

ABSTRACT

The thesis discusses the development of non-binary gender identity using the framework of social cognitive theory. The thesis has three objectives. Firstly, to understand what gender, gender identity and the binary concept of gender mean for non-binary people. Second, to identify which significant aspects enter into the development of non-binary gender identity and third, to explore how to view non-binary gender identity through the lens of social cognitive theory. The theoretical section focuses on gender socialization, gender and gender identity and the theoretical perspectives that address gender identity development. It then focuses on the development of non-binary gender identity and subfields. The empirical section presents the actual research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine non-binary individuals aged 18-25 years old thematically focused on their subjective experiences of gender identity development. The data were analysed through reflective thematic analysis. Subsequently, the themes of "Existing outside the box", "(In)visibility" and "Such a pet" were established. Based on the analysis, the research questions were answered. The thesis showed that non-binary persons perceive their difference already in childhood, although they do not know what this difference means until adolescence. In adolescence, through the Internet and the people in their lives, they access information that is crucial for further exploration and awareness of their gender identity. Non-binary identity development is seen as non-linear. Relationships with other queer persons and a sense of belonging emerged as crucial. There is a lack of awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues in schools, while at the same time gender dichotomization is noticeable here and in other settings. Social cognitive theory helps to understand the development of gender identity of non-binary persons who interact with the environment during this process. Persons are active agents in the search, while at the same time stigma may hinder their development.

KEYWORDS

non-binary identity, gender identity, non-binary gender identity development, gender, social cognitive theory