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**MEDIA CONSTRUCTION AND CONTESTED IDENTITY:
ANALYSING HOMOSEXUALITY IN MALAYSIAN NEWSPAPERS**

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Abstrak

Homoseksualiti ialah satu isu yang kompleks di Malaysia, memandangkan identitinya sebagai negara konservatif dengan majoriti Melayu-Muslim. Di sini, homoseksualiti bukan sahaja tidak diiktiraf tetapi juga dipandang negatif oleh masyarakat. Oleh itu, adalah tidak mengejutkan bahawa isu homoseksualiti tidak mendapat liputan dengan meluas dalam media berita di Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun, perubahan terbaru dalam politik global dan teknologi komunikasi memerlukan para pengkaji menilai penyelidikan terkini. Tambahan pula, bilangan penyelidikan, terutamanya liputan homoseksualiti dalam media Malaysia masih kurang ketara. Kajian ini mempunyai dua objektif: untuk memahami pendekatan yang digunakan surat khabar dalam membentuk liputan homoseksualiti dan untuk meneroka pemikiran komuniti homoseksualiti terhadap liputan tersebut dan gaya hidup mereka. Penyelidik menggunakan teori konstruktif sosial sebagai kaedah untuk merangka metodologi dan perbincangan hasil kajian. Objektif penyelidikan dicapai dalam dua peringkat. Peringkat pertama adalah untuk mengumpul dan menganalisis data tekstual dari akhbar *Utusan Malaysia* dan *Berita Harian* yang meliputi tempoh dari 1998 hingga 2012. Dalam tempoh tersebut, 463 liputan mengenai homoseksual dipaparkan. Penemuan ini sangat penting terutama dalam bahagian kedua penyelidikan, iaitu untuk mendapatkan pandangan daripada 10 responden homoseksual Melayu. Keseluruhannya, penemuan dari akhbar menunjukkan bahawa homoseksualiti digambarkan secara sangat negatif. Analisis yang lebih mendalam menunjukkan bahawa isu homoseksual cenderung ditonjolkan dari perspektif sosiopolitik tempatan. Hal ini ketara dalam penggunaan sumber berita yang mengutamakan individu dalam jaringan elit politik. Gambaran negatif tentang golongan homoseksual difahami sebagai sebahagian usaha mengekalkan status quo kumpulan tersebut. Selain itu, sumber maklumat juga disorot dari kaca mata sosiobudaya yang diwakili oleh elit agama. Sumber dari domain undang-undang turut mengaitkan amalan homoseksualiti dengan ketidaksejahteraan dalam lingkungan awam. Bertentangan dari dapatan ini, responden dari kajian temu bual menyatakan kesedaran yang tinggi berhubung dengan sokongan elit sosiopolitical dan sosiobudaya terhadap homoseksualiti sebagai modal politik dan budaya. Responden berpandangan bahawa liputan akhbar tentang homoseksual sepatutnya dipisahkan daripada politik dan kepentingan peribadi. Cadangan ini tidak tanpa meritnya dan sebagai penutup kajian ini menyarankan agar media berita Malaysia sepatutnya menilai semula pengagendaaan mereka sejajar dengan komuniti tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Homoseksualiti, Malaysia, Akhbar, Konstruktis Sosial, Media Berita

Abstract

Homosexuality is a complex issue in Malaysia, owing to its identity as a conservative nation with a Malay-Muslim majority. Here, homosexuality is not only unrecognized but also negatively viewed by society. It is unsurprising that the homosexuality issue is not widely covered in the news media in Malaysia. However, recent changes in global politics and communication technology require researchers to evaluate the current literature. Furthermore, the number of researches, particularly homosexuality coverage in the Malaysian media remains insignificant. This research had two objectives: to understand the approach of newspapers utilized in constructing homosexuality coverage and to explore the homosexuals community thoughts of the coverage and their lifestyles. The researcher utilized the social construction theory as a method to guide the methodology and to discuss the findings. The research objectives were achieved in two stages. The first stage was to collect and analyze the textual data from the *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* newspapers, covering the period from 1998 to 2012. During this period, 463 coverage on homosexuality were produced. The findings were invaluable in the second part of the research, to gain insights from 10 Malay homosexual respondents. Overall, the findings from the newspapers show that homosexuality is highly negativized. A much deeper analysis tells that homosexuality issues are dominated by local sociopolitical perspectives. This is evident in the use of news sources that tend to favor individuals who are closely connected to the political elites. The negative depiction of homosexuals is understood as part of an effort to maintain their established status quo. Other sources were from the religious elites who form part of the sociocultural power structure. Sources from the domain of law and order consequently frame the practice of homosexuality as detrimental to peaceful existence in the public sphere. Confronted with these findings, the respondents from interview study showed themselves to be highly aware of the support of the sociopolitical and sociocultural elites on homosexuality as political and cultural capitals. The respondents believed that homosexuality issues should be separated from politicians and their interests. This opinion is not without its merits, and in conclusion this research proposes that the news media in Malaysia should re-evaluate their agenda with respect to the community.

Keywords: Homosexuality, Malaysia, Newspaper, Social Constructionism, News Media.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Permission to Use.....	i
Abstrak	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures	x
List of Appendices	xii
List of Abbreviations.....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 An Overview	1
1.2 Background of the Study.....	2
1.3 Problem Statement	4
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.5 Research Objectives	9
1.6 Operational Definition	9
1.7 Thesis Outline	11
1.8 Significance of Study	13
CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Social Constructionism	16
2.3 The Communication Theory of Identity	21
2.4 Summary	24
CHAPTER THREE LITERATURE REVIEW	25
3.1 Introduction.....	25
3.2 Media	25
3.2.1 Media and Ideology Dissemination	25
3.2.2 Language and the Production of Hegemony in Media.....	30
3.2.3 Representations and Media Construction of Reality.....	32
3.2.4 Media in Malaysia: Media Structure and Ownership	34

3.3 Homosexuality	40
3.3.1 The Social Constructions of Homosexuality in the West.	40
3.3.2 The Historical Context of Homosexuality in Malaysia.....	42
3.3.3 Homosexuality in the Contemporary Malaysian Politics	46
3.3.4 Homosexuality and Islamic Nation in Malaysia	49
3.3.5 Coverage of Homosexuality in Malaysia.....	52
3.4 Summary	56
CHAPTER FOUR RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	57
4.1 Introduction.....	57
4.2 Content Analysis.....	58
4.2.1 Data Sampling	60
4.2.2 Time Frame and Data Collection Site.....	64
4.2.3 Data Collection Procedure	66
4.2.4 Unit of Analysis	69
4.2.5 Data Analysis	70
4.2.5.1 Data Analysis for Quantitative Content Analysis	70
4.2.5.1.1 Reliability and Validity.....	71
4.2.5.1.2 Coding Categorisation.....	72
4.2.5.2 Data Analysis for Qualitative Content Analysis	82
4.2.5.2.1 The Construction of the Themes.....	84
4.2.5.2.2 Inter-coder Reliability.....	93
4.2.5.2.3 Social Constructionism and Thematic Analysis	94
4.3 In-depth Interview.....	97
4.3.1 The Purpose of Conducting Interview	97
4.3.2 Sample of Respondents	98
4.3.3 Interview Procedures.....	101
4.3.4 Respondents Background.....	103
4.3.5 Data Analysis	107
4.3.6 Limitations	110
4.3.7 Data Trustworthiness for Qualitative Research	110
4.3.8 Ethical Issues.....	113

4.4 Summary	114
CHAPTER FIVE FINDINGS	115
5.1 Introduction	115
5.2 Findings on the Trends of the Coverage	115
5.2.1 Frequencies of the Coverage	116
5.2.1.1 Volume of the Coverage	116
5.2.1.2 Size of the Coverage	120
5.2.1.3 Tones of the Coverage	122
5.2.1.4 Placement of the Coverage.....	123
5.2.2 News Frame of the Coverage.....	133
5.2.3 Actors Appeared in the Coverage	143
5.3 Findings on the Media Construction of Homosexuality	153
5.3.1 Cultural Traditions	155
5.3.1.1 Challenge of Societal Norms	155
5.3.1.2 Challenge to Religious Tenets	163
5.3.2 Cognitive Customs.....	171
5.3.2.1 Biasness in the Political Status Quo.....	171
5.3.2.2 Homosexuality as Western Influence.....	184
5.3.2.3 Homosexuality as Mental Disorder and HIV Stigma	192
5.3.3 Rules and Shared Roles.....	200
5.3.3.1 Gay Rights and Social Movement.....	200
5.3.3.2 Law and Legislation on Homosexuals	214
5.3.4 Symbolic Codes	222
5.3.4.1 Negative Connotation	223
5.3.4.2 Emphasizing on the Islamic Narrative	225
5.4 Findings on the Perception of the Coverage and the Contested Identity	229
5.4.1. Cultural Traditions	230
5.4.1.1. Gay and Heterosexual Marriage: Damaging or Helpful?	230
5.4.1.2 Religious Content: Punishment or Enlightening?	235
5.4.2. Cognitive Customs.....	238
5.4.2.1 Political Motive and Anti-Opposition Sentiments.....	239

5.4.2.2 Western Agenda or Just a Myth?	246
5.4.2.3 Mental Disorder and HIV Stigma: A Need to Change	250
5.4.3. Rules and Shared Roles.....	259
5.4.3.1 Gay Rights: Not So Soon.....	259
5.4.3.2 Criminal Acts or Hate Crime?	266
5.4.4. Symbolic Codes	268
5.4.4.1 Biased Narratives	268
5.4.5 Media Influence and Contested Identity	271
5.4.5.1 Core Identities: Being Homo and Muslim	272
5.4.5.2 Discreet and Unseen.....	274
5.4.5.3 Self-Conflict and Struggle.....	277
5.5 Summary	281
CHAPTER SIX DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION	282
6.1 Introduction.....	282
6.2 The Discussion on the Trends of the Coverage	283
6.3 The Discussion on the Media Construction on Homosexuality.....	291
6.3.1 Negative and Unbalanced Voices	292
6.3.2 Them versus Us: The Enemy as the “Other”	295
6.3.3 Politically Motivated.....	298
6.3.4 Moral Panic	300
6.4 The Discussion on the Perception of the Coverage and Contested Identity	302
6.4.1 The Sociocultural and Religious Influences	303
6.4.2 Politicisation of Homosexuality.....	305
6.4.3 The Renegotiation of Contested Identity	309
6.5 Significance Contributions.....	315
6.6 Limitations and Future Research	319
6.7 Conclusion	321
REFERENCES.....	325

List of Tables

Table 4.1	<i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> circulation and readership from 2009 to 2013 (Source: Audit Bureau Circulation, 2016)	61
Table 4.2	Size of the coverage on homosexuality and number of words	75
Table 4.3	Tone of the coverage on homosexuality and its characteristics.....	75
Table 4.4	Placement of the coverage on homosexuality and its characteristics	77
Table 4.5	List of actors from the coverage on homosexuality and its examples	80
Table 4.6	The four main topics on homosexuality, the descriptions and the examples.....	86
Table 4.7	The four main topics that describe homosexuality with several list of subtopics.....	89
Table 4.8	Profile of the respondents	104



List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Social constructionism model.....	21
Figure 4.1: The overall distributions of homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 816$).....	67
Figure 4.2: A diagram summarizes the flow of data collection process for content analysis study	69
Figure 4.3: The Content Matrix	92
Figure 4.4: A diagram summarizes the process of data analysing in qualitative content analysis	93
Figure 4.5: The findings of the thematic coverage on homosexuality issues within social constructionism model.....	96
Figure 5.1: The distributions of homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)	117
Figure 5.2: The distributions of homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)	118
Figure 5.3: The size of homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)	121
Figure 5.4: The stance of homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)	123
Figure 5.5: The section of the newspapers for homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)	125
Figure 5.6: The section of the newspapers for homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)	126
Figure 5.7: The section of the newspaper for homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 331$)	129
Figure 5.8: The section of the newspaper for homosexuality coverage in <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 132$)	131
Figure 5.9: The news frame discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 647$)	134
Figure 5.10: The news frame discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage in <i>Utusan Malaysia</i> and <i>Berita Harian</i> from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 647$)	137

Figure 5.11: The news frame discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 407$) 139

Figure 5.12: The news frame discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage in *Berita Harian* from year 1998 to 2012 ($n = 240$) 141

Figure 5.13: The actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 419$)..... 146

Figure 5.14: The actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from year 1998 to 2012 ($n = 419$)..... 147

Figure 5.15: The actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 419$)..... 149

Figure 5.16: The actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 148$)..... 151



List of Appendices

Appendix A Coding Categories	346
Appendix B Sample of Intercoder Reliability Test.....	353
Appendix C Interview Protocol	355



List of Abbreviations

ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulations
ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia
ACCIN	Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGOs
BERSIH	Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections
BH	Berita Harian
BN	Barisan Nasional
HINDRAF	Hindu Rights Action Force
IGLHRC	The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
IRF	Islamic Renaissance Front
ISMA	Ikatan Muslim Malaysia
JAKIM	Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PAS	Parti Islam Se-Malaysia
PDRM	Polis Diraja Malaysia
PERKASA	Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia
PKR	Pakatan Keadilan Rakyat
SUHAKAM	Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia
UM	Utusan Malaysia
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 An Overview

This research seeks to explore the complex processes of homosexuality coverage in Malaysia. The researcher attempt to conduct this research by focusing on homosexuality issues from the perspective of mainstream newspapers from the period of 1998 to 2012 and examine how these newspapers cover the subject. It has been central to illustrate the coverage over time to understand how the homosexuality coverage was narrated particularly from two mainstream Malay language newspapers namely *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*. These newspapers which mainly targeted Malay readers had widely contributed to the long historical background to the Malay press and significantly shaping the Malay political hegemony and ideology. It is the researcher argument that the articulations on homosexuality coverage in the mainstream Malay news outfit were affected from the widespread Malay socio-culturo-political environment in order to sustain the dominant cultural order.

The researcher also seek to document how the institution of the mainstream society has thought about and represented this social group, specifically in a country in which subject of sexuality is frequently welded to the aspects of cultural and religion. By assessing the framework in which homosexuality issue is narrated from the mainstream newspapers, the researcher intention is to understand the position of this marginalized community to the Malaysian public. By collecting and analysing coverage related on homosexuality, the researcher also took steps to go beyond looking at the coverage in the news media whether the narration have been accurate in order to reflect upon what meanings the communicated images of homosexuality might have had particularly among homosexuals readers. The researcher specifically wants to examine how the communication might have any significance and influenced homosexual's readers' perception on the issues.

1.2 Background of the Study

Malaysia does not recognize same-sex unions nor has anti-discrimination laws for homosexuality and any deviant sexual orientation. Those convicted of homosexuals sex act can be punished with fines, incarceration of up to 20 years and caned (Hamidah, 2004). As consequence, homosexuality frequently has been seen as a criminal in Malaysia. According to Malaysian Penal Code, Chapter XVI, Article 377A (Penal Code, 1993):

Any person who has sexual connection with another person by the introduction of the penis into the anus or mouth of the other person is said to commit carnal intercourse [Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offence described in this section (Penal Code, 1993)] against the order of nature.

And the punishment for those convicted with homosexuals sex act was spelled in Article 377B:

Whoever voluntarily commits carnal intercourse against the order of nature shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to twenty years and shall also be liable to whipping (ibid).

Besides the civil law, Malaysia also practiced Islamic law that is known as Sharia law¹, which only applies to Muslims in the country. As for homosexual sex acts, the Sharia Criminal Offences Act (Federal Territories) 1997 (Act 559) states that those found guilty of sodomy (*liwat*) or lesbian relations (*musahaqah*) are liable to a fine of up to RM 5000, imprisonment for up to three years, whipping not exceeding six strokes or any combination thereof (Sharia Criminal Offences Federal Territories Act, 1997).

Despite of the legislation criminalizing of homosexual sex act in Malaysia mentioned above, apparently homosexual activities have been around in Malaysia for a long period of time but it was barely discussed publicly (Ho, 1998). It was not until the trial of the former Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim for the sodomy allegation in September 1998 becomes the spotlight of mainstream media. Anwar Ibrahim's case created huge controversy and the public uproar particularly among Muslim in the country. Anwar

¹ Malaysia is a multi-confessional country with Islam being the largest practiced religion and exercised dual system of law that includes secular law and sharia law as moral code and religious law of Islam. Sharia law deals with topics including issues of crime, politics and economics among Muslim.

Ibrahim's alleged sexual exploits were sensationalized in the media with lurid report of coverage particularly from the government-controlled media (Spaeth, 1998). With the background as the likeable leader of the Malaysia Muslim Youth Movement or Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), the nation's largest grassroots Muslim movement, Anwar's news on his sodomy allegation that were being sensationalized in the media was meant to be to destructive of his image (Nagata, 1980, p. 424).

Years later, issues surrounding homosexuality created several attentions grabbing headlines news and received extensive of the panics attack among Malaysian public. For instance, in January 2011, there was a huge public outcry following the released of the video in video sharing network YouTube from a 32 years old gay Malay man name Azwan Ismail. From the released video, Azwan Ismail openly confess his sexuality that later received multiple death threats and violence as a result of declaring his sexuality. (Shah, 2011).

Another example was a censored music from local radio stations on the explicit gay-affirming lyric bait from Lady Gaga hit single 'Born This Way' which considered as offensive within Malaysia's social and religious observances (Michaels, S., 2011). Later, several Malaysian gay rights activist has called on to protest against the radio station's decision and emphasized on the role of the radio as "a platform for marginalised voices and creating understanding" (Michaels, S., 2011). Meanwhile, in April 2011 there was the public furor against the 'boot camp' contending to toughen up 'soft' boys that later followed by the protest from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development Malaysia (Boo, 2011).

In August 2011, there is a case surrounding the High Court's rejection of a transgender Muslim woman name Aleesha Farhana appeal to change her male name to a female's name and few days later she was found death from health complication after the court decision (Ibrahim, 2011). Another example of cases surrounding homosexuality is a same-sex marriage controversy that leads to the condemnation from the public and intense argument from the newspapers between Malay Muslim men name Ariff Alfian

Rosli with his English partner in Ireland that triggered outrage specifically among Malay public. Finally, there was the resumption of Anwar's new sodomy trial (BBC News, 2011), this time on charges that surfaced in 2008. Most of these controversies issues around homosexuality were sensationalise in most of news media in Malaysia as well as in international media.

Given these controversial issues around homosexuality, from the dismissal of Anwar Ibrahim's role as Deputy of Prime Minister from the allegation of his sexual misconduct to the death threat received by Azwan Ismail's of his same-sex sexuality from the confessional video he created and several others polemics involved with homosexuality occurred around the country provides at least two tentative premises. First, it tells that Malaysia completely does not condone homosexuality throughout those evidences including from the legal perspective, religious teaching and the cultural tenet. Second, the news media played a critical role in constructing issues on homosexuality by putting the subject as a foreground topic in the newspapers which indirectly provoke the discussion widely and later give public a medium to discuss homosexuality openly.

1.3 Problem Statement

The issues on homosexuality featured in most Malaysian news media often received intensely resented from the public particularly when it involved Malay Muslim people. Knowing that Malaysia is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic country, with the Malays forming a politically significant majority, issues related with religion, ethnicity and even sexuality often becomes the politically sensitive subject including homosexuality. Any Malay Muslim in Malaysia that involved in same-sex relation and sexual activities often attributes as a failure to comply with cultural and religious expectation especially when Islam as the official religion of the country². The religion of Islam becomes the decisive marker of majority Malay Muslim in Malaysia that strictly prohibits homosexuality on the ground that it was the hideous crime and the most atrocious of human sins. Malay individual must remain grounded on the widely held notion that one must adhere to the

² Islam is constitutionally the country's official religion, with the freedom to practice other religions. Islam is an integral part of the Malaysian Malay culture, so much so that many Islamic rituals and practices are associated with the Malay culture.

heteronormative gender and sexual roles as dictated and adorned by the Malay state elites and dominant Malay Muslim.

The processes and the identity creation of Malay in Malaysia are so deeply rooted within the entrenched between ethnicity and religion. In addition, it can also equitable to enunciate that being Malay in Malaysia is constantly associated with being Muslim based from the exclusivity and irretrievable equation between ethnicity and religion. Most importantly, it was also inscribed in the Malaysian Constitution, which defines “Malay” as a person who regularly speaks Malay, observes to the Malay customs and avowed the Islamic practices and belief. Whereas the tensions and conflicts for the description of Malay are constantly being debatable, another question could be addressed is whether identities based on the same-sex sexuality are disputably acceptable to be expressed and created despite the normative cultural, ethnicity and religion within the formation of Malay identity. Similarly, if Malay identity construction itself was already fraught as a complex process from the dominant influence on what it meant to be Malay historically, how about the construction of being “queer” and “Malay” was observed?

Departed from this, by taking such contention into the media backdrop, several questions could further extended and adapted to the attitude and expression of the media on issues surrounding homosexuality particularly from the stance of mainstream Malay language newspapers. These newspapers, namely *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* that largely target Malay audience are the leading newspapers in the country with highest circulation and readership (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2013) was own and control by the government and has a policy of supporting the government agenda. These newspapers had contributed to the long historical background to the Malay press and significantly shaping the Malay political hegemony and ideology. While ideology was influenced by the role of discourse from social institution such as media (van Dijk, 1998) and media is the reflections of the dominant ideology and the prevalent ways of looking at certain events, how was the media depicted the connotations of homosexuality in their coverage from the point of mainstream Malay language

newspapers? How the ideology brings by these newspapers plays a role in the production of the concerned discourse? How the consistent themes from the coverage on homosexuality in the newspapers are being signified? Hence, detailed empirical work on the visibility and the connotation of homosexuality as depicted by these newspapers is needed in order to offer insights on the state of its representations.

A dispute exists on the state of homosexuality coverage in the media was also highlighted by The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC, 2010) on the frequent use of derogatory words in most series of articles to describe homosexuality. From the report published in their official website, it was revealed that homosexual community in Malaysia had constantly been depicted in a negative portrayal in the mainstream news media in which the organisation claimed these as a form of discrimination and hatred to gay people in the country (IGLHRC, 2010). As consequence, these 'discriminatory labels' used in the news coverage had prompted a loose coalition from Malaysian human right activists. They have sought the help of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia or known as SUHAKAM³ (Surahanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia) in putting a stop to the unethical, biased and systematic discrimination (IGLHRC, 2010) to the local news media. A memorandum was submitted to the SUHAKAM on 10 June, 2010 claiming that most local news coverage has been creating and encouraging an environment of hatred and violence that labeling gay people as criminal and immoral.

Given these points, it draw attention for this research with the broad-spectrum questions of how were newspapers in Malaysia have represented issues on homosexuality to the equally significance question of why media choose certain words to describe the community? Why issues surrounding homosexuality often presumed to receive prejudiced coverage in the media? Do the media present their real life? Are media attempting to discipline gay people through stereotypes and repression by using the

³ SUHAKAM is the national human rights institution of Malaysia. It was established by the Malaysian Parliament under the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Act 1999, Act 597 and begin its operation in April 2000. Its mandate is to promote human rights education, advice on legislation and policy and conduct investigations. The official website is <http://www.suhakam.org.my/>

derogatory terms? Or do they serve another purpose? And what do these descriptions on homosexuality signify to the society as well as to the gay community?

This research also attempts to plug the theoretical lens through the emergences between social constructionism and communication theory of identity. The contested discourse between these theories at one point is pivotal in analyzing issues of power and ideology within the hegemonic of media. The production of the subjects' identity with respect into social issues, the shared meaning becomes subjective and complex based on who, where and how the issue is publicly constructed. It is argue that if these conflicting discourses are possibility work to achieve and maintain dominance, then spaces may exist for human action to somehow exert influence, struggle and challenge the process. This theoretical underpinning attempts to explore ideas about "queerness" from the stance of mainstream newspaper and how homosexual individual response to this coverage. The theoretical underpinning was also work as the basis to seek answer of how power and ideology was asserted in the mainstream news media in propagating the provocative subject of homosexuality and whose voices are given the most credibility in evaluating the issues.

Another driving focus of this research is the relatively little attention that investigates this aspect of sexual minority group specifically the depiction in mainstream news media in Malaysia. Alagappar and Kaur (2009) conducted a study on homosexuality representations that employed mainstream English language newspaper of *The New Strait Times* as a main sample of the study. To the best of the researcher knowledge, no study pertaining to the issue of homosexuality in Malaysian news media has been conducted in a detailed manner which focuses on mainstream Malay language newspaper as a medium of investigation and this research seeks to broaden the scope of the former study. Hence, the study of representations of homosexuality by Alagappar and Kaur (2009) is significance to this research because it provides a platform to extend the research in media on issues surrounding homosexuality through in-depth analysis context particularly from the perspective of Malay language newspapers.

Alagappar and Kaur (2009) have also written that newspapers in Malaysia mostly have relied heavily on so-called expert sources including prominent politicians and religious leaders when expressing judgments, opinions or views. Absent were the voices of the gay individuals themselves. Hence, the decision to include voices of homosexual readers to this research is also appropriate. Additionally, it would be interesting to examine the voices particularly among Malay homosexuals on their perceptions towards homosexuality coverage and gay related issues and their own reservations about how they received and inferred the issues as depicted in the newspapers as well as how they want the issues to be constructed in the media. Therefore, this research will extend the previous work specifically by analyzing the coverage and the meaning and its connotation from the perspective of mainstream Malay language newspaper.

1.4 Research Questions

Hereby, the researcher seek to understand the ways in which mainstream Malay language newspapers constitute collective subjectivities around issues of homosexuality. The following questions were posed to guide this research towards achieving its goals:

RQ1: How are trends of the homosexuality coverage was distributed in the Malay language newspapers from 1998 to 2012?

RQ2: How coverage of homosexuality was thematically presented in the Malay language newspapers with references emerged from social constructionism?

Having identified the ways in which Malay language newspapers constitute collective subjects on homosexuality, the researcher then seek to identify the broader social implications of the coverage, by specifically interrogating in terms the ways that homosexual's readers perceive, contest and renegotiate the meaning. Moreover, the reactions of socially stigmatized groups, the homosexual people themselves to such portrayals have been virtually overlooked. Hence, the investigation is called for, not only into the homosexuals' people responses on the coverage in the media, but to explore the individual experience of their sexual identity differences and the renegotiation if any, to

the composition of the coverage made in the mainstream media. As such, the following question was posed:

RQ3: How homosexual's readers perceived the coverage with their own personal identity interfacing with the media depiction?

1.5 Research Objectives

In particular, the following are the research objectives which include:

RO1: To inform the trends of homosexuality coverage in Malay language newspapers.

RO2: To analyse the construction of homosexuality coverage in Malay language newspapers.

RO3: To examine the perception among homosexual's readers on homosexuality coverage in Malay language newspapers.

1.6 Operational Definition

The term "homosexual" refers to the sexual behavior or attraction between people of the same sex or a sexual orientation as having a sexual or romantic attraction primarily or exclusively to members of one's own sex (Webster, 2001; Richard, 2009, p. 110). Until 1974, homosexuality was labeled as a mental illness but later redefined as a person's sexual, mental, emotional and social interest in a person of the same sex whether may or may not be manifest in their explicit behavior (American Psychological Association, 1980). Richard (2009, p. 11) noted that homosexual men or women may not necessarily need to engage in any sexual activity to be homosexual that may be inhibited by societal pressure or by internal conflict.

The terminology for homosexuals is divided by sex with the term "gay" for males and "lesbian" for females and it is differentiate from "transsexual" persons (Fone, 2000, p. 4). Nasirin (2005) distinguishes between transsexuals with gay according to the way

they are dress and their inclinations of having a sexual intimacy with heterosexual men. Lim (2005), on the other hand, mentions that a man is considered to be a transsexual when he dresses in women's attire and behaves like one in which are more inclined to the members of the same sex specifically heterosexual men and at the same time consider themselves psychologically as having the sexual desire of the opposite sex. According to Teh (2004), the definitive goal of the majority of transsexuals is sex-change surgery, but not all transsexuals can or have the desire for the operation due to several factors including religious beliefs and the cost. Teh (2004) also writes that the local culture, tradition and religions influence their identity, which does not entirely apply to gay men and lesbians to undergo such surgery.

The term "queer" was alternately employed to describe non-heteronormative sexual expression. In broader definition, queer can be describes as anyone who are differs from the heterosexual norm in some odd way from that is usual or normal in regards to gender, sexuality and even politics (Gender Equity Resource Center, 2013). In a narrower definition, queer is an umbrella term to denote sexual minorities group and gender variant people such as gay, lesbian and transvestite as a specific target group (Wisegeek, 2013).

For this research purpose, the term "queer" was alternately used to signify gay and lesbian as a targeted queer subject throughout the research based from the definition of queer mentioned earlier. By describing them as "queer subjects", the intention is neither to presuppose publicly expressed nonconformity nor to ignore significant differences among them. The selection of the term "queer" for this research is also used for simplicity's sake as a generic term referring to all sexual minority individuals, unless otherwise noted. For the sake of variety, terms such as "homosexual", "gay" and "sexual minority" are used interchangeably throughout this research and as a range of sexual expressions, it sometimes unlabeled or indefinable and often dynamic, highly personal and context-dependent.

As used in this research, the terms self-identified homosexuals specifically refer to the respondents for the interview study. This term is defined and appropriately uses for individual that self-proclaims as homosexual individual by adapted on Robert Heasley (2005) ethnography study of queer men that were identified as “straight-queer males”. According to Heasley’s (2005) ethnographic study, men who have been surveyed about their “mostly straight” behavior gave various characteristics for this self-identification. Some felt constrained by traditional models of gender and sexual orientation, others found men attractive.

Some had a small amount of sexual interest in men but no desire for romantic same-sex relationships or intercourse, while others felt romantic but no sexual interest in other men. Heasley (2005) further concluded that a lack of understanding of masculinity could be addressed by “creating a terminology to describe non-hegemonic masculine behavior”. Based on Heasley’s (2005) terminology and the characteristics of queer men from his ethnography study, the terminology and the concept was modified and adapted to the term of “self-identified homosexuals” to be presented in this research.

Throughout this research, the researcher noting that the range of human sexual expression is not always necessarily limited to English terms. This identification may be culture-specific, temporary, mutable and conceptualized, and performed and revealed in multifarious ways. This includes *mak nyah* as a culturally term for a transsexual in Malaysia. The queer people in Malaysia are also often associated with terms including *pondan*, *khunsa*, *bapuk/bapok*, *kedo*, *darai*, *pengkid* or *tomboy* (tomboy) as a vernacular terminology that may work as a punitive label or unpleasant term. Akin noted that several countries have their own local terms for the queer community too, for example, *hijras* in India, *kathoey*s in Thailand, *warias* in Indonesia and *chawk* or *gandu* in Myanmar (DeAlwis & David, 2010).

1.7 Thesis Outline

This research is composed of six chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical background of the research. It focuses on social constructionism theory as a central of theoretical

foundation, and communication theory of identity. These theories were used to help in analysing the ideology and discourse in exploring the complexities of the discursive engagement of issue on homosexuality particularly on the mainstream news outfit being studied. The theory was also used to help analysing how the media influence individuals' information processing and cognitive activities through the the process of organizing and assigning meaning to certain issues. The concept was used to analyse the reaction to the wider scope and structures of social and cultural domination on the operation of power with sexuality in the setting of contemporary society in order to define social and cultural norms.

In Chapter 3, the researcher begins in the literature review and explains how the bodies of literature work in concert for this research along with critical arguments. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first main section reviewed on the relevant empirical literature on media including the analysis and concept of ideology and hegemony and how these two reflect the context that construct the social representations in the media. By bringing these two concepts, the similar chapter will attempt to relate and discuss on the historical background and media structure in Malaysia including its ownership and control. Meanwhile, the second main section discuss on the literature of homosexuality and its contextualization. This is including the historical contextualization of homosexuality between western countries and Malaysia, the politicization of homosexuality in Malaysia and the setting of homosexuality within contemporary Malay Muslim in Malaysia. Previous research on the media representations on homosexuality is also discussed.

Chapter 4 explains the methodology use for this research in detail. This research utilizes content analysis study to observe trend of the coverage on homosexuality and examine the context use on how the newspapers discursively presented issues surrounding homosexuality through identifying dominant pattern to seek the coverage of homosexuality. This chapter also discuss the method of in-depth interview study to examine the ways in which respondents particularly self-identified Malay homosexual

readers interact and negotiate to these news texts on homosexuals related stories based from the findings obtain from the content analysis study.

Chapter 5 consists of the research findings with several important subsections. The chapter explains the trends of the homosexuality coverage and discusses the media coverage of homosexuality as narrated in the Malay language newspapers. The same chapter also describes the perception of the coverage from the in-depth interview study among self-identified Malay homosexual respondents that was conducted to understand what meanings they make based from their personal experience and own narration of the sexual identity difference using the findings gathered from the content analysis study.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes this research with details discussion of the major findings. This chapter also deals with future prospects for the role of the mainstream newspapers in Malaysia on issues related with the provocative subject of homosexuality.

1.8 Significance of Study

This research of the discourse related with issue surrounding homosexuality in the country is significance for several reasons. One underlying value of this research revolves around one central inquiry, why look at the provocative issue like homosexuality in the first place? As a unique country with heterogeneous mixture of ethnicities, religions, cultures and languages, Malaysia is fragile to any sensitive issues, specifically when it involved religion, culture and sexuality.

Take a Lina Joy⁴ conversion issue for example, it provide a focal point for tensions between Muslim and religious minorities and created a huge debate in Malaysian

⁴Lina Joy is a Malay convert from Islam to Christianity. Born Azlina Jailani in 1964 in Malaysia to Muslim parents of Javanese descent, she converted at age 26. In 1998, she was baptized and applied to have her conversion legally recognized by the Malaysian courts. Though her change of name was recognized in 1999 and so noted on her identity card, however the National Registration Department of Malaysia began placing the word "Islam" on the identity card of those identified as Muslim. Joy's new identity card with her legal name thus carried the word "Islam" which made her file a suit in the High Court, arguing that she was legally entitled to an identity card without the word "Islam". This move was

mainstream media, online newspaper, and blogs (Foong & Ahmad, 2010). An analysis of the news coverage of Lina Joy conversional issues by Foong and Ahmad (2010) were considered this to be an interesting subject to examine from local media newspapers which included an analysis of the news source type and how the news were framed.

According to Foong and Ahmad (2010), stories of sensitive issues such as race, religions and sexuality can at times unintentionally misrepresent and mislead in the media, and thus, created conflicts and intense reactions especially in societies with diverse beliefs and cultures. Mustafa (2010) also claimed that in a diverse society, difficulty and the complexity exists in tackling provocative issue in providing accurate coverage on religion, ethnicity, sexuality or any other issue seen as proactive. Hence, it is worth studying how coverage on homosexuality in Malaysia is portrayed because many open questions can be explore specifically into the cultural production of the news in portraying a sensitive issue like homosexuality in the country. In addition, previous research was often talked on social issues such as ethnicities and religion conflict and how the issues were depicted in the media to be compared with issues related on homosexuality (Shaari, H. et. al. 2006; Fong, Y. L. et. al. 2010).

This research also departed from the huge question of how has mainstream media presented homosexual coverage to their readers, which is significance if readers are to determine what sort of stories that news media are constructing about this hot-button social issue. This is particularly significance among scholars in media studies in this country who have not considered much on this offensive subject, despite being globally discussed. For that reason, the decision to focus on a socially sensitive topic, homosexuality in particular, perhaps can explore how this provocative issue was being portrayed particularly in the mainstream news media outfit.

controversial because Joy by passed the Syariah courts. She argued that because she no longer considered herself a Muslim and she were no longer under the jurisdiction of the Syariah court.

This research also indirectly examine the role of newspapers considering that the relationship between the media and national politics and the media's role in the national agenda always remains crucial and a popular subject for media research in Malaysia (Azizah, 2008). Azizah (2008) also added that it is widely recognized that what readers know, suspect, think and reflect about the world is shaped by how events around the globe are reported, constructed and communicated by the media.

Therefore, this research helps cast light on the role of the media in shaping and tackling sensitive issues concerning homosexuality in Malaysian news media. Thus, a thorough study of coverage on homosexuality issues is necessary to understand the role of news media in shaping the parameters of public debate on a controversial issue in democratic and cultural politics. By studying the construction of homosexuality through the media text as a communicative artifact, this research will shed light on the way forward for media studies, specifically in Malaysian context.

Notwithstanding, this research makes no demonstration and declaration towards any subject of any stance on homosexuals rights in Malaysia with respect to equality, freedom or freedom of expression. Rather, the pure intention of this research is to study the discourse as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Philips & Jorgensen, 2002, p. 1). This research is purposely work to understand the ideas and discourse about homosexuality and examines how texts and contexts are produced by the news media toward the subject through detail analysis and exploration.

As media is an important element and have a significant influence on socialization that cultivates individual's belief about the world as well as affects individual values on social issues (Paik & Comstock, 1991), by studying the construction of homosexuality through the media text as a communicative artifact, this research perhaps could shed light on the way forward for media discourse studies, specifically in the Malaysian context and establish a platform for understanding the discourse on homosexuality for future reference.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses two theories: (i) social constructionism and (ii) the communication theory of identity. These bodies of literature are selected because it gives an in-depth examination of this research. However, the theories used for this research were not attempted for the purpose of testing and verification but merely to guide in exploring issue discuss in this research for better understanding. Furthermore, this research is mostly using qualitative research as a method of inquiry, hence, it does not rely specifically on theories for research variables. Nevertheless, it is important to ground this research with an appropriate theoretical framework.

2.2 Social Constructionism

According to the social constructionist model, communication work as a basis and social interaction as a process whereby people in groups, by using their own understanding supported by their culture to create collective representation of social reality. Communication is not something that goes on between individuals, instead something that surrounds people which can holds their world together. Through communication, social groups create collective ideas of themselves and of the world they inhabit. Communication becomes a means of world building.

The social constructionist model specifies four tools. The first one is languages or symbolic codes; the second is the ways people have been taught to process information and meaning making or the cognitive customs; the third is the beliefs, attitudes and values that make up people cultural traditions and lastly the shared of roles and rules that guide people actions or their knowledge. These tools shape the ways people experience and talk about out world. In social constructionist model, people exist within and perceive themselves and others through their communicative practices of their cultures.

Social constructionism takes a stance towards the way people accept and understand the system in this world. It is a theory of knowledge that can be defined as putting the inert

of conceptual believed to the structure of phenomena as naturally build in the social system. A central focus of social constructionism is to hold the ways on how individual or group of people perceived the construction of social reality and how they participate in the social system. Social system is a “product that should belong to the societies and (they) prefer to be in that way” rather than being something which is immutable (Crossley, 2005).

Social constructionists are particularly interested in social phenomena which include the startling concepts, texts, practices and conceptual schemes from the individuals or a group from varies places and times. The theory comes with an argument that individuals or groups of the shared background often take the concept for granted and claims as it is naturally established and constructed in solely biological ways such as gender, class, race and sexuality. It is supported by Burr (2003) that most of the social processes was presumed and takes by people for granted as given, fixed and unalterable. Burr (2003, p. 45) also added that social constructionism could happen in the phenomena which experienced by the people or among themselves upon inspection to be found and to be socially maintained. As consequence, members of the similar setting and circle usually shared the similar meaning which is constructed through social interaction with others using the shared language.

The social constructionist perspective upholds that people never experience the world directly. It is asserted by Mallon (2007) that some constructionists argue that culture play the main role in shaping things which will lead to people reaction and decision. Culture play the main role and significant enough for them which then process it in the familiar ways. Later, they connect it to another “facts”, perhaps from another source they trusted with. Nevertheless, the empirical of respective knowledge to different cultures must also put into account and it is indeed an important aspect that must be compromise by social constructionist along with its processes to establish the social realities. Social realities are expanding through dynamic and continuous social interactions through constant negotiation and power (Berger and Luckman, 1966).

Meanwhile, Dunphy (2000) writes that social constructionism also play a significance part on meaning making or work as metaphors that can give an impact to inform the power relations among the society. When it comes to social issues for example, the shared meanings become subjective based on how the issue is interpreted. Furthermore, social issues can be defined in a multiple of ways depending on those who provided the explanations. Social issues that involved ambiguity, deviant or unnatural are not inherent but it was socially constructed. It can be change and alter based on who describes it. What is unusual might be normal to someone else and vice versa. Meaning making is also build from the social interaction with other people or from social institution.

Burr (1995) writes that social constructionism takes a critical stance toward knowledge. Burr (2003) further states that knowledge is not something that a person has or does not have but it is something that people do together that later provides meaning. Hence, it can be said that knowledge itself is a social construction since it consists of meaning and it is constructed through social interaction. As Burr (2003) explains it, knowledge is the social construction that has received the “stamp of truth” or that which has the tendency to be viewed as common sense. A word ‘common sense’ here was reckoned driven to the significant words of ‘logical thinking based on the same culture and language’. In other words, our own understanding and the construction of certain ideas are defined from our self-knowledge and people understanding are varies depending on their attachment on social and cultural context (Burr, 1995).

Burr (1995) asserted that “our current accepted ways of understanding the world is a product, not the objective observation of the world but the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other”. However, according to Gergen (1999) he highlighted the need to focus on knowledge that is not necessarily just created but involved action. In this way, knowledge carries implications for people’s lives (Gergen, 1999). Hence, knowledge is a human product that must be approached with prudence and concern. The knowledge must be continuously review and the process of the construction is constantly critique.

This research also opts to also refer the work of Foucault as his contribution to social constructionism. Foucault (1972) challenges the notions of history and knowledge on what is regarded as common sense. According to Foucault there is no reality that precedes discourse. In other words discourse or what people said may constitute reality. Foucault further explained that history of knowledge is purely the result from products of language and therefore the acceptance of people toward the world around them is restricted by the possibilities allowed by their language. Accordingly, in his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault is very much concerned with what has not been told or what he called it the “Other” (p.12). As a result, this concept by Foucault’s forces one to reexamine social constructionism that one has regarded whether it is truth, factual or natural.

Social constructionism conserves human life and most of human experience is based on language. Language is not neutral, transparent or an access route to reality. Rather language assists in the creation and construction of reality in which a set of words or language ‘has a set of linguistic possibilities within which social life comes to be organized’ (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 149). The social constructionist view of language is said to have its origin in the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of semiotics and his work in modern linguistics. According to Saussure, language is a set of meaning and not merely an accumulation of signs referring to certain concepts. The meaning of any particular words is created in its relationship with other words (Gergen, 1999; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). In other words, the social constructionism approach is not exclusively about language but rather it aims to interpret the social world as if it were a language, a system of socially generated meaning and practices that construct reality.

The everyday talk and language help to shape social reality and lead to the actions and images produced in society. Representations of social reality that include social practices, structures or physical arrangements can also be seen as being structured like language or a system of signs such as text on newspaper as what being employed in this research. Language provides a framework through which we view and understand and

structure ourselves, our relationships with others as well as our behaviors or practices (Gergen, 1999; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Thus the following statement is relevant:

The manner in which people engage in the world is structured by the way in which the world is structured. When we act, what we achieve is to reproduce the ruling discourses of our time and re-enact established relational patterns. (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p.152).

The preceding discussion on social constructionism revolved on language, knowledge, meaning making and culture can be summarized into a theoretical model that revolved on communication. Figure 2.1 illustrates the social constructionist model. The discussion on social constructionism is very significant to this research specifically on how the construction of the narrative on homosexuality coverage in the media as a set of social meaning and how the issues are being constructed through language and the context used. As some scholars have revealed that social constructionism is normally employed to marginalize and to oppress certain members of the population, a study of feminists and queer theory is prominently design and created to naturalize the inequality and the conflict arises toward the concept of social constructionism.

The antecedent of social constructionist thought is symbolic interaction. First suggested by Mead (1934). The perspective in symbolic interaction is the idea that “as people we construct our own and each other’s identities through our everyday encounters with each other in social interaction” (Burr, 1995, p. 10). In other words, people have no single, fixed identity but rather continually construct our identities through their engagement of the world. Meanwhile, an individual’s understanding of the world is specific to a particular time or context, and a person may construe his or her life and experiences in many different ways, at different times (Gergen, 1973). How people view the reality at one time may no longer be salient when they experience changes in their lives.

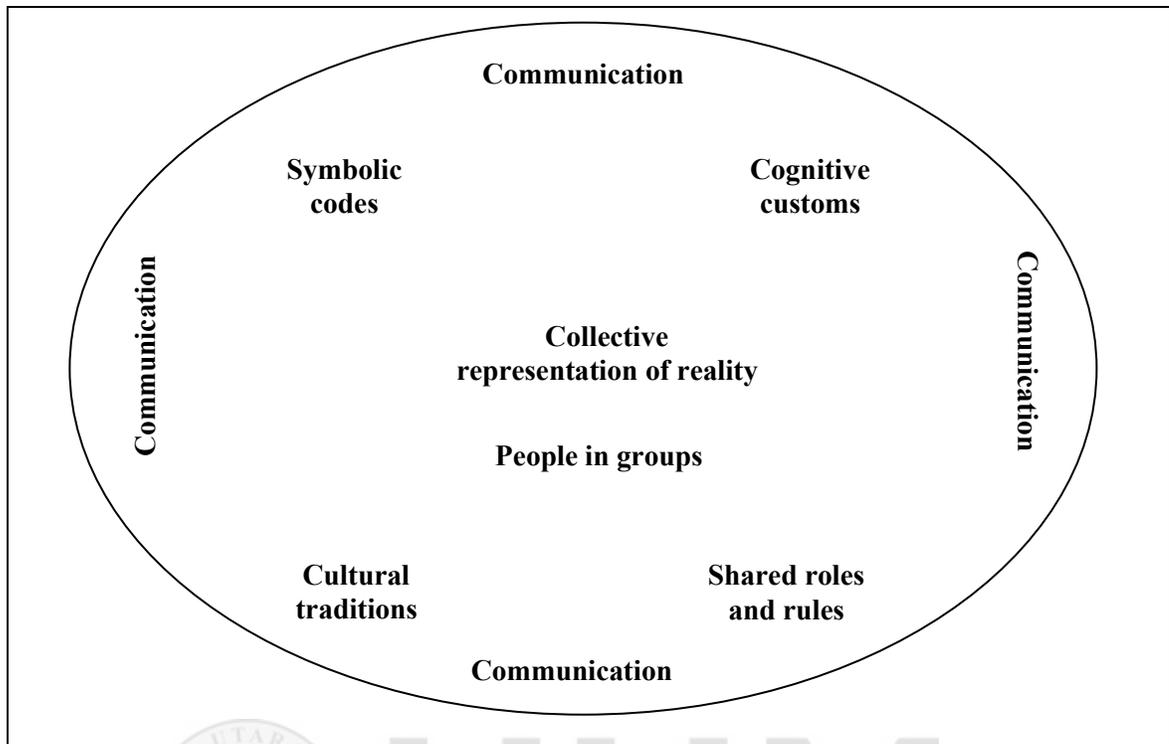


Figure 2.1 Social Constructionism model

2.3 The Communication Theory of Identity

The communication theory of identity is also employed in this research. This theory recognizes this sense of identity as shape-shifting and fluid and provides four different, interrelated frames through which to understand how identity is constructed and/or understood at a particular time. While social realities may be shared, individual identity conceptions are vital in social constructionist thought. The role of media in the creation of socially-constructed realities, specifically the role of depictions of socially stigmatized identities on Malaysian media in the creation of these identities has not received a lot of attention.

The communication theory of identity (first codified by Hecht, 1993) serves as a useful framework that has considerable potential to illuminate the issues for this research. The communication theory of identity postulates that the complex concept of personal identity can be conceived as consisting of multiple dimensions (Hecht, 1993). Under this scrutiny, identity is not a single, arrived at construct. Rather, any person's sense of

identity is multifaceted and often times consist of contradictory perceptions. The theory “extends identity beyond individual and societal constructions to consider interaction” as an influence on conceptions of identity (p. 79).

The communication theory of identity asserted that identity consisted of four frames: personal, enacted, relational and communal (summarized in Hecht, 1993, p. 79-80; see also Hecht et. Al, 2002, p. 853). The personal frame focuses on a person’s self-awareness, that is, the sense of self he or she holds in his or her subjective perceptions. The enacted frame refers to how verbalizations express identity and how by rhetorically constructing terms to describe identity, a person simultaneously constructs identity itself. The relational frame focuses on how an individual’s identity is often perceived in relation to one’s connection to other people. Finally, the communal frame is concerned with a person’s shared identity with those in each community or group in which he or she is a part. Individuals often conceive of themselves as part of multiple communities (a family unit, a profession, an ethnic group) that each carries some sense of identity.

The dimensions are interpenetrated, meaning that any specific experience or verbal reference related to identity might be understood in relation to more than one dimension of identity. For example, there may be discord between one’s self-concept and the perceptions one associates with a group with which one identifies. If a person recognizes homosexual inclination and struggles with his or her entrenched view that homosexuals are not good people, there would be a dialectical tension between the personal and communal frames of identity. Identity is best considered as “a negotiation among the individual, enactment, the relationship, and the community or any combination of the four” (Hecht et. al, 2002, p. 853).

Hecht, Collier and Ribeau (1993) applied the communication theory of identity to African American identity, work that was extended by Hecht, Jackson and Ribeau (2003) with encouragement to apply the theory to other cultural groups. Hence, the researcher aver that to keep with the core concepts of the theory to view homosexuals individuals as collectively constituting a culture. The definition of “culture” offered by

the authors (Hecht, Jackson & Ribeau, 2003) reflects the multidimensional nature of identity: culture is an individual, social and societal construct. Individuals experience culture through “a sense of belonging to a social group and adopting its own perspective on the world” (p. 4). At the social level, a culture is a group “constituted by membership within a system with common patterns of interaction and perception and a historically transmitted system of symbols, meanings and norms,” a “patterned social network with shared history,” and traditions (p. 4).

On a societal level, culture “characterizes large groups of people as an entity” (p. 4). All these components of culture resonate with the lived experience of gay and lesbian people. Such people are likely to identify themselves as part of a social group that is geographically diffuse but experiencing many of the same challenges. Additionally, they have a unique history and are likely to be viewed as a group by society at large. Hence, the communication theory of identity theory promises to be particularly useful for this research purpose of investigating homosexual identity. Homosexual people are likely to embrace the idea of having multi-dimensional identities, given the fact that they may be “out” as gay and lesbian people to selected people in their lives but closeted to others. This fact is likely to be a source of considerable identity negotiation, affecting the self-concepts of gay and lesbian individuals as well as their relationships with other people. A gay person may struggle at the personal level to come to terms with his or her sexual identity. Labeling is prevalent in society even though sexual identities themselves may be fluid and individuals may be reticent to self-identity themselves as being part of socially stigmatized group.

Gay and lesbian individuals might consider themselves, in essence to be one person when in a communal setting with other gay and lesbian people and another person when in a communal setting with heterosexuals. Sexual identity is likely to be “weighted” differently in contexts where there are few or no other gay and lesbian people. These complex identity issues are in evidence in the interviews conducted by Rhoads (1994) and Whisman (1996) as well as in literature that functions to provide people with advice about coming out (for example, Signorile, 1995). In sum, the concept of identity as

negotiated between different realms resonates with the experience of many gay and lesbian individuals, thus positioning the communication theory of identity as a particularly useful theory to apply to homosexual identity.

2.4 Summary

This chapter delineates the theoretical framework of this research. The theoretical framework of this research consists of social constructionism and the communication theory of identity. Drawing from the intersection and the arguments of these theoretical frameworks, these approaches is critically deliberated that provide a significance lens and stimulus of the purpose of this research. The purpose of this research is to examine the homosexuality coverage in Malay language newspapers in Malaysia. Specifically, this research attempt to find out how the Malay mainstream media express the description of homosexuality in terms of the trends and its distribution of the coverage and analyse it as the ways in which the hegemonic of Malay notion through the state that affect their narrative in the newspaper. This research also aim analyze the perception among readers particularly Malay homosexuals towards the homosexuality coverage as depicted from these Malay language newspapers based on the results obtained from the analysis of the newspaper texts. The following chapter will discuss on the literature review of this research.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explicates into two main sections. For the first, the relevant empirical literature was reviewed on media including the analysis and concept of ideology and hegemony and how these two reflect the context that construct the media narrative. By bringing these two concepts, the similar section will attempt to relate and discuss on the historical background and media structure in Malaysia including its ownership and control. A previous studies related with the literature is also discussed. Meanwhile, the second section discuss on the literature of homosexuality and its contextualization. This is including the historical contextualization of homosexuality between western countries and Malaysia, the politicization of homosexuality in Malaysia and the setting of homosexuality within contemporary Malay Muslim in Malaysia. Previous research on media and homosexuality is also discussed.

3.2 Media

3.2.1 Media and Ideology Dissemination

Michael Foucault, a French philosopher is one of the most prominent scholars who are very well known in the contribution of discourse towards of approaching and understanding meaning on social practices through the influence of language. Discourse, according to Foucault is refers to “more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They (individual or society) constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, intuitively or with conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects that they seek to govern” (Weedon, 1987). Through discourse, subjects of knowledge are constructed and accepted in an understandable way while at the same time excluding and dismissing another interpretation as insignificant and unimportant.

Knowledge and reality is normally located in between of the prevalent discourse and social practices of a culture. In one of his book *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault explained discourse as a set of statements operating by the obvious and dominant ruler that combines statements consists of meaning, power and specific effect

in certain social context. Foucault emphasized that analysing texts is evaluating what has been said. In other words, discourse is also examining the way of speaking on certain matters.

However, discourse was produce with certain limits such as norm and cultural differences of one society or institution. It is due to the belief that there was an identifiable and distinguishable mode of discourse for each institution or divisions of society. As a result, people's thinking and perception is different and in effect using a different form of discourse. This will determine what and how statements can be made and hence, social reality is produced and made real through discourses. The study of discourse by Foucault depicts the significance for the individual who speaks on certain issue publicly. For instance, if the discourse is the way of speaking on certain issue that may influence the social practices from those individuals that have entitlement to speak, hence their opinion is considered legitimate and they certainly considered as someone with power.

This further coagulates the benefits of the discourse in media, those who are sourced in the news coverage on certain issues such as homosexuality are those currently deemed sanctioned to speak and thus, control the discourse. However, it should be highlighted that Foucault's work on discourse has the possibility that this power or control can be swing. Foucault (1990) explains that with discourse brings power, but also the opportunity for others to raise resistance or contesting discourses.

Foucault's (1972) concept of discourse is significantly beneficial for this purpose of research due to his idea and the origins of knowledge and precisely inherent meaning and concepts of discourse. This research received influence from the previous study of media representations on immigrants. Immigrants often being portrayed as a minority group in which the texts that produced by the media regularly represent them as outsiders with frequent of the negative remarks and labeled them as *the other* (van Dijk, 1994, King & Wood, 2001). The study of analyzing text, used by the media also known

as media discourse on what Chavez (2001) and Fairclough (1995) writes is important in order to understand factors contributed to this minority group.

In one study on discourse, Widyawati's (2006) examined the representations of migrant workers in Malaysian newspapers which offer a study of media discourse by selected three Malaysian newspapers to examine how text were used in portraying the migrant workers in Malaysia. Employing van Dijk critical discourse analysis as an approach, the study on the portrayal of migrant workers in the media was underpinning on the question if there are exist possible way of intervention in the production of the discourse in the media and also in social practice that could be constructed by an influential individual or institution such as the ownership of the media. The finding of the study reveals that most of the local newspapers labeled migrants workers as trouble makers and responsible for the high index level of criminal cases in Malaysia.

Most newspapers were alternately employed the word 'illegal immigrant', described them as 'foolish' and 'poor' and use the word 'Indon' as the short abbreviation for Indonesia and 'Bangla' for Bangladeshi workers in which these words form a rhetoric of negative perception towards migrant workers through vernacular conversation. The study was also followed by an interviewed among migrant workers and it is revealed that most of them dissapointed with the label and words written on the newspaper that regularly published negative connotation. Widyawati (2006) further concluded on her study of the discourse about migrant workers in Malaysian newspaper was implicitly linked with the ownership and ideology of the newspaper that is much related to the political system in the country.

Another work related with the study of media discourse by Kirdnark (2010) that examines the portrayal of the Muslim militants in Southern Thailand from the two leading Thailand newspapers. The study delves deep into issue of the conflict between Muslim in Southern Thailand with the Thai military. It started with the incident of the 'unknown underground Muslim militia group' which was allegedly break into a military camp in Narathiwat, Thailand in January 2004 and stole weapons and military gears. As

consequences, there was a violent crackdown between Thai military with Muslim civilian protesters in Kru Ze Mosque in Pattani, Thailand in April of the same year. Later, in the month of October, some 78 Muslim protestors were confirmed killed, while in police detention after a protest outside police station in Narathiwat against the detention of six men accused by the police of providing weapons to 'Islamic militants'. Under these vignettes, the study was conducted to examine the front page of two Thailand newspapers for the year 2004 and found 240 news articles related with the Muslim militant or what the newspaper refer as 'Southern Bandits'.

The study found that the Muslim militants or *Jone Tai* are portrayed as an intimidation to the regions stability, thus violence operated by the government to abstain with these 'trouble makers' is legitimate. Calling the militant as the 'Southern Bandits', it was suggested that they are the perpetrator of the violence and the trouble makers. By employing Hall's concept of ideology in the media, Kirdnak's work concluded that the ideology rooted in Thailand newspapers is reproduced in the two newspapers when depicting 'Southern Bandits' by asserted on what Fowler (2007, p. 46) said as "journalists use language and styles that can be interpreted meaningfully by the audience" thus "(applying) an ideology which is already embodied in the language" that later retranslated in the "discursive interaction between the newspaper text and the reader" (p. 47).

The preceding discussion from both Widyawati (2006) and Kirdnak (2010) works that employed the studies of media discourse offered very much influence to this research despite targeted on different subject of analysis and also not rather adeptly with the subject of this research. However, both previous studies that provide the similarity to the discussion on its finding was concluded by specifically stated the role of the discourse in the media was established once the ideology is identified.

Ideology, like almost every term in social sciences does not lend itself to one integrated and independent definition. Ideology by literature offers more than a definitions range from the neutral to negative meaning. Van Dijk (1998) gives a general working

definition of ideology as “the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members”. Ideology or beliefs of a whole system are deeply perceptive understanding that is regularly taken for granted as far as certain culture is concerned. For the most part, different group carry a certain type of ideology and tries to establish their belief as consistent knowledge and understanding by equipping many tools that is much significant through discourse.

The word “group” as defined by van Dijk is formed by people that shared similar belief, idea and purposes and often structured with more or less of regular members or subgroups that play specific roles and certain position. The group has leaders as well as followers with the same goal. This alliance is vital for the attainment, spreading, defense or inculcation of ideologies and any new members must learn the ideology of the group (van Dijk, 1998). van Dijk further highlighted that ideology is cultivated and influence by the role of discourse using any social institution such as media.

Hall’s (1988) through his writing on ideology pointed that content of media is certainly have been assigned and shaped towards certain events and not merely reproduced or replicated ‘reality’. Hall (1988) further contested that the “definitions of reality were sustained and produced through all those linguistic practices (in the broad sense) by means of which selective definitions of ‘the real’ were represented”. Hall’s conception of ideology stems from the notion that all signs are polysemy and that nothing has an intrinsic or inherent meaning. Therefore, the events must acquire meanings through a process of signification.

Constructing upon Althusser’s structuralism, Hall (1988, p. 71) argues, “This move from content to structure or from manifest meaning to the level of code entailed a redefinition of what ideology was, or at least of how ideology worked”. Hall concede on ideology as an objective reality that constituted by material objects that exist, but social practice, i.e., our relationships with such a reality, may not be experienced, understood or conceptualized outside an ideological system (Hall, 1985). Ideology was also asserted on the constitutes system of significations and representations through which signs acquire their meanings.

The preceding discussion on the discourse and ideology conjured the argument for this research on how media and its context constructs the coverage in the newspapers on issues surrounding homosexuality as the outcome emerged from the social reality grounded within the ideological stance of the media. The selection of words and context that describe homosexuality in the newspapers especially from the perspective of Malay newspapers not only counted as crucial for interpretation but what more important is how the meaning of the words that can determine the social practices. Given that ideology and language stand close to one another, the following section provides elaboration on the language in dissemination of discourse that creates hegemony through media.

3.2.2 Language and the Production of Hegemony in Media

Dominant ideology of the elites would preferably fit to what van Dijk (2008) highlighted on mind control through language as an approach to misuse power and influence public's minds. van Dijk further writes that as "if controlling discourse as a first major form of power, controlling people's minds is the other fundamental way to reproduce dominance and hegemony" (p. 357).

Language is intertwined with social power when there is disputation over power and where power is defied in several ways. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001, p. 2), "power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it and to alter distributions of power". Meanwhile, Fowler also indicated the same idea,

"Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position. Language is not a clear window but a refracting, structuring medium. If we can acknowledge this as a positive, productive principle, we can show by analysis how it operates in texts" (1991, p. 10).

Fowler (2007, p. 1) further writes that language is certainly not neutral but rather "a highly constructive mediator". On the other hand, Heller (2007) associates language to power in two ways: The first one acts as a part of social interaction process for people to communicate and do things, satisfy needs, and affect others and the second works as a source that depending on how dexterity of language one individual attain, gives them

access to power and consents them to consume it, which ultimately provides privilege. Fairclough (1995, p. 55) writes, “language use all text is always simultaneously constitutive of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief”. Text is presented as part of a social interaction that goes beyond a group shared identity, further relating it to knowledge and belief. This last aspect is connected to the media influence on text and can be correlated with what people know through media and how that knowledge interacts with their beliefs.

The means and power of language is well connected with the reproduction of hegemony (van Dijk, 2008). According to Gramsci, the whole concept of hegemony is derived when “the ruling groups can conserve their power through force, consent or any combination of the two” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). Antonio Gramsci has significantly contributed to the articulation of this concept suggesting that power is not only dependent on force but also on consent.

In another definition, hegemony is the position of having the capability and power to change the rules and norms of international systems based on one’s own motivation and desire (Volgy, 2005). Allan (2010) further emphasized that when individual in power, they try to convince the audience to negotiate and subsequently agree on what they are presented as a reality. Those in power create the idea of normality and make the public believe on what they are reading, hearing or seeing is valid and truth. Croteau & Hoynes (2003, p. 165) posited that hegemony is “the key theoretical concepts that animates much the contemporary study of ideology in media”.

However, it is highlighted by Allan (2010) that hegemony and media could be a fatal combination in any democratic society. This can be truth when those people in power are manipulating the idea of democracy through the set of propaganda by using the media. The constructed message gives the idea of a reality that does not exist but give advantageous for those who have the power in their hands. Croteau and Hoynes (2003) state that the images presented by the media do not just represent the reality but they are re-represented and recreated of what the reality is. Croteau and Hoynes (2003, p. 168)

further states, “media are cultural sites where the ideas of the powerful are circulated and where they can be contested”. In other words, media has the power to make it believable to construct the reality but with that same power and media can be used to avoid giving the misleading information to people.

Based from the preceding discussion ranging from the topic of discourse to the topic of hegemony, it can be sum up that in order to discover meaning from the message promulgated by the media, text and context presented must be analyze that goes beyond the significance of the words and further attach to the local knowledge, discourse and ideology. Departed from these significance premises, this research seek to identify and discover how issues surrounding homosexuality was presented and discussed from the stance of government oriented and control newspaper in Malaysia.

For this purpose of research, two Malay language newspapers of UM and BH were chosen as the news text of investigation. As both newspapers are government oriented newspapers, this research aim to identify how the text on homosexuality was intertwined around the stance of hegemonic Malay and its ideological stance that resulted on the construction of the news coverage. The following section discuss on the representations and the media construction of reality.

3.2.3 Representations and Media Construction of Reality

In general, the simple explanation of representation can be tells as conveying X via Y, where X is an event, people, place etc., while Y become the medium through which the X is transmitting. In other word, representations itself is the process. It is recalled from the media section that media represent reality and this indicates that what is represented in media are not a copy of reality, but is more or less discursively presented reality.

For this purpose of research, representations are used to discuss the process of the production of meaning through the coalescence of the semiotic signs. It should be highlighted that reality is not at all times experienced directly but often through the symbolic categories made available by a society. Furthermore, these categories are the

filters of the original reality from what the medium are transmitting. Hence, the result is more or less similar to the original reality. As Hall (1982, p. 64) asserted that, “representation is a very different notion from that of reflection. It implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping; not merely the transmitting of an already existing meaning, but the more active labor of making things mean”. In furtherance, in what stated by Hall (1982), the elites as the dominating group that achieve hegemony by using the media, are involved through the process of representation and calls “the politics of signification”.

In this process, images about the world are produced and reproduce generating particular meanings and interpretations of events, people, ideas, etc. Hence, Poole (2002, p. 23) asserted that media would also build their own “meanings” (norms and values) through signifying practice during the same time that media reproduce the dominant ideologies to the society. For that reason, it is difficult to tell either that media representation of certain event is a clear copy of the construction of reality, but it is rather an amended and modified version. This amended version is intentional to provide “interpretative framework” (ibid) for the audience through which they see the world. As stated by Hall (1982), media, thus, has “the power to signify events in a particular”, hence, as researchers it is our role to look for the patterns that are used and reused to frame the events in a particular way. It is indicated that both representation and culture has a strong connection.

By all means, the more practices of representation that persists in a society, the most likely these representations would turn into cognitive concepts and cultural modes. Representation, according to Hall (1997), separates into objects representation and language representation. The first type that relates objects in the outside world are the sets of the mental representation in people heads and these are the type that people will use when they think and reflect. In furtherance, Hall stated that the accumulations of the systems are connected to each other through the various cognitive of the processing approaches such as differences and similarities, the temporal sequence and the causes and effects. Language representation relates to language as used to define the world, for

example the discourse. Hence, the relation between representation and the cultural models, between language and object representation is what Gee (1996) calls *Discourse and discourse*, respectively. The lower case discourse is the linguistic words, signs and sounds and discourse is what we have in our minds regarding these signs.

This discussion on representation is significance in this research to examine how homosexuality coverage was being depicted in the media in Malaysia particularly from the stance of government oriented newspapers. In so doing, the following section will provide details on the background of the media institution in Malaysia including the historical contextualization and the discussion of the ownership of the media. It is believed that the discussions of the background of media in Malaysia will uncover the understanding on how the ideology from these newspapers and the process of the discourse reflect the construction of homosexuality coverage in the newspaper.

3.2.4 Media in Malaysia: Media Structure and Ownership

In order to understand the structure of the media organisation in Malaysia and understand what is being roofed in the newspapers, it is better to start with a slight history of the country as media in Malaysia and its organization has an implicit link when the establishment first gets started. Malaysia is a multiethnic country dominated by representative of the country's majority by Malay population followed by the Chinese and Indian. As of the 2016, the population of Malaysia is 31.6 million (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2016) making it the 44th most populated country consist of 19.7 million of Malays and Bumiputra ethnicity, 6.6 million of Chinese, 1.9 million of Indians and followed by the others and non-Malaysian citizens.

The population composition is resulted from the colonialism, when indentured labor from China and India was brought into what was then Malaya to work in the tin mines and plantation. Most of Malaysia's existence economic and political dispute causes from the colonial experience and stem from the multiethnic nature of its population (Gomez & Jomo, 1997, p.1). During colonialism, British introduced the divide and rule policy that

left the public at that time with a strong sense of belonging to their own ethnic group in order to keep the political interests of British.

As a result, most political parties in Malaysia are ethnically based, encouraging racial political mobilization and consciousness, thus escalating the racial and cultural intense. This is very obvious with the set-up of political parties according to the ethnicity groups like the United Malays' National Organization (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). Later these three parties were combined and formed a coalition in 1955 and known as *Barisan Nasional* (The National Front) as the major alliance in the country up to the present.

The Malaysian vernacular newspapers were also affected with each has a characteristic and the tendency to concentrate on events important to their respective communities. The concentration on its content and the organization go back to its roots during the colonial era. In 1870s and 1900s for example, the beginning of ethnocentrism were promulgated when Malays community started to publish their newspapers and use the medium to kindle and raise the spirit of nationalism and used as channels to speak out against attitudes that stuck the progress of Malays.

According to Syed Arabi (1989), the development of the Malay political parties was made possible by the Malay press and the most notable among them is *Utusan Melayu* while early Chinese newspapers in Malaya were partisan and sympathetic to the Chinese Revolution in China or focused their attention on business in Malaya. The newspaper for Indian were notably highlighted the Indian community interest and carried the plight of the Indians in the estates and other economic sectors, advocated for the education among Indian, helped spread literary works and became the vehicle for political demands (Syed Arabi, 1989).

There are two phases that can be summarized in the development of the newspaper industry in Malaysia (Malaya at that time) during the early days. The first phase happen in 1806 till late 1930s saw the British traders and colonial officials pioneering the

printing of English newspapers to satisfy the commercial needs of the British and the Europeans. Most of the contents of English newspapers were commercial news and advertisements, while the Malay newspapers were also echoed the concerns of the community, religion and later the Malay nationalism. Meanwhile, the newspapers for Chinese and Indian are predominantly circulated on the cultural, emotional and political attachment of the ethnic groups to their homelands.

Meanwhile, the second phase that happen in 1940s and toward the independence year in 1957 showed a slight transition in the development of the newspapers. During this period, the Malay had begun to feel overwhelmed by the influx of the immigrants especially from the Indian and Chinese and started to realize if they could lose their control on economic and political affairs of the country. The newspapers were used to demonstrate these fears of anti-Chinese and anti-Indian sentiments whereas the non-Malay became more critical, especially against the pro-Malay attitude of the British administration. The fight for dissenting interest was prominent in the newspapers at that time (Dahari, 1992). Meanwhile the newspapers for Chinese and Indian community realized they were going to make Malaya their home. During this period, most newspapers had further developing a stronger identification with their own ethnic communities (Hamdan, 1993; Dahari, 1992).

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that the mainstream media in Malaysia has been in existence since the British Colonial administration in which the consequence of the Malaysian political structure in that centered on ethnically based party was also affected the country media establishment. Malaysian media organization is largely owned or indirectly controlled by the 14 political parties which constitute largely by ruling coalition of *Barisan Nasional* (The National Front) (Kenyon & Marjoribanks, 2007).

The restructuring of the economy of the country through the New Economic Policy (NEP) was believed to be the act as the starting point when media in Malaysia undergo the state of media control. Later, the NEP establishment evenly created a group of well-

connected Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera from diverse political and business people. Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (PERNAS) that was formed in the early 1970's, work as Bumiputera trust agency that acquired 80 percent stake in the Straits Times Press. A majority of the shares was later transferred to Fleet Holdings, an investment arm of UMNO. The Straits Times Press was renamed to New Strait Times Press (NSTP) when it was listed on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange in 1973. In the same year, Fleet Holdings also held shares in Utusan Melayu Press.

Notwithstanding, the acquirement of these publishing companies was intentional to control the editorial content of the newspapers (Gomez, 1994), albeit it was argue that the investments brought in the good returns. As consequence, the ownership of the New Straits Times Press and Utusan Melayu Press given UMNO the authority to control of the major newspapers in Malaysia. New Straits Times Press publishes the national newspaper such as *Berita Harian* and *Harian Metro* as well as the English language newspaper such as New Strait Times (NST), Malay Mail, Business Times and the Chinese newspaper such as Shin Min Daily News. Another newspapers that also published by NSTP such as *Berita Minggu*, *New Sunday Times* and *Sunday Mail* which was published every Sunday and for Utusan Melayu Press, the Sunday newspapers are *Mingguan Malaysia* and *Utusan Zaman*.

Another two main component parties, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysia Indian Congress (MIC) both also have substantial interests in the publishing industry and both control their substantial part of the mainstream media. For example, MCA has a 58% stake in Star Publications through its official holding company, Huaren Holdings Sdn. Bhd. which publishes the mainstream English newspaper, *The Star* another rival newspaper to the NST. The newspaper of The Star, like NST was also being under provision controlled by the component party of the ruling coalition, which perpetually propagates the agenda and policies of its owners in order to maintain the hegemony of the ruling group. Meanwhile, MIC as the other main component party in the *Barisan Nasional* also has substantial control of the Tamil Press.

The ownership of a Tamil press rests mainly in the hands of MIC president, Samy Vellu and his spouse.

Given these points, there is an obvious and close attachment between the media establishment and the political parties from the ruling coalition. While there are numerous media organizations in Malaysia, once their controlling interest is identified, it becomes evident that media ownership is highly concentrated with the current government interest as the major ruling party being a major stakeholder. The party-owned newspapers, as it was exemplified get their cues from the power that be. The allocative control of the media by the political parties consents them to decide on the scope and nature of the media content.

This is particularly blatant during periods of the crisis of hegemony. The press in a situation of control becomes ham-fisted in playing the reproachful role of the watchdog. As a result, this situation makes it difficult for citizens to exercise their right to information and their right to making informed choices. Beyond issues of ownership, a range of legal agencies have restrained the operation of media in Malaysia that linked to the history of British colonialism in which the British colonial administration used legal measures such as licensing and censorship in the content of media specifically during the communist insurgency period (Anuar, 2000; Khattab, 2004). Malaysian media licenses are tightly controlled by the state and must be renewable on a yearly basis. They can be revoked at will by the Minister of Information. This control certainly makes sure that owners of media companies toe the official line.

There are act in Malaysia that limit the freedom of the press which is the Printing Presses and Publications Act of 1984. Under the act, all domestic and foreign publications must apply permit from the government annually. The act was further amended in 1987 on several reasons that include the expanded of power from the government to ban and restricted the publications, to make any publication of “malicious news” as a punishable offense and also prohibit any court challenges for revocation of the publication permits.

The power from the government over license renewal and other policies create an atmosphere that impedes independent or investigative journalism that resulted in extensive self-censorship. In addition, the parliament in Malaysia's also enacted the Communications and Multimedia Act on April 1, 1999. The Act forces licensing for the Internet providers and even more portentously provides for the legal action against "those who post defamatory and false information on the Internet". Fear of prosecution under the Communications and Multimedia Act has resulted in some websites that are critical of the government moving their websites, or "online newspapers", by denying them press credentials, access to government meetings and press conferences or admission to government buildings.

Another laws that involved with media and press in Malaysia is the Printing Presses and Publication Act, 1984 and the also the Broadcasting Act (1988), that imposes on the media efficacy in playing its role as disseminator of information and watchdog over the government of the day. Suffice to say, both laws curb the press freedom in the country. Not only that these laws inhibited media professionals from getting involved with the investigative journalism and from playing any role as the custodians of truth, but both laws may also implant fear among the media practitioners. Another laws such as Societies Act, the Officials Secrets Act, 1972 (OSA) and the most suppressive of all, the Internal Security Act, 1960 (ISA) which can and have been used to curtail access to adequate information.

The concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few elites and the aforementioned acts however, skews the news reports with news angles and rhetoric that are often biased or favoring those with links to the ruling coalition. Media reform has been difficult because such attempt would almost certainly not go down too well with the current circle of media owners who are, in most cases, closely linked to politicians and political parties in the ruling coalition. Furthermore, the concentration in the hands of politically affiliated companies and individuals has been the norm in Malaysia for a long time (Zaharom, 2002, p. 266).

This section had discussed the background and history of the media establishment, the ownership and the state of the media control in Malaysia. The following section will discuss on the literature of homosexuality followed by several subsections on the historical, politicization and contextualization of homosexuality within the contemporary setting in Malaysia.

3.3 Homosexuality

3.3.1 The Social Constructions of Homosexuality in the West

The term homosexuality was first introduced in 1869 by a Swiss doctor name Karoly Maria Benkert to signify men who had sex with other men similar to the derogatory term “pederast” (Sullivan, 2003, p. 2). Homosexuality was defined by Karl-Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-1895) as the nature of human element or psyche positions itself in a wrong body or what he summed up with the Latin phrase “anima mulibris virile corpora inclusa” (a female psyche confined in a male body). As one of the pioneers of the gay movement in Europe, Ulrichs also claimed that homosexuality is inborn or “a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism”.

