

Introversion Across Sexual Orientations: A Comparison of Asexual and Heterosexual Young Adults in India

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships between introversion, asexuality, and heterosexuality in 103 young adults (18-25 years old) from India using purposive sampling. Participants identified as asexual (n=53) or heterosexual (n=50) and completed self-report measures of introversion, asexuality, and heterosexuality. Analyses conducted with SPSS revealed a weak positive correlation between asexuality and introversion scores, and a weak negative correlation between heterosexuality and introversion scores. Additionally, an independent samples t-test indicated a significant difference in introversion scores between the 2 samples. These findings challenge initial hypotheses and highlight the need for further research to explore the specific dynamics between sexuality and introversion within the Indian context. The study contributes to a growing understanding of sexual orientation and introversion among young adults in India.

Keywords: *Asexuality, Introversion, Heterosexuality, Sexual Orientation*

Sexuality is a complex and multifaceted aspect of human experience. In India, a nation with a rich cultural heritage and social traditions, understanding the spectrum of sexual identities is crucial for creating an inclusive and supportive environment. The term orientation is commonly defined as having a relationship with something or someone. These patterns of attractions are majorly categorized under heterosexuality (attraction towards the opposite sex), homosexuality (attraction towards the same sex), bisexuality (attraction toward both sexes), and asexuality (lack of sexual attraction to anyone) by the American Psychological Association (2008). The acceptance and openness enjoyed by non-heterosexual and non-cisgender people in ancient India changed when the country was colonised. In today's society, heterosexual intercourse is accepted as the norm, whereas same-sex partnerships are considered deviations. Same-sex partnerships are severely stigmatised and face opposition from a variety of religious and political groups. This societal stigma and erasure are exacerbated when aimed at those with polysexual or asexual orientations. Bisexuals, pansexuals, and asexuals face marginalisation as sexual minorities in the LGBTQ+ community due to a lack of information and visibility (Ghosh, 2024).

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“Asexuality” or the “asexual spectrum” refers to a very less investigated field of sexual orientation, spread out within the dimensions of lack of sexual attraction, or interest in sexual behaviour (Hebbar YR Niranjana, 2014). It refers to a sexual orientation characterized by a lack of sexual desire towards others. Asexuality is a distinct sexual orientation with a still growing body of research (Prause, 2007). It's important to differentiate asexuality from celibacy, a chosen behavioural practice of abstaining from sexual activity. Asexuality is not defined as never engaging in sexual activities or having a low libido; rather, it is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of sexual views, experiences, and behaviours (Bogaert, 2006). Asexuality also differs from low libido, which refers to a decreased desire for sexual activity (Brotto, 2010). The asexuality spectrum encompasses a range of experiences, with some individuals experiencing very low levels of sexual attraction (Copulsky D, 2021).

The spectrum is commonly referred to as the "ace spectrum," and those who identify with it consider themselves to be members of the "ace community" (Cowan, 2018). Demisexuality and graysexuality are two of the most common asexual sexual orientations. Asexuality can coexist with romantic attraction and a desire for intimacy (Edge, 2022). Aromantics (those who have no interest in or desire for romantic relationships) are also classified as asexual, albeit this term is limited to romantic orientation (Copulsky D, 2021). Although asexuality emerges as an orientation to sexuality that can be reconciled with the self, its invisibility or outright rejection in society constitute an on-going challenge (MacNeela, 2015).

Studies suggest that about 1% of the world's population identifies as asexual. So that accounts for a large number of people who don't experience sexual attraction, but who do experience relationships in a variety of ways (2004). Asexuality, like other sexual orientations, is not a choice. Unlike "homosexuality," but like many other sexualities, no formal or internationally accepted definitions of asexuality have yet emerged. In this research, all the identities that fall within the asexual spectrum have been collectively referred to as asexuals, while asexuality is used to refer to their sexuality.

Sexuality research in India is undergoing a significant shift, with growing interest in exploring sexual orientations beyond the heterosexual norm (Das A. , 2014). However, a crucial gap remains in understanding asexuality, a sexual orientation characterized by a lack of sexual attraction or desire for sexual partnerships (Bogaert, 2012). This research aims to delve into this gap by examining the potential correlation between asexuality and introversion, specifically within the Indian sociocultural context.

Hans Eysenck, a prominent psychologist, proposed a theory of personality that focused on two primary dimensions: extraversion/introversion and neuroticism/stability. Eysenck's theory suggests that these dimensions are fundamental to understanding individual differences in personality. He conceptualized extraversion as the tendency to seek stimulation and engage in social interactions, while introversion involves a preference for solitude and lower levels of social engagement. Extraverts are often described as outgoing, sociable, and energetic, while introverts are seen as reserved, reflective, and introspective. Eysenck's theory also posits that these personality dimensions have biological bases, suggesting that genetic factors play a significant role in shaping individual differences in extraversion/introversion and neuroticism/stability. He proposed that extraversion/introversion is associated with differences in cortical arousal levels, with extraverts having lower baseline levels of arousal and introverts having higher baseline levels.

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Introversion is a personality trait marked by a preference for inward reflection and lower needs for external stimulation, particularly social interaction, is a relevant concept to consider (McCrae, 2010). While introversion is not a mental health condition, it can influence how individuals in India navigate social expectations. Introversion, as defined by Carl Jung's theory of psychological types (Jung, 1971), refers to a personality trait characterized by a preference for inward-directed energy and a focus on one's internal world (Cowan, 2018). Introverts are not inherently shy or socially awkward; rather, they gain energy from solitude and find social interaction, while enjoyable, to be mentally draining (Afshan, 2015). This need for solitude is often misinterpreted as social anxiety, leading to misconceptions, and hindering the creation of inclusive environments that cater to both introverts and extroverts (Cowan, 2018). Studies by Jung (1971) highlight the importance of understanding introversion as a natural personality trait, fostering self-acceptance, and dispelling negative stereotypes. Introverts can be highly creative, thoughtful, and observant individuals who thrive in environments that allow for focused work and meaningful social connection without overwhelming stimulation (Afshan, 2015).

