

Readers' Responses to Homoeroticism on Indonesian Online Fictions

Andriadi

UIN Fatmawati Sukarno, Bengkulu, Indonesia

E-mail: andriadi@iainbengkulu.ac.id

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Abstract

The dominant masculine stereotype constructed in our society's view is considered to be restrictive and unfavorable in some aspects inherent in masculine gender. This condition sometimes makes men depressed and suffer because they cannot express certain feelings and emotions which also require other men's point of view. This study aims to explore the reader's response to homoeroticism depicted in Indonesian online fiction and an offer to ideal homosocial concept as a solution for male friendship that should be depicted in a fictional world as the basis for building a better civilization and source of literacy. This study uses a qualitative method. The result showed that the male body becomes the source of the emergence of homoeroticism in friendship interaction. Sexual stimulation and words that have homoerotic tendencies in character interactions lead to sexual feelings. The more intimate emotional and physical closeness leads them to change their sexual desire towards other sexual acts. The offer of the concept of the ideal friendship of heterosexual men in a fictional world should include aspects: togetherness, sharing problems openly and comfortably, providing emotional support, and giving surprises by avoiding things that are not accepted by our society, namely affection without deep emotions. and a description of ethical interactions without physical contact so that the strength of male homosocial bonds is built as well as to uphold certain images of masculinity and sexuality in accordance with the masculine stereotypes adopted and developed in the society. In other words, men must maintain ethics and dignity in a friendship.

Kata Kunci

Persahabatan pria;
Homoerotisme;
Respon pembaca;
Fiksi online;

Abstrak

Stereotipe maskulin dominan yang telah terkonstruksi dalam pandangan masyarakat kita dianggap mengekang dan tidak menguntungkan dalam beberapa aspek yang melekat pada gender maskulin. Kondisi ini terkadang membuat laki-laki tertekan dan menderita karena mereka tidak dapat meluapkan perasaan dan emosi tertentu yang juga membutuhkan sudut pandang laki-laki lain. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui respon pembaca terhadap homoerotisme yang digambarkan dalam fiksi online Indonesia dan memberikan tawaran konsep homososial ideal sebagai solusi persahabatan laki-laki yang seharusnya digambarkan dalam dunia fiksi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tubuh laki-laki menjadi sumber munculnya homoerotisme dalam interaksi pertemanan. Rangsangan seksual dan kata-kata yang cenderung homoerotik dalam interaksi karakter menimbulkan perasaan seksual. Kedekatan emosional dan fisik yang lebih intim membuat mereka mengubah hasrat seksual terhadap tindakan seksual lainnya. Tawaran konsep persahabatan ideal pria heteroseksual dalam dunia fiksi harus mencakup aspek: kebersamaan, berbagi masalah secara terbuka dan nyaman, memberikan dukungan emosional, dan memberi kejutan dengan menghindari hal-hal yang tidak diterima oleh masyarakat kita, yaitu kasih sayang tanpa rasa emosional yang mendalam dan gambaran interaksi etis tanpa kontak fisik sehingga kekuatan ikatan homososial laki-laki yang terbangun menjunjung tinggi citra maskulinitas dan seksualitas tertentu sesuai dengan stereotip maskulin yang dianut dan berkembang di masyarakat. Dengan kata lain, laki-laki harus menjaga etika dan martabat dalam pertemanan.

* Correspondensi Penulis: ✉ andriadi@iainbengkulu.ac.id

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Introduction

Friendship between two men that involves a strong emotional and a special intimacy is often depicted in Indonesian fiction. Since ancient times, the intimacy of two heterosexual men is considered as a brotherhood and today is termed as *bromance*. Very close friendships make friendly men open and support each other in life, even solid friendships make them spend time together. Closed male friend becomes a place to talk about all aspects of life. They are more comfortable telling problem to their male friends. They unconsciously have room to process and express their emotions in a healthy way with male friends.

The perspective of society has changed towards this male homosocial from time to time. In Indonesian culture, the closeness of two men (*bromance*) has begun to be misinterpreted. It leads their thinking to a bad prejudice, namely homosexual relations. The ideal figure of a man in Indonesia is assumed to be strong and brave. Therefore, the closeness of two men is limited by existing customary rules, such as not being allowed to hold hands for long, hugging, and so on so that the closeness of fellow men is considered taboo or abnormal (Hanani & Reza, 2019). The perpetrators of intimacy are considered as a man with a romantic relationship between men that can get social sanctions from society such as being ostracized by family and society.

Indonesia still adheres to the values of heteronormativity which constructs a dominant masculine stereotype in the culture and norms. A man must be able to become a leader, face a problem on his own, be wise, and make his own decisions (Marsya & Faladhin, 2019). Dominant masculinity makes men unable to express their feelings and emotions through same-sex friends, and internalize values for fear of being labeled as homosexual. As a result, men have to suppress certain feelings or emotions that also require another man's point of view. (Marsya & Faladin 2019) adds that this dominant masculine aspect is considered to be

restrictive and unfavorable in some aspects inherent to masculine gender that leads male's depressed and suffering.

The concept of Bromance is presented in the midst of modern society and popular culture to fight the masculine views. The concept of Bromance is a relationship between two heterosexual men with the strength of an emotional connection that is expressed through physical activity but is not involved in a romantic relationship (DeAngelis, 2014). In today's popular Indonesian fictions, the strength of the emotional relationship between two heterosexual male characters is often depicted intensely, either through physical activity or feelings. The two male characters can express their feelings, empathize with each other, motivate each other, show concern in difficult times, and share the problems they face as well as find solutions from a male point of view.

However, in practice, online fiction in Indonesia indicates intimacy of two heterosexual male characters that tend to produce homoerotic motifs or sexual attraction involving genital arousal. So, the bromance concept develops in Indonesian online fiction is different from the one offered by DeAngelis (2014) and Hanani & Reza (2019) which states that the closeness between men in Indonesia cannot always be associated with homosexual relationships. Homosocial depicted in Indonesian online fiction tends to be an emotional intention between two heterosexual men who may violate social norms by engaging in activities that are not just friendship (Bhattacharyya, 2020).

This is a challenge for the friendship of two men to maintain their sexual identity as straight men to avoid public pressure and negative labels. Homosocial and homoeroticism are important to discuss because society's mistakes in justifying individual relationships are fatal. Those who are considered to have violated the norms of course get pressures since this position is considered marginal in society.

Indonesian Online fiction is increasingly spreading among people who massively use mass communication media. Crystallization and affirmation of dominant norms in society are represented in online fiction. As the result, this product as well as cultural discourse becomes the best medium in studying gender aspects (Clark, 2004; Heryanto, 2017). One of the latest online fiction sites specifically discussing the lives of men, friendship, and the other side of the masculine honestly is "Sang Lelaki (The Man)". This site usually features a serialized story about masculinity with a male author and narrator. Fictions that have been shown and have many listeners are "Persahabatan Kampus MM (Friendship in Campus MM)" and "Kutunggu di Algiers (I'm waiting in Algiers)" by Harris. The online serial entitled "Friendship in Campus MM" aired for 8 episodes. This story premiered on August 15, 2020 and ended on August 23, 2020. While the story titled "I'm waiting in Algiers" aired for 6 episodes. This story first aired on October 24, 2020 and ended on November 6, 2020. These two online stories depict the friendly relationship of heterosexual men who have wives and children. However, in their interactions indicate homoerotic actions in the form of activities that involve sexual interest and arousal. The online story is the right channel for them to develop their gender performance independently and see the community's response to what has been shown in the story.

There have been many researchers conducted similar research. Hanani and Reza (2019) conducted a research entitled "Representation of Bromance in Indonesian Film with Yowis Ben's Javanese Cultural Background". It showed that the concept of bromance has been included in Indonesian culture which can be seen in the film *Yowis Ben*. It presents a group of teenage boys who are emotionally and physically closed. This study proves that the close relationship between men in Indonesia cannot always be associated with gay relationships.

Savela (2020) in her research entitled "Male Friendship in Bohemian Rhapsody: Bromance and Male Sexuality in Popular Culture" showed that *Bohemian Rhapsody* is different from other bromance films. It presented physical and emotional closeness between male friends as a natural thing. Mercury's sexuality does not affect friendships, nor does it cause panic for other heterosexual men. Mercury's overall sexuality is depicted in a less flamboyant manner than other productions, although his sexuality is not the focus of the film.

