

**A Study on Discrimination Experienced
by Sexual Minorities**

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Objective

1. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in consultation with the Advisory Group on Eliminating Discrimination against Sexual Minorities and acting through the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, commissioned Policy 21 Ltd. to conduct a study on discrimination experienced by the sexual minorities in Hong Kong (“the Study”). The aim of the Study is to ascertain whether sexual minorities were discriminated against in Hong Kong, and if so, the discrimination they had experienced and specifically: (a) in what domains; (b) in what forms; (c) the areas of needs for support and/or redress; and (d) whether they have attempted to seek redress and/or assistance from different bodies.
2. A qualitative method was adopted to collect more in-depth understanding of the experiences of sexual minorities instead of attempting to estimate the extent of discrimination using a quantitative survey of a representative sample. The data collection process was carried out from March to September 2014. A total of 214 sexual minority participants (encompassing 70 lesbians, 66 gays, 34 bisexuals, 35 transgender people, 8 post-gays and 1 intersex person) from diverse socio-economic backgrounds were interviewed through focus group discussion or in-depth interview.

Limitations

3. While the qualitative approach adopted in the Study could provide ample scope for obtaining in-depth responses by participants, this method has some limitations. Views from sexual minorities are the single source of qualitative data of the Study, and the experiences mentioned are cited based on self-report without concrete evidence or verification with other relevant parties; there is no guarantee that all descriptions were accurate especially for distant events reported from memory.
4. In addition, the Study used a non-random sample comprising a limited number of participants, which is not a scientific sampling design for

gathering views from a representative sample of the target population. Therefore, it should be cautioned that the findings cannot be extrapolated to wider populations or form the basis for any general conclusion to be drawn regarding the sexual minorities in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, efforts had been made to collect views of the sexual minorities from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and different age groups.

Key findings

General understanding of discrimination in daily life

5. About half of the participants¹ indicated that the basic definition of “discrimination” was “a person is treated unfairly or less favourably than other persons”. Another half of them might not be able to articulate clearly what the definition of discrimination was. However these participants gave examples including verbal insult, mockery, sexual harassment, and physical assault; the majority of these participants also perceived “unfriendly looks or expressions” as discriminatory acts.
6. On the basis of the above subjective understanding of discrimination, the majority of participants expressed that they had experienced discriminatory acts in daily life.

Experience of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation / gender identity

7. The participants were interviewed on their actual experiences, if any, in the domains of (1) employment; (2) education; (3) provision of goods, facilities and services; (4) disposal and management of premises and; (5) other domains. Participants were asked about the circumstantial information on the actual experiences. The reported discrimination experiences, if any, were recorded under the following pre-determined categories of forms of discrimination: direct discrimination (i.e., a person is treated less favourably than another person with a different sexual orientation or gender identity);

¹ In this report, terms including “the great majority”, “the majority”, “about half”, “some” and “few” are used to describe the proportion of participants expressing a specific point of view in response to a particular question. “The great majority” represents 90% or above; “the majority” 61% to 89%; “about half” 40% to 60%; “some” 11% to 39%; and “few” 10% or below.

indirect discrimination (i.e., a condition or requirement is applied to everyone but in practice adversely affects persons of a particular sexual orientation or gender identity²); harassment (i.e., a person is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct on grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity); and vilification (any activity in public that incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or persons because of their sexual orientation or gender identity).

8. In the workplace, slightly less than half of the participants (72 out of 180 participants who had work experience) had disclosed their sexual orientations / gender identities to their employers or co-workers in the workplace. Slightly less than half of the participants (72)³ who had work experience indicated that they had encountered discrimination. Among these participants who encountered discrimination, half of them (36 out of 72 participants) had disclosed their sexual orientations / gender identities in the workplace. Some of the participants (59) who had work experience encountered unwelcome verbal conduct (a form of harassment) in the workplace. Few of the participants (6) who had work experience suffered sexual harassment verbally or physically by their employers or co-workers. Few of the participants (10) who had work experience reported experience of direct discrimination, which includes being asked to leave their jobs/denied job offers or being deprived of promotion and training opportunities once their sexual orientation / gender identity was discovered. On the other hand, about half of the participants (108) who had work experience in Hong Kong stated that they had not experienced discrimination in the workplace.

9. In school, some of the participants (69 out of 208 participants who had

² It should be noted that the commonly adopted legal definition of indirect discrimination also takes into account whether the concerned condition or requirement can be justified; however, as the experiences collected in this Study are based on self-reports by the participants without concrete evidence or verification with other relevant parties, the definition in this Study for indirect discrimination does not take into account whether the concerned condition or requirement is justified or not.

³ These 72 participants are not the same group of the aforementioned 72 participants who had disclosed their sexual orientations / gender identities. Some participants who had not disclosed their sexual orientations / gender identities reported that they encountered discrimination, and vice versa.

studied in Hong Kong) reported suffering discrimination. Some of the participants (58) who had studied in Hong Kong encountered unwelcome verbal conduct (a form of harassment) in school. Few of the participants who had studied in Hong Kong encountered unwelcome physical conduct (a form of harassment) (4) and sexual harassment (8). Two participants also reported that they were denied school place offers by theological college, which in their view might constitute direct discrimination⁴. On the other hand, the majority of participants (139) who had studied in Hong Kong said that they had never encountered discrimination in school. It should be noted that the majority of the participants (154) who had studied in Hong Kong chose to conceal their sexual orientations / gender identities in school.

10. Regarding the experience in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services, some of the participants (85 out of 214 participants) indicated that they had encountered discrimination. Some of the participants (45) encountered unwelcome verbal conduct by the providers of goods, facilities and services. Apart from this, some of the participants reported experience of direct discrimination, which includes denial of goods, facilities or services requested (e.g. being denied Valentine's Day menus in restaurant and being denied entry to public toilets) (40) or differential treatment during the provision of goods, facilities or services (e.g. being charged additional deposit for rental in hotel/inn) (6). About half of the participants (129) expressed that they had not faced discrimination in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services.
11. Regarding the experience in relation to disposal and management of premises, many participants had no relevant experience; some of the participants (6 out of the 48 participants who had experience in disposal and management of premises) reported suffering direct discrimination, which includes denial of renting premises (4), and being subjected to less favourable treatment in relation to the rental of premises (2). The majority of participants (42) who had relevant experience in this domain in Hong Kong had not encountered discrimination in this domain.

⁴ While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation or gender identity in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions provide exemptions for religious schools in relation to their decisions on admission of students.

12. As far as other domains are concerned, few participants reported that they encountered direct discrimination in church (4)⁵; when their sexual minority identity was discovered in the churches they had joined, they were denied the opportunities to participate in the activities of the churches⁶. One post-gay participant recalled that he was opposed by a sexual minority organisation when he attended a forum to share his experience and he was subjected to unwelcome verbal conduct.
13. In the domains discussed above, among the participants who experienced discrimination, the majority of them had not sought assistance mainly because they did not know where to seek help or they were afraid of exposing their sexual minority identity.

Supportive measures

14. To address discrimination against sexual minorities, the majority of participants proposed (1) education in schools and education for stakeholders in different domains; and (2) enacting legislation against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Some of the participants proposed the following supportive measures: (3) setting up unisex toilets and changing rooms; (4) enhancing employment resources and counselling services for sexual minorities; (5) providing temporary shelters for sexual minorities. Some of the transgender participants proposed: (6) allowing transgender persons to dress in accordance with their preferred gender at work or at school; and (7) protecting privacy in relation to sex/gender identity (in relation to use of public services).

⁵ These experiences were reported during the open-ended session of the focus group discussion and/or in-depth interview on experiences in other domains. As the experiences do not belong to the major domains covered by the Study, there was no statistic on how many participants in total participated in church activities.

⁶ While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions provide exemptions for religious organisations in relation to participation in their activities.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Objective

1.1.1 To have a better understanding of discrimination against sexual minority people in Hong Kong, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Government), in consultation with the Advisory Group on Eliminating Discrimination against Sexual Minorities (the Advisory Group) and acting through the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB), commissioned Policy 21 Ltd. in November 2013 to conduct a study on discrimination experienced by the sexual minorities in Hong Kong (hereinafter referred to as “the Study”).

1.1.2 The objective of the Study is to ascertain whether sexual minorities are being discriminated against in Hong Kong, and if so, the discrimination they experienced and specifically:

- (a) in what aspects or domains –
 - (i) employment,
 - (ii) education,
 - (iii) provision of goods, facilities and services,
 - (iv) disposal and management of premises, or
 - (v) other domains where participants perceive acts of discrimination;

- (b) in what ways, i.e. the form of discrimination –
 - (i) direct⁷ or indirect discrimination⁸;
 - (ii) harassment⁹;

⁷ Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person with a different sexual orientation or gender identity.

⁸ Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied to everyone but in practice adversely affects persons of a particular sexual orientation or gender identity. Also see footnote 2.

- (iii) vilification¹⁰; and
 - (iv) any other ways;
- (c) what are the areas of needs for support and/or redress for the respondents given these experiences; and
- (d) whether the respondents have attempted to seek redress and/or assistance from different bodies, and if not, the reasons for not doing so.

⁹ Harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct on grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

¹⁰ Vilification encompasses any activity in public that incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or persons because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Chapter 2 Study Design

2.1 Sample design

- 2.1.1 The target respondents of the Study (“Target Respondents”) are people of different sexual orientation and gender identity in Hong Kong aged 18 or above. There should be a balance of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender people and people with other sexual orientation/gender identity (i.e. post-gay and intersex) as far as practicable. They should come from different economic and social backgrounds (e.g. economic activity status, income groups, educational attainment) and include people of different age groups.
- 2.1.2 A qualitative approach is adopted for this Study using focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Focus group discussions and in-depth one-to-one interviews could enable in-depth analysis on the views of the participants. Efforts have been made to encourage participants to disclose their personal experiences frankly, by assuring confidentiality of information gathered, re-confirming the impartiality and neutrality of Policy 21 in conducting the Study, and re-asserting the genuine intention of both the Government and the Advisory Group in ascertaining whether sexual minorities are being discriminated against in Hong Kong, and if so, the discrimination they have experienced. For those who did not want to share their views in the presence of other participants, in-depth one-to-one interviews would be conducted.
- 2.1.3 For focus group discussions, it is not necessary and indeed not practicable to adopt scientific sampling design aimed at gathering views from a representative sample of the target population. Nevertheless, it is desirable to ensure that focus group participants cover a sufficiently wide cross-section of participants. To ensure that participants in the Study come from diverse backgrounds, different means including open recruitment and referrals from sexual minority communities were adopted in recruiting participants. In addition, individuals not belonging to the identified organisations of sexual minorities were recruited through snowball sampling. Specifically, the participants

interviewed were asked to nominate individuals in the sexual minority outside of their communities or organisations to participate in the Study.

2.2 Sampling methods

2.2.1 Three sampling methods were adopted, as follows:

Sampling Method 1 - In order to form focus groups consisting of a diverse range of participants, sexual minority networks and communities were approached to recruit participants.

Sampling Method 2 - Snowball sampling was adopted to recruit sexual minorities who were not active members of the sexual minority community in Hong Kong. Participants recruited from the sexual minority communities were asked to nominate sexual minority people outside of their communities or organisations to participate in the Study. Coupled with the use of maximum variation sampling within each focus group, the voices of sexual minorities from a variety of backgrounds would be represented in the Study, enhancing the comprehensiveness of the data.

Sampling Method 3 - Target Respondents were recruited from online social networks and via online media outlets. The social networks include social media such as Facebook and discussion forums such as MyHotBoy and LesPub where sexual minority people were known to be active. Leaflets were distributed at clubs, bars, cafes and restaurants and in districts with high pedestrian flow such as the pedestrians-only streets in Causeway Bay and Mongkok during the weekends. In addition, advertisements were posted in two newspapers, namely Headline Daily and the Standard.

2.2.2 Based on the above sampling methods, over 200 participants were recruited to participate in the Study. Over 100 participants were recruited by Sampling Method 2 (snowball sampling) whereas about 70 and 30 participants were recruited by Sampling Method 1 and Sampling Method 3 respectively. All the participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the Study. Interviews and focus groups were conducted

in Cantonese or English.

2.3 Process of data collection

2.3.1 Conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for qualitative analysis is very different from conducting questionnaire surveys for quantitative analysis. An in-depth interview/focus group discussion is not designed to seek definitive responses from individual respondents based on a pre-designed structured or semi-structured questionnaire. Instead, the role of the moderator in a discussion is to encourage the participants to freely articulate their beliefs, ideas, experience and feelings about a particular topic. A focus group needs not reach a consensus. Rather, participants are encouraged to express different points of view to provide a wide range of qualitative information¹¹.

2.3.2 It is essential that the moderator should avoid, during the discussion, putting forward his/her own views on the subject matter, or leading the group discussion towards a particular direction. In summarising the findings of the discussion, the moderator should also avoid letting his/her own views on the subject matter affect the reporting.

2.3.3 A Discussion Guide in English and Chinese was prepared in consultation with the Government and Advisory Group before invitations were issued to Target Respondents. A pilot study was conducted on 22nd and 28th January, 2014 to test the overall flow and procedures of the Study and the feasibility of the Discussion Guide prior to the main study. In-depth interviews were carried out with four sexual minority persons (one interview each for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender person) and the views collected from the pilot interviews were examined with reference to supplementary information provided by the four interviewees. The Discussion Guide was revised according to the comments collected during the pilot study.

2.3.4 The Discussion Guide (*see Appendix 1*) was divided into five parts

¹¹ Vaughan, Sharon et al. (1996), *Focus Group interviews in education and psychology*, pg.5.

covering general understanding and experience of discrimination in daily life, experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in the workplace, in school, in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services, and in relation to the disposal and management of premises. Voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality of information collected were ensured in the Study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the Study and their rights as participants. With informed consent of all participants, every session was audio-taped.

2.3.5 The following procedures were adopted for conducting the focus groups:¹²

- (a) At the beginning of discussion sessions, the moderator tried to “warm up” the group by going through the purposes of the discussion. The moderator was required to ensure anonymity of opinions expressed to encourage better response;
- (b) Equipment such as clipboard and pen was provided to enable participants to record their opinion when necessary;
- (c) Then the moderator proceeded to the list of issues to be raised for discussion. The moderator started with the less threatening and more general issues and then proceeded to the more specific, more difficult and controversial ones. The moderator also encouraged discussion among participants as far as possible;
- (d) During the course of discussion, the moderator ensured that the list of issues required to be discussed were covered in the discussion; and
- (e) At the end of the discussion, the moderator tried to re-confirm the opinions of participants on the various issues raised during the discussion, to ensure that any change of mind over the course of the discussion was reflected.

