

EVEN WE ARE FAMILY: SOCIO-CULTURAL MEANING OF VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBT IN TAIWAN

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Abstract

With feminist groups' advocates, in 1998 Taiwan enacted the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA). Restricted by conservative patriarchal ideologies, the DVPA however only serves to provide protection for heterosexual partners, particularly for those married couples. Those lesbians and gay men who endure intimate partner violence are excluded from the protection of the preservation order. This situation has not been changed until the amendment in 2007. Since then, the protection of the preservation order has been extended to homosexual couples. Since 2000, the United Nations have conducted global investigation of violence against women, but ignored the experience of violence against LGBT. In Taiwan enormous studies regarding violence against women on heterosexual partners have been published but little discussion on domestic violence against LGBT or homophobia. Therefore, this article, based on data from internet survey and media representation on newspaper since 1951, explores the socio-cultural meaning of violence against LGBT within the family relations and gender order context in Taiwan.

Keywords: LGBT, violence against women, homophobia, preservation order, socio-cultural metaphor.

INTRODUCTION

Due to addocation by feminist and lesbian groups, in 1998 Taiwan enacted the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA). Restricted by both conservative patriarchal ideologies and the Confucian familism, the DVPA however only provides protective order for heterosexual partners, particularly married couples. Lesbians and gay men are excluded from the protection of the DVPA. In 2007 the protective order was extended to homosexual partners, and further to non-cohabitant partners after 2015.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) has become a global issue, but in many countries it is often referred as domestic or marital violence. In Taiwan, numerous studies on domestic violence have published since the past of the DVPA. Thee22 scope of these studies has not gone beyond heterotypical marital relationship. Despite diversities in topics (i.e., types of IPV, impacts of IPV on victims, attitude toward IPV, help-seeking, service delivery, and intervention

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programs),these researches pay little attention to the same-sex IPV. There are only few studies on issues regarding the same-sex IPV but these studies are predominately qualitative and unpublished master thesis. In addition, sources of these studies are mainly from lesbians rather from gays or bisexuals (Lin, 2012; Zhuang, 2008; Tseng, Shieh & Hsiao, 2008; Wen,2008).The lack of empirical studies on the same-sex IPV in Taiwan could prevend us from understanding the phenomenon of IPV against lesbians and gay men.

In Western countries, numerous studies on the same-sex IPV have been published since the first article published in 1978 (Diamond & Wilsnack, 1978). These studies predominately focus on IPV against lesbians but pay little attention to gays and bi-sexual (Bruke & Follingstad, 1999). Results of these studies show a similarity of IPV-prevalence between heterosexual and homosexual partners (Brown & Groscup,2009; Distefano,2009; Senn, 2010). Limited by the unknown population of homosexuality, these studies can only draw data from non-random sampling. Due to the atmosphere of homophobia,

these studies can only collect information predominately by self-administered questionnaire or telephone survey (Bernhard, 2000; Fortunata & Kohn, 2003; Owen & Burke, 2004; Tjaden, Thoennes, & Allison, 1999). For these two major restrictions, it is difficult to predict the prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men.

For instance, a study in the United States using telephone survey with 16,000 males and females shows that the prevalence of IPV against homosexuals is higher than heterosexuals. One-year prevalence for gays is 4.1-10% and 2.6-4.1% for lesbians. Near a quarter of lesbian interviewees report experiences of physical violence in life-time (Brand & Kidd, 1986). Based on a mail survey with 1000 respondents (500 male, 500 female) in Virginia, Owen & Burke (2004) find that 34 of 66 respondents have experiences on IPV. Lie & Gentlewarriery (1991) conducts a survey with 1099 lesbians in Michigan reporting 52% of the respondents who have experiences on psychological, sexual, or physical violence in life-time by their partner. With 90 lesbian couple interviews, Coleman (1998) demonstrates that 46% of the subject have experiences on partner abuse. Fortunata & Kohn (2003) report 33% of IPV-prevalence based on a survey of 161 lesbians and bisexuals with 62% response rate. Bernhard's study (2000) based on 215 convenient samples shows that the prevalence of physical violence against lesbians (51%) violence is higher than heterosexual women (33%), while there is no difference in sexual violence. In summary, the prevalence of all types of IPV against the same-sex is about 25-33%, 17-52% for lesbians (Peterman & Dixon, 2003; Ristock, 2003).

