Voices of Support and Stigma: A Comparative Analysis of English and Bahasa Indonesia Comments on Gay Indonesian Coming-Out Stories on YouTube

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Article information	Abstract
	Being gay in Indonesia, where Islam is the dominant religion, presents significant challenges. Sexual and gender minorities face heightened risks of abuse and discrimination. This study analyzed viewers' reactions in English and Bahasa Indonesia comments on the coming-out videos of three gay Indonesians: Yos, Bagus, and Acep. A total of 300 comments (100 comments per video: 50 in English and 50 in Bahasa Indonesia) were selected based on defined criteria. Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) was applied to examine how attitudes were expressed. The findings reveal significant contrasts between English and Bahasa Indonesia comments. English comments were largely supportive, emphasizing bravery and resilience. In contrast, Bahasa Indonesia comments were highly polarized, with a strong tendency toward moral condemnation and religious-based criticism, often framing homosexuality as deviant. Some extreme negative comments even contained threats of violence. However, a small yet notable number of supportive comments in Bahasa Indonesia acknowledged Yos', Bagus', and Acep's courage, indicating emerging acceptance within certain social groups. These findings highlight how deeply ingrained cultural and religious norms shape public discourse on LGBT identities in Indonesia. While hostility dominates, the presence of supportive voices suggests gradual shifts in societal attitudes. By examining these polarized reactions, this study provides insights into Indonesia's LGBT communities in digital spaces. The results underscore the need for greater awareness and advocacy to foster acceptance and protection for sexual minorities in restrictive cultural contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, there has been an increase in global awareness and recognition of the rights and struggles of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community (Badgett et al., 2017; Flores, 2021). Despite significant recognition in laws and norms concerning the issue of same-sex marriage and the rights of LGBT people worldwide, attitudes toward the LGBT community remain diverse and complex across different countries, regions, and societies

(Flores, 2021; Poushter & Kent, 2020). Indonesia, the world's fourth-most populous country with rich cultural diversity, is no exception. A 2019 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center indicates that only 9% of people in Indonesia agree that homosexuality should be accepted by society.

A study carried out by Manalastas et al. (2017) aiming to compare attitudes towards gay people across six countries in Southeast Asia using data from the World Values Survey, involving 9,182 participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The results show that when assessing the six countries based on the measure of social exclusion, the most pronounced negative attitudes towards gay people were observed in Indonesia, where 66.1% of people in Indonesia expressed reluctance to have gay neighbors. Moreover, in terms of perceptions concerning the gay people, the strongest negative attitudes were also noted in Indonesia, where 87.6% of people in Indonesia deeming homosexual identification as morally unjustifiable. In Indonesia, same-sex sexualities were perceived as highly inappropriate.

Scholarly research suggests that these attitudes are shaped by religious conservatism, cultural narratives, legal ambiguity, and media representation. Religious fundamentalism has been identified as a key driver of anti-LGBT sentiment, framing homosexuality as immoral or socially threatening (Arli et al., 2020). While Indonesia formally upholds human rights principles, gay people frequently experience discrimination due to the absence of explicit legal protections (Dhamayanti, 2022). Debates surrounding LGBT rights are often framed in relation to Pancasila, Indonesia's national ideology. However, the fifth principle of *Pancasila*, "*keadilan sosial bagi seluruh rakyat Indonesia*" (social justice for all Indonesians), can be interpreted as mandating equal protection and dignity for every citizen, regardless of sexual identity. From this perspective, the marginalization of LGBT people reflects a tension between exclusionary interpretations of national values and the inclusive normative foundation articulated in the state ideology itself. As Arivia and Gina (2015) argue, this climate leaves LGBT people vulnerable to systemic discrimination, social exclusion, and violence.

Mass media also plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions. Studies have shown that certain Indonesian news outlets frame LGBT identities as social threats, while others adopt more neutral positions (Syam et al., 2021). Content analysis reveal that LGBT-related reporting often emphasizes controversy, criminal cases, or moral panic, frequently lacking depth and balanced perspectives (Listiorini & Vidiadari, 2022). Such portrayals may reinforce existing biases rather than foster informed public discussion.

These societal conditions have tangible consequences. Gay Indonesians face bullying, family rejection, workplace discrimination, and public harassment (Arivia & Gina, 2015; Ariyanto & Triawan, 2008). For many gay Indonesian, disclosure of their sexual identity increases the risk of violence and social isolation (International Labour Office Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch, 2016). As a result, many gay Indonesians choose to remain silent and keep their sexual identity a secret and it becomes a survival strategy in everyday life.

In response to marginalization in offline spaces, many gay people in Indonesia have turned to digital media, particularly YouTube, as a platform for expression and support (Arief, 2022;

Ashri, 2023; Imam, 2023; Komnas Perempuan, 2023; Simbolon, 2023). YouTube offers them a space to openly share their identities, recount their personal experiences, and discuss the difficulties faced as members of the LGBT community in Indonesia with a global audience that might not be possible offline (King, 2009). Many creators, including Yos, Bagus, and Acep, use the platform to talk about their struggles, from coming out to dealing with family rejection, while viewers engage through comments, offering encouragement and solidarity. These interactions create a sense of community, reminding them that they are not alone. In this way, YouTube becomes more than just a platform, it becomes a source of strength for those navigating these challenges. However, while this platform can have a positive influence, the comments section often reveals the deeply ingrained societal prejudices and hostility that gay people continue to encounter daily in Indonesia.

Given YouTube's role in shaping discussions around LGBT issues, it is crucial to examine how public attitudes unfold within these digital spaces. While previous studies have explored LGBT issues in Indonesia, little attention has been given to how gay Indonesians are perceived online, particularly through the lens of social media interactions. As a platform that allows open discussions, YouTube enables people to express their views more freely, often without the constraints of social norms. Due to its anonymity, comments on the platform tend to reflect raw, unfiltered opinions, making them a valuable source for understanding public attitudes. However, few studies have specifically analyzed how viewers react to the coming-out stories of gay Indonesians, especially through a comparison of English and Bahasa Indonesia comments. This study fills that gap by using Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) to examine YouTube comments, offering insight into whether online spaces foster acceptance or reinforce exclusion.

