

Islamic Transexual: Reasons, Impacts, and Feelings

Lestari Budianto
antobuddy104@yahoo.com

K.H. Abdul Chalim University, Mojokerto

Abstract. In the modern era, gender differences are still polemic in society. Many people feel they have the right to change gender. A person who makes efforts to change sex is called a transsexual. This study aims to explore the Muslim community who decide to become transsexual. This study used a qualitative descriptive method involving 3 Muslim participants who decided to become transsexual. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Data collection is done online and offline. The data was analyzed through four stages, namely data collection, data presentation, data reduction, and conclusion. The results of this study indicate that the reasons for being transsexual are because of the economy, comfort, and trauma. While related to the impacts are being a minority, experiencing bullying, and confusion in efforts to worship. In terms of feelings, the participants felt both positive and negative things after deciding to become transsexual.

Keywords: Islam, Transsexual, Reasons, Impacts, Feelings.

1 Introduction

In the era of modern society, the issue of gender is still a matter of debate [1], [2]. Gender differences are still a sensitive issue for many people. This is marked by the emergence of gender difference activists, giving rise to many terms in the field of gender such as LGBTQ [3]–[6]. LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning. A Lesbian is someone who is a woman who has an attraction to same-sex women, Gay is the opposite of a lesbian whereas a gay is a man who has an attraction to same-sex men. Next up is bisexual. A bisexual is someone who has an attraction to the same sex and different sexes. This means that a bisexual has an attraction to both men and women. Then is the term transgender. Transgender is a condition in which a person who feels that he is different from his biological gender is like a man who feels he is a woman and vice versa a woman who feels she is a man. While questioning is a term for someone who is still in the process of searching for an identity for his identity.

Related to the term transgender, this term has a derivative word called transsexual. Transsexual is a term for a transgender person who has made efforts to change his gender like a man who has had breast injections so that he has breasts like a woman [7], [8]. Furthermore, a transgender usually performs a sex change operation. There are many factors behind a person becoming a transsexual such as issues related to psychology, sociology, economics, and so on [9]–[12]. Becoming a transsexual is a brave decision because not many countries consider it legal. Many countries consider that being a transsexual is an act that violates the law and even many religions consider it a violation of religious rules, especially Islam [13].

Related to Islam and transsexuals, Islam is a religion that opposes the activity of changing sex, either from male to female or vice versa. This is because Islam forbids activities related to changing the destiny of God's creation. In this case, it refers to the gender that is predestined to someone. Regulations in Islam expressly prohibit such efforts, even though this also affects the law in a country where the country adheres to or enforces Islamic law as a consideration or legal basis in the country [14]–[17]. One of them is the country of Indonesia where transsexuality is a violation unless it is due to urgent problems such as multiple sex disorders or experiencing an imperfect gender.

Related to previous research, there are three previous studies related to Islam and transsexuals. The first research was entitled Islam and Transgender [18]. The results of the study show that the issue of transgender has existed since the beginning of the development of Islam and Islam strictly prohibits the existence of transgender people. However, the implementation of hadith studies related to transgender in Indonesia is difficult to implement because Indonesia is not a country that uses Islam as the main basis for making regulations. This study does not discuss deeply Islam and transgender specifically the term transsexual. Therefore, research on Islam and transsexuals in Indonesia is important to conduct.

The second research is entitled An Obscure Perception of Transgender in Islam: A Case of Hijra in Bangladesh [19]. The results of the study show that an appropriate conception of transgender identity is impossible without recognizing Islamic cultural practices. Although this is also true, only the Islamic perspective will provide us with limited knowledge of hijras, one of Bangladesh's transgender populations. However, this study does not discuss deeply Islam and transgender specifically the term transsexual. Therefore, research on Islam and transsexuals in Indonesia is important to conduct.

