



Transgender From A Religious Perspective And Its Implications In Personality Education

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Abstract

This study examines transgender phenomena from religious and psychological perspectives and identifies their implications for personality education. The study retains the author's original analytical direction by comparing Sigmund Freud's structure of personality with Al-Ghazali's conception of desire, reason, and the heart. To ensure methodological consistency with the available evidence, the research is designed as qualitative library research using thematic content analysis and comparative-conceptual analysis. Twenty-one core sources were purposively selected from peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books, Islamic legal and ethical documents, and authoritative health-classification and educational sources. The analysis proceeded through source identification, data reduction, thematic coding, comparative mapping, and interpretive synthesis. The findings show, first, that transgender identity must be distinguished from sexual orientation, gender expression, and clinically significant distress. Second, the literature does not support a single causal explanation; biological, developmental, family, social, cognitive, and cultural factors interact in different ways. Third, Freud and Al-Ghazali both describe personality as a dynamic relation among impulses, regulatory capacities, and moral orientation, although their philosophical foundations and goals are different. Fourth, neither framework is sufficient to conclude that all transgender individuals are dominated by the pleasure principle or uncontrolled desire. Rather, both theories can be used cautiously to analyze tensions among identity, desire, social expectations, religious values, and self-regulation. The study contributes a religiously grounded and psychologically informed framework for personality education based on conceptual accuracy, moral reflection, self-control, empathetic dialogue, family involvement, protection from humiliation and violence, and referral to competent counseling when distress is present. The main limitation is that the study is theoretical and does not represent the direct experiences of transgender participants.

Keywords: Transgender; Religion; Freud; Personality Education; Islamic Psychology

INTRODUCTION

The transgender phenomenon has become an increasingly visible social issue in many parts of the world. Digital media, entertainment, educational institutions, health services, and public policy have made discussions of gender identity more accessible, but they have also

intensified disagreement. In Indonesia, the debate is especially complex because social and psychological considerations intersect with religious teachings that remain influential in family life and education. Transgender individuals may face stigma, discrimination, rejection, and barriers to social participation, while parents, teachers, counselors, and religious leaders often lack a shared conceptual framework for responding to the issue (Bockting et al., 2013; Hendricks & Testa, 2012; Testa et al., 2015).

A basic conceptual clarification is therefore necessary. Transgender refers broadly to individuals whose experienced gender differs from the sex assigned at birth; it is not a term for sexual orientation. Sexual orientation concerns patterns of emotional or sexual attraction, whereas gender identity concerns a person's experienced sense of gender. Current psychiatric and international health classifications distinguish transgender identity from clinically significant distress or a mental disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2022; World Health Organization [WHO], 2026). The World Health Organization places gender incongruence in the chapter on conditions related to sexual health rather than in the chapter on mental and behavioral disorders and states that gender-variant behavior or preferences alone are not a sufficient basis for diagnosis. This clarification does not remove religious or ethical debate, but it prevents psychological classification from being used inaccurately.

Indonesian scholarship has examined the issue from several perspectives. Boellstorff (2004) showed that the social category of waria has a distinct history and cultural position in Indonesia, illustrating that gender diversity cannot be understood only through imported categories. Barmawi and Silmi (2016) explored factors associated with transgender experiences among waria in Banda Aceh. Irhami et al. (2020) discussed questions of Islamic law concerning transgender women, while the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council distinguishes prohibited sex change from medical correction in cases involving biological ambiguity (Majelis Ulama Indonesia [MUI], 2010). These studies demonstrate that the phenomenon has psychological, cultural, religious, legal, and social dimensions.

Nevertheless, several limitations remain in the literature used by the original manuscript. First, transgender identity, sexual orientation, gender expression, and psychological distress were sometimes treated as if they were the same. Second, discussions of causal factors often relied on broad developmental assumptions without clarifying that no single factor explains all individual experiences. Third, the concepts of id, ego, and superego were presented alongside desire, reason, and the heart, but the similarities and differences between Freud and Al-Ghazali were not critically mapped. Fourth, the educational implications mentioned in the title were not sufficiently developed into principles that could guide families, teachers, and counselors.

