

Super Gender in Game Design: Applied Research on Destigmatizing Homosexuality in China

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Abstract: As of 2021, China's homosexual population has exceeded 70 million. This paper studies the current stigma phenomenon of homosexuality in China, analyzes the plight of LGBT(Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender) people in China under the stigma phenomenon and the reasons why destigmatization measures are ineffective, and puts forward the difficulty of solving the problem and the urgency of the current problem. At the same time, it studies the current situation of the combination of games and "Super Gender". Starting from the perspective of psychology, it researches, develops, and designs how to better integrate "Super Gender" into games. Using the projection of China's social stigma to become the player's shadow friend, using a humorous and interesting plot design to guide the player to escape the shackles of stigma on the character's victory, make players accept "Super Gender" independently. Let players re-recognize themselves, re-recognize and accept LGBT groups, de-label them, and achieve the purpose of destigmatization.

Keywords: LGBT stigma, super gender, game design

1. Introduction

China divides sexual orientation into three categories, absolute homosexuality, bisexuality, and absolute heterosexuality. Usually, "homosexuality" refers to absolute homosexuality or bisexuality. To define "homosexuality" from an academic point of view involves Physiological, psychological, social, and other aspects. The famous American sexologist Kinsey defined homosexuality, "The sexual relationship established by people of the same gender refers to both physical relationship and spiritual relationship" [1]. In fact, there is not much difference in the behavior of homosexuals and heterosexuals. The relationship between the two parties is based on love, attracting each other, and gradually develops from emotional intimacy to physical intimacy. Even homosexuals have formed their own "families". The fourth edition of the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual: Mental Disorders" has removed "homosexuality". In 2002, "homosexuality" was also deleted from China's "Psychiatric Manual", which also means that "homosexuality" is not synonymous with mental disorders or mental illnesses.

According to the data provided in the report "White Paper on Gay Data in China in 2021", by 2021, the number of homosexuals in China will have exceeded 70 million. Due to the lack of traditional ethics and legal status, the "homosexual" group is rejected by Chinese society and is in the

state of a subculture. Judging from the current social development trend, the stigmatization of homosexuality has become an unavoidable social problem that needs to be resolved [2].

People's perception of homosexuality has experienced changes in crime, disease, relationships, and subculture [3]. Regardless of whether in Western society or Chinese society, there is a legal system and people's moral sympathy. Most Chinese people's cognition of homosexuality is still at the stage of hypocrisy and ignorance. According to random sampling surveys, more than half of the Chinese people believe that homosexuality cannot reproduce and is not good for society [4]. Therefore, the stigmatization of homosexuality in China can be attributed to two factors: moral or psychological and public health issues.

Currently, Chinese homosexuals face three major difficulties. The first is the long-standing phenomenon of stigma. China has a rich cultural heritage. The traditional concept of marriage and family has been passed down to the present day, but homosexuality deviates from this traditional moral culture. In people's view, homosexuals have special sexual behaviors and psychology. Dressing, social behavior, and living habits are also different from those of heterosexuals. Therefore, for a long time, homosexuality has been forcibly drawn as an equal symbol of AIDS and sexual perversion. Alternative, abnormal, and deviant social cognitions have become unique labels for gay groups. Second, social discrimination is serious. Generally, social discrimination after homosexuals are stigmatized is divided into direct discrimination and structural discrimination. From a sociological perspective, direct discrimination comes from the isolation and avoidance of the surrounding environment. At the same time, exposure to sexual orientation also faces the loss of various opportunities, such as work, performance, etc. Structural discrimination is because various policies, institutions, and groups in China have consciously or unconsciously reduced some rights of homosexuals. In 1998, China's "Blood Station Management Measures" stipulated that homosexuals and people with multiple sexual partners could not participate in blood donation. In 2012, the "Health Requirements for Blood Donors Check" was updated, and lesbians can participate in blood donations if they meet the requirements, but Gay men are still not allowed to donate blood [4]. Finally, there are psychological problems with homosexuals. Although the social tolerance of homosexuality in Chinese society is gradually expanding, the vast majority of "decent" people still dislike or even hate the existence of homosexual groups. From a legal perspective, homosexuals cannot obtain equality, privacy, and marriage rights. The same degree of protection as heterosexuals have kept homosexuals in long-term tension and fear of revealing their true identities. They are resulting in the physical and mental health of homosexuals being on the verge of public attention. Much external pressure from public opinion and long-term social stigma has made homosexual patients fall into a state of self-denial, entangled in bold love and avoiding condemnation for a long time. Unable to accept their own differences, leading to a series of mental illnesses such as depression and schizophrenia, and even suicide in severe cases.

