



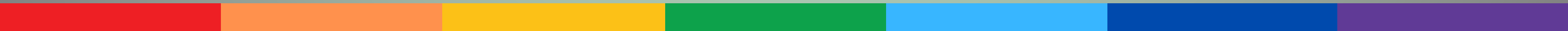
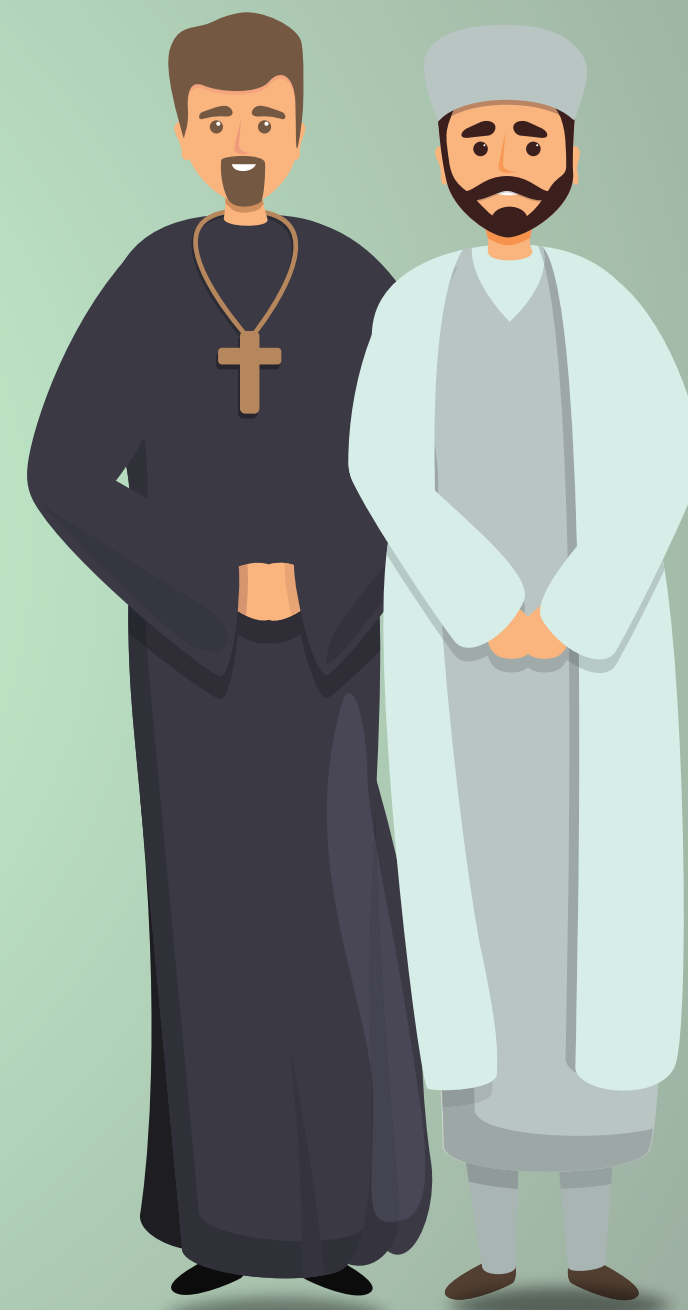
Bisi Alimi
Foundation

ACCELERATING SOCIAL
ACCEPTANCE OF LGBT IN NIGERIA

PATHWAY TO INCLUSION

RESEARCH REPORT

Highlighting lived experiences of LGBTQ+ persons of Faith in religious settings.



PATHWAY TO INCLUSION

RESEARCH REPORT



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The Bisi Alimi Foundation is a non-governmental charity that was set up following the passing of the same-sex Marriage Prohibition Bill, 2013 into law in 2014; the foundation was developed to challenge. Registered in England in 2015 and Nigeria in 2023, the foundation has carried out

projects and interventions in Nigeria for almost a decade with a wide-reaching impact. Our mission is "to accelerate the social acceptance of LGBTQ persons in Nigeria." We do this through three main focus areas; Research, Capacity Building Training and Stakeholder and community engagement. The Bisi Alimi Foundation (BAF) is built on strong values of openness, transparency, professionalism and quality deliverables. We work towards this mission through; Research – which informs our programming, Capacity-building interventions and stakeholder engagement, using an evidence-based approach to support and enhance our work to advocate for a more inclusive society for all, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised communities – we prioritise policies that strengthen our democracy, inclusion and the Rule of Law.

The Pathway of Inclusion: Equipping Religious Leaders to Embrace LGBTQ Diversity in Nigeria is a research data-driven initiative which aims to provide deeper insights and understanding of the experiences LGBTQ persons of faith face in religious settings and contexts. This report's primary objective is to provide religious leaders and institutions with data-driven evidence of the effect of intolerant religious teachings and practices on the lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQ) persons of faith in religious spaces.

Moreso, we aim to provide religious leaders with nuanced knowledge around SOGIESC (sexual orientation-gender-identity and expression-sex characteristics) issues by addressing common misconceptions and stereotypes through open dialogue and critical reflection.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who played a role in completing this significant research on the LGBTQI+ Pathway to Religious Inclusion in Nigeria. This study represents a collaborative effort that would not have been possible without the dedication, support, and insights from various individuals and organizations.

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Our heartfelt thanks extend to the religious leaders who engaged with us during this process. Your openness to dialogue and commitment to nurturing a more inclusive understanding of religious spaces is truly commendable. We aim for this report to reflect your dedication to cultivating a welcoming environment for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

This research underscores the strength of collaboration and the potential of collective action. We hope this report not only serves as a catalyst for ongoing discussions but also inspires constructive efforts to enhance religious inclusion and foster social acceptance for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW



1.1 Background of the Study

Religious discrimination is a pervasive issue faced by many LGBTQI+ individuals worldwide (Westwood, 2022b). In numerous cultural and religious contexts, non-heteronormative sexual orientations and gender identities are often perceived as morally or spiritually unacceptable (Mohd Tohit & Haque, 2024). This results in exclusion, condemnation, and systemic challenges that affect the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals. Religious institutions, which play a critical role in shaping societal norms and values in Nigeria, often perpetuate discriminatory attitudes through teachings and practices that oppose LGBTQI+ rights and recognition (Kim, 2024). Consequently, LGBTQI+ individuals experience stigma, alienation, and, in extreme cases, direct persecution (Meyer, 2003). Understanding the complex dynamics between religion and LGBTQI+ inclusion is essential for promoting acceptance, tolerance, and pathways to equality.

This study seeks to explore the intersection of religious discrimination and the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals, highlighting their challenges and the potential avenues for creating more inclusive religious spaces. It will also examine the global and local responses to LGBTQI+ rights within religious communities and propose ways to promote greater inclusivity.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Religious discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals continues to be a significant barrier to social and legal equality. In many societies, religion is a powerful influence on public opinion and policy.

This makes it difficult for LGBTQI+ individuals to live authentically and access the same rights and opportunities as their heterosexual or cisgender counterparts. Despite the progress made in some regions toward recognizing LGBTQI+ rights, the role of religious institutions in perpetuating exclusionary beliefs remains a critical problem. Many LGBTQI+ individuals face not only external discrimination from religious institutions but also internal conflict as they attempt to reconcile their identities with their faith. The resulting marginalization leads to negative outcomes such as increased mental health challenges, strained relationships with family and community, and limited access to support systems (Westwood, 2022). This study aims to address these issues by investigating the specific experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts and proposing practical solutions for fostering greater inclusivity.

1.3 Justification of the Study

This study addresses a gap in the existing literature on the intersection of religion and LGBTQI+ inclusion, particularly in regions where religious beliefs heavily influence societal attitudes. By exploring the specific experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in religious contexts, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how religious discrimination affects LGBTQI+. Secondly, the findings from this study will be valuable for religious institutions, LGBTQI+ advocacy groups, policymakers, and mental health professionals. Identifying the challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in religious spaces is essential for creating targeted interventions that promote tolerance and inclusion. Finally, this research has practical implications for fostering inclusivity within religious communities. By highlighting pathways to reform, this study can contribute to ongoing efforts to reduce discrimination and improve the quality of life for LGBTQI+ individuals.

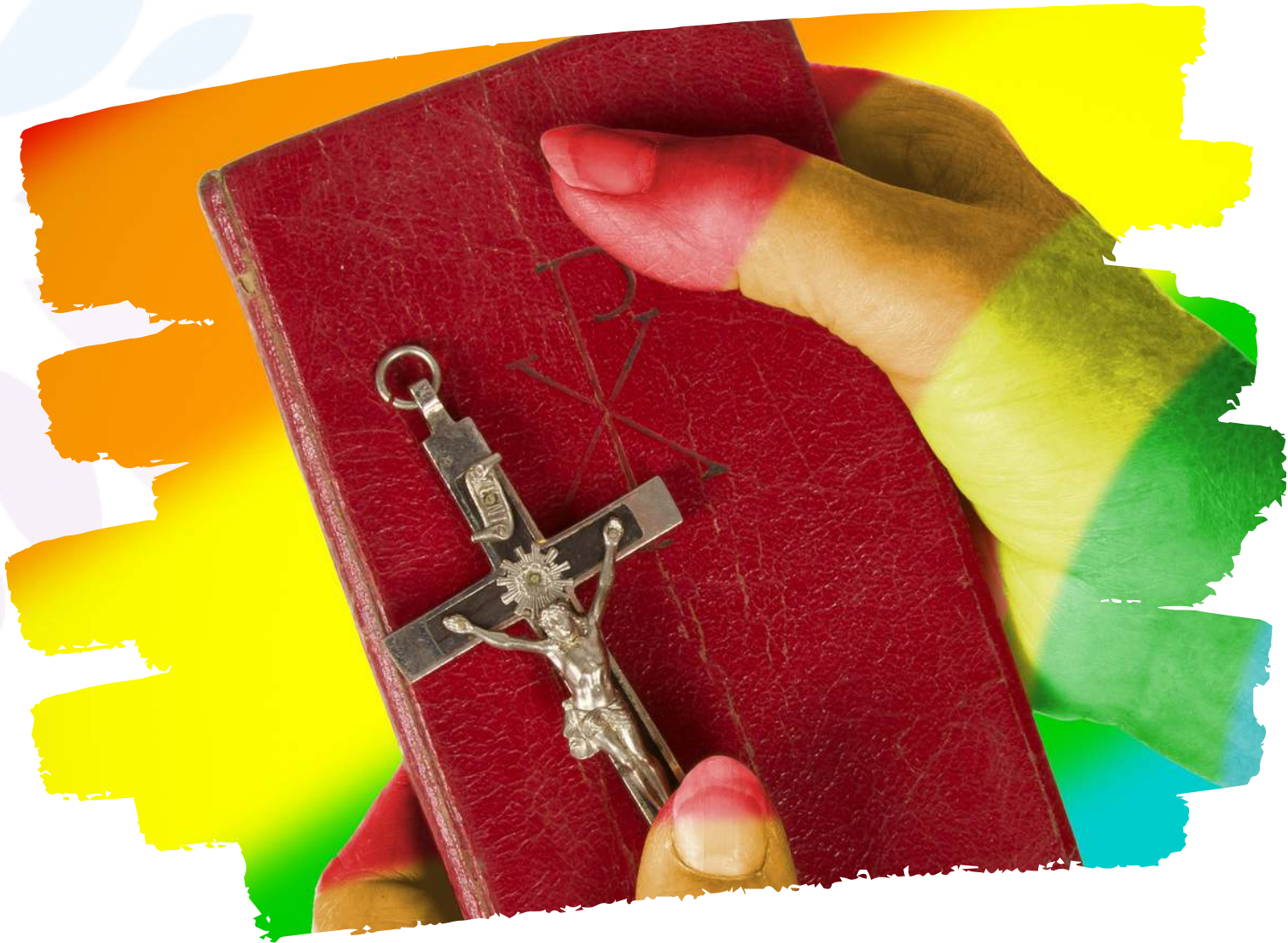
1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

Aim This study aims to explore the impact of religious discrimination on LGBTQI+ individuals, with a focus on understanding their experiences, challenges, and potential pathways to religious inclusion

Objectives By exploring the specific experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in religious contexts, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how religious discrimination affects LGBTQI+. Secondly, the findings from this study will be valuable for religious institutions, LGBTQI+ advocacy groups, policymakers, and mental health professionals. Identifying the challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in religious spaces is essential for creating targeted interventions that promote tolerance and inclusion. Finally, this research has practical implications for fostering inclusivity within religious communities. By highlighting pathways to reform, this study can contribute to ongoing efforts to reduce discrimination and improve the quality of life for LGBTQI+ individuals.

1.5 Research Questions

- 1.What are the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts about discrimination?
- 2.How does religious discrimination impact the psychological, emotional, and social well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals?
- 3.What role do religious institutions play in either supporting or opposing LGBTQI+ rights and inclusion?
- 4.What are the potential pathways for fostering religious inclusion and acceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals in religious spaces?



1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to both academic discourse and practical efforts aimed at fostering inclusivity for LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts. By examining the experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals who encounter religious discrimination, this research can illuminate the nuanced ways in which religious beliefs and practices impact their lives. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing effective interventions that promote acceptance and support within religious communities. Furthermore, the findings from this study can serve as a valuable resource for LGBTQI+ advocacy groups, religious institutions, and policymakers seeking to create more inclusive environments. By providing insights into the specific barriers faced by LGBTQI+ individuals, this research can inform strategies for reform within religious organizations and contribute to broader societal changes that enhance the rights and well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study encompasses the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within specific religious contexts, focusing on the impact of religious discrimination on their lives. The research will primarily target individuals from diverse religious backgrounds, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the varying degrees of discrimination encountered across different faiths. While the study aims to gather data from a wide range of participants, it will be delimited to a particular geographic region to ensure a manageable sample size and in-depth analysis. The research will not cover every possible religious tradition but rather focus on the most prevalent ones within the selected area. Additionally, this study will concentrate on the psychological, emotional, and social implications of religious discrimination, leaving aside other potential factors such as economic impacts or legal considerations. By defining these boundaries, the research aims to provide focused and relevant insights while acknowledging the complexity of the topic.

1.8 Literature Review

1.8.1 The Concept of Religious Discrimination

Religious discrimination refers to the unfair treatment or prejudice directed at individuals based on their religious beliefs, practices, or affiliations (Vang et al., 2019).

This form of discrimination can manifest in various ways, including social exclusion, verbal and physical harassment, unequal treatment in legal and educational systems, and denial of services or opportunities (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). In the context of LGBTQI+ individuals, religious discrimination often arises from beliefs that position non-heteronormative identities and practices as sinful or immoral, leading to stigmatization and marginalization (Westwood, 2022b).

Religious institutions and their doctrines can play a significant role in shaping societal attitudes toward LGBTQI+ individuals (Kim, 2024). Many traditional religious teachings view homosexuality and gender nonconformity as violations of divine laws, which can result in harmful rhetoric that promotes intolerance and exclusion (Campbell et al., 2019). This discrimination can occur at both institutional and interpersonal levels, affecting the psychological well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals who may feel rejected or alienated from their communities (Chan et al., 2022). It is essential to understand religious discrimination not only as a violation of individual rights but also as a barrier to social cohesion and community well-being.



1.8.2 Historical and Societal Context of LGBTQI+ Discrimination

The historical context of LGBTQI+ discrimination is deeply intertwined with societal norms, cultural beliefs, and religious teachings (Westwood, 2022b).

For centuries, many cultures have held heteronormative ideals that privilege heterosexual relationships while stigmatizing same-sex attraction and gender nonconformity (Pollitt et al., 2021). Historically, LGBTQI+ individuals have faced severe consequences for their identities, including criminalization, imprisonment, and violence (Donohue et al., 2021).

