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AWARENESS, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS IN COMMUNICATION WITH THE LGBT COMMUNITY OF STUDENTS IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT:

The LGBT community has been making great contributions to the development of society, but this social group in Vietnam is currently facing certain obstacles in social communication and social participation. In order to ensure social justice and enhance the active participation of LGBT community in society, society in general and students in particular need to have positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with them. Results of this study showed that the majority of students have positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community, but there is still a small part of students with negative awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with this community. Universities and social organizations need to strengthen the organization of communication activities on LGBT community, build a culture of gender equality behavior in schools to enhance student attitudes to communicate with the LGBT community.

INTRODUCTION

LGBT is the abbreviation for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

Viet Nam in particular and countries in the world in general, people of the LGBT community are a popular social group. This social group together with other social groups has been making positive contributions to the overall development of the whole society. According to statistics of the Institute of Legislative Studies and the Institute of Social, Economic and Environmental Research (iSEE) of Vietnam, there are currently about 1.6 million gay, bisexual and transgender people aged 15-59. For various reasons, LGBT people are still subjected to discrimination in their everyday lives (ILGA- Europe, 2013, 2016). This more or less causes certain difficulties to their lives, negatively affecting the realization of human rights and social justice (Quang, 2012; Hang, 2014).

In Vietnam, gender equality and the promotion of gender equality have really been concerned by the society, contributing to ensuring social justice, towards sustainable development (Dao, 2014). In recent years, gender equality in different areas of social life has seen many positive changes, but the implementation of gender equality with people of the LGBT community has not been given adequate attention and there are certain limitations (Tam, 2013).

Students are young intellectuals and future masters of the country, playing an important role in promoting gender equality, including gender equality with LGBT people (Dao, 2014). In order to perform well this role, first of all students need to have positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communicating with them, propagating and mobilizing people to fight against discrimination and discrimination against LGBT people.

The studies is mostly focused on the awareness, attitudes and behaviors of the community, the students towards the LGBT community, the research on awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community is very limited. The study "*Awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community of students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*" was conducted to help social managers see the status of awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communication with LGBT community, since then, have appropriate impact measures to enhance positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with LGBT people for students, contributing to promoting the implementation of gender equality in the whole society. Assembly, towards substantive gender equality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a report on challenges to equality for LGBT people, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - FRA (2016) stated: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people commonly face obstacles in their daily lives: at the doctor's, at school or simply walking hand-in-hand on the streets. They are often bullied in classrooms or publicly attacked for simply being gay, lesbian, trans or bisexual. Frequently they do not report incidents of hate crime or discrimination, partly out of lack of trust for the respective authorities (FRA, 2016).

The authors Johnson et al. (2007), Mayock et al. (2009), SAHM (2013), Kenneth et al. (2014) said that: lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) adolescents are vulnerable to poor health and social outcomes because of marginalization, stigma and normative pressure against sexual and gender minorities. They face personal and inter-personal challenges associated with the coming-out process, whereby many milestones are experienced as difficult.

Herek & Capitanion, Sanford & Engstorm (1995), Kite & Whitley (1996), LaMar & Kite (1998), Hinrichs & Rosenberg (2002), Shaynie (2018) have focused research on student awareness and attitudes towards LGBT people.

A number of other authors have carried out studies on health workers' perception, attitudes and beliefs in healthcare for the LGBT community. These studies have pointed out the limitations and suggested solutions for raising awareness as well as enhancing positive attitudes of health workers in health care for the LGBT community (Banerjee et al., 2018; Denise Rowe et al., 2017).

Up to now, there have been many different studies on LGBT community, public and student attitudes toward LGBT community. However, in-depth studies on awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communication with the LGBT community are still limited.

This study focuses on exploring the awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in Ho Chi Minh City in communication with LGBT people.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted on 500 students at 5 universities in Ho Chi Minh City: University of Labor and Social Affairs (Campus 2 - Ho Chi Minh City), Ho Chi Minh City University of Transport, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Southern Sub-Institute of Cryptography Technology, the number of students surveyed at each school is 100 including 50 males and 50 females. The number of respondents in each school was selected using a random sampling method. These students are identified to have interacted with people from the LGBT community.

