

The Mindset to Change One's Gender: A Short Academic Literature Review to Build Social Awareness

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ABSTRACT

The issue of gender change is a critical topic in society that most scholars are shy to discuss and investigate. Gender change is attributed to gender dysphoria, which occurs when people feel that the assigned genders do not match what they feel on the inside. Several factors indicate signs of gender change. People seek to express their gender change in diverse ways, including speech, dressing, relationships, and surgical modifications of sexual genitals. Some take supplements to make them more affiliated with their gender identity. This study explores factors that promote gender change. Qualitative research on gender change among children will help fill the gap in the prevalence of gender dysphoria among children and teenagers.

Keywords: *Gender change, dysphoria, transgender, LGBTQ community*

Gender change is one of the current issues in society that has not attracted many researchers. Today most people are courageous to state their gender preferences and perceptions because of the global freedom of expression and civilization. Freedom of expression and enlightenment has reduced gender stigmatization. Gender-related ideologies and terms such as bisexual and transgender are now prevalent in society because of the rise in gender expressions as people increasingly change their genders based on their emotions and perceptions. Kidd et al. (2018) assert that people who rise to challenge and change their genders regard themselves as transgender. They feel that the assigned genders do not match what they feel on the inside. These people seek to express their gender change in diverse ways, including speech, dressing, relationships, and surgical modifications of sexual genitals. People also take hormone supplements to make them more affiliated with their gender identity.

Purpose Statement

The issue of gender change is a critical topic in society that most scholars are shy to discuss and investigate. However, there is a significant rise in gender change cases in the United States and other countries (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). The purpose of this is qualitative use strategies such as literature reviews to explore why people change their gender. The study will interact with academic arguments from credible sources and probe their insights and perceptions on why people change their gender. One of the articles for review includes

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gender-affirming surgery by Kidd et al. (2018), published on the PubMed Central website. The study will identify research gaps in reviewed literature and propose further research to fill them. The research may use a qualitative design and methods to collect data. Qualitative methods are ideal for studies that seek to capture participants' feelings and emotions (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). Transgender individuals in universities are ideal participants for future studies on the topic. There is a great need to understand the rise in transgender cases and why people are increasingly choosing to change their gender today.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research investigates gender change, especially among children under 12 years, and recommends further research to fill possible information gaps. The study explores recent studies on gender change by examining credible sources such as the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and PubMed. The study chooses scholarly articles published in scientific journals such as Kidd et al. (2018) and Skordis et al. (2020) because of their credibility and accuracy. There is an exemption on Wiki sources because of their inaccurate data collection procedures and multiple anonymous and uncredited authors. The study uses thematic analysis to organize information based on dominant themes when reviewing available literature.

The state of the LGBTQ Community

While most people think that gender identity is based on physical identity, it is more psychological than physical. Gender identity, according to psychologists, is dependent on emotions and feelings (Kidd et al., 2018). People who feel inclined to a gender different from what people can see based on physical characteristics have joined together from time to time to form the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTQ) Community (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). The community has become more proactive in voicing the rights of transgender, bisexuals, and lesbians in recent years. Research indicates that while most LGBTQ community people continue to face discrimination in social institutions, the movement's growth is among the reasons individuals are confident to express their gender preferences.

The rise of human rights activism has inspired people in the LGBTQ community to declare their social orientation and preferences over the last few years. Studies indicate that 1 out of 6 in generation Z is likely to be transgender (Winkler, 2021). Research speculates that the younger generation is bolder than, the older, afraid of expressing their gender identities because of the violence against LGBTQ members in the early years (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). The current LGBTQ community boasts legal support in the United States and the world (Winkler, 2021). The United Kingdom is one of the world governments that have exhibited efforts to support through the LGBT Action Plan of 2018 (Lawrence & Taylor, 2020). The politicians have, through such measures, ensured making the lives of such minority groups better. The plan is a step-by-step procedure of how the UK government will promote LGBT rights in the country and abroad (Lawrence & Taylor, 2020). The move is in response to challenges faced by a member of this community. Such a move encourages individuals to live their lives in the gender they feel without intimidation and discrimination.

