

The crossdresser phenomenon: Between transgender and hobbies (study of crossdresser phenomenon on social media platforms)

Lalu Pradipta Jaya Bahari^{1*}, Joseph Lere Omiwole²

¹UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

²Osun State University, Ipetu Ijesa Campus, Nigeria

Article information	Abstract
Submitted: 2024-02-04 Revised: 2024-06-11 Published: 2024-06-30	This study emphasizes how Islamic teachings and traditional gender norms shape gender perceptions in Indonesia, creating significant gaps in education, politics, work access, and economic control. The phenomenon of transgender identity remains debated, reflecting persistent societal adherence to conventional gender expectations. The purpose of this study is to understand the phenomenon of crossdressers as part of a natural and complex spectrum of gender identities and to reduce stigma and discrimination against individuals who practice crossdressing. Using descriptive qualitative methods and a comprehensive scientific approach, this study uses observation, documentation, and interviews as data collection techniques. Primary data were obtained from the results of analyzing content created by several crossdresser accounts on the Facebook social media platform, as well as the results of interviews with account owners, while secondary data were obtained from relevant literature and references. This study concludes that the crossdresser phenomenon reflects complex intersections of gender identity, social perception, and cultural norms. Drawing on Queer Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Islamic perspectives, the findings reveal diverse motivations and societal responses. The research underscores the importance of inclusivity, equality, and human rights while encouraging further dialogue to promote understanding and acceptance of gender diversity. This research contributes by enriching the discourse on gender identity, offering deeper insights into crossdresser experiences, and highlighting the need for inclusive education, equality, and human rights awareness to support more equitable and accepting social environments.
Keywords: Crossdresser, Hobbies, Islam, Psychology, Transgender.	



Copyright: © The author(s) 2024

An-Nisa: Journal of Gender Studies is licensed under a Creative Commons AttributionNon-Commercial 4.0 International License. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

To cite this article (APA Style):

Bahari, L. P. J., & Omiwole, J. L. (2024). The crossdresser phenomenon: Between transgender and hobbies (study of crossdresser phenomenon on social media platforms). *An-Nisa Journal of Gender Studies*, 17(1), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.35719/annisa.v17i1.222>

*Corresponding author: Lalu Pradipta Jaya Bahari, Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies Study Program, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Email: 21200012039@student.uin-suka.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, perspectives on gender are strongly influenced by Islamic teachings, though scholars such as Syed (2010), Shankar (2022), and Bakhshizadeh (2023) note that interpretations of gender roles vary, sparking debates on their impact on women's rights and positions in society. Despite progress, Lwamba et al. (2022) and Christopherson et al. (2022) emphasize that gender gaps remain evident in education, political participation, access to decent work, and control over economic resources. Afif (2019) and Galizzi et al. (2024) further argue that patriarchal traditions continue to frame men as leaders and women as caretakers of the home. One contested issue is transgender identity, which the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) defines as individuals who change their gender identity. Winter (2006), Coleman et al. (2022), and White et al. (2023) explain that in Thailand, Buddhist beliefs in reincarnation encourage greater acceptance, framing transition as destiny (Setiawan, 2023). In Indonesia, LGBT communities estimated at 7.5 million by a CIA survey (Wahyuni & Amelia, 2023) increasingly advocate for recognition, visibility, and inclusion. Butler (2006) views transgender identity as a misalignment of sex and gender shaped by social, psychological, and biological factors, while Beagan and Hattie (2015), Gibbs and Goldbach (2015), and Endsjo (2020) interpret crossdressing as a gender expression that challenges heteronormativity, a trend Syafuddin (2020) notes has spread into daily life through social media.

Previous research on crossdressing remains limited, although several scholars have explored related topics. Syafuddin (2020) interprets that crossdressing does not necessarily indicate transgender identity, as some individuals only express themselves on social media while maintaining conventional male appearances in daily life; however, this finding primarily concerns cosplay-related participants. Hamidah and Mutahir (2023) analyze media portrayals in detik.com, suggesting that negative framing contributes to public stigma toward LGBT individuals. Wijayanto and Rahim (2023) argue that religious, cultural, and political narratives in Indonesia significantly shape negative societal perceptions of LGBT communities. Sipahutar et al. (2023) emphasize the tension between Islamic legal interpretations and human rights perspectives, revealing conflicts between moral norms and rights-based protections. Hafni and Erwinda (2023) note that LGBT behavior in West Sumatra does not always require psychological intervention, challenging assumptions about pathology. Lau (2018) observes that crossdressing is often mistakenly equated with transgender identity. Collectively, these studies indicate a need to deepen understanding of crossdressing behaviors and promote gender inclusivity, as advocated by Scheibner (2007) and Henningsen (2017).

Although several studies have examined crossdressing, previous research remains limited, particularly in understanding the motivations, experiences, and challenges faced by individuals who engage in crossdressing outside the context of cosplay or social media. Most studies have focused on societal perceptions, stigma, or media representations, while few have addressed psychological aspects, support needs, and effective interventions for the mental well-being of crossdressers. Furthermore, research linking crossdressing practices to social policies and individual rights including the right to self-expression, fair treatment in the workplace, and access to healthcare is still scarce. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by exploring the subjective experiences of crossdressers, understanding the psychosocial challenges they face, and providing a foundation for developing mental health support interventions and policies that promote gender equality and protect the human rights of all individuals.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences, motivations, and challenges of individuals who engage in crossdressing, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of their psychosocial realities. By investigating these aspects, the research seeks to inform the development of effective mental health interventions tailored to the specific needs of crossdressers, enhancing their psychological well-being and social functioning. Furthermore, this

study intends to generate empirical evidence that can guide policymakers in creating inclusive policies that protect the rights of crossdressers, including their right to self-expression, equitable treatment in the workplace, access to healthcare, and broader societal acceptance. The findings are expected to contribute to reducing stigma and discrimination, fostering a more supportive environment for crossdressers. Ultimately, this research not only advances academic knowledge on gender diversity but also promotes gender equality, social inclusion, and human rights, benefiting both individuals who engage in crossdressing and society as a whole.

