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### **THE RISING OF THE LGBT IN MALAYSIA**

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#### **Abstract**

*This research will discuss about an overview existing literature addressing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). This research was also aimed to study the factors of LGBT that commonly happens nowadays, to identify the effects and challenges faced by those who experienced, and to determine on how those people affecting with their surroundings. This research uses a qualitative method which includes a number of six respondents that aged among 19 to 23 which is experiencing or has experienced LGBT. This research using a deduction theory on this issue. The researchers point to ways that existing research approaches and theoretical stances benefit higher education practice to methodological and theoretical advancement is needed. Foremost the research also found that LGBT people faces negative perceptions from the society. Other than that, they involved in LGBT because of factors regarding their parents, friends, past life and others.*

Keynote: LGBT, deduction theory

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Day by day, the issues of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) are very worrying where it becomes a 'normalization' of the inverse practice that is being actively done openly in our country. The LGBT issue is a very sensitive issue especially in an Islamic country like Malaysia and it also will get a lot of attention from many parties and the public especially when it is discussed in a print media.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation and Islam is officially recognized as the religion of the state. Islam, being a religion, which completely forbids same sex relationship or any

unnatural relationship among human beings has in its penal code, punishment by death for anybody who engages in this activity as for a deterrent and lessons to others. In fact, the Shariah court also has the mandate to act against any individual or group who engage in any unnatural sexual intercourse between the same gender. For instance, The Shariah Penal law in Pulau Pinang confers penalties of sodomy (liwat) and lesbian (musahaqah) with fines of RM 5,000, three years imprisonment and six lashes of the whip (Carroll & Mendos, 2017).

The activities of LGBT have been around for a very long time in our country, however, it was not considered to be a dangerous group, until the group was highlighted by the local press. According to the Malaysia's Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohd emphasized that Malaysia does not accept LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) and same-sex marriages as our country does not subscribe to the Western values where the institution of marriage and family has now been disregarded the traditional family unit by allowing gay marriages and permitting gay couples to adopt children (Junior, 2018).

According to the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), the number of gay men in our country had increased from 173,000 to 310,000 between 2013 and 2018, while the number of transgender people between 1988 and 2018 increased from 10,000 to 30,000 (Mohd Izwan Mohd Yusof, 2018). This shows that the population of LGBT people in our country was increasing drastically even though the Islamic laws prohibit homosexuality and secular law bans sodomy.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Definition of LGBT**

LGBT is a group of society that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. According to Destagir (2017), lesbian is a woman who is emotionally or sexually attracted to other woman. Meanwhile for gay, it is a sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally or sexually attracted to people of their own gender. Besides that, it stated that bisexual is a person who is emotionally or sexually attracted to more than one sex or gender. Lastly, transgender is a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

## **The causes of becoming LGBT person**

There are a few factors on why people joined or involved with LGBT. Some say that it because of the influence of their friends, or maybe because of their past. According to Blue (2019), around 10% of young Australians experience the same attraction. Most of them realized around puberty. They are more likely to experience bullying at school or greater difficulty trying to connect with others. This is why these people join the LGBT community because they feel like they belonged. Next, lesbians or woman attracted to woman. The Rainbow Women and Help Seeking Research Report identified that lesbian have high rates of stress, distress, depression and anxiety (Beyond Blue, 2019). This is because maybe they have been sexually abused or have a history that makes them want to be with a same sex relationship. Other than that, the factor that affecting gay men is that compared to heterosexual men, gay men are more likely to experience depression and anxiety conditions. This is because at the early age, they may have been bullied or sexually abused and they do not know what to do about it. Meanwhile for the older gay men, they have been experienced these kind of things and they do not care what the other people thinks about them. For the transgender people, the prevalence of depression and anxiety among them is higher than lesbian, gay and bisexual people. This is because, in an Australian survey of LGBT people, around 60% of transgender males and 50% of transgender females reported that they are having depression. And in 2007, a survey of Australian and New Zealand transgender people found that almost 90% had experienced one form of stigma or discrimination (Beyond Blue, 2019). This is because they may have been mentally abused since they were young. And they thought by changing their gender they can be better person.

There has been a lot debate about what causes homosexuality. Many people ask and wonder if there's a gay gene or if homosexuality is caused by the environmental factors. And there are others are curious if it is something that we were born with, like the traits that we have or skin and hair color. But there have been studies on the causes of homosexuality. It also stated that being gay is not something they choose to be (Belge, 2019). This is because, as one has to wonder why anyone would choose to be something that could cause them to be rejected by their family. Next, for the lesbians. Some lesbians say that being gay is a choice especially those who were once married or came out later in life (Belge,2019). Despite from that, there

are others are angered to hear someone say that being gay is a choice. Many gays and lesbians would argue that being gay is not a choice, but whether to act on it is.

