

Original Article

Effect of Discrimination On Transgender Women's Religious Devotion

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Abstract - Discrimination against transgender women has reached places of worship. This paper aims to examine the forms of discrimination against transgender women to pray in worship places, the comfortability in performing pray and the effect of discrimination on the religious devotion of transgender women. This qualitative study focused on 6 transgender participants as a source of data to be observed and interviewed. The data analysis went through three stages, namely data reduction to select relevant data, data display to display the data categorically, and data verification to draw conclusions. The results of the study found that discrimination against transgender women happened everywhere and every time. Public space (profane) and place of worship (sacred) are both become places of discrimination. Discrimination against transgender women in mosques has weakened their devotion to worship. The discomfort of being in the mosque cause them to be further immersed in the nightlife.

Keywords — Discrimination, transgender women, religious devotion, mosque

I. INTRODUCTION

The transgender women minority group has experienced prolonged discrimination in every aspect of life. They do not only receive discrimination in public spaces (Lewis et al., 2021) but also in places of worship (Kurniawan, 2020). The discrimination in public spaces is experienced by transgender women, one of which is in a job application (Jones, 2020). They hardly find and being accepted in jobs that are usually done by normal men. Their choices are often limited to work in a beauty salon or being a make-up artist (Elsera, 2018). While in the worship places, the transgender women become the object of bullying where they experience discrimination as if worship act and pray only belongs to normal men. For Muslim transgender women, it is also impossible to pray in designated areas for women. They realized that other people actually know their existence as men. A similar thing also happens to Christian transgender women who receive the same treatment where they are avoided by both male and female congregations

when they choose a seat in the church (Fatmawati, 2019). In Bali that most people are Hindu; they are also rejected by religious leaders and the community because they were seen as a threat who damaged Balinese customs and cultural order (Palupi & Tobing, 2018).

This discrimination raises an assumption that transgender women are not welcomed in places of worship, whether they dress as women or men. The statement of the ulama increasingly negates the existence of transgender women, that men who dress like women and women who dress like men are not in line with Islamic teaching (Metro/Channel 4 News). Islamic religious leaders claimed that transgenders do not understand the teaching of religion, so they cannot be an *imam* or a person who leads prayer. If they understand the teaching in their religion, it is impossible for them to be a transgender (republika.co.id). Meanwhile, Catholic religious leaders tried to accept the transgender to worship in the church. It was written in The Advocate magazine when Pope Francis said, "If someone is gay and seeks the Lord with goodwill, who am I to judge?" (Nggalu, 2019). Unfortunately, in Indonesia, Christian transgender women still receive discrimination when they are in the church (Fatmawati, 2019). The discrimination against transgender women in places of worship has forced them to be involved in criminality and prostitution (okezone.com). This condition requires a serious study to create regulations that protect the existence of transgender women in practicing their religion.

Until now, the research on discrimination against the transgender community mostly analyzes the discrimination in public spaces, and only a few that discuss the discrimination in places of worship. Transgender women receive inappropriate treatment in both daily life and the work field (Johana, 2017). They are bullied, abused, and even beaten up on the pretext of bringing back their identity as men (Palupi & Tobing, 2018). Transgender women are not only rejected by family but also the society ((Khasan & Sujoko, 2018); (Triyono & Ambarwati, 2018)). In fact, discrimination also occurs within the transgender community (Maulida, 2017). In the aspect of health services, numerous transgender women cannot get access to health insurance



provided by the government due to administrative problems in population data that have not accommodated their gender choice (Utami, 2020). Likewise, in politics, they are not given the right to vote and be elected (Rakhmi, 2012). The trends of the research on transgender women mostly discuss the discrimination in workspaces, public services, and political participation, but only a few that discuss this issue related to worship act. Actually, some transgender women have felt sinful and want to repent and pray (Ruhghea & Rachmatan, 2014). There is a longing and hope of the transgender women, not only to learn religion but also to pray and get closer to God (Fatmawati, 2019). One study highlighted the refusal of transgender women in mosques was because other women felt uncomfortable (Fadi & Azeharie, 2020). The results of a study conducted by Koeswinarno & Mustolehudin, which focused on the religious spirit of the gay community, found that religion is a way out for gay people from a mysterious disease. The religious spirit of the gay community is a strategy and the actualization of their lives. This pattern is the result of their social construction, not only through social relations within the gay community but also through the social construction of society (Koeswinarno & Mustolehudin, 2017).

