



7. Adult Attitudes Toward the LGBTIQ Community in Pakistan: A Quantitative Study Based on Sociodemographic Variables

Actitudes de los adultos hacia la comunidad LGBTIQ en Pakistán: un estudio cuantitativo basado en variables sociodemográficas

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ABSTRACT

This study explores societal attitudes toward the LGBTIQ community in Pakistan, emphasizing the cultural, religious, and demographic factors shaping public opinion. Drawing on quantitative research design, data were collected from 368 adults in Rawalpindi and Islamabad through a structured attitude scale measuring alienation, excessiveness, and disease-related perceptions of LGBTIQ individuals. The study reveals a predominantly negative societal attitude, influenced by deeply rooted religious beliefs, patriarchal norms, and a lack of education and awareness. While younger, urban, educated participants showed relatively more acceptance, hostility and discrimination remain prevalent, particularly against transgender and intersex individuals. Key findings indicate that having LGBTIQ friends and not being bothered by media representations correlate with more positive attitudes. Moreover, gender identity significantly influences responses. The study also underscores the role of psychological stressors and legal discrimination faced by LGBTIQ individuals, noting the adverse impact on mental health and well-being. Despite constitutional protections and legal frameworks like the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018, systemic barriers and stigmatization persist. The research emphasizes the urgent need for educational interventions, legal reforms, and societal dialogue to combat prejudice and promote inclusion. By analyzing attitudes within a social

identity framework, the study contributes to understanding how group affiliations and cultural narratives influence bias and acceptance, aiming to inform policy and advocacy efforts toward a more inclusive society in Pakistan.

Keywords: LGBTIQ; Gender Identity; Attitude Measurement; Social Identity Theory; Sexual Prejudice

Actitudes de los adultos hacia la comunidad LGBTIQ en Pakistán: un estudio cuantitativo basado en variables sociodemográficas

RESUMEN

Este estudio explora las actitudes sociales hacia la comunidad LGBTIQ en Pakistán, con énfasis en los factores culturales, religiosos y demográficos que configuran la opinión pública. Basados en un diseño de investigación cuantitativa, se recopilieron datos de 368 adultos en Rawalpindi e Islamabad mediante una escala estructurada de actitudes que mide la alienación, la exageración y las percepciones relacionadas con enfermedades respecto a las personas LGBTIQ. El estudio revela una actitud social predominantemente negativa, influenciada por creencias religiosas profundamente arraigadas, normas patriarcales y la falta de educación y concienciación. Aunque los participantes más jóvenes, urbanos y educados mostraron una aceptación relativamente mayor, la hostilidad y la discriminación siguen siendo comunes, especialmente hacia personas transgénero e intersexuales. Los hallazgos clave indican que tener amistades LGBTIQ y no sentirse perturbado por las representaciones mediáticas se correlacionan con actitudes más positivas. Además, la identidad de género influye de manera significativa en las respuestas. El estudio también subraya el papel de los factores estresantes psicológicos y la discriminación legal que enfrentan las personas LGBTIQ, señalando su impacto negativo en la salud mental y el bienestar. A pesar de las protecciones constitucionales y marcos legales como la Ley de Protección de Derechos de las Personas Transgénero de 2018, persisten barreras sistémicas y estigmatización. La investigación destaca la necesidad urgente de intervenciones educativas, reformas legales y un diálogo social que combata los prejuicios y promueva la inclusión. Al analizar las actitudes en un marco de identidad social, el estudio contribuye a comprender cómo las afiliaciones grupales y las narrativas culturales influyen en los prejuicios y la aceptación, con el objetivo de informar las políticas y los esfuerzos de incidencia orientados a una sociedad más inclusiva en Pakistán.

Palabras clave: LGBTIQ; identidad de género; medición de actitud; teoría de la identidad social; prejuicio sexual

Atitudes dos adultos em relação à comunidade LGBTIQ no Paquistão: um estudo quantitativo baseado em variáveis sociodemográficas

RESUMO

Este estudo explora as atitudes sociais em relação à comunidade LGBTIQ no Paquistão, com ênfase nos fatores culturais, religiosos e demográficos que moldam a opinião pública. Com base em um desenho de pesquisa quantitativa, foram coletados dados de 368 adultos em Rawalpindi e Islamabad por meio de uma escala estruturada de atitudes que mede a alienação, o exagero e as percepções sobre pessoas LGBTIQ. O estudo revela uma atitude social predominantemente negativa, influenciada por crenças religiosas profundamente enraizadas, normas patriarcais e a falta de educação e conscientização. Embora participantes mais jovens, urbanos e instruídos tenham demonstrado maior aceitação relativa, a hostilidade e a discriminação ainda são comuns, especialmente contra pessoas transgênero e intersexo. As principais descobertas indicam que ter amigos LGBTIQ e não se incomodar com representações midiáticas correlacionam-se com atitudes mais positivas. Além disso, a identidade de gênero influencia significativamente as respostas. O estudo também destaca o papel dos estressores psicológicos e da discriminação legal enfrentada pelas pessoas LGBTIQ, observando o impacto negativo na saúde mental e no bem-estar. Apesar das proteções constitucionais e de marcos legais como a Lei de Proteção dos Direitos das Pessoas Transgênero de 2018, barreiras sistêmicas e estigmatização persistem. A pesquisa enfatiza a necessidade urgente de intervenções educacionais, reformas legais e diálogo social para combater o preconceito e promover a inclusão. Ao analisar as atitudes em uma estrutura de identidade social, o estudo contribui para a compreensão de como as afiliações grupais e as narrativas culturais influenciam o preconceito e a aceitação, com o objetivo de informar políticas e esforços de advocacy rumo a uma sociedade mais inclusiva no Paquistão.

