University of Southampton

Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences

School of Psychology

The Use of Social Media in Identity Development for LGBTQI+ Individuals and the

Factors That Shape Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population

by

Kirsty Russell

Thesis for the degree of Doctor in Educational Psychology

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<u>Abstract</u>

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Despite the legislative progress and increased visibility of LGBTQI+ individuals in society, research continues to highlight the prejudice and victimisation that this population can face. According to the minority stress model, sexual minorities can face hostile stigma-related stressors which can compromise the mental health of LGBTQI+ individuals. Additionally, LGBTQI+ individuals face a distinct path of navigating identity development compared to non-LGBTQI+ peers. Chapter one begins by outlining the context, rationale, and scope for this research. As identity development takes place in a contemporary world of widespread social media use, chapter two presents the systematic literature review conducted to answer 'how do LGBTQI+ individuals use social media as part of their identity development?' The review included 16 studies and adopted a thematic synthesis methodology. LGBTQI+ individuals used social media for: gaining a sense of belonging, developing my identity, managing my identity, and broadcasting my identity. Furthermore, understanding the mechanisms which underly

transprejudice has implications for the outcomes and mental health of transgender individuals. Consequently, chapter three presents the findings from an online survey with 129 young people, to investigate the factors which predict young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals. A multiple regression analysis revealed that several previously identified factors from the adult literature formed a comprehensive model in explaining a large amount of variance in young people's attitudes. The importance of discomfort felt with violations of heteronormativity, hostile sexism, and gender were emphasised. Implications to inform support across different ecological and contextual systems and scope for further research is discussed.

Keywords: LGBTQI+, mental health, social media, identity development, belonging, transgender, attitudes, transprejudice, heteronormativity, sexism, gender

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Declaration of Authorship

Print name:	Kirsty Russell

Title of thesis:	The Use of Social Media in Identity Development for LGBTQI+ individuals and the Factors That Shape Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature:		Date:	

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Definitions and Abbreviations

Term or Abbreviation	Definition
Ambivalent Sexism	Ambivalent sexism is a multidimensional construct that incorporates two sexist attitudes: hostile and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996).
Benevolent Sexism (BS)	Viewing women more stereotypically and in restricted roles, which may appear positive, affectionate, or chivalrous, but consequences can be damaging due to origins in masculine dominance (Glick & Fiske, 1996).
Cisgender	"Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were 'assigned' at birth" (Stonewall, 2017).
Coming Out	The process where "individuals with alternative sexual orientations must explore, define, and disclose their sexual orientations in a way that straight individuals need not" (Hill, 2009, p. 346).
Conservative Ideology	An adherence to traditional values, involving resistance to change, belief in hierarchy and submission to authority (Christopher & Mull, 2006).
Context Collapse	The non-intentional flattening of spatial, temporal and social boundaries online that would normally separate audiences offline (Marwick & Boyd, 2010).
Context Collusion	The process where individuals purposefully collapse, blur, and flatten contexts on social media to disclose identity (Davis & Jurgenson, 2014).
CYP	Children and Young People
Gender	"Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth" (Stonewall, 2017).
Gender Dysphoria	"A sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. This sense of unease or dissatisfaction may be so intense it can lead to depression and anxiety and have a harmful impact on daily life" (NHS, 2020)
Gender Essentialism	"The belief that males and females are born with distinctively different natures, determined biologically rather than culturally" (Chandler & Munday, 2011).

Term or Abbreviation	Definition
Gender Role Beliefs (GRBs)	"A set of beliefs and opinions about males and females and about the purported qualities of masculinity and femininity" (Deaux & Kite, 1987, p. 97).
Hegemonic Masculinity	Attitudes or practices to maintain men's power over women and other minority groups of men (Connell, 1987).
Heteronormativity	The idea that heterosexual attraction and relationships are the norm of sexuality. It is linked to essentialist and dichotomous understandings of sexuality (a person is heterosexual or homosexual) and gender (a person is a man or a woman) and the perception that these are fixed. (Barker, 2014).
Hostile Sexism (HS)	The belief that men are more competent and deserving of higher status and power than women (Becker & Wright, 2011).
Identity Development	The complex process whereby humans establish a unique view of the self-characterised by continuity and inner unity. It is related to terms such as the self, self-concept, values, and personality development (Herman, 2011).
LGB	Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer (or Questioning), or Intersex
Need for Closure (NFC)	The extent in which people have a desire for firm answers in opposition to ambiguity (Makwana et al., 2017).
Passing	"If someone is regarded, at a glance, to be a cisgender man or cisgender woman… This might include physical gender cues (hair or clothing) and/or behaviour which is historically or culturally associated with a particular gender" (Stonewall, 2017).
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews
Religious Fundamentalism (RF)	The belief "that there is one set of religious teaching that clearly contains the fundamental basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity" (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, p. 118).

Term or Abbreviation	Definition
Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA)	"Conventionalism (adherence to conventional values), authoritarian submission (placing high value on obedience and respect for authority), and authoritarian aggression (punitive attitudes toward those who deviate from conventional values)" (Manson, 2020, p. 1).
Social Media	"Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenleing, 2010, p. 61).
Transacceptance	Positive attitudes towards transgender individuals that are supportive of transgender opportunities and rights (Winter et al., 2009).
Transgender*	"An umbrella term encompassing those whose gender identities or gender roles differ from those typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth" (APA, 2018). "Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois" (Stonewall, 2017).
Transgender Man	"A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man" (Stonewall, 2017).
Transgender Woman	"A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman" (Stonewall, 2017).
Transprejudice	"The negative valuing, stereotyping and discriminatory treatment of individuals whose appearance and/or identity does not conform to the current social expectations or conventional conceptions of gender" (Winter et al., 2009, p. 20)
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
Young Person	Adolescents and emerging adults aged 16-25

Note. * Participants were provided with this definition as part of the online survey.

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1 Context for Research

It is estimated that 94.6% of the UK population over the age of 16 identify as heterosexual or straight, with 1.2 million people identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (ONS, 2018). Although no robust data exists, it is also estimated that 200,000-500,000 individuals identify as transgender (Government Equalities Office, 2018), and there have also been a surge in referrals for children and young people experiencing gender dysphoria to the UK's Tavistock and Portman Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS, 2018). Over the past 50 years, a political reform has taken place with the legalisation of homosexual acts (Sexual Offences Act, 1967), the freedom to change gender legally (Gender Recognition Act, 2004), the protection against being discriminated against based on gender or sexual identity (Equality Act, 2010), and the legalisation of same-sex marriage (Marriage Act, 2013). More recently, high profile LGBTQI+ media role models have attracted much attention such as Caitlyn Jenner's gender transition and Laverne Cox being rated one of the world's most beautiful women by People's Magazine, as well as the increased popularity of television shows such as 'RuPaul's Drag Race' 'Pose', or 'It's a Sin', and increased representation of LGBTQI+ characters in television shows (Cook, 2018). This has somewhat contributed to the increased visibility and recognition of LGBTQI+ individuals in the public domain.

Despite the legislative progress and increased media visibility, research continues to highlight the prejudice, discrimination, harassment, violence, and victimisation that this population often face (e.g., Bachmann & Gooch, 2018; Government Equalities Office, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2016). Furthermore, a large amount of transgender people report being

exposed to negative media depictions of transgender people across a range of mediums (Hughto et al., 2020). According to the minority stress model (Meyer, 1995), hostile stigma-related stressors (e.g., victimisation), in addition to everyday stressors, compromise the mental health of LGBTQI+ individuals (Russell & Fish, 2016). Research highlights that over 40% of LGBTQI+ individuals have experienced stigma-related incidents (Government Equalities Office, 2018), 52% have experienced depression, and 31% have thought about taking their lives (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018). These statistics are high in comparison to 19% of the general population over the age of 16 in the UK who show symptoms of anxiety or depression (Evans et al., 2016), 6% who have attempted suicide and 20% who have reported thinking about taking their own lives at some point (McManus et al., 2016). Young LGBTQI+ people also face higher risks of experiencing victimisation and mental health difficulties, with nearly half of LGBT pupils and 64% of transgender pupils being bullied, 84% of transgender young people reporting self-harm (Bradlow et al., 2017), and 13% of LGBT aged 18-24 reporting that they had considered taking their life (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018). This is in comparison to 9% of 16-24 years olds within the general population who have attempted suicide in their lifetime (McManus et al., 2016). Negative impacts on mental health have specifically been noted in regard to transgender individuals (McNeil et al., 2012).

In addition to stigma-related stressors induced by society, LGBTQI+ individuals face a distinct path of consciously navigating identity development and identity disclosure, in comparison to non-LGBTQI+ peers (Fax & Ralston, 2016). Stressors can challenge identity awareness, acceptance, and affirmation (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), leading to potential crises of self-concept and increased anxiety (Walters-Powell, 2016). Coming out is also a significant, and often difficult, part of identity development for LGBTQI+ individuals. In modern society,

statistics suggest that many LGBTQI+ individuals come out via social media (State & Wernerfelt, 2015), and although coming out can increase victimisation in the short term, it is associated with lower depression and improved wellbeing in young adulthood (Russell & Toomey, 2014).

In order to best support LGBTQI+ individuals and lessen the impact of stigma-related stressors in contemporary society, it is important to consider the differing contextual systems which impact on their identity development, functioning, and mental health. In line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1977), young people are impacted by complex interactions and relationships between multiple contextual systems in their environment from their immediate environments and direct contacts to their socio-cultural environments and wider influences. In contemporary society, social media are likely to impact upon many levels of an individual's ecological system due to its widespread use. Social media have become central to people's lives, with 78% of the UK population using it (Tankovska, 2021), and have somewhat shifted the sociocultural landscape for identity development (Davis & Weinstein, 2017; Kuper & Mustanski, 2014). The attitudes of young people towards transgender individuals are also likely to impact across ecological levels from close family and peers, to the school environment, to the mass media and even wider societal attitudes and ideologies of contemporary UK culture.

1.2 The Current Research

To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of social media use on LGBTQI+ identity development, chapter two aimed to answer 'how do LGBTQI+ individuals use social media as part of their identity development?'. This may help to inform understanding and applications of identity development models in contemporary society and to inform practice, support and

intervention. A systematic review was chosen to develop a current, clear and comprehensive overview of the qualitative literature around the topic. It was decided that the review would include qualitative studies as a way to capture information about human experience, meaning, feelings, perspectives and motivations to answer the research question. As "making judgements about qualitative research requires a deep engagement with 'rich, thick description' and the context of the study" (Bearman & Dawson, 2013, p. 253), a thematic synthesis was adopted to analyse qualitative findings from studies. The researcher's stance stems from a social constructivist epistemological position, viewing human experience as subjectively constructed, mediated historically, culturally, and linguistically, and with language being an important part of socially constructed knowledge (Willig, 2001). By rigorously examining overlapping and common elements amongst studies and using inductive coding, thematic synthesis was used to achieve analytical abstraction of themes at higher levels. Qualitative findings were therefore reviewed through the researcher's unique and subjective lens, impacted by the researcher's background and experience, especially during the analytical stage of thematic synthesis.

  To gain a deeper understanding of the underlying components of transprejudice attitudes which can negatively impact transgender individuals' mental health, chapter three asked 'to what extent can we predict young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals?'. Young people may provide scope for societal change, in line with the impressionable years hypothesis (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989), as during late adolescence and emerging adulthood, individuals can be highly susceptible to attitude change. Consequently, if we can understand what informs young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals then we can better inform interventions in attempt to reduce the potential impact of stigma-related stressors on transgender mental health. An online survey methodology was adopted to gather quantitative data regarding young people's

attitudes towards transgender individuals. This methodology was chosen due to the sensitive nature of the topic being explored and the ability to recruit large, heterogenous samples online quickly (Birnbaum, 2004). The quantitative methodology allowed for a broader investigation of the topic, involving larger samples, enhancing the generalisability of the results. A multiple regression analysis was chosen to enable the researcher to test the validity of their predictive model, based on findings from previous research, with a younger, diverse sample in the UK. It is likely that the participants recruited had a vested interest in the topic of transgender which motivated them to take part, however, it is also possible that the chance of winning monetary vouchers in the prize draw acted as a key incentive.

Taken together, these two studies were conducted to inform understanding around how LGBTQI+ populations may be impacted by the contemporary world by investigating young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals, and the use of social media in LGBTQI+ identity development. Developing this understanding has potential scope to improve outcomes and mental health and wellbeing of the LGBTQI+ population across ecological and contextual systems.

1.3 Researcher's Background and Rationale for Engagement

I recognise my potential impact on the analysis of the research as a cisgender, heterosexual woman, who has grown up in a society which tends to promote and reinforce binary understandings of gender. I adopt a social constructivist epistemological position and acknowledge my impact on the interpretation of the data. Up until the point of analytical coding in the thematic synthesis, the creation of free codes and descriptive themes kept close to the data. Higher order analytical themes were then created through my own unique lens constructed from

my culture, life experience, understandings and linguistics, and are open to alternative subjective interpretations.

My own personal values and beliefs influenced my decisions to undertake this research. I attended a grammar school for girls, which increased gender salience at a young age and reinforced the existence of a gender binary. Having to abide by strict rules that inhibited certain forms of gender expression was something I felt uncomfortable with from a young age. I was also an avid trampolinist where violations of wearing clothing inconsistent with my biological sex was penalised in sporting competitions, even by National Governing Bodies, again, something I felt very uncomfortable with. I have also always been driven to improve inclusion and the outcomes of those who society deem as 'different' or in the 'minority'. From a young age, I witnessed how society often excluded and victimised a family member who had Downs Syndrome and a family friend who had severe autism. This was a marked motivation wanting to work and advocate for individuals with additional needs, as well as holding a social model of disability within my values. Consequently, I completed an undergraduate Psychology degree where a professor's numerous publications on LGBT psychology sparked my interest in LGBTQI+ issues. I also completed a university assignment based on gender sexual fluidity which enabled me to move away from viewing gender as existing within a binary. I then worked as an Assistant Psychologist within diverse inner London schools where I witnessed the incredibly supportive systems that surrounded one particular nine-year-old child in her gender transition. This opened up an abundance of questions for me including: 'how can children this young experience gender dysphoria?', 'how have society, education and those close to me shaped and crafted my own gender identity?', and 'why are gender, sex, and attraction often referred to as being the same?'. Following this, I gained a place as a Trainee Educational

Psychologist on the Doctorate in Educational Psychology course at the University of

Southampton where I met two incredibly inspirational members of the staff team, as well as prior

trainees, who enthused me to learn more about the experiences of the LGBTQI+ population and

to make a difference.

I also acknowledge that my own identity development has taken place in a world of

ubiquitous social media use, especially when social media use was on the rise. I reflect that I

have had relatively positive experiences using social media and use multiple social media

platforms to this day. Consequently, these experiences were likely to have impacted on my

analytical lens.

I am also particularly motivated by the following quote "Equality means more than

passing laws. The struggle is really won in the hearts and minds of the community, where it

really counts" (Gittings, n.d). As mentioned, although legislative changes and increased

acceptance of LGBTQI+ have occurred within society, much prejudice and discrimination still

exist and the statistics reported previously were shocking for me to read. Those members of

society who believe that all human beings are equal and should be treated fairly and in a non-

discriminatory manner can help raise awareness, educate, support, and advocate for minority

groups to make a real difference. Having increased knowledge about the factors which influence

young people's attitudes towards transgender has important implications, particularly for

education settings, for targeting interventions aimed at young people in society. As social media

has changed the scope for communication, finding out about how LGBTQI+ individuals are

using social media as part of identity development will also have important implications to help

lessen the potential impacts of stigma-related stressors created by society on the mental health,

wellbeing and outcomes for the LGBTQI+ population.

1.4 Dissemination Plan

I strongly feel that disseminating research and publishing work through reliable sources can help to improve the visibility of the work, to educate others and to ultimately build upon knowledge in and across fields. Consequently, I intend to submit chapter two for publication which is the systematic literature review asking 'how do LGBTQI+ individuals use social media as part of their identity development?'. A peer reviewed journal such as 'Psychology of Sexualities Review' by the British Psychological Society is a relevant publication source due to its aim to develop non-heterosexist and gender-inclusive research, theory and practice in British Psychology. It also publishes a variety of research, including reviews, to improve understanding around LGBTQI+ issues.

Additionally, I intend to submit chapter three, the empirical online survey study asking 'to what extent can we predict young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals?', for publication. Since this study's implications can have relevance across many fields, a peer reviewed journal such as 'Sexualities' by SAGE journals would be appropriate as it is one of the world's leading international journals in exploring human sexualities across a wide variety of disciplines. The current study regarding young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals would be relevant to publish via this source due to the journal's aim to inform about lived life and real-world events including the shifting nature of human sexualities in the modern world.

Furthermore, I will be presenting the findings of chapter three at a University of Southampton's Post Graduate Psychology Conference in June 2021 with various members of the School of Psychology, to advance knowledge and its application across psychological disciplines and to inspire fellow trainee Psychologists. Additionally, I will be presenting the findings of both

chapters with the Educational Psychology Service I am on placement with at a team service day

in July 2021, highlighting the specific implications for Educational Psychologists and schools.

Chapter 2   How do LGBTQI+ Individuals Use Social Media as Part of Their Identity Development?

Abstract

A major task of adolescence is identity formation, where individuals typically engage in processes of identity exploration and identity commitment. Social media have become central to people's lives and have somewhat shifted the sociocultural landscape for identity development. Consequently, identity development now takes place in a world of widespread social media use and the LGBTQI+ population may be significantly impacted by the rise of social media. The current systematic review sought to answer 'how do LGBTQI+ individuals use social media as part of their identity development?' The review included 16 studies and adopted a thematic synthesis methodology to identify four analytical themes that encapsulated a variety of gender and sexual minority experiences: 1) gaining a sense of belonging, 2) developing my identity, 3) managing my identity, and 4) broadcasting my identity. Further research is warranted to establish whether differences exist between LGBTQI+ and non-LGBTQI+ individuals' social media use and identity development and to investigate impacts of intersectionality. Nevertheless, findings have important implications across individual, group, and systemic levels to lessen the impact of stigma-related stress on mental health.

Keywords: LGBTQI+, adolescence, social media, identity development, mental health

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Rise of Social Media

Social media have become central to people's lives, used by 78% of the UK population (Tankovska, 2021). Current "Zillenials", or young people and emerging adults born between 1995 and 2010 (Turner, 2015), are the first generation to experience an adolescent developmental period characterised by widespread social media use. Since its rise in the early 2000's (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019), social media have created new scope for communication and interaction and have somewhat shifted the sociocultural landscape for identity development (Davis & Weinstein, 2017; Kuper & Mustanski, 2014). Social media are defined as "internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenleing, 2010, p. 61).

2.1.2 LGBTQI+ Identity Development

Identity development is a complex and multidimensional process undergone by all humans. Adolescence is a key developmental period for identity formation that all individuals experience (Erikson, 1968) which can extend into emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2014). A major task of adolescence is to construct a sense of self and personal identity, which is continuous across time and contexts (Erikson, 1972; Pasupathi et al., 2007). Marcia (1966) proposes that adolescents engage in processes of identity exploration (questioning and searching for roles and values in domains like sexual orientation), leading to identity commitment (making firm decisions about domains). During this period, adolescents show commitment to social identity,

seek autonomy from parents, and have greater need for peer relationships (Meeus et al., 2005; Tarrant, 2002).

One population which may be significantly impacted by the major task of adolescence and the rise of social media is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, or Intersex (LGBTQI+) population (Doss, 2018). The assumption of heteronormativity present in society can make it difficult for LGBTQI+ individuals to recognise or cope with feelings of difference, to explore these further, and to commit to an identity that is considered a minority group. Also, identifying as LGBTQI+ and disclosing identity to others may be impacted by a fear of stigma or rejection which can induce anxiety, feelings of isolation or the need to hide identity from others, making Marcia's (1966) processes of identity exploration and commitment more difficult to achieve. Research also suggests that LGBTQI+ youth spend longer online than non-LGBTQI+ youth (Palmer et al., 2013) which may suggest that their purpose or need for social media use could be different to that of the general population.

