



The Role of Family in The Formation of LGBT Identity

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p>This study aims to examine in depth the role of family in the formation of LGBT identity through a literature review approach. An individual's sexual and gender identity is formed through a long process influenced by various factors, one of which is the family environment, as the primary foundation of self-development from an early age. A harmonious and affectionate family with open communication patterns has been proven to positively shape a child's gender identity. Conversely, family disharmony, unbalanced parenting, the absence of parental figures, and the lack of character and sexual education within the family can increase the risk of identity confusion in children and make them more vulnerable to seeking validation outside the family environment. This study analyzes scientific articles that discuss the relationship between family dynamics and LGBT identity, which are then categorized into several main themes, such as parenting patterns, emotional attachment, education within the family, and family-based interventions. The results of this review are expected to serve as a foundation for designing prevention and assistance strategies based on family involvement to support the healthy development of children's sexual and gender identity, following Indonesian social and cultural values</p> <p>© 2025 UPI Journals and Publications Office</p>	<p>Article History: <i>Submitted/Received</i> 01 Juni 2025 <i>First Revised</i> 15 Juni 2025 <i>Accepted</i> 27 Juni 2025 <i>First Available online</i> 29 Juni 2025 <i>Publication Date</i> 29 Juni 2025</p> <p>Keyword: Family; LGBT Identity; Parenting Patterns; Emotional Attachment; Sexual Education</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) remains a widely debated issue to this day, particularly in the context of social and psychological studies in Indonesia. An individual's sexual and gender identity is not formed instantly, but rather through a prolonged process influenced by various factors, one of which is the role of the family. As the closest and primary environment for a child, the family plays a significant role in shaping a person's character, values, and self-identity.

From the perspective of attachment theory, the pattern of early attachment between children and their parents influences the formation of sexual identity in later life. Strong attachment establishes a foundation for the development of the child's self-identity (Pratama and Setiawan, 2018). Conversely, when children's needs for affection and a sense of security from their parents are not fulfilled, they tend to seek alternative attachment figures outside the family. This aligns with (Nugraha et al, 2021), who assert that permissive or authoritarian parenting styles may affect the development of a child's gender identity.

Beyond parenting styles, factors such as family conflict, dysfunction, and adverse childhood experiences have been associated with the development of LGBT identity. It has been found that the primary contributing factors to the formation of LGBT identity include an unharmonious family environment, traumatic experiences, and the lack of character education and sexual education within the family (Pambudi & Yitawati, 2022). This situation shows that when the family fails to function optimally, children become more vulnerable to confusion in forming their sexual and gender identity.

Character education based on religious values within the family serves as an important protective barrier for children in facing the influx of information about LGBT. (Hasanah and Suprpto, 2020) state that character education grounded in religious values and local wisdom within the family can serve as an effective defense for children against exposure to LGBT-related information. In addition, age-appropriate sexual education is also essential in shaping a child's gender identity. Parents who are open to discussing sexuality issues can foster a healthy understanding of gender identity (Purwanti & Darma, 2021). This is further supported by (Rahmawati et al, 2022), who assert that patterns of family interaction and parental involvement in sexual education are key factors influencing a child's sexual orientation.

The lack of sexual education within the family also makes children more vulnerable to external influences. (Wahyuni, 2018) states that when families fail to provide children with healthy sexual knowledge, they become more susceptible to accepting LGBT concepts that are promoted as a form of self-expression. On the other hand, the family also plays a major role in fulfilling children's psychological needs, particularly regarding affection and acceptance. (Megasari et al, 2017) state that one of the reasons individuals identify themselves as LGBT is the pursuit of affection they did not receive within the family. In addition, the presence of both parental figures is essential in supporting a child identity development. (Azmi, 2015) emphasized that family disharmony and the absence of either a father or mother figure may contribute to confusion in gender identity.

The study by (Amendhita et al, 2023) shows that open communication patterns between parents and children have a significant influence on the process of sexual identity formation. A lack of attention and emotional support from parents may cause children to feel unaccepted, leading them to seek validation from the LGBT community. Based on this description, the present study aims to further examine the role of the family in the process of LGBT identity formation through a literature review. By positioning the family as the main factor, this study is expected to contribute to the development of family-based prevention and support strategies in promoting healthy sexual and gender identity development, particularly within the context of Indonesian society, which upholds religious and familial values.