The idea to assert naturalness of homosexuality by Ulrichs is to challenge the perception of homosexual love as crime against nature. Throughout his work on homosexuality that have some influence with legal studies, medical and sexuality studies, however, his theory is not met the expectation of novel scholars. As Sullivan stated,

Ulrichs’ thesis is firmly founded on dichotomies such as male/female, active/passive, subject/object, mind/body and so on, which construct the world in terms of one valued term and its opposite (Sullivan, 2003, p.6).

The studies on homosexuality by Ulrichs was also influenced another scholar Richard von Krafft-Ebing through his work *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) which focus on the non-procreative sexuality that become the main reference to most doctors and lawyers. Similar like Ulrichs, Krafft-Ebing also stated that homosexuality was inborn. However, the innateness of homosexuality according to Krafft-Ebing was link to heredity and degeneration (ibid., 2003, p. 7). The difference between the two is that for Ulrichs,

homosexuality was natural or normal but for Krafft-Ebing, it was because of disease or perversion.

Another study conducted by British sexologist name Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) on homosexuality stated that same-sex relationship is not a disease but merely abnormality like color-blindness. Ellis also doubted that the purely biological determinism of sexuality because, according to Ellis:

It is probable that many persons go through the world with congenital predisposition to inversion which always remained latent and unroused (Ellis, n.d. cited in Sullivan, 2003, p. 8).

In short, the studies on homosexuality by Ellis suggest that both congenital predispositions and cultural factors influence the making of sexuality. Therefore, it is by no means an illness needs to be treated or criminal behavior. By using examples of same-sex boarding school for example, Ellis support his work by claiming that the bonding between two same-sex adolescents might take place easily due to close associations (ibid., n.d. cited in Sullivan, 2003, p. 8-9). Meanwhile, another scholar on sexuality studies Karl Westphals (1800-1979) believed that homosexuality is in one way or merely inherited. According to Westphals, male inverts are sexual deviants like a woman in a man's body and vice-versa. According to him too, the medical involvement was essential (Westphal, n.d. cited in Sullivan, 2003, p. 10).

In the other hand, Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) presented the theory of third sex as biologically determined which later developed the idea of sexual plurality by breaking the old and adamant paradigm of sexual binary. Not only that Hirschfeld rejected the theory of degeneration and the labeling of sexuality as normal and abnormal, he also introduced the notion of unbounded sexual variability that can be as distinct as human's finger prints. Hirschfeld also asserted that medical intervention to cure homosexuality was pointless. According to him, what is needed was a sort of therapy so homosexuals individual can accept and acknowledge their own sexuality (Hirschfeld, n.d. cited in Sullivan, 2003, p. 11).

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was a founder of psychoanalytic school of psychology and said that humans are basically bisexuals with both masculinity and feminine traits have been carried by every individual. According to Freud, homosexuality is far from being just a simple gender modification (Freud, n.d. cited in Connel, 1995, p. 8). He asserted that same-sex desire is less than degeneration and tells that:

Inversion is found in people who have no other serious deviations from the normal, indeed, it is often apparent in those who are distinguished by especially high intellectual development and ethical culture (Freud, 1996 cited in Sullivan, 2003, p. 14).

Through this, Freud dismisses the notion of inversion as to be associated with immorality but also its innateness and permanency. Freud was also in disagreement with several of the previous scholars that claimed homosexuality as inversion and asserted that:

There are whole range of possible sexual aims, object choices and states of psycho-sexual being, which are the products of each individual's psycho-sexual development and of the context in which such development occurs (Freud, n.d. cited in Sullivan, 2003, p. 14).

Nevertheless, Freudian later viewed homosexuality mainly resulted from the environmental factors, which is the subject to therapeutic treatment. This discussion becomes the main topic of discussion during the post-war academic circle in both Europe and across the Atlantic (Sullivan, 2003, p. 16).

3.3.2 The Historical Context of Homosexuality in Malaysia

After all, most Western academics only started to pay attention to the studies of homosexuality in Asia during the 1990s. The topic of the discussion has concerned itself specifically with the issue of gay and lesbian identities, inquiring whether indigenous homosexual identities and practices have anything in common with the recently evolved understanding of gay and lesbian identities in the west (McLelland, 2000). Jackson and Sullivan (2001) posited that the emergence and spread of queer culture and identity in Malaysia as in most Asian countries is associated with the multiple influences and effects of globalization, industrialization and urbanization in which these developing

countries in Asia are adapting their lifestyle and economy in order to fit in with the western capitalism (Altman, 1996; cited by Sullivan, 2001).

This western capitalism relationship with the construction of queer culture and identity was demonstrated by D'Emilio (1983) that gay identity was constructed from the economic development by capitalist in America. D'Emilio work also denoted that capitalism relieved sexuality from the "imperative to procreate". In his book title *Sexual Citizenship* (1993), Evans suggested that capitalism in America has made the formation of gay identity and gay community possible.

However, the researcher would like to argue on homosexuality in Malaysia cannot always be associated with the influences from the western countries. This is due to the basis that queer culture in Malaysia is already existed in the form of *pondan* or *mak nyah* tradition on the well acceptance and tolerance among transsexuals in a traditional Malay village dated back few decades ago. Astoundingly, it is indeed supported by Teh (2002) in regard with queer social lives that "most *mak nyah* had a better standard of living during the colonial days. Most of them work as *mak andam* (bride's attendant), *joget* dancers, cook and artistes". Furthermore, from the interview she conducted with a 63 years old *mak nyah*, it was said that during the colonial time, most *mak nyahs* living during the period were happier as they were left to be as who they wanted to be (Teh, 2002).

Teh also added that "the police and the Islamic religious authorities did not harass them. Some of *mak nyahs* that can afford for their sex change operations in overseas could have their names and gender in their identity cards changed to female identity" (Teh, 2002). Given these points, what the researcher wants to emphasize here is that homosexual identity and their visibility has been brought into the local social landscape through a long history of colonialism and existed a long time ago. Today, it was boosted by the recent trends of globalization apparatus in the technologies including the Internet as a medium and critical site of exchange for homosexual people in both side local and the western context to negotiate the assorted discerning about their desire and identity.

The studies on homosexuality from the historical context of their social lives in Malaysia indicate a different description. In what seem to be as an astounding finding, Peletz (2002, p. 243) stated that between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries Southeast Asia was indeed characterized by gender egalitarianism and considerable of female autonomy. To this fact, these centuries were also culturally sanctioned positions for transsexual people. In nearby Indonesia among the ethnic Bugis for instance, *bissu* were males who dressed as females and had male-gendered partners. Although less is known about them, the *sida-sida* in Malaysia was similar to the *bissu* and like them plays a leading role in any ritual and royal duties (ibid. pp. 312-313).

Furthermore, a study by the anthropologist, Jaspán (1969, pp. 22-23) indicated that “Southeast Asians are far more open-minded of deviant personalities, abnormality and disorder. Transsexuals are treated with affection and an amused tolerance”. This is also supported from the anthropological research, Douglas Raybeck (1986, p. 65) where he writes that “the Malays regarded queer people as peculiar, different and even somewhat humorous but they did not view it as an illness or a serious sin”. It is also cited by Raybeck (1986, p. 65) on one scenario that took place during 1960s in Kelantan⁵ which is also known as ‘*Serambi Mekah Malaysia*’ (Sisters City of Mecca) and nonetheless, there is a “specialized villages for queer community in or near the state capital”. Raybeck further stated that queer people and other gender transgressors have no vindictive colonies but the movement is relatively fluid and residence is completely voluntary. Furthermore, there were no reports of moral marauders or mobs, protesting against such specialist residences (Raybeck, 1986, p. 65).

Another interesting study on homosexuals social lives back then was also regarded by Peletz (1996, p. 123) stated that the “considerable tolerance and acceptance for *pondan*

⁵ Kelantan is located in the north-east of Peninsular Malaysia and close to the border side of Narathiwat Province of Thailand to the north. Kelantan is an agrarian state with lush paddy fields, rustic fishing villages and casuarina-lined beaches. Due to Kelantan’s relative isolation and largely rural lifestyle, Kelantanese culture differs somewhat from Malay culture in the rest of the Peninsular Malaysia that reflected in the cuisine, arts and the peculiar Kelantanese Malay dialect which is unintelligible even for some speakers of standard Malay. Kelantan state always regarded as the epicenter of Islamic state in Malaysia with the levels of practice and interpretations considered to be the most rigorously faithful to the dictates of Islam.

(transsexual)” were indeed exist among local community. Peletz (1996, p. 123) documented fascinating findings towards the attitudes of a villagers in Negeri Sembilan towards *pondan* and marked to say that, “sexual orientation is not a primary marker of the *pondan* category, which is in any event, a mediating rather than a supernumerary status” (ibid, p. 123). This would explain why although the villagers seem to be rather frank while discussing the exploits of two famous *pondan* in the village, the topics of discussion often center more on the *pondan* public copying of female mannerisms rather than any topic overtly sexual.

Peletz (1996) puts a final remarked that central to this nonplussed attitude that sexuality and gender is used to be set as a prominent marker or determinant of Southeast Asian society and culture. Male and female are often viewed in many contexts as complementary rather than hierarchical and of far more pressing importance in determining the pecking order are “descent, age, birth order and in recent times, social class” (Peletz, 1996, p. 129-130). Peletz (1996) further added that it is even up until 1980s, the acceptance for transsexual individuals in Malaysia is still in well receptive among public.

Prior discussions on the tolerance and the acceptance towards homosexuality in Malaysia during the era back then is probably correlated with the openness on sexuality among Malaysian that also rather unlikely few decades ago. From a work of Norhazlina (2004), she posited that Malay films during the 50s and 60s would explicitly show women in a sexy figure hugging *kebayas* and often demonstrate a scene and acting as “*perempuan joget*” (cabaret dancers), who sometimes plays as a leading character in the movie. These old movies dated back during colonialism era, always pictured this “*perempuan joget*” as a playful and fun women, hunting for the love of an upright man (Norhazlina, 2004).

This discussion definitely not quite neatly with the topic of this research of signifying homosexual studies instead but the point for this argument is the reflective and the illustration of the kind of “freedom” or “sexual license” that already started long time

ago on what the public “enjoyed” in the past as compared to the greater policing of sexuality and morality nowadays specifically among contemporary Malay societies in Malaysia (Peletz, 2002, p. 237).

Hereby, the polemic tension between the reception and rejection encircle within the subjugation of Malay tradition autonomy with the religion of Islam towards homosexuals people draw the attention of Hadi Zachariah, a local sociologist at University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Hadi Zachariah in his interview with *Time* magazine was regarded to say that while Islamic leaders may never accept homosexuality, but “there are deep wells of tolerance in the ethnically diverse nation - even among the Malay majority. There is a Malay culture and there is Islamic culture. Both are not quite the same; Malay culture is very tolerant” (cited from Liebhold, 2000).

3.3.3 Homosexuality in the Contemporary Malaysian Politics

Homosexuality started to be in the mainstream politics at unprecedented levels by the UMNO-led government after Anwar being sacked from the government by then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in year 1998. Later, Anwar was sent to the jailed for sodomy allegation and corruption. However in 2004, the Federal Court overturned the sodomy conviction but Anwar was denied from his career as politician until 2008. He was then appointed as the *de facto* leader of the People’s Justice Party (PKR), which formally led by his wife, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Mahathir did not conjure any anti-gay rhetoric when he dismissed Anwar from the cabinet but emphasized on the ‘Asian Values’ which he advocated previously and mentioned homosexuality as one of numerous and unacceptable Western ills (Peletz, 2003. P. 3; Tan, 2012a, p. 19-21). The anti-gay stance by Mahathir was accompanied by his plan to modernise Malaysia while Anwar become the target particularly at a time when the government state seemed on the brink of a major political structural crisis. The ensuing political crisis unfolded amid a regional economic crisis which also sparked off political unrest in other Asian countries, such as Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea (Gomez & Jomo, 1999, p. 185).

The subject of politics and sexuality in Malaysia has been brought to the mainstream debate and polarise on different levels and at the different time since the late 1990s. At times, when Anwar was sacked from the government for the sodomy allegation, the UMNO leaders and government own media, disparage homosexuality while at the same time brought up topic on homosexuality to stir the moral panics about sexual deviance. Not only that homosexuality was classified as ‘deviants’ but Syiah and liberal Muslims and any state-sanctioned rhetoric that paints ‘human rights’ as a threat to Islam was also lumped together (Bernama, 2014).

The sentiments towards homosexuality are espoused during the growing contestations of the state especially during the elections in year 2008. The 2008 elections also took place amid the widespread discontent against the ruling coalition for the Mahathir successor, then Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (J. C. H. Leet et al., 2010, p. 294-295). These grievances were expressed in the mass protests during the lead-in to the general elections from the multi-ethnic and multi-religious participants. For instant, in the late 2007 alone, there were protests by Malaysian Bar Council members against the corruption in the judiciary, demand for the fair elections by the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (BERSIH), petitioning the monarchy for electoral reforms and the demand for exploitation of Indians during colonial Malaya by Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF).

As consequence, the result for the general election 2008 left the UMNO-led and Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition were severely weakened. The political analysts regarded the BN’s loss of its two-third majority in Parliament as a crisis in Malaysian politics (J. C. H. Lee et al., 2010, p. 293). The three major opposition parties, namely Democratic Action party (DAP), People Justice Party (PKR) and Parti Islam Se-Malaya (PAS) received massive gains and formed the People’s Alliance or *Pakatan Rakyat* (PR). However, within months, Anwar was hit with the second sodomy allegation but still contested in a by-election and was returned to Parliament, becoming the Leader of the Opposition. He was charged with sodomy allegation, for the second time in a year but was acquitted by the High Court in 2012.

The major event happening in 2008 was resulted in an expansion of civil society and backlash by the BN federal government, which also reinforced by the formation of pro-regime, ultranationalist Malay groups with the most prominent being PERKASA (The Association of Indigenous Empowerment) (Welsh, 2013, p. 139). At the same time, BERSIH continued organising the mass demonstration for the electoral reform in 2011 as BERSIH 2.0 and in year 2012 as BERSIH 3.0. Later, the UMNO leaders, the Malay ultranationalists and government media strengthening their target to BERSIH group and any group associated with it. The BERSIH 2.0 chairperson, Ambiga Sreenivasan, become the major target when she was agreed to speak at the sexuality rights festival – *Seksualiti Merdeka* in the late 2011 (Surin, 2011).

Seksualiti Merdeka was initiated in 2008, and it is a coalition between individuals and groups that advocate gender equality and rights among LGBT community. *Seksualiti Merdeka* was later banned by the authority - a decision it has unsuccessfully challenged in court (Sklar & Poore, 2012), followed by the BERSIH 2.0 demonstration and a multiple death threats against Ambiga. Another controversy amid the polemic of *Seksualiti Merdeka* is the series of YouTube videos in 2010, particularly from one Malay Muslim man name Azwan Ismail who confessed on the YouTube sharing video and coming out as gay. Azwan was later received a numbers of threats and also condemned by the Shariah lobby and other Muslim groups advocate. However, he has not been subjected to any legal action or vigilante persecution.

The state and other group pro-regime actors continue to politicise homosexuality and gay rights even after the 2013 general election with BN lost the popular vote to the *Pakatan Rakyat* with 47.4 percent against 50.9 percent, but still managed to retain the government (Welsh, 2013, p. 136). Homosexuality and the associated groups with gay rights were framed as a Trojan horse that will be the downfall of Malaysian society. However, the Muslim non-governmental organisation such as Sister in Islam and Islamic Renaissance Front (IRF) were publicly criticising the anti-LGBT expression of Islam (Ahmad Fuad, 2011; Sisters in Islam, 2011).

Nevertheless, gay Muslims in Malaysia are not all affected by the politics of sexuality in the same way amid this political climate. There are people who are not associated with the state's targeting of Anwar with their personal circumstances, while some people feel insulted by the state sanctioned of anti-gay rhetoric. There are also people who are still feel conflicted in wanting to defend their position as living Malay Muslim in Malaysia and at the same time completely protect their sexual lives privately. Regardless of these people perceptions, they want to negotiate how they can express their sexuality in ways that can escape the state's regulation of homosexuality, often exploiting the gaps and inconsistencies in practical aspects of regulations.

3.3.4 Homosexuality and Islamic Nation in Malaysia

One sees convergence between Malay ethnicity and the religion of Islam specifically when it comes into the complex issue involved with sexuality or gender in Malaysia. Contemporary Muslim scholars contend that all humans are 'naturally' heterosexual and homosexuality is considered a sinful and a perverse deviation from a person's true nature (Abu Saud, 1990). According to the Quran⁶, homosexuals are also referred to as *qaum Luth* (Lot's people) referring to the prophet Lot who preached against homosexuality in the cities of Sodom and Gomorra, which were subsequently destroyed. The oft-quoted line from the Story of Lot is "How can you lust for males, of all creatures in the world and leave those whom God has created for you as your mates. You are really going beyond all limits" (Jamal, 2001). Later, the Prophet Muhammad adds, "doomed by God is who does what Lot's people did (homosexuality).

The Quran declares Islam to be the "religion of nature" that promotes sex by making it a sacred act with a prayer to asking Allah to "grant me a righteous child" before any of sex intercourse. The Quran further encourages sex by outlawing celibacy and permitting polygamy, thus reinforcing 'halal⁷ heteronormative sexual behavior'. Since the purpose

⁶ Qur'an is the central religious text of Islam, which Muslims believe to be the verbatim word of God (Allah). It is regarded widely as the finest piece of literature in the Arabic language.

⁷ Halal is Arabic term which means permissible and designating to any object or an action which is permissible to use or engage in, according to Islamic law. In this context, halal heteronormative sexual behavior is a marriage between a man and woman to live as husband and wife. The Islamic marriage is

of sex is procreation according the religious text, homosexuality is seen as an aberration of Allah's will which threatens Muslims with extinction. As a result, there is officially no room for homosexuality within Islam (Duran, 1993) specifically among countries of Muslim-majority with Islam as a dominance religion.

The rising controversies on homosexuality among Malay Muslim in the Malaysian contemporary setting need to be understood within the Islamic state regulation in the country, following on what asserted by Tan Beng Hui (2012, p. 8) 'upholds heterosexuality as the sole legitimate form of sexuality'. However, in what of he studied on the Islamic bureaucracy, Tan (2012, p. 53) also discovered that state and non-state actors in Malaysia were advocating more rigid view of Islamic law which involved the competing ideological strands and political loyalties.

The effort of state-led to be systematise on the application of Islamic law might look standard but it was actually fraught with factional challenges, that involved political control financial and human resources issues. As consequence, statecraft shariah law that criminalising sexual offences including homosexuality and transgenderism are applied only subjectively and selectively, making the state's 'antigay bark worse than its bite' (Tan, 2012, p. 148-158). Yet, this still creates fears among homosexuals particularly Muslim gay community assisted by pro-shariah ideologues that drive mass sensationalist in the issue.

Another studies conducted by Yuenmei Wong, when she specifically argues on some Malay Muslims *pengkids*, which remain to be mostly indifferent from their individual belief instead of the increase stigmatisation from the society. Wong studies a 2008 fatwa (official Islamic ruling) that prohibit the identity of *pengkids* or 'tomboy' in public with some *pengkids* agreed to be interviewed in the media by the reporter to debate on the *fatwa*. Wong (2012, p. 439-444) postulated that *pengkids* are subject to religious and political scrutiny.

declared publicly by a responsible person after delivering a sermon to counsel and guide the couple. The Qur'an asserts that marriage is the only legitimate way to satisfy one's sexual desire.

In one the interview study with homosexual Muslim men on their sexual identity difference conducted by Zainon Shamsudin and Kamila Ghazali (2011, p. 287) stated that their respondents merely expressed contentment at being gay in Malaysia and not intended to challenge the religious and state authorities. Furthermore, the interview also revealed that the respondents agree on being conflicted living as homosexual and Muslim while wishing to get married eventually. These findings were similar with what Boellstorff and Gaudio observed about how gay and lesbian in Indonesia that did not necessarily attempt to 'reconcile' their sexual and religious identities.

Meanwhile, a study conducted by Goh (2014, p. 609) argues on the challenge posed by Malay Muslims homosexual towards 'Malaysian institutional Islam' that need not to be explicitly confrontational but they influence their surroundings merely because they are gay and Muslim. In his study, Goh examines the same-sex civil partnership of Ariff Alfian Rosli in 2011, a Malay Muslim man resides in Ireland. The incident triggered the fury of Muslim pressure groups, when the photos of his wedding ceremony were leaked in the Internet. Yet, in response to the controversy, Ariff Alfian confesses on his same-sex wedding with his partner, but he pointed that he was still a Muslim. Goh (2014, p. 607) said on the response by Ariff Alfian might have been possible because the sentiments of anti-homosexual of Islamic state authorities are hardly matched with the attitudes of many Malaysians including Muslim people.

However, as homosexual sex act is forbidden in most Muslim majority countries, it has no specific penalty for those who were delinquent of this act. The decision is left to the discretion of the ruling authorities and the legal punishments for sodomy are varied among juristic schools with some countries prescribe capital punishment (death penalty); while others prescribes a milder discretionary punishment such as imprisonment. For example in Iran, the methods of execution of homosexual individuals are include; beheading, chopped in two, stoning to death, burning alive and being thrown alive from a high building. Meanwhile in Afghanistan, there is a case of three men which are believed as homosexual are buried alive under a pile of stones and a wall is pushed on

top of them by a tank, as punishment for sodomy in the town of Kandahar (Arlandson, 2005).

These previous studies on Malay Muslim homosexual in Malaysia largely informed that Malay homosexual in Malaysia might still have strong relations with Islam to at least on an individual level on how they response to the strong state impositions of anti-homosexual interpretations of Islam. The previous studies also showed that political exigencies also influence the application of Islamic state regulation. These studies brought to the value of comparing experiences among Malay homosexuals in differing contexts.

3.3.5 Coverage of Homosexuality in Malaysia

Public acceptance on homosexuality is still unlikable among majorities of Malaysians. According to the survey conducted by Pew Research Center on the attitude towards homosexuality in 39 countries, only 9% respondents from Malaysia indicated a positive acceptance toward homosexuality in the country (2013). Another survey was also conducted to investigate on personal development including social environment and lifestyles among Muslim youth in Malaysia by Goethe Institut (2010) and the result shown that there is a rejection of any un-Islamic lifestyle such as beer drinking, premarital sex and also homosexuality with 99.4% of the respondents are against same-sex act and deviant sexual activities. However, regardless of the vast rejection towards homosexuality among Malaysian, the visibility of homosexuality's "scene" and community in Kuala Lumpur and other big cities throughout Malaysia is gradually thriving, hence opened up a precarious avenue through which concerning to the issue with most of their activities are still underground (Leach, 2013).

According to Ho (1998) issues related with homosexual in Malaysia has been around for relatively some period of time, but their stories is barely get an attention from the local news media. However, after the political storm that involved a high profile case of Anwar Ibrahim for sexual act of sodomy accusation in September 1998, Malaysian newspaper has provoked the discussion on sex openly which has given the public a

medium to communicate and popularize homosexuality in the country (Alagappar, 2009). Two years of regular references to sodomy (the charges) of Anwar Ibrahim since the year 1998 in what was being reported in the newspaper during his trial, few men was being disclosed as persons alleged as his same sex partners appeared to have left a perception from the public towards homosexual people (Liebhold, 2001). This explicit news reporting on Anwar Ibrahim sodomy trial was shown as a basis of pervasiveness of homosexual discourse among public in Malaysia as Chua (2007) contested that excessive news exposure on homosexual related stories both either local or international media is believe to influence public attitudes toward this social group.

While there is relatively little of literature about homosexuality specifically studies on the news media, the contentions on the subject of homosexuality in the country demonstrate curiosity on how homosexuality is depicted in the news media. However, there have been some significant studies with the current entrants. As claimed by Lipkin (1994) when issues related with homosexual was addressed in mass media, it is written in stereotypical manner and reported in so sensationalized ways that conflates homosexuality with controversy and sometimes suffering or uses their identity for the purpose of making fun and humiliation. By retrieving the controversial event of Azwan Ismail on his self-confessed video of his same-sex sexual orientation on YouTube video for instance, his story was not only received numerous of negative comments from YouTube viewers but it was reported in formidable way in most local newspaper that were utterly condemning his action and insisted local authorities to take action against him.

Another study by Suriati and Azilah (2012) examines the role of media as a tool of the social identity construction among transsexuals in Malaysia. The study investigate how media including magazines, television, dramas, films and the Internet play the role to expedite identification processes among transsexuals particularly university students. Throughout the work, Suriati and Azilah (2012) employ a various method of investigation including in-depth interview, face-to-face discussion, participation observation, conversation via internet chat and journal writing in duration between years

2007 to 2009 and manage to have 30 respondents that were chosen by utilizing snowball sampling.

The basis of the work is grounded with the strong tendency of Malaysians films and dramas that often focus on transsexual and broadcasted on local cinema and television as equal to an open discussions on the issues of transsexual social identity that are made in a local TV shows (Ghazali et. al. 2011). The result of the study were analyzed and interpreted by content analysis and textual strategies and the finding indicated that media play a significant position to spread information on transsexual identity while in the same time granting a new social identity to delve deep into space, place and culture that have already established. Suriati and Azilah (2012) further pointed there is in need of reworking of the space, place and culture that had to be deals and associated with conflict and contestation especially in the established culture in Malaysia local context that forbids transsexualism.

While the work conducted by Suriati and Azilah (2012) is not quite well related with the purpose of this research, however, the researcher would like to position the argument on Suriati and Azilah study that focus merely and constraint to the formation of identity among transsexual's people but not widely targeted to include among gay and lesbian people. The work is also lack of the justification and details that was made in a sense of the media selection to be related with its consumption and the supplementary of the discussion.

The focus also made merely on popular media selection which only superficially describe few local movies related with queer theme and no details and elaboration on music, magazine or any popular media related that was discuss in detail manners. Conversely, the researcher work for this research is ultimately focus on Malay language newspapers as a main medium of investigation that targeted on homosexual and the coverage that specifically examine on how homosexuality was being interpreted and constructed in the newspaper.

Another strand of this research derived from the previous work of Jerome's on *Queer 'Melayu' and the politics of Malay identity* (2011) that is very much contributive for this research which he traverse a wide expanse of intellectual breadth of local literally with an assortment of anthropological contributions towards Malay identity specifically the intense debate on queer Malays identity construction in Malaysia. His works delves deep into issues of queer Malays by highlighting the queer-themed films produced by local filmmaker Osman Ali and Amy Ikram Ismail and later analyze and formulate visions of queerness from these filmmakers' personal reflections to the formation and crisis of identity among queer-identified Malays. Jerome also examine literary works by contemporary local writers including Karim Raslan and Dina Zaman which are drawn from these writers' own personal experience and knowledge on the complex processes of identity-formation of queer Malays.

However, the researcher critiques and argument toward Jerome's work depicted from his focus and selection of the genre and media from the literary works and popular media by local writers and filmmakers as the interpretation of the means of such tensions and conflicts of queerness merely originated from the angles and perspectives of the writers and filmmakers itself. As crucial as Jerome's work as he find out how queer-identified Malays construct and articulate their identities on the various material implications from the popular media point of view, his work echoes the researcher intuition of the key concern to the work of analyzing the meaning of queerness from the local newspaper perspective specifically from the hegemonic impulses of Malay notion and ideas through the prominent Malay language newspapers of UM and BH.

Jerome (2011) work also demonstrated on the polemical tension between authority-defined and the everyday-defined notions of "Malayness" in the politics of Malaysian Malay identity construction in which he employed from the studies of Shamsul (1996) approach of "two social realities". This approach was constructed by Shamsul (1996) on his study of the politics and conception of "Malayness" in the setting of contemporary Malaysia. Shamsul (1996) studies of "two social realities" can be very much accustomed for this research as well in what he contended that authority-defined are formed by those

who are part of the elite governing bodies and local authorities who were discerned and interpreted the social reality of being Malay through oral or written political discourse.

3.4 Summary

At the outset of this review, the discussion on the relevant concept and previous studies is not merely to give impression on how media depicted the issue on homosexuality, but the understanding of how issues surrounding homosexuality was perceived by Malaysian public. While this research is attempted to examine the coverage of homosexuality from the perspective of mainstream newspapers, this chapter start with the concept and analysis of ideology and hegemony as a framework to be adapted and later analyse how these two reflect the context that construct the social representations in the media.

The discussion on the media structure in Malaysia and its historical background, media ownership and control was also discussed. The similar chapter also discussed on the literature of homosexuality including the contextualization of its history and the politicization of homosexuality within contemporary Malaysia. Previous studies of homosexuality and its representations were also brought up to the discussion. The next chapter will discuss on the methodology use in conducting this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the discussions for the methodology used in conducting this research. The primary focus for this research will be on the discourses related with issues surrounding on homosexuality in Malaysia. The purpose of this research is twofold. Firstly, this research aims to examine the homosexuality coverage in Malaysia from the stance of Malay language newspapers of *Utusan Malaysia* (UM) and *Berita Harian* (BH). In particular, this research seek to find out how these Malay language newspapers convey and express the narration of homosexuality in terms of the trends of the coverage and the thematical coverage as the ways in which the hegemonic of Malay notion through the state that affect their narrative in the newspaper. Secondly, this research aim to analyze the perception among readers particularly Malay homosexuals towards coverage of homosexuality as depicted from these Malay language newspapers based on the results acquired from the analysis of the newspaper texts. For this research, the methodology of content analysis and in-depth interview study is employed.

This chapter is divided into three main sections with several sub-sections. In section 4.2 the discussion on the methodology of content analysis study is presented. This research utilized both quantitative and qualitative content analysis study because both study are central on the same set of data sampling. Hence, the explanation on both techniques will be presented under the same section. However, for the description on the part of data analysis will be explained in the two different sections because both analyses are using different analysis technique.

The explanation on data analysis for quantitative content analysis will be in the section 4.2.5.1. Meanwhile the explanation on data analysis for qualitative content analysis will be in the section 4.2.5.2. The purpose of employing quantitative content analysis study is to get the frequency of the homosexuality articles. Ultimately, the result from the frequency of the coverage can unveil the trends and the development of the articles published on homosexuality within the duration of the study.

The quantitative content analysis is employed to seek answer for research question one (RQ 1): How are trends of the homosexuality coverage were distributed in the Malay language newspapers from 1998 to 2012? Meanwhile, the qualitative content analysis is used to examine the context used in depicting homosexuality from the dominant pattern, which construct the coverage in the newspaper. The qualitative content analysis is employed to answer research question two (RQ2): How coverage of homosexuality was thematically presented in the Malay language newspapers with references emerged from social constructionism?

In section 4.3 the discussion on the methodology of in-depth interview study is discussed. The interview was conducted to seek how readers received and inferred the provided perspective of the coverage on homosexuality as described from the Malay language newspapers. The interview was also conducted to explore for any possible reasons for such coverage was constructed by gathering another perspectives from the respondents. The respondents for the interview were chosen among Malay homosexuals. The interview study was performed to answer research question three (RQ 3): How homosexual's readers perceived the coverage with their own personal identity interfacing with the media depiction?

Finally, section 4.4 will concludes the overall chapter. The following section explains on the methodology of content analysis study.

4.2 Content Analysis

This section explained a justification of employing both quantitative and qualitative content analysis in this research. Both quantitative and qualitative content analysis was employed to cater research questions one and research question two respectively. Content analysis is the first method for the study of newspaper text analysis. The analysis of the newspaper coverage surrounding issues on homosexuality was explored through a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of content to make inferences from given information.

In general, the quantitative analysis method was normally used to measure the frequency of the coverage and qualitative analysis method was used to understand and interpret the viewpoints presented by the coverage. This supports what Smith, 1975 (cited in Yan, 2006, p. 2), suggests that the same merger of both quantitative and qualitative analysis should be used, “because qualitative analysis deals with forms and antecedent-consequent patterns of form, while quantitative analysis deals with duration and frequency of form”, (Smith, 1975 as cited in Yan, 2006, p. 2)

The purpose of conducting quantitative content analysis as the first research method is to examine the general trends and frequency of the distribution texts on coverage on homosexuality over the periods of time since newspaper articles is cultural artifacts that embody “issues and ideas necessary to social life” (Thomas, 1994, p. 686). In addition, qualitative content analysis was selected as one of the research technique in this research to identify the characteristics and cultural meaning of the coverage on homosexuality and its dispute and debate as they emerged in printed news narratives as spoken in local newspapers.

The identification of the pattern and trend of the coverage on homosexuality were categorized generally as extrapolation; which is defined by Krippendorff (2004, p. 47) as “inferences of unobserved instances in the intervals between or beyond the observations (data points)”. Since the analysis of data (in this case, coverage on homosexuality) is limited to what has been systematically codified and collected, content analysis is one valuable technique specifically in uncovering the broad similarities or unlikeness across texts, but not the anomalies.

Through analytical analysis of these patterns and trends, content analysis later provides a powerful tool for researchers to investigate the “big pictures” that shape cultural meanings, “the contours of the ideological environment” (Thomas, 1994, p. 689) specifically on the understanding of media depiction towards the offensive subject on homosexuality as being labeled by most public in Malaysia. This type of analysis is suitable for analyzing and describing patterns in media content and illustrating the extent

and presence of certain issues, frames and stereotypes in a large corpus (Berelson, 1952, Gunter 2000).

By conducting content analysis study, it will also work to determine which questions and topics of homosexuality that have received much significant attention by the newspapers and how it will reflect the interpretation among public specifically homosexual community itself. Using the result of the quantitative content analysis concerning general tabulation news text of news articles on homosexuality, a qualitative content analysis was later conducted to describe how homosexuality coverage was depicted and framed in the newspapers through dominant patterns and discursive themes.

For this research, both quantitative and qualitative content analyses are using the same type of data sampling. However, the process and procedures of data analysis are defined differently in order to achieve the aims of both content analysis techniques. The following section will elaborate and justified the selection on the data sampling of content analysis study.

4.2.1 Data Sampling

For this purpose of research, the study of newspaper text for content analysis was conducted on two prominent Malay language newspapers in Malaysia namely of *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*. The most important aspect taken into consideration for the selection was their presence in their respective markets. One of the factors of the selection was based on their high circulation and consistent publication. UM and BH newspapers had always been a rival and compete for the title of Malaysia's leading Malay language newspapers on its circulation and readership. For example, according to the latest audit report from Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), UM newspapers entitled for the highest number of circulation for Malay newspapers nationwide (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2013) for the year 2013, in which the number of the newspapers distributed around Malaysia including Sabah and Sarawak is 182,704 copies daily in average.

The Sunday edition of UM newspapers is known as *Mingguan Malaysia*. Meanwhile for BH newspapers, the numbers of copy circulated are 126,762 copies daily in average for the year 2013 and its Sunday edition is called *Berita Ahad* that formerly known as *Berita Minggu*. However, in term of the readership, BH newspapers outnumbered UM newspapers in which, the total of their readership is 947,000 for the year 2013 to be compared with UM newspapers which only have 563,000 of readership.

On the contrary, the number of readership for BH newspapers in year 2012 is higher than year 2013 which is 1,168,000 in total. Meanwhile, UM newspapers merely have 636,000 of readership.

Table 4.1 below shows a number of circulation and readership for both UM and BH newspapers for five consecutive years from 2009 to 2013.

Table 4.1

Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian circulation and readership from 2009 to 2013

Year	Circulation		Readership	
	<i>Utusan Malaysia</i>	<i>Berita Harian</i>	<i>Utusan Malaysia</i>	<i>Berita Harian</i>
2013	182,704	126,762	563,000	947,000
2012	182,748	138,805	636,000	1,168,000
2011	174,275	131,394	699,000	1,035,000
2010	171,842	157,037	557,000	1,020,000
2009	169,548	154,868	550,100	1,001,120

Source: Audit Bureau Circulation, 2016

From the Table 4.1 above, it shows that UM newspapers served as the leading Malay broadsheet in the country in term of circulation but for the number of readership, BH newspapers posed a much greater number than UM newspapers. All the numbers of circulation and readership for UM and BH newspapers here were distributed throughout Malaysia including Sabah and Sarawak.

UM and BH newspapers are both broadsheet newspapers that were also called ‘quality’ and ‘elite’ newspaper (Hanusch, 2013). Broadsheet newspaper were also defined as

news that address their readers as citizens, and proclaim themselves to be ‘newspapers of record’ or serious press, usually following public interest ideals and aiming to educate readers (Hanusch, 2013). There was another primary Malay language newspapers in Malaysia, namely as *Kosmo* and *Harian Metro* that also serve as a major news reading material in the country. However, *Kosmo* and *Harian Metro* both are tabloid newspapers, which have a strong agenda on scandal, sports and entertainment while showing little elements of serious news value (Sparks, 2000). For this research, the researcher merely focus on broadsheet newspaper as a sample of study, hence, UM and BH newspapers were the best choice of medium.

On top of that, the decision to choose UM newspapers was also primarily due to its long narration of association with Malay people in which the term ‘Malayness’ was articulated through the significance of the contribution in the Malay press during the period of its foundation that later disseminate the idea and the concept of ‘Malayness’ (Fee, L. K., 2001). Begin to publish daily in 1938, UM newspapers was drawn with an extensive readership among the Malay-literate populace during that time. During the colonial era, UM newspapers (known as *Utusan Melayu* at that time) insists to change the English term of ‘Malaya’ given by British to ‘Tanah Melayu’ (Malay land) as a symbolic practice to place Malay nation in a highest rank. In an embedded way, these actions are seen as a way of promoting *bangsa* (race) specifically Malay in consciousness and indirectly helped in constructing Malay political and ideological discourse (Fee, L. K., 2001).

Meanwhile, BH newspaper is another prominent Malay language newspaper in Malaysia with the first publication in July 1957, a month before Malaysia (Malaya at that time) gain independence from the British. Throughout the years, BH newspapers has diversely molded itself from a newspaper reflecting the thoughts and aspirations of Malay agenda and nationalism to a vibrant medium where the era of knowledge has become the primary resource of economic development specifically towards Malay community during the post-independence day period. In summation, these two Malay language newspapers speak and represent in the same and common way for Malay audiences

since ages ago up to the present. These newspapers, which traditionally target Malay audiences, provide a historical justification as the sampling selection. The researcher particularly interested to find out how these Malay language newspapers formulate and articulate the characteristics of homosexuality as the ways in which the hegemonic of Malay notion through the state that affect the coverage.

Another reason on why this research merely focus on Malay language newspapers and not English or non-Malay language newspapers⁸ is because this research work to explore the homosexuality coverage from the hegemonic discourse of Malay understanding from both newspapers while these UM and BH newspapers were predominantly associated with a long tradition of championing Malay agenda and ideologies. Moreover, both Malay language newspapers are seemed to complement each other and give more in-depth and roundup of issue discussed.

Therefore, UM and BH newspapers as primary Malay language newspapers in the country may provide useful means through which one can understand more comprehensively how issue-involving homosexuality was being portrayed and discussed based on the reputability and objectivity of both newspapers respectively. As for this study of content analysis, the focus is rest on homosexuality in the country are portrayed and represented through language used in the context and the connotation of homosexuality from the collectivism of Malay ideas and viewpoint from these two leading Malay language newspapers in Malaysia.

In a nutshell, this section explained a selection of the data sampling used, namely Malay language newspapers of UM and BH newspapers. Because the focus of this research is to analyze the coverage on homosexuality from the perspective of Malay language newspapers, the selection of both UM and BH newspapers were determined from their long historical establishment and their strong allies with Malay notions. On top of that,

⁸ Beside *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*, there are few non-Malay language newspapers in Malaysia such as *News Strait Times* and *The Star* for English language newspaper, Chinese language newspaper such as *Nanyang Siang Pau* and *Sin Chew Jit Poh* and Tamil language newspapers such as *Makkal Osai* and *Tamil Nesan*.

the selections were also derived from their great number of circulation and readership scale among broadsheet newspapers in Malaysia. The upcoming section will present the time frame and data collection site.

4.2.2 Time Frame and Data Collection Site

This research looks at coverage from both Malay language newspapers for a fifteen-year period from January 1998 to December 2012. The year of 1998 is selected as Alagappan and Kaur (2009) stated homosexuality began to be the subject of news media that entered the mainstream after the year 1998 because of Anwar Ibrahim's trial on sodomy accusation that resulted on the attention garnered from local news media. News coverage with word 'homosexual', 'gay' and 'lesbian' were scoured in UM and BH newspapers.

These coverage, whether they talked about homosexuality as a foreground subject or discussed it in a scantiness topic were gathered before the process of data cleaning and filtering. Details on data collection procedure and how the data being analyze will be elaborated in the section 4.2.3. For this research, the researcher focus on the fifteen years period started on the year 1998 to 2012 as these fifteen years period yielded numbers of coverage published on homosexuality and gay stories that may come from diverse perspectives.

The decision to choose these periods was also because of the chaotic, yet interesting period to study based on the controversial events surrounding issues with homosexuality in the country and to obtain a more in depth perspective about the coverage on homosexuality in both newspapers. Furthermore, from the initial observation of data gathering, the numbers of coverage published on homosexuality appeared to be upsurge especially after the year 2000 and rise dramatically in 2012 that would give fascinating output to find out.

Another reason for choosing these fifteen years periods was also offered me the chance to be able to visualize how the pattern and dispute of the coverage on homosexuality from both Malay language newspapers evolved through time. The following chapter of

finding and analysis of this research will elaborate details on the distribution of publication on homosexuality published in both Malay language newspapers from the year 1998 to 2012.

For the data collection site, the researcher use intranet search system to gather news coverage on homosexuality for UM newspapers. The intranet search engine of UM newspapers can only be accessed at the main library of UM head office at Jalan Chan Sow Lin, Kuala Lumpur. The fact that UM newspapers provides online news portal that can be accesses anywhere that serve readers to seek and search for predated coverage in the news archive section, however, the news archive is restricted to only show limited numbers of news coverage.

As a result, the researcher choose to collect data on the coverage from UM intranet system that mostly obtainable on the intended date and year. The intranet system of UM newspapers provides a great accessibility to search and look at any articles wanted by just write the keyword on the system at any period of publication intended. Meanwhile, for BH newspapers, the researcher also seeks the articles from the intranet search system at the press main library located at their headquarters located at Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. This is also due to the limited access in obtaining the articles required from the news archive search service provided by BH online news portal.

This section had justified the periods of data selection. The periods of data selection started from the year 1998 to year 2012, which is a period of fifteen years. This long period of fifteen years is chosen so it will make easier for me to visualize how the news trends and pattern on the news coverage surrounding issue on homosexuality were reported through time. The same section also uncovers the site of data collection process that is from the library and resource center of UM and BH through their intranet database system. Both locations are situated at Kuala Lumpur. The following section will discuss the procedure of data collection.

4.2.3 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher focused on the coverage reported by UM and BH newspapers with reference to homosexuality related issues and stories. Both Malay language newspapers were used in this process of identifying the trends of the coverage on homosexuality issue from the news between years 1998 to 2012 and to analyze the major concern on homosexuality based on the trends shown. The process of data collection is aim to identify and obtained relevant coverage until its meet the significance for further analysis, which consists of four overarching steps. The process is explained in the following steps.

The first step was guided by questions laid out by Fairclough (1992), keeping in mind that researchers must choose those aspect and keyword most significant to their analysis specifically in conducting study related with discourse on news media. Hence, the researcher determined the appropriate terms as keyword most likely to be used by both Malay language newspapers to narrate the coverage on homosexuality. Word that the researcher chooses to be the principal keyword as the search identification is 'homosexuality' and 'homosexual'. However, there were related keywords that are not limited with 'homosexual' or 'homosexuality' but the researcher also chose the word 'lesbian' and the word 'gay' as keywords during the data searching process. Since both UM and BH newspapers were using Malay language as a medium, the Malay translation and spelling of the word 'homosexual' as *homoseksual* and 'homosexuality' as *homoseksualiti* were used to locate the news coverage.

It should be noted that the word of 'gay' and 'lesbian' has the same spelling and meaning in Malay language, hence no translation was involved for these two particular words. In addition, some coverage from both Malay language newspapers was using the acronym of 'LGBT' that stands for 'lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender' to be referred to this community in their news reporting. Although, the purpose of this research is focus merely on gay and lesbian people and not on bisexual and transgender, coverage with word 'LGBT' were also included to be part of the sample of data. It is recognized that keywords used cannot fully cover homosexuality as a concept.

However, the representational frames of this iconic word are assumed to be symptomatic of attitudes towards broader manifestations of homosexuality. All news coverage with significant keywords was later identified. At first, the researcher examined each coverage in its entirety in order to assess the amount of overall coverage including non-related articles they were juxtaposed to. In the end, 621 numbers of coverage from UM newspapers was retrieved and for BH newspapers the total of 195 coverage with the signified keywords was gathered. As a result, the totals of 816 coverage for both newspapers were accumulated in this process.

Figure 4.1 below illustrate the overall number of news distribution on the coverage published on homosexuality from the year 1998 to year 2012 in both UM and BH newspapers.

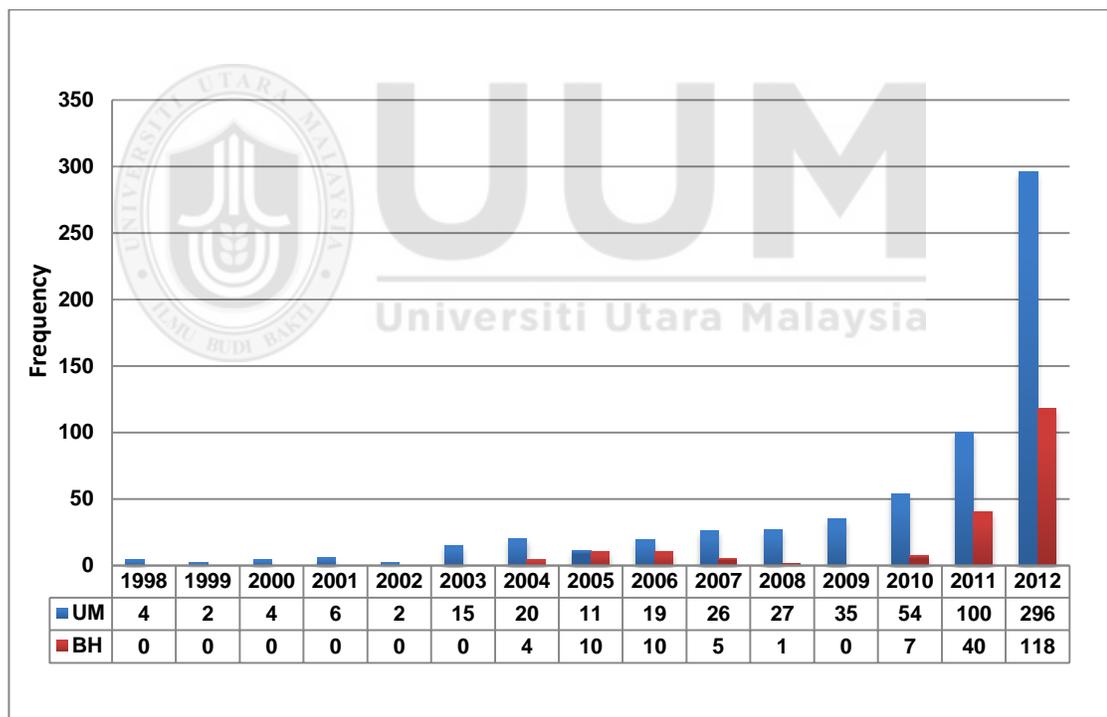


Figure 4.1. The overall distributions of homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 816$)

The next step is carefully reviewing each news collected to ensure that it fit to the main purpose of this research. For this process, all coverage was firstly examined whether it discussed entirely the subject of homosexuality or not. The main question rose during

this process is to keep questioning on how the coverage collected is describing homosexuality for the entire coverage. This meant that the coverage must be engaged with the discursive practice of homosexuality within the context of describing the homosexuality from both Malay language newspapers.

Other retrieved items, such as interviews transcript in the newspaper discussed on homosexuality stories, the researcher have highlighted the part on homosexuality from the interview content while keeping the context in which the reference is made. This means if homosexual is mentioned in the middle of the interview, the relevant questions and answers are sorted out while keeping the context of the selected part mentioned. This method proved to be useful later on in the analysis because sometimes the surrounding questions and answers in the interview are used as preamble to the research questions and to make some relevant insinuations.

After retrieval of the research results, the third step is to examine all items and analytically checked individually to make sure the retrieved outcomes were matched the subject investigated with the goal of the research. During the analytical process of news coverage selection, it is found three types of coverage surrounding on issue of homosexuality. The first type is coverage that discussed prominently on homosexuality as main subject of discussion in the entire articles. The second types of coverage discussed on homosexuality along with another different topic discussion in one single article. This is to be considered as half-prominent coverage on homosexuality but still engaged with the narrative on the characteristics of homosexuality. Meanwhile, the final type of coverage on homosexuality are articles that contain keywords during the searching process of the news on homosexuality but do not specifically described and discussed the characteristics of the subject of homosexuality.

Once the search is completed, step four is clean up the data by inspecting each coverage that fit with the main criteria to get the total number of relevant coverage from each newspaper. Eventually, only coverage that prominent and partly prominent on the discussion of homosexuality were selected for further analysis. Any coverage that is not

prominently talked on homosexuality were excluded for further analysis as these types of coverage is not reflected with the purpose of this research. In the end, the final number of coverage that was selected for further analysis is 463 coverage, from both UM and BH newspapers. The following chapter will discuss more on the discussion of the selected coverage.

Figure 4.2 below presents a diagram that summarized the process of data collection procedure.

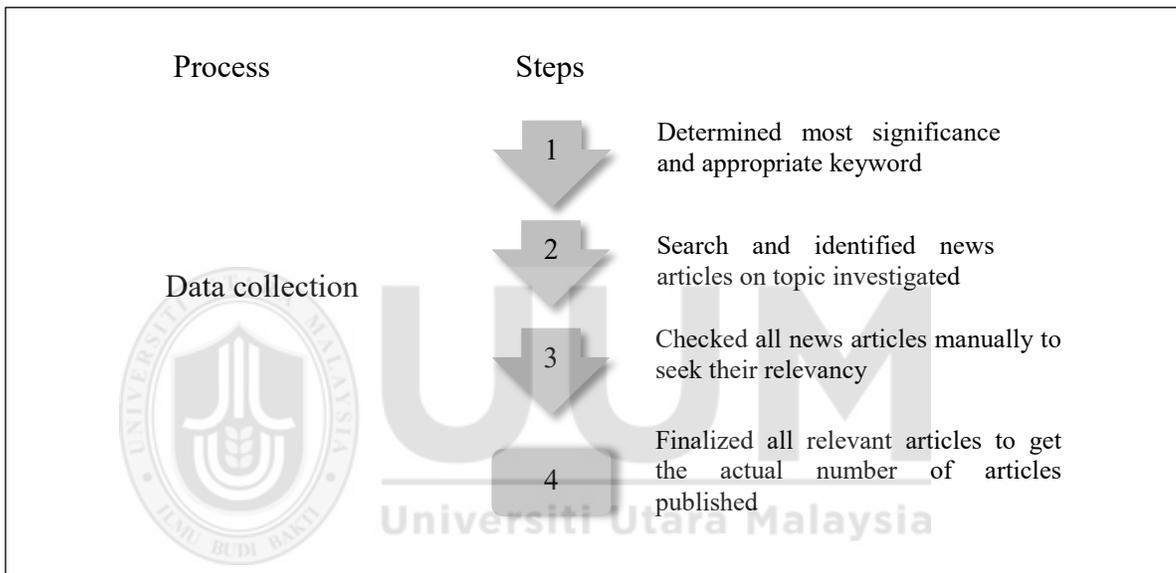


Figure 4.2. A diagram summarizes the flow of data collection process for content analysis study

In short, this section had explained on the data collection procedure that consists of four main steps. It starts with defining the suitable keyword to search for the coverage on homosexuality. After the process of scrutinizing all relevant coverage, the actual number is determined and ready for data analyzing process. The following section discuss further on the analysis of the selected data.

4.2.4 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was the individual coverage or news article on homosexuality stories. The definition of homosexuality news was based on the argument made in

Chapter 1 in section 1.6 of operational definition. The one single coverage work as the basic unit of analysis.

4.2.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis for content analysis study is divided into two sections which are data analysis for quantitative content analysis and data analysis for qualitative content analysis. The following section of 4.2.5.1 elaborates the data analysis for quantitative content analysis which will describe on the data reliability and validity and also the process of coding categorization. Meanwhile, the analysis of data for qualitative content analysis will be discussed in the section 4.2.5.2 particularly on the construction of the discursive themes and the discussion on data reliability.

4.2.5.1 Data Analysis for Quantitative Content Analysis

Data analysis process for quantitative content analysis starts with the construction of coding categorization. It is start with the pilot test that examined sub-sample of ten percent or 46 samples from 463 homosexuality coverage gathered from both Malay language newspapers published from the year 1998 to year 2012. The samples were chosen randomly and were coded from two coders from communication studies background.

Based on the pilot test, there are numbers of variables found with topics encircled on homosexuality issues that include religion, legal, family institution, politics, psychological, HIV and other elements from varies section of the newspaper within homosexuality coverage. The researcher also discovered actors that involved from institutions or individuals and their voices towards homosexuality such as ministers from the government officials, representative of non-government organization, lawyer and legal practitioners, religious scholars and social activists that had been used for the source in the coverage.

In other words, the coding sheet utilized in the quantitative content analysis included a number of variables. The lists will be elaborated more in the upcoming section. These

findings were very important as they were beneficial to get a big overview in order to develop the coding sheet from the details of the variables lists of common characteristics in homosexuality coverage in these newspapers. The researcher was then able to form the coding categorization accordingly. The unit of analysis was the individual coverage, regardless of length.

4.2.5.1.1 Reliability and Validity

According to Krippendorff (2004, p. 18), “the methodological requirements of reliability and validity are not unique but to make particular demands on content analysis”. As mentioned earlier, this content analysis study undertakes the reliability test by two coders. For this research, Cohen’s kappa (κ) is used to measure agreement between the two coders and to ensure an acceptable level of inter-coder reliability (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 42). Cohen’s kappa allows coders to have different distributions for the same category and a lot of sources reported Cohen’s kappa as the most widely used measure of coders’ agreement for categorical data in social sciences. It is generally thought to be a more robust measure than simple percent agreement calculation since κ takes into account on the agreement occurring by chance. The formula is as follow:

$$k = \frac{(P_o - P_e)}{(1 - P_e)}$$

Where the P_o is the relative observed agreement among coders and P_e is the hypothetical probability of chance agreement. In this quantitative content analysis study, the inter-coder reliability test for pilot study for coding purpose was conducted that later produced 0.50 coefficients. This score is fall under moderate agreement. Appendix B (page 352) will provide detail explanation on one of the intercoder reliability test calculation for consequence news frame.

Finally, the final coding categorization was produced based on this test. Refer to Appendix A (page 345) for the coding protocol and coding categorisation. Both pilot test

and inter-coder reliability tests have shown stability and representative dependability of this content analysis study. However, these tests were conducted merely for designing the coding categories and not for the actual analysis of the content of the newspapers.

This content analysis study is primarily center on the coverage surrounding issue on homosexuality in four main sections of coding category, which are the volume of the coverage, size of the coverage, tone of the coverage, placement of the coverage, topic of the coverage and the portrayal of the actors emerged from the coverage. Hence, for the validity purpose, all variables were tested twice (pre-pilot test and pilot test) in order to get comparable measurement to observe the trends and patterns of the coverage on homosexuality over time. This is crucial in order to get results as accurate as possible. The decision to select Malay language newspapers of UM and BH newspapers was also significant for the purpose of validity as they have the highest circulations of Malay language newspapers in the country. This suggests that these Malay language newspapers are representative of majority of readers and provide a good sample for this research purpose. Therefore, findings from this specific setting and small groups are able to be generalized to a broad range of setting and people (Neuman, 2000, p. 172).

4.2.5.1.2 Coding Categorisation

One of the important things in conducting quantitative content analysis study is categorization. For this research, the coding categorisation was divided into three main categories. The first category is a code for frequencies that consists of several subcodes including size of the coverage, tone of the coverage and placement of the coverage. The second category is a code for news frame. The news frame was defined as how the newspaper characterizes the homosexuality coverage by the reporters of the newspapers. The reporters can provide the over-arching premises of homosexuality coverage for the readers. Meanwhile, the last category is for portrayal of actors in the homosexuality coverage.

The coding list was designed in few steps. First, the researcher read a set of coding categorisation prepared from the previous study conducted by Alagappan and Kaur

(2009) to get an overview to construct the coding categorisation. The coding from previous content analysis study on the representations of homosexuality in Malaysian newspaper (Alagappar & Kaur, 2009) including the number of coverage published on homosexuality, the standpoint of the coverage, the type of the coverage and the size of the coverage was examined. Later the researcher study the list and make a comparison with the selected 110 coverage that picked randomly for the pre-pilot test and construct the frequencies of the homosexuality coverage in the newspapers. The list of the coding was later adapted and modified after the comparison made based from the sample of the coverage gathered during the pre-pilot test.

In addition, the researcher also took initiative to study issues highlighted by International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) from their official website specifically on the issue of gender identity and expression in order to get an overview of ideas on the treatment of homosexual's community. From the reading, the researcher found that most of issues provided by IGLHRC emphasized on violation and discrimination faced by homosexual community from the authority and public and that were not commonly reported in both UM and BH newspapers throughout the initial observation during the data collection process. It is probably because the issues were regarded as less important and against the values of the newspaper's ownership.

Furthermore, a conversation with the representative of Malaysian Aids Foundation was also made based on the coverage from UM newspapers reported on the negatives stigma among HIV sufferers especially among gay people which stated that,

“Negatives connotation in media towards this community will resulted stigmas and discriminations. Stigmas is still a main factors that prevent Malaysian Aids Foundation to approach this marginalized community such as men who have sex with men (who suffered from HIV) as to educate, create awareness and give social support to them” (Khan, M. Z., 2012).

The output from the conversation with the Malaysian Aids Foundation's representative and the issues arose from IGLHRC were analyzed together with the lists gathered from coding categorization from the previous study on newspaper representations on homosexuality in Malaysia (Alagappar & Kaur, 2009). This is important because the

aim of conducting content analysis study is to examine the trend of homosexual issues published in the newspaper for the fifteen years period of time and by obtaining this information on homosexuality and their issues from diverse sources is crucial. By doing this too, the comparable measurement can be attained as well as to ensure reliability during the coding process.

A list of issues concern with homosexuality was later formed and taken into account and adopted in the coding sheet. The coding categorization was designed and altered based on the aim of this research and was tested twice as Stempel (1989, p. 128) points out the set of coding categories should emphasized the aims of the study, the coding should be functional and the system of categories must be manageable.

The first category of the coding is to determine the frequencies of homosexuality coverage for the fifteen periods of years from the year 1998 to year 2012 which is aim to analyse the general text distributions consists of the volume of the homosexuality coverage, the size of the coverage, the tone of the coverage and the placement of the coverage. Firstly, the first eight of the subcoding provide column for the name of the newspaper which is *Utusan Malaysia* (UM) and *Berita Harian* (BH), coverage number, page number, word count, date, day, month and year of the coverage. Only the year of the coverage will be discuss and presented in this research. The volume of the coverage is tracked and graphed to examine how it changed over time for the yearly trends.

The following subcategory under category of frequency of the homosexuality coverage is the size of the coverage. The size have been categorized as “big”, “medium”, “small” and “very small” depending on the article length. Big coverage is articles that have more than 1500 words (more than a page of the newspaper) while medium coverage consist of 1001 to 1499 words (one page of the newspaper). Meanwhile, the length for small coverage is from 501 to 999 words (two third of a page of the newspaper) and very small coverage are articles that have below 500 words (one third of a page of a newspaper). Table 4.2 below illustrates the size of the coverage and the characteristics of the word length.

Table 4.2

Size of the coverage on homosexuality and number of words

Size of Coverage	Words
Very Small	Below 500 words
Small	Between 501 to 999 words
Medium	Between 1000 to 1499 words
Big	More than 1500 words

The following subcategory observed the tone of the coverage on homosexuality. The coding scheme identifies three tones of the coverage which are opposing, supportive and not available. The characteristics of the opposing tone are coverage that describe it as deviant, negative activities, bad behavior, against the norms, create an outrage by the public and unacceptable by law, religion and local norm. This also includes tones that strike and spread fear, panic and fright about homosexuality in the country. The characteristics of the supportive tone are the coverage that compassionate towards homosexuality and describe homosexuality where it was seen as basic human rights, equality and freedom of choice. There is also a category for not available tone of coverage, which described as no explanation made by the coverage on homosexuality issue. Table 4.3 below illustrates the tones of the coverage and the characteristics.

Table 4.3

Tone of the coverage on homosexuality and its characteristics

Tone of Coverage	Characteristics
Opposing	News coverage that describe homosexuality as deviant, abnormal, negative activities, bad behavior, against the norms, create an outrage by the public and unaccepted by religion and local norm.

Table 4.3 *Continue*

Supportive	News coverage that describe homosexuality where it was seen as basic human rights, equality and freedom of choice and has compassionate towards homosexuality.
Not available	No explanation made by the news coverage on homosexuality issue.

The following subcategory is the identification on the placement of the coverage in the newspaper that reported on homosexuality. While each newspaper has its own system of identifying and categorizing the sections, all the sections are standardized for the purposes of this research into the following section: national news, editorial, feature stories, international news, special column by in-house or guest author, special column of interview section as well as letters to editors. All homosexuality stories were placed in seven different newspaper sections indicating that the newspapers viewed this coverage in many ways even though there might have been some overlap in terms of topical elements of the stories. For instance, one single article might have been placed in the international news even though its main focus is on the politic issues.

Nonetheless, the placement of the coverage of homosexuality can provide their views and inform the decisions these newspaper make in term of the coverage of different aspect on homosexuality topic in the country. For example, if the homosexuality coverage is placed in the national news section, it can be assume that the issue was perceived to have local implications or significance to the nation-state issues in the country. It should be noted here that the international news are coverage written about Malaysia but the setting or the occasion was held outside of the county while the section of column is referring to the special column written by the in-house or invited columnists in the newspapers using a pseudonym name that write particularly on the current issues in Malaysia as well as issues around the world.

Table 4.4 below illustrates the placement of the coverage on homosexuality and its characteristics.

Table 4.4

Placement of the coverage on homosexuality and its characteristics

Placement of the Coverage	Characteristics
National News	Coverage in the few first page of the newspaper. Mostly coverage on event and current issue about homosexuality which was happened in the country.
Feature Stories	Coverage about homosexuality from real life experience in a feature-oriented style.
Editorial	Written opinions of the editor on homosexuality issues.
International News	Coverage about homosexuality which happened outside Malaysia.
Special Column	Coverage about homosexuality which was written by in-house or guest author.
Interview	A column which published an interview transcribe between the invited guest and the newspaper about homosexuality.
Letters to Editors	A column that published notes or letters written by the general readers about homosexuality.

Meanwhile, the second category of coding is the news frame that was adapted and modified that was designed by Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) and Yong and Md Sidin (2010) on study of framing analysis. There are six news frame which are conflict, consequences, responsibility, morality, human interest and others that is focus on the news frame around homosexuality coverage.

The first news frame is conflict. This news frame emphasizes conflict among and between individuals, groups, or institution as a means of capturing audience interest, reflects difference among and between them. It can also from an individual, group or institutional reproach dichotomizes or labels between good and bad. The news item refers to the two sides instead of more than two sides of the issue or problem and the news items refer to winners and losers.

For this purpose of research, this news frame is referring a conflict between government and opposition party as government was constantly being label as anti-homosexuals in the coverage as well as coverage on the opposition parties on homosexuality issues that constantly being label by the newspapers as pro homosexuals. Examples on issues involved opposition party that was label as pro homosexuality when their political president Anwar Ibrahim involved with sodomy allegation cases, the urge of the government to curb homosexuality in the country and the protest to homosexual people to join any political party were discussed under this news frame. This news frame also touch on debate about western and foreign ideology as factors and its influence homosexuality in Malaysia. Topics such as liberalism and pluralism that often being associated with western culture is also discussed. The topics on homosexuality and health issues including the classification of homosexuality as mental illness and mental disorder were also put under this news frame while there is an argument stated that homosexuality is not a mental illness.

The second news frame is consequences. This news frame highlighted on coverage about an event, issue or problem in terms of the consequences on individuals, groups, parties, institutions or the country, or report about the outcome of a court case. For this research, this news frame is referring to the homosexuality coverage and its consequences to the family institution and effect of the basic concept of traditional marriage. For example, homosexuality was perceived as a threat to the basic family affair and value and was also labelled as social illness that being depicted to have a significant of negative consequence to the society. This news frame also highlighted on religious topic when homosexual people will get the retaliation from Allah during the

judgment day and the consequences of homosexual practice that will spread HIV and AIDS.

This third news frame is responsibility that discusses on the present and event, issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government or to an individual, group, part or institution. The news frame also suggests the issue or problem requires the urgent action. For this research, this category of news frame refers to the urgency of the government to be quick in undertaking homosexuality issue in the country as it was prohibited to all races and religions. This news frame is also referring to the coverage about the role of parent, teacher, counselor and even religious institution and non-government organisation (NGO) to tackle the issue. Under this frame too is the discussion on the legal action by authorities for homosexual practice.

Next news frame is morality. This news frame puts the event, issue or problem in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions that is emphasizes on the collaboration and fellowship. For this purpose of research, this news frame present homosexuality that intertwined with religious and moral issues particularly on the coverage on how religion is reacting to the issues related with homosexuality. The religion such as Islam, Christian and Hindu work as religious entities will be presented as opposed to homosexual practice. Other times, this news frame is also about how those religious rights are campaigning against issues such as same-sex marriage and same-sex sexual activities.

Lastly, the news frame is human interest that brings a human face or emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem, refer to an effort to personalize the news, dramatize or emotionalize the news in order to capture and retain audience interest, employs adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy or compassion. This news frame also emphasizes how individuals and groups are affected by the event, issue or problem and the news items go into the private or personal lives of the actors. For this purpose of research, the news frame present homosexuality coverage around topics that is not limited only to individual who work

closely with the gay community but also to the gay and lesbian individual and activist that tell their stories and experiences living as gay people in Malaysia. This news frame also touches on topics about gay and lesbian issues and activism around the world. The narrative of this coverage can be positive, negative and neutral tone. Other than that, this news frame also referring to the historical background of gay and homosexuality issues in Malaysia.

The final category of the coding categorization is the actors appeared in the coverage in stories surrounding homosexuality. This section is important as it could determine who contributes to the coverage and the types of homosexual topics that they mostly covered. There are six main actors which were emerged in articles related of homosexuality issues in both newspapers. The actors are including the government officials, non-government organization, religion organization, academician, politician and others individual's namely legal practitioner, counselor, authority and more.

Table 4.5 below outline the list of the actors with the example that appeared on the coverage on homosexuality from both newspapers.

Table 4.5

List of actors from the coverage on homosexuality and its examples

Type of Actors	Example of the Actors
Government Official	Prime Minister Deputy Minister State Chief Minister Ministry of Prime Minister's Department Ministry of Education Malaysia Secretary Politic of Prime Minister

Table 4.5 *Continue*

Non-government Organization	<p>Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (ISMA) Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (Perkasa) Jaringan Melayu Malaysia (JMM) Parti Kesejahteraan Insan Tanah Air (KITA) Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung (GPMS) Pergerakan Belia India Muslim Malaysia (Gepima) Chinese Society Organization of Ampang</p>
Religion Organization	<p>Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM) Wilayah Persekutuan Islamic Religious Council Selangor Islamic Religious Council Buddha Association of Petaling Jaya Malaysian Association of Hindu Sangam National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) Malaysian Hindu Association</p>
Academician	<p>Former Vice Chancellor of Universiti Malaya Professor from Department of Fiqh, Islamic Studies Academy, Universiti Malaya (UM) Associate Professor from Faculty of Law, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM) Associate Professor from Usuluddin and Comparative Religion Studies, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM) Associate Professor from Medical Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Hospital (HUKM)</p>
Politician	<p>Deputy President of United Malay National Organization (UMNO) Deputy President of Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) Women's Youth of UMNO Member of Parliament PAS Spiritual Leader Secretary of Dewan Pemuda Chief PAS</p>

Table 4.5 *Continue*

Others	Former politician Authority Religious individual Counselor Psychiatrist Legal practitioners Activist
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Some of the limitation and issue in constructing this coding categorization was the complicatedness in getting a comparable measurement as variables on issues surrounding homosexuality especially on topics discussed was seen as interconnected with each other. It is challenging to look upon all the issues as one entity and to put all the issues in a list is quite an unrealistic matter to do so. Therefore, it took a longer time to get a reliable coding categorization of content analysis.

The final coding categorization is attached in Appendix A, while the result of the trends of news coverage on homosexuality will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2.5.2 Data Analysis for Qualitative Content Analysis

In addition, the qualitative content analysis was also performed to examine how the narrative of homosexuality was discursively presented from both UM and BH newspapers. It is believe by employing a qualitative methodology will enable to identify a number of over-arching categories and themes that may signify any difference and similarity of media approach in homosexuality coverage from year 1998 to year 2012.

For this purpose of research, the inductive approach is used when the initial observations were first made through all the collected coverage on homosexuality to generate the themes. Inductive approach is generally aim to produce meanings from the data set collected in order to identify pattern and relationships which ultimately will form a theory. However, inductive approach does not prevent researchers from employing existing theory to formulate the research question to be explored (Saunders, et. el.,

2012), as mentioned earlier that the research employing social constructionism and the communication theory of identity as a theoretical framework. In the inductive approach, the organization phase includes open coding, creating categories and abstraction (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Similarly, the analysis of qualitative content analysis for this research will follow the similar step.

The qualitative content analysis study conducted in this research was adapted from the modified version of Huckin's analysis on the study on qualitative content analysis of newspaper. In his study on the discourse of homelessness, Huckin (2002) employed qualitative content analysis in order to demonstrate how manipulative silences work in news coverage on homelessness and how the data was systematically identified that drawing on a corpus of 163 news coverage and editorials published in the newspaper. Throughout data analysis process, Huckin (2002) identified four main categories of topics addressed which are causes of homelessness, effects of homelessness, public responses to the problem and the demographic data about homelessness with two to thirty subtopics in each main categories that eventually construct into several main themes.

The same approach of Huckin was also employed by Cox et al., (2008) that investigated local newspaper coverage of the recovery process in two rural communities following a devastating forest fire. Following Huckin's approach of qualitative content analysis, Cox et al. (2008) identified four main categories which are effects of the fire, response to the effects, identified needs and identified issues with subtopics ranging from 18 to 21 for all four main categories that ultimately construct several main themes of the issue discussed.

For the purpose of this research, the approached used by Huckin was adapted with slight modification in order to identify the discursive themes around the homosexuality coverage from both UM and BH newspapers. More importantly, this approach presents a systematic and efficient way in identifying the data that addressing the issue (Huckin, 2002). The result is a compilation of subtopics found in the news corpus as a whole,

representing thematic threads that run across the corpus and constitute the discourse on that topic because there is a set of subtopics that has been generated over time in the body of media texts related to that topic for any of public discourse (cited from Huckin, 2002). Hence, the qualitative content analysis approach by Huckin was adapted in this research and allows properly examining each of the texts in a corpus and discerning thematic patterns that extend across texts and generated the subtopics. The following sections elaborate on the process of constructing the discursive theme on the coverage of homosexuality.

4.2.5.2.1 The Construction of the Themes

The process of the construction of the discursive themes on the coverage of homosexuality is explained in the following steps. As for the first step, the researcher reviewed all 463 of selected coverage from both UM and BH newspapers in order to gain familiarity with it and highlighted ideas that appeared important upon initial reading. Interpretative questions of what, who, how and why regarding content of the news coverage surfaced on homosexuality was being raised numerously as patterns in the content began to emerge.

In order to determine the degree and the qualitative expression of homosexuality coverage and the depiction made by Malay newspapers of UM and BH, there are several list of specific questions the researcher imposed for each article collected. These questions below were used to guide the researcher interpretation to the irrespective of the content in each article that can able to apply to the same criteria for discerning of the themes. Although systematic in the application, the researcher did not single out all the answers to each of these questions in every article. Rather, the researcher used these questions merely as guideline of the critical reading and for the final selection of the articles. The samples of questions used are as followed:

1. How is homosexuality being labeled and discussed?
2. What adjectives are used to describe homosexuality?
3. What is the stereotype on homosexuality are applied?

4. How are the issues of homosexuality being framed?
5. How the ideology is being represented in the articles?
6. Whose interests does this homosexuality's coverage serve?

The purpose of these questions are remain to focus on the analysis as well as to facilitate the description of these Malay newspapers has depicted issues surrounding homosexuality and publicized the issue within the sample period time. These questions were created under the guidance of Parenti's (1998) declaration of the six common methods the media uses to manipulate information. Parenti (1998) stated that, the media industry's claim to be as neutrality, objectivity and impartiality in representing information to the public. Moreover, he asserts that media bias is anything but random error or the result of everyday production chaos. To the contrary, "the built-in biases of corporate mainstream media faithfully reflect the dominant ideology, seldom straying into territory that might cause discomfort to those who hold political and economic power, including those who own the media or advertise in it" (Parenti, 1998, p. 150).

All selected news coverage were then explored for the meaning units through the identification of words, sentences or paragraphs on the subject discussed that were then assigned significance topics. As what Fairclough (1992) writes, texts work as a moment of past discursive practice, which makes their meanings ambivalent and open to interpretation. However, this research is an attempt to minimizing this uncertainty by ascribing particular meaning to the text by examining the specific vocabulary used and rhetorical schemata (Fairclough, 1992, p. 77) that reveal arguments being made in the text specifically on the issue of homosexuality as publicized in both newspapers.

Then, the coding process begins. Firstly, all the discourse on homosexuality within each coverage were map out and deconstruct and led to the inference that there are four significant categories or main topics that contribute to the denotation on homosexuality as presented in UM and BH newspapers. The four main topics that also acted as main code were identified. The four main topics are (i) traits of homosexuality, (ii) causes of homosexuality behavior, (iii) effects on homosexual's sex act and (iv) responses towards

homosexual practice. These four main topics were identified from the meaning units that were extracted from all words and phrases used to describe homosexuality based from all the 463 selected coverage. Table 4.6 below presents the description of the meaning unit and the example of the meaning units that later construct the main topics.

Table 4.6

The four main topics on homosexuality, the descriptions and the examples

Main Topics	Descriptions	Examples
Traits of homosexuality	The general statements that describe homosexuality	<p>“Bertentangan dengan fitrah dan norma kehidupan manusia” / <i>(Contrary to the norms of nature and human life)</i></p> <p>“Budaya tidak bermoral” / <i>(Immoral culture)</i></p>
Causes of homosexuality	The factors contributed and influences of the homosexuality	<p>“Dipengaruhi oleh NGO asing” / <i>(The influence from the foreign NGO)</i></p> <p>“Jaringan laman sosial menjadi antara platform utama yang menyumbang kepada penularan budaya seks” / <i>(Social network is one of the platform to contribute the sexual culture)</i></p>

Table 4.6 *Continue*

Causes of homosexuality	The factors contributed and influences of the homosexuality	“Dipengaruhi oleh NGO asing” / (<i>The influence from the foreign NGO</i>)
		“Jaringan laman sosial menjadi antara platform utama yang menyumbang kepada penularan budaya seks” / (<i>Social network is one of the platform to contribute the sexual culture</i>)
Effects of homosexuality	The effect, consequences and harm from the homosexuality	“Menyebabkan penyakit AIDS” / (<i>Causes of AIDS</i>)
		“Merosakkan sistem sosial dan sistem keluarga” / (<i>Damage the social system and family system</i>)
Responses on homosexuality	The action taken on homosexuality	“Kempen secara agresif melalui media massa” / (<i>An aggressive campaign through mass media</i>)
		“Kerajaan perlu menentang habis-habisan ejen songsang ini” / (<i>Government must be pitted against this deviant agent</i>)

From the Table 4.6 above, it is shown that the main topic for traits of homosexuality features a general characteristic of homosexuality with words and phrases regularly used in the coverage surrounding issues on homosexuality to describe homosexual sex act behavior and their community. The second main topic is the causes of homosexuality, which contain a set of words and phrases that explained the reasons of the influence to homosexuals practiced as it was reported from both Malay language newspapers.

