

CAN THO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

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Abstract. The study aims to investigate to survey students of Can Tho University (CTU) about the understanding of same-sex marriage, thereby analyzing students' perceptions of same-sex marriage. Since then, the study pointed out the factors that affect students' perception of this issue. Data of the study were collected from 400 students who are majoring in Social Humanities, Natural Science and Engineering Sciences at CTU. Descriptive statistics are used mainly in this study to clarify the purpose of the study. The research results showed that CTU students have understandings of same-sex marriage, most of them realized the positive and negative effects of this relationship.

Keywords: CTU students, same-sex marriage.

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

In Vietnam, from the 14th to the 17th centuries, homosexuality is manifested in unusual clothing such as men's clothes or women's jewelry. At that time, the person engaged in homosexual acts was considered unusual, but there was no specific reprimand or punishment. By the twentieth century, due to the development of urban centers, homosexual groups were allowed to meet due to the development of urban centers, homosexual groups were allowed to meet the homosexual phenomenon but became more conspicuous, even without permission and condemnation. However, at this stage, there was still no legal framework to regulate specific sanctions. In 2000, the National Assembly of Vietnam promulgated the Law on Marriage and Family in Clause 5, Article 10 of this Law stipulated the prohibiting marriage between people of the same sex. At its peak in 2002, homosexuality was seen as a social evil. Examination based on sexual orientation has made the sexual minority group shrink and suffer heavy stigma

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from family and society. In addition, HIV prevalence in Hanoi, Vietnam for homosexuals was as high as 20% in 2006, then the National Assembly put homosexuals on the list of high-risk groups that should be prioritized in programs of HIV prevention". The tips of public opinion about homosexuality as the spread of the century pandemic. In the world, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses in 1973, and World Health Organization (WHO) removed homosexuality from the list of sick books in 1990.

Since 2012, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community activities have appeared in Vietnam, the most prominent can be mentioned in the two cities as Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Activities were taken place on a small scale, from meetings and conversations at café to the forms of street parades, holding photos and entertainment events. Some outstanding activities such as VietPride, IDAHOT (May 17), the transgender day appeared, ... therefore, the proportion of people in the LGBT community is more open to society and gradually accepted by everyone. They can live up to the desired gender identity and participate in social, educational and recreational activities. At present, there have appeared many related studies on the same-sex issue and mainly focused on the aspect of scientific and legal theory with the common aim towards proposals to legalize marriage for the LGBT community [1;2;3]. However, many needs of the LGBT community have not been fully met, including the need for gender reassignment, change of personal papers; the need to get married and build a family. Same-sex marriage has become one of the most controversial social policy issues of our time. LGBT rights debates have raged for decades and same-sex marriage has been at the top of the social agenda in many European countries and in the United States of America (US) in recent times. One of the countries with notable policy changes on same-sex marriage in the US, and its policies may spark ideas for same-sex marriage policy-making in Vietnam.

Regarding the marriage issue of the LGBT community in Vietnam, gay and lesbians all want a happy life and they do not have to live in the dark or marry a heterosexual person to satisfy the common needs of the family and society. However, the Vietnamese country is still in the process of discussing and there is no specific policy on marriage, while the LGBT community is still growing and fighting against stigma for their own legitimate interests. Identifying students' perceptions and understanding of same-sex marriage are one of the keys to opening new opportunities for the LGBT community in general and same-sex people in particular. Therefore, the respondents in this study are students because this is considered the pioneer generation of society with progressive thinking and thought [4;5;6].

