Exploring the Experiences and Perceptions of LGBTQIA+ University of

Adelaide Students in the Context of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement

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Abstract

The current progression of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement has seen mainstream society enter an era characterised by decreased stigmatisation, allowing queer people to explore and develop their sexuality and gender identity somewhat freely. University is a critical time for such identity development with the campus acting as a place of convergence for diverse individuals and as a microcosm that mirrors broader society. This study aimed to explore the experiences and perceptions of queer-identifying students at the University of Adelaide and identify relevant aspects and changes to the university environment that would increase their feelings of comfort and safety as queer people. Fifty-five participants completed an exploratory qualitative survey exploring these ideas. Reflexive thematic analysis, guided by a critical realist framework, was utilised to generate five themes from the data: *Deconstructing Heteronormativity*, *Markers of Safety and Acceptance*, *Identity Development, Well-Being, and Academic Achievement*, *Fostering a Sense of Community*, and *Resource Mobilisation*. As the treatment and consequential experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals have long reflected the broader societal context of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement, the results were interpreted through the lens of Social Movement Theory. Analysis indicated that the LGBTQIA+ experience at the University is multifaceted with some students praising the welcoming and accepting atmosphere while others noted a lack of opportunities and accessibility. Providing genuine, ongoing interventions to further support the LGBTQIA+ community on campus is essential in ensuring positive long-term well-being and outcomes for students.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of diploma in any University, and, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published except where due reference is made. I give permission for the digital version of this thesis to be made available on the web, via the University of Adelaide's digital thesis repository, the Library Search and through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the School to restrict access for a period of time.

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September 2023

Contributor Roles

ROLE	ROLE DESCRIPTION	STUDENT	SUPERVISOR
CONCEPTUALIZATION	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims.	X	X
METHODOLOGY	Development or design of methodology; creation of models.	X	
PROJECT ADMINISTRATION	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.	X	
SUPERVISION	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.		X
RESOURCES	Provision of study materials, laboratory samples, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.		X
SOFTWARE	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code.		X
INVESTIGATION	Conducting research - specifically performing experiments, or data/evidence collection.	X	
VALIDATION	Verification of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments.	X	
DATA CURATION	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later re-use.		X
FORMAL ANALYSIS	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyse or synthesise study data.	X	
VISUALIZATION	Visualization/data presentation of the results.	X	
WRITING – ORIGINAL DRAFT	Specifically writing the initial draft.	X	
WRITING – REVIEW & EDITING	Critical review, commentary or revision of original draft	X	X

Table 1. Student and supervisor contributions to this project.

Exploring the Experiences and Perceptions of LGBTQIA+ University of Adelaide

Students in the Context of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement

Society has entered what some are describing as a 'postgay' era characterised by decreased stigmatisation and the assimilation of the LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, plus)[1] community into mainstream society (Jones, 2021; Pham, 2020). Increased exposure of the queer community during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an influx of people exploring their queer identity and the subsequent hazards associated with being a member of a stigmatised group (Adelman et al., 2022; Palkki & Caldwell, 2018; Penfold, 2022; Seemiller & Grace, 2016). While the progression of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement has led to increased tolerance, as a minority group, the queer community is still marginalised in many parts of the world due to a myriad of socio-political and cultural factors (Coley & Das, 2020). These social and political changes can be understood through the lens of Social Movement Theory (SMT) (Melucci, 1989). SMT explores the aspects of social movements through the psychological impacts of collective identity and resource mobilisation (Melucci, 1989; Staggenborg, 2005; Garvey et al., 2017). The presence and promotion of these driving factors explain the nuances in the progression of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement across different social contexts.

The university years are widely considered a critical time for identity development and socialisation, often characterised as a time for independent learning and self-discovery (Formby, 2017; Garvey et al., 2017). In line with typical university students, Jones's (2021) US census study illustrated that the queer population has increased, with 15.9% of young adults between the ages of 18 and 23 identifying as LGBTQIA+. This period of self-exploration is often triggered through the campus acting as a place of convergence for

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[1]'LGBTQIA+' and 'queer' are two inclusive umbrella terms which capture the entire non-heterosexual and non-cisgender spectrums of identities (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2022; Rodgers, 2012). These terms will be utilised interchangeably throughout this paper.

individuals of different ages, cultures, social standings, and identities (Formby, 2017). University can be students' first exposure to queer people and can provoke individuals to question and explore their sexuality and gender identity (Ferfolja et al., 2020).

Previous studies have established that LGBTQIA+ students who report negative experiences during their studies risk adverse effects on their identity development, mental health, academic achievement, and social outcomes (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Garvey et al., 2017; Larcrombe et al., 2022; McCallum & McLaren, 2011; Stout & Wright, 2016; van Gijn-Grosvenor & Huisman, 2020; Waling & Roffee, 2018). As a marginalised minority, LGBTQIA+ individuals require further support and resources to combat these adverse effects (Waling & Roffee, 2018). Due to the evolving nature of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement, using SMT as a framework, the current study aims to identify and explore the facets of the queer experience in a university context.

The Outcomes of Institutional Initiatives on LGBTQIA+ Students

An indirect way institutions can affirm LGBTQIA+ identities is by ensuring the staff identify as an *ally* (See Appendix A for glossary of terminology). An *ally* for the LGBTQIA+ community is someone knowledgeable in the community who aims to confront internalised queerphobia and actively support the LGBTQIA+ community (Ratts et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2013). However, creating allies can be a difficult endeavour for institutions to undertake. Ally training requires time and human resources, as well as active participation to administer the training. If ally training is made compulsory, intolerant individuals may undertake the training purely as a job requirement, making the title disingenuous (Renn, 2020). However, optional ally training would only be beneficial for individuals willing to partake, meaning those who would benefit most from the training will not seek it (Renn, 2020).

One way institutions can support marginalised students is to provide a dedicated 'safe space.' *Safe spaces* are physical areas that are designed to provide minority groups with emotional and psychological safety; a place that is devoid of queerphobia and openly rejects cis and heteronormative expectations (Colliver & Duffus, 2022; Hartal, 2018; Nash, 2011; Wilbourn, 2013). However, safe spaces have become somewhat divisive as some scholars argue they promote further exclusion and segregation (Coley & Das, 2020; Milmine, 2020; Pascar et al., 2022). Wilbourn (2013) predicted safe spaces would not be a long-term sustainable solution for queer students in educational settings and research has since reflected this (Hartal, 2018; Witherup & Verrecchia, 2020).

Another initiative is the installation and normalisation of gender-neutral toilets. Gender-segregated toilets physically reinforce the gender binary, a cis-normative idea which is exclusionary to transgender and gender-diverse individuals and installing gender-neutral toilets is a clear way to show support (Colliver & Duffus, 2021; Francis et al., 2022; Sanders & Stryker, 2016). However, they are difficult to implement due to the construction requiring time and monetary resources (Francis et al., 2022). There are also policy barriers as, in Australia, the National Construction Code stipulates all educational institutes must have a certain number of male *and* female toilets (Francis et al., 2022). The need for gender-specific facilities is commonly viewed as a necessity for safety reasons and thus, the capacity for extra bathrooms being built is often lacks wider institutional support (Sanders & Stryker, 2016).

