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RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

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# POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD LGBTQ PEOPLE IN MAINLAND CHINA

May 2024

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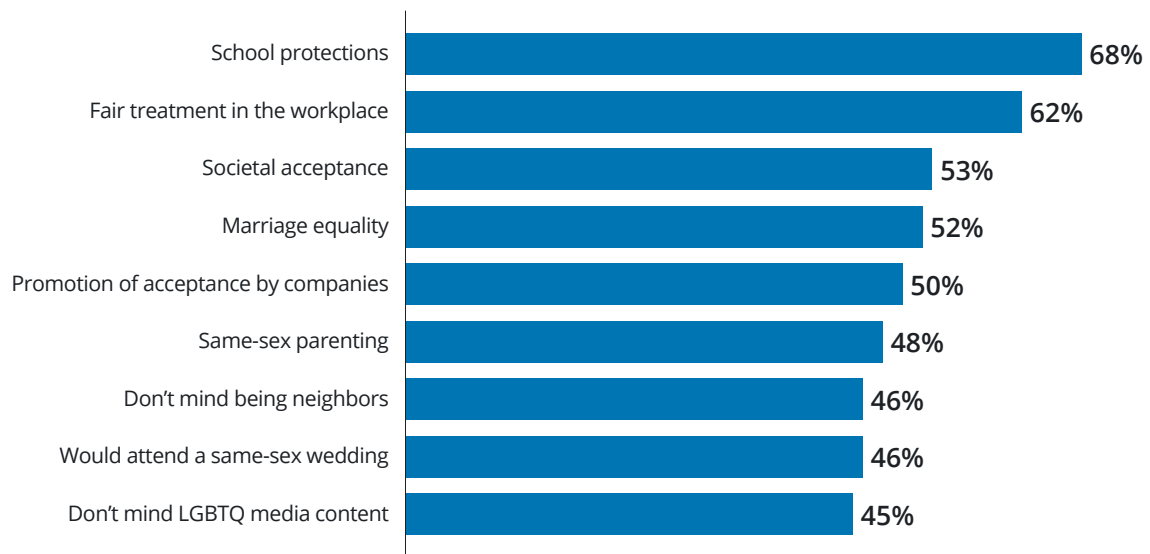
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## OVERVIEW

In this survey, we inquired about familiarity with and acceptance of LGBTQ people in mainland China and attitudes about policy issues affecting this population (e.g., workplace discrimination and same-sex couples raising children). Overall, survey respondents in mainland China agreed with viewpoints that are favorable toward LGBTQ people in China. The majority agreed with LGBTQ equal rights and protections on a societal and institutional level, especially for LGBTQ students and employees. About half agreed that same-sex marriages should be accepted. Slightly fewer endorsed positive attitudes about personal relationships with LGBTQ people, such as having a neighbor who is LGBTQ or attending an LGBTQ wedding.

### Percent of respondents who agree with favorable viewpoints toward LGBTQ people



Note: Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who chose “agree” (versus “somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and disagree”) in response to survey questions about attitudes toward LGBTQ people (see survey questions in the appendix).

## INTRODUCTION

Following a period of growth and optimism in Chinese LGBTQ<sup>1</sup> rights and advocacy, the past decade has been marked by setbacks, including increased curtailment of internet access to LGBTQ-supportive social media resources and an increase in government interventions that reduced, and sometimes made illegal, activities of LGBTQ (among other) civil society organizations.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, little is known about the general Chinese public's view of LGBTQ people and their rights. In this survey, we sought to assess the general public's attitudes toward key LGBTQ issues and to what extent official policies represent public attitudes. We surveyed the mainland Chinese public about their familiarity with and acceptance of LGBTQ people and attitudes toward policy issues such as discrimination at work, same-sex marriage, and same-sex couples raising children.

This investigation aims to bring to light societal perspectives and foster informed discussions in areas often overlooked or underrepresented in current discourse about LGBTQ lives in mainland China. We focused on public attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals in social and personal spheres. We explored the public's perspectives on workplace equality and campus bullying and assessed people's attitudes toward same-sex marriage and parenting—important domains in which LGBTQ people's legal rights are not recognized in China.

Additionally, we evaluated public expectations of media portrayal and corporate sector support of LGBTQ people. Many international corporations have explicit LGBTQ-supportive policies in other countries but are silent about these policies within mainland China and other countries where LGBTQ rights are not recognized.<sup>3</sup> By assessing the Chinese public's attitudes about media and corporate portrayals of LGBTQ people, our study provides insight into these routes to inclusivity and acceptance.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD LGBTQ PEOPLE IN CHINA

Research on attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals and the LGBTQ community among the general population in mainland China is limited; most studies do not use national probability samples, and the results are mixed and difficult to interpret in any clear way. The LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey by Ipsos assessed individuals from 27 countries regarding their attitudes on a variety of issues

<sup>1</sup> We use the term *LGBTQ* throughout this report to refer to lesbians, gay men, bisexual, transgender, and queer identified people. The survey was conducted in Chinese and used terms referring to these groups that make sense in the Chinese context but are not literally translatable as *LGBTQ* (see English and Chinese language survey questionnaires in the Appendix).

<sup>2</sup> Gao, L., Cheng, C., Hu, O., & Pu, B. (2023, June 13). *For China's LGBTQ community, safe spaces are becoming harder to find*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-beijing-lgbt-center-rcna85528>; Wu, H. (2023, May 16). *Beijing LGBT center shuttered as crackdown grows in China*. The Associated Press (AP). <https://apnews.com/article/china-beijing-lgbt-center-shutdown-a5643c680e1faf5c8a7a7d9bdd627d6f>; Hernández, J.C. & Mou Z. (2018, April 15). *'I am gay, not a pervert': Furor in China as Sina Weibo bans gay content*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/15/world/asia/china-gay-ban-sina-weibo-.html>; Hong, N. & Wang, Z. (2023, June 3). *With rainbow flags, 2 students test China's shrinking L.G.B.T.Q. space*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/03/world/asia/rainbow-flags-china-lgbtq.html>

<sup>3</sup> Kong, S. (2021, December 23). *Pride-friendly at home, queerphobic in China*. FairPlanet. <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/pride-friendly-at-home-queerphobic-in-china/>

related to same-sex legal rights and acceptance. Like our study, the Ipsos China survey (among other countries) used an online sample, which tends to be more urban, educated, and/or affluent than the general population. The Ipsos survey found that 63% of the respondents in China believe that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry legally or to obtain some kind of legal recognition.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, two-thirds (66%) of the respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that same-sex couples should have the same rights to adopt children as heterosexual couples, and 63% strongly or somewhat agreed that same-sex couples are just as likely as other parents to raise children successfully.<sup>5</sup> More than half (55%) of the respondents supported laws banning discrimination against LGBT people when it comes to employment, access to education, housing, and social services in China.

