THE INTERSECTING ETHNIC IDENTITY ON LGB WITH INTERNALIZED

HOMOPHOBIA AND COMING OUT IN MALAYSIA

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Approval Form

This research paper attached here to, entitled "The Intersecting Identity on LGB with Internalized Homophobia and Coming Out in Malaysia" was prepared and submitted by Hieu Sooh Peng and Ng Jo Anne in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Bachelor of Social Science (HONS) Psychology is hereby accepted.

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Abstract

In Malaysia, there has been less research that focus on gender, ethnic identity, internalized homophobia and coming out from closet within LGB communities. The study aim to find out whether level of ethnic identity and internalized homophobia related to coming out among LGB. Present study was carried by using snowball sampling method with the total number of 196 participants, 102 females, and 94 males. Revised Internalized Homophobia (IHP-R) scale, Outness Inventory (OI), and Revised Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R) were used for data collection. The result of study showed that there were significant gender difference in internalized homophobia, and significant negative correlation between internalized homophobia and coming out to Family and World. However, there were no significant correlation between level of ethnic identity and internalized homophobia, and no significant correlation between level of ethnic identity and coming out. The findings and results provided people to understand the minority stressors suffered by LGB.

Keywords: Malaysia, LGB, internalized homophobia, ethnic identity

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DECLARATION

We declare that the materials and data presented in this paper are the end result of our own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources, be they printed, electronic or personal.

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List of Abbreviations

IHP-R   Revised-Internalized Homophobia Scale

LGB   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual

LGBT   Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender

MEIM-R   Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised

OI   Outness Inventory

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Science

API   Asian-Pacific Islander

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background of study

Intersectionality emphasizes on the composition of several aspects of relationship basically including gender, ethnicity and class. The main purpose in discovering dimensions of intersectional positions is to reflect on an individual's multiple identities and the ways in which they interact, such as sexism and racism, sexism and homophobia, and racism and unearned advantages (Brown, 2011). A culturally varied experience can be formed among LGB individuals through the intersecting of different identities like religiosity, ethnicity and gender identity. The combination of heterosexists' negative reaction and racism can cause an effect on multiple minority identities' psychological functioning, for instance, depression and low self-esteem (DeBlaere, Brewster, Sarkees, & Moradi, 2010). Nonetheless, the current literature on theories of identity development and research on intersecting identity are less likely to emphasize on the intersecting identities of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) individuals (Lytle, 2012).

A research conducted by Herek, Cogan, Gillis and Glunt (1997) discovers that greater levels of internalized homophobia were related to concealment of one's sexual orientation and less sense of belonging to the gay and lesbian community. Besides, males are significantly having greater level of internalized homophobia than females, and bisexual individuals are having notably greater level of internalized homophobia than lesbian and gay. Allport's (Allport, 1954) theory of 'traits due to victimization' can be associated with the experience of internalized homophobia among LGB individuals. Allport claimed that stigmatized individuals express the defensive traits in either an extroverted and/or introverted

ways after the prejudice experience. An extroverted expression includes induce compulsive concern with the stigmatizing traits. While, introverted expression includes induce self-denigration and identification with the aggressor. Williamson (2000) stated that the introverted expression can be seen among stigmatized LGB individuals and it is more similar to current understanding of internalized homophobia.

Other theory has expanded Allport's original conceptualization. Meyer and Dean (1998) generally stated that homosexual individuals tends to have internalize homophobia to different degree as they begin to realize their own homosexuality. Then, they start to question their presumed heterosexuality and start to label themselves as homosexual when they recognize their own same sex attraction. Such self-labelling often happens before homosexual individuals disclose their homosexual appetence to anybody and eventually it causes the psychologically impact of societal homophobia on them. It was stated in identity development theories among LGB, in which internalized homophobia is frequently happened in the LGB identity development process, and surmounting internalized homophobia is essential to the growth of a well self-identity of LGB individuals (Fingerhut, Peplau, & Ghavami, 2005). However, it may not be able to entirely overcome, and it may influence LGB individuals some period of time after coming out. Researches have been showed that men and women are socialized differently, particularly with reference to intimacy and sexuality. Thus, it is reasonable to presume that men and women could experience different levels of internalized homophobia on intimacy and sexuality (Meyer & Dean, 1998).

Other than the common experience of overcoming internalized homophobia among LGB social network, specifically, LGB ethnic minority are believed to have difficulty in balancing and respecting their both sexual orientation identity and ethnic community values, maintaining family reputation, maintaining the bonding relationship with family and ethnic community, and avoid being an out-group community member. Research shows that the

tension may cause internalized homophobia and pressure to select between LGB individuals' ethnic and sexual orientation identities. This tension also causes feeling of imbalance and lack of personality cohesion among LGB individuals too (Nemoto et al., 2003). Consequently, it can be assumed that LGB ethnic minority with an experience of great exposure to ethnic community and societal prejudice can create more pressure and tends to have internalized homophobia and hide their sexual orientation (Moradi et al, 2010).

Besides, various reasons have shown that not all LGBT individuals believe the idea that coming out is essentially an option (Rasmussen, 2004). These reasons contain ethnicity identity, religious affiliations, and/or afraid of being rejected by family and friends. Particularly for LGBT ethnic minority individuals, coming out are not merely perceived as acceptance of their sexual orientation and gender identity by others (Lee, 2014). Legate, Ryan and Weinstein (2012) found that LGB individuals would disclose more to their family, friends and colleagues as they perceive to be more autonomy supportive

In various ethnic group, an individual's specific ethnic identity conflicts with his/her LGBT identity. Therefore, LGB individuals may experience numerous levels of oppression, as they challenge societal prejudice to their homosexuality, along with ethnic prejudice and high degree of rejection in their own ethnic community (Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004). Harper et al. also mentioned that some individuals did not admitted themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual even they have experienced same-sex needs and involve in different forms of same-sex sexual activities. LGB individuals tend to hide their same-sex sexual activities and recognize themselves as heterosexual instead of their sexual orientation as a men/women. Besides, research also found that they afraid of experiencing discrimination or harassment from heterosexist individuals within the ethnic community. There are individuals from different ethnic community may possibly identify the emancipation of gay movement and LGB recognition as Westernized White middle-class people and believe the specific ethnic

individuals who joint this movement have disregarded their origin culture and participating the White oppressor.

Problem statement

There has been less research that focus on gender, ethnic internalized homophobia and coming out from closet within LGB communities (Grov, Bimbi, Nanin, & Parsons, 2004), especially in Malaysia. Besides, in the context of a multi-ethnic society, such as Malaysia, an individual from LGB community may have difficulty in prioritizing the development of ethnic identity and sexual identity in response to many psychosocial and environment barriers associated with ethnic community. Therefore, there is a necessary to explore different experience in coming out and internalized homophobia among LGB individuals to understand the LGB communities as a whole. Unfortunately, there are no reliable data presented regarding the number of LGBT individuals in Malaysia, which emphasized by Coalition of Malaysian NGOs in its submission to the Universal Periodic Review. The submission enlightened that lesbian and gay individuals are being suppressed under the Official Secrets Act regarding the sexual and reproductive health (Equal Right Trust, 2012).

Regrettably, Malaysia society is still showing heterosexist's negative reaction and discrimination toward LGB communities. However, internalized homophobia usually derived from a stigmatized society and heterosexists' negative attitudes toward homosexuality. At worst stigma may bring out fear and recrimination and it leads to a devaluing of the self and psychological struggle among LGB individuals (Felix, 2014). While, the experience of internalized homophobia also associated with LGB individuals conceal their sexual orientation identity to family, friends and LGB community.

Lytle (2012) mentioned that identity development of lesbian and gay can be affected by ethnicity. They may experience societal prejudice and negative reaction within their ethnic

communities as well as from the society as a whole. Calzo and Ward (2009) also mentioned that one of the negative consequences of stigmatization is homosexual people tends to have pressure to conform forces based on cultural, social, religion and ethnicity. This can assume that ethnic groups in Malaysia may influence lesbians and gays likely to conceal their sexual orientation or become activists. Subsequently, as an ethnic minority group of lesbian or gay individual conceals their sexual identities, they tend to less motivated in seeking help and support if they have encountered difficulty in coming out to their family or ethnic community. This could relate to Malaysia LGB individuals from diverse ethnic group and religion and these forces may have different perspectives regarding attitudes of acceptance of homosexual people as part of them.

In conclusion, this is part of the issues which are missing out in many local researches in Malaysia, as such this study provides an insight into the relationship among ethnic identity, internalized homophobia and coming out of LGB individuals in Malaysia.

Significance of study

The importance of this research can increase understanding on the intersecting of ethnic identity on coming out and internalized homophobia among LGB individuals in Malaysia. Huang et al. (2010) stated that there are limited research with LGB individuals in quantity and range, with most researches emphasize on high risk sexual behaviour and diseases can be related such as AIDS and HIV. On the other hand, comparatively less research has focused on LGB individuals' perception on the theorized correlates of stigma, especially internalized homophobia and concealment of sexual orientation (Moradi et al., 2010). While, there has been little research that emphasizes on gender, age, racial, and ethnic diversity within LGB individuals (Grov et al., 2006). Hence, the finding from this research could be used as a guidance to the society of Malaysia regarding on the current issue that

faced by LGB individuals. It can also be a guidance for other researchers to have a further research on this area.

Furthermore, this research may increase the awareness and understanding of mental health professionals, such as psychiatrics, psychologists and counsellors, and public health professionals regarding stressful internalized homophobia environment and coming out process suffered by LGB individuals. Exploring the Meyer (2003) mentioned that minority stressors such as concealment of sexual orientation and internalized homophobia were proven to significantly predict negative psychological effects among the LGBT individuals. With such understanding, LGB individuals can better express how to meet the varying needs of them, while public health professionals and mental health professionals can better direct services, support, and interventions for LGB individuals. Both public and mental health professionals should consider the psychosocial treatment and developmental issues of LGB individuals in reducing the levels of internalized homophobia and the conflicts faced in coming out process. The treatments must be culturally appropriate for the purpose of meeting the needs of different ethnic group of LGB individuals.

Next, this research may also increase the awareness and understanding of society and heterosexists prejudices and negative towards LGB individuals in Malaysia. Prejudices and discrimination are part of the major societal problem because it is so unescapable and has such negative effects on so many people. Kelleher (2009) stated that society should focus on the changing the prejudicially inflicting and constraint social environment in which the LGB individuals live. Other than that, in order to promote social change toward an inclusive society, society should be emphasized on the interventions in challenging prejudice and negative attitudes of heterosexists at both cultural and individual level.

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Objectives of study

There are four main objectives for this study to be conducted. First of all, this study enables researchers to determine the gender difference in having internalized homophobia among LGB individuals. The second objective is to investigate the relationship between level of internalized homophobia and coming out to family, world and religion. Next, the third objective allows researcher to identify the relationship between LGB individual's ethnic identity and level of internalized homophobia. Lastly, this study also allows researcher to find determine the relationship between level of individual's ethnic identity and coming out to family, world and religion.

Research question

1. What is the gender difference in having internalized homophobia among LGB?

2. What is the relationship between level of internalized homophobia and coming out

    (a) Toward family?

    (b) Toward world?

    (c) Toward religion?

3. What is the relationship between LGB individual's ethnic identity and level of internalized homophobia?

4. What is the relationship between level of individual's ethnic identity and coming out

    (a) Toward family?

    (b) Toward world?

    (c) Toward religion?

Hypotheses

1. Research Hypothesis (H_1): Males have higher internalized homophobia than females among LGB individuals.

2. (a) Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between level of internalized homophobia and level of coming out toward family.

(b)Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between internalized homophobia and level of coming out toward world.

(c) Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between level of internalized homophobia and coming out toward religion.

3. Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between LGB individual's level of ethnic identity and level of internalized homophobia.

4. (a) Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between LGB individual's level of ethnic identity and coming out toward family.

(b) Research Hypothesis (H_1):There is a significant correlation between LGB individual's level of ethnic identity and coming out toward world

(c) Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between LGB individual's level of ethnic identity and coming out toward religion.

Conceptual Definition

Gender. Gender has been defined as how an individual identifies the masculine or feminine characteristics of them. It is commonly assumed as a cultural and social construction. An individual's gender expression or gender identity is not always completely male or female and might or might not relate to their sex (Australian Human Right Commission, 2011). It also stated as the social characteristics and opportunities related with being men and women and the relationship between both sexes, in addition to the connections between females and those between males. Gender is socially constructed and able to learn

through socialization processes regarding responsibilities, roles, activities undertaken, decision-making opportunities, along with expectation of women and men (UN Women, 2001). While, American Psychological Association [APA] (2011) defines gender as the behaviour, attitudes and feelings that a given culture associates with an individual's biological sex, where behaviour that is conform to the cultural expectation is known as gender normative, while behaviour that is viewed as not compatible with the cultural expectation is known as gender non-conformity.

Sexual Orientation. It defines as an individual's emotional or sexual attraction to other individual, as well as, within others, such as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, both sexes, asexual, or pansexual (Australian Human Right Commission, 2011). Other than that, it can be defined as an individual's sense of identity based on emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction, associated behaviour, and affiliation in community who share those attractions. It also can be understood as the group of persons in which an individual tends to get satisfying and gratifying romantic relationship, which are an important aspect of everyone's personal identity (American Psychological Association [APA], 2008). Therefore, a female who have sexual orientation toward other female are known as lesbian, whereas a male who has sexual orientation towards other male is known as gay, and an individual who has sexual orientation toward both female and male is known as bisexual. These three groups of individuals are known as LGB – lesbian, gay and bisexual – community (Department of Health, 2009).

LGBT. LGBT is the abbreviation formed of group lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals into one group in view of their general experience in different degree of heterosexism and transphobia and they usually suffer from sexual and gender freedom (Harper et al., 2004). LGBT represents lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, and includes sexual orientation, gender identity and gender role. It defines sexuality and gender expression that concerning on human right in the social, civil, political, cultural and economic spheres

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(RFSL, 2009). Harper et al. (2004) also claimed that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) are the group of individuals may encounter life experiences and psychosocial stressors consist of their sexual orientation identity and societal response toward their same-sex sexual and/or emotional attraction, and sexual behaviour. While, transgender people are a group of individuals who do not obey to traditional expectations and gender roles, in which the primary issues are consist of gender identity and gender nonconformity.