Palavras-chave: LGBTIQ; identidade de género; medição de atitude; teoria da identidade social; preconceito sexual

Attitudes des adultes envers la communauté LGBTIQ au Pakistan : une étude quantitative basée sur des variables sociodémographiques

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude explore les attitudes sociales envers la communauté LGBTIQ au Pakistan, en mettant l'accent sur les facteurs culturels, religieux et démographiques qui façonnent l'opinion publique. S'appuyant sur une approche de recherche quantitative, les données ont été recueillies auprès de 368 adultes à Rawalpindi et Islamabad à l'aide d'une échelle structurée mesurant l'aliénation, l'excès et les perceptions de la communauté LGBTIQ liées à la maladie. L'étude révèle une attitude sociale majoritairement négative, influencée par des croyances religieuses profondément ancrées, des normes patriarcales et un manque d'éducation et de sensibilisation. Bien que les participants plus jeunes, urbains et instruits aient montré une acceptation plus grande, l'hostilité et la discrimination demeurent courantes, en particulier à l'encontre des personnes transgenres et intersexes. Les résultats clés indiquent que le fait d'avoir des amis LGBTIQ et de ne pas être dérangé par les représentations médiatiques est corrélé à des attitudes plus positives. De plus, l'identité de genre influence de manière significative les réponses. L'étude souligne également le rôle des facteurs de stress psychologique et de la discrimination légale auxquels sont confrontées les personnes LGBTIQ, en notant les effets négatifs sur leur santé mentale et leur bien-être. Malgré les protections constitutionnelles et des cadres juridiques tels que la loi de 2018 sur la protection des droits des personnes transgenres, des obstacles systémiques et la stigmatisation persistent. La recherche met en évidence la nécessité urgente d'interventions éducatives, de réformes juridiques et d'un dialogue sociétal pour lutter contre les préjugés et promouvoir l'inclusion. En analysant les attitudes dans une perspective d'identité sociale, l'étude contribue à comprendre comment les affiliations de groupe et les récits culturels influencent les biais et l'acceptation, dans le but d'informer les politiques et les actions de plaidoyer en faveur d'une société pakistanaise plus inclusive.

Mots clés: LGBTIQ ; identité de genre ; mesure des attitudes ; théorie de l'identité sociale ; préjugés sexuels

1. INTRODUCTION

Attitudes, which are based on our core beliefs, are thought to be the foundation of our behavior. They reflect how much we like or dislike things, people, and communities. In every society, minority groups coexist with the dominant majority, and their presence influences social dynamics and cultural landscapes. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), people belonging to different groups tend to have certain attitudes toward other groups; these attitudes can be positive, negative, or neutral. Usually, people internalize the values and beliefs of the group they belong to and tend to have positive attitudes towards their own group. Whenever we discuss any prevalent social issue, we often focus on people's underlying beliefs about that matter. This idea should also be considered relevant when discussing the binary classification of gender in Pakistan. The traditional understanding of gender as a binary system oversimplifies a complex reality. In Pakistan, societal norms often require adherence to binary gender roles, categorizing individuals as either male or female. However, this binary perspective ignores the existence of diverse gender identities within the population (Ali et al., 2011).

The presence of non-binary and third-gender identities in Pakistan is excluded and subject to discrimination everywhere in the community because they deviate from the prescribed sociocultural standards (Hughto et al, 2015). When we look at it from Social Identity Theory, these (heterosexual) people defend their socially and culturally established gender norms, shielding against threats to self-esteem, which is tied to their adherence to the binary gender category. Resultantly, people belong to the non-binary gender category. This stigmatization, accusations, and exclusion from their biological family, their school, and society lead to hurting the mental health and day-to-day functioning of people. (Nazir & Yasir, 2016).

People in Pakistan strongly adhere to religious and cultural views, with Islamic precepts having a major influence on daily life, social standards, and community traditions. However, cultural practices have more influence on practicing Islam in the country. Some pre-Islamic and non-Islamic cultural traditions have been integrated into religious activities, resulting in a distinctive blend of faith and culture (Saidi, 2008). The issue of same-sex unions in Pakistan is considered taboo due to religious and cultural beliefs. Both post-modernists and Islamists see LGBTIQ identities as foreign constructs. Pakistan's non-secular nature makes it challenging

to address this issue through constructivist or essentialist perspectives. A 'don't ask, don't tell' compromise is going on in Pakistan, like past Muslim societies (Jahangir, 2022).

