

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Young Adults' Relational Well-Being Before and After Taiwanese Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage: A Qualitative Study Protocol

Yu-Te Huang¹ 

Abstract

In 2019, Taiwan became the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage. Such an historic shift in the legal landscape toward marriage equality in Taiwan presents a timely and unique opportunity to investigate the interplay of a lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB)-affirmative policy (i.e., marriage equality) and the well-being of LGB people. Existing quantitative studies on same-sex marriage have yielded compelling evidence about its positive effects on LGB individuals' psychosocial health. However, no research has examined the relational dimension of the effect associated with same-sex marriage policy. Furthermore, a relational focus requires a researcher to solicit narratives from LGB young adults' significant others (e.g., parents). This research project seeks to address these gaps by addressing whether legalization of same-sex marriage in Taiwan will improve Taiwanese LGB young adults' relational well-being. Qualitative data were collected from 30 in-depth, dyadic interviews with 15 LGB young Taiwanese adults aged between 18 and 39 years and their parents. Each participant took part in two interviews conducted before and after the passage of the legalization of same-sex marriage, respectively. Transcribed interviews will be analyzed following an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) where we seek insight into a social actor's inner perceptions in a wider context of social relationships. Multiple measures will be undertaken to ensure study rigor. Findings from this study will add to the evaluative endeavors of marriage equality policy enacted in Taiwan by highlighting relational well-being and the perspectives of LGB young adults' relevant others.

Keywords

hermeneutic phenomenology, qualitative evaluation, interpretive phenomenology, narrative, observational research

Background

On May 24 2019, Taiwan became the first Asian country to legally recognize same-sex marriage (Ho, 2019). This historic moment was preceded by several years of heated debate starting in 2014 when a number of legislators introduced the *Marriage Equality Bill*. The Bill passed its first reading in the Legislative Yuan (the Taiwanese parliament) on November 8, 2016, and was then endorsed by the Judiciary and the Organic Laws and Statutes Committee on December 26, 2016, before proceeding to party negotiations. Later, the passage of the *Marriage Equity Bill* was thwarted by Christian-oriented opposition groups who claimed that same-sex marriage would cause social problems and moral corruption, hence serving no public interest (Ho, 2019). Amid massive divergence of opinion, the Taipei City Government, along with gay rights activist Chia-Wei Chi, filed a petition for

constitutional interpretation. On May 24, 2017, Taiwan's Constitutional Court announced *Interpretation No. 748* in favor of same-sex marriage. By the ruling, the Court deemed the existing civil laws unconstitutional because they violated the democratic principles of freedom to marry and equal rights. The Court further commanded the Legislative Yuan to either amend the existing laws or pass a new one within 2 years.

¹ Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Corresponding Author:

Yu-Te Huang, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong, Rm515, Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus, Hong Kong.
Email: yuhuang@hku.hk



Such a shift in Taiwan's legal landscape had long been sought by sexual minority people who have been historically marginalized and denied accesses to various social entitlements associated with civil union status; it also presents a unique opportunity to conduct a prospective investigation into the interplay of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB)-affirmative policy and a person's interpersonal experiences—specifically, marriage equality and the relational well-being of LGB individuals. While pertinent empirical literature has unanimously indicated the positive effects of the legalization of same-sex marriage on LGB individuals' psychosocial well-being, this study will shed novel light on this topic by collecting and analyzing dyadic perspectives to disentangle the relational consequences of marriage equality. The findings generated from this study will provide LGB rights activists and legislators with a holistic understanding of the consequences of a social policy that is designed to foster equal rights (Held, 2007). Importantly as well, this study can enrich ongoing scholarly efforts in theorizing the pathway from policy-level discrimination to individual well-being by highlighting the relational and cultural specificities of Chinese LGB identities.

Study Justification

Defined as a state-level anti-discrimination policy (Lee & Ostergard, 2017), legal recognition of same-sex relationships is known to facilitate an array of legal and psychosocial protections for LGB individuals. In their daily lives, legal recognition affords same-sex couples access to tangible financial benefits and family security, along with an institutional and symbolic mechanism to define their intimate relationships (Lannutti, 2005; Philpot et al., 2016; Wight et al., 2013). Furthermore, at a societal level, legalization of same-sex marriage is contingent upon and reflective of a greater social acceptance of sexual diversity and improved visibility of sexual minorities (Flores & Barclay, 2016; Hooghe & Meeusen, 2013).

