# The Influence of Social Demographics Towards Homosexuality from Seven Countries in Southeast Asia

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# The Influence of Social Demographics Towards Homosexuality from Seven Countries in Southeast Asia

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#### Abstract

Despite sexual orientation not being classified as a mental disorder, homosexual behavior remains the object of discrimination by society. Many people in the world consider it deviant behavior. Even though homosexuality is legal in several Southeast Asian countries, community discrimination toward homosexuals has grown. This study investigates how socio-demographic conditions can explain the rejection of homosexual behavior in seven countries in Southeast Asia. In this study, we use cross-sectional World Value Survey wave 7 data. Using a multivariate logit regression model, we found that most people in Southeast Asia reject homosexual behavior. Also, they believe homosexuals will not become a good parent. Most of the society refuses to socialize and live side by side with a homosexual in their home environment as neighbors.

Furthermore, we also found that people are more likely to accept homosexual behavior when they get older. People with a higher level of religiosity, male and married people, have a negative correlation with homosexual behavior, which means they tend to reject the existence of homosexuality. Meanwhile, those who live in urban areas, have daily internet access, and are happier tend to accept homosexual behavior.

Keywords: Social Demographics, Homosexuality, Southeast Asia, Homonegativity, World Value Survey, Parents, Socialize.

# INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, homosexuality is considered a sexual desire, attraction or behavior directed towards someone of the same sex (The American Heritage Medical Dictionary, 2007). The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems has stated that sexual orientation is not classified as a mental disorder (WHO, 1992). However, the controversy over the existence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people has long been a somewhat complicated debate for decades on the international scene, including among people in Southeast Asia. Since the early 1990s, along with the increasing number of LGBT in Southeast Asia, a societal stigma has led to social

discrimination against the LGBTQ+<sup>1</sup>, laws that systematically criminalize LGBTQ+ people, and even restrictions on access to health services (ARROW, 2020). Moreover, there are many social sanctions, discriminations, and rejections in their work environment (Baert, 2018; Rozali et al., 2019; Suriyasarn, 2016; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

Community rejection and negative responses to homosexuals are often called homonegativity<sup>2</sup> or homophobia. The level of current homonegativity in our society continues to grow (Jäckle & Wenzelburger, 2015). Even though several countries have legalized homosexual behavior and written in their constitution, the public sentiment and social sanctions against homosexuals continue and tend to increase as the number of LGBTQ+ people rises (Moskowitz et al., 2010; Yeo and Chu, 2018). For example, several countries in Southeast Asia have legalized homosexuality by the constitution, such as Vietnam³ and Thailand⁴. Nevertheless, cultural values and religious perspectives in society drive public sentiment and discrimination against homosexuals. Some surveys and studies conducted in Thailand suggest that even though homosexuality is legal, it does not necessarily increase the tolerance of heterosexuals toward homosexuality (Suriyasam, 2016; UNDP, 2019; World Bank, 2018).

On the other hand, some other countries in Southeast Asia have prohibited the practice of homosexuality. The Malaysian government announced that LGBT is not permitted in their country (Rozali et al., 2019). Even more, Malaysia has enacted a special law to limit the behavior of sodomy, lesbian and transgender acts through Section 377A of the Penal Code and the Enforcement of Sharia Crimes. In Singapore, a homosexual can be sentenced to up to 2 years in jail (Chen, 2013). Similar to Malaysia and Singapore, Myanmar has banned same-sex marriage since British colonial (Capaldi, 2020). Under Section 377 of Myanmar Penal Code 1861, being homosexual can be sentenced to up to 20 years. Although the Indonesian government has not regulated the legality of homosexuality, there are many regional regulations at the city, and provincial levels impose sanctions on homosexual practices (The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection 2015).

Even though it is classified as a solid religious country, The Philippines is one of the "gay-friendly" countries (Capaldi, 2020). However, the law that legalizes men-to-men marriage remains an ongoing discussion. In June 2018, the Philippine supreme court received a petition regarding the legality of homosexuality. Yet, the petition is still unresolved until this day (Mendos, 2019).

