



Muslim Students and Attitudes toward Gay Men

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Abstract


The purpose of the present study was to determine the relationship between the socio-demographic variables, religiosity, childhood trauma scale and Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale and attitudes toward gays. It was conducted at eight regular classes in Lampung University, Indonesia. A total of 336 Muslim students participated in the study by answering the questionnaires. Results indicate that the socio-demographic variables related to attitudes toward gays are the choice of political parties and the type of region of origin. It also shows that religiosity and childhood trauma scale were not related to attitudes toward gays, while the GEM Scale had a negative correlation with attitudes toward gays. Among the sensitive issues with high resistance among students were legalization of gay marriage, gays in the military, gays in public institutions and the recognition of the rights of gays.

Keywords: Religiosity, Childhood trauma scale, GEM scale, Socio-demographics, Attitudes toward gays, Muslim students.

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1. Introduction

Gay men are a minority often suffering from discrimination and even victimization. Various acts of violence include insult, ridicule and threats (Barrientos *et al.*, 2010), verbal abuse and physical violence (Biçmen and Bekiroğullari, 2014) and even murder (Gruenewald, 2012). In the United States, 35% of homicide victims are gay men (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), 2015). The intensity of violence differs and it is influenced by their social position (Meyer, 2010). Violence against gay men occur worldwide (Dworkin and Yi, 2003). In addition to the real world, violence against gay men also occurs in the virtual world. For example, a study by Padva (2008) showed that gays often experience bullying in various media, such as cinemas, television, journals, web sites, fiction, children's story books, comics, music, advertising and pornography.

Public places, such as schools or colleges constitute the "dangerous" arenas for gay men. A study by Ellis (2009) showed that homophobia remains an important issue in the UK where the campus still cannot fully accept gays. Negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians also occur in the workplace (Embrick *et al.*, 2007). Violence is not only carried out by individuals or other groups in society but also by the state institutions. A study by Yu-Rong and Ping (2010) in Taiwan, for example, showed that gays are often treated with prejudice, hostility and violence within the society in addition to government's discriminative treatment with hateful discourse.

Discrimination leads gay men to experiencing fundamental problems both with regard to personality and social relations in society. According to McDermott *et al.* (2014) global data showed an increase in suicides and alcohol use among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) of young age. In this case, there is a correlation between homophobia with self-destructive behavior. Duncan *et al.* (2014) found a higher prevalence for marijuana use among LGBT groups representing the targets for crime/hostility. A study by Kosciw *et al.* (2013) reported that victimization contributes to low academic achievement and self-esteem among gay men. In addition, other effects of victimization on gays in general are health and well-being (Cunningham, 2011; Heck *et al.*, 2013; Horton, 2014) as well as depressive symptoms (Almeida *et al.*, 2009). In connection with social relations, a study by Knauer (2012) for example, pointed out that gays as a minority group do not have equality before law and are often forgotten in protection programs.

For gay men themselves, the various acts of discrimination and victimization lead them to be in need for social supports. In fact, those social supports are relatively limited. There are several factors affecting those social supports. Swank and Fahs (2013) identified four factors: the level of education, communication, the ability to recognize heterosexuality and commitment to social justice. Meanwhile, Valenti and Campbell (2009) reported that the fear of losing jobs, stigma/social charge of "gay lifestyle" and the safety factor constitute obstacles for someone to provide support to gays. Lack of social support from local communities leads gays to seek other alternative supports, such as in cyberspace. A study by DeHaan *et al.* (2012) found that LGBT uses the Internet as an efficient way to make friends, to obtain romantic couples, to join LGBT events offline and to get sexual health services.

Resistance to gay men occurs in all parts of the world, even in countries recognizing LGBT equal rights in various aspects, such as the UK and Canada (Browne and Nash, 2014). Discrimination and victimization against gay men are inseparable from the public perceptions of gay men. Those perceptions are influenced by various factors. A study by Besen and Zicklin (2007) found that religiosity and fundamentalism have negative effects on community support. Gender and race constitute other variables affecting attitudes toward gays. Meanwhile, a study by Lemelle and Battle (2004) showed that males typically have more negative attitudes than females; and African Americans have more negative attitudes than white residents. However, among African-Americans, women are thought to have the greatest negative attitudes toward gay men. Overall, the variables considered were age, income, education, residency and religiosity. Theoretically, according to Gerhards (2010) the theories of modernization and religious inheritance help explain differences in the degree of acceptance of homosexuality. The fact remains that there are differences in the acceptance of homosexuality in the 27 EU countries and Turkey.

