

Doing Gender and The Retaliation of Confrontational Interactions: A Case Study of Gay Community in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Homosexual people in Thailand have encountered a myriad of cumbersome circumstances in several settings regarding gendered expectations and stereotypes, albeit the reputation of a homosexuality-friendly country. Engendered in pop culture and intergenerational discourse, these gendered expectations and stereotypes are enforced among Thai gay people in their daily routines. These constructs conceive a gendered boundary between heterosexuality and homosexuality and gender inequality in society. Consequently, this research analyzes the concept of "doing gender" and the structural framework that Risman (2004) elaborated to illustrate the 'local' interactions of Thai gay people. Including their confrontational interactions in the heteronormative norms, manifestations, people's praxis, and response to gendered expectations and stereotypes. This study uses a semi-structured interview of 13 Thai gay people who have encountered gendered expectations and stereotypes. Their lived experiences for years elucidate the gender structure in Thailand. The results portray that Thai gay people are "doing gender" in their daily routines regardless of age, domicile, occupation, and educational background. They conform and

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perform distinctive social characteristics, activities, and aptitudes according to their sexual orientation. Nonetheless, to retaliate against confrontational interactions of gender, the informants react on accounts of negligence and contention.

Keywords: Doing Gender, Gender Structure, Retaliation, Gay, Thailand

Introduction

Notwithstanding the reputation of Thailand as a friendly country for LGBTQ+ travelers (Teeramachwanich, 2020), gender classification in the social context has occurred consecutively and embedded in people's routines, for instance, stigmatizing transgender as the ²nd type woman, stereotyping homosexual people as the ³rd sex person, etc. These pragmatic classifications are empirical indicators in order to portray that Thai heterosexual people have endeavored to reproduce the discourse that there has merely two biological sex categories according to Thai traditional social norms, heteronormativity (UNDP & USAID, 2014). Furthermore, the gendered ideology concreated by pop culture and intergenerational discourses is another manipulation that induces the public's thinking of performing gayness regarding the subjective manifestation of informants. These gender stratification and gendered ideology usher in a new sex category in which homosexual people consistently encounter the social stereotype through their daily interactions in a myriad of contexts and circumstances.

Apart from societal problems of this gender system which can manifest regional construction, gay people have encountered several cumbersome circumstances in the arena of 'local' interactions (henceforth "confrontational interactions") through various settings which this facet will be underlined by this research from individual lived experiences of Thai gay people. Regarding the personal experience of the researcher, the confrontational interactions of this gender system have been embedded through several arenas whether in educational settings, household realm, organization, or daily conversation in accordance with the heteronormative norms. Apparently, the confrontational interactions could be implied as doing gender which transforms to be a cumbersome circumstance occasionally that Thai gay people necessitate encountering day by day in matters of workplace relationships, kinship, friendship, etc. Doing gender through heteronormativity constructs the distinctions not only between heterosexual people themselves but also between heterosexual people and homosexual people. Hence, these confrontational interactions manipulate

Thai gay people into being queasy, a proper praxis to react cannot be applied by them somehow. This inherent experience echoes me to do this research so as to echo Thai gays' lives regarding gendered expectations and stereotypes as well as the retaliation regarding their practices after their confrontational interactions of doing gender.

Applying doing gender and the gender structure as a lens to this study could proffer a glimpse of the elucidation into how Thai gay people negotiate current social values and normative ideologies in the society. Homonegativity in Thai society is gradually transfiguring to be less salient than in the past, since the country embarked on a national law in 2015 to omit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation (Manalastas et al., 2017) until the recent looming normative ideology of sexual diversities' embrace in Thai society. In accordance with these empirical instances, both concepts are adopted to appraise whether the heteronormative norms are still obvious in Thai society which lead to the enforcement of conforming to gendered expectations and stereotypes toward Thai gays or not, and whether the society generally embraces homosexuality as it claimed.

In Thailand, scholarly research regarding doing gender is scant along with the insignificance of male-bodied gay literature in Thailand, while some available scholarly researches relating doing gender only underline the feminist facet or transgender facet, for instance, the reconfiguration of the intersection of relations of gender and age within the domestic sphere (Huijsmans, 2013), identities of transgender sex workers (Ocha, 2012), or gender relations and subordination of women in workplaces' documents (Kuasirikun, 2011). Hence, this research was conducted to fill that research gap while applying doing gender and gender structure framework of Risman (2004, p. 437) as an analytical manifestation. Subsequently, this research's objectives are considerably on 1) To illustrate the 'local' interactions of doing gender of Thai gay people through their confrontational interactions in the heteronormative norms, and 2) To manifest Thai gay people's praxis so as to respond to gendered expectations and stereotypes. In order to achieve those aims, this research is attempting to scrutinize 1) What is gendered

expectations and stereotypes that Thai gay people confront through their confrontational interactions? and 2) How do they respond to these gendered expectations and stereotypes?