Internalized Homophobia. It defined as homosexual individuals directed negative societal attitudes toward themselves, which causing a devaluation of the self and subsequent psychological conflict and low self-regard (Dean & Meyer, 1998). Internalized homophobia also being defined as unconscious internalized stigma causing by anxieties about being homosexual, and overt against those anxiety as similar to internalized stigma (Quartly, 2011). While, Herek and Gillis (2009) define it as the prejudice that directed by homosexual individual, which is according to the person's acceptance of and compatibility with societal negative judgment of homosexuality. Alternatively, Herek and Gillis (2009) developed five-item Revised Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHP-R) that focus on homosexual individual's attitudes toward their sexual orientation. The revised version of this scale is better matched in administrating gay, lesbian and bisexual as compared to the original IHP scale.

Coming Out from Closet (coming out). Coming out is a shorten term for coming out from closet. According to Lee (2014), coming out defines as a process of an individual becoming aware, understanding and compliant to one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity and sharing such information with others. Besides, it also refers to few characteristics of experiences among LGB individuals, which are self-conscious of their sexual orientation, disclosure of their sexual orientation to other(s), and identification with the LGB community (APA, 2008). Mohr and Fassinger (2000) developed a 10-items Outness Inventory (OI) which modified from the initial 11-items OI as the most easily interpretable. The goal to

develop OI is to estimate the degree to which individuals' sexual orientation was recognized by people indifferent individuals' lives (Mohr and Fassinger, 2000). The three factors that included in OI are Out to Family, Out to World and Out to Religion. The 10 roles of final pool are mother, father, siblings (sisters and brothers), extended family or relatives, new straight friends, work peers, work supervisor(s), members of an individual's religious community, and the leader of an individual's religious community (Gamst, Liang, & Der-Karabetain, 2011).

Ethnicity. The definition of this term does not generally agreed by every researcher. It has been defined as the acceptance of the group customs and practices of an individual's origin culture and their associated sense of belonging (American Psychological Association [APA], 2002). While, Gray (2001) stated it as the ethnic community that people have sense of belonging or recognize with. It is a degree of cultural sense of belonging, as contrasting to ancestry, nationality or race. Therefore, ethnicity is self-perceived and everyone can associate with more than one ethnic group. Moreover, cultural characteristics could serve as part of the dimensions in defining ethnicity in a plural society, for example, costumes, language, cuisine, and even skin colour, body figure, or other physical appearance characteristics (Hirschman, 1987). Ethnic communities in Malaysia are consist of Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban, Kadazan, Orang Asli and many other ethnic and sub-ethnic group (Chin, 2013). For the purpose if this research, ethnicity was identified through an open-ended question regarding the participants' ethnicity in the demographic questionnaire.

Level of Ethnic Identity. According to Phinney and Ong (2007), they defined ethnic identity as knowledge, awareness and understanding of one's in-group belonging to an ethnic group and cultural heritage. It includes self-categorization, commitment and connection, exploration, behavioural involvement, in-group attitudes, ethnic principles and views, significance of group affiliation and even language. An individual able to gain experience in

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accomplishing his or her ethnic identity through a lively process of exploration, learning, and

acceptance. On the other hand, Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen and Romero (1999) developed

a brief 12-items MEIM which modified criteria to be used as a global assessment for ethnic

identity. The two factors, affirmation/belonging and exploration, are the related aspect of

ethnic identity and the factors can be used as the guiding principle of the intensity of

identification.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Gender and Internalized Homophobia

Chan (1989) study reported Asian Americans gay encountered higher discrimination level for their sexual orientation than for their ethnic identity due to gay is less acceptable than lesbianism by society. Results from 75 women and 75 men showed men scored higher internalized homophobia than women significantly. Bisexuals scored higher IHP measure than homosexual significantly (Herek, Cogan, Gilis, & Glunt, 1997). Lesbians may experience less internalized homophobia than gay because men were more negatively in perceiving homosexual persons and homosexual behavior compared to women. Attitudes of men toward homosexual individual especially gay were negative but both women and men perceived lesbians in similar way (Kite & Whitley, 1996). Gay might be expected to internalize more hostility toward their own male homosexuality compared to lesbian women internalize hostility toward their own lesbianism (Herek et al., 1997). Gay's IHP-R scores were significantly higher than for lesbians and for bisexual men than for bisexual women (Herek, Gili, & Jeanine, 2009).

In a convenience sample of 735 Italian lesbian and gay male participants, Lingiardi, Baiocco, and Nardelli (2012) also found that women reported lower level of internal sexual stigma then men, and that men reported higher levels of stigma sensitivity. In Italian context, where men were used to be a do not ask and do not tell attitude allowed gay being more easily targets than lesbian to follow the hetero-normative gender roles. The violation of gender roles is viewed less serious in women compared to men. Men are encouraged to engage more traditional views about gender role than women are, and to be homophobic is part of the traditional gender role belief system (Davies, 2004).

Internalized Homophobia and Coming Out

IHP scores were correlated negatively in outness to friends for both lesbians and gays. Majority of the participants reported that their parents known about their sexual orientation. Internalized homophobia was negatively related with the disclosure of one's sexual orientation or coming out (Herek et al, 1997). Research by Gilmore, Rose and Rubinstein (2014) showed that in 291 lesbian, gay, and bisexual participants who had higher internalized homophobia afraid of coming out to heterosexual friends, especially those who were not support or agree with homosexual and bisexual identities. Therefore, individual with lower internalized homophobia were more likely coming out to friends who were support or agree with LGB sexual identities. However, completely accepting one's self as lesbian, gay, or bisexual may not equal to total coming out. This is because individual would decide not to come out in some situations due to the consideration of positive and negative outcomes from the disclosure. Hence, outness may not be related to internal conflict as it is only a situational and environmental condition. Besides, high internalized homophobia level sometimes influence individual to be less likely to feel connected with the LBG community especially when individual in areas that has low number of LGB individuals (Frost & Meyer, 2009). Moreover, religious identity would also influence the internalized homophobia level, and outness level (Lytle, 2012).

Furthermore, the findings from (Gilmore et al, 2014) found that internalized homophobia predicted the level of coming out to colleagues, friends, and extended family, but not to nuclear family. At work, there was a strong relationship between internalized homophobia and coming out level. Many LGB individual do not come out in work because there was a lack of legal protection or personal experiences with homophobia organizational surrounding and fear of rejection or negative consequences. They were less likely to come

out to friends or co-workers when they were highly uncomfortable with their homosexual identity. LGB remain closeted to family member in because of the high anxiety linked to the expected rejection by the nuclear family. Therefore, internalized homophobia did not predict coming out to nuclear family.

However, internalized homophobia and outness were not associated in a survey administered to women who identify as lesbian or bisexual. Overall participants showed moderate level of outness, and the degree of outness is not correlated with internal feelings regarding their lesbianism. Perhaps, the increase level of outness may explained by the acceptance of homosexuality continues to grow in society, resulted in the reduced of fear and more open about their sexual orientation but it may not necessarily reduce the negative feelings about lesbianism and it may continue to affect a lesbian's life even after she has successfully come out. This is because lesbians who are having higher outness levels still grappling with the internalization of negative perception from the society toward their lesbianism. Due to their concern on career and fear of harassment, lesbians may stay closeted at work, or choose to come out to only a few, trusted co-workers (Hines, 2014).

Ethnicity and Internalized Homophobia

Chan (1989) studied the identity development of 35 gay and lesbian Asian Americans to study the association of gay or lesbian and ethnic identities conflict. Most of the respondents identified themselves as lesbian or gay rather than Asian America. When a choice of identification is required, others rejected make a choice due to it would mean denying a vital part of their identity. The level of comfort to be identified as "Asians among lesbian and gay" or "lesbian and gay around Asians" or both is actually depending on the stage of identity he or she is in. The development of identity is a flexible process, he or she may decide to identify as lesbian-gay or Asian American according to the needs and

situational factors. This is because disclosure of homosexual identity may be more prohibited in Asian American cultural norms rather in American community.

Research done by Lytle (2012) with 177 total sample size showed that there was a significant effect of ethnic identity on their internalized homophobia level and they were inversely related. Black, Latino/a, Asian, and Native American Combined Group have greater effect compared to White participants after the level of ethnic identity accounted for. Gay and lesbian individuals would in the situation of negotiating multiple identities like religious and ethnic identity with their sexual orientation. This process may be influenced by the priority of individuals' identities. Individuals may experience lower of internalized homophobia after negotiated their ethnic identity and sexual orientation. But, the issues of ethnic identity may not be most noticeable because of a predominantly White sample in this study.

Jerome (2013) analyzing the complex processes of ethnic identification among queer Malay Muslim who are mentioned in Dina Zaman's book *I am Muslim.* Hajah, whom Dina interviewed for her article, mentions that if she embraced her sexuality fully, she would never be able to secure a place in heaven while Haji Zainal adopts a specific strategy in constructing his own notion of being Malay. He perceives his homosexuality as God's perfect gift. However, both of them reveal that queer Malays often experience in formulating their self-identity with conflicts and stresses. *Tudung* (head scarves) lesbian would not able to identify themselves as queer Malay as they cannot resolve conflict between their identification with homosexuality and their religion due to their strong *iman* (faith)and sexuality whereas Haji Zainal is about to indicate himself as a gay Malay Muslim embracing both queerness and religion. This unresolved conflict and those anxiety, fear and confusion result from being different, have caused *tudung* lesbian and Hajah not to indicate themselves as lesbian. This was true when they define themselves more in their relationship with significant other like family, friends, and God. On the other hand, when Haji Zainal views his

identification with religion and homosexuality to be in harmony with each other, he could

sustain a gay Malay identity. However, queer Malay men and women are not just Muslim

who practices Malay customs and traditions. They also organize their lives and identities

around homosexuality, desires and practices. So, Malay ethnicity cannot be formed simply

based on cultural, gender, sexual norm and religious.

Ethnicity and Coming Out

In the survey of 19 Asian-American lesbians and 16 Asian American gay men, most

of them were Chinese, Korean, or Japanese and a little number were Filipino, Bangladesh,

and Indian. Chan (1989) found out that most respondents have disclosure their homosexual

identity to someone in their family. Although most of them have come out to a family

member (77%), but, just a few have come out to their parents (26%). There is a low

percentage of respondent who have come out to their parent. At the same time, nearly all of

the respondents were "out" to most of their friends. Asian-American lesbian and gay seems to

be reluctance to come out to their parents and families which draw researchers' attention to

specific cultural values or ethnic identity in forming their roles traditionally. Respondents

tend to denial the existence of Asian-American gay and lesbian because ethnic minority

perceived homosexual identity as "White, Western phenomenon". Due to the overwhelming

fear of rejection and stigmatization, Asian-American lesbians and gay men have not come out

to their parents. This is because family and community relationships were so important in

their cultures. They also remain closet in their community as homosexuality is a taboo in

Asian cultures. However, Lytle (2012) found out ethnic identity level did not influence the

participant's coming out. Results of Out to Family was significant, but Out to World and Out

to Religion were not significant. Beside, women were more likely receive prejudice because

of their ethnicity whereas men were more easily get bias when mention about their sexual

orientation. White participants were significantly more out to families compared to the Black, Latino/a, Asian and Native American Combined Group. However, there was a lack of heterogeneity in the sample.

The social representations of homosexuality stopped several of British Muslim gays from serious considerations of self-disclosure to ethno-religious community as dominant Muslim community had their own social representation of homosexuality. Moreover, participants perceived 'coming out' as a negative consequences for identity because it may put their ethno-religious identity at risk, an important element of their identity which known as 'izzat' (honor). For example, Usman sister's romantic relationship with as ethno-religious out-group member was putting her honor at risk, similar to the impact of homosexual identity could be. At the same time, 'coming out' is considered accepting non-Muslim norms and values, and a concrete fact that they are assimilating to the White British culture (Jaspal & Siraj, 2011).

In a comparative qualitative study (Jaspal, 2012), British Indian participants tend to see their ethnic and sexual identities as potentially incompatible at a social level. The awareness of negative representations within their ethnic communities makes the construal of gay identities become socially problematic element of identity and that 'coming out' could jeopardize a sense of belonging within them. Furthermore, gay identity can expose British South Asian gay men to a risk of 'otherisation' from relevant in-groups. For example, Jas' mentions that his sexuality (being gay), and ethnicity (being Indian) no longer cause conflict at intrapsychic level but it is 'the family and Indian culture' that threaten his identity as a gay man. Besides, Sunil is fear of social rejection because he perceives the possibility that his father may question their relationship: 'he can't be my son'.

In another research which focused on lesbians, the majority of the respondents were out to all of their supervisors at work (66%), currents heterosexual friends (56%), and health

care providers (11%). They were mostly likely to coming out to a family member, especially

to their sisters (91%). In term of coming out to nonfamily members, color lesbians were

significantly less compared to White lesbians. And, both White and color lesbians have no

different in coming out to family members. All of them go through the similar process of

sexual identity development. But lesbians of color received less support from family or

friends to engage in this homosexual developmental process (Parks, Hugles, & Mathews,

2004).

Theoretical Framework

Cass' (1984) Homosexual Identity Model explains how one develops a sexual identity

by emphasizing the idea of homosexual identity and its relationship with the person's

interpersonal environment (Kimberly, 2011). Identity foreclosure depends on individual

either chooses to develop or not to develop any further (Cass, 1979). This model is linear and

involved progression through six stages. Cass's model bases on the notion that "coming out"

is important to positive sexual and emotional development (Kimberly, 2011).

Stage 1: Identity Confusion is characterized by a conscious awareness that

homosexuality is related to themselves in term of behavior like kissing, or thinking,

emotional, and physiological reaction as the starting point of the identity formation process.