Studies of IPV against the same-sex are predominately centered on lesbians rather than gays or bisexuals. Why most researchers concentrate on lesbian IPV? One reason for explanation is that theories on IPV are mainly from feminist perspectives which emphasize power asymmetry between sexes. Under the patriarchal society which emphasizes female inferiority and male superiority, women often become the victim of IPV because violence is regarded as a strategy by male to control female. However, the notion of power asymmetry can only explain the IPV against heterosexual partner rather than the same-sex IPV. It is not appropriate for

explaining the same-sex IPV (Shu-Man Pan, 2007; Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Renzetti, 1992; Rohrbaugh, 2006). Calhoun Card (1994), a lesbian feminist theorist, ever questions the appropriateness of power asymmetries for explaining the same-sex IPV. For Card, there is significant difference in sexual identity between lesbians and heterosexual women. Lesbian identity usually develops in terms of social role, not by heterosexual partner relationship. Yet heterosexual women identity develops in terms of the dichotomy of masculinity/femininity (Levitt, Gerrish, & Hiestand, 2003).

Pan, Yang & Lin (2012) also challenge the appropriateness of power asymmetry for explaining the same-sex IPV. This study could be the only one published in Taiwan addressing issue of IPV against lesbians. Based on in-depth interviews with 16 lesbian victims, this study explores the experience and type of IPV against lesbians. This study also addresses the extent to which the phenomenon of IPV against lesbians can be interpreted by feminist viewpoint of power asymmetries between sexes. Pan et al., (2012) do not reject feminist assumption of power asymmetries on the same-sex IPV, but they suggest an inclusion of cultural factors and look into how these cultural factors such as the Confucian familism and gender order become intermediation.

When we address issue regarding IPV, we have to look into how Confucianism shape the dynamic of everyday relation in Taiwan. Familism and gender order are often cited for defining the Confucian society. The concept of familism usually refers to the family based on father-to-son axis and the face of the family, while the logic of gender-order impose male-superiority and female-inferiority dichotomy (Koebel & Murray, 1999; Zhang, 2009). According to the dogma of three-abide and four-virtue, a good woman should follow the rule by her father, her husband, and her son as she is unmarried, married, or in her widowhood life stage (Chen & Yo, 2001). Therefore, a never married woman will bring shame to the family. Influenced by the Confucian ideology, a lesbian in Taiwan society could face with dual pressure from homophobic society and patriarchal family. Under these tremendous pressure and lack of support resource, lesbians could face dual violence from their family and partner.

This article, based on internet survey and content analysis of newspaper, investigates the prevalence and type of IPV against lesbians and gay men, their help-seeking, and the restriction of the DVPA for both lesbian and gay victims in Taiwan. This article also elaborates the socio-cultural implications of family violence against lesbians and gay men.

METHODS

Two data collection strategies were applied for the purpose of this study, including internet survey and content analysis. The following describes these two strategies and data collection procedures.

Internet Survey

Firstly, we apply an internet survey to collect information directly from LGBT for understanding the prevalence and severity of IPV against lesbians and gay men. Due to confidentiality, between Dec. 7, 2011 and Feb. 29, 2012, a self-administered questionnaire was post to the website and facebook of Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, which is the first and largest LGBT group. Totally, 217 respondents finished their questionnaire.

Definition of IPV

In this study, we define the term “intimate partner violence” as relation between respondents and perpetrators as well as type of violent behavior. According to the purpose of this study, the relation is operationally defined by respondent’s partner/ ex-partner, biological families, and others. Type of violent behavior is operationally defined by emotional, verbal, physical, and sexual violence against respondents.

Questionnaire

The self-administered questionnaire for this study includes three parts: Socio-demographic information, IPV, and violence from families and others. The section of socio-demographic includes variables of biological sex, sexual preference, age, education, partner relation, and occupation. The variable of occupation is defined by work or not-work. If “work”, then further asked in full-employed or part-time employed. Both sections of IPV and violence from families and others are defined by prevalence

(one-year and life-time), incidence, relation between respondent and the perpetrator, type of violent behavior in recent incidence, reasons for that incidence, and help-seeking.

