

## MUSLIM SOCIETY RESPONSE AND INDONESIAN CLERICS' VIEWS TOWARDS TRANSGENDER BEAUTY CONTESTS: BETWEEN BELIEF AND REALITY

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi perspektif masyarakat Muslim di Bandung serta pandangan ulama Indonesia terhadap kontes kecantikan transgender di Jakarta. Kontes ini menimbulkan ketegangan antara nilai-nilai agama Islam yang konservatif dan dinamika sosial modern yang lebih inklusif terhadap identitas gender non-konvensional. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui survei online dan analisis konten ceramah ulama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas responden Muslim menolak kontes kecantikan transgender, dengan alasan bertentangan dengan ajaran agama dan norma sosial yang berlaku. Selain itu, ulama menyatakan bahwa kegiatan ini melanggar prinsip ketuhanan dalam Pancasila, menegaskan peran agama dalam membentuk persepsi masyarakat. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang resistensi budaya terhadap fenomena gender non-konvensional di Indonesia, serta implikasinya terhadap kebijakan publik dan pemahaman sosial dalam konteks mayoritas Muslim

**Kata Kunci:** Kontes Kecantikan Transgender, Perspektif Masyarakat Muslim, Pandangan Ulama, Identitas Gender, Norma Agama

**Judul:** Respon Masyarakat Muslim dan Pandangan Ulama Indonesia terhadap Kontes Kecantikan Transgender: Antara Kepercayaan dan Realitas

**Abstract:** This study explores the perspectives of Muslim communities in Bandung and the views of Indonesian clerics towards transgender beauty contests in Jakarta. These contests raise tensions between conservative Islamic religious values and modern social dynamics that are more inclusive of non-conventional gender identities. Using a qualitative approach, this study collected data through an online survey and content analysis of clerics' sermons. The results show that the majority of Muslim respondents reject transgender beauty contests, citing their religious teachings and prevailing social norms. In addition, clerics stated that these activities violate the principle of divinity in Pancasila, emphasizing the role of religion in shaping public perceptions. This study provides insight into cultural resistance to non-conventional gender phenomena in Indonesia, as well as its implications for public policy and social understanding in a Muslim-majority context.

**Keywords:** Transgender Beauty Contests, Muslim Community Perspectives, Clerics' Views, Gender Identity, Religious Norms



## INTRODUCTION

The exploration of gender and self-identity in the Indonesian context, particularly in relation to the transgender beauty pageant in Jakarta, is an important area of study that intersects with religious perspectives, particularly Islam. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim majority, exhibits a unique blend of traditional values and contemporary social dynamics that influence discourses around gender and sexuality.

The complexity of gender roles in the Islamic context is highlighted by Burke, who discusses women's agency in traditional gender religions. Burke emphasizes the need to avoid a homogenizing narrative that ignores the diverse experiences of women in Islamic societies, suggesting that scholars must consider the complex interplay between religious identity and gender dynamics<sup>1</sup>. This perspective is important when examining how Muslim communities in Jakarta view transgender beauty pageants, as it underscores the need to understand individual and collective identities beyond simple categorizations.

Furthermore, Anwar's work on the gender approach in the Islamic view advocates a reconstruction of the interpretation of the Qur'an that is sensitive to contemporary gender issues. Anwar argues that such a reinterpretation can facilitate a more inclusive understanding of the role of gender in Islam, which is particularly relevant in the context of beauty pageants, as it challenges traditional notions of gender and identity<sup>2</sup>. This is in line with the broader discourse on gender in Indonesia, where Islamic teachings are often re-evaluated to accommodate evolving social norms.

The phenomenon of transgender beauty pageants in Indonesia illustrates a significant change in people's attitudes towards gender diversity and self-expression. This transformation is particularly evident in urban areas such as Jakarta, where such contests are increasingly recognized as a form of self-expression and a basic human right for the transgender community. However, these progressive views often clash with the dominant conservative religious beliefs in Indonesian society, particularly among Muslims, who may view transgender identity with skepticism or outright rejection. This dichotomy creates real social tensions, as the acceptance of transgender identities and expressions contradicts established religious norms that resist change<sup>3</sup>.