Stage 2: Identity Comparison occurred when an individual is encountered with feelings of

isolation when having accepted the potentiality of a homosexual identity, and they have a

clearer differentiation between homosexual self and heterosexual others. Stage 3: Identity

Tolerance. Individual moves towards the self-image of "homosexual" from "heterosexual".

At this point, disclosure of one's homosexual identity to the heterosexuals others is truly

limited. Individual tends to have two separate images: a heterosexual image for public and a

homosexual image for private exhibited only when in the company of homosexuals (Cass, 1979; Cass, 1984).

Stage 4: Identity Acceptance. By furthering and increasing contacts with homosexuals, selective disclosure is made to others, especially friends and relatives. Stage 5: Identity Pride. At this stage, individual feels pride towards his or her homosexual identity and able to stay loyal in homosexual group, who considered important whereas heterosexual have become devalued. They tend to disclosure and intentionally confront non-homosexuals to show or prove the validity and equality of homosexuals as they are anger about the stigma of homosexuals labeled by the society. Stage 6: Identity Synthesis. One has own lifestyle which the homosexual identity is no longer a secret and coming out is no longer an issue. Individual's personal and public sexual identities are integrated into one self-image while receiving substantial support from interpersonal relationships and environment (Cass, 1979; Cass, 1984).

The Layer Cake Model of bisexual identity development (2005) begins with layer one: development of heterosexual identity, due to our culture is inherently hetero-normative, layer two: experience of homosexual thought, feelings and behaviors, this layer may be a great time of uncertainty, fear or repression especially for those who were raised with culturally conservative backgrounds, follow by layer three: acceptance of homosexual attraction while maintaining heterosexual identity. In layer three, individuals are socialized into a heterosexual world and still have an attraction to opposite sex; it is not only uncomfortable but also unnecessary to openly recognize their sexual identification. Many individuals are raised in environment that coming out is not allowed and others do not believe in the identity of bisexuality. They do experience heterosexual attraction sometimes due to heterosexuality is the norm in our society, and they may not feel the pressure to come out compared to the coming out processes of gay or lesbian individuals. Even though they maintained a public

heterosexual identity, many of them in this layer feel that both the homosexual and heterosexual may not accept their sexual identity (Bleiberg, Fertmann, Friedman, & Godino, 2005).

Layer four: Integration and assimilation of heterosexual and homosexual identities. Individuals being attracted to both sexes but do not see themselves as gay or straight in this layer of development. They tend to see their sexuality as a continuum, ranging from one to ten, one being queer and ten being straight. They feel anger and frustration due to the constant labeling by other who are uniformed about bisexuality especially when they are being labeled as confused. At this moment, they explore and figure out definitions of bisexual, lesbian or gay, for what these terms actually mean for others and themselves. They seek out people they view as similar to them to help clarify their new identity. Hence, the process of coming out start, usually begin with close friends or family members. The reaction of these people might either encourage them to continue coming or pushing them back into the closet (Bleiberg et al, 2005).

Layer five: Identification as bisexual. In this final layer, Individuals are comfortable with their bisexual identities. They finally get an own definition of bisexuality that could clearly represents their sexual identity and bisexual means different things to different people. They find themselves attracted to people on a case by case basis regardless of their gender. However, individual will continue to experience the feelings, lessons and realization they have had in previous layers even their bisexual identity formation have come to the last layer (Bleiberg et al, 2005).

Three-Stage model of Ethnic Identity developed by Phinney describing an ethnic identity process that applicable to all ethnic group. Unexamined ethnic identity is the first stage characterized by lack of contact with ethnic concerns due to low level of awareness,

interest, while high level of ethnic identity comes from strong community. The second stage is ethnic identity search, through education and participant individuals constantly explore their ethnic identities. Lastly, the final stage, when individuals secure with their own identity or settling conflict between ethnic minorities and dominant group, and differs based on their ethnic experiences, they achieved ethnic identity. The process may not stop at the last stage because ethnic identity requires ongoing examination (Lytle, 2012).

Ecological Model of human development outlined bidirectional influences between context and individual development in Figure 1.0. A microsystem is the smallest ecological context. It consist face to face activities in setting involved physical, social and symbolic features which includes the interaction with the surrounding environment and relationships like family, school, friends and workplace (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The individual characteristics like degree of "outness", his or her family support and internalized homophobia has an effect on interpersonal relationship among LGB individuals (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Roth, 2015). LG microsystem involves self-identifying variables and their correlates, self-acceptance and self-confidence in a chosen identity (Roth, 2015). The mesosystem consists of the interaction of multiple microsystems, for example, how the relationship between an individual and her family interact with the relationship between an individual and her romantic partner (Kimberly, 2011). The exosystem comprises contextual characteristics that influence close to the developing person indirectly, such as parent's work, church community, school system, and local politics. Acceptation of LGB individual "Outness" to workplace influenced by level of local community's homophobia and general bias or hostility. The level of acceptance could be seen through the pay gaps and workplace discrimination. The macrosystem is the culture, beliefs, societal norms, traditions, and laws in the community which already well followed and obey by the community from few generations ago until today. LGB lifestyle had been stigmatized by denying their identity when there are no laws protecting their sexual

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orientation. They were keeping silent about their lifestyles for fear of punishment from their

community, family and legislature. For example, homophobia in the workplace is a major

concern for LG individuals (Roth, 2015).

Figure 2.1

Ecological Model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).
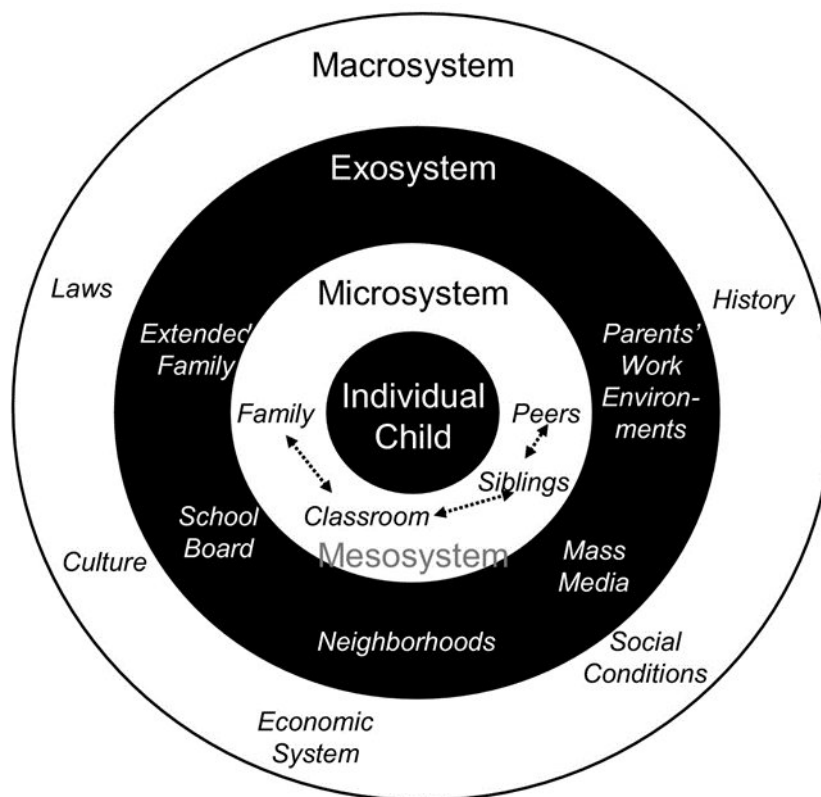
Conceptual Framework

Previous studies suggested internalized homophobia may indeed be an underlying

influence towards coming out. The results of some research showed less outness was due to

higher level of internalized homophobia. Minority stress model emphasized that that sexual

minority groups experience chronic stress arising from stigmatization and one of components

that causes minority stress is internalized homophobia (The National Academies, 2011). LGB often experiences a series stages of coming out and forming sexual minority identity with long-term relationships, they often encountered conflict, uneasy in this process. (Gilmore, Rose, & Rubinstein, 2014) Internalized homophobia requires adjusting of individual's self-concept to be matched with the stigmatization of society which integrated with the process of coming out result from the development of sexual identity. However, the increase of outness may not reduce the negative feelings about lesbianism due to society negative perception toward their sexual orientation (Hines, 2014).

Gender plays a role in LGB internalized homophobia level as male and female received different sexual stigma from the society. From that, this has risen the interest of researchers to determine the gender differences in the internalized homophobia. Research found men showed a higher level of internalized homophobia due to the expectation of fulfilling the gender role. Gays and lesbian are not immune to society' of gender and gender roles, and they perceived about the expectation to marry and reproduce (Yang, 2008).

At the same time, this study will be investigating the association of ethnic identity of LGB individual with both internalized homophobia and coming out. In collectivist culture, ethnic identity could be more to our self-identification compared to individualist culture. Therefore, ethnic identity may cause individual experiences a stressful event like coming out process. Their collectivistic values may oppress individual tendencies because of being loyal to family or community and group needs are important to be identified as a group member (Lytle, 2012). For example, participants of Asian Americans had a significant effect on their internalized homophobia level which was inversely related and they were significantly coming out to family.

Therefore, the hypothesized model is outlined in Figure 2. Basically, this model hypothesized that there is a significant correlation between LGB's ethnic identity and internalized homophobia (Path a). This model also hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between LGB individual's ethnic identity and coming out to family, world and religion (Path b). Consistent with previous research, this model hypothesized there is gender differences in having internalized homophobia (Path c). Lastly, this model also hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between internalized homophobia and coming out to family, world and religion (Path d).

Figure 2.2

The theoretical framework shows the variables that we are going to investigate, to know whether there is a correlation between gender and internalized homophobia, internalized homosexual and with coming to family, world and religion. Besides, more specifically, this study will examine whether ethnic identity correlate with internalized or coming out to family, world and religion.
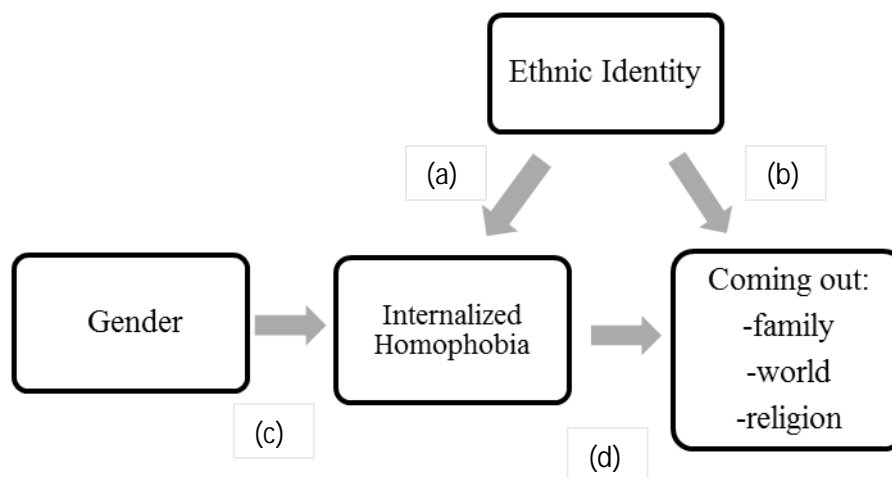
Chapter III

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive research was done by researcher whereby it allows researcher to apply types of research question, design, and describe the data analysis to a particular topic (Knupfer, McLellan, n.d.). It also allows researchers to have their research objective that may portray the characteristics of situations, society, or persons. Then, the data collection was done in quantitative research method where a clear picture of the phenomenon under study can be evaluated statistically, and the results are presented using statistics, tables and graphs. The research was conducted by using survey design where it allows researchers to study a sample of a population through a quantitative description of trends, attitude, or view of the population. Then, researchers able to generalize inferences from the sample finding with lower cost and shorter time (Creswell, 2014).

Non-probability sampling method was used in this research, where subjects were chose based on particular non-random criteria. Hence, there are some population may have no chance of selection (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Snowball sampling was further illustrated in this research. Bhattacherjee (2012) also mentioned that it allows researcher to begin with identifying a few participants that meet particular criteria for inclusion in the research. Then, request them to recommend other individuals that meet the same selection criteria as participant. In this research, the researchers only choose LGB individuals as participants based on the availability and willingness to respond to the questionnaire provided.

Participants

The data presented consists of 196 participants consist of Malaysian lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals participated in this study. Out of the 196 participants chosen, 94 of them

were males and 102 were females. The participants ranged in age between 18 and 52, with a

mean of 23.70. The largest group of participants was age ranged between 21 and 35 (N=128).

Generally, they were 99 Malay, 71 Chinese, 7 Indian, and 19 from other races include

Bumiputera, Sarawakian or mixed. As for sexual orientation, there are 75 gay, 57 lesbian, and

64 bisexual individuals. While, as for religion, there were 103 in Islam, followed by 36 in

Buddhism, 4 in Hinduism, 19 in Christianity, 1 in Sikhism, 33 individuals identified

themselves as free thinker, atheist and agnostic. All participants chosen for the research

successfully completed the questionnaire.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were 3 sets of questionnaires consist of Revised

Internalized Homophobia (IHP-R) scale, Outness Inventory, Revised Multigroup Ethnic

Identity Measure (MEIM-R), and demographic information.

Revised Internalized Homophobia (IHP-R) scale. The original nine-item IHP scale

was developed for administration to gay men by Martin and Dean in 1988. A five-item

revised version of IHP was then developed after a series of factor- and item, which is more

appropriate to administration to bisexuals and lesbians as well. The internal reliability for

original nine-item IHP scale was α= .85, while five-item IHP-R was α= .82. The IHP-R scale

was administrated with a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5

(*strongly agree*). The total scores were calculated by adding up all responses and dividing by

the total number of items. Individuals with higher score tend to have more negative self-

attitudes (Herek, Gillis, & Jeanine, 2009).