SU (2021) conducted a study entitled "Homosocial Desire: Reconfigured Male Friendship in Kim Eun Sook's *Dokebi: The Lonely and Great God*". This study focuses on exploring the representation of bromance in a South Korean drama, *Dokebi: The Lonely and Great God*, by Kim Eun Sook, a screenwriter and scriptwriter. Under a society built by patriarchal values, society, especially men, in South Korea developed the privilege to internalize psychological pressures both socially and mentally from the dominant ideology. However, such internalization of masculinity undergoes a series of transformations through the popularity of the media. In Korean dramas, men can freely express their feelings and even show close friendship with other straight men. The emotional bond that results from homosocial desire between two men is known as bromance. Thus, this study also reveals male intimacy outside of heterosexual relationships in Korean society.

It is clear that there have been many studies related to homosociality in various countries, but they have not paid attention to homoeroticism included in heterosexual male friendships; and lack of thorough analysis of the ideal homosocial concept in the society as a solution for male friendship described through fiction, especially the present context of Indonesian culture as well as reader's response to the emergence of homoeroticism in male friendships in the society point of view that adheres to the dominant masculine concept. Therefore, this research is important to in-

crease literacy about the public's perspective on homosocial in Indonesia and internalize the values found in online fiction as one of the strong socialization media for the community.

Due to the reasons above, this study aims to answer questions: How do the readers' responses to homoeroticism depicted in Indonesian online fiction and What does the ideal homosocial concept offer as a solution for male friendship that should be described in the fictional world as the basis for building a better civilization and source of literacy.

Literature Review

1. Masculinity Performance and Public Perception

The concept of masculinity has actually been around since the late 1970s. The word masculinity is specifically interpreted as the right qualities possessed by a man such as "strong" and "manly" (Flood, et al, 2007). In other words, masculinity is a characteristic that is owned by a man who is closely related to the concept of masculinity.

Every society certainly has a culture closely related to gender, but not all cultures have the concept of masculinity. Masculinity is a set of traits possessed by men, both embodies and disbodies (Connell, 1995). Therefore, for most modern societies, masculinity is the result of one's behavior. When a man behaves differently from stereotyped men in that area, they are considered not masculine. Likewise, the concept of intimate male friendship is sometimes considered different in the society's view. This unreasonable masculinity is taken on granted by the society. Surprisingly, this conception becomes an individual belief.

2. Homosocial Concept in Society's View

One form of intense interaction between individuals is friendship. Friendly relations are dominated by feelings and reciprocal relationships that are needed by individuals in establishing interpersonal relationships. Friends and companions can be defined a little differently. A friend is someone who is fun to be with, while a friend more

valued one who is generous, sensitive, honest, an individual with whom to relax (Baron & Byrne, 2005).

Friendship is a state of mutual benefit between two people in the long term with the aim of fulfilling the socio-emotional individual in which there are various types and levels of intimacy, affection, and mutual help (Febrieta, 2016). Friendship is a relationship between individuals which is characterized by familiarity, mutual trust, mutual acceptance, willingness to share feelings, thoughts, experiences, and sometimes doing activities together Santrock (2002). In a friendship, a person has partners to hang out, help him develop social skills, self-concept, self-esteem, and get emotional support when facing problems.

Friendship is a form of relationship attachment that includes pleasure, acceptance, trust, appreciation, mutual assistance, mutual trust, understanding, and spontaneity (Santrock, 2010). Friendly relationships provide emotional and material support, entertainment, and information that can increase life satisfaction (Aiken, 2002). Therefore, in building friendships, there are quality aspects that must be met (Asher & Parker, 1993): Validation and Caring, Conflict and Betrayal, Companionship and Recreation, Help and Guidance, Intimate Exchange, and Conflict Resolution.

Homosocial heterosexual men are better known as bromance which is an acronym of "Bro" or "Brother" which means brother and "Romance" which means intimate. So bromance is an intimate brotherhood of men. The word intimate is rather a very close relationship like brother, friends who feel belong together, are open and support each other. Sometimes men are more comfortable opening up to their male friends. It does not mean that female partners can't fulfill their emotional and physical needs, but men need a man's point of view. Therefore, men also need quality time with their male friends just as women do with their friends.

Bromance can be defined as an intense emotional relationship between heterosexual men that can be expressed through physical activity without involving romantic relationships (DeAngelis, 2014). Straight men express their feelings to each other regarding the problems they face in their daily life. Friendship becomes a mouthpiece for them to be able to express their emotions without fear of being labeled as homosexual by society. This concept of friendship actually contradicts to the reality of the dominant masculine concept it is impossible for a man to reveal or show his weaknesses in front of other people. Men tend to express emotions in partners of the opposite sex even though in certain contexts the views and opinions of other men are needed.

3. Homoeroticism

Relationships between men can be placed on a hypothetical scale ranging from purely homosocial (non-sexual but strong emotional bonds between men) to pure homosexuality (involving sexual attraction, arousal and genital activity). In modern Western society, homosocial and homosexual are strictly separated, this separation enforced by a homophobic policy of signs of sexual attraction between men.

According to The Oxford English Dictionary, homoeroticism is concerned with or characterized by the tendency of erotic emotions to center on people of the same sex; or dealing with homo-erotic people'. This definition refers to emotion, it says nothing about physical action. Someone who is homoerotic behaves emotionally but not necessarily in the form of actions. But it also includes 'erotic' entries: 'To turn an emotion into a sexual feeling', and 'to make it erotic, to stimulate it sexually'. In the Webster's dictionary, a more sexual definition is found in the following entry: 'Erotic: pertaining to, or driven by love; treat love; romance; tend to arouse sexual desire. ' In the Webster entry, the shift from 'love', which need not immediately suggest sex, to 'romance', which has a stronger sexual connotation, to 'sexual desire' explicitly. It

means that the relationship between erotic emotions and sexual acts is ambiguous. The two are clearly related to each other but the exact nature of the relationship between them is unclear.

The ambiguous combination of emotional and sexual in the definition of homo-eroticism, homosocial and homosexual relationships overlap to produce social bonds between mental states informed by unstable emotional-sexual mixtures. The instability of homoeroticism reflects the instability of the categories created by the polarization of men into heterosexual or homosexual. This dichotomy is relatively new and is constantly being produced and enforced through various cultural and social practices including homophobia and psychological and cultural denial of all forms of sexual attraction between men.

Freud (1905) argues that 'the boundary between homosexual and heterosexual is not clear, the polymorph perversity which is the starting point for everyone's sexuality and which includes homoeroticism is the foundation upon which heterosexuality is formed which can then be revived'. As a result, homoerotic emotions and identifications are present in everyone's consciousness.

Therefore, Homoeroticism is an unstable concept that tries to signify the relationship between men who are in a precarious position between homosexuality, which is socially and culturally recognized and defined in a dominant discursive framework, and heterosexuality, in which homosocial bonds from strong male bonds and friendships but expected to be excluded. And deny all forms of sexual attraction between men.

In Freud's view, some seemingly non-sexual human activities are actually driven by the power of the sexual instinct. In heteronormative regimes, forms of sexual attraction between men are desexualized and transferred to socially valued non-sexual activities. Freud's point is that this power of sexual attraction can be sublimated into social and cultural goals without losing its intensity (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988). This includes the

relationship between men which is at the core of the creation of society as a whole. In this sense, homoeroticism is a dimension of male bonding that is suppressed but capable of suppressing all relationships between men - the more effectively, the more sublimated.

Different historical periods and different cultures have determined or tended to favor certain male relationships over others. Homoerotic interests are expected to conform to class or age differences, and reflect local ideals of male physical beauty. The power difference between men can also be erotic. Cultural icons such as sportsmen and entertainers are objects of homoerotic attraction. Forms of masculinity that are considered inaccessible to gays often become erotic objects, including soldiers, police, firefighters, and workers from the traditional working class considered as cultural heritage of heterosexual men, such as construction workers. This 'forbidden' masculinity is made erotic and available for sexual fantasy; they are a staple of gay pornography.