The state policy toward homosexuality is quite varied. A study by Moscati (2010) showed that, although Italy and Spain have in common in terms of the legal and socio-historical backgrounds (legal culture of both countries discriminates homosexuality), their treatment of gays (homosexuality) is different. Spain allows same-sex marriage, while Italy disallows it. Policy variations occur even among states in the US. According to Killian (2010) such policy variations have an impact on social service programs and LGBT life itself.

Despite the controversial issue at the global level, homosexuality received less attention in the discipline of sociology. Studies on gays or LGBT in general started in the 1980s. Sociology in this case is a discipline that is lagging behind other disciplines. According to Robertson (2014) the sociological perspective of the process that determines a person identifies himself as gay is the first contribution to the literature of sociology. Ethnographic research found that sexuality is constructed through four processes: infringement of right to heterosexuality, the search for an explanation, the exploration of sexuality and identity negotiations. According to Stein and Plummer (1994) several sociologists tend to use the assumption that lesbians and gays are less relevant issues.

Not only marginalizing the issue of "sexual minorities", but sociology also has a weakness in explaining the phenomenon. The new "queer theory" is also more developed by scholars outside sociology. Ironically, those scholars use the social constructionist approach which represents a tradition in sociology. According to Moore and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer (2013) future direction of sociological research development needs to be focused on households of same-sex couples and households where parents identify themselves as gays or lesbians. In connection with it, the purpose of the present study was to determine the relationships between several sociological variables and attitudes toward gays. Sociological variables examined in this case were socio-demographic variables (gender, age, ethnicity, boyfriend-girlfriend relationships, organizational membership, the choice of political party and the type of region of origin), religiosity, childhood trauma scale and Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale.

2. Methods

Questionnaires were distributed to eight regular classes in Lampung University, Indonesia. The researcher strictly complied with the rules of scientific research, such as the explanation that there is no compulsion for the participants to participate in the study. The principles of confidentiality (anonymity) and participant privacy were guaranteed through not stating participants' name and other identities in the questionnaire. Participants were also informed that the study was not related to political aspects, but only to determine the students' attitudes toward gays currently at issue in Indonesia. The researcher also informed that the study was only for Muslim students. Of 420 questionnaires distributed, 336 were fully completed.

Participants were 148 (44%) men and 188 (56%) women, aged 14 to 29 years ($M = 20.07$; $SD = 1.4$) who were attending universities located in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. In terms of ethnicity, the largest proportion ($n = 174$; 51.8%) was Javanese, successively followed by Lampung ($n = 89$; 26.5%), Minang ($n = 28$; 8.3%), Sundanese ($n = 17$; 15.15), Batak ($n = 8$; 2.4%) and other ($n = 20$; 6.0%). A total of 203 (60.4%) students was active in student organizations and the remaining 133 (39.65) were not. A total of 51 people had jobs in addition to being college students. A total of 140 (41.7%) students had a boyfriend/partner and the remaining 196 (58.3%) did not. A total 141 (42%) students lived with their parents, 44 (13.1%) students lived with relatives and the remaining 151 (44.9%) students lived in boarding/rented houses. In terms of political parties, 81 (24.1%) students admitted to choose Islamic/religion-based parties, 118 (35.1%) students to choose national parties and the remaining 137 (40.8%) students did not have political parties of choice. Meanwhile, in terms of the type of region of origin, a total of 126 (37.5%) students came from rural areas (rural), 109 (32.4%) students from semi-urban areas and 101 (30.1%) came from urban areas.

2.1. Instrument

The questionnaire included five subgroups of questions related to characteristics of the students: demographics (i.e., sex, age, ethnicity, having a boyfriend or girlfriend, student organizational affiliation, monthly expenditure, where they live, political party preference, where they come from/area type), religiosity (how they describe their religious beliefs, experience, knowledge and practices), childhood trauma scale, attitudes toward male-female relationships (GEM scale) and attitudes toward gays. Religiosity was measured by using the scale of [El-Menouar \(2014\)](#) consisting of 22 items: five items of basic religion, six items of central duties, four items of religious experience, three items of religious knowledge and four items of orthopraxis. There were 16 items with a 5-point response including 'always', 'often', 'sometimes', 'rarely/almost never' and 'never'. The alternative was 'very sure', 'sure', 'hesitant', 'unsure', 'very unsure'. A total of 4 items had three answer choices ('yes', 'sometimes', 'never') and 2 items had two answer choices ('ever', 'never') and ('yes', 'no').