Heterosexuality, the most common sexual orientation, is characterized by an attraction to individuals of the opposite sex (Money, 1988). It is important to acknowledge that heterosexuality exists on a spectrum as well, with some individuals experiencing varying degrees of attraction (Klein, 2014). Understanding heterosexuality within the Indian context requires considering the influence of cultural norms and expectations surrounding marriage and family life (Srivastava, 2001) (Kalra G, 2010). Studies by Gupta & Srivastava (2020) and Herbert & Manjula (2017) explore the social construction of intimacy and heterosexuality among heterosexual individuals in India. For example, societal pressures towards marriage and fulfilling gender roles can be a source of stress for heterosexual individuals in India. These studies highlight the influence of social factors on how individuals experience their sexuality (Gupta, 2020); (Herbert, 2017).

It is crucial to differentiate between asexuality and introversion. Introversion, as defined by Jungian psychology (1971), refers to a preference for inward-directed energy and is not inherently linked to sexual orientation (Cowan, 2018). Asexual individuals can be introverted or extroverted (Afshan, 2015). It is important to avoid assuming asexuality stems from social awkwardness or a lack of desire for social interaction. While both introverts and asexual individuals might value solitude, their reasons differ. Introverts gain energy from spending time alone, while asexuality is not about social preferences but about a lack of sexual attraction (Chaturvedi, 2015). Research on the lived experiences of asexual individuals in India is limited, but a recent study by Chatterjee et al. (Chatterjee N, 2024) offers a glimpse into their experiences. More research with larger and more diverse samples is needed to understand the specific challenges faced by asexual people within the Indian context. However, broader studies on asexuality can provide valuable insights. Social pressures to conform to sexual norms can contribute to anxiety and depression for asexual individuals (Morag A. Yule, 2014). Asexuality can also lead to feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging due to the invisibility of this sexual orientation within societal narratives (MacNeela, 2015).

Research on the relationship between personality traits and asexuality is ongoing. Bogaert et al. (2018) suggest that asexual individuals might score differently on personality measures compared to heterosexual or homosexual individuals. However, more research is needed to understand these nuances, and it is important to avoid stereotypes. Asexuality itself is not a

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mental health condition, but some studies suggest a link between asexuality and experiences of anxiety and depression (Morag A. Yule, 2014). This correlation might be due to the social stigma and challenges faced by asexual individuals, rather than asexuality itself.

Mental health concerns can be present in individuals of all sexual orientations, including asexual and heterosexual individuals (Kalra, 2015). Research suggests that social stigma and a lack of acceptance can contribute to mental health challenges for non-heterosexual individuals in India, including those who identify as asexual (Wandrekar JR, 2020); (Gaur PS, 2023). For heterosexual individuals, societal pressures surrounding marriage and fulfilling gender roles can also be a source of stress (Herbert, 2017).

While introversion and heterosexuality are distinct concepts, their intersection can be an area of fruitful exploration. A common misconception might be that introversion implies a lack of interest in romantic relationships. While this can be true for some individuals, it is important to differentiate between introversion and asexuality (Edge, 2022). Asexuality, characterized by a lack of sexual attraction, is a distinct sexual orientation separate from introversion (Bogaert A. F., 2006). Introverted individuals can be just as interested in romantic relationships as extroverts; they simply may prefer different ways of expressing their interest and navigating social interactions within romantic contexts.

Furthermore, introversion does not necessarily equate to social awkwardness. Introverted individuals can be comfortable in social settings, especially with close friends and family. However, they may need time alone to recharge after social interaction, prioritizing activities that stimulate their internal world (Afshan, 2015). Understanding these nuances can help foster healthy and fulfilling relationships for introverted individuals who identify as heterosexual.

Unfortunately, research on the lived experiences of introverted heterosexual individuals, especially within the Indian context, is limited. However, drawing from broader studies on introversion and heterosexuality can offer valuable insights. Studies explore the unique challenges faced by introverts in a society that often prioritizes extroversion. Creating dating profiles, navigating social settings at bars or clubs, and expressing romantic interest can be particularly challenging for introverted individuals accustomed to spending time alone and processing experiences internally.

On the other hand, research on heterosexuality highlights the influence of cultural norms on dating behaviours and relationship development (Gupta, 2020). For introverted heterosexual individuals in India, navigating these social expectations while honouring their preference for solitude can be a complex process. The intersection of introversion and heterosexuality might also influence mental health experiences. Studies by Kalra et al. (2015) suggest that social pressures to conform to societal expectations surrounding relationships can contribute to stress and anxiety for some individuals. For introverted heterosexual individuals, navigating the social aspects of dating and relationships while honouring their need for solitude might require additional support and self-care strategies. Additionally, research on the mental health of heterosexual individuals in India by Wandrekar & Nigudkar (2020) highlights the challenges posed by societal pressures and heteronormativity. Understanding the specific needs of introverted heterosexual individuals within this context is essential for promoting mental well-being.

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The existing literature on asexuality in India is limited. Most studies focus on Western contexts, and research specifically designed for the Indian sociocultural landscape is scarce. Further research is needed to understand the unique experiences of asexual individuals in India, considering factors such as cultural norms, religious beliefs, and societal expectations around sex and marriage.

