
**Faculty of Language and Communication**

# Examining the Discursive Construction of Tolerance towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) in Malaysia

**Ling Hsin Nie**

**Master of Arts**
**2023**

# Examining the Discursive Construction of Tolerance towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) in Malaysia

Ling Hsin Nie

A thesis submitted

In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

(Applied Linguistics)

Faculty of Language and Communication
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2023

## DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

……

Signature

Name: Ling Hsin Nie

Matric No.: 20020047

Faculty of Language and Communication

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Date :

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to begin this section by acknowledging my core supervisor, Professor Dr. Ting Su Hie who travelled this master's degree journey with me from beginning to completion. Your guidance, execution of high expectation and imparted wisdom made this route a reality and I can never thank you enough. Continuing this acknowledgement, I would like to thank Dr. Collin Jerome to be my co-supervisor. Your valuable input has emerged confident in my work.

I would like to acknowledge and share my deepest appreciation to all the participants, especially those who identified themselves as part of LGBTs, who agreed to involved in this research study. Thank you for giving up your time and attention to help in bringing additional research findings to this field. I appreciate all of your for entrusting me with your sharing and hopefully the sharing within this research study will result in the development of new knowledge that will aide in the betterment of others in the LGBT-related fields.

I am also grateful to my parents for their endless support and encouragement. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to continue my master' degree in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Last but not least, thank you God for leading my throughout this journey and I look forward to the blessings coming on my way.

## ABSTRACT

This study examined tolerance towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) individuals among Malaysians through self-reports and analysis of LGBT representation via a discourse historical approach. Questionnaire data were collected from 413 participants living in Malaysia while interviews were conducted with 20 participants (14 heterosexuals and 6 LGBT). The questionnaire results showed that the younger generation in their twenties with higher education and have personal connection with LGBT tend to report greater tolerance towards LGBT individuals. The discursive analysis of interviews revealed that most of the heterosexual participants are able to accept it if their friends and colleagues are LGBT but not if their religious leader and own children are LGBT. The heterosexual participants agreed that LGBT individuals should deserve to have the same rights in society but they neither openly support legalisation of same-sex marriage nor oppose it. On the other hand, the LGBT participants stated that they chose to come out to their friends or siblings rather than their parents who are less tolerant towards the idea of LGBT. The interviews produced a more in-depth understanding of the participants' thoughts, beliefs and experiences that underlie their attitudes towards LGBT, but the results were similar to the questionnaire results, indicating that the data collection technique does not substantially influence results on LGBT.



**Keywords:** LGBT, heterosexual, tolerance, discursive

***Penyelidikan Pembinaan Toleransi Terhadap LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, dan Transgender) di Malaysia***


## *ABSTRAK*

*Kajian ini mengaji toleransi terhadap individu Lesbian, Gay, Biseksual, dan Transgender (LGBT) di kalangan rakyat Malaysia melalui laporan diri dan analisis pembinaan toleransi terhadap LGBT melalui data diskursif. Data soal selidik dikumpulkan dari 413 peserta yang tinggal di Malaysia sementara temu ramah dilakukan dengan 20 peserta (14 heteroseksual dan 6 LGBT). Hasil soal selidik menunjukkan bahawa generasi muda berusia dua puluhan dengan pendidikan tinggi dan mempunyai hubungan peribadi dengan LGBT melaporkan toleransi yang lebih tinggi terhadap individu LGBT. Analisis diskursif menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan peserta heteroseksual dapat menerimanya jika rakan dan rakan sekerja mereka adalah LGBT tetapi tidak dapat menerimany jika pemimpin agama dan anak mereka sendiri adalah LGBT. Peserta heteroseksual bersetuju bahawa individu LGBT harus memiliki hak yang sama dalam masyarakat tetapi mereka tidak secara terbuka menyokong pengesahan perkahwinan sesama jenis atau menentangnya. Sebaliknya, peserta LGBT menyatakan bahawa mereka memilih untuk mengaku identiti LGBT mereka kepada rakan atau adik beradik mereka daripada ibu bapa mereka yang kurang bertoleransi terhadap ideologi LGBT. Temu ramah menghasilkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai pemikiran, kepercayaan dan pengalaman peserta yang mendasari sikap mereka terhadap LGBT, tetapi hasilnya serupa dengan hasil soal selidik, menunjukkan bahawa teknik pengumpulan data tidak banyak mempengaruhi hasil pada kajian LGBT.*



***Kata kunci:*** *Kesimpulan, format, saiz fon, abstrak, kata kunci*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| **DECLARATION** | | **i** |
| **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** | | **ii** |
| **ABSTRACT** | | **iii** |
| **ABSTRAK** | | **iv** |
| **TABLE OF CONTENTS** | | **v** |
| **LIST OF TABLES** | | **x** |
| **LIST OF FIGURES** | | **xiii** |
| **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS** | | **xiv** |
| **CHAPTER 1** | **INTRODUCTION** | **1** |
| 1.1 | Research Problem | 1 |
| 1.2 | Aim and Objectives of the Study | 5 |
| 1.3 | Operational Definition of Terms | 7 |
| 1.3.1 | Sexual Orientation | 7 |
| 1.3.2 | Heterosexuals | 8 |
| 1.3.3 | LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) | 8 |
| 1.3.4 | Gender Identity | 9 |
| 1.3.5 | LGBT Tolerance | 9 |

1.3.6 Social knowledge 10

1.3.7 Discursive Strategies 10

1.4 Significance of the Study 11

**CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW 14**

2.1 Definitions of LGBT 14

2.2 Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 18

2.3 LGBT in Malaysia 23

2.4 Factors Influencing Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 31

2.4.1 Age 32

2.4.2 Ethnicity 33

2.4.3 Religious Beliefs 35

2.4.4 Sexual Orientation 38

2.4.5 Gender Identity 40

2.4.6 Social Knowledge on LGBT 41

2.4.7 Intergroup Contact with LGBT Individuals 43

2.4.8 Socialising Agents 44

2.5 Discursive Construction of LGBT 56

2.5.1 Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) 57

2.5.2 Discursive Construction of LGBT in Malaysia 59

2.6 Summary 62

**CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY** **64**

3.1 Research Design 64

3.2 Participants 66

3.3 Instruments 71

3.3.1 Questionnaire 71

3.3.2 Interview guide 78

3.4 Data Collection Procedures 80

3.4.1 Data Collection Procedures for Questionnaire 80

3.4.2 Data Collection Procedures for Interview 81

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures 83

3.5.1 Data Analysis Procedures for Questionnaire 83

3.5.2 Data Analysis Procedures for Interview 85

3.6 Limitations of the study 90

**CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION** **92**

4.1 Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 93

4.1.1 Participants' Views on LGBT Individuals 93

4.1.2 Participants' Views on LGBT Rights 96

4.1.3 Participants' Acceptance Level towards LGBT Individuals in Society 97

4.1.4 Participants' Intergroup Contact with LGBT Individuals 100

4.2 Demographic Factors and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 103

4.2.1 Age 103

4.2.2 Ethnic Group 106

4.2.3 Educational Background 110

4.2.4 Monthly Income 111

4.2.5 Religion 114

4.2.6 Gender Identity 118

4.2.7 Sexual Orientation 121

4.3 Intergroup Contact 124

4.3.1 Intergroup Contact and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 125

4.3.2 Intergroup Contact and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 127

4.4 Social knowledge 129

4.4.1 Social Knowledge and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 129

4.4.2 Social Knowledge and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 131

4.5 Discursive Construction of LGBT Identities using Discourse-Historical Approach 132

4.5.1 Discursive Strategies Used by Heterosexual Participants 133

4.5.2 Discursive Strategies Used by LGBT Participants 170

4.6 Comparison between Self-reported Tolerance and Discursive Strategies used 203

4.7 Discussion 205

**CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS** **212**

5.1 Summary of Findings 212

5.2 Implications of Study 215

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research 215

**REFERENCES** **218**

**APPENDICES** **249**

## LIST OF TABLES


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| **Table 3.1:** | Demographic Characteristics of Questionnaire Participants (N=413) | 67 |
| **Table 3.2:** | Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants (N=20) | 70 |
| **Table 3.3:** | Sources for questionnaire items on Malaysians' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals | 71 |
| **Table 3.4:** | KMO and Bartlett's Test Result | 78 |
| **Table 3.5:** | Recoded Questionnaire Items | 83 |
| **Table 3.6:** | Framework for Analysing Discursive Construction of Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017) | 88 |
| **Table 4.1:** | Participants' Views on LGBT Individuals (n=413) | 94 |
| **Table 4.2:** | Participants' Views on LGBT Rights (n=413) | 96 |
| **Table 4.3:** | Participants' Acceptance Level towards LGBT Individuals in Society (n=413) | 98 |
| **Table 4.4:** | Participants' Intergroup Contact with LGBT Individuals (n=413) | 100 |
| **Table 4.5:** | ANOVA Results for Age and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals | 104 |
| **Table 4.6:** | Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Age Groups and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals | 104 |
| **Table 4.7:** | ANOVA Results for Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals in terms of Age | 105 |
| **Table 4.8:** | Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Age Groups for Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT individuals | 106 |
| **Table 4.9:** | ANOVA Results for Ethnic Group and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals | 107 |
| **Table 4.10:** | Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Ethnic Groups and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals | 108 |
| **Table 4.11:** | ANOVA Results for Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT individuals in terms of Ethnic Groups | 108 |

**Table 4.12:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Ethnic Groups and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT individuals 109

**Table 4.13:** ANOVA Results for Educational Background and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 110

**Table 4.14:** ANOVA Results for Participants' Tolerance toward Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals in terms of Educational Background 111

**Table 4.15:** ANOVA Results for Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals in terms of Monthly Income 112

**Table 4.16:** ANOVA Results for Monthly Income and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 113

**Table 4.17:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Monthly Income and Participants' Tolerance toward Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 114

**Table 4.18:** ANOVA Results for Religion and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 115

**Table 4.19:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Religion and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 116

**Table 4.20:** ANOVA Results for Religion and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 116

**Table 4.21:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Religions and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 117

**Table 4.22:** ANOVA Results for Gender Identity and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 119

**Table 4.23:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Gender Identity and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 120

**Table 4.24:** ANOVA Results for Gender Identity and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 120

**Table 4.25:** ANOVA Results for Sexual Orientation and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 121

**Table 4.26:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Sexual Orientation and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals 122

**Table 4.27:** ANOVA Results for Sexual Orientation and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 123

**Table 4.28:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Sexual Orientation and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 124

**Table 4.29:** ANOVA Results on Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals and Level of Intergroup Contact with Post-Hoc Analysis 125

**Table 4.30:** ANOVA Results on Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals and Level of Intergroup Contact with Post-Hoc Analysis 128

**Table 4.31:** Pearson's Correlation between Social knowledge and 130

**Table 4.32:** Pearson's Correlation between Social Knowledge and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals 131

**Table 4.33:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Positive Construction of LGBT by Heterosexual Participants 135

**Table 4.34:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Negative Construction of LGBT by Heterosexuals Participants 139

**Table 4.35:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Positive Construction of Heterosexuals by Heterosexual Participants 142

**Table 4.36:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Negative Construction of Heterosexuals by Heterosexual Participants 147

**Table 4.37:** Intensification Strategies used by Heterosexual Participants 168

**Table 4.38:** Mitigation Strategies used by Heterosexual Participants 169

**Table 4.39:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Positive Construction of LGBT by LGBT Participants 171

**Table 4.40:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Negative Construction of LGBT by LGBT Participants 175

**Table 4.41:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Positive Construction of Heterosexuals by LGBT Participants 178

**Table 4.42:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Negative Construction of Heterosexuals by LGBT Participants 183

**Table 4.43:** Intensification Strategies used by LGBT Participants 201

**Table 4.44:** Mitigation Strategies used by LGBT Participants 203

## LIST OF FIGURES


**Page**

**Figure 2.1:** Model of Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Development 16

**Figure 3.1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study 66

**Figure 4.1:** Acceptance level towards LGBT in different identities 99

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ATH | Attitudes Towards Homosexuality |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| DHA | Discourse-historical Approach |
| GSA | Gay-Straight Alliance |
| HATH | Attitudes of heterosexual toward homosexuality |
| JAKIM | Malaysian Islamic Development Department |
| KSOG | Klein Sexual Orientation Grid |
| LGBT | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender |
| LGBTQ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer |
| LGBTI | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex |
| MSM | Men who have sex with men |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organisations |
| SOGI | Council of Europe Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research problem, aim and objectives of the study, operational definition of terms, and significance of the study.

## 1.1 Research Problem

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community is a group of people who are identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. They are usually known as sexual minorities because the majority of people still do not perceive lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender as a norm. Throughout the years, the LGBT community has been facing discrimination and negative stigma due to their sexual orientation and gender identity (United Nations, 2011). Back in 1776, Thomas Jefferson stated that "all men are created equal" in United States Declaration of Independence. However, the LGBT community still struggles for equality until today.

There were many past studies documenting the discrimination, harassment and other negative consequences experienced by LGBT individuals in different countries (Almeida et al., 2009; Baider, 2018; Buyantueva, 2018; Mallory et al., 2021; Woodford et al., 2013). For instance, Gocmen and Yilmaz (2016) found that the discrimination experienced by LGBT individuals in Turkey has led to several negative consequences to LGBT individuals such as dropping out of school, inability to perform in their own profession, and trauma due to "conversion therapy". Similarly, in Asia LGBT individuals are not recognised legally (Badgett, 2014; Manalastas et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2020), and face discrimination. In the Philippines, despite considered as a gay-friendly country, LGBT individuals still constantly

face discrimination and harassment in the society, and it is mainly due to the lack of legal protection and prohibitive religious teachings (mainly Roman Catholic) against LGBT practice (Tang & Poudel, 2018). Discrimination arising from a religious stance (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; Roggemans et al., 2015) is expected, but other people discriminate against LGBT individuals due to phobia (Logie, Bridge, & Bridge, 2007; Moskowitz et al., 2010) and lack of knowledge (Buyantueva, 2018; Woodford et al., 2013).

The review of literature shows that many past research on attitudes towards LGBT individuals were largely focused on certain settings such as school or college (Copp & Koehler, 2017; Woodford et al., 2012), workplace (Brewster et al., 2012; Resnick & Galupo, 2019), and also health care providers (Boch, 2012; Naal et al., 2019). There is limited research on the overall population apart from Reyes et al.'s (2019) study which examined whether religiosity and gender role beliefs influence attitudes toward lesbians and gay men among 633 heterosexual Filipinos. By using a correlational design, Reyes et al. (2019) found out that there was a significant relationship between religiosity, gender role beliefs and attitudes toward lesbians and gay men where Filipinos participants with higher religiosity and more traditional gender role beliefs hold more negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Attitudes towards LGBT individuals held by other segments of the population have not been studied to understand the attitudes of people who are not students and working adults.

In Malaysia, due to the conservative ideology, general observations show that many do not accept unconventional sexuality but the number of studies on LGBT is rather low. From 1998 to 2020, Tan et al. (2021) found 44 studies on LGBTQ in Malaysia, and these included both quantitative analyses and qualitative interviews. This is a small number of

publications in a span of almost two and a half decades. From their review, Tan et al. (2021) found that most of the existing Malaysian LGBTQ research focused on men who have sex with men (MSM) (Burch et al., 2018; Bourne & Weatherburn, 2017; Kanter et al., 2011), trans women (Galka et al., 2020; Rutledge et al., 2018), and gay men (Brown et al., 2016; Felix, 2014; Liow et al., 2017). However, the generalisation of results is not applicable to the LGBT group as a whole because each of them has their distinctive way of living based on their sexuality and gender identity (Higgins et al., 2016). Individuals of different sexual orientations face struggles to disclose their identities but the particular challenges could be different. Therefore, it is important to study the sub-groups of the LGBT community as the engagement with LGBT individuals can better provide significant findings which would be more relevant to wider LGBT communities (Adams et al., 2017).

In recent years, Malaysian studies on public tolerance towards LGBT has shown mixed responses towards LGBT individuals, and religious beliefs seemed to play a key role. For instance, Abdullah and Amat (2019) examined undergraduate students' (heterosexuals) understanding about LGBT individuals and their perceptions on LGBT individuals. The results showed mixed responses as there were students who disagreed with LGBT individuals' behaviour due to religious beliefs (e.g., Islam and Christianity) which view homosexual acts as going against human nature and Eastern cultural values; other students were open-minded enough to accept LGBT individuals but the proportion was small in comparison (Abdullah & Amat, 2019). In the medical field, Foong et al. (2020) found that ethnicity and religion can also heavily influence the attitudes of future doctors in treating LGBT patients. In addition, Jerome et al.'s (2021) interview with 15 LGBT individuals from Malaysia revealed the key role of religious factors in influencing public acceptance of LGBT figures on social media, but they also identified cultural norms about gender and sexuality

as another strong factor. In another study, Yeo et al. (2021) found that the attitudes towards LGBT individuals were heavily influenced by their religion. In the study, most of the heterosexual Malaysians interviewed were Muslims and Christians and they reported negative attitudes towards LGBT individuals while the sole Buddhist participant showed total acceptance of LGBT individuals. Specifically, the participants in Yeo et al. (2021) rejected LGBT individuals due to moral and biological reasons, and one said that being LGBT is just physically wrong. However, the participants who were positive towards LGBT rationalised that LGBT individuals should be treated with respect and should not be discriminated (Yeo et al., 2021). This is a small study involving 12 Malaysians and a majority of the participants were Muslims and Christians. Less is studied and known about the views of other religious groups and whether other religions play a role in influencing Malaysians' attitudes towards LGBT individuals.

In view of the past studies on receptivity towards LGBT in Malaysia and other countries, besides religion, other demographic factors such as educational background, age groups, and ethnic groups should be taken into consideration to examine Malaysians' tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Also, there is a need to understand how psychological, biological, and moral issues on LGBT are viewed on a larger scale among the Malaysian population. The need for breadth in the study of receptivity towards LGBT among Malaysians is important.

However, it is also important to achieve depth in understanding receptivity towards LGBT individuals. The depth can be attained by examining the discursive strategies used by individuals when they talk about their attitudes towards LGBT individuals as it can portray how heterosexuals view themselves in relation to LGBT individuals as "Us" and "Them". A

similar focus on LGBT individuals on themselves in relation to heterosexuals will add to understanding of the representations of the ingroup. The analysis of references, self-representation and other-representation will further reveal the depths of public tolerance towards LGBT. A study of public tolerance towards LGBT using questionnaires is a direct study of attitudes and may elicit socially desirable responses but analysis of discursive strategies is an indirect study of tolerance towards LGBT. Analysis of discursive strategies of how people talk about LGBT individuals will reveal whether or not Malaysians use these strategies to differentiate themselves from LGBT and will reveal whether Malaysians may be keeping particular less socially desirable views directly in questionnaires.

## 1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to examine tolerance towards LGBT individuals among Malaysians through self-reports and analysis of LGBT representation via a discourse historical approach.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1) to determine Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
2) to identify the factors that influence the Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
3) to determine the influence of intergroup contact on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
4) to determine the influence of social knowledge on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them; and
5) to analyse the discursive strategies used by Malaysian participants when talking about their tolerance towards LGBT individuals; and

6) to examine whether discursive strategies used by participants to talk about LGBT individuals reflect their self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals in questionnaires.

Based on the objectives of the study, the alternative hypotheses tested in this study are listed here. The null hypotheses of no difference are not stated.

1) Age has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.
2) Age has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.
3) Ethnic group has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.
4) Ethnic group has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.
5) Educational background has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.
6) Educational background has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.
7) Monthly income has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.
8) Monthly income has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.
9) Religion has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.
10) Religion has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.
11) Gender identity has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

12) Gender identity has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.
13) Sexual orientation has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.
14) Sexual orientation has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.
15) Intergroup contact has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.
16) Intergroup contact has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.
17) Social knowledge has a significant correlation with tolerance towards LGBT individuals.
18) Social knowledge has a significant correlation with tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

## 1.3 Operational Definition of Terms

This section will explain several important terms that will be used in this study.

### 1.3.1 Sexual Orientation

Klein et al. (1985) defined sexual orientation as a multidimensional, multivariable, and dynamic process. He then developed the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) to examine sexual orientation, which specifically measured one's sexual behaviour, sexual attraction and preference, self-identification as heterosexual or homosexual along with their lifestyles. Later Bogaert (2000) categorised sexual orientation into three types of attraction which were towards the opposite sex (heterosexuality), the same sex (homosexuality), and both sexes (bisexuality). Bogaert (2000) developed an untitled scale with one item each for attraction and behaviour dimensions in measuring one's sexual orientation.

In this study, the definition of sexual orientation is based on that used by the Council of Europe Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) set up in 2014 to address human rights of every individual including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons. Based on their glossary, sexual orientation is known as a person's capacity to develop attraction, including intimate and sexual feelings towards another person. It can be towards a different-sex person (heterosexual), same-sex person (homosexual), or either female or male persons (bisexual). This present study assesses sexual orientation as a sexual preference and to examine how different sexual preferences can influence one's tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

### 1.3.2 Heterosexuals

According to Bohan (1996, p. 14), heterosexuals can be defined as "an affectional and sexual orientation toward members of the other sex". Similarly, Haizlip (2009) stated that heterosexuals are persons who have a predominant sexual attraction towards individuals of the opposite gender. Following Haizlip (2009), a heterosexual is defined as a person who has a sexual preference towards opposite sex and indicate themselves as "heterosexual" in the demographic section of the questionnaire used in the present study.

### 1.3.3 LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender)

LGBT is the acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and this term is used broadly in this study to include these four sexual orientations. According to the definition provided by Choudhuri et al. (2012), lesbians are women whose is sexually attracted to the same sex. Gay is a man who is sexually attracted to men. Lesbian and gay are commonly known as having a homosexual sexual orientation. Bisexuals are people who have sexual response to both female and male. Lastly, transgender is the term used to refer

to individuals who take on the role of the alternative gender. Although transgenders are often viewed as a kind of sexual orientation, it is actually more of a gender identity issue. Transgender can also be acknowledged as cross-dressers, transsexuals and transvestites (Choudhuri et al., 2012).

### 1.3.4 Gender Identity

A person's sexual orientation is different from one's gender identity as well as gender expression. Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being male or female (or possibly both or neither), which might not correspond to one's body and gender assigned at birth (Marvel & Ertman, 2015). For instance, as mentioned above, a transgender person has a gender identity that does not fit with the gender assigned at birth. In this study, gender identity includes male, female, intersex male, intersex female, transgender male, transgender female. The participant's gender identity is operationally defined as what they indicate themselves in the demographic section of the questionnaire, and the researcher does not question their self-identification.

### 1.3.5 LGBT Tolerance

Arat and Nunez (2016) has published an article on LGBT rights in Turkey and defined tolerance as the degree to which the public supports the members of different social groups by "allowing" the other (LGBT in this case) to exist without full recognition of their rights and protection. In addition, through their empirical study, Corneo and Jeanne (2009) showed that tolerance can cause changes to the behaviour and beliefs so that the homophobia is reduced within the individuals. For the purpose of this study, tolerance towards LGBT individuals is measured through scales and interviews (for details, see Chapter 3, Section 3.3 Instrument). For example, tolerance is measured using questions related to LGBT including

acceptance of LGBT individuals in daily life, and the types of rights LGBT individuals can have.

### 1.3.6 Social knowledge

According to Barisnikov and Lejeune (2018), social knowledge can be defined as the capacity to evaluate and make deductions about social circumstances with regards to social norms, which are crucial for the cultivation of social conduct. Measuring social knowledge can be a complex process and may require a variety of assessment methods depending on the specific aspects of social knowledge being evaluated. In this research study, the research intends to use self-report questionnaire whereby the participants were asked about their understanding of social situations involving LGBT individuals.

### 1.3.7 Discursive Strategies

Carvalho (2005) explained that the idea of discursive strategy has been used to indicate different phenomena, from the cognitive processes involving discourse comprehension (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983) to ways of solving communication problems (Gumperz, 1982). Discourse strategies involved different ideologies. According to van Dijk (2006), discursive strategies are macro-ideological that such strategies can either enhance or mitigate “our” or “their” bad characteristics. Usually, the speakers of one group will generally tend to present themselves or their own group in positive terms while the other groups in negative terms.

In the present study, the discursive strategies are defined in the context of Reisigl and Wodak’s (2009) discourse-historical approach (DHA) to analyse discourse on multi-contextual levels. Therefore, in this study, discursive strategies are analysed based on the

five strategies outlined by Reisgl and Wodak (2009), namely, referential, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, and intensification and mitigation.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is important in providing the understanding of Malaysians' tolerance towards LGBT individuals and to identify possible factors which influence their tolerance (or intolerance) towards LGBT individuals. Possible influences may include social media as studies have found higher acceptance level among Malaysians towards LGBT individuals on social media (Mokhtar et al., 2019; Muhammad Ali & Mothar, 2020). The rise of social media has allowed people to voice out their opinions especially the LGBT issue is getting more visibility nowadays in Malaysia. However, there may be a difference between who people are in real life versus on social media. The present study focusses on Malaysians' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT in many aspects of life because it is important to uncover how Malaysians perceive LGBT individuals in real life, whether Malaysians tend to show acceptance or rejection when LGBT individuals happen to be public figures, their friends, colleagues, or even family members. Another aspect studied is LGBT rights. Social media has been used as a tool in promoting the LGBT movements in Malaysia to seek public acceptance towards LGBT ideology (Mokhtar et al., 2019) as Malaysian LGBT individuals' basic human rights have been frequently violated (Lee, 2012; Muhammed & Amuda, 2018). Thus, these findings of this study will be important to show how the Malaysian public feel about protection or violation of LGBT rights, such as holding neighbourhood events, adoption of children to form a family, and legal recognition of LGBT couples.

The literature has shown that the focus has been on Muslims and Christians (e.g., Roggemans et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2021). The present study extends the empirical data to

include a study of the views of religious groups on LGBT, including Buddhist, Hindus, and those with no religion. Findings on views of Malaysians who are not Christians and Muslims will provide a better understanding on how people reconcile religious teachings and their personal stance on LGBT.

Besides, past studies have examined how interpersonal contact can influence one's tolerance towards LGBT individuals and have shown that having adequate contact with LGBT individuals can reduce negative stigma towards LGBT individuals (Collier et al., 2012; Earnshaw et al., 2016; Fingerhut, 2011). In the Malaysian setting, this study is important to add to the knowledge on whether interpersonal contact can also lead to higher acceptance and greater receptivity towards LGBT individuals among Malaysians. The interpersonal contact may not be direct contact like having friends who are LGBT. The contact can be in the form of reading materials and stories about LGBT individuals and lives. Furthermore, this study is also important to better understand if the contact with LGBT individuals would lead to empathy which may cause a change in attitude especially for those who are more heteronormative. This study will also produce findings that show the tolerance of Malaysians from different demographic backgrounds and upbringing. Through this study, the tolerance of Malaysians towards LGBT will be better understood. The findings from the discursive construction will add to what is known from the self-reported attitudes and will indicate whether the representations of LGBT individuals in interviews differ from self-reported attitudes in questionnaires.

Last but not least, the practical significance of the study is explained. The findings will be relevant to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with LGBT such as PT Foundation and the Ministry of Education to develop interventions related to LGBT

acceptance in order to cultivate social wellness. It is because sexual minority groups like LGBT often do not have access to relevant support, especially in the countries where LGBT is viewed as abnormality. By viewing sexualities from diverse perspectives in a larger scale can help to reduce negative attitudes toward LGBT individuals (Worthen, 2012), and the best way to reduce negative stigma for LGBT is to better understand them and express sympathy toward them (Meyer, 2003).

The results of the discourse analysis have relevance for content creators of websites and media writers of articles on LGBT. The discourse analysis of interviews will reveal how heterosexual Malaysians would construct their language in describing LGBT individuals and at the same time also understand how LGBT individuals use language to share their experiences for being LGBT in Malaysia. The information is useful for content creators and journalists who wish to portray LGBT in a neutral light, and to avoid the "Us" versus "Them" language.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 presents the definition of LGBT and background on LGBT in Malaysia. Past studies which related to attitudes towards LGBT individuals influenced by different factors, and the past studies which used discursive construction in examining LGBT attitudes.

## 2.1 Definitions of LGBT

People who are LGBT are usually known as sexual minorities as they represent a subset of general population. Bhurgra and Wright (2004) describes homosexuality as a phenomenon that crosses ethnic, boundaries, class, socio-economic, employment and religion.

Commonly, homosexuals involve only persons who are identified as lesbians and gays. However, besides homosexuals, D'Augelli (1994) has included "bisexual" in the Model of Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual (LGB) Development. According to D'Augelli (1994), it was believed that women and men who define themselves as lesbians, gay, or bisexual must first overcome the two main obstacles – the social invisibility of the defining characteristic and the social and legal penalties attached to the overt expression. It involves three interrelated variables which are personal subjectivities and actions, interactive intimacies, and sociohistorical connections. The outcome will be the process of recognising the identity of being a member of LGB group. Using D'Augelli's (1994) model, Evans and Broido (1999) studied the "coming out" in a residence hall setting. Also, Stevens (2004) found that the development of gay identity in college was caused by five factors which are self-acceptance, disclosure to others, individual factors, environmental factors, and multiple identities.

Stevens (2004) showed that (except for multiple identities) the development can relate to D'Augelli's (1994) six processes. Although this model did not include the "T" (transgender), it is considered useful as this model provided adequate background knowledge of the process of becoming LGBT.

According to D'Augelli's (1994) Model of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Development, the development of LGB identity can be influenced by the surroundings and the encouragement received during the beginning of identity conceptualisation. Based on the model in Figure 2.1, one's sexual orientation can be influenced by factors such as individual perceptions of identity caused by their interpretation of feelings and sexual behaviours; influences from family, peer groups and partner relationships; culture influences which includes societal norms, policies, laws, and cultural norms (D'Augelli, 1994).

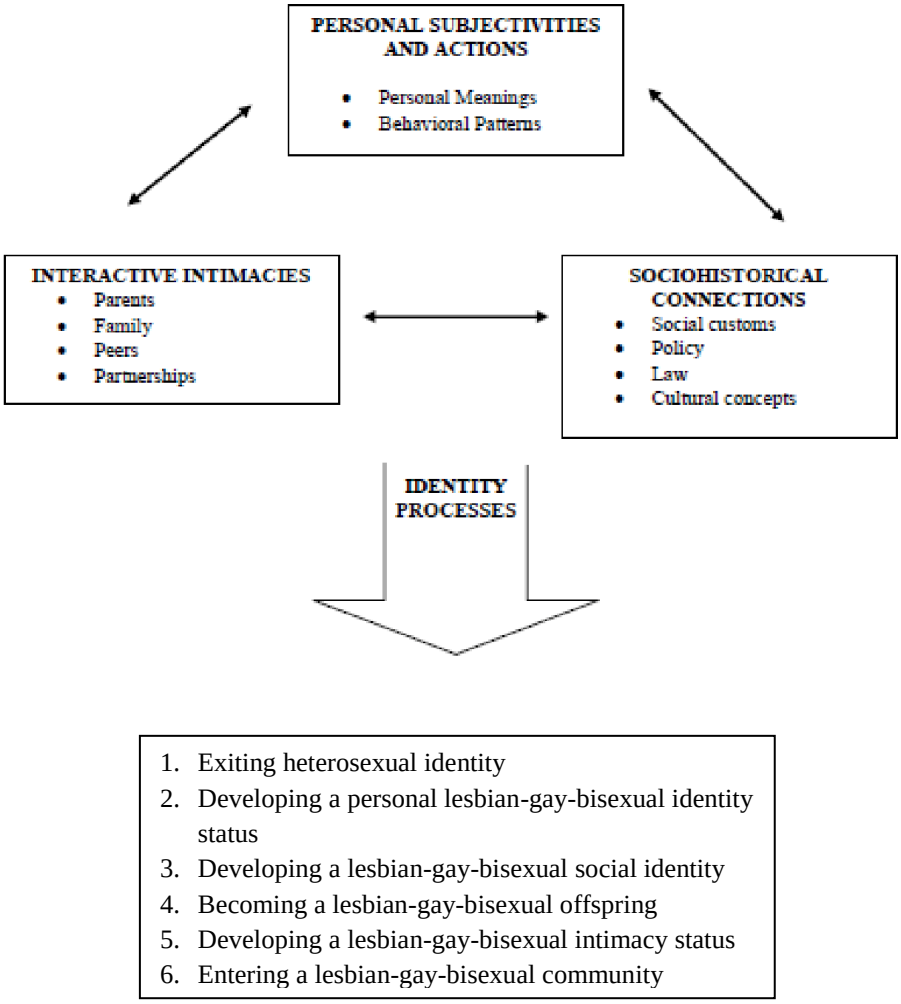


**Figure 2.1:** Model of Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Development

D'Augelli (1994) also identified six interactive processes for the development of LGB identity. First, the exiting of heterosexual identity. It is the process when a person starts to recognise the feelings for not being a heterosexual as well as admitting to others about his or her identity as a lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Next, one will start to develop a personal LGB identity status. D'Augelli (1994) states that the personal LGB identity development encompasses the sense of personal socio-affectional stability and this includes thoughts, feelings, and desires aligned to the LGB identity. One has to struggle with internalised myths about what it is to be LGB, and one way to possibly confirm the ideas of being non-

heterosexual is to be involved in a partner relationship with non-heterosexuals. After confirming the personal LGB identity, they will then develop the LGB social identity, meaning they start that to create a social network consisting of supportive people who know and show acceptance towards their sexual orientation. However, it takes time to determine people's true attitudes because attitudes may change from time to time. Then, it comes to the process of becoming a LGB offspring. This is the process which involves the disclosure of LGB identity to parents and the establishment or positive relationship with parents. It is often a challenge to become a LGB offspring, especially for children who still need to rely on parents for financial and emotional support. The fifth process is the development of LGB intimacy status. According to Evans et al. (1998), this process is much more complex compared to building an intimate heterosexual relationship due to the low acceptance of lesbian and gay couples in the society. The last is the process of entering a LGB community. Nevertheless, it depends on the social acceptance as some individuals would never take the initiative while some individuals would do so at risk, for instance, becoming unemployed.

At this point, LGBT is defined based on the definitions given by various scholars. In the early days, Storms (1980, as cited by Abdullah & Amat, 2019) stated that groups such as heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexual can be understood though the theory of sexual orientation. They usually have their behaviours and issues of sexuality involving attraction to either gender or opposite sex. More recently, Choudhuri et al. (2012) defined LGBT to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. First, the lesbian groups, refer to woman, female or a girl whose sexual orientation is toward the members from the same sex. Gay refers to man, male, or a boy whose sexual orientation is toward members from the same sex. Next, the bisexual is an individual who has attraction to both female or

male. Transgender or transsexual is often known as someone whose gender identity does not fit with the assigned birth sex and gender.

Moreover, according to Renn (2007), the term "LGB" describes sexual orientations while transgender relates to gender identity. In the United States, transgender includes a wide range of identities and the terms used include transsexuals, transvestites, male and female impersonators, drag kings and queens, male-to-female (MtF) persons, female-to-male (FtM) persons, cross-dressers, gender benders, and ambiguously gendered persons (Bornstein, 1994; Feinberg, 1996). The social norms usually accept the individuals whose biological sex assignment matches with the male or female gender identity. However, transgender indicates individuals whose gender identity is contrary with biological sex assignment or societal norms for gender expression as male or female (Bornstein, 1994; Elkins & King, 1996; Wilchins, 1997, 2002; as cited in Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). However, in non-Western societies, transgender identities are described with different terminology based on the cultural norms (Besnier, 1993; Brown, 1997). In Malaysia, the term "mak nyah is regularly used to denote Malay male-to-female transsexuals" (Jerome, 2013, p. 171).

## 2.2 Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

LGBT individuals often face discrimination, prejudice, and harassment in the society (Subhrajit, 2014). However, there are also people who show tolerance towards LGBT people and acknowledge their rights in different social contexts (Passani & Debicki, 2016). The word "tolerance" can be defined as enduring something that one dislikes or permitting what is objectionable (Allport, 1954; Arat, 201). Tolerance towards LGBT people means the degree to which the public supports the members of different social groups, by "allowing" the *other* to exist without full recognition of their rights and protection (Arat & Nunez, 2017).

Interestingly, tolerance is closely related to attitudes. According to previous studies of tolerance, tolerance exists with two main concepts. The first concept of tolerance was known as a permissive attitude towards a disliked out-group. In fact, the first way to study tolerance, is to treat prejudice as the prerequisite for tolerance. Specifically, if the condition for tolerance is dislike of an out-group, it means that one could not be tolerant without being prejudiced earlier before (Rapp & Ackermann, 2016; Verkuyten & Slooter, 2007). The second concept defines tolerance as a positive attitude to diversity itself. It means the need to investigate the attitudes to diversity without marginalising certain individuals or groups' behaviours are different from one's own. Nevertheless, Hjerm et al. (2020) stated that most of the previous studies did not incorporate the second concept in their studies but only measured the degrees of willingness to accept specific out-groups and how the participants feel about these groups in general.

Therefore, Hjerm et al. (2020, p. 899) improved the measurement of tolerance by developing questionnaire items corresponding to the conceptualisation of tolerance as "a value orientation towards difference". The items related to prejudice, including attitudes towards immigrants and homosexuals. The results showed that tolerance can be understood as a three-dimensional concept: acceptance of; respect for; and appreciation of difference, in line with Walzer (1997) to not see prejudice as precondition for tolerance. With the rapid evolution of LGBT issue globally, it is then necessary for this study to explicitly explore the meaning of tolerance, how much acceptance of, respect for, or appreciation of difference is needed to reduce prejudice in order to achieve "greater tolerance" towards LGBT individuals.

Researchers studying LGBT have documented the attitudes of particular occupational groups, such as students (Abdullah & Amat, 2019; Copp & Koehler, 2017;

Passani & Debicki, 2016; Worthen, 2012), psychologists (Arora et al., 2016), nursing students (Boch, 2012; Levesque, 2013), medical students (Szel et al., 2019), counsellors (Eliason, 2000; Kull et al., 2017; Shi & Doud, 2017), social media (Han et al., 2019; Mokhtar et al., 2019), health care providers (Naal et al., 2019), social workers (O'Pry, 2012), and teachers (Silveira & Goff, 2016; Swanson & Gettinger, 2016). These studies have uncovered some intolerant acts toward LGBT individuals.

The persons who are less tolerant towards LGBT individuals:

1. are less supportive of same-sex marriage (Moskowitz et al., 2010);
2. are more likely to be religious, to attend church frequently and to hold a strong conservative religious ideology (Eliason, 2000; O'Pry 2012; Reygan & Moane, 2014; Logie et al., 2007; Roggermans et al., 2015);
3. are less likely to have close acquaintances with LGBT individuals (Boch, 2012; Eick et al., 2016; Szel et al., 2019; Woodford et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2013);
4. are more likely to have less contact with LGBT individuals at school or workplace due to lack of exposure, training and knowledge (Eliason, 2000; Kull et al, 2017; Logie et al., 2007; Ozdemir & Buyukgoze, 2016);
5. are more likely to be a republican instead of a democrat in the United States (Holland et al., 2013);
6. are more likely to be African American (Logie et al., 2007; Worthen, 2018; O'Pry, 2012);
7. are less likely to engage in homosexual behaviours, or to identify themselves as LGBT (Eliason, 2000); and

8. are more likely to be less well-educated (Arora et al., 2016; Ozdemir & Buyukgoze, 2016).

There were other past studies which employed discourse analysis to examine the discursive construction of LGBT individuals in other countries. For example, Jones (2016) investigated the construction of identity among a group of British LGBT young people. None of the participants were Asian and all of them were from working-class backgrounds. The researcher conducted interviews in friendship pairs of willing participants, and asked about their experiences and opinions for being LGBT in the twenty-first century. With most of the discussions centred around the experiences of homophobia, it is then from such perspective that their identity is formed. The findings showed that homonormative discourse played an important role in constructing LGBT identities. These young participants' LGBT identities construction is not related to their difference compared to heterosexuals but with their disagreement as a perceived out-group based on the assumptions embedded in homonormative discourses. Also, these young participants emphasised that they were the generation who will live openly with their sexual identities without feeling shameful and they will not tolerate homophobia.

Another study conducted by Gibson and Macleod (2012) also employed a narrative-discursive analysis to study how lesbian identity is constructed based on different factors including race, class, gender, familial, and geographical space. Eight lesbian women (four were White; three were Black; and one was Indian/White) were recruited at Rhodes University, in South Africa. The participants were aged 18-40. During the first interviews, the participants were asked about how they constructed their sexual identities in different spaces and relationships while the second interviews were conducted four weeks later with

the follow-up questions for them to elaborate their experiences shared previously. Additional attention was given to the parts where the participants shared about discrimination or support received in accordance with their race, class, gender, and sexuality. The first findings were the "disallowance of lesbian identity within certain races and classes" where White was usually constructed as "liberal" while Black was "dangerous" due to gender stereotype in relation to their lesbian identity. As for the familial spaces, it is not surprising to see that the lesbian participants struggled between the disclosure of their lesbian identity and the acceptance from the heteronormative family. Therefore, the participants said that studying away from home caused a separation from families but gave them the privilege to freely explore their sexuality. However, at the institutional level, White participants felt more privileged in receiving acceptance compared to Black women who shared the same space. From these findings, there is credible evidence to suggest that the construction of lesbian identity is complex and would continually change within different spaces and times (Gibson & Macleod, 2012)

In addition, LGBT issues have become a heated discussion especially on news media. Nartey (2021) then carried out a study to analyse the prejudiced construction of LGBT issues or LGBT individuals in the Ghanaian news media and to examine how such prejudiced discourse would cause dishonour to LGBT individuals and marginalise them in the Ghanaian society. Nartey (2021) performed critical discourse analysis for 385 articles consisting of news reports, op-ed pieces, and editorials. Nartey (2021) categorised the discourses into three main discourses: discourse of immorality and social destruction; discourse of alienisation; and discourse of medicalisation. The findings showed that the news content

reported on LGBT issues is controversial and biased. In fact, LGBT individuals were labelled as extraneous, unpleasant, and unacceptable in the Ghanaian society.

## 2.3 LGBT in Malaysia

LGBT is now more visible in the Malaysian society. Most Malaysians today know about the existence of LGBT group. However, LGBT remains a very sensitive issue in an Islamic country like Malaysia. There are prevailing beliefs among Malaysians that the LGBT culture will affect human civilisation, which will affect the social structure of family, health, education, emotional and physical changes, and so on (Abdullah & Amat, 2019).

In Malaysia, Islam is recognised as the official religion and the teachings in Islam clearly prohibit same-sex relationship or any unnatural relationship among human beings. The "Unnatural sex" Law which punishes acts of homosexuality are the Penal Code where section 377(A) and 377(B) state that those who commits "carnal intercourse against the order of natural" will be canned and imprisoned for up to 20 years (Lim et al., 2018, p. 2). In addition, the religious or Syariah law, also known as Islamic law, punishes Muslims who engage in any unnatural sexual intercourse with people from the same gender. For instance, the Syariah Penal law in Pulau Pinang confers penalties with fines of RM 5,000, three years of imprisonment and six lashes of whip to individuals who involves in sodomy (liwat) and lesbian (musahaqah) practice (Carroll & Mendos, 2017).

Although the idea of LGBT is still not widely accepted by the society in Malaysia, it is obvious that the LGBT group is getting larger nowadays and growing a lot more than before (Mokhtar, 2019). It begins to become a "normalisation" in the Malaysian society (Hesamuddin et al. 2019). From the statistics reported by Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), the number of gay men in Malaysia had increased from 173,000 to

310,000 between 2013 and 2018 and the number of transgender people increased from 10,000 to 30,000 between 1988 and 2018, stated by the Senior Assistant Director of the Social Branch in JAKIM's Department of Family, Social and Community, Dr Mohd Izwan Mohd Yusof. Despite the growing number of LGBT people in Malaysia, the official stance of the government is against LGBT. As reported in The Star, the former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad stated that Malaysia would not accept LGBT practice and same-sex marriages as Malaysia does not follow the modern Western liberal ideology (Kaos, 2018). Another Malay newspaper article, Sinar Harian, reported that the Religious Affairs Minister, Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa, has made it clear that his meeting with transgender activist Nisha Ayub does not imply his endorsement for the LGBT community (Sharom, 2019). Moreover, JAKIM (Malaysian Department of Islamic Development) posted an announcement on its Facebook platform, saying that JAKIM does not accept or agree with LGBT behaviour. However, LGBT people still have the rights to be "guided" and "advised" so that they can be rehabilitated or go back to the right path (JAKIM, 2019).

LGBT individuals in Malaysia still continue to face challenges even though LGBT movements are significantly growing nowadays. For example, in September 2018, The Star reported that a Syariah court in Terengganu sentenced two women to caning for attempting to be involved in homosexual relations (Timbuong, 2018). In addition, New Straits Times reported a case which involved a transgender. In December 2018, a 32-year-old transgender woman died from multiple injuries after being attacked by a group of youths with blunt weapons in Klang, Kuala Lumpur. The police report stated that the case was linked to a mobile phone theft and it was not a hate crime against LGBT (New Straits Times, 2018). On the other hand, Nisha Ayub, a co-founder of Justice for Sisters (a transgender rights group

based in Kuala Lumpur), questioned if these youths would act in such a violent way if the victim was not a transgender person, believing that it is a hate crime (Beh, 2018). Another case happened in 2017, reported by The Straits Times, where an 18-year-old student in Penang was beaten to death by high school classmates who had bullied him for being "effeminate". Although the case has resulted in ongoing prosecutions, yet the police refuse to acknowledge the acts of violence as the bias-motivated crime. It then left LGBT individuals feeling that the government does not support them even though the criminals are brought to justice.