The childhood trauma scale and attitudes related to men-women relationships (GEM Scale) in the present study were measured using the IMAGES (International Men and Gender Equality Survey) scale which has been tested in various countries ([Barker et al., 2011](#)). The childhood trauma scale consisted of 15 items, each of which had four answer choices ('never', 'sometimes', 'often' and 'very often'). Meanwhile, GEM Scale consisted of 18 items, each of which had four answer choices ('strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'). Despite the high score of validity and reliability of the original scales, but it was still subjected to testing with regard to the different cultural settings. Attitudes toward gays were measured using the scale developed by [Raja and Stokes \(1998\)](#). This scale consists of 22 items divided into three parts: 9 items of Personal Discomfort with Gay Men (PDG), 4 items of Belief homosexuality as Deviant (BHD) and 9 items of Institutional Homophobia toward Gay Men (IHG).

3. Results

3.1. Religiosity

The present study measured religiosity using the scale of [El-Menouar \(2014\)](#), which includes five dimensions: basic religion (BR), central duties (CD), religion experience (RE), religion knowledge (RK) and Orthopraxis (OP). The scale is a special scale to measure the religiosity of Muslims. The first dimension (BR) consists of 5 items that measure aspects of faith and devotional practices. The second dimension (CD) consists of 6 items that measure the implementation of the primary obligations of a Muslim, among other, *shalat* (ritual prayer), Ramadan fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca and the rules of food consumption. The third dimension (RE) consists of four items that measure one's religious experiences in relation to God. The fourth dimension (RK) consists of three items that measure one's own understanding of religion. The last dimension (OP) consists of four items that measure the consequences of diversity for an individual. Students' religiosity scores in the present study ranged 61 to 95 ($M = 80.99$; $SD = 6.099$).

[Table 1](#) shows that there are several items not relevant as religious measures, especially in the context of student life. The obligation of pilgrimage to Mecca, for example, remains difficult to fulfill by a student in terms of both time and cost. Additionally, such obligation is also limited by quotas so that one must wait for the long waiting list. Thus, whether or not an individual has fulfilled the obligation of pilgrimage to Mecca does not necessarily indicate religiosity. The obligation to avoid shaking hands with the opposite sex is also an aspect of religious practice rarely carried out by the Indonesian people, especially college students. The fact shows that the prohibition is not widely known by the Indonesian Muslims. The prohibition is only understood and implemented by a minority of Muslims. Results of the present study indicate a total of 116 (34.5%) participants said "no" for avoiding handshake with the opposite sex and 220 (65.5%) said "sometimes". In this case, none of the participants stated "yes" (avoid handshake with the opposite sex). Other obligation serving as an orthopraxis dimension is giving alms (donations) which, in the context of students, remains an obligation difficult to meet given the students' economic dependence to their parents. Results of the present study shows that only 4 of

participants stated “often” for giving alms, 184 (54.8%) said “sometimes”, 129 (38.4%) stated “rarely” (“almost never”) and 19 (5.7%) said “never”. In this case, none of the participants stated “always”.

Therefore, the dimension of orthopraxis in this context is not relevant for measuring religiosity among the students. It is also evident from the results of the calculation of Pearson correlation as shown in Table 2.