Literature Review

To achieve the research objectives, this research was conducted by delineating the concept of doing gender as a primary framework while further scrutinizing the gender structure framework to comprehend the research objectives; consequently, relevant concepts were illustrated as follows

1. The Discussion of Terminologies in the Gender Studies and the Ambivalence of Sexual Diversities in Thai Society

Prior to the discussion regarding doing gender, common terminologies of gender studies need to be given a glimpse so as to comprehend an overview of the distinction of each terminology. This points out a relationship between biological and cultural processes that is sophisticated and reflexive as Acker (1992, p. 565) addressed “Sex was nature and gender was nurture.”. Biologically, there is only two biological sex in the heteronormative norms, male and female. This leads to the socialization of sex roles which are situated identities rather than master identities. This practice manipulates people to perform gendered-appropriate behaviors according to their biological sex; hence, it forms masculinity and femininity to be a gendered model for all individuals (Risman & Davis, 2013). It comes down to another terminology, sex categorization. Sex category is used as a proxy for sex but depends upon performing gender appropriately to be accepted as claimed. The sex category is determined by ‘required identificatory displays’ (West & Zimmerman, 1987 as cited in Risman & Davis, 2013).

West and Zimmerman (1987) illustrated gender as an emergent feature of social situations which is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doing of some sort as they claimed that gender is formed through interaction. Daily interactions and activities reproduce gender role as a display that relegates it to the periphery interaction. Therefore, gender display is the means to provide expressions that are perfunctory and conventionalized acts.

This depiction is more interactional portrayals of what we would like to convey rather than “essential sexual natures” of our conventionalized gestures (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Moreover, the heterosexual assumptions underlying the gender roles concept by focusing on roles and identities, normative models were created that were much too restrictive to accommodate the diversity of individual experiences (Acker, 1992). Therefore, what we are doing and our consecutive activities that are embedded in everyday interaction are doing gender.

Turning to the ambiguity of the spectrum of sexual diversities in Thai society, a homosexual community of a male body and used to be a male body comprises a bunch of people who identify themselves in different ways: ladyboy (Tud), transgender (Katoey), and gay. In regard to the personal observation of Thai contemporary narratives, the ambiguity of differences in identities is so obvious among both heterosexual people and homosexual people themselves. Nonetheless, the public has universally identified gay as a person who has a sexual desire for a male body regardless of gender identity. Therefore, to clarify the ambivalence of the definition of gay in Thailand, this study applies a definition of a male body who desires a romantic relationship with a male body so as to define a gay individual in general. Nonetheless, it necessitates being noted that although all informants are categorized as the previous definition, some of them still have vaguely seen and identified themselves as *Tud* or *Katoey* occasionally in accordance with the aforementioned ambivalence of sexual diversities in Thai society.

2. Concept of Doing Gender

“Gender is embedded in the individual, interactional, institutional dimensions of our society” (Risman, 2004, p. 429), therefore, “Doing gender is unavoidable” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 145). Risman and Davis (2013) concluded doing gender as a creation of gender by the activity of the individual. Likewise, West and Zimmerman (1987) defined doing gender as creating differences between women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological. Thus, doing gender means a practice of creating gender regardless of biological sex.

Figure 1. Dimensions of gender structure, by illustrative social processes.

	<i>Dimensions of the Gender Structure</i>		
	<i>Individual Level</i>	<i>Interactional Cultural Expectations</i>	<i>Institutional Domain</i>
<i>Social Processes^a</i>	Socialization Internalization Identity work Construction of selves	Status expectations Cognitive bias Othering Trading power for patronage Altercasting	Organizational practices Legal regulations Distribution of resources Ideology

a. These are examples of social processes that may help explain the gender structure on each dimension. They are meant to be illustrative and not a complete list of all possible social processes or causal mechanisms.

Source: Risman, 2004, p. 437

The allocation of power and resources as the social consequences of sex category is not only in the domestic, economic, and political spheres but also in the expanded arena of interpersonal relations (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The institutional domain surrounding individuals is a generator creating cultural expectations and discourses for the holistic society. The cultural expectation is adhered to our sex category as well; thus, it leads to gender inequality which is reproduced through daily confrontational interaction (Risman, 2004). Nevertheless, to claim a sex category so as to be accepted socially regarding social norms, people necessitate to do gender owing to interactional cultural expectations. Doing gender entails a tangle of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical practices that frame certain interests as manifestations of masculine and feminine “natures”. In doing so, it is not always to live up to normative conceptions of masculinity or femininity, but rather to engage in behaviors at the risk of gender assessment (West & Zimmerman, 1987). In addition, doing gender could be implied as social processes since confrontational interaction forms the status expectation that every human being encounters frequently in every moment of life. This status expectation is one of the engines that reproduce inequality.