To achieve this, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the viewers' reactions toward gay Indonesians as expressed in English comments on their coming-out videos?
2. What are the viewers' reactions toward gay Indonesians as expressed in Bahasa Indonesia comments on their coming-out videos?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Appraisal theory

Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory (henceforth AT) examines how language expresses attitudes, emotions, and stances toward people, events, or situations. It focuses on interpersonal meaning, revealing how writers and speakers evaluate and position themselves in relation to their social contexts (Oteíza, 2017). The framework consists of three main systems: (1) **Attitude** involves expressing emotions, judgments, and appreciation, (2) **Engagement** focuses on exploring the source of these attitudes, (3) **Graduation**, on the other hand, deals with intensifying or scaling the strength of both attitudes and engagement.

This study focuses on the **Attitude** system, which evaluates people, behaviors, and phenomena through three main categories: (1) **Affect** refers to emotional expressions, such as happiness, fear, or anger, (2) **Judgment** involves assessing actions or qualities based on personal or societal standards, and (3) **Appreciation** evaluates objects or phenomena for their aesthetic, ethical, or functional qualities. These categories can be expressed directly, using explicit terms like "happy" or "trustworthy," or indirectly through descriptive behaviors or metaphors, such as using "trembling" to signify fear (Martin & White, 2005; Oteíza, 2017).

Affect

Affect is described as a linguistic resource used to interpret and express emotions or feelings (Martin & White, 2005; Oteíza, 2017). It can be communicated through a range of lexical elements, including emotional verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. It reflects a range of feelings, categorized into three subcategories:

a. **Un/happiness** (personal emotional states): The boy was **sad/happy**
b. **In/security** (feelings tied to surroundings): The boy was **anxious/confident**
c. **Dis/satisfaction** (emotions related to achievement or frustration): The boy was **fed up/absorbed**

Judgment

Judgment can be categorized into two types: evaluations related to "social esteem" and those associated with "social sanction." Judgment evaluates people or behaviors using societal or personal standards, expressed through approval, criticism, or moral evaluations (Martin & White, 2005; Oteíza, 2017). It includes:

a. **Social Esteem**: Personal values, such as:
    1) Normality (how typical or unique someone is): He is **fashionable**/He is **dated**
    2) Capacity (their competence or ability): She is an **expert**/She is **inexpert**
    3) Tenacity (their determination or reliability): He is **tireless**/He is **weak**
b. **Social Sanction**: Shared moral values, such as:
    1) Veracity (truthfulness): He is **honest**/He is **dishonest**
    2) Propriety (ethical behavior): She is **humble**/She is **arrogant**

Appreciation

Appreciation assesses the value of objects, events, or phenomena, reflecting admiration, criticism, or preference (Martin & White, 2005; Oteíza, 2017). It is divided into:

a. **Reaction** (the object's impact or quality): The movie was **captivating**/The movie **was boring**
b. **Composition** (its balance or complexity): The argument was **consistent**/The argument was **contradictory**
c. **Valuation** (its worth or significance): The movie was **creative**/The movie was **prosaic**

Related studies in appraisal theory

Martin and White's (2005) AT has been widely applied in studies examining attitudes toward LGBT people across different media platforms (Ayu, 2022; Bartley & Benitez-Castro, 2016; Bontisesari & Hapsari, 2016; Qomariyah, 2018; Suherman, 2020; Wongburi & Vungthong, 2019). For example, Wongburi and Vungthong (2019) investigated attitudes toward transgender people on Quora. Analyzing 194 sentences from the top 100 responses to "What is your opinion on transgender people?," they found that most respondents expressed positive views, using judgment to affirm transgender identities. Negative attitudes, though less frequent, were conveyed through appreciation, highlighting perceived negative traits. Similarly, Ayu (2022) analyzed netizens' reactions to Elliot Page's pronoun announcement on Instagram using a qualitative approach. Categorizing comments through the engagement system, the study identified three perspectives: support, rejection, and neutrality/compromise, offering insights into public attitudes toward gender pronouns.

Beyond social media, AT has been applied to traditional news media. Bartley and Benitez-Castro (2016) analyzed how Irish newspapers portrayed the LGBT community during the 2008 economic downturn and Civil Partnership Bill debate. They examined a 200,000-word dataset from two tabloids and one broadsheet. The study found predominantly negative portrayals, with frequent use of negative judgment and affect, reinforcing patterns of discrimination in Irish media. Qomariyah (2018) also investigated how Newsweek presents LGBT issues, focusing on the graduation system. A discourse analysis of headlines revealed a dominant use of "force" (82.4%) over "focus" (17.6%), indicating a tendency toward weaker evaluations rather than strong stances. Meanwhile, Suherman (2020) examined The Jakarta Post's portrayal of transgender individuals. Analyzing six articles through a descriptive qualitative approach, the study found that the newspaper predominantly depicted transgender people as marginalized and a societal threat.

In addition to online discourse and news media, AT has been used to analyze personal narratives. Bontisesari and Hapsari (2016) explored linguistic markers in coming-out stories on Melela. org to understand sexual identity construction. They identified 299 Attitude markers, with Judgment (50.4%) as the most frequent. The findings highlight how young homosexuals use language to navigate self-acceptance within a heteronormative society.

The previous studies highlight the versatility of Martin and White's (2005) AT in analyzing attitudes across diverse research contexts, including online platforms and news media. Building on this framework, the present study examines viewers' reactions to gay people in Indonesia through comments on coming-out videos, applying AT to uncover the attitudes expressed in this specific context. While previous research has explored LGBT issues in Indonesia, little attention has been given to how gay people are perceived in online spaces, particularly through social media interactions. Few studies have specifically analyzed viewers' reactions to the coming-out stories of gay Indonesians, especially through a comparative analysis of English and Bahasa Indonesia comments. By filling this gap, the study provides insights into whether online discourse fosters acceptance or reinforces exclusion.