Based on the discussion above, this research hypothesizes that crossdressing behavior in Indonesia is not solely a precursor to transgender identity, but rather a unique form of gender expression influenced by various psychological, social, and cultural factors. The persistence of traditional gender norms and strong religious influences may shape public perceptions and contribute to stigma, yet they do not entirely determine an individual's gender identity trajectory. It is assumed that many individuals who engage in crossdressing do so as a form of self-expression without necessarily intending to transition genders. Additionally, increased visibility on social media suggests a shift in how crossdressing is practiced and perceived. Therefore, this study aims to explore whether crossdressing exists independently from transgender identity, and how societal, psychological, and cultural factors interact to shape these experiences, while also investigating the implications for mental health support and human rights policies.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to explore crossdressing practices on social media, particularly in the Indonesian context. Fazry (2023) argues that qualitative approaches are essential for capturing the depth and complexity of human behaviors and experiences, enabling researchers to understand motivations, challenges, and social dynamics. The research prioritizes content produced by multiple crossdresser accounts on Facebook as the primary data source, providing firsthand insight into identity expression and performance. Complementing this, unstructured interviews with account owners allow for contextualized understanding of their lived experiences, including their navigation of social norms and societal expectations. Secondary sources, including books, journal articles, and credible online materials, provide a theoretical and comparative foundation for analyzing these practices. By triangulating social media content, interviews, and scholarly literature, the study aims to interpret the nuanced ways crossdressers construct and express gender identities, offering insights into both individual strategies and broader cultural implications of their practices.

The data collection in this study uses triangulation, combining observation, documentation, and interviews to strengthen research validity, as emphasized by Fanasca (2019). Observations and documentation focus on Facebook content, including posts, images, and videos, capturing both performative and narrative expressions of gender identity. Meanwhile, unstructured interviews conducted through private chats or Personal Messenger provide participants the freedom to discuss personal experiences without social pressure, revealing motivations, challenges, and coping strategies in their daily lives. This triangulated approach allows the study to compare and contrast different forms of data, identifying consistencies and divergences between online expressions and verbal narratives. By integrating these multiple sources, the research ensures a more robust understanding of the crossdresser phenomenon, highlighting both common patterns and individual variations, while minimizing bias inherent in single-source analysis. The methodology thus provides a comprehensive platform to investigate identity construction within complex social and cultural contexts.

The analytical framework of this study draws on Judith Butler's Queer Theory (2015), which emphasizes that gender is socially constructed and performed, rather than biologically fixed.

Butler interprets gender as fluid, shaped through repeated behaviors and social norms, which provides a lens to analyze how crossdressers negotiate their identities within societal expectations. By applying Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis approach, the study further examines how linguistic and visual representations in social media content construct and reinforce power dynamics, social norms, and dominant perceptions of gender. This interpretative and comparative approach allows for the identification of patterns in identity performance, highlighting how crossdressers challenge, conform to, or reinterpret culturally imposed gender norms. The integration of theory with empirical data from social media and interviews provides both descriptive and analytical insights, demonstrating how crossdressers' self-expression not only reflects individual agency but also interacts with broader societal discourses on gender, inclusivity, and identity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Motivations and goals of individual crossdressing: Between self-expression and gender identity

The findings from the interviews indicate that individuals who engage in crossdressing have different motivations and future intentions. One respondent views crossdressing as a form of self-discovery and affirmation of their gender identity, with plans to fully transition through hormone therapy and permanent changes in appearance. On the other hand, another respondent perceives crossdressing purely as a hobby, with no intention of changing their everyday gender identity. For them, crossdressing serves as a safe space to express another side of their personality that cannot be shown in daily life. This highlights that the meaning of crossdressing is highly contextual and cannot be generalized across individuals.

Table 1
The Results of The Interviews

No	Question	The Results of The Interviews
1	What's your opinion About crossdressing?	"For me, crossdressing initially became a way to express my true self. Over time, I realized it was more than just about clothing - it was about my actual gender identity." " In my view, crossdressing is a fun and creative form of self-expression. It gives me the freedom to explore another side of my personality without having to change my everyday gender identity."
2	How did you start crossdressing?	" I began experimenting ith clothes of the opposite gender because I felt uncomfortable with the gender expectations placed on me. At first, it was just at home, but then I started feeling more 'myself' when doing it." " I first tried it for a costume party and really enjoyed it. Since then, I've started doing it occasionally at home as a way to relax and express a different side of myself."
3	What are your next steps regarding your crossdressing activities?	" I plan to start 'living full-time' as the gender I identify with. This might include hormone therapy and permanent appearance changes. I'll also be consulting with mental health professionals to discuss transition options." " I want to continue crossdressing as an enjoyable hobby. I might join a crossdressing community to share experiences and tips. But I don't plan on changing my everyday gender identity."