The third research entitled Countering Islamic Conservatism on being transgender: Clarifying Tantawi's and Khomeini's Fatwas from the Progressive Muslim Standpoint [20]. The results of the study show that despite various legal judgments, court decisions, and religious verdicts (fatwas) and rulings, transgender persons continue to face persecution, stigma, discrimination, intimidation, detention, torture, harassment, and in some cases death in the majority of Muslim nations. To provide support for trans people who are victims of gender violence, it is necessary to reform or remove these archaic conservative fatwas, especially when there is so much evidence and justification from the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as scientific explanations, that being transgender is a natural occurrence. However, this study does not discuss deeply Islam and transgender specifically the term transsexual. Therefore, research on Islam and transsexuals in Indonesia is important to conduct.

Based on these previous studies, there is a research gap in that there is no research that investigates the reasons, impacts, and people who decide to become transsexual while they are Muslims. Therefore, this study aims to investigate gender and Islamic issues, especially those related to transsexuals. Thus, this research leads to three research questions, namely: (1) Why do Muslims choose to be transsexuals? (2) What are the impacts Muslims experience after being transsexual? (3) What do Muslims feel after being transsexuals? The results of this study will show the novelty of the findings that will add to and strengthen theories about gender differences, especially those related to Islam where there are only a few studies that touch on the field of Islam related to gender issues, especially transsexuals.

2 Research Method

This study uses a qualitative method by carrying out a phenomenological design. Qualitative phenomenological research methods are considered to be selected and used for this research because they can explain phenomena that exist in society scientifically and reveal important facts about them [21], [22]. This study involved four Muslims who decided to become transsexual as participants in this study. The four participants were considered to be selected using the voluntary sampling method. The voluntary sampling method was considered to be selected and used because the participants voluntarily provided information as the data for this research and because without coercion, the data obtained would be very rich and clear [23], [24].

The data from this study were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The type of interview considered for selection is an in-depth interview where the researcher and participants meet to conduct unstructured interviews. Interviews were chosen as the primary data collection instrument because the research data obtained from interviews could be in-depth and clear [25]–[27]. The interviews were conducted offline for one participant and online for three participants. The choice of online and offline methods is due to provide convenience for the research participants so that the information the data obtained will be richer and clearer [28]–[31]. Apart from interviews, data from this study were also collected through participant observation and documentation methods. Observations were made to support primary data -interviews- so that the data obtained became more valid [32], [33]. In addition, documentation was also carried out by recording interviews and collecting data in the form of documents from the participants' social media to turn the data obtained into truly valid, rich, and clear data [34], [35].

Related to data analysis, four stages were chosen as the basis for data analysis, namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion [36]. After the data is collected, the data is then reduced to get data that is appropriate and suitable to be displayed in the next stage. After being reduced, the data is displayed in a neater form and represents the results of this study so that in the end conclusions are drawn which will be the final results of this study.

3 Result and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the reasons for being transsexual are because of the economy, comfort, and trauma. While related to the impact is being a minority, experiencing bullying, and confusion in the effort to worship. In terms of feelings, the participants felt both positive and negative after deciding to become transsexual.

3.1 Reasons

Muslims decide to become transsexual for several reasons. The first is the economic issue. The economic issue here leads to a weak economy. Jobs that are difficult to earn income make a person economically weak. Furthermore, by becoming a transsexual, that person has the opportunity to get a more instant economy. This is because the person can carry out various kinds of transactions to get income more instantly, such as being a make-up artist, singer, and work related to the services of commercial sex workers.

P1: cari kerja sulit. Kalau jadi waria, bs buka make up artist. Biasanya dapat undangan make up untuk acara pernikahan, wisuda, dan karnaval dulu sebelum pandemic”

English: “Looking for a hard job. If you become transgender, you can open a makeup artist. Usually, I get make-up invitations for weddings, graduations, and carnivals before the pandemic”

By becoming transgender, a person gets better job opportunities with income that is felt more instant, such as being a make-up artist who works not every day but only on certain days compared to working every day with less income with longer time spent. By becoming a make-up artist, a transsexual has the opportunity to participate in certain events such as weddings, graduations, and carnivals before the pandemic. These moments become opportunities to earn money with a short working mass and with income that is felt to be more instant and more abundant.