This study therefore focuses on the dynamics of the id, ego, and superego in Freud's theory and the dimensions of desire, reason, and the heart in Al-Ghazali's Islamic psychology. The theories are used as interpretive frameworks rather than diagnostic labels. The study asks how both traditions explain impulses, self-regulation, moral standards, and personality formation; where the two perspectives converge and differ; and how their synthesis may inform personality education in a religiously committed yet humane manner.

The contribution of this study is twofold. Academically, it strengthens interdisciplinary discussion among psychology, Islamic studies, gender studies, and education. Practically, it

offers a framework for personality education that combines moral and spiritual formation with accurate psychological concepts, empathy, non-violence, responsible family guidance, and professional counseling. Such a framework is important because religious conviction and respect for human dignity should not be treated as mutually exclusive educational goals.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs qualitative library research with thematic content analysis and comparative-conceptual analysis. The design was selected because the manuscript does not contain primary interview, observation, or field-note data. Consequently, the study does not claim to be an empirical phenomenological investigation. Instead, it analyzes how transgender, personality, religion, and personality education are conceptualized in relevant scholarly and authoritative documents.

The data corpus consisted of twenty-one core sources selected purposively. The sources included peer-reviewed studies on transgender and the Indonesian context, foundational and contemporary works on psychology and personality, Islamic psychological and legal literature, an official fatwa, and authoritative international documents concerning gender terminology, health classification, educational safety, and counseling. Contemporary sources were prioritized where available, while classical and foundational works were retained when they were essential to Freud's and Al-Ghazali's theoretical frameworks.

The inclusion criteria were: (1) direct relevance to transgender terminology, psychological dynamics, Islamic perspectives, personality theory, or personality education; (2) publication by an academic publisher, peer-reviewed journal, professional organization, or recognized religious authority; (3) sufficient conceptual detail to support analysis; and (4) accessibility of the full text or complete bibliographic information. Anonymous web pages, duplicate sources, unsupported opinion pieces, and materials unrelated to the research focus were excluded.

The analysis was conducted in five stages. First, relevant statements and concepts were identified from each source. Second, the material was reduced into six themes: conceptual definition, developmental and social factors, Islamic interpretation, Freud's personality structure, Al-Ghazali's personality structure, and educational implications. Third, concepts were coded and compared across sources. Fourth, Freud's and Al-Ghazali's frameworks were mapped in a comparative matrix to identify both limited similarities and fundamental differences. Fifth, the results were synthesized into implications for personality education and counseling. Trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation across psychology, Islamic studies, anthropology, education, and official institutional documents. Because the research used published documents and did not involve human participants, no personal data were collected.

Table 1. Main supporting sources and their analytical functions

Source	Primary Focus	Function in This Study
WHO (2026)	Gender incongruence and transgender health classification	Clarifies terminology and distinguishes identity from mental disorder.

Source	Primary Focus	Function in This Study
Coleman et al. (2022)	Standards of care and individualized assessment	Supports careful, non-generalizing psychological and counseling analysis.
Boellstorff (2004)	Waria in Indonesian cultural and national contexts	Provides Indonesian socio-cultural grounding.
Barmawi & Silmi (2016)	Factors associated with transgender experiences in Banda Aceh	Supports discussion of multifactorial influences in an Indonesian setting.
MUI (2010) and Qardhawi (2001)	Islamic legal assessment of sex change and bodily alteration	Provides the normative religious framework used by the authors.
Hall et al. (1998) and Hidayat (2011)	Freudian personality theory and counseling applications	Supports analysis of id, ego, superego, and self-regulation.
Gumiandari (2011) and Al-Ghazali	Islamic personality: nafs, aql, and qalb	Supports moral-spiritual analysis of personality formation.
UNESCO (2019)	School violence and bullying prevention	Supports educational implications concerning dignity and safety.