According to minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003), a decline in distal minority stressors, such as heterosexist harassment, interpersonal rejection, and/or institutional discrimination, can make a general contribution to LGB individuals' improved physical and mental health status. Over the past few decades, this theoretical postulation has received support from numerous population-based studies. For example, several U.S. studies found that same-sex couples who obtained legal recognition exhibited better mental health outcomes and lower internalized homophobia than those who did not obtain legal recognition (Riggle et al., 2010; Wight et al., 2013). Literature on the structural form of stigma (Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2011) also identified a lower rate of psychiatric morbidity among LGB individuals who lived in states that had (1) higher concentrations of LGB populations, (2) legal protections against hate crimes and employment discrimination, and (3) legalization of same-sex marriage. A recent longitudinal study provided strong evidence for the positive mental health effects of state legalization of same-sex marriage on sexual minority youth (Raifman et al., 2017). In view of this evidence, marriage

is not only a civil right but also an embodiment of social acceptance that carries a range of psychosocial benefits (Herek, 2006). Despite these promising findings, a critical appraisal of the extant literature regarding the implications of same-sex marriage identifies three problems that entail alternative methodological approaches: (1) a disproportionate focus on personal well-being, (2) decontextualized understanding of same-sex marriage, and (3) lack of significant others' accounts. This proposed study was conceived in response to these identified research shortcomings.

A Disproportionate Focus on Personal Well-Being

According to Erikson's (1959) psychosocial developmental theory, young adulthood represents a critical developmental stage for building and/or sustaining family and intimate relationships. While for LGB young adults same-sex marriage has the potential to create "a new context for relationships" (Lannutti, 2005, p. 16), scant research has been undertaken to examine how a policy change supportive of same-sex marriage may translate into shifts within LGB individuals' connections within their relational networks. While most studies about same-sex marriage concentrate on health and mental health disparities—using depression, anxiety, and suicidal attempts as outcome indicators—these studies appear circumscribed in their evaluative approach by defining well-being solely as an individually acquired entity, thereby overlooking humans' deep reliance on meaningful and reciprocal interactions with others.

According to relational cultural theory (Jordan, 2009; Singh & Moss, 2016), the formation of reciprocal relationships is a pivotal human yearning that is essential for personal growth and development. In this vein, the phenomena that are associated with a lack of mutual relationships—poor quality of relationships, loneliness, internalized sense of shame, and higher self-concealment—have been conceptualized as the pathways by which distal institutional discrimination impinges upon individualized health and mental health outcomes (Legate et al., 2012; Mereish & Poteat, 2015). Barriers to relational transactions and an enduring feeling of isolation are detrimental to an individual's health and mental health, particularly within marginalized communities (Atkinson, 2013; Prilleltensky, 2005; Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010). As Umberson and Karas Montez (2010) suggest, because social policy plays an important contextual role in either forging or fragmenting social ties, studies that are concerned with LGB individuals' well-being should address the relational dimension.

Recent studies have begun to employ a concept of *relational well-being* that goes beyond an individual-level focus to delineate the dynamic interpersonal processes and outcomes linked to the implementation of social policies and direct interventions (Myers et al., 2017; White, 2017). When applied in a policy analysis, this relational perspective directs researchers to ascertain whether a policy can serve a proactive goal of helping people live well together through fostering social ties and relationship qualities. In principle, the notion of relational well-being emphasizes that promoting a person's well-being

requires understanding the individual within a specific cultural and relational context.

Prilleltensky (2005) describes the manifestation of relational well-being in the forms of “caring, respect for diversity, reciprocity, nurturance and affection, support, collaboration, and democratic participation in decision-making process” (p. 55). Per Donati and Archer (2015), when viewing citizens as “relational subjects,” policy makers should strive to create relational goods. Several writers have promoted the merits of investigating how a policy enhances citizens’ well-being—not solely through an acquisition of benefits but by fostering reciprocal relationships (Atkinson, 2013; Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010). Responding to this call for investigation, this study explores the implications of same-sex marriage on relationships.

Decontextualized Understanding of Same-Sex Marriage

In the Chinese cultural context, wherein interdependence often overrides independence, the impact of same-sex marriage needs to be examined through a culturally sensitive lens. In particular, cross-cultural psychologists have devised the notion of *self-construal* to delineate the ways in which an individual constructs his/her conception of the self. A striking cross-cultural difference lies in the varying degrees to which individuals consider development and maintenance of an intimate, quality relationship as a basis of self-satisfaction (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In this vein, many studies have characterized East Asian people as having *relational-interdependent self-construal* in viewing relational harmony as the foundation of personal happiness (Cross et al., 2000; Kitayama et al., 2000; Yi et al., 2014).

