VM and MTS tended to develop more extreme control strategies (total isolation), while those with low self-esteem such as KC developed more moderate control (account privacy and comment blocking). The intensity of this privacy control was carried out by all five informants in line with the level of violation and severity of body shaming they experienced. These forms of control can be seen in the following table:

Table 3. Privacy Control Strategies of the Five Informants

Informant	Level	Main Strategy	Impact
IN	Minimal	Did not change privacy settings	None
KC	Moderate	Account privacy + block comments (not blocking people)	Minimal
MTS	High/Extreme	Instagram permanently private + stopped posting for 4 years	Wore mask to school
YY	Very High	Permanent privacy + almost never posts	Social withdrawal
VM	Extreme	Privacy + photo blur strategy + rarely posts	Total social withdrawal

Source: Author's Document

Fourth, privacy control & privacy rules, where privacy control is carried out by individuals through the formation of privacy rules created based on certain

criteria to meet situational needs. The research findings show the privacy control & privacy rules of the five informants as follows:

Table 4. Privacy Rules Developed by Informants

Informan	Privacy Rules	
	Owner	Co-owner
IN	Post normally, no changes	No restrictions
KC	Avoid appearance/body topics Reduce photo posts Facebook strictly private	Block comments, not blocking people
MTS	Avoid appearance/body topics Post only after acne clears Instagram permanently private; Facebook occasionally	Limit who can see
YY	Avoid appearance/body topics Almost never post Facebook strictly private	Limit who can see
VM	Avoid appearance/body topics BLUR photos when posting TikTok = danger zone, avoid	Strictly limit who can see

Source: Author's Document

These rules were created by the five informants according to their respective situations and needs. The research findings indicate that self-esteem level becomes a determinant factor in shaping different privacy rules. Informants with low self-esteem such as MTS and YY developed privacy rules oriented toward “self-improvement” efforts, stopping posting until their physical condition was deemed to have improved. Conversely, informants with high self-esteem such as VM developed privacy rules oriented toward “self-protection,” such as photo blur strategies and extreme access restrictions. These research findings also reinforce that privacy rules are dynamic and can evolve along with the level of severity and frequency of body shaming experiences they feel.

Fifth, privacy control and boundary regulation, where successful privacy control depends on coordination and negotiation of privacy rules with co-owners according to situational needs. A key finding of this research is that none of the five informants engaged in any form of explicit coordination or negotiation with co-owners regarding their privacy boundaries, either before or after experiencing body shaming. This absence of coordination was not perceived by informants as

an oversight but rather as a reflection of prevailing social norms in heterogeneous social media ecosystems, where such negotiation is neither common nor expected. Yet simultaneously, all five informants held implicit expectations that co-owners would respect the boundaries of shared content without being asked, refraining from negative judgment or unauthorized redistribution. This gap between the absence of explicit boundary negotiation and the presence of implicit boundary expectations represents a structural vulnerability in digital privacy management, making informants' privacy boundaries particularly susceptible to violation.

Sixth, privacy ownership, privacy control & boundary turbulence: Co-ownership creates distributed collective privacy boundaries, where all co-owners share responsibility in coordinating and negotiating information use. These research findings reveal that all five informants experienced traumatic impacts at various levels because body shaming created a profound sense of lost control over themselves and their personal information. This was most vividly illustrated in VM's case, where TikTok content she shared was redistributed by co-owners without her consent to WhatsApp groups, spaces she could neither access nor moderate. This act of unauthorized redistribution fractured the collective privacy boundary, transforming what began as a contained disclosure into an uncontrollable multi-platform exposure, stripping VM of any meaningful sense of ownership over her own content.

Seventh, boundary regulation & collective privacy, where boundary turbulence can occur when many people know confidential information, and decisions about who may know and the right to disclose become ambiguous (Parapat, 2025). This dynamic was clearly evident across multiple informants in this research. In VM's case, the rapid and uncontrolled spread of her content across platforms meant that the original privacy boundary she had set on TikTok became entirely irrelevant, as the audience grew far beyond what she had anticipated or consented to. Similarly, MTS experienced boundary turbulence through years of repeated body shaming across multiple platforms, where the sheer volume and persistence of violations made it increasingly difficult to maintain any stable sense of where her privacy boundaries lay. These experiences collectively illustrate how boundary turbulence in digital spaces is not merely a single violation event but can escalate into a sustained condition of boundary instability.