Another latest notable issue of LGBT individuals facing discrimination in Malaysia involved a cosmetic entrepreneur named Nur Sajat Kamaruzzaman. Her real name was Muhammad Sajjad Kamaruz Zaman. Nur Sajat is a transgender woman and is a Muslim. Her gender has been a subject of debate for years as she was born with both female and male organs, also known as hermaphrodite. Although she was assigned a male at birth, she chose to grow up as a woman. Due to her trans figure, she was constantly criticised on social media. The social media users would constantly provide the evidence of her male identity on government documents and discriminate her even though JAKIM has acknowledged that she was indeed born as an intersex individual, also known as "khunsa" in Malay (Sanders, 1991). In Malaysia, the searches for "Nur Sajat" and "khunsa" often became the most trending Google searches. Moreover, the searches for both terms spiked in February 2020, when Nur Sajat went on an *umrah* (a religious pilgrimage) in Mecca (Pauca, 2020). She posted a picture of herself and her family in front of the Kaaba, the Grand Mosque in Mecca, wearing the female prayer garb. On Twitter, the hashtag of #Sajat has gained over 24.9 thousand tweets. Malaysians express their opinions on Sajat wearing the female prayer garb

in Mecca. Some said it was forbidden and some said Islam teaches us to accept everyone regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity (The Leaders Online, 2020). Not only that, many people spread Nur Sajat's private documents including a copy of her passport and travel documents and allegedly stated Sajat's dead name on social media platforms, which is truly degrading for a trans-woman. The government did not take action for the acts of non-consensual disclosure of personal data under Personal Data Protection Act 2010. Instead, the Religious Affairs Minister, Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa had a discussion with MCMC (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia) in order to probe Nur Sajat and suggested barring her social media content which caused unease among Muslims in Malaysia (Malaysiakini, 2020). In the eyes of Malaysian authorities, Nur Sajat's identity as a transwoman is unacceptable. She then made a decision recently in October, relocated to Australia after being granted asylum there because Australia has accepted her for who she was and she is able to live freely there (The Star, 2021).

Another famous transgender figure in Malaysia is Jessie Chung who was born a male in Kuching, Sarawak. According to her biography provided in her own webpage, she was known as a singer, actress and also a certified nutritional consultant. She was successful in running her own business mainly on detox and health supplement. Being born as Jeffrey Chung, Jessie went through her sex-change surgery in 2003 and married her spouse, Joshua Beh, in 2005 (Khor, 2014). However, according to The Star, the couples are not yet wife and husband in the eyes of the law and religion in Malaysia ("Reject Couple's Marriage", 2005). The former Home Affairs Minister, Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid stated that Malaysian laws do not allow citizens to change their gender in their identity cards even though they have gone through sex-change operation. Since the gender identity remained as "male" for Jessie

Chung in the identity card, the marriage was deemed illegal. In addition, the Marriage and Divorce Reform Act 1976 clearly stated that marriages between two people of the same gender is prohibited, even if one of them has changed his or her gender through operation. Therefore, Jessie Chung and her husband has never received their marriage certificates from the government until today. It is clear that LGBT individuals in relationships cannot get married legally and perform religious activities freely, particularly Islamic activities.

Despite the prejudice and discrimination faced by LGBT individuals, these challenges have inspired more people to voice out and stand up for LGBT rights. Also, the idea of liberalism and the universal declaration of human rights by the United Nations triggered the spread of LGBT practices in many nations included Malaysia. Throughout the years, a lot of LGBT activists have been fighting for their rights in Malaysia (Owoyemi et al., 2013). Both the LGBT activists and the LGBT individuals openly campaigning for their rights to practise and engage in LGBT practices. In Malaysia, there are clubs and organisations formed to represent and protect the rights of LGBT individuals. For instance, one LGBT organisation known as *Seksualiti Merdeka* (sexual independence) organised events yearly to fight for LGBT community recognition in Malaysia but it was forced to shut down by the government in November 2011 (Owoyemi et al., 2013). However, *Seksualiti Merdeka* still owns a closed group on Facebook, meaning that the membership has to be approved by an administrator (Pitkanen, 2017). Besides, in Kuala Lumpur, there are LGBT activism and networks which provide support services for LGBT people. For instance, there is a significant group known as PT Foundation located in Klang Valley which provided HIV test services, shelter for LGBT, mental health support, and community support online and offline. Another registered HIV community-based organisation is *Pekasih*, located in Ipoh,

Perak which is funded by Ministry of Health, aimed in providing HIV tests and organise prayer sessions and communal events for the LGBT people (Cheah, 2020).

Looking the issue of LGBT in Malaysia, the tolerance of Malaysians toward LGBT group is currently negative. Ting et al. (2016) conducted a cross-sectional study to examine the relationship between religious beliefs, gender roles and attitudes toward homosexuals among 460 undergraduates in Malaysia. The results revealed that those who scored higher in the religion index scale showed more prejudicial attitudes towards homosexuality, and those who held more feminist gender role belief showed more positive attitudes towards homosexuality. In addition, Ting et al.'s (2016) results also revealed that male students would have more unfavourable attitudes towards both gay men and lesbians compared to female students.

In Malaysia, a country where Islamic conservatism is deeply rooted, it has been a challenge for LGBT individuals to receive recognition from the society. Ahmad et al. (2021) interviewed 12 Malaysians participants in Sarawak on their perspectives on LGBT by examining their social knowledge about LGBT through the social interaction with LGBT. From the semi-structured interview, it was found that participants who have personal encounter with LGBT individuals, for example, having LGBT friends, tend to have positive attitude towards LGBT but such individuals are the exception rather than the norm.

Furthermore, the prevalence of social media inspired researchers like Mokhtar et al. (2019) to investigate the effect of social media in spreading the LGBT movement in Malaysia. Through the observation on different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and also by interviewing some LGBT participants, Mokhtar et al. (2019) found that the LGBT individuals agreed that social media provides them a safer place

to express themselves and helps them to gain confidence to be their true selves and even coming out publicly as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transexual. However, Mokhtar et al. (2019) restricted their study within the use of social media and also restricted their participants to only LGBT individuals. Another study done by Tuah and Mazlan (2020) examined how Twitter plays a role in providing a more secure platform for LGBTQ individuals to disclose their identities. The participants agreed how Twitter have made their life better as part of LGBTQ because they have received recognition and encouragement from other people in the Twitter platform. At the same time, they became much more confident for who they are, suggesting that social media can be one of the safest places for LGBT individuals to truly be themselves.

On the other hand, social media can also be a double-edged sword that it would spread negativity towards LGBT individuals. For instance, Muhammad Ali and Mothar (2020) examined how the discourses on Twitter contributed to the concept of resilience among the LGBT community in Malaysia and found that there were some users who showed violence and rejection especially through the negative comments. The users believed that LGBT individuals do not deserve any rights and LGBT practice is intolerable in Malaysia (Muhammad Ali & Mothar, 2020). From the research on the public's reaction on social media, it is known how religions and cultural norms are brought in when rationalising tolerance or intolerance towards LGBT individuals. In comparison, little is known about how LGBT individuals are being treated in society especially in different settings including workplaces, schools, and how they were treated by family and friends throughout their life as part of LGBT individuals. Jerome (2019) found that queer Malaysians also faced cyber crimes including bullying and harassment on the basis of their queer identity. Some of the queer Malaysians have been affected by those hateful comments, causing them to suffer from

stress and becoming despicable while there were also some queer Malaysians who were not influenced by those cyber crimes. Again, these studies did not represent the views of large segments of the Malaysian population due to the restriction of participants to only LGBT individuals (Mokhtar, et al., 2019), LGBT Twitter users (Muhammad Ali & Mothar, 2020; Tuah & Mazlan, 2020), and queer Malaysians (Jerome, 2019).

Besides, according to Goh (2016), Malaysian men who are identified as non-heteronormative often receive condemnations due to their sexual representations. Goh's (2016) queer socio-theological project examined the lived realities of six non-heteronormative Malaysian men who were willing to speak up openly on their sexualities and spiritual sensibilities. From the analysis, Goh (2016) found that the non-heteronormative Malaysian men would describe how their physical bodies emerged as an important interface of transcendence as they strongly acknowledged themselves as a sexual subject, for instance, during sexual encounters with sexual Others. Also, they would call such engagements as self-respect, and love and relationships with sexual Others. At the same time, they strive to find a place where they are able to bridge religious teachings and their desires in a manageable and meaningful way.

Interpersonal contact with LGBT seems to bring about greater tolerance towards LGBT individuals. On a personal contact level, Earnshaw et al.'s (2016) study was on interpersonal contact with men who have sex with men (MSM) among future medical and dental providers in seven public and private Malaysian universities. The study found that students who had interaction with MSM before were less prejudiced, and had lower tendency to show discrimination towards MSM. It was because the students acquired enough knowledge which restrained the stereotypes against MSM and thus, reduced the prejudice

and negative stigma towards MSM. Also, another study which focused on transwomen's rights by Winter et al. (2009) among seven countries including Malaysia indicated that there was the view that transwomen should not be seen or treated as women and therefore, should not deserve any rights. Also, the results revealed that one should keep a distance or avoid any contact with transwomen in daily settings (Winter et al., 2009). These studies were conducted a decade or more ago and the visibility of LGBT in Malaysia has grown. Thus, more studies should be conducted to examine how interpersonal contact can affect tolerance, not only towards MSM and transwomen, but also towards LGBT individuals as a whole. In addition, the element of empathy including standing up for LGBT individuals due to interpersonal contact should be further examined as well. It could help to provide a more in-depth understanding whether or not Malaysians are able to empathise with those sexual and gender minorities, resulting in greater tolerance with LGBT individuals.

To sum up, LGBT is still considered as a taboo in Malaysia. As a result, LGBT individuals face discrimination and unequal treatment from the society regardless of ethnic background or religious beliefs. On the other hand, there were community groups and organisations in different states which are formed to offer help to the LGBT people. Attitudes of Malaysians towards LGBT individuals can be better understood through the conceptualisation of tolerance, that is, how much acceptance of, respect of, or appreciation of difference in sexual orientations.

## 2.4 Factors Influencing Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

There are many factors that affect tolerance towards LGBT. One of the common factors found in most of the studies is the demographic variables, including age, ethnic group, and religion. This section also presents findings on other possible factors which can affect

one's tolerance level towards LGBT individuals, including sexual orientation, gender identity, intergroup contact with LGBT individuals and the influences of socialisation agents.

### 2.4.1 Age

First, age is known as one of the demographic information and was often analysed as an independent variable across the past studies. Specifically, age or age groups has been included in assessing participants' attitudes or tolerance towards LGBT people.

Copp and Koehler (2017) measured students' attitudes toward their LGBT peers across a range of demographic factors in a public university in the Midwest and one of the main factors was age. A total of 416 undergraduate students in a midsize American public university were involved in the study with 379 of them identified as heterosexuals. A majority of the respondents fell within the 18-24 age range. Using a quantitative research design, the study revealed that more positive overall attitudes are associated with older respondents.

Another similar study was conducted on factors influencing stigma to LGBT among teenagers in Indonesia (Astuti & Kurniati, 2018). The researchers recruited 41 teenagers aged from 12 to 25 years old, living in Ngaran Village, Indonesia. Questionnaires were used to collect the data and a follow-up plan form was used to measure the respondents' knowledge level after and before the given counselling on the presentation of LGBT awareness in the family. Then, the respondents were required to provide information on prevention efforts toward stigma to the LGBT people. The results showed that age is associated with LGBT stigma among the adolescents. The elder respondents tend to be more matured in thinking and have a better understanding of information after they received counselling.

Furthermore, Horn (2006) investigated heterosexual adolescents' and young adults' beliefs and attitudes about homosexuality and gay and lesbian peers. This study was conducted in the United States with 264 adolescents (aged 14 to 18) and 86 young adults (aged 19 to 26) who answered the questionnaire on their beliefs and attitudes about homosexuality and gay and lesbian peers in school. Interestingly, however, age does not play a role in affecting the beliefs of whether homosexuality was right or wrong among the participants. Woodford et al.'s (2013) study examined the LGBT social attitudes of a randomly selected sample of social work faculty from accredited graduate programmes in the United States. The researchers examined the role of sociodemographic factors including age in affecting the attitudes toward LGBT people. However, the result contradicted with Copp and Koehler (2017) as age variable was not significant in influencing the faculty's attitudes towards LGBT. To sum up, the findings on the association of age and attitudes towards LGBT are mixed.

### 2.4.2 Ethnicity

A lot of past studies have been done on the association between ethnicity and LGBT individuals especially in Western countries (Boch, 2012; Holland et al., 2013; Logie et al., 2007; O'pry, 2012; Sheridan et al., 2017; Worthen, 2018; Woodford et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2013). According to Parent et al. (2013), ethnic identities have often been defined as a selection from multiple discreet categories including White, Asian, African American, Asian America, and others. Past research that offers comparisons of the influence of ethnicity on LGBT attitudes are reviewed in this section.

Holland et al. (2013) explored how race correlated with LGBT tolerance at a midsized, Southeastern, public university with 1,768 students. The Black sample chosen

were educated, single, registered voters, and non-religious and the researchers believed that they would more likely to report positive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. However, the results showed that the Whites, compared to African American, appeared to exhibit higher levels of tolerance toward homosexual individuals. In addition, Sheridan et al.'s (2017) study in south Florida revealed that European Americans (N=3,800) were more likely to feel comfortable with LGBT people and have better knowledge of LGBT struggles. They are also more likely to attend prior trainings related to LGBT and able to respond to discrimination compared to African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and multi-ethnic people. Another interesting result was reported by Friedman et al. (2014) which demonstrated that biracial/multiracial individuals have lower bias toward bisexual individuals than other racial/ethnic minorities. This suggests an identification that integrates two liminal spaces and thus creates a higher acceptance "between two worlds". Generally, more researchers found greater tolerance among the White/European American rather than Black/African American in the United States (Woodford et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2013).

Other researchers have found greater phobia towards LGBT among African Americans in the United States. According to Logie et al. (2007), negative attitudes toward LGBT individuals have been found within social workers and social work students. Their study in a Midwestern American University showed that a majority of the students demonstrated low phobia and positive attitude toward LGBT individuals. The analysis of variance specifically indicated that African Americans actually demonstrated greater phobia toward LGBT individuals. O'Pry (2012) found that African American social workers in Louisiana reported higher levels of homophobia and transphobia compared to white social workers. In addition, Worthen's (2018) study conducted at a Bible Belt university showed

that in both heterosexual and LGB samples, race was not related to the attitudes toward trans men and trans women but race was related to attitudes toward LGB. To be specific, the Whites/Caucasians, Native Americans/Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans/Pacific Islander, and those identifying as other race were more supportive of LGB than the Blacks/African Americans. These later findings contradicted an early study that showed tolerance towards LGBT in the Black ommunity. Herek and Capitanio (1995) who found that, although negative attitudes toward homosexuality seem general in Black community, homophobia does not appear to be more common among Blacks in comparison to Whites. It is possible that tolerance towards LGBT among the African Americans has somewhat decreased since Herek and Capitanio's (1995) study.

From these past studies, LGBT individuals who are also known as race/ethnic minorities are being marginalised subject to discrimination and victimisation associated with racism and heterosexism (Balsam et al., 2011). For instance, certain gay bars in United States would refuse the entry of African Americans and provide poorer service to the Black (Han, 2007). Race is closely associated with homophobia and transphobia. Jayaratne et al. (2008) examined how race can affect one's comfort by placing children with lesbian and gay parents. The findings showed that African Americans reported greater discomfort compared to the Whites, which is aligned with most of the previous studies. A possible reason for this outcome would be the norms within the African American community that emphasise church, family, and procreation (Parks, 2010).

### 2.4.3 Religious Beliefs

Next, religion is associated with tolerance towards LGBT individuals. LGBT individuals who live and grow up in a religious community often experienced discrimination

and harassment (Gibbs & Goldbach, 2015; O'Pry, 2012; Reygan & Moane, 2014). Traditional religiosity is significantly correlated with moral rejection toward LGBT individuals as religious people see LGBT as sinful and immoral (Eliason, 2000).

Several studies have shown that people who are not religious are not supportive towards LGBT individuals (Eick et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2010; Szel et al., 2019; Woodford et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2013). For example, Reygan and Moane (2014) explored experiences of religious homophobia among a sample of LGBT people (N=10) in Ireland given the historical dominance of the Catholic Church. From the interview, the participants clearly highlighted the intersection of Catholic identity which caused LGBT individuals to leave religious activities and they felt alienated from it. The result concurred with Logie et al. (2007) who studied social work students, and found those who were Protestant and Catholics demonstrated high phobia and negative attitude towards the LGBT populations. Another example was the study conducted by Holland et al. (2013), exploring college students' attitudes toward the LGBT populations which revealed that non-religious and non-Christian students are more tolerant toward LGBT individuals.

Besides Catholics and Protestants, studies have shown that Islam, Judaism and Christianity also explicitly condemn the homosexual act. According to Roggemans et al. (2015), there is a close relationship between religion and negative attitudes towards homosexuals among young people in Flanders (N=1,907). Their study showed that young people who identified themselves as Christian or Muslim reported more negative attitudes towards homosexuals than non-religious young people. Also, the stronger the religious adherence, the more negative the attitude towards homosexuals.

LGBT populations struggle against societal prejudices in Muslim country (Özdemir & Büyükgöze, 2016). Their study involved 368 pre-service teachers in Ankara, Turkey who reported their attitudes, democratic values, and tolerance towards LGBT individuals. It is important to note that Turkey's cultural and historical background contains Islamic interpretations and thus Turkey does not openly recognise the LGBT communities. The situation in Hungary, located in Central European, is similar. As stated by Takács (2011, cited in Szel et al., 2019), Hungary has made same-sex couples legally possible in 2009 but they still have far fewer rights and status than heterosexual married couples. Homophobia is still relatively prevalent in Hungary. Specifically, in the health care system in Hungary, Szel et al. (2019) carried out a study on how Hungarian medical students' knowledge about LGBT individuals would affect their attitudes toward the sexual minorities. From the convenience sample, about 80% of the sample reported being religious. The results also showed that religious medical students demonstrated low levels of knowledge about LGBT individuals. It is clear that people who are religious, regardless of which religion, usually hold negative attitudes toward LGBT individuals.

The negative attitudes toward LGBT people due to the religiosity lead to many consequences to the minority group. According to Gibbs and Goldbach (2015), most of the participants aged 18-24 who grew up in a religious community experienced conflict between their religious beliefs and sexuality. Gibbs and Goldbach (2015) suggested that religiosity and religious affiliation among the LGBT populations are associated with negative mental health outcomes, especially for young adults and adolescents who grow up in a religious family background. By examining the internalised homophobia as mediator, the researchers found out there are three indicators which are the parents' anti-homosexual religious beliefs,

religious upbringing with unresolved conflict in a family. The act of leaving religion due to conflict are highly associated with  thoughts among the LGBT individuals.

### 2.4.4 Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is also a significant variable to measure the tolerance towards LGBT people because it is expected that respondents who are heterosexuals may be less tolerant compared to respondents who are LGBT individuals.

Passani and Debicki (2016) conducted a study to identify high school students' opinions about LGBT issues and rights through the NISO project (Fighting Homophobia Through Active Citizenship and Media Education). The NISO presented the results showing that stereotypes about lesbians were less diffuse and less negative than the ones attached to gay men. However, people have been describing gay men as effeminate and lesbian women as masculine as a form of standard definitions. This tacit definition fulfils to a heteronormative model in which the difference between genders is defined and fixed in social interactions. Shi and Doud (2017) investigated school counsellors' competency level in working with LGBT youth. The 123 participants aged 20-69 were randomly selected from several cities in United States. There were also LGBT among the participants. The results showed that counsellors who self-identified as non-heterosexual reported higher competency levels than school counsellors who self-identified as heterosexual in working with LGBT youth. In addition, Eliason (2000) investigated the attitudes and knowledge of these counsellors regarding their LGBT clients. The researcher formed a total phobia scale to obtain an overall picture of the respondents' attitudes. Results indicated that more than half of the sample held positive attitudes toward LGBT clients although they lacked knowledge about LGBT people's issues. However, they were more negative about bisexuals and

transgendered people than gay men and lesbian women due to the factors such as religious beliefs, educational level, and sexual identity (being a heterosexual).

Day and Nicholls (2019) also explored the nuance and variability of language used when describing transgender people. The semi-structured interview with heterosexual males and females were on the beliefs, understanding, and experience of transgender and gender non-conformity. The results revealed the theme of heteronormativity where participants described transgender people as "something's wrong" as they do not abide by specific gendered behaviours which are presented as "right". On top of that, the participants placed transgender people as minority by "othering" them. Day and Nicholls (2019) have conceptualised such negative language, while not consciously prejudicial, as "microaggressions".

There is literature which suggest that bisexual men and women face profound health disparities compared to both heterosexual and homosexual individuals (Friedman et al., 2014). Bisexual individuals face prejudice, discrimination, and stigma from both homosexuals and straight communities – biphobia. Therefore, Friedman et al. (2014) examined how sexual identification affects bias toward bisexual men and women. From the scale administered, it was shown that sexual identity predicts the negative attitudes towards bisexuals. Results indicated that gay/lesbian had lower levels of bi-negative attitudes than heterosexuals; bisexuals had lower levels of bi-negative than gay/lesbian; and bisexuals had lower levels of bi-negative attitudes than the straight counterparts. It agrees with Hutsell's (2012) results on the influence of group identification, level of outness, level of contact, and perceived stigma on the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes. Yet, while overall attitudes

were positive, a notable result was gay males and lesbian females held less positive attitudes about both bisexual males and females.

### 2.4.5 Gender Identity

Gender identity also distinguishes tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Many researchers conducted studies to compare the attitudes towards LGBT individuals between just female and male (Eick et al., 2016; Holland et al., 2013; Moskowitz et al., 2010; Szel et al., 2019; Roggemans et al., 2015; Woodford et al., 2012; and Woodford et al., 2013). According to Woodford et al. (2013), a lot of advocacy efforts were made to establish social policies that recognise same-sex relationships and to protect LGBT people from discrimination.

Females being more tolerant towards LGBT than males is a recurring finding. For example, Woodford et al. (2013) examined the attitudes of undergraduate and graduate heterosexual American college students toward LGBT rights and gender to understand the relationship between support for LGBT civil rights and attitudes about LGBT people. A total of 1,714 eligible students participated in this study. The results indicated that male students showed lower levels of support for LGBT civil rights compared to the female students. In previous year, Woodford et al. (2012) also carried out a study to identify the predictors of United States heterosexual undergraduate and graduate college students' attitudes toward LGBT people. Similar result were obtained, that is, male students tend to have fewer affirming opinions toward LGBT individuals compared to female students. Worthen (2012) studied the relationship between sexual experiences, feminist self-identification, and attitudes toward LGBT individuals among the heterosexual college students. The results

showed that female students showed positive attitudes toward gays, male bisexuals, and transgender individuals.

However, there were a few studies which showed that heterosexual women tend to have more negative attitudes toward lesbians and more positive attitudes toward gay men (Herek, 1988; Raja & Stokes, 1998; cited by Worthen, 2012). In Taiwan, Lin et al.'s (2021) online study showed associations of gender, age, and sexual orientation with attitudes of general population in Taiwan toward homosexuality. The study was conducted twice, the first study was in 2017 (after the marriage equality bill was introduced) and the second study was in 2018 (after the same-sex marriage referendum). The results revealed that there was no observed difference between men and women in their acceptance of homosexuality.

For gender differences in attitudes toward bisexuals, previous studies suggested that heterosexual men were less tolerant of bisexual men compared to heterosexual women. On the other hand, both heterosexual men and women reported similar positive attitudes toward bisexual women (Eliason 1997; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999). From limited past research, gender differences in attitudes toward transgender individuals, heterosexual men have been found to hold more negative attitudes toward transgender individuals in studies of cisgender undergraduates conducted in the United States (Leitenberg & Slavin, 1983; Nagoshi et al., 2008) and in Poland (Antoszewski et al., 2007). To sum up, tolerance towards LGBT seems to be generally greater among females than males, and tolerance towards bisexual women is greater than for bisexual men.

### 2.4.6 Social Knowledge on LGBT

The amount of social knowledge on LGBT can also act as a predictor of tolerance level towards LGBT individuals. Turiel's (1978) social cognitive domain theory is mainly

used to evaluate the social judgments and the social reasoning made by individuals in everyday contexts. This theory focused on three main issues, which are human welfare, rights, and equality (also known as morality), issues on societal convention which is usually the standards established by social systems, and personal issues in terms of matters of preference and personal choice (Heinze & Horn, 2009).

To test their theory, Turiel et al. (1991) examined young adults' beliefs about homosexuality by adapting social cognitive domain theory, and they found that among the social judgments made regarding homosexuality, the young adults tended to view homosexuality as a kind of natural expression. Moreover, Turiel et al. (1991) reported that some young adults judged homosexuality to be wrong but at the same time, they felt that homosexuals should not be controlled by law and it is because they have their own rights to choose which sexuality they want. This was supported by other relevant studies such as Horn and Nucci (2003) who found that young adults were more accepting of their homosexual peers by not making judgments like seeing homosexual as unnatural. In addition, Horn (2006) and Horn and Szalcha (2009) again had found that age and school climate are the two factors which can affect adolescents' social reasoning on how they view homosexuality and how they treat homosexual individuals.

There was rather limited literature on utilising social cognitive domain theory in assessing attitudes toward LGBT individuals, particularly the tolerance level towards LGBT individuals. However, only the morality aspect will be included in this study especially in the development of questionnaire items regarding the LGBT rights and LGBT equality. The morality aspect under the domain theory provides a basis for understanding of sexual prejudice involving fairness and humans' rights (Horn, 2006).

### 2.4.7 Intergroup Contact with LGBT Individuals

Intergroup contact hypothesis was first proposed by Allport (1954) and this hypothesis suggests that intergroup contact can reduce negative stigma such as prejudice and discrimination toward the minority group members. The positive effects of intergroup contact can occur in four conditions which are equal status, cooperation, common goals, and support by social and institutional authorities (Everett, 2013). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) stated that greater contact with out-group people is associated with lower levels of prejudice against the out-group. Several evidence supporting the contact hypothesis has been confirmed in reducing prejudice. Particularly, positive contact experiences are said to be able to reduce prejudice between urban residents and rural-to-urban migrants in China (Li & Tong, 2020), towards Muslims (Abrams et al., 2017), and towards peers with disabilities (Schwab, 2017). In this section, various contexts are included such as family, peers, schools, workplace, and social media to explore how intergroup contact could influence people's attitudes towards LGBT individuals in different social contexts.

The intergroup contact theory has been utilised to understand attitudes towards LGBT individuals. For instance, Heinze and Horn (2009) has assessed the relationship between intergroup contact and adolescents' beliefs about homosexuality in United States. A total of 1,069 adolescents were involved in their study and the results suggested that adolescents who have a lesbian or gay friend were more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes toward homosexuality (Heinze & Horn, 2009). Collier et al. (2012) then advanced the study in similar settings to explore how intergroup contact with gay and lesbian people could affect adolescents' attitudes toward them by analysing the response from 456 adolescents aged 12 to 15 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The researchers reported that,

consistent with Allport's theory, contact with lesbian or gay persons outside of school influenced the adolescents to demonstrate positive attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. As for transgender, contrary with lesbians and gay men, transgender people are usually less likely to disclose their identity due to the serious anti-transgender stigma. This inspired Hoffarth and Hodson (2018) to explore if intergroup contact with transgender people is able to reduce such bias and prejudice. Hoffarth and Hodson (2018) reported that the positive transgender contact may decrease the anti-transgender bias. A little is known about the association between intergroup contact and attitudes toward bisexuals specifically. Castro-Convers and colleagues (2005) suggested that the contact experiences establish affiliation by normalising the concept of LGBT. Fingerhut (2011) then did a deeper study on heterosexuals and found that individuals who had LGBT friends were more likely to show alliance. Thus far, there is no existing studies investigating the relationships between intergroup contact and tolerance towards LGBT among the Malaysian society.

### 2.4.8 Socialising Agents

Socialisation is a process in which a person interacts with values and social norms of a particular society and culture. As for socialisation agents, they play a role in shaping our norms, values, behaviours, and how we interact with others in the society (Genner & Suss, 2017). Each agent has its own impact on an individual in relation to one's personality and life experiences. Therefore, this section covers the influences of different socialisation agents on one's tolerance towards LGBT individuals. The socialisation agents discussed here including family, peers, schools, workplace, and social media

#### 2.4.8.1 Family

Family is commonly known as the closest person to be with in one's life. From Ryan et al.'s (2010) Family Acceptance Project (FAP), it was found that LGBT adolescents who mature in a family with high levels of family acceptance showed positive adjustment and health in terms of self-esteem, social support, and general health. Moreover, highly accepting families usually have a higher parental occupational status compared with those that scored low on acceptance. On the other hand, young adults who reported low levels of family acceptance tended to experience depression, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation and attempts. It is clear that parent-adolescent relationships affected an adolescent's LGBT identity and the health of LGBT young adults. Also, Klein and Golub (2016) studied the associations between family rejection and risk of suicide attempts and substance misuse among transgender and gender non-conforming adult. The results showed that almost half of the participants (42.3%) reported a suicide attempt and up to 26.3% of them misused drugs or alcohol to cope with the discrimination. Next, by controlling the other various variables such as age and ethnicity, Klein and Golube (2016) found that family rejection was related with the increment of both behaviours. Meaning that family rejection could affect the health outcomes for transgender and gender non-conforming adults.

On the other hand, in a societal context where LGBT practice is still not highly acceptable, Schuler et al. (2006) showed that having a non-heterosexual child in a family could give the family a negative image. The mother would even be blamed for failing to raise the children well. There are some parents who may accept their children to be homosexuals. However, the parents would still force them to hide their sexual identity, and instruct them to get married in order to maintain the image of the family (Horton, 2014).

Worst of all, the Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP) (2011) based in Vietnam reported that some parents locked their children in the house or physically beat them after finding out that their children are gay or lesbian. Also in Vietnam, young adults refuse to discuss the topic of sexuality with their parents and the parents did not take the initiative too (Nguyen, 2009; Trinh et al., 2009).

Family support has long been depicted as critical to the well-being of LGBT people (Robert & Christens, 2021). According to Robert and Christens (2020), family support can aid psychological well-being across different ethnic groups of LGBT people in the United States and Puerto Rico. The data included public from Black, Latinx, Asian, and Pacific Islander. Pastrana (2015) also assessed the factors that would contribute to a person's decision to "come out" to more people in their lives. Specifically, the researcher adapted a quantitative data analysis from a nationwide sample of LGBT Latinos to assess the importance of family support in affecting a person's choice to "come out". This study also examined the variables of demographic characteristics, attitudinal measures of identity and religion in affecting the LGBT "outness". Findings revealed that, by controlling the variety of characteristics and measures, family support was the strongest and positive predictor for LGBT Latinos to decide to "come out".

In addition, coming out has traditionally been conceptualised in Western culture as the disclosure of one's sexual orientation to self and others, including family. However, such conceptualisation may not be suitable in a collectivistic culture in Asia. Jhang (2018) interviewed 28 Taiwanese LGB individuals in order to establish a grounded theory of coming out to their families. The results showed that a majority of the LGB individuals have different life expectations from their parents. Parents usually had the expectation of their

children getting married and having offspring whereas the LGB child wanted to be free and continue to live with their true identities. Then, the parents' expectations were challenged when the participants' identities as LGB were discovered or suspected. The LGB children often sensed that their parents have known or suspected their sexual orientation, but in order to keep the family relationship in harmony, both sides would usually remain silent.

#### 2.4.8.2 Peers

Besides family members, supportive peers or friends would display positive attitudes toward LGBT friends. Cheah and Singaravelu (2017) conducted 15 interviews to understand the coming out process and lived experiences of gay and lesbian individuals in Malaysia. The results showed that, in general, friends were the first recipients of the participants' first disclosure of their sexual identity. In the study conducted by Bhugra (1997), the experiences of coming out among gay men of South Asian origin were explored. The participants reported that the decision of revealing their own sexual orientation to friends was strongly dictated by the strength of the friendships and the desire for intimacy. In Hong Kong, Wong and Tang (2004) studied the coming out experiences of 187 Chinese gay men and the results showed that the participants tended to disclose their sexual orientation to their gay friends first, followed by heterosexual friends, family, and lastly their colleagues. Also, in Chow and Cheng's (2010) study, focusing on Chinese lesbians in Mainland China and Hong Kong, the coming out process to family and friends was found to be associated with shame, and internalised heterosexism. The results showed that the shame feeling was associated with reduced perception of support from friends and the somehow intensified the internalised heterosexism toward Chinese lesbians. These factors caused the unlikelihood of Chinese lesbians to come out to others.

In addition, the intergroup contact hypothesis suggested that having LGBT peers is associated with heterosexuals' engagement in LGBT-affirming behaviour and reduce prejudice toward LGBT people (Allport, 1954). Poteat (2015) wanted to find out the factors that could be associated with heterosexual youths' engagement in LGBT-affirming behaviour. By adapting Allport's intergroup contact, Poteat (2015) hypothesised that interpersonal factors such as having LGBT peers will demonstrate LGBT-affirming behaviour. A total of 722 students age ranged from 14 to 19 years old took part in the study. The results revealed that having LGBT friends was strongly associated the affirming behaviour toward LGBT people among the youths. The result was concurred with Pettigrew's (1998), stating that having LGBT friends strongly related to LGBT-affirming behaviour and such behaviour will grow if a person has a strong connection to LGBT friends and having open discussions about LGBT issues.

Besides, intergroup contact not only reduce prejudice but also motivate some heterosexual youths to show support for LGBT individuals (Heinze & Horn, 2009). In the study conducted by Heinze and Horn (2009), they investigated the relationship between intergroup contact and adolescents' attitudes regarding homosexuality. The results suggested that having lesbian and gay friends can develop positive attitudes toward homosexuality and intolerant with the unfair treatment for homosexual peers. Both of the studies concurred with Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), stating that intergroup contact has stronger influence among youngsters including children, adolescents, and college students compared to adults. It may due to the fact that young people are still in the state of developing attitudes about individuals who are different from them.

Also, in Israel, Eick et al. (2016) adapted the intergroup contact theory in their study as well. The researchers introduced a Hoshen method, a Hebrew acronym for "Education & Change" which has proven to result in a change in students' attitudes toward LGBT individuals in Israeli high schools. The main method used by Hoshen is by telling personal story by the volunteers. From the personal story activity, the students shared that having a friend from LGBT community stimulated them to have more positive attitudes toward LGBT people.

#### 2.4.8.3 Schools and Education System

For the past few years, the issue of the safe school environment plays an important role in understanding the well-being of LGBT adolescents (Horton, 2014; Gilkman & Elkayam, 2018; Greytak et al., 2013; Kosciw et al., 2012; Kull et al., 2017; Swanson & Gettinger, 2016). Findings showed that school environment and education system which did not show support toward LGBT students caused them to face discrimination. Based on the results of a national survey regarding school environment, a majority of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed at school, sexually harassed and physically harassed by peers or friends at school due to their sexual orientation (Copp & Koehler, 2017; Kosciw et al., 2012). Also, a majority of LGBT students reported feeling unsafe and uncomfortable in school due to their sexual orientation (Kosciw et al., 2012). It is supported by other studies which reported that negative school climate result in negative effect on students' academic achievements, increasing stress, depression and risk of self-destructive behaviour such as suicidal thoughts (Hall, 2018; Kosciw et al., 2015; Kosciw et al., 2012). Furthermore, Glikman and Elkayam's (2018) study suggested that homophobic behaviour decrease the level of LGBT students' self-acceptance and well-being in school.

Therefore, teachers or educators and schools have great responsibility in making the LGBT students feel accepted by providing protection and support for them (Greytak et al., 2013; Hall, 2018; Kosciw et al., 2015). It helps to prevent depressive episodes from happening among the students. However, Greytak and Kosciw (2014) showed that teachers in school occasionally made homophobic comments, creating an unhealthy environment which enable harassment and violence toward LGBT students. In order to create a safe school environment for LGBT students, teachers need to possess adequate knowledge in dealing with the issue of students' sexual orientation within school context (Greytak & Kosciw, 2014). For example, teachers need to receive training from time to time and always be open-minded when it comes to the issue of sexual orientation. Recent findings also showed that educators who received training regarding this issue are more prepared to discuss LGBT issues in the classrooms and promote LGBT awareness in schools (Matthew & Spano, 2017). When the teachers are able to discuss the topic of LGBT in the classroom, it helps the students to gain more knowledge and understand LGBT individuals better. Ozdemir and Buyukgoze (2016) reported that students who receive LGBT-related lesson and multicultural education show supportive attitudes toward LGBT people.

There is an interesting study conducted by Silveira and Godd (2016) specifically on music teachers' attitudes toward transgender students and toward school practices that support transgender students. A total of 612 music teachers who teach a variety of music subjects in elementary, middle, and high schools, in urban, suburban, and rural areas in United States are involved in this study (Silveira & Godd, 2016). The findings indicated that music teachers were open to ensuring their classrooms support students who may vary from gendered norms. In addition, institutional support such as providing anti-harassment training

and LGBT-inclusive curricula are able to help the music teachers to implement practical support in their classrooms. In addition, the availability of other school resources which support LGBT students help to reduce victimisation and absenteeism among the LGBT students and thus provide an affirming space for them (Greytak et al., 2013).

Some schools have resources that can protect LGBT students such as implement Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) group. Students who join GSA group are more supportive toward LGBT students (Arora et al., 2016; Greytak et al., 2013; Kosciw et al., 2012; Worthen, 2014). GSA are student-led extracurricular groups found in high schools (mostly in United States) that aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for LGBT students in campus (Griffin et al., 2004). As GSA is becoming more popular in high schools across U.S., Worthen (2014) suggested that college students who attended high schools with GSA would portray more supportive attitudes toward LGBT individuals compared to those who did not attend high schools with GSA. Even when considering many control variables such as high school location, town type, and student population size, the results from this study (Worthen, 2014) still showed that the presence of a GSA in a high school is a positive predictor of positive attitudes toward LGBT individuals.

#### 2.4.8.4 Workplace

Researchers have found that many LGBT individuals isolate themselves from the society including at their workplace. LGBT people often face discrimination and victimisation at workplace too (Gocmen & Yilmaz, 2016; Sheridan et al., 2017; Brewster et al., 2012). In United States, Pizer et al. (2012) reported that 37% of lesbian and gay individuals experienced workplace harassment or discrimination within the past five years and 90% of transgender individuals experienced harassment or mistreatment at workplace

due to their sexual orientation. In recent years, LGBT workers start to experience microaggressions instead of discrimination (Resnick & Galupo, 2018). Nadal (2008) defines microaggressions as "brief and common place daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward members of oppressed groups". Microaggressions within the workplace has led to the norms of heterosexist and cissexist and marginalise LGBT workers. They would encounter negative psychological consequences such as anxiety (e.g., dread of going to work), paranoia (e.g., lack of confidence in others), depression (e.g., prefer to isolate themselves from other workers), and worthlessness (e.g., interrogate themselves at workplace) in response to the microaggressions and discrimination face in the workplace (Root, 2003).

Being a stigmatised group, LGBT individuals receive little legal protection at the workplace. Given the challenges faced by the LGBT individuals, Ng et al. (2012) conducted a study to determine the career choice and expectations among the LGBT job seekers, knowing that "anticipated discrimination" will influence their initial career expectations, work values, and preferred work environment. Ng et al. (2012) reported that most of the early LGBT job seekers have different expectations for their careers compared to heterosexual people. Of note, gay men reported a larger salary expectation than lesbians relative to heterosexuals. From the result, Ng et al. (2012) reviewed Elmslie and Tebaldi's (2007) data which indicated that gay men usually earn 11-27% less than heterosexual men while lesbians could enjoy a 17-23% premium over heterosexual women. Also, the findings showed that the LGBT individuals are less willing to accept a less-than-ideal job while reflect the changing societal attitudes toward LGBT individuals and the greater acceptance

level of LGBT people in the workplace. In the context of altruistic values, LGBT individuals reported greater emphasis on altruistic work values and preferred to work for non-profit organisations compared to their heterosexual counterparts which align with the findings of Lewis (2010) on non-profit organisations attracting LGBT individuals who desire to serve others.

There is reasonable evidence to suggest that heteronormative companies and organisations inhibit LGBT employees from engaging fully in the workplace and reduce their work ability due to their sexual identity (Priola et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important for organisations to develop an LGBT-supportive workplace environment so that employees be themselves without worrying about their sexual orientation. A LGBT-supportive workplace will have formal policies that support LGBT workers including same-sex partner benefits, non-discrimination policies, and zero tolerance for heterosexist acts (Huffman et al., 2008). It is because without protections from employers and organisations, LGBT workers face hardship with job attainment and retention (Gehman et al., 2011). In addition, organisations can provide training and workshops for the employers to create exposure of sexual minorities.

#### 2.4.8.5 Social Media

Social media is also one of a powerful socialisation agents as it encourages the users to utilise it from different perspective such as socialisation, entertainment, education, political involvement, and so on (Zawawi et al., 2020). Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become an essential to users. For instance, according to Yu and Oh (2018), 68 percent of people use Facebook and 74 percent surf the web at least once a day in America.

Until today, social media still raise concerns related to cyberbullying and cyber-violence to the minority groups, including the LGBT population. Mkhize et al. (2020) interviewed participants who identified themselves as LGBT retrieved from *Facebook* groups and pages. Results showed that *Facebook* is used by heterosexuals to make harmful and violent comments against the LGBT people. They would display their comments to the public (e.g., "gays are dogs, they can never transform to being women") which highly reflected heteronormative behaviour. The act of attack made by the heterosexual individuals toward LGBT people on social media increased the risk of depression.

Recently, Jerome and Hadzmy (2022) examined the coming out strategies on social media specifically among young gay men in Malaysia. They conducted in-depth interviews with six young, gay-identified men to identify the strategies used by them while disclosing their sexual identity online. The analysis of interview data showed that the Malaysian gay participants tended to follow the coming-out strategies employed by the gay men in Western societies, including "being out and proud", "being out and discreet", and "being closeted on social media", possibly because users on social media sites were more open and accepting towards their gay identities compared to the larger Malaysian community which tend to show negative stigmas towards homosexuality (Jerome & Hadzmy, 2022).

In addition, Stefanita and Buf (2021) reviewed a past study from Hubbard (2020) to examine the psychological effects of online hate speech on the LGBT community. Unlike cyberbullying, hate speech is addressed towards someone or something through verbal statements, non-verbal messages, symbols, images, or memes (Simpson, 2013). From their analysis of online abuse experienced by LGBT individuals, Hubbard (2020) reported that the insults and threats received on social media have an impact on mental health. Online

violence has caused several negative psychological effects including sadness, anxiety, stress, shame and depression. Not only that, the LGBT victims would isolate and hide themselves to reduce the occurrence of hate speech online. Or even worse, the online violence would cause suicidal thoughts among the LGBT community (Hubbard, 2020).

However, despite all the violence and hateful speeches online, social media still play a vital role in expanding the LGBT community around the world. It enables users to create and share content and participate in social networking. Social media allow LGBT individuals to promote the acceptance of LGBT by spreading the knowledge about the LGBT community (Hanckel, 2016; Hanckel & Morris, 2014). Yang (2019) cited a case in China, where a lesbian college student named Qiu Bai, sued the Ministry of Education for its maladministration on homophobic textbooks in a social media environment. This case showed how LGBT activists utilise social media as a platform to enlighten the public during the process of fighting for their equal rights in the society. It also shows how the Internet can change the society relations in a sensitive issue area.

Besides Facebook, Tumblr is also known as a microblogging and social networking site which has been a platform for LGBT users to share their experiences as part of LGBT community. According to Cavalcante (2018), Tumblr offers a space for LGBT people to be their true selves. A participant involved in the interview shared that she openly revealed her sexuality as a pansexual on Tumblr and she received almost no question on this. Another participant also explained his frustration of explaining his gay identity to people in his everyday life. Yet on Tumblr, his identity as a gay is just a common sense. Moreover, Hanckel (2016) also shared that on YouTube, the "LGBT vloggers" like to create videos to share their stories about their sexual identity. Another similar study was conducted by Green

et al. (2015) to explore how video-mediated communication is used by the LGBT community to disclose information relating to LGBT bulling. The disclosure of experience allows the development of empathy between the contributors and the viewers. Not only that, this study (Green et al., 2015) highlighted that disclosure through video-mediated communication allow the public to offering aid and support toward the LGBT community.

## 2.5 Discursive Construction of LGBT

Discourse is known as a social act influenced by events that have occurred simultaneously or have taken place before (Ramanathan et al., 2020). Discourse involves both verbal and non-verbal communication methods to construct "special ways of speaking and constructing social reality" (Vaara et al., 2004, p. 4), and it can shape social interactions and constructs identities through verbal communication (Warriner & Anderson, 2017). In addition, according to Bacchi (2005), there are two analytic traditions on discourse, whereby the first tradition emphasises patterns of speech, usually occuring in interviews or authored texts. The other tradition emphasises the production of political systems of thought. Taken together, analysis of discourse can reveal what people believe about LGBT and act on those beliefs to provide better understanding on Malaysians' tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

In the analysis of discursive construction, researchers draw various concepts from "discourse" which covered different fields such as power, identity, and culture (Connaughton et al., 2017). Identity can be discursively constructed through language (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004). Researchers often view identities as a social construction of the daily language use of specific group of members.

