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An Exploration on Taiwanese Undergraduates' Gender Cognitions and Attitude toward Male to Female Transsexuals

In the past, Chinese gender consciousness was deeply affected by the Confucian Thought that males and females should be different. Recently, increased attention was paid to multicultural issues, which also influenced the development of gender paradigm. In our community, transgenders have become more visible. Among the transgenders, transsexuals often suffer from the most discrimination and stigma. Some gender advocators in Taiwan argued that the society has prejudice against transsexuals due to the gender stereotypes that are formed based on the bipolar gender traits: male characteristics and female characteristics. The statement of bipolar gender does not only limit the development of transsexual's gender identity, but also makes it more difficult for the transsexuals to expand their social relationship.

In Taiwan, several studies on transsexual have appeared. However, few empirical studies have been done on people's gender cognition and attitude toward transsexuals. If the transgender research could not be built in a frame of the dialectic of subject and object, it would be difficult to present the full picture of the transsexuals' current position. Therefore, the topic of this paper is focused on male to female transsexual (MtFs), and the participants of this research were Taiwanese undergraduates. This study investigated gender stereotypes, Taiwanese undergraduates' gender cognition and attitude toward MtFs, and explored the relationship among gender stereotypes, gender cognition and attitude toward MtFs. Findings of this study may lead to a better understanding of the current position and transition of Taiwanese undergraduates' collective gender consciousness. This paper was agreed to translate the Chinese version of the study, "An exploration on gender cognition and attitude toward male to female transsexual", which has been accepted by Formosa Journal of Mental Health.