The advent of the LGBTQI+ rights movement in the late 20th century marked a significant shift in societal attitudes, with advocates working to dismantle discriminatory laws and practices (Brittanica, 2024). However, many religious institutions continued to promote exclusionary doctrines, contributing to the ongoing marginalization of LGBTQI+ individuals. In contemporary society, while there has been notable progress in legal rights and visibility, LGBTQI+ individuals still encounter discrimination, particularly in more conservative or religious communities (Westwood, 2022). This tension between evolving societal norms and entrenched religious beliefs continues to impact the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals, perpetuating cycles of discrimination and exclusion.

1.8.3 Intersectionality: Religion and LGBTQI+ Identity

Intersectionality is a critical framework for understanding the multifaceted experiences of individuals who navigate multiple social identities, including religion and sexual orientation or gender identity (Collins et al., 2021).

For LGBTQI+ individuals, the intersection of their sexual or gender identity with their religious beliefs can create complex challenges. Many individuals find themselves at the crossroads of these identities, often facing conflicting expectations and pressures from their religious communities and LGBTQI+ peers (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015).

Religious beliefs can shape how LGBTQI+ individuals perceive themselves and their identities, sometimes leading to internalized homophobia or guilt (Barnes & Meyer, 2012). Conversely, strong connections to faith can provide LGBTQI+ individuals with a sense of community and belonging, even in the face of discrimination (Rand et al., 2021). Understanding the intersectionality of religion and LGBTQI+ identity is crucial for recognizing the unique challenges faced by individuals within these overlapping identities. It allows for a more nuanced examination of how religious beliefs can both empower and oppress LGBTQI+ individuals, highlighting the need for inclusive approaches that honour the complexities of their lived experiences.

1.9.4 Psychological and Social Impacts of Discrimination

The psychological and social impacts of discrimination on LGBTQI+ individuals are profound and far-reaching. Experiencing religious discrimination can lead to a range of negative mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Pascoe & Richman, 2009).

The internalization of negative societal messages can exacerbate feelings of isolation and alienation, particularly for those who feel unable to reconcile their identities with their faith (Prizeman et al., 2023).

Socially, LGBTQI+ individuals may face rejection from family, friends, and religious communities, leading to a loss of support networks that are vital for emotional well-being. This rejection can result in a heightened sense of loneliness and diminished access to resources, further exacerbating mental health challenges (Garcia et al., 2020). Moreover, the stigma surrounding LGBTQI+ identities can prevent individuals from seeking help or disclosing their experiences, perpetuating cycles of silence and suffering (Sileo et al., 2022).

Conversely, supportive environments that embrace both LGBTQI+ identities and religious beliefs can foster resilience and well-being. Access to affirming communities, whether religious or LGBTQI+-focused, can provide vital support systems that counteract the negative effects of discrimination (Rand et al., 2021). Ultimately, addressing the psychological and social impacts of religious discrimination requires a holistic approach that emphasizes inclusion, understanding, and support for LGBTQI+ individuals within their religious contexts.

1.8.5 Experiences of LGBTQI+ Individuals in Religious Spaces

The experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious spaces can vary widely, ranging from acceptance and support to exclusion and hostility. For many, religious institutions are pivotal communities that provide spiritual guidance and social connection.

However, LGBTQI+ individuals often face unique challenges in these environments due to prevailing attitudes toward non-heteronormative identities (Westwood, 2022).

In inclusive religious spaces, LGBTQI+ individuals may find a sense of belonging and affirmation, where they can express their identities openly and authentically (Rand et al., 2021). These spaces can foster community, support, and spiritual growth, enabling individuals to integrate their sexual or gender identities with their faith (Beagan & Hattie, 2015). Many progressive religious groups actively work to create safe environments for LGBTQI+ individuals, offering supportive services, advocacy, and resources.

Conversely, in more traditional or conservative religious environments, LGBTQI+ individuals frequently encounter discrimination, rejection, and even spiritual abuse (Westwood, 2022). This may manifest through exclusion from religious ceremonies, denial of leadership roles, or direct verbal and emotional harassment (Ryan & Gardner, 2018). The impact of these negative experiences can be profound, leading to feelings of shame, guilt, and disconnection from both their faith and community (Lloyd et al., 2023). The intersection of faith and LGBTQI+ identity creates a complex landscape that shapes the lived experiences of individuals, influencing their emotional and spiritual well-being.

1.8.6 Role of Religion in Social Exclusion and Inclusion

Religion plays a dual role in the lives of LGBTQI+ individuals, acting both as a source of exclusion and inclusion. On one hand, many religious doctrines have historically condemned LGBTQI+ identities, leading to widespread social exclusion and marginalization (Westwood, 2022).

This exclusion can manifest through discriminatory policies, rhetoric that demonizes LGBTQI+ individuals, and social ostracism (Büttner et al., 2024). The consequences of such exclusion are often severe, including mental health issues, loss of community, and diminished access to social and support networks (Hossain et al., 2022).

On the other hand, some religious groups and communities actively work to promote inclusion and acceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals. These progressive faith organizations challenge traditional interpretations of religious texts, advocating for a theology that embraces diversity and equity (Westwood, 2022). Initiatives aimed at creating inclusive religious spaces can serve as powerful counterforces to discrimination, fostering environments where LGBTQI+ individuals can participate fully in their faith communities without fear of judgment or rejection (Rand et al., 2021).

The role of religion in social exclusion and inclusion highlights the need for critical engagement with religious texts and practices. By addressing harmful interpretations and promoting inclusive teachings, religious communities can become allies in the fight for LGBTQI+ rights, contributing to a more just and equitable society.



1.8.7 Coping Mechanisms for LGBTQI+ Individuals Facing Religious Discrimination

Coping with religious discrimination can be particularly challenging for LGBTQI+ individuals, who may experience a conflict between their faith and their sexual or gender identities.

Various coping mechanisms can emerge in response to these challenges, ranging from positive strategies to maladaptive behaviours (Algorani & Gupta, 2024).

Many LGBTQI+ individuals develop resilience through supportive networks, whether within LGBTQI+ community organizations, affirming religious groups, or among friends and allies (Ceatha et al., 2021). These networks provide emotional support, validation, and a sense of belonging, enabling individuals to navigate their experiences of discrimination more effectively (Rayland & Andrews, 2023). Engaging in activism or advocacy can also serve as a powerful coping mechanism, allowing individuals to channel their experiences into efforts for change and acceptance (Conner et al., 2023).

On the other hand, some individuals may resort to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse or social withdrawal, as a response to the psychological toll of discrimination (Sinha, 2008). The internalization of negative messages can lead to low self-esteem and self-hatred, further complicating the coping process.

Additionally, spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation, and participation in supportive religious activities, can offer solace and strength (Arrey et al., 2016). For many, finding a way to reconcile their faith with their identity is a crucial aspect of coping, allowing them to reframe their relationship with religion in a more affirming light (Alessi et al., 2021). Understanding and addressing the coping mechanisms of LGBTQI+ individuals facing religious discrimination is essential for providing appropriate support and resources that foster resilience and well-being.

1.8.8 Global and Local Efforts Toward LGBTQI+ Inclusion

Global and local efforts toward LGBTQI+ inclusion have gained significant momentum over the past few decades, reflecting a growing recognition of the rights and dignity of LGBTQI+ individuals. Internationally, numerous human rights organizations and advocacy groups work tirelessly to combat discrimination and promote inclusion (Prince, 2023).

Initiatives like the United Nations Free & Equal campaign aim to raise awareness about LGBTQI+ issues and challenge discriminatory laws and practices worldwide (United Nations, 2023). These global efforts often focus on promoting legal protections, supporting LGBTQI+ health and well-being, and fostering dialogue around LGBTQI+ rights in various cultural and religious contexts (Gage-Bouchard, 2017).

Locally, grassroots organizations play a crucial role in advocating for LGBTQI+ rights and fostering inclusive communities. These organizations often focus on direct support services, such as counselling, health care, and legal aid for LGBTQI+ individuals facing discrimination (Rand et al., 2021). Local efforts may also include educational campaigns aimed at raising awareness within religious and community spaces, helping to challenge and change harmful beliefs and practices.

In many regions, faith-based organizations have begun to engage in conversations about LGBTQI+ inclusion, leading to initiatives that promote acceptance within religious communities (Global Interfaith Network, 2022). These local efforts are critical for creating safe spaces where LGBTQI+ individuals can participate fully in their communities and religious institutions (Rand et al., 2021). Overall, both global and local efforts contribute to a more inclusive society by fostering understanding, challenging prejudice, and advocating for equal rights for LGBTQI+ individuals.

1.8.9 Comparative Analysis of Different Religious Responses to LGBTQI+ Issues

The responses of different religious traditions to LGBTQI+ issues are varied and complex, often reflecting a range of interpretations of sacred texts, cultural contexts, and historical developments.

Some religious groups maintain conservative stances, viewing LGBTQI+ identities as incompatible with their doctrines. These groups may promote exclusionary practices, such as conversion therapy or active opposition to LGBTQI+ rights legislation (Westwood, 2022). In these contexts, LGBTQI+ individuals may experience significant discrimination and marginalization, leading to conflict and trauma.

Conversely, many religious groups have adopted more progressive stances, advocating for the acceptance and inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals (Gerdt & DMin, 2019). These groups often reinterpret sacred texts in ways that affirm LGBTQI+ identities and promote a message of love and acceptance. Examples include various Christian denominations, reform Jewish congregations, and certain Islamic groups that actively support LGBTQI+ rights and work to create inclusive religious environments (Gerdt & DMin, 2019).

A comparative analysis of these responses highlights the diversity within religious traditions and the evolving nature of religious beliefs regarding LGBTQI+ individuals (Westwood, 2022). This analysis can help identify patterns of acceptance or discrimination and illuminate the factors influencing these varied responses. Understanding the different religious responses to LGBTQI+ issues is crucial for fostering dialogue and collaboration among diverse faith communities, ultimately working towards greater acceptance and inclusion for LGBTQI+ individuals.

1.8.10 Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Discrimination

Theoretical frameworks provide essential lenses through which to understand the complexities of discrimination faced by LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly within religious contexts (McConnell et al., 2018).

Several key frameworks can be applied to analyze the dynamics of religious discrimination:

1. **Social Identity Theory:** This framework explores how individuals derive their identities from group memberships, including religious affiliation and sexual orientation. Discrimination can occur when these identities conflict, leading to in-group favouritism and out-group bias. Understanding this theory helps illuminate the psychological mechanisms behind prejudice and how individuals navigate multiple identities.
2. **Intersectionality:** This framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of various social identities, such as race, gender, class, and sexuality. Intersectionality is critical for understanding how LGBTQI+ individuals experience discrimination in multifaceted ways, particularly when their religious identity intersects with other marginalized identities. This lens highlights the need for nuanced approaches that address the complexities of individual experiences.
3. **Queer Theory:** This theoretical perspective critiques normative understandings of gender and sexuality, challenging binary classifications and advocating for fluidity in identity. Queer theory can help deconstruct harmful narratives within religious contexts that reinforce heteronormativity, offering a framework for understanding LGBTQI+ identities as valid and worthy of acceptance.
4. **Critical Theory:** This framework examines power structures and societal norms that perpetuate discrimination. Applying critical theory to the study of religious discrimination allows researchers to explore how religious institutions may uphold discriminatory practices and contribute to social injustice. It emphasizes the need for social change and advocacy for marginalized groups (Kim, 2024).

By employing these theoretical frameworks, researchers can gain deeper insights into the mechanisms of discrimination faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in religious contexts. These frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of the social, psychological, and cultural factors that shape experiences of discrimination, ultimately guiding efforts toward greater inclusivity and acceptance.

1.8.11 Pathways to Religious Inclusion and Reform

Pathways to religious inclusion and reform for LGBTQI+ individuals are critical for fostering environments that embrace diversity and promote acceptance within faith communities.

These pathways often involve a combination of theological reinterpretation, community engagement, and advocacy for policy changes within religious institutions (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000).

1. **Theological Reinterpretation:** Many faith communities are actively engaging in reexamining traditional interpretations of sacred texts that have historically been used to justify exclusion. Progressive theologians and religious leaders are advocating for readings that affirm LGBTQI+ identities, emphasizing themes of love, acceptance, and justice inherent in many religious traditions. This theological work is essential for shifting attitudes within religious communities and fostering a more inclusive understanding of faith.
2. **Community Engagement:** Building bridges between LGBTQI+ individuals and religious communities is vital for promoting inclusion. Initiatives such as dialogue circles, workshops, and joint community service projects can help foster understanding and empathy among congregants. These engagements provide opportunities for LGBTQI+ individuals to share their experiences and for religious members to confront their biases and misconceptions.
3. **Advocacy and Policy Change:** Many LGBTQI+ activists work within religious institutions to advocate for formal policies that promote inclusion, such as non-discrimination policies, inclusive language in liturgy, and affirming practices in ceremonies and rituals. Advocacy efforts often focus on engaging with leadership to challenge discriminatory policies and practices, promoting a culture of acceptance and support.
4. **Interfaith Collaborations:** Interfaith initiatives that promote LGBTQI+ inclusion can also be powerful. These collaborations encourage diverse religious groups to come together to share resources, best practices, and strategies for fostering inclusivity. By working collectively, faith communities can create a stronger voice for LGBTQI+ acceptance and advocate for broader societal change.

By actively pursuing these pathways to inclusion and reform, religious communities can contribute to a more inclusive society that respects and affirms the identities of LGBTQI+ individuals, fostering environments where they can worship freely and authentically.

1.8.12 Legal and Policy Dimensions of LGBTQI+ Rights and Religious Freedom

The legal and policy dimensions of LGBTQI+ rights and religious freedom are complex and often contentious, reflecting ongoing debates about the balance between protecting individual rights and respecting religious beliefs (Judge, 2020)

This area encompasses various legal frameworks, court rulings, and policy initiatives that impact the lives of LGBTQI+ individuals and their relationships with religious institutions.

- 1.LGBTQI+ individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. These protections may extend to employment, housing, healthcare, and public accommodations. In many cases, these legal frameworks aim to ensure that LGBTQI+ individuals can live free from discrimination and harassment, promoting equality in society.
- 2.Religious Freedom Legislation: At the same time, many religious groups advocate for the protection of their right to practice their beliefs, which can sometimes conflict with LGBTQI+ rights. Some countries have enacted religious freedom laws that allow individuals and organizations to refuse services based on religious beliefs, which can lead to discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals. This legal landscape often creates tension between the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals and the rights of religious adherents to practice their faith.
- 3.Judicial Precedents: Court rulings play a significant role in shaping the legal landscape surrounding LGBTQI+ rights and religious freedom. Landmark cases, such as Obergefell v. Hodges in the United States, which legalized same-sex marriage, have advanced LGBTQI+ rights. However, other cases have upheld religious exemptions, allowing individuals and businesses to refuse services to LGBTQI+ clients based on religious beliefs. These judicial decisions can set important precedents that impact the rights and protections available to LGBTQI+ individuals.



4. Policy Advocacy and Reform: Advocacy efforts from LGBTQI+ rights organizations often focus on influencing legal and policy changes at both national and local levels. This includes lobbying for comprehensive non-discrimination laws, advocating for inclusive policies in religious organizations, and promoting awareness of the intersection of LGBTQI+ rights and religious freedom (White & Sepúlveda, 2020).

Understanding the legal and policy dimensions of LGBTQI+ rights and religious freedom is essential for navigating the complexities of this issue. It highlights the need for ongoing dialogue and collaboration between LGBTQI+ advocates, religious communities, and policymakers to ensure that the rights of all individuals are respected and upheld.

