

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) IN MUSLIM SOCIETY

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Abstract

The LGBT phenomenon triggers both support and opposition, especially in Muslim-majority countries. Some nations legalize same-sex marriage. In Indonesia, rejection of LGBT arises through regulations and psychological efforts. This study aims to explore LGBT Muslims in Muslim communities more deeply. This research is a literature review, where all data sources are analyzed thoroughly. The results of the study reveal various perceptions within society regarding LGBT behavior. Reasons provided by different parties, including LGBT activists and individuals, contribute to the growing debate. Some oppose LGBT behavior, arguing it contradicts religious, cultural, and societal norms, while others support it as a form of freedom to express one's rights. Conclusion: The LGBT issue sparks both support and opposition, especially in Muslim-majority countries, with rejection in Indonesia through regulations and psychological efforts.

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A. INTRODUCTION

LGBTQ+ survivors face violence and discrimination, requiring an analysis of sexual social roles and the dynamics between governments for the protection of rights (Pérez, 2014). Issues of professional conduct and discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals persist in the UK and EU countries, necessitating inclusive education for healthcare workers (Pezzella, 2023). Over 54 million people in the US are aged ≥ 65 , including 2.4 million LGBTQ individuals, who experience criminalization, discrimination, and social stigma (Inventor et al., 2022). Research indicates that older LGBTQ individuals experience victimization, stress, PTSD, loneliness, discrimination, and health problems, requiring targeted interventions (Chan et al., 2024).

Although the history of treatment toward LGBTQ individuals in the US is shameful, significant progress and legal victories demonstrate momentum toward full equality (McGinnis, 2015). Western countries have built power through gender and sexual classification. Despite advancements in equality, the social status of LGBTQ individuals remains fragile (Prauthois & Biland, 2022). Limitations on LGBTQ rights are due to colonial, religious, and cultural factors that affect their mental health. Protection of LGBTQ rights is necessary (Alibudbud, 2023). The development of LGBTQ family rights is influenced by gender roles, civil rights movements,

and reproductive technology, with further research needed on the aspirations of LGBTQ parents (Gato et al., 2022).

LGBTQ organizations in non-metropolitan communities face limitations, but individual motivation to engage includes access to support, identity, and organizational backing (Paceley et al., 2019). LGBTQ+ individuals often face trauma from religious communities, but still wish to be involved. This chapter discusses professional mental health support (Ford, 2021). An online survey of 591 lesbian women revealed coping mechanisms and resilience strategies to deal with discrimination, focusing on identity awareness and civil activism (Masullo et al., 2022). LGBT policies and practices, supportive LGBT climates, and supportive working relationships influence work attitudes, psychological stress, disclosure, and perceived discrimination (Webster et al., 2018).

Intersectionality theory is used to understand how sexual orientation, gender, caste, class, and religion impact the inclusion and equality of LGBTQIA+ individuals in India (Mahajan et al., 2024). The well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals in Russia, Turkey, Pakistan, and India highlights discrimination despite legal advancements (Ahuwalia et al., 2024). LGBTQ issues are complex as they involve gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and their effects on individuals who are not heteronormative (Gedro, 2024). LGBTQ youth face significant challenges, including discrimination, lack of legal protection, and limited psychological support. Inclusive legislation, education, and social advocacy can mitigate these injustices (Jones et al., 2020). Participants' experiences accessing mental healthcare are linked to stigma and the staff's lack of understanding of LGBTQ needs, highlighting the need for care that prioritizes equality, inclusion, and respect for diversity (Rees et al., 2021).

This research further explores Muslim society's acceptance and views toward the LGBTQ phenomenon. This study also seeks to understand the various factors that influence societal attitudes toward LGBTQ behavior, including the impact of religious norms, culture, and social values. The impact of this research is expected to provide a clearer understanding of the social dynamics and perceptions of LGBTQ individuals in Muslim communities. This research can assist in formulating more effective approaches to addressing LGBTQ issues, both socially and legally, and reducing societal conflicts or misunderstandings. The findings of this study reveal both support and opposition to LGBTQ issues within Muslim communities. Most respondents consider LGBTQ behavior to be contrary to religious and cultural norms, while others view it as an expression of individual freedom. The study identifies factors influencing societal views on LGBTQ, such as education, social environment, and religious understanding.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a library research method, focusing on studying theories and references related to the research theme (Sa'idah, 2022, p. 12). In this case, the library research aims to explore various theories, concepts, and references in depth to support the understanding of Muslim society's acceptance and views on the LGBTQ phenomenon. Data is collected through documentation techniques, which gather theories or explanations from various sources, such as books, academic articles, or other online writings. This technique allows the researcher to gain different perspectives on the topic under study. The data analysis process involves reducing the gathered information to make it relevant to the research topic, specifically the

