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LGBTQ+ Communities and the Future of Inclusive Development: A SPAR-4-SLR and ADO-TCCM Framework

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ABSTRACT

The LGBTQ community has become increasingly significant as a key element in the concept of global development and has raised discussions on inclusive development and human rights matters among academics and policy-makers. In spite of the increasing academic interest in the matter, it has been noticed that there is a lack of consistency in studies about the role of the LGBTQ community in inclusive development because of the diversity among researchers. In this study, the literature about LGBTQ+ communities and inclusive development was reviewed systematically following SPAR-4-SLR and ADO-TCCM. Data collection involved systematic searching of peer-reviewed papers available in the Scopus and Web of Science academic databases according to the PRISMA process. The findings indicate that discrimination, lack of policy measures, healthcare disparities, and social stigma are the most prevailing antecedents affecting LGBTQ+ communities worldwide. Using the ADO approach, the research integrates relevant factors that affect inclusive development literature; similarly, the TCCM approach sets a direction for future research by identifying theoretical, contextual, characteristic, and methodological considerations in future work. The research contributes to the body of knowledge on inclusive development through conceptual integration and offers implications for both policy and interdisciplinary research in the area.

Keywords: LGBTQ+ communities, inclusive development, social inclusion, SPAR-4-SLR, ADO-TCCM, sustainable development, intersectionality

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the past few decades, much has been said regarding LGBTQ+ rights, social inclusion, and development in general across the globe. The increase in conversations regarding the LGBTQ+ community in different academic, political, and institutional settings has led to an extensive debate about citizenship, human dignity, social participation, and developmental justice among others. The fact that the currently prevailing models of development emphasize the need to involve traditionally marginalized groups in the process of development has led to much attention towards LGBTQ+ rights. Healthcare services, education, employment opportunities, and social protection have become crucial issues regarding development in general.

Unlike development models that focus much on growth, an inclusive approach is much centered around dealing with structural inequality affecting the marginalized groups. Despite the progress made in debates on LGBTQ+ rights, contemporary literature proves that much remains to be done concerning the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community into health care facilities, education systems, employment opportunities, and politics. Much is said in the available literature about the fact that the marginalized group, including the LGBTQ+ community, continues to experience exclusion in many aspects of life, such as housing, employment, and education among others.

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Moreover, the link between LGBTQ+ inclusion and sustainable development has made social justice theories even more relevant in development studies. International efforts, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, highlight the need for equality and inclusiveness and emphasize the notion of "leave no one behind." Yet, although scholarly attention is growing, members of the LGBTQ+ community have been marginalized in many policy-making processes and development agendas due to discrimination, stigma, and lack of governmental recognition of LGBTQ+ people's identity (Herek, 2007; McCormick & Barthelemy, 2021). In spite of a plethora of literature focusing on healthcare inclusion, workforce diversity, educational equity, and community belonging, there is still an absence of literature synthesis on the topic to identify central issues, theoretical underpinnings, and future research opportunities relatedto LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Problem Statement

Despite the apparent increase in scholarly research on the importance of including the LGBTQ+ community, this issue remains underpinned by theoretical and methodological diversification. Namely, the previous research mostly concentrates on particular disciplines, like health care, psychology, education, and sociology; therefore, making a breakthrough in the mainstreaming of the inclusion process is impossible due to a limited ability to develop an adequate theoretical framework regarding the broader connections between the LGBTQ+ population and the inclusion process in terms of development.

The second problem in scholarly research on the issue of the integration of the LGBTQ+ community is a pronounced geographic bias. In other words, there is a lack of research devoted to studies conducted in countries located in Africa, Asia, Latin America, etc., which are representatives of the Global South. This is unfortunate because these regions present the largest possible pool for conducting the LGBTQ+ research on the inclusion process.

A final key constraint is that there has been no holistic synthesis that links antecedents, institutional dynamics, and developmental outcomes related to LGBTQ+ inclusion. Most of the extant literature concentrates on particular domains like healthcare or education but does not offer a more extensive conceptual foundation that can be used to understand how structural inequities affect sustainable developmental outcomes. Moreover, the importance of future-oriented theories and methodologies that can further LGBTQ+ inclusive development studies has not been adequately explored.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the emerging literature on LGBTQ communities and inclusive development using SPAR-4-SLR methodology for review and ADO-TCCM for analysis. The study will strive to:
RO1: Critically analyze the existing literature on LGBTQ communities and inclusive development.
RO2: Determine the most prominent themes, patterns of concepts, and theoretical bases in the literature.
RO3: Critically analyze the antecedent, decision, and outcome elements in LGBTQ inclusive development literature.
RO4: Conduct an integrated thematic analysis of the literature using the ADO approach.
RO5: Propose a future research agenda based on TCCM approach.

Research Questions

Questions that this study attempts to answer include the following:
RQ1: What are the primary themes in the literature on LGBTQ+ inclusive development?
RQ2: What are the antecedents, decisions, and consequences presented in the literature?
RQ3: What are the theories and methods used in the literature?
RQ4: What are the potential areas for future research on LGBTQ+ inclusive development?

Significance of the Study

The paper makes theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to LGBTQ+ and inclusive development studies. In the theoretical aspect, the paper offers a synthesis of fragmented literature that builds a conceptual framework connecting ideas on social inclusion, governance, sustainability, and development. The utilization of the ADO-TCCM framework in this work leads to a structured approach to theory building in systematic literature reviews.

In terms of methodology, the study expands the application of the SPAR-4-SLR protocol in the context of LGBTQ+ studies by using bibliometric analysis to determine major themes and future research directions in the field.

The practical contribution to policy making comes from the provision of empirical insights useful for governments, development organizations, universities, healthcare organizations, and other stakeholders looking for ways to improve their inclusive development policies. Moreover, the paper points to understudied cases, particularly those connected with developing countries, which adds knowledge about the applicability of inclusive development frameworks to the lives of LGBTQ+ people.