1.2 Domestic and foreign research situations

Same-sex marriage is a form of marriage between two persons of the same biological sex or the law recognized by law in the birth certificate. Homosexuality is a natural form of human sexuality and is not the cause of any negative factors. Same-sex marriage is a civil rights issue, related to politics, society, ethics and religion in many countries. Currently, in the world, there are 16 countries and 20 territories that recognized same-sex marriage (2 states of Mexico, 18 states of US). In addition, Australia (5 states), the US (4 states), Mexico (2 states) and Venezuela (1 state) have

accepted two people of the same sex to legally register to live together under the forms of civil union registered relationship, family relations. In addition, 4 countries (Australia, Croatia, Israel, San Marino) admitted unregistered cohabitation. In these countries and territories, homosexuals have the right to live real life with their gender and emotions and have the right to pursue happiness like other citizens of society [7]. In addition, many researches showed that no statistically significant adverse effects from allowing same-sex marriage. This means that same-sex marriage does not have a negative impact on society. The study of homosexuals from the perspective of marriage in the gay and lesbian community is a new social phenomenon. From there, new issues have arisen related to this issue [8;9].

Several different views of the East and some Asian countries that same-sex marriage disrupts the traditional family institution, are inconsistent with traditional customs, goes against the natural situation and cannot maintain the race. In Vietnam, LGBT people experience widespread stigma and discrimination. In a survey of 3,000 gays and lesbians, 95% of respondents said that they have been stigmatized and discriminated against in various forms. Stigma and discrimination against homosexuals, bisexuals, and transgender people are stigma based on the difference in their sexual orientation and gender identity, which is manifested in many forms, from society to the community, from the workplace to within their family. In the past few years, the rights of the LGBT community have had many more opportunities to be resolved in Vietnam. In addition to advocating for the right of same-sex couples to marry, community groups, as well as social organizations working on gender and sexual diversity, have begun to pay attention to the issue of adoption of LGBT people. Recently, Law on Marriage and Family was enacted and a draft of the Civil Code was developed and commented on so civil society organizations have had more opportunities to ask for custody of adoption of sex and sexual minority groups in Vietnam. During the discussion on the draft Law on Marriage and Family at the National Assembly, there were opinions that it is advisable to admit marriage among people of the same sex, but there were also suggestions for further prohibition and comments. Proposing to remove prohibitions but instead of provisions related to solving problems arising from cohabitation among people of the same sex, such as property, children. In fact, Decree 110/2013/ND-CP stipulated the sanctioning of administrative violations in the fields of judicial assistance, judicial administration, marriage and family, civil judgment enforcement, corporate bankruptcy so the cooperative has eliminated the administrative sanctions for marriage among people of the same sex. Next, the prohibition on marriage among people of the same sex was removed when the Law on Marriage and Family was passed. This has been considered a new and fundamental step towards recognizing the rights of homosexuals [10].

According to the United Nations (1984) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is clear that there are provisions on basic rights in which individuals do not include provisions on the indiscrimination of the sex of individuals. This declaration makes sure that everyone who enjoys the rights must perform their responsibilities as intended so that everyone is the same, the LGBT communities are equal to everyone else in society. In many countries around the world, LGBT is a fairly common phenomenon and recognized by law as a normal sexual orientation. No statistically

significant adverse effects of permitting same-sex marriage were found. This means that same-sex marriage does not have a relationship that has negative impacts on society [11;2]. Same-sex marriage is a new social phenomenon. However, there are also many problems related to this issue. Around the world, the same-sex marriage didn't exist until the 21st century when more and more countries began to legally allow same-sex couples to marry. The United States is particularly noticeable because it is seen as a growing cradle of major political and legal issues about same-sex marriage. Although same-sex marriage exists in a few countries and states of the United States, its consequences and effects far outstrip the borders of those countries and regions. Based on that, studies of countries around the world serve as a basis for building a reasonable framework suitable to the socio-political situation of each region, especially in this study in Vietnam [8].

