

Self-acceptance and sexual disorientation in adolescents: integrating Ibn Miskawaih's al-dini al-'aqlani and humanistic Islamic educational psychology

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Abstract: This study aims the relevance of Ibn Miskawaih's concept of *al-dīnī al-'aqlānī* in understanding self-acceptance among Muslim adolescents experiencing sexual disorientation. Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed through reduction, categorization, and meaning interpretation within the *tazkiyatun nafs* framework. The findings reveal that sexual disorientation generates profound tension between self-acceptance needs and religious guilt, yet religiosity can serve as a constructive spiritual resource when freed from social judgment. The novelty of this study lies in its transdisciplinary integration of Ibn Miskawaih's *tazkiyatun nafs* with humanistic self-acceptance theory a synthesis previously untheorized in Muslim adolescent identity counseling, proposing that spiritual happiness (*sa'ādah*) is inseparable from the balance between rationality, morality, and mental health. This integration reframes religion not as a source of moral pressure, but as a private reflective space supporting emotional regulation. These findings recommend a spiritual-humanistic mentoring model for Islamic education and counseling settings, with implications for developing empathetic, non-discriminatory character education strategies for adolescents with diverse identity backgrounds.

Keywords: Ibn Miskawaih, sexual disorientation, tazkiyatun nafs, self-acceptance,

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Introduction

Morality and character formation serve as the primary foundation in Islamic teachings, as emphasized by the fact that the purpose of the Prophet's mission was the perfection of human character. In the modern context, moral values face serious challenges due to globalization, hedonism, and shifts in moral values among adolescents. One prominent form of moral crisis is the emergence of the phenomenon of sexual disorientation, namely an individual's confusion in recognizing and expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity. Various studies indicate that sexual disorientation often stems from social pressure, psychological trauma, and a lack of character education grounded in spiritual values.. (Hardiman 2020)

In the context of moral thought, Ibn Miskawaih, a Muslim philosopher who deeply examined ethical issues, placed the principle of moral excellence within the theory of "the middle way" (*al washl*). This concept emphasizes the balance between religious (*al-dini*) and rational (*al-aqlani*)

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aspects in shaping human moral character. According to him, an action is considered morally right if it lies midway between two extremes: excess and deficiency (Herningrum and Alfian 2019). just person is one who can position themselves between the oppressor and the oppressed, thereby maintaining balance and avoiding excess (Naja 2025).

In the current context, one of the major challenges faced by adolescents is sexual disorientation, which refers to the lack of clarity or confusion in recognizing and expressing one's sexual orientation and gender identity (Sukmawati and Pratiwi 2020). This condition may arise due to social pressure, personal experiences, or internal conflicts that influence how a person views themselves in the context of sexuality. Sexual disorientation is not a medical condition but a psychological phenomenon requiring support and understanding from both social and professional environments (Saidah, n.d.) In a moderate and progressive approach, sexual disorientation is viewed as a complex phenomenon rather than merely deviant behavior.

Factors influencing sexual disorientation include a lack of knowledge, the negative influence of social media, inappropriate parenting styles, and a lack of character education capable of guiding adolescents in understanding moral values and ethics Therefore, addressing sexual disorientation requires an integrated program. This condition often causes anxiety and inner conflict in adolescents, which, if not addressed with moral guidance and proper education, can have a negative impact on adolescents' behavior and mental health (Sekunda and Woga, n.d.). Therefore, building strong moral character, particularly grounded in Islamic values, is crucial to helping adolescents navigate sexual disorientation and various other challenges in their development in a healthy and balanced manner.

Previous research on sexual disorientation among adolescents can be grouped into three main clusters. First, psychological studies focusing on the causal factors and internal dynamics of sexual disorientation (Ch and Afritayeni 2020). Second, religious and psychological studies that examine sexual disorientation from an Islamic normative perspective using a spiritual counseling approach (Sukmawati and Pratiwi 2020) Third, Islamic education studies that emphasize character development through the curriculum and the teaching of moral values. Although they contribute, these three clusters have significant limitations: psychological studies tend to overlook the dimension of spirituality as a resource for resilience; religious studies are often normative-prescriptive without considering the psychological complexity of the individual; while Islamic educational studies have not yet explicitly integrated the classical philosophical heritage as an operational epistemological foundation. Most notably, no research has specifically integrated Ibn Miskawaih's concept of al-dini al-'aqlani with the framework of self-acceptance in humanistic psychology as an integrated approach to understanding and addressing sexual disorientation among Muslim adolescents. This gap serves as the academic justification for this study, which aims to offer a transdisciplinary paradigm that bridges classical Islamic philosophy, humanistic psychology, and Islamic character education in an integrative and applied manner.

