

WOMEN OF FAITH IN ACTION (WOFA) AND FAITHFUL CATHOLIC SOULS (FCS)

**RELIGION AND RECONCILIATION WITH
THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY IN UGANDA.**

**Resolving Conflict Between
Sexual Identity and Religious Beliefs**



Women of Faith in Action and Faithful Catholic Souls

Many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons in Uganda have found both comfort and suffering in religion. Although the majority of LGBTQ individuals in Uganda were raised in organized religion, many do not value their religious upbringing or continue to struggle with the issue of faith. As members of the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda, we believe that marginalization persists because of our upbringing and how it teaches us to be afraid of who we are due to the religious principles we are expected to uphold.

WOFA and FCSU exist to change this narrative and reconcile the community with their spirituality to enjoy their freedom to worship. This further explains the reason why minorities are less religious or have abandoned religion as means of survival.

This research brings to light most of the effects religion has caused to our community what we have been ignoring over the years. We would like to thank our Research consultant for the great work done and all persons that supported the success of this research. Special thanks goes to our donor UHAI for the support of this project.

Table of Contents

Chapter One	- 5
Background	- 5
Statement of the Problem	- 7
Purpose of the Study	- 8
Research Questions	- 8
Significance of the Study	- 8
Scope	- 9
Research Methodology	- 10
Chapter Two	- 11
Research Findings	- 11
The Conflict's Definition	- 12
Church teaching	- 13
Explicit and Implicit Messages	- 13
First Reaction to the Conflict	- 14
Working Through the Conflict	- 18
Conclusions and Discussion	- 21

Researcher's Insight

Can we ever really discover who we are? Do we ever reach a point where our identities are fully formed? These questions are important when attempting to understand how LGBTIQ-identified people raised religious handle the conflict between their sexual identity and religious convictions. Can an identity conflict between sexual

orientation and religion ever be totally and completely resolved? This process of conflict resolution is being explored.

Religion and spirituality, like other facets of identity, are things that grow with time (Fowler, 1981).

Definitions of religion and spirituality are necessary before the topic of religious identity formation can be examined. Religious leaders and congregations also offer guidance on anything from getting along with others to appropriate sexual behavior. People frequently turn to religion for guidance and while spirituality and religion both refer to a person's connection to God or a higher power, spirituality is a broader idea that is not just related to religion.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Many politicians in many nations utilize explicitly theological arguments to condemn homosexuality, calling it "unAfrican," "unbiblical," and "unChristian." Religious ideas frequently frame disputes regarding homosexuality in the media and among the general public. This has created a significant divide between religion and LGBTQ people and the church. It has sparked a heated debate over how to be religious while also being a member of the LGBTQ community, as well as suspicions about whether anyone who is religious is pro-LGBTQ. Religion is frequently used to explain the origins of anti-homosexuality politics in Africa. Despite the fact that religion plays a significant role in fueling homophobia in Africa, the Bible and Christian faith have been used by African LGBT activists to further their cause. We must look beyond a narrow focus on African religious homophobia because religion plays diverse and nuanced roles in modern African sexual dynamics. It is so important to note that religion is a major factor that fuels homophobia in Africa.

Uganda has gotten a lot of attention as a result of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill (AHB), which was enacted on December 20, 2013, and obtained presidential assent on February 24, becoming the Anti Homosexuality Act (AHA).

The Act made it unlawful to organize or speak out for LGBTIQ rights across the country and enhanced penalties for same-sex activity.

The US anti-gay evangelicals Scott Lively, Don Schmierer, and Caleb Brundidge's trip to Kampala in March 2009 to speak at a "Seminar on Exposing the "Homosexual Agenda"" and elaborate on the purported sins of homosexuality is widely seen as the origin of the AHA. The text of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, introduced seven months later in the Ugandan Parliament by MP David Bahati, who is rumored to have close ties to The Family, a potent and covert political Christian organization with headquarters in the US, reiterated several of the themes raised at that seminar, including the threat that homosexuality allegedly posed to marriage and the family and the propensity of homosexuals to recruit children into their "lifestyle." The process of criminalizing LGBTIQ individuals in Uganda was not initiated by US preachers. It goes back to August 1894, when Uganda was made an official Protectorate of the British government.

After the British assumed control of Uganda, a harsh and shameless campaign to subjugate the Ugandan people and impose British law and traditions began. Naturally, what was law in Britain was believed fit to be the foundation of law everywhere, and during British colonial authority, laws outlawing same-sex sexual conduct were passed.

Uganda was well-baked and ready to accept the homophobic message that homosexuality was an imported, not an indigenous, behavior. Although the connection between homosexuality and whiteness is a strong argument in Uganda, post-colonial nationalism's role in fostering homophobia in the country's political and religious beliefs is also not discussed. For reasons that historians are still debating, the Kabakas (kings) of 19th-century Buganda, the largest of the pre-colonial kingdoms that united to form modern-day Uganda, allowed their inhabitants to convert to Islam and Christianity. At the age of 17, Mwanga II succeeded to the throne in 1884, inheriting a court that had become violently divided between various religious factions.

