




## Teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of LGBT learners in the school setting

<sup>1</sup>Nontobeko Noxolo Dumakude 

<sup>1</sup>Free State Department of Education, South Africa

<sup>1</sup>Primary author: [ntobeko479@gmail.com](mailto:ntobeko479@gmail.com)

**Abstract**—This study explores the teachers' attitudes towards teaching LGBT learners in the school setting. It employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design, employing semi-structured interviews for data collection. Four participants, two male and two female teachers, were selected from a primary school in the Eastern Free State, South Africa. The data were analysed using a thematic analysis. The findings revealed that there has been slight progress in the school regarding LGBT issues. Most teachers showed that they have no problem teaching LGBT learners. They make efforts to accommodate and create a safe learning environment for such learners; however, the study also revealed that some teachers who seemed optimistic in creating a safe learning environment for LGBT learners still do not approve of people who are LGBT and hold some strong negative thoughts towards these people.

**Keywords:** Inclusive curriculum, LGBT Learners, Stigmatisation, Teachers' attitudes

To cite this article (APA): Dumakude, N. N. (2025). Teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of LGBT learners in the school setting. *International Journal of Studies in Sexuality Education*, 1(2), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijse.v1i2.1980>

### I. INTRODUCTION

THE increase of homophobic attacks within the country, continent, and even internationally, as well as the analysis of the current and previous literature, has raised interest in conducting research of this nature. Various attacks and hatred have been projected and are still occurring in our country towards homosexual individuals. These prejudices escalate from our societies to our schools, and the literature has revealed that homophobic assaults are more evident in the schooling environment since most teachers and learners are entirely against the notion of homosexuality (Bennett & Reddy, 2015; Butler & Astbury, 2008).

For instance, the qualitative study concerning the experiences of 18 South African gay and lesbian youth conducted by Buttler (2003) exposed that all the participants encountered non-tolerance, isolation, and discrimination within high school settings. In their responses, they shared that they experienced harassment, projected by peers, teachers, and school administrators, avoidance, rejection, and isolation. Buttler (2003) indicates that the experiences of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) learners within the school context need immediate attention, as such attacks result in harmful outcomes on their psychosocial development and education.

South African schools are established under various policies and legislation that seek equality for all learners regardless of gender diversity. Nevertheless, schools and teachers seem incapable and have no interest in following the values of equality policies to teach learners and society to develop a positive attitude and competence towards gender diversity issues (Moletsane et al., 2004). In providing solutions to a homophobic school environment by various researchers, Reygan and Steyn (2016) suggest that South African policy makers and teachers need more emphasis on the "theoretical, epistemological, methodological and pedagogical underpinnings of diversity literacy in schools. Reygan and Steyn (2016) also believe that all teachers should be actively involved in the process, not just life orientation teachers, and challenge gender inequality.

Another study conducted by the Human Rights Watch South Africa (2011) also provides evidence that schools are preserving and reinforcing social prejudices and discrimination towards LGBT learners. For example, the incident of Tanesha, a 13-year-old lesbian, describes how a teacher oppressed her: "She tried to chase me from the class because she did not want to teach an isitabane (Human Rights Watch South Africa, 2011, p. 61). Due to numerous homophobic incidents occurring within the watch of school managers, it was therefore essential to investigate teacher's attitudes towards the teaching of LGBT learners.

Problem statement

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Experiences of LGBT learners within the school environment

Gender and sexual diversity are not addressed in schools, regardless of various policies documented to protect and accommodate learners of the same sexual orientation. Policies such as the National Education Policy Act of 1996, South African Schools Act of 1996, White Paper 6 of 2001, and Screening Identification Assessment and Support Policy of 2014 advocate for a safe classroom and school environment. However, DePalma and Francis (2014) suggest that there is a strong conflict between progressive legislation and education policy, and according to UNESCO (2016), homophobic and transphobic bullying and violence deprive LGBT learners of their right to a quality education in a safe school environment.

International research findings and various reports have revealed that LGBT learners are and feel unsafe in schools, and this impacts their ability to participate fully and achieve in education and to complete their schooling. According to D'Augelli et al. (2006) and SAHRC (2007), oppression and marginalisation of LGBT people occur mainly in schools. Most of these learners who are perceived to be LGBT face extensive challenges such as marginalisation, invisibility, and bullying, and these kinds of challenges negatively impact their ability to participate completely and succeed in education and finish their schooling (Rey & Gibson, 1997). These challenges faced by LGBT youth result from the way they tend to present their gender identity

(Aspenlieder et al., 2009; Renn, 2010).

Toxic school environments result in a high number of students who drop out of school and are absent to escape the homophobic settings (Aragon et al., 2014). To identify the school challenges encountered by LGBT learners in our schools, Jones and Hillier (2013) reported that in the past decade, there has been an increasing number of Australian LGBT learners coming out, and they have faced several bullying experiences. The report shows that 61 % of young people in 2010 came across verbal abuse due to homophobia, those who experienced physical abuse stood at 18% resulting from homophobia, and 69% reported other forms of homophobia, including exclusion, cyber-bullying, and rumours. In general, 80% experienced some form of abuse at school. According to Jones and Hillier (2013), it appears that these learners are experiencing bullying even more than in the past, as the research around the world revealed an epidemic.

In revealing a continued oppression and marginalisation of LGBT learners within school environments another study was conducted by Elia (1993) in the United States of America using 7000 participants (LGBTI youth) as a sample, the point of interest of this study was to discuss and define different practices of homophobia in the high school settings and also to explore how homophobic school environments have negatively influenced high school students. Results revealed that 80% of participants displayed a high decline in academic performance, 40% demonstrated a high absenteeism rate, and 30% decided to quit school for good. Similarly, Sears (1991) revealed that about 90% of LGBTI students experienced negative attitudes portrayed by their classmates, and 50% of them were afraid of being harassed, which contributed to their fears of revealing their sexual orientation at school to avoid mistreatment from their peers. In comparing the lives of non-LGBTI and LGBTI students, LGBTI learners are more targeted when it comes to harmful experiences such as harassment, violence, and offensive comments than non-LGBTI peers (Rankin, 2007)

In New York, a survey with a sample of 7000 LGBTI students was conducted to investigate the increasing rate of homophobia in school settings. Kosciw et al. (2012) confirmed that in New York, there is evidence of homophobia. They reported that 84 % of the participants are being verbally harassed, whereas 40% of them are harassed physically, and 18% revealed that they were physically beaten at school in the previous year, just before the survey was conducted. The reasons for such attacks are due to different sexual orientations. These negative experiences accumulate because no specific attention is given to such cases. For instance, during the survey, one of the learners pointed out that he took the matter to the school staff, but no school action was taken to resolve the problem. South Africa is the first country in the world to protect gay and lesbian people in its constitution (Gevisser & Cameron, 1995). Despite the language of inclusivity and acceptance in a new democratic South Africa, various South African institutions, including education, continue to maintain behaviours of heterosexism (Richardson, 2006; Wells & Polders, 2006).

