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THE FRAMING OF LGBT-RELATED ISSUES IN MALAYSIAN ONLINE
NEWSPAPERS

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JASMINE LOKE HUI XIA

ABSTRACT

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) in Malaysia are criminalized and regarded as taboo. Due to limited studies on the subject matter, this research aimed to explore the framing of LGBT-related issues in Malaysian online newspapers, namely *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini*. The research objectives include to explore how extensively LGBT-related issues were covered by the newspapers, to examine the news frames reported and to investigate the valence of the articles published by the newspapers in their coverage of LGBT-related issues. The content analysis method was employed in this research. Findings showed that LGBT-linked issues were given less visibility in the newspapers. The most published news type is straight news with over half (51.4%) of the articles covering LGBT issues in Malaysia while the remaining articles were related to LGBT events in other nations. The top news frames utilized were “deviance” and “equal rights” with most of the articles portrayed in a positive or neutral tone. Suggestions include investigating LGBT framing in non-English-language newspapers and studying Malaysians’ perceptions on LGBT issues in the media to shed light on the level of support, acceptance, tolerance and rejection towards LGBT issues among the Malaysian society.

Keywords: LGBT, Malaysian newspapers, framing theory, news frames, tone

DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my 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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APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “The Framing of LGBT-Related Issues in Malaysian Online Newspapers” prepared and submitted by Jasmine Loke Hui Xia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Corporate Communication (Hons) is hereby accepted.

Supervisor

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In Malaysia, the label ‘LGBT’ was almost unheard of prior to the 1990s (Tan, 2019). The term refers to a broader spectrum of sexual and gender minorities (LGBTQIA Resource Center, 2020; American Psychological Association, 2022). LGBT is an abbreviation that has been developed to represent individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. The term is used to refer to the community as a whole. LGBT individuals are sexual minorities. Groups of individuals whose gender identity, sexual orientation or sexual characteristics differ from most of the surrounding society or population, who mainly identify as cisgender, heterosexual and non-intersex individuals, are sexual minorities (Hartney, 2020). The term, ‘LGBTQ+’, is also a label that has now become officially recognised and widely used. The ‘+’ in the acronym symbolizes individuals who have various other non-straight, non-cisgender identities that were not previously included or have yet to be recognized (GLAAD, 2018; American Psychological Association, 2022). Although the term, LGBTQ+, is a more inclusive label to use in reference to sexual orientation and gender diversity, it is not commonly used in Malaysia. Therefore, in this paper, the term ‘LGBT’ will be used to refer to the sexual minority groups in Malaysia as a whole.

The Malaysian LGBT community is considered a taboo and its existence is viewed as a “threat” to society (Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), 2019). In Muslim-majority Malaysia, same-sex marriage and LGBT rights are rejected (Kaos, 2018). The Malaysian LGBT community faces legal challenges and experiences harassment, violent hate crime and discrimination. In this nation, anti-discrimination laws comprising sexual orientation and gender identity do not exist (Ellis-Petersen, 2018).

Malaysia has state and federal statutes that criminalize same-sex relations and gender nonconformity (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Malaysia practices a dual-track legal system comprising civil courts and Shariah Courts (Phuoc, 2020). Non-Muslims are under the jurisdiction of civil courts while Shariah courts have jurisdiction over Muslims. Besides civil law, Muslims are lawfully regulated according to Islamic criminal and family laws (Beh, 2020). State-level Islamic laws governing Muslims prohibit same-sex acts while civil law stipulates fines, caning and jail for a maximum of 20 years for offenders, although convictions are rare (Reuters, 2018).

LGBT issues are widely discussed around the world, including in Malaysia. Over the years, it can be observed that there has been increased media coverage of LGBT-related issues. In 2021, former deputy minister for religious affairs in the Prime Minister's Department Ahmad Marzuk Shaary suggested amendments to the Islamic criminal law which would allow Shariah courts to impose heavier penalties against LGBT Malaysians for same-sex conduct. Under the federal law, the current sentence stipulates a three year imprisonment, a fine and six strokes of the cane (Bernama, 2021). It was also proposed that gender change and any LGBT-related social media content deemed indecent and obscene should be codified as Sharia criminal offenses (Sharifah Mahsinah Abdullah, 2021). This shows that feelings of intolerance has been growing towards the Malaysian LGBT community in recent times (Reuters, 2021).

Mass communication influences both society and culture. Different media systems and how they are set up by the law influences how the society works while the messages propagated in the mass media provide shape and structure to society (Poepsel, 2018). People have their own media preferences and media consumption patterns; however, mass media corporations often determine which stories to broadcast and which to promote. Almost everything one reads, sees and hears is framed within a mass media context (Olsen, Solvoll and Futsæter, 2022;

Poepsel, 2018). A mass media gatekeeper decides what mass audiences see, and then edits or dismisses the rest. This concerns the framing of news in the media.

1.2 Problem Statement

Malaysia is one of the many countries that criminalizes gender variance. The force of the law has been relied on by the Malaysian government to outlaw conduct and expression that are against a cisgender, heterosexual norm (Human Rights Watch, 2022; Tan, 2019). Having a legal environment that criminalizes LGBT individuals, pervasive anti-LGBT dialogues from government officials holding high-level positions, the absence of non-discrimination protections as well as pressures to change gender identity and sexual orientation in Malaysia from the cultural aspect, contributes to further discrimination against gender identity and sexual orientation. The government suppresses narratives that support LGBT people's equality and existence in an active manner as well as violates their rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly. Consequently, this affects how the law is enforced, outcomes of judiciaries, behaviours of families, and ultimately public conversations in the media revolving around LGBT individuals (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

There is a lack of studies that contribute to an in-depth understanding of how LGBT-related issues are framed in online newspapers in Malaysia, a Muslim-majority country where homosexuality, same-sex marriage and LGBT rights are rejected and criminalized. Hence, this research aimed to explore the framing of LGBT-related issues in Malaysian online newspapers with the following research objectives: (1) To explore how extensively LGBT-related issues are covered by the newspapers; (2) To examine the news frames reported by the newspapers in their coverage of LGBT-related issues, and (3) To investigate the valence of the articles published by the newspapers in their coverage of LGBT-related issues. Research questions for this study are as listed below:

RQ1: How extensively are LGBT-related issues covered by the newspapers?

RQ2: What were the news frames reported by the newspapers in their coverage of LGBT-related issues?

RQ3: What was the valence of the articles published by the newspapers in their coverage of LGBT-related issues?

1.3 Significance of Study

Mass media is an important filter through which individuals learn about one another. Much of what one knows or understands about each other is frequently communicated by news as well as popular media. Having such an extensive reach in society, mass media are powerful social agents (Ross, 2019). The media has a role in creating and upholding stereotypes (McLaughlin, Rodriguez, Dunn, Martinez, 2018, p. 4). If a stereotype is consistently repeated in the media, it becomes more assimilated. In return, this can affect how people perceive different groups.

Mainstream newspapers are a form of mass media. Newspapers are the most conventional and popular medium to convey local, regional, national and international issues to millions of readers globally which can subsequently shape and influence their opinions, views and attitudes. Newspapers are described as the guardians of civic, human rights and liberty in the civilized world (Pandey, 2020). Newspapers are agencies that not only educate, orient readers socially and engage them in their communities civically, but also challenge, reflect, and strengthen the development of values and social norms (Hurd, Mahal, Ng and Kanagasingam, 2020). Therefore, newspapers are a crucial indicator of the social construction of certain groups, individuals and issues. Nowadays, people lead such media-saturated lifestyles. Therefore, given the possibility and power of media to form people's views, opinions

and attitudes on diverse groups, it is necessary to explore the framing of LGBT-related issues in Malaysian online newspapers.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 LGBT in Malaysia

Malaysia, having been a former British colony along with many other countries, inherited a section of the penal code that criminalised homosexual acts. Therefore, homosexual activities are against Malaysia's laws. There is an absence of laws protecting individuals from being discriminated against based on their gender identity and sexual orientation. Despite it being a British colonial-era law, Malaysia retains and enforces Section 377 unlike other Commonwealth countries (Lily Jamaludin, 2018). Under the mentioned law, individuals involved in "carnal intercourse against the order of nature" can be punished with a jail time of 20 years and whipping (Laws of Malaysia Act 574 Penal Code, 2018). Persecutions are pervasive for the Malaysian LGBT community as they are perceived as a threat to the conservative values held by the nation (Reuters, 2018b). Hence, Malaysia's stance on LGBT issues is clear.