METHOD

Data collection

Prior to data collection, ethical considerations were carefully addressed to ensure compliance with research standards. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained to confirm the study's adherence to ethical guidelines. Letter of Permission was prepared and sent to each YouTube content creator, explaining the study's purpose and requesting approval to use their videos as part of the research. All content creators whose videos were selected granted their permission for this study.

Three videos featuring gay Indonesian coming-out stories were chosen based on specific criteria to ensure they aligned with the study's objectives. The selection process prioritized videos that not only had significant viewers engagement but also represented diverse yet comparable narratives of coming out. The criteria included: (1) the video is presented in English or Bahasa Indonesia with English subtitles to ensure accessibility to a wider audience, (2) the content consists of personal storytelling from gay Indonesians sharing their coming-out experiences, (3) the video is at least five minutes long to provide sufficient narrative depth, and (4) the video demonstrates high engagement, with the creator's channel having at least 1 million subscribers and the video receiving a minimum of 10,000 views and 1,000 comments. These criteria ensured that the selected videos reached a broad audience and elicited substantial viewer interaction, making them suitable for Appraisal Analysis.

Additionally, the selected videos share similarities in format and genre, enhancing their comparability. All three videos follow a personal storytelling format, where gays recount their coming-out journeys in a vlog-style or documentary-style presentation. Some include direct-to-camera storytelling, while others incorporate interviews or edited footage to provide context. Despite variations in presentation, each video emphasizes the personal and emotional aspects of coming out, making them relevant case studies for understanding viewer responses. To provide contextual understanding of the selected videos, a brief overview of each video is presented below.

The first video tells Yos' story of being outed to his family during a visit to Indonesia in 2016. After discovering that he was gay, his family took away his passport and prevented him from returning to the United States. He describes family rejection, religious pressure, and an unsuccessful attempt to escape before eventually managing to leave Indonesia. His story focuses on family control, emotional distress, and his effort to regain freedom.

The second video features Bagus, who shares his experiences of bullying, family rejection, and homelessness after coming out at a young age. He also discusses living with HIV, social stigma, and fear of discrimination. His story highlights the challenges of expressing his identity openly and the difficulties faced by LGBT people in Indonesia.

The third video presents Acep, a 24-year-old gay man living with HIV. He talks about his diagnosis, the stigma he faced from society and even a medical professional, and the loss of

some friendships. At the same time, he shares how supportive friends and his YouTube channel helped him advocate for HIV awareness and LGBT education. His story emphasizes stigma, resilience, and activism.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the three selected videos. The subscriber, view, and comment counts reflect data collected between December 21 and December 31, 2023, though these numbers are subject to change over time. Each video was treated as a separate case study for analysis.

Table 1

The selected videos

	Data 1	Data 2	Data 3
YouTube Channel	Max and Yos	South China Morning	Asian Boss
Subscribers	1.35 million	3.55 million	3.66 million
Title	Why I ran away from Indonesia for being gay (and how I did it)	Outcast: being gay in Indonesia	Being Gay and HIV Positive in Indonesia | THE VOICELESS #25
Publication Date	1 February 2020	8 April 2019	28 October 2019
Views	3,483,701	517,300	223,674
Comments	13,701	4,628	1,510
Language	English	English	Bahasa Indonesia, English subtitles are embedded on the video by the creators
Length	12:16 minutes	7:44 minutes	13:21 minutes
Link to the Video	https://youtu.be/WlYDE1f5mr8?si=33v31MAiSsKqgFit	https://youtu.be/-r-IlTKiKP0?si=Zw6XEgboswNbwWty	https://youtu.be/82vsxZfnYRM?si=ctyXoGHwhoUcy3ny

To examine viewers' reactions, 100 comments were selected from the comment section of each video, equally divided between 50 English comments and 50 Bahasa Indonesia comments. This balanced selection was designed to capture perspectives from both a global audience and the local Indonesian audience. The comments were sorted by the newest entries from December 2023, as data collection took place between December 21 and December 31, 2023. This focus on recent comments underscores the continued engagement these videos receive, despite being uploaded in 2019 and 2020. This method highlights the continued relevance of the topic, with the growing volume of comments underscoring the persistent discourse surrounding these issues.

The selected comments adhered to the following criteria: (1) they were written in English or Bahasa Indonesia, (2) they contained at least one or two complete sentences, and (3) they were relevant to the video's content. Non-verbal elements such as emoticons and symbols were excluded during data cleaning, as the analysis prioritized textual content. Additionally, the identities of commenters, including names, account details, and profile pictures, were anonymized to protect their privacy.

Data analysis

The researchers utilized Martin and White's (2005) AT to examine viewers' reactions to gay Indonesians, as expressed in the comment sections of their coming-out videos on YouTube. Since this study aimed to explore viewers' attitudes, the analysis focused exclusively on the attitude system. The Appraisal Analysis followed several steps. First, the researchers analyzed meaningful units within the comments, such as clauses and sentences, in line with the appraisal framework. This step involved identifying how viewers evaluated the video content and expressed their perspectives, with attention given to tone, attitude, and rhetorical strategies. Next, the comments were categorized based on their evaluative stance or polarity, determining whether they conveyed positive or negative attitudes. The frequency of appraisal items within the comments was then recorded, as a single comment could contain multiple appraisal items. Finally, the researchers drew conclusions by summarizing the overall attitudes reflected in the comments and highlighting any significant insights or implications regarding the video content.

