

Intersections of Kinship and Identity: Exploring the Impact of Family Relationships on Gender Identity of Individuals

Ishika and Vishnu Narayan Kucheria*

Department of Psychology, Central University of Haryana, India

Email of corresponding author: vishnunarayan57@cuh.ac.in

Abstract: Family dynamics and Peer group shapes the sexual orientation. Explores the connections between kinship, peer relationships, and self-identity. Norms, values, and self-concept of an individual developed are shaped by families and peer groups, act as socializing agents in development of individuals identity. In terms of experiences with self-acceptance, mental health, and social integration, family and peer relationships can have a significant impact on LGBTQIA+ individuals how they identify themselves. The proposed study attempts to examine LGBTQIA+ individuals relationship dynamics and their experiences with their family and peers with reference to communication, acceptance, and rejection, from current literature reviews. For this a systematic literature review of last five-year is conducted from India as well studies conducted across the globe were conducted. Based on the findings four major themes 1) Family as both protective and discriminatory force, 2) Peer support and identity development across the lifespan, 3) Stigma, SOCE, and structural harm and cultural contradictions and 4) context that creates acceptance or rejecting themselves for identifying themselves as third gender.

Keywords: LGBTQIA+; Family Relationships; Peer Group; Self-Identity.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of self-identity is complex. Erikson, in psychosocial development theory, determines wide range of identities, how people see and define themselves. It is particular during the identity vs. role confusion stage, when teenagers are forming a coherent sense of identity by exploring their own values, beliefs, and social roles (Erikson, 1968). It encompasses deeper elements like views, values, and personality qualities in addition to more superficial criteria like age, gender, and physical attributes (Kandler et al., 2014). "Why adolescence and social context matter?" Hornung et al., (2022) in social identity theory states that people identify with the groups they are a part of and where they fit into different social and cultural traditions. An individual is highly influenced by cultural roles and society.

Clark et al., (2024) attempts to answers "How family and peers shape sexual identity, in peer development", using sociocultural theory which explain the concept of "expansion of self" describes how people develop and change because of their interactions with other members of their social groups, with peers playing a major role in influencing behavior, identity, and emotional intelligence, particularly in adolescence and the

early stages of adulthood. As a result, individuals experience various roles, values, beliefs, and attitude. Peer interactions also help individuals in learning from one another by exchanging ideas and skills and promoting personal development. It is important to strike a balance between conformity and declaring originality since managing peer pressure promotes the growth of a complete sense of self in people (Laursen et al., 2021).

Family acceptance is necessary for mental health and personal growth. The Attachment theory by Thompson et al., (2022) states that early-stage attachment gives stable foundation that helps a person to adapt well to significant life transitions. The Family systems theory of Calatrava et al., (2022) shows how personal development is influenced by family dynamics, emphasizing the need for acceptance and emotional support. When identity-related or belief-based differences are created conflict, and problems can be addressed. Mutual understanding promoted through patience, open communication, and, when required, the involvement of external support such as therapy can help individuals. This process shapes Individuals' whole growth, which also indicates how much they accept and support themselves. The current article explores the dynamic relationships and experiences of LGBTQI+ people within family and peers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The proposed study attempts to investigate the following objectives.

1) To examine how LGBTQIA+ individuals relationship with their family and peers in terms of communication, acceptance, and rejection.

2) To explore the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals across family and peer group from related literature.

METHOD

The article attempts to explore LGBTQIA+ individual's relationship with their family and peers in terms of communication, acceptance, rejection, and their experiences. For this a

systematic literature review, literature of last five years was used adapting PRISMA Technique. The constructs used were sexual orientation, family relationships, peer group, and self-identity.

Databases Searched: Google Scholar

Time Frame: 2019–2024,

Keywords: “LGBTQ+ OR sexual orientation” AND “family acceptance OR peer group” AND “mental health OR identity.”

Inclusion Criteria: Peer reviewed, English language, LGBTQ+ population and focus on family/peer influence.

Exclusion Criteria: Non-empirical work, non-human studies, and Studies before 2019 and after 2024.