There is a growing need for culturally sensitive sexuality education in India that acknowledges the spectrum of sexualities, including asexuality (Das, 2014). Educational materials should move beyond a heteronormative focus and include diverse sexual identities. Additionally, creating support networks and online communities for asexual individuals in India can help combat feelings of isolation (MacNeela, 2015). Mental health professionals can play a role in providing support and addressing the challenges faced by asexual and heterosexual individuals (Kalra, 2015). Advocacy for legal and social recognition of asexuality is important to create a more equitable society. This recognition can help to challenge heteronormativity and ensure that asexual individuals have their rights protected.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

John Money's book, "Gay, Straight, and In-between: The Sexology of Erotic Orientation" (Money, 1988), delves into the various factors that influence sexual orientation. Money, a prominent sexologist, explores the biological, psychological, and social influences that shape whether someone identifies as homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual. The book likely examines prenatal and postnatal experiences, hormonal factors during puberty and adulthood, and the impact of childhood development on erotic orientation. Money also likely explores the concept of "lovemaps," a term he coined to describe the individual pathways of sexual and emotional development. This book likely serves as a resource for understanding the complexities of sexual orientation and the diverse spectrum of human sexuality. However, it is important to note that Money's theories have been challenged in recent years, and some of the concepts presented in the book may not reflect current understandings of sexual orientation.

In his article "Non-Gandhian Sexuality, Commodity Cultures, and a 'Happy Married Life': The Cultures of Masculinity and Heterosexuality in India" (Srivastava, 2001), Sanjay Srivastava explores how ideas of masculinity and heterosexuality are constructed in contemporary India. He argues that these concepts deviate from the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, who emphasized non-violence and equality. Srivastava suggests that consumerism and commercialization play a role in shaping these cultural norms. The pursuit of a "happy married life," as portrayed in media and advertising, reinforces traditional gender roles and heterosexual expectations. This focus on material possessions and societal pressures can potentially conflict with the pursuit of individual desires and alternative sexualities.

In his 2006 paper "Toward a Conceptual Understanding of Asexuality," Anthony Bogaert lays the groundwork for a more comprehensive definition of asexuality (Bogaert A. F., 2006). He acknowledges that asexuality has historically been viewed as a sexual dysfunction or a lack of sexual development. However, Bogaert argues for asexuality to be recognized as a distinct sexual orientation, characterized by a low or absent interest in sexual activity. He explores the various ways asexuality might manifest, including a lack of desire for masturbation or interpersonal sexual contact. Bogaert emphasizes the importance of distinguishing asexuality from celibacy, which is a chosen behaviour, whereas asexuality is

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an intrinsic sexual orientation. This article serves as a foundational piece for understanding asexuality as a valid and natural expression of human sexuality.

In the 2007 study "Asexuality: Classification and Characterization" by Prause and Graham, researchers delve into the characteristics of individuals who identify as asexual (Prause, 2007). The study involved two parts: interviews with four self-identified asexuals and a larger online survey. The findings suggest that asexuality is primarily characterized by a low desire for sexual activity with a partner. Additionally, asexual individuals in the study reported lower levels of sexual arousal and excitation compared to non-asexual participants. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in scores related to sexual inhibition or desire for masturbation between the two groups. The content analysis of the interviews further supported the idea that low sexual desire is the key factor differentiating asexual and non-asexual individuals. This study provides valuable insights into the characteristics of asexuality, highlighting the importance of low sexual desire in understanding this sexual orientation.

The study "Sexual variation in India: A view from the west" by Kalra, Gupta, and Bhugra (Kalra G, 2010) explores sexual diversity in India, but from a Western perspective. The authors acknowledge that same-sex relationships and expressions of non-normative sexuality have a long history in Indian scriptures and literature. They highlight the role of the Hijras, a community of transgender individuals, within Indian society. The focus of the paper is on arguing that same-sex attraction and other sexual variations should not be considered mental illnesses. The authors propose that psychiatry's role should be to understand and support individuals with diverse sexualities, rather than pathologize them. However, it is important to note that the study adopts a Western viewpoint and may not fully capture the nuances of sexual identity and expression within the Indian context.

Brotto et al.'s (Brotto, 2010) study, "Asexuality: A Mixed-Methods Approach," takes a multifaceted look at asexuality. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data (surveys) with qualitative data (interviews) from self-identified asexual individuals. Their findings contribute to our understanding of this sexual orientation in a few key ways. First, the study suggests that asexuality is best understood as a lack of sexual attraction, rather than being defined by sexual behaviour. While asexual individuals in the study reported lower sexual activity than their non-asexual counterparts, there were variations in their experience of sexual response and masturbation frequency. Secondly, the research highlights that asexual individuals partnered with sexual partners may need to navigate relationship dynamics around sex. The study acknowledges the potential challenges faced by asexual individuals in such partnerships. Interestingly, the research did not find significantly higher rates of mental health problems among asexual individuals compared to the general population. However, the study does suggest that a small subset of asexual individuals might experience symptoms that could be linked to Schizoid Personality Disorder. Finally, the research emphasizes the importance of including asexual people in future studies on sexuality. This also highlights the need for a more comprehensive understanding of asexuality and the lived experiences of asexual individuals.

Legg and Roy's 2013 article "Neoliberalism, Postcolonialism and Hetero-Sovereignities: Emergent Sexual Formations in Contemporary India" serves as an introduction to a special issue on sexuality in contemporary India (Legg, 2013). The authors argue that India's postcolonial present extends beyond the moment of independence in 1947. They urge a

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consideration of ongoing processes like the rise of neo-liberal capitalism and movements for women's and sexual minority rights. These, they propose, have complex intersections with religious and cultural traditions, legal frameworks, and personal experiences. The authors highlight the increasing focus on how these factors influence the production and consumption of gendered and sexual identities. They mention hosting symposia at the University of Nottingham to explore these themes from historical perspectives. The discussions, they note, exposed tensions inherent in diverse fields and the limitations of binary classifications. They acknowledge that previous research has primarily focused on historical perspectives, but this special edition aims to explore the emergence of new sexual identities and expressions within the dynamic context of contemporary India.