Whilst positive social changes regarding the acceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals have occurred, many continue to experience victimisation, prejudice, and discrimination (Russell & Fish, 2016). Research highlights that over 40% of LGBTQI+ individuals have experienced stigma-related incidents (Government Equalities Office, 2018), with 41% of transgender people reporting experiencing a hate crime because of their gender identity within the last year, and 28% of LGBTQI+ individuals experiencing discrimination from a place of worship (Bachmann & Gooch, 2017). The minority stress model (Meyer, 1995) argues that stigma-related stressors can compromise the mental health of LGBTQI+ individuals (Russell & Fish, 2016) and increase risks of psychopathology (Hatzenbuehler, 2009). Over 40% of LGBTQI+ individuals have experienced stigma-related incidents (Government Equalities Office, 2018), 52% have

experienced depression, and 31% have thought about taking their lives (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018). Stressors can challenge identity awareness, acceptance, and affirmation (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), leading to crises of self-concept and increased anxiety (Walters-Powell, 2016) because individuals sense "a sudden involuntary joining to a stigmatised group" (Anderson, 1994, p. 15).

LGBTQI+ individuals face a distinct path of consciously navigating identity development and identity disclosure, in comparison to non-LGBTQI+ peers (Fox & Ralston, 2016). Many gender and sexual identity development models (e.g., Cass, 1979; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996) encompass challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals. McCarn and Fassinger's (1996) model of minority identity formation describes four phases of sexual identity development. 'Awareness' describes how individuals perceive themselves as different, followed by 'exploration' where individuals investigate sexual feelings further. 'Deepening/commitment' describes how individuals begin to internalise themselves as LGBTQI+, followed by 'internalisation/synthesis' where individuals incorporate sexual identity into overall identity. Coming out is a significant, and sometimes difficult, part of identity development and refers to the process where LGBTQI+ individuals "must explore, define, and disclose their sexual orientations in a way that straight individuals need not" (Hill, 2009, p. 346).

Various risk and protective factors for the mental health of LGBTQI+ youth have been identified across contextual systems (Russell & Fish, 2016). Protective factors include gender and sexual alliances and LGBT focused policy and inclusive curriculums in schools (Black et al., 2012; Poteat et al., 2012; Toomey et al., 2011), social, parental and peer support (D'Augelli, 2008; Davey et al., 2014; Sheets & Mohr, 2009; Ryan et al., 2010; Shilo & Savaya, 2011; Ueno, 2005), and friendships with sexual minorities (Morrow, 2018). Online and offline victimisation

are significant risk factors (Poteat et al., 2011; Sinclair et al., 2012). Coming out is ultimately

protective (Luhtanen, 2002; Morris et al., 2001; Parent et al., 2015; Solomon et al., 2015), and

although it can increase victimisation in the short term, it is associated with positive long-term

outcomes such as lower depression, greater self-esteem and improved wellbeing due to

synthesising an LGBTQI+ identity into the sense of self (Russell & Toomey, 2014).

2.1.3 Social Media as Contexts for LGBTQI+ Identity Development

Social media now play an integral role in identity development (Barker, 2012; Davis &

Weinstein, 2017). For LGBTQI+ individuals, research suggests that social media provide

opportunities for safe identity exploration, practicing sexual and gender identities, gaining

support, having social interactions, seeking relationships not available offline, connecting to

similar others, increasing social capital, and facilitating identity expression or coming out

(Baams et al., 2011; Cserni & Talmud, 2015; DeHaan et al., 2013; Hillier & Harrison, 2007;

Kitzie, 2017; Lucero, 2017; Marciano, 2014; Mehra et al., 2004; Palmer et al., 2013; Pempek et

al., 2009). Individuals are increasingly coming out using social media (State & Wernerfelt,

2015), with media role models providing inspiration and comfort (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011).

Additionally, social media can be used for accessing information, resources, or events (DeHaan

et al., 2013; Palmer et al., 2013). Nevertheless, social media can collapse multiple offline

audiences into a single audience, making it difficult to apply offline self-presentational

techniques used to manage multiple audiences. This can increase risks of context collapse

(Marwick & Boyd, 2010), the non-intentional flattening of spatial, temporal and social

boundaries online that would normally separate audiences offline. Online a person's identity can

permeate the usually firmer boundaries of the offline social world, leading to unintentional identity disclosures in potentially less supportive contexts (Palmer et al., 2013).

2.1.4 The Current Study

While research has highlighted some ways that social media can impact LGBTQI+ identity development, research varies in the definitions of social media adopted, social media platforms used, differing countries of origin, and varying gender or sexual identities of participants. Given the changing landscape of social interaction and rise of social media, a systematic review is warranted to provide a current and comprehensive understanding of the literature to answer 'how do LGBTQI+ individuals use social media as part of their identity development?'. A better understanding of how LGBTQI+ individuals use social media to manage their identities could have useful implications for practice, support, and intervention.

2.2 Method

2.2.1 Search Strategy

Searches of PsycInfo, Educational Research Information Centre, and Web of Science databases were conducted on 27th August 2020. Using the 'PICO' framework (Richardson et al., 1995), studies were identified by combining search terms based on the review question and keywords identified through initial scoping searches (Appendix A). The initial search was broad to maximise the likelihood of capturing relevant literature. To reduce risks of identifying only the most accessible research, hand searches and citation chaining were applied.

2.2.2 Eligibility Criteria

Titles and abstracts of 326 papers were screened in line with eligibility criteria (Table 1). Sixteen papers were selected for final review. Figure 1 displays the systematic search strategy, based on the PRISMA template (Moher et al., 2009). To answer 'how do LGBTQI+ individuals use social media?', qualitative studies were chosen. Furthermore, studies that focused specifically on 'social media' or 'social network' use were included, rather than general internet, dating, gaming or chat room use. Studies centred around the use of dating apps were excluded due to their focus on sexual relationships and sub-groups seeking sexual relations which may have pulled the review in a different direction to the research question. Grey literature was included to prevent the impact of potential publication bias. This review also excluded studies whose outcomes focussed on other factors in addition to LGBTQI+ identity development such as disability or religion. The aim of this review was to identify factors specifically relevant to LGBTQI+ identity formation and if it were to include all studies investigating an intersection, then it would be less clear which factors were specifically relevant to LGBTQI+ identity development and which were more related to other areas of identity development (such as religion or disability).

As identity development can continue into adulthood (Fadjukoff et al., 2005; Sokol, 2009) all participant ages were included, and as social media is relatively modern, searches were not date restricted.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Study Item	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Type of Research	Primary research, published papers, theses, dissertations, and conference papers	Secondary research, books, and book chapters
Methodology	Qualitative methodology	Quantitative or mixed methodologies
Participants	Participants identify as LGBTQI+ Participants of all ages	Participants did not identify as LGBTQI+
Intervention	Studies that focused on social media or social networking site use	Studies not primarily focused on social media or social networking site use (e.g., dating apps, gaming, chat rooms, general internet use, offline social networking, selfies, and TV media)
Outcomes/Focus	Outcomes that related to LGBTQI+ identity management (e.g., coming out, gender identity, sexual identity, self-presentation, self-disclosure)	Outcomes not primarily focused on LGBTQI+ identity management (e.g., disability, religion, and migrant status)
Language	Papers accessible in English	Papers not accessible in English
Date	Any date of publication	

Figure 1

PRISMA Diagram Demonstrating the Systematic Literature Search Process

Identification

Records identified from

    PsycInfo via EBSCO (n = 170)
    ERIC via ProQuest (n = 10)
    Web of Science (n = 185)
    Additional Search Methods (n = 28)

Total (n = 326)

→ Records removed *before screening*:

    Duplicate records removed (n = 67)

Screening

Title/Abstract Screening

Records screened (n = 326)

→ Records excluded
(n = 261)

Full Text Screening

Records screened (n = 65)

→ Records not retrieved
(n = 49)

Reasons
Unrelated to review question (n = 12)
Not specifically LGBTQI+ identity related (n = 11)
Not social media specific (n = 10)
Not purely qualitative methodology (n = 6)
Population not LGBTQI+ (n = 5)
Cannot access whole paper (n = 4)
Duplication of dissertation later published (n = 1)

Included

Records included in review
(n = 16)

2.2.3 Quality Assurance

Based on Gough's Weight of Evidence Framework (WoE; Gough, 2007), specifically WoE A, the general coherence and integrity of studies were assessed using the University of Manchester framework for qualitative investigative studies (Bond et al., 2013). The framework was used to collate descriptive, numerical and evaluative information against 12 criteria around data collection, analysis, and interpretation (see Appendix B for example). Inter-rater agreement was not carried out so reliability coefficients were not calculated and removed from the original form. Studies could yield a maximum score of 14, and were deemed high, medium or low quality (see Table 2). Quality assessment is subjective (Booth et al., 2016), therefore the researcher's concept of high-quality studies could differ from other people's perspectives. As most studies were rated medium/high quality, all studies were given equal weight in the analysis. It was initially intended that low quality studies would be excluded, however, the one study assessed as low quality provided a unique perspective which was important to capture in the review.

Although most research in the area was deemed medium or high quality, a systematic review was warranted to summarise findings from a wide body of literature to provide an accessible and comprehensive understanding of the specific research question. Whilst all studies investigated identity development in some way, each study differed in terms of their specific focus e.g., identity disclosure, narrative development, self-presentation, and political expression. Research also varied in terms of the definitions of social media adopted, the social media platforms investigated, and ranged in terms of participant gender and sexual identities, so a wide overview of the literature was warranted.

2.2.4 Data Analysis

Findings were considered to encompass all text under 'results' or 'findings' sections, ranging

from 1387 to 5869 words, consisting of participant quotes and key concepts summarised by

authors. A thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008), using NVivo (release 1.3) software,

was conducted. By examining overlapping elements amongst data using inductive coding,

thematic synthesis aimed to achieve analytical abstraction of themes at higher levels (Morton et

al., 2010). The synthesis followed three distinct, yet iterative, stages. The first stage, line-by-line

coding, involved coding each line of text for basic meaning. These codes were initially 'free

codes' without hierarchical structure ($n = 348$). The second stage involved looking for

similarities and differences between free codes and involved grouping codes into hierarchical

structures. New descriptive themes ($n = 18$) were created to encapsulate meanings within groups

of free codes. The second stage was iterative, where initial codes were grouped, refined into

descriptive themes, followed by further collapsing of codes, and refinement. Until this point, the

analysis kept close to original study findings, however, the third stage involved generating high

order analytical themes, consistent with the review question; this involved moving beyond data

to create new meaning. This process continued until all analytical themes ($n = 4$) were abstract

enough to encapsulate the meaning of all relevant descriptive themes. See Appendix H for

example audit trail (from the line by line coding stage to the generation of 'gaining a sense of

belonging' analytical theme).

Table 2

Quality Assurance Ratings

Quality Rating	Reference	Quality Score (/14)
Low (0-5)	Lovelock (2019)[14]	5
Medium (6-10)	Ciszek (2017)[4]	9
	Carrasco and Kerne (2018)[2]	9
	Downing (2013)[8]	8
	Duguay (2016)[9]	8
	Hanckel et al. (2019)[13]	8
	Chester et al. (2016)[3]	10
	Craig and McInroy (2014)[5]	10
	Fox and Warber (2015)[10]	10
	Fox and Ralston (2016)[11]	10
	Rubin and McClelland (2014)[16]	10
High (11-14)	Bates et al. (2020)[1]	12
	Devito et al. (2018)[6]	11
	Doss (2018)[7]	14
	Haimson et al. (2016)[12]	11
	Owens (2017)[15]	11

Note. Study number depicted by index attached to reference.

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Study Characteristics

Key characteristics and findings from studies were summarised (Appendix C). Studies were relatively recent (published from 2013-2020) and mostly conducted in the USA ($n = 10$) and the UK ($n = 4$). Most studies adopted interview data collection ($n = 14$) and were analysed using a range of qualitative analyses. Samples mostly ranged from five to 52 participants ($M = 27$), but one study adopted a survey-based methodology with 283 participants. Participants varied in gender and sexual identities, and ages ranged from 13 to 66, although the majority of participants were adolescents/emerging adults. Many studies focused on all social media use, however, seven focused specifically on Facebook and one on YouTube.

2.3.2 Synthesis of Results

Four analytical themes were generated: 1) gaining a sense of belonging, 2) developing my identity, 3) managing my identity expression, and 4) broadcasting my identity. Figure 2 displays a thematic map and Table 3 displays the distribution of themes across studies.

Figure 2

Thematic Map
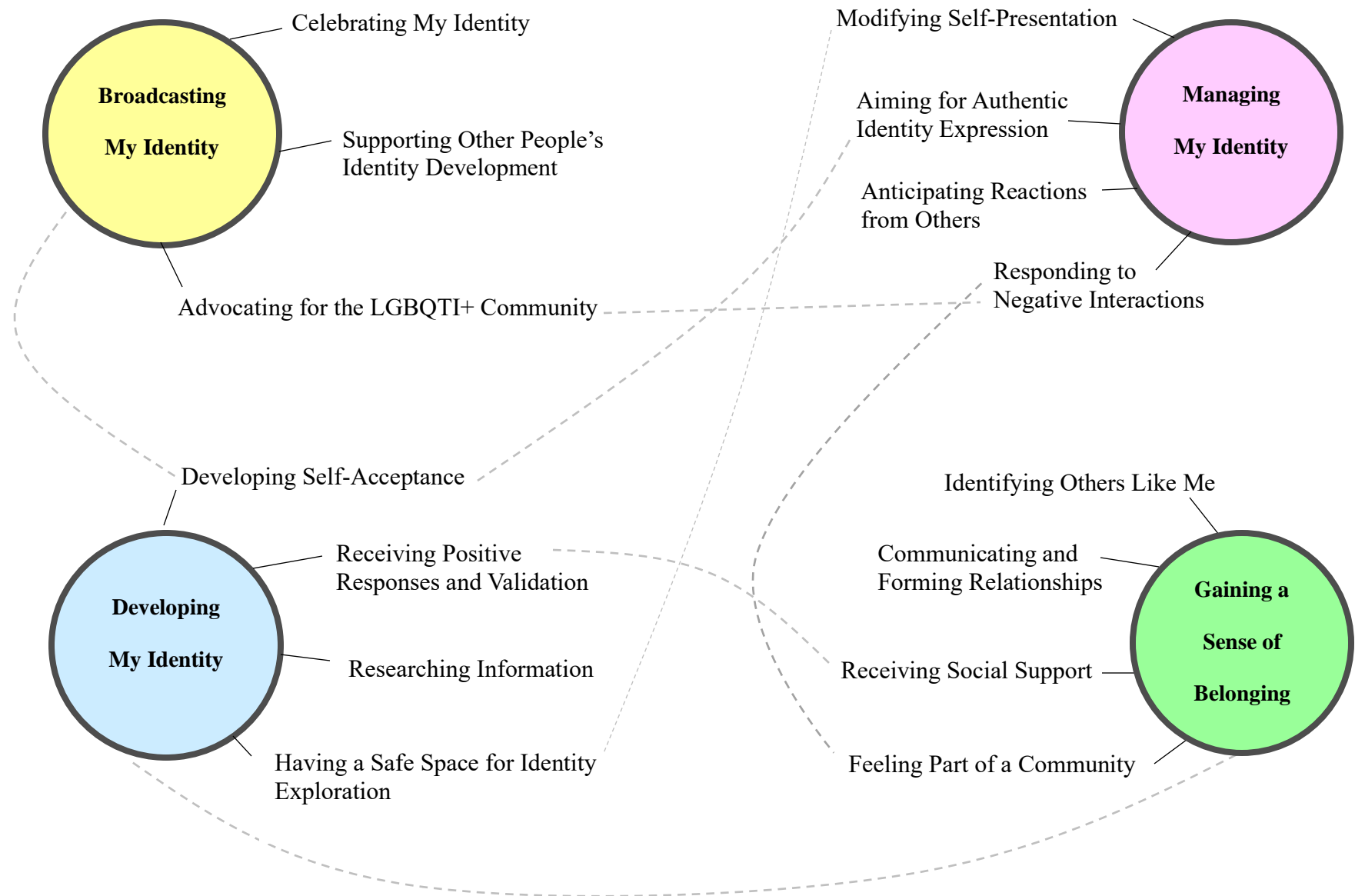
2.3.2.1 Gaining a Sense of Belonging. Members of the LGBTQI+ community's sense of belonging was promoted by their social media use. Social media allowed LGBTQI+ people to access networks of individuals who normalised their feelings of difference, provided support during difficult times, and built a sense of community not always accessible offline. This theme was identified in 14 studies.

LGBTQI+ individuals used social media for '***Identifying Others Like Me'.*** Participants discussed identifying other LGBTQI+ individuals who normalised feelings of difference, as one participant discussed "Tumblr was nice, because I could kind of feel like, I'm not alone. I'm not the only person questioning kind of what their sexuality might be like" (Devito et al., 2018, p. 14). Another discussed "once you find out that someone's queer, there's this feeling of, I don't want to say camaraderie because that sounds stupid. But like yeah, you're part of the fam, you know the struggle" (Carrasco & Kerne, 2081, p. 7). This appeared to increase feelings of hope as one participant expressed how advocacy campaigns that represent those who have "raised complete families", gave him hope that he can achieve "the American Dream" (Ciszeck, 2017, p. 2002). Exposure to LGBTQI+ individuals was discussed by some as not being possible offline, for example "I'm from a rural community and no one is out. So to see people from my area who were on there… changed my perspective of how many people identify as LGBT" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 638).

LGBTQI+ individuals also used social media for '***Communicating and Forming Relationships'****,* to interact with others, discuss identity issues, and to form relationships. Social media "can be a space to have meaningful dialogue" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 330) and "having ongoing conversations and finding acceptance among "Tumblr friends" could help individuals

embrace elements of their identity that may seem difficult to manage on their own" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 639). Social media helps create friendships as you can "get in to contact with many people very quickly" (Downing, 2013, p. 50), and some participants discussed how friendships have different dynamics from those offline due to rapid progression (Downing, 2013). One participant noted how coming out online "made it easier to find gay friends online" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 330) and others discussed how coming out online was important for establishing friendships by noting "I was more connected with that person then…it's kind of your deepest darkest hidden secret, so you feel like you can be yourself with them. And that was important to form relationships" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 324). Some participants also expressed how existing relationships were strengthened by coming out, leading to a positive sense of self (Bates et al. (2020).

LGBTQI+ individuals also used social media for '***Receiving Social Support'***, especially if not available offline. Participants sought "support from other LGBTQ+ individuals on platforms that were not directly linked to his offline identity" (DeVito et al., 2018, p. 13). Participants associated support with improved wellbeing, for example, "when he feels sad or alone, he looks for consolation on the Internet, pointing to online forums during times when he does not have support in his day-to-day life" (Ciszeck, 2017, p. 2001). Participants described relief when they received support after coming out. One participant "teared up at multiple times when I would read through post after post saying how I was supported by so many people that I thought I would lose" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 329), and another felt that "when I came out, the only thing I had was the online media and I feel like all the support I needed, I got it from the online community" (Craig & McInroy, 2014, p. 101). Supportive audiences were key for identity development, as one participant described how having an "audience consisting entirely of

individuals who would not only be accepting, but actively supportive of LGBTQ+ identity allowed her to develop her current self-presentation style" (DeVito et al, 2018, p. 10). Social media also enabled access to support groups; "accessing groups and resources… helped them in terms of their own identity development" (Doss, 2018, p. 49), and many discussed how these were not available offline. Another participant expressed that "without social media I wouldn't have known most of these places existed" (Doss, 2018, p. 48).

