

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

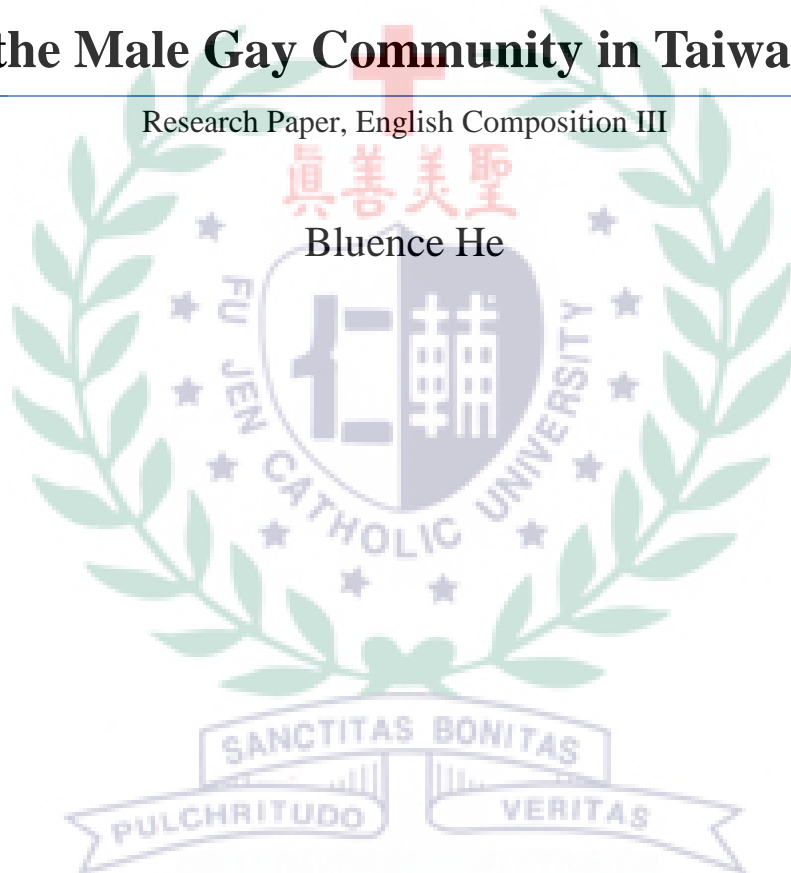
GRADUATION PROJECT 2016

Too Sissy for You: the Double Minoritization within the Male Gay Community in Taiwan

Research Paper, English Composition III

真善美聖

Bluence He



Too Sissy for You: the Double Minoritization within the Male Gay Community in Taiwan

Homosexuality related issues in Taiwan, such as those regarding marital equality, are receiving more and more public attention, and generally people have become quite accepting towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community(LGBTQ). For example, groups such as Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Right have been striving to rebuild gay images that have long been associated with negativity in order to achieve lawful equality of homosexual marital rights. In contrast, though, some associations, Taiwan Family for instance, vow to protect the value of the conventional form of family by being strongly against the legalization of gay marriage in Taiwan. The painstaking for the deprived gay marital rights, simultaneously receiving objections and supports, originates from the neglect, bias, and oppression on various romantic loves that are not recognized by the dominant heterosexual romance in the patriarchal society. Homosexuality, excluded by the heterosexual norms, is thus firstly minoritized by patriarchy. However, in spite of the exclusion of the hyper-masculine framework, the dynamics of the gay men community in Taiwan remains vibrant. Such vibrancy aims not only on striving for marital equality but also on changing the stereotypical feminine images of male homosexuals. Fighting against their feminine images and the social castration of their gay identities in a hyper-masculine framework, homosexual men in Taiwan therefore seek to regain social recognition through maintaining and obtaining masculinity in their bodies, which thus creates a masculine “mainstream” culture that further minoritizes effeminate male gays in the community. Therefore, besides the minoritization and exclusion of heterosexual norms of the patriarchal society, the second layer of minoritization is imposed on feminine gay men because of the internalization of discrimination against effeminacy of the mainstream masculine gay culture.

To start off, an effeminate male homosexual identity is socially castrating, and it is always associated with the term “fail man” under the lens of preferred masculine body images (Edwards 15). Being homosexual itself is not necessarily socially-castrating, though,

for such analysis is very “culturally specific and depends on the intersectionality of race, gender, sex, and sexuality” (Tong). Therefore, the scope, under which homosexuality becomes socially castrating, ought to be narrowed down to being an effeminate (gender) Taiwanese (race) gay (sexuality) male (sex). Homosexuality, referring specifically to male gays, is fundamentally feminine in a hyper-masculine society because of the “abnormal” sexual orientation that involves a man-to-man relationship, which is out of the heterosexual frame in terms of romance. As a result of such genderist stereotype, body-building, with the connotations of “masculinity and heterosexuality,” is therefore to prevent the self from social castration and feminization (Reily 29). Body image, consequently, becomes a major concern in terms of social recognition and re-masculinization. Body image, according to Fallon, is the mental picture one has of one’s body, which may be either an accurate or inaccurate representation of the reality. Such physical presentation, as Fallon states in his essay, include three areas: appearance orientation, appearance evaluation, and appearance satisfaction. In order to meet the needs of these three areas mentioned, looking manly caters for the need of both being masculine and socially accepted. However, gay men’s perception of the selves or other homosexual men “may be incompatible with their own identity, which results in the internalization of homonegativity (homophobia) (Nungesser qtd. in Reily).” By avoiding the social feminization of male homosexuals, a new mainstream body image is created: a muscular one. As a result of such physical alteration, a culture of being muscular is molded, and if one is to date a muscular guy, one must be muscular as well. Masculine appearance directly categorizes gay men into different sectors. The preference for masculine body image over sissy-looking one unveils the underlying misogynistic nature of the mainstream masculine gay men culture. The mainstream body image and the culture itself, hence, devalue effeminate bodies and characteristics, castrating the identity.

Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble*, defines gender as a performance and views it as the effect of reiterated acting, and she states:

That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer, and so institutes the 'integrity' of the subject. (136)

Gender, according to Butler, is not something one is, but it is something one does. Gender is, therefore, an act, or to be more precise, a sequence of acts. "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (25). Instead of a noun, gender is more like a verb. The body, accordingly, is constructed and gendered through the limited "costumes" from which one is shaped socially. Consequently, social construction of gender can be in various presentations. Drag, favored by Butler, "fully subverts the distinction between 'inner' and 'outer' psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" (137). "Drag also implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself (137). In other words, gender characteristics are not at all determined by the biological sex but by social perceptions, which enables a biologically male body to embody feminine features. For example, homosexuality itself can be viewed as a kind of performance of gender, for the attraction to a male "should" only happen on female according to patriarchal norms. The unconventional parody of gender that messes with gender stereotypes "constitutes a fluidity of identities" that can continually be re-signified and re-contextualized. Butler's point of view toward gender strongly contrasts with the current widely-accepted phenomenon that fixes certain traits of gender on a biologically-gendered body, which thus enhances gender stereotypes. Featuring socially-accepted masculinity, mainstream gays internalizes homophobia, referring to

“sissyphobia,” and places it on those who are out of the stereotypical frame set by a heterosexual-dominant society (Bergling).

