

## Risk and protective factors influencing sexual orientation among Islamic boarding school students in Jember, Indonesia

Ibnu Mubarak,<sup>1</sup> Erwin Nur Rif'ah,<sup>1</sup> Dewi Rokhmah<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Health Promotion and Behaviour Science, Faculty of Public Health, University of Jember, Indonesia

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### \*Corresponding author:

dewirokhmah@unej.ac.id

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The sexual orientation of students is influenced by various factors. Islamic boarding school is one of the places where risky sexual orientation can occur among students. This behaviour must be addressed so that it does not cause more severe health impacts.

**Objective:** This study aims to explore the risk and protective factors of sexual orientation from the experiences of students at Islamic Boarding School in Jember Indonesia.

**Methods:** This study was a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach. There were 16 informants consisting of key informants, main informants, and additional informants. The research informants were selected using the snowball sampling techniques. In-depth interviews were conducted to study the risk and protective factors of sexual orientation among Islamic Boarding School students in Jember, Indonesia. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis.

**Results:** The study showed that, in terms of risk factors, all informants had been victims of bullying because of a negative social, which made the informants feel depressed. All informants experienced mental trauma due to stigma and discrimination which caused the informants to feel depressed. The presence of protective factors was considered beneficial for individuals because this condition transformed negative emotional perceptions into positive perceptions, thereby strengthening personal development and resilience. The influence of religion and internal factors have a strong influence on making individuals have heterosexual desires and helping them recover from the bad effects experienced during periods of homosexual behaviour.

**Conclusion:** Factors that influence students' sexual orientation towards homosexuality include discrimination, weak individual resilience, and oppression. Based on this, assistance is needed to help students with homosexual orientation maintain a stable condition.

## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of sexual attraction, otherwise termed sexual orientation, has become a global problem. This phenomenon is influenced by mass media, both electronic and print, which report the legalisation of various sexual orientations worldwide. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that interactions with individuals of the same sex can influence an individual's sexual orientation, particularly within the context of prisons and other correctional institutions, where instances of harassment have been observed to have a detrimental effect on sexually deviant behaviour. Within educational settings, such as boarding schools, this dynamic can also manifest, including within Islamic boarding schools where the same gender interactions is present in both residences and academic settings.<sup>1</sup>

The study entitled "Islamic Boarding School and Homosexuality of Santri (Study on Old Salafiyyah and Khalafiyyah Islamic Boarding School in East Java Santris' City)" shows that deviant sexual behaviour, if not minimised, can lead to changes in sexual orientation within the *pesantren*

environment. Although the behaviour is relatively mild in practice, it does not lead to serious feelings of love. These behaviours include; *mojok* (having a nice chat together), *kelon* (cuddling), *adik-adikan* (considering someone as a brother) and *kobel* (poking the cheek).<sup>2</sup>

Risk factors are defined as circumstances that create conditions where an individual fails to adapt to the environment.<sup>3</sup> If an individual is increasingly susceptible to stress, there is a greater likelihood that they will produce nonadaptive behavioural responses, thereby trapping them in a prolonged state of stress.<sup>3</sup> Many things are classified as risk factors that may weaken the development of individuals' resilience, including discrimination, past trauma, or other stress-related experiences.<sup>1</sup> Adolescents tend to develop good character if they form friendships with positive influences; however, friendships with individuals exhibiting negative behaviour may lead to a damaged adolescent character.<sup>4</sup>

Sexual orientation behaviour has an adverse impact on health due to risky sexual behaviour, such as in the form of anal and oral sex, which is associated with one of the infectious diseases, namely HIV/AIDS.<sup>5</sup> In 2016 there were 153,771 individuals with various sexual orientations living with HIV/ AIDS.<sup>5</sup> The percentage of HIV cases found in July - September 2020 linked to sexual orientation risk factors was 25.2%.<sup>6</sup> Based on a report from Laskar NGO, the number of People Living With HIV/ AIDS (PLWHA) in Jember Regency has consistently increased every year from 2004 to 2020. It is reported that the cumulative number of PLWHA in 2020, both living and deceased, was 5,538 people. Among them, 2,536 women and 2,604 men were still alive, while 176 women and 222 men had died.<sup>7</sup>