A national survey of a non-probability sample of adults' attitudes towards LGBTI people in China by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) found that respondents were generally open and accepting in their attitudes toward sexual diversity: 70% of those who were not identified as sexual or gender minorities did not view homosexuality as a pathology, saying they disagreed that "homosexuality is abnormal and homosexual tendencies should be corrected."<sup>6</sup> In another study, 300 college students in Wenzhou City were asked if they accept lesbians, gay men, bisexual, and transgender people: 86% said they accept one or more of these LGBT groups.<sup>7</sup>

Other results suggest that Chinese people hold more negative views of sexual and gender diversity. The Williams Institute's most recent report, *Social Acceptance of LGBTI People in 175 Countries and Locations*, ranked China 100<sup>th</sup> on the Global Acceptance Index using data gathered from 1981 to 2020.<sup>8</sup> In the UNPD report, only one-third of respondents said they did not mind getting close to an LGBTI person or thought that sexual and gender minorities were fit and able to raise children.<sup>9</sup> Data from the 2018 World Values Survey suggests that only 11% of the respondents in China agree or strongly agree that same-sex couples are as good parents as other-sex couples.<sup>10</sup> In the same survey, 70% mentioned that they would *not* like to have "homosexual" people as neighbors—a rate that is the same as when the survey first started assessing this question in 1990.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ipsos. (2021). *LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey: A 27-country Ipsos survey*. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2021-06/LGBT%20Pride%202021%20Global%20Survey%20Report%20-%20US%20Version%20-%20Rev%202.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> see Footnote 4

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2016). *Being LGBTI in China – A national survey on social attitudes towards sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression*. <https://www.undp.org/asia-pacific/publications/being-lgbti-china-national-survey-social-attitudes-towards-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-and-gender-expression>

<sup>7</sup> Lu, Y., Yan, Y., Zhang, L., Zhong, Y., Jiang, B., & Cao, B. (2021). Investigation and research on LGBT awareness and acceptance among college students in Wenzhou. *Chinese Journal of Human Sexuality*, 30(9), 157-160. <http://www.chinadoi.cn/portal/mr.action?doi=10.3969/j.issn.1672-1993.2021.09.047>

<sup>8</sup> Flores, A. (2021). *Social acceptance of LGBTI people in 175 countries and locations: 1981 to 2020*. The Williams Institute, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/global-acceptance-index-lgbt/>

<sup>9</sup> see Footnote 6

<sup>10</sup> Haerper, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano, J., Lagos, M., Norris, P., Ponarin, E., & Puranen, B. (2022). World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017-2022). Online data analysis: China: Q36. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVOnline.jsp> and <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV7.jsp>

<sup>11</sup> Inglehart, R., C. Haerper, A. Moreno, C. Welzel, K. Kizilova, J. Diez-Medrano, M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen (eds.). (2022). World Values Survey: All Rounds - Country-Pooled. Online data analysis: China: Q36: Time series. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVOnline.jsp> and <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWVL.jsp>

In a study conducted among a sample of military troops stationed in Tibet, 28% of the respondents totally or somewhat agree with the statement, "I think it is not necessary to make a big fuss about homosexuality."<sup>12</sup> In another study among medical staff in a Changsha City hospital, 87% of the medical staff opposed same-sex sexual behaviors.<sup>13</sup> A longitudinal observation using all six waves of the China General Social Survey from 2010 to 2018 found that more than 75% of the Chinese public viewed same-sex sexual behaviors as always wrong or mostly wrong.

Some surveys suggest that attitudes varied by demographic characteristics, with men holding more negative views than women.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, acceptance of LGBT individuals among college male students was lower than that of females in the survey conducted in Wenzhou City.<sup>15</sup> A study of university students in Chongqing City found that male respondents had more negative attitudes toward homosexuality, especially toward gay men, and that male respondents with greater insecurity about their ingroup status were more likely to be homophobic.<sup>16</sup> Differences in attitudes toward LGBTQ people were also observed in terms of age, as the UNDP report found that young people, compared to older people, in China were more open and accepting of sexual and gender minorities.<sup>17</sup>

Familiarity with an LGBTQ person has been shown to be an important predictor of more positive attitudes toward LGBTQ people and LGBTQ rights, and it may be an important determinant of the attitudes we studied in this research.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Xu, Y., Huang, J., & Zhou, L. (2023). Investigation on sexual knowledge, sexual concepts, and sexual psychology of military personnel stationed in a certain unit in Tibet.

*Occupation and Health*, 39(23), 3235-3239. <https://d.wanfangdata.com.cn/periodical/ChlQZXJpb2RpY2FsQ0hjTmV3UzlwMjMxMjI2Eg56eXlqazlwMjMyMzAxNBolanh4MWhoczc%3D>

<sup>13</sup> Chen, J., Wang, H., Li, X., & Yuan, S. (2017). Understanding of AIDS transmission channels among young medical staff. *Journal of Practical Clinical Medicine*, 10, 161-162. <https://jcmp.yzu.edu.cn/cn/article/doi/10.7619/jcmp.201710051>

<sup>14</sup> Zhou, Y. (2022). Visualizing gendered attitudes toward same-sex sexual behavior in China over a decade. *Socius*, 8, 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23780231221117401>

<sup>15</sup> see Footnote 7

<sup>16</sup> Wu, P.P., Xiang, L., Liu, Q.H., Zhang, Y., & Lei, G.H. (2024). Sex differences in attitudes toward homosexuality: The mediating role of in-group differentiation and gender neutralization. *Chinese Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 32(1), 165-170. <https://oversea.cnki.net/kcms/detail/43.1214.R.20240204.1740.042.html>

<sup>17</sup> see Footnote 6

<sup>18</sup> Flores, A. R. (2015). Attitudes toward transgender rights: perceived knowledge and secondary interpersonal contact. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 3(3), 398-416. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2015.1050414>; Lewis, D. C., Flores, A. R., Haider-Markel, D. P., Miller, P. R., Tadlock, B. L., & Taylor, J. K. (2017). Degrees of Acceptance: Variation in Public Attitudes toward Segments of the LGBT Community. *Political Research Quarterly*, 70(4), 861-875. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917717352>; Yang, A. S. (1997). Trends: Attitudes toward homosexuality. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61(3), 477-507. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2749583>