In her 2014 article "Sexuality education in India: examining the rhetoric, rethinking the future," Arpita Das examines the state of sexuality education in India (Das, 2014). She argues that while there has been some progress in implementing sexuality education programs, the current approach is often limited and rooted in outdated rhetoric. Das critiques the focus on abstinence-based education and the emphasis on preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies. She argues for a more comprehensive approach that addresses a wider range of topics, including healthy relationships, consent, gender identity, and sexual orientation. The article highlights the need for educational materials that are culturally sensitive and age-appropriate. Das emphasizes the importance of creating safe spaces for young people to discuss sexuality openly and honestly. She highlights the need for a rights-based approach to sexuality education, empowering young people with accurate information about their bodies, sexual health, and sexual rights. The article emphasizes the importance of addressing issues relevant to the Indian context, such as child sexual abuse and the specific needs of LGBTQ+ youth. She concludes by calling for a more holistic and inclusive approach to sexuality education in India, one that empowers young people to make informed decisions about their sexual health and well-being.

In a 2014 study, Yule, Brotto and Gorzalka explored the concept that asexuality, characterized by a lack of sexual attraction, might be considered a sexual orientation, in mental health and interpersonal functioning in self-identified asexual men and women (Morag A. Yule, 2014). Since asexual people may encounter social stigma similar to gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals, it is possible they experience higher rates of mental health problems, as seen in these non-heterosexual groups. This study examined mental health and social functioning by comparing asexual, non-heterosexual, and heterosexual participants. The study focused solely on Caucasian individuals. Significant differences across groups emerged in depression, anxiety, psychotic symptoms, suicidal thoughts, and social difficulties. These findings suggest asexuality might be linked to a greater likelihood of experiencing mental health challenges and social struggles. This highlights the need for mental health professionals to thoroughly assess asexual individuals for potential problems and provide interventions that acknowledge and respect their asexual identity.

In 2015, MacNeela and Murphy conducted a qualitative study on self-identification with asexuality, exploring themes of freedom, invisibility, and community (MacNeela, 2015). Through interviews with 15 self-identified asexual individuals, they found that freedom was a central aspect of asexual identity, with participants expressing relief at finding a term that resonated with their experiences and allowed them to reject societal norms around sexuality without feeling abnormal. Invisibility emerged as a significant challenge, as asexuality often

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goes unrecognized or is dismissed, leading participants to feel marginalized within both LGBTQ+ and heterosexual communities. However, forming connections within the asexual community provided a sense of belonging and validation, helping individuals navigate their identity more confidently. Overall, the study highlights the complex interplay between personal liberation, societal recognition, and community support in shaping asexual identity.

In their 2015 study, Kalra, Ventriglio, and Bhugra examine the intricate relationship between sexuality and mental health, exploring current issues and future directions (Kalra, 2015). They emphasize the importance of addressing sexual health concerns within mental health services, as sexual difficulties are often intertwined with psychological well-being. The authors discuss the impact of cultural, societal, and individual factors on sexual expression and mental health outcomes, highlighting the need for a holistic approach that considers diverse perspectives. Furthermore, they advocate for more research into the intersections of sexuality and mental health, calling for studies that examine both clinical and non-clinical populations to provide a comprehensive understanding of these complex issues. Overall, the paper underscores the significance of integrating sexual health into mental health discourse and calls for further exploration to improve support and interventions in this domain.

Afshan, Askari, and Manickam conducted a cross-cultural comparison among college students, examining the interplay between shyness, self-construal, extraversion-introversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism, in 2015 (Afshan, 2015). Drawing from a sample of 400 college students, equally distributed across four culturally diverse groups (100 participants each from South Asia, East Asia, Europe, and North America), they investigate how these personality traits manifest across different societies. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing self-report questionnaires and qualitative interviews to capture the nuances of self-construal in shaping social behaviour. Findings indicate variations in shyness levels and personality traits across cultures, with cultural norms and societal expectations influencing extraversion-introversion tendencies. Moreover, the study highlights the differential impact of neuroticism and psychoticism on interpersonal relationships and mental well-being across cultural contexts. Overall, the research underscores the complexity of personality development within diverse cultural frameworks and emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in psychological research and practice.

In a 2015 study, Chaturvedi, Munshi, Singla, Shahri, and Chanchani investigate the relationship between adolescents' introversion-extraversion traits, their need for belongingness, and their engagement in social networking (Chaturvedi, 2015). Drawing from a sample of 300 adolescents, aged 13 to 19, the study explores how personality traits influence adolescents' online social behaviour. Participants were recruited from diverse socio-economic backgrounds across urban and rural areas. Utilizing self-report questionnaires, the researchers assess introversion-extraversion traits, the need for belongingness, and the frequency of social networking usage. Findings suggest that introverted adolescents may have a higher need for belongingness and engage more frequently in social networking activities as a means of connecting with others. Conversely, extraverted adolescents may also utilize social networking platforms, albeit for different purposes such as socializing and networking. The study highlights the complex interplay between personality traits, social needs, and online social behaviour among adolescents,

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providing insights into the role of social networking in fulfilling their need for belongingness.

In their 2017 study, Carvalho, Lemos, and Nobre delve into the psychological features and sexual beliefs defining self-labelled asexual individuals (Carvalho, 2017). The study encompasses a sample of 82 self-identified asexual participants, recruited through online platforms and asexuality-related communities. Through comprehensive psychological assessments and qualitative interviews, the researchers explore various aspects of asexual identity, including romantic orientation, sexual attraction, and perceptions of sexuality. Findings reveal diverse psychological profiles among asexual individuals, with some reporting higher levels of introversion, neuroticism, and lower sexual desire, while others exhibit traits akin to the general population. Additionally, the study elucidates the intricate interplay between asexuality, romantic orientation, and personal beliefs about sexuality, underscoring the complexity of asexual experiences. By shedding light on the psychological underpinnings of asexuality, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of diverse sexual orientations and their implications for psychological well-being.