Furthermore, the social implications of transgender beauty pageants go beyond individual expression; they become the focal point of broader discussions about human

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<sup>1</sup> Kelsy C. Burke, "Women's Agency in Gender-Traditional Religions: A Review of Four Approaches," *Sociology Compass* 6, no. 2 (2012): 122–133.

<sup>2</sup> Saeful Anwar, M.Irfan Rosfiana, and Sukma Hendrian, "Gender Approach In Islamic Views," *Asian Journal of Social and Humanities* 1, no. 05 (2023): 192–200.

<sup>3</sup> Fuat Edi Kurniawan, "Eksistensi Keluarga Besar Waria Yogyakarta (KEBAYA) Dalam Konsolidasi Organisasi Masyarakat Dan Perjuangan Hak Sipil," *Aristo* 9, no. 2 (2020): 284; Genta Maghvira, Lisa Mardiana, and Syukri Syukri, "Debate on the Plan of Making 'Fiqh Waria': Framing Analysis in Online Media," *Jurnal The Messenger* 12, no. 1 (2020): 52.

rights, social justice, and the role of religion in public life. The existence of this contest can be seen as a challenge to the status quo, which encourages debate about the rights of marginalized communities and the responsibility of society to protect these rights against the background of religious conservatism<sup>4</sup>. This situation underscores the need for a scientific approach to map the responses of various community actors, including religious leaders, to the increasing visibility of transgender individuals and the cultural practices that accompany their self-expression<sup>5</sup>.

Islamic perspectives on gender roles and identities have traditionally been conservative, emphasizing different roles for men and women based on religious teachings. This perspective often contradicts the emerging acceptance of transgender identities, especially in urban environments such as Jakarta, where transgender beauty pageants are becoming known. These contests are a form of self-expression and challenge rigid gender boundaries as defined by Islamic doctrine<sup>6</sup>. Scholars within the Muslim community are increasingly engaged with these issues, trying to reconcile traditional beliefs with contemporary understandings of gender diversity<sup>7</sup>. The interaction between Islamic teachings and the phenomenon of transgender identity creates a multifaceted discourse that requires careful examination.

Research shows that the transgender community in Indonesia, often referred to as "waria," faces many challenges related to social acceptance and access to basic rights. However, most studies have not distinguished the response of the Muslim community from the context of the general public. For example, while some literature discusses the stigma and discrimination faced by transgender individuals, it often ignores the religious dimension that shapes this experience<sup>8</sup>. The intersection between Islamic teachings and contemporary gender expression presents a unique challenge, as traditional views of gender roles can conflict with the acceptance of transgender identity<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Rr. Siti Kurnia Widiastuti, "Research Method for Exploring Discourse on the Rights for Religion for Transgender," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (2017): 105–122.

<sup>5</sup> Kurniawan, "Eksistensi Keluarga Besar Waria Yogyakarta (KEBAYA) Dalam Konsolidasi Organisasi Masyarakat Dan Perjuangan Hak Sipil."

<sup>6</sup> Caroline Essers and Yvonne Benschop, "Muslim Businesswomen Doing Boundary Work: The Negotiation of Islam, Gender and Ethnicity within Entrepreneurial Contexts," *Human Relations* 62, no. 3 (2009): 403–423.

<sup>7</sup> Suud Sarim Karimullah and Siti Rutbatul Aliyah, "Feminist Criticism of Traditional Understanding of Women's Roles in Islam," *An-Nisa Jurnal Kajian Perempuan dan Keislaman* 16, no. 2 (2023): 195–214.