The questionnaire is designed and used to measure the awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communication with the LGBT community. The questionnaire has 3 scales, including: a scale for students' awareness of the LGBT community, a scale of students' attitudes toward the LGBT community in communication, and a scale of student behavior in communicating with the LGBT community. Each scale is measured on a 3-level Likert scale. The reliability of the 3 scales is assessed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the statistical results showed that the scales are guaranteed reliability with Cronbach's Alpha > 0.85. Besides that, in-depth interviews, observations are also used as support methods.

The survey results were processed by using SPSS 18.0. Descriptive statistics and inference statistics are used to analyze research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Awareness of students about the LGBT community

Students play an important role in promoting the elimination of social stigma towards the LGBT community. To perform this role well, first of all requires students to have the correct and positive awareness about them. Surveying this aspect of the students in the research sample, we obtained the following results:

Table 1. Awareness of students about the LGBT community

<i>N</i> <i>o</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	People of the LGBT community are an indispensable component of any society	2.79	0.58
2	LGBT people have a certain contribution to the development of society	2.76	0.52
3	People in the LGBT community are ordinary people like many other groups in society	2.77	0.56
4	People from the LGBT community are not ill people	2.65	0.63
5	In the LGBT community, there are good people and good people that people need to learn	2.68	0.64
6	LGBT people have the right to be respected and treated equally	2.63	0.52
7	People in the LGBT community are ill people and deserve to be despised*	1.36	0.79
8	The presence of LGBT people negatively affects friends, family, society, etc.*	1.37	0.65
Mean in total:		2.71	0.61

<i>No</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Proactively approach and chat with people in the LGBT community	2.73	0.51
2	Cheerful and open when chatting with people of LGBT	2.77	0.54
3	Comfortable, natural to interact with and work with people of LGBT community	2.59	0.57
4	My respect for LGBT people when I talk to them	2.75	0.53
5	Willingness to make friends or establish long-term social relations with LGBT people	2.64	0.47
6	Fearful, sometimes afraid to interact with and talk with people of the LGBT community*	1.39	0.68

7	Discomfort when interacting with LGBT people*	1.34	0.65
Mean in total:		2.70	0.58

**Note: the more mean, the more positive attitude is. Items with an "*" are reversed when statistical processing.*

Source: Data Processed

The survey results show that the majority of students have a positive attitude in contacting and chatting with the LGBT community (Mean in total = 2.70, SD = 0.58).

Most students said they actively approach and talk with people of the LGBT community (Mean = 2.73).

Other positive attitudes in the process of talking with the LGBT community such as: "Having fun and being open when talking with people of the LGBT community", "Comfortable and natural when interacting, working with people students of the LGBT community", "Respect for those of the LGBT community when talking to them" is also done by students at a fairly high level (with Mean from 2.59 to 2.77).

The majority of students also stated that they are willing to make friends or establish long-term social relationships with people of the LGBT community (Mean = 2.64).

To understand more about the attitude of interacting and talking with the LGBT community of students, we conducted in-depth interviews with 15 students and as a result, there were 12 students with a positive attitude and only 3 students expressed negative attitude when communicating with people of LGBT community, for example: L.H.A said: *"I see people in the LGBT community as normal as people so I do not hesitate to contact them and often take the initiative. talk with them when needed"*, T.V.H shared: *"At school or outside of society when meeting with people of LGBT community, I often actively approach and chat with them"*, N.T.L said: *"... I also often interact with gay people, especially in part-time jobs, I feel very comfortable when interacting with they, I talk to them normally and respect them like other customers"*. N.T.N.P shared: *"In the group of friends I currently play, there is a gay friend, we play with each other very close, I am very Dear friends, I never thought that you were an abnormal person"*, Đ.V.H said: *" ... I rarely interact with gay people, I think they have something unusual, I feel feel uncomfortable and natural "*.

In addition to the majority of students who have a positive attitude in interacting with the LGBT community, the survey results show that there is still a small part of students who have not really positive attitude: "Fearful, sometimes afraid of contacting and talking with people of LGBT community", "Discomfort when having to talk and talk with people of LGBT community" (Mean = 1.39 and 1.34). This result shows that it is necessary to continue taking appropriate measures to

improve the positive attitude of students when communicating with the LGBT community.