This expectation also creates a cognitive bias which visualizes the reproduction of gender inequality in everyday life (Risman & Davis, 2013); hence, individuals need to deal with a sense of self from daily doing gender under the realm of individual level. This facet was applied to this research so as to comprehensively understand the status expectation of Thai gay people's lives through their confrontational interactions (see Figure 1). The research primarily scopes the focal analysis at only the individual level and the interactional cultural expectations, while a brief discussion of pop culture and intergenerational discourses will be scrutinized as the institutional domain based on the informants' perceptions. This brief discussion gives a facile demonstration of the gendered ideology of gayness in Thai society to some extent.

Generally, doing gender of heterosexual people can be concluded that men and women all do gender, but do so drastically different across time, space, ethnicity, and social institution. Distinct settings become a place so-called 'gender factories'; whether household, organization, school (Risman & Davis, 2013), sport center (Musto, 2014) and so on can be gender factories as such. Furthermore, a myriad of scholars illustrate doing gender in homosexual people's interactions as well. Likewise, Schilt and Westbrook (2009) demonstrated doing gender in transgender people in the working realm. Doing gender is emphasized to illustrate social interaction in either a non-sexualized context or a sexualized context. When homosexual people are not a potential sexual partner in a sexualized interaction, biological credentials are not essential to claim membership in a gender category. Besides, cisgender men do gender in order to claim their masculinity by opting for violence toward homosexual people while cisgender women do not. In their other work according to determining gender to comprehend gender-integrated spaces, they portrayed that people categorized homosexual people vis-a-vis identity-based criteria rather than biology-based criteria as such (Westbrook & Schilt, 2013).

In addition, McKee (2017) depicted gay men and fatherhood in the household. Gay men fathers do gender so as to construct their own parental identities regardless of heteronormative norms. They form their identities for raising children

regardless of mom things or dad things as both parents do things that could be seen either mothering and fathering simultaneously; thus, doing gender at home is portrayed their perspectives that challenging heteronormativity of a nuclear family in which mother and father have their own specific role at home. Correspondingly, Bergstrom-Lynch (2020) illustrated the LGBT parenting praxis to raise children. Both parents and children are practicing at home with non-binary practices; thus, these home interactions portray challenges in accordance with stereotypical gender norms. Nevertheless, they still reinforce their children's behaviors in heteronormative norms while embracing their varied gender expressions as well.

According to the extant literature above, doing gender is embedded in all arenas regarding sex category. People necessitate to do gender in matters of socio-cultural expectation, and social acceptance. Nonetheless, this praxis consecutively reproduces gender inequality as well as gender stratification which stigmatizes some specific groups in the society. This concept is an analytical lens to investigate contemporary sociological research since it repeatably happens in our routines with unawareness.

Methodology

Regarding the research questions and objectives, the research emphasizes two dimensions of doing gender: the confrontational interactions in daily life as well as the retaliation of gay people in Thailand. A qualitative study is the most appropriate approach to scrutinize these facets as most gender scholars also utilize this approach for their scholarly works. A semi-structured interview was applied in this research as an approach for data collection, interview questions of this approach are to inquiry specific questions in a specific sequence (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). The interviews adopted this approach to portraying an interaction or dialogue between the researcher and interviewees with the purpose of asking questions in an open and non-judgmental manner (Phillips & Johns, 2012) which may echo the informants' experiences, knowledge, perspective, and meaning and definitions of circumstances (Punch, 1998).

In order to gain an insightful perspective while still convenient for the researcher, the research's site selection and sampling were initiated with accessible sites (convenience sampling) by opting for informants who are gay in Thailand (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). The interrelationships between the researcher and prospective informants are fundamentally concerned for recruiting interviewees. They were contacted privately since the researcher has had strong ties with them for years, that most of them are dwelling in Chonburi Province similar to the researcher; hence, this group was chosen so as to assure the trustworthiness of this research. Informants could feel more comfortable sharing their lived experiences and contributing to the research. Pseudonyms were used in this research to ensure participants' anonymity since it needs to be noted that owing to the sense of homonegativity in Thailand is still strong to some extent; thus, this study adopted pseudonyms to protect the rights of interviewees. Besides, Google Meet was utilized for collecting data remotely despite the challenge of border control during the COVID-19 pandemic which all interviews were conducted in November 2021, while the duration of research was from September 2021 to January 2022. The interviews were conducted in Thai, lasting from 14 to 30 minutes, averaging just over 20 minutes. The interview guideline was conveyed to all informants prior to the interviews, different themes that they were asked are as follows: their daily life as a gay, their encountering difficulties of being gay, how do they be expected or stereotyped by their acquaintances, and how do they react to those difficulties, expectations, and stereotypes respectively. After the data collection, the interviews were transcribed and translated into English later for coding and analyzing. Then, the data was coded systematically by pulling together themes and by identifying patterns (Punch, 1998).