The study of homosexuals has long been the focus of research in the Asian region, especially Southeast Asia, with diverse perspectives. Detenber et al. (2014) find that even at the state level, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> LGBT not limited to "Questioning", "Queer" and "intersect" (Petro6, 2014)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Homonegativity firstly introduced by Morrison et al. (1997) refers to any prejudicial attitude or discriminatory behavior directed toward an individual because of his or her homosexual orientation. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> According to United Nation Human Rights (2019) Vietnam accepted to enact a law to fight against discrimination which guarantees the equality of all citizens, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> In 2002, the Minister of Health of Thai announced that homosexuality would no longer be considered as a mental illness or order (Katikireddi, 2003). In 2020, the Thai government revived Civil Partnership Bill that intended to guarantee registered same-sex couples the same safeguards over inheritance, medical decision-making, insurance benefits, pensions, tax status, and other rights as married couples. (Bangkok Post, 2022; Capaldi, 2020).

pros and cons of the existence of homosexuals are still happening. In his study, he shows that the consider use morality and religious issues to reject the existence of homosexuals. Meanwhile, the pro-side of homosexuality considers the prohibition and social discrimination as a violation of freedom and human rights. Jäckle and Wenzelburger (2015) analyze the attitude of homonegativity at a multinational level. In an aggregate of 79 countries, they find that religious people tend to reject the presence of homosexuality. Jerome et al. (2021) show that religious and cultural norms in Malaysia encourage the rejection of homosexuality. Eventually, the acceptance of LGBT in Malaysia began to increase as LGBT figures emerged on social media. These figures made their followers recognize and accept their non-normative gender or sexual identity.

Meanwhile, several studies have attempted to analyze how homosexuals are seen from a religious perspective. Adamczyk and Pitt (2009) state that Muslim and Protestant communities tend to have more homonegativity compared to Orthodox Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and non-religious people. Rich (2017) finds that since people are driven by conservative views and strong cultural influences on the Asian region, homosexuals do not get support from all of society. In the meantime, in the Southeast Asia region, Capaldi (2020) claims that there is an enormous challenge for homosexuals to live in a country with a very religious community. There is a significant rejection from society and lousy treatment. As a result, homosexuals are accused of sinning, immoral acts, or crimes and suffer a barrage of social or legal discrimination.

Studies on perceptions of homosexuals that have been carried out worldwide often reveal two essential elements: religion and culture. Despite the fact that Southeast Asia has diverse religions and cultures, the high level of public sentiment toward homosexuality varies in different Southeast Asian countries continues to grow and leads us to some fundamental questions. First, how do the societies in seven Southeast Asian countries perceive the existence of homosexuals appearing in their social life? Second, how are the social demographic factors and characteristics inherited in different countries in Southeast Asia can explain and influencing the tendency of society to socialize with homosexuals?

Based on the problems built on the background described, this study intends to analyze how social demographic factors explain and influence community perceptions and decisions to socialize with homosexuals in Southeast Asia. The main objective of this study is to describe the influence of social demographics on the perception of homosexuality in society. In addition, this study is expected to provide a new reference regarding the factors that might influence public perceptions of homosexuality in seven Southeast Asia countries.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have investigated how public stigma and perception toward homosexuals have been done in many parts of the world. In previous studies, various interesting discussions emerged that explained how demographic factors could explain people's perceptions of homosexuals. For example, the fact that homosexual discriminations and rejections do not only occur in countries that prohibit or

reject homosexuality. Contradiction also often arises in countries that legalize homosexuality by their constitution, such as The United States. Even though the United States<sup>5</sup> is the first country in the world to legalize LGBT rights in its constitution, it does not encourage society to accept and be willing to socialize with homosexuals. In their empirical study, Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera (2006) show that most people in the U.S. hold conservative views and encourage them to limit their contact with homosexuals in social life. In addition, they also found that men, older people, people with low-level education, people with more children, and religious people tend to be more homonegativity. In the Asian region, Lin et al. (2021) show that, even though Taiwan is the first country to legalize LGBT in Asia, the rejection of homosexuals remains increasing. According to their study, negative attitudes towards homosexuals often come from those with poor mental health and older people.

Some other studies have proven that gender has different tendencies toward homosexuals. Most studies state that men tend to oppose the presence of homosexuals in their environment compared to women. Men's rejection of the existence of homosexuality has been going on for quite a long time. In the early '90s, Britton (1990) finds that traditional beliefs are still inherent in society and encourage men to be more homophobic than women. Harbaugh & Lindsey (2015) claim that young adult males have more masculine traits than females, which drives them to become more homonegativity than females. On a larger scale, Jäckle and Wenzelburger (2015), with a scope of 79 countries, discover that several socio-demographic conditions can influence a person's decision to become homonegativity: men, older people, married people, people who have more children, people with low incomes and people with low education have a higher homonegativity. In addition, they mention in their study that religious people also tend to reject the presence of homosexuality.