2. METHODS

This study used a literature review method with a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the role of the family in the formation of LGBT identity. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to systematically and thoroughly analyze various findings from previous studies. The literature review is considered relevant for gathering multiple perspectives, theories, and empirical findings from prior research (Nugraha et al., 2021).

The data analysis technique used in this study was thematic analysis. All articles were carefully analyzed to identify key findings related to the role of the family in the formation of LGBT identity. These findings were then categorized into several themes, such as parenting styles, emotional attachment, family education, relationships among family members, and the influence of the social environment. Subsequently, these themes were analyzed to explore their interconnections and synthesized to formulate conclusions that address the focus of the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Family Dynamics in the Formation of LGBT Identity

Family Disharmony and Dysfunction

In their normative study, (Pambudi and Yitawati, 2022) revealed that family conflict, childhood trauma, and the absence of religious and moral education within the family are key factors contributing to development of LGBT identity. Such an unhealthy family environment is considered capable of creating conditions that do not adequately support the positive development of sexual and gender identity. The same was also stated by Azmi (2015), that disharmony within the family, particularly when a child loses the figure of a father or mother as a significant role model, may lead to confusion in gender identity. This confusion, if not addressed, can continue into adulthood and affect the process of self-identity exploration, including in terms of sexual orientation.

In addition, (Marlina and Sutrisno, 2017), through their literature review, emphasized that parenting patterns within the family also contribute greatly to the process of children's sexual identity development. Parenting that is either overly authoritarian or excessively

permissive is considered to pose a risk of increasing the likelihood of sexual orientation deviations. Furthermore, the absence of attachment figures in the family, especially those aligned with the child's gender, often leads children to seek self-validation outside the family environment. In some cases, children may find such acceptance within the LGBT community. A recent literature review by (Andini, Yani and Permata Nastia, 2024) highlights that unhealthy parenting characterized by lack of affection and poor communication is strongly linked to identity confusion among sexual minorities, reinforcing the role of family environment in the development of sexual identity.

Parenting Patterns

The parenting style applied by parents is one of the important factors influencing child development, including the process of sexual identity formation. (Nugraha et al, 2022) found that both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles implemented by parents may have an impact on the development of a child's gender identity. Children who grow up in a family environment with minimal emotional support tend to be more vulnerable to sexual identity confusion and eventually seek validation or acceptance from outside the family environment.

(Toher and Arifin,2023) reinforced these findings by stating that, in addition to religious education, other influencing factors include experiences of sexual abuse that are not properly addressed within the family, as well as unbalanced parenting styles. This understanding affirms that unbalanced parenting, whether excessively permissive or strictly authoritarian, can serve as a risk factor in the development of LGBT identity.

Furthermore, (Kusuma and Wahyuni, 2021), through their systematic literature review, emphasized that the role of parents has a significant contribution in shaping a child's gender identity. Parental attitudes and treatment toward gender-related issues directly influence how children construct their self-concept. They found that parents who adopt gender-responsive parenting, which refers to parenting tailored to the developmental needs of the child's gender, tend to be more successful in helping children form a healthy gender identity.

Absence of Parental Figures

The presence of parents, both physically and emotionally, plays an important role in the process of shaping a child's gender identity. (Rokhmah,2017) revealed that LGBT identity often develops in individuals who experience an imbalance of gender roles within the family, such as maternal dominance or the absence of a father. This condition may influence the way children perceive gender roles in everyday life. (Pambudi and Yitawati,2022) emphasized that the absence of a father or mother figure whether physical or emotional can lead to confusion in a child's sexual identity due to the lack of balanced gender role models within the family.

In addition, the quality of attachment between parents and children also influences the development of gender identity. The attachment between a father and his son plays an important role in shaping a stable gender identity. The absence of a father figure or limited paternal involvement in parenting increases the risk of identity confusion and makes children more vulnerable to the development of LGBT identity (Prasetyo and Sulistiani, 2018). Similar support is found in the study by (Wijaya and Sartika, 2021), which states that the active role

of all family members, including father, mother, and siblings, has a significant influence on the formation of a child's gender identity. They noted that children raised in families with a complete structure tend to have a clearer understanding of gender compared to those from single-parent families.