Under the ruling of the former Malaysian government, Barisan Nasional (henceforth BN), the Malaysian Islamic Development Department and state Islamic institutions conducted conversion therapy programmes known as '*mukhayyam*' camps to "change" LGBT individuals' gender identity and sexual orientation (Lily Jamaludin, 2018). The conversion practices are sponsored, funded and supported by the Malaysian government (Human Rights Watch, 2022). The conversion programmes even attempt to convert schoolchildren perceived as gender nonconforming through psychologically damaging methods (Loheswar, 2022).

When the opposition coalition of Malaysia, Pakatan Harapan (henceforth PH) won against the 60-year ruling coalition BN in the 14th General Election in 2018, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and his allies were questioned on their promise to improve the nation's

poor record in terms of human rights (Bhavan Jaipragas, 2018). Pre-election pledges were made by PH to improve universal rights (Tashny Sukumaran, 2019). PH's election manifesto included the promise to 'build an inclusive and moderate' country and to be 'committed to enhancing diversity and inclusiveness at all levels of society' (Bhavan Jaipragas, 2018). However, rights activists said that Mahathir's Pakatan Harapan bloc seemed as if it would not fulfil its vows to improve the LGBT community's rights. One of the reasons being, 60% of Malaysia's population of 31 million are made up of rural Malay Muslims. Hence, they are the country's largest voting bloc who remain unsympathetic and deeply conservative towards human rights issues (Bhavan Jaipragas, 2018; Lily Jamaluddin, 2018). It was suggested by experts that the anti-LGBT rhetoric expressed by the government is a strategic move for "political point scoring" with Malay Muslim voters with a conservative nature (Tashny Sukumaran, 2019).

The LGBT community faced hostility both from within society and from the administration (Reuters, 2018). A climate of anti-LGBT discrimination, violent hate crime and harassment was created due to a series of events which occurred when PH was in power (The Guardian, 2018). The growing hostility against LGBT individuals was displayed when Numan Afifi, who was appointed in July 2018 as the interim press secretary to Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, resigned within days after experiencing online harassment over his past gay rights advocacy from conservative Muslim commentators. As a result, this made it impossible for him to continue in his role (The Guardian, 2018; Bhavan Jaipragas, 2018; Lily Jamaluddin, 2018). In the same month, authorities organized a seminar to prevent and "cure" LGBT behaviour for 300 school teachers, counsellors and officials from within the government (The Guardian, 2018). In August 2018, two women were charged under Islamic laws prohibiting lesbian sex. The Sharia court convicted them for "attempting lesbian sex" in Terengganu, a conservative state in the east. They were punished to six strokes of the

cane which was conducted in front of over 100 spectators (Reuters, 2018a; Agence France-Presse, 2018). A member of the Terengganu state executive council said that the canings were conducted publicly as a “lesson for society” (The Guardian, 2018). The LGBT community’s rights were further restricted by the state when a gay bar in Kuala Lumpur was raided by police and religious authorities who instructed 20 Muslim Malay men to either attend counselling or suffer legal consequences (Lily Jamaluddin, 2018; Reuters, 2018a). In the same week, a transgender woman was attacked by five men in the more urban state of Negeri Sembilan, leaving her in the hospital with broken ribs, spinal fractures and a ruptured spleen (Lily Jamaluddin, 2018; Reuters, 2018a). Additionally, August 2018 also saw the minister in charge of Islamic affairs Mujahid Yusof Rawa removing two LGBT rights activists’ portraits from a public art exhibition in Penang (Reuters, 2018; Lily Jamaluddin, 2018; The Guardian, 2018). He remarked, “Society cannot accept LGBT being promoted because that is against societal norms, culture and religion” (Lily Jamaluddin, 2018, para. 14).

LGBT issues have been widely discussed in the past few years by political individuals such as Prime Ministers and government officials. Former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has publicly expressed anti-LGBT views on multiple occasions. He told reporters that same-sex marriage or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights are not accepted in Malaysia and dismissed them as “Western” values (Reuters, 2018a). He asserted that same-sex unions and other LGBT issues were “only for the West” and not suitable with Malaysian values and culture (Agence France-Presse, 2018; Tashny Sukumaran, 2019).

In the new government, Members of Parliament (MPs) held varied opinions on LGBT matters as compared to the previous government which expressed homophobic sentiments in a uniform and open manner. It can be observed that some were more forthright in their public condemnation. For instance, a minister from the Islamist party, Khalid Samad, supported the raid on the gay bar and hoped that it would prevent the spread of LGBT culture into Malaysian

society (Lily Jamaluddin, 2018). Former deputy minister for public affairs, Dr Lee Boon Chye, mentioned that LGBT individuals possess an “organic disorder” while the minister for religious affairs, Mujahid Yusof Rawa, stated that “proactive measures to curb the growing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender issues, and help them to return to the right path and lead a normal life” would be taken by the government (The Guardian, 2018). Former deputy prime minister and member of People’s Justice Party (PKR) Wan Azizah Wan Ismail expressed her views in a more conciliatory tone, saying that equal rights should be given to LGBT people if they can keep their “practice” private and avoid “glamourising their lifestyle” (Lily Jamaluddin, 2018; The Guardian, 2018).

Meanwhile, some politicians have vocalized their support for gay rights. Several politicians from the more liberal, urban DAP including former deputy minister for women, family and community development Hannah Yeoh, demanded that discrimination against the LGBT community be put to an end. She also expressed that the physical and verbal attacks suffered by transgender individuals were violations of their human rights (Lily Jamaluddin, 2018). Furthermore, a politician from the PH coalition, Charles Santiago, was among those who stood up for the community and advocated against the discrimination of LGBT individuals (The Guardian, 2018). He called for the government to stop demonizing the LGBT community and expressed hope that Malaysian society can be transformed based on equality and justice (Tashny Sukumaran, 2019). Therefore, it can be observed that criminal punishments, conversion programmes that attempt to change individuals’ gender identity or sexual orientation as well as sentiments from government officials that are anti-LGBT actively diminishes the Malaysian LGBT community’s basic rights.

2.2 LGBT and Media Framing in Malaysian Media

Syamsul Zahri Subir (2019) examined how two Malay language newspapers in Malaysia, which include *Berita Harian* and *Utusan Malaysia* covered homosexuality from the period of 1998 to 2012. He discovered that there were limited studies on homosexuality coverage in the Malaysian media; therefore, his study aimed to gain a better understanding into how Malaysian newspapers were employed in constructing coverage on homosexuality issues by using an adapted version of Huckin's study (2002) of qualitative content analysis. His findings revealed that both newspapers provided media coverage on LGBT-related news despite it being a topic subject to condemnation in Malaysia. Social-cultural-political aspects influences the framing of homosexuality issues in the media to a certain degree with most of the coverage citing government officials, religious institution and Malay based non-government organisations as trustworthy agencies and influential voices. *Berita Harian* and *Utusan Malaysia* are Malaysian mainstream newspapers owned and controlled by ruling coalition government parties. Therefore, this study argued that the coverage described homosexuality using negative words and homophobic language to uphold the government's dominant ideology and serve the interest of dominant Malay political hegemony. The newspapers were not objective, fair or independent in their reporting about homosexuality with most coverage excluding alternative viewpoints on the issue while the LGBT community possesses no power and control in the way they are represented and depicted in the coverage.