Meanwhile, the third main topic is on the effects of homosexuality that shows result and the consequences of practicing homosexual behavior. Finally, the main topic for responses on homosexuality specifically intended to the phrases and words of the feeling, reaction and action taken on homosexual behavior as depicted in both Malay language newspapers. These four main topics provide insight into the whole meaning of the coverage made by these Malay language newspapers surrounding issues on homosexuality.

The next step is to resubmit all the selected coverage to a second, detailed reading that further defined all main topics by using them as guidelines. The process was conducted with note being taken on how issues surrounding homosexuality was being revealed that later consigned several subtopics and forming the Content Matrix. The Content Matrix was used to conduct a more thorough coding of the news texts based on the conceptual analysis. Each text was given a qualitative, conceptual analysis rather than just a scan for keywords, thereby avoiding a standard criticism of traditional content analysis as being merely a tabulation of lexical items.

The process begin with the researcher turn the attention to the selected coverage and identify all relevant phrases and sentences narrated on homosexuality and placed them under the four main topics accordingly based on their relevancy. Having a classification of the discourse on homosexuality within the four main topics, all the subtopics were identified and listed, noting which ones is included and which ones are not within the four main topics in order to construct the dominant pattern and the discursive themes of homosexuality coverage for both UM and BH newspapers.

For the next step, the researcher then determined the frequency of occurrence of each subtopic and their relative weight in each main topic. Finally, as the analysis progressed and all elements are identified, all subtopics were grouped and classified the coverage to formulate the dominant pattern and discursive themes of the coverage. The frequency of occurrence of these subtopics and the subject identifiers were then summarized and

examined to highlight their relative contribution. The frequency of each subtopic in each main topic was also determined.

Table 4.7 below provide selected list of the subtopics assigned within the relevant four main topics that later formulate the dominant pattern and themes.

Table 4.7

The four main topics that describe homosexuality with selected list of subtopics

Main topic	Subtopics	Themes
Traits of homosexuality	Islam against homosexuality	Religion
	The biggest and serious sin	
	The practice of Lots people	
	Against Quran and Hadith teaching	
	Against the regular norm	Social and moral
	Illicit and immoral behavior	
	Degrading self-respect and human culture	
	Against the value of marriage	
	Western influence and lifestyles	Western agenda
	Western movement that have hidden agenda	
	Hedonism idea from the west	
	Western strategy to crimple Islam	
	Modernization imported from the west	
Pluralism and liberalism movement		
Malaysian law does not recognize homosexual	Legal	
Against the Malaysian Federal Constitution		
An offense to civil and sharia law		
It is a criminal act		

Table 4.7 *Continue*

	<p>Opposition party that support homosexuality Opposition leaders such as Anwar Ibrahim International politic interference</p>	<p>Politics</p>
	<p>Homosexuals are psychology disorder Homosexuals have mental illness Having a crisis with their identity</p>	<p>Health and psychology</p>
	<p>Using human right as an excuse</p>	<p>Human rights and social movement</p>
Causes of homosexuality	<p>Lack of religion education Religion is no longer used as a guidance</p>	<p>Religion</p>
	<p>Upbringing problem Peer influence Boarding school that introduce to gay life Growing numbers of entertainment premises Growing numbers of liberal academician Media influence Encountered sexual abuse before The influence of social network such as Facebook, Twitter</p>	<p>Social and moral</p>
	<p>Western propaganda Influence from the liberal thinking The influence from secular ideology Economic capitalism</p>	<p>Western agenda</p>
	<p>Interest of political support Afraid of losing political support Political instability</p>	<p>Politics</p>
	<p>People with psychology disorder Mental depression Addiction to deviant sexual activities</p>	<p>Health and psychology</p>

Table 4.7 *Continue*

Effects on homosexuality	Threatening the basic value of family	Social and moral
	Affect national identity	
	Pose a threat to the country	
	Left negative impact to the nation	
	Increase of divorce cases	Religion
	History will repeat time of Prophet Lot	
	Inviting Allah wrath	
	Damaging the Islam's image	
	Detrimental to Muslim	Health and psychology
	Risk of HIV/AIDS	
	Psychological and mental disorders	
	Attempted suicide among this group	
	Affect the local political system	Politic
	Feared that spread of liberal ideology	
	Summoned back to a real Islamic teachings	
	Religious and moral upbringing	
Responses to homosexuality	Put yourself with God	Religion
	Moral education and religious knowledge must be improved	
	Government needs to be more assertive	
	Government urged to review the existing legislation	
	Government to take decisive action	Politics
	Tougher penalties	
	Authorized counseling	
	Provide awareness and education	
		Legal
		Health and psychology

Meanwhile, Figure 4.3 below is the Content Matrix that illustrates the process of identifying the dominant themes through the identification of the subtopics from the four main topics.

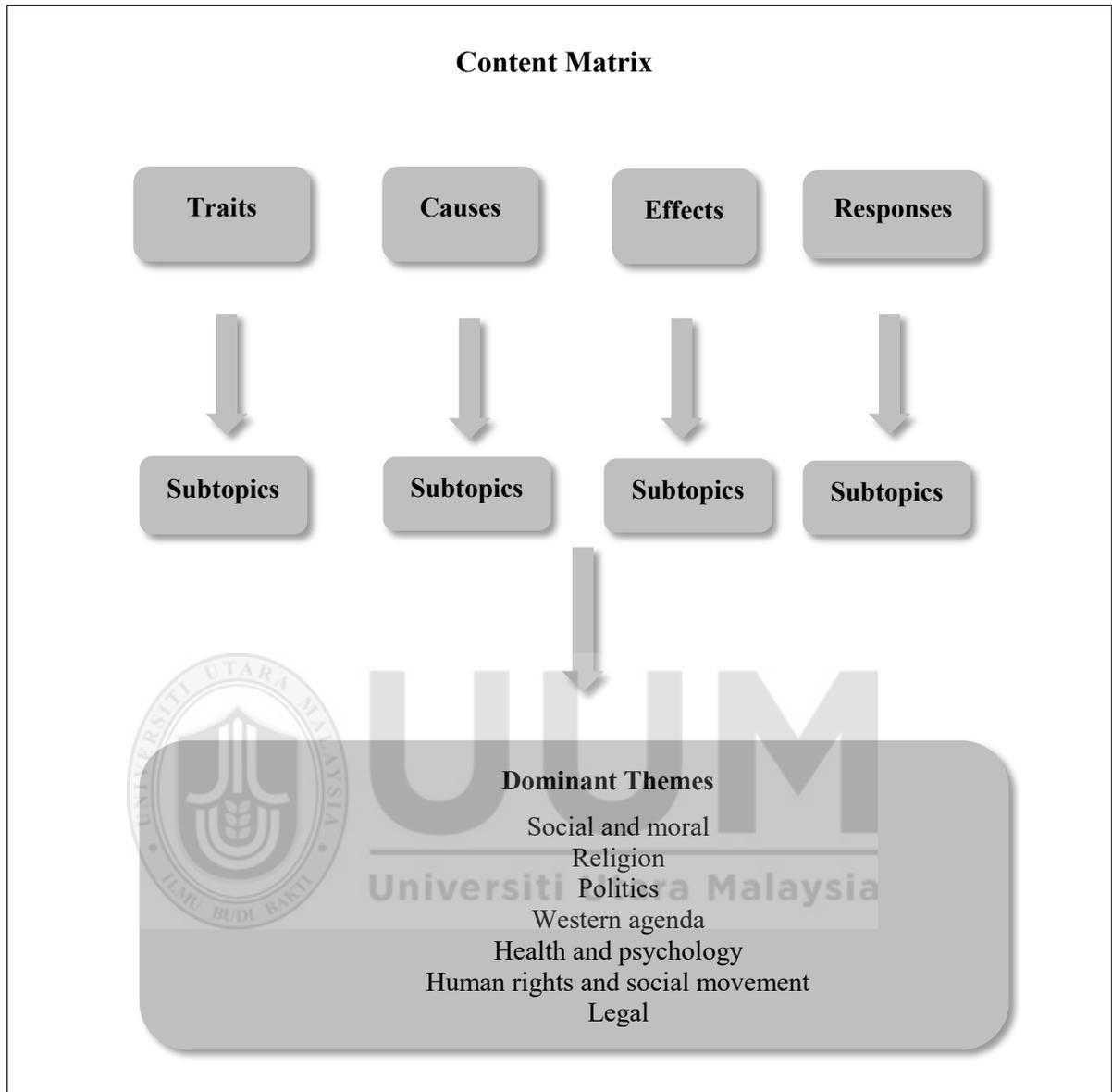


Figure 4.3. The Content Matrix

Based from the Figure 4.3 above, the four main topics that consist of the traits of homosexuality, causes of homosexuality, effects of homosexuality and responses on homosexuality were identified after the imperative review from the 463 coverage selected. Content Matrix was used to identify the subtopics from the four main topics and conduct a more thorough coding of the news coverage, stating which ones is counted in and which ones are not within the four main topics. Later, the discursive themes were identified resulted from the patterned emerged through the subtopics

identified. Figure 4.4 below illustrates the diagram that summarized the process of data analyzing in qualitative content analysis.

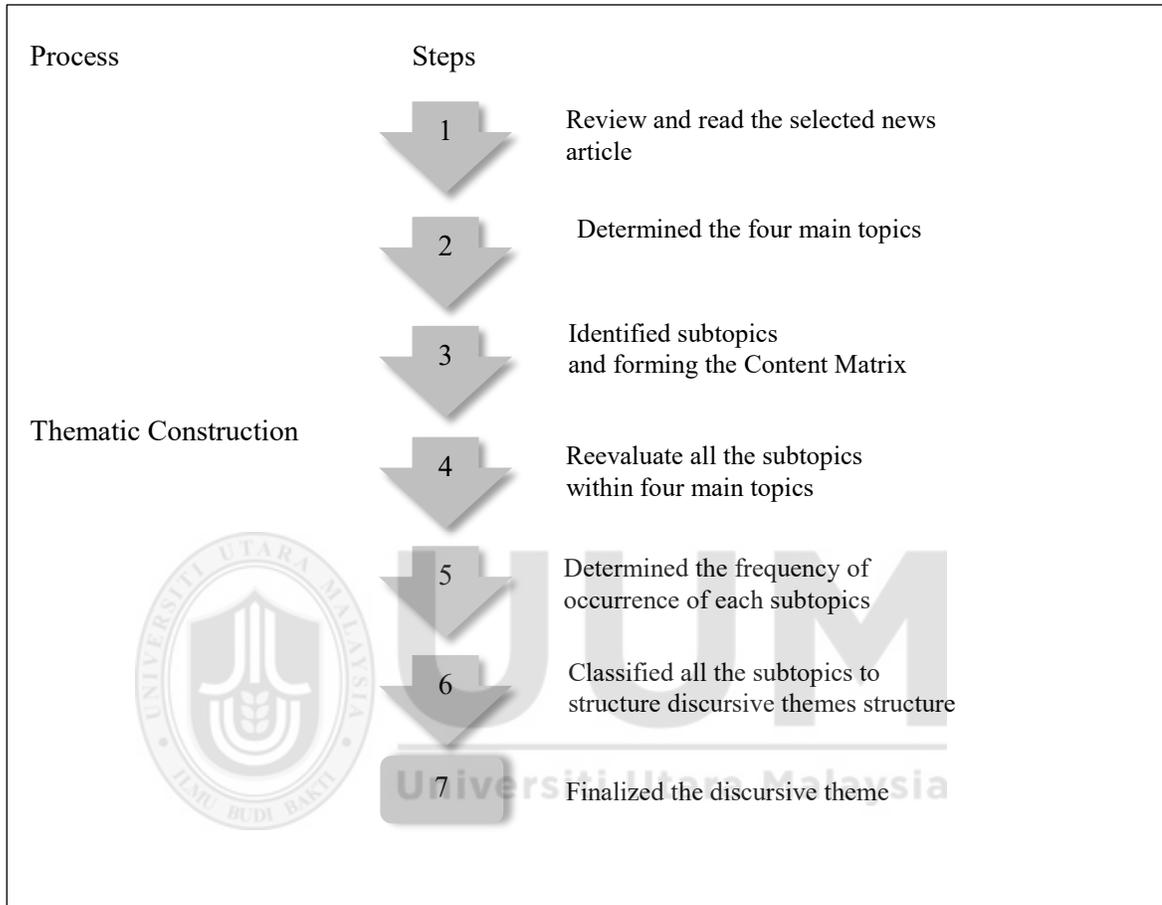


Figure 4.4. A diagram summarizes the process of data analysing in qualitative content analysis

4.2.5.2.2 Inter-coder Reliability

Throughout the course of the coding process of identifying the main topics, subtopics and the discursive themes, two coders were involved through ‘negotiated inter-coder reliability’ method who met to discuss their coding with the main researcher. In a negotiated approach, the code is constructed by all coders followed by the discussion with an aim to arrive at a final version in which most, if not all coded messages have

been brought into alignment. It provides a means of hands-on training, coding scheme refinement and thereby, may increase reliability.

Ten percent of the coverage from each of the coders was randomly selected and independently coded by the alternate rater. The next step is to improve the credibility of the study on the preliminary main topics, and the subtopics were discussed, compared and revised with the co-coder. Codes applying to related aspects of the content and context from the news text were compared to identify similarities and differences and were first sorted into preliminary subcategories and clustered in overarching dominant pattern and themes.

Despite the interpretive nature of the analysis, the reliability check revealed that there was relative consistency in the coding of the subtopics and high overall consistency in the identification of discursive themes. The coders gain a new point of reference from which to view the text as well as the coding scheme. The advantage of negotiated coding also includes the controllability for simple errors brought on by inexperience, coder-saturation or misinterpretation (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, Koole, & Kappelman, 2006). It may also be the approach of choice in exploratory research where new insights are the primary focus. It is believed this technique significantly and fruitfully in validating and understanding social phenomenon.

4.2.5.2.3 Social Constructionism and Thematic Analysis

For this research, the analysis of the homosexuality coverage used social constructionism as theoretical framework and employed qualitative content analysis method to generate the thematic news of homosexuality coverage. Because the second part of this research is exploratory in nature that sought to obtain rich data, therefore the construction of dominant themes work in epitome way to deal with the rich data that can be used to structure the findings during analysis phase. Both the framework and method used is ideal too because it is not linked to any epistemological position and can draw on a social constructionist and a set of Foucauldian informed principles (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Even by putting thematic analysis as one independent of theory and

epistemology, however, Braun and Clarke (2006) is not recommending researchers to apply theory-less or without an acknowledged epistemological stance. The thematic analysis can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches.

Social constructionism was used to analyse the way in which meanings and experiences of events or realities to make sense of the things, that is produced through the effects of discourses and their social context. By using this framework too, the researcher thoroughly seeking the various constructions of events and experiences that were being constructed around homosexuality coverage in the newspapers which also informed by Foucauldian principles of analysis (Arribas Aylon & Walkerdine, 2008). This underlying epistemology is not reductionist or essentialist because there is no attempt for the singular objective and universal truth. This research also has no attempt at meta-theorization, rather a focus on the multiple subjectivities and how these are made possible from the socio-cultural contexts (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). By using a social constructionist framework too, it will emphasis to the use of discourse in constituting various subject positions that make possible on the various ways of narrating certain phenomena. Chapter 2 discussed in detail about social constructionism theory.

This research is focusing on macro level within social constructionism (Burr, 2003) which normally associated with a critical realist stance. This macro level of analysis is concerned with the function of discourse in the constitution of social context. Discourse is formed as enabling, constraining and restraining to what can be said by whom, where and when (Parker, 1992 in Willig, 2008). This macro level of analysis places discourse in its institutional context and aligned to power. This focuses on the availability of discourses (discursive resources) within a culture and how they construct the objects and subjects of which they speak (Parker, 1992) and therefore have implications for how people see and experience the world through the offering up of subject positions.

There are four elements under social constructionist model. The first element is languages or symbolic codes; the second element is the ways people have been taught to process information and meaning making or the cognitive customs; the third element is

the beliefs, attitudes and values that make up people cultural traditions and the last element is the shared of roles and rules that guide people actions or knowledge. The thematical news on the homosexuality coverage emerged from the 463 coverage collected and constructed by the Context Matrix was discussed around these four elements of social constructionism framework with examples of how each dimension was in evidence in each element. The discussion of the findings will be elaborated in Chapter 6. Figure 4.2 below illustrate the thematic news of homosexuality coverage within social constructionism model.

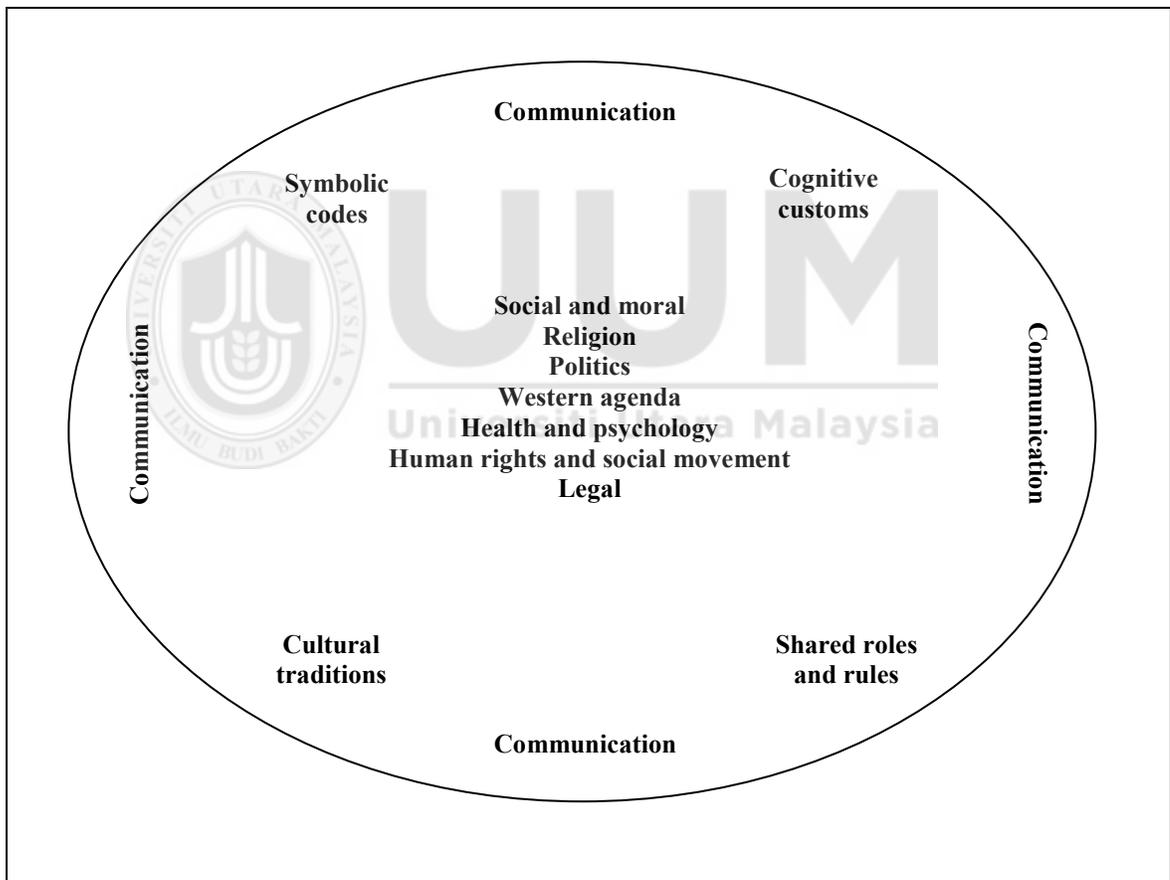


Figure 4.5 The findings of the thematic coverage on homosexuality issues within social constructionism model.

4.3 In-depth Interview

This research appears that it is not adequate to merely focus on homosexuality coverage to fully establish the construction and the interpretation of homosexuality from the newspapers. Hence, this research employed interview study as a second method as suggested by Pasha (2011) to employ several techniques that can be utilized to ensure balance and diligence verdict in the research study. Accordingly, interview study is also employed since some discourse may put forth on the issue might be excluded from the news coverage on the issue discussed.

Moreover, the interview provides the opportunity to see how the discourse of issue participants compares to the discourse presented publicly through the coverage published. Even if an event is documented in certain fashion, researchers may need to consult with participants to find out what really happened as to verify, validate or comment on information obtained from other sources. Therefore, in an effort to achieve contrast and perhaps observe the discourse of groups farther from the mainstream, the second part of this research employed interview study. The interview was conducted on the newspaper's readers specifically among self-identified Malay homosexual people.

4.3.1 The Purpose of Conducting Interview

The overall aim of the interview study was to analyse the coverage of homosexuality from the respondent's perspective, with the assumption that they might affected with coverage in the mainstream newspapers. Specifically, the interview was conducted to look for responses from the readers particularly among self-identified Malay homosexual with the intention to seek how these individuals received and inferred the coverage of homosexuality as reported from both Malay language newspapers of UM and BH. The interview among self-identified Malay homosexual readers were also aim to examine what meanings they make from their sexuality and identity difference as portrayed through the coverage of both Malay language newspapers. This interview study was also used as an explorative method to understand the pattern and trends of coverage on homosexuality and how it compares to and contrasts with the results found in the content analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

In particular, the researcher intended to verify, from the experience of the subjects, the various forces that might produce the patterns and trends of the coverage observed in the content analysis and investigate what determines the form of the reporting on homosexuality. Furthermore, as proposed by Stach and Hocking (1999, p. 203), “the research questions best answered by conducting interview are values and policy-oriented”. In addition, this method also enables researchers to gain deep information and knowledge compared with other methods, especially when the phenomena can’t be directly observed or when not much has been researched (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Patton, 2002; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

This section explained the aim and the justification of employing interview study. Particularly, the interview was conducted to seek answer for research question three. The following section will elaborate details on the sampling process and the procedure of the interview study.

4.3.2 Sample of Respondents

The selection of the respondents among newspaper readers was purposive because of the personal nature of the subject studied. For this research, the researcher will attempt to unravel the above through in-depth interview with self-identified Malay homosexual readers. The sexual orientation of the respondents must be acknowledged at the beginning of the interview process because the reading of this research must equate the sexuality of the respondents with the inherent bias in favor of homosexuality issues in Malaysia.

The requirements for the respondents in the study were include Malay individual living in Malaysia, homosexuals and aware of their own sexual orientation either publicly declare as a gay person or discreet, working as professional, read and aware of the coverage regarding homosexuality in the newspapers but not necessarily an avid reader of the newspapers and willing to be participate in the study. Recruitment of the participants took place two months prior to the fieldwork study. Two methods were used for recruiting the potential respondents.

The first method is through word-by-mouth advertisement from the pool of contacts that the researcher know while the second method is from the online advertisement made through social network such as Facebook and Twitter. The researcher joined several social groups from Facebook that are inclined to homosexual community with the intention to search and scout potential respondents. Meanwhile, in Twitter, there is an account created by the community in the country to handle discussion related with queer community including gay, lesbian, transgender and all type of sexual orientation. The advertisement to seek the potential respondents was made through the curator of this twitter account. In the end, I managed to secure 10 self-identified Malay homosexuals as respondents.

Of the total respondents, there were nine gay males and one lesbian. The participants ranged in age are between 30 to 45 years old, with the mean age of 32.5 which mostly lived in Klang Valley area. The physical locations of the interview study were at sites and at locations that could offer privacy and comfort for the respondents. Due to the complexity inherent in issues related to sexual orientation, the experiences of transgender people were not included in the current study. The perceptions and points of view of transgender are unique enough to merit a distinct and separate inquiry.

While this research is central principally on them, the researcher also spoke informally to various other peoples who had opinions to offer on issues surrounding homosexuality in general. Thus, the researcher sought out PT Foundation which is a community-based, voluntary non-profit making organization which is an organization that provides HIV/AIDS education, prevention, care and support programs, sexual health and empowerment programs for vulnerable communities in Malaysia. PT Foundation targeted to five primaries affected populations mainly drug users, sex workers, transsexuals, men who have sex with men and people living with HIV/AIDS.

The researcher was fortunate enough to have met the Chairperson of the NGO, Mr. Hisham Hussein and have a discussion specifically on the overview of sexual minority community in Malaysia especially LGBT people and how their acceptances from the

general public in the country were. Furthermore, the researcher have tried, where possible to join numerous social activities (house gatherings, sessions at the various gay spots in town, events such as fashion show, concerts, movie screening, exhibition, a book launch) in the attempt to better understand the social outlets available as to be believe will be attended by commonly gay community in Kuala Lumpur. As a result, through the researcher conversations and involvement with this diverse group of people and activities, the researcher have been able to more understand what the respondents' enraptured highs and tumultuous lows as they navigate their way around personal and public minefields that lie in wait for them.

It was truly implausible challenge to seek anyone who was open and willing to talk with me. It was extremely difficult to influence those concerned to come frontward, given that the researcher scarcely plugged into any manner of loose, informal networks of gay community. While the circle is mostly invisible, homosexual people do not necessarily coagulate and gravitate towards each other on the basis of their shared ethnicity or religion. Hence, the process of contacting one is incessantly extensive as the researcher would have to go through numerous acquaintances and various convoluted social networks.

While, it was also suggested that online “advertisement” be placed, looking for respondents, the researcher was uncertain to do that. This research required sustained, long-term contact and it was unsure if solicitation of such manner would garner me the type of respondents who would be prepared to answer probing questions on themselves. However, the researcher still advertised on looking for the potential respondents in social media through some groups created for this community.

Given the lack of visibility, the researcher had to plumb through personal contacts and apply gentle pressure to see if the contacts would refer to relevant respondents to the researcher. This manner of methodology is one kind of embarrassingly painful one, for both the initial pool of contacts and the researcher. While almost all of them promptly forwarded some names upon the subtle inquiring if they had friends who are Malay

homosexual, very few of their extended friends would come forward. This was an unavoidable and unenviable position to be in. The researcher could not explain more fully the research agenda and motivation so as to allay some of their fears of confidentiality and anonymity simply because the first few contacts had been refused. There were those who saw value in the study that the researcher was proposing. Holding fast to the principle that sexuality is a private matter, it was understandably, counter-intuitive for them to share their thoughts.

4.3.3 Interview Procedures

Interview method is a widely used data collection strategy in qualitative research design. For the most part, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with all respondents, as it is the best way of finding out someone's thinking (Jensen, 2002). In the beginning, the pilot test was conducted for the interviews earlier with three respondents. However, the pilot test findings showed that the answers did not quite fit with the objectives, perhaps because (i) the questions were vague and (ii) respondent were mainly interested in talking about their background and their selves and the researcher had little control over the interview. The modified set of questions which were tested was more reliable, although some respondents need to be guided throughout the interview in order to obtain answers which were as relevant as possible.

For this research, the average time for the interview study took place between 60 minutes to 90 minutes of duration. The nature of the interview is semi-structured using open-ended protocols. It is conducted in that manner so that the researcher is able to elicit as much information as possible from the respondents (Patton, 2002). When examining social and cultural phenomena, language is always an important consideration (Jensen, 2002). Therefore it is important that the researcher to be fully familiar with the language use and the custom of the potential respondents as their subject of studies.

For this research, the interview was conducted in either Malay or English language depending on the preferences of the respondents. The field study work started on

October 2014 and was completed four months later. The interview questions were designed based on the findings of the content analysis. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of choosing this method was to understand the themes in the real-world lives of the respondents as seen from the perspective of each subject, as suggested by Kvale (1996, p. 27).

All answers from the respondents were jotted down during the interview process. However, in order for not to miss any important and valuable information from the respondents, the interview was also recorded using digital audio-tape. Once the interview was completed, it was later transcribed. Once finished, all respondents were provided with an opportunity to check the transcript for clarification. Member or third-party checks provided a mechanism to ensure the validity of the researcher's interpretation (Merrigan & Huston, 2004). The finalized transcripts were then translated into English language and sent to a translator for cross-checking, proofreading and validation of the transcript. There was no standard form or code for transcription of the research interviews. Decision about the style of transcribing depends on how the transcriptions are to be used (Kvale, 1996, p. 170).

As the interviews were intended to seek deeper understanding from the respondents on the themes acquired from the findings of qualitative content analysis study, the researcher transcribed all the interviews, but neither at a paralinguistic level nor to take account of intonational aspects. For this purpose of research, the researcher have retained some Malay words in the interview scripts, which have no direct translation to English word, if respondents included a few Malay words in order to show another way of how respondents expressed themselves. Malay words were sometimes used by Malaysian respondents when speaking in English as a way of shifting their footing (Goffman, 2001), often to show their disappointment and anger or to stress important facts. The transcripts were then analyzed to examine the connections between the subjects and themes which emerged. Notes were also taken to record non-verbal communication.

Next section will explain the background of the respondents. The background of the respondents starts with the process of searching and identifying the potential respondents. Their profiles and their age are also listed. Each respondent are given the pseudonym name.

4.3.4 Respondents Background

This section talks about the respondents' background. For most, there were ten respondents to be interviewed, whose lives and ideas which were most interested in rendering. Nine of them are homosexual men and one of them was lesbian, with age ranging from 30 to 45 years old. Two from the respondents were in romantic relationship and were together for more than five years. The researcher met all ten respondents face to face for the interviews. There are follow-up interviews that sometimes stretched to two hours and repeat meet-ups were de-rigueur. The researcher has had dinners with most of the respondents (those who have grown inured to this research) as to escape from the stuffy pressures of interviewing and began to appreciate and understand the person and personality behind the responses. They are always willing to share and reveal parts of themselves, which they would not usually reveal. For that, the researcher remains always in their debt.

The researcher has to stress that the respondents, although 'selected' at random, all presented startlingly similar characteristics to each other. They are generally adults (early 30s to mid-40s), good education background with mostly graduated with first degree, economically independent and eloquent about their life goal. The researcher stresses this at the outset so that the comments and attitudes of the respondents towards the discussion on homosexuality are appropriately located as stemming from and being influenced by this socio-economic framework. Table 4.8 below provides the details profile of each of the respondents.

Table 4.8

Profile of the respondents

Pseudonym Name	Age	Profile
Hamzah	40 years old	<p>Hamzah is one matured man with deeply respectful and reverent towards his religion. He works in corporate sector with MBA degree holder and currently doing his DBA in local university. He is honest and engaging and deliberates over each query carefully. He says that “I do not need to be out and tell people who I actually am as long as I feel comfortable with myself. Plus, I don’t want to rebel against my religion and culture. I respect people with their stance regardless their believe and background. Being gay is something that I choose to embrace.</p> <p>I don’t find it necessarily to relate Islam to homosexuality because my key is ‘to keep things separate’ and I don’t want to throw this kind of thing in their face”.</p>
Syah	34 years old	<p>Syah is originally from Terengganu but live and work in Kuala Lumpur once he graduated from the university in United Kingdom. He is working in aviation industry. He was raised by his single mother together with others four siblings where his mother working as police officer. His father decided to leave his family and married with other women when he was a kid. He describes himself as private, quiet and only open to selected person that he comfortable with. He lived together with his partner that he met five years ago.</p>

Table 4.9 *Continue*

Jay	32 years old	Jay is a powerhouse of spitfire independence. She has been economically independent since her teens. She is working freelance as production executive mainly going for video or movie shooting. She has a strong character with assertive opinion, liberal and makes no apologies for the way she choose to live. Originally from Kelantan, she moves to Kuala Lumpur after she lost her mum after battling with cancer when she was 19 years old. Her father remarried and he barely spends time with her dad afterward. She has no sibling and she tells that, "I don't have to speak for anyone about me. Nobody can dictate and rule my life".
Mamat	34 years old	Mamat is a type of voluble person. He works as a lecturer in the public university. He has a caustic tongue but the prickly exteriors hide a very committed son. He lives with his mother and his only sister while his dad abandoned them when he is still four years old. "I love my mother and it hurt me when I am judges by the fact that I am an obedient son but I am gay. The fact that I went to religious high school for five years, I still believe that Allah is fair and He will see this when He judges me later".
Zaman	42 years old	Zaman is one funny man and asked point blank, "What are you exactly going to do with me?" during my initial invitation to him for the interview. He is a little flamboyant despite of having three kids from his fifteen years of marriage. He works as lecturer in public university and proves to be one of the interesting characters from my other respondents.
Firdaus	35 years old	Firdaus once work as an architect in one of architectural firm but he quit his job after more than 8 years working in the industry to focus as insurance agent. He loves to be free from any romantic commitment and enjoy being single. He believes that he may be "straight" and this would "most likely be motivated of his religion and doubt about gay relationship"

Table 4.9 *Continue*

Faizal	45 years old	Faizal is working as a Manager in legal unit in one of the Government Linked Company (GLC) located in Kuala Lumpur. With his background in law and very eloquent when delivering his view, Faizal has a strong character and knows exactly what he wants for his life. He lives with her mother who was suffered from diabetes.
Malik	40 years old	Working as a cabin crew makes Malik as the intrepid traveler. He is gentle and his uncomplicated approach to life is endearing. Malik lived with his partner that he met five years ago. He was once a party people and club goer and suddenly turns his life to 360 degree when his father passed away when he was on duty abroad. He then decided to stop going to clubs, drinking and partying. Malik tells that “I used to be a bad Muslim before and I think at certain point, we have to go back to the basic – our family and god. I appreciate my family much than before and going to meet them more often”
Azman	33 years old	Azman is extremely reserved due to the fact that he is working as police officer. He is discreet but knows very well about his sexuality with no qualms in disclosing that he is gay to me. His unbending attitude is no doubt bolstered by the fact that he is able to separate religion from sexuality. He declares by his own admission, “I am not a very good Muslim. Sometimes I drink and smoke and barely pray. Religion is always a part of me. Just that at this point, maybe I am not reminded of it so much because I don’t really practice”

Table 4.9 *Continue*

Majid	30 years old	Majid is a law graduated and always firm in his opinion. He is one of the most honest respondents with a very opinionated during the interview. Majid describes himself as a person with a high principle and dedicated to his work. He is currently working in one legal firm in Klang Valley.
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4.3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of data for in-depth interview is divided into two phase – the first one is the open coding phase, meanwhile the second phase is axial coding phase.

Phase One: Open Coding

Firstly, the coding process of the interview transcript involved open coding to identify responses derived from the two primary guiding questions: their thoughts on the portrayal of homosexuality coverage in the newspaper based from the theme constructed from the Content Matrix and the influence of homosexuality coverage onto their identity and sexuality construction. The researcher analyzed the interview transcripts for interpretations that referenced at least one of nine priori categories of the homosexuality coverage: (i) a respondent's thoughts on homosexuality as a challenge of societal norms, (ii) a respondent's thought on homosexuality as a challenge to the political status quo, (iii) a respondent's thoughts on homosexuality as a challenge to religious tenet (iv) a respondent's thoughts on homosexuality as a western influence, (v) a respondent's thoughts on homosexuality as a mental disorder and HIV/AIDS stigma, (vi) a respondent's thoughts on homosexuality in their rights and social movement in the country and (vii) a respondent's thoughts on homosexuality coverage in aspect of the law, (viii) a respondent's thoughts on negative portrayal on homosexuality coverage and (ix) a respondent's thoughts on excessive narration of Islamic narratif on homosexuality coverage.

The interview study were also expounded within the respondents negotiation concerning their variances in term of identity as this research is also employed the communication theory of identity as one of the theoretical framework to guide the issue of the research. Their narration were primarily guided on their individual experience and discovers what meanings they make on their identity if any contradiction with what had represented in both newspapers. The communication theory of identity contended that the internalization, externalization and social enactment of identity are extended by and through communication. The framework of communication theory of identity was used in various studies dealing with cultural phenomena, such as multiculturalism. In the communication theory of identity, individual identity were surrounded within four frames which is personal, enacted, relational and communal (summarized in Hecht, 1993, p. 79-80; see also Hecht et. Al, 2002, p. 853). For this part, the interview transcript was analysed to another category to examine respondent's thoughts on how (and in what ways, if at all) he or she felt that the homosexuality coverage has influenced his or her conception of his or her identity.

Next, the researcher coded each meaningful unit. Each of the interview extract was analyse and later determined to directly address to any nine priori categories according to which category of the meaningful unit that is most strongly addressed. There were few instances of meaningful units that required decision-making about which category to place them in. During the placing process of coding, the researcher examined the responses to see if there is any meaningful unit that was not reflected in any priori categories emerged. However, no additional category of observations related to either guiding question did emerge during the first phase of coding. The researcher deemed the nine priori categories are adequate to represent the data.

For the following step, the researcher writes each meaningful unit or quotation into separate documents, depending on which of the nine pre-determined categories the unit was addressed. Each meaningful unit was placed into one or more category depending on how significant within the category. These nine documents were then printed and cut so that each meaningful unit appeared on a separate slip of paper. Therefore, open

coding resulted within nine categories of quotations that each required a second phase of more nuanced coding to uncover the major themes brought up by respondents within the category.

Phase Two: Axial Coding.

The second phase of data analysis is the axial coding. The purpose of axial coding is “to polish and differentiate concepts that are already available and lends them the status of categories” (Bohm, 2004). At this point, the researcher considered each of the nine sets of meaningful units separately. Within each individual category, the researcher sorted the quotes into overarching themes. A theme is a recurring unit that is distinguishable in the text (Strauss & Cobin, 1990). Three main criteria were normally used to assess a theme as recurring: (i) repetition of similar or overlapping ideas across multiple interviews, (ii) restatement of ideas in more or less the same words across multiple interviews, and (iii) the intensity of assertions that echoed with assertions from other interviews. There were indeed easily-recognized recurrences on these dimensions in each of the categories.

For this purpose of research, the theme were derived from the social constructionism model which consists of symbolic code, cognitive customs, cultural traditions and shared roles and rules. Hence, for each of the nine categories, the researcher placed the quotations with the elements of social constructionism and went through several phases of refining – a process of collapsing, breaking out, expanding and/or contracting themes to represent the tenor of the comments in the overall category as fully and accurately as possible. In regard of the response relayed with the respondents identity, the similar process of locating of the interview quotation was conducted within the four elements of the communication theory of identity which consists of personal, enacted, relational and communal that works as main themes.

Throughout the analysis process described here, the researcher maintained a storehouse of theoretical memos. These theoretical memos, interview transcripts and categorized meaningful unit documents also represent resources that are available to an outside

auditor to assess the validity if the results of the study. The availability of these documents reflects the researcher effort to ensure the reliability of the findings (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

4.3.6 Limitations

The reluctant of the respondents to be interviewed at the beginning stage of the study was another constraint, which affected the research timeline and limited the information available for analysis. However, the researcher managed to persuade them and overcame the problem by (i) conducting interviews in a few sessions as they claimed to be busy (ii) communicating via internet by sending the follow up interview questions through email, despite the time constraint and location problem. Some respondents requested to send all the questions before the actual face to face interview and (iii) agreeing to conduct interviews for two respondents in the same time because some respondents refused to be interviewed alone.

4.3.7 Data Trustworthiness for Qualitative Research

This research employed qualitative research for both content analysis and in-depth interview study. Hence, it is very important for the qualitative researchers to be systematic and well organized to enhance the trustworthiness of their study (Saldana, 2011). The most widely used criteria for evaluating qualitative content analysis are those developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in which both used the term trustworthiness. The main purpose of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition, the strategy to ensure trustworthiness of qualitative analysis starts by choosing the best data collection method to answer the research questions of interest during the preparation phase. This is especially important when using inductive analysis as categories are created from the raw data without a theory-based categorization matrix. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four alternatives for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research; which is credibility, dependability,

conformability and transferability. In addition, another criterion is added in 1994 which is authenticity.

In term of the credibility of the research in qualitative analysis, self-awareness and self-evaluation of the researcher is critical (Koch, 1994). For this research, data for the qualitative content analysis were carefully selected and frequently evaluated with critical questions such as “Did the meaning unit is too broad or narrow”, “Did the subtopics generated is not overlap with each other” and etc. throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Similarly, for the interview study, pre-interviews questions may help to determine whether the interview questions are suitable for obtaining rich data that answer the proposed research questions. For example, questions should be asked such as “Did the questions need to be broad or structured?”, “Did the questions is redundant, not clear or ambiguous?” and etc. Such evaluation should not only have to initiate at the beginning of the research but must constantly work throughout the entire process to ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis and this is the process of this research is doing.

Another criterion's to establish the research trustworthiness is researcher must ensure that those participating in the research are identified and described accurately (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It is also called the dependability of the research which refers to the stability of the data over time and under different conditions (Bitsch, 2005). Dependability involves participants evaluating the findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are all supported by the data received from the informants of the study (Cohen et al., 2011; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Dependability for qualitative research can be achieved through several strategy including audit trail, a code-recode strategy, stepwise replication, peer examination or iterator comparisons. For this research, peer examination is employed to discuss and deliberate the process and findings of the research with an academic who have experience in qualitative research. Not only that, peer examination is beneficial to help

identify if there are topics or categories which is over looked by the research question but it also help to get for an honest findings and reflexive analysis from the peer.

It has also been argued that the use of quotations is necessary to indicate the trustworthiness of results (Polit & Beck, 2012; Sandelowski, 1995a), which leads to the conformability of the data analysis. Conformability refers to the objectivity and infers that the data accurately represent the information that the participants provided and interpretations of those data are not invented by the inquirer. Accordingly, the findings must reflect the participants' voice and conditions of the inquiry and not the researcher's biases, motivations or perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2012) and this is one of the main reason why researchers frequently present representative quotations from the transcribe text (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004), particularly to show a connection between the data and results. For instance, each main concept should be linked to the data by a quotation. Ideally, quotations should be selected that are at least connected at all main concepts and widely representative of the sample.

This research was employed the similar approach of analyzing the data by frequently using quotation from the news articles as well as quotation from the interview session with the respondents during the elaboration on the finding of the qualitative content analysis and in-depth interview study.

Meanwhile, transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents and it is the interpretative equivalent of generalizability (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004). According to Bitsch (2005), the "researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through 'thick description' and purposeful sampling" (p. 85). This means that when the researcher provides a detailed description of the enquiry and participants were selected purposively, it facilitates transferability of the inquiry.

This research employs purposive sampling for in-depth interview study which is suitable where the respondents were selected among readers from Malay homosexuals that can

be best provide their perception and interpretation towards news coverage on homosexuality as published in UM and BH newspapers. Beside to allow the researcher decide the reason he or she wants to use a specific category of informants in the study, purposive sampling provides greater in-depth findings than other probability samplings methods (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

4.3.8 Ethical Issue

All of the participants were informed verbally as well as in writing about the invitation to participate in the research. The intention of the research is also explained and their participation is on the voluntary basis. Prior to the participation in this research, respondents were provided with a Research Study Information Sheet that outlines the nature of this research. Besides that, all respondents were provided with Consent Form each. The potential ethical considerations in this research are includes the confidentiality of the data, issues of confidentiality with publication of the findings and fairness in the reporting of the findings. There are no external or physical risks in participating in this study.

In order to minimize these concerns, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study from the outset so that they could make informed decisions about taking part in the research. Furthermore, respondents were assured of utmost confidentiality telling them that they did not have to identify themselves in any that might link them to the study. The protection of the confidentiality of all the respondents was made with all the efforts and their attached organization. Respondents will remain anonymous to maintain confidentiality. Respondents will not be identified by name, nor will their organization be identified.

They will get the full information about the focus of the research, how the data will be analyzed and who is participating in the research. Respondents are free to withdraw from the interview study at any time before the interview is conducted and free to abstain their interview to be used for the analysis process with their notification at least two week after the interview was done. All raw data including videos, audios, and

transcripts and coding sheets in this study will be stored securely for an appropriate period of time.

4.4 Summary

This chapter outline in details of the research methodology employed for this research which is quantitative and qualitative content analysis and in-depth interview study. The quantitative content analysis was utilized in order to answer research question one that is to examine the trends of the news coverage on homosexuality issue from the mainstream Malay language newspapers from the year 1998 to year 2012. The qualitative content analysis was employed in order to seek answer for research question two which is to analyze for more in-depth the way mainstream Malay language newspapers cover the homosexuality stories. For both method of content analysis, the sampling and data collection procedure were managed in a similar fashion while the analysis data was discussed in a separate segment.

Meanwhile, the in-depth interview study was employed in order to seek answer for research question three to assess the perceptions among Malay homosexual readers to the coverage on homosexuality from the newspapers. The interviews were intended to seek deeper understanding from the respondents on the themes acquired from the findings of qualitative content analysis study.

The following chapter will discuss on the findings on the trends of the homosexuality coverage in the newspapers.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss on the findings of the research and divided into several sections. The organization of this chapter is making parallel along with the research methodology employed to seek answer for all three research questions. Section 5.2 will elaborate the findings on the quantitative content analysis, section 5.3 will discuss on the findings of the qualitative content analysis and finally, section 5.4 will explain on the findings of from the in-depth interview study. The following sections of 5.2 will discuss the findings for the quantitative content analysis study along with the several subsections.

5.2 Findings on the Trend of the Coverage

This section will focus on the findings from the quantitative content analysis study. By using a quantitative content analysis, the finding is discussed to answer research question one (RQ 1): How are trends of the homosexuality coverage was distributed in the Malay language newspapers from 1998 to 2012? The purpose of conducting quantitative content analysis study is to examine the frequency and trends obtained from the overall data tabulation of the news text distribution on issue surrounding of homosexuality as published in the newspapers from the standpoint of Malay language newspaper of *Utusan Malaysia* (UM) and *Berita Harian* (BH). The purpose to analyse the trends of homosexuality coverage is significant to obtain the broader understanding on how homosexuality issues in the newspaper being distributed. The duration of the newspapers published is fifteen years period.

The trends of the coverage are divided into three main parts that will report details findings. The first part is the frequencies of the coverage which include the volume of the coverage on homosexuality, size of the coverage, tones of the coverage and the placement of the coverage. The second part is the news frame of the coverage and the final part is the actors appeared in the homosexuality coverage.

5.2.1 Frequencies of the Coverage

This section consists of several sub section and will discuss the frequencies of the coverage that is the general distributions of homosexuality coverage in UM and BH newspapers on its volume of the coverage, the size of the coverage and the tone of the coverage and the placement of the coverage.

5.2.1.1 Volume of the Coverage

The researcher found a total of 816 coverage on homosexuality that were gathered from two Malay language newspapers of UM and BH newspapers from the period of year 1998 to 2012. These numbers of coverage from both Malay language newspapers were gathered for all coverage that contain words on 'homosexual', 'homosexuality', 'gay' and 'lesbian'. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the total of the coverage collected are articles covered homosexuality issue in the entire write-up, coverage that partly discussed on homosexuality and also coverage that are not entirely discuss on homosexuality issue but still has the word of 'homosexuality', 'gay' and 'lesbian'.

However, for this purpose of research, only coverage that entirely and partly discussed on homosexuality was selected. Coverage that are not wholly discussed on homosexuality despite consists of word 'gay' were discarded for further analysis as these types of coverage is not reflected with the purpose of the research. After a thorough examination, in the end, 331 coverage (71 percent) on topic of homosexuality were short-listed from UM newspapers while 132 coverage (29 percent) were chosen from BH newspapers that makes a total of 463 coverage on homosexuality. Figure 5.1 below illustrate the amount of the coverage published in both Malay language newspapers for the period of year 1998 to year 2012.

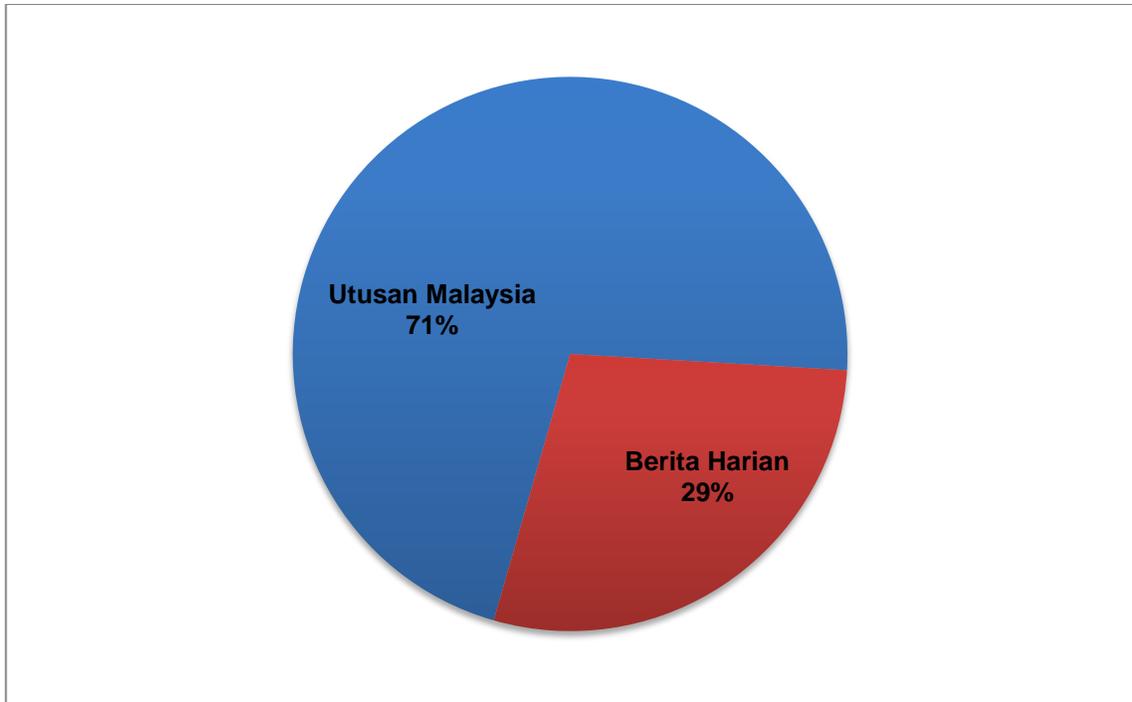


Figure 5.1. The distributions of homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)

From the amount of the 463 selected coverage on homosexuality in both Malay language newspapers, the researcher distributed the coverage according to the yearly basis for fifteen-year period of 1998 to 2012. Figure 5.2 below summarized the overall news data tabulation of the coverage on homosexuality in UM and BH newspapers for the fifteen-year period of 1998 to 2012.

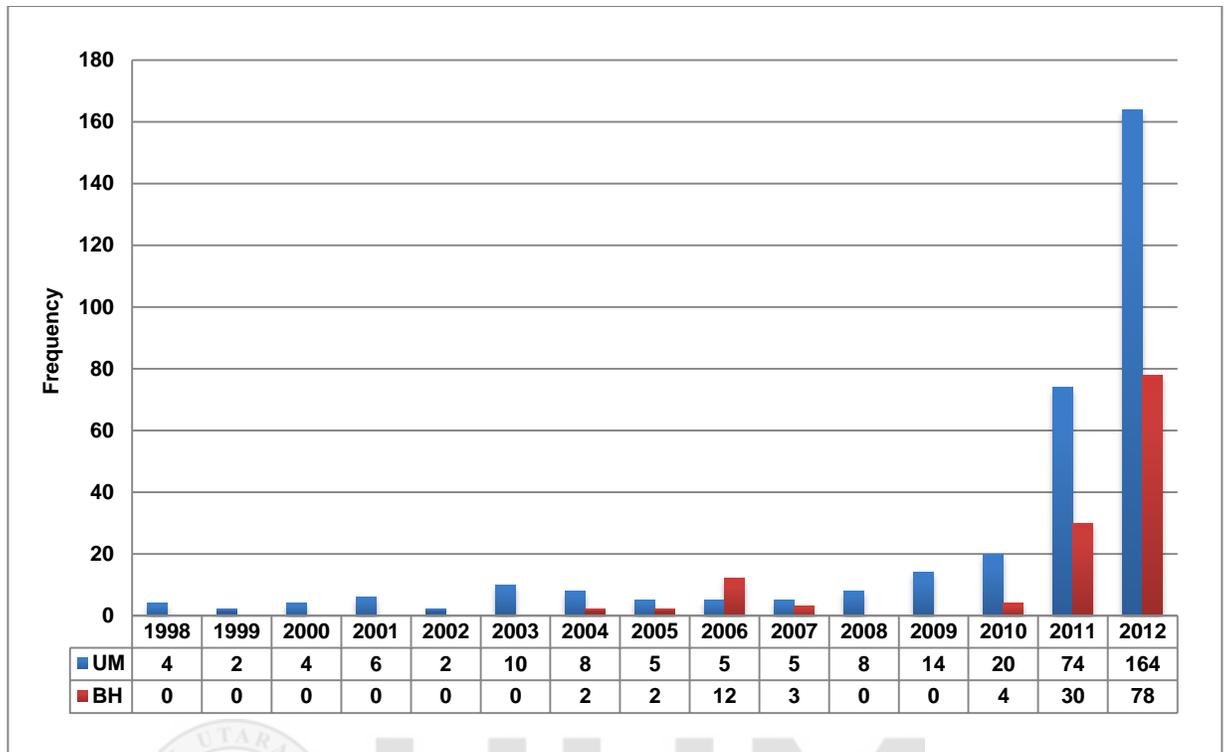


Figure 5.2. The distributions of homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)

Figure 5.2 above shows a significance difference in the numbers of coverage per year and the coverage trends on homosexuality issue throughout the whole fifteen-year of study period. There was an average of 30 coverage per year, (2.5 coverage per month) for those 15 years among these two newspapers. Throughout the fifteen years, UM newspapers reported on homosexuality steadily for each and every year despite of the inconsistency, with the least number of two coverage, which is in the year 1999 and 2002 respectively and the highest number of coverage on homosexuality is 164 coverage (35.4 percent) in year 2012. In average, UM newspapers published around 22 coverage each year from 1998 to year 2012.

Meanwhile, BH newspapers showed less numbers of coverage on homosexuality throughout the fifteen-year period as to compare with UM newspapers. During the analysis, BH newspapers showed that there are nine from the fifteen-year period that provides zero coverage published on homosexuality while the highest number of

homosexuality coverage is 78 (16.8 percent) in the year 2012 which is less than fifty percent than coverage from UM newspapers. In average, BH newspaper published around 8 coverage on homosexuality each year from 1998 to year 2012. From the finding too, it can be also highlighted that the year 2012 remarked as the year with the highest coverage published on homosexuality for both UM and BH newspapers.

Coverage on homosexuality from the UM newspapers published constantly for the first five year from the year 1998 to year 2002 with six coverage (1.3 percent) in year 2001, four coverage (0.9 percent) on homosexuality in the year 1998 and 2000 and two coverage (0.4 percent) each on year 1999 and 2002. Nonetheless, the number of the coverage upsurge to ten coverage (2.16 percent) in year 2003 before it gradually decrease to nine coverage (1.94 percent) in year 2004 and five coverage (1.07 percent) for three consecutive years of 2005, 2006 and year 2007. The number of the coverage on homosexuality then showed a steadily increased from year 2007 to year 2010 with five coverage (1.07 percent) in year 2007, eight coverage (1.73 percent) on homosexuality in year 2008, 14 coverage (3.02 percent) in year 2009 and increase to 20 coverage (4.32 percent) in year 2010.

Accordingly, it is important to highlight that the number of the coverage on homosexuality from the UM newspapers rises dramatically started in the year 2010 to year 2012. The number of the coverage growth to almost four time higher in year 2011 than the year before, which is 74 number of coverage (16 percent) in 2011 to compare with 20 coverage (4.32 percent) in year 2010. Again, the amount of the coverage rises dramatically in the year 2012 which indicate 164 coverage (35.42 percent) on homosexuality, and that is almost more than fifty percent increased than the year 2011. In average, for the year 2012 there are around 13 coverage appeared on homosexuality in UM newspaper.

Meanwhile, there is merely small coverage published on homosexuality for BH newspapers in general. For the first six years started in the year 1998 to year 2002, there is zero coverage published on issue surrounding homosexuality. Again, the scenario was

repeated in the year 2008 and year 2009 with zero coverage published on the subject discussed. It should be highlighted that the highest number of coverage for BH newspapers throughout the year 1998 to year 2012 is 78 coverage (16.85 percent) published in the year 2012. In average, there are around 6.5 coverage on homosexuality appeared in BH newspaper.

Although the number of the coverage showed a sudden rise in the year 2006 for 12 news coverage (2.6 percent) from only two (0.43 percent) in the previous year, the number had tremendously dropped to only three news coverage (0.65 percent) for the year 2007. In year 2010, the number raised to four news coverage (0.86 percent) after zero coverage published for two consecutive years of year 2008 and year 2009. It was later jumped dramatically to eight times higher from only four articles to 30 coverage (6.48 percent) in the year 2011. Again, in the year 2012 the number of coverage elevated drastically that reached 78 coverage (16.85 percent), which is more than two times higher than the amount in year 2011.

As a summary, it is showed that the year 2012 present the highest number of the coverage on homosexuality for both UM and BH newspapers throughout the year from 1998 to year 2012. It is also demonstrated that UM newspapers placed a higher number of coverage on issues of homosexuality to be compared with BH newspapers. The following section will discuss on the size of homosexuality's coverage that published in both newspapers.

5.2.1.2 Size of the Coverage

The distribution news text surrounding issues on homosexuality was also identified the size of the coverage. By identify the size, it can determine how much attention was given on homosexuality issue being circulated in the newspaper. The reason to inquire the size of the coverage published on homosexuality is also to reflect if the issue of homosexuality was deemed to be significant as being highlighted in both Malay newspapers. The size of the coverage is divided into four categories, which are “big”, “medium”, “small” and “very small”. Coverage than contain more than 1500 words

which is more than a page of the newspaper is categorized under big coverage while medium coverage consists between 1001 to 1499 words or estimated around one page of the newspaper.

Meanwhile, small coverage consist between 501 to 999 words or estimated around two third of a newspaper page and very small coverage have below 500 words or one third of a newspaper page. Figure 5.3 below illustrate the size of the coverage selected on issue about homosexuality in both Malay language newspapers from year 1998 to year 2012.

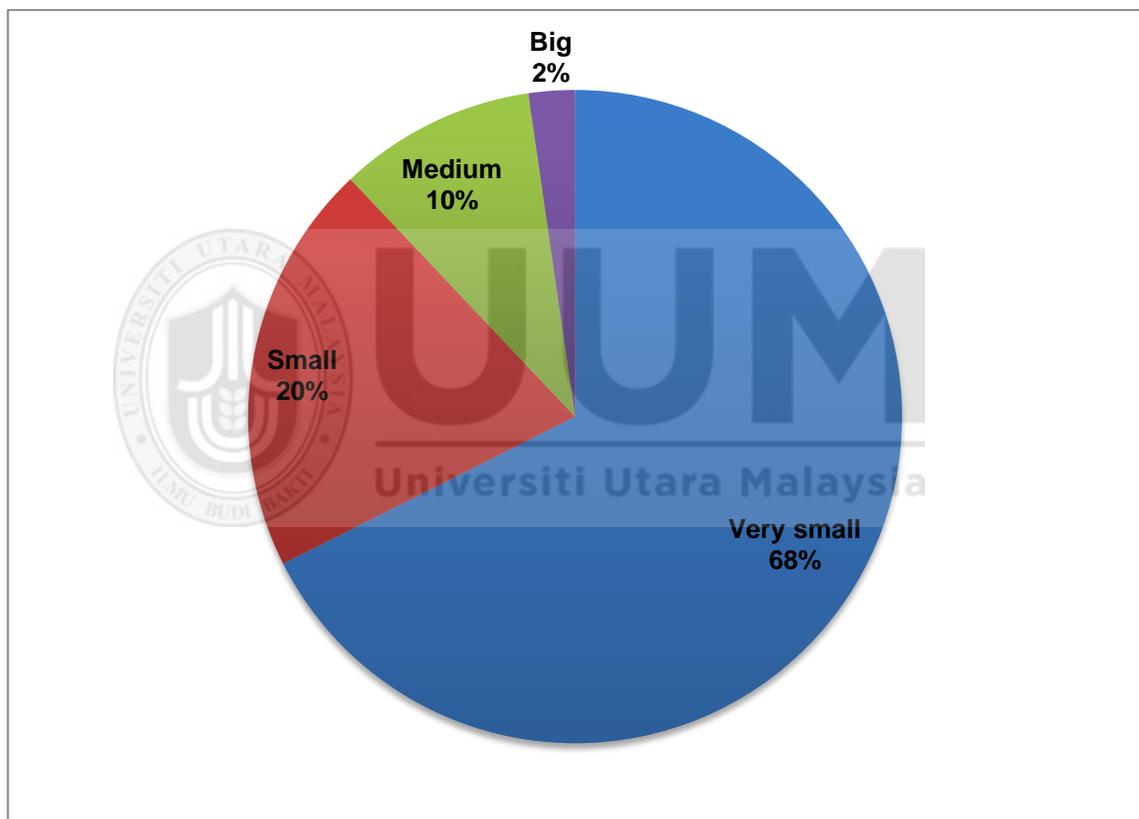


Figure 5.3. The size of homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)

Despite of considered to be offensive subject to discuss openly, the finding revealed that homosexuality is still getting coverage and reportage in the mainstream newspapers. The size range between the very small size to the large size.

Based from the Figure 5.3 above, it can be informed that coverage about homosexuality are majority under the category of very small in size with 314 numbers (68 percent). It was then followed by the category of small coverage with 92 numbers of coverage (20 percent). Meanwhile, 46 number of coverage on homosexuality are under the category of medium size and lastly, only 11 numbers of coverage on homosexuality (2 percent) is large coverage in size which is more than 1500 words per coverage. The following section will discuss on the tones of the coverage.

5.2.1.3 Tones of the Coverage

This research also identified the tone of the coverage and examines its standpoint toward homosexuality issue. There are three type of the coverage tone which is opposing, supportive and not available. The opposing stance showed the entire coverage with most of negative tones to describe homosexuality. The supportive coverage showed that the coverage used more positive tones toward homosexuality while there is also coverage that neither has positive or negative tone on issue around homosexuality.

Figure 5.4 below illustrate the distribution news text on the stance of the coverage on homosexuality in the newspapers.

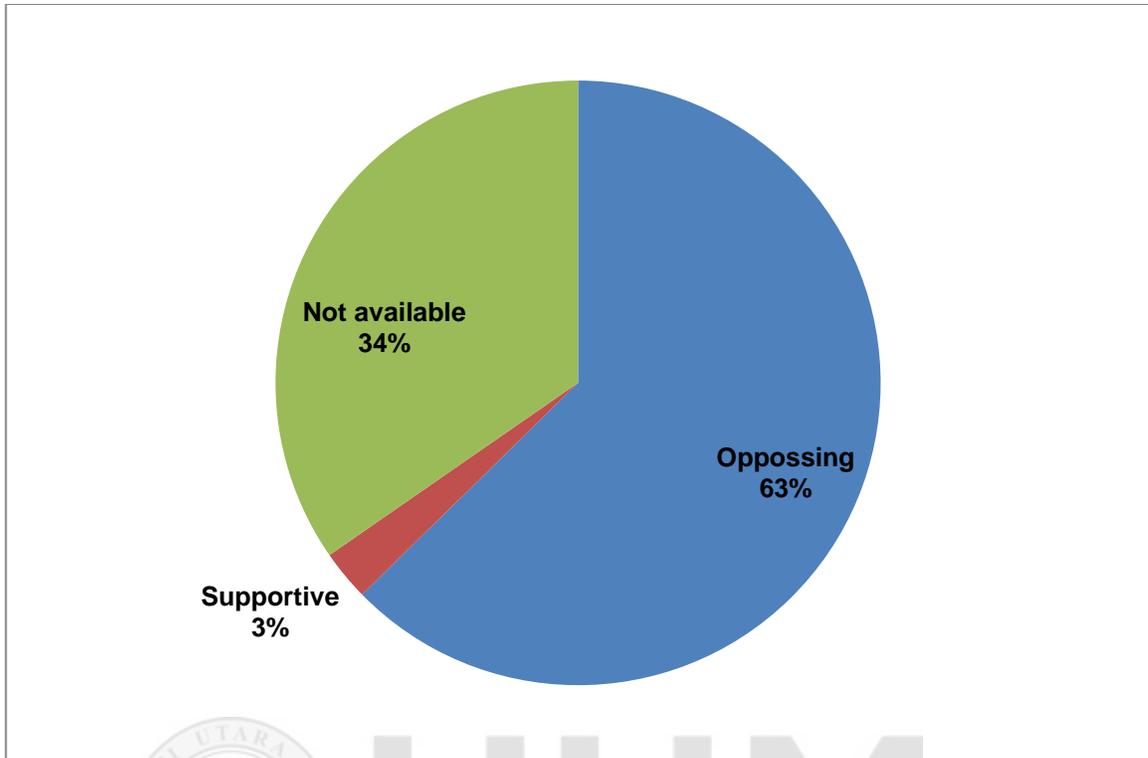


Figure 5.4. The stance of homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from year 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)

From Figure 5.4 above, it is clear that the numbers of coverage opposing to homosexuality issue showed the highest number of percentage as being expected. The number of the coverage which opposing to homosexuality is 292 coverage (63%) while 14 coverage (3%) provides a positive content on homosexuality in both Malay language newspapers. Meanwhile, there are 157 coverage (34%) on homosexuality that neither has positive and negative tones on homosexuality. The following section will discuss where the most coverage on homosexuality was placed throughout the section of the newspapers in both Malay language newspapers.

5.2.1.4 Placement of the Coverage

Throughout the examination of the overall news data tabulation on the coverage surrounding issues of homosexuality, in which section of the homosexuality stories were placed in the newspapers was also identified. Homosexuality stories in the country is not just a dispute between culture and religion but also one about politics, arts, economics,

identity, sexuality, justice, power at the individual, local, national and global levels. The sections in which stories on homosexuality are placed helps in observing the aspects of homosexuality in the newspapers cover as well as the approaches or frames characterising their coverage.

For the purposes of this research, all sections are collapsed and standardized into the following sections: national news, editorial, feature stories, international news, interview, column and letters to editors. There might have been some overlap in terms of the topical elements of the stories within the seven different newspaper sections. Nonetheless, the placement of the coverage into several sections in the newspaper make the coverage shows the different aspects of homosexuality in Malaysia. For instance, if the homosexuality stories are placed in the national news section, it is probably because it was deemed to be relevant to the nation-state.

The researcher seeks to outline all coverage on homosexuality according to the section identified for both UM and BH newspapers. In this research, the examination on the placement of the section in the newspaper on issue surrounding homosexuality is necessary because it could provide how significance's the coverage are in term of the news value and its impact to the readers. The study on the placement of the section can also determine the newsworthy for that particular issue in that particular period. In order to identify the trends and patterns on homosexuality coverage in term of the placement of the section in the newspaper, the researcher classified all the selected coverage of 463 from both Malay language newspapers according to the seven sections in the newspapers mentioned earlier.

Figure 5.5 below illustrate the amount of the coverage according to the type of the section in the newspapers that appeared to publish coverage on homosexuality in both UM and BH newspapers for the period of fifteen years from year 1998 to year 2012.

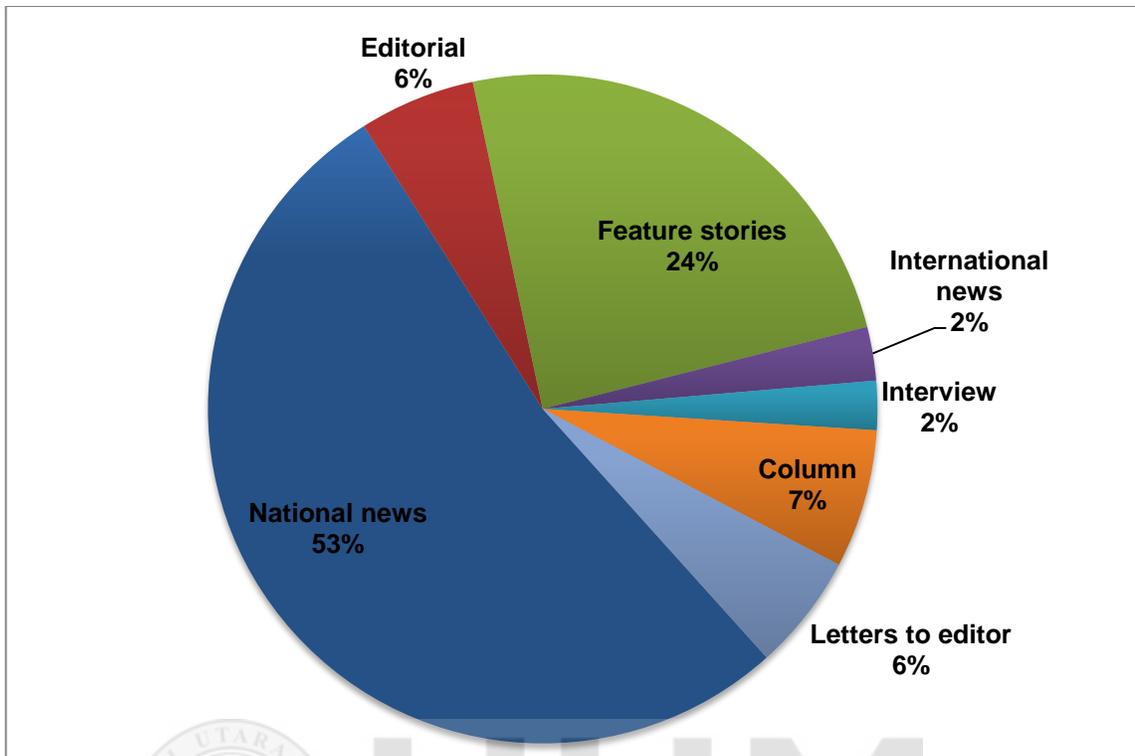


Figure 5.5. The section of the newspapers for homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)

Based from the Figure 5.3 above, it is clear that the section of the national gives the largest number of the coverage on homosexuality with the total of the publications is 244 coverage (53 percent) from both UM and BH newspapers throughout the fifteen years period. On the other hand, the least number of the section that contribute to the coverage on homosexuality is from the section of interview and international news, which indicated only eleven and twelve coverage (two percent) respectively for both Malay language newspapers.

The second highest of the section in the newspaper is feature stories that provide 113 number of coverage (24 percent) which is less than double quantity from the national news section and followed by the section of special column written by columnists with 31 numbers of coverage (seven percent). Meanwhile, the section of editorial news and letter to editor equally provide 26 numbers of coverage (six percent) for each section on

homosexuality coverage. In average, there are around 66 coverage in each section of the newspapers.

For this research, the researcher also quantified the distribution of the newspaper section that published coverage on homosexuality and sorted it between UM and BH newspapers. The outcome is illustrated in the Figure 5.6 below.

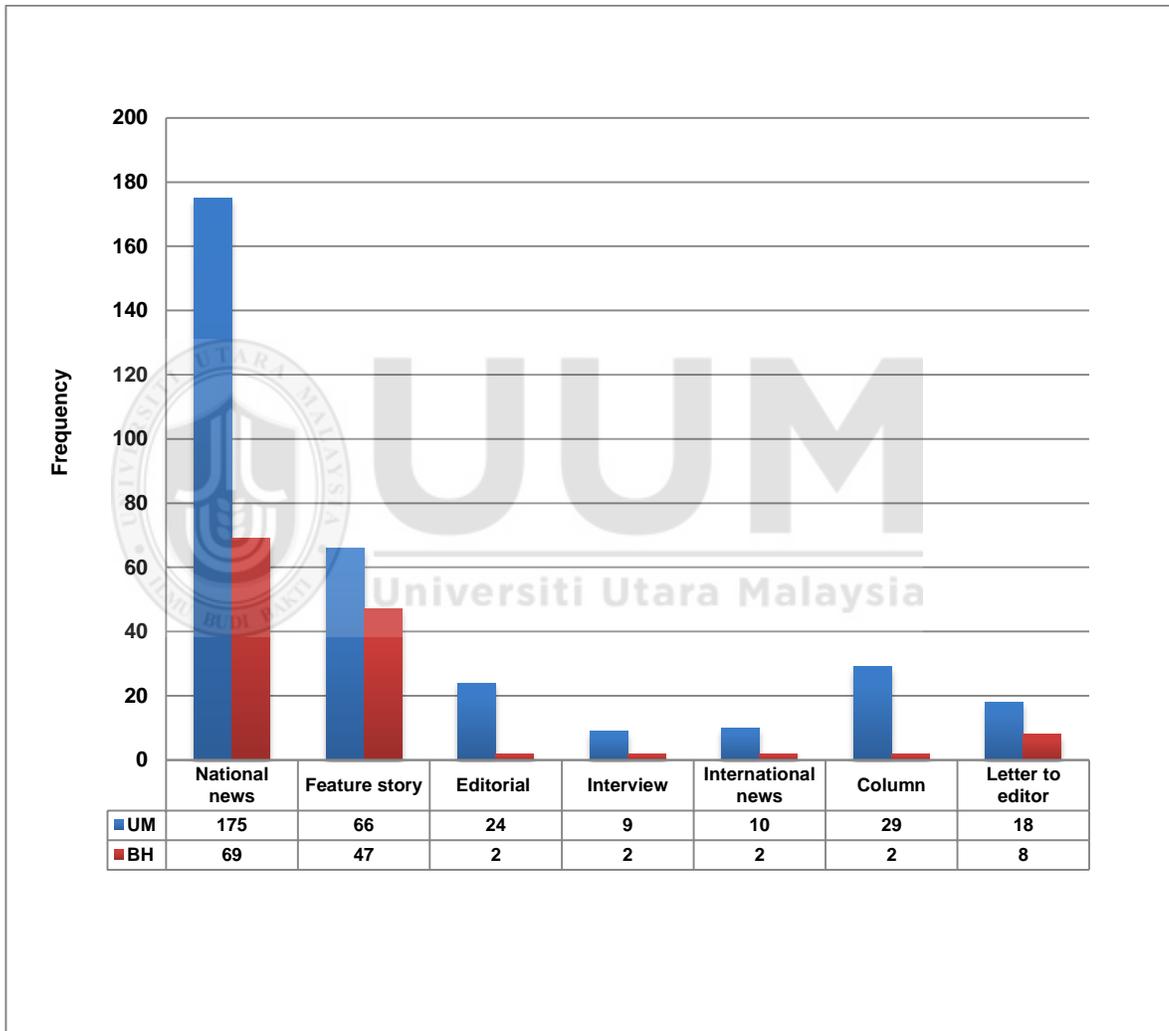


Figure 5.6. The section of the newspapers for homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 463$)

Based from the Figure 5.6 above, it can be shown that the section of the national news signified the highest number of coverage published on homosexuality for both UM and

BH newspapers throughout the fifteen-year period for the amount of 244 coverage (52.7 percent). For this particular section of the newspaper, UM newspapers indicated the higher number than BH newspapers with a total of 175 coverage (37.8 percent) on homosexuality while BH newspapers provide 69 coverage on homosexuality (14.9 percent) in the section of the national news on the subject of homosexuality which is more than fifty percent less than UM newspapers. In average, there are around 122 coverage on homosexuality under the section of national news for both newspapers.

On the other hand, the least number of the section of the newspaper that published coverage on homosexuality is unlike between these two Malay language newspapers. UM newspapers for instance showed nine coverage (1.94 percent) on homosexuality from the section of interview while the least number from BH newspapers has four different newspaper's sections that equally provided the same number of the news coverage published. The four sections in BH newspapers are editorial news, interview, international news and column, which present only two news coverage (0.43 percent) respectively.

