

Constructing a Measurement tool for Sexual and Gender Identities in Chinese

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Abstract

Introduction: The implementation of public policy relies on high-quality scientific data. One's sexual and gender identities resemble other social identities which are related to health, social justice, and economic status. Therefore, standardized validated measurement tools should be developed. The objective of this study is to construct a validated sexual orientation and gender measurement tool in Chinese that can be applied to Taiwanese at the very least.

Method: We selected questions of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression from questionnaires used in previous studies and translated them into Chinese. An expert panel validated the translation, and the content validity index (CVI) was calculated. Candidates willing to participate in the research were recruited from social platforms or online LGBTQ+ communities. Initial screening separated them into a transgender group and six cisgender groups, including heterosexual females, heterosexual males, lesbians, gay men, bisexual people, and other gender minorities. In order to demonstrate major concerns in a pretest questionnaire, we selected candidates from variant demographic backgrounds from the seven gender groups. Two individuals from each gender group were invited sequentially to yield a targeted sample size of 14 to complete the translated questionnaire. After participants filled out the translated questionnaire, the interviewer carried out cognitive interviews immediately to assess participants' experiences of completing the questionnaire. We then utilized MAXQDA to analyze the performance of sexual orientation and gender questions.

Results: A final sample of 16 participants was recruited due to the fact that some of the participants changed their sexual identity during the study. Cognitive interviewing analysis confirmed that those who changed their sexual identity after initial screening were affected by the sexual attraction question. Results showed that gender minorities were significantly younger and had a higher educational level. Regarding the three dimensions of sexual orientation, 12(85.71%) of the participants reported some form of same-gender/sex attraction with only 8(57.14%) chose to maintain an LGBTQ+ identity. A relatively confined group with four participants (28.57%), reported same-sex behavior in the past five years. That is, participants experiencing same-gender/sex attraction might not identify as LGBTQ+ or experienced same-sex behavior. In terms of gender expression items, the appearance item demonstrated good agreement (ICC=0.81) while the mannerisms item showed only moderate agreement (ICC=0.67). However, a wide range of confidence intervals (CIs) was observed in both appearance (95% CI: 0.47, 0.93) and mannerisms items (95% CI: 0.01, 0.89).

Conclusions: This study observed complexities associated with measuring sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in the Taiwanese context. The questionnaire we constructed was able to capture the sexual orientation and gender of the participants and the revised version of the questionnaire can be applied to investigate sexual orientation and gender in Chinese-speaking populations, in Taiwanese at least.