Ting, Johnson and Jerome (2021) explored how LGBT was framed in four Malaysian online newspapers, namely *The Star Online*, *MalaysiaKini*, *Free Malaysia Today* and *Astro Awani*. The study aimed to find out the percentage attributed to framing in the newspapers based on frames such as episodic and thematic, and to compare the LGBT news topics reported. Findings revealed that LGBT was backgrounded in the four online newspapers analysed with low visibility in the news. A possible reason being that LGBT continues to be a sensitive and

controversial subject in Malaysia and other nations. Results showed that a higher percentage of news articles were episodic frames which were skewed towards portraying the LGBT community negatively, citing quotations from religious leaders with anti-LGBT views. The study discovered that the coverage of local and foreign news related to LGBT differed for the newspapers analysed. *The Star Online* covered more foreign LGBT news and seemed more open to reporting articles that supported LGBT rights. Articles skewed towards discrimination and criminalisation of LGBT were met with articles promoting societal acceptance on LGBT. Meanwhile, *MalaysiaKini* and *Astro Awani* focused on local reporting which dismissed the LGBT individuals through statements made by religious and political leaders and insufficient support for LGBT other than the inclusion of activists' voice. A balanced reporting was discovered for *Free Malaysia Today* concerning local and foreign LGBT-related news.

Ting, Chuah, Jerome and Johnson (2021) studied the components that were spotlighted in LGBT-related articles in Malaysian online newspapers, namely *The Star Online*, *Free Malaysia Today*, *MalaysiaKini*, and *Astro Awani Online* using a textual analytic approach. The study examined the frequency of top ranked words to analyse the LGBT coverage in the four newspapers. Findings revealed that the Malaysian newspapers portrayed LGBT as an issue with a controversial nature which was also negatively covered. The articles depicted intolerance towards Malaysian LGBT community, the Malay and Muslim association with LGBT, and included negative comments on LGBT by government and ministerial sources. Voices of advocates and activists of LGBT rights were covered by government-linked sources. The analysis discovered that a majority of news articles by *Astro Awani* on LGBT were negative while the remaining newspapers possessed a balanced between positive and negative coverage on LGBT. Ting et al. (2021)'s study proved that a textual analytic approach can be employed to explore salient aspects concerning LGBT issues reported in newspapers, and potentially indicate how readers' attitudes are shaped by the media towards LGBT.

Kok, Zawawi and Ghazali (2019) explored the factors influencing the process of framing LGBT news in Malaysia, both internal and external, by adapting and adopting De Vreese's (2005) framing theory. By using the convenience sampling method, data was collected from news articles published by two major Malaysian news portals namely, *Malaysiakini* and *The Star*. Findings revealed that editorial policies as well as media roles and news values are internal factors that influence the way journalists organize and frame issues. External factors include the government as it can affect the way journalists frame LGBT-related news in the media. Cultural themes were another external factor discovered.

2.3 LGBT and Media Framing in Other Countries

Hamdani Syam, Nur Anisah, Rahmat Saleh and Murti Ali Lingga (2021) analysed the influence of media's ideology on the media's reporting of a reality through framing. This study focused on two mass media outlets in Indonesia with different ideologies namely, *Republika.co.id* and *Tempo.co.*, and their reporting of LGBT-related news. Findings revealed that *Republika.co.id*, an Islamic-based and nationalistic medium was more inclined towards reporting the rejection of the LGBT community in Indonesia and stigmatized LGBT-related issues. It framed LGBT as a threat that is considered serious to the country and state due to behaviours that are perceived to be against the nation's religion, social norms and laws. Meanwhile, *Tempo.co* upheld the ideology of diversity, humanity and freedom.

Wahid and Yakut (2018) examined how two online newspapers in Indonesia namely, *Detik.com* and *Republika.co.id* constructed and described LGBT-linked news by using the framing analysis method and observation techniques of online news text. Findings revealed that the reporting by the online newspapers were influenced by each outlet's ideology. *Detik.com*, the national media possessed the humanism ideology and called for readers to show sympathy towards the LGBT community who are victimized instead of judging and

discriminating them. Meanwhile, *Republika.co.id*, an Islamic-based media framed LGBT as a threat, emphasized Islamic values in its reporting and criticized activities of the LGBT community as the practices go against Islamic values. This showed that LGBT-related news were negatively framed by this particular media platform.

A study conducted by Amenaghawon and Ayantade (2019) explored the framing of homosexuality in one of Nigeria's top newspapers, *The Punch*. The content analysis method was employed to extract findings from the online version of the newspaper. Findings revealed that homosexuality was mainly framed negatively and portrayed as illegal and unacceptable to citizens. The study also investigated how two factors, the source of the reporting as well as religion, influenced the framing of homosexuality in the chosen Nigerian newspaper. Findings discovered that police or security agents were the highest source of framing whereby homosexuality was framed as illegal most of the time. Religious leaders were the third-highest source of content on homosexuality revealing that religion did not influence the presentation or reporting of homosexuality in the newspaper to a very large extent.

Hurd, Mahal, Ng and Kanagasingam (2020) examined the portrayal of senior LGTBQ adults in mainstream newspapers and popular magazines in Canada. The study's sampling consisted of 190 English stories reported by national online news website, newspapers, provincial newspapers and well known magazines with the highest readerships comprising of and catered to the mature market. A content analysis and a thematic analysis of the stories were conducted. The study revealed three main findings. First, senior LGBTQ members were underrepresented in the media which suggested that aging LGBTQ individuals are deemed as less newsworthy by the mainstream media. The researchers suggested that older LGBTQ individuals are considered less important topics by the media resulting in lower number of articles. This showed the marginalization of the community and reflected the perceptions of company owners, editors and reporters which were of a heterosexist nature. Second, older

LGBTQ individuals were often portrayed as victims of historical and ongoing discrimination, social exclusion and abuse. These depictions highlighted that senior LGBTQ adults experienced social injustice and highlighted the necessity for consistent changes in cultural and policy-based aspects. Third, senior LGBTQ individuals were portrayed as exceptional individuals for others to look up to because they had successfully triumphed over mistreatments and became icons in the media landscape.

Magrath (2019) explored the LGBT media representation in sports media in the United Kingdom and United States. The researchers conducted interviews in a semi-structured approach with 12 openly gay men currently employed in sports media. The study added to the comprehensiveness of findings documenting the growing acceptance of sexual minorities in the sports landscape. This research also focused on the evolution of LGBT coverage in sports media. Findings revealed that 8 of the 12 participants expressed that the media coverage of LGBT athletes has improved. Although most of them pointed out how gay professional athletes from previous generations were outed by the media, they emphasized that this was no longer the case in recent years. Participants recognized that journalists do not practice looking for a “scoop” by outing a professional gay athlete anymore. The researchers suggested that this is proof that the cultural context is changing for LGBT athletes who are experiencing a growing cultural acceptance towards them. Participants suggested that this change was primarily attributed to a higher awareness among those working in sports media. Another reason for the mentioned shift was due to the ethical guidelines being introduced in the media, such as the Guidelines on LGBT Reporting in accordance with the NUJ’s Code of Conduct (NUJ 2014) and the United Kingdom’s National Union of Journalists’ (NUJ).

A study conducted by Jacobs and Meeusen (2020) explored how LGBTs were represented in television news in Flanders, Belgium in aspects such as visibility, active representation, tone and framing. The researchers conducted a longitudinal content analysis of

daily news stories concerning LGBT individuals from 1986 to 2017 on the main broadcaster in Flanders known as *VRT*. Findings revealed that LGBT issues garnered more attention over time. However, LGBT people were less likely to be granted a voice or represented visually. Gay men were represented in a more active manner compared to lesbians and transgender individuals. Results suggest that although news stories depicting LGBT individuals as the root of negativity have reduced, news about LGBTs remain negatively biased. Patterns in framing have changed whereby there was a decrease in deviance and abnormality frames and an increase in frames namely victim and equal rights. In terms of tone and framing, the patterns were similar for gay men, lesbians and transgender individuals.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Media coverage allows people to know about events concerning the community. Audiences obtain information about their surroundings or reality from the media. Framing explains the way media understands events and interprets them into a particular form, which is news. When the media views events from a certain standpoint, it uses a frame to form a reality and that reality is then seen by the public. Hence, the way media frames issues affects the interpretations of people's realities (Hamdani Syam et al., 2021).

