The Narrator's Perception of Homosexual in *Catetan Poean Rere* By Ai Koraliati And *My Cousin Is Gay* By Lia Indra Andriana

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal the narrator's perception of homosexuality in the novelet Catetan Poéan Réré and the teenlit novel My Cousin is Gay. The method used in this research is descriptive analytic. Reading and taking notes are the data collection techniques of this research. The data processing technique used is data triangulation. The results of this study indicate that there are eight perceptions of the narrator towards homosexuals, namely homosexuality as a disgrace that must be hidden, a wrong deed, a disease that must be cured, a person who is strange or not in general, a difficult life to live, a bad person, a trial that given by God, and one's life choices that must be respected. The conclusion in this study is that negative perceptions of homosexual behavior are more dominant in both literary works.

Keywords

homosexual; narrator; writer; perception



I. Introduction

This study will discuss the narrator's perception of homosexuality in two books for children and adolescents, entitled Catetan Poéan Réré (Rere's Daily Note) (hereinafter referred to as CPR) by Ai Koraliati and My Cousin is Gay (hereinafter referred to as MCIG). by Lia Indra Andriana. Although homosexual issues are still considered taboo in Indonesian society, Ai and Lia dare to present this topic in reading books for children and teenagers. Because these two literary works raise the issue of homosexuality which is rarely discussed in children's and youth books, this work opens up space for a discussion on how the narrator's perception of the issue of homosexuality exists in the life around him.

Catetan Poéan Réré tells the story of a teenage girl named Rere who had just been abandoned by his mother because she died while giving birth to her third child. In this difficult situation, Rere was not accompanied by her father because the father was told to just leave for no reason before her mother gave birth. The story continues with various successive problems in Rere's life. Like when Rere suddenly found an abandoned baby in front of her house, and what surprised Rere the most was when he found out through his late mother's notebook that his older brother Susan Basari and his father were homosexuals.

The story of Rere's life in CPR is not much different from the character Eva in the novel My Cousin is Gay In the novel, Eva is told to live with her father, mother, and her cousin, Viggo. Viggo is the figure of an older cousin who Eva is always proud of because of her intelligence and good looks, but one day Eva finds a note in her cousin's room which makes her surprised. In the note Eva reads a written sentence stating that Viggo is a homosexual. The events experienced by Rere and Eva in the novel CPR and MCIG novels raise many questions as well as anxiety in the two characters who tell them. This indicates

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that homosexuality is still considered something unusual by teenagers in Indonesian society, so that many perceptions will emerge from their point of view.

Talking about homosexuals, actually this term has emerged since the 19th century from a German psychologist named Karoly Maria Benkert, the word homo itself comes from Greek which means the same and sex means gender. This term refers to the habit of someone who likes the same sex. Male to male and female to female (Wedanthi & Fridari, 2014) . This homosexual behavior is an attempt to gain affection, identity, through sexual intimacy of the same sex. There are two terms in homosexuality, the first term is called Lesbian. Lesbian refers to women who are emotionally and sexually attracted to other women. The second term is called gay, this term refers to men who are emotionally and sexually attracted to other men.

More clearly, Dermawan (2017) explained that homosexuality is based on two orientations, namely desires and needs (internal factors). First, a homosexual who basically from his youth has feelings and tendencies only towards men and is not interested in women. Second, homosexuals are caused by environmental influences (external factors). A person with a homosexual orientation in the early growth and development of his personality is normal. However, due to his poor daily social environment, he can eventually form a homosexual orientation in him.

At first, people often identify homosexuality as a mental disorder. However, at the end of the 19th century, there was a change in the view of homosexuals. Homosexuality is considered to be something that is innate and is considered a third gender. There are several studies that prove this. Quoted via Winurini (2016) one of the studies that proves that homosexuality is not a mental disorder has been conducted by Kinsey and Hooker. Kinsey mentions that homosexuals and heterosexuals are not two separate entities, but a continuum that exists within a person. While Hooker in his study said there was no difference in mental function from the test results between homosexuals and heterosexuals. The results of this study influenced the APA (American Psychiatric Association) to remove homosexuality as a mental disorder from the 1973 series DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) version III (Campbell & Carilli, 2013).