Meanwhile, the section of feature stories' ranked second highest that contribute to the coverage on homosexuality for both UM and BH newspapers. For this newspaper' section, 66 coverage (14.25 percent) on homosexuality was presented as feature stories section in UM newspapers while BH newspapers provides 47 coverage (10.15 percent) that were placed in the same section. The average coverage published on homosexuality under feature stories is around 56 coverage for both Malay language newspapers.

It was revealed that the column's section is ranked to be the third highest as the section in the newspaper that published issue surrounding homosexuality for UM newspapers. For this section, UM newspapers present 29 coverage (6.26 percent) on homosexuality. For BH newspapers, the third highest for the section in the newspaper on homosexuality coverage fall under the section of letter to editor which contributed to eight coverage (1.73 percent). As mentioned earlier that BH newspapers has equal number of coverage for four different types of newspaper section which are editorial news, interview,

international news and column section with only two coverage each, thus marked as the last four from the seven sections of the newspapers that contributed to coverage on homosexuality.

However, for UM newspapers the number of the coverage on homosexuality stories has perceptibly declining for the last three newspaper section which is editorial news with 24 coverage (5.18 percent), letter to editor with 18 coverage (3.89 percent) and international news with 10 coverage (2.16 percent). Given these points, this discussion summed up the comparison of the number of coverage surrounding issues of homosexuality as published between two Malay language newspapers of UM and BH according to the seven major sections as presented in Figure 5.5 throughout fifteen years of study.

On this particular section, the researcher also quantify the number of coverage for each Malay language newspapers of UM and BH newspapers for each and every year throughout the fifteen years of study. The following Figure 5.7 and Figure 5.8 below will illustrate the distribution of the section in the newspaper on coverage surrounding homosexuality for UM and BH newspapers respectively for the period of fifteen years from year 1998 to year 2012 and followed by the discussion of the finding.

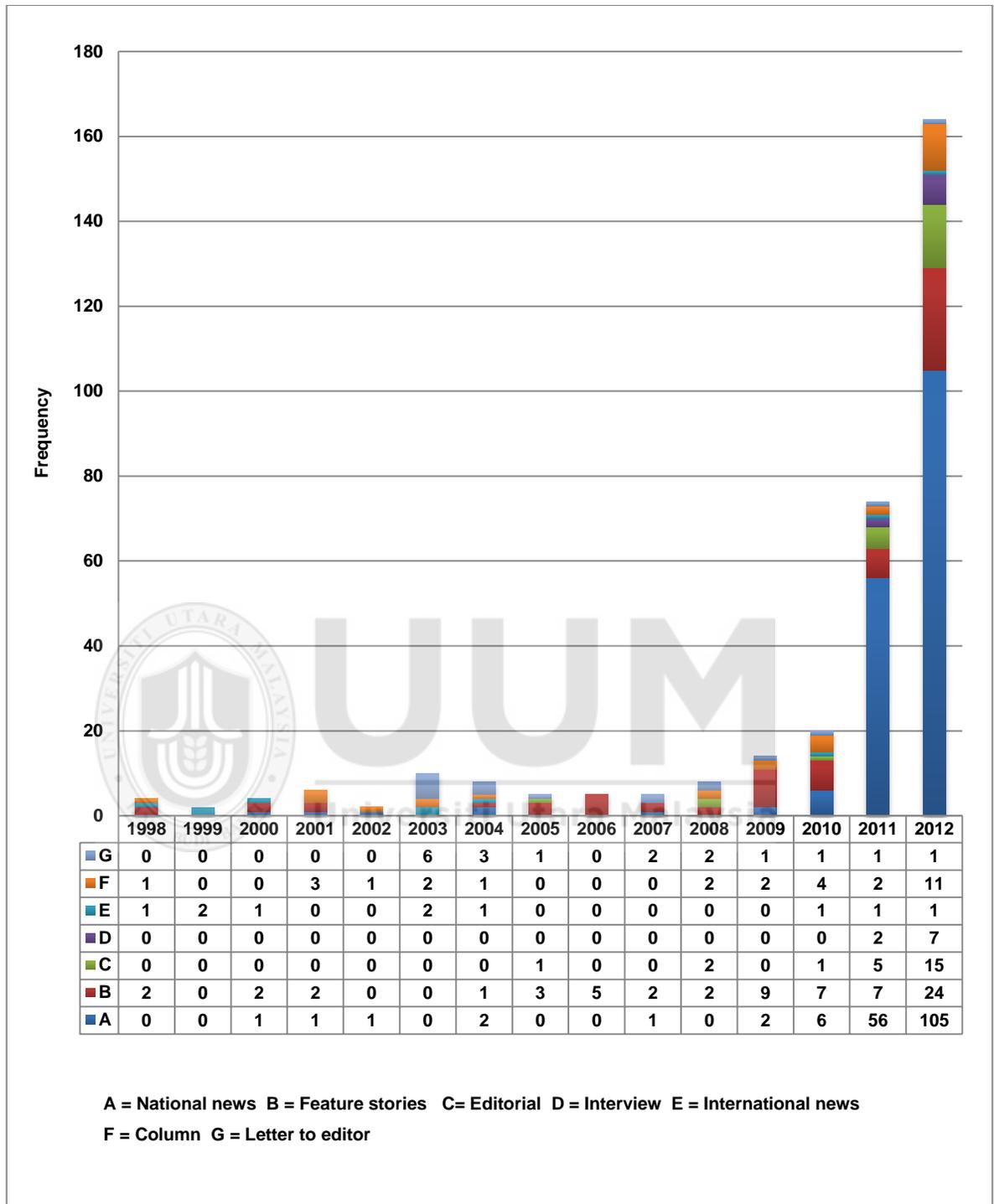


Figure 5.7. The section of the newspaper for homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 331$)

Based from the Figure 5.7 above, it can be informed that for the year 2012, the section of national news outnumbered the number of the coverage on homosexuality to be

compared with the rest of the years. In other words, the amount of coverage on homosexuality is the highest for the section of national news out of six others news section in the year 2012 with 105 news articles (31.72 percent) which is double the number published than year 2011. Accordingly, while the number of the coverage on homosexuality from the national news' section started to increase from the year 2009 with two news coverage (0.60 percent) and raised to six (1.81 percent), it is then upsurge to more than nine times higher to 56 coverage (16.92 percent) in the year 2011. In average, there are at least 11 coverage appeared in national news section throughout the period of fifteen years.

The same goes to another section of the newspaper from UM newspapers specifically in year 2012. For instance, the section of feature stories provide a constant number of coverage throughout the year, except in year 1999, 2002 and 2003 with zero coverage available before it increased to 24 news coverage (7.25 percent) in year 2012 from only seven coverage (2.11 percent) in the previous year. In average, there are around 4 coverage on homosexuality published in the newspaper for the feature stories. Meanwhile, in year 2012 too, the number of coverage on homosexuality from the section of editorial news was also increased three times higher than the year 2011 from only five coverage (1.51 percent) to fifteen coverage on that particular year.

Meanwhile, for the data tabulation for BH newspapers, Figure 5.8 below outlines the distribution of the coverage on homosexuality according to the section in the newspaper for the fifteen year period.

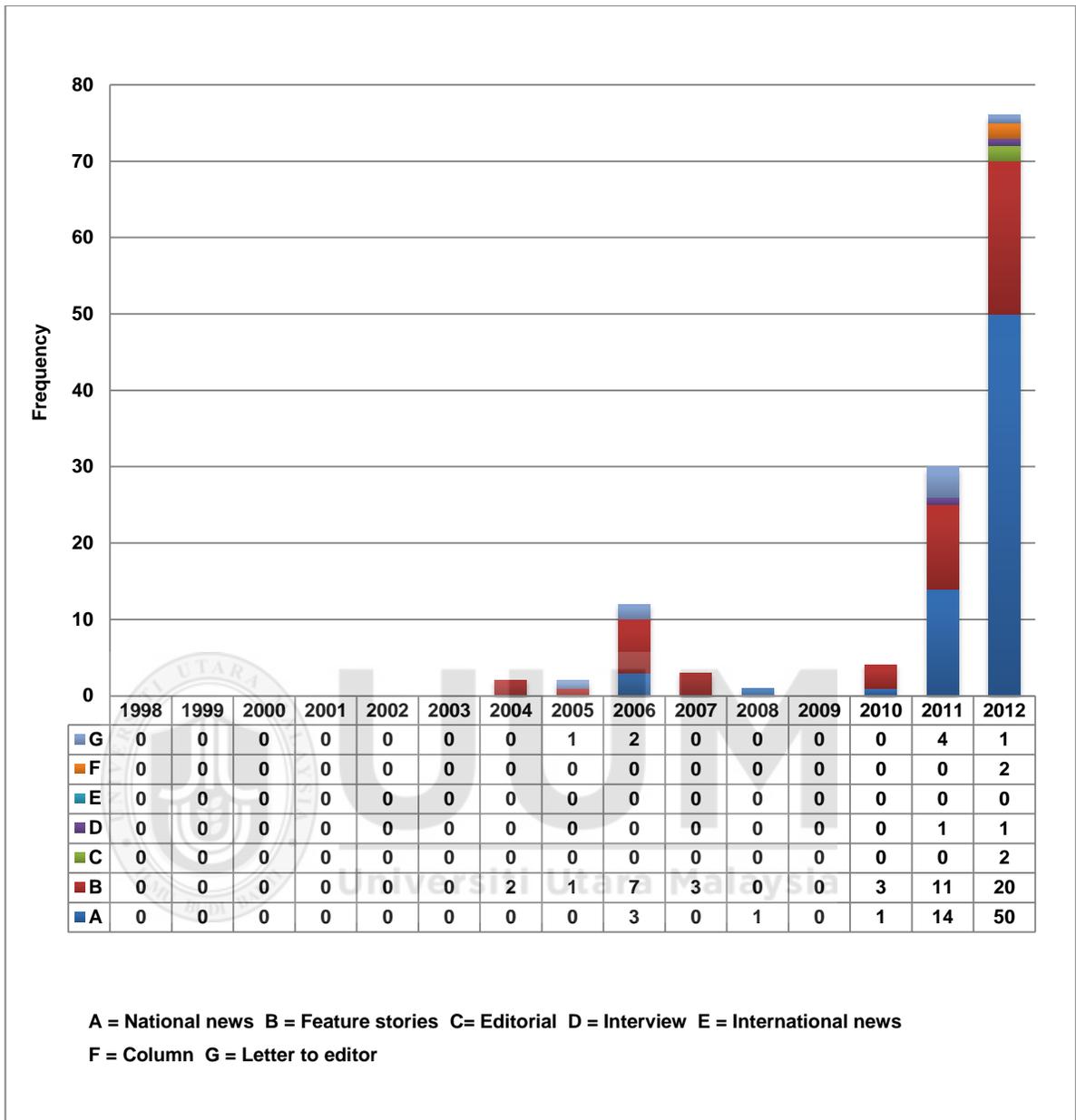


Figure 5.8. The section of the newspaper for homosexuality coverage in *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 132$)

The amount of the distribution for the section in the newspapers that published coverage on homosexuality in BH newspapers throughout the fifteen year period is not as umpteen as UM newspapers based from the Figure 5.8 above. From the Figure 5.8 too, it can be showed that the year 2012 provides the highest amount of numbers throughout the fifteen year periods of study with the highest number of coverage on homosexuality

stories come from the section of the national news. The total of the coverage published for section of national news in the year 2012 is 50 (37.88 percent) which are more than three times higher than the number published in the year 2011 which reveals only 14 coverage (10.61 percent). In average, there are around four coverage published on homosexuality under the section of national news for the period of fifteen years.

Accordingly, coverage that were placed in the section of feature stories indicated 20 coverage (15.15 percent) that published in the year 2012 which ranked second from the overall sections in the newspapers. It is to be highlighted that this number growth as double from eleven coverage (8.33 percent) from year 2011 in the same section. Nonetheless, the number of coverage on homosexuality for BH newspapers were rather undemanding to be compared with UM newspapers in general, there is still showing an interesting outcome when the number is growth drastically that inclined to the year 2012 as similar as UM newspapers especially for section of the national news and feature stories that showed dramatic increase from the year 2010 to year 2012.

This section of 5.2.4 discussed the trends and pattern of the coverage distributions on homosexuality particularly on what is the most section in the newspapers that published coverage on homosexuality for both UM and BH newspapers. In a nutshell, the news section of national news appeared to be the highest number of the section in the newspaper to publish stories and coverage on issue of homosexuality with UM newspapers provides the greater number than BH newspapers. The number of the coverage on issues surrounding homosexuality was presented to show the great interest specifically towards the last three years of fifteen-year period started from the year 2009 to year 2012 for both newspapers. The reason of such trends is unknown but a few correlations can be identified to observe the possibilities of external forces causing such patterns.

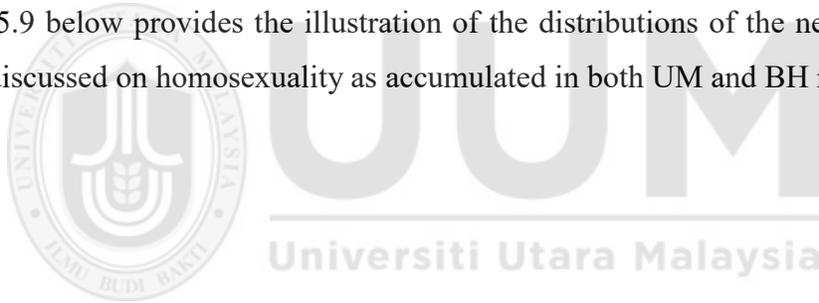
The following section of 5.2.5 will discuss on the distribution of the topics of the coverage discussed on issues surrounding homosexuality.

5.2.2 News Frame of the Coverage

On top of the examination on the distribution of the frequencies of coverage, the researcher also quantified and analysed the news frame of the coverage on homosexuality. The purpose of investigating the news frames is to analyse the segmentation on what is the topical discussion and content discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage from both UM and BH newspapers.

For this purpose of research, there were six news frame used that is adopted and modified from Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) and Yong and Md. Sidin (2010). The six news frame used that classified the topic of discussion on homosexuality coverage in this research is conflict, consequence, responsibility, morality, human interest and others. Refer section 4.2.5.1.2 for the explanation of these six news frame.

Figure 5.9 below provides the illustration of the distributions of the news frame on the topics discussed on homosexuality as accumulated in both UM and BH newspapers.



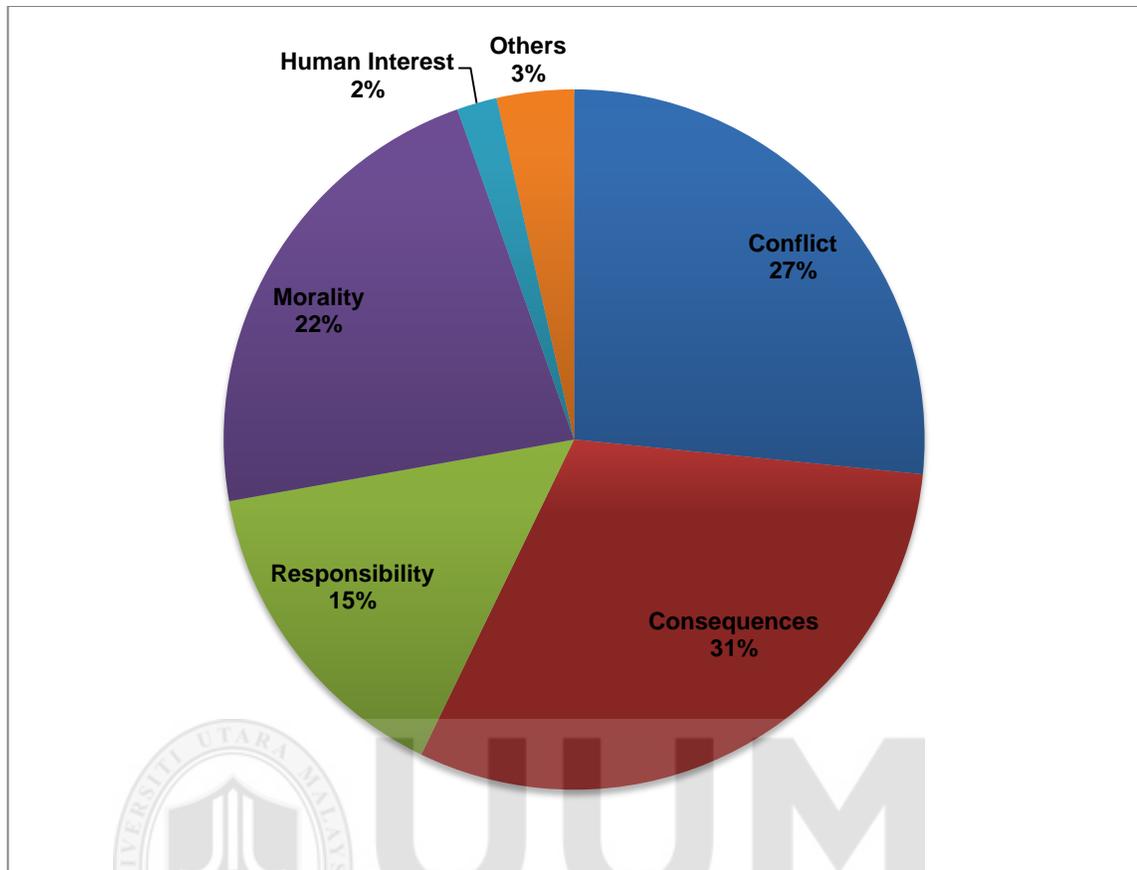


Figure 5.9. The news frame discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 647$)

Overall, the distributions of the news frame discussed surrounding issues of homosexuality showed a significance difference between each frame throughout the fifteen-year period of study for both newspapers. According to Figure 5.9 above, it is found that the most news frame being discussed around the subject on homosexuality were mostly linked with the stories related with consequences. Hence, it is appeared that the consequences frame revealed to be the highest topic being discussed in both UM and BH newspapers as to compare with the rest of the topics.

Based from the Figure 5.9 too, the total of the news frame on consequences for both newspapers are gathered to 198 news frame (31 percent). It should be highlighted that in one single coverage, it could be more than one news frame being discussed. Hence, the total number of the news frame accumulated cannot be match with the total number of

coverage collected. Throughout the analysis, the news frame on consequences was surrounded on news about homosexuality and its influence to basic family institution and value that mostly emphasized on the repercussion of homosexuality as it is challenged the local social belief, norms and nature. The discussion of homosexuality was also intertwined with label such as social illness and often being depicted as bringing negative impact to the society. For example, in UM newspaper asserted that “homosexuality is not only deflected from the system of universal humanity but even damage the social system and the family institution” (28 April 2012, p. 12).

The similar news frame also highlighted on discussion around religious and health content particularly when homosexuals people is frequently depicted as people who will get the retaliation from Allah and the HIV virus. For instance, in one of the coverage from UM, it was stated “Muslim has to be worried that homosexuality will invite Allah wrath, it is clearly an illegal act and blaspheme by Allah” (28 April 2012, p. 28).

Meanwhile, the second highest news frame on homosexuality coverage is conflict. The total news frame on conflict narrated around homosexuality was 172 news frames (27 percent). The issues surrounding on news frame conflict are include a dispute between government and the opposition party when government was constantly battle to fight homosexuality from being spread particularly on their ‘habit, lifestyle and culture’. For example, UM newspaper asserted that “kerajaan mesti mengambil berat terhadap masalah social ini kerana ia boleh merosakkan institusi sosial” (*government must take this social problem to be the main priority because it can depreciated social institution*) (11 March 2012, p. 7). Another example from similar frames from UM newspaper stated that “the government needs to deal with LGBT issue quickly and decisively because the social illness has spread into a cancer in the society as the practitioners consist of variety of backgrounds including politicians” (11 March 2012, p. 7).

The similar news frame also highlighted on the urge by members of parliament particularly from the government to demand a firm answer from opposition on their stance to gay community. Under this news frame too, there is a discussion to pursue

enactment against gay individual to be a member of parliament. For example, in one coverage from UM newspapers, it was asserted that “semua parti politik di negara ini perlu bersatu mewujudkan undang-undang khusus untuk menolak manusia yang mempunyai naluri songsang daripada menjadi pemimpin supaya kerajaan tidak dipimpin oleh golongan LGBT” (*all political party in this country must be unified in order to embody a specific law that will reject individuals with deviant sexuality as leader so the government is not lead by the LGBT community*) (10 April 2012, p. 13).

The third highest news frame is morality. The total news frame on morality is 145 news frames (22 percent). Under this news frame, the discussion on homosexuality is central on topics around religion with Islam that have a greater length of debate in both Malay language newspapers than any other religions. The discussion on religion was not solely on the religion of Islam but also include others religion as well such as Christian, Buddha and Hindu. Other than that, this news frame is also narrated on how the religious rights are championing against issues on same-sex marriage and same-sex sexual activities. Example of this news frame was asserted in one of the coverage in UM newspaper that stated that “kegiatan homoseksual tetap haram dan hukum tersebut tidak akan berubah dalam apa jua keadaan seperti mana ketetapan Allah dalam al-Quran” (*The homosexuals activity remain illegal and the law will not change under any circumstances as the ordinance of God in the Quran*) (16 January 2012, p. 5).

Other than that, another example for this news frame from UM newspaper asserted that, “isu gay bukan masalah bagi orang Islam sahaja tetapi masalah global. Mana-mana pemimpin agama di dunia termasuk Kristian dan Buddha tidak menyokong aktiviti gay” (*gay issues in not just a problem to Muslim but also a global issue. Any religious leader in the world including Christian and Buddha is not supporting gay activity*) (3 January 2011, p. 8).

This section also quantified the distribution of the news frame sorted between UM and BH newspapers in order to identify the trends of the coverage on homosexuality according to the news frame mentioned earlier. The following Figure 5.10 illustrated the

result of the numbers of the coverage released on the topics published from these two Malay language newspapers.

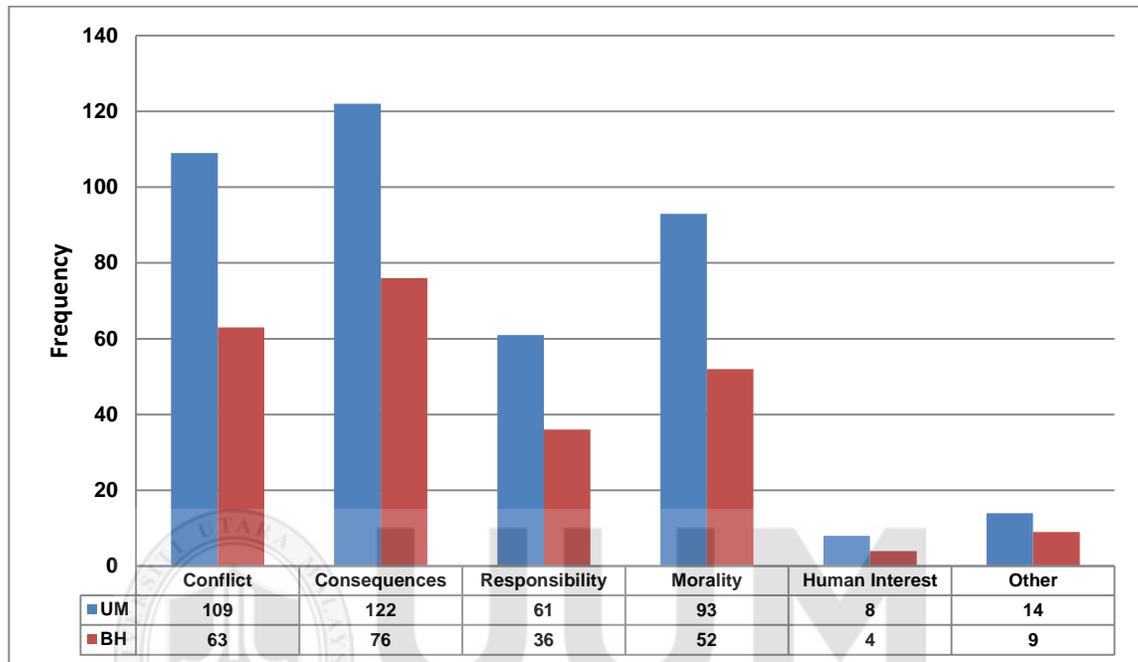


Figure 5.10. The news frame discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 647$)

In general, based from the Figure 5.10 above UM newspapers provides the greater number from varies news frame discussed on homosexuality coverage compare to BH newspapers throughout the period of fifteen-year of study. From the Figure 5.10 too, it can be seen that the highest news frame is consequences. However, among these two newspapers, UM newspapers provide the highest numbers of news frame on consequences which signified 122 news frame (19 percent) and BH newspapers revealed the similar finding with consequences news frame is the highest news frame with 76 (12 percent) which is merely half from the amount of UM newspaper.

On the other hand, the least amount of news frame on homosexuality coverage was also provides similar finding between UM and BH newspapers. For BH newspapers, the news frame under category of human interest placed the least amount of frame which

showed only 4 news frame (0.6 percent) while for UM newspapers, the human interest frame was also ranked to be the last spot that yielded 8 news frame (1.2 percent).

Meanwhile, the second highest news frame discussed on homosexuality appeared to be the news frame on conflicts for both Malay language newspapers. For this particular news frame, UM newspapers showed a total of 109 news frame (17 percent), which is double more than the amount revealed from BH newspapers that only showed 63 news frames (10 percent). The news frame of morality showed the third highest number of frame from both Malay language newspapers throughout the fifteen-year period. BH newspapers yield 52 news frame (8 percent) while UM gives a total of 93 news frame (14 percent).

For the rest of the news frame such as responsibility and others news frame, both were ranked fourth and fifth position for both UM and BH newspapers respectively. In general, the number of each of these news frames appeared in the newspapers was lead by UM newspapers that provide twice as much quantity to be compared with BH newspapers. For instance, on the news frame on responsibility, UM newspapers showed the total of 61 news frame (9 percent) and this amount is twice than what BH newspapers yielded with only published 36 news frame (5.5 percent).

The number of the news frame on homosexuality coverage on homosexuality for both Malay language newspapers for fifteen consecutive years was also quantified in order to identified the trends. The following Figure 5.11 and Figure 5.12 below outlined the distribution of the news frame for UM and BH newspapers for the period of fifteen years from the year 1998 to year 2012. It was later followed by the discussion of the findings. The discussion starts with the distribution of the news frames for UM newspapers as outline in the following Figure 5.11.

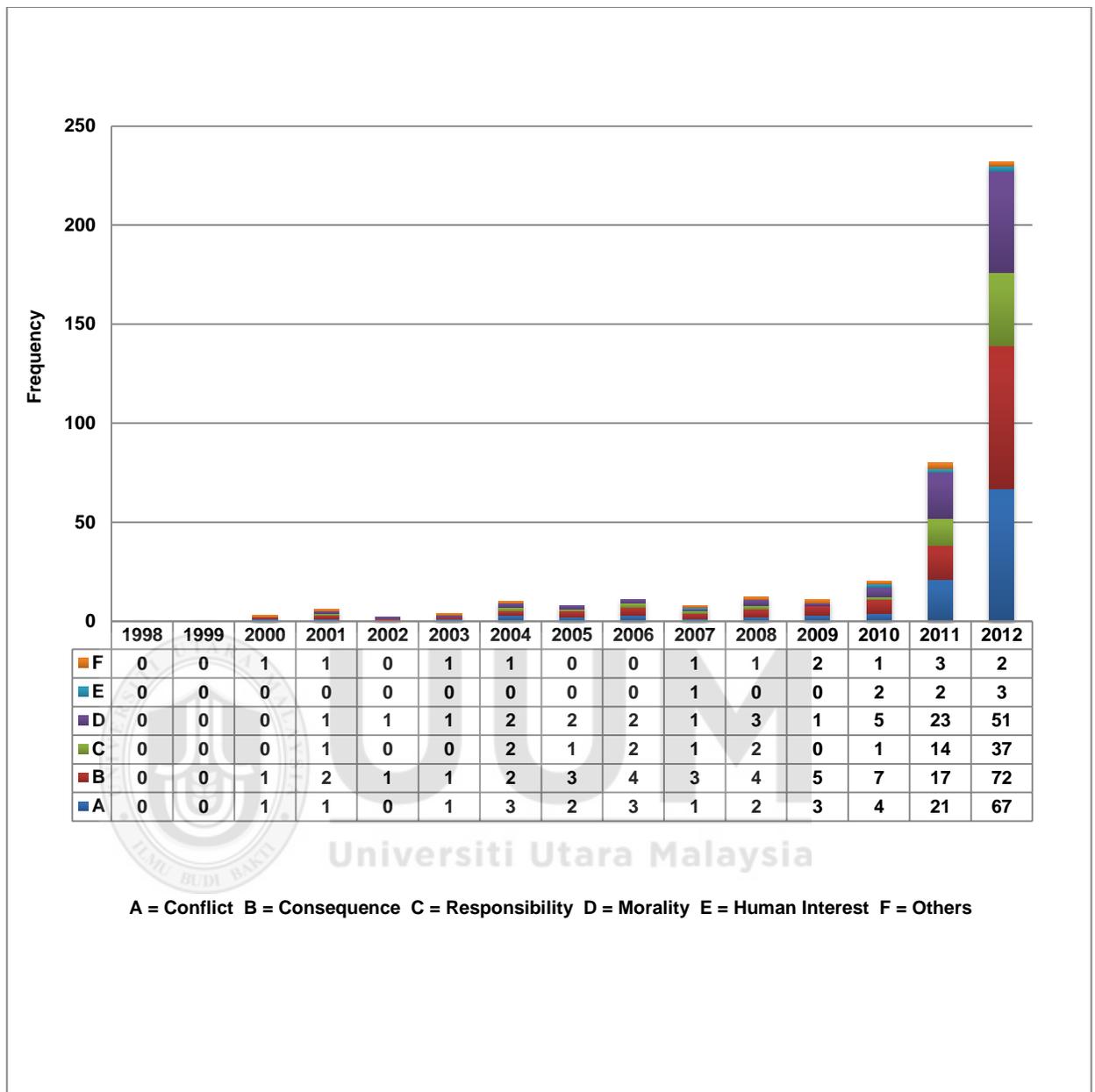


Figure 5.11. The news frame discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 407$)

In sum, the year 2012 remarked as the highest numbers from the overall coverage for all news frames in UM newspapers with total of 232 news frame (57 percent). In fact, most of the news frames on homosexuality increased abruptly started in the year 2010 to the year 2012. For example, the news frame on conflict increased from merely four frames in year 2010 (1 percent) to 21 news frame (5 percent) in year 2011. Again, the number is

upsurge to 67 news frame (16 percent) in year 2012. By the same token, the news frame on responsibility also provides the same situation when the number appeared to be increase dramatically from five news frame in year 2010 to 23 news frame in year 2011 and 51 news frame in year 2012.

The year 2012 also demonstrated the highest number of news frame on consequence with 72 news frame (17 percent). Prior to that, the similar news frame offered 17 (4 percent) and 7 news frame (1.7 percent) for year 2011 and 2010 respectively that also the highest news frame for both years. In average, a total of 8 news frame on consequences published in UM newspapers throughout fifteen years of study. Meanwhile, the news frame on conflict revealed the second highest news frame in year 2012 with 67 news frame (16.5 percent) while news frame on morality place third with 51 news frame (12.5 percent). In average, there is 7 news frame (1.7 percent) for conflict for each year and 6 news frame (1.4 percent) for morality.

Meanwhile, the least number of news frames is human interest. There is only four years from the fifteen years period that offered the news frame which is in year 2007, (1 news frame), 2010 (2 news frame), 2011 (2 news frame) and 2012 (3 news frame), while the rest of years are absent.

The following Figure 5.12 below will illustrate the news frames distribution enfolded issues on homosexuality for Malay language newspapers of BH newspapers.

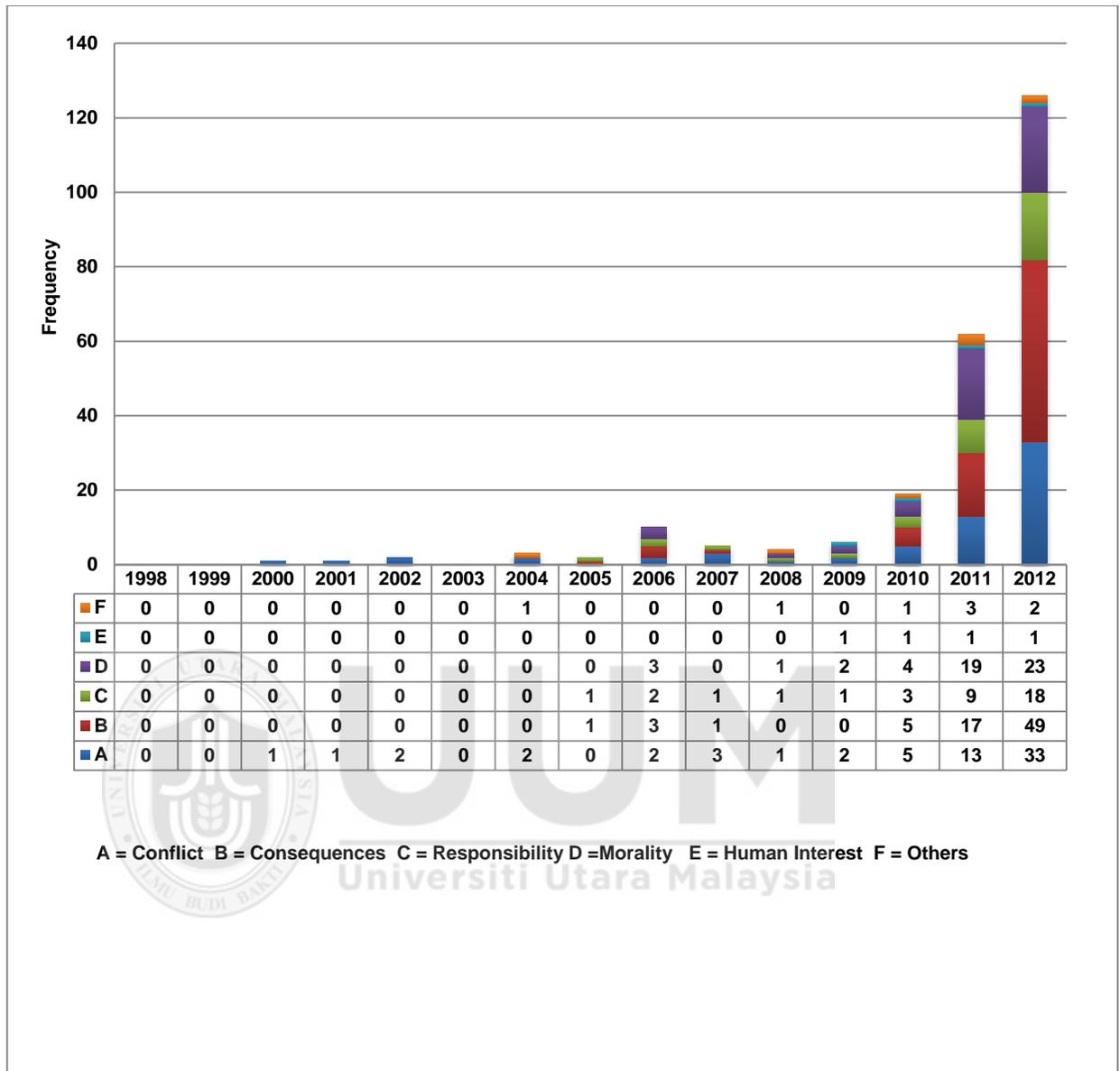


Figure 5.12. The news frame discussed surrounding homosexuality coverage in *Berita Harian* from year 1998 to 2012 ($n = 240$)

Overall, BH newspapers offered the unaggressive amount of number of coverage on homosexuality to be compared with the coverage published from UM newspapers. Hence, there was little significance findings were discovered from this Malay language newspaper. The total news frame for *Berita Harian* newspaper is 240 news frames with the year 2012 yielded the highest number of findings. 126 news frames for all six categories of news frames were gathered in 2012. This is similar to UM newspapers but

with the slight lesser amount of coverage. The year 2012 also provides the highest amount of coverage on the news frame of consequences with 49 news frame (20 percent) to be compared with the rest of news frames. The news frame on conflict ranked second with 33 news frames (13 percent) and the news frame on morality is the third highest in the year 2012 with 23 news frame (9 percent).

Similar like UM newspapers, the amount of coverage on homosexuality from BH newspapers demonstrated a dramatic increased especially from the year 2010 towards the year 2012. There are three news frames that clearly showed the dramatic increased on these last three years which include news frame on consequences, conflict and morality. For example, the news frame on conflict yielded five news frames (2 percent) in the year 2010, which later increased to 13 news frame (5 percent) in the year 2011 and upsurge to two times higher to 33 news frame (14 percent) in the year 2012. Meanwhile, there are zero news frames of the same title for year 1998, 1999, 2003 and 2005. News frame on conflict is the second highest news frame from all six types news frame. In average, there is around 5 news frame on conflict for each year throughout fifteen years period of study.

Morality ranked the third highest with 52 news frame (22 percent). Year 2012 revealed the highest morality frame with 23 news frame (9 percent), 19 news frame (7 percent) in year 2011 and four news frames (1.6 percent) in year 2010. Meanwhile, news frame on responsibility placed fourth with total 36 (15 percent) with the highest is in year 2012 (18 news frame).

The section of 5.2.5 discussed on the trends of the coverage particularly on the news frame discussed on homosexuality in both newspapers. From the discussion, it is clear that news frame on consequences, conflict and morality demonstrated the major highlight. It is also showed that UM newspapers conveys great numbers of the news frame than BH newspapers with the year 2012 revealed the highest numbers throughout the fifteen year period of study.

The following section of 5.2.3 will discuss on the portrayal of the actors appeared in UM newspapers and BH newspapers that acted as news source on homosexuality issues in the country.

5.2.3 Actors Appeared in the Coverage

For this research, the researcher also seek to identify and quantify the distribution of the actors appeared across the sample of the coverage related on homosexuality from both Malay language newspapers of UM and BH. The actor's appeared in the coverage were referred to those people who are quoted in the coverage for homosexuality issues. The use of synonyms and references to similar actors is used to determining these actors of the news items. An actor has to at a minimum be the focus of an entire paragraph within a story to be coded as an actor. For some cases, only one or two actors are coded depending on their relative dominance, for example if the coverage focus is only one actor, only that actor is recorded. It is important to be flexible fashion to count for the emergent actors from the coverage. The frequencies of the occurrence of actors in the coverage are then tallies.

The examination on the actors involved in the newspapers on homosexuality issues is significance because it could suggest who were regularly chosen by these Malay language newspapers to comment and give remarks on homosexuality and the types of homosexual topics that they are mostly covered. By doing this too, it will also indirectly revealed the person who were given the controlled and trust by the newspapers to speak on the subject of homosexuality in Malaysia. There are six dominant actors which were emerged in coverage related of homosexuality issues in both newspapers. The actors are including the government officials, non-government organization, religion organization, academician, politician and others individual's namely legal practitioner, counselor, authority and more.

The government official are those from important figure in the government body such as the Prime Minister, Deputy Minister, Minister of Prime Minister's Department, Secretary Politic of Prime Minister and Minister from Ministry of Education Malaysia.

Non-government organization is another actors revealed from the coverage of homosexuality in both newspapers. Few of the example from the non-government organization as showed from both Malay language newspapers are including *Pertubuhan Peribumi Perkasa Malaysia* (Perkasa), *Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia* (ISMA), *Jaringan Melayu Malaysia* (JMM), *Parti Kesejahteraan Insan Tanah Air* (KITA) and *Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung* (GPMS). It is revealed that actors from the non-government organization that was selected by the newspapers to speak on issue of homosexuality are mostly establishment that were founded exclusively only for Malay and Muslim people. However, there are still few non-organizations from non-Malay and non-Muslim affiliation such as Chinese Society Organization of Ampang that was selected by the newspapers to comment on the issue as well.

Religion organization is also another actor involved to speak on homosexuality issue. The religion organization can be divided into two which is from the Muslim and non-Muslim institution. The example of the organization from Muslim organization is including Department of Islamic Development Malaysia or *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (JAKIM), Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia or *Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia* (IKIM), Wilayah Persekutuan Islamic Council or *Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan* (JAWI) and Selangor Islamic Council or *Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor* (JAIS). Meanwhile, the example of the institution from the non-Muslim organization used in these Malay language newspapers to comment on homosexuality is from Buddha Association of Petaling Jaya, Malaysian Association of Hindu Sangam and National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF).

Another actors emerged from both newspapers that speak on homosexuality is academicians. The example of the academicians are from the former vice chancellor of public university, professors and lecturers that come from a varied field of studies including from the Islamic studies, law and medical education's with most of them were chosen among academicians in public university in Malaysia. Politicians were another actors appeared in UM and BH newspapers that voice out their comments on homosexuality issues. This is including the politician from the pro government agency

such as the Deputy President of the United Malay National Organization or *Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu* that better known as UMNO, Deputy President of Malaysian Chinese Association or MCA, Women's Youth of UMNO, Information Chief of UMNO and Member of Parliament. Nevertheless, the politician from the opposition party was also appeared to voice out issues on homosexuality if not too many including the Spiritual Leader or *Mursyidal Am* from Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party or *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS) and Dewan Pemuda's Chief of PAS. Lastly, for the others actors, the list is including former politician, authority, counsellor, legal practitioner, psychiatrist and activist.

Throughout the examination of the actors appeared in the coverage on homosexuality, the researcher quantified the amount for the period of fifteen years from the year 1998 to the year 2012 for both UM and BH newspapers. As a result, there were 271 numbers identified in UM newspapers throughout the period and 166 numbers were found in BH newspapers and that make the total of actors appeared in the newspapers for homosexuality issues is 419 numbers. The amount was accumulated ranging from the six actors mentioned earlier which is from the government official, religion organization, non-government organization, academician, politician and others voices.

Figure 5.13 below illustrated the overall number of the actors appeared in both UM and BH newspapers throughout fifteen years period of study and involved on the subject of homosexuality.

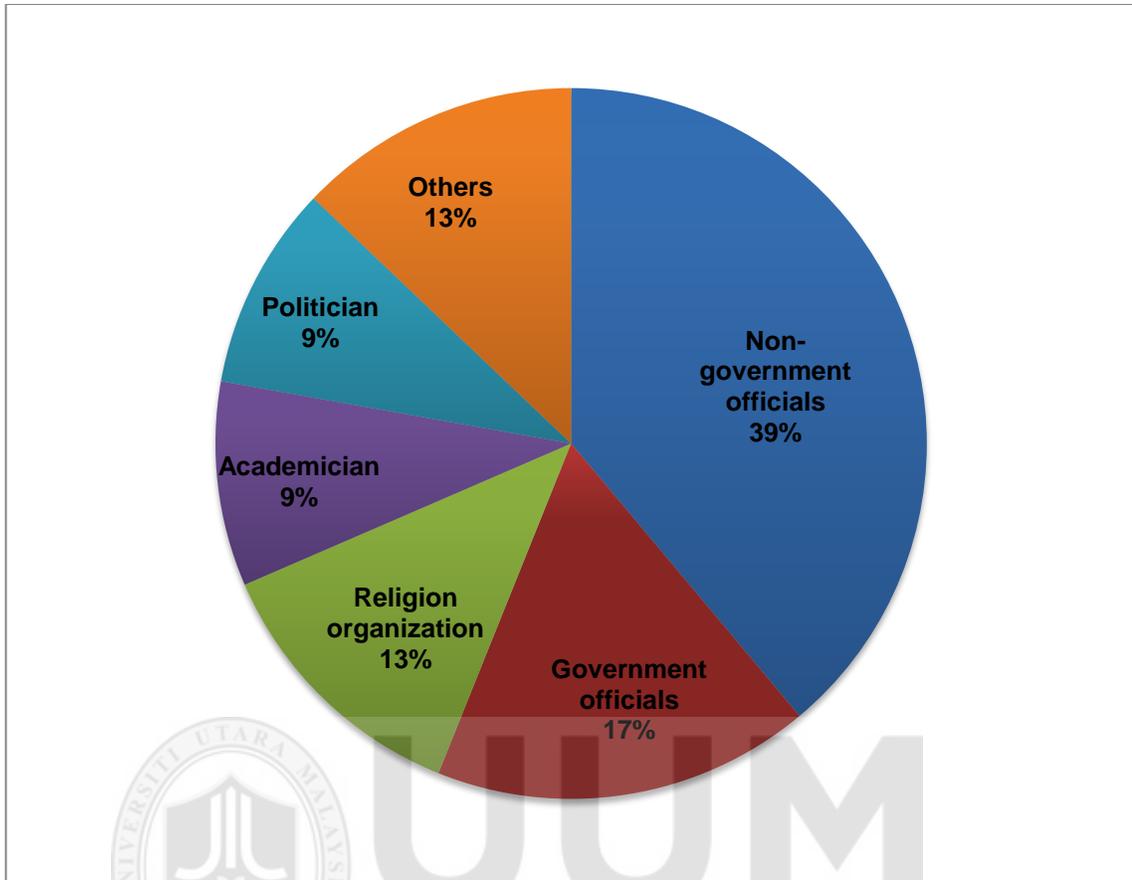


Figure 5.13. The actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 419$)

In sum, based from the Figure 5.13 above, it is showed that the highest number of the actors appeared in both Malay language newspapers is non-government officials that revealed 163 numbers (38 percent) while the least number appeared in the newspapers are from academician and politician that provides 39 numbers (nine percent) respectively. Meanwhile, the second highest of the actors appeared by the newspapers is government official that offered 72 numbers (17 percent). The rest of the actors are from the others category which provides 54 numbers (13 percent) and actors from religion organization provide 52 articles (13 percent). The discussion on the actors used by the newspaper to speak on issues related with homosexuality is also quantified according to the two newspapers throughout the fifteen year period of studies.

The following Figure 5.14 below illustrates the amount of the numbers accumulated for six dominant actors appeared on homosexuality coverage from two Malay language newspapers of UM and BH.

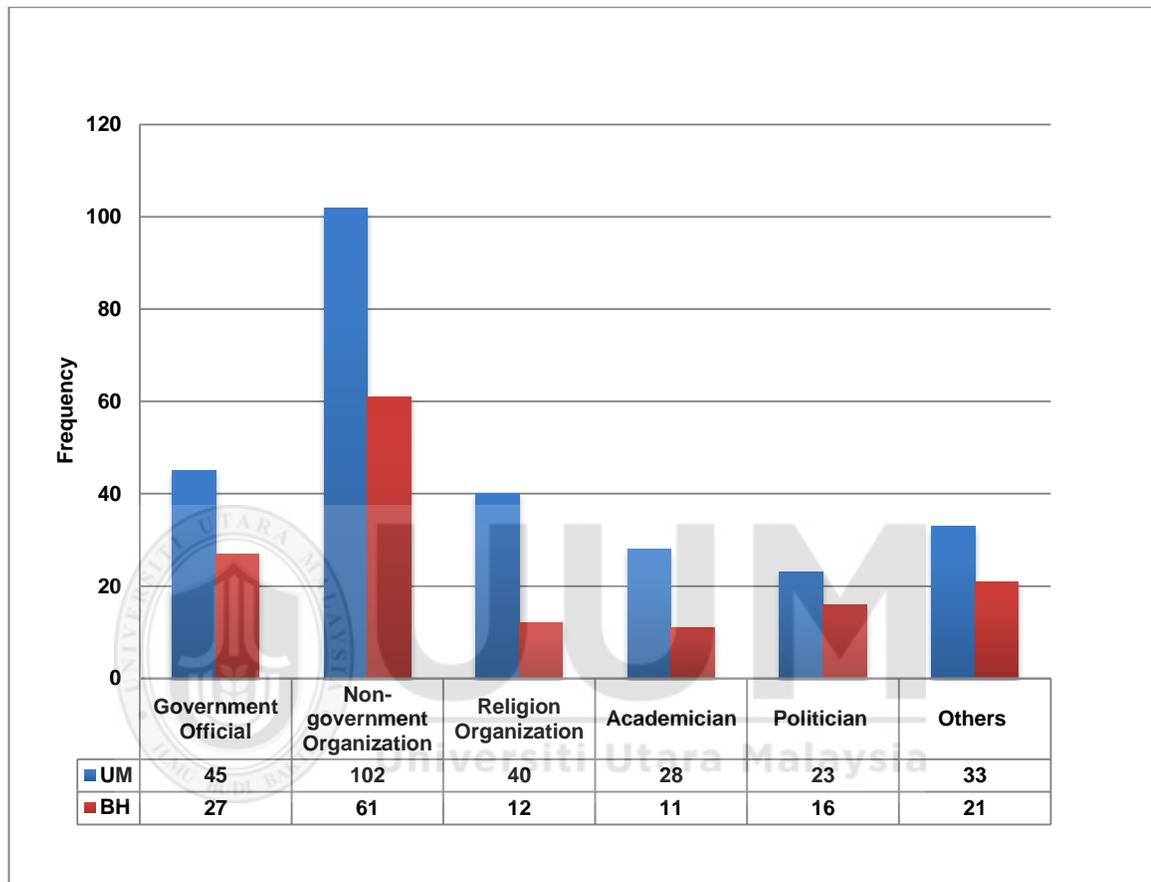


Figure 5.14. The actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 419$)

From the Figure 5.14 above, it was clear that the actors from the non-government organization give a predominant number which mostly appeared on the homosexuality issues to be compared with the rest of both UM and BH newspapers with 163 numbers (39 percent). It is showed that the actors from the non-government organization from UM newspapers provides a total of 102 numbers (24 percent) and BH newspapers showed a total of 61 number (14 percent). Meanwhile, the second highest actors appeared in both Malay language newspapers to speak on homosexuality is from the government official which provide 72 numbers (17 percent) which is half of the amount

from non-government officials. For this type of actors, UM newspapers provides the total number of 45 numbers (11 percent) meanwhile BH newspapers gives 27 number (6.5 percent).

The actors from the category of others place third of major contributors and presented 54 numbers (12.8 percent) from both Malay language newspapers. From this number, BH newspapers showed 21 numbers (5 percent) and UM newspapers provide 28 numbers (6.7 percent). The actors from the religion organization that associated with any religious bond and activities in Malaysia were identified to be the fourth highest from UM and BH newspapers to speak on homosexuality. Both Malay language newspapers gives 52 of numbers (12 percent) with UM newspapers indicates 40 numbers of actors from religion organization (9.5 percent) among non-government organization and BH newspapers showed 12 number of the voices (2.9 percent) for the same category.

Meanwhile, actors from both academician and politician provide an unalike position in UM and BH newspapers respectively. In UM newspapers, academician placed fifth with 28 numbers (6.7 percent) while politician indicate 23 numbers (5.5 percent) which are the least number of all six types of the actors. However, for BH newspapers, the actors from the category of politician place the fifth position with 16 numbers (3.8 percent) while academician reveals only 11 numbers (2.6 percent).

The preceding paragraphs identified the types of actors with the numbers accumulated from the two Malay language newspapers elaborated individually throughout the fifteen year period of years. In addition to that, the researcher also quantified the distribution numbers of the actors from the overall six types of actors according to the year for the period of fifteen years to uncover the amount of the actors used by both UM and BH newspapers individually.

The following Figure 5.15 below illustrates the findings of the numbers of the actors appeared for homosexuality stories from UM newspapers started from the year 1998 to year 2012.

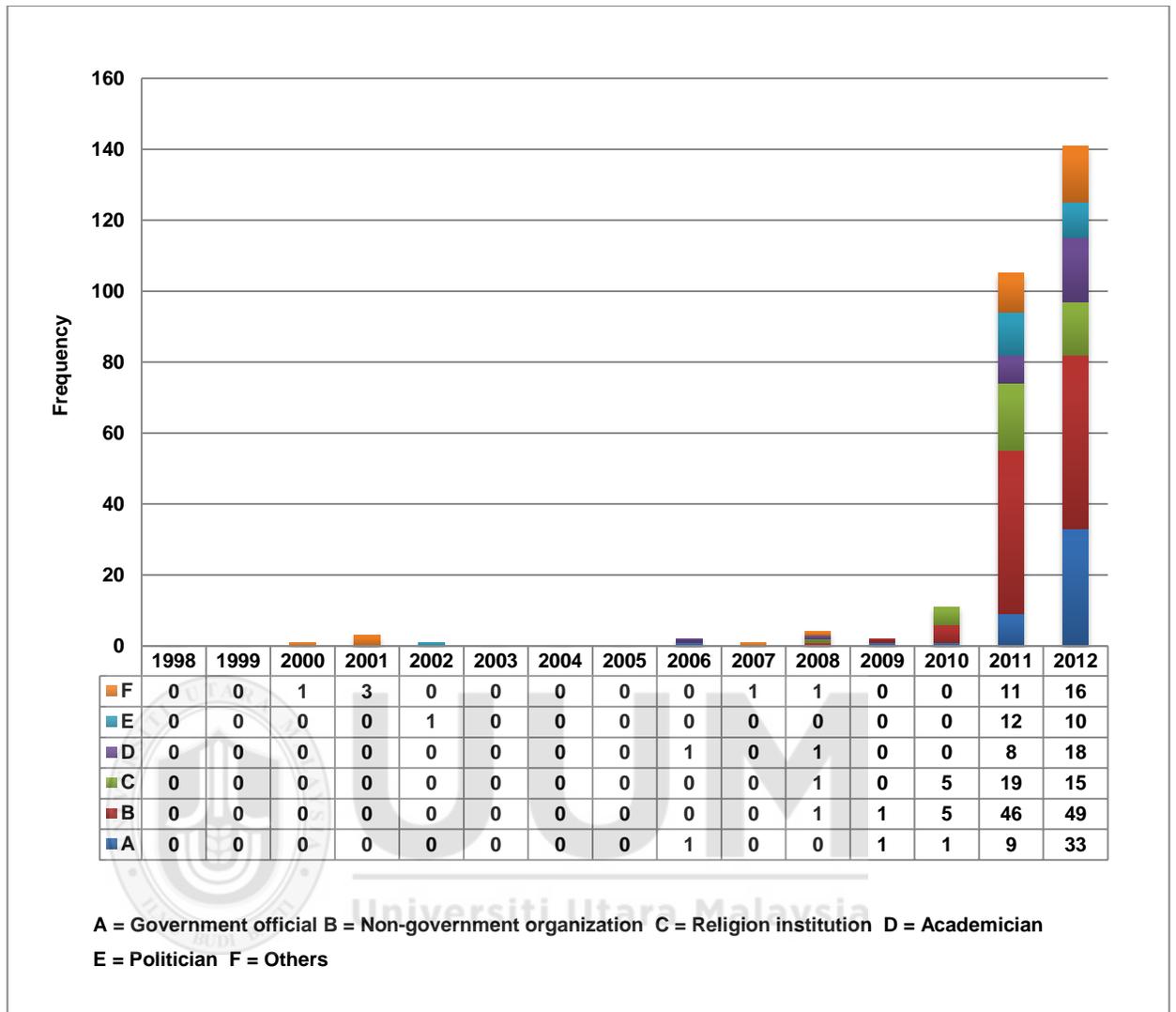


Figure 5.15. The actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in *Utusan Malaysia* from year 1998 to 2012 ($n = 419$)

Overall, UM newspapers revealed that the year 2012 provides the highest number of the actors from all six types of actors identified to be compared with the rest of the years based from the Figure 5.15 above. The total amount of the actors of the year 2012 is 141 numbers (33.65 percent). Meanwhile, the least amount of actors identified is the year 1998, 1999, 2003, 2004 and year 2005 which provides zero numbers of actors while the year 2000, 2002 and 2007 indicate only one actor (0.24 percent) respectively.

From the Figure 5.15 too, it is discovered that there are years showed the number of the actors with the dramatic increased of numbers started to the year 2010 to year 2012. For instance, government official provides the dramatic increased of the number from only one (0.24 percent) in the year 2010 to nine (2.15 percent) in the year 2011 that later upsurge to 33 (7.88 percent) in the year 2012. The similar situation was also occurred for academicians when it showed zero voice in the year 2010, to eight (1.91 percent) for the year 2011 and rose to 18 numbers (4.30 percent) of actors for the year 2012.

From the above Figure 5.15 too, it is highlighted that actors from non-government officials provides the highest amount of number with 49 numbers (11.70 percent) while the actors from the government official ranked second from all six categories of actors with 33 numbers (7.88 percent). It could also be seen that academicians provides 18 numbers (4.3 percent), hence place as the third highest for the year 2012 from only eight numbers (1.90 percent) in the year 2011. Meanwhile, religion organization showed the great number in the year 2011 with 19 numbers (4.53 percent) that later decrease to 15 numbers (3.58 percent) in the year 2012.

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that the non-government organization and government official was given major emphasis by UM newspapers to speak on issues related with homosexuality. The following Figure 5.16 illustrates the actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in BH newspapers for the period of fifteen years.

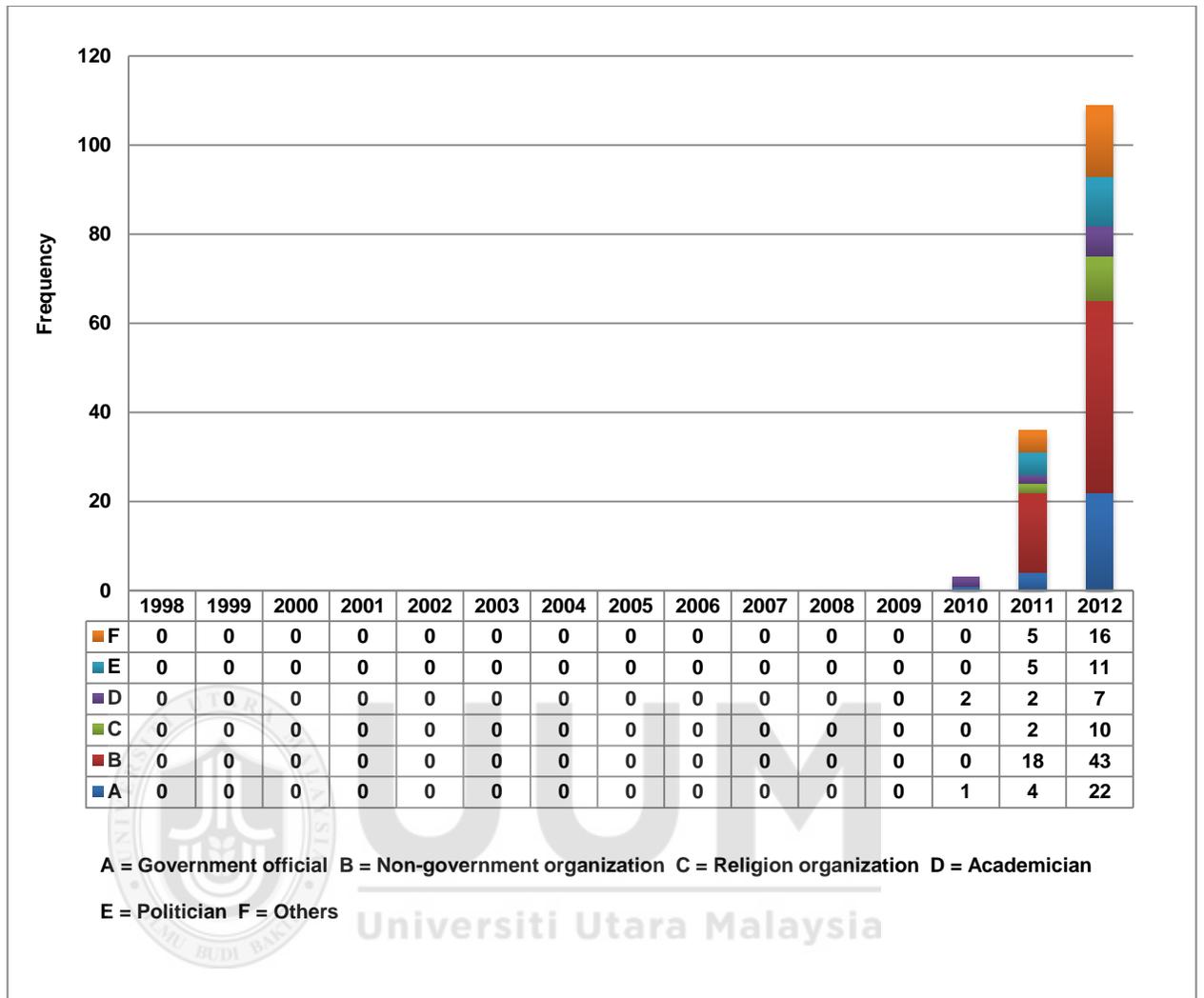


Figure 5.16. The actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in *Berita Harian* from 1998 to 2012 ($n = 148$)

Overall, from the Figure 5.16 above, it is showed that the year 2012 demonstrate the highest number for all six types actors used on homosexuality issues for BH newspapers. Throughout the fifteen years period, the total actors used by BH newspapers to speak on issues related with homosexuality is 148 of numbers. The number of actors gathered for the year 2012 is 109 of numbers (73.65 percent). Meanwhile, the year 2011 is the second highest number of actors accumulated with 36 numbers (24.32 percent). It is also tells from the Figure 5.16 that non-government organization shared the highest number for the year 2012 with 43 numbers (29.05 percent) while the government official is the second highest with 22 numbers (14.86 percent) on the same year.

The text distributions of the actors used on homosexuality over the period of fifteen years studies also suggested that BH newspapers showed less amount of volumes to be compared with UM newspapers. There are zero actor involved from the year 1998 until year 2009. Later, the number of actors begun to upsurge with intense growth from the year 2011 to year 2012. For example, the number from government official rise from only four (2.7 percent) in year 2011 to 22 (14.86 percent) in year 2012 which is almost three times higher. Similar with the non-government organization which reveals 18 numbers (12.16 percent) in the year 2011 to 43 numbers (29.05 percent) in the year 2012.

Another actors that show the similar situation with the dramatic increase of volumes from year 2011 to year 2012 were include religion organization from two (1.35 percent) in year 2011 to ten (6.76 percent) in year 2012, academician from two (1.35 percent) in year 2011 to seven (4.73 percent) in year 2012, politician from five (3.41 percent) in year 2011 to eleven (7.43 percent) in year 2012 and also from others voice from five (3.38 percent) in year 2011 to 16 (10.92 percent) in year 2012.

This section of 5.2.6 discussed the actors appeared to speak and comment on issues and stories surrounding homosexuality. From the preceding discussion, it is clear that the UM newspapers provides higher number of actors to be compared with BH newspapers. It is also demonstrated that the year 2012 indicates higher volumes for all six categories of actors throughout the fifteen year period from the year 1998 to year 2012 and the non-government organization reveals the higher number among the rest of especially in the year 2012. Another fascinating findings also suggested that the number of actors appeared to be upsurge dramatically from the year 2010 to year 2012.

The whole section of 5.2 discussed on the trends of the homosexuality coverage in Malaysian newspapers particularly from the standpoint of government oriented and controlled newspapers of UM and BH newspapers. The significance to analyse the trends on the coverage of homosexuality is to get the wider understanding on how homosexuality issue are being distributed in the newspapers. The analysis of trends is

also significance, which offers an outset to study the more in-depth of the news coverage and it's meaning as they emerged in the news narratives as spoken in the newspaper. The findings of the trends of the coverage reveal the overall news text tabulation throughout the fifteen years period of study from the year 1998 to year 2012. The similar section also discussed the findings on the placement of the news section that cover on homosexuality, the findings of the topics and content discussed on issues related with homosexuality and lastly the actors appeared in the coverage on issues surrounding homosexuality that were used by both UM and BH newspapers. The following section will discuss on the findings of the media construction of the homosexuality coverage in the Malay language newspapers.

5.3 Findings on the Media Construction of Homosexuality

This section will discuss on the findings of the media construction on homosexuality coverage in the newspapers. By employing qualitative content analysis, the finding is discussed to answer research question two (RQ 2): How coverage of homosexuality was thematically presented in the Malay language newspapers with reference emerged social constructionism? Two mainstream Malay language newspapers which is *Utusan Malaysia* (UM) and *Berita Harian* (BH) were selected as a sample of studies. The reason of choosing these newspapers is to examine how coverage on homosexuality was being constructed from the perspective of government oriented and controlled newspaper in Malaysia. The findings are significance as to analyse the characteristics and cultural meaning of the coverage on homosexuality and its dispute and debate as they emerged in the news narratives as spoken in the local newspapers. A total of 463 selected coverage were chosen to be examined with the duration of the publication is fifteen years period. It is the researcher argument that the newspapers has changed over time in its debate on issues surrounding homosexuality.

This section was divided into several subsections that can aid to navigate reader's reading due to the chapter's complexity and size with few sub-sections. The findings of this qualitative content analysis will be divide and discussed into four main elements from social constructionism model which is symbolic codes, cognitive customs, cultural

traditions and shared roles and rules with several themes discovered throughout the analysis.

In this section, the findings of the qualitative content analysis will be presented based from the commonly shared themes which construct the coverage on homosexuality from UM and BH newspaper. It was mentioned in the Chapter 4 on four significant topics that contribute to the thematic news on homosexuality coverage during the process of deconstruction of all selected coverage from the newspapers. The four main topics: (i) traits of homosexuality, (ii) causes of homosexuality behavior, (iii) effects on homosexual sex act and (iv) responses towards homosexuality. Based from these four main topics, it provides evidence for the discursive themes that discuss their significance to this research as a whole. These four main topics were identified from the meaning units that were extracted from all words and phrases used to describe homosexuality. Then, all the subtopics were identified and listed within the four main topics based from the classification of the discourse on homosexuality that will construct the main themes of the overall coverage. Finally, as the analysis progressed and all elements are identified, all the subtopics were grouped and classified the coverage to formulate the main themes.

The main themes presented were generated around the subtopics which were identified from the content matrix that revealed the various subject positions. Looking across both Malay language newspapers, the researcher revealed several main themes that works as main findings revolved on homosexuality issues. The main themes are: (i) social and moral (ii) religions (iii) politics (iv) Western agenda (v) health and psychology (vi) human rights and social movement (vii) legal

Next, these themes were discussed within four main elements of social constructionism theory. The four main elements consist of cultural traditions which derived from the shared beliefs, attitudes and values that also include religions. The second element is language or symbolic code, while the third element is the set of roles and rules that can

guide people action. Finally the cognitive customs as the ways people been taught to process information.

For the analysis of the findings, the researcher offer a sample of direct quotes from the news texts that exemplify the ways in which they describe, construct, produce and/or reproduce their subject position. However, it should be noted that all the original excerpt and quotations were in Malay language hence all quotations were translated into English language and undergo the process of paraphrasing. As a result, the language may not have flawless correspondences where every word and phrase was comparable with a foreign equivalent though of course some cases come closer than others (Lee, C., 2014). Moreover, because texts can serve multiple functions, sometimes the researcher used the same quotation in multiple sections, speaking to the different meanings that it constructs.

The following section will discuss the findings within the elements of social constructionism theory: (i) cultural traditions, (ii) shared roles and rules, (iii) cognitive customs and (iv) symbolic codes, with each of the section were include several significant subsections.

5.3.1 Cultural Traditions

Cultural traditions are one of the main elements of social constructionism. It can be referred to the cumulative deposit of beliefs, value, attitudes, religion and material objects or possessions acquired by a group of people within the course of generations. For this research, the findings from the coverage under the element of cultural traditions emerged from discussion around the themes of social and moral and religions. The findings are discussed in two central discussions: (i) challenge of societal norms and (ii) challenge to religious tenet.

5.3.1.1 Challenge of Societal Norms

The examination on homosexuality coverage was intertwined between discussion on family institution and social morality. To get a good flow and continuity of the narration, the researcher decided to elaborate the findings into another three subsections which are

(i) against the traditional heterosexual family (ii) homosexuals and the marriage imbroglio and (iii) homosexuality debacle among young children.

Against the Traditional Heterosexual Family

It was expressed in one of the coverage in the UM newspaper on the significance of the family institution and asserted as “benteng terakhir untuk melahirkan keluarga dan insan berintegriti melalui pembinaan keluarga bahagia” (*the ultimate stronghold to parturitate a family and human with integrity through the basis of one happy family*) (10 May 2012, p. 12) to emphasize on how importance of the family institution is. Hence, when deliberating on issue surrounding homosexuality from both UM and BH newspapers, it was undoubtedly observed that both newspapers were often and extensively disparaged same-sex relation and gay sex behavior with the accentuated to the harmful influence on the institution of family.

As a matter of fact, most of the coverage from UM and BH newspapers largely focus on the negative consequences of homosexual sex behavior to the family institution. For instances, UM newspaper stated that homosexuality can ruined the institution of family. It was asserted that “bukan sahaja terpesong dari sistem kemanusiaan sejagat malah merosakkan sistem sosial dan institusi kekeluargaan” (*not only deflected from the system of universal humanity but even damage the social system and the family institution*) (28 April 2012, p. 12) and added that “jika dilihat daripada perspektif yang lebih besar, budaya ini akan merosakkan sistem sosial dan sistem keluarga” (*if it is viewed from the larger perspective, this culture will corrupt the social and the family system*) (10 May 2012, p. 12).

Homosexuality was also perceived as a threat to the basic value family and was believed as among the factors of the divorce rate in the country as asserted in the UM newspaper that, “LGBT juga dilihat sebagai ancaman kepada asas kekeluargaan, apakah peningkatan kes perceraian di Malaysia turut disumbang oleh budaya songsang ini?” (*LGBT was also seen as a threat to the institution of family, whether the increase rate of divorce in Malaysia was contributed by this deviant sex culture*) (11 March 2012, p. 7).

In addition, it is stated in the coverage that homosexuality could be the factors to disrupt the reputation of the country as an Islamic state “katanya, masalah tersebut bukan sahaja boleh merosakkan institusi sosial dan keluarga, malah lebih teruk mencalarkan imej Malaysia sebagai sebuah negara Islam” (*the dispute is not only damaging the social institution and family, but even embarrassed the image of Malaysia as an Islamic country*) (8 December 2010, p. 4) and further added that homosexuality may invite Allah’s wrath “melihat kebangkitan LGBT bukan sahaja mengancam asas kekeluargaan malah mengundang kemurkaan Allah” (*by looking at the risen of LGBT, it is not only threaten the principle of family but also inviting the wrath of Allah*) (11 March 2012, p. 7).

Moreover, on top of the assertion of Islam as the official religion in the country, the coverage also bring up on the importances of Constitution of Malaysia that need to be observed and respected by declining on the homosexual activities with a remarked “adalah satu cubaan untuk memecahkan tembok sistem kekeluargaan dan kemasyarakatan negara yang dilindungi Perlembagaan”) (*an attempt to destroy the family system and social nation that was protected from the constitution*) (15 August 2011, p. 7) and insisted the government to take critical action on the same-sex relation and gay activities.

The statement was also pointed by the BH newspaper and tells that all gay related activities in the country must be prohibited unanimously to avoid any damaging repercussion in the institution of family. BH newspapers writes that “usaha golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT) untuk menuntut hak di negara ini perlu diperangi habis-habisan kerana ia boleh mengundang kepada kecelaruan moral dan keruntuhan institusi kekeluargaan” (*the initiative of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transexual (LGBT) to claim right in this country must be fight because it can bring to the moral damage and the corruption of family institution*) (22 April 2012, p. 10).

The disparaging of the family value specifically within the Islamic realm resulted from the homosexual’s activities was profusely stated in the newspaper as the western

influence. It is asserted in the UM newspaper that, “kebebasan dan hak individu yang diperjuangkan oleh golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) adalah senjata Barat untuk meruntuhkan sistem kekeluargaan dan kepercayaan agama” (*The freedom and right to the individual that was championed by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) is a Western’s agent to cripple the system of family and religious belief*) (30 May 2012, p. 6) and provides further remarked that “kalaulah nanti LGBT diterima dalam konteks kehidupan masyarakat kita boleh membayangkan kemusnahan yang akan dihadapi oleh institusi kekeluargaan” (*if the LGBT is been accepted in the context of a society, we can imagine the damaging of the family institution*) (26 March 2012, p. 14).

The Homosexuals and Marriage Imbroglia

In addition to the criticizing on the consequences of homosexuality to the family institution predominantly, both Malay languages newspaper were also demonstrated the reason on what causes of the attraction of the same-sex feelings and relinquish the desired for marriage. In one of the example, UM newspaper describes gay and lesbian people as individual that have issues with self-doubt or low self-esteem towards the opposite gender. It is also presumed that they ever experienced terrible situation growing up around their family. It is demonstrated in the UM newspaper,

"golongan ini mungkin mengalami masalah dengan jantina berlainan. Sebagai contoh mungkin menghadapi kesukaran memikat perempuan atau perempuan pernah menipunya atau pernah menyaksikan banyak kes cerai termasuk yang melibatkan keluarga terdekat sehingga tertanam dalam fikiran yang perempuan itu teruk”.

(these people may have a problem with the opposite sex. For instance, they possibly have a difficulty to approach women or get cheated by them or used to seen many divorce cases involving their immediate family until persuasively feel that women is bad)” (15 March 2012, p. 4).

UM newspaper further added that people can also turn to be homosexual when they had encountered a disturbing experience and stated that "mereka pernah berdepan dengan apa-apa masalah penderaan atau seksual atau di saat mereka memerlukan seseorang, tidak pernah ada perempuan yang hadir kebiasaannya lelaki dan juga sebaliknya” (*they*

ever faced physical or sexual abuse and when they need someone, no women that turn up but men and vice versa) (15 March 2012, p. 4).

Interwoven in these discussions around the baffling emotion among homosexual individual with people from the opposite sex, the newspaper also pointed out the issue of the increase divorce rate which among the reason was resulted from a spouse who committed to sexual misconduct between the same-sex people. In one of the articles from UM newspaper based on its conversation with a certified counselor, it stated that,

“Saya sangat optimis yang peningkatan kes perceraian turut disumbang masalah ini (homoseksual). Umpama dalam kes terbaru yang saya kendalikan, seorang isteri yang masih muda mendakwa dirinya sentiasa diliwat dan hasil siasatan mendapati suaminya seorang biseksual. Mereka kini dalam proses perceraian. Sebelum ini pun banyak kes serupa saya kendalikan”.

(I am very optimist that the rise of the divorce rate was also caused from this (homosexual) problem. For example, in one of the case I attended, one young wife claimed that she was sodomized and upon investigation, her husband is a bisexual man. They are now in a process of split up their marriage. I handle a lots of similar cases like this before) (11 March 2012, p. 7).

In one of the coverage, UM newspapers bring up the number of the divorce rate from the spouse who were engaged with the same sexual relation and writes that “turut mendapati sebanyak 21 kes perceraian di Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur dan Selangor tahun lalu dikesan berpunca daripada salah seorang pasangan suami isteri mengamalkan seks sejenis” (*it was found out that 21 divorce cases in Federal Territory Kuala Lumpur and Selangor last year was causes from either husband or wife that committed to same-sex act practiced*) (11 March 2012, p. 3) and further stated that “jumlah itu menunjukkan gejala lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) di negara ini berada dalam keadaan yang semakin parah dan membimbangkan” (*the number shows that the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) in this state were put in the critical position that is getting severe and disquieting*) (1 April 2012, p. 5). Hence, it can be shown that homosexual is utterly deplorably that work as the agents of family institution’s destruction.

Homosexuality Debacle among School Children

Besides of the huge exasperation on homosexuality to the institution of family and marriage, the newspaper were also bring out the polemics of homosexual and gay sex activities among teen and school children. It was proclaimed in the newspapers that writes “sebanyak 21 laporan polis telah dibuat sepanjang tahun lalu berkenaan pembabitian pelajar sekolah rendah dan menengah dalam kegiatan seks sejenis” (*there are 21 police reports were made last year regarding on the involvement among primary and secondary school children in the same sex act activity*) (11 March 2012, p. 3) as to point out that the issue had now become the major concern among public.

