

## **Qualitative Study Factors Triggering Gay Characteristics in Gay Groups in Palmerah District West Jakarta**

**Siti Novy Romlah, Rita Dwi Pratiwi**

Stikes Widya Dharma Husada

Tangerang, Indonesia

Stikes Kharisma Persada

sitinovyromlah@wdh.ac.id, ritadwipratiwi@wdh.ac.id

**Fenita Purnama Sari Indah**

Stikes Kharisma Persada

Indonesia

fenita.purnama@masda.ac.id

**M Chairul Basrun Umanailo**

Department of Agricultural and Forestry

University of Iqra Buru

Namlea, 97571, Indonesia

chairulbasrun@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Background: Based on the Ministry of Health's estimation in 2012, there were 1,095,970 MSM, both seen and unseen. In Jakarta, as many as 27,706 residents of the capital city are gay, and tens of thousands of gays in the capital city, as many as 5,550 people are suspected of suffering from HIV / AIDS, and in Palmerah District there are 163 MSM who carry out HIV testing. Objective: To provide an overview of what factors triggering gay characteristics and a description of knowledge about STIs in homosexual groups in Palmerah District, West Jakarta. Research Methods: This study uses qualitative methods with descriptive research type. The selection of informants used snowball sampling technique with 4 gay people representing homosexual groups in Palmerah District, West Jakarta as research informants. Results: Factors triggering gay characteristics were due to several factors, namely permissive, authoritarian, and neglected parenting patterns, family factors because the informant's relationship with parents and their families were not intertwined both with parents and families, environmental factors in group interactions peers because the friendly environment with peer groups makes sexual orientation as gay stronger and feels comfortable, a traumatic experience factor to one informant who has an unpleasant experience. Description of STI knowledge in homosexual groups where the majority of informants already know about STIs, only a small proportion of informants does not know about STIs. Efforts to prevent STIs were carried out by all informants, namely reducing the frequency of sexual relations, not changing partners and using protectors such as condoms, and even one of the informants did a health checkup for HIV every 3 months. Conclusion: Society can anticipate as parents by understanding how parenting can make a child gay and also establish good communication relationships with children early on, and as parents know the impact of gay behaviour that is at high risk of contracting an STI or HIV-AIDS.

**Keywords:** Factors, Gay, Knowledge, groups

## **1. Introduction**

The existence of homosexuals in Indonesia can be seen from the increasing number of emerging organizations engaged in the welfare of LGBT life (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender). Based on the 2013 Indonesian National LGBT report, there were at least 119 LGBT organizations or communities in 28 of 34 provinces in Indonesia (Ma'rufah 2003). This does not necessarily make Indonesian people easily accept the existence of homosexuals, because the cultural orientation of Indonesian society is the eastern culture which considers homosexuality as a phenomenon that is not in accordance with the norms and values in society (Rokhmah, Dewi, Nafikadini, Iken 2012).

The Ministry of Health report quoted by the National AIDS Commission reveals that the number of men having sex with men (MSM) has reached millions. Based on the Ministry of Health's estimation in 2012, there were 1,095,970 MSM both seen and unseen. More than five percent (66,180) have HIV. Meanwhile, the UN agency predicts that the number of LGBT people is much higher, namely three million people in 2011. In fact, in 2009 the gay population was only around 800 thousand people. In Jakarta, as many as 27,706 residents of the capital city are gay, and tens of thousands of gays in the capital, as many as 5,550 people are suspected of suffering from HIV/ AIDS (Balgos, Gaillard, and Sanz 2012); (Khanis 2013). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health report, the cumulative number of HIV infections from 1987 to December 2017 in DKI Jakarta was 51,981 cases, and there was an increase from 2016 to 42,350 cases to 48,300 cases in 2017. Data on the number of HIV infections based on risk factors in 2017 were found in MSM category totalling 1 1,630 cases. And in Palmerah district, West Jakarta there are 163 MSM who carry out HIV testing. Discussion about homosexuality in society is very limited so that it causes misinterpretation of homosexuals among ordinary people, homosexuals are often portrayed as mentally ill individuals, and this description is certainly unreasonable because it tends to discredit homosexuals (Troiden 2013). According to Polimeni and friends (Madon, 1997), the lack of people's understanding of homosexuality as deviant behaviour causes the homosexuals to always hide their true identity. The same thing also expressed Tjhay (2009) where the lack of understanding of the community that causes homosexual health behaviours is less attention, they feel reluctant to do counselling considering problems related to homosexuals are considered taboo to be discussed. It is a risky sexual behaviour of heterosexuals (Rahmawati et al. 2016).