## RESULTS

### SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

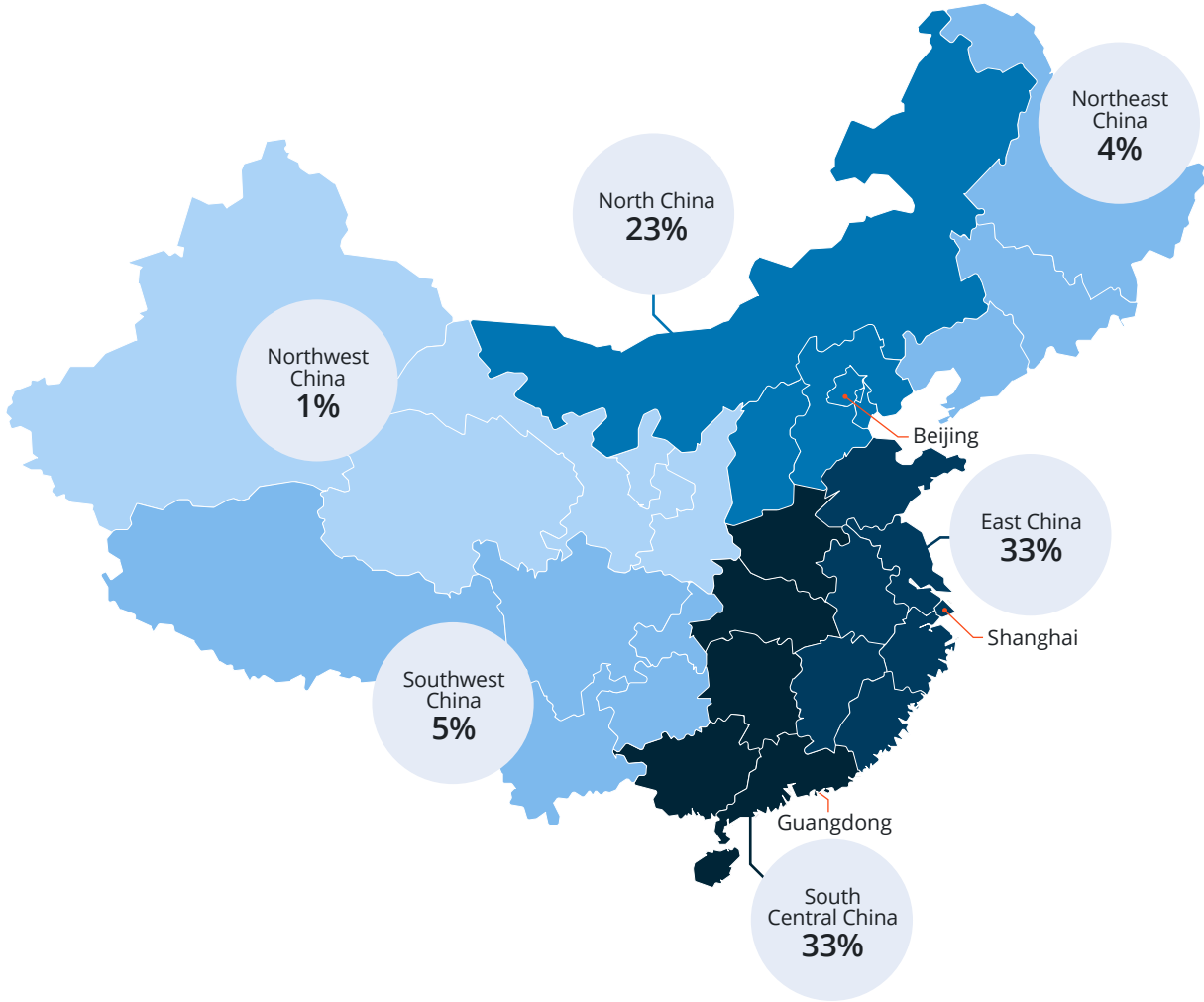
In Table 1, we present demographic characteristics of the sample. Most respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44 years old, were college-educated, and had a monthly income of 7,000 Yuan or higher (close to 1,000 USD). About one-half of respondents lived in a major city (Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangdong), and 65% lived in East and South-Central China (Figure 1).

Table 1. Sample characteristics

	TOTAL SAMPLE (N = 2,926)
<b>AGE</b>	
Mean (SD)	34.2 (9.9)
18–24	22%
25–34	30%
35–44	32%
45–54	12%
55+	3%
<b>GENDER</b>	
Man	48%
Woman	52%
Something else	0.2%
<b>EDUCATION</b>	
Less than high school	1%
High school or vocational school graduate	10%
Associate degree or bachelor's degree	80%
Graduate school	9%
<b>MONTHLY INCOME (CNY)</b>	
¥ <3000	6%
¥ 3000–6999	23%
¥ 7000–10000	36%
¥ >10000	35%



Figure 1. Mainland China regions where respondents resided

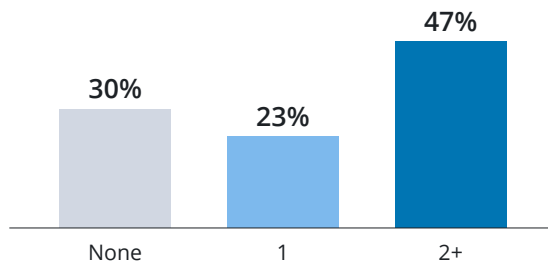


## FAMILIARITY WITH LGBTQ PEOPLE

Most respondents knew at least one person who was LGBTQ, and almost half knew two or more LGBTQ people. Only 30% did not know any LGBTQ people (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Familiarity with LGBTQ people

How many family members/friends/colleagues/classmates do you know who belong to these diverse groups?



## ATTITUDES TOWARD LGBTQ PEOPLE

We first examined the proportion of respondents who agreed with each assessed attitude about LGBTQ issues. We then examined whether each attitude varied according to sociodemographic factors. Odds ratios (ORs) were calculated from bivariate logistic regression models to estimate the association of each sociodemographic factor to each attitude studied (Tables 2-5). Additionally, adjusted odds ratios were calculated to estimate the combined effects of the sociodemographic factors when considered together (Appendix Table A1).