1.3. The necessity and novelty of the topic

Currently, same-sex couples are increasingly popular and attract a lot of attention. It is where the sexual minority community speaks out about the difficulties, struggles, success and best of all, the long-term happy coexistence of couples, it deals a heavy blow on those who doubt the sustainability of same-sex coexistence or see it as a trend. Same-sex marriage or the LGBT community is a topic that many researchers are interested in and implemented with different directions, but there is no specific study on students' understanding of kissing issues. Realizing the importance of studying this issue, the study was conducted in the area of Can Tho University - A quality training environment with good equipment for learning; experienced and creative lecturers in teaching methods should train generations of dynamic students who can grasp information quickly and integrate well to create opportunities to change people's perceptions about same-sex marriage quickly and effectively. In addition, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences has carried out communication activities on gender diversity for students and organized seminars in conjunction with the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Faculty of Science and Technology. Social work to develop social work curriculum with the aim of helping students have more information and correct understanding about the LGBT community. It can be seen that research on the issue of "Students' understanding of Can Tho University on same-sex marriage" is necessary to understand students' attitudes and perceptions about homosexual marriage. Hence, this study will be a premise for future studies to make a solid scientific foundation for further research and a base in contributing to the adjustment and supplementation of the Law on Marriage and Family in the next period, contributing to minimize stigma and stigma in the LGBT community and extends benefits for this minority group.

2. Content

2.1. Research methodology and theory

2.1.1. Research method

The data in this study were collected and analyzed respectively through two main steps of collecting and analyzing data:

➤ Data collection: Secondary research data are collected from internet sources and some previous studies related to homosexual people, the LGBT community. In addition, the primary data of the topic was collected from 400 samples of CTU student surveys by a convenient random sampling method.

➤ Data analysis: The study used descriptive statistics to analyze the current situation of understanding of Can Tho University students about same-sex marriage with measurement indicators such as average number, frequency number, rate, standard deviation. Simultaneously, the study conducted in-depth interviews with some respondents to find out representative opinions for the surveyed group.

2.1.2. Application of sociological theory in research

Research on applying Marx Weber's theory of social action to explore and analyze perceptions of CTU students on same-sex marriage. In his theory, Weber emphasizes the internal “motive” of the subject as the cause of the action, the “subjective meaning” is consciousness, conscious actions, the subject understands, and how I do what acts and how to do it, different from biological instincts. Thereby, research showed that students' actions toward same-sex marriage are social actions. In the process of behaving and forming an understanding of students, students acquire knowledge about same-sex marriage through their own considerations and choices. In addition, the study also applies structural-functional theory as a foundation for building theoretical foundations. This theory is applied because it brings together many authors, including some typical sociologists such as: Talcott Parsons (1902 - 1979), Robert Merton (1910 - 2003) and Peter Blau (1918-2002). This theory is widely used in sociological analysis to emphasize the functional contributions of one part of society to maintain the old structure; the basic thing is that in each society, there is order and unity, consensus, social unity. Since then, the study considered the function of individual students' accurate awareness of same-sex marriage and the conscious influence of the whole society. When students have the right awareness, they will contribute to building the premise of spreading information to neighboring community groups, promoting the elimination of social stereotypes about same-sex marriage in the particular and the LGBT community in general.

2.2. Reality

Today in Vietnam, although the 2014 Law on Family and Marriage was passed by the National Assembly and came into effect from January 1, 2015, same-sex marriage has still not been recognized and there is no regulation. of the law to solve legal problems arising between coexistence between people of the same sex. Since then, the issue of same-sex marriage is no longer a subject of social discrimination, people have been fully and properly aware of this issue.

2.2.1. Students' understanding of same-sex marriage concept

The study results indicated that between two people of the same sex, equal marriage between two people of the same sex, living similar to the same biological sex couple, same-sex marriage is not socially accepted. In which, the majority of students said that same-sex marriage is the marriage with the same biological sex, accounting for the highest percentage (42%).