In KwaZulu-Natal, Msibi (2012) explored how black learners from traditional societies deal with LGBT. The results reported that homosexual learners faced hostile experiences of schooling (Msibi, 2012). These hostile experiences involved offensive language and physical violence, which teachers and their peers primarily caused. The study also revealed that homosexual learners had to hide their sexual preferences to cope with homophobic attacks coming from their peers. Furthermore, the results of his study indicated that LGBT learners are facing the fear of coming out, and again, the lack of knowledge about the varieties of sexuality steers the mistreatment of homosexual learners. The study revealed that within the province, homosexual learners are more stigmatised and discriminated against within higher

institutions of learning.

Similarly, Killen and Stangor (2001) indicated that heterosexual learners harass learners daily. In the Western Cape Province, another study was done whereby participants indicated that some school staff members and peers tend to project homophobic comments towards them, for instance, "Zetabane, Moffie or Fag" (Martinez-Merino et al., 2025). South African university homosexual student's experiences have also been studied. For instance, Graziano (2004) used 20 gay and lesbian students to explore their beliefs and opinions. The results of his study indicated that these LGBT students opted for silence about their actual sexual attraction due to a hostile campus environment, and they also indicated that they are afraid of being abused.

According to the qualitative study of Buttler (2003), the experiences of 18 South African gay and lesbian youth revealed that all participants faced discrimination, isolation, and intolerance within high school contexts. The 18 sexual minority youth shared details about how they experienced harassment, inflicted by peers, teachers, and school administrators, avoidance, rejection, and isolation. This research gives an idea that the experiences of the LGBT participants in their high school environment had harmful results on their psychosocial development and education. LGBT students are less likely to be oppressed and harassed at schools when schools' policies address and give enough attention to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity (Kosciw et al., 2012). Teachers are more likely to intervene in scenes of homophobic attacks.

#### **Teacher's attitudes towards homosexuality**

In examining the attitudes of teachers towards homosexual learners O'Connell et al. (2010) conducted a study of teachers in rural New York, the report indicated that six percent of teachers did not feel comfortable when it comes to communicating with LGBT learners; nineteen percent revealed that their classrooms or offices cannot be a safe environment for LGBTQ youth and twenty percent (20%) of them were so reluctant to talk about homosexual issues with colleagues. Similarly, another study conducted in Texas, United States, indicated that 35% of teachers who were participants had one or more negative approaches towards homosexuality and lesbian as well as gay people (Wyatt et al., 2008). Regarding homosexuality as a sinful act, abnormal, compulsive, and unnatural are the attitudes portrayed by participants (Wyatt et al., 2008). Additionally, two national studies concerning the attitudes of teachers towards homosexuals were carried out, and the results indicated that a negative approach towards LGBT youth was dominant amongst the teachers (Kumashiro, 2000).

The first part of the national survey was conducted using primary teachers as participants. The data that was gathered indicated that 51 % of teachers would not be able to respond to students' questions about LGBT people, as they are uncomfortable with such people. In comparison, 18% of the teachers pointed out that addressing issues of bullying and harassment for students referred to as LGBT would not be comfortable for them (Kosciw et al., 2012). The second national survey was conducted amongst the high school teachers, where 24% of teachers highlighted that creating a safe and supportive learning environment for LGBT students is not their responsibility and should not be held accountable (Kosciw et al., 2012). After these two surveys, conclusions were made that teachers hold negative attitudes towards homosexual learners. Literature review shows that some teachers are reluctant to engage in gender diversity topics in the classroom due to their cultural and religious beliefs.

Literature revealed that teachers tend to divert from the content (syllabus) to avoid difficult topics such as gender diversity, and they also perceive homosexuality as immoral work done (Francis, 2012; Helleve et al., 2009). According to Francis and Msibi (2011), South

African in-service teachers are showing a very slight shift in their attitudes regarding homosexuality. Regardless of inclusive and tolerance policies, teachers always advocate for heterosexism in the classroom (Francis & Msibi, 2011). A study was conducted among eleven Durban schools to study teachers' experiences. Francis (2012) pointed out that teachers frequently ignored issues of sexual diversity when homosexuality was introduced in the classroom. In another study by McCabe et al. (2013), teachers, schools, and school counsellors saw a need to advocate for LGBT learners. Also, another study presented that as attitudes about LGBT people progressed from negative to positive, school counsellors stated that more engagement in behaviours to make the school climate less heterosexist and more supportive for LGBT students (Hall et al. 2013). Therefore, teachers' attitudes can impact the way they behave, and these attitudes may serve as a basis of supportive actions concerning LGBT students, or teachers may contribute to an aggressive school environment for these youth regarding homosexuality and supporting LGBTQ students.

Scholars highlighted that teachers are the product of the society holding certain beliefs about the culture, religion, sexuality, and gender, and it must be understood that their perceptions about homosexuality are rooted within societal norms which involve gender, religion, and culture (Francis & Le Roux, 2011; Msibi, 2012). Few studies have been conducted focusing on South African teachers and their attitudes towards homosexuality. It is often through testimonies provided by lesbians and gays that one can analyse teacher's attitudes (Msibi, 2012) and from children coming from gay and lesbian households (Lubbe, 2007). South African schools have proved to be hostile towards homosexual learners; prejudices and oppression surround schooling experiences of lesbians and gays within school settings (Msibi, 2012; Butler et al., 2003; Richardson, 2004). The study conducted by Msibi (2012, p. 12) for African townships schools, one gay student revealed that the teacher: "Dragged me by neck ... He always says that he does not like 'izitabane' [insulting word for gay in isiZulu]. Other teachers just laugh and do nothing" and Butler et al.'s (2003, p. 21) study also indicate to teacher's prejudice: "There is one teacher. He is so against gay people, and he is always criticising gay people openly in class. Everyone would laugh and I just burst into tears".