RESULTS

Viewers' reactions to gay Indonesians' coming-out stories on YouTube

The findings presented in this section are summarized in a table, offering insights into the distribution of attitudes across three key categories, such as **Affect**, **Judgment**, and **Appreciation**. To provide a clearer understanding, each distribution is accompanied by detailed explanations and examples. This approach aims to illustrate how viewers' attitudes are expressed in their comments and to highlight patterns in their engagement with the stories.

Table 2
Overall distribution of attitudes in English and Bahasa Indonesia comments

Attitudes in English Comments			
	Yos	**Bagus**	**Acep**
Affect	66.47%	66.07%	22.77%
Judgment	12.57%	16.07%	42.57%
Appreciation	20.96%	17.86%	34.65%
Attitudes Bahasa Indonesia Comments			
	Yos	**Bagus**	**Acep**
Affect	36.46%	27.40%	4.76%
Judgment	58.33%	52.05%	73.02%
Appreciation	5.21%	20.55%	22.22%

Table 2 presents a comparative analysis of the distribution of **Affect**, **Judgment**, and **Appreciation** categories in the appraisal analysis of English and Bahasa Indonesia comments on the coming-out stories of Yos, Bagus, and Acep on YouTube.

Attitudes in English comments

In English comments, **Affect** is the most significant category for Yos and Bagus, accounting for 66.47% and 66.07% respectively. This suggests that Yos' and Bagus' stories resonated more emotionally with viewers, evoking feelings of empathy, sympathy, and moral support. Yos' story of seeking freedom and Bagus' honest story of his personal journey likely fostered deeper emotional connections with viewers. In contrast, Acep receives a lower percentage of Affect (22.77%), with **Judgment** being the most dominant (42.57%), suggesting a focus on moral or behavioural evaluations in the comments. This indicates that viewers were more likely to critically assess his experiences and qualities, particularly his openness about living with HIV and the associated stigma. However, this judgment was largely positive, with many commenters praising his bravery and resilience in sharing his story.

Attitudes in Bahasa Indonesia comments

The pattern shifts in the Bahasa Indonesia comments. Among the three individuals, **Judgment** emerges as the most dominant category, especially for Acep (73.02%), followed by Yos (58.33%) and Bagus (52.05%). This implies that Bahasa Indonesia commenters are more concerned with evaluating the personal character or behaviour of the individuals rather than expressing emotions. Unlike in English comments, the judgment towards Acep in Bahasa Indonesia was predominantly negative, with many commenters criticizing his sexuality as deviant from Islamic values. This contrast highlights the differing cultural and social perspectives between English-speaking and Indonesian viewers, with the former emphasizing personal courage and the latter reinforcing moral and religious norms. Acep's disclosure of being both gay and living with HIV in Indonesia thus not only sparked discussions on stigma, courage, and social responsibility but also revealed the deep divide in how different viewers interpret and respond to LGBT stories.

To explore the details of viewers' reactions to each coming-out story, the following section presents the findings for each story, focusing on how viewers' attitudes are distributed across the three stories. By analyzing both English and Bahasa Indonesia comments, this study highlights the unique ways in which viewers engaged with each story and the perspectives they expressed.

Attitudes in viewers' comments on Yos' coming-out story

The analysis of Table 2 reveals that all categories of the Attitude system appear in English comments about Yos' coming-out story. Among these, **Affect** is the most prominent, accounting for 66.47%, followed by **Appreciation** at 20.96%, and **Judgment** at 12.57%. This distribution suggests that English comments primarily conveyed empathy for Yos' experiences, admiration for his courage, and support for his personal journey. In contrast, there is a different trend in comments written in Bahasa Indonesia, where **Judgment** is the most significant category, making up 58.33%, followed by **Affect** at 36.46%, and **Appreciation** at only 5.21%. This indicates that comments written in Bahasa Indonesia towards Yos often reflected judgment, with homosexuality viewed as deviant behavior. A detailed breakdown of the most significant category both from English and Bahasa Indonesia comments is provided in the table below.

Table 3

The distribution of the most significant attitudes in the comments on Yos' story

Appraisal Systems	Categories	Sub-categories	Polarity +	Polarity -	Frequency	Percentage	
		English Comments					
	Affect	Un/happiness	31	50	81	48.50%	66.47%
		In/security	19	6	25	14.97%	
		Dis/satisfaction	4	1	5	2.99%	
		Bahasa Indonesia Comments			111		
Attitudes		Normality	1	37	38	39.58%	58.33%
		Capacity	11	0	11	11.56%	
		Tenacity	0	0	0	0.00%	
	Judgment	Veracity	0	1	1	1.04%	
		Propriety	1	5	6	6.25%	

(Frequency value 56 appears spanning the Bahasa Indonesia rows; 111 spans the English rows.)

Affect in English comments

In English comments, the **Affect** category, which reflects emotional responses, encompasses both positive and negative expressions. According to the Table 3, the most common sub-category is **Un/happiness** (48.50%), followed by **In/security** (14.97%) and **Dis/satisfaction** (2.99%). Negative emotions, particularly **Unhappiness** (29.94%), are more frequent than positive emotions, such as **Happiness** (18.56%). Many comments conveyed sadness, not due to Yos' sexual orientation, but out of empathy for the challenges he has faced, as demonstrated in the example below.

> *Yos, **your story breaks my heart!** [Affect (-) Unhappiness] I am a 73 year old American Mom/Grandmother. My oldest son and my oldest grandson are both gay. I have NEVER had a problem with this!* (D1C9EN)

The selected comment, particularly the phrase "breaks my heart," falls under the Affect category, specifically the Unhappiness sub-category, reflecting negative emotions toward Yos' story. The commenter, a 73-year-old American mother and grandmother, expresses sorrow for the challenges Yos faced as a gay individual in a homophobic family environment. As someone who fully accepts her gay son and grandson, she conveys sadness and empathy over Yos' struggle with parental rejection, recognizing the deep emotional struggle it has on him. Similarly, some commenters related their own painful experiences to Yos' story, as seen in the comment below.

