



**PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND ITS CORRELATES AMONG
LGBTQIA+**



DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled: “*A study on Psychological Safety and its correlates among LGBTQ+ individuals in India*” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Shruti Shourie, Associate Professor of the Department of Psychology, D.A.V. College, Sector 10, Chandigarh, India. No part of this report has previously formed the basis of any degree or fellowship award.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	WORD
S.E.	SELF ESTEEM
SOC	SOCIAL
COM	COMPASSION
BOD	BODILY
P.S.	PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY
AFF	AFFILIATION
CON	CONNECTEDNESS
COP	COMPANIONSHIP
BEL	BELONGINGNESS
AD	ASSUMED DEVIANCE
SCC	SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN
AGC	ASSUMPTION OF GAY CULTURE
SKB	STEREOTYPICAL KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOUR
HMA	HOMONEGATIVE MICROAGGRESSION

ABSTRACT

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and other LGBTQIA+ individuals have been the subject of much discussion in India between 2009 and 2019, although they still exhibit unequal health outcomes. Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ or who are otherwise "sexual and gender diverse" face systemic and personal discrimination, which has a negative impact on their well-being and produces unequal results in several important areas of life. Although more Indian youths than ever before may accept homosexuality and queer identities. Today, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) individuals still constantly struggle to be accepted for who they are sexually and to be free to openly express their gender choices within the boundaries of family, home, and school. They are constantly faced with stigmatization affecting them physically, psychologically and socially. As part of an ongoing effort to understand the lives and experiences of LGBTQ+ communities during this period, the aim of the present study was to examine the psychological Safety and its correlates among LGBTQ+. A sample of 35 LGBTQ+ individuals in total is gathered for this. Some of the other variables included in this study are Self-Esteem, Belongingness and Homonegative Microaggression. SPSS was used to get the raw scores and do statistical analysis. The findings indicated that psychological safety and self-esteem were positively correlated. Additionally, there is a favorable correlation between the component of belongingness known as companionship and psychological safety. Finding the predictors of psychological safety—self-esteem and companionship—was another useful outcome of this study. More attention needs to be paid to fostering close and supportive relationships inside and outside of the community (externally) and enhancing the self-esteem of LGBTQ+ people in order to ensure their psychological safety (internally).

Key words: *LGBTQ+, Psychological Safety, Self-Esteem, Microaggression, Belongingness, community, individuals*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

‘To speak of sexuality and of same-sex love in particular, in India today is simultaneously an act of political assertion, of celebration, of defiance and of fear. For far too long, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people have simply been the distant and hypothetical subjects of theories and ideas, looked upon either with pity, curiosity or disdain.’

Arvind and Bhan (2005)

The term "person" evokes gender-neutral thoughts by default, this study starts by emphasizing the use of "person" rather than "human," even while the earlier, more common usage of "human" is continued in a similar manner. The introduction of human sexuality has always been a challenging process due to numerous physiological and psychological difficulties. As the saying goes, "Birds of a feather flock together." This idea, known as the "principle of homogamy," continues to serve as the foundation for research on homosexuality and homosexuals (Cramer, 1998).

While discussing about the complexities of human beings and personality, Hjelte and Ziegler (1981) in their book "Personality Theory" states that 'of all the problems that have confronted human beings since the beginning of recorded history, perhaps the most significant has been the riddle of their own nature. Countless attempts have been made to answer the question "What sort of creatures are we?" Even after a huge number of approaches have been taken and a wide range of ideas have been used, a good solution is still out of reach. There are numerous differences that need to be taken into consideration, which is a major factor in the difficulty in obtaining a definitive response. Humans are diverse in size and structure, and they exhibit incredibly sophisticated behavior. There are currently billion people on the planet, and no two are the same. Finding out what unites them as members of the human species is challenging, if not impossible, due to their extreme variances. Short (1980) notes that "human sexual behavior is infinitely variable, within the cultural constraints imposed upon it" in reference to the beginnings of human sexuality (Austin, 1980).

The way that individuals perceive and communicate the inclinations and emotions that constitute sexual attraction for other people is known as their sexuality. It is a typical aspect of

the human experience that is influenced by a variety of elements, such as our genetic make-up, our early experiences, the people around us, and cultural beliefs (Brown, 2023)

Sexuality is defined “as a quality of maleness or femaleness that determines the anatomy, behaviour, characteristics and personality of the individuals through which he is able to procreate or have children, which determines his relationship with other individuals and groups” (Joshi, 2004).

Haas et al. (2011) stated that “sexual orientation and gender identity are two distinct and complex characteristics that are used to define sexual minorities.” Indian society is both varied and conservative in that many Indians believe transsexualism is an entirely Western phenomena, similar to lesbianism and homosexuality that was brought about by an excessively permissive and indulgent society. They dismiss the fact that homosexuality and lesbianism are as old as man, having been written about and debated in ancient treatises like the Kamsutra, and they gloss over the ills of sexual repression in their own civilization (Talwar, 1999).

Talking about the categories such as homosexuality David Halperin, argues that homosexuality is indispensable to the experience of ‘being’ homosexual and further wants to make clear that such categories do not exist ‘outside of history and culture’, nor are they some form of ‘false consciousness’ (Nye, 2009).

1.1 LGBTQ: Definition and Meaning

LGBT is an initialism that stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender." Rather than being limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender individuals, it can also apply to anyone who identifies as non-heterosexual, non-heteroromantic, or non-cisgender. For persons who identify as queer or who are unsure of their sexual or gender identity, a form known as LGBTQ adds the letter Q. Another variation, LGBTQ+, "represents those who are part of the community, but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity" (Shankle & Michael, 2006).

These letters represented a diverse population that was previously just referred to as “the gay community” but they also represented a shift toward inclusivity. The letters turned out to be restrictive, despite their intentions. The vocabulary used to discuss gender identity and sexual orientation has evolved along with the times and views. Because of this, the well-known

LGBT acronym now has a few extra letters in it, along with a plethora of related terms related to gender and sexuality. They haven't yet been adopted by everyone.

Certain symbols are often linked with the homosexual community, particularly rainbows or rainbow flags. Other "gay acceptance" symbols include triangles, ribbons, the Greek lambda symbol ("L" for freedom), and gender symbols. Although there are many different flags used to symbolize different LGBT communities, the rainbow flag is the most well-known. Gilbert Baker, the man who designed the rainbow flag, claims that each hue stands for a communal value i.e. pink-sexuality, red-life, orange-healing, yellow-sun, green-nature, blue-art, indigo-harmony and violet-spirit (LAMBDA, GLBT Community Services, n.d.).

The famous Pride Rainbow flag was designed in 1978 by Gilbert Baker and featured eight stripes at first. The colors comprised violet for spirit, turquoise for art, indigo for harmony, yellow for sun, green for tranquility with nature, and pink for sexuality. Six colors now make up the flag after all these years. The turquoise and indigo stripes were swapped out for royal blue, and the pink stripe is no longer there. It was first displayed at the 1979 Pride Parade. The Triumph over AIDS, Leather Pride, and Bear Pride flags are among the other flags (Flags of the LGBTIQ Community, n.d.).



Figure 1: *Pride Flag.* Source: (Sky News, 2023)

1.2 Meaning of each letter – LGBTQ+(MSEd, 2023)

L (Lesbian): A lesbian is a woman or someone who identifies as woman and who is solely drawn to other persons who are also of that gender.

G (Gay): The term "gay" is typically used to describe guys or individuals who identify as men and who are only drawn to other people who are the same gender as them. But the term "gay" can also apply to lesbians. In the 1970s, the term "homosexual" gained increased attraction. These days, bisexuals and pansexuals will occasionally refer to themselves as gay in passing while discussing their attraction to the same gender.

B (Bisexual): This sexual orientation denotes a preference for both genders. It's critical to acknowledge bisexuals since there have been instances where those who identify as bi have been mistakenly believed to be gay. Since then, bisexuality has encompassed transgender, binary, and nonbinary people.

T (Transgender): The term "transgender" refers to a person whose gender identity differs from the gender that corresponds with their biological sex.

Q (Queer or questioning): Although some use the term to refer to a particular identity, it is commonly used to refer to anyone who heterosexual or non-cisgender is. It is a slur, though. It is not appropriate to apply to every member of the community; rather, it should be reserved for cisgender and heterosexual people to refer to those who consciously identify as such. Those who may be unsure of their gender identity or sexual orientation are referred to as questioning.

Intersex: The term "intersex" refers to people who are born with variances in sex traits that do not conform to binary notions of male or female bodies.

Asexual: Often abbreviated as "ace," this phrase describes a person who may be attracted to someone romantically but has little to no sexual interest.

“+” (Plus): The 'plus' denotes all gender identities and sexual orientations not covered by the other seven initials. Other identities included in the LGBTQIA+ are:

Agender: Those who do not identify as any gender at all are referred to as Agender.

Demisexual: A person who needs an emotional connection to develop a sexual attraction is called a Demisexual.

Genderfluid: A person who fluctuates in their gender presentation and identification, either inside or outside of socially prescribed gender roles, being able to move between two or more different genders.

Graysexual: The "gray area" between asexuality and sexuality is referred to as being Graysexual.

Non-binary/Genderqueer: Genderqueer or non-binary refers to those who do not identify as either binary or non-binary.

Pansexual/Omnisexual: People who have a desire for all genders and sexes are referred to as pansexuals or omnisexuals.

Polyamorous: Those who are open to several consensual romantic or sexual relationships at once are known as Polyamorous.

Sapiosexual: A Sapiosexual is someone who, irrespective of gender identity, is drawn to intelligence.

Two-spirit: Native Americans referred to a third gender as "two-spirit" (often included as 2S in the main acronym as LGBTQIA2S+).

1.3 History of LGBTQIA+ community

The LGBTQIA+ community's history is a tapestry of resiliency, hardship, and victory intertwined. People who disregarded traditional gender roles and sexual orientations have existed throughout history; they were tolerated in certain societies but persecuted in others. Gender variety and same-sex relationships have been documented in art, literature, and historical narratives from ancient civilizations such as Greece, Rome, Egypt, and several Native American communities (Faderman, 2015; Stryker, 2017).

For millennia and throughout many cultures, there have been alternatives to the Western male-female and heterosexual binary. Examples include Sappho's lyrics about same-sex desire from the seventh century BCE, youths raised as the opposite sex in cultures from Albania to Afghanistan, "female husbands" from Kenya, and Native American "Two-Spirit." Eventually, the notebooks of diplomats, missionaries' church records, traveler's diaries, and reports from medical anthropologists taught the West about these realities. The European nations enforced their own laws against what was referred to as "sodomy" in the New World: the Spanish executed a Frenchman in Florida in 1566, which was the first known case of homosexual behavior in North America to result in death (Morris, 2023).

Another complex history of gender identification and resistance can be found where missionaries imposed European attire, a blatant gender identifier. Biblical interpretation made it unlawful for a man to dress like a woman or for a woman to wear pants. Sensationalized public trials warned against "deviants" but also popularized martyrs and heroes like Joan of Arc. The word "faggot" has chilling origins, as a stick of wood used to burn gay men in public is one of them.

Cross-dressing flourished in early modern Europe and America, despite the risks involved in violating strict legal laws. Furthermore, men had to be hired to perform female roles in the arts where women were prohibited from working, which frequently created a high-status, competitive market for people who would now be identified as Trans women in settings like Chinese opera, Shakespearean theater, and Japanese Kabuki. While the acceptance of performance artists and the global appeal of "drag" humor did not necessarily signal the beginning of transgender advocacy, they did make the arts a welcoming haven for LGBT people who pursued careers in theater that revolved upon deception and disguise (Morris, 2023).

The first attempts to understand the range of human sexual behavior were undertaken by European physicians and scientists, including Westphal (1869), Krafft-Ebing (1882), and Ellis (1897). In their publications, Krafft-Ebing and Ellis portrayed a "third sex" as abnormal and wicked, even though they were sympathetic to the idea that homosexuality or bisexuality may occur naturally in a different segment of the human population. Sigmund Freud believed that homosexuality was not a sickness nor a crime during this time and that bisexuality was an innate trait that began with unclear gender development in the womb. But Freud also thought that marriage to a heterosexual and male dominance may help women grow over their immaturity when it comes to lesbian attraction (Morris, 2023).

Established in 1950 by Harry Hay and Chuck Rowland, the Mattachine Society served as the main organization for gay men who were subjected to discrimination as a minority population. Other notable homophile groups on the West Coast were Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian support group, which was started in 1955 by Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, and One, Inc., which was established in 1952. These organizations reached thousands of people with outreach and informational sessions and publications (Morris, 2023).

But it wasn't until 1973 that the American Psychiatric Association took homosexuality off its list of "illnesses" in its diagnostic handbook. Courts and clinics persisted in labeling

homosexual love as sinful, criminal, or unhealthy during the 1950s and 60s, placing gay men and lesbians at risk of mental health facilities, jail time, unemployment, and/or losing custody of their children (Morris, 2023).

Leading the charge were lifelong campaigners Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings, who organized the first homosexual rights marches in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. in 1965 as the civil rights movement won new legislation against racial discrimination. The modern LGBTQIA+ rights movement emerged out of decades of oppression and marginalization, culminating in pivotal moments such as the Stonewall Riots of 1969. This uprising against police harassment in New York City's Stonewall Inn galvanized the community, sparking a wave of activism and advocacy for equality and acceptance (Carter, 2004).

Established in 1972, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) provided family members with expanded roles of support within the LGBT community. The 1980s saw the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which disproportionately affected the LGBTQIA+ community and exposed systemic inequalities in healthcare and social support (Shilts, 2007).

The most significant shifts in American history happened between the springs of 2015 and 2016: in the latter part of 2015, the Broadway production *Fun Home*, with a lesbian theme, won several Tony Awards; Bruce Jenner, the former Olympic champion, changed his name to Caitlyn Jenner; and in June of that same year, the Supreme Court decided to recognize same-sex marriage. *Carol* and *The Danish Girl*, two movies containing lesbian and transgender themes, were honored with Academy Awards recognition by the spring of 2016. Furthermore, the Supreme Court declared that every state had to acknowledge a lesbian family adoption from one state (Morris, 2023).

Despite these challenges, the LGBTQIA+ community has made significant strides in advancing civil rights and legal recognition. Landmark victories include the decriminalization of homosexuality, the legalization of same-sex marriage in many countries, and the implementation of anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQIA+ individuals in various spheres of life. However, the fight for equality is far from over, with ongoing battles for transgender rights, inclusive healthcare, and protections against discrimination and violence.