P2: “kadang juga dapat job nyanyi, mas. Kalau ada acara nikahan di kampung-kampung aku sering dapat tawaran untuk nyanyi. Hasilnya lumayan sebagai pekerjaan sampingan”

English: “Sometimes also get a job singing, mas. If there are weddings in the villages, I often get offers to sing. The result is pretty good as a side job”

Apart from being a make-up artist, a transsexual often gets a side job as a singer at weddings and events organized by the village. Although it is not every day that they get this job, the invitation to sing at these events is considered to be a positive thing economically because it is a side job that gives transsexuals more instant results and is easier on time and effort. This is one of the reasons some Muslims decide to become transsexual.

P3: “tergiur uang instan, mas. Kalau open BO malah lebih cepat uangnya. Dapetnya banyak kerjanya malah hanya hitungan jam”

English: “Tempted by instant money, sir. If you open BO, the money will be faster. Gets a lot of work even just a matter of hours”

Being transsexual opens up opportunities to work as commercial sex workers. By doing this job, the money you get is felt to be much more instant, a lot, and easy to get. This is because you only need to do the work in a matter of hours. Of course, it is different from other types of work that require a longer working time with a lower income.

In addition to economic issues, convenience is the next reason a Muslim decides to become a transsexual. Despite violating the rules of his religion, comfort is a strong attraction that can beat obedience to the rules of his religion. This is related to the psychological and sociological conditions of a person. With a psychological condition where a person feels he wants to be a woman while biologically he is a man, it causes inner turmoil that causes him to behave differently among several people around him so it makes him feel uncomfortable because of these differences. Finding a transgender community and hanging out with other

people who feel the same way makes a person feel comfortable with the decision to become a transsexual. It is felt for him as a transsexual to feel himself and feel freer.

P3: “Aku dari kecil memang berbeda. Aku lebih suka dengan barang-barang perempuan dan selera perempuan. Tapi aku jadi tidak nyaman dengan kondisiku di antara teman-teman karena merasa berbeda. Waktu aku menemukan komunitas waria dan bersama teman-teman yang juga merasakan hal yang sama, aku mantab dan nyaman menjadi seorang waria”

English: “I have been different since I was little. I prefer women's goods and women's tastes. But I became uncomfortable with my condition among friends because I felt different. When I found the transsexual community and with friends who also felt the same way, I felt good and comfortable being a transsexual”

Sociological conditions since childhood plus the support of the transsexual community are the next reason someone decides to become a transsexual. Similar communities and the similarity of feelings among members of the community makes a feeling of security and comfort because they do not feel different like in normal society. So, the convenience of being a transsexual in their community is a reason to make big decisions for someone and feel good about being a transsexual.

The last reason a Muslim decides to become a transsexual is due to issues related to the incident that caused trauma. Trauma in the past, when a person was in childhood, is the cause.

P1: “Waktu aku kecil aku mendapatkan tindak pelecehan. Waktu itu aku tidak mengerti apa-apa tentang tindakan itu. Saat aku dewasa, aku selalu teringat akan kejadian itu dan seperti terpanggil untuk melakukannya. Dulu sempat trauma takut tapi waktu dewasa menjadi penasaran karna selalu teringat akan kejadian tersebut”

English: “When I was little I was abused. At that time I did not understand anything about that action. When I grew up, I was always reminded of that incident and seemed to be called to do it. I used to be traumatized by fear but as an adult, I became curious because I always remembered the incident”

The past incident of abuse by an adult to a small child traumatized the child and could not forget the incident even until the child grew up. When he becomes an adult, the image of the events he experienced as a child becomes a shadow and creates a feeling of curiosity that in the end, he wants to do activities as adults did to him as a child. This makes it easier for him to do it by becoming a transsexual because that way, he can do it by being a servant to men who have deviant behavior and need these services. In other words, childhood trauma can be a reason for someone to decide to become a transsexual.

3.2 Impacts

Being a transsexual is not without its repercussions. The impact experienced by a Muslim who decides to become a transsexual is being a minority, experiencing bullying, and confusion in their efforts to worship.

P1: “aku jadi kaum minoritas mas. Di tempat lingkunganku yang asli aku tidak banyak punya teman. Aku jadi orang yang dianggap aneh”

English: “I’m a minority. In my original neighborhood, I didn’t have many friends. I became a person who is considered strange”

The first impact experienced by a Muslim who decides to become a transsexual is having to live a life as a minority. In society, the figure of a transsexual is considered a strange figure because of the decision to change gender so many do not accept its existence. Many groups of people are reluctant to approach and make friends with a transsexual figure. This is also due to the community’s assumption that the act violates religious and state norms.

