

## Content Analysis of Articles Pertaining to Same-sex Preference Female in Clinical and Counseling Psychological Journals in Japan

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# Content Analysis of Articles Pertaining to Same-sex Preference Female in Clinical and Counseling Psychological Journals in Japan

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This study provides a content analysis of 8 articles related to same-sex preference female published by 4 major clinical and counseling psychological journals in Japan from 1950s to present. According to the results, the increasing of the articles pertaining to this issue is apparent and the views toward homosexuality have changed from pathology to non-pathology and mainly taken the idea of essentialism. Findings are discussed the scarcity of empirical research, homosexuality, bisexuality, sexuality and transgender issues. The comparison between the studies in Japan and the States is also discussed.

**Keywords:** content analysis, same-sex preference, female, Japan

## 1. Problem and goal

The same-sex preference (lesbian, gay and bisexual, LGB) issues have been studied from a non-pathological view in United States and Europe since "homosexuality" was removed from the official list of mental disorders included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. On December 15, 1973, the American Psychological Association (APA) adopted the official policy that homosexuality per se does not imply any kind of mental health impairment and urged mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that long had been associated with lesbian and gay sexuality. In 1984, the APA approved the establishment of Division 44, dedicated to the psychological study of LGB issues. (Perez, DeBord and Bieschke, 1999). In 1998, the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section was officially inaugurated at the BPS London Conference on 18th December 1998 (Coyle and Kitzinger, 2002). Thus, homosexuality was not been treated as a stigma in psychological field, but as an arena of psychological and scientific inquiry.

Along with the changes from pathological to non-pathological perspectives, psychologists' view toward same-sex preference female has moved from psychodynamic and psychoanalytic views aligned with Freudian psychotherapy to non clinical views such as Kinsey and Armon, in which same-sex preference female are not seen as a small group of psychiatric patients but as part of the human sexual experience of many persons (Ponse, 1978). Along with the gradually development in the studies in the States and Europe, the

importance of the researches in this field have been further recognized in the last decade. Some researches have been proved that the same-sex preference females do face more stress and identity issues than heterosexual female due to their minority sexual experiences and they tend to be more likely than heterosexual people to be consumers of counseling (Perez, DeBord and Bieschke, 1999, Bradford, Ryan, & Rothblum, 1994).

Due to the importance of this issue, the psychologists in the west have delivered obviously efforts in the related research in the last decades. During the 1990s, the LGB issues have been increasingly integrated in a number of ways. Improvement has clearly been seen in the sheer quantity of articles that major counseling journals have published on LGB issues in the states (Phillips, Ingram, Smith & Mindes, 2003). However, considering with the findings and literature reviews in the west, the researching state in Asia has been unknown. Compared with researchs in the United States and Europe, the mental health of Asian lesbians needs further study (Mathy, 2002). In order to study the same-sex preference female in Asia, understanding the present research states and analyzing the issues faced by the clinical and counseling psychologists in Asia would be important and necessary subjects.

The purpose of this research is to study the literatures pertaining to same-sex preference female in clinical and counseling journals in Japan in order to understand the situation in one of the most developed countries in clinical psychology and sexual minority community in Asia. Japan has admitted

the first clinical psychologist license since 1988 and there have had annually lesbian and gay parade in Japan from 1994.

### The same-sex preference female community in Japan

The same-sex preference female community in Japan started to have regular lesbian events from 1971 to 1986. In the present, there are more than 15 regular community events running in the whole country. The lesbian oriented counseling hotline has started since 1991 and opens 6 hours per month until now. The first transgender community (female to male) has started since 1994 (Anise, 2001). In other of the community events, there are also numerous lesbian oriented publishing, homepages, bars, shops and social parties running around Japan during the whole year. According to the community self-run research with database of 148 readers of the national lesbian magazine in 2001, 69 persons have claimed themselves as the lesbian, 35 persons as the bisexual, 16 persons as the transgender and 28 persons chose the answer of other. Within the interviewees, 91 persons have admitted that they have been coming out of their homosexuality (Anise, 2001).

### Content analysis of psychological literature in Japan

The goal of this study is to examine the clinical psychological and counseling literatures in Japan to acquire more knowledge of the same-sex preference female issues in the Japanese clinical psychology and counseling arenas. To study the psychological literatures pertaining to same-sex preference female is not only to understand the issues encountered by clinical psychologists, but also the viewpoints and trends in the research environment in Japan. In the States and Europe, the homosexual issues have been one focus when studied the trends and contents of the psychological arena. Gay and lesbian issues have been a focus of several past content and methodological reviews of psychological literatures (Phillips, Ingram, Smith & Mindes, 2003). However there have been less related researches held toward Asia and this research would focus in the literatures of Japan by studying the contents and the methodological views by the method of content analysis.

