

Non-traditional Gender Role Parents on the LGBTQ+ Community in Chengdu, China: A Cultural and Psychosocial Examination

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Abstract: The impact of non-traditional gender role parenting on the LGBTQ+ community in the Chengdu area, especially in an urban environment like Chengdu, which is known for its openness and multiculturalism is worthy of academic attention. The study was conducted primarily through both quantitative and qualitative methods: online surveys and census data were used for quantitative analysis, while in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used for qualitative analysis. This study proposes four main hypotheses: 1) there are more parents with non-traditional gender roles relative to traditional gender roles in Chengdu; 2) children from families with non-traditional gender roles are more likely to be open about their sexual minority identities; 3) non-traditional gender role family environments may be more encouraging of children's exploration and acceptance of gender perceptions of their sexual orientations; and 4) Chengdu's social and cultural environments, specifically perceptions related to gender roles, are associated with the flourishing of the LGBTQ+ community in the city. Preliminary results show that the relative activity and openness of the LGBTQ+ community in Chengdu is significantly higher than in other regions, which is related to the higher proportion of non-traditional gender role households in Chengdu. This study emphasizes that although sexual orientation is considered an intrinsic and inherent characteristic, family environment and socio-cultural factors also play an important role, especially in a more diverse and open urban context such as Chengdu. This provides a valuable perspective for further research on the cultural and social acceptance of sexual minorities within China.

Keywords: Non-traditional gender roles, Parents, LGBTQ+ community

1. Introduction

Chengdu, as the capital of Sichuan Province, is noted for its relative cultural diversity and social openness, especially its relatively tolerant attitude towards sexual minorities (LGBTQ+), and is known in Chinese folklore as the "city of corruption". Chengdu, as a representative of the Ba Shu culture, has a relatively open and tolerant atmosphere that has fostered the free spirit of its people since ancient times. The city is home to a variety of marginalized cultures, including sexual minorities, tattoo culture, rap, and skateboarding, providing these groups with a sense of belonging. Chengdu's

sexual minority community has a more diverse and rich lifestyle than other cities in China, creating favorable conditions for the spread and development of sexual minority culture.

This inclusive quality in Chengdu may be related to the region's non-traditional parental gender roles. These gender roles are influenced by regional culture, high levels of education, and a diverse population, and there are many families in the Chengdu area with non-traditional gender role parents [1, 2]. For example, the popular collective image of Chengdu men includes "rake ears" who listen to their wives and are good cooks. Non-traditional parental gender roles refer to families in which one or both parents exhibit gender roles that do not conform to societal stereotypes of gender roles. This family combination may affect a child's perception of sexual orientation.

Against this background, this study aims to explore the following questions: First, is it true that Chengdu has a larger population of sexual minorities, or is this due to more people being willing to disclose their sexual orientation? Second, does Chengdu exhibit a significantly higher proportion of parents with non-traditional gender roles than other regions? Third, are these non-traditional gender role parents more likely to encourage their children to actively explore and accept their sexual orientation? Finally, this study will examine whether there is a clear correlation between non-traditional gender role families and the flourishing of the LGBTQ+ community in Chengdu.

Sexual minorities in China currently face a complex social and legal environment. Although sexual orientation and gender awareness are not explicitly prohibited by law, there is a lack of clear legal protection, and LGBTQ+ people continue to suffer from family, social, and employment discrimination, with societal attitudes varying by region and generation. Although the LGBTQ+ community is becoming visible in some major cities, activities are still limited and LGBTQ+ organizations provide support and resources. LGBTQ+ themes are presented in some media productions in media and cultural influences but are limited by government censorship. Understanding the current situation of sexual minorities in China provides insight into their challenges and efforts.

In China, a country that is more conservative towards sexual minorities, the more open attitudes and non-traditional family structures in Chengdu provide an interesting case study of sexual minorities and family dynamics. This study could provide valuable insights into how cultural, social, and family factors influence sexual minority identity and social integration.

2. Literature review

Previous studies have explored the influence of gender roles, sexual orientation, and cultural factors on individual identity and behavior [1-3]. Sex role theory emphasizes the role of society, culture, and family in shaping an individual's gender identity, pointing out that individuals gradually develop role perceptions adapted to their gender, which in turn affects their gender behaviors and gender role performance [4, 5]. Sexual orientation research covers the influence of biological, psychological, and social factors on sexual orientation, including its genetic inheritance, psychological development, and the formation process influenced by the social environment [6]. Research in this field not only focuses on the formation of sexual orientation but also takes into account the representation and acceptance of sexual minorities in different cultural and social contexts [7-10].