Social media were also used for '***Feeling Part of a Community'***. "Online spaces can support community building and identity affirmation for LGBTQ people where there is no offline equivalent" (Duguay, 2016, p. 902). Individuals cannot join communities they cannot see and cannot develop social identities without experiencing it in social contexts (Doss, 2018), and social media allows for these processes. Supportive communities were not always available offline as one participant noted "before I knew any gay people in real life, there were people on Tumblr, and it taught me a lot about what it meant to be a part of this community" (DeVito et al., 2018, p. 10) and another described how "marginalisation they had experienced within their local gay scene…had heightened the need to achieve a sense of belonging online" (Downing, 2013, p. 52). Advocacy campaigns helped individuals "feel connected to a larger LGBTQ collective, suggesting isolation and fear of being alone are fundamental components of their reality" (Ciszeck, 2017, p. 2000). Nevertheless, one participant noted how resources and groups "are so blocked and guarded and hidden that it's hard to find them sometimes" (Doss, 2018, p. 49). A distinction was made between online and offline communities as social media is "a space where one could potentially connect with community and others without necessarily identifying or being identified with that group outside of social media settings" (Doss, 2018, p. 39).

2.3.2.2 Developing My Identity. LGBTQI+ participants used social media to directly develop their identities through building self-acceptance, being influenced by others, seeking information online, and having a safe space for identity exploration. This theme was identified in 14 studies.

LGBTQI+ individuals also used social media for '***Developing Self-Acceptance',*** to resolve internalised feelings of difference and confusion. One participant discussed how "people tend to have a lot of misconceptions about their own identity when they're first coming out … Tumblr can help dispel a lot of those internalized things…that might restrict them from identifying in certain ways" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 639), with another stating "before that I thought I was just a really weird straight person" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 640). Self-acceptance was important for coming out, and "to talk of coming out is now to talk as much, if not more, of self-acceptance of an LGB identity" (Lovelock, 2019, p. 81). LGBQTI+ visibility on social media assisted in developing self-acceptance. Social media features "lots of people putting their own experiences forward, and that makes room for validation and self-discovery" (Bates et al., 2020, p. 63). Social learning allows people to "relate to similar experiences, and in doing so, assist their transitions to a range of non-heterosexual identities…previously viewed as unattainable" (Downing, 2013, p. 49). Social learning positively impacted identity development for many and "provided a window into what it was like to engage in an everyday activity…as an LGBTQ-identified person" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p.639).

Social media also increased the representativeness of the LGBTQI+ population as "campaigns deconstruct stereotypes by providing more robust and complex representations of LGBTQ people and issues, in contrast to the homogenization of LGBTQ they perceived in the media" (Ciszeck, 2017, p. 2002). Some learnt from media role models and discussed how

"Caitlin Jenner, and Laverne Cox and all these… icons…found it much easier to come out as trans because they had these cultural pinpoints" (Bates et al., 2020, p. 69). Nevertheless, some felt the visibility of certain gender and sexual minorities were poorly represented as "advocacy campaigns rarely featured transgender perspectives" (Ciszeck, 2017, p. 2003) and "non-binary and even still bisexuality . . . there's a lot less representation" (Bates et al., 2020, p.69).

Social media were also used by LGBTQI+ individuals for '***Receiving Positive Responses and Validation'.*** Narratives of coming out frequently included other people's reactions, highlighting the abundance of positive responses. Participants generally felt "positive responses far outweighed the negative reactions" (Owens, 2017, p. 437) which appeared to be important for developing self-acceptance. One participant noted how "early experiences on Tumblr were positive in terms of helping her become comfortable with her LGBTQ+ identity" which would impact on "later presentation decisions in other spaces" (Devito et al., 2018, p. 14). Another described that "gay young men often wanted to verify the relative masculinity and femininity of their own bodily comportment" through webcam (Downing, 2013, p. 51). Positive peer reactions were influential as "it's important to see if friends like what I am saying" (Rubin & McClelland, 2015, p. 6).

Social media were also used by LGBTQI+ individuals for '***Researching Information'.*** Information ranged from sexuality issues (sexual disclosure and LGBTQI+ lifestyles) to finding professional support (hormones and name changing processes). Craig and McInroy (2014) discuss how accessing resources offline is impacted by risks to safety and stigma, however, social media offers many resources without risks. Participants valued the multimodal information such as videos, podcasts, and blogs, and several used YouTube to learn about LGBTQI+ issues (Fox & Ralston, 2016). One participant noted how social media "is probably the best way [to get

real information] ... because books and stuff are usually like fiction" (Craig & McInroy, 2014, p.

101) and another felt "without me doing that research...there would always be a big question

mark hanging over me" (Downing, 2013, p. 48).

Social media provides "exposure to a multiplicity of labels as well as the facility to self-

designate identity labels" and is seen as integral to for self-definition (Bates et al., 2020, p. 67).

One participant discussed how "before I joined Tumblr I felt like I didn't have language for a lot

of things, like I didn't know transgender was a thing…knowing about those things definitely

helped the process" and another discussed how "without online access they would not have been

able to identify as asexual" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 638). Social media helps individuals

identify language that fits with their sense of self, as one participant describes "I saw trans

first…I dabbled in it for a little bit, and I was like, owww, this still doesn't fit…I saw the phrase

non-binary and I was like, Oh! There we go, that's it! (Bates et al., 2020, p. 69).

LGBTQI+ individuals also used social media as a '***Safe Space for Identity Exploration'***

which facilitated stable identity development. "Stories of forming identity projections that

reflected aspects of their sexual identity highlighted how engagement in such projections was

only possible when [LGBTQ+ undergraduates] felt safe" (Bates et al., 2020, p. 61). Social media

was seen as safer for exploration than offline. Social media was a testing ground and a safe place

to start coming out due to lower risks as "coming out on Facebook in a controlled and indirect

manner allows these men to retain a greater sense of safety than other ways of coming out"

(Owens, 2017, p. 442). One participant noted how "starting online and talking to just strangers

that are comforting to you would help you to gradually move into the public" (Craig & McInroy,

2014, p. 105). Safety was related to privacy settings, anonymity, and ability to distance

themselves from prejudice. One participant described "it helps a lot the fact that I'm anonymous,

like I feel a lot more open…on other platforms where it isn't as anonymous, like Facebook, I'm

kind of just like I post stuff without defining who or what I am" (Hanckel et al., 2019, p. 1267).

Participants felt implicit cues were safer ways to begin disclosing identity than explicit cues and

"participants use them because they are safer and more reliable than explicit user bios" (Carrasco

& Kerne, 2018, p. 7). Advocacy campaigns "provided them a sense of comfort, or a feeling of

being at home, in places where home often felt dangerous and foreign" (Ciszeck, 2017, p. 2001).

Nevertheless, experiences of marginalisation made some participants feel unsafe, and one

participant "deleted her profile as a way to maintain her personal safety" (Rubin & McClelland,

2014, p. 9).

2.3.2.3 Managing My Identity Expression. LGBTQI+ participants managed their

identity expression on social media through modifying self-presentation, aiming to present their

authentic selves, predicting how audiences would respond, and protecting their identity by

avoiding or responding to negative interactions. Self-presentation differed depending on identity

development stages. This theme was identified across all studies.

Social media were used by LGBTQI+ individuals for '***Modifying Self-Presentation'*** by

those in early stages of identity development, such as awareness, to conceal LGBTQI+ identities

due to fears of involuntary identity disclosure. On social media "you can hide behind a facade,

you could hide behind anything and be who you want to be" (Craig & McInroy, 2014, p. 102).

One participant noted "you can't search my name and my surname is different…I made it as

secret as I possibly can, so you can't even find me if you search" (Hanckel et al., 2019, p. 1269).

Some participants "hid the "Interested in" and "In a Relationship with" fields on profiles" (Fox

& Warber, 2014, p. 88) and some used camouflaging techniques like "maintaining the ambiguity

of potential sexual identity indicators through humor, such as changing one's relationship status to being "married" to a best friend" (Duguay, 2016, p. 899). Others would not support LGBTQI+ political issues through 'liking' or 'commenting' or would "deal with privacy by just not posting things" (Hanckel et al., 2019, p. 1273). Others felt "mundane decisions on Facebook, such as leaving a checkbox unmarked, are a way to protect oneself and maintain relationships" (Rubin & McClelland, 2014, p. 8) and others feared involuntary exposure so deleted profiles "as the only strategy to offset rejection for her self-presentation" (Rubin & McClelland, 2014, p. 9).

Participants attempted to avoid context collapse by managing audiences. Participants deleted and blocked individuals, and created tiered systems to control access. These actions were laborious and one participant described how "the most difficult part was being able to maintain a closeted status to certain people (family) while being out to others (friends)" (Haimson et al., 2016, p. 2901). Participants adopted multiple accounts to separate audiences, with one explaining "I made a new Facebook account, and that's my gay Facebook" (Carrasco & Kerne, 2018, p. 8), and used multiple platforms which "illustrates their construction of backstage contexts, which serve specific purposes or allow for different types of identity expression" (Duguay, 2016, p. 902). Participants managed content by disclosing identity over time, explaining how "the ones that are about gender and identity and sexuality and stuff like that, I've started kinda of, kinda, creeping into showing them more" (Bates et al., 2020, p. 63). Managing past identities for transgender individuals was important for preventing context collapse. 'Digital footprints' were managed by removing photos, names, and gender markers (Haimson et al., 2016).

Participants used many self-presentational strategies. Implicit methods, like posting subtle pictures, sharing posts, or liking LGBTQI+ events or pages, were adopted in early stages of identity development, such as exploration. Participants could present as an LGBTQI+ ally, as

they "might like a page for [a local gay organization] or something, but you wouldn't necessarily look at that and think, 'oh, that's a queer person" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 639). Participants found this "kind of expression was "easy to defend" …as she could frame herself as merely an ally" (Fox & Warber, 2014, p. 90). Implicit methods were used to express identity subtly, to avoid directly coming out when not ready, and to leak information slowly. Implicit methods were easier, safer, and less anxiety provoking than disclosing identity explicitly or offline.

Participants in the deepening/commitment phase of identity development who were beginning to internalise the sense of self as LGBTQI+, used more explicit methods of self-presentation. Changing names, highlighting pronouns, posting or retweeting LGBTQI+ news stories, tagging others in LGBTQI+ posts, sharing narratives through video, changing "interested in" fields, or creating new profiles after transition were used. Social media were used by many to explicitly come out, with Facebook being a tool for "coming out in a single click" (Duguay, 2016, p. 897). In contrast to context collapse, some participants promoted 'context collusion' to flatten contexts by linking platforms to come out to several audiences simultaneously. One participant would out himself by messaging "just so you know, I'm transgender, so that it doesn't surprise you when you see some of my statuses" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 640).

LGBTQI+ individuals were '***Aiming for Authentic Identity Expression'*** on social media. Aligning an inner sense of self with external self-presentation was important for many. Participants wanted to present "who I already am" (Bates et al., 2020, p. 64) and participants viewed social media as spaces to promote honesty as "it can be a space to…reveal who you truly are" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 330). Some expressed how "new media allowed LGBTQ youth to be their real selves without the pressure or expectations inherent in their offline lives" (Craig & McInroy, 2014, p. 102). YouTube videos encouraged authentic identity presentation through

messages "summarised as 'be yourself' and 'accept yourself'" (Lovelock, 2019, p. 79) which led to relief. One participant expressed "it's honestly the best thing ever to be able to be fully who you are, embrace who you are and to be able to love every single part of yourself" (Lovelock, 2019, p. 80) with "a big weight being lifted off my shoulders" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 329). Lovelock (2019, p. 82) describes how "the drive to actualising their authentic selves is put forth as a discursive strategy for navigating a heteronormative, and at times homophobic, world, and for forging a sense of selfhood and self-worth".

Social media use was impacted by *'Anticipating Reactions from Others'.* One participant felt "I was forced to critically analyse my relationships with family and friends in an effort to predict their reactions" (Haimson et al., 2016, p. 2901). Participants took actions to avoid negative interactions by removing friends or making new accounts. One participant had "concern over family seeing and negatively reacting to LGBTQ+-related content [so] must segregate out all of her queer-related content onto Snapchat and Twitter" (DeVito et al., 2018, p. 10). Another participant's decision to remain closeted "was a calculated one, produced with an audience in mind and used as a strategy to avoid further social exclusion" (Rubin & McClelland, 2014, p. 8). Participants feared losing friends, hurting others, or risks to personal safety. Some felt older generations would react negatively, expressing they were "avoiding older contacts who might be in a position of authority or have less tolerant views" (Duguay, 2016, p. 901). Anticipated reactions had less impact for those in deepening/commitment phases of identity development, as "Facebook is a site where he can openly and proudly claim his non-heterosexual identity, even in the presence of people he feels may disapprove" (Owens, 2017, p. 436).

Social media were also used by LGBTQI+ individuals for *'Responding to Negative Interactions'.* Participants discussed experiences of victimisation and microaggressions on social

media. Those in early stages of identity development, such as awareness and exploration, avoided responding to negative interactions, reinforcing a "spiral of silence" (Fox & Warber, 2014) due to low confidence, worries of alienating others, losing opportunities, or being outed. One participant described how they would not respond to comments like "that's so gay…it makes me feel terrible... I guess I could delete them, but…I feel like this could just cause problems" (Rubin & McClelland, 2014, p. 7). As participants reached identity commitment, "those who were more confident also attempted assertive practices such as educating others or even aggression practices such as confronting" (Fox & Warber, 2014, p. 90). Participants directly responded to negative interactions including blocking, messaging, commenting, educating others, or reporting. Some "who are fully out to the network take active steps to make Facebook and other SNSs supportive places…some members of this group…referred to as the "hard core" …express their opinion no matter what" (Fox & Warber, 2014, p. 93).

2.3.2.4 Broadcasting My Identity. LGBTQI+ participants who had reached identity commitment and internalisation/synthesis stages used social media to share and celebrate identity, and were using their journeys and confidence to support others and advocate for the LGBTQI+ community. This theme was the least common and identified in nine studies, highlighting how social media may be less commonly used for this function, in comparison to gaining a sense of belonging, developing and managing identities.

Social media was used by LGBTQI+ individuals for '*Celebrating My Identity'.* One participant expressed they could "openly and proudly claim his non-heterosexual identity, even in the presence of people he feels may disapprove" (Owens, 2017). YouTube was discussed in relation to enabling "young LGB people to express what it feels like to break away from the

heterosexual norm and identify as LGB in the present moment" and to proudly communicate messages like "I accept myself and I want you all to know that it's ok to accept yourself" (Lovelock, 2019, p. 82). Some discussed how celebrations occurred in periods like 'Coming Out Week', and others noted how reaching this stage took time (Owens, 2017).

LGBTQI+ individuals used social media for '***Supporting Other People's Identity Development*** by those committed to their LGBTQI+ identities. In this case, "engagement in reciprocal interactions in virtual spaces allowed the roles of 'supporter' and 'supported' to be performed simultaneously" (Downing, 2013, p. 49). Participants supported others by answering questions, creating support pages, educating others and making coming out videos. One participant noted how they wanted "to provide a positive example and "some level of comfort" to individuals "struggling with the issue of identity" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 326), with another wanting to communicate "if anyone is going through the same situation that I went through […] you're not alone and I'm here" (Lovelock 2019, p. 79) through vlogs. The research reviewed suggests there is a shift in seeking support to providing support as participants become committed to their LGBTQI+ identities.

Social media was used by some LGBTQI+ individuals for '***Advocating for the LGBTQI+ Community'.*** Participants used advocacy methods including: liking pages, sharing LGBTQI+ news, having online debates, and tagging others in LGBTQI+ related posts. Motivations were to "educate others with online content, both to sensitize non-LGBTQ people to issues and to help others who were also going through the coming out process" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 640). This participant also described how "sharing LGBTQ-related media with friends and family on SNSs is a driving force behind the success of the marriage equality movement and growing acceptance of LGBTQ". Changing public attitudes were important as "presence in these

social networks served as a way to dispel stereotypes about LGBT+ people by just being herself"

and there was a "need to put a good face for our side up" (Fox & Warber, 2014, p. 91).

2.4 Discussion

This review, of 16 studies, asked 'how do LGBTQI+ individuals use social media as part

of their identity development?' Social media were firstly used by LGBTQI+ individuals to foster

belonging, impacting on identity development at an interpersonal level. Humans are driven to

form and maintain enduring interpersonal relationships based on positive interactions and

concern for each other's welfare (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Belonging was fostered by

communicating and building relationships with other LGBTQI+ individuals, which enabled

social support during difficult times, which can buffer against stressors for this population

(Morrow, 2018). Social media were used to gain support, particularly peer support, which has

been identified as protective for mental health (D'Augelli, 2008; Davey et al., 2014; Sheets &

Mohr, 2009; Ryan et al., 2010; Shilo & Savaya, 2011; Ueno, 2005). Social media helped build

community, and since adolescents show increased commitment to group-based membership,

feeling part of an LGBTQI+ community through social interaction with similar others can

positively impact psychological development, in line with social identity theory (Ceglarek &

Ward, 2016; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). McCarn and Fassinger's (1996) minority identity formation

theory highlights the importance of group membership in addition to individual sexual identity

for development. Developing group identity may not be possible offline due to lack of LGBTQI+

visibility or fears of involuntary disclosure. Consequently, social media can provide individuals,

especially in awareness, exploration, and commitment phases, with opportunities to belong, a

fundamental human need (Maslow, 1943).

Social media were also used to actively develop LGBTQI+ identity at the intrapersonal level. Similarly to how LGBT inclusive curriculums are protective against stressors on mental health (Black et al., 2012), the reviewed research suggests that learning about LGBTQI+ specific information helped to manage uncomfortable internalised feelings, especially for those in awareness and exploration phases. Social media were used to develop self-acceptance as the increased visibility and representativeness of LGBTQI+ individuals online, including role models, allowed for social learning through observation, modelling, and imitation (Bandura, 1977). Safety is an inherent human need (Maslow, 1943), and social media were viewed as safe spaces for identity exploration or coming out, through anonymity and the ability to detach from negative interactions. LGBTQI+ individuals used social media to gain feedback and validation, which through positive reinforcement, helped develop identity commitment. During identity exploration, adolescents are strongly influenced by others' definitions of them (Marcia, 1966), so feedback is important. Positive reactions from others have been positively associated with stress-related growth (Solomon et al., 2015), a phenomenon describing how individuals can grow psychologically following difficult events (Kesımcı et al., 2005).

Social media were also used to manage identities and self-presentation, impacting on identity development at an interpersonal level. Although LGBTQI+ individuals strive for authentic self-presentation, in line with Goffman's theory of self-presentation (1959), social media were used as 'front stages' to present identities to audiences that were not always congruent with 'backstage' identities. Social media enable individuals to intentionally tailor performances to specific contexts based on predicted audience norms, and expectations. Users anticipate reactions to identity expression, adjust performances accordingly, and actively attempt to avoid negative interactions and context collapse to protect themselves. This is especially

significant for those who have not reached identity commitment. The desire to present an authentic self, along with expected negative reactions, is likely to create cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), leading to the adoption of strategies to either mask identity, disclose parts of identity implicitly, or to fully disclose identity and come out explicitly.

Although the reviewed research suggested that social media enabled positive responses and social support to be gained, LGBTQI+ individuals also experienced negative interactions, a risk factor for mental health (Poteat et al., 2011; Sinclair et al., 2012). Those in early identity development often ignored negative interactions, reinforcing a "spiral of silence" (Fox & Warber, 2015) seen as damaging to the LGBTQI+ community. This describes how individuals who feel their opinions are in the minority remain silent about important moral issues due to fears of social isolation or punishment (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). This ultimately reinforces the dominant opinion as explicit statements continue to be stated publicly through majority groups. In contrast, individuals who had reached deepening/commitment and internalisation/synthesis stages directly addressed negative interactions, proudly celebrated identity, supported others, and advocated for LGBTQI+. Feeling part of a community was likely to increase individuals' willingness to voice their opinions publicly, to break the "spiral of silence". This impacts identity development at a socio-cultural level and strengthens social identity further.