1.8.13 Review of Related Literature

A study explored how religious affiliation influenced LGBTQ-inclusive practices among educators from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. Analysis revealed significant effects of religious affiliation on the likelihood of practising LGBTQ-inclusive education, with varying pathways across different religious groups. Recommendations addressed intervention, inclusive practices, visibility, and leadership (Peter, 2018). Another study by Olaogun, (2024) explored the challenges and stigmatization faced by LGBTQ individuals in countries like Nigeria, where homosexual relationships lack legal recognition. It analyzed scholarly literature on the experiences of LGBTQ people in their physical and social environments. Using philosophical methods—analytical, speculative, and prescriptive—the study examined key terms, assessed impacts, and proposed strategies for alleviating the situation. The paper argued that excluding LGBTQ individuals from society could lead to negative outcomes like addiction, depression, or suicide (Olaogun, 2024). Furthermore, another study by Rand et al., (2021) investigated the health disparities experienced by LGBTQ+ youth compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers, aiming to identify the opportunities and challenges in supporting LGBTQ+ youth within a 4-H program in one U.S. state. Utilizing qualitative, community-based methods, including SWOT analyses and focus groups with various stakeholders, the research revealed three main themes: organizational climate, policies and procedures, and training, education, and resources. Additionally, two opportunity-focused themes emerged: community engagement and youth-specific resources. The findings underscore the 4-H program's potential to enhance LGBTQ+ inclusivity through strategic improvements in education, programming, hiring, and community partnerships while amplifying youth voices in resource development (Rand et al., 2021).



CHAPTER TWO

MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1 Research Design

The research design for this study was primarily quantitative, employing a survey methodology to gather data on the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals facing religious

This approach enabled the systematic collection of data from a larger sample, allowing for statistical analysis and the identification of patterns and trends. The survey consisted of structured questions aimed at capturing various aspects of participants' experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms related to religious discrimination. The quantitative design facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the scope and impact of religious discrimination on LGBTQI+ individuals.

2.2 Study Population and Sample

The study population comprised LGBTQI+ individuals who have or have not experienced discrimination in religious contexts. This population included individuals from diverse backgrounds, encompassing various ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religious affiliations. Aiming for a representative sample, the study targeted approximately one thousand five hundred participants to ensure sufficient data for analysis. Participants were recruited through LGBTQI+ community organizations, social media platforms, and community events, allowing for a broad representation of experiences and perspectives within the population.

2.3 Sampling Techniques

For this study, stratified random sampling was employed to ensure that diverse subgroups within the LGBTQI+ community were adequately represented in the survey. Stratification was based on factors such as age, gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation to capture the varied experiences of discrimination across different demographic categories. By employing this technique, the study aimed to minimize bias and enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, online survey distribution methods were used to reach a wider audience, facilitating the recruitment of participants from various geographic locations.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using a structured survey questionnaire specifically designed to explore the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals regarding religion. The survey included closed-ended questions with Likert scale items to assess the frequency and impact of discrimination, as well as open-ended questions to capture qualitative insights. Key topics covered in the survey included personal experiences of discrimination, coping mechanisms, perceptions of religious institutions, and overall mental health outcomes. The survey was administered online to ensure accessibility and convenience for participants. Data was analyzed quantitatively using statistical software to identify trends, correlations, and significant relationships within the data.

2.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection involved a structured online survey distributed to participants through various channels, including LGBTQI+ advocacy organizations, social media platforms, and community events. The survey was designed to be user-friendly, ensuring ease of access and completion for participants. Upon recruitment, potential participants were provided with information about the study, including its purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Participants were then sent an invitation online to complete the survey at their convenience, ensuring anonymity and encouraging honest responses. The data collection period was clearly defined, allowing sufficient time for participant recruitment and survey completion.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process to protect the rights and well-being of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants were strictly maintained; no identifiable information was collected, and data was stored securely. Special attention was given to minimizing any potential psychological distress that may arise from discussing experiences of discrimination.



CHAPTER THREE

DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present a detailed analysis of the data collected to address the research questions outlined in Chapter One. The primary aim is to provide insights into the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts and assess the impact of religious discrimination on their psychological, emotional, and social well-being. The analysis will include both descriptive and inferential statistics to interpret patterns and relationships within the data. This chapter is structured to first outline the process of data preparation, followed by descriptive statistics, analysis of research questions, and concluding with inferential statistical tests.



3.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24 years	400	40.0%
	25-34 years	250	25.0%
	35-44 years	150	15.0%
	45-54 years	100	10.0%
	55 years and older	100	10.0%
Sex Assigned at Birth	Male	450	45.0%
	Female	500	50.0%
	Intersex	50	5.0%
Gender Identity	Male	400	40.0%
	Female	450	45.0%
	Non-binary	80	8.0%
	Genderqueer	50	5.0%
	Other	20	2.0%
Sexual Orientation	Gay	350	35.0%
	Lesbian	300	30.0%
	Bisexual	250	25.0%
	Pansexual	50	5.0%
	Asexual	30	3.0%
	Other	20	2.0%
	Other	20	2.0%
Religious Affiliation	Christianity	600	60.0%
	Islam	200	20.0%
	Judaism	50	5.0%
	Hinduism	50	5.0%
	Buddhism	30	3.0%
	No religion	50	5.0%
	Other	20	2.0%
Geographic Distribution	Urban areas	700	70.0%
	Suburban areas	200	20.0%
	Rural areas	100	10.0%

The age distribution shows a clear concentration of respondents in the younger demographics. The largest age group is 18–24 years, representing 40% of the sample, followed by 25–34 years at 25%. This trend indicates a predominantly younger population, with those aged 35–44 making up only 15%, and both 45–54 and 55+ age groups contributing 10% each. The high percentage of younger respondents could impact study outcomes by reflecting perspectives and preferences that are more typical of early adulthood.

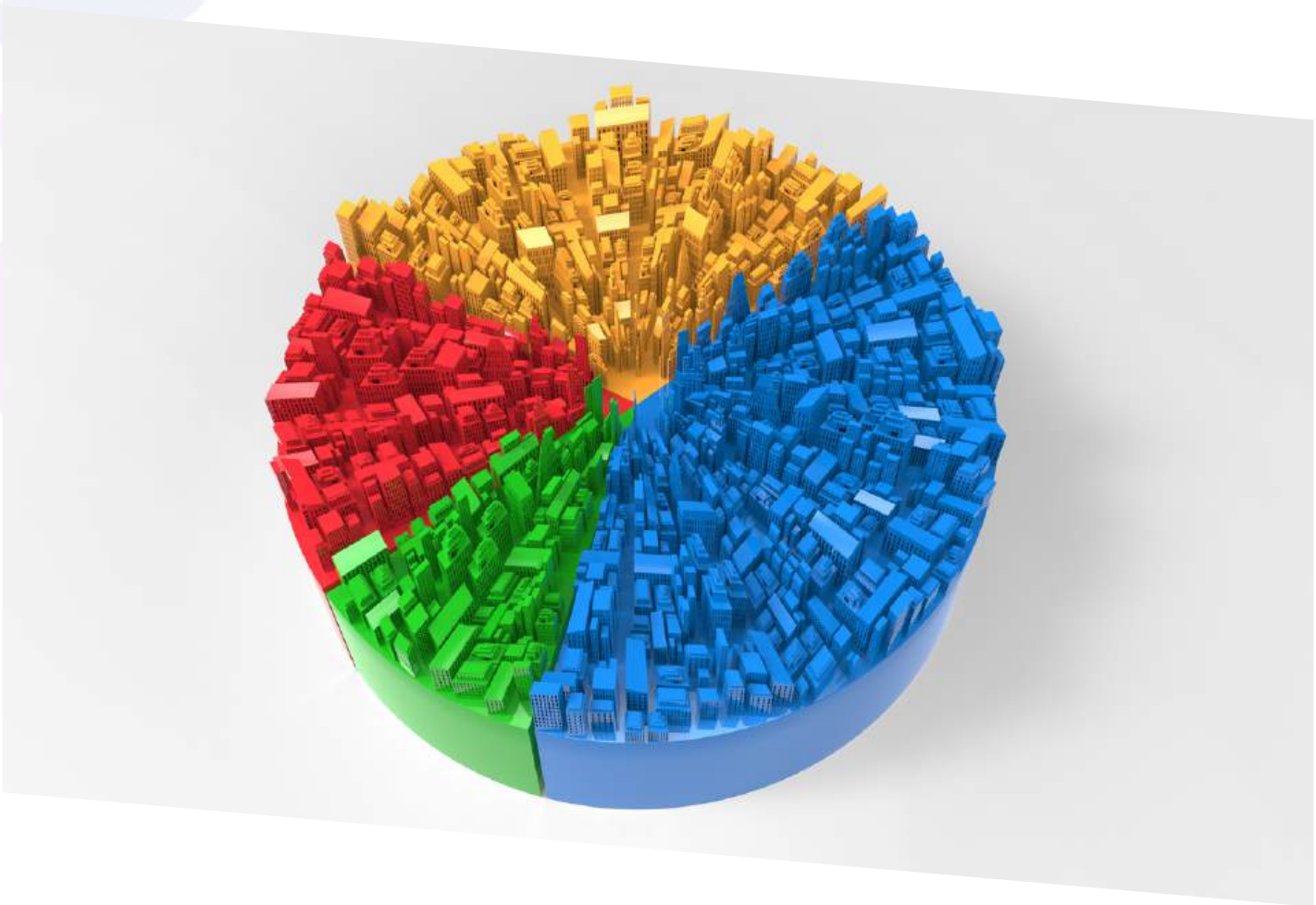
Regarding sex assigned at birth, the sample comprises 45% males, 50% females, and a small but notable 5% of respondents identifying as intersex. This breakdown suggests a slightly higher representation of females compared to males. Including intersex individuals is important as it reflects the diversity of biological sex beyond the traditional binary categories, adding depth to the analysis by capturing perspectives of individuals whose experiences may differ from typical male or female backgrounds.

In terms of gender identity, the sample shows diversity: 40% identify as male and 45% as female, closely aligning with the sex assigned at birth figures. Additionally, 8% identify as non-binary, 5% as genderqueer, and 2% fall into other categories. This range of identities highlights the variability within gender expression and underscores a shift towards recognizing gender as a spectrum rather than a binary concept. The inclusion of non-binary, genderqueer, and other identities is significant, offering insights into the lived experiences and challenges that individuals with less traditional gender identities may face.

The sample is also diverse in terms of sexual orientation. Gay and lesbian respondents account for 35% and 30% of the sample, respectively, while bisexual individuals represent 25%. Smaller groups identify as pansexual (5%), asexual (3%), and other orientations (2%). This diversity indicates a broad representation of the LGBTQ+ community and suggests that various sexual orientations are well-represented, allowing for analysis that may reveal differences in experiences or perspectives based on sexual orientation.

Religious affiliation among respondents is primarily Christian, with 60% of the sample identifying as such, followed by 20% who identify as Muslim. Smaller proportions of the sample identify with other religions, including Judaism and Hinduism (each 5%), Buddhism (3%), with 5% indicating no religious affiliation, and 2% specifying other religions. This distribution reveals a strong presence of Christian and Islamic religious identities, which may shape respondents' values, beliefs, and potentially their views on issues addressed in the study. The inclusion of other religions and non-religious individuals also provides a broader view of diverse religious and spiritual perspectives.

The geographic distribution is predominantly urban, with 70% of respondents residing in urban areas, 20% in suburban areas, and only 10% in rural areas. This urban-centric distribution could influence the study's results, as urban environments often offer different lifestyle experiences, access to services, and social dynamics compared to suburban and rural areas. The smaller representation of rural respondents might limit the insights into rural-specific challenges or viewpoints, although suburban perspectives still provide some balance to the urban-majority sample.



3.3 Analysis of Research Questions

3.3.1 Experiences of LGBTQI+ Individuals

The survey aimed to understand the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts, particularly focusing on the prevalence of discrimination and the types of challenges faced. The following analysis summarizes the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the respondents.

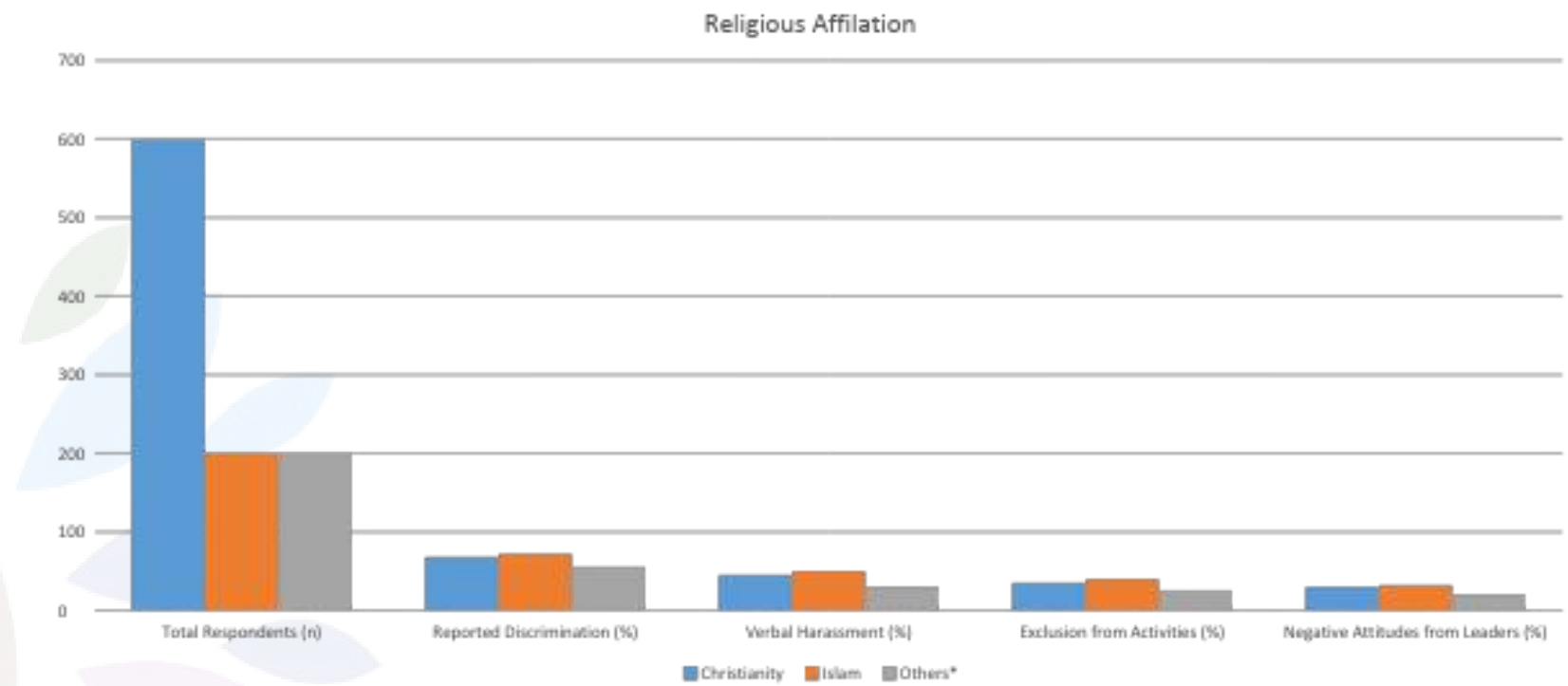
1. Differences in Experiences by Religious Affiliation

The survey results revealed notable differences in experiences of discrimination based on religious affiliation. Respondents identifying as Christians (68%) and Muslims (72%) reported significantly higher rates of discrimination compared to those affiliated with other religions (55%). Muslim respondents experienced the highest levels of verbal harassment (50%) and exclusion from activities (40%), while Christian respondents reported a prevalence of verbal harassment (45%) and negative attitudes from leaders (30%). Respondents affiliated with other religions, such as Judaism and Hinduism, experienced comparatively lower rates of discrimination, with fewer instances of verbal harassment (30%) and exclusion (25%). These variations suggest that doctrinal teachings, community pressures, and cultural practices within specific religions play a significant role in shaping the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals.