Historically, gender and sexual flexibility were, nevertheless, encouraged during the Mughal era (1526-1857), but this trend has become dormant after the partition. In South Asia, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) community has established a rhythm since the historic Aurat March (Jami & Kamal, 2015). Studies in Pakistan are mostly focused on the transgender population; however, other nonconforming genders and sexualities are discouraged or not given space in Pakistan's societal framework (Aurat Foundation, 2016; Jami and Kamal, 2015).

This quantitative research, thus, investigates acceptance and rejection faced by minority groups, asserting that while societies may choose to embrace or shun these groups, they cannot avoid their presence. Utilizing interdisciplinary approaches, including sociological and psychological perspectives, this research analyzes the implications of societal attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community.

1.1. Attitudes Towards LGBTIQ Community

When a baby is born, the first question that is asked is "Is it a boy or a girl?" This is assumed to be a very straightforward question in the case of a baby with clear genitals, but when a baby is born with unclear genitalia, this seemingly straightforward inquiry about the child becomes more complicated (Greenblatt, 2011). Since birth, the newborn baby starts facing different attitudes.

According to Çiçek et al. (2017), there are three dimensions of attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community.

1.3.1. Alienation

This factor indicates that LGBTIQ individuals are not desired, accepted, or embraced by society (Çiçek et al., 2017).

1.3.2. Excessiveness

These suggest that LGBTIQ individuals are extreme, show off their gender identity, and use their gender orientation to gain attention (Çiçek et al., 2017).

1.3.3. Disease

This factor indicates whether or not LGBTIQ people are mentally or physically healthy (Çiçek et al., 2017).

Transphobia (fear and hatred of transgender people) is the term used to describe the negative attitudes about trans people based on enactment of gender (Bettrech, 2007) and those who do not conform to social norms (Hill & Willoghby, 2005). According to a study by the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (2009), 90 per cent of transgender students heard negative remarks about someone's gender expression. Two-thirds of transgender students felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation and how they expressed their gender (Greytak et al., 2009), which is a clear violation of SDG 4 (UNESCO, 2020). Youth who identify as transgender also face discrimination; 26% of them have experienced physical assault, and 87% of them have experienced verbal and physical harassment due to their gender expression (Greytak et al., 2009). The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (2023) notes that a rise in homicides, injuries, and biased violence committed by strangers, as well as mistreatment by law enforcement, and many perpetrators go unpunished because transphobia has become institutionalized. In the rare cases where they are held accountable, they frequently win reduced sentences by using the "transgender panic" defense, which is a victim-blaming legal approach (Lee, 2017).

Religious devotion is often cited as a significant factor influencing attitudes towards sexual minorities and related experiences (Jami & Kamal, 2015). Discrimination, harassment, and violence against LGBTIQs are a matter of public attitudes and social acceptance (Weiss, 2007). Negative attitudes towards LGBTIQ individuals can also stem from strong religious convictions that view them as sinful and deviant (Crooks & Baur, 2005; Oswald & Culton, 2003). In Judeo-Christianity-Islam, practices such as cross-dressing and homosexuality are heavily condemned (Yip, 2008). Islam explicitly outlines rules regarding dressing and gender roles, discouraging practices like cross-dressing, effeminacy, castration for abstaining from marriage, sodomy, and homosexuality (Brown, 2017). The Vedic culture, however, permitted transgender people of the third sex, known as hijras (Stances of Faiths on LGBTQ+ Issues: Hinduism, n.d.).

Prevalence of negative attitudes also occurs in other countries where LGBTIQ groups are organized and have protective laws as well (Ford Foundation, 2006). The Salzburg Global LGBT Forum (2019), comparative surveys suggest

that South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka have recognized a “third gender,” yet social discrimination and stigma continue to affect public perceptions despite legislative changes. Similarly, Peiris (2021) states that in Sri Lanka, while many people recognize LGBT discrimination and support basic rights, awareness of LGBT identities is low, and negative attitudes persist in personal situations such as housing, work, and leadership responsibilities. Anjum et al. (2021) emphasize that, while Bangladesh constitutionally recognizes a “third gender,” other gender identities remain largely unacknowledged. Societal attitudes remain traditional and discriminatory, with little awareness of gender diversity, persistent stigma, and barriers to legal protection and social acceptance. George et al. (2025) discovered that, while many adults in rural South India are aware of LGBTQIA+ populations and acknowledge discrimination, a deeper understanding of LGBTQIA+ identities is limited. Younger, urban, and more educated people were more receptive, although overall, reluctance to publicly discuss LGBTQIA+ still exists. Collectively, these studies highlight a gap between legal reforms and societal change, implying that legal recognition alone is insufficient in South Asian countries due to the lack of awareness, education, targeted research, and social support initiatives.