Based on the identification of this gap, this study aims not only to describe the forms and impacts of sexual disorientation but also to explore how Ibn Miskawaih's concept of al-dini al-'aqlani can be applied as a moral-spiritual solution in guiding adolescents experiencing identity confusion. Thus, this study is expected to provide practical contributions to the development of Islamic character education and counseling that is more empathetic, humanistic, and grounded in spiritual rationality.

Literature review

Ibn Miskawaih views true happiness (as-sa'adah) not as a static condition, but as a dynamic achievement through the actualization of the intellect's potential in controlling the three dimensions of the soul: the rational (nathiqah), the emotional (ghadabiyah), and the sensual (syahwiyah) (Fathuddin 2016). It is the balance of these three dimensions that serves as the primary analytical instrument of this study in understanding the inner experiences of adolescents with sexual disorientation, namely as a state of imbalance between sexual urges, emotional pressures, and an individual's rational capacity

The process toward this balance is achieved through tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), which is gradual and deliberate, not spontaneous. Ibn Miskawaih details this process in two operational stages (Asid Maududin et al. 2021). Tazkiyah, the cleansing of the soul from

destructive traits such as envy and arrogance. And Tahliyah, the filling of the soul with constructive values, such as patience, gratitude, and sincerity. In this study, these two stages serve as an analytical categorization to map the subjects' experiential narratives, determining whether they are in the phase of struggling to release guilt (tazkiyah) or have already moved toward spiritual acceptance (tahliyah). The ultimate goal of this process is as-sa'adah a spiritual and transcendent state free from dependence on external validation (Jamal 2017; Masyfufah and Syaifuddin 2024). In this study, sexual disorientation is operationally defined as a psychological condition characterized by confusion or uncertainty in recognizing one's sexual orientation and gender identity, experienced by adolescents within the context of social pressure and religious norms (Rahayu 2019). This definition deliberately does not frame sexual disorientation as a moral pathology, but rather as a complex psychological phenomenon requiring an empathetic and balanced analytical approach.

Etiologically, sexual disorientation has no single cause; the intensity and combination of factors vary from person to person (Situngkir 2018). Relevant factors include the absence of a father figure and the dominance of the mother's role, which trigger gender misidentification in boys (Mardiyah 2016), as well as traumatic experiences such as sexual abuse, which impact interpersonal relationships, sexual dysfunction, and risky sexual behavior (Noviana 2015). Within Ibn Miskawaih's framework, these factors can be understood as disturbances to the balance of the soul, resulting in the dominance of the sensual and emotional dimensions over the control of reason.

The analytical relevance of this study lies in the convergence between Ibn Miskawaih's concept of tazkiyatun nafs and self-acceptance theory in humanistic psychology (Feigenbaum 2024). Both view inner growth as an active process requiring self-honesty, acceptance of internal conditions, and an orientation toward the actualization of one's highest potential. The difference lies in their epistemological foundations. Humanistic psychology is based on individual autonomy, while Ibn Miskawaih adds a transcendental dimension in the form of an orientation toward God as the pinnacle of self-actualization. The synergy between the two in this study serves as a dual analytical tool, enabling us to understand adolescents' subjective experiences psychologically while also interpreting them within the framework of Islamic spiritual growth.

Method

This study is an interdisciplinary research project that integrates Ibn Miskawaih's ideas on the purification of the soul with the field of psychology to examine the issue of sexual disorientation among adolescents. The study employs an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach because it aims to interpret the meaning of the subjects' experiences, rather than merely describing them. Participants were selected purposively based on specific criteria: three adolescents aged 19–20 with a strong religious educational background who are members of a sexual disorientation community in Surabaya. Selecting three participants is considered sufficient in phenomenological research because the primary focus is on the depth of experience (depth over breadth) rather than broad statistical representation (Cresswell 1985). The researcher's access to participants was facilitated through a trust-based gatekeeping approach, utilizing pre-existing relational networks between the researcher and community mentors in Surabaya. This approach was chosen given the sensitivity of the research topic, which could potentially make prospective participants feel vulnerable if recruited through formal or open mechanisms.