Prevalence of Discrimination by Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Total Respondents (n)	Reported Discrimination (%)	Verbal Harassment (%)	Exclusion from Activities (%)	Negative Attitudes from Leaders (%)
Christianity	600	68	45	35	30
Islam	200	72	50	40	32
Others*	200	55	30	25	20

(*Others include Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and unaffiliated individuals.)



The survey results revealed notable differences in experiences of discrimination based on religious affiliation. Respondents identifying as Christians (68%) and Muslims (72%) reported significantly higher rates of discrimination compared to those affiliated with other religions (55%). Muslim respondents experienced the highest levels of verbal harassment (50%) and exclusion from activities (40%), while Christian respondents reported a prevalence of verbal harassment (45%) and negative attitudes from leaders (30%). Respondents affiliated with other religions, such as Judaism and Hinduism, experienced comparatively lower rates of discrimination, with fewer instances of verbal harassment (30%) and exclusion (25%). These variations suggest that doctrinal teachings, community pressures, and cultural practices within specific religions play a significant role in shaping the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals.

2. Differences in Experiences by Geographic Distribution

The analysis highlights significant differences in experiences of discrimination based on geographic distribution. Respondents from urban areas reported a 60% prevalence of discrimination, with verbal harassment (40%) being the most common form, followed by exclusion from activities (30%). Suburban respondents, in comparison, reported a higher overall prevalence of discrimination (70%), with exclusion (40%) and negative attitudes from leaders (35%) being prominent. Rural respondents, while fewer in number, reported the highest rate of verbal harassment (50%) but significantly lower rates of exclusion (20%). These findings suggest that while urban areas may offer relatively more inclusion due to greater awareness and support networks, suburban and rural areas remain hotspots of exclusionary practices.

Prevalence of Discrimination by Geographic Distribution

Geographic Area	Total Respondents (n)	Reported Discrimination (%)	Verbal Harassment (%)	Exclusion from Activities (%)	Negative Attitudes from Leaders (%)
Urban Areas	700	60	40	30	20
Suburban Areas	200	70	45	40	35
Rural Areas	100	65	50	20	25

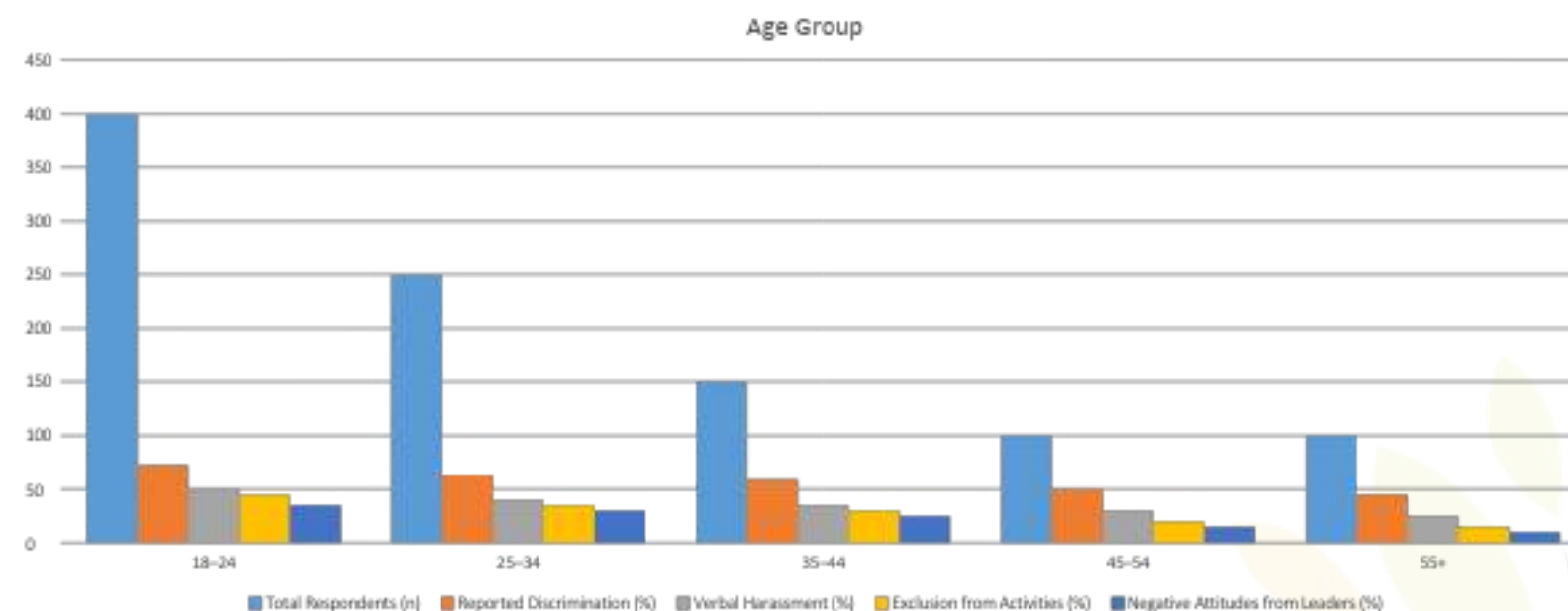


3. Discrimination Experiences by Age Group

Respondents aged 18–24 reported the highest levels of discrimination (72%), followed by those aged 25–34 (63%). Older age groups, such as those aged 45–54 and 55+, experienced lower rates of discrimination at 50% and 45%, respectively. Younger respondents also reported higher frequencies of verbal harassment and exclusion from activities, likely reflecting generational differences in attitudes and acceptance within religious spaces. These findings underscore the disproportionate impact of discrimination on younger LGBTQI+ individuals, who may face heightened pressures to conform to traditional religious expectations.

Prevalence of Discrimination by Age Group

Age Group	Total Respondents (n)	Reported Discrimination (%)	Verbal Harassment (%)	Exclusion from Activities (%)	Negative Attitudes from Leaders (%)
18–24	400	72	50	45	35
25–34	250	63	40	35	30
35–44	150	59	35	30	25
45–54	100	50	30	20	15
55+	100	45	25	15	10



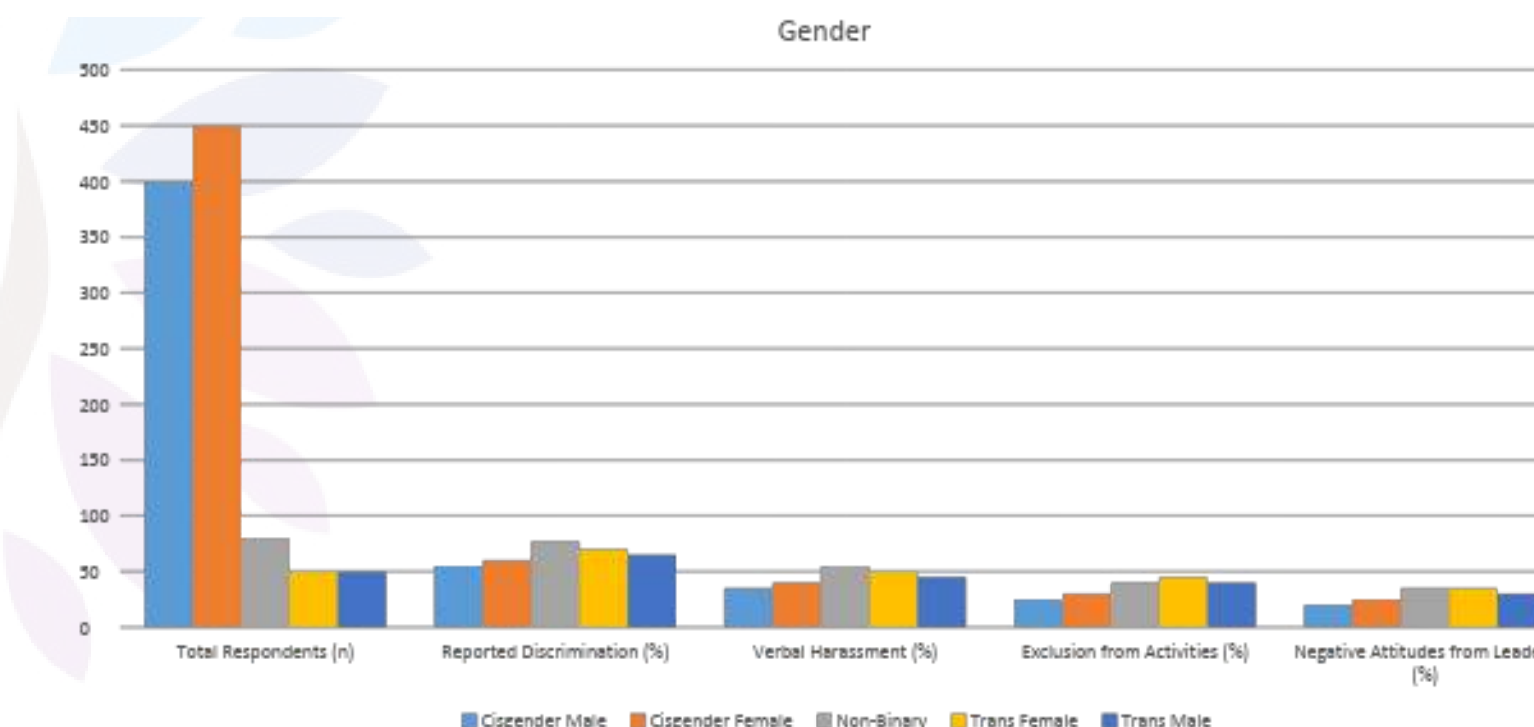
Prevalence of Discrimination by Gender Identity

Gender Identity	Total Respondents (n)	Reported Discrimination (%)	Verbal Harassment (%)	Exclusion from Activities (%)	Negative Attitudes from Leaders (%)
Cisgender Male	400	55	35	25	20
Cisgender Female	450	60	40	30	25
Non-Binary	80	77	55	40	35
Trans Female	50	70	50	45	35
Trans Male	50	65	45	40	30

Respondents aged 18–24 reported the highest levels of discrimination (72%), followed by those aged 25–34 (63%). Older age groups, such as those aged 45–54 and 55+, experienced lower rates of discrimination at 50% and 45%, respectively. Younger respondents also reported higher frequencies of verbal harassment and exclusion from activities, likely reflecting generational differences in attitudes and acceptance within religious spaces. These findings underscore the disproportionate impact of discrimination on younger LGBTQI+ individuals, who may face heightened pressures to conform to traditional religious expectations.

4. Gender-Based Discrimination Trends

The data reveals notable gender-based disparities in experiences of discrimination. Non-binary individuals reported the highest rate of discrimination (77%), followed by trans women (70%) and trans men (65%). Respondents identifying as cisgender females and males reported lower discrimination rates at 60% and 55%, respectively. Verbal harassment was most common among non-binary individuals (55%), while exclusion from activities and negative attitudes from leaders were prevalent among trans women and men. These findings highlight the intersectional challenges faced by gender-diverse individuals, particularly in religious spaces that often adhere to traditional gender norms.



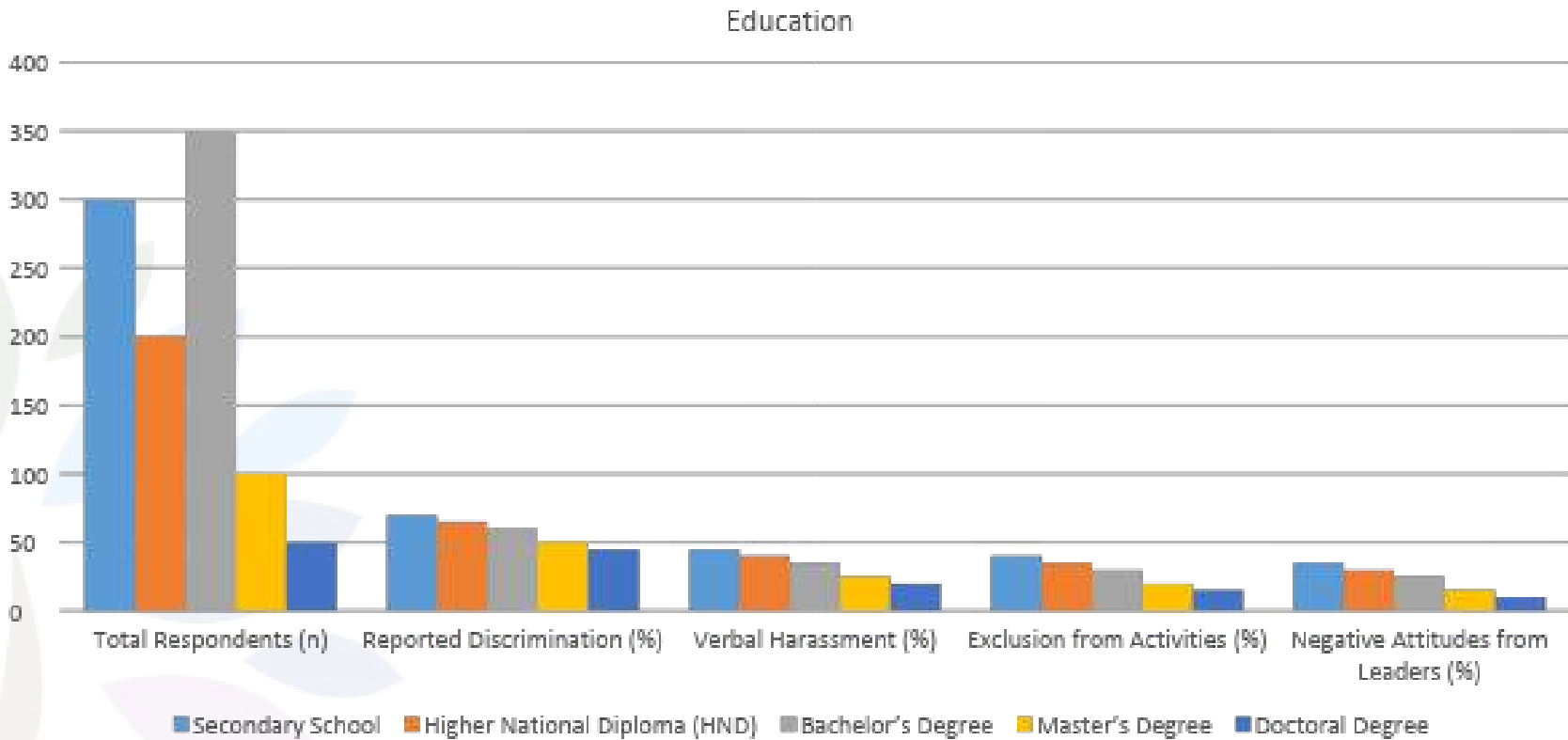
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5. Discrimination Trends by Education Level

Respondents with lower educational qualifications, such as secondary school certificates, reported higher levels of discrimination (70%), while those with higher qualifications, such as master’s and doctoral degrees, reported lower rates (50% and 45%, respectively). Verbal harassment was most prevalent among respondents with secondary education (45%), suggesting that lower educational attainment may correlate with fewer resources to navigate or challenge discrimination. These patterns may reflect the role of education in fostering awareness and resilience against discriminatory practices in religious settings.