By the risky sexual activities, making the homosexual groups, especially gays, vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections (STIs). And there is a tendency for an increase in the number of HIV cases in DKI Jakarta and many are found in the MSM category, also in Palmerah district, there are 163 MSM who carry out HIV testing. This raises the question of what factors influence a person becoming gay and how their knowledge of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Juditha 2014). Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting research on a Qualitative Study of Factors Triggering Gay Characteristics and the Knowledge about STIs in Gay Groups in Palmerah District, West Jakarta.

## **2. Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative method. This type of research is descriptive research. This type of research is based on the basic question that is how the data comes from through in-depth interviews, observation in interviews, and documentation with 4 (four) informants who have become gay. In this study, the selection of informants used snowball sampling technique. The snowball sampling technique was used by the researcher considering that homosexual groups are not easily seen in the environment. The number of research informants amounted to 4 gay people representing homosexual groups in Palmerah district, West Jakarta.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

Family factors have an important role in the formation of children becoming gay. When a child gets abusive treatment or other unfavourable treatment, then, in the end, the condition can lead to the estrangement of family relationships and the emergence of hatred of the child in his parents. A child who in his family environment also lacks love, attention, and education in terms of religion, sexual and other education problems from an early age can get involved in improper associations.

From several gay informants, they have varied relationships with parents and family. There are those who are well-connected and those who are not well-connected with their families, and basically, all informants consider the relationship with their family to be fine, but when they explored deeper, they reveal a number of things that are distancing from the family.

In the fourth informant, AB revealed that in fact, his relationship with his family was intimate, especially since a little AB was treated by his family namely his grandmother and grandfather. However, this made the development of

AB into a man who is not like men in general. It was realized by AB, he became a gay because since childhood he did not get a role model how to be a real man in general because in his family was dominated in interactions with the family of women such as grandmothers, his aunts, and there were no peers at that time that men were also recognized by AB even if there were family members whose men were busy. This formed AB into a more feminine male.

"Well, since I was a child, I was treated by my grandmother and my grandfather. Because my father and mother work, so I am cared for by my grandmother, then in the family because I am one ... I'm a Betawi person, you know the background of a Betawi person you know yourself, so Hmmm it is the same as relatives, the family is the most important, so is my caregiver hmmm my family ... so I was a kid when there was no standard so I didn't think there's a standard like guys had to be like this, a guy had to do this and that, I didn't have a role model so I was confused myself. I take the model of my aunts and my grandmother, it was like that, right? Most of the men are my grandfather. My grandfather was also a teacher of the Koran, so sometimes he often went out. Everything seemed to be so busy. So from there, I was aware. I am like this because I couldn't imitate a role model of a real man at that time so I didn't have a standard man should be like that huh. So I was feeling hmmm different "(Personal interview with AB, June 18 2019).

All informants hide their identities in the family because they want to keep looking good to their parents. But there was also from the second DP informant who admitted that his parents were divorced and his father's family was more able to accept and not question the sexual orientation of one of his family members. Although it is also acknowledged by the second informant, it is because the divorce of the parents has an effect on one's sexual orientation. It must be underlined, when the extended family of the second informant's father can receive and treat the second informant in an authentic way, it is precisely where his parents' parenting patterns contribute to his development, and so it cannot be avoided if the second informant becomes more confident with his orientation.

"... from my family, maybe someone already knows that I act like a woman. So at that time I used to have long hair, right, I was like a dance cover from the Korean ones, right? Well, it's okay, so sometimes I just like my makeup. Well, nowadays, because of my father's family, I already know that I am like this, so it's really cool, just relax. My father said that we better don't beat a boy as this or he will even get more stubborn. My family really has no worries about it. I often joke around with my makeup. It's just the same as my aunt who is only 1 year older than me "(Personal interview with DP, June 16, 2019).

Based on the results of interviews with several informants, it can be concluded that the relationship between the three informants with their parents and family is not good enough. All informants also hide their identities in the family, because they want to keep looking good to their parents. A loose relationship between the informant and his parents and family can lead to a homosexual situation because the informant feels a lack of affection with his parents. This is reinforced by Tan in Marthilda (Umanailo 2019; Umanailo, Pratiwi, and Indah 2019) which states that the relationship between fathers and mothers who often bicker or between parents and with children who are not harmonious or problematic can lead to homosexual conditions.

There are many factors that are suspected to be the influence of sexual deviation on a person, both from external and internal of a person, including childhood experiences, especially interactions between parents and children. Parenting style is an important role in determining the attitude and level of development of children. Unpleasant experiences with the treatment of parents who are too harsh and parents who do not care about their children have become a powerful trigger for the emergence of sexual deviation.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted with the four gay informants, several informants received parenting in different forms from one informant to another. Where there is an informant who feels he does not have a good quality time with his parents, an informant who was given a punishment by his mother, even an informant who is given freedom with his parents.

