

### ***Abstract***

*Globalization encourages inclusiveness in media content. The issue of gender and sexuality is an important topic. Thailand as a progressive country in the Southeast Asian region confirmed its position with the start of Boys' Love as a popular culture that was spread throughout the world. Significantly, the BL audience in Southeast Asia occupies the highest position and is led by Indonesia. Previous studies have explained that Boys' Love has an influence on the understanding of the conservative environmental community on LGBT issues. Indonesia has become a conservative country with a ban on LGBT content circulating in mainstream media. The researcher captures the phenomenon of Boys' Love which is popular among hetero Muslim women who hide their identity behind anonymity on social media. Using the reception theory of an active audience by Helen Wood (2007), it is found that there is an exchange of meaning about homosexual representations between the text and the audience. Engagement is caused by interactions that occur with the text and fellow audiences. They ultimately form greater tolerance and challenge the construction of meaning about the representations offered. Conservatism and religion, which were initially thought to be resistance, were understood as challenges to forms of validation. Those who are silent in social circles are actually vocal about LGBT issues on social media.*

***Keywords: Boys' Love; active audience; reception; fans***

## Abstrak

Globalisasi mendorong adanya inklusivitas dalam konten media. Isu tentang gender dan seksualitas menjadi topik yang penting. Thailand sebagai negara yang progresif di kawasan Asia Tenggara menegaskan posisinya dengan dimulainya tayangan *Boys' Love* sebagai budaya populer yang disebarkan di seluruh dunia. Secara signifikan, audiens BL di Asia Tenggara menempati posisi tertinggi dan dipimpin oleh Indonesia. Kajian sebelumnya menjelaskan bahwa *Boys' Love* memberikan pengaruh atas pemahaman masyarakat lingkungan konservatif atas isu LGBT. Indonesia menjadi negara konservatif dengan adanya larangan konten LGBT beredar di media arus utama. Peneliti menangkap fenomena tentang *Boys' Love* yang populer di kalangan perempuan muslim hetero yang menyembunyikan identitasnya di balik anonimitas di media sosial. Menggunakan teori resepsi pada audiens aktif milik Helen Wood (2007), diperoleh adanya pertukaran pemaknaan tentang representasi homoseksual antara teks dengan audiens. Keterikatan disebabkan oleh interaksi yang muncul dengan teks dan sesama audiens. Mereka pada akhirnya membentuk toleransi lebih besar dan menantang konstruksi makna tentang representasi yang ditawarkan. Konservatisme dan agama yang pada awalnya diduga sebagai resistensi, dipahami sebagai tantangan atas bentuk validasi. Mereka yang senyap di lingkungan sosial, justru vokal akan isu LGBT di media sosial.

**Kata Kunci:** *Boys' Love; audiens aktif; resepsi; fans*