From these interviews, it can be concluded that crossdressing does not have a single definition or motivation. For some, crossdressing is part of the process toward embracing the gender identity they feel is true to themselves. For others, it is a way to express creativity and experience psychological freedom, without any desire to permanently change their gender identity. This difference highlights the importance of distinguishing between crossdressers and transgender individuals both terminologically and psychologically. Therefore, the approach to

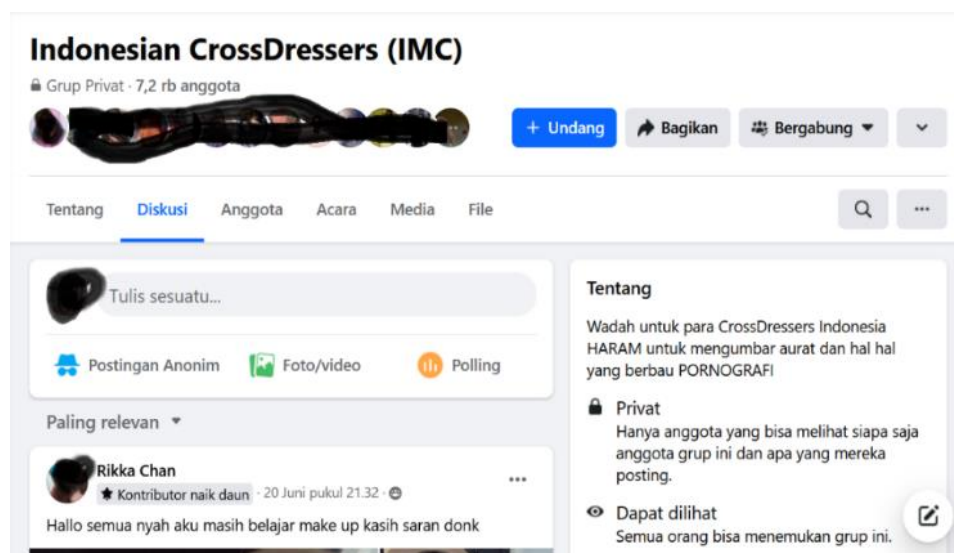
individuals engaging in crossdressing should be personal and non-stigmatizing. These findings also reinforce the importance of public education to foster an inclusive and non-judgmental understanding of gender expression diversity in society.

Social identity, community boundaries, and public perception

This finding shows that crossdressing has diverse meanings depending on the perspective of the individual and the group. For some, crossdressing is not merely a hobby but a part of the process of exploring and discovering their gender identity. Meanwhile, the crossdresser community, particularly on social media platforms like Facebook, emphasizes crossdressing as a form of self-expression without being associated with transgender or LGBTQ+ issues. This highlights the differences in understanding within the community regarding the role and purpose of crossdressing.

Figure 1

One of the Crossdresser Community Facebook Groups



The findings highlight several key points regarding crossdressing. Involvement in activities like cosplay can influence personal identity, particularly when individuals feel accepted within a community that values diverse gender expressions, aligning with Social Identity Theory (Jost & Sidanius, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). However, many in the crossdresser community view crossdressing primarily as a hobby, not linked to LGBTQ+ or transgender identities (Chess, 2016; Erhardt, 2007). The community is protective of its principles, excluding those who integrate LGBTQ+ or transgender elements. It also criticizes behaviors that violate social norms, such as the "Crosshijaber" case, seeing them as damaging to the reputation of crossdressing. Members typically engage in "outing" activities in non-controversial ways, such as walking in public spaces, to express their identity while maintaining boundaries acceptable within the community.

Overall, these findings highlight the multifaceted nature of crossdressing as a form of gender expression. The crossdresser community distinguishes this practice from transgender or broader LGBTQ+ identities, emphasizing self-expression without permanent changes to gender identity. Community members maintain boundaries in public behavior and avoid actions considered socially inappropriate, reflecting their commitment to preserving the integrity of the practice. Crossdressing is framed as a constructive and enjoyable hobby rather than a reflection of altered gender identity. This perspective underscores the significance of understanding crossdressing on its own terms, recognizing its cultural, social, and psychological dimensions.

Discussion

Exploring Crossdressing: Identity, Expression, and Relationships with LGBT

To begin with, scholars emphasize the importance of distinguishing crossdressing from transgender identity. Franklin and Herek (2008) and Hao and Zi (2019) interpret crossdressing as the act of wearing attire traditionally associated with a gender different from one's assigned sex at birth, often as a form of self-expression rather than identity transformation. In contrast, Veale et al. (2010) and Schwan (2021) argue that transgender identity involves a persistent incongruence between one's gender identity and biological sex, reflecting a deeper, enduring aspect of self rather than performative behavior. Historically, crossdressing has been culturally contextualized. For instance, Japanese Kabuki and Noh theater illustrate how male performers embody female roles, which scholars interpret as socially accepted and artistically celebrated within that cultural framework. Conversely, Valentine and Kulick (2001) critically analyze Western contexts, highlighting that crossdressing is often stigmatized, marginalized, and linked to discrimination, demonstrating how cultural norms shape perceptions and acceptance of gendered behaviors.

The motivations behind crossdressing are interpreted differently by scholars, highlighting the diversity of experiences. Peletz (2006) argues that some individuals engage in crossdressing to find comfort and authenticity through clothing not typically associated with their gender, while for others, it serves as a medium to explore alternative gender expressions, which may occasionally lead to transgender identification. Tazkiyah and Nasrulloh (2023) provide a comparative perspective, noting that societal attitudes shape these practices: some communities accept crossdressing as valid self-expression, whereas others reject deviations from biological sex. Butler (2004) interprets crossdressing as a performative act focused on appearance rather than identity transformation, contrasting with Morgenroth and Ryan (2020), Kurup and Underwood (2021), and Higgs et al. (2021), who assert that transgender individuals align clothing and behavior with internal gender identity. Bouman et al. (2017) emphasize that while crossdressing and transgender expression may overlap, each individual's experience is unique, shaped by personal, cultural, and social factors.

