
Master's Research Report

**Male Chinese Homosexuals' Self-Perception of Environmental
Influence on Their Identity, Choice for Marriage, and Coming Out**

By

YE Feng
(51120608)

August 2022

Master's Research Report Presented to

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Asia Pacific Studies/ Society and Culture

Table of Contents

Certification Page	1
Privacy Declaration	2
Acknowledgment	3
Abstract	4
1. Introduction	6
1.1 Research background	6
1.2 Research questions and research objectives	9
1.3 Significance of this study	10
2. Cass' theory of homosexual identity formation (HIF)	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Criticisms of the HIF	16
2.3 HIF for this study	18
3. Background of homosexuality in China and other Asian countries/ region	19
3.1 China	19
3.2 Other Asian countries and region	22
4. Literature review	25
4.1 Review of coming out and marriage of male Chinese homosexuals	25
4.2 Review of social attitude towards homosexuality within China	27
4.3 Review of homosexuals' identity in China.....	30
5. Methodology	33
5.1 Respondents	33
5.2 Data collection.....	36
5.2.1 Preliminary interview	36
5.2.2 In-depth interview	37
5.3 Data analysis	37
6. Environmental factors on homosexuals' identity selection	38
6.1 Choice for coming out, and marriage.....	38
6.2 Family factors influencing identity selection	44

6.2.1 Parent’s perception of homosexuality	44
6.2.2 Family expectation	47
6.2.3 Family situation	50
6.3 Social factors	53
6.3.1 Policy and law	53
6.3.2 Workplace	55
6.3.3 Public opinion	56
7. The influence of environmental factors on Homosexual Identity Formation.....	59
7.1 Case studies	59
7.2 Identity Comparison	60
7.3 Identity Tolerance	62
7.4 Thoughts on Identity Comparison and Identity Tolerance	64
7.5 Identity Acceptance	66
7.6 Identity Pride	67
7.7 Overall	70
8. Conclusion	72
8.1 Findings	72
8.2 Limitations	74
8.3 Suggestions for further research.....	75
References	77

List of figures

Figure 5-1 Ages of respondents in the first step interview	34
Figure 5-2 Highest education of respondents (until Nov. 2021)	35
Figure 6-1 Basic information of preliminary interview respondents	40
Figure 6-2 Choice of coming out and marriage	41
Figure 6-3 Proportion of coming out choice	42
Figure 6-4 Proportion of marriage choice	43
Figure 7-1 Basic information about in-depth interview respondents	60
Figure 8-1 Environmental factors influencing male homosexuals' identity	72

Certification Page

I, YE FENG (Student ID 51120608) hereby declare that the contents of this master's Research Report are original and true and have not been submitted at any other university or educational institution for the award of degree or diploma.

All the information derived from other published or unpublished sources has been cited and acknowledged appropriately.

YE, Feng

2022/06/14

Privacy Declaration

Respondents of this research report have all been informed that the interviews will be used for research purposes and consent was obtained from all respondents.

No personal information about the respondents was disclosed in this report.

Acknowledgment

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor: Professor Joseph PROGLER, for his help on the completion of this Research Report. He walked me through all the stages of this research report. I want to thank Professor Proglers again for his academic help and guidance, for the very helpful information provided to me when I was confused about my research, as well as my life support during my master's period.

In addition to this, I would like to thank the other professors at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Prof. KOJIMA, Prof. YOSHIDA, Prof. IGUCHI, and Prof. SEIKE for their guidance and help. As well as my fellow graduate classmates, ANI Aileen Concepcion, LI Yixuan, CHU Xiaohan, LONG Junjie, for discussing academics with me and making progress together.

I would also like to thank the LDP led by Prime Minister Kishida for opening up Japan and giving me the opportunity to come to Japan, even though it was only for my last semester.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for providing me with moral and financial help, and for encouraging me to follow my dreams in the face of the severe COVID-19 pandemic in my home country, thanks to them!

Abstract

Homosexuality is a large group in human society that cannot be ignored, however, the stigmatization of homosexuality in contemporary Chinese society is serious, where government propaganda plays a role in shaping public values. The open recruitment requirements of government agencies clearly state that homosexuals are not to be recruited, and an openly gay identity will be rejected in the workplace and charged with “improper lifestyle.” In a high-pressure social environment, male homosexuals conceal their identity and marry women for various reasons. It is necessary to understand the current situation and demands of homosexuality in China, increase the public’s attention to the homosexual community, and call for the equalization of gay people. This study is about how environmental factors influence identity formation of male homosexuals in China.

The first research objective is to identify and categorize the environmental factors that influence male homosexuals’ choice of their identity. The primary data for this subjective are interviews with 17 Chinese homosexual respondents. The second research objective is to conduct a case study through the self-narratives of 6 male homosexuals. By using Cass’ HIF theory, the goal is to categorize the identity formation of the six respondents in order to explore how male homosexuals’ identity formation is influenced by different environmental factors, specifically family and society.

Analysis of the interview data finds that the social and family environment in contemporary China has some degree of effect on the identity formation of male

homosexuals, depending on their circumstances. Within Confucian culture, which influences family environment, it is difficult for homosexuals to come out to their parents because they are at risk of being ostracized by their families. This in turn can have a significant social impact on a person's overall self-evaluation. Socially, China's laws and policies are not inclusive of homosexuality and do not promote understanding and support for homosexuality among the public. While most of the homosexuals in this research have reached the Identity Acceptance stage and are able to perceive their own sexual orientation, they are unable to reach the Identity Pride stage. Therefore, Chinese family values and the social environment exclude homosexuals from full participation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

In China, the homosexual community is easily overlooked. The sexual orientation of homosexuality refers to sexual tendencies and behaviors aimed at the same sex; a homosexual is an individual (man or woman) who has homosexuality as a sexual object (Li, 1993, p.7). What distinguishes homosexuals from most people is their different sexual orientation.

The origin of homosexuality has been debated for a long time, from mental illness to genetic mutation and later to the theory of acquired formation. “The origin of homosexuality is complex, and it involves the influence of psychology, biology, sexuality and other disciplines” (Wang, 2017, p.70). A part of scholars think that it is innate, and a part of scholars believed that it is acquired (Li, 1998, P.36). This has also led to two significant schools of thought, Essentialism, and Constructivism (Wang, 2017, P.70).

Researchers believe that there is usually a certain percentage of homosexuality in the whole community, that is 10% (Wang, 2017, P.1). The figures released by the Chinese Ministry of Health in 2004 indicated that sexually active male homosexuals make up about 2%-4% of the sexually active male population in China in general, and therefore estimate that there were about 5-10 million male homosexuals in China in that time. The most recent statistics by Yang (2020) indicated the prevalence of same-sex attraction ranges from 1% to 17%, the prevalence of those with a homosexual identity from 1% to

16%, and the prevalence of same-sex sexual behavior from 0.5% to 24%. Although the minimum values of this data are small, considering the large population base in China, it was conceivable that the homosexual community in China is quite large. If we take the smallest proportion value to calculate, then the number of men with same-sex attraction in China in 2020 reached 1,400,000. The number of homosexuals is so large that society should pay attention to the homosexual community.

Homosexuals are complex and diverse. In the heterosexual-dominated social background, homosexuality is seen as heterogeneous, excluded by society, and in a subculture status (Li, 2019, p.201). The image of a man's presence in the community is diverse. The traditional Chinese Confucian values for men are “修身 *xiushen*,” “齐家 *qijia*,” “治国 *zhiguo*,” “平天下 *pingtianxia*” (meaning cultivating the moral self, regulating the family, maintaining the state rightly and making all peaceful). These four Chinese words have ruled the ideological values of Chinese men for thousands of years. According to Confucianism, the first important thing for men is that they need to discipline their behavior, and the second is about family integrity. Confucianism has ruled China for thousands of years, whose concept of sex is “only to reproduce.” However, a public identity of male homosexuality in modern China may not reach this intention to have a child.

The central social values in China today are influenced by the socialist values of the Chinese Communist Party, and the government has a very intuitive influence on the thinking of the public. In recent years, the Chinese government had interfered so severely

with the mass media that when I was in China, all films, television, and literature about homosexuality were not allowed to be publicly displayed or for sale. In modern China, male homosexuals, under the pressure of society and family, mostly conceal their homosexual identity and choose a heterosexual marriage or a lavender marriage with a lesbian (that is, a gay and a lesbian marry without love), which leads to marriage disaster. Such families are called “mixed gay/straight” or “dual-orientation families” (Laird, 1993, p.282, as cited in Allen & Demo, 1995, p.113). There is an old saying in China that “不孝有三，无后为大 *buxiaoyousan, wuhouweida*” (direct translation: there are many ways to be unfilial, the worst is not to produce offspring, meaning that it is the worst situation which you disobey the unfilial piety that you do not have children), which means that Chinese traditional filial piety culture requires children to reproduce. As cited in Kong (2012):

Chinese gay men had (and still have) to deal with two major issues related to the family. First, there is a familial role, which is manifested as that of the filial son, generally defined according to prescribed ways of showing love and respect to parents and the elderly. One major element is obedience to parent’s expectations and following the pressure to get married and thereby to fulfil the obligation to continue the family bloodline are both seen as signs of a good filial son (p.160).

If Chinese men fail to fulfill the responsibility of reproduction, it is a violation of filial piety. The family, as well as Chinese society, have certain constraints on the role of men. Thus, male homosexuals in China face an awkward situation in the relationship between family and community and themselves.

1.2 Research questions and research objectives

Based on what has been presented previously, I would examine the extent to which gay identity is influenced in the context of Chinese culture. Inspired by Ocobock's (2013) study, which concluded that family of origin families impacts the lives of homosexuals, I investigated environmental factors, including family and society, which affect the perception and choice of homosexual identity in the Chinese context. The identity selection mentioned in this research on homosexuality is the homosexual's perception of their own identities, including how they accept their identity, whether to come out, and whether to choose marriage. Coming out refers to the process of accepting oneself as gay, lesbian, or bisexual and to integrating this sexual orientation into different spheres of one's life. (Cass, 1984, as cited in Wong, 2015, p.149)

The first research purpose is to identify and categorize the environmental factors that influence male homosexuals' choice of their identity, based on interviews with 17 Chinese homosexual respondents.

The second research objective is to conduct a case study through the self-narratives of 6 male homosexuals, using Cass' HIF theory, categorizing the identity formation of the six respondents, and exploring how male homosexuals' identity formation is influenced in different environments (family and society).

This research was guided primarily by the following two research questions:

- What are the specific environmental factors (based on family and social perspectives) that influence the identity choices of male homosexuals in China, as well as options for marriage and coming out?
- How do environmental factors impact the identity formation of male homosexuals in China?

1.3 Significance of this study

First, I believe that studies on homosexuality have become an essential element of social disciplinary concern today. As the background introduces, homosexuality has become an inescapable social phenomenon (Li, 2019, p.201). As a large group existing, homosexuality as an identity cannot be ignored in China, and understanding the actual thoughts and life demands of homosexuals has crucial social significance for the whole society (Wang, 2017, p.8). “Homosexuality should be seen as a social role (McIntosh 1968, p.182).” In the three decades after the founding of the People’s Republic of China, homosexuality was severely suppressed as a decadent bourgeois lifestyle and a remnant of feudalism (Wang, 2017, p.24). By the mid-to-late 1980s, the relationship between homosexuality and AIDS had been established as a fundamental link due to the emergence of AIDS and the severity of the form of AIDS prevention. AIDS was once considered a homosexuality-related disease known as homosexuality-related immunodeficiency, GRID. in a heterosexual-dominated social environment, homosexuals were often discriminated against (Wang, 2005, p.5). People do not understand or misunderstand

homosexuality. On the one hand, they are reluctant to accept the homosexuals around them, many still consider homosexuality as a (psychological) disease or a degenerate lifestyle, and even doctors try to “cure” homosexuals for various purposes. Most Chinese parents have a hard time accepting their homosexual children. Therefore, an in-depth study of homosexuality will help the public to promote understanding of the gay community and, more importantly, affirmative action of the homosexual community in the future.

Second, the problems caused by homosexuals marrying heterosexuals to their families and women should never be underestimated. Most homosexuals would marry women under the influence of social and family factors, which was not only torture to themselves but also to heterosexual partners. According to Wang et al. (2011), 51.4% of a group of unmarried male homosexuals interviewed in Changsha, Hunan, believed that they were likely to marry a woman in the future (cited in Shi et al., 2018). From a study by Ni et al. (2015), sexual orientation self-assessed as gay male was 32% married, and bisexual was even higher at 58% married. Due to the pressure of external public opinion or the stigmatization of homosexuality, this group of homosexuals is mainly self-denying themselves. They must pursue their happiness on the one hand and condemn themselves on the other. The long-term pain of struggling with contradictions is likely to cause a series of mental illnesses and, in serious cases, suicide. It is also a tragedy for women who unknowingly marry gay men whose marriages are not predicated on love, and countless family tragedies are being played out in China.