<sup>8</sup> Sari L. Reisner et al., "Comprehensive Transgender Healthcare: The Gender Affirming Clinical and Public Health Model of Fenway Health," *Journal of Urban Health* 92, no. 3 (2015): 584–592; Adi Nugroho et al., "Driving Factors of Retention in Care among HIV-Positive MSM and Transwomen in Indonesia: A Cross-Sectional Study," *PLoS ONE* 13, no. 1 (2018).

<sup>9</sup> Mostafa Salari Rad et al., "Folk Theories of Gender and Anti-Transgender Attitudes: Gender Differences and Policy Preferences," *PLoS ONE* 14, no. 12 (2019); Christopher S. Carpenter, Samuel T. Eppink, and Gilbert Gonzales, "Transgender Status, Gender Identity, and Socioeconomic Outcomes in the United States," *ILR Review* 73, no. 3 (2020): 573–599.

This article offers novelty by highlighting the perspective of Islam in interpreting and responding to transgender beauty pageants in Jakarta through the lens of the Muslim community and the views of scholars. By digging deeper into the perception and attitude of the Muslim community towards this phenomenon, as well as looking at the role of scholars in shaping this view, this study makes a contribution that has not been widely reviewed in the previous literature. This research will enrich the scientific understanding of how religious principles are applied or challenged in modern social life that is increasingly inclusive of non-conventional gender identities. In addition, this article is expected to contribute to the academic debate regarding the compatibility between Islamic values and gender identity rights in Indonesia, so that it can be a reference for future studies that explore similar issues in other Muslim countries.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design with the aim of deeply understanding the perspective of the Muslim community and the views of scholars related to transgender beauty pageants in Jakarta. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the participants' thoughts, experiences, and perceptions holistically and deeply. Qualitative research methods are an approach that is increasingly used in various disciplines, including education, psychology, and accounting. Qualitative research has descriptive characteristics and often uses inductive approach analysis, which allows researchers to understand the meaning and process from the perspective of the research subject<sup>10</sup>. In this context, Fadli explained that qualitative research design can be used as a comprehensive and easy-to-understand method for researchers and academics<sup>11</sup>. In this study, qualitative design is also useful for examining the interpretation of society and scholars on religious values related to gender identity and transgender beauty contests, and to see how these views contribute to shaping the social response of society. Researchers used an interpretive approach in this design to analyze how each participant associated their religious beliefs with opinions toward transgender contests, which would later provide a richer and deeper picture of this phenomenon.

The research subjects consisted of 30 Muslim people living in Bandung, who were selected through a purposive sampling method to ensure a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds that could enrich the research data. The choice of location in Bandung is based on its existence as a city that is a center of cultural and modernity, which allows for a variety of views on complex social issues such as transgender beauty contests. In addition, opinions

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<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

from scholars are taken through video lectures or relevant statements from religious leaders which in general become a reference for the community in understanding and responding to this social phenomenon. Thus, the data obtained includes the perspective of the general public as well as official views that may influence their response. The focus on the Muslim community in Bandung also provides a clear context on the influence of Islamic values in the midst of the modernity of big cities in responding to gender and identity issues.

This study pays attention to the principles of qualitative research ethics, including obtaining participant consent through informed consent and maintaining the confidentiality of the participants' identities. In collecting the data, the researchers used a Google Forms-based survey to obtain responses from participants regarding their views on transgender beauty pageants and their understanding of relevant religious teachings. The use of online surveys through Google Forms also allows participants to provide answers anonymously, so they can share their views more openly without social pressure or privacy concerns. Prior to data collection, the participants were given an explanation of the purpose of the study, the importance of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Ethics in data collection is also considered in the selection of scholar videos, where only public videos that are relevant and in accordance with the research theme are analyzed.