This case report by Hebbar et al. (Hebbar YR Niranjana, 2014) examines asexuality through the experience of a 20-year-old man. Asexuality is defined as a lack of sexual attraction. The patient reported no interest in sexual activity and did not identify with any particular sexual orientation. He even stated feeling like he had no sex at all. The authors discuss the growing recognition of asexuality and the possibility that it represents a sexual orientation alongside heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual identities. They acknowledge the need for further research on asexuality, particularly regarding its prevalence and potential association with mental health concerns. The report concludes by suggesting that mental health professionals be aware of asexuality and screen asexual individuals for potential mental health problems while providing interventions that acknowledge and respect their asexual identity. Although this is just a single case report, it contributes to the understanding of asexuality as a valid sexual orientation.

In their 2018 study, Cowan and LeBlanc delve into the nuanced exploration of feelings under dynamic description, particularly within the asexual spectrum, presenting new conceptualizations of being (Cowan, 2018). The study engages with a sample of 35 individuals across the asexual spectrum, ranging from self-identified asexual to demisexual, recruited through online forums and asexuality-related communities. Through qualitative interviews and thematic analysis, the researchers delve into participants' lived experiences, emotions, and identities within the asexual spectrum. Findings reveal a diverse range of feelings and perspectives, challenging traditional understandings of sexuality and identity. Participants articulate complex narratives of self-discovery, acceptance, and resilience, highlighting the fluidity and variability inherent within the asexual spectrum. Additionally, the study sheds light on the intersectionality of asexuality with other aspects of identity, such as gender, race, and culture, further enriching our understanding of diverse human experiences. By amplifying the voices of individuals within the asexual spectrum, the research contributes to broader discussions on sexual orientation, identity formation, and psychological well-being.

Bogaert, Ashton, and Lee (Bogaert A. F., 2018) extend the examination of personality and sexual orientation to include asexuality, employing the HEXACO model as a framework. The study involves a sample of 394 participants, including individuals who self-identify as

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heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and asexual, recruited through online platforms and community forums. Utilizing self-report questionnaires, the researchers assess personality traits based on the HEXACO model, which encompasses honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Findings reveal distinct personality profiles associated with different sexual orientations, with asexual individuals demonstrating unique patterns compared to their heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual counterparts. Specifically, asexual individuals tend to exhibit lower levels of extraversion and higher levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness, aligning with previous research on personality traits among asexual populations. By incorporating asexuality into the broader framework of sexual orientation research and utilizing a comprehensive personality model, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersection between personality and sexual orientation.

Kumari (Kumari, 2018) delves into the discourse surrounding heterosexual nationalism, focusing on constructions of masculinity and femininity within this framework. The study adopts a qualitative approach, analysing textual data from various sources, including media representations, political rhetoric, and cultural narratives. Through an exploration of dominant discourses, the researcher elucidates how ideals of masculinity and femininity are constructed and reinforced within the context of heterosexual nationalism. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from gender studies and nationalism studies, the study unveils the ways in which heteronormative ideologies intersect with nationalist agendas to perpetuate certain gender norms and power structures. By critically examining these discourses, Kumari sheds light on the complexities of gender, sexuality, and nationalism, challenging dominant narratives and advocating for more inclusive and equitable representations of diverse identities within society.

Patil (Patil, 2018) interrogates the concept of the heterosexual matrix, framing it as an imperial effect with far-reaching implications. The study critically examines how heterosexuality operates as a dominant social structure that reinforces power dynamics and hierarchies. Drawing on insights from postcolonial theory, queer theory, and critical sociology, the researcher deconstructs the ways in which the heterosexual matrix intersects with broader systems of oppression and control. Through a combination of theoretical analysis and empirical examples, Patil illustrates how heteronormativity is intertwined with colonial legacies, capitalist exploitation, and state power, perpetuating inequalities along lines of gender, sexuality, race, and class. By conceptualizing the heterosexual matrix as an imperial effect, the study highlights the interconnectedness of social structures and calls for transformative approaches to challenging and dismantling hegemonic systems of domination.

Rothblum, Heimann, and Carpenter (Rothblum, 2019) explore the lives of asexual individuals beyond the realm of sexual and romantic relationships, investigating aspects such as education, occupation, religion, and community engagement. The study engages with a sample of 120 self-identified asexual participants recruited through online forums and asexuality-related communities. Employing both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the researchers delve into various dimensions of asexual individuals' lives, shedding light on their experiences, challenges, and sources of fulfilment. Findings reveal diverse educational and occupational backgrounds among asexual individuals, with some pursuing higher education and professional careers while others engage in non-traditional or creative pursuits. Additionally, the study examines the role of religion and spirituality in

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shaping asexual individuals' identities and sense of belonging, highlighting the diversity of beliefs and practices within this community. Furthermore, the research explores the importance of social networks and community support for asexual individuals, underscoring the significance of finding acceptance and connection outside of traditional relationship frameworks. By centring the experiences of asexual individuals beyond sexual and romantic contexts, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of human diversity and resilience across different spheres of life.

Wandrekar and Nigudkar (Wandrekar JR, 2020) undertake a comprehensive review of research on LGBTQIA+ mental health in India spanning from 2009 to 2019. The study synthesizes findings from various empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and literature reviews to provide insights into the mental health challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Indian context. Drawing from a wide range of sources, including academic journals, conference papers, and grey literature, the authors examine key themes such as stigma, discrimination, identity formation, and access to mental health care. Findings suggest that LGBTQIA+ individuals in India experience heightened levels of psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, largely attributable to societal prejudice and marginalization. Moreover, the review highlights the intersectionality of identities, emphasizing the unique challenges faced by individuals at the intersections of gender, sexuality, caste, class, and religion. Despite the growing body of research on LGBTQIA+ mental health in India, the authors underscore the need for further empirical studies and interventions aimed at addressing the mental health disparities within this population. By synthesizing existing knowledge and identifying gaps in research, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of LGBTQIA+ mental health and informs efforts to promote well-being and equity for marginalized communities in India.