Addressing identity and sexuality, Tim Edwards elaborates in *Erotics & Politics* that:

Cruising is the linchpin of public sex. Importantly, for the process to succeed, it is dependent upon dress codes and identities. These codes and identities are sometimes merely minor adjustments to dress though ultimately constitute a complete identity cultures. Consequently, identities and definitions in fact create a complex means of conveying detailed individual sexual information and facilitate sexual access in codes of sexual signification. (95)

Although Edwards’ notions are regarding the interrelation between dress codes and one’s sexuality, dress codes can also be the representation of one’s recognized “gender identity.” Since gender is a social construct, the dress codes or how a male homosexual presents himself to the public are the gendered reiterations of masculine/feminine performance (Butler). Therefore, the public images of the individual reflect the psychologically-perceived gender identity, which is beyond the control of sex-gender fixation defined by patriarchal norms. Yet, under the influences of genderism and social perceptions of sex and gender, gender is determined and set by biological sex and thus is no longer performative. Losing its performativity, performative gender, therefore, becomes the receptor of bias and prejudice because of its unconformity and displacement in terms of sex-gender conformity.

Gender performativity, the idea originated from Judith Butler, is best presented in a homosexual body. By narrowing down the scope to Taiwanese homosexual gay male, gender seems to lose its performativity due to the underlying hyper-masculine framework that fixes sex with gender. I argue gender is performed in the gay community, while the visual images of gender can change with time. However, stereotypical images of gender limit our perception of homosexuality and especially that of gay feminine tendencies. Since the literature reviews include different aspects of social issues concerning gender, effeminate gay

as a socially castrating identity, and body image, the research questions related to the paper are majorly dealing with the contradiction between identity as a homosexual male, which seemingly leads to a more accepting attitude toward unconformity of gender and sex, and the internalized hyper-masculine framework that further minoritizes effeminacy in the gay community in Taiwan:

A: Does the identity as a homosexual male in Taiwan necessarily lead to a more accepting attitude toward sex/gender unconformity and various sexual orientations?

B: If so, why are effeminate gay men are oftentimes looked down on, discriminated against, and mocked?

C: Does the gay community internalize the characteristics of a hyper-masculine society and further cause gender to lose its performativity?

D: Why effeminacy, then, is devalued?

E: What are the double minoritizations be imposed on gays men in Taiwan?

The methodology of this research paper is solely through surveys, which distributes an online questionnaire specifically for gay men in Taiwan to fill out. The questionnaire was designed on Google Docs, and it mainly addresses the interrelation between male gay identity and open-mindedness toward related gender issues. Accordingly, the accepting attitude can be explained as the agreement on the performance of gender. The nineteen questions are designed to see whether gay men in Taiwan are aware of the underlying hyper-masculine influences within the male homosexual community. Questions aiming on different purposes are scattered so as to prevent respondents from deliberately manipulating answers to respective question. Respondents are exposed to statements that stereotypically fix sex with gender characteristics and also to those that address how they feel about effeminacy in a male body. By answering these questions, respondents will be tested to see how much they are aware of being under the influences of the hyper-masculine societal framework. Also, the questionnaire also directly addresses how respondents feel about effeminate gays and whether

or not effeminacy in male bodies is generally accepted by the gay community in Taiwan.

The results of the questionnaire, as expected, debunk the Taiwanese gay men's "open-mind," unveiling the abhorrence of effeminacy.

According to appendixes A, question 1, 2, 11, 12, and 13, respondents mostly agreed, or strongly agreed, with the fact that their homosexual identities do bestow them a more accepting attitude towards different sexual orientations and the "feminine" nature of the selves. In question 1, 272 out of 303 respondents agreed that their gay identities allow them to have a more open-minded attitude toward various sexual orientations. Homosexuality, within a patriarchal, hyper-masculine, and heterosexist framework, is gendered and feminized (Tong). It is not, however, that homosexuality is "inherently" castrated (castrating) or feminine but that a hyper-masculine patriarchy confers such social-cultural connotations. The hegemonic nature of heterosexist values rejects homosexuality and other forms of sexual orientations, marking them as "abnormal." This "abnormality," therefore, feminizes homosexuality while heterosexism remains "normal"/masculine. The heterosexism-based feminization of male homosexual identity is commonly known as the first layer of the minoritization. As all being minoritized by the dominant heterosexual norms, male gays in Taiwan accept a certain feminine characteristics such as crying, which in Chinese culture is a gendered (feminized) way to self-express. Also, the minoritization of dominant heterosexist norms also creates a certain bond between Taiwanese gay men, making it easier for gay males to connect themselves with those who are also rejected by the mainstream social norms. To some degree, the embrace of feminine characteristics is the embodiment of or acceptance of Butler's performance of gender. Through this performance of gender, the "queerness" of gay men collides with the hyper-masculine patriarchal framework.

Because of the feminization of males' gay identities, re-masculinization guarantees social recognition and acceptance. Question 13 specifically points out whether or not respondents have tried to subvert "inherent" feminine image of male homosexuals made by

the patriarchal society, 222 out of 303 respondents chose “strongly agree” and “agree.” Since hyper-masculine patriarchy rejects, hinders, and devalues the performance of gender, or sex-gender unconformity, if one male homosexual is to be socially accepted and not be feminized, he ought to be masculine. Body-building, therefore, becomes the most direct way to simultaneously masculinize the feminized identity and to be recognized by patriarchy. Being muscular connotes being masculine, and (pseudo) heterosexual. The muscular appearance reflects the psychologically-perceived gender identity, and the re-masculinization of the feminized homosexuality also promises a less biased living environment. The trend of body-building, though subverting the feminine gay body images originated from hyper-masculine patriarchy, creates another stereotypical perception of body and forms a masculine gay culture in the community: a male homosexual should be a “man” about his gayness.

The shift from patriarchy-to-gay scope to that of masculine-gays-to-effeminate-gays marks the process of the internalization of homophobia (fearing effeminacy) (Reily 37). As more and more male homosexuals are pursuing masculine public images, a mainstream culture that prefers manliness over womanliness is thus created. Question 9 addresses two different images of men. One is that of Bradley Cooper, a famous Hollywood star, and the other is Bii, a Korean Singer. The former is muscular and hairy while the latter is comparatively feminine. The result of this specific question shows that the gay community in Taiwan does prefer a man with a masculine appearance. This newly-formed masculine gay culture assimilates itself to the hyper-masculine patriarchy, making itself a part of the hegemonic power so as to be free from discrimination, bias, and prejudice. However, this privilege in term of being free from bias of patriarchy is reserved only for those gay men who are re-masculinized, and gays with effeminacy remain rejected by the heterosexual norms and now also by the mainstream masculine gay culture in Taiwan. The rejection of the masculine gay community is the second layer of minoritization imposed on effeminate male

homosexuals. In question 3, 200 respondents out of 303 strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that gays who work out often are more attractive with 30 people disagreed with it. In question 5, 126 respondents considered it necessary for a gay man to have his hair neatly trimmed, and 87 people disagreed with the statement with 90 showing no strong inclination. In question 7, 142 out of 303 agreed that it is important for a gay man to own the “manliness,” and 75 people were against such idea. In question 9, 162 respondents agreed that the Hollywood star, Bradley Cooper, is more “preferred” than his counterpart Bii, and 47 respondents disagreed with it (See Figure 1 and 2). In question 16, 155 out 303 found fit/hairy gays very “manly” with 49 respondents showing disagreement. These questions specifically deal with respondents’ direct perceptions towards masculinity within a male body. The results show that the gay community does prefer manly physical traits. It is also considered important for a gay man to own the manliness so as to be socially accepted and recognized even within the gay community itself. Question 8, in which 165 respondents admitted that they did not like effeminate gays, points out the fact that effeminate gays are generally disliked because they own too much effeminacy (also see Question 6). Such assimilation of masculine gay men to patriarchy, though preventing discrimination, eliminates the performativity of gender. Looking back at the theoretical approaches, if one is to argue that Butler’s gender performativity is flawed, it is because of Butler’s ignorance of how powerful patriarchy is. However, if the powerfulness of patriarchy is what causes gender to “lose” its performativity, the fact also suggests that the male gay community in Taiwan is deeply influenced by patriarchal perceptions. The trend of body-building and preference of the mainstream gay culture for masculinity cause the loss of dynamics of displacement between sex and gender. Gender is therefore “fixed.” Masculinity is still fixed to men, and femininity is abhorred in male bodies.