With the basic understanding of how discursive strategies work, van Dijk (2006) proposed a socio-cognitive model of Critical Discourse Analysis (Chapter 22), mainly used

to examine how discourse strategies are "utilised" to create polarity of in-group favouritism and out-group derogation. In other words, CDA aims to uncover the uncertain connections between discourse practices, social practices and social structures. Within CDA, there are three leading approaches: (1) Wodak's (1989) discourse-historical approach, focusing on historical perspectives in explaining and interpreting discourse; (2) Fairclough's (1989, 1995, 2003) socio-semiotic model, examining functional linguistics in discourse studies; and (3) van Dijk's (2006) socio-cognitive approach, emphasising cognitive view of discourse. Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 89), defined discourse as:

a) Related to a macro-topic (and to the argumentation of validity claims, such as truth and normative validity, which involve social actors with different points of view);

b) A cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action; and

c) Socially constituted as well as socially constitutive.

In this thesis, Wodak's (1989) discourse-historical approach will be taken to explain and interpret discourse. The discursive strategies from DHA is useful for analysing different contexts involving different fields such as political, history, cultural, psychological, and sociological depend on the object studied (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

### 2.5.1 Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

Language plays significant role in different social practices as it is used as a tool to serve different interests in social relationships. Wodak (2001, p.2) quotes Habermas (1977) by stating that "language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimise relations of organised power". Also, according to Wodak (2011), Discourse-

Historical Approach (DHA) allows the researchers to be less subjective in processing different data using the concept of triangulation. DHA focuses on the use of linguistic forms in different expressions and manipulations of power and by the means of power, it is not only discursively applied on grammatical forms, but also how a person establishes own's will in social occasion through text or discourse. In other words, a researcher needs to analyse the text first to determine the inconsistencies and dilemmas through the language used. Then, context knowledge and other relevant theories are brought in to interpret the results. After the theoretical part, the researcher makes use the significance of the results by proposing practical applications to improve communication in the future. Several past studies have utilised the DHA in different contexts such as biographies of professional women with their successful stories (Wagner & Wodak, 2006), religion issue (Von Stuckrad, 2013), and even health communication (Hunt & Harvey, 2015).

the DHA theory comes with three main principles: (1) to identify specific contents or topics of a text or discourse, (2) to investigate the discursive strategies employed, and (3) to examine the linguistic means of forms. Practically, DHA is oriented to five questions:

1. How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes, and actions named and referred to linguistically?
2. What characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events, and processes?
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
4. From what perspective are these nominations, attributions, and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly? Are they intensified or mitigated?

(Reisigl & Wodak, 2017)

Using DHA, Sugiharti (2018) examined the representation of Javanese local culture through a first trilogy book entitled "*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*" and the study was based in Indonesia. Sugaharti (2018) has focused the five discursive strategies mentioned above while processing the micro-analysis. For instance, through the analysis using the nomination strategy (guided by the first question in DHA), the texts have indicated the three main human relationships: human interaction with oneself or another human being; human interaction with God; and human interaction with nature.

In addition, Atassi (2014) also employed the DHA as the analytical methodology to explore the effect of war in Syria on the transnational identities of the first generation, married Syrian-Americans. Atassi (2014) studied two married couples who have migrated from Syria and settled down in Texas, America. The conversation was carried out during the table talks aimed at better understanding the constructions of their developing identities, in the context of Syrian crisis in the past, present, and future. Atassi (2014) concluded that the four participants exhibited American culture including the language used, and Syrian identities which is mainly influenced by their past and current experiences, constructing their transnational identities. For example, they would preserve their Syrian identities through the custom practices and dressings (Atassi, 2014).

In the following section, past studies which employed discourse-historical approach in LGBT-related studies conducted in Malaysia will be reviewed.

### 2.5.2 Discursive Construction of LGBT in Malaysia

Past studies have employed other methods to discursively construct LGBT in Malaysia. For instance, Jerome (2013) noticed the need to identity the complexity of the queer Malay Muslims who are found in Dina Zaman's "*I am Muslim"*. Jerome (2013) is

interested to know construction of the queer identities and also the challenges faced by the Malay Muslims as a queer in Dina's work. Jerome (2013) came into the conclusion that the conflict between religious beliefs and sexuality was the biggest challenge to some queer Malay Muslims who wished to establish their identities as a queer as the Malay due to the heteronormative Malay Muslim community which do not perceive queer as a norm.

In addition, Felix (2016) studied how homosexual Muslim men in Malaysia are able to conform to their religion of Islam while constructing their gay identities at the same time. Felix (2016) conducted interviews with 10 Muslim male undergraduates at a public university in Penang, Malaysia and all of them were self-identified as gay men, aged between 21 and 24 years old. Felix (2016) analysed the transcripts using five main principles which were: intersubjective social construction, consciousness of intentionality, typification, institutionalisation, and universe maintenance. Felix (2016) showed that the construction of identity of all the participants were not complete due to the religious influence. For example, the participants would not go against the principles in Islam but at the same time, they would not make drop their gay identity. Instead, they would try to find the balance in between Islamic conservatism and personal recognition as a gay (Felix, 2016).

There is little literature on discursive construction LGBT individuals in Malaysian context using DHA apart from Shamsudin and Ghazali's (2010) work to examine the construction of identities of young homosexual males in Malaysia. They interviewed four self-identified homosexual men and used DHA to understand how they discursively construct their identities as a homosexual man. The results showed that the participants have experienced internal struggle in between the decision of either continue the journey as a homosexual or to follow the societal norm which only views heterosexuals as normal.

Shamsudin and Ghazali (2010) concluded that religion and cultures played a role in shaping the participants' views and attitudes while constructing their identities.

Asyraf Zulkffli and Rashid (2019) also investigated how homosexual Muslim men in Malaysia convey their experiences in relation to their religion but not using DHA. The researchers utilised Twitter and gay dating applications called Grindr and Growlr to recruit the participants. In the interview, only one participant stated that he did not feel sinful for engaging in homosexuality while the other three participants held onto their religious beliefs that homosexuality is sinful in Islamic interpretation. Moreover, the participants in Asyraf Zulkffli and Rashid's (2019) study struggled with wanting to live their homosexual lifestyle and at the same time, they still need to conform to the sexual ideology of Muslim society where homosexuality is forbidden. Asyraf Zulkffli and Rashid's (2019) findings are in line with the findings from Shamsuddin and Ghazali (2011).

Chetty (2014) examined the opinion editorials that were published in the English print media in Malaysia (The Star and The News Straits Times) to understand the way argumentation schemes and linguistic means are employed in the construction of transsexuals' identity. From the analysis, the print media would portrayed transsexuals as individuals but usually involved in vice trade or criticised them for not behaving appropriately. In fact, transsexuals always associated with sex workers and victims of abuse in the society. Besides, the results showed that the print media have higher usage on using "male-to-female transsexuals" and almost excluded female-to-male transsexuals. Chetty (2014) suggested that such label will contribute to the misconception of the term "transsexual" and caused stereotypes at the same time.

From the past studies reviewed, there is credible evidence to suggest the use of DHA in examining how people would construct their discourse in different contexts. There is a need for more studies using DHA to understand theattitudes of heterosexuals towards LGBT individuals, and also the experiences and self-representations of LGBT individuals who are not Muslim as this group has been the focus of other studies like Asyraf Zulkffli and Rashid (2019) and Shamsuddin and Ghazali (2011).

## 2.6 Summary

LGBT has been one of the major issues discussed all over the world including Malaysia. There is always a debate on whether LGBT deserves the same human rights, freedom to live and practice sexual preference despite being perceived as unconventional by the religious society (Sabri et al., 2014). There are also many past studies which investigate people's perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge on LGBT in different social contexts not only in other countries (Boch, 2012; Copp & Koehler, 2017; Dessel & Rodenborg, 2016; Horn, 2006; and Passani & Debicki, 2016). These studies have provided insights on generally discriminatory views of LGBT.

As in Malaysia, due to the conservative society norms and being an Islamic country, most of the studies conducted invested on how Malaysians view LGBT practice and the LGBT individuals in relation to their religious beliefs, age, sexual orientation, gender, and ethnic groups (Abdullah & Amat, 2019; Cheah & Singaravelu, 2017; Hesamuddin et al., 2019; and Mokhtar et al., 2019). These studies only examined either heterosexuals or LGBT individuals. There were limited studies which included both heterosexuals and LGBT individuals apart from Jerome et al. (2021) who explored societal receptivity towards LGBT culture in Malaysia from the perspective of both LGBT and heterosexuals. The researchers

adapted socialisation and integration theory used by Janssen and Scheepers (2019) in their study to examine societal rejection of homosexuality. However, Jerome et al. (2021) only adapted the qualitative method with only 29 Malaysians involved in the interview. There is no study so far which adapted the mixed method in achieving a deeper understanding on Malaysians' attitude towards LGBT individuals.

The discursive construction of Muslim LGBT individuals revealed their struggles to reconcile their gender identity and their religion (Asyraf Zulkiffli & Rahsid, 2019; Chetty, 2014; Shamsuddin & Ghazali, 2011). These researchers used DHA but this approach was only used in analysing the discursive construction of the homosexual participants and print media on transgender issues. In spite of this, there are no study that has been conducted to use discourse-historical approach in exploring how heterosexual and LGBT Malaysians discursively construct their tolerance on the LGBT issue.

In short, there is a knowledge gap on how the discursive construction of tolerance among the Malaysians toward LGBT individuals might reveal points of similarities or differences when compared with tolerance towards LGBT based on questionnaire data. By analysing views on LGBT representations through the combination of discourse, including words, phrases, and contained linguistic features using DHA the study will provide a deeper understanding on Malaysians' tolerance level toward LGBT individuals in relation to different background variables.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the research will be described in this chapter: research design, population and sample, and research instrument used. This chapter also describes the data collection procedures and data analysis procedures. In addition, this chapter described pilot study conducted in order to determine the reliability of the instruments used.

## 3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed method research design which incorporates techniques from qualitative and quantitative to examine the tolerance towards LGBT individuals among Malaysians through the discourse historical approach. In a mixed method research design, both quantitative and/or qualitative data are collected in a single study concurrently or sequentially, and the data are then integrated along the research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). In the present study, the quantitative data took the form of questionnaire data and the results presented in frequencies and percentages show the patterns in a group of substantial size, achieving breadth in the study on tolerance towards LGBT. Qualitative data were from interviews with a smaller number of participants and the results were presented in text and visual form to show more in-depth insights into LGBT tolerance. Moreover, according to Byrne and Humble (2007), all methods have their limitations when it comes to data collection, while the mixed method design can help to complement the strengths of each approach and balance out the disadvantages of a certain approach.

In addition, mixed method research design is suitable to be used in applied research especially when it is needed to understand complexities of certain social phenomena (Byrne

& Humble, 2007). Therefore, to explore the social phenomenon of Malaysians' tolerance towards LGBT individuals, it is best to use mixed method design and the questionnaire is a cross-sectional study conducted at one point in time. The interviews were conducted during the same time period.

Figure 3.1 shows the conceptual framework of this study, where the relationship among three independent variables and two dependent variables are investigated. The first independent variable is demographic characteristics (IV1), which includes age, ethnic, educational background, monthly income, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The second and third independent variables are the construct of intergroup contact with LGBT individuals (IV2) and social knowledge about LGBT individuals (IV3) respectively. The two dependent variables are tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2). Data on the three independent variables and two dependent variables were obtained through the questionnaire. The interviews also focussed on the same variables but the information were sought through indirect questions.

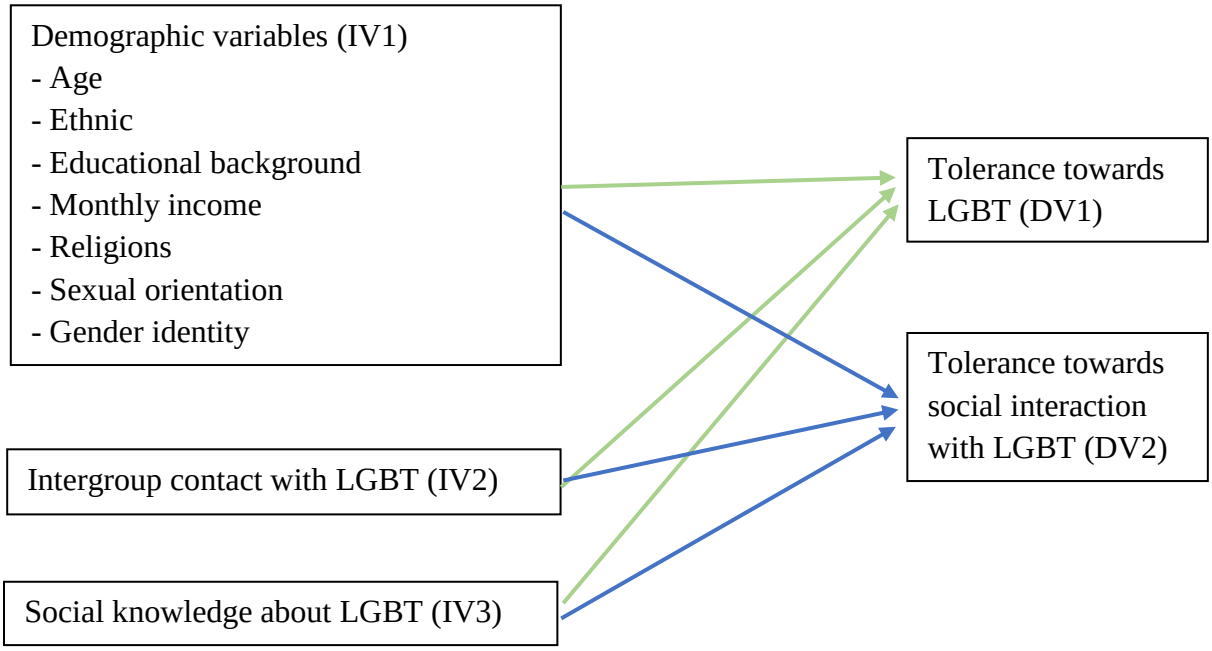


**Figure 3.1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study

## 3.2 Participants

This study involved two sets of participants: participants who were involved in answering questionnaire and participants whom were involved in the interview. Participants who answered the questionnaire and participated in the interview are referred to as "questionnaire participants" and "interview participants" where there might be confusion. In this thesis, the term "participants" is used to facilitate the final description of overall conclusions on the tolerance of the participants towards LGBT based on comparisons of the questionnaire and interview results.

There were 413 participants who fit the selection criteria in answering the questionnaire. The selection criteria for the questionnaire participants were those who are officially Malaysian citizens with a minimum age of 18 so that parental consent to participate in the study is not needed. No other criteria were used for exclusion. According to the

Malaysian Penal Code (Act 574), Section 375, the consent age in Malaysia was 16 years old. However, due to the ethics consideration of this study, only participants who are at least 18 years old or above are eligible to take part in this study.

The questionnaire participants are chosen through purposive sampling technique. It is a technique whereby the researcher recruits a specific participant within the population to participate in the study because they fulfil the selection criteria. The number of questionnaire participants was sufficient based on the calculation of sample size. The sample size was determined based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula for sample size calculation whereby the sample size should not be less than 382 if the population is above 100,000. In 2019, Department of Statistics Malaysia reported that Malaysia has a population of over 32 million.

Table 3.1 shows the demographic characteristics of 413 participants who filled in the questionnaire. The participants ranged from 18 years old to over 60 years old. The participants were from different ethnic groups, where the majority are Chinese (71.7%), followed by Malay (18.6%), Sarawak indigenous (4.6%), Indian (2.2%), others (including Sabah indigenous). Since most of the participants are Chinese, it is not surprising to see Christianity (42.4%) and Buddhism (30.8%) being the two religions with highest frequency, followed by Islam (19.6%), no religion (5.1%), Hinduism (1.7%), and others (0.5%).

**Table 3.1:** Demographic Characteristics of Questionnaire Participants (N=413)

| Characteristics | n | % |
|---|---|---|
| Age | | |
| 21-30 | 340 | 82.3 |
| 31-40 | 30 | 7.3 |
| 51-60 | 17 | 4.1 |
| Below 20 | 16 | 3.9 |
| 41-50 | 6 | 1.5 |
| 61-70 | 4 | 1.0 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ethnic group | | |
| Chinese | 296 | 71.7 |
| Malay | 77 | 18.6 |
| Sarawak indigenous | 19 | 4.6 |
| Indian | 9 | 2.2 |
| Others | 7 | 1.7 |
| Sabah indigenous | 5 | 1.2 |
| Education background | | |
| Degree | 342 | 82.8 |
| Diploma | 35 | 8.5 |
| Form 5/SPM/MCE/Certificate | 17 | 4.1 |
| Form 6 | 11 | 2.7 |
| Form 3/PT3/PMR/LCE | 7 | 1.7 |
| Primary 6 or lower | 1 | 0.2 |
| Monthly income | | |
| Below RM2000 | 215 | 52.1 |
| RM2000-RM3999 | 129 | 31.2 |
| RM4000-RM5999 | 43 | 10.4 |
| RM8000-RM9999 | 9 | 2.2 |
| RM10000 and above | 9 | 2.2 |
| RM6000-RM7999 | 8 | 1.9 |
| Religion | | |
| Buddhism | 127 | 30.8 |
| Christianity | 175 | 42.4 |
| Islam | 81 | 19.6 |
| No religion | 21 | 5.1 |
| Hinduism | 7 | 1.7 |
| Others | 2 | 0.5 |
| Sexual orientation | | |
| Heterosexual (Female or Male) | 364 | 88.1 |
| Other | 16 | 3.9 |
| Bisexual | 14 | 3.4 |
| Gay | 11 | 2.7 |
| Lesbian | 8 | 1.9 |
| Gender identity | | |
| Female | 281 | 68.0 |
| Male | 128 | 31.0 |
| Other | 2 | 0.5 |
| Intersex Female | 1 | 0.2 |
| Transgender Male | 1 | 0.2 |

A majority of the participants who filled in the questionnaire had a degree (82.8%), followed by diploma (8.5%), Form 5/SPM/MCE/Certificate (4.1%), Form 6 (2.7%), Form 3/PT3/PMR/LCE (1.7%), and lastly where only one participant (0.2%) studied up to Primary

6. For the monthly income, about half of the participants (51.8%) had a monthly income below RM2,000. The second highest income range reported was RM 2,001 to RM3,999 (32.1%). However, only 16.7% of the participants reported their monthly income to be above RM4,000.

Next, in terms of sexual orientation, more heterosexuals were among the participants who filled in the questionnaire (88.1%). Since LGBT is known as a minority group, only 3.9% identified as having other sexual orientations, 3.4% as bisexual, 2.7% as gay, and 1.9% as lesbian. Lastly, in terms of gender identity, 68.0% identified as female, followed by 31.0% male, 0.5% others, 0.2% intersex female and transgender male.

Next, the interview participants are described. The selection criteria were the same as for questionnaire participants, that is, the interview participants must be aged at least 18 years old and above and identified as Malaysians in order to take part in the interview. The interviews were conducted with a sample of 20 individuals (14 heterosexuals and six non-heterosexuals) in Malaysia. The procedures to find the interview participants are described in Section 3.4, Data collection procedures.

Table 3.2 shows the demographic characteristics of the interview participants. There were more female participants (65.0%), and most of the participants were aged 21 to 30 (80.0%). A majority of the interview participants identified themselves as heterosexuals (70.0%). As for the LGBT participants, two (10.0%) identified as other, which is non-binary and cisgender female. The participants were from different ethnic groups: Chinese (50.0%), Malay (45.0%), and Sarawak indigenous (5.0%). Among the participants, there were more Muslims (45.0%) than Christians (25.0%) and Buddhists (10.0%). Only one participant was

from other religions (5.0%). In addition, some interview participants had also filled in the questionnaire.

**Table 3.2:** Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants (N=20)

| Characteristics | n | % |
|---|---|---|
| Age | | |
| 21-30 | 16 | 80.0 |
| 31-40 | 3 | 15.0 |
| 41-50 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Ethnic group | | |
| Chinese | 10 | 50.0 |
| Malay | 9 | 45.0 |
| Sarawak indigenous | 1 | 5.0 |
| Education background | | |
| Degree | 16 | 80.0 |
| Master | 3 | 15.0 |
| Diploma | 1 | 5.0 |
| Monthly income | | |
| RM2000-RM3999 | 9 | 47.4 |
| Below RM2000 | 7 | 36.8 |
| RM4000-RM5999 | 2 | 10.5 |
| RM6000 and above | 1 | 5.3 |
| *One participant did not want to disclose | | |
| Religion | | |
| Islam | 9 | 45.0 |
| Christianity | 7 | 35.0 |
| Buddhism | 2 | 20.0 |
| No religion | 1 | 5.0 |
| Others | 1 | 5.0 |
| Sexual orientation | | |
| Heterosexual | 14 | 70.0 |
| Gay | 4 | 20.0 |
| Lesbian | 1 | 5.0 |
| Bisexual | 1 | 5.0 |
| Gender identity | | |
| Female | 13 | 65.0 |
| Male | 5 | 25.0 |
| Other | 2 | 10.0 |

## 3.3 Instruments

This section describes the questionnaire and the interview guide.

### 3.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was constructed based on the conceptual framework for the study. The items in the questionnaire were adapted from various past studies as shown in Table 3.3. The table also shows the Cronbach Alpha values for the different sections of the questionnaire for measuring various constructs.

**Table 3.3:** Sources for questionnaire items on Malaysians' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| Construct | Author(s) and Original Scale | Cronbach Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals (Section B) | | .931 |
| B1 | • Bidell (2005) | |
| B2 | • Bidell (2005) | |
| B3 | • Herek (1988) – Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale<br>• Logie et al. (2007) – LGBT Assessment Scale (LGBTAS) | |
| B4 | • Dodge et al. (2016) – Bisexualities: Indiana Attitudes Scale (BIAS-m) | |
| B5 | • Kite and Deux (1986) – ATH<br>• Larsen et al. (1980) – HATH | |
| B6 | • Hill and Willoughby (2005) – Genderism and Transphobia Scale | |
| B7 | • Herek (1988) – Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale<br>• Mohr and Rochlen (1999) – Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality Scale (ARBS-F) | |
| B8 | • Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G) | |
| B9 | • Herek (1988) – Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale<br>• LaMar and Kite (1998) | |
| B10 | • (New item) | |
| B11 | • Eliason (2000) | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • Eliason and Hughes (2004)<br>• Herek (1988) – Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale<br>• Walch et al. (2012) – Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals Scale | |
| B12 | • Lannuti and Lachlan (2007) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS) | |
| B13 | • Herek (1988) – Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale | |
| Social knowledge (Morality) (Section C) | | .970 |
| C1 | • Passani and Debicki (2016) | |
| C2 | • Passani and Debicki (2016) | |
| C3 | • Larsen et al. (1980) – HATH | |
| C4 | • Dodge et al. (2016) – Bisexualities: Indiana Attitudes Scale (BIAS-m) | |
| C5 | • Herek (1988) – Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale<br>• LaMar and Kite (1998)<br>• Lannuti and Lachlan (2007) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS)<br>• Passani and Debicki (2016) | |
| C6 | • Lannuti and Lachlan (2007) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS)<br>• Passani and Debicki (2016)<br>• Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-L) | |
| C7 | • Lannuti and Lachlan (2007) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS) | |
| C8 | • Passani and Debicki (2016) | |
| C9 | • Passani and Debicki (2016) | |
| Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals (Section D) | | .937 |
| D1 | • Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G and MHS-L) | |
| D2 | • LaMar and Kite (1998)<br>• Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G and MHS-L) | |
| D3 | • Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G and MHS-L) | |
| D4 | • Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G and MHS-L) | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| D5 | • Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G and MHS-G) | |
| D6 | • Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G and MHS-L) | |
| D7 | • Kite and Deux (1986) – ATH<br>• Siebert et al. (2009) – Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuals (IAH)<br>• Herek (1988) – Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale | |
| D8 | • Kite and Deux (1986) – ATH<br>• Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G and MHS-L)<br>• Wright Jr et al. (1999) – Reduced version of the Homophobia Scale | |
| D9 | • Eliason and Hughes (2004)<br>• Kite and Deux (1986) – ATH<br>• Raja and Stoke (1998) – Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G and MHS-G)<br>• Walch et al. (2012) – Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals Scale<br>• Woodford (2012)<br>• Wright Jr et al. (1999) – Reduced version of the Homophobia Scale | |
| D10 | • Siebert et al. (2009) – Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuals (IAH)<br>• Walch et al. (2012) – Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals Scale | |
| Intergroup contact with LGBT (Section E) | | .867 |
| E1: | • (New item) | |
| E2 | • Bidell (2005)<br>• Sheridan et al. (2017) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS) | |
| E3 | • Sheridan et al. (2017) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS)<br>• Logie et al. (2007) – LGBT Assessment Scale (LGBTAS) | |
| E4 | • Woodford (2012) | |
| E5 | • Sheridan et al. (2017) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS) | |
| E6 | • Lannuti and Lachlan (2007) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex | |
| E7 | • Worthington et el. (2005) – The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals (LGB-KASH) | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| E8 | • Worthington et el. (2005) – The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals (LGB-KASH)<br>• Wright Jr et al. (1999) – Reduced version of the Homophobia Scale | |
| E9 | • Lannuti and Lachlan (2007) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex | |
| E10 | • Lannuti and Lachlan (2007) – Attitude Toward Same-Sex | |
| E11 | • Mohr and Fassinger (1998) – Lesbian and Gay Identity Scale (LGIS) | |

The questionnaire contains six sections and uses a seven-point Likert scale except for the first section on demographic characteristics. The seven-point Likert scale has three main advantages, namely, it can help to ensure the granularity in results and provide a better reflection of the respondents' true evaluation (Bertram, 2007), it is believed to be a more sensitive and robust measure (Sauro & Dumas, 2009), and it can also reflect higher perceived accuracy (Diefenbach et al., 1993).

In the questionnaire, the first section elicited demographic variables from the participants, which was also the first independent variable (IV1) of this study. The demographic variables elicited included the town of residence, age, ethnic group, occupation, educational background, monthly income, religion. Although sexual orientation and gender identity were not demographic variables, both were included under this section in order to collect the information from the participants more easily.

The second section of the questionnaire measured the first dependent variable (DV1), tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Participants were instructed to indicate whether they agree with these views listed on LGBT individuals. There were 13 items. The four items that required reverse scoring were: (1) "People are born with LGBT tendencis"; (2) "Same-sex

couples marrying is acceptable"; (3) LGBT sexual orientation is not a problem but society makes it a problem; and (4) LGBT sexual orientation is a natural expression of sexuality. Items in this section were adapted from ATH by Kite and Deux (1986), Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality Scale (ARBS-F) by Mohr and Rochlen (1999), Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale by Herek (1988), Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS) by Lannuti and Lachlan (2008), Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals Scale by Walch et al. (2012), Bidell (2005), Bisexualities: Indiania Attitudes Scale (BIAS-m) by Dodge et al. (2016), Eliason and Hughes (2004), Genderism and Transphobia Scale by Hill and Willoughby (2005), HATH by Larsen, Reed, and Hoffman (1980), Lamar and Kite (1998), LGBT Assessment Scale (LGBTAS) by Logie, Bridge, and Bridge (2007), and Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-G) by Raja and Stoke (1998). This section also included on self-constructed item which is, "People are born with LGBT tendencies". The item has been examined by the content experts to ensure its validity. The content experts are the two supervisors, namely, Professor Dr Ting Su Hie and Dr Collin Jerome. Both of them have conducted research on LGBT, and Dr Collin Jerome has a long-standing research expertise in LGBT studies. The Cronbach Alpha value for this section shows excellent reliability ($\alpha$=.931).

The third section measured the third independent variable (IV3) which is the social knowledge on morality. It includes nine items where participants need to indicate their views on LGBT rights. Two examples of items are "LGBT individuals should stand up for their rights", "LGBT individuals should be free to date whoever they want", and "LGBT couples should have the right to adopt a child". The items were adapted from different past measures, namely, Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale by Herek (1988), Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS) by Lannuti and Lachlan (2008), Bisexualities: Indiania

Attitudes Scale (BIAS-m) by Dodge et al. (2016), HATH by Larsen, Reed, and Hoffman (1980), LaMar and Kite (1998), Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-L) by Raja and Stoke (1998), and Passani and Debicki (2016). The reliability analysis showed a Cronbach alpha value of 0.970, proved a high reliability of the scale.

The fourth section measured the second dependent variable (DV2), the tolerance level towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. It included 10 items, where participants were instructed to indicate whether they can accept LGBT in the society. Three items required reverse scoring, and these items were: (1) "I can accept if my religious leader is LGBT"; (2) "I can accept if my child is LGBT"; and (3) "If I found out my friend is LGBT, the friendship is over". The items were adapted from past studies, namely, ATH by Kite and Deux (1986), Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale by Herek (1988), Attitudes Toward Transgender Individuals Scale by Walch et al. (2012), Eliason and Hughes (2004), Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuals (IAH) by Siebert et al. (2009), LaMar and Kite (1998), Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS-L) and (MHS-G) by Raja and Stoke (1998), Reduced version of Homophobia Scale by Wright Jr et al. (1999), and Woodford (2012). This section included a self-constructed item which is, "I can accept if my close relative is LGBT". The item has been examined by the content experts to ensure its validity. The relevant expertise of the content experts is explained in Section 3.3.1, page number 75. Also, this scale showed high internal consistency with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.937.

The last section of the questionnaire measured the second dependent variable (DV2) which is the tolerance level towards the social interaction with LGBT individuals. This section contained 11 items on the intergroup contact with LGBT individuals. The intergroup contact here does not necessarily mean physical contact but also mean indirect contact as

well. This is indicated by some items like “I have attended talks on LGBT”, and “I have signed petitions asking the government to ensure LGBT individuals have equal rights to work”. An item on direct contact is “I know a LGBT couple”. The items were adapted from various past measures including Attitude Towards Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS) by Lannuti and Lachlan (2008), Bidell (2005), LGBT Assessment Scale (LGBTAS) by Logie et al. (2007), Woodford (2012), Sheridan et al. (2017), and The Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals (LGB-KASH) by Worthington et al. (2005). The reliability analysis (Cronbach Alpha) showed good internal consistency (α=.867). The scales were developed to measure tolerance level towards LGBT individuals among the Malaysians. Therefore, modifications were made to the items to suit the Malaysian context. Particularly, words were refined to standardise the use of terms. For example, the term of “LGBT” was used throughout the questionnaire although the items adapted from other studies used the word “homosexual”, “bisexual”, “transgender”, or other related terms. Furthermore, wording that was too positive or too negative are avoided. For instance, “Gay men shouldn’t be allowed to join the military” was changed to “I can accept if a military office is LGBT”. A pilot study was conducted with 30 participants on the questionnaire as suggested by Browne (1995), a general flat rule of using “at least 30 subjects or greater to estimate a parameter”. The reliability analysis showed Cronbach’s Alpha value of .74 reflects a high reliability in the instrument as it is above the recommended α value of .70 (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, the researcher decided not to exclude or delete any items from the questionnaire to obtain higher Cronbach’s Alpha value. For content validity, the instruments have been examined by the content experts as suggested by Thorn and Deitz (1989).

Altogether, 43 items were constructed to measure the tolerance towards LGBT individuals among Malaysians were factor analysed using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation. The analysis yielded six factors explaining a total of 71.028% of the variance for the whole set of variables. The Barlett's Test of Sphericity is then conducted to confirm that the data are correlated. The value of .963 indicated that the test variables are inter-correlated with is greater than the suggested value of .60 (Kaiser, 1974).

**Table 3.4:** KMO and Bartlett's Test Result

| **KMO and Bartlett's Test** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .963 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 17265.601 |
| | Df | 903 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

A consent form before answering the questionnaire was attached to the first page of the Google form while a separate consent form is given to the interview participants. After the participants have read the information about the purpose of the study, understood that their participation was voluntarily and that their responses would be confidential and used responsibly in the study, they filled in the consent form. The research was approved by the Ethic Committee for Research and the letter of ethics clearance granting approval to the research entitled "Perceptions Towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) in Malaysia was dated 8 December 2020, with the reference number, HREC(BP)2020(1)/02.

### 3.3.2 Interview guide

The next instrument is a semi-structured interview guide used to collect data on the participants' views on being LGBT and heterosexuals. Interview is known as a conversation

or comprehensive interview which happens individually with a small number of participants in order to obtain and explore their perspectives and opinions for a particular issue (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

For the interview guide, the questions for heterosexual participants were adapted from Hesamuddin et al. (2019) and the questions for LGBT participants were adapted from Nadal et al. (2015). The questions were checked by the two content experts mentioned in Section 3.3.1, page number 75 and by another researcher in the social sciences to ensure that they fit the purpose of the study and elicit the relevant information without being too direct. These interview questions were used by other researchers and found suitable to understand the perspectives of heterosexuals (Yeo et al., 2021; Ahmad et al., 2021), and LGBT individuals (Jerome et al., 2021).

1. Interview guide for heterosexual participants:

   1a. In your opinion, how does our society view LGBT?

   - *Do they accept or reject LGBT? Why?*
   - *How do they show the rejection or acceptance?*

   1b. What is the strongest influence on their views?

   1c. How do you yourself view LGBT?

   - *Do you accept or reject LGBT?*

   1d. What is the strongest influence on your view?

2. Interview guide for LGBT participants:

   2a. Tell me your story/experience of being an LGBT.

2b. Do you remember when you came out? What was the event or experience that trigged it?

- *Can you remember what made you come out? Whom did you first come out to?*
- *How did you feel then? How do you feel now? What was your initial reaction? How did you cope with it?*

## 3.4 Data Collection Procedures

This section explains the data collection procedures to obtain the questionnaire data and the interview data.

### 3.4.1 Data Collection Procedures for Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed online by sharing the Google Form link on different social media platforms and online groups which consisted of both LGBT and heterosexual individuals. To find heterosexual individuals to fill in the questionnaire was generally easy. However, to find LGBT participants, it was more difficult because many of them do not make their sexual orientation known to the wider community. Therefore, the researcher started with one or two social contacts who had come out as LGBT individuals. Through them, she was put in touch with the active LGBT groups on social media. As most of the groups were set to private access, researcher had first contacted the group admin to indicate the purpose of this study and requested help to share the link in the group. The social media platforms used to recruit questionnaire participants included WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, and Instagram. Distributing the questionnaire online has the advantages as it can better access individuals at distant locations. It is also convenient to collect the automated

data, which save researcher's time and effort. More importantly, it gave the questionnaire participants anonymity as their names and contacts were not required to fill in the online questionnaire.

The first part of the questionnaire had information on the purpose of this study, voluntary participation, confidential information and dissemination of group results in research reports. The information was provided in straightforward language was used so that the participants could make an informed decision before deciding whether or not to fill in the questionnaire. Those who agreed to participate in the study ticked all of the six statements to indicate that they have read and understood the statements. Those who did not agree to participate were directed to an exit page. However, participants who did not meet the basic requirement such as for those who were not Malaysians and did not reach the minimum age of 18 years old were omitted from this study. To ensure a higher return rate, the researcher reminded participants to submit the questionnaire through personal message or resent the questionnaire link a second time calling for participation in the study.

After the questionnaire responses exceeded the target of 400 participants, the researcher closed the Google Forms. All the data were downloaded as an Excel sheet from the Google Forms. Lastly, the Excel file was saved for data analysis.

### 3.4.2 Data Collection Procedures for Interview

In this study, all the interviews were carried out as individual interviews, that is, only one interviewer interviewing one participant at one time. Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated that a one-on-one interview can help to obtain meaning directly created by two people through the interview process.

There were 20 interview participants, and 14 participants were identified as heterosexuals and six participants were identified as LGBT. First, researcher contacted the heterosexual participants, mainly the close acquaintances of the researcher, who were willing to take part in the interview. The researcher contacted the eligible participants through different ways including text message, WhatsApp, and phone calls and invited the participants by informing the purpose of this study. After the heterosexual participants agreed to take part in the interview, the date and time was scheduled. A confirmation text was sent to the participants and stated the approximate time of 20 minutes for the interview. Also, demographic information was collected from the interview participants using the first section of the questionnaire.

On the day of scheduled interview, before the interview started, the researcher explained again the purpose of this study and assured the confidentiality of the heterosexual participants regarding their disclosed information. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the interviews were conducted online through Zoom with its built-in audio recorder. The audio files are then saved and transcribed in the future into word documents.

After interviewing heterosexual participants, the researcher started to look for LGBT participants for the interviews. The researcher sought the help of the heterosexual participants who said that they had LGBT friends during the interviews. After the interviews ended, the researcher politely requested the heterosexual participants to help ask if their LGBT friends were comfortable and willing to take part in the study. After the permission was granted, the researcher got the contact number or the social media account to make a formal invitation to the LGBT participants through phone calls or direct message. The researcher explained the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality of

responses, and dissemination of findings in research reports. When the LGBT participants agreed to take part in the interviews, the researcher scheduled the interviews and sent the details to the LGBT participants. The same process of sending the confirmation of the date of the interview and the approximate time for the interviews was carried out. The researcher also collected their demographic information.

Before the interviews get started, researcher explained the purpose of this study to LGBT participants and assured that all the information shared will be kept confidential. Similarly, all the interviews were carried out online through Zoom and the audios were recorded. The audio files were then saved.

## 3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

This section explains the procedures for the analysis of the questionnaire data and the interview data.

### 3.5.1 Data Analysis Procedures for Questionnaire

The questionnaire items were analysed using SPSS Version 26.0. All the sections except for demographic information were analysed using the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation). However, before conducting the analysis, it is important to ensure all the questionnaire items were consistent with each other in terms of the mean of agreement or disagreement. In this present study, seven items were recoded using "recode into different variables" in SPSS and the items were presented in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5:** Recoded Questionnaire Items

| Section B: Participants' Views on LGBT Individuals |
|---|
| 3. People are *(not)* born with LGBT tendencies |
| 7. Same-sex couples marrying is *(not)* acceptable |
| 8. LGBT sexual orientation is *(not)* a natural expression of sexuality |

| |
|---|
| 11. LGBT sexual orientation is not a problem but society makes it a problem *(LGBT sexual orientation is a problem but society does not make it a problem)* |
| Section D: Participants' Acceptance Level towards LGBT in Society |
| 1. If I found out my friend is LGBT, the friendship is *(not)* over |
| 2. If I found out a neighbour is LGBT, I will not talk to him or her *(If I found out a neighbour is LGBT, I will talk to him or her)* |
| 4. If I found out my child's teacher is LGBT, I will *(not)* remove my child from the class |

Table 3.5 shows the items which were recoded for reverse scoring. First, in Section B, items 3, 7, 8, and 11 were recoded, making the larger score an indication of positive attitudes towards LGBT and the lower score an indication of negative attitudes towards LGBT. Similarly, in Section D, items 1, 2, and 4 were recoded which made them more positively phrased in accepting LGBT in society.

Then, according to the conceptual framework proposed, the researcher needed to find out if demographic characteristics of the participants (IV1) influenced the scores on the other constructs in the study, namely, intergroup contact with LGBT (IV2), and social knowledge on morality (IV3) and the tolerance towards LGBT sexual orientation (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT (DV2). One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test and Spearman correlation test were used according to the type of data.

Demographic characteristics included seven characteristics which are age, ethnicity, educational background, monthly income, and religion. In addition, although sexual orientation and gender identity are not demographic characteristics, both of these variables were included in the statistical tests as well to determine if these characteristics are able to influence the outcome which is the participants' tolerance towards LGBT sexual orientation and towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. One-Way ANOVA test was carried out for all the demographic characteristics to determine if they significantly influenced the participants' tolerance towards LGBT sexual orientation. Then, the Tukey HSD post-hoc

analysis was further carried out for demographic characteristics which showed a significant p-value of <.05 in the ANOVA test. The same process was carried out to determine if these characteristics can significantly influence the participants' tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. On a side note, for the gender identity, there were less than three participants who identified themselves as "other" (n=2), "intersex female" (n=1) and "transgender male" (n=1) respectively. Thus, they were grouped together into one group (named as "others") in order to run the ANOVA test. The second test was to examine whether there were any significant differences between participants with different levels of intergroup contact and their attitudes towards LGBT. As the items to measure participants' intergroup contact with LGBT are all in seven-point Likert scale, the researcher used the SPSS to divide the intergroup contact variable into three levels: low contact, moderate contact, and high contact with the LGBT individuals. Then, the One-Way ANOVA test was carried out to determine the influence of intergroup contact with LGBT on two measures, namely, participants' tolerance towards LGBT as well as the tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT. Finally, the last independent variable in the questionnaire was social knowledge. Spearman's correlation test was carried out to assess if social knowledge can significantly influence participants' attitudes toward LGBT individuals. Spearman rho is able to assess how well a test measures linear correlation between the variables and provides a coefficient between -1 and +1 to indicate a range of negative to positive correlation.

### 3.5.2 Data Analysis Procedures for Interview

For the interview data, the audio recordings were transcribed and typed into word documents. Then, the interview transcripts were analysed using the analysis framework – Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) DHA and related research publications like Shamsudin and

Ghazali (2010). The analysis of the interview data was to address Objective 5 of this study which is to examine the discursive strategies and linguistic features used by the Malaysians to construct the tolerance level towards LGBT individuals. Particularly, the interview data in this study weanalysed based on the five DHA strategies, explained in Chapter 3.

According to the Table 3.5, the first discursive strategy is the nomination strategy (How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?). This strategy looks at how social actors, objects, phenomena and events are referred to linguistically. In this study, participants who were heterosexuals and LGBT were involved to represent their "groups" respectively. The researcher analysed the words used whether the "persons" are referred to LGBT or heterosexuals. For instance, the word "gay" is referred to LGBT while the word "my family" might refer to heterosexuals depending on how the participants addressed the social actors. Another way to do that is through the use of in-groups and out-groups in a categorical way and this is when the use of pronouns become significant to differentiate between "Us" and "Them". Other linguistic devices that are functional in this strategy included metaphors, metonymy, and synecdoche.

The second discursive strategy is the predication strategy (What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?). According to KhosraviNil (2010, p. 57), the predication strategy characterises social actors in accordance with stereotypical, evaluative, attribution of positive or negative traits in linguistic forms, whether the actors were being labelled positively or negatively. In this case, the researcher analysed the words or phrases which are related to the characteristics describing LGBT or heterosexual individuals, including their actions and properties. For instance, the phrase "sinful in Islam" is the one characteristic of LGBT (gay) while "more

open" can be the positive trait of a non-LGBT viewing LGBT persons. Thus, the nomination and predication strategies were related to one another and one may predetermine the other because there was a correlation between the linguistic choices and the conventional used of contexts (Ochs, 1996).

The third discursive strategy is the argumentation strategy, the means of persuading the audiences by justifying and legitimising actors, objects, and phenomena (Fetzer, 2007). In this study, the researcher is required to analyse the justification and questioning the truth and rightness on participants' attitudes towards LGBT (What arguments are employed in the discourse in questions?). One example for rightness is "Malaysia tradition caused LGBT to hide themselves" and one example for truth is "people who has contact with LGBT is more likely to accept LGBT".

The next discursive strategy is known as perspectivation. It is used to analyse the point of view and the distance from what or who is talked about (From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?). This strategy helps to determine the detachment or involvement and position one's point of view in line with their tolerance towards LGBT individuals. For instance, the phrase which included the first-person point of view (e.g., I, we, our) with direct speech indicate a closeness in distance while expressing the opinions.

The last discursive strategy is intensification or mitigation. This strategy helps to analyse whether the "utterances articulated are intensified or mitigated". This strategy involved several linguistic features which might indicate the intensification or mitigation in the verbal expressions. For example, augmentatives (e.g., actually) can indicate intensification and hesitations (e.g., I guess) can indicate mitigation. However, all of the

linguistic features were analysed by looking the whole text together before confirming whether it is articulated overtly or covertly. The discursive strategies are explained in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.6:** Framework for Analysing Discursive Construction of Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017)

| **Strategy** | **Objective** | **Device** | **Linguistic function** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nomination | Discursive construction of social actors, objects/ phenomena/ events and processes/ actions | • Membership categorisation devices, deictic, anthroponyms, etc.<br>• Tropes such as metaphors, metonymies and synecdoche.<br>• Verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions, etc | Ways of naming |
| Predication | Discursive qualification of social actors, objects, phenomena, events/ processes and actions (more or less positively or negatively) | • Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits (e.g. in the form of adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, conjunctional clauses, infinitive clauses and participial clauses or groups)<br>• Explicit predicates or predicative nouns/ adjectives/ pronouns<br>• Collocations<br>• Explicit comparisons, similes, metaphors and other rhetorical figures (including metonymies, hyperboles, litotes, euphemisms)<br>• Allusions, evocations, and presuppositions/ implicatures, etc. | Ways of describing |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Argumentation | Justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness | • Topoi (formal or more content-related)<br>• Fallacies | Ways of reasoning |
| Perspectivization | Positioning speaker's or writer's point of view and expressing involvement or distance | • Deictics<br>• Direct, indirect or free indirect speech<br>• Quotation marks, discourse markers/ particles<br>• Metaphors<br>• Animating prosody, etc. | Ways of positioning |
| Intensification, mitigation | Modifying (intensifying or mitigating) the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances | • Diminutives or augmentatives<br>• (modal) particles, tag questions, subjunctive, hesitations, vague expressions, etc.<br>• Hyperboles, litotes<br>• Indirect speech acts (e.g. question instead of assertion)<br>• Verbs of saying, feeling, thinking, etc. | Ways of scaling |

The DHA identified three dimensions in terms of generating textual meaning and discourse structure: the topics, discursive strategies, and linguistics realisation. These three dimensions were covered throughout to complement the linguistic analysis of the data. Particularly, the researcher analysed all the transcripts by:

a) looking at the content and topics,

b) identifying the discursive strategies, and

c) examining the linguistic means and context-dependent linguistic realisations.