#### **School curriculum on gender and sexual diversity**

South Africa has been among the applauded countries for ensuring that all citizens' rights are fully observed, irrespective of sexual orientation. Nevertheless, the increasing violent crisis against LGBT persons shows that there is a considerable gap between constitution and implementation, as LGBT people are still marginalised by fellow citizens (DePalma & Francis, 2014). South African curriculum is also trying to align with the country's constitution by offering quality and equality for all citizens. Still, the content of our curriculum does not address the issues of homosexuality in our school classrooms. South African literature reveals that the issues of LGBT in school curriculum in South Africa are rooted only in one subject, namely life skills popularly known as Life Orientation (LO). Both learners and teachers are exposed to the issues of homosexuality only during LO period, and this shows that only LO teachers have access to teach and engage in LGBT problems.

According to Francis (2012), South African issues associated with homosexuality based on the outcomes of the LO curriculum were previously described and addressed in the OBE (Outcome-Based Education) curriculum. Frances (2012) continues to argue that in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2006) and Departmental LO Teacher Guidelines (Department of Education [DoE], 2006), there is a huge silence on issues which could be categorised as "sexual diversity". Helleve et al.'s (2009) results indicate that teachers change the syllabus

to escape difficult learning outcomes such as sexuality education. Teachers are failing to challenge social norms, and they hold a perception that homosexuality is deviant from social practices, and due to religious and cultural beliefs, are reluctant to teach about such topics in the classroom. Heterosexism continues to dominate in South African classrooms regardless of the tolerance and inclusivity of democratic policies that address past imbalances (Francis & Msibi, 2011). In a study of teachers' experiences in 11 Durban schools, Francis (2012) found that teachers ignored sexual diversity topics and that when the topic of homosexuality was presented in the classroom, it was outlined in terms of "compulsory heterosexuality". Therefore, out of various findings by researchers, it is evident that the South African curriculum is lacking inclusivity for LGBT learners. A lot still needs to be done to accommodate gender diversity in the classrooms; for instance, Life Orientation was the only subject that addressed the issues concerning gender differences in our schools.

Exclusion of LGBT issues in the school curriculum has become a global issue, as most countries are facing discrimination towards homosexuality. On the report provided by Human Rights Watch (2016), after conducting research within five United States (Alabama, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, and Utah) concerning discrimination among LGBT learners in the United States (US) schools, learners revealed that their teachers had never attempted to discuss or raise LGBT lessons in class. An 18-year-old student in Utah said: "I have not had teachers mention LGBT issues at all. Nobody likes to mention it. And any time someone brings up the issue, it was just skimmed over" (Human Rights Watch South Africa, 2011).

Teachers in some schools silenced learners who tried to bring up LGBT matters as a topic of discussion for instance in one of the schools in Alabama, Rowan C 15-year-old bisexual gender learner in Alabama, stated "We learn about the civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, but not LGBT movements. We even tried to bring it up in class and got shutdown and it was the teacher shutting it down" (Human Right Watch, 2016) in some cases, teachers reprimanded learners for raising issues about LGBT for example a 17 year old girl by the name of Angela in Pennsylvania mentioned "I remember in middle school, asking about same-sex relationships, and being totally shut down, and being pulled aside by an administrator and told that was not something we talk about" (Human Right Watch, 2016). Similarly, a teacher in Alabama pointed out that teachers are not allowed to discuss such issues because they are not trained to discuss topics like this. He said, "We have to be careful about what we say in the classroom because all it takes is one student complaining to mom and dad, and it becomes a huge problem, a school problem, and potentially a school district problem" (Human Rights Watch South Africa, 2011).

#### **Educational policies and the constitution of South Africa on homosexuality**

Negative attitudes shown by teachers towards homosexual learners in schools reveal that school policies are not aligned with the values of the constitution and many other educational policies that seek to ensure all learners are equally treated in classrooms. In 1994, South Africa established a democratic constitution to challenge the exclusion of certain citizens. The notion of equality dominated the contents of the constitution; therefore, according to the constitution of South Africa, all people must be treated equally and no unfair discrimination of individuals based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief, culture, ethnicity, and language (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The White Paper 6 defined inclusive education as acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, or disability (DoE, 2001).

From white paper 6 (2001), the South African Schools Act (SASA) and

the DoE have also provided information on how our schools can integrate the issues of homosexuality within the school environment. Section 5(1) emphasises that public schools must accept and teach learners without discrimination. According to Section 20(1) of the South African Schools Act state that the school governing body has a prominent duty to establish school policies and code of conduct for learners that serve the best interests of the school, and to make it a point that those policies are aligned with the country's constitution to ensure quality education for all learners at the school.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2011) has provided schools with code of conduct guidelines for learners; the content of that guideline stipulates that all the stakeholders (parents, teachers, learners, and non-teaching staff) of the school must take initiative in the establishment of the school's Code of Conduct. Code of Conduct Guidelines emphasise the importance of supporting the development of inclusive policies, which promote respect for LGBTI learners and consider gender and sexuality diversity. It also stipulates that learners should never be exposed to any form of disciplinary procedures or punishment regarding their gender and sexual orientation. The DBE (2011) has also distributed a guide on fighting homophobic bullying in school, which offers significant guidelines on the phases that all stakeholders can follow in developing inclusive policies and a safe environment for all learners.

Nevertheless, the case is still far different for LGBT learners, whose identities are frequently questioned by teachers, peers, and society, and yet our education stands for inclusivity. A Study conducted by the Human Rights Watch South Africa (2011) offers a clear reality that schools are perpetuating and reinforcing social prejudices and discrimination towards LGBT learners. For instance, the case of Tanesha, a 13-year-old lesbian, explains how a teacher oppressed her: "She tried to chase me from the class because she did not want to teach an isitabane" (Human Rights Watch South Africa, 2011, p. 61).

### III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study explores teachers' attitudes towards teaching LGBT learners in the school setting.

### IV. METHODS

#### Research approach

According to Creswell (2014), research design can be perceived as the guiding plan to conduct a study that maximises control over factors that could interfere with the validity of the drawn conclusions. For Mouton (2006), research design is a plan in which a researcher aims to conduct proposed research, and it also focuses on the product and formulates a research problem as an initial point. Referring to the views of these two researchers (Creswell, 2014), the research design provides a clear structure in which data were collected and analysed. The qualitative approach was used for this study. Qualitative research examines individual's and collective actions, beliefs, and perceptions on how they construct and understand their reality in a society (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This approach is helpful in the natural setting. The researchers gather data in the field where participants experience the problem within the study, and researchers tend to interact face-to-face with participants.