Research conducted by Arowolo (2017) to understand framing theory presented a deeper insight into the mentioned theory. His findings suggested that framing theory is formed on a basis that the media devotes attention towards particular events and then categorizes them into areas that represent certain meaning. Framing theory explains that how something is shown to the audience is called "the frame" which organizes or structures the meaning of the message. The theory states that the media introduces news items with predefined and narrowed contextualisation to create this frame. Frames can be created to enhance audience's

understanding, influence how they process that information or serve as cognitive shortcuts linking news items to the bigger picture (Arowolo, 2017).

Framing theory is widely used by communication scholars to observe the media's selection process and investigate the media's reporting of reality from different aspects. By employing the concept of framing in studies, it is an attempt to explore how journalists employ different perspectives when determining news topics and engaging in news writing (Hamdani Syam et al., 2021).

Framing can be described as the way information is presented in the news which involves the information selection process (Jacobs and Meeusen, 2020). Every published content is framed in a certain way. Frames serve to organize messages and form an angle on how issues are reported in the news. Frames allow journalists to provide audiences with a simpler interpretation of events and to reduce complexity in news reporting (Jacobs and Meeusen, 2020). By relying on frames, it enables journalists to provide their audiences with a simpler version of events. The selection of frames by media outlets are influenced by several factors such as political agendas as well as newsmakers' norms and values. Although journalists strive for objectivity in their reporting, media framing may cause some aspects of a news story to be represented in a certain frame at the expense of other perspectives, favouring one side over another, thus always resulting in some degree of bias (Liu, Guo, Mays, Betke, 2019; Jacobs and Meeusen, 2020). For instance, frames can be utilized to portray support for or opposition to any issue. Audiences may turn any agenda set by the media into public discourse which may subsequently influence how the audiences respond or relate with it leading to the formation of their realities based on this reaction (Amenaghawon and Ayantade, 2019). Figure 1 below shows the research framework consistent with the research questions and objectives proposed for this study.

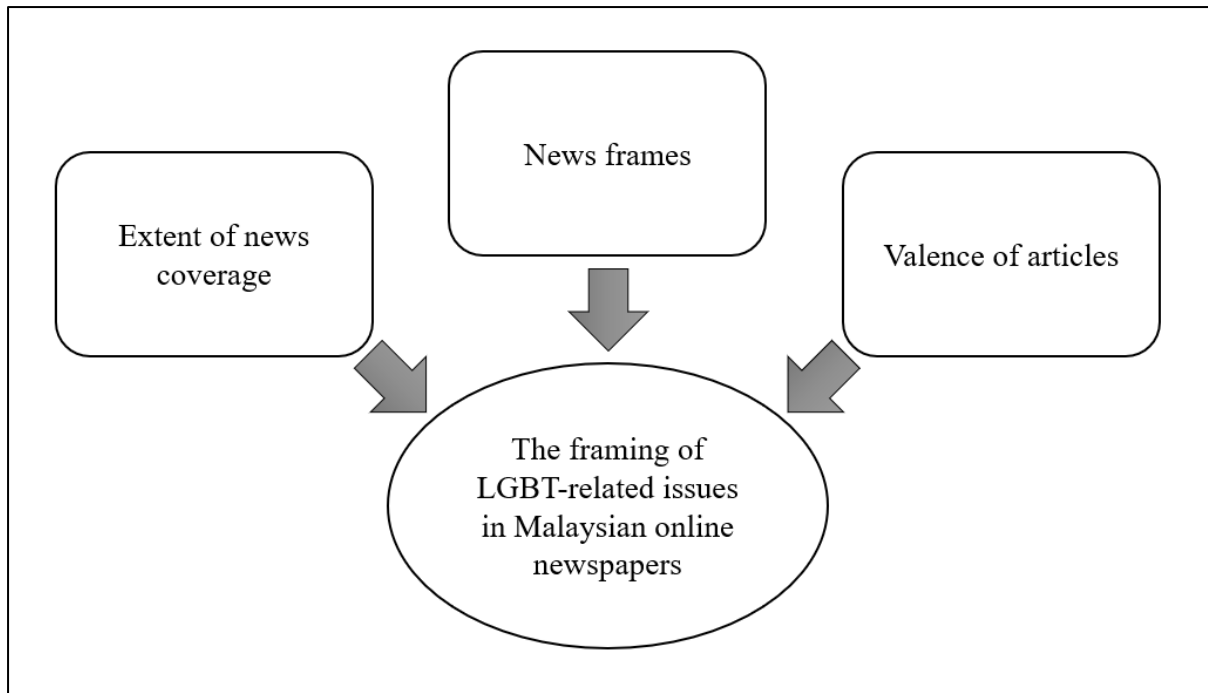


Figure 1. *The research framework*

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method of Study

The method used in this study is content analysis, defined as “...a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e., text)” (Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, 2022, para. 1). Using content analysis, the meanings, presence and relationships between selected words, concepts or themes can be quantified and analysed. Various forms of text can be analysed in a single study. Before analysing the text, the text must first be sorted into categories. These categories are known as “codes”. Then, the codes are classified again to further summarize the data collected (Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, 2022). Various framing studies have employed the content analysis method. In this paper, message characteristics such as extent of coverage, news frames and valence of articles on LGBT issues would be content analysed.

3.2 Selected Newspapers

Two Malaysian newspapers were selected based on their popularity in terms of having the highest circulation rate compared with other newspapers. The two online newspapers were *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini*, each representing a mainstream newspaper and an alternative newspaper, respectively. The mentioned newspapers are the two most widely read online news portals by Malaysians (Chu, 2019). Both newspapers provide its audiences with news reporting of a high quality on a wide range of national and international issues and are distributed across the nation. The reason for selecting online newspapers instead of printed newspapers was because of convenient access to readers.

Founded in 1971, *The Star* is the country's leading English daily with an extensive reach of more than 1.5 million readers on a daily basis (Audit Bureau of Circulations Malaysia, 2018). *The Star* recorded 86,667 copies for its digital version and 151,623 printed copies in circulation from July to December 2018 (Goh, 2019). Meanwhile, *MalaysiaKini*'s articles are published in four languages which are English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil. Its independent news reporting reaches over 2.5 million readers every month (Malaysian Digital Association, 2018). Both newspapers own their respective online sites reflecting similar content in their print edition.

3.3 Sampling and Coding Procedure

This research involved a content analysis of every LGBT-related article in Malaysia covered by two online news portals, namely *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini*. The data for the content analysis were taken from articles reporting on LGBT issues in Malaysia from 1 January 2021 to 31 October 2022. The reason behind the selected period of study is to obtain current findings on the topic. Individual articles comprising of straight news, features, editorials and opinions were analysed. Only articles that concerned LGBT-related issues were included for analysis. For articles published by *MalaysiaKini*, this study selected only English articles because news stories written in the other three languages were mainly translated from the English version of the news story.

Google Web Search was used to obtain relevant articles by searching the domain names of the two local media outlets selected— “site:thestar.com.my” and “site:malaysiakini.com”. LGBT related keywords were used in the search such as “LGBT”, “homosexual” and “same-sex”. These keywords were selected to reliably find all news stories which presented LGBT as the central narrative. Then, search results were narrowed down using date filters. The date filter was set accordingly for the Google search engine results page to display only news articles

published from 1 January 2021 until 31 October 2022. By doing so, more refined search results were obtained. News articles that appeared in the search results were inspected manually to determine if the story mainly revolved around LGBT issues. Within the period under study, local and foreign-based news concerning LGBT issues were gathered while duplicate stories and articles with brief, incidental and insignificant mentions were removed to collect the most relevant clips.