Third, although homosexuality is seen as an important research issue across disciplines, there is little scholarship on a sensitive issue like homosexuality in China. In an era when only economic construction was valued, social disciplines were considered useless, not to mention disciplines like sexology that touched on forbidden areas of Chinese privacy. There has been a paucity of studies on homosexuality in Chinese societies due to various historical and cultural and political reasons (Wong & Tang, 2004). Li (1998) wrote in her study:

Between 1898 and 1908 alone, more than a thousand publications were published about homosexuality, and in the next 90 years of this century, even more studies on homosexuality were published. However, there was not a single monograph on homosexuality in China until the 1990s, except for a few scattered articles in newspapers and magazines, which is surprising. As the first attempt to study the phenomenon of homosexuality in domestic sociology, we cannot but feel a great responsibility (1998, p.10).

The public does not know enough about the homosexual community, and I hope that this study will contribute to what I know about affirmative action in the homosexual community.

2. Cass' theory of homosexual identity formation (HIF)

“The 1970s marked a new era in research regarding sexual orientation identity development with the emergence of theoretical stage models describing homosexual identity. These models focused on the resolution of internal conflict related to identification as lesbian or gay (Bilodeau, & Renn, 2005, p.25).” Cass' theory of homosexual identity formation (HIF) is the key theory referenced in this study, and I will analyze and categorize my research subjects according to Cass' theory.

2.1 Introduction

Cass (1979), a clinical psychology consultant in the Western Australian Homosexual Counselling Service, proposed a theoretical model of homosexual identity formation. Stages are distinguished according to the individual's perception of his/her behavior and the actions that result from that perception (p.219). Cass argues that all homosexuals go through six stages before they experience full self-identity acceptance. These are “Identity Confusion,” “Identity Comparison,” “Identity Tolerance,” “Identity Acceptance,” “Identity Pride,” and “Identity Synthesis.”

Cass (1979) said: “Taking an interactionist perspective, interpersonal congruency theory is based on the assumption that stability and change in human behavior are dependent on the congruency or incongruency that exists within an individual's interpersonal environment” (p.220). Cass argues that growth occurs when one's self-

perception is different from others' perception of oneself, the development of Cass' model. For homosexuals, self-perceptions of aptitudes change as the environment changes.

The six stages are:

The first stage, "Identity Confusion": Most people in this stage are exposed to some information about homosexuality but feel that it is not related to them, or some of them are aware that their behavior is related to homosexuality. The group in this stage does not have a strong sexual consciousness, does not know enough about homosexuality, or does not know enough about their sexual orientation. They compare their behavior to that of homosexuality, actively looking for related information to answer the question: "Am I a homosexual? As Cass (1979) stated:

Since this is at odds with the previous view of self as non-homosexual and heterosexual, they begin to experience doubts. "Who am I?" is the burning question. Feelings of personal alienation are paramount (Cass, 1979, p.223).

The second stage, "Identity Comparison": This group has come to realize that their sexual orientation is either homosexual or non-heterosexual. The group's former heterosexual code of conduct, ideals, and expectations for the future are no longer relevant to them. People at this stage begin to handle social alienation, and they will feel alienated from society and family. They don't think they belong to this society. As cited in Cass (1979):

As a result of this increased incongruency, they come to feel alienated

from all others and has a sense of “not belonging” to society at large as well as to specific subgroups such as family and peers. “I’m different,” said by them, is a summative expression of these feelings of alienation (p.225).

The third stage, “Identity Tolerance”: People at this stage have further transformed their identities from heterosexual homosexuals. Homosexuals at this stage no longer feel alienated because of who they are. On the one hand, people at this stage are freed from the task of having to manage identity confusion and turmoil, and able to acknowledge social, emotional, and sexual needs. People at this stage began to look for homosexuals and homosexual subcultures. “At this stage, contacting homosexuals is viewed as ‘something that has to be done’ in order to counter the felt isolation and alienation from others. (Cass, 1979, p.229).”

The Fourth stage, “Identity Acceptance”: Homosexuals in this stage begin to accept their new identity and become more socially active. As cited in Cass (1979):

This stage is characterized by continued and increasing contacts with other homosexuals. These allow them to feel the impact of those features of the subculture that validate and “normalize” homosexuality as an identity and way of life (p. 231).

The fifth stage, “Identity Pride”: In which gays and lesbians begin to take pride in the gay community they are a part of and devalue the importance of heterosexuality. They immerse themselves in a homosexual subculture and dichotomize the world, i.e., the gay world and the heterosexual world. And take pride in the gay community they live in.

The sixth stage “Identity Synthesis”: This group of gays and lesbians does not see their sexual orientation as a special thing. It is as if people do not divide the world into a world of drinkers and a world of non-drinkers. “They acknowledge that there are some heterosexual others who accept their homosexual identity in the same way that they do. (Cass, 1979, p. 234).”

Cass’ theory is the earliest and most widely used model of homosexual identity formation. This model is based on three dimensions: self-perception, behavioral perception, and awareness of others’ reactions to study the process of homosexual identity development. I believe that Cass has given some detailed criteria for determining the self-identity of homosexuals, which is extremely informative for my research.

2.2 Criticisms of the HIF

Because the theory of homosexual identity formation was first proposed by Cass in the 1970s, over time, some scholars have argued that the theory has limitations. For example, Kaufman and Johnson (2004) believed that the background of Cass’ model was no longer applicable to today’s social environment and did not consider the socio-cultural factors that affect the development of identity.

Secondly, Cass’ view that “homosexuality must be experienced in all six stages can be regarded as having no identity barriers” was questioned. Kaufman and Johnson’s research proves that this is no longer true.

Zheng and Wen (2020) argued that although this theory can also reflect the cognitive process of homosexuality intuitively, it ignores the behaviors and cognitive changes that individuals may learn during the process of identification, as well as the impact of the interaction of multiple elements and each process, ignoring the complexity and differences of individuals.

Degges-White, Rice, and Myers, J. E. (2000) summarized Cass' model by arguing that the sample studied by Cass is not large enough to represent the six processes described by Cass for all homosexuals. And "the Cass model has been criticized as being too rigid in its linear progression, not applicable to lesbian identity development" (Akerhind & Cheung, 2000, as cited in Degges-White, Rice and Myers, J. E., 2000, p.320).

Kenneady (2014) concluded four main areas of criticism of Cass' model by later scholars:

(a)the limitation of a linear stage model, (b) the narrow focus on only gay male and lesbian identity development, (c) the lack of addressing differences between males and females in sexual identity development, and (d) the lack of addressing how racial and ethnic aspects of identity influence sexual identity (p.235).

These criticisms of Cass' model were mainly about questioning the linear structure of Cass' model, and later scholars argued that not every individual would go through every stage of this linear structure. As an example, some individuals may not undergo the first or fourth stage. Cass believed that only individuals who experience each stage could be called complete identity, and anyone who does not achieve a positive identity is

considered identity foreclosure. Most scholars focus on the entire developmental process of the individual and depending on the change of time and the development of society, some stages are not present, and thus the Cass model has been questioned.

2.3 HIF for this study

The purpose of my study is to explore the influence of environmental factors on homosexual identity, and the influence requires criteria to define the degree. The criterion I apply is Cass' HIF model, and the six stages of Cass' HIF model are the criteria by which my perceptions of homosexual identity are determined and under which my respondents are categorized for analysis. Thus, Kaufman and Johnson's (2004) challenge to Cass regarding individual differences in homosexual development has little relevance to this study. And Kenneady (2014) also mentions in his later arguments that "utilizing aspects of the Cass model may be helpful to understand the identity development of gay males and lesbians within that community" (p.240). The significance of Cass' model for this study is to determine the extent of homosexual self-perception; this model is used as an important criterion for judgment rather than to study individual self-perception development, so Cass' emphasis on a linear developmental structure to study individual development of homosexuality is not the primary research purpose of this study. As Aglipay said, "every stage depicts commonality of development that can be considered valid in the eyes of individuals who are trying to understand one's sexual identity. (p.417)" The purpose of the Cass model that I am going to apply is to try to understand the identity of my respondents.

3. Background of homosexuality in China and other Asian countries/ region

3.1 China

Homosexuality has not been absent from Chinese history, and many ancient Chinese historical biographies and literary works contain detailed accounts of homosexuality. Wang (2017) pointed out that homosexuality had a history but did not form a culture in ancient China, which means although homosexuality appeared very early, it did not form a special culture.

Homosexuality was extremely active in China during the feudal-imperial era. In China, people's attitudes towards homosexuality vary in different social backgrounds and different periods of history. Homosexuality evolves with the reformation of social systems and changes in social perceptions. In the pre-Qin era (the pre-Qin era refers to the period before the unification of China by Qin Shi Huang, First Emperor of Qin), it was common for the kings of states (not emperors) to have a male lover in China's mainland. The Hundred Schools of Thought during the pre-Qin era (including Confucianism and Taoism, and more) believed that love and desire between people of the same sex were natural. Many allusions in the history of the pre-Qin era tell beautiful stories of same-sex relationships, such as “断袖 *duanxiu*” (direct translation: cutting sleeve) and “分桃 *fentaο*” (direct translation: sharing peaches]. After Qin Shi Huang unified the six states, homosexuality was still a normal phenomenon, influenced by the pre-Qin thoughts from the Hundred Schools of Thought. Homosexuality reached its peak

during the Northern and Southern Dynasties from 420 to 589 A.D. Because of the turmoil in the state and social instability, people's outlook on life was that things were unpredictable, and enjoyment was paramount. There were few restrictions on thoughts in this period. Until the prosperous Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties, homosexuality existed in society as a very normal phenomenon. The first punishment for homosexuality in Chinese history was the punishment for male sodomy of young children during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty, which was a supplement to the law for rape and did not indicate that same-sex sexual behavior was opposed. After the overthrow of the feudal imperial system, this law was abolished by the Chinese Republican government (p.17-20).

In the depiction of homosexuality in ancient Chinese novels, it can be found that the depiction of homosexuality is common in ancient Chinese literature. According to Shi (2008), The Han Dynasty period was the period in Chinese history when homosexuality was prevalent, and several emperors of the Han Dynasty had male lovers. During the Qing Dynasty, homosexuality was even used as a supplement to the family marriage system, and it was a status symbol for the male owner to have a male lover. Homosexuality is just like a common bad habit such as smoking and prostitution in ancient Chinese society. Thus, homosexuality was not stigmatized and did not cause great social repercussions (p.5), although Hang's (2013) study suggested that same-sex relationships in late Qing society were becoming progressively more strained.

After the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, a new social system was

established under the influence of Western thought. But there is not much information about homosexuality during this period because China was in turmoil during this period and with it came to the war, so there are not many documents about homosexuality during the period.

In 1949, the People's Republic of China was established. The establishment of New China facilitated the pursuit of modernization in a backward China, and according to Tian (2019), during the Mao era, Maoist thought dichotomized sex quite simply, with stable heterosexual families contributing to social production "under the influence of Soviet socialist imperialism, the Chinese Communist Party banned sociological inquiries into sex, replacing it with the Western medical framework that privileges monogamous reproductive sex. (2019, p.57)" There was no research on homosexuality in the academic arts in China for 30 years from 1950 to 1980, certainly in the context of this era when Chinese society was undergoing great changes, (including social activities such as the Cultural Revolution). After the 1980s, China began to reform and open up, and academics began to study homosexuality again. The Marriage Law was implemented in 1980, and Article 2 of the Marriage Law makes it clear that monogamy is practiced in China, but there is no provision for homosexuality in the Marriage Law. In an article published in 2003, Sang noted the emergence of sub-cultural organizations in China's major cities and the beginning of homosexuality as a special identity (p.30).

In general, the turning point in the history of homosexuality was the founding of socialist China. The change in social thinking expanded the issue of homosexuality, and

it was no longer a neglected and unmentionable personal preference but was seen as a serious personal problem.

3.2 Other Asian countries and region

These Asian countries and regions are influenced by Confucian culture, and many foreign scholars referred to Confucian culture when studying local homosexuality issues, which is consistent with the situation in China.