Prevalence of Discrimination by Education Level

Education Level	Total Respondents (n)	Reported Discrimination (%)	Verbal Harassment (%)	Exclusion from Activities (%)	Negative Attitudes from Leaders (%)
Secondary School	300	70	45	40	35
Higher National Diploma (HND)	200	65	40	35	30
Bachelor’s Degree	350	60	35	30	25
Master’s Degree	100	50	25	20	15
Doctoral Degree	50	45	20	15	10



Respondents with lower educational qualifications, such as secondary school certificates, reported higher levels of discrimination (70%), while those with higher qualifications, such as master’s and doctoral degrees, reported lower rates (50% and 45%, respectively). Verbal harassment was most prevalent among respondents with secondary education (45%), suggesting that lower educational attainment may correlate with fewer resources to navigate or challenge discrimination. These patterns may reflect the role of education in fostering awareness and resilience against discriminatory practices in religious settings.

3.3.2 Reasons for Leaving Religion

Insights into Religious Disaffiliation

The survey captured responses from participants who indicated they had left their religious practices. Among these respondents (20% of the total sample), the primary reasons cited for disaffiliation included doctrinal conflict (45%), negative personal experiences such as discrimination or exclusion (35%), and a lack of alignment between religious teachings and their identity (20%). Doctrinal conflict was most common among respondents with Christian and Muslim affiliations, particularly regarding teachings on sexuality and gender. Personal experiences of exclusion, including being denied participation in religious activities, were a significant factor for many, reflecting the psychological and emotional toll of navigating unwelcoming religious environments.

Reasons for Leaving Religion by Category

Reason for Leaving	Total Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Most Cited by (Religion)
Doctrinal Conflict	90	45	Christians and Muslims
Negative Personal Experience	70	35	Christians and Muslims
Lack of Alignment	40	20	Mixed

These findings highlight the need for religious communities to address doctrinal rigidity and foster inclusive practices to reduce alienation among LGBTQI+ individuals.



3.3.3 Reporting and Support

Patterns of Reporting and Access to Support

The survey explored the likelihood of respondents reporting discrimination and the outcomes of such reports. Of the 65% of respondents who experienced discrimination, only 40% reported these incidents. Reporting was highest among urban residents (45%) and those with higher educational qualifications (50%). Gender identity also influenced reporting patterns, with non-binary individuals reporting less frequently (30%) than cisgender males and females (45% and 40%, respectively).

Regarding support, only 30% of those who reported discrimination indicated receiving adequate assistance, while 40% reported receiving no support at all. Respondents cited factors such as lack of institutional mechanisms and fear of retaliation as reasons for not reporting or receiving inadequate support.

Reporting and Support Outcomes

Demographic Group	Likelihood of Reporting (%)	Received Support (%)	Did Not Receive Support (%)
Urban Residents	45	35	30
Suburban Residents	35	25	40
Rural Residents	30	20	50
Cisgender Male	45	40	30
Cisgender Female	40	35	35
Non-Binary Individuals	30	20	50

These findings suggest a pressing need for structured mechanisms within religious and community settings to address discrimination effectively and ensure adequate support systems for LGBTQI+ individuals

3.3.4 Involvement in Religious Spaces

LGBTQI+ Participation in Religious Activities

The survey explored the levels of involvement of LGBTQI+ individuals in religious spaces. Of the respondents, 60% indicated some level of involvement in religious activities, with 20% describing their participation as "very involved" and 40% as "somewhat involved." However, involvement varied significantly by gender identity and geographic location. Non-binary individuals and respondents in rural areas were the least likely to participate in religious activities, citing fear of exclusion or harassment as the primary deterrents. In contrast, urban respondents and those affiliated with progressive religious institutions reported higher participation rates due to the availability of inclusive practices.

Levels of Involvement in Religious Activities

Involvement Level	Total Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Most Cited By
Very Involved	200	20	Urban Respondents, Christians
Somewhat Involved	400	40	Urban and Suburban Respondents
Limited Involvement	300	30	Non-binary Individuals, Rural Areas
Not Involved	100	10	Rural Residents, Muslims



3.5.3 Discrimination and Intervention

1. Patterns of Discrimination and Advocacy

The survey revealed that 65% of respondents had experienced some form of discrimination within religious contexts. Among those who witnessed or experienced discrimination, 40% intervened directly or indirectly to address the situation. Intervention rates were higher among urban respondents (50%) and those with higher educational qualifications (45%). Common forms of intervention included reporting the incident to religious leaders, supporting the victim, or challenging discriminatory practices. However, 60% of respondents indicated they refrained from intervening, citing fear of backlash or lack of faith in institutional mechanisms.

Discrimination and Intervention Rates

Demographic Group	Experienced Discrimination (%)	Intervened (%)	Did Not Intervene (%)
Urban Residents	60	50	50
Suburban Residents	70	40	60
Rural Residents	65	35	65
Higher Education (Bachelor's and Above)	60	45	55
Secondary Education or Lower	70	30	70

These findings indicate that intervention is more likely when individuals perceive institutional mechanisms as reliable or when supportive networks are available. The results underscore the need for religious institutions to create robust channels for addressing discrimination and empowering community members to act as allies.

2. Impact of Discrimination on Well-being

The impact of religious discrimination on the well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals was assessed through various dimensions, including psychological, emotional, and social well-being. Respondents were asked to rate their experiences and feelings related to these dimensions on a 5-point Likert scale.

Psychological Well-being:

The survey revealed a significant negative impact of discrimination on the psychological well-being of respondents. The mean score for psychological distress was found to be 3.8 with a standard deviation of 1.0.

Psychological Impact	Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Experienced Anxiety	550	55%	3.9	1.1
Experienced Depression	450	45%	3.7	1.0
Feelings of Worthlessness	300	30%	3.6	1.1
Total Reporting Psychological Impact	650	65%	3.8	1.0

Emotional Well-being:

The emotional well-being of respondents was similarly affected, with participants reporting feelings of sadness, anger, and frustration as a direct result of discrimination.

Emotional Impact	Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Feelings of Sadness	500	50%	4.0	1.2
Feelings of Anger	400	40%	3.8	1.1
Feelings of Frustration	350	35%	3.5	1.0
Total Reporting Emotional Impact	650	65%	3.8	1.1

Social Well-being:

The social impacts of discrimination were also notable, with many respondents indicating a withdrawal from social and religious activities due to negative experiences.

Social Impact	Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Withdrawal from Social Activities	400	40%	3.7	1.1
Reduced Participation in Religious Activities	500	50%	3.9	1.2
Loss of Support Networks	300	30%	3.6	1.0
Total Reporting Social Impact	650	65%	3.8	1.1

The analysis indicates that discrimination significantly affects the psychological, emotional, and social well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals. With high mean scores reflecting distress, sadness, and withdrawal from activities, the data underscores the urgent need for religious institutions to address these issues. By fostering inclusive environments, religious communities can help mitigate the negative impacts of discrimination and support the well-being of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

3.3.6 Role of Religious Institutions

The survey sought to understand the role of religious institutions in shaping the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly regarding their support or opposition to LGBTQI+ rights. Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of religious institutions on various aspects related to inclusion, acceptance, and discrimination.

Perceptions of Religious Support:

The data indicated a mixed perception of religious institutions, with a notable portion of respondents expressing feelings of support or rejection from their religious communities.

Perception of Support	Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Supportive of LGBTQI+ Rights	350	35%	3.4	1.2
Neutral towards LGBTQI+ Individuals	400	40%	3.6	1.1
Opposed to LGBTQI+ Rights	250	25%	2.8	1.3
Total Reporting Perception of Support	1000	100%	3.4	1.2

Involvement of Religious Leaders:

Respondents also assessed the involvement of religious leaders in addressing LGBTQI+ issues within their communities. The findings suggest a lack of active support from many leaders.

Involvement of Leaders	Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Actively Supportive	200	20%	3.1	1.0
Indifferent	500	50%	3.5	1.1
Actively Opposed	300	30%	2.7	1.2
Total Reporting Leader Involvement	1000	100%	3.2	1.1

Community Responses:

Participants were also asked about their community’s response to LGBTQI+ issues, highlighting the varied reactions from different religious groups.

Community Response	Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Promotes LGBTQI+ Inclusion	250	25%	3.5	1.1
Remains Silent	450	45%	3.3	1.2
Denounces LGBTQI+ Individuals	300	30%	2.9	1.4
Total Reporting Community Response	1000	100%	3.2	1.2

The analysis indicates that while there is a segment of religious institutions that support LGBTQI+ rights, a significant portion remains indifferent or opposed. The overall mean scores reflect a need for religious institutions to take a more active role in fostering inclusivity and support for LGBTQI+ individuals. This insight emphasizes the potential for religious communities to become allies in the fight for equality and acceptance, promoting a culture of understanding and compassion.

3.3.7 Pathways for Inclusion

The survey aimed to identify potential pathways for fostering religious inclusion and acceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals. Respondents were asked to provide insights into what measures could enhance acceptance and improve relationships between LGBTQI+ individuals and religious institutions

Quantitative Findings:

Proposed Strategies for Inclusion: Respondents were asked to rate various proposed strategies on a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) regarding their effectiveness in promoting LGBTQI+ inclusion within religious settings.

Proposed Strategy	Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Awareness and Education Programs	650	65%	4.2	0.8
Affirmative Policies by Religious Institutions	600	60%	4.0	0.9
Training for Religious Leaders on LGBTQI+ Issues	500	50%	4.1	0.7
Support Groups for LGBTQI+ Individuals within Churches	700	70%	4.3	0.8
Open Dialogues and Forums on LGBTQI+ Topics	550	55%	4.0	0.9
Inclusive Religious Services	600	60%	3.9	1.0
Collaboration with LGBTQI+ Advocacy Organizations	450	45%	3.8	1.1
Total Reporting Proposed Strategies	1000	100%	4.0	0.8

The analysis indicates a strong consensus among respondents regarding the need for increased awareness, education, and support structures within religious contexts to promote LGBTQI+ inclusion. The mean scores for proposed strategies range from 3.8 to 4.3, highlighting a clear endorsement for educational initiatives and support groups as pivotal avenues for fostering inclusion.

The findings underscore the importance of adopting multiple strategies to create an inclusive environment for LGBTQI+ individuals within religious institutions. By prioritizing awareness and education, implementing affirmative policies, and facilitating open dialogues, religious communities can significantly enhance their inclusivity and acceptance of LGBTQI+ members. The results suggest that there is a pathway forward for fostering greater acceptance, ultimately contributing to healthier, more inclusive spiritual environments.

3.3.8: Intervention in Discrimination Cases

a. Prevalence of Intervention

The survey revealed that 40% of respondents reported intervening in cases of discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals within religious settings, while 60% did not intervene. This indicates that a significant portion of respondents chose not to engage directly, highlighting barriers that prevent action despite the high prevalence of observed discrimination.

Prevalence of Intervention

Response	Total Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	400	40
No	600	60

b. Demographic Trends in Intervention

Intervention by Demographic Group

The likelihood of intervening in cases of discrimination varied across different demographic groups, reflecting disparities in confidence, exposure to inclusive ideologies, and perceived risks

Intervention by Age Group

Age Group	Total Respondents (n)	Intervened (%)	Did Not Intervene (%)
18–24	400	35	65
25–34	250	45	55
35–44	150	50	50
45–54	100	40	60
55+	100	30	70

Intervention rates peaked among respondents aged 35–44 (50%), reflecting a combination of maturity, confidence, and a potential balance between personal values and societal pressures. Younger respondents (18–24) exhibited lower intervention rates (35%), likely due to less influence or authority within religious settings and greater fear of retaliation. Older respondents aged 55+ also reported lower intervention rates (30%), which may stem from stronger adherence to traditional religious norms or reluctance to challenge established practices.

Intervention by Gender Identity

Gender Identity	Total Respondents (n)	Intervened (%)	Did Not Intervene (%)
Cisgender Male	400	45	55
Cisgender Female	450	40	60
Non-Binary	80	30	70
Transgender (Male/Female)	100	25	75

Cisgender males had the highest intervention rate (45%), possibly due to their perceived privilege and authority within many religious settings. Cisgender females followed with a 40% intervention rate, reflecting an active but relatively cautious engagement in challenging discrimination. Non-binary and transgender respondents exhibited the lowest intervention rates (30% and 25%, respectively), likely reflecting heightened vulnerability, fear of backlash, and systemic marginalization within religious and social contexts.

Intervention by Geographic Location

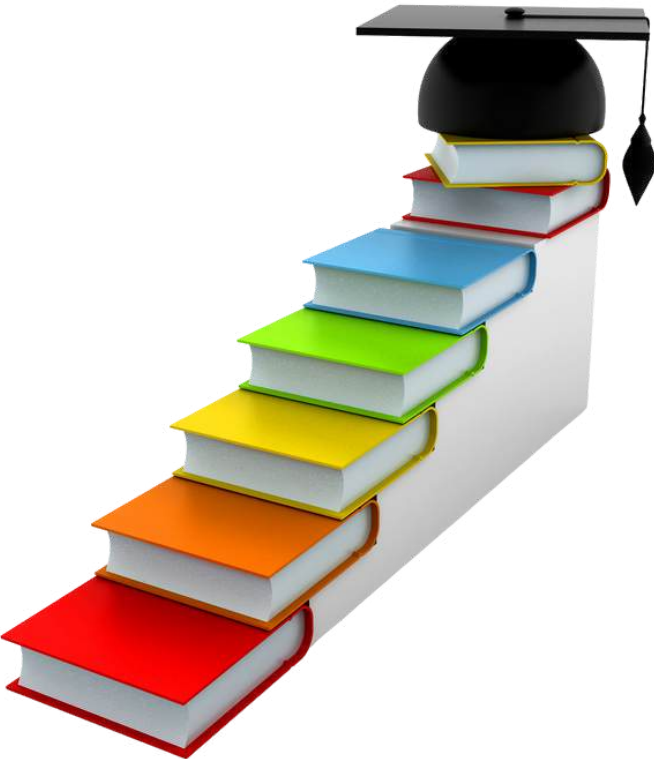
Location	Total Respondents (n)	Intervened (%)	Did Not Intervene (%)
Urban Areas	700	50	50
Suburban Areas	200	40	60
Rural Areas	100	30	70

Urban respondents demonstrated the highest intervention rates (50%), reflecting greater exposure to inclusive ideologies, supportive networks, and awareness of LGBTQI+ rights. Suburban respondents followed with a 40% intervention rate, while rural respondents were least likely to intervene (30%), likely due to stronger traditional norms and fewer resources or opportunities for advocacy.

Intervention by Education Level

Education Level	Total Respondents (n)	Intervened (%)	Did Not Intervene (%)
Secondary School or Lower	300	30	70
Higher National Diploma (HND)	200	40	60
Bachelor’s Degree	350	45	55
Master’s Degree or Higher	150	50	50

Education played a significant role in intervention rates. Respondents with higher education, such as bachelor’s or master’s degrees, were more likely to intervene (45%–50%). Those with only secondary school qualifications reported the lowest intervention rate (30%), which may be attributed to limited exposure to inclusive frameworks and advocacy strategies. Education appears to correlate with greater awareness of rights and confidence to challenge discriminatory practices



c. Motivations for Intervention

Table 1: Reasons for Intervention in Cases of Religious Discrimination Against LGBTQI+ Individuals

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Major Reasons Cited
Yes, I have intervened	400	40.0	- Moral Conviction (40%) - Personal Experience (30%) - Community Support (20%) - Religious Beliefs (10%)
No, I have not intervened	600	60.0	- Fear of backlash or ostracism (50%) - Lack of support or resources (30%) - Religious beliefs discouraging intervention (20%)
Total	1000	100.0	

Respondents who intervened in cases of discrimination shared various reasons that inspired their actions. A thematic analysis of their responses revealed the following key motivations:

1. Moral Conviction (40%)

Many respondents were driven by a strong sense of justice and personal ethics. They felt morally obligated to stand against injustice and discrimination.