These factions had all formed varied degrees of alliances with outside forces who were encroaching on Buganda as part of the ongoing scramble for Africa. Protestants had strong ties to the British, Catholics to the Germans, and Muslims to the Sultan of Zanzibar; traditionalists in the court held suspicion of all three groups.

The missionary accounts are eager to emphasize that homosexuality was not just unchristian but also despised by the Baganda, despite language being linguistic anthropological proof that homosexuality existed in Uganda. They base this assertion on a book on Baganda traditions written by Apollo Kagwa, who is regarded as the first local ethnographer of Buganda. ⁶⁷ Kagwa, however, is not a detached anthropologist.

After barely escaping the purges, he rose to prominence as the head of the Protestant faction and went on to work closely with the Imperial British East Africa Company and its agent Frederick (later Lord) Lugard, whose bluster and firepower were essential to the Protestants' eventual victory and that of their British backers in the ensuing civil wars.

In order to avoid repeating the narrative of the Ugandan martyrs, we would like to make it abundantly clear that Ugandans do not give much attention to the homosexuality-related issues that surround it.

They have utilized the stories of the martyrs in several ways to enrich the lives of Christians. Instead, political problems of authority and the boundaries of obedience have been fundamental: whether one's first loyalty is to God, the King of the Universe, or to an earthly, possibly tyrannical, ruler.

The (Anglican) Church of Uganda has historically been the more dominant institution, despite the fact that there are less Anglicans (32.0%) than Catholics (39.3%) in Uganda.

This position of prominence has persisted into the postcolonial period, with eight of Uganda's nine Presidents having been Anglican, initially due to its relationship with the colonial force. As a result, Uganda has been significantly impacted by Anglican politics on a global scale, especially in relation to the homosexuality debate.

It is generally acknowledged that until 1997, when conservative US Episcopalians helped African Anglican bishops, who were deeply concerned by the advancement of LGBT rights in the country, homosexuality was not a major concern to the Church of Uganda (or other Christian denominations within the nation).

Statement of the Problem

Religion can have a big impact on people's lives. In addition to offering a set of guiding principles, it can serve as a social and emotional support system. However, a person's religious beliefs may conflict with other aspects of who they are. According to Christians, who base their beliefs on the Bible, "God said that homosexuality is forbidden in the Bible" (Fulton et al., 1999). But many who identify as gay, lesbian, or queer who were raised as Christians could find this idea upsetting. In addition, a lot of gay, lesbian, and queer people struggle with mental health problems as a result of the tension that arises from the conflict between their religious convictions and sexual orientation. How do Christians who identify as gay, lesbian, or queer manage this identity conflict? When confronted with interpersonal, social, and ideological factors that are so at conflict with how they personally sense their identities, people react in a variety of remarkably different ways (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000)

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study was to comprehend how LGBTQ people who were raised in Christian environments reconcile the tension between their sexual orientation and their religious convictions. Finding areas of convergence between religion and the LGBTQ community in Uganda is another goal of the research.

Research Questions

The following research issues were of particular relevance to the study within the general purpose:

1. What does it mean for individuals when their sexual identity and religious views conflict?
2. What individual and contextual factors influenced their attempts to settle this conflict?
3. What is the process by which individuals resolve this conflict? and
4. How do participants describe their resolution of this conflict?

Significance of the Study

Due to our society's heteronormativity, forced heterosexuality, homophobia, and heterosexism, LGBTQ persons frequently feel guilt, shame, fear, sadness, and loneliness. Conflicts between sexual identity and religious convictions for gay, lesbian, and queer Christians add to problems already experienced by the homosexual population. Although the LGBTQ community has special mental health needs, these needs are rarely properly met by mental health treatment systems. Helping professionals must first comprehend the unique circumstances of non-heterosexual people,

who have had a Christian upbringing in order to respond to their needs. This study contributes to the body of literature already available so that we can comprehend the process by which LGBTQ people who were raised as Christians reconcile their sexual and religious identities.

Many factors make the lives and hardships of LGBTQ individuals who have been raised in Christianity noteworthy. Research on conflicts between sexual identity and religious beliefs will be useful to practicing mental health professionals as they work with the community.

It will be easier to find effective interventions and support systems if practitioners and researchers are able to recognize the experiences of this demographic. This research-specific look at LGBTQ identity development is important in finding points of reconciliation for individuals.

Scope

This study looked into and analyzed the religious conflict that Uganda's LGBTQ community faces. The position of the LGBTQ community in Uganda is examined, as is their ability to live in harmony with religious convictions.