In line with self- determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), social media can be seen as positive tools for assisting identity development, self-presentation, and coming out enabling autonomy by providing control, anonymity and choice over self-presentation. Additionally, social media could develop competence through serving as a learning tool, increasing exposure to LGBTQI+ individuals, and providing opportunities for safe exploration and positive feedback. Furthermore, social media could enhance relatedness by communicating with similar others,

building relationships, and building community, helping to form social identities. Nevertheless, those in early identity development may reinforce a "spiral of silence" (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) by not responding to negative interactions. Social media are therefore not only platforms for 'front stage' self-presentation, but may be a driving force behind decisions to come out in contemporary society, especially when opportunities to fulfil these needs are not available offline and have changed the socio-cultural landscape for identity development.

2.4.1 Strengths and Limitations

This review excluded studies whose focus related to disability, religion, and migrant status in addition to LGBTQI+ identity. Since race, ethnicity, immigrant status, socioeconomic status, and disability influence LGBTQI+ experiences (APA, 2012), the review has somewhat restricted its understanding by viewing LGBQTI+ individuals as a homogenous group without considering intersectionality.

Furthermore, all studies included in the systematic review derived from westernised countries. This is significant seeing as cross-cultural differences, in terms of difficulties faced by LGBTQI+ communities in different countries, are likely to occur. Although there has generally been an increase in acceptance of homosexuality across many countries over the past two decades, a global divide remains. Acceptance of homosexuality was found to be highest in Western Europe and North America, whilst lowest levels of acceptance were recorded in Indonesia, sub- Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Russia, and Ukraine (Pew Research Center, 2020). Furthermore, 72 countries still criminalise same sex relationships, eight countries allow the death penalty as a form of punishment for same sex relationships, in more than half of the world the LGBTQI+ community may not be protected from discrimination by workplace law,

and most governments deny trans people the right to legally change their name and gender (Stonewall, 2017). As this review did not identify any studies from non-westernised countries, conclusions and implications may not extend to LGBTQI+ communities globally.

In line with Hannes' (2011) evaluative criteria of credibility, the researcher acknowledges that thematic synthesis is subjective, and recognises that their unique interpretative lens will have impacted the analysis. Nevertheless, supervision was used to discuss the analysis, many verbatim quotes were provided and attention was given to negative cases when relevant to ensure transparency. In terms of transferability, demographic information was provided where available. This review has strong dependability as a transparent description of the methodology and analysis was included, as well as an audit trail documenting transition through thematic synthesis stages and decision-making processes. Furthermore, this review has good confirmability as the researcher provides details of their background and context and its potential impact.

2.4.2 Implications for Practice

Considering the ecological systems that impact development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), social media were being used across systems from the intrapersonal level (e.g., developing self-acceptance, feeling safe, coming out), to an interpersonal level (e.g., communicating, building relationships, and fostering belonging), to a socio-cultural level (e.g., LGTQI+ activism and advocacy). It is important that those working with young people understand how social media can impact identity development across levels to inform holistic formulations and interventions.

As social media were used as learning tools and to gain social support, adults working with LGBTQI+ individuals could signpost to educational and supportive channels on social media so they are explicit, as some participants felt resources or support groups were hard to

access. This research suggests that individuals find it hard to access resources offline due to fear of being outed or receiving negative responses, and that online resources provide safety and anonymity to learn about gender or sexual identity at early stages. Relationships and Sex Education (DfE, 2019) is now compulsory in secondary schools (and Relationships Education in primary schools). The RSE guidance outlines how "young people often operate very freely in the online world and by secondary school age some are likely to be spending a substantial amount of time online" and "where topics and issues outlined in this guidance are likely to be encountered by pupils online, schools should take this into account when planning how to support them in distinguishing between different types of online content and making well-founded decisions" (DfE, 2019, p. 9). Therefore, ensuring that schools are aware of the findings of this research (e.g., LGBTQI+ students using social media to gain information when not available offline) when planning and delivering RSE will help to support LGBTQI+ students, including keeping them safe.

Coming out is associated with positive wellbeing (Russell & Toomey, 2014), and although social media can be supportive, many individuals still fear negative reactions, have experienced victimisation online, or reinforce a "spiral of silence" (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). At interpersonal and socio-cultural levels, it is important that society is educated about impacts of online victimisation as this is a significant risk factor for mental health of LGBTQI+ individuals (Poteat et al., 2011; Sinclair et al., 2012). In line with the intergroup contact hypothesis, attitudes are more positive for those with frequent contact, and research highlights that contact with LGBTQI+ individuals improves attitudes, reduces discomfort, and increases support of rights (e.g., Axt et al., 2021; Flores, 2015; Flores et al., 2018; King et al., 2009; Tee & Hegarty, 2006). Education settings are well placed to provide exposure through sharing real life LGBTQI+

experiences with students (Hackimer et al., 2021), having gender and sexual alliances (Poteat et al., 2012; Toomey et al., 2011), and adopting LGBT focused policy and inclusive curriculums (Black et al., 2012), as these are protective factors. In line with the impressionable year's hypothesis (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989), people are highly susceptible to attitude change during late adolescence and early adulthood, so targeting secondary or further education students may help reduce the impact of stigma-related stressors on the mental health of LGBTQI+ individuals.

Although many young people are online, it is important to recognise that many will not have the resources nor skills to access social media, therefore consideration of offline support is essential. Ensuring that individuals have access to accurate and representative resources, safe spaces for exploration, opportunities for exposure to diverse gender and sexual identities, social support, and opportunities for validation offline to assist them through awareness and exploration stages is needed. Furthermore, as social media were used to disclose identity, giving individuals agency in terms of control over pace and nature of self-presentation is also key.

2.4.3 Directions for Future Research

Whilst this research has identified how LGBTQI+ individuals use social media as part of identity development, social media also enables identity expression, exploration, and experimentation in wider populations (Gündüz, 2017). Ellison (2013) discusses how social media can allow control over self-presentation, prevent context collapse, and help manage audiences, in the general population. Future research is therefore warranted to establish whether LGBTQI+ and non-LGBTQI+ individuals use social media in differing ways as part of identity development. As LGBTQI+ youth spend longer online (Palmer et al., 2013) and navigate a

distinct path in developing and disclosing identity (Fox & Ralston, 2016), it is likely that differences may exist, but conclusions cannot be drawn.

Future research is also warranted to explore the impact of intersectionality on social media use and identity development for LGBTQI+ individuals. Hulko and Hovanes (2018) found that faith, indigenous ancestry, and class were central to queer youth's identities as the interaction of multiple identities framed experiences. A broader search of the literature may consider including studies based on intersectional factors in the future. Caution should be made when interpreting findings from this research in relation to the wider LGBTQI+ population whose identity development is likely to be impacted by intersectionality. In the research reviewed, it is likely that LGBTQI+ experiences will have differed in relation to interacting identity categories and requires further investigation. This will enhance understanding of how social media specifically impacts internalisation/synthesis phases of identity development.

2.5 Conclusion

The current systematic review identified that social media was used by LGBTQI+ individuals in a range of ways to facilitate identity development: to foster belonging, to actively develop identity, to manage their identities, and to broadcast their identities, especially when these opportunities or needs could not be met offline. These findings have important implications for supporting LGBTQI+ individuals across individual, group, and systemic levels to lessen the impact of stigma-related stress on the mental health of LGBTQI+ individuals.

Chapter 3   To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards

Transgender Individuals?

Abstract

Whilst public attitudes towards transgender are broadly positive, many transgender individuals continue to face prejudice, discrimination, and violence. The transprejudice and societal inequalities transgender people can face contributes to their disproportionately high risks of experiencing mental health difficulties. Understanding the mechanisms that underly transprejudice has important implications for social justice, outcomes, and mental health of the transgender population. While several predictors of adult transprejudice have been identified (e.g., conservative ideologies, heteronormative beliefs, sexism, need for closure, frequency of contact, and gender), research into predictors of young people's transprejudice is comparatively sparse. This is surprising given that young people may provide scope for societal change. This study adopted an online survey methodology with 129 diverse young people across the UK to explore the extent to which 10 previously identified factors from the literature could predict young people's attitudes towards the transgender population. Using a multiple regression analysis, findings identified that the factors collectively formed a comprehensive model in predicting a large amount of variance ($R^2 = .75$) in young people's attitudes, highlighting the specific importance of discomfort felt with violations of heteronormativity, hostile sexism, and gender. Findings are discussed in line with social psychology theories, in addition to implications for interventions applied through an ecological systems lens.

Keywords: transgender, attitudes, transprejudice, mental health, young people, gender, heteronormativity, hostile sexism, conservativism, need for closure

3.1 Introduction

The visibility of transgender individuals in the public domain has increased in recent years, particularly via media and news platforms (Gillig et al., 2017). It is estimated that 200,000-500,000 transgender people live in the UK (Government Equalities Office, 2018), and over the past few decades, a political reform has taken place with the introduction of the Gender Recognition Act (2004) and the Equality Act (2010). The term 'transgender' is "an umbrella term encompassing those whose gender identities or gender roles differ from those typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth" (APA, 2018), including transgender women, transgender men, and those whose identity falls outside of a binary model of gender such as nonbinary, agender, gender fluid and gender queer (Perez-Arche & Miller, 2021). Despite their increased visibility, many transgender individuals report being exposed to negative media depictions of other transgender people (Hughto et al., 2020) and continually face prejudice, discrimination, and violence (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018; FRA, 2012; Lombardi, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2016; Stotzer, 2008). Transgender individuals are more likely to be hate crime victims, with 29% having reported assault (Walters et al., 2017), and gender non-conforming transgender individuals and transgender women who do not 'pass' are at higher risk of discrimination (Miller & Grollman, 2015; Perry & Dyck, 2013) and

Attitudes towards transgender individuals can be represented on a continuum from transacceptance to transprejudice. Transprejudice is "the negative valuing, stereotyping and discriminatory treatment of individuals whose appearance and/or identity does not conform to the current social expectations or conventional conceptions of gender" (Winter et al., 2009, p. 20). Contrastingly, transacceptance refers to positive attitudes towards transgender individuals that are supportive of transgender rights (Winter et al., 2009). Various terms describing negative

attitudes have been cited, such as 'anti-transgender prejudice' and 'transphobia' (Hill & Willoughby, 2008; Tebbe & Moradi, 2012), however, 'transprejudice' is adopted in this study to acknowledge prejudicial attitudes rather than phobias.

Transprejudice can negatively impact on outcomes for transgender individuals who are more likely to experience workplace harassment (FRA, 2012; McNeil et al., 2012), economic discrimination (Lombardi et al., 2001), homelessness (Haas et al., 2014), and access to treatment (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018). These societal inequalities, in addition to pressures to conform to a binary model of gender (Claman, 2007), put transgender individuals at a disproportionately higher risk of experiencing poor mental health. The minority stress model views social stigma and the impact of discrimination as potential contributors of mental health difficulties (Meyer, 1995; Scandurra et al., 2017). Mental health difficulties are relatively high within the transgender population as 55% of transgender individuals in Britain have been diagnosed with depression, compared to 19% of people aged 16 or over in the UK who show symptoms of anxiety or depression (Evans et al., 2016). Additionally, 48% of transgender individuals have attempted suicide, and 84% have experienced suicidal thoughts (McNeil et al., 2012), compared to 6% of the general population who have attempted suicide and 20% who have reported thinking about taking their own lives at some point (McManus et al., 2016). Understanding mechanisms through which transprejudice exists has clear implications for social justice, outcomes and mental health of transgender individuals.

3.1.1 Predictors of Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals

While research exploring the predictors of transprejudice is somewhat under researched compared to attitudes towards LGB individuals (Bettinsoli et al., 2020; Schwartz & Lindley,

2005; Shackelford & Besser, 2007; Whitley & Ægisdóttir, 2000), the literature describes various factors influencing transprejudice, with studies often adopting survey-based methodologies to measure explicit attitudes of university students.

Conservative Ideology. Conservative ideology is conceptualised as an adherence to traditional values, involving resistance to change, belief in hierarchy and submission to authority (Christopher & Mull, 2006). Facets of conservativism include right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and religious fundamentalism (RF). RWA is characterised by conventionalism, submission to authority, and authoritarian aggression (Manson, 2020), whilst RF reflects a belief "that there is one set of religious teaching that clearly contains the fundamental basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity" (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, p. 118). RF is usually confined to monotheistic religions such as Christianity and Islam due to emphasis on orthodoxy and strong centres of leadership (Gierycz, 2020).

Research consistently highlights that RWA, religiosity, and RF are associated with transprejudice across countries (Claman, 2007; Jones et al., 2018; Makwana et al., 2018; McCullough, 2016; Nagoshi et al., 2008; Norton & Herek, 2013; Rye et al., 2019; Scandurraa et al., 2017; Warriner et al., 2013; Welch et al., 2017; Willoughby et al., 2010). For example, Perez-Arche and Miller (2021) identified that one standard deviation increase in RWA scores decreased positive attitudes towards transgender people by -.53 standard deviations, and was the strongest predictive variable in their model. Furthermore, Tee and Hegarty (2006) identified that RWA predicted unique variance in opposition to transgender civil rights in the UK, and Konopka et al. (2019) found RWA and RF to significantly predict transphobia in Poland. Campbell et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review which further highlighted how RF was specifically predictive of transprejudice. The relationship between RF and transprejudice appears to depend

on characteristics including gender (Norton & Herek, 2013; Garelick et al., 2017), sexual

orientation (Warriner et al., 2013), and culture (Elischberger et al., 2017).

RWA and RF both represent a need to maintain traditional and conservative values. In

line with previous findings that suggest RWA predicts attitudes towards dissident groups

(Duckitt & Sibley, 2007), transgender individuals challenge biological essentialism and deviate

from society's authority, norms, and rules. Transgender individuals may also violate religious

values (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005), whose doctrines may be entrenched in binary models of

gender. Violations may cause discomfort and threaten conservative belief systems regarding

gender and sexuality for those high in RWA and RF (Rye et al., 2019). This is consistent with

integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), where ingroups express prejudice towards

outgroups who are perceived to pose symbolic threats to the group's values, identity or power.

Heteronormative Beliefs. Similarly, research has identified that individuals with

stronger beliefs in a binary model of gender and traditional gender role beliefs (GRBs), hold

stronger beliefs in heteronormativity, associated with transprejudice (Brassel & Anderson, 2019;

Hackimer et al., 2021; Konopka et al., 2019; Tebbe & Moradi, 2012; Worthen, 2016). More

specifically, endorsing traditional masculinity ideologies (Perez-Arche & Miller, 2021) and

holding traditional beliefs about female roles (Claman, 2007), both predict transprejudice.

Furthermore, several studies have highlighted how GRBs have a moderating, rather than direct,

effect on transprejudice (Broussard & Warner, 2018; Makwana et al., 2018; Willoughby et al.,

2010). This suggests that GRBs impact the relationship between two factors, such as gender and

anti-trans behaviours (Hackimer et al., 2021). Research has also suggested that males report

higher discomfort when other males display feminine characteristics (Parrott et al., 2002), with

females holding more egalitarian views about gender roles (Van De Vijver, 2007). Adams et al.

(2016) identified that discomfort with gender identity norm violations was particularly correlated with transphobia, and highlighted how feelings of discomfort mediated the relationship between RWA and transphobia. Consequently, it is likely that GRBs (cognitive component) and discomfort with violations of heteronormativity (DVH; affective component) both have roles in predicting transprejudice.

In line with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), social categorisation helps individuals create social groups that form part of their self-identity and belonging. Transgender individuals may challenge characteristics of a group that form the ingroup's identity, which can produce discomfort and represent an attack on identity, group membership, and place within society. Broussard and Warner (2018) discuss how 'distinctiveness threat' can occur when ingroups are motivated to maintain intergroup distinctiveness (i.e., gender boundaries), and this protective mechanism may occur through ingroups devaluing outgroups.

Ambivalent Sexism. Ambivalent sexism is a multidimensional construct that incorporates hostile and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism (HS) refers to the belief that men are more competent and deserving of higher status and power than women (Becker & Wright, 2011), whereas benevolent sexism (BS) refers to viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles, which may appear affectionate, or chivalrous, but consequences can be damaging due to origins in masculine dominance (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Both HS and BS infer that women are inferior, and both have been associated with transprejudice (Nagoshi et al., 2008; Rye et al., 2019), however, the relationship is complex. Rye et al., (2019) found that HS significantly predicted male attitudes towards transgender individuals, more so than female attitudes. This fits with research that finds males exhibit higher levels of HS (Chen et al., 2009; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Vandenbossche et al., 2017). Research has not established such a

distinct gender effect for BS, as it has been found to be endorsed by both genders in some studies (Mastari et al., 2019), yet more predictive of female attitudes in others (Nagoshi et al., 2008; Rye et al., 2019). HS may be more relevant for males as its function is to preserve male dominance and power (Mastari et al., 2019).

Gender. Research has consistently demonstrated that males hold higher transprejudice than females (Brassel & Anderson, 2019; Carrera-Fernandez et al., 2013; Costa & Davies, 2012; Glotfelter & Anderson, 2017; Konopka et al., 2020; Morgan et al., 2020; Nagoshi et al, 2008; Norton & Herek, 2013; Rye et al., 2019; Tebbe & Moradi, 2012; Tee & Hegarty, 2006; Willoughby et al., 2010). Nevertheless, research is somewhat contradictory regarding the unique predictors of transprejudice between genders (Nagoshi et al., 2008; Tebbe & Moradi, 2012).

Given that males typically hold stronger traditional GRBs than females (Perez-Arche & Miller, 2021), and are more invested in adhering to gender norms (Norton & Herek, 2013), transgender individuals may specifically threaten hegemonic masculinity (attitudes or practices to maintain men's power over women and other minority groups of men; Connell, 1987) and the male dominant role (Nagoshi et al., 2008; Warriner et al., 2013). Transgender individuals may pose symbolic threats to the cisgender ingroup, who may feel they threaten male self-identity and values, in line with integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). As a result, males can attempt to preserve intergroup distinctiveness through devaluing transgender outgroups. This is more prominent for those who have strong identifications with the ingroup, or higher gender self-esteem, which is the importance of identifying with one's gender group (Falomir-Pichastor & Mugny, 2009). Gender self-esteem has been particularly associated with male transprejudice (Glotfelter & Anderson, 2017), highlighting that transgender individuals may be less threatening to females as their self-esteem can be less entrenched in gender identity.

Need for Closure. Need for Closure (NFC) refers to the extent to which people have a desire for firm answers in opposition to ambiguity (Makwana et al., 2018). This cognitive style may underly prejudice towards individuals who deviate from social categories and norms due their desire to maintain certainty (Burke et al., 2017; Roets & Van Hiel, 2011). Research has identified that adults with a greater NFC show higher transprejudice (Tebbe & Moradi, 2012), and are less supportive of transgender rights (Jones et al., 2018). Makwana et al. (2018) further highlighted that although NFC was strongly associated with transphobia, this relationship was mediated by RWA and GRBs. Transgender individuals may evoke feelings of discomfort in those with greater NFC due to the ambiguity inherent in the concept of a gender identity which is inconsistent with that assigned at birth, and sometimes outside of a binary. Transprejudice may be a reaction to this disruption of clear categories (Tebbe & Moradi, 2012).