Table-1. Factor loading of religiosity items

No	Item	BR	CD	RE	RK	OP	Comm
1	Belief in Allah	0.460**	0.231**	0.290**	0.250**	0.10	0.375**
2	Belief in the Qur'an as unchanged revelation	0.478**	0.250**	0.245**	0.121**	-0.001	0.323**
3	Belief in the existence of Jinn, Angel etc.	0.584**	0.251**	0.191**	0.121**	-0.027	0.328**
4	Frequency of performing the ritual prayer	0.506**	0.811**	0.348**	0.475**	0.043	0.629**
5	Pilgrimage to Mecca	-0.003	0.148**	0.029	0.043	0.070	0.073
6	Fasting during Ramadan	0.449**	0.708**	0.269**	0.261**	0.42	0.488**
7	Celebrating end of Ramadan	0.230**	0.483**	0.212**	0.122*	-0.043	0.291**
8	Frequency of personal prayer to Allah	0.768**	0.542**	0.481**	0.425**	0.076	0.671**
9	Frequency of recitation of the <i>Basmala</i>	0.773**	0.437**	0.468**	0.485**	0.076	0.668**
10	Feeling: Allah is close	0.532**	0.376**	0.780**	0.393**	0.047	0.666**
11	Feeling: Allah tell you something	0.516**	0.336**	0.845**	0.355**	0.115	0.676**
12	Feeling: Allah is rewarding you	0.408**	0.371**	0.836**	0.360**	0.051	0.641**
13	Feeling: Allah is punishing you	0.325**	0.239**	0.788**	0.335**	-0.001	0.551**
14	Knowledge of Islam in general	0.385**	0.310**	0.358**	0.800**	0.251**	0.620**
15	Knowledge of the content of the Quran	0.440**	0.439**	0.358**	0.854**	0.167**	0.675**
16	Knowledge of the life and action of the prophet	0.369**	0.349**	0.358**	0.793**	0.325**	0.648**
17	Drinking alcohol	0.158**	0.433**	0.120*	0.119*	-0.070	0.291**
18	Eating <i>halal</i> meat	0.162**	0.180**	0.174**	0.122*	-0.001	0.193**
19	Avoiding shaking hands with opposite sex	-0.075	-0.051	-0.067	-0.044	0.625**	0.043
20	Sex segregation at marriages and other celebration	-0.068	-0.054	-0.027	0.112*	0.547**	0.097
21	Muslims should not listen music	0.048	0.033	0.011	0.198**	0.497**	0.183**
22	Religious donation (<i>zakat</i>)	0.181**	0.106	0.177**	0.383**	0.717**	0.401**

Note: ** = p-value <0.01; * = p-value <0.05

Table-2. Correlation Matrix of five dimension of Muslim religiosity

	BR	CD	RE	RK	OP
Basic Religiosity (BR)	1	0.571**	0.549**	0.488**	0.056
Central Duties (CD)		1	0.407**	0.445**	0.26
Religious Experience (RE)			1	0.445**	0.064
Religious Knowledge (RK)				1	0.289**
Orthopraxis (OP)					1

Note: ** p-value <0.01

3.2. Childhood Trauma Scale

In general, Table 3 shows that the percentage of participants who experienced certain childhood violent traumas is not excessively high except for the trauma in the form of punishment in schools. The types of trauma most frequently experienced by participants are verbal violence within the family, physical violence both within the family and the school and spending time outdoors without being noticed by other family members. Based on the score of trauma scale, a total of 331 (98.5%) participants belonged to the “low” category and only 5 (1.5%) participants belonged to the “moderate” category. In this case, there was no participant belonging to the “high” category. The participants’ scores of trauma scale were relatively low with a maximum score of 57 and a minimum score of 15. The mean was 18.71 (SD of 4.575 and variance of 20 933). The score of 57 was an extreme score since there was only one participant with such a score. The highest score after such a score was 35 in three participants.

Table-3. Participants’ Childhood Trauma Scale

No.	Types of Trauma	NV	ST	OF	VO
1.	Before the age of 18, I did not have enough to eat.	264	59	9	4
2.	Before the age of 18, my family moved several times.	299	28	8	1
3.	Before the age of 18 years, I saw or heard my mother was beaten by her husband or boyfriend (the affair).	287	40	6	3
4.	Before the age of 18, there were members of my family who vilified me as lazy or stupid or weak.	179	117	27	13
5.	Before the age of 18, my buttocks or genital were touch or anyone told me to touch my buttocks or genital, but I did not want to.	307	27	1	1
6.	Before the age of 18, I was verbally abused or insulted by my family members in front of others.	279	45	9	3
7.	Before the age of 18, I was beaten up at home with a belt or a stick or a whip or other hard tools.	243	80	9	4
8.	Before the age of 18, I had sex	311	11	5	9
9.	Before the age of 18, my parents were often drunk or unconscious because of drugs (alcohols or local liquors) so they could not take care of me.	312	13	7	4
10.	Before the age of 18, I was beaten up at home so hard, leaving scars or bruises.	292	31	10	3
11.	Before the age of 18, I spent my time outside the home where the adults in the house did not know where I was.	207	94	15	20
12.	Before the age of 18, I had sex with someone because I was threatened or frightened or forced.	318	7	8	3
13.	Before the age of 18, I was beaten or physically punished by teachers or principals.	236	82	12	6
14.	Before the age of 18, were you mocked, teased, or harassed at schools or in your village?	286	46	9	1
15.	Before the age of 18, did you like making play with, teasing, or harassing others?	286	46	9	1

Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2016.