The history of the LGBTQIA+ community is not just a narrative of struggle, but also one of resilience, pride, and celebration. Pride parades and festivals, which originated as acts of defiance and solidarity, have evolved into vibrant expressions of diversity and affirmation, showcasing the strength and resilience of the community. As we continue to navigate the complexities of identity, gender, and sexuality in the 21st century, the history of the LGBTQIA+ community serves as a reminder of the power of collective action, the importance of visibility, and the enduring quest for dignity and equality for all.

1.3.1 Timeline of the LGBTQIA+ Movement in India (LGBTQIA+ Community: A Detailed Discussion)

In 1860, when Britain ruled India, gay relations were deemed abnormal and were made illegal under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Chapter 16, Section 377. Even after the Right to Equality was established under Article 14 on November 26, 1949, following independence, homosexuality was still illegal. The first-ever demonstration for LGBT rights took place on August 11, 1992, which was decades later. Kolkata played home to India's first Gay Pride Parade in 1999. There were only fifteen people in the procession, which was called Calcutta Rainbow Pride.

In the 2009 Naz Foundation v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi case, the Delhi High Court rendered a historic decision holding that criminalizing consensual homosexual consummation between adults violates their basic rights as guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. The Indian Penal Code's Section 377 was restored by the Supreme Court in the 2013 case of Suresh Kumar Koushal and others v. NAZ Foundation and others, which overturned the Delhi High Court's ruling in Naz Foundation v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi.

A measure to decriminalize homosexuality was introduced by MP Shashi Tharoor towards the end of 2015, however the Lok Sabha rejected it. In the historic Puttuswamy ruling from August 2017, the Supreme Court maintained the right to privacy as a basic constitutional right. LGBT activists now have new optimism because of this.

On September 6, 2018, the Supreme Court held, "insofar as it criminalizes consensual sexual conduct between adults of the same sex," that Section 377 was unconstitutional, by majority decision. While the fight against Section 377 is over, the larger fight for LGBT people's equal rights is still going on.

1.4 From LGBT to LGBTQIA+: The evolving recognition of identity

The categories used to describe the community of individuals that includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual persons are just as diverse as the community itself: The acronym for multiple sexual identities and gender expressions has expanded along with society's comprehension, acceptance, and inclusion of these identities.

1.4.1 Lesbianism

The letter L was the first to appear in the acronym LGBTQ of all the letters. The term had been linked for centuries to the poetry of Sappho, a classical Greek poet from the island of Lesbos who wrote about the desire of the same gender. The phrase was first used to refer to same-gender relationships in the seventeenth century. However, it wasn't until the 1890s that it became widely employed in works on psychology and sexuality as well as an English-language medical lexicon. It gained traction over time and was embraced by women who first loved other women in secret and subsequently with pride.



Figure 2: *Lesbian Flag. Source: (McDonald, 2023)*

In order to promote gender nonconformity, freedom, community, special relationships to womanhood, peace, tranquility, love, sex, and femininity, Emily Gwen created this new version in 2018.

1.4.2 Homosexuality and Bisexuality

First to attempt to categorize his own group was the 19th-century German lawyer and writer Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, who may or may not have identified as gay. He referred to males who were drawn to men as "Urnings" as early as 1862. He stated, "We Urnings constitute a special class of human gender." "We are a third sex, our own gender." However, a word created by Austro-Hungarian journalist Karoly Maria Kertbeny swiftly superseded the term. The

Prussian government considered amending the constitution in 1869 to outlaw same-gender sexual relations between men.

Kertbeny responded to the new law by writing an impassioned, anonymous open letter to the Prussian minister of justice. He used the phrase "homosexuality," which he had created earlier in a private correspondence to Ulrichs, and called the legislation "shocking nonsense." In addition, he is credited with creating the terms heterosexual and bisexual, which describe those drawn to both men and women. He also defined heterosexuality as the attraction to individuals of the opposite gender.

In his letter, Kertbeny refuted popular belief that same-gender desire is detrimental and dishonorable, emphasizing that it is an innate urge. Eventually, the names were embraced by early homosexual rights organizations and psychologists working in the expanding discipline of psychology.



Figure 3: *Bisexual Flag. Source: (McDonald, 2023)*

Michael Page designed the bisexual pride flag in 1998. The flag has a purple line that overlaps in the middle and is pink on top and royal blue on bottom. The blue stripe symbolizes attraction to other genders, the pink stripe gay attraction, and the resulting overlap hue, purple, depicts attraction irrespective of gender identity.

1.4.3 Gay

The term "gay" was a decades-old insult that activists reclaimed in the late 1960s. Same-gender attraction and sexual behavior were mainly prohibited during the 20th century, and derogatory remarks about LGBTQ+ individuals were frequent. The term "gay" was finally accepted by males who openly expressed their same-gender love, despite its ambiguous origins.

Other labels, such as social variant, deviant, and "homophile," which translates to "same love," were also used by activists to avoid commonly used slurs, highlight the loving ties of same-gender relationships, and condemn discriminatory policies. "As a way for people to make sense of their own experiences, their active-undergoing of being homosexual in a homophobic environment," these words were employed.

Essayist Edmund White claimed that by 1980, males who are attracted to men were more commonly referred to as "gay" than by other labels. The fact that it is "one of the few words that does not refer explicitly to sexual activity" is what White ascribed to its rising popularity. It was used to describe males who liked men as well as people who stated that they preferred one gender over another.

1.4.4 Transgender

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) was widely adopted in the 1990s due to the long-standing relationships that these groups had in both daily life and liberation action. However, another term that is now included in the current acronym took longer to become widely accepted: "transgender." Although there have always been transgender persons, the word did not exist until the 1960s. The phrase was first used in a psychology textbook in 1965, according to historians. Transfeminine activists like Virginia Prince popularized it by promoting the idea that sex and gender are two distinct concepts. The term "transgender" gained popularity in the 2000s and replaced older terms that denigrated or ridiculed transgender persons. It was widely accepted as a component of the larger LGBT rights movement.



Figure 4: *Transgender Flag. Source: (McDonald, 2023)*

The transgender flag, which has five horizontal stripes to symbolize the transgender people, is designed in a palindromic fashion. There is a white stripe in the middle for people who are intersex, transgender, or who feel they have no gender at all. There are two light blue

stripes for boys and two pink stripes for girls. Michael Page, the author of the bisexual flag, pushed Monica Helms to create a transgender flag in 1999 so that it would represent her community.

1.4.5 *Queer*

The letter Q was added to the abbreviation more recently. It was also once a derogatory term meant to keep people out of heteronormative societies; it has been in use since at least the 1910s. However, starting in the 1990s, more and more members of the LGBT rights movement began to refer to themselves as "queer." Depending on the speaker's identity and meaning, it "can be read as at once pejorative and honorific," according to linguist Gregory Coles. Most academics view the adoption of the term "queer" as a form of reclaiming.

In the past, Q was also a symbol for "questioning," a nod toward people who are investigating their gender or sexual identity. The debate over what constitutes a personal identity and whether or not it is appropriate to use general phrases like LGBTQ to refer to people's lived experiences is highlighted by this dual definition.



Figure 5: *Queer Flag.* Source: (McDonald, 2023)

Although the original originator of the LGBT People of Color Flag is unknown, it stands for the convergence of the black and LGBT communities as well as the Black Lives Matter movements. Over time, the flag's popularity has grown. The raised fist symbol denotes both rebellion and resistance as well as solidarity and support, while the fist's different hues stand for diversity.

1.4.6 Addition of other Communities

More recent additions to the acronym aim to include an even larger segment of the population. LGBTQ can occasionally have a plus sign (denoting a range of gender identities and sexual orientations) or the initials I (intersex) and A (asexual) appended after it.

There are others who criticize the acronym, particularly those who contend that no term can ever fully capture the range of gender and sexual expression. In an effort to be even more inclusive, a number of governmental and academic institutions, notably the National Institutes of Health, have lately adopted the term "gender and sexual minority."

Within the LGBTQIA2-S community, numerous groups have created their own Pride flags. The identities of the transgender, bisexual, lesbian, pansexual, asexual, and other communities are celebrated with special flags. Nonetheless, historically speaking, the LGBTQIA2-S community as a whole has recognized and utilized the rainbow-striped flag as the most prominent emblem of Pride.



Figure 6: All Flags. Source: Pham (2020)

1.5 Statistics of LGBTQIA+ community

1.5.1 Worldwide

Research conducted in Western societies indicates that approximately 93% of men and 87% of women identify as completely heterosexual, 4% as mostly heterosexual, 1% as evenly bisexual, 5% as mostly homosexual, 2% as completely homosexual, and 4% as men and 10% as women (Bailey et al., 2016).

The lifetime prevalence of intercourse between men (regardless of orientation) was found to be 3-5% in East Asia, 6-12% in South and Southeast Asia, 6-25% in Eastern Europe, and 6-20% in Latin America, according to a review of 67 research (Caceres et al., 2006).

According to estimates from the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, between 3 and 16 percent of men worldwide have sex with men (International HIV/AIDS Alliance 2003). In this poll, the average global response to the question of sexual orientation was 80% heterosexual, 3% gay, lesbian, or homosexual, 4% bisexual, 1% pansexual or omnisexual, 1% asexual, 1% "other," and 11% unsure or unwilling to answer (Bogaert, 2015).

The findings showed that there are notable global variations in sexual identification among the generations, with Generation Z, the youngest, identifying as bisexual (9%) more often than Millennials (4%), Gen X (3%) and Boomers (2%). Additionally, Millennials and Generation Z were more likely than Generation X and Boomers to identify as homosexuals, at 3% and 4%, respectively. Men are also more likely than women to identify as homosexual, according to the survey (4%).

1.5.2 Homosexuality in India

The number of LGBTQ persons varies; in 2012, the Government of India said that there were "at least 2.5 million" of them, based on self-declarations; activists, on the other hand, put the number closer to 125 million (AP News, 2023). Global research firm Ipsos published a report on the LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey, which was carried out from April 23 to May 7, 2022. The study was carried out as a 620 market survey by Ipsos using interviews with a sample of about 50,000 people in India on its global advisor platform. 17% of Indians identify as homosexual (including gay and lesbian people), 9% as bisexual, 1% as pansexual, and 2% as asexual, according to the research. Among those who answered, "prefer not to answer," and "do not know," 69% identified as heterosexual (BBC News, 2012).

1.6 Legal status of LGBTQIA+ community

1.6.1 Worldwide

According to Wikipedia (2024b) the LGBT community is represented by a segment of society that is widely thought to be underrepresented in the field of civil rights, even by allies who identify as straight. Globalization is mostly to blame for the gay community's current struggles. Many closeted rural men from throughout the United States were pulled together by

World War II and exposed to more progressive attitudes in some sections of Europe. Many of these guys chose to form groups in cities instead of going back to their tiny areas after the war.

Early in the homosexual rights movement, fledgling groups would quickly turn political, leading to historic events at locations like Stonewall. Gay and lesbian community centers can be found in many major cities these days. In the US, several organizations, including GLAAD, Lambda Legal, the Empowering Spirits Foundation, and the Human Rights Campaign, speak out for LGBT persons on various concerns. The International Lesbian and Gay Association is another.

LGBT campaigners adhered to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the United Kingdom in 1947. The document stated that every person had the same, unalienable rights, regardless of their gender, color, or sexual orientation. While equality and the absence of discrimination are discussed, homosexual rights are not directly included in the declaration.

Clark Polak became a member of The Janus Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1962. In less than a year, he was elected president. He declared in 1968 that the organization will become the Homosexual Law Reform Society. "Homosexuals are now willing to fly under their own colors".

Same-sex couples are now eligible for marriage or partnership in various regions of the world. Proponents of same-sex marriage point to several advantages that are not available to those who are not able to marry, such as health care, inheritance and property rights, immigration, and other family responsibilities and protections, as justifications for extending marriage to same-sex couples.

Within the homosexual community, many opposed to same-sex marriage contend that pursuing these advantages through the extension of marriage privileges to same-sex couples privatizes advantages (like health care) that ought to be accessible to all individuals, regardless of their romantic status. They also contend that families consisting of three or more intimate partners are discriminated against by the gay community's same-sex marriage campaign.

1.6.2 India (Laws Related to LGBTQ+ Community in India, n.d.)

DECRIMINALISATION OF SECTION 377

In the case of Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India AIR 2018 SC 4321, the Constitutional Bench led by then Chief Justice Dipak Mishra resulted in a partial decriminalization of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 by the Supreme Court of India in 2018. Former Section 377 made homosexual couples' sexual relations illegal. The ruling represented a little milestone in the fight for the LGBTQ community's equal recognition and normalization. In this case, the Supreme Court protected the constitutional rights of the LGBTQ community while also elucidating its struggles. The Apex Court ruled in the KS Puttuswamy case that Article 21 includes the right to privacy.

TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) ACT, 2019

Indian mythology acknowledges the existence of transgender individuals; yet, throughout the British era, they faced prejudice and cruelty, which led to their backwardness. A number of rulings and pieces of legislation have been issued in an effort to restore the status of the transgender community.

The Apex Court recognized transgender people as belonging to the third gender in the National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India AIR 2014 SC 1863 case. It was the most well-known ruling, and along similar lines, the first-ever bill for the rights of the transgender community was proposed in 2014; sadly, it expired in 2016. The current law was introduced in 2019 but was heavily criticized for being passed in a chaotic manner. The goal of this act is to give transgender persons equal access to employment, education, and other opportunities.

In addition to outlawing discrimination against the transgender population, the Act sanctions abuse of transgender people under the Indian Penal Code, 1860, Section 354, Section 354A, Section 354B, Section 376, Section 498A, and Section 499. Additionally, this piece of legislation covers medical facilities, shelters, and community rehabilitation. It also offers protections for the wellbeing of transgender community members and further shields them from their antagonistic family.

RESERVATION TO TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

The Apex Court recognized transgender people as belonging to the third gender in the 2014 case National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India AIR 2014 SC 1863. The Indian Constitution provides the transgender community with economic and educational reservations.

RIGHTS UNDER CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Following the Independence War, the Indian Constitution was drafted; this process in and of itself marked freedom from all restrictions. The Constitution contains Articles 14, 15, and 21, which ensure that everyone enjoys the fundamental human rights of equality and life. Every person's right to life and personal liberty is guaranteed by Article 21, and discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth is outlawed by Article 14. But the rights granted by the Indian Constitution were insufficient, thus further laws were needed to make these provisions more effective.

