

## Attitudes towards Tolerance towards LGBT in Malaysia: Insights from Questionnaires versus Interviews

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Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) is considered a sexual minority group in relation to heterosexuals which form the majority in the society. Throughout the years, LGBT individuals have experienced discrimination and negative stigma due to their sexual orientation and gender identity (Buyantueva, 2018). For instance, in Turkey, Yilmaz, and Gocmen (2016) found that LGBT individuals who were discriminated have experienced negative consequences such as dropping out of school, inability to perform in their own profession, and even suffering trauma due to “conversion therapy”. Moreover, LGBT individuals continue to face harassment even in Philippines which is considered as a gay-friendly country, and it is mainly due to the lack of legal protection and religious teachings – mainly Roman Catholic which is against LGBT practice (Tang & Poudel, 2018).

Many past researchers have investigated attitudes towards LGBT individuals in colleges and universities (Copp & Koehler, 2017), workplaces (Resnick & Galupo, 2018), and in the health care setting (Naal et al., 2019). Reyes et al. (2019) examined whether religiosity and gender role beliefs influence attitudes toward lesbians and gay men among 633 non-LGBT Filipinos. The findings showed a significant relationship where higher religiosity and more traditional gender role beliefs are associated with more negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men among the Filipinos participants.

In Malaysia, most of the people do not see unconventional sexuality as a norm due to the conservative ideology that being heterosexuals is normal. Tan et al. (2021) reviewed 44 studies on LGBTQ in Malaysia from 1998 to 2020, which involved both quantitative analyses and qualitative interviews. Tan et al.'s (2021) review showed that most of the studies focussed on men who have sex with men (MSM) (Burch et al., 2018), trans women (Galka et al., 2020; Rutledge et al., 2018), and gay men (Felix, 2014; Liow et al., 2017). The researchers either collected data using questionnaires or interviews, but not both. The use of different data collection techniques has been found to influence results in school choice studies where ethnicity is a factor (Bagley, 1996; Elacqua, Schneider, & Buckley, 2006), but it is not known whether the different means of eliciting data would affect results in LGBT studies.

This study employed a mixed method research design, using both questionnaire and interviews to examine the Malaysians' attitudes towards LGBT individuals. The questionnaire data were from 413 respondents (88.1% heterosexuals, 11.9% LGBTs) and a majority of them were aged 21 to 30 (82.3%). Also, a majority of the respondents identified themselves as Chinese (71.7%), 18.6% identified as Malay, 4.6% identified as Sarawak indigenous, 2.2% identified as Indian, and 1.2% identified as Sabah indigenous. The interview data were from 20 participants (14 heterosexuals and six LGBT). The distribution of religious background is as follows: Muslim (45.0%), Christians (25.0%), Buddhists (10.0%), Others (5.0%).

The questionnaire elicited data on four main constructs (tolerance towards LGBT individuals, 13 items), social knowledge on morality (9 items), tolerance towards social interaction with LGBT individuals, 10 items), and intergroup contact with LGBTs (11 items), using a seven-point Likert scale. The interview guide elicited the heterosexuals' attitudes towards LGBT and the LGBT participants' experiences in disclosing their identity.