Conversely, the Western world has shown a steadily increasing acceptance level over recent decades. According to the Williams Institute (2021), Western countries consistently rank among the highest in terms of social acceptance of LGBTI individuals, with Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada, and Iceland displaying strong support for LGBTI rights and inclusion. According to Witeck (2014), public opinion in the United States has become more accepting of LGBT individuals and their families, as evidenced by increased support for same-sex marriage and legal recognition of LGBTI partnerships. These shifts are linked to social marketing activities, media visibility, and important legal reforms, all of which contributed to reshaping cultural narratives and reducing stigma in many parts of the Western world.

In Pakistan, Hijras (Transgenders) live in a close-knit community, and people consider them as freaks for hiding their sexual identity (Jami & Kamal, 2015). A Pakistan-based study on psychological issues among transgender individuals indicated rejection, physical and emotional abuse from other communities and their biological families (Akhtar & Bilour, 2020). Section 377 (1860) of the Pakistani Penal Code (PPC) criminalizes homosexuality and imposes a maximum 10-year jail penalty on offenders. Reports from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Pakistan (2008) indicate that approxi-

mately two hundred thousand people identify as homosexual in Pakistan. A Pew survey conducted in 2013 found that 87% of Pakistanis had unfavorable opinions toward LGBTIQ. Healthcare access is poor, and 70% of transgender individuals receive substandard care, which is clearly against the WHO policy and UN statement of having access to equal healthcare regardless of one's sexual orientation and gender identity (World Health Organization, 2025).

In Pakistan, incidents of violence against LGBTIQ people are common, which is also against SDG 16 "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions". According to a report released by Trans-Action Alliance, 62 transgender people were murdered in 2015, with hundreds of incidents yearly. LGBTIQ individuals often face legal prosecutions rather than legal protection, along with familial rejection and societal marginalization. Likewise, the Government of Pakistan opposes the acceptance of the LGBTIQ community by voting against the amendments presented by the UN. They have also countered all the efforts done by the local community to promote the LGBTIQ by pulling down the websites with the slogan "have a queer Ramadan" by anonymous citizens and "Don't Hate Us, Know Us", citing the website's anti-Islamic content.

In September 2022, the Federal Shariat Court (FSC) rejected the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2018 and approved the Khunsa Person (Protection of Rights) Act, 2022, which importantly states in Chapter 2 that 3(1) A Khunsa is a person with a combination of male and female genital traits or congenital ambiguity. The Khunsa Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2022 positively outlaws discrimination against Khunsas in a variety of settings, including education, employment, healthcare, access to goods and services, housing, and public office (Khunsa Persons (Protection of Rights Act, 2022), but this act lacks inclusivity towards the other gender category. Resultantly, same-sex marriage is forbidden under the existing law.

1.5. Theoretical Perspective

1.5.1. Social Identity Theory

This theory provides a strong basis for how people develop their attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community based on their belonging to a heterosexual group. Tajfel and Turner (1979) suggest that individuals derive a sense of belonging and identity from the groups they belong to. People tend to internalize the values and beliefs of that specific group. In this case, heterosexual people develop negative attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community because they consider them as an "Out-group". Moreover, people typically have pos-

itive attitudes toward their own group and negative attitudes toward the out-group because they tend to retain a positive self-identity that is largely dependent on their group membership. It frequently incorporates shared values and ideas within a community, which gives group members a sense of identity and commonality.

According to the Social Identity Theory, people tend to develop certain attitudes as they serve the cognitive and emotional needs of people. Four goals are served by attitudes regarding sexual minorities. First, just as more extrinsically oriented people display negative opinions about sexual minorities for social reasons to ensure their own acceptance within their groups, social expressive function improves bonds with recognized groups. Second, value expressiveness serves the same purpose as intrinsically religious individuals, fundamentalists, and traditionalists expressing views based on values that are accepted in a cultural, religious, and political context, thus confirming one's own moral character. Thirdly, defensive purpose upholds socially and culturally established gender norms, shielding against threats to self-esteem. These may be connected to psychological traits that do not change over time, like femininity and masculinity in the current study. Finally, an objective evaluation of the schematic role of attitudes helps one comprehend past encounters with sexual minorities (Jami & Kamal, 2015).

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the attitudes of adults towards the LGBTIQ community.
2. To investigate the role of demographic variables (gender, media representation of the LGBTIQ community, friends or acquaintances who identify as LGBTIQ individuals) on attitudes of adults towards the LGBTIQ community.

2.1. Rationale of the Study

The preamble of the Constitution of Pakistan, established in 1973, articulates Pakistan as an Islamic and democratic state, affirming the significance of both Islamic principles and democratic values in the governance and societal fabric of the nation. In line with democratic principles, it is important to acknowledge the opinions and attitudes of the people on prevalent societal issues.

In Pakistan, certain societal topics, particularly those related to the LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer) community, are

considered taboo. The limited literature surrounding LGBTIQ issues contributes to a lack of conceptual clarity among people regarding LGBTIQ identities and experiences. While some efforts have been made to address the issues faced by the transgender community, the other members of the LGBTIQ community have received comparatively less attention in terms of research and advocacy (Mazhir, 2021).