The results of the questionnaire also points out a heart-sinking fact that gay men in Taiwan are actually aware of the discriminative nature of the mainstream masculine gay

culture. Effeminacy in a male body, rejected by both patriarchy and mainstream gay culture, connotes negativity and social marginalization. In question 15, 263 out of 303 agreed that terms such as “sissy” contain more negativity, and they are oftentimes used to mock effeminate homosexuals. The negative connotations of these terms, again, come from the hegemonic frameworks: one of patriarchy, and the other of the masculine gay culture. It is also agreed that, according to questions 8 and 18, the more feminine a gay man is, the less he is recognized by the community. The devaluation of femininity is embodied, turning the problematic trend into a discrimination, or racism without a proper name. Claims such as “no sissy” are commonly seen in social applications on mobile phones. The mainstream gay culture does not only gradually deprive gender of its performativity but also actualize the abhorrence of effeminacy. The devaluation of femininity in male bodies also disfranchises the “queerness” that rebels against the influences of hyper-masculine patriarchy inside gay identities.


It is interesting that male homosexuals in Taiwan are quite open and candid about their “gendered” sex role as bottoms. If male homosexual romance is put under the lens of heterosexual norms, one who is bottom during sexual intercourses is indeed feminized. In question 4, out of 303 total respondents, 158 disagreed with the statement that “I prefer using terms such as “not top” to inform others of my sex roles instead of that of “bottom.”” In question 10, nearly half respondents showed no strong inclination when asked if they agreed that “versatile” is a tactful way to reveal one’s role as a bottom. In question 19, the difference between agreement on the question and disagreement is not contrasting. 93 respondents in total agreed with the statement that most gay men in Taiwan who are bottom have the so-called bottom shame with 98 showing disagreement, and 112 responded without strong inclination. According to questions 4, 10, and 19, respondents, whether effeminate or not, are quite outspoken about their sex roles, concerning nothing regarding the feminization of being a bottom in a homosexual romance. The feminization of the gay males’ bodies is generally

loathed while that of sexual roles as a bottom remains widely accepted. The responses of these three questions accentuate the contradictions between their gay identities and acceptance toward the idea of being feminized, considering the fact that “bottom” confers the meaning of being “feminized” in a patriarchal framework.

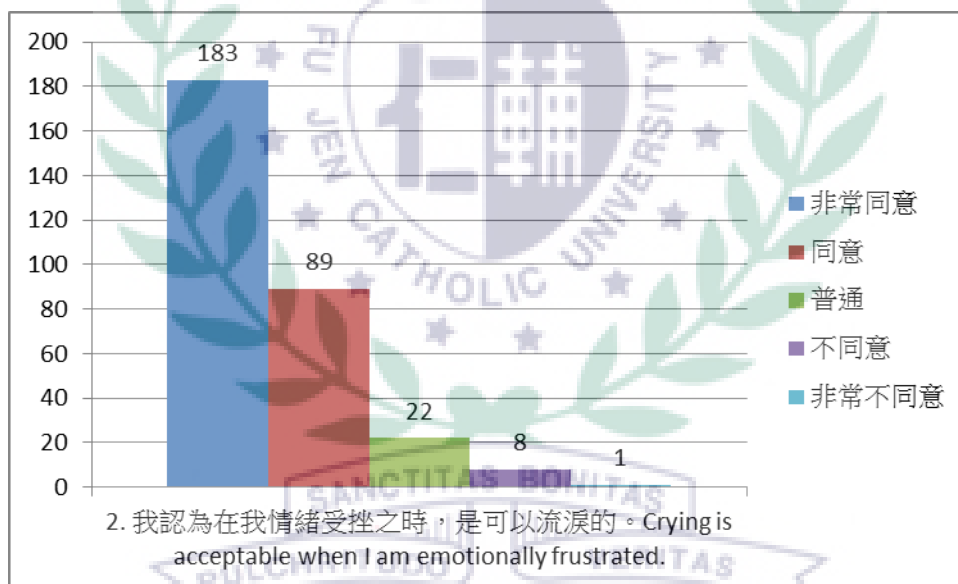
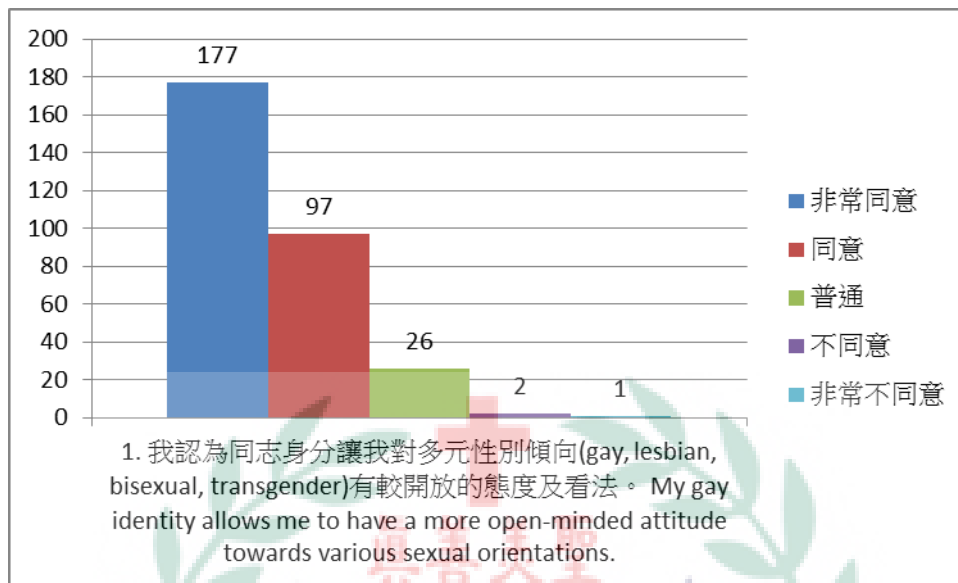
The mainstream gay culture in Taiwan is problematic because of its preference for masculinity over femininity, which fixes sex-gender within a hyper-masculine patriarchal framework. According to the results of the questionnaire, it can be known that manly or macular gay men are more preferred by members of the gay community in Taiwan. The sense of disgust on sissyness the mainstream masculine gay culture gradually develops soon makes femininity in the body of a gay male the “object” he strives to get rid of, which is termed as “sissyphobia” in Bergling’s book. (Kristeva 4). This preference for masculinity in a male body can be traced back to the oppression of heterosexual norms, which is also seen as the process of the internalization of homophobia (fearing effeminacy) and patriarchal framework. It is also known as the first layer of minoritization on gay men. After the internalization of heterosexual norms, the masculine nature of mainstream gay culture further marginalizes effeminate gays, imposing the second layer of minoritization on them. Effeminate gays eventually become the martyrs of both patriarchy and mainstream gay culture due to their sex-gender unconformity and their “queerness.” The assimilation of masculine gay men to the patriarchal framework also diminishes the inherent rebellious power of gay identities and of queerness. The mainstream masculine gay culture, at the end, will not only lose the performativity of gender, but also the power to fight against the discriminative nature of this patriarchal society. Although there is no denying that people, whether gay or not, are holding a more accepting view on effeminate males, it is still a common phenomenon that they are oftentimes marginalized by the society and even by the gay community itself. If homosexual men are voicing against the patriarchal oppression yet still imposing discrimination on femininity, there is by no means a way to reach gender equality.