## 3.6 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are explained in this section. First, the participants involved in the study were not balanced in terms of the demographic background because of the use of purposive sampling and not stratified sampling. For instance, more than half of the participants recruited were Chinese who aged between 21-30 years old (58.4%). Also, a majority of the interview participants recruited were 21-30 years old. This is most probably because the researcher is a Chinese in her twenties and this made it easier for her to get in touch with this group of participants and get them to participate in the study. However, the unbalanced number of participants in different demographic groups might limit the generalisability of the results on tolerance towards LGBT. However, the findings are applicable to Malaysian participants who are predominantly in their twenties and Chinese.

Other limitation in this study is the small number of LGBT participants for questionnaire and interview, relative to heterosexuals. The researcher managed to recruit lesbian, gay, and bisexual participants for the interviews. However, the researcher did not manage to get any transgender participants. This might result in insufficient data especially from the point of view of transgender community. It was possibly due to the process of searching for eligible participants as all these LGBT participants were introduced by the heterosexual participants and lesbians and gays were more common to be found in their social circle. Nevertheless, the small number of LGBT participants relative to heterosexuals is expected because of LGBT individuals are a minority in the larger population. Related to this, this is a concern that participants who identify themselves as LGBT may not be LGBT or conversely heterosexual individuals who identify themselves as heterosexual may actually

be LGBT. However, questionnaires and interviews are subject to self-reported data, and this is unavoidable.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results on the mutual influences of demographic characteristics, intergroup contact, and social knowledge on Malaysians' tolerance towards LGBT individuals to address the six objectives of the study as follows:

1) to determine Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
2) to identify the factors that influence the Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
3) to determine the influence of intergroup contact on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
4) to determine the influence of social knowledge on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them; and
5) to analyse the discursive strategies used by Malaysian participants when talking about their tolerance towards LGBT individuals; and
6) to examine whether discursive strategies used by participants to talk about LGBT individuals reflect their self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals in questionnaires.

Altogether 18 hypotheses were tested (see Section 1.2 in Chapter 1). Appendix 1 summarises the results on the hypotheses.

## 4.1 Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

In this section, the results for Objective 1 are presented, that is, to determine Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and factors that influence their tolerance. The results for Objective 1 are divided into sub-sections, which are (1) participants' views on LGBT individuals (in Section 4.1.1), (2) participants' views on LGBT rights (in Section 4.1.2), participants' acceptance level towards LGBT in the society (in Section 4.1.3), and the participants' intergroup contact with LGBT individuals (in Section 4.1.4).

### 4.1.1 Participants' Views on LGBT Individuals

Table 4.1 showed the statements in the questionnaire asking on the participants' views on LGBT individuals which consisted of 13 statements. A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure the level of agreement towards the statements regarding the views on LGBT individuals. The scale ranged from strong disagreement (score of 1) to strong agreement (score of 7), with a neutral mid-point (score of 4). The statements labelled with a "*" was reverse coded in order to get overall statements which were more favorable towards the heterosexual individuals. In this section, percentages are not used to report the results. Instead, mean scores are used, and the term "a majority" is used when the mean scores are clearly above or below the mid-point like 5-7 or 1-3.  S

The results shown in Table 4.1 were mixed responses, as indicated by an average mean score of 3.97 (SD=1.55). From the results, a majority of the questionnaire participants agreed that being heterosexual (i.e. being either female or male) is the best (M=5.54) as they believed that people are not born with LGBT tendencies (M=4.37). Given that there were 95% of the participants having their own religious beliefs and practices, it is expected that

the participants generally agreed that having LGBT sexual orientation is against their religion (M=4.85) and having sex-change operation is against moral values (M=4.33).

**Table 4.1:** Participants' Views on LGBT Individuals (n=413)

| **Statements (Do you agree with these views on LGBT individuals?)** | **Mean** | **Standard deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Heterosexuality (i.e. being either female or male) is the best. | 5.54 | 1.75 |
| 2. LGBT sexual orientation is against religion. | 4.85 | 2.25 |
| 3. People are (not) born with LGBT tendencies.* | 4.37 | 1.83 |
| 4. Sex-change operation is against morality. | 4.33 | 2.31 |
| 5. LGBT individuals should overcome their feelings of wanting to be LGBT. | 4.16 | 2.18 |
| 6. LGBT individuals should go through counselling so that they can be either male or female. | 4.10 | 2.25 |
| 7. Same-sex couples marrying is (not) acceptable.* | 4.10 | 2.42 |
| 8. LGBT sexual orientation is (not) a natural expression of sexuality.* | 3.89 | 2.04 |
| 9. Being LGBT is a temporary phase in the lives of LGBT individuals. | 3.55 | 1.93 |
| 10. LGBT sexual orientation is a kind of mental health condition. | 3.49 | 2.14 |
| 11. LGBT sexual orientation is not a problem but society makes it a problem.* (LGBT sexual orientation is a problem but it is society that makes it not a problem) | 3.31 | 2.25 |
| 12. LGBT individuals should keep their sexuality or gender identity a secret. | 3.28 | 1.88 |
| 13. LGBT individuals cannot fit into society. | 2.67 | 1.80 |
| **Average** | **3.97** | **1.55** |

Notes:
* The item was reverse coded and the word "(not)" has been added to the item in brackets to show the meaning after reverse-coding

As there were a majority of the questionnaire participants who believed that being heterosexual is the best, it is assumed that there would not be full support from them for individuals who choose to become LGBT. Therefore, it is not surprising that the participants somehow agreed that LGBT individuals should try to control their feelings of wanting to be LGBT (M=4.16), and most probably they should seek counsel so that they can be either male or female again (M=4.11).

Next, the results with mean scores below four are reported. Table 4.1 results revealed mixed responses on whether LGBT is a natural condition or a choice. These three results show that the questionnaire participants as a group believed that one is born as an LGBT. There was slight disagreement to the statement that the LGBT sexual orientation is not a natural expression of sexuality (M=3.89), indicating that some participants believed that individuals may be born with an LGBT orientation. Also, there were participants who disagreed that being LGBT is a temporary phase (M=3.55). Some participants disagreed that LGBT is a kind of mental health condition (M=3.49). The next three results show sympathy for the hardship faced by LGBT individuals. The participants did not feel that LGBT sexual orientation is a problem but they blamed the society which made it a problem (M=3.31). Therefore, it is not surprising that the participants disagreed that LGBT individuals should keep their sexual orientation or gender identity a secret (M=3.28). These results were consistent with their belief that LGBT individuals could not fit into the society (M=2.67).

Overall, the questionnaire results showed that the participants believed that people are born heterosexuals, and the LGBT sexual orientation is against both religion and morality. They also disapproved of LGBT marriages. However, a sizable proportion of the participants were positive in accepting the fact the LGBT sexual orientation is natural and individuals can display LGBT sexuality in the society but the percentage did not exceed 50%. The participants showed some tolerance towards LGBT individuals and treated them as part of the society. Lastly, since the value of standard deviation for every statement was more than one, there were mixed responses from the participants on their views towards LGBT individuals.

### 4.1.2 Participants' Views on LGBT Rights

This section presents the second part of the results to address Objective 1 on determining Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and factors that influence their tolerance, that is, participants' views on LGBT rights. Table 4.2 shows the results on questionnaire participants' views on LGBT rights, measured using nine seven-point Likert scale items. A higher mean value indicates more positive views on LGBT rights and lower mean value indicates more negative views on LGBT rights with a neutral value of four.

**Table 4.2:** Participants' Views on LGBT Rights (n=413)

| **Statements (What are your views on LGBT rights?)** | **Mean** | **Standard deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. LGBT individuals should have the right to organize events in the neighbourhood. | 5.03 | 2.02 |
| 2. LGBT individuals should be free to live the life they want to live. | 4.98 | 1.97 |
| 3. LGBT individuals should be free to date whoever they want. | 4.86 | 2.07 |
| 4. LGBT individuals should have right to express their opinions on Malaysian TV. | 4.85 | 2.01 |
| 5. LGBT individuals should stand up for their rights. | 4.67 | 1.97 |
| 6. LGBT couples should have the right to adopt a child. | 4.66 | 2.22 |
| 7. LGBT couples should have the same rights as heterosexual couples (i.e. male-female couples). | 4.62 | 2.20 |
| 8. LGBT individuals should be free to have sex with whoever they want. | 4.30 | 2.32 |
| 9. LGBT couples should be allowed to get married legally. | 4.21 | 2.42 |
| **Average** | **4.69** | **1.92** |

Table 4.2 showed that most of the questionnaire participants agreed that LGBT individuals should have the right to organise events in the neighbourhood (M=5.02) because they are free to live the life they want to live (M=4.98), just like the heterosexuals. In the context of romantic relationship, a majority of the participants believed that LGBT individuals have the right to date whoever they want (M=4.86), and this is shown by mean

scores that are well above the mid-point of four. Moreover, participants generally agreed that LGBT individuals have the right to express their views on mass media such as on the national television (M=4.84) and stand up for their rights (M=4.67).

The results on same-gender marriage contradict the previous result (in Table 4.1), that is, the questionnaire participants agreed that LGBT couples have the right to adopt a child (M=4.66). Also, the questionnaire participants also believed that the LGBT couples deserved the same rights as the heterosexual couples (M4.62), including having sex with whoever they want (M=4.30) and even getting married legally (M=4.21). However, the mean scores for the last two statements which are closer to the mid-point of four indicating that a large proportion of participants were still unable to tolerate LGBT practices.

Generally, the questionnaire participants showed great tolerance on LGBT rights with an average mean score of 4.69. The participants understood that LGBT individuals were no different from the heterosexuals. They deserved to get the same treatment and the same rights in different social contexts just like the other heterosexual individuals.

### 4.1.3 Participants' Acceptance Level towards LGBT Individuals in Society

This section reports the third part of the results to address Objective 1 on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and factors that influence their tolerance, that is, participants' acceptance level towards LGBT individuals in society.

Table 4.3 shows the 10 statements in the questionnaire on participants' acceptance level towards LGBT individuals in the society. Higher mean values indicate a higher acceptance level towards LGBT individuals in society whereas lower mean values indicate a lower acceptance level. The mid-point of four is a neutral value on a seven-point scale. The statements with a "*" was reverse coded in order to get overall positive statements which

favour the LGBT individuals and to show the average acceptance level of the participants towards the LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.3:** Participants' Acceptance Level towards LGBT Individuals in Society (n=413)

| **Statements (Can you accept LGBT in society?)** | **Mean** | **Standard deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. If I found out my friend is LGBT, the friendship is (not) over.* | 5.99 | 1.44 |
| 2. If I found out a neighbour is LGBT, I will not talk to him or her.* (If I found out a neighbor is LGBT, I will talk to him or her) | 5.96 | 1.46 |
| 3. I can accept if my work colleague is LGBT. | 5.46 | 1.70 |
| 4. If I found out my child's teacher is LGBT, I will (not) remove my child from the class.* | 5.28 | 1.82 |
| 5. I can accept if my close relative is LGBT. | 5.04 | 2.01 |
| 6. I can accept if a company uses LGBT celebrities to advertise products. | 4.87 | 2.04 |
| 7. I can accept if a military officer is LGBT. | 4.82 | 2.11 |
| 8. I can accept if a politician is LGBT. | 4.58 | 2.23 |
| 9. I can accept if my child is LGBT. | 3.87 | 2.37 |
| 10. I can accept if my religious leader is LGBT. | 3.61 | 2.50 |
| **Average** | **4.95** | **1.60** |

Notes:
* The item was reverse coded and the word "(not)" has been added to the item in brackets to show the meaning after reverse-coding

Table 4.3 results show good tolerance of LGBT. A majority of participants would still keep the friendship even if they found out their friends' sexual identity as a LGBT individual (M=5.99). Similarly, the participants would still maintain the neighbour relationship and talk to them even if the neighbour is an LGBT individual (M=5.96). This result is consistent with the previous result on the belief that LGBT individuals have their right to organise events in the neighborhood. Moreover, most of the participants could accept their work colleagues to be LGBT (M=5.46), indicating a high acceptance level towards the LGBT individuals at the workplace. In the educational setting, the results indicated a high acceptance level whereby the participants would not choose to remove their child from the

class even though the child's teacher is known to be an LGBT individual (M=5.28). Next, for the family domain, participants generally showed acceptance if their close relative are LGBT (M=5.04) but they slightly could not accept if their own children turn out to be LGBT (M=3.87). The children are the closest to the participants on the continuum of closeness in relationship while neighbours and colleagues are more distant from one's life.

The results showed acceptance of public figures as LGBT except as a religious leader. Table 4.3 results revealed that the participants could accept seeing LGBT celebrities advertise products (M=4.87), LGBT being a military officer (M=4.82), and even LGBT being a politician (4.58). On the other hand, participants could not accept it if a religious leader is an LGBT individual (M=3.61) because they believe the LGBT sexual orientation is against religion.

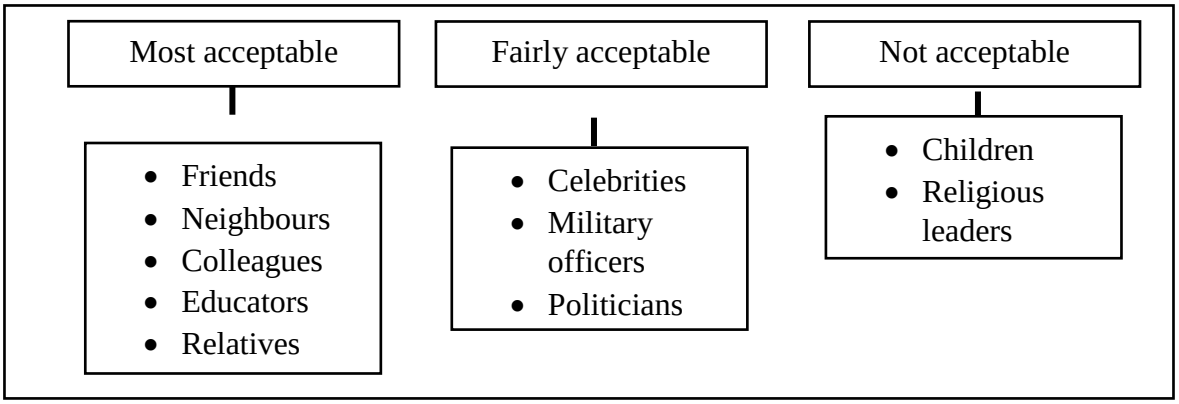


**Figure 4.1:** Acceptance level towards LGBT in different identities

Taken together, the average mean value of 4.95 indicated that a majority of the participants had rather high acceptance level towards the LGBT individuals in different social settings. Figure 4.1 shows that friends, neighbours, workmates, teachers and relatives are more likely to be accepted than children and religious leaders if they are LGBT. However, the participants could not accept it if their own children turned out to be LGBT. Tolerance

for LGBT is greater if the individuals are not in the immediate circle of the participants' lives and do not affect them directly. Interestingly, participants generally showed high acceptance for LGBT to be teachers in schools while most of the participants demonstrated only fair acceptance for LGBT who are celebrities, military officers, and politicians although all of these positions might bring certain influences onto the people especially the younger generation. Also, they do not agree on LGBT individuals to be a religious leader probably because more than half of the participants (62%) practise Christianity and Islam which forbid LGBT practices.

### 4.1.4 Participants' Intergroup Contact with LGBT Individuals

This section reports the fourth part of the results for Objective 1 Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and factors that influence their tolerance. Based on previous findings described in Chapter 2, intergroup contact with LGBT individuals may make people more open to LGBT, which is why this study sought to find out the extent of intergroup contact of Malaysians with LGBT individuals.

Table 4.4 showed the statements which were used to determine the intergroup contact with LGBT individuals. The measure consisted of 11 statements and was measured with seven-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

**Table 4.4:** Participants' Intergroup Contact with LGBT Individuals (n=413)

| **Statements (LGBT and I)** | **Mean** | **Standard deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. I know the challenges of LGBT individuals. | 4.99 | 1.72 |
| 2. I have read materials on LGBT. | 4.80 | 1.87 |
| 3. I know a LGBT couple. | 4.57 | 2.26 |
| 4. I have close friends who are LGBT. | 4.36 | 2.19 |
| 5. I tell my family to respect LGBT individuals. | 4.36 | 1.95 |
| 6. I have spoken up when LGBT is bullied/unfairly treated. | 3.74 | 1.97 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7. I have attended talks on LGBT. | 3.04 | 1.98 |
| 8. I have signed petitions asking the government to ensure LGBT individuals have equal rights to work. | 3.03 | 1.92 |
| 9. I have attended a marriage ceremony for LGBT couples. | 2.00 | 1.57 |
| 10. I have a romantic relationship with LGBT individuals. | 1.92 | 1.62 |
| 11. I am LGBT. | 1.74 | 1.74 |
| **Average** | **3.50** | **1.25** |

Table 4.4 shows the statements with their respective mean values and standard deviation regarding the intergroup contact level with LGBT individuals. Five items had mean scores above four. The questionnaire participants showed a high positive intergroup contact by agreeing that they understand the challenges faced by the LGBT individuals (M=4.99) and this could be because most of the participants had read articles related to the LGBT topics (M=4.80). Reading about LGBT constitutes indirect intergroup contact, but nevertheless helps people to understand matters from the perspective of LGBT. Besides, there were more participants indicating that they know at least a LGBT couple in their life (M=4.57) and have LGBT individuals as their close friends (M=4.36). By building up the friendships with the LGBT individuals and understanding their struggles, the participants would make an effort to tell their family members to show respect towards the LGBT individuals (M=4.36). However, note that the mean scores are just over four (the mid-point) and did not reach five, and this shows moderate direct intergroup contact. Since there were no items above the mean score of five, it can be concluded that only a small proportion of the questionnaire participants had a higher level of intergroup contact with LGBT individuals in daily interaction.

On the other hand, there were three items with mean scores of between three and four indicating moderate contact with LGBT individuals. Such contact included participants who have spoken up when they see LGBT individuals is being mistreated (M=3.74), indicating a

slightly moderate intergroup contact with the LGBT individuals although they understand the challenges faced by LGBT individuals and have read LGBT-related materials. The results also reported that most of the participants seldom attend talks that covered the topic of LGBT issues (M=3.04) and most of the participants did not sign the petitions to ensure LGBT individuals' equal rights to work in Malaysia (M=3.03). These items are on indirect intergroup contact with LGBT individuals, and the results showed that the participants were less inclined to make their support for LGBT visible (by speaking up, attending talks or signing petitions), perhaps for fear of criticism from people around them.

Lastly, there were three items with mean scores of below three indicating low contact with LGBT individuals. Same-gender marriage and homosexual activity is not legal in Malaysia. Therefore, it is understandable that a majority of the participants had not attended a marriage ceremony for LGBT couples before (M=2.00) and reported that they did not have a romantic relationship with the LGBT individuals (M=1.92). Lastly, a majority of the participants did not report themselves as part of LGBT community (M=1.74), showing that LGBT community is always known as the sexual minority in the Malaysian society. These three items were on direct contact with LGBT individuals, and the mean scores below three show that the questionnaire participants were generally not in direct contact with the LGBT community.

In general, the participants showed slightly negative intergroup contact with the LGBT individuals with the overall mean value of 3.50 which is lower than the neutral scale of four.

## 4.2 Demographic Factors and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

This section reports the results on demographic factors that influence the Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2). To address Objective 2, the influence of five demographic variables were examined in relation to these two dependent variables. The five demographic variables are age, ethnic group, educational background (NOT), monthly income (NOT), and religion. In addition to the five demographic variables, the influence of another two variables were tested, that is, sexual. Therefore, there are altogether seven sub-sections to describe the results for the seven variables (Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.7). Each sub-section is divided into two to report results for tolerance towards LGBT individuals and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (for example, Section 4.2.1.1 and Section 4.2.1.2). A distinction is made between tolerance of the persons and tolerance of the interaction because the latter involves greater involvement with the LGBT individuals.

### 4.2.1 Age

One-Way ANOVA test results on the effect of age on tolerance towards LGBT individuals and also tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals are reported in Sections 4.2.1.1 and 4.2.1.2 respectively.

#### 4.2.1.1 Age and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

The ANOVA test showed there are statistically significant differences between the tolerance towards LGBT individuals and age (Table 4.5). There were significant differences in the mean tolerance level towards LGBT individuals at the $p<.05$ level for six age groups [$F(5,407)=3.616$, $p=.003$].

**Table 4.5:** ANOVA Results for Age and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 42.011 | 5 | 8.402 | 3.616 | .003* |
| Within Groups | 945.791 | 407 | 2.324 | | |
| Total | 987.802 | 412 | | | |

Next, post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test was carried out to confirm where those differences are. The results shown in Table 4.6 indicated that the mean score for the age group below 20 (M=3.27, SD=1.47) was significantly different than the age group of 51-60 (M=4.86, SD=1.25) with a p-value of .034. However, the other age groups did not show significant effect on the tolerance level towards LGBT individuals. Therefore, the results suggested that the participants' tolerance level toward LGBT individuals decreases as the age increases. Specifically, younger participants (below 20 years old and 21-30 years old) were more tolerant towards LGBT individuals compared to the other older participants.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Age has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.6:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Age Groups and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age group | Below 20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 |
| Below 20 | | .628 | .055 | .367 | .034* | .511 |
| 21-30 | | | .123 | .778 | .101 | .867 |
| 31-40 | | | | 1.000 | .994 | 1.000 |
| 41-50 | | | | | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| 51-60 | | | | | | 1.000 |
| 61-70 | | | | | | |

p<.05

#### 4.2.1.2 Age and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

From Table 4.7, the ANOVA test showed there are statistically significant differences between the participants' tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals and age groups. There was a significant difference in mean at the $p<.05$ level for six age groups [$F(5,407)=2.996$, $p=.011$].

**Table 4.7:** ANOVA Results for Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals in terms of Age

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 37.210 | 5 | 7.442 | 2.996 | .011* |
| Within Groups | 1010.862 | 407 | 2.484 | | |
| Total | 1048.072 | 412 | | | |

Post hoc analysis was then carried out to know where exactly those differences are. However, from the results shown in Table 4.8, there is a low significant effect on the tolerance towards social interaction towards LGBT individuals. The mean scores for both age groups of below 20 (M=5.48, SD=1.79) and 21-30 (M=5.04, SD=1.57) were significantly different from the age group 51-60 (M=3.89, SD=1.39) with a p-value of .045 and .043 respectively, suggesting that the age groups can slightly affect the participants' tolerance level towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. To be precise, younger participants especially those who were below 30 years old tend to be more tolerant than the older participants aged 40 and above.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Age has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.8:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Age Groups for Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age group | Below 20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 |
| Below 20 | | .873 | .346 | .602 | .045* | .634 |
| 21-30 | | | .505 | .856 | .043* | .860 |
| 31-40 | | | | 1.000 | .788 | .997 |
| 41-50 | | | | | .995 | 1.000 |
| 51-60 | | | | | | 1.000 |
| 61-70 | | | | | | |

$p<.05$

The present study showed that the questionnaire participants from these two age groups of below 20 and 21-30 had better tolerance towards LGBT individuals. These results concur with some studies and contradict others. According to Helms and Waters (2016), attitudes toward LGBT rights become more conservative as age increases. For instance, Kulanthaivel and Balasundaram (2020) has reported that younger respondents (18-30 years) have higher awareness on LGBT-related issue compared to elder respondents (31-50 years) who agreed that the probable main cause of LGBT was psychological issue. However, there were also other studies in education institution settings like Copp and Koehler's (2017) study which showed the opposite results, that is, peer attitudes toward LGBT among university students found that more positive attitudes were associated with older participants. Since most of them were aged from 18 to 25 years old, meaning that older teenagers showed better acceptance towards LGBT individuals. The influence of age on tolerance towards LGBT individuals may not be as simple as it seems.

### 4.2.2 Ethnic Group

One-Way ANOVA test results on the effect of ethnic group on tolerance towards LGBT individuals and also tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals are reported in Sections 4.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2 respectively.

#### 4.2.2.1 Ethnic Group and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

The ANOVA results in Table 4.9 revealed that there are statistically significant differences between ethnic group and the tolerance towards LGBT individuals among the participants. It showed a significant difference in mean at the $p<.05$ level for the six ethnic groups [$F(5,407)=13.375$, $p<.001$].

**Table 4.9:** ANOVA Results for Ethnic Group and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 139.399 | 5 | 27.880 | 13.375 | .000* |
| Within Groups | 848.404 | 407 | 2.085 | | |
| Total | 987.802 | 412 | | | |

The Tukey HSD post hoc test was carried out to find out the differences in participants' tolerance of different ethnic groups towards LGBT individuals more precisely. The results in Table 4.10 indicated that the mean score for Malay participants (M=5.12, SD=1.36) was significantly different from the Chinese participants (M=3.71, SD=1.45) with a p-value of $p<.001$. Also, the mean score of Malay participants (M=5.12, SD=1.36) was significantly different than the Indian participants (M=3.16, SD=1.59) with a p-value of .002 and Sarawak indigenous (M=3.61, SD=1.58) with a p-value of .001. As for the other ethnic groups (Sabah indigenous and others), the ethnic background did not have any significant effect on their tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Therefore, the results suggested that both Malay and Sabah indigenous participants were the least tolerant toward LGBT individuals, followed by Chinese, Others, and Sarawak indigenous participants who showed moderate tolerance toward LGBT individuals. However, the Indian group was the most tolerant toward LGBT individuals.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Ethnic group has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.10:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Ethnic Groups and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic | Chinese | Indian | Malay | Sarawak Indigenous | Sabah Indigenous | Others |
| Chinese | | .874 | .000* | 1.000 | .190 | 1.000 |
| Indian | | | .002* | .974 | .113 | .992 |
| Malay | | | | .001* | 1.000 | .082 |
| Sarawak Indigenous | | | | | 2.33 | 1.000 |
| Sabah Indigenous | | | | | | .392 |
| Others | | | | | | |

p<.05

### 4.2.2.2 Ethnic Groups and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

Table 4.11 shows the results on the tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals of questionnaire participants from different ethnic groups. The ANOVA results indicated there are statistically significant differences in mean tolerance level towards social interaction towards LGBT individuals at the p<.05 level for the six ethnic groups [F(5,407)=11.500, p<.001].

**Table 4.11:** ANOVA Results for Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT individuals in terms of Ethnic Groups

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 129.739 | 5 | 25.948 | 11.500 | .000* |
| Within Groups | 918.333 | 407 | 2.256 | | |
| Total | 1048.072 | 412 | | | |

The Tukey HSD post hoc test was run to find out where those differences are in the tolerance towards interactions with LGBT individuals. The results in Table 4.12 showed the same results as the previous test on the differences between ethnic groups and tolerance

towards LGBT individuals. Based on the results, the mean score for the ethnic group of Malay (M=3.86, SD=1.58) was significantly different than four ethnic groups which were Chinese (M=5.16, SD=1.47) at the p-value of p<.001, Indian (M=6.03, SD=1.43) at the p-value of .001, Sarawak indigenous (M=5.52, SD=1.60) with p-value of p<.001, and Other ethnic group (M=5.71, SD=1.79) at p=.023. There was an exception for Sabah indigenous as this was the only ethnic group which did not show significant effect on the tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. In short, the post-hoc analysis suggested that both Malay and Sabah indigenous participants were the two least tolerant groups in their tolerance toward social interaction with LGBT individuals, followed by Chinese ethnic groups, Sarawak indigenous, and Other ethnic groups. Again, the Indian participants showed the greatest tolerance level toward the social interaction with LGBT individuals in daily settings.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Ethnic group has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.12:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Ethnic Groups and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic | Chinese | Indian | Malay | Sarawak Indigenous | Sabah Indigenous | Others |
| Chinese | | .521 | .000* | .913 | .524 | .929 |
| Indian | | | .001* | .959 | .149 | 998 |
| Malay | | | | .000* | 1.000 | .023* |
| Sarawak Indigenous | | | | | .336 | 1.000 |
| Sabah Indigenous | | | | | | .374 |
| Others | | | | | | |

p<.05

### 4.2.3 Educational Background

One-Way ANOVA test results on the effect of educational background on tolerance towards LGBT individuals and also tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals are reported in Sections 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.1.2 respectively.

For the third demographic variable, the researcher tested if there are any significant difference between educational background and tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2). The same ANOVA test was used as educational background was categorical data.

#### 4.2.3.1 Educational Background and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

Table 4.13 showed the ANOVA results on participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals in regards with their educational background. The results indicated that there were no significant differences in mean scores between tolerance towards LGBT individuals and educational background at $p<.05$ level. In other words, educational level does not influence Malaysian participants' attitudes towards LGBT individuals.

The hypothesis tested are H0: Ethnic group does not have significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.13:** ANOVA Results for Educational Background and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 14.796 | 5 | 2.959 | 1.238 | .290 |
| Within Groups | 973.006 | 407 | 2.391 | | |
| Total | 987.802 | 412 | | | |

#### 4.2.3.2 Educational Background and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

Table 4.14 shows that there were no significant differences in mean scores between tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals and educational background at $p<.05$ level.

The hypothesis tested are H0: Ethnic group does not have significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.14:** ANOVA Results for Participants' Tolerance toward Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals in terms of Educational Background

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 13.619 | 5 | 2.724 | 1.072 | .375 |
| Within Groups | 1034.453 | 407 | 2.542 | | |
| Total | 1048.072 | 412 | | | |

### 4.2.4 Monthly Income

The fourth demographic variable was participants' monthly income. The researcher ran ANOVA tests in order to find monthly income had a significant effect on participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2). These results are reported in Sections 4.2.4.1 and 4.2.4.2 respectively.

#### 4.2.4.1 Monthly Income and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

Table 4.15 showed the results of ANOVA test on the participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals in terms of monthly income. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in mean scores between the participants' monthly income and their tolerance level towards LGBT individuals at $p<.05$ level.

**Table 4.15:** ANOVA Results for Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals in terms of Monthly Income

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 24.437 | 5 | 4.887 | 2.065 | .069 |
| Within Groups | 963.365 | 407 | 2.367 | | |
| Total | 987.802 | 412 | | | |

However, the means plot generated showed that participants who were in the second highest income group (RM 8,000 – RM 9,999) has the lowest mean score of 3.15, indicating a high tolerance level towards LGBT individuals. This is followed by the lowest income group which earned below RM 2,000 per month (M = 3.81). The other income groups generally show moderate tolerance towards LGBT individuals too as all of their mean scores did not exceed 4.50.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Monthly income has significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

#### 4.2.4.2 Monthly Income and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

Table 4.16 shows the ANOVA test results on participants' tolerance toward social interaction with LGBT individuals and their monthly income. There were significant differences in mean scores between the participants' monthly income and their tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals at $p<.05$ level.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Monthly income has significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.16:** ANOVA Results for Monthly Income and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 34.091 | 5 | 6.818 | 2.737 | .019* |
| Within Groups | 1013.981 | 407 | 2.491 | | |
| Total | 1048.072 | 412 | | | |

Post-hoc analysis was then carried out to find out the exact differences between the different monthly income groups and tolerance toward social interaction with LGBT individuals. The results in Table 4.17 indicated the tolerance of the group with the monthly income of RM8,000 – RM9,999 (M=6.40, SD=1.11) was significant different from the tolerance of the groups earning RM2,000 – RM3,999 (M=4.72, SD=1.60) at p=.026 and RM4,000 – RM5,999 (M=4.70, SD1.69). All the income groups have average mean scores of above 4.50. This shows that they have moderate tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. The results also suggest that participants who earned RM8,000 – RM9,999 monthly showed the greatest tolerance, followed by those who earned RM10,000 per month (M=5.57, SD=1.23). Participants who earned below RM2,000 and RM6,000 – RM7,999 had similar mean scores of 5.05 and 5.03 respectively, suggesting a high tolerance level as well. However, participants from the middle monthly income groups of RM2,000 – RM3,999 and RM4,000 – RM5,999 had the lowest mean scores of 4.72 and 4.70 respectively. Having said that, both mean scores were still close to 5.00, indicating moderately high tolerance level towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. To sum up, the participants earning RM2,000-RM5,999 per month had the lowest mean scores among all monthly income groups while those learning RM8,000-RM9,999 were the most tolerant towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.17:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Monthly Income and Participants' Tolerance toward Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monthly Income | Below RM2,000 | RM2,000-RM3,999 | RM4,000-RM5,999 | RM6,000-RM7,999 | RM8,000-RM9,999 | RM10,000 and above |
| Below RM2,000 | | .417 | .774 | 1..000 | .121 | .928 |
| RM2,000-RM3,999 | | | 1.000 | .995 | .026* | .626 |
| RM4,000-RM5,999 | | | | .995 | .040* | .666 |
| RM6,000-RM7,999 | | | | | .472 | .981 |
| RM8,000-RM9,999 | | | | | | .873 |
| RM10,000 and above | | | | | | |

p<.05

### 4.2.5 Religion

The fifth demographic variable was participants' religion. The researcher ran ANOVA tests in order to find whether religion had a significant effect on participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2). These results are reported in Sections 4.2.5.1 and 4.2.5.2 respectively.

Reygan and Moane (2014) has suggested that religion has a significant influence on people's views on LGBT individuals. For example, Holland et al. (2013) who examined college students' attitudes in the United States found that students who are non-religious or atheist, and non-Christians are more likely to demonstrate higher tolerance level towards homosexual individuals. Also, Abdullah and Amat (2019) found that the college students in Malaysia who practise Islam viewed LGBT as illegal as LGBT behaviour was against Islamic teachings on God creating male and female for reproduction.

#### 4.2.5.1 Religion and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

Table 4.18 shows that the ANOVA test on participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals in terms of religion. There were statistically significant differences in tolerance towards LGBT individuals for participants from different religious backgrounds at p<.05 level for the religion [F(5,407)=34.046, p<.001].

The hypothesis tested are H1: Religion has significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.18:** ANOVA Results for Religion and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 291.311 | 5 | 58.262 | 34.046 | .000* |
| Within Groups | 696.492 | 407 | 1.711 | | |
| Total | 987.802 | 412 | | | |

Post-hoc analysis was then carried out to find out where those differences are in the participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Table 4.19 shows the results of the post-hoc analysis on different religious groups. The results indicated that the mean score for Islam (M=5.04, SD=1.42) was significantly different from all the other religions including Christianity (M=4.37, SD=1.41) with a p-value of .002, Buddhism (M=3.09, SD=1.05) with a p-value of p<.001, Hinduism (M=3.28, SD=1.86) with a p-value of .009, no religion (M=2.33, SD=1.17) with a p-value of p<.001, and others (M=1.58, SD=.60) with a p-value of .003. There were significant differences between Christian participants and Buddhist participants, and there were also significant differences between Christian participants and those with no religion at p<.001. There were significant differences between Christian participants and those with and other religion at p=.034. There were no significant differences in the Christian participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals and those from

Hindu religion. Since 62% of the participants in this study identified themselves as Christians and Muslims, it was not surprising to see that both Muslim and Christian participants reporting the lowest tolerance level towards LGBT individuals while Buddhist and Hindu participants reported a moderate tolerance level. Lastly, in line with Holland et al.'s (2013) work, the participants who had no religion and those with Others religion in this study was the most tolerate groups toward LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.19:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Religion and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Religion | Islam | Christianity | Buddhism | Hinduism | No religion | Others |
| Islam | | .002* | .000* | .009* | .000* | .003* |
| Christianity | | | .000* | .255 | .000* | .034* |
| Buddhism | | | | .999 | .143 | .586 |
| Hinduism | | | | | .567 | .587 |
| No religion | | | | | | .971 |
| Others | | | | | | |

p<.05

#### 4.2.5.2 Religion and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

The results in Table 4.20 show the ANOVA results of tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals for participants with different religious backgrounds. The results revealed the participants' tolerance level towards social interaction with LGBT individuals differed significantly among the six religion groups, $F(5,407)=23.354$, $p<.001$.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Religion has significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.20:** ANOVA Results for Religion and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 233.660 | 5 | 46.732 | 23.354 | .000* |
| Within Groups | 814.412 | 407 | 2.001 | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 1048.072 | 412 | | | |

Next, Tukey HSD post-hoc analysis was carried out to find out where exactly the differences are in their tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. The results in Table 4.21 indicated that the mean score for Islam (M=3.91, SD=1.60) was significantly different from all the other religion groups: Others (M=7.00, SD=.00) at p=.029, Hinduism (M=5.89, SD=1.61) at p=.006, Christianity (M=4.65, SD=1.52) at p=.002, and Buddhism (M=5.72, SD=1.15) and No religion (M=6.31, SD=1.16) with same p-value of p<.001.

In addition, the results showed that Christian participants differed significantly from Buddhist participants and participants with no religion at p<.001. However, participants having other religions were not significantly different from one another in the post-hoc analysis. It is important to note that all the religious groups reported positive tolerance toward the social interaction with LGBT individuals, with a mean score above the mid-point of four, except for Islam which is slightly below the mid-point of four (M = 3.91). Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that Muslims have slightly poorer tolerance in social interaction with LGBT individuals, followed by Christians who have moderate tolerance (M = 4.65). Nevertheless, participants with No religion (M = 6.31) and participants in the Other religion category (M = 7.00) showed the greatest tolerance while interacting with LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.21:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Religions and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Religion | Islam | Christianity | Buddhism | Hinduism | No religion | Others |
| Islam | | .002* | .000* | .006* | .000* | .029* |
| Christianity | | | .000* | .207 | .000* | .180 |
| Buddhism | | | | 1.000 | .493 | .803 |
| Hinduism | | | | | .983 | .923 |
| No religion | | | | | | .986 |

Others

$p<.05$

To sum up, the results for the influence of demographic variables on the questionnaire participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2) are similar. In other words, both dependent variables would be significant influenced by the demographic variable, or both would not be significantly influenced by the demographic variable. Of the five demographic variables, three variables (age, ethnic group, and religion) have significant effects on participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2). However, the educational background and monthly income of the participants do not influence either DV1 or DV2, suggestion that Malaysian participants have similar attitudes towards LGBT regardless of their socio-economic background. The next part of the results reports the effect of gender identity and sexual orientation on the two dependent variables.

### 4.2.6 Gender Identity

In this study, participants identified themselves with several gender identities including female, male, intersex female, transgender male and other. However, from the data collected, the reported gender of "other" (n=2), "intersex female" (n=1) and "transgender male" (n=1) were less than three participants respectively. Therefore, the researcher grouped them together into one group in order to run the ANOVA test. According to Copp and Koehler (2017), they have included gender as a factor to measure American students' attitudes toward their LGBT peers. The results have shown that cisgender male students tend to express poorer attitudes compared to students of other genders. However, Moskowitz et al. (2010) found the opposite result that gender was not significant in influencing

undergraduates' students' attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Section 4.2.6.1 and Section 4.2.6.2 describe the effect of gender identity on the results for tolerance of LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance of the social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2) respectively.

#### 4.2.6.1 Gender Identity and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

Table 4.22 shows the ANOVA results on tolerance towards LGBT individuals reported by questionnaire participants with different gender identities. The results revealed that the participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals differed significantly among the five gender identity groups, $F(2,410)=4.064$, $p=.018$.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Gender identity has significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.22:** ANOVA Results for Gender Identity and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 19.202 | 2 | 9.601 | 4.064 | .018* |
| Within Groups | 968.601 | 410 | 2.362 | | |
| Total | 987.802 | 412 | | | |

Then, the researcher carried out the Tukey HSD post-hoc test to find out the differences in tolerance towards LGBT individuals more precisely. Table 4.23 shows the post-hoc analysis result of gender identity differences on participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals. The mean scores for both female ($M=3.93$, $SD=1.60$), and male ($M=4.13$, $SD=1.39$) were significantly different from the other sexual orientation ($M=2.02$, $SD=1.59$) at $p=.038$ and $p=.019$ respectively, suggesting that the gender identity influenced participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals. To be precise, male participants showed lower tolerance of LGBT individuals compared to female participants who showed almost neutral

but a slightly higher tolerance of LGBT individuals. On the other hand, the other gender identity reported the highest tolerance and acceptance level towards LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.23:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Gender Identity and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sexual orientation | Female | Male | Other |
| Female | | .413 | .038* |
| Male | | | .019* |
| Other | | | |

p<.05

#### 4.2.6.2 Gender Identity and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

Table 4.24 shows the ANOVA results on participants' tolerance level towards social interaction with LGBT individuals for the three main gender identities. In contrast with the previous results on tolerance towards LGBT individuals, Table 4.24 indicated gender identity was not significantly different from the participants' tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals, $F(2,410)=2.124$, $p=.121$. This is interesting because for the five demographic variables, the results were the same for tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2) meaning that both dependent variables would be significant influenced by the demographic variable, or both would not be significantly influenced by the demographic variable.

**Table 4.24:** ANOVA Results for Gender Identity and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 10.746 | 2 | 5.373 | 2.124 | .121 |
| Within Groups | 1037.326 | 410 | 2.530 | | |
| Total | 1048.072 | 412 | | | |

Generally, all female, male and Other gender identity showed high mean scores (above 4.50), indicating a high tolerance level in social interaction with LGBT individuals.

The hypothesis tested are H0: Gender identity does not have significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

### 4.2.7 Sexual Orientation

The last variable to be assessed for influence on tolerance towards LGBT is the sexual orientation of participants. In this study, participants identified themselves with several sexual orientations including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and others. Past studies (Shi & Doud, 2017; Worthen, 2012) indicate that the sexual orientation of people influence their views on LGBT individuals. The researcher ran the ANOVA test to find out if sexual orientation could influence the questionnaire participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1) and the social interaction with them (DV2). Section 4.2.7.1 and Section 4.2.7.2 describe the effect of gender identity on the results for tolerance of LGBT individuals (DV1) and tolerance of the social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2) respectively.

#### 4.2.7.1 Sexual Orientation and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

Table 4.25 shows the ANOVA test results on the participants' sexual orientation and the tolerance level towards LGBT individuals. The results showed that the participants' tolerance towards LGBT individuals was differed significantly in terms of the five different sexual orientation identified, $F(4,408)=15.120$, $p<.001$.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Sexual orientation has significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.25:** ANOVA Results for Sexual Orientation and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 128.720 | 4 | 32.180 | 15.283 | .000* |
| Within Groups | 859.082 | 408 | 2.106 | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 987.802 | 412 | | | |

Then, Tukey HSD post-hoc analysis was carried out to locate the specific differences among the different sexual orientations. Table 4.26 showed the post-hoc analysis results on sexual orientation and tolerance towards LGBT individuals. The results revealed that the mean score for heterosexual (M=4.16, SD=1.48) was significantly different from gay (M=2.46, SD=1.37), lesbian (M=1.59, SD=.51) and bisexual (M=2.39, SD=.73) at $p < .001$. There were no significant differences in the tolerance level towards LGBT individuals for the other sexual orientation groups. Therefore, the post-hoc analysis suggested that heterosexual (female or male) were more likely to be less tolerant towards LGBT individuals compared to the other sexual orientations. Particularly, lesbian was reported to be the most tolerant sexual orientation towards the LGBT individuals, followed by bisexual and gay.

**Table 4.26:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Sexual Orientation and Participants' Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sexual orientation | Heterosexual (Female/Male) | Lesbian | Gay | Bisexual | Other |
| Heterosexual (Female/Male) | | .000* | .000* | .000* | .133 |
| Lesbian | | | .671 | .732 | .064 |
| Gay | | | | 1.000 | .579 |
| Bisexual | | | | | .502 |
| Other | | | | | |

p<.05

#### 4.2.7.2 Sexual Orientation and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

For the second dependent variable on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals, the researcher assessed the differences on sexual orientation, whether the sexual orientation does have an effect on participants' tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. Table 4.27 shows the ANOVA test results on the differences of sexual

orientation on participants' tolerance level towards the social interaction with LGBT individuals. The results suggested that there is a strong significant difference between the sexual orientation and the tolerance level towards the social interaction with LGBT individuals, $F(4,408)=12.377$, $p<.001$.

The hypothesis tested are H1: Sexual orientation has significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.27:** ANOVA Results for Sexual Orientation and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 113.412 | 4 | 28.353 | 12.377 | .000* |
| Within Groups | 934.660 | 408 | 2.291 | | |
| Total | 1048.072 | 412 | | | |

After finding that there is significant difference between the two variables, Tukey HSD post-hoc analysis was then carried out to find out the where the exact differences located in tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. Table 4.28 showed the results of the post-hoc analysis. The results indicated that the mean score of heterosexual participants ($M=4.77$, $SD=1.56$) differed significantly from participants who were lesbian ($M=6.81$, $SD=.35$) and gay ($M=6.40$, $SD=1.08$), both at the p-value of $p<.005$. Also, heterosexuals was significantly different from bisexual ($M=6.78$, $SD=.35$) at $p<.001$, suggesting a very strong significance. Then, similar to the previous result on the sexual orientation differences on tolerance towards LGBT individuals, the results here showed that there were no significant differences in the tolerance of sexual orientation groups towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. Although heterosexual groups reported to have lowest mean score of 4.77 compared to other sexual orientations, the tolerance level is moderate for social interaction with LGBT individuals. In short, the ANOVA results and

post-hoc analysis suggested that all the participants have moderate to high tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. The most tolerant towards social interaction with LGBT individuals were lesbians and bisexuals, followed by gays, others, and lastly heterosexuals.