Eighth, privacy turbulence, which occurs on a broad spectrum, ranging from minor disruptions in information management to total violations and unwanted damage (Radutniy, 2025). The level of privacy turbulence in these research findings also shows diverse variants. The privacy turbulence experienced by the five informants shows a spectrum from mild disturbances to severe violations with impacts directly proportional to their severity. Informant IN experienced the mildest turbulence with several comments in private/semi-private

spaces (Story and DM) causing slightly surprised reactions. Informant KC experienced moderate turbulence with repeated public comments such as “Why is a kindergarten kid going to MAN school lol,” resulting in decreased self-esteem for several months to one year. Informant KC developed permanent behavioral changes such as account privacy and blocking comments. Informant YY experienced major turbulence with systematic comments occurring in almost every post on her social media account about various aspects of appearance (glasses and body).

This caused significant self-esteem decline and YY needed nearly two years to begin taking action, with trauma still persistent despite physical condition improvements. Informant MTS experienced very severe turbulence with systematic body shaming for years in almost every post, resulting in the most dramatic self-esteem decline and experiencing extreme isolation periods (“almost depressed, could only cry in the room”), and needed four years for recovery although trauma is still remembered to date. Informant VM experienced the most complex and dangerous turbulence with viral cross-platform components where her TikTok content was shared by co-owners without her permission to WhatsApp groups and discussed in spaces she could not access. This experience created VM’s feeling of losing total control over herself and resulted in VM withdrawing both online and offline.

The severity level of this privacy turbulence shows a complex correlation with informants’ initial self-esteem, where high self-esteem does not always protect individuals from severe traumatic impacts, as seen in the cases of VM and MTS, both of whom had high self-esteem but experienced the slowest recovery.

The Self-Esteem Paradox and Coping Mechanisms in Privacy Management

Based on these research findings, there is a complex two-way relationship between self-esteem and communication privacy management. On one hand, the severity level of privacy turbulence determines changes in self-esteem through mechanisms of loss of control and ownership violation. On the other hand, informants’ initial self-esteem level also significantly determines the types of privacy management strategies they develop as coping mechanisms, which ultimately influence the type and effectiveness of their recovery. Informants’ initial self-esteem levels showed significant variation. Informants KC and YY had low self-esteem before experiencing body shaming, while informants MTS, IN, and VM had high self-esteem. This initial self-esteem position underwent diverse changes after body shaming incidents, with patterns that were not always linear and sometimes paradoxical.

Contextually, these research findings show that privacy ownership, privacy control, and privacy turbulence become the core of body shaming experiences of

the five informants. These three axioms also intersect with self-esteem and coping mechanisms, which are ultimately manifested in communication privacy management. Uniquely, these control efforts are influenced by changes in self-esteem that they experience. Furthermore, these research findings also show that the privacy turbulence of the five victims resulted in communication privacy management impacts at levels of experience severity and recovery processes experienced by individuals. The magnitude of the “shock” affects the decline in self-esteem, feelings of shame, and informants’ ability to readjust their privacy boundaries properly to regain control over their own social media accounts and content.

These research findings also show that positive self-esteem level is not always a benchmark for adaptive coping mechanisms, indicating the existence of a self-esteem paradox, which generally assumes a linear relationship between self-esteem and coping ability (Brown, 2010). For example, what happened to informant VM who had high self-esteem both before and after experiencing body shaming but behaved avoidantly and withdrew from social media. She manifested this by rarely uploading photos, or if uploading by blurring certain parts that were worried would invite perpetrators to body shame again, and even did not want to interact again with perpetrators. What informant VM did shows that the coping mechanism undertaken by informants is influenced by many factors such as level of awareness, external support, characteristics of social media platforms they use, and the stress impact experienced by victims. Through informant VM, it can be seen that maladaptive coping mechanisms are considered best by herself even though she must isolate herself from her interactions with others.

An important finding from this research is that the coping mechanisms developed by the five informants are fundamentally concrete manifestations of communication privacy management strategies within the CPM framework. Every coping decision, from blocking comments (KC), stopping posting until physical condition improves (MTS and YY), to total withdrawal from social interaction (VM), is a form of boundary regulation and privacy rules they developed to manage privacy turbulence. In other words, coping mechanisms in the context of body shaming on social media are not merely internal psychological responses, but communicative practices involving the regulation of personal information boundaries (privacy boundaries), access negotiation (co-ownership), and reconstruction of privacy rules. We acknowledge that this positioning may invite an alternative reading, that the conceptual proximity between coping mechanisms and CPM strategies reflects theoretical overlap or redundancy between the two literatures. However, we argue that this convergence is precisely what makes the finding significant: in the specific context of digital trauma such as body shaming on social media, the boundary between psychological coping and communicative privacy management collapses. This insight points toward the value of

interdisciplinary integration rather than treating the two literatures as separate domains.