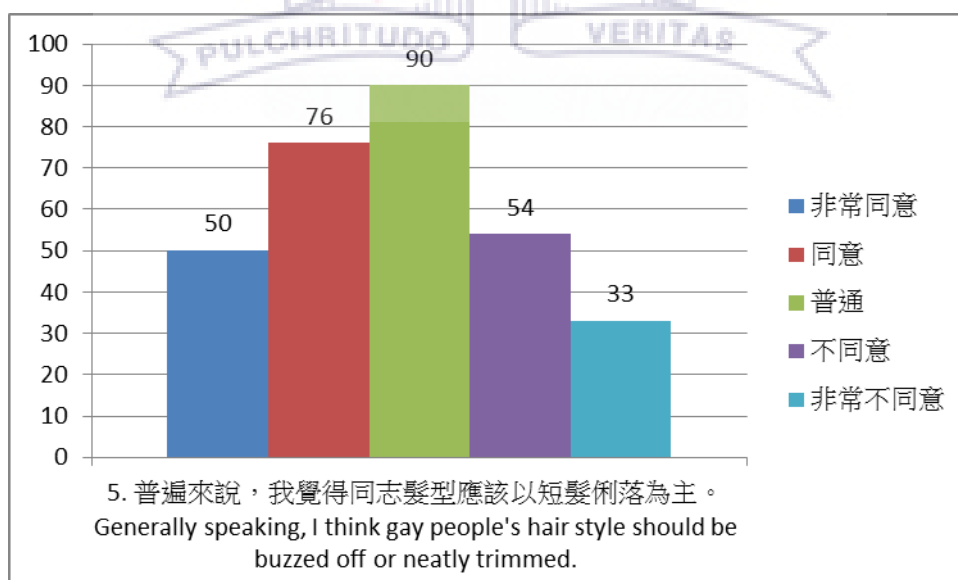
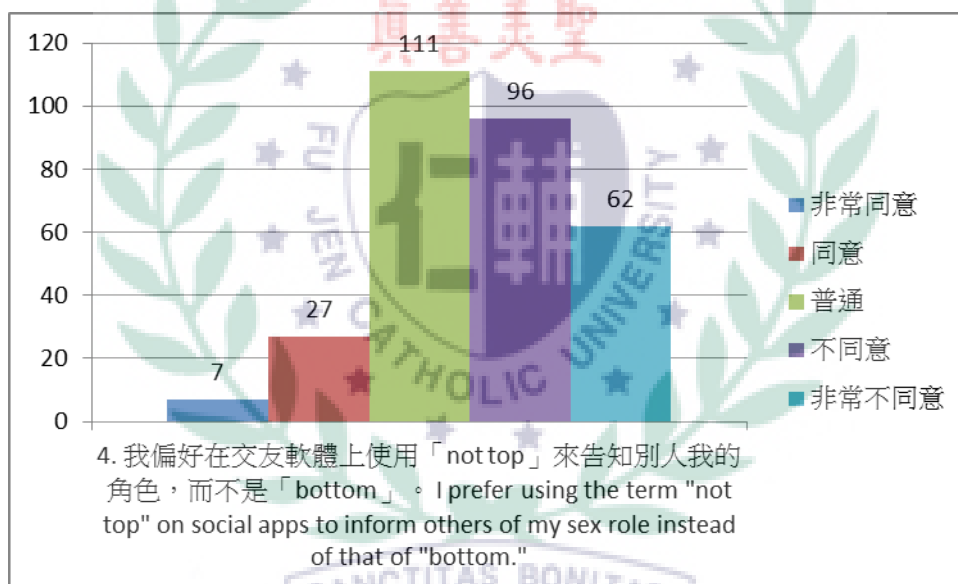
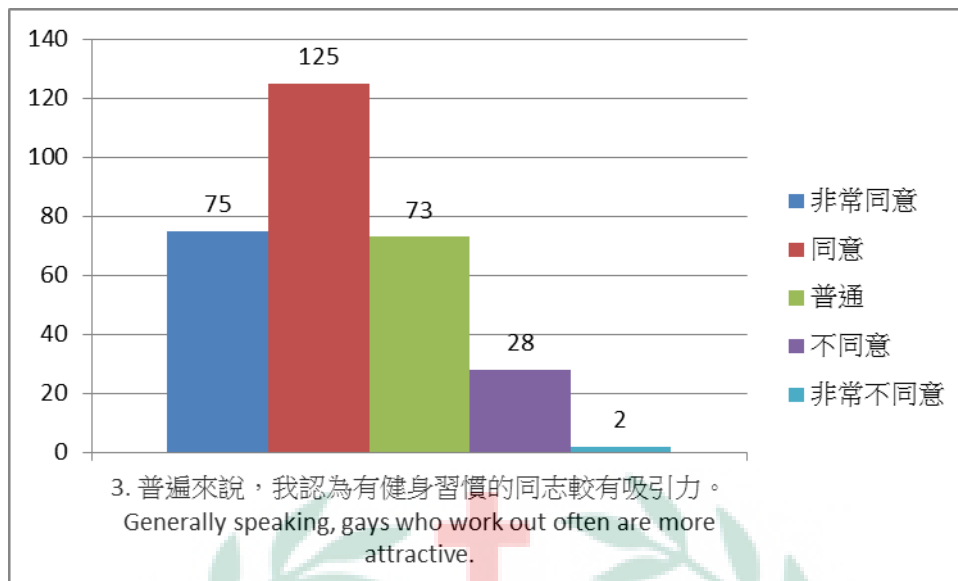