Since then, homosexuals are no longer seen as criminals, sinners, or strange creatures. His position in society changed significantly. Since then, society's negative perspectives, assumptions, and stereotypes about homosexuals have slowly disappeared (Chapman, 1998). After the negative views and intolerance towards homosexuals disappeared, people began to be more comfortable talking or discussing homosexuality. This issue spread widely in various media, even the author began to include the theme of homosexuality in books for children and adolescents. The topic of homosexuality in children's literature began to emerge in the second half of the 20th century, especially in 1969 when John Danovan's story "I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip" published (Mason, 2016). After that, gradually many books for children and adolescents that openly talked about homosexuality began to appear, such as the book entitled Duktig Pokje by Ibger Edelfeldt in 1997, Annie on My Mind by Nancy Garden in 1982, Koning & Koning by Linda de Haan . 2002, and many more.

At the beginning of its appearance, children's reading books with the theme of homosexuality were written for children of homosexual parents (Chapman, 1998:8). This book aims to help them understand their life situation so they don't feel ashamed or belittled by the people around them, but in the end, books with the theme of homosexuality become one of the topics that are widely raised in children's books. Even according to Jadrna in his research (2011) this theme is widely recommended for children in the United States with the aim of increasing sexual tolerance among children and to influence them to have an open

mind. Through this theme, it is believed that children will learn not to discriminate against minorities.

However, it is also possible that there are children's reading books with the theme of homosexuality for other purposes. It will relate to the perception of the person speaking in the story or what we usually call the narrator. In order to know from whose point of view homosexuality is spoken of in the story, it is necessary to first know the position of the narrator in the story. Genette (1980) once explained the position of the narrator in the story in terms of mood. Mood focuses on how the author places the narrator in his work. What is discussed is about whether this narrator is present through a character who plays an active role in the story or whether this narrator is part of the outside of the story. The choice of the narrator's position in the story will also affect the point of view of the story. This point of view is a strategy, technique, tactic, which the author deliberately chooses to convey ideas and stories. Everything that is stated in a fiction story belongs to the author, which includes a view of life and his interpretation of life.

In this study, the theory of narratology will be used to analyze the voice of the narrator in the novelet Catetan Poéan Réré and the novel My Cousin is Gay on homosexual issues. The theory used is a combination of point of view theory, narrative voice, and queer narrative theory because in these two literary works there are many things related to gender and sexuality. These theories are used to find out from whose point of view this homosexual character is narrated. The results of the narratological analysis in these two literary works will later help to find out how the narrator's perception in the story is about homosexual issues in the surrounding environment. The reason for choosing the novelet Catetan Poéan Réré and the novel My Cousin is Gay as the object of study is because of the uniqueness of the theme which raises the issue of homosexuality in children's and youth's books which are rarely used. The scarcity of research on gender and sexuality in reading books for children and adolescents in Indonesia is also one of the reasons for conducting this research. Therefore, it is important to discuss the narrator's perception in children's and youth's reading books on homosexual issues. This research will also increase intellectual property related to gender and sexuality issues in children's literature research.

In connection with this research, there are two previous studies with the object of the novelette Catetan Poéan Réré. The first research was conducted by Zaelani (2015). The research conducted by Tatang Zaelani uses the theory of structuralism of Robert Stanton and the psychology of literature. The second study was conducted by Rohimah, et al (2019). In this research, Rohimah examined 19 children's literature books to analyze their characteristics. One of the books that became the object of his research was the novelet Catetan Poéan Réré. As for the novel My Cousin is Gay by Lia Indra Andriana, no previous research has been found. In addition, research that focuses on discussing the narrator's perspective on homosexuality in these two literary works has not yet been carried out, therefore this shows that there is still room for research. This research is expected to contribute to the research of children's and youth's reading books that discuss gender and sexuality issues.