The stigma associated with non-heterosexual identification and behavior discourages scholars from pursuing research on LGBTIQs. Similarly, the lack of standard terms and descriptions for gender identity and sexual orientation, both of which are diverse and complex phenomena, prevents the assessment of attitudes toward the LGBTIQ group. This is the basis for research in this field, particularly in Pakistan (Jami & Kamal, 2015). Therefore, the current research is quantitative in nature and aims to determine the dynamics of people's opinions about the LGBTIQ population.

The sample of the research is adults, which includes people aged 18 years and above, according to the Majority Act (1875). This sample is selected because, according to the census of 2017, percentages of population between 15-64 years=56% and 65 and over = 3.7% clearly show that a large portion of the Pakistan population is people above 18 years of age. The sample range for this research comes between the ranges of most of the population of Pakistan. So, it is assumed that their opinion and attitudes are able to depict the attitudes of the whole country.

This research aims to investigate whether adults in Pakistan exhibit positive attitudes towards LGBTIQ individuals, influenced by the personal and cultural components, or they will exhibit a negative attitude due to the perception of LGBTIQ identities as unnatural and contrary to religious teachings. This study examines the interplay between various demographic variables like gender, media representation of the LGBTIQ community, and friends or acquaintances who identify as LGBTIQ individuals. The reason for choosing these specific variables was that, as per the "Social Identity Theory", a person's belongingness to a specific gender category majorly contribute in forming social perception, media strongly influence people's awareness (Witeck, 2014), and having a personal contact with the LGBTIQ community (Shariff, 2007) can reshape your level of acceptance or rejection. This study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping attitudes towards LGBTIQ individuals in Pakistan's context (Delaney, 2003).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Instruments

The research instruments used for this research include: (a) Demographic sheet, (b) Attitudes scale towards LGBT individuals.

3.2. Demographic Sheet

To ascertain many important demographic factors, a detailed and precise demographic sheet was created. The sheet was based on the questions dealing with gender, education, and any contact in person or via visual methods with the LGBTIQ people.

3.3. Attitude Scale Towards LGBT Individuals

This scale was developed by Çiçek et al. (2017). It is a 5-point Likert scale (1 being absolutely agree and 5 being absolutely disagree). It has a total of 28 items, and there are no reverse-scored items. This scale has 3 subscales (a) Alienation, it consists of 19 items from item 1 to item number 19 of the scale and the alpha reliability is .94, (b) Excessiveness, it has 5 items from item number 20 to item number 24 of the scale with .81 alpha reliability, and (c) Disease, it has 4 items from item number 25 to item number 28 of the scale and alpha reliability is .70. Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale is .95. The total score of all the items is calculated by adding the score of all the items. Individuals in the range of High scores on the attitude scale towards LGBTIQ individuals indicate positive attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community, and low score indicates negative attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community.

The score between 1-65 indicates a negative attitude towards the LGBTIQ community, a score between 66-103 indicates a neutral attitude, and a score between 104-140 indicates a positive attitude towards the LGBTIQ community. The original scale items did not include the acronym IQ, which stands for intersex and queer. So, after seeking permission from the original author, IQ was added as an author confirmed that this addition does not change the reliability and validity of the scale, maintaining semantic equivalence, and it will still effectively measure the attitudes of people towards the LGBTIQ community. This scale was originally developed by a Turkish author and validated on the Turkish population, and since Turkey is a Muslim-majority country, like Pakistan, this scale also holds cultural relevance.

3.4. Research Design

This research is quantitative in nature. A correlational research design was used as it is well fitted with a standardized scale to determine the direction of the relationship between the variables. The scale used was quantitative in nature to gather numerical data for statistical analysis and to avoid any biases.

3.5. Sample

This article is based on primary data obtained from 368 individuals who were aged 18 and greater than 18. All the figures mentioned in the tables are based on information gathered during data collection in the field. The data used in this study are original, authentic, and collected firsthand, ensuring the credibility of the findings. A convenient snowball sampling technique was used because of the stigma attached to the LGBTIQ community. People tend to hide their opinions; they are not easy to access, and they avoid interaction with religious fanatics for safety purposes.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage		
Participants (N = 368)		
Demographic Variables	f	%
Gender		
Man	153	41.6
Woman	212	57.6
Other	3	0.8
Participants having LGBTIQ friends		
Yes	85	23.1
No	283	76.9
Get bothered by the media representation of LGBTIQ		
Yes	132	35.9
No	157	42.7
A Little	79	21.5

Note: M=Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; f=Frequency; %=Percentage

Table 1 shows the demographics of the sample of the survey based on gender, education, experience of attraction to the same gender, and friends or acquaintances who identify as LGBTIQ individuals. The distribution shows that the ratio of women is higher in the sample, 57.6%, 77.7% participants were undergraduates. The data shows that 76.5% of people never felt attraction to the same gender. 76.9% of participants do not have LGBTIQ friends, 42.7% do not get bothered by the media representation of LGBTIQ individuals.