When examining crossdressing in relation to the broader LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) movement, scholars provide interpretative and comparative insights. Shimazaki (2021) argues that while crossdressers challenge conventional gender norms and promote self-expression, they do not necessarily align themselves with the LGBT community, as crossdressing is not inherently linked to sexual orientation. Schmidthorst (2022) further emphasizes that some crossdressers may identify as transgender or support LGBT advocacy, yet many maintain a distinct identity to preserve personal boundaries. In contrast, Sedinger (1997) interprets the LGBT movement as a collective effort aimed at achieving legal and social recognition for sexual and gender minorities, highlighting systemic oppression and advocating for rights and inclusion. Comparatively, crossdressing operates more on individual self-expression and performative exploration of gender, whereas the LGBT movement engages in organized activism to challenge institutionalized discrimination, reflecting different levels of social and political engagement despite overlapping goals regarding gender norms.

Some scholars interpret crossdressing as potentially serving as an initial stage in a person's journey toward gender transition. Sansfaçon et al. (2020) argue that individuals who start by wearing clothing associated with the opposite sex particularly in cosplay contexts may discover that this form of expression resonates with their deeper sense of self. Cooper et al. (2020) provide an analytical perspective, noting that male cosplayers often fully embody female characters using wigs, makeup, and silicone body parts, suggesting that such practices go beyond entertainment to become tools for identity exploration. Primo and Freitas (2000) and Muhlisian and Setyono (2023) offer a comparative lens, indicating that while not all crossdressers progress toward gender

transition, for some, cosplay crossdressing facilitates self-recognition and experimentation with gender identity. Collectively, these interpretations highlight that crossdressing can function both as a performative hobby and as a meaningful medium through which individuals explore, negotiate, and sometimes redefine their gender identity.

Scholars suggest that immersive practices like crossdressing can have notable psychological impacts, particularly when reinforced by peer acceptance and supportive social environments. Pradipta and Resen (2020) interpret this through the lens of Social Identity Theory, originally developed by Tajfel and Turner (2004), arguing that individuals construct their identities through affiliations with social groups. Frequent participation in crossdressing or cosplay communities can foster connections with groups embracing gender diversity, providing validation and a sense of belonging, which may influence one's exploration of gender identity. Jost and Sidanius (2006) add a comparative perspective, noting that social reinforcement can strengthen self-understanding and identity formation. However, Chess (2016), Fadhilaatika and Muthoifin (2022), and Erhardt (2007) emphasize that many crossdressers maintain the practice purely as a hobby, distancing themselves from transgender or broader LGBT identities. Online communities, such as Facebook crossdressing groups, often enforce boundaries to preserve the activity's focus on self-expression rather than advocacy, highlighting the nuanced ways social context shapes participation.

Researchers highlight that public controversies involving crossdressing, such as the 2019 Crosshijaber case in Indonesia, illustrate how certain actions can generate backlash and reinforce negative stereotypes (Hidayat, 2020). Butler (2011) interprets such incidents as ethical breaches that contribute to societal stigma, emphasizing the importance of distinguishing performative gender expressions from actions perceived as deceptive. In contrast, Daniel et al. (2023) analyze "Outing" practices, where crossdressers engage in low-profile public activities like park walks, movies, or private gatherings to express gender identity respectfully, preserving dignity while avoiding disruption of social norms. From a theoretical perspective, Butler's queer theory offers an interpretative lens, viewing gender as constructed through repeated behaviors rather than biologically fixed traits. Abrams and Hogg (1998) provide an analytical comparison through Social Identity Theory, showing that identity emerges through group interactions and social belonging. Blau (2017) and Razali & Widaningsih (2021) further add a comparative angle, using Social Exchange Theory to explain how crossdressers adjust behaviors based on social feedback, highlighting the dynamic interplay between self-expression and societal response.

Patricia Hill Collins' theory of oppression offers an interpretative lens to examine how gender non-conforming individuals, including crossdressers, are marginalized by dominant societal norms. Collins (2022) argues that systemic power structures limit agency and reinforce inequality, complementing Butler's view on the liberatory potential of challenging conventional gender roles. In contrast, Islamic perspectives, particularly the concept of *fitrah*, frame gender as a natural disposition from Allah, emphasizing a binary understanding of male and female roles (al-Ġazālī, 2007). This differs from Butler's socially constructed perspective, highlighting tension between religious doctrine and progressive gender theories. Islamic feminist scholars, such as Badran (2013) and Hafez (2011), argue for inclusive interpretations, suggesting that Islam can accommodate flexibility in gender expression and reconcile traditional religious views with contemporary understandings of gender nonconformity (Grech, 2014; Nawawy & Ahmad, 2021).

Crossdressers in the Discourse of Gender Theory and Islamic Nature: A Critical Review

The crossdresser community often critiques public behaviors that they feel misrepresent their intentions and values. Canbul (2022) interprets such criticism as an effort to differentiate genuine gender expression from acts perceived as performative or sensationalized. A notable example is the 2019 Crosshijaber phenomenon in Indonesia. In this case, a man dressed as a

Muslim woman, including hijab and veil, and took photos with female worshippers in a mosque. Hidayat (2020) argues that the public backlash stemmed from the visible biological traits, such as facial hair, which many interpreted as signaling inappropriate or fetishistic motives rather than authentic exploration of gender identity. Butler (2011) emphasizes that such incidents highlight the tension between societal norms and individual expressions of gender, showing how public misinterpretations can reinforce negative stereotypes. Similarly, another 2019 incident involved a Crosshijaber taking a mirror selfie in a women's restroom at a shopping mall, further illustrating the community's concern over behaviors that amplify stigma and misperceptions about crossdressing.