Generally, the informants reside in Chonburi Province while only some dwell in other provinces, their average age is 24.3 years old (N=13). The informants all express their gender identity as gay to their families, acquaintances, and friends which meets the definition as the researcher elaborated somewhere in the literature. Localities, occupations, and educational backgrounds of each informant were predicted as one of main factors which lead to do gender

differently; on the contrary, during the interviews, the informants did not indicate that their distinct backgrounds lead to routinely do gender as anticipated. Rather, they do gender so as to conform to the interactional cultural expectations regardless of the aforementioned factors. A brief demographic of informants will be provided below; therefore, readers can acknowledge their backgrounds. (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic of the informants

Name	Age	Domicile	Occupation	Educational Background
G1	26	Bangkok	Office worker	Bachelor's degree
G2	18	Chonburi	Student	Bachelor's degree
G3	22	Chonburi	Office worker	Bachelor's degree
G4	23	Chonburi	Online marketer	Bachelor's degree
G5	23	Chonburi	Self-employed	Bachelor's degree
G6	23	Chonburi	Makeup artist	Bachelor's degree
G7	24	Chonburi	Student	Bachelor's degree
G8	26	Chonburi	Office worker	Bachelor's degree
G9	31	Chonburi	Sales consultant	Bachelor's degree
G10	25	Khon Kaen	Unemployed	Bachelor's degree
G11	19	Nakhon Ratchasima	Student	Bachelor's degree
G12	24	Nakhon Ratchasima	Administrative officer	Bachelor's degree
G13	32	Surat Thani	Unemployed	Bachelor's degree

Source: Author's elaboration

Doing Gender in Thai Gay People's Daily Confrontational Interactions

Thai gays encounter doing gender due to several reasons, most informants subjectively give a facile understanding of the gendered ideology in terms of gayness in Thai society. They portrayed that pop culture and intergenerational discourses are the gendered ideology which manipulate and induce the public's perception regarding gendered expectations and stereotypes of gayness. Nevertheless, the institutional domain of the gender structure does not only limit to these two facets but also can be further elaborated on other aspects, especially the legal regulations. In accordance with most informants' understanding, the primary factor that shapes this practice is pop culture in Thailand. Pop culture in Thailand encompasses several mediators whether boy love series, Facebook groups for gay people, TV drama, pop music, etc. In Thai society, the most apparent instance of gendered stereotypes of gayness in pop culture is the capable and flamboyant portrayal of a gay volleyball player in the movie, namely 'The Iron Ladies'. The movie depicts gendered expectations and stereotypes of gay, and ladyboy (Tud) to some extent, in Thai society. These rendered gendered expectations and stereotypes have embedded in the public's perceptions throughout the time regarding most informants' illustrations since they are expected to perform accordingly, this is the interwoven relationship between pop culture and doing gender either in the movie or real situations. These components have constructed the discourse regarding gendered expectations and stereotypes for gay people in Thailand.

Owing to the fact that pop culture has an implication toward people in society, it is a potentially rich and powerful instrument to manipulate people for a distinctive purpose (Duff, 2002). Once individuals consume these contents, they are induced by gendered stereotypes of gayness portrayed in the media. Pop culture related to homosexuality in Thailand is extremely rich which has an influence not only across the nation but also in other countries; for instance, almost 19 million users access to boys' love dramas via the streaming platform, LINE TV, in 2020 (Suepaisal, 2020), the Chinese people is one among the biggest consumer of homosexual contents from Thailand (ibusiness, 2020), etc. Recently,

the Thai entertainment industry has produced numerous contents related to homosexuality in a positive way so as to broadcast domestically as well as to export internationally in East and Southeast Asian countries. This burgeoning socio-cultural trend leads to gendered expectations and stereotypes which effectively othering Thai gay people as subordinate, creating devalued statuses and expectations for them (Schwalbe et al., 2000), failure to adhere to these gendered expectations and stereotypes could lead to socio-cultural exclusion as G12 noted:

...We are different due to social stereotypes which affected and manipulated gays to conform to it...Especially, if there has a boom of pop culture on online platforms, people will expect us to practice accordingly, for example, if gay people on Facebook are favor in any specific word, all people will expect us to use that word as such.

(G12, interview, 11 November 2021)

Besides, intergenerational discourses also play a crucial role in forging gendered expectations and stereotypes which were reproduced by intergenerational discourses, it then shaped the intergenerational assumption of heteronormativity that all gay people in the society necessitate conforming. This conventionalized portrayal was formed via various aspects in Thai society: religious beliefs, school textbooks, media, etc. These factors are the mightiest one that constructs gendered expectations and stereotypes in Thai society regarding the informants' experiences. These confrontational interactions occurred through a myriad of settings: market, school, workplace, daily conversation, etc. in accordance with the informants' experiences regardless of age, domicile, occupation, and educational background. These embedded interactions in their daily routines intensely construct doing gender which generates a gendered boundary between homosexuality and heterosexuality becoming conspicuous, all details will be illustrated as follow.