The steps in this study began with data collection through online surveys and the collection of video materials from scholarly statements. Once the data was collected, the analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman qualitative approach, which included the process of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction stage, survey responses and video content are selected and categorized based on the main themes that emerge, such as understanding gender, religious perspectives, and views on transgender contests. After the data is reduced, the presentation of the data is carried out in the form of tables or matrices that facilitate further analysis. The final stage is conclusion drawing where the researcher interprets the findings and relates them to the research question and the theoretical framework used. This analysis aims to understand the general patterns and differences of opinion in the response of the Muslim community and the views of scholars on transgender beauty pageants, so as to produce conclusions that can enrich social studies related to gender and religious issues in Indonesia.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Respondents' Knowledge of Transgender Beauty Pageants in Jakarta**

From the results of a survey given to 30 respondents regarding their knowledge of transgender beauty pageants in Jakarta, there are variations in responses that show a diverse understanding of this phenomenon. A total of 12 respondents (40%) said "Yes", indicating

that they were aware of the transgender beauty pageant. Meanwhile, 17 respondents (56.7%) stated "No", which indicates that most of the respondents are not aware or unfamiliar with the phenomenon of transgender beauty pageants in Jakarta. In addition, 1 respondent answered "Maybe", which indicates uncertainty or ignorance.

The analysis of this data shows that although transgender beauty pageants have attracted media and public attention, there are still disparities in the dissemination of information about the existence and purpose of the pageants, especially among the Muslim community that is the subject of this study. This could be due to media factors that may lack widespread exposure to the event or a tendency for respondents to avoid information related to issues that they consider controversial or not in accordance with religious norms. In addition, respondents who said "Yes" generally have a broader knowledge of social issues, both from mass media and social media, which has the potential to affect the way they access and understand information about the transgender community.

### **Respondents' Opinion of Transgender Beauty Pageants**

Based on survey data related to respondents' opinions regarding transgender beauty contests, the majority of respondents expressed their disapproval of this phenomenon. Out of a total of 30 respondents, as many as 27 people (90%) stated "No Support" for transgender beauty contests. Only one person chose the "Neutral" stance and the other stated "Don't Know." This shows that the majority of respondents have a less supportive view or tend to reject transgender beauty contests, which may reflect the normative view of the Muslim community in Bandung on issues related to non-conventional gender identity.

This analysis shows that there is strong resistance from the public to transgender beauty pageants, which are most likely based on conservative religious and social values. For many Muslim communities, non-binary gender identities and expressions often contradict traditional views of gender influenced by religious teachings. This rejection can also show the influence of the views of scholars or religious figures who are often used as a reference in assessing social phenomena that are considered sensitive or controversial. The neutral attitude shown by only one respondent shows that there is little openness in responding to this issue, although the number is very small. Meanwhile, the choice of "Don't Know" which was also chosen by only one respondent indicates ignorance or confusion in assessing the phenomenon of transgender beauty contests. This can happen due to the lack of information or unclarity about the position of religion in responding to this issue in the community.

Overall, the results of this survey show that Muslims in Bandung tend to reject transgender beauty contests. This strong rejection reflects religious values and norms that are still dominant among society, which are likely influenced by the views of scholars and conservative social norms in responding to gender and identity issues.

## **Respondents' Reasons for Responding to Transgender Beauty Pageants**

From the analysis of respondents' responses regarding their reasons for not supporting transgender beauty contests, it can be seen that the majority of respondents voiced their disapproval based on strong reasons related to religious values, social norms, and dominant cultural views in society. The most common reason given by respondents is that transgender beauty pageants are considered a form of deviation from the nature or nature that has been ordained by God. Many respondents argued that transgender and the pageants involving them are contrary to the teachings of Islam, which explicitly prohibits gender change and supports the predetermined concept of male and female nature from birth.

Some respondents highlighted that transgender activities, including beauty pageants, are considered a violation of the norms and ethics that apply in Indonesian society, which is majority Muslim. They view that this kind of activity interferes with cultural and social norms, especially in the context of a society that still upholds religious values. In addition, some respondents emphasized that this kind of event is inappropriate to be held in a country that has moral norms and values that oppose LGBTQ+, arguing that the activity violates Pancasila, especially the first precept on "*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*."