These incidents raised significant concern within the crossdresser community, with most members criticizing such behaviors as misrepresentative of genuine crossdressing. Daniel et al. (2023) interpret this critique as an effort to distinguish respectful self-expression from actions that provoke public discomfort or reinforce negative stereotypes. In contrast, the community practices what is called Outing, in which individuals dress in clothing traditionally associated with another gender but do so in controlled environments that minimize social disruption. Typical locations include parks, movie theaters, or private hotel rooms, where participants can safely and consensually express themselves. From a theoretical standpoint, Queer Theory, as proposed by Judith Butler (Ho & Blackwood, 2022), frames gender as a socially constructed identity enacted through repeated behaviors rather than a fixed biological trait. However, scholars argue that while this framework elucidates performativity, it may underemphasize the psychological and social dimensions of crossdresser behavior, including the negotiation of identity, community norms, and public perception.

Social Identity Theory, developed by Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg, offers an interpretative lens to understand how individuals construct their sense of self including gender through membership in and interaction with social groups. Abrams and Hogg (1998) argue that identity is shaped by affiliation, social comparison, and group norms, which aligns with Butler's concept of gender performativity, where gender is continuously enacted and reinforced through social behaviors. Blau's Social Exchange Theory further complements this view by analyzing how individuals adapt their actions and identities based on feedback and reciprocal relationships within their social environment (Blau, 2017; Razali & Widaningsih, 2021). Together, these perspectives suggest a comparative understanding: while Butler emphasizes performative enactment, Social Identity Theory highlights group-mediated identity formation, and Social Exchange Theory underscores the role of social feedback. Collectively, they provide an analytical framework showing that gender identity is fluid, context-dependent, and negotiated through ongoing social interactions.

Patricia Hill Collins' Theory of Oppression provides an interpretative framework for understanding how marginalized groups, including gender non-conforming individuals, experience systemic discrimination. Collins (2022) emphasizes that oppressive structures restrict autonomy, complementing Butler's argument that resisting traditional gender norms is crucial for liberation. From an Islamic psychological perspective, the concept of fitrah frames gender as a divinely ordained, innate disposition (al-Ġazālī, 2007). This contrasts with Butler's socially constructed and fluid notion of gender, highlighting a tension between religious and contemporary perspectives. Margot Badran (2013) demonstrates that Islamic interpretations of gender vary, ranging from traditional adherence to inclusive approaches that accommodate diverse expressions (Hafez, 2011; Grech, 2014; Nawawy & Ahmad, 2021). Additionally, Tariq Ramadan's ethical framework emphasizes human dignity and fairness in social relations, advocating respect and inclusion for individuals regardless of gender expression (Ramadan, 2009; Morrow, 2009; Soesanto, 2022; Sakinah & Kurniawan, 2023). Collectively, these perspectives offer a comparative and analytical

understanding, revealing points of tension and potential dialogue between Islamic thought and contemporary gender theories.

Despite various theoretical insights, crossdressers in Indonesia face significant social barriers. Suherly and Mandala (2016) note that the country's predominantly Muslim population and prevailing negative attitudes toward the LGBT community contribute to limited public acceptance of crossdressing. Scholars emphasize that crossdressing and transgender identities are fundamentally distinct; however, societal conflation of the two reinforces stigma and discrimination, compounding challenges for crossdressers (Butler, 2004; Collins, 2022). Consequently, many individuals seek safety and validation in online communities, where shared experiences foster social support and understanding (Pradipta & Resen, 2020). In public spaces, crossdressers often engage in carefully managed "Outing" practices, avoiding behaviors that might provoke negative reactions or ethical concerns (Sihombing, 2020; Canbul, 2022). Comparative analyses suggest that these strategies reflect a conscious negotiation between individual self-expression and societal expectations, highlighting the tension between personal identity and normative cultural constraints, and illustrating how crossdressers adapt to maintain both dignity and social acceptability.

CONCLUSION

The crossdresser phenomenon is a compelling topic in the context of gender identity. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method using observation, documentation, and interviews. It explores various supporting theories, such as Judith Butler's Queer Theory and the Social Identity Theory of Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg, while also examining the role of oppression and Islamic perspectives on gender. The findings provide in-depth insights into why individuals become crossdressers and how society perceives them. This research contributes significantly to the understanding of gender identity, equality, and human rights, emphasizing the uniqueness of each individual's experience. It also highlights the importance of ongoing research and open dialogue around gender to foster a more inclusive and equitable society.

Theoretically, this research enriches the discourse on gender identity by integrating Western gender theories, such as Queer Theory and Social Identity Theory, with perspectives from Islamic psychology. It offers a nuanced understanding of crossdressing as a form of identity expression shaped by social interaction and cultural context. Practically, the findings encourage greater social awareness and sensitivity toward crossdressers, promoting respectful treatment and reducing stigma. For policymakers and educators, the study provides a foundation to develop inclusive policies and educational materials that respect diverse gender expressions without conflicting with cultural or religious values. It also serves as a reference for mental health practitioners in providing appropriate support to individuals exploring or expressing non-normative gender identities. Overall, the research advocates for open dialogue and inclusive practices to foster social environments that uphold dignity and equality for all individuals, regardless of gender expression.