2.3.6 Relevant demographic data (including gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age group, occupation and income level) of all participants of the in-depth interviews or focus group discussions were collected through a questionnaire at *Appendix 2*.

¹² Vaughan, Sharon et al. (1996) and Steward, David et al. (1990), *Focus groups, theory and practice*.

2.3.7 The Study used a non-random sample comprising a limited number of participants. As this is not a scientific sampling design for gathering views from a representative sample of the target population, the findings cannot be extrapolated to wider populations or form the basis for any general conclusion to be drawn regarding the sexual minorities in Hong Kong. The incidence of reported experiences among the participants therefore should not be quantified into actual percentages. In this report, terms including “the great majority”, “the majority”, “about half”, “some” and “few” are used to describe the proportion of participants expressing a specific point of view. “The great majority” represents 90% or above; “the majority” 61% to 89%; “about half” 40% to 60%; “some” 11% to 39%; and “few” 10% or below.

2.4 Quality assurance

2.4.1 A number of measures were adopted to ensure that information gathered from the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews was credible, as follows:

- (a) Attempts were made to recruit the Target Respondents from a diverse range of backgrounds, by recruiting from a number of different sources;
- (b) The Discussion Guide used for the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews was carefully drawn up in consultation with the Government and the Advisory Group and pilot-tested before actual use;
- (c) The moderators of the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were experienced researchers who had ample experience conducting focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Training was provided to the researchers prior to the commencement of the Study.

2.4.2 All personal particulars of the participants, audio tape and datasets were treated as strictly confidential at all stages of work. Data collection instruments, including but not limited to interview protocols, were regarded as “confidential” documents.

2.5 Limitations

2.5.1 Few studies have examined the discrimination encountered by sexual minorities in Hong Kong. The qualitative approach adopted in the Study, including focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, could provide the researchers with ample scope for probing and obtaining in-depth responses by participants, and allow ample time and opportunities for each participant to share views, experience and feelings. More details and deeper insights into their subjective experience could be obtained. Despite these advantages, the research method employed has limitations as discussed below.

Single source of qualitative data provided by the participants

2.5.2 The Study gathered views from sexual minorities in Hong Kong and was dependent on this single source of qualitative data. The experiences of discrimination were cited based on self-report by the participants without any concrete evidence/supporting information or verification with other relevant parties, e.g. the organisations/individuals that are said to have discriminated against the participants. Data triangulation¹³ was also not used to check and ensure validity of the qualitative analysis by analysing the issue with the use of different sources.

2.5.3 The Study collects views and experiences from the participants only through face-to-face focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. It is important for the researchers to establish mutual trust with the participants so as to elicit in-depth responses. The researchers could not question the accuracy of participants' account of events and did not investigate into the incidents mentioned. Hence there is no guarantee that all descriptions were accurate especially in regard to distant events reported from memory.

¹³ Data triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources in the same study for validation purposes, so that data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, can be collected.

Results cannot be generalised

2.5.4 The Study used a non-random sample comprising a limited number of participants recruited through referrals from sexual minority communities, snowball sampling and open recruitment. This is not a scientific sampling design for gathering views from a representative sample of the target population. Therefore, the findings cannot be extrapolated to wider populations or form the basis for any general conclusion to be drawn regarding the sexual minorities in Hong Kong. In spite of this, efforts had been made to collect different views of individuals belonging to the sexual minorities from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and of different age groups. While seeking to cover the widest possible range of experiences of discrimination in the relevant domains, the researchers cannot quantify the incidence of reported experiences among the sexual minorities.

Chapter 3 Profile of the Participants

3.1 Enumeration results

- 3.1.1 In total, 231 persons enrolled to participate in the Study, including 71 lesbians, 80 gays, 34 bisexuals, 37 transgender people, 8 post-gays and 1 intersex person. Among them, 88 who were members of sexual minorities communities (“members”) were recruited from the social networks and communities, and 143 who were not members of sexual minority communities (“non-members”) were recruited by snowball sampling and open recruitment.
- 3.1.2 The main study was conducted from March 2014 to September 2014. 29 focus group discussions with 76 participants and 138 one-to-one in-depth interviews were conducted. All the focus group discussions were conducted in Cantonese. Interviews were conducted according to the spoken languages of the participants. 117 and 21 in-depth interviews were conducted in Cantonese and English respectively. Most of the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted at the Policy 21 Limited premises and some were held in the venues provided by sexual minority organisations.
- 3.1.3 In total, 214 participants were interviewed¹⁴, including 70 lesbian, 66 gay, 34 bisexual, 35 transgender, 8 post-gay and 1 intersex participants. Of these 214 participants interviewed, 72 who were members were interviewed, and 142 who were non-members and recruited by snowball sampling (112 participants) and open recruitment (30 participants).

¹⁴ Among the 231 persons enrolled, 17 could not be reached during the data collection period and were not interviewed.

Table 1: Distribution of participants and the number of participants interviewed

Categories	No. of participants				No. of participants interviewed			
	Total	Members	Non-members (Snowball)	Non-members (Open recruitment)	Total	Members	Non-members (Snowball)	Non-members (Open recruitment)
Lesbians	71	21	38	12	70	20	38	12
Gay	80	32	39	9	66	19	38	9
Bisexual	34	8	20	6	34	8	20	6
Transgender	37	20	14	3	35	18	14	3
Post-gay	8	7	1	0	8	7	1	0
Intersex	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Total	231	88	113	30	214	72	112	30

3.1.4 The socio-economic status and the status of disclosure of sexual orientation/gender identity of the interviewed participants are presented in the following paragraphs. Other demographic data of these participants are summarised in *Appendix 3*.

3.2 Socio-economic status

3.2.1 A total of 214 participants from different sexual orientations/gender identities, ages, educational attainment and economic activity status were interviewed. Only one intersex person participated in the Study. In order to protect his/her privacy, this report leaves out his/her information in some paragraphs and charts that set out the data of each category of participants (including paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 and *Appendix 3*). As such, the total number of participants covered in the paragraphs and charts concerned is 213.

3.2.2 With regard to age groups, 122 participants were at the ages of 25-39, 57 participants were aged 18-24 and 34 participants were aged 40 or above (6 participants were aged 60 or above). It is worth noting that the recruitment of elder sexual minority people was very difficult and different sampling methods were adopted to reach out to them. Regarding educational attainment, 176 participants had attained post-secondary education or above and 37 participants had attained

secondary education or below.

- 3.2.3 Considering monthly total personal income (in Hong Kong Dollars), among the 158 participants who were economically active, 111 participants earned around \$10,000 to \$29,999, 29 participants earned more than \$30,000 per month and 18 participants earned less than \$10,000.

Table 2: Socioeconomic status of the participants

Profile	Sexual orientation/gender identity					
	Lesbians	Gay	Bisexual	Trans-gender	Post-gay	Total
Age group						
18-24	18	18	14	6	1	57
25-39	46	35	16	19	6	122
40 or above	6	13	4	10	1	34
Educational attainment						
Secondary and below	14	7	3	12	1	37
Post-secondary and above	56	59	31	23	7	176
Economic activity status						
Economically active	59	44	25	23	7	158
Economically inactive	11	22	9	12	1	55
Monthly total personal income (for those who were economically active)						
Below HK\$10,000	6	6	2	3	1	18
HK\$10,000 - HK\$29,999	44	26	20	17	4	111
HK\$30,000 or above	9	12	3	3	2	29
Total	70	66	34	35	8	213

3.3 Status of disclosure of sexual orientation/gender identity

- 3.3.1 Among the 213 participants, 191 participants said that they had disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities to friends, parents, siblings, colleagues, relatives¹⁵, classmates/teachers, church mates and the public¹⁶.

¹⁵ The working definition of “relatives” refers to relatives excluding parents and siblings.

Their average age when doing so was 20.8 years. 170 participants told their friends their sexual orientations or gender identities; 110 participants told their parents, 95 participants told their siblings, 93 participants told their colleagues, 70 participants told other relatives, 59 participants told the public, 9 participants told their teachers and classmates and 4 participants told their church mates.

Table 3: Participants' status of disclosure of sexual orientation/gender identity

Profile	Sexual orientation/gender identity					
	Lesbians	Gay	Bisexual	Trans-gender	Post-gay	Total
Whether their sexual orientations or gender identities had been disclosed						
No	9	1	6	5	1	22
Yes	61	65	28	30	7	191
<i>Average age of their first disclosure</i>	<i>19.2</i>	<i>20.6</i>	<i>19.4</i>	<i>25.5</i>	<i>19.6</i>	<i>20.8</i>
<i>Age range</i>	<i>9-45</i>	<i>10-39</i>	<i>13-24</i>	<i>12-54</i>	<i>14-29</i>	<i>9-54</i>
Who has been told						
Friends	54	60	27	22	7	170
Parents	35	41	13	20	1	110
Siblings	31	36	13	13	2	95
Colleagues	26	37	15	11	4	93
Relatives	21	28	12	9	0	70
Public	15	24	9	10	1	59
Others						
Classmates/teachers	4	1	2	1	1	9
Church mates	1	1	0	0	2	4
Total	70	66	34	35	8	213

¹⁶ The working definition of “public” refers to acquaintances/other people encountered in daily life.

Chapter 4 Study Findings

4.1 General understanding and experience of discrimination in daily life

General understanding of discrimination in daily life

- 4.1.1 At the beginning of the focus group discussions or in-depth interviews, the participants discussed their subjective understanding of discrimination, their experience of discrimination in daily life and the forms and the frequency of discrimination they experienced.
- 4.1.2 With regard to the general understanding and forms of discrimination, there were no significant differences among the sexual minority groups (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, post-gay and intersex) nor among participants from different socio-economic backgrounds (e.g. economic activity status, income groups, educational attainment, and age).
- 4.1.3 About half of the participants considered that direct discrimination occurs when “a person is treated unfairly or less favourably than other persons”. Examples in the domain of employment include “employers refused to employ applicants who were qualified for the job due to their sexual orientation or gender identity” and “employees were mistreated in the assignment of work due to their sexual orientation or gender identity”. Some of them also considered that “depriving a person of his/her basic rights” or “unfair distribution of resources” was direct discrimination.
- 4.1.4 Another half of the participants might not be able to articulate clearly what the definition of discrimination was. However these participants gave examples including “verbal insult, mockery” or “physical assault”. Their descriptions of “verbal insult or mockery” included “passing inappropriate sexual comments”, “telling inappropriate jokes”, “sharing sexual anecdotes” and “making derogatory remarks in relation to the sexual orientation or gender identity” of the participants. Their descriptions of physical assault include “beating”, “punching” or

“kicking the body”. Some of these participants mentioned “persistent attempt to hurt or humiliate someone” as example of harassment. Some of these participants further elaborated that, despite that each person had freedom to express one’s own judgment on sexual orientation and gender identity and that opposition to sexual minorities was not tantamount to discrimination, verbal attack was intolerable and discriminatory.

- 4.1.5 It is worth noting that, among the half of the participants who might not be able to articulate clearly what the definition of discrimination was, the majority of them considered “unfriendly look or expression” as a form of discrimination. Their descriptions included “looking at ones’ body in an unfriendly manner”, “showing offensive gestures or facial expressions” to the participants, and “staring at one in a sexually suggestive or offensive manner”. Some of these participants pointed out that “making a person feel stressed to disclose his/her sexual orientation/gender identity” and “addressing transgender persons by their biological sex instead of their preferred gender” were discriminatory practices.

Views of the participants who had experienced discrimination in daily life

- 4.1.6 On the basis of the above subjective understanding of discrimination, the majority of the participants expressed that they had experienced various forms of discriminatory acts in daily life. Among these participants, about half considered that they had encountered discrimination “frequently” or “sometimes” and another half said that they were “seldom” discriminated against in daily life.
- 4.1.7 Among the sexual minority groups interviewed (i.e. lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender people, post-gays and an intersex), the majority of the transgender participants and the intersex participant considered that they experienced discrimination according to their own understanding of discrimination, while about half of the lesbian, gay and post-gay participants and some of the bisexual participants considered they had experienced discrimination. These findings did not differ significantly across different socio-economic backgrounds of the participants.
- 4.1.8 Regarding whether there are differences in findings among participants recruited from the three sampling methods as discussed in Chapter 2.2

(i.e. members from sexual minority communities, and non-members recruited from snowball sampling and open recruitment from online social networks and media outlets), in general, more of the gay and lesbian participants recruited from sexual minority communities' members had reported that they encountered discrimination, as compared to the non-members. For the bisexual and transgender participants, there were no observable differences in the frequency and forms of discrimination among members and non-members. Since most of the post-gay participants were recruited from members of the sexual minority communities, whether there could be differences could not be ascertained.

Views of the participants who had not experienced discrimination in daily life

- 4.1.9 About half of the bisexual participants expressed that they had not experienced discrimination in daily life. For the other categories of sexual minority participants, some of them stated that they had never encountered discrimination.
- 4.1.10 The majority of the participants who had not experienced discrimination in daily life had made efforts to avoid discrimination. In general, the participants who had gender-conforming appearance and behaviours would seldom be discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in daily life. Their identities as sexual minority were less prone to be uncovered by others. Some participants chose to disclose their sexual orientations and gender identities only to the persons they trusted in order to ensure they would not face discrimination by other people. For example, in the domain of employment, some of the participants selectively disclosed to their most trusted colleagues instead of their work counterparts or supervisors; while some only disclosed to their family and friends but did not do so at all in the workplace.
- 4.1.11 In addition, some of the participants had not experienced discrimination as they had an inclusive environment where their sexual orientation/gender identity was welcomed by people around them. Some of the participants, especially those in the high-income group, pointed out that their sexual orientations and gender identities are well

accepted by people around them, and hence they feel more comfortable to disclose their sexual orientations and gender identities and had never faced discrimination in daily life.

4.1.12 After sharing their subjective understanding on discrimination, participants were asked about the circumstantial information on the actual experiences. They were interviewed on their actual experiences, if any, in the domains of (1) employment; (2) education; (3) provision of goods, facilities and services; (4) disposal and management of premises and; (5) other domains. The reported discrimination experiences, if any, were recorded under the following pre-determined categories of forms of discrimination: direct discrimination (i.e. a person is treated less favourably than another person with a different sexual orientation or gender identity); indirect discrimination (i.e. a condition or requirement is applied to everyone but in practice adversely affects persons of a particular sexual orientation or gender identity¹⁷); harassment (i.e. a person is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct on grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity); and vilification (any activity in public that incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or persons because of their sexual orientation or gender identity). These experiences in different domains, which were based on the circumstantial information reported and categorised by the researchers, form the main findings of the Study and are presented in Chapters 4.2 – 4.6 below.