**Table 4.28:** Post-Hoc Analysis on Different Sexual Orientation and Participants' Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

| | Post-Hoc Comparison | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sexual orientation | Heterosexual (Female/Male) | Lesbian | Gay | Bisexual | Other |
| Heterosexual (Female/Male) | | .002* | .001* | .000* | .514 |
| Lesbian | | | .974 | 1.000 | .209 |
| Gay | | | | .967 | .408 |
| Bisexual | | | | | .114 |
| Other | | | | | |

p<.05

## 4.3 Intergroup Contact

The results described in this section addresses Objective 3, that is, to determine the influence of intergroup contact with LGBT individuals on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them. Two separate tests were conducted to compare the differences between:

i. The effect of intergroup contact (independent variable) in tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1).

ii. The effect of intergroup contact (independent variable) in tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2).

For the analysis, the intergroup contact variable was divided into three levels: less contact with LGBT individuals, moderate contact with LGBT individuals, and frequent

contact with LGBT individuals. Then, One-Way ANOVA test was used to test whether there were significant differences caused by the different levels of intergroup contact with LGBT individuals on tolerance towards LGBT individuals (results reported in Section 4.3.1) and also tolerance towards social interaction with them (results reported in Section 4.3.2). Details on the results for the individual items for these two dependent variables are found in Tables 4.1 and 4.3 respectively.

### 4.3.1 Intergroup Contact and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

In this section, the first part of the results for Objective 3 are reported, that is, the influence of intergroup contact on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Table 4.29 shows the ANOVA results on significant differences in tolerance towards LGBT individuals due to different levels of intergroup contact with LGBT individuals. It was hypothesised that the participants who has frequent contact with LGBT should show greater tolerance towards the LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.29:** ANOVA Results on Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals and Level of Intergroup Contact with Post-Hoc Analysis

| | Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals | | | Degrees of Freedom | | Analysis of variance | | Post-Hoc Comparison | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level of intergroup contact | n | M | SD | df1 | df2 | F | P | Moderate contact | Most contact |
| Low contact | 142 | 4.67 | 1.30 | 2 | 410 | 49.034 | .000* | .012* | .000* |
| Moderate contact | 131 | 4.19 | 1.44 | | | | | | .000* |
| Frequent contact | 140 | 3.06 | 1.44 | | | | | | |

p<.05

Notes:

M is the mean of the dependent variable for each level of the independent variable

The mean scores are on a seven-point Likert-scale, 1 for the greatest tolerance towards LGBT and 7 for the least tolerance towards LGBT (or greatest support for heterosexuality)

The ANOVA results in Table 4.29 show significant differences in participants' LGBT tolerance due to different levels of intergroup contact, $F(2,410)=49.034$, $p<.001$. Tukey HSD post-hoc analysis was conducted to locate the exact difference. Table 4.29 shows the post-hoc comparison result. Participants having low intergroup contact with LGBT individuals ($M=4.67$, $SD=1.30$) differed significantly from participants having moderate intergroup contact ($M=4.19$, $SD=1.44$) at $p=.012$ in their tolerance towards LGBT individuals. On the seven-point Likert-scale used for the items, 1 is for the greatest tolerance towards LGBT and 7 is for the least tolerance towards LGBT (or greatest support for heterosexuality. The mean scores show that participants with low intergroup contact have lower tolerance than participants with moderate intergroup contact. Also, participants with frequent intergroup contact with LGBT individuals are very different from participants with low intergroup contact level ($M=3.06$, $SD=1.44$) and moderate intergroup contact level at $p<.001$. The mean scores show that participants with moderate intergroup contact have lower tolerance than participants with frequent intergroup contact.

As expected, when intergroup contact increases, tolerance towards LGBT individuals increases. Table 4.29 results show that the mean score for participants with frequent contact with LGBT individuals was the lowest ($M=3.06$). This means that the participants were very tolerant towards LGBT individuals when they had a high degree of intergroup contact with LGBT individuals. Participants with low contact with LGBT individuals have the highest mean score of 4.67, showing their thinking that heterosexuality is the best. Increased intergroup contact enable participants to relate to LGBT individuals as human beings and no longer treat them as different and an outgroup.

### 4.3.2 Intergroup Contact and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

In this section, the second part of the results for Objective 3 are reported, that is, the influence of intergroup contact on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards social interactions with LGBT individuals. Table 4.30 shows the ANOVA results on participants' tolerance level towards the social interaction with LGBT individuals in terms of the three intergroup contact levels. It was hypothesised that those who showed greater intergroup contact with LGBT individuals will show greater tolerance towards LGBT individuals in social interaction process. The mean scores are on a seven-point Likert-scale, 1 for the least tolerance towards social interactions with LGBT individuals (or greatest support for heterosexuality) and 7 for the greatest tolerance towards social interactions with LGBT individuals. The results show that mean scores for all three groups are above the mid-point of four. The frequent contact group had a mean score of 6.01, while the moderate contact had a mean score of 4.70 and the low contact group had a mean score of 4.13. Participants who have more contact with LGBT individuals were more likely to tolerate them better when they social interact with LGBT individuals in different social contexts.

**Table 4.30:** ANOVA Results on Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals and Level of Intergroup Contact with Post-Hoc Analysis

| | Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals | | | Degrees of Freedom | | Analysis of variance | | Post-Hoc Comparison | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level of intergroup contact | n | M | SD | df1 | df2 | F | P | Moderate contact | Most contact |
| Low contact | 142 | 4.13 | 1.52 | 2 | 410 | 68.299 | .000* | .002* | .000* |
| Moderate contact | 131 | 4.70 | 1.49 | | | | | | .000* |
| Frequent contact | 140 | 6.01 | 1.11 | | | | | | |

p<.05
Notes:

M is the mean of the dependent variable for each level of the independent variable

The mean scores are on a seven-point Likert-scale, 1 for the least tolerance towards social interactions with LGBT individuals (or greatest support for heterosexuality) and 7 for the greatest tolerance towards social interactions with LGBT individuals

The ANOVA test results in Table 4.30 show that there were significant differences in the participants' tolerance level towards the social interaction with LGBT individuals in terms of the three levels of intergroup contact, $F(2,410)=68.299$, $p<.001$. The extent of contact with LGBT individuals made a significant difference in how positive they feel about talking with LGBT individuals. The post-hoc analysis result revealed that the participants who had frequent with LGBT individuals ($M=6.01$, $SD=1.11$) differed significantly from participants who had low ($M=4.13$, $SD=1.52$) and moderate ($M=4.70$, $SD=1.49$) contact with LGBT individuals at p-value of $p<.001$. In addition, participants with the lowest level of intergroup contact with LGBT individuals were significantly different from those who had moderate contact with LGBT individuals at $p=.002$. Therefore, the results suggested a direct relationship where the participants' tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals increases as they had greater intergroup contact with LGBT individuals. When

participants spend more time communicating with LGBT individuals, they are more positive about such intergroup interactions, compared to participants who did not know anyone from the LGBT community.

## 4.4 Social knowledge

This section reports the results for Objective 4, which is to determine the influence of social knowledge on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals (Section 4.4.1) and social interactions with them (Section 4.4.2). This is because, besides age and intergroup contact, social knowledge is also important in exploring the LGBT tolerance among the Malaysians (as shown by past findings, described in Chapter 2). Two separate tests were conducted to compare the differences between:

i. The effect of social knowledge on morality (independent variable) in tolerance towards LGBT individuals (DV1).

ii. The effect of social knowledge on morality (independent variable) in tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals (DV2).

### 4.4.1 Social Knowledge and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

This section reports the first part of the results for Objective 4, which is to determine the influence of social knowledge on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals. The detailed results for each of the items for social knowledge were described earlier (refer to Table 4.2) while the detailed results for tolerance towards LGBT individuals are in Table 4.1.

Table 4.31 shows that there is a strong correlation between social knowledge and tolerance towards LGBT individuals ($r = –.852$, $p<.001$). This provides strong evidence to

reject the null hypothesis. The mean scores for tolerance towards LGBT individuals are on a seven-point Likert-scale, 1 for the greatest tolerance towards LGBT and 7 for the least tolerance towards LGBT (or greatest support for heterosexuality). Since the items in the questionnaire section on tolerance towards LGBT individuals were favoured towards heterosexuals, the negative correlation here indicates that the higher the social knowledge, the greater the tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Social knowledge on LGBT can also act as a predictor of tolerance level towards LGBT individuals.

**Table 4.31:** Pearson's Correlation between Social knowledge and Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals

| **Correlations** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Social knowledge | Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals |
| Social knowledge | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | -.852** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals | Correlation Coefficient | -.852** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

In other words, participants who have greater social knowledge and are informed about human welfare, rights, and equality (also known as morality) of the LGBT community develop preferences and personal choices that are more understanding of LGBT individuals (see Section 2.4.6 on social knowledge). The social knowledge comes from personal encounter with LGBT individuals like having LGBT friends and family members. Based on Turiel's (1978) social cognitive domain theory, participants with greater social knowledge of LGBT are likely to have social judgments and social reasoning that favour LGBT.

### 4.4.2 Social Knowledge and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

This section reports the second part of the results for Objective 4, which is to determine the influence of social knowledge on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards social interactions with LGBT individuals. The detailed results for each of the items for social knowledge were described earlier (refer to Table 4.2) while the detailed results for tolerance towards social interactions with LGBT individuals are in Table 4.3.

The Pearson's Correlation test results in Table 4.32 show that there was a strong correlation between the social knowledge acquired and the participants' tolerance level towards social interaction with LGBT individuals ($r=.859$, $p<.001$). When social knowledge about LGBT increased, the tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals increased too. Therefore, the results show that the participants can tolerate the LGBT individuals in daily social interaction.

**Table 4.32:** Pearson's Correlation between Social Knowledge and Tolerance towards Social Interaction with LGBT Individuals

| **Correlations** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Social knowledge | Tolerance - towards social interaction with LGBT Individuals |
| Social knowledge | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .859** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| Tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT Individuals | Correlation Coefficient | .859** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-taied) | .000 | . |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

The results for the first part of Objective 4 (on tolerance towards LGBT individuals) are consistent with the results for the second part of Objective 4 (on tolerance towards social

interactions with LGBT individuals), that is, when social knowledge increases, both of these types of tolerance increase as well. This means that when participants have more information about the issues that the LGBT community struggle with such as rights and equality, as well as stigma and discrimination, they are less likely to reject the LGBT individuals or feel uncomfortable to talk with them. Greater social knowledge of LGBT leads to social judgments and social reasoning that do not represent outright rejection of LGBT.

## 4.5 Discursive Construction of LGBT Identities using Discourse-Historical Approach

This section reports the results for Objective 5, which is to analyse the discursive strategies used by Malaysian participants when talking about their tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Although the previous sections have presented the quantitative results regarding the LGBT tolerance among Malaysians, it is worth to know about the discursive construction of LGBT identities and how such construction of LGBT identities affects the LGBT tolerance. This analysis builds on previous research on LGBT identity discourse construction using different methods: by interviewing LGBT individuals and analysing the interview transcripts using Creswell's (2014) qualitative analysis procedures (Jerome et al., 2021) and by figuring out the construction of gay identity among homosexual Muslim men in Malaysia using content analysis matrix (Felix, 2016).

This present study however differs in several ways: (i) instead of using other qualitative analysis procedures mentioned above, it specifically applied discourse-historical approach (DHA) to examine whether the discursive strategies used by participants to talk about LGBT individuals reflect their self-reported tolerance towards LGBT, (ii) this research involved both heterosexual and LGBT participants, and (iii) it combined both qualitative and

quantitative approaches by incorporating the discourse-historical approach into the analytical apparatus.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, discourse-historical approach (DHA) was used to analyse the qualitative results collected which involved five discursive strategies in achieving "a particular social, political, and linguistic goal" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 94). Of these five strategies, Reisigl and Wodak (2009) proposed a selection of discursive strategies, namely, nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, intensification or mitigation.

Therefore, this section in particular presents the findings of discourse-historical analyses from the interviews conducted with both heterosexual and LGBT participants in Malaysia. The presentation of results is divided into two sections, the first section was the analysis from heterosexual participants (Section 4.5.1) while the second section presented the analysis from LGBT participants (Section 4.5.2).

### 4.5.1 Discursive Strategies Used by Heterosexual Participants

This section presents the discursive strategies used by heterosexual participants when talking about their tolerance towards LGBT individuals. The analysis focused on (1) how social actors and their actions have been referred and described by heterosexual participants using referential and predication strategies; (2) what perspectivisation strategies have been used to show heterosexual speaker's perspective of involvement and detachment in the central issue of speech; (3) how certain arguments stated have been lead to certain conclusions; and (4) how certain LGBT-related issues have been highlighted or diluted using the intensification and mitigation strategies. Where relevant, interview excerpts are included, and the participants are referred to as Participant 1 to Participant 14.

As mentioned before, referential and predication strategies are closely related, and one may predetermine the other. Therefore, the analysis of these both strategies are presented in one section.

#### 4.5.1.1 Referential and Predication Strategies

This section explains how heterosexual individuals used referential and predication strategies to construct both LGBT individuals and heterosexuals discursively when talking about their tolerance towards LGBT individuals. While other past studies included social actors with persons, institutions, objects, and events, only *persons* will be included in this study, whether they are referred to LGBT individuals or heterosexuals.

##### 4.5.1.1.1 Positive Representation of LGBT by Heterosexuals

Table 4.33 shows the positive adjectives and actions used by heterosexual participants when describing LGBT individuals. The positive construction of LGBT made by heterosexual participants comprised four main social actors. The first social actor was the general LGBT individuals, commonly referred as "LGBT", "this group of people", "these people", and there were some heterosexual participants who specified the references by using the term "gay" and "lesbians" as well. The second actor was the LGBT family member whereby only one reference made which was "one of my relatives".

> *I feel that now **a lot of people** from the **LGBT community** have been brave enough to speak out, um, about themselves, to, to share their stories and everything. (Participant 9)*

> *But during this time, in this, this era, um, **this group of people** they're starting to be more prominent… (Participant 12)*

*I have **a few friends**, um, I mean, like, **course mates**, they are actually **LGBT**. There are **gays**, there are **lesbians**. Yes. (Participant 11)*

*…my favourite singer, his name is **Sam Smith**. And actually Sam Smith is, uh, he actually claimed himself as **non-binary**. (Participant 8)*

The third social actor was the LGBT friends referred to as, for instance, "my friend", "my gay friend", and "some friends". The fourth social actor as the LGBT celebrities referred to as "Nur Sajat" and "Sam Smith". All these categories and references are positive qualities.

**Table 4.33:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Positive Construction of LGBT by Heterosexual Participants

| Social actors | References | Predication |
|---|---|---|
| **LGBT** | A few of them, the partner | - reveal their identity on social media (P6) |
| | LGBT<br>Pronouns: They | - same like other normal people but with different orientation only (P7)<br>- not a freak, not abnormal (P7)<br>- do nothing wrong (P8)<br>- one of the smartest groups in the world (P11)<br>- they are all good (P11)<br>- not a mental illness (P14) |
| | A lot of people, LGBT community<br>Pronouns: They | - brave enough to speak out about themselves (P9)<br>- just like normal people (P9) |
| | This group of people, these people<br>Pronouns: They | - starting to be more prominent (P12)<br>- brave enough to come out from the closet (P12)<br>- no different from you and I (P12) |
| | Some of them, these people, homosexual<br>Pronouns: They | - very good-looking men who do not act like girl and talk like a man (P13) |
| | Some people, LGBTQ<br>Pronouns: They | - normal people and they are not different or eccentric (P14) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Foreign LGBT<br>Pronouns: They | - more open and being accepted (P2) |
| | Gay<br>Pronouns: He | - feel nothing about female but have interest in another guy (P7) |
| | Lesbians<br>Pronouns: They | - very well-versed in religion and know what is right and wrong (P3)<br>- have lesbian vibe (P3) |
| **Family** | One of my relatives<br>Pronouns: He | - suspect to be LGBT but he is polite and humble (P9) |
| **Friends** | My friend<br>Pronouns: He, They | - admit openly to me (P3 and P5) |
| | One friend, one guy, my gay friend<br>Pronouns: He | - more into guys and establish relationship with other guys (P8)<br>- good guy actually (P11) |
| | Some friends, a few friends, coursemates, a few classmates<br>Pronouns: They | - open about it (P9)<br>- admitted publicly (P11)<br>- open about involving in LGBTQ relationship (P14) |
| **Celebrities** | Nur Sajat | - dress as a woman (P1) |
| | Sam Smith<br>Pronouns: He | - openly claimed himself as non-binary and he is into male (P8)<br>- wears high heels singing and dancing in his music video (P8) |

The predicational strategies shown in Table 4.33 indicated that the heterosexual participants represented the LGBT individuals as brave, prominent, and normal. The positive characteristics highlighted include opening up on their own identity to others (Participant 8), LGBT individuals being no different from anyone else (Participant 12), and not viewing LGBT as abnormal (see Table 4.33). Instead, they were just normal persons with different sexual orientation only (Participant 7).

*I'm, like, really open with this. Because, uh, I think, like, we should just see them as **normal**. (Participant 8)*

*…these people they are* ***no different from you and I****. They're just, they just prefer to be romantically link with people of same, same sex with them, things like that la. (Participant 12)*

Next, there was only one heterosexual participant (Participant 9) who used the pronoun "he" to refer to one of her relatives whom she suspected to be LGBT. Participant 9 pointed out the positive characteristic of the LGBT relative by saying that "he" was polite and humble. This evidence showed that there might be a chance for LGBT individuals to be accepted if they have good personality and are well-behaved.

*And I, I can see that my family has so far no comments about it as he just, you know,* ***polite*** *and* ***humble*** *person. (Participant 9)*

As for social actors of LGBT friends, four heterosexual participants used the third-person pronoun "he", suggesting a higher possibility of having male LGBT friends. Three heterosexual participants used the pronoun of "they", showing they might know more than one LGBT individual.

*But nowadays there's some people who, they, they're* ***brave*** *enough to, you know,* ***come out from the closet*** *and say that they are part of the LGBT group. (Participant 12)*

Through the analysis of predicational strategies used by the heterosexual participants, it is clear that the positive traits used for describing LGBT friends were mainly about them being open and able to publicly admit their sexual orientation. However, some of the LGBT individuals came out selectively. For instance, some of them come out to certain people or only on social media platforms.

On the other hand, there were participants who presented a mix of a positive and negative representation of LGBT individuals like Participant 11. She said that she would still keep a distance from her male LGBT friend due to the gender differences.

> *Because sometimes I feel that, the, my gay friend, he would really think that he is a girl. So when he acts like he is a girl, so he would just come close to you naturally, like, you know, sister like that, and then he wants to touch you. But, there is a, there is difference ah, between girl and boy. So for me, I will be very careful of his, um, actions, like that. So I will prevent myself to be too close physically to him. But he is* ***actually a good guy*** *la. (Participant 11)*

"Gay" is typically known as individual who has no interest towards the opposite gender – the females. It is also common to see that gay people usually develop close relationship with the females and they see themselves as part of the female gender. However, Participant 11 emphasised that there was still a gender difference as gay was still a male after all. Therefore, she would still keep a distance from him even though he was "a good guy".

#### 4.5.1.1.2 Negative Representation of LGBT by Heterosexuals

Table 4.34 shows the results of how heterosexual participants used referential and predicational strategies in their negative construction of LGBT individuals. According to Table 4.34, there were three social actors being referred to. The first actor was general LGBT individuals. A majority of the heterosexual participants used these references: "LGBTQ people", "this group of people", "LGBT", "LGBT group", and "this type of people".

> *So, I think most of the people they reject the* ***LGBT group****. (Participant 7)*

However, a few of them referred to LGBT groups using the terms, “transgender”, “gay”, and “lesbian”.

*Growing up, usually when guys, like, uh, for example, guys like pink, and people, uh, the kids would tease him, saying, eee,* ***gay****, something like that. (Participant 2)*

The second actor was LGBT friends whereby there were only one reference made by Participant 4 which was “my friend”.

*I have* ***my friend*** *but not very close one. Yeah. We are in same class but she’s a Chinese. So we know, they have this kind of relationship… (Participant 4)*

Lastly, the third social actor was LGBT celebrities. “Nur Sajat” was described as a “transgender” and a “transwoman” because she dressed like a woman. However, Participant 10 was not sure whether to use the pronoun “he” or “she” for Nur Sajat.

*So, he or she, uh, he or she, I’m not sure what gender, they, so, they are* ***transgender*** *people,* ***Nur Sajat****. (Participant 10)*

**Table 4.34:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Negative Construction of LGBT by Heterosexuals Participants

| Social actors | References | Predication |
|---|---|---|
| **LGBT** | LGBTQ people, this group of people, LGBT, LGBT group, this type of people<br>Pronouns: They | - either bullied or harassed (P1)<br>- not accepted, not normal, was not a norm in the old days, considered as a different group (P2)<br>- face a lot of challenges especially the acceptance by family and society (P6)<br>- got hurt from society such as discrimination (P7)<br>- we shouldn’t stay together or to be friends with (P9)<br>- weird at the same time (P11) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | - people used to see them as dirty (P12)<br>- have to be in their own clique (P13) |
| | Transgender | - not widely accepted in Malaysia (P1)<br>- simply marry a woman/man in order to look normal and get accepted in society (P1) |
| | Gay, the guy man, guys, two men, gay couple<br>Pronouns: They | - marry a woman in order to look normal and be accepted in society (P1)<br>- being teased as gay if they like pink (P2)<br>- weird to see them holding hands (P10) |
| | Lesbian, gay<br>Pronouns: They | - had bad experience with opposite gender and therefore turn to same gender to seek for comfort (P6) |
| **Celebrities** | Nur Sajat, transgender, transwoman<br>Pronouns: She | - cause controversy on Malaysians (P12) |

Also, as for the LGBT individuals, a majority of the heterosexual participants used the third-person pronoun "they" when they mentioned LGBT-related groups. This is most probably because the heterosexual participants do not address LGBT individuals on a personal level as they do not share the same practice and have a different sexual orientation. From the analysis of predicational strategies (Table 4.34), the heterosexual participants use negative attributes when describing LGBT individuals such as weird (Participant 11).

*So that's why they are smart but they are* ***weird*** *at the same time. (Participant 11)*

*They are* ***not widely accepted*** *in Malaysia, right. So it's hard la for them to come clear about their gender. (Participant 1)*

*So, she's one of the, the few, um, trans-woman in Malaysia that, that seems to* ***cause controversy on Malaysians****. (Participant 12)*

Participant 1 described transgender as someone who is not widely accepted in Malaysia, and Participant 10 felt that it is weird to see gays holding hands. In addition, Participant 12 used the pronoun of "she" to refer Nur Sajat, a celebrity in Malaysia who is known as "transwoman", indicating the acknowledgment of Nur Sajat's identity as a woman. However, Participant 12 had mentioned her negative trait by stating that "she" had caused "controversy on Malaysians". These examples have somehow suggested that there are still Malaysians who do not feel positive towards LGBT individuals. From the demographic information collected, the researcher has also found that most of the participants who gave a negative representation of LGBT individuals were Muslims and Christians.

#### 4.5.1.1.3 Positive Representation of Heterosexuals by Heterosexuals

Table 4.35 summarises the results of how heterosexual participants used the referential and predicational strategies to positively present and construct LGBT individuals. the attribution of positive references and positive adjectives and actions. There were five categories of social actors. The first social actor was the speakers themselves, referred tp as "I" and "we". The second social actor was general Malaysians, broken down into three minor categories which were "younger generation", "some people", and "our society". The third social actor was the social media users, referred to as "most of them".

***I****…don't have any problem with them. (Participant 3)*

*…**the younger people** they tend to be more, um, open minded to, um, accept this, um, the LGBT culture… (Participant 6)*

*…**my millennials sisters** are very open toward the idea as well. (Participant 14)*

The fourth actor was friends, referred to as "friends", "some of my friends", and "most of them". Lastly, the fifth social actor was family, referred to as "my parents", "my family",

and “my millennials sisters”. The age of the family members was made obvious through the term “millennials”.

**Table 4.35:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Positive Construction of Heterosexuals by Heterosexual Participants

| Social actors | References | Predication |
|---|---|---|
| **The Speaker** | Pronouns: I, We | **Mixed acceptance**<br>- don’t support but will not discriminate (P1, P4, P9)<br>- not allowed to scorn them and hate them; hate the sin, not the sinner (P3)<br>- can accept LGBT as long as they don’t spread hate (P2)<br>- never say that is so wrong, and can understand their interest (P1)<br>- love them as human beings but do not encourage (P13)<br>- love them even though they are not right by God (P13)<br>- accept LGBT as a person but reject the practice (P13)<br><br>**Total acceptance**<br>- can accept them (P3, P8, P12, P14)<br>- no reason to reject them (P7)<br>- should not reprimand them for what they do (P3, P8)<br>- don’t see this as a big problem (P1, P3)<br>- view them as human (P2, P13)<br>- embrace, respect, and bless them (P8)<br>- don’t criticise and label them as “abnormal” (P8)<br><br>**Fair treatment**<br>- don’t treat them differently (P2, P5, P10)<br>- as a teacher, treat the student the same as other kids (P1)<br>- prefer their personalities rather than their sexual preference (P2)<br>- LGBT deserve human rights like others (P7)<br><br>**Empathy**<br>- have empathy towards LGBT (P3, P5) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | - respect their decision (P4, P6, P9)<br><br>**If having LGBT friends/family members**<br>- feel sad but accept them (P7)<br>- respect and support (P8)<br>- don't keep a distance (P7, P8)<br>- okay; not going to leave them (P9)<br>- treat them like normal (P10)<br>- no disgusted feeling (P10)<br>- want to understand more; still remain the relationship (P8, P10, P11)<br>- accepting; no problem with it (P12)<br>- shocked but try to understand (P1, P13)<br>- still love them (P10, P13)<br>- surprised but not having negative feeling (P14)<br>- won't advise them to change (P8, P14)<br><br>**Legal acceptance**<br>- support legalisation of same-sex marriage (P8, P12)<br>- neutral; follow the majority and adapt to the final decision (P9) |
| **Malaysians** | Most people, youngsters, younger generation, younger people, the generation nowadays<br>Pronouns: They | - started to tolerate (P1)<br>- had more exposure to LGBT and would accept more easily (P3, P12)<br>- some can accept (P5)<br>- open minded (P5, P6, P9, P10, P11)<br>- it's acceptable (P6, P13)<br>- more understanding (P10)<br>- liberal (P10)<br>- lenient and positive (P14)<br>- appreciate individuality as opposed to collective society (P14)<br>- fond and accepting when it comes to change (P14) |
| | Some people, this group of people<br>Pronouns: They | - deep down not agreeing but they keep to themselves and not showing out (P3)<br>- accept and fine with it (P12) |
| | Our society<br>Pronouns: They | - liberal (P6)<br>- acceptance is quite okay (P6) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Social media users** | Most of them<br>Pronouns: They | - accept it (P3)<br>- supporting (P5)<br>- leave positive feedback (P9)<br>- those who are pro-LGBT changed everything into rainbow to show support (13) |
| **Friends** | Friends, some of my friends, most of them<br>Pronouns: They | - very liberal (P1)<br>- very open (P2)<br>- very kind (P2)<br>- neutral perceptions with some support but don't show it openly (P2) |
| **Family** | My parents, my family, my millennials sisters<br>Pronouns: We | - seems like no opposing and no comments (P9)<br>- open-minded (P12, P14)<br>- can accept LGBT people but not sure if it happens to their own children (P12)<br>- very accepting and don't reject because of their differences (P14) |

From Table 4.35, the analysis of predicational strategies showed that about half of the heterosexual participants actually showed total acceptance of LGBT. For example, Participant 7 stated that there was "no reason to reject them" and some said that they "can accept them" (Participant 3, Participant 8, Participant 12, Participant 14).

*But, for me, I personally, I **accept**, I can **accept** LGBT. Because, there is **no reason for me to reject** LGBT. (Participant 7)*

*I personally **accept** them. (Participant 12)*

*But me as an individual, as an educator, and, uh, as a borderline between millennials and Gen Z, I would say that, um, I am **accepting of the community**. (Participant 14)*

Also, when they were asked about their reactions if they found out that their family or friends were LGBT, more than half of the heterosexual participants presented their

positive traits in accepting them by saying that there is “no problem with it” (Participant 12) and “won’t advise them to change” (Participant 8 and Participant 14). Participant 12 further justified her point that it is more important for her own children to live freely if they happened to be LGBT.

> *No. No.* ***Not advise****. But, uh, I will try to understand, like, why, and, I would like to know more la.* ***I won’t advise****, like, you don’t do this, like, you have to change. No. I will not do it this way. (Participant 8)*

> *I would, I would, personally, for me, I, I will* ***not have any problem with it****. Because I would rather want them to live the life they want to live rather than they live in a lie. (Participant 12)*

On the other hand, Participant 7 mentioned that it was sad to have LGBT family members or LGBT friends but it was best to accept them rather than drive them away by rejecting them. Some heterosexual participants showed their empathy towards LGBT individuals. They said that LGBT individuals should not be treated differently (Participant 2, Participant 5, Participant 10) because they deserve the human rights like anyone else (Participant 7). In addition, there were a few heterosexual participants expressed positive views in either supporting the legalisation of same-sex marriage (Participant 8 and Participant 12) or being neutral even if same-sex marriage is being legalised (Participant 9). However, almost half of the heterosexual participants showed only mixed acceptance, mainly stating their stand of not being able to fully support LGBT especially their practice but to accept and love them as human beings. They acceptance went as far as not discriminating them.

Next, the second social actor was the general Malaysians. The third-person pronoun ("they") was to refer to the three minor categories, "younger generation", "some people", and "our society". The predicational strategies showed that the Malaysians referred here have been presented as open-minded, accepting, and liberal. This is particularly true for the younger generation because "they" have been described for having greater exposure to LGBT and being more understanding than the older generation who could not accept LGBT. As for social media users, only a few of heterosexual participants stated that "they" would show support by "leaving positive feedback" (Participant 9) and some would use the symbol of "rainbow" as allies in supporting LGBT as well (Participant 13). Furthermore, the third-person pronoun "they" was used on "friends". The analysis showed that "they" were positively presented as liberal, kind, and open too.

On the other hand, the first-person pronoun of "we" was used to refer to heterosexual family members. It was because the speakers themselves were heterosexuals as well and therefore the first-person pronoun was used. In a way, the speakers motivated the audience by boosting the qualities of having positive attitudes towards LGBT individuals. From the predicational strategies analysis, "we" do have positive actions towards LGBT individuals due to being open-minded (Participant 12 and Participant 14), and "we" don't simply reject LGBT just because they have different sexual orientation (Participant 14).

#### 4.5.1.1.4 Negative Representation of Heterosexuals by Heterosexual Participants

Table 4.36 shows the references and predication results of how heterosexual participants negatively constructed LGBT individuals. There were five categories of social actors. The first social actor was the speakers themselves, referred as "I", "we", "us", and "you". The second social actor was general Malaysians, broken down into five minor

categories which were “older generation”, “our government”, “Chinese ethnic”, “Malay ethnic”, and “Indian and Others ethnic”. The third social actor was the “students”, referred to as “kids” and “classmates”. The fourth actor was social media users, referred to as “this group of people” and “younger generation”. Lastly, the fifth social actor was family and were referred to as “my parents”, “my family”, and “our ancestors”.

**Table 4.36:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Negative Construction of Heterosexuals by Heterosexual Participants

| Social actors | References | Predication |
|---|---|---|
| **The Speaker** | Pronouns: We, I, Us, You | **Total rejection**<br>- object this kind of relationship (P4)<br>- not encouraging (P4)<br>- won’t accept LGBT (P5, P6, P10, P11)<br>- could not imagine; could not understand (P5)<br>- not accepting LGBT value (P6, P13)<br>- believe that LGBT does not exist naturally (P6)<br>- not born to be gay or lesbian but born to be a normal human being (P6)<br>- oppose LGBT as it’s against Islam religion (P9)<br>- can’t accept LGBT being normalise (P10)<br>- LGBT is not right (P11)<br><br>**Hoping for a change**<br>- try to bring them back (P1)<br>- pray that they can change (P4)<br>- suggest to seek help from counselling or pastor (P5)<br>- bring them to doctor or psychologist (P11)<br><br>**If having LGBT friends/family members**<br>- console them and organize their thoughts (P2)<br>- shocked and will think how to overcome this (P4)<br>- would not pass this (LGBT value) to the next generation (P6) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | - would definitely educate them of the right thing to do (P6)<br>- can't accept; couldn't really be open about that (P10, P11)<br>- won't encourage them to tell everyone or to be open (P14)<br><br>**If seeing LGBT couples acting intimately**<br>- feel disgusted and walk away (P11)<br>- not comfortable to see (P11, P14)<br><br>**Legal rejection**<br>- would not show support by voting (P2, P5, P13)<br>- oppose of the legalization (P4, P10)<br>- vote for a "no" for same-sex marriage legalization (P6, P10, P11) |
| **Malaysians** | Most Malaysians, our society, most people, our population, old generation, older people, old people, some people, elderly, most of us, most Malaysians ten years ago, another group of people, the boomers, older millennials, old ones<br>Pronouns: They, We | - unable to tolerate; oppose; do not agree; not accepting; reject (P1, P2, P5, P9, P10, P11, P12)<br>- follow the social flow which do not agree with LGBT activity (P1)<br>- conservative; not open; not easy to accept something new; don't accept things that's beyond our norm (P3, P12)<br>- show hatred directly through verbal, facial expressions, actions (P3)<br>- do not believe LGBT does exist (P6)<br>- reject LGBT group (P7, P8)<br>- have stereotype towards LGBT (P8)<br>- don't really embrace it (P8)<br>- yelled mean things and stray them away (P9)<br>- reject LGBT community strictly because from religion wise (P9, P12)<br>- see it as a problem (P11)<br>- keep quiet; choose not to talk about it (P11)<br>- maybe not that acceptive (P13)<br>- judge LGBT; isolate LGBT; talk behind people's back (P13)<br>- still not open to the change (P14)<br>- become afraid of it; believe that it's destructive and bad (P14) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Our government, politicians, religious people<br>Pronouns: We | - politically not accepting (P6)<br>- speak publicly about their rejection for same-sex relationship (P14)<br>- reject motions to support same-sex relationship (P14)<br>- no one stand for LGBTQ (P14)<br>- discriminate against LGBTQ community (P14) |
| | **Chinese ethnic**<br>Chinese, the elders, the ethnic group in my circle<br>Pronouns: They | - not that open minded (P5)<br>- want children to carry on the bloodline (P5)<br>- get really mad to find out having LGBT child (P5)<br>- don't think they would accept (P6)<br>- some reject (P8) |
| | **Malay ethnic**<br>Muslims, Malay friends, People, Islam believers<br>Pronouns: They | - don't really encourage (P8)<br>- they are against it (P8)<br>- see it as a crime, as a sin (P8)<br>- don't want to talk about it (P8)<br>- very conservative, saying that man should be with a woman (P10)<br>- prohibit (P11) |
| | **Indian and Others ethnic**<br>Indians, Others, other friends from other races, some of them | - some reject (P8)<br>- said it's abnormal (P8) |
| **Students** | Most kids, classmates, the kids<br>Pronouns: They | - do not have background knowledge, ground knowledge about LGBT (P1)<br>- bully the kids (P1)<br>- boys who like pink are teased for being gay (P2) |
| **Social media users** | Malaysians, younger generation, this group of people<br>Pronouns: They | **Rejection**<br>- reject this kind of relationship (P4)<br><br>**Nur Sajat**<br>- agreed that Nur Sajat should be arrested as it was true that she disrespect Islam religion (P1)<br>- saying very, very bad thing about him (P10)<br>- show dislike and disregard though comments on social media (P12) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Family** | My family, our ancestors, our parents, my parents, my brothers, my sisters, as Asian<br>Pronouns: They, We | - very conservative and strongly oppose (P1, P11)<br>- not familiar with these different group (P2)<br>- not accepting (P2, P3)<br>- advise to choose friends "wisely" while studying in a convent school (P4)<br>- really opposed; it's totally wrong in Islam (P10)<br>- know LGBT is wrong (P10)<br>- comments and remarks given are not positive (P14) |

Since the speakers here were the heterosexual participants themselves, a majority of the participants used the first-person pronouns of "I", "we", and "us" which referring to themselves. From the predications made, it was clear to see that there were nearly another half of the heterosexual participants have clarified their total rejection towards LGBT individuals. For instance, Participant 4 said a Muslim is forbidden to agree with LGBT act and she could not go against with the Islamic teachings.

> *Because, if I accept that means that I go against God. Means that, Muslim,* ***we cannot****, cannot involve in LGBT. Hmm. I respect the other's opinion or the other religions' view about this, but as a Muslim,* ***I surely cannot****. (Participant 4)*

The negative attributions made included not being able to accept LGBT, one should only born to be normal human being and not being LGBT, and LGBT should not be normalised (see Table 36). Again, the use of the singular first-person pronoun "I" indicated that the speakers have the responsibility for the actions they take and therefore they have the authority to show their rejection towards LGBT individuals.

> *For me,* ***I don't accept it*** *because it's wrong and what is wrong can never be right even though it, it's might seem normal (Participant 10)*

Not only they would reject LGBT individuals, but they were also against laws that acknowledge LGBT rights. They stated that they would not support the legalisation of same-sex marriage in Malaysia and they would definitely "vote for a no" (Participant 6, Participant 10, Participant 11).

*If I'm given the chance, I would **definitely vote a no**. (Participant 6)*

*Oh. My reaction, I think I will be **opposed**, against towards it… Yeah. If I were given a chance to vote, I think I will **vote for no**. **Cannot**. (Participant 10)*

*If there's a petition, yes I will sign for the petition to **stop this from happening**. (Participant 11)*

In addition, it was uncomfortable for "us" to see LGBT couples having intimate acts in public as well. On the other hand, if it happens to have LGBT family members or LGBT friends around "us", Participant 10 and Participant 11 negatively presented themselves as someone who "can't accept" and "could not really be open" to have close LGBT members around them. Participant 6 even suggested to not pass on such LGBT value to her next generation to avoid having LGBT family members in future.

*… I **wouldn't pass this to my, um, next generation, my, my children**. So, um, I would **definitely educate them** with what's the right thing to do. (Participant 6)*

There were a few of the participants who hoped to change LGBT individuals spiritually (by praying) and psychologically (by bringing them to doctor, psychologist, or counsellors).

*And, um, **this is something that needs to be righted** because, um, maybe, some help, like **psychologically**, or **counselling**, or **consultation** need to be happened. (Participant 13)*

The second social actor, Malaysians, was categorised into five minor categories. The first group of Malaysians were the older generation of Malaysians. Some participants used the pronoun of "they" while some used the pronoun of "we". It was most probably because the heterosexual participants who participated in the interviews comprised participants who were in this age group. As for older generations in Malaysia, a majority of the participants predicated that "they" were unable to accept LGBT as "they" were more conservative and could not accept new concepts easily due to the less exposure to such new norms. Also, older generation tend to believe that LGBT does not exist naturally and would reject LGBT due to religious factors. For instance, Participant 3 has used the term "our society" to present the older generation as she had later mentioned that youngsters were the exception. The term "our society" suggests that Participant 3 did not consider LGBT to be part of the society.

> *Because our, um, our society, **our society** is actually **quite, uh, con- conservative** in this kind of thing. So, we're **not open to this views**, **except for the youngsters**. (Participant 3)*

> *I believe that a lot of **parents and grandparents** would **oppose** this. I think is more over generation, uh, pattern, or generation thing. I, I feel, I feel that **older generation** usually they would **just stick to their own**, uh, point, and **always have their own sense**. (Participant 9)*

Also, two heterosexual participants mentioned the "government" and "politicians" by using the first-person pronoun of "we", suggesting the inclusion of themselves as a part

of Malaysians. They stated their standpoint on how Malaysian government did not politically accepting LGBT and how politicians openly discriminate and reject LGBT community. Such inclusion has served the purpose of appealing to the audience's emotions.

> *I think, um, generally in Malaysia, because we are Muslim country, so, um,* ***politically our government, um, would not accept this****. (Participant 6)*

> *We have* ***politicians*** *who spe****ak publicly about their rejection for same-sex relationship.*** *We have politicians who* ***reject motions to support same-sex relationship****…* ***we do not have politicians who actually stand for LGBTQ*** *community individuals. (Participant 14)*

Moving on to the ethnic groups, based on the speakers, the "Chinese", especially "the elders", "they" were not open-minded to accept LGBT as "they" usually want their children to be in a normal relationship to carry on the bloodline of the family. Also, the "they" meaning the "Malay" oadamsr "Islam believers" opposed LGBT because it is a sin in Islam to be LGBT. For "Indians" and "Others" ethnic, "they" were also predicated as a group who viewed LGBT as abnormal and therefore reject LGBT individuals.

> *And also, like, as I know, for* ***Chinese****, like the* ***elders*** *are, um, maybe can say that they're not that open minded. And* ***they always want their children to carry the bloodline****. (Participant 5)*

> *my* ***Malay*** *friends they don't, they just,* ***they think it's a sin*** *so obviously they don't really, uh, yeah, they're totally,* ***they don't want to talk about it****. (Participant 8)*

*for **Indians**, um, I have friends around me, yeah, **some of them** they, they **support** and **some of them they reject**. (Participant 8)*

In addition, Participant 1 who worked as an educator shared her experience that "most kids" in schools ("they") do not receive enough background knowledge regarding LGBT and therefore, "they" would bully the kids who portrayed LGBT-liked characteristics. Participant 2 also stated that boys who like pink colour would be teased for being gay in school. Other than schools, social media was another platform where heterosexual "Malaysians" were negatively constructed especially on the issue related to Nur Sajat. For instance, "they" would leave very negative comments to "show dislike and disregard" as "they" agreed that Nur Sajat disrespected Islam. Lastly, the pronouns of "they" and "we" were both used to refer family members. According to Table 36, the family members do not accept LGBT individuals and parents would even advise their children "choose friends wisely while studying in convent school" (Participant 4).

#### 4.5.1.2 Argumentation Strategies

This part of analysis aimed to find out the kind of arguments employed by heterosexual participants to construct LGBT individuals. Argumentation strategies also present the ways of reasoning about the validity of truth and rightness found in the positive representation of LGBT individuals made by heterosexual participants.

##### 4.5.1.2.1 Truth

LGBT issue is a taboo topic in Malaysia. The analysis revealed that some participants would directly show their dislike while some would not. Others might not show their support even if deep down they could accept LGBT. Distinctively, different generations will have different acceptance level towards LGBT as well. The older generation is more traditional

and conservative in a way that they still hold onto the belief that LGBT was not a norm and LGBT does not exist (Participants 5 and 9).

> *Because their **mindset are, are fixed for elders**. They are, they don't really know, they don't even know, like, a man can be with a man and a girl can be with a girl. (Participant 5)*

> *I feel that older generation usually **they would just stick to their own, uh, point**, and always **have their own sense**. (Participant 9)*

Such beliefs have been passed on to the next generations causing more Malaysians to not accept LGBT individuals. Elders also send the message to stay away from LGBT people or avoid being friends with them. Participant 5 has stated another truth that is prevailing in the Chinese community in Malaysia, that is, usually Chinese elders would reject LGBT as they want their children to get married with the opposite gender to carry on the bloodline.

> *And also, like, as I know, **for Chinese**, like the **elders** are, um, maybe can say that they're **not that open minded**. And they always **want their children to carry the bloodline**. (Participant 5)*

Therefore, it is normal that in Asian culture for the elders to encourage their younger generation to get married to heterosexuals. On the other hand, Participant 12 believed that older generation can tolerate LGBT individuals as long as they are willing to be more open-minded. In comparison, the younger generation portrayed a more positive attitude towards LGBT as they usually had greater exposure to LGBT-related elements in movies and songs from the West.

*Because, um, I know that my,* ***my parents*** *are, they are* ***open-minded****. They're fine with it. They see things that happen around them.* ***They're fine****. (Participant 12)*

As LGBT is not a norm in Malaysia, people who accept LGBT are sometimes viewed as having minority views. Therefore, people tend to follow the social flow in rejecting LGBT. In addition, LGBT is not a common topic of discussion, even among the LGBT community. However, according to Participant 6, she felt that the Malaysian society is considered liberal nowadays as people are becoming more open-minded when it comes to LGBT acceptance as LGBT has become a new norm across the globe over the years.

*but, our society, it's still very, um,* ***liberal****. They still have their own, um, thinking and what they want to pursue. So, I do come across some, um, LGBT circle as well. So,* ***I think the acceptance is quite okay****. (Participant 6)*

A majority of the heterosexual participants said that they could not accept LGBT because it is against Islam, the official religion of Malaysia. According to Participant 4, Muslims always remind themselves of God's teachings that same-sex relationships are forbidden.

*So, as for the* ***Muslim****, I always see, I always tend to see at their,* ***sharing the Hadis*** *(in Islam, it refers to what the majority of Muslims believe to be a record of the words, actions, and the silent approval of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.) and all, and this kind, so,* ***to remind us that, uh, you cannot, uh, involve or have a feeling with the same gender****. (Participant 4)*

Interestingly, another Muslim heterosexual participant (Participant 3) quoted a saying in Islam which showed that being LGBT is a choice: if one has the tendency to be LGBT but one did not act upon it, then he or she is not sinful.