Respondents

Of 217 participants, 128 respondents (59.0%) are biological females, 83 biological male (38.2%), and 6 without both sex identities (2.8%). One hundred and sixty respondents (75.5%) identified themselves as lesbians or gay men, 46 bi-sexual (21.7%), and 6 transgender (2.8%). The range of age was from 13 to 55 years old. Average age for the respondents was 26.5. One hundred and twenty-six respondents (58.1%) were aged between 21 and 30 years old, 45 (20.7%) aged 31-40, 41 (18.9%) aged above 41, and 5 (2.3%) aged under 20. Near half of the respondents (107, 49.3%) were students. Ninety respondents (41.4%) were full-employed, while only twenty respondents (9.2%) were unemployed or housekeeper.

Content Analysis

Source

This study also applies content analysis to explore how media represent the image of lesbians and gay men on the issue of IPV-incidence and violence from families and others due to respondent’s sexual identities. Keywords related to homosexual in Chinese such as homosexual, tongzhi, LGBT, lesbians, and queer were firstly utilized to extract data from the newspaper library. Between 1951 and 2013 there were 14,188 articles related to the issue of homosexuals. After that, keyword “IPV” was used to extract data, and finally there were 86 articles related to IPV or family violence against lesbians and gay men.

Content analysis

Total samples for the content analysis of this study are 86 articles. Each article is a unit of content analysis. According to the purpose of this study, researchers developed an analytical frame work for this analysis that include variables such as relation between victim and perpetrator, type of violent behavior in the incidence, reasons for explaining that incidence, and the image of perpetrator or victim. For content analysis, we not only look at statistical

analysis on relation, type of violence behavior, and reason, but also focus on qualitative content of media coverage of the incidence of IPV against lesbians and gay men.

RESULTS

Intimate Partner Violence

One-year and life-time prevalence

Of the 217 respondents, near ninety percent reported without experiences on IPV over the past 12 months, while 16 (7.4%) respondents reported experiences on

IPV. However, the percentage of life-time prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men has increased up to 16.6% which implies that 36 respondents reported to have experience on IPV in life-time period. Among these 16 respondents abused by their partner, 5 (31.3%) reported 1 or 2 times per month over the past year, followed by once a week (3 respondents), everyday (2 respondents), and only happen once (1 respondent). While twelve (75%) of the 16 respondents reported to have experiences of psychological and emotional violence by their partner over the past year, four (25%) reported to have physical violence by their partner (Table 1).

Table 1: Prevalence of IPV and types of violent behavior

	frequency(%)
One-year prevalence	
yes	16(7.4%)
no	201(92.6%)
Life-time prevalence	
yes	36(16.6%)
no	181(83.4%)
Incidence in one year	
Once a year	1(6.2%)
1-2 times a year	2(12.5%)
3-4 times a year	3(18.8%)
1-2 times a month	5(31.3%)
1-2 times a week	3(18.8%)
1-2 times a day	1(6.2%)
Several times a day	1(6.2%)
Types of violence	
Psychological	12(75%)
Physical	4(25%)

In this study, we further apply Chi-square analysis to examine differences between lesbians and gay men in one-year IPV prevalence. The result of this study has shown statistical significance (χ^2 (df = 1) = 7.223, P-value <0.05) between lesbians and gay men. Of eighty-three gay respondents, only one (1.2%) reported having experience on IPV. Fourteen of one hundred and twenty-eight (10.9%) lesbian respondents reported having experiences on IPV. The victim of gay respondents suffered from psychological violence, but types of IPV against lesbian respondents are diverse. Eight (57.1%) of 15 lesbian respondents had experiences on psychological

and emotional violence, 3(21.4%) on verbal violence, and 3 (21.4%) on physical violence (Table 2).