Media Impact on Gender Dysphoria

The media is also associated with the current global rise in the LGBTQ community. It promotes the community by providing for activism and giving people an opportunity to speak about their gender perceptions (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). Recently the community

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has secured strategic representations in media, governments, and countries in developed countries such as the US and UK (Winkler, 2021). The media has also increased exposure to information and increased confidence and support for LGBTQ community affairs despite criticism in culturally sensitive areas such as Africa (Winkler, 2021). The United Nations, as a global organization, is also using media broadcasts to argue for minority rights. In a recent forum, its focus has been on gender-based violence in the last decades, especially toward transgender members (Winkler, 2021). The UN also uses the media to advocate for global human rights relations (Winkler, 2021). The body has long been shy of meeting to deliberate but recently conducted a conference on intersex issues.

Impact of Technology on Gender Change

The rise in technology is another factor that makes it possible for individuals to change their genders. As a means of communication, the internet has promoted sharing of ideas and communication among the LGBTQ community (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). The community uses social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube to make global strategic communications on their issues (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). Technology has increased in the two decades and contributes to why the younger generation is increasingly confident about changing gender roles. This confidence results from shared perceptions and feelings among members of the LGBTQ community on social media. Besides aiding communication, technology has also improved clinical care among dysphoric individuals (Kidd et al., 2018). The state of technology is helping transgender to get surgeries and experience parenthood in their perceived genders (Condat et al., 2018). Such technological advancement is likely to impact gender change today strategically.

Gender Dysphoria among Children and Teenagers

Gender Dysphoria is rising among teenagers and youths, according to Skordis et al. (2020). Psychologists define dysphoria as a situation in which individuals feel their sexual identity does not match their sexual organs (Skordis et al., 2020). The mismatch results in discomfort, anxiety, and desire for a change of sexual organs, dressing, and behavior. Medical practitioners term the case as gender identity disorder (Martinerie et al., 2018). The stakeholders researched and realized that the condition was not a mental illness but caused distress among members, changing the term to gender dysphoria. Research indicates that many individuals seek hormone supplements to match their inward gender (Martinerie et al., 2018). Acceptance of the situation in society and reduced stigma also influence the number of young people seeking to change their gender.

Efforts by countries to deal with dysphoria cases are also critical, making most people willing to undertake gender change. The Dutch Approach in the Netherlands, UK, and the USA, among other nations, have improved the psychology of children and teenagers seeking transgender clinic services (Martinerie et al., 2018). Transgender clinics in the United States and other developed countries have expressed a strong desire to deal with children and teenagers experiencing gender identity crises. The clinics have, for instance, developed a pathway for helping individuals to change Gender (Skordis et al., 2020). The criterion for approving gender change among teenagers includes the individual's expression of a different gender for over six months (Skordis et al., 2020). Stimulating gender attire, cross-gender chores, and preferred opposite gender for the association are critical considerations for dysphoria cases (Skordis et al., 2020). Individuals may also strongly need to demonstrate a dislike for their sexual anatomy as a factor for gender genitals change.

CONCLUSION

Available research indicates that most people experiencing dysphoria prefer changing their gender to live their lives based on what they feel (Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). Transgender individuals demonstrate their desire to shift gender through strong hate for sexual anatomy, according to Skordis et al. (2020). Further research can use the pointers to investigate gender change perceptions among children below 12 years. First, they start indicating a strong preference to appear in the gender they feel inside, such as through speech, dressing, and gender genital change. Most available research and academic arguments have highlighted the external environmental factors that facilitate gender change. Such factors include political, government, and media support. Technology is also among the factors that most researchers have cited as the factors influencing gender change and confidence among people experiencing dysphoria. Biomedical technology, for instance, fosters gender change because of the possibility of experiencing parenthood after gender change (Condat et al., 2018). In addition, the media is significantly contributing to the rise in liberal thinking among the young generations and also influencing the increase in gender change cases. The available research, however, have some limitations that result in some research gaps. Most of the articles, for instance, have worked with adults. Limited research works use children under 12 years to assess the possibility and reason for gender change.

Most researchers have also sidelined children on the topic by giving them limited concentration. While gender change starts through perception and feelings, it is possible to investigate the possibility of gender change among children and teens. Since gender identity is a social construction, there is a need for research that addresses how schools can promote gender change. World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) study proposes that individuals experience life changes from an early age. Most reviewed articles have also focused on secondary data to build on their argument. There is a need for research that incorporates firsthand information on why people do gender change. A study on the shift in gender among teenagers and children would be ideal since there are limited articles addressing the subject. However, one available academic argument indicates that children below 12 years are more likely to associate with their birth-assigned origin. It argues that teens should be considered for treatment when gender dysphoria symptoms persist at puberty. Qualitative research on gender change among children will also fill the gap in the prevalence of gender dysphoria among children and teenagers.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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