acceptance and views of Muslim society toward LGBTQ issues. Incomplete data or data whose validity has not been tested will be excluded from the analysis, while complete and valid data will be selected for further analysis (Syahza, 2021). After the reduction process, the selected data will be presented in an easily understandable form, as seen in this research's findings.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)

LGBT refers to sexual orientations involving same-sex relationships. Lesbian refers to women attracted to other women, gay to men attracted to other men, bisexual to individuals attracted to both genders, and transgender to those who alter their appearance or sex organs according to their desires (Nisa, 2023). LGBT issues are not a new phenomenon; they have existed throughout history and have begun to show their presence in society. In Indonesia, the existence of LGBT remains a controversial issue in a predominantly Muslim country (Yudiyanto, 2016). This contrasts with Western countries, where the LGBT phenomenon has become more accepted and normalized in society. Research by Eliason and Roberson found that discrimination against LGBT individuals in the US has been decreasing (Muttaqin, 2017). LGBT has become a common topic in mass media, especially with the advancement of technology, which provides people with access to vast amounts of information, both positive and potentially harmful. Mass media undeniably shape individuals' views, emotions, and communication (Rendanody, 2019). This has led to an increase in the number of LGBT individuals every year, and the spread of such behavior occurs easily due to the innate human desires. It is supported by intellectual elements (Yudiyanto, 2016).

LGBT communities are considered a threat in religious countries, especially in Islam. The lack of public knowledge about sex, sexuality, and LGBT issues has made this topic taboo and has contributed to discrimination and intimidation against this minority group (Ismail, 2022, p. 4). The advancement of technology and societal progress has encouraged freedom of expression but also poses risks, particularly to adolescents. However, an increasing number of people in Indonesia and worldwide are accepting LGBT as part of diversity, rather than seeing it as a deviation (Dhamayanti, 2022). Medical sexologist Andik Wijaya states that LGBT is not an innate condition but a sexual behavior influenced by psycho-social-spiritual dynamics. Parenting, social environment, and spiritual guidance play significant roles in preventing such behaviors during childhood (Hutabarat, 2019). In psychology, however, homosexuality and lesbianism are often neglected, with individuals engaging in these sexual behaviors viewed as abnormal (Khairani & Saefudin, 2018).

Prejudice or biases against specific groups, races, religions, or social orientations often arise within society, leading to unfair treatment of those groups (Sa'idah & Annajih, 2022). LGBT individuals often face criticism and discrimination, which has a significant impact on their psychological well-being. Research by Jennifer de Lange shows a significant relationship between minority stress and suicidal thoughts among LGBT youth and young adults (Lange et al., 2022). In Indonesia, 98% of the population adheres to a religion or belief system, including Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and others, which all strictly forbid LGBT behavior, as it is considered contrary to religious principles



(Hikmawati, 2020, p. 4). The prohibition of homosexual and lesbian behavior is not just seen as damaging to human dignity but also associated with severe risks such as sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, syphilis, and similar diseases (Yanggo, 2018).