The marital status of heterosexual couples also has a role in influencing people's acceptance of homosexuals in their daily life. An individual who marries a different gender has a tendency to reject the existence of homosexuals in their environment compared to those who decide not to marry or remain single. According to Adamczyk & Pitt (2009), married people and people with a low level of education most likely reject the existence of homosexuality than those who remain single or divorced and those with higher education. In studies conducted at the end of the 20th century, Berkman & Zinberg (1997) find a high tendency of homophobia in heterosexual couples both in the social and the work environment. This finding indicates that the trend of homonegativity among heterosexuals is not new in the modern world.

Most of the world's major religions reject the existence of homosexuals; in Islam, it is clear that homosexuality is prohibited in the Quran. While Christians claim that homosexuality is an abomination in the old testament in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Meanwhile, there are different viewpoints about homosexuality in Buddhism. The Dalai Lama said that the relationship between the two men was wrong (BBC UK, 2020). However, no Buddhist manuscript that explains the context of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The United States has legalized the practices of LGBT in 2003 through Lawrence v. Texas, 539 U.S 558

homosexuality is written in the book. At the same time, some empirical studies show that people with higher religious levels are likely to refuse the existence of homosexuality in their environment and life. Possamai & Blasi (2020) explain that religion has a different influence on an individual level of homophobia. Their study suggests that homophobia has occurred in every religion. The results indicate that Conservative Protestants have the highest scores on the homophobic level, followed by moderate Protestants, Catholics, and Non-Christians such as Muslims, Jews, Wiccans, and Pagans. Adamczyk & Pitt (2009) found that Muslim and Christian communities tend to have higher homophobia than Catholicism, Jews, and people with no religion. In a level of religiosity context, Detenber et al. (2014) believe that people with higher religious levels tend to be homophobic. Lambert et al. (2006) add that religious observance and political views greatly influence homonegativity attitudes. Also, they discover that people who frequently participate in religious activities and hold democratic views typically have more homonegativity.

# DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study uses secondary cross-sectional data from the World Value Survey wave 7. The World Values Survey (WVS) is an international research program devoted to the scientific and academic study of people's social, political, economic, religious, and cultural values. The projects comprise over 120 countries representing 94.5% of the world population, with a sample of individuals aged 18 years and over (Inglehart et al., 2014). The objects in this study are seven countries in Southeast Asia that were specified as the object in the World Value Survey wave 7 that was conducted in 2017-2020.

Our analysis aims to determine how people's perceptions and decisions are about socializing with homosexuals. The initial systematic was built by selecting the dependent and independent variables. We used three essential questions to assess perceptions and decisions of society toward homosexuals: 1. Do you want to be neighbors with homosexuals?; 2. Do you think homosexual couples can be as good parents as other parents?; 3. Do you think homosexual behavior is justifiable? To reduce raw data measurement bias, we dropped data on respondents who chose neutral on both options in the second question. In addition, the third question has an ordinal range from 1 to 10. To simplify things, we index the data on the following conditions:

Table 1. Index of acceptance of homosexuality

U	Unacceptable				Acceptable			e	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In our analysis, we include three independent variables: the level of individual religiosity, daily internet use, and the level of individual happiness in living their life. In our hypothesis, these variables may influence the decision of public perception to reject or accept homosexual existence. As discussed

in the literature review, homonegativity is often related to specific religions. However, studies that examine the level of religiosity toward the perception of homosexuality regardless of their faith are limited, especially in Southeast Asia. Thus, we include the level of individuals of religiosity irrespective of what religion they follow in our estimation.

Both the rejection and acceptance of homosexuals due to internet access remain uncertain. Detenber et al. (2014) show that social media encourage people to reject homosexuality since social media is a free expressive medium to deliver a voice against homosexual rejection through petitions. Meanwhile, several other studies show that increasing social media influencers encourage public acceptance of homosexuals (Jerome et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). However, the study of the influence of daily internet access on people's perceptions remains unclear. Therefore we included this variable in our analysis.

Several studies show that positive emotions and happiness resulting from satisfaction with meaningful life make individuals more tolerant (Chebotareva, 2015; Crowley & Walsh, 2021; Dicakson-Koekemoer & Ferreira, 2019). However, the influence of individual happiness living their life toward the perception of homosexuality remains unsolved, especially in Southeast Asia, which has different cultures, religious diversity, and happiness levels in each country. So, in conducting our analysis, we include the individual perception about the happiness level of their feeling while living their life as one of our focus studies.