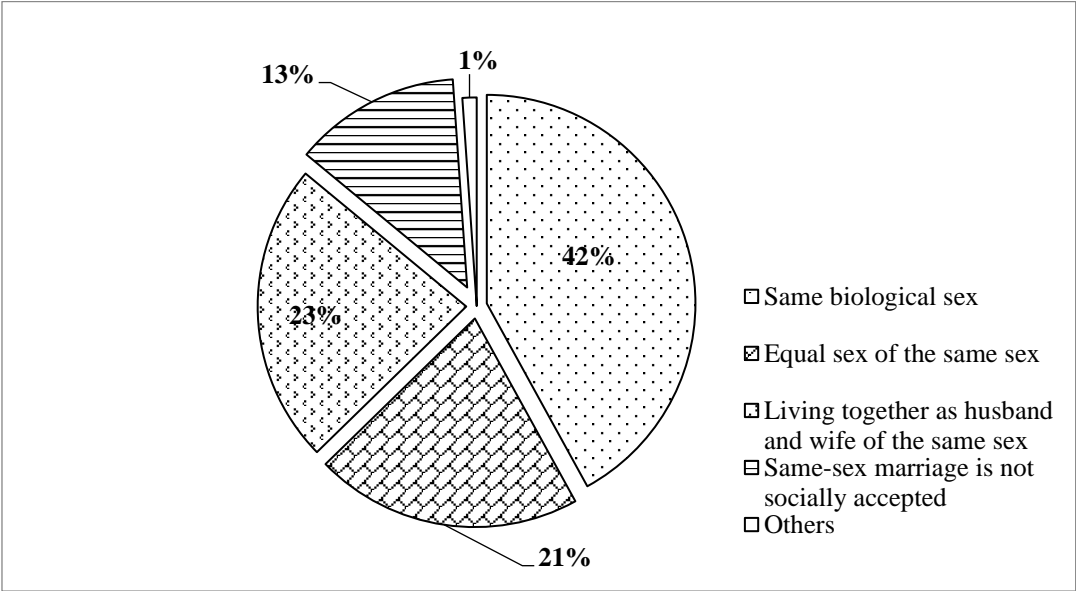


Figure 1. Students' understanding of the concept of same-sex marriage (n = 400)
 (Source: Student implementation, 2020)

Next is same-sex marriage, living together as husband and wife of the same sex, accounting for the second rate in the survey (23.3%). The rate of answers to same-sex marriage is not accepted by society (12.9%) and other opinions (1.1%) have the lowest rate in the survey. This shows that most of the respondents had a correct and quite complete view of same-sex marriage as the marriage between people of the same biological sex.

2.2.2 Information sources on same-sex marriage

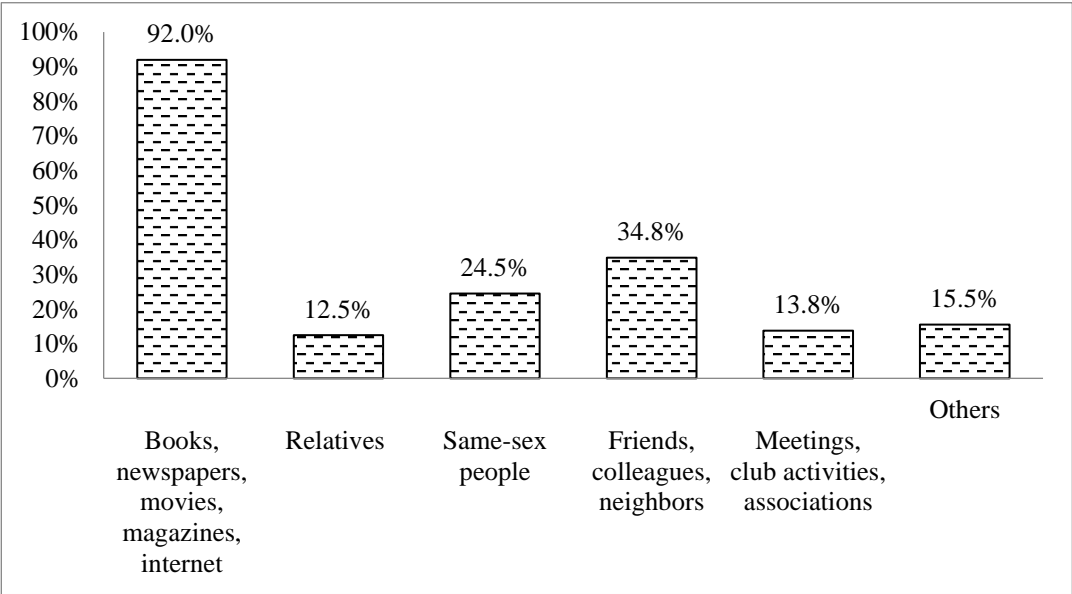


Figure 2. Information sources on same-sex marriage (n = 400)
 (Source: Students implementation, 2020)