3.6. Procedure

Participants in the research were adults. They were able to understand, read, and write English. The data was collected from 368 adults, who were citizens of Pakistan. Before giving the questionnaire, the research topic was explained, and rapport was built with participants. Consent was also taken from the participants. The ethical issues were also kept under consideration while collecting the data (i.e., ensuring willingness, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and right to withdraw). Upon the completion of the scales, the participants were thanked with high gratitude for becoming part of the study voluntarily. The data was collected from private and public universities, and people belonging to various fields. A Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data, and the results were reported.

4. RESULTS

The main objective of the current research was to examine the attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community among adults (18 years and above). Applying a correlational design, the study adopted a quantitative approach to comprehensively examine the relationship between the study variables and various demographic variables. The statistical analyses encompassed various procedures, including computing Cronbach's alpha to evaluate internal consistency of the study variables, determining means and standard deviations for assessing central tendency and variability, examining the data range for dispersion, evaluating skewness and kurtosis to understand distribution characteristics, utilizing Pearson product-moment correlation to examine associations, conducting independent sample t-tests for mean testing, and one way ANOVA for comparative analyses.

The entire range of study variables was thoroughly analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 26).

Tabla 2. Independent Sample t-test									
Comparison of Having Friends or Acquaintances who Identify as LGBTIQ Individuals Along Study Variables (N=368)									
Variables	Yes (n = 85)		No (n = 283)		t (366)	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
LGBT	93.07	28.92	79.35	23.09	4.52	.00	7.74	19.70	0.52
ALI	65.95	19.02	56.46	16.37	4.50	.00	5.34	13.63	0.53
EXC	15.19	5.75	12.86	4.32	4.02	.00	1.19	3.47	0.46
DIS	11.93	5.17	10.00	3.84	3.73	.00	.91	2.94	0.42

Note: LGBT = Attitude towards LGBTIQ community; ALI= Alienation; EXC= Excessiveness; DIS= Disease.

Table 2 presents the comparison of means between individuals who have friends or acquaintances identifying as LGBTIQ and those who do not have such friends or acquaintances on study variables, including attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community, alienation, excessiveness, and disease. There is a significant difference in the attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community between those who said yes and those who said no. Those who said yes scored significantly higher on alienation than those who said no, also on excessiveness and on disease. There is a medium effect size of attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community (Cohn's d= .52) (Téllez et al., 2015).

Tabla 3. <i>One-Way ANOVA</i>										
Based on Gender (N=368)										
Variables	Men (n=153)		Women (n=212)		Other (n=3)		F	p	η2	Post hoc
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
LGBT	83.86	24.15	80.77	24.96	138.33	2.89	8.41	.00	.04	3>1,3>2
ALI	59.95	17.13	57.23	17.29	93.33	2.89	7.28	.00	.04	3>1,3>2
EXC	13.41	4.56	13.23	4.78	25	.000	9.38	.00	.05	3>1,3>2
DIS	10.50	4.18	10.27	4.19	20.00	.000	8.04	.00	.04	3>1,3>2

Note: LGBT = Attitude towards LGBTIQ community, ALI = Alienation, EXC = Excessiveness, DIS = Disease.

Table 3 presents insights into the mean difference of gender on study variables, including attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community, alienation, excessiveness, and disease. The results showed that the mean value of the other gender is higher, which is followed by men and women, in attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community. In the analysis, the Bonferroni post hoc test is used because the homogeneity of variances across comparison groups is assumed, which is verified through Levene’s test. Eta squared η^2 values indicate small to medium effects (Richardson, 2011).

Tabla 4. One-Way ANOVA

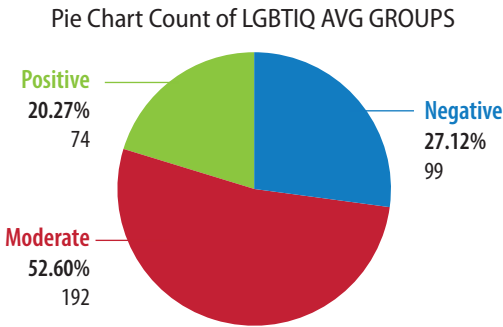
Based on Getting Bothered by the Representation of LGBTIQ Individuals (N=368)

Variables	Yes (n=132)		No (n=157)		A little (n=79)		F	p	η^2	Post hoc
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
LGBT	66.13	20.82	93.59	24.34	88.03	18.42	59.21	.00	0.25	2>1,3>1
ALI	47.58	14.78	65.75	16.67	63.15	13.50	54.28	.00	0.23	2>1,3>1
EXC	10.75	4.06	15.45	4.75	13.75	3.78	42.80	.00	0.19	1>2,1>3,2>3
DIS	7.79	3.46	12.39	4.20	11.00	3.16	55.38	.00	0.23	1>2,1>3,2>3

Note: LGBT = Attitude towards LGBTIQ community; ALI = Alienation; EXC = Excessiveness; DIS = Disease.

Table 4 shows that those not bothered by LGBTIQ representation on TV have higher mean values, followed by those who are slightly bothered, and lastly, those who are bothered, in terms of attitudes towards the LG-BTIQ community, alienation, excessiveness, and disease. The Bonferroni post hoc test was used, assuming homogeneity of variances, as verified by Levene’s test. Effect sizes (η^2) suggest large effects for attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community, alienation, excessiveness, and disease (Richardson, 2011).