II. Research Methods

This research is included in qualitative research. This type of research is research that produces data in the form of words or sentences either in writing or orally spoken by the people or sources under study (Moleong, 2007). The method used in this research is descriptive analytical method which is done by describing the facts which are then analyzed. The workings of this method is to describe and provide an understanding of the facts found in the object of research (Ratna, 2012: 53). Sources of data from this study are divided into two

types, namely primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources of this study were obtained from the novelet Catetan Poéan Réré and the novel My Cousin is Gay, while the secondary sources of this research were obtained from several literatures such as journals, books, or articles that are closely related to the issues studied in this research. Reading and taking notes are the data collection techniques of this research. The first step is to read the object of the research, after that put a mark on the appropriate section or indicate things that refer to the research objectives, and the last step is to interpret the sections that are related to things that refer to the research objectives. The data processing technique used is data triangulation which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

III. Discussion

The Narrator's Perception of Homosexuals in Poéan Réré's Catetan Novelet

The storytelling in the novelet *Catetan Poéan Réré* and the novel *My Cousin is Gay is* taken from the point of view of the main character's first persona "I". This point of view is only omniscient for oneself and not for other people (characters) involved in the story (Nurgiyantoro, 2010). The narrator in the CPR novelet and the MCIG novel is the main character who tells the story, tells his consciousness, narrates events and actions, whether they are known, seen, heard, experienced, and felt, as well as his attitude towards other characters to the reader. No other party interferes in the storytelling. This causes readers to only get information from one direction and is limited. What is known by the narrator will be known by the reader, then things that are beyond the knowledge of the narrator will also not be known by the reader.

To show this point of view, in the novelet CPR Rere uses the pronoun "urang" to show that she is the one who tells the story and tells the whole event that happened . "Me too Li! Since the first I did not want to be called Reina, it's not good to hear, it's better to be called Rere" (CPR, p. 7). Not much different from the narrator in the CPR novel, Eva in the MCIG novel also uses the pronoun "I" which refers to her speaking and telling all the events in the story. For example, in this quote, "Hi, my name is Eva. Three months ago I turned 15" (MCIG, p. 7). From that quote Eva narrates herself to introduce herself to the reader. The introduction made at the beginning of the story of the MCIG novel shows that Eva wants to tell the readers that it is from her point of view that the whole story is told.

The focalization technique used by Ai and Lia in these two literary works is the external focalization technique. In the previous paragraph, it was explained that the narrator with the point of view of the "I" persona said less than what the characters knew. The limited information or knowledge of this narrator will raise questions. This indicates that the focalization technique in these two literary works is an external focalization technique. This refers to Genette's (1980) statement, he mentions in his book that narrators with this technique will usually narrate something that raises questions like a riddle. Rere and Eva, who are narrators in each story, act as observers and only narrate every movement of the other characters they see. The narrator's position as the main character and also as an observer is common in a narrative that tells a queer story. McCromack (2014) states that queer is a system-destabilizing character, therefore in narrative queer persona is confused through the instability of the relationship between the narrator and the characters narrated in the story. The narrator is sometimes the main character, but sometimes he is also an observer who acts to convey the story from what he sees. Neither Rere nor Eva, both of them can guess specifically about everything that is in the minds of other characters because they act as narrators who observe the movements of other characters and only convey what they see. Therefore, the narrative that is told becomes a limited story.

The questions that are present and cannot be answered in the narrative narrated by the main character eventually give rise to a perception. The perception that appears in the narrative of the main character who is the narrator is a form of response to what they find in their surrounding environment. What the narrator finds in these two literary works refers to homosexual behavior shown or found in the story. After identifying the data, eight forms of perception emerged from the point of view of Rere and Eva as narrators on homosexual issues that emerged in their surrounding environment. The following are eight perceptions of the narrator towards homosexuality that occurs in the surrounding environment.

Homosexuality as a Wrong Action

The first perception and most appear inside story is homosexual as a wrong action . Rere as narrator and main characters in CPR novellet live in environment of Sundanese people who are still taboo with homosexual . Knowledge of Rere regarding gender and sexuality still shackled in the messing up heteronormativity. Among women and men inside environment heteronormative society, a man sued for look masculine. If a man no look macho then her attitude considered as an error .

"His appearance now as like transgender. While holding on, I try look more clear to direction oh my brother. It seems like he on purpose buy women's clothes. Oh my God! He used bra too!" (CPR, p. 35)

In that quote narration, the clothes that Susan is wearing are stimulating Rere for bring up a perception that what is it wear no in accordance with as should be. Comparing the gender performativity of Susan 's character gives reader 's view that what has been seen by Rere is wrong behavior. Based on that things, it can be concluded that in heteronormative society, the clothes worn somebody must in accordance with type of their sex. For example, male only can wearing pants and not allowed for use skirt especially bras. Because skirts and bras are attribute only feminine can worn by women .