4.2 Experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in the workplace

4.2.1 This section focuses on whether the participants disclosed their sexual minority identities in the workplace, whether the participants were being discriminated against in the workplace in Hong Kong, and if so, the forms of discrimination they experienced. Brief excerpts are illustrated for further elaboration and understanding of the situation encountered by the participants. In order to safeguard the anonymity of the participants, the excerpts have been modified to remove details that may expose the

¹⁷ See footnote 2.

identity of the individuals. Any differences in experiences across different sexual minority groups and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as between those who had disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities and those who had not, are also presented where applicable. The cases as reported in this report are listed at *Appendix 4*.

Disclosure of sexual orientations or gender identities in the workplace

- 4.2.2 In general, slightly less than half of the participants (72 out of 180 participants who had working experience) had disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities to their employers or co-workers in the workplace. Among different sexual minority groups, more gay and transgender participants expressed that they had disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities in the workplace. Bisexual and post-gay participants pointed out that it was not difficult to hide their sexual orientation from their employers or co-workers, and therefore far fewer bisexual and post-gay participants indicated that they had disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities in the workplace. There is no observable difference in the findings among different socio-economic backgrounds of the participants except for gay participants. Gay participants in the higher income group (monthly income of HK\$30,000 or above) were more likely to disclose their sexual orientation to their employers or co-workers in the workplace (as compared to gay participants in the lower income groups (i.e. HK\$10,000 – HK\$29,999 and below HK\$10,000) as well as participants of other sexual minority groups in all levels of income).
- 4.2.3 The participants who had disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities commented that being open at work could be a daunting challenge. They chose to disclose their orientations or gender identities at work to eliminate the need to hide or mislead, to build trusting working relationships if they felt being accepted at the working environment, to avoid embarrassment, to break down barriers to understanding, or to work in organisations related to sexual minorities.
- 4.2.4 Some of the transgender participants expressed that although disclosing their identities might result in the denial of job offers, they still chose to be open at work from the outset as the employers or co-workers would

eventually find out their identities when referring to their ID cards or school certificates. Besides, some of the transgender participants had disclosed their gender identities to their seniors during sex reassignment treatment in order to protect themselves from discrimination and avoid any misunderstanding or embarrassment.

4.2.5 The participants who chose to conceal their sexual orientations or gender identities considered that this was a private matter so it was unnecessary for them to be out to their employers, co-workers or clients at work. Some stated that they were hiding at work for fear of losing their jobs or social connections and suffering workplace discrimination or stigmatisation. In addition, some suggested that no one wanted to put their job security or opportunity for advancement in jeopardy. Even where employers or co-workers adopted laudable and inclusive practices, these were deemed necessary but not wholly sufficient for creating a climate of inclusion in the views of some participants. Nevertheless, some of the participants pointed out that even if they had not disclosed their orientations or gender identities to avoid discrimination, their sexual minority identity could still be noticed in the workplace due to their appearance or behaviour.

4.2.6 The majority of the transgender participants thought that transgenderism were still a taboo subject in the workplace due to a lack of understanding in the Hong Kong society. They feared that disclosure of their gender identities at work would have a negative impact on their relationships with co-workers, their prospects for promotion and even their social status in the workplace. They did not want to take the risk of losing their jobs so they had not disclosed their gender identities in the workplace. The transgender participants who had not undergone sex reassignment surgery might even try hard to conceal their identity in the workplace by appearing and behaving in a way conforming to their biological sex. However, they reported that they suffered great pressures from doing so.

Whether the participants had experienced discrimination in the workplace

4.2.7 Slightly less than half of the participants (72 out of 180 participants who had working experience) indicated that they had experienced various

forms of discrimination in the workplace (direct discrimination: 12 participants; harassment: 65 participants who encountered unwelcome verbal conduct (59) and sexual harassment (6)) [Note: some participants indicated that they experienced both forms of discrimination.]. Among these participants, half (36 out of 72 who had experienced discrimination) had disclosed their sexual orientations / gender identities in the workplace. Among different sexual minority groups, more of the transgender participants reported that they had experienced workplace discrimination on the grounds of their gender identity, whereas fewer of the bisexual participants experienced discrimination. The findings did not differ significantly across participants from different socio-economic backgrounds, except for participants in the higher income group (with personal monthly income of HK\$30,000 or above). Gay and lesbian participants in the higher income group were less likely to experience discrimination in the workplace as they were the executives or senior managers of the companies and they had a greater decision-making power in the workplace.

- 4.2.8 It was also found that the English-speaking participants were less likely to suffer discrimination. The main reason might be that the majority of them had higher income and status. Another reason might be because they often lived and/or worked among the communities of foreigners in Hong Kong, whose attitudes were deemed to be more inclusive towards sexual minorities, it was less likely they would face discrimination.

Forms of discrimination experienced in the workplace

- 4.2.9 The participants experienced various forms of workplace discrimination. The major forms of workplace discrimination could be categorised as: (1) direct discrimination - being asked to leave a job or denied a job offer; (2) direct discrimination - being deprived of promotion and training opportunities; (3) harassment - unwelcome verbal conduct; and (4) harassment - sexual harassment.

(1) Direct discrimination - Being asked to leave a job or denied a job offer

- 4.2.10 Few (including lesbian, gay and transgender participants) of the

participants who had work experience indicated that they were denied a job offer or asked to leave a job by their supervisors or employers due to their sexual orientations and gender identities, and not based on employment qualifications (10 participants out of 180 participants who had work experience).

- 4.2.11 Two of the gay participants who had disclosed their sexual orientation reported that they were asked to leave a job after disclosing their sexual orientation. However, it is possible that some employers may conceal their real reasons for withholding a job offer by offering excuses. A gay participant emphasised that he had good appraisal records before disclosing his sexual orientation, and was asked to leave the jobs soon after his senior became aware of his sexual orientation. Another gay participant said that he was abruptly dismissed after disclosure to his senior and the excerpt of his experience in Chinese is presented below.

<p>我向上司表露了〔同性戀者〕身份，同一日下午，我就被解僱了。 I disclosed my identity [as a homosexual] to my senior, and later the same day, I was dismissed from my post. (A gay participant describing an incident in 2004)</p>

Note: All excerpts quoted in this report were delivered by the participants in Chinese. The English translation is prepared by researchers.

- 4.2.12 One transgender participant who had disclosed his/her gender identity in the workplace expressed that he/she had once been denied a job offer after he/she had disclosed his/her gender identity. He/she also perceived that it was more difficult for him/her to obtain a job than “ordinary” people.
- 4.2.13 Some of the transgender participants faced the threat of being fired because of their gender identities. They reported that they had been informed to leave their jobs due to their gender identities. However, it would be difficult to substantiate these claims with evidence. In two cases, transgender participants reported that their employers asked them to leave after learning about their gender identity, and the employers clearly expressed their non-acceptance. Brief excerpts from their statements are presented below:

曾有上司知道我是跨性別之後，就對我說：「其實我個人是接受不了的。」所以後來就解僱了我。

After learning that I was a transgender person, my senior said, “personally I can't accept it.” Some time later, he fired me. [Translation]
(A transgender participant describing an incident in 2007)

當時我正在看醫生，開始 Real Life Experience [真實生活體驗]，便通知人事部，想以另一個性別的身份上班，後來老闆突然將我的工作報告評為不合格，並借故解散我主管的部門，以冗員為由將我勸退。
At that time, I was under the supervision of a doctor and started the Real Life Experience. So I informed the human resources department that I wished to work as a staff member of the opposite sex. Then my boss abruptly failed my job appraisal and dismissed the department I was in charge of. And he/she asked me to leave the job for I was a redundant staff member.

(A transgender participant describing an incident in 2009)

(2) Direct discrimination - Being deprived of promotion and training opportunities

4.2.14 One transgender participant and one gay participant reported that they had been deprived of promotion and training opportunities in the workplace on the basis of gender identity/sexual orientation.

4.2.15 The transgender participant expressed that he/she was deprived of promotion and training opportunities after he/she disclosed his/her identity to his/her seniors. The excerpt of his/her experience is presented below to illustrate the situation encountered.

因為我透露了自己的性別認同，上司就將我調職，並且失去一些受訓機會，無法得到某些技能，變相直接影響我的晉升機會。

As I disclosed my gender identity, my senior transferred me to another post. I lost training opportunities as a result, and was unable to acquire certain skills. This in turn directly affected my chances of promotion.
(A transgender participant describing an incident during 2012 - 2014)

(3) Harassment - Unwelcome verbal conduct

- 4.2.16 Unwelcome verbal conduct was the most common form of discrimination in the workplace mentioned by the participants (59 participants out of 180 participants who had working experience). Among these participants, about half had disclosed their sexual orientations / gender identities (27 out of 59 participants who had encountered unwelcome verbal conduct). Examples of the unwelcome verbal conduct included calling offensive nicknames, telling inappropriate jokes and making derogatory remarks on the grounds of the sexual orientation or gender identity of the participants. Some participants reported that the unwelcome verbal conduct might cause profound and serious psychological injury. Some participants were annoyed and distressed by the unwelcome verbal conduct and they struggled to ignore the conduct when their dignity was attacked.
- 4.2.17 Some of the gay participants reported offensive nicknames encountered such as “死基佬” (*damn gay men*), “屎忽鬼” (*asshole*), “變態” (*pervert*), “屺型” (*sissy*) and “不男不女” (*not like a man, not like a woman*). Some reported that the co-workers also teased them by continually imitating their behaviours or voices. Some of the gay participants pointed out that even though they concealed their sexual orientation at the workplace, they were subject to such nickname-calling or asked if they were gay because their co-workers suspected that they were gay. These conducts caused distress and nervousness. Some of these gay participants reported that their employers and co-workers liked to make homophobic jokes or comments, creating an unwelcome or even hostile environment to homosexual persons. They considered that this working environment made them feel more depressed and anxious as they had to put more effort into hiding their sexual orientation.
- 4.2.18 Some lesbian participants also reported that they were called offensive nicknames by their employers or co-workers such as “死TB” (*damn tom-boy*).
- 4.2.19 Some transgender participants reported that they encountered offensive nicknames such as “人妖” (*shemale*), “變態” (*pervert*) and “不男不女” (*not like a man, not like a woman*), “怪物” (*monster*) and “陰陽怪氣”

(*queer*), as called by their co-workers, clients and even employers. Some of them reported that the co-workers also teased them by continually imitating their behaviours or voices. Some of the transgender participants had not disclosed their gender identities at work, but their sexual minority identity could still be spotted by their co-workers due to their gender-nonconforming appearances or behaviours. Some of these transgender participants stated that the unwelcome verbal conduct might spread in the workplace once their gender identity was discovered. Some of these transgender participants pointed out that due to lack of understanding of transgenderism, their co-workers confused transgender people with homosexuals and told homophobic jokes to them.

- 4.2.20 Bisexual and post-gay participants were less likely to be subjected to unwelcome verbal conduct in the workplace as their appearance usually did not reveal their sexual orientation. Some of them reported that some verbal comments and jokes encountered at the workplace were extremely humiliating to them.

(4) *Harassment - Sexual harassment*

- 4.2.21 Few of the participants who had working experience had experienced sexual harassment (6 participants out of 180 participants who had working experience). Three cases (one transgender participant, one gay participant and one intersex participant) are extracted and summarised below.

- 4.2.22 One transgender participant stated that he/she had sometimes experienced verbal and physical sexual harassment exerted by his/her employer and co-workers in the workplace. He/she, who had undergone sex reassignment surgery and had disclosed his/her gender identity in the workplace, recalls his/her experience in the following excerpt:

我的僱主會向其他同事評價我的身材，說：「他/她〔指受訪者〕的胸部造得太小，真是浪費了。」甚至有些同事會觸摸我的臀部和胸部。
My employer commented on my figure in front of other colleagues: “His/her (the participant’s) breasts are made too small. What a pity!”
Some colleagues even touched my buttocks and breasts.
(A transgender participant describing an incident in the 2000s)

- 4.2.23 A brief excerpt of the intersex participant's recollection of his/her having been sexually harassed by his/her co-workers after disclosing his/her identity in the workplace is presented below:

我在工作間透露自己的性別身份後，有一個同事直接用手按我的胸脯，跟著說：「你的胸部頗大！」

After I disclosed my gender identity in the workplace, a co-worker touched my breast and said: "Your breasts are quite large."

(An Intersex participant describes his/her experience in 2012)

- 4.2.24 One gay participant stated that he encountered verbal sexual harassment when he was suspected of being gay due to his gender-nonconforming appearance or behaviour. The excerpt below illustrates his experience:

公司有兩個女同事直接問我是不是同性戀，我說大家不太熟絡，不談私事，她們繼續追問，叫我快些讓她們打臀部，那就會和我熟絡。

Two female co-workers in my workplace asked me if I was gay. I replied that we were not close enough to talk about personal matters. They persisted in asking and asked me to let them pat my buttocks, saying that we could then become friends.

(A gay participant describing his experience in 2011)

Seeking assistance in the workplace when experiencing discrimination

- 4.2.25 The majority of the participants who had experienced discrimination in the workplace had not sought assistance from any party. The major reason quoted was that they did not know any party that could offer assistance. They pointed out that seeking assistance might expose their identities in the workplace and adversely affect their relationship with co-workers, and that in some cases it was difficult to collect substantial evidence of the discriminatory workplace practices. Moreover, as some of the discriminators were participants' employers and seniors, fear of losing their jobs prompted them to adopt a protective silence.

- 4.2.26 Some of the participants who experienced discrimination in the workplace had sought assistance from the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), Government departments, their seniors, social

workers or friends (12 out of 72 participants who experienced discrimination in the workplace). However, the majority of them considered that those parties which provide assistance were not helpful, and that discriminatory practices could not be mitigated after seeking assistance. They considered that the seniors in the workplace often overlooked the seriousness of the reported discriminatory acts and hence took no further actions to address the problem. Still, two transgender participants who sought help from friends and EOC had found it helpful. One of the transgender participants reported a case where his/her employer failed his/her work appraisal upon learning that he/she was a transgender person and was undergoing “real life experience”. According to him/her, his/her Gender Identity Disorder (GID) was considered by EOC as a form of disability and hence was covered by the Disability Discrimination Ordinance. EOC investigated into the case and provided mediation to both parties.