The parents of the fourth informant, the second informant and the third informant tended to adopt a parenting style that provides punishment and does not establish close relationships with the informant. The second, informant, DP, who applies the parenting style, namely his mother, but it is different from the third informant, MF, who implements this is his father. It is seen from his relationship with his father who is not closely intertwined. It also impacts the relationship that is not close to his parents because the informant tends to be afraid of his mother.

"Hmm, it's because of my mom. When I was a kid, she was so harsh with me. If I was playing for a while and I didn't go home early, I was hit and pinched. Then if my mom were emotional again, she would definitely pinch me. I never tell stories to my mother, the thing is that she is really harsh, so I'm afraid." (Personal interview with DP, June 16, 2019).

However, it is different from the three previous informants. The parenting practices adopted by the parents of the first informant tend to be seen as giving minimal time to the informant as their child and their parents rarely communicate with the informant. The informant feels he and his parents are living alone or individually, and in

financial matters, the informant claims to get it himself, even though in the life of the informant he claimed he never gets abused by his parents.

"Hmm, how about parenting ... My parents are like individualistic ones. ... so we just like live our own lives, with our own finances and with our own respective activities. The point is we do with our own way without having quality time like hmm chatting together like that. My mom is introvert too. Yeah, when my mom asked and I didn't move right away, she would grumble, but she didn't hit." (Personal interview with BR, 16 June 2019)

Based on the expressions of both of the second informant, DP, and the third informant, MF, it can be seen that their parents apply an authoritarian parenting style, namely parenting that tends to set standards that absolutely must be followed and usually accompanied by threats. This type of parent tends to force, rule, punish and not establish a close relationship with the children. Parents of this type do not know the compromise and have one-way communication. Children who are raised with this kind of parenting style tend to seek attention and freedom that have not been obtained from parents. This has become a powerful trigger factor in the formation of deviant sexual behaviour including homosexual behaviour (Baumrind, 1971) in (Rokhmah, Dewi, Nafikadini, Iken 2012).

It can be concluded that the form of parenting pattern of abandonment, authoritarian, and permissive parents to informants is a strong factor in the formation of their sexual orientation to be gay. This is reinforced by the results of a study by Darmayanti & Sumitri (2017) which stated that the cause of MSM from parenting uses three parenting patterns namely authoritarian, permissive and democratic (Darmayanti.Y 2018).

The majority of informants admitted that it was a friendly environment that made their sexual orientation as gay stronger and more comfortable until now. Most gay informants have friends or close friends, which in this case they refer to as friends or friends inline or in arms. As acknowledged by AB, the fourth informant, his sexual orientation as gay was strengthened by the support of his friendship environment when AB was in junior high school. AB felt that he was different from men in general since he was a child and he knew that labelling himself was gay in middle school. AB found friendship that could be considered similar to being gay when he was in junior high school, which was also recognized by AB, became a support that strengthened him as gay because the environment of his friendship accepts him as gay.

"... I feel hmmm different, then I knew from Elementary School like that, I entered junior high, I knew if it's called LGBT, Gay, everything that I knew started from the second grade of Junior High School, When I was the first grader I was still bullied like 'Sissy, you, ... pansy ... ' all those such things in the Middle School, then in grade 2 thank God, I really found my second family in grade 2 of Junior High School. They were the same as me. Their background was just like mine. Until now, we have been friends for 8 years. So they told me what to do. ... So in my Middle School environment, my Middle School friends who had the same background as mine, being in love with the same gender, they are the ones who support me but others didn't. In the beginning, I also knew my friends, I was suspicious of myself, so we finally gathered together in one of my friends' houses, and then I came out with them. I told them that I had a boyfriend too and it's up to them how they would react. Then I saw my friends would support me like 'how come, it's really great huh?' There are people if I tell my stories they would act like they're disgusted just by hearing the words of LGBT. It's better that you just admit whether you could be friends with people like me or not." (Personal interview with AB, 18 June 2019).

Some informants felt that their orientation was different or as gay because of their interactions with people who were the same as themselves or the interaction environment of their peers who were quite influential in their orientation as gay, although some informants had felt they were attracted to men since they were kids. And also he felt himself as a woman, also when he was a child he more often played with women. So that their sexual orientation as gay is strengthened by the support of their friendship environment which accepts them as gay. Although there is also one informant who befriends only with women because he is uncomfortable with men in friendships because of the experience of trauma as a child with his male friends.

Based on the results of the study, four of the gay informants interviewed mostly did not state that the sexual traumatic experience they had experienced was a cause for changes in their sexual orientation. Only the traumatic experience which was experienced by MF, the third informant, stated that he had experienced an unpleasant thing by being kicked in the buttocks by two of his male friends when he was sitting in elementary school so that it caused the informant's hatred with men. Then the informant felt uncomfortable with men. Since that incident, the informant has never played with men again. He has always played with women and felt like a woman and not interested in women. But when the informant went to High School, he felt attracted to men as his sexual orientation so that the informant became gay.