The problems experienced by individuals with diverse sexual orientations also impact their mental and physical health because of the discrimination and social stigma they experience while living in society. Stigmatisation caused by the environment makes them reluctant to accept themselves so they will cover up their sexual orientation.<sup>8</sup> Individuals with diverse sexual orientations often do not feel comfortable in asking others for help, sometimes they do not even disclose their situation to their own family.<sup>9</sup> As a result, many experience depression, which leads to various forms of negative thoughts such as suicidal ideation, illegal drug use, and hiding or escaping from problems, while continuing to feel chronic depression.<sup>5</sup>

Based on interviews with the heads of Islamic Boarding Schools in Jember, it was concluded that the phenomenon of diverse sexual orientation has various characteristics. The practice of sexual orientation carried out at Islamic Boarding Schools shows the behaviour of senior students who are looking for new students to become their younger siblings, they will carry out cottage activities together. The outlet for the sexual desires of these siblings includes kissing, *kelon*, leading to other sexual expressions such as oral sex. There are also behaviours among students who are attracted to the same sex by looking for other students as one of the victims to vent their sexual desires. Based on a preliminary study conducted by researchers in November 2020, sexual orientation behaviours among students are relatively concealed so that it rarely gets public attention. Individuals with diverse sexual orientations tend to cover up their sexually deviant behaviour because they are afraid of bad assumptions and all forms of discrimination, ridicule, insults or bullying.

Students expressing diverse sexual orientations often have feelings of blaming themselves and feeling humiliated for the various actions they have done. They feel ashamed in front of Allah, their caregivers, their families, and those closest to them because of the problem of sexual deviation. These individuals often show that they are sorry and disappointed about their own experiences with their sexual orientation, so they have a desire to change into normal men who identify as heterosexual. This condition is included in the protective factors that can encourage individuals to rise from adversity. The presence of protective factors is considered beneficial because it can change negative perceptions into positive ones, thereby strengthening the development of resilience.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the risk and protective factors of sexual orientation from the experiences of students at Islamic Boarding Schools in Jember, Indonesia

## METHODS

This research is qualitative and uses a phenomenological approach. It was conducted at two Islamic boarding schools in Jember Regency, Indonesia. The aim was to identify the risks and protective factors for students with diverse sexual orientations in Islamic boarding schools. The study was carried out from August 2021 to January 2022. Three categories of people gave information in this study: key informants, main informants, and additional informants. The key informants are the heads of the Islamic Boarding School, totalling two individuals. Five students with diverse sexual orientations were selected as the main informants. The additional informants consisted of nine people, including five friends, three victims of sexual orientation-related behaviour, and one family member of one of the main informants. In total, 16 people were involved in this study. The informants were selected using the 'snowball technique'. They were chosen based on the problems we wanted to study, starting with a small group and adding more until we had enough participants to address each problem.<sup>10</sup> The criteria for selecting the main and additional informants of this study were as follows :

Table 1. Criteria the main and additional informants

No.	Main informants	Additional informants
1.	Men who have sexual interest in people of the same sex	1. Victims are students who have been the target of sexual abuse by diverse sexual orientation students, such as being hugged/kissed/touched in sensitive parts or having sexual relations with the main informants
2.	Have sexual involvement with one or more people of the same sex	2. Family who has a sibling relationship with the main informants
3.	Identify themselves as having a diverse sexual orientation	3. Friends are someone with whom the main informant discusses their problems.
4.	Have a desire to be heterosexual	4. Willing to be a research informant and conduct an in-depth interview

The data collection technique was carried out through in-depth interviews using an interview guide. The interview technique used in this study was a semi-structured interview with questions related to both risk and protective factors. In addition to interviews, researchers also carried out documentation and observations to find things that had not been revealed in the interviews and to provide supporting and supplementary information.

Data saturation is the point of exhaustion of information redundancy where the data collected is saturated and there is no new information that can be used as research findings. In other words, adequate data collection has been achieved. Data saturation in this research is determined as follows: 1. Informant data saturation is achieved when all types of informant characteristics have been represented in the study; 2. Theoretical saturation of the construct is achieved when the data that has been collected fully covers all constructs in the research theoretical framework.

Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The first stage was collecting data in the field during interviews or observing gestures, facial expressions, and the environment. The responses from the informants were analysed to obtain credible data. Furthermore, the data obtained was reduced by testing the data associated with the research focus. Then, the data were summarised and put into a classification according to the research focus, while unrelated data were eliminated. The data were presented and summarised in accessible language and data verification was carried out to draw conclusions. The data validity was measured by researchers using data triangulation techniques so that data acquisition was more consistent. To ensure the validity of the data collected, participant checking was also carried out by conveying the results

of the interview transcript to the informant to get feedback from the informant on whether the data that has been collected was in accordance with what they conveyed and allowing input from the informant if the data was felt to be insufficient.

### Ethical statement

This research passed the ethical test on August 13, 2021, by the Institute Health Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Public Health, Jember University with number: 82/KEPK/FKM-UNEJ/VII/2021.

### RESULTS

The informants in this study consisted of 16 individuals, including 2 key informants, 5 main informants, and 9 additional informants, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of informants

Informant ID	Characteristics
<i>Key informants</i>	
KI 1	Male, 20 years old, Head of Islamic Boarding School X Jember Regency
KI 2	Male, 20 years old, Head of Islamic Boarding School Y Jember Regency
<i>Main informants</i>	
MI 1	Male, 20 years old, bachelor's degree in education, has liked boy since junior high school and received bullying because he played with girls
MI 2	Male, 23 years old, bachelor's degree in education, liked men since elementary school and was a victim of sexual harassment by blowjob (oral sex)
MI 3	Male, 22 years old, bachelor's degree in education, likes men since entering Islamic boarding school because he has limited interactions with the opposite sex and has not been able to regulate his sexual desires
MI 4	Male, 22 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, likes men since senior high school and feels comfortable with men who are kind and caring
MI 5	Male, 21 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, likes men since entering Islamic boarding school because he feels comfortable with good and caring boys
<i>Additional informants</i>	
AI 1	Male, 23 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, as a friend to confide in MI 1
AI 2	Male, 20 years old, bachelor's degree in education, as a friend to confide in MI 2
AI 3	Male, 20 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, as a friend to confide in MI 3
AI 4	Male, 23 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, as a friend to confide in MI 4
AI 5	Male, 21 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, as a friend to confide in MI 5
AI 6	Male, 22 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, a victim of MI 1
AI 7	Male, 22 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, a victim of MI 2
AI 8	Male, 21 years old, bachelor's degree in humanities, a victim of MI 3
AI 9	Female, 41 years old, housewife, mother of MI 5

Thematic Content Analysis produces 2 main themes: (1) Risk Factors Affecting Students with Diverse Sexual Orientations, (2) Protective Factors Affecting Students with Diverse Sexual Orientations with the following details:

Table 3. Themes and sub-themes produced from Data Analysis

Theme	Sub-themes
Risk Factors Affecting Students with Diverse Sexual Orientations	1. Sexual Orientation Causing Factors 2. Victims of Bullying 3. Mental Trauma Due to Stigma Discrimination
Protective Factors Affecting Students with Diverse Sexual Orientations	1. Individual Attributes 2. Characteristics of Confessing Friends 3. Perception of Transmission of HIV and AIDS 4. Religious Factors

### Students with Diverse Sexual Orientations

The following are risk factors that affect the resilience of students with diverse sexual orientations in Islamic boarding schools, namely:

#### ***Sexual orientation-causing factors***

Based on the results of in-depth interviews, it shows that all the main informants have different factors, as stated by the informants as follows:

*"...In the past, I used to hang out with girls a lot. In the past, I was even considered to be a jerk like that, bro. I am a sissy, so I used to hang out with girls and rarely meet or hang out with men..."* (MI 1, 22 years old)

Based on the quote above, MI 1 said that the factor that caused him to have a same-sex orientation was his tendency to hang out with women, which made MI 1 feel like he was a woman himself. The following is an excerpt from an in-depth interview with MI 2:

*"So, it started when I was little, I became a victim of a pedophile with my neighbour, a man bro. I also once, when I was pretending to sleep, suddenly my older brother was sleeping with me naked and rubbing his genitals to me bro and I was still small bro. Once my older brother asked me to do that, so I was also aware and without thinking about it, I just wanted it bro. because I felt good like that, bro. so what do you mean by that, bro, I was a kid when I became a sexual victim with men at first and that was the initial trigger for me liking men..."* (MI 2, 23 years old)

Based on the quote above, MI 2 said the factor that caused him to become homosexual was that the informant had been a victim of sexual harassment from men. Another statement by the informants is as follow:

*"...I think it is because I do not have a father figure, bro. I am far from my parents and have lived with my grandmother since I was a kid. My parents are there but I live with my grandmother, bro..."* (MI 4, 22 years old)

Based on the quote above, MI 4 said the factor that caused him to become homosexual was that his family upbringing was not good because he was far from his parents so he did not feel the role of his father in him.

#### ***Victims of bullying***

Based on in-depth interviews with 5 main informants, it was found that all the informants admitted that they had been victims of bullying. The following is an excerpt from the results of an in-depth interview with MI 2:

*"There must be bro, some who berate me or bully me who say I'm sexual orientation, now this can also make me feel down because my image as a man doesn't seem like it normal bro."* (MI 2, 23 years old)

The quote above was conveyed by IU 2 who claimed to have experienced verbal violence from the surrounding environment which was against sexual orientation. The act of bullying made him feel inferior, insecure, and less communicative when meeting men.

#### ***Mental trauma due to stigma discrimination***

The results showed that all the informants admitted to having experienced mental trauma due to stigma and discrimination which caused the informants to feel depressed. The following is an excerpt from the results of an in-depth interview with MI 1:

*"The impact that I felt, finally affected my daily life, like I was getting worse, more quiet, and when every time there was a problem that suppressed my mind, it finally ran to that action, like I seek pleasure from myself so I can calm down, in what way? By masturbating or even looking for other victims like that. So, my activities have been neglected and even not as active as they used to be, even though I have had a lot of positive activities in the end, I couldn't even do it because I was down earlier, depressed to the point where I almost killed myself too."* (MI 1, 22 years old)

Due to limited communication, informants never date women because they are afraid of hurting women's feelings. This causes the informant to choose to approach men. This bad habit makes sexual desires less controllable, resulting in negative behaviour within oneself as conveyed

by MI 1. The informant will masturbate and do other bad acts, resulting in a drastic change of heart, blaming himself, and not focusing on worship.

### **Protective factors affecting students with diverse sexual orientation**

The following are some of the protective factors that affect the sexual orientation of students in Islamic boarding schools, namely:

#### **Individual attributes**

The results showed that out of the five main informants, two (MI 1 and MI 4) have a personality that tended to be closed. The following is an excerpt from an in-depth interview with the main informants:

*"It's closed bro, I'm also ashamed if I have an abnormal sexual disorder, I'd rather just take care of their feelings, but what can I do because of that problem, finally some people know my behaviour bro. I also rarely tell a lot of people, usually I just keep quiet as long as I can. I'll just talk to people I know closely who are used to it...."* (MI 4, 22 years old).

The biggest obstacle for people with diverse sexual orientations in terms of resilience comes from individuals who are closed off to friends and their surrounding environment, and even experience rejection from society, which leads them to feel afraid, shunned, and ostracised. Self-motivation is a strengthening factor in recovering to being heterosexual, as in the quote below:

*"But yes, I tried my best to avoid sexual orientation sexual behaviour. In what way? Yes, I have to be really strong when the lust arises, right usually I often masturbate in the bathroom. So that I don't masturbate, I have to hurry out if I'm in the bathroom, try not to stay in the bathroom for long because If you're in the bathroom for a long time, you'll end up wanting to masturbate. When at night I see my friend's genitals, I feel like I want to hold on to it bro, but I really have to endure it as hard as I can."* (MI 1, 22 years old)

#### **Characteristics of confessing friends**

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with 5 main informants, all the informants admitted that they had supportive friends to confide in. The following is an excerpt from an in-depth interview with MI 1:

*"Usually, they are often given advice, suggestions, told to repent, told to increase activities so that they can forget the desires or passions that arise. There are so many things that I got from my friends, I was given good advice, it's an invitation to be better like that, for example, what kind of help I need, he also helps, bro, basically anything, I have to communicate with my friend from here there will be mutual trust, won't it."* (MI 1, 22 years old)

#### **Perception of transmission of HIV/AIDS**

The results showed that all of the informants claimed to have a desire to stop having risky relationships due to the impact of the risk of HIV and AIDS transmission. The following is an excerpt from an in-depth interview with MI 2:

*"It could be yes, if I hear the news that HIV is really dangerous, it makes me feel afraid to have sexual relations again, bro. This can also change my mindset, if this sexual relationship can make the risk of contracting various dangerous venereal diseases too bro. I am so scared like I am infected with HIV, how will people think about me bro."* (MI 2, 23 years old)

#### **Religious factors**

Based on in-depth interviews with informants, it was found that religious factors supported them not to engage in sexual deviant behaviour. The following is an excerpt from an in-depth interview with MI 4:

*"There is a feeling of regret and guilt towards myself when I hear the study of the scriptures that teach goodness while I still violate the commandment of kindness by committing same-sex sexual perversions..."* (MI 4, 22 years old)

This made the main informant regret, be aware of religious rules, and obey religious teachings.

## DISCUSSION

### **Risk factors affecting students with diverse sexual orientation**

#### ***Sexual orientation causing factors***

Changes in sexual orientation can make people feel less resilient. Things that can cause a person to change their sexual orientation include being raised in an inappropriate way, having been a victim of sexual abuse or trauma, not feeling loved by their parents, losing a father figure, and being influenced by the people around them.<sup>11</sup>

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that the factors causing sexual orientation include; 1) informants tend to feel comfortable with good and caring men, causing feelings of love, 2) informants have been victims of sexual harassment from men, 3) family parenting is not good because they are far from their parents so they don't feel the role of the father in himself, 4) tends to hang out with women so that informants feel they are women, 5) there are boarding school regulations that limit the interaction of informants with the opposite sex, and 6) have not been able to regulate the sexual desires that are developing at their age. Individuals who have experienced risk factors that affect their sexual orientation will need extraordinary efforts to return to being heterosexual, live their usual circumstances and carry out life functions well.<sup>3</sup> In this case, resilience is an individual's effort not to do sexually deviant things that can cause health problems and avoid bad effects.

#### ***Victims of bullying***

All informants had been victims of bullying because the social environment tends to be negative, making them feel pressured. The communication pattern between the family and the victim needs to be maintained properly so that the victim does not feel guilty about being homosexual or having another sexual orientation.<sup>12</sup>

The environment around MI 2 often discusses incidents of sexual harassment and makes it a subject of ridicule so that MI 2 feels hurt and uncomfortable with the environment. Bullying carried out by the environment around MI 2 is a risk factor that can weaken the process of people with diverse sexual orientations becoming resilient individuals. This is because bullying is one of the actions that suppresses stress.<sup>13</sup> In this case resilience is an individual's effort not to do sexually deviant things that can cause health problems and avoid the bad effects of sexually deviant behaviour such as depression which has serious implications in the future.

#### ***Mental trauma due to stigma and discrimination***

The problems experienced by people with diverse sexual orientations have an impact on their mental and physical health because they experience discrimination and social stigma while living in society.<sup>8</sup> The depressed condition of the informant made the informant do negative things such as blaming himself, masturbating, looking for other victims, having suicidal ideation, and even attempting suicide. This is in line with other research that the form of mental trauma due to acts of discrimination will cause individuals to experience depression and give rise to various forms of negative thoughts such as; wanting to commit suicide, use illegal drugs and hide or run from problems that occur by continuing to feel chronic depression.<sup>5</sup>

Individuals with diverse sexual orientations with high resilience have the capacity to adapt and regulate behaviour that comes out within themselves to continue to develop positively into personal strengths that protect them from the effects they live as sexual orientation such as self-worth, guilt and sin, depression, frustration, suicidal ideation even to suicide and the desire to withdraw from the environment.<sup>14</sup> The existence of bullying and mental trauma due to stigma and discrimination are the most influential risk factors in making individuals fail to have heterosexual desires and rise from the bad effects experienced while being homosexual.