Views of the participants who had not experienced discrimination in the workplace

4.2.27 In the workplace, about half of the participants (108 out of 180 participants who had working experience) stated that they had not experienced discrimination. The main reason is that their working environments were inclusive and their sexual orientation was well accepted. The view of a lesbian participant who works in the film industry is presented below:

就我自己個人而言，我不知道是否因為我幸運，我身邊的人思想都很開放……因為在拍攝和創意上，我認為他們都是比較多元化和他們的想法能夠擺脫框架，所以我認為我自己很幸運。

My personal experience is that I may be lucky because people around me are open-minded. As they are engaged in the creative film industry, they are more open to diversity and breaking away from convention. I think I am lucky to be around these people.

4.2.28 Other participants expressed that they concealed their identities in a careful way and avoided discussing issues related to sexual minorities with their colleagues or employers. This had helped them avoid discrimination.

4.3 Experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in school

4.3.1 This section focuses on whether the participants disclosed their sexual orientation/gender identity as students, whether the participants were discriminated against in school in Hong Kong, and if so, the forms of discrimination they experienced. Brief excerpts of participants' statements are presented for further elaboration and understanding of the situations they encountered. In order to safeguard the anonymity of the participants, the excerpts have been modified to remove details that may expose the identity of the individuals. Any differences in experiences across different sexual minority groups and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as between those who had disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities and those who had not, are also presented where applicable.

Disclosure of sexual orientations/gender identities in school

4.3.2 In general, the majority of the participants (154 out of 208 participants who had studied in Hong Kong) chose to conceal their sexual orientations or gender identities from their schoolmates and teachers in the school due to fear of being gossiped about, isolated, despised or bullied by their schoolmates and teachers. The reason given by participants was that whenever their schoolmates or teachers mentioned homosexuality, they often talked about it in negative ways. Some gay participants stated that they even pretended to be more "masculine" to accommodate themselves to the conventional gender role expectations in school. The majority of the participants viewed the school, especially secondary schools, as an unwelcome or hostile environment towards homosexuals. When the participants reached tertiary educational level they were more willing to disclose their sexual orientation as they thought that the atmosphere of the tertiary education institutes was more open. Findings across participants from different sexual minority and age groups did not differ significantly in this respect.

4.3.3 Among transgender participants, the majority of them had not disclosed their gender identities because of the lack of understanding of

transgender identity in society. The transgender participants, especially those aged over 40, stated that they were ignorant of transgenderism due to the scarcity of information and education about gender identity. Their gender-nonconforming thoughts and behaviours made them perceive themselves as “abnormal”, “bad” or even “mentally ill”. Some of the transgender participants also pointed out that they could only recognise their gender identity in adulthood after they researched information about LGBT on the Internet. Another main reason was that they thought that transgenderism was a taboo and even a “sin” at school. They were afraid of being bullied or discriminated against in school after disclosing their gender identities and therefore made every effort to conceal their gender identities.

4.3.4 Despite this, some of the participants (who had studied in Hong Kong) had disclosed their orientations or gender identities in school selectively to schoolmates whom they trusted when the pressure and depression induced by the concealment of gender identity became too much to bear. It was also found that the participants were more willing to disclose in higher education institutions due to the more open atmosphere.

4.3.5 With regard to findings across different age groups, fewer participants who were aged over 40 had disclosed their sexual orientations and gender identities while at school, as compared with the younger age groups. Some of the older participants pointed out that homosexuality was unlawful at the time they were students, which forced them to conceal their sexual orientation/gender identity. Also, owing to the scarcity of information about sexual orientation and gender identity, some of them were uncertain of their sexual orientations and gender identities when attending schools.

Whether the participants had experienced discrimination in the school

4.3.6 Some of the participants (69 out of 208 participants who had studied in Hong Kong) indicated that they had experienced various forms of discrimination in school (direct discrimination: 2 participants; harassment: 69 participants who encountered unwelcome verbal conduct (58), sexual harassment (8) and unwelcome physical conduct (4) [Note: some participants indicated that they experienced more than one form of

discrimination.]. Among these participants, about half had disclosed their sexual orientations / gender identities (34 out of 69 participants who had experienced discrimination). Among different sexual minority groups, more gay, lesbian and transgender participants reported that they experienced discrimination in school on the grounds of their sexual orientation and gender identity whereas fewer bisexual participants and post-gay participants experienced discrimination. The findings did not differ significantly across different socio-economic backgrounds of the participants. Across different academic stages, it was found that participants encountered discriminatory practices more frequently in the secondary school stage when compared with the tertiary education stage.

- 4.3.7 No significant difference was found across participants in different age groups.

Forms of discrimination experienced in the school

- 4.3.8 Various forms of discrimination in school were experienced by the participants. Some of them reported that these discriminatory acts might contribute to the development of different mental problems and psychological outcomes such as depression (including suicidal ideation) or anxiety. The major forms of discrimination in the school can be categorised as: (1) direct discrimination - being denied a school place offer; (2) harassment - unwelcome verbal conduct; (3) harassment - sexual harassment; and (4) harassment – unwelcome physical conduct.

(1) Direct discrimination - Being denied a school place offer

- 4.3.9 Two participants reported that they had been denied a school place offer. One transgender participant stated that he/she was denied a place in a theological college in the 2000s when he/she applied for admission. During the college's interview, the panel informed him/her that as he/she was a transgender person, a meeting was required to discuss whether or not to give him/her an offer. At last, no offer was issued. The participant indicated that the school place offer was denied on the grounds of gender identity.

- 4.3.10 A gay participant recalled that he was dismissed by a theological college

when he disclosed his sexual orientation while attending that college in 1997. The dismissal letter issued by the college stated explicitly that he was being dismissed on the grounds of his sexual orientation, and that if he felt regrets, he might be given a chance. However, he refused and was finally dismissed by the college.

4.3.11 While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation or gender identity in the above two cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions provide exemptions for religious schools in relation to their decisions on admission of students.

(2) *Harassment - Unwelcome verbal conduct*

4.3.12 Unwelcome verbal conduct was the most common form of discrimination in school mentioned by the participants. Some (58) of the participants (who had studied in Hong Kong) had experienced this form of discrimination. The discriminatory acts of unwelcome verbal conduct (mostly by schoolmates, while a few participants reported experiencing unwelcome verbal conduct by teachers) included calling offensive nicknames, telling inappropriate jokes and making derogatory remarks on the grounds of the sexual orientation or gender identity of the participants.

4.3.13 The frequently heard offensive nicknames included “死基佬” (*damn gay men*), “死變態” (*damn pervert*), “死TB” (*damn tom-boy*), “死人妖” (*damn shemale*), “唔正常” (*abnormal*), “污糟” (*dirty*) and “怪物” (*monster*). In addition, homosexual persons were sometimes associated with AIDS and promiscuity. It is noteworthy that some of the participants pointed out that they were mocked by the teachers in class, making them feel helpless in the school. A brief excerpt is presented below:

我的班主任有在上課時，會拿我的性傾向開玩笑，說什麼我永遠不會結婚，不會有後代之類，用來引全班笑。

My class teacher made fun of my sexual orientation in the class. He said that I would never get married or have children. The whole class laughed at me.

(A gay participant describing an experience in 2004)

4.3.14 Some of the participants who attempted to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity pointed out that the homophobic jokes and comments made by schoolmates and teachers forced them to make every effort to conceal their sexual orientation. Such concealment was said to have made them depressed and anxious.

(3) Harassment - Sexual Harassment

4.3.15 Few (8) of the participants (who had studied in Hong Kong) reported that they had been sexually harassed by their schoolmates verbally and physically. One lesbian participant stated that her classmate asked her, “你有無下體?” (“Do you have a penis?”), and even tried to touch her private parts. One gay participant expressed that his male classmates asked him, “你是同性戀，你會不會「搞我」？你會不會用下體觸碰我臀部?” (“As you are gay, would you harass me? Would you touch my bottom with your private part?”).

4.3.16 Another gay participant shared his case and the excerpt of his experience is presented below to illustrate the situation encountered.

有同學捉著我的手叫我摸他的胸部和下體，問我是否真的同性戀，以及是否可以幫他自瀆。

A schoolmate held my hand and asked me to touch his chest and genital area. He asked me if I was gay and if I could help him masturbate.

(A gay participant describing an incident in the early 1990s)

(4) Harassment - Unwelcome physical conduct

4.3.17 Few (4) of the participants (who had studied in Hong Kong) said that they were subjected to unwelcome physical conduct. They described this as bullying by classmates. A lesbian recalled that her classmates took out the belongings in her bag and threw them away. A transgender participant stated that he/she was bullied and physically attacked due to his/her masculine appearance. He/she recalled that classmates used pencils to stab him/her, kicked him/her, stalked him/her, stole his/her belongings, etc.

4.3.18 Two gay participants also stated that they were bullied. A gay participant expressed that in his secondary school days, his classmates threw objects at his body to humiliate him. Another participant said that a schoolmate enticed others to isolate him.

Seeking assistance in the school when experiencing discrimination

4.3.19 The great majority of the participants (61 participants out of 69 participants who had experienced discrimination at school) had not sought assistance from any party. The major reason for not seeking assistance was that they did not know any party that could provide assistance, and they felt that even the teachers and social workers were not equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to handle cases of discrimination against sexual minority students. Some also pointed out that they dared not expose their sexual orientations or gender identities to anyone in the school. Furthermore, as some of the discriminators were school authority figures, such as principals and teachers, the participants were completely helpless when facing discrimination.

4.3.20 Few of the participants had sought assistance from teachers, social workers or classmates when they experienced unwelcome verbal or physical conduct (6 out of 69 participants who reported experience of discrimination at school). Two participants reported that verbal reminders by teachers to the “discriminators” could lessen the problem for a short period of time, and that they could benefit from counselling services by social workers. One mentioned that after the involvement of teacher, the discriminatory act was stopped and never happened again. However, few participants (4 out of 69 participants who reported experience of discrimination at school) mentioned that those discrimination practices still persisted over time even after the involvement of teachers.

Views of the participants who had not experienced discrimination in school

4.3.21 In school, the majority of the participants (139 out of 208 participants who had studied in Hong Kong), especially the bisexuals and post-gays, said that they had never encountered discrimination. They indicated that the environment in schools showed more acceptance of homosexuals

and bisexuals as the social perception towards them is gradually turning more accommodating/inclusive. The view of a lesbian participant is presented below:

我想是較年長一輩〔對同性戀〕是不喜歡。但是，年輕的會持較正面的態度，都可以一起玩。特別是那些年輕的老師，她們會開心地和你聊天。我曾經表示大學有很多相類似的人，她們也表示看過不少，沒什麼大不了的。

I think elder generations do not like us (homosexuals). However, younger generations show more acceptance of us and we get along well. For instance, young teachers would be happy to chat with us. I once mentioned to them that there were many homosexuals in universities, and they responded that they had also seen quite a number and it was no big deal.

4.3.22 Besides, some of the participants who had studied in Hong Kong were not aware of their sexual orientations or gender identities in school days and they had identical appearances as with heterosexual and gender-conforming persons. Thus, they had not experienced discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity at school.

4.4 Experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services

4.4.1 This section focuses on whether the participants were discriminated against in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services in Hong Kong, and if so, the forms of discrimination they experienced. Brief excerpts are presented for further elaboration and understanding of the situation encountered by the participants. In order to safeguard the anonymity of the participants, the excerpts have been modified to remove details that may expose the identity of the individuals. Any differences in experiences across different sexual minority groups and socio-economic backgrounds are also presented where applicable.

Whether the participants had experienced discrimination in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services

- 4.4.2 Some of the participants (85 out of 214 participants) indicated that they had experienced various forms of discrimination in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services (direct discrimination: 46 participants; harassment (unwelcome verbal conduct): 45 participants) [Note: some participants indicated that they experienced both forms of discrimination.]. Among the different sexual minority groups, more gay, lesbian and transgender participants reported that they experienced discrimination in this aspect on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity whereas fewer bisexuals experienced discrimination.
- 4.4.3 Participants in the higher income group (with personal monthly income of HK\$30,000 or above) were less likely to experience discrimination in this domain (as compared to participants in the lower income groups (i.e. HK\$10,000 – HK\$29,999 and below HK\$10,000)).

Forms of discrimination experienced in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services by the participants

- 4.4.4 Various forms of discrimination in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services were experienced by the participants. The major forms of discrimination in this aspect can be categorised as: (1) direct discrimination - being denied the goods, facilities or services requested; (2) direct discrimination - differential treatment; and (3) harassment – unwelcome verbal conduct.

(1) Direct discrimination - Being denied the goods, facilities or services requested

- 4.4.5 Among the participants who reported having experienced discrimination before, some stated that they had been once denied goods, facilities or services requested (40 out of 214 participants). The public spaces in which they experienced refusal of services included refuge centres, medical clinics, retail shops and restaurants.
- 4.4.6 Two lesbian participants and two gay participants expressed that they had tried to order a Valentine's set dinner on Valentine's Day, but were

refused by waiters/waitresses who informed them that the Valentine's set dinner could only be offered to heterosexual couples. When challenged on the lack of notification in the restaurant regarding the said rules, the waiters/waitresses replied that it was their usual practice, and no further explanation was offered. The participants said they left the restaurant when they were refused the services. In the context of clubbing activities, few lesbian participants (7 out of 70 lesbian participants) reported that when they tried to enter clubs that offered free entry to ladies, they were requested to pay an entry charge or were not allowed to enter the clubs because they had a tom-boy appearance.

- 4.4.7 In shopping arcades, some of the lesbians (9 out of 70 lesbian participants) with a tom-boy look and some transgender participants (5 out of 35 transgender participants) were not welcome to use the female toilets and would sometimes be driven away by the cleaners. Sometimes, the participants needed to show their identity cards to prove their gender when using public toilets.
- 4.4.8 Regarding rental of hotels/inns, few gay (4 participants) and lesbian (3 participants), and one bisexual participants expressed that they were refused to make a booking with hotels/inns due to their sexual orientations. Some commented that there were statements posted at the hotel indicating that the rental services were not provided to same-sex couples, and that these rules were unfair to people with different sexual orientations.
- 4.4.9 For blood donation, two gay and one bisexual participants indicated that they were not allowed to donate blood if they had disclosed their sexual orientation to the staff of the blood donation centres by filling a form which enquires whether they had any sexual contact with another man¹⁸. While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions allow organisations that operate blood service to refuse to accept a person's blood donation if the

¹⁸ Note by the research team: The Hong Kong Red Cross checks for the suitability to donate by asking, among other things, whether donors ever had male-to-male sexual activity, and whether they, for the past 12 months, had sexual activity with a bisexual male, or a male/female sex worker.

decision is based on reasonable medical ground.

