

Actuality of Chinese LGBT Group

A Quantitative Report on What Chinese LGBT Group are Facing in Employment

Kehao Chen^{1, a, *, †} Wenxuan Cai^{2, b, *, †} Yuelin Jin^{3, c, *, †} Cuican Zhang^{4, d, *, †}

¹ University of Auckland, New Zealand

² Shanghai Ocean University, Shanghai, China

³ Yali High School, Changsha, China

⁴ Jining Confucious international school, Jining, China

*Corresponding author. Email: ^aCaiwx2000@163.com, ^b1316139698@qq.com, ^czzymjq04161212@qq.com

^dkche446@aucklanduni.ac.nz,

[†]These authors contributed equally.

ABSTRACT

Based on the survival status of the LGBT group, this paper focuses on the main problems they face in the process of employment and analyzes the main reasons. In this paper, a questionnaire survey is used as the main method. The first questionnaire mainly explores the status quo of LGBT groups in family, education, employment, and health. The second questionnaire obtains the main data of this study, a total of 122 questionnaires. Through the investigation and analysis, this paper finds that the stereotype of the LGBT group is one of the reasons for their discrimination in the process of employment. At the same time, the gender temperament of the LGBT group is not always negative. Some enterprises provide more suitable and competitive job opportunities for LGBT, but the external gender temperament is not enough to eliminate the original employment discrimination in the employment market. Male feminization and female masculinization are more vulnerable to be discriminated against. This paper is helpful to provide some suggestions for the resolution of employment discrimination faced by some LGBT groups.

Keywords: LGBT group, employment discrimination, stereotype, gender temperament.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese is known as one of the most popular countries, consisting of different types of groups. The LGBT group is one of these. According to Chinese history, culture and religion, the LGBT group was the most excluded group, which means they used to be despised and ignored by other populations. However, it is widely believed that the way people look at LGBT groups changes as the world changes.

The recent years have witnessed the emerging movements of equal rights of LGBTQ groups. However, the LGBT group is still classified as a marginalized group, especially in the workplace. It is generally believed that about 5-10% of the population in any group belongs to the LGBT group. Based on the 774.51 million employed population at the end of 2015, there may be about 38.27 million to 77.45 million LGBT people in the workplace in China. So, there is no doubt that the situation of LGBT

groups in the workplace is a microcosm of that in society in China. Although there have been more inclusive spaces for those in China, we still need a long way to go through it.

With the help of social media, Chinese people's awareness of the LGBT group has been rapidly increased. Still, there also exist a lot of stereotypes and discrimination in the workplace in China. They are always facing pressure from colleagues whatever the visible or the invisible one. Therefore, they probably have to choose to hide their real identities to gain normal and equal treatment when they work.

The Chinese population holds both positive and negative perspectives towards LGBT groups due to the different growing environments, childhood experience, educational background, and adulthood experience. Therefore, we cannot affirm that the Chinese community provides the LGBT group an equal status, especially in employment, which could be a microscope for

investigating the LGBT acceptance under the Chinese community. In our proposal, we made three hypotheses: 1) employment discrimination is mainly caused by the stereotype of the LGBT group, 2) certain features of LGBT group stereotypes give them the advantage of competitive advantage in some jobs, and 3) The LGBT group alleviates gender discrimination in the workplace to a certain extent.

2. REVIEW

2.1. Health concerns under the employment environment

Before 2001, the Chinese Classification of Mental Disorders still includes homosexuality as a mental disorder. Cheng determined that most mental health workers are still concerned lesbians and gays have incorrect sexual cognition. They ignore the rules from the new version of CCMD and try to give their clients therapy to change their sexual orientation[1]. Despite that, discrimination of sexual orientation still exists in the employment environment. According to Wang and his colleagues' study, they proposed that discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation or gender identity needs to be prohibited [2]. Besides, he also indicated that instead of using the CCMD-3, Chinese practitioners should use foreign diagnostic classifications.

Even though mental health could affect the employment opportunities for LGBT people, physical health issues can also be a factor in declining chances of employment. Most companies hold routine medical examinations every year, especially in government, education, or clinics. Social stigmatization of LGBT people and a lack of sexual health education can also make it difficult to prevent sexually transmitted diseases like HIV [2]. However, other factors vary the opportunities of employment. This could be demonstrated in recent research that people living with HIV (PLWH) have different employment qualities: negative self-image and workplace discrimination are negative factors in PLWH employment quality, whereas social support and policy support are positive factors. In addition, when compared to their colleagues, second-generation, older, male, and highly educated PLWH can better exploit the negative impacts of negative self-image and workplace discrimination on employment quality. Apart from that, when compared to their colleagues, male and highly educated PLWH can help expand social and policy help to enhance employment quality [3, 4].