#### Research approach

A qualitative approach was used in this study to analyse the way teachers understand and view the issue of working towards an inclusive environment, whereby gender differences amongst the learners need to be accepted and prioritised to ensure that the aims of inclusive education are implemented in the classroom.

#### Research design

The study adopted a case study exploring teachers' attitudes in teaching homosexual learners. Choosing this form of design to gather data allowed me as a researcher to closely focus on the existing matter since interactions with participants possibly pointed out what hinders the acceptance of homosexual learners in schools. Yin (2009, p. 18) proposed that a case study is utilised to understand a real-life phenomenon in depth; nevertheless, such understanding involves necessary contextual conditions, for they are closely related to or rather influence the phenomenon under study. Therefore, the contextual factor affecting my study involves the background or the nature of the society participants (teachers) from a traditional or modern society.

#### Participants

Four participants, two male and two female teachers, were selected from a primary school in the Eastern Free State, South Africa.

#### Research site

This study was conducted at a school that is diverse in terms of race, religion, and gender among both teachers and learners. My population was diverse because I wanted to have a representation of racial, gender, and religious groups. It represented the diversity of our country and schools, which allowed me as a researcher to explore the views of the teachers from various races (African and White). The English medium school has 950 learners and 32 teachers; learners are black.

#### Semi-structured interviews

This study used semi-structured interviews to gather data from four teachers. The questions were open-ended, and the researcher engaged with participants in a formal interview on a prepared schedule of fifteen minutes per participant. The interviews were recorded.

#### Data analysis

This study used the thematic content analysis (TCA). Thematic content analysis is a technique used to analyse the subjective interpretation of the data context, whereby themes and coding are utilised through a systematic classification process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). This technique was helpful as it helped to elaborate on themes through the interpretation of the participants' in-depth experience. TCA involves systematic and transparent data processing procedures to support valid and reliable interpretations.

#### Ethical considerations

Ethics are the standards and the norms for behaviours that differentiate between right and wrong. Ethics guide people to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours; thus, ethical considerations are fundamentally significant when researching, as they serve as the guiding mechanism for researchers (Devillan, 2006). The main goal of any research is to obtain truth and knowledge about the social world; therefore, the research principles help researchers to avoid falsifying the data. Researchers must also abide by ethical standards for the public to support and believe in the research. The success of the research largely depends on the availability of the participants. Therefore, it is academically and publicly advisable that researchers employ ethics that protect participants from harm during data gathering. Ethics for participants consists of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, deception, incentives, voluntary participation, the ability to withdraw, and approval requirements. This research project is one of the sensitive projects as it touches on teacher's attitudes toward LGBT learners. Ethical approval was attained from the University of the Free State and Department of Education. In this research, I observed the ethics of confidentiality and anonymity, voluntary participation, and the ability to withdraw informed consent.

The informed consent of participants who choose to participate in research voluntarily is obtained with a full understanding of the possible risks that might be involved in this study. This study provided

full details and outlined that their views are essential, and they requested their consent to record their responses using Easy Voice Recorder. This study ensures participants' confidentiality by not revealing their or the school's identities. An easy voice recorder was kept safe to ensure that the information recorded during interviews was not accessible to anyone except a researcher, to ensure confidentiality.

Voluntary participation is how an individual decides to participate in a specific project without being forced to do so. This study sensitises my participants to the fact that participation in this research is voluntary. They can withdraw from participating at any given time, and there are no harmful consequences after withdrawal.

## V. RESULTS

### Teacher's attitudes towards homosexual learners

According to the study conducted by O'Connel et al. (2010), teachers indicated that they do not feel relaxed when interacting with LGBT youth, and some specified that they were not willing to create a safe space for LGBT youth in their classrooms and offices. Some did not want to engage with colleagues as far as LGBT issues were concerned. Another study conducted by Wyatt et al. (2008) revealed that teachers hold one or more negative attitudes toward homosexual people. Based on the interviews with teachers, both negative and positive attitudes were revealed towards homosexual people. Almost all teachers responded positively when asked how teachers in their schools maintain equality between heterosexual and homosexual learners in their classrooms.

Teacher A: *Most teachers are applying a strategy of equity, whereby they treat each gender equally regardless of preference, and to ensure the strategy is effective, they use what we call differentiation inside the classroom, whereby they put learners of mixed gender so that they can learn about different sexual orientations.*

Teacher B: *"By not showing discrimination to those learners and not making examples about them because they feel out, I think it is working because they feel they are on the same level as other learners".*

*"Learners are learners so in most cases they in one way discriminate against learners who are heterosexual and learners who are homosexuals so as a school like I have said in the beginning we rely on SASA we must teach learners that they should respect learners regardless of their sexual orientation gays deserves to be respected like any other learners in the premises of the school"* (Teacher C).

Teacher D: Teachers maintain equality between them, we do not treat them differently, and we do not teach them different learning content because they must be taught according to the Department of Education's policy, CAPS. And we have to adhere to that, according to me it is effective because they are some of the teachers who do not understand these things of heterosexuals and homosexuals but life orientation teachers are there to assist those teachers who do not understand because to especial us who are traditional teachers who are from apartheid era it is a taboo to have these things of homosexuals we do not understand, the curriculum that we are teaching it is not the one that we were using when we were attending school, the curriculum is changing from time to time, we are taught in workshops and trained on how to adjust to the new curriculum and according to the constitution of the country everyone is equal before the law so they should receive equal treatment and people's rights have to be respected we have to do everything according to the constitution of the country and it is working if other teachers are not doing that, parents have a right to complain about that so that it can be dealt with procedural so.

According to the above responses it shows that teachers are trying to create a space that is LGBT friendly in their classrooms, the strategies

shared by teachers on the interviews are revealing that there is a slightly improvement in some schools regarding the acceptance of homosexual learners and according to Teacher D it is also evident that the department of education is also working towards improving knowledge of gender diversity in schools, Life Orientation teachers are being trained on how to adjust to the new curriculum and in return they enrich other teachers in their schools who are teaching Life Skills. Teachers' strategies answer this research question: How can a safe and inclusive schooling space be created for LGBT learners for optimal academic and psychosocial development? Teachers also indicated how individual teachers maintain equality between learners with diverse gender orientations.

*"As an individual I honour gender equality, I treat each learner equal despite sexuality, what I am doing, I am mixing them despite of their sexual orientation to ensure that they know that teamwork is something present despite of gender and other issues so teamwork and working in collaboration despite of the gender orientation is my key point"* (Teacher A).

*"I treat learners equally and do not embarrass those different. Even when I ask questions, I ask them randomly, not specifically to point them out"* (Teacher B).