The recruitment process was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher contacted key informants from the relevant community to obtain initial recommendations regarding individuals who met the inclusion criteria. Second, the researcher provided an initial explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, and participants' rights, both verbally and in writing. Third, prospective participants were given sufficient time to consider their decision without pressure from any party. Only those who voluntarily expressed their willingness to participate were subsequently involved in this study.

Participant inclusion criteria include: 1) aged 19–20 years, 2) possessing a strong Islamic religious educational background, both formal and non-formal, 3) currently or previously

affiliated with a sexual orientation community in the Surabaya area, 4) willing to openly share life experiences during in-depth interview sessions.

Given that the research subjects are individuals belonging to a vulnerable population both psychologically and socially the researcher established several ethical protocols that must be adhered to throughout the research process. These include: 1) all participants' identities are strictly kept confidential, with real names replaced by agreed-upon codes or pseudonyms. 2) Before data collection begins, each participant is provided with an informed consent form. 3) Psychological protection of participants. 4) The researcher is committed to building an equal and non-exploitative relationship with participants that emphasizes respect for the subject's autonomy.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth face-to-face interviews, lasting approximately one hour per participant. The interviews were semi-structured, recorded with the participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were reflectively revised throughout the research process and conducted in a private location in downtown Surabaya, given the highly sensitive nature of the discussion topics. The researcher performed " " to clarify the meaning of participants' responses. Data analysis utilized a validation technique through the process of categorization and exploration of key themes.

The data analysis technique employed a phenomenological thematic analysis approach adapted from the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework through the following stages: 1) close reading, involving transcription or re-reading accompanied by initial annotations of significant units of meaning. 2) Open coding, where each unit of meaning is assigned an inductive code; for example, the statement, "I still pray but don't know if God still wants to hear me or not," is coded as spiritual ambivalence. 3) Axial coding, in which codes are grouped based on their logical relationships into more abstract categories. 4) Theme development, where categories are expanded into interpretive themes representing the essence of participants' phenomenological experiences. 5) Cross-case analysis, comparing themes across participants to identify convergent and divergent patterns

Data validity and reliability refer to criteria of credibility and validity through four strategies, namely: 1) Credibility is maintained through participant Jack and theoretical triangulation encompassing theories of religious identity and developmental psychology. 2) Reliability is supported by an audit trail in the form of chronological documentation of all methodological decisions in the research journal. 3) Confirmability is sought through the researcher's explicit reflexivity, including documentation of the researcher's positionality as a Muslim with a religious education background that could potentially influence data interpretation. 4) Transferability is not claimed as statistical generalization, but rather through thick description, which allows readers to assess the relevance of the findings in other similar contexts

Results

The research results reveal the complexity of adolescents' experiences facing sexual disorientation within an Islamic religious context. Thematic analysis uncovers three main patterns: moral and spiritual conflict, the process of self-acceptance, and the search for the meaning of happiness. The following discussion interprets these patterns using Ibn Miskawaih's concept of the purification of the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*) and the principle of rational-spiritual balance in achieving true happiness (*as-sa'ādah*) (Hakim 2016; Abdullah et al., 2025; Firdaus et al., 2025; Tambak & Sukenti, 2025).

To untangle the complexities of this sexual disorientation, the author poses several questions to adolescents experiencing sexual disorientation, including: How did you first come to identify yourself as not heterosexual? Or what caused you to be attracted to the same sex? Apakah kamu merasa nyaman menjadi seperti ini? Kenyamanan seperti apa yang kamu rasakan? Do you feel comfortable being this way? What kind of comfort do you feel? Do you feel happy? What kind of happiness do you feel? Do you consciously express your uniqueness, which differs from the prevailing sexual orientation in society, or is what you're currently expressing a form of coping with past wounds? Someday, will you still choose to be this way, or will you return to the norm in

society and become heterosexual? In your opinion, are you sinning by choosing to be this way? If so, what do you do to reduce that sin? What is your relationship with God like?

These questions were posed to explore participants' perceptions of sexual disorientation, as well as how they interpret their personal experiences in relation to social and religious values. The reflections from participants' answers can be summarized as follows: All three participants demonstrated a clear moral awareness of religious values amidst the experiences of sexual disorientation they were going through. One participant revealed that the initial moment they identified themselves as not heterosexual was when they experienced sexual abuse by their cousin.