Although many studies highlight the importance of the family's role, most of them remain theoretical or are based on literature reviews. The study by (Pambudi and Yitawati, 2022), for instance, lacks a comprehensive depiction of real field conditions. In fact, a case study approach could provide a clearer picture of how family dynamics influence the formation of an individual's identity. According to (Megasari et al, 2017), one participant reported feeling more accepted by an external community, as they had received little to no attention from their family since early childhood. This indicates that a personal approach is highly important for understanding how this issue develops in each individual. Recent findings by (de Vries et al, 2023) also confirm that weak family cohesion is linked to gender identity confusion in youth.

Psychological and Emotional Factors within the Family

Childhood Trauma and Experiences of Violence

Traumatic experiences within the family can have long-term impacts on a child's psychological development, including the formation of sexual identity. (Siregar, 2015) in his study, found that the main factors causing individuals to identify themselves as LGBT are the lack of affection from the family and experiences of violence or sexual abuse within the family environment, which lead to trauma toward heterosexual relationships. This is supported by (Russell and Fish, 2019), who emphasized that adverse childhood experiences, including family-based trauma and rejection, play a significant role in shaping the mental health and identity development of LGBT youth.

Similar findings were also presented by (Toher and Arifin, 2023), who identified that experiences of sexual abuse that are not properly addressed within the family are among the factors that may influence the development of LGBT identity. This indicates that trauma and violence within the family can lead children to develop negative perceptions of heterosexual relationships and seek alternative sexual identities.

Lack of Affection and Emotional Support

The need for affection and emotional support is a fundamental human need. When this need is not fulfilled within the family, individuals tend to seek it elsewhere. (Megasari et al, 2017), in their study, revealed that one of the main reasons individuals identify themselves as LGBT is the pursuit of affection that they did not receive within their family.

(Amendhita et al, 2023) reinforced this finding by stating that a lack of affection and attention from parents may lead children to seek validation from external environments, including the LGBT community. When the family fails to provide the necessary affection and emotional support, individuals tend to seek acceptance and affection from other communities, which in some cases is the LGBT community.

Seeking Validation Outside the Family

When children do not receive acceptance, affection, and recognition from their family, they tend to seek validation outside the family environment. Social media and the internet

serve as alternative spaces that provide both information and communities, including those related to sexual identity. (Juditha, 2014) stated that LGBT representations in social media and magazines often influence individuals who feel unaccepted by their families. In addition, peers also play a significant role. (Fadzilah and Noremy, 2019) found that adolescents experiencing psychological pressure within the family tend to seek comfort and acceptance within LGBT communities.

This strengthens the statement that the family holds a vital role in safeguarding children from external influences, particularly those originating from media and peers. The failure of the family to fulfill the child's emotional needs will increase vulnerability to seeking validation outside the family, including within LGBT communities.

It should also be noted that not all children who experience violence or childhood trauma will identify themselves as LGBT. This indicates that other factors may also play a role, such as the child's personality, the influence of the school environment, or social media. For example, in the study by (Siregar, 2013), childhood trauma is indeed mentioned as a primary factor, but it does not explain how children who undergo similar traumatic experiences but do not become LGBT may exhibit different responses. This is important as a point of reflection, indicating that each individual has their own way of responding to emotional experiences.

Education within the Family

Character Education and Religious Values

Character education based on religious values within the family plays an important role in shaping a child's sexual identity. (Hasanah and Suprpto, 2020) stated that character education grounded in religious values and local wisdom within the family can serve as an effective defense for children in facing the flow of information about LGBT. Children with a strong foundation of character are more likely to maintain a gender identity following their natural disposition (Hasanah and Suprpto, 2020). In addition, intensive communication between parents and children reinforces the internalization process of these values.