The male body is increasingly becoming an object to be admired in Western consumer culture beyond the bounds of sport, whereas previously only the female body was an erotic and sexual object in advertising and pornography, now the male body - usually young, physically, attractive, well built healthy and as if heterosexual - is a common view in advertising, films, and various other media (Budiman, et al, 2019; Hadiani, et al, 2020). However, most advertising media, films, fiction still want to avoid being interpreted explicitly and unambiguously as 'gay' or 'homosexual'. At the same time, there is an increasing number of works of fiction online that play out sexual ambiguity and allow heterosexual and homo-sexual interpretations. This is ambiguity that is at the center of much homoeroticism.

When trying to identify homo-erotic, we should bear in mind that Freud had objected to the term 'erotic' itself, for he recognized that it could be used to camouflage sexual phenomena in favor of

sublimated forms by means of less sexually explicit terms (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988). There were many merits in Freud's preservation. If homoeroticism involves sexual desire, why not just call it homosexual? If the term 'homoeroticism' is to be used, then it may be best to use it to refer to the sublimated and unrecognized form of homosexuality that informs all male relationships, while using 'homosexual' to refer to explicit sexual interest in other men.

Homoeroticism, as a concept and label for a form of sexuality, should perhaps be seen as a product of the heterosexual-homosexual binary that pervades Western culture and which demands that homosexual feelings be restricted and associated with certain sexual types, homosexual men who are thus clearly distinguished of heterosexual men. The term 'homoeroticism' has come to be often used to refer to borders or transition zones where neither of these two main categories can enforce untested claims. If it is not so important to maintain the two as mutually exclusive sexual types, then it is possible to admit that the sexuality of all men includes a homosexual (and heterosexual) dimension without the aid of the slippery and ambiguous term 'homoeroticism'.

4. Readers' Response

Response analysis is a marker of a work in which there are experiences in various events contain messages to be conveyed. The function of the reception is to provide suggestions in order that the audience can see the content of the message conveyed specifically with what is seen as the object of empirical analysis (Argani, 2014). Audience studies have developed and have several variants, namely: multiple effect research, uses and gratification research, literary criticism, cultural studies, and reception analysis (Jansen & Rosengen, 2015). The object of this research study is fiction which is included in literary works, the appropriate reception variant used is reception analysis.

Method

This research is textual analysis with a qualitative approach. The research focuses on the quality of a particular activity that investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials (Fraenkele, 2012). Researchers also study the meaning of people's lives or real life conditions, represent people's views and perspectives, provide insight into existing or emerging concepts that can help explain human social behavior, and strive to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on single source (Yin, 2011; Creswell, 2014).

In this study context, the researcher uses a descriptive approach in analyzing the text as the data source to interpret the readers' responses on intimate homosocial (homoeroticism) on their masculinity performance, and an ideal homosocial concept as a solution for male friendship should be described in a fictional world which is as the overall data source.

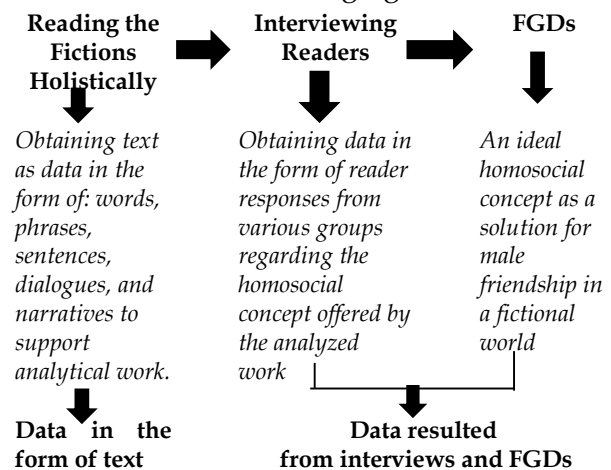
The data came from two sources, namely: first, Primary Data – a popular site that intensely produces serial stories regarding men and their masculinity in Indonesian online fiction is "*Sang Lelaki* (The Man)". The source of the data is based on works that contain intimate heterosexual male friendships. The selection of research samples using the purposive method which is carried out according to the intended purpose of the researcher (Lyons and Doueck, 2010). To determine the sample, the researcher sorts the stories according to the purpose so that 14 episodes of serialized online stories are collected as primary data. First, a story entitled "*Persahabatan Kampus MM* (Friendship in MM College)" which consists of six episodes. The online fictions were aired on October 24, 27, and 30, and November 6 and 8, 2020. Second, the story entitled "*Kutunggu di Algiers* (Waiting in Algiers)" which consists of 8 episodes aired on 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, and 23 August 2020.

To find out the readers' responses to homoeroticism and to know the ideal homosocial concept as a solution for male friendship that should

be depicted in the fictional world, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews and FGDs. The respondents for interview and FGDs consisted of 20 people, 10 men and 10 women who are members of the Bengkulu Writing Community (KMB). They were readers or listeners of the analyzed online fictions. They have a literary education background, counseling teachers, psychologists, and observers of gender studies, especially masculinity who have read the analyzed works and are following the development of popular literature or cyber literature. These qualifications make them able to appreciate the literary works well. Researchers interviewed readers to find out their responses and conduct FGDs to find out the ideal concept of homosocial in the fictional world in Indonesia. For this interview, the researcher prepared interview guidelines as a medium and guide in data collection.

Second, secondary data – the secondary data is obtained through literature studies and document studies in the form of books, papers, journals, and research reports, videos, photos, pictures, and other information related to the object of study which shows the homosocial aspects of heterosexual men. All of these data sources deserve to be research objects because they are in accordance with research needs in dissecting works and knowing readers' responses.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out as the following figure:

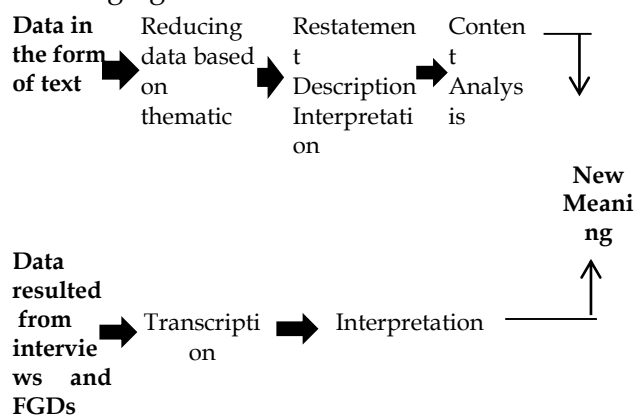


The researcher read holistically on the serialized online fictions to obtain various texts as data that supports analytical work, identifying all texts in form of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, or narrations related to research needs to support analytical work.

The researcher interviewed readers who had read these works and asked questions according to the needs related to the object of research to find out their response to the homosocial concept offered by the analyzed online fictions.

Researchers conducted FGDs to build an ideal homosocial concept as a solution for male friendship that should be depicted in the fictional world. FGD participants were those who have a literary education background and follow the development of popular literature or cyber literature or are observers of gender studies, especially masculinity because with these qualifications, they can appreciate the work well. Thus, the FGD participants can meet the qualifications of literary and gender views so that they can construct the expected ideal homosocial concept.

Data analysis in this study was carried out as following figure:



Text data that have been collected were processed through several stages. First, the data are reduced based on thematic. Second, the levels of analysis used are: restatement, description, and interpretation. Third, the analysis technique used is content analysis. Meanwhile, interview data and FGD results that have been collected were tran-

scribed and interpreted to give birth to new meanings.

Result

1. Readers' Responses to Homoeroticism in Indonesian Online Fiction

The ideal friendship upholds ethics in association and the norms that apply in society. Ideal friendships are more likely to be emotional bonds, not intimate physical contact with men.

a. Erotic Emotions – Transformation of Emotions into Sexual Feelings

1) Interest/Emotion in the Male Body and Make it Homoerotic Object

Male body becomes a homoerotic object that evokes homoerotic feelings and even sexual feelings. These fragments contain homoerotic tendencies in the analyzed work based on the reader's view.

...When the lecturer lay down, he took off his clothes and surprised Harris with the thick brown fur all over his not-so-white body. When the French lecturer lay down to get a massage, Harris briefly saw a mound of weapons behind his boxer like a big hose even though he was not erect... (Friendship in MM Campus, 4, 09.19 – 11.39).