"At the time, I was still in elementary school. My older brother invited me into his room; at first, he said we were going to play, but I didn't understand what kind of game he meant. That's when I experienced sexual abuse for the first time. What I felt at the time was shame and regret, but I was also afraid to tell my parents about it. From that moment on, I became more interested in being close to friends of the same gender rather than the opposite gender."

The participant's response explains that, in fact, they felt ashamed for being a victim of sexual abuse; however, due to fear, they did not dare to speak out. This sense of shame served as an early indication that they understood the difference between right and wrong. Yet, they were unable to control themselves to suppress their desires or resist their attraction to the same sex (Silva 2018). When it comes to feeling comfortable being oneself, it is important to first understand that this comfort is closely tied to self-acceptance and the environment. The comfort experienced can take the form of a sense of safety and freedom to authentically express one's identity and sexual orientation without fear of discrimination or stigma. During the interview session, a participant said:

"I'm comfortable with myself as I am having a soft voice even though I'm a man, which society views as very unmasculine; I'm comfortable with my interest in fashion, etc., even though I often face negative stigma regarding that. However, when it comes to happiness, am I happy? The answer is no, because societal norms still carry deeply ingrained negative stigma."

These findings indicate that comfort in self-expression does not automatically lead to psychological well-being, as the pressure of social stigma significantly hinders participants' subjective well-being. When asked about their relationship with God, whether they feel guilty or not, and if so, what they do to alleviate that guilt they stated that,

"What I do is a sin. And I'm aware of it. I'm also trying to reduce it right now. Regarding my relationship with God, I pray the five daily prayers every day. However, I feel more comfortable praying alone rather than with others. Perhaps this is due to self-stigma. So, when I pray in congregation, I feel like people are looking at me strangely. Therefore, I'm more comfortable praying alone and feel more devout. I achieved that sense of devotion after undergoing counseling sessions with a psychologist to manage those feelings."

From this interview, the participant feels guilty about their sexual orientation and experiences self-stigma, leading them to feel more comfortable worshiping alone. Psychology views this experience as very common within the context of strong social stigma toward non heterosexual orientations. Self-stigma can lead to feelings of shame, social anxiety, and self isolation, which disrupt the quality of worship and social relationships. The psychological counseling process undertaken by the participant is a positive step in helping to manage emotions and reduce the psychological pressure experienced, allowing them to feel calm and devotion during worship despite being in a state of social isolation (Nurhafidah et al. 2025)

During the interview session, the participant expressed a desire to one day transition to heterosexuality and start a family; however, they felt that the path they had already taken was too far gone. This ambivalence reflects the tension between religious social norms and the reality of an established identity. In psychology, the process by which a person seeks to return to or

transition to a heterosexual sexual orientation from another sexual orientation is known as sexual orientation transition ((Nurhafidah et al. 2025; Chapakiya et al., 2025; Yasin et al., 2025; Widodo et al., 2025). This process is not easy and is often marked by internal conflict, fear, social rejection, and high psychological pressure.

Discussion

Findings indicate that experiences of sexual abuse during childhood serve as a significant triggering factor in the development of participants' sexual disorientation. Unresolved shame stemming from social fear reinforces the process of internalization, which subsequently alters patterns of sexual attraction (Marčinko et al. 2023; Tambal et al., 2025; Sukenti et al., 2025). From Ibn Miskawaih's perspective, this condition reflects a soul that has not yet mastered self-control (*nafs ammarah*), not merely due to free will, but because of unhealed wounds. The process of soul purification (*Tazkiyatun nafs*) must therefore begin with trauma healing before moral education can be effectively implemented (Amri & Makassar, 2017; Tambak, Amril & Sukenti, 2021).

The comfort participants feel regarding their self-expression reflects a partial process of self-acceptance, present at the level of expression but not yet at the level of happiness. In humanistic psychology, self-acceptance is a prerequisite for self-actualization and optimal psychological well-being. Individuals who fully accept themselves, including aspects considered socially non-ideal, possess a greater capacity to achieve emotional balance (Li et al. 2025). In modern psychology, the process of self-acceptance is crucial as part of an individual's psychosocial development. Self-acceptance relates to how a person accepts various aspects of their identity, including strengths and weaknesses, without negative judgment (Wałejko, 2025). Theories of self-acceptance are often linked to the concept of self-actualization in humanistic psychology, as proposed by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, who emphasized that individuals who can fully accept themselves are capable of achieving optimal levels of well-being and happiness (Bakri 2018).