This *self-in-relation construal* can be observed in the daily lives and narratives of LGB young adults who live in East Asian countries. It is typified by Chinese LGB individuals’ hesitation in and strategic approaches to disclosing their sexual identities to close family members (Chou, 2001). While some scholars interpret a lower rate of individuals’ coming-out as resulting from internalized stigma and societal intolerance (Chow & Cheng, 2010), emerging narrative analyses have revealed that the maintenance of relational harmony is the core reason why many Asian LGB individuals opt for an indirect, incremental, and tacit disclosure strategy. This has been understood as a pursuit of balance between personal autonomy and harmony within a relational context (Wang et al., 2009). Such perceived salience of relational harmony—along with a gentle self-disclosure gesture rather than a Westernized assertive coming-out—fundamentally challenges the dominant identity-politics discourse where coming-out is confrontational, desirable, and presumably positive for all LGB individuals (Chou, 2001). This literature contributes contextualized insight and highlights a culturally sensitive perspective in exploring the relational dimensions of the lives of LGB people in Asian countries.

From a cultural perspective, this study posits that legal recognition of same-sex relationships will benefit LGB individuals’ relational well-being within their families by affording

them the possibility of establishing a legally and culturally recognized family. With Confucianism’s prioritization of family values, homosexuality could be deemed a transgression of Chinese cultural norms and is therefore more likely to be disapproved in Confucian countries than in Europe or the United States (Adamczyk & Cheng, 2015). Other studies also show that the endorsement of *filial piety values*—where continuing a familial line takes precedence over individual goals—is negatively associated with Chinese sexual minorities’ self-acceptance (Hu & Wang, 2013; Huang et al., 2020). Taken together, these findings speak to the cultural specificity inherent in Chinese LGB individuals’ daily lives and identities that are deeply situated in their family relationships.

In light of these cultural characteristics, Chou (2001) thus proposes “coming home” (p. 35), in contrast to “coming-out,” as an indigenous rhetoric of Chinese LGB people’s self-affirmation given that a major concern in LGB individuals’ coming-out is their parents’ reactions and the consequence for parent-child relationships. When same-sex relationships are not legally recognized, there could be a constant tension between LGB young adults and their parents who may be unwilling to relinquish hope that their children will get married in order to avoid blame for disrespecting ancestors (Wang et al., 2009). It is therefore possible that legalization of same-sex marriage will open opportunities for LGB individuals to reclaim their identity while integrating themselves into the family and cultural context. These cultural characteristics should be taken into account by research on the outcomes of legalizing same-sex marriage, thus advancing theoretical understanding of the effects of institutional destigmatization by considering intersection of policy and culture.

Lack of Significant Others’ Accounts

Much policy analysis has revealed the coincidence of legalizing same-sex marriage and progressive changes in public attitudes and behaviors toward homosexuality (Flores & Barclay, 2016; Hooghe & Meeusen, 2013). In contrast, institutional inequalities on the grounds of sexual orientation have been found to exacerbate the rate of hate crimes because they promote spaces for bias, discrimination, and violence (Levy & Levy, 2017). Certainly, this line of investigation provides policy makers with valuable information because societal attitudes profoundly matter in the lives of LGB individuals (Ryan et al., 2010; Shilo & Savaya, 2011). However, these studies of public attitudes may have limited capacity to inform LGB-affirmative policies, since they did not collect in-depth accounts of real-life, interpersonal experiences, and are subject to compromised validity because of social desirability and response biases. Moreover, extant studies fail to identify the underlying forces that lead people to modify their judgments about and interaction with LGB young adults. As a consequence, the experiential and relational implications of same-sex marriage remain largely unknown.

In fact, some studies have shown that LGB individuals’ sense of relational connectivity is closely tied to the

perceptions of and interactions with other people in their immediate environment (Doty et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2010). However, these findings are largely reliant on LGB individuals' self-reports and can be criticized for ignoring the complexity of relationships that are full of dyadic discrepancies (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010). As such, narratives from LGB young adults' close others provide an important insight to enhance our understanding of the consequences of marriage equality.

It is important to look into LGB young adults' relational domains that are not romantic, yet are equally consequential. Previous studies have examined the impact of legalized same-sex unions on the ways in which LGB individuals perceive and manage their romantic relationships (Rothblum et al., 2011; Solomon et al., 2004), but there have been no studies of LGB young adults' parents' understanding of and reactions to same-sex marriage. While same-sex marriage will bring about tangible and significant changes in sociocultural and institutional spheres, a compelling yet unanswered question lies in whether and how legalization gives rise to qualitative differences in the perceptions and attitudes of LGB young adults' family members.

Study Objectives and Research Questions

Marriage equality is anticipated to result in equal access to legal and health benefits—as well as increased social inclusivity—which may, in turn, function to improve LGB individuals' connections within their immediate networks and in society at large. The objectives of this study are to (1) evaluate the impact of legalization of same-sex marriage on LGB young adults' relational well-being, (2) theorize the implications of same-sex marriage beyond the Western independence-oriented paradigm, and (3) illuminate the implications of same-sex marriage from the perspectives of LGB young adults' parents.