> *I am gay and I live in southeast asia, I've dealt with conversion theraphy at my school and even a priest tried to change me whatsoever when I was only 12/13 and **it was the darkest years of my life, and it still destroys me every day** [Affect (-) Unhappiness, please wish the best for me to get out of this situation and move out.* (D1C31EN)

In the chosen comment, the phrase "it was the darkest years of my life, and it still destroys me every day" falls under the Affect category, specifically the Unhappiness sub-category. This reflects a negative attitude toward Yos' story, as the commenter shares their own deeply upsetting experience, similar to Yos'. The experience left a lasting emotional impact, causing

ongoing sadness and a sense of being deeply affected. Positive Affect was also present, with viewers expressing joy for Yos' resilience and newfound freedom as illustrated in the following example.

> *Your story is truly a touching one. Unfortunately your DNA can never be changed .You are who You are.* **I'm so glad you had a friend who was able to help you** *[Affect (+) Happiness]. Live your life proud and enjoy it with your beautiful husband.* (D1C30EN)

Based on the selected comment, the word "glad" is categorized under Affect, specifically the Happiness sub-category, reflecting positive emotions toward Yos. The commenter expresses joy and relief that Yos was able to leave his homophobic family environment. Their use of the intensifier "so" emphasizes the depth of their happiness for Yos. This attitude stems from an empathetic understanding of Yos' struggles, and his ability to overcome them brings the commenter a sense of joy.

Judgment in Bahasa Indonesia comments

Judgment involves the evaluation of an individual's behavior or characteristics, encompassing both positive and negative viewpoints. Based on the data in Table 3, the most frequent sub-category of **Judgment** is **Normality** (39.58%), followed by **Capacity** (11.46%), **Propriety** (6.25%), and **Veracity** (1.04%). The sub-category of **Tenacity** was not present in any comments. Negative judgments of **Normality** (38.54%) far exceeded positive judgments (1.04%). These negative assessments often condemned Yos' sexuality as deviant, reflecting religious and cultural influences. An example of this is provided below.

> **"*Tuhan menciptakan adam dan hawa bukan adam dan udin*"**
> **God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Udin** *(a male name) [Judgment (-) Social Esteem: Normality].* (D1C38BI)

The comment "*Tuhan menciptakan adam dan hawa bukan adam dan udin*" ("God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Udin") falls under the Judgment category, specifically the Normality sub-category. This reflects a negative attitude toward Yos, as the commenter critiques his sexuality based on the belief that men should only be paired with women. The analogy of "Adam and Udin" is used sarcastically, with "Udin" often employed in Indonesian humor to mock. This sarcastic remark underscores the commenter's disapproval, portraying Yos' sexual orientation as a deviation from their perceived norm. Similar harsh judgments are evident in other comments directed at Yos as seen in the example below.

> "*Sini nak pulang ke Indo,, **biar di Rajam**.*"
> *Come back to Indonesia, kid,* **so you can be stoned to death** *[Judgment (-) Social Sanction: Propriety].* (D1C30BI)

The comment, "*Sini nak pulang ke Indo, biar di Rajam*" ("Come back to Indonesia, kid, so you can be stoned to death"), expresses a strong negative Judgment to Yos under the Propriety sub-category. Propriety refers to judgments about whether someone's behavior is ethical or

unethical, right or wrong. By mentioning stoning, which is an extreme religious or legal punishment, the commenter suggests that Yos' sexuality is a serious moral violation that deserves punishment. This comment does more than criticize, it supports the idea that violence is justified. Therefore, the statement reflects a moral condemnation of Yos' identity and shows how non-heteronormative identities are framed as sinful or punishable within certain ideological and religious perspectives.

Attitudes in viewers' comments on Bagus' coming-out story

Table 2 highlights the attitudes conveyed in English comments about Bagus' coming-out story. The most frequent category is **Affect** (66.07%), followed by **Appreciation** (17.86%) and **Judgment** (16.07%). These comments largely express empathy for Bagus and show support for his personal journey. In contrast, the attitudes found in Bahasa Indonesia comments on the same story, **Judgment** is the most frequent category (52.05%), followed by **Affect** (27.40%) and **Appreciation** (20.55%). These comments often critique societal views on the LGBT community and include personal judgments about Bagus, frequently influenced by the perception that homosexuality contradicts societal norms. The subsequent sections provide a detailed analysis of the most significant category both from English and Bahasa Indonesia comments.

Table 4

The distribution of the most significant attitudes in the comments on Bagus' story

Appraisal Systems	Categories	Sub-categories	Polarity +	Polarity -	Frequency	Percentage	
		English Comments					
		Un/happiness	17	57	74		44.05%	
		In/security	16	5	21	111	12.50%	66.07%
	Affect	Dis/satisfaction	9	7	16		9.52%	
		Bahasa Indonesia Comments					
Attitudes		Normality	3	1	4		5.48%	
		Capacity	0	0	0		0.00%	52.05%
		Tenacity	0	0	0	38	0.00%	
		Veracity	0	0	0		0.00%	
	Judgment	Propriety	0	34	34		46.58%	

Affect in English comments

Affect captures emotional reactions and levels of engagement with Bagus' coming-out story, classified into positive and negative emotions. Based on Table 4, the **Un/happiness** sub-category is the most dominant (44.05%), followed by **In/security** (12.50%) and **Dis/satisfaction** (9.52%). Significantly, expressions of **Unhappiness** (33.93%) in English comments occur more frequently than those of **Happiness** (10.12%). However, the majority of these expressions of **Unhappiness** stem from empathy toward Bagus and his struggles, rather than criticism of his sexuality, as illustrated in the example below.

> ***It hurts to see lots of people can't feel freedom in their own country*** [*Affect (-) Unhappiness*]. (D2C41EN)

The word "hurts" in the selected comment falls under the Affect category, specifically the Unhappiness sub-category. This comment conveys a negative attitude toward Bagus, as the commenter expresses sadness over the lack of freedom experienced by Bagus and the LGBT community in Indonesia. Some comments also reflect personal insecurities and fears based on shared experiences, as illustrated below.