In interview, respondents agreed that men should maintain ethics, especially things that involve sexual body parts, even though the friendship is very close. Vital body parts can trigger emotions leading to homoerotic acts. Harris thinks deeply indicates that he has an interest, desire, and/or fantasies about what he sees.

For men who do not identify as homosexual, do not appreciate other men's bodies except in certain contexts, such as in a sports competition where men are free to have physical contact and stare at each other as long as the gaze does not affect emotions into sexual feelings. Harris's narrative of complimenting his friend's body could be construed as an unconscious and unrecognized homoerotic feeling.

...Gandi rushing to a stop at Urine Oir right next to me.

Gandi : Oh, I can't stand it anymore (he said to himself).

Harris : Same, bro, the queue is very long, almost an hour. Why Gan, why are you glancing at me.

Gandi : It's okay, bro, that's still not erect, that's all, bro, what if it erect perfectly.

Harris : What are you talking about? I immediately walked to the sink to wash my hands (I'll be waiting in Algiers, 1, 32.25 – 33.50).

Sexual ambiguity shown in the quote above is one of the centers of homoeroticism. Intense admiration and even praise for the male sensitive body organ makes it an erotic and sexual object. This work still seems to avoid explicitly interpreting hetero-homosexual ambiguity. Gandi's actions already refer to explicit sexual interest in other men.

Gandi: Just open the boxers, bro, there's already a plastic bag on the shelf for Harris' dirty clothes (he mumbled while pointing to a shelf towards the wardrobe).

Harris : Hmmm, I mumbled awkwardly. Yes, it's okay to bear it all (I said as I lowered my boxer, then I put the boxer brief on top of another pile of dirty clothes).

I could see at a glance that Gandi had turned his head and looked at my lower body which was already in a state without a single thread in front of him. However, he soon averted his gaze and walked towards the bed (I am waiting in Algiers, 2, 34.50 – 36.35)

Suddenly, Gandhi knocked on the bathroom door.

Gandi : Harris is it still a long time or not?

Harris : Why bro?

Gandi : I'm sorry, my stomach suddenly hurts because I ate spicy food this afternoon.

Harris : I can't hold it anymore. Already in.

Then he opened the bathroom and peeked his face through the door.

Gandi: Harris, it's really okay if I come in (Gandi asked with a bit of hesitation).

Harris : I'm already in, I'll be done in a minute.

Wearing only an underwear and a tight t-shirt, Gandi immediately entered and opened the closet. I saw him lower the underwear quickly and immediately sat on the closed.

Gandi : Sorry, bro, I can't stand it anymore (he said while holding his stomach).

Harris : Yes, just relax, Bro (I am waiting in Algiers, 2, 38.28 – 40.10).

Harris followed what Gandi ordered indicate that they have feeling and Gandhi also looked deliberately at the sensitive part. It means that sexual attraction began to emerge between them. Using the bathroom alone is not justified because it violates the norms of decency and ethics. This kind of behavior does not initially lead to homoeroticism since the context is urgent, but if it is done repeatedly, it has the potential to ignite the sexual attraction of others.

The scene provokes Gandi and Harris' sexual response so the picture here signifies eroticism between men or the potential for such a value. In other words, this situation contains a sexual dimension that changes emotions into erotic emotions in the character and arouses eroticism through sexual stimulation of the eroticism of the body of fellow men.

2) Exploration of Homoerotic Tendency through Words/Expressions

Respondents identified that homoeroticism tendencies exhaled through certain words or expressions.

I also had time to send photos while we were enjoying the meal.

Gandi: Wow, that's okay, Mas Harris, the goat roll. Be careful, soon there will be erect if you eat goat rolls.

Harris : yes, my body is starting to feel hot.

Gandi : That's right, then who do you want to hang out with, come oG? (Gandi replied ignorantly).

Harris : Yes, I'm most comfortable in the bathroom.

Gandi : Wow, if you're just getting wet in the bathroom, bro. Take care, Harris. I Miss you (at the end of the message by adding a heart emoticon).

Harris : Thank you Gandhi, I miss you too (Harris replied) (I am waiting in Algiers, 2, 23.50 – 25.40).

Although in the joking context, men should still avoid using words related to intimate organs or sensitive words related to sexual matters. The use of the heart emoticon is not appropriate for a male friend. This symbol is a form of love expression to the opposite sex with special relationship.

The word "erect" used by Gandi leads the reader to a homoerotic meaning since it is spoken by a man to a male friend. This word may be said with a joke intention. However, it contains a sexual element that evokes arousal or erotic emotions in the character who listens it. Moreover, they are both far away from their families and spouses. At the end of the message, Gandi provoked Harris with his attention and said the word "I Miss you" followed by a heart emoticon. Gandi's actions prompted Harris to say the same. This action could drive their emotional into sexual feelings.

b. Turning Sexual Desire into Sexual Action

The closeness between the male characters in the story makes them more intimate emotionally and physically. They have exceeded friendship boundaries from their closeness. Ethically, in countries that hold dominant masculine principles, this behavior has violated norms. There are physical or emotional actions that arouse the sexual desire of others and lead them to perform sexual acts with others.

The French lecturer thanked Harris and his friends for the kindness and concern before leaving for France at the airport. One by one Harris and his friends hugged and kissed each other on the cheek with the lecturer.

Harris : He held my hand tightly and stared for a long time.

Lecturer : Thank you very much Harris, you are very kind. Thank you very much for accompanying me while in Indonesia. I'm happy and I'm waiting for you to visit France someday (MM Friendship Campus, 4, 16:40 – 18.00).

Most of our culture are still not familiar of kissing on the cheek for male friends. More common ways to deal with emotional situations such as separation by hugging, shaking hands, patting the shoulder to avoid negative public perceptions. Hugging accompanied by kissing on the cheek for a long time has potency to arouse sexual desire towards same-sex sexual acts. Most people consider taboo and strange for kissing on the cheek between male friends since it does not comply with existing masculine standards.

Harris rides the evening prayer at Rizal's boarding house. Harris became a priest. Harris kissed Rizal's forehead for a moment and prayed. Yes, God I love my best friend. Hopefully we can always be friends in times of trouble and joy... (I am waiting in Algiers, 8, 20.00 – 21.30).

Kissing on the forehead is only done by married couples in congregational prayers, not same-sex friends. Male friendship is not manifested in the form of touch, but attention and action. A kiss on the forehead has shown other sexual interactions involving emotions and sexual desire. This action indicates that the perpetrator is involved in a loving and comfortable relationship. There was a tendency for sexual desire to drive him.

Gandi: Harris, I'll help you rub your back so it's clean so you can sleep well.

Before he had time to respond to his offer, he immediately took off the underwear and shirt he was wearing and put them on the stencil iron shelf above the closed. In such an innocent state, then he came up to me and took the sponge in my hand. He calmly climbed into the bath tub and sat behind

me and dripped liquid soap on the sponge. Then from behind, he started to gently rub my back.

Harris : Thank you, bro, my body is really tired and feels sore, bro.

Gandi: Just relax, bro, it's okay.

Every now and then he would massage my back, shoulders, and neck which did feel sore and stiff. He seemed to know very well my back which felt very tired after sitting for hours on the way from Elbayet to Algiers. I really enjoy the pressure of his hand which makes my body feel light and relaxed (I'm waiting in Algiers, 2, 41.15 – 43.30).

Bathing together followed by rubbing/massaging the back, shoulders, and neck is an unnatural act in the culture of heterosexual men in Indonesia and belongs to homoeroticism. It is not natural for adult men to bathe together and followed by massage activities. Bathing can be done alternately if conditions are rushed as in military life.

Gandi's appearance refers to a homoerotic activity, namely rubbing the back of a male friend at a very close distance without wearing clothes. In the quote above, Harris really enjoys Gandi's treatment and forgets the awkwardness that arose at the beginning. Gandi's presence in the bathroom provided comfort to his stiff body. Harris marveled at the pressure, Gandi was putting through his hands. Without knowing it, they have become perpetrators of sexual acts that arouse sexual desire. Homoerotic tendencies are also shown in the scene of Gandi and Harris in the bedroom before they sleep.

Harris : Then you only wear underwear and a t-shirt like this. What do you want?

Gandi : When I sleep, I'm usually like this, bro.

Harris: Oh that's right. You're not cold because of the AC?

