

# Mistakes DidiChuxing made that may fuel crimes against women

by TONGXU CAI

url: <https://alltechasia.com/mistakes-didichuxing-made-may-fuel-crimes-women/>



A recent murder of a 21-year-old stewardess during a carpool leads the ride hailing giant Didi Chuxing to overhaul its services.

Since May 12, Didi temporarily suspended its carpool service, Didi Hitch, after a 21-year-old Li Mingzhu was murdered using the service and later found with more than 20 stab wounds in central Zhengzhou. Two days later, police found a body in a local river belonging to the driver suspected of killing the woman.

On May 16, Didi added safety measures for carpooling, limiting the services to only be available during the daytime. Hitch will also hide both the drivers' and passengers' personal data and profile pictures. In addition, not only will facial recognition be compulsory to verify the drivers' identity, but also a potential video recording feature might be introduced.

Most importantly, personalized tags and ratings features will be axed. Previously, Hitch let drivers and passengers rate each others' profile pictures and tag images with labels such as "beauties", "college girl", "not dressing much", "low self-defense." There have

been repeated posts from female passengers, including minors, reporting harassment from drivers, to whom the passenger ratings are exclusively shared.

When Didi launched its carpool service for the first time in 2015, there were reviews comparing Didi Hitch with China's largest dating app Momo, musing that Didi's consumption scenario combined with its social demand is the next trendy O2O business model.

For instance, on a past Chinese valentine's day Qixi Festival, Didi published posters with slogans, saying "Let's date: how carpool should be played", "Be yours sooner or later", etc. On all these posters, drivers were all portrayed as men, since this is the only way to encourage part-time drivers to accept hitch requests that are less rewarding money-wise.

In the above slogans Didi misplaced its position in the carpool service as a platform enabling drivers to interact with female passengers. Hence, what truly got Didi into trouble is that by including users in an enclosed consumption scenario, it acts like an accomplice to these crimes against female passengers.

On the other hand, there are also some controversial measures in this overhaul, specifically the non-optional recording is being deemed debatable.

According to Didi's statement, not only will a video recording potentially be installed during rides but also these recordings could be in the pipeline too. Though the company insists the encrypted data will be stored only on its servers and will be deleted after 72 hours, this approach fuels a privacy concern, which is already being widely discussed given that both the state and enterprise are massively integrating big-data technology. Thus, is Didi violating privacy in order to protect privacy? By overly catering to consumers with flamboyant functions, does shared economy realize or substantially protect user interests?

After all, this case poses a real challenge for Didi, who has already been facing competition from Meituan Dianping, which recently entered the ride-sharing market and acquired bike-sharing startup Mobike in April. While being occupied with its ambitious overseas expansion, how could Didi maintain its trust with its already-existent 450 million users?

(Top photo from unsplash.com)

Jul 01, 2017 01:28 PM

## Hunger for Homegrown Content Helps Chinese Reality TV Shows Edge Past Foreign Rivals

By Cai Tongxu



A screenshot of the first episode of the second season of "Stand By Me," with an advertisement for Vitasoy appearing in the bottom-right corner. At the time of the screenshot, the episode had been viewed 120 million times.

Would a Victoria's Secret supermodel take good care of your pet while you're away from home for a few days? This is the tough question being tackled in "Stand by Me," China's hottest online variety show that has attracted hundreds of millions of yuan in investment.

After years of being accused of ripping off foreign television hits, Chinese variety show producers have started scripting their own templates to feed the hunger for homegrown content.

"Chinese variety shows are now shifting from making copycat shows or purchasing foreign templates to creating original content," said Cao Zhigao, chief operating officer of Star China Media. "Now the time and conditions are right for locally made variety shows to make their mark."

Dwindling viewership for foreign adaptations and favorable policies supporting domestic production houses are fueling this trend. Investors have also turned variety shows into their new battleground after China's cinema box office sales flatlined in 2016 amid stiff competition from online video-streaming sites.

But attempts by advertisers to control the storyline and celebrities who demand a lion's share of the production budget threaten to snub out this creative spark.

