

Perceptions and Attitudes of Parents and Teachers of Students Within and Outside the Chinese System Towards the LGBT+ Community

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Abstract: Sexual minority(LGBT+) is a relatively controversial topic, especially in China. Globally, LGBT+ is still a vulnerable group, and there are still cases of bullying and verbal abuse in various countries because of their sexual orientation, and people have mixed opinions about it. But with the development of the internet, people have become more aware of it and opinions have changed. And for the official and the general public, the official attitude is significantly more neutral and conservative. And people with different education have different views on LGBT, and overseas students are significantly more open to the influence of western culture. For people of different ages, the different perceptions they receive can also lead to differences in perceptions. In this paper, we use questionnaires and references to literature and laws to derive the official and private attitudes, and then compare and analyze the perceptions of people of different ages and different educational levels about the LGBT+ community.

Keywords: LGBT+, education, human rights, sex education

1. Introduction

Sexual minority (LGBT+) is the acronym of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. This is the most common acronym of sexual minority groups. Some of the more rarely used abbreviations are LGBTQIP2SA, while “QIP2SA” stands for questioning, Intersex, pansexual, two-spirited and asexual. Lesbian refers to a woman who only desires the same sex. gay refers to a man who only desires the same sex. bisexual is between homosexual and heterosexual; they can have a love for both the same and opposite sex. transgender refers to a person who is psychologically. The term “queer” was initially used in a grotesque sense but is now used to refer to a variety of non-normative sexual orientation identities. Questioning refers specifically to people who have doubts about their gender and sexual orientation. Asexual refers to people who have little or no sexual attraction to others or who lack sexual orientation [1]. An intersex is a person with both male and female physical characteristics, or in older terminology, androgynous. Pansexual is sexually, romantically, or emotionally attracted to people regardless of their gender or gender identity. two-spirited represents a person who has both a male spirit and a female spirit as their identity. This originated in Native American societies and its definition varies from country to country. Two-Spirit is also a relatively new term that refers to a relationship between people and nature, not

necessarily related to biology or gender, so the definition may change as the world continues to understand the term.

The World Health Organization recognized in 1992 that homosexuality is a natural phenomenon belonging to a minority and no longer classifies it as a psychological disorder. And China only really decriminalized homosexual behavior in 1997. In China before 2001, homosexuality was considered a mental illness, but since 2001, homosexuality year has been redefined in the third edition of the Chinese Classification and Diagnostic Criteria of Mental Disorders, and homosexuality has been removed from the list of mental illnesses by the Psychiatric Branch of the Chinese Medical Association [2].

Although there are some affirmative action movements for sexual minorities worldwide, they are still not in good shape. Especially in China, although homosexuality has been slowly accepted over the years, there are still many people who don't understand or even hate homosexuality. 2022 Mid-Autumn Festival, Gao Yan committed suicide and died because his class teacher insulted and ostracized him because of his sexual orientation and assigned him to the worst class. In fact, there are many other things like this, many people still do not accept homosexuals and find them disgusting [3].

In regular high schools, students are more conservative in their thinking because their education is not the same as that of international schools. After the exchange, students in international schools seem to be more receptive to sexual minorities. This paper will examine the perceptions and attitudes of students and teachers of in-body high schools and international high schools about the LGBTQ community.

There are actually several reasons as to why the views of parents and teachers, the older generation, about the LGBT+ community differ from those of students. Sexuality education in China is actually lacking, and there is almost no content about sexuality education in the Chinese syllabus, except for the most basic biological knowledge [4]. Regardless of the education and knowledge received by the parent's generation, the parents and teachers of the new generation of children rarely take the initiative to mention sex education. They think that children will naturally know when they grow up, and they think that the topic of "sex" will lead them astray. But in fact, it is because of the lack of sex education that so many children are raped and become pregnant early in society. This also leads to parents who accept the old mentality not understanding LGBT+, and a few who lack education may even believe that the LGBT+ community is a cult and a source of HIV infection. But the truth is that men and women who have sex can also spread AIDS, as long as one of them has AIDS. In addition, there is in fact no scientific book about sex in China, so it is difficult for people to be exposed to scientific knowledge about sex, which also leads to the creation of prejudice.