Moreover, it was frequently highlighted in the newspapers that boarding school is one of the causes among school children to discover same-sex relation or gay sex activities especially from the single-sex boarding school. It was asserted in the newspapers that, “remaja yang bersekolah asrama lebih-lebih lagi yang berasingan jantina lebih terdedah kepada perasaan tersebut kerana secara rutin mereka berhadapan dengan rakan-rakan daripada jantina yang sama” (*teens who were in the boarding school especially in the separate gender are more expose to the feeling because of the routine with their same sex friends*) (5 September 2012). In other word, boarding school was seen as hives of latent homosexuality, places where boys, frustrated only in the company of others boys inevitably turn to one another to experiment sexually, gay or not. The dispute of boarding schools and gay infatuation among school children was also addressed in the newspapers which were cited from an interviewed with the counselor. It was reported from UM newspaper, according to Hushim a certified counselor,

“berdasarkan kes yang saya kendalikan memang benar sekolah berasrama merupakan permulaan kepada penularan budaya songsang tetapi sekolah pondok dan agama juga tidak terkecuali. Mungkin ramai yang marah dengan kenyataan saya tetapi melihat kepada masalah LGBT pada hari ini, kita perlu jujur”.

(based from the case I handle, it is true that boarding school is the beginning of the spreading of same sex act but ‘pondok’ and religious school is not an exemption too. Maybe, a lot of people is furious with my statement but looking at the LGBT problem today, we have to be honest) (11 March 2012, p. 7).

Subsequently, the Malaysian Ministry of Education is called into action to oversee all boarding schools around the country as UM newspaper stated that “Kementerian Pelajaran diminta memantau sekolah-sekolah berasrama penuh yang dilihat berpotensi melahirkan golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT)” (*Ministry of Education was asked to monitor all boarding schools which have potentials to produce lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people*) (5 September 2012, p. 6). Accordingly, it is further described by Prof. Dr. Azizan Baharuddin, a deputy director of Institute of Islamic Understanding (IKIM) and said that homosexual feeling is a temporary transition and it is normal among teenagers, “homoseksualiti sementara yang wujud dalam kalangan remaja tidak kira lelaki atau perempuan merupakan fenomena biasa” (*a transient homosexuality that existed among teenagers; male and female is a normal phenomenal*) (5 September 2012, p. 6).

Nevertheless, the newspaper inserted various approach to overcome gay sex activities among school children. In one of the coverage, UM newspaper highlighted on the Ministry of Education and their commitment to combat homosexual sex activities among school children and asserted that “Kementerian Pelajaran sentiasa komited untuk memastikan gejala lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) tidak menular dalam kalangan pelajar sekolah” (*Ministry of Education always committed to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) do not spread among school children*) (21 September 2012, p. 29). There were several suggestions that mostly come from the government especially the Malaysian Ministry of Education which introduces the new syllabus for the subject of health education. In one of the syllabus, it contains the discussion on homosexuality with the intention to create awareness among the school children. It was asserted in the BH newspaper that,

“Kementerian Pelajaran berharap mata pelajaran Pendidikan Kesihatan Reproduksi dan Sosial (PKRS) yang bakal diperkenalkan kepada murid sekolah tidak lama lagi berupaya mengurangkan masalah kepincangan sosial di kalangan anak muda sekarang. Silibus yang sesuai dimasukkan dalam mata pelajaran berkenaan juga dikatakan boleh menyedarkan anak muda mengenai bahaya ancaman kegiatan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LBGT) di negara ini”.

(The Ministry of Education hope that the Reproductive Health Education and Social that will be introduce to school people soon can lessen the problem of social breakdown among youngster now. The suitable syllabus is included in the subject can open up the youngster on the threat of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activities in the country) (6 July 2012, page 4).

In one of the interview with a counselor as cited in the newspapers, the single-sex schools which were believes as places that promote homosexual sex behavior should not to be asked to shut down. Instead, most schools should create and organize programs that highlighted the awareness on homosexuality behavior among school children as stated in the newspaper that “tidak perlu hapuskan, cuma kita perlu perbanyakkan program berbentuk kesedaran kepada pelajar tentang bahaya LGBT” (*no need to dismiss, but we must have diverse awareness programs for students on the dangerous of LGBT*) (11 March 2012, p. 7).

Another approach to overcome the gay issues among school children that was also proposed by the Ministry of Education is to create program that involved single-sex schools between both genders of male and female students. The program was called as ‘interaction of education’ as to cultivate the two-way communication between opposite sex students as another method to hinder same-sex infatuation among single-sex school children. It is asserted in the newspapers that,

“Kementerian Pelajaran diminta mewujudkan program interaksi pendidikan yang membolehkan para pelajar di sekolah sejenis bertemu dan beramah mesra dengan pelajar jantina berbeza bagi menghindari daripada terjadinya budaya seks songsang”. Presiden Persatuan Ibu Bapa dan Guru Nasional (PIBGN), Prof. Madya Datuk Dr. Mohamad Ali Hasan berkata, program interaksi itu dapat mengimbangi proses pergaulan mereka yang sebelum ini terhad kepada jantina sejenis sahaja”.

(The Ministry of Education was asked to create the interaction education program that enables students in single-sex school to meet and be friend with opposite sex student to avoid any homosexual sex relation to be happen. This interaction program can balance up the interaction process that only limited to the same-sex student before that) (5 Jan 2011, p. 25).

5.3.1.2 Challenge to Religious Tenets

Within the element of cultural traditions too, the coverage of homosexuality was also revolved around religion specifically the religion of Islam and the discussion on other religions in general. The discussion was divided to four subsections: (i) treatment of homosexuals in Islam (ii) the explicitness on homosexuality from the Quran (iii) homosexuality and the people of Lots and (iv) other religions on homosexuality.

Treatment of Homosexuals in Islam

The narration of homosexuality that central on religion specifically the religion of Islam and the discussion on other religions in general, not surprisingly, is one of the major themes being discussed by most coverage published in both UM and BH newspapers. In the broad-spectrum, both Malay language newspapers extensively provide opinion on homosexuality from the perspective of religion. Most of the coverage asserted that religion of Islam is strictly against same sex relation and homosexual behavior even during the setting of contemporary and modern day society. In one of the coverage from UM newspaper, it is stated that, "sama ada keadaan yang muncul pada hari ini relevan atau tidak, perbuatan homoseksual tetap haram dalam Islam" (*either this is still relevant or not, homosexuality is still prohibited in Islam*) (16 January 2012, p. 5).

The subject of homosexuality were heavily discussed around Islamic perspectives and frequently provides the declination remark on the homosexuals sex act that give similar connotation to the committing of adultery practice. It is asserted by UM newspaper that, "perbuatan homoseksual sama erti dengan zina yang jelas merupakan perbuatan fasik dan haram di sisi Islam" (*homosexual sex act is equal to adultery that obviously an impious behavior and forbidden in Islamic teaching*) (26 February 2001, p. 5).

Despite of the long period of fifteen-years of coverage studied surrounding issues on homosexuality that central on Islam and other religions, it is found that most of the coverage found were widely discussed the subject only after the year 2010 to the year 2012 as to be compared with years before that. More importantly, it should be highlighted that most of the coverage offered undesirable expressions towards gay

community. For example, UM newspaper stated that, “dari sudut Islam, setiap perbuatan yang berlawanan jantina (homoseksual) dari segi fitrahnya adalah haram dan tidak dibenarkan sama sekali oleh Islam. Tindakan ini seumpama mengubah fitrah kejadian manusia yang dijadikan Allah yang telah sempurna sifatnya” (*in the Islamic view, every act to the opposite gender (homosexual) is forbidden and prohibited in Islam. Such behavior was presumed as changing the human nature created by Allah that was perfectly crafted*) (2 May 2010, p. 8).

The discussion on homosexuality was also heavily highlighted from the point of Islamic perspective in the BH newspaper. In one of the coverage, it is asserted that Islam absolutely does not acknowledge homosexuality despite of any scientific evidence or logical thinking because Allah created every individual is completely perfects. BH newspaper writes that, “apa juga hujah atau fakta dari segi sains dan naluri yang diberikan golongan LGBT, agama Islam tidak mengiktiraf mereka kerana manusia dijadikan Allah mempunyai fitrah semula jadi yang normal. Tiada kecacatan dalam kejadian manusia” (*any arguments or facts of science and instinct from the LGBT people, Islam does not recognize them because Allah created human beings that have normal natural innate. There is no flaw in human creation*) (21 December 2012, p. 34).

Homosexual sex act was also depicted in the newspapers as a practice that would deny the union between men and women, which find their complementarity in any marriage. Homosexuality also denied the specific primary purpose of marriage, the perpetuation of the human race and the raising of children as asserted in the BH newspaper that,

“Allah SWT menciptakan lelaki dan perempuan, yang cantik serta kacak agar berkahwin dan memenuhi naluri seks. Ini adalah cara paling sesuai untuk meneruskan generasi suci. Justeru, kegiatan tidak sihat seperti LGBT adalah perkara tidak rasional dilakukan”.

(Allah SWT created men and women that is beautiful and handsome to get married and fulfill the sexual instincts. This is the most convenient way to continue the holy generation. Thus, the unhealthy activity like LGBT is the irrational act to be done) (3 July 2012, p. 26).

In addition, it is also repeatedly highlighted in the newspaper that Islam goes beyond merely disapproving of homosexuality and for those who were practicing homosexuals practice will experience the retaliation from Allah during the judgment day. It is indicated in the newspapers that,

“Islam sendiri melaknati perlakuan hubungan sejenis ini dan orang Islam sendiri menganggap pengamalnya sebagai sudah dirasuk syaitan yang berterusan mahu menyesatkan manusia. Bagi orang Islam yang mengamalkan perlakuan songsang ini sedialah menghadapi Allah di Padang Mahsyar nanti”

(Islam itself condemns homosexual behavior and Muslims themselves considered its practitioners as a demon trying to mislead people. For Muslim that practicing the deviant sex act gets ready to face Allah during judgment day later) (10 November 2011, p. 23).

It was further added that "kita bimbang ia akan mengundang bala Allah, jadi ini jelas perbuatan haram dan dilaknat Allah" (*we worried it will invite Allah wrath, it is clearly an illegal act and blaspheme by Allah*) (28 April 2012, p. 28).

The Explicitness on Homosexuality from the Quran

The analysis on issues surrounding homosexuality within the topic on religion was also entwined with the discussion on the subject with the Quran. Muslim regards the Quran as the most important miracle and the essential references of life. The Quran is also a belief system of practical guidance and law. In one of the article in the newspaper, it is writes that,

“Apa saja perbuatan manusia, kita mesti kaji, adakah ia ditegah syarak atau tidak. Itu yang penting, kita tiada pilihan lain. Kalau ia melanggar perintah Allah, umat manusia mesti patuh, kerana ia adalah perintah. Semua itu sudah disebut dalam al-Quran dan wajib kita patuhi. Adakah kita sanggup membuang hukum Allah, sanggup ketepikan hadis semata-mata mahu memenuhi kehendak diri. Itu berdosa besar. Kalau melaksanakan perintah Allah itu dianggap satu penghinaan atau dilakukan oleh manusia secara sengaja dan tanpa paksaan, sedangkan akal fikirannya masih waras, percayalah ia boleh terkeluar daripada agamanya. Boleh menjadi murtad kerana itu adalah hukum”.

(Any act of human behavior, we must learn if it is forbidden by Islamic law or not. That is the most important, we have no choice. If it is violating the commandments of Allah, Muslim must obey because it is the command. All that was mentioned in the Quran and we must obey. Are we willing to deny the law of Allah and set aside 'hadith' simply wanted to pander self. That is huge sin. When

carrying out Allah commands are considered an insult or made by man intentionally and without coercion while his mind is still healthy, believe it can be excluded from his religion. It can be apostate because it is law) (22 January 2012, p. 22).

In furtherance, the Quran becomes the crucial references of the newspapers in narrating issues on homosexuality that intertwined with the topic on religion throughout the analysis of the newspapers. Both newspapers profusely indicate that Quran is very explicit in the condemnation of homosexuality behavior and stated that, “Islam secara jelas menentang kumpulan yang dipanggil gay, lesbian, dan biseksual dan ia dinyatakan dalam nas-nas al-Quran dan Hadis” (*Islam is clearly against the gay, lesbian and bisexual group and it is stated in Quran and Hadith*) (21 August 2011, p. 7).

It was further added that the Islamic law on homosexual behavior remains illegitimate even during the modern-day setting as mentioned in the Quran, “kegiatan homoseksual tetap haram dan hukum tersebut tidak akan berubah dalam apa jua keadaan seperti mana ketetapan Allah dalam al-Quran” (*The homosexuals activity remain illegal and the law will not change under any circumstances as the ordinance of God in the Quran*) (16 January 2012, p. 5).

The narration on homosexuality in the newspapers by using Quran as references is frequently highlighted specifically on the negative consequences to the society and asserted that “budaya songsang (homosexual) itu haram dan tidak dibenarkan kerana ia memberi kesan yang amat buruk kepada manusia berdasarkan al-Quran dan Sunnah” (*that deviant sex act (homosexual) is illicit and illegitimate because it gives bad consequences to people based from the Quran and Sunnah*) (5 November 2011, p. 7).

In one of the coverage in BH newspaper, it is asserted that homosexuality is harmful and will wreck the social institution of family by referring to the Quran, “ulama bersetuju berdasarkan al-Quran dan hadis, wujud larangan keras terhadap perbuatan homoseksual dan lesbian kerana kedua-dua tindakan itu pemusnah institusi kekeluargaan terutama ikatan pernikahan yang suci. (*‘ulama’ agreed based on the Quran and Hadith, there is significant prohibition to the homosexual and lesbian behavior because both behavior is*

the destruction of institutions especially the legitimate wedlock) (15 June 2012, p. 29). It was also added that the interrelated decree between homosexuality and the central of marriage in Islam as mentioned in the Quran,

“adalah jelas bahawa isu LGBT bagi umat Islam adalah isu akidah yang serius kerana selain daripada disebutkan berulang kali di dalam al-Quran mengenai pengharamannya, hukum hakam perkahwinan, nasab dan faraid adalah berkait rapat dengan status mengelirukan”.

(it is clear that LGBT issues for Muslim people is a main concern of faith because apart of being mentioned repeatedly in the Quran about its ban, the tenets of marriage, lineage and ‘faraid’ is closely related to the confusing status) (12 October 2012, p. 32).

The references of the Quran as written in the newspapers to describe the interdiction of homosexuality were also interwoven with the depiction of Allah’s wrath. By referring to the history of the mankind in the past as mentioned in the Quran, one of the articles in the BH newspaper asserted that,

“Terdapat banyak kisah di dalam al-Quran yang menjelaskan balasan menimpa umat terdahulu akibat maksiat dan dosa yang mereka lakukan walaupun sudah sampai peringatan kepada mereka supaya bertaubat dan kembali ke pangkal jalan. Dalam al-Quran dijelaskan banjir besar menimpa umat Nabi Nuh, selain balasan dahsyat dikenakan terhadap kaum Nabi Lut kerana mengamalkan seks songsang sesama lelaki iaitu liwat atau homoseksual ialah perbuatan dilaknat Allah”.

(There are many stories in the Quran that explain the retribution to people because of the vice and sin they have committed even they were reminded so they can repent and back to square. In the Quran, it is explained about the big flood on Noah people beside the terrible disaster to Lot people because of practicing the deviant sex among men that is sodomy and homosexual which is cursed by Allah) (8 November 2012, p. 26).

Homosexuality and the People of Lots

In a similar discussion of homosexuality from the perspective of religion, both UM and BH newspaper were extensively referred homosexuals’ people as Lot’s people in referring to the prophet Lot (pbuh), who preached against homosexuality in the cities of Sodom and Gomorra that were subsequently destroyed and demolished. It is believed

that the obliteration of both Sodom and Gomorra city were caused by the same sex practiced among Lot's people.

The portrayal of homosexuals' sex act from both Malay newspapers and the elaboration on the similitude with Lot's people were eloquently narrated in UM newspaper with the coverage quoted as followed, "Kaum Nabi Luth adalah kaum yang sering melakukan maksiat iaitu homoseksual. Kaum lelaki cenderung kepada kaumnya sendiri. Ini bermakna, mereka berasmara dengan kaum sejenis lantas mengadakan hubungan seks sejenis" (*Lot's people is known as people who practicing homosexual. Men are attracted to the same gender. This is means they makes love to the same gender and had same-sex intercourse*) (9 July 2004, p. 6).

As a matter of fact, the portrayal on homosexuals people are still being constantly reminded with Lot's people as UM newspaper is intensely highlighting this connotation to describe homosexuality. One of the coverage from UM newspaper writes the following,

"Isu lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) melampaui faktor fitrah dan syarak. Kisah kaum Nabi Luth a.s. adalah bukti nyata yang dikisahkan dalam al-Quran untuk dijadikan pedoman manusia apabila aksi melampau yang tidak fitrah sifatnya menyebabkan musibah Allah terjadi".

(The issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) is beyond our norm and sharia. Lots people stories is the ultimate evidence as stated in the Quran to guide people when unnatural extreme behavior cause unholy mess from Allah) (3 May 2012, p. 12).

Simultaneously, the exemplification on homosexuality with Lot's people was always depicted along with verses quoted from the Quran. For instances, UM newspaper provides an explanation on homosexuality which start with Qur'an verse,

"Sebagaimana firman Allah dalam surah Al-Anbia' ayat 74: "Dan kepada Luth, Kami telah berikan hikmah dan ilmu, dan telah Kami selamatkan dia dari (azab yang menimpa penduduk) kota yang mengerjakan perbuatan keji (homoseksual). Sesungguhnya mereka adalah kaum yang jahat lagi fasik". Kisah Nabi Luth jelas menunjukkan bala yang Allah turunkan kepada kaum yang mengamalkan homoseksual semasa di dunia sementara di akhirat pasti neraka sebagai balasannya".

(As stated from Allah, in surah Al-Anbia' 74: And (remember) Lout (Lot), We gave him Hukman (right judgment of the affairs and Prophet hood) and (religious) knowledge, and We saved him from the town (folk) who practiced Al-Khaba'ith (evil, wicked and filthy deeds, etc.). Verily, they were a people given to evil, and were Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient, to Allah) (26 February 2001, p. 5).

Following the description on homosexuality and its connotation of Lot's people that supplemented with verses quoted from the Quran, both Malay newspapers greatly highlighted and articulated their resentment on homosexual sex act with the consequences of Allah wrath against same-sex erotic practices. The Quran alternately forbids same-sex sexuality on the grounds that it is as an abominable crime and the most heinous of human sins. Hence, homosexuals' sex acts were frequently pronounced with Allah dander in most of the coverage from UM newspaper and provides the following,

“Kisah kaum Lut yang disebut dalam Quran menggambarkan bagaimana kaum yang mengamalkan seks songsang, lelaki menggemari lelaki yang sekarang dikenali sebagai gay ditimpa bala yang dahsyat oleh Allah sehingga semua penduduk negeri tersebut hancur musnah walaupun terdapat sebilangan yang taat kepada suruhan Allah”.

The history of Lots people as stated in the Quran described how people who practicing homosexual, a men who attracted to men which known as gay were facing real calamity from Allah until the entire population were destroyed even there is some devout followers of Allah (5 May, 2012, p. 13).

Accordingly, BH newspaper further added that homosexual lifestyle was reflected from the modern and leading-edge society and this characteristic is seem as the reappearance to the Lot people era which homosexual behavior is commonly being practices. BH newspaper further urged that this social issue were curb and stop instantaneously to avoid Allah's animosity. BH newspaper asserted that,

“Kini, kita hidup dalam zaman moden, tetapi gaya hidup seperti kaum Nabi Lut kembali menyinggah ke dalam jiwa sesetengah manusia. Ini termasuklah dalam kalangan orang Islam sendiri. Gaya hidup dengan mengamalkan seks sejenis, homoseksual dan lesbian menular seolah-olah mengembalikan era Nabi Lut. Keadaan sebegini seharusnya cepat dibanteras demi mengelakkan azab Allah kerana jika kemungkaran dan maksiat merebak, tetapi tiada tindakan mencegahnya, bermakna mengundang bencana”.

(Now, we are living in the modern era but the lifestyle of Lot people is back to the soul of people. The lifestyle of same sex relation, homosexual and lesbian spread like Lots era. This situation should quickly eradicate in order to avoid the wrath of Allah because if the illicit behavior was spread but no action to prevent it then it will invite disaster) (25 March 2012 p. 42).

Other Religions on Homosexuality

Additionally, the newspapers also pointed that other religion than Islam also proscribed homosexual behavior and it was mentioned in the UM newspaper, “bukan sahaja yang beragama Islam malah bukan Islam menolak amalan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT) yang jelas bertentangan dengan ajaran agama, norma dan budaya di sini” *(not only Muslim but non-Muslim also rejected lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual (LGBT) that obviously against the religion adhere and local custom) (5 November 2011, p. 6).*

Conceding that much of the prevailing on the negative acceptance of homosexual sex act from most religion, it is further asserted in the newspaper that people who are practicing same-sex relation were deflected from the norms and the religion is merely on the name. It is stated in the newspapers that,

“Hakikatnya, bukan hanya Islam saja yang menentang hubungan sejenis, tetapi semua agama lain juga tidak membenarkan hubungan itu. Ini semua amalan manusia akhir zaman. Rasulullah sendiri pernah ingatkan umatnya bahawa suatu hari nanti umat Islam akan hanya wujud pada nama saja kerana amalan, akhlak umat Islam tidak lagi mengikut agama. Amalan dan budaya yang diajar agama sudah tenggelam, sudah tidak dihiraukan lagi. Manusia akan hidup dalam dunia penuh kesesatan yang merugikan diri sendiri dan umat”.

(In reality, not only Islam that against same-sex relation but all religions also prohibited the relationship. This is all the practices of the end of world. Prophet Muhammad reminded his people that one day Muslim is merely exist only by names because the practices, behavior are no longer following the religion. Traditions and culture that was taught has sunk, and was ignored. People will live in a world full of heresy and harm themselves) (22 January 2012 p. 22).

Other religions, specifically Christian and Buddha were also mentioned in UM newspaper that emphasized their disapproval on homosexual sex act as stated that, “sedangkan isu gay bukan masalah bagi orang Islam sahaja tetapi masalah global. Mana-mana pemimpin agama di dunia termasuk Kristian dan Buddha tidak menyokong aktiviti

gay” (*gay issues in not just a problem to Muslim but also a global issue. Any religious leader in the world including Christian and Buddha is not supporting gay activity*) (3 January 2011, p. 8).

The proscription of homosexual behavior from other religion than Islam was also accentuated in the BH newspaper and stated the consequences on the detriment to the society. The newspaper asserted that,

“bukan saja Islam, kita yakin agama lain sekalipun menyeru penganutnya supaya memperjuangkan gaya hidup mengikut norma kemanusiaan normal, secara positif dan tidak mengamalkan amalan yang boleh mendatangkan bala Tuhan dan memudaratkan diri, masyarakat serta negara”.

(not only Islam, we believe others religions even calling their people to follow the lifestyle of normal life positively and not following practices that can bring an anger of God and self-harm, society and the state) (3 March 2012, p. 6).

5.3.2 Cognitives Customs

Cognitive customs is another main element of social constructionism model. For this purpose of research, cognitive customs was described as the way of how coverage on homosexuality was formed and labelled by the media as the way it is, merely to let people think as such. The findings emerged under the element of cognitives customs revolved on themes on politics, western agenda and health and psychology and will be discussed in three sections: (i) biasness in the political status quo (ii) homosexuality as western influence and (iii) homosexuality as mental disorder and HIV stigma.

5.3.2.1 Biasness in the Political Status Quo

The discussion on homosexuality in the newspapers under the element of cognitives customs was extensively intertwined within the political eristic in the country. The researcher divided the findings to six subsections to get a better flow of discussion of the findings: (i) the government stance on homosexuality (ii) gay people is verboten to be politician (iii) the incertitude of the opposition allies iv) the dubiousness of the opposition parties’ leader (v) the tension in *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS) and (vi) the role of non-government organizations (NGOs).

The Government Stance on Homosexuality

The discussion on homosexuality in the newspapers was also extensively intertwined with the political eristic in the country. Upon examining across the multiple articles from UM and BH newspaper, it is asserted that both Malay language newspapers were frequently emphasized on the declination of homosexuality and the gay community. Because both of the newspapers are government oriented and controlled media, it is not surprising that both newspapers were heavily highlighted to the prompt action of the government to ascertain that homosexuality and any gay activities were not being tolerable in the country.

In one of the coverage, UM newspaper affirmed that “kerajaan akan memastikan budaya songsang iaitu gay tidak mendapat tempat di negara ini” (*government will make certain that gay and deviant sex culture does not has a place in this country*) (27 June 2012, p. 4). Moreover, homosexuality was perceived as a social illness that needs to be critically monitors. The government was urged to curb the issues as asserted in the UM newspaper that “kerajaan kena letakkan masalah ini sebagai satu keutamaan kerana ia boleh memporak-perandakan institusi sosial” (*government must turn this social problem to be the main priority because it can depreciated social institution*) (11 March 2012, p. 7). Apparently, the insistency of the hindrance to homosexuality in the country has long been talked and highlighted in the Malaysian media several years earlier. For instance, in one coverage published in the year 2005, it is already established on the urgency of the government to look on homosexuality issues in the country as asserted in the UM newspaper that, “kita percaya kerajaan akan mengambil perhatian terhadap desakan pelbagai pihak yang mahu ia bertindak tegas mengatasi gejala budaya hubungan sejenis kini mula menular ke negara ini” (*We believe the government will give attention on the exhort from many parties that want it to take firm action to overcome the issues of same sex relation in the country*) (22 Nov 2005, p. 6).

The subject of homosexuality is continuously become the topic highlighted with the heavy attention given to the government to impede the issue. For instance, in one of the coverage in UM newspaper year 2010, it is stated that "kerajaan perlu bertindak segera,

jangan biarkan perkara ini merebak baru mahu mengambil tindakan, kita bimbang ia akan menjadi lebih parah. Lebih baik ambil tindakan sekarang bagi menyelamatkan keadaan” (*government need to act quickly, do not take action when these things were spread, we worried it will be more severe. It is better to take action now to save the situation*) (26 December 2010, p. 12). It was further professed for the government in taking on the serious actions on homosexuality that,

“berharap semua pihak termasuklah badan-badan kerajaan dan bukan kerajaan dapat mengambil tindakan serta inisiatif tersendiri bagi mengatasi masalah ini seperti mengadakan program kesedaran. Jangan tunggu keluar berita di akhbar sahaja baru mahu bertindak kerana ia sudah terlewat”.

(hoping that all parties including government bodies and non-government organizations to take action and own initiative to overcome the problem such as conducting awareness program. Do not wait for the news to be published in the newspaper then only action can be taken because it is already late) (28 Dec 2010, p. 5).

The sensationalized news on homosexuality was again being raised in the newspapers with the focus given repeatedly to the government to be quick in resolving the issues and in one of the coverage in year 2011 writes that, “budaya gay yang semakin mendapat sambutan anak muda ketika ini tidak boleh lagi dipandang remeh oleh kerajaan. Kerajaan perlu pantas menghalang aktiviti seperti itu kerana ia ditentang oleh semua bangsa dan agama” (*gay culture that received well acceptance from the youngster can no longer be taken for granted by the government. The government should act fast to stop this activity like this because it is prohibited to all race and religion*) (5 January 2011, p. 25).

The discussion on homosexuality becoming more apparent in the newspapers for the following years up to the year 2012 and remained to be frequently labeled as social illness that often being depicted to have significant of negative consequences. Most importantly, the government was frowned upon this alternative lifestyle and put for the full responsibility to combat the issues with alluding on several politician that might be involved with the issues, “kerajaan perlu menangani isu LGBT dengan cepat dan tegas kerana penyakit sosial tersebut telah merebak menjadi barah dalam masyarakat

memandangkan pengamalnya terdiri daripada pelbagai latar belakang termasuk ahli politik” (*the government need to deal with LGBT issue quickly and decisively because the social illness has spread into a cancer in the society as the practitioners consist of variety of backgrounds including politicians*) (11 March 2012, p. 7).

Homosexuals is Verboten to be Politician

Interwoven to the discussion on homosexuality and political polemic in the country, both Malay language newspapers were also demonstrated that any gay individual or people who are practiced the alternative lifestyle has absolutely no room to enter political party and to be elected as politician in Malaysia in any political parties. In one of the coverage, UM newspaper suggested that all political parties in the country to be united and jointly decline for gay people to hold any position in the political arena and stated that, "semua parti politik di negara ini perlu bersatu mewujudkan undang-undang khusus untuk menolak manusia yang mempunyai naluri songsang daripada menjadi pemimpin supaya kerajaan tidak dipimpin oleh golongan LGBT” (*all political party in this country must be unified in order to embody a specific law that will reject individuals with deviant sexuality as leader so the government is not lead by the LGBT community*) (10 April 2012, p. 13).

It was also urged that all politician must sit together and agreed to decline any trial to recognize any homosexuals individual in any political parties in the country as asserted in UM newspaper that, “ahli-ahli politik digesa untuk membahas segera di dalam Dewan Rakyat, Dewan Negara serta Dewan Undangan Negeri (DUN) bagi menolak individu yang terlibat dengan gejala lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) daripada menjadi pemimpin” (*politicians were prompted to discuss in the House of Representatives, Council of State and State Assembly to decline individual that involved in lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) to be the leader*) (10 April 2012, p. 13).

Seemingly, the remark on the declination on gay individual to join political party was already being exercised back then during the era of former Malaysian Prime Minister of Mahathir Mohamad. During his tenure when he was a Prime Minister, Mahathir

Mohamad announced on the suspension of UMNO party membership to members who were involved with the same sex act practice and sack from the party as ultimate consequences. UM newspaper stated that as, “Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad berkata, UMNO akan memecat mana-mana ahlinya yang didapati bersalah mengamalkan kegiatan homoseksual atau lesbian tanpa mengira kedudukan mereka dalam parti” (*Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said, UMNO will terminate any of the members who found guilty of practicing homosexual or lesbian sex act regardless of the position in the party*) (26 October 2002, p. 2).

The Incertitude of the Opposition Coalition

The discussion from both Malay language newspapers also revolves around the sentiment of skepticism around opposition parties on their stance towards issues on homosexuality in the country. UM newspaper for instance was allegedly writes that opposition coalition is a political party that favor to homosexual community and gay social movement with remarks such as “pembangkang seolah-olah menghalalkan aktiviti LGBT” (*opposition seem to legalizing the activities of LGBT*) (7 June 2012, p. 27).

Such remarked was made when the opposition was being sermon to frequently questioning the fundamental of human right issues in this country including the right among gay community with UM newspaper posited that “pakatan pembangkang juga mempersoalkan hak kebebasan di negara ini sehingga sanggup membawa agenda gejala lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) serta seks bebas yang amat bertentangan dengan nilai etika, budaya dan agama di negara ini” (*the opposition party also questioning the right of freedom to the extent of bringing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender agenda (LGBT) as well as free sex that is contrary to the ethics, culture and religion in the country*) (23 April 2012, p. 4).

As consequences, it is further interrogated by the UM newspaper by questioning the future and the fate of the country if one day the opposition parties were elected to run the government and asserted that “bagaimana nanti apabila mereka mentadbir kerajaan, adakah pindaan Perlembagaan akan dibuat untuk menghalalkan amalan songsang itu

pada masa hadapan?” (*how will they are running the government, is the Constitutional being amended to legalize deviant sex act in the foreseeable future?*) (7 June 2012, p. 27).

On top of that, the newspaper foresee the situation of the dubiousness stance from opposition coalition to issues surrounding homosexuality was strictly compelled to their political interest and not purely intended to auspices the nation and further affirmed that “kebimbangan kita apabila ada pemimpin pembangkang melihat masalah ini dari sudut politik dan bukannya kepentingan negara dan bangsa” (*our concern is when the opposition leader view this problem from the political perspective and not from the interest of the state and nation*) (5 October 2012, p. 9).

In addition, it is also deliberated in the newspapers when the opposition parties were given their misconception and wrong idea upon the critical response and backlash given from the government to gay community as an infliction of the form of discrimination and mistreatment while it is decently intended to offer guidance and assistance to the community. It was stated that “pembangkang juga cuba memperlihatkan kerajaan bertindak seolah-olah mendiskriminasi atau menzalimi golongan itu sedangkan kerajaan cuba mendekati dan memberikan kesedaran dalam membimbing mereka” (*opposition is trying to evince that government’s action is a (form of) discrimination and oppression to homosexual community while what they were trying to do is to reach out and provide awareness in guiding this people*) (5 October 2012, p. 9).

Accordingly, it was allegedly that opposition parties were providing excuses by refusing in offering hands and stand together with the government in opposing issues on homosexuality as they are implicitly trying to attract votes from the gay community and individual who were advocate to the gay rights. It was asserted that “pembangkang didakwa cuba mengelak bersama-sama kerajaan menangani gejala lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) yang semakin membimbangkan di negara ini semata-mata untuk meraih undi” (*opposition was allegedly tried to avoid in working together*

with the government to handle the alarming issues on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) simply to win votes) (5 October 2012, p. 9).

The Dubiousness of the Opposition Parties' Leader

The ramification from the harbor suspicion on the opposition allies towards their stance on homosexuality has resulted of the denunciation from both Malay language newspapers towards opposition party especially their main front-runners. In one of the coverage, UM newspaper was deliberated the negative impression to Anwar Ibrahim, the defacto leader of the opposition coalition with homosexual's sex act and questioned if the allegation can be accepted among opposition party member on the issues as stated, "kita dapat lihat ketika ini, Ketua Pembangkang, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim sering dikaitkan dengan budaya songsang itu, adakah pemimpin pembangkang boleh menerima secara terbuka perkara itu?" (*as we can see, the head of opposition, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was often linked to deviant sex act, is that what leaders of the opposition can publicly acknowledge?*) (30 June 2012, p. 9). Such statement by the UM newspaper was made, when Anwar Ibrahim was called up for the interview by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) regarding of the anti-discrimination law on gay community in Malaysia.

As reported by the UM newspaper, Anwar was being questioned by the BBC reporter regarding the penal code of the colonial era on criminalizing sodomy that was still retained by the government. It was alleged mentioned that the law needs to be largely reevaluated as asserted that "kami perlu menyemak semula sebahagian daripada undang-undang lapuk kami" (*we needs to revise some parts of the obsolete law*) (15 January 2012, p. 11). It was further stated that the act of conduct is no longer applicable for the present-day situation as "tidak boleh diterima sebagai sesuatu yang relevan" (*it is no longer accepted as relevant*) (16 January 2012, p. 5) in referring to the criminal act of homosexuality in Malaysia.

As a result, the statement made by Anwar from the interview with BBC was later alleged as an agenda from the opposition parties to allow homosexuality being practiced

in the country and make it legalise. It was reported by the UM newspaper “mempunyai unsur-unsur menghalalkan kegiatan homoseksualiti” (*possess elements to legalize homosexual sex act*) (14 August 2012, p. 12) that later received hostile responses in the media as a trial to swerve the faith of Muslim in Malaysia as indicated in the articles “merupakan satu penyimpangan pemikiran dan mampu memesonng akidah umat Islam” (*as a divergence of thought and capable of deflecting Muslim’s faith*) (18 January 2012, p. 7).

Professedly, the newspapers makes additional responses on the statement made by Anwar regarding laws on homosexual sex act is merely driven for political stunt as quoted from the news articles “jelas membuktikan keberanian Ketua Pembangkang itu menentang hukum Islam demi politik” (*it is clearly proves the boldness of opposition head against Islamic law for the sake of politics*) (16 January 2012, p. 5). The newspaper makes further proclamation that Anwar’s action is nothing more than to attract sympathy and votes from the certain types of public “mengharapkan sokongan daripada kumpulan yang berfikiran secular serta liberal” (*secure support from secular and liberal minded group*) (18 June 2012, p. 7). The sensationalized news in Malaysian media on Anwar’s comment regarding his view to review the set of laws penalizing sodomy in Malaysia was believed to be related with his trial on his sodomy act with his male former aide in the year 2008 (Subramaniam, P.). The arrest came shortly after Anwar was claimed to be in the position to challenge the governing coalition after the opposition’s successes in the March elections.

Similarly, the newspapers were also addressed the contention to few others leaders from the opposition coalition with their subtle connection of favoring homosexuality and the gay community. A name such as Nurul Izzah, the vice-president of *Parti Keadilan Rakyat* (PKR) or People’s Justice Party for instance were quoted extensively by the UM newspaper and asserted that “kepimpinan parti itu juga perlu mendapatkan penjelasan daripada Nurul Izzah terhadap satu lagi kenyataannya yang dilihat menyokong lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) pada forum yang sama” (*the leadership of the party (PKR) need to seek clarification from Nurul Izzah on one of her remarked which*

give the idea of supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) in the same forum) (11 November 2012, p. 6).

The report on Nurul Izzah by the newspapers for her allegedly support to gay community was resulted from the forum she attended when she was also among the panelists and the speaker. As reported by the UM newspaper, Nurul Izzah was alleged expressing her concern to gay community amid their rights and privacy in Malaysia that must be respected by the authority,

“Nurul Izzah juga mengatakan bahawa golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT) ini hendaklah dihormati privasinya. Dia juga turut mempertikaikan undang-undang di negara ini berkaitan dengan halangan terhadap LGBT. Menurutnya, selain daripada tempat awam, pihak berkuasa tidak wajar untuk mengambil tindakan terhadap mereka yang terlibat dengan gejala tersebut di tempat peribadi”.

(Nurul Izzah were also mentioned that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transexual (LGBT) people and their privacy must be respected. She also questioned the law in this country relating to the restrictions on LGBT people. According to her, apart from the public areas, it is inappropriate for the authorities to take actions against them in their private place) (12 November 2012, p. 13).

Given these points, the constant feeling of great doubt and the precarious to the opposition allies on their stance about homosexual sex act were heavily highlighted by both Malay language newspapers. For example, UM newspaper provides remarked on PKR as a political party that characterise with the image of liberalist such as homosexuality and gay movement. It was asserted that “PKR tidak boleh ditebalkan lagi dengan imej parti songsang” (*PKR can no longer be impenetrable with the image of deviant sex act*) (11 December 2012, p. 6).

It was also further insisted for Wan Azizah, the president of PKR to stood up and stated her stance against homosexuality and denied the subtle relations of the political party with gay community as stated in UM newspaper that “untuk turut mendesak Wan Azizah menafikan bahawa PKR merupakan sebuah parti yang tidak menghalang budaya seks bebas serta lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT) seperti yang diperkatakan masyarakat” (*to urges Wan Azizah to renounce that PKR is a political*

party that does not prohibit a free sex practice and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transexual (LGBT) which were mostly talked by the public) (19 April 2012, p. 15).

The Tension on ‘Parti Islam Se-Malaysia’ (PAS)

Beside PKR that was allegedly support gay community as depicted in the newspapers, another indiction made by the newspapers regarding issues surrounding homosexuality that entwined with the political polemics in Malaysia is another component of opposition coalition, which is *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS) or Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party. Most coverage questioned the political party’s vague stance on gay related issue. As a political party that is based with the puritanical brand of Islamism, the newspapers expressed their curiosity to PAS on its view to homosexuality subject in the country as stated in the UM newspaper that “pemimpin tertinggi PAS perlu tampil menyatakan pendirian berhubung penyebaran budaya lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) di negara ini” (*the higher leadership of PAS should come forward to state their stance on the spread of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) in the country*) (28 June 2012, p. 26) due to their on-going affiliation with another opposition party and strong alliance with the head of the opposition party, Anwar Ibrahim as cited in UM newspaper,

“turut mempersoal tindakan pemimpin PAS yang masih mengiktiraf Anwar sebagai Ketua Pembangkang. Sebagai parti yang kononnya memperjuang Islam sepatutnya perlu menolak sebarang kerjasama dengan Anwar kerana tindakan tersebut dilihat menyokong LGBT”.

(questioned the action of PAS that is still recognizes Anwar as opposition head. As party who is fighting for Islam, it should reject any cooperation with Anwar because the action was seen as support to LGBT) (10 April 2012, p. 13).

As one of the component of the political party in the opposition coalition, PAS was heavily criticized by the newspapers for their silence view to Anwar on his allegedly opinion on to legalise homosexuality in the country. Hence, the political party received numerous questions from the newspapers especially when it was claimed as political party that champions in Islam but at the same time detached any comments and remarks on the subject as stated that,

“berikutan kenyataan Anwar dan desakan kumpulan pro-LGBT terbabit, kita sudah pasti merasa musykil kenapa isu terbabit dipandang daripada sudut undang-undang sahaja dan bukannya agama. Dimanakah suara pemimpin PAS yang sebelum ini mendakwa merekalah pejuang Islam tulen? Adakah para ulama dalam parti itu kini hanya mengambil sikap memekakkan telinga dan membutakan mata terhadap perlakuan maksiat terbabit semata-mata kerana tidak mahu percanggahan pendapat mereka dengan Anwar menggugat perpaduan pembangkang dan matlamat menawan Putrajaya?”.

(following Anwar’s statement and the insistence of the pro-LGBT group, we are wonder why the issues was viewed only from the side of legal and not religion. Where is the voice of PAS that claimed as purely Islamist champion? Is the ‘ulama’ in the party is just turned a deaf ear and a blind eyes to the wrongdoing just because not wanting disagreement with Anwar undermine the unity of the opposition and the goal of invading Putrajaya?) (18 January 2012, p. 11).

The coalition of PAS with the another opposition parties was being described by the newspapers as simply being used by certain parties for their hidden agenda specifically on political purposed as indicted that, “para penyokong pembangkang khususnya PAS perlu sedar bahawa mereka telah diperkudakan oleh pihak yang mempunyai matlamat tersembunyi untuk 'menghalalkan' pejuang lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) menjadi pemimpin negara” *(the opposition supporter especially PAS must realize that they were being used by certain parties that have hidden motive to legalize lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) to be country’s leader)* (28 April 2012, p. 8).

It was further asserted on how peculiar and questionable it is about the cooperation between PAS with another opposition parties that was allegedly linked with idea on homosexual and alternative lifestyle as stated that, “amalan LGBT serta fahaman pluralisme dan liberalisme jelas terkeluar daripada ajaran Islam tetapi pelik kenapa PAS yang mendakwa parti Islam boleh bersekongkol dengan pakatan pembangkang yang ternyata menyokong perkara itu” *(LGBT practice and pluralism and liberalism clearly excluded from Islamic teaching but strange why PAS that claimed as Islamic party can be allied with opposition coalition that support the issue)* (27 June 2012, p. 4).

Drawing upon the explication on the dubious stance of PAS and the denunciation of their alliances with another opposition party, the newspapers makes further remarked to the leadership of PAS to be more wary and watchful especially on their cooperation and alliances with another opposition parties that allegedly linked with homosexuals and gay social movement. Most importantly to avoid any resentment among Muslim in the country,

“PAS jangan menyokong melulu tanpa meneliti apa sebenarnya yang ada dalam LGBT. Jangan kita memberi sokongan secara semberono semata-mata demi kepentingan politik kerana ia akan mengakibatkan perpecahan di kalangan umat Islam di negara ini. Dalam hal ini, banyak unsur-unsur negatif akan berlaku jika budaya LGBT menjadi amalan pemimpin pembangkang. Perjuangan itu (sokongan PAS) salah dan mereka harus sedar jika benar PAS bersandar kepada Islam”.

(PAS do not recklessly support without researching what is actually present in the LGBT. We are not giving support purely for the sake of politic because it will cause discord among Muslim in the country. In this case, many negative elements will happen if the LGBT is being practice among opposition leader. The strive (the support of PAS) is wrong and they should be aware if PAS really lean on Islam) (27 June 2012, p. 4).

The Role of the Non-government Organizations (NGOs)

The discussion on the dispute of homosexuality in the country reported in the newspapers was also interjected with the involvement of the non-government organizations (NGOs) especially on their participation in battling the increasing number of people practicing same-sex relation and the lifestyle of homosexual in the country. It should be highlighted that most of the NGOs addressed in the newspapers to discuss homosexuality are NGOS from the majority of Malay based participation that are aggressive and outspoken in advocating for the Malay privileges and religious issues especially Islam. For example, in one of the coverage in the newspapers related with homosexuality, it was asserted for two prominent NGOs which are Malaysian Muslim Solidarity or *Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia* (ISMA) and Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia or *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* (ABIM) who are completely against the homosexual practice and gay activities. It is stated that,

“Dua pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO) Islam mahu negara Islam di rantau Arab serta Malaysia terus bergabung tenaga serta suara menyampaikan mesej penentangan terhadap aktiviti songsang lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) di peringkat antarabangsa. Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (ISMA) serta Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) yang menyokong sepenuhnya pendirian itu menegaskan, menjadi kewajipan kepada setiap negara Islam menunjukkan penentangan terhadap aktiviti jijik tersebut kerana ia jelas bertentangan dengan syariat serta fitrah manusia”.

(Two Islamic non-government organizations want Islamic countries in the Arab region and Malaysia to continue to join forces and voices out the message against the activities of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) in the international level. Both Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (ISMA) and Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) were fully support to the stance and asserted that it is obligatory to every Islamic state to show the resistance to the illicit activities because it is obviously against the Islamic law and human natural innate) (30 May 2012, p. 6).

In the other hand, the NGOs in Malaysia were also called to assist the community of homosexual by providing the social support and outreach program. For example, in one of the coverage in the UM newspaper, it is stated that NGOs should go for the field work and lending their support to the community through series of education and awareness and asserted that, “orang ramai termasuk pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO) seharusnya mendekati golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT) bagi mendidik mereka meninggalkan perbuatan keji dan bukannya menyokong aktiviti mereka” (*Public including non-government organizations (NGO) should reached out to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) to educate and leave the indecency behavior rather than supporting their activity*) (7 November 2012, p. 6).

It further added in the BH newspaper that “seharusnya NGO juga berperanan mendekati golongan homoseksual. Mendekati dalam maksud supaya dapat memujuk mereka kembali ke pangkal jalan, bukan menyokong perjuangan songsang mereka itu” (*NGOs should also play a role in reaching out the homosexual people. Approaching to the point of persuading them to back to their root, not supporting their deviant believe*) (22 January 2012, p. 22).

Not to mentioned, it is also asserted in the newspapers that government representatives and non-government organizations are interrelated to each other and should work together to resolve issues pertaining to homosexuality dispute and gay community in the country. It is indicated in the newspaper that, “beberapa pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO) sependapat sudah tiba masanya kerajaan memandang serius masalah tersebut kerana ia kian meruntuhkan moral masyarakat negara ini” (*several non-government organizations agreed that it is time the government taking the serious view on the issue because it is increasingly demoralizing the society*) (9 December 2010, p. 28).

5.3.2.2 Homosexuality as Western Influence

The findings on issues surrounding homosexuality was also intermingled around topics on western influence. The researcher divided the findings in three subsections: (i) homosexuality is the Western lifestyles (ii) homosexuality is the Western propaganda (iii) the ideology of secularism and liberalism on homosexuality.

Homosexuality is the Western Lifestyles

Another frequent theme on homosexuality from both Malay languages newspapers is the contentions that associated homosexual's sex act with Westerns lifestyles. In other words, most of the coverage on homosexuality from both Malay language newspapers described homosexual sex act as normal and not the uncommon practice in the Western countries. For example, UM newspaper asserted that, “di Barat hubungan sejenis yang lebih dikenali sebagai homoseksual dan lesbian semakin mendapat tempat dikalangan penduduknya” (*In the Western countries, same sex relationship that also known as homosexual and lesbian, is now become prevalent among them*) (21 February 2010, p. 9). Meanwhile, BH newspaper stated that, “perjuangan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT) sudah mendapat tempat sehingga sebilangan besar negara Barat memperakui hak diperjuangkan golongan ini” (*The belligerence among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) has well recognized to the point of most Western countries were already acknowledged their right*) (17 September 2012, p. 33).

Consequently, both newspapers alternately indicted homosexuality and same sex relationship was brought from the Western countries to the country and marked as debauched morals of Western lifestyle. In addition, UM newspaper affirmed that homosexual's behavior is a part of the Western culture and stated that,

“memang di Barat cara hidup gay dan homoseksual sudah menjadi budaya yang tidak boleh dikawal. Mereka bebas melakukan perbuatan terkutuk itu sehingga perkahwinan sesama jenis dibenarkan malah pemimpin gay dibenarkan memimpin negara”.

(The lifestyle of gay and homosexuals is now become the uncontrollable culture in the Western countries. They are open to practice the illicit behavior to the permissible of the same-sex marriage and even allowed gay people to head their country) (21 February 2010, p. 9).

BH newspaper further stated about the rights on homosexuals practice in the Western countries and the freedom of their lifestyles among homosexuals persons and writes, “kebebasan di Barat tidak ada batasannya, ada kalanya melampaui batasan budaya” *(there are an unlimited freedom in the Western countries and sometimes it can go overboard)* (10 July 2011, p. 26).

With regard from these points, BH newspaper declared that “ia (budaya songsang) sesuai untuk negara Barat, agama Persekutuan kita (Malaysia) adalah Islam jadi kena hormati” *(It (deviant sex act) is right for the Western countries, our official religion is Islam so must comply)* (3 November 2011, p. 4) as to strongly profess that Malaysia as an Islamic state with Islam is the official religion of the country, hence, does not acknowledge homosexuality behavior and totally contradicts with the acceptance of homosexual behavior in the Western countries.

Homosexuality is the Western Propaganda

UM newspaper shared the similar point on Western countries as the major influence of homosexuals practiced in the country. Hence, blatantly asserted that Western countries as the major contributor trying to incapacitate Muslim majority in Malaysia. It stated as followed, “mungkin kerana Malaysia sebuah negara Islam, pelbagai usaha puak anti-Islam dilakukan termasuk menerapkan budaya gay ke negara kita” *(maybe because*

Malaysia is an Islamic state, many attempts of anti-Islamic group was made including propagating the gay culture to our country) (3 January 2011, p. 8).

It is further claimed by UM newspaper that Westerns countries are responsible to popularized homosexuality as strategy to cripple Islam and quoted that, “mempromosikan kebebasan asasi menerusi budaya lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LBGT) itu sebenarnya satu strategi Barat untuk melumpuhkan Islam” (*promoting human right through lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) is one of the western strategy to weaken Islam*) (11 November 2011, p. 13).

As a result, UM newspaper alleged that homosexuality was created by Western countries to meanderingly dissuade majority of Muslim’s faith (*aqidah*) in Malaysia to the promoting of homosexuality culture and was highlighted as followed, “budaya gay ataupun seks songsang merupakan dakyah Barat bagi memesongkan akhlak masyarakat di negara Islam yang sudah tidak lagi berpegang kepada ajaran yang sebenar” (*gay culture or deviant sex act is Western propaganda to deflect public’s uprightness in Islamic state that is no more adhere to the authentic teachings*) (9 December 2010, p. 28).

In addition, BH newspaper further clarified from all events related with homosexuality around the country as a part of Western agenda to rescind Islam and stated that, “rentetan peristiwa berlaku di Malaysia kebelakangan ini seperti satu agenda tersusun Barat untuk memadamkan syiar Islam di Malaysia” (*with many recent cases occurred around Malaysia that is like one Western structured agenda to squelch Islam in Malaysia*) (16 January 2012, p. 17). Not only that, homosexuality was claimed by UM newspaper as to be brought from the Western countries were also labeled to be responsible in trying of demolishing the value of family institution in Malaysia and provide the following, “kebebasan dan hak individu yang diperjuangkan oleh golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) adalah senjata Barat untuk meruntuhkan sistem kekeluargaan dan kepercayaan agama” (*the freedom and the rights of lesbian,*

gay, bisexual and transgender is the western's arms to annihilate the family system and religious believe) (30 May 2012, p. 6).

In addition for that, BH newspaper also emphasized on the repulsiveness of the same sex practice and lifestyle and its consequences to the family institution and stated that, “gejala kecelaruan orientasi seks seperti lesbian, gay, transeksual dan biseksual (LGBT) yang dulunya berkisar dalam masyarakat Barat kini berlaku dalam masyarakat tempatan, sekali gus boleh mengancam institusi kekeluargaan” (*sexual disorder symptoms such as lesbian, gay, transsexual and bisexual (LGBT) that was formerly circle around Western countries is now happen in our society and at the same time threatening the family institution*) (5 April 2012, p. 4).

Correspondingly, UM newspaper indicated that the world political and economic system was monopolized and controlled by the Western countries. As a result, it will affect most of others countries due to their dominant characteristics to the greater effect of accepting homosexuality culture to be adapted in the rest of countries in the world. UM newspaper was quoted as followed,

“Ia (homoseksualiti) melibatkan masalah politik dan ekonomi antarabangsa yang dikawal oleh kelompok Barat secara dominan. Ini bersifat universal dan saling berkait dengan negara-negara di dunia. Jika kita tidak ikut mereka akan bertindak melalui pelbagai cara dan salah satunya memaksa kita mengikut nilai hidup songsang mereka yang terlalu terbeban dengan soal hak asasi dan kebebasan mutlak”.

It (homosexuality) is involved with international issue of politics and economic that was predominantly control by Western countries. The issue is universal and related with all countries worldwide. If we are not adhere, they will react through variety of ways and one of it is forcing us to follow their deviant lifestyle that is central with fundamental of rights and absolute freedom) (6 November 2011, p. 7).

On top of that, BH newspaper makes a further remark on the Western tactics to topple Islam and writes, “segala perancangan ini adalah muslihat Barat bagi menyekat Islam berkembang selain melumpuhkan potensi ummah untuk maju bagi memastikan dominasi mereka dalam bidang ekonomi, politik dan sosial berkekalan” (*all this plan is a Western ployed to stop Islam from thrive beside weaken the potential of nation to be more*

develop and ensure their domination and sustainable of economic, politic and social (26 September 2012 p. 33).

The Secularism and Liberalism

Findings on homosexuality in both Malay language newspapers were also revolves around the argument on secularism and liberalism as another causes that contribute to the homosexuality. It was defined by UM newspaper that secularism is an ideology that does not interfere between worldly life with religion and stated that, "golongan berfahaman sekularisme memegang prinsip bahawa agama tidak harus mencampuri urusan duniawi manusia serta meletakkan domain agama sebagai sesuatu yang peribadi" (*people with secularism stance hold to the principle that religion should not intervene with materiality and put religion as something personal*) (5 September 2012, p. 6).

UM newspaper further stated that "perkara tersebut (secularisme) membawa kepada kehidupan yang berasaskan materialisme semata-mata tanpa bersandarkan kepada aspek kerohanian manusia" (*it (secularism) will lead with purely materialism with no obligation with spiritual aspect*) (5 September 2012, p. 6). In another note, BH newspaper provides the definition of secularism that is obviously related with liberalism and said that,

"fahaman sekularisme ini turut merangkumi fahaman Islam liberal yang mendukung pluralisme agama yang berpendirian semua agama adalah sama dan benar yang juga semakin berkembang di tengah kehidupan masyarakat Islam di Malaysia".

(the tutelage of secularism is comprising the notion of Islamic liberal that stance on religion pluralism and strongly believe that most religion is similar and accurate which is growing in the midst of Muslim society in Malaysia (26 September 2012, p. 33).

UM newspaper provides the general situation of homosexuality with secularism with an explicit remark that "fahaman sekularisme dan liberalisme merupakan antara factor yang menyumbang kepada penularan gejala lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT)" (*the idea of secularism and liberalism are factors that contribute to lesbian, gay,*

bisexual and transgender (LGBT) (5 September 2012, p. 6) as to strongly suggest that secularism is the main cause of homosexuality in Malaysia.

UM newspaper also posited the idea of liberalism as another factor that cultivate free lifestyle including homosexual sex act and practice and further emphasized that, “pemikiran berbentuk liberal pula menjadi asas kepada penerimaan dan amalan gaya hidup bebas mengikut selera masing-masing tanpa dipandu oleh kesedaran terhadap tuntutan sebenar agama” (*while liberal thinking is a basis to the acceptance and free lifestyle practice according to individual taste with no guidance of awareness to the religion adherence*) (5 September 2012, p. 6).

Accordingly, what is more important to be highlighted from both Malay language newspapers are the indication of both secularism and liberalism which was originally inclined from the Western countries and it was further reported from UM newspaper that “pengaruh sekularisme sudah lama bertapak di negara Barat sehingga masyarakat di sana hilang identiti agama” (*The influence of secularism was well established in the Western countries until they lost their religion’s identity*) (25 May 2012, p. 12), thus, give validation that secularism was initially founded from the Western notion.

Given these points, BH newspaper also asserted that secularism is an indecorous notion that entirely made up from the Western countries with the intention of alienating religion with life and stated as,

“fahaman sekularisme tajaan Barat moden sudah berjaya mensekularisasikan seluruh dunia termasuk dunia Islam. Proses sekularisasi ini tidak lain hanya proses pembebasan manusia daripada kongkongan agama dan kawalan metafizik”.

(the ideology of secularism was advocated from the modern Western and successfully secularizing entire world including Muslim world. This secularizing process is nothing but a process of human liberation from the religious captivity and metaphysics control) (26 September 2012, p. 33).

In addition, a little history on the ideology was asserted in the BH newspaper that secularism was started to gain an acceptance after the French Revolution. It is reported that,

“perbuatan sodomi dan hubungan homoseksual mula mendapat perhatian serta simpati masyarakat Barat selepas berlaku Revolusi Perancis pada 1791 apabila sekularisme mula mendapat tempat sementara peranan agama terutama gereja tidak lagi relevan dalam sosial, politik dan ekonomi”.

(sodomy and homosexual sex act is started to get attention and sympathy among Westerners after the French Revolution in 1791 when secularism received an acceptance while religious role especially church is no longer relevance in social, politics and economy) (17 September 2012, p. 33).

The raucous argument between secularism and liberalism with homosexuality were also precipitate from one isolated but related incident of the controversial book by Canadian author, name Irshad Manji that was translated to Malay language for Malaysian market. The 388 page book is a translation of the original ‘Allah, liberty and love: The courage to reconcile faith and freedom’ which was banned to be sell in Malaysia from the Ministry of Home Affairs as it contravene from the teachings of the Al-Quran and Hadith.

The banned of the book was also because of the contain that have elements that can deviate Muslims from their faith, confuse the public and contain words that insult Islam. Moreover, Irshad is a liberal Muslim activist who openly supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) lifestyles as indicated by BH newspaper, “seorang wanita Islam yang berfahaman liberalisme, pluralisme dan pendukung gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT)” *(as Muslim women that connected with idea of liberalism, pluralism and supporter of gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) (21 May 2012, p. 17).*

The newspaper further urged the government to deport the author from the country before she encourage more people with her liberal ideology as, “berharap kerajaan bersikap tegas dan mengusir sebarang anasir seperti itu dari Malaysia sebelum dia mempengaruhi masyarakat di negara ini dengan pendirian liberalnya” *(expecting that*

government is firm and expel any elements like that from Malaysia before she influence public in the country with her liberal standpoint) (21 May 2012, p. 17).

It is also claimed by UM newspaper that, by getting in people like Irshad in the country is one tactic to spread unwanted influence including homosexuality and reported as “tindakan membawa masuk Irshad itu merupakan strategi menyebarkan pengaruh negatif terutama berkaitan homoseksual terhadap masyarakat Malaysia secara halus dan perlahan-lahan” (*the act of bringing in Irshad is one of the strategy to spread negative influence implicitly and undetectably especially on homosexuality to Malaysian society*) (21 May 2012, p. 8).

On top of the postulating that homosexuality are resulted from secularism and liberalism which were speculated to be originated from the Western countries, both UM and BH newspapers were also highlighted on secularism and liberalism that were also interrelated and has a strong involving with religion. In one of the article, UM newspaper stated that,

“perjuangan golongan ini (homoseksual) yang berasaskan fahaman liberalisme tidak menghairankan berlaku dalam masyarakat Barat yang menolak atau meninggalkan agama. Hal yang demikian berlaku tidak lain kerana agama yang dianuti tidak mampu sama sekali untuk memberikan keyakinan, bimbingan dan panduan dalam kehidupan mereka”.

(the struggle among homosexual people that were grounded by liberalism is not surprisingly happen in the Western countries that reject or renounce their belief. Such things happen because the religion their professed is not able to give assurance, direction and guidance in their life) (13 March 2012, p. 11).

In addition, BH newspaper asserted that Western employed secularism to work against certainty which is grounded on epiphany and writes as, “Barat menggunakan fahaman sekularisme yang membuat serangan hebat ke atas semua bentuk keyakinan yang mengatakan terdapat suatu kebenaran mutlak, sama ada kebenaran itu diasaskan wahyu Ilahi atau akal manusia” (*Western used secularism to create aggression to every truth that conform with revelation or human wisdom*) (26 September 2012, p. 33). It was further elaborated that secularism’s dominant aspect is to work against religion and

divinity as stated, “maka ia akan bersifat anti-agama dan anti-Tuhan” (*so it’s anti-religion and anti-god by nature*) (26 September 2012, p. 33).

By all means, both Malay language newspapers affirmed that homosexual’s behavior are being practiced by those who believe on the ideas on secularism and liberalism which were speculated from the Western countries. These foreign ideologies were claimed as refuse to adhere religion. It was strongly professed by UM newspaper as “kita tidak boleh memilih untuk menerima pascamodernis, liberalisme dan pluralisme sebaliknya kehidupan kita perlu dipandu oleh agama” (*we cannot elect to accept postmodernism, liberalism and pluralism but instead our life must be guided by religion*) (23 April 2012, p. 10).

5.3.2.3 Homosexuality as Mental Disorder and HIV Stigma

The subject on psychology, mental health and the topics of HIV and AIDS are also among topics being highlighted by UM and BH newspapers under the element of cognitive customs when discussing on the issues related with homosexuality. Looking across the multiple coverage from both newspapers, the researcher divided the findings into three subsections: (i) homosexuality as a psychological pathology (ii) counseling and psychological support and (iii) homosexuality and HIV/AIDS stigma.

Homosexuality as a Psychological Pathology

The subject on psychology, mental health and the topics of HIV and AIDS are also among topics being highlighted by UM and BH newspapers when discussing on the issues related with homosexuality. Both UM and BH newspapers are commonly addressed homosexuality in terms of pathological models as a mental illness. Most coverage in the newspapers labeled people who are homosexual and practicing same-sex relation as individual who endured from psychological problem that have mental and emotional issues.

In one of the coverage, UM newspaper asserted that, “jika ditinjau dari sudut perubatan mereka ini adalah kumpulan yang bermasalah dari segi psikologi dan sudah tentu

dikelaskan sebagai orang yang sakit. Sakit ini berkaitan dengan emosi, dan dengan kata lain sakit jiwa” (*if it is reviewed from the medical perspective, they are a group of people who had problem from psychological view and indeed were classified as sick person. This sickness is related with emotion and in other words as mental illness*) (28 April 2012, p. 13).

Apparently, the remarked by the newspapers on homosexual people as mental disorder had been echoed several years earlier and was depicted in one coverage in UM newspaper in the year 2000, “golongan tersebut juga boleh dikatakan mengalami masalah gangguan jiwa dan mengalami tekanan dalam masyarakat” (*these people can also been named as suffer from mental disorder and pressure in the society*) (18 January 2000, p. 22).

It is further added by the newspapers that gay individual were also considered as person who are weak-minded, easily tempted and succumbed by group pressure and fail to foresee the negative consequences of their homosexual behavior and writes that, “pengamal seks songsang dikategorikan sebagai golongan yang mengalami masalah psikologi sehingga mereka cenderung memilih kaum sejenis tanpa memikirkan kesan penyakit yang boleh menjangkiti mereka” (*deviant sex practitioner was categorized as people who suffered from psychology problem and tend to choose same sex partner without thinking the side effect which can infect them*) (30 December 2010, p. 13).

In addition, homosexuality was also named as one of the social disease and extending the term similar to the addiction of drug. Those who are homosexual and involved with gay sex activities should be admitted to rehabilitation center and get treatment as posited by UM newspaper that,

“gerakan gay dan lesbian sebenarnya sejenis penyakit sosial. Ia juga penyakit mental yang sama buruk dengan penyalahgunaan dadah. Jika orang yang ketagih dadah boleh dimasukkan ke dalam pusat pemulihan, mengapa gay dan lesbian yang ditangkap tidak boleh dimasukkan ke pusat-pusat khas bagi mengembalikan mereka sebagai lelaki dan perempuan normal”.

(gay and lesbian movement is a social disease. It is a mental illness that equal to the drug abuse. If people who addicted to drug can be jailed in the rehab center, why gay and lesbian who get caught cannot be put in the special center to restore them back as normal men and women) (5 August 2001, p. 39).

The term mental illness to homosexual people that was often labeled by the newspapers were also addressed to any individual who are not practicing homosexual behavior but contribute the strong support and sympathy to the gay community as asserted in the UM newspaper that, "individu yang mengamalkan atau menyokong budaya LGBT mempunyai masalah mental seperti dijelaskan dalam kajian psikologi antarabangsa dan sudah tentu tidak layak dijadikan pemimpin" (*individual who practiced or support LGBT culture has a mental problem that was explained in international psychology research and undoubtedly unfit to become a leader*) (7 December 2012, p. 08).

Given these points, both Malay language newspapers are undoubtedly using disciplines from psychopathology issues as the primary motive of homosexuality behavior and linked that as a mental illness. In one of the coverage in UM newspaper, it is asserted that,

"terdapat beberapa faktor dikenal pasti punca kepada berlakunya homoseksual iaitu secara biologi, psikologi dan sosial. Faktor psikologi misalnya, termasuklah interaksi antara ahli keluarga, pengalaman seksual semasa kecil dan meniru perwatakan jantina yang bertentangan"

(there are few factors that had been known as reason to homosexual sex act which are biology, psychology and social. Psychology factor for instance are include interaction between family member, sexual experience when growing up and mimicking the opposite gender) (26 February 2001, p. 05).

The discussion on homosexuality behavior that intermingled with mental health and psychology issues as often described in the newspapers were also talked on the history of medical specifically from the Western countries. Throughout the analysis, UM newspaper narrated the history of homosexuality that classified homosexuality under the category of mental disorder that required special treatment and attention in America many years ago and used this fact to emphasize the depiction on homosexuality in the newspaper. Nevertheless, it is further stated in the newspapers that homosexuality had been withdraw from the category of mental disorder and tells that,

“malah pada satu ketika di Amerika golongan homoseksual ini dikategorikan sebagai gangguan mental dan perlu diberikan rawatan. Namun kerana desakan kuat dari golongan ini mereka tidak dikategorikan dalam golongan tersebut dan diberi peluang untuk menjalani kehidupan seperti manusia biasa”.

(there were time in America when homosexual people are categorized as mental disorder and need to give treatment. However, because of the pressure from these people, they are not categorized in the category and was given a chance to lead their life like a normal people) (21 August 2011, p. 7).

It is further highlighted by the newspapers that until 1973, homosexuality was later being removed from the category of mental disorder due to the strong pressure from the politician and medical practitioners who are believe of practicing same-sex relation and homosexuals life and write that,

“banyak laporan menyetujui bahawa desakan kuat pengamal homoseksualiti, dan lobi ahli politik dan pengamal perubatan yang mengamalkan gaya hidup ini, telah mendorong Persatuan Psikiatri Amerika mengeluarkan homoseksualiti daripada dikategorikan sebagai penyakit mental pada 1973”.

(many reports agreed on the strong strident from the homosexuals people especially among politician and medical professional to American Psychiatry Association to remove homosexuality from the mental disorder category in year 1973) (12 October 2012, p. 32)

BH newspaper reported based from the book by Dr. Ronald Bayer with the title, ‘Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis’ and stated that “keputusan itu adalah tekanan politik yang hebat dan bukannya daripada hasil kajian saintifik yang objektif” *(it was resulted from the great political pressure and not from the objective scientific research) (12 October 2012, p. 32)*. As a result, homosexuality was disregard as a mental disorder.

Nevertheless, the newspapers further added there is no evidence whether homosexuality is innate or a choice and asserted that “sehingga kini, tiada bukti kukuh yang menyokong bahawa LGBT adalah sesuatu yang diwarisi dan tidak dapat diubah. Pelbagai kajian dilakukan untuk cuba membuktikan bahawa orientasi seks ini berpunca daripada struktur anatomi dan fisiologi manusia” *(it is no solid reason to support LGBT that is inheritable)*.

Many researches had been done to prove that sexual orientation is resulted from the anatomy structure and human physiology) (12 October 2012, p. 32).

Counseling and Psychological Support

Despite of the label and term coined that addressed homosexual people and gay community as individuals suffered from the mental disorder, it is also shown throughout the analysis of the newspapers on the urgency of providing social support and positive peer to the gay individuals and gay community. In one of the coverage in the UM newspaper, it is asserted that, “mereka ini adalah pesakit yang memerlukan bantuan. Mereka berhak mendapat perkhidmatan kesihatan bagi memulihkan penyakit itu. Kita harus berbuat sesuatu untuk golongan ini” (*they are patient who need helps. They deserve to get a health service to cure the illness. We have to do something for this people*) (28 December 2010, p. 18) and further seek for the therapist and counselors with the help from the religious members so the community will be able to get appropriate attention and care.

It is emphasized by the BH newspaper on the help from the academic and expert in psychology to help gay people and asserted that,

“bantuan pakar akademik dalam bidang gender dan kaunselor atau ahli psikologi bertauliah bersama ahli agama diperlukan untuk proses kaunseling. Menerusi sokongan pihak terdekat ini, berkemungkinan mereka dapat dibantu untuk sekurang-kurangnya meninggalkan perbuatan seks songsang”.

(academic professional helps in gender and counselor or certified psychologist with religious members are needed throughout the counseling process. From the support, probably they can be help at least to leave the deviant sex act) (19 November 2006, p. 2).

Not only the significance of the counseling to provide guidance especially mental and emotional support to homosexual people were identified, it is also posited in one of the coverage in the UM newspaper on the requirement of having sufficient skills and knowledge among counselors to better treat issues related with sexuality specifically among gay community,

“para kaunselor tempatan perlu dilengkapkan dengan kemahiran terkini untuk berhadapan dengan pelbagai cabaran baru seperti kecelaruan seks di kalangan masyarakat termasuk kemunculan golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT)”.

(local counselors must be equipped with the latest skill to deal with many new challenges such as sexual disorders among public including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)) (5 April 2012, p. 4).

To add this matter, there is urgency of the involvement from the government and non-government organizations to produce more certified counselors on the related area, "pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO) dan kerajaan sendiri disaran untuk sama-sama berusaha melahirkan pakar dan kaunselor bertauliah yang memahami isu tersebut, seterusnya mampu membantu mereka yang terlibat dengan gejala LGBT" (*The non-government organization (NGO) and the government was urged to work together to produce expert and qualified counselor to understand the issue and thus able to help them who involved with issue of LGBT*) (17 October 2012, p. 24).

Accordingly, the newspapers posited that all psychological aspect must be given extra attention with prompt prevention to counter this situation from the early stage and asserted that, “semua aspek perlu diberi penekanan terutama psikologi dan rawatan awal ke atas pesakit yang mengalami kecelaruan psikoseksual” (*all aspect must give full emphasize especially psychology and early treatment to patient who experienced a psychosexual disorder*) (8 April 2012, p. 17).

Homosexuality as HIV/AIDS Stigma

Both Malay language newspapers also expounded on the narration of homosexuality with the HIV and AIDS stigma among these people. In one of the coverage, UM newspaper asserted the major concern specifically towards Malay people that involved with homosexuals and gay sex activities that were infected with the HIV virus and highlighted on the alarming number of HIV carrier among the community “semakin ramai golongan muda lelaki Melayu dikesan menjadi pengamal homoseksual sekalipun mengetahui perkara itu ditegah agama dan mendedahkan mereka kepada jangkitan virus HIV” (*many Malay male are now practicing homosexual sex act even they knew that it*

is prohibited in the religion and exposed them to the HIV virus) (23 December 2011, p. 06).

The result of the disquieting number of the HIV carrier was caused from the gay sex activities that become more prevalent and visible as depicted in the newspapers, “penularan seks luar tabii semakin serius dan tidak tertumpu kepada negeri-negeri di pantai Barat sahaja tetapi berlaku di negeri-negeri lain termasuk Kelantan” (*the deviant sexual act become serious and not merely concentrated to the west coast area but also to another states including Kelantan*) (23 December 2011, p. 6) and further added that, “jika dahulu pengamalnya melakukannya secara sembunyi tetapi kini mereka semakin berani menonjolkan diri sehingga menubuhkan kelab-kelab gay” (*homosexual persons were once act covertly but now they are become more daring to be visible and even established gay clubs*) (23 December 2011, p. 6).

One important point that being highlighted by the newspapers is the number of HIV patients from the sexual intercourse including homosexual and heterosexual person that was proclaimed to be higher than the number of people who get infected through needle sharing especially drug users. UM newspaper asserted, “trend jangkitan HIV dan AIDS dalam negara telah berubah daripada jangkitan akibat perkongsian jarum suntikan kepada transmisi aktiviti seks tidak selamat” (*the trend of HIV and AIDS infection had changed from sharing needles to unsafe sexual sex act transmission*) (23 December 2011, p. 6). It is revealed that the year 2010 shown the highest percentage of HIV patients with 48.7 percent for sexually transmitted infections in all types of sexual orientation and emphasizing that the number is higher than drug abuse which is merely 47.7 percent.

UM newspaper write that, "pada tahun 2010, jangkitan melalui hubungan seks secara heteroseksual, homoseksual dan biseksual mencatatkan jumlah 48.7 peratus melebihi jangkitan melalui penggunaan dadah suntikan iaitu 47.7 peratus" (*in year 2010, the infection through sexual intercourse such as heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual*

recorded to be 48.7 percent more than the infection from the drug injection which is 47.7 percent) (23 December 2011, p. 06).

In addition to the HIV disease, other sexually transmitted diseases were also mentioned such as syphilis, gonorrhea and more, “gejala perbuatan buruk ini sebelumnya telah menghasilkan penyakit kelamin yang serius dan berbahaya seperti sifilis, gonorrhea dan sebagainya. Namun kesemua penyakit itu tidak ditakuti oleh manusia sebelum kedatangan AIDS” (*the symptom of the bad behavior resulted to the more serious venereal disease such as syphilis, gonorrhea and more. But all those disease were not feared by humans before the arrival of AIDS*) (10 June 2005, p. 32).

Nonetheless, the heterosexual sex has no exception from getting the HIV infection when it was depicted in the newspapers, “wabak AIDS secara senyap membarah di negara ini ekoran salah tanggapan yang melabelkan hanya orang tidak bermoral atau secara kasarnya - pelacur dan golongan homoseksual sahaja yang akan dijangkiti HIV” (*AIDS virus killed silently in this country due to the misjudgment that only immoral people or prostitute and homosexual people will get the HIV infection*) (1 December 2007, p. 11). Accordingly, a little history of HIV and AIDS was also mentioned in the newspapers and asserted that the patient of AIDS in America was first discovered from San Francisco, California from a gay person and the cure for the disease have yet to discover up to present, “HIV/AIDS telah mula dikesan di kalangan pengamal seks songsang di California, Amerika Syarikat (AS) dan sehingga kini tiada ubat yang boleh menyembuhkan penyakit tersebut” (*HIV/AIDS was discovered among homosexual person in California, America and no medication that can cure this disease*) (24 November 2011, p. 9).

Nevertheless, UM newspaper further depicted that mental depression is a major concern that clearly threatened among homosexual person beside others illness and stated that, “selain penyakit-penyakit fizikal yang mengundang maut seperti sifilis, barah dubur, dan HIV, pengamal homoseksual sebagai contoh, berhadapan masalah tekanan mental yang tidak terkawal” (*besides physical illness that causes death such as syphilis, anal cancer*

and HIV, homosexual persons for instance facing an uncontrollable mental pressure) (13 March 2012, p. 11).