Most scholars mentioned that Confucianism is the main reason for the negative social judgments about homosexuality in the Confucian cultural influence countries and regions. For example, Nguyen & Angelique (2017) mentioned that although the influence of Confucianism is weaker among the younger generation in Vietnam, the emphasis of Confucianism on filial piety plays an important part in their cultural perceptions, and therefore homosexuality in Vietnam also receives influences about filial piety. The situation is similar in Korea, where Kim & Hahn (2006) stated that “the family influences ethical decisions on the part of the individual in the context of ‘filial piety’.” Like the Chinese, Koreans’ filial piety toward their parents is largely expressed in the phrase “父母命，不可违 *fumuming, bukewei*” [parents’ orders must not be disobeyed], and although not as strict as in feudal times, most young people follow their parent’s guidance and opinions. But in general, Korean gay culture is more “advanced” than China’s, and according to Yi & Phillipps (2015), since 1980, LGBT people have formed a large and

vibrant subculture as they move toward liberal capitalist democracy. Taiwan is also a region heavily influenced by Confucianism, and a large proportion of Taiwan's indigenous people are immigrants from the mainland in the last century; therefore, Taiwan's culture is largely aligned with that of the mainland. According to Damn (2015) for the course of the historical development of homosexuality in Taiwan, the early development of homosexuality in Taiwan was largely in line with the trajectory of the mainland; the beginning of the stigmatization of homosexuality was due to the AIDS epidemic, but due to political democracy, gay marriage has become legal in Taiwan. Despite the legalization of same-sex marriage, Chen (2011) noted that homosexuality is still marginalized in society. Singapore is also an overseas country with a large Chinese population, and Tan mentions that although Singapore is also influenced by Confucianism, it has avoided the over-marginalization of the gay community due to its political superiority.

Filial piety is inherent in family relationships not only in China but also in East and Southeast Asia, where Confucianism has ruled as the core ideology. The practice of homosexuality requires a violation of filial piety, and in modern monogamous countries, where it is difficult to accomplish both homosexuality and procreation, homosexuality has been marginalized. But it is hard to deny that with the development of society, homosexuality has also seen a great change in Asia. Yue (2014) mentioned that in addition to the gradual change in the views of certain laws on homosexuality in Asian countries, many Asian films with same-sex themes have started to appear, which helps people to

know and understand homosexuality.

4. Literature review

This study was inspired by many historical documents. Before conducting the investigation, I mainly read literature in three domains: “coming out and marriage studies on homosexuality in China,” “perceptions of homosexuality in Chinese society,” and “studies of homosexual identity.”

4.1 Review of coming out and marriage of male Chinese homosexuals

The two subjects chosen for this paper are choices for “coming out” and “marriage.” Many previous studies have investigated “coming out” and “marriage” choices for homosexuals in Chinese cultural circles. The term “coming out” refers to the process of accepting oneself as gay, lesbian, or bisexual and to integrating this sexual orientation into different spheres of one’s life” (Cass, 1996; D’Augelli & Patterson, 1995; Savin-Williams, 1990, as cited in Wong & Tang, 2004, p.149). And marriage is an important indicator of homosexual identity research, as Grimes points out in his book *Sexual Consequences*: “When a man is not married by the age of 30, people assume something is wrong with him, or suspect him of being a homosexual, or suspect him of being a sexual gamer. He will not rise too high positions in the military, in corporations, in politics, and in trade union organizations. Some academics and artists are successful or capable, but they are still suspicious in the eyes of individuals. Therefore, it can be argued that marriage and normal outward appearances are the fuel for men’s career success (Grimes. 1975, p.57, as cited in Li, 1998, p.277).

Hu & Wang (2013) concluded that

Traditionally, it is for parents to decide when and whom one shall marry, and it is widely believed that only through marriage can one become a completed human being and legally bear offspring to continue the family bloodline. Such a strong belief in marriage is still prevalent in modern Chinese society, although different parents may endorse this traditional value to varying degrees (p.670-671).

Li (1998), in an early study of homosexuality, concluded that few Chinese homosexuals came out in the 1990s and that almost half of his subjects were already married, and the other half were ready or about to get married. Of course, in the 1990s, Chinese people were still more traditional in their thinking and less able to accept new things. Li's (1998) study also pointed out that some homosexuals do not yet marry out of a preference for children, but rather out of a sense of family and social responsibility to have children to carry on the family line, and arguably out of the traditional Chinese concept of family and heirship so that they have to marry (p.288). Because of China's one-child policy in the last century, which has left most Chinese families with only one child, "it is seen as more threatening to the propagation of the family than if one of the multiple children is gay" (Shi et al., 2018, p.453).

Shi et al. (2018) analyzed 217 Chinese gay men through surveys and learned that gays who are deeply influenced by the culture of filial piety would also choose heterosexual marriages. Cao and Lu (2014) mentioned that gays and lesbians in China suffer a lot due to a lack of basic political and civil rights. They are faced with huge social

pressure from the stigma of homosexuality and the traditional filial piety, which suggests the importance of building a family. Therefore, they must marry the opposite sex. Wong & Tang's (2004) research on gays' process of coming out results indicates that gay or lesbian prefers to come out to their friends rather than to their parents. The reason is the influence of Chinese filial piety culture. Wang et al. (2009) did research on gay coming out in Taiwan. They found that for gay men, family is more worth considering, and most people choose to hide their identity. "Conceptions about family die-hard. (Sebag-Montefiore, 2012. as cited in Nguyen, & Angelique, 2017. p.1627)." According to Wong et al. (2019), the influence on the identities of Chinese sexual minorities is mainly derived from traditional values, which require marriage. And most Chinese sexual minority youth feel intense about marriage, who bear the responsibility of continuing the family bloodline, and they will choose to conceal their homosexuality and choose to marry the opposite sex. "The coming-out issue is still a dominant one for most Chinese gay men" (Kong, 2012. p.168). In summary, Chinese gay men, in the face of the choice of whether to come out, the main consideration is the family and filial piety because to fulfill the "filial piety," so to get married and have children, so that they cannot come out of the closet.

4.2 Review of social attitude towards homosexuality within China

As mentioned in the historical study of homosexuality, the ancient Chinese attitudes towards homosexuality were inclusive, and homosexuality was only used as a special hobby without being pathologized.

The introduction of modern sociology and the biomedical model, and social reformation are thought to have been a source of influence on the change in the Chinese view of homosexuality. Kong's (2016) research on China's homosexuality indicates that the change in Chinese people's attitude toward homosexuality resulted from the political reformation and the introduction of sociology to Modern China. Male homosexuality was regarded as normal behavior in ancient China because it was a production in a patriarchal society. Males are not prohibited from having a same-sex sexual partner. The introduction of Western ideas into China and the political changes in modern China have led to the stigmatization of homosexuality. Hu & Wang (2013) also pointed out that the introduction of Western thought led to a fundamental change in the perception of homosexuality in both the gay and heterosexual communities. In the early stage of the People's Republic of China, homosexuality was considered a capitalist lifestyle and rejected.

And later, with the emergence of AIDS and HIV, people began to take homosexuality seriously and associate it with AIDS. "Homosexuality is heavily stigmatized, threatening to filial piety and associated with promiscuity and AIDS" (Wang et al., 2009). In 1997, the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China abolished the crime of hooliganism for homosexuality, and in 2001, the Chinese Classification and Diagnostic Criteria of Mental Disorders (Third Edition) (CCMD-3) spoke of the removal of homosexuality from the classification of mental illness, which marked the de-pathologization of homosexuality in China (Wang, 2017, p.4). Li's (1998) findings:

There are currently no explicit legal provisions prohibiting

homosexuality in China, and homosexual acts that occur between two consenting adults rarely result in legal sanctions as long as no minors are involved and no one denounces them. However, if a minor is involved, the crime of sodomy may be punished; if the spouse of a homosexual or other person sues, the crime of hooliganism may also be punished; in addition, the police may make temporary arrests for public security purposes at homosexual activity sites, but they are usually released quickly and not recorded as punishment, but sometimes they are also punished with 15 days of detention (p.471).

According to the current civil law of the People's Republic of China, the behavior of homosexuality is not clearly defined as an illegal act. This is a change in legal attitudes toward the homosexual population.

In terms of social opinion, Li & Zheng (2003) surveyed public attitudes toward homosexuality in a random sample of medium and large cities in China. The study found that only 7.5% of people admitted that they knew someone who was gay (Li & Zheng, 2003, p.32). In contrast, in 2000, 75% of Americans admitted to being around someone they knew who was gay (Wang, 2017, p.1). This difference in data may be because the ratio of gay people varies across societies, but in my opinion, it is more likely due to the low visibility of gay people in China during that period and the fact that people generally do not come out to people as much, and the direct cause of this phenomenon stems from social intolerance. Li & Zheng's study also showed that 27% of urban Chinese residents support same-sex marriage. However, homosexuality in China is still not protected by law. For example, "homosexuality is not legal, and in current Chinese society, gay and

lesbian couples still have no legal right to marry or adopt children” (Hu et al. 2015, p.72).

Li’s (1998) statement, which I think is spot on for describing public attitudes toward homosexuality:

In short, the situation of homosexuality in China is also like that of many other issues in China, facing not harsh persecution and extreme hatred - as homosexuals in the West once faced - but mainly the neglect and disdain of mainstream society (p.484)

In the United States 50 years ago, according to a poll by Alaston (1973), most respondents believed that homosexuality was always wrong, but now same-sex marriage is legal in the United States. Thus, compared to the United States, there has been no progress in affirmative action for homosexuality in China, and the stigma against homosexuality has been in place for no more than 100 years, but it will take a long time to change the current situation.

4.3 Review of homosexuals’ identity in China

Before the founding of New China, homosexuality in China was not considered a specific sexual orientation, and homosexuals did not treat their preference for men as a matter of identity. The dramatic changes in the social status of homosexuality in recent decades have sparked enthusiasm for scholarly research on homosexuality, and this is the relevant literature on scholarly research on the identity of homosexuals in China.

In general, homosexuals in China have a poor perception of their homosexual identity. “Homosexuals may have a sense of guilt or moral guilt, trying to quit

their 'unhealthy tendencies' as they did with cigarettes" (Li, 1998, p.386). And because "negative societal attitudes toward homosexuality" led to "negative feelings associated with their gay identities" (Hu&Wang, 2013). "A comprehensive survey of 330 Chinese gay men also indicated that the living conditions of gay men were relatively poor and that the psychological health" (Yu, 2010, as cited in Hu et al., 2016, p.73). Their study also showed that "LGB adults reported significantly higher loneliness and lower self-esteem than heterosexual adults." The survival of LGB people in China is not very good, and most of them have psychological problems because of their sexual identity choices. The entanglement of this choice stems from the contradiction between traditional values and self-awareness. Hu &Wang (2013) concluded that different gays have different levels of recognition of traditional values, and for gays, accepting their identity means giving up the responsibility of the family.

Not only homosexuality within China but also among Chinese living abroad. Quach et al. (2013) did a study on Chinese students abroad and they found that collectivism, filial piety, and social expectations still have a strong influence on the perception of homosexuality in the minds of these students living in the United States. "The needs, obligations, and honor of the family take precedence over individual needs," so Chinese people act according to the wishes of their families and perceive their homosexual identity-less.

Several studies have addressed the impact of social change on homosexual identity. Homosexuality has undergone a fundamental shift in expression with the economic,

political, and cultural changes in the country (Wei, 2007). Cao and Lu (2014) mentioned that the development of new information and communication technologies is facilitating the self-identification of gays and lesbians and expanding the public space for gays and lesbians. The personal identity of homosexuals is accompanied by the emergence of a sense of community. The Internet has profoundly changed the patterns of gay and lesbian interactions and, in turn, influenced identities in everyday life. The emergence of gay communities has generated a sense of community, which in turn has influenced the perception of personal identity. Although Redman's (2018) study found that same-sex marriage legislation has not contributed to changes in public attitudes toward homosexuality, that European-based context has been well-realized by social institutions, whereas the situation in China is one in which homosexuality is generally unknown or stigmatized. When expanded to include not only Chinese but Asian men as well, Mao et al. (2002) pointed out that Asian men speak of Asian culture as their main conflict in mediating identity conflicts. Despite living in a non-Asian culture country, the collectivism of Asian culture is still a barrier for them in dealing with their homosexual identity.