The LGBTQ community has endured tragedies for a very long time. Even while the aforementioned laws might not be enough to solve the problem, they are a step in the right direction toward normalizing at least the conversation. The younger generation in India is aware of the challenges and issues facing the LGBTQ community. Numerous seminars, a pride march, the painting of a pride wall, and active discussion on public forums have all been held in an effort to address these issues. The 377 judgment is the cornerstone of all this, and people are attempting to normalize the debate about it, if nothing else. Nationwide rejoicing has greeted the Apex Court's decriminalization of Section 377 ruling.

1.7 Challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ community (Mgrant, 2023)

Over one-third of LGBTQ Americans—including over three-quarters of transgender Americans—experienced discrimination of some type in the previous year. Many LGBTQ Americans suffer from discrimination's detrimental effects on their emotional and financial well-being; of them, 1 in 2 claim moderates to severe psychological effects.

More than half of LGBTQ Americans say they have hidden a personal connection to escape prejudice, and between one-third and one-fifth of them have changed other elements of their personal or professional lives. More than half of transgender Americans and around three out of ten LGBTQ Americans had trouble paying for the essential medical care they needed last year. 15% of LGBTQ Americans—including nearly 3 out of 10 transgender people—report delaying or forgoing medical care because of discrimination.

One in three transgender patients have to inform their doctor about their gender identity in order to receive proper care, making transgender patients confront particular challenges in getting access to healthcare. LGBTQI+ persons face mistreatment and disavowal from their

own families in addition to discrimination in the workplace, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities.

Because of stigma and discrimination, they are less likely to seek medical attention, interact with medical professionals, and experience a disproportionate amount of negative physical and mental health effects. They are more prone as a group to be subjected to abuses such as torture, violence, criminalization, forced medical procedures, and prejudice. In addition, individuals experience incorrect pathologizing in medical settings, discriminatory attitudes, and care rejection.

Compared to their counterparts in the general population, young LGBTQ people experience higher rates of rejection, violence, suicide, and homelessness. In addition to being overrepresented in juvenile justice and welfare systems, LGBTQ kids also have a higher dropout rate than their heterosexual peers.

1.8 Empirical Evidence

The current study investigates instances of microaggressions directed at members of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) households. The results of a thematic analysis showed that LGBTQ family microaggressions were significant to people in a variety of family positions. These results demonstrate how cultural ideas of family shape LGBTQ microaggressions and affect the family structure (Haines et al., 2017).

The study features, psychometric qualities, and later adjustments of the 27 original measures that they identified are reported in this article. In evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of measuring LGBTQ microaggressions, the paper finishes by identifying innovative areas of measurement that other research might build upon (Fisher et al., 2018).

The current study set out to investigate the connections among Black LGBTQ people's mental health, well-being, minority stress, and identity-based community belongingness and coping (Watts & Thrasher, 2023). A study was conducted to study the impact that social connectivity and isolation have on LGBTQ youth's well-being is discussed in this conceptual overview. According to this conceptual study, when young people's capacities are developed via social well-being, meaningful engagement in forming their surroundings leads to both individual and social transformations (García et al., 2019). This study acted as an uncontrolled pilot test to examine how LGBTQ youth resilience and well-being were affected by Pride Camp, a six-day on-campus program (Weinhardt et al., 2021).

1.9 PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Every stage that humans have gone through in human history has left tales about their way of life, cultures, technologies, and abilities. The history of humanity is a chronicle of their triumph over the peculiar difficulties that each stage of life presented to them. The urge for "psychological safety" is a basic animal feature that humans still display despite all forms of superiority.

Psychological safety can be defined as, *"being able to show and employ oneself without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career"* (Kahn, 1990). To put this idea into better perspective, we might argue that it is a psychological characteristic that influences human performance, making it a crucial area of research for all disciplines pertaining to human behavior. The majority of people on the planet today still struggle to meet their basic needs, which are represented by the lowest rung of Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" (food, clothing, and housing). This is despite the fact that we are vying with one another to expand human territory in extraterrestrial areas. The layer of "safety needs" follows this one, ranking as the second most important category of necessities. According to social scientists, psychological safety is one of these fundamental needs that people must have in order to function at their highest level at work, at home, and in educational institutions (McLeod, 2019).

Psychological safety is the ability to engage in risky interpersonal interactions, voice opinions, dispute in public, and raise concerns without worrying about the consequences or feeling under pressure to sugarcoat bad news. An atmosphere of psychological safety encourages people to express their own thoughts without worrying about offending anyone or treading on toes. It is safe to provide feedback to others in this type of setting, even if it is negative and aimed at leaders, pointing out areas that require improvement or modification. Admitting faults, displaying vulnerability, and standing up to authority are acceptable.

Psychological safety fosters stronger, more creative communities, whether it is at work or at home. The advantages of psychological safety in the workplace have been widely recognized since the term was first used in 1999 by Amy Edmondson, a professor at Harvard Business School. A McKinsey survey revealed that a staggering 89% of employee participants said psychological safety in the workplace was crucial. Though it certainly helps, psychological safety has benefits beyond making individuals feel comfortable at work. Though it also promotes diversity and inclusivity in the workplace, it accomplishes more than that. Beyond the soft stuff, psychological safety has a significant positive influence on team effectiveness,

learning, employee retention, and—above all—better decision-making and performance (What Is Psychological Safety?, 2023).

1.9.1 History of Psychological Safety

Rogers (1954) first used the term "psychological safety" in reference to creating the environment required to support a person's creativity in the 1950s. Psychological safety, in Rogers' view, is linked to three processes: empathizing, accepting the person for their own worth, and creating an environment free from outside judgment.

The phrase was coined in reference to people's need for security by Ohio Wesleyan University psychology professor Hubert Bonner. He said that in addition to physiological and safety demands, a person requires "psychological safety"—the ability to believe in something and hold onto it in the face of contradicting information—in order to feel secure (Bonner, 1961).

Schein and Bennis (1965) defined "laboratory training" as "an atmosphere where one can take chances (which experimentalism implies) without fear and with sufficient protection, thus a climate is built which encourages provisional tries and which tolerates failure without retaliation, renunciation, or guilt" in relation to T-groups and "laboratory training" to effect organizational change.

Kahn (1990) revived interest in psychological safety by conducting qualitative investigations that demonstrated how psychological safety allows individuals to "employ or express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally." This occurred concurrently with the emergence of progressive management paradigms at the time, such as safety culture and the Toyota Production System (TPS), which introduced the Andon Cord, a tangible symbol of psychological safety that expressly gives employees the authority to voice concerns or issues. (Katz et al., 1996)

1.9.2 BENEFITS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Improves likelihood of process innovation success

Numerous studies have demonstrated that firms attempt to innovate their processes have been moderately to completely unsuccessful in improving corporate performance. It has been demonstrated that psychological safety is a significant and useful modulator of the relationship between process innovation and business performance. This is because a key

component of process innovation is collaboration. It's critical to create an atmosphere where people feel comfortable sharing ideas in order to foster cooperation (Baer et al., 2003).

Research indicates that psychological safety can impact “manufacturing process innovation (MPI) performance” in both direct and indirect ways. It directly improves MPI performance because team members who feel comfortable raising issues and use everyone’s skills to find solutions are more likely to successfully adopt these process innovations. It also acts as a mediator since teams’ psychological safety is increased by established information-sharing procedures, which improves MPI performance (Lee et al., 2010).

Learning from mistakes

Error detection rates in hospital units were found to be positively connected with members' perceptions that they won't face consequences for reporting errors. This demonstrates a cycle whereby individuals in psychologically safe units talk about mistakes more, which encourages others to disclose faults in the future because there is less risk involved in doing so (Edmondson, 1996).

Improves employee engagement

Employee engagement at work is influenced by psychological safety indirectly, through employees sharing their opinions as a mediator, according to a study conducted among workers at a Chinese manufacturing company. When psychological safety is high and there are little perceived dangers associated with speaking up, employees are more inclined to feel comfortable voicing their ideas, which in turn increases their level of engagement at work (Yuanqin, 2020).

Increases team innovation and creativity

A study conducted in China that looked at research and development teams from various industries discovered that psychological safety acts as a mediator in the association between the cooperative conflict management style of team leaders and the innovative performance of their teams. Because conflict is resolved by open communication and collaboration between the team leader and team members, psychological safety in teams is enhanced when team leaders employ cooperative conflict management techniques. The resultant increase in psychological safety enhances team innovation performance even more (Yin, 2022).

A study looking at 180 workers in R&D teams across 8 companies discovered that psychological safety acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between worker innovation and leadership. Employees feel more comfortable sharing novel ideas when leaders demonstrate that they are approachable and willing to listen, which promotes psychological safety. Thus, psychological safety raises staff members' engagement in creative work. This is a result of workers feeling free to participate in creative work, which includes challenging policies and practices and offering fresh concepts or modification proposals (Carmeli, 2010).

1.9.3 DRAWBACKS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Changing positive effects: "Too-much-of-a-good-thing" effect

The advantages of psychological safety for teams have been the subject of much research. Research published in the management literature, however, indicates that antecedents that are often positively correlated with desired outcomes eventually encounter a point at which the correlation becomes inverse. The term "too-much-of-a-good-thing" (TMGT) impact describes this. Conscientiousness and performance, for instance, have an inverted U-shaped connection, which means that while conscientiousness initially improves performance, too much of it actually lowers it (Pierce et al., 2011).

Mediates unethical behavior

A study that investigated these possible adverse effects examined the impact of utilitarianism on unethical behavior in teams where there is psychological safety and a mediator. The findings indicated that teams with more utilitarian members had higher rates of unethical behavior, such as cheating. In teams with higher psychological safety levels, this effect was even more noticeable (Pearsall et al., 2011).

Lowers motivation

More recent studies show that psychological safety has a detrimental impact on group members' motivation for their jobs and, consequently, has a negative impact on taking risks. Reduced motivation was correlated with higher psychological safety. Members of the group were less likely to learn from and enhance their procedures, as well as to raise concerns or new ideas, as a result of the motivation mechanism (Deng et al., 2017).

1.9.4 MODELS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Tim Clark's "Four Stages of Psychological Safety" Model

Safety for inclusion is the first step. Everyone wants to feel accepted. We yearn to fit in. Basically, the first step is just to be at ease in the team. As humans, we need to be accepted before we can be heard. All participants are encouraged to feel included and welcomed at this point, regardless of their gender, age, social background, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, or any other factor.

Learner safety is the second step, which include having the freedom to explore, ask questions, provide and accept feedback, and make mistakes. At this point, team members will ask for and share feedback to one another.

Contributor safety is the third stage. This entails being able to use each person's unique skills and abilities to contribute to the team without fear, engage as a team member, offer ideas and suggestions, and raise hazards and risks. Retrospectives and "post-mortems" become very effective techniques at this point.

Challenger safety is the fourth stage. This entails having the ability to question the team's processes, devise fresh approaches, adopt new behaviors, and criticize others' opinions—even those of more senior team members. This is the most significant "stage" of psychological safety because it can keep potentially harmful ideas out of the real world while simultaneously allowing for the emergence of new ideas and the opportunity to learn from failures.

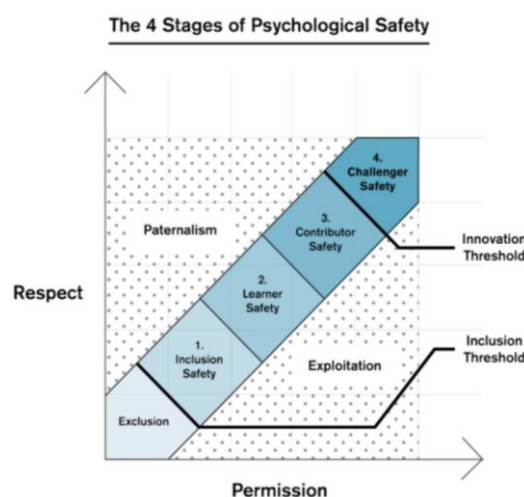


Figure 7: *Tim Clark's "Four Stages of Psychological Safety" Model*

Source: *The Four Stages of Psychological Safety – Psychological Safety, n.d.*

Tuckman's Model and Psychological Safety

Tuckman's Model of Team Development, which divides teams into four categories—"Form," "Storm," "Norm," and "Perform"—is another helpful model for team development. True performance can only be attained in psychologically secure teams since this level demands that team members be able to contribute, challenge ideas, own up to mistakes, and learn from them. Your objective as a team leader is to get to this point. When changes take place, such as when members join or leave the team, when obstacles arise, or when the team environment changes, teams may go through cycles of norming and storming. You may create and sustain high-performing teams by using the practices and procedures found in the psychological safety action pack, which you can download. These procedures will assist you in leading your teams through these four stages.

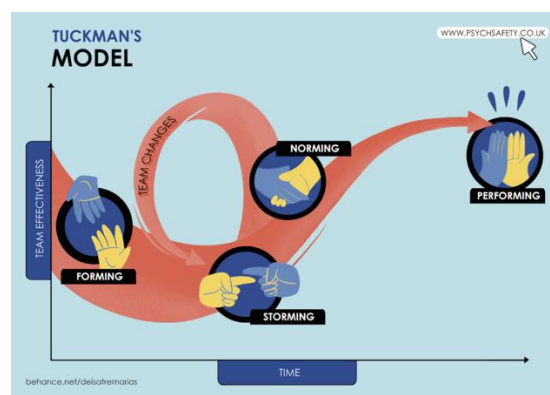


Figure 8: *Tuckman's Model of Team Development*

Source: *The Four Stages of Psychological Safety – Psychological Safety, n.d.*

1.9.5 Empirical Evidence

This study places psychological safety within the context of human development and explains the current research on the subject. They give examples that show how people interact with their surroundings to co-create moments when people may or may not feel psychologically comfortable. They suggest to develop new strategies for creating environments that make people feel more psychologically secure to interact, learn, and grow if we take into account psychological safety's place in developmental research (Wanless, 2016b).