To diversify between samples, we included five control variables in our estimation: age, gender, income level, marital status, and household location. The method used in this study is multivariate logit, while the model used to answer the question of how society's perception of homosexuals depends on the following two models:

```
Y1_{i} = \alpha_{0} + \beta_{1} religiousity_{i} + \beta_{2} internetusage_{i} + \beta_{3} happines_{i} + \beta_{4} age_{i} + \beta_{5} gender_{i} + \beta_{6} income_{i} + \beta_{7} marriage_{i} + \beta_{8} location_{i} + \mu .....(1)
and
Y2_{i} = \alpha_{0} + \beta_{1} religiousity_{i} + \beta_{2} internetusage_{i} + \beta_{3} happines_{i} + \beta_{4} age_{i} + \beta_{5} gender_{i} + \beta_{6} income_{i} + \beta_{7} marriage_{i} + \beta_{8} location_{i} + \mu .....(2)
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While the model used to analyze how people's decisions to socialize with homosexuals is based on the following model:

```
Y3_i = a_0 + \beta_1 religiousity_i + \beta_2 internetusage_i + \beta_3 happines_i + \beta_4 age_i + \beta_5 gender_i + \beta_6 income_i + \beta_7 marriage_i + \beta_8 location_i + \mu .....(3)
```

# Where

Y1 = public perception of the existence of homosexuals

Y2 = public perception about how homosexuals become parents
Y3 = public preference for socializing and neighbors with homosexuals

Religousity = individual level of religious observance

Internetusage = internate usage daily

Happines = individual happiness level of living their life (happy/unhappy)

Age = Individual age Gender = gender (male/female)

Income = income level (lower middle/upper middle)

Marriage = marital status (married / single)

Location = individual residence area (urban / rural)

 $a_0$  = intercept

 $\beta_1, \beta_2 \dots \beta_8$  = variable coefficient

 $\mu$  = error term

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A number of 9044 respondents consists of 2986 individuals from Indonesia, 927 individuals from Malaysia, 1094 individuals from Myanmar, 976 individuals from the Philippines, 1205 individuals from Singapore, 934 individuals from Thailand, and 918 individuals from Vietnam who were eligible to be sampled in this study. Each country sample used in this study is between 37 and 49 years old. As many as 74.88% of the respondent feel more religious toward the teachings of their religion. Most people reported that they are happy living their life, and less than 9% of the samples reported that that they are unhappy with their life. Most of the samples are women, and only about 46.47% of the samples are men. We found that almost half of the samples access the internet daily; approximately 41.29% of individuals access the internet daily. Most of the samples were individuals with lower-middle-income levels, with only about 29.78% belonging to upper-middle-income groups. Only 45.44% of the sample live in urban areas, and 72.88% of the sample are married.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistic

Variables	INA	MAL	MYN	PHI	SGP	THAI	VIET	Pooled
Age (Years old)	40.13	37.72	40.56	43.64	49.37	45.81	37.94	41.91
Religious Ob. (Obedience)	92.71%	85.01%	94.97%	83.50%	65.39%	25.91%	35.73%	74.88%
Happines (Happy)	93.95%	86.73%	87.84%	91.50%	89.79%	83.62%	97.82%	90.98%
Gender (Male)	45.25%	49.30%	50.55%	51.23%	42.57%	46.15%	43.14%	46.47%
Accessing Internet (Daily)	30.60%	73.46%	16.73%	25.82%	58.17%	45.07%	63.29%	41.29%
Level income (Middle up)	28.43%	24.70%	26.78%	24.90%	41.58%	26.23%	36.17%	29.78%
Location (Urban Areas)	25.92%	59.22%	30.16%	57.99%	100%	41.65%	32.24%	45.44%
Married Status (Married)	77.49%	63.54%	72.21%	73.53%	63.15%	79.55%	73.20%	72.88%
N	2990	927	1094	976	1205	934	918	9044

Source: Data processed, 2022.

The existence of homosexuals in each sampled country in this study has experienced severe rejection. It is revealed that 80.51% of the sample stated that homosexuals could not be justified living in their region or country. In addition, only about 35.5% of the sample agreed that homosexuals could be good parents if they decide to have or adopt children in the future. Meanwhile, 64.5% believe and disagree that homosexuals can be good parents. Approximately 60% of the sample refuses to be

neighbors with homosexuals, and only 40% reported has no problem living side-by-side with homosexual as a neighbors daily.

Table 3. Public Perception Toward Homosexuals from Seven Countries in South-East Asia

Variables	Allowed / Acceptable	Disallowed / Disagree
Perception on homosexual existance	19.49%	80.51%
Perception of homosexuals as a good parents	35.46%	64.54%
Willingness to be neighbors with homosexuals	39.82%	60.18%

Source: Data processed, 2022.

#### REGRESSION ANALYSIS

In the analysis of this study, we used a multivariate logit approach to estimate the three models. Since the coefficients found from the regression value tend to bias and inaccurate, So to get a better interpretation, we use the transformation of the values obtained from the post-estimation of the marginal effect value (Escobar et al., 2010). The calculation of the marginal effect value in Table 4 and the multivariate logit regression analysis coefficients have the same direction and significance value. The only difference between these values is the coefficient and probability values in the results obtained (see: Table 4 and Appendix 1).