5. Methodology

In June 2021, I conducted preliminary fieldwork about my research topic in Chengdu and Chongqing, China. These two cities are famous for their high degree of tolerance regarding social issues, including homosexuality. Through personal acquaintances, I identified several gay people and asked for their opinions on my research topic. They informed me that there are no independent and legal gay and lesbian protection organizations and institutions in China, so I was unable to identify a large enough number of respondents for quantitative analysis. However, through these preliminary conversations, I realized that most gay people do not reveal their real feelings to strangers because of the sensitive and private nature of the topic. Therefore, I decided to use a qualitative approach and proceeded to identify potential research subjects and conduct interviews by using snowball sampling and using acquaintance referrals.

While the basic research method for this study are interviews. And for the two main research questions, I will employ two different kinds of interviews.

5.1 Respondents

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, the main target of this study is the homosexual community. There are no legal homosexual organizations in China, so it was difficult to obtain direct data. By talking with gay people in Chengdu and Chongqing's homosexual gathering places, I learned about some homosexual dating apps, and ways to interview

homosexual people. I found 17 respondents who were willing to be interviewed through recommendations from close friends that I knew. Fifteen of these 17 individuals were 21-25 years old, one was 26-30 years old, and one was 30-35 years old. Sixteen of them were unmarried, and one was married.

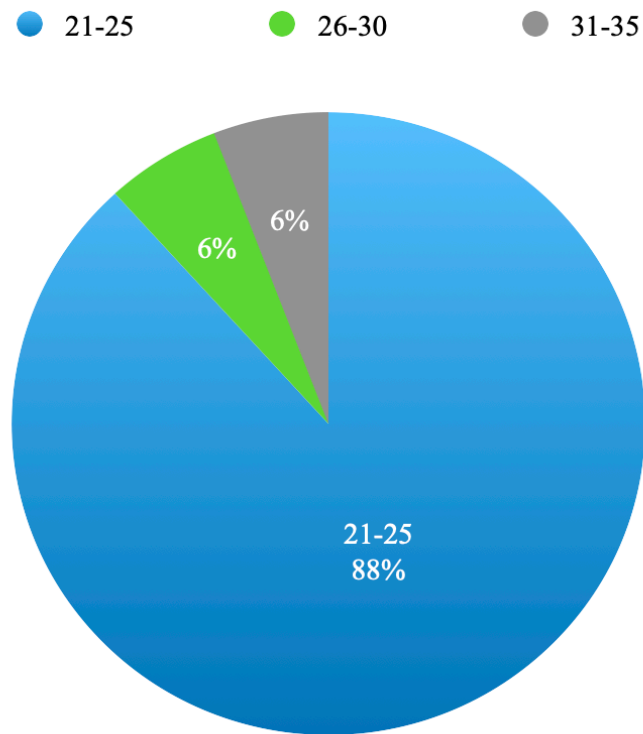


Figure 5-1 Ages of respondents in the first step interview

As of November 2021, two of these 17 people had graduated with a master's degree, ten people had a master's degree in progress, four people had a bachelor's degree in progress, and one person had a high school diploma as his highest level of education.

● Master ● In graduate School ● Bachelor ● High school

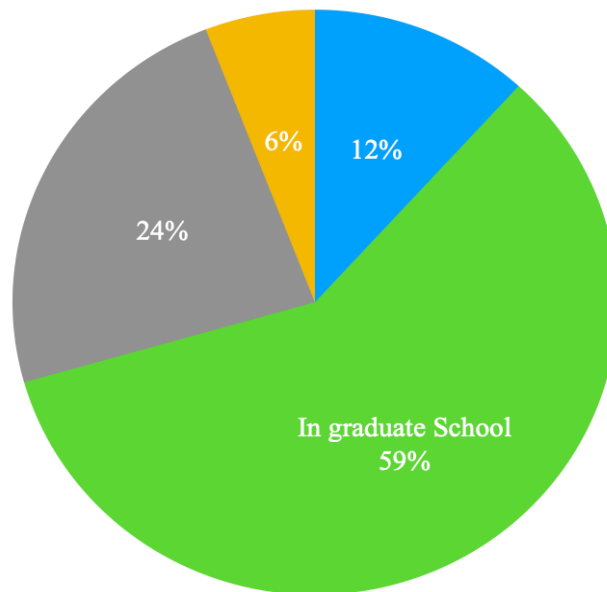


Figure 5-2 Highest education of respondents (until Nov. 2021)

The second research question of this study is to examine the influence of the environmental factors to which the respondents were exposed on their identity. Six gay male respondents who were willing to conduct in-depth interviews were selected for this study. I have established a good rapport with these six respondents and have had frequent conversations for more than a year since 2021, so I think they can be my informants, and interviews with them are real and effective used in my research.

To protect identity and privacy, participants in this research are Preliminary Respondents (P1-17) and Main Respondents (M1-6).

5.2 Data collection

The data for this study was collected during the second half of 2021. Due to the policy of prevention and control of COVID-19 in China 202, most of the interviews for this study were conducted online by WeChat. These mainly include preliminary interviews and in-depth interviews.

5.2.1 Preliminary interview

The preliminary study was preceded by a questionnaire on the choices of these 17 respondents regarding marriage and coming out. This was used as a basis for categorizing the respondents and interviewing them. Here are the main interview questions:

(A). Do your family traditions have had an impact on the perception of your identity? Including your parents' education and your parents' perceptions about homosexuality.

(B). Is your family tradition very concerned about the importance of having a child?

(C). Does the status of the family have had an impact on the perception of your identity? Including whether you are the only child, whether your parents are divorced, and your parents' economic status.

(D). How do you think society's laws and regulations affect the gay population?

(E). Is your job LGBT-friendly?

(F). Does the public opinion around you have a lot of stigmas against gay?

These interview questions are based on several studies about factors (mainly mentioned in 3.4 and 3.5) that may have had an impact on the perception of homosexual identity. I will build on these questions to explore other factors that may influence respondents' perceptions of their identities.

5.2.2 In-depth interview

The second step involved conducting an in-depth interview with six respondents. Part of the in-depth interview was conducted offline, and the rest was communicated on WeChat. The in-depth interviews focus on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' personal experiences and understanding the influence of the environment on the formation of gay personal identity from their perspectives.

5.3 Data analysis

The first research question was designed to identify and analyze the environmental factors that the homosexual community (represented by 17 respondents) considered in the process of facing their choices of identity, coming out, and marriage. "Coming out" is an important indicator (Wang, 2013). Therefore, for this research question, I used interviews with a few fixed questions (but not a survey). These interviews were short and focused on gaining a basic understanding of the respondents and what they think based on different environmental contexts.

In-depth interviews were conducted to get a comprehensive understanding of everything about the respondents and to explore the respondents' upbringing, family, and social environment about their own identity. The respondents' identities were also assessed through Cass' HIF theory to categorize the perception of identity with the respondents and explore the influence of environment on gay identity. Respondents' conversations will be adopted into the specific analysis.

6. Environmental factors on homosexuals' identity selection

The term "Identity selection" in this study refers to how gay people choose to deal with their identities. The questions I address are how do gay people choose their identities (including marriage and coming out choices) in China today, and what are the family and social contextual factors that are considered in making these choices?

6.1 Choice for coming out, and marriage

The initial interviews for this study targeted 17 respondents and asked two questions.

Question 1: Would you come out?

A. No B. Not sure C. Might later D. Yes E. Already Come out

Question 2: Would you marry someone of the opposite sex?

A. No B. Not sure C. Maybe in the future D. Yes E. Already married

The different answer meets the different attitude, if the willingness to come out or

to marry seems as a percentage, A would be 0%, $0 < B \leq 50\%$, $50\% < C < 90\%$, $90 < D \leq 100\%$, $D = 100\%$.

The responses of these 17 respondents are as follows.

Distribution of answers to Question 1: A6. B3 C4 D3 E1

Distribution of answers to Question 2: A8. B3 C3 D2 E1

Here is the basic information about their answer:

	Age	Question 1	Question 2	Highest education	Parent's highest education	Parent divorce
P1	25	A	D	Graduate school	Middle	No
P2	23	E	A	Graduate school	High	No
P3	25	B	B	Graduate school	High	No
P4	25	C	C	Graduate school	High	No
P5	25	B	A	Graduate school	Middle	Yes
P6	25	B	A	Undergraduate school	University	No
P7	23	A	B	Graduate school	High	No
P8	24	A	B	Graduate school	Middle	No
P9	26	D	A	Graduate school	Middle	Yes
P10	23	C	C	Undergraduate school	Primary	No
P11	21	C	A	Undergraduate school	University	No
P12	25	C	C	Graduate school	Middle	No
P13	25	A	A	Graduate school	Middle	No
P14	25	D	A	Graduate school	High	No
P15	23	D	A	Undergraduate school	High	Yes
P16	33	A	E	High school	Primary	NO
P17	24	A	D	Graduate school	High	NO

	Age	Q 1	Q 2	Highest education	Parent's highest education	Parent divorce
P1	25	A	D	Graduate school	Middle	No
P2	23	E	A	Graduate school	High	No
P3	25	B	B	Graduate school	High	No
P4	25	C	C	Graduate school	High	No
P5	25	B	A	Graduate school	Middle	Yes
P6	25	B	A	Undergraduate school	University	No
P7	23	A	B	Graduate school	High	No
P8	24	A	B	Graduate school	Middle	No
P9	26	D	A	Graduate school	Middle	Yes
P10	23	C	C	Undergraduate school	Primary	No
P11	21	C	A	Undergraduate school	University	No
P12	25	C	C	Graduate school	Middle	No
P13	25	A	A	Graduate school	Middle	No
P14	25	D	A	Graduate school	High	No
P15	23	D	A	Undergraduate school	High	Yes
P16	33	A	E	High school	Primary	NO
P17	24	A	D	Graduate school	High	NO

Figure 6-1 Basic information of preliminary interview respondents

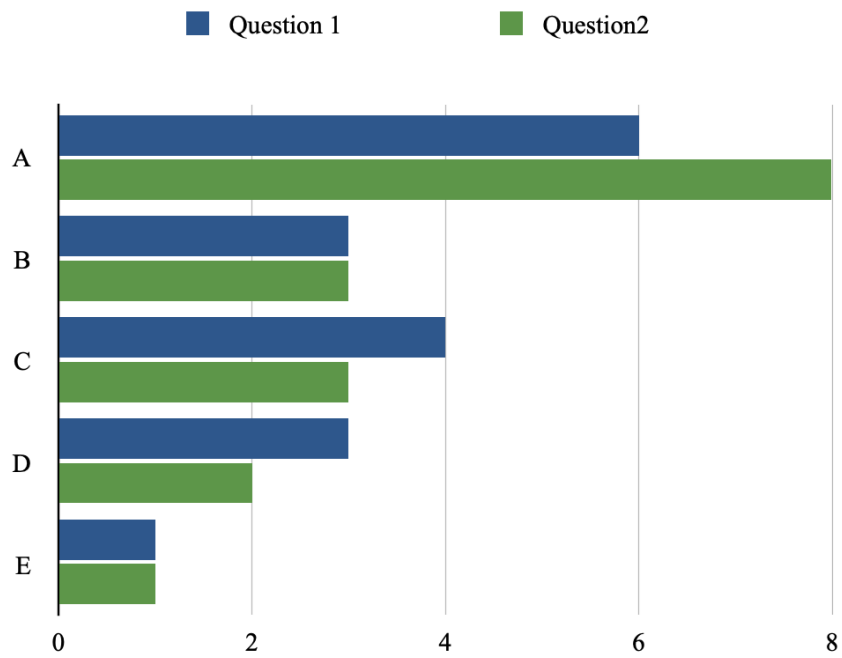


Figure 6-2 Choice of coming out and marriage

The choice of coming out in question 1 shows that 6 respondents explicitly chose not to come out, while only three respondents chose “yes.” 3 of the respondents in the uncertainty stage were not sure about coming out, while 4 were inclined to come out but not sure, and only 1 respondent (P2) had already come out to her parents and friends.