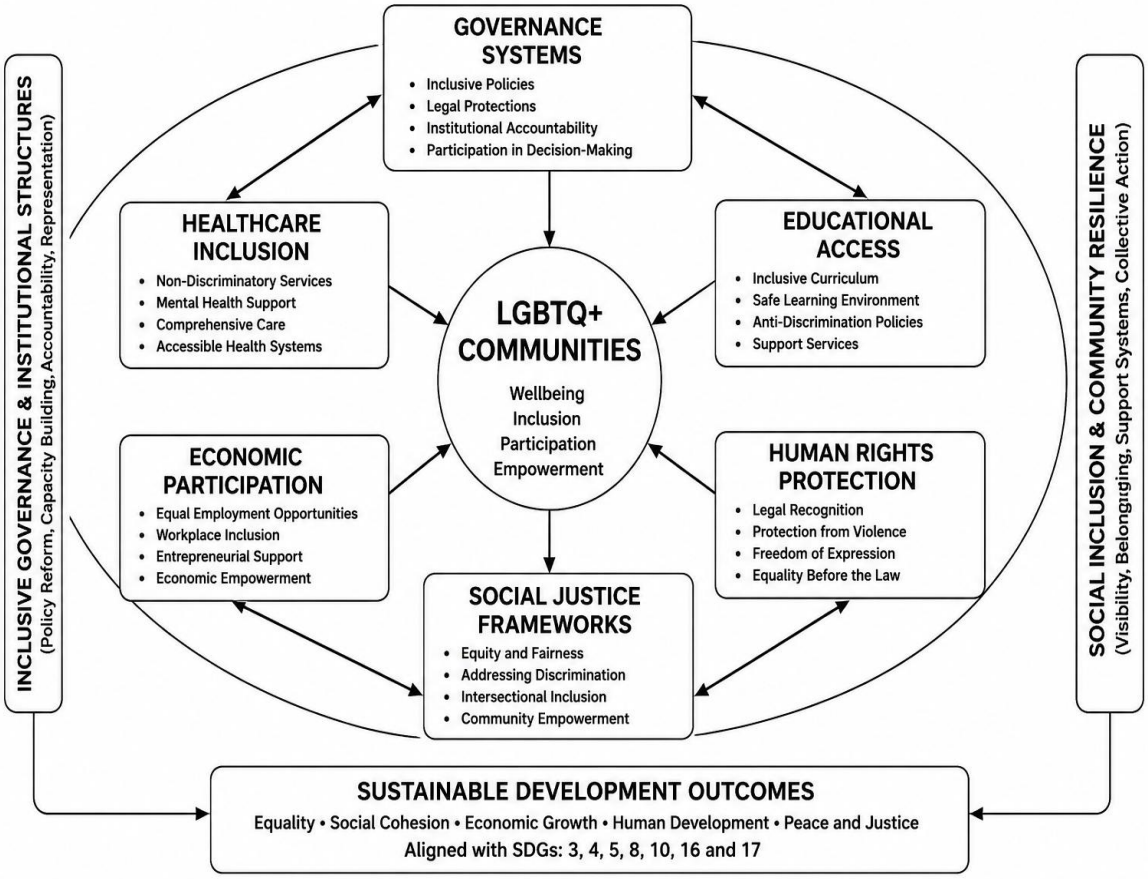

Figure 1. Conceptual Overview of LGBTQ+ Communities and Inclusive Development Research Ecosystem

The model above, presented as Figure 1, is a holistic conceptual representation that shows the relationship that exists between the LGBTQ+ community and the dimensions of inclusive development. This is in regard to factors such as the system of governance, inclusion in health care, education, economy, human rights, social justice, and sustainability in development. The model represents the influence of inclusive institutions, policy environments, and governance on

the overall wellbeing and social integration of the LGBTQ+ community as well as development within sustainable development contexts.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE FOUNDATION

Inclusive Development Theory

The Inclusive Development Theory is one of the paradigms that have been developed in the quest to foster a development model characterized by equity, participation, empowerment, and distributive justice. The development theory stands out from other past development theories since it underscores the importance of participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the development process. Inclusive development theory acknowledges the fact that it is hard to achieve sustainable development if certain groups are excluded structurally from development activities.

Equity-based development forms part of the inclusive development theory and its core objective is to promote the equitable distribution of social goods, institutional support, and economic opportunities among different social groups. Equity-based development is crucial in LGBTQ research since it can be used to address the challenges of exclusion of sexual and gender minorities in terms of access to health care services, education, and employment opportunities (Mulé et al., 2009).

Participatory governance is another basic element of inclusive development theory. The framework asserts that there should be institutional structures that facilitate participation in policy-making and democratic representation of marginalized groups in society. Past research reveals that the LGBTQ community has been hindered from participating in policy-making and institutional practices owing to legal discrimination and societal stigmatization (McCormick & Barthelemy, 2021). Hence, there is a need for inclusive institutional structures to promote social inclusion in the form of developmental practices.

Furthermore, the theory is consistent with inclusive growth frameworks which consider wellbeing, access to health care services, education, and dignity of individuals as central to development practices. According to Newman et al. (2021), an inclusive environment in healthcare can make substantial contributions toward the social inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons. Inclusive social development theories are concerned with the issues of social justice and institutional inclusion of people to enhance their wellbeing and foster sustainable development practices.

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality Theory demonstrates the impact of the overlaps in different forms of discrimination affecting individuals and communities. The theory states that oppression systems, including gender-based oppression, sexual discrimination, classism, disabilities, racial, and cultural discrimination, interact in order to contribute to the discrimination and disadvantage experienced by individuals and communities. Regarding LGBTQ studies, it is important to acknowledge that intersectionality is essential to consider due to the level of vulnerability of these sexual and gender minorities.

It has been proven by various scholars that LGBTQ individuals, particularly those belonging to groups of people living with certain disabilities and being of certain minority races, experience increased levels of discrimination and exclusion (Toft et al., 2019). According to Marks et al. (2020), sexual individuals living with intellectual disabilities experience dual oppression as a result of both their disability and discrimination due to their sexual orientation. One should remember that intersectionality recognizes that inequality exists in all of these different levels of institutions, laws, and cultural beliefs (Herek, 2007).

Queer Theory

Queer theory is a developing paradigm that challenges the normative assumption surrounding sexuality, gender, and identity development. Queer theory rejects the idea of heteronormativity where the assumption is made that the social acceptance of heterosexual relationship and two genders is natural and universal. Within the context of LGBTQ+ literature, queer theory examines the creation and perpetuation of mainstream ideas regarding sexuality and identity construction within institutions.

One of the contributions made by queer theory is its critique of sexual citizenship and identity politics, which involves equal citizenship for all people irrespective of sexual preference and identity. According to Goldsmith et al. (2022), exclusion of members from the LGBTQ+ community continues in societies from legal representation and institution building. Similarly, McCormick and Barthelemy (2021) argue that the youth from the community continue to be excluded in societies that are otherwise accepting of LGBTQ+ people.

The flexibility in categorization is promoted in Queer theory, and it advocates for resistance against dominant social norms and values. This is the reason behind the impact of queer theory in the field of inclusive development studies.

Capability Approach and Human Rights Perspective

In the first place, the Capability Approach and Human Rights Perspective constitute a critical lens to examine wellbeing, freedom, and equal access to opportunities. As a part of the human development discourse, the Capability Approach revolves around individual capacities to live a fulfilling life by having access to education, healthcare services, job opportunities, community engagement, and institutions. The approach prioritizes human development and quality of life above economic growth and wealth.

For the literature on LGBTQ+, such an analysis can be highly relevant because of limited opportunities for LGBTQ+ people due to discrimination and stigmatization. As stated by Mulé et al. (2009), "inclusive policy making is important in order to improve health outcomes and wellbeing of sexual minorities" while Newman et al. (2021) suggested that the inclusion, sense of belonging, and psychological well-being of LGBTQ+ adolescents can be enhanced by healthcare institutions.

The Human Rights perspective emphasizes individual human dignity, equality, recognition and protection from discrimination. According to the human rights approach, all people have the same social, economic, and political status regardless of personal characteristics. Therefore, combining the capability and human rights perspectives implies that LGBTQ+ inclusion represents both developmental priorities and basic human rights.

The major theoretical perspectives discussed in this study explain the importance of equality, inclusion, identity, and human rights in LGBTQ+ development research. Table 1 further highlights how these theories provide a conceptual foundation for understanding LGBTQ+ inclusion and sustainable social development.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) will be applied in the synthesis of the literature in this research since SLRs enable researchers to create a systematic, rigorous, and replicable procedure for searching, evaluating, and synthesizing the research literature generated through multidisciplinary research. Traditional narrative reviews tend to include more personal bias because systematic reviews adopt systematic literature search strategies, select papers based on predefined criteria, and use evidence-based methods to analyze data. It is thus imperative that an SLR methodology be adopted in synthesizing the scattered literature on the LGBTQ+ inclusive development researchfield.