### **Challenges faced by LGBT people**

There are a few people are accepting this LGBT community and a few are refusing it. Some of this community feel that this society does not cater or to like them, so they are always in a constant battle of validating their own identity while having society tell them to throw it away (Sonia, 2018). In this day, there are individuals among us who live in a different world than us. This is because they have little or no access at all on certain opportunities that most of us had. These people are the LGBT people. The negative sentiment against LGBT has made it more difficult for them to get the medical treatment (Moh, 2015). Because of this, they may have to see healthcare providers less frequent than other individuals. This is because the fear of not enough treatment and discrimination. Other than that, an infectious diseases physician, Dr Benedict Sim Lim Heng said “Many LGBT individuals have complained about getting awkward and sometimes hostile stares form doctors or clinical staff when they reveal their personal sexual orientation.” (Moh, 2015). This LGBT people are afraid that they were not being treated like normal people just because they were different.

Not only that, they also want to feel like they are a part of the society. But it was the other way around. This is because they were felt unsafe and unwelcome. According to Gabrielle Levy, in a national survey, more than 12,000 LGBTQ teens aged 13 to 17, conducted by the Human Rights Campaign and researchers at the University of Connecticut, nearly 8 in 10 reported feeling depressed or down within the previous week, while only a quarter say they feel safe at school (Levy, 2018). It also stated that nearly all (95%) said they had trouble sleeping at night and 86% percent of them rated that their average stress at 5 or more on a scale of 1 to 10. Next, there also LGBT people who are described being afraid to reveal express their identities at workplace or school. This is because, according to Gabrielle Levy, they have reported that they have been bullied from their peers and lack of supports from their teachers and counsellors. Lastly, many LGBT people have experienced sexual harassment. There are 11 percent say they

have been raped or sexually attacked because of their identity and 20 percent said they have had an unwanted sexual encounter in the past year (Levy, 2018).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **A. In Depth Interview**

In order to get the accurate information regarding the case of LGBT which is also known as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, dept-interview was used in this research. In-depth interviewing is focus on gathering together with participant observation or also can be a stand-alone research method. The objective of doing this depth interviewing is to understand the participant's point of view on their experience regarding the LGBT situation. The researcher interviewed six people who are categorize and involved in the situation of the LGBT. All of them have different reason and perceptions regarding their lifestyle in LGBT. The researcher interviewed them in many different places which includes at KLCC, Ipoh and restaurant near Jalan AU Keramat.

### **B. Data Collection Strategies**

The purpose sampling of this study is also known as the judgemental sampling. This method is gaining information by selecting samples and targets LGBT participants (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2018) The researcher selected some LGBT participants to interview which can give some insights into the particular subset of individuals from whom the researchers collected data. The stated below is the list of the LGBT participants that have been interviewed.

1. Faiz bin Mohd Akif is one of the persons that involved with the gay status. He is 20 years old and a student at Politeknik Sultan Ibrahim. He lives in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.
2. Muhammad Osman bin Mohammad Din who is also a gay. He is 20 years old student in UNIKL. He's from Ampang, Selangor.
3. Syakila binti Mohd Ayub is a 20 years old lesbian who is a student in INTI College . She lives in Kajang, Selangor.
4. Nur Layla binti Azman is a lesbian from Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. She is 21 years old and work as a promoter at clothing shop called H&M.

5. Arisha binti Hadi is one of the people that into bisexual status. She is 19 years old student from Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.
6. Muhammad Nabil Azim bin Hazman who is a transgender person. He is 23 years old and working as a freelance. He's from Subang Jaya, Selangor.

### **C. Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis is the entity that frames what being analysed in a study, whether the entity is studied as a whole, within which most factors of causality and change exist. The researchers gather data regarding the rising of the LGBT community in Malaysia that includes male and females from the range of age of 19-23 years old. This unit of analysis is the most typical units of analysis used by the researchers. The individuals may be characterized in terms of their membership in social groupings or categorization on psychological attributes (Abdul Rauf Ridzuan et al., 2015).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **RQ 1: HOW DO YOU GET INVOLVE AND WHEN DO YOU REALIZE THAT YOU ARE IN THE LGBT COMMUNITY?**

#### **THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS IN THE SAME GENDER SCHOOL**

According to Faiz bin Mohd Akif, if someone went to a same gender school, the possibility to involve with this kind of thing is easy. As it has been experienced by him in the boys' school when he was in secondary school, he somehow feels attracted to boys easily. He added, being gay in all-boys school is normal. It is because, most of his seniors are involved with this kind of thing. As for him, he chose to be gay because of his choice.