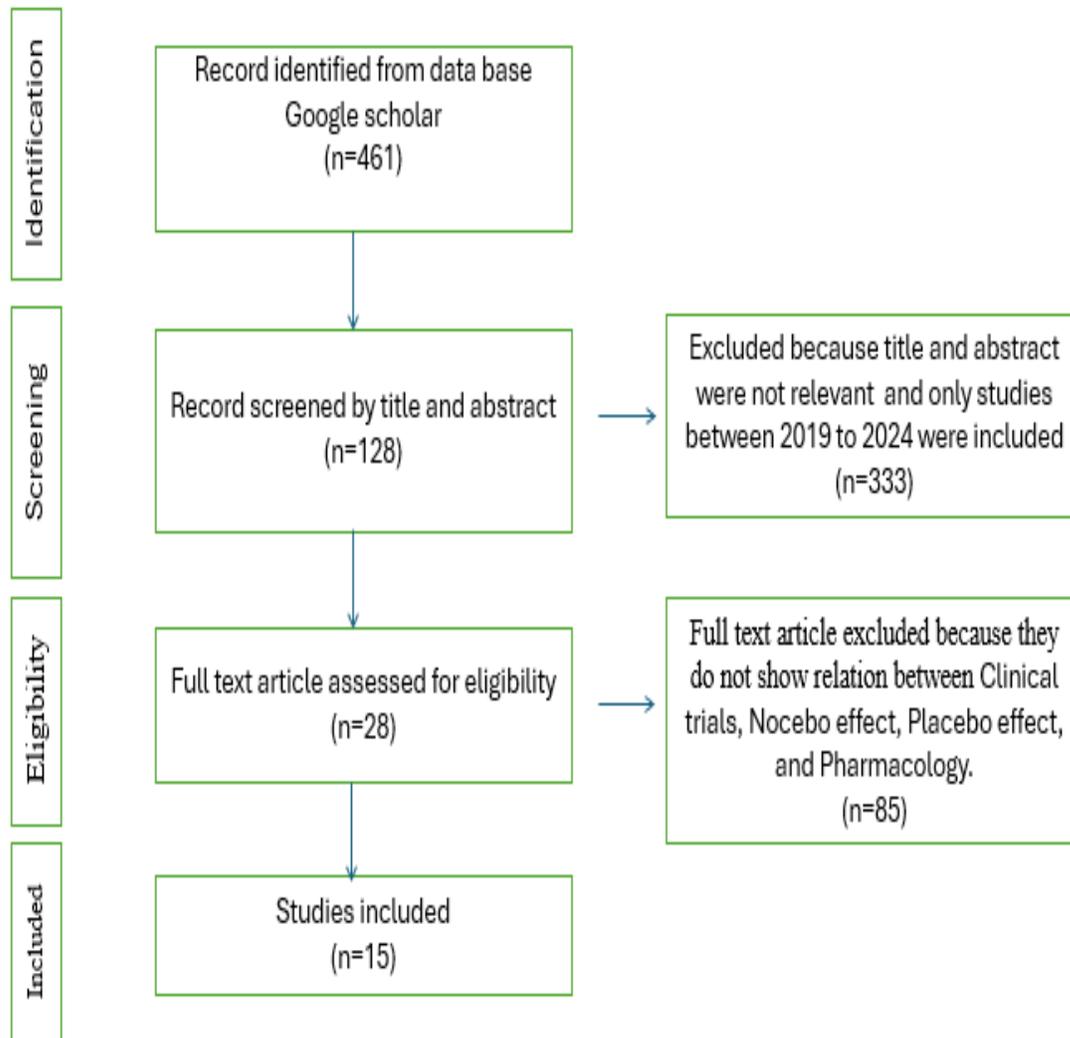


Figure 1: Shows the method of data Screening.