A little over half (53%) of respondents agreed that LGBTQ people should be accepted by Chinese society. Slightly fewer (46%) agreed that they would not mind having an LGBTQ neighbor (Figure 3). Bivariate regression analyses showed that each examined demographic variable—younger age, being female, higher income, college education, and residing in a major metropolitan city—as well as knowing an LGBTQ person personally, predicted greater acceptance (Table 2).

Figure 3. Social acceptance of LGBTQ people

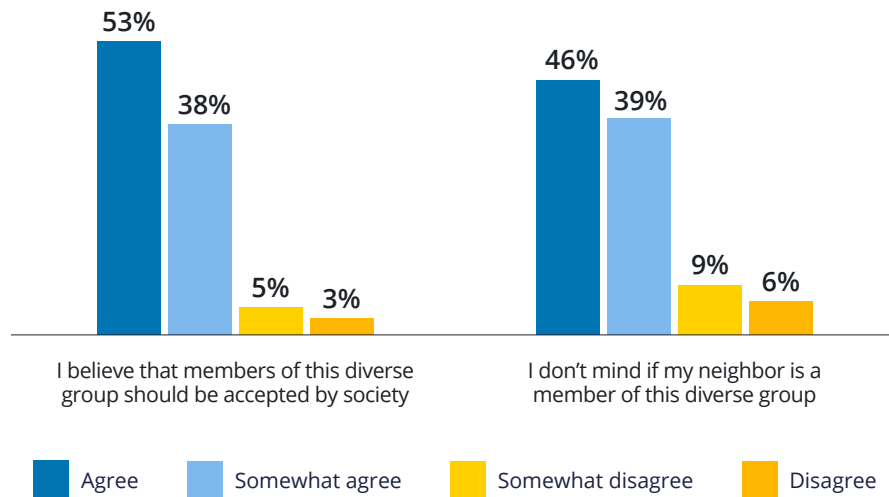


Table 2. Attitudes toward acceptance of LGBTQ people

Associations with demographic characteristics (odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals)

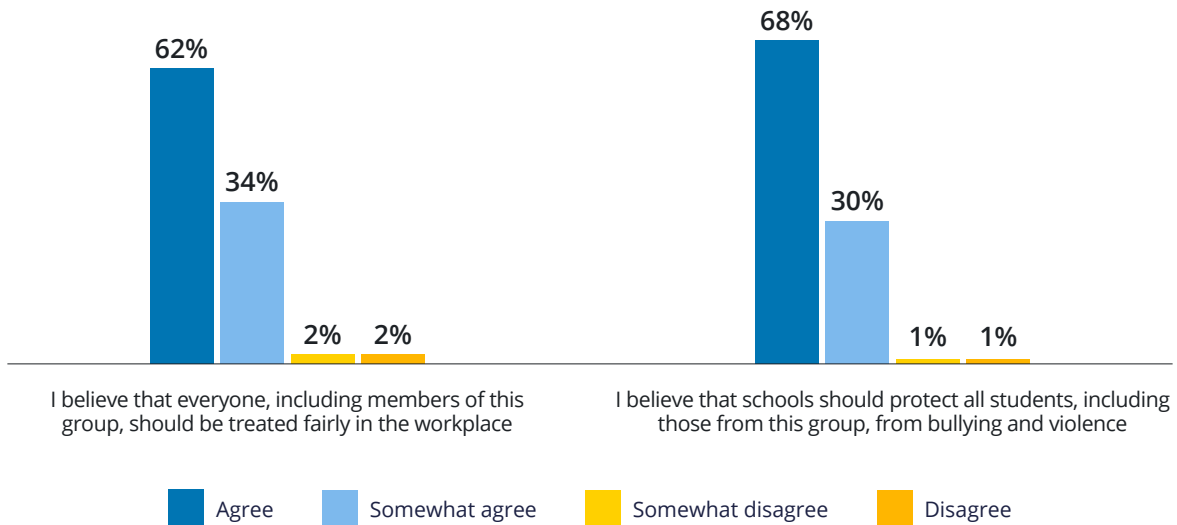
	LGBTQ PEOPLE SHOULD BE ACCEPTED BY SOCIETY	DON'T MIND HAVING AN LGBTQ NEIGHBOR
Age (continuous range: 18–74)	0.96 (0.95, 0.97)	0.96 (0.95, 0.97)
Female (vs. male)	2.22 (1.68, 2.93)	1.97 (1.60, 2.43)
Monthly income ¥7,000 or more (vs. less than ¥6,999)	1.24 (0.94, 1.64)	1.46 (1.18, 1.81)
College degree or more (vs. no college)	2.08 (1.47, 2.95)	2.07 (1.57, 2.75)

	LGBTQ PEOPLE SHOULD BE ACCEPTED BY SOCIETY	DON'T MIND HAVING AN LGBTQ NEIGHBOR
Resides in major city (vs. outside major city)	<b>1.43</b> (1.10, 1.86)	1.47 (1.20, 1.81)
Knows LGBTQ person(s) (vs. does not know)	<b>3.60</b> (2.75, 4.71)	5.36 (4.32, 6.64)

Note: Bolded values indicate statistical significance.

Most respondents agreed that LGBTQ people should be treated fairly at work and protected from violence in schools (Figure 4). Protection of LGBTQ students from violence in schools had the strongest agreement among all the questions asked of respondents (Figure A1). Binary regression analyses show that knowing an LGBTQ person, having a younger age, and having higher education were each associated with greater agreement with workplace fairness and school protections for LGBTQ students. Being female was associated only with more positive attitudes toward school protections for LGBTQ students (Table 3).