Despite the fact that Central Uganda had a concentration of LGBTQ people, opinions from people in other regions of the nation were also considered. People prefer not to openly show their sexual orientation or gender identity in more rural towns and villages due to the more conservative environment in which they live so leaders in the movement in rural areas were taken into account as long as they could speak to this issue.

Methods used

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants in the research. In order to be included as participants in the research, participants had to reach the following criteria;

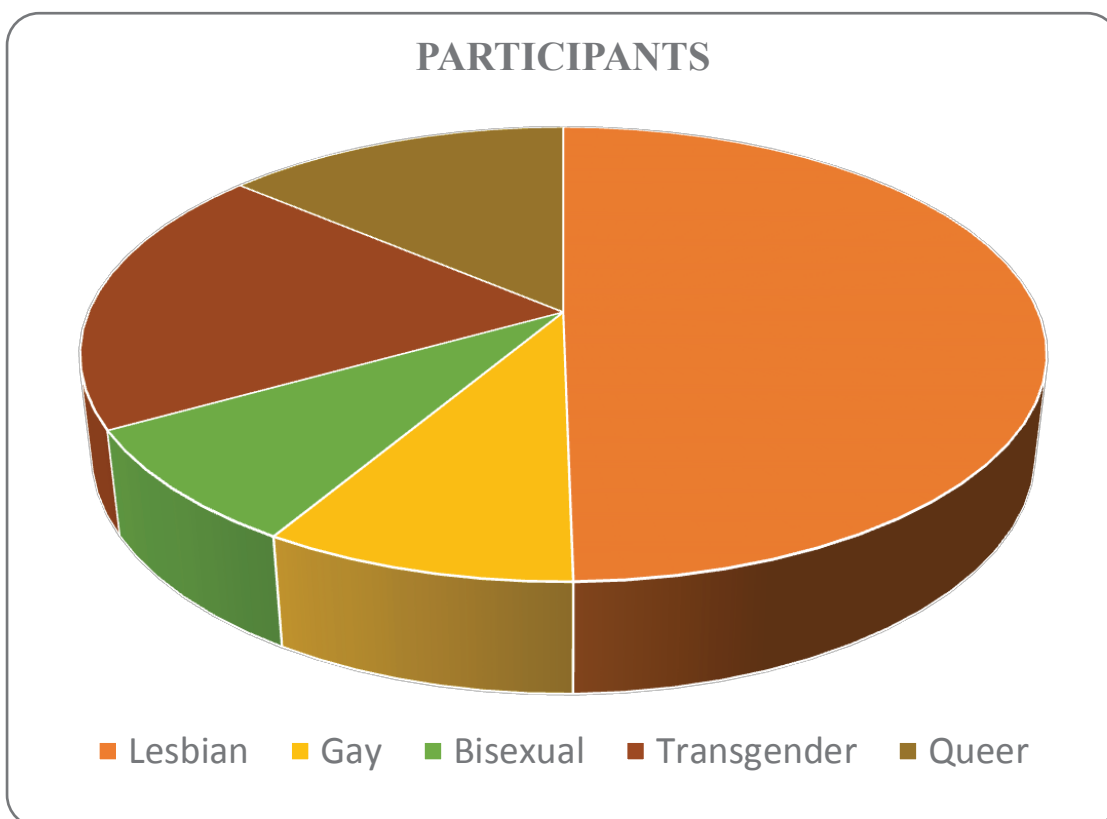
- (a) Be at least 18 years or older
- (b) Be LGBTQ self-identifying
- (c) Be able to have some English proficiency
- (d) Live within central Uganda or be willing to be interviewed online if from other regions
- (e) Have a religious background
- (f) have experienced and addressed conflict between religious beliefs and sexual identity
- (g) Be willing to participate in a face-to-face interview, lasting no more than 120 minutes; and
- (h) Be willing to participate in a follow-up interview if necessary. This follow-up interview was by phone and did not exceed 30 minutes.