Gandi : No, it's not normal. Make it this way. Besides, I don't usually take clothes with me when I travel. I left all my clothes in Jakarta and I left all my work clothes at basecamp. So practically when I return to Indonesia and return to Algeria,

I only bring two sets of clothes and two sets of underwear (I am waiting in Algiers, 3, 15.45 – 17.10).

Sleeping together by wearing only underwear was included homoeroticism, even though it is a habit for men to sleep wearing only underwear. In this context, it is done not only alone, but both. Such close friendships tend to make men forget the limits of politeness norms in the association of fellow men. This tendency opens wide avenues for homoeroticism actions or values to enter and confine men in perverted thoughts and actions. This situation becomes an easy target for homoerotic values in drowning the minds of male characters into homoerotic acts.

In particular, the quote "*When I pulled the bedcover to cover my body, which was cold because of the air conditioning in the room, Gandi also snuck under the bedcover. Then he positioned his head under my neck and hugged my stomach (I am waiting in Algiers, 3, 19.36 – 21.30)*" describes the intimacy between Gandi and Harris. Their activity indicates something beyond the intimacy of a friend. The quote "*I felt a strange vibration running through my body. I wanted to give him a hug in return, but I just hugged his head and gently stroked his hair*" indicates that Harris did not refuse Gandi's treatment, he even responded with sexual acts by hugging and stroking his hair which aroused the sexual desire of others. In this section, the writer describes the homoerotic nuance as a mere normal feeling. In addition, there are cultural values that deserve attention in the scene above.

All respondents agreed that their actions fall into the category of homoeroticism because they have exceeded the habits of heterosexual men. Hugging each other involves skin touching, even romantic acts. This action is even indicated as more than just a friend's behavior. Loving male friends is enough to motivate or just use words. The physical act of rubbing the

head by these two male characters is unnatural and even includes an act of homoeroticism. The act of rubbing the head is a form of affection and deep feeling that is usually done by men to partners of the opposite sex.

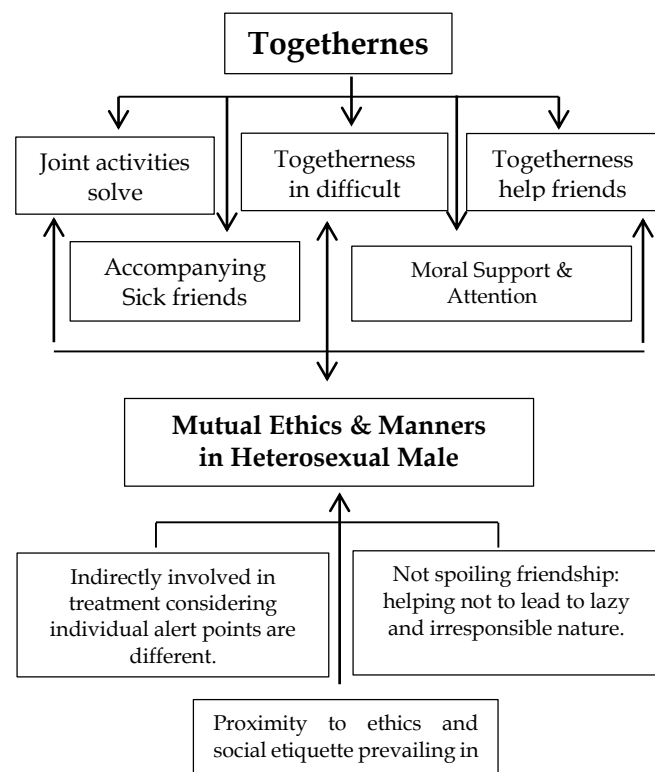
It is clear that the male body is the source of the emergence of homoeroticism in friendship. Sexual stimulation and homoerotic tendency words resulted sexual feeling. Then, strong and intense emotions brought them to feelings of homoerotism. An increasingly intimate emotional and physical closeness leads them to change of sexual desire towards other sexual acts.

2. Offering of An Ideal Homosocial Concept for Heterosexual Male in Fictional World

This study proposes an ideal concept of male homosocial which should be represented in fictional word. It is expected to be role models for readers, young generations, and authors.

1. Togetherness

Doing activities together can get to know each other and build a good friendship. However, togetherness can also destroys etiquette. Togetherness in a close relationship can underestimate the boundaries of social ethics and rules exist in society. Hence, it violates norms. After conducting interviews and FGDs, respondents resulted an offering concept of ideal togetherness in heterosexual men homosocial which should be depicted in a fictional world.



a. Joint Activities Solve Problems

Togetherness is the first consideration case in an ideal concept in friendship. It is togetherness in solving a problem to find a bright spot and a way out of the problems faced.

In the context of learning, Intense meeting strengthens their friendship. A man has a meeting and discussing about study problems with a male friend, that's good (Soraya, 36 years).

The condition is ok because a friendship is also based on a common interest, in this case the coursework. So they often do things together that have the same goal. It proximity is biased on various grounds due to lecture material and so on (Ekadana, 42 years).

I prefer to be friends with boys than girls. In a sense, I think women are complicated. Men care more. Boy friends can make commitments. A man's success comes from his friends, not from his partner (Priyo, 30 years).

Togetherness in friendship is an important aspect for several reasons. It needs to spend time together in to build a good friend-

ship. The meeting intensity strengthens relations. It is true that successes of a man come from his male friends, not from his spouse. Then, it is true that a friendship is also based on a common interest. So, togetherness to solve or find the best solution for a problem can be the glue of friendship. They become intensely meeting to do activities that have one goal.

b. Togetherness in Difficult Times by Meeting Intensity that Avoid Stigma

Another commonality in male friendship is togetherness in difficult times.

When friendship is too intense, "Me Time" is no longer there. Privacy finally opens and produces a relationship that is more than a friendship because it crosses the boundaries of privacy. Friendship will be unhealthy in the future. Everything is all together and this is not good (Badriyah, 32 Years).

Male friendship must be sensitive; they generally cannot be shown fully because it will bring bad perceptions. Harris's willingness must have a boundary context when he is in public and on campus. Harris must give understanding to Dito (Arif, 27 years).

Togetherness in difficult times can give views on the problems they are facing. They become a reference for further action and even find the best solution. This condition also encourages mutual understanding because male friendship is also sensitive. In a difficult time, friends need friend's presence to provide motivation and assistance. The loyalty of a friend can be proven in this situation. However, they must not too intense to maintain privacy. In addition, they have boundaries for interactions in public to avoid stigma or negative perceptions from the environment.

c. Togetherness Helping Friends without Indulging Friendship

When a friend faces a problem, the presence of a close friend really means to provide

support and assistance. The respondents in the FGD gave their views for this case:

Harris helped Rizal to read reference books and finding the theory are very good to support friendship, but when Harris helped to type the thesis, he spoiled the friendship. He should only helped Rizal share a new mindset for Rizal's learning process. (Oktarika, 30 years).

That do all the tasks is not good. If Rizal burdens Harris with everything, he is not a friend but taking advantage of a friend for doing his thesis assignments (Syahri, 38 years).

There is nothing excessive to help in a friendship. A help is good to support friendship, but helping a major responsibility, it spoils the friendship. Helping is just sharing a mindset to encourage friends having a learning process to solve the problem. The majority of assistance makes them ignore their problems and leave the solution to their friends. It seems like taking advantages from a friendship.

d. Accompanying Sick Friends without being Directly Involved in Treatment

Sick friends need attention and support from friends to provide strong and enthusiastic in carrying out treatment. There are many things a friend can do in the process of healing a friend who is in an unhealthy condition.

Accompanying Rizal who was sick was a very positive influence. But to scrape it could be a negative thing. In bromance, we don't know each other's alert points. There is a breaking point in each person. Well, actually there are many things that Harris can do, such as asking for a meal together or calling a masseuse or massage together or going to a place for reflection together that can be done by two friends where the context is that Harris is not directly involved in Rizal's treatment process (Nabila, 26 years).

Scraping and taking friends for treatment creates emotional bonds with friends because what they

do will be embedded in their hearts. This is very influential on friendship (Putra, 28 years).