Same perception also appears in the MCIG teenlit novel. Eva as the narrator in the novel gives similar response as what Rere showed in CPR novels. Past corner look at it he own perception that relation sexual happening. Among fellow man or homosexual is wrong behavior. When Eva finds out that her cousin named Viggo is homosexual, he own assumption negative on her cousin. Negative assumption that make Eva feel hate people who become the couple of her cousin .

"That is boyfriend of Viggo. God damn it. So that is you who make my older brother become gay. You are at fault" (MCIG, p. 70).

When Eva finds out that her cousin named Viggo is homosexual, he own assumption negative on her cousin. Assume negative that make Eva feel hate people who become couple homosexual her brother. In quote that seen how Eva is behaving when he by no on purpose caught a Viggo being dialogue with a indicated man as couple homosexual. After viewing that incident, Eva directly justify that couple Homosexual Viggo has done error because has make Viggo become a homosexual.

The Disgrace That Must Be Concealed

The second perception is the perception that homosexuals are a disgrace that must be hidden. This perception appears in the point of view of Rere and Eva as narrators in each story. They argue that this homosexual behavior is a flaw in humans that must be covered so that it is not harmful. As previously stated, Eva as the narrator in the MCIG novel lives in a heterosexual society. This non-heterosexual sexual relationship is considered a flaw in a person that is detrimental so that it must be hidden. In Eva's mind has been embedded the concept that men should have an interest in women. This thought or concept eventually led to an interpretation in Eva that homosexual behavior was a disgrace that had to be hidden. In the quote on pages 66-67, Eva narrates homosexuality in a very negative way. In fact, she narrates his life as if it had gone bad just because Viggo admitted he was gay in his notebook.

"Suddenly I couldn't tell her my problem. I don't know how to start. I was embarrassed, scared, and confused at the same time" (MCIG, p. 73).

Eva's attitude which is further shown in the quote on page 73 shows that she wanted to hide Viggo's homosexual identity from others. The sentence "I am ashamed, afraid, and confused at the same time" indicates that homosexuality is an identity that is not accepted by her and the community around her. Even based on Eva's narration, it can be concluded that homosexual identity is not only a disgrace to the perpetrators, but it can also be an embarrassment to those who live around them.

In the novelet of CPR, Rere also shows the same thing with Eva. Rere considers that being homosexual is a disgrace that must be hidden. As in the quote below

"I immediately folded the poster back up and I put it in my brother's bag. My heart ached. Suddenly the bag slipped from my grip. Tears suddenly dripped. Why are you like this? Can you imagine how Mama would feel if she was still alive. Maybe she would be confused. it hurts to see my brother like that." (CPR, p. 29)

Rere's attitude of returning things and telling his little sister not to play with Susan's bag is an act that shows that anything that she thinks is not true must be hidden and should not be known by others. Rere considers the items in Susan's bag as forbidden items that will negatively affect Susan and herself. So, the perception of homosexuality as a disgrace that must be hidden appears in the narratives told by Rere and Eva because they consider the homosexual behavior of Susan and Viggo's characters to be inconsistent with the norms that exist in society. As Mastuti said (2012) in his research, he stated that society is more accepting of someone with a heterosexual sexual orientation. Some people still feel weird and view homosexuals as a symbol of evil, a disgrace that shames the family. Likewise, several other side characters such as the Mamah character in the novelet CPR and the character Meri and Ys in the MCIG novel who have the assumption that people with homosexual orientation are negative. The figures of Mamah, Meri, and Ys in these two literary works seem to represent the voice of society about homosexuality. It is this public opinion that makes Rere and Eva have the view that the homosexuality shown by Susan and Viggo is a disgrace. From the point of view of the narrative, Eva and Rere seem to understand the condition of society that cannot accept homosexuals, so it must be hidden.

Diseases To Be Cured

The third perception is that homosexuality is a disease that must be cured. Even though this homosexual has actually been removed from the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder) series as a mental disorder (Campbell & Carilli, 2013). However, many people still think that homosexuality is a disease that must be cured. This perception is also clearly depicted in the novelet CPR and the novel MCIG. In the novel MCIG, the character Meri is one of the reasons the narrator has the perception that homosexuality is a disease that must be cured. Meri tells Eva that the only thing that can heal Viggo to become a normal man again is a woman. From Meri's statement, Eva has the perception that homosexuality is a disease that must be cured.