Outness Inventory (OI). A 10-item OI was designed to assess the degree to which

lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals' sexual orientation were known by and openly

discussed with others, in which consisted of father, mother, siblings, extended family or

relatives, old heterosexual friends, strangers, work peers, work supervisors, member of an individual's religious community, and leaders of an individual's religious community. The OI are rated on 7-point rating scale from 1 (*person definitely does not know about your sexual orientation status*) to 7 (*person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is openly talked about*) with an option of 0 (*not applicable to your situation; there is no such person or group of people in your life*) (Mohr and Fassinger, 2000). The total scores can be acquired by adding up and dividing the scores on the items of the subscales. Respondent with higher scores show greater levels of outness to the relevant individuals in their life. (Gamst, Liang, & Der-Karabetian (2011). Mohr and Fassinger (2000) mentioned that OI is consists of three subscale and the internal reliability of each subscales are as following: (1) Out to Family (α= .74), (2) Out to World (α= .79), and (3) Out to Religion (α= .97).

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised (MEIM-R). A revised 12-item MEIM was developed to measure ethnic identity across various ethnic among adolescents and young adults or respondents from age 12 and above, including adults (Phineey, 1992). It is consists of two subscales, which are affirmation/ belonging (items 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12) and exploration subscale (items 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10), while item 3 load on both subscales. The scale were rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1(*strongly disagree*), to 4 (*strongly agree*) (Roberts et al., 1999). Roberts et al. (1999) mentioned that MEIM-R has presented good reliability among various ethnic group and ages with alpha higher than .80 for the overall scale. It was also proved that MEIM-R has high interfactor correlations and it could be used as a global assessment of ethnic identity. The scoring system can be calculated either through subscale scores or total MEIM-R score. The subscale scores are acquired from the mean ratings of them items in each subscale, while, the total scores are acquired through the average rating of the twelve items.

Demographic information. This section included Question 1 through 5. In this section, participants were required to fill up the demographic information regarding their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, and religion.

Other than that, two open-ended questions were added with OI is to allow researchers to examine the reason of participants choose to coming out or not to coming out to others. The first question is "Do you choose to coming out, or not to coming out?", and followed by "Could you please elaborate what makes you choose to do so? ". These are not voluntary questions, participants may choose not to answer it.

Procedure

A set of questionnaire with inform consent form was prepared by researchers through Survey Monkey, an internet based research tool that allows researchers to create survey at no cost. Research supervisor have checked on it before giving approval for distribution to participants. The purpose of an inform consent form is to acknowledge participants regarding the purpose of the research and to inform the participants regarding confidentiality of the collection of data. The questionnaires were started to distribute to LGB individuals through snowball sampling method in social network, after receiving the permission from research supervisor. A personal message containing the link of the survey, which were created on Google Form was sent to participants as invitation to participate in this research. The researchers explained the purposes of the study and clarified the confidentiality and privacy issues when participant is available and willing to answer the questionnaire. This made sure that participants did not feel unjustified pressure in participating. To ensure the confidentiality, only both researchers able to hold the password that able to access into Survey Monkey. No one else able to access to the responses from participants.

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Approximately 10 minutes is needed to complete the demographic information and three

instruments.

Figure 3.1

Flow chart of procedure throughout the study

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Prepare the questionnaire with  │
│            inform consent        │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Get approval from research      │
│           supervisor             │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   Distributed the questionnaires │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Acknowledged participants the   │
│        nature of research        │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│         Data collection          │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Tabulated the data collection   │
│         into table form          │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   Analyzed the data collection   │
│          using SPSS 20           │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Presented the finding and result│
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```
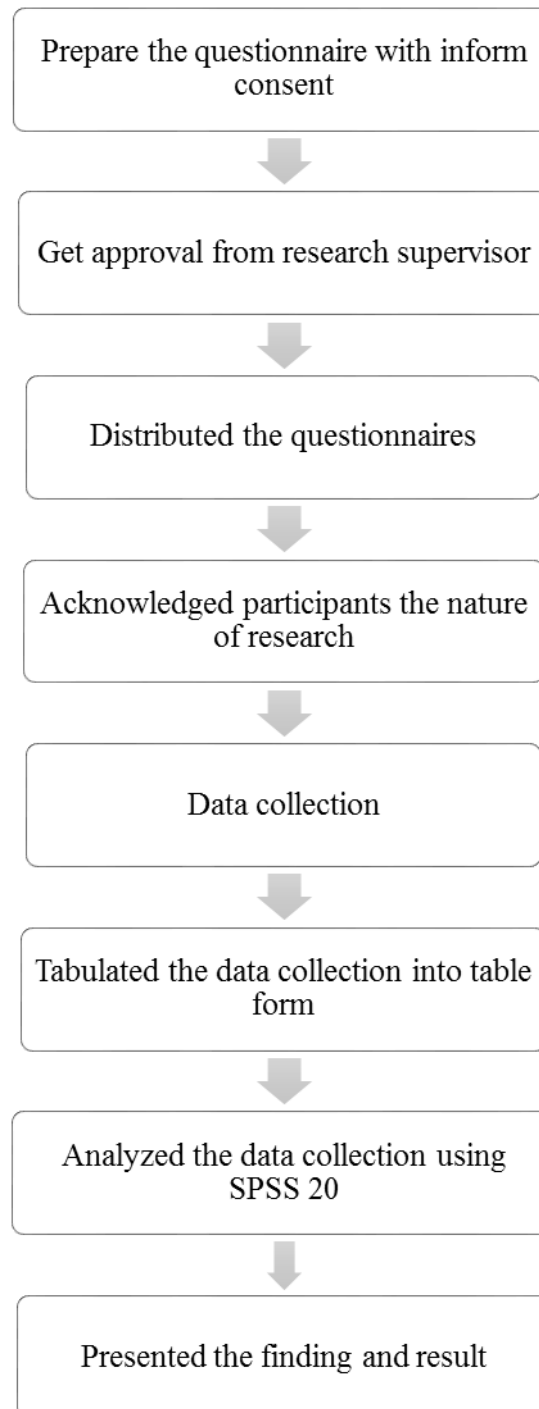
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Data Analysis

The data collection was further evaluated using Statistical Package of Social Science Version 20 (SPSS) after finalization of the collection. For descriptive statistics, the summary of IHP-R, OI and MEIM scales will be presented in mean and standard deviation. For inferential statistics, the statistics of the finding will be analyzed by using Pearson correlation and T-test. Precisely, Pearson correlation will be used to analyze the correlation between internalized homophobia and coming out, ethnic identity and internalized homophobia, and ethnic identity and coming out. While, T-test will be used in analyzing gender difference in internalized homophobia. The data then further tabulated in a table form.

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Chapter IV

Finding and Analysis

Results

In this chapter, researchers will look into the results and finding of the study according to the response of the participants. The total number of the participants is 196 (N=196), which consists of 102 female and 94 male participants. It will be further analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Descriptive Statistic

Table 4.1

Age Group of Participants

Age Range (years old)	Number of Participants
18 – 20	59
21 – 35	128
36 – 50	8
51 – 69	1

By referring to Table 4.1, most of the participants are belong to 21 to 35 years old group which consists of 128 participants. Age 18 to 20 have 59 participants followed by 8 participants and 1 participant from age 36 to 50 and age 51 to 69 respectively. The mean of the participants' age is 23.7.

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Table 4.2

Ethnic Group of Participants

Ethnic	Number of Participants
Malay	99
Chinese	71
Indian	7
Others	19

       Table 4.2 shows that the majority participants are Malay which consists of 99 persons, followed by 71 Chinese and 7 Indian. There are also 19 persons of participants who are *bumiputera* and mixed.

Table 4.3

Sexual Orientation of Participants

Sexual Orientations	Number of Participants
Gay	75
Bisexual	64
Lesbian	57

       According to Table 4.4, the largest number of participants is gay which consists of 75 persons, followed by 64 persons of bisexual and lastly 57 persons of lesbian.

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Table 4.4

Religion Group of Participants

Religion	Number of Participants
Islam	103
Buddhist	36
Christian	19
Hindu	4
Others	34

Based on Table 4.4, majority of the participants are Muslim, 103 persons stated their religion as Islam. Secondly, 36 persons are Buddhism followed by 19 persons who are Christian and 4 Hindu. Other than Islam, Buddhist and Christian, there are 34 persons who stated as free thinker, atheist, and agnostic.

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Table 4.5

Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum and Maximum

Measure	Min	Max	M	SD
IHP	5	25	12.78	5.52
OI	6	77	24.18	13.55
Family	3	30	9.81	5.82
World	0	31	11.07	7.08
Religion	0	16	3.25	4.00
MEIM	12	48	32.39	7.99

According to the Table 4.5, the minimum and maximum score for IHP is 5 and 25 respectively among 196 participants ($M = 12.78$, $SD = 5.52$). OI obtained 6 for the minimum score and 77 for maximum score among the total participants ($M = 24.18$, $SD = 13.55$). The subscales of OI included Family, World, and Religion. For Family ($M = 9.81$, $SD = 5.82$), the minimum score for is 3, whereas the maximum score is 30. For World ($M = 11.07$, $SD = 7.08$), the minimum score is 0, while the maximum score is 31. For Religion ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 4.00$), the minimum and maximum score are 0 and 16 respectively. Lastly, the minimum score is 12 and the maximum score is 48 for MEIM ($M = 32.29$, $SD = 7.99$).

Inferential Statistic

5. Research Hypothesis (H_1): Males have higher internalized homophobia than females among LGB individuals.

Table 4.6

Summary of Independent Samples Test on the Gender and IHP-R

	Male		Female			
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*	*sig*
Internalized Homophobia	14.13	5.62	11.53	5.15	-3.38	0.001

Independent Samples Test showed that there was a significant gender difference in internalized homophobia, $t(194) = -3.38$, $p = 0.00$, with male ($M = 14.13$, $SD = 5.62$) scored higher than female ($M = 11.53$, $SD = 5.15$). Male tend to have higher level of internalized homophobia compared to female. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

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2.   (a) Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between level of

internalized homophobia and level of coming out toward family.

(b) Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between internalized

homophobia and level of coming out toward world.

(c) Research Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between level of

internalized homophobia and coming out toward religion.

Table 4.7

Summary of Pearson Bivariate Correlation on the IHP-R and OI

	Internalized Homophobia
Coming Out	-0.32**
Family	-0.37**
World	-0.28**
Religion	-0.05

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results of *Pearson correlation* analysis showed that there were significant

negative correlations between internalized homophobia and coming out $r(194) = -0.32, p <$

0.01, internalized homophobia and coming out to Family $r(194) = -0.37, p < 0.01,$

internalized homophobia and coming out to World $r(194) = -0.28, p < 0.01$. This shows that

the higher level of internalized homophobia, the lower level of coming out, specifically to

Family and World. However, there was no significant correlation between internalized

homophobia and coming out to Religion $r(194) = -0.05, p > 0.01$. Hence, only 2a and 2b

hypothesis were supported.

3. Research Hypothesis (H$_1$): There is a significant correlation between LGB

    individual's level of ethnic identity and level of internalized homophobia.

Table 4.8

Summary of Pearson Bivariate Correlation on the MEIM-R and IHP-R

	Ethnic Identity
Internalized Homophobia	0.03

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

 Pearson Correlation showed that there was no significant correlation between level of ethnicity and internalized homophobia $r(194) = 0.03$, $p > 0.01$. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

4. (a) Research Hypothesis (H$_1$): There is a significant correlation between LGB

    individual's level of ethnic identity and coming out toward family.

    (d) Research Hypothesis (H$_1$):There is a significant correlation between LGB

     individual's level of ethnic identity and coming out toward world

    (e) Research Hypothesis (H$_1$):There is a significant correlation between LGB

     individual's level of ethnic identity and coming out toward religion.

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Table 4.9

Summary of Pearson Bivariate Correlation on the MEIM-R and OI

	Ethnic Identity
Coming Out	0.04
Family	-0.01
World	0.07
Religion	0.03

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There were no significant correlations between ethnic identity and coming out $r(194)$ = 0.04, $p > 0.01$, ethnic identity and coming out to Family $r(194)$ = -0.01, $p > 0.01$, ethnic identity and coming out to World $r(194)$ = 0.07, $p > 0.01$, ethnic identity and coming out to Religion $r(194)$ = 0.03, $p > 0.01$. So, hypothesis 4a, 4b, and 4c were not supported.

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Chapter V

Discussion

The primary purposes of this research is to assess the relationship between LGB individual's level of ethnic identity and coming and the relationship between LGB individuals' level of ethnic identity and internalized homophobia. It were predicted that there are significant correlation between level of ethnic identity and coming as well as level of ethnic identity and internalized homophobia. The findings are also discussed in terms of the gender differences in experiencing internalized homophobia and the relationship between internalized homophobia and coming out.

Gender and Internalized Homophobia

With the regard of gender difference, as expected, male participants have been significantly experienced higher level of internalized homophobia than female which consistent with previous studies. In questionnaire IHP-R, regardless of whether they were gay or bisexual, male participants were more likely than female to respond "disagree" and "strong disagree" in question "I wish I weren't lesbian/bisexual [gay/bisexual].The difference was statistically significant for LGB individuals (42.56% of male participants respond they wish they weren't a gay or bisexual, compared to 35.30% of female). This could be supported with male may experience more internalized homophobia than female due to male were more negatively in perceiving homosexual persons and homosexual behavior compared to women as mentioned earlier. Attitudes of heterosexual male toward homosexual individual especially gay were negative but both women and men perceived lesbians in similar way (Kite & Whitley, 1996).

Herek (1998) has mentioned that men and women are socialized in a different way, specifically with respect to intimacy and sexuality, thus it is practical to assume that both sexes may experience different degree of internalized homophobia on intimacy and sexuality. Therefore, it can be assumed that gay and bisexual men who have high level of internalized homophobia have difficulties to react social attitude and values regarding homosexuality, and may have greater difficulties in developing same-sex intimate relationship (Herek, 1998). Moreover, men are more expected to follow the gender role and their violation toward gender role is perceived as more serious compared to women (Davies, 2004). This is because traditional gender roles strengthen or maintain the privilege and power held by men in comparison with women. Hence, more traditional gender roles attitudes developed by men than do women (Kerns, & Fine, 1994).