RESULT

Table 1: Shows the Screened Studies as Per the Search Strategy

Sr. No.	Author	Problem	Research Design	Finding
1	Bowling et al. (2019)	This study looks at how sexuality is affected by stigma among sexual and gender minority (SGM) people in metropolitan India.	Group discussions and interviews	Factors, such as heterosexual marriage pressure, sexual identity-specific stigma, partners' stigma and the buffering effects of a relationship, gender-specific stigma and behavioural norms, and restricted sexual healthcare, impact on sexuality.
2	Swift-Gallant et al. (2019)	The study looked at whether biological markers associated with male sexual orientation are found in different subgroups or cluster among the same individuals.	Latent Profile Analysis (LPA)	Differentiated Biological routes: that several subgroups of non-heterosexual men show distinct combinations of biological indicators (fraternal birth order, handedness, familiarity), male sexual orientation is affected by diverse bio developmental routes. Gender Nonconformity: In comparison to other groups, the fraternal birth order subgroup displayed more behaviours indicative of women and a higher degree of agreeableness.
3	Banik et al. (2019)	Understand how bisexual males in India manage their sexuality in various cultural and societal circumstances, the study examined the distinct sexual identities, behaviours, and difficulties that they meet.	Qualitative Study	Factors Shaping Sexual Experiences: variety of factors, such as sexual posture, the gender of partners, and the cultural and psychosocial dynamics around bisexual identification, influence the sexual experiences of self-identified bisexual men in Mumbai. Relationships and behaviours are influenced by discretion, sexual pleasure, and secrecy.
4	Brown et al. (2020)	Fill a vacuum in the literature by addressing the absence of thorough knowledge about how family relationships affect the health and well-being of TGD kids and providing direction for future study.	Systematic review	Transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) youth's health and well-being are significantly affected by strong family ties, especially in the areas of coping skills, constructive communication, and respect and affection.

5	Sharma and Subramanyam (2020)	Investigate the differences in the psychological effects of the Covid-19 shutdown among adults who identify as LGBT and those who are more likely to experience difficulties, bringing attention to knowledge gaps in the Indian setting.	Quantitative and qualitative	High-risk people (those with comorbidities or a history of mental illness) and LGBT adults had higher levels of anxiety. Adult LGBT people reported using pornography more often as a coping technique, and more family calls were linked to better social interactions and empathy.
6	Blosnich et al. (2020)	Examine the relationship between sexual minorities' suicide morbidity and SOCE, adjusting for unfavourable childhood circumstances, to understand the mental health hazards connected to SOCE.	Cross-sectional	Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) were considered, sexual minorities who underwent sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) reported far greater risks of suicidal thoughts, planning, and tries than those who did not.
7	Przeworski and Piedra (2020)	Investigate the ways in which Latinx cultural beliefs influence how families react to members of sexual minorities, recognizing both discriminating and supportive family dynamics.	Systematic review	Latinx families can help members of sexual minorities, a variety of complicated family reactions, including discrimination as well as support, are linked to cultural values like families.
8	Ryan et al. (2020)	Identify a knowledge gap in parental roles and their long-term impacts on LGBT adolescents by investigating the effects of parent-initiated SOCE during adolescence on mental health and adjustment in young adulthood.	Cross-sectional design	Parent-initiated sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) during adolescence were linked to increased depression, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, lower educational attainment, and reduced weekly income in young adulthood.
9	Mishra, J. (2020)	Investigate how homosexual men in South Asia deal with emotions, especially guilt, by questioning heteronormative emotional frameworks and looking into how these guys deal with social and familial pressures in a queer setting.	Ethnographic accounts	Guilt among gay men in Odisha, India, can be socially created and is not only an internal emotion. This is often the result of demands from family and community to fit into heteronormative roles. Gay men manage these feelings within social systems and alternative kinship arrangements. They feel guilty about "reciprocity," as if they must repay their relatives by living up to traditional expectations.