This study aims to fill the gap as well as correct the views of previous studies on the existence of transgender women who experience discrimination in the public space by analyzing the discrimination against transgender women in mosques. This discrimination has ruined their convenience and their rights to worship according to their religion and beliefs. Their existence is even considered to deviate from religious norms (Maharani & Zafi, 2020).

Therefore, this research will answer three questions as follow: 1) what are the forms of discrimination against the transgender women in a mosque? 2) how is it convenient to perform prayer in a mosque? 3) what is the impact of this discrimination on transgender women's religious devotion? These three questions give direction to the understanding that discrimination against transgender women in places of worship has not only created discomfort in praying but has also created new concern in society over the deviations they commit as an escape from such discrimination and discomfort.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this paper, three main concepts are used for the basis in discussion and analysis. First is the concept of the transgender women in Indonesia. The second is discrimination. The third is the concept of religious devotion. These three concepts are explained according to expert opinion with the categorization that is based on previous studies.

A. Transgender Women in Indonesia

Historically, ancient Indonesian society gave transgender women a sacred and special position, both in Sulawesi (Suliyati, 2018) and Java (Alnoza & Sulistyowati, 2021).

Actually, transgender women are men who dress up and behave like women (Atmodjo, 1986). These people see themselves as feminine men throughout their lives (Boellstorff, 2004). They are transsexual sufferers whose soul is different from their physical appearance, or have a discrepancy between their physical and gender identity (RS. Peroto, 1993). These people are categorized as having inverted sexual characteristics or is called an inverted person, so that this relationship is called an inversion (Freud, 2014). This incompatibility between physical and behavioral makes transgender women more vulnerable to violence than lesbians, gays, and bisexuals (Sutopo, 2019). Transgender women in Indonesia are often associated as people who do not have life skills but work as prostitutes. This negative stigma causes transgender women to receive more bad treatment and target of inspection (Suvianita, 2013). This condition makes them to have worse discrimination over time.

B. Discrimination against Transgender Women

Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) is the motto of Indonesia, but in its practice in daily life, transgender women still cannot be accepted because of their differences (Sari, 2016). The majority of Indonesian people consider transgender women as people who violate the nature of human beings; instead, transgenders are given a bad label. Even the government, consciously or subconsciously, discriminates against transgender people by unavailable options for their gender in the population data (Karmaya, 2014). The negative stigma on the existence of transgender women occurs because the social norms do not accept the existence of a third gender (non-binary). It causes the transgender women to receive discriminatory treatment, violence, verbal and non-verbal harassment, to death threats (Palupi et al., 2018).

Discrimination against transgender women is a social construction that creates prejudice, stereotypes, and hatred because it is considered a deviation from social values and norms (Ariba & Humsona, 2020). Forms of discrimination are not only bullying and sexual harassment (Klemmer, 2019), but also in job recruitment and promotion, verbal harassment, exclusion, violence, abandonment, and intimidation (Peng et al., 2019). This discrimination and rejection cause transgender women to be more marginalized not only in public spaces but also in places of worship.

C. Religious Devotion in Mosque

Religious devotion is the obedience and loyalty of a human being to God by carrying out God's orders and staying away from God's prohibitions. A worship act that is carried out with sincerity and courtesy is a form of self-devotion for God's blessing (Risthantri & Sudrajat, 2015). This devotion is not only specific to certain groups but applies in general, including to transgender women. Although religion emphasizes that humans basically have the same position and have the same rights and obligations

(Falah, 2012), but Muslim transgenders face various forms of pressure, including gender and religious pressure (Etengoff & Rodriguez, 2020). They are often excluded from religious worship (Kurniawan, 2020).

Furthermore, transgender women are faced with legal realities, both written and unwritten, which determine their rights and obligations not only as social beings and individuals but also as religious beings (Nadia, 2003). Among the religious leaders, there are those who support the transgender community, and there are also those who are strictly opposed until judging and mentioning names. Opposition to transgender women by religious organizations (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, etc.) can have a profound effect on the spirituality of the congregants from the transgender community (Goodman, 2017). As religious beings, transgender women also have a desire not only to learn religion, but also to worship and get closer to God. Social and religious institutions in the society do not become aware of this issue. These institutions do not provide them with the religious services but instead try to bring them back to their male nature (Fatmawati, 2019). This condition actually creates discomfort for transgender women to be involved in religious activities.

This research is based on the hypothesis (argument) that discrimination against transgender minority groups in the space of worship has caused them to lose access to deeply learn their religion. This condition further distances the transgender women from religious and social norms. The closed access to places of worship loses the opportunity of transgender women to religious teachings. They cannot perform worship and listen to sermons in mosques, churches, and temples that refuse their presence. This discrimination has made transgender women to engage in behavior that violate social and religious norms (Maharani & Zafi, 2020), become prostitutes ((Johana, 2017); (Suvianita, 2013)) especially having same-sex relationships and transmit HIV/AIDS (Wattie & Purwatiningsih, 2018).