The variety genre that includes reality TV shows, quizzes, debates and celebrity gossip has exploded on small screens across the country over the past decade. There were just such 10 shows in 2005, but the number jumped to more than 250 last year, according to Chinese media outlet Film and TV Observer. After the government allowed state-backed satellite TV channels to outsource production to private studios at the turn of

the century, Chinese producers have tried to replicate the success of international franchises such as "The Voice" and "Running Man" at home.

"Within five years (starting in 2005), Chinese buyers had purchased nearly all the super variety models from Europe, U.S., Japan, South Korea and some other countries," said Cao. His company helped kick start this global shopping spree with the acquisition of the successful singing show, "The Voice," that had franchises in more than 60 countries.



Judges Liu Huan, Na Ying, Jay Chou and Eason Chen appear at a press conference on June 6 for the second season of "Sing! China" in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

But locally produced versions of Western and Korean franchises that combine the exotic with the familiarity of local aesthetics started losing their sheen starting in 2015. "Running Man," a popular South Korean show that asks celebrities to solve puzzles as they progress along an obstacle course, saw its viewer ratings drop by 40% from 2014 to 2016. That was according to ratings on Douban, a website similar to Rotten Tomatoes that relies on user reviews to rank films, books and TV shows. Viewer ratings for "Sing! China," a knock-off of "The Voice of China" series, slid from 4.4 in 2015 to 2.8 in 2016.

The fall of "Sing! China," produced by Cao, rattled advertisers and investors for another reason. Cao and his crew had broken ranks with the foreign brand owner of "The Voice" series after **a protracted legal battle** amid sky-rocketing franchising fees. The original "The Voice of China" series, produced in collaboration of Dutch company Talpa Global, had attracted more than 120 million TV viewers in China, while another 400 million streamed it online. But the spectacular crash of the copycat show after the Chinese producers went solo exposed the risks of trying to adapt Western models and pushed many investors to look for a winning formula closer to home. This was when they noticed a handful of long-established Chinese variety shows such as "Day Day Up," which promotes traditional Chinese art and handcrafting, and "Happy Camp" that had managed to sustain high viewer ratings for nearly a decade.

What started off as a quite trickle, quickly gathered momentum, pushing domestically produced shows into the limelight.

"Day Day Up" received 1 billion yuan (\$147.52 million) in sponsorship from Kans, a Shanghai skincare brand, in October 2016. Advertisers also started pouring money into less-well known program that portrayed values cherished by Chinese viewers. For example, "The Greatest Love," a reality show about filial piety, got 400 million yuan in investment last year.



Victoria's Secrets model He Sui appears in an episode of the reality television show "Running Man" in April 2016.

This wave of interest also spawned hits that delve deeper into Chinese culture, such as "The Chinese Poetry Conference." The 10-episode series made **stars of poetry lovers** who were well-versed in ancient Chinese classics and attracted nearly 1.2 billion views despite the absence of any celebrities.

Meanwhile, a government rule in mid-2016 that stopped satellite TV stations from broadcasting more than one foreign-format show each year has cleared the airwaves for local creations.