Future research is recommended to explore the psychological experiences of crossdressers in greater depth, particularly in relation to mental health, identity development, and societal acceptance. Comparative studies between crossdressers in urban and rural settings could reveal the influence of environment on gender expression. Additionally, longitudinal research could investigate how crossdressers' identities evolve over time and under various social pressures. Further studies may also examine the intersectionality between religion, culture, and gender identity to provide a more comprehensive view of how these factors influence individual choices. Engaging more diverse participants, including voices from within and outside the crossdresser community, would enrich the findings. Finally, collaborative research involving gender theorists,

religious scholars, and psychologists could foster more balanced and inclusive understandings, contributing to both academic discourse and social policy development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the informants who willingly provided valuable data for the writing of this article. We also extend our thanks to An-Nisa: Journal of Gender Studies for the opportunity and trust given, which enabled the publication of this article.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. A. (1998). *Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203135457>
- Afif, M. B. (2019). Islam and transgender (A study of hadith about transgender). *International Journal of Nusantara Islam*, 7(2), 185–189. <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v7i2.6138>
- al-Ġazālī, M. (2007). *The alchemy of happiness* (Repr.). Cosimo Classics.
- Badran, M. (2013). *Feminism in Islam: Secular and religious convergences*. Oneworld Publications. <https://archive.org/details/feminisminislams0000badr>
- Bakhshizadeh, M. (2023). A social psychological critique on Islamic feminism. *Religions*, 14(2), 202. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14020202>
- Beagan, B. L., & Hattie, B. (2015). Religion, spirituality, and LGBTQ identity integration. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 9(2), 92–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2015.1029204>
- Blau, P. (2017). *Exchange and power in social life*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203792643>
- Bouman, W. P., Claes, L., Brewin, N., Crawford, J. R., Millet, N., Fernandez-Aranda, F., & Arcelus, J. (2017). Transgender and anxiety: A comparative study between transgender people and the general population. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 18(1), 16–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2016.1258352>
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203499627>
- Butler, J. (2006). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824979>
- Butler, J. (2011). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. Taylor & Francis. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=UczySq19AIC>
- Butler, J. (2015). *Notes toward a performative theory of assembly*. Harvard University Press. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=tRxUCwAAQBAJ>
- Canbul, O. (2022). The curious case of a cutpurse: Unhistorical queerness through female crossdressing within *The Roaring Girl*. *Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences, Hokkaido University*. <https://doi.org/10.14943/jfhhs.17.23>
- Chess, S. (2016). *Male-to-female crossdressing in early modern English literature* (1st ed.). Taylor and Francis. <https://www.perlego.com/book/1633115/maletofemale-crossdressing-in-early-modern-english-literature-gender-performance-and-queer-relations-pdf>
- Christopherson Puh, K. M., Yiadom, A., Johnson, J., Fernando, F., Yazid, H., & Thiemann, C. (2022). Tackling legal impediments to women's economic empowerment. *IMF Working Papers*, 2022(037), A001. <https://doi.org/10.5089/9798400203640.001.A001>

- Coleman, E., Radix, A. E., Bouman, W. P., Brown, G. R., de Vries, A. L. C., Deutsch, M. B., ... Arcelus, J. (2022). Standards of care for the health of transgender and gender diverse people, version 8. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 23(sup1), S1–S259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2100644>
- Collins, P. H. (2022). *Black feminist thought* (30th anniversary ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003245650>
- Cooper, K., Russell, A., Mandy, W., & Butler, C. (2020). The phenomenology of gender dysphoria in adults: A systematic review and meta-synthesis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 80, 101875. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2020.101875>
- Daniel, J., Muflih, R., Simanjuntak, R. M., Mutmainah, S., Djija, S. A., & Angelia, V. (2023). Pandangan mahasiswa terhadap transgender di media sosial. *Nusantara Journal of Multidisciplinary Science*, 1(5), 1265–1278. <https://jurnal.intekom.id/index.php/njms/article/view/215>
- Endsjø, D. O. (2020). The other way around? How freedom of religion may protect LGBT rights. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 24(10), 1681–1700. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2020.1763961>
- Erhardt, V. (2007). *Head over heels: Wives who stay with cross-dressers and transsexuals* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315808420>
- Fadhilaatika, A., & Muthoifin, M. (2022). The phenomenon of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) and the story of the Shodom in Islamic view. *Urecol Journal. Part H: Social, Art, and Humanities*, 2(1), 11–19. <https://doi.org/10.53017/ujsah.155>
- Fanasca, M. (2019). FtM crossdresser escorts in contemporary Japan: An embodied and sensorial ethnography. *Asian Anthropology*, 18(3), 154–169. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1683478X.2019.1632543>
- Fazry, M. H. (2023). Fenomena crossdressing selebgram dalam membangun eksistensi di media sosial (Studi kasus pada selebgram Palembang). *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Komunikasi*, 2(2), 55–61. <https://jurnal.radenfatah.ac.id/index.php/jsikom/article/view/14447>
- Franklin, K., & Herek, G. M. (2008). Sexual minorities, violence against. In L. Kurtz (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of violence, peace, & conflict* (2nd ed., pp. 1920–1929). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012373985-8.00078-7>
- Galizzi, G., McBride, K., & Siboni, B. (2024). Patriarchy persists: Experiences of barriers to women's career progression in Italian accounting academia. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 99, 102625. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2023.102625>
- Gibbs, J. J., & Goldbach, J. (2015). Religious conflict, sexual identity, and suicidal behaviors among LGBT young adults. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 19(4), 472–488. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2015.1004476>
- Grech, M. (2014). Feminism in Islam? *Implicit Religion*, 17(3), 349–359. <https://doi.org/10.1558/imre.v17i3.349>
- Hafez, S. (2011). Feminism in Islam: Secular and religious convergences by Margot Badran. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 7(2), 114–117. <https://doi.org/10.2979/jmiddeastwomstud.7.2.114>
- Hafni, M., Syahputra, Y., & Erwinda, L. (2023). Homoseksual dan transgender; gender dan wilayah tempat tinggal. *Psychocentrum Review*, 5(1), 42–52. <https://doi.org/10.26539/pcr.511579>