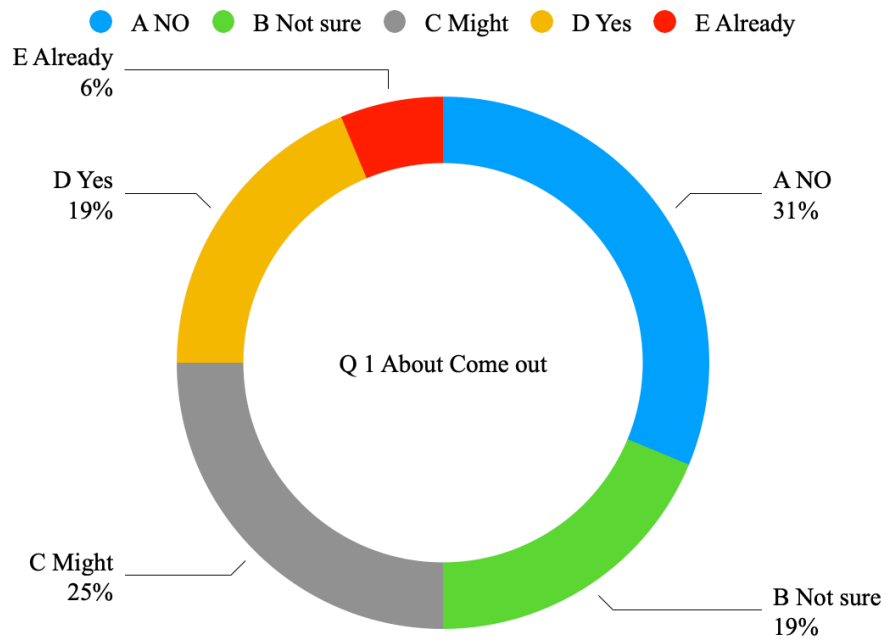


Figure 6-3 Proportion of coming out choice

Most of these respondents are 21-30 years old (as mentioned in 4.1), and their average education level is above the bachelor's level. Therefore, they are representative of Chinese young people's thoughts. The answers to this question, options A and B can be categorized as "not willing to come out," while option CDE can be categorized as willing to come out, so in fact, the ratio of coming out and not coming out among these 17 respondents is 9:8. In Figure5-2 we can also see that the question of whether this comes out of the closet is evenly distributed.

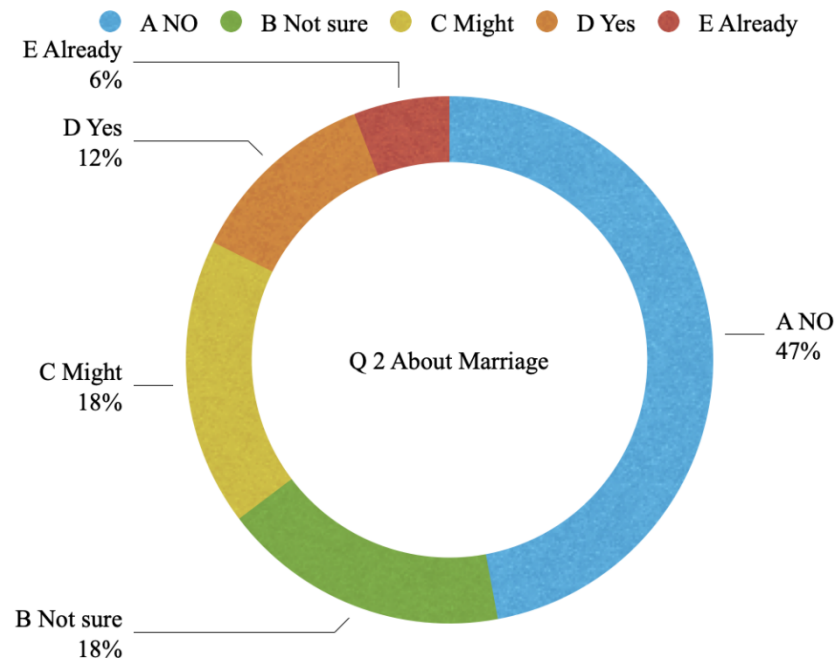


Figure 6-4 Proportion of marriage choice

Among the marriage options, I think who chose BCDE can be classified as those who are inclined to marry, while only A can be considered the non-marriage doctrine among homosexuals. Because according to Wang’s (2017) study, homosexuality is currently in the “Enlightenment period” (Wang’s study was published in 2017, just five years after, so I think it is still the “enlightenment period” of homosexuality). Due to the lack of reference to gay cultural traditions, the shortage of gay cognitive pathways, and low social visibility, identity perceptions are vulnerable to environmental influences (p.126). Therefore, I believe that those who are uncertain about marriage are easily influenced by traditional culture to choose marriage, and therefore I believe that BCDE can be counted as a group of people who tend to marry. Coincidentally, among these 17 individuals, the proportion of married and non-married groups is again similar. Here is the specific information about them.

6.2 Family factors influencing identity selection

Different people make different choices about marriage and coming out, and the reasons behind this are complex: family, society, upbringing, and personal experience. In Chinese society, the most basic identity attribute of an individual comes from the “family-kinship” system rather than the choice of sexual partners. (Wah-Shan, 2001, p.28, as cited in Wang, 2017, p.135) During the interviews, almost every interviewee talked about family.

6.2.1 Parent’s perception of homosexuality

During the interview process, I found that some of the parents of the respondents did not know what homosexuality was at all. Parents’ perception of homosexuality may have an influence on their children. I regarded the parents or fathers/mothers of homosexuals (some were single-parent families) as a whole, and the highest education of one of them was regarded as the highest education of the family. The study found that only two families had a father or mother who had higher education, five families had a parent whose highest level of education was high school, six families had a parent whose highest level of education was middle school, and two other families had a parent whose level of education was elementary school. (In China, there is no direct relationship between the education level of parents and the economic level of the family.)

One respondent (P10) whose father had only received primary education and whose mother had not received state education said,

My parents don't have the concept of "gay" in their minds, and if I told them I like boys, I think the only thing they would think of was me being a sissy or that I was a pervert. They have limited knowledge that is inaccessible to traditional Chinese rural environments. I am afraid to talk to them about this, and I think it will only cause unnecessary arguments. If I do not get married in the future, they will only think of some other reasons, but never think I will like boys or I am gay. (P 10)

Of course, a very small number of highly educated parents, who are at that age, are mostly in the elite of their profession. This was the case with the fathers of interviewees P2 and P11, both of whose parents had university degrees P2 had come out and had gained the understanding of his family.

I have the habit of keeping a diary, and I think my mom should have read my diary. They should have known that I don't like girls. Once I confided in them, my parents' attitude was that they would not object to me having a boy as a partner, but they asked me not to tell everyone, and I couldn't bring him (my boyfriend) home. They gave me the freedom to love, and at the same time, they have made me pay attention to protecting myself because such an identity may cause me a certain degree of trouble in China. (P2)

Another respondent's parent with the highest education to college (P11) did not mention the attitude his parents might have towards him, but his intention to come out was "maybe later."

This study finds that parents'/parent's perceptions of homosexuality may influence homosexuality coming out and that parents'/parent's perceptions are directly related to parental education; some parents with low education have no concept of homosexuality or speak of homosexuality pathologization as a mental illness. Male homosexuals' coming out in front of parents is exposing a pathology that is difficult for parents to understand. Parents with low levels of education are easily influenced by traditional feudalism, such as the previously mentioned “不孝有三，无后为大 *buxiaoyousan, wuhouwieda*” (direct translation: there are many ways to be unfilial, the worst is not to produce offspring, meaning that it is the worst situation which you disobey the unfilial piety that you do not have children), which leads to a huge communication gap between the new generation of young people and their parents, and young gay people cannot reveal their true feelings to their parents. Educated parents may have a certain degree of understanding of homosexuality, although they may not fully understand it, it has a positive effect on the identity of homosexuality.

There are certain limitations to this view. In fact, I can't conclude that there is a strong connection between the parent's education level and the perception of homosexual by parents. But according to my guess, the parents of the younger generation in China are basically people in the 60s or 70s of the last century, and the people of that era, who are highly educated, generally have high salaries and easy jobs. They tend to have more opportunities to be exposed to new things. Thus, they have a strong ability to accept new things. However, there are some special situations, such as some parents being extremely

homophobic. I cannot say whether there is a direct connection between academic qualifications and perception.

6.2.2 Family expectation

Of the three respondents who were adamant about coming out, their relationship with their families' expectations was mentioned in their plans for future coming out.

I will come out later. My parents got divorced when I was very young, I lived with my mother, and then I came to ** (a foreign country) alone after college for five years. I have been here for so many years, and I have never seen my mother. And I have two older brothers and one older sister, both are married. But in recent years I feel that I have had less and less contact with my family. I don't think my family will object if I come out in the future. (P9)

I don't know when I'll come out, but I'm sure I won't sneak around and pretend to be straight for the rest of my life, I think I'm tired of hiding it from my family, and I'm tired of my own life, I'm sure I'll come out. I have a younger brother, so that means my family has two sons, one not married is not a problem. And the marriage of one son is less stressful for parents than the marriage of two sons (in China, a man needs to prepare at least a car and a house for marriage). Maybe I will come out after I earn enough money, now I am financially self-sufficient, but it is still hard to be completely independent. I think one of the prerequisites for coming out is that I can achieve financial freedom. (P14)

I think my parents should be able to sense that I do not like girls. For me,

coming out is not a big problem. I have a younger sister who can fulfill the task of having a child and let my parents fulfill their aspirations of being grandparents, however, I may live abroad in the future. (P13)

I asked them about their family relationships during the interview based on their choice to come out. P9 had a very bad relationship with their family, with divorced parents. The common similarity among all three interviewees was that none of them were the only child of their families. All three interviewees felt that their parent's expectations of their offspring were not placed on them, as they were not only children, and without exception, but their choice of marriage was also equally firm that is would not marry.

During the interviews with the two respondents who intended to get married and who would not come out, it was found that family expectations played a large role in their identity choices.

The respondent (P1) is not an only child in his family, but his other brother/sister, has a mental disability, so his parents have high expectations for him in the future. "I should get married, right? Right now, I'm just having fun with guys, and I think my parents are miserable if I don't get married, or if both kids don't get married in the future. (P1)"

Respondent (P17) is an only child, including his father are the only child. "I will definitely get married. If I don't get married, my parents will probably go crazy, right? I'm their only son. (P17)"

Among the four respondents who gave "might come out" in the future, three chose

“might get married in the future” and only one chose “won’t get married “. The respondent who would not get married (P11) said:

I will not get married. As for whether I come out or not, it depends on whether I have the ability to come out in the future. I think coming out will make the distance between me and my parents farther, and I need to become more independent. I’m worried that my parents will be disappointed when they hear that I like boys, I think it’s hard to come out to them, after all, it’s hard for a gay to live in China, and although the idea is a bit old-fashioned, I think it’s hard to see in my lifetime homosexuals are legally protected in China. (P11)

Another interviewee also said:

Coming out is okay, but should only come out to acquaintances and friends, I never wanted to reveal my sexuality to my parents. I even get scared at the thought of coming out to them. Sometimes when I go out with my parents, I get scared when the car radio broadcasts gay news, even though it’s not broadcasting the news about their son marrying a man. (P4)

Therefore, this study argues that family expectations play a large role in the coming out and marriage process of homosexuals. Once homosexuals come out, they face a situation where they will not have offspring (surrogacy is illegal in China and more expensive abroad, and generally unaffordable for most families), which contradicts their parents’ expectations for them to pass on their offspring. China’s one-child policy has led to most families having only one child (there are also cases of multiple children, which means that parents who have more than one child were fined), which leads many parents

to not care about their children's sexual orientation and to stick to one principle: they must marry and have children. As a result, the expectations of families under the influence of strong traditional Chinese thinking can prevent most homosexuals from coming out and make homosexuals more inclined to marry someone of the opposite sex.

6.2.3 Family situation

Family status is another influential factor, which includes the integrity of families, and the economic status of the family.

A. Family integrity

I chose this topic because, according to Ibrahim (1976), his research found that "There was a high percentage of homosexuals who came from broken homes (p.280)." So, I think that the integrity of the family may affect homosexuality. Three of the 17 respondents were in single-parent families. General research suggests that "single-parent families are more desirous of having offspring due to being more isolated and helpless (Wang, 2017, p.138)."

Two of these three respondents (P15, P5) were the only child in their families, while the other (P9) has more two brothers and a sister. The interview with P5 and P15 indicated that single-parent families, however, were more helpful in their identity perception.

My parents divorced when I was very young, but I don't live with either of them, I live with my grandmother. My parents never cared about me

during my childhood. Only on Chinese New Year and holidays, my mom might come to see me and give me some money. I have little contact with my parents, so even if I come out in the future, they should not care about me. And as for my grandma, she is too old, she should not object to my decision, as long as I am happy. (P5)

Another respondent also said:

My parents divorced a long time ago, the judge let me live with my mom. My dad had a new family soon, and my mom also had her second husband. I don't like living with my stepfather, so I moved to my grandparents when I grew up. After I went to college, I had very little contact with my mother, and I had conflicts with her every time I met her. All my tuition fees were passed on by my mother to my grandmother, and then my grandmother gave them to me. Over these years, I have had little contact with my parents, I don't care if they can accept that I'm gay. (P15)

These two respondents, in my opinion, had weak ties to their families and did not have a strong sense of family, and Wang's (2017) findings that "single-parent families can negatively influence coming out" apply to single-parent families with good family relationships. In my two interview informants, both respondents' families were torn apart by their parent's divorce, and the respondents' family values were weak from childhood, they did not live with either mother or father. Thus, they did not have strong family feelings. which would instead promote individual independence and have a positive effect on coming out and identity perception. But none of my informants, like Wang's research, had divorced parents and lived with either mother or father, and had a good relationship.