### **Advertising 'sugar daddies'**

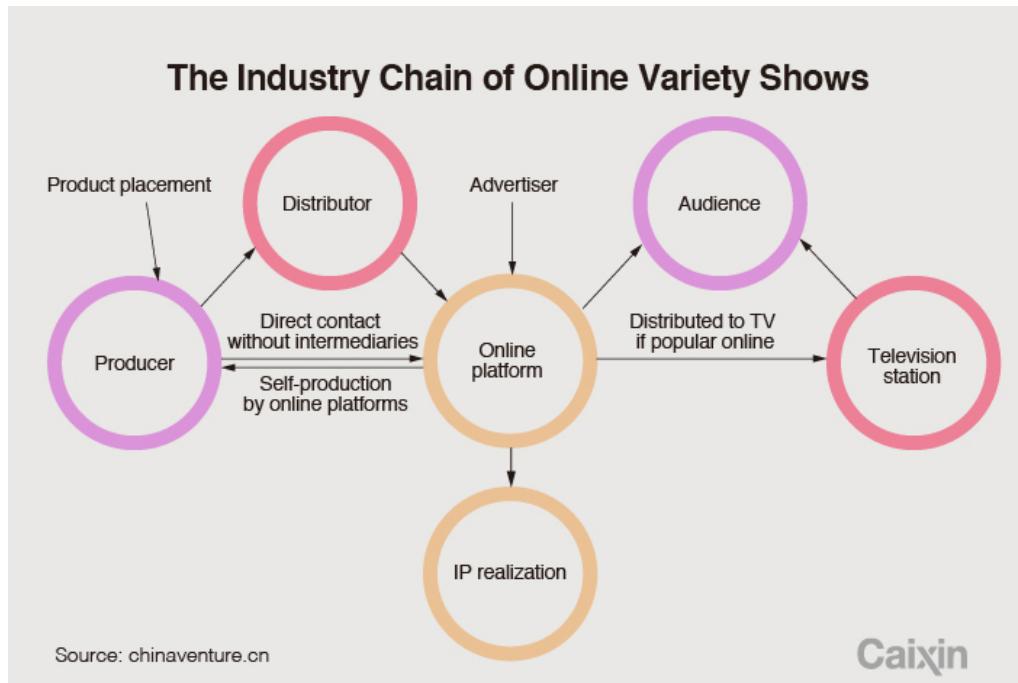
When Zhu Hukuai, the producer of "Stand by Me," was looking for the next big idea for a variety show, he didn't start by brainstorming with a group of script writers. Instead, his team did a market survey to see how Chinese consumers liked to spend money. After scanning through several sectors including fashion and cosmetics, they zeroed in on the country's pet industry.

Pet ownership in China was growing at a whopping 20% each year, with the rise of young households with dual incomes, but no children, the team found. And they were ready to splurge money on dog spas that offered a 480 yuan mud bath for their terriers.

The production team went to the drawing board and designed a variety show that not just entertains, but also helps loosen the purse strings of pet owners. The show focuses on how celebrities care for pets left under their charge. Many of the animals had their own pet castles, branded clothes and accessories. Although the show has only been aired for two weeks, it has already fueled a wave of demand. Local pet owners were asking Chinese students or homemakers in the U.S. to buy dog leashes or Simpsons T-shirts for their little wards and courier them to China on online shopping forums.

"Data from first two episodes of "Stand by Me" told us that about 70% of the viewers were female young adults," said Zhu, CEO of Xinchi Media.

Other Chinese producers were also scripting shows to create hype about an industry or a sponsor's brands. This included the recent runaway hit focused on China's emerging home-deco market. And advertisers, weary of 30-second commercials or subtle product placements, were lapping up the idea.



"Stand by Me" has inked advertising deals with Myfoodie, a pet food company, and Vitasoy, which makes soy milk and green tea beverages. And during the first 10 minutes of the first episode of "Stand by Me," beverages from Vitasoy appear 25 times.

Variety shows have also spawned successful mobile games and clothing brands. For example, when Chinese heartthrob Zheng Kai accidentally passed gas while on the set of "Running Man" in 2014, it became a trending topic on social media. Within a week, the star launched his own clothing line and used a mushroom cloud as its brand to make fun of himself. The clothes, specially the jeans, sold like hot cakes.

The pet show, "Stand By Me," has devoted a sizable chunk of the program showing celebrities walking 10,000 steps each day with their pets wearing Vitasoy's pedometer.

### Suffocated producers

In addition to pressure from advertisers to integrate their brands into the story, producers were also crushed by celebrities who demand a lion's share of the production budget.

Zhu says 60% of the production cost for "Stand by Me" went to the celebrity pet keepers that included Victoria's Secret super model He Sui.

"We were able to cut back on the celebrity paychecks after switching from a satellite TV show to an online-only show," he said.

But sky-high celebrity pay remains a hotly debated topic on Chinese social media. According to data from [Tencent](#), which has investments in several large video-streaming platforms, rock singer Wang Feng made 12 million yuan for appearing as a judge in one season of "The Voice of China" in 2014.

Producers also have had to step gingerly to avoid topics deemed taboo by authorities such as homosexuality and time travel. Last year, China's media regulator also banned reality television shows from featuring the children of celebrities, spelling the end for one of the country's most popular prime-time programs that showed celebrity dads traveling with their children.

Despite these challenges, Chinese variety show producers say they are continuing to explore new possibilities.