*"Should I come across a learner who is maybe a homosexual at school, it is my duty as a teacher to teach other learners to know that we are different in terms of gender orientation and to lead by example, I must respect that learner regardless of sexual orientation"* (Teacher C).

### Lack of policy implementation and knowledge

All institutions are bound to have policies that need to govern the function of the entire institution; therefore, even schools are constructed to function under certain policies to achieve both the needs and goals of learners and the DoE. It is the duty of the teachers and school management team to see to it that all the policies designed by the DoE are known and implemented within the school, and it is also important that those policies are functional in our schools to ensure the safety of all learners in school. According to the interviews conducted with the teachers, some of the responses regarding inclusive policies that are put into practice in the school revealed that some teachers are not familiar with policies that protect non-heterosexual learners, and showed that there are no policies that are functional in the school in the protection of such learners. Teachers were asked if any policies or legislation were being implemented where they teach. The following responses were given:

*"So far, based on the DoE, it is just the amendment; we are not having a solid policy being implemented, yes, even white paper 6 is trying to accommodate homosexuals, but it is not that explicit"* (Teacher A).

*"I have not come across that policy, but then I know that we are advised to give them a chance to learn and their right to education is not violated, and many of them are now graduates and are working. I know some learners"* (Teacher B).

*"I cannot say they are not there because honestly speaking, I have not gone through all the policies in the school, but I have not come across"* (Teacher C).

*"The act used at schools is the South African Schools Act (SASA), which assists us in controlling all these things. Even the learner's code of conduct adopted by the school governing body, which must go along with the South African Schools Act, covers the rights of such learners, and they are protected"* (Teacher D).

From the above responses, I can point out that most teachers are not aware of existing policies that advocate for the rights of homosexual learners, and it is also evident that schools have not put such policies into practice. Those aware of some policies are not familiar with the content of such policies. For instance, according to teacher A, white paper 6 is not explicitly in terms of how schools should accommodate homosexual learners. In contrast, it clearly states that schools should

acknowledge and respect differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV status, etc.

As far as policy is concerned, some of the teachers still do not see the need to implement homosexual policies in their schools since there are very few learners in their schools who are non-heterosexual. The abstracts of two participants declared these.

*"We do not have any policy in place because we do not have such a situation. Even in the past, if we had such a situation, it was just an individual; we could not put any policy in place just to encompass an individual. Most of our learners know their sexual orientation, and we do not suffer from that (Teacher A)."*

*"You find out that in the whole school, we have about 900 learners, and there are one or two learners who are gay, which is almost zero percent" (Teacher C).*

The follow-up question was then asked to Teacher C if one or two learners do not deserve an inclusive policy, and the matter of using the same toilets was also raised throughout the policy issue. The following response was received:

*"I do not understand by including them because we have girls, we have boys and we have gays is just a matter of knowing that this one is a girl, boy or gay and I do not think is necessary, it is like boys are boys or girls are girls it is just a matter of knowing that this person is a gay and should be respected for, the choice of being a gay if it is choice. I do not think it is necessary because we do not need a policy that accommodate boys and policy that accommodate girls so why do we need policy that accommodate gays to my knowledge we only have two gender which is female and male then this one of being homosexual is just an orientation so if you are a gay it does not change that you are a man so you are going to use man's toilet"*

Such responses indicate that some teachers are still not ready to implement inclusive education and indicate answers to the proposed research question: How can a safe and inclusive schooling space be created for LGBT learners for optimal academic and psychosocial development? It is quite evident that a safe and inclusive schooling environment for LGBT learners is not something that achieve soon in our schools, since not all teachers reveal feelings of acceptance towards such learners. In their responses, they see no reason to adopt policies for minority learners, and that can make things even more difficult for LGBT learners in schools because the school does not recognise their existence; instead, they are being treated as majority learners.

Also, when respondents were asked what should be done to improve gender and sexuality diversity policies in the school and who should be involved in improving the policy, some responded positively, giving ideas on how the gender policy could be improved. In contrast, some indicated that learners should be trained early to accept their gender.

*"What should be done is to go back to the basics of teaching. Teaching is based on a tripartite structure: parents, teacher, and learner. If we can start to socialise learners about sexual orientation at the very early stage this help us to make them accept their state of gender or it make us to tell them how to improve in terms patriarchy and matriarchy so that they may know their role in community because right now learners who are not sure of their sexual orientation they end up being the victims of anything that is trending that is related to sexuality" (Teacher A).*

*"If teachers can be given a lesson on different gender sexualities because some of them are old and do not understand these things or were not exposed to them from the childhood so it is difficult for them to accept and believe in them ... they are struggling to accept and adapt to it because they were not exposed to it during their childhood" (Teacher B).*

*"Already the DoE has included such in the content that is taught in LO so LO has a section that talks about gender so learners are being taught on all issues revolving around gender so I do not think there anything that is beyond that, that should be done, I think that is the purpose of life orientation people*

*should be oriented about anything outside the content, in fact it is there to teach learners how to behave and how to treat other people so it is enough there" (Teacher C).*

*"I think that we should continue to have a joint venture with non-governmental structures like the one we engage with which the USAID sponsors this organisation is giving us a booklet which has a scripted lesson plans which have to be taught at school from grade 4-7, grade 4-6 it is part of life skills and from grade 7 upwards it is part of life orientation. They are meant for sexuality education for instance in grade 7 the scripted lesson plan 7.2 is about appreciation and acceptance of self and others and 7.3 in the scripted lesson is based on the difference between gender and sex, scripted lesson plan 7.4 it is based on understanding puberty which is physical, social and emotional changes which people experience at puberty level this lesson plans are aligned with the policy of DoE" (Teacher D).*

#### **Teaching LGBT LGBT-inclusive curriculum**

According to the literature, issues of homosexuality in schools are only addressed in Life Orientation, and it also reveals that only Life Orientation teachers are exposed to such issues, and learners only get to know about homosexual people during LO periods. The existing literature also indicates that some of the teachers tend to look the other way when approaching a topic that touches on homosexual issues, and some do not even give a platform to learners to engage in such topics. The results of the interviews I had with four teachers also show that teachers who offer different subjects from life skills are shifting their responsibilities to life orientation teachers. They are not willing to see such topics included in their teaching curriculum. In the interviews, it is also evident that some teachers still hold negative perspectives towards homosexuality. For instance, participants were asked whether gender and sexuality issues are well addressed in their subjects, and the following responses were given:

Teacher A: In Natural Sciences, we talk about sexuality in reproduction; there is not even a single chapter that talks about gay reproduction or lesbian reproduction, so why should we change the curriculum that is working to accommodate something that is trending? According to the science curriculum, the disease that can lead someone to have too much of the production hormone testosterone or progesterone is Cervicofacial Syndrome. Still, that thing does not qualify someone to be gay or lesbian; it was just a matter of hormones, not a matter of behaviours. There is a difference between hormonal dysfunction and behavioural dysfunction; lesbian and gay are matters of behavioural problems. My subject is outlining reality, not popularity, so if you are going to attend, the issue of popularity was a waste of time. I think it would be a waste of funds to address such issues that have been initiated because of the trends; we know that, because of globalisation, people have adopted what was adopted in other countries. Before 1994, SA did not have a problem with LGBT or staff because we were focusing on real things, but right now, because of laissez-faire, everyone can do what they like, which is why we must adopt this. Theologically, I can say that these are all demonic spirits affecting South African people; we do not have such people, and I never accommodate them because it is something that is trending, not real. The curriculum should not bother to entertain such an issue because in a few years, this issue will fade just like any other issue, such as terrorism and staff.

*"I am teaching mathematics, and I do not see how LGBT can fit in it; basically, it deals with calculations" (Teacher C).*

According to teacher A, the science curriculum does not involve the issues of homosexuality. For him, the current curriculum is perfect; no changes must be made to include homosexual learners because he believes that being gay or a lesbian is due to behavioural issues and popularity. He also believes that adopting an LGBT inclusive

curriculum would be a waste of time. Some teachers do not understand how such issues can be addressed or included in their subjects; for instance, teacher C teaches mathematics, which focuses on calculations. Although in some subjects, homosexual issues are not included, Life Orientation and Life Skills teachers agreed that gender issues are included in such subjects.

*"Yes, they are addressed because they even make examples that include homosexuality, even the scenarios for learners to create them in their mind and maybe to recall what is happening in the community, in languages they are not included"* (Teacher B).

*"Yes, definitely, so the sexuality and gender issues are addressed because in the teaching plan, they are covered even in these scripted lesson plans that the USAID company provides. They are covered in totality. I do not doubt that"* (Teacher D).

#### **Attitudes towards teaching LGBT inclusive curriculum**

Our societies are becoming more diverse, and people should learn how to adapt to various changes in our society to maintain social cohesion. Therefore, schools should also ensure that an inclusive curriculum is used in the classroom to accommodate all the differences in learners. LGBT learners also deserve to be included in the school curriculum so that they may feel motivated and positive about their education. According to the existing literature, homosexual learners feel excluded from schools where they belong because of their sexual orientation, and teachers are implicated in the results of such feelings projected by homosexual learners. During interviews, teachers were asked what should be done to include gender issues in their subjects; some responded negatively, while others responded positively.

Teacher A: What can be done to include is to put the aspects in the subject that teach learners about feminism and masculinity, that is, the only two perspectives that are included in real life; we do not have any third one, unless, of course, there was a mutation. Still, as far as I am concerned, based on my research, there is a rare chance of mutation. Hence, whether you are male or female, nothing needs to be addressed for now; everything is still balanced. Do not entertain popularity over reality. Gender issues eventually affect those people who want to be trendy, who want to be popular. Gender issues can be included in terms of addressing gender violence, not in terms of addressing people who are behind in popularity or anything. The thing about gays is not in existence; there is not even a single chromosome that talks about that, so it is not even there; it is a myth. Let us make a typical example if we could have a teacher who is teaching our children science how many of the children would love science because would think that is cursed is something of the gays or lesbians it going to decline the moral of the children to study science so that is just demonical curse, is not something that is there. Being a guy means you are cursed and greedy and do not know what you want in life. That is my view.

*"I think maybe we, as teachers, can make practical examples or maybe tell learners a story about a homosexual couple, even if we do not mention the names, but then we should tell them so that they can know and be exposed to them. It be much better"* (Teacher B).

*"I do not think there is any, like I have said, I am teaching mathematics"* (Teacher C).

According to teacher A, gender issues in the curriculum can be included by putting topics that only teach learners about feminism and masculinity, not homosexual issues. And he also believes that gender issues can be embedded in addressing gender violence matters. For teacher A, Gays do not exist and are a myth; he also shares a perception that if such issues were to be included in his subject, learners would lack interest in studying science, as he believes that homosexual people are just demonically cursed.

Teacher C holds the perspective that there are no gender issues that

can be included in mathematics.

In contrast, teacher B believes that teachers can include homosexual issues in the curriculum by making practical examples or telling learners a story about homosexual people to expose learners to diverse sexual orientations.

#### **Acceptance of homosexual people in society**

Homosexual people are victimised and marginalised in our societies, and such treatment goes beyond society to our schools, whereby LGBT learners also face various kinds of discrimination by teachers, learners, and administrators due to their sexual orientation. During interviews, candidate teachers were asked how discrimination against homosexual people can be dealt with in societies.

*"We can stop discrimination by making gender based workshops whereby we going to teach males about males orientation and females about females orientation, you see I said males and females orientation I do not have gays orientation in between because it does not exist so let us make typical example the situation improve if people can remember who they are. in a birth certificate it either your sex is male or female there is not any other and that cannot be changed what need to be changed is this people who are misled, who are dysfunctional and affecting our society these are the only people that can be fixed"* (Teacher A).

*"If there could be community meetings and invite experts people who know about much about it to explain to them why should they accept those people because the society is changing they are changes and you can find out that your child become a homosexual or is already a homosexual and you are not aware of it so if there could be people who know much better about these things so that they can address them to the community, I think it could be much better"* (Teacher A).

*"People should be taught that as a constitutional country, people must be taught that there are people who are homosexuals and that being a homosexual you are not offending anybody that is the decision you have taken, people should taught and should accept homosexuals as they are and I like the initiation our governments taking they are giving them a liberty if they want to marry each other they must go ahead, they should be free we are in a free country as much as I believe that everybody has the right to choose to be a homosexual or not. I am against this thing of putting unnecessary attention on homosexuals. If you are a homosexual, you are a homosexual"* (Teacher C).