The study surveyed 400 people with the question about how they access information about same-sex marriage, showing that the majority of respondents receive information from newspapers, magazines, movies, the internet is the most common (accounting for 92%). In addition, some respondents also received information about same-sex marriage from their friends, colleagues, neighbors (accounting for 34.8%); information from people of the same sex (accounting for 24.5%), other information channels such as doctors, game shows, meetings with the LGBT community (15.5%); meetings, activities of clubs, associations (accounting for 13.8%). Information sources from relatives account for the lowest proportion because these are also subjects that do not have open points about same-sex marriage, so the rate of information sharing is low (12.5%). This showed that students have many resources to learn information about same-sex marriage at present. However, in the process of sharing and absorbing views on same-sex marriage, students need to select a reliable source of information to avoid absorbing false or extreme views on this issue (Figure 2).

2.3. Effect of same-sex marriage

2.3.1 Positive effects

The study results showed that the majority of respondents believed that the acceptance of same-sex marriage in society helps homosexual people have the opportunity to build family happiness (accounting for 66%). Same-sex marriage helps people of the same sex ensure human rights (accounting for 50.3%), which is clearly demonstrated through the right to seek personal happiness. Moreover, same-sex marriage helps reduce discrimination against homosexuals in society (49.8%), helps same-sex people live their sexual orientation (42.8%), ensures that equal sexual orientation (accounting for 36.3%), ensuring legal rights of the same sex in marriage (accounting for 32.5%). The recognition of same-sex marriage makes homosexual people have a sense of security in family life with their partner. Besides, they will have a sense and responsibility to take care of the family's material and spiritual life. When same-sex marriage is recognized, it means that they will fulfill their commitment to long-term bonding, build family relationships and know-how to appreciate their emotional relationships. Thus, they will have the opportunity to remove barriers to the opponent's legal representation, adoption/surrogacy and joint property rights of two people. In addition, in the Nordic countries, it was found that after the laws to allow registration of cohabitation were passed, the long-term attachment of individuals when registering to live together means a commitment to faithful behavior and this reduces the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases [9].

On the other hand, the family is the cell of society, so the relationship between marriage and family is extremely important and has an influence on society. It is a place to nurture and educate people to grow up and mature. In addition, when the family grows and lives well, society will be improved and developed. Correspondingly, the first thing to form a good, healthy family is to get married in accordance with the law. In the current reality, it is very important and necessary to support same-sex marriage and adjust the same-sex marriage law, contributing to ensuring family stability.

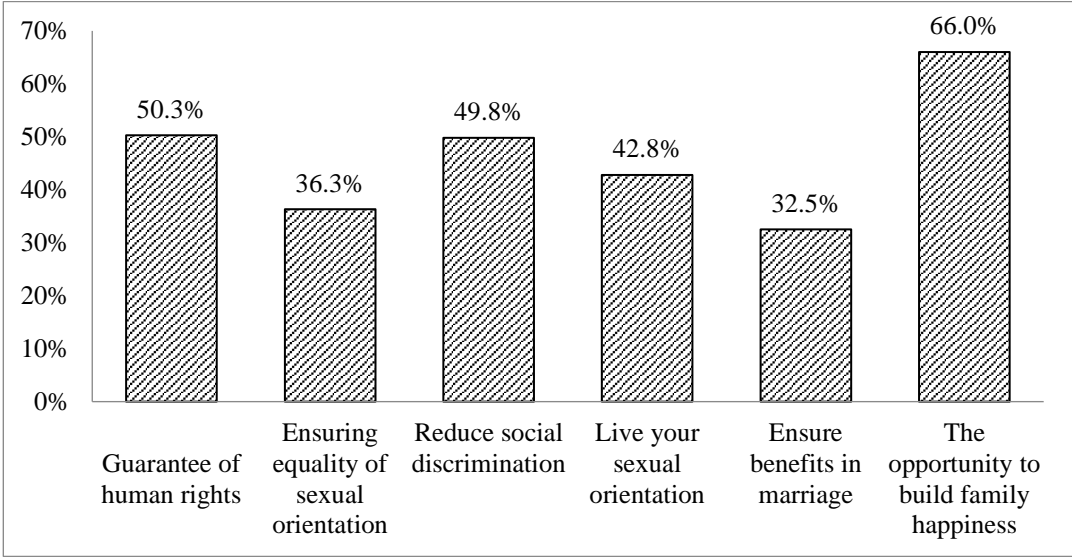


Figure 3. Positive effects of same-sex marriage (n = 400)