Internalized Homophobia and Coming Out

As shown in Table 4.7, it shows that there is a significant negatively correlation between LGB individuals' IHP result and coming out to Family and World. While, there is no correlation between IHP result and coming out to Religion. Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported. Consistent with previous finding, the higher the level of internalized homophobia, the less likely an LGB individual will come out to family, friends and work colleagues. The overall scores of OI were consider low in the three aspects of coming out. Out of the 3 subscales, most participants scored the highest in Coming Out to World. According to the open-ended question, Research shows that LGB individuals would less likely to reveal their sexual orientation in their life if they perceive less autonomy support from others (Legate et al, 2012).

Families have been viewed as support systems during individuals go through hard times. Nevertheless, families seem could be the stress in this circumstances. Most LGB individuals may still settling conflict of their internalized homophobia and even sexual orientation. Hence, coming out to families likely to be a confession of one's inadequacies, and LGB individuals may not be able to bear the shamefulness (Igartua, Gill, & Montoro, 2003). According Colgan, Creegan, McKearney and Wright (2006), the underlying factors LGB individuals reluctant to come out are fears about career promotion, temporary status of employment, organisational culture and previous bad experiences. The participants in that study will have a range of ways in hiding their sexual orientation, such as pretending to have heterosexual partner, conforming to people's expectation and modifying their behaviour in workplace.

The association between internalized homophobia and coming out can be examined by using Cass' Homosexual Identity Model, whereby it provided a view that coming out is related to an individual's positive sexual and emotional development (Kimberly, 2011). Using this model, the identity foreclosure on LGB individuals might fall on stage 3 and 4, which are Identity Tolerance and Identity Acceptance (Cass, 1979; Cass, 1984). The low level of coming out of LGB individuals show that their self-image may have moved from "heterosexual" to "homosexual", but the level of disclosing of their sexual orientation to others is somehow very low. The image of homosexual may only show to homosexual friends only. Out of the 3 subscales, most participants scored the highest in Coming Out to World. While, in stage 4, Identity Acceptance, it has supported that some participants may have more contact with homosexual community and may disclose their sexual orientation to friends that have open-minded on LGB identity. Therefore, when an individual has bad emotional development (internalized homophobia), this may affect the level of coming out of this individual.

Moreover, most of the participants scored very low in Coming out to Religion (M = 3.25, SD = 4.00). Given that there are 17.35% of LGB individuals (N = 34) with no religion in this research sample, have significantly scored lower or zero level of internalized homophobia than those who with religious affiliation. Indeed, coming out has proven itself to be an effective tool in advocating LGBT right and gaining support from heterosexual others (Lee, 2014). However, it seems like doesn't applicable to coming out to religion. This could be explained with a survey of LGBT Americans where it discovered that LGBT individuals are less religious as compare to general public. While, those who with religious affiliation, some are having self-conflict between their sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Highly religious Americans are still discouraging the acceptance of homosexuality in the society (Pew Research Center, 2013). It could discourage the participants to coming out to religion.

Ethnicity and Internalized Homophobia

Inconsistent with previous researches, the result of hypothesis 3 shows that there is no significant correlation between level of ethnicity and internalized homophobia among LGB individuals. Hence, hypothesis 3 is unsupported. The result shows the average score of MEIM among the total participants is considered moderate (M = 32.29, SD =7.99).

The culture of an identity can be explained as a mutual set of normative beliefs, comprising standards and principles that are believed by individuals with a certain identity. Incompatible normative expectation may occur when the cultures of two identities are vary and may cause identity interference due to the identity switching from one identity to another is difficult for certain individuals. The identity switch between two different cultures may experience more interference and involve a larger use of emotional, psychological, or cognitive resources (Settle, 2004). However, participants of this study seem like do not

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experience such interference between ethnic identity and sexual orientation identity. Based on Three-stage model of Ethnic Identity (Lytle, 2012). It can be assumed that most participants are still in stage two, which is ethnic identity search. LGB individuals may be still constantly searching their ethnic identities, and maybe they had not have the security with their own identity yet.

On the other hand, perhaps, LGB individual would not in the situation of negotiating ethnic identity with their sexual orientation. The issue of ethnic identity seems like does not noticeable even though majority of the ethnic is made up of Malay sample in this study. The process may be influenced by age identity of participants. According to Howard (2000), age is part of the social bases of identity of an individual. Majority of the participants of this research are aged between 21 and 35 (N= 128), which known as Millennial, where they commonly defined as individuals born after 1980s until 2000s. A research was done to survey millennia's opinions on marriage of homosexual individual reported that most of the young people are more likely to agree homosexuality should be supported by society as compared to previous generation (63 percent vs 35 percent) (Pew Research Center, 2010).

For the past few decades, various historical events showed a significant social change on public perceptibility and social acceptance of lesbian and gay individuals. Historical events, such as after Stonewall riot in 1969 in 1969, until "Ellen's" 1997 self-disclosure of her lesbian identity on a TV show, provide a circumstance for different generations of lesbians and gay men to accept their identity development and identity management plans (D'Augelli, Grossman, Hershberger, & O'Connell, 2001). Thus, it caused lesbian and gay individuals from different age group get influences on their personal awareness of and attitudes about sexual orientation through experiencing different levels of exposure to these social changes. Lee (2014) also said that participants of ages between 24 and 49 from the study enjoyed higher level of tolerance from the larger society and more existence of

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supportive setting, such as LGBT organization and communities. Hence, LGBT identities are more accepted than in the previous years when the general public has greater understanding on and more educated about LGBT issues.

Ethnicity and Coming Out

Similar to hypothesis 3, there is no significant correlation between level of ethnicity and coming out to Family, World and Religion. Based on the 127 responses of open-ended question, surprisingly, none of the participants were commenting regarding ethnic issue that may encourage or discourage them from coming out. One common theme was identified as the main factor affect LGB individual (N= 45, 35.43%) choose to come out from closet: on own term to themselves or partner. Most participants illustrated that they want to be themselves who they truly wish rather than staying in the closet. Being in the closet may affect the relationship between LGB individuals and their partner. They choose to disclose their sexual orientation to individuals that close to them yet have better understanding and acceptance toward LGBT group of individuals, especially friends. In line with Lee's (2014) study, it showed that ethnic identity did not cause significant effect on LGBT API outness its own. Besides, participants who consider their sexual orientation identity important than other aspects of their identity were out to others. Examples of participants' responses are as below:

> *If I choose to coming out to others, the reason is for me to stop lying to people and to myself, most importantly. I want to introduce my partner without having to worry about whether my sexuality matters.*

> **Malay, Muslim, 25, Lesbian, Female**

> *Being in the closet was damaging to me and people I love. I came out "official" and publicly on Facebook last year during the US National*

Coming Out day. I could do it then because my relationship with my much

closeted girlfriend had ended and I could not stand lying by omission

anymore. I have done nothing wrong, I am being who I truly am. I think it is

important to come out of the closet because it will make your life better. We

must speak out more and make the environment safer. Because being in the

closet is truly, truly damaging to one's soul.

Punjabi, Sikh, 39, Lesbian, Female

Yeah, all my close friends know about it & some new acquaintances who I

know are cool with it. Why, because I don't see it as a big deal, and neither

do they. I don't make announcements, they asked if I'm seeing anyone and I

tell them yes and who. Just like how any other straight person would do.

Malay, Muslim, 23, Bisexual, Female

On the other hand, there are three common themes were recognised on the factors of participants chose not to coming out from closet: societal influence, family value, and religion. Subsequently, there are 25.20% of the participants (N = 32) mentioned that the societal attitude of anti-homosexuality and narrow minded were the main concerns that caused them chose not to coming out from the closet. The participants were afraid of being psychologically harmed or of involving in legal issue. This is compatible with macrosystem in Ecological model of human development as mentioned previously. The "outness" of an LGB individual can be affected by societal norms and culture in a community that has already well obey by the society member (Roth, 2015). Societal influence on LGBT views includes the opinion from politics, government, media, or even assumptions concluded with an unknown origin regarding the issue of being a homosexual individual. For many of the participants, society began to have an impact on shaping every person's world perspectives.

Such impact may affect how people manage their relationships and alter to interpersonal connections who may not share the same views that they personally have (Jones, 2008). Examples participants' responses are as below:

The fact that being LGBT is frowned upon in Malaysia is the main reason why I choose to not to come out, at least not until I am able to be independent (after I finish my studies) and support myself without my parents' help. This is because I fear they would disown me and kick me out of home while I'm still struggling in university (first year of degree), and have nowhere else to go to. My other concern is how the society's mentality regarding LGBT that might be harmful or dangerous to me, as in I fear they would attack me physically for not being 'normal' and try to change my sexuality in a forceful way.

Malay, Muslim, 19, Lesbian, Female

No, because I'm afraid of people judgement against me and how I would be treated later. I had enough of rejection and I couldn't handle it alone. Everything I'd kept onto myself, unless no harm would happen. Only my dearest friends know about me and they are the same orientation.

Malay, Muslim, 24, Gay, Male

I choose not to come out because of the homophobic society.

Malay, Muslim, 20, Lesbian, Female

Approximately 9.45% of the participants (N=12) reported that family value was the main reason why they chose not to disclose their sexual orientation. In line with Chan's (1989) study that Asian-American gay and lesbian did not come out to their family because of afraid of rejection and stigmatization from them. It may due to family relationship was so important

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in their culture. Jones's (2008) study also showed that although family usually act as a source

of strength, however it became obstruction for LGB individuals in their coming out process.

They afraid of losing cares and support from their parents if they discuss their sexual identity

to their parents, especially for those still emotionally and financially dependent on parents.

The examples of participants' responses are below:

> *My answer is totally waiting for my own family do agree let me free and I will*
>
> *choose to coming out.*

Chinese, Buddhist, 25, Lesbian, Female

> *I don't want to break anybody's heart (especially my family), and I am not*
>
> *stable yet financially to come out. Although, my sexuality does not define me,*
>
> *hence there's no need actually to come out in the first place.*

Malay, Muslim, 26, Lesbian, Female

> *No, I'm afraid that it would bring shame to my family and I'm afraid that if I do*
>
> *come out, they would not accept me.*

Bumiputera, Christian, 22, Bisexual, Female

> *No, I need my family more than anything. This feeling will fade away*
>
> *eventually, so for me there is no need to coming out. Each person has their*
>
> *own perspective and opinion.*

Malay, Muslim, 20, Bisexual, Male

Approximately 7.09% of the participants (N= 9) mentioned that religion is the main

factor that prohibited them from coming out, and most of the participants are from Muslim,

followed by Christian. Interestingly, according to the survey, Millennial put low priority in

religion. There is about 26% of the participants in that survey say that religion is not

important to them. While, 28% of the participants say it is very important to them but not one of the most important things (Pew Research Center, 2010). Another survey also mentioned that Millennial are less likely to be religious than other generation and about a quarter of Millennial have no religious preference, and yet they retain largely broad-minded values in their life (Experian Marketing Service, 2014). Perhaps, this is an area that should be further discussed in the future to investigate the behind reason. Examples of participants' responses are as below:

> Not coming out because I'm a Muslim and being a lesbian is totally wrong so i
> don't want to coming out.

Malay, Muslim, 23, Lesbian, Female

> Particularly in my environment in IIUM where people study religious
> knowledge.

Malay, Muslim, 20, Bisexual, Male

> No due to religion issue

Malay, Muslim, 24, Bisexual, Female

Implications of study

Besides examining the relationship between ethnic identity and internalized homophobia, as well as coming out among LGB individuals. This study has provided an insight on factors associated with internalized homophobia and coming out. Prior to this study, there is no strong evidence of the relationship of these variables established in Malaysia. Generally, the issues of sex and sexuality, especially homosexuality are seldom

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discussed or debated among the society. This is due to these issues are considered taboo and freedom of speech on this issue is regarded reserved to the newspaper and media. Previous study regarding LGBT issues are usually emphasized on the context of HIV and AIDS, and LGBT right in Malaysia.

The finding of this study has shown males have higher internalized homophobia than females. The underlying reason is male were more negatively in perceiving homosexual persons and homosexual behavior compared to women. This may due to males will be viewed more serious if they violate their gender roles and they are encouraged to involve more traditional perspectives about gender role too (Davies, 2004). According to minority stress model, internalized homophobia has been conceptualized as a minority stress (Frost & Meyer, 2009). Exposing to high level of stress due to their LGB identity can be attributed to cause mental disorders (Meyer, 2003). Therefore, mental health service should be promoted among LGB individuals to help LBG individuals deal with the social stigma and develop a positive self-concept (Frost & Meyer, 2009). Mental health professionals may benefit LGB clients by taking a resiliency approach that allows their clients express goals of life (Arnett, 2013).

Other than that, the finding also shows that ethnic identity does not significantly correlated with internalized homophobia and coming out among LGB individuals. Participants seem do not experience interference in identity switching between ethnic identity and sexual orientation identity. The underlying reasons that can be assumed are most participant are still not settling conflicts with their ethnic identity yet, which causing them to constantly searching it. In addition, it also could be assumed that the level of internalized homophobia can be influenced by age identity of participants. Surprisingly, the finding has also indicated that most participants chose to come out from closet is on own term to themselves or partner. While, the main reasons of not coming out from closet are societal

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influences, followed by family value and religion factor. Therefore, more concern should focus on the social support that can be provided to LGB individual may help them to reduce internalized homophobia level and learn how to come out to others.

Limitation

Currently, there is no specific number of the population of the sexual minority group like LGB, researchers could not generalize the result the entire population with only 196 participants, which mean researchers could not assume the results of the whole population by just basing on only 196 participants. In addition to that, snowball sampling does not select units for inclusion in the sample based on random selection. Therefore it is no way to determine the possible sampling error and make statistical inferences from the sample to the population (Mugera, 2013).

Internet-based surveys have the potential of sample bias; both response rate bias and selection bias are likely to be present. Just like others kind of surveys, low response rate could be due to non-responding. Besides, there are some differences in important characteristics for those who respond to survey from those who do not respond. For example, the respondents comprised of individuals who could access to internet and those from generation y and generation z are more likely to use Internet. Selection biases occur when sending notices of research project to individual or groups who likely to answer due to their interest in survey topics. This is because, Internet users could not represent the general population, and also members of Internet special interest groups are not surely representative of their specific groups. The present study may overly represent people who are already involved with LGB community and more motivated to participate (Lytle, 2012).