Table 2: Prevalence and types of IPV between lesbians and gay men

	frequency(%)	χ^2
One-year prevalence		
Gay men	1(1.2%)	$\chi^2(df=1)=7.223^*$ P-value=0.006 < 0.05
Lesbians	14(10.9%)	
Life-time prevalence		
Gay men	10(12.0%)	$\chi^2(df=3)=3.166^*$ P-value=0.104 < 0.05
Lesbians	25(19.5%)	
Types of violence (gay men)		
Psychological	1(100%)	
Types of violence (lesbians)		
Psychological	8 (57.2%)	
Verbal	3 (21.4%)	
Physical	3 (21.4%)	

Types of IPV

Of the 16 respondents endured violence by their partner, twelve (75%) had experiences of psychological violence, followed by physical violence (four, 25.0%), but no any respondent reported sexual violence or economic control by their partner. Eleven (68.8%) of sixteen respondents were abused by their partner, while five (31.2%) were abused by their former partner. Main reasons for the

incidence of IPV were “partner’s personality and psychological factors” (25 respondents, 47.2%), followed by "interpersonal factors"(18 respondents, 34.0%) and" material factors "(10 respondents, 18.9%). “Personality or psychological factors" refers to the partner’s personality, controlling, jealousy, and suspicion, while "interpersonal factors" refers to the interaction of the partner and his biological families, come-out of the closet, affair, and sexual relation. "Material factors" includes economic hardship and unemployed (Table 3).

Table 3: Reasons of the recent IPV-incidence

	Frequency(%)
Material factors	10(18.9%)
Economic hardship	6(60.0%)
Unemployed	4(40.0%)
Interpersonal factors	18(34.0%)
Relation with bio. fam.	4(22.2%)
Other friends	4(22.2%)
Affairs	4(22.2%)
Come-out	3(16.7%)
Others	2(11.2%)
Sexual relation	1(5.5%)
Personality factors	25(47.1%)
Personality traits	10(40.0%)
Controlling	7(28.0%)
Jealous	5(20.0)
Psychosis	3(12.0%)

Help-seeking

Of 16 respondents having experiences on IPV over past one-year, eleven (68.8%) did not ask help, while five (31.2%) do ask help. Reasons for not to ask for help include "useless" (seven, 31.8%), "do not know who should ask" (five, 22.7%), "losing face" (four, 18.2%), and "afraid exposure" (two, 9.1%). Those five ask helps in total 13 times. Near half (seven, 53.8%) of these 13 times helps comes from informal support system, while slightly less than half (six, 46.2%) come from formal support system such as Domestic Violence Prevention Centers (DVPC), LGBT groups, women's groups, and school teachers. There were only two reported to the court for protective order.

For 36(16.6%)respondents having experiences on IPV over the life-time, every respondent ever asked for help and in totally 51 times for helps. Of 51 times for helps, 44(86.3%)gain helps from informal support systems, and seven (13.7%)from formal support systems such as DVPC and women's groups.In summary, the result of this study has shown that one-year prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men is 7.4%, and the prevalence of life-time has increased up to 16.6% .

Violence from Families and Others

Prevalence

Of 217 respondents, eight-five (39.2%) reported to have experience of violence by their families or others due to their sexual identity. Nearly four of ten (32, 37.6%) occurred once, while six (53, 62.4%) occurred many times (Table 4). For these 85 respondents, about sixty-five percent had experiences of psychological violence (73 times, 64.0%), followed by physical violence(35 times, 30.7%), but few(6 times, 5.3%)for economic control. Violence against these 85 respondents mainly came from others(41, 48.1%)such as school mates, neighbors, or strangers followed by parents and grandparents(21, 24.8%), siblings(8, 9.4%), partner's parents and grandparents(7, 8.3%), partner's ex-partner(6, 7.1%), son and daughter (1, 1.2%), and partner's siblings(1, 1.2%)(Table 5).

Types of violent behavior

Chi-square analysis has been applied to examine differences between lesbians and gay men in one-year prevalence of violence from families and others due to their sexual identity. The result has shown difference ($\chi^2 = 11.529$, $P < .0$) between lesbians and gay men. Gay respondents (53%) were more likely than lesbians (20.7%) to have experience of violence. Violence against gay men mostly came from schoolmates and verbal violence in public places. Violence against lesbian respondents mainly come from their family and experience of verbal harassment, intimidation, and threatened in public places. The results of this study also showed a statistical significance between lesbians and gay men in verbal harassment ($\chi^2 = 12.360$, $P < .05$), psychological violence ($\chi^2 = 12.391$, $P < .05$), physical violence ($\chi^2 = 10.195$, $P < .05$), and economic control ($\chi^2 = 12.847$, $P < .05$) (Table 5).