III. RESEARCH METHOD

All paragraphs must be indented. All paragraphs must be justified, i.e., both left-justified and right-justified. Discrimination against transgender people is inevitable in today's society. The relationship between transgender discrimination and religious devotion in a mosque was chosen as the object of research for three reasons. The first reason; discrimination against transgender women in places of worship has distanced them from religious life. There is no one to defend them against this discrimination, including family, community, or government. Second, less attention is given to the study of the relationship between discrimination against transgender women and their devotion to religious teachings. Many previous studies were limited to discuss the discrimination of transgender women in public. Third; a study on the availability of space of worship for transgender women is essential to open wider

opportunities that enable them to perform prayer at the mosque comfortably. These three reasons show that a thorough understanding of the discrimination of transgender women with their religious devotion is a crucial issue to be understood as the basis for regulation that provides protection to this community so that they can practice their religion properly without any pressure and discrimination.

The relationship between transgender discrimination and religious devotion in mosques was explained through qualitative research that relied on primary and secondary data. Primary data consisted of discriminatory acts of the society towards transgender women in places of worship and psychological pressure on transgender women due to discriminatory treatment, so that transgender women are increasingly distant from religious devotion. Secondary data consisted of data on the existence of transgender women in Indonesia. Both primary and secondary data were used as the basis for analyzing the relationship between discrimination against transgender women and their religious devotion at the mosque.

This research involved six transgender women as participants; three of them live in Gorontalo, and three of them in Makassar. By choosing these participants, it was expected to portray the religious devotion, especially in the mosque. The transgender women from Makassar tend to be feminine and dress like women. They also have been injected female hormones into their bodies. Unlike them, the transgender women in Gorontalo still maintain their appearance as men. Only one of them who has been injected with female hormones. This characteristics difference was used to explain the relationship between discrimination and religious devotion.

The data of this research were collected through interviews and observation. Firstly, the secondary about the existence of transgender women were collected online. Second, the data were taken from the interviews with six participants about the discrimination they have faced and their psychological condition. Third, this research was equipped with an observation stage to see the discrimination they face in a mosque. The data, which were taken from various sources and methods, were managed as the foundation to analyze the relationship between discrimination and the religious devotion in a mosque.

The data analysis process took place through three stages of analysis and two data analysis techniques. The three stages of data analysis include; (a) data reduction as a process of organizing data in a more systematic form, especially thematically; (b) data display as an effort to present research results in the form of tables and interview excerpts, and (c) data verification as a stage of data inference, especially following the trend of the data obtained. After three-stage analysis, the data processed were analyzed through (a) descriptive methods and (b) presented in the table. Description of the data as the basis for the interpretation process was carried out contextually. The stages of analysis and the analytical techniques used led to a conclusion on the

relationship between discrimination against transgender women in the spaces of worship room and the religious devotion.

IV. RESULT

Mosque as a place of worship does not provide and guarantee a comfort for transgender women. In this place, transgender women continue to receive discriminatory treatment that makes them avoid mosques and getting far away from religious devotion. The evidence for this statement was obtained from the six research participants who will be presented in this discussion.

A. Text Font of Entire Document

Recommended font sizes are shown in Table 1. There are various forms of discrimination that have been commonly experienced by transgender women since childhood. The first is a cynical look from everyone who sees them. Although it was in the form of an expression without words, it destroyed their spirit to visit a mosque. Second, the condition of the mosque, which requires separate places between men and women, causes the transgender women to be placed in the female congregation area. It was initially done by a close friend, relatives, or kids as a joke, yet it turned to hurt the transgender women's feelings. The third, the transgender women are being laughed at and mocked.

Table 1: Forms of Discrimination Against Transgender Women in Mosque

Participant	Forms of Discrimination Against Transgender Women in Mosque
Emen	I was pushed into the area for females, and that person said, "This is where you belong to, don't go to the area for males." It happened several times and was done by the same person. I was made as a joke since my first step at a mosque, until I went back home.
Felicia	I used to pray at a mosque when I was a kid. But the problem started when I decided to change my appearance as a woman. Let alone going to the mosque, I am always mocked at in public places. I cannot imagine how it will be a mosque.
Gusyey	The cynical look was a routine whenever I went to a mosque, as if I am not a Muslim who has the same right to pray. My feminine gesture who mingles in the area for the male congregation would always be a joke. I have been trying to look for other mosques, but it was the same everywhere.
Chaca	I used to attend sermon and sit next to anyone. I am an ignorant person. Since I was child, I would love to go to mosque like other kids. Later, I started to feel disturbed by people's cynical look. Especially when the mosques were full of people. There was no verbal bullying, but I could feel it

