

Sexual orientation

Psychology



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Sexual Orientation Sexual Orientation Sexual orientation describes the nature of a person's long-term romantic, emotional or sexual desirability to others. Three different forms of sexual orientation are described by the literature; heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality. Heterosexuality, the most common type of sexual orientation, is the one in which a person is sexually attracted to members of the other gender. Sexual desirability and attraction towards the same sex is described as homosexuality. A Gay man is a term used for male homosexuals while a lesbian refers to female homosexuals. Bisexuality is characterized by feelings that do not relate to any of the corresponding patterns of sexual behavior. Heterosexuality is considered a normal sexual behavior around us and in many cultures, while homosexuality is considered a taboo. Homosexuality is many times referred to as a disease or a crime and attempts are made to "cure" it through medical or psychological therapies. (Bernstein 2012). In spite of the modern developments, it is still socially disapproved by many people. Here the question arises that what factors or features influence a particular sexual orientation. Many biological, psychosocial and environmental influences have been studied which contribute towards the sexual orientation. This paper discusses these theories as well as the effect on human values and moralities.

The research studies have given evidence through various biological theories that biological factors play a significant role in the development of sexual orientation. One of the most influential hormonal theories explaining the homosexuality explains it by the sex-atypical androgen acting during the gestational period. Human studies of some gay men have elaborated that they had lower levels of testosterone hormone. However, some studies find <https://assignbuster.com/sexual-orientation-essay-samples-2/>

no or little difference between the heterosexual and homosexual men. The hormonal studies for women showed less consistent results. Earlier studies estimated higher levels of testosterone in lesbians as compared to heterosexual while the more recent studies state that no difference of hormones has been observed (Mustanski et al 2002). The hormonal theory also states that prenatal exposure to certain hormones decides the sexual orientation. One research stated that exposure to the synthetic estrogen diethylstilbestrol increased the birth probability of a female lesbian. The genetic theory for sexual orientation states that genetic factors cause the person to become homosexual. Kallman (1952) stated that homosexuality is developed as a result of genetic predisposition. Many studies believe that homosexuality runs in the families (Greenberg et al 2011). The hormonal explanations of the sexual orientation provide less evidence and no convincing proof is available however, the genetic theories are more stable and convincing regarding the sexual orientation.

Although genetic and the hormonal theories explained have a significant contribution towards sexual orientation it is important to note that environmental influences have a considerable contribution as well. Our brains and bodies are quite responsive to the environmental factors and the environmental experiences often result in physical changes in the brain and hormonal changes (Bernstein 2012). One important environmental influence is the atmosphere created in the educational institutions. Schools and colleges are mostly not open in accepting gays, lesbians or bisexuals and also do not discuss it openly with the students. Many issues such as identity conflicts, feelings of isolation, family disruptions and peer relationship problems predispose the students to start believing that they are

homosexuals (Greenberg et al 2011).

In cases of socially disputed sexual orientation such as homosexuality, many question the sanctity of human values and the negative effects on them.

However, it has been observed that even in same-sex couples they equally value love, faithfulness and commitment. Power and decision making is also not much different as compared to the heterosexual couples. Gay and lesbian relationships can also be brief or unstable like the heterosexual couples or they can be long-term in other cases. Many also go a step further and adopt children to complete their families and prove as good parents in spite of their sexual orientation (Bernstein 2012; Lamanna 2012). However, in cases of discrimination against the same-sex couples, many undergo stress affecting the strength of their relationship (Lamanna et al 2012).

The paper suggests through different evidences that genetic factors and prenatal hormonal factors cause the differences in sexual orientation.

Environmental influences also affect the development of the human brain and preference towards a particular orientation. However, it is best to say that sexual orientation is shaped by the complex and combined action of both biological and non-biological factors. It is important for our society to accept the increasing emerging homosexuality in our surroundings and decrease our discriminative attitudes towards them. Homosexual couples although are disapproved by many, have emerged to show that they have equal capabilities of building a stable relationship, nurturing children and valuing the human ethics.

References

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