> *In my religion (Islam), it has something, uh, it says something like that. Even if you have that kind of feeling, you don't, uh, don't act upon it. And* ***if you don't act upon and you will not get sin from it****. (Participant 3)*

However, there were also Muslim participants who actually accept LGBT individuals and the justification given is that Islam also teaches believers to respect everyone regardless of their sexual identities. In short, it can be understood that one should hate the sin, not the sinner. As in Christianity, Christians also view LGBT as wrong because Christians believe that God has created only man and woman for each other. In other words, heterosexuality is right in Christianity.

> *And in our* ***Christianity****, we are taught that and we also believe that, um, our,* ***our God created man and woman and it's originally, and it's perfectly is one and one****. (Participant 11)*

> *Because in the, you know in bible or whatever, uh, it said that, um,* ***God created us to be, like, um, man and woman to be in a covenant****. (Participant 13)*

Besides religion, friends and peers can influence one's tolerance towards LGBT individuals as well. For instance, having liberal friends who are more open-minded and receptive can influence one to change his or her views in viewing LGBT individuals. Moreover, Participant 11 stated that one might be able to accept LGBT if they happen to be their friends but a majority of them cannot accept it when their own family members declare

that they are LGBT. However, Participant 10 shared about her concerns that it is usually easier to accept LGBT when the people concerned are strangers compared to close friends and family members.

> *I have a few friends, um, I mean, like, course mates, they are actually LGBT… I think* ***we can still maintain as good friend****. But the minimal distance that between, um, girl and boy that, I would still maintain la… We are* ***still joking around and be very good together****. (Participant 11)*

> *Because, you know, um, when it comes to our, I mean, w****hen it comes to stranger it's another thing****,* ***when it comes to our friends or our family that we actually close to you, uh, we couldn't really be open about that****. Because we love them. And it's, whenever it's wrong in our religion, we know that, you know, we have this heaven and hell thing, we have this sin and 'pahala' (reward) thing, so we don't want them to commit this thing, to do what we think is wrong. So we love them, so we try to, you know, make it right, yeah. (Participant 10)*

Additionally, there has been a debate on whether one is born to be LGBT. Participant 7 believed that LGBT sexual orientation cannot be changed as it is a kind of natural expression.

> *So, for me, for what I know, for, I believe that LGBT is never caused by the, uh, material or the virus. Is,* ***you're born with it. It's nature, it's natural****. (Participant 7)*

However, there were other participants who believed that LGBT did not exist naturally but were triggered by external factors such as awful upbringing experiences or

living in a pro-LGBT environment. Participant 11 and Participant 13 even believed that everyone is born as a normal human being (heterosexual) and believed that LGBT was a kind of mental illness. Moreover, they even suggested that LGBT should seek psychological help to change their sexual orientation to heterosexual.

> *Somehow it is. I think it's something related to the psy- the* ***psychology part in the brain****… I think that, like, what I mentioned,* ***I think LGBT is just a sickness****. (Participant 11)*

> *Because, uh, like, social conduct and all that,* ***nobody is born to only like the same gender****. So, um, something might have gone, gone wrong along the way. And, um,* ***this is something that needs to be righted*** *because, um, maybe, some help, like psychologically, or counselling, or consultation need to be happened. (Participant 13)*

In Malaysia, the LGBT topic was not being covered in school syllabus. As an educator, Participant 7 noticed that the Malaysian education system did not deliver sufficient knowledge on LGBT but only the basic knowledge on the "normal" heterosexual sexual orientation.

> *In our education, we never,* ***we never teach the students about what is LGBT*** *and we just teach them about the, uh, sexual, normal sexual orientation only. (Participant 7)*

To Participant 7, the lack of knowledge about LGBT often cause problems. LGBT students would face harassment and bullying in schools because the other students tend to see them as weird and different. Unfortunately, the lack of knowledge about LGBT also

caused the teachers or educators to not carry out their responsibilities in protecting the LGBT students, which indirectly give other students the right to discriminate against the LGBT students. Instead, teachers need to start to raise awareness by being a role model in treating every student equally regardless of their sexual orientation, said Participant 1.

> *Especially in my case, where I am a teacher. So I have to show good, good example. For example, in class,* ***I cannot discriminate the students just because he is, uh, a gay kid****. Rather, I would just treat him the same as other kids. (Participant 1)*

Furthermore, the social media played an important role in influencing heterosexual participants as well as other Malaysians in viewing LGBT issue. Young people are easily influenced by the information on media, whether it is right or wrong. Social media users who behave aggressively may even make use of the platforms to attack and condemn the LGBT individuals. On the other hand, social media allow the people nowadays to better understand LGBT lifestyles and challenges faced which foster greater tolerance towards LGBT individuals.

> *I think* ***social media plays a really big role****. Especially, um, you know, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, you know, have been watching other people culture, or provides good exposure to, uh, the different people, different individuals that exist within the world…completely* ***contribute into the positive, um, perspective of LGBT communities****. (Participant 14)*

For instance, Nur Sajat is a famous figure and became a hot topic on social media. News of her Nur Sajat's arrest for conducting religious activity publicly went viral on social media. Some participants disliked Nur Sajat for causing a controversy in Malaysia. However,

some Malaysians, especially the younger generation, have started to show tolerance towards her by supporting her in social media platforms.

> *So people always react. React to her. And whatever that she does…And I think* ***most people in Malaysia has started to tolerate this society****…I mean,* ***just among the youngsters*** *la. (Participant 1)*

It is undeniable that social media has influenced some participants to develop empathy towards LGBT. Moreover, recently in Western media industry, there are more movies with elements of LGBT. Participant 9 felt that these constant exposure of LGBT elements on both social media and entertainment have influenced people to becoming more tolerant of LGBT.

> *…nowadays even in the Western community, like, last time they would also oppose to this, but now I can see that especially that in Netflix shows, a lot of, um,* ***movies or TV shows that has the LGBT character****, so in a way can see that the society is more, like, accepting. (Participant 9)*

Another legal truth in Malaysia is about the legalisation of same-sex marriage. LGBT couples have no rights to get married legally and enjoy the legal privilege as other heterosexual married couples. The main reason would be still due to participants' respective religious teaching, including Islam (Participant 6 and Participant 10) and Christianity (Participant 11).

> *I would* ***definitely vote a no****… the family is supposed to be made up of, um, a man and a woman. (Participant 6)*

*Yeah. If I were given a chance to vote, I think **I will vote for no**. Cannot. Because I think, again, the religion comes in. **We are a Muslim country**, yeah, any people will think that way. (Participant 10)*

*If there's a petition, **yes I will sign for the petition to stop this from happening**. (Participant 11)*

On the other hand, there were heterosexual participants who supported the legalisation of same-sex marriage in Malaysia as long as such decision did not bring any harm to the society (Participant 8). However, LGBT individuals will continue to be stigmatised as long as there is no legal protection for them. Participant 8 was in support of same-sex marriage and this would reduce discrimination of LGBT individuals.

*I mean, like, **of course I'm okay with it**. Because, uh, because I support LGBT, so, uh, if my country would support this, of course, I mean, like, I'm very happy, **I'm very glad with this decision**. Uh. Yeah. But the fact is that, hm, it's, **it's quite hard to achieve this** la. (Participant 8)*

*Yeah. I would actually. I mean, um, **it's a step for a more progressive nation**. I understand that we are conservative country. So if let's say that they would, they agree to pass the bill to let same-sex marriage to be legal, I would, I would vote for it as well. (Participant 12)*

Despite agreeing and accepting LGBT individuals in Malaysia, there were participants like Participant 1 who felt that the rising number of LGBT might become a problem in the society one day.

*I think it will encourage more people, even more people, now we already have the group of people, the society, I think the society will grow even bigger if we legalize it.* ***And it will be a problem if it's in a big scale****. (Participant 1)*

#### 4.5.1.2.2 Rightness

With the rightness, LGBT individuals should deserve equal rights just like anyone else. It is because everyone should be treated just like normal human beings regardless of their sexual orientation. Participant 2 believed that one's personality should come first, before sexual orientation.

***I prefer their personalities****, getting to know them. I don't care what they like. As long as it doesn't affect me, then I'm okay. (Participant 2)*

*As long as they obey the law, they don't break the law, uh, they don't hurt anyone, they don't hurt others' feelings, I think it's,* ***they deserve the human rights like the other, other person****. (Participant 7)*

Also, everyone is born to have their freedom in making decision, whether they choose to be LGBT or heterosexuals. To Participant 8, being LGBT is not a crime. If people can learn to accept different types of people including people from different race and religion backgrounds, then there should be not a problem to accept people with different sexual orientation as well.

*…they don't really understand what is LGBT and, um, they see it as a crime. In fact,* ***it's not a crime****. I mean, like, um,* ***they do nothing wrong****…and I think we should just face it la. Instead of just judging them. (Participant 8)*

Thus, if one insisted on being LGBT, then other people should respect the decision made, continue to love them and treat them the same instead of showing discrimination. Participant 6 and Participant 10 clarified that they would accept and respect LGBT as human beings, but it did not mean they unreservedly accept the LGBT culture or practice.

> *I still be friend them, but it doesn't mean that I accept, yeah, their value, yeah. I* ***would still respect them, as their choice****. (Participant 6)*

> *I just cannot accept the, you know, to put it simpler words, I don't think I can accept LGBT being normalize,* ***but I can accept if people, uh, if you know, like, an individual being that way****. (Participant 10)*

Furthermore, LGBT individuals are no different from anyone else except for their sexual preferences, according to Participant 12. The sexuality is definitely not the only criterion used to define a person as everyone has their own rights to choose their preferences. Throughout the years, LGBT individuals have been fighting for their rights especially in Western countries which had influenced them to be more aware about the existence of LGBT way before, resulting in a more accepting attitude towards LGBT individuals. Besides, one should not be easily influenced by others' opinions on social media especially those who hold negative views on LGBT.

> *… maybe people saw them as straight, then, they were just hiding… But the time they were finally say that, hey, I'm gay, hey, I'm lesbian, I'm coming out transgender, they see that, hey, I was hanging out with you this whole time,* ***you're no any different than me****. (Participant 12)*

In addition, people should be more understanding towards LGBT individuals, knowing that it was uneasy for them to come out with their true identities especially in Malaysia. For instance, Participant 3 said that she found out about a friend who is LGBT but it did not affect their friendship. She did not keep a distance and did not isolate them. She also felt that people should not simply make judgement on LGBT individuals as there might be other hidden factors which caused them to become LGBT (i.e., being hurt in the past relationship with the opposite gender). Other participants also expressed the view that one should not weaponise religious teachings to discriminate LGBT individuals by saying that being LGBT is sinful.

> *But we, but **we are not allowed to scorn them**, you know? It's like, even if we don't like them, we don't like that kind of thing that they do, we cannot, um, we cannot hate them. (Participant 3)*

#### 4.5.1.3 Perspectivisation Strategies

Perspectivisation plays an important role in creating persuasive discourse where in this case, heterosexual speakers can express their feelings and attitudes towards LGBT individuals.

The rhetorical power of pronouns in the discourse showed a speaker's involvement or detachment from different point of view. From the analysis of references, attributions, and arguments, it can be seen that heterosexual participants have employed several first-person point of view as a Malaysian, as a child in a family, and as a believer of a religion.

From the results shown in Table 4.33, most of the heterosexual participants used the pronoun "they" when making references to LGBT individuals. The use of third-person pronoun indicated a third party individual other than the speaker. Also, the third-person

pronoun of “they” can help to avoid mention of the gender when it comes to LGBT-related issue. For example, Participant 3 also used the pronoun “they” when she talked about “lesbians”. On the other hand, Participant 7 specifically used the third-person pronoun of “he” when referring to “gay”, most probably because it is more commonly known that “gays” are male.

Table 4.35 results also show that heterosexual participants represent themselves using the first-person pronouns. Using “I” and “we” shows that they claim the power and authority in speaking their opinions (Bramley, 2001). The speakers used the pronouns “I” and “we” to show their level of acceptance towards LGBT individuals. The pronoun “we” can be exclusive and inclusive, with different references in different contexts (Petersoo, 2007). In this case, the pronoun “we” expressed a sense of unification to stand up for LGBT individuals by positively constructed their heterosexual identities in accepting LGBT individuals.

#### 4.5.1.4 Intensification and Mitigation Strategies

This section presents the results on strategies used by heterosexual participants to intensify or mitigate their construction of tolerance towards LGBT individuals. The intention of amplifying the issue is to persuade the audience to modify their opinion based on the issues discussed. Although an issue can be intensified and mitigated by using different delivery styles including pause, intensity, and pace of speech, this section will only focus on the linguistic strategies used by heterosexual participants, for instance, diminutives or augmentatives, modal verbs, tag questions, etc. (See Table 3.5 in Chapter 3)

#### 4.5.1.4.1 Intensification

Linguistic features used for intensification by heterosexual participants here included augmentatives, modal verbs, tag questions, and verbs of saying. When they were asked about their views on LGBT, Participant 11, who is a Chinese female, stated that Islam is commonly known as one of the religions which "actually prohibit LGBT". Her statement was supported by Participant 4. This mother of three believed that other religions besides Islam would not accept LGBT as well, and she used a tag question to get agreement from the interviewer.

Moreover, when it comes to issue like same-sex marriage, some heterosexual participants rejected the idea of legalising same-sex marriage in Malaysia. For instance, Participant 13, a Chinese female aged 27 years old used a strong expression like "definitely won't vote for it to be legalise". Participant 13 mentioned that she is a strong believer of Christianity. She followed Bible's teachings closely, stating that God would not allow any LGBT marriage.

Another Christian, a Sarawak Indigenous female, stated that she was more accepting towards LGBT individuals. Participant 12 intensified her point of view that most people "were taught to believe that man should be with woman, woman should be with man". Nevertheless, Participant 12 had her own take despite her religious beliefs. She felt that people need to learn to be more accepting regardless of one's culture, background, and sexual orientation. Table 4.37 shows more examples of intensification strategies used by heterosexual participants in terms of augmentatives, modal verbs, tag questions, and verbs of saying.

**Table 4.37:** Intensification Strategies used by Heterosexual Participants

| Linguistic features | Examples |
|---|---|
| Augmentatives | - **Of course**. **Of course**. To be honest, I have a lot of friends from that society (P1)<br>- My social, most of them are **very** open. They have a **very** open personality and they are **very** kind (P2)<br>- It's not a crime, **I mean**, like, they do nothing wrong (P8)<br>- I don't think I can accept that. **I mean**, truthfully, I don't think I can accept that (P10)<br>- I believe that in Islam they **actually** prohibit LGBT (P11)<br>- I **definitely** won't vote for it to be legalize (P13) |
| Modal verbs | - In fact, we **should** respect them (P8)<br>- We **have to** tell the people around us that, we **should** try to understand them (P8)<br>- However, we **should** always…we **should** always treat them with respect, with love and everything (P9)<br>- A man **should** be with a woman…a man **should** be with a woman (P10)<br>- we were taught to believe that man **should** be with woman, woman should be with man (P12)<br>- They (LGBT) **should** still be included in every single thing (P13) |
| Tag questions | - I mean, because it's not easy for human to accept something new, **right?** (P3)<br>- The other religion also will not accept this LGBT, **right?** (P4) |
| Verbs of saying | - That's why **I say**, **I think** is, it depends on generation (P3)<br>- **I feel** that now a lot of people from LGBT community have been brave enough to speak out about themselves (P9) |

#### 4.5.1.4.2 Mitigation

Table 4.38 shows the mitigation strategies used by heterosexual participants when constructing their views on LGBT included features like diminutives, modal verbs, vague expressions, hesitations, and verbs of saying. Several diminutive terms were used including "maybe", "perhaps" in their speech acts. The participants were still quite reserved when talking about their stance on LGBT. For instance, Participant 11 stated that "maybe" it was

just her who are not used to LGBT while Participant 12 stated that "maybe" there were others who are not accepting and "maybe" there were others who could accept LGBT just like her.

In addition, Participant 11 also used vague expressions like "psychology part in the brain" instead of saying LGBT is a kind of mental problem. Hesitation in views manifest as "I mean" and "I guess" to show the uncertainties of the participants when talking about LGBT. Table 4.38 shows more examples of intensification strategies used by heterosexual participants in terms of dimunitives, modal verbs, hesitation markers, and verbs of saying.

**Table 4.38:** Mitigation Strategies used by Heterosexual Participants

| Linguistic features | Examples |
|---|---|
| Diminutives | - He (gay) **might**, he **might** get hurt from the society (P7)<br>- **Maybe** I'm not used to it (LGBT) (P11)<br>- **Perhaps**, **maybe** people saw them as straight (P12)<br>- **Maybe** there are other people who are of the same race as me who are not accepting. Maybe there are those who are just like me who are accepting (P12)<br>- they change everything into **rainbow** (P13)<br>- But for family members, **maybe** I will try my best (P1) |
| Modal verbs | - we **may** not be part of community but we are defini-definite allied (P14)<br>- there **might** be some of the group…LGBT group…hurt from our society (P7)<br>- some older generation that **might** oppose it (P9) |
| Vague expressions | - I think it's something related to the **psychology part in the brain** (P11) |
| Hesitations | - For me, if, for me, **I mean**, if you wanna get married, then okay, fine. But, **I guess**…that would be another problem… (P2)<br>- **I guess** that nowadays…there're lot of people still hold to that principle (P9)<br>- I think LGBT in Malaysia is still, **I mean**, we have stereotype toward it (P8) |
| Verbs of saying | - **I think** there is a separation in generations (P14)<br>- In general, **I think** Malaysians don't really embrace this (P8)<br>- **I think** most people in Malaysia has started to tolerate this society (P1) |

### 4.5.2 Discursive Strategies Used by LGBT Participants

This section shows the discursive strategies used by LGBT participants when talking about heterosexuals' tolerance towards LGBT individuals. This is the second part of the Objective 5 results. The analysis will focus on (1) how social actors and their actions have been referred and described by LGBT participants using referential and predication strategies; (2) what perspectivisation strategies have been used to show LGBT speaker's perspective of involvement and detachment in the central issue of speech; (3) how certain arguments stated have been lead to certain conclusions; and (4) how certain LGBT-related issues have been highlighted or diluted using the intensification and mitigation strategies. Since referential and predication strategies are closely related, and one may predetermine the other, thus, the analysis of these both strategies are presented in one section.

#### 4.5.2.1 Referential and Predication Strategies used by LGBT

This part of the results describes how LGBT individuals used referential and predication strategies to construct both LGBT individuals and heterosexuals discursively, positively or negatively. Similar to the analysis done on heterosexual participants earlier, only *persons* will be included in this study, whether they are referred to LGBT individuals or heterosexuals.

##### 4.5.2.1.1 Positive Representation of LGBT by LGBT

According to Table 4.39, the positive construction of LGBT by LGBT participants comprised five categories of social actors. First, it is the speakers themselves where they used the references of "non-binary", "gay", "lesbian", and "queer". Interestingly, out of six LGBT participants, five of them positively constructed their LGBT identities. The second social actor was the general LGBT individuals who were referred to as "LGBT", "LGBT

group", "the community" and one participant specified the reference using his "Malay friends" who were part of LGBT. This can be taken as an indirect indication that Malay LGBT individuals may be more visible than those from other ethnic groups. The remaining social actors were all mentioned by Participant 17 solely. They were the LGBT friends, referred to as "queer", "my friends", "gay", "trans", and "asexual"; LGBT colleagues referred to as "some of them" and "queer"; and social media users referred to as "a lot of people", "queer", and "allies".

**Table 4.39:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Positive Construction of LGBT by LGBT Participants

| Social actors | References | Predication |
|---|---|---|
| **The Speaker** | Non-binary<br>Pronouns: I | - didn't really have a conflict with my gender identity (P15)<br>- felt thankful, happier, and more comfortable to truly be myself (P15)<br>- lucky to realise my sexual orientation in early age (P15)<br>- didn't go through disowned (P15) |
| | Gay<br>Pronouns: I | - easier to mingle around with female friend (P16)<br>- try to be as truthful as possible to avoid being rejected as a gay (P16)<br>- have interaction with other gay guys better shaped by understanding; greater exposure and become more matured (P16)<br>- didn't receive hate or discrimination a lot (P19)<br>- proud to be and it feels quite normal to be gay (P20) |
| | Lesbian, Gay, Queer<br>Pronouns: I | - never really bother me, thought it was normal (P17)<br>- very open with my identity as a lesbian (P17) |
| **LGBT** | The community (a LGBTQ+ friendly village located in Kelantan) | - widely accepted (P15) |
| | LGBT, LGBT group<br>Pronouns: They, It | - don't have to go for counselling (P16) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | - need to expose themselves more and live happy life as there's no point to change back to straight (P16)<br>- can accept LGBT (P18)<br>- perfectly fine and nothing wrong with it (P19)<br>- not a mental illness (P20) |
| | Malay friends<br>Pronouns: They | - just want to live out their life even though the religion is not approving (P20) |
| **Friends** | Queer, my friends, gay, trans, asexual<br>Pronouns: They | - all accepting and very supportive (P17)<br>- they are great (P17) |
| **Colleagues** | Some of them, queer | - okay, as usual (P17) |
| **Social media users** | A lot of people, queer, allies | - pro-LGBT because they are queer themselves or allies (P17) |

The LGBT participants used the first-person pronoun "I" to speak as an LGBT individual (Participant 15, Participant 16, Participant 17, Participant 19, and Participant 20). They used the pronoun "I" to present their identities as part of LGBT members and their authorities to speak as a LGBT individual. From the predicational strategies used, the results showed that these five LGBT participants were very proud of their LGBT identities. For instance, Participant 15 positively constructed his identity as a lucky person for he was able to realise his sexual orientation at the earlier age and able to comfortably present his identity as a non-binary. Also, Participant 17 showed her positive characteristics as a lesbian that she was very open with her identity publicly, and she felt that it was normal to be a lesbian. Similarly, three LGBT participants who were identified as gay attributed positive traits by stating their truthfulness in presenting his gay identity publicly (Participant 16), did not receive much discrimination (Participant 19), and was proud to be a gay (Participant 20).

> *I definitely felt **happier** and more **comfortable** because, you know, I get to **truly be myself**. (Participant 15)*

*Because I **comfortable** with where I am right now… once I came out I'm like I do not that restriction anymore… I guess I'm just more **comfortable** with my skin. (Participant 19)*

*I'm **proud** to… quite **normal** la, is not something big deal. (Participant 20)*

Next, there were several LGBT participants who used the pronoun "they" to present some other LGBT groups and those LGBT groups were predicated with positive traits that "they" were absolutely normal and should not be treated as someone who suffered from mental illness. Furthermore, Participant 15 shared an interesting fact that there were this "community" who lived together in a LGBTQ+ friendly village located in Kelantan who were widely accepted by the people back then in Malaysia. The use of the term "kampung" and the location in Kelantan which has a large Malay population indirectly shows that LGBT individuals may have been accepted in the Malay community in the 1960s.

*So one interesting that I found on social media is that Malaysia used to have a **LGBTQ kampung**, I think in Kelantan, I'm not too sure. I think it's in Kelantan. Yeah. Somewhere in Kelantan, there was, like, this **LGBTQ+ friendly kampung**, KL village, that is you know, this was before like I think 1960s or something. It was. Yeah. It was recently independent, like, macam (like), baru merdeka (achived independence), something like that. So it was, like, uh, **widely accepted**, **the community was widely accepted**. (Participant 15)*

However, Participant 20 has used the pronoun "it" to refer LGBT group (see Table 4.39). The pronoun "it" is a singular third-person pronoun which is usually used to refer to non-living things. In this case, it was most probably because Participant 20 viewed LGBT

as an issue or a thing rather than the living LGBT individual. Also, Participant 20 specifically used “they” when he gave example by referring his “Malay friends” who had the positive LGBT traits that “they” appreciate individuality and “they” strived for it even though their religion could not approve the LGBT practice. The following social actor was the LGBT friends where Participant 17 used the pronoun “they” to talk about her LGBT friends.

> *My friends all know I’m queer, whether or not they are queer themselves or they are straight. And, it’s, they all* ***accepting*** *and even some that warrant, are accepting, or was low-key homophobic ha****s actually change their stance on how they view queer people****. (Participant 17)*

It is an expected result that LGBT participants would describe their LGBT friends positively as they support and accept other LGBT individuals. For example, Participant 17 said that she kept her lesbian identity to herself.

> *I primarily* ***kept it to myself****. Um. Because* ***most of the colleagues were like older****, and then different generation from I am. So,* ***it was not something that I was ready to deal with****. (Participant 17)*

However, when it comes to colleagues at workplace, Participant 17 predicated their trait as “okay” and “as usual” which were considered as positive trait but less positive compared to her LGBT friends. Last but not least, “allies” also showed their support on social media platforms by expressing pro-LGBT views.

#### 4.5.2.1.2 Negative Representation of LGBT by LGBT

Table 4.40 indicated the results of how LGBT participants negatively constructed their LGBT identities using the referential and predicational strategies. Table 4.40 shows

that there were three main social actor categories, which were the speakers themselves, general LGBT individuals, and the social media users.

**Table 4.40:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Negative Construction of LGBT by LGBT Participants

| Social actors | References | Predication |
|---|---|---|
| **The Speaker** | Non-binary<br>Pronouns: I | - felt weird being called as "man" (P15)<br>- face bullies throughout studies (P15)<br>- family said I'm a bit weird (P15) |
| | Gay<br>Pronouns: I | - get stereotype like: money boy, sugar daddy when dating older guys (P16)<br>- some are very hostile towards other gays (P16)<br>- should not adopt (P16)<br>- felt very unwelcomed at church (P16)<br>- being labelled as promiscuous and despicable (P16)<br>- being called "pondan" in school (P19)<br>- have struggle to work as a teacher due to the fear of being discriminated/being expelled (P19)<br>- control my appearance and the way I talk to prevent being too gay (P19) |
| | Lesbian, Gay, Queer<br>Pronouns: I | - was forced to get married and sometimes felt regret for getting married (P18) |
| **LGBT** | This community | - labelled as "salah" (P15) |
| | LGBT, LGBT group<br>Pronouns: They | - not faithful to God (P18)<br>- sinful in Islam (P19) |
| | Other people<br>Pronouns: They | - disowned from the family (P15)<br>- get rejected by non-LGBT friends (P15) |
| | Some LGBT people | - doesn't believe I'm a bisexual just because I'm married (P18) |
| | People like me | - cry because they face discrimination (P19) |
| | That group of people<br>Pronouns: They | - might have mental illness back in old days due to living in denial society/social pressure (P20)<br>- might get sick mentally if forced to like opposite gender (P20) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Social media users** | This community | - getting discrimination mostly from the Muslims (P15) |

Similar to the previous results on positive representation of LGBT identities, the LGBT participants used the pronoun "I" to indicate their power to speak for themselves. Although Participant 15 was open about his own non-binary identity, he also related the negative predications of him facing bullies during school days before and being labelled as "weird" by people around him including his family members.

> *I don't think my family know. But I think they kinda know. Because, I, because, you know, I would make up and stuff. So I kinda think like they have that, um, guess, something? Yeah. They might have guess la. That I'm, like, I'm a bit* ***weird****. Like,* ***we don't really talk about it****. Yeah. (Participant 15)*

As for the references of "gay", Participant 16 shared his experience of him being stereotyped as a "money boy" when he went to date older gays. He was even being described as "promiscuous and despicable". Also, from his dating experiences, he shared that some gays had the negative trait of being "very hostile towards other gays" as well which made him uncomfortable with some gays he had met before.

> *So the problem is that, when you're hanging out with older guys, people from other perspective, they tend to see, oh,* ***money boy****,* ***sugar daddy****. Those, those stereotypes. (Participant 16)*

> *They become, tend to, uh, even they are gay, they can be* ***very hostile towards other gays****. Yeah. I have encounter guys like that. (Participant 16)*

In addition, Participant 19 shared the negative descriptions of him being gay including being called as "*pondan*" (boys who act like girls) during school days. He also related his struggles to work as an educator due to the fear of facing discrimination, and the struggles to control his physical appearance in order to prevent looking too gay.

> *…when I was in school as well. I was, I was a bit on the feminine side so yeah, that, there're boys that would call me '**pondan**' (boy who acts girlish) and everything. (Participant 19)*

However, there was a contrast here as in previous positive representation of LGBT identities, Participants 19 stated that he felt normal and proud to be a gay. It is important to note that Participant 18 was the only LGBT participant who was negative about her lesbian identity. She was "forced to get married" by her family and she sometimes regretted getting married. She also did not like the pretence of being a heterosexual.

> *But still there are some LGBT people still **don't believe that I'm a bi because I'm married**… But for my case is because **I was forced to**…**I wasn't given a choice**. **Sometimes there is a regret of being married**. (Participant 18)*

The second social actor was general LGBT individuals and were referred as "this community", "LGBT group", "that group of people", etc. (see Table 4.40). When the LGBT participants were asked to share their experiences of being LGBT, the predicational strategies analysis showed negative traits that being LGBT is wrong (Participant 15), LGBT people were sinful especially in Islam (Participant 18 and Participant 19), and get rejected by friends and family members (Participant 15).

*So, having a son that, you know,* ***live a sinful life*** *is not something that she wanna to see. And probably she would wish that, you know, I got married, have children, because that's the lifestyle that everyone is having. (Participant 19)*

In addition, Participant 19 made references like "people like me" which hint at negative predications of LGBT individuals by heterosexuals. Participant 19 and other gay members often faced discrimination in the society and they felt upset about such discrimination. Interestingly, although the LGBT participants were speaking on behalf on their own LGBT group, the third-person pronoun "they" was used throughout, suggesting an exclusion of LGBT participants themselves. Lastly, the phrase "this community" is also used, as a vague reference, almost as if the LGBT term is too controversial to be explicitly mentioned.

#### 4.5.2.1.3 Positive Representation of Heterosexuals by LGBT

Table 4.41 shows the results on referential and predication strategies used by LGBT participants to construct heterosexuals' identities positively. They did not paint the heterosexual people negatively as "enemies" who were out to discriminate them. There were six social actor categories which comprised friends, heterosexual men, colleagues at workplace, family members, general Malaysians, and social media users.

**Table 4.41:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Positive Construction of Heterosexuals by LGBT Participants

| Social actors | References | Predication |
|---|---|---|
| **Friends** | My friends, my close friends<br>Pronouns: They | - have been positive (P15)<br>- wouldn't show negative reaction (P16)<br>- accepting and very supportive, had changed their view (P17)<br>- some are okay/accepting (P18)<br>- reacted very positively, very open, very receiving (P19)<br>- quite acceptable (P20) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Heterosexual men** | My trainer, coach, other male teacher, athletes<br>Pronouns: He | - very fascinating, has interesting look, and looks attractive (P16)<br>- looks really great (P20) |
| | Boys | - good-looking (P19) |
| **Colleagues** | One of my colleagues | - open even though he's from different generation (P17) |
| | My CEO, a boomer, my manager<br>Pronouns: He | - very proud of me being lesbian (P17)<br>- very open (P19) |
| | The crowd | - all accept who I am (P18) |
| | Colleagues | - didn't show disregard and dissatisfaction (P19) |
| **Family** | My sister, parents<br>Pronouns: they | - okay with me being gay now (P16) |
| | Both my sisters | - took some time to accept(P17) |
| | My brother | - fine with it (P17) |
| | My younger sister | - more open (P19) |
| **Malaysians** | Gen-Z, youngsters, most of the people<br>Pronouns: They | - more positive than other generation (P17)<br>- quite educated and open (P20) |
| | Some people | - accept it (P18) |
| | Those who are very religious<br>Pronouns: They | - respect, never say anything bad (P19) |
| **Social media users** | Most of them | - quite positive nowadays (P20) |

According to the results reported in Table 4.39, the LGBT participants referred to heterosexual people as friends, namely, "my friends" and "my close friends". The second social actor was categorised as heterosexual men where LGBT participants used references including "my trainer", "coach", "other male teacher", "athletes", and "boys". The third social actor was the colleagues at workplaces, referred to as "colleagues", "my manager", "my CEO", and "the crowd". Next, the social actor of family members mainly included the

references of “my parents”, “my sisters”, and “my brother”. As for general Malaysians, references were made using “Gen-Z”, “most of the people”, “some people”, and “those who are very religious”. The sixth social actor was social media users who referred to as “most of them”.

For the first social actor of friends, the LGBT participants have generally used the pronoun of “they” to refer their respective heterosexual friends. From the predication strategies used, the analysis showed the positive construction of these heterosexual friends a “they” possessed positive qualities including being supportive, open-minded, receiving, and accepting, shared by all six LGBT participants.

*Yeah. **Very positive**. They’ve [my friends] been **supportive** and just, the best. (Participant 17)*

*And in **my group of friends**, this is a group of people that **very open** and **very receiving** and they come from a lot of different background. (Participant 19)*

*I told quite some of **my friends**. Yeah. **My best friend** they know about my identity as well. **Most of them quite acceptable**. (Participant 20)*

While for the social actor of heterosexual men, only gay participants made positive predications such as attractive, fascinating, and good-looking. Moving on to workplaces, only three LGBT participants positively constructed their work mates’ qualities for being very open, accepting, and without showing any disregard towards them (an example is Participant 19). Two out of three LGBT participants also talked about their CEO and manager who was a boomer but turned out to be very open and receptive as well towards their LGBT identities.

*Because in my previous workplace,* ***my manager*** *was not a local woman, she married to a local Malay guy la, but* ***she's very open*** *in that sense. And my, someone like* ***my leader*** *as well, was another homosexual guy. And in* ***my group of friends****, this is a group of people that* ***very open and very receiving*** *and they come from a lot of different background. (Participant 19)*

As for family members, there were also three LGBT participants who positively constructed their heterosexual family members who were able to accept them for who they are. However, Participant 17 mentioned that both of her sisters actually took some time to accept her. Also, Participant 19 mentioned that his "younger sister" was "more open", supporting previous questionnaire results on the younger generation being more tolerant than the older generation towards LGBT.

*My, both* ***my sisters****, when I told them, uh, they,* ***they took a while****. One, one of them* ***took bit longer to accept*** *it. But longer as in like a few weeks. The* ***other sister, the older one****, like, yeah,* ***she knows****, she's like, yeah,* ***of course there are people like you in the world****, but I don't think you should come out to our parents. (Participant 19)*

*[My parents]* ***Now okay already****. Nah. They even, even met my previous ex before, though, and my ex family, uh, come together and eat meal. Uh. She gave up that- she know that I won't give her grandchildren la. (Participant 16)*

Therefore, from Table 4.39, it is clear that only Participant 16 mentioned that his "parents" was from the older generation, and yet could accept his gay identity. The analysis revealed that Participant 16 was the exception but other LGBT participants only mentioned

about their siblings who accepted them. Furthermore, in the category of general Malaysians, "they" (the youngsters and Gen-Z) were more positive and more open when it comes to LGBT. Participant 20 felt that the younger generation was more educated and had greater exposure to new norms.

> *I think most of the people they are **quite educated**, I mean they are **quite open on LGBT**, the **youngsters in Malaysia**, about LGBTQs la. Yeah. (Participant 20)*

Again, Malaysia being an Islamic country, it was unavoidable to make a relation between LGBT issue and religion. However, Participant 19 has positively constructed heterosexual Malaysians who were religious by stating that "they" could show respect by not saying bad things about LGBT.

> *…those who are **very religious** as well in our group, **still respect** in a way, they **never say anything bad** or they never talk about it in general. (Participant 19)*

Lastly, the LGBT participants felt that most of the heterosexual people in their lives were quite positive towards LGBT nowadays on social media. This may be why LGBT individuals find it easier to come out on social media rather than in face-to-face interactions.

> *There's definitely a lot of the people-for-LGBT, because either they are queer themselves or allies. (Participant 17)*

#### 4.5.2.1.4 Negative Representation of Heterosexuals by LGBT

Table 4.42 showed the analysis of referential and predication strategies used by LGBT participants in their negative discursive construction of Malaysian heterosexuals. There were nine categories of social actors involved. The first actor was heterosexual friends who were simply referred to as "friends". The second actor was heterosexual female referred

to as “girls” and “girlfriend”. The third and fourth social actors were students and teachers respectively which happened to be in the setting of schools. The fifth actor was Christians referred to as “the priest” and “the leader” by Participant 16. The next actor was colleagues at workplace, referred to as “a lot of people”. The following social actor involved family members where majority of the LGBT participants used the references of “my family” and “my parents”. Also, general Malaysians was another social actor came with some negative references including “LGBT-hater” and “extremist”. The last actor was social media users and the pronoun “they” was used to refer to them.

**Table 4.42:** Referential and Predication Strategies in Negative Construction of Heterosexuals by LGBT Participants

| Social actors | References | Predication |
|---|---|---|
| **Friends** | Friends<br>Pronouns: They | - will keep a little distant away (P16, P18)<br>- some don’t accept and show negative reaction through face expression (P18) |
| **Heterosexual female** | Girls, girlfriend | - not sexually attracted (P16) |
| **Students** | The boys in school<br>Pronouns: They | - call me “pondan” (P15, P19) |
| **Teachers** | Teachers<br>Pronouns: They | - did not take action when I’m being ridiculed (P15)<br>- didn’t teach about what is LGBT (P18) |
| **Christians** | Pronouns: They | - think that they are better than anyone else (P16) |
| | The priest, the leader | - try to convince me to change (P16) |
| **Colleagues** | A lot of people | - some don’t accept (P18) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Family** | My family, my parents<br>Pronouns: They | - don't support it, talk negatively, being discreet (P15)<br>- very upset and unhappy (P17)<br>- totally reject me for being LGBT (P18)<br>- cornered me (P18)<br>- believe that there's not LGBT orientation (P18)<br>- would put the blame on themselves (P19)<br>- never try to understand what LGBT is (P20)<br>- force children to go for counselling (P20)<br>- might get humiliated for having LGBT children (P20) |
| | My mum | - wants reputation and got hysterical in the counselling session (P16)<br>- may still in denial (P17)<br>- think that LGBT is a mental illness (P18)<br>- will be disappointed as she thinks being LGBT is living a sinful life (P19) |
| | My father | - cornered me, almost kicked me out of the house but gave in after all (P16) |
| | My husband | - reacted badly after finding out I used to date a girl (P18) |
| **Malaysians** | People, a lot of people, LGBT-hater, extremist, Malaysian<br>Pronouns: They | - say insensitive thing about my sexuality as a gay (P15)<br>- highly opposing LGBT (P15)<br>- weaponizing their religion to deny people's human basic rights (P17)<br>- might harass, bully, and hurt LGBT (P17)<br>- view being queer is wrong and mostly tied with religion (P17)<br>- being very negative and say "no" to LGBT (P18)<br>- very low acceptance, had ideology that LGBT is not normal, and connect everything with God (P18)<br>- view LGBT as a sin, highest sin of all (P19)<br>- had biasness towards LGBT (P19) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | The police | - don't take it seriously if the case involves LGBT but to send LGBT victim for JAKIM (P19) |
| **Social media users** | Pronouns: They | - LGBT is a sin against most religion as it's a Western agenda (P17)<br>- harass people who are LGBT (P17) |

First, from the social actor of friends, the results in Table 4.42 indicated that Participant 16 and Participant 18 used the pronoun of "they" along with the negative predications by stating that their heterosexual friends would keep a little distance away after finding out their true identities.

*They wouldn't say- they wouldn't show negative reaction. But they probably will* ***keep a little bit distant away****. (Participant 16)*

*Yes…Yes, I can feel the, the, the energy, the vibration, you can-* ***actually you can feel it****. (Participant 18)*

Moreover, some of them would even show their rejection through their body language (feel the negative vibes) (Participant 18). As for the actor of heterosexual female, only Participant 16 (gay) made attribution to their negative qualities for those "girls" were not sexually attracted to them as he was more drawn to men.

*Yeah. I mean. Emotionally attach, can attach but, uh, physically, as sexually,* ***not, not able to with, uh, the ladies****. (Participant 16)*

A few LGBT participants shared about their school experience and they were not happy with the students and teachers who made fun of them. For instance, Participant 15 and Participant 19 shared similar experience as "the boys in school" would call them "*pondan*" (boys who act like girls) which was very disrespectful for them. Even though they had such

bad experience in schools, the teachers did not lend a hand to help the LGBT participants when they faced verbal discrimination.

> *So, and then, like, they were start to, like, call me, stuff like that, they would kept call me, and you know,* ***call me the 'pondan'****(transvestite) word, stuff like that. Yeah.* ***Even though there are, like, teachers, in the same building, but the teacher didn't say anything****. (Participant 15)*

> *When I was in school as well, I was, I was a bit on the feminine side so yeah, that, there're boys that would* ***call me 'pondan'*** *(transvestite) and everything. (Participant 19)*

Participant 18 blamed the education system and the teachers on not disseminating knowledge about LGBT to the students. The teachers could have played a part in increasing the social knowledge of students on LGBT, in Participant 18's view. This caused heterosexual students to view LGBT students as different.

> *…actually back those days when I was so young, in secondary, I do not know what is LGBT, I do not understand all those terms* ***because teacher don't teach you that term****. (Participant 18)*

Religion wise, Participant 16 shared that Christians did not possess positive qualities as well as "they" would see themselves as someone who is better, compared to LGBT individuals. Moreover, "the priest" and "the leader" had convinced Participant 16 to revert to a heterosexual identity.

*To be honest, I find it quite, uh, (sigh), I, I have to admit it, this is not- ah, I forgot to mention this certain one, that* ***I feel the negative part*** *of the, uh,* ***prejudice*** *la. I used to go to church often. And because of that standpoint, that, that standpoint* ***I feel like I'm very unwelcomed.*** *Although, although I helped around, uh, I try to make everyone around me laugh. But the way how they, they perceive gay, LGB- lesbian, and other, I mean, other LGBT folks, it just made me feel like, it doesn't- I mean, like,* ***their nose are so high up****, I think that,* ***they think that they are better than anyone else****. (Participant 16)*

*They kinda, like,* ***the priest try to****, uh,* ***change me****. Then those,* ***the Mormons****,* ***the leader****, they know that I man,* ***they will try to convince me****,* ***change me*** *also. So I feel like, I'm,* ***I find it very stressful****, like, I just wanted to reach them and tell them that stop trying to change me. I am who I am. (Participant 16)*

In addition, at her workplace, Participant 18 shared that "some people" which possibly referred to her heterosexual colleagues could not accept her identity as a lesbian as well.

*So back those days when I was working with a lot of people, it's still the same, some people accept it,* ***some people don't****. (Participant 18)*

In their families, all of the LGBT participants have their negative construction for their heterosexual family members' identities. From the predicational strategies used, all of their family members portrayed negative characteristics. For example, "they" would talk negatively, felt unhappy, cornered the LGBT participants in house, force them to seek help psychologically, and even put the blame on themselves.

*I 'kantoi' with* ***my parents*** *and my, uh, then the* ***total rejection from my family****,* ***they said that is not normal****. (Participant 18)*

*Because, like,* ***parents never trying to understand what LGBTQ is****. And* ***forcing their children go for counselling*** *I think that is, uh, is not, is not what parenting about la I think. (Participant 20)*

It was interesting to find out that, the references of "mum" was used by four LGBT participants, suggesting that mother was usually the one who had the worries and disappointment towards having LGBT children. The predications found on "mum" were, for instance, "think that LGBT is a mental illness", "think that LGBT is living a sinful life", and "still in denial".

*I think* ***my mum will be disappointed*** *because, you know, she's a traditional woman. Uh. Very Malay. Very religious. So, having a son that, you know, live a sinful life is not something that she wanna to see. And probably she would wish that, you know, I got married, have children, because that's the lifestyle that everyone is having. (Participant 19)*

***My mum think is a mental illness****. (Participant 18)*

***My mum may still in denial****. I don't know. (Participant 17)*

While for "father", who usually played a role of being strict and firm, had the negative predication of cornering Participant 16 and almost kicked him out of the house after finding out his identity as a gay. Also, for Participant 18 who got married, she negatively constructed her husband as someone who got bad reaction when he found out Participant 18 used to date the same gender before.

***My father corner me**. Um. Quite intense. **My father almost kicked me out**. (Participant 16)*

***My father** ask me to married. Yes. But **I cannot [disobey]** la that time because the feeling, it was too scary at that point, so better to follow what your father wants. (Participant 18)*

As for general Malaysians, a majority of the LGBT participants used the pronoun of "they" to refer the "people" who portray negative attitudes towards them and other LGBT individuals. For example, "they" would act negatively by harassing and bullying LGBT individuals. Furthermore, "they" would connect everything with religion by saying that LGBT is sinful and abnormal, and therefore LGBT individuals should not deserve any rights in Malaysia.

*…they would know that, you know, my sexuality and **they probably would not handle my case** the way it is because there is a lot of, uh, history in which that when police are met with this kind of case quickly, they, they, **they don't take it seriously** and they, they, and **they are pious toward you**. (Participant 19)*

Participant 19 has shared his experience by referring "the police" in Malaysia who had biasness towards LGBT individuals and would not handle the cases seriously just because the cases involved LGBT individuals even though the victim was a LGBT. Instead, the LGBT victim would be sent to JAKIM to undergo counselling.