> As an Indonesian, and a CHILD **it really hurts to be in the LGBT community** [Affect (-) Unhappiness] because some might say, "I'm a young man and I'm a bisexual, a biromantic, a bigender." **Im also afraid of what will happen if my family found out, especially my dad** [Affect (-) Insecurity]. I love them so much to let them go and everytime I draw lgbt my dad usually finds out and says "Kamu suka cewek?" and I would make up a lame excuse and he would believe it. So **this is why it's hard especially me being a child, my religion, the people who care about you, and being the only LGBT person in the whole school** [Affect (-) Unhappiness], well except the Asexuals that are there uwu. (D2C13EN)

In the selected comment, the words "hurts" and "hard" are classified under the Affect category, specifically the Unhappiness sub-category, reflecting negative attitudes toward Bagus' story. The commenter shares feelings of sadness and highlights the challenges of being part of the LGBT community in Indonesia. Additionally, the word "afraid" also falls under the Affect category, specifically the Insecurity sub-category. This indicates a sense of fear, as the commenter expresses anxiety about potential family reactions if their LGBT identity were discovered.

Judgment in Bahasa Indonesia comments

Judgment in Bagus' coming-out story reflects evaluations of individuals or actions, shaped by personal beliefs. As shown in Table 4, the Propriety sub-category accounts for the majority (46.58%) of the judgments, followed by Normality at 5.48%. Particularly, there are no comments that fall under the sub-categories of Capacity, Veracity, or Tenacity. Negative judgments of Propriety dominate (46.58%), with comments written in Bahasa Indonesia portraying homosexuality as deviant and incompatible with societal or religious norms, as demonstrated in the example below.

> "*Gimana ya, **udah dikasih tau sm surah2 alquran soal gimana haram, dosa dan laknat nya sampe diceritakan dalam kisah nabi luth kalo lgbtq+ pada jamanya bakalan dilmpar btu karna melenceng keras dr ajaran islam**. Buang mindset 'tuhan bakalan tetep maafin kita dan tuhan gabakalan sekejam itu sm umatnya.' like, what?! **Terima kenyataan ajalah kalo emang gaboleh dan dosa.**"*
> *Well, you see, **the Quran has already mentioned how it's forbidden, sinful, and cursed, even narrating the story of Prophet Lut where LGBTQ+ individuals in his time would be punished severely for deviating from Islamic teachings** [Judgment (-) Social Sanction: Propriety]. Get rid of the mindset that "God will always forgive us and He won't be that cruel to His people." Like, what?! **Just accept the reality if it's indeed forbidden and sinful** [Judgment (-) Social Sanction: Propriety].* (D2C50BI)

Based on the selected comment above, the terms "*haram*" (forbidden), "*dosa*" (sinful), and "*laknat*" (cursed) fall under the Judgment category, specifically the Propriety sub-category. In this case, the commenter evaluates homosexual practices as morally wrong and religiously prohibited, drawing explicitly on Islamic doctrinal references, including the story of Prophet Lot. The comment therefore encodes negative Judgment of Propriety towards Bagus, positioning LGBTQ+ identities as morally deviant in relation to religious norms. Similarly, negative judgments are evident in other comments directed at Bagus as seen in the following example.

> "*Di kota saya ada spanduk **halal darahnya.***"
> *In my city, there's a banner saying **their blood is halal** [Judgment (-) Social Sanction: Propriety].* (D2C31BI)

In the selected comment, "*Di kota saya ada spanduk halal darahnya*" ("In my city, there's a banner saying their blood is halal"), conveys an extreme moral judgment to Bagus and the LGBT people in general under the Propriety sub-category. The phrase "*halal darahnya*" ("their blood is permissible to shed") suggests a moral and religious justification for violence. By referencing a banner that declares LGBT people' blood as "*halal*" (permissible to be shed), the commenter implies that violence against them is justified within certain ideological or religious frameworks. This comment does more than simply express disapproval, it invokes the idea of sanctioned harm, reinforcing the notion that LGBT people are not only deviant but also deserving of severe consequences. The comment reflects a broader societal hostility, suggesting that such beliefs are not isolated but publicly endorsed, further marginalizing those it targets.

Attitudes in viewers' comments on Acep's coming-out story

An analysis of Table 2 reveals that comments written in English on Acep's coming-out story encompass all Attitude categories, with **Judgment** being the most prevalent at 42.57%, followed by **Appreciation** at 34.65% and **Affect** at 22.77%. Unlike earlier datasets where **Affect** was more prominent, **Judgment** takes center stage here, reflecting critiques of Indonesian societal norms towards LGBT people. English comments also convey admiration for Acep's courage in sharing his experiences as a gay man living with HIV. Similarly, comments written in Bahasa Indonesia also span all Attitude categories, with **Judgment** overwhelmingly dominant at 73.02%, followed by **Appreciation** at 22.22% and **Affect** at just 4.76%. Unlike the English comments, the **Judgment** expressed in Bahasa Indonesia often criticized Acep's sexuality as deviant, with criticism heavily influenced by religious and cultural perspectives. A detailed breakdown of the most significant category both from English and Bahasa Indonesia comments is provided in the table below.

Table 5
The distribution of the most significant attitudes in the comments on Acep's story

Appraisal Systems	Categories	Sub-categories	Polarity		Frequency	Percentage	
			+	-			
		English Comments					
		Normality	4	3	7	6.93%	
		Capacity	18	1	19	18.81%	
	Judgment	Tenacity	9	1	10	43	9.90%	42.57%
		Veracity	1	0	1	0.99%	
Attitudes		Propriety	2	4	6	5.94%	
		Bahasa Indonesia Comments					
		Normality	0	7	7	11.11%	
		Capacity	2	4	6	9.52%	
	Judgment	Tenacity	1	0	1	46	1.59%	73.02%
		Veracity	0	0	0	0.00%	
		Propriety	1	31	32	50.79%	

Judgment in English comments

Judgment refers to the evaluation of people's actions or behaviors, which can be either positive or negative. As shown in Table 5, the most frequently occurring sub-category is **Capacity** (18.81%), followed by **Tenacity** (9.90%), **Normality** (6.93%), **Propriety** (5.94%), and **Veracity** (0.99%). Positive judgments of **Capacity** (17.82%) far outweigh negative judgments (0.99%). Many comments written in English highlight Acep's strength and resilience, as demonstrated in the example below.