Note: NV = never, ST = some time, OF = Often, VO = very often.

3.3. Gender Equitable Men Scale

Table 4 shows that participants' attitudes toward men-women relationships are a mixture of "traditional" (conservative) and modern views. Examples of participants' traditional views are "the main task of women is cooking", "women have to endure violence for the sake of her family integrity", "I think women should obey their husband", "men should be tough" and "men are the ultimate decision makers about various things in the house". Participants' views of quite sensitive issues include "I would be very embarrassed should I have homosexual boys (gay)". The percentage of participants stating "agree" and "strongly agree" for this variable is very high. These views reflect a gender bias among young people, such as students.

Additionally, there is also a variable that reflects "modern" views". The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that "men and women have the same right to decide the type of contraceptive", "all people should be treated equally" and "men opt in to share domestic chores". Overall, with regard to participants' attitudes toward male-female relationships (GEM Scale), 289 (86%) of participants were at the level of "moderate equity", 41 (12.2%) participants at the level of "low equity" and only 6 (1.8%) participants at the level of "high equity".

Tabel-4. Participants' GEM Scale

No.	Items	"agree" and "strongly agree" answers	%
1.	The most important tasks of women are taking care of the home and cooking for her family.	301	89,6
2.	Men are more in need of sex than women.	228	67,9
3.	Sometimes women are ALLOWED to be beaten.	55	16,4
4.	It is women's responsibility for preventing pregnancy.	128	38,1
5.	Men are the ultimate decision makers about various things in the house	271	80,7
6.	Women have to endure violence for the sake of her family integrity.	104	30,9
7.	Men and women have the same right to decide the type of contraceptive.	315	93,7
8.	I would be very upset if my wife asks me to use a condom.	166	49,5
9.	If someone insults me, I will defend my honor by force, if necessary.	235	69,9
10.	Men should be tough.	325	96,8
11.	I think everyone should be treated equally, both men and women	282	84,0
12.	I think men should opt in to share domestic chores with women, such as washing dishes, cleaning the house and cooking.	297	85,5
13.	I think women should obey their husband.	324	96,4
14.	I think if the wife does make a mistake the husband has the right to punish her.	231	78,8
15.	I think that women should not refuse to have sex with her husband.	263	78,3
16.	I think when a woman is raped usually it is she who deserves the blame for making her be in that position.	113	33,6
17.	I think if women did not fight physically, what happened to her is not a rape (consensual).	245	72,9
18.	I would be very embarrassed should I have homosexual boys (gay).	304	90,5

Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2015.

3.4. Attitudes toward Gays

The present study measured attitudes toward gays by using the scale developed by Raja and Stokes (1998). This scale consists of 22 items which can be grouped into 3 sections: Personal Discomfort with Gay Men (PDG), Belief in Homosexuality as Deviant (BHD) and Institutional Homophobia toward Gay Men (IHG). Each item has answer choices of "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree". Overall, the average score of attitudes toward gays was 59.2351. The lowest score was 37 and the highest was 87 and the standard deviation was 6.2396. Of the total of 22 items on attitudes toward gay, theoretically, the lowest score was 22 and the highest was 88. The higher the score for attitudes toward gay, the more tolerant or positive the attitudes toward the presence of gays in their environment would be. Furthermore, the scores for tolerance to gays are categorized into "high" (the score of 66–88), "moderate" (the score of 44–65) and "low" (the score below 44). Based on statistical calculations, 6 (1.8%) participants were categorized as "low", 279 (83%) as "moderate" and 51 (15.2%) as "high".

In general, participants' attitudes toward gays tended to be negative based on the PDG, BHD and IHG. The proportion of participants stating "disagree" and "strongly disagree" for several items was quite large, such as for "working with a gay men", "inviting gays to parties", "going to gay marriage party" and also "gay strategic roles in various social institutions". On the contrary, participants were likely to see gays as deviation and requiring great energy to "recover" to the heterosexual condition. Gay marriage is a sensitive issue in Indonesia and it is also evidenced in the present study as an issue with the highest resistance. Such views are inseparable from the general perspective that gays are "deviation", "disease", "dregs of society" and so on.