P2: “Sering ada yang bully aku, mas. Menjadi seorang transsexual itu hidup penuh bullying karena dianggap seperti bukan orang normal”

English: “Often someone bullies me, sir. Being a transsexual is a life full of bullying because it is considered like not a normal person”

In addition to being a minority, a transsexual is also often bullied. Transsexual figures are considered as low-level figures than people in general and because they are unusual figures, many people do not like and do not have a high tolerance for bullying transsexuals. The negative view of society makes the transsexual figure even more guilty.

P2: “ada momen saat aku ingin ibadah seperti waktu hari raya idul fitri. Aku sempat bingung apakah aku pakai sarung atau mukenah. Gejolak hati itu muncul sebagai dampak keputusanku memilih menjadi seorang transsexual”

English: “There are moments when I want to worship like during Eid al-Fitr. I was confused about whether I was wearing a sarong or a mukenah. The turmoil in my heart arose as a result of my decision to choose to be a transsexual”

Regarding worship activities, the impact felt by a Muslim who decides to become a transsexual is confusion in carrying out worship. This is because the transsexual gender is like being amid the general gender such as men and women. In worship activities, the worship equipment needed by men and women in Islam certainly differs according to their respective genitals. As a result, a transsexual will feel indecisive to choose whether to be a male or female figure in carrying out worship such as during prayers on Eid al-Fitr.

3.3 Feelings

Regarding emotional problems, the participants felt both positive and negative things after deciding to become transsexual

P3: “perasaan setelah memutuskan jadi seorang transsexual ada positif dan negatifnya. Postifnya ya aku jadi merasa menjadi diriku suutuhnya. Bahagia tanpa terbebani harus jadi seorang laki-laki sedangkan negatifnya ya aku merasa aneh saat di lingkungan umum karena orang selalu seperti melihat ke aku dan seperti berpikir aneh”

English: “feeling after deciding to be a transsexual there are positives and negatives. The positive thing is that I feel like I am completely myself. Happy without being burdened with having to be a man while the negative is yes I feel weird when in public because people always look at me and think weird”

As a Muslim who decides to become a transsexual, there are positive and negative feelings that are felt. The positive feeling that is felt is the feeling of being free and happy because you can be yourself according to your heart's desire. Before becoming a transsexual, it is often a burden on the heart because it is born as a male biologically but the feeling of the heart is as a woman. So, when you have decided to become a transsexual, the feeling of happiness, because you have succeeded in being yourself, appears. Even so, there are also negative feelings felt. It was a strange feeling to be in a public place. When interacting with the general public, there tends to be a feeling as if everyone views transsexuals as a mistake and an oddity so many people view it unnaturally. These feelings are quite disturbing in the mind of a transsexual.

This research adds to the scientific treasures in the field of social sciences related to gender. Previous studies reviewed Islamic law related to transgender where transgender is something that violates religious rules so that it is considered an act of sin [18]–[20]. There are no studies that examine the causes, effects, and feelings experienced by Muslims who decide to become transgender, more specifically transsexual. Therefore, the results of this study succeeded in adding insight related to Islam and transsexuals.

4 Conclusion and Suggestions

Transsexual is a term derived from transgender. The term refers to transgender people who make efforts to become another gender such as having silicone injections, sex-change surgery, and so on. Islam and Indonesia itself vehemently oppose such efforts unless it is due to an emergency such as incomplete sex development or multiple sex disorders. However, there is still a phenomenon of Muslim citizens who decide to become transsexual. This is motivated by several reasons, namely related to economic issues, comfort, and trauma. The decision is not without impact. The impact that arises because of this decision is being in the minority, experiencing bullying, and confusion in their efforts to worship. In terms of feelings, the participants felt both positive and negative after deciding to become transsexual. This study is limited to the number of participants and the causes, effects, and feelings of the Muslim participants. It is recommended for further research be able to increase the number and diversity of participants and not be limited to only Muslim participants.

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