(Nurhayati and Firmansyah, 2023) found that the consistent introduction of gender identity and roles to children at an early age within the family establishes a strong foundation for the future development of their gender identity. This study also revealed that cultural and religious factors within the family serve as a crucial basis for how parents introduce gender roles to their children. Recent research indicates that parental religiosity particularly fathers discussions of gender roles significantly shapes children's gender attitudes and preferences, reinforcing the idea that religiously framed family communication builds stable gender identities (Wiwattanaworaset et al., 2022).

Sexual Education within the Family

Appropriate sexual education within the family also plays an important role in the formation of a healthy sexual identity. (Purwanti and Darma, 2021), in their study, found that families who actively provide age-appropriate sexual education play a significant role in preventing deviations in sexual orientation. They emphasized that parents who are open in discussing issues of sexuality with their children can foster a healthy understanding of gender

identity. This study also revealed that the involvement of fathers in the sexual education of sons and mothers in the sexual education of daughters has proven effective in shaping appropriate gender identity.

(Wahyuni, 2018) emphasized that the lack of sexual education within the family makes children more vulnerable to external influences that introduce the concept of LGBT as a form of self-expression. This highlights the importance of appropriate and age-appropriate sexual education within the family to prevent confusion in sexual identity.

Although character education and sexual education are considered important, some studies remain limited in scope. As seen in the study by (Purwanti and Darma, 2021), the research was conducted in only one city and may not fully represent family conditions in other regions. In addition, in some families, even though religious education is introduced from an early age, there is a possibility that children do not internalize it. This may result in silent rejection of the values being taught. Therefore, how parents convey these messages is also an important aspect that needs to be considered, not just the content itself.

Family-Based Intervention and Prevention

Family Counseling

The family counseling approach can become one of the effective interventions in addressing issues related to sexual identity. Family-based counseling may assist LGBT individuals in understanding their identity more healthily. This highlights the importance of a holistic approach that involves all family members in the counseling process. Through family-based therapy, LGBT individuals can be supported in developing a healthier understanding of their identity. This approach does not focus solely on the individual but also considers family dynamics that may contribute to identity confusion (Azmi, 2015). Family based interventions, especially attachment-focused therapy, have been shown to support well-being and identity stability in sexual and gender minority youth (Diamond et al., 2021).

Strengthening Family Communication

Effective and open communication within the family is a key factor in the prevention and intervention of issues related to sexual identity. (Amendhita et al, 2023) emphasized that open communication patterns between parents and children have a strong influence on the formation of a child's sexual identity. The role of parents in providing proper guidance and appropriate parenting can help children avoid sexual identity confusion and sexual deviation.

(Nugraha et al, 2022) also emphasized the importance of communication by stating that children who receive a strong religious understanding are more likely to have a stable sexual orientation compared to those raised in families that provide limited moral values. This indicates that effective communication about values and morality within the family can help children develop a healthy sexual identity.

The idea of family counseling as a solution may indeed sound effective. However, in practice, it is unlikely that many families are truly prepared to engage in the counseling process, especially when the topic is as sensitive as sexual identity. Many parents tend to feel ashamed or reject the process, resulting in less optimal support. In several cases, rigid or authoritarian communication patterns within the family become the main barriers. This indicates that, before implementing interventions for the child, it is advisable to first approach

the family so that they can open up and understand the importance of healthy communication.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this literature review indicate that the family plays a highly significant role in the formation of LGBT identity. Factors such as family disharmony, unbalanced parenting, and the absence of parental figures have a considerable impact on the development of a child's sexual and gender identity. Children who do not receive emotional attachment and support from their families are more likely to experience confusion in forming their self-identity and are more vulnerable to seeking acceptance outside the family.

In addition, educational aspects within the family, such as character education based on religious values and age-appropriate sexual education, have been proven to serve as a foundation in shaping a healthy gender identity in children. Open and intensive communication between parents and children also strengthens the process of internalizing family values, enabling children to better understand and positively direct their identity.

Thus, it can be concluded that the family is the primary factor in either supporting or preventing the development of LGBT identity in children. Through nurturing parenting, appropriate education, and healthy communication, the family holds great potential to guide children in forming a sexual and gender identity that aligns with the values they uphold. The results of this study are expected to serve as a foundation for designing family-based programs that support the comprehensive development of a child's identity.

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