1. Sociability and Characteristics

Inasmuch as homosexual people do gender with Thai gay people regarding expected and stereotyped sociability and characteristics, this praxis reproduces the discourse and engenders the distinction between homosexuality and heterosexuality. All informants depicted particular sociability and characteristics which they were expected by heterosexual people to conform to these expectations in several facets. Thai gay people were envisaged to be socialized. Extrovert was applied to them as they necessitated to enjoy going out, being hilarious, being self-confident, carousing, and vogueishness. This excessive extrovert of Thai gay people, as heterosexual people depicted, led to an excessive expectation of their practices in several circumstances whether in the classroom that they were expected to be a discussant or a group leader, or in the event of any organizations that they were expected to be an entertainer or a comedian. Furthermore, a minority of informants outlined the cultural perceptions of their acquaintances toward them as well, which they are both hilarious and absurd simultaneously. Regarding the cultural perceptions, it occasionally guides them to perform their improperly interactional practices with the informants verbally and physically. These confrontational interactions arose the feeling of neglect toward the informants' sentimental notions.

In order to parody the informants' gender in accordance with the notion of hilariously, considerable informants were interacted in their confrontational interactions with disrespectfulness. This has reproduced the alienation of gender difference which conveys the awkward atmosphere as well as environment, this reproduction constructed the sentiment of alienation, estrangement, humiliation, and exclusion as G6 noted:

...When shopkeepers found out that we are gay, their reaction and tone will change. They will interact with us like we are a funny person...This changing tone makes me feel bad, feel like I am strange in that environment.

(G6, interview, 10 November 2021)

The configurations of gendered behavior are another aspect in regard to characteristics that homosexual people constantly depict. Cisgender males visualized Thai gay's practice as feminine and flamboyant gestures whereas cisgender females did not have this kind of perception compared to their male counterparts in accordance with most informants' manifestation, In other words, they did not be stereotyped as feminine gesture by cisgender females as much as cisgender males did. The conventionalized portrayal of gay in Thai pop culture was predominantly reproduced by movies and TV dramas which drastically influence heterosexual people's perspectives. The awkwardness of this stereotyped certain gesture illustrated the endeavor to naturally compromise with the heteronormative notion that there has only two kinds of expressions mundanely, a binary system; thus, as a gay which cannot be categorized in any biological sex, they must sustain their status quo as neutrality which is not too masculine while also not too feminine as G12 addressed:

...Cisgender males always think that gay is always so feminine with coquettish gesture...Our gender is a point between male and female that we need to well-balance our masculinity and femininity in our bodies.

(G12, interview, 11 November 2021)

Apart from the assumption of certain gesture, beauty standard is also another expectation that placed on Thai gay people since a few informants manifest the gendered expectation to be perfectly good-looking. This confrontational interaction also demonstrated disrespectful praxis toward Thai gay people if they could not surpass the public's cultural perception as G4 noted.

...I heard a lot like 'as the ³rd sex person, why do you let yourself to be so plump?' or 'Being gay but also so fat, it must be disgraceful.' I feel like even you are normal sex and your body is not that good, I did not use to blame your body. But when it becomes my turn, is it because I am gay, so I could be looked down on?

(G4, interview, 17 November 2021)

2. Distinctive Activities and Aptitudes

Gendered expectations and stereotypes in accordance with sports and activities were applied to Thai gay people as well since they were expected to do only some certain activities as well as to have particular aptitudes regarding their gender: volleyball, dancing, singing, makeup, and favoring of a beauty pageant. Actions are often designated with an eye to their accountability, which is how they might look and how they might be characterized. This process of rendering something accountable is interactional in character, virtually any activity can be appraised as to its gender nature (Heritage, 1984, p. 179 as cited in West & Zimmerman, 1987). Some heterosexual people, and even some homosexual people themselves, conjectured that these activities belong to homosexual people; then, they were expected to perform these practices better than another gender in the society as G3 and G7 noted:

...When we finished playing volleyball and went back home. I heard an aunty in the market shouting at my friend that 'These people (gay) always play this kind of sport (volleyball).'

(G3, interview, 14 November 2021)

...Back when I was in high school during a sports day, people expected that I should play volleyball very well and win the match. But in the end, I lost. Then, cisgender male classmates came to ask me 'why you lost?' and 'why you are so noob?'

(G7, interview, 15 November 2021)

The sentimental notion of disappointment, impairment, and depression was expressed by a few informants as a consequence of failure to magnificently perform according to their gendered expectations and stereotypes. Occasionally, these gendered expectations and stereotypes were driven by the gay community themselves since some of them already conformed to the heteronormative norms and conjectured other gays in their own communities to do likewise. In other words, embedded gendered expectations and stereotypes in the society constructed the sense of endeavor to surpass the bar of gender norms toward gay people in Thailand as G3 and G4 noted:

...I was born and try to dance and sing. But to be honest, I am not good at singing and dancing...Sometimes, I feel disappointed in myself that I cannot dance or sing like the others...At least, I think I should do some things as people expected.