The Impacts of Campus Culture on LGBTQIA+ Well-being, Academic Performance, and Social Outcomes

Recent research on LGBTQIA+ students has focused more on the impacts of campus culture on students' long-term well-being, academic performance, and social outcomes. Socialising is a critical aspect of the identity development period which typically coincides with the university years, and the level of acceptance present within a university will impact

this (Ellis, 2009; Pham, 2020). If queer individuals feel safe to explore their identity in an

environment free of judgement and prejudice, they will likely elude harmful feelings of

shame and depression that regularly accompany identity suppression (Adelman et al., 2022;

Pham, 2020). Several studies have identified a 'sense of belonging,' from Maslow's

Hierarchy of Needs, as a strong protective factor and interventions that aim to prioritise it

result in positive mental health outcomes for LGBTQIA+ students (McCallum & McLaren,

2011; Stout & Wright, 2016; van Gijn-Grosvenor & Huisman, 2020). Evidence suggests

fostering an accepting university culture with a high level of visibility and solidarity is

important in ensuring positive life outcomes for queer students (Ellis, 2009; Garvey et al.,

2017; Vaccaro, 2012; Woodford et al., 2018).

Context for the Current Study

       While a growing area, the current research on the LGBTQIA+ university

experiences is limited. The LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement is a continually evolving

phenomenon which requires continual assessment and exploration, making many prior

studies no longer relevant to the current climate. The COVID-19 pandemic has bred a new

social environment focused on online interactions and the growing impacts of this period on

LGBTQIA+ university students have yet to be investigated (Pascar et al., 2022; Penfold,

2022). The current body of research is also largely located in North America, due to their

polarising LGBTQIA+ politics (Coley & Das, 2020).

       Prior literature based in Australian university settings has noted a lack of widespread

institutional support for LGBTQIA+ students, citing an underlying presence of heterosexism

on campus silencing queer students (Ferfolja et al., 2020; Francis et al., 2022; Larcombe et

al., 2022; van Gijn-Grosvenor, & Huisman, 2020; Waling & Roffee, 2018). However, no

studies of this nature have been conducted at a South Australian university despite the state's

progressive LGBTQIA+ history (Kirby & Hay, 1997). In 1975, South Australia became the

first Australian state to decriminalise homosexuality following the murder of University of Adelaide queer law lecturer Professor George Duncan in 1972 (Forrest et al., 2019; Kirby & Hay. 1997). Duncan's murder was branded a hate crime and the outpour of mourning and anger at the injustice led to Duncan's memory shaping Adelaide's LGBTQIA+ community into what it is today (Reeves, 2022). Following Duncan's murder, 'Gay Liberation' was formed at the University of Adelaide in 1974 which has since become the 'Pride Club,' making it one of the longest-running clubs at the University (Reeves, 2022). The current Pride Club occupies the 'Rainbow Room' on campus, a designated safe space for queer students dedicated to Duncan's memory. Considering the University's strong LGBTQIA+ history, there has yet to be a study that investigates queer student experiences or level of institutional support.

This growing need to accommodate LGBTQIA+ students has yet to be explored through the framework of SMT. Employing SMT in a university setting will give new insight into the progression of the social movement amongst a current sector of the Australian queer student population. The sociohistorical progression of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement has been documented and suggests there is a significantly rising queer population (Jones, 2021; Penfold, 2022). As SMT predicts, with group growth, collective identity and resource needs grow in tandem (Garvey et al., 2017). A study of this nature would explore whether there is a sense of collective identity present and if there are enough resources to meet the group's psychological needs within an educational context.

The localised nature of this study will provide the University with LGBTQIA+ student feedback, information the institution is likely unaware of, and the suggestions generated may help inform administrative decisions moving forward. In the broader context, these results will inform other Australian universities of how LGBTQIA+ students perceive and experience a similar campus environment and offer viable improvements (Flores, 2021).

Further, this study will give insight into the understudied LGBTQIA+ population in South Australia, providing a new understanding of the queer individuals that live, study, and socialise there.

The Current Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how LGBTQIA+ students at the University of Adelaide perceive and experience the campus environment and culture concerning their queer identity, through the lens of SMT. Three research aims were developed:

1. To identify the aspects of a university environment and culture that make LGBTQIA+ identifying people feel supported, accepted, and safe.

2. To explore the experiences of queer students at the University of Adelaide concerning their LGBTQIA+ identity.

3. To identify potential practical implications for the University of Adelaide to further support LGBTQIA+ students.

Method

Design

A qualitative survey methodology, guided by a critical realist paradigm, was utilised to explore the experiences of LGBTQIA+ University of Adelaide students. A critical realist approach allowed analysis to be guided through the acknowledgement that an objective, knowable reality exists, but people's perceptions and experiences of this reality are diverse (Cruickshank, 2012). This approach allowed for the exploring the impacts of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement on a university environment and, in turn, how these impacts affect current queer students' experiences and perceptions of that environment. This approach will provide a strong evidence base to explain institutional problems and provide recommendations for improvements (Archer, 1995).

A qualitative survey methodology was chosen as it allows participants to answer easily and openly, generating a rich, complex, and diverse range of responses (Braun & Clarke, 2013; 2019; Braun et al., 2021). Online qualitative surveys are advantageous for sensitive topics as they offer the highest level of anonymity for participants and encourage richness of data, particularly suiting research focused on the experiences of a marginalised minority (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Approval was obtained by the University of Adelaide's Human Research Ethics Subcommittee (#23/48).

Data and Data Collection

The survey for this study was hosted on Qualtrics and was comprised of seven demographic questions and five free-text questions (See Appendix B). Demographic data collected included age, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, level of current study, university faculty, and school of study. For sexuality and gender identity, a wide range of options and a write-in option were included to facilitate inclusiveness (Braun et al., 2021). The first two free-text questions enquired into what makes LGBTQIA+ individuals feel safe and

supported, and why these are important. The final three questions sought information about the participants - perceptions and experiences at the University of Adelaide, and outcomes they would like to see in future. The question included the instructions "Please describe in as much detail as possible" or "Please describe in as much detail as you are able to or feel comfortable to do so" to encourage detailed responses.

Participants were recruited utilising a myriad of recruitment pathways. Physical posters with study information and a scannable QR code for the survey were displayed on permitted noticeboards around the University of Adelaide campuses – North Terrace, Roseworthy, and Waite (See Appendix C). Convenience sampling from the University of Adelaide Pride Club who, upon administrator permission, assisted in the direct distribution of the poster to club members. First-year University of Adelaide psychology students were invited to participate via the internal online research participation system, SONA, for which students received course credit for completing the study. Further snowball sampling was also encouraged.

The survey was externally piloted through initial distribution to a single recruitment pathway, convenience sampling from the Pride Club ($n = 4$), to ensure all questions were being interpreted appropriately (Braun et al., 2021). Following the piloting phase, minor grammatical changes were made to clarify meaning and to encourage detailed responses. As these changes were only minimal, initial pilot responses were included in the final dataset. Recruitment ceased once responses slowed (no new responses collected over the course of a week), and the recruitment threshold minimum ($n = 40$) was surpassed.