(Source: Student implementation, 2020)

2.3.2 Negative effects of same-sex marriage

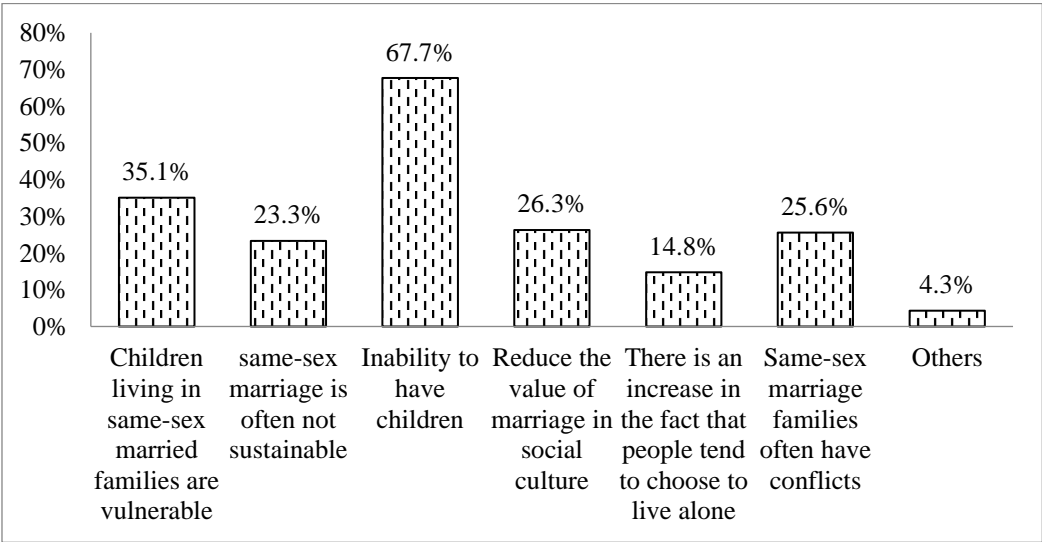


Figure 4. Negative effects of same-sex marriage (n = 400)

(Source: Student implementation, 2020)

Through the survey, the majority of students believed that the negative effect of same-sex marriage is the inability to have children (67.7%). This result has reflected objectively the fact that homosexual people face a large number of challenges for reproduction. The present research conducted in-depth interviews to understand thoroughly students' perceptions of this issue. Indeed, the cost for surrogacy is quite expensive so that not all homosexual couples can have someone get pregnant and give birth to them. Besides, the adoption of a gay couple is also facing many difficulties and legal troubles. Next, the students said that children living in same-sex families will be emotionally vulnerable (accounting for 35.1%), same-sex marriage reduces the value of

marriage in social culture (accounting for 35.1%). And the same-sex marriage causes reduce the value of marriage in social culture (26,3%), same-sex marriage is often unsustainable (accounting for 23.3%). On the contrary, some students have another opinion that same-sex marriage does not affect society, it is impossible because some homosexual individuals influence society but the same-sex community has no chance to conspire their own happiness (4.3%). In fact, some heterosexual people believe that same-sex marriage will seriously affect the value of marriage and social order. However, according to researchers in countries that allow same-sex marriage, there are no links between allowing homosexuals to marry or living with negative effects on marriage. Also, allowing same-sex marriage will help increase the rate of marriage, reduce the abortion rate and sexually transmitted diseases. Likewise, legal same-sex marriage will contribute to reducing the number of children living in single-parent families, the children will have the love of two fathers or two mothers without being affected by the commune, discrimination and condemnation. For the reasons as mentioned, same-sex marriage does not have any direct effect on the deterioration of traditional marriage, whether it is traditional marriage or same-sex marriage, they are all the same at the point of their desire to be loved, socially recognized their feelings. The two forms of marriage are different in terms of marriage sex but are still the same in terms of affection between two individuals who want to bond and build long-term commitments with each other.