The early stage of this study went deep into the Chinese gay community. Through the existing research reports, they learned about the daily life of the Chinese gay community and their expectations and demands for Chinese society, as well as the need to convey the type, style, game experience, and plot of the "Super Gender" game. Suggestions based on the research results to design and construct the game world, so that game players can independently accept "Super Gender", redefine gender and eliminate the stigmatization of sexual minorities in China.

2. Research on the Application of Games and "Super Gender"

2.1. Extension of Game Meaning

For games, from early Kant's proposition that "games are free activities that are opposed to forced labor" to Huizinga's conclusion that the characteristics of games are "freedom, non-utility, isolation,

order and rules”, and then from Caillois that games should be It has the characteristics of “freedom, isolation, no output, rule control, and false belief” to the definition of “game is a human activity that is restricted by rules, has an uncertain outcome, is competitive, and is not false” [5,6]. It can be concluded that the competition, regularity, and interaction of games are gradually highlighted in the process of development. Games have gradually become social activities with a practical orientation from activities with aesthetic and artistic value at the beginning.

People’s imaginary worlds and the real world can be connected with each other through the medium of games. No matter how the game scene flows, as long as the player enters the game and carries out activities under the same game rules, the interaction between the player and himself, others, and the environment is realized [7]. This interactive process constitutes a complete metaphor for human social activities. The interactive process of the game is also the process of generating meaning. And a better explanation of the whole social situation. It can be seen that games not only serve as entertainment functions but also carry a serious social mission and guide social practice.

2.2. About “Super Gender”

“Gender Awareness” is one of the important contents of self-awareness, including masculinity and femininity. In contemporary Chinese society, clear gender awareness and clear division of gender awareness have led to China still being in a state of patriarchy and husband power [8]. Man’s consciousness is evident, women’s consciousness is oppressed, the traditional concept of the family consisting of men and women is becoming stronger, and same-sex families and the third gender are difficult to be accepted by society.

In the 1890s, the Chinese female writer Ran Chen put forward the term and concept of “Super Gender”. At the same time, a large number of literary works for women appeared. The division of gender does put a certain type of people in a disadvantaged position. Ran Chen wrote in his work “Super Gender and My Creation”: “Whether it is writing about love, looking at a person or returning to art, the concept of ‘Super Gender’ should be adopted”, and believes that true love transcends gender and people should appreciate others without gender [9]. From this, it can be concluded that “Super Gender” is to transcend the gender perspective of individuals to pay attention to society and life [10]. “Super Gender” is not at the cost of abandoning gender but should be based on gender awareness to derive more multiple gender awareness concepts.

2.3. Applied Research on the Combination of “Super Gender”

In “The Art of Game Design”, Jesse Schell defines “game” as “a game is an activity that solves problems with an entertainment attitude”. To consider the essence of game entertainment while ensuring the accurate, reasonable, and complete expression of the research content in the development and design of the game equipped with “Super Gender”, the design can be carried out from the following aspects:

In game design, dramatic elements have the ability to help players memorize the rules and convey the game narrative beyond the game itself. The game plot brings players a sense of substitution far beyond other carriers. While operating the characters to complete the plot setting, watch the game plot development of the character to understand the psychological environment of the character. Through positive feedback, to obtain more shocking experiences and feelings. “Super Gender”, as the core idea of the game, should control the plot well and convey that “true love is beyond gender above” concept.

A game with “Super Gender” at its core should have a complete psychological system. The psychological system includes psychological motivation, psychological process, psychological state, and psychological characteristics. A complete psychological system can improve the playability of

the game and make playing the game a meaningful and purpose-driven thing, such as the core gameplay of “Glory of the King”. The gameplay of the game is clearly conveyed to the player from the very beginning, that is, to destroy the opponent’s base to win the game and to operate or buy equipment to make the character stronger. Studies have shown that adults tend to play more challenging games and hope that they win because of strategy rather than luck. Phased victories, rank upgrades, and gradually increase the difficulty of the game. Psychology is not only reflected in the pleasure of breaking through levels, but it also brings players a better sense of substitution in the plot and screen [11]. The game design based on this research should have clear psychological hints and timely behavioral feedback.