Table 1 makes the evidence trail explicit. The article's conclusions are based on the synthesis of published sources and should therefore be read as theoretical findings, not as direct descriptions of every transgender individual.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The literature-based analysis produced six interconnected themes. These themes retain the author's original analytical direction while correcting the inconsistency between a claimed phenomenological method and the absence of primary empirical data.

1. Understanding Gender

The term transgender should not be defined as an inability to identify sexual orientation. Gender identity and sexual orientation are related to different dimensions of human experience. A transgender individual may have any sexual orientation, just as a non-transgender individual may. This distinction is essential because an inaccurate definition can distort the subsequent religious, psychological, and educational analysis.

WHO (2026) defines gender incongruence as a marked and persistent incongruence between experienced gender and assigned sex, while emphasizing that gender-variant behavior and preferences alone do not establish a diagnosis. The relocation of gender incongruence outside the mental-disorder chapter reflects the distinction between identity and psychopathology. Psychological support may still be needed when an individual experiences distress, family conflict, social exclusion, or other mental-health concerns, but these conditions must be assessed individually rather than presumed from identity alone.

In Indonesia, the category of waria has developed through particular cultural and social histories. Boellstorff (2004) demonstrates that waria identity is shaped by national discourse, local forms of belonging, work, family relationships, and public visibility. This evidence supports the argument that transgender phenomena cannot be reduced to one

psychological drive or one social influence. The meaning and expression of gender identity are mediated by culture, language, religion, and personal biography.

2. Factors that influence gender development

The original manuscript discussed biological, parenting, environmental, and cognitive factors in gender development. These dimensions remain relevant, but the literature does not justify treating any one of them as a universal cause of transgender identity. Developmental psychology shows that children learn gender categories and roles through biological maturation, family interaction, peer relationships, cultural expectations, and cognitive development (Santrock, 2007; Wade & Tavis, 2007). However, learning gender roles is not identical to the formation of gender identity, and gender-nonconforming behavior does not necessarily predict a transgender identity.

Family relationships influence the way children understand expectations, communicate distress, and develop coping strategies. This influence should not be translated into the claim that parents directly cause or can simply prevent transgender identity by enforcing gender-typed behavior. A more defensible conclusion is that families shape the emotional and moral environment in which questions of identity are interpreted. Supportive communication may reduce isolation and facilitate responsible guidance, whereas humiliation, coercion, or rejection may intensify psychological conflict. Evidence from supported transgender children also indicates that a supportive family environment is associated with more favorable mental-health outcomes (Olson et al., 2016).

Social media and public figures may provide language, information, and models through which individuals interpret their experiences, but exposure alone cannot be treated as a sufficient cause. Similarly, biological and psychological research has not established one deterministic explanation applicable to all transgender people. The factors discussed in this article should therefore be understood as interacting contexts rather than as a simple causal formula. Barmawi and Silmi (2016) likewise indicate the importance of multiple personal and environmental factors in an Indonesian setting.

3. Transgender from an Islamic perspective

Islamic discussions of gender variance use several concepts that should not be collapsed into one category. Classical legal literature distinguishes congenital biological ambiguity, commonly discussed under the concept of *khuntha*, from intentional imitation of the opposite sex and from deliberate alteration of an unambiguous body. The Indonesian Ulema Council fatwa on sex change and sex correction similarly differentiates prohibited change from medically justified correction in cases of biological ambiguity (MUI, 2010). This distinction is important because legal and moral judgments depend on the condition being discussed.