5.3.3 Rules and Shared Roles

Rules and shared roles is another element of social constructionism theory. For this research, shared roles and rules were defined as the set of behaviors that is expected by individuals or group that holds a particular status to guide action that involves the debatable theme on law, rights and social movement among gay community. The discussion were discussed under two main sections: (i) gay rights and social movement and (ii) law and legislation on homosexuals.

5.3.3.1 Gay Rights and Social Movement

Another finding that was broached on the discourse surrounding homosexuality from both UM and BH newspapers is the discussion on the rights and freedoms particularly among gay community and the emergence of the social movement for the gay rights in the country. The researcher divided the findings into six subsections: (i) challenging the Federal Constitution of Malaysia (ii) human rights and Islam (iii) the argument on the same sex marriage (iv) gay rights and the opposition party (v) gay right is the Western agenda and (vi) the personifying of anti-gay movement.

Challenging the Federal Constitution of Malaysia

One major topic that was broached on issue surrounding homosexuality in both Malay language of UM and BH is the discussion on the rights and freedoms among gay community and the emergence of the social movement for the gay rights in the country. Essentially, the discussion on the issues related with human rights particularly on the gay rights and the freedom of expression among the gay community is often traversed in the newspaper about the disapproval of their rights and privileges. As stated in BH newspaper that, “atas dasar hak asasi dan kebebasan, golongan itu mahu masyarakat menerima dan memberi pengiktirafan kepada mereka. Mereka juga mahu pengiktirafan daripada sudut undang-undang negara” (*on the basis of rights and freedom, homosexual*

people want society to accept and give recognition to them. They want the recognition from the viewpoint of legal state law) (7 September 2010, p. 18).

It is also deliberated in the newspaper on the contention from the gay community that rights must be guaranteed for every types of people in any gender and sexuality as depicted in the BH newspaper that, “bagi golongan ini, hak kebebasan dan hak asasi harus diberikan serta dijamin untuk semua golongan tanpa mengambil kira gender atau orientasi seksual mereka” (*to this people, freedom and rights should be given as well as guaranteed to all groups without taken into account their gender or sexual orientation*) (7 September 2010, p. 18).

The newspaper further stated on their discontentment of the sentiment brought up from people who provide support and solidarity on rights among gay people in the country. UM newspaper stated and urged public to be extra vigilant on the propaganda from the community as asserted that,

“amat menyedihkan jika ada rakyat Malaysia yang terbawa-bawa dengan isu LGBT dengan mengaitkan dengan faktor hak asasi manusia dan menuduh sesiapa yang menentang hak LGBT adalah berlaku kejam. Rakyat Malaysia perlu berhati-hati dan menilai dengan teliti sama ada tuduhan tersebut berasas atau pun mempunyai agenda tersirat”.

(it is really sadden if any Malaysian who get carried away with LGBT issue and relate it with human rights factors and accused people who against the LGBT rights is cruel. Malaysian must be carefully and thoroughly assess whether the allegations is real or hold a hidden agenda) (26 January 2012, p. 11).

In furtherance, the discussion on the gay rights, that is often interwoven with the issue about human rights are confined with the legislation of the Civil law and also Sharia law for the Muslim and asserted that,

“hak asasi perlu selaras dengan undang-undang dan bagi umat Islam, mereka tertakluk kepada dua iaitu Sivil dan Syariah yang perlu dipatuhi. Ini tidak bererti hak kebebasan asasi mereka dalam Perlembagaan Persekutuan, telah dinafikan sebaliknya Undang-Undang Keluarga Islam perlu dipatuhi dan berjalan seiringan”.

(the rights should be consistent with the legislation and for Muslim, they are subject with two law which is Civil and Sharia that must be observed. This does

not mean their fundamental rights to freedom in Federal Constitution was denied but Islamic family law must be followed and go hand in hand) (9 March 2012, p. 12).

Most importantly, both Malay language newspapers are widely highlighted that same sex relation and the community of homosexuals has no right and has no exclusivity to be protected in Malaysia by referring to the clauses in the Federal Constitution and stated Islam is the official religion in the country. Obviously, Islam is against homosexual sex act. UM newspaper asserted that,

“Perlembagaan Persekutuan tidak pernah menghalalkan hubungan sesama jenis ini. Kebebasan itu mestilah berlandaskan hak yang diberikan. Tiada hak diberikan kepada hubungan sesama jenis kerana ia amat jelas melanggar 'Agama Negara' seperti dalam Perkara 3 Perlembagaan Persekutuan”.
(Federal Constitution never legalizes same sex relationship. The freedom must be based on the given rights. No rights were given to the same sex relationship because it is clearly against the 'State Religion' as in Article 3 of Federal Constitution) (22 January 2012, p. 22).

Human Rights and Islam

The discussion on the debate about rights among homosexual people in Malaysia is also heavily deliberated in the newspapers that intertwined with the attention from the Islamic perspective on the human rights issue. It is asserted in the newspapers that the fundamental of human right which also include rights among sexual minority in Malaysia must be grounded on the principle of religion and cultural as asserted by BH newspaper that, “platform kebebasan hak asasi manusia harus dipandu oleh nilai agama dan budaya masyarakat serta perlu disesuaikan dengan sosio-budaya masyarakat” (*a human rights platform must be guided by religions value and cultural as well as the need to be adapted with society socio-cultural*) (3 November 2011, p. 23).

Accordingly, the concept of human rights from the Islamic framework must be compelled according to the Sharia law and it is asserted in the newspapers that, “dalam Islam syariah dan fiqh ada hak asasi tetapi ia mengikut syariah. Hak ialah memperjuangkan kebebasan tetapi bukanlah kebebasan yang membawa kepada kekufuran dan meminta kita melakukan perkara yang tidak senonoh” (*in Islamic Sharia and fiqh, there are basic rights but it followed Sharia. Rights is a fight for freedom but*

not freedom that lead to infidelity and asking us to do indecent things) (23 April 2012, p. 8) and the model of human rights must constantly be circumscribed within the Islamic law that is unequivocally will never get amend,

“hak manusia itu dibatasi hukum Islam yang ditetapkan dan tidak pernah berubah. Begitulah mereka yang terjebak dengan homoseksual dan lesbian, sebagai insan dilahirkan sebagai Islam, seharusnya mengerti perlakuan itu bertentangan dengan perintah Allah”.

(human rights is confined with the allotted Islamic law and never changed. Those who involved with homosexual and lesbian, as people who born as Muslim, should understand that behavior is against Allah commands) (6 January 2011, p. 33).

In addition, the discussion in the newspapers about the concept of human rights and freedoms within the Islamic principle were also interchangeably mentioned about Quran and Hadith as the main religious precept and the primary sources of the Islamic law. It is stated in the UM newspaper that freedoms and rights in the country must be defined in the context of Islam and must be adhere to the teaching of Quran and Hadith. The newspaper asserted that, “hak asasi dan kebebasan di dalam Islam dipandu oleh al-Quran, al-Hadis serta sumber hukum yang lain dan bukannya bersifat mutlak seperti mana diperjuangkan oleh kelompok-kelompok tertentu di negara ini” (*rights and freedom in Islam is guided by the Quran and Hadith, as well as others sources of charge and not imperious like was backed by certain groups in the country*) (27 April 2012, p. 13).

The coverage stated “*bukan bersifat mutlak*” (but not imperious) in referring to the secular framework of human rights which gives absolute power to people in deciding and pursuing on what they insist and to be what they want while UM newspaper further affirmed that the highest and purest rights must belong to Allah, “bagi umat Islam hak yang tertinggi adalah hak Allah dan apa sahaja yang bertentangan dengannya perlu ditinggalkan” (*the highest rights for Muslim is Allah’s rights and anything to the contrary must be abandoned*) (29 November 2011, p. 24).

In addition, the rights and the freedom that is not adhere with the Islamic law will lead to the negative consequences as asserted in the UM newspaper that, “hak asasi manusia dan kebebasan yang bersifat mutlak akan membawa kepada kekufuran dan kemaksiatan sedangkan ia sesuatu yang amat ditegah di dalam Islam” (*human rights and freedom which is absolute will bring to infidelity and debauchery while it is prohibited in Islam*) (27 April 2012, p. 13).

The Argument on the Same-sex Marriage

In a somewhat similar discussion on the marriage conundrum between gay or lesbian people that were confounded in the loveless marriage with their heterosexual partner as discussed in the section 6.2.1.1, another frequent topic that was greatly discussed from both Malay language newspapers is about the issue on the same-sex marriage. Same-sex marriage or gay marriage is one of the topics being extensively highlighted and also intertwined with the discussion with rights and freedom among gay community in Malaysia with most coverage served displeasure connotation towards the subject.

In one of the coverage from UM newspaper, it tells the conjecture of the circumstances to the institution of family in Malaysia if the same sex marriage is being practiced in the country that eventually will create turmoil and chaos. It is asserted that, “jika dilaksanakan perkahwinan sejenis boleh menghuru-harakan institusi keluarga kerana ia membelakangkan fitrah dan tamadun manusia jika diamalkan” (*if it is being practiced, same-sex marriage can create a bedlam to the institution of family because it breaks the unalterable natural disposition and human civilization*) (6 March 2012, p. 7).

The discussion on the undesirable and detrimental of the gay marriage is further accentuated with the narration from BH newspaper on the definition and meaning of marriage from the standpoint of Islam as stated that,

“setiap manusia itu dijadikan lengkap dengan fitrah dan ada nafsu. Sudah ditetapkan bahawa setiap perkahwinan itu mesti membabitkan lelaki dan perempuan. Dalam Islam, syarat perkahwinan dan nikah antaranya ialah mesti ada bakal suami iaitu lelaki dan isteri iaitu wanita”.

(every people were perfectly created with intrinsic and desire. It is already assigned that every marriage must be between men and women. In Islamic rule, the marriage must have future husband who is male and wife which is women) (22 January 2012, p. 22)

The newspaper further stated that, “memang benar tiada agama yang menghalalkan hubungan sama jenis, malah hubungan berlainan jenis tanpa ikatan perkahwinan yang sah juga diharamkan semua agama” *(it is accurate there is no religion that permitted same sex relation, even the opposite sex relationships without the legitimate wedlock is also prohibited in all religion)* (22 January 2012, p. 22).

It is also highlighted in the newspapers that the religion of Islam only acknowledged a marriage between men and women and prohibited from others religion as well as cited in the UM newspaper that, "Islam hanya membenarkan perkahwinan antara lelaki dan perempuan. Kegiatan LGBT bukan sahaja ditentang semua agama malah ia terbukti menghapuskan keseluruhan asas kekeluargaan iaitu ibu dan ayah” *(Islam only allowed a marriage between men and women. LGBT activities is not only opposed by all religion but it is proven that entire family foundation which is mother and father will be eradicated)* (6 March 2012, p. 7).

The intense discussion on the same-sex marriage from both newspapers was inflamed from the real event of the same-sex marriage between an openly gay man from Malaysia with his American partner. Ou Yang Wen Feng, a Chinese born Malaysian who resides in America married his longtime partner in New York, barely a month after same-sex marriage became legalized there which is in August 2011. A story of Ou Yang’s same-sex marriage aroused much controversy and criticism from the public, especially, when he decided to held his wedding banquet in his hometown in Kuala Lumpur despite earlier outrage by the majority of the public.

Another controversy event that involved gay marriage between Malay Muslim men with his male partner in Ireland has triggered outrage among public especially in Malaysia. Ariff Alfian Rosli was reportedly missing by his family after years of studying in Dublin and only to be found after his wedding photos and stories had gone viral at the Internet.

As a result, his wedding reception which is believed that was taken outside of the country received massive criticism from major public in Malaysia especially when the Malay groom is wearing complete Malay traditional attire.

The gay marriage controversies from both Ariff Alfian Rosli and Ou Yang Wen Feng create major outrage among public in Malaysia despite that their marriage is not being held in the country. The dissention of the gay marriage sparked the numerous of negative report from the media in Malaysia with UM newspaper stated that gay marriage; if it is allowed it may contribute to the moral decay and asserted that “perkahwinan sejenis jika dibenarkan juga boleh menimbulkan keruntuhan moral yang lebih dahsyat” (*same-sex marriage if it is allowed can create a terrible moral breakdown*) (6 March 2012, p. 7).

Furthermore, BH newspaper highlighted the consequences of the same-sex marriage for kids from the gay marriage that could bring harm to the well-being of the child being raised from gay parent and reported that, “secara psikologi, setiap anak memerlukan ibu dan bapa kerana mereka memainkan peranan berbeza dari segi naluri serta emosi” (*psychologically, every child need their mother and father because they both play different role, instinctively and emotionally*) (6 March 2012, p. 7). The newspaper also asserted on the spread of the infectious diseases as stated,

“antara kemudaratan itu, keruntuhan institusi akibat perkahwinan di luar norma, kedudukan anak jika dibenarkan dalam keluarga songsang itu dan penyebaran penyakit berjangkit seksual daripada hubungan sejenis”.

(some of the break down, the disruption of the institution resulted from the abnormal marriage, the children status if is allowed in the family and the spread of infectious diseases from the same sex intercourse) (17 September 2012, p. 33).

The dispute on the same-sex marriage was also further added from the stance of law specifically from the Sharia law and it was affirmed by BH newspaper that,

“Seksyen 69 Akta Pembaharuan (Perkahwinan dan Perceraian) 1976 menegaskan bahawa perkahwinan hendaklah antara pasangan lelaki dan perempuan saja. Ini dengan jelas menolak perkahwinan sejenis. Kedudukan undang-undang keluarga Islam berkaitan syarat sah perkahwinan ini juga begitu jelas”.

(Section 69 Renewal Act (Marriage and Divorce) 1976 insisted that marriage should be only between men and women. This clearly rejected same sex marriage. The legal position of Muslim family related with condition for marriage is very obvious) (21 June 2011, p. 22).

The government was also urged to combat the homosexual issues and same sex marriage as shown in the newspapers that, “kerajaan perlu bertindak lebih cepat, tegas dan agresif dalam menangani isu gay dan perkahwinan sejenis sebelum ia terus menular di negara ini” (*government must take quick, firm and aggressive action in tackling gay and same sex marriage before it continue to spread in this country*) (15 August 2011, p. 7).

The heavily reported of the same sex marriage controversies by Malaysian in the local media was later disparaged of the fear that it can inflict bad influence to the public and stated that “tidak seharusnya diperbesar-besarkan kerana bimbang ia boleh merosakkan pemikiran masyarakat negara ini” (*not be exaggerated for fear that it would harm the society’s state of mind*) (24 August 2011, p. 8).

Gay Rights and the Opposition Party

The findings on the issues related with rights among gay community was also interchangeably written on the allegation of the involvement of the opposition party that plays the dominant role in advocating the equality of rights. Inherent to this proclamation, it was asserted in the newspapers that opposition party is merely showing interest to issues with gay rights is nothing more than serving their political agenda. In one the coverage in the BH newspaper, it is stated that,

“Pemimpin pembangkang menyokong LGBT atas alasan hak kebebasan manusia dan mereka cuba politikkan isu ini. Parti pembangkang melihat dari sudut kepentingan politik sehingga menyetepikan nilai dan norma hidup manusia yang tidak lagi berpaksikan kepada batasan agama. Pembangkang tidak mempedulikan semua itu kerana kepentingan politik dan sanggup menyokong LGBT. Apakah ibu bapa mahu melihat anak-anak kita kahwin sesama sejenis. Bagaimanapun, pemimpin pembangkang menyokong LGBT atas alasan hak kebebasan manusia dan mereka cuba politikkan isu ini”.

(Opposition leaders supported LGBT on the ground of human rights and their freedom and they are trying to politicize the issue. Opposition party looks from the point of political interest to the exclusion of the values and norms of human

life that is no longer centered on religious restrictions. The opposition do not care about it because of the political interest and willing to support LGBT. Is the parent wants to see our children married to the same sex gender. However, opposition leader support LGBT for the reason of freedom and rights and they try to politicize the issues) (5 October 2012, p. 16).

The opposition party was veraciously depicted in the newspaper as providing a strong support to the gay rights with the intention to attract more votes from the gay community. It was asserted in the BH newspaper that,

"penularan LGBT dan seks bebas ini dijalankan secara terancang bertujuan merosakkan anak bangsa Malaysia dan meruntuhkan agama. Apa yang membimbangkan terdapat pemimpin pembangkang turut bersekongkol dengan mempromosi kegiatan ini demi memancing undi pada pilihan raya umum akan datang".

(The spread of LGBT and free sex was a well plan aimed at destroying the nation and undermining religion. What worries that there are opposition leader who support in promoting this activity to gain votes in the next election) (8 April 2012, p. 13).

In addition, the allegation of the engrossment of opposition party with gay community in championing the gay right and their freedom is heavily narrated in the newspapers to the extent of claiming on the pursuing gay marriage and the abolishment of law toward homosexual person as stated in the newspaper that,

"kegiatan itu semakin serius sejak kebelakangan ini sehingga mewujudkan kelompok besar yang berani menyuarakan kebebasan LBGT, termasuk menggesa kerajaan mengiktiraf kedudukan mereka seperti perkahwinan sesama sejenis serta menghapuskan undang-undang homoseksual".

(the activity is recently becoming serious until the large community was created that spoke out the rights of LGBT including the urgency to the government in recognizing them including same sex marriage and the abolishment of homosexual law) (8 April 2012, p. 13).

It is further elaborated in the newspapers on the allegation of the opposition party and their the solidarity to demand gay right in Malaysia was also buttress from the funding received through the foreign organization to be channel to local organization related with the gay social movement. It is asserted in the newspaper that,

"saya mempunyai bukti yang menunjukkan dana jutaan ringgit dari NGO luar negara disalurkan terus kepada NGO tempatan serta pemimpin pembangkang ini atas nama kegiatan memperjuang hak asasi manusia dan kebebasan bersuara".

(I have evidence that showed million ringgit funds from foreign NGO to local NGO and opposition leader in the name of championing human rights and freedom of speech) (8 April 2012, p. 13).

Gay Rights is the Western Agenda

The discussions on the gay rights was not only restricted with the allegation of the opposition party and their advocacy to the gay community in the country, but it was also framed in the newspapers that gay rights in Malaysia was getting much influence from the western countries in providing the full spectrum of gay rights movement to gay community in the country. It is asserted in the BH newspaper that,

“terdapat kronologi jelas yang boleh disandarkan dan dijadikan bukti mengapa isu kebebasan serta hak asasi manusia ini semakin lantang berkumandang di Malaysia walaupun kumpulan ini tahu ia menyentuh sensitiviti agama khususnya Islam. Kita boleh menilai sendiri, rentetan peristiwa berlaku di Malaysia kebelakangan ini seperti satu agenda tersusun Barat untuk memadamkan syiar Islam di Malaysia”.

(there is an obvious chronology which can be backed up and proven why issues with freedom and human rights is growing louder in Malaysia even the community realized it is sensitive especially among Muslim. We can evaluate it ourselves, the sequence of the events in Malaysia recently like an organized Western agenda to smother Islam in Malaysia) (16 January 2012, p. 17).

The wave of acceptance for homosexuality and same-sex relations has washed most of the Western countries based on the modern concept of human rights that was claimed to be the Western cultural construct,

“perjuangan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) sudah mendapat tempat sehingga sebilangan besar negara Barat memperakui hak diperjuangkan golongan ini. Penerimaan itu berdasarkan pemahaman apa yang diperjuangkan sebahagian daripada hak asasi manusia yang perlu diterima serta dihormati”.

(The campaign on LGBT had received attention with the large number of Western countries recognized the right of the community. The recognition is based on the understanding as a part of the human rights that should be accepted and respected) (17 September 2012, p. 33).

The foundation of Western cultural construct of human rights provides inherent and inalienable rights to all, regardless of culture and tradition. Notwithstanding, the only thing that matter with the human rights concept and freedom from the western countries was the exigent of prioritizing on what they believed they are entitled or allowed, such as a sexual rights agenda over the advancement of universal human rights. It is asserted in the newspaper,

“Tetapi di Barat dan juga pertubuhan-pertubuhan Islam liberal ini, mereka hanya menekankan satu hak sahaja iaitu apa yang mereka dapat atau perolehi. Dalam soal ini apa yang mereka perjuangkan adalah soal kebebasan. Mereka mahukan kebebasan termasuklah bebas memilih cara hidup walaupun songsang. Mereka hendakkan kebebasan bersuara dan lantang menyuarakan apa saja yang mereka rasa betul termasuklah membenarkan perlakuan seks luar tabii”.

(However, in the west and these liberal Islamic organizations, they only emphasized on the rights as to what they want and get. In this matter, what they fight is a matter of freedom. They want the freedom including the freedom to choose the way of life. They want freedom of speech and vocal on what they think is right including allowing unnatural sexual acts) (6 November 2011, p. 7).

The view that human rights is the western idea is also debunking on the inculcate of the prevaricate of the Quran as professed in the newspapers that,

“Mereka menafsirkan semula al-Quran berasaskan pemikiran dan pemahaman mereka yang kebanyakan tidak selari. Mungkin pada asalnya elok tetapi ia berakhir dengan penekanan yang berat sebelah dan hanya berdasarkan apa yang mereka mahu. Apatah lagi mereka perjuangkan berlandaskan hak asasi dan kebebasan yang keterlaluan dan akhirnya ia menjurus kepada kekeliruan”.

(They are re-interpreting the Quran based on the thinking and understanding that are mostly not in line. Probably, it is originally fair but it is ended with the sided emphasized and just based on what they want. Not to mention their fight was based on rights and freedom that is extreme which eventually leading to the confusion) (6 November 2011, p. 7).

And so, the Western progressive have made their move and trampling on the moral values of developing nations to impose the agenda as narrated in the newspapers,

"perjuangan LGBT sudah mendapat tempat sehingga sebilangan besar negara Barat memperakui hak diperjuangkan golongan ini. Penerimaan itu berdasarkan pemahaman apa yang diperjuangkan sebahagian daripada hak asasi manusia yang perlu diterima serta dihormati”.

(The fight on LGBT already found a place to so that a large number of Western countries certifies championed the rights of this group. The acceptance is based on the understanding of what being championed some part of the human rights that need to be accepted and respected) (17 September 2012, p. 33).

It was further asserted that Malaysia has no exclusion from getting the repercussion,

“gerakan menuntut hak dan kebebasan warga gay dan lesbian yang mempunyai kedudukan kukuh di negara-negara Barat pasti akan berusaha untuk menyebarkan nilai-nilai mereka ke seluruh dunia termasuk Malaysia”.

(the movement for the rights and freedoms for gay and lesbian people that has solid place in the Western countries will certainly seek to spread their value to entire world including Malaysia) (22 November 2005, p. 5).

The Personifying of Anti-gay Movement

In a somewhat similar aspect of the discussion on the Western influence to the gay rights movement in the country, the newspapers also sparked on the resistance and the condescension towards gay social movement. While the hike of gay rights continues across the West, Malaysia continues to hardening the repression of people on the basis of their sexuality with the growing bigotry to alternative sexuality was thought to be emerging.

The profound argument on the anti-gay movement in Malaysia was further infuriated from the controversial event of *Seksualiti Merdeka*. *Seksualiti Merdeka* that can be loosely translated as “Sexuality Independence” is an annual human rights festival on sexuality held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and organized by a coalition of number of non-governmental organization such as Malaysian Council Bar, Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), PT Foundation, United Nations and Amnesty International. *Seksualiti Merdeka* was intents to empower Malaysians of all sexualities through series of talks, forums, workshops, art, theatre, music performances, interactive installations and films screenings,

“Penganjuran program itu dipromosikan melalui laman sesawang www.seksualitimerdeka.org yang kononnya bertujuan mempertahankan hak golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT) agar boleh diterima masyarakat negara ini. Penaja dan penyokong program yang berlangsung selama 13 hari itu antaranya Majlis Peguam dan Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) manakala aktivitinya termasuk bengkel, perbincangan, filem, pameran dan persembahan”.

(The organizing of the program was being promoting through website www.seksualitimerdeka.org that was believed to fight the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) so that can be accepted among society. The sponsored and the supporter of the program that was held for 13 days are The Malaysian Bar and SUARAM while the activities are including workshop, discussion, film, exhibition and performance) (4 November 2011, p. 4).

It was reported in the newspaper that the purpose of *Seksualiti Merdeka* was allegedly anticipated to promote free sex and demanded rights among sexual minority group, “*Seksualiti Merdeka menuntut kebebasan seks bukan sahaja bagi sesama lelaki dan sesama perempuan. Mereka juga menuntut kebebasan bagi seks semua jenis (termasuk pondan) yang dinamakan LGBT, akronim bagi lesbian, gay, biseksual, transgender*” (*Seksualiti Merdeka claimed for the sexual freedom not only among men and women. They also demanding sexual freedom for all (including transvestite) which were name LGBT, acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender*) (18 March 2012, p. 10).

The event of *Seksualiti Merdeka* was subsequently created a protest especially from the non-government organizations including Islamic and non-Islamic organizations who feared that the programmed could create disharmony, enmity and disturb public order as asserted in the newspapers, “*bagaimanapun program yang bertujuan memperjuangkan hak LGBT mendapat bantahan keras daripada pelbagai pihak bukan sahaja di kalangan masyarakat Islam malah komuniti bukan Islam*” (*however, the program that intended to fight the right of LGBT receives major backlash from the various parties not limited to Muslim but also non-Muslim community*) (27 April 2012, p. 13).

It was later extensively insinuated in the newspapers that the event will flares up negativity among public, “*penganjuran program Seksualiti Merdeka dan apa juga perkara yang boleh membawa kepada kemungkaran serta memberi kesan kepada masyarakat mahupun negara perlu dicegah*” (*the hosting of the Seksualiti Merdeka program and any matter which can lead to disobedience and affects to the society or country must be prevented*) (3 November 2011, p. 4). The event that was supposed to be held in November 2011 was later shutdown amidst being label indecent and subversive.

The authority were asked to take legal restriction to prevent any functions relating to the program as well as to counter what it call social immorality,

“Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) mengambil tindakan tegas mengharamkan segala bentuk aktiviti dan promosi program yang berunsurkan seks bebas, Seksualiti Merdeka 2011 berkuat kuasa hari ini. Selain mengarahkan program itu dihentikan serta-merta, polis juga membuka dua kertas siasatan dan akan mengambil tindakan undang-undang terhadap mana-mana pihak yang meneruskan program itu, sama ada ia dibuat secara tertutup atau terbuka”

(Malaysian Royal Police take strict action by prohibiting all forms of activities and promotion to the sexual oriented program, Seksualiti Merdeka 2011, effectively today. Besides asking to stop the program immediately, police also open two investigation papers and will take legal action to any party that continue the program) (4 November 2011, p. 4).

Alongside with the authority, host of non-government organizations especially from the Muslim groups have also expressed outrage against the event, stating that the event is absolutely despicable, “beberapa pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO) berkaitan agama menentang keras penganjuran Seksualiti Merdeka yang mahu memperjuangkan hak golongan homoseksual berlandaskan hak asasi manusia” *(several non-government organizations that related with religions strongly opposed the organizing of Seksualiti Merdeka who wants to fight homosexuals based on their rights)* (2 November 2011, p. 4). For instance, one of the non-government organizations name Mighty Native Organization or *Persatuan Pribumi Perkasa* (PERKASA) called the event of *Seksualiti Merdeka* is disrespectful, “Presiden Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (PERKASA), Datuk Ibrahim Ali pula menyifatkan penganjuran program berkenaan bersifat kurang ajar” *(The President of Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (PERKASA), Datuk Ibrahim Ali describing the program as rude)* (2 November 2011, p. 4) with several non-government organizations lodged a police report against the event,

“Gabungan Pertubuhan Islam Bukan Kerajaan (ACCIN) hari ini membuat laporan polis bagi membantah penganjuran Seksualiti Merdeka 2011 yang dilihat bagi menjayakan gerakan homoseksual di negara ini. Laporan dibuat bagi menghalang penganjuran program yang menuntut pengiktirafan golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) kerana jelas bertentangan dengan tuntutan semua agama”.

(Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGO's (ACCIN) today make a police report to contend the organizing of Seksualiti Merdeka 2011 that was seen as to raise the homosexual movement in the country. the report was made to stop the

organizing program that demanded recognition of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) that is clearly against the religion adherent) (3 November 2011, p. 4).

Given this dynamics on the analysis of *Seksualiti Merdeka* throughout the newspapers, it is clear that there seems to be an overarching political and cultural lucidity in disseminating the sexual minority group in the country. Nonetheless, it is still stimulating to see how a festival that openly defending sexual diversity emerged within such a politically-charged circumstantial. *Seksualiti Merdeka* still gets space in the government-controlled media, albeit not in the positive narrative. The sexual diversity is still hostile in the country as depicted in the newspapers that accentuating the definition of human rights according to the value of religion and cultural specifically in Malaysia,

“sesuatu kebebasan itu bukanlah bersifat mutlak tetapi mestilah berteraskan keadilan sejagat yang bermatlamatkan memberi masalah kepada manusia dan menolak sebarang kerosakan kepada kehidupan mereka. Penafsiran kesaksamaan gender haruslah dirujuk berasaskan nilai agama dan budaya ketimuran yang amat menekankan adab sopan dan tata susila. Budaya lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) merupakan budaya songsang yang masuk ke negara kita dan menyalahi norma kehidupan masyarakat dan agama”.

(A freedom is not absolute but must be guided with universal justice, which provide objective ‘masalah’ to people and rejected any damages to their lives. The interpretation of gender equality must be referring based on the religion’s value and east cultural that emphasized on manners and moral. The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) is a deviant cultural that enter to our country and violate the norms of public life and religion) (4 November 2011, p. 4)

5.3.3.2 Law and Legislation on Homosexuals

Under the elements of shared roles and rules too, the media construction on homosexuality was also being highlighted profoundly from the stance of law and legal in the country. The researcher elaborates the findings to four subsections: (i) the ban of gay sex (ii) the fiasco of anti-gay law and Anwar Ibrahim (iii) the Civil law and Sharia law and (iv) the authority and the enforcement.

The Ban of Gay Sex

The discussion on homosexuality in the newspapers was also being highlighted profoundly from the stance of law and legal in the country. The coverage on

homosexuality in the country from both UM and BH are profusely emphasized the narrative on homosexual behavior and the gay community from the standpoint of law and legal perspective in Malaysia. The issues had been discussed largely in the newspapers and undoubtedly, it is stated that the country has a clear stance on issue around homosexuality and alternately considered gay sex as an offense and utterly prohibited in the country.

It is stated in the UM newspaper that “kita bernasib baik kerana negara kita mempunyai undang-undang yang mengharamkan amalan keji LGBT” (*We are lucky because our country has a law that prohibited the despicable practices of LGBT*) (5 May 2012, p. 13) and was also asserted the zero tolerance with no legitimate permission on this behavior as cited in UM newspaper in one of the article, “tiada peruntukan undang-undang yang membenarkan hubungan sejenis, seks bebas dan perkahwinan sejenis di negara ini” (*there is no law and its allocation to allow same sex relation, free sex and same sex marriage in this country*) (23 March 2012, p. 10).

Indeed, it is copiously stated by the newspapers that government is taking action to overcome homosexual issues especially among Muslim society in Malaysia and asserted that, “menyedari masalah itu (homoseksual) semakin menular, kerajaan telah mengambil langkah berterusan bagi mengatasi masalah sosial seperti lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender terutamanya di kalangan masyarakat Islam (*realizing that the issue (homosexual) become more rampant, the government had taken next action to overcome issues such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender*) (23 March 2012, p. 10).

The gay sex activities or as it was often called homosexual culture among media in Malaysia is become more apparent when coverage from the newspapers provides remarkable statement that the gay movement in the country is becoming more belligerent to the point of claiming that activities related with gay community in the country has now gain a strong support from the international body. For instance, it is stated in the newspaper from UM newspaper that there is some resistance from the international organization for the abolishment of the law on sodomy that revolved

around the dispute with human right issues. In one of the coverage from UM newspaper and asserted that,

“realitinya, gerakan LGBT semakin meresap kuat di negara ini dengan mendapat sokongan pelbagai badan antarabangsa. Antaranya, Human Rights Watch yang mendesak agar undang-undang mengkategorikan liwat sebagai jenayah di Malaysia, dihapuskan kerana dianggap lapuk. Ada juga pihak asing yang khabarnya memberikan bantuan kewangan dan nasihat kepada LGBT di negara ini”.

(in reality, LGBT movement shown an increased interest in the country with all the support received from many international bodies. For example, Human Rights Watch that urged for the law on sodomy as a crime in Malaysia to be repealed because it was obsolete. There is also some foreign parties that seemingly provide help on funds and advise to LGBT in this country) (12 August 2012, p. 6).

The Fiasco of Anti-gay Law and Anwar Ibrahim

The allegation on getting the support and funding from the international agency related with human right organization to abort the colonial era of law on sodomy in Malaysia as reported in the newspapers was also added with the indictment of the advisor of opposition party, Anwar Ibrahim when he was also purported to amend the sodomy law in Malaysia. In one of the interview with British Broadcast Corporation (BBC), Anwar Ibrahim was reported in the UM newspaper and said that,

“ketika ditemu bual oleh wartawan BBC baru-baru ini, Ketua Pembangkang, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim telah mempertikaikan undang-undang yang bersifat diskriminasi terhadap golongan homoseksual di negara ini. Sambil menyifatkan undang-undang berkenaan sebagai sudah lapuk, Penasihat Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) itu berkata ia tidak boleh diterima sebagai sesuatu yang relevan”.

(during the interview with BBC reporter recently, the opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was questioned the law on the discrimination towards homosexual in the country. While describing the law as already obsolete, the advisor of People Justice Party (PKR) said, it is unacceptable as something relevant) (18 January 2012, p. 11).

The allegation of Anwar Ibrahim on his commend for the abrogation of the law related with gay sex act and the activities related with gay community were covered extensively and sometimes sensationally by both local and international media when it was reported

that law used to penalized homosexuality cases is merely a form of humiliation and oppression. It is stated in the UM newspaper that,

“Ketua pembangkang, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim mengulangi pendiriannya sebelum ini yang mahu undang-undang kononnya digunakan untuk mengaibkan seseorang dipinda termasuk peruntukan dalam Seksyen 377 (B) dan 377 (C) Kanun Keseksaan. Pendirian itu dinyatakan dengan alasan bahawa undang-undang sedia ada itu tidak boleh dikekalkan kerana kononnya ia bersifat zalim dan terdedah kepada amalan fitnah oleh pihak-pihak tertentu”.

(Opposition leader, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim reiterated his stance before this who want the law supposedly used to humiliate someone as amended in Section 377 (B) and 377 (C) Penal Code. The establishment was stated with an excuse on the grounds that the existing law cannot be maintained because it was assumed as despotic and expose to defamation practices by certain parties) (23 January 2012, p. 4).

As consequences, the indication from Anwar Ibrahim on gay sex act that need to be review had received the numerous outburst from the media and was claimed as the politically motivated. It was reported in the UM newspaper as “langkah Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim mempertikaikan undang-undang berkaitan kegiatan homoseksual di negara ini jelas membuktikan ‘keberanian’ Ketua Pembangkang itu menentang hukum Islam demi politik” *(the action of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in questioning the law related with homosexual activity in the country clearly proven the mettle of the opposition leader against the law of Islam for political purposes) (16 January 2012, p. 5).*

The spread of homosexual activities were then being put in context of assuming of producing the extremist that work on against the law. UM newspaper asserted that, “kita bimbang jika pandangan terlalu liberal yang dibawa Ketua Pembangkang tidak dibendung, maka akan lahir golongan pelampau yang akan mengambil tindakan sendiri apabila merasakan undang-undang tidak lagi mampu mengekang kegiatan LGBT” *(We worried if the extremely liberal belief that was brought up by the opposition leader is unrestraint, then it will produce extremists that will take own action when they feels the law is no longer able to curb the activities of LGBT) (18 January 2012, p. 11).*

It was further stated that the law on same sex relation has been around long time ago in the country as stated in UM newspaper that,

“tidak timbul isu lapuk kerana hukuman bagi seks luar tabii sudah ada sejak zaman kesultanan Melayu Islam dan batu bersurat lagi. Secara langsung pertikaian mengenainya membabitkan akidah kerana Allah telah melarang tetapi ada pula yang memperjuangkannya. Malah jika menurut undang-undang, mereka ini adalah 'penjenayah', jadi memang tidak boleh gerakan LGBT ini diiktiraf dari sudut sivil”.

(no issue of obsolete because punishment of deviant sex act was already existed since the time of the Malacca Sultanate and inscription stone. Directly, the dispute involving faith because Allah has prohibited but there are people who support it. Even, if according to the law, they are criminals so the movement of LGBT is not recognized from the side of civil) (29 April 2012, p. 7).

Nevertheless, the insistence was made from the media to uphold the existing law on homosexuality and stated that the law must be preserved as UM newspaper stated that, "oleh itu, undang-undang negara (Kanun Keseksaan) yang mengharamkan perbuatan liwat wajib dipertahankan walaupun Anwar menuduhnya lapuk dan tidak relevan. Walau apa yang berlaku kita wajib mempertahankan peruntukan ini," *(the state of law (Penal Code) that proscribe sodomy act must be preserved even Anwar claimed that it is obsolete. No matter what, we must preserve this provision) (16 January 2012, p. 5).*

The Civil Law and Sharia Law

Given from the incident of the allegation of Anwar Ibrahim on his provocation to amend law related with gay people, these Malay language newspaper are constantly affirmed that the same sex relation and any sexual sex act misconduct is exceptionally prohibited in Malaysia from the legal perspective. Malaysia has a dual legal system. There are federal civil and criminal courts, but at the state level, Muslim use Sharia Courts for religious and family issue and for homosexuals was condemned under both jurisdictions. In one of the articles from BH newspaper, it is stated that,

“Undang-undang negara memperuntukkan jika terdapat kes seperti ini dan didapati bersalah, pesalah akan menghadapi hukuman seperti denda, penjara sehingga 20 tahun dan sebat. Di samping itu, sekiranya mereka yang beragama Islam melakukan perkara songsang itu, mereka boleh didakwa di mahkamah Islam”.

(The law of the country was assigned if there is a case like this and if it was found guilty, the offender will face the penalties such as fines, 29 years in jail and whipping. Other than that, if they were Muslim involved in homosexual sex act, they can be prosecuted in Islamic court) (3 July 2012, p. 26).

While Malaysian law does not specifically criminalize gay or lesbian sex, Section 377A of the Penal Code makes it illegal to perform sodomy sex act or fellatio. The particular section states that a man who puts his penis into the anus or mouth of another person is said to commit carnal intercourse against the order of nature, which is punishable with whipping and imprisonment of up to 20 years. The assertion on the statement of legal jurisdiction in which involved homosexuals sex act are extensively elaborated UM newspaper in its coverage as asserted,

“Malaysia terus mempertahankan bahawa budaya LBGT adalah salah dalam apa aspek sekalipun. Undang-undang yang sedia ada akan menghukum pelakunya sebagaimana terkandung dalam seksyen 377A, 377C dan 377D, Kanun Keseksaan; dan perkahwinan yang sah dalam Seksyen 69 Akta Pembaharuan (Perkahwinan dan Pembubaran Perkahwinan) 1976 adalah antara lelaki dan wanita, bukannya sesama jenis”.

(Malaysia will keep on uphold that LGBT is wrong in any aspect whatsoever. The existing law will punish the wrongdoer as contained in Section 377A, 377C and 377D, Penal Code; and legal marriage in Section 69 Renewal Act (Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage) 1976 is between men and women, not the same sex) (11 November 2011, p. 13).

The assertion on the Sharia law has also made a frequent depiction from the newspapers by highlighting the form of the penalty if any Muslim were convicted with the offense from homosexual sex related crime. Unlike the civil courts in Malaysia, which is a federalized court system, the Sharia Court is primarily established for the state law. Similarly, Sharia or Islamic law is a matter of state law and Sharia law in one state might differ to that of another state. For example, UM newspaper affirmed that penal code of Sharia law for the state of Selangor as,

“Dari sudut perundangan syariah, setiap negeri memperuntukkan undang-undang berhubung hukuman bagi mereka yang didapati bersalah melakukan hubungan seks luar tabii seperti yang dituntut oleh golongan ini. Sebagai contoh Enakmen 9, Enakmen Jenayah Syariah (Selangor) 1995, Seksyen 28 menyatakan sesiapa yang melakukan persetubuhan bertentangan dengan hukum tabii dengan mana-mana lelaki, perempuan atau binatang adalah melakukan suatu kesalahan. Ia memperuntukkan denda tidak melebihi RM5,000 atau penjara selama tempoh

tidak melebihi tiga tahun atau sebatan tidak melebihi enam kali atau dihukum dengan mana-mana kombinasi hukuman itu, jika sabit kesalahan”.

(From the view of Sharia law, each state owed the law regarding penalties for those who found guilty on anal sex intercourse as claimed in this group. For example Enactment 9, Enactment of Sharia Crime (Selangor) 1995, Section 28 stated that for those who are doing unlawful sexual intercourse with any men, women or animal it is considered as a felony. It can be fines for not more than RM5000 or imprisonment for not more than three years or whipping not more than six times or penalized with in any of the combination thereof if found guilty) (9 March 2012, p. 12).

Meanwhile, in Federal Territories the penal code from the Sharia Court of the offense for those Muslim who involved with any gay activities or same sex relation was also asserted in the UM newspaper,

“dalam aspek penguatkuasaan pula, Akta Kesalahan Jenayah Syariah (Wilayah-Wilayah Persekutuan) 1997 (Akta 559) telah memperuntukan hukuman yang jelas mengenai kesalahan yang menjurus kepada aktiviti LGBT dan boleh dikuatkuasakan kepada orang Islam sahaja. Antara peruntukan yang berkaitan adalah Seksyen 21 (kesalahan pelacuran); Seksyen 25 (kesalahan liwat); Seksyen 26 (kesalahan musahaqah atau perhubungan sejenis sesama perempuan); Seksyen 28 (lelaki berlagak perempuan) dan Seksyen 29 (perbuatan tidak sopan di tempat awam)”.

(In the enforcement aspect, Sharia Criminal Act (Federal Territories) 1997 (Act 559) already provides for a clear penalty on offenses leading to LGBT activities and can be enforceable to Muslims only. Among of the relevant provisions is Section 21 (prostitution offenses) Section 25 (sodomy offenses); Section 28 (men posing women) and Section 29 (indecent behavior in public) (23 March 2012, p. 10).

The Authority and the Enforcement

A result from the heavily reported on homosexuality and gay sex act in the country, the newspaper alternately demonstrated greater emphasis on the enforcement and prosecution from the authorities to any gay sexual misconduct and it was widely stated in both newspapers. The authority including Royal Malaysian Police was reported in fighting any activities related with gay sexual act and the homosexual behavior to individuals who engage with the activities. In one of the coverage in the UM newspaper, it was asserted that, “Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) tidak pernah berkompromi terhadap

aktiviti menyalahi undang-undang dan akan membanteras aktiviti seks songsang secara berterusan, termasuk gerakan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT)” (*Royal Malaysian Police never compromised to activities that against the law and will combat deviant sexual sex act consistently, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement*) (13 March 2012, p. 8).

The prosecution to homosexual sex act and same sex relation was also being highlighted in the newspapers from the religious authority including State Islamic Religious Department and Malaysian Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) to resist on the spread of gay sex activities in the country. It was reported in the UM newspaper that,

“pihak Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri dan Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) serta badan-badan bukan kerajaan (NGO) yang berasaskan dakwah hendaklah berganding bahu memacu perubahan dalam pendekatan mereka mengatasi masalah ini sebelum bertambah parah lagi”.

(the State Islamic Religious Department and religious based of non-government organizations (NGO) must work together to drive the change in approaching them and overcome the problem before it will be more intense) (9 March 2012, p. 12).

It was further asserted in the newspaper on the action by the authority that was given the full support from others agency such as Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (SKMM) or Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission,

“Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) sentiasa memantau aktiviti golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transgender (LGBT) termasuk laman-laman web yang mempromosikan seks songsang dan pemantauan itu turut mendapat kerjasama daripada Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (SKMM)”.

(Malaysian Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) always monitors activities of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) including related websites that promote deviant sex act and the monitoring will get the cooperation from Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (SKMM)) (13 March 2012, p. 8).

Nonetheless, it appeared that the government was started to look on homosexuals issue many years ago on the banning of gay individual to be appeared in the media that will publicly promoting the rights and culture of homosexuality and asserted in the UM

newspaper that “pada 1994, kerajaan melarang sesiapa yang melakukan homoseksual, biseksual dan transeksual untuk muncul di dalam media bagi mengekang pengaruh golongan ini mencari mangsa dan mengekang penularan aktiviti tidak sihat ini” (*in 1994, the government prohibited those who involved in homosexual, bisexual and transsexual from appearing in the media to restraint the influence of this people from looking for the victim and restraint from spreading this immoral activity*) (3 July 2012, p. 26).

It is further added that government was persistently created a new mechanism to counteract homosexuality in the country with UM newspaper asserted that, “kerajaan didesak mewujudkan satu mekanisme atau undang-undang dalam mengekang masalah budaya gay sebelum ia menjadi lebih rumit dan sukar dikawal” (5 January 2011, p. 25) though the existing law need to be amplified constantly “peruntukan undang-undang sedia ada perlu dimantapkan agar ia lebih jelas selain hukuman tegas yang dapat memberi kesan terhadap usaha menangani gejala tersebut” (*the allocation of the existing law will be strengthening so it will be clearer in addition to the tough sanction that can give effect on the efforts to eradicate the problem*) (14 March 2012, p. 23).

Suffice to say, the existing law on homosexuality is still appeared to be significant and substantial as depicted in the newspapers that, “undang-undang berkaitan kegiatan homoseksual di negara ini relevan dan berperanan luas dalam mengekang gejala di luar tabii yang melanggar kejadian semula jadi itu daripada terus menular” (*The law on homosexual act in the country is relevant and has a wide role to curb the deviant sex act that is violate the natural occurrence from spreading*) (16 January 2012, p. 5) and strongly stressed on the Federal Constitution that established Islam as the official religion of the federation by following the Islamic regulation that completely rejected homosexual sex act,

“kewujudan undang-undang berkaitan homoseksual itu selaras dengan undang-undang Islam dan lain-lain peraturan agama di Malaysia. Di dalam Perlembagaan, katanya, secara jelas menyatakan bahawa Islam sebagai agama rasmi dan tiada pihak boleh meminda undang-undang yang sememangnya selaras dengan agama Islam”.

(the existence of the law related with homosexual is accordance with the Islamic law and other religious regulations in Malaysia. In the Constitution, it is clear that Islam is the official religions and no parties can amend the law that is in line with Islam) (16 January 2012, p. 5).

5.3.4 Symbolic Codes

Under element of social constructionism too, has what was called symbolic code or language. Here, the interpretation of symbolic code may refer to the way on how the words and context of homosexuality coverage was being depicted in the media. The findings emerged under this element was intertwined on theme such as social and moral, religion, health and psychology and discussed in two main sections: (i) negative connotation and (ii) emphasizing on the Islamic narrative.

5.3.4.1 Negative Connotation

On the basis of the available findings, homosexuality is at most unacceptable with utmost of negative portrayal. The attitude towards homosexuality described from these Malay language newspapers within the periods of study explicitly instigated a prejudice with most of derogatory terms and label. The use of the term such as ‘memberi kesan negatif’ (*negative consequence*), ‘satu bentuk ancaman’ (*form of threat*) and ‘merosakkan nilai sistem sosial’ (*erode the value of the social system*) and many more are frequently being used to describe homosexuality behavior and practice. For instance, homosexuality and gay sex act was often being labeled as a major threat that can destroy the value of the social system and ultimately depraved the basis of heterosexual and traditional family in Malaysia. For examples, BH newspapers highlighted that “usaha golongan lesbian, gay, biseksual dan transeksual (LGBT) untuk menuntut hak di negara ini perlu diperangi habis-habisan kerana ia boleh mengundang kepada kecelaruan moral dan keruntuhan institusi kekeluargaan” (*the initiative of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transexual (LGBT) to claim right in this country must be fight because it can bring to the moral damage and the corruption of family institution*) (22 April 2012, p. 10).

Similarly, UM newspaper also sharing the same sentiment when it highlighted that homosexuality is the factor that can degraded family institution. It was asserted that "bukan sahaja terpesong dari sistem kemanusiaan sejagat malah merosakkan sistem

sosial dan institusi kekeluargaan" (*not only deflected from the system of universal humanity but even damage the social system and the family institution*) (28 April 2012, p. 12) and added that "jika dilihat daripada perspektif yang lebih besar, budaya ini akan merosakkan sistem sosial dan sistem keluarga" (*if it is viewed from the larger perspective, this culture will corrupt the social and the family system*) (10 May 2012, p. 12).

The findings also revolved around the prejudice to the homosexuals and their struggle of heterosexual marriage and the homosexual sex act debacle among young children which mostly employed negative connotation. For example, the stereotypical images towards homosexuals was often highlighted within HIV and AIDS stigma that often depicted by name calling and negative label. Homosexual people and those practicing same-sex relations were called as people who experienced psychological disorder that also fitted to have mental illness. They were also frequently stigmatized as the HIV carrier.

In one of the example, it was highlighted by UM newspaper that, "jika ditinjau dari sudut perubatan mereka ini adalah kumpulan yang bermasalah dari segi psikologi dan sudah tentu dikelaskan sebagai orang yang sakit. Sakit ini berkaitan dengan emosi, dan dengan kata lain sakit jiwa" (*if it is reviewed from the medical perspective, they are a group of people who had problem from psychological view and indeed were classified as sick person. This sickness is related with emotion and in other words as mental illness*) (28 April 2012, p. 13). Suprisingly, the label given by the newspaper was started even as early as year 2000 by the following statement by UM newspaper and asserted that "golongan tersebut juga boleh dikatakan mengalami masalah gangguan jiwa dan mengalami tekanan dalam masyarakat" (*these people can also been named as suffer from mental disorder and pressure in the society*) (18 January 2000, p. 22). Clearly, the term such as 'sick', 'illness' has been repeatedly used by the newspaper to describe homosexuals people.

Homosexual person is not only labeled as people with mental disorder. The findings also discovered that most coverage labeled them as people who are lack of self-esteem, easily

beguile which often consented with mental pressure and self-refusal to understand the bad consequence of their gay sex activities. And it was asserted in UM newspaper that, “pengamal seks songsang dikategorikan sebagai golongan yang mengalami masalah psikologi sehingga mereka cenderung memilih kaum sejenis tanpa memikirkan kesan penyakit yang boleh menjangkiti mereka” (*deviant sex practitioner was categorized as people who suffered from psychology problem and tend to choose same sex partner without thinking the side effect which can infect them*) (30 December 2010, p. 13).

Not only that the coverage on homosexuality was widely narrated in negative tone, the coverage was also frequently intermingled with the Islamic narrative.

5.3.4.2 Emphasizing on the Islamic Narrative

The findings also unravel on how expressions of religion especially Islam in Malaysia influence the attitudes in the media towards the sexual minorities group. Both UM and BH newspapers relied heavily on religious subject and commentary, which reflexed the propensity of the strong religious stance among Malaysian public that is almost necessarily an indication of the negative impression. The subject surrounding homosexuality was broadly narrated and was given significant attention with most coverage asserted that Islam is meticulously against the act of homosexual sex behavior which extend the homosexual sex acts with similar connotation of adultery or unlawful sex relations and widely discussed critically especially between year 2009 to 2012.

Moreover, both Malay language newspapers were likely to append their stories with statements by religious figures, even if it was a sympathetic coverage to homosexuality. The discussion surrounding homosexuality within Islamic narration goes beyond a mere critical disapproval but whoever committed the homosexuals' sex behavior will experience the retaliation from Allah during the judgment day. Both Malay language newspapers had also undergone a review in content and tone by emphasizing their identity of Malay Muslim as a crucial integer with the alternate of negative remarks on homosexuality that often conflated within the conflicts of religion.

The excerpt from the Quran and Hadith becomes the crucial references in both Malay language newspapers in describing homosexuality. It was profusely indicates that the Quran is very explicit in the condemnation of homosexual sex act behavior and heavily highlighted the negative consequences to the society and stump the state's interest of social institution. Moreover, homosexuality was also widely referred to Lot's people as the followers from the prophet Lot (pbuh), who preached against homosexuality in the cities of Sodom and Gomorra that was later destroyed causes by the same sex practiced among Lot's people. Hence, the portrayal of homosexuals' sex act from both Malay language newspapers was articulately narrated in the newspapers with the resemblance of Lot's people. As a matter of fact, homosexual sex act and same sex relation are constantly being reminded in the newspapers with Lot's people throughout the period of the study along with frequent verses quoted from the Quran.

The researcher come to theorize on the common use of remarks given to homosexuals from the preceding discussion on the negative labeling when they were often called with derogatory and hostile terms used to depict this social group in the newspapers. It is to be assumed that depiction on homosexuality with unpleasant name and connotation were frequently used in the newspapers because it was somehow motivated and innervate by the excerpt taken from the Quran and Hadith to pronounce homosexuality in most coverage about homosexuality. For example, in one of the coverage in UM newspapers, the Quran verse of 80-81 from Al-A'raf was used and the verse tells,

“Dan (Kami juga telah mengutus) Luth (kepada kaumnya). (Ingatlah) tatkala dia berkata kepada mereka: “Mengapa kamu mengerjakan perbuatan fahsiah (keji) itu yang belum dikerjakan oleh seseorang pun (di dunia ini) sebelum kamu? Sesungguhnya kamu mendatangi lelaki untuk melepaskan nafsu mu (kepada mereka), bukan kepada wanita, malah kamu ini adalah kaum yang melampaui batas”

And Lot, when he said to his people, “Do you commit lewdness no people anywhere have ever committed before you? You lust after men rather women; you are an excessive people (25 May 2012, p. 12. LGBT idolize desire).

Another example was also asserted in the newspapers that was taken from the Prophet in the Hadith of Ibn Abbas says, “Aku melaknat lelaki menyerupai perempuan dan

perempuan menyerupai lelaki” (Hadis Riwayat Bukhari) / *I cursed the men who look like a women and women look like a men (Hadith Sahih al-Bukhari)* (June 15, 2010, p. 29. Homosexuals need to be smart to handle lust).

Given the example, the word ‘commit lewdness’ (*perbuatan keji*) and ‘cursed’ (*melaknat*) and another similar connotations that was used in the Quran verse and Hadith shown that homosexuality was interpreted and referred as bad and immoral which ultimately tells the homosexuality is the negative behavior that needs to be shunned. As consequence, it eventually works like a ‘sense of consent’ that constantly become legitimate and looks purely fine if the local media use and take the similar terms in depicting homosexuality in general. However, the assumption requires further research and investigation.

The findings also emerged on the deliberation towards human rights issue within the discourse of civil law and shariah law for the Muslim that emphasized on the significance of the Federal Constitution which constitutes Islam as the official religion in the country. As country who practiced a dual-track legal system which is federal civil and criminal courts while for Muslims legal disputes on family matters like marriage, divorce and inheritance and the precepts of Islam are dealt with under the shariah law, it is heavily asserted in the newspapers that homosexuality was condemned under both jurisdictions which given much articulation in the newspapers.

It is often asserted in the newspapers that concept of human rights must constantly compelled within the Islamic framework following the shariah law that interchangeably mentioned about Quran and Hadith as the main religious precept and the vital sources of the Islamic law. The discussion on homosexuality and human rights was subjugated around freedom of expression and the argument on social equality among gay community including the discussion on same-sex marriage with most of the articles provides declination remark toward the subject. Not only that the publications on same-sex marriage were also clearly articulated with most of the negative reports that can contribute to the violation of the natural law specifically the sanctitude of the institution

of family, the argument of same-sex marriage or gay marriage was accentuated within the Islamic stance that only recognized a marriage between men and women in which will definitely insults the God's law if the gay marriage is being practice in the country.

The assertion on the shariah law has made a frequent depiction from the newspapers by highlighting the form of the penalty if any Muslim were convicted with the offense from homosexual sex related crime. It was widely stated in the newspapers that alternately demonstrated greater emphasis on the enforcement and prosecution from the authorities to any gay sexual act. The authority such as Royal Malaysian Police was mentioned repeatedly to combat any activities related with homosexual sex act and to the individuals who engaged with the activities.

The persecution to any engagement of gay sexual act was also highlighted in the newspapers from the religious organization and authority such as the State Islamic Religious Department and Malaysian Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) to resist on the propagation of gay sex activities in the country. Hence, it can be informed that the religion of Islam was also working as the basis of references in the newspapers to show the conflicting course from the stance of the Malaysian Constitution that signified the strong principle of the official religion of the country.

Overall, section 5.3 discussed on the findings on how homosexuality coverage was constructed in Malay language newspapers. The finding is discussed to answer research question two (RQ2): How coverage of homosexuality was socially constructed in the Malay language newspapers with references emerged from social constructionism? By employing qualitative content analysis, that emerged several dominants themes on the homosexuality coverage, the findings then discussed under the four elements of social constructionism theory. The following section will discuss on the findings of the in-depth interview study from the Malay homosexual respondents and seek how their received and inferred the provided perspective of the coverage on homosexuality as described from the Malay language newspapers. The similar section will also explore the

respondent's assessment of the coverage and analyse the comments that have been made of these depiction.

5.4 Findings on the Perception of the Coverage and the Contested Identity

This section focuses on the findings from the in-depth interview study. The in-depth interview was performed to answer research question three (RQ 3): How homosexual's readers perceived the coverage with their own personal identity interfacing with the media depiction? Throughout the interview process, the discussion revolves on how respondents perceived and countered the portrayal on homosexuality as demonstrated from the newspapers and their influences of the coverage to their personal and conflicted identity.

There were ten interviews being conducted with respondents particularly among self-identified Malay homosexual with the intention of seeking how these individuals received and inferred the construction of homosexuality as reported in both Malay language newspapers. By using the respondents' personal experience and narration, the interview study was also aim to examine meanings of the findings from the qualitative content analysis in the newspapers which was analysed from the main elements of social constructionism.

The interview also attempted to understand how they negotiated such meanings between their own identity and the media depiction of homosexuality identity frame within the operation of heterosexual dominant in the contemporary society. As such, the interview may provide the opportunity to see how the discourse of issue participants to be compares with their personal identity and narrative presented publicly through the coverage published. Prior the interview process, the sexual orientation of the respondents must be acknowledged because the reading of this research must equate the inherent bias of homosexuality issues in the newspapers.

The discussion of the findings from the interview begins with the respondents' on their perception towards the media construction of homosexuality. The analysis then goes

further and discusses the influence of their identity towards the discourse on homosexuality as constructed from the newspapers. It is important to observe the emerged pattern of answers from the interviews in order to help the researcher to nail down the most likely reactions from the coverage on homosexuality in such a way based from the themes acquired in the content analysis study. All interviews were based on semi-structured questions (refer Appendix C).

Each of the respondents will be given due indication but the researcher shall not be presenting all ten of the respondents across for all topics uncover throughout the analysis. This selective airing is not for the researcher wanting to impose any arbitrary editorial cuts, but rather the main intention is to lessen duplication where responses conveyed are alike.

The interview questions were generated based from the dominant themes constructed through the analysis of the newspapers that used qualitative content analysis study. Then, the findings from the interview were analysed and arranged according to the four main elements of social constructionsim following the similar arrangement and discussion of the findings of the coverage as discussed in section 5.3. Thus, the following section is also arranged and discussed into four sections with several subsections: (i) cultural traditions (ii) cognitive customs (iii) rules and shared roles and (iv) symbolic codes.

5.4.1 Cultural Traditions

The findings under this element revolved on topics on social and moral and religion. To get a better view, the findings were discussed in two sections: (i) gay and heterosexual marriage: damaging or helpful? (ii) religious contents: punishment or enlightening?

5.4.1.1 Gay and Heterosexual Marriage: Damaging or Helpful?

One of the topics that were brought to the dissension on issues surrounding homosexuality in both newspapers is the topic related with family institution, morality and societal norms. For instance, it was ominously reported from both UM and BH

newspapers that homosexual sex practice or what they often characterized it in the newspapers as 'gay culture' are one of the reasons to social putrefaction to the family institution that causes the marriage failure. When the researcher brought up the issue of gay and the heterosexual marriage to the respondents during the interview session, most of them exhibited several sensible points.

To relate with what had been depicted in the newspaper, most of the respondents agreed on the gay people who were apt to have heterosexual marriage. For instant, Azman inevitably shared his view on what he had caught from his personal experience through his circle of gay friends. He said that there are real cases of gay people who were decided to get married profusely because they wanted to settle down and begun the new phase of life, "in my opinion, some gay people really want to change. These gay people think that by getting marriage they can change to be a normal person" (Azman).

Mamat also added up to the opinion on the tendencies of gay men who were having a heterosexual marriage and agree on the possibilities of the occurrences, "there are possibilities for that because I met several gay people who were married with women and have kids. It is not something strange" (Mamat). As a matter of fact, Mamat further eloquent on gay people with heterosexual marriage and emphasized the fact that it was actually happened for long times ago especially those gay who live in the village or remote area with restricted and limited access to the outside world.

Several respondents shared their points by referring to the news stories on the divorce rate from the mixed-oriented marriage. For example, Azman assumed that some marriage is not remained to be last longer for several reasons and one of the reasons is the failure to hinder from getting back to their gay sex life and he said "but some of them failed and their marriage only lasted for several years and turn back to their old life as gay" (Azman). Mamat provided his similar sight on the number of the divorce rate as a result of the gay spouse as reported in the newspapers, "there is a possibility that gay issue can also contributed to the breakdown of the marriage" (Mamat). Mamat later professed that there are indeed gay people whom their marriage are in trouble because

they are unable to control their own feeling to go back on having the same sex relation tendency that resulted to the marriage cessation. Mamat said that,

“Speaking from my experience, I know a couple of gay friends who were married but it is not long lasted for reasons. After a while, they feel that marriage is not for them and then later decided to get separated. I think they just can’t fight with their own feeling to be love with the same sex people” (Mamat).

It is also claimed by Mamat that most gay people that are look after the heterosexual marriage only intended on the ground of getting children. Mamat said that,

“I have met couple of gay friends who were married with women but their marriage is not long-lasting because he just wanted a children and nothing more than that. At the end of the day, their marriage is split” (Mamat).

Concurrently, some of the respondents highlighted several likelihoods among gay individual with the heterosexual marriage. For example, Azman provides few possibilities such as family pressure from the beginning of the marriage, emotionally unprepared and the devious intention before decided to get married,

“They are married probably because of the family pressure or because their intention is just want to have children and nothing more than that. It could also be that they have issues with their sexual life. There are also gay people that I know who are married but still meeting other men behind their wife” (Azman).

By referring to the point asserted by Azman about the possibility of the marriage failure and reaffirming the stories as depicted in the newspapers, Jay expressed a similar wave of concern and verge with such statement that may strike most gay or even straight people as veracious. She unequivocally highlighted that social pressure is the main factor why people wanted to get married despite of their unpreparedness. Jay tells that,

“I think in this country, some people married because of the social pressure. The pressure may come from the society and even from your own family and your own parent. In this country, you have to obey with social obligation and adhere to your cultural and religion especially among Malay people and you are always being asked about marriage even you are emotionally unfit for that” (Jay).

The similar note was also pinpointed by Majid and he offers his perspective on marriage that becomes the cultural obligation with most people saw that as the societal norm within the traditional thing. Majid comments,

“Knowing the social norm and the culture of Malay, your life had been arranged as you have to get marriage at certain age because it is a Sunnah of the prophet but if you are dragging other people into your own problem than you are the one who destroyed your own marriage and other people life” (Majid).

Sharing the viewpoint by giving the social pressure as one factor that causes of the marriage breakdown, another respondent asserted that marriage is the life biggest change and it must be taken in highly consideration. Referring to all people in general, Shah tells that marriage is the real commitment and not just the feeling of liking being married. He asserted that,

“You have to have a clear picture of the purpose of getting marriage because you know yourself better. You are not getting married because of your parent, your family or your relative asked you to. If you think marriage can make you a better person then go ahead. At the end of the day, you are the one who decide what is best for your life” (Shah).

Clearly, from the interview, it showed that the social stigma associated on marriage was created due to the informal cultural consciousness based from the collective observation of humanity when the society designates a time for everything that even being depicted in the newspapers. Jay extended her view in exchanged of the deliberation of marriage and tells that,

“I think it is always good to reflect back on what is the real purpose of marriage, be it for gay people or straight people. But for me, the most important thing in any marriage is that, you have to be honest and loyal to your partner” (Jay).

The discussion was expanded by Mamat when he tells the challenges faces by gay people who get into heterosexual marriage to be mentally well prepared and have strong mind to stay true to their spouse and keep the family contented. Mamat tells that,

“Personally, I think any gay people who wanted to get married with women must have a strong willpower to change and refrained themselves from having secret relationship with other men behind their wife. I am talking not only to any gay people but also to all men that you must stay faithful to your wife and take care of the family” (Mamat).

Meanwhile, Majid articulated his equitable view and asked to incite the arraignment to the individual instead of blaming the whole gay community. Contrary to what being reported in the newspaper, Majid tells that,

“if they (the newspapers) said that homosexuals will destroy marriage institution, but for me my answered rely on the individual itself. He is the one who responsible on his own marriage because of who he is. He can stop since the very beginning” (Majid).

Majid added that,

“if they can’t change themselves so no point of getting married and dragged your own problem into other people life. It is just unfair to the family especially the wife and the children” (Majid).

Majid claimed that he has nothing against those gay people who are decided to have heterosexual marriage as long as they are frank and honest with their own decision without any social pressure from other people and the surrounding. He asserted that,

“for me, if any of the gay people felt reasonable and wanted to get married and change themselves on the ground that they are not in the same nature like other people then they are more than welcome to get married” (Majid).

Majid colludes on the idea that the choice and decision made from any gay people to get married must also come with the responsibility. Following the statement, Firdaus conveyed the annoyed and vociferous stance to the constant sensational tenor of these topics raised by the newspapers that gives one rather skewed and limited depiction of the issue.

“I think the breakdown of one marriage could be from other reasons as well and not only because of the homosexuality. Some people get divorce because of the financial problem, and it could be that his wife or her husband met another person and it could be otherwise” (Firdaus).

He further added that the failure of marriage from gay people is merely an isolated case and just another provocation from the media to this community. Firdaus tells,

“I think the problem with the family institution should be fall under society issue and not only to gay issue. To frame gay issue as the main causes to the downfall of marriage is just another isolated issue” (Firdaus).

Overall, many respondents has a mixed response on this findings. While some asserted on the cultural pressure as reasons for any gay people to settle down with heterosexual marriage, some offered that it should not be happen knowing that homosexual sexuality cannot be change entirely with that. The following section discuss on the religious content in homosexuality coverage.

5.4.1.2 Religious Content: Punishment or Enlightening?

Throughout the analysis of the newspapers, it was revealed that both Malay languages newspapers provide extensive remarks on issues surrounding homosexuality from the perspective of religious stance especially Islam. Obviously, there is no doubt that both newspapers profoundly implied huge disapproval and condemnation against homosexual's behavior and same sex relation. Homosexuality as often being narrated in the newspapers was widely viewed as aberrant and sinful. Among others, homosexuals was also frequently called as people of Lots with the newspapers were alternately mentioned several places in the Quran where the story of Sodom is repeated. The newspapers also bring up arguments from other religions towards homosexuals and its declination remarked.

When being asked what might be the potential causes of the newspapers that excessively consociated homosexuality within the narrative of the religion viewpoint especially Islam, most of the respondents indubitably squelched to agree that the main reason on that is probably due to the majority of Malay as the dominants readers of the newspapers. Syah for instance, asserted the main causes of homosexuality coverage were reiteratively conveyed within Islamic prehension was because of the majority of Malay that often associated with Muslim and Islam as official religion in the country, "I can understand that because of our culture and also our religion here" (Syah).

It was also supported by Firdaus, when he asserted his point and relates the reason is probably due to the target audience of the newspapers, "both are prominent Malay languages newspapers that were written by Malay writer to Malay readers. I think it makes sense" (Syah). Mamat responded in a similar manner and postulated that most writers of the coverage were among heterosexual with less or zero contact and little experienced interacting with gay community,

"The newspapers always presented the news on homosexuals with Islamic doctrine because of the person who is writing the news is mostly Malay heterosexual person. It is no surprise that they often slanted this thing as bad and against the culture and religion" (Mamat).

In a similar vein, another respondent was also commented that the main reason most coverage was intentionally slanted to the undesirable and negative narrating with the incitement from the Islamic perspective is because of the stance of the newspapers itself that represent the majority of Malay voices in the country. Hamzah said that,

“I think they intentionally do this on purpose because like I said *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* newspaper are being the police value and they are trying to make sure that, these homosexual sex acts are not acceptable in the Malay culture and in Islam specifically” (Hamzah).

Not only that the homosexuality coverage was unfold stories that were highly accentuated within religious colloquy, most of the coverage was also supplemented with the negative revelation. Upon presenting the question to the respondent, majority of them extended their anguish and confusion,

“From what I have read on articles about gay issues, most of the explanations was often tagged in the negative tone even the context was explained in the religious oriented topic along with the Quranic verse” (Firdaus).

Mamat’s participation remained similar with the other respondents and pointed out the reason of the news on homosexuality are portrayed in the negative depiction is mainly due to the religion restriction, “our life is often guided by the religion” (Mamat). Syah was also commented on the news portrayal on homosexuality that somehow more on the negative side,

“It is biased. It is more on the negative side. I can understand that because of our culture and also our religion. Most importantly, Malay is also Islam here. I can understand that” (Syah).

While such statement may strike most gay as sardonicism, one of respondent, Firdaus, expressed a similar wave of response and said that,

“The newspapers mostly portrayed the negative things with harsh remarked about gay and then tagged the issues with the Islamic testimony. I am not sure if that is just a provocation but I found it a little baffling” (Firdaus).

The response was later supported by Jay, “it is more on punishing the gay people than enlightening us” (Jay). In addition, Mamat expressed his disappointment to the most of the articles published on homosexuality because they keep blaming homosexual as a bad

people and keep boasting the news with a provocation from the religious account. Mamat said that,

“Sometimes, I feel hurt reading the news articles on homosexuals because of this exaggeration using Islamic notes. The fact is they won’t get affected from the writing but the truth is we were fighting between lust and religion” (Mamat).

Meanwhile, Firdaus composed his view on homosexual with religions’ dispute that was highly promulgated in the media and informed that sexuality and religion are two different entities that should be confronted within the personal space and subjective matter. He said that,

“My sexuality is a secretive matter. I am not going wandering and share with people what my sexuality is and how my sex life is. In other word, I stand on the ground of ‘do not ask and do not tell’ principle” (Firdaus).

Firdaus later claimed that any manner of interceding with anyone own sexuality should be done exclusively within the “sinner” and the God itself. He further posited on other pressing issues that are more crucial to be debatable among Malay Muslim public that have both legitimate and rational undertones, such as teenage pregnancies, baby dumping, domestic abuse, family violence and so on. These issues are more palatable and forthrightly traceable, which could be brought under control through a wide array of preventive and rehabilitative measures.

In the other hand, Majid proposed his opinion when the researcher seeks response on the frequent narration of homosexuals with assortment of religious citation as discovered in the newspapers. He started by reaffirming on his sexuality and the existence of homosexuals, “again like I said being a homosexual is not something that you turn yourself to be, it is something that, it is always with you. It is something that is given by God” (Majid).

Majid further commented on lengthy report or writes up on homosexuality that intertwined with religion topic that often depicted with the assortment of the negative diction of the consequences will not entirely change to the fact that homosexuality is still exist and it will be. He affirmed that, “I wouldn’t think having lengthy explanation or write up pertaining to homosexuality would change anything” (Majid). Majid later

offered his opinion that someone faith cannot simply be shuddered by reading or knowing about homosexuals and asserted,

“I’m sure being a true Muslim, the faith can’t be shaken by providing knowledge on homosexuality because it is clear according to this people, in the Quran, it has spell out about homosexuality in Islam” (Majid).

While most respondents may not agree on the lots of negative label that often intertwined with Islamic narrative in the coverage of homosexuality, they also not denying the fact of homosexuality that is unacceptable in Islam. However, the respondents also wish that the homosexuality coverage related will tone down the negativity but highlighted too the encouragement or positive narration in the media. The following section will discuss on another element of social constructionism that focus on cognitive customs.

5.4.2 Cognitive Customs

Previous section discussed findings under the cultural tradition element with most of respondents agreed that homosexuality coverage were exceptionally intertwined with religious substance. The reason given by most of the respondents was because the journalists are dominantly come from Malay heterosexual individual and it is somehow affected the stereotypical of the coverage. However, do they also share another reasons contributed to the stereotypical coverage on homosexuality issues other than that? Here, the following findings central on topics such as politics, western agenda and mental and psychology which divided into three main subsections: (i) political motive and anti-opposition sentiments (ii) western agenda or just a myth and (iii) mental disorder and HIV stigma: a need to change. From the interview being conducted, these three findings were discussed under element of cognitive customs because these three findings were intentionally act as labels given by the media – as proposed by the respondents, so it can cultivate readers mind about how bad and immoral homosexuality was. Many respondents also commented by affiliating homosexuality to another forces it will also indirectly attempt to press the readers on how displease homosexuality was to the conception of the general public.

5.4.2.1 Political Motive and Anti-Opposition Sentiments

Another point being discussed throughout the interview with the respondents is the topic on homosexuality that entwined around the political ruckus in the country. Most coverage about homosexuality was heavily narrated with a brawl between both government and the opposition parties. There are debatable topics from the newspapers, which emphasized on the indictment of the opposition parties and their stance toward homosexuality issues that was being consistently questioned by the government. It is alleged that the opposition parties have strong connection with the gay community and used the community merely to get more votes and partially work as tactics of their political stunt. However, the majority of the respondents viewed the allegation as nothing more than a facade created by the politician particularly from the government.

When being asked about this, an often-voiced concern from most of the respondents regarding homosexuality as depicted in the newspapers that frequently highlighted on the opposition parties with homosexual stories was just because of the politically motivated reason. Majid said “the main reason why they are doing it is just because of the politics” (Majid) in which was also supported by Faizal, “It is more politicized on the matter itself” (Faizal). Majid explained beforehand that politics itself is the practice of influencing people by manipulate or scheme other people. He said that,

“In the field of politics, of course they try to portray the worst image as they can on their opponent and that is why on that particular ground itself, they portray the opposition as a party as a favorite among the homosexual in Malaysia but in reality, I don’t think so” (Majid).

In the similar page of discussion, Firdaus claimed his view and asserted that it was intentionally being sensationalized by the newspapers to sink the image of the political party when being asked about the regular highlight on issues of homosexuals in the newspapers that often linked with the opposition parties. In addition, Majid later confessed that he is not surprised that the huge factor that contributes to the large numbers of articles on homosexuality were inclining to the allegation of the opposition parties is because of the de facto opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim. He asserted that,

“I think the main reason is because of Anwar Ibrahim. Being in opposition party, he has been accused and has been judged as homosexual just because he has this case between him and also his aide” (Majid).

Upon being asked on what becomes the aspects of the newspapers that were deemed on frequently highlighted opposition parties with sensationalized news on homosexual stories, most of the respondents agreed on the status of the newspapers itself as a mainstream newspaper controlled by the government. Faizal for instance, strongly professed his point with the skewed portrayal on issues related with homosexuality in the newspapers by asserted the people behind the media outlet has the great control of the news published and the news content in the newspaper. Faizal clearly stated that both newspapers of UM and BH newspapers are more inclined to the government, “it is more toward government opinion” (Faizal). It was also echoed by Malik that stated the ownership as the obvious reason that causes on the news were shaped to certain message and meaning.