Accompanying friends when they are sick strengthens friendship, make him feel cared for. It will be a moment to remember when it heals. In other words, it strengthens the emotional with friends. However, to give treatment to friends can be a negative thing because it seems too close. At bromance, there is a different alert point in each individual. A friend is suggested only the following things: asking for a meal together, calling a massage therapist or having massage together where the context is that the friend is not directly involved in the treatment process of his friend.

e. Moral Support and Attention to Unlucky Friends

Misfortune experiences sadness, lost, and even depression. Attention and moral support are needed to raise him from the sadness and adversity he is suffering from. At this time, the role of friends is needed.

It's good because of the moral support. This moral support is usually obtained by Harris from his friends to help Harris rise again because losing a father figure means losing a male figure in his life and the presence of Dani, Dito, and Rizal as friends who are also in the same context as their father and have the same gender. It provides a separate space that Harris has not lost a father figure (Fadly, 28 Years).

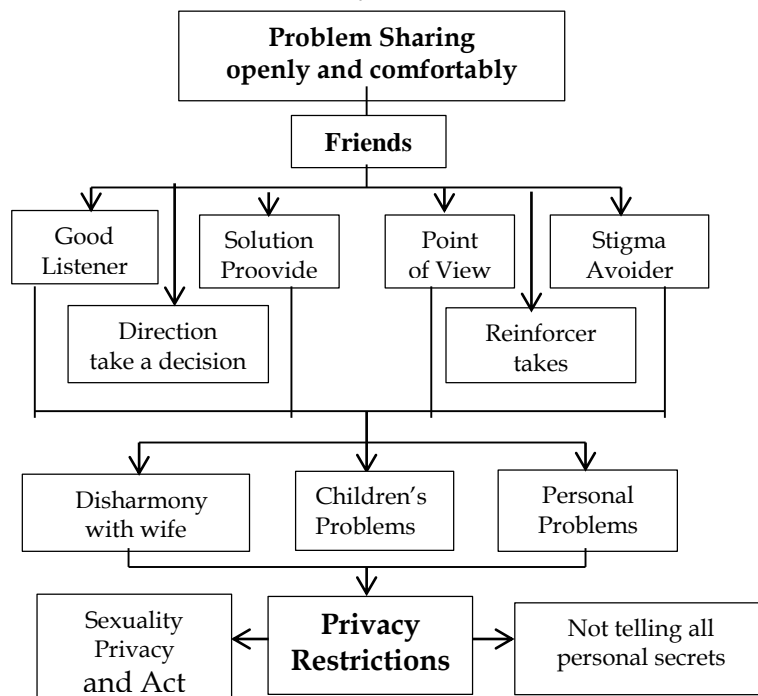
It's an ideal friendship because each of them can build and motivate a friend who is having problems. Friends not only come when needed, but can show a causal relationship when each can give his position (Amelia, 27 years).

The moral support from friends really helps a friend rise from his downturn, even a friend felt that he did not lose and forgot a little about his misfortune. Support is called as an ideal friendship since each of them can build and motivate a friend who is having problems.

In other words, Friends not only come when needed, but can show a causal relationship when each can give his position.

2. Problem Sharing Openly and Comfortably

When someone is facing a problem, he needs a close friend to be a good listener. A good listener can gives positive responses and advices to solve the problem. Respondents in FGD propose the concept of openly sharing problems that ideally could be done:



Sharing Problems with Privacy Restrictions

One must have privacy limits in telling a personal problem. Not all problems can be told to close friends. The results of the FGD showed problem that a man usually shares with his friend, namely: disharmony with his wife, children, and personal problems.

Disharmony with Wife

The respondents in FGD gave their opinion about sharing problems related to disharmony with their wives with friends.

It's natural when Gandi told to Harris about problems occurred while he was working away from his family because Gandi needed a place to share besides his activities with his children and wife who were far away due to LDR. So Gandi

really needs someone to listen to his story. It can also avoid stigma if he makes friendship with female friends. So it's better if Gandi has to tell his problem and find a close male friend to share his opinion (Patricia 26 years).

I tell friends as self-reinforcement to me. The suggestions given by friends become the direction of action in making decisions. In this regard, I think this is the therapist's relationship between me and my best friend. That is, friends here I make patterns to shape me in solving personal problems. Basically, if we talk to the therapist, such as a psychologist or counselor, there must be boundaries that we still cover, but if we talk to our own friends, we will be more open. I will definitely tell my friends about personal problems (Sunarto, 28 years).

In male friendship, they need partner to listen their life story. The level of friendship can be a reference for problems discussed with the friend. If you don't really know your friends closely, you're afraid that the problem can be told to other people. In addition, problems related to domestic problems, such as work, causes of quarrels with wives, and child disputes are reasonable to share with friends (not issues of privacy or sexual behavior). In this situation, friends need a good listener. Furthermore, male friends need justification or point of view from other men. In this case, they can compare experiences to find solutions of the problems. Then, married men must have close male friends to share their problems to avoid new problems if they make friendship with women. It also avoids stigma in our society.

Telling problem to a friend make us relieved and reduce burden as well as strengthens the friendship since there has been openness between friends that leads an opportunity to find wise solutions together. And then, opinions or suggestions from friends can be self-reinforcement and action direction in making decisions. Last but not least, sharing is a therapist's

relationship between friends. It means that friends are used as forming patterns in solving problems with some boundaries that still need to be covered up, because we don't talk to therapists such as psychologists or counselors.

Children's Problems

Issues regarding children are often a conversation topic between a man and his best friend, especially regarding the growth of their children.

At least they have the same view as a man, when talking about children's problems is an acceptable thing because our friends also have the same thoughts as a man regarding the same problem (Wiwin, 27 years).

I perceive from my experience, I am closer to my friends than my siblings because this is personal and sensitive. I prefer to tell other people, Family disharmony is told to male friends to find out responses and friends' rewards for self-strengthening. In our culture we have to tell stories to know prevention and solutions. The decision is up to you (Putra, 34 Years).

Discussing children's problems with friends is a natural thing. They are both men/a father who have the same views when talking about children's problems. They can exchange ideas and experiences regarding child problems. This allows them to know each other's points of view regarding children's problems to find the right solution.

Personal Problems

Some people feel free to talk about personal matters, such as their love and other cases to close friends than family. Most respondents in FGD regarding personal issues:

Rizal begins to entrust his life to Harris. The good side is that Harris is Rizal's confidant. The bad side is when Harris violates that trust or is unable to meet Rizal's level of trust; on the contrary Rizal's aggressive nature will appear because he feels betrayed. The process of jealousy feeling will

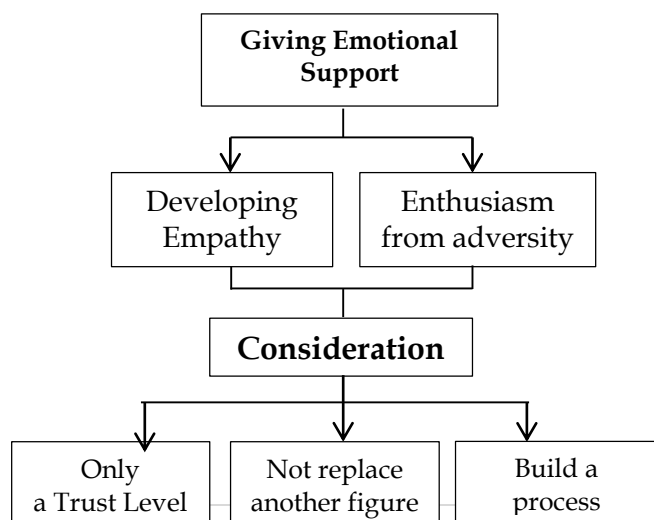
appear and this will be strange when it comes to friendship, friendship should be complementary, mutual respect (Nasiru, 32 years).

We need to have one or more people who can make us freely and comfortably tell everything. I think it is natural of needing friends to confide in and stories we can trust. Sometimes we confide in relatives, but because our relatives are far away, we need friends as a place to tell personal problems (Yanti, 42 years).

It is important to have a trusted friend to share our personal problems freely and comfortably. It is hoped that the friend can appreciate or provide feedback on the complaint or problem that is being told. However, things that are very private should not be told even to a friend because friendship does not always go well. Sometimes a dispute becomes a moment where someone who used to be close actually spit out the disgrace of a friend he knew. Finally, there will be a sense of betrayal by friends.

