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## Language Sustainability: Reality, Challenges and Directions in the Digital Technology Era



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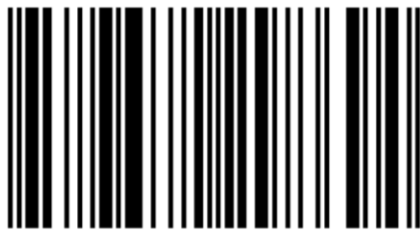
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# TOLERANCE TOWARDS LGBT INDIVIDUALS AMONG MALAYSIANS

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## ABSTRACT

Of late, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) has made its presence felt in Malaysian society. The study examined tolerance towards LGBT individuals among Malaysians. Questionnaire data were collected from 411 respondents consisting of different age, ethnicity, and religion groups. The results indicate that a majority of the respondents felt that heterosexuality is the best because of religion and morality. There was some agreement that LGBT individuals should be counselled so that they can overcome their feelings of wanting to be LGBT and return to being either male or female. However, at the same time, the respondents somewhat believed that people are born with LGBT tendencies and they need not keep their sexual orientation a secret. The respondents agreed that LGBT individuals can fit into society, and LGBT in itself is not a problem but society makes it a problem. Interestingly, the respondents were open to LGBT individuals standing up for their rights. They also agreed to some extent that LGBT individuals can live the life they want to live, including adopting a child, dating and living with whoever they want, and expressing their views on Malaysian television channels. The results suggest some tolerance towards LGBT existence in society.

**Keywords:** LGBT, tolerance, heterosexual, religion, morality, rights, sexual orientation

## Introduction

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) are usually known as sexual minorities as they represent a subset of general population. Recently, there has been a shift in attitudes toward LGBT community, particularly in Southeast Asia. For example, same-sex marriage became legal in Taiwan in 2018, making Taiwan the first Asian country to practice same-sex marriage. However, there are still many nations that disapprove same-sex marriage, such as Malaysia. LGBT remains a sensitive topic in Malaysia due to ethical, cultural and religious issues. Islam, the official religion in Malaysia, prohibits same-sex relationship. As an example, cross-dressing is punishable under Section 66 of the Syariah Criminal Enactment of the Negeri Sembilan state.

LGBT individuals are unable to express their actual selves in society because they are afraid of being discriminated. Some segments of the society believe that LGBT culture will affect human civilisation, social structure of family, health, education,