Conversely, these research findings show that informants with low self-esteem were actually able to develop adaptive coping mechanisms, as seen in informant KC who attempted self-acceptance and considered her body a gift from God that should be appreciated. Additionally, informants MTS and YY planned physical change efforts. The two differences above show that the privacy turbulence experienced by victims triggers the development of coping mechanisms that are contextual and situational. This argument aligns with findings illustrated through informant IN. Informant IN had high self-esteem but felt she did not experience significant impact after experiencing body shaming. The privacy turbulence experienced by IN did not change how she interacted and did not change her privacy management. These findings also reinforce that self-esteem, although important, is not the most dominant factor in determining privacy management but is mediated by various factors, including each informant's awareness, social support systems, and the severity level of privacy violations experienced.

As discussed in the privacy ownership analysis above, the five informants held clear expectations about the limits of co-owner access to their content, yet found these boundaries difficult to enforce in practice given the borderless and rapidly spreading nature of digital data. This tension between perceived ownership rights and actual loss of control is further compounded by the unpredictable nature of privacy regulation within digital privacy management systems (Vitak, 2012).

The Role of Acehese Cultural and Islamic Values in Privacy Boundary Regulation

The Acehese cultural context with strong Islamic values and customs also shaped how the five informants developed their communication privacy management strategies. Several findings show the influence of local values on privacy decisions. First, Islamic religiosity values in Aceh shaped the privacy rules developed by informants. Informant KC, who developed the most adaptive coping mechanism, stated that her self-acceptance was based on the belief that the body is "a gift from God that should be appreciated." This religious perspective helped KC build resilience. Unlike KC, informants MTS and YY who chose "self-improvement" strategies before reappearing on social media actually showed different religious value internalization, which is attempting to "improve God's creation" before presenting it again to the public. These findings show that religiosity values can function as balancing tools that protect individuals from traumatic impacts of body shaming, but different religious value interpretations produce different boundary regulation strategies.

Second, politeness norms emphasized in Acehnese customary culture shaped how informants regulated their privacy boundaries post-body shaming. Unlike modern urban contexts that tend to be permissive toward self-expression on social media, Acehnese values emphasizing caution actually strengthened informants' tendencies to develop stricter privacy control strategies. This can be seen from the majority of informants, except IN, choosing to privatize accounts or significantly reduce posting activities. Informant MTS even stopped posting for four years, while YY almost never posts anymore. These extreme strategies reflect how caution values in Acehnese culture are internalized and reinforced by body shaming trauma, creating highly defensive boundary regulation. Only informant IN did not change privacy strategies, indicating that the level of cultural value internalization varies among Acehnese youth.

These findings indicate the need for broader analysis of the CPM framework to include technological dimensions in multi-platform social media ecology, where technological features create new complexities in boundary management (Marwick & Boyd, 2014). Additionally, these findings also show that social media features such as share, screenshot, and cross-posting have great potential for expanding privacy boundaries without permission, so understanding self-information disclosed between information owners and co-owners is no longer the same and even unclear. Understanding these dynamics is important so that individuals can formulate adaptive privacy rules and boundary management strategies, especially in facing privacy boundary violation threats in an increasingly complex digital era. These findings also show that religious values, customs, and local norms function as frameworks that shape how individuals interpret privacy turbulence, develop privacy rules, and conduct boundary regulation. In the Acehnese context, local values not only influence privacy decisions but also determine the level of sensitivity to body shaming, recovery speed, and effectiveness of coping mechanisms developed (Yulia & Azhar, 2023).

Overall, this research provides three main contributions to CPM literature and body shaming studies. First, it reveals the self-esteem paradox, where high self-esteem does not automatically produce adaptive privacy management strategies but is mediated by contextual factors such as privacy turbulence severity level, social support, and cultural values. Second, it shows that coping mechanisms are fundamentally manifestations of CPM strategies, expanding understanding that privacy management is not merely technical practice but also psychological and communicative processes. Third, it enriches CPM by showing how local cultural contexts, particularly religious values and Acehnese customs, shape boundary regulation and privacy rules that individuals develop in responding to digital trauma.