3. Giving Emotional Support

A bad condition sometimes makes a friend loses confidence and even finds it difficult to trust others. As a result, most of them close their communication and shut themselves off from social life and even distance themselves from interaction with their own friends to cover up the problems. In this condition, figure of a friend is needed. The FGD carried out concept of providing emotional support to friends.



Developing Empathy

Empathy develops sense of understanding that arise a sense of tolerance. Empathy presents when a friend experiences a problem that makes him sad and/or burdened. In analyzing the main character, Harris shows his empathy for the problem of Rizal's child who is different in growth from other children his age.

It is really good because Harris gives a view from his experience as a father that helps Rizal. He thinks that Harris is more capable than him, which means that there is still a process of trust there. So it will foster friendship (Rangga, 33 years).

What Harris does is right. He plays himself as a father not a friend. When friends meet to talk about personal problems, a wise answer or rebuttal or solution is what a friend conveys is how he can position himself not only as a friend but one of them as a father. Harris' role is appropriate because he plays a father figure (Silvi, 44 years).

The function of a friend is to be a good listener to his friend's complaints from an experience point of view so that friends feel helped by friends who are considered people who have qualified experience. So there's a trust process here. It is better to build this discussion with friends rather than exploring personal matters relating to wives.

Enthusiasm from Adversity

Sometimes a friend is in a slumped position by a problem that he considers a disgrace. This causes him to be afraid to talk about the problem. A friend sometimes tries to ask his friend to tell his real problem, sometimes by forcing him to know the problem so that he can involve in finding the solution wisely. In this case, the respondents in the FGDs showed their opinion:

When Dito told his biggest problem that had made him burdened (telling his biggest secret), Dito and

Harris had crossed the line of friendship. When one holds a big secret and the other character is not comfortable telling a big secret, then their friendship cannot be said to have inner strength because one party does not have a sense of trust in the other party. Well, for this problems, there shouldn't be a need for Bromance. Friendship is enough to get to the point of spending time together and telling problems just to the extent of one's level of trust in telling a story. For Dito and Harris, of course, this can't be the case because it has crossed the line to be called a friendship. Moreover, the problem that was told was an intimate matter that would burden Dito in the future (Yulita, 42 Years).

Harris in this position, I contextualize that there is no need to force yourself to make your friends open up because there are limits that Harris cannot do. Therefore, for every problem that Dito faces, of course he knows which problems need to be revealed and which ones are unnecessary. So it's true that Dito should limit himself to Harris who behaves like that. The problems faced are related to disgrace, cannot be published, disgrace must be kept tightly and not to be spread widely and do not do things that can bring disgrace again. My attitude as Dito will limit this because this is a personal disgrace, which is very sensitive for me (Moradarma, 28 Years).

One must consider aspects of a personal problem that must be told by a friend. If a friend feels burdened by telling their biggest problem, this is crossing the line of friendship. This kind of problems should be avoided in a bromance. So telling the problem is only limited to the level of trust of friends. However, this case is also considered as an example of the sportsmanship of a friend because as a friend you have to take part in the problems faced by your friend and be there when your friend has a problem. This is a form of concern for a friend to know the problems faced by his friend so that he can take part in solving unresolved problems.

Sometimes it takes the persistence of a friend to ignite a new spirit for friends after a period of adversity in order to build self-confidence that has never wavered and strengthen their spirit to face the challenges of life in the future. In the case of the analyzed work, Harris always tries to calm and ignite new enthusiasm for Dito after the accident so that he is more confident in starting his Masters education and living his life. The respondents in the FGD gave their opinion as follows:

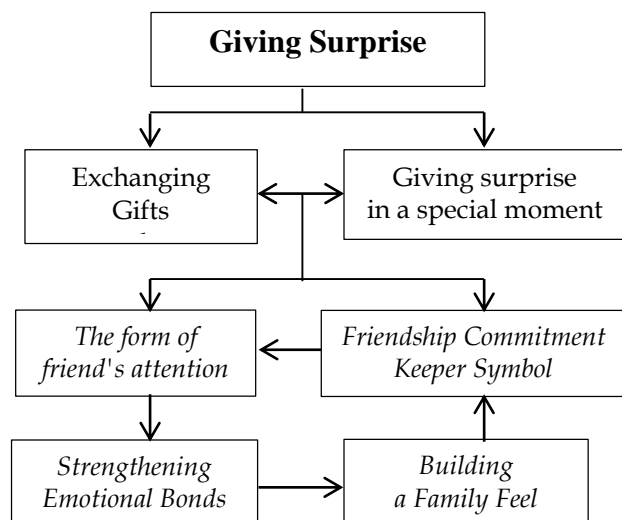
As encouraging points, it's good for Dito, especially after the accident, Dito becomes more confident. However, it should not take too much time to calm down, but rather to encourage because if these soothing words mean Harris is trying to replace another figure. Meanwhile, Dito already has a new family (Soraya, 36 years).

Harris is an example of a good friend, I agree that this can make his friendship stronger because Harris encourages Dito. Harris gave a positive value. He means he's not the type to know people's disgrace. For Dito, he didn't want to go to college because of an accident, maybe he was insecure, with Harris' influence he became motivated. If he is not a good friend, he will only provide advice, not a strong motivation because of Harris' influence (Ekadana, 42 years).

Giving encouragement and motivation to friends who have experienced problems or adversity is a good morale boost. For the calming process, friends don't need too much time but rather just encourage them because the word "calm" means a friend is trying to replace another person, while our friends have their own family. Giving motivation is the right thing in this context because friends are in need of support and motivation, not advice.

4. Giving Surprise

In a friendship, it needs a moment considered as a memory for a symbol of friendship. The emotional moment is often used as a reminder that they once had a friend who cared about him.



Giving Surprise in a Special Moment

Surprising a friend's special moment can strengthen and heighten the level of our friendship. The participation of friends can only be considered as empathy that is hard to forget. For this case, the FGD participants gave their responses as follows:

As for Harris and his small family, why can it be a support for their close friendship, first, because Harris brought his small family. So, why is this the starting point of friendship, because Harris also introduces his little family, it's not just Harris. Then the second is that Harris has empathy for the condition of the Lecturer who is far from his family so that Harris brings the feel of a family element in friendship so that the lecturer feels the same aspect. Empathy appears to cause a higher sense of friendship (Respondent 1).

Based on the opinion of the respondents above, it can be concluded that giving a surprise, especially giving a surprise on a friend's birthday, can support their friendship, especially at this moment when they involve family members with each other, so there is also communication with family members. This strengthens the emotional bond between friends. Giving a surprise is a form of empathy for the condition of a friend who is far from his family (the context in the story) so that a family feel is

built in their friendship. This kind of empathy leads to a higher sense of friendship.

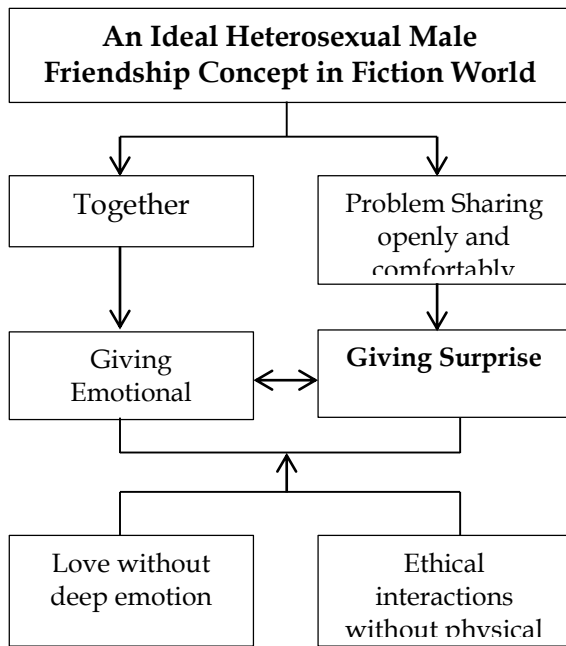
Exchanging Gifts and or Souvenirs

In a friendship, sometimes a friend gives a friend a souvenir or gift that he likes. This gift is one aspect to build attachment in a friendship. In the FGD in this study, the respondents were of the opinion that:

Yes, it has an influence on the longevity of their friendship because the gift is given to impress everyone's heart and so they don't forget that person, the gift will automatically give a special impression in the friendship so that they keep the friendship commitment with the gift, it's symbolic. There is a built commitment (Respondent 1).