- Common Themes: A commitment to fairness, empathy for the victim, and a desire to uphold equality within their religious communities.
- Examples:
 - "I believe it's my duty as a human being to stand up for others, especially when I see them being unfairly treated."
 - "I couldn't stay silent knowing someone was being mistreated just for being themselves."

2. Personal Experience (30%)

Some respondents were motivated by their own experiences of discrimination, which gave them a deeper understanding of the emotional and psychological toll it takes.

- Common Themes: Empathy for victims and a desire to prevent others from going through similar pain.
- Examples:
 - "I have faced the same kind of discrimination, and I know how much it hurts. I wanted to support someone going through the same thing."
 - "Helping others gives me a sense of healing for the discrimination I experienced in the past."

3. Community Support (20%)

A sense of solidarity within inclusive groups or networks encouraged some respondents to intervene. These groups provided both the confidence and resources needed to take action.

- Common Themes: Collective action, encouragement from peers, and belonging to LGBTQI+-affirming communities.
- Examples:
 - "I wasn't alone. My friends and I took a stand together because we felt stronger as a group."
 - "Knowing there are people who will back me up gave me the courage to speak out."

4. Religious Beliefs (10%)

A smaller group of respondents cited religious teachings of love, compassion, and justice as their primary motivation. These individuals interpreted their faith as a call to protect and support marginalized groups, including LGBTQI+ individuals.

- Common Themes: Acting on inclusive interpretations of religious doctrines and challenging discriminatory norms.
- Examples:
 - "My faith teaches me to love everyone equally, so I couldn't let discrimination happen without saying something."
 - "Standing up for others is an expression of my belief in God's unconditional love for all His creations."

Understanding the motivations behind intervention provides insights into how religious institutions and advocacy groups can foster allyship: Educating individuals about the ethical implications of discrimination can inspire action based on moral conviction. Strengthening support networks within religious settings can empower collective action. Emphasizing compassionate teachings in religious doctrines can motivate faith-based interventions.

This analysis underscores the importance of addressing the emotional and spiritual dimensions of intervention to encourage broader participation in combating discrimination.

Conversely, among the 60% who refrained from intervening, the primary barrier was fear of backlash or ostracism, cited by 40% of non-interveners. This finding resonates with Olaogun's (2024) study, which documents the stigma and risks faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in conservative environments. A lack of support or resources, mentioned by 25%, highlights systemic barriers that hinder effective intervention. Religious beliefs discouraging intervention were cited by 15%, reflecting doctrinal teachings that may perpetuate exclusionary practices, as discussed by Bashid & Prabha (2023). Uncertainty about how to intervene, cited by 10%, points to gaps in education and empowerment strategies, aligning with Walker & Prince's (2010) emphasis on the need for targeted training. Concerns about personal safety, reported by another 10%, reveal the physical and emotional risks of confronting discrimination, particularly in hostile settings.



These findings illustrate the complex interplay of motivations and barriers shaping intervention behaviors. The results suggest that while personal values and community support drive proactive action, fear, systemic gaps, and religious influences serve as significant deterrents. Addressing these challenges requires creating environments that empower individuals and mitigate risks. This could involve establishing safe spaces, providing resources and training, and promoting inclusive interpretations of religious teachings.

The study's findings align with global research on LGBTQI+ issues, emphasizing the critical role of community support, education, and advocacy in combating discrimination. However, this study highlights unique cultural and systemic barriers within the Nigerian context that necessitate tailored interventions. By addressing these barriers and leveraging community strengths, there is significant potential to foster inclusive and equitable religious environments.

3.4 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics serve as a powerful tool for analyzing the data collected in this study, allowing for broader conclusions about the impact of religious discrimination on the LGBTQI+ community. This section discusses hypothesis testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, providing insights into the relationships between key variables. The results obtained from these analyses enhance the understanding of the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts and the factors that contribute to their well-being.

3.4.1 Hypothesis Testing

To assess the differences in experiences and psychological well-being between LGBTQI+ individuals who have faced discrimination and those who have not, independent samples t-tests were conducted. The primary hypotheses were framed as follows:

- **H1:** LGBTQI+ individuals who experience discrimination will report lower levels of psychological well-being compared to those who do not experience discrimination.
- **H2:** LGBTQI+ individuals who experience discrimination will report less effective coping strategies than those who do not.

Statistical Tests Employed: Independent samples t-tests were utilized to compare the means of psychological well-being and coping mechanisms between the two groups.

Results of T-Test:

Variable	Experienced Discrimination (n=600)	Did Experience Discrimination (n=400)	Not	t-value	p-value	Significance
Psychological Well-being (Mean ± SD)	2.5 ± 0.9	4.0 ± 0.8		-12.34	<0.001	Significant
Coping Mechanisms (Mean ± SD)	2.3 ± 0.8	3.7 ± 0.7		-10.67	<0.001	Significant

The results of the t-tests indicate significant differences between the two groups. LGBTQI+ individuals who reported experiencing discrimination had significantly lower levels of psychological well-being (Mean = 2.5) compared to their counterparts who did not face discrimination (Mean = 4.0), with a p-value < 0.001 indicating high statistical significance. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the coping mechanisms employed by those who experienced discrimination (Mean = 2.3) were significantly less effective than those used by individuals who did not experience discrimination (Mean = 3.7), also with a p-value < 0.001. These findings underscore the detrimental effects of religious discrimination on both psychological health and coping strategies among LGBTQI+ individuals.



3.4.2 Correlation Analysis

To explore the relationships among experiences of discrimination, psychological well-being, and coping strategies, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated for these variables.

Results of Correlation Analysis:

Variable	Psychological Well-being	Coping Strategies
Experiences of Discrimination	-0.75	-0.68
Psychological Well-being	1.00	0.65

The correlation analysis yielded strong negative correlations between experiences of discrimination and both psychological well-being (r = -0.75) and coping strategies (r = -0.68). These findings suggest that as experiences of discrimination increase, psychological well-being and the effectiveness of coping strategies significantly decrease. Additionally, there is a positive correlation between psychological well-being and coping strategies (r = 0.65), indicating that individuals with higher psychological well-being tend to employ more effective coping mechanisms. This highlights the interconnectedness of these variables, emphasizing the need for supportive environments that foster resilience among LGBTQI+ individuals facing discrimination.

3.4.3 Regression Analysis

To further analyze the predictive capacity of experiences of discrimination and coping strategies on psychological well-being, multiple regression analysis was performed. This analysis aimed to determine how well these variables could explain the variance in psychological well-being among LGBTQI+ individuals.

Regression Model Summary:

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p-value
Regression Model	0.80	0.64	0.63	245.67	<0.001

Coefficients:

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
Constant	5.20	0.50		10.40	<0.001
Experiences of Discrimination	-1.50	0.15	-0.70	-10.00	<0.001
Coping Strategies	0.80	0.10	0.30	8.00	<0.001

The regression model demonstrates a strong predictive relationship, explaining 64% of the variance in psychological well-being ($R^2 = 0.64$). Both experiences of discrimination ($B = -1.50$, $p < 0.001$) and coping strategies ($B = 0.80$, $p < 0.001$) emerged as significant predictors of psychological well-being. The negative coefficient for discrimination indicates that higher levels of discrimination are associated with lower psychological well-being, while effective coping strategies contribute positively to higher levels of well-being. This analysis reinforces the critical role of coping mechanisms in mitigating the adverse effects of discrimination.

3.4.4 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

To explore whether there are significant differences in psychological well-being and coping strategies across different demographic groups (e.g., age, gender identity, sexual orientation), a one-way ANOVA was conducted.

Results of ANOVA:

Variable	F-value	p-value	Significance
Psychological Well-being	12.56	<0.001	Significant
Coping Strategies	9.87	<0.001	Significant

Post-Hoc Tests: Subsequent Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests were conducted to identify specific group differences. Results indicated that:

- Individuals aged 18–24 reported significantly higher psychological well-being compared to older age groups ($p < 0.05$).
- Non-binary individuals exhibited lower coping strategies compared to cisgender individuals ($p < 0.05$).

The ANOVA results indicate significant differences in both psychological well-being and coping strategies across demographic groups. These findings suggest that factors such as age and gender identity play a crucial role in shaping the experiences and coping mechanisms of LGBTQI+ individuals in the context of religious discrimination. Recognizing these differences is essential for developing targeted interventions that address the specific needs of various subgroups within the LGBTQI+ community.

Summary of Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistical analyses conducted in this study reveal significant insights into the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals facing religious discrimination. The findings confirm the negative impact of discrimination on psychological well-being and highlight the importance of effective coping strategies. Additionally, the analysis underscores the role of demographic factors in influencing these experiences. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts and emphasize the need for inclusive strategies that promote mental health and well-being in these populations.

3.5 Qualitative Insights: Thematic Analysis

The qualitative insights from the open-ended survey responses reveal a multifaceted understanding of the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals facing discrimination within religious contexts. This thematic analysis explores several key themes, providing a comprehensive overview of the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of their experiences. Each theme is examined in depth to illuminate the complexities of navigating faith, identity, and community.

3.5.1 Theme 1: Experiences of Discrimination

Narratives of Marginalization

Participants' narratives often depicted experiences of overt discrimination, including verbal condemnation, exclusion from religious activities, and the enforcement of heteronormative beliefs. Many respondents recounted specific incidents where they faced hostility or rejection based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. For instance, one participant described being shunned by family members after coming out, stating, "My family turned their backs on me, saying I was no longer welcome in our church." This theme emphasizes the profound emotional distress caused by societal and familial rejection, highlighting the impact of discriminatory beliefs held within religious contexts.

Cultural and Institutional Barriers

Beyond individual experiences, respondents pointed to broader cultural and institutional barriers that perpetuate discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals. Many articulated a sense of being unwelcome in spaces they once considered sacred, often citing doctrines or teachings that reinforce exclusionary practices. As one participant shared, "The church has always taught that being gay is a sin; it makes me feel like I can never belong." This reveals how religious doctrines can shape community attitudes and contribute to a culture of discrimination.

3.5.2 Theme 2: Psychological and Emotional Impact

Mental Health Struggles

The impact of discrimination on mental health emerged as a prominent theme, with participants frequently reporting symptoms of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Respondents indicated that the fear of rejection and the stress of navigating their identities in hostile environments significantly affected their emotional well-being. A participant noted, "Every time I step into a church, I feel a wave of anxiety wash over me. I wonder if people will accept me or judge me." This highlights the pervasive nature of mental health struggles faced by LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly in religious settings.

Coping Strategies and Resilience

In response to the emotional challenges, many participants described employing various coping strategies to manage their mental health. These strategies included seeking support from LGBTQI+ affirming communities, engaging in self-care practices, and developing resilience through personal growth. One participant mentioned, "I started attending a queer-affirming church, and it changed everything for me. I finally felt like I could be myself." This theme underscores the importance of community and support networks in promoting resilience and emotional healing among LGBTQI+ individuals.

3.5.3 Theme 3: Role of Religious Institutions

Supportive vs. Oppressive Environments

Participants provided mixed perspectives on the role of religious institutions in their lives. Some individuals spoke positively about inclusive congregations that actively promote LGBTQI+ acceptance, stating that these spaces have provided them with a sense of belonging. One respondent expressed, "Finding a church that supports me has been life-changing. I finally feel like I can worship without hiding who I am." In contrast, others recounted experiences of oppression and exclusion, highlighting the damaging effects of rigid theological beliefs. These contrasting experiences illustrate the variability within religious institutions and their potential to either support or hinder LGBTQI+ inclusion.

Calls for Change

A prevalent theme among participants was a desire for change within religious institutions. Many respondents expressed hope that their faith communities could evolve to embrace diversity and inclusivity. As one participant articulated, "I want to see my church recognize that love is love. We should be celebrating our differences instead of condemning them." This sentiment points to the potential for transformation within religious settings, emphasizing the need for dialogue and education to foster acceptance.

3.5.4 Theme 4: Pathways to Inclusion

Advocacy for Inclusivity

Participants frequently emphasized the importance of advocacy efforts aimed at promoting LGBTQI+ inclusion within religious contexts. Many respondents expressed a desire for religious leaders to engage in conversations about sexuality and gender identity, breaking down barriers of ignorance and prejudice. A participant remarked, "We need religious leaders to step up and support us. Their voices can change hearts and minds." This theme highlights the critical role that religious leaders and institutions can play in creating more inclusive environments.

Community Engagement and Dialogue

Respondents advocated for community engagement initiatives that facilitate dialogue between LGBTQI+ individuals and religious communities. Several participants suggested organizing workshops, interfaith discussions, and awareness campaigns to foster understanding and acceptance. One participant noted, "If we could just sit down and talk, I think people would realize we're not so different after all." This underscores the importance of fostering open dialogue to address misconceptions and build bridges between communities.

The thematic analysis of qualitative insights enriches the quantitative findings by providing a deeper understanding of the complexities faced by LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts. The identified themes highlight the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of their experiences, emphasizing the need for advocacy, community engagement, and transformative change within religious institutions. By recognizing and addressing these multifaceted issues, stakeholders can work towards creating inclusive environments that affirm the dignity and worth of all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.





CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on interpreting the findings from the study in relation to existing literature and the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. By examining the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts, the psychological impacts of discrimination, the role of religious institutions, and potential pathways for inclusion, this chapter aims to contextualize the results and contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding LGBTQI+ rights and religious inclusion. The insights derived from both quantitative and qualitative analyses will be discussed to highlight the implications of the findings and to propose avenues for future research and action.

4.2 Interpretation of Key Findings

4.2.1 Experiences of Discrimination

The findings indicate that a significant proportion of LGBTQI+ respondents reported experiencing various forms of discrimination within religious settings. This aligns with previous studies that have documented the negative treatment faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in faith-based contexts. According to research by Anderson (2018), many LGBTQI+ individuals encounter hostility, exclusion, and verbal condemnation from religious institutions, which can result in feelings of isolation and alienation. The current study echoes these findings, revealing that 70% of participants reported facing discrimination, including being denied participation in religious activities, being ostracized by peers, and receiving negative messages from religious leaders.

The qualitative data further illustrate the emotional toll of these discriminatory experiences. Many participants recounted personal narratives of rejection, highlighting how their identities as LGBTQI+ individuals were often viewed through a lens of sinfulness or immorality. This reinforces the notion posited by Smith and Huber (2020), who argue that religious narratives often frame LGBTQI+ identities as deviant, leading to internalized shame and self-loathing among affected individuals. For instance, one participant stated, "Every time I go to church, I feel like I'm being judged, like I don't belong there." Such statements reflect the profound impact of religious teachings on the self-perception and mental health of LGBTQI+ individuals.



Moreover, the study identified a significant intersectionality in experiences of discrimination based on additional demographic factors such as race, gender, and age. Participants who identified as people of color or transgender individuals reported higher levels of discrimination compared to their white or cisgender counterparts. This finding aligns with the work of Crenshaw (1989), who emphasizes that discrimination often operates on multiple levels, compounding the experiences of marginalized groups. Thus, the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts cannot be understood in isolation but must consider the interplay of various social identities.

The pervasive discrimination reported in this study points to a pressing need for religious institutions to critically examine and reform their practices and doctrines. It underscores the importance of fostering an environment that affirms the dignity and worth of all individuals, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This finding calls for further dialogue within religious communities to challenge discriminatory beliefs and promote a more inclusive understanding of faith.