Therefore, it cannot be proved whether Wang's research results are correct.

B. Economic status

During the interview, I found that the economic factor is a point that many Chinese people will pay attention to. Many respondents also indicated this.

I'm still in school, and if I come out to my parents, I don't know what will happen, they might tell my teachers, or I might get cut off from my living expenses, and I might be sent to psychiatric school. Isn't this kind of news very normal in China? Children addicted to the Internet are sent to a school for Internet addiction by their parents, which is mental destruction. For them, homosexuality is more terrible than Internet addiction. I dare not to take this risk. (P8)

Living together with a gay would be a toss-up, I will get married later. It's impossible for two boys living together as a couple, not only my parent won't agree, but this society also won't accept it. I just want to have a stable income and a future without any potential threats. I don't have the ability to live abroad. (P1)

If you get married, there is another advantage that your life will not be too difficult in the future. Most of our generation now is the only child in the family because when we were born, China's one-child policy was very strict. When you marry a girl, you can always get some financial support from her family (since Chinese parents advocate saving money for their children, girls' parents give their son-in-law a large amount of financial support). While this idea is odd, I think it's exactly what most people think. (P17)

In Chinese cultural contexts, it is accepted that parents always try to save money for their children. Respondents indicated that marrying a girl would be financially supported by the family, that marrying someone of the opposite sex would bring benefits and convenience, and that a blessed union of two people of the opposite sex would be better than an unsupported union of two people of the same sex. And some respondents prefer heterosexual marriage to achieve a “normal family” considering the economic factors of the family.

6.3 Social factors

The behavioral characteristics of homosexuality reflect, to some extent, societal influences. Institutional intentional neglect, cultural inheritance breaks, social stigma, all influence the value judgments of society regarding the homosexual community. This study summarizes the interviews conducted with 17 interviewees and concludes that the social factors examined by these 17 interviewees come from three main parts: the first is the intentional neglect of the homosexual community by national laws and policies, the second is the social pressure on homosexual individuals in the workplace, and the third is the public opinion of the homosexual community.

6.3.1 Policy and law

After the founding of China in 1949, the only legal provision on homosexuality that

can be found in 1997 amendment to the Criminal Law of the Peoples Republic of China, which abolished the crime of hooliganism, which vaguely criminalized same-sex sexual behavior. Since then, no legal provisions on homosexuality have been found, and the rights of this group are not guaranteed. China has never officially given homosexuality a proper name.

Even if I have a wedding ceremony with a man, it's not allowed in Chinese Law, that means I can't get the marriage certificate. Without the certificate, I would have trouble applying a loan or buying a house, something like that. Chinese Society does not allow the existence of a public gay identity, I do not want to be the cannon fodder of the times. I just want to go with the flow of good. (P12)

I think not being legal is the main obstacle faced by this group, we are like rats in the gutter, living secretly, no one dares to say this thing, openly say they are gay is equal to like saying they are crazy. This is how it is in China, if the policy supports something, no matter how unreasonable, the masses will also clap their hands to support it. If the policy does not support it, no matter how urgent the matter is, the people will also feel that this is nonsense. (P1)

Chinese pay much attention to “legality”. The legitimacy of everything is based on the premise of legality. If homosexual marriage is not legal in policy, then the whole society and the people will consider it unreasonable. Although homosexual intercourse is not illegal in China, but homosexual marriage has never been recognized as legal by the Chinese government. For example, in recent years, the Chinese government has been regulating television and mass media, and an episode involving drinking, smoking,

fighting, or homosexuality has been banned from television. Homosexuality has become classified as a bad inducement, that is, homosexual was classified harmful matter such as drinking and smoking.

I could potentially live in a place where gay marriage is legal. (P9)

The legalization of same-sex marriage policies abroad will attract some homosexuals to migrate, and the desire of homosexuals to be protected by the law and receive the same rights as heterosexual marriage likewise confirms the influence of social policies on the perception of homosexual identity. The legalization of laws and policies will promote the self-perception of homosexuality.

6.3.2 Workplace

The workplace was also a social factor that respondents felt had an impact on their choice of coming out and getting married. It is widely perceived in China that civil service is the best job of all, followed by state-owned enterprises. These jobs generally require a political qualification check, which is a check for any crimes in close family members or bad criminal records in personal history. In recent years, certain state units such as the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other public administration positions have explicitly excluded homosexuals from recruitment. The homosexual community is explicitly excluded from professional competition, as are offenders. Such overt non-acceptance of the homosexual community has deepened the stigma against the

community, causing many homosexuals to shy away from talking about their sexual orientation.

Although the job at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is very suitable for me, I dare not go, I heard that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs interview has a lie detector, that will test whether you are gay. It's too scary, the best situation is you miss this job chance, but the worst is that "you are a gay" may be public news. (P1)

I heard the news of the recruitment of ** University. I think it's incredible that an university recruitment which stands for higher education should openly say no to homosexuals. What does this mean, homosexuality will sexually harass male students? Wouldn't heterosexual male teachers sexually harass female students? (P5)

Being openly gay can lead to dismissal or banning from employment because of the charge of "improper lifestyle", which would cut off their financial resources. As a result, most of the gay respondents said they would be cautious about their identity to avoid any misfortune in the workplace.

6.3.3 Public opinion

Public opinion is one of the most profoundly influential environmental factors. Chinese people are very concerned about how they are judged by others. Often society's view of homosexuals is one of guilt by association, which means, that if a male is known to be a homosexual, not only is he subject to negative public judgment, but his family is

subject to negative judgment. In my opinion, a son being gay is the same level of a blow to the parents as a daughter being a prostitute. Not only the homosexual individuals themselves but also their parents are traumatized and consider it a shameful, unspeakable family scandal.

One interviewee who had been married stated.

When I was 25, my family introduced me to girls, but I always rejected them for various reasons. But as the number of rejections increased, my family began to question me. I don't want my parents to question my sexual orientation, then I got married at 29 to a girl. After getting married and having a daughter, I got divorced two years later. No relatives thought I was gay anymore. I felt that the marriage was proof of my "correct" identity, which was a relief for me. (P16)

As previously stated, the most basic identity attribute of Chinese people comes from the "family-relative" system; Chinese people can change their sexual partners, but family is crucial to them. Although the perception of homosexuality as "hooliganism" and psychopathy has changed significantly in the general heterosexual community, in the minds of many people, homosexuality is still strange and sick. The stereotypical historical discourse still prevails. My parents, for example, are still amazed at the news of same-sex marriages, thinking that this is news on the same level as the cloning of sheep, and questioning why I am researching such topics when they learn about my research.

At the same time, some negative news about homosexuality adds to the negative attitude of society toward homosexuality in the absence of understanding from the masses.

For example, it is believed that gays and straight women marry and cheat on women. Gays spread HIV and gays are promiscuous. In my opinion, it is society's lack of understanding and support for the homosexual community that has caused the gay community to not receive proper sex education and to do inappropriate things in the face of social pressure.

7. The influence of environmental factors on Homosexual Identity Formation

Through the preliminary interviews, specific factors were categorized which affect the identity of homosexual individuals. Next, in-depth interviews were conducted to examine the extent of the influence of these factors on homosexual identity formation. The in-depth interviews were categorized based on the respondents' self-perceptions of their homosexual identity through Cass' HIF theory.

The personal privacy involved, i.e., the environmental context to be studied contains only the environmental factors listed in Chapter 5. No other information that may be associated with identity is included to protect respondents' personal information.

7.1 Case studies

These six respondents are from the previous 17 respondents who are willing to conduct further interviews with me. I have been familiar with them and conducted in-depth interviews for about a year from time to time. The interviews were conducted through chat software. According to the criteria of homosexual identity recognition in Cass' HIF theory, my classification of their identity perception is as follows: 1 is in the stage of Identity Comparison, 1 is in the stage of Identity Tolerance, 2 are in the stage of Identity Acceptance, and two are in the stage of identity pride. Next is the analysis of different categories according to different stages. And here is the basic information about

these 6 respondents:

Main Interview Respondents	Identity Stages
M1	Identity Comparison
M2	Identity Tolerance
M3	Identity Acceptance
M4	Identity Acceptance
M5	Identity Pride
M6	Identity Pride

Figure 7-1 Basic information about in-depth interview respondents

7.2 Identity Comparison

Respondent M1 is in the Identity Comparison stage. Generally speaking, interviewees at this stage are less likely to be interviewed or to talk about homosexuality. But the peculiarity of the situation is that I have a very close relationship with respondent M1, and I have witnessed the entire process of M1's identity change. M1 never thought that he would never have sexual contact with or be attracted to a male until she was in college. However, M1 was confessed by a boy during his postgraduate studies and had a sexual relationship with the boy while attending graduate school. As Yarhouse (2005) found, the first sexual experience affects sexual orientation. M1 now is also dating men, so I can see M1 as gay. However, M1 is very resistant to contacting other homosexual individuals. From what I know about him, M1 never thought about being gay before he encountered the same-sex confession, so I judged M1's self-identity as Identity

Comparison. As Cass' research result, this group is increasingly aware of whether their sexuality is gay or non-heterosexual. The group's previous heterosexual codes of conduct, ideals, and future expectations are no longer relevant to them.

M1 was born in a non-only child family, but he has a brother/sister with mental problems. Since the probability of his brother/sister getting married is too small, he is the only child who can inherit the family. In a sense, he is also an only child. When talking about marriage and coming out, M1 told me that he would never come out, but he was hesitant to choose marriage. His main consideration is the family aspect.

My parents are both graduated from elementary school, and they have limited cognition of something in their minds. Sex for them is the activity between men and women for reproductive purposes. If I tell them I'm gay, they won't accept it, maybe they might think it's a mental disease. I once told my dad that I would not get married. My dad's reaction was: "You are too young and too naive." He thought that our generation was afraid to take the responsibility to make a family. He never thought of me being gay. He only wondered if I had accepted some new ideas when I was in university, such as Dink. My family's conditions are not very good, so I use the reason that I can't raise children to prevaricate. Of course, until now my plan for the future cannot be decided by myself.

(M1)

From this description, we can see that the main factors affecting M1's consideration are family factors, including parents' perceptions, and the fact that parents do not have the prototype of "homosexuality" in their minds, which is a difficult issue for parents to understand. It also includes the expectations of the family, where the brothers/sisters are

unable to fulfill their desire to have offspring, and this family vision is assumed and fulfilled by M1. In China, it is a matter of shame for the family if a couple has two children but cannot have offspring when the children are of marriageable age. It is the traditional family concept of “多子多福 *duozi duofu*” (direct translation: “more offspring luckier,” meaning that it’s lucky for a family to have more children) that supports the desire of Chinese families to have offspring. As well as M1 mentions the economic situation of the family, the working class, due to the lack of material things, pays more attention to the integrity of the spiritual world, such as the integrity of the family. Because what Chinese people value besides the economy is the family, they cannot achieve the condition of family affluence, so they must achieve the integrity of the family anyway. The superposition of the three family factors makes it impossible for M1 to achieve a identity as gay, and he must live like a straight man despite his current sexual orientation as homosexual.

7.3 Identity Tolerance

M2 is a respondent I met through a gay dating app, and I spent a long time getting to be familiar with M2 and gaining his trust to interact with him. M2, as a gay man, has been married to a woman and has had a child. M2 had fulfilled his family’s expectation of having offspring and had achieved economic freedom in his 30s, which was somehow free from his parents’ constraints. I asked him about the subject of marriage, and he said:

I got married when I was 29. My parents have been urging me to get married since I got a job out of high school. Later, when I was about 25

years old, my parents said that they had never seen me be in a relationship, and they always urged me to get married and introduced me to girls for me to meet. When I was 29 years old, because of the pressure, I found a girl on a blind date and got married. At that time, I didn't even think about not getting married. Marriage was necessary for me. If I got married and had children, my parents wouldn't pay attention to whether I was gay or not. After getting married, maybe my wife also found some problems, we divorced two years after we had a daughter. (M2)

M2 was influenced by traditional values in his choice of marriage, and because of the inactivity of the homosexual community at the time, he did not have the experience of coming out to other gays. Influenced by family factors, he chose to marry a woman and have offspring. M2's statement that he "never thought of not marrying" indicates that his perception was deeply influenced by traditional family values.