- 4.4.10 A bisexual participant stated that a group of sexual minority people had experienced discrimination when they tried to rent a bus for a demonstration to protest for their rights. When they first contacted the rental bus service company, the representative replied that they could rent the bus after filling in the application. However, when the rental bus service company realised that the bus would be rented to a group of LGBT people, the representative of the company refused to provide the service, with the reason given that this was a commercial decision and they had to take “the image of the company” into consideration.
- 4.4.11 One transgender participant reported experience of being refused the provision of social services. Another transgender participant stated that he/she had faced refusal when requesting to use services during medical check-ups in private clinics. These cases might be a result of a lack of adequate knowledge about transgenderism among front-line workers. Two brief excerpts for these two cases are presented below:

我因向家人出櫃而被趕出家門，睡在街頭，我到某福利機構求助，〔他們〕不單止不接受申請，而且還說我選擇了這條路，也應預計會受到這樣的對待。

I was expelled from home and slept on the street after I disclosed my gender identity to my family. I sought help from a social welfare organisation but they didn't accept my application. They even said that I should have anticipated such treatment when I chose to be a transgender person.

(A transgender participant describing an incident in 2011)

有一次體格檢查〔於更改身份證所顯示的性別後〕，因為我以前是男性，我可以做前列腺檢查，但某醫護人員不許我做，說我的身份證顯示我是女性，不准做前列腺檢查。

I used to be a male and so I had had prostate examination. However, during a medical check [after change of gender on identity card], I was refused to have such examination because my identity card showed that I was a female.

(A transgender participant describing an incident in the 2010s)

4.4.12 In another case, a transgender participant was refused permission to try on and purchase a women's headdress by the salesperson in a high-end department store.

(2) *Direct discrimination - Differential treatment*

4.4.13 Among the participants who reported having experienced discrimination before, few stated that they had been offered differential treatment compared to heterosexuals (6 out of 214 participants).

4.4.14 Two lesbian participants recalled that during dinner at an eatery, the waiters intentionally did not provide service. A brief excerpt for this case is presented below:

有一次，我跟朋友去吃飯，侍應會特別不招呼我們，並對我說：「你心理不平衡呀？若非心理不平衡又怎會作此打扮！明明是女的，又要打扮成男性。」

Once I ate out with my friend but the waiter refused to serve our table and said: "Are you psychologically impaired? How come you would dress like that! You are a woman but you dress like a man."

(A lesbian participant describing an incident in 2010s)

4.4.15 Two gay participants indicated that they faced differential treatment at hotels/inns on the grounds of their sexual orientations. In one case a participant reported that when the staff of the hotel/inn was notified that two men were coming, they requested payment of an additional deposit. The condition was that if the gay couple vacated the room without any damage, the deposit would be refunded. The participant was very disappointed and distressed about the differential treatment. Another participant recalled that the staff of one hotel refused to offer a double bed to a gay couple, and stated that this was the company policy so as to prevent sexual intercourse among gay couples. However, this policy did not apply to women couples; in the same hotel a women couple was allowed to book a double bed without hindrance.

4.4.16 Regarding child adoption, one gay participant recalled the process of applying for child adoption with his male partner in a non-governmental organisation in Hong Kong. The staff of the non-governmental

organisation informed them that they could not apply in the capacity of a married couple as they got married overseas. The gay participant could only apply as an individual and as a result only his income level (instead of the sum of his and his partner's) would be taken into account for the application¹⁹. He considered that such arrangement of the organisation constituted systemic discrimination in that it was applying differential treatment, and making it more difficult for gay couples to adopt children as same-sex marriage was not yet legal in Hong Kong.

- 4.4.17 A transgender participant attempted to apply for child sponsorship during his/her real life test period, and encountered differential treatment. An excerpt for this case is presented below:

我去某機構助養一位小朋友，那時我仍未做手術的，但我已經開始了我的 Real Life Test [真實生活體驗]，機構人員要求我將身份告訴小孩父母，我就說，這是我的個人私隱，為何要展露給小朋友的父母？然後我去投訴，他們就說沒有規定向小孩父母透露身份。

I approached an organisation to apply for child sponsorship. At that time I had not undergone surgical operation but had started Real Life Test. The staff asked me to disclose my gender identity to the parents of the child. I said this was my privacy and there was no reason to tell them. I then made a complaint. As a result, they replied that there was no regulation that the child sponsor must disclose his/her gender identity to the parents of the child.

(A transgender participant describing an incident in 2009)

(3) Harassment - Unwelcome verbal conduct

- 4.4.18 Unwelcome verbal conduct was the most common form of discrimination in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services recalled by the participants. The discriminatory acts of unwelcome verbal conduct included calling offensive nicknames, telling inappropriate jokes, and

¹⁹ Note by the research team: there is no written policy by local adoption agencies on whether same-sex or non same-sex cohabitants could apply in the capacity of a couple. Applicants have to undergo a thorough home study in assessing their capability to become suitable adoptive parents. A number of factors will be taken into account including the applicants' early life experience, parenting attitudes and capacities, adoption motivation, abilities in meeting the needs and developing the potentials of the children being adopted, etc.

making derogatory remarks on the grounds of the sexual orientation or gender identity of the participants.

- 4.4.19 Some of the participants indicated that they had encountered unwelcome verbal conduct (45 out of 214 participants). Some of the gay participants (9 gay participants out of 66 gay participants) were called offensive nicknames or subjected to derogatory remarks such as “死基佬” (*damn gay men*), “變態” (*pervert*), “死基佬, 真的核突, 有女人不去愛, 要愛男人” (*damn gay men, you are so disgusting. You love men rather than women*) and “有沒有玩性玩具” (“*Do you like sex toys?*”) by the staff providing goods, facilities and services. Some of the lesbian participants (14 lesbian participants out of 70 lesbian participants) also encountered offensive nicknames and derogatory remarks such as “死TB” (*damn tom-boy*), “女同性戀的性行為是不正常的” (*Lesbian sex is abnormal!*) and “不要貼近她(女同性戀者), 她會搞你的” (“*Don't get close to her, she would harass you!*”) by the staff providing goods, facilities and services. In discussion on how they responded to such treatment, some participants said they would probably grudgingly accept some inappropriate comments or jokes. Some would deliberately conceal their sexual orientation to avoid intimidation and discrimination.
- 4.4.20 About half of the transgender participants (16 transgender participants out of 35 transgender participants) encountered offensive nicknames and derogatory remarks such as “人妖” (*shemale*), “變態” (*pervert*) and “不男不女” (*not like a man, not like a woman*). Access to public toilets was also a great difficulty they sometimes faced. They might be cursed when using public toilets, and some had been insulted by the cleaning staff or staff in shopping arcades. They expressed that these disrespectful or scornfully abusive comments and jokes were extremely humiliating.
- 4.4.21 For bisexual and post-gay participants, they were less likely to be subjected to unwelcome verbal conduct when using/purchasing goods, facilities and services.

Seeking assistance in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services when experiencing discrimination

4.4.22 The great majority of the participants who had experienced discrimination in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services had not sought assistance from any party (77 out of the 85 participants who experienced discrimination in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services). The major reason for not seeking assistance was that they did not know any party that could provide assistance. Also, some of the participants pointed out that seeking assistance was of no use as there were no legal measures to restrict those discriminatory acts.

4.4.23 Few participants had sought assistance from sexual minority organisations, EOC or the staff/managers of the companies which provide the good, facilities and services when facing discrimination in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services (8 out of the 85 participants who experienced discrimination in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services). Among them, some stated that those parties were helpful in stopping the discriminatory acts.

Views of the participants who had not experienced discrimination in relation to use/purchase of goods, services and facilities

4.4.24 About half of the participants (129 out of 214 participants) expressed that they had not faced discrimination in this domain. The main reason is that they would not intentionally disclose their identities when using or purchasing goods, services and facilities as they only had brief interaction with the providers. They considered that the providers of goods, services and facilities did not care about the customers' sexual orientations or gender identities as long as there was business. Even though on some occasions they had faced unfriendly looks or expressions by the staff providing goods or services, they were not sure if this amounted to discrimination.

4.4.25 Moreover, a few of the homosexual participants considered that most of the staff providing goods or services were friendly to homosexuals.

我覺得購物可能始終都是消費，現在強調客人為先，他都不會因為你的性傾向而歧視你。

After all we spend money. Now that we are in a customer-oriented society, they won't discriminate against us because of our sexual orientation.

(A lesbian participant describing an incident in 2009)

4.5 Experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises

4.5.1 This section focuses on whether the participants were discriminated against in relation to the disposal and management of premises, and if so, the discrimination they experienced. Brief excerpts are presented for further elaboration and understanding of the situation encountered by the participants. In order to safeguard the anonymity of the participants, the excerpts have been modified to remove details that may expose the identity of the individuals. Any differences in experiences across different sexual minority groups and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as between those who had disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities and those who had not, are also presented where applicable.

Whether the participants had experienced discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises

4.5.2 Some of the participants (6 out of the 48 participants who had experience in disposal and management of premises) had encountered discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises and the majority of these few participants had not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity to the landlords or property managers.

Forms of discrimination experienced in relation to the disposal and management of premises

4.5.3 The major form of discrimination in this aspect was (1) direct discrimination - being denied rental of premises; and (2) direct discrimination - being subjected to less favourable treatment in relation

to the rental of premises.

4.5.4 The participants who had encountered discrimination in this aspect reported being denied rental of premises or being subjected to less favourable treatment in relation to the rental of premises. Generally, discrimination usually happened when the landlord or property manager met the tenant. The landlord or property manager would ask the participants specific questions about their relationship with their partner and enquire whether it was a same-sex relationship.

(1) Direct discrimination - Being denied rental of premises

4.5.5 Few participants had experienced this form of discrimination (4 out of 48 participants who had experience of disposal and management of premises). One transgender participant recalled that he/she wanted to move to a new flat. Everything was fine and the contract was ready. When he/she informed the landlord that he/she was a transgender person, the landlord refused to sign the contract. After some time, the property agency informed the transgender participant that the landlord would not rent the flat to him/her because the landlord did not accept his/her gender identity. Another transgender participant experienced the same discriminatory act, with the landlord refusing to rent the flat to him/her once the landlord noticed his/her gender identity. Two lesbian participants shared similar cases; they were refused rental of flats when the landlords recognised that lesbian couples would live in the premises.

(2) Direct discrimination - Being subjected to less favourable treatment

4.5.6 Two participants in total reported this form of discrimination. One transgender participant indicated that he/she was requested to pay the rent for the whole year in advance. This was an unusual and less favourable term. A brief excerpt is presented below:

有一次與屋主談妥租約了，拿身份證出來看，發現我是男性，便說要我預先繳付一年租金，才肯租給我。

The owner and I reached an agreement on renting the flat. When I showed my ID card, he realised I was a male and requested me to pay the rent for the whole year in advance.

(A transgender participant describing an experience in the 2000s)

4.5.7 One lesbian participant recalled that she initially conducted the entire rental process with no issues raised by the landlord, in what was overall a friendly transaction. After the landlord saw her partner and realised that a pair of lesbians were living in the premises, the landlord's attitude changed and more suggestive rules were stated explicitly including "don't be too noisy and disturb others" and "don't get the place dirty". These comments had never been voiced before.

Seeking assistance in relation to the disposal and management of premises

4.5.8 The great majority of the participants who had experienced discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises had not sought assistance from any party (5 out of 6 participants who experienced discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises). The main reason for not seeking assistance was that they did not know any party that could provide assistance.

4.5.9 One participant sought assistance from a sexual minority organisation. The participant considered it helpful as the organisation provided a shelter for him/her.

Views of the participants who had not experienced discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises

4.5.10 In relation to the disposal and management of premises, the majority of the participants (42 out of 48 participants who had experience of disposal and management of premises) had not encountered discrimination.

4.5.11 Some of the participants who had not encountered discrimination considered that the owners or managers were concerned only about whether the premises could be sold or rented at good prices; sexual orientations or gender identities of the clients were not their concern.

4.5.12 However, some participants pointed out that homosexuality or transgenderism was a taboo when renting premises and therefore they would conceal their sexual orientations or gender identities in order to avoid discrimination in this domain.

4.6 Experience of discrimination in other domains

4.6.1 This section focuses on some participants' discrimination experience in relation to other domains. Brief excerpts are presented for further elaboration and understanding of the situation encountered by the participants. In order to safeguard the anonymity of the participants, the excerpts have been modified to remove details that may expose the identity of the individuals.

(1) Direct discrimination - Being denied the opportunities to participate in church activities

4.6.2 Few participants stated that when their sexual minority identity was discovered in the churches they had joined, they were denied the opportunities to participate in the activities of the churches (4 participants out of 214 participants)²⁰. Brief excerpt of a case as mentioned by a gay participant is presented below:

教會知道我是同性戀時，他們覺得如果你是同性戀的話，應該先認罪，而且表示暫時未適合再作奉獻。

When the church knew I was a homosexual, they would ask me to first admit the sin, and consider it inappropriate for me to make contributions for the church for the time being.

(A gay participant describing an incident in the 2000s)

4.6.3 While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions provide exemptions for religious organisations in relation to participation in their activities.

²⁰ These experiences were reported during the open-ended session of the focus group discussion and/or in-depth interview on experiences in other domains. As the experiences do not belong to the major domains covered by the Study, there was no statistic on how many participants in total participated in church activities.

(2) *Harassment: being subjected to unwelcome verbal conduct during participation in social activities*

4.6.4 One post-gay participant recalled that he was met with hostility by a sexual minority organisation when he attended a forum to share his experience and he was subjected to unwelcome verbal conduct because of his post-gay identity. A brief excerpt of the experience of this participant is presented below:

有一次我與另一位講者去講座演講，討論如何輔導青少年同性戀，並分享我的經歷。某性小眾組織前來阻攔我們的活動。

I attended a forum with another speaker to share my experience in homosexuals counseling for youths. A sexual minority organisation came to interrupt the activity.

(A post-gay participant describing an experience in the 2000s)

4.7 Supportive measures

4.7.1 This section focuses on supportive measures for sexual minorities suggested by the participants. Education in schools and education for stakeholders in different domains, and enacting legislation against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity were suggested by the majority of participants respectively, while the other five measures to be discussed in this section were supported by some of the participants. Among these five measures, two were suggested by some of the transgender participants.

(1) *Education in schools and education for stakeholders in different domains*

Education in schools

4.7.2 The great majority of participants (194 out of 214 participants) pointed out that proper education on sexual orientation, gender identity and other related issues was lacking in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. Absence of such information and knowledge in the regular curriculum resulted in a lack of awareness of problems faced by sexual minorities. The participants believed that incorporating education on sexual orientation and gender identity into the regular curriculum could

help eliminate prejudice and thus alleviate the discrimination problems faced by sexual minorities in schools.