A small percentage of respondents also highlighted the perceived negative social impact of the event. They are concerned that transgender beauty pageants could encourage acceptance or normalization of LGBTQ+ identity among the wider community, which they see as something that should be avoided. Some respondents even attributed this phenomenon to the potential long-term impact on social norms and influence on the younger generation, considering it a form of deviation that could cause moral problems in society.

Although most respondents expressed strong disapproval, there were also a few voices who were more moderate or did not feel disturbed as long as the event did not harm others. These respondents tend to view individual decisions, including transgender, as personal choices that should not be a problem for others, as long as they do not negatively impact society. This suggests that there is little diversity in attitudes, although very small compared to the majority who refuse.

Overall, this response reflects the strong resistance of the Muslim community in Bandung to events involving the transgender community, which is seen as a threat to religious values and prevailing social norms. This discussion also shows how religious views, cultural values, and societal norms shape people's attitudes towards LGBTQ+ issues in Indonesia, especially related to transgender beauty contests.

## **Related to Islamic Religious Values**

Based on the results of a survey related to respondents' views on whether transgender beauty pageants are contrary to Islamic religious values, the majority of respondents, namely

29 out of 30 people (96.7%), stated that the contest is "very contradictory" to the teachings of Islam. The only respondents who did not give the same answer were those who answered "I don't know." These results show a strong and consistent perception among the Muslim community that transgender beauty pageants are considered contrary to Islamic values and principles.

This majority view reflects the influence of religious teachings in shaping public opinion on issues related to non-conventional gender identity. In Islamic teachings, the concept of fitrah or human nature as men and women is an important part of religious teachings, which is considered not to be changed or violated. Therefore, beauty pageants involving transgender participants are often considered a violation of this provision, as they are considered to blur predetermined boundaries. Respondents who stated that this pageant was contrary to Islam generally believed that transgender beauty pageants not only violated human nature, but also went against the principles of purity and morality upheld in religion.

In addition, these results show that there is a strong view among the Muslim community regarding the importance of maintaining religious norms in daily life. Transgender beauty pageants, which involve gender expression outside the traditional norm, are considered a threat to the religious values that serve as a guideline for life. Respondents who stated that they were "very conflicted" may feel that the existence of such events has the potential to erode people's understanding of the teachings of the right and correct religion, thereby causing unrest in the Muslim community.

Overall, these results underscore how powerful the influence of religion is in shaping Muslim attitudes towards gender and identity issues. The near-unanimous rejection of transgender beauty pageants suggests that for many, religion is a very important factor in determining whether or not a social phenomenon is acceptable in a society based on Islamic values.

### **Reasons for Disapproval**

From the results of the survey that collected respondents' reasons for their disapproval of transgender beauty contests, it was revealed that most respondents were worried that this kind of activity could normalize behavior that they see as contrary to the teachings of Islam and prevailing social values. Many respondents argued that the increasing normalcy of transgender people in society could erode religious values that they consider sacred, and it is feared that it will have a negative impact, especially for the younger generation. These concerns underscore the view that activities such as transgender beauty pageants have the potential to change people's perception of gender issues, and in the long run, can affect their attitudes towards practices that are considered incompatible with human nature according to Islamic teachings.



Respondents also highlighted the potential for negative influences on children and adolescents, who may be inspired or encouraged to imitate or support the transgender phenomenon if it is considered normal in society. Some respondents expressed concern that children who saw transgender beauty pageants could be exposed to ideas about gender change that contradict their religious and cultural teachings. With such events, they fear that LGBTQ+ will be more widely accepted, which is seen as a threat to family values and religious beliefs.

In addition, some respondents stated that transgender beauty pageants can reinforce negative stereotypes about gender and beauty, as well as create unrealistic expectations. This is considered to be able to influence people's views on gender roles and existing norms, which they believe can adversely affect social stability and public morality. They consider that allowing or supporting such activities is the same as justifying actions that they believe violate religious rules and go against long-accepted norms in society.