CONCLUSION

The current research produced three main findings that address the research objectives. First, self-esteem level significantly determines the type of privacy management strategy developed by victims. Informants with high self-esteem (VM and MTS) tended to develop “self-protection” oriented privacy rules with extreme boundary regulation strategies such as total isolation and drastic access restrictions. Conversely, informants with low self-esteem (KC and YY) developed “self-improvement” oriented privacy rules with more moderate yet defensive strategies. These findings reveal a self-esteem paradox, where high self-esteem does not automatically produce adaptive privacy management strategies but is mediated by contextual factors such as privacy turbulence severity level, social support, self-awareness, and response speed.

Second, this research shows that the coping mechanisms developed by the five informants are fundamentally concrete manifestations of communication privacy management strategies within the CPM framework. Every coping decision, from blocking comments, stopping posting until physical condition improves, to total withdrawal from social interaction, is a form of boundary regulation and privacy rules they developed to manage privacy turbulence. Body shaming creates privacy disturbances (privacy turbulence) with varying severity levels, ranging from mild disturbances (one-week recovery) to severe violations with long-term traumatic impacts (four years or more recovery). These findings expand CPM understanding by showing that in the context of digital trauma, coping mechanisms and privacy management are two separate sides, so interventions for body shaming victims need to integrate psychological and communicative approaches simultaneously.

Third, the Acehnese cultural context, with its strong Islamic values and customs, determines how informants develop their communication privacy management strategies. Islamic religiosity values shape different privacy rules: informant KC developed self-acceptance through the belief that the body is “a gift from God that should be appreciated,” while MTS and YY chose to “improve God’s creation” before returning to social media. Politeness and caution norms in Acehnese customs strengthened the tendency of most informants to adopt very strict privacy control strategies, such as account privatization and drastic reduction in posting activities. These findings show that local values function as frameworks that shape how individuals interpret privacy turbulence, develop privacy rules, and conduct boundary regulation.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in three aspects. First, this research enriches CPM literature by showing the need for theoretical framework expansion to include multi-platform technological dimensions, where digital features such as share, screenshot, and cross-posting create new complexities. Second, this research integrates psychological variables (self-esteem) with

communication theory (CPM) to explain variations in privacy management strategies, showing that interdisciplinary approaches are required to understand contemporary digital communication phenomena. Third, this research shows how local cultural contexts, particularly in regions with strong religiosity values and customs such as Aceh, shape communication privacy management practices differently from modern urban contexts.

This research has some limitations. First, the limited number of informants (five people) and gender homogeneity (all female) limit the generalization of findings. Second, the body shaming experiences studied occurred in the past (3-5 years ago), so informant narratives may be influenced by memory bias. Third, there is no direct access to actual body shaming content because many have been deleted, so analysis relies entirely on informants' subjective narratives without digital data triangulation. Fourth, it focuses on individual-level privacy management without exploring collective-level dynamics or how families and communities in Aceh shape victims' privacy decisions. Fifth, it does not explore generational differences in the internalization of Acehnese cultural values, although findings show variations in internalization levels among young people. Sixth, in accordance with ethical data protection principles and participant confidentiality agreements, all raw data including audio recordings and interview transcripts will be deleted following publication. While this practice protects participants' privacy, it limits the possibility of data verification or replication of findings for future use.

Based on these limitations, the researchers recommend the following future research directions. First, involving a larger and more diverse number of informants in terms of gender, age, and cultural value internalization levels to enrich understanding of variations in privacy management strategies in Acehnese cultural contexts. Future research also needs to compare body shaming victim experiences in Aceh with other urban contexts in Indonesia to identify specific influences of local cultural values. Second, using mixed-methods approaches that combine in-depth interviews with participatory observation and digital content analysis to access body-shaming experiences in real time and reduce memory bias. Third, exploring collective-level privacy management dynamics, particularly how family and community values in Aceh shape collective privacy norms and collective coping strategies in responding to body shaming. Fourth, investigating the role of algorithms and platform architecture in facilitating or limiting cross-platform privacy turbulence, including how technical features such as sharing, screenshots, and notifications contribute to unwanted boundary expansion. Fifth, developing and testing culturally sensitive digital privacy literacy interventions, particularly for societies with strong religious values and customs, to help individuals develop more adaptive boundary regulation strategies when facing body shaming on social media.

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