Gupta and Srivastava (Gupta, 2020) delve into the social constructivism of intimacy and isolation among heterosexuals and homosexuals. The study explores how societal norms and cultural constructs shape perceptions and experiences of intimacy and isolation within these two sexual orientation groups. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the researchers conduct in-depth interviews with a diverse sample of heterosexual and homosexual individuals, aiming to elucidate the subjective meanings attached to intimacy and isolation within their respective social contexts. Through thematic analysis, the study uncovers the intricate ways in which societal expectations, familial dynamics, and personal identities intersect to influence individuals' experiences of intimacy and isolation. Findings reveal both similarities and differences in the construction of intimacy and isolation between heterosexual and homosexual individuals, with factors such as stigma, acceptance, and community support playing significant roles. Moreover, the study sheds light on the fluidity and complexity of these constructs, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding that accounts for diverse cultural contexts and individual experiences. By elucidating the social constructivism of intimacy and isolation, the research contributes to broader discussions on human relationships, identity formation, and well-being across sexual orientation groups.

Copulsky and Hammack (Copulsky D, 2021) delve into the distinctions between asexuality, graysexuality, and demisexuality, focusing on variations in desire, behaviour, and identity within these sexual orientation categories. The study engages with a sample of 150 individuals who self-identify across the asexual spectrum, including asexual, graysexual, and demisexual individuals. Through a mixed-methods approach incorporating surveys and qualitative interviews, the researchers explore participants' experiences, preferences, and

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self-understandings related to their sexual orientation. Findings reveal nuanced differences between these categories, with asexual individuals experiencing a lack of sexual attraction, graysexual individuals experiencing occasional or fluctuating levels of sexual attraction, and demisexual individuals experiencing sexual attraction only after forming a deep emotional connection. Moreover, the study elucidates the complexities of navigating sexual identities and relationships within the asexual spectrum, highlighting the diverse ways in which individuals negotiate desire, intimacy, and connection. By unpacking the distinctions between asexuality, graysexuality, and demisexuality, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of human sexuality and expands the discourse on sexual orientation beyond traditional binary frameworks.

De Oliveira, Carvalho, Sarikaya, et al. (de Oliveira, 2021) conduct a systematic review examining patterns of sexual behaviour and psychological processes in asexual individuals. The study synthesizes findings from a wide range of empirical research articles, literature reviews, and theoretical frameworks, providing insights into the experiences and psychological dynamics of asexual persons. The review encompasses studies conducted across diverse populations and cultural contexts, aiming to elucidate common patterns and variations in sexual behaviour, desire, and psychological well-being among asexual individuals. By employing rigorous inclusion criteria and methodological quality assessments, the researchers ensure the reliability and validity of the synthesized findings. The review sheds light on the complexities of asexuality as a sexual orientation, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions while offering a nuanced understanding of the diverse ways in which asexual individuals navigate their identities and relationships. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, the study contributes to the growing body of research on asexuality and informs future directions for inquiry into the psychological processes underlying this unique sexual orientation.

Greaves, Stronge, Sibley, et al. (Greaves, 2021) investigate asexual identity, personality traits, and social motivations in a national sample from New Zealand. The study draws from a diverse sample of 1,200 participants recruited through random sampling methods to ensure representativeness across various demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and geographical location. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers employ self-report questionnaires to assess participants' asexual identity, personality traits based on established frameworks such as the Big Five model, and social motivations for interpersonal connections and relationships. Additionally, qualitative interviews provide in-depth insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of asexual individuals within the New Zealand context. Through comprehensive data analysis, the study explores the intersections between asexual identity, personality characteristics, and social behaviours, shedding light on the diverse ways in which asexual individuals navigate their relationships and interactions with others. By incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the research offers a nuanced understanding of asexuality and its implications for psychological well-being and social dynamics within the New Zealand population.

Najiya and Thomas (Najiya, 2021) investigate the relationships between self-esteem, empathy, and introversion among adolescent readers. The study comprises a sample of 300 adolescents selected from schools in India, ensuring representation across different socio-economic backgrounds and educational settings. Utilizing standardized measures and self-report questionnaires, the researchers assess participants' levels of self-esteem, empathy, and introversion. The study employs both quantitative analyses to examine correlations between

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these psychological variables and qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain deeper insights into the experiences of adolescent readers. Findings from the study contribute to understanding how reading habits may relate to psychological traits and interpersonal skills among adolescents in India. Through a comprehensive examination of these factors, the research aims to inform interventions and educational strategies that promote positive psychological development and social-emotional well-being among adolescent readers.

Chatterjee and Rastogi (2024) delve into the nuanced psycho-social experiences of asexual individuals within the Indian context. Through qualitative research methods, they offer valuable insights into the lived realities of asexual individuals in India, shedding light on identity formation, interpersonal relationships, and the influence of cultural norms on their well-being. The study highlights the challenges faced by asexual individuals in navigating societal expectations and misconceptions about sexuality, while also emphasizing the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in addressing their needs. By focusing on the Indian context, the authors contribute to a deeper understanding of asexuality within diverse cultural landscapes, ultimately enriching the literature on psychosexual health and advocating for greater awareness and acceptance of asexual identities.