	from the way they were starring. So now I rarely go to a mosque, unless for a special moment like Eid prayer.
Andini	Being mocked is not always happen, especially when I go to the same mosque every time. Unless when I met some friends who like to joke. It was common when they used feminine voices to speak to me, in order to mock me.
Mayka	When I was a teenager, I was very active in going to a mosque and doing many activities during a special celebration, even sometimes I won in a competition. There was always someone who mocked me, but that person was not a close friend of mine. Since I transformed my look like a female, people who see me for the first time, see me as women. That's is why I avoid being with other transgender women because it can cause me to be laughed at and yelled at.

Receiving cynical looks, being pushed to be in an area for females, and being mocked at cold happen all at once or changing anytime. Most of the bullies are kids. The three forms of discrimination happen continuously and become a common treatment to transgender women at a mosque.

B. The Convenience of Transgender Women in Praying at Mosque

One of the main objectives of the Muslims in praying is serenity. Unfortunately, the experience of transgender women was the opposite. First of all, they feel depressed. Coming and sitting for a certain period of time in a mosque became an unpleasant experience. They were becoming more sensitive to anybody who greeted and smiled at them. It was experienced by all participants, excluding Mayka and Andini. Andini, who works as a civil servant, does not change his appearance so that he feels at peace every time he when to mosque despite his feminine gestures. A similar thing happens to Mayka whenever she comes to the mosque with her father on Eid. However, it never happens to Chaca, Felicia, Emen, and Gusye. The psychological pressure has burdened them, so they lost the convenience to pray at peace at a mosque.

Second, they feel scared. The other congregations gave excessive treatment such as pushing, pulling, and other bad treatment that created a fear whenever they were approaching the mosque. This experience was experienced by almost all participants. The fear of God was taken over by the fear of others' congregation's treatment towards them. All mosques that participants have visited, both in Makassar and Gorontalo, never rejected them but there was always bullying. As a result, they are afraid to approach the mosque and worried that the disrespectful treatment might be repeated.

Third, they were ashamed. It happened when they got verbal and non-verbal violence from other congregations. It is also the reason for Mayka and Chaca not to join other transgender women. Walking together with other transgender women made them the center of attention.

Table 2: The (In)Convenience of Transgender Women in Praying at Mosque

Participant	The (In)Convenience of Transgender Women in Praying at Mosque
Emen	The hatred I receive is not as bad as other transgender women who are 90% feminine. I still wear my prayer cap, different from those in Java Island who already wear ladies' prayer gowns (<i>mukenah</i>). I ask my close friend to accompany me. There is always the feeling of discomfort. The kids always teased me, and other adults smiled at me when they saw me. It has been a while since the last time I attended Friday prayer. If I have to, I try to finish my business as fast as possible and go home.
Felicia	I choose not to go to mosque anymore, because I will always be a subject of bullying. Now that I have transformed my look to be like a woman, I feel ashamed to go to a mosque.
Gusyey	When the kids called me "sissy," and I got a lot of bully, I couldn't take it anymore. So, I decided to stop coming to the mosque. The moment my friends mocked me made me away from any religious activities. Now I focus on managing my business.
Chaca	I was often called as "sissy", especially by the children. One day when I went home from the mosque, I looked for the kid who was making fun of me, I chased him, and I beat him, so he wouldn't repeat his actions. My appearance, which looks like a woman, has made me feel uncomfortable going to the mosque. Every Eid, I will look for a mosque in a faraway place where no one knows me.
Andini	I often go to a mosque; even I become one of the mosque caretakers near my house. Once in a while, I give preach, I can see some mocking face among the congregations while they are listening to my preach. It has become my daily basis. They feel funny to hear my feminine voice and intonation.
Mayka	Since I decided to become a woman, I pray alone at home. There is a guilty to live as a transgender woman, especially life full of a bully. To avoid public bully, I do not befriend other transgenders. Usually, those people who call me "sissy" are those who don't know me. My close friends never do that to me. Only on Eid, I try to pray at the mosque with my father. I feel relatively calm because my father is known to the public as a soldier. I joined the male congregation with my hair tied and wearing a prayer cap.

With the presence of transgender women, the children at the mosque are always loud, especially to mock them. This condition has created discomfort for these minorities. This discomfort accumulates and becomes a strong reason for the transgender women to stop coming to the mosque. These phenomena cause them to distance themselves from religious activities.