Table 4: Prevalence of violence from families or others

	Frequency(%)
Violence	
Yes	85(39.2%)
No	132(60.8%)
Incidence (12 months)	
Once	32(37.6%)
1-2 times a year	15(17.6%)
3-4 times a year	10(11.8%)
1-2 times a year	8(9.4%)
1 time a year	14(16.5%)
1-2 times a day	5(5.9%)
Several times a day	1(1.2%)
Type of violence	
Psychological	73(64.0%)
Physical	35(30.7%)
Economic control	6(5.3%)

Table 5: Cross-table for violence against lesbians and gay men

	Frequency(%)	χ^2
Violence		
Gay men	44(53.0%)	$\chi^2(df=1)=11.529^*$
Lesbians	38(29.7%)	P-value=0.001 < 0.05
Types of violence (Gays)		
Verbal	35(79.5%)	$\chi^2(df=2)=12.360^*$
Psychological	15(34.1%)	$\chi^2(df=2)=12.391^*$
Physical	3 (6.8%)	$\chi^2(df=2)=10.195^*$
Economic control	1(2.3%)	$\chi^2(df=2)=12.847^*$
Types of violence (lesb.)		
Verbal	29(71.1%)	
Psychological	19 (50.0%)	
Physical	5 (13.2%)	
Economic control	5(13.2%)	

Help-seeking

Of 85 respondents who had experiences of violence from families and others, 16 (18.9%) asked help, but 69 (81.1%) not ask help. Total is 34 times to gain assistance. About 70% (24 respondents, 70.6%) seek help from informal support system such as friends, classmates, families, sons or daughters, or co-workers. There were only 10 respondents(29.4%) seeking helps from formal support systems including teachers, women's groups, NGO, DVPC, police, or

hotline. Reasons for reluctant to seek help are "useless" (42 respondents, 31.3%), "do not know who can help" (28 respondents, 20.9%), "unfriendly society" (21 respondents, 15.7 %), "fear of exposure" (20 respondents, 14.9%), "losing face" (10 respondents, 7.5%), and "others" (8 respondents, 6.0%).

Overall, the results of this study have shown that homophobia is prevalent in Taiwan society. About forty percent (85 respondents) reported to have

experiences on violence from families and others due to their sexual identities. One third of these respondents endured physical abuse, while two-thirds had experience of psychological violence.

Images of Lesbian and Gay Men

Totally, eighty-six articles were analyzed for the purpose of this study. Of these 86 articles, thirty-nine articles (45.3%) reported on gay men, 38 articles (44.2%) on lesbians and 9 articles (10.5%) on bisexuals. In types of IPV against lesbians and gay men, thirty-one articles (35.9%) reported on physical violence, followed by suicide (26, 30.2%) and multiple violence (16, 18.7%). The most significant reason for the incidence of IPV against lesbians and gay men was “break-up” (25, 29.3%), followed by economic hardship (16, 18.6%) and jealous (15, 17.4%).

According to Taiwanese newspaper, the incidence of IPV against lesbians and gay men often attributed to having an “abnormal relation”. Especially, incidence related to lesbians was more likely than gay men to be described as “abnormal”. This image of “abnormal” changed a little bit since 1951. However, possibly influenced by LGBT movement in Taiwan, there is no any article on the incidence of IPV against lesbians and gay men using the term of “abnormal” since 2000. Under the media representation, lesbians are often described as possessive, incomplete personality, and addiction of sex. The image of abnormal represented by Taiwanese newspaper as follows,

“...Actress who engaged in Taiwanese opera was disfigured yesterday. Last year this actress met her partner in the theater. Then they developed an abnormal relationship ...”(1966, 08,04).