Based on Muhammad Osman bin Mohammad Din, he agreed that the influence of friends in school also is one of the factors of why a student turns out being lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Even though he is not in all-boys school, he explained that his boyfriend, became gay since he went to an all-boys school because of the strong influence from his friends in the school.

In accordance with Syakila binti Mohd Ayub, she became a lesbian when she was in all-girls school. Her parents had sent her to all-girls school since primary until secondary

school. From there, she got comfortable with girls only. She also admitted that she feels attracted to the same gender when one of her seniors in school, try to get close with her and suddenly she fell for her senior.

Based on Nur Layla binti Azman, she stated that she started involved in the LGBT community when she was in an all-girls school. She identifies as being straight. But then, somehow there was someone in her batch, who had feelings on her. She has rejected the girl many times until one day, she suddenly accepts her, and they began a relationship because of the efforts given by the girl.

### **GETTING DUMPED BY THEIR EX BOYFRIEND / GIRLFRIEND**

Based on Arisha binti Hadi, if someone got dumped by their exes can make someone turns to LGBT community. She self- confessed that she got dumped for about 9 times by her exes which make her finally date someone of the same gender, another girl to talk to, tell all her problems and can give her comfort. It is all started when her roommate give affection and always be there for her through thick and thin which makes her feel attracted to her roommate and from there on, she came out as bisexual.

Our informant, named Muhammad Nabil Azim bin Hazman also stated that there is no denying if someone turns their gender because of being left by their partners. He stated that based on his experience, he had been left by his lovely ex-girlfriend after have been in a relationship for 7 years. The girl left him for another guy and it made him feel depressed and do not trust any girl anymore. This has taught him a lesson for not to be in love with girl. And because of this, he turns out to be a gay.

### **CONCLUSION REMARKS**

Based on the interview session that has been conducted by the researcher, the factors of why some people turn out being in this Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community can be concluded into two factors such as the influence of friends in the school getting dumped by their ex-boyfriend/girlfriend. As stated by Blue (2019) this community are more likely to experience depression and anxiety conditions in which it could lead them to being as LGBT.

**RQ2: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING AN LGBT PERSON LIVING IN THIS SOCIETY?****SUBQUESTION: DO YOU THINK THE PUBLIC ACCEPTED THE EXISTENCE OF LGBT IN THIS COUNTRY?****ALWAYS GET DIRTY LOOKS EASILY**

According to Arisha binti Hadi, when she was dating with her girlfriend, they were caught for hugging and kissing on New Year's Day after the fireworks. For her, being an LGBT person is definitely difficult in Malaysia. Her girlfriend's parents also found out about the relationship, and were not approving of it. She added, she has been on the receiving end of unsolicited judgemental comments, including "God won't forgive you", "you have committed a great sin" and etc.

Based on Syakila binti Muhd Ayub, being an LGBT person has to face a lot of challenges in our country. As stated by her, when she was in high school, she has been ignored by her friends, knowing that she is not straight. For that reason, she stated that coming out to people was challenging, imagine going through the same terror each time you want to let a person know who you truly are. Imagine having to go up to everyone that you know and telling them that you are straight, just that now, you are not straight and who you are is not widely accepted yet because you don't know what the end result would be.

In accordance with Faiz bin Muhd Akif, he once told her best friend about his feelings towards the same gender. But then, his best friend could not accept the fact that he is gay and suddenly tell to other friends. The rumour has spread and he get so much hate and get ignored by most of his friends until he had to move to another school. He added, he also insisted that he find it hard to trust anybody after got betrayed by his best friend.

## **SOCIETY IS NOW BECOME MORE CONCERN**

Based on Muhammad Nabil Azim bin Hazman, as he being gay, he never experienced any discriminations from anybody. For him, everything is fine if we (their community) did not cause any trouble such as marched through the streets calling for their rights. He admitted that he was quite scared to open up to anybody about this matter, but luckily, the people who know about him being gay are not that type of 'judgemental' person and they're being open minded and accept him.