In Table 4, we find that age affects each model differently. The first model indicates that the older the individual, the more likely they are to reject the existence of homosexuals in their environment. The second model has the same direction, where the older the individual has the probability of thinking that homosexuals are incapable of being good parents. Meanwhile, in the third model, we found a different pattern from the first and second models, where the older a person has no problems socializing and have neighbors with homosexuals. We found the same patterns in all countries regardless of homosexual legality status. There was no substantial difference between the findings on categorical countries in Table 5 and the pooled results in Table 4.

We found interesting results on the level of individual religious perspectives. The religious level has a negative influence on all models used and is statistically significant. People with high religious level had an 18% higher probability of rejecting and disapproving of homosexual practices. In the second model, religious level seems has the most significant effect. Those with higher religiosity level have a higher probability of thinking that homosexuals will not be able to become good parents will be around 29% higher than others. In addition, the more higher level of religiosity have a 16% probability of refusing to socialize and have neighbors with homosexuals. We found a similar pattern between country groups and pooled results. However, in countries that legalize homosexuality, it seems that higher religious levels have a lower homonegativity influence with a 7.5% probability compared

to countries that prohibit homosexual practices. Nevertheless, they still refuse to socialize with homosexuals, as found in countries that prohibit homosexual practices.

Daily internet access has a statistically significant influence in the first and second models. We found that the more people access the internet daily, the more they have a 5.2% higher probability of accepting the existence of homosexuality compared to people who do not access the internet daily. In the second model, people who access the internet daily have a 3.4% higher probability of thinking that homosexuals can be good parents as heterosexual parents. The influence of accessing the internet daily in countries that legalize homosexuality shows significant probability changes compared to the pooled analysis. Our estimation in homosexual legalized countries shows an 8% probability of accepting homosexuality, and the second models have an 8.6% probability of believing homosexuals can be good parents. The last model shows that homosexuals legalized country, accessing the internet every day will give a 6% higher probability than those who do not access the internet daily. Even more, countries with vague homosexual policies, such as the Philippines, show that internet access on a daily basis encourages people to be more receptive to homosexuals. In fact, the probability of the level of acceptance is three times higher than the findings in the pooled analysis.

Table 4. Marginal Effect Analysis (Post Estimation Multivariate Logit Regression)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.001*	-0.002***	0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000	(0.000)
Religious Obedience	-0.181***	-0.287)***	-0.158***
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.011)
Acces Internet Daily	0.052***	0.034)***	0.007
•	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Level of Happines	0.044***	0.008	0.005
	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Gender	-0.035***	-0.029)***	-0.019*
	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Income level	0.003	-0.005	-0.016
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Married Status	-0.023**	-0.026)**	-0.037***
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Location	0.048***	0.017)*	0.157***
	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.010)
N	9,044	9,044	9,044

Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

The first model only shows a statistically significant influence on the individual happiness level. We found that the happier a person is, the more likely they will accept homosexuality in their life. In country groups, higher results are shown in countries where homosexuality is legal. Those who feel happier in their life have a 21.2% higher probability of accepting the existence of homosexuality compared to unhappy people. This finding is quite interesting since at our pooled analysis, the level of happiness only gives a 4% probability of accepting homosexual existence. However, happier people