Behaviors of students in communicating with the LGBT community

Surveying students in the sample of their behavior during contact and talk with people of the LGBT community, we obtained the following results:

Table 3. Behaviors of students in communicating with the LGBT community

<i>No</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Welcome, welcome their presence	2.76	0.53
2	Creating a happy and comfortable atmosphere	2.74	0.47
3	Sharing and exchanging enthusiastic information	2.62	0.46
4	Listen to them share	2.67	0.55
5	Commend their opinions	2.53	0.61
6	No mention of their sex	2.73	0.58
7	Create conditions for them to express themselves	2.68	0.53
8	Avoid or attempt to withdraw early*	1.32	0.67
9	Speaking through the speaker*	1.41	0.71
10	Not listening to what they say*	1.38	0.66
11	Joking about their gender*	1.35	0.59
Mean in total:		2.68	0.55

**Note: the more mean, the more positive behaviors is. Items with an "*" are reversed when statistical processing.*

Source: Data Processed

Among the behaviors surveyed and presented in table 3, it can be seen that the "Welcome, welcome" and "Creating a happy and comfortable atmosphere" in communication with the LGBT community are manifested in highest level (with Mean = 2.76 and 2.74).

"Passionate exchange of information", "Listen to them share ", "Appreciating opinions" are also acts that are carried out at a relatively high level (Mean = 2.53 to 2.67). In the process of communicating with the LGBT community, the majority of students also said they were "Not mentioning their gender issues" and "Facilitating the LGBT community to express themselves" (Mean from 2.73 to 2.68).

The survey results also show that negative behaviors in communication with LGBT community of students such as: "Avoid or seek to withdraw early", "Speak with your speaker to finish the story", "Don't listen to what they have say ", "Joking about their gender" expressed at a very low level (with Mean from 1.32 to 1.41).

Interviewing some students about their behavior during communication with the LGBT community, we found that the majority of students had positive behaviors,

of the 15 students interviewed, only 2 students reported showing negative behaviors while communicating with people of the LGBT community, such as: T.V.H said *"I am always ready to communicate with people of the LGBT community, I welcome them and chat politely with them, respect them and listen to their share"*, N.T.L shared *"when communicating with people in the LGBT community, I also communicate like everyone, often listen to their opinions, share enthusiastically. with them and respect their gender, I often do not mention gender issues when talking to them"*, in contrast, Đ.V.H said *"I often avoid talking to people in the LGBT community, if they are present I will try to withdraw or just be silent and not talk to them at all"*.

Observing 5 random communication situations between students in the research sample and the LGBT community, we found that in all 5 situations, students showed positive behaviors, they all showed happy welcome, enthusiastically exchanging and listening to each other's ideas, ...

From the above results, it can be seen that the majority of students have been active in communicating with the LGBT community (Mean in total = 2.68, SD=0.55). However with Mean in total = 2.68/3.0, it shows that it is necessary to promote positive behaviors in communication with LGBT community of students. *Awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communication with the LGBT community*

- The awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communicating with the LGBT community is summarized in the figure below:

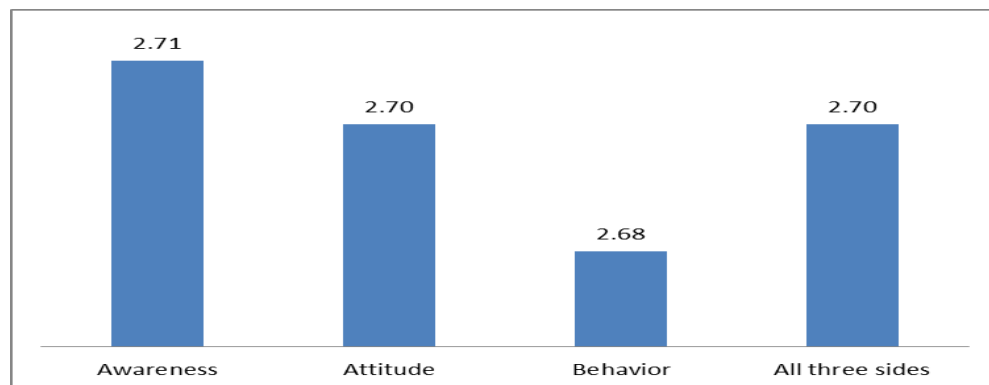


Figure 1. The awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communicating with the LGBT community

Source: Data Processed

With the data in Figure 1 it is noticeable:

+ In general, the majority of students in the research sample had positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communicating with people of the LGBT community ((Mean in total = $(2.71 + 2.70 + 2.68)/3 = 2.70$)). However, there is still a small part of students who do not have positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in this regard.