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Furthermore, lack of control over the research environment is another limitation. Without the present of researcher, there is no way to know if respondents have a clear understanding of the instruction and questions, are answering conscientiously or creating multiple submissions and respondents may participate in groups or under distracting conditions. (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2009).

Other than that, in terms of the generalizability of this study, there was the underrepresentation of certain religious and ethnic group. Even though researchers able to reach out to diverse population of LGB individuals, however there is an imbalance ratio of participants from across different ethnics and religion. This is the disadvantage of this study whereby majority of the participants are consist of Malay (50.51%), followed by participants, Chinese (36.22%), Indian (3.57%) and others (9.69%). For religious group, the sample has more representation from Muslim (52.55%), followed by Buddhist (18.37%), Christian (9.69%), Hindu (2.04%) and others (17.35%). However, since the majority of the participants in this study were Malay, the partially unsupported Hypotheses 3 and 4 maybe attributable to the underrepresentation of other ethnic group of LGB individuals. Specifically, future studies need to be done and should make great efforts to include participants from all ethnic group in a balance ratio.

Recommendation

One of the recommendations is more data on LGB populations are needed in order to better understand the sexual minority in term of their health needs. Other than ethnic and racial, more demographic information about LGB across the life course is needed such as education and occupation (National Academies Press, 2011), For example, LGBT educators and students usually encounter worry inside school buildings due to afraid of the

consequence of coming out in the classroom, or the negative emotional effects of remaining closeted (Johnson, 2012). The roles of social structures like families, partnerships, friends, schools, workplaces and community organizations in LGB lives are under-researched. The social structures provide either stress when in homophobia environment LGB are not acceptable or social support when coming out no longer an issue (NAP, 2011).

Furthermore, future researchers may continue to study about the intersection of religious and racial or ethnic identities on internalized homophobia, and coming out in LGB people in Malaysia context. Besides, transgender could be included to see the differences between LGBT. Additional variables are needed as internalized homophobia and coming out may be influenced by other environmental factors like homophobia level of the society or psychological factors such as LGBT identity development stages and so on.

Moreover, the research methodology of this study is another limitation. This study is strictly based on quantitative methodology, and thus, does not examine the exact factors and impact of internalized homophobia and coming out of participants. Further studies should be done on exploring the coming out process of LGB individuals by using qualitative methodology. Conducting qualitative research allows researchers to understand in depth understanding on impacts of internalized homophobia and explore the coming out process of LGB individuals. Exploring the coming out process allows researcher to recognize why they chose to disclose or conceal their sexual orientation and how they navigate through different social setting.

Conclusion

In the conclusion, the current study examined the intersecting identities on internalized homophobia and coming out experienced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. Previous research regarding LGBT issues in Malaysia have focused on HIV infections, LGBT right issue and more, less studies have examined the intersection of ethnic identity and sexual orientation. Therefore, the primary importance of this study emphasized on the relationship of ethnic identity and internalized homophobia, and ethnic identity and coming out to Family, World and Religion.

There are two significant findings should be noted in this study. The result of this study shows that male is significantly scored higher level of internalized homophobia as compare to female participants. Moreover, there is a significantly negative correlation between internalized homophobia and coming out among LGB individuals too. On the other hand, this study also shows that there is no significant correlation between ethnic identity and internalized homophobia, and ethnic identity and coming out.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

The Intersecting Ethnic Identities on LGB with Internalized Homophobia, and Coming Out in Malaysia

We are Year 3 student in the Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Psychology of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The overall purpose of conducting this research is to obtain information regarding the relationship among intersecting ethnic identities on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual individuals with internalized homophobia, coming out in Malaysia and as a requirement of our UAPZ 3013/UAPZ 3023 Final Year Project.

You will complete a questionnaire which consists of 28 questions and will take approximately 10 minutes. The questionnaire consists of 4 sections, as follow:
Section A: Demographic information
Section B: Revised Internalized Homophobia Scale IHP-R.
Section C: Outness Inventory
Section D: Revised (12-Item) Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. No risks are anticipated from taking part in this study. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can skip that question or withdraw from the study altogether. If you decide to quit at any time before you have finished the questionnaire, your answers will not be recorded.

All the information you have provided will remain confidential. These information will be tabulated and used for **academic purposes** where only grouped data will be shared. Individual data will not be disclosed. Hence, your identity will remain anonymous. Your participation is much appreciated.

There are no expected individual benefits to the participants. However, this research may have broader benefits because of its potential to provide understanding that may advance the well-being of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals.

Thank you.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Section A: Demographic Information

1) Age: _____

2) Gender :
Female ☐   Male ☐

3) Sexual Orientation:
Lesbian ☐   Gay ☐   Bisexual ☐

4) Race:
Malay ☐   Chinese ☐   Indian ☐   Bumiputera ☐   Others ☐

5) Religion:
Islam ☐   Buddhist ☐   Hindu ☐   Christian ☐   Others ☐

Section B: Revised Internalized Homophobia Scale IHP-R

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

The items were administered with a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

 (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither disagree or agree (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree

Items	Response				
1. I wish I weren't lesbian/bisexual [gay/bisexual].	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have tried to stop being attracted to women [men] in general.	1	2	3	4	5
3. If someone offered me the chance to be completely heterosexual, I would accept the chance.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel that being lesbian/bisexual [gay/bisexual] is a personal shortcoming for me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would like to get professional help in order to change my sexual orientation from lesbian/bisexual [gay/bisexual] to straight.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Outness Inventory

Use the following rating scale to indicate how open you are about your sexual orientation to the people listed below. Try to respond to all of the items by circling it, but leave items blank if they do not apply to you.

1 = person definitely does NOT know about your sexual orientation status

2 = person might know about your sexual orientation status, but it is NEVER talked about

3 = person probably knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is NEVER talked about

4 = person probably knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is RARELY talked about

5 = person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is RARELY talked about

6 = person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is SOMETIMES talked about

7 = person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is OPENLY talked about

N/A = not applicable to your situation; there is no such person or group of people in your life

Items	Response							
1. Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
2. Father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
3. Siblings (sisters/ brothers)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
4. Extended family (relatives)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
5. My new straight friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
6. My work peers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
7. My work supervisor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
8. Members of my religious community (e.g. church, temple)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
9. Leaders of my religious community (e.g. church, temple)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
10. Strangers, new acquaintances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
11. My old heterosexual friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A

13) Do you choose to coming out, or not to coming out?

☐ YES ☐ NO

14) Could you please elaborate what makes you choose to do so?

_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____

Section D: (Revised (12-Item) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

In Malaysia, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Malay, Chinese, Indian, Bumiputera and others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

Circle the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree

Items	Response			
1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	1	2	3	4
2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.	1	2	3	4
3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.	1	2	3	4
4. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.	1	2	3	4

5. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.	1	2	3	4
6. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	1	2	3	4
7. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	1	2	3	4
8. To learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.	1	2	3	4
9. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments.	1	2	3	4
10. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.	1	2	3	4
11. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	1	2	3	4
12. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.	1	2	3	4

Appendix B: SPSS Outputs

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
IHP	196	5.00	25.00	12.7755	5.51925
OI	196	6.00	77.00	24.1786	13.55232
Family	196	3.00	30.00	9.8061	5.82067
World	196	.00	31.00	11.0714	7.07723
Religion	196	.00	16.00	3.2500	4.00304
MEIM	196	12.00	48.00	32.3878	7.98734
Valid N (listwise)	196				

Research hypothesis 1

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
IHP	Female	102	11.5294	5.14869	.50980
	Male	94	14.1277	5.61533	.57918

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
IHP	Equal variances assumed	1.819	.179	-3.379	194	.001	-2.59825	.76885	-4.11462	-1.08188
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.367	188.657	.001	-2.59825	.77158	-4.12028	-1.07621

Research hypothesis 2

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IHP	12.7755	5.51925	196
OI	24.1786	13.55232	196

Correlations

		IHP	OI
IHP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.320**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	196	196
OI	Pearson Correlation	-.320**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	196	196

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IHP	12.7755	5.51925	196
Family	9.8061	5.82067	196

Correlations

		IHP	Family
IHP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.367**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	196	196
Family	Pearson Correlation	-.367**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	196	196

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IHP	12.7755	5.51925	196
World	11.0714	7.07723	196

Correlations

		IHP	World
IHP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.284**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	196	196
World	Pearson Correlation	-.284**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	196	196

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IHP	12.7755	5.51925	196
Religion	3.2500	4.00304	196

Correlations

		IHP	Religion
IHP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.049
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.493
	N	196	196
Religion	Pearson Correlation	-.049	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.493	
	N	196	196

Research hypothesis 3

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IHP	12.7755	5.51925	196
MEIM	32.3878	7.98734	196

Correlations

		IHP	MEIM
IHP	Pearson Correlation	1	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.671
	N	196	196
MEIM	Pearson Correlation	.030	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.671	
	N	196	196

Research hypothesis 4

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MEIM	32.3878	7.98734	196
OI	24.1786	13.55232	196

Correlations

		MEIM	OI
MEIM	Pearson Correlation	1	.043
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.550
	N	196	196
OI	Pearson Correlation	.043	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.550	
	N	196	196

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MEIM	32.3878	7.98734	196
Family	9.8061	5.82067	196

Correlations

		MEIM	Family
MEIM	Pearson Correlation	1	-.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.924
	N	196	196
Family	Pearson Correlation	-.007	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.924	
	N	196	196

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MEIM	32.3878	7.98734	196
World	11.0714	7.07723	196

Correlations

		MEIM	World
MEIM	Pearson Correlation	1	.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.309
	N	196	196
World	Pearson Correlation	.073	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.309	
	N	196	196

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
MEIM	32.3878	7.98734	196
Religion	3.2500	4.00304	196

Correlations

		MEIM	Religion
MEIM	Pearson Correlation	1	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.681
	N	196	196
Religion	Pearson Correlation	.030	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.681	
	N	196	196

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paper text:

Chapter III Methodology Research Design A descriptive research was done by researcher whereby it allows rearcher to apply types of research question, design, and describe the data analysis to a particular topic (Knupfer, McLellan, n.d.). It also allows researchers to have their research objective that may portray the characteristics of situations, society, or persons. Then, the data collection was done in quantitative research method where a clear picture of the phenomenon under study can be evaluated statistically, and the results are presented using statistics, tables and graphs. The research was conducted by using survey design where it allows researchers to study a sample of a population through a quantitative description of trends, attitude, or view of the population. Then, researchers able to generalize inferences from the sample finding with lower cost and shorter time (Creswell, 2014). Non-probability sampling method was used in this research, where subjects were chose based on particular non-random criteria. Hence, there are some population may have no chance of selection (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Snowball sampling was further illustrated in this research. Bhattacherjee (2012) also mentioned that it allows researcher to begin with identifying a few participants that meet particular criteria for inclusion in the research. Then, request them to recommend other individuals that meet the same selection criteria as participant. In this research, the researchers only choose LGB individuals as participants based on the availability and willingness to respond to the questionnaire provided. Participants The data presented consists of 196 participants consist of Malaysian lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals participated in this study. Out of the 196 participants chosen, 94 of them were males and 102 were females. The

> 19**participants ranged in age** between **18** and 52, **with a mean of** 23.70. **The**

largest group of participants was age ranged between 21 and 35 (N=128). Generally, they were 99 Malay, 71 Chinese, 7 Indian, and 19 from other races includes Bumiputera, Sarawakian or mixed. As for sexual orientation, there are 75 gay, 57 lesbian, and 64 bisexual individuals. While, as for religion, there were 103 in Islam, followed by 36 in Buddhism, 4 in Hinduism, 19 in Christianity, 1 in Sikhism, 33 individuals identified themselves as free thinker, atheist and agnostic. All participants chosen for the research successfully completed the questionnaire. Instruments The instruments used in this study were 3 sets of questionnaires consist of Revised Internalized Homophobia (IHP-R)

> 2**scale, Outness Inventory,** Revised **Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure** (MEIM-R), **and**

demographic information. Revised Internalized Homophobia (IHP-R) scale. The original nine-item IHP scale was developed for administration to gay men by Martin and Dean in 1988.

> 3**A five-item** revised **version of IHP was** then **developed**

after a series of factor- and item, which is more appropriate

> 3**to administration to bisexuals and lesbians as well. The**

> 3**internal reliability for** original nine -item IHP scale wasα= .85,

while five-item IHP-R was α= .82. The IHP-R scale was administrated

> 3**with a 5-point response scale ranging from 1** (strongly **disagree)** to 5 **(strongly agree).** The total **scores were** calculated **by** adding up all **responses and dividing by the total number of items.**

Individuals with higher score tend to have more negative self- attitudes (Herek, Gillis, & Jeanine, 2009). Outness Inventory (OI). A 10-item OI was

> 10**designed to assess the degree to which lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals'**

> 18**sexual orientation** were **known by and openly discussed with** others, **in** which consisted **of**

father, mother,

> 11**siblings, extended family** or **relatives, old heterosexual friends, strangers, work peers, work supervisors,** member **of** an individual's **religious community, and leaders of** an individual's **religious community.**

The OI are rated on

> 4**7-point** rating **scale from 1 (person** definitely **does not know about your sexual** orientation **status) to 7 (person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is openly talked about) with an option of 0 (not applicable to your situation; there is no such person or group of people in your life)**

(Mohr and Fassinger, 2000). The total scores can be acquired by adding up and dividing the scores on the items of the subscales. Respondent

> 25**with higher scores** show **greater** levels **of** outness to **the**

relevant individuals in their life. (Gamst, Liang, & Der-Karabetian (2011). Mohr and Fassinger (2000) mentioned that OI is consists of three subscale and the internal reliability of each subscales are as following: (1)

> 10**Out to Family (α=** .74), (2) **Out to World (α=** .79), **and** (3) **Out to Religion (α= .97).**

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure- Revised (MEIM-R). A revised 12-item MEIM was developed to measure ethnic identity across various ethnic among adolescents and young adults or respondents from age 12 and above, including adults (Phineey, 1992). It is consists of two subscales, which are affirmation/ belonging

> 7(items 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12) and exploration subscale (items 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10), while item 3 load on both subscales. The

scale were

> 14rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree), to 4 (strongly agree)

> 24(Roberts et al., 1999). Roberts et al. (1999) mentioned that MEIM-

R has presented good reliability among various ethnic group and ages with alpha higher than .80 for the overall scale. It was also proved that MEIM-R has high interfactor correlations and it

> 7could be used as a global assessment of ethnic identity.

