



LGBTQ IDENTITIES IN KENYA: A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study examines the perspectives of the Kenyan population regarding the LGBTQ community. It tested the hypotheses that generational differences do not significantly affect attitudes toward LGBTQ, that culture and stereotypes are the primary factors driving rejection, and that external pressure has minimal influence on Kenyan views. The research aimed to identify the factors shaping these perspectives, future concerns about LGBTQ, and the barriers to acceptance in Kenya. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection through a structured survey with both closed- and open-ended questions. Data was gathered online via Google Forms, and analyzed using SPSS for quantitative data and Atlas.ti for qualitative responses. Findings reveal that cultural norms, religious beliefs, and misconceptions about LGBTQ issues are key reasons for rejection. Additionally, there is a widespread fear of moral decay and the erosion of traditional values. However, the study also indicates that education and awareness campaigns could shift public attitudes, making LGBTQ issues more acceptable in Kenya over time. The research underscores the importance of addressing misinformation and fostering a more inclusive, informed perspective on LGBTQ right.

Keywords: LGBTQ, Kenya, cultural norms, religious beliefs, generational differences, stereotypes, moral decay, awareness campaigns, social change, inclusivity.

Introduction and Background

Gender equality and the LGBTIQ debate

Gender equality has emerged as a central issue of global importance, advocating for the equal rights of all individuals, irrespective of their gender identity. The discourse around gender identity, which has historically been used to categorize individuals and structure social hierarchies, has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades. Traditional views of gender were primarily binary, focusing on male and female distinctions based on biological sex. However, advancements in gender studies, social theory, and human rights advocacy have challenged these simplistic binaries, particularly in Western societies. This has led to the recognition of a broad spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities, culminating in the growing recognition of LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer) individuals and communities.

Over the past few decades, many countries have introduced legal reforms that seek to protect the rights of LGBTIQ people. The United States, for instance, has seen significant legal strides, including the legalization of same-sex marriage and anti-discrimination laws in employment and housing

(Gutman et al., 2020). Globally, over 36 countries have legalized same-sex marriage, while others have passed laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (Kaufman & Compton, 2020). Despite these positive developments, many countries, especially in the Global South, remain resistant to legal and societal recognition of LGBTIQ rights. This resistance is often shaped by deeply ingrained cultural, religious, and societal norms that continue to perpetuate heteronormative frameworks.

LGBTIQ rights in Africa and Kenya

In Africa, where traditional values and colonial-era laws continue to play a significant role in shaping societal attitudes, the acceptance of LGBTIQ identities remains highly contested. South Africa stands out as a progressive exception, being the first African nation to legalize same-sex marriage and adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination laws for sexual minorities (Lazar, 2023). However, the majority of African countries continue to enforce laws that criminalize homosexuality and, in some cases, impose severe penalties for engaging in same-sex relationships. The social stigma associated with being LGBTIQ is pervasive across the continent, and many African governments actively suppress



public discourse on the matter (Boryczka, 2023; Moreno et al., 2020).

Kenya, situated in East Africa, is part of this broader trend of resistance to LGBTIQ rights. While there is growing recognition of LGBTIQ identities within Kenyan civil society, including some legal protections against discrimination, there is no formal recognition of same-sex unions or marriage. Public opinion on the LGBTIQ community is marked by deep divisions, with significant opposition from both political and religious leaders, as well as the broader population. The general view of LGBTIQ individuals in Kenya remains overwhelmingly negative, particularly in rural areas, where traditional cultural beliefs continue to exert a strong influence. Despite these challenges, some Kenyan activists and LGBTIQ individuals continue to push for greater visibility and legal recognition. However, the issue remains highly contentious, with ongoing debates about whether the country should legalize same-sex marriage and provide legal protections for sexual minorities (Harper et al., 2021; Gedro & Rocco, 2024).

Problem Statement

The global shift toward greater acceptance and recognition of LGBTIQ rights has placed external pressure on countries like Kenya to reconsider their stance on the issue. While international actors push for the de-criminalization of homosexuality and the protection of LGBTIQ rights, the Kenyan population remains largely divided on the issue. A significant portion of the population holds deep reservations about embracing LGBTIQ identities, citing concerns over cultural traditions and moral values. Despite this, the number of LGBTIQ individuals in Kenya appears to be rising, and public awareness of gender diversity is slowly increasing.