### Definition of term

In order to eliminate the possibility of discrimination, this article uses the term of same-sex preference female instead of the traditional terms of lesbian, homosexual female or same-sex orientation. In this article, the term of the same-sex preference female also includes the bisexual female since the bisexuality also belongs to the sexual minority issue. More

recently, constructionist ideas about sexual orientation have gained attention in society and psychological literature, leading to increasing acceptance of bisexuality as a legitimate sexual orientation (Phillips, Ingram, Smith & Mindes, 2003). Though the transgender issue (female to male, FTM) is not included in the homosexuality subjects but belongs to the category of gender identity disorder, in order to acquire the whole image of sexual minority female in Japan, this research also includes the FTM issue in the content analysis.

## 2. Research method

Content analysis is used in this research to analyze the articles containing this issue in the major clinical psychological and counseling journals in Japan. Nine major clinical psychology and counseling journals from 1950s to present were reviewed (*Japanese journal of counseling science*, *The Japanese journal of humanistic psychology*, *Journal of Japanese clinical psychology*, *The official journal of the Japan Association of Group Psychotherapy*, *Clinical psychology*, *The Japanese Journal of psycho-analysis*, *The Japanese journal of clinical psychology*, *Japanese journal of clinical psychiatry*, *Rorschachiana Japonica*). The reason *The Japanese journal of humanistic psychology* was included is that it is one of the leading and active journal specialized in psychotherapy and group therapy in Japan.

All the articles in these journals were first searched by the MAGAZINEPLUS, which is the largest journal and dissertation online database of Japan. For identifying the literatures pertaining to same-sex preference female, a list of terms was used as the keywords for the title, keyword, abstract and content. The terms used including lesbian, same-sex preference, same-sex orientation, homosexuality, homosexual, sexual orientation, sexual preference, bisexuality, bisexual, gender identity disorder, gender conflicts, transgender, transsexual, FTM, female and etc in both Japanese and English. All the terms were also grouped as pair and triad in order to cross-checked the literatures.

The articles contained the terms above were checked by the hand-worked in the second run and the book reviews, editorials, presidential addresses, in memoriam and award announcements were excluded because they often are not peer reviewed. In order to focus on the topics of same-sex preference female, the literatures pertaining the female sexuality, feminist and female but without same-sex preference were not

included in this research. The literatures whose titles contained homosexuality or homosexual focused only on male issues were also not included. Though the articles included both the gay and lesbian issues were included in the research because the same-sex preference female subjects were also discussed in the literatures. The articles that included the terms of FTM, gender identity disorder, gender conflicts, transgender and transsexual but not limited only to male to female (MTF) issues were included in this research.

### 3. Results

#### Descriptive findings

From 1950s to the present 2003, there are 8 articles pertaining to same-sex preference female from 4 clinical psychological and counseling journals in Japan. Of the findings, 2 articles (25%) focused on the same-sex preference female, 3 articles (37.5%) discussed the homosexuality as a whole subject which included both the gay and lesbian issues, 3 articles (37.5%) aimed in the gender identity disorder and 2 articles (25%) studied the Rorschach Homosexual Indices. (Table 1)

With respect of the article types, 2 articles (25%) used the method of case study, one (12.5%) used the archival report, one (12.5%) was program description, 2 articles (25%) were comments and introductions and 2 articles (25%) were the empirical researches. (Table 2) Among

**Table 1**  
Distribution of topics across the 8 articles

Topics	F	%
Same-sex preference female	2	25.0
Homosexuality	3	37.5
Gender identity disorder	3	37.5
Rorschach homosexual indicis	2	25.0

**Table 2**  
Distribution of types and year published across the 8 articles

Topics	F	%	Year
Case study	2	25	2001
Archival report	1	12.5	1999
Program description	1	12.5	2000
Comments and introductions	2	25	1999
Empirical researches	2	25	1950s & 1960s

those articles, there are 2 articles (25%) published in 1950s and 1960s and 6 articles (75%) in the late 1990s and early 2000s. (Table 2) There are no repeating authors among these literatures. Within these journals, there was only one special issue focused on the identity disorder issue and published in 1999.