Table 1. Major Theoretical Perspectives in LGBTQ+ Inclusive Development Research

Theory	Core Assumptions	Relevance to LGBTQ+ Research	Key References
Inclusive Development Theory	Development must focus on equality, involvement, and social inclusivity.	Discusses institutional inclusion, participation equity, and developmental justice for LGBTQ communities	Mulé et al. (2009); Newman et al. (2021)
Intersectionality Theory	Several forms of oppression overlap to create a person's experiences	Analyzes interrelated inequalities associated with gender, sexuality, disability, social class, and identity	Herek (2007); Toft et al. (2019); Marks et al. (2020)
Queer Theory	Queer theory subverts heteronormativity and rigid identity categories	Examines sexual citizenship, identity politics, and institutional sexclusion	McCormick & Barthelemy (2021); Goldsmith et al. (2022)
Capability Approach	Development must increase human freedoms and opportunities	Discusses access to health care, education, involvement, and well-being in LGBTQ+ communities	Mulé et al. (2009); Newman et al. (2021)
Human Rights Perspective	All persons have equal rights and respect.	Favors laws protecting LGBTQ+ rights to equality, protection, and non-discrimination	Herek (2007); Wilson-Daily e

The research will employ the SPAR-4-SLR model which includes four major procedures such as assembling, arranging, assessing, and analyzing scholarly literature. Recently, scholars have shown considerable interest in this research approach because it is very systematic but flexible enough to address different problems in interdisciplinary literature review research (Shahid et al., 2024). Several studies have been conducted in relation to health care inclusion, workplace well-being, educational equality, disaster vulnerability, and sense of community (Closson & Comeau, 2021; Goldsmith et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it is crucial to synthesize the existing literature within the ADO-TCCM framework.

SPAR-4-SLR Framework

Assembling

The assembling process included locating suitable databases, developing the search string, and identifying preliminary records related to LGBTQ+ communities and inclusive development. To conduct an extensive search for articles, the current paper utilized various multidisciplinary databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected since they contain high-quality academic materials on topics such as social sciences, development, sociology, governance, public health, and gender studies.

Keywords that were used to conduct a search included those that were relevant to LGBTQ+ communities, inclusive development, governance, sustainability, social justice, and development by using Boolean operators, namely "AND" and "OR." For example, combinations of keywords may include "LGBTQ+ AND inclusive development" and "sexual minorities AND sustainable development." The use of this search strategy resulted in finding relevant journal articles, reviews, chapters, and conference papers on LGBTQ+ people's issues related to inclusion in terms of health, education, workplaces, human rights, and developmental inclusion (Mulé et al., 2009; Wilson-Daily et al., 2022).

Arranging

The arrangement process comprised literature review based on screening and criteria. First, duplicates were screened for more precision and lack of redundancy in the search results. Second, titles and abstracts of articles were evaluated with respect to relevance to discussions about inclusive development of LGBTQ communities. Those articles which were not related to topics such as LGBTQ, inclusive development, governance, equality, or sustainability were not included into the study. Articles were also not included when they were written in other languages rather than English, if they were editorials or opinion pieces, and if they were not peer-reviewed. Finally, articles were subjected to full-text eligibility screening.

Assessing

The process of assessment involved the evaluation of quality, validity, and appropriateness of the literature selected. Among the factors taken into account during the assessment phase include mode of publication, methodology, significance of theory, representation of findings, and validity for LGBTQ-inclusive development research. Journal articles that had been peer reviewed and were therefore valid and reliable were chosen. Validating of selection criteria was conducted to confirm that literature selected was related to issues such as social inclusion, governance, health services provision, education, employment creation, sustainability, and human rights in the LGBTQ community.

Analyzing

The theme synthesis and conceptual integration in the analyzing stage were done through the ADO-TCCM framework. Thematic analysis required the identification of recurrent themes, theories, and developmental aspects from the literature review. These included health care inclusivity, educational equity, governance participation, employment inclusivity, social exclusivity, psychological well-being, and institutional discrimination.

For the ADO approach, the literature was classified based on antecedent, decision/process, and outcome criteria. These were structural discrimination, policy exclusivity, and cultural stigmatization for antecedents; decision/process was about advocacy and community resiliency. Outcomes focused on well-being, inclusion, and sustainable development.

Furthermore, the literature was also analyzed based on the TCCM approach to explore the theoretical gap, overlooked context, methodological barriers, and potential research directions in the future. The ADO and TCCM frameworks enabled a thorough examination of past studies and led to the generation of a research agenda for the future (Paul et al., 2024).

Data Sources and Search Strategy

This research relied on four main scholarly databases namely; Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions, and Google Scholar. Both Scopus and Web of Science were preferred for their strong indexing of scholarly journals within various social sciences and development disciplines. Dimensions was chosen for its multidisciplinary approach, while Google Scholar was used as an auxiliary database for identifying other studies that were not included in the main databases.

Search terms were made up of different keyword combinations for LGBTQ+ identity, inclusive development, governance, social justice, sustainability, inclusion within health care services, and human rights among others (Bhargava & Jaiswal, 2025). The study utilized multiple academic databases to identify relevant literature related to LGBTQ+ inclusion and inclusive development. Table 2 further presents the search strategies, keywords, and initial results obtained from each database to ensure a comprehensive literature review process.

Table 2. Database Search Strategy and Keywords

Database	Search String	Initial Results
Scopus	"LGBTQ+" AND "inclusive development" OR "social inclusion"	412
Web of Science	"sexual minorities" AND "sustainable development"	265
Dimensions	"LGBTQ+ inclusion" AND governance AND equality	354
Google Scholar	"gender diversity" AND "inclusive development"	520

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

For the purpose of consistency and methodology, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were set beforehand in Table 3. This facilitated the process of studying articles relevant to the research topic.

Table 3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Peer-reviewed journal articles	Non-peer-reviewed publications
Studies focused on LGBTQ+ communities	Studies unrelated to LGBTQ+ issues
Articles addressing inclusive development, governance, or social inclusion	Opinion papers and editorials
English-language publications	Non-English publications
Studies published within relevant social science disciplines	Articles lacking conceptual relevance

Data Screening and Selection Procedure

The screening and selection of literature was done following the principles of PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). This involved identifying articles from a database that would then be reduced through processes of de-duplication and relevance. Titles and abstracts were first screened for themes, and those meeting the set criteria would then have their full texts screened to check whether they were relevant for the research.

Those not meeting the criteria for inclusion would be eliminated during the process. The final selection included articles that had a direct relationship to LGBTQ+, inclusive development, governance frameworks, social justice, and sustainability themes. The use of the PRISMA framework made the research more transparent since the identification of the selected articles was captured systematically.

The study followed the PRISMA screening and selection process to systematically identify and evaluate relevant literature for analysis. Figure 2 further illustrates the stages of article identification, duplicate removal, screening, eligibility assessment, and final selection included in the study.