10	Hall et al. (2021)	Address the diversity and variability in milestone trajectories across different demographic groups to understand the patterns and timing of sexual orientation identity development milestones among LGB+ individuals.	Systematic review and meta-analysis	LGB+ people share comparable milestones in the development of their sexual orientation identities. These milestones include realizing queer attractions, questioning one's sexual orientation, self-identifying, coming out, having sex, and starting a romantic relationship. The sequence of attraction, self-identification, sexual activity, and coming out is followed by milestones.
11	Przeworski et al. (2021)	Evaluate the effectiveness of Sexual orientation, change efforts (SOCE) and draw attention to the ethical issues these methods raise when collaborating with clients who identify as LGBQ, addressing the need for affirming therapeutic approaches	Systematic review	Attempts to change one's sexual orientation known as sexual orientation, change attempts (SOCE), are linked to unfavourable consequences such as despair, broken relationships, and heightened homonegativity. SOCE contradicts the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (APA) while claiming that therapies work and benefit LGBQ clients.
12	Hsieh and Liu (2021)	Study looking at differences in late-life social interactions and loneliness by sexual orientation in the US.	Quantitative analysis and cross-sectional survey design.	Older LGB individuals reported much greater levels of loneliness than their heterosexual peers. This was mostly because they were less likely to have a spouse, had less support from their families, and were under more stress from their friends.
13	Saraff et al. (2022)	Examine at how stigma affects LGBTQ individuals' sexual, mental, and physical health in India and show the interpersonal and intrapersonal factors that affect how they perceive stigma.	Systematic review	LGBTQ persons in India face a lot of stigmas, which negatively affects their physical, mental, and sexual well-being .stigma include lack of acceptance from family, friends, and society, as well as social rejection and systemic discrimination. Intrapersonal factors including shame, low self-worth, self-blame, and identity confusion also contribute to the poor health outcomes experienced.

14	Goodyear et al. (2022)	Examined how feelings of shame and brokenness harms are felt and shaped in the lives of individuals affected to overcome the paucity of knowledge about the unique psychosocial effects of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Change Efforts (SOGIECE).	Qualitative interpretive description	Exposure to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Change Efforts (SOGIECE) had a significant psychosocial impact, making participants socially isolated and decreasing their likelihood of developing close relationships with friends, romantic partners, and LGBTQ+ groups.
15	Pillay, (2023)	to investigate the psychological experiences of LGBTQ individuals of Indian descent in South Africa to close the information gap about the link between sexual and gender diversity and Indian cultural in the region.	Qualitative survey	LGBTQ South Africans of Indian ancestry suffers four main psychological challenges: balancing a double life, overcoming conservative cultural standards, finding chances for acceptance and hope, and struggling to fit in with LGBTQ groups. The findings show the distinctive intersection of gender and sexual orientation variance with South Africa's Indian cultural and religious roots.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to analyse the literature of last five years (2019-2024), including research from global level and India. The finding of table 1 reveals the importance of family dynamics in mental health and overall wellbeing of LGBTQ+ individuals. Two questions were in the research addressed the first question examines LGBTQIA+ individuals' relationship with their family and peers in terms of communication, acceptance, and rejection. Related literature revealed the strong familial ties seem to be quite helpful, particularly for young people who identify themselves as transgender or gender nonconforming. A cordial bond with parents with siblings, offer space to express, tends to improve the efficacy and confidence also better mental health outcomes, helping Transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) to harmonize socially (Brown et al., 2020). During COVID-19 epidemic higher level of mental health issues were reported among LGBTQ individuals in India due to uncontrolled pornography consumption use as a coping strategy. Frequent

family calls and other supportive family contacts were associated with better social connections and empathy, underscoring the importance of social support for their overall wellbeing (Sharma & Subramanyam, 2020).

The effect of peer milestones on social identity formation, and self-concept. Milestones like as self-identification, coming out, having sex, doubting one's own sexual orientation, and establishing romantic connections are indicative of the development of an LGB+ identity (Hall, 2021). This process frequently proceeds in a similar order, with self-identification and attraction arriving before coming out and engaging in sexual activity. Because of the pressure to fit in with heteronormative norms, LGBT guys in Odisha, India, characterize emotions of shame as socially constructed rather than intrinsic. The complicated relationship between cultural expectations and LGBTQ people's mental health is highlighted by the fact that LGBTQ people in South Asia believe they owe their family a sort of "reciprocity" by fulfilling conventional expectations. (Mishra,2020).