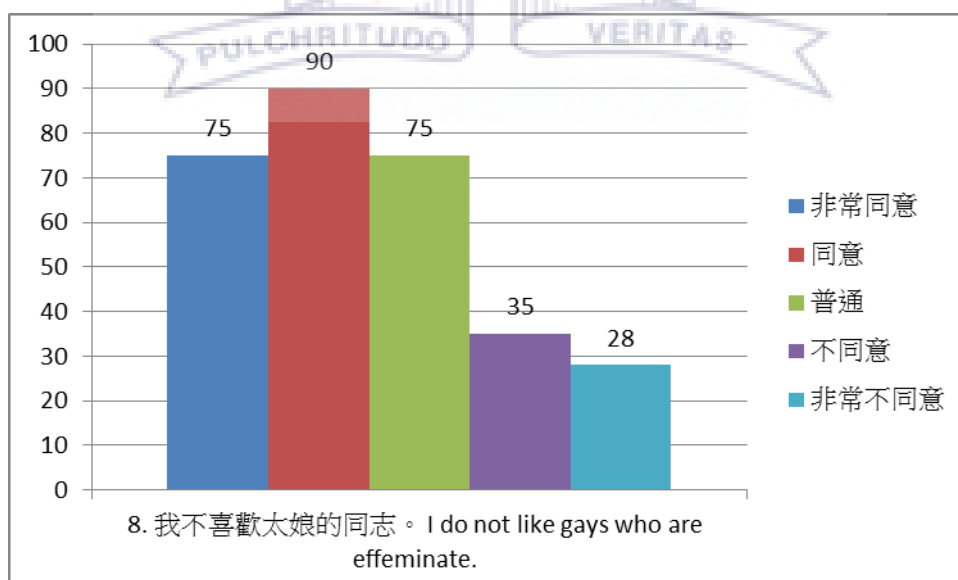
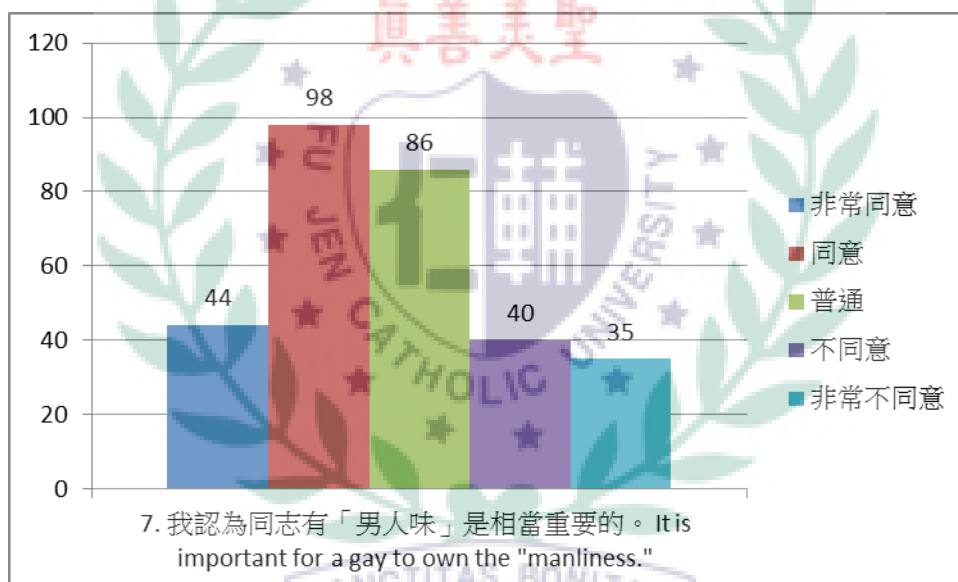
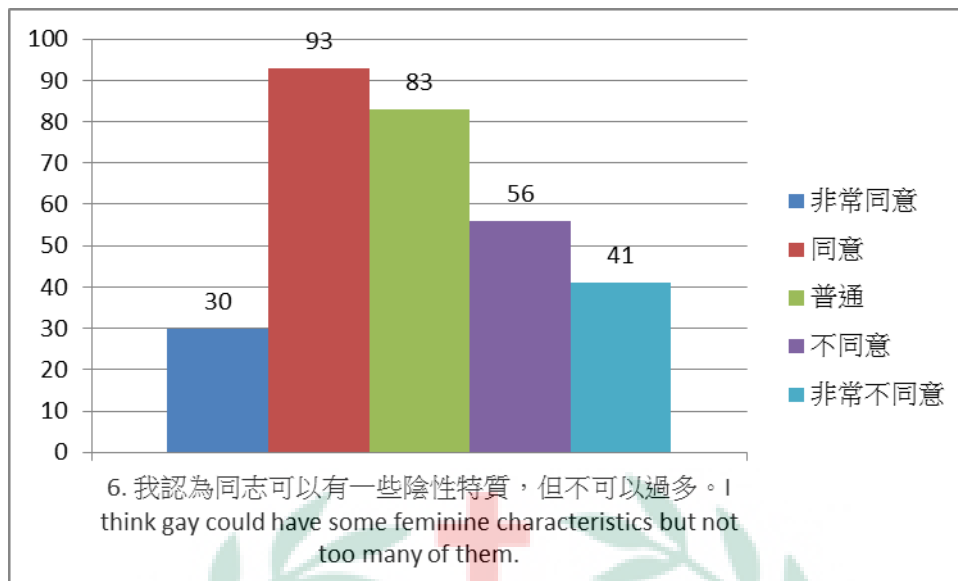
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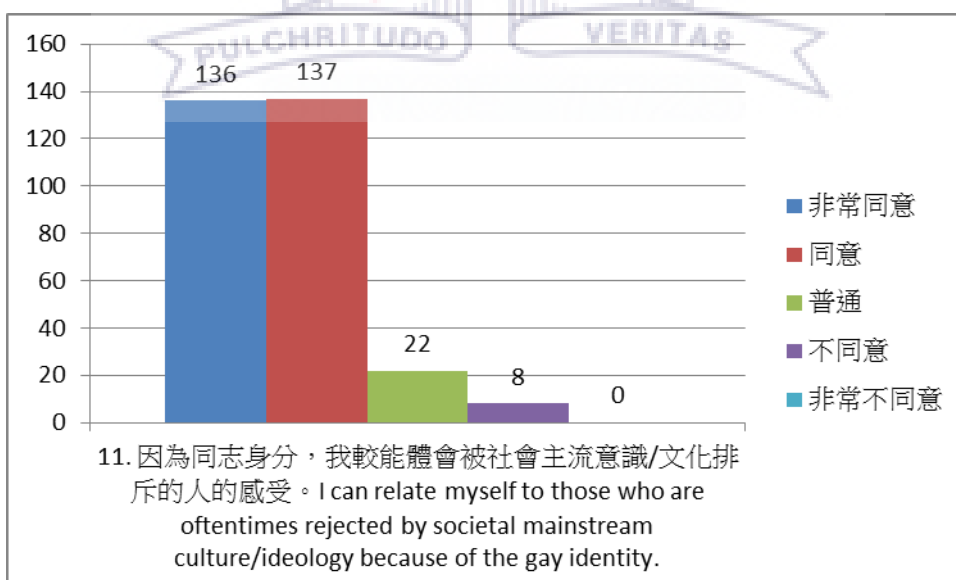
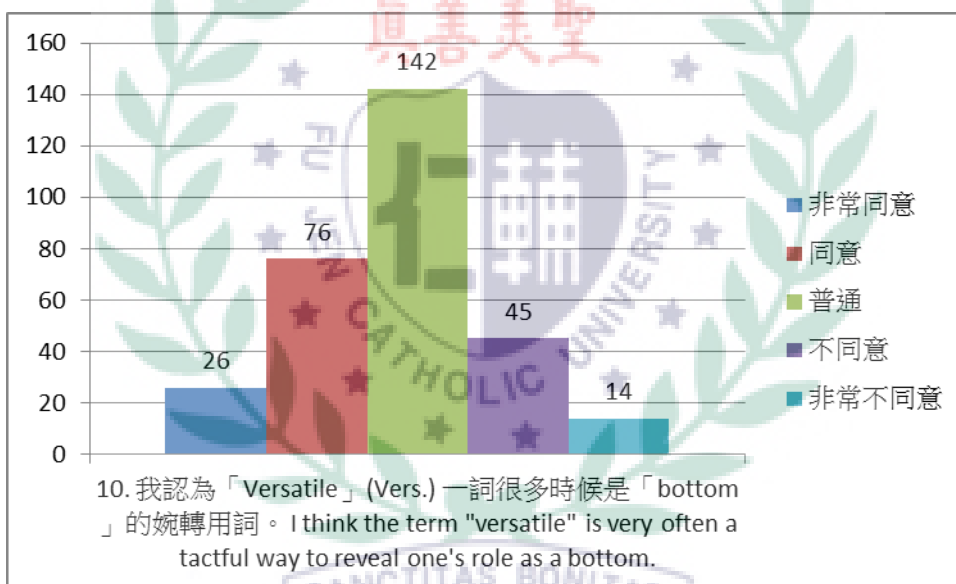
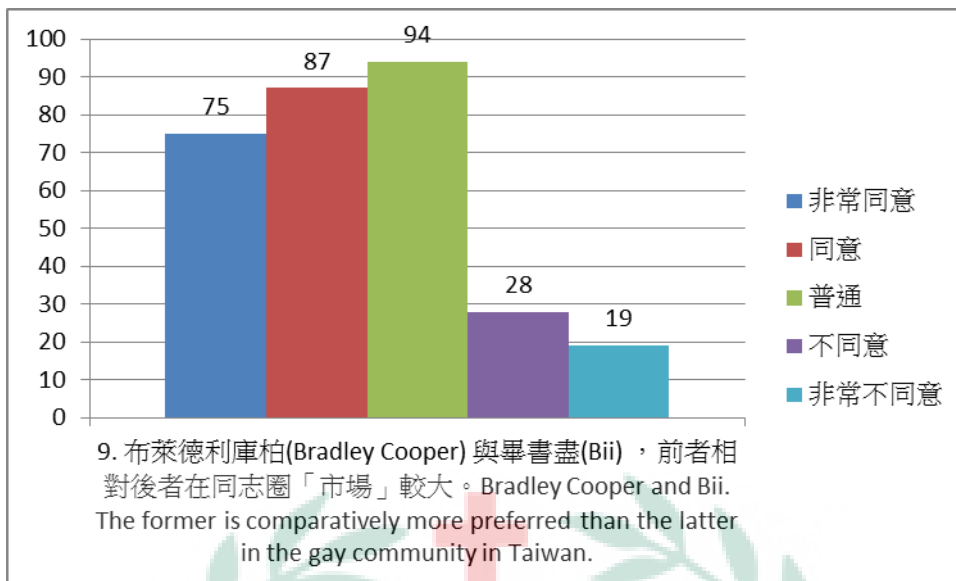
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- The watermark is a circular seal of the University of the Holy Spirit. It features a central shield with a cross and a book, surrounded by a laurel wreath. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT' is written around the perimeter. At the bottom, a banner contains the Latin motto 'SANCTITAS BONITAS PULCHRITUDO VERITAS'.