3. About the Design and Development of the Game Equipped With “Super Gender”

3.1. Game Development

The game development process is mainly divided into four stages: analysis, design, implementation, and testing. The following is the specific implementation:

3.1.1. Analysis

In the early stage of the research, conducted in-depth observation and discussion on Chinese homosexual couples and sexual minority families and summarized the troubles they believed existed in Chinese society into two dimensions: physical and psychological. Physiology is mainly reflected in the sexual behavior and reproductive issues between homosexual couples. In the discussion of same-sex marriage in contemporary Chinese society, sex, marriage, reproduction, morality, and ethics dominate. Cody believes that “in the ethical structure, as long as freedom and Desires are accepted, same-sex behavior will be affirmed ethically. However, marriage is based on population production and a system that regulates human reproductive behavior, and same-sex marriage cannot escape the moral negation of reproductive standards in any society” [2]. Psychologically extremely, the biggest pressure comes from media behavior and legal policies. China’s media industry has developed rapidly after the epidemic, and the new media industry has risen rapidly. At the same time, it has also promoted the spread of gay culture. During the interview, it was found that most of the public’s understanding of gay culture comes from the media’s dissemination and other people’s narration, but media reports are gradually pan-entertaining to increase traffic. The media often carry negative words such as “AIDS” and “crime” when homosexuality appears in the media. While other people’s narrations cannot avoid carrying personal emotional factors, which leads to the public’s dissatisfaction with homosexuality. The cognition of the homosexual group is misleading, one-sided, and not objective. Chinese society grants homosexuals and heterosexuals equal rights, but due to different sexual orientations. Some rights of homosexual couples are missing, such as the right to free choice and equal employment rights, and other rights are not clearly guaranteed for the gay community. Chinese sociologist Yinhe Li submitted the “Same-Sex Marriage Proposal” to the National People’s Congress three times, but all failed [12].

At this stage, it is clear that the purpose of game development is to comprehensively and objectively popularize the unity of minority groups with heterosexual groups or mass groups from two dimensions physiology and psychology. At the same time, it hopes to understand the demands of Chinese sexual minorities for social equality and lead players to accept the “Super Gender” independently to achieve the goal of destigmatization. It is clear that the game is aimed at the Chinese public adult group, avoiding minors, so as to avoid cases caused by a lack of gender awareness that minors who have not yet fully developed their minds cannot fully understand the whole game. According to research, adults are more inclined to use computers to join games, so the game is positioned as a strategic computer game developed for adults.

3.1.2. Design

Jesse Schell explained in the book “The Art of Game Design” that listening is an important skill for game designers. Therefore, for the design of this research, it should listen to the voices of sexual minorities, the general public, games, and players.

Listen to sexual minorities: In game design projects, sexual minorities play the role of “customers”. The main body of this story needs to listen to their ideas at various stages of game development to judge whether the game plot is complete. Accurately express the thoughts conveyed by sexual minorities to “Super Gender”. In addition, the role setting in the game will adopt the image of a white “little monster” who cannot distinguish “male” and “female” based on shape and color. Blue is the main color, gradually moving to green, purple, yellow, orange, and finally red. These six colors are inspired by the six-color rainbow flag representing homosexuality. The six colors respectively symbolize harmony, nature, spirit, sunshine, healing, and life. Respectively representing the main settings of the six levels of the game, the color tone changes from cold to warm, which symbolizes the gradual acceptance of this group in Chinese society. Nature, Spirit, Sunshine, Healing, and Life evaluate players from six dimensions, extract the main colors of each theme in proportion, and synthesize the color of the “little monster”. The change of body color implies that each player is unique but a colorful individual.

Listening to the public: In China, “sex” is not an issue suitable for open and open discussions. The research process learned that the public believes that the expression of “sex” in games should be closer to reality, but it does not break the game for players—the artistic conception of creation. So, in plot writing, the emotional expression corresponding to the behavior is created from the auditory and visual aspects. At the same time, the plot design of the game should not violate traditional Chinese moral thought.

Listening to the game: As a game, although many nodes in the game need detailed carving. In the design process, it is necessary to overlook the whole picture of the game from an overall perspective to ensure the overall output effect of the game.

Listen to inner voice: Chris Swin said that “game design is composed of 1% inspiration and 99% iteration”. That 1% of inspiration comes mainly from the designer’s own intuition. Sometimes intuition finds the answer one step ahead of reason. In the game, there is not only the protagonist, “little monster”, but also the dark shadow friend of “little monster”. The LGBT group was sealed by double psychological pressure.

3.1.3. Implementation

To control the development cost of the game. The game uses a 2D perspective to present the screen. According to the content of the game design, the paper prototype of the game is made first. The storyboard of the game is presented on paper, including the game interface, color presentation, and “little monster” “Shaping. After collecting opinions from 500 random testers, the Unity 3D game engine is used to apply Ae to create special effects comprehensively, Ai to draw scenes and develop a digital prototype of the game.