- Hamidah, R., Wulan, T. R., & Mutahir, A. (2023). Representasi kelompok lesbian, gay, biseksual, dan transgender (LGBT) dalam pemberitaan Detik.com. *Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam Gender dan Anak*, 18(1), 59–84. <https://doi.org/10.24090/yinyang.v18i1.7196>
- Hao, S., & Zi, W. (2019). Research on images of cross-dresser from the perspective of androgyny. *Chinese Studies*, 8, 92–102. <https://doi.org/10.4236/chnstd.2019.83008>
- Henningsen, K. (2017). Reclaiming male femininities. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 4(2), 311–316. <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-3815105>
- Hidayat, H. (2020). Crossshijaber antara trend dan gejolak sosial (Analisis perilaku crossshijaber perspektif Al-Qur'an dan psikologi). *Marwah: Jurnal Perempuan, Agama dan Jender*, 19(2), 190. <https://doi.org/10.24014/marwah.v19i2.9614>
- Higgs, T., Proulx, J., Gauthier, A., Garant, E., & James, J. (2021). Sexual sadism and offending. In L. A. Craig & R. M. Bartels (Eds.), *Sexual deviance: Understanding and managing deviant sexual interests and paraphilic disorders* (pp. 189–206). Wiley Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119771401.ch>
- Ho, M. H. S., & Blackwood, E. (2022). Queer Asias: Genders and sexualities across borders and boundaries. *Sexualities*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634607221092153>
- Jost, J. T., & Sidanius, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Political psychology: Key readings*. Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203505984>
- Kurup, A. R., & Underwood, M. K. (2021). Gender diversity in peer relations: Best research practices and marshalling peer influence. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 76, 101328. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2021.101328>
- Lau, J. (2018). Champion of youngmen. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 5(1), 157–159. <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-4291869>
- Lwamba, E., Shisler, S., Ridlehoover, W., Kupfer, M., Tshabalala, N., Nduku, P., Langer, L., Grant, S., Sonnenfeld, A., Anda, D., Eysers, J., & Snilstveit, B. (2022). Strengthening women's empowerment and gender equality in fragile contexts towards peaceful and inclusive societies: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 18(1), e1214. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1214>
- Morgenroth, T., & Ryan, M. K. (2020). The effects of gender trouble: An integrative theoretical framework of the perpetuation and disruption of the gender/sex binary. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 16(6), 1113–1142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691620902442>
- Morrow, J. A. (2009). *Radical reform: Islamic ethics and liberation* by Tariq Ramadan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 372 pages.). *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 26(4), 108–110. <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v26i4.1366>
- Muhlisian, A. A., & Setyono, Z. R. S. (2023). Citra ikemen dalam cosplayer crossdress female to male (F2M) di komunitas cosplay Bandung. *J-Litera: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, Sastra dan Budaya Jepang*, 5(2), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jlitera.2023.5.2.8930>
- Nawawy, N. M., & Ahmad, H. (2021). Akidah transgender Mak Nyah Muslim dan konsep taubat melalui pemikiran Imam al-Ghazali. *Jurnal Al-Sirat*, 19(1), 41–57. <https://ejournal.kuipsas.edu.my/index.php/qwefqwefq/article/view/28>
- Peletz, M. G. (2006). Transgenderism and gender pluralism in Southeast Asia since early modern times. *Current Anthropology*, 47(2), 309–340. <https://doi.org/10.1086/498947>
- Pradipta, A. D., & Resen, P. T. K. (2020). Representasi transgender pada novel *Calabai: Perempuan dalam tubuh lelaki*. *Warta ISKI*, 3(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.25008/wartaiski.v3i02.66>