Figure 4. Attitudes toward offering protections for LGBTQ people



**Table 3. Attitudes toward protections for LGBTQ people**

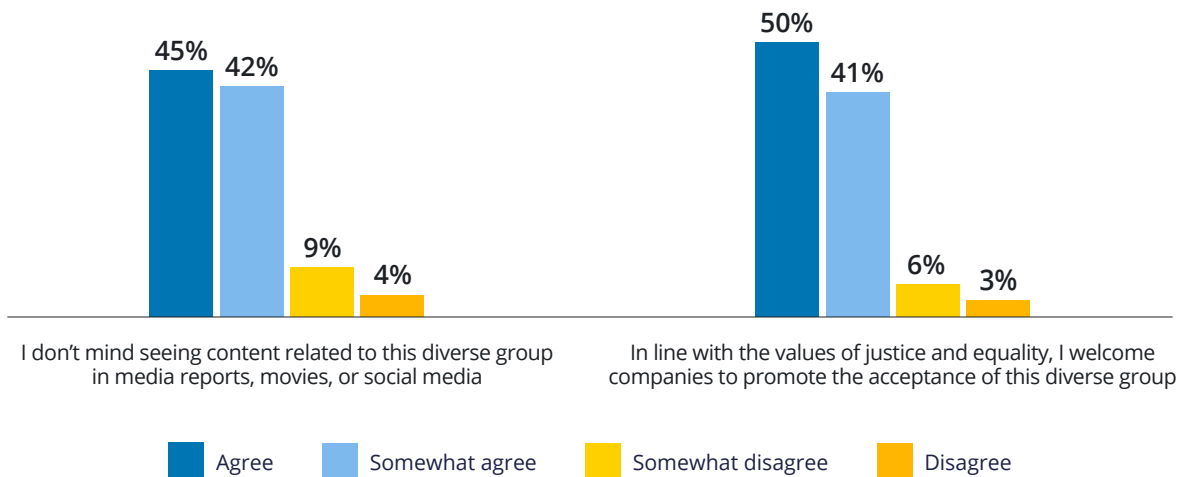
Associations with demographic characteristics (odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals)

	LGBTQ PEOPLE SHOULD BE TREATED FAIRLY AT WORK	LGBTQ STUDENTS SHOULD BE PROTECTED IN SCHOOLS
Age (continuous range: 18–74)	0.96 (0.95, 0.98)	0.98 (0.95, 1.00)
Female (vs. male)	1.30 (0.89, 1.90)	2.16 (1.33, 3.52)
Monthly income ¥7,000 or more (vs. less than ¥6,999)	1.44 (0.97, 2.13)	1.45 (0.90, 2.35)
College degree or more (vs. no college)	<b>1.88</b> (1.14, 3.10)	<b>2.64</b> (1.51, 4.60)
Resides in major city (vs. outside major city)	1.30 (0.89, 1.89)	1.30 (0.82, 2.06)
Knows LGBTQ person(s) (vs. does not know)	<b>4.15</b> (2.82, 6.11)	<b>2.29</b> (1.44, 3.63)

Note. Bolded values indicate statistical significance.

Close to half of respondents (45%) said that they “didn’t mind”<sup>19</sup> being exposed to LGBTQ content in the media, and one-half (50%) of respondents agreed that, in line with Chinese values of justice and equality, companies should promote the acceptance of LGBTQ people (Figure 5). Results from a binary regression analysis showed that knowing an LGBTQ person was associated with more positive attitudes, as were each of the demographic variables we tested (Table 4).

**Figure 5. Promotion of LGBTQ people in the workplace and the media**



<sup>19</sup> “Didn’t mind” is our best translation of the Chinese question. See original language in the Appendix.

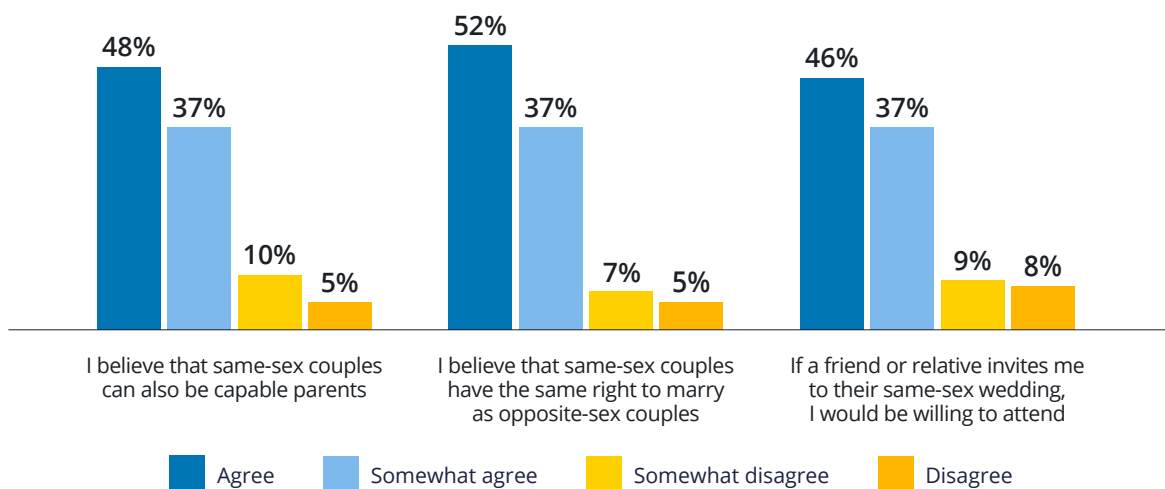
**Table 4. Attitudes toward promotion of LGBTQ people by media and companies**

Associations with demographic characteristics (odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals)

	ACCEPT SEEING LGBTQ CONTENT IN MEDIA	COMPANIES SHOULD PROMOTE ACCEPTANCE OF LGBTQ PEOPLE
Age (continuous range: 18–74)	0.97 (0.96, 0.98)	0.98 (0.97, 0.99)
Female (vs. male)	1.60 (1.29, 1.99)	1.49 (1.15, 1.92)
Monthly income ¥7,000 or more (vs. less than ¥6,999)	1.46 (1.16, 1.83)	1.32 (1.01, 1.73)
College degree or more (vs. no college)	2.02 (1.51, 2.71)	1.76 (1.24, 2.51)
Resides in major city (vs. outside major city)	1.59 (1.28, 1.98)	1.32 (1.02, 1.71)
Knows LGBTQ person(s) (vs. does not know)	2.99 (2.41, 3.73)	3.03 (2.34, 3.93)

Note. Bolded values indicate statistical significance.

About half of respondents agreed that same-sex couples can be capable parents (48%), should be able to marry (52%), and that they would personally attend an LGBTQ wedding (46%; Figure 6). Binary regression analyses showed that knowing an LGBTQ person and each of the demographic variables we tested were associated with more positive attitudes toward LGBTQ families, with the exception that income was not significantly related to attitudes about parenting (Table 5).