According to Muhammad Osman bin Mohammad Din, even though LGBT people have been condemned as misfits and (expected to) be rehabilitated to conform to accepted social and religious norms in which, it is clearly wrong and against the law, but there are still some people who accept and offered to guide them to the right path. As stated by him, there's one time when he was sitting alone in the park, a random guy sits next to him and tell about one program which is called "Mukhayyam" that is being introduced by the Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) to help and guide this community to the right path. For that reason, he believes that even though Malaysia does not accept LGBT, but there are still some party who concerned regarding this issue.

## **SOME PEOPLE CAN ACCEPT, SOME NOT**

Based on Nur Layla binti Azman, she stated that she never feels threatened living in this society. There is no denying that some LGBT people have long suffered discrimination especially in Muslim-Majority Malaysia. She also stated that if this LGBT people did not cause any trouble like involve in demonstration to get the 'same equality', then it would be fine. It is better for them to just remain silent and minding their own business as they know that Islam is officially recognized as the religion of the state, so they have to respect it.

## **CONCLUSION REMARKS**

Based on the interview session that has been conducted by the researcher, it can be conclude that some of the informants are always get dirty looks easily by society. According to Levy (2018) many LGBT people have experienced sexual harassment in which there are 11 percent of this community stated that they have been raped or sexually attacked because of their identity and 20 percent said they have had an unwanted sexual encounter in the past year. However, the society also become more concern and some of them can accept this community.

### **RQ3: WHAT ATTRACTS YOU TO KEEP BEING AS LGBT PERSON?**

**SUBQUESTION: DO YOU WANT TO BE IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE OR WILL YOU REPENT TO THE RIGHT PATH SOMEDAY?**

#### **LOVE TOWARDS PARTNER**

Based on Muhammad Osman bin Mohammad Din, he said that he could not describe the feelings of being in love with the same gender. He feels so happy when he is with his boyfriend. He also stated that he wants to be as LGBT person for his entire life.

According to Nur Layla binti Azman, she emphasized that the feeling of love towards the same gender is one of the reasons of why she sticks to her partner. She feels comfortable as her partner always be there for her through thick and thin. She added, perhaps she will repent to the right path one fine day.

#### **GENETICS**

In accordance with Muhammad Nabil Azim bin Hazman, Faiz bin Mohd Akif, Syakila binti Muhd Ayub and Arisha binti Hadi, all of them do agree that they want to keep being in this community is because they believe that they were destined to be born that way and their feelings towards the same sex partner become stronger as they grow older. However, they also stated that they will repent to the right path when the right time is come. They also admitted that being an LGBT is indeed wrong in every religion and there is nothing to be proud of after all.

## **CONCLUSION REMARKS**

Based on the interview session that has been conducted by the researcher, the main reason of why this LGBT people keep being in this community is because of love and genetics. As stated by Belge (2019), being gay is not something they choose to be (Belge, 2019). Some of them also want to repent to the right path when the right time is come.

## **CONCLUSION**

In a conclusion, the increasing of the LGBT population and cases brings more worries towards the community. The participants of LGBT tend to be more open and doing actions that is not quite acceptable in public. Homosexuality is an activity that is considered a big sin, thus prohibited by the God. This happens because some people did not aware of these activities who are increasing drastically. Furthermore, there are still people who aren't accepting this LGBT in the society. This make the participants feel uncomfortable to join the community and end up making one of its own community. The more LGBT participants feel unaccepted, the bigger their population. Other than that, the negative thought towards them that was deeply kept by the participants clearly create a negative impact towards their feeling and end up making them stay away out of the society. The one who to blame for all these cases is our own self. Firstly, LGBT won't happen if they are more people to care and to give love towards these participants as love and support is all that they needed. Its either they are already involved or nearly involved, we as a human being should be more aware of what LGBT participants been struggling especially for the parents and family members, at least the participants of LGBT knew that they are not alone to face all the hard obstacles.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

LGBT is a bad thing in Islam because Islam is a religion that prevents sexual immortality. Therefore, there are a few ways to prevent the LGBT society. First, our ministry plays a big role in this matter. For instance, The Education Ministry have to ensure that this LGBT issue will not spread to schools and harm the moral of students. Some various measures would be taken including appointing counsellors in schools to help parents understand the issue and the dangers it posed. With this, it will eventually make the parents and teachers aware of this issue so that the problem involving the young, especially those still schooling, could be checked. Not only that, some non-government organizations

also can make an awareness campaign for this LGBT community in which it is aimed at asking this group to stop because these activities are wrong in every religion and are cursed by God. This awareness campaign perhaps will educate this group to back to the right path.

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