#### **Importance of teaching homosexuals**

Teacher D: Now that we are using technological devices that empower us, we have digital TVs and talk shows; those talk shows help us adjust to such changes, but depend on people's interest. Another issue that we can do, now that we have seen that is a problem, we have LGBT people they must stand up for their rights and we have community meetings they must ask for the platform so that they can empower community especially where they leave and they can also form their support groups, where they can support each other and empower each other so that they can stand up for what they believe in because if they cannot accept themselves for what they are and they cannot even fight for their right no one is going to that but also we have a constitutional court which is the highest court in the country if one is not satisfied and someone's rights have been violated the person has to take a responsibility to make it a point that the issue is taken to the court and the issue was finalised with the constitutional court because it the one that is responsible for our rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996)

Most teachers suggested that there should be community gatherings, whereby people would be taught about gender diversity and the constitution of our country.

## **VI. DISCUSSION**

The study revealed that there has been slight progress in the school



regarding LGBT issues. Most teachers showed that they have no problem teaching LGBT learners. They make efforts to accommodate and create a safe learning environment for such learners; however, the study also revealed that some teachers who seemed optimistic in creating a safe learning environment for LGBT learners still do not approve of people who are LGBT and hold some strong negative thoughts towards these people. Similar findings in the study conducted by Wyatt et al. (2008) showed that teachers have one or more negative attitudes toward homosexual people.

The study also revealed that teachers accommodate homosexual learners in their classrooms. Still, they cannot go beyond that, as some revealed that they cannot teach subject content that touches on homosexual issues. They even applauded the current curriculum for only including such matters in the LO curriculum, and some even pointed out that they do not see how homosexual issues can be integrated into the subjects they are teaching. Only life orientation and English teachers have positive attitudes toward teaching an inclusive LGBT curriculum. I can also compare these findings with the work completed by Francis (2012), Helleve et al. (2009), and Francis and Msibi (2011) as it revealed that teachers have a tendency to divert from the curriculum to move away from challenging chapters such as gender diversity and also see homosexual as immoral again Francis (2012) points out that in South Africa homosexual issues are embedded in the LO curriculum. Such outcomes were previously well addressed on the OBE (Outcome-Based Curriculum).

The study also revealed that most teachers in the school lack knowledge in terms of inclusive policies that advocate for the rights of LGBT learners. Some teachers only know the names of policies. Still, they are not familiar with the content of a policy, as one of the teachers noted that White Paper 6 is not transparent enough in explaining issues of homosexuality, and some revealed that they know none of these policies. Teachers indicated that in the school, there are no policies that are put into practice for homosexual learners, and again, one of the teachers did not understand why there should be a specific policy for LGBT learners in the school, because there are no policies for heterosexual learners. According to the study, there is still more to be done in a school to cultivate the culture of inclusivity, and teachers still need to be acquainted with the policies. The absence of gender diversity policies in schools leads to the continuous victimisation of LGBT learners in our schools.

## VII. CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the school adhere to national policies, as they serve as a protective weapon for teachers and learners. Policies such as White Paper 6, SIAS, and SASA should always be used in school when creating policies for learners. Gender issues are clearly discussed in such policies; they guide the schools in dealing with diversity. Such policies not only specify gender diversity but generally advocate all-inclusive issues that need to be treated with care in schools to maintain an inclusive environment for all learners. All teachers and the school management team must receive proper training workshops on issues of homosexuality and be trained in how to implement inclusive policies in the school. Workshops assist teachers to gain knowledge on how to protect and support learners who are experiencing discrimination due to gender orientation, and such training also helps teachers who are personally against homosexual people. It shifts negative perceptions and brings little positive perspectives towards homosexual people, thus leading to an inclusive environment for all learners.

Teachers should lead by example in their classrooms to ensure that learners do not project negative attitudes towards LGBT learners.

Teachers should be the ones who refrain from attributing negative attitudes to homosexual learners. Positive behaviours projected by teachers towards LGBT learners automatically model the behaviours of heterosexual learners against homosexual learners, and it also shows that teachers do not allow any discrimination in their classrooms. A positive school environment for every learner can be successfully achieved through teachers who embrace diversity and understand that gender is diverse and that even learners can be diverse regarding sexual orientation. The duty of creating a kind and healthy homosexual environment should not only be embedded in teaching staff, because not only does discrimination against homosexual learners occur in the classroom, but also outside the classroom; therefore, all people who are working within the school should be adequately trained in gender identity and sexual diversity. The school must have a gender policy that accommodates both heterosexual and homosexual learners' needs. Even if there is only one child in the school who forms part of the LGBT society, he/she does not deserve to be treated as a homosexual.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The research question that was proposed for this study was: What are the teacher's attitudes towards teaching LGBT learners? And how can a safe and inclusive schooling space be created for LGBT learners for optimal academic and psychosocial development? The study revealed that teachers have different attitudes towards homosexual learners; some revealed positive attitudes, whereas some teachers hold negative attitudes. On my findings, it is evident that gender also plays a role in the creation of such attitudes. Female participants displayed more positive attitudes towards the teaching of homosexual learners than male participants, and one of the male participants even went further, using some discriminatory words referring to homosexual learners. From the data collected, it is also evident that non-LO teachers shift the responsibility of teaching gender issues to LO teachers; they believe that LO is the only subject that can address sexual diversity issues, not on any topic, particularly Maths and Natural Sciences. Inclusive policies also seem not well-known by many teachers, and the school implements none; therefore, much work needs to be done to train and familiarise the school with such policies to create an inclusive schooling space for LGBT learners.

## IX. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest in this study.

## REFERENCES

- Aragon, S. R., Poteat, V. P., & Espelage, D. L. (2014). The influence of peer victimization on educational outcomes for LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ high school students. *Journal of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Youth*, 11(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2014.840761>
- Aspenlieder, L., Buchanan, C. M., McDougall, P., & Sippola, L. K. (2009). Gender nonconformity and peer victimization in pre- and early adolescence. *International Journal of Developmental Science*, 3(1), 3-16. <https://doi.org/10.3233/DEV-2009-3103>
- Bennett, J., & Reddy, V. (2015). 'African positionings': South African relationships with continental questions of LGBT justice and rights. *Agenda*, 29(1), 10-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2015.1015829>
- Butler, A. H., & Astbury, G. (2008). The use of defence mechanisms as precursors to coming out in post-apartheid South Africa: A gay and