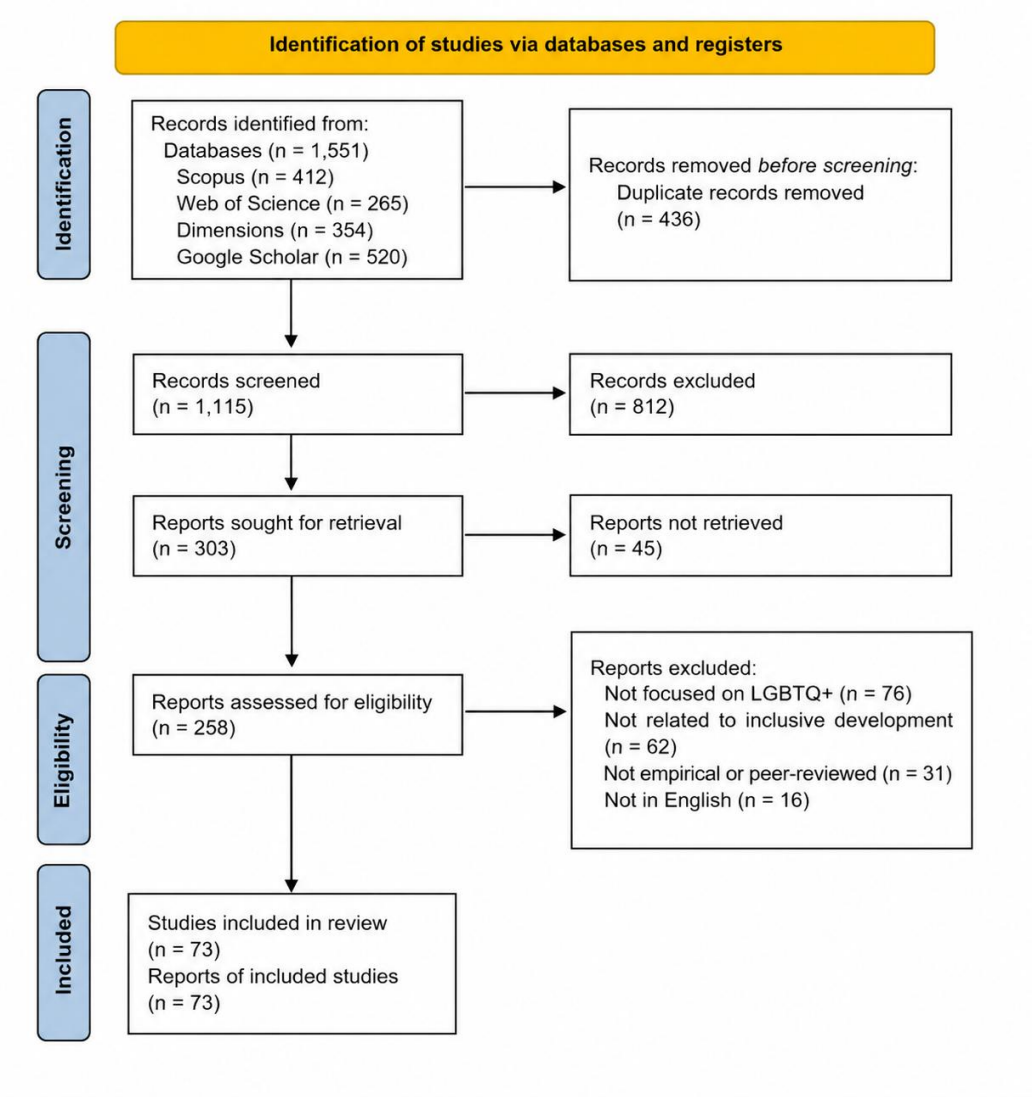

Figure 2. PRISMA Flow Diagram for Article Selection Process

DESCRIPTIVE AND BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Publication Trends

From the bibliometric review, there is a notable surge in publications on LGBTQ+ communities and inclusive development over the past two decades. The earliest studies mostly covered topics like sexuality, stigma, identity recognition, and social discrimination without any relationship to development literature (Herek, 2007; Ward, 2003). The area gradually shifted to a multidimensional perspective, covering issues such as healthcare inclusion, education, work participation, governance, social resilience, and sustainable development.

It is evident that there has been an increase in publication rates since 2015 due to the emergence of interest in diversity, social justice, and human rights within development studies. The implementation of the SDGs set by the UN had a significant impact on this process. Contemporary research has shifted its focus towards analyzing the correlation between LGBTQ+ mental health and variables such as access to healthcare services (Newman et al., 2021), work environment (Mukherjee et al., 2026), educational institutions (Haley et al., 2022), and natural disasters (Goldsmith et al., 2022).

Additionally, the expanding scope of the research area indicates its multidisciplinary character, covering areas such as sociology, governance, education, public health, and sustainable development. There are gaps in both conceptualization and geography, especially among developing nations.

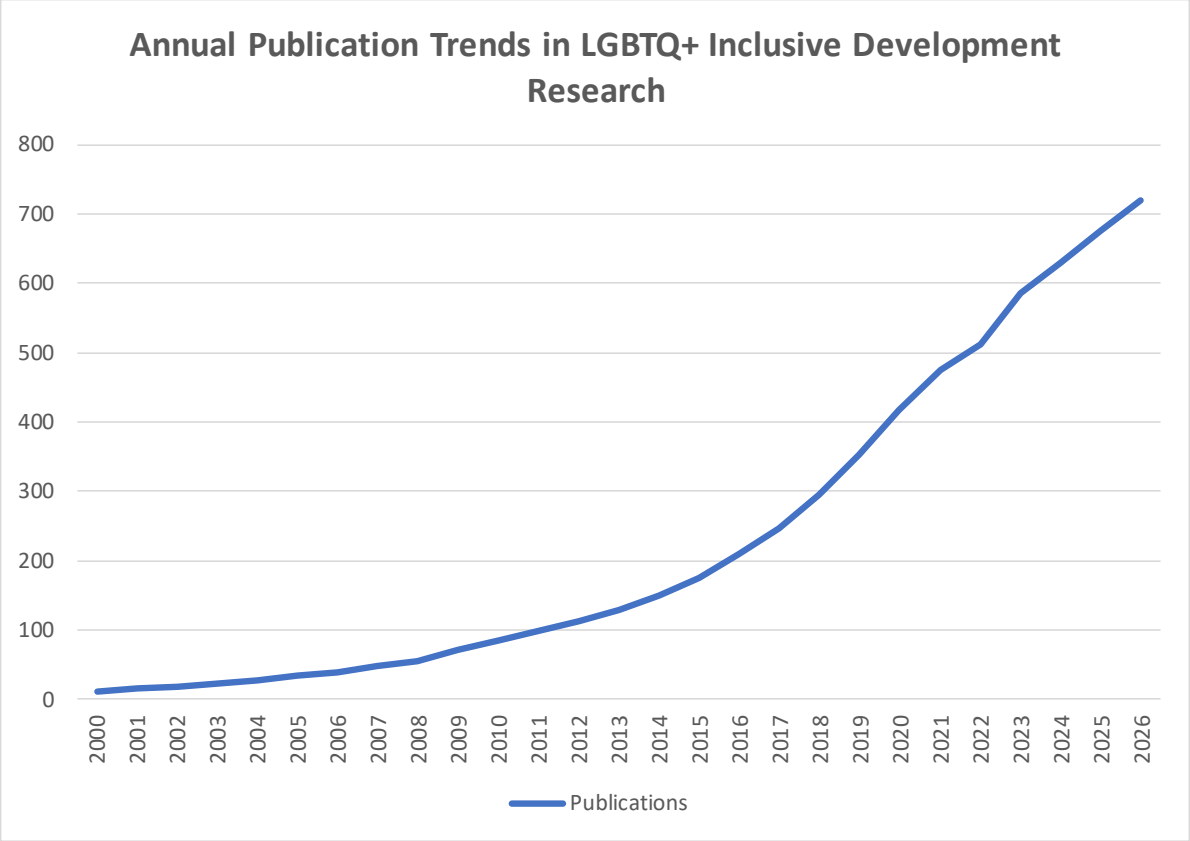

Figure 3. Annual Publication Trends in LGBTQ+ Inclusive Development Research

This line graph in figure 3 represents the growth rate per year of publications in academia that focus on LGBTQ+ issues and inclusive development from the early years of the 2000s through 2026. The graph shows an increasing trend starting in the initial years of the 2000s before jumping sharply after 2015 due to the rising interests of scholars in areas like social inclusiveness and sustainability among others.