Contact Frequency and Quality with Transgender Individuals. According to the intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), attitudes towards outgroups are more positive for those who have frequent contact. Pettigrew (2009) found that the potential prejudice-reducing impact of having contact with outgroups can extend to similar outgroups, resulting in secondary transfer effects. It is thought that this occurs through attitude generalisation mechanisms (Flores, 2015). Consequently, contact frequency with transgender or LGB individuals should predict lower transprejudice, however, research offers mixed support for intergroup contact and secondary transfer effect hypotheses (Axt et al., 2021; Claman, 2007; Elishberger et al., 2018; Flores, 2015; Jones et al., 2018; King et al., 2009; McCullough, 2016; Norton & Herek, 2013; Stafford, 2018; Tee & Hegarty, 2006; Woodford et al., 2012). This may be explained by methodological flaws, in that some studies have adopted a "yes/no" binary variable to measure contact frequency (e.g., Rye et al. 2019), rather than a continuous variable.

Furthermore, transprejudice may be more strongly related to quality of contacts. Rye et al.

(2019) was one of the first to identify that quality of contacts predicted transprejudice, in

congruence with findings that having transgender friends or family is related to transacceptance

(Hackimer et al., 2021; Scandurraa et al. (2017).

3.1.2. Predictors of Young People's Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals

In comparison with the adult literature, research exploring factors that predict young

people's attitudes towards the transgender population is in its infancy. Thus far, research has

highlighted a similar gender effect, in that adolescent males hold higher transprejudice than

females in Spain and Portugal (Carrera-Fernandez et al., 2013; Costa & Davies, 2012).

Additionally, Costa and Davies (2012) suggested that adolescents with stronger GRBs,

specifically regarding women violating gender norms, was predictive of transprejudice.

Read et al. (2020) recently conducted a systematic review that explored the beliefs that

influence children and young people's (CYP) attitudes towards transgender individuals. This

identified that heteronormative (GRBs), conservative (RF and RWA), and gender essentialist

beliefs, influenced attitudes. In line with factors underlying adult transprejudice, Read et al.

(2020) explained how transgender individuals may threaten CYP's social membership,

masculine dominance, and gender identity in those with strong heteronormative, conservative,

and gender essentialist beliefs, as these are foundations upon which CYP build identity.

Nevertheless, a variety of different measures were used across studies within the review which

Read explained limits the comparability of findings and conclusions drawn. Whilst this review

was a valuable starting point to inform understanding of the predictors of young people's

attitudes towards the transgender population, quantitative research is needed to expand upon

these findings and to investigate the extent to which identified variables can be generalised to a wider sample of contemporary youth (since 12 out of the 14 studies consisted of college student samples).

Read (2019) also conducted qualitative research with 13-14-year-olds in the UK which highlighted that systemic influences (socialisation processes, social media, and parental/peer views), GRBs, understanding of transgender, observable differences (physical differences), and awareness and education, impacted on CYP's transgender attitudes. Whilst this provides preliminary findings, its small sample ($N = 10$), recruitment from one school, and recruitment of one male means the findings may not represent CYP's attitudes more widely and warrants further exploration Again, quantitative research is needed to investigate the applicability and generalisability of these findings to larger samples of young people from all across the UK rather than one educational setting.

Research into factors that predict transprejudice in CYP is sparse, which is surprising given that an increasing number of CYP identify as a gender different to that assigned at birth. The UK's Tavistock and Portman Gender Identity Development Service received 2,519 referrals from 2017-2018 from CYP, an increase of 25% from the previous year (GIDS, 2018). Additionally, the limited research is significant as young individuals are more likely to show transacceptance. Age is a key predictor of transprejudice, with older generations holding greater transprejudice (King et al., 2009; Landén & Innala, 2000; Morgan et al., 2020; Stafford, 2018). Tolerance towards LGB individuals has generally increased over the past 30 years, which may demonstrate a generation replacement effect (Keleher & Smith, 2012) where public opinion slowly shifts in direction of the young. The sparsity of research is also especially significant as transgender CYP, like adults, experience disproportionately high rates of transprejudice.

Stonewall's large-scale survey with LGBT CYP in Britain highlighted that 46% of respondents were exposed to transphobic language 'frequently' or 'often', 64% of transgender CYP reported being bullied, and 9% reported being subjected to death threats (Bradlow et al., 2017). Consequently, transgender CYP are at high risk of experiencing poor mental health, with 84% reporting self-harm and 45% reporting attempted suicide (Bradlow et al., 2017).

As reducing transprejudice can be an effective mechanism for increasing transgender support (Flores et al. 2018), a greater understanding of the predictors of transprejudice in CYP is needed to inform interventions which promote transacceptance. CYP may provide scope for societal change, and in line with the impressionable years hypothesis (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989), people are highly susceptible to attitude change during late adolescence and early adulthood. This has implications for social justice as well as life outcomes and mental health for transgender individuals. LGBTQI+ inclusion also has wider advantages for economic development (Badgett et al., 2019).

3.1.3 The Current Study

This study, adopting an online survey methodology, aimed to extend the emerging literature, using a well-sized sample of diverse young people across the UK, to explore the extent to which previously identified factors can predict young people and emerging adults' attitudes towards the transgender population. This study uses the term 'young person' or 'young people' to capture adolescents and emerging adults aged 16-25. Based on research, we hypothesise that higher levels of RF, NFC, GRBs, HS, BS, RWA, and DVH, as well as being male, will predict transprejudice in young people. Due to a lack of research with young people, these analyses are exploratory. Additionally, as social desirability has been significantly correlated with transgender

attitude measures (Wang-Jones et al., 2017), this study controls for potential social desirability bias. If common predictive factors of young people's transprejudice can be identified, factors can inform intervention to improve outcomes and the mental health of transgender CYP.

3.2. Method

3.2.1 Participants

The University of Southampton's Educational Psychology Twitter account advertised the study in May 2020 (see Appendix D for advertisement), and emails including the advertisement were sent to 238 colleges across the UK (see Appendix E) from May to September 2020. A list of further education colleges was obtained ("List of further education colleges in England", 2021), and systematic sampling was used to contact every 7th, 4th, then 2nd setting where possible.

A total of 137 participants fully completed the online survey. Three participants were excluded due to being older than 16-25 and five participants were excluded as their identified gender was 'other' ($n = 1$), 'prefer not to say' ($n = 3$), or did not specify ($n = 1$). We recognise the irony of applying a gender binary in the analysis of a study exploring attitudes towards gender minorities, however, including these distinct groups with such small samples would have negative statistical implications.

The final sample ($N = 129$) was just short of approaching the acceptable size of 146 to conduct a multiple linear regression analysis with sufficient power (Green, 1991). Participant ages ranged from 16-25 ($M = 19.64$, $SD = 3.20$), many of whom identified as female ($n = 86$, 66.7%), and male ($n = 43$, 33.3%). Participants also identified as heterosexual ($n = 98$, 76%), bisexual ($n = 19$, 14.7%), homosexual ($n = 5$, 3.9%), other ($n = 4$, 3.1%), with others concealing

sexual orientation ($n = 3$, 2.3%). Participants further identified as non-religious ($n = 53$, 41.1%),

Christian ($n = 25$, 19.4%), atheist ($n = 15$, 11.6%), agnostic ($n = 10$, 7.8%), Catholic ($n = 9$,

7.0%), other religion ($n = 5$, 3.9%) or did not say ($n = 12$, 9.3%).

3.2.2 Procedure

The University of Southampton Ethics Committee granted approval for this research. A

pilot study was initially run with participants recruited through opportunity sampling ($n = 5$).

This allowed researchers to establish an estimated duration of completion to include on the

participant information sheet (see Appendix F), and enabled modifications to be made to the

survey (adding key definitions).

Data collection spanned April to October 2020. Participants followed a link to iSurvey, a

University of Southampton research tool, and read the participant information sheet which

included study information and participant rights. Participants could indicate consent by ticking a

box which allowed them to progress with the survey. Participants provided demographic

information (age, sexuality, gender, and religion) and completed eight self-report measures in

addition to questions around contact frequency and quality. Following completion, participants

read a debriefing statement (see Appendix G) and were signposted to supportive channels. The

average duration taken to complete the survey was 30 minutes. Participants could enter a prize

draw to win Amazon e-vouchers or to receive information about the findings by leaving an email

address. Emails were stored separately and unlinked to survey data to ensure confidentiality. A

prize draw was conducted in December 2020, and successful participants were sent e-vouchers.

3.2.3 Measures

Attitudes Towards Transgendered Individuals. The 20-item Attitudes Towards Transgendered Individuals Scale (ATTIS; Walch et al., 2012), measured the dependent variable of transgender-related attitudes and stigma (e.g., "transgenderism is immoral") on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (5), with lower scores reflecting negative attitudes. In this sample the ATTIS showed strong internal consistency (α = .96). Items 1, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17 were reverse coded.

This measure was chosen as it specifically refers to transgendered individuals as the target of items rather than more general terms used in other measures such as "masculine women" and "feminine men" in the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (Hill & Willoughby, 2005), or general issues of gender nonconformity in the Transphobia Scale (Nagoshi et al., 2008). Furthermore, Walch et al. (2012) demonstrated that the ATTIS had high internal consistency and evidence of convergent and discriminant construct validity.

Religious Fundamentalism. The 12-item Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale (RRFS; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004, measured the belief that "there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity" (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004, p. 48). Responses to items like "God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed" were measured on an eight-point scale ranging from 'very strongly disagree' (-4) to 'very strongly agree' (4). In this sample the RRFS showed strong internal consistency (α = .91). Items 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, and 12 were reverse coded.

This measure was chosen due it its use in previous research (Adams et al., 2016), nevertheless a short version of the scale was specifically used to ensure the total time length of

the survey was not too long for the young participants to complete. Furthermore, Altemeyer and Hunsberger (2004) showed that the short version matched or exceeded empirical validity of the full 20-item version.

Need for Closure. The 15-item short version of the *Need for Closure Scale* (NFCS; Roets & Van Hiel, 2011, measured the need for cognitive closure (e.g., "I don't like situations that are uncertain") on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (6). In this sample the NFCS showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$). This measure was used in previous research (Makwana et al., 2018). Roets and Van Hiel (2011) demonstrated that the scale had internal consistency and demonstrated the construct validity of the scale by showing negative correlations with closely related concepts such as Openness and Need for Cognition and positive correlations with Need for Structure. A short version of the scale was chosen to ensure the total length of time to complete the survey was not too long for young participants.

Gender Role Beliefs. The 10-item short version of the Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS; Brown & Gladstone, 2012), measured gender role ideology and gender stereotypes (e.g., "the initiative in courtship should usually come from the man") on a seven-point Likert scale from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (7). In this sample the GRBS showed acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .76$). Item 3 was reverse coded. A short version of the scale was specifically chosen to ensure the total time taken to complete the survey was not too long for participants. Brown and Gladstone (2012) demonstrated how the short version of the GRBS had strong reliability and demonstrated good construct validity.

Hostile and Benevolent Sexism. The 22-item Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) measured two correlated, but conceptually distinct components of ambivalent

sexism. The HS 11-item subscale measured sexist antipathy towards women (e.g., "women exaggerate problems they have at work"). The HS subscale showed strong internal consistency in this sample ($\alpha = .92$). The BS 11-item subscale measured subjectively favourable, yet patronising, beliefs about women e.g., "women should be cherished and protected by men". The BS subscale showed acceptable internal consistency in this sample ($\alpha = .77$). Subscales were measured on six-point Likert scales from 'disagree strongly' (1) to 'agree strongly' (6). Items 3, 6, 7, 13, 18, and 21 were reverse coded. This scale was specifically chosen as it had been used in previous research (Adams et al., 2016) and Glick and Fiske (1996) demonstrated good internal consistency of both subscales.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism. The six-item Very Short Authoritarianism Scale (VSAS; Bizumic & Duckitt, 2018 measured RWA, based on three sub-dimensions of authoritarianism, conservativism, and traditionalism, (e.g., "what our country needs most is discipline, with everyone following our leaders in unity") on a nine-point Likert scale from 'very strongly disagree' (1) to 'very strongly agree' (9). Items 1, 4, and 5 were reverse coded. In this sample the VSAS showed acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .69$). Instead of using the full scale (used in Adams et al., 2016), the short version of the scale was chosen to ensure the total time taken to complete the survey was not too long for young participants and Bizumic and Duckitt (2018) demonstrated adequate internal consistency.

Social Desirability. The 13-item Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form (MCSDS; Reynolds, 1982) measured social desirability and the "need for subjects to respond in culturally sanctioned ways" (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960, p. 354). Participants responded to items (e.g., "I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable") by selecting 'true' or 'false'. In this sample the MCSDS showed questionable internal consistency ($\alpha = .63$). This

instrument was included as a control variable. Items 5, 7, 9, 10, and 13 were reverse coded. Instead of using the full version of the scale, the short version was chosen to ensure the time taken to complete the whole survey was not too long for young participants. Also, Reynolds (1982) found good evidence of convergent and discriminant construct validity with other measures of social desirability.

Gender Heteronormativity. The 38-item Discomfort with Violations of Gender Heteronormativity Indices (DVGHI; Adams et al., 2016) measured discomfort with behavioural violations of gender heteronormative gender roles (e.g., "you see a woman physically beat up a man"), gender identity (e.g., "you can't identify the sex of someone you meet") and sexual orientation (e.g., "you see two lesbians kissing in public"). Participants responded on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 'furious' (-3) to 'ecstatic' (3). In this sample the DVGHI showed strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$). This scale had been previously used in research (Adams et al., 2016) which demonstrated good internal consistency across its three scales.

Contact with Transgender Individuals. Participants identified how many contacts with transgender individuals they had throughout their life on a continuous scale (0-20+), in addition to rating the quality of interactions on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'extremely negative' (0) to 'extremely positive (1), based on the scale adopted by Rye et al. (2019).

All measures were coded to ensure they scored in a positive direction, starting from one. Reverse coding was applied where specified. Higher scores on scales represented higher transacceptance, RF, NFC, feminist role beliefs, HS and BS, RWA, social desirability, DVH, in addition to increased contact and quality of interactions. Composite scores were created for each

variable by averaging participant scores across the scale. Scores on the MCSDS were totalled, in line with scoring instructions.

3.3 Results

3.3.1 Preliminary Analyses

Statistical analyses were run on IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 27.0. Data were firstly analysed for missing values. One participant did not complete the 12-item RRFS, three participants missed one DVGHI item, and one had not completed the quality of contact item. Missing data points were imputed using an average from other participants on that scale.

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations for each measure, and correlations are presented in Table 3 . Large significant correlations existed between the dependent variable (ATTIS) and several predictor variables (HS, BS, VSAS and DVGHI). This is expected given that these have been predictive of attitudes in previous research. In addition, large significant correlations existed between HS and BS, which is logical as they are subscales from the ASI measuring related sexism components. HS also had large significant correlations with the VSAS and DVGHI, which is logical given they are likely to measure similar constructs (e.g., the need to maintain traditional gender values and norms), and between the VSAS and NFCS, again expected given that variables may measure similar constructs (e.g., obedience to rules and authority with avoidance of ambiguity).

It was intended that the DVGHI measure would be split into its subscales (discomfort with violation of gender role, gender identity, and sexual orientation norms) as separate variables in the analysis. Nevertheless, the scales' variance inflation factor (VIF) values exceeded 10,

indicating multicollinearity, so the decision was made to include the DVGHI as a single variable.

The ASI subscales (HS and BS) indicated no multicollinearity, so were included as separate

variables. No multicollinearity was observed in the rest of the data through observation of

correlations (below r = .8), VIF statistics (below 10), and tolerance statistics (above 0.2).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Pearson's Correlations Among Variables in the Multiple Regression Model

	Descriptives			Correlations										
	N	*M*	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*
1.ATTIS	117	4.32	0.67	-											
2.Gender	117	-	-	-.38***	-										
3.RRFS	117	2.62	1.35	-.29***	-.11	-									
4.NFCS	117	3.80	0.78	-.03	-.18*	.05	-								
5.GRBS	117	5.88	0.75	.61***	-.31***	-.36***	-.13	-							
6.No. Cont.	117	4.62	4.81	.26**	.07	.02	-.07	.14	-						
7.Qual Cont.	117	5.63	1.42	-.03	-.09	-.04	.01	.13	-.05	-					
8.HS	117	2.47	1.05	-.69***	.37***	.33***	.01	-.70***	-.11	-.03	-				
9.BS	117	2.62	0.78	-.51***	.27**	.28***	.13	-.61***	-.12	-.05	.56***	-			
10.VSAS	117	3.51	1.21	-.55***	-.06	.51***	.21*	-.54***	-.12	.07	.55***	.48***	-	.	
11.DVGHI	117	3.01	0.51	-.73***	.15	.30***	.001	-.38***	-.32***	.07	.50*	.28*	.46*	-	
12. MCSDS	117	5.70	2.62	-.06	-.02	-.01	.21	.07	-.16*	.11	-.07	-.04	.05	-.05	-

Note. ATTIS= Attitudes Towards Transgendered Individuals Scale (scale ranges from 1-5), RRFS = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale (scale ranges from 1-8), NFC= Need for Closure Scale (scale ranges from 1-6), GRBS= Gender Role Beliefs Scale (scale ranges from 1-7), No. Cont.= Number of Contacts with Transgender Individuals, Qual Cont.= Quality of Contacts with Transgender Individuals (scale ranges from 1-7), HS= Hostile Sexism (scale ranges from 1-6), BS= Benevolent Sexism (scale ranges from 1-6), VSAS= Very Short Authoritarianism Scale (scale ranges from 1-9), DVGHI= Discomfort with Violations of Gender Heteronormativity Indices (scale ranges from 1-6), MCSDS = Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form (scale ranges from 0-13).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p <.001.

3.3.2 Multiple Regression

Statistical assumptions for a multiple linear regression were suitably met (Osborne & Waters, 2002). To ensure cases were not placing undue influence on the model, Cook's distances larger than 0.03 were excluded (calculated using 4/N; Cook, 1977). A multiple linear regression was conducted to explore the extent to which RF, NFC, GRBs, HS, BS, RWA, DVH, gender, and number and quality of interactions, could predict young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals. Social desirability was included alongside predictors in the regression as a control variable based on previous research (Hünermund & Louw, 2020; Larson, 2019).

Using the enter method, results of the multiple regression analysis (see Table 4) indicated that the overall model significantly explained a large amount of variance in attitudes towards transgender individuals (R^2 = .75, $F(11,105) = 28.60$, $p < .001$). Higher levels of DVH ($p < .001$) significantly predicted transprejudice, with scores on the DVGHI being the strongest predictor (β = -.46). Gender was also a significant predictor ($p = .003$), with males holding significantly higher transprejudice (β = -.18). Additionally, higher levels of HS ($p = .022$) significantly predicted transprejudice (β = -.18). It is worth highlighting that RWA ($p = .052$) and GRBs ($p = $ 0.78) approached statistical significance, in that higher levels of RWA (β = -.14) and endorsement of traditional GRBs predicted transprejudice (β = .14). Furthermore, higher levels of RF, NFC, BS, RWA, contact frequency and contact quality were weak and insignificant predictors within the model. See Figure 3 for a visual representation of the model, highlighting significant predictor variables. See Appendix I for mediation analyses. These explored the mediation relationship of DVH between RWA and transprejudice (based on the findings by Adams et al., 2016), between RF and transprejudice, between number of contacts and transprejudice, and between HS and transprejudice.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Results

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Constant	6.58	.62	
Gender	-.26	.09	-.18**
RRFS	.02	.03	.04
NFCS	.01	.05	.02
GRBS	.12	.07	.14
No. Cont	.01	.01	.04
Qual Cont	-.01	.02	-.02
HS	-.12	.05	-.18*
BS	-.08	.06	-.09
VSAS	-.08	.04	-.14
DVGHI	-.60	.08	-.46***

Note. R^2= .75.