It can be seen that the majority of students have had an understanding of homosexual people in general and same-sex marriage in particular. The negative effects of same-sex marriage that students care about mostly focus on the issue of maintaining the race and educating the children. It is clear that maintaining the breed affects the balance of society, but in case that the LGBT community cannot have children, it will not cause a serious effect since they just make up a small part of society. They can adopt children to create conditions for the less fortunate children to have care and education from the family. However, in terms of protecting children from abuse and violence, the law also needs regulations on the adoption of same-sex families. Furthermore, no studies showed that children adopted in same-sex families are at greater risk of emotional damage than children in heterosexual families. Actually, the child's socialization process depends on the care, love and care of family members, not on the child having gay parents.

2.4. Solutions

From the remaining negativity that has raised stereotypes towards same-sex marriage, the research has proposed a number of solutions to help same-sex couples be recognized in society.

Firstly, to raise students' awareness of the LGBT community, same-sex people and same-sex marriage. In a study on same-sex marriage, there have been a number of questions “changing traditional norms in society or removing people's stereotypes about same-sex marriage or same-sex marriage?”. It can be determined that constructing arguments on same-sex marriage, researchers have all pointed out that homosexuality is a normal phenomenon in society. It should be clearly stated that same-sex marriage does not destroy Vietnamese traditional customs and moral values. Even some same-sex

couples have constantly demonstrated to society and made great achievements to contribute to the development of everyone's life. Therefore, changing perceptions in the student community about same-sex people to have a more open view of same-sex marriage is essential when students are qualified, knowledgeable, and New thinking, there are many opportunities to contact with a modern society from there, it will be easy to accept same-sex marriage in society. We need more time for people to contact, work, and converse with same-sex people. In cases of having same-sex acquaintances, the probability of supporting the legalization of marriage was twice as high as in cases of not knowing. This shows that the public appearance of homosexuals has a good impact on the supportive attitude of society [12;13].

Secondly, schools and faculties consider establishing clubs for the LGBT community and same-sex people to give them the opportunity to exchange and assert themselves with everyone, providing same-sex students with a healthy playground and active activities. In addition, the school needs to organize seminars and information sharing from guests who are reputable individuals to inspire the LGBT community so that students can contact and directly present their problems. Besides, there should be contests and programs to learn knowledge about the LGBT community to clarify information and regulations on LGBT to improve knowledge and also mean propaganda.

Finally, for the school's library service, which needs to update and supplement documents related to LGBT issues and it is suggested to include more general categories for LGBT people. Or create an LGBT library channel, on the School library page, to make learning about community knowledge easier. Organize exhibitions of pictures, pictures, books and videos about sexual diversity, activities of the LGBT community such as Rainbow School to convey positive messages to LGBT students in particular and students of Can Tho University in general.

3. Conclusion

In summary, homosexuals increasingly assert their roles and achievements in social life, at the same time they express a desire to be sympathetic and recognized by everyone. The recognition of same-sex marriage by Vietnamese laws will be a key that open up opportunities for the LGBT community in general and same-sex people in particular to have the opportunity to build family happiness and be guaranteed their rights. Through the descriptive statistical method, the research has described the current situation of students' understanding and the effects of same-sex marriage. In addition, helping students to have a correct view of same-sex marriage will be a new step for the surrounding community to spread positive thoughts and avoid stigma against the LGBT community. However, this will be a long journey for society to build a correct outlook on same-sex marriage. Law on marriage and family may not establish same-sex marriage together, but it is possible to consider building laws for homosexual objects in marriage. As such, they will receive more legal assurance and responsibility in their married life.

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