This study examines the relational foundations of organizational failure learning by utilizing the idea of high-quality connections. We examine how the relational dimensions of

relational coordination—shared goals, mutual respect, and shared knowledge—foster psychological safety and, as a result, allow organizational members to engage in learning from mistakes. We center on relational coordination as a particular manifestation of high-quality relationships. Our mediation model, in which psychological safety mediates the relationship between learning from mistakes in organizations and high-quality relationships, is supported by the findings of two independent investigations (Carmeli & Gittell, 2008).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present study considers various positive and negative correlates of Psychological Safety among LGBTQ+ individuals. To throw light on the dynamics involved in the relationship of variables of the study that are self-esteem, psychological safety, social, compassion, bodily, belongingness, connectedness, affiliation, companionship, microaggression, assumed deviance, second-class citizen, assumption of gay culture and stereotypical knowledge and behaviour, all theoretical and empirical research has been presented here.

2.1 SELF ESTEEM

Confidence in one's own value, skills, or morals is known as self-esteem. Beliefs about oneself (such "I am loved" or "I am worthy") and emotional states (including success, despair, pride, and shame) are all included in the concept of self-esteem (Hewitt, 2009).

In psychology, it has been demonstrated that the construct of self-esteem is desirable since it is linked to many favorable outcomes, including happiness, relationship satisfaction, scholastic success, and decreased rates of criminal conduct. While low self-esteem has been linked to anxiety, loneliness, and a higher risk of substance addiction, high self-esteem is regarded to provide advantages such as better mental and physical health and a decrease in antisocial behavior (Baumeister, 2003).

Self-Esteem vs. Self-Concept

Purkey (1988) describes self-concept as: *“The totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence”*.

Although self-esteem can be a component of self-concept, self-esteem is not the same as self-concept. When we ask ourselves, "Who am I?" our response is what we believe about ourselves, or our self-concept. It involves being aware of one's own inclinations, ideas, tastes, routines, interests, abilities, and weak points. To put it simply, our concept of ourselves is the consciousness of who we are.

Self-Esteem vs. Self-Image

Self-image is another term that is similar to self-concept but has a distinct connotation; it is all about how you view yourself (McLeod, 2008). It may, however, be founded on erroneous and misleading beliefs about who we are, rather than on fact. Although our perception of ourselves may be accurate or inaccurate, it usually does not match either the outside world or how other people see us.

Self-Esteem vs. Self-Worth

Self-worth and self-esteem are related ideas, but they differ somewhat (but significantly) in that self-worth is the more widespread acknowledgement that we are deserving of love as worthwhile human beings, but self-esteem is what we think, feel, and believe about ourselves (Hibbert, 2013).

Self-Esteem vs. Self-Confidence

According to Burton (2015), self-confidence is the belief in oneself and one's capacity to overcome obstacles, find solutions, and interact positively with others. Self-esteem, on the other hand, is not the same as self-confidence. As this description has no doubt made clear to you, self-confidence is derived more from external success and value indicators than from internal indicators that support self-worth. It is possible to be quite confident in oneself, especially in a particular domain or field, and yet not have a sound sense of one's own worth or self-worth.

Self-Esteem vs. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is not a stand-in for self-esteem, although it is related to it, much like self-confidence is. Self-efficacy is the conviction that one can accomplish particular goals (Neil, 2005). Regarding basketball, you might have high self-efficacy, but when it comes to doing well in math class, you might have poor self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is based on outward success rather than internal worth, and it is more specific than self-esteem.

Self-Esteem vs. Self-Compassion

Lastly, self-compassion is not the same as self-esteem. Rather than how we view or judge ourselves, self-compassion is more concerned with how we interact to ourselves (Neff, n.d.). Being self-compassionate entails treating ourselves with kindness and forgiveness and

refraining from being unduly critical or harsh with ourselves. Although it is not the same as self-esteem in and of itself, self-compassion can help us arrive at a healthy sense of self-worth.

1.9.1 Theories of Self Esteem

Maslow's Theory- The Hierarchy of Needs

The fourth level of Maslow's pyramid, esteem needs, may come to mind when the word esteem is used. Although there is a connection between these needs and the idea of self-esteem, Maslow's esteem needs place more emphasis on external esteem indicators like respect, status, acknowledgment, achievement, and prestige (McLeod, 2017).

Although self-esteem plays a role at this level of the hierarchy, Maslow believed that self-esteem was less crucial for development and need fulfillment than the respect of others. He clarified that in order for a person to grow and reach self-actualization, their needs for respect from others and from within themselves must be satisfied.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Figure 9: *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Source: Hopper (2020b)*

Self- Determination Theory

According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), real high self-esteem is reported when the basic psychological nutrients, or needs, of life (relatedness, competency, and autonomy) are in balance. Man is born with an intrinsic motivation to explore, absorb, and master his surroundings.

Enhancement of personal growth, vitality, and well-being occurs when social conditions offer support and opportunities to meet these fundamental requirements. In order to explain people's innate capacity to internalize cultural practices and beliefs and establish connections with others, relatedness was added to the original idea (Ryan & Deci, 2004).

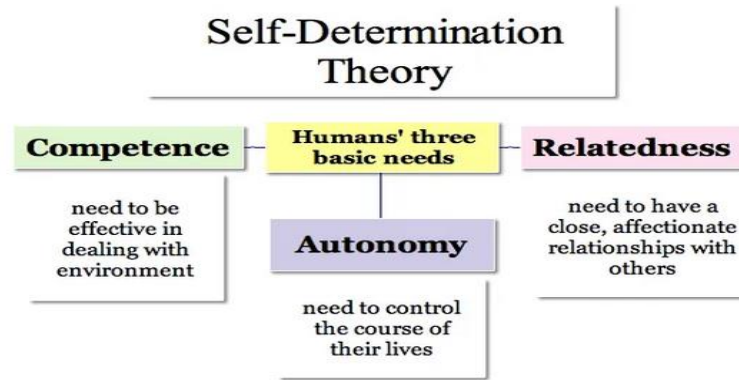


Figure 10: *Self Determination Theory.* Source: Ackerman (2024)

Terror Management Theory

The internalization of cultural values plays a crucial role in Terror Management Theory (TMT), which views self-esteem as a cultural construct that arises from the incorporation of particular societally valued circumstances into an individual's "worldview."

According to TMT, having a strong sense of self-worth fosters growth and good affect, psychological well-being, and coping mechanisms as a defense against anxiety associated to knowing that we will eventually die. It also lessens defensive anxiety-related behavior (Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

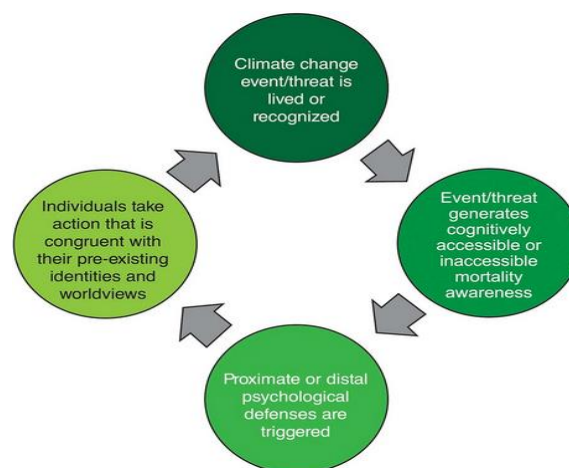


Figure 11: *Terror Management Theory.* Source: Myers (2023)

Attachment Theory

According to attachment theory, a child's chances of surviving are increased when they have a close bond with their caregiver. The Strange Situation Test categorizes children as avoidant, ambivalent, or securely attached. Seventy percent of the children tested were classified as securely attached; these children try to stay in touch with their caregiver and, despite being sad to see them go, are usually happy when they return. This suggests that they have a loving and supportive relationship with their caregiver and, interestingly, aligns with the Western World's perception of happier and more self-assured children.

According to an integration of TMT and Attachment Theory, a child's "worldview" evolves, and self-esteem and positive connections are inextricably linked as they realize that their anxiety decreases when their needs are addressed by their caregiver. Anxiety that stems from low self-esteem might cause defensive responses to dangers in contingent domains (Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

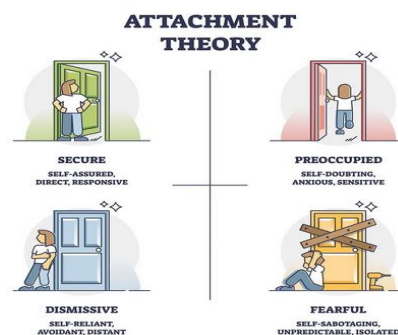


Figure 12: *Attachment Theory. Source: Simply Psychology (2024)*

Sociometer Theory

According to the Sociometer Theory (ST), human reproduction and survival depend on a certain degree of social inclusion or belonging, with self-esteem serving as a sociometer. The establishment and preservation of a limited number of significant relationships are facilitated by the capacity to quickly ascertain how other people's responses impact one's standing. It is more detrimental to one's self-esteem to be left out of a meaningful relationship than it is to be included in an increasing number of less meaningful ones, and inclusion is preferred to being merely positively viewed.

The additional complexity of worrying about one's inclusive status with groups that may be viewed negatively or as unworthy adds to the sociometer of an individual, contributing

to the growth or decline of their self-esteem. Feelings of pride and high self-esteem, and shame and low self-esteem, which translate as anxiety levels to both trait and state self-esteem, may be the best indicators of changes in one's self-esteem (Leary et al., 1995).

1.9.2 Measuring Self Esteem

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES)

One of the instruments that is most frequently used in research settings to measure self-esteem is the Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem scale. This measure was created to evaluate overall self-esteem. It ignores any mention of any particular characteristic or feature in favor of concentrating on people's overall attitudes about themselves. The items are divided into two categories: those that are phrased positively ("On the whole, I am satisfied with myself") and those that are phrased negatively ("All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure")

Coopersmith Inventory

The Coopersmith Inventory encourages participants to rank someone as similar to or different from themselves using a battery of 50 questions covering a range of areas. When a subject provides responses that show a strong sense of self-worth, the scale treats them similarly. It views people as being more likely to engage in social deviance if their responses indicate any internal shame (MacArthur SES & Health Network, 2017).

Texas Social Behavior Inventory

Although this scale is frequently used to gauge overall self-esteem, its true purpose is to gauge a person's sense of competence and comfort in social settings. Although there is some correlation between the scores on this scale and the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, the two scales do not measure the same thing. Even if someone doesn't feel comfortable in social settings, they may nonetheless generally enjoy themselves. On the other hand, a person may be laid back and gregarious among other people but not particularly like oneself. Because of this, the Rosenberg scale is the suitable tool to gauge overall self-esteem.

1.9.3 Factor affecting Self Esteem

- a) Self-esteem is positively correlated with commitment to one's job, marriage, and parental role (Reitzes & Mutran, 1994).

- b) Self-esteem and worker identity meaning are positively correlated (Reitzes & Mutran, 2006).
- c) Lower self-esteem is associated with age and marriage (Reitzes & Mutran, 2006).
- d) Higher self-esteem is correlated with both wealth and education levels (Reitzes & Mutran, 2006).
- e) Low self-esteem and low socioeconomic status are associated (von Soest, Wagner, Hansen, & Gerstorf, 2018).
- f) Low self-esteem is associated with living alone (without a significant partner) (van Soest et al., 2018).
- g) Reduced self-esteem is a result of both unemployment and disability (van Soest et al., 2018).
- h) Higher self-esteem is associated with emotional stability and a more developed personality (van Soest et al., 2018).
- i) Exercise self-efficacy and self-fulfillment are positively correlated with self-esteem, however social norms—the significance of friends' and family members' opinions—about one's body and exercise habits are negatively correlated with self-esteem (Chang & Suttikun, 2017).
- j) Low self-esteem can also result from traumatic experiences or difficult life events such as divorce, abuse, racism, neglect, poverty, a natural disaster, bullying, or other mistreatment. (Vanbuskirk, 2023)
- k) Your ability to cope with difficult situations, how optimistic you perceive the world, and your overall resilience—all of which can be acquired or inherited—all play a significant role in how damaging experiences may be to your sense of self-worth. (Vanbuskirk, 2023)

1.9.4 Benefits of Healthy Self Esteem

Feelings of security and value are influenced by a healthy sense of self-worth. Positive relationships with others are more likely to occur when one's self-esteem is in good shape. You can perform at your best at work or school because of your confidence. When your self-esteem is high, you might be more receptive to criticism and possibilities for personal development,

which helps you stay optimistic even when you fall short of expectations. You no longer have to fit in to get other people's acceptance when you accept yourself as you are. You are less likely to experience mental health issues like addictions, eating disorders, anxiety, or depression when your self-esteem is strong.

Signs of healthy self-esteem

- a) Assertive in expressing needs and opinions
- b) Confident in ability to make decisions
- c) Able to form secure and honest relationships, and discontinue unhealthy ones
- d) Realistic in expectations; not overcritical of self or others
- e) More resilient; better able to endure stress and setbacks (Self-Esteem, n.d.)

1.9.5 Costs of Low Self Esteem

Making decisions is tough when one has low self-esteem. When you don't think well of yourself, you rely too much on other people's acceptance. When you lack confidence, you tend to be afraid of failing and avoid taking chances. Generally speaking, you anticipate failure and become quite critical of yourself when you make mistakes. You prefer to ignore praises and constantly make yourself look bad. Negative self-perception raises the likelihood of dysfunctional interpersonal connections.

Signs of low self-esteem

- a) All-or-nothing thinking: You consider everything to be either nice or awful.
- b) Overgeneralization: You think that one bad experience or incident establishes a rule for your life.
- c) Mental filtering: You only pay attention to, linger on, and exaggerate the bad parts of life. You dismiss or downplay life's positive features.
- d) Converting positives into negatives: You rationalize away your accomplishments.
- e) Jumping to negative conclusions: Even in the absence of supporting data, you tend to assume the worst.

- f) Mistaking feelings for facts: You come to the conclusion that you must actually be foolish, lazy, or ugly because you feel like you are.
- g) Personalizing everything: You believe that you are responsible for all bad things that happen. You feel inappropriately guilty and accept inappropriate responsibility. (Self-Esteem, n.d.)

1.9.6 Empirical Evidence

In a study connections between self-esteem, Confucianism, and internalized homonegativity in LGBTQ individuals who grew up in Vietnam during the Doi Moi, or Open Door Policy (Nguyen & Angelique, 2017).

In a study of 657 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) people, the correlations between self-esteem, shame proneness, and forgiving of oneself, situations, and others were investigated. Results show that lesser shame proneness and greater self-forgiveness were major predictors of LGBTQ self-esteem (Greene & Britton, 2013).

A study was conducted where people who identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus) are more likely to face discrimination because of their gender identity or sexual orientation than people who identify as heterosexual or cisgender (non-transgender). Higher self-esteem for cisgender LGBTQ students was linked to social support from peers, but not for transgender students (Taylor et al., 2020).