Participants

Fifty-five LGBTQIA+ students participated in the study. Participants were aged 17-45 ($M = 20$, $SD = 4.23$). Noting participants could select multiple options, participants

identified their ethnicity as White/Caucasian (30), Asian or Pacific Islander (13), European (11), Mixed Ethnicity (2) ('Chinese-Indonesian' and 'white and south east asian'), 'Afghani' (1), and 'Indian' (1). Participants identified their sexuality as bisexual (27), queer (11) pansexual (8), asexual (6), gay (6), lesbian (5), aromantic (4), questioning/unsure (3), prefer not to say (3), demisexual (2), omnisexual (1) and 'demiromantic' (1). Further, participants identified their gender identity as cisgender woman (31), questioning/unsure (6), cisgender man (5), genderfluid (4), non-binary (4), prefer not to say (4), agender (2), bigender (1), genderqueer (1), transgender man (1), and transgender woman (1).

Participants identified their current level of study as undergraduate (49), honours (3), postgraduate (2), and masters (1). Noting participants could select multiple options, participants identified enrolment into the faculties of Health and Medical Sciences (34), Arts, Business, Law, and Economics (16), and Science and Engineering (12). As a write-in question, participants were asked what Schools they have studied in but due to a portion of participants misinterpreting the question, even after piloting alterations, all answers were disregarded and not included in the final analysis. As obtained from SONA course crediting information, thirty-seven of the participants were first-year students studying psychology.

Analysis

I analysed the data set utilising Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2013) reflexive thematic analysis. My analysis followed the six thematic steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and adopted an inductive approach to generate themes. Data familiarisation occurred in conjunction with data collection; this involved thoroughly reading and comparing responses as they were submitted and making relevant notes in a comprehensive audit trail. I initially coded the data by question to assist with familiarisation and to identify broad semantic codes, then conducted a second round of coding to identify broad coding patterns across the entire dataset (Braun et al., 2021). Upon reassessing and collapsing the generated codes, I collated

them into categories to produce a broad picture of the dataset. I then reevaluated and interpreted the categories to generate initial themes. The final generated themes were then named and defined in detail to ensure they conveyed the broader ideas, meaning and nuances within the dataset.

I maintained an audit trail and engaged in ongoing discussions with my supervisor throughout the analysis to refine my ideas, track research decisions, and ensure methodological rigour (Braun & Clark, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000). I referred to Tracy's (2010) eight criteria for qualitative research – worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence – throughout my analytic process to ensure a high quality of analysis.

Personal Reflexive Statement

I am a queer, white University of Adelaide student. I have insider experience as a student at the University who has studied and experienced the campus as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. My insider status had the potential to be a source of bias, and this was mitigated through regular reflection in my audit trail and ongoing discussions with my supervisor. My status allowed me to identify latent themes within the data set and observe nuances in the data that were alike and different to my personal experiences, allowing me to gain new insight into the multifaceted nature of the LGBTQIA+ university experience.

Results

Five themes were generated in response to this study's research aims. The first two themes, *Deconstructing Heteronormativity* and *Markers of Safety and Acceptance*, describe how normalisation and visibility provide feelings of comfort and security on campus. The third and fourth themes, *Identity Development, Well-Being, and Academic Achievement* and *Fostering a Sense of Community*, illustrate the importance of a positive university experience for LGBTQIA+ students due to the potentially adverse life outcomes invalidating and isolating university experiences can offer. The final theme, *Resource Mobilisation*, captures participants' advocation for genuine queer-focused initiatives and institutional support to benefit LGBTQIA+ students.

Participant extracts are identified by participant sexuality and gender identity, with multiple chosen identities being listed with a slash (e.g., Bisexual/Queer, Genderfluid). Minor spelling and grammatical errors were corrected for clarity. Added words and removed sections for readability are shown by square parentheses.

'Casual yet consistent reminders': Deconstructing Heteronormativity

Participants detailed their desire to be treated 'normally' but acknowledged that it is a complex thing which requires recognition of difference alongside acceptance and inclusivity within the mainstream, heteronormative culture of the university campus. Participants suggested this can be achieved through a range of ways, including the use of pronouns, LGBTQIA+ education among the broader university community, and gender-neutral toilets.

The LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement can be seen to underpin many of the participants' views about the University campus, perceiving it as predominately heteronormative with a queer minority. Echoing the movement, participants argue that to foster feelings of acceptance and support for LGBTQIA+ individuals, queer ideas and

practices must be normalised and assimilated into the mainstream. Advocating for queer normalisation, one participant described: "We should deconstruct heteronormativity and continue to allow space for the expression of the queer community" (Bisexual, Genderfluid).

Participants acknowledged that their desire to be treated 'normally' is complex. It requires recognition of difference in queer people's experiences and challenges yet must be balanced with the desire to be treated just like everybody else. One participant described this conflicting view:

> I would rather be treated as a person, holistically, as a cis-straight person would be treated, but there be subtle consideration to the distinct challenges that I face and needs I have as a marginalised and underrepresented minority. LGBTQIA+ advocacy doesn't have to be the bread and butter of everything and it be all we talk about. But: there is certainly room for conversation, representation and education. (Gay, Cisgender Man)

Considering the University, participants described how normalisation is important and should occur through subtle acknowledgement and representation, as an assimilation of sorts. Participants voice a preference for subtle assimilation to ensure their safety and the longstanding, positive impact queer normalisation will have on the broader campus culture. One participant described their view: "I think small and casual yet consistent reminders go a long way […] even if no one actually pays attention to them they're still there and subconsciously being seen by everyone." (Queer, Cisgender Woman). Small displays of normalisation in the form of regular use of inclusive language and visuals assist in normalising queerness for the broader community and help queer students feel more established on campus. Participants explained how subtle displays of support from the staff

and faculty can also be very powerful indicators of LGBTQIA+ inclusion and safety in the context of the University, which has flow-on effects on their learning. As one participant described:

> I think normalising small things like email signatures with pronouns and using gender neutral language will make a big difference because these instantly show that LGBTQIA+ identities are safe and supported. I know that for me personally, seeing these kind of things make me feel more comfortable in the classroom and interacting with the lecturer/tutor which then helps me to engage better in the class. I think other students would have a similar experience too. (Pansexual, Questioning/Unsure)

Participants further suggested general discussion and education focused on queer ideas and history would assist greatly in deconstructing heteronormativity on campus. One such participant suggested that, regarding the LGBTQIA+ community: "I think it is still a quite a 'taboo' topic for most people that are not within this community so maybe putting more education and learning into this area" (Bisexual, Cisgender Woman).

Participants also advocated for the implementation of gender-neutral bathroom facilities to assist in deconstructing heteronormative practices and normalising queer experiences and presence on campus. Participants described how for transgender and gender-diverse individuals, gendered toilets are important as they can be a significant trigger of gender dysphoria by reinforcing the gender binary and the associated gendered expectations. One such participant elaborated on this feeling:

> As a transgender man, unisex and gender inclusive toilets make me feel comfortable in a public space. As I am currently transitioning and in a place where I do not look 'fem' enough to use the female bathrooms but

also not 'masc' enough to use the mens, unisex toilets are a life saver.

(Bisexual, Transgender Man)

Regarding the University, there were mixed levels of knowledge regarding the campus' facilities among the participants. Some participants voiced that "the gender-neutral bathrooms have been immensely helpful in feeling comfortable at the school" (Bisexual, Transgender Man). Adversely, many participants voiced a lack of knowledge about any such facilities and instead offered gender-neutral bathrooms as a suggestion. One participant suggested that "the university should offer gender neutral toilets or educate students or advertise it is okay for transgender people to use the toilets they identify with/feel most comfortable with" (Pansexual, Cisgender Woman). Deconstructing heteronormativity and queer normalisation are multifaceted constructs which require acknowledgement and subtle assimilation.