Perception of the narrator who thinks homosexual as a disease that must healed also appears on the character Rere. Inside the novelette there is story telling part when Rere find daily notes of his mother. In that diary, her mother write that her husband is also a homosexual. In that diary her mother mention that his father own disorders and diseases that make herself sad that is his father like men. From her mother 's writing, Rere own perception that homosexual is a disease. She also considers that homosexuality experienced by his father has infectious to her brother.

Personality that is strange or not like in general

The fourth perception shown by the narrator towards homosexuality is as a unique person. This perception arises because it has something to do with the concept of masculinity in heteronormative culture. Masculinity in Indonesian society is influenced by the existing culture. A man who lives in a society will be charged with various norms, obligations, and demands of the family. According to Demartoto (2010), an unwritten rule in society states that a real man should not cry, must look tough, strong, brave, fierce and muscular. A great man is a man who conquers many women's hearts and becomes a protective figure. So, if a man who does not show these things in himself will be considered a failed or strange man.

On page 30 of the novelet CPR, Rere narrates his perception to Susan as he interacts with the character Gani. "I've never heard them talk, I think it's strange. Usually, men will always sound noisy when they meet their friends" (CPR, p. 30). The quote clearly describes the suspicions directed at Susan and Gani. As said in the previous paragraph, men who do not display masculinity properly will be considered a failure or strange. In fact, the two of them (Susan and Gani) did not react like men in general who are usually noisy when they are chatting. From the narrative, it can be seen how the interpretation of Rere's character is trapped in the concept of mainstream masculinity, which requires men to be rude.

Eva in the MCIG teenlit novel also shows the same thing. "You know, Viggo is different from us" (MCIG, p. 132). In the quote that occurs on page 132, Eva narrates a homosexual with the phrase "different from us". This is referred to as Eva's perception that homosexuals are people who are not like in general. In that narrative, homosexuals are considered as something unique and cannot be equated with themselves.

A Hard Life To Live

The characters of Rere and Eva as the narrator have the perception that people with homosexual have a difficult life to live. As part of a minority in social life, people with a homosexual orientation will be subordinated or ostracized. They will be a small part of society who are not accepted because they are considered as abnormal humans. As stated by Boellstorff (2016) who also mentions that this difference in sexual orientation will make it difficult for homosexuals to be honest in their surroundings and this condition becomes a problem for them because they are considered an excluded group. It is also related to the power in the social order. Heteronormativity is considered as a normal sexual relationship

began when Western colonialism entered the Asian region. During the colonial period, the West brought Christian puritan values which considered true and natural sexuality to be sexuality that could produce offspring (Yulius, 2015). From this, it is clear how the power of colonialism controlled by the West affects people's mindsets.

Eva in the novel MCIG mentions in her narration on page 138 that not all homosexuals can live their lives well. In her dialogue with Ys, Eva explains that a homosexual will decide what they think is good for himself. Even in the narration, Eva said that since childhood the community in the surrounding environment would direct everyone to have a sexual orientation that is considered normal, namely heterosexual. In fact, according to her, this has been regulated in the culture of the community that everyone will meet a partner of the opposite sex. As Mulia said (2010) in his journal article that the idea of sexuality in society is dominated by a heteronormative system. This system influences the birth of normative judgments on sexual relations. This is also Eva's view that people with same-sex sexual orientation will find it difficult to live their lives in society because of the differences they have. Eva even thinks that homosexuals have a big challenge because they have to maintain their thoughts, love, and identity from the judgments of those around them. "The challenges for them are definitely bigger than the average person" (MCIG, p. 139).

Rere also has the perception that being a homosexual is difficult. This he expressed in his narration addressed to his best friend named Dali. "He told me that he was ashamed of her friends. Always gets bullied, they say my brother has a girl-like name." (CPR, p. 28). The quote describes how Rere feels for her brother Susan. Rere has the view that Susan's mistake is also a threat for her to be ostracized by society. Especially since he was a child, Susan was told that he often got bullied from her friends around him. The bad experience that had befallen Susan in the past became a trigger for Rere to interpret homosexuality from his point of view.