Table-5. Participants' attitudes toward gays

No.	Items	SA (%)	AG (%)	DA (%)	SD (%)
1.	I wouldn't mind going to party that included gay men	32 (9.5)	133 (39.6)	98 (29.2)	73 (21.7)
2.	I would not mind working with a gay men	7 (2.1)	57 (17.0)	151 (44.9)	121 (36.0)
3.	I welcome new friend who are gay	11 (3.3)	85 (25.3)	132 (39.3)	108 (32.1)
4.	I would be sure to invite the same-sex partner of my gay male friend to my party	9 (2.7)	65 (19.3)	140 (41.7)	122 (36.3)
5.	I won't associate with gay men for fear of catching AIDS (R)	145 (43.2)	73 (21.7)	69 (20.5)	49 (16.6)
6.	I don't think it would negatively affect our relationship if I learned that one of my close relation was gay	33 (9.8)	112 (33.3)	120 (35.7)	71 (21.1)
7.	I am comfortable with the thought of two men being romantically involved	16 (4.8)	82 (24.4)	122 (36.3)	116 (34.5)
8.	I would remove my child from class if I found out the teacher was gay (R)	134 (39.9)	124 (36.9)	54 (16.1)	24 (7.1)
9.	It's all right with me if I see two men holding hands	23 (6.8)	50 (14.9)	148 (44.0)	115 (34.2)
10.	Male homosexuality is a psychological disease (R)	133 (39.6)	142 (42.3)	47 (14.0)	14 (4.2)
11.	Physicians and psychologist should strive to find a cure for male homosexuality (R)	202 (60.1)	95 (28.3)	29 (8.6)	10 (3.0)
12.	Gay men should undergo therapy to change their sexual orientation (R)	216 (64.3)	98 (29.2)	17 (5.1)	5 (1.5)
13.	Gay men could be heterosexual if they really wanted to be (R)	127 (37.8)	154 (45.8)	43 (12.8)	12 (3.6)
14.	I don't mind companies using openly gay men celebrities to advertise their product	31 (9.2)	112 (33.3)	114 (33.9)	79 (23.5)
15.	I would not vote for political candidate who was openly gay (R)	176 (52.4)	97 (28.9)	36 (10.7)	27 (8.0)
16.	Hospitals shouldn't hire gay male doctors (R)	161 (47.9)	106 (31.5)	50 (14.9)	19 (5.7)
17.	Gay men shouldn't be allowed to join the military (R)	179 (53.3)	92 (27.4)	46 (13.7)	19 (5.7)
18.	Movies that approve of male homosexuality bother me (R)	123 (36.6)	129 (38.4)	65 (19.3)	19 (5.7)
19.	Gay men should not be allowed to be leaders in religious organization (R)	225 (67.0)	81 (24.1)	15 (4.5)	15 (4.5)
20.	Marriage between two gay men should be legal	55 (16.4)	22 (6.5)	75 (22.3)	184 (54.8)
21.	I am tired of hearing about gay men's problems (R)	85 (25.3)	164 (48.8)	64 (19.0)	23 (6.8)
22.	Gay men want too many right (R)	23 (6.8)	69 (20.5)	153 (45.5)	91 (27.1)

Note: R = Reversed, SA=strongly agree, AG=Agree, DA= Disagree, SD=Strongly disagree.

Table-6. Correlation Matrix of Attitudes toward Gays

	PDG	BHD	IHG
MHS-G Scale			
Personal Discomfort with gay Men (PDG)	1	0.571**	0.549**
Belief in Homosexuality as Deviant (BHD)		1	0.407**
Institutional Homophobia toward Gay Men (IHG)			1

Note: ** = $p < 0.01$

After scoring the Homophobia (Communitary) Index, the scores were broadly categorized into "low" (intolerance) for scores below 44, "moderate" (moderate) for scores of 45–66 and "high" (tolerant) for scores above 66. Furthermore, correlations among socio-demographic variables, such as gender, age, ethnicity, having a girlfriend/partner, political party preference, region of origin and expenditure, were calculated. Correlations between socio-demographic variables and the homophobia index were calculated using the measures of relationships among the variables calculated, namely the phi coefficient ($\phi = -1, 0, +1$) and Cramer's V. The results show only types of region of origin and political party preference had significant relationships. Gender, age, ethnicity, having a girlfriend, organizational membership and expenditures did not have significant relationships with attitudes toward gays. With regard to political party preference, participants preferring national parties tended to be more tolerant than those preferring religious/Islamic parties and those with no political party preference. Meanwhile, with regard to regions of origin, students coming from urban areas tended to be more tolerant than those coming from semi-urban and rural areas. Overall, religiosity was associated with attitudes toward gays and so was childhood trauma scale. Only GEM Scale was associated with attitudes toward gays. The association was negative, meaning that the higher the score of the GEM Scale, the more intolerant to gays would be.