However, the contemporary perspectives of the Kenyan population on LGBTIQ identities remain under-explored. It is unclear what factors influence these views, how they differ across different generations, and to what extent external pressures have impacted Kenyan attitudes toward LGBTIQ issues. The lack of detailed research on this topic has hindered policymakers from making informed decisions that reflect the nuanced views of the population. Thus, this study aims to address the gap in understanding the perspectives of Kenyans on the issue of LGBTIQ identities, exploring the factors that shape these views, and identifying the possible future trajectory for LGBTIQ rights in Kenya.

Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the contemporary perspectives of Kenyans regarding LGBTIQ identities and the factors that influence these perspectives. The primary objectives of the research are:

- To identify the key factors that impacts the acceptance or rejection of the LGBTIQ community in Kenya.
- To examine the role of external pressures, such as international human rights advocacy and global trends, in shaping Kenyan public opinion on LGBTIQ issues.

- To explore the cultural, social, and religious factors that influence perceptions of the LGBTIQ community in Kenya.
- To investigate potential future trends in the acceptance of LGBTIQ rights in Kenya.
- To highlight the primary concerns raised by the Kenyan population regarding LGBTIQ inclusion.
- To assess the attitudes of Kenyans toward LGBTIQ issues across different generations.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What factors have shaped the current perspectives of the Kenyan population regarding LGBTIQ identities?
- How do generational differences influence attitudes toward LGBTIQ individuals in Kenya?
- What are the main concerns expressed by the Kenyan population regarding the recognition and rights of the LGBTIQ community?
- To what extent have external pressures, such as global advocacy and foreign policies, influenced the public's view on LGBTIQ issues in Kenya?
- What are the potential future prospects for LGBTIQ rights and acceptance in Kenya?

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value for several key stakeholders in the Kenyan context, including policymakers, civil society organizations, and the LGBTIQ community itself. For the LGBTIQ community, this research will provide insight into the societal perception of their identities and help them understand their position within Kenyan society. It will also aid in the identification of strategies to improve their visibility, advocate for their rights, and engage with the broader population in more constructive ways.

For policymakers, the findings will inform the development of laws and policies that address the needs and rights of sexual minorities in Kenya. Understanding the public's perceptions and concerns will allow for the formulation of policies that are both effective and culturally sensitive. Given the ongoing debates around LGBTIQ rights, this study can guide future legal reforms aimed at protecting marginalized communities while balancing the diverse social and cultural values within the country.

The study is also significant in its potential to contribute to broader conversations about human rights, inclusivity, and the role of culture in shaping attitudes toward gender and sexuality. By addressing the factors that influence acceptance or rejection of LGBTIQ identities in Kenya, the research will provide valuable insights into the social dynamics at play and offer recommendations for fostering greater understanding and respect for sexual diversity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section presents a review of relevant literature, critically analyzing existing theories and empirical findings related to

the acceptance of the LGBTQ community. It aims to enhance understanding of the topic and identify research gaps, particularly within African societies. The review is divided into a theoretical section, discussing key theories, and an empirical section, examining prior studies and their findings.

Theoretical Review

Sexual minority stress theory

Developed by Meyer in 2003, the Sexual Minority Stress Theory highlights the psychological stress faced by LGBTQ individuals due to societal stigma, prejudice, and discrimination. Stressors are categorized into external (e.g., harassment, stigma, and discrimination) and internal (e.g., internalized homophobia). This theory is particularly relevant in understanding the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Africa, where negative stereotypes and cultural resistance have hindered their acceptance. Cultural perceptions, fueled by historical prejudices, contribute to the slow development of LGBTQ inclusivity on the continent (Fulginiti et al., 2023; Frost & Meyer, 2023).

Cultural relativism theory

Cultural relativism asserts that norms and values are shaped by the cultural context in which they exist, emphasizing respect for diverse cultural perspectives (Österman, 2023). This theory is important for understanding African resistance to LGBTQ rights, as many African societies view LGBTQ issues as foreign and incompatible with their traditional values. The concept of cultural relativism helps explain why many African nations reject the LGBTQ agenda, viewing it as an imposition of Western cultural norms.