A Bad People

This perception appears only in the novelet Catetan Poéan Réré. Gani is Susan's homosexual partner who often comes to the house to have sexual activity with Susan. In the story, Gani is described as a sloppy man. Rere sees Gani's character as a thug because he wears earrings, a pierced nose, and punk-style hair. With his appearance like that, Rere feels that Gani is a bad person. Gani in this story is told as a bisexual. Bisexual is a type of homosexual who has an interest in two genders, men and women (Azhari & Kencana, 2016). In the novel, it is also told that it turns out that Gani has an interest in Rere. Rere's suspicion of Gani who also likes him makes him have the perception that Gani is a bad person who only wants to play with Susan's feelings. This perception creates hatred in Rere towards Gani.

In addition to the character Gani, the perception that homosexuals are bad people also appears when Rere sees Susan's character, who looks happy when he gets the news that his Father and childhood friend of Rere named Dali are going home. Susan showed joy by acting in an unusual manner. This change in his brother's attitude invites Rere's suspicion that there is a hidden purpose that his brother is trying to do. She thought that his brother had changed his attitude because he wanted to meet Dali, his childhood friend. She thought that Susan would lure Dali into having an interest in him.

Trials That Given by God

This seventh perception only emerges from the point of view of the narrator in the novelet Catetan Poéan Réré. Rere as the narrator has the view that homosexuality is a trial given by God to his family. One time, Rere found the notebook in his brother's room. After she read about the fact that his father was a homosexual he came to his senses. This fact makes Rere realize that everything happened because of God's will and this is a test for

himself and his family. According to Rere's perception, the homosexual in the father figure is considered a trial from God. This perception arises because Rere lives in a religious Sundanese community. The Sundanese are individuals who have faith in the power of God. It is God who determines one's destiny, as reflected in the phrase "Jodo, pati, bagja, cilaka, Pangéran anu nangtukeun". This expression represents the Sundanese belief that everything has been determined by Allah. Just like what happened to Rere. He has the perception that the homosexuality experienced by the father figure is a trial that has been ordained by God for his family.

One's Life Choices That Must Be Respected

This last perception is a positive perception that only appears in the novel My Cousin is Gay. Eva as the narrator has a positive view that homosexuality is a life choice for someone who must be respected. This positive perception appears in Eva when she has had many interactions with YS and Meri characters. He also got these views after doing a lot of research from various sources such as the internet, books, and others. Eva as the narrator assumes that homosexuals are the same as other humans. There is not the slightest reason to say that being a homosexual is a bad person. Eva has the view that homosexuals should still be treated with respect and should not look down on homosexuals. Eva has the idea that as a fellow human being should be able to respect each other's choices. Including choices regarding the desired sexual orientation. Eva also said that she didn't mind if Viggo was really a homosexual. Although at first he was shocked, confused, and afraid because he had never had a close relationship with someone who had a same-sex sexual orientation, but he would continue to support Viggo.

IV. Conclusion

These two literary works are narrated from the point of view of the main character who is directly involved in the story. Therefore, the readers of this literary work can only see and feel in a limited way what the narrator sees and feels. The vocalization technique used in both literary works is an external focalization technique. This external focalization technique gives rise to many perceptions of homosexual issues that they find in their surrounding environment. There are eight perceptions that arise towards homosexual behavior. Of the eight perceptions, there are five perceptions that are shared by Rere and Eva. The five perceptions are homosexuality as a disgrace that must be hidden, homosexuality as a wrongdoing, homosexuality is a disease that must be cured, homosexuality as a strange person or not in general, and homosexuality is a difficult life to live. Furthermore, there are two perceptions that only appear in Catetan Poéan Réré's novelet, namely homosexuals are evil people and homosexual behavior is a trial given by God. Lastly, there is one additional perception that only Eva's character has in the teenlit novel My Cousin is Gay, namely that homosexuality is a person's life choice that must be respected. Of the eight perceptions present, the perception that often appears in this literary work is the perception that homosexuality is a wrong act. Although positive perceptions of homosexuals appear, the negative perceptions are more dominant. The positive perception that homosexuality is a life choice that must be respected is as if only opinions are forgotten or not heard.

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