Cao from Star Media says his team is experimenting with introducing virtual reality elements into variety shows that allow viewers to feel like they are on the set, or even augmented reality, similar to what was used in Pokémon games. But he declined to offer details as the projects are still under development.

After years of having their eyeballs abused by copycat shows, Chinese viewers were now yearning for something different, said Zhu. "Only good content is what matters ultimately," he said.

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BUSINESS &amp; TECH

## Is China Poised to Become the Top Dog in Luxury Pet Services?

By Cai Tongxu



A dog gets a trim at the Pet Expo at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Center on March 17, 2016. Photo: IC

(Beijing) — In one of the largest pet cemeteries on the outskirts of Beijing lies a dog's tomb made of white marble — the material used only for ancient royal gravestones. This symbol of love that reminds one of the cool white marble coffin inside the Taj Mahal cost the pet owner more than 30,000 yuan (\$4,440), according to the guard at this graveyard that smelled of cat litter.

The rise in disposable incomes, the number of rich elderly with “empty nests,” and “double income, no kids” households — or DINK families — are fueling pet ownership and the growth of luxury pet services in China.

Once banned as a bourgeois pastime, pets have now become a symbol of financial success and a way to fill an emotional void for some in the country. Consultancy Euromonitor forecast the pet care sector to grow by more than 22% year-on-year to \$2.5 billion by the end of 2017, outpacing growth in the world's biggest market, the United States, which is expected to grow just over 3.7% this year to \$46 billion. According to Euromonitor's forecast, China will become the world's fourth largest pet market in 2021 after the U.S., Brazil and UK.

Pet ownership in the country has more than doubled since the turn of the century and stood at 100 million in 2015, according to Goumin.com, a leading online forum for China's animal lovers.

A survey by the site that year showed that 3 out of 5 pet owners in China had a dog, and only 1 in 5 had a cat. The third-most-popular pet was a turtle.

“Since people have started to view their animals more like children, the demand for training and pampering services has turned rigid and wasn't too price-sensitive,” according to the report.

One in 10 surveyed pet owners spent more than 10,000 yuan per year on pet massages, manicures and imported pet food, while 19% spent 3,000 to 5,000 yuan, the study found. Given that over half the pet owners in the country were between the ages of 25 and 35, and the average annual salary of a white-collar worker in Beijing in that age group was about 120,000 yuan, this shows that some spent over 8% of their salary on their little wards.



A guard cleans a marble tomb at Baifu Pets' Paradise Cemetery in Beijing on July 10. Photo: Cai Tongxu / Caixin

China's pet-rearing habits have certainly passed the stage in which one fed one's Pekingese with some diced chicken liver or corn-flour flatbread. As many families switched to specialized food options, the market for dog food in China is estimated to grow by 182% from 2013 to 2017 to 6.5 billion yuan, according to Euromonitor.

A Shanghai-based manufacturer named Royal Canine was the top dog in the country's pet food industry, closely followed by global brands like Nestle's Purina and U.S. food giant Mars Inc.'s Pedigree.

Small artisan bakeries have also popped up in big cities like Shanghai and Beijing, which offer chicken mousse cakes or mixed-berry cheesecake made with New Zealand yogurt — especially for puppy birthday parties.

Besides the daily meals and occasional treats, pets also required vitamin supplements, calcium tablets, omega-3 and even dentifrice. One pet store in Sanlitun, a busy shopping hub in downtown Beijing, sells mouthwash for dogs that can give canines minty breath for 12 hours. One of these bottles cost over 240 yuan, the price of a meal at an upscale restaurant in the area. According to the Goumin.com survey, spending on these nonfood items including clothes, toys and "plush cat castles," accounted for 60% of all expenses on pets — and the percentage is growing.



A pet owner dresses her teddy-bear dog with a navy blue top on Thursday at the Smellme pet store in the Sanlitun Soho shopping center in Beijing. Photo: Cai Tongxu / Caixin

China's demand for high-quality pet accessories has pushed up cross-border e-commerce, with a premium puppy stroller from South Korea being sold for 3,747 yuan on shopping site [Taobao](#). It has also mobilized an army of "daiguo," or Chinese students or housewives living abroad, who will buy high-end trainers from the U.S., or a handmade dress with lace and fake pearls from Japan and deliver it to one's doorstep.