2.2. Inequality of opportunity in the job market

There is no doubt that discrimination against LGBT people still exists, although legal persecution was repealed in 1997. According to Inglehart and other researchers, diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are still laid out of the main society, carrying

superfluous stigmatization on most occasions. More specifically, most of the studies and researches still symbolically, socially, and legally define lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people as a different and inferior group to those who are heterosexual and cisgender [5-7].

Job markets and employment are mirrors that cast all the inequalities and inequities that LGBT are facing typically in the modern world. According to European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014, their findings show that only 5.1% of respondents fully disclosed their identity at work which is much lower than the respective figure in other parts of the world. Despite increasingly emerging LGBT organizations in China, the researches and surveys still reveal the veil of pressure and challenge LGBT employees are plaguing in the workplace. Regarding the research by Gustafsson and Sai, while China's Constitution says everyone is treated equally before the law, employment discrimination continues to exist, ranging from monitoring of appearance and mannerisms to sexual harassment and physical violence [8].

Most importantly, training and raising awareness are needed to ensure that policies and mechanisms about the LGBT group are properly implemented. However, such policies and training are still rare in China. Kong argued that sexualities studies in China have gone through different stages, focusing on biomedical science and the medicalization of same-sex relations, the "causes" of homosexuality, and the emergence of queer/tongzhi identity[9]. What's more, Petula Ho and her colleagues also contend that topics associated with HIV risk behavior, which are in line with addressing the Chinese state's public health agenda, continue to receive far more academic attention than others [10]. The government must prioritize education and public awareness about LGBT people's rights to equality and non-discrimination.

3. METHOD

S This investigation is quantitative, collecting data through the questionnaire and publishing it to WeChat Moments. The result will be used for statistical analysis.

Participants were high school students or low and or those studying for a bachelor's degree or those who have a master's degree or above, which are studying and some are working, some are in their careers, and some are choosing jobs. Those are randomly selected from 18 years old to 60 years old in China, who were studying math, Economics, English, accounting, physical education, Chinese, political, history, geography, biology, chemistry, physical, music, computer science, and art as compulsory courses and so on. It is widely known that society's acceptance of LGBT groups is divergent, so the scope of our survey is very broad because everyone will have a different impression of the LGBT group. Moreover, here, we will talk about the social acceptance

of the LGBT group, observed what stereotypes the LGBT group would have in society and what impact it would have on employment discrimination.

The basic information in Table 1 contains five questions related to participants' gender, age, sexual orientation, degree of education, and the study or work of status. This part is convenient for us to better grasp the overall situation of the survey subjects and cross-analysis with the results in data analysis.

Table 1. Basic information of survey subjects

Variables	Sample Sizes (percentages)
Gender	
Male	36.89%
Female	63.11%
Sexual orientation	
L/G/B/T	26.89%
heterosexuality	73.11%
Degree of education	
High school and below	18.85%
bachelor	70.49%
master and above	10.66%
Age	
18 and below	13.93%
18-30	70.49%
31-40	9.02%
40-50	4.92%
50-60	1.64%
Study or work status	
At work	39.34%
Unemployment	0%
in the choice of career	5.74%
study	54.92%

Besides, there are a total of 21 questions in the questionnaire, which consists of basic information of survey objects and the prejudice that LGBT group experiences in the workplace. After the survey questionnaire is published in the WeChat Moment, we found that females account for the highest gender (63.11%), and the LGBT group accounts for a small proportion of the total (26.89%).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Employment discrimination is mainly caused by the stereotype of the LGBT group

The research separated 32 LGBT members from 122 participants to find out what they reckon about employment discrimination. 93.75% of LGBT members think that it is necessary to decline employment discrimination and bring more equality for LGBT members in the workplace. Most LGBT members, who are 81.25%, think it is difficult for LGBT to solve workplace relationships. More LGBT members reckon that declining employment discrimination is more essential than solving the relationship crisis in the workplace.

Meanwhile, more LGBT members think the major difficulty they faced in the workplace or job market was discrimination on the LGBT identity, 84.38%. They also think "identified as personality defect" and "strange looks from peers" were difficulties for them in the workplace. As it is a multiple-choice question, we cannot figure out whether participants who chose "discrimination on the LGBT identity" have chosen other answers. Due to the fact that the distributions for these survey questions are similar to the distributions in the LGBT groups, we assumed that the group of heterosexuality also has a similar distribution.

