

**Effeminacy Among University Students: Exploring The
Perception Towards Effeminacy From University
Students' Perspectives.**



Universiti Teknologi MARA

**KHADIJAH BINTI SAID HASHIM
SITI ZURAIDA BINTI MAARUF
INTAN SYAHRIZA BINTI AZIZAN**

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Effeminacy among university students: Exploring the perception on effeminates social relationship and friendship from university students' perspectives.

By :

Khadijah Binti Said Hashim (Fakulti Pendidikan)

Siti Zuraida Binti Maaruf (Fakulti Pendidikan)

Intan Syahriza Binti Azizan (Fakulti Sains Pentadbiran Dan Pengajian Polisi)

diji79@yahoo.com.my

aidasam79@yahoo.com.my

intansyahriza@yahoo.com

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

ABSTRACT

The concern of this research is to explore the students' perception towards the issue of effeminacy in higher institution. It is assumed that, different people will hold different perception towards this group. On top of that, to define effeminacy it is a phenomenon when a male has a tendency to exhibit and adopt one or more of female character (s) and behavior. The study is relevant because despite rejection, stigma and negative treatment from society, effeminacy still exist and increase in number. In the effort to explore about students' perception towards effeminacy, this research focuses on research question: perception on effeminates social relationship and friendship. The survey conducted by distributing questionnaires to 100 respondent students ranging from 19 years old to 36 years old of males and females. The data reveals that majority of the respondents (91%) have effeminate friends and the remaining of 9% have no experience any friendship with effeminates. It is hoped that, this research will at least give a better insight to the society at large, about effeminates as one of the groups that exist in society before giving any stereotypical remarks. In fact, this group and other similar groups like transvestites and hermaphrodites should not be discriminated blindly as they need help, guide and support to continue their lives and functions in society.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

God created human beings into two kinds that constitutes of male and female. In fact, almost all religions recognize that human's existence can be divided into only two sexes, which are dichotomous in nature of either being a male or a female. Islam for instance repeatedly says and insists about this in the Holy Qur'an.

Being male or female is something that human being has been endowed with since the very beginning of his or her life. Thus, it is a crucial part of human nature which is known as sex or sexual identity. According to Richardson (1998), as quoted by Noraini, Jamil, Ahmad Rahim and Shukran (2003), sex refers to the biological aspects of a person, such as the chromosomal, anatomical, hormonal and physiological structure which are assigned at birth.

Therefore, one should not be confused about what is sex and gender, since both of them are totally different but always use interchangeably. Feldman (2000) defines gender as "the sense of being male or female". Thus, this sense can be developed or something that can be learned through interaction, socialization and modeling (Hargreaves and Colley, 1986). In addition, gender also refers to the perception of maleness and femaleness related to membership in a given society (Feldman, 2000). Apparently gender is about psychological, social and cultural components accomplished within social context (Noraini et al., 2003).

Though sexual identity is obviously 'inborn', both Hargreaves and Colley (1986) argue, "One of the first things which happen after a baby is born is the assignment of gender on the basis of external genital appearance". However, gender identity is well-established by the time children reach the pre-school years, particularly by the age of 2 (Feldman, 2000).

From sociological point of view, it is believed that society dictates that males and females are supposed to exhibit certain characteristics and assume different roles based on their sex. In addition, male and female are associated with a number of different dimensions and characteristics, which include biological, psychological and physical aspects. Therefore, males and females are expected to be different not only in their physical characteristics but also in the roles they play, because of their oppositional and dichotomous nature.

Confusion arises when it comes to define and understand what is transsexual and effeminate. Briefly, transsexual is more general in its sense and effeminacy is more specific term. Transsexual or transgender is a phenomenon in which, a person feels uneasy or discomfort with his or her gender role. According to Hargreaves and Colley (1986) "the characteristic feature of transsexualism is a fundamental feeling by the individual that he or she was born into the wrong sex and should rightly belongs to the other sex".

With regards to the issue of effeminacy, an effeminate refers to a person who is born as a male, (i.e. possesses biological and physical characteristics of a male) but portrays or exhibits the behaviors, traits and appearance of a female.

Generally, society considered that people who failed to fit into one of the categories of either being male or female, as someone who is having problems and 'abnormal'. Psychologically they are classified as having gender disorder. While at the society level, they are considered as a deviant.

Today, part of the society seems to be more in accepting and understanding effeminates, though most of the time, the majority of them still face rejection. Effeminates start to involve in society, pursue their studies up to the highest level and work elsewhere. Thus, this research aims to study and understand their challenges, adjustment styles and coping strategies.