In Islam, the issue of LGBT is addressed by prohibiting all causes of these diseases, leading to Islamic laws that forbid adultery, homosexuality, and all actions that could lead to these behaviors (Dacholfany & Khoirurrijal, 2016). Religion does not encourage unfair treatment of those who make mistakes, including LGBT individuals. Islam, instead, offers a path for change toward human nature. Hermawan states that Islam does not condemn LGBT but rather shows tolerance toward them (Abdusshomad et al., 2023). Efforts to address LGBT issues in society, particularly among the general public, are necessary. One approach is providing education and socialization about the dangers of LGBT behavior and the consequences it can bring (Thaheransyah et al., 2021). Early education for adolescents is crucial to prevent deviant sexual orientations. Effective methods include presenting the impact of LGBT from various aspects such as health, religion, society, culture, and law. Media based on cognitive theory has proven effective in increasing knowledge, although its role is not absolute (Rahmawati & Ambarwati, 2021). Differences of opinion regarding LGBT can lead to social unrest and disturb societal harmony. Provocative arguments can make this issue seem ambiguous and more widely accepted. Many individuals allow LGBT to develop without considering its potential impact on national morality, even though it has existed for a long time, and its presence has not been entirely accepted by the international community (Adnyani, 2022).

2. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender in Muslim Society

Most participants in the study grew up in Muslim communities and experienced conflict when they realized their sexual orientation or gender identity. They faced discrimination from both Muslims and non-religious LGBT individuals, which affected their identity development (Kumpasoğlu, 2022). The strategy for reconciling LGBT and Muslim identities emphasizes the process of Muslim LGBT identity formation while also highlighting new awareness of negotiations around Islamophobia, racialization, and Muslim homophobia, as well as the importance of understanding Muslim identity in a broad sense. Their experiences challenge Western assumptions and Muslim culture (Rahman & Valliani, 2016). Love can be found in same-sex relationships, similar to heterosexual love, in the Qur'an. However, the majority reject same-sex marriage, viewing it as incompatible with Islamic law (Izwan bin Md Yusof et al., 2019).

Ethnicity plays an important role in the formation of religious and sexual identity for young Muslim gays in the UK and Malaysia. This study highlights how those considered "out of place" form strategies to feel a sense of belonging, considering the socio-political context of Islam in both countries (Shah, 2019). In three communities, the main challenges were related to the acceptance of homosexuality, rigid gender roles, and experiences of intersectional racism and exclusion. Solutions include government support for community initiatives, media representation, and sexual diversity education in schools (Dhoest & Wasserbauer, 2023). Progressive Muslim gay identities are integrated into three dimensions: religion, ethno-culture, and color. The challenges include relationships with Allah,

reinterpretation of the Qur'an, East-West ethno-cultural differences, and internal racism in the context of white cultural dominance (Minwalla et al., 2016). Within their religious and cultural communities, sexual orientation often threatens a sense of belonging, forcing them to "bend" Islam. The status of being a "minority within a minority" emphasizes their search for accurate representation, freedom from discrimination, and religious practices that harmonize with sexuality, even when in conflict with the majority Muslim views (Kam-Tuck Yip, 2016).

Love can be found in same-sex partnerships, similar to the concept of love in the Qur'an. However, the majority reject same-sex marriage, considering it prohibited by the Qur'an (Md Yusof, 2019). The alienation and exclusion experienced by women from Muslim communities did not drive them away from Islam. On the contrary, they firmly assert the importance of faith, worship, and living according to Islamic moral standards and principles. These women manage and integrate their complex identities through commitment to Islam, while also being determined to acknowledge intrinsic aspects of themselves that they no longer reject or suppress (Siraj, 2016). The American Muslim debate reflects broader American conversations. However, it is also marked by different positions, arguments, and effects, which hinder the possibility of categorizing Muslim attitudes toward same-sex love and marriage as purely affirmative or negative (Hammer, 2021).

D. CONCLUSION

The issue of LGBT today has caused society to become divided into pro and con groups. Some support and justify LGBT behaviors, while others oppose them. Both sides stand firm and defend their arguments. Ongoing debates within society about the existence of the LGBT community continue to take place. The various perceptions emerging within society regarding LGBT have led those who support such behaviors to make efforts to legitimize them. Meanwhile, those opposing LGBT behavior are equally determined to take action to prevent its spread. There are various ways to prevent the development of LGBT behaviors. One of the strategies is through education and socialization to the public about the dangers of LGBT behavior, by explaining the negative impacts from health, social, cultural, and religious perspectives. With such efforts, it is hoped that the growth of LGBT behavior can be halted and prevented from spreading. This initiative is also expected to encourage society not to normalize deviant sexual behaviors like LGBT. Furthermore, providing proper guidance and support to individuals involved in LGBT behaviors can contribute to their mental well-being.

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