(G3, interview, 14 November 2021)

...There are some gay friends that are a big fan of a beauty pageant which I am not a big fan of this topic. So, I got questions like 'Being gay, why do not you watch a beauty pageant? So, you must not be a gay.'...I feel like, on several topics in our lives, we do not have the same interest...Why do they expect me to do likewise?

(G4, interview, 17 November 2021)

These normalized gender roles were formed so as to differentiate homosexual people from heterosexual people by categorizing activities regarding distinctive gender; this differentiation is neither natural, essential, nor even biological but rather cultural perceptions of heterosexual people in the society. Simultaneously, gay communities themselves also utilized these normalized gender roles, these gendered expectations and stereotypes, as a material culture in order to identify the others' gayness as well as to claim their solidarity as G9 addressed:

...For those who are expecting me to play volleyball are my seniors in school, transgender and gay, they want me to play so we can be in the same group, have good teamwork, have good communication.

(G9, interview, 17 November 2021)

3. Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation as a key part of a person's identity is a fundamental human trait rather than a choice as heterosexual people constantly imply. According to this heteronormative insight, heterosexual people assume that Thai gay people choose their gender which is preferable. This inexact notion has led to the reproduction of discourses, expectations, and stereotypes about Thai gay people so far. All informants insisted on the importance of this facet as they were consecutively interacted verbally through a myriad of stigmatized terminologies, for instance, gold digger, yellow digger, septic tank bomber, yellow sky, pumpkin, compressing of black bean, etc. These terminologies are all related to gay's sexual orientation, anal sex, since they are referring to the conventionalized portrayal that having anal sex will unquestionably deliver excrement. Consequently, these terminologies' cultural connotation is negative as its resonance is the impairment of sexual orientation of gay as G13 expressed:

...People talk to me like deliver gold (excrement) or yellow sky. These are phrases which they imagine that our sex activities must deliver gold...This is not true because before having sex, we always clean up ourselves to protect against this kind of accident.

(G13, interview, 5 November 2021)

Generally, these gendered expectations and stereotypes of sexual orientation arise in educational settings since most of the counterparts that the informants have interacted with are not well-educated students in accordance

with gender issues and gender fluidity. Therefore, a sense of insecurity and impairment were formed as a few informants expressed their feeling which they felt being harassed when they had the confrontational interactions with their counterparts as G6 and G10 expressed:

...Generally, I face these words when I was young like in high school. Because the society at the time did not accept gays...Besides physical violence, they used these words to make us feel bad at the time, for example; fuck poo; stick poo; do not stand in front of them, you will be fucked.

(G6, interview, 10 November 2021)

...Sometimes, when I sit with cisgender male friends, I will face the situation that they are teasing me by talking with other guys that 'Why do not you like G10? He wants you, are you not interested?' I feel sometimes, it is harassing me...Sometimes, these friends think that they can harass me whatever they want by hugging me, teasing me that some man like me, or even referring me for making fun that I am craving for every man.

(G10, interview, 17 November 2021)

In highlighting these several social interactions, Thai gay people's sexual orientation and private bodies matter little, since their appearance is taken to be proof of their biological sex (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). Gays who assume a position as a top cannot practice feminine as they were expected to behave masculine, while gays who assume a position as a bottom were also done vice versa. Furthermore, identifying gay people as masculine or feminine by calling them father or mother is another dimension that delineates how heterosexual people construct homosexuality's identity by using a binary system. This binary

portrayal indicates the interwoven depiction between gayness and femininity, in other words, between gay and transgender. This inevitably influences the identity construction of individuals: gay people cannot form their gender identity as the cultural perception of heteronormativity does not welcome the gender-fluid under homosexuality. This contradiction leads to the endeavor to form, sustain, and portray the gender identity of gayness which is a midpoint between masculinity and femininity as G3 and G12 addressed:

...Some people like my juniors in school call me mom. I think that I want to be neither mom nor dad. I do not want them to call me as such. I do not feel resentful but there has a question that why they call me a mom...I am gay. I want everyone to know that I am gay. I want to be neither transgender nor woman.

(G3, interview, 14 November 2021)

...I got many questions like why do you perform so feminine although you are a top? or why do not you perform more masculinely? Somehow, my sexual orientation is not fixed to my physical body, it is rather an individual mentality.

(G12, interview, 11 November 2021)

The aforementioned descriptions regarding gendered expectations and stereotypes of sexual orientation are a cognitive bias applied toward Thai gay people. These confrontational interactions have commonly happened since all informants illustrated their experiences. The reproduction of cognitive bias toward Thai gay people is an evident engine to re-create gender inequality, which their sexual orientation is disdained, since it is one of the casual mechanisms that demonstrate the reproduction of gender inequality in everyday life (Risman, 2004).

The Retaliation of Confrontational Interactions of Doing Gender of Thai Gay People

In many social interactions, Thai gay people respond the confrontational interactions with their counterparts through different reactions. This part contributes to illustrating how they respond, retaliate, and interact with the mechanisms which maintain the heteronormative gender system visible. These responses were applied according to how close their intimate relationships are between the informants and their counterparts, which can be demonstrated as follow.