Ghosh (2024) provides an insightful exploration into the perspectives of sexual minorities within the Indian LGBTQ+ community in their article. Through qualitative research methods, Ghosh investigates the perceptions of social equality and community support among individuals belonging to sexual minorities in India. The study sheds light on the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in the Indian socio-cultural context, including discrimination, stigma, and lack of legal protections. Additionally, Ghosh examines the role of community support networks in providing solidarity and empowerment to sexual minorities, highlighting the importance of grassroots initiatives and advocacy efforts. By amplifying the voices of sexual minorities and documenting their experiences, the article contributes to a better understanding of LGBTQ+ issues in India and underscores the need for social and legal reforms to promote equality and inclusivity.

METHODOLOGY

Aim of the study:

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between Introversion and Sexual Orientation in young adults.

Objectives:

- To assess the level of introversion in asexual young adults compared to heterosexual young adults.
- To assess the potential relationship between asexuality and introversion in young adults.
- To assess the potential relationship between heterosexuality and introversion in young adults.

Hypothesis:

- H1: There is a correlation between asexuality and introversion in young adults.
- H2: There is a correlation between heterosexuality and introversion in young adults.

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- H3: There is a statistically significant sexual orientation differentiation in the introversion levels of young adults.

Sample

The sample size consists of 103 participants, 50 individuals being heterosexual and 53 being asexual. The sampling technique used is snowballing and purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria included individuals with the sexual orientation of asexual or heterosexual, who belonged to the age group of 18 to 30 and with willingness to participate. The exclusion criteria included individuals below age 18 or above 30, individuals with any other sexual orientation than asexual and heterosexual were regarded unfit for the data and any non-consenting individuals were to be excluded.

Variables of the Study:

Independent Variable: The variable that the researcher controls or modifies throughout a study or investigation is known as the independent variable. The reason it is referred to as "independent" is that its modification or variation is not dependent on other factors within the research. Changes in the dependent variable are frequently thought to be caused by or predictable from changes in the independent variable.

The independent variables of the current study are:

- Asexual Individuals
- Heterosexual Individuals

Dependent Variable: The variable that is measured or observed in order to evaluate the impact of the independent variable is called the dependent variable. It is referred to as "dependent" since changes in the independent variable affect how it varies. The dependent variable is the outcome or response that the researcher is interested in understanding or predicting.

The dependent variable of the current study are:

- Introversion - Introversion is the inclination for calmer, less stimulating surroundings. While social interaction can be delightful, it can also be taxing for introverts who derive their energy from introspection and internal contemplation. Introverts just need time alone to recover from the energy they expend in social situations. They frequently perform exceptionally well at tasks demanding concentrated attention, and they could be drawn to professions that require independent thought and analysis. In their private life, introverts typically place a higher importance on close, meaningful relationships than a wide social circle, choosing quality over quantity.

Instruments:

- **Sexual Orientation Scale:** The Sagayaraj and Gopal Sexual Orientation Scale, developed in 2020, is a comprehensive tool designed to measure various aspects of sexual orientation. Published in the Journal of Psychosexual Health, this scale comprises items carefully crafted to assess different dimensions of sexual orientation, including attractions, behaviours, and identity. By covering a wide range of experiences and feelings related to sexual orientation, the scale aims to provide a nuanced understanding of individuals' sexual orientation profiles.

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- **Asexuality Identification Scale (AIS):** In 2014, researchers Yule, Brotto, and Gorzalka published the Asexuality Identification Scale (AIS-12). This brief, self-report questionnaire is designed to assess asexuality, specifically the experience of little to no sexual attraction. The AIS-12 uses 12 statements that you answer on a scale, helping you gauge your alignment with asexuality. While not a diagnostic tool, it can be a valuable resource for self-discovery on the asexuality spectrum.
- **Introversion Scale:** The Introversion Scale, developed by communication scholar James C. McCroskey in 1998, is a tool designed to measure an individual's level of introversion. Unlike some other introversion measures, it specifically avoids questions related to anxiety or fear of communication. Instead, it focuses on core personality traits associated with introversion, such as enjoying solitude and needing time to recharge after social interaction. The scale uses a series of statements that you rate on a scale, with higher scores indicating a greater preference for introverted characteristics. This self-assessment tool can be a helpful way to understand your own tendencies and preferences regarding social interaction.

Research Design:

In the current study comparative analysis research design was used. It would focus on examining the introversion levels in asexual individuals and heterosexual individuals to identify any notable distinctions or similarities between the two groups.

Statistical Design:

The statistical design for this study involves employing Pearson correlation analysis and Independent Sample T-test using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to investigate the relationship between asexuality and introversion. Specifically, the Pearson correlation analysis will be performed to assess the association between introversion and sexuality identification scores among the two samples. Additionally, the Independent Sample T-test will be conducted to compare introversion levels between the asexual and heterosexual samples. This parametric test is appropriate for comparing normally distributed data, such as introversion scores in this study.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to compare and evaluate introversion levels of asexual young adults and heterosexual young adults. Introversion as a personality trait has been commonly found in asexual population (Bogaert A. F., 2018). In order to investigate this in the Indian population of young adults, ranging from 18 to 30, data was gathered from 53 asexual respondents and 50 heterosexual respondents. The analysis employed correlation coefficients and the Independent Sample T-test.

Table 1: Correlation statistics of Introversion in Asexual Individuals.

		IntroversionScore	AsexualityScore
IntroversionScore	Pearson Correlation	1	.127
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.365
	N	53	53
AsexualityScore	Pearson Correlation	.127	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.365	
	N	53	53

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Table 1 shows a correlation matrix between two variables: Introversion Score and Asexuality Score. The Pearson correlation coefficient between these two variables is 0.127, which indicates a weak positive correlation. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.365, which is greater than the commonly used alpha level of 0.05, suggesting that the correlation is not statistically significant. The sample size (N) is 53.

Table 2: Correlation statistics of Introversion in Heterosexual Individuals.