Empirical Review

Cultural beliefs are a significant barrier to the acceptance of the LGBTQ community. Parameter et al. (2020) found that even in countries where LGBTQ rights are legalized, there is concern about cultural erosion, particularly among older generations. Guttman et al. (2020) and Filipovic (2020) support this, noting that many elderly individuals view LGBTQ acceptance as a threat to their cultural traditions. Filipovic, in particular, observed similar patterns in Serbia, where LGBTQ acceptance was seen as part of "Europeanization."

Generational differences also influence attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals. Studies by Hagai et al. (2020) and Dhoest (2023) show that younger generation, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, are more likely to accept LGBTQ identities compared to older generations, who hold more conservative views. Similar findings by Barsigian et al. (2020) and Newman et al. (2019) demonstrate that younger people are more open to LGBTQ rights, while older generations remain more resistant.

The influence of external pressures, such as foreign policies and global advocacy, also affects acceptance in Africa. Boryczka (2023) found that many Africans view LGBTQ issues as a foreign imposition, with external factors like religion and Western pressure playing significant roles in shaping attitudes. Dreier et al. (2019) confirmed this in their study across 33 countries, which found that cultural, religious,

and external influences were key drivers of LGBTQ acceptance in African nations. Similar conclusions were drawn by Mogotsi et al. (2024), who found that many African communities continue to reject LGBTQ rights due to perceived Western cultural imperialism.

Research Gap

While existing studies have explored the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in Africa, including cultural resistance and generational differences, there remains a lack of research focused on the perspectives of local communities in countries like Kenya. Most studies have concentrated on broad regional trends or external influences, leaving a gap in understanding how different social classes within African societies view LGBTQ issues. This research aims to fill that gap by exploring the attitudes of the Kenyan community toward LGBTQ issues, with particular attention to how these views vary across different social groups.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section outlines the research methodology employed in this study to investigate the perspectives of Kenyans on LGBTIQ issues. The methodology section provides a detailed explanation of the research philosophy, design, methods of data collection, sample selection, and data analysis techniques used to address the research questions and test the hypotheses. A mixed-methods approach was employed to ensure comprehensive insights into the study topic, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques.

Research Philosophy

The research philosophy guiding this study is realism, which aims to explain the underlying factors influencing societal events and attitudes, particularly in complex and culturally sensitive topics such as LGBTIQ issues. Realism as a philosophical approach seeks to understand the world as it truly exists, beyond surface-level perceptions, recognizing that the perspectives of individuals may be influenced by various deeper social, cultural, and historical contexts (LaMarre & Chamberlain, 2022). In the context of this research, realism is particularly suited for understanding the diverse and often conflicting viewpoints regarding LGBTIQ issues in Kenya, where societal acceptance is limited, and the movement faces substantial opposition. This perspective facilitates a more nuanced approach to understanding how attitudes toward LGBTIQ individuals are shaped by personal beliefs, cultural norms, and external pressures.

Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was adopted for this study, combining both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The use of mixed methods allows for a comprehensive exploration of the research questions, capturing both numerical data on public opinion and more in-depth qualitative insights into individual experiences and attitudes.

- **Quantitative approach:** A survey design was employed to gather numerical data on the general

attitudes and perceptions of Kenyans regarding LGBTIQ issues. This method allowed for the collection of data from a larger, more representative sample, making it possible to identify broad patterns and trends in the public's views.

- **Qualitative approach:** In addition to the survey, a phenomenological study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of individuals and how they perceive LGBTIQ issues. Phenomenology focuses on the subjective experiences of participants, providing deeper insight into the reasons behind their beliefs and attitudes. This approach was particularly useful for understanding how cultural, religious, and personal factors shape individual perspectives on LGBTIQ issues.

The combination of these two methods allowed the researcher to gain both broad statistical insights and rich, detailed narratives, creating a well-rounded understanding of the study topic.

Research Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprised adult residents of Kenya aged 18 years and above. According to the most recent data from Statista (2024), the population of Kenyans aged 18 and older is approximately 32.5 million. Given the focus on the general attitudes of Kenyan adults toward LGBTIQ issues, the study aimed to capture a wide range of perspectives from this demographic.