While empirical evidence about the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage is accumulating, this study extends current knowledge by exploring the impact of legalization of same-sex marriage in Taiwan on Taiwanese LGB young adults' relational well-being. Specific research questions are: (1) Do LGB young adults change their ways of engaging in and interpreting their relationships with their parents as a result of the legalization of same-sex marriage? In what specific ways have any changes been evident? (2) Do LGB young adults' parents change their ways of engaging in and interpreting their relationships with LGB young adults as a result of the legalization of same-sex marriage? In what specific ways have any changes been evident? (3) What are the social and cultural mechanisms through which legalization of same-sex marriage shapes relationships between LGB young adults and their parents?

Explanation and Justification of Methods

This study is a prospective inquiry into the real-time impact of the legalization of same-sex marriage on Taiwanese LGB young adults' relational well-being. Given that an individual's relational well-being is characterized by complexity,

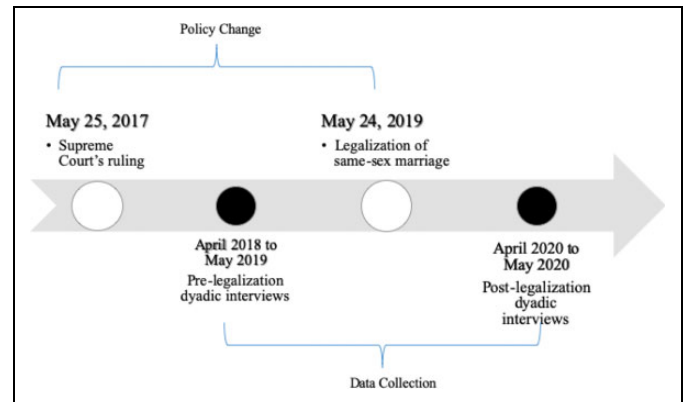


Figure 1. Timeline of data collection.

temporality, variability, and contextual specificity (White & Jha, 2014), these often-elusive properties embedded in a person's relational context can be better captured by a qualitative method. While quantitative methods remain dominant in the area of policy evaluation, narrative research that aims to reveal the thematic and storied nature of personal experiences can inform the policy-making process by elucidating the complex interplay between a person's daily, lived experience and social-political structure (Frost & Ouellette, 2011).

The research questions lend themselves to IPA whereby a researcher seeks insight into a social actor's inner perceptions in a wider context of social relationships (Houston & Mullan-Jensen, 2011). The final product of IPA is thematic descriptions that illuminate the structure of lived experiences. Rooted in Martin Heidegger's philosophy, IPA suggests a path to uncover the meaning of an experience constructed within everyday practical activities (Smith et al., 2009). In essence, IPA is both idiographic and contextual in interpreting the meaning of an individual's "being-in-the-world" (*dasein*) and exploring how one's choices are influenced by these meanings (Houston & Mullan-Jensen, 2011). Given this person-in-context perspective, IPA is well suited for this study focused on relationships.

Data and Sample

In this study, data were collected from in-depth, dyadic interviews with LGB young adults and their designated parents. Each dyad participated in two interviews conducted immediately before (April and May 2019) and 11/12 months after (April and May 2020) the legalization of same-sex marriage in Taiwan, respectively (see Figure 1), in order to capture the evolution of relational well-being and lived experiences during the policy change. *Dyadic interviews* have been increasingly promoted as an instrumental technique for phenomenological research to gain an extensive understanding of relationship qualities, contextual and processual factors, and consequences from multiple reporters' viewpoints (Morgan et al., 2013; Taylor & Vocht, 2011; Ummel & Achille, 2016). Whether conducted individually or jointly, dyadic interviews are aligned with the tenet of IPA by bringing the presence of a relevant

other into the interview context (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010). In search of multiple and comparative narratives, dyadic interviews enable us to pinpoint shifts in the relationships between dyads as a function of the same-sex marriage policy.