The authors' religious argument refers to Qur'an 4:119 and hadith reports concerning men who deliberately imitate women and women who deliberately imitate men. Qardhawi (2001) interprets elective alteration of an unambiguous sex as inconsistent with the created order. Irhami et al. (2020) show that questions concerning transgender women also generate practical legal discussions, including dress and *aurat*, which cannot be resolved merely by repeating a general prohibition. Thus, Islamic

analysis requires attention to physical condition, intention, conduct, necessity, and the specific legal question at issue.

A religious perspective must also preserve the ethical principles that govern interaction with all human beings. Moral disagreement does not justify ridicule, physical violence, exclusion from basic services, or humiliation. Religious education loses its formative purpose when moral instruction is delivered through cruelty. Consequently, the Islamic perspective developed in this article combines normative clarity with justice, compassion, protection of dignity, and the possibility of voluntary spiritual guidance.

4. Human Personality

Freud conceptualizes personality through the interaction of the id, ego, and superego. The id contains instinctual drives and operates according to the pleasure principle. The ego develops to negotiate between instinctual demands, external reality, and possible consequences. The superego represents internalized moral standards and ideals acquired through relationships and socialization (Hall et al., 1998; Hidayat, 2011). Human behavior is therefore not produced by one structure in isolation but by a dynamic relationship among the three.

This framework can illuminate psychological conflict related to identity, family expectations, social judgment, and religious norms. For example, an individual may experience a strong internal desire for self-expression, anticipate social consequences, and simultaneously feel the pressure of internalized moral standards. The ego attempts to regulate these competing demands through decision-making, defense mechanisms, coping, and adaptation. The framework is useful for describing conflict, but it is not sufficient to determine the origin or truth of a person's gender identity.

The earlier conclusion that transgender individuals necessarily prioritize the pleasure principle over values is too general. Such a conclusion would require direct individual assessment and empirical evidence. Some individuals may act impulsively, but others may deliberate for years, suppress their feelings, seek religious advice, or make decisions after considering significant personal and social consequences. Freud's theory therefore supports an analysis of tension among desire, reality, and internalized values, not a universal diagnosis that transgender identity equals domination by the id.

The educational value of Freud's theory lies in the development of self-awareness and regulation. Students can be taught to identify impulses, anticipate consequences, recognize internalized standards, and choose responsible responses. In personality education, this framework should be directed toward reflective decision-making rather than toward labeling particular groups.

5. Personality According to Islamic Psychology

Islamic psychology views the human being as an integrated physical, psychological, moral, and spiritual person. In the Al-Ghazalian framework, *nafs* refers to the self and its appetitive, emotional, and motivational tendencies; *aql* refers to the capacity for knowledge and rational discernment; and *qalb* refers to the spiritual-moral center through which intention, faith, and ethical orientation are formed (Al-Ghazali, n.d.; Gumindari, 2011; Nasr, 1972). These dimensions are distinguishable but operate together in personality formation.

Al-Ghazali's model is explicitly educational and transformative. Personality is developed through tarbiyah, mujahadah, habituation, self-examination, and tazkiyat al-nafs. Desire is not eliminated but directed; reason is strengthened to distinguish beneficial from harmful action; and the heart is cultivated so that knowledge becomes moral commitment. The goal is not only psychological balance but also ethical and spiritual maturity.

Within this framework, transgender-related conflict may be examined through questions of desire, reasoning, intention, moral responsibility, and spiritual meaning. Nevertheless, it is methodologically inaccurate to conclude that every transgender individual simply follows lust and refuses to use reason. Nafs is broader than sexual desire, and the inner state of a person cannot be inferred solely from outward appearance. An Islamic analysis should examine intention, knowledge, circumstances, psychological condition, voluntary action, and the person's own spiritual struggle.

For personality education, Al-Ghazali's framework offers a language of self-discipline, moral reflection, repentance, patience, compassion, and responsibility. Religious guidance can be provided to individuals who voluntarily seek it, but coercive or humiliating practices contradict the educational aim of cultivating a conscious and morally responsible person.