I also asked M2 about coming out, and M2 said that he would not actively participate in gay social activities because he was afraid that meeting too many people would lead to unnecessary trouble if his gay identity was leaked. He would only look for sexual partners on same-sex dating sites and try to keep his identity information as private as possible.

He said:

I met a lot of people when I was young in another city and I think that kind of lifestyle is very messy, I don't want to continue, I'm afraid that when someone recognizes me, and then everyone will know. Sometimes when I go out to date with others in a hotel, I don't take my ID card, I let the other person go to check-in, and I'm afraid that the public security system to find out my room record. (M2)

M2 did not express to me what he specifically from the work, but my guess is that he may be a police officer or other public official. Because as far as I know, Chinese civil servants and other people working in state agencies are not allowed to be gay. (The phrase is phrased this way because homosexuality is seen by some groups as a subjective choice rather than a passive acceptance.) The reason why I define his identity as Identity tolerance is that despite his awareness that he is gay, he still chooses to marry someone of the opposite sex and hide his sexual orientation. Therefore, I believe that the factors that influence M2's identity come not only from his family but also from the social environment. As a member of Chinese society, M2's identity must fit into the mainstream thinking, which is a prerequisite for him to be able to live a stable life. In a group of M2's age, they consider not only how they need to face their parents, but more importantly, how he has integrated into society. The double pressure of society and family forces them to go no further in their homosexual identity, and they have to hide their identity.

7.4 Thoughts on Identity Comparison and Identity Tolerance

I believe that those in Identity Comparison and Identity Tolerance are both poor identity perceptions, and they are unable to identify with their identities not only from their own perceptions, but also because of the influence of various environmental factors.

From the analysis of M1 and M2, the influence of either family and social factors can prevent homosexual individuals from moving forward in their identity formation. the

reason why M1 was unable to engage in Identity Comparison stage, in my opinion, was mainly due to the expectations from parents, whose expectations for their children to start a family and have offspring made M1, despite being aware of his or her change in sexual orientation. The inability to tolerate being gay disappointed their parents, and the inability of their brothers/sisters to marry forced them to not come out in the family. The reason M2 can only be in Identity Tolerance is mainly from work, in order to ensure that his work is not affected, he must conceal his homosexual identity. Social factors influence M2's identity formation in his personal perception, and although he understands that he is gay, this identity is an unspeakable secret for him and hinders his identity perception.

7.5 Identity Acceptance

M3 and M4 are both graduate students in one of the cities in China. They are both only children and their parents are not divorced.

M3 is in a same-sex relationship, and I defined him as Identity Acceptance because he is, first of all, accepting of his identity as a gay man and is in a same-sex relationship. He is also active in the gay community, meeting gay people of his kind. In my previous interviews, I learned that M3 has a close relationship with his family, a good relationship with his parents, and a good financial situation. I believe that the reason M3 could not become Identity Pride despite recognizing his homosexuality was that he had a good relationship with his parents and as an only child, it was difficult for him to come out of the closet. And M3's parents knew about the concept of homosexuality

My parents know what homosexuality is, we've talked about it before when we were having dinner together, and they said the news that gay marriage is disgusting. I was afraid that if I told my parents, they would think I was disgusting too. (M3)

M3, who is well educated, was unsure about whether he will marry a woman in the future but was adamant that he would not come out of the closet. I believe that parents' perceptions of homosexuality also have an impact on their children's attitudes and that the immersion of such values makes M3 fear their parents' attitudes toward homosexuality in their hearts. Therefore, despite his higher education and knowledge of homosexuality, M3 was still afraid of coming out against his parents' will. (M3)

M4, like M3, answered no to coming out and insisted that he would get married later. The reason is that M4 is from a good family and plans to take over his father's business in the future.

As far as I am concerned, I want to continue my father's career in the future. I can choose not to get married, but I can't let everyone know that I am gay. I feel that if a businessman in China is gay, then his integrity will also be influenced by his gay identity. And I don't want to embarrass my parents by being told that "your son is a gay." (M4)

In China, people like to associate everything with an impression of a person. For example, a sloppy chef does not give the impression that he can make delicious food. Similarly, if a businessman is commonly stigmatized as gay, it will do more harm than good to his career. Thus M4's demand for family perfection is motivated solely by concern for his future social image. Social factors for the perception of gay personal identity can have an impact on hindering homosexual identity formation.

M3 and M4 are both highly educated and have some knowledge of homosexuality. Although they can accept the fact that they are gay, they are influenced by a certain environmental factor that makes them a group of people who cannot come out, and they are forced to conceal their identity.

7.6 Identity Pride

M5 and M6 are both international students. M5's parents divorced when M5 was young, and M5 has weak ties to her family and little contact with them, and M5 is not the

only child in the family, as M5 has two older brothers/sisters who are married and have children. M5 has only been back to China once since he left about 5 years ago. When M5 graduated, he firmly chose to stay in a foreign country to work because he did not want to return to China to be oppressed by her family and society.

I didn't want to go back to China. When I graduated and chose to work here in **(a foreign country), I chose an LGBT-friendly company, and I don't want to be in danger because of the gay identity working, as a threat in China. If I go back to China someday, I will definitely be pushed by my mom to get married, that's hard for me. And I think I should come out to my mom later when I earn enough money or find a suitable boyfriend here, I will tell her, my mom has only one son left with her, that is me. She shouldn't break off the relationship with me. (M5)

In my opinion, M5 is a free homosexual. He got freedom of identity in **(an foreign country) and he can come out to people around him without restrictions. Analyzing the family relationship, M5 does not have an intact family, such an environment increases the possibility of M5's coming out to his family, and M5 is not an only child, relatively speaking, his parents' expectation of offspring reproduction is lowered, and M5 does not receive the attention of the whole family. In addition, M5's social environment is in an overseas democracy, which has a high tolerance for LGBT people, and although it cannot be completely ignored, the society in that country is more tolerant of LGBT people than in China, and there is no loss of jobs because of their homosexuality. Therefore, M5 tends to be more of an Identity Pride identity.

Similar to M5, M6 also comes from a family with divorced parents and is also an

international student in *(overseas country). (I met M6 on an online social networking software like Twitter.) But unlike M5, M6 had a lesser relationship with his father and mother, and a more tenuous family connection, although he is the only son, as his father and mother never met M6 during his study abroad, and M6 had a same-sex partner who lived with him for a long time.

For M6, he was basically free from family influence because he was disconnected from his family of origin. M6 is also in an overseas democracy, and again, for him, social tolerance of homosexuality is more conducive to identity formation. He is happy to tell who he is and will speak out for gays on social media.

For M5, there may still be some aspects of his coming out that he is concerned about, similar to the question of whether his mother can accept it. But for M6, who is completely free from the influence of his family of origin, it is clear from the examples of M5 and M6 that family factors do have some degree of influence on the identity of homosexual individuals. But previous studies have found that single-parent families have a hindering effect on the perception of homosexual individuals because children do not want to disappoint their fathers or mothers and travel family duties to marry and have children. However, in the present investigation, it was found that instead, homosexuals in single-parent families were more likely to come out because the breakdown of the family of origin resulted in children with a weak sense of family and a greater tendency to be self-centered rather than the traditional emphasis on the Chinese concept of family-relation.

7.7 Overall

Ignore the influence of other factors, such as personal experience and genetic factors. All environmental factors do have a hindering effect on homosexual identity formation. In my opinion, these factors can be divided into endogenous factors and exogenous factors. Endogenous factors include the parents' desire for a better life for their children and the desire for their children to have offspring. These endogenous factors can be compensated by other means, such as economic affluence, or other means such as adoption surrogacy. Exogenous factors include the social stigma of homosexuality, the stigma of parental guilt by association with their children, and the pressure of the workplace. Exogenous factors cannot be remedied by the individual and need to be changed through social change and progress. But exogenous factors can be chosen and can be changed by choosing a different society. The immersion of traditional Chinese cultural thought and the opposition of mainstream thought make the whole society have poor knowledge of homosexuality. In my opinion, the endogenous factors are also influenced by the exogenous factors, and the collective stigma brings individual disgust.

As we can see from the cases of M5 and M6, they are not influenced by endogenous factors and their parents have lower expectations of them, while they are extremely influenced by exogenous factors and society is tolerant towards homosexuality. Therefore, their identity perception is at a more advanced stage.

M1 and M2 received various degrees of influence from endogenous and exogenous sources, so they also had a degree of internal homophobia and thus were unable to engage

in identity formation.

M3 and M4, despite having a good perception of homosexuality, are influenced by one or more circumstances that cause them to accept but not identify with it.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Findings

This study investigated some of the environmental factors which male Chinese homosexuals perceived that influence them in their perceptions of identity including coming out, and marriage considerations as well as in the process of their identity formation. These environmental factors come from family and society and are shown in the figure below:

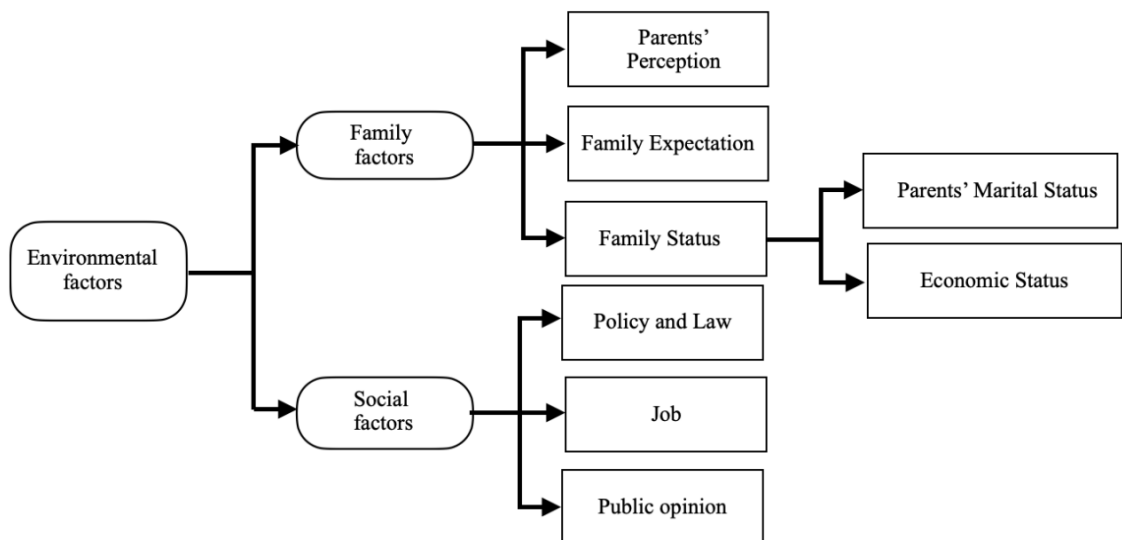


Figure 8-1 Environmental factors influencing male homosexuals' identity

This study concluded that 50% of the younger generation of homosexuals in China, represented by these 17 respondents, perceive their environment as negatively influencing them and discouraging them from coming out, and they were in the stages before Identity Acceptance. These respondents were influenced by, on the one hand, traditional family

values, which emphasize the importance of men in establishing families and having offspring, and, on the other hand, a society that lacks homosexual cultural traditions and stigmatizes the homosexual community. There is no connection between homosexuality in the Western sense and the traditional same-sex lustful behavior in China's history, and the level of social tolerance and understanding of homosexuality is extremely low. Therefore, Chinese family values and the social environment exclude homosexuals from full participation.

The second finding is that the influence of family and society on the perception of homosexuality can be divided into endogenous and exogenous influences. Endogenous is mainly the pursuit of the family as required by traditional values, and exogenous influences are the social stigma of homosexuality that leads to the influence on homosexuals' rights. Endogenous factors are influenced by exogenous factors. The individual's thoughts are influenced by the dominant ideas of society. The combination of family and social factors can prevent homosexual individuals from engaging in identity formation and individual perceptions can stagnate. Family and society are equally important to homosexuals, and the influence of any of these key factors can affect their perception of identity and hide their identity.