Meanwhile, Ibn Miskawaih's perspective and the concept of *al-dīnī al-'aqlānī* emphasize the use of rational intellect as the primary foundation of life; the process of returning to the norm, such as heterosexuality is seen as an effort to control desires and purify the soul, in order to attain true happiness (Hakim 2016). Ibn Miskawaih teaches the importance of reason's dominance over desires and emotions; thus, although the path may feel difficult and distant, through self control and moral training, one can attain inner peace and spiritual happiness (Amri and Makassar 2017)

A combination of psychological support and moral character development will help individuals overcome the internal conflicts and external pressures they face. Ibn Miskawaih's approach offers an ethical and spiritual framework that strengthens the resolve to achieve a better life in accordance with rational and moral values, while psychology provides practical guidance and support in addressing emotional and social challenges during the process of sexual orientation change. In psychology, participants' desire to return to a heterosexual orientation can be understood as part of the sexual orientation transition process, which sometimes faces complex emotional and social challenges (Chan et al. 2022).

The most significant finding in this study is that sexual orientation does not automatically distance individuals from religious practices. Participants continued to perform the five daily prayers consistently, although this was marked by self-stigma that led them to worship in isolation. Self-stigma is the internalization of social stigma that gives rise to anxiety, shame, and self-isolation (Nurhafidah et al. 2025). The psychological counseling process undergone by the participants was shown to aid in emotional regulation, thereby enhancing the quality of devotion during worship.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of Ibn Miskawaih and the concept of *al-dini al-aqlani*, feelings of guilt and efforts to alleviate them are part of the process of purifying the soul, which must be undertaken with patience and wisdom (Hanifah and Bakar 2024). Choosing to worship alone to achieve greater *khusyu'* is better than worshipping in congregation while feeling anxious and stressed, because the primary focus is on the quality of a pure spiritual relationship with God, unhindered by social pressure (Harahap 2017). Pendekatan ini membimbing individu untuk mencapai kebahagiaan spiritual dan kedamaian This approach guides individuals toward achieving spiritual happiness and inner peace despite facing stigma and external pressures. Thus,

the psychology and philosophy of Ibn Miskawaih offer a synergistic approach. Psychology provides practical support for managing mental stress caused by stigma, while the concept of al-dīnī al 'aqlānī directs individuals toward self-mastery and the purification of the soul as a path to true spiritual happiness and a more intimate closeness to God.

The participants' desire to return to a heterosexual orientation reflects the internalization of strong religious-social values, yet is accompanied by doubts regarding the possibility of tangible change. In the psychology of religion, this process is known as a transition in sexual orientation, accompanied by internal conflict, fear, and high psychological pressure. Social support is a determining factor in the success of this process (Araújo et al. 2019). And within the framework of these efforts toward change, this is understood as the struggle of reason against the dominance of carnal desires, a process that is not instantaneous. However, it can gradually lead to true happiness (as-Sa'adah) through self-control and the cultivation of moral character

This study demonstrates that humanistic psychology and Ibn Miskawaih's ethical philosophy are not in a contradictory position but rather complementary. Psychology provides practical methods for managing emotional stress and self-stigma (Cabero-Almenara et al. 2016). Meanwhile, Ibn Miskawaih's concept of tazkiyatun nafs offers a spiritual-ethical framework that guides individuals toward spiritual happiness independent of external validation. The synergy between the two opens a new paradigm that spiritual happiness (as-sa'adah) cannot be separated from the balance between reason, morality, and mental health. This premise is relevant for the development of an Islamic value-based counseling model in educational institutions

The contribution of this research lies in the integration of classical Islamic philosophy and modern psychology in understanding the psychological dynamics of humans living amidst social complexity. Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of Ibn Miskawaih's concept of the purification of the soul and relates it to the theory of self-acceptance in humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1943; Rogers, 1951; Sukenti & Fauzan, 2024; Namora et al., 2025). This synergy offers a new paradigm that spiritual happiness cannot be separated from the balance between reason, morality, and mental health. Practically, this study contributes to the fields of psychology and Islamic education, particularly in the context of counseling adolescents with sexual disorientation so they can find spiritual peace without feeling alienated from their social environment or religion. For the field of education, these findings encourage teachers to develop more humanistic, empathetic, and non-discriminatory teaching approaches when addressing the diversity of students' identities (Araújo et al. 2019; Tambak & Sukenti, 2025).