After living together, they gradually developed a homosexual relationship. However, recently OO refused to continue their abnormal relationship, but her partner would not allow her to separate... (1988.11.21)

OO and her partner have developed an abnormal relation. Because OO was too possessive, her partner asked for separation... (1992.02.01)

Of eight-six articles, forty-eight (55.8%) reports on perpetrator as victim’s partner, followed by ex-

partner (15, 17.4%), others (9, 10.5%), partner’s friend (5, 5.8%), and partner’s families (2, 2.3%). There is a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 16.637$, $P < .05$) between lesbians and gay men on the reason of interpersonal relation for explaining IPV-incidence. Two reasons including “break-up” and “affair” are often to be cited for explaining IPV-incidence (see Table 6). Table 7 shows a significant difference between lesbians and gay men in the relation of perpetrator and victim ($\chi^2 = 16.637$, $P < .05$). Generally, Lesbians are more likely than gay men to have experiences of violence from partner’s families and friends, but gay men are more likely than lesbians to face violence from others (i.e., strangers or schoolmates).

Scholars (Wang, Bih & Brennan, 2009) point out that for lesbians and gay men the most difficult part for come-out is from their family. Due to internalized homophobia, a lesbian or gay man could face tremendous pressure from their family. It is not uncommon that violence becomes a strategy by family to force a lesbian or gay family member to change their sexual identity.

Table 6 : Reason of IPV on interpersonal between lesbians and gay men

	Lesbians		Gay men		
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
No mention	12	31.5%	19	48.7%	$\chi^2 = 16.637$.011*
Come out	2	5.3%	0	0.0%	
Affair	4	10.5%	1	2.6%	
Sexual relation	0	0.0%	3	7.7%	
Break-up	16	42.1%	8	20.5%	
Families	2	5.3%	0	0.0%	
Sex division	0	0%	0	0%	
More than one reason	0	0%	0	0%	
Others	2	5.3%	8	20.5%	

* p<.05;** p<.01;*** p<.001

Table 7: Relation of perpetrators and victims between lesbians and gay men

	Lesbians		Gay men		
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
No mention	0	0.0%	7	17.9%	$\chi^2 = 16.637$.009**
Partner	21	55.2%	21	53.9%	
Ex-partner	7	18.4%	5	12.8%	
Partner's families	2	5.3%	0	0.0%	
Partner's friends	5	13.2%	0	0.0%	
Others	3	7.9%	6	15.4%	

* p<.05;** p<.01;*** p<.001

The lady told police that she had a happy family with two daughters. The eldest daughter now is 30 years old. Unfortunately, ten years ago, her eldest daughter in high school was close to a female classmate. Her daughter's classmate often came to their home and stay overnight with her eldest daughter. One day her husband discovered that her eldest daughter and her classmate in the living room engaged unusual behavior. Then they recognized that her eldest daughter and her classmate had abnormal relation. In order to change this situation, her husband closed his business and moved to the United States. Ten years later, they thought that everything was over. So they decided to go back to Taiwan ... (1991.03.14)

Both of them are college students at the same department. One of them has a twin sister. So, three girls live

in a three- beds room. The elder sister suspected that her twin sister and roommate have a close relationship. This morning when the elder sister wake up and saw her sister and the roommate sleep together, so she scolded them "you two should not sleep together." Since her sound is too loud and disturbs other roommates. Both of them feel sad. Without a word they leave the apartment, check into a motel, and burn charcoal for suicide (2010. 12.01).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to this study, one-year prevalence of IPV for lesbians and gay men is 7.4%. The number of life-time prevalence increases up to 16.6%. Both one-year and life-time IPV prevalence for lesbians (10.9% &

19.5%) are higher than gay men (1.2%, 12.0%), which implies that lesbians are more likely than gay men to suffer from IPV. Lesbians and gay men often face psychological violence i.e., threats and verbal, but only few has experiences of physical violence. For lesbian respondents, violence mostly comes from their live-in partner. After the incidence of IPV, they tend not to ask for helps. Even asking for help, they seek help from informal system. Main reason for the IPV incidence is interpersonal factor such as perpetrator's personality, power control, economic hardship, and jealousy. Respondents seldom attribute the incidence of IPV to the failure of society.