### **Protective factors affecting students with diverse sexual orientation**

Protective factors are conditions that lead individuals to succeed in resilience. Protective factors are considered beneficial to individuals because they can change negative emotional perceptions into positive perceptions to strengthen the development and achievement of

resilience. This adaptability develops dynamically over time, allowing sexual orientation to have fluctuating resilience abilities.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Individual attributes***

Individual attributes are defined as the fundamental capabilities of the individual's own internal. These factors include the individual's positive perception in thinking and responding to any problems that arise, the individual's tendency to always show positive performance, and self-confidence as shown by hobbies, career choices and types of friendships. Being good at choosing associations and determining a proper social environment is also a profitable supporter so that individuals always have a positive outlook on life.<sup>15</sup>

Three main informants felt uncomfortable when sharing their feelings with others, especially not those closest to them, and even preferred to keep their problems to themselves. Informants tend to be closed because they are not used to doing it before, have feelings of shame and guard the feelings of those closest to them.

Individual attributes have an influence on the determination of informants to achieve the degree of resilience from sexual deviant behaviour that is carried out. Individuals have a desire to stop committing sexual deviant behaviour among men based on individual internal factors. MI 1 revealed that self-motivation is a reinforcing factor to return to being heterosexual. MI 1 took actions to refrain from sexual desires that arise such as rushing out of the bathroom so as not to masturbate and refraining from sexually harassing other students. MI 1's form of self-control allows her to control herself from sexual deviant behaviour among men.

Based on the main informant's expression, it was concluded that the positive response that individuals made when faced with a problem tended to shift to other activities or focus on problem-solving by doing something more positive. These responses and behaviours affect the process of resilience and transition in the future that will be faced next. In this case, internal factors have a strong influence on risk and protective factors of individuals not to commit sexual deviations and rise from the bad effects experienced during their sexual orientation.

### ***Characteristics of confessing friends***

The social support given by friends who confide in the form of advice and accompanying sexual orientation students makes sexual orientation feel calm and receive attention and support. This is an attempt to show that a friend must have at least good communication, a good pattern of friendship organisation and a strong belief system so that they can become a resilient friendship. The presence of a friend to confide in can calm him down even if he just listens to the complaints that are being faced, especially when friends are able to respond well to the problems they face.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, confiding friends are one of the protective factors that affect the level of resilience for individuals.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Perception of transmission of HIV/AIDS***

The existence of HIV has a negative impact on humans, besides being able to cause death, HIV also causes various psychological problems, such as hopelessness, and fear, accompanied by prejudice and discrimination from others, which can then cause psychological pressure. The general public has a negative view of HIV. The community strongly rejects this disease, which happens because the people themselves experience a great fear of the threat of HIV disease, they view HIV as a disease that is easily transmitted and can cause death to those who are infected. For individuals living with HIV, this reality is a heavy burden. They often feel upset, dejected, hopeless, and even annoyed.

All informants claimed to stop having risky relationships due to the impact of the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission. This was acknowledged by the informant because he was afraid of the impact caused by the risky relationship of sexual orientation that caused the risk of HIV/ AIDS transmission. Fear triggers people with diverse sexual orientations to become resilient individuals.<sup>18</sup> Those who have good resilience will be able to deal with problems well, and have a more positive way of thinking when dealing with stress due to thinking about the impacts that arise later when they are exposed to HIV/AIDS.



### ***Religious factors***

Religious factors supported sexual orientation not to engage in sexually deviant behaviour. This is viewed from the teaching system of Islamic Boarding Schools X and Y, which teach students not to engage in sexual deviant behaviour because apart from being prohibited by religion, it will also have a negative impact on each student's personality. This made the main informant feel sorry, aware of religious rules, and obedient to religious teachings. The main informant realised that humans were created according to their initial nature when they were born and it was contrary to the Islamic history of the Sodomites at the time of the Prophet Lut who received the wrath of Allah due to sexual deviation behaviour. This made the informant feel guilty for violating Islamic religious orders, which clearly prohibit sexual deviant behaviour. Based on existing research shows that perpetrators of sexual deviations admit that the sexual orientation they have is a sin. They were fully aware of this, but none of the subjects wanted to leave Islam.<sup>19</sup> Prevention efforts carried out by Islamic boarding schools to reduce diverse sexual orientations by making them feel they have a supporting factor so that they can perform resilience for their sexually deviant behaviour.<sup>20</sup> Sex education in Islam has the potential to prevent individuals from homosexual behaviour and keep them away from other sexual abnormalities.<sup>21</sup> This is also supported by other studies that show that knowledge of Islamic religion has an influence on sexual behaviour in adolescents.<sup>22</sup> Mental spirituality education in question is spiritual education that is soulful and applicable, not just theoretical. This effort will form a complete character of the students, so that it will become a protective barrier in preventing sexual orientation among students.