'Visibility and solidarity mean a lot': Markers of Safety and Acceptance

As a historically marginalised minority, participants valued visual acceptance markers to help create a sense of immediate safety on campus. In conjunction, participants voiced a strong need for solidarity in the form of allyship and a vocalised rejection of intolerance on campus to strengthen that sense of security.

Participants noted how the historical discrimination of the LGBTQIA+ community still prevails. As a result, participants reported a need for clear, visual markers for the LGBTQIA+ community to act as a visual promise of safety when accessing an environment. As one participant summarised:

The alternative to being accepted and supported would be having people

in the LGBTQIA+ community possibly feeling unwelcome, and at worst,

fearful for their safety if there are signs they aren't accepted. Feeling

these ways would put an additional barrier in the way of these people

from accessing public and educational spaces. (Bisexual/Pansexual, Non-

binary)

For participants, visibility is a multifaceted concept that can be obvious or subtle.

When describing positive LGBTQIA+ environments, many participants noted feelings of

safety and acceptance at the sight of visual markers e.g., pride flags, pride posters, pride

stickers, pronoun pins, and rainbow symbolism. When asked what makes them feel

comfortable in a public space, one participant exemplified this:

Seeing visible support and inclusion of queer people in all spaces, not

just those dedicated to LGBTQIA+ support. Things like the rainbow

stickers you see on businesses that say "you are welcome here", having

pride flags stuck up around the place, or pronoun badges/pins for people.

(Pansexual, Questioning/Unsure)

Regarding the University, participants expressed that the campus' visual markers

have had a positive impact on their sense of acceptance and overall perception of the

University. As one participant described: "I feel extremely comfortable with who I am

because of all the clear LGBTQIA+ support posted around the university."

(Aromantic/Asexual, Non-binary).

Other participants amassed further comfort from more subtle markers only

LGBTQIA+ people could identify as they allude to a large queer presence. Participants

described these subtle markers as the presence of other queer people, discussion of queer

topics and relationships, and signifiers of queer culture. This concept of visual queer presence

was described by participants as "when the group environment is very expressive and has a

stereotypical 'queer aesthetic'" (Gay, Cisgender Man). Participants defined 'queer aesthetic'

as alternative and gender non-conforming; stylised markers that would be identifiable by members of the LGBTQIA+ community or allies knowledgeable in the culture. Participants described how witnessing the freedom of queer expression is a powerful and moving concept considering historic LGBTQIA+ oppression. As one such participant described: "I also like seeing LGBTQIA+ couples openly showing that they are partners as it makes me feel inspired and proud that we have come this far" (Bisexual, Genderfluid).

Visual solidarity at the University was also defined by participants as the presence of allies on campus. Participants noted the knowledge of solidarity from staff, faculty, and students as a positive that helps them feel safe and comfortable. One participant explained the allyship on campus: "There is an 'ally network' of staff who have gone out of their way to make it clear they are an ally - this is a nice thing to see, especially as some have 'Ally' signs on their office doors" (Bisexual/Queer, Genderfluid).

As a marginalised community, participants noted a clear stance against intolerance and discrimination as a significant marker of safety. As one participant explained: "Not tolerating intolerance is valuable in creating a better environment for everyone, as those who are queerphobic do not stop at hating one group" (Bisexual, Agender). Regarding the University, participants were conflicted on whether they felt safe and trusted that the institution would intervene if any acts of discrimination were to occur. Some participants noted feelings of trust: "I feel that instances of discrimination would be addressed if brought to the institution's attention" (Gay, Cisgender Man). However, other participants alluded to negative perceptions of the campus through suggesting the institution could improve upon advertising a stance against intolerance. As one such participant explained: "Accessible interventions for cases of homophobia or transphobia on campus which would improve the feeling of security" (Gay, Cisgender Man).

Glaring or subtle, visual markers of acceptance and rejection of intolerance foster a sense of queer presence and safety for queer students. For the LGBTQIA+ community, participants strongly articulated that "visibility and solidarity mean a lot, even in subtle gestures" (Asexual/Lesbian/Queer, Cisgender Woman).

'A basic human right': Identity Development, Well-Being, and Academic Achievement

Participants described how university coincides with an important time for self-discovery and identity suppression during this period is harmful to queer people, leading to poor well-being, mental health, and academic outcomes. Considering these hazards, participants argued the University is responsible for fostering success for LGBTQIA+ students by creating an accepting and judgement-free environment.

In line with the research (Ferfolja et al., 2020; Fine, 2012; Wilbourn, 2013), participants reported how campus interaction can be an individual's first exposure to the LGBTQIA+ community and trigger identity questioning. Participants characterised this period of self-discovery as one of uncertainty and confrontation that the University should help alleviate the stress of. One participant described the University's role in this process:

> The university is meant to be a space of critical thought and "seeking light". For a lot of people, this may be the first time they can be themselves and meet like-minded peers. If the space feels accepting, the students (and also staff) will feel like they are allowed to exist as their authentic selves. (Bisexual, Cis-Gendered Woman)

Participants reported mixed experiences regarding their sense of safety and acceptance at the University. While some participants described the campus as a safe place where they feel free to express themselves, others reported feeling unsafe and unable to express themselves fully. Many undergraduate participants described the campus positively

as a place that exudes a "non-judgemental aroma" (Queer, Cisgender Woman) where "people appear to be free and open to express themselves" (Bisexual, Cisgender Woman). Adversely, an honours student spoke on their lack of safety at the University, stating: "I do not feel psychologically or physically safe to be who I am on campus, […] I paint my nails on Friday night and then rush to remove the polish on Monday morning before class" (Gay, Cisgender Man). Such contrasting experiences speak to the fact that the campus is occupied by a range of diverse individuals and groups and that the queer experience is unique for everyone.

Echoing the sentiment of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement, participants described the ability to express themselves as one of equal opportunity, defining it as 'a basic human right,' and further asserting the importance of prioritising safety in an educational context. As one participant explained:

> It is extremely important that myself and other LGBTQIA+ identifying individuals feel accepted, supported, and safe in public and educational spaces because at the end of the day, feeling safe, accepted, and supported is the basics and the bare minimum of any human needs and everyone deserves that feeling of acceptance. in educational institutions, workplaces and in general in the community, feeling safe is a basic human right. (Bisexual, Questioning/Unsure)

This stage of identity development is a fundamental aspect of adulthood and identity suppression during this period is associated with adverse life outcomes for LGBTQIA+ individuals (Eisenberg et al., 2013; McCallum & McLaren, 2011). Participants articulated this knowledge: "Gender and sexuality for many queer people is an inherent part of their identity, [and] when in places that don't actively support LGBTQ+ people, many queer

people feel the need to suppress their identity, which is ultimately harmful" (Lesbian,

Cisgender Woman).

One such outcome is poor mental health, which has long been associated with the

historical discrimination and exclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community and this hazard was

acknowledged by participants (Larcombe et al., 2022; McCallum & McLaren, 2011). As one

participant described: "Being excluded from educational spaces fosters feelings of

invalidation and isolation" (Pansexual, Questioning/Unsure). Participants voiced that the

University is responsible for helping safeguard LGBTQIA+ students' mental health as an

educational space that promotes self-discovery. One participant even suggested the

University should help by providing "tips on self-acceptance, managing anxiety & negative

emotions, opinions of others and improving mental health" (Pansexual, Cisgender Woman).