Another sector that has benefited is pet spas. Smellme, a high-end pet store in the Sanlitun Soho shopping center, plays a video showing a French bulldog, partially wrapped in a white, fluffy towel, enjoying a fragrant oil massage with its eyes squinting in pleasure. According to the price list behind the front desk, this massage costs 588 yuan. The company also offers mud baths, herbal baths and hair styling, in addition to the mandatory fur trimming.

Despite the small apartment sizes given real estate prices in major Chinese cities, many pet owners opted for bigger dogs such as golden retrievers, huskies and Labradors, according to data from Your Pet, an industry information provider from the southern city of Guangzhou. A few even opted for sturdier animals, including German shepherds, Alaskan malamutes or Great Pyrenees.

The upkeep of a large dog usually costs more than 3,000 yuan a month, according to a manager at Nobelpet, another pet store located on the same building as Smellme.

She underplayed the hefty price tag, saying, "Expensive? That is not expensive at all!"



A refrigerator holds pet pastries at the Smellme pet store at the Sanlitun Soho shopping center in Beijing on Thursday. Photo: Cai Tongxu / Caixin

Meanwhile, a couple entered, holding a schnauzer. They asked for a bath and later chose the kind of pedicure they wanted for their dog.

At one end of the store a teddy-bear dog, shaking badly, was getting its hair shaved by two pet stylists. On the price board, stylists were classified as A-grade, B-grade or those that could prep your pup for a beauty pageant. The pageant option could cost up to 1,300 yuan per session. On the other end of the store were kennels where pet owners can leave their wards for a few days when they are out of town, and where a stressed employee snapped at a boarding dog for barking too much.

### **A costly ‘ancestor’**

The rise in disposable incomes, particularly among rich elderly parents trying to fill their empty nests, DINK families and white-collar female workers who opt to stay single, have fueled spending on luxury pet care, according to Deng Yuanyuan, a researcher from CKGSB Knowledge, a part of Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business.

Another reason is that Chinese students, who went overseas to study after the country opened up in the 1980s, brought back with them Japanese or Western ideas of pet care to China.

According to Deng's research into [pet-related consumer behavior](#) China's pet industry has also been through “the three stages of maturity,” similar to that in Europe or Japan, and this has changed people's attitudes toward animals.

“At the primary stage, animals were only needed to fulfill domestic or functional roles, including watching over homes or catching mice,” she said. “At the second stage, the concept of ‘raising’ an animal comes in, and pet owners would set aside part of their income for pet food and other basic needs of animals. Finally, at the third stage, the existence of pets breeds an independent industry, which includes all kinds of different merchandise, just like those for human beings.”



A red lotus-shaped speaker, powered by solar energy, plays Buddhist chants for a deceased pet at the Baifu Pets' Paradise Cemetery in Beijing. Photo: Cai Tongxu / Caixin

While some affluent buyers are willing to splurge as much as \$3,200 on an extravagant dog collar, according to the product catalog at Smellme pet spa, some complain about the rising cost of products as the industry matures. “My pet’s medicines and shampoos are costlier than mine,” wrote one Weibo user with the online name Vitaminee-D. “It costs 10 times the money to get the fur trimmed on my dog compared to my haircut. It’s almost as if I was making offerings to a precious ancestor!”

But the extreme lengths that some owners go to pamper their pets was also linked to loneliness and stress endemic to city life.

A graduate student in psychology at Beijing Normal University who provided only her surname, Zhang, said, “I basically treat my cat Jianguo the same way I would treat a very important friend.”

“My cat brings me great comfort and joy. Most importantly, he offers me many new experiences, which I’ve never had when I interact with humans.”

“For example, with humans, I might be desperate to reason with others and to prove them wrong,” she said. “But thanks to Jianguo, I’ve learned the happiness of compromising for another being.”