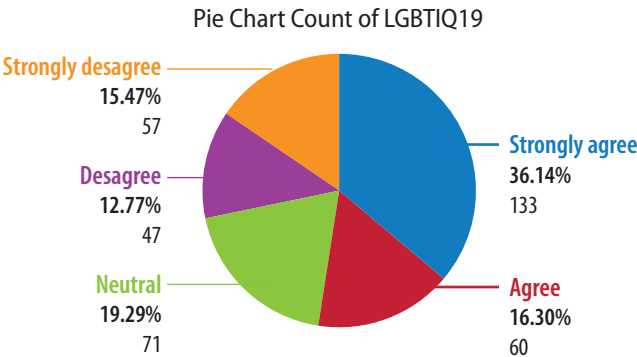
Chart 1. Frequency and Percentage
People's Attitudes Towards LGBTIQ Individuals (N=368)



Note: Framing responses of participants on attitude scales towards LGBTIQ individuals.

Chart 1 illustrates the overall responses of participants on the attitudes scale towards LGBTIQ individuals. Chart 4 shows that out of 368 participants, 74 (20%) showed a positive attitude towards the LGBTIQ community, 99 (27%) showed an extremely negative attitude, and the highest percentage, 53% of the participants had moderate attitudes, which means that 192 individuals had neither positive nor negative attitudes.

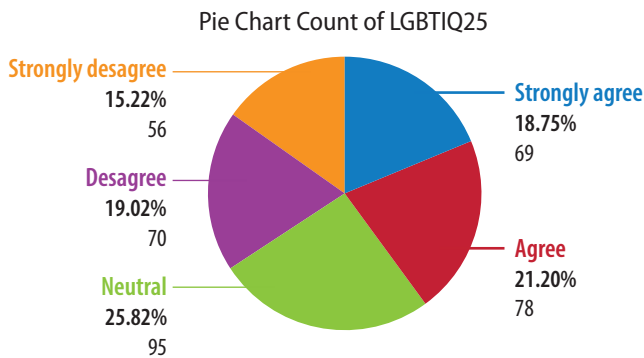
Chart 2. Frequency and Percentage
Participants on whether they think LGBT (LGBTIQ) is a sin (N=368)



Note: Framing responses from participants on whether they think LGBTIQ is a sin.

Chart 2 illustrates the overall responses of participants on whether they think LGBTIQ is a sin. Data showed that out of 368 participants, 133 (36.4%) strongly agreed with the statement, 60 participants (16.30%) also agreed with the statement but not to the extreme extent, 71 participants (19.29%) showed neutral, 47 participants (12.77%) disagreed with the statement, and (15%) strongly disagreed with this statement.

Chart 3. *Frequency and Percentage*
Participants on whether they think LGBT (LGBTIQ) is a Disease (N =368)



Note: Framing responses of participants on whether they think LGBTIQ is a disease.

Pie Chart 3 illustrates the overall responses of participants on whether they think LGBTIQ is a disease. Data showed that out of 368 participants, 69 (18.75%) strongly agreed with the statement, 76 participants (21.20%) also agreed with the statement but not to the extreme extent, 95 participants (25.82%) showed a neutral response, 70 participants (19.02%) disagreed with this statement, and (15.22%) strongly disagreed with this statement.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to assess attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community among adults. The study also aimed to investigate the role of demographic variables on attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community. The results of the study were assessed by specified analysis using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences SPSS. Reliability of the current study scales was examined by

means of the alpha coefficient for the scale and sub-scales. Providentially, these scales' psychometric properties, including Cronbach's alpha, have been potentially sound (Konting et al., 2009). Skewness and kurtosis values were within range, indicating that the data were negatively skewed (see Table 2). According to Kim (2013), a negative skew value shows that the tail on the left side of the distribution is longer than the right side, and most of the values are located to the right of the mean. The negative value of kurtosis (-0.45) distributions is known as a platykurtic distribution, which means a flat-topped curve (Kim, 2013).

5.1. Attitudes Towards LGBTIQ Individuals

The objective of the study was to examine the attitudes of adults towards the LGBTIQ community through quantitative analysis. The results of the study showed that the majority of people had negative attitudes towards the LGBTIQ community. The present study showed no significant correlation between a higher level of education and attitudes towards LGBTIQ individuals. Multiple contextual factors exist in Pakistan; expressing and exploring your preferred sexual orientation is not acceptable openly, even in universities. People do not like to engage with people who have fluid sexuality because it does not align with their own group's identity. People do not interact with the individuals belonging to the LGBTIQ community, even while doing higher studies, due to multiple societal barriers like fear of being judged and family pressure, due to which their attitude about LGBTIQ remains unaffected.

According to Social Identity Theory, people tend to have positive attitudes towards their in-group and negative attitudes towards the out-group, which was also supported by the results of our study. According to the present study, people belonging to non-normative genders have a more positive attitude towards the LGBTIQ community, then comes the male and female have the most negative attitudes among all the gender categories. There could be multiple factors that influence the beliefs of women, especially in the context of Pakistani culture.