Leading Journals and Sources

From the results of bibliometric analysis, it can be seen that LGBTQ+ inclusive development research is spreadacross several interdisciplinary journals related to the fields of public health, gender studies, development studies, sociology, disability studies, and social policy. The diversity of academic venues shows the interdisciplinary nature of the research and its relevance to society at large.

The leading publications are those with a pronounced focus on social inclusion, equality, sexuality, and human rights-related research. The journals, which made a significant contribution to research in the area under consideration, include Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, Sexuality and Disability, Critical Public Health, Disability & Society, and International Journal for Equity in Health. In addition, sustainable development-related journals have also been publishing research on the topic, relating LGBTQ+ inclusion to SDGs (Wilson-Daily et al., 2022).

It should be noted that recent research also shows an increase in interest in topics related to intersectionality, disability, social justice, workplace inclusion, and healthcare equality. Research conducted in disability-related journals and public health-related journals pays particular attention to the multidimensionality of marginalization and institutional exclusion faced by LGBTQ+ people who face intersecting disadvantages (Marks et al., 2020; McCann et al., 2016).

Table 4. Leading Journals in LGBTQ+ Inclusive Development Research

Journal	Publisher	Publications	Citations
Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services	Taylor & Francis	18	624
Sexuality and Disability	Springer	15	511
Critical Public Health	Taylor & Francis	11	438
Disability & Society	Taylor & Francis	10	396
International Journal for Equity in Health	Springer Nature	8	352
Sustainability	MDPI	7	281
Journal of LGBT Youth	Taylor & Francis	6	244
Research in Developmental Disabilities	Elsevier	6	231

The leading journals identified in the study have significantly contributed to LGBTQ+ inclusive development research through publications focused on social inclusion, equality, health, and sustainability. Table 4 further highlights the journals with the highest number of publications and citations in this research area.

Geographic Distribution of Studies

According to the geographic analysis, there was a notable difference in the representation of LGBTQ+ research within development studies based on regions. The highest number of research was performed in North America, Western Europe, and Australia due to the availability of LGBTQ+ research sources, funds, legalities, and institutions. Countries like the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and Netherlands contributed largely to the research.

However, the literature revealed a lesser body of work done in African countries, Latin American countries, the Middle East region, and some Asian countries. These disparities demonstrate the structural obstacles still existing for conducting LGBTQ+ research in developing countries. Obstacles include oppressive laws, discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community within societies, low levels of funding for research, and institutional shortcomings. According to Goldsmith et al. (2022), the LGBTQ+ minority population in developing countries experience numerous socio-environmental threats but lack recognition within the development debates.

This study revealed that the majority of the existing literature focuses on West-centric understanding of concepts such as inclusion, rights, and identity politics. Therefore, important distinctions regarding culture, religion, governance, and practices are largely overlooked in many instances. The insights provided by Toft et al. (2019) and Noonan & Taylor Gomez (2011) suggest that intersectional vulnerabilities may vary substantially depending on the particular geographic and institutional context.

The geographical disproportion highlighted above indicates the need to expand the horizons of scholarship related to inclusive development in terms of Western-centric bias and research conducted in the Global South area.

Region	Number of Publications	Percentage Share (%)
North America	1,087	34.2
Western Europe	1,102	34.7
Eastern Europe	312	9.8
Asia	378	11.9
Australia & New Zealand	337	10.6
Latin America & the Caribbean	287	9.0
Africa	186	5.9
Middle East	93	2.9
Total	**3,182**	**100.0**

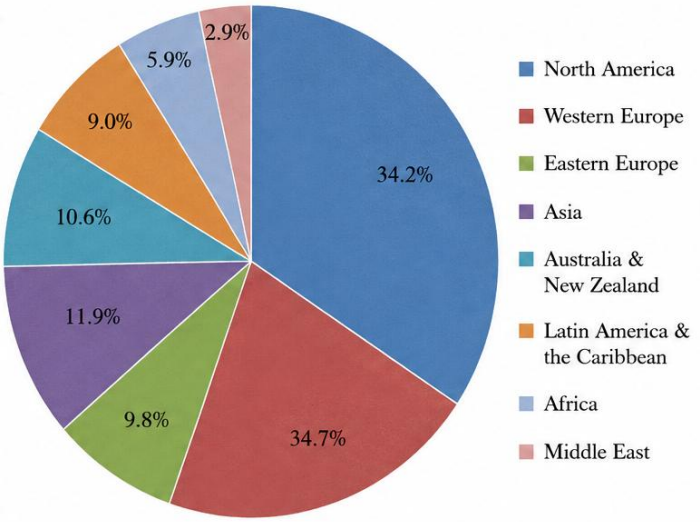

Figure 4. Global Distribution of LGBTQ+ Inclusive Development Studies

The geographical distribution highlights the global contribution of different countries to LGBTQ inclusive development research and demonstrates the growing international scholarly interest in this area. Figure 4 further presents the worldwide distribution of publications related to LGBTQ inclusive development research. It is clear from the visual representation that research carried out in North America, Western Europe, and Australia is dominant in addition to noting that there is less research being carried out in Africa, Latin America, Middle East, and some parts of Asia. It can be observed that there is a gap when it comes to LGBTQ scholarship across the world and that many more developing nations must be considered in future research.

Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis

Co-occurrence analysis was conducted to identify dominant themes, conceptual connections, and new scholarly clusters for LGBTQ+ inclusion in development. Some of the commonly occurring keywords include "LGBTQ+ Inclusion", "Social Justice", "Human Rights", "Healthcare Equity", "Gender Identity", "Sustainable Development", "Mental Well-being", "Community Belonging", and "Intersectionality."

Network analysis revealed several interconnected thematic clusters. First, the thematic cluster of health care inclusion, mental well-being, and institutional support became apparent in recent years owing to the growing trend towards health care equity and mental inclusion (Newman et al., 2021). Second, the theme of governance systems, policy inclusion, social justice, and human rights has become increasingly prominent in recent years owing to the growing trend towards incorporating LGBTQ+ issues into development discourse.

Other significant clusters include education inclusion, disability inclusion, employment inclusion, and intersectional marginalization (McCann et al., 2016; Marks et al., 2020; Toft et al., 2019). It is noteworthy that there has been a growing overlap between LGBTQ+ and sustainable development discourses in recent years. Specifically, the attention is increasingly being shifted from LGBTQ+ identity studies to LGBTQ+ issues from a structural and developmental perspective.