By referring to the both UM and BH newspapers, Malik tells that, “the newspapers are too mainstream and incline more to the government side. The issues they covered are usually telling how good the government is and how bad their opponents are” (Malik). Another respondent, Syah puts his view bluntly and tells the newspapers as more biased to the government. Meanwhile, Firdaus asserted that both newspapers are mainstream media controlled by the government and any news coverage is related with their reputation as well. To this and in relation to the discussion of the arrangement of the news on issues with homosexuality in the country as depicted in the newspapers, Faizal continue to share his remark, “newspaper can be one sided and we can always check how they write their news” (Faizal). The discussion was also agreed by Firdaus to look at the source of the news articles and tells that,

“Newspaper can be one sided and as a reader, we can always check from which sources of the newspaper and how their slanted their reporting on certain issues. Some newspapers are neutral and not sided to any party so they regularly quoted the unbiased news reporting” (Firdaus).

Faizal continued to assert his view when being asked about the news about homosexuals and gay stories in the newspapers that were allegedly ascends from the opposition parties as revealed. He later agreed that the sources of the news, the writer and the context that were used by both UM and BH newspapers are mostly come from the

individuals in the government body as well as the NGO's who were prone to the government party. He asserted that,

“In the case of homosexuality issues in Malaysia, the newspapers quoted much on the negative reporting on the subject that were clearly written and reported from individuals that are sided to the government” (Faizal).

Hence, the results of the news reporting are more negative towards opposition that was frequently labeled as a political party that supports gay people and the community. Firdaus further claimed that both newspapers of UM and BH newspapers were owned to the government and they used these medium to propagate their ideology to the public. Firdaus asserted that,

“If you refer to the *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* newspaper, these are the newspapers used by the government as their main medium to channel their ideology to the people” (Firdaus).

Nevertheless, Firdaus refuse to agree that homosexual and gay rights movement is the agenda of the opposition party. He asserted that,

“By saying that homosexuality is the agenda of opposition party, it is very unlikely that I am agree on this. Like I said just now, these newspapers are government oriented newspapers so it is not possible if they tell that opposition is supporting homosexuality to the public. But that is not true at all due to the lack of proof on this” (Firdaus).

Accompanying with the response of the majority of the respondents on the allegation of the newspapers to the opposition parties that often affiliated the political parties with the gay community, it can be conclude that the assertion of the ownership of the media as the main factor of the contribution.

In the contrary, Hamzah deliberates his lengthy perspective on the discussion of the highly frequented connection of the opposition party with homosexual's stories as written in both Malay languages newspapers. By giving the specific example of UM newspaper, Hamzah tells the philosophy, the ideology and the history of the newspapers is someway grounded with the core value of the media establishments they tried to conveyed, along with the earlier purpose of their foundation. Hamzah says that,

“I think Malay language newspapers especially *Utusan Malaysia* is a medium that were put and to remind Malay people of their value. Being a mainstream Malay newspaper, they are very much conservative in term of bringing the value” (Hamzah).

As consequence, the news content was rather skewed to what it should be embodied and represented. Hamzah back it ups with his statement by using UM newspaper as an exemplary and tells that,

“The fact is, you can actually tell that *Utusan Malaysia* is being the ‘value police’ and trying to be the one who make sure that people specifically Malay people to always being aware of their origin, behavior and culture” (Hamzah).

Another discussion highlighted during the interview is the impression made by these Malay language newspapers to the opposition parties as political parties that attempted to fuse the resurgence of the gay social movement in the country. Nonetheless, most of the respondents often vociferously critiqued most of the news representations. Faizal for instance, shared his views, “I don’t agree with the statement of saying that the opposition party has hidden agenda of promoting gay movement in the country” (Faizal), which was also supported by Jay, “if the newspaper tells that homosexuality is the agenda of the opposition party, I think the newspaper is just degrading their selves and it should not be respected” (Jay).

Faizal asserted his interesting points based on his observation. Faizal tells that the allegation on the opposition party could coincidentally occurred because of the boisterous group who stand behind the opposition party are several radical NGOs which also the correspondent for the human right advocate and strong supporter to human rights that demand justice for those whose rights have been violated including gay rights in Malaysia. He responded that,

“The newspaper highlighted this just because it is come into the picture that the loudest NGOs are sided to the opposition party especially the left wing NGOs. It may not necessarily true that the opposition are voicing out to the gay right in the country but having said that, it should also not to be associated with the political party in the very first place” (Faizal).

The discussion was continued by Syah and he provides his decent perspectives with significant points on the reason why the newspapers highlighting certain political parties

with issue on homosexuality that are nothing more than attempting to espouse political correctness in order to draw extra attention from the voters,

“We know the fact that any political party is only interested to get the vote from the public. So in order to attract the vote, they try to include all people to vote for them including the minority people from different ethnicity, class, and even the gay community” (Syah).

Syah further departed his conjecture and pointed that both political parties of the government and the opposition were indeed merely playing their game of political chess. Specifically, Syah offers his perspectives and tells that the government intentionally attempted to fertilize the gay agenda within opposition parties by using their media which later raised disturbance among majority of their Malay readers,

“It is come to my assumption that the government and organization or individual that are pro to the government party asserted that they will not giving any toleration to LGBT community so apparently the opposition parties are trying to influence this group” (Syah).

In the other hand, Syah was also posited that the opposition party is also trying to get attention from the group of the minority especially the gay community by diverted their attention, acted as the victim playing in return to get their vote for the future general election,

“Not all people from the opposition parties has interest in gay related issues but as long as they can influence them to get the vote for the upcoming election so it could possibly happen so that, they can take over and be elected as the government one day” (Syah).

To conclude his remarked on his observation between both political parties, Syah said that, “the bottom line is both political parties are using the gay issue merely for their sake of political drive instead of looking the issue sanely just to get the voters” (Syah).

When being asked whether homosexual people in Malaysia are mostly favored on the opposition parties and gives the strong support as to compare with the government side, most of the respondents were opposed to the idea and take that simply as a stereotypical sign. For example, Jay hesitantly agreed to the statement and responded that she does not exclusively put herself to any of the political parties in the country, “to be frank, I am not supporting either opposition or government. I just sit in the middle” (Jay).

Jay further professed that she will only choose a politician based on their full credibility and high tendencies of integrity to run the country either the government or the opposition parties, “I will choose a person who can work competently to be my leader in the country then only he or she will get my vote”, (Jay). Jay also asserted that there is no significance evidence that tells all homosexual people in the country were rooting on the opposition party. Jay mentioned that, “you cannot blame gay people that support opposition party and there is no proof stating that gay people in Malaysia stance toward opposition party” (Jay).

The discussion is also articulated by Azman. Azman indicated his similar opinion about gay people as politician and further emphasized that society is looking for an individual who were highly competence and with strong integrity to govern the country.

“And for me, if any gay people are doing excellent job or run the business well, people will acknowledge that and the most important thing is the quality of work regardless what kind of sexuality they are” (Azman).

Faizal offered his opinion when he being asked if gay people in Malaysia have good potential to become the politician and he said that,

“Definitely. I would say that gay people is much more focus on whatever field they are doing. Over-ambitious if I am permitted to say that. They were successful businessmen, they were successful figure in the country or even in the international level and of course in the world of politic too and I think that is one of the side that gay people can be very good at” (Faizal).

Nonetheless, most of the respondents were also agree that if any of the gay people were elected as politician or intent to pursue politics as their career, he or she are strongly discouraged to openly declare his sexuality to the public - let alone engaged with any sex scandal or even intended to propose issues related with gay rights, be it explicit or implicit as it will create chaos and backlash among public in the country. Syah said that,

“Obviously that you cannot make an announcement and declaring yourself as homosexual to the extent of proposing the idea of gay marriage or issues related that can provoke the public. You know the limitation and you have to set your political objective right then you can become the politician” (Syah).

In addition to the discussion, Mamat responded on his disagreement when being asked about the allegation of the political affiliation created by the newspapers between opposition parties with the homosexual community that regularly shown in the newspapers. Mamat relates his previous experiences and asserted that he knew some of the gay people who attached with the government office, “to associate gay community with the opposition party is what I am not totally agree with because I have met some people from the government who are happen to be gay and they are mostly discreet” (Mamat). Azman also commented that he also knew few gay people in the government agency and some of them hold a great position,

“For me, there is a gay doctor, gay lawyer, gay police and many professions more. It is not only delimited to the opposition party as claimed by the newspapers. Even among the government servant, it could be gay person in the organization too. It is just that they are not publicly out and not revealed which for me that is not necessarily have to be happening” (Azman).

After all, Mamat further conceded that the issues with homosexual with opposition parties should not be an issue to be put in the priority and to be debated in the first place as it was simply being sensationalized by the newspaper and tells that, “it is just because the opposition does not have the privilege in the mainstream media and that is all” (Mamat). Meanwhile, on the matter of the assertion made by the newspapers for those gays are not qualified to work as politician and hold public office, most of the respondent’s offered their disagreement and achieved the consensus that “anybody can be a politician including gay people”, (Jay). Syah asserted,

“There is nothing wrong if gay people want to join politic. But, they have to know that living in this conservative country, it is a sensitive topic and very taboo to disclose your real sexuality especially if you are a public figure what more if you join political arena” (Syah).

Throughout the discussion on the subject too, few of the respondents such as Faizal and Syah shared their similar view on issues of homosexuality that was supposed to be the social issue and both political parties should play the same responsibilities to uncover the possible way to outreach this community and not turn the subject to the political

foray. Syah tells that, “this issue on LGBT shouldn’t be a political issues, but it should be the society issue”. Similarly, Faizal said that,

“I think, the opposition is not voicing out any right for the gay community because if the media said that the opposition stance to gay people especially on their right, these community is indeed were already protected with the constitution. For me, any issues on homosexuality should be not being politicized and not to be associated with political party or in any way” (Faizal).

While many of the respondents agreed that the homosexuality coverage were often being embedded with the political narration due to the political motive, they were also pressing that homosexuality issue was used merely to skewed the image of the opposition party. Not only was that, the interview study also discussed on the coverage of homosexuality that also grappling with the western influence.

5.4.2.2 Western Agenda or Just a Myth?

The findings of the homosexuality coverage from both newspapers as presented in the Chapter 6 revealed that homosexual and gay lifestyle was also frequently deliberated around the allegation of its influence and a form of advocacy from the Western countries. Having said that, homosexuality was also often depicted as the Western agenda and Western lifestyle in the newspapers. Throughout the examination of the study in the newspapers too, several terminologies such as secularism, liberalism and pluralism were perceived as ideologies and ideas brought from the Western countries and used extensively when they deliberated homosexual stories.

Contrary to the what being asserted in the newspapers, comments made by most of the respondents upon probing the depiction from both newspapers on issue surrounding homosexuality that was heavily alleged come from the Western countries and often tagged as the Western agenda, it is undoubtedly provide inappreciable reaction from the respondents. Upon being asked if homosexuals in the country is entirely originated from the Western countries that often being lamented as a negative social issue, most of the respondents express their disagreement on the assertion made by the newspapers.

Majid for example, strongly professed that homosexuality is not utterly from the Western countries, let alone to be claimed as Western agenda that was frequently propagated in the newspapers, “in my opinion, homosexuality is not from the Western countries and totally not a Western agenda” (Majid) and it was also agreed with Jay, “I do not find that gay is completely from the Western countries”, (Jay). Sharing the same point, Syah asserted that homosexual and gay in Malaysia was not Western’s influenced and not related with the Western agenda, “it is nothing to do with the Western agenda” (Syah).

One of the central highlight during the discussion with the respondents on the existence of homosexual and gay in the country is the fact that homosexual and gay had been around in the country for the longest time despite being allegedly comes from the Western countries as stated by the newspapers. Malik for instance inserted his opinion and said that gay has been existed in this country with the presence of effeminate men working as makeup artist or beautician and they are better known as *mak andam* especially in the *kampung* or village area for the long period of times. Malik said that,

“To think of it, that so called ‘gay culture’ had been exist in our society long time ago especially in our *kampung* when we normally found some of *mak nyah* or an effeminate men working as makeup artist or *mak andam* for the bride” (Malik).

It is also articulated by Faizal and he asserted his agreement that homosexuality is not entirely originated from the Western countries. Faizal shared his previous experience and stated that the existence of gay and homosexual had been around in the country for many years as far back as he can remember but the term was normally called as *pondan*, *bapok* and *mak nyah* and these terms was normally associated with men who were fond of effeminate attitude than masculine men and also man dressed in women’s clothing. Faizal stated,

“Before the word ‘gay’ are used in the media, we already have our own term. I still remember when I was a kid, people called this people as *pondan* when they see boy with feminine behavior” (Faizal).

The discussion later was continued with Mamat and he informed on the existence of gay people all over the world including in the Middle East countries and not definite merely from the Western countries as claimed in the newspapers. Mamat said that,

“For me, it is not really truth if the newspapers tell that gay issues were only come from the Western countries. Even in the Middle East, they have gay people but they are not exposed. Gay people already exist in every part of the world. We can find gay people in the world” (Mamat).

Interwoven into this discussion, the respondents addressing on the presence of gay people today is much more widely visible as to be compared with the past, “today, gay people are very much obvious. Their existence is more noticeable. It is not strange to see them around especially in the big cities like Kuala Lumpur” (Malik). Malik further correlated on the allegation from the newspapers on the influence of gay life from the Western countries that he later ridiculed on the idea and back up with his statement with some prominent and successful individuals in the country who were likely to be gay and become the household name in their respective fields including in the entertainment and media industry, culinary expert and even the influential businessmen. Malik said that,

“It is ironic when the newspapers claimed that gay culture is from the Western countries but the real fact is the gay is already exist in our country and some of them is very influential in their areas and even working in the media industry since a longer time” (Malik).

In another discussion, the allegation of homosexuality as a Western culture that originated from the west that was regularly depicted in the newspapers creates another frequent voice from the respondents on what may become the factors that make these newspapers highlighted such issue. The influx of popular culture from the West such as films and television programs are to be believed become the reason in giving the implication on why the newspapers are commonly described homosexuals as a Western culture. Faizal asserted his idea,

“Personally, I think before the phrase ‘gay’ was heavily used in our media, only few Malaysian heard about this but they just don’t know where it comes from. It is because when I was a kid back then in late 70’s this term is still not commonly used and we only knew term such as ‘*pondan*’ as a term regularly called to gay especially to the effeminate men” (Faizal).

Faizal further asserted on the recent growth and trends of the gay and homosexual themes or character in the movie or television show being showed in the local television in the country especially from the west and that could be the reason on the inclination of

the newspapers to posit that homosexuals is derived from the Western countries. Faizal said that,

“As time goes by, we received lots of exposure from the Western countries especially in the entertainment industry when we see more Hollywood movies, television show that showed gay characters flooding in our country” (Faizal).

In somewhat similar discussion on the allegation of homosexuality as a Western agenda that was related with the accusation of its spread from the media, the respondents offered their contested view about the idea. Majid for example, put it bluntly that not all people have privileged and full accessibility of media. Majid asserted that,

“If you said that homosexuality is the Western agenda, what about those gay who live in the village without any access to the Internet or any media. How these people get influenced by the Westerners? Obviously, they are not being influence by anybody” (Majid).

Jay also suggested that homosexual and gay practice is not entirely derived from the media imported from the Western countries. Jay said that she received restricted amount of media from watching any television shows or movies when addressing a personal experience during her childhood and asserted that,

“I was born during the 80’s and kids during that time are not really exposed with media like television. Not every house has a television set and the sources of entertainment is very limited” (Jay).

Grown up in the underprivileged family in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Jay claimed that she barely had the chance to watch television because she does not owned one. If she had a chance to watch television, she hardly watches any English television show. In short, Jay make a clear assertion that she disagree with the newspapers allegation that the existence of gay people in Malaysia was being influenced from the Western countries because clearly, she was born as gay and learnt more about herself throughout time and not entirely affected from the Western influences especially through their media. Jay said that,

“I do not get the influence of becoming gay by watching an English movie when I was a kid. It was naturally born and throughout time, I discovered more on myself. For me, gay is not a western agenda at all” (Jay).

Overall, it was asserted by most respondents on their discrepancy on the belief that homosexuality was originated from the western countries and one of the western agenda as frequently highlighted in the newspapers. Other discussion from the interview were topics of stigmatization of HIV among homosexual people as frequently depicted in the media as well as the label given to them as people that prone with mental disorder. When this issue was raised to the respondents, many were unhappy and expressed their exasperation and further claimed that the coverage is generally lack substantive study and the journalism ethic was also questioned. Similar like linking homosexual as a form of western agenda, most respondents highlighted that by stigmatizing homosexuals as HIV carrier and person with mental illness, the media was attempted to highlight on how negative homosexuality was to the public comprehension.

5.4.2.3 Mental Disorder and HIV Stigma: A Need to Change

The finding revealed from both Malay language newspapers on the discourse stated on homosexuality is the argument about homosexuals as individual that was labeled as someone who suffered from mental and psychological disorder. It is also frequently mentioned in the newspapers that described gay people as person with mental illness and disturbingly deals with the state of depression. These newspapers also make further remark on HIV/AIDS that often being stigmatized with the gay community.

Upon being asked about the depiction shown from the newspapers that writes homosexual which is often regarded with issues of mental health, most of the respondents were completely confounded and refuse to allow the assertion made by these newspapers. Some of respondents provide the real definition of mental illness and urged the newspaper to redefine the meaning of the disorder before attempting to relate homosexuality to mental illness. Jay for instant expressed her disappointment with the skewed portrayal of gay people that later offered her own definition of mental illness, and asserted that,

“For me, mental illness is something that makes you feel really down. You are unbothered and just mind on your thing. You are mentally down and you are refuse to do anything. You are isolated yourself from other people” (Jay).

Jay further responded that the feeling and the attraction towards same sex or same gender by all means cannot be defined as mental illness. She urged the newspapers to redefine the meaning of mental illness, “attracted to the same sex doesn’t mean that you are mentally disturbed. Mental illness is way more complex than this. It is a heavy subject to be questioned” (Jay).

Similarly, Malik responded that mentally ill people are not only meant to the gay people and further asserted that it could also happen to any person, “I think gay person is not a crazy or insane person and definitely not a mental disorder person because there are a lot of psycho people out there who are not gay” (Malik). Jay asserted that, “mental illness can be happen to anyone and not only to gay people because it is related with your emotion” (Jay) which is also agreed by Faizal that asserted that mental depression could also happen to anybody regardless of sexual orientation and not only to the gay people.

In a similar page of discussion, Malik offered his perspective and said that the decisive expression of mental illness among gay people was merely a media spectacle and he said that it might just a state when people begin to feel doubtful and unconvinced about his or her own sexuality especially among teenagers that sexual feelings can be very intense. However, Malik informed that it is not utterly leading to the mental disorder. Malik asserted,

“For me, I would say it is just a ‘confuse situation’ that not necessary lead to the mental disorder. It could be the transition period that makes them confuse especially when it involved with emotion and feeling and this is normally happen on gay people especially among teenagers” (Malik).

Malik continued to response on the unfair judgment by the newspapers to gay people by frequently tagging them as people with mentally disorder and later described the complex situation of the homosexual’s identity and sexuality construction. He informed that,

“Mental illness is not only to gay people but it could be happen to normal people. It is just that gay person has such a complex identity. But I think most gay people are like a chameleon because they can adapt to most of situation. Those people who said that gay people is a mental illness people has no basis at all because you don’t need to be a gay to have a mental illness issues” (Malik).

In somewhat similar discussion on the debate, Syah posited the idea that some homosexuals are just perplexed on their own sexuality. Their mind and body are at odds to each other. Syah further elaborated that gay people are often feel trapped between the desired for sexual relations with the same sex instead of the opposite sex. Some of them are living as undercover, secretive and feel repressed about their own sexuality. Syah asserted,

“For me, I don’t think gay people are completely mental illness. It is the matter of handling the situation. For example, they have to evaluate the situation whether to choose to stay in the closet or to come out and both have their own consequences too” (Syah).

By referring to the analysis from both UM and BH newspapers that allegedly associated homosexual person with mental disorder, Firdaus provides his opinion and strongly professed that the newspapers have no basis of labelling homosexual person as someone who suffered from mental illness. Firdaus further urged that media should make detail clarification based on the scientific evidence before translated unverified info to the news report and commented that,

“If the newspaper tells that homosexual people is a mental illness person, thereby they have to prove it scientifically on what basis they are saying that homosexuals is having the mental illness syndrome” (Firdaus).

Another topic has been raised several times from both newspapers are the overwhelmingly province of men who have sex with men and within communities of gay men with venereal disease of HIV and the debilitating disease of AIDS. Throughout the examination of the topics from the interview study, most respondents provide lengthy arguments when the researcher raised question regarding the subject that was frequently highlighted by the newspapers. It is not surprised to know that most respondents were knowledgeable and well-informed about HIV and topic related with the disease. Majority of the respondents are well-read and can explained well to demonstrate at least the basic idea about HIV including the way on how it can be transmitted and what prevention should be taken to avoid people from getting the diseased.

Throughout the interview, it is revealed that the respondents are mostly well familiar about HIV and AIDS. For instance, Mamat shared his detail explanation on HIV on how it will spread to people and informed that,

“You have to know that HIV can only be spread from an infected person to another person through direct contact with some of the body’s fluids. It is not easily spread. Only certain body fluids from an HIV-infected person can spread the virus such as blood, semen or breast milk” (Mamat).

The discussion on the topic of HIV among homosexual person also covered a little background of the disease and how homosexual people are started to be stigmatized on the virus. Meanwhile, a respondent name Malik offered his view and shared a little history on HIV while he can still vividly remember a controversy stories on AIDS which involved with the famous Hollywood celebrity and he said that,

“I still remember one famous actor during the 80’s name Rock Hudson, a very good looking man that infected with the HIV positive. He was also the first Hollywood celebrity who was died because of AIDS in 2 October 1985 and was speculated to be homosexual” (Malik).

Malik further postulated on the consequence after the death of the celebrity that eventually resulted on the debatable topic on AIDS and the stigmatization among homosexual people that was spread around the world,

“Since then, HIV becomes the most talked about issue around the world and public start making an assumption that gay people is the main reason of HIV disease. As consequences, I believe that the stigma of gay people with HIV is started from there” (Malik).

In furtherance, Malik tend to agree on the association made on the HIV and AIDS stigma among homosexuals’ community that was frequently highlighted in the newspapers, and he said that,

“When people talked about gay, the first thing they will picture is HIV and AIDS and when people talked about HIV and AIDS the first thing they will relate is gay people or men who have sex with men” (Malik).

In the other hand, Malik further professed that heterosexual people also had no exception in contributing to the higher number of HIV and AIDS patients in the country.

“However, little they know that among heterosexual people too, they were also HIV positive patients as well and the number is quite alarming” (Malik).

By referring to the newspapers that give least attention to heterosexual with HIV disease, Malik further informed in a detail manner that HIV can also be spread through the sexual intercourse among heterosexual person who was already affected and also from the needle sharing. He stated,

“HIV can also be spread through sexual intercourse among heterosexual people such as people who have sex with multiple partners like prostitutes including their counterpart through sexual intercourse” (Malik).

Malik added to assert that HIV may also infected to the spouse from the infected husband, “If their counterpart is having intercourse with their wife at home, their wife was also at risk of getting the virus and also their babies as well” (Malik). In the similar page of discussion, Mamat highlighted on the higher risk of HIV infection from both homosexual and heterosexual people especially when there is no protection were used during sexual intercourse. Mamat informed that,

“For me, it is undeniably that both homosexual and heterosexual has an equal chance of getting infected by HIV positive if they are not using a protection during sexual intercourse especially from the stranger with little knowledge about their sexual background” (Mamat).

The discussion on the stigma met by homosexual person with HIV related disease was also echoed by Azman as he continued to support the disagreement along with others respondents to the idea of gay community as the leading benefactor of the disease, “I know that most people said that gay people is the main contributor to HIV disease. But I would like to highlight there are other factors that contribute to HIV virus too” (Azman). Azman further highlighted that drug users in general has the most number of HIV carrier than homosexual person. Azman said that,

“Drug users for instance have higher potential of getting HIV disease than homosexual people. We can get the statistic from the Malaysian AIDS Council and it is showed that Injection Drug Users or IDU provides the higher number of HIV cases than homosexual sex act” (Azman).

In a related discussion on how HIV is being transmitted, Firdaus asserted to enumerate on several factors that may also contributed to get HIV other than same sex intercourse. He informed that,

“Of course, HIV-related disease is often being related with gay people but we must also look at another factors too such as drug abuse, sexual activities among prostitutes that also contribute to the number as well” (Firdaus).

The hyperbole on the stigmatization of homosexual community with HIV and AIDS in the media attracted Malik when he postulated that media is intentionally makes an aggravation when talking about HIV and AIDS especially when it involves issues with homosexual people as to compare with the heterosexual person, “when people talked about HIV and AIDS and it is related with homosexual or gay communities, suddenly they are giving so much attention and tend to care so much” (Malik).

Malik further highlighted that heterosexual people with HIV positive also need to get similar attention in the media especially among women who get infected with the disease from their spouse. Malik informed that,

“However, it is not often happened with heterosexual especially among women who get the disease from his spouse who slept with prostitute or drug user for instance. They are the victim and why media does not providing info about this?” (Malik).

Upon being asked on the allegation made in the newspapers that postulated gay community with HIV disease which resulted from the frequent practice of sexual intercourse with multiple sex partners, most of the respondents rejected the idea and informed that not all gay people sleep around swapping sexual partners and practicing promiscuous lifestyle. Syah for example, asserted her disagreement to the premise and stated the claimed was merely a stereotypical connotation that was heavily sensationalized by the media and tells that, “you have to know that being gay does not mean that they are all sleeping around and practicing a free sex” (Syah) which later supported by Jay,

“For me, it is not fair to accuse gay people as people who enjoy having free sex because not all gay sleep around. The HIV disease and AIDS is interconnecting with person’s sexual activities regardless whether they are homosexual or not” (Jay).

Jay put her remarked on the media biased in delivering news related with HIV and asserted that the reason why gay people were stigmatizing with HIV could be because the media intentionally try to make gay community look bad from the public perception. Jay said,

“The statement made by the media is just based on the assumption and not through the actual statistic or accurate fact. In fact, I think they try to make the gay community look bad by adding the HIV stigma among them because they want to add up more negativity to this community” (Jay).

In addition, Jay concluded that, “I feel that media is very unfair in delivering this fact and people have to educate their selves regarding this issue” (Jay). The aforementioned discussion on media and HIV also draw attention from Faizal and he asserted his accusation on the media and its biasness in providing accurate evidence on HIV and gay people. Faizal said that,

“The society always has this judgmental remark especially when they talk about HIV and relate that to the gay community. I blame it to the media because the way they portrayed this group is very untruth and keep telling the audience that being gay is all about practicing promiscuous sex and eventually will be infected with the HIV disease” (Faizal).

The point raised by Jay and Faizal on media’s exaggeration to HIV-related disease among gay people attracted another respondent to share the similar view. Accordingly, Syah also highlighted to the fact given by the media is inaccurate and does not informed the real statistic and numbers of the HIV patient throughout Malaysia by merely giving inadequate evidence. Syah informed that,

“I think the statement is completely false because it is not based on the real statistic. How could gay community as a minority people has higher number than heterosexual people from the figure of HIV-positive patient. Of course it does not make sense” (Syah).

The discussion revolved on the HIV disease that was stigmatize among gay community and the role of media in providing the information about the disease was further added by Faizal when he incriminates the media by providing the inaccurate fact about statistic on HIV patient especially among gay people and their community. Faizal addressed that the number of HIV patient among heterosexual is in fact higher than homosexual people especially among drug user. Faizal said that,

“But, what is not being told is that the highest number of HIV-positive person is among the drug user because of needle sharing. In fact, we can get the HIV through blood transfusion. More importantly, HIV virus can be infected regardless if you are homosexual or heterosexual” (Faizal).

Similar with what had been emphasized by Jay and Faizal, Majid offered his suggestion that media should also highlighted on the positive remark or at least being neutral in publishing the stories on HIV and AIDS. Majid conceded that,

“These are the things that should be published and broadcast to the public and not the negative side of it because I do think it is unfair for the HIV-positive to have such bad perception towards them” (Majid).

Beforehand, Majid pinpointed the issue on HIV stigma among gay community and stated that what matter most by HIV patients is a total support especially the emotional care from the society and not the prejudice or prejudgment attitude. Majid said that,

“In reality HIV is not a killing disease. It is a disease that is of course not curable but HIV-positive can still lead alive like any other people as so long they can take care of themselves” (Majid).

Majid further commented on the need of encouragement to homosexual people to survive specifically those affected with the HIV disease and this news are supposedly taken to be frequently highlighted in the media. Majid said that,

“So these are the things that should be portrayed to not only to homosexual but to everyone to educate this people, that being a HIV-positive you can still live comfortably and you can take really care good care of yourself and what are other things you should do if you are contracted to this disease” (Majid).

The elongated discussion about media and how it depicted issue of HIV to gay people provides Faizal an idea and he said that media may sometimes do not portrayed the accurate scenario of certain issue and it may be controverted with what people read and observed. Faizal informed that,

“In Malaysia, the society here has a stigma with gay people because it has been brainwashed by the media. It is frustrating because that is not the real perception of HIV. And those HIV sufferers they need proper guidance and professional help especially counseling to lead a positive life” (Faizal).

The discussion on media and its portrayal on HIV that often associated with homosexual community triggered by Faizal was also supported by Majid,

“Of course media is being media. Their only objective at the end of the day is to make sure whatever that is being published in the newspaper can sell and in the end of the day, it is all about profit” (Majid).

The point deliberated by the respondents on the HIV infected patient that required appropriate assistance especially the emotional support as discussed earlier was backed up by Malik when he posited the importance of sex education and sex awareness in the country. Malik professed about the significance of practicing safer sex as a step to reduce the graph of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Malaysia and describe the differences between Malaysia and other foreign countries especially in the First World’s countries in tackling the issue throughout his experience working as flight attendant. Malik informed that,

“Throughout my experiences as a cabin crew, since I travel a lot, some of the countries especially first world countries are providing free condom especially to gay hot spot such as in the club or gay sauna because they want these people to have a safe sex. But this is not exist in Malaysia. I think it is about time to have an education about this thing in the country” (Malik).

However, due to the stereotypical view among majority of the society in the country that circumscribed within cultural and religious adherence, Malik further stated that the idea of practicing safer sex is nothing more than promoting a free sex. He informed that, “to compare with the Western countries with our country Malaysia, when we talk about safe sex, people will go against it and said that it is a way to promote free sex” (Malik).

The discussion about the significance of sex education in Malaysia was also suggested by Firdaus when he said that the country may have to start cultivating on the idea of the importance of sex education to the public, “personally, I think what we need to highlight here is the importance of sex education” (Firdaus). Firdaus added his comment and suggested on the awareness of practicing safe sex that should be introduced for not only to lessen the stigmatization on HIV patients but also to reduce any issues that involved sexual activities especially among young people in the country. Firdaus further address the importance of media in playing their role and tells that,

“Firstly, we have to start to teach young people what is sex and what they need to know about sex, the do and the don’t. Then only we can start seeing the progress of reducing the stigma especially when we discuss about HIV and AIDS. In this situation, I think media have to play a major instrument here” (Firdaus).

Overall, most of the respondents were not happy with the label given by the media to homosexuals as individual who have mental disorder and HIV carrier. The least of media people can do is basically do lots more research about HIV and understand the meaning of mental illness before putting on their words in their articles.

This section discussed on the findings under element of cognitive costumes. Under this element and for this purpose of research, cognitive customs was described as the way certain news were frame and slanted to specific purpose, merely to make people believe and think as such. Many respondents believed that media intentionally relied on the political motive, merely to tarnish the image of opposition with homosexuality agenda besides labelling gay people as someone suffered with mental illness. Other than that, many were surprised with the claimed that homosexuality was imported from western countries. The following section discussed the findings under elements of rules and shared roles.

5.4.3 Rules and Shared Roles

Rules and shared roles were defined as the set of behaviors that is expected by individuals or group that holds certain status to guide action. For this purpose of research, the findings from the interview study revolved on themes on law and human rights and social movement and were divided into two subsections for further discussion: (i) gay rights: not so soon and (ii) criminal acts or just a hate crime?

5.4.3.1 Gay Rights: Not So Soon

It is discovered throughout the analysis on issues surrounding homosexuality in both newspapers was the assertion of demand and the provocation to challenge the rights and freedom from the gay community in order to seek for the acknowledgment and recognition through the standpoint of the legal state law. It is also revealed from the newspapers that the discussion on gay rights was also heavily enfolded within the

legislation from the civil law and shariah law by the frequent emphasized with the Federal Constitution of Malaysia specifically through the clause on Islam as the official religion in the country.

The newspapers were also frequently narrated the discussion of human rights that need to be compelled with the adherence of religion and cultural in its deliberation on issues related with the gay rights. Upon the interrogation process with the respondents on what being deplored in the newspapers about the disputation of the gay rights in the country, the researcher received major surprise of responses with most of the respondents declared their declination remarks towards gay rights and completely agree on what being stated in the newspapers on its discontentment to impose and legalize exclusive rights to the gay community.

For example, Syah reiterated with series of questions when being probed on the subject of gay rights in Malaysia. Syah questioned, “What is gay right? What do gay people want? It is just to make announcement that you are gay?” (Syah). Clearly, Syah does not condone to the idea of having exclusive rights for gay community in Malaysia. Syah put his position that is keen to expostulate which will not constitute and elevate any significance changes to the community and stated that, “I don’t think that if we have gay rights, it will make any different. They have to think what they want with proper justification and think on the consequences” (Syah).

While Syah interjected with disparaging of numerous queries, most of the respondents convey their unanimity to decline the need to have exclusive rights among gay community in Malaysia. Majid for instance, professed that rights among gay people is unlikely to be existed and gay social movement is completely unheard, “There is no such thing like gay rights and gay social movement in the country” (Majid) which is supported by Azman that concedes his loose collective of interest in gay rights, “In Malaysia, if we started to discuss stories about gay and homosexuality, people will started talking and let alone if we ask about rights among gay community” (Azman).

Mamat further describe the potential consequence that will receive to the public if there is an intention to suggest the lawmakers to arouse social movement related with gay rights and freedom of expression that initiated among gay community. Malik stated that, “It is very difficult for gay people to voice out their rights and opinion in Malaysia. It is because of the repercussion they will receive from the public” (Mamat) and it was agreed by Majid, “suffice to say, there is no gay rights and gay movement got no place in Malaysia” (Majid).

Notwithstanding, the discussion on the dispute and the demand to materialize gay rights as being sensationalized by the newspapers, draws an important point from most of the respondents when they asserted that rights for every citizens in the country were already constituted in the Federal Constitution. Jay highlighted on the existing law that keep people’s right in the country was exclusively covered for every citizen and non-citizen living in the country, “the existing law should already protect all citizens in the country regardless race and gender as it was already written in the Federal Constitution” (Jay) and she further added on the unnecessary action to propose act specifically to protect and held rights for gay community and their privileges and informed that, “I don’t think we should have another law to serve gay people and its rights because we already have a complete law to all citizens in Malaysia” (Jay).

Sharing the similar view, Malik personally commented that issues about rights among gay people is merely a provocation created from the newspapers and informed that it should not be the concern to be discussed, “I think in Malaysia, gay people enjoy all the privileges and rights same like everyone here and there are no issues on that at all” (Malik). Faizal offered his similar view and commented that, every citizens in the country has equal rights to be protected and to address or voice out their opinions and interest under the freedom of speech which apparently bounded with certain undisclosed limitation, “if we look under the Federal Constitution, every citizen has their rights to say or express whatever they want to say and to be frank, it is actually confined under the limited freedom of speech” (Faizal). Faizal then said on the consequences if the freedom of speech is misuse and suggested on constantly wearing a conscious hat before

posting anything on any media, “we can express ourselves; we can put our view in the newspapers, in the social media or in whichever medium that you want but you have to bare its consequences” (Faizal).

The discussion on issues related with freedom of expression was also articulated by Majid that interlaced his point with the legal system in Malaysia and the Federal Constitution. Majid said that, “under the Federal Constitution, you have the right to express yourself but in reality those right are all being confine within the parliament before you can do certain things” (Majid). Speaking of the freedom of speech, Azman conjured his opinion on the huge level of cultural and religious sensitivity in the country when we publicly express something related with ethnicity, culture or religion especially with hatred and hate comment. Azman said that,

“In Malaysia, we can always trying to speak up and voice out our personal opinion but knowing the sensitivity of this country, we have to be extra careful. If gay community demands for their rights and freedom by doing demonstration or press conference, it will then create more problems” (Azman).

While it is clear that most of the respondents are not in favor with the idea of imposing rights that exclusively for gay community, in the other hand Azman demonstrated his rational opinion if rights among sexual minority community was being carry out especially to subdue the implicit prejudice towards this community. Azman asserted that,

“Personally, I think if the issue involved with gay community is relevant such as unemployment or discrimination in the work place or violent, I will be more than agree on the exclusive rights among this community” (Azman).

The view indicated by Azman on rights among homosexual community and how it may help the community was resulted throughout his experience of comingle and socialize with the transsexual community when they revealed issue concern with the stigma from the public. Azman informed that,

“From what I heard from my conversation with gay people especially among the transgender people, most of them are struggling to earn a living because of the difficulty of getting a job. It is because of the stigma and the prejudice with most people are despise their lifestyle” (Azman).

However, Azman firmly dismissed the idea on same-sex marriage to be happened in the country and said that, “but for issue such as same-sex marriage in the country, I am not agree on that” (Azman). Nevertheless, the discussion on gay rights attract Malik attention when he commented that gay community were enjoying their privileges and private life long before the debate on the gay rights appeared in the media. Malik said that,

“Even without the gay rights people still, there are still exist a private show like paper dolls or drag show among transsexual. So, I think it can be conclude that there is no restriction among gay people here as long as you are doing it behind the door” (Malik).

Malik further acclaimed that the dispute on gay rights especially in the country encountered more predicament than good, “personally I think the issue with gay rights makes things more complicated” (Malik).

The issues on homosexuality depicted in both UM and BH newspapers were also highlighted on the debate about rights and freedom among gay community in the country and the emergence of the gay social movement. In somewhat similar topic related with the gay rights, the arguments on the same-sex marriage were also mentioned in the newspapers with most of the coverage provided their displeasure with most of the negative connotation. When being asked about issue on gay marriage, apparently, it is come as a surprise that most of the respondents shared their agreement with the coverage from the newspapers on the declination and rejection to the idea of gay or same-sex marriage and utterly describe gay marriage as beyond the unacceptable thing to be happening in Malaysia.

For example, Mamat said his objection on gay marriage, “I am really disagree with the gay marriage” (Azman) while Mamat stated that, “for me, same sex marriage is nonsense. Male with a male cannot get married at all” (Mamat). Firdaus also expressed his disagreement and asserted, “I am disagree with the gay marriage. For me, it is not going to be happen in the country because I personally think that this should not being addressed in the first place” (Firdaus). Azman said that, “to be frank, gay relationship is more toward fun” (Azman). Not only that the respondent pointed their disagreement on

the same-sex marriage, several of them constantly shared their view with the substantial assertion of cultural and religion restriction in the country, with comment from Azman,

“Moreover, we live in Malaysia and our culture has a strong relationships and bond with family. Being gay is already a disgrace what more to have a gay marriage. We don’t want to humiliate our family twice” (Azman).

Firdaus further added to comment on the similar view with Azman about the restriction of cultural and religion in the country to accept the practice of the same-sex marriage, “You have to know that we are living in multicultural with dominant Malay Muslim majority. There will be consequences if this is happening in the country” (Firdaus). Meanwhile, another respondent informed his strong disagreement on the same-sex marriage and its enormous consequences on family institution. Mamat backs it up and probed back with several questions,

“What for do gay people want to get married? To tell people that you already wrong? Then you want to try to fix it and get it right? Even if you are marriage, you still cannot get your own children. Again, for me gay marriage has no place here” (Mamat).

While most of the respondents shared their discontentment on gay marriage, only two respondents have neutral feeling and address no objection on the same-sex marriage in Malaysia. Jay for example said that she is unconvinced if the gay marriage will ever be practice in the country, “I am not sure about gay marriage in Malaysia because I do not see any potential on that in here” (Jay).

She added her view on the meaning of gay marriage, “personally, I think gay marriage is an agreement that you want to be put on paper” (Jay) that later disclosed that she has no objection on the same-sex marriage, “but, I am not against the gay marriage” (Jay). Sharing the same view is Majid and he offered his approval if the same-sex marriage is being practiced in the country.

“I am ok. I am not opposing to the gay marriage. I am very ok with that. Because again I don’t see the problem of two guys or two girls getting marriage like any other heterosexual because I guess they should be given the right to do so as well” (Majid).

In another notes, both Mamat and Jay further asserted to agree on having the romantic partner, “in the other hand, I believe in life partner. I don’t mind living together with my life partner” (Jay). Having said that, Malik asserted that gay marriage was actually existed in Malaysia long before it was debatable in the media. Malik said that,

“However, I believe that issues on gay marriage had been long existed here in Malaysia, with the term domestic partnership. In fact, I know few gay couple who live together under the same roof for years. I think the term gay marriage is just come to the picture quite recently and it is trying to make the domestic partnership legal and get documented” (Malik).

The discussion is also articulated by Azman. Azman indicated his similar opinion about gay people as politician and further emphasized that society is looking for an individual who were highly competence and with strong integrity to govern the country.

“And for me, if any gay people are doing excellent job or run the business well, people will acknowledge that and the most important thing is the quality of work regardless what kind of sexuality they are” (Azman).

Faizal offered his opinion when he being asked if gay people in Malaysia have good potential to become the politician and he said that,

“Definitely. I would say that gay people is much more focus on whatever field they are doing. Over-ambitious if I am permitted to say that. They were successful businessmen, they were successful figure in the country or even in the international level and of course in the world of politic too and I think that is one of the side that gay people can be very good at” (Faizal).

Nonetheless, most of the respondents were also agree that if any of the gay people were elected as politician or intent to pursue politics as their career, he or she are strongly discouraged to openly declare his sexuality to the public - let alone engaged with any sex scandal or even intended to propose issues related with gay rights, be it explicit or implicit as it will create chaos and backlash among public in the country. Syah said that,

“Obviously that you cannot make an announcement and declaring yourself as homosexual to the extent of proposing the idea of gay marriage or issues related that can provoke the public. You know the limitation and you have to set your political objective right then you can become the politician” (Syah).

5.4.3.2 Criminal Act or Hate Crime?

The discussion from both newspapers of UM and BH revealed that homosexual sex act was commonly being called as the form of criminal act. Consequently, such statements strikes most as hogwash from majority of the respondents and assert their resentment on the statement. For instance, Jay expresses her annoyance and said that, “if they called that falling in love with the same sex is a criminal act, I would not agree more on that”, (Jay). She later asserted her definition of crime act, “for me, criminal are people who killed another people and not homosexual sex act” (Jay) and also informed that,

“If the murderer is gay people, of course he or she has to be convicted to murder but not in term of sexual act or romantic relationship with the same sex. That is not a crime” (Jay).

By referring to the findings from the newspapers on the label assumed to homosexual activities as the act of criminal, Azman offered his view and said that same sex attraction cannot be called as a crime, “it cannot be called as crime. They just attracted to the same sex” (Azman). Azman further professed on other things that are more implacable to be considered as crimes than homosexual sex act. Azman said that,

“I am strongly disagree if they said that gay is a crime because there are more other things that can be classified as crimes. Logically, most gay were born as gay and it is related with human psychology” (Azman).

Malik conceded his opinion and also agreed on the idea that gay is not a form of crime, “gay is not a crime. It is just a sexual preference” (Malik). He offered his personal deliberation on the derogatory word and name that often used by the media that regularly described homosexuals as a social problem and illness that may become the reason on why homosexuals was being labelled as a criminal act, “I think because the word that often use in the newspapers to describe homosexual as the social problem to the society” (Malik).

Faizal issued his view on the label thrown to gay sexual act as criminal by the newspapers that associated the behavior as a rape crime. He said that,

“For me gay is not a crime. How come the newspapers label that as a crime because both people have consensus to do such act. Also, it cannot be the same like rape because rape is a real crime” (Faizal).

In the other hand, Majid offered his argument on homosexual sex relation through the discourse of legal and agree that homosexual sex act was stated under the penal code as a crime but commented that it should be read within the different context and content depending on the situation. Majid said that,

“Homosexual sex act is a crime under the penal code and it is stated that if there is penetration then it is called a crime. However, if it is being done with consent, I don’t see it as a problem because both parties consented to that particular act” (Majid).

Majid further asserted on his perspective of homosexual sex that was allegedly called as a crime act as narrated in the newspapers with details narration on the legal aspect. He said that, if the particular person who force someone else to perform illicit or innatural sex behavior that can be called crime act. Majid said that,

“If there is a force and the person can be prove, that he or she is being force to do such thing then they are subject under the penal code but if it is not then it is being done on the ground of love between both parties so what is wrong with it. As long as it is being done between four walls and it is not in public then that it is their problem” (Majid).

The discussion is also echoed by Mamat when he expresses his strong disagreement on the statement from the newspapers that addressing homosexual people as criminal,

“For me, I couldn’t agree with that because gay means fun. Gay people are always doing something nice that we are all mostly enjoying it. However, even if they are gay, that is not impossible he or she will do a crime” (Mamat).

Mamat further mentioned that most gay people he met is gracious and amiable, “most gay people that I know are kind to people, and they live in peace. For me, homosexuals will try to avoid any crime because of their natural feeling” (Mamat).

As this section demonstrates, most respondents expressed disagreement particularly on the label of criminal of being homosexuals. For them, it was just a piece of hate crime coming from the media. The following section will discuss on the findings under the element of symbolic codes.

5.4.4 Symbolic Codes

Another element of social constructionism theory is symbolic codes. For this research, symbolic codes refer to the way on how the words and language used to depict homosexuality being used in the media. Themes under this element were including social and moral, politics and few more. Throughout the interview session, most respondents commented on topics on social and moral, politics and few more. The following section will discuss further on the findings.

5.4.4.1 Biased Narratives

Despite has no specific question during the interview session that ask on how the language and context used in the newspapers in depicting homosexuality coverage, most respondents were indirectly said that the language used by the media to describe homosexuality was significantly biased and off balance, during in between of the interview questions. Stories with statements that mostly negative and opposing homosexuality was outweighed the positive coverage. The negative portrayals on homosexuality issues make most of respondents disappointed and unhappy to the way of the coverage was constructed.

Syah for instance mentioned that gay people are often being named as freak while Hamzah learnt that most of the coverage on homosexuality writes with lots of harsh and unpleasant words with negative description. Hamzah also asserted that most local newspapers here particularly the Malay language newspapers are profoundly using derogatory words and label to depict homosexuals community. He said that,

“From my observation, Malay newspapers tend to use a quite harsh name-calling. They will either use words such as *pondan*, *bapok* or *mak nyah* and what not. Personally, I think the name-calling is somewhat degrading” (Hamzah).

The discussion on the negative depiction of homosexuality was also expanded by Firdaus when he commented that,

“The newspapers mostly portrayed the negative things with unkind remarked about gay people and then exaggerated the issues as unislamic, inclined to the Western lifestyle and many more negative label” (Firdaus).

Another point that was raised during the interview is the absent of the voices from homosexuals and social activists to express their opinions which is hardly exist in both newspapers. As outspoken as it is, Jay commented that media must have the accurate representation of queer people and active engagement with the community is a must. She asserted that,

“We also need to carefully interrogate who is telling these stories. When it comes to matters of queer identity, those best qualified to speak are those who are queer themselves. It all comes down to agency. We don’t need to be patronised or condescended to, what we need is a platform for our own voices to be heard” (Jay)

The discussion was expanded by Faizal, when he emphasized that journalists should play a huge responsibility towards their audience, in which the homosexual community whose issues are often under-reported. To add to his point, Faizal further asserted that “accurate representation on this community is just as significant and important as covering any other community especially the minority group”. Faizal added,

“By systematically ignoring the community especially in the mainstream news outlet, any stories related with homosexuality do get covered, they are often sensationalized and exaggerated” (Faizal).

Majid provides a good point when he accentuated that journalists from these newspapers are wrestling with the aspiring for the objective reporting, but often let their cultural predilections shape the way of their writing towards homosexuality in the newspaper. Majid further asserted that, the coverage was constructed such a way in attempt to reflect the norms of the local society but for many cases, the journalists merely used their own sense with little to no substance in covering homosexuality stories. Majid added,

“Too often, those who are retelling our stories will either twist the narratives to fit their own preconceptions, or will simply be insensitive to the nuances and complexities that surround gay identity.”

By referring to the point asserted by Faizal when he pointed on the diversity of the people working in the newsroom, Jay commented that media organisations by now should have been pushing towards building more diverse teams, regardless ethnicities, religions and even sexualities including gay people that should be more visible in the newsroom as it could be. Jay added that, “having diverse newsroom staff means having

people with experiences that you can bounce ideas off when you are writing a story and that include different sexualities”. Jay colludes on the idea that reporters should also form connections with the homosexual community and include them in the newsgathering process instead of forcing for a story which often turns one-sided. He added,

“That is means, going out to a source and talking to people that do not necessarily share similar thought like you. And at the end of the day, it’s really not about our differences or the different cultures but it is also about respecting the news source” (Jay).

Sharing similar page of discussion, it was continued by Syah as he asserted that any media depiction on homosexuality can highlight more or less sensational or controversial aspect of gay life, but often disregards the broad array of issues experiences by members from this community.

In addition to the discussion, Firdaus commented on the reason why the coverage on homosexuality is often biased and off balance due to the preconception among the journalist by implanting certain standards of comprehension when they write homosexuality coverage in the media. Firdaus said,

“Most heteronormative way of engaging with gay people is problematic because it assumes that there is a norm and everyone is measured by that standard. Making assumptions about somebody and writing that they were, for example, ‘born in the wrong body’ implies that there is somehow a ‘right body’ to have been born in. For someone trying to come to terms with themselves as a complex being, this will cause added distress and trauma”.

Ultimately, most respondents collude that media practitioners should take into account on how importance it is in understanding the cultural interchange through media including minority group that later can shape another people opinions and values.

Meanwhile, Majid pinpointed the importance role of the media, when he asserted that

“The media needs to be more mindful. In general, journalists, subeditors and editors sit in an incredibly powerful position, with little to no experience of being othered. Because of this position, they are willing to let a set of essentially random style rules overrule an individual’s dignity and right to dignity in the way in which they wish to addressed and identify”.

Overall, from the findings of this section, it is clear that most respondents were not happy with the way of the coverage but give certain reasons why it was constructed as such including the cultural and religious restriction. The following section will discuss on the respondent's reaction of their contested identity from the homosexuality coverage as depicted in the media.

5.4.5 Media Influences and Contested Identity

How is the homosexual's respondent reacted to the homosexuality coverage depicted in the media? The findings for this question had been discussed earlier in the previous section. However, how does the coverage presented on homosexuality in the local media influence their identity construction of those self-identify Malay homosexual? On the basis of shared social realities, individual identity conceptions have multiple dimension and complex in social constructionist thought. Hence, the research question three emerged additional finding on the respondent's interaction with the homosexual's content and their understanding of such meanings from the coverage depicted in the media with their own identity.

The discussion on the media influence address what the respondents had to say about the ways in which they perceive or did not perceive their own personal identities interfaced with media depictions of identity's frame within the operation of heterosexual dominant society. Throughout the interview, most respondents confirmed that the media depiction on homosexuality have some reasonably direct effect on them which recognize some influence on their personal identity. But each respondent's sense of their homosexual identity is not necessarily turn out to be collectively connected with each other with the various answers given.

The discussion of the findings was grounded with the communication theory of identity that consists of four frames: personal, enacted, relational and communal. The theory claims that identity is based on roles, other people's attributions and social constructions and performances. The personal frame is focuses on a person's self-awareness and how he or she viewed them internally and externally. The enacted frame refers to how people

connected to another people by using the rhetorical constructive terms to describe their identity. Meanwhile, the relational frame is how individuals perceived their identity in relation to other people and influenced by another behavior. Lastly, the communal frame is concerned with individual shared identity with those in each group in which he or she is part. As identity can be defined as “a negotiation among the individual, enactment, relationship and the community or any combination of the four” (Hecht, etl al, 2002, p. 853), it is argued that identity does not necessarily can be categorized into single classification but might be understood as having more than one dimension of identity. Similarly, the discussion of the findings cannot be explained separately as the findings were intertwined within all four types of frames. The reason because most respondents do see a degree of complexity throughout the four different frames of their identity construction.

To get a better perspective, the following analysis is arranged in three subsections. The section discussed is as followed: (i) core identities: being homo and Muslim, (ii) discreet and unseen, and (iii) self-conflict and struggle.

5.4.5.1 Core Identities: Being Homo and Muslim

Most respondents had many strong and varied impressions about their own personal identity of being Muslim and homosexuals. Upon the completion of the interview, most of the respondents comfortably draw their contentment and fortitude of being gay from the outside the schematic norms of the Malay Muslim majority living in the country. During the interrogation among respondents on how they negotiate between sexuality and identity difference, it is discovered that most of respondents are still observed their life as Muslim and distance themselves from taking non-halal foods and consumed alcohol. They also claimed to be obliged for their regular prayers. In addition, most respondents were only open up their sexuality among their friends within the same cycle and barely disclosed their personal stories with their family.

Nevertheless, despite of the newspapers that mostly canvassed by placing not only the eloquent narration of homosexuality from the religion standpoint and explicated with

frequent of explicit consequences, almost all of the respondents were largely conceded that they are still observed their life as Muslim regardless of the reticent affection on the same sex relation upon examining the responses about their faith and practice on the religion. Faizal for instance, tells the importance's of religion that is still significant to his existence, "I learnt that religion is the main backbone in every part of life" (Faizal). Syah professed that he will not behaving in a way that is not acceptable as a Muslim and to remain steadfast with his religion, "even though that I am gay, but deep down inside I am trying not to going off the rails. After all I still have my religion" (Syah).

Family upbringing had been identified as the factor why the respondents are still read themselves as obedience and devout Muslim and that was agreed by almost all of the respondents, "in my opinion, it is depends on that someone upbringing and how does their parent raised their children" (Faizal). Despite of his sentience on the struggle between religion and sexuality, Faizal personally tells that he feels lucky that he came from the family that counts heavily on religion and education, "I was born to a family that keeps reminding me to keep the good names of the family especially in the public" (Faizal). Hamzah makes further acclamation that he comes from the religious family, and he said that,

"My family has a quite religious background. Religious matter is important to us. If I were try to relate to question whether we were practicing Muslim, yes we do. We take religion very seriously" (Hamzah).

In furtherance, the researcher also asked the respondents how are the attachment they made to be compelled with religious adherence in which they draw several boundary including self-refrained from alcohol consumption, drug and non-halal foods, "I refrain myself from taking alcohol and I am fasting during Ramadhan" (Hamzah) and homologated the basic teaching in Islam such as performing dailies prayers, attending a Friday prayer and observing Ramadhan. Syah sent his constructive note with strong undercurrent message and said that,

"We are Allah servant too. We have to think positive. Everybody try to do their best to be a good Muslim. I think even though I am gay, but I still pray, hoping that Allah will accept me because gay people are still servant to Allah too" (Syah).

In the other hand, Jay shared her personal conflict with religion and her sexuality and she unreservedly confess that Islam has continually been at the center of her life but no longer as worshipper or someone who submits to anything or anyone else's will. Jay said that,

“I am a type of receptive person and understand on how conflict between religion and sexuality has affected my life. For most people, I am not Muslim enough at all but for others I am not queer enough. I think the queer Muslim community needs to shuffle off from dwindling into the trap of having to provide answers to questions that supply a cleaving message. Diversity is our clout and we should nurture that” (Jay).

Nevertheless, the constant portrayal of homosexuals and labelled them to be un-Malay and un-Islamic as frequently described in the newspapers attracted respondents to offer their own standpoint. Majid conjured his idea about the impression made from the newspapers and upon being asked how is he perceived both his religion and sexuality, he conceded that both are central element and congenital of his identity marker as Malay Muslim in the country,

“Of course religion specifically Islam very much important to the Muslim and of course there are tenants and pillars of Islam that taught and explain to you that being homosexual is prohibited in Islam but again being a gay it is not something that you choose or you opt to. For me, it is a gift” (Majid).

Overall, respondents commented that they are mostly still has a strong attachment towards Malay cultural and Islamic adherence. However, most of them is keeping their religion and sexuality difference. As consequences, most of them live dual lives and have to find a precarious balance between attending mosques, families and their gay circle.

5.4.5.2 Discreet and Unseen

Another discussion throughout the interview was also touch about their personal live between their immediately family, public and their gay friends. Following the interview with Majid and the discussion on the religious tensions with homosexuals with the assortment of heavily negative remarked from the analysis found in the newspaper, the researcher asked on how the respondents negotiated in the double bind on account of their sexuality and identity difference especially on their existence and acceptance living

in Malaysia. Most of the respondents offered analogous response with Azman reaction, “for me, the most important thing is, you have to be discreet” (Azman) which is also agree with Mamat, “what we can do is to remain unseen” (Mamat).

Majid express his similar agreement and informed that he will not disclosed on his sexuality with someone unfamiliar, “you can’t express yourself publicly, you can’t be too open. There are limitations, be it in the work place or within relative and family members” (Majid). Syah continued to assert his comment and stated that the existence of gay community in the country is real. However, the presence should not to be publicized and sensationalized especially in the media and make known due to the society’s sensitivity in the country, “if you are gay, you don’t have to make announcement to the public that you are gay. You just live as what you are” (Syah).

Mamat continued to assert a similar reaction when he said that gay person in Malaysia especially among Malay Muslim for not extremely exposed and revealed anything about their sexuality including in the Internet. Mamat tells,

“As a gay Muslim living in Malaysia, we cannot be extremely audacious because our culture is against on what we practice. As long as you can control yourself so that is exceptional. If you want to be gay, just keep it to yourself and do not reveal too much on it especially in the Internet” (Mamat).

Azman continued his view that his sexuality is something that he needs to keep only for himself. He asserted,

“you don’t have to tell out loud to other people who you are not acquainted with that you are gay especially around heterosexual people because not all people can welcome you as gay in this country” (Azman).

Nevertheless, Azman on the other hand make further remarked that his openness on his sexuality only allowed to someone that he trusted and familiar but with the exclusion on his intimate detail of his sex life, “personally, I think it is all right if they know you as gay without you telling them your sex interest explicitly” (Azman). While Majid settled with his own story on the challenges that typically received by most gay people in the country and their collisions between religion and sexuality, he asserted that, “therefore,

it is very much difficult to be one in Malaysia and somehow or rather it is difficult and it is very challenging being one” (Majid).

Seemingly, the entire collection of the interrogation on the strategies made in the negotiation of the respondents on their sexuality and identity difference as rejoinders to the newspapers revelation on the deliberation of the same sex sexuality and religious colloquy meet the consensus and the mutual agreement on several ideas. Considering as the minority group living in the country, Syah for example emphasized on respect another group of people especially to the majority. Syah asserted that,

“For me, as the minority people, we are obligated to follow and respect the voices of the majority. It is not to say that we do not deserve the right to speak up. But as long as we can still make living and safe, get a job and money, I think it is already good” (Syah).

Meanwhile, Azman highlighted on keeping the good behavior, “what is more important is you just have to keep the good behaviors” (Azman). Azman further asserted that,

“I do agree, as a homosexual person, sometime they want to be unique and different. However, unlike Western people which most of them are more open to compare with our society, we are bounded on certain limitation due to the cultural and religion restriction. Therefore, as homosexuals living in the country here, you have to be behaved and act reasonably” (Azman).

The point raised by Syah on the identity and sexuality struggle among gay people makes further deliberation on the consequences if the gay person chooses to openly disclose on their sexuality or remained to have their identity private and both have its own repercussion. Syah asserted that,

“If gay people are too outspoken about their sexuality and makes public and family offended, they will feel anger and frustrated of being rejected. But if they chose to stay in the closet, they will feel alienated and lonely. So both actions have their own reaction. So again, it is not entirely mental illness. It is just an internal conflict between two choices” (Syah).

Overall, it is interesting to know that there are numbers of respondents agree that there are no reasons to be loud and open about their sexuality especially when they are all living in Malaysia. While most respondents affirmed that gay people in Malaysia should not have to be too open and publicly disclosed their sexuality with someone unfamiliar,

they also emphasized on respecting other people particularly to the majority if they want also be respected.

5.4.5.3 Self-Conflict and Struggle

The aforementioned discussion on the state of confusion among gay people takes to another discussion on the complex creation of homosexuality when Faizal chips in with his real story, “during the early stage of teenagers, I have to admit that I have to fight with my own feeling” (Faizal). Faizal conceded and informed that society should be known that being gay is already a miserable feeling because most of them are fighting with their own emotion and always being left out without the great support from their surrounding including the peripheral acquaintances and friends with frequent of unpleasant remarks from the public and media. Malik tend to agree with the statement and join in to the discussion and informed that, “they are fighting with their own feeling with lots of things such as relationship, family and even their own identity” (Malik).

The self-conflict and struggle between two opposing forces of identity and sexuality difference among gay people asserted by Malik was further articulated by Faizal when he shared his own experience during he grew up time. As time goes by, he embraced his sexuality as long as he did not bring shame to his family. He said that he is lucky because he has a good family and his parent raised him well. Faizal informed that,

“I know the feeling is wrong but this is how I have been born with, so I have to accept it eventually. This feeling does not come in a flash like what people told you and you cannot choose to be normal immediately because it is not easy. We don’t ask ourselves to be like this because it comes naturally” (Faizal).

Accompanying the response on the self-conflict and grappling on the identity and sexuality difference, the respondents resist the notion on the acceptance of their sexuality and identity struggle and claimed their sexuality is not an illness that often being narrated in the newspapers. Majid for example, put it bluntly that he was born as gay and his sexual orientation is decided by God. He later declared that the only decision he had is just embodied his inborn sexuality. Majid asserted that, “I don’t think it is a mental illness. I do think it is something that the God has given to us and you have got no choice but to go through it” (Majid).

Majid further affirmed on his embracement with his sexuality and postulated that as a test from God, “I do think this is a challenge that God has given us to test us whether we can survive in this world or not being what we are today” (Majid). He called that gay individual as a brave and strong human being from the psychological challenges. The remarked given by Majid on his assertion about his homosexual orientation as a test from God is further assured by Faizal and he informed that,

“For me this is a test from god. We have to accept it and learn to control it and get our emotional support especially from friends that what I called extended family that hold me intact” (Faizal).

After all, the respondent asserted to affirm on the struggle and the battle living as homosexual that often involved with emotional pain and bump, “actually, being gay is already in pain because you are fighting with your own feeling and emotion” (Faizal) and later highlighted on the need of support as Faizal asserted, “the moral support from friends, parent and from the environment is important to these people especially when they have to live in the pressure of conservative society” (Faizal).

In the other hand, Majid also submitted on the idea for any homosexual individual who have the strong will to combat with their own feeling and said that, “well, if say for example if you are really strong that probably you can go against the flow and try to lead your life as normal person” (Majid). In a similar conversation about homosexual and their struggle about their own feeling, Syah put emphasised on the self-restraint among gay people when they encountered such a stressful situation. Syah highlighted for keep on evaluating the decision based on the environment and the situation regardless of any decision makes by them on the choices either to come out or to stay in the closet because both choices definitely has the pros-and-cons.

After all, Faizal added that, being gay is not totally the end of someone life. Gay people should appreciated themselves more because it is not something bad at all as long as they know how to take great care of their selves with certain self-restriction and appropriate self-guidance. He informed that,

“Gay people should appreciate themselves more because they are not alone and being gay does not mean that the person is bad. It is indeed something that

cannot be accepted in the country but as long as they know the boundary” (Faizal).

Faizal further lengthily his view by contributing his personal message for hope and encouragement for those gay people who are still living in despair and anxiety,

“There are lots of gay people in this world and those who feel alienated, don’t despair yourself because you are not alone. Gay people also has feeling, emotion, desire and they want to be in love, to get to be with somebody to share emotion, to share their happiness with someone else without being judged of who they are and all they need is proper guidance” (Faizal).

The discussion on the need of support to gay community was also articulated by Azman and he informed that society can simply blame and labelled gay people as insane and mentally disturbed and said that,

“People don’t go through it so they can say anything they wanted. If you are to ask any of gay people, they are not choosing to be gay at the beginning. They want to be as normal like any other people” (Azman).

In another direction of the discussion, Faizal further deliberated on the role of the family upbringing and relations that may nurture oneself to be mentally healthy and having sense of wellbeing, and said that,

“The mental illness can happen to anybody and not only to gay people. For me, it is depends on the people upbringing. If the family has a problem, it will lead to the problematic children” (Faizal).

From this finding, many respondents were not agree when media depicted gay community as people with mental illness. The definition of mental illness should be well reserarch before they make such statement to homosexual individual. The respondents also highlighted that media should be more sensitive when they use issue surrounding mental health because it will offended certain people suffering with the illness.

To relate all these findings above with the elements of social communication of identity, it is shown that most of the respondents can be categorized to any if not all from the four frames that outlined by Hecht (1993). For the personal frame, they were all aware on their sexuality and their own version of being Malay Muslim living in Malaysia. Despite being emotionally challenges, most respondents accepting themselves and reaffirmed

that their sexual identity different are not their faults. They often choose to be surrounded with supportive gay circle and people that they can relate with.

Meanwhile, their enacted frame of identity is depending on their acceptance towards their own sexuality based on their own internalization and interpretation of their significant life events or relationships. Not only that they aware on their homosexual sexuality, but most of respondents were still comply with the surrounding cultural and social expectations of both as Malay and Muslim individual either by choice or because they feel pressured to obey to certain conventions and norms, and this is specifically refers to the identity of communal frame.

Their identity making also comprises with diverse levels of tension with their families, peers and society. Family upbringing and also their deeper attachment with family members and Malay Muslim peers were the main reasons of the self refrain from downright agitation against the rebukes of Islam. For them, it is possible to avoid stated rhetoric by living discreetly or semi-openly as a homosexual Muslim in Malaysia as long as not explicitly declaring or labelling their gay identity publicly. Looked at how their self-understandings of Islam and sexuality can shift depending upon their surrounding circumstances. This explanation is the best to relate with relational frame of identity.

Most respondents also choose not to be critical about critiquing the Islamic authorities blatantly. Often, many respondents also do not feel the need to oppose things publicly since the occasional and subjective nature of moral policing does not make life completely unbearable. Attempting to be more visible with their sexuality and demanding equal rights such as doing the public rally would upset the delicate balance of multi-diverse community in the country that can invite danger as opposed to the relative safety which they enjoys. Others factors such as heavily legal, political and social penalties for renouncing Islam also becomes another factors of their self-adjustment. Afterall, the experiences demonstrated by most of the respondents helping them to adapt, modify and play with different adjustment depending on their circumstances.

In summary, the section 5.4 and 5.5 outlines in details the findings from the in-depth interview study which was conducted with ten self-identified Malay homosexual. The interview was conducted to answer research question three (RQ3): How homosexual's readers perceived the coverage with their own personal identity interfacing with the media depiction? The purpose of the interview was to examine how these Malay homosexuals respondents received and inferred the homosexuality coverage as depicted in Malay language newspapers. The interview was also conducted to provide the opportunity to see how the discourse of issue participants compared to the discourse depicted publicly through the coverage. The following chapter is the final chapter which will discuss on the findings attempted to reveal answer for the research questions. The similar chapter also discussed on how the research contributes to the directing of the theoretical fields and body of knowledge.

5.5 Summary

Overall, this chapter examined the findings on the way homosexuality coverage was being constructed in Malay language newspapers and also examine the way homosexual respondents perceived the coverage. This chapter is divided into three main sections which are the findings of the trends of the coverage, findings of the media construction of homosexuality and lastly findings on the perception of the respondents to the coverage and their conflicted identity. These three main sections were discussed to answer three main questions respectively utilizing content analysis method and in-depth interview study.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to discuss the findings revealed answered the research questions guiding this research and delves into discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapters in the context of the objectives met, expectations and literature laid out. This chapter also discussed on how the research contributes to the directing of the theoretical fields and body of knowledge. It also highlights the strength and limitations and also offers some suggestions for future research. Considering the sheer volume of information included in Chapter 5, it is necessary to answer the question - what does it all mean? The discussion of this research revolved around three research questions. The first research question is intended to catch the trends of the homosexuality coverage throughout fifteen years period of time. The quantitative content analysis is employed to seek answer for research question one (RQ1): How are trends of the homosexuality coverage were distributed in the Malay language newspapers from 1998 to 2012?

Meanwhile, the second research question is constructed to examine how the newspapers provide narratives of the news and context used to depict homosexuality through identifying dominant elements of social constructionism. The methodology used to determine answer for second research question is qualitative content analysis with question (RQ2): How coverage of homosexuality was thematically presented in the Malay language newspapers with references emerged from social constructionism?

And the third question is designed to analyze the perception among readers based on the findings acquired from the content analysis study. The methodology used to seek answers for research question three is in-depth interview study. The respondents for the interview were Malay homosexuals' people. The interview is to seek how these homosexual individuals received and inferred the provided perspective of the news homosexuality narrative as described from the discourse of Malay language newspapers. The interview was also conducted to investigate for any potential reasons for such coverage by gathering other viewpoints of respondents. The research question three is

(RQ3): How homosexual's readers perceived the coverage with their own personal identity interfacing with the media depiction?

This chapter has been explicitly organized into several sections. The first section of 6.2 addresses the discussion on the findings from research question one (RQ1). The second section of 6.3 discusses on the findings from research question two (RQ2) and the third section of 6.4 addresses the discussion on research question three (RQ3). Meanwhile section 6.5 discusses the prospect and challenges of this research, followed by the contributions and concludes with the implications of the research's findings for future research.

6.2 The Discussion on the Trends of the Coverage

The first research question concerned on the trends of the homosexuality coverage from UM and BH newspapers. The trends of the coverage are examine from multiple categories including the general news text distributions of the coverage about homosexuality, the sections which place the homosexual stories, the content discussed around homosexual's issue and the portrayal of actors appeared in the coverage. The studies span from year 1998 to 2012. The purpose to analyse the trends on the homosexuality coverage is significant to get the broader understanding on how issues around homosexuality being narrated. It is argue that both UM and BH newspapers has a common attributes as the government oriented media and both newspapers are expected to share similar history of the establishment and the ownership. However, take into account that the findings on the distribution of the coverage revealed that both Malay language newspapers demonstrated dissimilar amount of number throughout all categories. Yet, it is not entirely affect the intention of the overall aim of this research.

The finding of this research showed that both Malay language newspapers featured a total of 463 coverage on homosexuality related issue that span from fifteen years of studies. UM newspaper yielded the higher numbers of coverage with 331 coverage while BH newspapers provide 132 numbers of coverage. This amount gives an average of 30 coverage on homosexuality per year with at least two coverage per month within fifteen

years period. It is also revealed that the number of the coverage on homosexuality for both Malay language newspapers showed a drastic growth and reached the peaked in year 2012 with total of 242 coverage.

UM newspaper showed greater attention on issues around homosexuality with the intense growth on the number of coverage started from the year 2005 with 5 coverage and reached at the highest in 2012 with 164 coverage. In the other hand, BH newspaper demonstrated the irregular number of coverage. BH newspaper merely begun to show interest with stories of homosexuality from the year 2010 and later achieved the highest peaked on the year 2012 with 78 coverage. From these two findings, it can be said that coverage around homosexual appeared to become more visible and received great amount of attention from these governments' oriented newspapers.

This research also seeks to identify the section from the newspapers that placed coverage on homosexuality and content discussed about homosexual. There are ten different sections published around issue on homosexuality which is national news, feature stories, column, editorial news, letter to editors, international news and interview. Meanwhile, there are ten contents encircled on homosexuality which include social, politics, religion, western ideology, legal and crime, human rights, health, aids, psychology, global and others. The study of the section in the newspapers and content discussed that write stories around homosexuality is significant in this research in order to determine the implication and the reflection of the newspaper's stance. Similarly, the findings can be uncover how issues on homosexuality being reported and narrated. It will then ultimately discover the assortment of the homosexual's stories presented in the newspapers.

The section of national news provides the great numbers of coverage on homosexuality that showed 244 coverage on homosexual stories throughout fifteen years of studies. The second highest is feature stories with total of 113 news coverage. Specifically, the section of national news showed the highest numbers of coverage on homosexuality in the year 2012 with total of 155 articles for both newspapers. Seven coverage on

homosexual were published in year 2010 in the same section. Later, the coverage showed the drastic growth in 2011 with 70 articles. The number of the coverage provide as twice number in the following year with 155 coverage. Meanwhile, the section for feature stories about homosexuality indicated 10 coverage in the year 2010, 18 coverage in year 2011 and 44 coverage in year 2012. The section for editorial provides one coverage in year 2010, which later escalated to five coverage in the year 2011 and 17 coverage in year 2012. These three sections in the newspapers provides a great amount of coverage combined which showed the great amount of visibility in both Malay language newspapers between the years 2010 to year 2012.

This research also analyse the news frame of the homosexuality coverage. There are six main categories of news frame that is consequence, conflict, morality, responsibility, human interest and others. The numbers of all news frames were quantified with 647 amounts for all sex types news frames from fifteen years period of analysis. It is discovered that news frame on homosexuality on consequences provided the great amount of coverage which was followed by the content categorized under conflict and morality. There are 198 news frames in total under the category of consequences throughout the fifteen years period from both newspapers. Under this news frame, the discussion on homosexuality was interwoven which range from the consequences and impact of homosexuality to society, particularly to the family institution and value in the country.

Meanwhile, the news frame on conflict revealed a total of 172 news frame that rank second. Issues discussed revolved mostly on political dispute between government, NGO and the opposition party as the government was constantly being label as anti-homosexuals in the coverage as well as coverage on the opposition parties that constantly labelled by the newspaper as pro homosexuals. Lastly, news frame on morality place third with 145 news frame. This news content undoubtedly highlighted issues on homosexuality from the stance of religions particularly Islam as well as others religion such as Christian, Buddha and Hindu. The numbers of the news frame throughout all six categories provide the significance attention from both Malay

language newspapers and become more visible particularly between the years 2010 to 2012 as to compare with years prior to that. For example, there are 12 news frames on consequence in year 2010 which later showed the dramatic upsurge to 34 news frames in 2011 and 121 news frame in year 2012.

Looking collectively to all these data, there are some general observation emerged on the distinct position of various news frame concern on homosexuality. There are growing numbers on homosexuality's stories from both Malay language newspapers which provide significant trends throughout the fifteen years period of studies. The trend on homosexuality coverage become more obvious and received great amount of attention from these mainstream newspapers. It could also be informed that homosexuality coverage is not being unnoticed in the mainstream newspapers. The evidence was revealed when three significance sections from the newspapers namely national news, feature stories and editorial news provide numbers of coverage on homosexuality particularly from year 2010 to 2012. Any coverage under national news, feature stories and editorial was known to discuss current issue which regularly raised attention from the readers.

This findings is consistent on what Machungo (2012) asserted on news that placed at the front page and important section like national news and editorial news because they are deemed important by journalist, editor, news organization and for the readership that the news to be more newsworthy and significance. The high level of newsworthiness is based on the importance, urgency, sensational nature of the events, places or actors being covered (Machungo, 2012). By defining what is newsworthy, the people behind the media control and decide what matters to the audience and their readers, by creating the categories of inclusions and exclusion, important and unimportant, relevant and irrelevant.

Newsmakers are unceasingly making choices using their writing to establish existence and verify significance, sending powerful messages that some people, subjects, events and places are worthy of attention compared to others news. In other words, coverage on

homosexuality were considered as newsworthy from the stance of the Malay newspapers possibly to attract more readers and the reason why topic on homosexuality was reckoned to be newsworthy need to be further look up. The findings on the trends of the increase number of homosexuality's coverage was also considered to be consistent on what Gasher (2007) posited that journalist and the organizations of the media play their role like cartographer by assigning certain events, people, places, institutions, problems and solutions by default to inhibit people from different social group or class to be included in the news coverage. The coverage then was slanted in the media through their routine coverage according to the interest of the author, the editor or the newspapers' organisation.