CHAPTER TWO

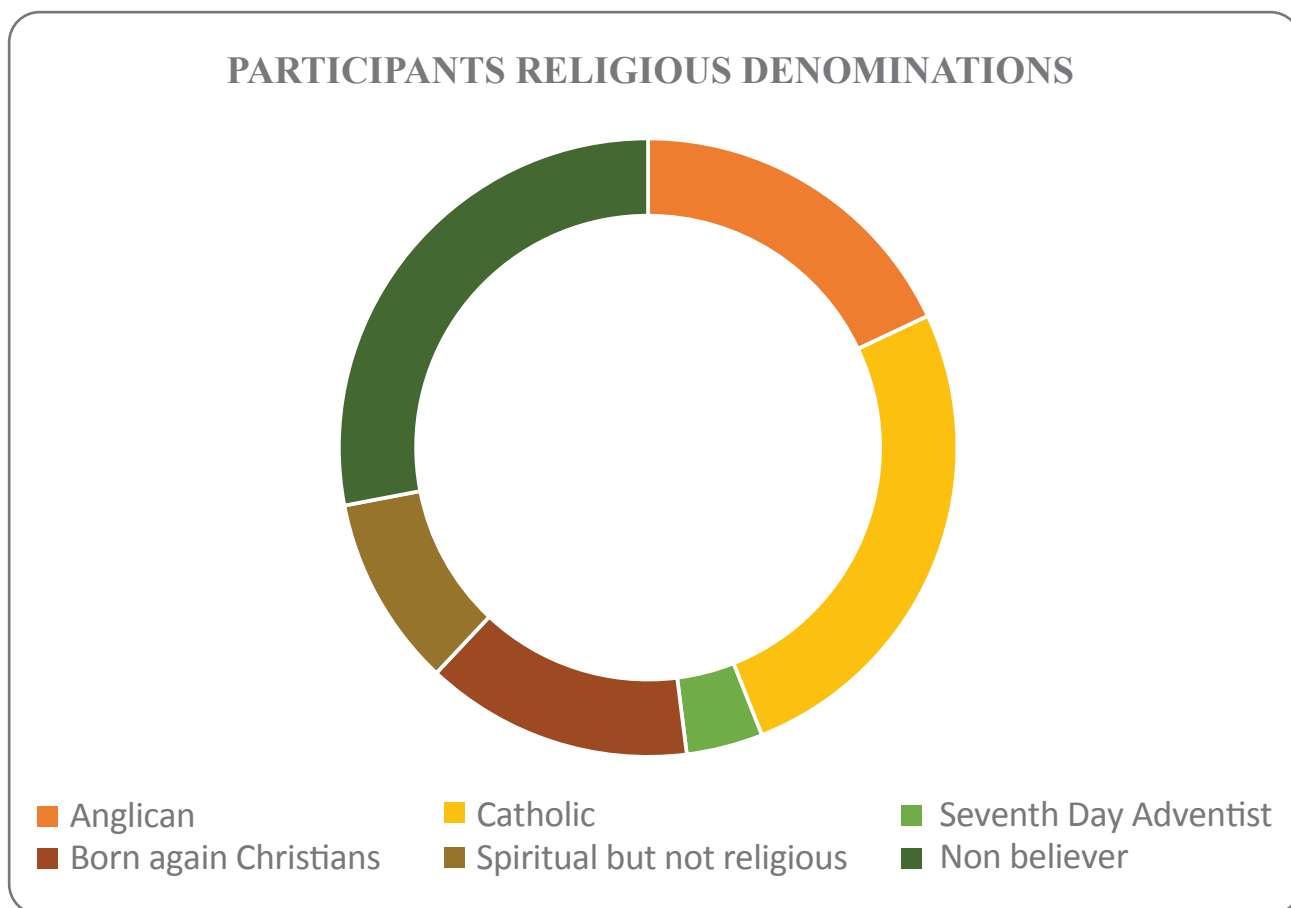
Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand the process by which LGBTIQ-identified individuals with a Christian upbringing resolve the conflict between their sexual identity and religious beliefs.

Participants in this study included 50 Kampala, Uganda residents who identify as LGBTIQ and who were raised as Christians. Their ages ranged from 19 to 43, and they represented diversity in terms of gender, age, religious background, and current beliefs. Of the 50 individuals, 17 are gay, 18 are lesbian, 7 are transgender, 3 are bisexual, and 5 queer persons. A background in sex work was present in 30% of them. They were raised in various religions, including those of the Anglican, Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Born-Again Christian faiths.



The participants belonged to Christian religious denominations including Anglican, Catholic, Seventh day Adventist, Born again Christians and others were spiritual but not religious and other had no faith convictions at all.



The Conflict's Definition

Participants in this study had to admit that they had conflicts with their religious and sexual identities. All participants identified this issue as a confrontation between their personal experiences of same-sex attraction and their respective faith teachings on homosexuality.

One participant who was brought up as an Anglican claimed that he had totally accepted his religious beliefs, which had taught him that "no genuine relationship with the same sex person is possible," and that he had "never questioned anything until... began to love same sex folks." We will elaborate on the experiences and definitions of this conflict provided by the participants in this section. I will specifically talk about the implications of same-sex attraction and implicit and explicit religious messaging regarding homosexuality.

Church Teaching

Even though the study's participants were raised in various Christian religions, they all exhibited strong views against homosexuality. Church pastors, the individuals they knew growing up, educators, parents, and administrators from religious schools all expressed this idea. Nevertheless, not all themes about homosexuality were spoken or made explicit. I'll list the explicit and covert signals the study participants were exposed to below.