**Figure 6. Attitudes toward LGBTQ families**

**Table 5. Attitudes toward LGBTQ families**

Associations with demographic characteristics (odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals)

	<b>SAME-SEX COUPLES CAN BE CAPABLE PARENTS</b>	<b>WILLING TO ATTEND SAME- SEX WEDDING</b>	<b>SAME-SEX COUPLES SHOULD HAVE RIGHT TO MARRY</b>
Age (continuous range: 18–74)	<b>0.96</b> (0.96, 0.97)	<b>0.96</b> (0.95, 0.97)	<b>0.95</b> (0.94, 0.96)
Female (vs. male)	<b>2.41</b> (1.94, 2.98)	<b>2.03</b> (1.66, 2.48)	<b>2.17</b> (1.71, 2.76)
Monthly income ¥7,000 or more (vs. less than ¥6,999)	<b>1.17</b> (0.94, 1.46)	<b>1.55</b> (1.26, 1.90)	<b>1.56</b> (1.23, 1.99)
College degree or more (vs. no college)	<b>1.80</b> (1.35, 2.39)	<b>1.83</b> (1.39, 2.42)	<b>2.52</b> (1.87, 3.39)
Resides in major city (vs. outside major city)	<b>1.36</b> (1.11, 1.66)	<b>1.49</b> (1.23, 1.81)	<b>1.47</b> (1.17, 1.85)
Knows LGBTQ person(s) (vs. does not know)	<b>2.90</b> (2.36, 3.57)	<b>4.33</b> (3.54, 5.30)	<b>3.70</b> (2.93, 4.68)

Note. Bolded values indicate statistical significance.

## DISCUSSION

Overall, survey respondents agreed with viewpoints that are favorable toward LGBTQ people. The majority agreed with LGBTQ equal rights and protections on a societal and institutional level, especially for LGBTQ students and employees. About half agreed that same-sex marriages should be accepted. Slightly fewer agreed to a personal relationship with LGBTQ people, such as having a neighbor who is LGBTQ or personally attending an LGBTQ wedding.

Familiarity with an LGBTQ person, younger age, being female, and having higher education were significantly associated with favorable attitudes toward LGBTQ people on all the attitudes we tested (with the exception of workplace fairness, where men and women showed similar attitudes). Further, higher income was associated with favorable attitudes toward LGBTQ people in the domains of having an LGBTQ neighbor, attending an LGBTQ wedding, marriage equality, and LGBTQ representation in media. However, respondents' income was not associated with attitudes toward LGBTQ parental abilities, societal acceptance, school protections, workplace equality, or promotion of LGBTQ people by companies.

In the adjusted model, where all the sociodemographic factors were considered together, we were able to isolate which factors were significant (see Appendix Table A1). Results showed that only younger age remained a significant predictor in supporting workplace fairness and that age was not significantly associated with LGBTQ protections in schools after controlling for the other factors—only gender and education were significant predictors. Though educational attainment was associated with most outcomes after controlling for all sociodemographic factors, it no longer predicted attitudes regarding workplace fairness, attending an LGBTQ wedding, or promotion of LGBTQ acceptance in companies. Also, when controlling for the other factors, living in a major city was not a significant predictor of any attitude except for LGBTQ representation in media.

Our results are consistent with the studies cited above that portray more positive public attitudes in China toward LGBTQ people but are inconsistent with the more negative portrayals of some other studies. For example, the UNDP study found that only one-third of the respondents said they did not mind getting close to an LGBTI person or thought that sexual and gender minorities were fit and able to raise children.<sup>20</sup> In our study, almost half of the respondents agreed that they would not mind having an LGBTQ neighbor and that same-sex couples can be capable parents. Reasons for differences in levels of support observed between our study and the UNDP study may include differences in sample composition, question wording, and underlying attitudes over time.

Another issue is that, like our study, the other studies we cited used non-probability samples. Therefore, the degree to which these studies represent the attitudes of the Chinese population is impossible to determine. Selection bias in the study—namely, who received notice of the study and who chose to respond—could have affected the average age of study respondents, among other characteristics, which in turn would have affected the attitudes reported by study participants. For example, if younger people are more likely to be included in a sample, as is the case in our sample,

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<sup>20</sup> see Footnote 6



and if they are more likely than older people to report more positive attitudes toward LGBTQ people, then findings would suggest that more positive attitudes exist than is true for the general population.

Compared to the total mainland Chinese population, our survey respondents were younger (5.1% of the population in China is between the ages 20-24<sup>21</sup> vs. 19.5% of respondents to our survey); had more education (15% of Chinese adults have a college education<sup>22</sup> compared with 89% in our sample); and had higher incomes (the average monthly income is ¥3,268 in China<sup>23</sup> compared with our survey where most respondents reported a monthly income above ¥7,000). The geographic distribution of our survey respondents also differs from the overall Chinese population, with more survey respondents residing in major urban centers than is the case for the Chinese population as a whole: for example, 1.6% of China's population resides in Beijing compared with 17.5% of our sample, 1.8% reside in Shanghai compared with 16.8% of our sample, and 8.9% of the national population reside in Guangdong compared with 19.3% in our sample.<sup>24</sup>

Because we do not have data from a nationally representative sample in mainland China, we cannot know whether our study respondents endorsed more positive views of LGBTQ people compared to the overall Chinese population. Nevertheless, our study shows evidence of high approval of LGBTQ rights and protections among a significant segment of the Chinese population. As a consequence, this considerable support for LGBTQ individuals, especially among younger, wealthier, and more educated populations in major urban centers, may impact the trajectory of attitudes towards LGBTQ people in the Chinese population overall.

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<sup>21</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2023). *Population by age and gender 2022*. China Statistical Yearbook 2023. Chapter 2.8. <https://www.stats.gov.cn/sj/ndsj/2023/indexeh.htm>

<sup>22</sup> China Population Census. (2020). *Major figures on 2020 population census of China*. <https://www.stats.gov.cn/sj/pcsj/rkpc/d7c/202303/P020230301403217959330.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2024). *Households' income and consumption expenditure in 2023*. [https://www.stats.gov.cn/english/pressrelease/202402/t20240201\\_1947120.html#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20the%20nationwide%20per,percent%20after%20deducting%20price%20factor](https://www.stats.gov.cn/english/pressrelease/202402/t20240201_1947120.html#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20the%20nationwide%20per,percent%20after%20deducting%20price%20factor)

<sup>24</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China (2021). *Communique of the seventh national population census (No. 3): Population by region*. [https://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/202105/t20210510\\_1817188.html](https://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/202105/t20210510_1817188.html)

## METHODS

### SAMPLE

To recruit our sample, we contracted with the survey research company *Dynata*, which maintains a panel of survey respondents in over 45 countries around the world, including China.<sup>25</sup> Dynata panel members are recruited using a variety of approaches related to their participation in online activities; for example, by invitation as part of an entertainment or travel loyalty program membership.