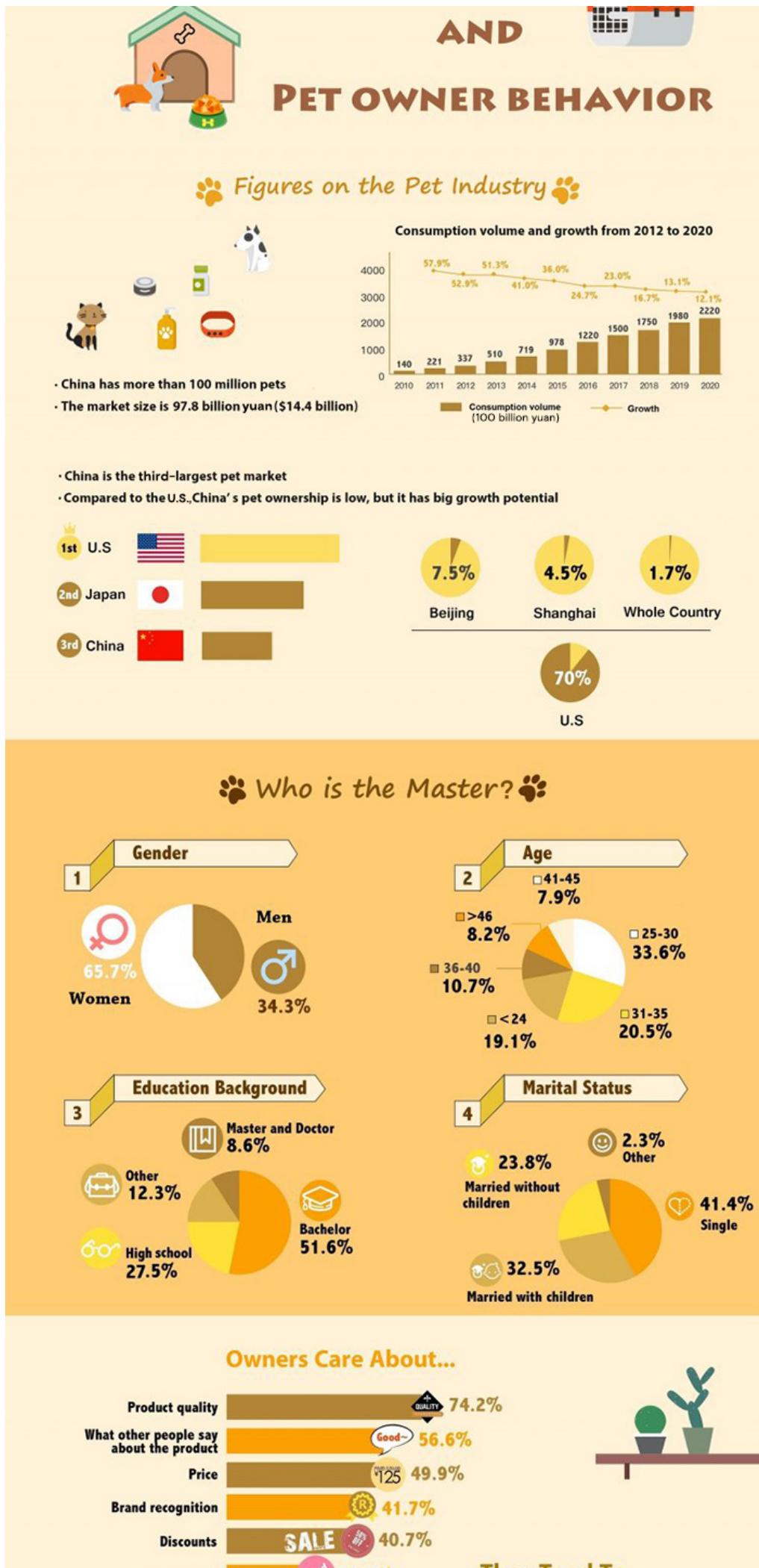
“I do know quite a few people who could have a great time with cats but not with humans,” she added, trying to explain why some owners may attribute human traits to animals or believe they had humanlike demands such as the need to have a gravestone.

In the nondescript cemetery in Beijing’s Changping district, a freshly dug grave that was barely 1.6 square meters (17.2 square feet) cost 3,000 yuan, according to the guard. The bigger ones were priced at 5,000 yuan or more. The marble tomb for the royal canine sprawled over four big plots and had the words “Mommy’s little princess, I’ll love you forever!” carved on it. The owner had also placed more than a dozen stuffed animals and other toys the pet loved in a glass case built atop the grave. The funeral service also includes transportation, according to the guard, who estimated that it would cost 300 yuan one-way to pick up a deceased pet from downtown Beijing, which is an hour’s drive from the cemetery.