The coding was organized in a manner consistent with the RQ's: (1) extent of news coverage; (2) news frames, and (3) valence of articles. To determine the extent of coverage, these variables were used: (1) number of news items; (2) news type and (3) local and foreign-based news.

News frames serve to indicate the essence of an issue (Liu, 2019). The selection of news frames for this study was adopted based on prior research conducted by Jacobs and Meeusen (2020). The articles analysed in this study were classified into news frames such as: (1) Deviance; (2) Abnormality; (3) Religion; (4) Victim, and (5) Equal rights. The operational definitions for each news frame are listed below:

1. Deviance — depicts LGBT individuals as different, immoral, having deviant sexual behaviour, displaying criminal behaviour and promiscuity, a threat to the social order, outgroups that go against society's dominant focus on heterosexuality.
2. Abnormality — emphasizes homosexuality as unnatural, an abnormal way of life and a mental disorder.
3. Religion — includes religious arguments about LGBT, places the LGBT topic in a religious context, emphasizes religious or traditional belief systems and includes voices from religious leaders condemning homosexual behaviour.
4. Victim — represents LGBT persons as victims of discrimination and physical violence.

5. Equal rights — stresses equal rights for LGBT individuals, highlights voices that support and advocate for LGBT rights, portrays the LGBT community as a group with valid demands, focuses on the struggle for others to recognize their rights as human beings and to ensure equal opportunities for LGBT people.

In addition, an article's tone or slant is described as valence. Previous research placed an emphasis on the implication of media content about minority groups from the social aspect, in terms of valence (Graf, Linhartova and Sczesny, 2019). Valence is attributed as an aspect capable of bringing out readers' mood through messages in the media (Lee and Wong, 2020). As readers' mood influence their thought process and behaviour, it may also impact how they interpret the message's information. News tone impacts the salience and reception of certain issues. Due to the tone, public opinion can be steered in a certain direction (Sheafer, 2007; as cited in Jacobs and Meeusen, 2020). The audience has a higher possibility of internalizing the dominant tone while judging outgroups, whether it be positively or negatively covered (Jacobs & Van der Linden, 2018).

This study adopted the tonality assessment method employed by Pellot (2020). Every article was evaluated individually and categorised according to their tones using codes such as "Positive/Neutral", "Incomplete" and "Negative". The number of articles published by both media outlets on LGBT issues was determined and analysed to present an overall assessment of the tone. In order to determine which tone category an article would be parked under; multiple indicators were identified. Figure 2 below shows the rationale framework adapted from Pellot (2020)'s study. If a clip had indicators from a column, the clip was assigned to that tone category.

Coverage Tone Matrix		
Positive/Neutral Coverage	Incomplete Coverage	Negative Coverage
Includes sufficient LGBTQI+ and ally voices	Includes insufficient LGBTQI+ and ally voices	Includes zero LGBTQI+ or ally voices
Challenges negative myths/stereotypes	Repeats myths/stereotypes without adequate interrogation	Perpetuates negative myths/stereotypes
Has a fair, balanced, and objective approach	Has an objective approach but unjust weighting of sources or information	Displays clear bias, moralizing, fearmongering, sensationalizing, prejudice, ridicule, and so on
Uses accessible language	Uses inaccurate or inadequate explanation of terms/jargon	Uses stereotypical, biased, dog-whistle language
Uses accurate and inclusive terminology	Misuses terms but with no apparent malice	Uses discriminatory or dehumanizing terms
Includes accurate factual research, history, and context	Relies on insufficient or questionable research, history, and context	Uses false or only negative research, history, and context
Takes source safety seriously (anonymity, etc.)	Inadequately addresses or acknowledges source safety.	Shows dangerous or deliberate disregard for source safety
Uses relevant affirming visuals/photos	Uses generic (rainbow flag-type) visuals/photos	Uses demonizing visuals/photos

Figure 2. *Rationale framework for coverage tone matrix*

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

This section compiled important information according to the three aspects: (1) the extent of news coverage, (2) news frames, and (3) valence of articles associated to the framing of LGBT-related issues in Malaysian online newspapers, *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini*. Within the period under study, 70 news stories related to LGBT issues were analysed. The following are the analyses which are presented in the form of each variable's frequency and percentage. Table 1 below presents the breakdown of the 70 LGBT-related news articles that were gathered from the two newspapers' online sites. *The Star Online* devoted the greatest number of news items (39 articles), followed by *MalaysiaKini* (31 articles). Overall, it can be said that the subject was more extensively covered by *The Star Online* (55.7%) compared to *MalaysiaKini* (44.3%).

Table 1

Number of LGBT-related articles from the two newspapers

Newspaper	Number of Articles (n=70)	
	n	%
The Star Online	39	55.7
MalaysiaKini	31	44.3
Total	70	

4.1 Intensity of Coverage

Overall, both newspapers published a total of 70 articles on LGBT-related issues. Table 2 below displays that the most frequently featured news type is straight news, representing 87.1% of the total coverage on LGBT-related issues. This was followed by feature articles with 7.1% while opinion pieces formed 5.7% of the total coverage across the two newspapers. None of the news articles gathered consisted of editorials. There are significant differences in terms of how each newspaper covered LGBT-related issues. A higher percentage of feature articles were published by *The Star Online* (7.7%) compared to *MalaysiaKini* (6.5%). Interestingly, all opinion pieces found in this study were published by *MalaysiaKini* (12.9%).

In addition, Table 3 below displays that more than half (51.4%) of the articles were linked to LGBT issues in Malaysia while 48.6% of articles were related to LGBT events in other nations. The percentage of local and foreign-based LGBT-related news articles significantly differed in both newspapers. *The Star Online* published more foreign-based LGBT-related news (71.8%) and placed less emphasis on local LGBT news (28.2%). Contrastingly, *MalaysiaKini* is more focused on local LGBT news (80.6%) compared to foreign-based news (19.4%).

Table 2*Coverage and news types on LGBT-related issues*

	The Star Online		MalaysiaKini		Both newspapers	
	(n=39)		(n=31)		(n=70)	
News type	n	%	n	%	n	%
Straight news	36	92.3	25	80.6	61	87.1
Features	3	7.7	2	6.5	5	7.1
Opinions	0	0.0	4	12.9	4	5.7
Editorials	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 3*Local and foreign-based LGBT-related news in the two online newspapers analysed*

	The Star Online		MalaysiaKini		Both newspapers	
	(n=39)		(n=31)		(n=70)	
News type	n	%	n	%	n	%
Local news	11	28.2	25	80.6	36	51.4
Foreign-based news	28	71.8	6	19.4	34	48.6

4.2 News Frames

Table 4 shows that the most frequently employed frames by both newspapers in their coverage of LGBT-related issues are “deviance” and “equal rights”, representing an equal percentage of 42.9% each. This is followed by the “victim” frame (10.0%) while the least utilized frames are “religion” (2.8%) and “abnormality” (1.4%). *The Star Online* employed “equal rights” as the most dominant frame in their coverage of LGBT-related issues (48.7%). The second frame found in *The Star Online* was “deviance” (41.0%) followed by “religion” (5.1%). Meanwhile, both “victim” and “abnormality” were the least employed frames in *The Star Online*’s articles (2.6%). Meanwhile, *MalaysiaKini* adopted “deviance” as its most salient frame (45.1%). This was followed by “equal rights” (35.5%) and “victim” (19.4%). There were no articles framed using the “abnormality” and “religion” frames by *MalaysiaKini*.

Table 4

News frames for LGBT-related issues

News Frames	The Star Online (n=39)		MalaysiaKini (n=31)		Both newspapers (n=70)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Deviance	16	41.0	14	45.1	30	42.9
Equal rights	19	48.7	11	35.5	30	42.9
Victim	1	2.6	6	19.4	7	10.0
Abnormality	1	2.6	0	0.0	1	1.4
Religion	2	5.1	0	0.0	2	2.8

4.3 Tone of Coverage

Table 5 below exhibits that most articles covering LGBT-related issues by both newspapers were written in a “positive/neutral” tone (74.3%) while the remaining were in a “negative” tone (25.7%). *The Star Online* published more “positive/neutral” articles (76.9%) compared to *MalaysiaKini* (71.0%). A higher percentage of articles with a “negative” tone were contributed by *MalaysiaKini* (29.0%) than *The Star Online* (23.1%).