Overall, these responses indicate a deep concern among the Muslim community about the social impact of transgender beauty pageants. Many respondents see such contests as a threat to the social and religious order they profess, and worry that their existence could exacerbate moral shifts in society. This view underscores the importance of religion and traditional values in shaping their attitudes towards phenomena related to non-conventional gender identity, where they feel that activities such as transgender beauty pageants will only reinforce negative views of the LGBTQ+ community in Indonesia.

### **Attitudes that Muslims Should Take**

Based on a survey on the attitude that Muslims should take towards transgender beauty pageants, the majority of respondents revealed that they chose to "voice their disapproval" of such events. A total of 26 out of 30 respondents (87%) stated that they would voice their disagreement, while some chose to ignore or feel ignorant. This attitude shows that there is a collective agreement among the Muslim community that transgender beauty pageants are considered incompatible with their values, and they feel the need to declare such rejection publicly as a form of maintaining religious principles and social values that they believe in.

This attitude of voicing disagreement reflects the assumption that silence on this issue can be considered a form of agreement or normalization, which is actually worried by many respondents. According to them, by being vocal and expressing rejection openly, the Muslim community can make a positive contribution in maintaining morals and norms that they consider to be in line with Islamic teachings. They feel that voicing disagreement is not only an expression of opinion, but also a form of active role in preventing things that they see as deviating from religious teachings so that they do not spread further in society.

On the other hand, a small percentage of respondents chose to "ignore" or "don't know" in responding to this contest, suggesting that there is a small percentage of the public

who may feel that a more moderate or passive attitude can reduce social tensions or even be considered wiser in dealing with this controversial issue. They may be of the view that focusing on the internal values of religion, without being directly involved in voicing rejection, is sufficient in defending the principles they believe in.

Overall, the results of this survey indicate that the Muslim community tends to consider it important to be active in maintaining values that are in accordance with the teachings of Islam. For many respondents, voicing disagreement is a form of moral responsibility to prevent deviations in religious values in society.

### **Approval Against Government Ban on Transgender Beauty Pageants**

The survey results showed that most respondents expressed their approval if the government banned the holding of transgender beauty pageants in Indonesia. Of the 30 respondents, the majority answered "Strongly agree" and "Agree," while only a few chose the "Neutral" stance. This attitude shows that many Muslim communities feel the need for government regulation in regulating activities that they consider contrary to local religious and cultural values. For those who say "Strongly agree" or "Agree," the ban is seen as a preventive measure to protect social norms and religious values that have long been upheld in Indonesia. With the ban, they hope that the negative impact that may arise from the transgender phenomenon on society, especially the younger generation, can be minimized.

Meanwhile, some respondents who are "Neutral" may reflect the view that a full ban from the government is not necessarily an effective solution. They may think that this problem can also be addressed through other approaches, such as education and dialogue involving various elements of society. This neutral stance can arise from the awareness that overly strict regulations can cause social conflict or undermine the principles of individual freedom, which are also guaranteed in the Indonesian constitution. For neutral respondents, the ban may be considered too harsh a response, requiring a more flexible approach to addressing transgender issues in Indonesia.

Overall, however, the preference for bans indicates that there is great concern from the Muslim community about the social impact of transgender beauty pageants. They feel that this contest can bring influence that is not in accordance with the principles of Indonesian religion and culture, and threaten moral stability in society. This attitude is in line with the desire to maintain Indonesia as a Muslim-majority country with strong religious norms. This view affirms the hope that the government will play an active role in safeguarding these values by regulating activities that are considered inconsistent with social and religious norms.