A study investigated YouTube as a platform for social interaction among LGBTQ people (N = 428) was the aim of this study. The LGBTQ community's collective and individual self-esteem both benefited from exposure to LGBTQ YouTubers (Bond & Miller, 2021).

2.2 Belongingness

This iconic film from the 1980s depicts the tale of five strangers who are put in jail and have built their entire identity around how they fit in, are accepted, and display themselves to others. Through their social contacts with one another while incarcerated, they were able to view themselves for who they really are fellow humans with a deep need for acceptance and belonging that is satisfied via their friendships rather than for how they are perceived by society. This insight into social connectivity is what led Brian to refer to the group as "The Breakfast Club" (Pardede et al., 2021).

In reaction to our social relationships, the movie demonstrates how the need to belong and the need for acceptance are two fundamental components of what it means to be oneself (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The human emotional drive to fit in and be accepted by a group is known as belongingness. Some people seem to have an 'inherent' urge to join and play a significant role in something bigger than themselves, whether it is their family, friends, coworkers, a religion, or something else entirely. This suggests a deeper level of relationship than just familiarity or acquaintance.

Allen (2020) stated that one of the most powerful emotions in human nature is belonging. Being a part of a group is a personal experience that is shaped by a variety of elements in both the individual and the environment in which they live. Emotions that are physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual can all be significantly impacted by one's sense of belonging.

According to social psychology, the fundamental need to associate with people and gain social acceptance is known as the need to belong. Numerous social phenomena, including social comparison and self-presentation, are influenced by this urge. According to Baumeister & Leary (1995), people experience serious repercussions for not belonging since belongingness is such a basic human goal. If it weren't so essential, then not feeling like you belong wouldn't have such disastrous effects. The yearning to fit in is so ubiquitous that it exists in all societal groups and demographics.

Due to its capacity to facilitate meaningful and understanding listening and response, active listening can contribute to a person's sense of belonging. A substantial increase in feelings of acceptance and belonging can occur when the individual believes they have been heard, especially when that hearing occurs in a way that fosters unconditional positive regard.

2.2.1 Theories of Belongingness

Maslow's Theory- The Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow proposed that a primary driver of human motivation is the urge for belonging. In his hierarchy of needs, it was seen as one of the five basic human needs, along with safety, self-actualization, esteem, and physiological needs. These demands have a hierarchy and need to be met in that order. An individual can focus on fulfilling their desire for love and belonging once their physiological and safety needs have been satisfied. Maslow states that a person cannot fully love someone if their first two wants are not addressed.



Figure 13: *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Source: Hopper (2020b)*

Emotion-Sharing – Reciprocal Connectedness

The psychological feeling of social connectivity attained via sharing emotions is thought to play a role in the yearning to belong. Through camaraderie, affiliation, and connectivity, a sense of belongingness develops from infancy to maturity, according to Lee and Robbins (1995). They persuasively argued that one's need to belong is increasingly linked to a sense of worth attained through affiliations with others and, eventually, relationships outside of their comfort zone, even though they were unable to provide empirical support for their three-part argument. Their shared thesis is that these stages of needing to belong are characterized by the capacity to communicate feelings with one another and feel a mature sense of closeness. Thus, according to Lee & Robbins (1995), the urge to belong is fulfilled through emotion-sharing and reciprocal connectedness.

Supportive-Proximity – Emotional Support from Others

According to Lazarus' (1991) theory, people evaluate stressful situations according to their perception of their ability to manage the stressors. Examining one's social resources for coping is a crucial coping strategy while dealing with social pressures. For this reason, when faced with a stressor, people usually turn to their social networks for emotional support. In order to reassess the stressor based on the emotional support one receives from whomever is close enough to be given assistance, evaluating stressful events should therefore stimulate one's sense of belonging (or the urge to seek out for emotional support) beyond significant persons. Therefore, Hill (1987) proposed that as a person's demand for belongingness is heightened by subjective experiences and cues, their drive for social connection might be shaped by their want for ongoing emotional support. Therefore, the urge to belong might be interpreted as a need focused on receiving emotional support from those who are closest to you.

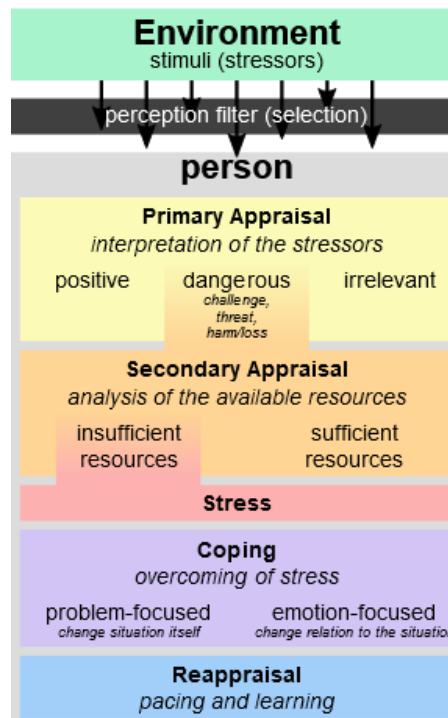


Figure 14: Lazarus Theory of Stress. Source: Wikipedia contributors (2023)

Social Identity Theory

Social identification theory holds that our perception of ourselves is shaped by the ways in which we identify with individuals who are similar to us (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Turner (1999) asserts that a person can only completely utilize self-categorization as a social identity after they have connected with their social category. Therefore, the number of potential social groupings to which one can belong affects one's value. If one has acquired a sense of belonging by being assigned to a group of people who are similar to them, they will prioritize their group just by virtue of being a valued member of that group. As a result, the drive to belong arises from a cognitive process in which one's value as a person depends on how much they resemble other people, as exemplified by their group membership.

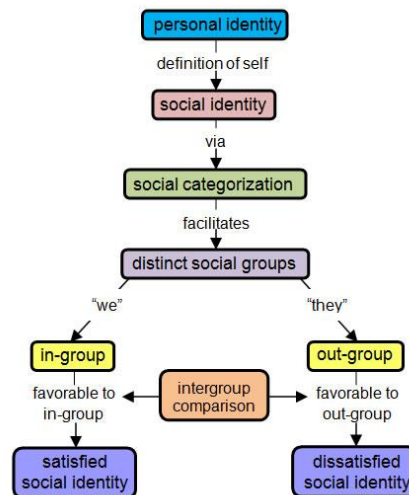


Figure 15: *Social Identity Theory. Source: Tajfel and Turner (1979)*

Environmental-Satisfaction – Interactions and Experiences

The effects of one's surroundings on oneself are linked to a feeling of belonging. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological paradigm, human experiences and growth are linked to how people interact with one another and the things that happen in their environment, and these interactions can be either acceptable or unsatisfactory. Therefore, the concept of "environmental-satisfaction"-based belongingness is linked to the way an individual identifies with or focuses themselves on the overall satisfaction of an experience in their surroundings. This in turn drives one's desire to participate and the impact of one's own sense of belongingness, since this emotional connection within a context can lead to feelings of acceptance or rejection depending on how satisfying the experience is.

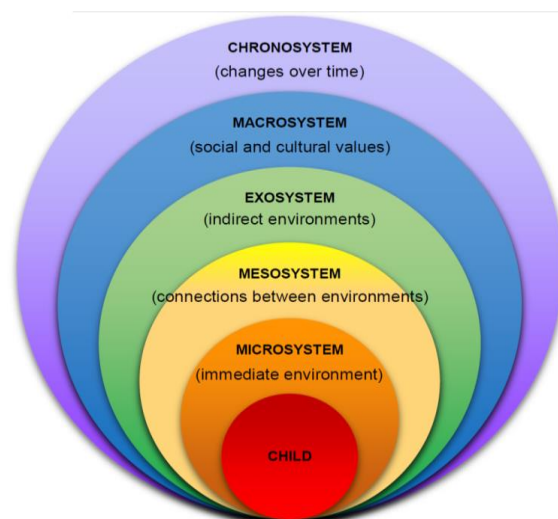


Figure 16: *Ecological Model*. Source: Budzyna and Buckley (2023)

2.2.2 Importance of Belongingness

A sense of belonging fosters opportunity for growth

Abraham Maslow, a psychologist, asserts that people frequently cannot pursue their more basic needs—physiological, safety, belonging, and esteem requirements—before they may seek their cognitive, artistic, and self-actualization wants. Put another way, individuals whose basic needs—also known as deficient needs—have been satisfied should, in theory, be better able to develop physically and psychologically to the fullest extent possible.

Isolation can be life-threatening

For a very long time, social cohesiveness and communication have been essential to human survival. Even if social identity cannot satisfy a basic need like food or shelter, it is nevertheless a strong predictor of survival in many circumstances. Think about the potentially fatal difficulties that social isolation would bring to a hunter-gatherer community. Humans hunt, gather, and work in structured groups, sharing necessary duties and defending one another from foes and predators, even on many modern farms.

Validation is necessary for mental health.

Neurological chemistry drives humans, whether or whether they live in a hunter-gatherer community, to seek out rational affirmation in a support group and social connection. Humans who reject this innate programming may see declines in both their physical and emotional well-being.

2.2.3 Empirical Evidence

This article places psychological safety within the context of human development and explains the current research on the subject. We give examples that show how people interact with their surroundings to co-create moments when people may or may not feel psychologically comfortable. We may acquire new strategies for creating environments that make people feel more psychologically secure to interact, learn, and grow if we take into account psychological safety's place in developmental research (Wanless, 2016).

The two contexts that are the subject of this article are education and health care. According to the authors, psychological safety varies depending on the kind of employment, a

person's position in the hierarchy, and how well they lead. The authors use cross-industry comparison to highlight unique aspects of various occupations, which is in line with previous research. The intention is to shed light on parallels and divergences with implications for upcoming studies on psychological safety. The authors do this by reviewing pertinent literature and presenting analyses of sizable data samples from each business to encourage additional study on psychological safety in both fields, both independently and in tandem (Edmondson et al., 2016).

2.3 Microaggression

A lecturer remarks to an Asian-American student that he speaks wonderful English, even if it's not his first tongue. A black man is brutally reminded of racial prejudices as he witnesses a white woman tremble and clutch her purse as she approaches him in the elevator. In a crucial meeting, a woman speaks up, but her male coworkers constantly interrupt her before she can finish speaking.

There's a name for what's happening in these situations, when people's biases against marginalized groups reveal themselves in a way that leaves their victims feeling uncomfortable or insulted: microaggressions (Desmond, 2015).

Psychologist Derald Wing Sue (2012) described microaggression as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership."

The word "microaggression" refers to everyday verbal, behavioral, or environmental slights—intentional or not—that convey hostile, disparaging, or unfavorable sentiments toward marginalized or stigmatized groups. Pierce, a psychiatrist at Harvard University, first used the word in 1970 to characterize the disparaging remarks and taunts that he frequently saw non-black Americans perpetrating on African Americans. The phrase began to be used in the early 21st century to refer to the casual disparagement of members of any socially oppressed group, such as LGBT individuals, the impoverished, and those with disabilities. The people voicing the remarks might otherwise have good intentions and not be aware of the consequences of what they are saying (Clinic, 2024).

Harris (2015) states that some people are irritated by the concept's increasing acceptance since they believe "microaggressions" only refer to instances in which people are being overly sensitive. In addition, it offers a shared language for individuals who wish to

identify the particular kind of everyday humiliations they experience. Furthermore, it's arguably more useful now than in the past in a society where overt racism is unacceptable but covert prejudice persists.

There is more to microaggressions than just crude remarks, insults, or jerky behavior in general. They are quite specific: the words, inquiries, or acts that cause grief because they are related to a person's membership in a group that faces prejudice or discrimination. And a major factor in why they are so unsettling is that they routinely occur in everyday life in a casual manner with no malice intent.

Commonplace slights and remarks about a person's appearance or identity, such as those related to class, gender, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, mother tongue, age, body type, handicap, or religion, are known as microaggressions. They are believed to originate from unintentionally held biases and beliefs, which might be expressed verbally in everyday interactions either intentionally or unintentionally. Even while these exchanges usually seem innocuous to onlookers, they are seen as a type of covert racism or regular prejudice. Pierce distinguished between "macroaggressions" and "microaggressions," which are more extreme types of racism (such lynchings or beatings), based on the differences in their ambiguity, size, and frequency. The majority of people who are stigmatized regularly encounter microaggressions.

2.3.1 Types of Microaggression (Haghighi, 2023)

Verbal: A question or remark that is demeaning or stigmatizing to a person or group that is marginalized is considered a verbal microaggression. Saying something like, "You're so smart for a woman,"

Behavioral: This refers to acting in a way that harms a marginalized individual or group, such as through discrimination or other means. For instance, when a waiter or bartender serves a cisgender person—someone whose biological sex matches their gender identity—instead of a transgender person.

Environmental: When there is subtly discriminatory behavior on a college campus, such as when there are only buildings named after white people that is considered an environmental microaggression.

2.3.2 Classifications (Haghighi, 2023)

Psychologist Dr. Derald Wing Sue and colleagues have defined three classifications of microaggression:

Microassaults: These occur when someone purposefully acts in a biased manner without meaning to offend. Giving a racist remark and then claiming, "I was just joking," is one example.

Microinsults: These are inadvertently discriminating remarks or behaviors. Saying to an Indian doctor, for instance, "Your people must be so proud."

Microinvalidations: These occur when someone makes a statement that minimizes or invalidates the experiences of a group that is marginalized. A white individual telling a black person, for instance, that "racism does not exist in today's society," would be an example.

2.3.3 Examples of Microaggression (Washington, 2022)

Ethnicity/Race

- "You don't look German—I didn't realize you were German," implying that someone of Jewish descent has a stereotyped appearance.
- "I think the best candidate should be hired," a statement implying that a person is receiving an unfair advantage due to their race.

Nationality

- "Your parents are from where? Your English is really good." indicating that speakers of English as a second language are typically less proficient in the language.
- "However, where exactly are you from?" indicating that a person's "true" origin is not where they grew up. Microaggressions against members of ethnic and racial minorities, whom some mistakenly believe to be immigrants, frequently occur.

Class

- "How did you get into that school?" implies that a person is an outcast at a famous university because of their background.
- "You don't seem like you grew up poor," is a signal that someone from a specific socioeconomic background ought to have a specific appearance or mannerism.