remain to refuse to socialize and avoid neighbors with homosexuals. In addition, we find that men have a 3.5% higher probability of rejecting homosexual existence than women. Furthermore, males have a 2.9% higher possibility of assuming homosexuals will never be good parents as heterosexuals. Table 5 shows that men have a higher 8.6% probability of rejecting the existence of homosexuals and a 6.7% probability of believing that homosexuals would not be good parents. We also find that males have a 6.7% probability of avoiding socializing and living side by side with a homosexual in their neighborhood. This finding indicates that despite the constitution having legalized homosexual activity, males tend to be more homonegativity than females. The probability changes are even higher than we found in the pooled analysis.

Our estimation found that income level does not significantly affect public perception or preferences towards homosexuals. On the other hand, being married gives a person a 2.3% higher probability of thinking that homosexuality is not justified. Also, married people have a 2.6% higher probability of thinking that homosexuals never be as good parents as heterosexual couples. Furthermore, married people tend to reject living side-by-side with homosexuals in their neighborhood with a 3,7% probability. Country group analysis showed that married people who live in a country that prohibits homosexual practices have a higher probability of rejecting the existence of homosexuals. In addition, they do not believe homosexuals can be good parents and refuse to socialize with them.

Table 5. Marginal Effect Analysis On Country Groups (Post Estimation Multivariate Logit Regression)

	Legal (THAI, VIET)		Vague (PHI)			Illegal / Prohibited (MAL, SGP, INA, MYN)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.003***	-0.004*** (0.001)	0.003***	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001* (0.000)	-0.002*** (0.000)	0.002***
Religious Obedience	-0.075***	-0.075***	-0.179***	-0.009	-0.108***	0.012	-0.076***	-0.146***	-0.167***
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.033)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.016)
Access Internet Daily	0.081***	0.086***	0.061**	0.040	0.158***	0.113***	0.033***	-0.036***	0.022*
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.013)
Level of Happiness	0.212***	0.062*	-0.117***	-0.002	0.073	0.002	-0.004	-0.030*	0.023
	(0.043)	(0.033)	(0.039)	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.042)	(0.012)	(0.018)	(0.020)
Gender	-0.086***	-0.067***	-0.067***	-0.039	-0.058*	-0.055**	-0.010	0.004	-0.012
	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.024)	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.012)
Income level	0.024	0.019	-0.049**	0.026	0.031	0.023	0.002	-0.002	0.006
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.030)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.013)
Married Status	-0.007	-0.002	-0.002	-0.042	0.018	0.011	-0.039***	-0.067***	-0.057***
	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.028)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.013)
Location	0.093***	0.079***	0.0817***	0.095***	0.062*	0.012	0.056***	0.083***	0.153***
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.025)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.012)
10	1,852	1,852	1,852	976	976	976	6,216	6,216	6,216

Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

We also found that people living in urban areas have a 4.8% higher probability of accepting that homosexuality can be justified. Moreover, people in urban areas tend to think homosexuals can be good parents, with a 1.7% higher probability than people living in rural areas. People who live in urban areas also have a 15.7% probability of accepting the presence of homosexuals as their neighbors and

have no problems socializing with them. The results from the country group analysis show the same results as pooled analysis, whether in countries that legalize, prohibit, or are still vague regulations about homosexuals.

# DISCUSSION

Currently, most communities in Southeast Asia are homophobic, and homosexuals suffer considerable rejection. Less than 20% of the community could justify the existence of homosexuals. Moreover, 64% of the people in Southeast Asia believe that homosexuals will not be able to become good parents. 40% of the respondents do not refuse to socialize and live side-by-side as neighbors in their environment despite their non-normative behavior. Our results indicate that public receptivity toward homosexual Southeast Asia is also relatively low. This finding is consistent with Detenber et al. (2014) and Jerome et al. (2021), which conducted a study on Malaysia and Singapore and found the same pattern as our findings.