Education for stakeholders in different domains

- 4.7.3 Regarding discrimination in the workplace, the majority of the participants (140 out of 214 participants) opined that the major cause of discrimination against sexual minorities was that the discriminators lacked adequate and accurate knowledge about sexual orientation, gender identity and other related issues. They suggested that employers could organise seminars for employees with a view to dismantling myths and stereotypes about sexual minorities.
- 4.7.4 Regarding discrimination in school, some of the participants (77 out of 214 participants) suggested that schools could cooperate with sexual minority organisations to hold seminars and workshops for students to enhance knowledge on issues about sexual minorities. In addition, few participants (21 out of 214 participants) stressed that many teachers and social workers in schools did not acquire adequate knowledge about sexual minorities, leading them to misunderstand or even discriminate against sexual minority students. Moreover, as authority figures who should offer assistance to sexual minority students, teachers and social workers should be well-equipped with knowledge and skills to handle discriminatory practices. Training courses for teachers and social workers should be provided.
- 4.7.5 In relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services, few of the participants (21 out of 214 participants) considered that more promotional materials issued by the Government to spread the message of equal opportunities for sexual minorities could help prevent discrimination against them.
- 4.7.6 Some of the transgender participants (14 out of the total 37 transgender participants) indicated that doctors and medical staff often lacked good knowledge of transgenderism. This might lead to mistakes when they provided medical services for transgender people²¹.

²¹ They also remarked that there were too few doctors who dealt with people with GID in Hong Kong and so they had to wait for a long time before undergoing sex

4.7.7 Furthermore, few participants (20 out of 214 participants) expressed that stereotypical portrayals of sexual minorities in the mass media had shaped negative attitudes towards sexual minorities in the society. They believed that increasing media exposure of sexual minorities could help the public understand the real situation of sexual minorities in Hong Kong and mitigate prejudice towards them.

(2) Enacting legislation against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity

4.7.8 The participants opined that the Government should take the lead to stop discriminatory practices towards sexual minorities by enacting anti-discrimination legislation. The majority of them believed legislation would be effective in mitigating discriminatory practices in the domains of work (139 out of 214 participants) and provision of goods, facilities and services (159 out of 214 participants); while half of them were supportive of legislation in the domain of education (126 out of 214 participants), and some of them for the domain of the disposal and management of premises (84 out of 214 participants). The participants also pointed out that legislation could be an effective way to educate the public on equal opportunities for people with different sexual orientations and gender identities as well as to raise the awareness among stakeholders over the rights of sexual minorities.

(3) Setting up unisex toilets and changing rooms

4.7.9 In relation to the public toilets and changing rooms in public venues especially the shopping arcades, some lesbian and transgender participants (29 out of the total 104 lesbian participants and transgender participants) stated that they might be subjected to embarrassment, or even insult or arrest by others offended by the presence of a person they perceived as being of the other gender in the public toilets and changing rooms. It was necessary to set up more public unisex toilets and changing rooms to eliminate embarrassment and inconvenience suffered

reassignment treatment. They opined that increasing the number of doctors who dealt with GID could reduce / shorten the waiting time for the process of sex reassignment treatment.

by them.

- 4.7.10 The majority of the lesbian and transgender participants (61 out of the total 104 lesbian participants and transgender participants) indicated that they had experienced embarrassment and inconvenience when using washrooms and changing rooms with their co-workers or classmates, and therefore they saw a need to set up unisex toilets and changing rooms in the workplace and in the school.

(4) Enhancing employment resources and counselling services for sexual minorities

- 4.7.11 Some of the participants (22 out of 214 participants; among them, 18 are transgender participants) pointed out that it was difficult for them to support a living on their own as they had fewer opportunities to secure a job than ordinary people. They opined that the Government should help transgender people to seek jobs. For example, the Labour Department could establish a network to match transgender people with sexual minority-friendly employers. Also, the Government could encourage employers to create a friendly working environment for sexual minorities.

- 4.7.12 Few participants (20 out of 214 participants) pointed out that when sexual minorities suffered discrimination, they did not know what to do and where to seek assistance. Counselling services provided by well-trained social workers equipped with adequate knowledge about sexual minorities could be helpful to them.

(5) Providing temporary shelters for sexual minorities

- 4.7.13 Some of the participants (48 out of 214 participants) pointed out that sexual minorities, especially transgender people, might be expelled from home by their families who do not accept their sexual orientation/gender identity. Therefore, it was considered important to set up temporary shelters for sexual minorities who encountered such a situation.

(6) Allowing transgender people to dress in accordance with their preferred

gender at work or at school

- 4.7.14 Some of the transgender participants (14 out of the total 35 transgender participants) stated that they felt uncomfortable and depressed when they were requested to wear the work uniform conforming to their biological sex but not their preferred gender. They advised that transgender people ought to be allowed to dress in accordance with their preferred gender in the workplace and at school.

(7) Protecting privacy in relation to sex/gender identity (in relation to use of public services)

- 4.7.15 Some of the transgender participants (7 out of the total 35 transgender participants) expressed that some providers of facilities and services might expose their identities to the public. They opined that the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data should protect personal data about sex/gender identity against unauthorised or accidental access.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 This Study was based on 29 focus discussions and 138 in-depth one-to-one interviews with 214 sexual minority participants with different socio-economic backgrounds. The purpose was to ascertain whether sexual minorities were discriminated against in Hong Kong, and if so, the discrimination they experienced and specifically: (a) in what domains, namely employment; education; provision of goods, facilities and services; and disposal and management of premises; (b) in what forms of discrimination; (c) the areas of needs for support and/or redress; and (d) whether they have attempted to seek redress and/or assistance from different bodies. Following the analysis on the participants' discussions as set out in Chapter 4, conclusions were drawn as summarised below.

General understanding of discrimination in daily life

5.2 About half of the participants indicated that the basic definition of "discrimination" was "a person is treated unfairly or less favourably than other persons". Another half of them might not be able to state clearly what the definition of discrimination was. However, these participants gave examples including verbal insult, mockery, sexual harassment and physical assault. Besides, some of these participants pointed out that depriving sexual minorities of their resources and basic rights were forms of discrimination as well. The majority of these participants also perceived "unfriendly looks or expressions" as discriminatory. These participants expressed that this kind of unfriendly gesture would make them feel uncomfortable and stressful. On the basis of the above understandings of discrimination, the majority of participants expressed that they had experienced some form of discriminatory acts in daily life.

Overview of discrimination experience of the participants

5.3 The majority of the participants tended not to disclose their sexual orientations or gender identities in the four domains surveyed. They observed that whenever the persons around them mentioned issues related to sexual minorities, most of them talked about it in negative ways, thereby

creating an unwelcome and even hostile environment towards them. Some of the participants reported that they had at one time or another suffered from mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression (including suicidal ideation), as a result of the severe strain they were mindful at all times to make sure that their sexual orientation/gender identity would not be uncovered. Some of the participants who had not disclosed their sexual orientations or gender identities were still suspected of being homosexual or transgender and thus were discriminated against owing to their gender-nonconforming appearance and behaviours.

5.4 Regarding the forms of discrimination experienced, unwelcome verbal conduct (harassment) was the most common form of discrimination the participants suffered. They were called offensive nicknames, told inappropriate jokes and given derogatory remarks on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Direct discrimination and sexual harassment are the less common forms of discriminatory acts encountered by the participants.

5.5 Across different sexual minority groups, it is found that the majority of transgender and gay participants reported that they had encountered discrimination, while some of the lesbian participants, few bisexual participants, one post-gay participant and one intersex participant reported having encountered discrimination. Generally speaking, lesbians and bisexuals could more easily conceal their sexual orientations and were less likely to face discrimination in different spheres of daily life.

5.6 In consideration of differences in findings among participants recruited from the three sampling methods as discussed in Chapter 2.2 (i.e. members from sexual minority networks and communities, and non-members recruited from snowball sampling and open recruitment from online social networks and media outlets), in general, more of the gay and lesbian participants recruited from members of sexual minority communities had encountered various forms of discrimination, as compared to non-members. It might be because they were more open about their sexual minority identity in daily life; more of the participants recruited from members of sexual minority communities disclosed their sexual minority identity in different domains, as compared to the non-member participants. For bisexual and transgender participants, there were no significant differences

on the frequency and forms of discrimination among members and non-members. Since most of the post-gay participants were recruited from members of the sexual minority communities, whether there were differences could not be ascertained.

Seeking assistance when experiencing discrimination

5.7 It is noteworthy that the majority of the participants who encountered discrimination had not sought assistance from any party. This was likely because there is no statutory body or legal measures handling discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; as such, they did not know any party that could provide helpful and long-term assistance. Also, the risk of exposing their identity prevented them from making complaints to the possible complaint-handling organisations. Moreover, as some of the discriminators were employers in the workplace or authority figures (principals or teachers) in the school, fear of losing jobs and school places prompted them to remain silent about the discrimination they experienced.

Experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in the workplace

5.8 In the workplace, some of the participants who had work experience stated that they had been subjected to unwelcome verbal conduct (harassment) by their seniors or co-workers. Few of the participants who had work experience reported that they had been asked to leave their jobs/denied job offers, deprived of promotion and training opportunities, or sexually harassed because of their sexual orientations or gender identities.

5.9 Among different sexual minority groups, more of the gay and transgender participants reported that they had experienced workplace discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

5.10 Meanwhile, about half of the participants who had work experience stated that they had not experienced discrimination in the workplace. The main reasons were that their working environments were inclusive towards them, and that they concealed their identities in a careful way.

Experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in school

- 5.11 In the school, some of the participants who had studied in Hong Kong stated that they had been subjected to unwelcome verbal conduct by their schoolmates and teachers. Few of the participants who had studied in Hong Kong had been subjected to unwelcome physical conduct (harassment), had encountered denial of a school place offer in theological colleges²², or had experienced sexual harassment.
- 5.12 Among different sexual minority groups, the majority of the gay participants indicated that they had experienced various forms of discrimination in school, whereas some of the participants who were lesbian, transgender and post-gay participants had experienced discrimination in school.
- 5.13 Some of the participants who had experienced discrimination in the school considered that schools, especially secondary schools, were an unsafe and hostile environment for sexual minorities. Bullying and social isolation at school even led some participants to contemplate self-harm and engage in high-risk behaviour. Furthermore, they expressed that the discriminatory acts they experienced at school might cast a shadow on their later lives.
- 5.14 Meanwhile, the majority of the participants who had studied in Hong Kong, including the great majority of the bisexuals and post-gays, said that they had never suffered discrimination in schools. These participants indicated that the environment in schools showed more acceptance of homosexuals and bisexuals as the social perception towards them is gradually turning more welcoming. Besides, some of the participants who had never suffered discrimination in schools had not recognised their sexual orientations or gender identities in school age and they had identical appearances as with heterosexual and gender-conforming persons. Thus, they had not experienced discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity at school.

²² While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation or gender identity in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions provide exemptions for religious schools in relation to their decisions on admission of students.

Experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services

- 5.15 Concerning use/purchase of goods, facilities and services, some of the participants had suffered various forms of discrimination including unwelcome verbal conduct, being denied the goods, facilities or services requested (direct discrimination)(e.g. being denied Valentine’s Day menus and being denied entry to public toilets) and differential treatment (direct discrimination)(e.g. being charged additional deposit for rental in hotel/inn).
- 5.16 Within this domain, among different sexual minority groups, more gay, lesbian and transgender participants reported that they experienced discrimination in this aspect on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity whereas fewer bisexuals experienced discrimination. The participants in the higher income group (with personal monthly income of HK\$30,000 or above) were less likely to experience discrimination in this domain (as compared to participants in the lower income groups (i.e. HK\$10,000 – HK\$29,999 and below HK\$10,000)).
- 5.17 One participant pointed out that he faced systemic discrimination that involved policies of a non-governmental organisation on processing applications for child adoption which were allegedly unfair.
- 5.18 Meanwhile, about half of the participants expressed that they had not faced discrimination. The main reason was that they would not intentionally disclose their identities when using or purchasing goods, services and facilities as they only had brief interaction with the providers. They considered that the providers of goods, services and facilities did not care about the customers’ sexual orientations or gender identities as long as there was business.

Experience of sexual orientation/gender identity discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises

- 5.19 Regarding the disposal and management of premises, more than half of the participants had no experience in this domain. For those who had such

experience, some of them had suffered discrimination. The major forms of discrimination experienced were denial of renting premises and being subjected to less favourable treatment in relation to the rental of premises.

5.20 Meanwhile, among the participants who had relevant experience in this domain in Hong Kong, the majority had not encountered discrimination. Some of these participants considered that the owners or managers only cared about whether the premises could be sold or rented at good rate, and sexual orientations or gender identities of the clients were not their concern. However, some of these participants pointed out that homosexuality or transgenderism was a taboo when renting premises and therefore they would conceal their sexual orientations or gender identities in order to avoid discrimination in this domain.

Experience of discrimination in other domains

5.21 As far as other domains are concerned, few participants reported that they encountered direct discrimination in churches²³; when their sexual minority identity was discovered in the churches they had joined, they were denied the opportunities to participate in the activities of the churches²⁴. One post-gay participant recalled that he was opposed by a sexual minority organisation when he attended a forum to share his experience and he was subjected to unwelcome verbal conduct.

Supportive measures

5.22 To mitigate the discrimination they experienced, the majority of participants proposed: (1) education in schools and education for stakeholders in different domains; and (2) enacting legislation against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

²³ These experiences were reported during the open-ended session of the focus group discussion and/or in-depth interview on experiences in other domains. As the experiences do not belong to the major domains covered by the Study, there was no statistic on how many participants in total participated in church activities.

²⁴ While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions provide exemptions for religious organisations in relation to participation in their activities.

Some of the participants proposed the following supportive measures: (3) setting up unisex toilets and changing rooms; (4) enhancing employment resources and counselling services for sexual minorities; (5) providing temporary shelters for sexual minorities. Some of the transgender participants proposed: (6) allowing transgender people to dress in accordance with their preferred gender at work or at school; and (7) protecting privacy in relation to sex/gender identity (in relation to use of public services).

- 5.23 The majority of the participants believed that Government should take the first step to formulate effective and long-term measures that could help create an inclusive society accommodating of sexual minorities. Also, they hoped that the general public could have a deeper understanding of their situations so as to eliminate the prejudice and discrimination against sexual minorities.