Participants described how a lack of safety and acceptance can result in poor

academic outcomes due to a subsequent decline in motivation and self-confidence.

Considering the University as an academic institution, participants argued that aiding

academic success through cultivating a safe and accepting atmosphere should be a high

priority. As one such participant described:

> If someone isn't able to feel accepted or supported in an educational
>
> setting it will be extremely difficult to feel safe enough to ask for help.
>
> Which will no doubt lead to impacted grades and self-confidence from an
>
> educational perspective (Queer, Cis-Gendered Woman).

University support and encouragement with identity development is essential as

participants note that "without [feeling accepted, safe, and supported] you can't openly be

yourself and thus be happy and comfortable and achieve your full potential as a student"

(Bisexual, Cis-Gendered Woman). Queer students described how the University is

responsible for ensuring all students experience the right and freedom to express their identity in a safe and supportive environment to encourage prosperous life outcomes for students.

'Becoming supports for one another': Fostering a Sense of Community

University is a critical period of socialisation and participants view it as a period to form connections and develop a sense of community. However, individual differences and faculty cultures have acted as barriers to this socialisation and participants desire further queer-focused social opportunities to mitigate these challenges.

The LGBTQIA+ community is exactly that, a community of individuals linked through a collective identity, culture, and marginalised status who often desire to form connections within the community on account of their similar outlooks and experiences (Gates, 2012). Participants described a sense of comfort when interacting with other queer people, stemming from the feeling of alliance and lack of prejudice the community provides. As one participant described:

> I have found it easier to relate to LGBTQ+ students, as we have a sense of shared comradery, and typically we share similar outlooks on life. It's always comforting to know someone is in the same community as you, even if you don't have anything in common. (Bisexual/Queer, Cisgender Woman)

Participants lacking this sense of community also described negative experiences during their studies. Many participants cited individual differences such as culture, religion, and age having acted as barriers to their queer socialisation. Participants described how the LGBTQIA+ community's status as a marginalised minority, especially within certain cultures and generations, makes these barriers more challenging to conquer. One participant detailed their experience with their international friends at the University:

They brought their homophobic and transphobic views into uni and its

hard to discuss anything about the topic with it in fear of being discovered

and shunned for it. It's made me kind of anxious and depressed about it,

suddenly faced with the prospect that these 'friends' I've made isn't as great

as I thought they were. And having to completely start from scratch and

find more accepting friends.

(Aromantic/Asexual/Demisexual/Omnisexual/Queer, Genderfluid/Non-

binary)

Further, another participant explained how generational differences have also acted

as a barrier to fostering a sense of community, describing: "As I am older I feel a bit left out

[…] I am finding it hard to make connections with other queer people in my age group"

(Queer, Genderfluid). These participants described how their struggle with queer socialisation

has led to them feeling isolated and helpless.

Another barrier mentioned were the stark differences in student-faculty cultures.

Participants noted some within the University faculties fostered a higher level of acceptance

than others based on different student cultures. The contrasting perceptions of the

University's faculties have led to mixed experiences based on these student-faculty cultures.

One participant described their experience with this phenomenon at length:

I see the uni as pretty good at showing their acceptance, but it's definitely

different in different parts of the uni - for example, in previous study in

the School of Music I felt a lot more comfortable expressing my

queerness and talking openly about it than I do in my current program

[Allied Health] - I think, like anything, it varies and in some places

you're probably more likely to find similar people (which was a main

factor in my comfort level). I also wouldn't necessarily attribute this to the uni as an institution, but more in the student culture in each program. (Asexual/Lesbian/Queer, Cisgender Woman)

Considering these barriers, when asked what participants would like to see at the University, participants advocated strongly for more queer-focused social opportunities to mitigate these barriers. As one participant voiced: "I'd love to have the confidence, opportunity, and ability to connect with other LGBTQIA+ students" (Asexual/Lesbian/Queer, Cisgender Woman).

One social opportunity spoken about positively and at length by participants was the University's student-run Pride Club, with participants citing the club as aiding their wellbeing and social interactions during their studies. One such participant described the club and their 'Rainbow Room' as "a space where people can meet, discover and socialize with similar like-minded students." (Pansexual, Cisgender Woman). Participants described the Pride Club's community as "a constant tarp I can sort of fall back into for advice on my queer identity" (Aromantic/Asexual/Demisexual/Omnisexual/Queer, Genderfluid/Non-binary).

In addition to the Pride Club, participants advocated for the development of further social opportunities for LGBTQIA+ students. Participants described a need for the University to offer more queer social opportunities to foster that sense of community, and its subsequent positive impacts. One participant detailed this, stating: "More clubs and events run by and for LGBTQIA+ individuals […] can help people connect and find people in the community and also help them feel a better sense of belonging, especially if they do not feel that belonging outside of uni" (Bisexual/'Demiromantic', Cisgender Woman). Participants described how providing social opportunities will help "queer people can build their community and become supports for one another" (Bisexual/Questioning or Unsure, Cisgender Woman). Specifically,

in the broader social context of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement, participants believe it is the University's responsibility to help cultivate a sense of community for queer students to act as a support system both on and off campus.

'A positive step': Resource Mobilisation

Participants shared a growing frustration with seasonal, performative pride in mainstream society. Participants lamented how current LGBTQIA+ queer-focused initiatives at the University lack sufficient resources, hindering their accessibility and subsequent benefits.

With the progression of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement, Pride Month and other awareness days have become annual widespread celebrations to demonstrate LGBTQIA+ support (Askew, 2021). While these periods are important for the queer community, participants noted their uptake by the broader society does not always indicate ongoing support. Participants voiced that the overrepresentation during these periods has become somewhat compensatory and performative, used to present a falsely inclusive front. As one participant explained: "I sometimes feel almost frustrated when i see us being overrepresented, as if an advertisement is just trying to 'tick the gay box' for political correctness" (Queer, Cisgender Woman). Another participant detailed their perspective: "I think it would be very meaningful if allyship and acceptance were seen to extend beyond pride month, otherwise it can very easily come across as rainbow-washing" (Pansexual, Questioning/Unsure).

Regarding perceptions of the University, these views on overrepresentation were echoed with participants noting distinctly performative displays of LGBTQIA+ support on campus. As one participant detailed:

Pride committees and meeting places, IDAHOBIT days, free rainbow

donuts in the hub on symbolic days and pronouns in the signatures of

academic staff does not compensate for the fact that institutional

prejudice prevails in our university. I think these measures are

FANTASTIC and I do not downplay that some staff and students are

trying... but I do not think this is a priority for senior staff or higher levels

of management in the university and our schools. (Gay, Cisgender Man)

These performative displays on campus reflect 'institutional prejudice,' suggesting the lack of ongoing institutional support is considered equivalent to prejudice. To remedy this, participants suggested deeper institutional acknowledgement and further development of ongoing queer-focused initiatives. The Ally Network, as previously discussed, and the LGBTQIA+ inclusive counselling services were the only institutional initiatives mentioned by participants. Few participants referenced the advertised queer-friendly nature of the support services at the university, with one participant positively noting how "offering counselling support and wellbeing support to students is a positive step" (Bisexual, Cisgender Woman). Although mentioned sparsely, their impacts on students were not spoken about at length, suggesting they have had little recognisable or notable impact on participants.