Dynata published our attitudes survey between October 31 and November 17, 2023. Panel members who volunteered to participate could do so after passing an eligibility screening test. Respondents received standard compensation by Dynata for participating in surveys (e.g., points or miles relevant to the program they were recruited from).

Respondents were eligible if they were 18 years of age or older and resided in mainland China. People who lived outside mainland China were not eligible to participate. We used quotas to monitor participation and limit the number of respondents by age group, geographic region, and gender. As a quality control measure, we excluded anyone who completed the survey in under 60 seconds from analysis because the integrity of their responses was suspect. The final total sample size was 2,926.

The study was exempted from review by the IRB of UCLA because no identifiers were made available by Dynata to the investigators.

### SURVEY METHOD

The brief 13-item survey was self-administered and conducted online in Standard Chinese via Qualtrics desktop or mobile version. Survey items were developed by the investigators in consultation with members of an advisory board (see Acknowledgements). At the beginning of the survey, an information sheet was provided to respondents that included information on the research entities conducting the survey, their contact information, funding sources, aims, risks, benefits, duration of the survey, and the confidential and voluntary nature of the survey. Respondents were told, “The purpose of this research is to find out what you think about diverse groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) people.” For demographic questions, respondents could choose their location from a list of 33 administrative regions in China. These were later combined into the six greater regions.<sup>26</sup> Respondents were also asked to indicate their age, year of birth, gender, highest education level, and monthly income level (see Table 1 for response options and frequencies).

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<sup>25</sup> Dynata (2020). *Dynata panel book*. <https://www.dynata.com/content/Panel-Book.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (2014). About China: *Administrative division*. [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/china\\_abc/2014/08/27/content\\_281474983873401.htm](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/china_abc/2014/08/27/content_281474983873401.htm); China Foreigners Guide (2013). Your guide to China: *Great regions*. [http://cfguide.cn/china\\_great\\_region.asp](http://cfguide.cn/china_great_region.asp)

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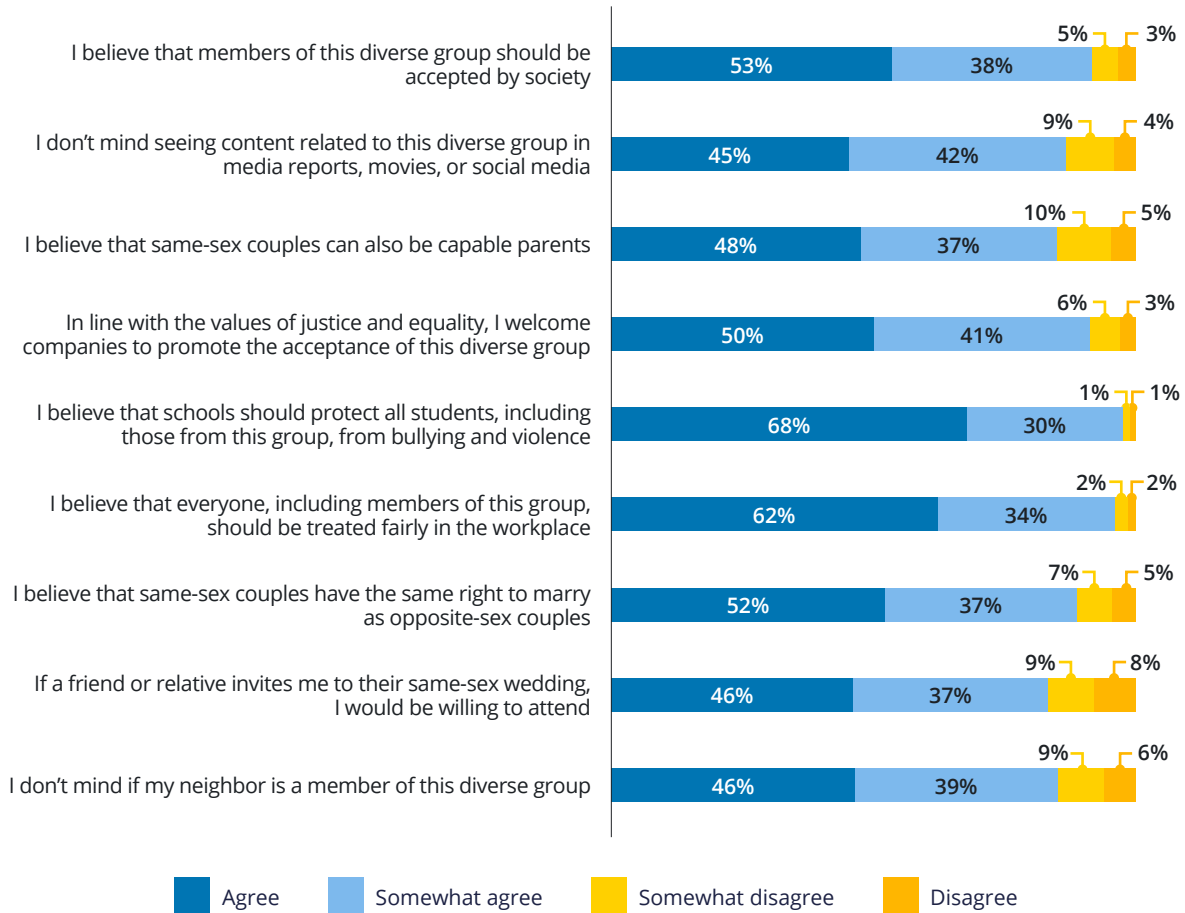
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## APPENDIX