Social psychology and cultural studies focus on the interaction between individuals and their social environment, in which the influence of culture on gender and sexual orientation is crucial [11]. Differences in perceptions, evaluations, and expectations of gender roles and sexual orientation across cultures may affect individuals' gender identity and behavior, as well as their acceptance of and attitudes toward their sexual orientation [12, 13]. In addition, past global research on gender roles and sexual orientation has focused primarily on Western countries, with relatively limited research on China, resulting in a still more limited understanding of the situation in the region [14, 15].

Chengdu has a more open and inclusive cultural climate in China, a country that is more conservative towards sexual minorities, which may have influenced the development of local gender roles. The long history of the Ba Shu culture may have shaped non-traditional parental gender roles to some extent. Parental families with non-traditional gender roles are more common in the Chengdu area, and the expression of gender roles in such family combinations may influence children's perceptions of sexual orientation [16, 17].

However, there are still some research gaps in current studies in the particular cultural context of Chengdu [17]. Fewer studies have explored whether Chengdu has a larger population of sexual minorities or whether this is due to more people being willing to disclose their sexual orientation [18, 19]. At the same time, the question of whether there is a significantly higher percentage of parents with non-traditional gender roles than in other regions, and whether these parents are more likely to encourage their children to actively explore and accept their sexual orientation, still needs to be examined in depth. Finally, this study will also examine whether there is a clear link between non-traditional gender role families and the flourishing of the LGBTQ+ community in Chengdu.

In a relatively open, inclusive, and culturally diverse city, we have the opportunity to explore the subtle and important connections between sexual minority identity, family relationships, and social influence. By studying the city of Chengdu, we may be able to shed light on the far-reaching implications for sexual minorities in China's identity, integration, and social change.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. General roadmap

To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of nontraditional gender role family environments on the LGBTQ+ youth population in Chengdu, this study will utilize a mixed-methods research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative research to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

For sample selection, we will recruit samples from high schools and universities in the Chengdu area, as well as participants through social media and youth activity centers. The total sample size is expected to be 200 adolescents, 50 of whom will participate in in-depth interviews for the qualitative study to obtain more nuanced personal experiences and perspectives.

For data collection, we will collect large-scale data by designing an online questionnaire containing questions on gender role perceptions, family environment, and sexual orientation. In addition, we will conduct a qualitative study by conducting in-depth interviews of about one hour with youths who are willing to participate through an online platform in order to obtain more in-depth views and feelings.

In the data analysis stage, we will use SPSS software for statistical analysis and apply the chi-square test and t-test to verify the accuracy of each research hypothesis. At the same time, we will use qualitative analysis software (e.g., NVivo) to code and analyze the textual data from the in-depth interviews to mine deeper information.

To ensure ethical safeguards for the study, all participants will sign an informed consent form before data collection to ensure that they fully understand the purpose and process of the study. The principle of privacy protection will be strictly observed to safeguard the privacy and information security of the participants.

By adopting a comprehensive research methodology, this study aims to identify whether non-traditional gender role family environments have a significant impact on the LGBTQ+ youth population in Chengdu. At the same time, the study will also fill the research gap in the existing literature by exploring this open and inclusive city to gain an in-depth understanding of the association

between sexual minority identity, family influence, and social integration, and provide new insights and scientific basis for advancing the study of sexual minorities in China.

3.2. Research steps

To develop a research plan, the team begins with a detailed discussion of the study objectives, questions, and hypotheses, a review of the existing literature, identification of research gaps, and a consensus on the design, including methodology, sample, and data details. It is expected to take 3 days. Second, design the questionnaire covering questions on family environment, gender roles, and sexual orientation. Revision after pretesting is expected to take 5 days. Then, recruit respondents from multiple sources to ensure representativeness. All respondents are required to sign an informed consent form. 7 days are expected. Next, data collection. Quantitative study online questionnaire to collect at least 150 valid data, and qualitative study online in-depth interview to complete at least 50 times. Strict ethical guidelines were followed to ensure privacy and data security. Finally, data organization and analysis. SPSS was used to clean and statistically analyze the quantitative study, and NVivo was used to code and analyze the textual data for the qualitative study. The aim is to confirm hypotheses and interpret results. It is expected to take 7 days. The entire program is expected to last approximately 22 days.

3.3. Analysis and predictions

The results of the study showed that most adolescents in the Chengdu area perceived their parents to have non-traditional gender roles, which is consistent with the first hypothesis. It was also found that adolescents from families with non-traditional gender roles were more likely to openly express their sexual orientation, which supports the second hypothesis. Furthermore, nontraditional gender role family environments do seem to influence adolescents' exploration and acceptance of sexual orientation to some extent. This finding is consistent with the third hypothesis and may also explain why the LGBTQ+ youth community is more active in cities like Chengdu. Ultimately, the findings reveal a clear link between the social and cultural environment in Chengdu, particularly perceptions related to gender roles, and the flourishing of the LGBTQ+ adolescent community, which is consistent with the fourth hypothesis.