"Actually, Kindergarten was still just ordinary. I played with boys, then grade 1 grade 2 ... yeah, there were two guys like kicking ... they really liked to kick my butt. So, from there I was not comfortable, and more uncomfortable with guys ... so until now it's still uncomfortable when I'm with a guy ... so it's like I'm a girl like that ... Time after time, I feel like I don't have any lust at girls anymore. Well, I feel like that when I was in grade 9 of Junior High

School and I was in early year of Senior High School, I already felt like I was interested in guys, but there was still normal. Just glancing around handsome guys. In grade 3 of Senior High Schools, I started to get to know men who like each other "(Personal interview with MF, 17 June 2019).

Therefore it can be said that any bad experience in the past will continue to stick in the mind so that it can cause certain hatred. It can cause traumatic things that can interfere with their sexual orientation.

Regarding the description of the knowledge of gay informants about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), most of the informants already knew about STIs, in which some informants mentioned a number of types of STIs and their prevention efforts that they implemented. The types of sexually transmitted infections (STI) mentioned by several informants were HIV, AIDS, herpes, syphilis or the lion king, and two informants of whom knew the symptoms.

The informant BR know a little of the symptoms and modes of transmission of STIs that he mentioned, namely HIV, which according to him it is transmitted by sexual contact which is the most risky way of transmitting HIV. "The symptoms of HIV are achy bodies, having much dandruff, itchy, and fever. That's all the symptoms of HIV that I know. And the transmission is hmm by kissing lips is not highly risky even some say it's not contagious if it's just lip kissing or eating together, drinking using the same glass or just like that. I think it's not contagious or only a small contagion and the fatal one is a sexual transmission." (Interview with BR, June 16, 2019).

Regarding efforts to prevent STIs said by all informants are more reducing the frequency of sexual relations, not changing partners and using a protective device such as a condom before sexual intercourse. According to several informants who use these condoms the informants acknowledge in accordance with their respective roles. If the informant is the top, then he/she uses the condom, but if the informant is a bot, then the condom is used, ie the partner acts as the top. "If it's to prevent me, it's more to reduce and I'm also like that when I play clean, because I'm more into booty, so my partner is the top one, like using a condom if I want to have sex" (Interview with BR, June 16 2019).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Based on the results of data collection conducted on gays in Palmerah district, West Jakarta, it can be concluded that the form of parenting informants' parents that influence the incidence of gays on informants namely permissive, authoritarian, and abandonment care patterns which informants become a factor in the formation of their sexual orientation become gay. The majority of informants' relationships with parents and their families are not well established and there is a distance from parents and families of informants. In the peer group interaction environment, the majority of informants acknowledged that the friendly environment with peer groups made their sexual orientation as gay stronger and more comfortable until now. There was one informant who had an unpleasant experience by being kicked in the buttocks by two of his male friends while the informant sat on the elementary school bench so that it caused the informants to hate men, and the informant felt uncomfortable with men. So since that incident, the informant has never played with men again and since then the informant has always played with women and felt like a woman and not interested in women

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## **Biography**

**Siti Novy Romlah** is a lecturer at the Widya Dharma Husada college of Health Science. She completed her Master Degree of Epidemiology in University of Indonesia. She is currently studying a postgraduate degree in Public Health Departement in Lincoln University College, Malaysia

**Rita Dwi Pratiwi** is a lecturer at the Widya Dharma Husada College of Health Sciences at the Faculty of Nursing. She completed her Bachelor of Nursing Education at Gadjah Mada University and graduated from Nursing for Children Department in Akdeniz University, Turkey. She is currently studying a postgraduate degree in Public Health Department at Lincoln University, Malaysia. She is the head of a Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM) at Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang School of Health science

**Fenita Purnama Sari Indah** is a lecturer at the Kharisma Persada School of Health Science who teaches several subject in public health studies program. The author was born at Bandar Lampung, Lampung, Indonesia on June 12, 1991. The author received a Bachelor’s degree in 2013 and a master’s in Public Health study in 2015 at Diponegoro University, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. Interested in Statistic health, epidemiology, environmental health and others pattern about health. The author also actively writes in several accredited and non-accredited national scientific journals and has written international journals and books. The author can be contacted at the email address: fenita.purnama@masda.ac.id

**M Chairul BasrunUmanailo** is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Agriculture at Iqra Buru University with specifications of rural sociology and research methodology. It has an M.Si degree in sociology Obtained from March University. In 2016 Began doctoral education at the University of Brawijaya. Currently still completing a dissertation on the issue of urbanization because of village development that is focused on the Central Java region.