#### 4.5.2.2 Argumentation Strategies

This part of analysis showed the arguments that have been employed in the discourse constructed by LGBT participants. Argumentation strategies used can help to present the

ways of reasoning about the validity of truth and rightness found in the construction of both LGBT and heterosexual identities.

#### 4.5.2.2.1 Truth

The analysis of argumentation strategies used by LGBT participants showed that they too agreed that the LGBT issue remains a sensitive topic to be discussed among Malaysian families. Malaysian parents often send the message to their children that they should only show interest in the opposite gender. They would comment negatively on LGBT and Asian parents usually unable to accept the fact that their children are part of LGBT as they would be very upset and disappointed. Parents often care about the reputation of the family and they felt that having LGBT children was a shame to the family.

> *So, **they were very upset**. They, they **mentioned their disappointment**. And all these, you know, they, **they weren't happy about it**… I've came out to my parents before. Whether or not they accept it, it's a different thing. **My mum may still in denial**. I don't know. But she never asked me about, 'are you gonna get married with your boyfriend?' And she has never harassed me about that. So **I guess there are some form of acceptance there** la. But they know I'm queer. (Participant 17)*

> *My, **both my sisters**, when I told them, uh, they, they **took a while**. One, one of them took bit longer to accept it. But longer as in like a few weeks. The other sister, the older one, like, yeah, she knows, she's like, yeah, **of course there are people like you in the world**. (Participant 17)*

From Participant 17's experience as lesbian, even though there might be some form of acceptance among the parents, they would not simply bring up any topic related to LGBT

as well. However, siblings usually tend to be more accepting and most probably due to closer age or within the same generation, so they can understand LGBT better. This somehow showed the difference between different generations as younger generation nowadays were more accepting towards LGBT and acknowledge them as a normal human being.

In addition, it is challenging for LGBT participants to come out from closet to admit their identities publicly in Malaysia. It was because they need to take the risk that many people would keep a distance away from them or even reject them after finding out their true identities. Another concern is that people often have wrong impression towards LGBT, for instance, towards gays just because gays have sexual interest in the same gender. However, this was a false impression as Participant 16 clarified that it did not mean gays would fall for all the males they meet.

> *to **a lot of straight people, they think that gay guys are promiscuous**, 滥交 (promiscuity). They feel that very, it's, they find it very despicable, they very, they despise, like that. (Participant 16)*

Therefore, it is often more comfortable and easier to come out to friends compared to family members. Participant 17 said that all her friends, regardless of whether they were LGBT or straight, were all able to accept her identity as a lesbian, including those who are low-key homophobic.

> ***they all accepting** and even some that warrant, are accepting, or was low-key homophobic has actually change their stance on how they view queer people. (Participant 17)*

*I told quite some of my friends. Yeah. My best friend they know about my identity as well.* ***Most of them quite acceptable****. (Participant 20)*

Before that, it was important to build a truthful relationship with friends to avoid being rejected at the time when they disclose their true identities. The LGBT participants were generally thankful that there were heterosexuals who demonstrated kindness and acceptance towards LGBT which helped LGBT participants to get to truly be themselves comfortably.

Speaking on whether people are born to be heterosexual or LGBT, the LGBT participants themselves have different understandings as well. Some of them believed that LGBT was not biologically inherited but more to a random probability which can happen on anyone. Participant 18 also stated that LGBT is something that one is born with but yet it was not biologically inherited as well as she did not have other family members who happened to be LGBT except her.

***Biological inherited? I don't think so****. Because I know, my family, my biological family doesn't have all these things. It's like I am the only person. (Participant 18)*

Participant 20 argued that one was either born to be LGBT (natural expression) or it was a personal choice. Moreover, LGBT was not a kind of mental illness and it was actually very dismissive to label a LGBT person by saying that they were suffering from mental illness. However, forcing LGBT individuals to be involved in heterosexual relationship due to social expectation can cause them to have mental sickness.

*I think* ***either born to be or you want to be****... First thing is, actually* ***WHO already proved that it is not a mental illnesses*** *and then if you go through, uh, pick any LGBT*

*la, any of- one of them going- going through this test, I think the test would be 100% normal. (Participant 20)*

On social media, LGBT participants have different experiences. According to Participant 17 and Participant 20, they were getting more allies on the Internet who show support towards LGBT individuals because they fight for acceptance and inclusivity.

*With Gen Z-ers being on social media way more often than any other generation, the, **it has been way more positive**. (Participant 17)*

*I think most of them (social media users) are **quite positive** la nowadays. (Participant 20)*

However, Participant 18 felt that social media was not a good platform for her to portray her lesbian identity as she realised there were many anti-LGBT who were very negative and they would attack LGBT. Besides, with the aid of negative media influence, the older generation would view LGBT as the highest sin of all.

*That one, **totally I cannot portray myself**…, I know inside my social media there is **a lot of LGBT hater**, there is, uh, a lot, uh, some of them are extremist. I think there is like one point, there is something like, uh, 'say no to LGBT' something like that. I was like, oh my god, that's why I don't really want to go into social media so much because of all the negative. (Participant 18)*

One of the major problems faced by LGBT individuals in Malaysia is that they did not get the recognition from the government especially on the matter of legalisation of same-sex marriage. Knowing that Malaysia is a conservative country, it would be too luxurious for LGBT individuals to dream of getting married legally here. One participant has shared

his concern that LGBT, especially gays, often face challenges such that they could not be responsible for their partners when it comes to legal matters, for example, making medical decision which required agreement from family members.

> *But, you have to come back to the reality that, at the end of the day, if something happened to your spouse…you cannot make decision for the other person.* ***The legal part…it's not at the LGBT side****. So you may have build a house together, spend years, you know, decorate with their love together. But it can be, one, the other one pass away, the family, that side family can just took everything away from you. (Participant 16)*

Therefore, there were LGBT participants who planned to get married somewhere else that would recognise same-sex -marriage to be exact. Thailand is one of the countries where LGBT individuals may go to have their marriage legalised. Also, the social pressure from the society was another problem faced by LGBT individuals as many people would choose to get married to heterosexuals due to the pressure coming from peers and family. They then have to put up a pretence of a heterosexual relationship. In the end, LGBT individuals have to hide their true identities, knowing that people around them only see heterosexuals as normal.

> *Maybe. We're looking at Taiwan. I mean, of course, eventually, um, being able to call yourself a partner, call,* ***call your partner a official spouse in the eyes of the law is, would be beneficial for us****. (Participant 17)*

> *Whichever,* ***whichever country that recognize gay marriage*** *and can provide a safe environment, that will be the ultimate option. (Participant 20)*

Lastly, LGBT participants also stated that a lot of people are still stuck with the ideology that LGBT was abnormal, and they would connect everything with God. For example, traditional Malay who is very religious tend to view LGBT as sinful. As a Muslim, Participant 19 believed that sin should be more than just sexual orientation as everyone sins, but sin differently.

> *Another way that I look at it is that,* ***everyone sin****. One way or another. And, I sin, you sin, it's just that, the different, we sin differently. (Participant 19)*

In Christianity, Participant 18 argued that God's love should be unconditional to accept everyone regardless one's sexual orientation. It is the human beings who set the limitation to love.

> *...that is between me and God, not between me, you and god.* ***God's love is unconditional*** *la. But for me, is God don't put a limitation to love. For me, God pour unconditional love regardless of who you are.* ***Is only the human that set the limitation****. (Participant 18)*

#### 4.5.2.2.2 Rightness

Based on the interviews with LGBT participants, most of the Malaysians should start to learn to be more understanding towards LGBT individuals and this will gradually reduce the negative stigma against them. When people start to cherish and appreciate people around them including LGBT, they will be able to accept all kinds of people more easily. Also, it is not necessary to fit into the stereotype which treat heterosexuality as normal. Participant 19 felt that if one happened to have LGBT children, parents should accept their children and continue to love them.

*Like, no one has to, no one has to, like, fit into that, uh, stereotype, you know, like, the normal feel, like,* ***you can be different on your own****, that's my thought. (Participant 15)*

*I mean like,* ***regardless of whatever choices your kids are making, the fact that you are so willing to change them to the point that you're okay by inflicting pain to them, it's nothing short of a abuse****. (Participant 19)*

In addition, Malaysians should stop asking, convincing, or giving advice to LGBT individuals and hope that they could change their sexual orientation back to heterosexual. It is because such acts would only cause more stress to LGBT individuals as they could not choose to be who they want to be.

An important message for the LGBT individuals is that LGBT individuals should start to look forward and learn to live a happier and meaningful life. There is no point for them to go seek for psychological help or to change back being straight. Participant 17 felt that it was "wrong" to try to fix LGBT individuals while Participant 18 felt that it was "ridiculous". LGBT individuals enjoy total freedom as long as they do not commit crime. For example, they even have their right to have sexual act with anyone they want as long as both parties agreed with it. No doubt, there are a lot of challenges to be faced being LGBT in Malaysia. However, one should not blame them for being born in Malaysia but to start making a change and truly be themselves.

***You should love your child for whoever they are****. Bringing them into a counselling, to try to fix your children is just very wrong, I feel. (Participant 17)*

***Is the matter whether you accept the person for who they are or not***. *No point you send us to counselling or send, uh, go to find, don't know, priest or, or whatever the religion you people in and pray for you so that you come back, for me that is just ridiculous. (Participant 18)*

The participants believed that LGBT couples should be given the right to adopt children as well. Participant 16 believed that LGBT couples can bring the children up way better than the heterosexual parents as he noticed that there were many heterosexual parents who did not carry out their responsibility well, causing the children becoming orphans.

*Let's say they say gay guy should not adopt. But I think if, if we adopt,* ***we provide them a lovely environment to grow up, better than they being dumped by their parents who are consist of straight***. *So, yeah, straight does not make them any better than anyone else. (Participant 16)*

Furthermore, LGBT individuals often do not get fair treatment especially when it comes to crime cases which require police investigation. Participant 19 stated that LGBT victims would suffer more than other heterosexual victims just because of their sexual orientation as the authorities would not show the same respect towards them.

*…because there is a lot of, uh, history in which that when police are met with this kind of case quickly, they, they,* ***they don't take it seriously***. *(Participant 19)*

In a nutshell, LGBT individuals were just human beings who have different sexual orientation and they deserve the same things as other heterosexual individuals have. By having different sexual orientation, LGBT individuals should not be labelled as sinful as it was definitely not a sin according to LGBT participants.

#### 4.5.2.3 Perspectivization Strategies

This section presents the analysis on the perspectives from which references, attributions, and arguments are expressed.

From the analysis of both referential and predication strategies, a majority of the LGBT participants used the third-person point of view when asked to what extent Malaysians tolerate LGBT. They referred to their friends, their colleagues, and their family members using the pronoun "they". For instance, Participant 15 (identified as gay) said that "they" (his family members) were being discreet about his identity as part of LGBT individuals and Participant 18 (identified as bisexual) said that "they" (her parents) think that it is not normal to be LGBT.

On the other hand, there were LGBT participants who used the first-person point of view especially in argumentation strategy as they wanted to indicate their strong will of wanting to be treated equally and to be accepted for who they are. For example, Participant 17 who is a lesbian used the pronoun "we" to say that LGBT individuals have the same feelings, lifestyle, and experiences like any other heterosexuals. Therefore, she urged the public to at least show respect to LGBT individuals and treat them like ordinary human beings.

#### 4.5.2.4 Intensification and Mitigation Strategies

This section describes the strategies used by heterosexual participants to intensify or mitigate their construction of tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Martinez and Pertejo (2012) defines intensification in both written and spoken language as a message delivered in a more amplified tone, and the purpose is to emphasise the speakers' position and their attitude on what they are saying. On the other hand, mitigation strategy does not refer to

"any weakening of the force of act being performed" but to reduce the "unwelcome" effects to hearers in speech acts (Fraser, 1980, as cited in Ali & Salih, 2020). The examples of intensification and mitigation strategies used by heterosexual participants while constructing their views towards LGBT individuals are listed in Table 4.43.

#### 4.5.2.4.1 Intensification

Table 4.43 shows the examples of intensification strategies used by LGBT participants when constructing their views on Malaysians' tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Intensification strategies include augmentatives, subjunctive, modal verbs, tag questions, and verbs of saying.

For augmentatives, Participant 15 who identified himself as gay used this strategy when asked about his feelings after coming out. He mentioned that he was "definitely" feeling happier and he was very comfortable to be his true self. Besides, Participant 16 who is a gay said that his mum should "actually" go for counselling instead of sending him for it. Participant 16 felt there was nothing wrong about being gay but his mum should seek for counsellors in order to become more accepting.

Several participants used the subjunctive to express their attitudes towards Malaysians' tolerance on LGBT. Table 4.43 shows that participants generally expressed their hopes or wishes for better times. For instance, Participant 19 who experienced discrimination for being gay expressed his "hope" that other LGBT individuals would not experience the hard times as he did.

Moreover, modal verbs such as "have to", "very", "should", and "shouldn't" were used by LGBT participants to intensify their views. For instance, some participants like Participant 16 used "have to" to mention how lucky he was to be surrounded by people who

are open and accepting of his gay identity. Also, Participant 19 felt that he was "very lucky" as he did not face much discrimination throughout his journey as gay. Other participants used intensification strategies when they said that Malaysians "have to" learn to accept different types of people including those with different sexuality (Participant 18) and especially parents "have to" start to understand their children if their children happened to be LGBT (Participant 20). Most importantly, Participant 17 stated that parents "should" love their children for whoever they are.

There were two participants who employed tag questions to intensify their statement by seeking agreement from the interviewer. For example, Participant 17 strongly disagreed with how people see LGBT as wrong because there were no rules saying that only being heterosexual is normal. Also, Participant 16 used tag question to get the interviewer to agree with his standpoint that everyone only lives once and therefore, "whether you are LGBT or not, you should live your life to the fullest".

Lastly, the LGBT participants sent messages of intensification using verbs of feeling and thinking. For instance, when Participant 15 (gay male) was asked about the argument of whether being LGBT is a mental illness or not, he said that he doesn't "think" that is a mental illness. According to Participant 15, being LGBT is a personal feeling and it is not related to the brains. Another example showed was Participant 18 (bisexual female) who "feel" that she was not being real for herself and therefore she would choose to admit her bisexual identity to selected persons.

**Table 4.43:** Intensification Strategies used by LGBT Participants

| Linguistic features | Examples |
|---|---|
| Augmentatives | - **Definitely**. I **definitely** felt happier and more comfortable (P15)<br>- … **actually** the person that need counselling the most is my mum (P16) |
| Subjunctive | - I really **hope** there will be more, more people that would not have the same struggle as I do (P19)<br>- I **hope** that the Malaysians LGBT, for those younger generation, 不要怨天尤人 *(lay the blame upon other people)*. Don't blame others (P16) |
| Modal verbs | - I **have to** say I'm quite lucky la, my surrounding people of, people around me, quite open (P16)<br>- They **have to** learn to accept people from various type of background no matter who they are (P18)<br>- I've been **very** lucky not to face a lot of discrimination (P19)<br>- They **have to** understand what is LGBTQ first, and then they **have to** listen to their childrens…they **have to** listen from their children (P20)<br>- I mean, like, if you guys have the rights…I **should** also have the same benefit or the same rights (P19)<br>- I do think about, oh, I **should** wear this kind of outfit…or I **shouldn't** be talking the way like this (P19)<br>- You **should** love your child for whoever they are (P17) |
| Tag questions | - How can you say that being heterosexual-normative is the regular way to be? When other brains of queer people look the same, **right?** (P17)<br>- If you one day cannot live a happy life, what's the point of, I mean, you're 白花 *(wasted your life)*. **You get what I mean?** (P16) |
| Verbs of saying | - I **don't think** it is a mental illness (P15)<br>- I **feel** so fake around people if I'm not being truthful to myself (P18) |

#### 4.5.2.4.2 Mitigation

Table 4.44 shows the mitigation strategies used by LGBT participants in constructing their views on Malaysians' tolerance towards LGBT individuals. Features used for the analysis include diminutives, modal verbs, subjunctive, hesitations, and verbs of saying. For instance, when asked about being LGBT back in the school days, Participant 20 used

diminutive feature by stating “maybe” there were some male students who act more feminine might encounter bullies in the school. Hedging reduced the strength of the propositions made.

Besides, Participant 15 also used modal verbs of “could” to mitigate his opinion by stating that especially those who are religious “could” possibly learn how to be kind to people, including LGBT, as what have been taught in their religious teachings. Also, when asked about whether an LGBT sexual orientation could be inherited or not, Participant 16 somehow presumed that there “could be” a chance that sexual orientation was affected by genes.

In mitigation strategies, the subjunctive can also be used to express hope that has not yet occurred, but in a less intensified tone. For instance, both Participant 15 (gay) and Participant 18 (bisexual female) expressed their “hopes” that Malaysians “could be more understanding and accepting” for who they are.

For hesitations, several participants used “I guess” to mitigate their speech acts. For example, when asked about family’s acceptance towards Participant 17’s identity as a lesbian, she mentioned that she had a “guess” that her mother somehow accepted her identity and had never pushed her to involve in heterosexual relationship or to get married. Another term used was “I mean” where Participant 19 has mentioned earlier that he was totally out to everyone at his workplace but soon after he mitigate his statement using “I mean”, rephrasing that he will try not to conceive his gay identity from his colleagues.

Lastly, verbs of saying can also be found in the mitigation strategies used by LGBT participants. Some LGBT participants were reserved when asked about struggles faced as an LGBT individual. Participant 17 “thinks” that she had not encounter any big challenges up to this time being a lesbian. For Participant 20, he “thinks” that his family members could

possible accept his gay identity when he was financially stable. The verb "think" is a form of hedging, and is an example of a mitigation strategy.

**Table 4.44:** Mitigation Strategies used by LGBT Participants

| Linguistic features | Examples |
|---|---|
| Diminutives | - some guy **maybe** they acts like a little bit sissy **maybe** they will get bullied by their friends (P20)<br>- It's **probably** because it has only been discussed by one group of people (P19)<br>- I don't read it so I don't say yes or no. **Maybe? Maybe no?** It's not in my knowledge (P19)<br>- **Maybe** someday yes? But at the moment no la. **Maybe** few years later la. Not really ready to tell them (P20) |
| Modal verbs | - you **could** probably try and practice what your religion is teaching you and that is to be kind to people (P15)<br>- I suspect **could** be a, uh, it's just in the gene (P16)<br>- I **could** be killing a person, but if you're LGBT then you're worse than me (P19) |
| Subjunctive | - I **hope** that people could be more understanding and accepting (P15)<br>- I just **hope** that people could be more accepting (P15) |
| Hesitations | - I would make up and stuff. So I kinda think like they have that, um, guess, **something?** (P15)<br>- I **guess** there are some form of acceptance there (P17)<br>- I **guess** it's a way for me to kind like, embrace myself… (P19)<br>- **I mean**, **I guess**, **I mean**, I'm pretty privileged, **I guess**. (P15)<br>- I don't know. Like, the, **I mean**, the communities itself is kind of scary, in a way that a lot of people are looking out for sex (P15)<br>- At work, I'm totally out to everyone. **I mean**, I don't try to conceive to my sexuality identity at work (P19) |
| Verbs of saying | - I don't **think** there's any specific queer, uh, challenges during this time (P17)<br>- I **think** they can accept it (P20) |

## 4.6 Comparison between Self-reported Tolerance and Discursive Strategies used

In this section, the results are described to address Objective 6, that is, **t**o examine whether discursive strategies used by participants to talk about LGBT individuals reflect

their self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals in questionnaires. The quantitative results (Sections 4.1-4.4) and qualitative results (Section 4.5) were compared to examine the similarities and differences between the self-reported tolerance and discursive strategies used in talking about the representation of LGBT individuals. The comparison yielded three key constructs, which are: (1) LGBT is nature or nurture; (2) acceptance on LGBT rights; and (3) acceptable social roles for LGBT individuals in the society.

First, the discussion on whether LGBT is nature or nurture. The questionnaire results showed two different patterns. One portion of the questionnaire participants felt that LGBT is born to be or it is a kind of natural expression. Another portion of participants felt that LGBT could be caused by external factors including the upbringing experiences, environmental factors, the use of social media, or peers influence. The discursive results showed that a majority of the interview participants who were heterosexual tended to have think that LGBT is a personal choice. On the other hand, the interview participants who were LGBT felt that LGBT sexual orientation is natural and cannot be changed. Thus, LGBT participants in this study would feel uncomfortable on the act of heterosexuals advise them to change their sexuality or gender identity. In this sense, the views of the questionnaire and interview participants were similar. Both techniques of data collection uncovered the two groups of people in the Malaysian society; people who believed that sexual orientation is a choice versus a natural inclination.

Secondly, on the comparison of the questionnaire and interview results on LGBT rights showed that the latter uncovered greater depth of insights. The self-reported tolerance questionnaire results showed the majority view that LGBT individuals are human beings, and deserve all kind of rights in the society including getting married legally and having the

rights to adopt children. The discursive results also revealed that less than half of the participants were quite reserved about their stance and preferred to express neutral views. For instance, they felt that they would not openly support for same-sex marriage to be legalised but at the same time they would not oppose as well if Malaysia plans to legalise it. However, about 64% of the questionnaire participants totally rejected the idea of legalising same-sex marriage in Malaysia and definitely would vote for a "no" if there is going to be a petition.

Lastly, the third construct that emerged from the comparison of the questionnaire and interview results is the acceptance of LGBT individuals in the society. The questionnaire results showed that all of the participants were able to tolerate LGBT individuals in most of the social roles including friends, neighbours, teachers, military offices, politicians, and colleagues. On the other hand, they could not accept it if their religious leaders and their own children are practising LGBT. This result aligns with the discursive results whereby half of heterosexual participants would advise their children to return to heterosexuality, and they would even bring them for counselling if they find out their children happened to be LGBT. However, they would not do so if they were their friends or colleagues. In view of this, it is understandable that all of the LGBT participants shared that they preferred to come out to their selected friends and colleagues, who are more tolerant than their parents. Most of the Asian parents are not being very open and supportive towards the idea of LGBT.

## 4.7 Discussion

The first finding discussed is the lack of tolerance towards LGBT individuals, mainly due to religious reasons. In the present study, there are slightly more Malaysians who do not express positive views on LGBT individuals. One of the main reasons is because of religious

beliefs and teachings. In this study, about 95% of the questionnaire participants had a religion. Not only that, about 59.2% the participants believed that LGBT sexual orientation is against religion. Similar results on the key role of religious background was found by Foong et al. (2019) who conducted a cross-sectional study in order to explore the associations between ethnicity, religion, gender and attitude of clinical-year medical students towards LGBT. Foong et al. (2019) pooled together the Abrahamic religions (Islam and Christianity) and compared with the other pooled Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Others), the results showed significant difference where Abrahamic religions were more negative towards LGBT individuals compared to those medical students who practised Eastern religions. On the other hand, Foong et al. (2019) found that, when the religious groups were compared separately, different results were shown whereby Muslim participants reported significantly lower scores compared to Buddhists, Hindus, and Other religions but there were no significant differences observed between participants professing Islam and Christianity. Also, Buddhists participants did not show any significant differences when compared to the rest of the religious groups. In this present study, there were significant differences in tolerance towards LGBT between participants who profess Islam and Christianity, and between Buddhism and Christianity.

The results of the present study showed that more than half of the participants (51.1%) clearly could not tolerate having religious leaders who are LGBT. As mentioned before, Malaysia is rather a conservative country which practises Islam as the national religion. The incompatibility of LGBT and religion can also be seen in other Western countries besides Malaysia. For instance, in Belgium, Roggemans et al. (2015) reported that young people who identified themselves as Christian or Muslim reported more negative attitudes towards homosexuals than non-religious young people. Logie et al.'s (2007) study in a Midwestern

American University also showed that religion clearly had an effect on students' phobias and attitudes toward LGBT, specifically for the religions of Protestant and Catholics. Holland et al. (2013) reported that students who practise more liberal Christian traditions and those who identified themselves as non-religious reported higher levels of LGBT tolerance. Although this present study did not specifically analyse participants' phobias towards LGBT, Malaysians also find it unacceptable to have religious leaders who are LGBT. However, they were able to accept LGBT in other social context such as being friends, colleagues, neighbours, celebrities, and even politicians.

Secondly, the present study found openness to LGBT rights in both the questionnaire and interview results. The study added new knowledge where almost half of the participants (47.4%) were actually willing to keep their religious views to themselves in order to accept LGBT individuals in our Malaysian society. Not only that, they support LGBT individuals to have the right to get married legally, even though it is prohibited in both Christian and Islamic teachings. In this respect, the results of the present study contradict Abdullah and Amat's (2019) findings which showed that Malaysians found LGBT relationships or LGBT marriage unacceptable.

In addition, the interview results analysed using the discourse-historical approach revealed that there is openness to same-sex marriage. When participants were asked for their opinions on the legalisation of same-sex marriage in Malaysia, 64% of the participants did not agree with the legalisation of same-sex marriage and they would not show support by voting it. Moreover, even the LGBT participants themselves felt that it was very challenging to hope to get married legally. Therefore, some of them would have the thoughts of getting married in other countries where their marriage can be recognised legally. On the other hand,

less than half of the heterosexual participants expressed support for the LGBT right to be married, and they said that would probably vote for "yes" if Malaysia government has the intention to legalise same-sex marriage one day. These are the results on the openness towards LGBT right which have not been found in the previous studies done in Malaysia.

Thirdly and finally, Malaysians generally reported low intergroup contact with LGBT individuals but they surprisingly were tolerant towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them. It is assumed that low intergroup contact would lead to the Malaysians being less tolerant towards LGBT individuals too. This assumption was correct for both tolerance towards the individuals and social interactions with them. For the first measure of tolerance, when intergroup contact increases, tolerance towards LGBT individuals increases as well. Questionnaire participants with low contact with LGBT individuals were inclined to think that heterosexuality is the best. Increased intergroup contact enable participants to relate to LGBT individuals as human beings and no longer treat them as different and an outgroup. For the second measure on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals, the results were also unexpected. Nevertheless, regardless of level of intergroup contact with LGBT individuals, the participants acknowledged and tolerated the existence of LGBT individuals in the society with different identities including friends, neighbours, colleagues, educators, military officer, and even politicians.

In this study, the interview results revealed that having LGBT friends was a key reason for Malaysians to develop tolerance for LGBT. When they have personal connections with LGBT friends, they were better able to understand their situation. This result was in line with Woodford et al.'s (2012) finding that students who have LGBT friends and family

members had positive attitudes towards LGBT compared with those without such social contacts. Both of these results from Malaysia and United States confirmed the hypothesis made by Fingerhut (2011), that is, higher levels of empathy and out-group contact are associated with higher levels of alliance with the LGBT community. Besides, in healthcare industries, Szel et al.'s (2019) study showed that Hungarian medical students who have LGBTQ acquaintances tended to have positive attitudes towards these minorities. Intergroup contact is then important for reducing discrimination in medical services and improving the health care of LGBTQ individuals (Szel et al., 2019). Therefore, the results from various studies are consistent in showing greater tolerance towards LGBT if individuals have LGBT friends, LGBT workmates, LGBT relatives, or even LGBT teachers.

Intergroup contact leads to increased social knowledge on LGBT issues. Based on Horn (2006), the social knowledge can influence an individual on how he or she would evaluate homosexuality based on their moral judgements. For instance, Horn (2006) cited a study from Turiel et al. (1991), who utilised the social cognitive domain theory to examine young adults' beliefs about homosexuality and they found that the variation in their social judgments toward homosexuality were associated with young adults' factual assumptions that homosexuality is natural expression. In the present study, there in fact more participants who agreed that LGBT sexuality orientation is a natural from of sexuality rather than LGBT orientation being a temporary phase in life.

The social knowledge on LGBT for the participants in the present study came mostly from social media. In the interview in the present study, the participants said that the social media helped to provide information on LGBT to fill in the gap in the education system on such knowledge. Mokhtar et al.'s (2019) interviews revealed that LGBT Malaysians were

aware of how social media spread the LGBT movements such as *Seksualiti Merdeka* and Love Wins, which got into the trending page, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. From these platforms, Malaysians get to know more information regarding the LGBT rights and also the personal experiences from LGBT through the social media. Thus, it is clear to see that, over the years, Malaysians have slowly shifted their views from negative to positive especially in accepting and recognising LGBT individuals in the society.

The questionnaire results in the present study revealed that the more the social knowledge acquired by the Malaysians, the more tolerant they are towards the LGBT individuals and social interaction with them. The DHA analysis of the interview results revealed that all heterosexual participants acknowledged the existence of LGBT individuals and said that they could treat LGBT individuals just like a normal human being. The openness towards LGBT that comes with greater social knowledge is in line with Abdullah and Amat's (2019) findings, where their participants were open-minded towards LGBT and acknowledged that LGBT individuals deserve the recognition by the society with the same human rights even though they see LGBT practice as against religion and against the human nature. However, it needs to be noted that the ability to relate to LGBT individuals as a normal human being does not equate to full acceptance. In fact, 44.1% of the questionnaire participants in the present study felt that LGBT individuals should try to overcome their LGBT feelings and revert to a heterosexual orientation through different solutions such as counselling. The DHA analysis yielded similar results as well where 36% of the heterosexual participants would hope LGBT individuals to change by giving advice and counselling them using religious teachings especially when it comes to family members. The LGBT participants confirmed that this was going on, and they had experiences of people around them who advised them to change. However, when the LGBT individuals are not close

family members, the participants were able to say that the LGBT individuals have the right to live their own life and they could respect their decisions to be LGBT. Their stance was not as liberal when an immediate family member come out as LGBT.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Summary of Findings

The research aimed to examine tolerance towards LGBT individuals among Malaysians through self-reports and analysis of LGBT representation via discourse historical approach. The six main objectives of this study were:

1) to determine Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
2) to identify the factors that influence the Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
3) to determine the influence of intergroup contact on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them;
4) to determine the influence of social knowledge on Malaysian participants' self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interactions with them; and
5) to analyse the discursive strategies used by Malaysian participants when talking about their tolerance towards LGBT individuals; and
6) to examine whether discursive strategies used by participants to talk about LGBT individuals reflect their self-reported tolerance towards LGBT individuals in questionnaires.

A mixed method research design was used where a questionnaire was used to assess the Malaysians' tolerance towards LGBT individuals and the interview was used to determine how both LGBT and non-LGBT participants expressed their opinions on LGBT. Malaysians

who are above 18 years old are eligible to participate and therefore, purposive sampling was used to select the participants.

A total of 413 participants were recruited through researcher's contact and also other social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram to answer the questionnaire. The participants consisted of different age groups, ethnicity, religion groups, and educational backgrounds. Specifically, the dominant participants in this study were the Chinese youngsters who aged 21-30 years old. A majority of them (82.8%) had at least degree qualification. There were 19.6% Muslims and 42.4% Christians. Also, 88% of the participants were heterosexuals and there were also LGBT individuals and with different gender identities including male, female, non-binary, and transgender female.

The results are divided into sub-sections based on first four objectives, which are (1) participants' views on LGBT individuals, (2) participants' views on LGBT rights, (3) participants' acceptance level towards LGBT in the society, and (4) the participants' intergroup contact with LGBT individuals. Overall, the questionnaire results showed that some Malaysians were still quite heteronormative and still unable to see LGBT as a norm. For instance, there was an agreement that LGBT should undergo counselling in order to revert to heterosexuality. However, it was interesting to find out that, despite being heteronormative, there were also some Malaysians who were more open and tolerant towards LGBT sexual orientation such that they do not see LGBT as a kind of mental illness. Overall, the results showed that most of the Malaysians were tolerant towards LGBT individuals in the society by acknowledging LGBT's rights. In addition, although a majority of the participants had little intergroup contact with LGBT individuals, there is credible evidence to suggest that Malaysians still show positive attitudes in accepting LGBT regardless of their

roles in the society and the acceptance level was the highest when their friends are LGBT. On the other hand, they could not accept it if their children or religious leaders happened to be LGBT. Therefore, from these results, it can be argued that Malaysians are willing to accept LGBT people openly but only if they were socially distant.

The DHA analysis produced two key results. First, heterosexual participants are tolerant towards LGBT individuals even though some of them are religious. For instance, a majority of them would not encourage people around them to become LGBT, especially not their family members. Siblings were more tolerant than parents, and mothers eventually accepted their children who were LGBT more easily than fathers. Some parents took action like bringing their children to see counsellors. Eventually, they tried their best to accept their children's sexual orientation and gave up forcing them to change. Also, from the use of social media, heterosexual participants shared their experiences of seeing more and more advocates coming out to stand for LGBT individuals and help to spread positivity about LGBT. Second, from the experiences shared by LGBT participants living in Malaysia, a majority of them had the courage to come out from the closet and open up with their true identities to people around them, particularly their close friends. They are most afraid to come out to their family for fear of rejection. They also did not want to disappoint their parents. The DHA results are consistent with the questionnaire results whereby participants had problems accepting family members who turned out to be LGBT. In addition, due to the conservative culture and society in Malaysia, a majority of Malaysians felt that LGBT was a Western culture which Asians should not practise. In short, LGBT participants were still struggling from the heteronormative stereotype in Malaysia until today.

## 5.2 Implications of Study

The shift of attitudes in viewing LGBT more positively raises awareness on how the LGBT issue should be taken more seriously as there are more and more LGBT groups coming out to fight for their own right globally. The findings are believed to be relevant to various non-government organisations (NGOs) which provide support to LGBT individuals. Also, the findings could provide better insights to the Malaysia government to better understand the opinion of the public on this issue and thus, to design and develop policies in cultivating social wellness. For instance, in education institutions, the government can extend the anti-homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying programme in schools. It is important to ensure that every child or student feel safe in schools. By introducing these programmes in schools, students can acquire more knowledge on LGBT instead of discriminating and harassing the LGBT students. Although Malaysia is an Islamic country and LGBT practice is wrong by law, the findings of the present study showed that there is increasing openness and "undercover" support for LGBT individuals. The findings of this study showed that most of the LGBT individuals were still not comfortable in representing their LGBT identity in public due to all kinds of name calling and labelling such as "weird". Therefore, the findings of this study give an indication of how authorities can approach LGBT individuals to understand the issues face by this minority group instead of neglecting them.

## 5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Researchers are recommended to carry out a multinational research in order to examine the differences and similarities of how different nations respond to the LGBT issue. From the findings on this study, there were participants who mentioned that Western

countries are more open-minded in accepting LGBT and LGBT participants wished to get married legally in other countries which recognised same-sex marriage. Thus, it would be another recommendation to investigate the extent to which the tolerance towards LGBT in other countries affects Malaysians.

In addition, the proportion of LGBT individuals in a population is generally smaller than that of heterosexual individuals, and this can result in a smaller number of LGBT participants in research studies. However, it is important for researchers to make efforts to include diverse participants in their studies. Another concern about the accuracy of self-reported sexual orientation in Section 3.6, Limitations of the Study, it is also true that self-report measures are subject to potential biases and errors. Individuals may feel pressure to conform to societal norms and therefore chose to report a heterosexual orientation. It is recommended that researchers may attempt to minimize the potential for inaccurate self-reporting by using validated measures with good reliability and validity. Additionally, researchers may use variety of recruitment strategies to attract diverse participants including reaching out to LGBT advocacy groups.

An interesting finding in this study which needs further verification is how intergroup contact and social knowledge increases tolerance towards LGBT individuals and social interaction with them, which is in direct opposition to the influence of religion. Since most religions teach respect for human beings, a question arises on how individuals reconcile between religious teachings and love and respect for LGBT individuals. Jerome et al. (2021) has previously examined the human dignity factor and how this factor would affect the attitudes of the Malaysian public towards LGBT. The interview participants could accept LGBT individuals in Malaysia as they acknowledge them as human beings too despite their

sexual and gender differences. They agreed that LGBT individuals should be respected and have their freedom to live their own lives. However, Jerome et al. (2021) suggested that further study including different and distinct meanings of human dignity should be done to better understand public's acceptance and rejection of LGBT individuals in Malaysia, and also the various sources and contexts in which these meanings are created. An area for future research is how individuals weigh between religious teachings, human dignity concerns, and the key factors that define their own stance on LGBT.

## REFERENCES


Abdullah, Z., & Amat, S. (2019). Understanding About LGBT Among Student in a Public Higher Learning Institution. *Bisma The Journal of Counseling*, *3*(2), 46-57.

Abrams, D., Van de Vyver, J., Houston, D. M., & Vasiljevic, M. (2017). Does terror defeat contact? Intergroup contact and prejudice toward Muslims before and after the London bombings. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, *23*(3), 260.

Adams, N., Pearce, R., Veale, J., Radix, A., Castro, D., Sarkar, A., & Thom, K. C. (2017). Guidance and ethical considerations for undertaking transgender health research and institutional review boards adjudicating this research. *Transgender Health*, *2*(1), 165-175.

Ahmad, S., Ting, S. H., Jerome, C., & Yeo, J. J. Y. (2021). Perspectives on LGBT in Malaysia: Sexual Regulation from Below. *Asian Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, *3*(2), 119–130.

Ainsworth, S., & Hardy, C. (2004). Discourse and identities. *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Discourse*, 153-173.

Ali, A. I., & Salih, S. M. (2020). A Taxonomy of Mitigation Devices in English Language. *Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *3*(1), 31-40.

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

Almeida, J., Johnson, R. M., Corliss, H. L., Molnar, B. E., & Azrael, D. (2009). Emotional distress among LGBT youth: The influence of perceived discrimination based on sexual orientation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *38*(7), 1001-1014.

Antoszewski, B., Kasielska, A., Jędrzejczak, M., & Kruk-Jeromin, J. (2007). Knowledge of and attitude toward transsexualism among college students. *Sexuality and Disability*, *25*(1), 29-35.

Arat, Z. F. K. (2011). Tolerance. *International Encyclopedia of Political Science. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers*, 2624-2627.

Arat, Z. F. K., & Nuňez, C. (2017). Advancing LGBT rights in Turkey: Tolerance or protection? *Human Rights Review*, *18*(1), 1-19.

Arora, P. G., Kelly, J., & Goldstein, T. R. (2016). Current and future school psychologists'preparedness to work with lgbt students: Role of education and gay-straight alliances. *Psychology in the Schools*, *53*(7), 722-735.

Asyraf Zulkffli, M., & Rashid, R. A. (2019). Discursive strategies employed by homosexual Malaysian Muslim men in talking about homosexuality in Islam. *Discourse & Society*, *30*(3), 307-320.

Atassi, S. H. (2014). Diaspora and Transnational Identities: Table talk construction of Syrian-American identities in times of civil war. *Plaza: Dialogues in Language and Literature*, *4*(2), 1-15.

Astuti, D. A., & Kurniati, N. (2018). Factors influencing stigma to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) among teenagers at Ngaran Village, Gamping, Sleman, Indonesia. *GHMJ (Global Health Management Journal)*, *2*(2), 19-24.

Bacchi, C. (2005). Discourse, discourse everywhere: Subject "agency" in feminist discourse methodology. *Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, *13*(03), 198-209.

Badgett, M. V. (2014). *The economic cost of stigma and the exclusion of LGBT people: A case study of India*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Baider, F. (2018). “Go to hell fucking faggots, may you die!” framing the LGBT subject in online comments. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, *14*(1), 69-92.

Balsam, K. F., Molina, Y., Beadnell, B., Simoni, J., & Walters, K. (2011). Measuring multiple minority stress: the LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *17*(2), 163.

Barisnikov, K., & Lejeune, F. (2018). Social knowledge and social reasoning abilities in a neurotypical population and in children with Down syndrome. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0200932

Beh, L. Y. (2018, December 17). Death of transgender woman in Malaysia sparks fears of rising hate crime. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/malaysia-lgbt-crime-idUSL8N1YM12C

Bertram, D. (2007). *Likert scales*. Retrieved from http://poincare.matf.bg.ac.rs/~kristina/topic-dane-likert.pdf

Besnier, N. (1993) “Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space.” In *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* (Herdt, G., ed.). New York: Zone Books.

Bhugra, D. (1997). Coming out by South Asian gay men in the United Kingdom. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *26*(5), 547-557.

Bhugra, D., & Wright, B. (2004). Sexual dysfunction in lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. *Psychiatry*, *3*(2), 30-32.

Bidell, M. P. (2005). The sexual orientation counselor competency scale: Assessing attitudes, skills, and knowledge of counselors working with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, *44*(4), 267-279.

Bilodeau, B. L., & Renn, K. A. (2005). Analysis of LGBT identity development models and implications for practice. *New Directions for Student Services, 2005*(111), 25-39.

Boch, S. (2012). Knowledge, attitudes, behaviors of nursing faculty and students' about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Retrieved from http://kb.osu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/1811/51928/ThesisSamanthaJBoch.pdf?sequence=1

Bogaert, A. F. (2000). Birth order and sexual orientation in a national probability sample. *Journal of Sex Research*, *37*(4), 361-368.

Bohan, J.S. (1996). *Psychology and Sexual Orientation*. London: Routledge.

Bornstein, K. (1994). *Gender outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us*. New York: Routledge.

Bourne, A., & Weatherburn, P. (2017). Substance use among men who have sex with men: patterns, motivations, impacts and intervention development need. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, *93*(5), 342-346.

Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing andconducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input. Pathfinder International Watertown, MA.

Bramley, Nicolette Ruth. (2001). Pronouns of Politics: the use of pronouns in the construction of 'self' and 'other' in political interviews.

Brewster, M. E., Velez, B., DeBlaere, C., & Moradi, B. (2012). Transgender individuals' workplace experiences: the applicability of sexual minority measures and models. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *59*(1), 60.

Brown, J., Low, W. Y., Tai, R., & Tong, W. T. (2016). Shame, internalized homonegativity, and religiosity: A comparison of the stigmatization associated with minority stress

with gay men in Australia and Malaysia. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, *28*(1), 28-36.

Brown, L. B. (1997). Women and men, not-men and not-women, lesbians and gays: American Indian gender style alternatives. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *6*(2), 5-20.

Browne, R. H. (1995). On the use of a pilot sample for sample size determination. *Statistics in Medicine*, *14*(17), 1933-1940.

Burch, W. J., Hart, G. J., & Lim, S. H. (2018). A qualitative study of young men who have sex with men and multilevel factors related to HIV risks in Malaysia. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, *30*(2), 85-95.

Buyantueva, R. (2018). LGBT rights activism and homophobia in Russia. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*(4), 456-483.

Byrne, J., & Humble, Á. M. (2007). An introduction to mixed method research. *Atlantic Research Centre for Family-work Issues*, *1*, 1-4.

Carroll, A., & Mendos, L. R. (2017). *State-sponsored Homophobia*. Geneva: Ilga.

Carvalho, A. (2005). Representing the politics of the greenhouse effect: Discursive strategies in the British media. *Critical Discourse Studies*, *2*(1), 1-29.

Castro-Convers, K., Gray, L. A., Ladany, N., & Metzler, A. E. (2005). Interpersonal contact experiences with gay men: A qualitative investigation of "fag hags" and gay-supportive heterosexual men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *49*(1), 47-76.

Cavalcante, A. (2019). Tumbling into queer utopias and vortexes: Experiences of LGBTQ social media users on Tumblr. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *66*(12), 1715-1735.

Choudhuri. D. D., Rivera. A. S., & Michael. T. G. (2012). Counseling & diversity. *United of America: Brooks / Cole, Cengage Learning*.

Cheah, E. (2020). *Monitoring Report: LGBTIQ+ Rights in Malaysia.* Arrow. Retrieved from https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/LGBTIQ-Rights-in-Malaysia-.pdf.

Cheah, W. H., & Singaravelu, H. (2017). The coming-out process of gay and lesbian individuals from Islamic Malaysia: communication strategies and motivations. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 46*(5), 401–423. doi:10.1080/17475759.2017.1362460

Chow, P. K. Y., & Cheng, S. T. (2010). Shame, internalized heterosexism, lesbian identity, and coming out to others: A comparative study of lesbians in mainland China and Hong Kong. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *57*(1), 92

Collier, K. L., Bos, H. M., & Sandfort, T. G. (2012). Intergroup contact, attitudes toward homosexuality, and the role of acceptance of gender non-conformity in young adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*(4), 899-907.

Connaughton, S. L., Linabary, J. R., & Yakova, L. (2017). Discursive construction. *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*, 1-13.

Copp, H. L., & Koehler, W. J. (2017). Peer attitudes toward LGBT-identified university students as mediated by demographic factors. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health, 21*(4), 277–291. doi:10.1080/19359705.2017.1320697

Corneo, G., & Jeanne, O. (2009). A theory of tolerance. *Journal of Public Economics*, *93*(5-6), 691-702.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches.*

D'Augelli, A. R. (1994). Identity development and sexual orientation: Toward a model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual development.

Dessel, A. B., & Rodenborg, N. (2017). Social workers and LGBT policies: Attitude predictors and cultural competence course outcomes. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *14*(1), 17-31.

Diefenbach, M. A., Weinstein, N. D., & O'reilly, J. (1993). Scales for assessing perceptions of health hazard susceptibility. *Health Education Research*, *8*(2), 181-192.

Dodge, B., Schick, V., Friedman, M. R., Herbenick, D., & Reece, M. (2014). Bisexualities: Indiana Attitudes Scale. *LGBT Health*.

Earnshaw, V. A., Bogart, L. M., Poteat, V. P., Reisner, S. L., & Schuster, M. A. (2016). Bullying among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Pediatric Clinics*, *63*(6), 999-1010.

Earnshaw, V. A., Jin, H., Wickersham, J. A., Kamarulzaman, A., John, J., Lim, S. H., & Altice, F. L. (2016). Stigma toward men who have sex with men among future healthcare providers in Malaysia: would more interpersonal contact reduce prejudice? *AIDS and Behavior*, *20*(1), 98-106.