In Western studies, one-year prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men is about 2.6-10%. The number of prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men in Taiwan, based on the result of this study, is 7.4%. However, there is a contradiction between lesbians and gay men. One-year prevalence of IPV for lesbians in Taiwan is higher than Western countries, but one-year prevalence for gay men in Taiwan is lower than Western countries. The study also shows that the life-time prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men (16.6%) in Taiwan is lower than Western countries, i.e., 25-33% by Peterman & Dixon's study (2003) and 17-52% by Ristock's study (2003). Generally, lesbians in Taiwan are more likely to suffer from IPV than gay men and Western countries.

Although this study has demonstrated a lower life-time prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men than Western studies, the data collection strategy applied for this study, that is, an internet survey has to be considered for the contribution of this lower prevalence. This study also shows that those respondents who are young and still in college with high-education could have more access to internet, while those old generation may not frequently use computer. Therefore, age could be a factor for underestimating the prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men in this study.

Until now, there is no any study on the prevalence of IPV against lesbians and gay men in Taiwan. It is difficult for us to understand the situation of IPV against lesbians and gay men in Taiwan, so we only can make a comparison to previous studies of domestic violence. According to this study, the life-

time IPV prevalence for lesbians and gay men is in the middle position, compared to results from studies on domestic violence (10-18%) (Wang & Chen, 2003).

The type of IPV between homosexual and heterosexual partners is different. Pan & Yu's study (2012), based on the DVPA data set constituted with reporting case of Domestic violence between 2008 and 2010, finds that physical and psychological violence are equally distributed. The results of this study demonstrate that the majority of the respondent (65%) have experience of psychological violence, while only one-third face with physical violence. This study also supported the result of a study by Pan, Yang & Lin's study (2012), based on in-depth interviews with 16 lesbians, that lesbians often face psychological violence by their partners. If physical violence happens, it is usually not severity. This study also supports the results of a study by Chong, Mak & Kwong (2013) in Hong Kong that most IPV victims of lesbians and gay men endure psychological violence and verbal violence. However, this study shows a slight difference from Western studies on type of violence against lesbian. For the Western studies, lesbians are more likely to have experiences of physical violence (Tjaden, Thoennes, & Allison, 1999) or both physical and sexual violence (Senn, 2010), whereas this study finds that about one-fifth of the lesbian respondent endure physical violence. This difference reflects some socio-cultural meaning of gender. It needs to be addressed in the future.

Another issue needed to be concerned is that the result of this study shows a high prevalence of family violence against lesbians and gay men. Almost two of five (39.2%) respondents have experienced violence from families and others due to their sexual identity. This number is about two and half times of IPV against lesbians and gay men. The fact deserves more attention that thirty-five (30.7%) of the 85 respondents have experiences of physical violence from families and others. Most victims gain helps from colleagues. Reasons for not to ask for help from formal resource are: Uselessness, internalized homophobia, and worry about exposure of their homosexual identity.

Finally, the previous studies have demonstrated that both drinking problem and personality are two

reasons contributing to IPV against lesbians and gay men. And, Coleman (1998) further indicates that economic hardship is the main reason for contributing IPV against gay men. However, the result of this study does not support these arguments. The reason of interpersonal relationship is more highlighted by the respondents of this study.

Limited by two reasons, the result of this study cannot be generalized to the whole population of lesbians and gay men. Firstly, source of this study is not drawn from random sampling strategy. Secondly, respondents of this study from internet could be younger than whole population of lesbians and gay men. Limited by these two reasons, the IPV prevalence against lesbians and gay men, especially on life-time prevalence, could be under-estimated.

This study reveals a fact that homophobia is prevalent in Taiwan. Homophobia could become an excuse of violence against lesbians and gay men. Therefore, changing the atmosphere of homophobia is needed via educating the general public. Moreover, under the heterosexual hegemony, the first-line practitioners in the DVPA center in Taiwan are largely insensitive to gender/sexual differences, and services are often delivered in terms of heterosexual ideologies. This will in turn seeking help from formal system. Therefore, training program for discourage the first line practitioners should focus on the notion and practice of anti-sexism and sexual diversity.

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