Table 5

Valence for LGBT-related issues

	The Star Online		MalaysiaKini		Both newspapers	
	(n=39)		(n=31)		(n=70)	
Tone	n	%	n	%	n	%
Positive/neutral	30	76.9	22	71.0	52	74.3
Incomplete	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Negative	9	23.1	9	29.0	18	25.7

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study explored how LGBT-related issues were framed in two online newspapers in Malaysia, namely, *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini*. The discussion of the findings included a sample of references and quotes extracted from certain articles to further illustrate how LGBT issues were described and constructed. This study produced several significant findings.

Overall, a total of 70 news articles were devoted to LGBT-related issues by both newspapers. The data illustrated that only a small gap existed between the total number of articles published by each newspaper. *The Star Online* had 39 articles while *MalaysiaKini* had 31 articles, presenting a difference of only 8 articles between both newspapers. Based on the number of articles published by each newspaper, it can be said that *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini* displayed relatively equal attention to LGBT-related news.

Based on the number of LGBT-related articles published during the period of study, the salience of LGBT news seems to be downplayed. Among the two newspapers, *The Star Online* provided LGBT-linked issues slightly more visibility. However, publishing 39 articles on LGBT over the period of 22 months, nearly two years, is not particularly extensive. The same can be said for the coverage provided by *MalaysiaKini* with only 31 articles over the same period, reflecting that LGBT-linked issues were also backgrounded. On average, it would mean that only a maximum of two news articles about LGBT-linked persons or events are published every month by the two Malaysian newspapers analysed. This reflects that a limited number of articles are devoted to LGBT-related topics. This result is supported by Ting et al. (2021) and Syamsul Zahri Subir (2019)'s research findings that LGBT news were not widely covered in Malaysian newspapers. Syamsul Zahri Subir (2019) stated that the media places emphasis on

certain issues in their coverage. This can be seen in terms of the allocation of a larger proportion of news by placing an issue in a more prominent manner in the newspapers, which will affect the saliences of these issues among the newspaper's readerships. Therefore, the lack of homosexuality coverage in Malaysia is due to the media placing lesser emphasis on LGBT-linked issues (Syamsul Zahri Subir, 2019).

Several reasons could be attributed for the limited coverage on LGBT-related issues in Malaysian newspapers. Firstly, LGBT is still considered a sensitive and controversial issue in Malaysia and other nations. "At least 67 countries have national laws criminalizing same-sex relations between consenting adults. In addition, at least nine countries have national laws criminalizing forms of gender expression that target transgender and gender nonconforming people" (Human Rights Watch, 2022, para. 1). Furthermore, several articles by *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini* cited Malaysian laws such as Section 377 which criminalizes "carnal intercourse against the order of nature", which further emphasizes that homosexuality is not accepted and is illegal in this nation.

Another reason might be due to certain gatekeeping processes practiced by Malaysian newspaper organizations. News media has the power to choose and control what information is received by the audience. Several aspects such as journalistic gatekeeping and editorial oversight play a role in this matter (Olsen et al., 2022). "Gatekeeping, specifically in the form of editorial oversight by professional journalists, could serve as a necessary vetting of information in a situation when such quality control and information guidance is particularly important" (Olsen et al., 2022, para. 2). Essentially, gatekeepers determine which information is perceived to have certain significance to the public and filter those which are considered the opposite. In this context, journalists and editors serve as gatekeepers. As LGBT is considered a deviant behaviour which contradicts the dominant value held by a majority of the Malaysian society, editors act as gatekeepers in the media landscape and have authority to edit the news

written by reporters and decide whether or not to publish them. Therefore, it is possible that articles on certain taboo issues such as LGBT news receive little coverage in the media. This finding is supported by Kok et al. (2019)'s study which discovered that editorial policies, media roles, news values and the government can affect the way journalists frame LGBT-related news in the media.

Another noteworthy finding was that straight news was the most published news type in the coverage of LGBT news by both newspapers. Straight news refers to stories that report the most crucial information in an impartial and concise manner. The most newsworthy information is placed at the beginning of the article according to the inverted pyramid style (Roberts, n.d.). This type of news is commonly based on facts and thorough research (Masterclass, 2021). Straight news articles have a factual-based approach that provides basic information such as the who, what, where, why, when and how. The domination of this fact-based reporting limits results in a top-down communication format (Lee, 2020). The reason for this finding could be because the landscape of the mainstream media is still controlled in a strict manner. The media is subject to several ownership structures and legislative mechanisms whereby compliance is ensured (Lee, 2020). Therefore, fact-based reporting, compared to other news types, is a safe way of ensuring the media adheres to media laws and regulations. Journalists or the media, in general, may be guilty of perpetuating inaccurate or biased content in their news coverage, especially for topics which are considered controversial such as LGBT where there is a higher risk of misrepresenting the LGBT community and spreading negative myths and stereotypes in their news content.

In addition, it is important to note the significant differences in the coverage of local and foreign-based news by each newspaper. This suggests that readers' attitudes toward LGBT may be influenced by each newspaper in a different manner. *The Star Online* was oriented towards reporting foreign news on LGBT while *MalaysiaKini* emphasised local news. *The Star*

Online's reporting of LGBT was more inclined to articles that advocate for equal rights for LGBTs. Most news stories included general expressions of support affirming human rights of LGBT, represented them as a social group with legitimate demands and focused on the struggle to respect human rights and to ensure equal opportunities. Therefore, *The Star Online*'s readers may form their own viewpoints about LGBT in a broader sense compared to readers of newspapers with more local news reporting on LGBT. On the other hand, *MalaysiaKini* placed more emphasis on local news in which most of its news stories about events or issues linked to LGBT were portrayed in an objective approach.

Secondly, the study discovered that the “deviance” and “equal rights” were the top frames adopted in news articles published by both newspapers. This shows that articles representing an incline towards discrimination and criminalisation of LGBT were balanced with articles on human rights for LGBT. The deviance frame employed in news articles can greatly influence audiences. In the context of LGBT news, the deviance frame is frequently used to negatively portray LGBT. This was depicted through the inclusion of voices and quotations from religious and political leaders which were usually negative towards LGBT. News stories stressed immoral and deviant behaviour ascribed to LGBTs with an absence of voices from activists or allies that support LGBT. It can be said that there was an exclusion of LGBT ally voices and a heavier inclusion of statements with clear bias, discriminatory nature and moralizing language pro-claiming Malaysia's official stance of Malaysia on LGBT.

Particular news articles from *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini* were parked under the “deviance” frame as they included a heavy number of quotations from government ministers and religious leaders referring to LGBT as an “inappropriate culture”, groups that carry out “unhealthy activities”, have “uncivilised elements” and lead a “risky lifestyle”. Statements that emphasize LGBT as a group that goes against dominant societal values were also detected, “If nothing is done to stem this tide, this lifestyle that goes against our local values will gain wide

societal acceptance, especially if it's prevalent among university students." It was expressed in other articles that heavier punishments on LGBT individuals are necessary "to address their wrongdoings." Discriminatory terms were also included from a religious leader's statement, "The officer needs to prove that the 'mak nyah' is in a public place and was there for some immoral purposes." The views of religious leaders were heavily emphasized in another article, "It [LGBT culture] is a strong stimulus for moral deviance, especially among young people. This will also drag them towards committing crimes, violence, and drug addiction." Concerning the proposal for heavier penalties for LGBT individuals, the following quotes were included in several articles, "What the deputy minister is proposing is an act of love to save them (LGBT people) from continued gender confusion and sin", "We need to strengthen existing laws, as LGBT activists and icons are promoting a toxic lifestyle openly through social media", "We should be concerned about the threat of LGBT ideologues who are infiltrating this region" (The Star Online, 2021; The Star Online, 2022; MalaysiaKini, 2021; MalaysiaKini, 2022).