Second, students are exposed to a different online environment than their parents and teachers, especially in international schools. First of all, international school students themselves need to receive foreign education, and they will use more international software such as Google and YouTube, which are not available in China. This international software can look up some of the more sensitive topics in China, LGBT+ being one of them. With these channels, they have more opportunities to learn about sexual minorities. Furthermore, education in China is very stressful, so they hardly have time to look at their phones, and some of them don't even have them. However, students outside the system have more free time, and they naturally have access to the Internet more than students inside the system. The big data push is also an important reason. LGBT+ is actually a relatively niche term in China that few people understand. As mentioned earlier, parents don't know or care about this group due to educational influences, and almost no one around them is a sexual minority. Big data naturally doesn't push information with LGBT-related tags to parents and teachers based on projections. But young people actually know more about the LGBT+ community

and are surrounded by people who are sexual minorities, and big data will push this content to them. For example, another feature of TikTok is that it pushes videos liked by friends to users, which is why they are not sexual minorities but can access the videos [5].

2. Social Status

The LGBT community exploded into the public eye in 2010 in China, but China does not allow gay marriage. Currently, 34 countries legally recognize gay marriage nationally or in some regions (Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Iceland, Argentina, Denmark, Brazil, France, Uruguay, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Mexico, United States, Ireland, Colombia, Finland, Malta, Germany, Australia, Austria, Taiwan in China). Many people are again fighting for their rights in the LGBT community. In New York City on June 28, 1969, a group of gays and lesbians began rioting at the Stonewall Inn in New York City. This event became an essential origin of the LGBT rights movement, which later developed into the LGBT Pride March, an annual pride parade held in New York. Many in the LGBT community and those who support them will participate in this march. The event drew attention to the fact that the rights of the LGBT community were being taken seriously.

However, in other countries, LGBT people are a vulnerable group. Discrimination can often happen to the LGBT community. Most Turks follow the same religion as Judaism and Christianity, Islam, in which homosexuality is not accepted and considered sinful. Therefore, many Islamic countries have so far imposed legal sanctions on same-sex sexual activity, and in extreme cases, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan, the death penalty is imposed on homosexuals after they have publicly admitted or been identified four times by an impartial Muslim [6]. Human Rights Watch and the Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic at Yale Law School released a report today stating that LGBT people in South Korea are isolated in schools and excluded from school programs [6].

The LGBT+ community has been attacked in China as well. As recently as September 10, 2022, Gao died at home, the cause of death being suicide. The incident has garnered widespread attention online. His suicide was said to be caused by his homeroom teacher, and his sexual orientation was the main reason for the attack by his homeroom teacher. His homeroom teacher physically attacked Gao Yan mainly because of his sexual orientation, verbally abusing him. Gao Yan's grades were not bad, but he was assigned to a poor class that targeted him at every turn. Gao Yan had a nervous breakdown under the class teacher's attack and chose to commit suicide [7].

3. The Attitude of the Public

There are campaigns online, especially in countries and regions that allow gay marriage, and they are not as sensitive to the topic as the Chinese are. For example, on YouTube there is a topic called #ProudToBe. Since 2014, every June on YouTube, there has been a #ProudTo... The hashtag celebrates "Gay Pride Month". Since 2016, the hashtag has been renamed "ProudToBe". The hashtag exists to bring attention to the LGBT+ community. While the point of the hashtag is to bring attention and focus to the LGBT+ community, there are still homophobic people who comment against LGBT+. A study conducted by Zhou Nuo Buckwheat of Wuhan University's School of Journalism and Communication showed that LGBT videos on YouTube are not well-liked. Some even commented that "There are only two genders" and "Gay people have a special place in hell" and other offensive words. So even though it's an open platform, there are still people who denigrate the LGBT+ community [8]. On TikTok in China, there is also a tag about LGBT+ topics. a small group of people will post their relationship routine and most people in the

comment section will wish them well, but a small group will denigrate them and think it is disgusting.

According to the questionnaire, most people only know the most common homosexuality and bisexuality. A total of 94 questionnaires were collected, of which 81.91% were students and 74.03% were high school students, 13.83% were parents and 4.26% were teachers. Of these 94, 69.15% received an education outside the system, i.e., not taking the entrance exams, attending international schools, foreign schools, or attending schools abroad that do not teach the domestic curriculum. In contrast the rest received an education inside the system. 18.09% said they were in the LGBT+ community, 71.28% said they were not, and 10.64% of the participants said they were not sure of their sexual orientation for the time being. 84.04% of the volunteers said they are surrounded by LGBT people, most of them are supportive and neutral towards them, and only a few do not support or understand them. 77.66% of them are accepting of their children being LGBT people.