Our first regression results show that age influences individual perceptions toward homosexuals differently for each model. Our findings suggest that the older a person is more likely to reject the existence of homosexuality. Also, when people get older, they believe that homosexuals will not be able to be good parents like heterosexual couples. This finding support several studies that have been conducted in other regions, such as Cheng, Wu, and Adamczyk (2016); Jakobsson, Kotsadam, and Jakobsson (2013); Schwartz (2010). Their study found that older people tend to be more homonegativity because of their conservative views and traditional culture. That traditional culture makes them remain stand with heterosexual orientation. However, our third model shows that older people do not necessarily refuse to socialize and interact with homosexuals. This finding is contrary to Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera (2006), Jäckle & Wenzelburger (2015), and Lin et al. (2021). They found that in the U.S., Taiwan, and most of the world, older people tend not to associate with homosexuals. Nevertheless, our findings are consistent with Baltes & Smith (2008). Their finding suggests that when people get older, their psychological development continues to grow, leading them to a high level of wisdom and tend to be more tolerant.

The second finding in our analysis shows that someone with a higher religious level has more probability of rejecting homosexuality. A high-level religious person prefers not to socialize with homosexuals, nor do they want to live in the same environment as homosexuals. In addition, a religious person believes homosexuals will never be a good parents when they have kids. Although it has a lower probability value, the results of the country group analysis show that homonegativity still occurs in countries that legalize homosexuality in their constitution. This finding is consistent with previous work that found a higher religious people tend to reject the existence of homosexuals in their environment (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009; Detenber et al., 2014; Jäckle & Wenzelburger, 2015; Lambert et al., 2006).

It is known that the internet often opens a person's boundaries to access information from various regions. Wisely accessing the internet is often associated with open-mindedness, making users

more concerned about new phenomena in everyday life. Moreover, accessing the internet makes people more tolerant of contemporary phenomena such as homosexuality (Zhang et al., 2020). Our third finding suggests that people who access the internet daily have a tendency to be more open to accepting the existence of homosexuals in daily life, encouraging them to believe that homosexuals can be good parents as well as heterosexuals couple. In countries where homosexuality is legal, daily internet access shows a very significant increase compared to the probability that appears in the pooled analysis. Countries with vague regulations about homosexuality show a reasonably high probability of perceptions of homosexuals to be good parents and encourage them to want to socialize with other people homosexuals. It would not be surprising since the previous study shows that people who spend more time accessing the internet through social media will encourage people to become more open to accepting homosexuals in their life (Detenber et al., 2014; Jerome et al., 2021).

Our finding suggests that when people feel happier in their life, they will more accept the existence of homosexuals in their life compared to unhappy people. Our analysis of country groups shows that in countries where homosexuality has been legalized, people who are happy with their lives choose not to socialize with homosexuals. However, their probability of accepting the presence of homosexuals and believing that homosexuals can be good parents has a higher probability than the findings in the pooled analysis. This finding supports Tenenbaum et al. (2018), which say that when people are happier, they tend to be more tolerant than those who are afraid or do not feel emotions. Several studies confirm that individual happiness and life satisfaction have the most significant influence in encouraging individuals to become more tolerant. (Crowley & Walsh, 2021; Dicakson-Koekemoer & Ferreira, 2019).

Males, married people, and people who live in rural areas tend to be more homogenous. They reject the existence of homosexuals and thinks that homosexual never becomes a good parent. Even more, they avoid socializing with homosexuals or deny becoming their neighbors. Although the state has legalized homosexuality, it does not necessarily make men more tolerant of homosexuals. The probability is even higher than our pooled analysis. The gender tendency toward homonegativity is found in other studies in other parts of the world. Harbaugh & Lindsey (2015), Jäckle & Wenzelburger (2015), and Lin et al. (2021) suggest that men tend to be more homonegativity and reject the existence of homosexual behavior compared to women.

Married persons are more homonegativity than those who are not married or remain single. This finding is in line with Adamczyk and Pitt (2009); Jäckle and Wenzelburger (2015), which confirms that married people tend to be homonegativity and reject the presence of homosexuals around them. It is known that rural and urban societies have different characteristics. Urban communities tend to be more open to various interactions between work and the environment. Whereas people in rural areas where beliefs and attitudes are sometimes affected by the thickness of religion and traditions that do not change over time (Nikkhah et al., 2015).