Mental well-being

- "That's insane" or "That's crazy," which are terms associated with mental illness used to express shock or disbelief.
- "It doesn't appear that you're depressed. The statement "Sometimes I get sad too" minimizes the struggles that people with mental illness face.
- "Don't mind my OCD!" is a statement that refers to being meticulous, fastidious, or orderly while utilizing the abbreviation for obsessive compulsive disorder, a mental health illness in which a person is racked with compulsive thoughts and anxieties that might result in compulsions.

Sex

- Saying something like, "Don't be so sensitive," implies that someone is acting "too emotionally," perhaps a woman, in a scenario where a guy would be more levelheaded.
- "Thank you, sweetie," and other remarks of like nature are frequently said to women and are either disrespectful or unappreciated.

Sexuality

- "That's so gay" conveys the idea that something is terrible or undesired, suggesting that being homosexual is connected to these traits.
- The question "Do you have a wife/husband?" implies heteronormative society and behavior; alternatively, the question "Do you have a partner?" is more inclusive.

2.3.4 Effects of Microaggression

A 2013 review of the microaggression literature found: "the adverse effect of ethnic microaggressions on both mental and physical well-being is just starting to be recorded; nevertheless, these studies have been largely linked and relied on recall and self-report, creating it challenging to establish whether ethnic microaggressions truly lead to adverse health effects and, if so, through what mechanisms" (Wong et al., 2014).

In a 2017 review of the literature on microaggressions, it was argued that in an attempt to comprehend the potential harm caused by microaggressions, researchers have relied too

heavily on small collections of anecdotal evidence from samples that are not indicative of any particular population, and have not done much cognitive or behavioral analysis or experimental testing (Lilienfeld, 2017).

Later, in 2020, these claims were refuted in that same journal, although the argument drew criticism for continuing to extrapolate causal conclusions from correlational data while ignoring the conclusions of the systematic studies (Lilienfeld, 2020).

Microaggression victims may experience weariness, rage, or frustration. African Americans have expressed feeling pressure to "act white" and "represent" their group, as well as to repress their own cultural expression. Some believe that the cumulative impact of microaggressions might eventually cause people to have low self-esteem and a negative self-image, as well as mental health issues like trauma, anxiety, and depression (Sue et al., 2008).

Numerous scholars contend that because microaggressions are subtle and thus frequently disregarded or minimized, they are more harmful than overt displays of bigotry because they cause the victim to experience loneliness rather than support from others and self-doubt for observing or responding to the encounter (Greer & Chwalisz, 2007).

Research has indicated that in the United States, client satisfaction with therapy is worse when individuals of color perceive microaggressions from mental health practitioners. According to certain research, individuals of color may fear, distrust, or shun connections with white people in order to prevent microaggressions because they are too much of a burden. However, some claim that overcoming microaggressions has strengthened their resilience (Lundberg, 2011).

Microaggressions "may seem minor," but there are so many of them that it's "like lifting a ton of feathers" to try to function in such a situation, according to scholars (Harvard, 2015).

In response to microaggressions, participants in an ethnographic study of transgender individuals in medical settings occasionally left hospitals in the middle of treatments and never went back to a formal healthcare environment (Nordmarken & Kelly, 2014).

2.3.5 Microaggression and LGBTQIA+ community (Woo & Woo, 2021)

A nationwide survey of public opinion found that over one-third of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual and gender identities) Americans reported experiencing discrimination because of their gender identity or sexual orientation in the

previous year. That number is considerably higher among transgender people: according to the poll, 62% of them said they had experienced discrimination in the previous year.

When considering the regular onslaught of microaggressions — those imperceptible but damaging slights, insults, and prejudices that members of the LGBTQ+ community encounter in their daily lives — these figures are merely the tip of the iceberg.

Compared to their heterosexual and cisgender friends, LGBTQ+ people have much greater rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide as well as risky behaviors including binge drinking, smoking cigarettes, and using illegal drugs. Having to deal with the daily stress of feeling marginalized is the cause of these health disparities.

2.3.6 Empirical Evidence

This study investigated the relationship between psychological distress and both overt victimization and microaggressions among LGBTQ college students, as well as whether gender identity influences this relationship. Discrimination in all its manifestations is linked to higher levels of stress and anxiety as well as decreased self-esteem (Seelman et al., 2020).

In order to remedy this absence, the present study clarifies the importance of intersectionality as a theoretical framework in LGBTQ studies. The results showed that because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, LGBTQ people of Color faced microaggressions in their families, racial and ethnic communities, and mainstream LGBTQ settings (Sadika et al., 2020).

The current study makes it possible to comprehend prejudice that operates at the level of the family system. The results of a thematic analysis showed that LGBTQ family microaggressions were significant to people in a variety of family positions. Three main topics came to light: gender inequality within families, difficulties with family ideals, and family legitimacy. These results demonstrate how cultural ideas of family shape LGBTQ microaggressions and affect the family structure (Haines et al., 2017b).

In order to fill this vacuum in the literature, the current study used a qualitative methodology that enabled LGBTQ individuals to openly recount instances of microaggression they had encountered in their spiritual and religious organizations. Three main themes emerged from the thematic analysis: (1) LGBTQ identities as inauthentic; (2) religious and spiritual

tolerance of LGBTQ identities; and (3) the incompatibility of LGBTQ and religious/spiritual identities (Lomash et al., 2018).

CHAPTER 3

AIM, OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This chapter explores the study's goals, reasoning, and objectives while giving a thorough rundown of the research framework and its fundamental intent. This chapter provides insight into the rationale behind the study and its significance within the larger academic field, serving as a crucial foundation for the overall research attempt. This chapter lays the groundwork for further empirical study by providing an overview of the research, describing its specific goals and objectives, and identifying the main questions or hypotheses that need to be investigated. It also gives readers a clear idea of the extent of the research, laying the foundation for the analytical and interpretive debates that will come in following chapters.

3.1 Rationale of the Study

It can be quite dangerous to be an LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer) person in many different parts of the world. Even for those who do not regularly face an immediate threat to their lives, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, and sex characteristics can have a disastrous impact on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of those who are forced to endure it.

At the heart of our inquiry lies the pivotal role of Psychological Safety among LGBTQ+ individuals. As far there has never been a study of Psychological Safety among LGBTQ+ even though they are the ones who face the utmost harsh and brutal discrimination everyday impacting them psychologically. Making it one of the most important reason of studying this variable among LGBTQ+ community.

Drawing from the seminal work of Wanless (2016), the study places psychological safety within the context of human development and explains the current research on the subject. They give examples that show how people interact with their surroundings to co-create moments when people may or may not feel psychologically comfortable. They suggest to develop new strategies for creating environments that make people feel more psychologically secure to interact, learn, and grow if we take into account psychological safety's place in developmental research.

Self-Esteem, Belongingness and Homonegative Microaggression are some of the other variables taken up to be studied along with Psychological Safety. The fourth level of Maslow's

pyramid, esteem needs, may come to mind when the word esteem is used. However, we are aware that having self-esteem is crucial to leading a fulfilling life and that success, relationships, and happiness all depend on you believing in and accepting who you are. It gives us confidence in our skills and the will to use them, leading to fulfillment as we go through life with a good attitude.

Through a lens informed by Vosvick and Stem (2019), they stated that lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender (LGBT) people endure stress related to their minority status due to a history of marginalization, which can endanger their psychological well-being and sense of self. They postulated that the relationship between stress and psychological quality of life is modulated by mindful attention and self-esteem, and that mindful acceptance and self-esteem explain a major percentage of variance in psychological quality of life of LGBT individuals. They then discovered that a considerable percentage of the variation in psychological quality of life was explained by conscious acceptance and self-esteem.

In our quest to unravel the tapestry of belongingness, we draw inspiration from the profound insights of Hill et al. (2017), they postulated that social support, through a reduction in thwarted belongingness, would be indirectly linked to a decrease in suicidal ideation. The findings showed that, in addition to the impacts of age, sex, and depressive symptoms, support from the LGB community and family was related with decreased thwarted belongingness. Through thwarted belongingness, indirect effects models also suggested a relationship between suicide thoughts and support from the LGB community and family. According to the current study's findings, LGB emerging adults' families and the LGB community may be particular targets for lowering thwarted belongingness, which might be used to enhance efforts to prevent suicide.

Incorporating insights from Sadika et al., (2020), their study makes clear the significance of intersectionality as a theoretical framework in LGBTQ studies in order to address this gap. The findings demonstrated that LGBTQ people of Color experienced microaggressions in mainstream LGBTQ settings, racial and ethnic communities, and families due to their gender identity and sexual orientation.

The interdependence of the study variables—psychological safety, self-esteem, belongingness, and homonegative microaggression among LGBTQ+ people—is well supported by these studies. By clarifying these connections, researchers advance our knowledge of the variables affecting psychological well-being and safety in this crucial area.

This knowledge informs the development of specialized interventions and support plans that are suited to the particular requirements of this community. Regression analysis will be used to examine the important determinants of psychological safety among the variables under investigation. Belongingness and Self-Esteem are two possible factors. The relative contributions of each of these characteristics to psychological safety will be evaluated, taking into account pertinent demographic factors including age, gender, and the frequency of microaggressions experienced.

3.2 Research Gaps

- a) **Legally free but imprisoned psychologically-** Section 377 was removed from IPC back in 2018 but LGBTQ+ community still faces everyday stigmatization and discrimination affecting them psychologically. Even after being legally free they are still caught up in a society full of hate and anger towards them. Thus, this study aims to focus on factors that can help in identifying and creating a psychological safe space for LGBTQ+ community.
- b) **No study on Psychological Safety among LGBTQ+-** No studies on psychological safety among LGBTQ+ people have been done worldwide as of yet. An individual's psychological safety is their capacity to take risks in social situations, express their thoughts, argue in public, and voice concerns without fear of repercussions or pressure to sugarcoat unfavorable information. Therefore, it is crucial that this variable be studied for this study.
- c) **Cultural considerations and limited research in India-** The bulk of this field's research has been done in Western settings, ignoring the impact of cultural variables on LGBT's psychological safety. Research on the cultural subtleties and contextual elements influencing LGBTQ+ experiences is desperately needed, especially in multicultural environments like India. Researchers can create culturally sensitive interventions that are suited to the needs of a variety of communities by considering cultural viewpoints.
- d) **Intervention and Support strategies-** Although a number of studies have examined the relationships between psychological safety, self-esteem, belongingness, and microaggression in the LGBTQ+ community, few have assessed the efficacy of particular intervention and support techniques. Future studies should concentrate on creating and assessing evidence-based interventions that are specifically designed to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ people. Examples of such interventions include training

courses, community outreach programs, and organizational measures that create a safe and welcoming atmosphere.

3.3 Research Questions

Among LGBTQ+, are there any correlations between:

3.3.1.1 Psychological safety and self-esteem?

3.3.1.2 Psychological safety and belongingness & its components?

3.3.1.3 Psychological safety and homonegative microaggression & its components?

3.3.2 Are there any components and predictors of psychological safety among LGBTQ+?

3.4 Research Objectives

Among LGBTQ+, to study the relationship between

3.4.1.1 Psychological safety and self esteem

3.4.1.2 Psychological safety and belongingness & its components

3.4.1.3 Psychological safety and homonegative microaggression & its components

3.4.2 To determine predictors of psychological safety among LGBTQ+

3.5 Hypotheses

It is expected that

3.5.1.1 Psychological safety will be positively correlated to self esteem

3.5.1.2 Psychological safety will be positively correlated to belongingness & its components

3.5.1.3 Psychological safety will be negatively correlated to homonegative microaggression & its components

3.5.2 Self-esteem and belongingness are expected to be the positive predictors of psychological safety and components of microaggression are expected to be the negative predictors of psychological safety.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter clarifies the research methodology to answer the hypotheses to acquire systematic information. The aim of the present investigation was to study Psychological Safety and its correlates among LGBTQ+ individuals. For this purpose, 35 responses of individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ were collected.

4.1 Research Design

For the present investigation, a quantitative approach was used. Researchers use the quantitative research method when the purpose of the research is to obtain primary data, that is, data gathered and assembled particularly for the study, in contrast to secondary data. The present study follows the quantitative research design intended to examine the correlation among variables used in the study.

4.2 Sample

The sample for the current investigation consisted of 35 LGBTQ+ individuals. Specifically, 4 were Lesbians, 4 were Gay, 13 were Bisexuals, 4 were Transgenders, 4 were Queer, 3 were Asexual and 3 were Pansexual. The sample was drawn through the technique of purposive and snowball sampling.

4.3 Inclusion Criteria

- a) Anyone who identifies as homosexual or LGBTQ+ individual were selected as the research participant.
- b) Participants who reside in India were included in the study.
- c) Participants who understand English language were included in the study.

By applying these inclusion criteria, the study aimed to ensure that participants were suitably qualified and experienced to provide valuable insights into the research questions and objectives. Additionally, adherence to these criteria helped maintain the integrity and validity of the study's findings.

4.4 Exclusion Criteria

- a) Anyone who does not belong to LGBTQ+ community or consider themselves as straight or heterosexual were excluded from the study.
- b) Participants residing outside of India were excluded from the study.
- c) Participants who have difficulty understanding English language were excluded from the study.

By applying these exclusion criteria, the study aimed to maintain the relevance, reliability and validity of the data collected from the participants. Additionally, these criteria helped ensure that participants were suitable and qualified to contribute meaningfully to the research objectives.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

The current investigation adhered to ethical guidelines and protocols in recruiting study participants. Adequate information regarding the studies objective was provided to all individuals and consent was obtained from each participant before the study. Participants were assured that their responses on data would be kept confidential to safeguard confidentiality and the information collected will be used solely for the study purpose.

4.6 Tests and Tools

Standardized tools with good psychometric qualities were chosen in consideration of the variables to be tested, the study's objectives, and nature of the sample. The following standardized tests and tools were used:

- a) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)
- b) Neuroception of Psychological Safety Scale- Generic Version (NPSS-G) (Morton et al., 2021).
- c) LGBTQ Belongingness Attainment Scale (Murray & Dailey, 2020)
- d) Homonegative Microaggression Scale (Wright & Wegner, 2012)

All the tests used for the purpose of research were standardized and had established reliability and validity. The scales administered were available in English. A semi-

structured interview schedule was also administered to the participants to seek detailed information about their, critical, social and demographic aspects such as age and gender.

4.7 Brief description of Scales

a) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

One popular self-esteem tool in social science research is the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES), which was created by sociologist Morris Rosenberg. A score of less than 15 on the 10–40 scale may be indicative of seriously low self-esteem. Despite being designed with teens in mind, the tool has found widespread application in adult research.