ATTIS= Attitudes Towards Transgendered Individuals Scale (1-5), RRFS = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale (1-8), NFC= Need for Closure Scale (1-6), GRBS= Gender Role Beliefs Scale (1-7), No. Cont= Number of Contacts with Transgender Individuals, Qual Cont= Quality of Contacts with Transgender Individuals (1-7), HS= Hostile Sexism (1-6), BS= Benevolent Sexism (1-6), VSAS= Very Short Authoritarianism Scale (1-9), DVGHI= Discomfort with Violations of Gender Heteronormativity Indices (1-6), MCSDS = Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form (0-13).

p < .05, **p* < .01, ***p* <.001.

Figure 3

Key Predictors in the Multiple Regression Model
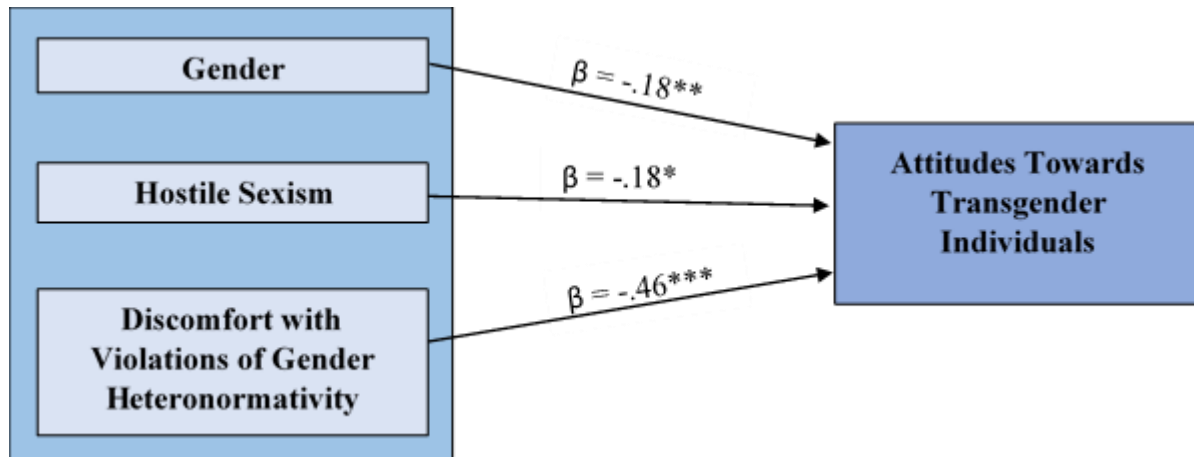
*Note. *p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* <.001.*

3.4 Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to extend the emerging literature to explore the extent to which a range of previously identified factors from the adult literature could predict young people and emerging adults' attitudes towards transgender individuals, using a well-sized sample of diverse young people across the UK. It was hypothesised that higher levels of RF, NFC, GRBs, HS, BS, RWA, DVH, as well as being male, would predict higher transprejudice.

This sample of young people showed considerably high transacceptance (according to a mean sample score of 4.32 out of 5 on the ATTIS with 5 representing most positive attitudes), congruent with findings that older generations may hold higher transprejudice (King et al., 2009; Landen & Innala, 2000; Morgan et al., 2020; Stafford, 2018). Findings identified a preliminary comprehensive model in predicting young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals, with the model significantly predicting a very large amount of variance in attitudes. The strongest predictor identified was DVH in that young people who reported higher levels of anger in response to deviations to heteronormativity, held higher transprejudice. Holding traditional GRBs was a weaker, but still noteworthy predictor of transprejudice. The strong predictive value of DVH may suggest that transprejudice is more strongly related to the affective component of deviations to heteronormativity than the cognitive component. Alternatively, it is possible that participants were better able to report on affective responses, rather than underlying beliefs, due to affective responses being more conscious and explicit. Additionally, being male and holding higher levels of HS and RWA predicted a considerable amount of variance. These findings are congruent with research that associated being male, holding strong heteronormative beliefs, and having high HS with transprejudice (e.g., Brassel & Anderson, 2019; Carrera-Fernandez et al.,

2013; Costa & Davies, 2012; Hackimer et al., 2021; Read, 2020; Rye et al., 2019; Tebbe &

Moradi, 2012).

To unpick these findings further, mediation analyses were conducted to explore the

potential role of DVH as a mediator in the relationship between several of the predictor variables

and attitudes towards transgender individuals. Based on the findings by Adams et al. (2016), who

found that discomfort with violations of gender identity norms significantly mediated the

relationships linking RWA to transphobia, mediation analyses found a similar effect in that DVH

significantly mediated the relationship between RWA and attitudes. Furthermore, DVH was

found to significantly mediate the relationship between number of contacts with transgender

individuals and attitudes in addition to significantly mediating the relationship between HS and

attitudes too. Consequently, several key factors have been identified in terms of predicting

attitudes towards transgender individuals through the regression model, however discomfort with

violations of gender heteronormativity is shown to at least partially mediate some of these

relationships and has a heavy hand in shaping attitudes. Discomfort felt with violations of

heteronormativity and HS were likely to lead to transprejudice attitudes due to these factors

leading to internalisation of a distinct ingroup (cisgender) and outgroup (transgender), through

social categorisation. In line with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), perceived

membership with an ingroup can form an important part of an individual's self-identity and

belonging through shared belief systems, values, and norms. Strong identification with ingroups

can lead to overidentification of ingroup similarities and outgroup differences leading to attempts

to maintain intergroup distinctiveness. In line with integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan,

2000), transgender individuals may pose symbolic threats to ingroup members due to being

perceived as transgressing gender identity, gender role, and gender expression norms. This can

threaten ingroup member's self-identity, group identity and place within society, creating anxiety

and discomfort (linking to the finding that discomfort with violations to heteronormativity being

such a significant mediating variable). As a result of 'distinctiveness threat' (Broussard &

Warner, 2018) or discomfort, individuals are motivated to maintain distinct gender boundaries

between groups and protect their identity by holding transprejudice. For males, gender self-

esteem may be entrenched in identity formation (Glotfelter & Anderson, 2017), meaning

transgender individuals may specifically threaten hegemonic masculinity and the male dominant

role (linked with the findings that HS and gender were significant predictors), resulting in

discomfort and aggression. Aggression can reflect a fear of a loss of male social power over

women when deviations in gender roles, gender identity or sexual orientation occur (Adams et

al., 2016).

RF, BS, and number of contacts with transgender individuals were significantly

correlated with the ATTIS, but when incorporated into the overall regression model with other

variables, their predictive power was absorbed by stronger predictors. DVH was not found to

significantly mediate the relationship between BS and attitudes or RF and attitudes, therefore it is

likely that these predictor variables are not strong predictors of attitudes in the current sample.

Nevertheless, DVH was found to significantly mediate the relationship between number of

contacts with transgender individuals and attitudes, highlighting that frequency of exposure

lessens discomfort which improves attitudes, linking to the intergroup contact hypothesis

(Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and mere exposure effects (Zajonc, 2001).

Additionally, NFC was not significantly correlated with the ATTIS and was a weak

predictor in the model. As NFC had been previously linked to transprejudice due to disruption to

clear boundaries and ambiguity (Makwana et al., 2018; Tebbe & Moradi, 2012), NFC may be

more closely linked to physical appearance. Transgender individuals can be evaluated negatively

if their physical characteristics are androgynous rather than gender typical (Stern & Rule, 2017),

and gender non-conforming transgender individuals are at greater risk for higher transprejudice

(Miller & Grollman, 2015). As this study measured attitudes towards transgender populations in

general, rather than specific individuals varying in physical appearance, it may have been

unlikely to detect this effect. It may also be likely that NFC is a stronger predictor for attitudes

towards non-binary or gender fluid communities, due to breaking away from a gender binary.

3.4.1 Strengths and Limitations

This study aimed to bring together different variables into a single multiple regression to

understand which variables were of importance in predicting attitudes towards the transgender

population in young people. This study has extended the emerging literature by identifying a

comprehensive model predicting attitudes, based on a well-sized sample. Previous research had

mostly recruited university students who are not representative of general populations (Hanel &

Vione, 2016), and Rye et al. (2019) advised that further studies should be conducted with non-

student samples. Consequently, this study aimed to recruit a diverse sample of young people by

recruiting participants (who may or may not have been in education) through wide reaching

social media, in addition to systematic sampling to recruit non-biased samples across the UK.

Nevertheless, the study did not collect demographic information concerning participants'

education levels, geographical location, socio-economic status, or ethnicity etc. Consequently,

the generalisability of findings or diverseness of the sample cannot be fully determined due to

this lack of data.

It would be understandable if participants responded in socially desirable ways due to the nature of the topic, however, this study controlled for social desirability by including it as a variable within the regression. Social desirability did not significantly impact attitudes.

This study also built upon previous research methodologies which used a binary variable of "yes/no" to measure contact frequency (e.g., Claman, 2007; Elischberger et al., 2018; Flores, 2015), by adopting a continuous variable. Whilst our sample varied in the number of transgender contacts they reported, qualitative feedback from the pilot highlighted how some participants found it difficult to recall exact numbers from memory, potentially impacting on the validity of this item. Participants may have benefitted from having numerical ranges to choose from rather than being asked to specify exact frequencies or asked to report how often they have direct and indirect contact. Furthermore, only one item was used to measure contact quality, which assumes transgender individuals are a homogenous group, in that all contacts are the same quality. This item could be refined and qualitative methods may capture better insight into this variable.

Furthermore, this study measured attitudes using the ATTIS, implying that transgender individuals are a homogeneous group. As transgender individuals are diverse, Perez-Arche and Miller (2021) modified their outcome instrument to measure attitudes towards transgender men, transgender women and non-binary individuals. Adopting a similar instrument may have enhanced understanding around different types of transprejudice in young people.

3.4.2 Implications for Practice

This comprehensive model has important practical implications. Reducing transprejudice effectively increases transgender support (Flores et al. 2018), therefore targeting factors identified in the model such as heteronormative beliefs, conservativism, sexism, and particularly

discomfort felt when a person perceives violations to gender heteronormativity (as this was the mediating factor), through intervention may improve outcomes. According to ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), an individual's development is impacted by a complex system of relationships spanning across many levels from their surrounding environment (including family and school), to broader cultural impacts (including values, laws and norms). Consequently, interventions informed by research should target individual, group and systemic levels with young people to improve outcomes for transgender individuals.

At an individual level, sharing these findings with transgender young people will enhance their understanding of the underlying reasons for transprejudice in society which could assist in them having productive conversations and positive interactions with others regarding their identity. Findings may also help all students uncover their own beliefs, biases, and norms which may be consciously or unconsciously impacting upon transgender young people. Given that high levels of transprejudice can occur in schools (Bradlow et al., 2017), and that CYP may provide scope for societal change through the generation replacement effect (Keleher & Smith, 2012), education settings provide opportunities to intervene. Also, Relationships Education in primary schools and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in secondary schools have become compulsory in England since 2019, so schools are ideal places to provide support, deliver intervention, develop knowledge or to increase familiarity of minority groups to help reduce transprejudice. This provides the policy through which many of the study's findings can be implemented.

This model can inform group-based interventions to improve environments for transgender young people since the RSE guidance states that "schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action

to build a culture where these are not tolerated" (DfE, 2019, p. 14). McGuire et al. (2010) identified that when schools provide information about LGBT issues and address issues in the curriculum, transgender students feel safer. Similarly, Worthen (2012) argues that fostering open-minded, reflective, discussions about heteronormative beliefs, including how gender roles differ among cultures and over time, as well as exploring multiple ways of conceptualising gender roles, can help to improve transacceptance. Findings from this study suggested that the more frequently individuals come into contact with transgender individuals, the more likely this is to decrease feelings of discomfort, leading to more positive attitudes. This is in line with the mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 2001), where individuals develop preferences for familiar things Therefore, the more education settings can foster discussions promoting awareness of transgender issues through RSE, the more likely this is to increase familiarity, reduce discomfort and increase transacceptance. Flores et al. (2018) argues that mere exposure to vignettes and photos of transgender people lowers transprejudice and feelings of discomfort and Hackimer et al. (2021) suggest that interventions should use real examples of transgender individuals to challenge heteronormative beliefs and to make experiences relatable. These indirect experiences through RSE, in line with the parasocial contact hypothesis, induce empathy which improves feelings towards stigmatised groups (Batson et al., 1997). An example of an existing intervention involving direct exposure to gender and sexual minority groups based on the intergroup contact hypothesis and the mere exposure effect is 'Drag Queen Story Hour' (Drag Queen Story Hour, 2021). These are school based events where drag queens visit a school and read to children to give them an implicit experience of gender outside of the norm. These experiences aim to inspire a love for reading whilst also teaching about diversity, self-love and equality.

At a systemic and societal level, this research highlights that the binary model of gender underpinned by conservativism, heteronormativity and gender essentialism, needs to be challenged in order to reduce discomfort with gender heteronormativity. School staff, Educational Psychologists, and other professionals working with CYP are well placed to adopt inclusive models of gender where acceptance, diversity, and belonging are promoted. Models that view gender as defined by individuals' experiences and choices, rather than assigned biology should be endorsed (Read et al., 2020). For example, the 'Genderbread Person' (Killerman, 2015) that represents gender on a continuum, or models that view gender as combinations of a person's biological configuration, gender identity and gender expression (Sargeant, 2020) should be encouraged through RSE. Interventions like 'Drag Queen Story Hour' would also help children and young people to learn about gender beyond a binary concept. Adoption of LGBTQI+ inclusive curricula (Stonewall, 2017) and consideration of the inclusivity of school environments using tools such as the Transgender Inclusive Behaviour Scale (Kattari et al., 2018) will help to promote such models. Furthermore, ensuring that transgender and other gender/sexual minorities, are accurately represented through media will be helpful in ensuring adequate exposure to diverse populations, in line with the parasocial contact hypothesis and secondary transfer effects (Pettigrew, 2009; Schiappa et al., 2005; Schiappa et al., 2006).

3.4.3 Directions for Future Research

Whilst this study has identified a preliminary comprehensive model in understanding factors which predict transprejudice, further empirical research is needed with larger samples of diverse young populations to ensure generalisability. Furthermore, the regression model from this research has identified a set of predictor variables which could be used as target outcomes in future longitudinal studies. This research design would be helpful in establishing how attitudes

towards transgender individuals may develop from childhood, through to adolescence and into adulthood, based on the key predictor variables identified from this research.

Building on this research, further mediation analyses are warranted to explore the potential mediating role of discomfort with violations of gender heteronormativity on relationships between predictor variables and attitudes. Although this study has confirmed findings by Adams et al. (2016), that the relationship between RWA and attitudes is mediated by DVH, findings that DVH mediated the relationship between number of contacts with transgender individuals and HS warrants further investigation through research with different samples. Also, as Adams et al. (2016) identified that transphobia was associated with discomfort to violations of gender identity norms specifically, research should identify whether transprejudice is more closely related to individual components of the DVHGI (discomfort with deviations to gender roles, gender identity, or sexual orientation) to better inform interventions.

While this study provides key preliminary findings using self-report methodology measuring explicit attitudes, it may be beneficial for future research to investigate the impact of implicit attitudes. Axt et al. (2021) found that their implicit association test had higher predictive validity in predicting gender essentialism, contacts with transgender individuals, and support for transgender policies, beyond that of self-reported explicit attitudes. Furthermore, a variety of additional factors such as biological determinism (Ching & Xu, 2018), contact apprehension and intergroup anxiety (McCullough, 2016), physical appearance (Miller & Grollman, 2015), and social dominance orientation (Puckett et al., 2019), could provide further predictive strength or act as mediators in this model and warrant further investigation in young samples.

Additionally, this study is based on research conducted in western cultures. As Elischberger et al. (2018) identified that their regression model accounted for considerably more

variance in attitudes towards transgender individuals in the US, compared to India, further research should adopt cross-cultural designs to explore transprejudice predictors in young people across cultures, comparing countries with differing conceptualisations of gender and treatment of transgender individuals in society.

3.5 Conclusion

While research exploring factors that predict young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals is in its infancy, the current study identified a preliminary, comprehensive model in understanding young people's attitudes across the UK. The study highlights the importance of several factors in predicting transprejudice in young people and emerging adults, many of which are consistently found to predict adult transprejudice too. While further research is needed to fully understand mechanisms underlying CYP's attitudes towards transgender individuals in modern society, this model and identified factors can begin to inform interventions applied at individual, group and systemic levels to reduce the impact of transprejudice on outcomes, wellbeing- and mental health for young transgender individuals.

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Appendix A Search Terms

PICO Model	Search Terms
Population	LGBT* OR GLB* OR Homosexual* OR Lesbian* OR Gay OR Bisex* OR Trans* OR Queer OR "Gender neutral" OR "Gender fluid" OR "Gender variant" OR "Non-binary" OR "Gender non-conforming" OR "Sexual minorit*"
Intervention	"Social media" OR "Social network* site" OR "Facebook" OR "Instagram" OR "social network*
Comparison	N/A
Outcome	"Identity manage*" OR "Identity develop*" OR "Identity form*" OR "self-present*" OR "self-disclos*"

Search strategy: (LGBT* OR GLB* OR Homosexual* OR Lesbian* OR Gay OR Bisex* OR Trans* OR Queer OR "Gender neutral" OR "Gender fluid" OR "Gender variant" OR "Non-binary" OR "Gender non-conforming" OR "Sexual minorit*") AND ("Social media" OR "Social network* site" OR "Facebook" OR "Instagram" OR "social network*") AND ("Identity manage*" OR "Identity develop*" OR "Identity form*" OR "self-present*" OR "self-disclos*"

Appendix B Example Quality Assurance Framework

D.Ed.Ch.Psychol. 2017
Review framework for qualitative evaluation/ investigation research

Journal Reference:

Bates, A., Hobman, T., & Bell, B. T. (2020). "Let Me Do What I Please with It . . . Don't Decide My Identity for Me": LGBTQ+ Youth Experiences of Social Media in Narrative Identity Development. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 35(*1), 51-83.