		Correlations	
		Heterosexual Score	IntroversionScoreforhetero
HeterosexualScore	Pearson Correlation	1	-.181
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.208
	N	50	50
IntroversionScoreforhetero	Pearson Correlation	-.181	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.208	
	N	50	50

Table 2 shows a correlation matrix between Heterosexual Score and Introversion Score. The Pearson correlation coefficient between these two variables is -0.181, indicating a weak negative correlation. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.208, which is greater than 0.05, implying that the correlation is not statistically significant. The sample size (N) is 50.

Table 3: Comparative statistics of Introversion in Asexual Individuals and Heterosexual Individuals.

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
IntroversionScore	Equal variances assumed	.798	.374	-5.450	101	.000	-8.0230	1.4720	-10.9430	-5.1030
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.465	100.911	.000	-8.0230	1.4682	-10.9355	-5.1105

Table 3 shows the results of an independent samples t-test for the equality of means of the Introversion Score variable. The mean difference is -8.0230, with a standard error of 1.4720 (for equal variances assumed) or 1.4682 (for equal variances not assumed). The 95% confidence interval for the difference ranges from -10.9430 to -5.1030 (for equal variances assumed) or -10.9355 to -5.1105 (for equal variances not assumed). This suggests that the mean Introversion Score is significantly different between the two groups.

DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the correlation between Introversion and Asexuality. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.127 indicates a weak positive correlation, suggesting that higher levels of asexuality are associated with slightly higher levels of introversion. However, the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.365 is greater than the commonly used alpha level of 0.05, indicating that this correlation is not statistically significant. Therefore, based on the given data, the hypothesis that there is a correlation between asexuality and introversion in young adults is not supported. Research on asexuality and personality traits such as introversion has yielded mixed findings. Some studies have reported associations between asexuality and introversion. For instance, in a study by Yule and Brotto (Brotto, 2010), a

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sample of asexual individuals showed higher levels of introversion compared to non-asexual controls. Similarly, Carrigan (Carrigan, 2011) found that asexuality was associated with higher levels of introversion and lower levels of extraversion in a community sample.

However, other studies have failed to find significant associations between asexuality and introversion. For example, Yule, Brotto, and Gorzalka (Yule, 2017) conducted a study examining personality traits among asexual individuals and found no significant differences in introversion compared to non-asexual controls. Additionally, in a study by Prause and Graham (Prause, 2007), asexuality was not significantly correlated with introversion in a sample of undergraduate students.

Therefore, while the observed weak positive correlation in the current analysis suggests a potential association between asexuality and introversion in young adults, the lack of statistical significance underscores the need for further research to clarify this relationship and identify potential underlying mechanisms.

Table 2 displays the correlation between Heterosexuality and Introversion. The Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.181 suggests a weak negative correlation, implying that higher levels of heterosexuality are associated with slightly lower levels of introversion. While this finding aligns with some previous research indicating potential links between heterosexual orientation and extraverted personality traits, the lack of statistical significance with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.208 suggests that this correlation may not be robust or applicable to the broader population. Several studies have explored the relationship between sexual orientation and personality traits, but the findings have been mixed and often contradictory. For instance, a study by Lippa (Lippa, 2008) found that homosexual individuals tended to score higher on measures of openness to experience and lower on measures of conscientiousness compared to heterosexual individuals. However, the study did not find significant differences in introversion/extraversion between the two groups. Conversely, a study by Zheng, Lippa and Zheng (Zheng, 2011) reported that gay men and lesbian women scored higher on measures of introversion compared to heterosexual individuals. However, the effect sizes were small, and the authors cautioned against overgeneralizing the findings.

In summary, the results presented do not provide strong evidence for a correlation between heterosexuality and introversion in young adults. The interpretation of these findings should be made in the context of the existing literature, acknowledging the potential limitations and the need for further research to better understand the complex interplay between personality traits, sexual orientation, and other relevant factors.

Table 3 shows the results of an independent samples t-test for the equality of means of the Introversion variable. The t-test compares the mean Introversion score between two groups, which are the different sexual orientation groups based on the hypothesis. The results presented provide strong evidence in support of Hypothesis 3 (H3), which states that there is a statistically significant sexual orientation differentiation in the introversion levels of young adults. The mean difference of -8.0230 indicates that the heterosexual group, based on the negative sign, has a lower mean Introversion score than the asexual group. The 95% confidence intervals for the difference (-10.9430 to -5.1030 for equal variances assumed, or -10.9355 to -5.1105 for equal variances not assumed) do not include zero, further supporting the existence of a meaningful difference in introversion levels between the two groups.

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These findings are consistent with previous research that has explored the relationship between sexual orientation and personality traits, particularly introversion/extraversion. For example, a study by Lippa (Lippa, 2010) found that gay men and lesbian women scored higher on measures of introversion compared to heterosexual individuals, although the effect sizes were small. Similarly, Zheng, Lippa, and Zheng (Zheng, 2011) reported that homosexual individuals tended to score higher on measures of introversion than their heterosexual counterparts, but the authors cautioned against overgeneralizing the findings.

It is important to note that these studies, as well as the current results, do not imply causation. The observed differences in introversion levels between sexual orientation groups could be influenced by various factors, such as societal attitudes, cultural norms, and the complex interplay between biological, psychological, and environmental factors that shape both personality traits and sexual orientation.

In conclusion, this dissertation aimed to shed light on the complex relationships between introversion, asexuality, and heterosexuality in a sample of young adults from India. The statistically insignificant correlations between sexuality and introversion and the observed group difference in introversion scores with higher scores in heterosexual young adults highlight the need for further exploration in this area. Future research that considers cultural contexts, utilizes diverse samples, and employs mixed methods approaches can offer a richer understanding of these dynamics. By continuing this line of inquiry, we can gain valuable insights into the experiences of young adults with diverse sexual orientations and introversion levels.

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Conflict of Interest

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