> This is so sad. I can't even imagine how hard it must have been for Acep. **He is so strong** [Judgment (+) Social Esteem: Capacity] and **his smile is contagious** [Judgment (+) Social Esteem: Capacity]. (D3C15EN)

Based on the chosen comment above, the statement "he is so strong" falls under Judgment category, specifically the Capacity sub-category. This comment conveys a positive attitude towards Acep as the commenter evaluates Acep positively, focusing on his resilience in overcoming adversity despite being discriminated by the doctor about his HIV status. The use of "so" intensify the commenter's positive evaluation towards Acep. Moreover, the sentence "his smile is contagious" further emphasizes Acep's strength and ability to inspire others, presenting him as a source of positivity, which still fall under the Capacity sub-category. Similarly, other commenters evaluate Acep for his positivity, as illustrated in the following example.

> **Such a wonderful positive** [Judgment (+) Social Esteem: Capacity] **young man** - I sincerely hope he represents the future for those with HIV in his country. (D3C34EN)

The phrase "such a wonderful positive young man" in the comment above fall under Judgment category, specifically the Capacity sub-category. This comment evaluates Acep's personality and attitude positively, highlighting his admirable qualities and strength regardless being HIV positive in Indonesia. The word "wonderful" emphasizes the commenter's positive evaluation towards Acep for his ability to maintain an optimistic and inspiring outlook.

Judgment in Bahasa Indonesia comments

Judgment refers to the evaluation of people's actions or behaviors, which can be either positive or negative. As shown in Table 5, the most frequent sub-category is **Propriety** (50.79%), followed by **Normality** (11.11%), **Capacity** (9.52%), and **Tenacity** (1.59%), with no comments reflecting **Veracity**. Negative judgments of **Propriety** (49.21%) far exceed positive ones (1.59%). Many comments written in Bahasa Indonesia criticize Acep's homosexuality, labeling it as abnormal based on personal or religious beliefs, as illustrated in the example below.

> "***Tidak ada agama mnapun yg melegalkan LGBT. Krna LGBT merupakan sebuah kesalahan yang tdk bisa dibenarkan!***"
> ***No religion legalizes LGBT*** [Judgment (-) Social Sanction: Propriety]. ***Because LGBT is a mistake that cannot be justified!*** [Judgment (-) Social Sanction: Propriety] (D3C50BI)

The statement "*tidak ada agama manapun yang melegalkan LGBT*" ("no religion legalizes LGBT") is categorized under Judgment, specifically within the Propriety sub-category. The reference to religion functions as an evaluative resource that positions LGBT identity as inconsistent with accepted moral and religious norms. This evaluative stance is intensified in the subsequent clause, "*karena LGBT merupakan sebuah kesalahan yang tidak bisa dibenarkan*" ("because LGBT is a mistake that cannot be justified"), which explicitly encodes negative moral judgment toward Acep. The lexical items "*kesalahan*" (mistake) and "*tidak bisa dibenarkan*" (cannot be justified) clearly signal condemnation based on moral grounds. Similarly, other commenters criticized Acep for his homosexuality, deeming it deviant and contradictory to their beliefs, as illustrated in the following example.

> "***Islam ga bakal bisa di samain dengan gay.*** *Gay ya gay. Islam ya islam kan udah di peringatkan di al quran pada surat al a'raf . Bukannya apa2 tapi kalau memang bang acep itu islam pasti belajar tentang kaum luth.*"
> ***Islam can't be equated with being gay*** [Judgment (-) Social Sanction: Propriety]. *Gay is gay. Islam is Islam. It's already warned in the Quran, in Surah Al-A'raf. Not to say anything, but if indeed Mr. Acep is Muslim, surely he would have learned about the people of Lot.* (D3C33BI)

The comment "*Islam ga bakal bisa di samain dengan gay*" ("Islam can't be equated with being gay") is categorized under the Judgment category, specifically the sub-category of Propriety. The commenter makes a negative moral evaluation toward Acep by positioning homosexuality as incompatible with Islamic teachings. The reference to Surah Al-A'raf and the story of the people of Lot invokes religious doctrine as an authoritative moral framework, thereby construing same-sex identity as ethically improper within Islam. This evaluation is directed not only toward the general category of "gay," but also implicitly toward Acep as a Muslim subject, suggesting that his sexual identity contradicts religious norms.

DISCUSSION

The attitudes in viewers' comments written in English and Bahasa Indonesia to Yos', Bagus', and Acep's coming-out stories

The analysis of comments on Yos', Bagus', and Acep's coming-out stories reveals a significant contrast between reactions written in English and those written in Bahasa Indonesia. Comments in English are generally positive, emphasizing open-mindedness, acceptance, and support. Many highlight the strength and resilience of the three individuals, acknowledging their struggles in navigating life as members of the LGBT community in Indonesia. These responses align with broader socio-cultural values in many English-speaking societies that prioritize individual freedom, inclusivity, and equality (Badgett et al., 2017). In contrast, comments in Bahasa Indonesia tend to be highly polarized, with a strong tendency toward negativity, often shaped by religious and cultural norms (Rokhmansyah et al., 2021).