Sample

The sample size for this study was determined using a sample size calculator, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a 7% margin of error. The calculation, based on a 50% proportion of the population, indicated that a sample of 197 participants would be appropriate for this study. To select participants, a convenient random sampling technique was employed. Participants were recruited through online platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, where the survey was shared. The nature of this online sampling method meant that participants were self-selecting, as only those who chose to participate would be included. This approach was deemed suitable for the study given its broad reach and ease of data collection through online channels. There were no specific inclusion criteria other than being 18 years or older and willing to complete the survey. This broad inclusion criterion aimed to gather diverse perspectives from the Kenyan public.

Research Method

This study used a primary research method, involving the collection of data directly from participants through structured questionnaires. Primary research was chosen because it allows the researcher to obtain firsthand information regarding the participants' attitudes toward LGBTIQ identities, providing a direct and accurate representation of public opinion. The questionnaire was designed to capture both quantitative data (through closed-ended questions) and qualitative data (through open-ended questions). This approach allowed participants to provide more nuanced responses, enriching the study's findings.

Data Collection Method

Data collection for this study was carried out via an online survey, which was distributed using various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and through a Google Forms link. The survey consisted of both structured (closed-ended) and open-ended questions, which allowed participants to express their views quantitatively and qualitatively. The online survey method was chosen because it allowed for efficient data collection from a wide and geographically dispersed sample. Participants were invited to complete the survey voluntarily, and responses were automatically recorded and stored in an online database for analysis. The survey was designed to be user-friendly and accessible, ensuring that participants could easily navigate the form and submit their responses.

Validity and Reliability

Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the research accurately measures what it intends to measure. For this study, criterion-related validity was used, which involves ensuring that the data collected accurately reflects the participants' perspectives on the issue of LGBTIQ rights. Since the survey was designed to capture individuals' personal attitudes and beliefs about LGBTIQ issues, the methodology directly addresses the research questions and provides an accurate measure of public opinion (LaMarre & Chamberlain, 2022). The use of self-report surveys allowed participants to share their authentic views, ensuring the validity of the data collected.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained from the research methods. In this study, parallel form reliability was employed, wherein participants were asked similar questions in different formats to check for consistency in their responses. This method helps to assess whether the participants' responses are stable and consistent across different measures. Ensuring high reliability was critical for maintaining the credibility of the findings and ensuring that the data accurately represented the participants' true opinions (Mitchell, 2023).

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study was conducted using both statistical and thematic methods:

- **Quantitative data analysis:** Statistical analyses, including correlation analysis, t-tests, and regression analysis, were used to examine relationships between variables such as age, education level, and attitudes toward LGBTIQ issues. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 27. These analyses allowed the researcher to identify patterns and test hypotheses related to the public's perspectives on LGBTIQ issues.
- **Qualitative data analysis:** Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative responses obtained from the open-ended survey questions. Atlas.ti software (version 12) was employed to code and categorize the responses, identifying common

themes and patterns in participants' narratives. This allowed for an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing individual perspectives on LGBTIQ issues.

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

This study assumed that all participants had a basic understanding of the concept of LGBTIQ and were capable of providing informed responses based on their own knowledge or experiences. It was also assumed that participants would respond truthfully and without bias, as participation was voluntary.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was its reliance on online data collection, which may have excluded certain populations without access to the internet or familiarity with online survey tools. Additionally, the self-selecting nature of the sample may have led to bias, as those who are more open to discussing LGBTIQ issues may have been more likely to participate. This limitation could potentially skew the findings, as it may not fully represent the views of the general population.

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study, which aim to respond to the research hypotheses and answer the research questions. The section is divided into two main parts: the quantitative findings and the qualitative findings. The quantitative section evaluates the hypotheses using statistical analyses, while the qualitative section provides insights from thematic analysis of interviews. The findings are presented in relation to the hypotheses and research questions explored in this study.