Eick, U., Rubinstein, T., Hertz, S., & Slater, A. (2016). Changing attitudes of high school students in Israel toward homosexuality. *Journal of LGBT youth*, *13*(1-2), 192-206.

Eliason, M. J. (1997). The prevalence and nature of biphobia in heterosexual undergraduate students. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *26*(3), 317-326.

Eliason, M. J. (2000). Substance abuse counselor's attitudes regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered clients. *Journal of Substance Abuse*, *12*(4), 311–328. doi:10.1016/s0899-3289(01)00055-4

Eliason, M. J., & Hughes, T. (2004). Treatment counselor's attitudes about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered clients: Urban vs. rural settings. *Substance Use & Misuse*, *39*(4), 625-644.

Elkins, R., & King, D. (1996). *Blending Genders: Social Aspects of Cross-Dressing and Sex Changing*. New York: Routledge.

Elmslie, B., & Tebaldi, E. (2007). Sexual orientation and labor market discrimination. *Journal of Labor Research*, *28*(3), 436-453.

Evans, B. A., Bond, R. A., & MacRae, K. D. (1998). Heterosexual behaviour, risk factors and sexually transmitted infections among selfclassified homosexual and bisexual men. *International Journal of STD & AIDS*, *9*(3), 129-133.

Evans, N. J., & Broido, E. M. (1999). Coming out in college residence halls: Negotiation, meaning making, challenges, supports. *Journal of College Student Development*, *40*(6), 658-668.

Everett, J. A., & Onu, D. (2013). Intergroup contact theory: Past, present, and future. *The Inquisitive Mind*, *2*(17), 1-6.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research.* London: Routledge.

Feinberg, L. (1996). *Transgender warriors: Making history from Joan of Arc to RuPaul*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Felix, M. S. (2014). Stigma as Part of Identity Development of Gay Men in Penang-A Qualitative Study. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, *22*(1).

Felix, M. S. (2016). Gay identity construction of ten Muslim male undergrduates in Penang, Malaysia: A phenomenological qualitative study. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, *16*(2), 1-1.

Fetzer, A. (2007). Well if that had been true, that would have been perfectly reasonable: Appeals to reasonableness in political interviews. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *39*(8), 1342-1359.

Fingerhut, A. W. (2011). Straight Allies: What Predicts Heterosexuals' Alliance With the LGBT Community? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *41*(9), 2230-2248.

Foong, A. L., Liow, J. W., Nalliah, S., Low, W. Y., Samy, A. L., & Khalaf, Z. F. (2020). Attitudes of future doctors towards LGBT patients in conservative Malaysian society. *Sexuality & Culture*, *24*(5), 1358-1375.

Fraser, B. (1980). Conversational mitigation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *4*(4), 341-350.

Friedman, M. R., Dodge, B., Schick, V., Herbenick, D., Hubach, R. D., Bowling, J., Goncalves, G., Krier, S., & Reece, M. (2014). From bias to bisexual health disparities: Attitudes toward bisexual men and women in the United States. *LGBT Health*, *1*(4), 309-318.

Galka, J. M., Wang, M., Azwa, I., Gibson, B., Lim, S. H., Shrestha, R., & Wickersham, J. A. (2020). Willingness to Use Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV Prevention and PrEP Implementation Preferences Among Transgender Women in Malaysia. *Transgender Health*, *5*(4), 258-266.

Garrett, M. L., & Spano, F. P. (2017). An examination of LGBTQ-inclusive strategies used by practicing music educators. *Research Studies in Music Education*, *39*(1), 39-56.

Gehman, J., Lounsbury, M., & Greenwood, R. (2016). How institutions matter: From the micro foundations of institutional impacts to the macro consequences of institutional arrangements. *How Institutions Matter! 48*, 1-34.

Genner, S., & Süss, D. (2017). Socialization as media effect. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, *1*, 15.

Gibbs, J. J., & Goldbach, J. (2015). Religious conflict, sexual identity, and suicidal behaviors among LGBT young adults. *Archives of Suicide Research*, *19*(4), 472-488.

Gibson, A., & Macleod, C. (2012). (Dis) allowances of lesbians' sexual identities: Lesbian identity construction in racialised, classed, familial, and institutional spaces. *Feminism & Psychology*, *22*(4), 462-481.

Glikman, A., & Elkayam, T. S. (2019). Addressing the issue of sexual orientation in the classroom–attitudes of Israeli education students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *16*(1), 38-61.

Goh, J. N. (2016). Imaginative assemblages of transcendent/desire: Non-heteronormative Malaysian men speak up and talk back. *Critical Research on Religion*, *4*(2), 125-140.

Green, M., Bobrowicz, A., & Ang, C. S. (2015). The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community online: discussions of bullying and self-disclosure in YouTube videos. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, *34*(7), 704-712.

Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Boesen, M. J. (2013). Putting the "T" in "resource": the benefits of LGBT-related school resources for transgender youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 10*(1-2), 45–63. doi:10.1080/19361653.2012.718522

Greytak, E. A., & Kosciw, J. G. (2014). Predictors of US teachers' intervention in anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender bullying and harassment. *Teaching Education, 25*(4), 410-426.

Griffin, P., Lee, C., Waugh, J., & Beyer, C. (2004). Describing roles that gay-straight alliances play in schools: From individual support to school change. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, *1*(3), 7-22.

Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse Strategies* (No. 1). Cambridge University Press.

Habermas, J. (1977). A review of Gadamer's Truth and Method. *Understanding and Social Inquiry*, 360.

Haizlip, B. N. (2009). *A Qualitative Inquiry of Conceptualized Heterosexuality and Its Influence on the Counseling Process*. Old Dominion University.

Hall, W. J. (2018). Psychosocial risk and protective factors for depression among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer youth: A systematic review. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*(3), 263-316.

Han, C.S. (2007). They Don't Want to Cruise Your Type: Gay Men of Color and the Racial Politics of Exclusion. *Social Identities*, *13*(1), 51–67. doi: 10.1080/13504630601163337.

Hanckel, B. (2016). Representations of LGBT youth: A review of Queer youth and media cultures.

Hanckel, B., & Morris, A. (2014). Finding community and contesting heteronormativity: queer young people's engagement in an Australian online community. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *17*(7), 872-886.

Han, X., Han, W., Qu, J., Li, B., & Zhu, Q. (2019). What happens online stays online? - Social media dependency, online support behavior and offline effects for LGBT. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *93*, 91-98.

Hate crime fears grow after murder of Malaysian transgender woman. (2018, December 17). *New Straits Times.*

Heinze, J. E., & Horn, S. S. (2009). Intergroup contact and beliefs about homosexuality in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *38*(7), 937-951.

Herek, G. M., & Capitanio, J. P. (1995). Black heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men in the United States. *Journal of Sex Research*, *32*(2), 95-105.

Herek, G. M. (1988). Heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: Correlates and gender differences. *Journal of Sex Research*, *25*(4), 451-477.

Hesamuddin, D. M., Harris, A., Danial, M. A., Mohammad Din, M. M., & Mohd Nor, N. (2019). The rising of the LGBT in Malaysia. *e-Journal of Media and Society (e-JOMS)*, *3*, 1-13.

Higgins, A., Sharek, D., & Glacken, M. (2016). Building resilience in the face of adversity: Navigation processes used by older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender adults living in Ireland. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *25*(23-24), 3652-3664.

Hill, D. B., & Willoughby, B. L. (2005). The development and validation of the genderism and transphobia scale. *Sex Roles*, *53*(7), 531-544.

Hjerm, M., Eger, M. A., Bohman, A., & Fors Connolly, F. (2020). A new approach to the study of tolerance: Conceptualizing and measuring acceptance, respect, and appreciation of difference. *Social Indicators Research*, *147*(3), 897-919.

Hoffarth, M. R., & Hodson, G. (2018). When intergroup contact is uncommon and bias is strong: The case of anti-transgender bias. *Psychology & Sexuality*, *9*(3), 237-250.

Holland, L., Matthews, T. L., & Schott, M. R. (2013). "That's so gay!" exploring college students' attitudes toward the LGBT population. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *60*(4), 575-595.

Horn, S. S., & Nucci, L. (2003). The multidimensionality of adolescents' beliefs about and attitudes toward gay and lesbian peers in school. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *36*(2), 136-147.

Horn, S. S. (2006). Heterosexual adolescents' and young adults' beliefs and attitudes about homosexuality and gay and lesbian peers. *Cognitive Development*, *21*(4), 420-440.

Horn, S. S., & Szalacha, L. A. (2009). School differences in heterosexual students' attitudes about homosexuality and prejudice based on sexual orientation. *International Journal of Developmental Science*, *3*(1), 64-79.

Horton, P. (2014). 'I thought I was the only one': the misrecognition of LGBT youth in contemporary Vietnam. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *16*(8), 960-973.

Hubbard, L. (2020). Online Hate Crime Report: Challenging online homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. *London: Galop, The LGBT+ Anti-violence Charity.* Retrieved from http://www.galop. org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Online-Crime-2020_0.pdf

Huffman, A. H., Watrous-Rodriguez, K. M., & King, E. B. (2008). Supporting a diverse workforce: What type of support is most meaningful for lesbian and gay employees? *Human Resource Management: Published in Cooperation with the School of Business Administration, The University of Michigan and in alliance with the Society of Human Resources Management*, *47*(2), 237-253.

Hunt, D., & Harvey, K. (2015). Health communication and corpus linguistics: using corpus tools to analyse eating disorder discourse online. In *Corpora and Discourse Studies*, pp. 134-154. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Hutsell, D. W. (2012). Intragroup Attitudes of the LGBT Community: Assessment and Correlates.

Janssen, D. J., & Scheepers, P. (2019). How religiosity shapes rejection of homosexuality across the globe. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *66*(14), 1974-2001.

Jayaratne, S., Faller, K. C., Ortega, R. M., & Vandervort, F. (2008). African American and white child welfare workers' attitudes towards policies involving race and sexual orientation. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *30*(8), 955-966.

Jerome, C. (2013). The Complexity of Malay Muslim Identity in Dina Zaman's "I Am Muslim". *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, *169*(13), 2.

Jerome, C. (2019). The Right to be Me, Queerly Cyberly: Cybercrime and Queer Individuals in Malaysia. *Exploring the Nexus Between Technologies and Human Rights: Opportunities and Challenges in Southeast Asia*, 150-184.

Jerome, C., Ting, S. H., Podin, Y., & Ahmad, S. S. W. (2021). Public receptivity towards LGBT in recent times Malaysia: LGBT perspectives. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *11*(14), 371-383.

Jerome, C., Ting, S. H., Yeo, J. J. Y., & Ling, H. N. (2021). Examining discrepant views of LGBT and non-LGBT individuals on societal receptivity towards the LGBT phenomenon in present-day Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, *3*(1), 55-66.

Jerome, C., & Hadzmy, A. J. B. A. (2022). Coming Out Strategies on Social Media among Young Gay Men in Malaysia. *Youth*, *2*(1), 39-52.

Jhang, J. (2018). Scaffolding in family relationships: A grounded theory of coming out to family. *Family Relations*, *67*(1), 161-175.

Jones, L. (2016). "If a Muslim says 'homo', nothing gets done": Racist discourse and in-group identity construction in an LGBT youth group. *Language in Society*, *45*(1), 113-133.

Kaiser, H.F. (1974) An Index of Factorial Simplicity. *Psychometrika*, *39*, 31-36. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02291575

Kanter, J., Koh, C., Razali, K., Tai, R., Izenberg, J., Rajan, L., Van Griensven, F. & Kamarulzaman, A. (2011). Risk behaviour and HIV prevalence among men who

have sex with men in a multiethnic society: a venue-based study in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *International Journal of STD & AIDS*, *22*(1), 30-37.

Kaos, J. (2018, September 21). Dr M: M'sia does not accept LGBT culture, same-sex marriage. *The Star*. Retrieved from https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/09/21/msia-does-not-accept-lgbt-culture-same-sex-marriage/

Khor, S. (2014, November 17). 8 Influential Malaysian transgenders you didn't know about. *Says.com*. Retrieved from http://says.com/my/lifestyle/8-influential-malaysian-transgenders-you-didn-t-know-about

KhosraviNik, M. (2010). The representation of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in British newspapers: A critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *9*(1), 1-28.

Kite, M. E., & Deux, K. (1986). Attitudes toward homosexuality: Assessment and behavioral consequences. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *7*, 137–162.

Klein, F., Sepekoff, B., & Wolf, T. J. (1985). Sexual orientation: A multi-variable dynamic process. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *11*(1-2), 35-49.

Klein, A., & Golub, S. A. (2016). Family rejection as a predictor of suicide attempts and substance misuse among transgender and gender nonconforming adults. *LGBT Health*, *3*(3), 193-199.

Kosciw, J. G., Palmer, N. A., Kull, R. M., & Greytak, E. A. (2012). The effect of negative school climate on academic outcomes for LGBT youth and the role of in-school supports. *Journal of School Violence*, *12*(1), 45–63. doi:10.1080/15388220.2012.732546

Kosciw, J. G., Palmer, N. A., & Kull, R. M. (2015). Reflecting resiliency: Openness about sexual orientation and/or gender identity and its relationship to well-being and educational outcomes for LGBT students. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *55*(1), 167-178.

Krejcie, R., & Morgan, S. (1970). Sample size determination. *Business Research Methods*, *4*(5), 34-36.

Kulanthaivel, S., & Balasundaram, K. (2020). Comparison of view on LGBT in people with different age groups. *Forcipe*, *3*(S), 579-580.

Kull, R. M., Kosciw, J. G., & Greytak, E. A. (2017). Preparing school counselors to support LGBT youth: the roles of graduate education and professional development. *Professional School Counseling, 20*(1a), 1096–2409–20.1a.

LaMar, L., & Kite, M. (1998). Sex differences in attitudes toward gay men and lesbians: A multidimensional perspective. *Journal of Sex Research*, *35*(2), 189-196.

Lannutti, P. J., & Lachlan, K. A. (2007). Assessing attitude toward same-sex marriage: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *53*(4), 113-133.

Larsen, K. S., Reed, M., & Hoffman, S. (1980). Attitudes of heterosexuals toward homosexuality: A Likert-type scale and construct validity. *Journal of Sex Research*, *16*(3), 245-257.

Lee, J. C. (2012). Sexuality rights activism in Malaysia: The case of Seksualiti Merdeka. In *Social Activism in Southeast Asia*, pp. 184-200. Routledge.

Leitenberg, H., & Slavin, L. (1983). Comparison of attitudes toward transsexuality and homosexuality. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *12*(4), 337-346.

Levesque, P. J. (2013). Nurse practitioners knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy for working with transgender patients. *Clinical Nursing Studies, 1*(4). doi:10.5430/cns.v1n4p93

Lewis, A.P. (2009) Destructive organizational communication and LGBT workers' experiences. *Destructive Organizational Communication: Processes, Consequences, and Constructive Ways of Organizing*, 184–202. New York: Routledge.

Li, J. X., & Tong, Y. (2020). Coming together or remaining apart? A closer examination of the contexts of intergroup contact and friendship between urban residents and rural-to-urban migrants in China. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *46*(1), 66-86.

Lim, S. H., Brown, S. E., Shaw, S. A., Kamarulzaman, A., Altice, F. L., & Beyrer, C. (2018). "You have to keep yourself hidden": Perspectives from Malaysian Malay-Muslim men who have sex with men on policy, network, community, and individual influences on HIV risk. *Journal of Homosexuality*. *67*(1), 104-126.

Lin, C. Y., Griffiths, M. D., Pakpour, A. H., Tsai, C. S., & Yen, C. F. (2022). Relationships of familial sexual stigma and family support with internalized homonegativity among lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals: the mediating effect of self-identity disturbance and moderating effect of gender. *BMC Public Health, 22*(1), 1-12.

Lin, H. C., Chen, Y. L., Ko, N. Y., Chang, Y. P., Lu, W. H., & Yen, C. F. (2021). Perception of attitudes of the general population toward homosexuality in Taiwan: Roles of demographic factors, mental health, and social debates on legalizing same-sex marriage. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(5), 2618.

Liow, J. W., Fazli Khalaf, Z., Mohammad Ameeruddin, N. A., & Foong, A. (2017). The experience of intimate relationships among homosexual men in Malaysia. *Sexuality & Culture*, *21*(4), 1140-1156.

Logie, C., Bridge, T. J., & Bridge, P. D. (2007). Evaluating the phobias, attitudes, and cultural competence of master of social work students toward the LGBT populations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *53*(4), 201-221.

Mallory, C., Vasquez, L. A., Brown, T. N., Momen, R. E., & Sears, B. (2021). The impact of stigma and discrimination against LGBT people in West Virginia.

Manalastas, E. J., Ojanen, T. T., Torre, B. A., Ratanashevorn, R., Hong, B. C. C., Kumaresan, V., & Veeramuthu, V. (2017). Homonegativity in southeast Asia: Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, *17*(1), 25-33.

Marvel, S., & Ertman, M. M. (2015). *Sexual Orientation and the Law*.

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(5), 674.

Mkhize, S., Nunlall, R., & Gopal, N. (2020). An examination of social media as a platform for cyber-violence against the LGBT+ population. *Agenda*, *34*(1), 23-33.

Mohr, J., & Fassinger, R. (1998). Lesbian and Gay Identity Scale. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*.

Mohr, J. J., & Rochlen, A. B. (1999). Measuring attitudes regarding bisexuality in lesbian, gay male, and heterosexual populations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *46*(3), 353.

Mokhtar, M. F., Sukeri, W. A. E. D. W., & Latiff, Z. A. (2019). Social media roles in spreading LGBT movements in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Media and Communication (AJMC)*, *3*(2), 77-82.

Morse, J. M. (2003). Principles of mixed methods and multimethod research design. *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research, 1*, 189-208.

Moskowitz, D. A., Rieger, G., & Roloff, M. E. (2010). Heterosexual attitudes toward same-sex marriage. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *57*(2), 325-336.

Muhammed, A. A., & Amuda, Y. J. (2018). LGBT: An evaluation of Shariah provisions and the Laws of Malaysia and Nigeria. *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah (GJAT)*, *8*(1), 15-29.

Muhammad Ali, M. N., & Mothar, N. M. (2020). Discourses on Twitter contribute to the concept of resilience in the LGBT community in Malaysia. *ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *5*, 27-47.

Mujahid wants MCMC to probe Nur Sajat. (2020, February 4). *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved from https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/509454

Naal, H., Abboud, S., Harfoush, O., & Mahmoud, H. (2019). Examining the attitudes and behaviors of health-care providers toward LGBT patients in Lebanon. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 1–18. doi:10.1080/00918369.2019.1616431

Nadal, K. L. (2008). Preventing racial, ethnic, gender, sexual minority, disability, and religious microaggressions: Recommendations for promoting positive mental health. *Prevention in Counseling Psychology: Theory, Research, Practice and Training*, *2*, 22–27.

Nadal, K. L., Quintanilla, A., Goswick, A., & Sriken, J. (2015). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people's perceptions of the criminal justice system: Implications for social services. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *27*(4), 457-481.

Nagoshi, J. L., Adams, K. A., Terrell, H. K., Hill, E. D., Brzuzy, S., & Nagoshi, C. T. (2008). Gender differences in correlates of homophobia and transphobia. *Sex Roles*, *59*(7), 521-531.

Naraina Chetty, T. (2014). *Representation of Transsexuals in Malaysian English Print Media*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Malaya).

Nartey, M. (2022). Marginality and otherness: the discursive construction of LGBT issues/people in the Ghanaian news media. *Media, Culture & Society*, *44*(4), 785-801.

Ng, E. S., Schweitzer, L., & Lyons, S. T. (2012). Anticipated discrimination and a career choice in nonprofit: A study of early career lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered (LGBT) job seekers. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *32*(4), 332-352.

Nguyen, A. C. (2009). Public Opinion in Vietnam about adolescent sexuality, sex education and abortion. *Sex Education and Abortion (August 21, 2009). Asia Research Institute Working Paper*, (119).

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Nur Sajat has new home in Australia. (2021, October 21). *The Star*. Retrieved from https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/10/21/nur-sajat-has-new-home-in-australia.

Ochs, E. (1996). *Linguistic Resources for Socializing Humanity*. Cambridge University Press.

O'Pry, R. K. (2012). Louisiana social workers: A study on attitudes toward LGBT youth.

Owoyemi, M. Y., Sabri, A. Z. S. A., & Sani, A. Z. (2013). LGBT: nature or ideology: the view of a former LGBT practitioner in Malaysia. *Research Journal of Biological Sciences*, *8*(4), 104-111.

Ozdemir, M., & Buyukgoze, H. (2016). Investigating the role of multicultural education and democratic values on LGBT attitudes of preservice teachers. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy*, *13*(1).

Parent, M. C., DeBlaere, C., & Moradi, B. (2013). Approaches to research on intersectionality: Perspectives on gender, LGBT, and racial/ethnic identities. *Sex roles*, *68*(11), 639-645.

Parks, C. W. (2010). A window illuminating the reservations of black men who have sex with men in fully embracing the institution of same-sex marriage. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, 22(1–2): 132–148. doi:10.1080/10538720903332446

Passani, A., & Debicki, M. (2016). Students opinions and attitudes toward LGBT persons and rights: Results of a transnational European project. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *13*(1-2), 67–88. doi:10.1080/19361653.2015.1087927

Pastrana, A. J. (2015). Being out to others: The relative importance of family support, identity and religion for LGBT Latina/os. *Latino Studies*, *13*(1), 88-112.

Pauca, S. (2020, May 19). *The Umrah of Nur Sajat.* ArcGIS StoryMaps. Retrieved from https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3a54429b42c944ea91822de4bed2fd27

Petersoo, P. (2007). What does 'we'mean?: National deixis in the media. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *6*(3), 419-436.

Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *49*(1), 65-85.

Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *90*(5), 751.

Pitkänen, V. H. (2017). *"You're Not Left Thinking That You're The Only Gay in the Village". The Role of the Facebook Group: Seksualiti Merdeka in the Malaysian LGBT Community*, pp. 227-238. transcript.

Pizer, J., Mallory, C., Sears, B., & Hunter, N. (2012). Evidence of persistent and pervasive workplace discrimination against LGBT people: The need for federal legislation prohibiting discrimination and providing for equal employment benefits. *Los Angeles Law Review*, *45*, 715–780.

Poteat, V. P. (2015). Individual psychological factors and complex interpersonal conditions that predict LGBT-affirming behavior. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *44*(8), 1494-1507.

Priola, V., Lasio, D., De Simone, S., & Serri, F. (2014). The sound of silence. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender discrimination in 'inclusive organizations'. *British Journal of Management*, *25*(3), 488-502.

Raja, S., & Stokes, J. P. (1998). Assessing attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: The modern homophobia scale. *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, *3*(2), 113-134.

Ramanathan, R., Paramasivam, S., & Hoon, T. B. (2020). Discursive Strategies and Speech Acts in Political Discourse of Najib and Modi. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *8*(3), 34-44.

Rapp, C., & Ackermann, K. (2016). The consequences of social intolerance on non-violent protest. *European Political Science Review*, *8*(4), 567-588.

Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2009). The discourse-historical approach. In *R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed.), pp. 87–121. London, UK: Sage.

Reject Couple's Marriage. (2005, November 15). *The Star*. Retrieved from https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2005/11/15/government-and-church-reject-couples-marriage-deemed-as-unlawful-and-unholy/

Renn, K. A. (2007). LGBT student leaders and queer activists: Identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identified college student leaders and activists. *Journal of College Student Development*, *48*(3), 311-330.

Resnick, C. A., & Galupo, M. P. (2019). Assessing experiences with LGBT microaggressions in the workplace: Development and validation of the microaggression experiences at work scale. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *66*(10), 1380-1403.

Reyes, M. E. S., Ballesteros, K. C. A., Bandol, P. A. A., Jimenez, K. A. H., & Malangen, S. D. R. (2019). Religiosity, Gender Role Beliefs, and Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays in the Philippines. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *21*(3).

Reygan, F., & Moane, G. (2014). Religious homophobia: The experiences of a sample of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Ireland. *Culture and Religion*, *15*(3), 298-312.

Roberts, L. M., & Christens, B. D. (2021). Pathways to well-being among lgbt adults: Sociopolitical involvement, family support, outness, and community connectedness with race/ethnicity as a moderator. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *67*(3-4), 405-418.

Robson Day, C., & Nicholls, K. (2021). “They Don’t Think Like Us”: Exploring Attitudes of Non-Transgender Students Toward Transgender People Using Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *68*(6), 914-933.

Roggemans, L., Spruyt, B., Droogenbroeck, F. V., & Keppens, G. (2015). Religion and negative attitudes towards homosexuals: An analysis of urban young people and their attitudes towards homosexuality. *Young*, *23*(3), 254-276. doi: 10.1177/1103330881558690

Root, M. P. (2003). Racial and ethnic origins of harassment in the workplace. *Handbook of Multicultural Competencies in Counseling and Psychology*, 478-492.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). Structuring the interview. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, *2*, 129-151.

Rutledge, R., Morozova, O., Gibson, B. A., Altice, F. L., Kamarulzaman, A., & Wickersham, J. A. (2018). Correlates of recent HIV testing among transgender women in Greater Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *LGBT Health*, *5*(8), 484-493.

Ryan, C., Russell, S. T., Huebner, D., Diaz, R., & Sanchez, J. (2010). Family acceptance in adolescence and the health of LGBT young adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, *23*(4), 205-213.

Sabri, A. Z. S. A., Owoyemi, M. Y., & Mangsor, F. (2014). Leading by example: Causes and treatment by an experienced LGBT counsellor. *International Journal of Innovation and Scientific Research*, *10*(2), 255-261.

Sanders, P. (1991). "Gendering the Ungendered Body: Hermaphrodites in Medieval Islamic Law." In *Women in Middle Eastern Hist*.

Sarason, I. G., & Sarason, B. R. (2009). Social support: Mapping the construct. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *26*(1), 113-120.

Sauro, J., & Dumas, J. S. (2009). Comparison of three one-question, post-task usability questionnaires. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1599-1608.

Schuler, S. R., Anh, H. T., Ha, V. S., Minh, T. H., Mai, B. T. T., & Thien, P. V. (2006). Constructions of gender in Vietnam: In pursuit of the 'Three Criteria'. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *8*(5), 383-394.

Schwab, S. (2017). The impact of contact on students' attitudes towards peers with disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 62*, 160-165.

Sharom, N. F. (2019, March 9). Amalan LGBT tidak akan diterima di negara ini: Mujahid. *Sinar Harian*. Retrieved from https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/17182/berita/nasional/amalan-lgbt-tidak-akan-diterima-di-negara-ini-mujahid

Sheridan, D., Zolobczuk, J., Huynh, K., & Lee, D. L. (2017). Workplace harassment and attitudes towards LGBT people: Differences across human service occupations in South Florida. *Florida Public Health Review*, *14*(1), 1-12.

Shi, Q., & Doud, S. (2017). An examination of school counselors' competency working with lesbian, gay and bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling, 11*(1), 2–17. doi:10.1080/15538605.2017.1273165

Siebert, D. C., Chonody, J., Rutledge, S. E., & Killian, M. (2009). The index of attitudes toward homosexuals 30 years later: A psychometric study. *Research on Social Work Practice, 19*(2), 214-220.

Silveira, J. M., & Goff, S. C. (2016). Music teachers' attitudes toward transgender students and supportive school practices. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 64*(2), 138–158. doi:10.1177/0022429416647048

Simpson, R. M. (2013). Dignity, harm, and hate speech. *Law and Philosophy*, *32*(6), 701-728.

Ștefăniță, O., & Buf, D. M. (2021). Hate speech in social media and its effects on the LGBT community: A review of the current research. *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, *23*(1), 47-55.

Stevens, R. A. (2004). Understanding gay identity development within the college environment. *Journal of College Student Development*, *45*(2), 185-206.

Storms, M.D. (1980). Theories of sexual orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 35*, 783–792.

Subhrajit, C. (2014). Problems faced by LGBT people in the mainstream society: Some recommendations. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies, 1*(5), 317-331.

Sugiharti, S. (2018). A discourse historical analysis on local culture in the first book trilogy "ronggeng dukuh paruk" of Ahmad Tohari. *Cahaya Pendidikan, 4*(2).

Swanson, K., & Gettinger, M. (2016). Teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and supportive behaviors toward LGBT students: Relationship to Gay-Straight Alliances, antibullying policy, and teacher training. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 13*(4), 326-351.

Szél, Z., Kiss, D., Török, Z., & Gyarmathy, V. A. (2019). Hungarian medical students' knowledge about and attitude toward homosexual, bisexual, and transsexual Individuals. *Journal of Homosexuality, 67*(10), 1-18.

Takács, J. (2011): Homofóbia Magyarországon és Európában. [Homophobia in Hungary and in Europe.] In Homofóbia Magyarországon [Homophobia in Hungary]. In J. Takács (Ed.), *Homofóbia Magyarországon* (pp. 15–34). Budapest, Hungary: L'Harmattan

Tang, X., & Poudel, A. N. (2018). Exploring challenges and problems faced by LGBT students in Philippines: A qualitative study. *Journal of Public Health Policy and Planning. 2*(3), 9-17.

Tan, K. K. H., Lee, K. W., & Cheong, Z. W. (2021). Current research involving LGBTQ people in Malaysia: a scoping review informed by a health equity lens. *Journal of Population and Social Studies [JPSS]*, *29*, 622-643.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). Issues and dilemmas in teaching research methods courses in social and behavioural sciences: US perspective. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *6*(1), 61-77.

Thorn, D. W., & Deitz, J. C. (1989). Examining content validity through the use of content experts. *The Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, *9*(6), 334-346.

Timbuong, J. (2018, August 16). Syariah Court's judgement against lesbian couple is final. *The Star*. Retrieved from https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/08/16/syariah-court-judgement-against-lesbian-couple-is-final/

Ting, T. S., Kwin, E. S., & Xinyi, P. (2016). Factors Affecting Attitudes Toward Homosexuals Among Undergraduate Students in Malaysia. *UTAR Institutional Repository*, 1-68.

Travel agency under fire for covering up Nur Sajat's gender status for umrah. (2020, February 3). *The Leaders Online*. Retrieved from https://theleaders-online.com/travel-agency-under-fire-for-covering-up-nur-sajats-gender-status-for-umrah/

Trinh, T., Steckler, A., Ngo, A., & Ratliff, E. (2009). Parent communication about sexual issues with adolescents in Vietnam: content, contexts, and barriers. *Sex Education*, *9*(4), 371-380.

Tuah, K. M., & Mazlan, U. S. (2020). Twitter as Safe Space for Self-Disclosure among Malaysian LGBTQ Youths. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, *36*(1), 436-448.

Turiel, E., Hildebrandt, C., Wainryb, C., & Saltzstein, H. D. (1991). Judging social issues: Difficulties, inconsistencies, and consistencies. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, i-116.

Turiel, E. (1978). Social regulations and domains of social concepts. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *1978*(1), 45-74.

Vaara, E., Kleymann, B., & Seristö, H. (2004). Strategies as discursive constructions: The case of airline alliances. *Journal of Management Studies*, *41*(1), 1-35.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of political ideologies*, *11*(2), 115-140.

Van Dijk, T. A., & Kintsch, W. (1983). *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*.

Verkuyten, M., & Slooter, L. (2007). Tolerance of Muslim beliefs and practices: Age related differences and context effects. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *31*(5), 467-477.

Von Stuckrad, K. (2013). Discursive study of religion: Approaches, definitions, implications. *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, *25*(1), 5-25.

Wagner, I., & Wodak, R. (2006). Performing success: identifying strategies of self-presentation in women's biographical narratives. *Discourse & Society*, *17*(3), 385-411.

Walch, S. E., Ngamake, S. T., Francisco, J., Stitt, R. L., & Shingler, K. A. (2012). The attitudes toward transgendered individuals scale: Psychometric properties. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *41*(5), 1283-1291.

Walzer, M. (1997). The politics of difference: Statehood and toleration in a multicultural world. *Ratio Juris, 10*(2), 165-176.

Wang, Y., Hu, Z., Peng, K., Rechdan, J., Yang, Y., Wu, L., Xin, Y., Lin, J., Duan, Z., Zhu, X. & Feng, Y. (2020). Mapping out a spectrum of the Chinese public's discrimination toward the LGBT community: results from a national survey. *BMC Public Health*, *20*(1), 1-10.

Warriner, D., & Anderson, K. T. (2017). Discourse Analysis in Educational Research. In *Research Methods in Language and Education* (3rd ed.). New York: Springer.

Wilchins, R.A. (1997). *Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and The End of Gender*. New York: Firebrand Books.

Wilchins, R. A. (2002). *Genderqueer: Voices from Beyond the Sexual Binary*. Los Angeles: Alyson.

Winter, S., Chalungsooth, P., Teh, Y. K., Rojanalert, N., Maneerat, K., Wong, Y. W., Beaumont, A., Wah Ho, L. M., Gomez, F. C., & Macapagal, R. A. (2009). Transpeople, transprejudice and pathologization: A seven-country factor analytic study. *International Journal of Sexual Health, 21*(2), 96-118.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: History, agenda, theory and methodology. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, *2*, 1-33.

Wodak, R. (2011). Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. *Discursive Pragmatics*, *8*, 50-70.

Wong, C. Y., & Tang, C. S. K. (2004). Sexual practices and psychosocial correlates of current condom use among Chinese gay men in Hong Kong. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 33*(2), 159-167.

Woodford, M. R., Silverschanz, P., Swank, E., Scherrer, K. S., & Raiz, L. (2012). Predictors of heterosexual college students' attitudes toward LGBT people. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 9*(4), 297–320. doi:10.1080/19361653.2012.716697

Woodford, M. R., Atteberry, B., Derr, M., & Howell, M. (2013). Endorsement for civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people among heterosexual college students: Informing socially just policy advocacy. *Journal of Community Practice*, *21*(3), 203-227.

Worthen, M. G. F. (2012). Heterosexual college student sexual experiences, feminist identity, and attitudes toward LGBT individuals. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 9*(2), 77–113. doi:10.1080/19361653.2012.649613

Worthen, M. G. (2018). "Gay equals White"? Racial, ethnic, and sexual identities and attitudes toward LGBT individuals among college students at a Bible Belt university. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *55*(8), 995-1011.

Worthington, R. L., Dillon, F. R., & Becker-Schutte, A. M. (2005). Development, Reliability, and Validity of the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals (LGB-KASH). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(1), 104.

Wright, L. W., Adams, H. E., & Bernat, J. A. (1999). The Homophobia Scale: Development and validation. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, 21*, 337–347.

Yang, Y. (2019). Bargaining with the state: The empowerment of Chinese sexual minorities/LGBT in the social media era. *Journal of Contemporary China*, *28*(118), 662-677.

Yeo, J. Y., Ting, S. H., & Jerome, C. (2021). “Love for All” versus Religious Teachings: Attitudes towards LGBT among Heterosexual Malaysians. *Asian Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, *3*(2), 80-91.

Yılmaz, V., & Göçmen, İ. (2016). Denied citizens of Turkey: experiences of discrimination among LGBT individuals in employment, housing and health care. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *23*(5), 470-488.

Yu, R. P., & Oh, Y. W. (2018). Social media and expressive citizenship: Understanding the relationships between social and entertainment expression on Facebook and political participation. *Telematics and Informatics*, *35*(8), 2299-2311.

Zawawi, J. W. M., Hassan, H., Kho, S. N., & Hashim, N. (2020). Malaysian audience reaction of news frame setting towards LGBT Issues. *International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences*, *3*(11), 118-124.

# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1:** Questionnaire

## TOLERANCE TOWARDS LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) IN MALAYSIA

## SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Instruction: Please indicate your response by ticking the most appropriate box.

1. Town you are living in _____ (please write down)

2. Age
[ ] Below 20
[ ] 21-30
[ ] 31-40
[ ] 41-50
[ ] 51-60
[ ] 61-70
[ ] 71 and above

3. Ethnic group
[ ] Malay
[ ] Chinese
[ ] Indian
[ ] Sarawak Indigenous
[ ] Sabah Indigenous
[ ] Indigenous in West Malaysia (e.g., Orang Asli)
[ ] Others

4. Occupation _____. (Please write down your job. If you are not working, write down "student", "not working" or "retired")

5. Educational Background
[ ] Primary 6 or lower
[ ] Form 3/PT3/PMR/LCE
[ ] Form 5/SPM/MCE/Certificate
[ ] Form 6
[ ] Diploma
[ ] Degree

6. Monthly income
[ ] Below RM2000

[ ] RM2000-RM3999
[ ] RM4000-RM5999
[ ] RM6000-RM7999
[ ] RM8000-RM9999
[ ] RM10000 and above

7. Religion
[ ] Buddhism
[ ] Christianity
[ ] Hinduism
[ ] Islam
[ ] No religion
[ ] Others

8. Sexual orientation
[ ] Heterosexual (Female or Male)
[ ] Bisexual
[ ] Gay
[ ] Lesbian
[ ] Other

9. Gender identity
[ ] Male
[ ] Female
[ ] Intersex Male
[ ] Intersex Female
[ ] Transgender Male
[ ] Transgender Female
[ ] Other

**SECTION B: DO YOU AGREE WITH THESE VIEWS ON LGBT INDIVIDUALS?**

Instruction: Please indicate your response by ticking the most appropriate box.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

B1. Heterosexuality (i.e. being either female or male) is the best.
B2. LGBT individuals should keep their sexuality or gender identity a secret.
B3. LGBT individuals should overcome their feelings of wanting to be LGBT.
B4. Being LGBT is a temporary phase in the lives of LGBT individuals.
B5. LGBT sexual orientation is a kind of mental health condition.
B6. Sex-change operation is against morality.
B7. LGBT sexual orientation is against religion.
B8. LGBT individuals should go through counselling so that they can be either male or female.

B9. LGBT individuals cannot fit into society.
B10. People are born with LGBT tendencies.
B11. LGBT sexual orientation is a natural expression of sexuality.
B12. Same-sex couples marrying is acceptable.
B13. LGBT sexual orientation is not a problem but society makes it a problem.

**SECTION C: WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON LGBT RIGHTS?**

Instruction: Please indicate your response by ticking the most appropriate box.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

C1. LGBT individuals should stand up for their rights.
C2. LGBT individuals should be free to live the life they want to live.
C3. LGBT individuals should be free to date whoever they want.
C4. LGBT individuals should be free to have sex with whoever they want.
C5. LGBT couples should have the right to adopt a child.
C6. LGBT couples should be allowed to get married legally.
C7. LGBT couples should have the same rights as heterosexual couples (i.e. male-female couples).
C8. LGBT individuals should have the right to organise events in the neighbourhood.
C9. LGBT individuals should have right to express their opinions on Malaysian TV.

**SECTION D: CAN YOU ACCEPT LGBT IN SOCIETY?**

Instruction: Please indicate your response by ticking the most appropriate box.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

D1. I can accept if a company uses LGBT celebrities to advertise their products.
D2. I can accept if a military officer is LGBT
D3. I can accept if a politician is LGBT.
D4. I can accept if my religious leader is LGBT.
D5. I can accept if my work colleague is LGBT.
D6. I can accept if my close relative is LGBT.
D7. I can accept if my child is LGBT.
D8. If I found out my child's teacher is LGBT, I will remove my child from the class.
D9. If I found out my friend is LGBT, the friendship is over.
D10. If I found out a neighbour is LGBT, I will not talk to him or her.

**SECTION E: LGBT AND I**

Instruction: Please indicate your response by ticking the most appropriate box.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

E1. I have read materials on LGBT.
E2. I have attended talks on LGBT.
E3. I know the challenges of LGBT individuals.
E4. I have signed petitions asking the government to ensure LGBT individuals have equal rights to work.
E5. I have spoken up when LGBT is bullied/unfairly treated.
E6. I know a LGBT couple.
E7. I have close friends who are LGBT.
E8. I tell my family to respect LGBT individuals.
E9. I have attended a marriage ceremony for LGBT couples.
E10. I have a romantic relationship with LGBT individuals.
E11. I am LGBT.

Thank you very much for participating in the study!

**APPENDIX 2:** INTERVIEW GUIDE ON TOLERANCE TOWARDS LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) IN MALAYSIA

| **English version** | **Malay version** |
|---|---|
| 1a. In your opinion, how does our society view LGBT?<br>• *Do they accept or reject LGBT? Why?*<br>• *How do they show the rejection or acceptance?* | 1a. Pada pandangan anda, bagaimanakah masyarakat kita memandang LGBT?<br>• *Adakah mereka menerima atau menentang LGBT? Mengapa?*<br>• *Bagaimanakah mereka menunjukkan penentangan atau penerimaan tersebut?*<br>• |
| 1b. What is the strongest influence on their views? | 1b. Apakah pengaruh yang paling kuat terhadap pandangan mereka? |
| 2a. How do you yourself view LGBT?<br>• *Do you accept or reject LGBT? Why?* | 2a. Bagaimanakah anda sendiri memandang LGBT?<br>• Adakah anda menerima atau menentang LGBT? Mengapa? |
| 2b. What is the strongest influence on your view?<br>• *Religion, ethnic group etc.* | Apakah pengaruh yang paling kuat terhadap pandangan anda?<br>• *Agama, kumpulan etnik dll.* |

**NARRATIVE INQUIRY QUESTIONS FOR LGBT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS**

| **English version** | **Malay version** |
|---|---|
| Tell me your story/experience of being an LGBT.<br>**Note**:<br>During question phase. . .<br>1. Let participants control the direction of their story.<br>2. Can ask "What happened then?" Can use the following prompts:<br>• Do you remember when you came out? What was the event or experience that trigged it?<br>• Can you remember what made you come out? Whom did you first come out to?<br>• How did you feel then? How do you feel now? What was your initial reaction? How did you cope with it?<br>• Now that you have come out, how has the experience been so far? | Ceritakan kepada saya kisah/pengalaman anda sebagai seorang LGBT.<br>• Adakah anda masih ingat bila. . . Apakah anda masih ingat peristiwa/pengalaman yang mencetuskannya?<br>• Bolehkah anda ingat apa yang menyebabkan. . . Kepada siapa anda pertama kali. . .<br>• Apakah yang anda rasakan pada saat itu? Apakah yang anda rasakan sekarang? Apakah reaksi pertama anda? Bagaimanakah anda mengatasinya?<br>• Kini, setelah anda. . . bagaimanakah pengalaman anda setakat ini? |

## APPENDIX 3

**Summary of results on the testing of 18 hypotheses**

| Hypotheses | Significance |
|---|---|
| 1) Age has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 2) Age has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Significant* |
| 3) Ethnic group has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 4) Ethnic group has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 5) Educational background has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Not significant |
| 6) Educational background has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Not significant |
| 7) Monthly income has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Not significant |
| 8) Monthly income has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Significant* |
| 9) Religion has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 10) Religion has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 11) Gender identity has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Significant* |
| 12) Gender identity has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Not significant |
| 13) Sexual orientation has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 14) Sexual orientation has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 15) Intergroup contact has a significant effect on tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 16) Intergroup contact has a significant effect on tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Significant** |

| | |
|---|---|
| 17) Social knowledge has a significant correlation with tolerance towards LGBT individuals. | Significant** |
| 18) Social knowledge has a significant correlation with tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals. | Significant** |

Note: * p<.05; ** p<.01

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Jerome, C., Ting, S. H., Yeo, J. J. Y., & Ling, H. N. (2021). Examining discrepant views of LGBT and non-LGBT individuals on societal receptivity towards the LGBT phenomenon in present-day Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, *3*(1), 55-66.

Jerome, C., Ting, S. H., Yeo, J. J. Y., & Ling, H. N. (2021). LGBT in recent times Malaysia: Exploring the views of the different segments of Malaysian society. In *Proceedings of 3rd International Conference on Business, Management, Social Science, Technology, Education and Engineering, Penang, Malaysia*.

Lilly Metom, U. T., Ting, S. H., & Ling, H. N. (2021). The Iban of Sarawak, Malaysia: Ethnic Language Losing Ground to English and Sarawak Malay. *Human Behavior, Development and Society*, *22*(3), 54-64.

Ling, H. N., & Ting, S. H. (2022). Demographic Factors Influencing Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals among Malaysians. *Human Behavior, Development and Society*, *23*(1), 30-41.

Ling, H. N., & Ting, S. H. (2022, February 26). Relationship between contact with LGBT individuals and acceptance of LGBT in Malaysia. In *Proceedings of 3rd International Conference on Economy, Education, Social Science, Supply Chain, Engineering, Technology and Tourism (ESSET2022), Penang, Malaysia.*

Ling, H. N., & Ting, S. H. (2022). Relationship between Religious Background, Intergroup Contact and Acceptance Of LGBT In Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, *4*(1), 339-354.

Ling, H. N., & Ting, S. H. (2021). Tolerance towards LGBT Individuals Among Malaysians. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Language Studies 2021 (iCLS 2021), Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia.*

Metom, L., Ting, S. H., & Ling, H. N. (2021, September 8-9). Language use of the Iban people in Iban-Dominant and non-Iban dominant areas in Sarawak. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Language Studies (iCLS2021), Kota Samarahan, Malaysia.*

Metom, L., Ting, S. H., & Ling, H. N. (2021). The Iban of Sarawak, Malaysia: Ethnic language losing ground to English and Sarawak Malay. *Human Behavior, Development and Society, 22*(3), 54-64.