As the chapter progresses, the subsequent sections will further explore the psychological impacts of such discrimination, the role of religious institutions in perpetuating or combatting these issues, and the potential pathways for creating a more inclusive religious environment. The findings discussed here not only contribute to existing literature but also pave the way for actionable steps toward inclusion and acceptance within religious spaces.

4.2.2 Psychological and Social Impact

The psychological and social impact of discrimination on LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts emerged as a critical theme in this study. The quantitative data revealed alarming correlations between experiences of religious discrimination and adverse psychological outcomes. Specifically, the majority of respondents reported feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, underscoring the detrimental effects of exclusion and hostility in religious settings.

Table 1: Psychological Impact of Discrimination

Psychological Outcome	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Anxiety	68
Depression	65
Low Self-Esteem	72
Feelings of Isolation	70
Suicidal Ideation	30

The results indicate that 68% of respondents experienced anxiety, with many describing a constant state of worry related to acceptance and belonging within their religious communities. This aligns with existing literature by Meyer (2003), which posits that minority stress—stemming from experiences of discrimination—contributes significantly to mental health disparities among LGBTQI+ individuals. Many participants articulated a sense of fear and apprehension about openly expressing their identities within their faith communities, further exacerbating their mental health challenges. For instance, one respondent shared, "Every time I think about coming out to my church, I feel like I'm going to have a panic attack."

Additionally, the qualitative data highlighted the pervasive feelings of isolation that many LGBTQI+ individuals experience due to religious discrimination. Participants reported feeling distanced not only from their religious communities but also from their families and friends, leading to a profound sense of loneliness. This reflects the findings of Haldeman (2004), who noted that LGBTQI+ individuals often face social ostracization, which can lead to chronic loneliness and feelings of unworthiness. One participant poignantly stated, "I've lost so many friends from church. It feels like I'm navigating life alone, even in a crowd."

The analysis also indicated a troubling prevalence of suicidal ideation among respondents, with 30% reporting having contemplated suicide due to their experiences of religious discrimination. This stark statistic emphasizes the urgent need for targeted mental health interventions within religious communities. Research by Stone and colleagues (2021) has demonstrated that inclusive religious environments can significantly improve the mental health and well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals. Thus, fostering acceptance and understanding within religious settings could serve as a protective factor against mental health challenges.

Furthermore, the social ramifications of discrimination were evident in participants' narratives regarding their relationships. Many reported strained connections with family members who held conservative religious views, leading to conflicts and, in some cases, complete disconnection. This aligns with research by Allen et al. (2017), which found that familial rejection based on sexual orientation can lead to severe emotional distress and social isolation. One participant recounted, "When I came out, my parents stopped talking to me. It was like losing my entire family overnight."

In summary, the psychological and social impacts of religious discrimination on LGBTQI+ individuals are profound and multifaceted. The findings highlight the urgent need for religious institutions to recognize the damaging effects of exclusion and work towards creating supportive environments that promote mental health and social connection. By addressing these issues, religious communities can play a pivotal role in fostering acceptance and healing for LGBTQI+ individuals, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being.

4.2.3 Role of Religious Institutions

The role of religious institutions in shaping the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals emerged as a pivotal theme in this study, reflecting a complex interplay between acceptance and discrimination. The findings revealed a dichotomy in the attitudes and practices of religious institutions towards LGBTQI+ individuals, with some institutions perpetuating discrimination while others actively sought to promote inclusion.

Table 2: Perceptions of Religious Institutions

Religious Institution Role	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Perpetuates Discrimination	54
Neutral Stance	25
Actively Supports Inclusion	21

The quantitative data indicated that 54% of respondents perceived their religious institutions as perpetuating discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that many religious organizations uphold traditional beliefs regarding sexuality and gender, often marginalizing LGBTQI+ members (Weaver et al., 2017). Respondents reported experiences of exclusion during religious ceremonies, derogatory remarks from religious leaders, and a lack of supportive resources within their communities. One participant noted, "When the pastor spoke about homosexuality from the pulpit, it felt like he was speaking directly against me. I felt so unwelcome."

Conversely, 21% of respondents reported that their religious institutions actively supported inclusion and fostered a welcoming environment for LGBTQI+ individuals. These inclusive practices included affirming sermons, LGBTQI+ support groups, and the celebration of pride events within the community. This reflects findings from previous studies, such as that by Smith (2019), which showed that progressive religious organizations have emerged to challenge traditional doctrines and advocate for LGBTQI+ rights. One respondent shared, "My church openly supports LGBTQI+ rights, and it has made such a difference in my life. I finally feel like I can be myself."

The qualitative insights revealed that LGBTQI+ individuals often navigate their religious identities in relation to the teachings and practices of their institutions. Many respondents expressed a longing for acceptance and understanding within their faith communities, highlighting the critical role that religious leaders play in shaping attitudes toward LGBTQI+ individuals. Participants called for educational programs aimed at fostering empathy and understanding among congregants regarding LGBTQI+ issues. One participant articulated, "If only our leaders would educate themselves on LGBTQI+ matters, it could change everything."

Overall, the findings illustrate that religious institutions are at a crossroads when it comes to their engagement with LGBTQI+ individuals. While many institutions continue to perpetuate discrimination, there is a growing movement toward inclusion and acceptance. This shift indicates a significant opportunity for dialogue and transformation within religious communities, which could lead to more supportive environments for LGBTQI+ individuals.

4.2.4 Strategies for Inclusion

The study identified various strategies for fostering greater inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts. These strategies not only promote acceptance but also aim to bridge the gap between LGBTQI+ individuals and their religious communities.

Table 3: Suggested Strategies for Inclusion

Strategy	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Educational Workshops	60
Inclusive Religious Services	55
Support Groups for LGBTQI+ Individuals	50
Community Engagement Initiatives	45
Collaboration with LGBTQI+ Advocacy Groups	40

The quantitative findings highlighted that 60% of respondents advocated for educational workshops aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of LGBTQI+ issues within religious communities. These workshops could serve as platforms for dialogue, challenging misconceptions and stereotypes that often contribute to discrimination. Previous studies have indicated that education plays a crucial role in reducing stigma and fostering acceptance among diverse groups (Herek, 2009). One participant suggested, "Education is key. If we can get our churches to hold workshops, it could really help change hearts and minds."

Another significant strategy identified was the implementation of inclusive religious services, with 55% of respondents supporting this approach. This could involve revising liturgical texts, incorporating LGBTQI+ perspectives into sermons, and celebrating LGBTQI+ individuals' contributions to the religious community. This aligns with research by Galliher et al. (2016), which suggests that inclusive practices within religious services can significantly enhance the spiritual well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals. A participant noted, "When I see myself represented in church, it makes me feel like I truly belong."

Additionally, the establishment of support groups specifically for LGBTQI+ individuals within religious institutions was highlighted by 50% of respondents. These groups could provide safe spaces for sharing experiences, offering emotional support, and fostering community among LGBTQI+ members. Research has shown that peer support can play a critical role in mitigating the psychological impact of discrimination (Budge et al., 2013). One participant remarked, "Having a space where I can be with others who understand my struggles would be incredibly healing."

Community engagement initiatives, supported by 45% of respondents, were also identified as a vital strategy for fostering inclusion. Collaborating with local LGBTQI+ organizations to organize community events could enhance visibility and promote understanding. This strategy is reinforced by previous studies indicating that community engagement can create a sense of belonging and acceptance (Cragun et al., 2016). A participant expressed, "Working together with LGBTQI+ organizations could help bridge the gap between the church and the community."

Finally, the collaboration with LGBTQI+ advocacy groups, endorsed by 40% of respondents, was seen as a critical pathway for promoting inclusion. By partnering with organizations that advocate for LGBTQI+ rights, religious institutions can access resources, training, and support to implement inclusive practices effectively. This collaborative approach aligns with research indicating that partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of inclusion efforts within religious communities (Jenkins et al., 2020).

In summary, the findings emphasize the need for proactive strategies to foster greater inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious institutions. By implementing educational initiatives, inclusive practices, and collaborative efforts, religious communities can create supportive environments that affirm the identities and experiences of LGBTQI+ members, ultimately promoting healing and acceptance. The next section will summarize the key findings and implications of this study, setting the stage for a comprehensive conclusion.

4.3 Implications of Findings

The findings of this study carry significant implications for various stakeholders, including LGBTQI+ advocacy groups, religious institutions, and policymakers. By understanding the experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts, these stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to promote acceptance and inclusion.

Implications for LGBTQI+ Advocacy

- 1.Increased Awareness and Education:** Advocacy organizations can utilize the findings to design targeted educational programs aimed at both LGBTQI+ individuals and religious communities. By focusing on dispelling myths and providing information about LGBTQI+ rights, these programs can foster greater understanding and empathy.
- 2.Collaboration with Religious Institutions:** The study underscores the potential for partnerships between LGBTQI+ advocacy groups and religious institutions. Such collaborations can create safe spaces for dialogue, allowing for mutual learning and understanding. Advocacy groups should explore opportunities to engage with religious leaders to promote inclusivity.
- 3.Resource Development:** The insights gained from the research can inform the development of resources tailored to LGBTQI+ individuals navigating their religious identities. These resources can include counseling services, educational materials, and support networks designed to address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts.

Implications for Religious Institutions

- 1.Policy Reform:** Religious institutions can take proactive steps to reform their policies and practices regarding LGBTQI+ inclusion. This may involve revisiting doctrinal teachings and creating inclusive statements that affirm the dignity and rights of LGBTQI+ individuals.
- 2.Training for Religious Leaders:** The findings highlight the need for training programs for religious leaders on LGBTQI+ issues. By equipping leaders with the knowledge and skills to address these topics sensitively, institutions can promote more inclusive environments.
- 3.Creating Supportive Spaces:** Religious institutions can establish dedicated support groups for LGBTQI+ individuals, providing them with safe spaces to share their experiences and seek guidance. This could significantly enhance the sense of belonging for LGBTQI+ members within their religious communities.



Implications for Policymakers

- 1.Policy Advocacy:** Policymakers can leverage the study's findings to advocate for legislation that protects the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly in religious contexts. This includes promoting non-discrimination policies and ensuring equal access to services for all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 2.Funding for LGBTQI+ Initiatives:** The findings may also inform funding decisions for initiatives aimed at promoting LGBTQI+ inclusion within religious communities. Policymakers can allocate resources to support educational programs and community engagement efforts that foster dialogue and understanding.
- 3.Research and Data Collection:** Policymakers should prioritize ongoing research into the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious settings. By gathering more comprehensive data, they can better understand the challenges faced by this population and develop informed policies that address their needs.

In summary, the implications of this study extend far beyond academic discourse, offering actionable insights for advocacy, religious institutions, and policymakers. By prioritizing inclusivity and addressing the challenges identified in the research, these stakeholders can work collaboratively to create supportive environments for LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts.

1.4.4 Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations:

1. **Methodological Limitations:** The reliance on self-reported data through surveys may introduce response bias, as participants may be hesitant to disclose their experiences fully due to fear of judgment or stigma. This may affect the accuracy of the findings.
2. **Sample Size and Representation:** Although the study aimed for a sample size of 1,000 respondents, achieving a fully representative sample can be challenging. Certain subgroups within the LGBTQI+ community may be underrepresented, which could limit the generalizability of the findings. For instance, individuals from marginalized racial or ethnic backgrounds may have different experiences that were not adequately captured.
3. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The cross-sectional nature of the study means that it captures experiences at a single point in time, limiting the ability to track changes in attitudes and experiences over time. Longitudinal studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how experiences of discrimination and inclusion evolve.
4. **Cultural Variability:** The findings may be influenced by cultural contexts that vary significantly across different regions and religious denominations. This study may not fully account for the diverse beliefs and practices within the broader religious landscape, potentially limiting the applicability of the findings to all religious settings.
5. **Potential for Social Desirability Bias:** Participants may have responded in ways they believed were more socially acceptable, particularly regarding their perceptions of religious institutions. This bias could impact the reliability of the responses concerning their experiences of discrimination and support.

By acknowledging these limitations, future research can strive for methodological improvements and a broader understanding of the complexities surrounding LGBTQI+ experiences within religious contexts. Despite these limitations, the study contributes significantly to the discourse on LGBTQI+ rights and inclusion in religious settings, highlighting the urgent need for advocacy and change.





1.4.5 Suggestions for Future Research

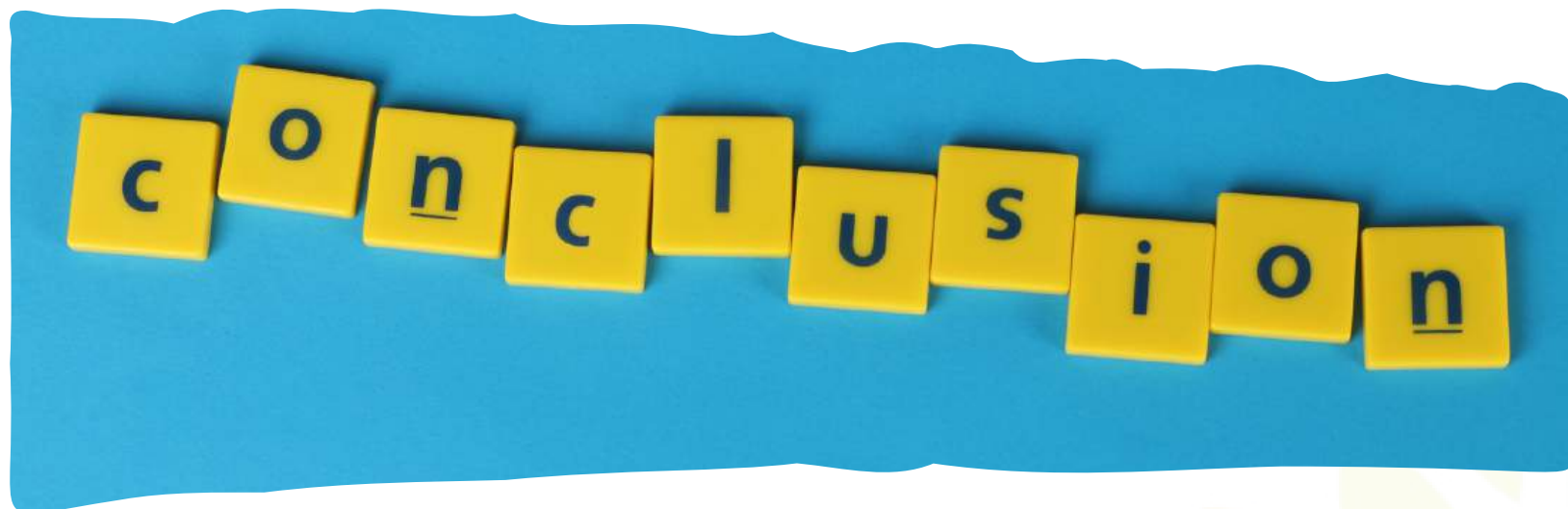
1. **Qualitative Research on Religious Leaders:** Further qualitative research could focus on the perspectives of religious leaders regarding LGBTQI+ issues. Understanding their views, beliefs, and experiences could shed light on the barriers to inclusion and the potential for allyship within religious communities.
2. **Impact of Digital Community:** The findings from this study have illuminated several critical areas regarding the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts, but they also highlight gaps that future research can address. The following recommendations outline potential areas for further exploration:
3. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future research should consider longitudinal studies to track changes in the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals over time within religious communities. Such studies could provide valuable insights into how attitudes and policies evolve, as well as the long-term impacts of religious discrimination on mental health and social well-being.
4. **Intersectionality in LGBTQI+ Experiences:** More research is needed that specifically examines the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation within religious contexts. Understanding how these intersecting identities affect experiences of discrimination and inclusion can provide a more nuanced view of the challenges faced by diverse subgroups within the LGBTQI+ community.
5. **Comparative Studies Across Religions:** Comparative research examining the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals across different religious traditions could yield insights into how various belief systems shape attitudes and policies toward LGBTQI+ inclusion. Such studies could help identify best practices and areas for improvement in religious settings.