6. Comparative Analysis of Freud and Al-Ghazali

Table 2. Comparative framework of personality

Dimension	Freud	Al-Ghazali	Implication for Analysis
View of the human person	A dynamic psychic system shaped by instinct, reality, and internalized norms.	An integrated physical, rational, moral, and spiritual being.	The theories arise from different philosophical foundations and are not exact equivalents.
Motivational dimension	Id and the pleasure principle.	Nafs as the self with appetitive, emotional, and motivational tendencies.	Both acknowledge desire, but nafs cannot be reduced to the id or sexual appetite.
Regulatory dimension	Ego mediates impulses, reality, and consequences.	Aql discerns, evaluates, and supports responsible action.	Both support self-regulation, although aql has a stronger moral and epistemic role.
Moral dimension	Superego contains internalized standards and ideals.	Qalb is the spiritual-moral center of intention and orientation.	Superego reflects internalized norms; qalb includes relationship with God and spiritual meaning.
Goal of development	Realistic management of conflict and functional adaptation.	Moral refinement, balance, and spiritual flourishing.	Personality education can combine coping skills with moral-spiritual cultivation.

Dimension	Freud	Al-Ghazali	Implication for Analysis
Primary limitation	May overemphasize intrapsychic conflict and historical psychoanalytic assumptions.	May be applied normatively without sufficient empirical and individual assessment.	Both require cautious use and must not become universal labels for transgender people.

Table 2 shows that Freud and Al-Ghazali share a limited structural concern with desire, regulation, and moral orientation, but they do not describe the same psychological system. The id is not identical to nafs, the ego is not identical to aql, and the superego is not identical to qalb. Freud's model is a psychoanalytic account of psychic conflict, whereas Al-Ghazali's model is embedded in an Islamic anthropology oriented toward moral and spiritual transformation.

The most defensible synthesis is therefore functional rather than terminological. Freud helps explain how internal drives, social reality, and internalized values may come into conflict. Al-Ghazali explains how desire, rational discernment, intention, and spiritual orientation may be cultivated through education. Applied to transgender discourse, the two frameworks reveal possible tensions among self-experience, bodily condition, family expectations, social acceptance, and religious commitment. They do not establish a single cause or a single psychological profile.

This synthesis strengthens the contribution of the study. Instead of declaring that transgender people are uniformly controlled by pleasure or lust, the article proposes that personality analysis should examine how each individual negotiates impulses, identity, values, relationships, and meaning. This approach preserves the author's religious and personality focus while making the conclusion proportional to the evidence.

7. Implications for Personality Education

The title of this article requires a clear explanation of educational implications. Personality education is understood here as a deliberate process of developing self-knowledge, self-control, moral reasoning, responsibility, empathy, and respectful conduct. The analysis produces five practical implications.

First, personality education must begin with conceptual literacy. Students, parents, teachers, and counselors should understand the differences among biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, psychological distress, and medical diagnosis. Conceptual accuracy prevents both uncritical acceptance and uninformed condemnation. Learners should be trained to evaluate claims, evidence, and moral arguments carefully.

Second, education should strengthen self-regulation. Freud's concepts can be used to discuss impulses, reality, consequences, and internalized values. Al-Ghazali's concepts can deepen reflection on desire, reason, intention, and the heart. Practical methods may include reflective writing, case discussion, moral problem-solving, spiritual reflection, and counseling conversations. These activities should help learners examine themselves rather than encourage them to diagnose or ridicule others.

Third, religious guidance should combine normative clarity with empathy. Educators may explain Islamic teachings and legal positions while maintaining respectful language and recognizing that individuals may experience profound psychological and spiritual conflict. Guidance should be dialogical, confidential, and proportionate. When a person voluntarily seeks religiously oriented support, counselors may integrate spiritual practices, family communication, and psychological coping without making promises of guaranteed identity change.