I think there are many cultural and historical reasons why gays and lesbians in China are in an awkward position. The first is the lack of culture, the Chinese did not pay much attention to homosexuality in the early days. Later, with the social reform and the epidemic of HIV, homosexuality quickly appeared in the public eye and was regarded as

a disease. China is currently in a rising stage of social development, taking economic construction as its primary development goal, ignoring the interests and development of minority groups. So, homosexuality is marginalized in today's Chinese society. Such social background and the influence of family culture make most homosexuals have a poor identity and dare not admit their sexual orientation.

8.2 Limitations

There are some limitations in this study. First, the method used in this study is mainly interviews, and because the research topic involves personal privacy and some cultural and political reasons, and because the homosexual community is special and not easy to find in China, the research scope was limited and the number of respondents was not large enough, only six people were deeply interviewed. Although this study is a qualitative study, there may be some data processing in exploring the causes of homosexuality and exploring the influence of single-parent families on sexual orientation. The number of respondents in this research was not large enough, which may lead to inaccurate research results. Moreover, due to the special nature of the homosexual community and the influence of social opinion, most people may not express their feelings and information truthfully, and the authenticity of the interview results may be biased. This may have a certain degree of influence on the accuracy of the research results

Second, the main content of this study was to investigate the influence of

environment and family environment on the perception of homosexual identity and the choice to come out and marriage. However, the informants of this study were not sufficiently representative. The research method of this study is interview, and the respondents who were willing to cooperate with the researcher already indicate that these respondents have a strong sense of identity and sense of social participation, therefore, there will be some deviations in the representativeness and accuracy of the research informants.

8.3 Suggestions for further research

Due to the limitations mentioned in this study, future researchers on Chinese homosexuality-related topics must avoid all risks and consider their safety. Given the complexity of homosexuality itself and the current social attitudes towards homosexuality in China's laws, decrees, and social norms, research must be conducted in secret.

And this study took a long time to gain the trust of the respondents, so future researchers who want to conduct qualitative research on homosexuals and conduct in-depth interviews must pay attention to conversation skills and research strategies. And in the process of selecting the respondents, I think that young people generally have a high degree of acceptance and a strong sense of social participation, so the respondents selected for this study are basically young people. The age range of the interviewees can be widened to achieve research richness in future research.

And this study concluded the result that children of single-parent families are more inclined to come out, which contradicts the previous findings of Li (1998) and Wang (2017), who argued that children of single-parent families conceal their identity for the sake of their parents' thoughts or expectation. However, I got this result from the interview of only 2 informants. Thus, I think investigating the influences of single-parent families on homosexuality could be the one direction of future research, with the independent variables being the timing of parental divorce, for children during childhood character formation, or adulthood.

The time of this research is limited, and this study only investigated the influence of social and family factors on the identity cognition process of Chinese homosexuality. I hope that future researchers can pay attention to the topic of the rights of gays and lesbians in China, which is of great significance to the equal rights of this group. Although the current life of homosexuality in China is not optimistic, the acceptance rate of homosexuality among the younger generation is increasing. I believe that one day in the future, homosexuals will be able to get rid of social stigma and exist as independent and open individuals in Chinese society.

References

- Allen, K. R., & Demo, D. H. (1995). The families of lesbians and gay men: A new frontier in family research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57(1), 111. <https://doi.org/10.2307/353821>
- Aglipay, F. A. (2014). The Cass' theory of sexual identity formation: A study of the complexities of queer identity development. *Journal of Psychology Research*, 4(06). <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5542/2014.06.001>
- Alston, J. P. (1974). Attitudes toward extramarital and homosexual relations. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 13(4), 479. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1384611>
- Bilodeau, B. L., & Renn, K. A. (2005). Analysis of LGBT identity development models and implications for practice. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2005(111), 25–39. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.171>
- Cao, J., & Lu, X. (2014). A preliminary exploration of the gay movement in mainland China: Legacy, transition, opportunity, and the new media. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 39(4), 840–848. <https://doi.org/10.1086/675538>
- Cass, V. C. (1979). Homosexual identity formation: A theoretical model. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 4(3), 219–235. https://doi.org/10.1300/j082v04n03_01
- Cass, V. C. (1984). Homosexual identity formation: Testing a theoretical model. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 20(2), 143–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224498409551214>
- Chen, L. (2011). Queering Taiwan: In search of nationalism's other. *Modern China*, 37(4), 384–421. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0097700411409328>
- Damm, J. (2005). Same sex desire and society in Taiwan, 1970–1987. *The China Quarterly*, 181, 67–81. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0305741005000044>
- Degges-White, S., Rice, B., & Myers, J. E. (2000). Revisiting Cass' theory of sexual identity formation: A study of lesbian development. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 22(4), 318 - 333. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265158591>
- Focus on the Family (Canada) Association. (2010). *What is a family of origin?* Retrieved June 25, 2021, from: <https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/what-is-a-family-of-origin>
- Hu, J., Hu, J., Huang, G., & Zheng, X. (2015). Life satisfaction, self-esteem, and loneliness among LGB adults and heterosexual adults in China. *Journal of*

- Homosexuality*, 63(1), 72–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2015.1078651>
- Hu, X., & Wang, Y. (2013). LGB identity among young Chinese: The influence of traditional culture. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 60(5), 667–684. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.773815>
- Huang, M. W., & Lu, W. (2013). Male-male sexual bonding and male friendship in late imperial China. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 22(2), 312–331. <https://doi.org/10.7560/jhs22206>
- Ibrahim, A. (1976). The home situation and the homosexual. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 12(4), 263–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224497609550946>
- Kaufman, J. M., & Johnson, C. (2004). Stigmatized individuals and the process of identity. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 45(4), 807–833. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2004.tb02315.x>
- Kenneady, D. A., & Oswalt, S. B. (2014). Is Cass' model of homosexual identity formation relevant to today's society? *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 9(2), 229–246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15546128.2014.900465>
- Kim, Y., & Hahn, S. (2006). Homosexuality in ancient and modern Korea. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 8(1), 59–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050500159720>
- Kong, T. (2012). *Chinese male homosexualities: Memba, tongzhi and golden boy*. Routledge.
- Kong, T. S. K. (2016). The sexual in Chinese sociology: Homosexuality studies in contemporary China. *The Sociological Review*, 64(3), 495–514. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954x.12372>
- Li, S. (2019). Lun tongxinglian de ziwo renzhi he shehui rentong—Tanjiu tongxinglian he lunli daode de guanxi [On homosexual self-cognition and social identity—Explore the relationship between homosexuality and ethics]. *Home Drama*, 2019(02), 201-203.
- Li, Y. (1998). *Tongxinglian yawenhua [Subculture of homosexuality]*. Beijing: China Today Press.
- Li, Y. & Zheng, H. (2008) Gongzhong dui tongxinglian de taidu ji yingxiang yinsu [Public attitudes toward homosexuality and factors influencing public attitudes toward homosexuality], *Community*, 2008(22), 31-36.
- Li, Y. & Wang, X. (1993). *Tamen de shijie: zhongguo nantongxinglian qunti toudi [Their world: A study of homosexuality in China]*. Taiyuan: Shanxi People's Press.

- Luan, R., Zeng, G., Zhang, D., Luo, L., Yuan, P., Liang, B., & Li, Y. (2005). A study on methods of estimating the population size of men who have sex with men in Southwest China. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, *20*(7), 581–585. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10654-005-4305-4>
- Mao, L., McCormick, J., & Van de Ven, P. (2002). Ethnic and gay identification: Gay Asian men dealing with the divide. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *4*(4), 419–430. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050110148342>
- McIntosh, M. (1968). The homosexual role. *Social Problems*, *16*(2), 182–192. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.1968.16.2.03a00050>
- Nguyen, T., & Angelique, H. (2017). Internalized homonegativity, Confucianism, and self-esteem at the emergence of an LGBTQ identity in modern Vietnam. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *64*(12), 1617–1631. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1345231>
- Ni, Z., Xu, d., Jiang, M., Huang, S., Ge, Y. (2015). Nan-nan jiechuzhe yixing xingxingwei tezheng ji yingxiangyinsu yanjiu [A Study on the Characteristics and Influencing Factors of Heterosexual Intercourse among MSM Population]. *Zhejiang Prev Med.* *27*(1), 14-16.
- Ocobock, A. (2013). The power and limits of marriage: Married gay men’s family relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *75*(1), 191–205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.01032.x>
- Pool, R. (1993). Evidence for homosexuality gene. *Science*, *261*(5119), 291–292. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.8332894>
- Quach, A. S., Todd, M. E., Hepp, B. W., & Doneker Mancini, K. L. (2013). Conceptualizing sexual identity development: Implications for GLB Chinese international students. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, *9*(3), 254–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428x.2013.781908>
- Redman, S. M. (2018). Effects of same-sex legislation on attitudes toward homosexuality. *Political Research Quarterly*, *71*(3), 628–641. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917753077>
- Sang, T. D. (2003). *The emerging lesbian: female same-sex desire in modern China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shi, X., Xu, W., & Zheng, Y. (2018). Heterosexual marital intention: Effects of internalized homophobia, homosexual identity, perceived family support, and disclosure among Chinese gay and bisexual men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *67*(4), 452–467. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1547558>

- Shi, Y. (2008). *Zhongguo gudaiwenxue zhong de tongxinglian shuxie yanjiu* [A study of homosexual writing in ancient Chinese literature]. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press
- Tan, C. (2015). Pink dot: Cultural and sexual citizenship in gay Singapore. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 88(4), 969–996.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2015.0058>
- Tian. (2019). Graduated in/visibility: Reflections on ku'er activism in (post)socialist China. *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, 6(3), 56.
<https://doi.org/10.14321/qed.6.3.0056>
- Wah-Shan, C. (2001). Homosexuality and the cultural politics of tongzhi in Chinese societies. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 40(3-4), 27–46.
https://doi.org/10.1300/j082v40n03_03
- Wang, F. T. Y., Bih, H., & Brennan, D. J. (2009). Have they really come out: gay men and their parents in Taiwan. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 11(3), 285–296.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050802572711>
- Wang, Q. (2017). *Tongxinglian yanjiu: lishi, jingyan yu lilun* [Homosexuality study: history, experience and theory]. Beijing: China Minzu University Press.
- Wang, Q. (2013). Wenhua queshi, daiji chayi yu tongxinglian rentong moshi [Culture Default, Generation Gap and Homosexuality Identification Mode]. *Tribune of Social Sciences*, 2013(11), 54-62.
- Wei, W. (2007). Chengli de piaopiao: Chengdu bendi tongxinglian shenfen de xingcheng yu boanhua [“Piaopiao” in the city: The emergence and change of homosexual identities in Chengdu]. *Chinese Journal of Sociology*, 27(1), 67 -67.
- Wong, A. D. (2005). The reappropriation of tongzhi. *Language in Society*, 34(05).
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0047404505050281>
- Wong, C.-Y., & Tang, C. S.-K. (2004). Coming out experiences and psychological distress of Chinese homosexual men in Hong Kong. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 33(2), 149–157. <https://doi.org/10.1023/b:aseb.0000014329.00994.b6>
- Wong, D., Zhang, W., Kwan, Y. W., & Wright, E. (2019). Gender differences in identity concerns among sexual minority young adults in China: Socioeconomic status, familial, and cultural factors. *Sexuality & Culture*, 23(4), 1167–1187.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-019-09607-5>
- Yang, W. (2019). Tongxinglian zhe zizungan yu shenfenrentong de guanxi: Ziwo xiaoneng gan de zhongjie zuoyong. [The relationship of self-respect and self-acceptance of homosexuals--the agent role of self-efficacy]. *Modern*

Communication, 12, 74-76.

Yang, X. (2020). LGBT renqun de shuliangguji: guojijingyan he zhongguotiaozhan [The estimation on LGBT population size: the international experiences and China's challenges]. *Chinese Journal of Human Sexuality*, 29(1), 148-152.

Yarhouse, M. A. (2005). Same-sex attraction, homosexual orientation, and gay identity: A three-tier distinction for counseling and pastoral care. *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Advancing Theory and Professional Practice through Scholarly and Reflective Publications*, 59(3), 201–211.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/154230500505900303>

Yi, J., & Phillips, J. (2015). Paths of integration for sexual minorities in Korea. *Pacific Affairs*, 88(1), 123–134. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2015881123>

Yue, A. (2014). Queer Asian cinema and media studies: From hybridity to critical regionality. *Cinema Journal*, 53(2), 145–151.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/cj.2014.0001>

Zheng, J., Wen, Q. (2020). Xinmeiti shidai tongxinglian daxuesheng shenfen rentong jiangou guocheng yanjiu [Study on the identity formation process of university homosexual students in the wake of the development of the new media]. *Journal of Contemporary Social Work*, 2020(11), 1-41.