“We have plenty of returning customers,” he said. “That household over there has buried seven pets already.”

The sound of Buddhist chanting could be heard blaring out of small devices on some graves. According to the guard, the mini-speakers placed on a few tombs are powered by solar energy.







## Where Do They Spend Money? 🐾🐾



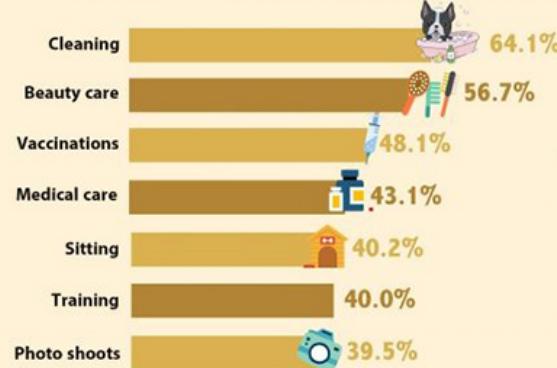
99.8% of pet owners are willing to spend money on goods specifically for their pet. On average, a dog costs 450 yuan per month, and a cat cost a bit more at 488 yuan.



Although e-commerce is quite developed, bricks-and-mortar pet shops are still a very important channel. 32.8% say they buy from offline stores more often than online, because there is more choice, greater convenience and free samples to try before buying.



## They Also Are Interested in Pet Services Such As...



Source: CKGSB Knowledge

• Research by Deng Yuanyuan. Graphic by Zhao Qianwen/CKGSB Knowledge

*Correction: This article has been corrected to say that according to Euromonitor's forecast, China will become the world's fourth largest pet market in 2021 after the U.S., Brazil and UK. An earlier version said "according to Euromonitor's forecast, China will surpass Japan to become the world's second-biggest pet market by 2020."*

Aug 25, 2017 06:20 PM

**PEOPLE**

## Is China the Wild West of Consumer Gene Testing?

By Cai Tongxu



WeGene Co-founder Chen Gang. Photo: WeGene

Genetic testing services that promise to find whether your child is the next Mozart or matchmaking services that help you find the most “genetically compatible” partner have made headlines in China in recent years.

That is because the multibillion dollar consumer gene testing industry in the country is still in its infancy and regulations to govern its growth aren’t still in place.

“There are plenty of different tests directly for consumers, worldwide. But there are still many unresolved issues. For instance, gene testing for the purpose of talent detection doesn’t have a scientific basis and isn’t ethically sound,” said Chen Gang, co-founder and CEO at WeGene, a direct-to-consumer genetic testing startup in Shenzhen. “In the early years, these companies got themselves into trouble and later became tools for pyramid selling.”

Chen received his doctorate in computer science from Central South University in Changsha, Hunan province. For his degree, he concentrated on bioinformatics — the science of analyzing complex biological data like genetic codes. He has also worked at Shenzhen-based BGI, one of the world’s largest genome sequencing companies, as its vice president of internet and cloud computing.

Gene testing is the next frontier in personalized health care, Chen said. It will allow doctors to forecast major health risks such as cancer and could prompt individuals with a high risk of developing certain diseases to alter their lifestyles. By referring to a gene report, both doctors and individuals could also more accurately choose medicines or control the dosage of drugs.

At present, one can purchase a basic gene-testing kit online for about 1,000 yuan (\$150.10).

Despite the name, this “kit” is only a tube to store your saliva so you can send it to the testing company. This reporter, who tried an introductory package, received the results in 30 days. The findings traced my ancestry to Mongolian roots, which came as a surprise to me, but didn’t mention anything about my Manchu grandmother. It also hinted that my chance of dying from sudden cardiac arrest was three times the average. It also included a report on my reactions to various types of medicines, which I could barely understand, but I assume would be helpful to my doctors.



WeGene's headquarters in Shenzhen. Photo: WeGene

Critics of the direct-to-consumer gene testing services say that the findings are not as accurate as people imagine, and could vary based on the method of testing.

But despite these concerns, China’s genetics testing is one of the fastest growing markets in the world, estimated to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 37% in the next five years through 2021, according to a report by China Investment Consulting Corp. from earlier this year.