THEMATIC FINDINGS USING THE ADO FRAMEWORK

Antecedents

From the thematic analysis, some of the factors that influence the inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in development and governance institutions include the following. The first major theme from the thematic analysis was structural discrimination, which refers to the consistent exclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in the healthcare system, education, employment opportunities, housing rights, and governance institutions. According to Herek (2007), sexual prejudices remain entrenched within the sociocultural structure of society, which promotes inequality in participation and discrimination of LGBTQ+ individuals. Similarly, McCormick & Barthelemy (2021) found that LGBTQ+ youth continue to experience discrimination in inclusive societies.

Another primary antecedent to discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals includes religious conservatism, especially in many countries. Religious doctrines are known to shape personal beliefs and public policies towards sexual and gender minorities, which leads to oppressive legal systems and inadequate social policies.

Inclusivity of policy making remains another critical antecedent, particularly in developing countries and global south nations where inclusive policies are yet to be established. Mulé et al. (2009) emphasize that inclusive policy making plays a significant role in improving LGBTQ+ wellbeing.

Economic marginalization was another problem that was common among the LGBTQ community. This group of individuals tends to experience employment discrimination, workplace exclusion, and inequality in wages (Mukherjee et al., 2026). Discrimination in education is another aspect that contributes to the reluctance of the LGBTQ group to participate in learning activities (Wilson-Daily et al., 2022).

Stigma and heteronormativity contribute to the exclusion of the LGBTQ group socially (Goldsmith et al., 2022).

Decisions and Processes

From the literature on this issue, I learned some crucial decisions and procedures that affect LGBTQ+ inclusion and participation in developmental settings. Among those, civic participation appeared to be one of the most significant topics. It is mentioned in the literature that participation, political representation, and governance are crucial in ensuring the inclusion of marginal populations. Governance institutions that embrace inclusivity are able to enable the participation of LGBTQ+ individuals in politics and other political advocacy and decision-making processes. Unfortunately, oppressive and restrictive regimes make it impossible for the LGBTQ+ population to engage in such processes.

Furthermore, the procedure of institutional engagement became apparent from the literature analyzed. Institutions such as education facilities, health organizations, and employers affect people's social connections and overall well-being. As pointed out by Newman et al., creating an inclusive healthcare setting positively affects the psychological well-being and perception of social and institutional support among young members of the LGBTQ+ population. Such results may be obtained when implementing measures promoting inclusiveness at workplaces.

Finally, identity negotiation has been found to be one of the most common phenomena studied by scholars in the field. The members of the LGBTQ+ community have to experience a lot of difficulties because of stigma and discrimination. As reported by McCormick and Barthelemy (2021), the process of identity negotiation is experienced by the members of the LGBTQ+ community that allows them to avoid exclusion and gain social acceptance.

Resilience was another critical process identified in LGBTQ+ inclusive development research. Typically, LGBTQ+ communities create supportive processes for adapting to institutional and social exclusion and discriminatory practices through creating adaptive mechanisms such as networks for advocacy and collective resilience mechanisms. As

suggested by Felt et al. (2022), the development of an inclusive evaluation framework and a community-based approach to build resilience would enhance future advocacy efforts in the field.

Policy advocacy and social mobilization have also been important elements in the process of LGBTQ+ inclusion in development. Policy advocacy by means of the work of civil society organizations, advocates, and community movements continues to play an important role in effecting reform and change, including legal change and increasing awareness. Social mobilization has made contributions to discussions about equality, social justice, health care, education, and human rights.

Outcomes

The results of thematic analysis identified several significant consequences related to LGBTQ+ inclusion in development systems. One of the most recurring themes in the literature review is social well-being. An inclusive environment within institutions helps foster a sense of belongingness, dignity, empowerment, and social integration among LGBTQ+ people. According to Newman et al. (2021), having a good healthcare system is beneficial for psychological well-being and social integration among LGBTQ+ youth.

Inclusive governance can be regarded as a key developmental outcome. Systems of governance that are equitable and participatory in nature help foster institutional trust and social cohesion. In addition, inclusive governance ensures equitable access to public goods, healthcare services, education, and employment, which ultimately leads to social justice outcomes.

Economic participation can be considered another critical outcome of LGBTQ+ inclusion in development systems. Workplace inclusion, anti-discrimination policies, and equality at the workplace help ensure economic stability, career progression, and upward social mobility for LGBTQ+ individuals. Mukherjee et al. (2026) elaborated on the relationship between inclusive organizational culture and multidimensional employee well-being.

The results of mental health also showed a very high correlation between institutional inclusion and social support. As evidenced by scientific studies, discriminatory attitudes, loneliness, and stigma can adversely affect people's psychological well-being, while inclusive environments contribute to the development of resilience, self-assurance, and psychological balance (Closson & Comeau, 2021). Therefore, the inclusion of education, community involvement, and health care services may facilitate favorable mental health outcomes.

Last but not least, one should mention that the reviewed literature shows that LGBTQ+ inclusion is associated with other sustainability goals, including reducing inequality, social cohesion, higher civic engagement, and enhanced institutional transparency. As mentioned by Wilson-Daily et al. (2022), inclusive education and social integration become necessary factors for solving problems related to many SDGs. Similarly, a model of inclusive development can foster progress toward social equality through equal participation, respect, and institutional fairness. Inconclusion, the reviewed literature confirms that LGBTQ+ inclusion goes beyond merely accepting identity differences.

The ADO framework synthesis highlights the major antecedents, decision processes, and outcomes associated with LGBTQ+ inclusive development research. Table 5 further demonstrates how structural inequalities, institutional participation, and advocacy efforts influence social inclusion, wellbeing, governance equity, and sustainable development outcomes.

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA USING THE TCCM FRAMEWORK

Theory

It became evident that LGBTQ+ inclusive development scholarly studies at the moment use theories such as the ones of Inclusive Development Theory, Intersectionality Theory, Queer Theory, and Human Rights. Although they make significant contributions in explaining social exclusion, identity politics, and institutional discrimination, the existing literature is characterized by an incomplete theoretical integration within multiple disciplines. Current empirical studies place emphasis on social stigma, inclusion, and discrimination, while ignoring wider theoretical models of a developmental, economic, and governance nature.

Further research could utilize multidisciplinary theoretical perspectives that can assist in improving theoretical integration in the field of LGBTQ+ inclusive development. Integration of social justice theory, resilience theory, institutional theory, signaling theory, and social capital perspectives can help understand the topics of governance participation, institutional trust, workplace inclusion, and developmental equity. Shahid et al. (2024) highlight the necessity for multidisciplinary theoretical integration for better conceptualization within emerging interdisciplinary fields.

Finally, further scholarly studies should avoid using Western perspectives on identity and inclusion and include indigenous, decolonial, and culturally based theoretical perspectives.

Context

The contextual literature search showed that there were serious geographical gaps within the body of knowledge on LGBTQ+ inclusive development research. Scholarly articles that discuss LGBTQ+ inclusion within developmenthave mainly taken place in North America, Western Europe, and Australia, whereas few studies have been done in other geographies, for example, in Africa, Latin America, Middle East, and certain parts of Asia. Hence, the role of politics, culture, laws, institutions, and the like in fostering LGBTQ+ inclusion in these regions has not been sufficiently analyzed.