Explicit and Implicit Messages

Implicit

Many interviewees revealed that homosexuality was never openly mentioned in their churches. Growing up, "it was just expected that everyone was assumed to be straight," said one participant who was a Seventh-day Adventist. Even though it was periodically brought up that same-sex acts were sinful, the topic was so frowned upon that it was rarely brought up. A participant who went to a Catholic high school noted that no one there discussed homosexuality either. She explained, "it honestly was just skipped."

The youngest participant, who resided in a "Christian Bubble," added that it "wasn't brought up. Nobody brought it up in conversation. The Bible forbade that, yet nobody brought it up. It was in spite of the fact that homosexuality was not openly discussed in these churches, its negative connotation was obvious.

Being LGBTIQ was an option, but several participants were unaware of it because it was such a taboo subject. They struggled to understand why they were attracted to other people of the same sex.

Considered to be one of those unmentionable topics because it was so forbidden.

Explicit

Many participants talked about the explicit words they heard at church in addition to the implicit messages regarding homosexuality. In high school, one participant, a cheerful and thoughtful 26-year-old, "started to really pay attention to what religion was saying about it." And this is what all the religious leaders had to say about it: "it is immoral and bad." The participant, a 28-year-old lesbian woman, revealed that a pastor had been invited to their school in 2014, at the height of Uganda's anti-homosexuality bill, and had delivered a sermon in which he stated that it was impossible to be gay and attend church. "You are not able to be a Christian. You cannot be a homosexual and inherit the Kingdom of God. You'll burn in hell for all eternity," he said. Another participant, a 22-year-old medical student, stated he had heard similar sentiments, but added that the headmaster's statement that "We will defend you for raping and impregnating the girls but we will not support you for the sin of homosexuality" was "the last straw" for him.

A participant who came out most recently to himself and chose to stay closeted explained that, at first, he tried to uphold the views by "not practicing" or acting on his same-sex desires. He said that he grew up in a Christian family with a father who was a preacher and feared his sexuality being known by the public would lead to him losing his.

He explained that ", I live in safety mode every day because if anyone finds out I will lose my entire living. My father's system will crucify me because they believe homosexuality is a demon."

The participant believed that because his father was a preacher, "his father spoke for God." Since he was the ultimate authority, if homosexuality was wrong in his view, "it was also wrong and I was therefore unavoidably in the wrong."

First Reaction to the Conflict

Participants demonstrated a strong conflict between their sexual orientation and religious beliefs through implicit and explicit experiences.

Participants become more private and involved in their religion as a result of the conflict between same-sex experiences and church doctrine. A participant who was raised as the leader of the high school chapel choir said on how getting more involved in church helped him hide his same-sex desires:

"Because I believed I would be homosexual there by myself and no one would suspect me, I felt really safe in the choir. Wherever I felt safe was there. And it was odd that because I go to church and I'm at this Christ-centered gathering, I felt like I could hide there and no one would pick on me, call me out, or think I'm gay."

It was effective. I was respected by everybody." Participants' same-sex attractions persisted despite increasing their participation in religious activities; as a result, several of them struggled with sadness and showed signs of anxiousness in their storytelling.

I will use the participants' own words and tales to highlight the themes of secrecy, greater religious involvement, and depression in this section.

The Issue of Secrecy

Participants worked very hard to keep their same-sex attractions under wraps because of the negative church doctrine. A participant who was raised as a Catholic expressed how she felt when she discovered she was lesbian: "I just wanted it to go away so terribly. I prayed about it nonstop. Because it has such a strong stigma, I was ashamed but I had no idea.

What else to do. I wouldn't discuss it with anybody." Another participant responded to his same-sex attractions in a similar way, saying, "It was the great secret for me. Up to the age of 23, I kept that a secret. Up to the age of 23, I simply believed I would burn in hell.

She admitted that it was challenging to keep her encounters a secret: "I guess my mum thought I was dating. She may have begun to realize that I was acting in some way. She just had no idea what it was, so she guessed. But I made an effort to conceal it."

“I simply remember doing stuff like that all the way through until I was 19 years old.” A participant who identified as gender nonconforming claimed that their concealed behaviors had more to do with sexuality than religion. You just engaged in some secret behavior, after which you declared, “Oh, I’m never going to do it again but you found yourself doing it over and over again. Then you would tell yourself to keep it private and keep quiet about something that was obviously immoral and terrible to you”

In the words of one participant who was raised by a church reverend parent, “I felt like I was hiding in my own family; like I could not be who I truly was.

I merely carried on with my daily activities while first keeping it hidden from my family. And he said, “I was still residing at home with my parents, you know, and I often felt heavy-hearted there because I was concealing such a big secret. And while all of this was going on, I had no one with whom to discuss it.

Despite being a very honest person in general, I was unable, to be honest.” Many of the participants said that they were concealing their actions and behaviors in addition to their same-sex attractions.

One participant revealed that in order to meet other gay and lesbian people, she attended gay home parties covertly.