Contrastingly, the passion and length at which participants wrote about the student-run Pride Club emphasised the positive impact the club has had while their frustration regarding the club, lies with a lack of institutional support and resources. Participants argue allocating further resources and infrastructure for the club would be a genuine act of support over seasonal, performative displays of support. One participant spoke on this passionately:

The pride club needs a bigger room with running water to be able to

function. The space is the only space where many people feel safe to be

themselves and it's not fair that we have such a small space when the

work we do in the wider community is so important. A bigger room, as

well as better resources for name changes is needed to make people feel

safe on campus. (Lesbian, Genderqueer)

These ongoing issues with name and pronoun alteration for transgender and gender-diverse students were also voiced by participants as an area of needed resource mobilisation. For transgender and gender-diverse individuals, utilising a preferred name and pronouns helps in authenticating their queer identity and fostering feelings of acceptance and safety (Adelman et al., 2022). Articulating this, participants voiced how the "difficulties changing names within youx/alumni emails and myuni make us feel unwelcome and unsafe" (Lesbian, Genderqueer).

In conjunction with resources, promotion and accessibility for LGBTQIA+ initiatives are essential in ensuring participants benefit from them. Participants noted a distinct lack of knowledge of current LGBTQIA+ initiatives at the University which one participant exemplified:

I don't know what the uni already has to offer in terms of support

systems/services, but queer focused services are always a plus.

Something like a uni club, or a queer only space, or a counselling type

service. I think this would help people feel safer and more connected.

(Queer, Bigender)

These initiatives suggested by the participant are all currently present on campus, suggesting a severe lack of promotion and endorsement by the University. Further, some participants noted knowledge of the initiatives but have struggled to access and reap the intended benefits. For example, an honours student claimed: "I would have liked to get

involved with the pride club, but I feel like if you miss their stall in O'Week, it is difficult to

get involved, as they don't have a very active social media presence or anything"

(Bisexual/Queer, Genderfluid). The University's lack of resource mobilisation regarding

LGBTQIA+ initiatives has led participants to view the institution's current support as either

performative, non-existent, or inaccessible.

Discussion

This exploration of the University of Adelaide's campus culture and environment through the experiences and perceptions of LGBTQIA+ students elucidated the University's strengths and weaknesses. Participant responses were consistent with the concepts of SMT, collective identity and resource mobilisation, illustrating the flow-on effects of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement. These results reflect prior literature and contribute to the growing area of LGBTQIA+ research from a South Australian university context.

This study successfully identified the features of a university environment and culture that provide queer students with support, acceptance, and safety. Participants described a need for queer normalisation to feel included and accepted among the overwhelming cisgender and heterosexual majority (Colliver & Duffus, 2022). Participants described how the discussion of queer topics, inclusive language, and pronoun use help establish a sense of normalcy and reinforced identity, especially when utilised by non-queer others (Vaccaro, 2012; Wilbourn, 2013). In line with previous research (Colliver & Duffus, 2022; Francis et al., 2022), participants exemplified how gender-neutral bathrooms further reinforce a sense of safety by deconstructing the cis-normative gender binary.

Various forms of visibility and solidarity were documented by participants as markers of safety and acceptance in an environment. The priority at which participants spoke about a sense of safety through visual markers emphasised how queer people have and continue to feel unsafe and suggest a sense of inequality and difference on campus (Waling and Roffee, 2018). Participants voiced a preference for subtle signifiers over more obvious ones due to the increased performativity in mainstream society (Adelman et al., 2022; Pham, 2020). In line with the SMT concept of collective identity, participants sought comfort in witnessing other queer people in an environment due to their shared comradery and experiences, but also the knowledge that queer people *can* safely operate in an environment

(Miller et al., 2016; Staggenborg, 2005). The conflicting views on visibility articulate the diverse and microcosmic nature of the university context, mirroring the complex broader societal context of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement (Simpson, 2020).

Further emphasising collective identity, participants extensively detailed their desire for a sense of community on campus (Miller et al., 2016). Socialisation is considered highly comforting for minority group members when navigating a university environment (Stout & Wright, 2016; van Gijn-Grosvenor, & Huisman, 2020). Participants spoke highly of the Pride Club for the social support it fosters and strongly described how further social opportunities would benefit their sense of support on campus.

This study sought to explore the experiences of queer students at the University of Adelaide. As a result of the ongoing LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement and still present prejudice, participants reported mixed experiences during their time at the University.

Participants who spoke positively about their experiences cited feelings of immediate acceptance and safety from the visual acceptance markers, seasonal pride events, and the presence of LGBTQIA+ initiatives. These markers signal to queer students that the environment is largely non-judgemental and devoid of homophobia; a place where they can freely express their queerness (Adelman et al., 2022). However, these positive perceptions were largely voiced by participants sourced from SONA and other undergraduate students, providing insight into LGBTQIA+ first impressions rather than lived experiences.

More experienced participants recited more personal experiences and as a result, notably more negative experiences. Several participants described feelings of unease and a lack of safety on the campus from witnessing or fear of exposure to homophobic acts. Prejudice and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ individuals are linked to identity suppression, poor mental health, and social isolation which some participants documented

experiencing (Adelman et al., 2022; Eisenberg et al., 2013; Ellis, 2009; Larcombe et al., 2022 Witherup & Verrecchia, 2020).

Some of these negative experiences were linked to individual differences. Differing cultural and generational prejudices are common barriers to queer socialisation and developing a sense of community and collective identity (Staggenborg, 2005). As an institution that boasts diversity, the University must understand how conflicting views regarding marginalised minorities will be a challenge and potentially negatively impact students' university experience. While not the institution's fault there is clear a need for these challenges to be acknowledged and mitigated.

The analysis of the results and participant suggestions has generated several practical implications the University could employ to further support queer students. In line with SMT, participants described how the University's most appropriate route to support the movement and LGBTQIA+ students is through resource mobilisation (Coley & Das, 2020; Staggenborg, 2005).

As participants detailed, normalisation is vital to the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement and relatively simple with institutional support (Waling & Roffee, 2018). Encouraging inclusive language and pronoun disclaimers in educational resources and among staff and faculty would invoke a top-down approach to normalisation and have flow-on effects for queer students (Milmine, 2020). Research illustrates that ongoing LGBTQIA+ education and acknowledgement through participatory meetings or seminars assists in rallying institution-wide support (Coley & Das, 2020). Similarly, to mitigate differing levels of tolerance between faculties, the University could advertise that LGBTQIA+ discrimination is not tolerated visually on campus with posters or through class reminders at the beginning of each semester (Renn, 2020).

Participants were inconsistent regarding knowledge of gender-neutral facilities on campus, with some perceiving the all-gender disabled toilets on campus as inclusive for gender-nonconforming individuals and others categorising them as only for disabled people. Whether the institution planned for either perception is unknown, but considering the passionate outpour from participants, the institution should either advertise the inclusion if intended or allocate resources to constructing a gender-neutral option for experiencing gender dysphoria (Francis et al., 2022). Bathroom construction is not an entirely practical implication but the importance and positive impact it has on the mental health of transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals is extensive (Colliver & Duffus, 2022). To make the proposal more practical, analysis suggests providing intentional gender-neutral options in high-traffic areas around the campus would aid queer normalisation.