In our research, when we asked about the worries of employing an LGBT member for enterprise, most LGBT members reckoned the worries are from getting along with peers. Still, most other participants thought it is because of the enterprise visualization. What brings this difference could also be the different perspectives between these two groups. However, it also because of different genders. The result shows most females thought it is because of the enterprise, but most males believed it is because of getting along with peers.

4.2. Certain industries help LGBT group show their advantages

From the received 122 valid data, we can find that the public is quite holding a tolerant and positive attitude towards the employment of LGBT groups in certain industries.

Half of the data shows that the public believes that LGBT people can have some strong abilities in certain areas such as communication and innovation. 66% of the data confirms that the LGBT people have a great advantage in certain industries like the art industry and design industry, which have accounted for 94% and 76% of data. Following are some popular industries, such as the public relations industry and the Internet industry.

Meanwhile, a highlight of the data is that about 75% of the data shows the willingness to join a company with

a large LGBT community. More than 70 % of the data indicates that LGBT people tend to choose a specific job to avoid discrimination in the workplace.

4.3. Special gender temperament of the LGBT group does not help to eliminate gender discrimination

There are 69.67% of participants think that there is a gender difference for the LGBT group in employment discrimination. And 30.33% of the participants think there is no gender difference in the workplace for the LGBT group.

When we asked about "Which do you think is the LGBT common gender temperaments that are more vulnerable to being discriminated in the workplace", (there are four choices for this question, "masculine gay, feminine gay, feminine lesbian, and masculine lesbian", participants can choose more than one answers), 115 participants chose "feminine gay", 59 participants chose "masculine lesbian". In addition, 22 and 14 participants chose "masculine gay" and "feminine lesbian," respectively, as the more vulnerable gender temperaments to be discriminated against.

81.15% of the participants think that being openly lesbian cannot help alleviating employment discrimination and 18.85% of the participants think employment discrimination can be alleviated. Most of the participants think that coming out as lesbian cannot alleviate their employment discrimination.

Another question is that "What do you think is the possible reason that lesbian identity disclosure helps alleviate gender discrimination in the workplace?". Except for 56.56% of the participants who do not think lesbian identity disclosure will alleviate gender stereotypes in the workplace, 27.87% of the participants chose "Avoiding pregnant issues" as the main reason. Besides, 15.57% of the participants thought lesbian identity disclosure can alleviate employment gender discrimination because lesbian's masculine characteristics could help people easier to survive in the workplace environment.

88.52% of the participants state that lesbians should not consider sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace because sexual orientation belongs to personal privacy. They will face more problems after disclosure. And 11.48% of the participants argue that lesbians should consider sexual orientation disclosure because this will have more opportunities after disclosing their sexual orientation.

5. DISCUSSION

It is widely believed that the LGBT stereotype could cause employment discrimination. However, it is not major causation. As a result, half of LGBT members are

still in school and have not come upon the stage. It concerns whether employment discrimination is mainly caused by the stereotype of LGBT, as those students could imagine the situations they probably meet when they are in the job market or workplace. In addition, according to the same distribution established by heterosexual participants, they gave them their own answers about what difficulties LGBT members are going to make, we don't exclude the probability that they have seen or experience the same situation, but for different perspectives between heterosexual and homosexual participants, their answers seem to be more objective. In other words, in heterosexual participants' perspective, employment discrimination is mainly caused by these features such as looking girly or manly, bad personality, or not getting along with peers instead of the identity of LGBT.

Due to the fact that females and males think differently, the result brings us more manner to prove whether the hypothesis can be established. According to Wei and Liu's research [11], they figured out that more LGBT males have initial awareness than LGBT females. Hence, the discrimination in the workplace and gender differences can also be a causality, not only the LGBT stereotype. As school is a micro-society which can reflect many social concerns, under the school environment, male students, in particular, felt less included in the Chinese hetero-normative school culture (especially at the college/university level) because they viewed a less inclusive school environment than female students, with lower school inclusivity and fewer freedom of expression [11].