In Pakistan, many women are not allowed to interact with people from diverse backgrounds. Their families ask them to stay inside the house. They do not have exposure to different facets of society. Due to lack of education (Pakistani women's literacy rate as of January 2022 was approximately 49.6%) women hold on to the orthodox opinions and consider the new trends as threat to them as they are a little insecure about their own group's identity and they start perceiving LGBTIQ people as "Out-group" and ultimately de-

velop negative attitude toward them to maintain self-esteem of their own group's identity. However, increasing personal contact with sexual minorities can positively alter their opinions towards transsexual individuals (Norton and Herek 2012). On the other hand, Pakistani men have a literacy rate of approximately 72% (PNYPINK, 2023). Males are considered the breadwinners of the household; they have access to education and are allowed to have friends with diverse backgrounds, which ultimately leads them to form more positive attitudes towards minority groups.

In the current study, the role of demographic variables (gender, friends or acquaintances who identify as LGBTIQ individuals, representation of LGBTIQ individuals on TV) on attitudes of adults towards the LGBTIQ community was investigated. Recently, there has been a spike in the representation of individuals belonging to the LGBTIQ community on TV and social media websites. Some people get bothered by their representation, and some are fine with it. The results show that people who are not bothered by the media representation of LGBTIQ individuals show more positive attitudes towards this community. Media portrayal of LGBTIQ issues plays a crucial role in shaping gender identity, self-perception, and societal acceptance. Recent initiatives, including online campaigns, support groups, cinematic works, and media coverage of offline efforts, have significantly contributed to increasing awareness in this regard (Randev, 2022).

A person's peer group is considered to be one of the most important socializing agents. Even in the absence of this intergroup contact, heterosexual teenagers in network positions that offer chances for the formation of other cross-sexual friendships can be predicted to report less homophobic attitudes (McMillan et al., 2023). The result of the data is also consistent with existing literature, as the results showed that those participants who had friends belonging to the LGBTIQ community showed more positive attitudes towards this community than those who did not have friends from this community.

In the demographics, various questions were asked by the participants to better know about their understanding of the terminologies, their own sexual identity, and preferences. Pie charts 1, 2, and 3 show the frequency and percentages of participants on different questions.

Chart 1 shows that most of the participants had a moderate attitude towards LGBTIQ individuals; they were neither extremely against it nor extremely in favor of it. The purpose of this analysis was to get an idea of the overall view of people's attitudes without any other influencing variable.

Chart 2 shows that many of the participants in the research think that LGBTIQ is a sin, while Chart 3 shows that almost 40% view it as a disease. By comparing these results, even though the majority think of LGBTIQ as a disease, they still consider it a sin as well. The possible reason behind this finding could be the lack of awareness among people regarding LGBTIQ individuals.

From these responses, we can assume that people considered a “variety of people” as just people belonging to different races and cultures. They did not include a variety of people based on multiple gender identities and sexual preferences because this is not openly discussed, so it does not come to mind as a first thought. Ultimately, negative attitudes about transgender people are predicted by higher degrees of psychological authoritarianism, political conservatism, anti-egalitarianism, and religiosity.

6. CONCLUSION

Recognition of everyone's human rights is a fundamental constitutional right in Pakistan. This empirical research, however, shows significant results, where cultural and religious elements drive negative sentiments toward LGBTIQ individuals, attributed to restricted exposure and societal norms. To bridge the gap between data and action, these findings should be used to inform legislative reform, raise public health awareness, and advocate for inclusive social services for the LGBTIQ community. However, the study's findings must be evaluated considering important limitations, such as potential self-report bias and sampling constraints associated with researching sensitive topics in conservative settings.

This study provides a strong basis for Pakistan's perspective on the LGBTIQ community by making a notable contribution to South Asian and broader international discourse on the LGBTIQ community.

Future research should therefore use longitudinal methodologies to capture shifts in attitudes over time as well as intersectional studies, providing a more comprehensive foundation for cross-cultural advocacy and the formulation of policies.

It also emphasizes the need for more research on culture and LGBTIQ attitudes, which could yield valuable data for cross-cultural studies.

6.1. Future Implications

- I. This research aims to specify the direction of public opinion regarding the LGBTIQ community. As a result, it will prove to be beneficial for policymakers to make policies regarding this issue in light of public opinion.
- II. The findings can be beneficial for fostering healthy debates on these tabooed topics. It creates public awareness and enhances the public's knowledge about ambiguous terminologies regarding LGBTIQ.
- III. The data can be used in public health campaigns to address specific health concerns within the population, resulting in improved health outcomes.
- IV. Social service providers can create more effective programs and services that address the unique needs of the LGBTIQ population, thereby increasing their quality of life.
- V. The research can serve as the foundation for further research on topics related to gender identity and sexual minority.
- VI. It can also provide comprehensive information to international researchers who are interested in doing cross-cultural/cross-national studies.

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