Criterion	Score			Comment
Appropriateness of the research design *e.g., rationale vis-à-vis aims, links to previous approaches, limitations*	**1**	0		Good rationale (narrative identity development). Person centred narrative approach fits with research question.
Clear sampling rationale *e.g., description, justification; attrition evaluated*	**1**	0		Purposeful sampling. Good description of population in location and rationale for using students from this university. Excluded data explained (heterosexual).
Well executed data collection *e.g., clear details of who, what, how; effect of methods on data quality*	**1**	0		Details of who led (first author) Details of how (semi structured interviews, details of interview guide formation and where questions came from and how they fit with narrative identity work)
Analysis close to the data, *e.g., researcher can evaluate fit between categories/ themes and data.*	**2**	1	0	Examining individual narratives, then using TA to identify shared narrative themes.
Evidence of explicit reflexivity *e.g., impact of researcher, limitations, data validation (e.g., inter-coder validation), researcher philosophy/ stance evaluated.*	2	**1**	0	Section describing impact of researcher Inter-coder validation described No philosophy mentioned
Comprehensiveness of documentation *e.g., schedules, transcripts, thematic maps, paper trail for external audit*	1	**0**		Not available in journal article (probably within appendices but have no access).
Negative case analysis, *e.g., e.g., contrasts/ contradictions/ outliers within data; categories/ themes as dimensional; diversity of perspectives.*	**1**	0		Diversity of perspectives explored e.g., benefits and drawbacks of labels discussed.
Clarity and coherence of the reporting *e.g., clear structure, clear account linked to aims, key points highlighted*	**1**	0		Clear structure, language accessible, good use of headings to aid understanding, key findings highlighted well.
Evidence of researcher-participant negotiation of meanings, *e.g., member checking, empower participants.*	**1**	0		Member checking with a subset of participants completed, ensuring triangulation.
Emergent theory related to the problem, *e.g., abstraction from categories/ themes to model/ explanation.*	**1**	0		Explanation of themes given and explained further.
Valid and transferable conclusions *e.g., contextualised findings; limitations of scope identified.*	**1**	0		Good conclusions related to question and limitations addressed. Quotes very contextualised- very long quotes chosen to reflect meaning within context.
Evidence of attention to ethical issues *e.g., presentation, sensitivity, minimising harm, feedback*	**1**	0		Interviews were participant led which enabled them to focus on what they wanted to and felt was important. Results fed back to some participants (member checking). Interviews conducted 1:1 not focus group.
Total	**12**			

Appendix C Data Extraction Table

Reference	Title	Article type	Country	Design	Methodology /analysis	Sample	Social media type	Summary of main findings
Bates et al. (2020)[1]	"Let Me Do What I Please With It . . . Don't Decide My Identity For Me": LGBTQ+ Youth Experiences of Social Media in Narrative Identity Development	Journal article	UK	Semi-structured interviews	Thematic analysis	$N = 11$, aged 19-23 University students Female bisexual ($n = 4$), bisexual nonbinary born female ($n = 1$), two female and one male pansexual/fluid/queer ($n = 3$), two female and one male homosexual ($n = 3$)	All	Young LGBT+ youth's experiences of building narrative identities on social media. Four themes: 1. Narratives of merging safe spaces- LGBTQ+ youth have access to safe environments which facilitates secure identity development. 2. Narratives of external identity alignment- social media used to seek identities that match sense of self. 3. Narratives of multiple context-based identities- youth have many identity markers that are context dependent 4. Narratives of individuality and autonomy- LGBTQ+ youth see themselves as highly individualised members of a wider community.
Carrasco & Kerne (2018)[2]	Queer Visibility: Supporting LGBT+ Selective Visibility on Social Media	Conference paper	USA	Semi-structured interviews	"Qualitative analysis process"	$N = 17$, aged 18+ (no ages recorded) University students Male ($n = 7$), female ($n = 4$), cis male ($n = 2$), trans male ($n = 2$), genderqueer ($n = 1$), "genderqueer guy" ($n = 1$) Gay ($n = 8$), lesbian ($n = 4$), straight ($n = 2$), bisexual ($n = 1$), asexual ($n = 1$), "ace lesbian" ($n = 1$)	Facebook and other social media	How social media affects LGBT+ management of self-presentation and how social media affects participation in LGBT+ communities. Three categories of findings: 1. Identity- how people show, interpret and reason about sharing identities on social media. 2. Community- people participate and benefit from online communities, as well as face discrimination. 3. Audience- people manage activity and LGBT+ visibility differently between social media accounts
Chester et al. (2016)[3]	Gay men's experiences coming out online: A qualitative study	Journal article	USA	Semi-structured interviews	"Consensual qualitative analysis"	$N = 12$, aged 21-27 ($M = 24.4$) Gay males	Facebook	Experiences of gay men who came out on Facebook. Participants discussed influences on their disclosure, e.g., homophobia and previous disclosures. Participants discussed goals and concerns about coming out online e.g., improving relationships. Participants also discussed benefits of coming out online e.g., increased authenticity and decreased ambiguity about their sexuality.
Ciszek (2017)[4]	Advocacy Communication and Social Identity: An Exploration of Social Media Outreach	Journal article	USA	Semi-structured interviews	Thematic analysis	$N = 24$, aged 13-18 Male ($n = 18$), female ($n = 4$), transgender ($n = 2$)	Advocacy campaigns on social media	How LGBTQ youth understand online advocacy campaigns, perceive LGBTQ as a social category in campaigns and values assigned to group membership. Three themes: 1. Virtual safe haven- connecting with others, seek advocacy resources to alleviate rejection from others, outlets of support, not feeling like the only one.

Reference	Title	Article type	Country	Design	Methodology /analysis	Sample	Social media type	Summary of main findings
								2.Representations of LGBTQ- campaigns deconstruct stereotypes, robust representations of LGBTQ, multiplicity of voices of LGBTQ people. 3.Critcial community- many participants complimentary of advocacy efforts by providing support and community, some discussed unwarranted stigma, discussions of a generation gap, multiple intersecting identities.
Craig & McInroy (2014)[5]	You Can Form a Part of Yourself Online: The Influence of New Media on Identity Development and Coming Out for LGBTQ Youth	Journal article	Canada	Semi-structured interviews	Grounded theory	N = 19, aged 18-22 Cisgender female (n = 9), cisgender male (n = 6), transgender/transsexual male (n = 3), gender queer (n = 1) Gay (n = 6), lesbian (n = 4), bisexual (n = 2), polysexual (n = 1), queer (n = 1), other (n = 5)	New media (including social media)	How online media influences LGBTQ identity development. New media enabled participants to access resources, explore identities, find likeness, engage in coming out, and expand their online identities offline.
Devito et al. (2018)[6]	"Too Gay for Facebook": Presenting LGBTQ+ Identity Throughout the Personal Social Media Ecosystem	Journal article	USA	Semi-structured interviews/ cognitive mapping activity	Constructivist grounded theory	N = 20, aged 20-57 Female (n = 10), male (n = 8), genderqueer (n = 2) Gay (n = 14), bisexual (n = 4), other (n = 2)	All	How LGBTQ+ participants use social media to manage disclosure and presentation of LGBTQ+ identities, and how imagined audiences and affordances impact. Participants use social media platforms, audiences online, affordances of platforms, and norms on social media within their 'personal social media ecosystem' to avoid stigmatisation whilst allowing for LGBTQ+ identity expression and the ability to adjust self-presentation.
Doss (2018)[7]	Exploring the Role of Social Media in the Identity Development of Trans Individuals	Master's thesis	USA	Semi-structured interviews	"Phenomenol ogical approach"	N = 5, aged 26-52 Transgender man (n = 3), transgender woman (n = 2)	All	Influences of social media on identity development for transgender individuals. Three themes: 1.Social support- source of support including providing increased visibility and role in coming out. 2.Negative interactions and microaggressions- exposure to microaggressions, negative interactions and news can alter mood and self-perception. 3.Access- high frequency of use and using it regularly to find resources to assist identity development.
Downing (2013)[8]	Virtual youth: non-heterosexual young people's use of the internet to	Journal article	UK	Semi-structured interviews/f ocus groups	"Conventiona l social science techniques" using "emic	N = 41 Young people (n = 34), aged 16-25 Young men (n = 27), young women (n = 7)	Internet use (including social networking sites)	1.Young people's use of LGBT social networking sites- all used the internet for sexuality-related reasons, important in supporting newly forming identities, virtual sounding board, information about range of sexualities, used to seek support around LGBT, supporting others.

Reference	Title	Article type	Country	Design	Methodology /analysis	Sample	Social media type	Summary of main findings
	negotiate their identities and socio-sexual relations				and etic coding"	Gay ($n = 23$), lesbian ($n = 5$), bisexual ($n = 2$), transgender ($n = 2$), other ($n = 2$) Youth workers ($n = 7$), no further information specified		2.Socio-sexual relations- effective for supporting friendships and relationships with other non-heterosexual youth, stigma related to online dating, virtual relations have a different dynamic to offline in terms of rapid development, online interactions embodied through phone, photography and webcams, interacting with other LGBT people where access offline is limited. 3.Online-offline interconnections- complex relationship between online and offline in developing LGBT identities.
Duguay (2016)[9]	"He has a way gayer Facebook than I do": Investigating sexual identity disclosure and context collapse on a social networking site	Journal article	UK	Semi-structured interviews and Facebook walkthroughs	Grounded theory	$N = 27$, aged 18-25 ($M = 20$) University students Female ($n = 15$), male ($n = 11$), agender ($n = 1$) Gay $(n = 14)$, bisexual ($n = 5$). Lesbian ($n = 4$), queer ($n = 2$), pansexual ($n = 1$), asexual ($n = 1$)	Facebook	Sexual identity disclosures were influenced by social conditions of their online networks and the technological architecture of the platform. Context collapse occurred where individuals intentionally redefined their sexual identity across audiences or managed unintentional disclosures. Participants reinstated contexts through tailored performances and audience separation to avoid context collapse.
Fox & Warber (2014)[10]	Queer Identity Management and Political Self-Expression on Social Networking Sites: A Co-Cultural Approach to the Spiral of Silence	Journal article	USA	Semi-structured interviews	Grounded theory	$N = 52$ Aged 18-53 Gay men ($n = 16$), lesbian women ($n = 14$), bisexual women ($n = 12$), bisexual men ($n = 2$), pansexual women ($n = 5$), asexual biromantic woman ($n = 1$), transgender genderqueer ($n = 1$), panromantic genderfluid asexual ($n = 1$)	Facebook	Factors that influence LGBT+ identity management and political expression on social media. Participants who were 'in the closet' showed a spiral of silence in terms of their online activity in reaction to the heteronormative majority. Contrastingly, those who were 'out' showed a spiral of silencing, where they used the site's affordances to empower the LGBT+ minority and to silence the dominant heteronormative group.
Fox & Ralston (2016)[11]	Queer identity online: Informal learning and teaching experiences of LGBTQ individuals on social media	Journal article	USA	Semi-structured interviews	Grounded theory	$N= 33$, aged 18-28 ($M = 20.91$) Gay men (n = 8), lesbian women (n = 4), bisexual women (n = 8), bisexual men (n = 5), transgender, pansexual man (n = 1), transgender, polyamorous, and genderqueer man (n = 1), transgender, genderqueer,	Social media, particularly social networking sites	How social media serves as learning environments for LGBTQ individuals during identity development. Three educational uses identified: 1.Traditional learning- information seeking about LGBTQ issues 2.Social learning-observing role models or other LGBTQ individuals' experiences 3.Experiential learning- experimenting with dating and identity.

Reference	Title	Article type	Country	Design	Methodology /analysis	Sample	Social media type	Summary of main findings
						man (n = 1), asexual women (n = 2), heteroromantic woman (n = 1), gray sexual woman (n = 1), pansexual, polyamorous woman (n = 1), polyamorous and androgynous (n = 1)		
Haimson et al. (2016)[12]	Digital Footprints and Changing Networks During Online Identity Transitions	Conference paper	USA	Online survey	"Inductive open coding and live coding techniques"	N = 283, aged 18-66 (M = 28.93) Female/transfemale/transwoman/MTF (46.3%), male/transmale/transman/FTM (39.18%), genderqueer, agender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, or a different gender (25.48%)	Facebook	Digital artifacts (data from past identity) can challenge individuals during identity transitions. People shape their digital footprints in two ways: 1.Editing self-presentational data from old identity 2.Managing who has access to their data Challenges discussed in terms of the interplay between transition, social networks, and the data that join them.
Hanckel et al. (2019)[13]	'That's not necessarily for them': LGBTIQ+ young people, social media platform affordances and identity curation	Journal article	Australia	Interviews	Not specified	N = 23, aged 16-34 Female (n = 9), male (n = 8), nonbinary (n = 3), gender-fluid (n = 2), agender (n = 1) Bisexual (n = 5), queer (n = 4), gay (n = 4), pansexual (n = 2), lesbian (n = 2), queer asexual (n = 1), queer pansexual (n = 1), gay and asexual (n = 1), transinclusive lesbian (n = 1), panromantic asexual (n = 1), open (n = 1)	All	How LGBTIQ+ youth navigate risk and rewards offered through different social media platforms. Affordances of platforms and the contexts of their engagement inform a typology of uses. Practices on social media (focused on finding, building and fostering support) draw on young people's social media literacies, where their experiences range from feeling of safety, security and control to fear, disappointment and anger. Practices on social media also work to manage boundaries between what is 'for them' and 'not for them'. Young people are negotiating risks and managing social media engagement by using the functions they are aware of on each platform. They use platform affordances and their own digital literacy to engage in a range of practices e.g., pseudonymity, unfollowing, unfriending, reporting and blocking.
Lovelock (2019)[14]	'My coming out story': Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth identities on YouTube	Journal article	UK (Videos from USA, Britain, Australia and Ireland)	YouTube videos	Discursive textual analysis	YouTube videos (N = 35), individuals aged 18-29 (exact ages not established) Lesbian (n = 11), gay (n = 15), bisexual females (n = 5), bisexual males (n = 4)	YouTube	How LGB youth construct and articulate identities on YouTube. LGB youth can articulate what it feels like to be queer and share strategies which encourage authentic self-representation and self-acceptance. YouTube coming out videos are important ways in which young LGB individuals shape and articulate their sexualities.

Reference	Title	Article type	Country	Design	Methodology /analysis	Sample	Social media type	Summary of main findings
Owens (2017)[15]	Is It Facebook Official? Coming Out and Passing Strategies of Young Adult Gay Men on Social Media	Journal article	USA	Semi-structured interviews	Not specified "data were coded line by line …common concepts grouped together using focused coding"	$N = 42$, aged 18-27 University students Gay men ($N = 42$)	Facebook	Strategies of identity management used to disclose or conceal identity differs depending on level of 'outness': 1.'Out and proud'- use Facebook to celebrate identity 2.'Out and discreet'- use Facebook to indirectly come out to some people whilst hiding from others 3.'Facebook closeted'-actively manage Facebook profile to ensure sexual identity is not exposed.
Rubin & McClelland (2015)[16]	'Even though it's a small checkbox, it's a big deal': stresses and strains of managing sexual identity(s) on Facebook	Journal article	USA	Interviews	Thematic analysis	$N = 8$, aged 16-19 Identified as lesbian, bisexual or queer ($N = 8$)	Facebook	How young queer women navigate expectations of rejection from others. Participants try to develop relationships on Facebook, and this requires sharing thoughts, feelings, behaviours and ideas, while also trying to hide and silence their emerging sexuality. Facebook serves as a 'virtual closet' where participants tamper self-presentation and make labored decisions about visibility to avoid social exclusion. Dual use of Facebook- integral to their lives but also effortful in terms of ruminating about content, social surveillance, worries about being outed online.

Note. Study number depicted by index attached to reference.

Appendix D Advertisement Poster

Appendix E Advertisement Email

Dear [INSERT NAME],

My name is Kirsty Russell and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my second year of training on the DEdPsy course at the University of Southampton.

Whilst there are around 200,000-500,000 transgender people in the UK, many of these individuals face prejudice, which can have significant impact on their mental health. Research into young people's attitudes towards the transgender population is extremely sparse, and little is known about the factors which influence young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals.

I am calling on you for your help…I am currently looking to recruit students aged 16-25 to participate in my doctoral thesis named:

"To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population: A Quantitative Study"

The study requires students to follow a link to an online survey which they can complete in their own time from their own devices. The study will ask participants to give scaled responses to various questions around areas such as gender role beliefs, their need for closure, heteronormativity, religious fundamentalism and their contact with transgender individuals. The online survey will take around 45 minutes to complete.

Students can opt in to be entered into a prize draw to win Amazon vouchers (10x £5, 4x £10, 3x £20, 1x £50, 1x £100) which will take place after data collection (estimated December 2020). Your students' responses are extremely valuable. The study aims to develop a clearer understanding of the factors which may predict attitudes towards transgender individuals in young people. This research will improve current understanding and build upon limited literature with young people in the UK. By identifying common factors that predict attitudes, these factors can be targeted to decrease prejudice towards the transgender population to help diminish the potential impact prejudice has on well-being and mental health of transgender individuals.

I would appreciate it if you could take a look at the attached recruitment flyer and send it to your students to complete if they wish. A variety of screenshots from the survey are displayed on the reverse of this letter.

If you have any questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: kr1n18@soton.ac.uk

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Southampton, ERGO number: 55652

Many thanks,
Kirsty Russell (Trainee Educational Psychologist, University of Southampton)

iSurvey

To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population?

1.1

How old are you?

Do you consider yourself to be

Other ▼

If other, please describe

What is your religion, if any?

What is your gender?

Please select ▼

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iSurvey

To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population?

2.2

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It would be beneficial to society to recognize transgenderism as normal	○	○	○	○	○
Transgender individuals should not be allowed to work with children	○	○	○	○	○
Transgenderism is immoral	○	○	○	○	○
All transgender bars should be closed down	○	○	○	○	○
Transgender individuals are a viable part of our society	○	○	○	○	○
Transgenderism is a sin	○	○	○	○	○
Transgenderism endangers the institution of the family	○	○	○	○	○
Transgender individuals should be accepted completely into our society	○	○	○	○	○
Transgender individuals should be barred from the teaching profession	○	○	○	○	○
There should be no restrictions on transgenderism	○	○	○	○	○
I avoid transgender individuals whenever possible	○	○	○	○	○
I would feel comfortable working closely with a transgender individual	○	○	○	○	○
I would enjoy attending social functions at which transgender individuals were present	○	○	○	○	○
I would feel comfortable if I learned that my neighbour was a transgender individual	○	○	○	○	○
Transgender individuals should not be allowed to cross dress in public	○	○	○	○	○
I would like to have friends who are transgender individuals	○	○	○	○	○

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iSurvey

To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population?

4.4

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
I don't like situations that are uncertain.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I dislike questions which could be answered in many different ways.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I find that a well ordered life with regular hours suits my temperament.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel uncomfortable when I don't understand the reason why an event occurred in my life.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel irritated when one person disagrees with what everyone else in a group believes.						
I don't like to go into a situation without knowing what I can expect from it.						
When I have made a decision, I feel relieved						
When I am confronted with a problem, I'm dying to reach a solution very quickly.						
I would quickly become impatient and irritated if I would not find a solution to a problem immediately.						
I don't like to be with people who are capable of unexpected actions.						
I dislike it when a person's statement could mean many different things.						
I find that establishing a consistent routine enables me to enjoy life more.						
I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life.						
I do not usually consult many different opinions before forming my own view.						
I dislike unpredictable situations.						

Back a page

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iSurvey

To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population?

6.6

How often do you come into contact with transgender individuals?
○ Very often
○ Often
○ Sometimes
○ Never

Where do you mostly come into contact with transgender individuals?
○ Family
○ Friends
○ Work
○ Education

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iSurvey

To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population?

To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population?: A Quantitative Study

Debriefing Statement (Version 1, 02/02/2020)

ERGO ID: 55552

The aim of this research was to explore the factors which predict young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals.

It is expected that the previously identified factors in the literature (such as religiosity, ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism, heteronormativity, need for closure, gender role beliefs, contact with transgender individuals and gender) will predict attitudes towards transgender individuals in this sample of young people within the UK.

Your data will help our understanding of the factors which predict attitudes towards transgender individuals. At the moment there has not been a lot of research conducted with young people in the UK and your participation has helped with this understanding. If common factors are found to predict attitudes then these factors can be targeted to decrease the prejudice that many of the transgender population face.

Once again results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics. The research did not use deception. You may have a copy of this summary if you wish and a summary of the research findings once complete if you left an email address.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel that you have been placed at risk, you may contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

If you have any further questions please contact me *Kirsty Russell* at *kr1n18@soton.ac.uk*

If you wish to speak to the other researchers to further explore this area of research then please contact:

- *Dr Cora Sargeant: c.c.sargeant@soton.ac.uk*
- *Dr Sarah Wright: s.f.wright@soton.ac.uk*

It is possible that some of the questions asked may have evoked uncomfortable feelings, and this is understandable. If the study has led to any distress please seek support from a trusted adult or if you wish to seek further support, below are some services that you can contact:

Samaritans https://www.samaritans.org/
- Charity to provide emotional support to anyone in emotional distress

Young Minds https://youngminds.org.uk/
- Charity supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

Gendered Intelligence http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/
- Charity that supports trans people under the age of 21

Appendix F Participant Information Sheet

<u>**Participant Information Sheet**</u>

Study Title:
To What Extent Can We Predict Young People's Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population: A Quantitative Study

Researcher:
Kirsty Russell (Trainee Educational Psychologist)
Supervisors:
Dr Cora Sargeant: c.c.sargeant@soton.ac.uk
Dr Sarah Wright: s.f.wright@soton.ac.uk

ERGO number: 55652

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

<u>**What is the research about?**</u>
My name is Kirsty Russell and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist completing my doctoral thesis (Doctorate in Educational Psychology) at the University of Southampton. This research forms part of my doctoral thesis and aims to explore the factors which predict young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals. It is expected that several factors found in previous research will help explain attitudes towards the transgender population in this UK based sample with young people. It is an online survey that can be completed in your own time on your own device.