The data shows that half of those educated in the system have only heard of the term LGBT, but do not know much about it. Only one person is completely unaccepting of LGBT. Those educated outside the system are significantly more aware of the LGBT community than those educated inside the system, with 98.46% knowing or being very aware of LGBT and more people knowing more about sexual minorities (A+), which is nearly 10% higher than the number of people educated inside the system. Nearly 93% of people are surrounded by sexual minorities, which is a big gap in the system.

Before I did the questionnaire, my assumption was that people with institutional education were less likely to accept the LGBT+ community. However, the results showed that while most people were not familiar with the definition of the term, they still respected them. In fact, in terms of acceptance, those educated within the system and those educated outside the system are similar, except that those outside the system will have more access to a broader range of LGBT+ people.

In the questionnaire, for the parents, none of them were clear about the meaning of LGBT, 76.92% of them had just heard about it, and others don't know LGBT at all. Most of them know about gay and lesbian, 92.31%, and none of them are LGBT group, while they think they are not surrounded by sexual minorities. There are 76.92% who understand but do not support the LGBT community, and 61.54% understand that their children are LGBT. In other words, there are some people who understand LGBT people, but still maintain traditional ideas when it happens to their children. For teachers, the number of questionnaires collected about teachers' attitudes is too small to be representative, so this essay will not be analyzed.

4. The Official Attitude

There is currently no law in mainland China that indicates that homosexuals can marry. Article 104 of the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China specifies that the People's Republic of China implements a monogamous and equal marriage system between men and women, without considering the need and possibility of same-sex marriage and other forms of civil unions [9]. A "marriage" between persons of the same sex has no legal effect in the People's Republic of China, nor is it protected or bound by law. This also shows that officials are actually against or do not support gay marriage.

This essay argues that it is possible because homosexuality significantly reduces fertility rates and China is aging more severely. By the end of 2021, there will be 267.36 million people aged 60 years and above, accounting for 18.9% of the total population, and 20.56 million people aged 65 years and above, accounting for 14.2% of the total population. The national dependency ratio of the elderly population aged 65 years and above is 20.8%. If gay marriage were legal, the fertility rate would be significantly reduced, leading to problems such as raising taxes on young people and a labor shortage [10].

In 2018, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave its first clear response to the LGBT issue at the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session. China's position on this topic is that: China has always respected the right to health of the LGBT+ community and given them equal social security. The right to gender reassignment surgery is protected. At this stage, China does not grant the LGBT+ community the right to enter into marriage with a person of the same sex not because of discrimination. This policy is determined by our historical and cultural values.

In 2001, the Chinese Medical Association's Psychiatry Branch removed "self-concordant homosexuality" from its diagnostic guidelines. From this time onwards, the official attitude toward the homosexual community in China began to relax.

5. Conclusion

Students and parents have very different acceptance levels of LGBT people, with students being significantly more accepting and open than parents. This is probably because parents have been educated conservatively and traditionally before, and in their time, they had no chance to encounter LGBT people and naturally have less understanding and acceptance of them. In contrast, students are in an era of advanced information, they can easily get the information they want from the Internet, and some social platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, etc., more or less recommend relevant content, so they are more likely to be exposed to sexual minorities compared to their parents. The number of LGBT people who received institutional education is much smaller than those who received education outside the system, which may be due to the influence of foreign culture and education. Overall, most people are still gentle and neutral towards the LGBT community, with extreme disgust towards LGBT people being a very small minority.

In general, the government is still neutral. Through the changes in the law and the f bill, you can see that their attitude is actually changing, and z is gradually becoming more moderate. The official attitude of the government and the state towards LGBT people is neither encouraging nor opposing, and the overall attitude is neutral.

Older people have more prejudice and negative attitudes towards the LGBT+ community because they lack knowledge about the community. The lack of understanding is due to the lack of sex education in China and the fact that they are not exposed to the same information as young people. Big Data will recommend different information content based on the preferences of different people based on projections, and sometimes recommend information that friends follow.

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