The existence of protective factors is considered beneficial for individuals because this condition changes perceptions from negative emotions into positive ones, thereby strengthening the development and achievement of resilience. In this case resilience is an individual's effort not to do sexually deviant things that can cause health problems and avoid the bad effects of sexual deviant behaviour such as depression which has serious implications in the future. The existence of religious influence and internal factors have a strong influence on making individuals have heterosexual desires and rise from the bad effects experienced while being homosexual.<sup>23</sup> Direction obtained from teachers, friends, and the surrounding environment will bring a person to a more mature stage thereby helping the individual to be wiser in responding to issues or problems.<sup>24</sup> If a sexual orientation person is resilient to various pressures then that individual will have more enthusiasm for life and be grateful for the remaining time in his life.<sup>25</sup>

Prevention efforts should be comprehensive including strengthening religious values, proper understanding of LGBT dangers, and rehabilitation support.<sup>26</sup> This is carried out by the relevant agencies by involving collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and the Health Service through Islamic Boarding School Health Post (POSKESTREN) activities by holding reproductive health education about the dangers of deviant sexual orientation and its risks to the health of students involving professional staff such as health promotion experts and adolescent development psychologist. Furthermore, the urgency of implementing policy changes in reducing STI, HIV, and AIDS among the MSM community in Jember Regency has been emphasized. This Includes the need for focused interventions and programs targeting high-risk groups, particularly through better education and access to health services<sup>27</sup>. In addition, the Social Service and the Regency Office of Religious Affairs created a policy regarding regulations for the provision of adequate infrastructure in Islamic boarding schools that provide services in accordance with the reproductive health needs of adolescents. This research can be used as a reference for Islamic boarding school students so they can understand the importance of obeying Islamic boarding school norms, understanding the characteristics of students, as well as a reference for acting according to the rules. This research was limited in involving informants for interviews so the information obtained regarding the problem of sexual deviant behaviour was also limited. Apart from that, this research was limited in carrying out observation techniques and requires complete participant observation where researchers would be directly involved with the daily activities of the people being observed as a source of research data.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that bullying and mental trauma due to stigma and discrimination are the most influential risk factors preventing individuals from having heterosexual desires and recovering from the negative impact associated with their sexual orientation. However, the presence of protective factors is very beneficial for students with diverse sexual orientation students in changing negative perceptions into positive ones. The researcher suggests that parents and caregivers engage in active communication as a form of support and recovery, especially for students with diverse sexual orientations. Apart from that, there is a need for comprehensive socialisation and supervision regarding sexual deviant behaviour.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All the authors in this research declared that no relationships could be considered a conflict of interest.

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## DATA AVAILABILITY

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request from the corresponding author. Due to privacy or ethical restrictions, the data are not publicly available. However, interested parties can request access to the data by contacting the corresponding author at dewirokhmah@unej.ac.id

## SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

No additional supplemental data are provided for this study. All relevant data supporting the findings of this research are included within the main article.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

IM, ENR, and DR designed the research, IB collected the data, DR, ENR and IB analysed the data and wrote the script.

## DECLARATION OF USING AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used during the writing process of this article to language refinement, and manuscript editing. However, the authors confirm that all the research findings and conclusions are based on the authors' independent work and critical analysis. The use of AI was limited to enhancing the clarity and quality of the manuscript.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus; AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome; APA: American Psychological Association; NGO: Non-Governmental Organization; PLWHA: People Living With HIV and AIDS.

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