The social-survey questions and the RSES have a similar design. There are five things with statements written positively and five with statements written adversely. The scale gauges an individual's overall sense of worth by assessing both positive and negative self-perceptions. 5,024 juniors and seniors from ten randomly chosen New York State high schools made up the initial sample for which the measure was created. One effective and dependable quantitative technique for assessing one's own self-esteem is the Rosenberg self-esteem scale.

Numerous languages, including Persian, French, Chinese, Italian, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, have seen translations and adaptations of the RSES. The measure is widely used in up to 53 different countries for cross-cultural research.

Instructions

When using RSES, participants are usually given explicit instructions to carefully read a series of items that address your overall self-perception. They express your level of agreement or disagreement with each assertion.

Types of items

The RSES comprises of a balanced mix of positively and negatively worded items, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of self-esteem. Positively worded items reflect an individual's confidence in their abilities while negatively worded items capture the potential decline in their abilities.

Scoring

Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. Give “Strongly Disagree” 1 point, “Disagree” 2 points, “Agree” 3 points, and “Strongly Agree” 4 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

Interpretation

RSES SCORE	INTERPRETATION
10-20	Low Self-esteem
20-30	Normal Self-esteem
30-40	High Self-esteem

Psychometric Properties

Reliability: The RSE has good internal consistency with a Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of .92. Over a two-week period, test-retest reliability shows correlations of .85 and .88, showing outstanding stability.

Validity: Uses established groups to demonstrate concurrent, predictive, and construct validity. Significant correlations have been found between the RSE and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and other measures of self-esteem. Furthermore, there is an anticipated correlation between the RSE and anxiety and depression measurements.

Neuroception of Psychological Safety Scale- Generic Version (NPSS-G) (Morton et al., 2021).

A new tool for assessing psychological safety that may be applied in a variety of health and social care contexts is the NPSS. The psychological, relational, and physiological aspects of safety may be measured, and this research offers a framework for future work to support and improve understandings of the science of safety. New methods for assessing trauma therapies, relationship problems, and mental health challenges will be shaped in part by the NPSS. There is ongoing research to determine the NPSS's convergent, discriminant, and concurrent validity as well as to investigate its application with a range of clinical and community populations.

Sub-Scales

Social Engagement Subscale: This subscale suggest that people think it is safe and acceptable to interact socially in the area. These scores reflect the opinions of individuals about understanding, acceptance, care, freedom of expression without fear of rejection, and support from others.

Compassion Subscale: The Compassion Subscale are indicative of a capacity for compassion along with a sense of empathy, caring, closeness, and a desire to help others.

Bodily Sensations Subscale: This subscale reflect the inner feelings of a peaceful state of the body, such as a soothed stomach, a relaxed face and body, and a stable heartbeat and breathing pattern.

Instructions

The participant were asked to rate how well the statements describe your feelings during (specifying a particular situation, timeframe, or experience). For example: ‘Your experiences at work over the past week’, ‘Your recent hospital stay’, ‘Your experiences in your classroom’ or ‘Your time spent on social media over the past week’.

Scoring

For each item, assign values to the responses according to the numbering below:

Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly Agree	5

Scoring for subscales

Sub-scales	Item No.	Score range
Social Engagement Subscale	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14=14	14-70
Compassion Subscale	15,16,17,18,19,20,21=7	7-35
Bodily Sensations Subscale	22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29=8	8-40

Interpretation

Social Engagement Subscale- Higher ratings on this subscale indicate that people believe the surroundings to be safe and non-threatening for social interaction. These ratings show how people feel about being understood, welcomed, cared for, free to express themselves without fear of rejection, and supported by others.

Compassion Subscale- Higher scores on this subscale indicate a capacity for compassion as well as a sense of connectedness, empathy, caring, and a desire to assist others.

Bodily Sensations Subscale- Higher scores capture the interior sensations of a tranquil state of the body, including a relaxed face and body, a steady heartbeat and breathing pattern, and a calmed stomach.

Psychometric Properties

The reliability and validity of this scale is being established.

b) LGBTQ Belongingness Attainment Scale (Murray & Dailey, 2020)

The Social Connected Scale, Social Assurance Scale, and Connectedness to the LGBT Community Scale by Lee and Robbins (1995) and Frost and Meyer (2012) were analyzed to create the 18-item LGBTQ BAS self-report survey. The LGBTQ BAS incorporates Lee and Robbins' (1995) focus on a multidimensional concept of belongingness that encompasses friendship, affiliation, and connectedness, as well as Frost and Meyer's (2012) focus on LGBTQ community connectivity. Their understanding of belongingness was theoretically based on Kohut's Self-Psychology and the idea that people need alter ego self-objects. By offering a subjective sensation of camaraderie, connection, and closeness, alter ego self-objects are created to avoid emotions of isolation and alienation (Lee & Robbins, 1995).

Sub-scales

Companionship- The need for humans to develop close, emotional bonds and ties with other people is reflected in companionship. Relationships are beneficial because they reduce loneliness, boost social pleasure, and elevate mood (Rook, 1987; Baldassare et al., 1984). The item numbers under companionship are 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18.

Affiliation- The need for humans to interact and communicate with peer groups is known as affiliation (Lee & Robbins, 1995). According to Brown & Lohr (1987), affiliations boost self-esteem, encourage friendships, provide a platform for social activities, and aid in the development of social networks and supports (Brown et al., 1986). The item numbers under affiliation are 2, 5, 8, 11, 14 and 17.

Connectedness- According to Lee and Robbins (1995), connectedness is the need for people to identify with and feel a part of the greater community. According to Yoon et al. (2008), being connected promotes personal wellbeing and reduces anxiety (Lee & Robbins, 1998). The item numbers under connectedness are 1, 4, 7, 10, 13 and 16.

Instructions

Participants were asked to read each statement carefully. They were asked to respond by circling the number that best indicated how they felt about each statement. Also they were asked to only circle one number for each of their responses.

Scoring

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Somewhat Disagree

4 = Somewhat Agree

5 = Agree

6 = Strongly Agree

Interpretation

<i>TOTAL SCORE INTERPRETATION</i>	
Score Range	Interpretation
6-40	Low
41-75	Average
76-108	High

<i>COMPANIONSHIP INTERPRETATION</i>	
Score Range	Interpretation
6-16	Low
17-26	Average
27-36	High

<i>AFFILIATION INTERPRETATION</i>	
Score Range	Interpretation
6-16	Low
17-26	Average
27-36	High

<i>CONNECTEDNESS INTERPRETATION</i>	
Score Range	Interpretation
6-16	Low
17-26	Average
27-36	High

Psychometric Properties

Reliability- The internal consistency and dependability of the LGBTQ BAS test results was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and IBM SPSS Statistics Grad Pack 22.0. Excellent reliability (0.95) was found for the overall construct of belongingness, and for each of the latent variables of connectedness (0.89), companionship (0.94), and affiliation (0.92).

Validity- The CFA provided evidence of a good model fit based on measurements of the CFI = 0.91 and the IFI= 0.91, as well as a reasonable model fit as determined by the chi square test ($X^2/(df) = 3.11$). The factor loadings on the schematic structure further confirmed the LGBTQ BAS's adequate degree of construct validity, as these measurements show.

c) Homonegative Microaggression Scale (Wright & Wegner, 2012)

The model was first created using an exploratory factor analysis on the same sample that Wright & Wegner (2012) employed. A confirmatory factor analysis was then performed to validate the model with a larger, more varied sample of individuals. Given that Sue et al.'s (2007) taxonomy informed the construction of the Homonegative Microaggressions Scale, the hypothesis was that subscales produced by factor analysis would reflect the themes of racial microaggressions he proposed. Ascription of Intelligence, Color Blindness, Criminality, Denial of Individual Racism, Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles, Second-Class Citizen, and Environmental Microaggressions were some of the subjects that were covered. The Homonegative Microaggressions Scale items were predicted to cluster together in a way that represented different degrees of aggression.

Sub-scales

The four HMS subscales have distinct qualities related to what it means to be a sexual minority as opposed to a racial minority, even though they can be linked in some ways to one or more of Sue's themes. For instance, based solely on physical attributes, a person's sexual orientation is frequently not immediately obvious, and this can lead to assumptions of heterosexuality, a possible affront that is exclusive to LGB people. The study's four microaggression themes aim to encompass the experiences that are most significant to gay and bisexual people. These core constructs included Assumed Deviance, Second Class Citizen, Assumptions of Gay Culture, and Stereotypical Knowledge and Behavior.

Assumed Deviance- The subscale Assumed Deviance included items that addressed the assumption that a person's sexual minority status translates into something fundamentally wrong or dangerous about them; examples of microaggressions that loaded onto Assumed Deviance were believing that people who identify as LGBT are perverts, pedophiles, going to hell because of how they identify, or having HIV/AIDS. Other things included the suggestion that homosexuality is a decision and the propensity for people to keep their distance from LGB people or to protect their kids from them. The subscale that most closely resembles Sue's topic of criminality/assumption of criminal status is probably this one. However, it addresses the notion that homosexuals and bisexuals are viewed as sexual deviants rather than reflecting the assumption that they are violent criminals.

Second-Class Citizen- Second-Class Citizen emerged as the second factor from SEM. It comprised items evaluating exposure to statements made against LGBT people adopting children, getting married, or being instructed to disguise their sexual orientation. The categories seemed to cover a large portion of the experiences of feeling like a second-class citizen that Sue et al. (2007) detailed for racial minorities. Given the heterosexist world in which we live, it is plausible that LGB people may experience similar feelings.

Furthermore, certain items were included to this factor that evaluated the trivialization or reduction of minority status; these items included individuals making generalizations about how diverse society is or attempting to show that they are aware of LGBT culture. In this way, Second-Class Citizen on the HMS was made up of not only microinsults but also microinvalidations.

Assumption of Gay Culture- The items that loaded onto the third factor, Assumptions of Gay Culture, represented instances in which people in a heterosexist culture generalized the conduct of LGBT people and envisioned their cultural standards. One type of contact covered in this subscale was people expressing surprise at how "normal" a gay man is due to his lack of effeminate characteristics. Hearing phrases like "you people" or "you know how gay people are" was another. Although some of the elements in Assumptions of Gay Culture are similar to what Sue envisaged in Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles, they combine to produce a theme of microaggressions specific to the LGB experience. However, the significance of this issue lies in the fact that numerous pieces show how a perceived complement might be hurtful.

Stereotypical Knowledge and Behaviour- The component that most closely resembled Sue's Ascription of Intelligence was the fourth one to surface from the exploratory and confirmatory analyses. It included things like presuming homosexual and bisexual guys know a lot about wine, women's fashion, and interior design. In a similar vein, it captures the stereotype that lesbian and bisexual women are acquainted with men's clothes, sports, and woodworking. It's interesting to note that Stereotypical Knowledge and Behavior also discusses safe sex, whether or not LGB people need to worry about at all. This element includes assumptions that are not always meant to be harmful, much as a few of the things in Assumptions of Gay Culture. Once more, there is a social expectation that gay and bisexual persons will adhere to specific stereotypes.

Instructions

Participants were asked to read each statement carefully. These questions were about experiences they have had in the recent past (the past 6 months). They were then asked to mark the option according to the frequency of such encounters.

Scoring

1=Hardly ever/never/ not at all

2=Occasionally, but rarely/a little bit

3= occasionally/from time to time/ somewhat

4= Consistently/often/ a good deal

5= constantly/a great deal

6=Not applicable

Assumed Deviance (items: 1, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 28, and 40= 9)

Second-Class Citizen (items: 12, 21, 22, 34, 35, 37, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45= 11)

Assumptions of Gay Culture (items: 2, 3, 10, 13, 24, 26, 32 and 39= 8)

Stereotypical Knowledge and Behavior (items: 6, 7, 8, 9, and 29= 5)

Interpretation

<i>TOTAL SCORE INTERPRETATION</i>	
Score Range	Interpretation
45-120	Low Microaggression
121-195	Average Microaggression
196-270	High Microaggression

<i>ASSUMED DEVIANCE INTERPRETATION</i>	
Score range	Interpretation
9-23	Low
24-38	Average
39-54	High

<i>SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN</i>	
Score Range	Interpretation
11-29	Low
30-48	Average
49-66	High

<i>ASSUMPTION OF GAY CULTURE</i>	
Score Range	Interpretation

8-26	Low
27-44	Average
45-64	High

STEREOTYPICAL KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOUR	
Score Range	Interpretation
5-13	Low
14-21	Average
22-30	High

Psychometric Properties

Reliability- Using Cronbach's alpha, the internal consistency reliabilities of the three HMS scales were investigated. Cronbach's alpha was equal to .94, .95, and .96 for the scales measuring the frequency of microaggressions experienced in the last six months (HMS Current), growing up (HMS Past), and their impact (HMS Impact), respectively, demonstrating excellent reliability.

Validity- The frequencies of previous microaggressions (HMS Past) and current HMS were linked in the predicted directions with the GALOSI-F, PPS, and PDS. It was demonstrated that there was a substantial positive correlation between the HMS Impact scale and the GALOSI-E, PPS, and PDS in the anticipated direction.

4.8 Procedure

Keeping in view the objectives and ethical considerations, following procedures were executed. To study “Psychological Safety and its correlates among LGBTQ+.” Literature review was collected and various researches were studied. The tools for data collection for all the variables were gathered. Next, the hypotheses were formulated and the expected outcomes were identified. The research was conducted on a sample of 35 LGBTQ+ individuals. To recruit participants, Google forms were created to assure anonymity and to reach a broader population

of LGBTQ+ in India. The Google form included a brief study description, eligibility criteria and a request for informed consent. Then columns for taking socio-demographic details and standardized scales of the study were included in the study. The participants were assured that their responses would be kept anonymous and confidential. The form was shared on the internet via various social media platforms and LGBTQ+ dating sites and apps such as instagram, whatsapp, linkedin, grindr and bumble to spread the form to the eligible participants. After completing the Google forms, participants were encouraged to share the link with other eligible LGBTQ+ individuals. Participants were appreciated and thanked for contributing to the study. The rigorous procedure aimed to uphold ethical standards, prioritize participant comfort, and foster a supportive environment for data collection from LGBTQ+ community.