<u>**Why have I been asked to participate?**</u>
You have been invited to participate as you are aged 16-25 and we are interested in hearing your views. We expect that there will be over 120 participants in this study.

<u>**What will happen to me if I take part?**</u>
If you wish to take part in this online survey, you can consent by reading the consent form and ticking the box to say you have read and agreed to the terms of the study. If you consent, you will then be asked if you would like to be entered into a prize draw to win Amazon vouchers. The vouchers available to win are:
• 10x £5
• 4x £10
• 3x £20
• 1x £50
• 1x £100

If you wish to entered into this prize draw you will be asked to leave your email address so that researchers can contact you if you win and vouchers can then be sent to you via email. This randomised prize draw will take place after data collection by the researcher. The online survey will then begin and you will be asked to respond to questions about your views around transgender individuals at your own pace. You will then be asked to provide some demographic information before being asked questions about. You are free to withdraw from the survey. The online survey is expected to take 45 minutes to complete and you will be asked if you want to leave your email to be contacted with the results of the study after the research study is complete. You will also be signposted to services if you wish to receive further support with any issues that may arise from completing the survey.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?
You can be entered into a prize draw for Amazon vouchers as described above if you choose. This prize draw will take place after data collection and estimated to happen in December 2020 (although this may vary depending on the length of data collection). Your participation in this study will help to improve current understanding about the factors which predict attitudes towards transgender individuals. At the moment there has not been a lot of research conducted with young people in the UK and if we can identify common factors that predict attitudes then these factors can be targeted to decrease the prejudice that many of the transgender population face.

Are there any risks involved?
As this study may be exploring sensitive issues, there is a risk that this study may evoke psychological discomfort or distress. If this is the case you are free to withdraw at any time. If the survey evokes any feelings of discomfort then please speak to a trusted adult. The services below may also be contacted:

- Samaritans https://www.samaritans.org/ (Charity to provide emotional support to anyone in emotional distress)
- Young Minds https://youngminds.org.uk/ (Charity supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing)
- Gendered Intelligence http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/ (Charity that supports trans people under the age of 21)

What data will be collected?
The online survey will ask you to provide some demographic information (age, gender identity, whether you are in education or employment, sexual orientation, religious beliefs) however if you prefer not to disclose this information that is fine. This information is being collected to develop understanding further into what predicts attitudes towards transgender individuals. Please note that response scale options in the survey may differ in direction throughout the survey, so please read questions and select your answers carefully

All data collected for this study will be stored securely on a password-protected computer and backed up securely on the University of Southampton's server.

You may also wish to opt in to receiving information about the findings of the study by leaving your email address at the end of the online survey. It is estimated that you would receive the results of the study via email around June 2021. Your email address will be stored separately to your other data.

Researchers will use the email address provided to contact you via email if you are a winner in the prize draw or to provide overall findings of the study after the study has finished. You have the option to leave an email address for both reasons at the end of the survey.

<u>Will my participation be confidential?</u>

Your survey data will be anonymous. Any data we hold will not be identifiable and cannot be traced back to you. Your response data will be given a participant number so you do not have to provide any other personal details. This means your survey data will be anonymous. If you provide your email address to be entered into the prize draw or if you wish to receive information regarding the findings of the study, this will not be linked to your data and stored separately. After winners of the prize draw have been contacted and findings have been shared, email addresses will be disposed of. Your data will be stored securely on isurvey via the University of Southampton's cloud which is password protected. Your data will be stored for a minimum of 10 years. Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

<u>Do I have to take part?</u>

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to tick the consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

<u>What happens if I change my mind?</u>

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. To withdraw you can simply exit and abandon the survey. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only. As this survey is anonymous, once you will submit your answers, you will no longer be able to withdraw them from this study.

<u>What will happen to the results of the research?</u>

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. The results of this research will be written up as part of a doctoral thesis. If you wish to receive information regarding the findings of the research then you can leave your email address and researchers will email you a summary of the findings following completion of the study.

Where can I get more information?

For more information after reading this sheet please contact

- Kirsty Russell (Trainee Educational Psychologist): kr1n18@soton.ac.uk

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions.

- Dr Cora Sargeant: c.c.sargeant@soton.ac.uk
- Dr Sarah Wright: s.f.wright@soton.ac.uk

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be

disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Survey data will be anonymised and assigned a participant number. Personal data therefore cannot be tracked back to the individual. Email addresses will be stored separately to response and demographic data so that participants cannot be identified by their email address.

Thank you for taking the time to read the participant information sheet and considering taking part in this research.

Appendix G Debriefing Statement

Debriefing Statement (Version 1, 02/02/2020)
ERGO ID: 55652

The aim of this research was to explore the factors which predict young people's attitudes towards transgender individuals.

It is expected that the previously identified factors in the literature (such as religiosity, ambivalent sexism, authoritarianism, heteronormativity, need for closure, gender role beliefs, contact with transgender individuals and gender) will predict attitudes towards transgender individuals in this sample of young people within the UK.

Your data will help our understanding of the factors which predict attitudes towards transgender individuals. At the moment there has not been a lot of research conducted with young people in the UK and your participation has helped with this understanding. If common factors are found to predict attitudes then these factors can be targeted to decrease the prejudice that many of the transgender population face.

Once again results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics. The research did not use deception. You may have a copy of this summary if you wish and a summary of the research findings once complete if you left an email address.
If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel that you have been placed at risk, you may contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

If you have any further questions please contact me Kirsty Russell at kr1n18@soton.ac.uk.
If you wish to speak to the other researchers to further explore this area of research then please contact:
- o   Dr Cora Sargeant: c.c.sargeant@soton.ac.uk
- o   Dr Sarah Wright: s.f.wright@soton.ac.uk

It is possible that some of the questions asked may have evoked uncomfortable feelings, and this is understandable. If the study has led to any distress please seek support from a trusted adult or if you wish to seek further support, below are some services that you can contact:
- Samaritans https://www.samaritans.org/
  - Charity to provide emotional support to anyone in emotional distress
- Young Minds https://youngminds.org.uk/
  - Charity supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing
- Gendered Intelligence http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/
- Charity that supports trans people under the age of 21

If you wish to discuss any issues further with a health professional, please contact your GP.

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Appendix H- Example Audit Trail for 'Gaining a Sense of Belonging' Theme

Example Quotes from Papers	Example Line by Line Codes	Example Descriptive Codes	Analytical Theme
"Tumblr was nice, because I could kind of feel like, I'm not alone. I'm not the only person questioning kind of what their sexuality might be like" (Devito et al., 2018, p. 14). "I'm from a rural community and no one is out. So to see people from my area who were on there… changed my perspective of how many people identify as LGBT" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 638).	I'm not alone Other LGBT users Removing feelings of 'difference' Other LGBT users Exposure to LGBT online higher than offline More people LGBT than initially thought	• Visibility of other LGBT users • Feeling accepted • LGBT as 'normal' online • Role models	**Gaining a Sense of Belonging** o **Identifying others like me (subtheme)**
"It can be a space to have meaningful dialogue. And in a sense, reveal who you truly are" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 330). "Having ongoing conversations and finding acceptance among "Tumblr friends" could help individuals embrace elements of their identity that may seem difficult to manage on their own" (Fox & Ralston, 2016, p. 639). "Another states that coming out on Facebook made it easier to find gay friends online" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 330). "I was more connected with that person then…it's kind of your deepest darkest hidden secret, so you feel like you can be yourself with them. And that was important to form relationships" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 324). "Half of participants reported that coming out online improved their relationships" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 327)	Meaningful dialogue Reveal true identity. Ongoing conversations Supported by others Embrace identity Coming out Forming friendships Increased connectiveness with others Be myself	• Connecting with other people • Opportunities to communicate online • Enriched existing relationships	o **Communicating and forming relationships (subtheme)**
"Support from other LGBTQ+ individuals on platforms that were not directly linked to his offline identity" (DeVito et al., 2018, p. 13). "When he feels sad or alone, he looks for consolation on the Internet, pointing to online forums during times when he does not have support in his day-to-day life" (Ciszeck, 2017, p. 2001). "Teared up at multiple times when I would read through post after post saying how I was supported by so many people that I thought I would lose" (Chester et al., 2016, p. 329)	Online/offline identities Online identity not linked to offline Support from LGBT users Internet as source of support No support offline Anticipation around losing relationships Emotional reaction to feeling supported	• Feeling supported by others • Feeling accepted • Positive reactions from others • Differences between online and offline	o **Receiving social support (subtheme)**

|			
"When I came out, the only thing I had was the online media and I feel like all the support I needed, I got it from the online community" (Craig & McInroy, 2014, p. 101). "Audience consisting entirely of individuals who would not only be accepting, but actively supportive of LGBTQ+ identity allowed her to develop her current self-presentation style" (DeVito et al, 2018, p. 10).	Opportunities for positive reactions from others online Online provided support when offline couldn't Supported by others when coming out Many people online are accepting of LGBT Many people online are supportive of LGBT Acceptance from others helped with identity presentation		
"Once you find out that someone's queer, there's this feeling of, I don't want to say camaraderie because that sounds stupid. But like yeah, you're part of the fam, you know the struggle" (Carrasco & Kerne, 2081, p. 7). "Online spaces can support community building and identity affirmation for LGBTQ people where there is no offline equivalent" (Duguay, 2016, p. 902) "Before I knew any gay people in real life, there were people on Tumblr, and it taught me a lot about what it meant to be a part of this community" (DeVito et al., 2018, p. 10) "Advocacy campaigns help many participants feel connected to a larger LGBTQ collective, suggesting isolation and fear of being alone are fundamental components of their reality" (Ciszeck, 2017, p. 2000).	Feeling included Part of a family Part of a community Online provided community when offline couldn't Sense of an LGBT community online Sense of an LGBT community online Exposure to LGBT online Learning about LGBT community through social media Feeling connected to a community Many LGBT feel isolated offline	• Feeling accepted • Feeling part of a larger group of people like me	○ **Feeling part of a community (subtheme)**

Appendix I- Mediation Analyses

PROCESS (Model 4, version 3.5; Hayes, 2020) was used to test whether DVH mediated the effect of RWA on transprejudice, based on the mediation relationship found by Adams et al. (2016). See Figure 4 for visual representation of mediation model. The total effect of RWA on transprejudice was negative and significant, b = -.22, SE = .05, 95% CI [-0.33, -0.13], p = .000; the higher the participant's RWA score, the lower their scores on the ATTIS (reflecting higher transprejudice). There was a significant positive relationship between RWA and DVH, b = .11, SE = .04, 95% CI [0.02, 0.19], p = .02; suggesting that those scoring higher on RWA also felt higher levels of DVH. There was also a significant negative relationship between DVH and transprejudice, with higher scores on DVH associated with higher transprejudice; b = -.63, SE = .09, 95% CI [-0.81, -0.45], p = .000. There remained a significant negative relationship between RWA and transprejudice even when accounting for the mediator (DVH), b = -.16, SE = .04, 95% CI [-0.25, -0.07], p = .01. The indirect effect was negative and significant, suggesting that RWA can affect transprejudice via DVH, b = -.07, bootstrapped SE = .03, bootstrapped 95% CI [-0.12, -0.01]. Those who scored higher on RWA held higher levels of DVH which predicted higher transprejudice.

Figure 4.

Path Model of the Relationships Between Right Wing Authoritarianism, Discomfort with Violations of Gender Heteronormativity, and Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals.
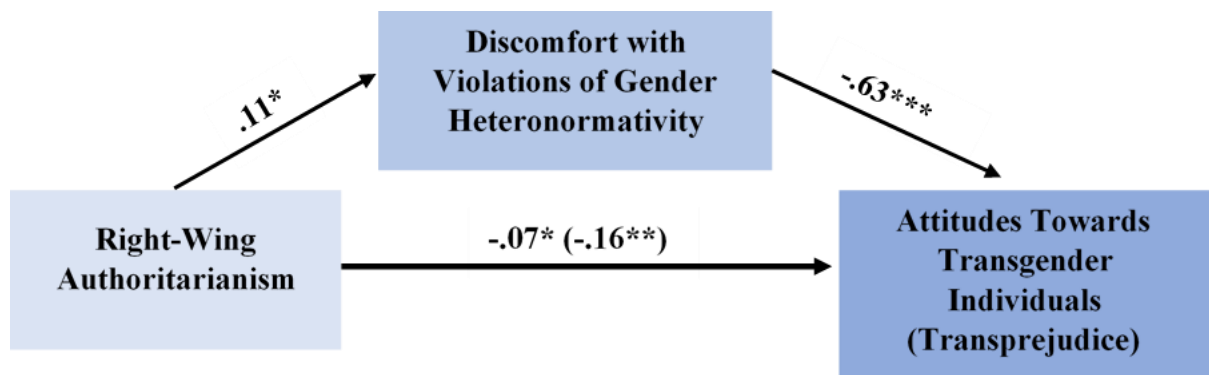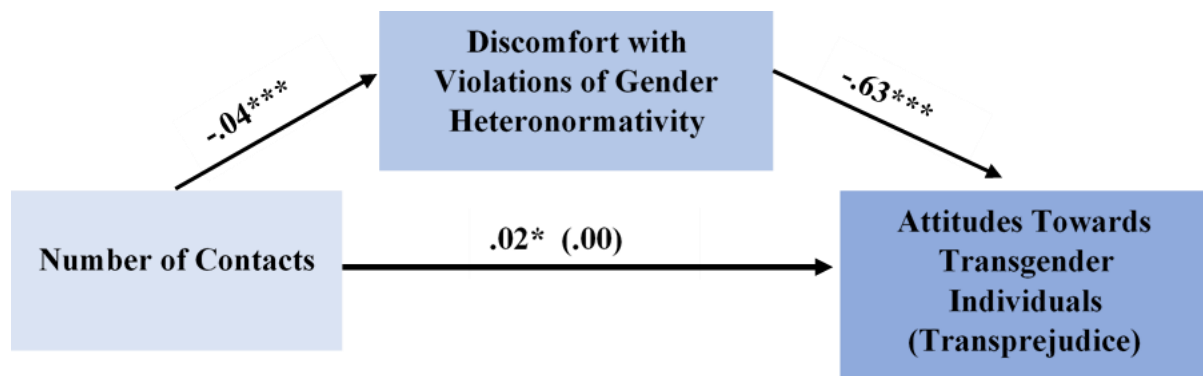

Note: Path coefficients are unstandardised regression coefficients. The value in parentheses is the direct effect (*c'*) of Right-Wing Authoritarianism on Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

PROCESS (Model 4, version 3.5; Hayes, 2020) was used to test whether DVH mediated the effect of RF on transprejudice, as RF had strong significant corelations with the ATTIS but when included in the regression model became a weaker predictor suggesting a potential mediation relationship could have occurred. The total effect of RF on transprejudice was insignificant, b = .01, SE = .04, 95% CI [-0.08, 0.09], p = .88. There was not significant relationship between RF and DVGH, b = .06, SE = .03, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.13], p = .08. There was a significant positive relationship between DVH and transprejudice in the model, with higher scores on DVGH associated with higher transprejudice; b = -.63, SE = .09, 95% CI [-0.81, -0.45], p = .000. There was not a significant relationship between RF and transprejudice even when accounting for the mediator (DVGH), b = .05, SE = .04, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.12], p = .20. The indirect effect was also insignificant, b = -.04, bootstrapped SE = .02, bootstrapped 95% CI [-0.09, -0.00].

PROCESS (Model 4, version 3.5; Hayes, 2020) was used to test whether DVH mediated the effect of number of contacts with transgender individuals on transprejudice, as the number of contacts variable had strong significant corelations with the ATTIS but when included in the regression model became a weaker predictor suggesting a potential mediation relationship could have occurred. The total effect of number of contacts on transprejudice was significant, $b = .02$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.05], $p = .01$. There was a significant relationship between number of contacts and DVH, $b = -.04$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [-0.05, -0.02], $p = .000$. There was a significant positive relationship between DVH and transprejudice in the model, with higher scores on DVH associated with higher transprejudice; $b = .-.63$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [-0.81, -0.45], $p = .000$. There was no significant direct relationship between number of contacts and transprejudice even when accounting for the mediator (DVGH), $b = .00$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.02], $p = .65$. The indirect effect was significant, $b = .02$, bootstrapped $SE = .01$, bootstrapped 95% CI [0.01, 0.04]. This suggests that's the higher number of contacts people have with transgender individuals decreases discomfort with violations of heteronormativity felt which is associated with lower transprejudice.

Figure 5.

Path Model of the Relationships Between Number of Contacts with Transgender Individuals, Discomfort with Violations of Gender Heteronormativity, and Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals.
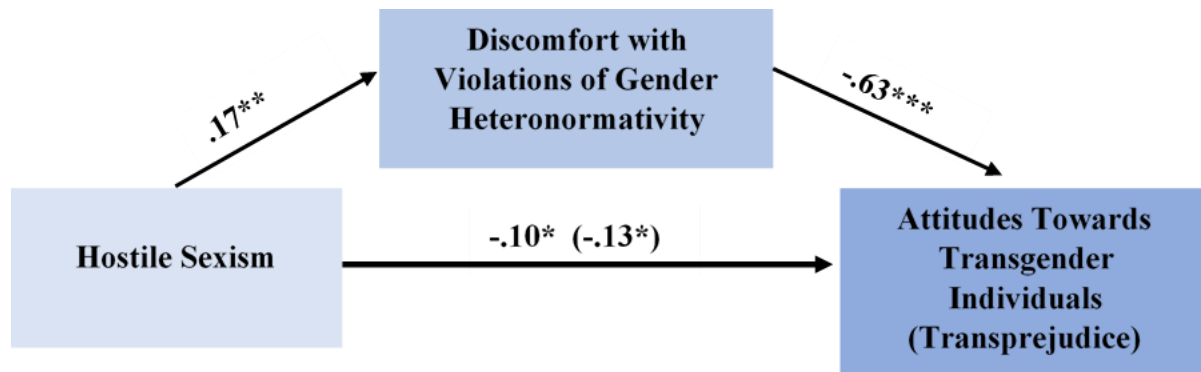

Note: Path coefficients are unstandardised regression coefficients. The value in parentheses is the direct effect (*c'*) of Number of Contacts on Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

PROCESS (Model 4, version 3.5; Hayes, 2020) was used to test whether DVGH mediated the effect of HS on transprejudice. The total effect of HS on transprejudice was significant, b = -.24, SE = .07, 95% CI [-0.37, -0.10], p = .001. There was a significant relationship between HS and DVGH, b = .17, SE = .06, 95% CI [0.05, -0.28], p = .01. There was a significant positive relationship between DVGH and transprejudice in the model, with higher scores on DVGH associated with higher transprejudice; b = .-.63, SE = .09, 95% CI [-0.81, -0.45], p = .000. There was a significant direct relationship between HS and transprejudice even when accounting for the mediator (DVGH), b = -.13, SE = .06, 95% CI [-0.25, -0.01], p = .03. The indirect effect was significant, b = -0.10, bootstrapped SE = .04, bootstrapped 95% CI [-0.19, -0.03]. This suggests that higher scores of HS increases discomfort with violations of heteronormativity felt which is then associated with higher transprejudice.

Figure 6.

Path Model of the Relationships Between Hostile Sexism, Discomfort with Violations of Gender Heteronormativity, and Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals.

Note: Path coefficients are unstandardised regression coefficients. The value in parentheses is the direct effect (*c'*) of Hostile Sexism on Attitudes Towards Transgender Individuals. **p* < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.