There are several reasons that can be attributed to this finding. Firstly, the way LGBT news was framed in Malaysia is meant to reflect dominant societal views. In Ting et al. (2021)'s study, LGBT issues were mostly negatively covered with unfavourable comments from government sources. News articles depicted a low tolerance towards LGBT. This finding is also consistent with Syamsul Zahri Subir (2019)'s finding which displayed that homosexuality coverage was not inclined towards the progressive content and was constructed in a negative manner to uphold the interest of dominant Malay political hegemony. This finding is further supported by framing studies conducted in other countries on similar topics related to LGBT. Hamdani Syam et al. (2021)'s reported that a newspaper in Indonesia framed LGBT as a threat that should be taken seriously because the behaviour is considered to be against the nation's religion, social norms and laws. A similar result was found by Amenaghawon and Ayantade

(2019) in which Nigerian newspapers mainly framed LGBT negatively and portrayed them as illegal and unacceptable to citizens.

The “equal rights” frame utilised in *The Star Online* and *MalaysiaKini*’s news articles included the citation of voices and quotations from activists in support of LGBT. Relevant research findings in the past support this result. Ting et al. (2021) discovered that *The Star Online* was more inclined to report articles that affirmed human rights of LGBT while the other Malaysian newspapers selected had a balance between positive and negative coverage on LGBT. Moreover, Hamdani Syam (2021) found that an Indonesian news site embraces the ideology of diversity, freedom and humanity in its reporting. News stories revolved around how LGBT are members of the community and are part of human rights that Indonesians should respect. In addition, Wahid and Yakut (2018) discovered that another Indonesia news portal possessed the humanism ideology and called for readers’ sympathy towards those LGBT individuals who were victimized instead of judging and discriminating them.

Certain articles published by both newspapers were categorised under the “equal rights” frame as they contained the following statements and voices that emphasized human rights for LGBT. For instance, “...LGBT have the right to go to medical establishments, and they have the right to be treated equally” and “To express the strong commitment of the United States to ending discrimination wherever it occurs and ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and humanity, we simply cannot leave any of you behind.” Statements by human rights activists calling for recognition of LGBT rights were also detected, “We’re going to fight with you for equality and human rights.” Quotations by LGBT allies expressing the struggle for LGBT rights were also detected, “Russia denied us the right that we were fighting for years, Russia denied us the Pride, our march of equality that we are holding every year since 2012 in Kyiv... That is why we are marching in Warsaw” (The Star Online, 2021; The Star Online, 2022; MalaysiaKini, 2021; MalaysiaKini, 2022).

Other than that, most of the coverage on LGBT-related issues was portrayed in a positive or neutral tone. The articles had a fair, balanced and objective approach in reporting about LGBT issues. Sufficient voices and quotations from LGBT individuals and LGBT allies were included in most of the articles to challenge myths and stereotypes about the LGBT community. However, findings from past research showed contrasting results. LGBT news were mostly negatively covered in the Malaysian media landscape (Ting et al, 2021; Syamsul Zahri Subir, 2019). However, it can be said that since most of the articles were covered in a “positive/neutral” tone, both newspapers may have avoided taking a stance on the LGBT phenomenon. Their stance on LGBT was not directly shown as the articles analysed were found to have a balance of quotations from religious leaders referring to LGBT in a negative manner and quotations from activists supporting LGBT rights.

To conclude, this study produced noteworthy findings of how LGBT-related issues are framed in online Malaysian newspapers. As this paper focused solely on two major English language newspapers in Malaysia, this can be considered one of the limitations of this study. Therefore, future research should consider investigating a wider selection of newspapers, especially Chinese and Tamil newspapers in Malaysia to expand the understanding of framing in non-English-language newspapers which can further contribute to this body of research. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that there are multiple established human rights organisations which have been spearheading the fight for LGBT rights in Malaysia for decades. This subject matter should be explored in terms of how LGBT rhetoric by these organisations is framed in the media landscape to portray viewpoints from a side with strong stance and support of LGBT. This leads to another suggestion for future research to examine the perceptions of Malaysians on the way LGBT issues are framed in the media as the findings may shed light on the level of support, acceptance, tolerance and rejection towards LGBT issues among the Malaysian society.

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Appendix A

Excel Spreadsheet for Articles Published by *The Star Online*

The Star Online							
Link	Date	Headline	Local / Foreign-based	News Type	News Frame	Tone	
https://ww	20-Jan-21	Minister: Heavier punishments on LGBT not ruled out	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative	
https://ww	14-Apr-21	Mexican Netflix street vendor star 'Lady Tacos' eyes jump to political stage	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	16-Jun-21	Soccer-UEFA sent report on homophobic banner at Budapest Euro match	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	26-Jun-21	No 'third gender' for Malaysia, says minister	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative	
https://ww	30-Oct-21	The wins and woes of Hong Kong's rainbow families – has city made progress on policy and law for LGBT community?	Foreign	Feature	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	30-Nov-21	Govt cannot regulate online streaming platforms such as Netflix, says Annuar Musa	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative	
https://ww	15-Dec-21	Total of 287 unnatural sex cases between 2019 and Nov 2021, Parliament told	Local	Straight news	Abnormality	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	4-Feb-22	China moves to kill romantic gay-themed 'boys' love' dramas amid wider crackdown on entertainment industry	Local	Feature	Deviance	Negative	
https://ww	10-Mar-22	Jakim has developed plan to tackle growing LGBT issues, says Minister	Local	Straight news	Religion	Negative	
https://ww	18-Mar-22	Removal of Jakim's LBGTC conversion app from Google Play Store is 'unfortunate', says Idris Ahmad	Local	Straight news	Religion	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	26-Apr-22	'Doctor Strange' sequel banned in Saudi Arabia	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	4-Jun-22	China's gay youth wanting to expand rights at home seek a different path to LGBT campaigners in the West	Local	Feature	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	5-Jun-22	Thailand's Bangkok Pride parade brings carnival to Silom from Sunday (June 5) onwards	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	14-Jun-22	Disney/Pixar's 'Lightyear', with same-sex couple, will not play in Malaysia and 13 countries; China in question	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	18-Jun-22	Thousands join Singapore gay rights rally	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	25-Jun-22	Thousands unite in Polish, Ukrainian LGBT+ parades in Warsaw	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	26-Jun-22	Filipina wins transgender pageant in Thailand, the world's largest and most popular transgender pageant	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	16-Jul-22	Thousands take part in Seoul LGBT festival, protesters rally	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	31-Jul-22	Fears grow among people that homophobia may hinder monkeypox fight in Indonesia	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	9-Aug-22	Being gay is not a disease, Vietnam tells medical workers	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	10-Aug-22	Censorship of LGBT elements in movies, social media to continue, says Zahidi	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative	
https://ww	21-Aug-22	Singapore's religious leaders outline positions on repeal of gay-sex law	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	22-Aug-22	End of Singapore's gay sex ban a 'small step' for some LGBT couples	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	31-Aug-22	Russia considers doubling fines for 'LGBT propaganda' in new law	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Negative	
https://ww	1-Sep-22	Set controls, guidelines for art and cultural activities, says Penang Mufti	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative	
https://ww	7-Sep-22	Gulf states demand Netflix pull content deemed offensive	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Negative	
https://ww	27-Sep-22	'Very real fears' for LGBT community after far-right win in Italy	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	13-Oct-22	Soccer-LGBT safety should be considered in awarding hosting rights: Cavallo	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	15-Oct-22	Singapore penalises Vogue magazine for promoting 'Non-Traditional Families', breached content guidelines on four occasions	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	18-Oct-22	Iranian dancer in Turkey says she believes protests will end Tehran's cruelty	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	20-Oct-22	Singapore seeks to amend constitution to protect its definition of marriage	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	21-Oct-22	'Robbing women': Japan's sperm donation law sparks controversy	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	24-Oct-22	HRW says Qatar has detained and mistreated LGBT people ahead of World Cup	Foreign	Straight news	Victim	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	25-Oct-22	Qatar police stop protest by British LGBT activist	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	27-Oct-22	Russia moves to ban 'LGBT propaganda' among all ages	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	27-Oct-22	Australian players call out Qatar's human rights record ahead of World Cup	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	28-Oct-22	Soccer-British LGBT activist urges captains to speak out in Qatar	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	29-Oct-22	Johannesburg LGBT+ Pride marches on despite U.S. terrorism warning	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral	
https://ww	30-Oct-22	Jawi has detained 20 men for dressing in drag, say KL cops	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral	