The scoring system can be calculated either through subscale scores or total MEIM-R score. The subscale scores are acquired from the mean ratings of them items in each subscale. While, the total scores are acquired through the average rating of the twelve items. Demographic information. This section included Question 1 through 5. In this section, participants were required to fill up the demographic information regarding their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, and religion. Other than that, two open-ended questions were added with OI is to allow researchers to examine the reason of participants choose to coming out or not to coming out to others. The first question is "Do you choose to coming out, or not to coming out?", and followed by "Could you please elaborate what makes you choose to do so? ". These are not voluntary questions, participants may choose not to answer it. Procedure A set of questionnaire with inform consent form was prepared by researchers through Survey Monkey, an internet based research tool that allows researchers to create survey at no cost. Research supervisor have checked on it before giving approval for distribution to participants. The purpose of an inform consent form is to acknowledge participants regarding the purpose of the research and to inform the participants regarding confidentiality of the collection of data. The questionnaires were started to distribute to LGB individuals through snowball sampling method in social network, after receiving the permission from research supervisor. A personal message containing the link of the survey, which were created on Google Form was sent to participants as invitation to participate in this research. The researchers explained the purposes of the study and clarified the confidentiality and privacy issues when participant is available and willing to answer the questionnaire. This made sure that participants did not feel unjustified pressure in participating. To ensure the confidentiality, only both researchers able to hold the password that able to access into Survey Monkey. No one else able to access to the responses from participants. Approximately 10 minutes is needed to complete the demographic information and three instruments. Figure 3.1 Flow chart of procedure throughout the study Prepare the questionnaire with inform consent Get approval from research supervisor Distributed the questionnaires Acknowledged participants the nature of research Data collection Tabulated the data collection into table form. Analyzed the data collection using SPSS 2.0 Presented the finding and result. Data Analysis The data collection was further evaluated using Statistical

Package of Social Science Version 20 (SPSS) after finalization of the collection. For descriptive statistics, the summary of IHP-R, OI and MEIM scales will be presented in mean and standard deviation. For inferential statistics, the statistics of the finding will be analyzed by using Pearson correlation and T-test. Precisely, Pearson correlation will be used to analyze the correlation between internalized homophobia and coming out, ethnic identity and internalized homophobia, and ethnic identity and coming out. While, T-test will be used in analyzing gender difference in internalized homophobia. The data then further tabulated in a table form. Chapter IV Finding and Analysis Results In this chapter, researchers will look into the results and finding of the study according to the response of the participants. The total number of the participants is 196 (N=196), which consists of 102 female and 94 male participants. It will be further analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive Statistic Table 4.1 Age Group of Participants Age Range (years old) Number of Participants 18 – 20 59 21 – 35 128 36 – 50 8 51 – 69 1 By referring to Table 4.1, most of the participants are belong to 21 to 35 years old group which consists of 128 participants. Age 18 to 20 have 59 participants followed by 8 participants and 1 participant from age 36 to 50 and age 51 to 69 respectively. The mean of the participants' age is 23.7. Table 4.2 Ethnic Group of Participants Ethnic Number of Participants Malay Chinese Indian Others 99 71 7 19 Table 4.2 shows that the majority participants are Malay which consists of 99 persons, followed by 71 Chinese and 7 Indian. There are also 19 persons of participants who are bumiputera and mixed. Table 4.3 Sexual Orientation of Participants Sexual Orientations Number of Participants Gay Bisexual Lesbian 75 64 57 According to Table 4.4, the largest number of participants is gay which consists of 75 persons, followed by 64 persons of bisexual and lastly 57 persons of lesbian. Table 4.4 Religion Group of Participants Religion Number of Participants Islam 103 Buddhist 36 Christian 19 Hindu 4 Others 34 Based on Table 4.4, majority of the participants are Muslim, 103 persons stated their religion as Islam. Secondly, 36 persons are Buddhism followed by 19 persons who are Christian and 4 Hindu. Other than Islam, Buddhist and Christian, there are 34 persons who stated as free thinker, atheist, and agnostic.

20Table 4. 5 **Summary of Means, Standard Deviations,** Minimum **and Maximum**

Measure Min Max M SD IHP 5 25 12.78 5.52 OI 6 77 24.18 13.55 Family 3 30 9.81 5.82 World 0 31 11.07 7.08 Religion 0 16 3.25 4.00 MEIM 12 48 32.39 7.99 According to the Table 4.5, the minimum and maximum score for IHP is 5 and 25 respectively among 196 participants (M = 12.78, SD = 5.52). OI obtained 6 for the minimum score and 77 for maximum score among the total participants (M = 24.18, SD = 13.55). The subscales of OI included Family, World, and Religion. For Family (M = 9.81, SD = 5.82), the minimum score for is 3, whereas the maximum score is 30. For World (M = 11.07, SD = 7.08), the minimum score is 0, while the maximum score is 31. For Religion (M = 3.25, SD = 4.00), the minimum and maximum score are 0 and 16 respectively. Lastly, the minimum score is 12 and the maximum score is 48 for MEIM (M = 32.29, SD =7.99). Inferential Statistic 1. Research Hypothesis (H1): Males have higher internalized homophobia than females among LGB individuals. Table 4.6 Summary of Independent Samples Test on the Gender and IHP-R M Male SD Female M SD t sig Internalized Homophobia 14.13 5.62 11.53 5.15 -3.38 0.001 Independent Samples Test

21**showed that there was a significant** gender **difference** in internalized homophobia, **t(** 194) = -3.38, **p**

= 0.00, with male (M = 14.13, SD = 5.62) scored higher than female (M = 11.53, SD =5.15). Male tend to have higher level of internalized homophobia compared to female. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

9**2. (a) Research Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant correlation between**

level of internalized homophobia and level of coming out toward family.

> 9(b)Research Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant correlation between
> internalized homophobia **and** level **of**

coming out toward world. (c)

> 9Research Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant correlation between

level of internalized homophobia and coming out toward religion. Table 4.7 Summary of Pearson Bivariate Correlation on the IHP-R and OI Internalized Homophobia Coming Out -0.32** Family World Religion -0.37** -0.28** -0.05 Note. **

> 1Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) The results of Pearson
> correlation analysis showed **that there**

were significant negative correlations between internalized homophobia and coming out r(194) = -0.32, p < 0.01, internalized homophobia and coming out to Family r(194) = -0.37, p < 0.01, internalized homophobia and coming out to World r(194) = - 0.28, p < 0.01. This shows that the higher level of internalized homophobia, the lower level of coming out, specifically to Family and World. However, there was no significant correlation between internalized homophobia and coming out to Religion r(194) = -0.05, p > 0.01. Hence, only 2a and 2b hypothesis were supported. 3. Research Hypothesis (H1):

> 1There is a significant correlation between LGB individual's **level of**

ethnic identity and level of internalized homophobia. Table 4.8 Summary of Pearson Bivariate Correlation on the MEIM-R and IHP-R Ethnic Identity Internalized Homophobia 0.03 Note. **

> 1Correlation is significant at the 0. 01 **level (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation**
> showed **that there was** no **significant correlation between** level **of** ethnicity **and**

internalized homophobia r(194) = 0.03, p > 0.01. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was not supported. 4. (a) Research Hypothesis (H1):

> 1There is a significant correlation between LGB individual's **level of**

ethnic identity and coming out toward family. (b) Research Hypothesis (H1

> 1):There is a significant correlation between LGB individual's **level of**

ethnic identity and coming out toward world (c) Research Hypothesis (H1

> **1):There is a significant correlation between** LGB individual's **level of**

ethnic identity and coming out toward religion. Table 4.9 Summary of Pearson Bivariate Correlation on the MEIM-R and OI Ethnic Identity Coming Out 0.04 Family -0.01 World 0.07 Religion 0.03 Note. **

> **12Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) There** were no **significant** correlations **between** ethnic identity **and** coming out **r(** 194) = 0.04, **p > 0.01,**

ethnic identity and coming out to Family r(194) = -0.01, p > 0.01, ethnic identity and coming out to World r(194) = 0.07, p > 0.01, ethnic identity and coming out to Religion r(194) = 0.03,

> **16p > 0.01.** So, **hypothesis 4a, 4b, and 4c were** not **supported. Chapter** V **Discussion**

The primary purposes of this research is to assess the relationship between LGB individual's level of ethnic identity and coming and the relationship between LGB individuals' level of ethnic identity and internalized homophobia. It were predicted that there are significant correlation

> **2between level of ethnic identity** and coming **as well as**

level of ethnic identity and internalized homophobia. The findings are also discussed in terms of the gender differences in experiencing internalized homophobia and the

> **15relationship between internalized homophobia and coming out.** Gender **and Internalized Homophobia** With **the** regard **of**

gender difference, as expected, male participants have been significantly experienced higher level of internalized homophobia than female which consistent with previous studies. In questionnaire IHP-R, regardless of whether they were gay or bisexual, male participants were more likely than female to respond "disagree" and "strong disagree" in question

> **3"I wish I weren't lesbian/bisexual [gay/bisexual].**

The difference was statistically significant for LGB individuals (42.56% of male participants respond they wish they weren't a gay or bisexual, compared to 35.30% of female). This could be supported with male may experience more internalized homophobia than female due to male were more negatively in perceiving homosexual persons and homosexual behavior compared to women as mentioned earlier. Attitudes of heterosexual male toward homosexual individual especially gay were negative but both women and men perceived lesbians in similar way (Kite & Whitley, 1996). Herek (1998) has mentioned that men and women are socialized in a different way, specifically with respect to intimacy and sexuality, thus it is practical to assume that both sexes may experience different degree of internalized homophobia on intimacy and sexuality. Therefore, it can be assumed that

22**gay and bisexual men** who have **high** level **of internalized homophobia** have difficulties **to**

react social attitude and values regarding homosexuality, and may have greater difficulties in developing same-sex intimate relationship (Herek, 1998). Moreover, men are more expected to follow the gender role and their violation toward gender role is perceived as more serious compared to women (Davies, 2004). This is because traditional gender roles strengthen or maintain the privilege and power held by men in comparison with women. Hence, more traditional gender roles attitudes developed by men than do women (Kerns, & Fine, 1994). Internalized Homophobia and Coming Out As shown in Table 4.7, it

13**shows that there is a significant** negatively **correlation between**

LGB individuals' IHP result and coming out to Family and World. While, there is no correlation between IHP result and coming out to Religion. Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported. Consistent with previous finding, the higher the level of internalized homophobia, the less likely an LGB individual will come out to family, friends and work colleagues. The overall scores of OI were consider low in the three aspects of coming out. Out of the 3 subscales, most participants scored the highest in Coming Out to World. According to the open-ended question, Research shows that LGB individuals would less likely to reveal their sexual orientation in their life if they perceive less autonomy support from others (Legate et al, 2012). Families have been viewed as support system during individuals go through hard times. Nevertheless, families seem could be the stress in this circumstances. Most LGB individuals may still settling conflict of their internalized homophobia and even sexual orientation. Hence, coming out to families likely to be a confession of one's inadequacies, and LGB individuals may not be able to bear the shamefulness (Igartua, Gill, & Montoro, 2003). The association between internalized homophobia and coming out can be examined by using Cass' Homosexual Identity Model, whereby it provided a view that coming out is related to an individual's positive sexual and emotional development (Kimberly, 2011). Using this model, the identity foreclosure on LGB individuals might fall on stage 3 and 4, which are Identity Tolerance and Identity Acceptance (Cass, 1979; Cass, 1984). The low level of coming out of LGB individuals show that their self-image may have moved from "heterosexual" to "homosexual", but the level of disclosing of their sexual orientation to others is somehow very low. The image of homosexual may only show to homosexual friends only. Out of the 3 subscales, most participants scored the highest in Coming Out to World. While, in stage 4, Identity Acceptance, it has supported that some participants may have more contact with homosexual community and may disclose their sexual orientation to friends that have open-minded on LGB identity. Therefore, when an individual has bad emotional development (internalized homophobia), this may affect the level of coming out of this individual. Moreover, most of the participants scored very low in Coming out to Religion (M = 3.25, SD = 4.00). Given that there are 17.35% of LGB individuals (N = 34) with no religion in this research sample, have significantly scored lower or zero level of internalized homophobia than those who with religious affiliation. Indeed, coming out has proven itself to be an effective tool in advocating LGBT right and gaining support from heterosexual others (Lee, 2014). However, it seems like doesn't applicable to coming out to religion. This could be explained with a survey of LGBT Americans where it discovered that LGBT individuals are less religious as compare to general public. While, those who with religious affiliation, some are having self-conflict between their sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Highly religious Americans are still discourage the acceptance of homosexuality in the society (Pew Research Center, 2013). It could discourage the participants to coming out to religion. Ethnicity and Internalized Homophobia Inconsistent with previous researches, the result of hypothesis 3

13**shows that there is** no **significant correlation between** level of ethnicity **and**

internalized homophobia among LGB individuals. Hence, hypothesis 3 is unsupported. The result shows the average score of MEIM among the total participants is considered moderate (M = 32.29, SD =7.99). The culture of an identity can be explained as a mutual set of normative beliefs, comprising standards and principles that are believed by individuals with a certain identity. Incompatible normative expectation may occur when the cultures of two identities are vary and may cause identity interference due to the identity switching from one identity to another is difficult for certain individuals. The identity switch between two different cultures may experience more interference and involve a larger use of emotional, psychological, or cognitive resources (Settle, 2004). However, participants of this study seem like do not experience such interference between ethnic identity and sexual orientation identity. Based on Three-stage model of Ethnic Identity (Lytle, 2012). It can be assumed that most participants are still in stage two, which is ethnic identity search. LGB individuals may be still constantly searching their ethnic identities, and maybe they have not have the security with their own identity yet. On the other hand, perhaps, LGB individual would not in the situation of negotiating ethnic identity with their sexual orientation. The issue of ethnic identity seems like does not noticeable even though majority of the ethnic is made up of Malay sample in this study. The process may be influenced by age identity of participants. According to Howard (2000), age is part of the social bases of identity of an individual. Majority of the participants of this research are aged between 21 and 35 (N= 128), which known as Millennial, where they commonly defined as individuals born after 1980s until 2000s. A research was done to survey millennia's opinions on marriage of homosexual individual reported that most of the young people are more likely to agree homosexuality should be supported by society as compared to previous generation (63 percent vs 35 percent) (Pew Research Center, 2010). For the past few decades, various historical events showed a significant social changes on public perceptibility and

5social acceptance of lesbian and gay individuals. Historical events, such as after Stonewall riot in 1969 in 1969, until "Ellen's" 1997 self- disclosure of her lesbian identity on a TV

show, provide a circumstance for

5different generations of lesbians and gay men

to accept their identity development and identity management plans

5(D'Augelli, Grossman, Hershberger, & O'Connell, 2001).

