

Introduction

Cultural Contexts

- Homosexual relationships in South Asia are generally frowned upon at a statewide level and within personal networks. In India, bars and clubs that are home for LGBTQ socialization are suppressed by the state laws (Laurent, 2005).
- Other studies have found that being open about one's sexual identity leads to alienation from their South Asian and religious communities (Inman et. al., 2014). Coming out would threaten a family's izzat, which is the family's honor associated with feelings of shame and guilt (Patel, 2019). In accordance with the collectivistic values held in South Asia, one must avoid shame and guilt by prioritizing the family's desires and expectations over their own sexual or gender identity (Zaidi, 2014).

Religious Contexts

- Gender identity and sexual orientation are emotionally charged topics among many U.S. Christians, Muslims, and Sikh. While all three faith beliefs have divided opinions, Muslims were far more conservative in their view of homosexuality, Christians followed (Page & Shipley, 2022), and Sikhs held more liberal views in comparison (Kaur & Kaur, 2020).
- Of those who oppose LGBTQ identities, many heterosexuals in Muslim and Christian communities resort to instead emotions like love to emphasize their good personhood and distance themselves from their feelings of fear towards LGBTQ people (Page & Shipley, 2022). Homophobic and affirming attitudes are much more nuanced than previously understood. Further research on the complexity and fluidity of attitudes rooted in intersectional identities is needed.
- Christian colleges and universities in the U.S. have faced numerous challenges associated with policies regarding human sexuality, including hiring practices, especially since the legalization of same-sex marriages in 2015 (Rockenbach & Crandall, 2016). The university where our data collection took place is a Christian liberal arts institution that is dealing with multiple legal issues around hiring policies.

Research Aim

- We will explore how **cultural, personal religious, and institutional religious contexts** formulate a South Asian student's attitudes towards the LGBTQ community.
- We expect the students' South Asian communities to have shared values regarding LGBTQ people and issues. We also predict that attending a faith-based institution will provide shared culture-specific experiences that influence views regarding the LGBTQ community.

Methods

Participants

- $N = 6$ (3 cisgender female, 2 cisgender male, 1 transgender male; $M_{age} = 20.83$, $SD = 1.835$, Range: 19-24)
- Sexual Orientation: 4 Straight, 1 Bisexual, and 1 Lesbian
- Ethnicity: 3 Indian, 2 Indian and White, and 1 Pakistani
- Religion: 3 Sikh, 1 Christian, 1 Muslim, and 1 Atheist
- Years in School: 2-7 years, $M_{years} = 4.17$, $SD = 1.941$
- Generational Status: 4 2nd generation, 1 1st generation, and 1 3rd generation

Procedure

- An email was sent to South Asian students at a small Christian Liberal Arts Institution
- Then participants were emailed the demographic questionnaire, the 5-item Cognitive Negativism subscale of the Homophobia Scale on a 5-point Likert scale (Wright et al., 1999), and the interview questions to think about ahead of time
- 1st author conducted semi-structured interviews on Zoom for 25 to 35 minutes
- Through a drawing, 1 participant received a \$100 online gift card

Qualitative Analysis

- Qualitative Analysis is still in progress
- A 3-member research team followed **Thematic Analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2006) over one academic quarter for 1.5 hours a week
 - Reviewed each member's biases and committed to holding each other responsible
 - Transcribed each interview
 - Coded the transcriptions by individually reviewing the material and then agreeing upon codes
 - Grouped codes into domains based on their similarities

Discussion

- Attitudes towards LGBTQ people are not dichotomous, and our present study qualitatively analyzes what beliefs South Asian youth embody and enact derived from cultural and religious environments.
- Overall, South Asian countries promote silencing of topics around LGBTQ. Open familial communication, peer support, and organized social groups (e.g., churches, clubs) is essential for deep religious and cultural identity formation (Inman et. al., 2014).
- Hence, it is important to create safe and comfortable environments within religious and educational spaces for queer South Asian youth.
- Our findings identify that the South Asian communities generally have a negative attitude towards LGBTQ identities. There can be future implications for the physical and emotional well-being of sexual minority South Asian students that experience cultural pressures (Inman et. al., 2014). These cultural stressors should be further explored within clinical settings.

Results

Table 1

Preliminary Results

Domain	Main Ideas	Quotes
Cultural Community Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Asian community views of LGBTQ people Generational differences in attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "at least my mom's side it is very much a sin and shunned and nobody talks about it in my family." "When my mom found out [my sister was gay] she was screaming and crying and saying 'we're going to get kicked out' and 'how could you do this to us' which stuck with me." "I think my South Asian mother and her sisters would agree with the board's hiring policies, but all of us cousins would not."
Religious Interpretations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal faith perspective Institutional faith-based beliefs Use of instead emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "even if [being queer] goes against the Bible, Jesus still calls us to love one another and that no sin is worse than any other" "none of the South Asian religions, as much as I understand, have any concrete set against queer or LGBTQ people. It's just people interpreting said religion have come up with explanations for why we should not like blank or blank."
Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and teachers are mostly supportive and accepting Finding supportive religious community is more difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I think still knowing the Board's decision, I feel pretty affirmed by the faculty here and the other students, for the most part." "I am still a firm believer, but I now find it harder to find a church or to have conversations like these with my parents just because we all believe the same thing but the way it plays out and the way it is shown is very different."
Changes in Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protests on campus have provided more awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I think [LGBTQ people] are really nice people and everything. It has opened my eyes that all they want is to be accepted and I completely understand that"
Expectations for the Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some expected acceptance from the Institution Do not expect LGBTQ topics to be discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "In terms of LGBTQ+ students I was expecting a little more acceptance, but as we've realized with the hiring policies and all that it's not really there" "I go to the classroom to study and that's pretty much all I want from my professor. To teach me what I need to be taught."