- lesbian youth perspective. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 55(2), 223-244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918360802129485>
- Butler, A., Alpaslan, A., Strumpher, J., & Astbury, G. (2003). Gay and lesbian youth experiences of homophobia in South African secondary education. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, 1(2), 3-28. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J367v01n02\\_02](https://doi.org/10.1300/J367v01n02_02)
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. (1996). Constitution of the republic of South Africa No. 108 of 1996. Statutes of the Republic south Africa-Constitutional Law, 38. Pretoria: Government Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- D'Augelli, A. R., Grossman, A. H., & Starks, M. T. (2006). Childhood gender atypicality, victimization, and PTSD among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21(11), 1462-1482. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260506293482>
- DePalma, R., & Francis, D. (2014). South African life orientation teachers: (Not) teaching about sexuality diversity. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 61(12), 1687-1711. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2014.951256>
- Department of Basic Education (DBE). (2011). *Annual Report 2011/12*. Pretoria: Government Press.
- Department of Education (DoE). (2001). *Special Needs Education: Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*. Pretoria: Government Press.
- Department of Education (DoE). (2006). *Teacher guide: Life orientation. National Curriculum Statements Grade10-12*. Pretoria: Government Press.
- Devlin, M. (2006). Challenging accepted wisdom about conceptions of teaching in academic development. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 18(2), 112-119.
- Elia, J. P. (1993). Homophobia in the high school: A problem in need of a resolution. *The High School Journal*, 77(1/2), 177-185.
- Francis, D. (2012). Teacher positioning on the teaching of sexual diversity in South African schools. *Culture, Health and Sexuality: An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care*, 14(6), 597-611. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2012.674558>
- Francis, D., & Le Roux, A. (2011). Teaching for social justice education: the intersection between identity, critical agency, and social justice education. *South African Journal of Education*, 31(3), 299-311. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v31n3a533>
- Francis, D., & Msibi, T. (2011). Teaching about heterosexism: Challenging homophobia in South Africa. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 8, 157-173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2011.553713>
- Gevisser, M., & Cameron, E. (eds.). (1995). *Defiant desire: Gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Graziano, K. J. (2004). Oppression and resiliency in a post-apartheid South Africa: unheard voices of Black gay men and lesbians. *Cultural diversity & ethnic minority Psychology*, 10(3), 302-316. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.10.3.302>
- Hall, W. J., McDougald, A., & Kresica, A. (2013). School counselors' education and training, competency, and supportive behaviors concerning gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. *Professional School Counseling*, 17(1), 130-141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X0001700108>
- Helleve, A., Flisher A., Onya, H., Mukoma, W., & Klepp, K. (2009). South African teachers' reflections on the impact of culture on their teaching of sexuality and HIV/AIDS. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 11, 189-204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050802562613>
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research*, 15(9), 1277-1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>
- Human Rights Watch, South Africa. (2011). *World Report 2011: South Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2011/country-chapters/south-africa>
- Jones, T., & Hillier, L. (2013). Comparing Trans-Spectrum and Same-sex-attracted Youth in Australia: Increased Risks, Increased Activisms. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10(4), 287-307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2013.825197>
- Killen, M., & Stangor, C. (2001). Children's social reasoning about inclusion and exclusion in gender and race peer group contexts. *Child development*, 72(1), 174-186. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00272>
- Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., & Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2013 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN.
- Kumashiro, K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25-53. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543070001025>
- Lubbe, C. (2007). Mothers, fathers, or parents: Same-gendered families in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 37(2), 260-283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630703700204>
- Martinez-Merino, N., Sáenz-Macana, A. M., Gil-Quintana, J., Pereira-Garcia, S., Soler-Prat, S., & Martos-Garcia, D. (2025). Faggot! Dyke! Experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual physical education teachers and their strategies in the face of homophobia. *Journal of homosexuality*, 72(7), 1222-1244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2024.2373788>
- McCabe, P. C., Robinson, F., Dragowski, E. A., & Elizalde-Utrick, G. (2013). Behavioral intention of teachers, school psychologists, and counselors to intervene and prevent harassment of LGBTQ youth. *Psychology in the Schools*, 50(7), 672-688. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21702>
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry, MyEducationLab Series*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Moletsane, R., Hemson, C., & Muthukrishna, A. (2004). Educating South African teachers for the challenge of school integration: Towards a teaching and research agenda. In M. Nkomo, C. McKinney, & L. Chisholm (eds.). *Reflections on school integration: Colloquium proceedings* (pp. 61-77). Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Mouton, J. (2006). Science for transformation: Research agendas and priorities in South Africa. In L. Box & R. Engelhard (eds.). *Science and technology policy for development: Dialogues at the interface* (pp. 89-106). London: Anthem Press.
- Msibi, T. (2012). I'm used to it now: experiences of homophobia amongst queer youth in South African township schools. *Gender and Education*, 25(5), 515-533. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2011.645021>
- O'Connell, L. M., Atlas, J. G., Saunders, A. L., & Philbrick, R. (2010). Perceptions of rural school staff regarding sexual minority students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 7(4), 293-309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2010.518534>
- Rankin, S. R. (2007). Campus climate for sexual minorities. In L. Badgett, & J. Frank (eds.). *Sexual orientation discrimination*, (pp. 254-270). London: Routledge.
- Renn, K. (2010). LGBTI and queer research in higher education: The state and status of the field. *Educational Researcher*, 39(2), 132-141. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X10362579>
- Rey, A. M., & Gibson, P. R. (1997). Beyond high school: Heterosexuals' self-reported anti-gay/lesbian behaviors and attitudes. In M. B. Harris (ed.). *School Experiences of Gay and Lesbian Youth* (pp. 65-84). New York: Routledge.

- Reygan, F., & Steyn, M. (2017). Diversity in basic education in South Africa: Intersectionality and critical diversity literacy. *Africa Education Review*, 14(2), 68-81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2017.1280374>
- Richardson, E. (2006). Researching LGB youth in post-apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, 3(2/3), 135-140. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J367v03n02\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1300/J367v03n02_15)
- Richardson, E. M. (2004). A ripple in the pond: Challenging homophobia in a teacher education course. *Education as Change*, 8(1), 146-163. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC31677>
- Sears, J. T. (1991). Growing up gay in the South: Race, gender, and journeys of the spirit. New York, USA: Harrington Park Press.
- South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). (2007). *South African Human Rights Commission Report of the public hearing on school-based violence*. Pretoria: SAHRC.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2016). *Health and education For healthy, happy and thriving learners*. Retrieved from <https://www.unesco.org/en/health-education>
- Wells, H., & Polders, L. (2006). Anti-gay hate crimes in South Africa: Prevalence, Reporting practices, and experiences of the police. *Agenda*, 67, 12-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2006.9674694>
- Wyatt, T. J., Oswalt, S. B., White, C., & Peterson, F. L. (2008). Are tomorrow's teachers ready to deal with diverse students? Teacher candidates' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(2), 171-185.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of GAERPSY and/or the editor(s). GAERPSY and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.