Prior research illustrates how the described individual barriers to socialisation could be alleviated by providing LGBTQIA+ students with more queer-focused social opportunities (Miller et al., 2016; van Gijn-Grosvenor, & Huisman, 2020). More social opportunities were overwhelmingly suggested by participants, and the documented importance of a sense of community and collective identity for the LGBTQIA+ community further emphasises this need (Miller et al., 2016). Social opportunities do not require extensive organisation or resources; from the participants' outcry, simple gatherings on campus lawns would suffice if they were ongoing and advertised for increased accessibility. Developing social opportunities extends to providing additional support to the Pride Club. Providing increased promotion and the needed resources to upgrade and expand the Rainbow Room will illustrate the institutional recognition of the Pride Club's positive impact and assist in increasing its longevity and scope.

The analysis identified that inaccessibility and a lack of promotion for current LGBTQIA+ initiatives are currently barriers to their success. To improve the scope and

accessibility of the Ally Network, support services, and Pride Club, analysis suggests the University could focus on increased promotion around campus and online. Considering the broad online queer community which has emerged following COVID-19, an active social media presence and promoting initiatives through online avenues such as Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok, would advertise to a broad population of queer students (Penfold, 2022).

Finally, continual evaluations of queer experiences on campus will help the institution to monitor the impacts of the initiatives and adjust to accommodate the needs of the growing LGBTQIA+ population (Palkki & Caldwell, 2018; Rankin, 2003). Conducting a regular census or study of this nature on an ongoing basis will help to track the queer student population and the impacts of university initiatives as they grow and develop in tandem.

Strengths and Limitations

A strength of this study was the qualitative survey methodology used which provided rich data focused on the research aims and allowed for a high level of anonymity. Being a survey undertaken at and about the institution being studied, this high anonymity allowed participants to disclose their experiences and perceptions comfortably and without fear of identification. Another strength was the sample diversity of LGBTQIA+ sexualities and gender identities of participants as almost all options for these categories were assumed by one or more of the participants. A limitation of this study was the faculty and study level diversity among the sample. Many participants were sourced from SONA – first-year Psychology students – meaning the results were skewed in favour of these demographics and lacked the insight of more experienced students. While a limitation, it allowed for the exploration of participants' first impressions of the University. A further limitation was the cultural diversity among the sample with most participants identifying as 'White/Caucasian.'

Implications and Future Research

This study has provided new insight into the current experiences and perceptions of LGBTQIA+ students at the University of Adelaide, knowledge the institution can utilise for the betterment of current and future students. The recommendations sourced from participants and further developed through analysis have the potential to genuinely support queer students and alleviate the challenges they face during and after their studies. Additionally, this study has illustrated the impacts of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement on the University's environment and culture through the lens of SMT. Upholding the sub-concepts of collective identity and resource mobilisation, the results of this study illustrate the microcosmic nature of a university environment and how this relates to the experience of students who belong to a marginalised minority in an educational context.

Further, the scope of this study allows for numerous avenues for future research. Adelaide's current LGBTQIA+ community is largely understudied, and research could investigate the population to explore if participants' experiences at the University mirror the broader surrounding society. In the University context, future research could expand on this project by comparing this study's findings with the perceptions and experiences of LGBTQIA+ students at other universities such as other South Australian or Go8 universities. As the findings and limitations of this study suggest, intersectional research on culturally diverse LGBTQIA+ students would allow for further exploration of overlapping minority group membership on the university experience (Sullivan & Day, 2021).

Conclusion

This study sought to inaugurally study the University of Adelaide's queer student population from the perspective of the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement. The findings have provided valuable, rich insight into the understanding of LGBTQIA+ student's experiences, perceptions, and needs to have a fulfilling university experience. Participants described the

importance of queer normalisation, visibility and solidarity, identity exploration, and a sense of community to feel accepted, safe, and supported on campus. Exploring how negative experiences during university can lead to adverse life outcomes, participants advocated for more institutional resources to provide the LGBTQIA+ community with genuine, ongoing support. This study provided new insight into the microcosmic nature of a university environment in the broader context of SMT and the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement. These findings provide insight into the multifaceted nature of the queer experience and will assist in developing beneficial outcomes for the growing population of queer students.

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Appendix A:

Glossary of LGBTQIA+ Terminology

Term	Definition
Agender	A gender identity that describes individuals who identify as having no gender, or do not experience gender as a component of their identity.
Ally	An individual who actively supports the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community despite not being a member of the community
Aromantic	Describes individuals who experiences little to no romantic attraction to others and/or lacks interest in forming romantic relationships.
Asexual	Describes individuals who experience little to no sexual attraction to others and/or lacks interest in forming sexual relationships.
Bigender	A gender identity that describes a person whose gender identity is comprised of two genders which they can experience at one at a time or simultaneously.
Bisexual	Describes individuals that are attracted to people of two or more genders. Bisexuality does not necessarily assume there are only two genders.
Cisgender (Cis)	A gender identity that describes a person whose gender corresponds to the sex they were assigned at birth.
Cisnormativity	The assumption that everyone identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth. and that is viewed as 'normal.'
Demiromantic	Describes individuals who experience little or no romantic attraction until a strong sexual or emotional connection is formed
Demisexual	Describes individuals who experience little to no sexual attraction until a strong romantic or emotional connection is formed

Gay	Describes people who are primarily attracted to people of the same sex and/or gender as themselves. Commonly used to describe men who are primarily attracted to other men.
Gender Binary	The concept of there are only two genders, man and woman, and that a person must adhere to their gender assigned at birth.
Gender Dysphoria	The distress or unease experienced from being misgendered and/or when someone's gender and body personally do not feel connected or congruent. Commonly associated with psychological, social, and occupational distress.
Gender Identity	A person's sense of whether they are a man, woman, non-binary, agender, genderqueer, genderfluid, etc. or a combination of one or more of these identities.
Gender-diverse	An umbrella term for the community of people who fall outside of the gender binary structure
Gender-neutral	A term that refers to something that does not associate with or refer to the concept of the gender binary.
Genderfluid	A gender identity that describes people with a fluid or changing gender. A genderfluid person may identify with one, multiple, or a lack of gender at any one time and another gender at other times.
Genderqueer	An umbrella term that describes a person whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender binary.
Heteronormativity	The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that is 'normal.'
Intersex	An umbrella term for individuals who have anatomical, chromosomal, and/or hormonal characteristics that differ from conventional medical understandings of male and female bodies.
Lesbian	Describes individuals who identify as women who are attracted by other women. Sometimes used to encompass other non-men identities.

Omnisexual	Describes individuals who are attracted to all genders.
Non-Binary	A gender identity that describes individuals who fall outside of the traditional gender binary.
Pansexual	Describes an individual that is attracted to all gender identities, or whose sexual attractions is not restricted or related to gender.
Queer	An umbrella term used to describe a range of LGBTQIA+ sexual orientations and gender identities. Once used as a derogatory term, the term has been reclaimed and its use now encapsulates political ideas of resistance to heteronormativity.
Questioning	A term used in reference to someone who is currently exploring or unsure of what sexuality and/or gender identity, if any, they identify with.
Sexuality	An individual's emotional and sexual attraction to others. Sometimes referred to as sexual identity or sexual orientation.
Transgender	An umbrella term used for individuals whose assigned sex at birth does not match their gender identity.

(Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2022; National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Centre, 2020; University of Connecticut Rainbow Center. 2019)

Appendix B:

Survey Content

Exploring the Experiences and Perceptions of LGBTQIA+ Students at the University of Adelaide

Participant Information:

You are invited to participate in the following survey exploring the experiences and perceptions of LGBTQIA+ students at the University of Adelaide in regard to their queer identity.