Fourth, schools and families must protect individuals from bullying, humiliation, and violence. UNESCO (2019) identifies school violence and bullying as barriers to learning, participation, and well-being. A religious disagreement does not remove the duty to prevent abuse. Educational institutions should establish clear procedures for reporting bullying, protecting privacy, involving families appropriately, and referring serious mental-health concerns to qualified professionals.

Fifth, counseling responses should be individualized. Professional guidance emphasizes careful assessment, respect for each person's circumstances, and the avoidance of assumptions based solely on identity or outward expression (American Psychological Association, 2015; Coleman et al., 2022; Hendricks & Testa, 2012). In the context of this study, two complementary principles can be retained from the author's original discussion: guidance for individuals who experience distress and voluntarily seek psychological or spiritual assistance, and humanitarian acceptance that rejects humiliation and protects basic dignity. These principles become academically stronger when they are framed as ethical support rather than as coercion or social abandonment

8. Synthesis

The transgender phenomenon cannot be understood adequately through a single perspective. Psychology contributes concepts of development, conflict, coping, and self-regulation. Islamic scholarship provides a normative and spiritual framework concerning creation, intention, bodily conduct, moral responsibility, and compassion. Education translates these perspectives into practices that influence how young people reason, communicate, and treat others.

The central contribution of this article is an integrative framework with clear boundaries. Religious teaching should not be presented as a clinical diagnosis, and psychological terminology should not be used to invalidate religious reasoning. Freud and Al-Ghazali can be brought into dialogue when their concepts are treated critically, but their categories should not be declared equivalent. Personality education should cultivate moral conviction, intellectual honesty, emotional regulation, empathy, and responsibility at the same time.

Accordingly, the implications of the study are not limited to transgender individuals. The framework can help educators address any morally contested social issue by combining accurate knowledge, reflective judgment, self-control, non-violence, and respect for human dignity. In this sense, the transgender discussion becomes a test of whether personality education can form individuals who are principled without being cruel and compassionate without abandoning critical reasoning.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes transgender phenomena through religious and psychological perspectives while preserving the author's focus on Freud, Al-Ghazali, and personality education. The literature shows that transgender identity must be distinguished from sexual orientation, gender expression, and mental disorder. It also shows that transgender experiences cannot be explained by a single biological, family, social, cognitive, or psychological factor.

Freud's theory explains personality through the interaction of the id, ego, and superego, while Al-Ghazali explains personality through the dynamic relationship among nafs, aql, and qalb. Both perspectives acknowledge desire, regulation, and moral orientation, but they differ in philosophical foundation and developmental purpose. Freud emphasizes management of psychic conflict and reality; Al-Ghazali emphasizes moral discipline, purification of the self, and spiritual orientation. The two perspectives can therefore be used together only as a cautious comparative framework.

The analysis does not support the general conclusion that all transgender individuals prioritize pleasure and lust over values. A more defensible conclusion is that transgender-related experiences may involve complex tensions among identity, desire, bodily condition, family expectations, social norms, and religious commitments. The way these tensions are experienced varies among individuals and cannot be inferred solely from outward behavior.

The study contributes to personality education by proposing conceptual accuracy, self-regulation, moral-spiritual reflection, empathetic religious dialogue, family involvement, protection from bullying and violence, and individualized counseling. Religious guidance may be offered to individuals who voluntarily seek it, while humanitarian acceptance requires that every person be protected from humiliation and abuse regardless of moral disagreement.

This study has important limitations. It is a theoretical literature study and does not involve direct interviews with transgender individuals, families, educators, or counselors. Its findings therefore describe concepts and arguments in the literature rather than the empirical experiences of all transgender people. The study also does not test the effectiveness of a specific personality-education or counseling intervention. Future research should conduct ethical phenomenological studies involving transgender participants, families, teachers, and religious counselors; compare diverse Islamic interpretations; and evaluate educational or counseling models that integrate psychological competence, religious literacy, and protection of human dignity.

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