Increased Involvement in Religion

Donnie McClurkin's song, "Create in me a clean heart," which is inspired on Psalm 51:10, had a significant impact on how many participants handled their conflict. Participants increased their participation in religious activities while concealing their same-sex attraction. Many said that they prayed for a long time, thinking that their desires would fade and God would eventually cure them of these desires. One participant stated that he prayed to be healed and to change in the following way: "I hoped to meet a suitable girl and get married. I prayed for this side of me to simply disappear and I would evolve as a child of God to be like everyone else."

On the other hand, a participant asserted that he found solace in asking for forgiveness because the church stressed repentance. "I would tell God that I'd never do it again," he declared. I felt awfully bad. I hoped that maybe things would change and that,

if God so desired, He would reform me."

A participant who attended a catholic school claimed that because she had been taught that homosexuality is the "greatest sin," she had spent a lot of time in prayer. She states that she "prayed the entire rosary before going to bed every night for strength." Participants say they prayed and prayed in pain that a miracle would happen but no change was realized in the long run which leads us to the phases of depression as they tried to find resolve in their beliefs and sexual orientation or gender identity.

Depression and Loneliness

Many participants said they had suffered depression and felt alone in their conflict because of the severe internal conflict between their LGBTIQ identity and religious doctrine. participant who says he now lives with religious

trauma and no longer identifies as Christian but follows the christian teachings says

he had to talk to a counsellor because he “had a lot of depression as a result” of the conflict and he explained that feeling like a sinner had a serious effect on him:


"I was constantly depressed. I didn't want to interact with anyone or be near them. Being a feminine boy, I thought everyone could see it. Speaking to people and engaging in activities that my age group did, such playing football or participating in sports in general, gave me anxiety. In school, everyone avoided me too anyway!"

One of the participants stated that the conflict led her into performing very poorly in school because she could not concentrate on her studies especially when she started being aware that she was different.

This increased a lot of depression because she felt religion was not there for her and felt like God was punishing her for what she was doing as a lesbian. When she thought she needed the church the most, she says, "I didn't have it."

New Information as a Catalyst

As the participants matured into adulthood, they went through the conflict's phases buried in secrecy, intensifying their religious commitments, and dealing with depression. The initial event in the majority of their lives was the discovery of new information that contradicted their religious beliefs. This was the turning point that led them to modify their religious beliefs into something they felt comfortable with or to reject religion altogether.



One participant said that he realize that, “I did not have to continue being a Christian,” while another realized that “there are many ways to interpret the bible about homosexuality.” He said that “finding the new way I could interpret Proverbs 3:5-6” made him trust in God in his own way with his whole heart.

Participants demonstrated that acquiring new knowledge is a necessary first step in resolving the conflict between sexual identity and religious upbringing.

Learning that being LGBTIQ and religious is possible, that the messages they are given are not all right, that all religions have importance in their uniqueness, and that they are not required to practice a particular religion. This information was reported to be gotten from peers, reading, watching documentaries or TV shows, having talks with other LGBTIQ persons who have made that journey etc.

Other participants learned that other issues other than homosexuality made them realise that religion was not really that perfect.

One participant reported that: “I saw how my friend who was a sex worker was treated when she went to church after the death of her son to seek some solace for her grief. That day the priest talked about sex working and how demonic it was and that we should not be around sinful people like that. I felt bad because she just needed God that day.

It felt like a contradiction to the preaching that everyone should come as they are.”

Working Through the Conflict

New information drives resolve for the conflict. Participants showed that they sought information at some time when they found out things could be different and the information-seeking periods are what led to making decisions of either to be LGBTIQ and Christian or not to be religious at all in the end. One participant says that he went and watched so many movies that were gay and read books one of which was “In God We Doubt” by John Humphrys. He says “That book had me thinking is it really true that being gay will get me in hell for?”

On the other hand, participants questioned religion in response to other material that had nothing to do with religion. According to one participant, she "had a lot of concerns with society's perception of female vs male and how we're meant to dress and act based on that." She claimed, "I saw Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's We should all be feminists TED talk." She began to question "why Jesus had only male disciples" and how the Bible could not give her power as a woman in its narrative.

LGBTIQ identity and religious beliefs. The ability to reflect on what they had learned, strength and resilience, anger, creativity, and humor were among the personal traits

Overcoming The Conflict Between Religious Beliefs and LGBTIQ Identity

Based on the tentative findings of this research, three conclusions are emerging: (a) There are five stages to the process of resolving the conflict between sexual identity and religious beliefs; (b) Personal and contextual factors have an impact on all aspects of the process; and (c) For

LGBTQ people who were raised in a religious environment, faith and sexual identity development are intertwined and fluid constructions. The findings show that the internal conflict and struggle to balance religious principles and sexual or gender identity is the problem that causes the most hardship to the LGBTQ population.