C. Effect of Discrimination on the Religious Devotion of Transgender Women

Discrimination in the form of cynical looks, being poked and being pushed into women's areas, as well as being laughed at in crowds made the transgender women stop coming to the mosque. The research participants admitted that they did not feel comfortable going to the mosque because they felt pressured, scared and embarrassed. This factor causes some effects. First, they became reluctant to go to the mosque. The participants admitted that they no longer wanted to come to the mosque. The sacred mosque is like a scary haunted place. However, this case does not apply to Andini, who tries to eliminate his feminine behavior and is active as the caretaker of the mosque. Second, their religious understanding does not develop. The reluctance to go to the mosque is in line with the reluctance to attend the religious lecture. The understanding of religious teaching has no effect on encouraging them to pray. Third, getting away from religious life can lead to immorality. According to the confession of several participants, their transgender friends choose to become prostitutes when they feel that there is no point in being good people anymore. When they are trying to be good people, they are still treated as deviant people, and in the end, they choose to just be bad people.

The results show that there are various forms of discrimination and factors that cause discomfort for transgender women to pray at the mosque, and there are the effects of discrimination in the mosque to the religious devotion..

Table 3: Forms, Factors, and Effects of Discrimination Against Transgender Women at Mosque s

Forms of Discrimination at Mosque	Cynical look from other congregations when they come to mosque
	Being poked and pushed into women's area
	Being laughing object by strangers
A factor of Inconvenience Felt by Transgender Women	Psychological pressure every time they visit a mosque.
	Fear of the repeated bad treatment they have received.
	Feel ashamed to be staring object and bullying an object

Effects in Religious Devotion	Reluctant to go to a mosque, except in Eid when they pray together with their family at a mosque nearby or go to the faraway mosque where no one knows them
	Their religious knowledge is not developed.
	Staying away from religious life and getting closer to nightlife

V. DISCUSSION

This research, which focused on six transgender women in Makassar and Gorontalo, allowed an in-depth discussion of the potential, opportunities, and barriers to transgender women's diversity in the midst of discriminatory treatment. Like other people, transgender women are not only individuals and, at the same time, social beings; they are also religious beings (Nadia, 2003). The status of transgender women as religious beings becomes their potential to come to the mosque. In reality, the mosque as a holy place to worship God does not provide opportunities, comfort, and serenity for transgender women. Their appearance and behavior that look like women are the main causes for the discrimination. The separated area for men and women in the mosque further emphasizes the gender confusion among transgender women (Djohan, 2019). Unlike lesbians, gays, and bisexuals (Palupi et al., 2018), their appearance does not present their true self, so they can still join certain genders without anyone knowing the deviations in them. This is the condition that hinders the potential of transgender women to pray at a mosque.

This fact also shows the imbalance of people's attitudes. The people criticized the existence of transgender women who violate values and norms (Ariba & Humsona, 2020), but they themselves also violated religious norms by criticizing their own brothers (transgenders). The religious teaching actually forbids Muslims from criticizing others, as stated in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 11, "O you who believe! Let no people look down upon another people for the (latter) people may be better than they, nor let women (look down) upon other women, who (-the women who are treated lightly) may be better than the other ones...." In this regard, it can be said that discrimination against transgender women happens everywhere and every time. Public spaces and places of worship are both the places where they get discrimination. There is no difference between the sacred space and the profane space.

Various forms of discrimination against transgender women have left serious effects (Goodman, 2017) that hinder their potential to increase their religious devotion and prevent them from doing bad deeds. The fact that many of transgender women who become prostitutes ((Johana, 2017); (Suvianita, 2013)) also having a same-sex sexual relationship and spreading HIV/AIDS (Wattie & Purwatiningsih, 2018)

are the portrayal of their avoidance from places of worship.

VI. CONCLUSIONS(SIZE 10 &BOLD)

This research found that discrimination against transgender women happens everywhere and every time. Both public (profane) and worship (sacred) spaces become the place where they received discrimination. The worship space as a holy place for seeking serenity actually gave the opposite effect. Patterned and repeated discrimination has created discomfort and, at the same time, weakened the religious devotion of the transgender women. The absence of convenience in mosques turns some of them to find comfort in the nightlife.

The concept of discrimination can explain the treatment of the society to transgender people in all aspects of life. This paper has shown that there is discrimination against the transgender women in the mosque. Transgenders have lost their rights as religious beings to practice their religion and beliefs comfortably. The potential to increase their religious side has been replaced by the potential for sin and bad deeds.

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