Table-7. Relationships between socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and their attitudes toward gays

No.	Socio-demographic characteristics	Low/Intolerant	Moderate	High/Tolerant	Statistic
1	Gender				Phi = 0.082
	Men	2	128	18	Cramer's V = 0.082
	Women	4	151	33	Approx.sig = 0.326
2	Age				Phi = 0.119
	< 20	4	97	16	Cramer's V = 0.084
	20–23	2	165	34	Approx.sig = 0.314
	>24	0	17	1	
3	Etnichity				
	Javanese	2	151	21	
	Lampung	3	71	15	Phi = 0.184
	Sundanese	1	12	4	Cramer's V = 0.130
	Batak	0	7	1	Approx.sig = 0.334
	Minang	0	20	8	
	Other	0	18	2	
4	Having a relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend				
	Yes	6	106	28	Phi/Cramer's V=0.201
	No	0	173	23	Approx.sig = 0.001
5	Student organization				Phi = 0,144
	Yes	5	168	30	Cramer's V =0.102
	No	1	111	21	Approx.sig = 0.140
6	Political Party Preference				
	Islamic Party	0	69	12	Phi = 0,219
	National Party	0	92	26	Cramer's V =0.155
	No Party	6	118	13	Approx.sig = 0.013
7	Type of region of origin				
	Rural	1	110	15	Phi = 0,177
	Semi Urban	0	91	18	Cramer's V =0.125
	Urban	5	78	18	Approx.sig = 0.033
8	Expenditure (IDR/month)				
	< 1 million	3	201	30	Phi = 0,146
	1–5 million	3	72	21	Cramer's V =0.103
	5–10 million	0	2	0	Approx.sig = 0.303
	>10 milion	0	4	0	

Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2016.

Table-8. Matrix of correlations between some variables and attitudes toward gays

No.	Variable/Indicator	Attitudes toward gays			
		PDG	BHD	IHG	Communality
1.	Religiosity				-0.078
	Basic Religion	-0.164**	0.153*	0.068	-0.018
	Central Duties	-0.119*	0.183**	0.137*	0.068
	Religion Expression	-0.058	0.160**	0.200**	0.140*
	Religion Knowledge	-0.057	0.043	-0.019	0.057
	Orthopraxis	-0.012	-0.093	-0.019	0.111*
2.	Childhood trauma scale	0.060	-0.129*	0.019	0.016
3.	GEM Scale	0.028	-0.174**	0.194**	-0.193**

Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2016.

Note: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.

4. Discussion

Attitudes toward gays and homosexuals in general vary among cultures and communities. According to Gerhards (2010) the majority of the European people not support the idea of non-discrimination against homosexuals. A study showed that fifty-five percent of African countries have laws against sex between men. Penalties range from fines, imprisonment, to death (Sallar and Somda, 2011). In America, homophobia is very evident in conservative Christian circles (Linneman, 2004) and more extreme among Negro (blacks) (Literte and Hodge, 2012). Meanwhile, a study by Cashmore and Cleland (2012) for example, showed that, among football fans, 93% claimed no place for homophobia. According to McCormack and Anderson (2014) there are social trends in the U.S.: decreasing homophobia and changing behaviors of heterosexual males.

There are several factors affecting attitudes toward homosexuality. A meta-analysis by Whitley (2001) states that the best predictors of antigay behavior were hyper-participant gender and gender-role orientation; attitudes toward women and modern sexism were also predictors for men but not for women. Meanwhile, Whitehead (2013) identified that religious tradition, theological and political ideology, location, and demographic composition of congregations all influence the degree to which gays and lesbians are included into congregational life. The findings of Verweij *et al.* (2008) showed that men tend to have negative attitudes toward homosexuals relative to women. Non-heterosexuals encountered lower homophobia than homosexuals. Age had no effect on homophobia. Variation in homophobia scored could be explained by additive genetic (36%), shared environmental (18%) and unique environmental factors (46%).