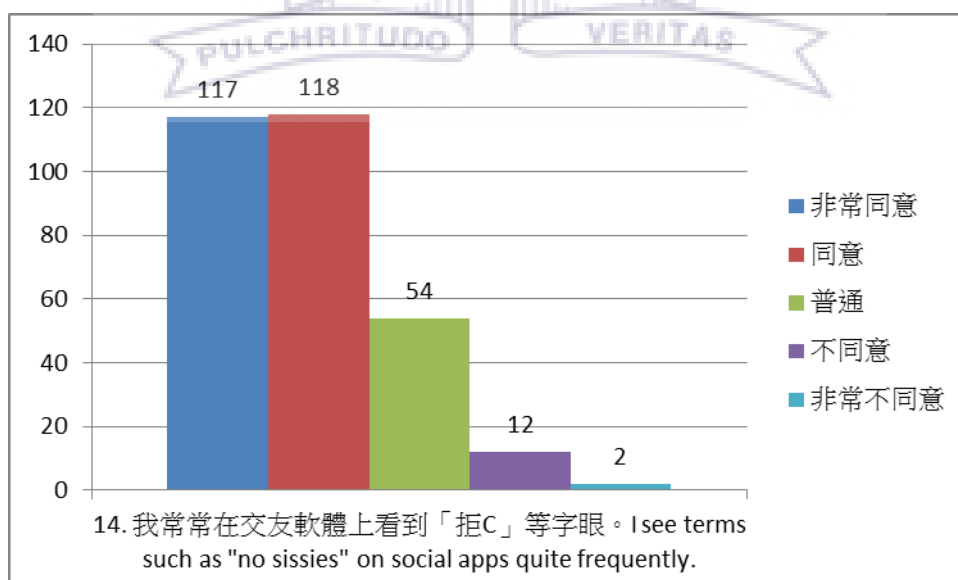
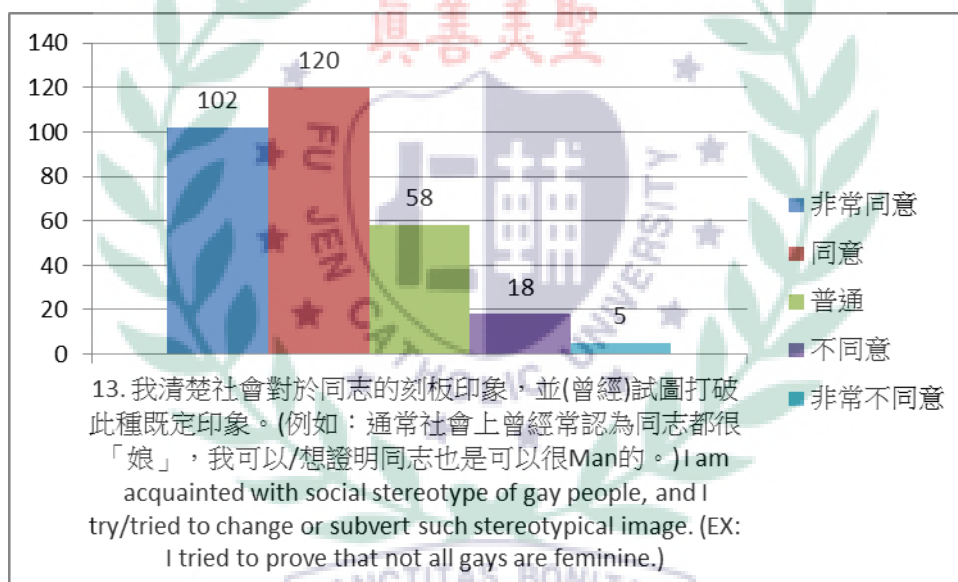
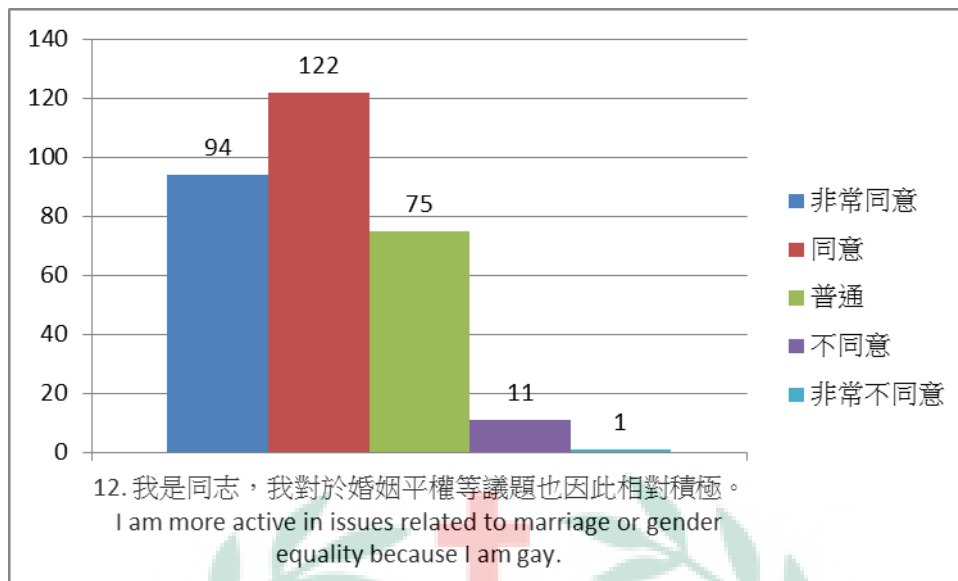
Appendix