It means that future scholars should pay closer attention to the Southern Global perspective, particularly, with respect to Africa and other developing countries where LGBTQ+ community can face legal persecution and social vulnerability. Besides, the lack of research on how governance, policies, religion affect LGBTQ+ inclusion in this region should be considered by future scholars. Last but not least, future research will require an examination of the difference between rural and urban settings regarding how they influence the development of LGBTQ+ population.

Characteristics

While current literature recognizes the heterogeneity of the LGBTQ+ population, there are several demographic and sociological variables that deserve additional examination. For example, most research tends to treat the LGBTQ+ community as a homogeneous entity without taking into account differences across gender categories, age cohorts, disabilities, ethnicity, socioeconomic position, and culture.

First, the transgender, nonbinary, and gender-diverse population deserves greater scrutiny because they suffer from particular issues with respect to health care, systemic discrimination, and social integration. Second, it was noted during the review that very few studies exist regarding the needs of young and older LGBTQ+ populations. Although youth have been well-researched regarding their educational needs and mental well-being (Closson & Comeau, 2021), older people's demands for accessible healthcare services, social inclusion, economic security, and quality of life remain understudied.

Table 5. ADO Framework Synthesis of LGBTQ+ Inclusive Development Literature

Dimension	Major Themes	Representative Studies	Key Insights

Antecedents	Structural discrimination, religious conservatism, exclusion from public policies, economic disenfranchisement, education constraints, and stigmatization	Herek (2007); Mulé et al. (2009); Goldsmith et al. (2022); Haley et al. (2022)	Institutional and Sociocultural Inequalities Significantly Impact LGBTQ Exclusion and Vulnerability
Decisions/Processes	Civic engagement, institutional involvement, identity negotiation, community resilience, policy advocacy, social mobilization	Newman et al. (2021); McCormick & Barthelemy (2021); Felt et al. (2022)	Advocacy groups and inclusive institutions enhance participation, resilience, and social inclusion
Outcomes	Social well-being, inclusive governance, economic engagement, mental well-being effects, sustainable development, social equity	Wilson-Daily et al. (2022); Mukherjee et al. (2026); Closson & Comeau (2021)	Contribution of LGBTQ+ Inclusion to Wellbeing, Governance Equity, and Sustainable Development

Third, intersectionality-based vulnerability is another topic that merits additional academic exploration. According to Simić Stanojević et al. (2023) and Marks et al. (2020), LGBTQ+ persons who are intellectually disabled have experienced multi-level discrimination and marginalization. Additional research can focus on how socioeconomic, ethnic, and migratory aspects intersect with sexual and gender identity during development and adulthood.

Methodology

The discussion of the methodologies has shown that prior studies in the area of LGBTQ+ inclusion and development use predominantly qualitative and cross-sectional designs. While these methodologies allow gaining insight into individual experiences and identities, they lack generalizability and applicability for long-term analyses.

Longitudinal designs would be used in future studies to evaluate the impact of institutional inclusion, policy changes, healthcare provision, and attitude changes on LGBTQ+ individuals' well-being. Longitudinal research designs could help to investigate further how inclusive governance, education, and workplace practices impact development of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Comparative analysis across countries and regions would also be an interesting topic for study in the field of LGBTQ+ inclusion in development as it would allow understanding how different governance and cultural settings impact LGBTQ+ inclusion. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology could be another avenue for future research.

Digital ethnography and online community analysis are some of the emergent research methodologies that could be used in the study of LGBTQ+. Paul et al. (2024) discuss the importance of digital technologies for modern LGBT experience including identity formation, advocacy, community building, and mobilization.

Table 6. TCCM-Based Future Research Agenda

Dimension	Existing Gaps	Future Research Opportunities
Theory	Overreliance on Western and identity-focused theories	Integration of institutional, resilience, social capital, and decolonial theories
Context	Limited Global South representation	African, rural, and comparative governance studies
Characteristics	Underrepresentation of transgender, aging, disabled, and economically marginalized populations	Intersectional and demographic diversity-focused research
Methodology	Predominance of qualitative and cross-sectional studies	Longitudinal, comparative, mixed-method, and digital ethnographic research

The ADO-TCCM framework highlights potential pathways for future research in LGBTQ+ inclusive development studies by integrating theoretical, contextual, and methodological dimensions. Figure 6 further illustrates keyresearch directions and emerging themes for advancing inclusive development literature. This framework links the antecedent, process/decision, and outcome aspects obtained from the thematic analysis with future research directions in theory, context, characteristic, and methodology. This framework shows the interrelationship between structural discrimination, governance participation, institutional inclusiveness, and development outcomes through the lens of changing theoretical frameworks, the Global South, intersectional characteristics of populations, and methodological changes.

PRACTICAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Government and Policy Implications

From the research outcomes presented in this paper, there is an immediate need for the formulation of laws by governments in order to safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of LGBTQ communities. It is imperative to enact inclusive legislation in order to counteract the issue of structural discrimination and exclusion that affects this particular community in addition to limiting their access to various governmental services.

As indicated by the existing studies, the absence of proper legal protection and a discriminatory approach towards the governance process continue to perpetuate the vulnerability of sexual and gender minorities in developing nations and socially conservative environments (Abbott, 2013; Richards, 2017).

Thus, there is a clear need to formulate policies that seek to combat discrimination in employment, education, health care, housing, and civic activities. Such policies will help to decrease institutional stigmatization and foster social participation of members of this community. Exclusion of LGBTQ individuals from the process of belongingness and development remains an issue even now, as stated by Hess and Bitterman (2021). It is important to address the aspects of intersecting vulnerabilities in terms of disabilities, poverty, and cultural differences while formulating the policy. It was found that both Björnsdóttir and Stefánsdóttir (2020) and Gill (2015) have established the fact that individuals suffering from intellectual disabilities and who considered themselves to be part of the LGBTQ community suffered from exclusion due to different institutions, which requires inclusive policies.

Apart from providing legal recognition and making people aware of these issues through institutional measures, governments need to address issues such as the ability to communicate effectively and acquire health literacy.

Educational Implications

The importance of education institutions is immense in ensuring that LGBTQ populations experience inclusive development, social equality, and institutionally inclusive belonging. From the reviewed literature, it can be seen that creating an exclusionary environment, having a discriminatory attitude, as well as a lack of an appropriate institutional framework have negative consequences for the levels of academic engagement, identity development, and psychological well-being experienced by LGBTQ individuals. Therefore, it is critical to have a diverse curriculum and institutional framework that would guarantee social inclusion and education equality.

It is necessary to incorporate the curriculum on issues such as diversity and social inclusion, sexual education, human rights, and social justice. As explained by Shtarkshall et al. (2007), an inclusive sexuality curriculum plays a significant role in promoting socialization, awareness, and decision-making processes. Furthermore, Curtiss (2018) stressed the importance of adopting inclusive educational frameworks that are designed to promote diversity and social inclusion within institutional settings.

At the same time, it is essential for institutions to implement diversity programs that are aimed at educating teachers and other stakeholders on how to prevent stigmatization, identity-related discrimination, and bullying. As noted by Averett et al. (2008) and Tolman & McClelland (2011), identity development and socialization occur through certain processes related to socialization and parental communication.