- + Considering each aspect, awareness and attitudes of students in communicating with people of LGBT community at a more positive level than behavior but the difference is not large and not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).
- + Analyzing the correlation between the three aspects expression in communication with people of the LGBT community, we obtained the following results:

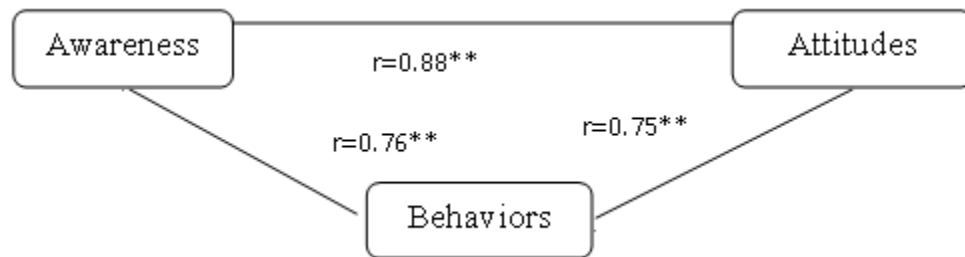


Figure 2. Correlation between awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communication with LGBT people (**: $p < 0.001$)

Source: Data Processed

Looking at the analysis results in Figure 2, we can see that the awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communicating with LGBT community are positively correlated with each other ($r = 0.75$ to 0.88 , $p < 0.001$). This means that when students' awareness of the LGBT community change, they will lead to a change in their attitudes and behaviors in communicating with the LGBT community in the same direction of increasing or decreasing.

- Comparing the difference in awareness, attitudes and behaviors of male and female students in the research sample, we obtained the following results:

Table 4. Awareness, attitudes and behaviors of male and female students in communicating with LGBT community

No	Gender	Mean	T-Test
1	Male	2.68	$p > 0.05$
2	Female	2.72	

Source: Data Processed

With the results in Table 4 can be identified, between male and female students in the research sample there is no statistically significant difference in awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community ($p > 0.05$).

- Comparing the difference in awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community of students of 5 different universities in the research sample, we obtained the following results:

Table 5. Awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community of students of 5 different universities

<i>No</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>ANOVA-Test</i>
1	HCMC University of Transport	2.61	<i>p</i> <0.05
2	Southern Sub-institute - Academy of Cryptography Techniques	2.64	
3	Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology	2.68	
4	Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities	2.81	
5	University of Labor - Social Affairs (Campus 2)	2.76	

Source: Data Processed

The statistical results in table 5 show a statistically significant difference in the awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with LGBT community of students at 5 universities in the sample. The group of schools specialized in social and humanities has more positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community than the group of schools specialized in technical disciplines. This is explained by the fact that students from social sciences and humanities have more opportunities to interact with information about the LGBT community and also have more interest in this community.

Conclusions and recommendations

From the research results about the awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in Ho Chi Minh City in communicating with the LGBT community, we draw some conclusions and recommendations:

- Society in general, students in particular need to have positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with people of the LGBT community, contributing to ensuring social justice, creating conditions for LGBT people to have a happy life. Blessed, have the opportunity to contribute more to the development of society.

- Survey results from the research sample show that the awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in Ho Chi Minh City in communication with LGBT people is quite positive: the majority of students have a positive awareness about LGBT people, have positive attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community. However, there is still a small part of students who do not have positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communicating with LGBT people. There is no difference between male and female students in awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communication with the LGBT community. There is a difference

in awareness, attitudes and behaviors in communicating with the LGBT community of students at 5 universities in the research sample, the group of schools specialized in social and humanities have a more positive attitude in communicating with the community LGBT compared to the group of schools specialized in training technical disciplines.

- It is necessary to further improve the positive awareness, attitudes and behaviors of students in communicating with people of the LGBT community. In order to do this, schools and social organizations need to strengthen the organization of communication activities about the LGBT community to change students' awareness about this social group, helping to eliminate prejudices against people belonging to the LGBT community; developing communication activities about the LGBT community; make gender equality content for LGBT people an important content in implementing gender equality strategy.

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