One of the most alarming findings of this study is the presence of extremely negative and violent comments in some Bahasa Indonesia comments, particularly on Yos' and Bagus' coming-out stories. For example, comments such as "*Sini nak pulang ke Indo, biar di Rajam*" ("Come back to Indonesia, kid, so you can be stoned to death") and "*Di kota saya ada spanduk halal darahnya*" ("In my city, there's a banner saying their blood is halal") are not just expressions of disapproval, they reflect a broader societal attitude that normalizes violence against LGBT people. These comments are particularly alarming because they mirror real-world threats, discrimination, and violence that LGBT Indonesians face. The fact that such comments are publicly stated online indicates a normalization of homophobic attitude that could translate into physical harm.

This pattern of hostility is consistent with previous research on LGBT discrimination in Indonesia, where negative perceptions are deeply rooted in conservative religious interpretations and cultural beliefs (Riadil, 2020). Public discourse in Indonesia has increasingly framed LGBT identities as threats to societal morality, leading to social exclusion, legal persecution, and acts of violence (Listiorini & Vidiadari, 2022; Syam et al., 2021). The presence of explicit death threats and calls for punishment in YouTube comment sections further reinforces the notion that online spaces are extensions of real-world prejudices.

The Judgment category in AT further reveals key differences in how Acep's coming-out story was received in English and Bahasa Indonesia comments. In English comments, Judgment was largely positive, portraying Acep as brave and resilient for sharing his story as a gay man living with HIV. Many English-speaking commenters expressed admiration and empathy, as seen in comments like, "He is so strong." and "Such a wonderful, positive young man." In contrast, Judgment in Bahasa Indonesia comments was overwhelmingly negative, focusing on moral and religious condemnation rather than personal qualities. Many commenters framed Acep's identity as a violation of Islamic teachings, as seen in statements like, "*Tidak ada agama manapun yg melegalkan LGBT. Karena LGBT merupakan sebuah kesalahan yang tidak bisa dibenarkan!*" ("No religion legalizes LGBT. Because LGBT is a mistake that cannot be justified!") and "*Islam ga bakal bisa disamain dengan gay*" ("Islam can't be equated with being gay.").

The contrast between English and Bahasa Indonesia comments reflects broader sociocultural differences between English-speaking and Indonesian viewers. In many Western societies, public discourse on LGBT rights has evolved to emphasize human rights, diversity, and personal identity (Flores, 2021; Poushter & Kent, 2020). Conversely, Indonesia has witnessed a resurgence of conservative religious rhetoric, which frames LGBT identities as morally unacceptable (Kelly et al., 2024). The findings of this study align with previous research, demonstrating that negative Judgment toward LGBT people in Indonesia is heavily influenced by Islamic moral frameworks, where non-heteronormative identities are viewed as transgressions rather than personal traits (Arli et al., 2020).

Despite the overwhelming negative Judgment in Bahasa Indonesia comments, it is crucial to acknowledge that supportive voices also exist, even if they are a minority. While these supportive comments were not significant in number, their presence is meaningful, offering glimpses of empathy and acceptance within an otherwise hostile environment. Some Indonesian commenters expressed appreciation, encouragement, and solidarity, recognizing the courage of Yos and Acep for sharing their stories in comments such as, "*Pengen ketemu sama abang ini, biar gue peluk erat-erat dan bilang 'You are so amazing.'*" ("I want to meet him, so I can give him a tight hug and tell him, 'You are so amazing.'") and "*Tetap semangat Acep jaaa, dan kamu adalah inspirasi buat saya dan juga kekuatan buat saya buat menjalankan hidup ini.*" ("Stay strong, Acep! You are an inspiration to me and also my strength to keep going in life.")

The presence of these supportive comments align with research showing that while institutionalized homophobia remains widespread in Indonesia, grassroots acceptance is slowly emerging, particularly among younger, more progressive generations (Ridwan & Wu, 2018). Although positive comments are far fewer than negative ones, their significance should not be overlooked. They represent shifting perspectives within Indonesian society and offer hope for LGBT people seeking acceptance. As public discourse continues to evolve, such expressions of support may contribute to broader LGBT advocacy efforts in Indonesia and challenge deep-seated prejudices over time.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE STUDY

This study highlights the significant contrast in attitudes toward LGBT people in online English and Bahasa Indonesia comments on coming-out stories. While English comments primarily express support, admiration, and empathy, Bahasa Indonesia comments tend to be more polarized, with many reflecting negative judgment rooted in cultural and religious beliefs. Extreme negativity, including threats of violence, underscores the broader societal discrimination against LGBT people in Indonesia. These findings align with existing research on LGBT marginalization in conservative societies, where non-heteronormative identities are framed as moral and religious violations rather than personal aspects of identity.

Despite the overwhelming negativity, the presence of small but meaningful expressions of support in Bahasa Indonesia comments suggests that pockets of acceptance exist, particularly among younger and more progressive individuals. This highlights the potential of digital

platforms in fostering inclusivity, even within restrictive social environments. However, continued advocacy and awareness are necessary to combat discrimination and improve societal acceptance of LGBT people in Indonesia.

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The data, published between 2019 and 2020, may not fully reflect recent developments regarding LGBT rights and societal attitudes in Indonesia. Although the "newest comments" filter on YouTube was applied to capture more current perspectives, the study remains limited in its ability to track evolving attitudes. Future research could address this by analyzing more up-to-date data to provide a clearer picture of recent trends.

Additionally, this study primarily examines explicit expressions of attitude in online comments. However, attitudes toward LGBT people may also be shaped by implicit biases that are not always evident in written discourse. Incorporating tools like the Implicit Association Test (IAT) could provide deeper insights into unconscious biases and hidden prejudices that influence public perceptions. Such an approach would offer a more comprehensive understanding of societal attitudes, particularly in contexts where overt expressions may not fully align with implicit beliefs. By addressing these limitations and expanding methodologies, future studies can further contribute to understanding LGBT representation and societal attitudes in Indonesia. As digital discourse continues to evolve, ongoing research is essential in shaping more inclusive narratives and policies that support LGBT people.

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