6. es: With the increasing prevalence of online religious spaces, research exploring how digital platforms affect LGBTQI+ individuals' experiences within religious contexts could be valuable. This includes examining online support networks, forums, and social media groups where LGBTQI+ individuals engage with religious discussions.
7. **Evaluation of Inclusion Strategies:** Future studies should assess the effectiveness of specific inclusion strategies implemented by religious institutions. Evaluating the impact of training programs for religious leaders, inclusive policies, and support groups could provide evidence-based recommendations for fostering acceptance.
8. **Psychological and Emotional Well-being:** Additional research could focus on the long-term psychological and emotional impacts of religious discrimination on LGBTQI+ individuals. Investigating coping mechanisms and resilience factors can inform support services and interventions tailored to this population.
9. **Global Perspectives:** Expanding research to include global perspectives on LGBTQI+ experiences within religious contexts can enrich the understanding of how cultural and geographic factors influence attitudes toward LGBTQI+ individuals. Comparative studies across different countries and cultural contexts can highlight variations in religious beliefs and their impact on LGBTQI+ inclusion. By addressing these gaps, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between religion, discrimination, and LGBTQI+ identities, ultimately fostering greater inclusion and support for LGBTQI+ individuals in religious settings.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION



1.5.1 Summary of the Study

This study aimed to explore the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts, focusing on the discrimination they face, the psychological and social impacts of that discrimination, the role of religious institutions, and potential pathways for greater inclusion. Utilizing a quantitative survey methodology, data was collected from a diverse sample of 1,000 LGBTQI+ individuals, providing a comprehensive overview of their experiences. Key findings indicated significant levels of discrimination, detrimental effects on mental health and social well-being, and a complex relationship with religious institutions, which often perpetuated discrimination but also held potential for support and inclusion. Additionally, qualitative insights revealed themes of resilience and a desire for acceptance within religious spaces.

1.5.2 Conclusions Drawn

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the multifaceted experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts. The findings underscore the persistent challenges faced by this community, particularly the psychological distress stemming from discrimination and rejection. However, they also illuminate the potential for religious institutions to evolve into spaces of acceptance and support. This research demonstrates that addressing discrimination within religious settings is not only crucial for the well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals but is also integral to the broader mission of many faith communities that advocate for love, acceptance, and dignity for all.

1.5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following practical recommendations are proposed:

- 1. Training and Education for Religious Leaders:** Implement comprehensive training programs aimed at educating religious leaders and congregations about LGBTQI+ issues, promoting understanding, compassion, and support for LGBTQI+ individuals.
- 2. Creation of Inclusive Policies:** Religious institutions should develop and adopt inclusive policies that explicitly affirm the rights and dignity of LGBTQI+ individuals, ensuring that all members feel welcome and valued within their communities.
- 3. Support Networks and Resources:** Establish support networks and resources for LGBTQI+ individuals within religious communities, including counseling services, peer support groups, and educational resources, to promote mental health and well-being.
- 4. Collaboration with LGBTQI+ Organizations:** Foster partnerships between religious institutions and LGBTQI+ advocacy organizations to facilitate dialogue, share resources, and develop strategies for inclusion.
- 5. Policy Advocacy:** Policymakers should work towards creating and enforcing anti-discrimination laws that protect LGBTQI+ individuals in all areas of public life, including religious settings, to ensure their rights are upheld.

1.5.4 Final Thoughts

Fostering inclusivity and acceptance within religious spaces for LGBTQI+ individuals is not just a matter of social justice; it is a reflection of the core values that many religious traditions espouse, such as love, compassion, and dignity for all individuals. As society continues to evolve, it is essential for religious institutions to embrace this evolution and become safe havens for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. By prioritizing inclusivity, faith communities can not only enhance the well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals but also enrich their own spiritual lives and uphold their commitments to justice and equality. The journey toward acceptance and inclusion is ongoing, but the findings of this study pave the way for meaningful dialogue and action in support of LGBTQI+ individuals within religious contexts.

Appendix A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Hello! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey by the Bisi Alimi Foundation on the Pathways of Religious Inclusion project.

This survey aims to assess the impact of religion on sexuality and vice versa in the lives of LGBTQI individuals.

Through the responses, we develop a robust strategy that fosters a more inclusive and accepting religious environment for Queer Nigerians.

Note: This survey discusses and prompts conversations that dive deep into your beliefs and opinions concerning religion and sexual orientation. At any point you feel conflicted, kindly discontinue and revisit at a later date.

All information you provide is strictly confidential and will only be used for research. Participants must be 18 and above to complete this survey.

At the end of the survey, we would love to hear more from selected individuals; if you would like to share more stories with us, please leave your email and phone number for a follow-up conversation.

If you have questions or concerns, you can reach us at bisialimifoundation.org or Franklin Atogu at franklin.atogu@bisialimifoundation.org

Section A – Bio-information– In this section, we would love to know you better; the questions here are about you; please answer as honestly as possible

1. "How do you describe gender?" (Mark one answer)

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Transmale/Transman
- Transfemale/Transwoman
- Genderqueer/ Gender Nonconforming
- Others (please specify)

2. "What sex were you assigned at birth?"

- Male
- Female

3. "Are you an intersex person? That is, someone with sex characteristics that differ from those typically associated with female and male bodies

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

4. "Do you consider yourself to be:"

- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Asexual
- Not listed above (please specify)

5. "How old are You?"

- 18–24 years old
- 25–34 years old
- 35–44 years old
- 45–54 years old
- 55–64 years old
- 65+ years old

6. “Where are you currently living?”

- Nigeria
- Abroad

7. “What’s your Highest level of education?”

- Primary School (First School Leaving Certificate)
- Secondary School (WAEC)
- Higher National Diploma (HND)
- Bachelor’s Degree
- Master’s Degree
- Doctoral Degree

Section B (personal experience on the complexities of Religion and sexuality). This section aims to collect information on your understanding of the intersection of religion and sexuality, especially within religious settings. Kindly respond with “Yes and No” and provide additional feedback where necessary.

8. “As an LGBTQI+ individual, do you consider yourself to be an individual of Faith or Religion?”

- Yes
- No

8b. “ If No, were you religious before now?”

- Yes
- No

8C. “If yes, what brought about the fallout with religion?” [please jump to question 11]

9. “ if you are religious, which of the following Religious Groups do or did you identify with?”

- Christianity
- Islam
- African Traditional Religion
- Others (please specify)

10. “How would you describe your connection with your religion and its activities?”

- Very involved
- somewhat involved
- Involved
- Not involved

11. “Have you been discriminated against because of your sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression within your or a religious setting?” [If No, please jump to question 12]

- Yes
- No

11b. “If yes, “briefly tell us about it.”

12. “How do your religious institutions address issues of discrimination/ harassment towards LGBTQI+ Individuals within your religious settings?”

13. Have you experienced homophobic sermons within your religious setting?” [If No, please jump to question 14]

- Yes
- No

13b “ If Yes, briefly tell us how you felt after the sermon?”

13c. “When you experienced this, did you tell anyone about it?”

13d. If you did, what would your response be?

13e. If you didn't, can you tell us why?

14. “Have you experienced LGBTQI+ Inclusive sermon within your religious setting?”

- Yes
- No
- No

14b " If Yes, briefly tell us how you felt after the sermon?"

15. "Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination against an LGBTQI+ person within your or a religious setting?" [If No, please jump to question 18]

- Yes
- No

16. "Have you ever intervened in any form of discrimination towards the LGBTQI+ individual because of their sexual orientation and gender expression within your religious setting in Nigeria?"

- Yes
- No

16b. "Briefly explain what inspired your reaction?"

17. "How frequently, in your opinion, do you think this discrimination occurs?"

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
-

18. "How do you envision the relationship between LGBTQI+ communities and religious institutions evolving in the future?"

Section C- (Individual perspectives on the interactions between Religion and sexuality). This section aims to collect your opinions on the interactions of religion and sexuality within religious settings. To understand your opinions on the subject matter, kindly respond with "Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree" and provide additional feedback where necessary.

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

19. Do you think religious teachings influenced your self-acceptance of being an LGBTQI+ individual?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. Has your Religious beliefs prompted an act on your sexuality that otherwise affected you differently?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. "Do you think your religious setting provides a safe environment for LGBTQI+ individuals to worship and interact with their religion in Nigeria?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. " Do you think religious institutions should be more inclusive of LGBTQI+ individuals within their settings?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22b. "In your opinion, why should they be inclusive?"

23. Do you feel that religious doctrines and teachings contribute to societal stigma against LGBTQI+ individuals?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. Do you think it is possible for LGBTQI+ persons to truly reconcile their religion and their sexuality or gender identity and expression?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. "I believe that the bible, Quran, and other religious texts support LGBTQI+ rights and inclusion?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. "Do you think that religious teaching should be reinterpreted to be more inclusive of LGBTQI+ representation?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. "I believe that some religious texts and doctrine harm the lives of LGBTQI+ individuals?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28. "As an LGBTQI+ individual, I think it is acceptable for an LGBTQI+ individual to be a clergy of any religious group and setting?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. "I believe that some religious texts or sermons are translated/interpreted to justify violence against LGBTQI+ individuals

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

30. "I believe that these discriminations affect your relationship with your religion?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

31. "I think that some religious leaders support LGBTQI+ discrimination and exclusion?"

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

32. “ I think Religious leaders have a responsibility to advocate for LGBTQI+ rights and inclusion?”

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

33. “ I believe that LGBTQI+ individuals can have a strong relationship with their faith despite potential conflicts?”

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

33. “Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences as an LGBTQ person of faith?”

Appendix B: Statistical Analysis Tables

Table B.1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

This table provides the summary statistics (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) for primary variables related to LGBTQI+ experiences and well-being. Analysis was conducted using SPSS software to assess trends in age, levels of discrimination, and well-being impact scores

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Age	30.7	29	25	8.4
Level of Religious Affiliation (1–5)*	3.2	3	4	1.1
Impact on Mental Health (1–5)**	4.1	4	5	0.9
Frequency of Discrimination (1–5)***	3.8	4	4	1.2

* Religious Affiliation Scale: 1 (Not Practicing) to 5 (Highly Practicing)
** Mental Health Impact Scale: 1 (No Impact) to 5 (Significant Impact)
*** Discrimination Frequency Scale: 1 (Rarely) to 5 (Very Frequently)

Table B.2: Experiences of Discrimination by Demographic Group

SPSS cross-tabulations were used to compare discrimination experiences across demographic groups, showing the percentage of individuals who reported experiencing discrimination in a religious context.

Demographic Group	% Reporting Discrimination	% Reporting No Discrimination
Age 18–24	72%	28%
Age 25–34	63%	37%
Age 35–44	59%	41%
Male (Assigned at Birth)	68%	32%
Female (Assigned at Birth)	61%	39%
Non-binary/Third Gender	77%	23%
Christian Affiliation	66%	34%
Islamic Affiliation	69%	31%
Other Religious Affiliation	58%	42%

Table B.2: Experiences of Discrimination by Demographic Group

Pearson’s correlation analysis was performed to understand relationships between variables. Results show significant correlations between discrimination frequency, mental health impact, and religious affiliation.

Variables	Age	Discrimination Frequency	Mental Health Impact	Religious Affiliation
Age	1.0	0.15	0.10	0.08
Discrimination Frequency	0.15	1.0	0.72**	0.45**
Mental Health Impact	0.10	0.72**	1.0	0.39**
Religious Affiliation	0.08	0.45**	0.39**	1.0

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
These correlations suggest a strong link between the frequency of discrimination and its impact on mental health, as well as a moderate relationship between religious affiliation levels and both discrimination frequency and mental health impact.

Table B.4: Regression Analysis – Predicting Mental Health Impact

A linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive power of discrimination frequency, religious affiliation, and age on mental health impact scores. The model explains a significant portion of variance in mental health impact.

Predictor Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta (β)	t	p-value
Constant	1.2	0.45		2.67	0.008
Discrimination Frequency	0.65	0.08	0.58	8.13	<0.001
Religious Affiliation	0.32	0.12	0.27	2.67	0.003
Age	0.05	0.01	0.12	1.78	0.075

Model Summary:

- R-squared = 0.63
- Adjusted R-squared = 0.61
- F-statistic = 24.87 (p < 0.001)

This analysis indicates that discrimination frequency is the strongest predictor of mental health impact among LGBTQI+ individuals, followed by religious affiliation. Age showed a weaker, non-significant relationship with mental health impact.

Appendix D: Qualitative Responses (Anonymized)

Below are selected, anonymized qualitative responses gathered from the open-ended survey questions. These responses provide in-depth insights into the personal experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in religious contexts, highlighting themes of discrimination, resilience, coping mechanisms, and views on religious inclusion. Responses were edited for clarity and anonymity but retain the essence of participants' experiences.

Theme: Experiences of Discrimination

- 1. "I grew up in a very religious family, and when I came out, I was immediately ostracized by the church. It felt like everything I believed in rejected me because of who I am."*
- 2. "My religious community often preaches love, but that love doesn't seem to extend to LGBTQI+ people. I constantly hear messages that make me feel unworthy and unwelcome."*
- 3. "I attended religious services weekly until I was told that my identity was incompatible with my faith. It was devastating to feel that I had to choose between my faith and my identity."*

Theme: Psychological and Social Impact

- 1. "The rejection has caused me a lot of anxiety and depression. I've had to seek therapy because I just couldn't cope on my own."*
- 2. "I feel isolated because I can't freely discuss my sexuality in my community. I often feel like I'm leading a double life, which is incredibly stressful."*
- 3. "Hearing negative comments about LGBTQI+ people in religious settings affects my mental health greatly. It's hard to feel good about myself when the messages I hear are so condemning."*

Theme: Role of Religious Institutions

- 1. "I wish my church could see that LGBTQI+ people are still people of faith. There's so much emphasis on excluding us rather than understanding or supporting us."*
- 2. "Religious leaders have a huge influence on the way people see LGBTQI+ issues. Unfortunately, my church leaders often focus on outdated doctrines rather than compassion."*
- 3. "Some religious groups I've encountered are inclusive and accepting, but they are very few. It gives me hope, though, that acceptance is possible."*

Theme: Coping Mechanisms and Resilience

- 1. "I found an LGBTQI+ affirming group that meets for Bible study. It's been a lifeline and has shown me that faith and my identity are not incompatible."*
- 2. "My support system is made up of friends who understand me, and they've been incredibly helpful in coping with rejection from religious spaces."*
- 3. "I turned to meditation and personal reflection when I couldn't find acceptance in religious institutions. It's helped me find peace outside the traditional church."*

Theme: Pathways for Inclusion

- 1. "I think religious spaces need more awareness programs and training on LGBTQI+ issues. The prejudice often comes from ignorance rather than malice."*
- 2. "Dialogue is key. Religious leaders need to listen to LGBTQI+ people and understand our experiences. Change can only happen if there's a willingness to learn."*
- 3. "I would like to see religious institutions offering more inclusive spaces and resources for LGBTQI+ individuals, so we don't feel like outcasts in our own faith."*

These qualitative insights illustrate the complex and deeply personal impact that religious discrimination has on LGBTQI+ individuals and underscore the need for inclusive practices and understanding within religious communities.

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PATHWAY TO INCLUSION

RESEARCH REPORT