Participant Recruitment

The design of dyadic interview in this study thus entailed two elements of recruitment: (1) LGB young adults and (2) LGB young adults' parents who assume a vital role in LGB young adults' relational well-being. Four criteria were applied to recruit LGB young adults to participate in face-to-face interviews to narrate their thoughts and experiences in relation to same-sex marriage. Eligible participants needed to (1) be aged between 18 and 39 years; (2) self-identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual; (3) reside in Taiwan, holding citizenship or permanent residency; and (4) agree to refer a parent to take part in an interview. In light of the challenges in recruiting both LGB individuals who are "hard-to-reach, stigmatized, [and] hidden" (Guest et al., 2006) and consenting dyads (Gumede et al., 2019), purposive sampling was undertaken via multiple recruitment sites. We distributed: (1) recruitment flyers to LGB-related service agencies such as Tongzhi Hotline Association (in Taipei), Sunshine Queer Centre (in Kaohsiung), and Taichung G-Di (in Taichung); (2) recruitment advertisements on social media (e.g., Facebook) and smartphone communication applications frequented by LGB individuals (e.g., Grindr, Jack'd, Blued). We also employed snowball sampling through which participants were encouraged to refer other potentially eligible participants. Over the first phase of data collection, 15 dyads (i.e., 30 respondents in total) were recruited, a number deemed sufficient for the purposes of IPA (Creswell, 1998; Guest et al., 2006).

In order to form interview dyads, the principal investigator (PI) asked LGB participants to pass recruitment information to one of their parents and invite him/her to participate. To prevent any risk of unexpected self-disclosure resulting in unwanted consequences, we informed prospective participants of our intention to also recruit a parent and advised them to consider participation in the study only if his/her parent(s) knew about his/her sexual identity. Notably, this strategy not only created a challenge in recruiting eligible dyads but also posed a study limitation since all participating parents were already aware of their children's sexual orientation. It was therefore beyond our capacity to observe attitudinal changes in parents who were unsure or unaware of their children's sexual orientation and resulted in a reliance on participating parents' retrospective accounts of coming to terms with this issue.

Separate Dyadic Interviews

After obtaining independent and informed consent from each participant, the PI and a research assistant conducted semi-structured interviews with each member of the dyad separately in order to gather as much personal information as possible and to ensure authenticity of narratives (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010;

Ummel & Achille, 2016). The duration of each individual interview was 1.5–2 hr. Interviews began with an explanation of the study focus, followed by provision of an interview guide (see supplemental material) to facilitate the participant's reflection and narration. However, each participant was encouraged to determine the order, scope, directions, and depth of the interview questions. The interview guide was modified during the simultaneous processes of data collection and analysis (Crist & Tanner, 2003).

Interview questions that were asked prior to the policy change explored (1) overall and current state of the dyadic relationship, (2) past development of the dyadic relationship, (3) the role and meaning of an LGB sexual orientation in this dyadic relationship, (4) unique experiences and situations bearing distinctive meanings for their relational well-being, and (5) envisioned influence of the legalization of same-sex marriage on the dyadic relationship. In the interviews conducted after the legalization of same-sex marriage, the dyads were asked to describe (1) specific decisions and experiences associated with the passage of the same-sex marriage policy, (2) shifts in their relationships caused by the legalization, and (3) immediate implications of the legalization of same-sex marriage on their dyadic relationships.

Data Analysis

Following completion of the second phase interview, dyadic interview data will be analyzed following a systematic process where related statements will be synthesized into clusters of meaning (Crist & Tanner, 2003). Synthesis will first occur within an interview then shift to cross-case, dyadic-level interpretations (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010; Larkin et al., 2006). Using NVivo (version 12) to analyze the data, the PI and a research assistant will jointly embark on a four-phase analytical procedure, following the format outlined by Crist and Tanner (2003):

1. In the *early focus and line of inquiry phase*, we will appraise the progress of interviews and closely read each line of narrative.
2. The second stage will move to *central concerns, exemplars, and paradigm cases*. We will identify in the interview the primary *concerns* across interviews. Representative quotes (*exemplars*) that can resonate with other participants' accounts will emerge at this stage. A particularly compelling narrative will be marked as a *paradigm case*, which will be more closely examined from multiple perspectives.
3. By repeatedly examining the concerns, exemplars and paradigm cases, phase three aims to indicate the *shared meaning* arising from the analysis. At the same time, the interpretative element of IPA entails a constant dialogue with an external body of theories so as to "reveal something as something else" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 116).
4. *Final interpretation* will be reached when we find little room for additional interpretations and decide that the data have adequately answered the research questions.