- Primo, A. F. T., Pereira, V. A., & Freitas, A. (2000). Brazilian crossdresser club. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 3(2), 287–296. <https://doi.org/10.1089/109493100316139>
- Rahmah, H., Amalia, D., & Hamidah, H. (2023). Fenomena LGBT menurut pandangan psikologi, sosial dan agama. *Integrasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan dan Kemasyarakatan*, 1(2), 110. <https://doi.org/10.61590/int.v1i02.87>
- Ramadan, T. (2009). *Radical reform: Islamic ethics and liberation*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.bu.edu/religion/files/2010/10/Radical-Reform-Islam-Ethics-and-Liberation.pdf>
- Razali, G., Ronda, M., & Widaningsih, T. (2021). Moral pluralism in drag queen art (Critical analysis of Axel Honneth's social recognition theory through actor crossdresser). *International Journal of Management Studies and Social Science Research*, 3(1), 257–264. <https://ijmsssr.org/paper/IJMSSSR00334.pdf>
- Sakinah, U., & Kurniawan, R. R. (2023). Transgender dan khuntsa dalam pandangan Islam. *Rizquna: Jurnal Hukum dan Ekonomi Syariah*, 2(1), 12–21. <https://doi.org/10.56480/rizquna.v2i1/899>
- Sansfaçon, A. P., Medico, D., Suerich-Gulick, F., & Temple Newhook, J. (2020). I knew that I wasn't cis, I knew that, but I didn't know exactly: Gender identity development, expression and affirmation in youth who access gender affirming medical care. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 21(3), 307–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2020.1756551>
- Scheibner, G. (2007). *Alice in Genderland: A crossdresser comes of age*. *Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality*, 10. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A228436008/AONE?u=anon~287ea293&sid=googleScholar&xid=458f3ffe>
- Schmidthorst, S. E. (2022). A review of *human trafficking and the feminization of poverty: Structural violence in Cambodia*, by Yuko Shimazaki. *International Journal of Rural Criminology*, 6(2), 304–306. <https://doi.org/10.18061/ijrc.v6i2.8930>
- Schwan, T. (2021). Crossdresser, liebesholler Schmetterling oder Don Giovanni im Embryonalstadium?: Cherubinos erotisches Maskenspiel. In A.-B. Rothstein (Ed.), *GenderCodes – Transkriptionen zwischen Wissen und Geschlecht* (Vol. 20, pp. 37–62). transcript Verlag. <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839450888-003>
- Sedinger, T. (1997). “If sight and shape be true”: The epistemology of crossdressing on the London stage. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48(1), 63–84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2871401>
- Setiawan, A. (2023). Mengapa di Thailand banyak transgender? Ternyata ini alasannya. *VIVA.co.id*. <https://www.viva.co.id/gaya-hidup/gaya/1575351-mengapa-di-thailand-banyak-transgender-ternyata-ini-alasannya>
- Shankar, S. (2022). Women and Islam in Africa. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.497>
- Shimazaki, Y. (2021). *Human trafficking and the feminization of poverty: Structural violence in Cambodia*. Lexington Books.
- Sihombing, S. S. (2020). Human rights juridic review on transgenders as a tool of social control in Indonesia. *Jurnal Scientia Indonesia*, 6(2), 127–156. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jsi.v6i2.36119>
- Sipahutar, E. S., Warsiman, A., Sipahutar, A., & Purba, I. G. (2023). Penyuluhan hukum tentang larangan lesbian, gay, biseksual, dan transgender (LGBT) di Indonesia berdasarkan hukum Islam dan HAM di Sekolah Madrasah Aliyah Negeri, Kecamatan Kabanjahe, Kabupaten Karo.

- Jurnal Derma Pengabdian Dosen Perguruan Tinggi (Jurnal DEPUTI)*, 3(1), 157–160.
<https://doi.org/10.54123/deputi.v3i1.241>
- Soesanto, A. I. (2022). Radical reform: Studi analitis konsep ijtihad Tariq Ramadan. *Al-Manhaj: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial Islam*, 4(1), 51–60.
<https://doi.org/10.37680/almanhaj.v4i1.1545>
- Suherry, M., & Mandala, E. (2016). Lesbian, gay, biseksual, dan transgender (LGBT) dalam perspektif masyarakat dan agama. *ARISTO*, 4(2), 89. <https://doi.org/10.24269/ars.v4i2.191>
- Syafuddin, K. (2020). Cosplay sebagai ajang mendapatkan pengakuan masyarakat (Analisis politik identitas cosplayer di dunia virtual). *Mediasi: Jurnal Kajian dan Terapan Media, Bahasa, Komunikasi*, 1(3), 158–173. <https://doi.org/10.46961/mediasi.v1i3.146>
- Syed, J. (2010). An historical perspective on Islamic modesty and its implications for female employment. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, 29(2), 150–166.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151011024475>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political psychology* (pp. 276–293). Psychology Press.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.4324/9780203505984-16>
- Tazkiyah, I., & Nasrulloh, N. (2023). The relevance of crossdressing laws from the perspective of hadith and MUI leaders of Malang City: Relevansi hukum crossdressing perspektif hadis dan tokoh MUI Kota Malang. *Indonesian Journal of Law and Islamic Law (IJLIL)*, 5(1), 60–71.
<https://doi.org/10.35719/ijlil.v5i1.265>
- Valentine, D., & Kulick, D. (2001). Transsexuality, transvestism, and transgender. In N. J. Smelser & P. B. Baltes (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (pp. 15888–15893). Pergamon. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/04009-2>
- Veale, J. F., Clarke, D. E., & Lomax, T. C. (2010). Biological and psychosocial correlates of adult gender-variant identities: A review. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 48(4), 357–366.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.09.018>
- Wahyuni, S., & Amelia, R. (2023). Edukasi dan skrining tingkat pengetahuan LGBT (lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender) pada siswa SMAN di Masjid Maryam Ranah Padang. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bangsa*, 1(9), 2004–2009.
<https://doi.org/10.59837/jpmba.v1i9.461>
- White, K. J., McCoy, M., & Love, K. (2023). The majors of transgender and gender diverse college students. *International Journal of LGBTQ+ Youth Studies*, 22(1), 75–86.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2023.2268605>
- Wijayanto, D. P., Rohmah, S. N., & Rahim, A. (2023). Tinjauan hukum Islam terhadap dugaan propaganda dan eksistensi lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender di Indonesia. *El-Siyasa: Journal of Constitutional Law*, 1(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.61341/el-siyasa/v1i1.001>
- Winter, S. (2006). Thai transgenders in focus: Demographics, transitions and identities. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 9(1), 15–27.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J485v09n01_03