The company forecast that the market will grow to 42 billion yuan by 2021, up from 13.3 billion yuan in 2017, fueled by a surge in cancer cases in recent years.

In a telephone interview with Caixin, Chen talked about the untapped potential for consumer gene testing in China, how the country compares with mature markets like the U.S., and ethical issues such as privacy due to the lack of clear regulations. The following are edited excerpts of that interview.

### **Caixin: What's the growth potential for commercial gene testing in China?**

**Chen Gang:** I have a great interest in doing genomic data analysis. During my PhD, I noticed the vast gap (in this field) between the U.S. and China. As a matter of fact, China is better in prenatal DNA testing, but we lag far behind in terms of personal genome services for consumers. WeGene has merely tested tens and thousands of people, while U.S. companies have done millions. This leaves a huge room for growth. For instance, if we

apply AI to medical services, genome data would be a prerequisite for this. Everyone should be able to access his or her own gene data at the time of birth.

**What is gene testing mostly used for? Is it for personal uses like predicting potential future illnesses or commercial collaborations with other companies that use it for drug discovery?**

Many people don't know about this immature market (for gene testing). It is also still rather costly for most people. Our customers are generally middle class from first-tier cities, and a few from developed second-tier ones, aged 20 to 40. These people usually work in the fields of finance, bio-science, computing and technology; individuals who are working in the health care sector are the largest group among those demanding personal gene tests. Ours is still a small company, with a limited advertising budget. Moreover, regulators have not introduced any clear definition for our products.



A basic gene-testing kit bought online. The kit allows users to send their saliva to be tested. Photo: Cai Tongxu/Caixin

**Commercial gene-testing services have sparked controversy the world over. What are the regulatory and ethical issues in this industry?**

There are plenty of different tests directly for consumers, worldwide. But there are still many unresolved issues. For instance, gene tests for the purpose of talent detection don't have a scientific basis and are not ethically sound. In the early years, these companies got themselves into trouble and later became tools for pyramid selling. This creates a negative impression of the entire industry. We could say that the regulators are being positive, but they don't necessarily have a holistic approach or understanding of the gene testing industry. The government has allowed several commercial gene testing startups to register their businesses. We

are capable of providing more and more reliable genetic information. But still, China's regulations to govern this emerging industry are not officially out yet.

**Why does it usually take about two months on average to get the results back after a personal gene test?**

WeGene, on average, takes three to six weeks. The process includes receiving samples, quality control, DNA extraction, on-machine examinations, chip-scanning and data analysis. As part of a gene test for a normal healthy person, these procedures are not only costly but also time-consuming. Over the past decades, we have digitized many things: music CDs and printed photographs have already become obsolete. In the same way, we can digitize information about our bodies, which genome data is the most basic. This data could be used many times for various applications that require gene data (such as assessing the risk of breast cancer and checking metabolism rates).

**How does your company deal with the data you collect? How do you safeguard privacy?**

We save data, but delete it, if explicitly asked by the client to do so. As for (mass-scale) statistical analysis, we need permission from the clients first. If other studies are involved, we still need to inform the users and get their permission.

**There is a fear that individuals' genetic information could be sold to businesses that can use it to promote products like tailor-made weight-loss programs or medical tests. Is this a real concern?**

A: From a legal perspective, it would be very risky (to sell gene data). Moreover, it would simply be a one-time deal. But imagine if many users are relatives of people with Parkinson's disease, we could sell their data for a research study and receive cash without violating privacy laws.

**I have seen some companies that provide prenatal DNA tests. What are your thoughts on that? Do many couples in China choose to have abortions if they find there is a genetic defect in the fetus?**

A: It is definitely a very strict medical service, in terms of genetics. For instance, abortion is outlawed in Muslim countries, but prenatal DNA tests are permitted. The most widespread one is noninvasive prenatal testing. It targets high-risk groups through surveys. Many (in China) would choose abortion if the diagnosis keeps on showing a genetic defect in the fetus.

*Caixin Hot Pot is a regular feature that introduces you to the colorful array of players in today's China – from the leaders of top U.S. companies doing business here to the migrant woman selling noodles from a push-cart.*