Several other factors identified by researchers include concepts reproducing the social-moral bonds (Buttaro and Battle, 2012) micropanics (Guittar, 2013) secure attachment style (Jellison and McConnell, 2003) racial discrimination against the ingroup (Craig and Richeson, 2014) the direct environment (Blaauw, 2012) maternal attitudes (Oksal, 2008) the intimacy of contact (Heinze and Horn, 2009; Smith *et al.*, 2009) levels of aversion toward homosexuals (Ncanana and Ige, 2014); educational attainment, communicating with full-fledged activists, having an ability to recognize heterosexism and maintaining a commitment to social justice (Swank and Fahs, 2013) age, educational level, religious affiliation, contact with homosexual persons (Adela, 2010) higher levels of knowledge (Alderson *et al.*, 2009) public policy (Hooghe and Meeusen, 2013) and government institution (Henshaw, 2014).

Gender represents a socio-demographic variable frequently taken into account by researchers and associated with attitudes toward gays or minority sexuality in general. The underlying argument is different patterns of gender role socialization between boys and girls which then produces different gender role constructions. The fact is that such variable inconsistently affects their attitudes towards gay/minority sexuality. Several studies showed that gender had an influence (Kerns and Fine, 1994; Mandra, 2003; Gelbal and Duyan, 2006; Olson *et al.*, 2006; Maher, 2013) however, a number of other researchers found the contrary (Schellenberg *et al.*, 1999; Landicho *et al.*, 2014; Oti-Boadi *et al.*, 2014). In general, researchers who found an association between gender and attitudes toward gays stated that women had a more tolerant attitude than men.

In addition to gender, religion or religiosity is also frequently associated with homophobia. Unlike gender, the facts show that religiosity is consistently associated with homophobia. A number of researchers found a negative relationship between religiosity and attitudes toward homosexuals (Hinrichs and Rosenberg, 2002; Gelbal and Duyan, 2006; Rowatt *et al.*, 2009; Sherkat *et al.*, 2009; Hooghe *et al.*, 2010; Cunningham and Melton, 2012; Clobert *et al.*, 2014; Cragun and Sumerau, 2014; Decoo, 2014; Henshaw, 2014; Kuptsevych, 2014; Gilad and Stepanova, 2015).

Results of the present study indicate that gender does not have a relationship with attitudes toward gays, while some aspects of religiosity have a relationship with attitudes toward gays. Overall, religiosity is not associated with attitudes toward gays. Political party preference has a relationship with attitudes toward gays. Two interpretations can be made for this. First, the socialization of values both within the family and society is incapable of shaping a tolerant personality. Or, in other words, the theme of tolerance for diversity does not constitute an important point in such socialization in both the primary and secondary levels. Second, in the context of Indonesian culture, the level of resistance to LGBT in general is quite high. Indonesian people consider LGBT community as a form of deviation or “disease” that should be avoided or cured. The primary to higher education has a high resistance to the presence of LGBT. This is evident in the highly significant relationships between the various aspects of religiosity and attitudes towards gays, as shown by the BHD (Belief in homosexuals as deviants). Correlation of various variables to BHD attitudes shows that people’s understanding of LGBT remains low. A number of issues with resistance among communities include legalization of gay marriage, gays in the military, gay as a doctor and recognition of gay rights (see Table 5).

The item of the GEM Scale aimed at measuring homophobia is item number 18 (“I would be very embarrassed should I have homosexual boys (gay)”). For this item, a total of 304 (90.5%) participants said “strongly agree” and “agree”. This means that the level of homophobia among the participants was very high. This finding is consistent with the general attitudes towards gays which tend to be negative (intolerant). This is consistent with the finding of Barker *et al.* (2011) that, of the various countries studied, homophobia constitutes the general attitude, despite the variations. Overall, GEM scale has a negative relationship with attitudes toward gays.

5. Conclusion

In general, students’ attitudes toward gays tend to be negative. The socio-demographic variables that have a relationship with attitudes toward gays are political party preference and the type of region of origin. Results of the present study also show that religiosity and childhood trauma scale are not related to attitudes toward gays, but GEM Scale is. Issues related to gays and LGBT generally encounter resistance within communities. Such sensitive issues include legalization of gay marriage, gays in the military, gays in public institutions and recognition of the rights of gays. Based on these findings, further studies on LGBT in Indonesia are required in order to design public policies that are acceptable to all parties.

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