Descriptive Statistics

The study targeted 200 participants, and a total of 192 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 96%. In terms of age distribution, 39% of participants were aged between 21-30 years, while 28% were aged 31-40 years. The remaining participants were distributed as follows: 10% were aged below 20 years, 13% were between 41-50 years, and only 10% were aged above 50 years. Regarding education level, 54% of participants had completed tertiary education, followed by 16% with postgraduate education and 16% with secondary school education. A small proportion had either no formal education or only primary education. The gender distribution showed that 44% of respondents were male, 39% were female, and 15% chose not to disclose their gender identity. These demographics provide a representative sample of Kenyan society, spanning a broad range of age groups, education levels, and genders.

Quantitative Findings

Hypothesis 1: *There is no difference in contemporary perspectives on LGBTIQ based on the different generations.*

The first hypothesis tested whether generational differences influenced perceptions of LGBTIQ. The findings revealed that 47% of respondents disagreed that LGBTIQ is a concept of the

younger generations, while 44% agreed. A majority (79%) disagreed with the notion that older generations would be more likely to accept LGBTIQ compared to younger generations. This suggests that younger generations are more open to LGBTIQ issues than older generations. A significant relationship was observed between age and the perception that LGBTIQ is primarily a concept of younger generations (p -value = 0.001). Furthermore, a statistically significant difference was found between generational attitudes towards whether LGBTIQ communities should be treated equally (p -value = 0.00). These results suggest that generational factors play a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards LGBTIQ issues, with younger generations being more likely to support equal treatment for LGBTIQ individuals.

Hypothesis 2: *Culture and stereotypes are the main factors impacting the acceptance of the LGBTIQ community in Kenya.*

The second hypothesis posited that cultural beliefs and stereotypes were the main factors influencing LGBTIQ acceptance. Factor analysis was conducted to identify the key factors influencing participants' attitudes. The results revealed that more than two factors contributed significantly to perceptions of LGBTIQ, with cultural beliefs and religious views being among the most influential. In fact, the data showed that these factors, alongside others such as education and awareness, accounted for 77% of the variance in attitudes towards LGBTIQ issues. This finding suggests that the initial hypothesis, which focused only on culture and religion, was too narrow. The findings indicate that other factors, such as exposure to global advocacy, personal experiences, and social networks, also play significant roles in shaping attitudes toward LGBTIQ.

Hypothesis 3: *External pressures do not influence the perspective of the people of Kenya regarding the issue of LGBTIQ.*

The third hypothesis tested whether external pressures, particularly from Western countries, influenced Kenyan perceptions of LGBTIQ. The study found significant evidence that external pressures, especially from Western advocacy groups, played a crucial role in shaping local opinions. A p -value of 0.02 indicated that international advocacy for LGBTIQ rights had a measurable impact on local attitudes. Additionally, 44% of participants agreed that the advocacy efforts of Western countries influenced Kenyan perspectives on LGBTIQ, increasing local acceptance to some extent. This supports the hypothesis that external factors—particularly Western support for LGBTIQ rights—are influencing the way Kenyan people view the LGBTIQ community, even as local culture and religion continue to resist these changes.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, identifying key themes based on participants' responses to open-ended questions. The findings were organized around the research questions.

Research Question 1: *What factors have influenced the current perspectives of the Kenyan population regarding the issue of LGBTIQ?*

Theme 1: Cultural Influence and Fear of Cultural Erosion

A dominant theme that emerged from the interviews was the importance of cultural preservation. A large proportion of participants (72%) agreed that the rejection of LGBTIQ in Kenya is largely driven by the desire to protect local cultural values. In fact, 79% of respondents expressed a deep fear that LGBTIQ would lead to the erosion of these traditions. A significant portion of the sample (65%) also viewed LGBTIQ as a foreign concept being pushed into Kenyan society by Western countries, which they believed would undermine their cultural norms. Respondents emphasized that traditional Kenyan culture and values, including family structures and gender roles, were incompatible with LGBTIQ identities. One respondent stated, *"LGBTIQ is a result of cultural erosion and Westernization; it goes against our social and biblical norms."* This sentiment was echoed by another participant who commented, *"It's against our culture, our religious beliefs, and it has always been a crime since the colonial period."* These statements illustrate the prevailing view that LGBTIQ is a foreign influence that threatens the cultural fabric of Kenyan society.