Based on the studies two major themes were derived, first theme shows the Family as a Discriminatory and Protective Force, and the second is Peer Assistance and Identity Formation Throughout Life. Collectively, these themes show how peer-based affirmation and familial acceptance or rejection interact dynamically to shape LGBTQ+ identity development and mental health, influencing whether people experience resilience and identity coherence or persistent psychological distress throughout their lives.

The second question was to investigate the experiences of LGBTQ+ people across family and peer group based on related literature review. Findings from the table 1 - Cultural beliefs of any society can sometimes protect the LGBTQ+ individuals and sometimes can create obstacles, as seen in the paradox of Latinx families offering support and discriminating against them because of cultural standards (Przeworski & Piedra, 2020). The fact that serious mental health implications, such as increased dejection and suicidal ideation, continue into adulthood among LGBTQ+ children is evidence of the detrimental impact of Sexual Orientation Change Attempts (SOCE) on LGBTQ+ children (Ryan., 2020). Older LGB+ stated that they feel higher level of loneliness than the heterosexual coworkers which is mostly because of strained friendships and low level of family support (Hsieh, 2021). Furthermore, Sex Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Change Efforts (SOGIECE) can cause serious psychological harm, such as social isolation, feelings of shame, and an increased risk of mental health conditions including anxiety and depression (Goodyear., 2022). In order to improve the mental health of LGBTQ+ people, these findings highlight the need of establishing partnerships and the need to stop conversion practices.

The influence of stigma, discrimination, and (SOCE/SOGIECE) harmful practices on mental health is the main emphasis. This is well explained by theories like Erikson's (identity conflict) and Tajfel's (ingroup-outgroup rejection). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and prejudice from society worsen mental health problems among LGBTQ individuals. Sexual minorities taking part in SOCE, ACEs were linked to significantly greater levels of suicidal ideas, preparation, and attempted suicide (Blosnich, 2020). According to Przeworski, (2021) those who tries to alter one's sexual orientation carry serious ethical and psychological risks, highlighting the need for encouraging,

favourable treatment. LGBTQ people's emotional, sexual, and bodily wellness all are affected by the stigma they experience in India. Mental health was made worse by intrapersonal factors like shame, low self-esteem, and identity uncertainty in addition to societal exclusion, stigma, and lack of acceptance from family and society (Saraff, 2022).

The intersection of cultural norms, expectations, and identity on LGBTQ+ individuals emphasizing how social environments shape LGBTQ+ individuals' identity development, belongingness, and psychological well-being. It connects to theories such as Vygotsky's (social environment), Erikson's (role confusion), and Tajfel's (group identification and belonging). Research shows that males may develop their sexual orientation differently, indicating that sexual orientation is influenced by both biological and environmental variables (Swift-Gallant et al., 2019). Attempts to change one's sexual orientation have significant ethical and psychological hazards, according to Przeworski et al. (2021), underscoring the necessity of supportive, affirming treatment in its place. LGBTQ people's mental health issues are worsened by social stigma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs were associated with considerably higher rates of suicide ideation, planning, and tries among sexual minorities (Blosnich et al., 2020). Sexual orientation changes programs (SOCE) have been associated with negative outcomes, such as heightened internalized homonegativity, damaged relationships, and feelings of hopelessness. SOCE has been warned against by the American Psychological Association (APA) due to its ineffectiveness and potential damage to LGBQ people.

Based on studies findings two themes were found that are Stigma, SOCE, and structural harm and cultural contradictions and context that create acceptance or rejecting themselves for identifying themselves as third gender.

CONCLUSION

In this study a literature review of last five year literature was conducted focusing on the role of family dynamics in deciding LGBTQ+ individual's mental health and over all wellbeing. Through literature review four major themes were found i.e., Family as both protective and discriminatory force, Peer support and identity development across the lifespan, Stigma, SOCE, and structural harm, Cultural contradictions and context.

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