Study Rigor

A number of measures have been and will be undertaken to fulfill the trustworthiness criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). (1) *Credibility* refers to a researcher gathering, analyzing, and reporting data and findings without manipulation. To address this issue, in the interview, the PI made a conscious effort to maintain closely attentive to the interview process. Including a research assistant as a second coder also helps strengthen credibility. (2) *Transferability* refers to the extent to which the research findings are applicable beyond the current study setting and context. While most qualitative studies do not intend to produce transferable findings, providing thick and contextual descriptions about the participants enables future studies to gauge the utility of the study results in other contexts. To aid assessment of transferability, the sample's demographics will be presented. The criterion of (3) *dependability* requires us to demonstrate that a research process and its generated findings are reliable. This has been achieved by memoing and writing field notes throughout the research process to document the PI's immediate interview reactions and initial thoughts. This record allows us to chart the operation and evolution of our presumptions while on the analytic path and will be analyzed along with transcripts (Koch, 1996). Finally, (4) *conformability* concerns the researcher's ability to verify and substantiate the research findings. All the measures outlined above—including dyadic interviews, the interviewer's open attitude, prolonged engagement (i.e., multiple interviews), multiple coders, provision of thick descriptions, and memo-writing—are instrumental in obtaining conformability.

Ethical Issues

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University of Hong Kong research ethics committee (#EA1802085). The ethical concerns involved in this project cover voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the do-no-harm principle. Specifically, prospective participants were given full advance information of the purpose of the study, proposals to audio-record interviews, storage strategies, transcription, duration of data retention, potential risks associated with the project, and their freedom to withdraw from the study before signing the written informed consent form. Given the design of the dyadic interview, an LGB young adult interested in participating in the study also needed to obtain his/her parent(s)' consent to take part. This helped ensure voluntary participation of both parties and avoid unexpected and unwanted disclosure of LGB participants' sexual identity to their parents.

Participants' confidentiality was protected by the following measures. Each interview was conducted in a convenient private space in which each participant felt comfortable. All interviews were audio-recorded, and audio recordings were encrypted and stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to the PI and research assistant who guaranteed to protect participants' personal identity and information throughout the research process, including in any resultant reports or

publications. Dyadic interviews may raise particular ethical concerns regarding confidentiality and the relationship between dyads and may possibly undermine the freedom of narration (Bjornholt & Farstad, 2014; Gumede et al., 2019). In response, we conducted interviews with LGB participants and their parents separately and reassured participants that their accounts would not be disclosed to the other party. When a narrative discrepancy between dyads arose, the interviewers neither confronted the participant about this nor introduced the competing account but rather sought the participant's individual interpretation (Gumede et al., 2019).

It was anticipated that the interviews might incur very limited psychological discomfort for LGB participants with prior experience of being rejected or having difficulty in accepting him/herself and that participating parents may experience unpleasant feeling when narrating the process of learning about their children's sexual orientation. In such situations, the PI and the research assistant were in a position to provide emotional support and referral to relevant professional services where necessary. Throughout the data collection period, no participants exhibited clinically noteworthy distress and required professional services. Each participant received 600 NTD per interview as a token of appreciation; this was considered proportionate to his/her time and transportation expenses and unlikely to pose a coercive inducement.

Conclusion

To extend extant literature on the effects of same-sex marriage in promoting personal well-being, this study will further elucidate the consequences of marriage equality on LGB young adults' relationships with their relevant others. The anticipated findings will provide policy makers and LGB rights activists with richer evidence in their advocacy endeavors. This study will also contribute to culturally competent practice with LGB young adults by illuminating the interplay between same-sex marriage policy and their intimate relationships, preparing practitioners to work with LGB individuals and their relevant others to navigate the policy change and relationship adjustments.

Over the past few decades, scholars have made remarkable advances in theorizing about the ways in which societal and institutional discrimination and inequality can compromise LGB individuals' health among which Meyer's (1995) minority stress theory and Hatzenbuehler's (2016) notion of structural stigma are seminal theories. The former has established a theoretical link between experiences of being stigmatized (such as prejudicial events and victimization) and various psychological outcomes; the latter extends distal minority stress to a structural and policy level. Gaining increasing empirical support, these theories have laid a cornerstone for the marriage equality campaign. However, we argue that these theoretical works are predicated upon the Western identity-politics paradigm that foregrounds an individual's pursuit of personal interests, autonomy, and well-being. As the first prospective empirical investigation into the implications of same-sex marriage on relationships in a Chinese context, this study will

contribute to theory construction about the impact of marriage equality by incorporating the relational and cultural aspects.


Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Research grants council, university grants committee (Early Career Scheme 27616418).