Theme 2: Religious Beliefs and Rejection of LGBTIQ

Religious beliefs were another key factor influencing participants' attitudes. Seventy percent of participants identified religious convictions, particularly Christianity and Islam, as a major reason for rejecting LGBTIQ. Many respondents stated that LGBTIQ practices are considered sinful or immoral by their religious teachings, making acceptance difficult. One respondent said, *"Being a Christian, LGBTIQ is an evil practice and should not be condoned. However, enshrining people's rights is important."* Another respondent remarked, *"We respect God's creation, and we are a religious nation who can't allow such evil practices."* The influence of religion in shaping Kenyan views on LGBTIQ is profound and cannot be understated.

Research Question 2: *How does the Kenyan population consider the perspective of the local people concerning the issue of LGBTIQ in the future?*

Theme 3: LGBTIQ as a Foreign Aspect Rooted in Younger Generations

A recurring theme in the responses was that LGBTIQ is perceived as an issue largely relevant to younger generations. Forty-three percent of participants agreed that LGBTIQ is primarily a concern of Generation Z and Millennials, and 79% disagreed that older generations would be more likely to accept LGBTIQ. Additionally, 65% of respondents stated that LGBTIQ was a foreign concept imported from Western countries. They viewed the continued spread of LGBTIQ rights in Africa as a form of Western cultural imperialism. One participant remarked, *"LGBTIQ is not a good movement for the people of Kenya. It should be disbanded as it is an element of Western culture."* These views suggest that many Kenyan

respondents do not see LGBTIQ as part of their local culture and consider it an imposition from abroad.

Theme 4: LGBTIQ is Dangerous and Disregards African Traditions

Over half of the sample (51%) expressed concerns that LGBTIQ poses a danger to future generations, with 77% believing that its acceptance would lead to the erosion of African traditions. Many respondents viewed the LGBTIQ movement as a threat to the social fabric of Kenyan society, and some voiced concerns about the impact it could have on children and families. One respondent stated, *"This community will harm our children and create challenges for individuals."* Another commented, *"I feel our children are being misled."* These responses highlight the widespread fear that the acceptance of LGBTIQ could destabilize traditional African family structures and values.

Theme 5: LGBTIQ Could Be Accepted in the Future

While many respondents were resistant to LGBTIQ, there was also some optimism about future acceptance. Thirty-eight percent of participants believed that LGBTIQ could be accepted in the future, especially if the younger generations continued to advocate for it. Additionally, 51% agreed that proper education and awareness programs could change people's perspectives and lead to greater acceptance. One respondent stated, *"Possibly yes, as young people are more supportive of this issue."* Another suggested, *"When people get used to the idea, they might become more enlightened and accept it."* These responses suggest that, while current attitudes are largely negative, education and awareness could play a significant role in shifting public opinion over time.

Research Question 3: *What are the main concerns about the acceptance of LGBTIQ communities among the Kenyan population?*

Theme 6: Lack of Education and Awareness Limits Acceptance

A major barrier to LGBTIQ acceptance identified by respondents was a lack of education and awareness. Fifty-one percent of participants agreed that misinformation and a lack of understanding contributed to negative perceptions of LGBTIQ. Many respondents believed that greater awareness through educational programs could help reduce misconceptions and foster acceptance. One participant noted, *"Education is key to dispelling false beliefs about the LGBTIQ community."* Another added, *"With increased education, perceptions might change, but it will take time."* These findings suggest that while acceptance is currently low, there is hope that through proper education, more people will come to understand LGBTIQ issues and support the movement in the future.

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the research findings, offering insights into their implications for LGBTIQ acceptance in Kenya. It is structured into four sections: a summary of the research findings, a discussion of

the findings, conclusions drawn from the study, and recommendations for both policy and further research.

Discussion of Research Findings

The findings of this study indicate that generational differences play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward the LGBTQ community in Kenya. Younger generations, particularly those exposed to globalized media and the influence of Western culture, tend to have more progressive views on LGBTQ issues compared to older generations. This trend is consistent with the social change theory, which posits that as societies are exposed to new ideas through social interactions and cultural shifts, they gradually adapt and evolve in their values and norms (Roşca, 2020). For example, younger Kenyans who interact with global media or who have access to information about LGBTQ rights may be more inclined to view the LGBTQ movement as part of a broader human rights struggle. Conversely, older generations, who have been raised in a cultural environment more resistant to such ideas, often perceive LGBTQ rights as a challenge to the established social order. These generational divides are not unique to Kenya and have been observed across various African countries and cultures.