Based on the opinion of the respondents above, it can be concluded that giving souvenirs or gifts to friends has a positive influence on the longevity of their friendship because the gifts given are media that impresses everyone's hearts so that moments with them are difficult to forget. Gifts or souvenirs are symbolic that help maintain friendship commitments so that commitment is built, especially when we are far from friends, gifts or souvenirs are really a sign that we have a friend who cares about us. Souvenirs or gifts are a form of attention from a friend, no matter how small the gift will have a great influence and meaning for friendship because this is through certain processes and ways.

The description of the research results above can be perfectly described as the ideal concept of heterosexual male friendship in a fictional world which can be seen in the following chart:



It is clear that the concept of the ideal friendship of heterosexual men that the writer should describe in the fictional world includes the following aspects: togetherness, sharing problems openly and comfortably, providing emotional support, and giving surprises so that they can become role models for wider readers. However, in practice these aspects must avoid things that are unacceptable to our society. So, in friendship, men should depict affection without deep emotional and ethical interactions without physical contact between male characters.

Discussion

The depiction of homoeroticism that appears in the works begins with the character's interest in the bodies of fellow men and makes them the object of homoeroticism. Furthermore, the character explores situations containing the sexual dimension of others who are able to change emotions into erotic emotions and arouse homoeroticism through sexual stimulation of the male body. Then, the use of words and expressions with a tendency to homoeroticism in the form of the use of words relating to intimate organs and sensitive words related to sexual matters. Finally, the cha-

acter's actions that arouse sexual desire lead to sexual acts. This act is not only related to erotic emotions, but has also become a sexual act among men because this action is driven by feelings. In short, the analyzed works show the development process of homoeroticism towards other sexual acts.

Male friendship (bromance) genre of Indonesia online fiction seems to be influenced by the circulation of similar works from several countries, such as Boy Love (BL) Story from Thailand and Yaoi from Japan. The level of popularity of this genre is so high that it has many readers/listeners and even has many fan clubs (Communities) in Indonesia. However, these works do not escape the nuances of same-sex relationships (LGBT). The spectacle and reading with LGBT nuances show their existence among teenagers because of the increasing number of LGBT cases in Indonesia.

Homoeroticism in analyzed fictions is still implicit and not detailed. The author does not describe the sexual activities of male characters explicitly. It can be identified that the analyzed work adopts the *shounen-ai* formula, namely the fictional genre of Manga Boy's Love which tells the romantic love story of a male couple that does not explicitly explore sexual scenes, only tells the story of the romance of a male couple (Fitriana, Darmawan, Efriani, & Apriadi, 2021). The author deliberately includes a formula for the tendency of homoeroticism to perceive works that are currently popular with the public and also revitalizes the structure of the work to expand market segments by presenting aspects of homoeroticism to satisfy the tastes of readers who have a thirst for Boy's Love content without considering whether these elements are appropriate or not with the country's culture and ethics. In other words, this product of popular culture is adopted and forms the narrative structure of local works unconsciously and ultimately accepted and consumed by the wider community.

Online fiction with the theme of bromance and homoerotic elements began to show its existence and succeeded in expanding the market share of readers or viewers who have a thirst for Boy's Love content. Even with a story formula that contains homoeroticism, it can expand the reader/audience segment that has formed a community with the same preferences, enjoying homoerotic sexual fantasies.

Talking about male relationships, it cannot be separated from the LGBT phenomenon that is increasingly happening in Indonesia. It is still considered taboo and abnormal in our society both in terms of norms, moral values, and religion. The debate arose from the contra that this remains unacceptable in our culture. Meanwhile, pro-LGBT people began to campaign, express, and show themselves openly. In developed countries, the LGBT community expresses its support through various media, even literature is also an effective medium for them. In Japan, they express same-sex relationships through *Manga* and *Anime* which are genres of homosexual relationships between men. In Thailand currently has a variety of serial genre *Boy's Love* which is much favored by Indonesian women. South Korea also began to produce series themed love stories between men called *Manhwa*. In Indonesia, will the *bromance* genre show its identity as the successor to a genre with similar nuances in Indonesia?

Venturini, Lubis, and Oxygentri (2021) in their research say that women liking homosexual narratives cannot be associated with "abnormalities" because BL films provide space for fans to understand one's gender identity without having to be burdened by the social and cultural environment. The more heterosexual women consume these popular culture products, the more tolerant they are of the gender understanding that is conveyed (implicit message) conveyed by this genre work, namely: love is not focused on gender differences, male and female, but love can occur in the

same sex that is male with male. This view makes women more tolerant of homosexual partners.

The emergence of these kinds of scenes in literature, especially cyber literature, is triggered by the attitude of our society that is less concerned about the circumstances around them and the world of entertainment which increasingly gives freedom to enjoy homoerotic writing anytime and anywhere because it is easier by accessing internet (Ani, 2018).

Therefore, the concept of ideal friendship for heterosexual men is needed which should be described by the author in the fictional world, including the following aspects: togetherness, sharing problems openly and comfortably, providing emotional support, and giving surprises so that they can become role models for readers at large. However, in practice these aspects must avoid things that are unacceptable to our society. So, in friendship, men should describe affection without deep emotional and ethical interactions without physical contact between male characters so that online fiction can be used as a role model and character education learning medium for the wider community. The concept of heterosexual male friendship offered in the findings of this study can be a way out of the problem of homoeroticism in existing online fiction.

Conclusion

Homoeroticism depicted in the analyzed works received negative responses from the readers. The male characters interact with deep feelings or emotions and involve physical contact that crosses the boundaries of friendship and the intensity of togetherness with male friends. Initially, this paper argues that the dominant masculine stereotype that has been constructed in our society's view is considered to be restrictive and unfavorable in some aspects inherent to masculine gender. This condition sometimes makes men depressed and suffers because they cannot express certain feelings and emotions which also require

other men's point of view and internalize certain values. Bromance is considered a concept against masculine views that develop in society so that they are able to express their feelings, empathize with each other, motivate each other, and together show concern in difficult times so that they can share the problems they face and find solutions from a male point of view.

However, the findings of this study indicate that intimate interactions make men fall into acts of homoeroticism starting from an interest in the bodies of their male friends, the use of words and expressions that have sexual tension, arouse sexual desire in others and lead them to same-sex-actions.

In writing bromance online fiction, it is important for author to have a heterosexual male friendship story formula that upholds the ethics prevailing in society because online literary works are easily consumed by many readers, especially the younger generation, which will later shape their mindset and behavior. The literature regarding the bromance formula as a reference or guide for writing works has not been found. This study offers the ideal concept of an ideal heterosexual male friendship that limits interaction in male friendships in the fictional world, namely friendships that build togetherness, share problems openly and comfortably, provide emotional support, and surprise by avoiding things that are not accepted by our society, namely affection without deep emotional and ethical interactions without physical contact so that the strength of male homosocial relation is built at the same time to uphold certain images of masculinity and sexuality in accordance with masculine stereotypes adopted and developed in society. The point is that men must maintain ethics and dignity in making relation with men.

This research raises important questions about the emergence of the Indonesian version of bromance fiction in online media recently with such a large audience. Indonesian online bromance fiction seems to adopt a story formula that expres-

ses the same sex relationships, such as *Manga* and *Anime* from Japan and *Boy's Love* from Thailand. In their country, the three genres are used as media by LGBT people to express, campaign, and show themselves openly. Is the Indonesian bromance fiction genre a medium built by pro-LGBT people for the same interest? As a result of the research, this paper proposes that further research be conducted on Indonesian bromance fiction by legitimizing literary works categorized as bromance genre and investigating the motives behind these works. It will be more useful if the research also explores the response of teenagers to online bromance fiction that is popular on social media.

It is necessary to have censorship in the distribution of online fiction from the authorities so that the works received and then consumed by the public as reading material truly become sources of knowledge and role models. Cyber literature producers, especially online bromance fiction authors, need to improve themselves because the results their work also plays an important role in shaping the mindset of readers/listeners and society. As anticipation, it is important for parents who are too busy with their activities to be able to take the time to share opinions with children who have reached their teens regarding the understanding of sex and ethical association for teenagers in order to avoid miscommunication or promiscuity.

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