Appendix B

Excel Spreadsheet for Articles Published by *MalaysiaKini*

MalaysiaKini						
Link	Date	Headline	Local / Foreign-based	News Type	News Frame	Tone
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/13-jan-21	13-Jan-21	State treatment of transgender women foments impunity - rights group	Local	Straight news	Victim	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/20-jan-21	20-Jan-21	LFL accuses deputy minister of using LGBT to distract from real issues	Local	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/21-jan-21	21-Jan-21	PM: Get tough on hate speech – race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/22-jan-21	22-Jan-21	LGBT: PAS women's chief sees no contradiction between PM, deputy minister	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/23-jan-21	23-Jan-21	LETTER Rights of LGBTs cannot be violated	Local	Opinion	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/23-jan-21	23-Jan-21	G25 challenges deputy minister's authority to instruct states on LGBT enforcement	Local	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/23-jan-21	23-Jan-21	PAS pushes for anti-LGBT Muslims taskforce, day after PM denounces hate speech	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/9-feb-21	9-Feb-21	Medical woes: Try stepping into the shoes of a transgender person	Local	Feature	Victim	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/10-feb-21	10-Feb-21	Orked's plight - from med student to injecting black-market hormones	Local	Feature	Victim	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/7-mar-21	7-Mar-21	LETTER Wait no more, act now on gender issues, PN!	Local	Opinion	Victim	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/18-mar-21	18-Mar-21	Japan court says it is 'unconstitutional' to bar same-sex marriage	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/25-oct-21	25-Oct-21	Free from authorities, Sajat calls for more awareness on human rights	Local	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/1-nov-21	1-Nov-21	'Gay is Okay' book could harm public order 7 years after publication: Filing	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/8-nov-21	8-Nov-21	Ti: Use science to understand LGBT issues, not just blame the West	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/11-mar-22	11-Mar-22	Johor polls: LGBTs used to provoke conservatives - group	Local	Straight news	Victim	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/14-may-22	14-May-22	Cosmetic tycoon lands in trouble over video with drag queens	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/24-may-22	24-May-22	Indonesia summons Britain's envoy after furor over LGBT flag	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/29-may-22	29-May-22	Drag artists speak out on Vida music video, portrayal in media	Local	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/17-jun-22	17-Jun-22	Disney refused to screen censored version of 'Lightyear' - LPF	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/10-aug-22	10-Aug-22	Zahidi: Govt to continue censoring LGBT elements in films, social media	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/11-aug-22	11-Aug-22	Stop supporting LGBT 'conversion' programmes, rights groups tell govt	Local	Straight news	Victim	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/11-aug-22	11-Aug-22	Govt confirms ban hammer falls on Thor over 'LGBT elements'	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/14-aug-22	14-Aug-22	YOURSAY Hands off citizens' personal lives, please	Local	Opinion	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/22-aug-22	22-Aug-22	LETTER S'pore decriminalises gay sex, how about M'sia?	Local	Opinion	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/23-aug-22	23-Aug-22	End of S'pore's gay sex ban a 'small step' for some LGBT couples	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/2-sep-22	2-Sep-22	Jakim should have more clout in foreign artist regulator - PAS	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/17-sep-22	17-Sep-22	Set up task force to study HIV prevalence among tertiary students: PBM leader	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Negative
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/27-sep-22	27-Sep-22	Cubans approve gay marriage by large margin in referendum	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/28-sep-22	28-Sep-22	'Very real fears' for LGBT community after far-right win in Italy	Foreign	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/21-oct-22	21-Oct-22	Singapore seeks to amend constitution to protect its definition of marriage	Foreign	Straight news	Equal rights	Positive/Neutral
https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/30-oct-22	30-Oct-22	Authorities raid KL Halloween party with drag performers	Local	Straight news	Deviance	Positive/Neutral

Appendix C

Screenshot of Article Published by *The Star Online* Using the 'Deviance' Frame

12/2/22, 7:46 AM

No 'third gender' for Malaysia, says minister | The Star

No 'third gender' for Malaysia, says minister



NATION 🔒

Saturday, 26 Jun 2021 3:26 PM MYT



PETALING JAYA (Sinar Harian): The Government does not agree with efforts to allow a "third gender" in the country, says Datuk Dr Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri (pic).

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) said this was similar to how Malaysia does not acknowledge the LGBTQ (lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community.

He said that the government's stand had to be emphasised when delivering his message during an online conference with members of the Third Gender Implications Research Committee.

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<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/06/26/no-039third-gender039-for-malaysia-says-minister>

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Appendix D

Screenshot of Article Published by *MalaysiaKini* Using the 'Deviance' Frame

12/2/22, 7:50 AM

PAS pushes for anti-LGBT Muslims taskforce, day after PM denounces hate speech

malaysiakini
news and views that matter



PAS pushes for anti-LGBT Muslims taskforce, day after PM denounces hate speech

Published: Jan 22, 2021 9:10 PM · Updated: 9:56 PM

PAS vice-president Idris Ahmad is pushing for public support of an anti-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) taskforce.

This comes a day after Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin urged Asean to take a tougher stance against hate speech, including on religion, gender, and sexual orientation...

Appendix E

Screenshot of Article Published by *The Star Online* Using the 'Equal Rights' Frame

12/2/22, 7:54 AM

End of Singapore's gay sex ban a 'small step' for some LGBT couples | The Star

End of Singapore's gay sex ban a 'small step' for some LGBT couples



By CHEN LIN

WORLD

Monday, 22 Aug 2022 9:17 PM MYT



People cheer as Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announces that Singapore will decriminalise gay sex, in Singapore, August 21, 2022, this screen grab obtained from a social media video. Boo Junfeng/via REUTERS

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Singapore's decision to lift a colonial-era ban on sex between men is long overdue and will not end discrimination of LGBT groups in the conservative city-state, rights activists and members of the gay community said on Monday.

The announcement by Singapore's prime minister to repeal the so-called 377A law on Sunday came as he also said the government would take steps to prevent legal challenges that would allow same-sex marriages to be recognised.

That has left many feeling underwhelmed by the historic move

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<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/world/2022/08/22/end-of-singapore039s-gay-sex-ban-a-039small-step039-for-some-lgbt-couples>

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Appendix F

Screenshot of Article Published by *MalaysiaKini* Using the 'Equal Rights' Frame

12/2/22, 7:56 AM

Free from authorities, Sajat calls for more awareness on human rights

malaysiakini
news and views that matter



Free from authorities, Sajat calls for more awareness on human rights

Published: Oct 25, 2021 7:58 AM · Updated: 7:58 AM

Now free from the Malaysian authorities, cosmetic entrepreneur Nur Sajat Kamaruzzaman said she has learnt more about human rights since her recent arrival in Australia, where she has been granted permanent resident status.

Speaking in a live interview with comedian Harith Iskander, Nur Sajat (*above*) expressed hope that more Malaysians, including from the LGBTQ+ community, would similarly be more aware of their own personal rights.

"I hope that we as humans, no matter LGBT, cisgender or others, we must know our rights.

"I would like to say, I want to continue with my life here and let whatever happened in Malaysia stay in the past," she said.