1. Negligence

Intimacy was concerned as a priority rationale when the informants responded to the confrontational interactions as most informants stressed companion relationships which could be broken if they reacted aggressively or improperly. The tease of their counterparts was recognized as a hilarious praxis by the informants which did not intend to stereotype their gender. Subsequently, negligence was opted to cope with this praxis, albeit a feeling of queasy. Nonetheless, it cannot be implied that their negligence is the acceptance of gendered expectations and stereotypes: it rather depicts the informants' notion that contentious reaction could negatively affect their companion relations as well as bring up a side issue to complicate the matter. On the other hand, it cannot deny that negligence also strengthens a gendered boundary simultaneously. In other words, a cultural meaning of negligence is the process of boundary maintenance (Schwalbe et al., 2000), the practice to maintain social relations between dominant and subordinated groups and the social status between the informants and their counterparts, of gay people in Thailand which maintains the presence of gendered expectations and stereotypes as G4 and G13 noted:

...If they are my close friends, I try to explain that I am serious in a relationship not craving for men...Finally, I reluctantly played (volleyball) when they (friends) encouraged me to do likewise... Sometimes, I conform to social expectations even I am not satisfied.

(G4, interview, 17 November 2021)

...If they are my acquaintances, I will be like 'It is fine, these friends just joking.' ...Because I know their behaviors how they are very well. I rather care about their feelings because they also know how I truly am.

(G13, interview, 5 November 2021)

An informant addressed negligence as a means to contain the sentimental notion of estrangement and exclusion, not only for themselves but also for their accompanies. This implication indicates the attentiveness of Thai gay people as they did not concern only with their sentimental notions but also with accompanied acquaintances. This is an approach for the protection of discontent of doing gender as well as the emotion management as G6 noted:

...If I walk with my mom, I will choose not to respond, and turn my head away. I believe that most people will do likewise if they accompany their parents...As I said, if I am done like this, I will feel excluded and strange. I do not want my mom to feel like I am strange, so I decide to walk away instead of responding to them.

(G6, interview, 10 November 2021)

Furthermore, it is crucial that Thai gay people necessitate conforming to these gendered expectations and stereotypes; otherwise, social exclusion could be applied. Nonetheless, some gay people determine to attend a homosexual community in order to create socio-cultural acceptance within homosexuality which could be easier rather than within heterosexuality. Paradoxically, some informants still portray the heteronormativity in a gay community which they necessitate to comply with, otherwise, even gay communities could not socio-culturally accept them. These gendered expectations and stereotypes are embodied in either a heterosexual community or a homosexual community: this constructs the sense toward homosexual people that these gendered expectations and

stereotypes are the norms which they need to conform to even in their own spaces. In other words, this praxis can be implied as a subordinated adaptation which helps to scrutinize Thai gay's strategy to adapt to the gender structure (Risman, 2004) as G12 quoted:

...In the first stage when we come out as gay, we may feel alienated because Thai society did not accept us in the reality. If we could find a group that we are similar to, we can feel that this space is a safe zone...If you want to construct your identity, you need to attend the gay community firstly as this space is quite open and accepts each other rather than the heterosexual community. Nonetheless, you also need to conform to the group identity at the same time...If we want to be accepted, we need to be subordinated first.

(G12, interview, 11 November 2021)

2. Contention

While merely a few informants opted for contentious reaction as a means to respond to their confrontational interactions regarding doing gender. In this latter case, the aggressive retaliation or verbal abuse was opted to respond to gendered expectations and stereotypes. This latter was practiced with the one without an intimate relationship with the informants. In other words, intimacy is primarily concerned as a rationale when Thai gay people decided to respond doing gender in their routines. If their interactional counterparts have no intimate relationships, Thai gay people will react to the confrontational interactions aggressively inasmuch as there are no companion relationships to maintain. This could be implied as a struggle to stop doing gender through the confrontational interactions. Nevertheless, the endeavor to rectify the cultural perceptions regarding gayness is absent as the informants did not attempt to demonstrate the correct version of gayness or deconstruct a gendered boundary. Hence,

it could not be assumed that this contentious practice is a means to deconstruct gendered expectations and stereotypes, it is rather a means to avoid doing gender in their daily routines as G1 and G2 addressed:

...Everyone does (gender) whether friends, relatives, or store owners. It depends on who they are, I will whine to them if I do not know them...When I was young, I abused them from head to toe...There was an incident when my senior was abused by a store owner that 'You are a beautiful transgender with beautiful boobs, in my neighborhood, they are all whore.' I then abused that 'Elders should know your place.'

(G1, interview, 25 November 2021)

...I whine to them so rude because I feel like why they keep bothering me. Then, I will leave that scene. But I am not angry, I just whine to portray my feeling that I do not like their practices... I used to be looked down on my sexual orientation by the one that I am not close. I told him that 'If you are cool, then come.' I scolded loudly to make him feel embarrassed. Then, he left me and did not bother me anymore. I think that if this person practices badly with me so why do I need to do well to him.