As for the follow-up plan for this study, it is directed toward the development of a spiritual humanistic counseling model based on the thought of Ibn Miskawaih that can be applied in Islamic educational institutions or counseling centers. Additionally, a comparative study between the thought of Ibn Miskawaih and other figures such as Al-Ghazali or Ibn Sina can be conducted to enrich the concepts of soul purification and spiritual happiness within the context of modern psychology. Further research could also be expanded to a more diverse population to comprehensively understand the dynamics of self-acceptance and religiosity within the framework of gender diversity. Furthermore, the results of this study have the potential to be integrated into a character education curriculum based on Islamic ethics and humanistic psychology, serving as a guide for educators in wisely and compassionately guiding students

Thus, this study not only underscores the importance of synergy between philosophy and psychology in fostering human spiritual balance but also opens new avenues for dialogue on how religion can serve as a source of peace, not judgment. Through rational understanding, empathy, and spirituality, it is hoped that society and educational institutions will be able to foster an environment that values diversity, strengthens human values, and cultivates true spiritual happiness.

Conclusion

This study identified three key findings. First, the sexual disorientation experienced by participants stems from unresolved childhood trauma, not merely a conscious choice. Second, sexual orientation does not determine how close a person is to God. Participants continued to practice their religious duties consistently despite being burdened by self-stigma. Third, spiritual happiness (as-sa'adah) is more determined by an individual's ability to purify the soul (tazkiyatun

nafs) and to accept oneself reflectively, rather than solely by compliance with social norms. Scientifically, this study contributes to the development of an interdisciplinary discourse between Islamic ethical philosophy and humanistic psychology, demonstrating that Ibn Miskawaih's concepts of tazkiyatun nafs and as-sa'adah hold contemporary relevance in understanding mental health and spirituality. These are not conflicting domains but rather complementary in explaining the inner dynamics of modern humans. Practically, these findings have direct implications for Islamic education and counseling. Educators and counselors need to develop humanistic, empathetic, and stigma-free approaches when guiding students with diverse identities. A humanistic spiritual counseling model based on the thought of Ibn Miskawaih has the potential to serve as an applicable framework in Islamic educational institutions, positioning religion as a source of inner peace rather than merely a tool for social judgment.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Alfita Choirun Amalia, contributed as the lead author by designing the overall research concept, developing the theoretical framework, conducting data collection through in-depth interviews, analyzing the data, and drafting the article from the initial version to the final version. **Musbirotun Ni'mah** contributed to the development of the literature review, particularly regarding the philosophical ethics of Ibn Miskawaih and the concept of tazkiyatun nafs, and provided substantial input during the revision and refinement of the manuscript's theoretical arguments. **Catur Lestari Wijayanti** contributed to the development of the phenomenological research methodology framework, assisted in the data validation process through member checking, and conducted a critical review of the consistency of the resulting thematic analysis. **A. Nasih Ahabab** contributed to integrating a humanistic psychology perspective into the discussion, provided input on the interpretation of data related to self-stigma and self-acceptance, and assisted in the process of tracing and verifying scientific references. **M. Yunus Abu Bakar** contributed to overseeing the entire research process, provided guidance on the conceptual framework and practical implications of the findings, and conducted a final review of the manuscript prior to submission..

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Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study consist of transcripts of in-depth interviews with participants. Given the highly sensitive nature of the data and its relation to the privacy of individuals belonging to a vulnerable population, the raw data cannot be publicly released to maintain the confidentiality and protect the identities of the participants, as agreed upon in the informed consent form. Data are available on a limited basis and may be accessed upon request submitted directly to the corresponding author (Alfita Choirun Amalia; fitacho17@gmail.com), accompanied by a clear academic justification. Each request for access will be considered based on the appropriateness of the intended use and compliance with applicable research ethics principles.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper

Declaration of use artificial intelligence

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI) was used only to a limited extent in this study, specifically during the formulation and refinement of the research methodology to align with the phenomenological theme and approach employed. The entire process of data collection, thematic analysis, interpretation of findings, and development of scientific arguments was conducted

entirely by the authors. The use of artificial intelligence did not affect the substance of the data or the conclusions drawn in this study.

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