#### Content review of all articles

*The articles used empirical research design.* Empirical research design: Two of the articles published in the *Rorschachiana Japonica* in 1950s and 1960s were applied the empirical research design to test the relationship between the Rorschach Homosexual Indices (RHI) and mental disorder (Kataguchi, 1958, Sekine, Akitani, Baba & Midorikawa, 1963). Both of the two researches were focused at the male homosexual testees as the samples of the homosexuality group. The article of 1950s was used the RHI to test 60 testees and the one of the 1960s used both the RHI and TAT to test 80 testees. Both of the researches viewed the homosexuality as the mental disorder and examined the relationship between sexual orientation, schizophrenia and neurosis.

*The articles discussed by case study.* Case study: Both of the case studies were applied the psychoanalysis as the psychotherapy method (Kinoshita, 2001, Horikawa, 2001). One of the articles was aimed at the relationship between the eating disorder and gender conflict from the view of 'the masculine woman and the homosexual woman'. The gender conflict in the case was recognized as the secondary gender identity disorder instead of the primary gender identity disorder. The other article discussed the case that the patient with lesbian love looked for the female therapist due to the anxiety to male therapist.

*The article used the archival report.* The archival report: One article reported the clinical research of gender identity disorders by using the archives of gender identity disorder patients in the first legal sex reassignment surgery (SRS) hospital in Japan from 1984 to 1999 (Abe, 1999). Both the FTM and MTF patients were included in the archives and the relationship of GID and homosexuality were discussed in this research. This article belonged to the special issue of GID published by the Japanese *journal of clinical psychiatry* in 1999.

*The article was the program description.* The program description: One of the articles was the program description of the homosexual hotline organized by the homosexual

community 'Occor' since 1987 (Kawakuchi, 2000). This article introduced the history, management system, training system, profiles and the main claims of the callers. The author also discussed the importance of the peer counseling in the homosexuality community. There was no clear indication of the specific gender when the term 'homosexuality' was used in the articles.

The articles used comments and introduction. Description and introduction: Two of the articles used the comments and introductions to explain the gender identity disorder (GID) in Japan (Ushijima, 1999, Sawada & Yamauchi, 1999). One of the articles introduced the concepts of gender, gender identity, GID, and the mechanism of gender. Finally, the author commented the history and the future of the GID issue in Japan. The other article discussed the psychotherapy for the patients with sexual identity disorder from the point of views of GID, trauma, transsexuals, SRS and real time test. Both of the articles used the term of GID to indicate the FTM and MTF and published in the special issue of GID published by the *Japanese journal of clinical psychiatry* in 1999.

#### **The moves of the methodology and the views toward homosexuality**

There are two distinct moves among the articles, one is the period from the 1950s to 1960s and the other is in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The change of methodology implied the two different views toward homosexuality held by the psychologists and also the various methodologies during different times. The first period is to use *Rorschach Homosexual Indices* as the empirical research method in the 1950s and 1960s. During this time, the researchers used the pathology view toward homosexuality and examined the relationship between homosexual indices and mental disorders. These researches tended to test the differences between the homosexual testees and the 'normal' testees that it meant the heterosexual people. In these articles, the term 'homosexuality' was mainly indicated to the same sex preference man. The homosexual indices were examined and tested to the gay and heterosexual man only but used to apply to both the same-sex preference male and female in these articles. The lesbian and bisexual terms were rarely seen in the articles in this period.

The second move of the articles is during the late 1990s and early 2000s. In this period, lesbian, GID and other terms indicating to the female sexual minority have been expressed in the clinical and counseling psychological journals. The

psychologists have taken the homosexuality as one of the human sexual experiences instead of the pathological view. Two articles during this time had discussed the relationship between gender conflict, lesbian love and mental disorder. Three articles used the comments and introduction methods to discuss the homosexual and GID issues and used the term of homosexuality to include both the gay and lesbian subjects. The term bisexual was rarely seen in the articles in this period.

## **4. Discussion**

### **The increasing of the articles pertaining to same-sex preference female**

According to the results of the content analysis of the articles in the clinical and counseling journals, it is concluded that the articles pertaining to same-sex preference female have increased a lot during the past 60 years. The articles of this issue in the past 10 years have been three times of the numbers of the articles in the past 50 years. The reason that the same-sex preference female issue has acquired more intention is that they would be the group suffered more social stress and more inclined to receive the psychology help. LGB people are more likely than heterosexual people to be consumers of counseling (Bradford, Ryan, & Roghblum, 1994). Also in two different studies, approximated three fourths of lesbian women reported usage of psychotherapy services (Bradford et al., 1994). However, the numbers of the articles compared with the whole amount of the articles in these journals are still in the minority. One of the reasons could be that the whole sexuality issues are not explicitly in the clinical and counseling journals of Japan so the sexual minority issue is also remained implicitly.