The internal conflict that people experience needs to be addressed first in order to find a resolution. It is impossible to reconcile the

LGBTQ religious community without first addressing the problems that individuals are having with religion personally. The reconciliation of identity and religion is influenced by a variety of personal and cultural factors as seen in the study.

Reflective skills, courage and resilience, anger management, creativity, and humor are examples of personal elements so far. Contextual factors include family, local resources, and religious doctrines.

When they distanced themselves from organized religion, the participants' faith become more of a personal thing.

Everyone acknowledged that finding the right balance between faith and LGBTIQ identity is a process. Regardless of whether they still considered themselves religious or spiritual, all participants demonstrated that they had abandoned organized religion in preference of a more personalized faith. A catholic participant who is lesbian said, “It's challenging to emphasize the necessity for LGBTIQ people to realign our spiritual selves.

If we continue to practice our faith, it must be altered in how we practice it since only then can we continue to love who we are and have a healthy self-concept.” Despite not going to church, some participants continued to identify as Christians.

Their Christian faith was more concerned with individual convictions than with religious participation. Some participants identified themselves as non-religious but reported having a more personalized faith. To them, rather than believing in God, they had faith in a higher power.

They stated that they were unable to abandon their LGBTQ identity because they had come to terms with the fact that it marked them. One participant characterized leaving the religion they had practiced their entire life as "a difficult journey to lose your faith," according to them. Another added that it is simpler to move in the direction of being spiritual rather than religious and that "spirituality is that kindness that people have inside themselves that transcends all religions."

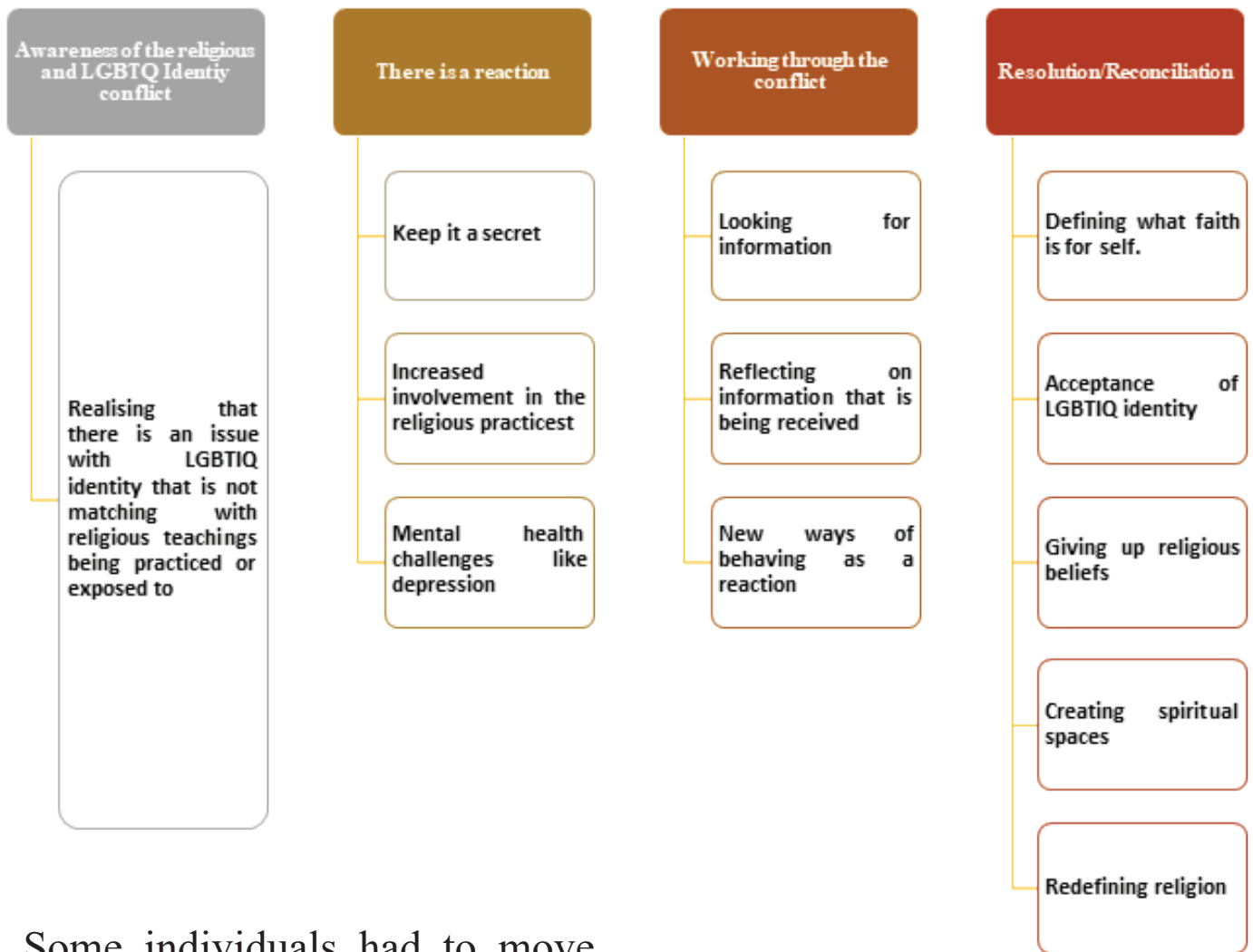
Contextual and participant-specific factors both had a role in the resolution of the conflict between

mentioned by participants as helping them deal with this issue. The ability to reflect helped individuals process information about homosexuality and Christianity critically. Additionally, when they coped with criticism from others, strength and resilience were crucial.