The study aligns with existing literature, such as the work of Hagai et al. (2020), which found that older generations, including Baby Boomers, were more likely to hold discriminatory views toward sexual minorities compared to Millennials and Generation Z. Similarly, Barsigian et al. (2020) and Dhoest (2023) documented that younger generations, especially those in Western societies, were more likely to accept shifts in sexual identity compared to older cohorts. These findings underscore a broader global trend, where younger people are generally more open to LGBTQ rights than their elders. However, in Kenya, the generational divide is particularly pronounced because the country has a deeply rooted tradition of conservatism, especially in rural and religious communities.

The study also revealed that factors beyond culture and stereotypes are contributing to the rejection of the LGBTQ movement in Kenya. While cultural norms and societal stereotypes certainly play a key role in shaping public opinion, religious beliefs and fear of foreign influence are also critical factors. The deep intertwining of religion with social and cultural practices in Kenya cannot be overstated. Christianity, which is the predominant religion, and Islam, which has a significant following, both generally condemn same-sex relationships. These religious beliefs contribute to the widespread perception that LGBTQ identities are morally wrong or sinful. In this context, LGBTQ rights are viewed not only as a challenge to cultural traditions but also as an affront to religious teachings, which many Kenyans hold in high regard.

This religious opposition is consistent with research by Dreier et al. (2019), which highlighted that religion, alongside cultural and legal factors, plays a central role in shaping public attitudes toward LGBTQ rights in Africa. Similarly, Lyons et al. (2023) identified religious doctrine as one of the

primary drivers of homophobia in African societies, noting that in many cases, religious teachings reinforce negative stereotypes and stigmatization of LGBTQ individuals. These findings suggest that the religious component in Kenya's rejection of LGBTQ rights is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires nuanced interventions that address both cultural and religious concerns.

Another critical finding in this study is the perception that LGBTQ rights are an alien concept being "imposed" by Western countries. This sentiment is widespread not only in Kenya but also across much of the African continent. As noted by Matsuzaka et al. (2021) and Boryczka (2023), there is a strong belief in many African societies that LGBTQ rights are part of a "Western agenda" to undermine traditional African values. This perception is fueled by the fact that LGBTQ rights have been legalized or normalized in many Western nations, leading to a belief that such ideas are being forced onto African societies. In Kenya, this foreign imposition is framed as a cultural invasion, and many view it as an existential threat to the national identity and cultural practices that have historically defined the country.

This "foreign agenda" narrative is a significant barrier to LGBTQ acceptance in Kenya. As the study found, many Kenyans believe that LGBTQ identities are a Western phenomenon and therefore incompatible with local customs and values. This perception complicates the advocacy for LGBTQ rights, as it is often framed not just as an issue of equality but as an external imposition that undermines national sovereignty. This finding aligns with the work of Boryczka (2023), who noted that many African countries view the promotion of LGBTQ rights as a form of Western imperialism, reinforcing a narrative of resistance to foreign influence.

Furthermore, the study found that there is a prevailing fear that the acceptance of LGBTQ rights would lead to moral decay and the erosion of traditional values. Many participants expressed concerns about the impact of LGBTQ rights on the future generations, arguing that it could undermine the moral fabric of Kenyan society. This concern is particularly significant in Kenya, where traditional family structures and gender roles are central to social cohesion. There is a widely held belief that the acceptance of non-heteronormative sexualities would disrupt these traditional norms and lead to a breakdown of the family unit.

This fear of moral decay is rooted in cultural and religious teachings that emphasize heterosexuality as the norm and traditional gender roles as essential to societal order. This perception is supported by social change theory, which argues that communities exposed to new ideas or practices may fear that such shifts will destabilize the established social order (Mia, 2022). In the case of Kenya, the fear that LGBTQ acceptance could lead to moral and cultural breakdown is compounded by concerns about the future of Kenyan youth, who are seen as vulnerable to "corrupting" influences from both Western media and the LGBTQ rights movement.