3.1.4. Testing

The digital prototype of the game is put to the player’s test. The trial experience and opinions are collected in the form of questionnaires and interviews so as to avoid the influence of feedback channels on the authenticity of the test results and iterate the game according to the collected feedback.

3.2. Game Framework Construction - MDA

The MDA(Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics) design framework was proposed by Robin Hunicke, Marc LeBlanc, and Robert Zubek. MDA stands for mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics, respectively. It is the most familiar framework for professional game designers. The MDA framework has done much research on the relationship between game players and game designers. The core elements are MDA's definitions of mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics, as well as an understanding of the differences in game perspectives between players and designers.

In the MDA framework, mechanics refers to the components and algorithms on the data level of the game. Dynamics is the real-time behavior that responds to player input and other outputs. Aesthetics is the emotional response that should be evoked when the player interacts with the game system. Aesthetics is a part of philosophy branches related to beauty and ugliness. Design aesthetics are design intentions.

3.2.1.Mechanics

The research implements mechanism embedding from seven elements—namely goals, player relationships, rules, boundaries, resources, spaces, and tables.

The goal of the game is to win. To strengthen the urgency, assign corresponding short-term goals, mid-term goals, and long-term goals to each screen. The short-term goal is to require players to collect stigma fragments through shadow activities and emotional feedback. The mid-term goal is the game scene. The long-term goal is to find their shadow friends at the end of the game. The protagonist, as the main body of the shadow, is the existence of mutual companionship and also a relationship of mutual redemption and mutual healing. The final victory of the player means finding his true self.

The game adopts the player interaction mode of single-player confrontation. Although, according to the research, the current game development pays more attention to the multi-dimensional and multi-form interaction between players, the development of this game pays more attention to the competition between players and their hearts. In the writing of the plot, it is implied that the player's rule is to find the next fragment through the connection of clues of each fragment and the understanding of the plot. The world created by the game is the boundary of the game. Players complete tasks in the created scene to obtain fragment resources, and the main plot occurs under the guidance of the space streamlined.

3.2.2.Dynamics

All elements of the dynamic layer are derived from the player's game, including various elements controlled by the player and the results of their interaction, which is the experience of the game.

In the dynamic layer, they focus on the strategic design of the game. One of the most important skills of game design is to predict the player. According to the previous research results, the decryption strategy of embedding the behavior and attitudes of the Chinese mass groups towards the homosexual group into the game, the most common manifestations are avoiding and not talking, being curious to ask around, and being independent.

3.2.3.Aesthetics

Five aesthetic feelings must be considered in the designer's game development process, vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. The development of this game mainly involves vision and hearing. Vision is the most eye-catching part of the game. In terms of vision, emotional value is mainly created through color expression. To control the cost of game development, the game screen adopts 2D dimensions for scene simulation. Game sound effects include sound effects, music, and dialogue,

which are triggered by players. For the corresponding scene mechanism, for example, immediately make sound effect feedback to increase the fun and immersion of the scene. Choose the post-rock style of background music. There are plot climaxes and plain plots, combined with plot design and scene design to touch the player's heart and support players having simple conversations with passers-by in the game to help players better understand the troubles and harm caused by stigma to homosexuals.

4. Conclusions

The number of homosexual couples participating in statistics in China is growing visible to the naked eye. For the stigmatization that has always existed, most destigmatization researchers start from the perspective of popularizing gay culture, making the Chinese people passively accept and tolerate LGBT people and promote it on a small scale. It was coupled with the fact that pan-entertainment information limits the public's cognition. It is clear that the strategy of destigmatization is not effective. Therefore, this study aims at the problem that the stigma of gay groups in China is solidified and difficult to eradicate, and the "Super Gender" Implanted in the game to communicate to the Chinese public to achieve destigmatization.

This research used "Super Gender" to eliminate the stigma of homosexuality in China. Games will attract the attention of Chinese society and the public to the stigma of homosexuality. In the deepening of the game, it will rescue players from being stigmatized by China through strategic adventures. The shadow friends who are sealed by the stigma of homosexuality hope to use a humorous and interesting way to guide players to eliminate the original "gender consciousness" in their minds. During the process of participating in the game, gay culture and "Super Gender" are actively accepted by players, so re-recognize the self, re-recognize and accept this special LGBT group cause more people to think about the limitations of "gender awareness" in Chinese society, tear off the label of stereotypes, and solve the stigma of homosexuality in China.

The current research only focuses on Chinese adults, but the impact of homosexual stigma on adolescents should not be underestimated. Future research should also focus on adolescents to completely eradicate the phenomenon of homosexual stigma in Chinese society.

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