While in some countries, with the increasing emphasis on the LGBT group, many enterprises have realized this problem. An exclusive working environment will stifle employees' productivity, passion, and creativity, in contrast to an inclusive working atmosphere that may enhance the vitality and competitiveness in the enterprise. Therefore, many major enterprises provide equal opportunities to LGBT people and promote a culturally diverse working environment. IBM may be one of the best. Thomas Watson Jr, a former IBM vice president, wrote a letter to the managers, which said that "The company's policy is to recruit people with personality, talent, background and the ability to do the required work regardless of race, color, and creed." By equally treating employees of different races, genders, and sexual orientation, providing them with the same employment opportunities, stimulating their work enthusiasm, and creating a diverse and humanizing enterprise culture, IBM has won the reputation of a pioneer in social reform and the thrive in the global market despite the storm.

Meanwhile, Apple CEO Tim Cook also said, "Being gay has given me a better understanding of what it means to be in the minority, and it has given me a window to know more about what other groups are facing every

day." Apple is also making efforts to respect diversity for creating an inclusive and diverse work environment that inspires employees of diverse backgrounds to create more value for the enterprise in the long term. Big enterprises such as Deloitte and Disney are the typical ones doing so. Research shows that the policies promoting diversity in the workplace can increase the productivity of LGBT employees by 30 percent. In conclusion, Chinese enterprises should be aware that people are the most important wealth in any enterprise. What they pursue is how to attract and maintain the talents and stimulate creativity and productivity of employees.

6. CONCLUSION

Even though the core of social expectations in the Chinese cultural environment are majorly commitment to family and heterosexual marriage, employment has also become an essential factor as economic development is critical to social progress. From our research, we assumed that the stereotype of LGBT mainly causes employment discrimination. However, the cause of employment discrimination for LGBT can be caused by many other factors.

The particularity of the LGBT group in gender temperament makes it have certain advantages in specific industries. Enterprises should give LGBT groups more and more equal job opportunities. The obvious gender temperament in the LGBT group cannot eliminate the existing inequality between men and women in society and make some feminine men and masculine women face more problems in the employment market.

Although there is no specific policy for the LGBT population in China, there are some positive changes in the policy of sexual orientation and gender identity. For example, in 2001, the Psychiatry Branch of the Chinese Medical Association made it clear that homosexuality and bisexuality were not the types of mental diseases specified in the Chinese classification and diagnostic criteria for mental diseases (Third Edition) (CCMD-3). But that is not enough to improve all the situation in China, especially in the field of employment. So, that is what we need to focus on in the future because once a fundamental policy has been put into effect, the radical changes will certainly come soon.

REFERENCES

- [1] Cheng, F. K., Dilemmas of Chinese Lesbian Youths in Contemporary Mainland China, *Sexuality & Culture*, 2017, 22(1), pp. 190–208. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-017-9460-8>
- [2] Wang, Y., Hu, Z., Peng, K., Xin, Y., Yang, Y., Drescher, J., & Chen, R., Discrimination against LGBT populations in China, *The Lancet Public Health*, 2019, 4(9), pp. e440-e441. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667\(19\)30153-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(19)30153-7)
- [3] Yu, Y., Chen, Z., Huang, S., Chen, Z., & Zhang, K., What determines employment quality among people living with HIV: An empirical study in China, *PLOS ONE*, 2020, 15(12), e0243069. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0243069>
- [4] Li, Y., & Fabbre, V. D., The health and well-being of LGBTQ people in mainland China: The role of social work, *International Social Work*, 2020, 002087282094001. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872820940018>
- [5] Inglehart R, Baker W E., Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values, *American sociological review*, 2000, pp.19-51. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657288>
- [6] Carroll A, Mendos L. State-sponsored Homophobia , A World Survey of Sexual Orientation Laws: Criminalisation, Protection and Recognition , International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association [ILGA], 2017.
- [7] Flores A R, Esq. Andrew Park., Examining the relationship between social acceptance of LGBT people and legal inclusion of sexual minorities , Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, 2018.
- [8] Andersen, R. and Fetner, T., Cohort differences in tolerance of homosexuality attitudinal change in Canada and the United States, 1981–2000, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2008, 72, pp. 311–330.
- [9] Kong TSK, The Sexual in Chinese Sociology: Homosexuality Studies in Contemporary China, *The Sociological Review*, 2016, 64(3), pp.495-514. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12372>
- [10] Ho, Petula Sik Ying, Cao, Siyang et al., Sex with Chinese Characteristics: Sexuality research in/on 21st century China. *JOURNAL OF SEX RESEARCH*. 2018, 55(4-5), pp. 486-521. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2018.1437593>
- [11] Wei, C., & Liu, W., Coming out in Mainland China: A national survey of LGBTQ students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 2019, 16(2), pp.192-219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2019.1565795>