### **Views of Indonesian Ulema**

K.H. Kholil Nafis, Chairman of the MUI for Da'wah, gave his view that transgender beauty contests are contrary to Islamic religious values and the foundation of Pancasila. According to K.H. Kholil, transgender, namely the act of changing gender or behaving like

the opposite sex, is not justified in Islam because it is considered to violate the nature and gender identity that has been determined. In the context of Islamic law, both men who behave femininely and women who behave masculine are acts that are not in accordance with religious teachings. K.H. Kholil also stated that Islamic teachings recognize only two genders, namely men and women. This is based on religious texts that show that gender identity is biologically determined, and gender change is not in accordance with sharia principles<sup>12</sup>.

In addition to the religious aspect, he mentioned that the organization of transgender beauty contests is also contrary to the values of Pancasila, especially the first precept, *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*, which requires Indonesian people to adhere to religious norms. In his interview, K.H. Kholil said that transgender behavior could affect the nation's personality and cause concern for the younger generation. Therefore, he appreciated the steps taken by the authorities who had investigated this case because it was held without permission and violated the provisions of the law<sup>13</sup>.

Furthermore, K.H. Kholil urged the public to pay more attention to the family, especially in educating children so that they understand the importance of maintaining gender identity in accordance with their respective natures. He invited the community not only to be good individuals, but also to improve the surrounding environment by voicing disapproval of behavior that is considered deviant. In this case, the public is asked to report any actions that violate religious norms to the authorities to maintain social order and the essence of human identity. For him, a firm stance on transgender issues is important to maintain the conduciveness of Indonesian society based on religion and eastern values.

### **Research Findings**

The main findings in this study show that transgender beauty pageants in Jakarta received various negative responses from the Muslim community and scholars. The majority view states that this activity is considered contrary to Islamic religious values and social norms that apply in Indonesia. The rejection arises mainly related to gender identity that is not in accordance with the nature determined by religion, as well as concerns about its impact on the younger generation in Muslim society.

The next findings, in order from most important to least important, highlight that community groups that reject the activity are largely based on religious reasons, considering it a violation of Islamic norms and Pancasila. In addition, there are concerns that this kind of activity will have a negative influence on people's perception of gender norms and can normalize transgender behavior. Some participants also considered the event to disturb social order and cause cultural conflicts.

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<sup>12</sup> BeritaSatu, "MUI Kecam Kontes Kecantikan Transgender di Jakarta" Youtube Video, 6.56, posted on August 7, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCPTj2lpJq0&t=17s>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

These findings are in line with social norm theory and literature that highlights that activities that are considered contrary to religious and cultural values can cause resistance in society. In addition, these findings reinforce previous literature that states that religious norms are often the main basis for assessing the suitability or non-conformity of a public activity in Indonesia. Comparisons with other contexts show that this view tends to be stronger in countries with large Muslim populations.

The implications of this study are important for policymakers to consider regulations related to controversial public activities in society. In addition, the government needs to take a better education-based and socialization-based approach related to gender and identity issues, to prevent wider value conflicts and maintain social harmony.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion of this study goes back to its original purpose, which is to explore the Muslim community's view of transgender beauty pageants in Jakarta and see the response of scholars to the phenomenon. Based on the results obtained, the majority of respondents, including prominent scholars, expressed their disapproval of the contest, especially because it was considered contrary to Islamic religious values and social norms. The main findings show that there are concerns about the impact of the contest on the younger generation, especially in terms of the perception of gender norms, which are seen as affecting the cultural and religious order of society. These results underscore the importance of the role of religion as a basis for assessing the suitability of public activities in Indonesian Muslim society and show cultural resistance to contests that are considered to shift traditional gender norms.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in future research. First, this research focuses on the viewpoint of the Muslim community in Jakarta, so it cannot represent the views of the wider community in Indonesia or non-Muslim groups. Second, data collection is limited to survey and interview methods, which can have subjective bias in respondents' interpretations. Therefore, it is recommended that further research expand the study area to include various social and cultural groups and consider more diverse qualitative and quantitative research methods. This is important so that the understanding of public perceptions related to transgender issues and social norms in Indonesia is more comprehensive and can contribute more widely in formulating inclusive and effective social policies in maintaining the harmony of religious and cultural values.

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