Thus, it caused lesbian and gay individuals from different age group get influences on their

5personal awareness of and attitudes about sexual orientation

through experiencing different

5levels of exposure to these social changes.

Lee (2014) also said that participants of ages between 24 and 49 from the study enjoyed higher level of

tolerance from the larger society and more existence of supportive setting, such as LGBT organization and communities. Hence, LGBT identities are more accepted than in the previous years when the general public has greater understanding on and more educated about LGBT issues. Ethnicity and Coming Out Similar to hypothesis 3,

> 23**there is no significant correlation between** level of ethnicity **and** coming out to **Family,**

World and Religion. Based on the 127 responses of open-ended question, surprisingly, none of the participants were commenting regarding ethnic issue that may encourage or discourage them from coming out. One common theme was identified as the main factor affect LGB individual (N= 45, 35.43%) choose to come out from closet: on own term to themselves or partner. Most participants illustrated that they want to be themselves who they truly wish rather than staying in the closet. Being in the closet may affect the relationship between LGB individuals and their partner. They choose to disclose their sexual orientation to individuals that close to them yet have better understanding and acceptance toward LGBT group of individuals, especially friends. In line with Lee's (2014) study, it showed that ethnic identity did not cause significant effect on LGBT API outness its own. Besides, participants who consider their sexual orientation identity important than other aspects of their identity were out to others. Examples of participants' responses are as below: If I choose to coming out to others, the reason is for me to stop lying to people and to myself, most importantly. I want to introduce my partner without having to worry about whether my sexuality matters. Malay, Muslim, 25, Lesbian, Female Being in the closet was damaging to me and people I love. I came out "official" and publicly on Facebook last year during the US National Coming Out day. I could do it then because my relationship with my much closeted girlfriend had ended and I could not stand lying by omission anymore. I have done nothing wrong, I am being who I truly am. I think it is important to come out of the closet because it will make your life better. We must speak out more and make the environment safer. Because being in the closet is truly, truly damaging to one's soul. Punjabi, Sikh, 39, Lesbian, Female Yeah, all my close friends know about it & some new acquaintances who I know are cool with it. Why, because I don't see it as a big deal, and neither do they. I don't make announcements, they asked if I'm seeing anyone and I tell them yes and who. Just like how any other straight person would do. Malay, Muslim, 23, Bisexual, Female On the other hand, there are three common themes were recognised on the factors of participants chose not to coming out from closet: societal influence, family value, and religion. Subsequently, there are 25.20% of the participants (N = 32) mentioned that the societal attitude of anti-homosexuality and narrow minded were the main concerns that caused them chose not to coming out from the closet. The participants were afraid of being psychologically harmed or of involving in legal issue. This is compatible with macrosystem in Ecological model of human development as mentioned previously. The "outness" of an LGB individual can be affected by societal norms and culture in a community that has already well obey by the society member (Roth, 2015). Societal influence on LGBT views includes the opinion from politics, government, media, or even assumptions concluded with an unknown origin regarding the issue of being a homosexual individual. For many of the participants, society began to have an impact on shaping every person's world perspectives. Such impact may affect how people manage their relationships and alter to interpersonal connections who may not share the same views that they personally have (Jones, 2008). Examples participants' responses are as below: The fact that being LGBT is frowned upon in Malaysia is the main reason why I choose to not to come out, at least not until I am able to be independent (after I finish my studies) and support myself without my parents' help. This is because I fear they would disown me and kick me out of home while I'm still struggling in university (first year of degree), and have nowhere else to go to. My other concern is how the society's mentality regarding LGBT that might be harmful or dangerous to me, as in I fear they would attack me physically for not being 'normal' and try to change my sexuality in a forceful way. Malay, Muslim, 19, Lesbian, Female No, because I'm afraid of people judgement against me and how I would be treated later. I had enough of rejection and I couldn't handle it alone. Everything

I'd kept onto myself, unless no harm would happen. Only my dearest friends know about me and they are the same orientation. Malay, Muslim, 24, Gay, Male I choose not to come out because of the homophobic society. Malay, Muslim, 20, Lesbian, Female Approximately 9.45% of the participants (N=12) reported that family value was the main reason why they chose not to disclose their sexual orientation. In line with Chan's (1989) study that Asian-American gay and lesbian did not come out to their family because of afraid of rejection and stigmatization from them. It may due to family relationship was so important in their culture. Jones's (2008) study also showed that although family usually act as a source of strength, however it became obstruction for LGB individuals in their coming out process. They afraid of losing cares and support from their parents if they discuss their sexual identity to their parents, especially for those still emotionally and financially dependent on parents. The examples of participants' responses are below: My answer is totally waiting for my own family do agree let me free and I will choose to coming out. Chinese, Buddhist, 25, Lesbian, Female I don't want to break anybody's heart (especially my family), and I am not stable yet financially to come out. Although, my sexuality does not define me, hence there's no need actually to come out in the first place. Malay, Muslim, 26, Lesbian, Female No, I'm afraid that it would bring shame to my family and I'm afraid that if I do come out, they would not accept me. Bumiputera, Christian, 22, Bisexual, Female No, I need my family more than anything. This feeling will fade away eventually, so for me there is no need to coming out. Each person has their own perspective and opinion. Malay, Muslim, 20, Bisexual, Male Approximately 7.09% of the participants (N= 9) mentioned that religion is the main factor that prohibited them from coming out, and most of the participants are from Muslim, followed by Christian. Interestingly, according to the survey, Millennial put low priority in religion. There is about 26% of the participants in that survey say that religion is not important to them. While, 28% of the participants say it is very important to them but not one of the most important things (Pew Research Center, 2010). Another survey also mentioned that Millennial are less likely to be religious than other generation and about a quarter of Millennial have no religious preference, and yet they retain largely broad-minded values in their life (Experian Marketing Service, 2014). Perhaps, this is an area that should be further discussed in the future to investigate the behind reason. Examples of participants' responses are as below: Not coming out because I'm a Muslim and being a lesbian is totally wrong so i don't want to coming out. Malay, Muslim, 23, Lesbian, Female Particularly in my environment in IIUM where people study religious knowledge. Malay, Muslim, 20, Bisexual, Male No due to religion issue Malay, Muslim, 24, Bisexual, Female Implications of study Besides examining the relationship between ethnic identity and internalized homophobia, as well as coming out among LGB individuals. This study has provided an insight on factors associated with internalized homophobia and coming out. Prior to this study, there is no strong evidence of the relationship of these variables established in Malaysia. Generally, the issues of sex and sexuality, especially homosexuality are seldom discussed or debated among the society. This is due to these issues are considered taboo and freedom of speech on this issue is regarded reserved to the newspaper and media. Previous study regarding LGBT issues are usually emphasized on the context of HIV and AIDS, and LGBT right in Malaysia. The finding of this study has shown males have higher internalized homophobia than females. The underlying reason is male were more negatively in perceiving homosexual persons and homosexual behavior compared to women. This may due to males will be viewed more serious if they violate their gender roles and they are encouraged to involve more traditional perspectives about gender role too (Davies, 2004). According to minority stress model, internalized homophobia has been conceptualized as a minority stress (Frost & Meyer, 2009). Exposing to high level of stress due to their LGB identity can be attributed to cause mental disorders (Meyer, 2003). Therefore, mental health service should be promoted among LGB individuals to help LBG individuals deal with the social stigma and develop a positive self-concept (Frost & Meyer, 2009). Mental health professionals may benefit LGB clients by taking a resiliency approach that allows their clients express goals of life (Arnett, 2013). Other than that, the finding also shows that ethnic identity does not significantly correlated with internalized homophobia and coming out among LGB individuals. Participants seem do not experience interference in identity switching between ethnic identity and sexual orientation identity. The underlying reasons that can be assumed are most participant are still not settling conflicts with their ethnic identity yet, which causing them to constantly searching it. In addition, it also could be assumed that the level of internalized homophobia can be influenced by age identity of participants. Surprisingly, the finding has

also indicated that most participants chose to come out from closet is on own term to themselves or partner. While, the main reasons of not coming out from closet are societal influences, followed by family value and religion factor. Therefore, more concern should focus on the social support that can be provided to LGB individual may help them to reduce internalized homophobia level and learn how to come out to others. Limitation Currently, there is no specific number of the population of the sexual minority group like LGB, researchers could not generalize the result the entire population with only 196 participants, which mean researchers could not assume the results of the whole population by just basing on only 196 participants. In addition to that,

> 8snowball sampling does not select units for inclusion in the sample based on random selection. Therefore it is no way to determine the possible sampling error and make statistical inferences from the sample to the population

(Mugera, 2013). Internet-based surveys have the potential of sample bias; both response rate bias and selection bias are likely to be present. Just like others kind of surveys, low response rate could be due to non-responding. Besides, there are some differences in important characteristics for those who respond to survey from those who do not respond. For example, the respondents comprised of individuals who could access to internet and those from generation y and generation z are more likely to use Internet. Selection biases occur when sending notices of research project to individual or groups who likely to answer due to their interest in survey topics. This is because, Internet users could not represent the general population, and also members of Internet special interest groups are not surely representative of their specific groups. The present

> 2study may overly represent people who are already involved with LGB community and

more motivated to participate (Lytle, 2012). Furthermore,

> 6lack of control over the research environment is

another limitation. Without the present of researcher,

> 6there is no way to know if respondents have a clear understanding of the instruction and questions, are answering conscientiously or

> 6creating multiple submissions and respondents may participate in groups or under distracting conditions.

(Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2009). Other than that, in terms of the generalizability of this study, there was the underrepresentation of certain religious and ethnic group. Even though researchers able to reach out to diverse population of LGB individuals, however there is an imbalance ratio of participants from across different ethnics and religion. This is the disadvantage of this study whereby majority of the participants are consist of Malay (50.51%), followed by participants, Chinese (36.22%), Indian (3.57%) and others (9.69%). For religious group, the sample has more representation from Muslim

(52.55%), followed by Buddhist (18.37%), Christian (9.69%), Hindu (2.04%) and others (17.35%).

> 2**However, since the majority** of the **participants in** this **study were** Malay, **the partially** unsupported **Hypotheses** 3 **and**

4 maybe attributable to the underrepresentation of other ethnic group of LGB individuals. Specifically, future studies need to be done and should make great efforts to include participants from all ethnic group in a balance ratio. Recommendation One of the recommendations is more data on LGB populations are needed in order to better understand the sexual minority in term of their health needs. Other than ethnic and racial, more demographic information about LGB across the life course is needed such as education and occupation (National Academies Press, 2011), For example, LGBT educators and students usually encounter worry inside school buildings due to afraid of the consequence of coming out in the classroom, or the negative emotional effects of remaining closeted (Johnson, 2012). The roles of social structures like families, partnerships, friends, schools, workplaces and community organizations in LGB lives are under-researched. The social structures provide either stress when in homophobia environment LGB are not acceptable or social support when coming out no longer an issue (NAP, 2011). Furthermore,

> 2**future researchers** may **continue to** study about **the intersection** of religious **and racial** or **ethnic identities on internalized** homophobia, **and**

coming out in LGB people in Malaysia context. Besides, transgender could be included to see the differences between LGBT. Additional variables are needed as internalized homophobia and coming out may be influenced by other environmental factors like homophobia level of the society or psychological factors such as LGBT identity development stages and so on. Moreover, the research methodology of this study is another limitation. This study is strictly based on quantitative methodology, and thus, does not examine the exact factors and impact of internalized homophobia and coming out of participants. Further studies should be done on exploring the coming out process of LGB individuals by using qualitative methodology. Conducting qualitative research allows researchers to understand in depth understanding on impacts of internalized homophobia and explore the coming out process of LGB individuals. Exploring the coming out process allows researcher to recognize why they chose to disclose or conceal their sexual orientation and how they navigate through different social setting. Conclusion In the

> 2**conclusion, the current study examined the intersecting identities on**

internalized homophobia and coming out experienced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. Previous research regarding LGBT issues in Malaysia have focused on HIV infections, LGBT right issue and more, less studies have examined the intersection of ethnic identity and sexual orientation. Therefore, the primary importance of this study emphasized on the relationship of ethnic identity and internalized homophobia, and ethnic identity and coming out to Family, World and Religion. There are two significant findings should be noted in this study. The result of this study shows that male is significantly scored higher level of internalized homophobia as compare to female participants. Moreover, there is a significantly negative correlation between internalized homophobia and coming out among LGB individuals too. On the other hand, this study also shows

> 17**that there is no significant** correlation **between ethnic identity and** internalized homophobia, and **ethnic**

identity and coming out.