Further, this analysis also brings to the fore the importance of intersectional education provision among LGBTQ+ groups that are oppressed and have disabilities. Various research works, for example, conducted by Löfgren-Mårtenson (2009), Fitzgerald & Withers (2013), and Withers et al. (2020), indicate that LGBTQ+ individuals with intellectual disabilities face invisibility and discrimination in terms of inadequate educational opportunities.

Healthcare Implications

The findings prove that inclusive healthcare plays an essential role in achieving the wellbeing, psychological wellness, and equity-focused development outcomes among the representatives of the LGBTQ+ community. The members of this group tend to face healthcare discrimination, stigma, barriers to communication, and lack of access to healthcare services. These issues adversely affect the use of healthcare services and wellbeing.

Inclusive policies should be implemented in healthcare organizations, diversity-focused practice of healthcare professionals, and psychological counseling services. Borawska-Charko et al. (2017) suggest that lack of information concerning sexual health is a critical issue causing disparities. In addition, Piatt (2019) underlined that the problem of exclusion of sexual health from therapy interventions has not been addressed yet.

Another point concerns the consequences of discrimination and exclusion caused by one's identity and related to social wellbeing. Parmenter et al. (2021) showed that exclusion within a community could negatively influence psychological wellness and social integration of young adults. In such a case, counseling and mental healthcare are also necessary for individuals.

The literature review brings attention to the need to develop health care services to accommodate the intersectional vulnerability of individuals with both disabilities and minority status from the LGBTQ+ community. The research findings by Rushbrooke et al. (2014), Payne et al. (2016), and Friedman et al. (2014) revealed that persons with disabilities experience restrictions in terms of freedom, limitations in advocating for themselves, and limitations in intimacy and social interaction. In such cases, health care service providers should ensure that access, dignity, advocacy, and equality in health care services are provided.

Additionally, health communication services require inclusion in their language to ensure health literacy and participation of all the diverse LGBTQ+ community members (Stableford & Mettger, 2007).

Development Agency Implications

There is no doubt that organizations involved in development, international organizations, NGOs, and community organizations are significant contributors towards the advancement of LGBTQ inclusion in sustainable development. From the analysis provided above, it is evident that the application of an inclusive SDG framework requires the recognition of the LGBTQ community as stakeholders in governance, health care, education, and social protection programs.

The development approach must encompass the concept of LGBTQ inclusion as part of the wider human rights, social justice, and equality agenda. According to Naples et al. (2016), gender and sexuality studies pay increasing attention to intersectionality and rights-based frameworks in addressing global structural inequities in development contexts. Thus, organizations working in development should adopt people-oriented and context-driven approaches.

It is imperative for NGOs and community-based organizations to champion the cause of LGBTQ inclusion in the process of development. Community-based interventions are necessary for building resilience, social mobilization, and accountability alongside civic engagement among vulnerable communities. Inclusiveness and participation of marginal groups have also been stressed by Lundin and Bombaci (2023).

Moreover, through this review, one can see how the growing importance of digital spaces and social media is playing a part in increasing activism and awareness creation. As indicated by Paul et al. (2024), digital spaces and social influence networks are critical in shaping discourses, identities, and changes. It is therefore imperative for development agencies to include digital inclusion, online activism, and participatory communication as aspects of development.

Finally, it is essential to note that any efforts to ensure inclusive development must be based on collaboration among governments, schools, health services, civil society organizations, and even communities themselves.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the present literature review can be considered an all-encompassing one that summarizes all the available studies on LGBTQ+ inclusion in the realm of development, there are still some issues that should be addressed. First and foremost, the reviewed literature includes peer-reviewed sources written in English only. Thus, there may have been some factors to be considered that pertain to LGBTQ+ people living in developing countries and were not addressed in English-speaking literature.

Secondly, there appears to be no conceptual coherence between current studies. Current researches are mainly concentrated on the issue of sexuality, identity formation, and inclusion without taking into consideration wider perspectives related to development and governance. In other words, studies devoted to sexuality and its perception by people focus more on psychological issues than to changes associated with sexuality itself (Bay-Cheng, 2019; Mosher & Danoff-Burg, 2005). Moreover, studies devoted to health care and the inclusion of marginalized groups of the population, for instance, intellectually disabled people, appear to be quite scattered (Alexander & Gomez, 2017; Young et al., 2012).

Another limitation concerns methodological diversity of the included literature. While these methods help us understand the lived experiences and institutional exclusion, they cannot capture the longitudinal impact of inclusive policy and governance systems on developmental outcomes. The same is true about other literature pieces focusing on sexual agency, health communication, and institutions' role in the process (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2021).

The second critical gap relates to underrepresentation of contextual factors such as educational systems, media exposure, and sex discourse. For example, Ward (2003) noted that media environment greatly impacted socialization

and identity development processes, whereas Wilson-Daily et al. (2022) argued that education played a vital role in SDG achievements. Nonetheless, these dimensions were not considered sufficiently in relation to inclusive development studies.

Finally, there is a lack of research about the role of LGBTQ individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in inclusive development studies even though they experience high institutional exclusion rates and do not have appropriate support structures (Withers et al., 2020; Wilson & Frawley, 2016).

CONCLUSION

In this systematic literature review, we have examined the ever-developing body of knowledge on LGBTQ+ communities and inclusive development through the SPAR-4-SLR protocol and ADO-TCCM framework. The research findings show that there has been increasing attention to the topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion in development discourse, especially when it comes to social justice, good governance, health equity, education, and sustainable development.

It is evident from the thematic analysis that structural discrimination, cultural stigma, policy exclusion, educational restrictions, and economic marginalization continue to be crucial antecedents that shape the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals. However, civic engagement, community resilience, institutional involvement, and policy advocacy play significant roles in ensuring social inclusion and participation in development processes. The results indicated by the literature review also prove that inclusive governance, healthcare accessibility, education equality, and workplace inclusivity lead to better well-being, mental health, social inclusion, and sustainable development outcomes.

Some conceptual and contextual limitations were found within the body of literature under investigation. Even though diversity and inclusion have been increasingly recognized in academia, LGBTQ+ populations still encounter inequity in accessing institutional assistance, health care services, sex education, and participatory development processes. Research on sexual agency, sexual socialization, and institutional support systems underscores the fact that inclusive development should progress from symbolic to structural transformations (Bay-Cheng, 2019; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2021). Moreover, the studies conducted by Alexander & Gomez (2017) and Withers et al. (2020) highlight the necessity to address issues of sexuality, dignity, and agency among marginalized members of LGBTQ+ groups, especially people with intellectual disabilities.

Further, the findings emerging from the application of TCCM to LGBTQ+ studies highlighted the necessity to pay attention to the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, representation of the Global South, longitudinal research methods, and intersectionality approach to studying social problems. It is important for future research to address the problem through context-specific, participant-inclusive methodologies aimed at capturing the realities of diverse contexts of governance, culture, and institution.

In sum, the current paper provides a useful contribution to LGBTQ+ and inclusive development literature through the application of the interdisciplinary conceptual framework that unites the concepts of governance, social inclusion, human rights, and sustainable development.

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CRediT Author Statement / Author contributions

Kashish Dua: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing — original draft, Visualization, Software, Data curation, Formal analysis, Visualization, Writing — review & editing.

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