Appendix 1 Discussion Guide

SECTION A

General understanding and experience of discrimination in daily life

Opening:

- (1) Based on your understanding, what is discrimination?
- (2) Have you experienced any discrimination in your daily life? If so, what are the details of the experience? What exactly happened and in what domain?
- (3) Do you think that the discrimination was mainly induced by your sexual orientation / gender identity?
- (4) What form(s) of discrimination have you experienced?
For example (prompts):
 - (a) Verbal insult or mockery
 - (b) Sexual harassment
 - (c) Vilification²⁵
 - (d) Bullying or physical violence
 - (e) Other forms
- (5) How often do you experience the above form(s) of discrimination?
 - (a) Frequently
 - (b) Sometimes
 - (c) Seldom

²⁵ Any activity in public that incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or persons because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

SECTION B

**Experience of sexual orientation / gender identity discrimination
in the workplace**

I would like to discuss with you about the following aspects of experience you may have:

- (1) Sexual orientation / gender identity disclosure in the workplace
- (2) Discrimination experienced in the workplace
- (3) Seeking assistance in the workplace

Sexual orientation / gender identity disclosure in the workplace

(B1) Have you disclosed your sexual minority identity in the workplace?

If the participant **HAS** disclosed, ask the following:

- (1) How did you decide whether/whom/when to tell?
- (2) How do you think disclosure of sexual orientation/gender identity has affected your relationships with the following:
 - (a) Your employer
 - (b) Your co-workers
 - (c) Your business clients

If the participant **HAS NOT** disclosed, ask the following:

- (3) What prevent you from disclosing?
- (4) Are the anticipated effects caused by the disclosure part of the reason(s) of your choice?
 - (a) What is your concern for coming out at work?
 - (b) What is the anticipated consequence?
 - (c) What is the difficulty involved?
 - (d) In what ways do you think coming out might affect:
 - (i) Your status
 - (ii) Prospect for promotion / posting
 - (iii) Welfare packages
 - (iv) Other aspects of your work experience

Discrimination experienced in the workplace

(B2) Have you experienced any direct or indirect discrimination in the workplace?

- (1) What form(s) of direct or indirect discrimination²⁶ have you experienced?

For example (prompters):

- (a) Verbal insult or mockery
- (b) Sexual harassment
- (c) Being denied a promotion that you were qualified for
- (d) Being denied a job offer or asked to leave a job
- (e) Bullying or physical violence
- (f) Indirect discrimination (please specify: _____)

We would like to know the actual incidents. Please elaborate specifically what happened. Please also let us know when the incidents above occurred.

- (2) Who exert(s) the above form(s) of discrimination to you?
- (a) Your employer
 - (b) Your co-workers
 - (c) Your business clients
 - (d) Others (please specify: _____)
- (3) Why do you think that the above form(s) of discrimination were mainly induced by your sexual orientation / gender identity? Have you compared the treatment you experienced with others in the workplace?
- (4) How often do you experience the above form(s) of discrimination?
- (a) Frequently
 - (b) Sometimes
 - (c) Seldom
- (5) What do you think about the overall attitudes of your employer / co-workers / business clients towards your sexual orientation / gender identity?
- (a) Positive / Negative / Neutral
 - (b) Inclusive / Exclusive / Neutral

²⁶ Moderators should clarify with the interviewees the definitions of direct and indirect discrimination: (1) Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person with a different sexual orientation or gender identity; (2) Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied to everyone but in practice adversely affects persons of a particular sexual orientation or gender identity.

Seeking assistance in the workplace

(B3) Have you sought assistance when you experience direct or indirect discrimination in the workplace?

If the participant **HAS** sought assistance, ask the following:

- (1) From whom did you seek assistance?
 - (a) Your employer
 - (b) Your co-worker
 - (c) Your family
 - (d) NGO
 - (e) Others (please specify: _____)

- (2) What form(s) of assistance did the person(s) or institution(s) provide for you?
 - (a) Complaint system in the workplace
 - (b) Anti-discrimination instructions
 - (c) Verbal reminder
 - (d) Others (please specify: _____)

- (3) Has the discrimination act been mitigated after you sought assistance?

If the participant **HAS NOT** sought assistance, ask the following:

- (1) What is the reason for not seeking assistance?

Ask all participants:

- (1) What kinds of support do you think are needed for sexual minority people in the workplace? What kind of policy or legal measure would be needed? Would you take legal action against your 'discriminator' if there were legal measures in place? Why or why not?

SECTION C

Experience of sexual orientation / gender identity discrimination in school

I would like to discuss with you about the following aspects of experience you may have:

- (1) Sexual orientation / gender identity disclosure in school
- (2) Discrimination experienced in school
- (3) Seeking assistance in school

Sexual orientation / gender identity disclosure in school

[For non-student participants] Did you realise your sexual orientation/gender identity back in the school days? (If not, skip section C)

(C1) Have you disclosed your sexual minority identity in school?

If the participant **HAS** disclosed, ask the following:

- (1) How did you decide whether/whom/when to tell?
- (2) How do you think disclosure of sexual/gender identity has affected your relationships with the following?
 - (a) Your teachers
 - (b) Your classmates
 - (c) Others (please specify: _____)

If the participant **HAS NOT** disclosed, ask the following:

- (3) What prevent you from disclosing?
- (4) Are the anticipated effects caused by the disclosure part of the reason(s) of your choice? What are your concerns for coming out at school?
 - (a) What are the anticipated consequences?
 - (b) What are the difficulties involved?
 - (c) In what ways do you think coming out might affect?
 - (i) Your status
 - (ii) School place offer
 - (iii) Opportunity to take part in courses or activities
 - (iv) Others (please specify: _____)

Discrimination experience in school

(C2) Have you experienced any direct or indirect discrimination in school?

- (1) What form(s) of direct or indirect discrimination have you experienced?

For example (prompts):

- (a) Verbal insult or mockery
- (b) Sexual harassment
- (c) Being denied a school place offer
- (d) Being denied an opportunity to take part in courses or activities
- (e) Bullying or physical violence
- (g) Indirect discrimination (please specify: _____)

We would like to know the actual incidents. Please elaborate specifically what happened. Please also let us know when the incidents above occurred.

- (2) When was the first time you experienced discrimination in school?
- (a) In primary school
 - (b) In secondary school
 - (c) In university or other educational venues for post-secondary education
- (3) Who exerts the above form(s) of discrimination to you?
- (a) Your teachers
 - (b) Your classmates
 - (c) Others (please specify: _____)
- (4) Why do you think that the above form(s) of discrimination were mainly induced by your sexual orientation / gender identity? Have you compared the treatment you experienced with others in school?
- (5) How often do you experience the above form(s) of discrimination?
- (a) Frequently
 - (b) Sometimes
 - (c) Seldom
- (6) What do you think about the overall attitudes of your teachers / classmates towards your sexual orientation / gender identity?
- (a) Positive / Negative / Neutral
 - (b) Inclusive / Exclusive / Neutral

Seeking assistance in school

(C3) Have you sought assistance when you experience direct or indirect discrimination in school?

If the participant **HAS** sought assistance, ask the following:

- (1) From whom did you seek assistance?
 - (a) Your teacher
 - (b) Your classmate
 - (c) Social worker
 - (d) Your family
 - (e) NGO
 - (f) Others (please specify: _____)

- (2) What form(s) of assistance did the person or institution provide for you?
 - (a) Complaint system in school
 - (b) Anti-discrimination instructions
 - (c) Verbal reminder
 - (d) Others (please specify: _____)

- (3) Has the discrimination act been mitigated after you sought assistance?

If the participant **HAS NOT** sought assistance, ask the following:

- (1) What is the reason for not seeking assistance?

Ask all participants:

- (1) What kind of support do you think is needed for sexual minority people in school? What kind of policy or legal measure would be needed? Would you take legal action against your 'discriminator' if there were legal measures in place? Why or why not?

SECTION D

**Experience of sexual orientation / gender identity discrimination in relation
to
use/purchase of goods, facilities and services**

I would like to discuss with you about the following aspects of experience you may have:

- (1) Discrimination experienced in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services
- (2) Seeking assistance in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services

The goods, facilities and services here include banking or insurance services, entertainment or refreshment facilities, transport or travel facilities, and also include any service undertaking by or of the government.

Discrimination in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services

(D1) Have you experienced any direct or indirect discrimination in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services

- (1) What form(s) of direct or indirect discriminations have you experienced?
For example (prompts):
 - (a) Verbal insult or mockery
 - (b) Sexual harassment
 - (c) Being denied the goods, facilities, services requested
 - (d) Differential treatment in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services
 - (e) Bullying or physical violence
 - (f) Indirect discrimination (please specify: _____)

We would like to know the actual incidents. Please elaborate specifically what happened. Please let us know when the incidents above occurred.

- (2) Who exert(s) the above form(s) of discrimination to you?
 - (a) Policies of the bodies providing goods, facilities and services
 - (b) The staff providing goods, facilities and services
 - (c) Others (please specify: _____)

- (3) Why do you think that the above form(s) of discrimination were mainly induced by your sexual orientation / gender identity? Have you compared the treatment you experienced with others in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services?

- (4) How often do you experience the above form(s) of discrimination?
 - (a) Frequently
 - (b) Sometimes
 - (c) Seldom

- (5) What do you think about the overall attitudes of the staff providing goods, facilities and services towards your sexual orientation / gender identity?
 - (a) Positive / Negative / Neutral
 - (b) Inclusive / Exclusive / Neutral

Seek assistance in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services

(D2) Have you sought assistance when you experience direct or indirect discriminations in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services ?

If the participant **HAS** sought assistance, ask the following:

- (1) From whom did you seek assistance?
 - (a) Person-in-charge of the goods, facilities and services
 - (b) NGO
 - (c) Others (please specify: _____)
- (2) What form(s) of assistance did the person or institution provide for you?
 - (a) Anti-discrimination instructions
 - (b) Verbal reminder
 - (c) Others (please specify: _____)
- (3) Have the discrimination acts been mitigated after you sought assistance?

If the participant **HAS NOT** sought assistance, ask the following:

- (1) What is the reason for not seeking assistance?

Ask all participants:

- (1) What kinds of support do you think are needed for sexual minority people in relation to the use/purchase of goods, facilities and services ? What kind of policy or legal measure would be needed? Would you take legal action against your 'discriminator' if there were legal measures in place? Why or why not?

SECTION E

Experience of sexual orientation / gender identity discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises

I would like to discuss with you about the following aspects of experience you may have:

- (1) Discrimination experienced in relation to the disposal and management of premises;
- (2) Seeking assistance in relation to the disposal and management of premises

Discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises

(E1) Have you experienced any direct or indirect discrimination in relation to the disposal and management of premises

- (1) What form(s) of discrimination have you experienced?
For example (prompters):
 - (a) Verbal insult or mockery
 - (b) Sexual harassment
 - (c) Being denied renting premises
 - (d) Being offered premises or rental of premises on less favourable terms
 - (e) Bullying or physical violence
 - (f) Indirect discrimination (please specify: _____)

We would like to know the actual incidents. Please elaborate specifically what happened. Please let us know when the incidents above occurred.

- (2) Why do you think that the discrimination act is mainly induced by your sexual orientation / gender identity? Have you compared the treatment you experienced with others in relation to disposal and management of premises?
- (3) Who exert(s) the above form(s) of discrimination to you?
 - (a) The bodies/property owners or any policies handling the disposal

and management of premises
(b) Others (please specify: _____)

- (4) How often do you experience the above form(s) of discrimination?
(a) Frequently
(b) Sometimes
(c) Seldom
- (5) What do you think about the overall attitudes of the property owners handling the disposal and management of premises towards your sexual orientation / gender identity?
(a) Positive / Negative / Neutral
(b) Inclusive / Exclusive / Neutral

Seeking assistance in relation to the disposal and management of premises

(E2) Have you sought assistance when you experience direct or indirect discriminations in relation to the disposal and management of premises?

If the participant **HAS** sought assistance, ask the following:

- (1) From whom did you seek assistance?
(a) Person-in-charge of the disposal and management of premises
(b) NGO
(c) Others (please specify: _____)
- (2) What form(s) of assistance did the person or institution provide for you?
(a) Anti-discrimination instructions
(b) Verbal reminder
(c) Others (please specify: _____)
- (3) Has the discrimination act been mitigated after you sought assistance?

If the participant **HAS NOT** sought assistance, ask the following:

- (1) What is the reason for not seeking assistance?

Ask all participants:

- (1) What kind of support do you think is needed for sexual minority people in relation to the disposal and management of premises? Whether and what kind of policy or legal measure would be needed? Would you take legal action against your 'discriminator' if there were legal measures in place? Why or why not?

Appendix 2 Demographics of Respondents

個人資料 Demographics of Respondents

The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has commissioned Policy 21 Limited (Policy 21) to conduct a Study on the Discrimination Experienced by Sexual Minorities in Hong Kong.

Your participation in this survey is vital to our analysis and the information provided will be valuable and meaningful. Please be assured that all the information collected will be kept strictly confidential and only aggregate statistics will be published.

If you have any enquiry about the study, please contact Mr. Ben Wong of Policy 21 Limited at 2370 8652 during office hour (9 am to 6 pm from Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

Thank you for your support and co-operation.

香港特別行政區政府政制及內地事務局現正委託政策二十一有限公司（「政策二十一」）對香港性小眾所經歷的歧視進行研究。

您的參與對於是次研究分析很重要，所得資料對進行是次研究非常有價值和有意義。所得資料會嚴加保密，只作整體統計分析之用，不會作個別發表。

如 您對是次研究有任何疑問，請在辦公時間內（星期一至五早上九時至下午六時，公眾假期除外）致電 2370 8652 與政策二十一黃先生聯絡。

多謝您的支持和合作。

以下有幾條有關您個人資料嘅問題作為綜合分析嘅用途，您所提供嘅資料係會絕對保密。

For the purpose of analyzing the survey results, I would like to know some of your personal particulars. The information you provide will be used for analysis only and will be kept strictly confidential.