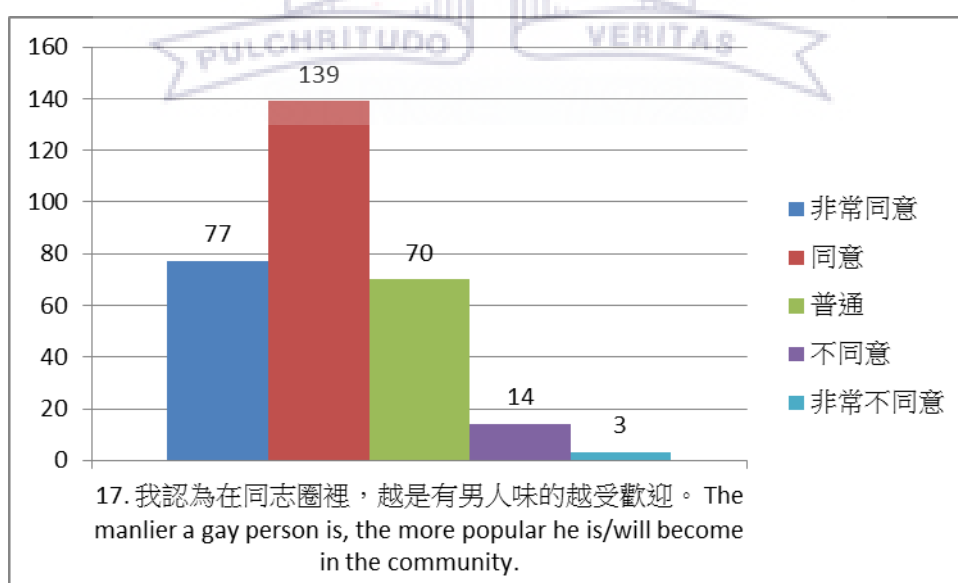
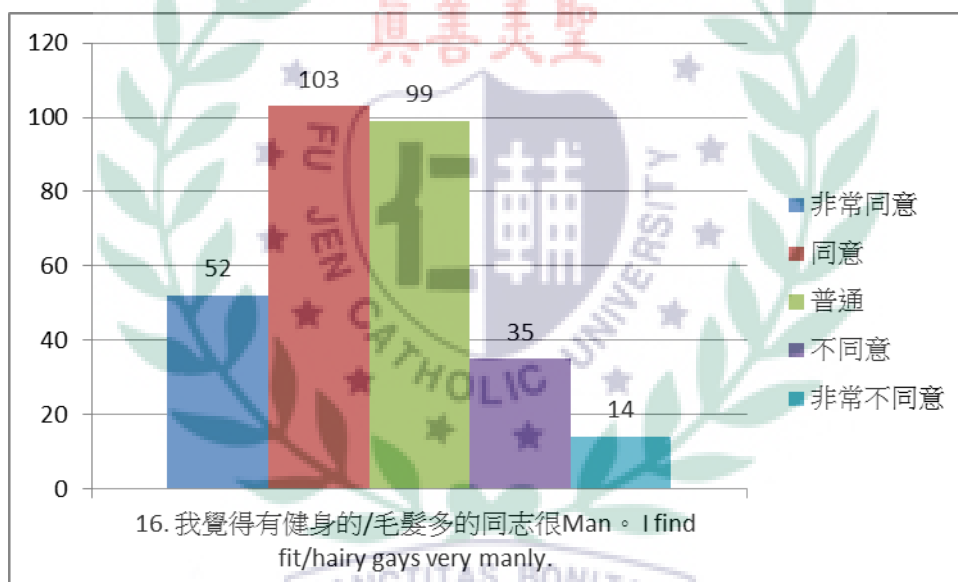
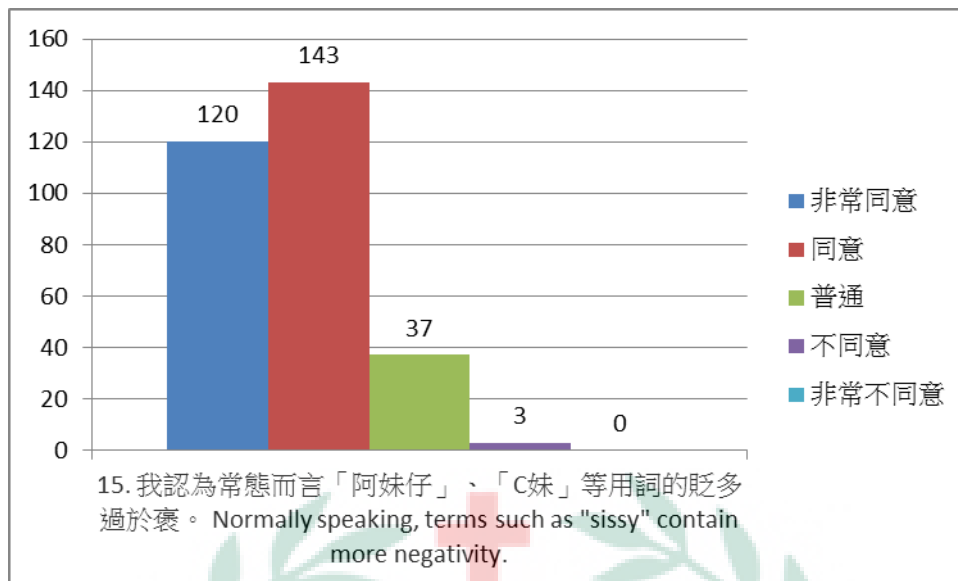


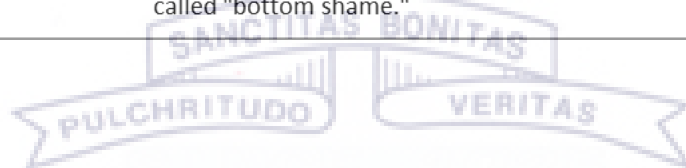
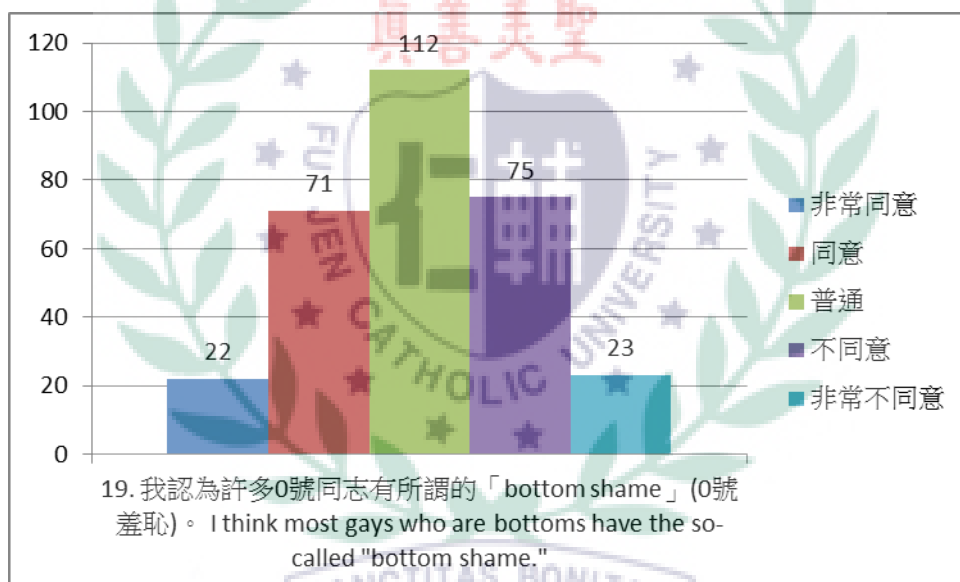
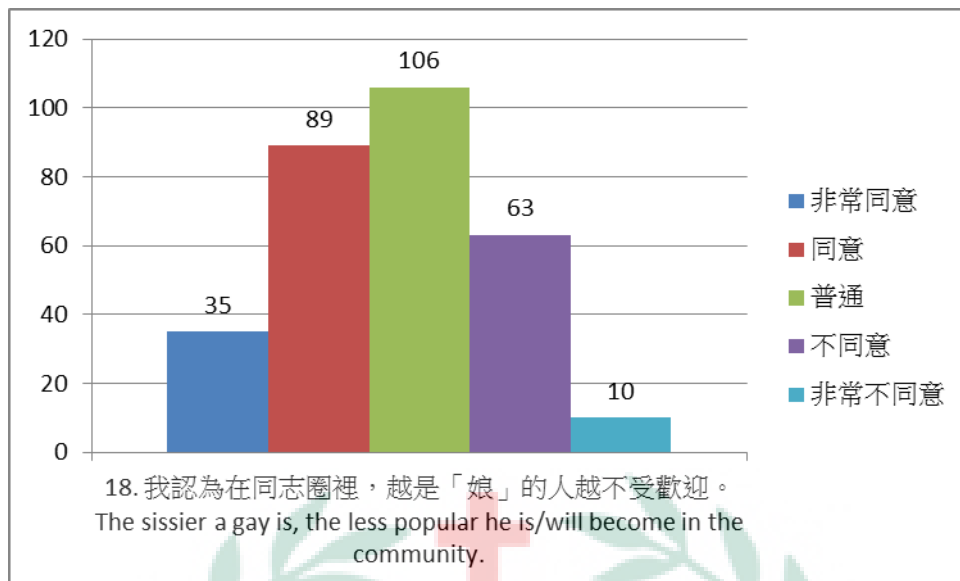