4.9 Scoring and statistical analysis

Scoring for all the given tests was done as per the scoring instructions given in the manual. With the help of Microsoft Excel raw scores were arranged and tabulated and subjected to various statistical analysis by using Statistical Product and service Solutions (SPSS) package. Keeping in view the aim of the study, statistical analysis was conducted. Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation Analysis and Regression were carried out. Correlation Analysis was carried out to test the relationship between four variables. Regression for criterion variable was taken out to find its predictors. Before carrying out statistical tests, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were checked. The responses that emerged through the semi structured interview schedule, were analyzed qualitatively and the results are presented in the form of tables.

CHAPTER 5**RESULTS***Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the total sample (N=35)*

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
SELF-ESTEEM	27.7143	6.13367	35
SOCIAL	50.6571	11.99741	35
COMPASSION	29.7714	4.05902	35
BODILY	26.9143	7.01834	35
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY	107.3429	19.84935	35
CONNECTEDNESS	26.5429	5.39795	35
AFFILIATION	27.2857	6.39656	35
COMPANIONSHIP	30.8571	5.63676	35
BELONGINGNESS	84.6857	13.93846	35
ASSUMED DEVIANCE	26.6286	11.41487	35
SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN	34.0857	12.80251	35
ASSUMPTION OF GAY CULTURE	25.9714	8.71606	35
STEREOTYPICAL KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOUR	15.8000	7.16117	35
HOMONEGATIVE MICROAGGRESSION	146.4286	52.64045	35

Table 2: Intercorrelation Matrix of the total Sample (N=35)

		S.E.	SOC	COM	BOD	P.S.	CON	AFF	COP	BEL	AD	SCC	AGC	SKB	HMA
S.E.	Pearson Correlation	1													
SOC	Pearson Correlation	.477**	1												
COM	Pearson Correlation	.522**	.592**	1											
BOD	Pearson Correlation	.468**	.578**	.516**	1										
P.S.	Pearson Correlation	.561**	.930**	.745**	.808**	1									
CON	Pearson Correlation	.249	.191	.222	-.072	.135	1								
AFF	Pearson Correlation	-.005	.069	.112	-.156	.009	.889**	1							
COP	Pearson Correlation	.244	.569**	.442**	.328*	.550**	.213	.251	1						
BEL	Pearson Correlation	.193	.335*	.316	.033	.279	.881**	.905**	.602**	1					
AD	Pearson Correlation	.393*	.130	.158	.258	.202	-.033	-.034	-.016	-.035	1				
SCC	Pearson Correlation	.313	.060	-.045	.050	.045	.155	.204	.008	.157	.681**	1			
AGC	Pearson Correlation	.321	.109	.176	.164	.160	-.048	.010	-.056	-.037	.728**	.841**	1		
SKB	Pearson Correlation	.289	.089	.018	.166	.116	-.080	-.051	-.047	-.073	.724**	.756**	.809**	1	
HMA	Pearson Correlation	.237	.105	-.049	.106	.091	-.019	.026	-.077	-.026	.818**	.821**	.829**	.860**	1

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. (o.418)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. (0.325)

S.E.- SELF ESTEEM, SOC-SOCIAL, COM-COMPASSION, BOD-BODILY, P.S.- PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, AFF-AFFILIATION, CON- CONNECTEDNESS, COP-COMPANIONSHIP, BEL- BELONGINGNESS, AD- ASSUMED DEVIANCE, SCC- SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN, AGC- ASSUMPTION OF GAY CULTURE, SKB-STEREOTYPICAL KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOUR, HMA- HOMONEGATIVE MICROAGGRESSION

Table 3: Stepwise Multiple Regression table for Criterion Variable Psychological Safety (N=35)

S. No.	Independent Variable	Mean	S.D.	Regression Coefficient	β Coefficient	t value	p	MR ²	F	df	p	R ² Change	F Change	p
1	Self-Esteem	27.71	6.13	1.47	.453	3.50	.001	0.314	15.12	(1, 33)	.000	0.314	15.12	.000
2	Companionship	30.86	5.64	1.55	.439	3.39	.002	0.496	15.73	(2, 32)	.000	0.182	11.52	.002

Note: MR²= 0.496; F= 15.73; df= (2, 32); p<.000

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Around the world, people are under attack for who they are.

Living as an LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer) person can be extremely dangerous in many different parts of the world. Discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, and sex characteristics can have a catastrophic effect on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of people who are forced to endure it, even for those who do not face an immediate danger to their lives on a daily basis.

LGBTQ individuals may face a variety of types of violence and discrimination, such as being refused access to proper healthcare or employment, as well as name-calling, bullying, harassment, and gender-based assault. Globally, protests advocating for the rights of LGBTQ individuals are also met with oppression.

The rates of rejection, violence, suicide, and homelessness among young LGBTQ people are higher than those of the general population. LGBTQ children not only outnumber their heterosexual counterparts in the juvenile justice and welfare systems, but their dropout rate is still high.

Self-esteem refers to how one perceives and values themselves. Thus, Self-Esteem of an individual can be negatively impacted by hate crimes, threats, family rejection, anti-LGBTQ messaging, and an unwillingness to embrace one's gender identity. According to a 2018 Human Rights Campaign survey, while 91% of LGBTQ kids are proud of who they are, 70% of them said they felt useless or hopeless the week before. Furthermore, 67% of participants reported hearing anti-LGBTQ remarks from family members.

According to a study, compared to people who identify as heterosexual or cisgender (non-transgender), LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus) individuals are more likely to experience prejudice because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Peer social support was associated with higher self-esteem for cisgender LGBTQ students, but not for transgender students (Taylor et al., 2020).

Belongingness refers to a sense of security and support when they are accepted, included, and given an identity. It occurs when a person is able to present their true selves to work.

Correlation between Self-Esteem and Belongingness was also studied by García et al., (2019). This conceptual review discusses a study that looked at the effects of social isolation and connection on the wellbeing of LGBTQ kids. This conceptual study suggests that meaningful engagement in shaping one's environment can lead to both individual and social reforms when young people's capacities are developed through social well-being.

The word "microaggression" refers to everyday verbal, behavioral, or environmental slights—intentional or not—that convey hostile, disparaging, or unfavorable sentiments toward marginalized or stigmatized groups.

A study also reported the correlation between Self Esteem and Microaggression. Seelman et al. (2020) in their study examined if gender identity has an impact on the association between psychological distress and overt victimization as well as microaggressions among LGBTQ college students. All forms of discrimination are associated with increased stress and anxiety as well as low self-esteem.

Further, LGBTQ people were able to candidly narrate incidents of microaggression they had experienced in their spiritual and religious groups because to a previous study's qualitative technique. The thematic analysis revealed three primary themes: (1) LGBTQ identities as inauthentic; (2) LGBTQ identities are tolerated in religious and spiritual contexts; and (3) there is a contradiction between LGBTQ identities and religious/spiritual identities (Lomash et al., 2018).

Psychological safety is the ability to engage in risky interpersonal interactions, voice opinions, dispute in public, and raise concerns without worrying about the consequences or feeling under pressure to sugarcoat bad news.

Till date there is no study of Psychological safety among LGBTQ+ but in one of the researches importance of Psychological Safety for human development was studied. This study places psychological safety within the context of human development and explains the current research on the subject. They give examples that show how people interact with their surroundings to co-create moments when people may or may not feel psychologically comfortable. They suggest to develop new strategies for creating environments that make people feel more psychologically secure to interact, learn, and grow if we take into account psychological safety's place in developmental research (Wanless, 2016b).

Keeping in mind all these issues and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ community, the aim of the present investigation is to study “Psychological Safety and its correlates among LGBTQ+.” For this a total sample of 35 LGBTQ+ Individuals is collected. Raw scores obtained and statistical analysis was done using SPSS.

Table 1- Mean and standard deviation for the total sample (N=35)

Table 2- Inter-correlation matrix for total sample (N=35)

Table 3- Stepwise Multiple Regression table for Criterion Variable Psychological Safety (N=35)

INTERCORRELATIONS

A perusal of table 2 reveals intercorrelations among all the study variables viz, self-esteem, psychological safety, social, compassion, bodily, belongingness, connectedness, affiliation, companionship, microaggression, assumed deviance, second-class citizen, assumption of gay culture and stereotypical knowledge and behaviour.

The findings of the present investigation are being discussed in the light of proposed hypotheses:

3.5.1 It is expected that

3.5.1.1 Psychological safety will be positively correlated to self esteem

3.5.1.2 Psychological safety will be positively correlated to belongingness & its components

3.5.1.3 Psychological safety will be negatively correlated to homonegative microaggression & its components

Psychological Safety has a positive and significant coorelation with Self-Esteem ($r=0.561, p<0.01$) & ($r=0.550, p<0.01$).

To give evidence for this result, Oh and 신제구 (2018), studied the link between organization-based self-esteem and creative activity, and how the former directly influences the latter. They also pinpointed the conditional indirect role psychological safety has in regulating this process. The results suggested that high psychological safety within the

organization can enhance leaders' ability to foster members' organization-based self-esteem and innovative behavior through collaborative leadership.

No other significant correlation have been reported between Psychological Safety and other variables.

Therefore, Hypothesis 3.5.1.1 is substantiated.

Hypothesis 3.5.1.2 is partially substantiated.

Hypothesis 3.5.1.3 is not substantiated.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

3.5.2 Self-esteem and belongingness are expected to be the positive predictors of psychological safety and components of microaggression are expected to be the negative predictors of psychological safety.

For criterion variable psychological safety, the following IV's were added: self-esteem, connectedness, affiliation, companionship, assumed deviance, second-class citizen, assumption of gay culture and stereotypical knowledge & behaviour.

Out of these IV's, 2 predictors emerged namely self-esteem and companionship. These predictors account for 49.6% variance ($MR^2 = 0.496$) in criterion variable psychological safety.

Self-esteem emerged as a positive predictor ($\beta = 0.453$) accounting for 31.4% (R^2 Change = 0.314) in psychological safety.

Companionship emerged as a positive predictor ($\beta = 0.431$) accounting for 18.2% (R^2 Change = 0.182) in psychological safety.

To increase perception of psychological safety one needs to focus on increasing self-esteem and companionship of the LGBTQ+ community.

Hypothesis 3.5.2 is partially substantiated.

LIMITATIONS

First off, the limited sample size ($N = 35$) in our study may limit the applicability of our findings to wider LGBTQ+ community demographics. A bigger sample size would improve

the validity and reliability of our findings and provide a more varied representation of individuals belonging to this community.

Second, the sample of this study included all individuals whether they identify as lesbian, bisexual or transgender which might hinder the results as every category in LGBTQ+ have different problems and conducting research specifically on one group may bring different insights into light.

Third, only four psychosocial variables have been included in this study which has limited the results. Therefore, a research with other psychosocial variables can also be conducted to have better understanding and to find other predictors of Psychological Safety.

Further, there is a chance that responses may be biased or inaccurate when self-reported measures of traits like microaggression and belongingness are used. Our findings may not be as valid if participants gave responses they thought were socially acceptable or if they misinterpreted the survey questions. Employing diverse techniques for gathering data, including conducting interviews or observations, may aid in reducing these biases and yield a more thorough comprehension of the concepts being studied.

Moreover, the fact that our research was limited to a particular area could limit the applicability of the conclusions we draw to different cultural or regional settings. The ways in which LGBTQ+ individuals face microaggression may differ depending on cultural norms, healthcare systems, and societal environment. To ensure the validity and relevance of our findings, future research should try to replicate our study in a variety of cultural contexts.

In order to appropriately interpret our results and direct future research efforts to further our understanding of Psychological Safety among LGBTQ+, it is imperative that these constraints be addressed. We can help develop focused interventions and support systems to improve Psychological Safety and other correlates in this crucial caring environment by recognizing these limitations and expanding on our findings.

SUGGESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Moving forward, our study has important implications for both research and practice in the field of Psychological health of LGBTQ+.

Starting with, our findings can be helpful for Social Welfare Ministry of LGBTQ+ to develop certain laws or improvise certain legal rights keeping in mind the everyday

microaggression faced by LGBTQ+ and working on marital and adoption rights of LGBTQ+ community in order to increase their companionship.

One significant future implication is the development and implementation of targeted interventions to increase the Psychological Safety among LGBTQ+. This can be achieved by working on increasing their self-esteem through Mindfulness Based Therapy that helps in increasing relaxation while removing negative judgements.

Furthermore, our findings highlight the importance of Companionship in increasing Psychological Safety among LGBTQ+. Intervention plans can be developed such as engaging them in Animal Therapy which will help them develop bonds with other beings without any fear of discrimination or judgments. Through this they can gain confidence in engaging with other people in the world and forming secure and loving relationships.

In addition to practical implications, our study offers several suggestions for future research in this area. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore the long-term effects of Self-Esteem and Companionship on Psychological Safety. Moreover, research examining the role of individual differences, such as personality traits or coping styles, in shaping their Psychological Safety. Other predictors of Psychological Safety can be found by studying other psychosocial variables and their correlations.

Overall, our study underscores the importance of Self-Esteem and Companionship in increasing Psychological Safety among LGBTQ+. By implementing targeted interventions, fostering supportive environments, and prioritizing research in this area, we can help LGBTQ+ individuals to feel safe and comfortable in a world equal to all and voice their opinions without the fear of judgments.

Summary

Despite the fact that they continue to have unequal health outcomes, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and other LGBTQIA+ people have received a lot of attention in India between 2009 and 2019. Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ or who are otherwise "sexual and gender diverse" are subject to institutional and individual discrimination, which negatively affects their quality of life and leads to inequality in many crucial domains. LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people still continuously struggle to be accepted for who they are sexually and to be free to openly express their gender choices within the confines of family, home, and school, despite the fact that more Indian youths than ever before may accept homosexuality and queer identities today. They experience stigmatization on a regular basis affecting them physically, psychologically and socially.

The current study's goal is to investigate "Psychological Safety and its correlates among LGBTQ+," as part of an ongoing attempt to comprehend the lives and experiences of LGBTQ+ populations during this time. For this, a total of 35 LGBTQ+ individuals are sampled. Other variables examined in this research are Homonegative Microaggression, Belongingness, and Self-Esteem. To obtain the raw scores and do statistical analysis, SPSS was utilized. The results showed a positive correlation between psychological safety and self-esteem. Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between psychological safety and the aspect of belongingness referred to as Companionship. Another valuable result of this study was identifying the predictors of psychological safety, which include companionship and self-esteem. To protect LGBTQ+ people's psychological safety, more focus must be placed on building strong, supportive relationships both inside and outside of the community (externally) and raising the self-esteem of these individuals (internally).

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