1. 暱稱 Nickname: _____

2. 性傾向 / 性別認同 Sexual orientation/ gender identity :
 - (1) 男同性戀 Gay ²⁷
 - (2) 女同性戀 Lesbian ²⁸
 - (3) 雙性戀 Bisexual ²⁹
 - (4) 跨性別人士 Transgender ³⁰
 - (5) 後同性戀者 Post-gay³¹
 - (6) 其他性傾向或性別認同 Other sexual orientations or gender identities:
請註明 Please specify:_____

3. 年齡 Age:
 - (1) 18 – 24
 - (2) 25 – 29
 - (3) 30 – 34
 - (4) 35 – 39
 - (5) 40 – 44
 - (6) 45 – 49
 - (7) 50 – 54
 - (8) 55 – 59
 - (9) 60 – 64
 - (10) >64

4. 你有沒有出櫃? Have you come out of the closet?
 - (1) 有 Yes
 - (2) 冇 No (跳至Q.7 Jump to Q.7)

²⁷ 具有同性戀性傾向的男性 A man who is homosexual

²⁸ 具有同性戀性傾向的女性 A woman who is homosexual

²⁹ 不只對單一性別有性傾向的人士 A person who is sexually attracted to both men and women

³⁰ 對其出生時被指定的性別感到無法認同的人 A person whose self-identity does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender

³¹ 希望離開同性戀生活模式的同性戀者 A person who is attracted to same sex, but chose not to have a homosexual lifestyle

5. 出櫃年齡 Age of coming out: _____
6. 向誰出櫃? Whom has been told? (Multiple responses)
- (1) 父母 Parents
 - (2) 兄弟姊妹 Siblings
 - (3) 親戚 Relatives
 - (4) 朋友 Friends
 - (5) 同事 Colleagues
 - (6) 公眾 Public
 - (7) 其他(請註明Please specify) : _____
7. 你現在有沒有親密的男女朋友? Are you in an intimate relationship?
- (1) 有 Yes
 - (2) 冇 No (跳至Q.10 Jump to Q.10)
8. 與男女朋友的親密關係維持了多少月? (如受訪者表示有多於一位親密的男女朋友, 請填寫維持關係最長那個) The length of the intimate relationship (in months) (Please fill in the longest intimate relationship if the respondent indicates that he/she has more than one intimate relationship) :
_____月 months
9. 常用語言 Usual language:
- (1) 廣東話 Cantonese
 - (2) 英文 English
 - (3) 其他 Others
10. 育程度 Educational attainment:
- (1) 未曾接受教育/幼稚園 No schooling/kindergarten
 - (2) 小學 Primary (P1-P6)
 - (3) 初中 Lower secondary (F.1 – F.3)
 - (4) 高中 Upper secondary (F.4 – F.6)
 - (5) 預科 Matriculation (F.6 – F.7)
 - (6) 大專 (非學位課程) Tertiary (Non-degree course)
 - (7) 大專 (學位課程) 或以上 Tertiary or above (Degree course or above)
11. 狀況 Marital status:
- (1) 未婚 Single
 - (2) 已婚 Married
 - (3) 同居 Cohabiting
 - (4) 分居/離婚 Separated/Divorced
 - (5) 喪偶 Widowed
 - (6) 民事伴侶關係 Civil partnership
 - (7) 其他 Others
12. 請問你有沒有小孩? Do you have children?

- (1) 有 No
(2) 有 Yes – 幾多位 How many children:
-

13. 請問你有沒有宗教信仰呢 Do you have any religion?

- (1) 有 No
(2) 有 Yes

(a) 係邊種宗教呢? What religion? (可選多項 Multiple answers allowed)

- (1) 天主教 Catholicism
(2) 基督教 Christianity
(3) 佛教 Buddhist
(4) 其他 Others (請註明 Please specify) : _____

(b) 你係 Are you...?

- (1) 非常虔誠 Very devoted
(2) 虔誠 Devoted
(3) 一般 Average
(4) 唔熱衷 Lukewarm
(5) 完全唔關心 Indifferent

14. 請問你嘅經濟活動狀況係? What is your economic activity status?

- (1) 僱主 Employer
(2) 自僱人士 Self-employed
(3) 僱員 Employee
(4) 學生 Student
(5) 退休人士 Retired
(6) 料理家務者 Homemaker
(7) 待業人士 Unemployed
(8) 其他 Others (請註明 please specify: _____)
- } (跳問 Q.17)
(jump to Q.17)

15. 你從事那一種行業? Which industry are you engaged in?

- (1) 製造業 Manufacturing
(2) 建造業 Construction
(3) 進出口、批發及零售業 Import/export, wholesale and retail trades
(4) 運輸、倉庫、郵政及速遞服務業 Transportation, storage, postal and courier services
(5) 住宿及膳食服務業 Accommodation and food services
(6) 資訊及通訊業 Information and communications
(7) 金融及保險業 Financing and insurance
(8) 地產、專業及商用服務業 Real estate, professional and business services
(9) 公共行政、教育、人類醫療保健及社工活動 Public administration,

education, human health and social work activities

(10) 雜項社會及個人服務 Miscellaneous social and personal services

(11) 其他 Others _____

16. 請問你嘅職位係? Could you tell me your position?

(1) 經理及行政級人員 Managers and Administrators

(2) 專業人員 Professionals

(3) 輔助專業人員 Associate professionals

(4) 文員支援人員 Clerical support workers

(5) 服務工作及商店銷售人員 Service Workers and sales workers

(6) 工藝及有關人員 Craft and related workers

(7) 機台及機器操作員及裝配員 Plant and machine operators and assemblers

(8) 非技術工人 Elementary occupations (9) 其他 Others

17. 請問你個人每月嘅平均總收入大約有幾多錢呢(以港幣計算)? (包括所有收入來源例如每月薪金、花紅、房屋津貼、社會援助金或投資收入等)
Could you tell me your monthly total personal income (in Hong Kong Dollars)?
Total personal income should include all your monthly salary, bonus, housing allowance, social support, investment income, etc.

(1) \$5,000 以下 below

(2) \$5,000 - \$9,999

(3) \$10,000 - \$14,999

(4) \$15,000 - \$19,999

(5) \$20,000 - \$24,999

(6) \$25,000 - \$29,999

(7) \$30,000 - \$39,999

(8) \$40,000 - \$49,999

(9) \$50,000 - \$59,999

(10) \$60,000 - \$99,999

(11) \$100,000 - \$199,999

(12) \$200,000 或以上 or above

Appendix 3 Other demographic data

Socioeconomic status

1. A total of 214 participants from different sexual orientations/gender identities, ages, educational attainment and economic activity status were interviewed. Only one intersex person participated in the Study. In order to protect his/her privacy, this report leaves out his/her information in some paragraphs and charts that set out the data of each category of participants (including paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 and this Appendix). As such, the total number of participants covered in the paragraphs and charts concerned is 213.

2. Regarding economic activity status, 158 participants were economically active and 55 participants were economically inactive. Among the 158 participants who were economically active, 63 participants worked in public administration, education, human health and social work activities, 17 participants worked in the industry of information and communications, and 16 participants were involved in import/export, wholesale and retail trades.

Table 5: Industry the participants who were economically active engaged in

Profile	Sexual orientation/ gender identity					
	Lesbians	Gay	Bisexual	Trans-gender	Post-gay	Total
Public administration, education, human health and social work activities	25	20	11	5	2	63
Information and communications	6	3	1	5	2	17
Import/export, wholesale and retail trades	7	6	1	1	1	16
Real estate, professional and business services	3	2	2	5	0	12
Financing and insurance	4	4	2	0	0	10
Accommodation and food services	4	3	0	1	0	8

Manufacturing	3	2	1	2	0	8
Miscellaneous social and personal services	1	3	2	1	1	8
Transportation, storage, postal and courier services	0	0	2	3	1	6
Construction	4	1	1	0	0	6
Refused to answer	2	0	2	0	0	4

3. Regarding their occupations, 45 participants were professionals and 34 were managers and administrators.

Table 6: Occupations of the participants who were economically active

Profile	Sexual orientation/ gender identity					Total
	Lesbians	Gay	Bisexual	Trans-gender	Post-ga y	
Professionals	15	14	5	9	2	45
Managers and Administrators	10	14	5	4	1	34
Associate professionals	9	5	6	3	2	25
Clerical support workers	6	7	6	3	1	23
Service workers and sales workers	9	3	1	0	1	14
Elementary occupations	3	0	0	3	0	6
Craft and related workers/	5	1	0	0	0	6
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	0	0	0	1	0	1
Refused to answer	2	0	2	0	0	4

Current relationship status

4. Among 213 participants, 136 participants were in an intimate relationship. The average length of the participants' longest intimate relationship was 4.4 years.
5. 171 participants were single, 16 were cohabitating, 14 were married and 5 were in a civil relationship. Fewer than 10 participants were separated, divorced, widowed or other status. Only 10 participants had children.

Table 7: Current relationship status of the participants

Profile	Sexual orientation/gender identity					
	Lesbians	Gay	Bisexual	Trans-gender	Post-gay	Total
Whether in an intimate relationship?						
Yes	53	40	27	17	0	137
No	17	26	7	18	8	76
Marital status						
Single	59	53	25	28	6	171
Married	2	4	1	5	2	14
Cohabiting	6	3	6	1	0	16
Separated/Divorced	0	1	1	1	0	3
Widowed	1	0	0	0	0	1
Civil partnership	0	4	1	0	0	5
Others	2	1	0	0	0	3
Whether had children?						
Yes	4	2	1	3	0	10
No	66	64	33	32	8	203
Total	70	66	34	35	8	213

Religion

6. 83 participants had religious belief: 64 were Christians/Catholics, 14 believed in Buddhism and 5 believed in other religious belief. For those 83 participants who had religious belief, 13 and 21 participants indicated they were very devoted and devoted respectively.

Table 8: Religion of the participants

Profile	Sexual orientation/ gender identity					
	Lesbians	Gay	Bisexual	Trans-gender	Post-gay	Total
Religion						
Yes	18	27	14	16	8	83
<i>Christian/ Catholic</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Buddhist</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>5</i>
No	52	39	20	19	0	130
Degree of devotion						
Very devoted	1	3	5	2	2	13
Devoted	6	5	3	3	4	21
Average	11	14	4	9	2	40
Lukewarm	0	3	2	0	0	5
Indifferent	0	2	0	2	0	4

Appendix 4 Summary of the reported discrimination experience

<i>Reported discriminatory experience in the workplace</i>	
<i>Forms of discrimination</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Direct discrimination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being asked to leave a job after the sexual orientation/gender identity was made known to employer [2 lesbians, 2 gays, and 5 transgender people] (Total: 9 out of the 180 participants who had working experience in Hong Kong) • Being denied a job offer after gender identity was exposed during recruitment process [1 transgender person out of the 180 participants who had working experience in Hong Kong] • Being deprived of promotion and training opportunities after the sexual orientation/gender identity was made known to employer [1 gay and 1 transgender person] (Total: 2 out of the 180 participants who had working experience in Hong Kong)
<i>Harassment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome verbal conduct³² [20 lesbians, 16 gays, 5 bisexuals ,17 transgender people and 1 post-gay] (Total: 59 out of the 180 participants who had working experience in Hong Kong) • Sexual harassment [3 lesbians, 1 gay, 1 transgender person and 1 intersex person] (Total: 6 out of the 180 participants who had working experience in Hong Kong)

³² Examples of unwelcome verbal conduct encountered in different domains include:

Lesbian: “死TB” (damn tom-boy) **Gay:** “死基佬” (damn gay men), “屎忽鬼” (asshole) and “變態” (pervert).

Bisexual: “濫交” (promiscuity), “污糟” (dirty) and “死基佬” (damn gay men).

Transgender: “人妖” (shemale), “變態” (pervert), “不男不女” (not like a man, not like a woman) and “怪物” (monster).

Post-gay: “㗎型” (Sissy)

<i>Reported discriminatory experience in school</i>	
<i>Forms of discrimination</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Direct discrimination</i> ³³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being denied a school place offer of a theological college after the gender identity was exposed during the admission process [1 transgender person out of the 208 participants who had studied in Hong Kong] • Being dismissed by a theological college after the sexual orientation was made known to the college [1 gay out of the 208 participants who had studied in Hong Kong]
<i>Harassment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome verbal conduct [17 lesbians, 24 gays, 5 bisexuals ,10 transgender people, 1 post-gay and 1 intersex] (Total: 58 out of the 208 participants who had studied in Hong Kong) • Sexual harassment [6 gays, 1 transgender person and 1 intersex] (Total: 8 out of the 208 participants who had studied in Hong Kong) • Unwelcome physical conduct [1 lesbian, 2 gays and 1 transgender person] (Total: 4 out of the 208 participants who had studied in Hong Kong)

<i>Reported discriminatory experience in relation to use/purchase of goods, facilities and services</i>	
<i>Forms of discrimination</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Direct discrimination</i>	<p>Being denied the goods, facilities and services requested: [40 participants in total]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being denied services requested (Valentine’s Day menus) in restaurants [2 lesbians and 2 gays] (Total: 4 out of the 214 participants) • Being denied free entry to bars / clubs that offered free entry to ladies

³³ While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation or gender identity in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions provide exemptions for religious schools in relation to their decisions on admission of students.

	<p>[7 out of the 70 lesbian participants]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being denied entry to public toilets or toilets in shopping arcades [9 lesbians and 5 transgender people] (Total: 14 participants out of the total 105 lesbian participants and transgender participants) • Being denied rental of hotels / inns [3 lesbians, 4 gays and 1 bisexual] (Total: 8 participants out of the 214 participants) • Being rejected as a blood donor³⁴ [2 gays and 1 bisexual] (Total: 3 participants out of the 214 participants) • Being refused trying on and purchasing fashion accessory in retail shop [1 transgender person out of the 214 participants] • Being denied services requested when accessing to medical services [1 transgender person out of the 214 participants] • Being denied social service [1 transgender person out of the 214 participants] • Being denied rental services of a bus service company for demonstration activities [1 bisexual out of the 214 participants] <p><i>Differential treatment</i> [6 participants in total]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being treated less favourably in restaurants [2 lesbians out of the 214 participants] • Being charged additional deposit for rental in an inn [1 gay out of the 214 participants] • Being refused provision of a double bed in hotel [1 gay out of the 214 participants]
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³⁴ While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions allow organisations that operate blood service to refuse to accept a person's blood donation if the decision is based on reasonable medical ground.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being rejected application for child adoption [1 gay out of the 214 participants] • Being treated less favourably in participation of child sponsorship programme [1 transgender person out of the 214 participants]
Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome verbal conduct [14 lesbians, 9 gays, 2 bisexuals, 16 transgender people and 4 post-gays] (Total: 45 out of the 214 participants)

Reported discriminatory experience in relation to the disposal and management of premises	
Forms of discrimination	Description
Direct discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being denied rental of premises [1 lesbian, 1 gay, 1 bisexual and 1 transgender person] (Total : 4 out of the 48 participants who had experience in the domain) • Being subjected to less favourable treatment in relation to the rental of premises [1 transgender person and 1 lesbian] (Total: 2 out of the 48 participants who had experience in the domain)

Other reported discriminatory experience	
Description	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being denied opportunities of participating in church activities³⁵ [1 lesbian, 1 gay, 1 bisexual and 1 transgender person] (Total : 4 participants) • Unwelcome verbal conduct during participation in social activities [1 post-gay] 	

³⁵ While there was less favourable treatment for a person with different sexual orientation in these cases, it is noted that the anti-discrimination laws in some of the overseas jurisdictions provide exemptions for religious organisations in relation to participation in their activities.