Some participants found that expressing their hatred toward God, institutional religion, and their environment was therapeutic for them. Similarly, artistic activities like singing or writing poetry offered outlets for expression. Participants were able to navigate the challenging conflict thanks to humor they found in talking to their LGBTIQ friends.

Contextual factors such as the participant's upbringing, information access, and church teaching had an impact on how the conflict was resolved.

The conflict between LGBTIQ identification and religious beliefs was somewhat more difficult to reconcile for people whose families were not welcoming of them. Additionally, because it took participants years to learn about themselves, lack of information made the process more difficult for many.



Some individuals had to move away from their places of origin in order to find happiness. A participant's upbringing, whether religious or not, and the manner in which the ideologies were conveyed to them were important factors in the resolution process.

Conclusions and Discussion Summary Of Findings

For the longest time, they were unable to access any information on their identity.

The model of Internal Conflict Resolution

According to the theory of internal conflict resolution, the process entails acknowledging the problem, responding to it initially, moving participants forward with a catalyst of fresh information, working through the issue in , and finally coming to a resolution.

The literature on transforming after learning, LGBTIQ identity, and faith has been advanced by this study. It genuinely offers a working model emphasizing the process by which gay, lesbian,

, transgender, and queer-identified persons who were raised religious reconcile the conflict between their identity and respective religious beliefs. There are five stages in the process of resolving conflict between sexual identity and religious beliefs: awareness of the conflict, initial response to the conflict, catalyst of newfound information motivating individuals forward, steps of working through the conflict, and a resolution of the conflict that is completely different from person to person.

It was evident that participants' non-supportive environments contributed to their greater difficulty resolving the conflict between their religious beliefs and their LGBTQ identity.

For LGBTQ people who were raised in a religious environment, the development of one's faith and the formation of one's identity are interconnected and flowing processes.

Normalizing the struggles of being LGBTQ and religious is the first step in doing this. Programs can be developed to help faith-based LGBTQ organizations locate their individuals' current stages in the resolution process and assist them in moving on more quickly without succumbing to instances of religious trauma.

They can utilize this information to shed light on how to offer closure to LGBTQ people who have experienced religious trauma as well. Churches and all other religious institutions must be aware of how their anti-homosexuality sentiments affect LGBTQ people who were raised with these convictions.

It is generally not surprising that participants' initial responses to the conflict between religious convictions and same-sex attraction were depression and anxiety..

Isolation results from not being able to fit in. Instead of bringing people back into the fold as many religious doctrines expect, this kind of isolation causes negative and angry reactions and even causes many to entirely abandon their faith. Condemnation, segregation, and invoking fear to persuade people to adhere to religious doctrine by denouncing homosexuality will never be able to reintegrate LGBTIQ persons into their churches. These strategies of condemnation and separation do not work.

Religious spaces that welcome LGBTQ people should be conscious of their crucial role in the spiritual upbringing of LGBTQ people. Participants in this study stated that environments that paid too much attention to sexual orientation did not satisfy their spiritual and religious needs. They should understand that the majority of individuals attend religious activities largely to satiate their need for spiritual fulfillment. For LGBTQ people who were raised as Christians, the development of their faith and their sexual identities are interconnected and flexible constructs. Many individuals who grew up in faith environments did not question their religion until they started experiencing same-sex desires

References

- Berkman, C. S., & Zinberg, G. (1997). Homophobia and heterosexism in social workers. *Social Work*, 42(4), 319-332.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Church of Christ. (2008). What does the Word of God say about homosexuality?
- Fowler, J. W. (1981). *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- King James Bible. (2008). Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1769)
- Papa, O. B. (2015). Homosexuality and Religion : The Conflict Homosexuality and Religion : The Conflict. *Intuition: The BYU Undergraduate Journal of Psychology*, 11(2).
- Rao, R. (2014). The locations of homophobia. *London Review of International Law*, 2(2), 169–199. <https://doi.org/10.1093/lril/l-ru010>

Appendix

Abbreviations

AHA – Anti homosexuality act

FCS – Faithful catholic Souls

LGBTQ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

WOFA – Women of faith in action



**BREAKING
THE
SILENCE**