ORCID iD

Yu-Te Huang  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6861-8144>

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

References

- Adamczyk, A., & Cheng, Y.-H. A. (2015). Explaining attitudes about homosexuality in confucian and non-confucian nations: Is there a “cultural” influence? *Social Science Research, 51*, 276–289. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2014.10.002>
- Atkinson, S. (2013). Beyond components of wellbeing: The effects of relational and situated assemblage. *Topoi, 32*(2), 137–144. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-013-9164-0>
- Bjornholt, M., & Farstad, G. R. (2014). “Am I rambling?” On the advantages of interviewing couples together. *Qualitative Research, 14*(1), 3–19.
- Chou, W.-S. (2001). Homosexuality and the cultural politics of Tongzhi in Chinese societies. *Journal of Homosexuality, 40*(3–4), 27–46. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v40n03_03
- Chow, P. K.-Y., & Cheng, S.-T. (2010). Shame, internalized heterosexism, lesbian identity, and coming out to others: A comparative study of lesbians in mainland China and Hong Kong. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 57*(1), 92–104.
- Creswell, J. D. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Sage.
- Crist, J. D., & Tanner, C. A. (2003). Interpretation/analysis methods in hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology. *Nursing Research, 52*(3), 202–205.
- Cross, S. E., Bacon, P. L., & Morris, M. L. (2000). The relational-interdependent self-construal and relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(4), 791–808.
- Donati, P., & Archer, M. (2015). *The relational subject*. Cambridge University Press.
- Doty, N. D., Willoughby, B. L. B., Lindahl, K. M., & Malik, N. M. (2010). Sexuality related social support among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 39*(10), 1134–1147. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9566-x>
- Eisikovits, Z., & Koren, C. (2010). Approaches to and outcomes of dyadic interview analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 20*(12), 1642–1655. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732310376520>
- Erikson, E. H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle*. International Universities Press.
- Flores, A. R., & Barclay, S. (2016). Backlash, consensus, legitimacy, or polarization: The effect of same-sex marriage policy on mass attitudes. *Political Research Quarterly, 69*(1), 43–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912915621175>
- Frost, D. M., & Ouellette, S. C. (2011). A search for meaning: Recognizing the potential of narrative research in social policy-making efforts. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 8*(3), 151–161.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822x05279903>
- Gumede, D., Ngwenya, N. B., Namukwaya, S., Bernays, S., & Seeley, J. (2019). A reflection on ethical and methodological challenges of using separate interviews with adolescent-older carer dyads in rural South Africa. *BMC Medical Ethics, 20*, 47. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-019-0383-9>
- Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2011). The social environment and suicide attempts in lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Pediatrics, 127*(5), 896–903. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2010-3020>
- Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2016). Structural stigma: Research evidence and implications for psychological science. *American Psychologist, 71*(8), 742–751.
- Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Keyes, K. M., & McLaughlin, K. A. (2011). The protective effects of social/contextual factors on psychiatric morbidity in LGB populations. *International Journal of Epidemiology, 40*(4), 1071–1080.
- Held, J. M. (2007). Gay marriage, liberalism, and recognition: The case for equal treatment. *Public Affairs Quarterly, 21*(3), 221–233.
- Herek, G. M. (2006). Legal recognition of same-sex relationships in the United States: A social science perspective. *American Psychologist, 61*(6), 607–621.
- Ho, M.-S. (2019). Taiwan’s road to marriage equality: Politics of legalizing same-sex marriage. *The China Quarterly, 238*, 482–503. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741018001765>
- Hooghe, M., & Meeusen, C. (2013). Is same-sex marriage legislation related to attitudes toward homosexuality? *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 10*(4), 258–268. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-013-0125-6>
- Houston, S., & Mullan-Jensen, C. (2011). Towards depth and width in qualitative social work: Aligning interpretative phenomenological analysis with the theory of social domains. *Qualitative Social Work, 11*(3), 266–281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325011400484>
- Hu, X., & Wang, Y. (2013). LGB identity among young Chinese: The influence of traditional culture. *Journal of Homosexuality, 60*(5), 667–684. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.773815>
- Huang, Y. T., Chan, R. C. H., & Cui, L. (2020). Filial piety, internalized homonegativity, and depressive symptoms among Taiwanese gay and bisexual men: A mediation analysis. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000439>
- Jordan, J. V. (2009). *Relational-cultural therapy*. American Psychological Association.
- Kitayama, S., Markus, H. R., & Kurokawa, M. (2000). Culture, emotion, and well-being: Good feelings in Japan and the United States. *Cognition and Emotion, 14*(1), 93–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/026999300379003>