Questionnaire

男同志身分對性別特質認同之研究

各位大家好，首先感謝大家抽空填寫此問卷，裡面共有 19 題問題。我是目前就讀於輔仁大學英國語文學系三年級的學生何宗儒，指導教授為施佑芝教授。目前正著手理緒出男同志以及多元性別特質其中的關聯性，並試圖探討同志身分是否對於性別與性別特質之間的關係能有較開放的態度及看法。再次感謝您能夠抽空填寫此問卷，此問卷結果僅供個人研究及分析使用，不會對外公開，請放心填寫。若對問卷有任何疑問也歡迎在最後留下疑問及電子郵件地址。或直接寄信至 rfluence15@gmail.com 4/21: 此問卷之設計主要針對男同志圈，關於女同志這部分並未多作著墨，若有造成誤會，相當抱歉。

Good day, everyone. Thank you in advance for sparing your precious time for the questionnaire. There are 19 short questions in total. I am currently a student from the department of English Language and Literature at Fu Jen Catholic University, advised by Professor Doris Y.C. Shih. This questionnaire is designed to clarify the interrelation between male gay identity and gender characteristics. It is also to examine whether or not such identity leads to a more open-minded attitude toward unconventional gender traits within a biological male body. Thank you again for the participation, and the results are solely for personal use and research. If you have doubts, questions, or concerns regarding the questionnaire, please do leave your message and questions at the end. Or contact me directly through my email: rfluence15@gmail.com Your input is greatly appreciated. 4/21: This questionnaire is specifically designed for gay men, and it has not yet been extended to lesbian community. My sincere apology for any possible misunderstanding.

*必填

是否已出櫃? Are you out? *

是/半出櫃 Yes/It's Complicated

否 No

年齡 Age *

10~20

21~30

31~40

41~50

51 以上

1. 我認為同志身分讓我對多元性別傾向(gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender)有較開放的態度及看法。 My gay identity allows me to have a more open-minded attitude towards various sexual orientations. *

非常同意 Strongly agree

同意 Agree

普通 Meh

不同意 Disagree

非常不同意 Strongly disagree

2. 我認為在我情緒受挫之時，是可以流淚的。Crying is acceptable when I am emotionally frustrated. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

3. 普遍來說，我認為有健身習慣的同志較有吸引力。Generally speaking, gays who work out often are more attractive. *

非常同意

同意



普通

不同意

非常不同意

4. 我偏好在交友軟體上使用「not top」來告知別人我的角色，而不是「bottom」。 I prefer using the term "not top" on social apps to inform others of my sex role instead of that of "bottom." *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

5. 普遍來說，我覺得同志髮型應該以短髮俐落為主。 Generally speaking, I think gay people's hair style should be buzzed off or neatly trimmed. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

6. 我認為同志可以有一些陰性特質，但不可以過多。 I think gay could have some feminine characteristics but not too many of them. *

非常同意

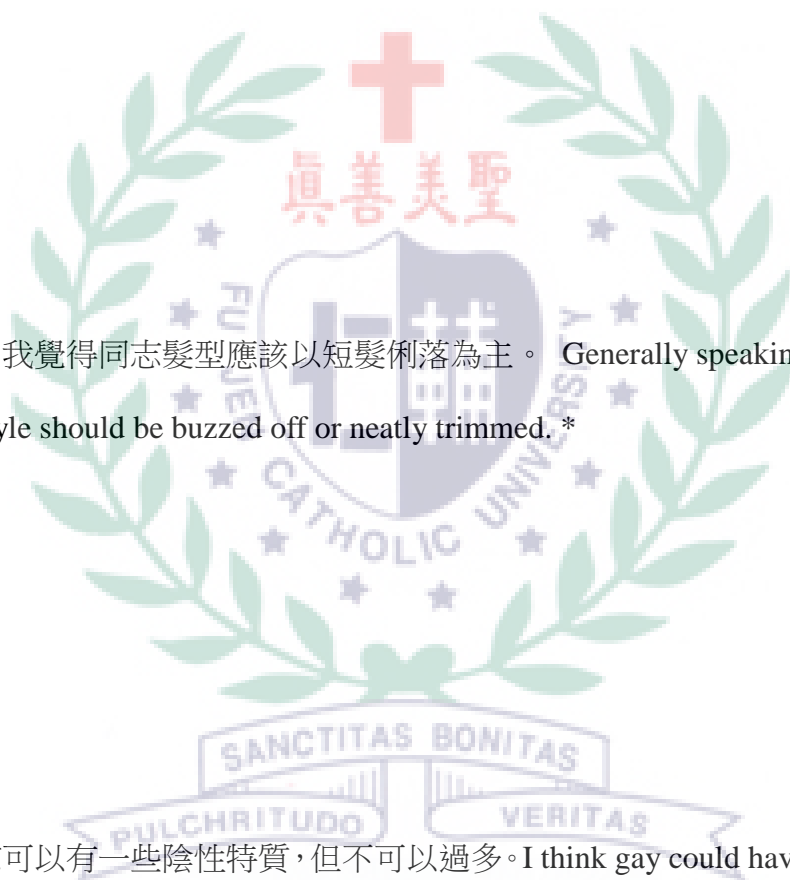
同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

7. 我認為同志有「男人味」是相當重要的。 It is important for a gay to own the "manliness."



*

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

8. 我不喜歡太娘的同志。 I do not like gays who are effeminate. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

9. 布萊德利庫柏(Bradley Cooper) 與畢書盡(Bii) ，前者相對後者在同志圈「市場」較大。 Bradley Cooper and Bii. The former is comparatively more preferred than the latter in the gay community in Taiwan. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

10. 我認為「Versatile」(Vers.) 一詞很多時候是「bottom」的婉轉用詞。 I think the term "versatile" is very often a tactful way to reveal one's role as a bottom. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意



非常不同意

11. 因為同志身分，我較能體會被社會主流意識/文化排斥的人的感受。I can relate myself to those who are oftentimes rejected by societal mainstream culture/ideology because of the gay identity. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

12. 我是同志，我對於婚姻平權等議題也因此相對積極。I am more active in issues related to marriage or gender equality because I am gay. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

13. 我清楚社會對於同志的刻板印象，並(曾經)試圖打破此種既定印象。(例如：通常社會上曾經常認為同志都很「娘」，我可以/想證明同志也是可以很 Man 的。) I am acquainted with social stereotype of gay people, and I try/tried to change or subvert such stereotypical image. (EX: I tried to prove that not all gays are feminine.) *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

14. 我常常在交友軟體上看到「拒 C」等字眼。I see terms such as "no sissies" on social apps

quite frequently. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

15. 我認為常態而言「阿妹仔」、「C 妹」等用詞的貶多過於褒。 Normally speaking, terms such as "sissy" contain more negativity. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

16. 我覺得有健身的/毛髮多的同志很 Man。 I find fit/hairy gays very manly. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

17. 我認為在同志圈裡，越是有男人味的越受歡迎。 The manlier a gay person is, the more popular he is/will become in the community. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意



18. 我認為在同志圈裡，越是「娘」的人越不受歡迎。 The sissier a gay is, the less popular he is/will become in the community. *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

19. 我認為許多 0 號同志有所謂的「bottom shame」(0 號羞恥)。 I think most gays who are bottoms have the so-called "bottom shame." *

非常同意

同意

普通

不同意

非常不同意