### **The view toward the homosexuality**

Along with the increasing of the publishing numbers, the view toward homosexuality held by the psychologists in Japan has changed from the pathology view in 1950s and 1960s to the non-pathology view in the latest ten years. The term "homosexuality" was removed from the official list of mental disorders included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1973 would be an explanation for the changes of the attitudes toward homosexuality. Since all the psychologists and mental health professionals in the world have taken the idea of removing the stigma of mental illness that long had been associated with lesbian and gay sexuality. According to the articles in the latest ten years, the psychologists in Japan have focused on the relationship

between gender conflicts, sexual preference conflicts and mental disorder.

In another word, the mental health of the 'healthy' same-sex preference female has been neglected in the clinical and counseling psychological journals in Japan. In the last decade, the focus toward same-sex preference female in the west has shifted to the relationship between social stress and mental health. Research about sexual orientation and mental health recently has begun to focus on social oppression as a factor contributing to depression and hence risks of suicidality among homosexual and bisexual females and males (Cochran & Mays, 2000). Same-sex preference females are more likely than heterosexuals to have issues with identity, psychosocial development, coming out and social stress (Perez, DeBord, & Bieschke, 1999). Psychologists have started to study the possibility that social oppression felt by homosexual people approximates post traumatic stress experiences that occur during the coming out stages of minority sexual identities and psychosexual developmental. According to the research progress and development toward the same sex preference female in the west, more articles related to mental health and post traumatic stress issues are expected to see in the journals of Japan in the future.

### **Essentialism V.S Social constructionism**

There are two distinct concepts toward the homosexuality in the states and Europe. One is the essentialism that is a theory of social science that posits that some aspects of people are fixed, stable and fundamental to their sense of themselves (Garnets & Kimmel, 1993). The essentialism takes the cause of homosexuality and the measure of the homosexual desire as the research goals. As applied to questions of sexual orientation, essentialist positions look for the causes or sources of same-gender desire (Perez, DeBord and Bieschke, 1999). Alternatively, the constructionism has taken the different attitude toward the homosexuality and research objects. Social constructionism takes the view that there is no universal, or essential, commonality about same- or other-gendered sexuality. The social constructionists care little for questions about the causes of homosexuality and they examine the ways that particular structures affect people's understanding of themselves (Perez, DeBord and Bieschke, 1999).

In the results of the content analysis, the articles before and after the 1990s all inclined to take the view of essentialism. The two articles in the 1950s and 1960s used the empirical test to examine the relationship of the

homosexuality and mental disorder. The intention of examinings had implied that the authors had taken the homosexuality as the fixed factor influenced the mental health. In the two articles reported the case study in the 1990s, the authors had tried to use the psychoanalysis to discover the reason of the homosexual desire and gender conflicts of the patients. The approach that the two authors took has also showed the essentialism inclination due to the attention of searching the reason and resource of the homosexual desire. The literatures in Japan have taken the essentialism toward the concept of the homosexuality.

The two concepts have been the major concepts toward the homosexuality in the west, there are still expectation of more other concepts and theory. Though the literatures in Japan from 1950s to present all have used the essentialism, there are the possibility and rooms for other concepts and ideas that could be approved to be applicable in Japan.

### **Bisexuality**

Bisexuality has been long admitted as one diverse of the human sexuality behaviors; however, the related research and theory are not as visible as the other minority sexual activities. Research has documented the existence of bisexuality and bisexuals, such as Kinsey et al. used a case-study approach to determine, through interviews with 5,300 white males and 5940 white females and the findings revealed that more participants identified themselves as bisexual than as exclusively gay. Also the follow-up studies had discovered that many of the men and women in their studies were heterosexually married and did not consider themselves to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual despite participation in same-sex sexual behavior (Perez, DeBord and Bieschke, 1999).