(G2, interview, 15 November 2021)

Conclusion and Discussion

In order to scrutinize doing gender as social processes under the manifestation of Risman (2004, p. 437) of gender structure framework, this conclusion is dedicated to that purpose. Fully illuminating the confrontational interactions indicates gendered expectations and stereotypes in the context of Thai society in a myriad of circumstances regardless of age, domicile, occupation, and educational background. The construction of gendered expectations and stereotypes arises

through the institutional domain owing to pop culture and intergenerational discourses as the informants depicted. Thai pop culture accelerates gendered expectations and stereotypes under several mediators, while intergenerational discourses influence Thai people's cultural perceptions regarding distinctive genders.

Table 2. Doing Gender toward Gay People in Thailand under the Gender Structure Framework.

Dimensions of the Gender Structure			
	Individual Level	Interactional Cultural	Institutional
		Expectations	Domain
Social Processes	The Formation of Sentimental Notion	Sociability and Characteristics	Pop Culture
	The Retaliation of Confrontational Interactions	Distinctive Activities and Aptitudes	Intergenerational Discourses
		Sexual Orientation	

Source: Author's elaboration

Embodied gendered expectations and stereotypes are placed upon Thai gay people to accomplish a perfect version of being gay. Institutionalized frameworks whether certain sociability and characteristics, distinctive activities and aptitudes, and sexual orientation are the expressions of gayness in Thailand. These social standardized occasions provide stages of evocations of the essential homosexual nature (West & Zimmerman, 1987), which Thai gay people necessitate to conform to and perform accordingly so as to portray their gayness in accordance with gendered expectations and stereotypes. These practices are doing gender under the interactional cultural expectations scale which also forms a gendered boundary between homosexuality and heterosexuality, and gender inequality.

The consequence of the aforementioned doing gender leads to social processes at the individual level. It is alienation rather than subordination since doing gender differentiates Thai gay people from heterosexual people. The consequence of doing gender constructs the sentimental notion of whether alienation, depression, humiliation, impairment, and insecurity. Negligence and contention were opted differently in accordance with the intimate relationships between Thai gay people and their counterparts to react doing gender. Apart from how Thai gays are doing gender, Thai society does not embrace homosexuality as it claimed due to a conspicuous gendered boundary between homosexuality and heterosexuality as discussed somewhere in the discussion.

These all facets either the institutional domain, the interactional cultural expectations, or the individual level are social processes that manipulating cultural perceptions toward both heterosexual and homosexual people in regard to gayness as well as constructing gender structure of gay people in Thailand which enforces them to do gender (see Figure 3).

In a comparison with other countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand is still one of the leading countries in embracing homosexuality socially and legally (Manalastas et al., 2017). Gay individuals from the CLMV countries are all confronting the gender structure due to the absence of legal recognition and social support, this leads to the stigmatization of gay men whether in Vietnam (Horton, Rydstrøm, & Tonini, 2015) or Cambodia (Salas & Sorn, 2013), while gay in Myanmar could not even express their gender identity since it is illegal (Salvato, 2022). The Gender Equality Act 2015 in Thailand to eradicate discrimination in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation is another pragmatic proof for the above statement, albeit the absence of legal recognition of homosexuality. Practically, Thai authorities must embark on relevant policies to embrace gender equality not only between cisgender individuals but also homosexuality, for instance, the legalization of same-sex marriage, and the educationalization of sexual diversities in schools. Inasmuch as a homosexual community is marginalized to some extent; hence, the legalization and providing education on homosexuality are the process of demarginalization which can socio-culturally include the LGBTQ+ community.

The jurisdiction and education should be the very first step to embrace this community, then the society will obey with a law and enlighten themselves which could stop doing gender to homosexual people, embrace homosexuality, as well as deconstruct a gendered boundary and inequality.

Theorizing the concept of doing gender and gender structure of Thai gay people manifests the situating gender structure in Thai society and its enforcement of doing gender. Objectively, it offers the elucidation of the process of doing gender toward human spatial relationships in terms of homosexuality: Thai gay people also face social standardized circumstances, as it often does to cisgender females owing to the extant literature. Furthermore, there is much more ground left to be empirically explored in how Thai gays reconcile with doing gender through their confrontational interactions. Inasmuch as the forming sentimental notion toward Thai gay people from doing gender is negative feelings which are leading to mental health, emotion management can be further emphasized on how gay people in Thailand adapt to the gender structure and doing gender as well as how do they handle with these negative feelings which occur due to doing gender. In addition, it could be included future scholarly works on doing gender toward gay people in Thailand within certain settings so as to offer a glimpse of a particular consequence of doing gender in distinct means and realms. These facets should be underscored to comprehensively illustrate Thai gay people's social standardized circumstances.

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