# CONCLUSION

In general, more than half of the people in seven countries in Southeast Asia have a tendency to reject the existence of homosexuality. Most of them are reluctant to socialize with or be neighbors with homosexuals. In addition, they are less likely to believe that homosexuals will become good parents when they choose to have or adopt children. According to our results, age has a different influence on each model; the older a person, the more likely they will reject the existence of homosexuality. An older person thinks that homosexuals cannot be good parents like heterosexual couples. However, they do not refuse to socialize and neighbor with homosexuals. The level of religiosity has a negative influence on homosexuality. It has the same direction in all models, meaning that a higher level of religiosity will encourage the person not to accept the presence of homosexuals. Also, they believe that homosexuals will not become good parents and tend not to want to socialize and be neighbors with homosexuals. However, in countries that legalized homosexuality, a higher level of religiosity has a lower influence compared to countries that prohibit homosexual behavior.

By accessing the internet daily, people become more tolerant. This finding suggests that people who access the internet daily are more likely to accept homosexuals around them. They support that being homosexual does not necessarily make them bad parents to their children. Even in countries where homosexuality is legal, accessing the internet on a daily basis shows a significant influence. They are more open to accepting homosexuals. Furthermore, happiness has a role in individual sentiment toward homosexuality. Happier people make them more tolerant and accepting of homosexual behavior. In countries that have legalized homosexuality, happy people have a higher probability of accepting the existence of homosexuals. However, they still choose not to socialize with homosexuals. Men and married people have a tendency not to accept homosexual behavior and refuse to associate with homosexuals. We found that married people in countries where homosexuality is prohibited are more homonegativity than married people in countries where homosexuality is legal or in countries with vague homosexual policies. In addition, we found that people living in urban areas tend to accept homosexual behavior compared to rural areas.

# LIMITATIONS

The data used in this study is cross-section data. Thus it has not explained how individual attitudes change towards homosexual cases over time. The future study is expected to use data for a more extended period to explain the long-term impact of the interest variable on homosexual behavior.

# DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors

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**Appendix 1: Multivariate Logit Regression** 

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.004*	-0.009***	***800.0
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Religious Obedience	-1.261***	-1.398***	-0.700***
	(0.057)	(0.052)	(0.051)
Acces Internet Daily	0.359***	0.163***	0.0309
•	(0.061)	(0.052)	(0.050)
Level of Happines	0.303***	0.039	0.020
	(0.103)	(0.082)	(0.077)
Gender	-0.240***	-0.142***	-0.084*
	(0.056)	(0.047)	(0.045)
Income level	0.0198	-0.023	-0.069
	(0.061)	(0.052)	(0.049)
Married Status	-0.160**	-0.129**	-0.163***
	(0.062)	(0.053)	(0.051)
Location	0.335***	0.083*	0.695***
	(0.058)	(0.049)	(0.046)
Constant	-0.812***	0.813***	-0.394***
	(0.149)	(0.125)	(0.118)
N	9,044	9,044	9,044

Appendix 2: Multivariate Logit Regression on Country Group

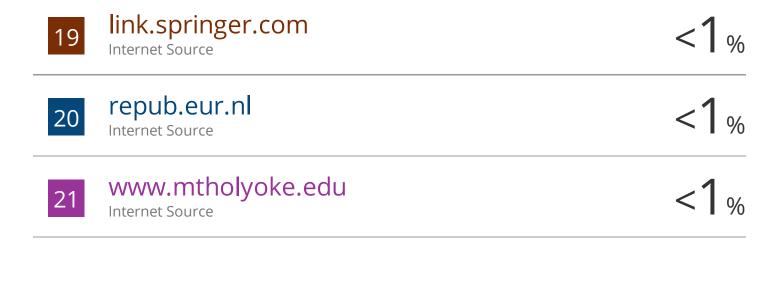
	Legal (THAI, VIET)				Vague (PHI)			Illegal / Prohibited (MAL, SGP, INA, MYN)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	
Age	-0.012*** (0.004)	-0.0183*** (0.004)	0.013***	-0.004 (0.005)	-0.021*** (0.005)	-0.008 (0.00557)	-0.006* (0.003)	-0.011*** (0.002)	0.008***	
Religious Obedience	-0.323***	-0.384*** (0.111)	-0.763***	-0.0412 (0.185)	-0.478*** (0.185)	0.085	-0.927***	-0.854*** (0.082)	-0.832*** (0.080)	
Acces Internet Daily	0.348***	0.437***	0.261**	0.184	0.700***	0.791*** (0.251)	0.391***	-0.214*** (0.070)	0.109*	
Level of Happines	0.909***	0.317*	-0.502*** (0.167)	-0.008 (0.251)	0.324 (0.256)	0.014 (0.296)	-0.054 (0.147)	-0.178* (0.103)	0.114 (0.099)	
Gender	-0.368***	-0.343***	-0.286***	-0.179	-0.258*	-0.384** (0.172)	-0.118	0.028	-0.061 (0.057)	
Income level	0.105	0.096	-0.209* (0.107)	0.117	0.138	0.162	0.027	-0.015 (0.068)	0.032	
Married Status	-0.030	-0.010 (0.133)	-0.010 (0.121)	-0.193	0.078	0.077	-0.471***	-0.396***	-0.285***	
Location	0.399***	0.402***	0.349*** (0.103)	0.435***	0.273*	0.0754	0.665***	0.489***	0.760***	
Constant	-0.665** (0.274)	1.579*** (0.282)	-0.169 (0.263)	-0.584	0.525	1.713*** (0.472)	-1.394***	0.232 (0.164)	-0.713*** (0.155)	
N	1,852	1,852	1.852	976	976	976	6.216	6,216	6.216	

Standard errors in parentheses
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

# The Influence of Social Demographics Towards Homosexuality from Seven Countries in Southeast Asia

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