- Koch, T. (1996). Implementation of a hermeneutic inquiry in nursing: Philosophy, rigour and representation. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 24, 174–184.
- Lannutti, P. J. (2005). For better or worse: Exploring the meanings of same-sex marriage within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22(1), 5–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026540750505049319>
- Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 102–120.
- Lee, C., & Ostergard, R. L. (2017). Measuring discrimination against LGBTQ people: A cross-national analysis. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 39(1), 37–72.
- Legate, N., Ryan, R. M., & Weinstein, N. (2012). Is coming out always a “good thing”? Exploring the relations of autonomy support, outness, and wellness for lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 3(2), 145–152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550611411929>
- Levy, B. L., & Levy, D. L. (2017). When love meets hate: The relationship between state policies on gay and lesbian rights and hate crime incidence. *Social Science Research*, 61, 142–159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.06.008>
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224–253.
- Mereish, E. H., & Poteat, V. P. (2015). A relational model of sexual minority mental and physical health: The negative effects of shame on relationships, loneliness, and health. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 62(3), 425–437. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000088>
- Meyer, I. H. (1995). Minority stress and mental health in gay men. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 36(1), 38–56.
- Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, bisexual populations: Conceptual issues. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674–697.
- Morgan, D. L., Ataie, J., Carder, P., & Hoffman, K. (2013). Introducing dyadic interviews as a method for collecting qualitative data. *Qualitative Health Research*, 23(9), 1276–1284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732313501889>
- Myers, N. D., Prilleltensky, I., Prilleltensky, O., McMahon, A., Dietz, S., & Rubenstein, C. L. (2017). Efficacy of the fun for wellness online intervention to promote multidimensional well-being: A randomized controlled trial. *Prevention Science*, 18(8), 984–994. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-017-0779-z>
- Philpot, S. P., Ellard, J., Duncan, D., Dowsett, G. W., Bavinton, B. R., Down, I., Keen, P., Hammoud, M. A., & Prestage, G. (2016). Gay and bisexual men’s interest in marriage: An Australian perspective. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 18(12), 1347–1362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2016.1184314>
- Prilleltensky, I. (2005). Promoting well-being: Time for a paradigm shift in health and human services. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 33(Suppl. 66), 53–60.
- Raifman, J., Moscoe, E., Austin, S., & McConnell, M. (2017). Difference-in-differences analysis of the association between state same-sex marriage policies and adolescent suicide attempts. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 171(4), 350–356. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2016.4529>
- Riggle, E. D. B., Rostosky, S. S., & Horne, S. G. (2010). Psychological distress, well-being, and legal recognition in same-sex couple relationships. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 24(1), 82–86. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017942>
- Rothblum, E. D., Balsam, K. F., & Solomon, S. E. (2011). Narratives of same-sex couples who had civil unions in Vermont: The impact of legalizing relationships on couples and on social policy. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 8(3), 183–191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-011-0054-1>
- Ryan, C., Russell, S. T., Huebner, D., Diaz, R., & Sanchez, J. (2010). Family acceptance in adolescence and the health of LGBT young adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 23(4), 205–213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6171.2010.00246.x>
- Shilo, G., & Savaya, R. (2011). Effects of family and friend support on LGB youths’ mental health and sexual orientation milestones. *Family Relations*, 60(3), 318–330. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00648.x>
- Singh, A. A., & Moss, L. (2016). Using relational-cultural theory in LGBTQQ counseling: Addressing heterosexism and enhancing relational competencies. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 94(4), 398–404. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12098>
- Smith, J. A., Flower, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Sage.
- Solomon, S. E., Rothblum, E. D., & Balsam, K. F. (2004). Pioneers in partnership: Lesbian and gay male couples in civil unions compared with those not in civil unions and married heterosexual siblings. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 18(2), 275–286.
- Taylor, B., & Vocht, H. D. (2011). Interviewing separately or as couples? Considerations of authenticity of method. *Qualitative Health Research*, 21(11), 1576–1587. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732311415288>
- Umberson, D., & Karas Montez, J. (2010). Social relationships and health: A flashpoint for health policy. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 51(Suppl. 1), S54–S66.
- Ummel, D., & Achille, M. (2016). How not to let secrets out when conducting qualitative research with dyads. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(6), 807–815. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315627427>
- Wang, F. T. Y., Bih, H. D., & Brennan, D. J. (2009). Have they really come out: Gay men and their parents in Taiwan. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 11(3), 285–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050802572711>
- White, S. C. (2017). Relational wellbeing: Re-centring the politics of happiness, policy and the self. *Policy & Politics*, 45(2), 121–136. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557317X14866576265970>
- White, S. C., & Jha, S. (2014). Inner wellbeing: The wellbeing and poverty pathway approach. In S. C. White & A. Abeyasekera (Eds.), *Wellbeing and quality of life assessment: A practical guide*. Practical Action Publishing.
- Wight, R. G., LeBlanc, A. J., & Lee Badgett, M. (2013). Same-sex legal marriage and psychological well-being: Findings from the California health interview survey. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(2), 339–346.
- Yi, L., Gore, J. S., & Kanagawa, C. (2014). Relational motivation and well-being: A cross-cultural comparison. *Japanese Psychological Research*, 56(4), 320–330. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpr.12056>