What is the project about?

This study is exploratory in nature, investigating the treatment and attitude towards LGBTQIA+ students at the University of Adelaide through enquiring into the experiences and perceptions queer students have of the campus culture and environment. With the growth of the LGBTQIA+ rights movement, we are looking to examine how members of the queer community view their experiences at the University and examine whether queer needs of safety and support are being accommodated for. This study will also be focusing on developing practical outcomes that will further improve the campus for LGBTQIA+ students based on participant responses.

This survey has three main research aims:

1. To identify the aspects of a public environment and culture that make LGBTQ+ identifying people feel supported, accepted, and safe.

2. To explore the experiences of queer students at the University of Adelaide in relation to their LGBTQIA+ identity.

3. To identify potential practical implications for the University of Adelaide to employ to further support LGBTQIA+ students.

Who can participate?

You can take part if:

- You are a current student at the University of Adelaide and attended in-person classes

- You identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community

- You have interacted or engaged in-person with the University of Adelaide campus environment and/or culture during your studies (This could be attending classes in-person, studying on campus, engaging in University clubs, etc.)

- You are able read and write in English

What will happen to my information?

Your data will be used for an Honours thesis, where it will be analysed thematically to explore what these experiences have been like for you, and whether or not there are insights that can be used to support LGBTQIA+ students in an Adelaide university setting.

No identifying data will be connected to you. Information in this project will be collected using a secure website (Qualtrics) and data will be stored on a password-protected cloud. The data will be retained for a minimum of five years from the date of publication if published in a psychological journal, otherwise it will only be retained for 12 months from the completion of the Honours thesis (September 2023).

Your data may also be used for future studies unless you indicate otherwise on the consent form; however, there will be no identifying information included and your data would only be shared amongst the research team - other researchers separate from the team, or other institutions, will not have access to your data. This data will be specifically retained for an extended period of 5 years following the completion of the Honours thesis (September 2023), and then stored as per the retention policy mentioned above.

Can I withdraw from the project at any time?

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time before finishing, by exiting the webpage. Incomplete surveys will not be included in the dataset. However, once you complete the survey, the data cannot be withdrawn.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

If you have any questions about this project, please contact:

    Principal Supervisor: [Contact Information]

    Student Researcher: [Contact Information]

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the School of Psychology Human Research Ethics Subcommittee at the University of Adelaide (#23/48). If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, please contact Dr ████████████, Chair of the Human Research Ethics Subcommittee in the School of Psychology on (08) ████████, or ████████████ @adelaide.edu.au.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

If you would like to participate in this research project, please click the 'Continue' button below to continue to the Consent page.

For First-Year Psychology students at the University of Adelaide, please leave your RPS ID number and student ID number when prompted, so you can receive course credit for research participation.

Consent

For you to participate in the study, please click 'Agree' on the button below.

By clicking the button below, I agree that:

- I have read the study information on the previous page

- My consent is given freely to participate in this research

- I understand that I can withdraw at any time, however once submitted, responses cannot be withdrawn

Please indicate if you **DO NOT** consent to your data being retained for future studies (If you select this box, it means your responses will only be used for this project). Your response to this question will not affect participation for this project.

- I do not consent to my data being retained for future studies

If you do not consent to participate, please exit the webpage now.

(First-Year University of Adelaide Psychology students only) Research Participation System ID: _____

[Agree]

Demographic Questions

What is your age? _____

How would you describe your ethnicity?
- o Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

- o Asian or Pacific Islander

- o Black or African American

- o European

- o Hispanic or Latinx

- o White/Caucasian

- o Mixed Ethnicity (please specify): _____

- o Other (please specify): _____

What term/s best describe your sexual orientation?

- o Aromantic

- o Asexual

- o Bisexual

- o Demisexual

- o Gay

- o Heterosexual

- o Lesbian

- o Omnisexual

- o Pansexual

- o Queer

- o Questioning/Unsure

- o Prefer not to say

- o Other (please specify): _____

What term/s best describes your gender identity?

- o Agender

- o Bigender

- o Cisgender Man

- o Cisgender Woman

- Genderfluid

- Genderqueer

- Intersex

- Non-binary

- Transgender Man

- Transgender Woman

- Questioning/Unsure

- Prefer not to say

- Other (please specify): _____

What level of study are you currently enrolled in?

- Undergraduate

- Postgraduate

- Honours

- PhD

- Masters

- Other (please specify): _____

What faculties have you been engaged with during your studies at the University of Adelaide?

- Health and Medical Sciences

- Arts, Business, Law and Economics

- Science and Engineering

What School or Department are you currently or have previously been enrolled in at the University of Adelaide? You may report more than one School or Department. (e.g. School of Psychology): _____

Free-Text Questions

Question 1

What physical, social, and/or cultural characteristics of a public space make you feel comfortable in relation to your LGBTQIA+ identity? Please describe any relevant examples in as much detail as possible.

Question 2

Do you believe it is important that yourself and other LGBTQIA+ identifying individuals feel accepted, supported, and safe in public and educational spaces? Why or why not? Please explain in as much detail as possible.

Question 3

What is your perception of the University of Adelaide's culture and environment in regard to its treatment and acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community? Please describe in as much detail as possible.

Question 4

How has your personal experience been as a LGBTQIA+ student at the University of Adelaide in relation to your queer identity? How have any of these experiences affected you? Please describe in as much detail as you are able to or feel comfortable to do so.

Question 5

What improvements or changes to the University of Adelaide campus culture or environment would make you feel more comfortable and accepted in relation to your LGBTQIA+ identity? How would yourself and other LGBTQIA+ individuals benefit from these changes? Please describe these ideas and examples in as much detail as possible.

End of Survey

If you have experienced any distress as a result of your experiences or whilst completing this survey, you can contact these services for support:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

https://www.lifeline.org.au/

QLife: 1800 184 527

https://qlife.org.au/

The University of Adelaide Counselling Service: 8313 5663

https://www.adelaide.edu.au/counselling/

If you would like to receive a summary of the results once the project is finished, please leave your e-mail address below. Please note, this will be not used to identify you, and will be stored separately to your responses. It will be deleted after the summary is sent.

_____

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

If you have any questions about this project, please contact:

   Principal Supervisor: [Contact Information]

   Student Researcher: [Contact Information]

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the School of Psychology Human Research Ethics Subcommittee at the University of Adelaide (Approval number: 23/48). If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, please contact Dr ▮

████████, Chair of the Human Research Ethics Subcommittee in the School of Psychology

at (08) ████████, or ████████ @adelaide.edu.au.

We thank you for your time spent completing this survey.

Appendix C:

Recruitment Poster

LGBTQIA+ UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE STUDENTS!

We are seeking students to take a short survey on their experiences at the University of Adelaide as queer-identifying individuals.

We are exploring the experiences and perceptions of LGBTQIA+ students at the University of Adelaide regarding the campus environment and culture.

Participants will be asked 5 free-text response questions about their perceptions and experiences, and some demographic questions.

Selection Criteria

- Currently enrolled student at the University of Adelaide
- Member of the LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus) community
- Engaged with or experienced the University of Adelaide campus during studies
- Can read and write in English

SCAN THE QR CODE TO PARTICIPATE!

THE UNIVERSITY of ADELAIDE

School of Psychology Human Research Subcommittee Approval #23/48

*Identifying information and QR code removed