Figure A1. Full response distribution listed in order of survey questionnaire



**Table A1. Demographic variables predicting attitudes toward LGBTQ people**

Adjusted odds ratio and 95% confidence intervals

	AGE	FEMALE	MONTHLY INCOME ¥7,000 OR MORE	COLLEGE DEGREE OR MORE	LIVES IN MAJOR CITY
	CONTINUOUS RANGE: 18-74	VS. MALE	VS. LESS THAN ¥6,999	VS. NO COLLEGE	VS. OUTSIDE MAJOR CITY
Same-sex couples can be capable parents	<b>0.97</b> (0.96, 0.98)	<b>2.19</b> (1.76, 2.71)	1.20 (0.94, 1.53)	<b>1.40</b> (1.02, 1.92)	1.08 (0.87, 1.34)
Willing to attend same-sex wedding	<b>0.96</b> (0.95, 0.97)	<b>1.81</b> (1.47, 2.22)	<b>1.71</b> (1.36, 2.15)	1.19 (0.88, 1.62)	1.14 (0.93, 1.40)
Same-sex couples should have right to marry	<b>0.95</b> (0.94, 0.96)	<b>1.89</b> (1.48, 2.42)	<b>1.61</b> (1.23, 2.10)	<b>1.68</b> (1.20, 2.34)	1.05 (0.82, 1.34)
Accept seeing LGBTQ content in media	<b>0.98</b> (0.97, 0.99)	<b>1.42</b> (1.14, 1.78)	<b>1.39</b> (1.08, 1.78)	<b>1.51</b> (1.10, 2.07)	<b>1.30</b> (1.04, 1.63)
Companies should promote acceptance of LGBTQ people	<b>0.98</b> (0.97, 0.99)	<b>1.36</b> (1.05, 1.77)	1.28 (0.95, 1.73)	1.41 (0.96, 2.07)	1.11 (0.85, 1.45)
LGBTQ people should be treated fairly at work	<b>0.97</b> (0.95, 0.98)	1.16 (0.79, 1.71)	1.46 (0.95, 2.25)	1.35 (0.78, 2.33)	1.05 (0.71, 1.56)
LGBTQ students should be protected in schools	0.98 (0.96, 1.00)	<b>1.95</b> (1.19, 3.20)	1.27 (0.75, 2.16)	<b>2.12</b> (1.15, 3.92)	0.98 (0.61, 1.60)
Accept having LGBTQ neighbor	<b>0.96</b> (0.95, 0.97)	<b>1.75</b> (1.41, 2.17)	<b>1.49</b> (1.17, 1.90)	<b>1.46</b> (1.07, 1.99)	1.15 (0.92, 1.42)
LGBTQ people should be accepted by society	<b>0.97</b> (0.96, 0.98)	<b>1.98</b> (1.49, 2.62)	1.20 (0.88, 1.63)	<b>1.59</b> (1.08, 2.33)	1.14 (0.86, 1.50)

Note: Bolded values indicate statistical significance.

## CHINESE LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

### P1. 您所在的地区：

北京市、天津市、河北省、山西省、内蒙古自治区、辽宁省、吉林省、黑龙江省、上海市、浙江省、安徽省、福建省、江西省、山东省、江苏省、河南省、湖北省、湖南省、广东省、广西壮族自治区、海南省、重庆市、四川省、贵州省、云南省、西藏自治区、陕西省、甘肃省、青海省、宁夏回族自治区、新疆维吾尔自治区

### P2. 您的年龄？

- A. 小于18岁
- B. 18-24岁
- C. 25-34岁
- D. 35-44岁
- E. 45-54岁
- F. 小于55岁

### P3. 您的性别是？

- A. 男性
- B. 女性
- C. 其他(请在下方写出：\_\_\_\_\_)

本次调研旨在了解您对同性恋、双性恋、跨性别者等多元群体的看法。

#### 1. 您知道多少位家人/朋友/同事/同学属于这个多元群体？

- A. 超过五位
- B. 二到五位
- C. 至少一位
- D. 没有

#### 2. 我不介意我的邻居是这个多元群体的一员。

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意
- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

#### 3. 如果我的亲友邀请我参加他/她们的同性婚礼，我会愿意参加。

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意
- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

#### 4. 我认为同性伴侣和异性伴侣一样，有和相爱的人结婚的权利。

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意
- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

#### 5. 我认为所有人，包括这个群体，都应该在工作中受到公平对待。

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意

- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

**6. 我认为学校应保护所有学生,包括这个群体的学生免受欺凌和暴力。**

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意
- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

**7. 响应公正和平等的价值观,我认同企业推动对这个多元群体的接纳。**

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意
- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

**8. 我认为同性伴侣也可以成为合格的家长。**

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意
- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

**9. 我不介意在媒体报道、影视作品或社交网络中看到这个多元群体的相关内容。**

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意
- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

**10. 我认为这个多元群体的成员应该被社会接纳。**

- A. 同意
- B. 比较同意
- C. 比较不同意
- D. 不同意

**11. 您的最高教育程度?**

- A. 初中及以下
- B. 高中/中专
- C. 本科/专科
- D. 研究生或以上

**12. 您是哪一年出生的?**

[2005-1933]

**13. 您的月收入水平?**

- A. <3000
- B. 3000-6999
- C. 7000-10000
- D. >10000

我们感谢您花时间参与这项调查。您的回应已被记录。



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

### P1. Your location:

Beijing, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Shandong, Tianjin, Nei Mongol AR (Inner Mongolia), Shanxi, Gansu, Ningxia Hui AR, Shaanxi, Qinghai, Xinjiang Uyghur AR, Chongqing, Guangxi AR, Guizhou, Sichuan, Xizang AR (Tibet), Yunnan, Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Zhejiang

### P2. What is your age?

- A. Less than 18
- B. 18-24
- C. 25-34
- D. 35-44
- E. 45-54
- F. 55+

### P3. Your gender:

- A. Male
- B. Female
- C. Other (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

This survey aims to understand your views on a diverse group of people, including homosexual, bisexual, and transgender people.

1. How many family members/friends/colleagues/classmates do you know who belong to these diverse groups?

- A. None
- B. At least one
- C. Two to five
- D. More than five

2. I don't mind if my neighbor is a member of this diverse group.

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

3. If a friend or relative invites me to their same-sex wedding, I would be willing to attend.

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

4. I believe that same-sex couples have the same right to marry as opposite-sex couples.

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

**5. I believe that everyone, including members of this group, should be treated fairly in the workplace.**

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

**6. I believe that schools should protect all students, including those from this group, from bullying and violence.**

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

**7. In line with the values of justice and equality, I welcome companies to promote the acceptance of this diverse group.**

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

**8. I believe that same-sex couples can also be capable parents.**

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

**9. I don't mind seeing content related to this diverse group in media reports, movies, or social media.**

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

**10. I believe that members of this diverse group should be accepted by society.**

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

**11. Your highest education level:**

- A. Junior high school or below
- B. High school/vocational school
- C. Bachelor's degree/associate's degree
- D. Master's degree or above

**12. Your age/year of birth**

*Drop down [2005-1933]*

**13. Your monthly income level:**

- A. <3000
- B. 3000-6999
- C. 7000-10000
- D. >10000

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your answer has been recorded.