The emerging trends of the coverage on homosexuality under the news frame on consequences, conflicts and morality also provide significance meaning which reflected the root of both Malay language newspaper that constitute their long narrative with Malay institution and cultural. As agents for social progress and a medium that has been long standing in championing the Malay interest, homosexuality coverage were skewed within the interest of social, politics and religion as these topics are deemed relevant and significance to discuss a controversial topic of gay or social deviance related issues knowing this country as a Muslim-majority Muslim nations that has a strong conservative attitude on such issues. Moreover, in moving towards the modern state, it should be understood on challenges that arise particularly when you live in the diverse societies.

The emerging trend of homosexuality coverage that intertwined within areas of social, politics and religion under the related news frame also informed that these Malay language newspapers were abidingly becomes the watchdog especially on the circumstances of any insignificance portion of cultural norm and belief that is unusual and uncommon within Malay cultural. Hence, it can be said that subjects around social, politics and religion are the crucial discourse and points to deliberate and uphold the Malay indomitableness specifically when these Malay language newspapers unfailingly befall within Malay hegemony (Fee, L. K. 2001) since its earlier establishment.

In addition to the analysis of the news frames and the section of the newspapers, the actors portrayed in the coverage about homosexuality were also identified. The actors appeared were act as the source of the news. The source of the news was defined as words that appeared from those directly or indirectly quoted in the coverage. The analysis of the actors used to speak on the issue is significance in this research because it can reveal the embodiment of certain individuals or organizations that commonly selected by the newspapers to speak on issue surrounding homosexuality and the kinds of the confine topics. By doing this too, it will undoubtedly show on who were given the prime powers to speak on the issue which indirectly may influence the general readers.

There are six actors appeared on homosexuality coverage in the newspapers. The list according to the highest amount of number to the lowest were as followed; non-government organization, government officials, religion organization, academician, politician and others. The source from others category were include a former or retired politician (they are speaking on the capacity as the individual and not represented certain bodies), authority such as police officer, religious individual such as motivational or religion speaker, counselor, psychiatrist, legal practitioners, social activist and few more. The total numbers of the actors speak on homosexuality from both UM and BH newspapers are 419 throughout the fifteen years period of studies. The detail illustration on the numbers of actors portrayed by the newspapers to speak on homosexuality was shown in Figure 5.13 in Chapter 5.

Throughout the fifteen years periods of studies, the highest number of actors used from both Malay language newspapers was hailed from the non-government officials with 163 numbers. It must be highlighted that most of the non-government organizations were favored to the government's decision and were mostly from Malay based organization that consolidate Malay and Muslim welfare, social and education in Malaysia. Several examples are including *Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung* (GPMS), *Jaringan Melayu Malaysia* (JMM), *Pertubuhan Peribumi Perkasa Malaysia* (Perkasa) and *Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia* (ISMA). Nevertheless, there are still few non-government organizations from non-Malay and non-Muslim affiliation such as Chinese

Society Organization of Ampang that was selected by the newspapers to comment on homosexuality issue as well. The second highest number of actors appeared in homosexuality coverage by both Malay language newspapers is from the government officials with the 72 of numbers. It is discovered that the newspapers were opted to use prominent and high ranking figure in the government body such as the Prime Minister, Deputy Minister, Secretary Politic of Prime Minister and Minister from varies government agency to speak and comment on homosexuality.

Meanwhile, the actor's portrayed from the religion organization are the third highest with the total amount of 52 numbers. The example were mostly from the Islamic organization which affiliate with government orientation include *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* or JAKIM, *Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia* or IKIM, *Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan* or JAWI, *Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor* or JAIS and few more agencies. Nevertheless, non-Islamic organization was also mentioned including Buddha Association of Petaling Jaya, Malaysia Association of Hindu Sangam, National Evangelical Christian Fellowship or NECF and Malaysia Hindu Association.

Following the finding, the trend on the actors portrayed on homosexuality emerged from the three most significance source namely Malay based non-government organization (NGO), the government and the religion organization. Clearly, it is shown that both Malay language newspapers rely heavily on the influential individual and organisation on issues surrounding homosexuality. The actors used by both Malay language newspapers work as the central source on coverage about homosexuality which also indirectly revealed the selection made of the newspaper on who are the best people to speak on homosexuality issue in the newspaper.

Hereby, the findings on the actors portrayal in this research can be relate on what Erickson et. al. (1989) stated that news is a form of representations of the authority which marks their explanations to the society. News is also represents on who are the authorized knowers and the represent the versions of reality from the authoritative stance. News from the authoritative sources will be accepted as the "truth" of the matter

without further investigation, as it reflecting an assumption that they serve the public interest. It is also to affirm that their organization is accountable. Here, the trend of the sources used on homosexuality is probably adequate to inform that journalists from both newspapers relied on the NGOs, the government and the religious institution as a trustworthy agency and influential actors to speak on homosexuality.

These three most referred actors on homosexuality used in the newspapers were also indirectly showed the position of the institution in the society. Those types of actors who hold a higher status and ranking among public that frequently used as a source in the media was also known as “primary definers” (Hall, 1978). The higher ranked group is to be believed to have more credibility and power. Thus, their words could legitimize the news, in comparison to the lower group whose information could be partial, distorted and less trustworthy. The findings on the actors used on homosexuality can also affirmed on what Fishman (1980) calls it as “bureaucratic consciousness”. Through bureaucratic consciousness, journalists would normally know where to find the sources based on their common sense. Journalists select sources of information according to a “hierarchy of credibility” with the assumption that sources in a higher ranked group know best due to their “knowledge of truth” (Becker, 1967). While the findings of the trends revealed that homosexuality issues were intertwined mostly on politics and religion topics, hence, the selection of the sources are not surprisingly come from the government official, non-government organisation and religious institution which is consistent with the “bureaucratic consciousness” stated by Fishman (1980).

Furthermore, the trends of the actors appeared in the homosexuality coverage were also reflected on the ownership of the newspapers for both UM and BH newspapers. As a government oriented media, the choices of the actors used is important and crucial because it was used to maintain and uphold the power and eliminate others voices (Hall, 1978). The trends of the actors portrayed were also consistent within the interest covered by the newspapers on homosexuality topic that spun around social, religion and politics. Both trends of the actors used and the interest topics highlighted on homosexuality issue were melded with the background of the newspapers. Hence, this is consistent on what

argued by Erickson et. al. (1989, p. 15) on the relations between the organizational sources and the ownership of the media that leads to a sharing of the core values in one dominant culture.

In summary, UM and BH newspapers used a narration that surrounded on the discussion intertwined with social, politics and religion were the central trends to depict issues of homosexuality. These three dominant subjects were also intertwined with three dominant actors that include non-government organization, government official and religious institution to speak on the issues. The ownership and background of the newspapers was believed as the main motivation of these trends. The following section will discuss on the findings emerged on the analyses of the coverage which concern on the second research question.

6.3 The Discussion on the Media Construction on Homosexuality

For the discussion on the media coverage, some observations can be made when looking at each of the four dimension of social constructionism: symbolic codes, cognitive customs, cultural traditions and shared roles and rules. Regarding the symbolic codes, the findings were discussed in two central findings that are negative connotation and the emphasizing on the Islamic narrative. At the cognitive customs, the findings discussed on the biasness in the political status quo, homosexuality as a western influence and as a mental disorder and HIV stigma. Meanwhile for the cultural traditions, the findings are central around challenge of societal norms and religious tenets. Lastly, the shared roles and rules elements that discussed on gay rights and law on homosexuality. The discussion was form with mostly contributed to certain stereotypical images which were perceived from both Malay language newspapers based from the findings discussed in Chapter 6. All four dimensions of social constructionism were discussed unifiedly but divided into subsections to ease the understanding of the discussion. The sections were include: (i) negative and unbalance voices (ii) them versus us: the enemy as the “other” (iii) politically motivated and (iv) moral panic.

6.3.1 Negative and Unbalance Voices

From the researcher opinion, the newspapers should obtain the viewpoint of all relevant parties including the homosexuals themselves and those directly or indirectly involved with the homosexual's community to get the better understanding of the phenomena from multiple angles. Furthermore, while most of the coverage is on homosexuality was constructed as negative with lack of supportive and positive narration in both newspapers, the findings can be relate on what stated by Littlejohn (1992) about the selection of the news and choosing the activity to “establishes the salience of issues or images in the minds of the public” (cited in Akpabio, 2005, p. 174) to highlight that the same-sex behavior is immoral and unacceptable.

The disproportion coverage on homosexuality can adds to the seriousness and criticalness of the issue and eventually these viewpoints will be implanted to what the general readers might think of. This is also supported on what McCombs and Shaw (cited in Sei-hill Kim, 2002) argument on the emphasize of media towards certain issues in their coverage by allotting a greater proportion of the news hole to them or by placing them more prominently in the newspaper and this emphasis, will influences the saliences of these issues among the audience. Although not the main intension of this research to analyze and compare the coverage from multiple newspapers with different ownership and control, it was argued that the news attitudes towards the coverage related with homosexuality should not go merely from one single direction. Rather, it should be a concurrently opening up of room and spaces to discuss and express the diversity of opinions and views.

The findings from the newspapers also revealed that coverage published about homosexuality were resulted from the reactions and reciprocation to the increasingly visible gay activities and communities around the country especially between the years 2009 to 2012 when the amount of coverage on homosexuality shows a tremendous upsurge. One of the examples is the most controversial event of *Seksualiti Merdeka* that takes place in November 2011, which allegedly held to promote deviant sex act and acknowledge the existence of sexual minority in Malaysia. Following the festival which

sought the inclusion and participation of a broad base of organizations and individuals including HIV/AIDS activists, human rights lawyers, feminist groups, artists, politicians and concerned members of the public (Seksualiti Merdeka, 2011) is the sensationalised report that made headlines in most newspapers in the country was subjugated with most of the declination remark and unashamed take on male same-sex relation and practice.

There were profound arguments on the discussion of anti-gay movement on the controversial event of *Seksualiti Merdeka* that later shows the intense report in the newspapers encircling heavily around religion, politics and legal clarity on the condemnation of homosexuality behavior and practice in the country. Albeit, it is still interesting to see how a festival that openly defending sexual diversity emerged within such a politically-charged circumstantial still gets the attention in the government-controlled media, even though not in the positive narrative. By using the *Seksualiti Merdeka* fiasco as an example, it tells a thing on the social standing to the depiction of the news media on homosexuality in which was argued by Meyers (1994). Meyer (1994) also asserted that homosexuality coverage in the media is not entirely resting on the question of either the social group of homosexuals is either deserving or undeserving of civil rights but most importantly is the prevalent of the societal view towards homosexuality. Meyer (1994) further acclaimed that the media should not emphasizing on certain attributes of an issue which will give more significance that might tell audience on “how to think about” this issue as well as “what to think about” regardless of which context of the issue is perceived.

With the findings shown that most coverage are against homosexuality, the researcher would like to argue on the selection of words and context to describe homosexuality in the media is not only reckoned to be critical for the interpretation but what more important is the meaning of the accepted words that can determine the bilateral thinking among readers and general public. Hence, a discussion on the possibilities for decriminalization of same-sex sexualities in Malaysia must therefore take into multiple accounts with inter-related factors to have fair and equal narration while the role of the mainstream newspapers need to be reassessed and reviewed. It was not strange as it was

also stated by Kuhar (2003) in his study when homosexuality was labeled as a disease and as such it became an item on the mass media agenda. Homosexual sex act and same-sex relations were also often being depicted in both Malay language newspapers to be illegal from the legal perspective and alternately proscribed the activities and behavior as a form of criminal act in the country.

This negative stereotype depicted from the newspapers to homosexuals was also consistent on what stated by Adorno (1999) about stereotype. According to him, stereotype work as a critical part of an authoritarian system while at the same time serve the value of the scapegoat (Quasthoff, 1989). Quasthoff (1989) who also studied the news reporting on the minorities indicated that stereotype typically fall in the form of judgment that exploit generalization to certain traits and deny certain social group of people with certain qualities or behavioral patterns.

While both Malay language newspapers were under the observation of the government with various restrictive regulation and ownership structures, sensitive issues like homosexuals were depicted in the stereotypical way by employing religion and politics as central topics. And this is the reason why government and religious institution were chose as their major source, knowing full well the consequences of writing stories that sided those in power. The finding is also supported on what Quist and Wiegand (2002) asserted that conservative's coverage on homosexuality is commonly known in the media. The media choose to describe homosexuality in the negative coverage to give the negative impression to the general public. This is what asserted by Alagappar and Kaur, (2007), that by employing undesirable terms on homosexuality from the media, it may leave impression and perception to the reader that homosexuals and same-sex relations are not acceptable).

The repetitive and frequent narration on homosexuality in the media with the derogatory names that labeled them as a form of dangers towards the nation, eventually such image becomes realistic for homosexuals particularly in term of its consequences to the public's response (Alagappar and Kaur, 2007). As a consequence, homosexuality is

bombarded by the negative stereotypes to make readers believe the idea, that homosexuality is a plague afflicting the country that needs to be eliminated as if they were toxin. The findings also support van Dijk (2007) statement that members of minority group always face most of negative remarks based their not only action but also their identity different “because they are different to belong to another group” (p. 10).

6.3.2 Them Versus Us: The Enemy as the “Other”

While both UM and BH newspapers were inclined to the government that support the dominant ideology and policies of the ruling political elite (Muhammed, 2009) and work like the major voice to represent the majority of Malay public in Malaysia, the findings revealed an unintended relation between the newspapers with the homosexuals. Throughout the analysis, it is obvious that the findings on homosexuality, opposition party and the western countries are led to the construction of ‘them’ versus ‘us’. The ‘us’ is referred to the majority public particularly Malay Muslim in Malaysia with the newspapers representing on their behalf and ‘them’ is referred to the opposition parties and the western countries. As homosexuality is condemned in Malaysia, the use of ‘them’ here was referred to both opposition parties and western countries because both were repeatedly framed in the newspaper with constant allegation to promote homosexuality in the country which is contravene with Malaysian cultural and religions. As consequence, both opposition parties and western countries were being shown as entities that does not reflect the Malay cultural and adhere to religious principles.

The findings under discussion of political motive and anti-opposition sentiments were constantly classified opposition parties with deep-rooted suspicion of homosexual agenda. Opposition parties was often coalesce their political agenda with gay social movement and viewed as the political party which has strong support to homosexual’s people and gay community. Those supporting opposition parties or gay politician are also label as betrayal to the sovereignty of the state and religion knowing that homosexuality is prohibited in majority Muslim Malaysia. On top of that, the opposition parties was accused to receive financial assistance from the foreign organization that advocate to the global gay rights which was allegedly as an attempt to foster and

promote the gay social movement in Malaysia. It was also claimed in the media that the opposition party asserted that law used to penalized homosexuality cases is merely a form of humiliation and oppression which later called by the media as part of the political stunt from the opposition party. In addition, any openly gay individuals and their related involvement in politics were also created a debatable topic with sensationalized news. Most coverage asserted that gay people have no rooms in political career and their involvement in the political field is considered offensive.

The political debacle surrounding homosexuality issues were also intertwined with the uncertainty stance from the opposition alliance on homosexuality issue which had been regarded as one hidden agenda. The purpose is largely intended for the political interest to secure and fortify votes from the gay community as well as to gain sympathy from the community. For instance, the component of the opposition political alliance of *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS) or Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party which was known as a political party instituted within the puritanical brand of Islamism was also triggered with the question on their vague stance on homosexuality. PAS received a blatant critique from the media when they remained to be quiet with issues involved with homosexuality despite of their well-known Islamism party's ideology. Hence, it can be informed that even the political body that constituted with Islamist brand was also given unpleasant depiction from both Malay newspapers particularly on issues about homosexuality.

The opposition parties' leaders such as Anwar Ibrahim were also received major spotlight with huge backlash and critics particularly during his trials on sodomy allegation that were covered extensively and sensationally by media. Here, it can be informed that issues surrounding homosexuality were often fused with the ideologies of opposition parties in which the researcher presumed as an attempt to tarnish the image of the political parties as well as their political leader in an implicit way. The opposition parties also often being regarded as bodies that is contravene with the real hegemonic Malay cultural and religious value by repeatedly used homosexuality dispute as the sensationalises news stories. Consequently, by associating opposition party as politically liberal that prone towards gay people and its social movement, it will likely terrify the

Malays and make them not supporting them and their alliances. By all means, while manipulated the Malays fears to support opposition party was still inadequate, calling Malays who support opposition party was also means accepting the gay lifestyle and culture.

The findings also emerged another unintended relation between homosexuality with the western nation, which also led to the construction of 'us' vs. 'them'. Homosexuality was often being instigated from the Western cultural construct and the central arguments on homosexuality from both newspapers were regularly linked with the Western lifestyles. It is further acclaimed that homosexual sex act and same sex relation is the common practice and behavior in the Western countries. Western countries were also allegedly responsible to popularize homosexuality in the country as a part of their hidden propaganda to debilitate Islam. Homosexuality was asserted as one of the major contributor to dwindle majority Muslim in Malaysia that attempted to mislead the majority of the Muslim's faith (*aqidah*) in Malaysia.

By referring 'them' to the western countries within the dispute of homosexuality in Malaysia, it is commonly stated that homosexuality is a part of the Western culture in which the gay community has the freedom to enjoy their lifestyles in those countries which is marked as the dissipated morals if that is being practice in Malaysia. The thought of secularism and liberalism that was called as foreign ideology, which allegedly imported from the Western countries was also heavily mentioned in the newspapers. Suffice to say, the newspapers often labeled homosexuals as those who indulged secular and liberal lifestyle grounded by the Western life and ideology that completely diverged with the religion adherence in Malaysia particularly Islam. It was also mentioned that the subjugation of homosexual's culture and lifestyle was resulted from the dominant and prevailing characteristics of the world political and economic system which was monopolized and controlled by the Western countries.

Based from the discussion, it can be informed that both opposition parties and the Western countries were treated as a thread to majority Malay Muslim in Malaysia by

employing homosexuality dispute as an offensive cause. As both UM and BH were Malay language newspapers cater for Malay based readers, apparently these newspapers might work as dominant voices to the majority Malay if not all and served as significance platform to represent Malay people in Malaysia. Moreover, the nature and the long history of both Malay language newspapers itself was also play the central influence on its role and implication to Malay community. Due to this reason, both Malay language newspapers were appeared to be referred as ‘us’ based from the emerging finding. Meanwhile, both opposition parties and the Western countries were seemed to be referred as ‘them’ due to their frequent association with homosexuality in the newspapers which are against the Malay cultural and disregard to religious principles. This suggests that the newspapers were propagating the ‘them’ versus ‘us’ mindset when constructing the homosexuality issue.

6.3.3 Politically Motivated

Sprinkled throughout discussions on homosexuality with constant allegation of opposition party and the Western countries with their propaganda to cultivate homosexual culture in the country, it can be informed that homosexuality was also explicated from the political reasons. As UM and BH are both mainstream newspapers in Malaysia that are owned and/or under the control of the parties of the ruling coalition government, clearly the coverage backlashing on homosexuality and gay community are perpetually propagates the agenda and policies of its owners in order to maintain the hegemony of the ruling group.

By addressing the opposition parties and the western countries as homosexual protagonists and strong agent of gay social movement with a frequent depiction of the negative labeling, it will heightened the position of the government which will indirectly attract the majority of Malay public to be in favor on their side. Moreover, with the tremendous interest of the coverage about homosexuality from both Malay language newspapers that has started in the year 2005 which demonstrates more critical publications from year 2009 to year 2012, it is indicated the strong signal that political

deliberation in the country had some degree of influence on homosexuality coverage on in the mainstream media in the country.

In addition, in what to be considered as the critical deliberation of the rights among gay people is the assertion to the opposition party that was allegedly exert to support the rights of equality among the gay community. It was depicted in the newspapers that opposition party was overtly play the dominant role which provide the strong support to the gay community and their rights that was presumably intended to attract votes from the community including the allegation of legalizing same sex marriage and their intention to dissolve law to homosexual sex act. Accordingly, this is what stated by Helena (2003, p. 68) that coverage of marginalized groups commonly reflect the biases and interests of the power that defines the public agenda. This is also an accordance to McCombs and Shaw (cited in Sei-hill Kim, 2002) argument that the media emphasize certain issues in their coverage within political discourse by devoting a greater proportion of the news hole to them or by placing their interest more prominently in the newspaper and this emphasize, in turn influences the salience of these issues among the readers.

Hereby, the researcher come to theorize on the great number of homosexuality coverage specifically towards the year 2012 were intentionally conspired by the government as one of their election campaign strategy by using the media for the preparation of the coming general election that was predicted in year 2012⁹ because the role of the media is most evident in the run-up to any election (U. Rajaratnam, 2009). While the political opponent in the country face limited reporting particularly over the calls for political reform in the mainstream media, by giving the excessive of negative coverage about the political party with homosexuality may corrupted their acceptance from the majority of public in the country. However, future research may further investigate the correlation between the coverage on homosexuality with the political campaign from the government in the media.

⁹ The Malaysian 13th general elections were held on Sunday, 5 May 2013

6.3.4 Moral Panic

The findings emerged from the newspapers can also be further reflect with what described by Stanley Cohen as moral panic. According to Cohen (2011), moral panics involve ‘deviance amplification’ in which those who attempt to control morality that often provoke further deviant reactions through their creation and policing of categories of intolerable behavior. The term ‘moral panic’ began from the late 1960s social reaction theory particularly on the concern with the media’s role in stereotyping and misrepresenting deviance activities and behavior (cited from Garland, 2008). Cohen defined moral panic phenomena as,

“Society appears to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media” (Cohen, 1972).

The significance of Cohen’s work on moral panics was grounded on the labeling or interactionist perception. It is an approach with a strong focus on how society labels rule-breakers as fitting to certain deviant social groups and how once a person or group is labeled the actions they undertake are viewed and interpreted in terms of this label (cited from Marsh and Melville, 2011). Most importantly, an essential part of the labeling process involves the mass media and its role in defining and shaping social problems:

“The media have long operated as agents of moral indignation in their own right: even if they are not self-consciously engaged in crusading or muck-raking, their very reporting of certain ‘facts’ can be sufficient to generate concern, anxiety, indignation or panic’ (Cohen, 1972).

Accordingly, Garland (2008) tells that the causal conditions of social phenomena that can be associated with moral panics are depending with the nature and focus but scholars listed several characteristics including (i) the existence of a sensationalist mass media (ii) the encounter of some new or hitherto unreported form of deviance (iii) the existence of marginalized or outsider social groups and (iv) an already primed, sensitized public audience.

While understanding these variable dynamics of moral panic can provide more nuanced insights into how media represented homosexuality with the experience of homosexuals people and negotiate polarized social condition in Malaysia, the intention of this research is not to demonstrate whether or not the growing visibility of coverage on homosexuality in the newspapers are prompted as a form of moral panic. However the concept and definition of moral panic can be ensemble to this research subject of homosexuality particularly when media was dominantly used to shape this social phenomenon. The media, according to Stanley Cohen (1972) play a substantial role in enforcing moral panic, even if it merely reporting the news. Cohen (1972) also stated that the media overreact to certain aspect of event or behavior which may be seen as a challenge to existing social norms while Garland (2008) stated that “mass media regularly converge on a single anxiety-creating issue and exploit it for all it’s worth especially in this era of exaggeration”.

In one of his work, Cohen (1972) analyzed the riots caused by the gangs in a seaside town Clacton in terms of the responses of the media, police, courts and the public and he argued that the nature of social reaction depends on the kind and amount of information available in the public arena such as media. Cohen delineates two types of social control: the official – in the forms of the police and the courts and the informal, represented by the actions groups. He also added that it is important to recognize ‘what interests are to be protected as this knowledge shapes the subsequent campaign for the rule creation’ (ibid, 93).

The researcher would like to highlight on the social control addressed by Cohen based from the findings revealed in this research through the dominant representations indicates that most actors used in the coverage on homosexuality were largely from the high-ranking civil servants with power such as politicians and religious scholars as well as right-wing activists from non-government organization. The media had relied heavily on experts’ sources i.e. prominent politicians and religious leaders when it comes to expressing judgment, opinions or views to homosexual’s issues that intertwined between Islam and Malay and as these authorities believe that they have the right to decide on the

moral grounds of the society. Accordingly, this is what Cohen stated about moral panic that is largely dictated by person with power;

“The moral barricades are manned by the news editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and become more visible” (Cohen, 2002).

Perhaps, future research might continue to study further on how issues about homosexuality in the country can be demonstrated as a form of moral panic and analyse how deviant sexuality misconduct is being operated within the related agencies in the country and the was gay community amounted with that. The following section discuss the findings emerged on the analyses of the interview which concern on the third research question.

6.4 The Discussion on the Perception of the Coverage and Contested Identity

While the dominant construction on homosexuality coverage was subscribed to the stereotypical images of homosexual's individual that commonly observed by both Malay language newspapers, the in-depth interview study was examined on how the respondents perceived and inferred the provided perspective of the homosexuality coverage as described from both newspapers. The interview study was also attempt to deconstruct these stereotypes by unfolding their individual experiences on how they perceived the homosexuality coverage through the subscription to the four dimension of social constructionism: cultural traditions, cognitive customs, rules and shared roles and symbolic codes. The findings of the interview study was also indirectly revealed what meanings these respondents make on their identity and sexuality differences from what had represented in both UM and BH newspapers.

The researcher came across a range of discernments from the respondents particularly over the depiction of homosexuality issue from both Malay language newspapers. Throughout the interview, primarily, most of the respondents agreed on the obvious absence of positive substance in the homosexuality coverage from both newspapers due to the sociocultural factors in Malaysia. Respondents also achieved similar view that

most coverage on homosexuality is intentionally constructed as a scare tactic to fear the general public on the consequences if homosexual's activities are not being prevented. Most importantly, the findings of the interview also depicted that, most of the coverage on homosexuality was not geared towards the definite of the progressive content and filled with ideological gears reflecting the Malay supremacy on their political agenda.

The following section will discuss on the three important discussions from the in-depth interview study which is (i) the sociocultural and religious influences, (ii) politicisation of homosexuality and (iii) the renegotiation of contested identity.

6.4.1 The Sociocultural and Religious Influences

Several issues emerged from the discussion of the in-depth interview study on homosexuality based from topics erected from the dominant themes in the newspapers particularly on societal norms and relied heavily on religious themes and commentary, which is reflective with the propensity of religious issues in Malaysian environment. Throughout the interview, most respondents revealed a struggle around notions of stereotypical image depicted in the newspapers that is implicated through the engagement of the coverage. This is due to the fact that societies is profoundly pinned by the sociocultural and the growing trends in Malaysia where hardline Islamic policies and thinking are allowed to take root at various level of government which also affected the social institution in Malaysia including the media and that was generally agreed by most of the respondents.

For example, it was heavily reported from both newspapers that homosexual lifestyle or what they often considered in the newspapers as 'gay culture' is one of the reasons of social decay to the family institution that causes the marriage failure. Most of the respondents response with sensible points and agreed that there are some gay people who decided to have heterosexual marriage because they want to settle down and begun the new life. While, there are also homosexual people get into heterosexual marriage because of family and society pressure. This sociocultural obligation towards marriage

makes those people who are not mentally and emotionally prepared for marriage to end their relationship.

Divorce is hugely damaging to the society, however, do not let that sink to be the assumption that homosexuality is the main factor of divorce rate in the country as claimed in the newspapers. The respondents mostly stated there are others varies factors contributed to the failure of marriage, and the indictment from these mainstream newspapers towards homosexuality as the main factor of divorce rate produced sensational tenor of these topics that gives one rather skewed and limited depiction of the issue. The sociocultural environments become the factor asserted by most of the respondents on why the homosexuality coverage was slanted into this means of narration.

There is no surprise among the respondents upon their response on the excessive of the religious narrative around homosexuality stories in the newspapers that often carried reports and commentaries condemning the sexual behavior especially from the Islamic perspective. In the interview, most of the respondents conceded that one of the primary factors that resulted to the wider description on homosexuality from the point of Islamic view was primarily due to the readership status that is largely come from the Malay based readers. This can be tracing back to the background of the newspapers, which initially form to cater the Malay audience interest and become the platform to raise the spirit of Malay nationalism. However, the researcher would like to argue if these Malay language newspapers were also work as a platform for religious based content and state sanctioned moral policing among Malay readers during the early establishment of the newspapers.

In the interviews, there was consensus among respondents that being Malay in Malaysia is always conflated with Islam while several respondents emphasized that it is because of the legitimate definition of Malay that associated Malay people with the religion of Islam in the country. This response can be tracing back with the definition of Malay in Malaysia, particularly in Article 160 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, when

Malay is legally defined in term of the three significant markers, namely a person who profess the Muslim religion, habitually speaks Malay and conforms to Malay custom.

This is consistent by what Peletz (2002) had said that the religion of Islam had become an essential feature and distinctive marker to the Malay identity in Malaysia. The constitutional that defined Malay identity with Islam in Malaysia can be suggested as the potential influence on why the construction of the homosexuality coverage was often coalesces within Islamic point of view in both Malay language newspapers in addition to the wider regulation of Islam in Malaysia. And that is possibly the main reason of the coverage on homosexuality was heavily reminded that Islam and homosexuality are irreconcilable and unacceptable.

6.4.2 Politicisation of Homosexuality

Beyond doubt, the most definite shared response from the respondents is the sociopolitical related factor on why coverage of homosexuality was skewed into political pitch narration based from the evidence emerged through the findings of the content analysis. Most of respondents also asserted that coverage on homosexuality in the newspapers are also being exaggerated by the journalists, inclined to the politically inclination attack particularly to the opposition parties. The negative coverage about the opposition parties are commonly become the topic in homosexuality with the undesirable labels and names. Accusation toward them was being made including working as the underground agent to promote gay agenda in the country.

In the interview too, several of the respondents relate the exaggeration on homosexuality issues in the newspapers was resulted from the high profile case of sodomy allegation of the opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim¹⁰. He was prosecuted to be involved on same-sex intercourse since 1998 and has been in and out prison as his case has moved through the

¹⁰ Anwar Ibrahim was previously imprisoned for six years for sodomy and corruption after being ousted as deputy prime minister in 1998. Later on, he was free in 2004 and went on to lead his three-party alliance to unprecedented gains in the 2008 and 2013 election. Anwar Ibrahim is currently served the five-year term in prison from the recent sodomy accusation that he was given in March 2014. He has always maintained that the accusations against him were politically motivated.

courts. This case was also possibly created another factor that contributed to the upsurged numbers of homosexuality coverage which frequently repeated and relates this event with the opposition parties. Several of the respondents also make another claimed that the allegation on the opposition party could coincidentally occurred because the boisterous group who always stand behind the opposition party are left-wing NGOs which often associated with the human right advocate.

Most of respondents suggested that coverage related with homosexuality was intentionally being exaggerated by the newspapers with intertwined report which link with the opposition parties possibly attempt to sink their party political image by frequently labeled them as a political parties that offer deliberate supports to gay community. Opposition parties was also being accused to work as agent to cultivate homosexuals practice in the country which is nothing more than a facade created by the politician of the ruling party. Interestingly, it was also proposed by the respondents on issue surrounding homosexuality was merely sensationalize by the newspapers possibly intended as political strategies by the ruling party to attract attention from the public and perhaps to also cover up their hidden political agenda which ultimately attempt to maintain their status quo.

Moreover, majority of the respondents agree about the sources of the coverage on homosexuality used by both UM and BH newspapers were mostly from individuals and non-government organisation that inclined to the pro-Malay group and ruling government related agencies. Hence, the contents of the coverage are undoubtedly expected to be reported in an unpleasant ways on the issues surrounding homosexuality. By relating this to the media at large, the claimed made on issues with the opposition parties and their frequent associations with homosexuality as frequently depicted in the newspapers are just a political rhetoric to get the public bought into the hyperbolic of the mainstream media in the country. In other words, the interview with self-identified homosexuals suggested that most coverage is being dramatized by these mainstream media with merely unwarranted news about pressing issues of concern from the

journalists just to create newsworthy with sensationalized topic with the desperate intention.

Press ownership was also becomes another factor why issues on homosexuality was often skewed to the political leverage. While most of respondents agreed that both newspapers are synonym as the main carrier of the ideological structure on the national agenda particularly to the Malay community, the argument made on the press ownership of the newspapers can be relate back with the long history and background of the newspaper's establishment. By tracing back the concept of ideology as "the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members" (van Dijk, 1998), UM newspaper was established in supporting *bangsa* (race) particularly Malay and attempted to place Malay nation in the most rank during the colonial era and BH newspaper formed itself from a newspaper that aspired nationalism among Malay community during the post-independence day period. Hence, it can be informed that both Malay newspapers are news media eminent for its Malay agenda which elevated Malay ideological and political discourse and put forwarded its concern over the effort to destabilize the status quo of the country (Sanawi, 2014).

Moreover, the interviews also revealed that most respondents conceded on the position of both UM and BH newspapers which is control by the ruling coalition government (Loh and Mustafa 1996; Zaharom, 2002). Most respondents shared the consent that UM newspaper was seen as the main media for the ruling government due to the large portion of company share belong to some prominent individuals in the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) which is the biggest component of the ruling party of Barisan Nasional (Mohd Safar Hasim, 2004). The involvement of the media with ruling government happened when media in Malaysia begun to undergo the state of media control and ownership, specifically when it was prompted by the New Economic Policy (NEP) that was implemented in 1970 and the privatisation policy.

When owner of the media organisation are associated with the ruling party to constitute their political hegemony economic interest, this situation certainly has indirect

implications on the freedom of press and the media content because the concentration of the media ownership tends to restrict the content's diversity and standpoints especially in the mainstream newspapers. This is reflected on what Zaharom and Wang (2004) asserted that, the concentration of media ownership among the organisation that have link with politicians has become a norm in Malaysia for a long time.

Departed from that, while the main ideology of both Malay language newspapers are still remained to anchor Malay agenda and nationalism and unify the Malay community with the initial aim of the establishment is to promote the sentiment of anti-British, the analysis argue that the goal of these Malay newspapers on this contemporary era are now presumably shifted to promote the sentiment of anti-opposition parties while desperately need to protect and elevate the status quo and power of the ruling party. As consequence, there is no doubt when issues on homosexuality merely have a single perspective in the newspapers with only people who have political interest with the government have the right to express their opinions.

The findings from the newspapers also revealed that homosexuals people in Malaysia was labelled as a group that mostly favored to the opposition parties and lending them support but not to the ruling government. However, throughout the interviews, most respondents were completely opposed to the idea and stated the claimed was entirely uncorroborated with no empirical evidence. Some respondents said that individual political ideology should just not to be assumed and took laterally based on certain characteristic like sexuality or gender. As the findings from the newspapers revealed on the prohibition of any gay people to be politician, the respondents reacted and highlighted that someone sexuality should not to be considered as a problem to be a politician but their credibility and integrity should be the definitive primacies. There should be a strong exclusion between one's political ideologies and political integrity with their own sexual identity.

The findings emerged from the interviews on the political leverage within the content of homosexuality coverage and the link with the press ownership of the newspapers can be

reflected on what asserted by Peiser (2000) on the decision factors of the coverage. Peiser (2000) stated that, there are several factors working toward the homogeneity of any news decisions, including newsroom socialization, organizational routines and other constraints such as organisation philosophical and stance and journalists and editors own opinions and their ideological positions, which are significant and relevant to their news reporting decisions. With most of the respondents capitulate on the status of both newspapers of UM and BH being examined as mainstream newspapers owned to the government, it is favorable to the idea that they used these medium to propagate their ideology whether from their organization routine or their personal agenda to the public.

By making choices on how to report issues surrounding homosexuality that entwined within the political control in which experiences to highlight as newsworthy, the newspapers able to constructs and shapes public perception towards homosexuality. As consequence, it is the impression made by these Malay language newspapers to the opposition parties as political parties that attempted to fuse the resurgence of the gay social movement in the country. The person who works behind the media outlet has the great control of the coverage and the content on homosexuality in the newspapers. Influences from journalists and editor's background and values probably do exist and perhaps they also pertain to their personal agendas. Perhaps, future research may further examine the correlation between the coverage and the individual decision of the journalists on the coverage on homosexuality.

From this preceding discussion, the practice of sociocultural system in Malaysia seems to be the pivotal significance of the homosexuality coverage in Malay language newspapers. The way of homosexuality coverage was constructed in the newspaper tend to reflect the aspects of sociocultural practice in the country.

6.4.3 The Renegotiation of Contested Identity

While most of respondents agree on the frequent pitch of Islamic narration in the coverage on homosexuality was because the broader regulation of Islam in Malaysia which indirectly shape the political and ideological boundaries of the mainstream

newspaper being examined, the findings from the interview revealed that most respondents have their personal strategy of self-identification and their own adaptation on the contested meaning of their sexuality and identity that might differed from what being depicted in the newspapers.

Following the communication theory of identity that consists of four frames: personal, enacted, relational and communal, the findings discovered that the respondents individuals identity have more than one dimension of identity with their own strategy of self-identification. Their personal strategy of self-identification can be informed during the interview, when majority respondents said that they still have a significant tie with their religion despite of their non-normative sexual orientation identities. Most of respondents are still feels connected to the Islamic belief despite of their major disappointment to the negative remark and excessive condemnation that employed Islamic and moral narration in most of homosexuality coverage in the newspapers. Having said that, the respondents claimed that their family, peers and their surrounding where factors state subtly and deliberately imposes Islam as a part of their identity.

The respondents' unload their self-identification of their sexuality and religion is rested on their own understanding whether their acceptance to the Islamic view that is really prohibits homosexuality. There are respondents who interpreted homosexuality as haram but at the same time attempted to appeal on the idea that only Allah could judge their deeds and intention. The respondents also often defended by trying to highlight the other Muslim on their moral inadequacies and fault. In the other hand, there are also respondents who refused to see Islam as condemning homosexuality. For them, they look their sexuality as a unique creation and a natural bequest by God that must be embraced and not to be judged. They employ alternative and inclusive interpretations of their sexuality and religion to claim the moral high ground portraying their beliefs as deviant yet private.

The findings from the interview also revealed that experiences of Islam among respondents cannot be concerted merely to the struggle primarily between the individual

and Islam which imposed by the state or other monolithic Islamic 'authorities'. Most of respondents engaged with Islam via traversing with multiple authorities including families and peers while some of them have religious education background during school time. While most of respondents are disappointed to the negative remark and attack on homosexuality that employed harsh commentaries supplemented with Islamic narration as presented in the newspapers, there are also interesting points that consider worth to be highlighted. When being asked on the subject of same-sex marriage as presented in the newspapers, most of respondents firmly dismissed the idea on same-sex marriage to be happened in the country and willingly agree with the newspapers to oppose on the subject and accept the denunciation as reported.

Throughout the interview, most respondents do not condone to have exclusive rights for gay community as well. Most of the respondents are not in favor with the idea of imposing rights that exclusively for gay community. They believe on the potential consequence that will certainly spark huge outrage from the public if there is an intention to suggest the lawmakers to arouse social movement related with gay rights. More importantly, most respondents shared their declination on both same-sex marriage and gay rights in Malaysia with the substantial assertion of cultural, legal and religion restriction in Malaysia. Perhaps, this has got to do with the strong significant relation with their religion despite of their non-normative sexual orientation identities.

In the interview too, respondents draws an important point when they asserted that rights for every citizens in the country were already constituted in the Federal Constitution and exclusive rights among gay community should not be raised at all. While some respondents alleged that rights among gay people is merely a provocation created in the newspapers, most respondents acknowledged that every citizen in the country has equal rights to be protected and to address or voice out their opinions and interest under the freedom of speech which apparently bounded with certain undisclosed limitation.

Nevertheless, several respondents demonstrated rational opinion for rights among sexual minority community that should be carry out particularly on the discrimination and

prejudice among transsexual for their job opportunities and welfare, especially among underprivileged transsexual in the country. Although the respondents were articulated in their critique, the ways in which they enacted political action was muted, at least to the researcher knowledge of their social interactions. They were not at the forefront of political rallies, they were not preaching gay rights to whoever would listen and, in fact, in certain moments they did not contest instances of heterosexism and homophobia in front of them.

The discussion on the respondents' strategy of self-identification and declination on the idea of same-sex marriage and exclusive rights for gay people in Malaysia can also be matched with Merton (1968, p. 677) description on the role of adjustments to different social and cultural expectation. According to Merton, when people have to abide with the 'institutionally prescribed conduct' is unable to meet 'culturally defined goal, purposes and interests', the incoherence between institutionalised norms and cultural expectations lead them to explore into 'deviant' alternatives self-adaptation. Merton (1968, p. 194) proposed five 'modes of individual adaptation', depending on the degree of continuity between their responses to institutional control and cultural expectations. The five modes of individual adaptation are the conformity that accept dominant 'culture goals' and socially regulated 'norms', innovators that accept the goals but reject the socially regulated ways of achieving them, ritualists reject the goals but conform to the norms, retreatists reject the goals and norms and finally is a rebellion that want to overturn existing structures and introduce a 'new social order' altogether.

While the researcher not intended to categorize each of the respondents into specific mode of individual adaptation respectively once the interview was conducted, most respondents shared a similar characteristic when cultural and Islamic wider regulation provides an essential factor of their adaptation to the institutionalised norms. It can be said that there is a link between individual's religious self-identification and state-imposed expressions of Islam with responses ranging from conformist to rebellious. Most of respondents even alternate between more than one modes of adaptation at any

point. The reason of the adaptation is also to avoid troubles and to maintain the relationships with other Muslim.

Respondents who were uncomfortable with religiously motivated moral policing, most would not criticise it too publicly in any media platform particularly in social media in light of the many civil and shariah law restricting freedom of religion and expression. By putting together their sexuality and Muslim identities, the preceding discussion demonstrated a seemingly contested notion of gay individual between the liberal and traditional which often involves drawing out the relationship between their religions and ethnic identities. Perhaps future research can clarify exactly how different state actions are religions experienced and negotiated by the gay individuals.

Another thing these respondents have in common is the belief that they were naturally born as homosexuals and perceived their sexuality was involuntary. This is conforming on what essentialist theorists which described homosexual identities that are determined either prenatally or in early childhood (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1995). Essentialism entails the belief that sexuality is purely a natural phenomenon, outside of culture and society, made up of fixed and inherent drives, and that nature and these drives dictate our sexual identities (Weeks, 1995). Essentialism viewed homosexuality as a form of gender reversal that arose from such presocial forces as genes, hormones, instincts or specific kinds of developmental psychodynamics (Richardson, 1981). People who believe sexual preference is always inborn are pure essentialists. People who do not believe anyone is born with any predisposition toward any particular sexual preference are pure social constructionists.

While most the homosexual respondents believed that their sexual preference is always inborn, however, the findings from the newspapers highlighted that homosexuality and same-sex practice was motivated largely from extraneous factors such as same-sex boarding school, peers, Western influence and opposition party which was frequently alleged to promote the pro-gay movement with most of negative narration. Little had been depicted from the psychological and emotional aspect from the community itself.

This is what McIntosh (1968, p. 184-186) proposed that society constructs and vilifies the 'homosexual role'. McIntosh (1968, p. 184-186) added that notion of homosexuality is different depending on the social context and the 'institutionalised homosexual role' is a consequence of social control. McIntosh's insights can be linked with social constructionists who stated that there's nothing real about sexual orientation but a society's construction.

According to social constructionism, sexual roles and behaviors are the result of a culture's religions, moral and ethical beliefs, its legal traditions, politics, aesthetics, whatever scientific or traditional views biology and psychology it may have, even factors like geography and climate. As a consequence, this societal regulation contributes to the formation of a circumscribed homosexual identity (McIntosh, 1968, p. 184-186). However, there are also respondents who are somewhere in the middle and agree with certain aspects of both social constructionism and essentialism. They may believe that there is some degree of biological influence on sexual preference but that cultural ideas also have an important influence. Though, some of them often speculated about whether they could 'change' by the self-control and also will of Allah. The researcher observed this kind of exchange most frequently among those who believed it was a sin to be homosexuals.

Overall, the findings challenge the notion that socio-culturo-political environment in Malaysia inherently opposes homosexuality, and instead suggest that there is no conclusive story or model in the making of Malay homosexual identity. Most of the respondents identify themselves as Malay and homosexuals through the distinct personal trajectories with their experiences are shaped by some common factors. Their life experiences shaped ongoing, personal reflections and renegotiations of what their self-identity meant. The respondents are also aware to the extent of the authoritarian government selects, manipulates or distorts particular coverage on homosexuality and how this impacts the coverage in the mainstream newspapers which might affect the gay community. The homosexuality coverage is tailored to the perception of heterosexuals in such a way that they do not threaten their world.

6.5 Significance Contributions

When embarking on this research, the primary goal was to document and analyse the homosexuality coverage from the stance of Malay language newspapers of *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* between 1998 to 2012. This time frame was chosen because of its significance of the coverage when topic on homosexuality started to openly enter mainstream debate after 1998 and extended to 2012 to analyse the introspective view on the coverage of the issues throughout fifteen years period. Throughout this research, the findings revealed on the heavily influence of the socio-culturo-political aspects to the construction of the coverage issues surrounding homosexuality in the mainstream newspapers which employed intertwined theories, analysis and a discussion of media and literature on homosexuality and makes significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge.

For the theoretical contribution, this research benefited from the interwoven theories used in this research, which is social constructionism and communication theory of identity. The combination of those lenses makes the study noteworthy. Each of the theories was explained in Chapter 2. A central focus of social constructionism is to reveal the ways in which individuals or groups shared and participated in the system on how they perceived social reality within four dimensions of social constructionism: symbolic codes, cognitive customs, cultural traditions and shared roles and rules particularly from the dominant group. The findings of this research about homosexuality issue in Malaysia reflected with the concept of social constructionism when it look at the common understandings of the majority public that create the basis of shared expectations about the social reality with the argument that media help to sustain a culture existing power structure.

The social constructionism on homosexuality from the standpoint of mainstream Malay language newspapers informed that it was a challenge to the societal norms, a challenge to the political status quo also a challenge to the religion adherence. Homosexuality was also viewed as a Western influence, as well as a form of mental disorder and disease. Dispute on the gay rights and debate from the point of law was also discussed in the

newspapers. Applying social constructionism explore the narrative of homosexuality in the newspapers showed that homosexuality was socially stigmatized in such way possibly not to challenge the heterosexual privilege, at least from the argument of the researcher.

In addition to what stated by Hall (1988), media is not merely take charge by those in power but also suggest the dominant ideology within the accepted cultural boundaries that has been naturalised. Hence, the findings of this research contributed to the aspect of the literature in the media studies and its important role and practice in a plural society such as Malaysia which in conserving and keeping the cultural structures of domination and subordination. The newspapers used in this research still holding on to their principal of bringing the Malay notion that homosexuality is not compatible within the Malay ideologies which constituted within the long narrative of Malay hegemonic agenda that has strong conservative attitude on such issues. Nonetheless, it was still disappointing that the newspapers used as part of this research in particular excessively convey the dominant ideas and ulterior motive of political agenda.

The findings also revealed that most coverage was sounded as provocations of hatred to gay people and the community, and at the center of this confrontation was the anxiety that homosexuality would destabilize the traditional heterosexual union. All this happen because the patriarchal system in the media organization was assumed to be dominated by heterosexual Malay journalists. However, the findings from the in-depth interview study revealed that most respondents are not in favor of imposing any rights exclusively for gay community with the substantial assertion of cultural, legal and religion restriction in Malaysia.

Throughout the contested findings by using the social constructionism theory between content analysis and in-depth interview, it appears to be a gap between the experiences of the Malay homosexual respondents and the expectation of the authorities based from what depicted in the newspapers. The Malay homosexual respondents that the researcher met during the interview were constantly grappled with what the authorities pronounced

but carried on forging lifestyles that sometimes contested these assertions. The findings from the interview also does not work to increase the democratic representations but merely called for the interrogation of the sexuality identity that work to maintain the cultural context and it can be reflected with the findings. Hence, this overlapping panics of the diverse and dissent ideas of Malay homosexuality and its coverage in the mainstream media become the wider indicators of the challenges confronting the parameter of proper expression of Malay and Islam in the country. These aspects of findings can therefore be the references for any scholars or those interested with the contemporary transformation of queer Malay and its coverage in different medium and contexts.

Furthermore, multiple data analysis by engaging the combine methods of content analysis and in-depth interview in this research has contributed to contemporary knowledge in exploring and assessing the coverage of homosexuality and how does it impact to the community. In addition to that, this research also sought to add such data to the studies of media, as well as to the general social science studies such as studies on gender, sexuality, theology, psychology, medic and perhaps political science study that become the platform for the potential area of research on the stated fields for further interrogation. While descriptive in nature, the findings and data chronicled here can be utilized to conduct further explanatory work and nature of the coverage on these related issues. Not only that it sought to shed light on the coverage of homosexuality issues from mainstream media in Malaysia, the data herein provides the general readers with the volume of the coverage and the respective proportions accounted for by each topic, section, tone, actor and their frames of portrayal and use in comparative studies seeking to examine coverage by another media such as alternative media.

Furthermore, the findings of this research could profit scholars from another region and could be employed in comparative studies seeking to examine coverage in another regions particularly the neighbor's countries such as Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and another countries on how these countries perceived and depicted issue on homosexuality in their media. The data compiled through this research can also be utilized to explore a

wide variety of research questions and extend to the related and contemporary issues globally such as religion, politics, human rights, HIV and AIDS.

The findings of this research also benefit people working in the media such as journalist and news editors. The findings confirm the notion that coverage of homosexuality issues in the mainstream newspapers serve as a site for the struggle to the discourse with offensive and defamatory portrayals. Even more pressing, the findings revealed the complete nonappearance of the voices from gay community in the newspapers. Throughout the fifteen years period, from 1998 to 2012, the findings shown that there was not one homosexual individual appeared in the coverage. Departed from that, the findings posited on the question whether the journalists should strike the right to the standard of balance in news reporting on homosexuality.

If the mainstream newspapers anticipated a social progress and represent most potential readers, the exclusion should be revised and reviewed. By using the findings of this research, it was suggested that journalists especially from the mainstream newspapers could reassess and reevaluate their role in disseminating news on homosexuality to be more mindful on the issues. Journalists must remember that it is their responsibility to not only reflect changes in society but also encourage and further social progress. Perhaps, they should be granted the latitude to make judgments as to what sources are credible without imposing pressure to appear biased. The media must continue to expand the accurate depicted of gay communities by focusing on the coverage that do not cater to stereotypes or outdated convention.

While it will be the unpopular opinion, on the basis of the available findings, this research may also benefit for human right activist, gender and sexual equality and diversity and social development based organisation, particularly from the community-based and voluntary non-profit organisation related with the community including the organisation which provides HIV and AIDS education or support programmes, sexual health and empowerment programmes for vulnerable communities in Malaysia such as PT Foundation and Malaysian Aids Council. Although homosexuality coverage in both

newspapers being examined was generally unpleasant but the findings can pave way for further interrogation as it provides an extensive reference for a wide range for future references for them to analyse reasons on the social stigma to the community.

Despite of the call from the representatives of the community who wish issues related with homosexuality is not to be brought to the national stage and be contested which stated from the MalayMail Online (2017) that “forcing a national discussion on LGBT and portraying the community as a problem would go against the latter’s basic human rights” and the coverage of homosexuality was assume to be constantly distorted in the mainstream media and the context used, this research may provide useful info for any non-government organisations or human rights activists and the community on what they can do to combat prejudice and stereotypical narrative not limited to homophobia but also to misogyny, sexism or transphobia in Malaysia using the findings of this research as references.

6.6 Limitations and Future Research

There are, of course, some limitations to this research. The news coverage of homosexuality was partly limited because it included only the print media. In addition, this research was merely central on mainstream newspapers particularly Malay language newspaper as primary text of investigation. Future scholarship may want to extend the framework of analysing other Malaysian mainstream newspapers from different language such as English language newspapers, Chinese and Tamil language newspapers.

Another suggestion is to compare between mainstream newspaper with different types of newspapers such as tabloids and alternative online newspapers particularly with different business model and ownership such as *Harian Metro* or *Kosmo* as Malay language news tabloid and alternative newspapers such as ‘Malaysiakini’ or ‘Free Malaysia Today’. Such comparison of the coverage and context can be made as different finding might emerge from and relate to larger discursive structures. Further research on

different type of media such as television, magazines and even social media would also likely find new results and different conclusions that what was offered by this research.

While this research merely focuses on the period of fifteen years from year 1998 to year 2012, future scholarship may extend the period of study up to another five years of the present year. Perhaps, the pattern of the trends would further illuminate different findings with broader sampling. Another suggestion is to compare the numbers of the coverage surrounding homosexuality between before and after the thirtieth general election of Malaysia in year 2013 with the upcoming election and identified the trends of the coverage to uncover the potential of any political motivated context of the discursive events.

Next, the methodological limitations of this research could be used to expand into another method such as critical discourse analysis (CDA). The CDA would likely propose an excellent complement to this subject of studies and would also be able to focus more on how language works in the social context and how it is related to power and ideology. The CDA studies offer real and often extended instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. Its critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258). CDA aims to show how “linguistic-discursive practices” are connected to “socio-political structures of power and domination” (Kress, 1990, p. 85) by emphasizing “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249). Particularly, the study of homosexuality in Malaysian media could be study further on how language was shape and is shape by social and cultural context was an influential drive to examine in-depth the language – ideology relation by conducting the CDA study.

Third, in order to extend the understanding of the subjectivities, it is recommended that further study be undertaken by investigating if and how the narrative of homosexuality issue was being interpreted by different background and types of respondents including

the journalists, human right and social activist who feel the conversation should be shifted to other priorities. The interview study should investigate the alternative voices that not heard in public discourse and identified the strategies that ultimately failed to garner media attention.

Sensitive political issue must also be considered and their opinions on political issue would potentially provide interesting findings if the respondents' identity can be fully protected. Such variables ideally should be included as potential predictors of stereotypes. Consequently, analyzing how different the communities utilize distinct strategies to engage and challenge the discourse can lead to a better understanding of the framework.

6.7 Conclusion

This research is exploratory in nature and has ultimately been concerned with the various dimensions of homosexuality coverage and its assessments from the self-identified homosexual individual themselves. Specifically, this research attempt to shed light by examining the ways on how homosexuality coverage in Malaysia were narrated in the mainstream Malay language newspapers. Then, this research analyse the significance on the analysis of the coverage might had to self-identified Malay homosexuals and how these members of a group reflect and renegotiate their sexuality and identity difference as depicted from the news media.

This research was organised around the following research questions; how are trends of the homosexuality coverage were distributed in the mainstream Malay language newspapers from 1998 to 2012? How homosexuality coverage was thematically presented in the mainstream Malay language newspapers? and how homosexual's readers perceived the homosexuality coverage in mainstream Malay language newspapers? Two related studies were conducted to serve as the primary investigation through the systematic exploration by analyses of newspaper articles and an in-depth interview that sought to gain different understanding of the representations on homosexuality which investigating areas that have been not often explored.

Taken together, there are several general conclusions can be drawn from the findings which constitute this research. First, despite the fact that homosexuality is largely denounced as unnatural both in the secular spaces of Malaysia as well as the sacred ones, the numbers of articles on homosexuality seen the proliferation and receive amount of attention from both Malay language newspapers. From the findings too, it is clearly shown that both Malay language newspapers are fervent in allotting news and stories on homosexuality throughout the fifteen years study period. The underpinning of the apportioning news text distribution on homosexuality shed light on the growing visibility of homosexuality issues in the newspapers in Malaysia can opened up a critical avenue for future discussion and debate despite the ways in which same-sex sexuality still remains a social taboo to be discuss openly in this Muslim-majority country.

Second, this research revealed that socio-culturo-political aspects have some degree of influence on how issues about homosexuality were framed in the newspaper. On the basis of the available findings, homosexuality issues were largely intertwined around topics of social, politics and religion which relied heavily on the government officials, Malay supremacy non-government organisations and religious institution as a trustworthy agencies and influential voices. Perhaps, the sources used were consistent within the interest covered by the newspapers and was used to conserve and sustain the power and disregard others voices that potentially attempt to reaching out to their niche readers. Departed from that, the images presented of homosexuality in the mainstream Malay language newspapers are implicitly reflected the ongoing influence of control by the dominant Malay political hegemony in the country and perhaps, homosexuality is only acceptable only when it is being depoliticized.

The third, this research has evidenced that homosexual's community has no power and control over the images and degree of representations attributed them as depicted in articles from the newspapers. The normative definition of sexuality conveyed remains to be heteronormative patriarchy that largely produced by heterosexual reporters which only have particular kinds of responses and certain qualities and those who are not celebrated the diversity of sexuality in the country. The description about homosexuality

in the newspapers almost often uses negative words and homophobic language. This includes the headlines which produced by the journalists which possibly have an impact on how general readers understand and feel about homosexual people. In another word, the representations of homosexuality are tailored to the heterosexual's vantage point in such a way that they do not threaten their world.

The fourth, the newspapers has not assisting in educating society fairly about homosexuality and not remained objective or independent. Most coverage were written without challenging what they say or offering alternative views. Based from the findings from the analysis of the newspapers, there's not much awareness that come from the journalists through their write-up about homosexuality in a more educative way to get across the mindset of the public, which in general still lacks the understanding that convey the narrative in conservative way. The basic journalistic ethics is another question needs to be debated. The social tolerance of this unconventionality has no different throughout the past fifteen years.

The fifth, it can be informed that the coverage of homosexuality had scarcely influenced the self-identified homosexual people onto shaping of their own identities. The interviews with self-identifying homosexuals revealed a wide range of responses. While some expressed disdain for the gay portrayals that they considered one-dimensional, others found some portrayals to be complex and relatable. Certain responses to the portrayals were delimited by the certain depictions depending on how high is their anti-gay or anti-Muslim sentiment which inform their immediate surrounding. Respondents also offered differing responses about the influence of such media images in their own lives.

While some respondents could recognize a direct influence of the media on their identity, others maintained that there was no direct influence. Many respondents noted that they felt there was a real potential for the media to significantly influence others, particularly those struggling with sexuality and identity issues. Regardless of the society that might think their sexual orientation is learnt and the others think it is nurtured and

beyond their control, they would still express or repress it based on the wider social expectations and/or religious sanctions among other things.

Drawing to the final conclusion, it must be stated that this research in no way attempt to imply that the media is either good or bad but rather work in ubiquitous. As a social institution, media occupies every aspect of life although not every social actor has equal entree to employ the media for their own purposes. Whether the media outlets are under the control of government or the opposition or independent, it should plays an important role in how people understands the diversity in the society including the marginalised groups such as gay community with balance, fair and unbiased representations.



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Appendix A: Code Book for Content Analysis

The researcher is conducting a Ph.D. research on trends of homosexuality coverage from the Malay language newspapers of *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*. The title of the Ph.D. research is:

Media Construction and Contested Identity: Analysing Homosexuality in Malaysian Newspapers

In this content analysis study, the goal is to find out frequencies, news frame and actors appeared in homosexuality coverage for a fifteen years study period from 1998 to 2012. It is argue that the hegemonic of Malay notion through the state affect the coverage of homosexuality in which these newspapers were predominantly associated with a long tradition of advocating Malay agenda and ideologies.

This code book is divided into three sections. The first section is a code for frequencies of coverage which consist of several sub codes, the second section is code for news frame and the last section is for portrayal of actors.

Code 1: Frequencies of Coverage

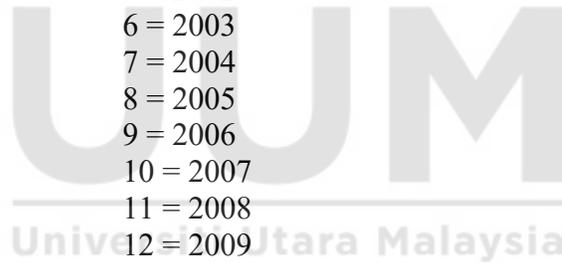
1. **Newspaper Name** : _____
2. **Coverage Number** : _____
3. **Page Number** : _____
4. **Word Count** : _____
5. **Date** : _____
6. **Day** : Enter the number that corresponds to the year of publication. E.g.: Wednesday, 18 July 2012. So the code is 3.
Code:
1 = Monday
2 = Tuesday
3 = Wednesday
4 = Thursday
5 = Friday
6 = Saturday
7 = Sunday
7. **Month** : Enter the number that corresponds to the month of publication. E.g.: 18 July, 2012. So the code is 7.
Code:
1= January

- 2 = February
- 3 = March
- 4 = April
- 5 = May
- 6 = June
- 7 = July
- 8 = August
- 9 = September
- 10 = October
- 11 = November
- 12 = December

8. Year

: Enter the number that corresponds to the year of publication. E.g.: 18 July, 2012. So the code is 15.
Code:

- 1 = 1998
- 2 = 1999
- 3 = 2000
- 4 = 2001
- 5 = 2002
- 6 = 2003
- 7 = 2004
- 8 = 2005
- 9 = 2006
- 10 = 2007
- 11 = 2008
- 12 = 2009
- 13 = 2010
- 14 = 2011
- 15 = 2012



9. Size of the Coverage

: Enter the number of the size of the coverage.
Big: If the coverage that has more than 1500 words
Medium: Coverage consists of 1001 to 1499 words
Small: Coverage is from 501 to 999 words
Code:

- 1 = Big
- 2 = Medium
- 3 = Small

10. Tone of the Coverage

: Enter the number of the tone of the coverage.
Opposing: Coverage that describe homosexuality as deviant, abnormal, negative activities, bad behavior, against the norms, create an outrage by the public, unaccepted by religion and local norm and all negative words.

Supportive: Coverage that describe homosexuality where it was seen as basic human rights, equality and freedom of choice and has compassionate towards homosexuality and all positive word.

Not Available: No stances are made by the coverage on homosexuality issue.

Code:

1 = Opposing

2 = Supportive

3 = Not Available

11. Placement of the Coverage

: Enter the number of the placement of the coverage.

National News: Coverage that covered on national event and current issue surrounding homosexuality that happen in the country.

Feature Stories: Coverage about homosexuality in a feature-oriented style from real-life experience, historical narration and articles.

Editorial: The written opinions to homosexuality issues from the editor of the newspapers.

International News: Homosexuality coverage on issues around the world.

Column: A special column published weekly that write about any issues around country or international that sometimes include homosexuality by real name or anonymous author.

Interview: A special column which published an interview transcribe and a commentator from the invited guest from any background such religious, psychologist, academician etc. that discussed homosexuality.

Letter to Editor: A column that published notes or letters written by the general readers about homosexuality.

Code:

1 = National News

2 = Feature Stories

3 = Editorial

4 = International News

5 = Column

6 = Interview

7 = Letter to Editor



Code 2: News Frame

News frames defines how the newspaper characterize the coverage of homosexuality by the journalists and editors. They can provide the over-arching premises of the story for the viewer.

For this purpose of research, there were six news frame being adopted and modified which was designed by Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) and Yong and Md Sidin (2010). The news frame used was conflict, consequences, responsibility, morality, human interest and others. The description of each news frame is explained in the following paragraph.

Coverages will often have multiple frames, so circle “yes” for each frame that is clearly present and stated. Circle “no” if the frame is not present. For statement with the answer of “yes”, the code “1” is recorded. Meanwhile, if “0” is recorded for a “no” answer. Several rounds of reliability tests among the coders were carried out to ensure a high reliability of the research before the data collection is carried out.

Because issues on homosexuality are complex and interconnected in a single coverage, so the frame does not need to be frequently dominant to be “clearly present”. For example, one coverage might mostly concern how homosexuality could be the factors to disrupt the reputation of the country as an Islamic state (consequence). But halfway through, that same coverage concern that any gay related activities in the country must be prohibited unanimously to avoid any damaging repercussion in the institution of family (responsibility). Both frames are present, and both should be circled because this research is not concerned with what is the primary or secondary framing. However, not all possible frames are listed below so if there is a frame that is clearly present but not included in the list, please write it in the space provided under “other”.

The following are the news frames and the operational definitions.

1. Conflict: Yes (1) No (0)

This news frame emphasizes conflict among and between individuals, groups, parties or institution as a means of capturing audience interest, reflects disagreement among and between individuals, groups, parties or institutions. It can also from an individual, group, party or institutional reproach dichotomizes or labels the good and bad. The news item refers to the two sides instead of more than two sides of the issue or problem and the news items refer to winners and losers.

For this research, this news frame is referring a conflict between government and opposition party as government was constantly being label as anti-homosexuals in the coverage as well as coverage on the opposition parties on homosexuality issues that constantly being label by the newspapers as pro homosexuals. Issues that involved Anwar Ibrahim with his sodomy allegation cases, the urge of the government to curb homosexuality in the country and the protest to homosexual people to join any political party were discussed under this news frame. This news frame also touch on debate about western and foreign ideology as factors and its influence homosexuality in Malaysia.

Topics such as liberalism and pluralism that often being associated with western culture is also discussed. The topics on homosexuality and health issues including the classification of homosexuality as mental illness and mental disorder were also put under this news frame while there is an argument stated that homosexuality is not a mental illness.

2. Consequences: Yes (1) No (0)

This news frame highlighted on coverage about an event, issue or problem in terms of the consequences on individuals, groups, parties, institutions or the country, or report about the outcome of a court case. For this research, this news frame is referring to the homosexuality coverage and its consequences to the family institution and effect of the basic concept of marriage. For example, homosexuality was perceived as a threat to the basic family affair and value and was also labelled as social illness that being depicted to have a significant of negative consequence to the society. This news frame also highlighted on religious topic when homosexual people will get the retaliation from Allah during the judgment day and the consequences of homosexual practice that will spread HIV and AIDS.

3. Responsibility: Yes (1) No (0)

This news frame discusses on the present and event, issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government or to an individual, group, part or institution. The news frame also suggests the issue or problem requires the urgent action. For this research, this category of news frame refers to the urgency of the government to be quick in undertaking homosexuality issue in the country as it was prohibited to all races and religions. This news frame is also referring to the coverage about the role of parent, teacher, counselor and even religious institution and non-government organisation (NGO) to tackle the issue. Under this frame too is the discussion on the legal action by authorities for homosexual practice.

4. Morality: Yes (1) No (0)

This category of news frame puts the event, issue or problem in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions that is emphasizes on the collaboration and fellowship. For this purpose of research, this news frame present homosexuality that intertwined with religious and moral issues particularly on the coverage on how religion is reacting to the issues related with homosexuality. The religion such as Islam, Christian and Hindu work as religious entities will be presented as opposed to homosexual practice. Other times, this news frame is also about how those religious rights are campaigning against issues such as same-sex marriage and same-sex sexual activities.

5. Human Interest: Yes (1) No (0)

Brings a human face or emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem, refer to an effort to personalize the news, dramatize or emotionalize the news in order to capture and retain audience interest, employs adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy or compassion. This news frame also emphasizes how individuals and groups are affected by the event, issue or problem and the news items go into the private or personal lives of the actors.

For this purpose of research, the news frame present homosexuality coverage around topics that is not limited only to individual who work closely with the gay community but also to the gay and lesbian individual and activist that tell their stories and experiences living as gay people in Malaysia. This news frame also touches on topics about gay and lesbian issues and activism around the world. The narrative of this coverage can be positive, negative and neutral tone. Other than that, this news frame also referring to the historical background of gay and homosexuality issues in Malaysia.

6. Others: Yes (1) No (0)

Any other frames that do not fall into the above categories

Code 3: Actors (must speak or be quoted)

The purpose of this category is to record the actors who is appeared in homosexuality coverage and also allowed access in the coverage. This category is also considered as a source and voice be it individual or entity and they must actually speak or be directly quoted with their words appearing verbatim in the coverage. For example, the President of Pertubuhan Jaringan Melayu Malaysia (JMM), Azwanddin Hamzah released a statement by saying that “the numbers revealed that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) symptoms in the country were in a worse and more worrisome state”, which is fall under non-governmental official category.

For the purposes of this category, their position on homosexuality does not matter. You are only categorizing the actor that appeared to speak on homosexuality. It is possible to have each of the source have multiple identities and for this case, just choose the primary identity from which organisation they speak. For example, Ambiga can be both the chairperson of Bersih (under category of NGO) and also the human rights lawyer and advocate (under category of others). In some coverage, she appears more as an activist and is labeled as such. Meanwhile, in others coverage, her identity is a main spokesperson of Bersih. It is based on your decision to look at how the coverage defines the actor.

1. Government Official: Yes (1) No (0)

This is includes interviews with individuals who is holding an official position in the government body. Examples of the individual for this government official are includes the Prime Minister, Deputy Minister, Minister of Prime Minister’s Department, Secretary Politic of Prime Minister and Minister from Ministry of Education Malaysia.

2. Non-government Organisation: Yes (1) No (0)

This is includes interviews with individuals who is attached with the non-government organisation and has no formal affiliation with the government body. Examples of the NGOs are include Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (ISMA), Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (Perkasa), Jaringan Melayu Malaysia (JMM), Parti Kesejahteraan Insan Tanah Air (KITA), Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung (GPMS), Pergerakan Belia India Muslim Malaysia (Gepima), Chinese Society Organization of Ampang.

3. Religious Figure: Yes (1) No (0)

This category includes those actors whose identities are mostly religious in nature and they are speaking from the point of religion. The list from this category may come from individual that may or may not represent themselves with the institutions that holding special interest to issues related to religion in Malaysia. The religious figures can be divided into two which is from the Muslim and non-Muslim institution. The example of the organization from Muslim organization is including Department of Islamic Development Malaysia or *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (JAKIM), Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia or *Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia* (IKIM), Wilayah Persekutuan Islamic Council or *Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan* (JAWI) and Selangor Islamic Council or *Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor* (JAIS).

4. Academician: Yes (1) No (0)

Individuals from education institutions such as university or college. The example of the academicians are professors and lecturers that come from diversified fields of studies including from the Islamic studies, law, medical education's etc. with most of them attached in public university in Malaysia. They are often interviewed to get with typically unbiased response who analysed the homosexuality issue from aspect of law, civil rights issues, cultural and/or political issues.

5. Political Figure: Yes (1) No (0)

Political figures and candidates is anyone running for the political office with or without political position in the their political party. This is includes politician from the right wing party including the President of United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), UMNO Youth Chief. Nevertheless, the political figure from the left wing party was also appeared to speak on homosexuality issue including from the Mursyidal Am from the Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) and Dewan Pemuda's Chief of PAS. Any individuals from political party. in This is including the politician from the pro government agency such as the Deputy President of the United Malay National Organization or *Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu* that better known as UMNO, Deputy President of Malaysian Chinese Association or MCA, Women's Youth of UMNO, Information Chief of UMNO and Member of Parliament. Nevertheless, the politician from the opposition party was also appeared to voice out issues on homosexuality if not too many including the Spiritual Leader or *Mursyidal Am* from Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party or *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS) and Dewan Pemuda's Chief of PAS.

6. Others/Undetermined: Yes (1) No (0)

Some of the actors appeared in the coverage is not fit into one of the above categories, or the source is simply undetermined or unaffiliated (but not the vox pop). If this is the case, select "other/undetermined".

Appendix B: Sample of Intercoder Reliability Test

The formula to calculate Cohen's kappa:

$$k = \frac{(P_o - P_e)}{(1 - P_e)}$$

Where:

P_o = the relative observed agreement among coders

P_e = the hypothetical probability of chance agreement

The Cohen's kappa statistic varies from 0 to 1, where

0 = agreement equivalent to chance

0.1 – 0.20 = slight agreement

0.21 – 0.40 = fair agreement

0.41 – 0.60 = moderate agreement

0.61 – 0.80 = substantial agreement

0.81 – 0.99 = near perfect agreement

1 = perfect agreement

Example of the procedure:

The intercoder reliability test is seeking for the coverage for the consequence news frame. The number of coverage used for pilot test is 46 based from the 10% of total number of selected coverage ($n = 460$).

Step 1:

Calculate P_o (the observed proportional agreement)

30 coverage were rated Yes by both coders

5 coverage were rated No by both coders

So, P_o = number of agreement / total = $(30 + 5) / 46 = 0.76$

Step 2:

Find the probability that the coders would randomly both said Yes

Coder A said Yes to 35/46 coverage, or 76% (0.76)

Coder B said Yes to 40/46 coverage, or 86% (0.86)

The total probability of the coders both saying Yes randomly is:

$0.76 \times 0.86 = 0.65$

Step 3:

Calculate the probability that the coders would randomly both say No

Coder A said No to 11/46 coverage, or 23 (0.23)

Coder B said No to 6/46 coverage, or 13 (0.13)

The total probability of the coders both saying No randomly is:

$0.23 \times 0.86 = 0.19$

Step 4:

Calculate P_e . Add answer from Step 2 and 3 to get the overall probability that the raters would randomly agree.

$$P_e = 0.65 + 0.19 = 0.84$$

Step 5:

Insert the calculations into the formula and solve:

$$K = (0.76 - 0.84) / 1 - 0.84 = -0.08 / 0.16 = \mathbf{0.50}$$

$K = 0.50$, which indicates moderate agreement.



Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is conducting a PhD research on the coverage of homosexuality in Malay language newspapers by interviewing self-identified Malay homosexual with the aims of getting insights of their opinion and perceptions on the issues. The title of the PhD project is:

Media Construction and Contested Identity: Analysing Homosexuality in Malaysian Newspapers.

The interview will take about one hour or so and will be audio recorded. Information obtained from the interview will be solely used for the research purpose as part of the project for researchers' PhD thesis.

Part A: Details of Respondents

Name:

Profession:

Age:

Sexuality:

Education background:

Date, time and venue of interview:

Part B: Interview Questions

Opinion on Mainstream Malay Language Newspapers in Malaysia

- i. Do you read newspapers? Do you prefer online newspaper or printed newspaper? How frequent do you read newspapers?
- ii. Do you read Malay language newspapers? Do you read *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* newspaper?
- iii. What is your general perception on *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*?
- iv. What types of news articles or stories you read in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*?
- v. Have you encountered any news articles or write-up on homosexuality in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*?
- vi. What are the examples of news articles or write-up on homosexuality you encountered in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian*?

Response on the Coverage of Homosexuality in the Newspaper

- i. Homosexuality as a challenge to societal norms
 - Most coverage on homosexuality in *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* mentioned that homosexuality could ruin family institution. What is your opinion in this matter?
- ii. Homosexuality as a challenge to the political status quo

- Most coverage in both *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* newspapers frequently link homosexuality with the opposition party. What is your comment on that?
 - Do you think that homosexual's people are anti-government?
 - Do you think that gay people can work as politician?
- iii. Homosexuality as a challenge to religious teaching
- Both *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* extensively mentioned homosexuality is prohibited and *haram* by using Islamic narration. What is your opinion on that?
 - How Islam and Malay culture affected your identity as Malay homosexual in Malaysia?
- iv. Homosexuality as a Western influence
- Based from the coverage on homosexuality in both *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* newspapers, homosexuality in Malaysia was reported as Western agenda. How far do you agree on this matter?
 - Do you think homosexuality is the Western lifestyle?
 - Do you think that liberalism and secularism can be associated with homosexuality?
- v. Homosexuality as a mental disorder and disease
- Most coverage from the *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* label homosexuals people as mental illness and HIV carrier. What is your view on this matter?
 - Do you think HIV and AIDS are major stigma among gay people?
- vi. Homosexuality rights and social movement
- Coverage from both *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* newspapers describe homosexuality is now become the serious issue in the country to the extent of demanding rights and equality. What is your opinion on this matter?
 - What is your opinion on same-sex marriage?
 - Do you think gay community in Malaysia is being oppressed by society and authority?
- vii. Homosexuality and legal act
- *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* reported that homosexuality was a form of crime. How do you response on that?
 - Do you think that legal practice in Malaysia need to amend the law on homosexuality?