The findings also suggest that education and awareness campaigns are key to addressing these fears and misconceptions. While many respondents were initially resistant to LGBTQ rights, several expressed the belief that with better information and understanding, their views might change. This highlights the critical importance of education in shifting public attitudes. There is a significant knowledge gap in Kenya regarding LGBTQ issues, with many people relying on myths, stereotypes, and misinformation to form their opinions. This is particularly true in rural areas, where access to information is limited and exposure to alternative viewpoints is minimal.

Studies by Singla et al. (2022) and Agyapong (2021) have similarly documented the role of misinformation in perpetuating negative attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals in Africa. This misinformation often includes harmful stereotypes, such as the belief that LGBTQ individuals are more likely to spread diseases like HIV or that they pose a threat to social order. Such misconceptions are powerful barriers to acceptance, and without targeted education and outreach, they will continue to hinder progress.

To address these challenges, the government and advocacy groups should prioritize public awareness campaigns that provide accurate, factual information about LGBTQ rights and the lived experiences of LGBTQ individuals. These campaigns should be culturally sensitive and tailored to different demographic groups, particularly in rural areas where misconceptions are most prevalent. There is also a need for policy changes that promote inclusivity and address the legal and social discrimination faced by LGBTQ individuals in Kenya.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that while resistance to LGBTQ rights in Kenya is strong, there is potential for change. Education, informed discussions, and respectful dialogue can help bridge the gap between opposing views. If addressed properly, the generational divide, cultural concerns, and religious opposition can be mitigated, leading to a more inclusive society that recognizes the dignity and rights of all its members.

Conclusion

The research has provided a detailed picture of the Kenyan population's attitudes toward LGBTQ issues, highlighting the complex interplay of cultural, religious, generational, and societal factors. The rejection of LGBTQ rights is primarily driven by concerns about moral decay, cultural preservation, and religious beliefs, with many Kenyans perceiving the movement as a foreign imposition. However, there is potential for change, particularly through education and awareness efforts that can address the misinformation surrounding LGBTQ issues. The Kenyan people's views on LGBTQ are not fixed, and with appropriate interventions, there is hope for a more inclusive and accepting society in the future.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- **Education and awareness campaigns:** There is a pressing need for educational initiatives to address the widespread misinformation and misconceptions about LGBTQ communities. Advocacy groups and policymakers should focus on providing accurate, culturally sensitive information about LGBTQ issues to the Kenyan public. Such campaigns could focus on human rights, diversity, and the importance of inclusivity, helping to foster a more informed and empathetic society.
- **Cultural protection and integration:** While acknowledging the concerns about cultural erosion, it is essential to balance the protection of Kenyan traditions with the promotion of diversity and inclusivity. The government and local communities should find ways to protect cultural heritage while also accommodating the rights and freedoms of all individuals, including LGBTQ persons. Initiatives that promote the coexistence of local cultures and human rights may help to address the fears surrounding the LGBTQ movement.
- **Government support for cultural preservation:** The Kenyan government should consider supporting initiatives that promote and protect the local culture while also embracing global movements for human rights. Ensuring that traditional values are maintained without dismissing the rights of sexual minorities will be critical in addressing the generational divide on this issue.
- **Promote inclusivity in policies:** Policymakers should incorporate the principles of inclusivity and non-discrimination into national policies. While the legal framework in Kenya currently criminalizes same-sex relations, there is a need for ongoing dialogue to explore the possibility of reforming laws that discriminate against LGBTQ individuals. Ensuring the rights of marginalized groups is essential for a more inclusive society.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study has provided valuable insights into the attitudes of the Kenyan population toward LGBTQ issues. However, further research is needed to explore strategies that can effectively change public attitudes and increase the acceptance of LGBTQ individuals in Kenya. Future studies could examine the effectiveness of specific education campaigns, the role of media in shaping perceptions, and the impact of religious and cultural interventions on attitudes toward LGBTQ rights. Additionally, more in-depth qualitative research is needed to explore the personal stories of LGBTQ individuals in Kenya, to better understand their experiences and challenges in this societal context.

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