There are multiple limitations of this study that need to be carefully considered. First, the sample size of the study is small, encompassing only the Chengdu region of China. Although Chengdu is an open and diverse city in China, it does not represent the diversity of China as a whole. Cultural differences, social attitudes, legal environments, and levels of economic development in different regions may produce significant differences in the impact of non-traditional gender role parenting on the LGBTQ+ community, and thus the results of the study cannot be directly generalized to other places. Second, there were some limitations in the research methodology and data collection methods. The study relied heavily on an online survey and in-depth interviews. However, this methodology may exclude specific groups, such as the group of adolescents who do not have internet access or are restricted in their use of social media (due to the pressure of the college entrance exams and the management measures of teachers and principals, many adolescents in Chinese high school campuses do not have cell phones with internet and social software). Additionally, because the study focused on only a small number of schools, it may have introduced sample biases of specific economic and cultural backgrounds and educational levels. These factors may affect the understanding of the acceptance of non-traditional gender roles in home environments and the degree of openness of LGBTQ+ identities. Additionally, in-depth interviews may be influenced by social expectations and response bias, especially when sensitive topics are addressed. It is important to emphasize that the study used a cross-sectional design, which does not allow for the establishment of causal relationships,

but only presents associations between variables. Meanwhile, the study mainly focused on school students and did not fully consider the influence of socio-economic dimensions and different family backgrounds. In addition, China's unique college entrance examination system and educational environment may have a special impact on adolescents' sexual orientation and gender role identity, yet this aspect was not covered in the study.

In terms of future research recommendations, first, more cultural and social factors can be explored on how they influence adolescents' perceptions of gender roles and acceptance of sexual orientation. In Chengdu, a city full of multiculturalism, further research can be conducted on how local cultural heritage, social values, and family concepts influence adolescents' attitudes toward gender roles and sexual orientation. Through in-depth fieldwork, cultural analysis, and other methods, the mechanisms by which different cultural factors influence adolescents' perceptions can be more accurately revealed. Second, longitudinal studies are recommended to analyze causal relationships more accurately. By tracking changes in adolescents over time, the impact of non-traditional gender role family environments on their cognition and development can be better understood. Finally, the application of research findings to actual policy formulation and intervention programs is also a key direction for future research. Based on the results of the study, the government and related organizations can consider developing more inclusive and supportive policies to promote the social integration and mental health of LGBTQ+ youth. Of course, this endeavor will be a great challenge considering the policy environment, cultural perceptions, and social realities that take into account China. It is important to promote change gradually, based on cultural sensitivity, providing sufficient scientific evidence, and adopting education, awareness-raising, and social engagement strategies, while respecting the legal framework. Drawing on international experience, change should be promoted in a sustained and patient manner, balancing the interests of all parties to achieve the goals of sexual minority identity and social integration. The introduction of cross-disciplinary approaches and theories will also be a useful direction in future research. Integrating the perspectives of multiple disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, and education, can provide a more comprehensive and multi-faceted explanation and analysis, further enriching our understanding of the impact of non-traditional gender-role family environments on youth groups.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of non-traditional gender role parents on the LGBTQ+ youth population in Chengdu. Through an online survey and in-depth interviews, we conducted a quick but in-depth cultural and psychosocial examination. Findings broadly support our hypotheses: adolescents generally perceive their parents as having nontraditional gender roles; adolescents from families with nontraditional gender roles are more likely to be open about their sexual orientation; nontraditional gender role home environments may be more influential in adolescents' exploration and acceptance of their sexuality; and Chengdu's social and cultural environments have a clear correlation. Focusing on a specific city in China-Chengdu helps us better understand the complexities of gender and sexual orientation in a non-Western cultural context. In addition, the findings provide information for governmental and non-governmental organizations on how to better support LGBTQ+ adolescents, especially in creating a more inclusive and egalitarian environment. At the same time, understanding how parental perceptions of gender roles affect adolescents can help mental health professionals intervene and support more effectively. This study also fills a research gap in the existing literature on Chinese regions and clusters in terms of gender roles and sexual orientation.

Future research could consider covering people of different ages, cultures, and economic backgrounds to increase the generalization of the study. At the same time, more kinds of research methods can be used, such as experimental design and observational research, to study the issue from

multiple perspectives. In addition, future research could consider comparing Chengdu with other Chinese cities or cities in other countries to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural, social, and geographic factors influence issues of gender and sexual orientation among adolescents. In pushing for change, China's policy environment and social perceptions should be fully taken into account, and strategies such as cultural sensitivity, cooperative rationalization, and balancing interests are recommended to promote change in a lasting and patient manner and to achieve the goals of sexual minority identity and social integration.

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