Nevertheless, the literatures pertaining to bisexuality have been increased in the late decade only. Although much theory has been developed to explain the process through which gay men and lesbians develops a positive gay identity, limited scholarly activity has been dedicated to bisexual identity development (Zinik, 1985). This apparent superficial treatment of bisexuality results in a dearth of work on healthy identity development and issues facing this population (Bowman, 2003). According to the content analysis of the articles in Japan, the similar situation has been recognized. There are two articles have mentioned the possibility of the bisexuality of the patients in the case study, though the term 'bisexual'

had not been used in the contents. The idea of bisexuality is expressed in the explanation of the psychoanalysis process instead of the discussion of the concept, theory or empirical research. By the expression of the bisexuality in the articles, though there have not been academic research about the bisexuality in Japan, this diversity of human sexual behavior pattern and behavior have been gained more attention in the latest decade.

### Transgender

The FTM and same-sex preference female have been taken as the different sexual minority category in the clinical psychology since the homosexuality have been taken out of the DSM and the transgender is belonged to the gender identity disorder category. Also in the gender studies and culture studies, the FTM and same-sex preference female belonged to the various political concepts. Abide by the different categorized of these behaviors; these two sexual patterns have been proved to have the similarities in various aspects. Though there have been a lot of debates and discussion toward the differences and similarities between FTM and lesbians, a comparative analysis of these lesbians' and FTMs' accounts of their experiences of their bodies, gender identifications and sexualities over their life courses show that there were more similarities than differences in their experiences (Lee, 2001). Since this research is to study the articles of same-sex preference female instead of only to lesbian, the transgender issues have also been included for the research areas.

In the results of the research, there have been discussed the gender identity disorder issue and one of the articles reported the clinical data of the FTM patients of the first legal gender clinic in Japan. There have not been specialized articles or sessions discussed the FTM transgender, but the increased of the articles containing to this issue has showed the development and acceptances of this issue in the clinical psychology area and society in Japan.

### Japan V.S The States

According to the comparison of the articles pertaining to same-sex preference female in Japan and US, though researches in both of the countries have been increased in the last decade, there are still several differences between them. The research taken by the Phillips, Ingram, Smith & Mindes has been used to compare with the data of this research (Phillips, Ingram, Smith & Mindes, 2003). The first difference is the quantity of articles. From 1990 to 1999, 119 (2.11%) articles contained a significant focus on LGB issues, included

LGB research participants, or incorporated one or more LGB-related variables in their analysis in eight major counseling journals of total 5,628 articles in America (Phillips, Ingram, Smith & Mindes, 2003). There are 9 articles (9/90, 10%) focus on the lesbian issues and the 81 (81/90, 90%) articles took the LGB issue as a whole concept.

In Japan, within the 4 major clinical and counseling journals from 1990 to 2003 of total 1070 articles in Japan, there are 6 articles focused on the LGB issues. There are 1 article focused on the lesbian issues, 1 took the LGB issue as a whole concept and 4 on the gender identity disorder issue. Both of the countries have expressed the increasing of the articles in the same-sex preference female issues, though the articles in Japan are less than the quantity in the states, the percentage of the lesbian focused article are higher than the states.

The second difference is the methodology used by the psychologists in the two countries. The 57.14% of the articles focused on the LGB in states used the empirical studies as the research method and there are no articles in Japan have used the empirical studies from 1990 to 2003. In Japan, the comments, introduction and case study are the methods used in the same-sex preference female related researches. The last difference is that the literature review taken in the states focused on the counseling journals but this research has focused not only the counseling journals but also the clinical journals. The differences of these two researches would be a reason of the various quantity and quality of the results.

### 5. Conclusion

The issue of same-sex preference female which includes the lesbian, bisexual female and FTM have gained more attention in the clinical and counseling journals in Japan according to the result of this research. The amount of the articles in the last decade has been three times of the ones before 1990s. In the analysis of the views taken by the articles, the psychologists in Japan have inclined to use the essentialism sight to study the homosexuality issue. According to the delete of the homosexuality from the DSM in 1975, the researches have also changed from the pathology to non-pathology view toward the homosexuality. The studies of same-sex preference female after the 1975 have been focused on the relationship between gender conflicts and mental disorder. Abide by the first legal gender clinic in Japan has been established since 1996, there was one special issue focused on the gender

identity issue published in 1999.

The results have showed that the issue of female sexual minority has gained more attention in the last decade in Japan. There is still expectation for future development in this area since the rise of the professional psychology help and homosexual events in Japan started from the latest decade. The empirical studies of the mental health and development theory toward the sexuality issues and same-sex preference female could be the next step for the research in the following decade in Japan since these issues have gained more attention in the west since 1990s.

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