PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEWS ON TRANSGENDER IDENTITY

Karen Sathyanand
219072806

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

School of Education
College of Humanities

Supervisor: Prof. DEEVIA BHANA

2021

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I have read this dissertation and I agree to the submission of this dissertation for the award of Master of Education

Signature:

Name: Prof. Deevia Bhana

Date: 11 August 2021

DECLARATION

I **Karen Sathyanand** declare that

(i)   The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

(ii)   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii)   This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

(iv)   This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
a)   their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
b)   where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

(v)   Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.

(vi)   This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the References sections.

Signature: ---------------------------------------

Date: 11 August 2021

NRF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all those who in some way or another helped bring this study to fruition:

- First, I am extremely grateful to my parents for their abundant love, support and encouragement throughout my academic journey, and for preparing me for my future. All I am, or hope to be, I owe to you.

- Next, my deep and sincere gratitude is extended to Dr. Patsy Jewnarain for her patience, valuable insight, and constant care shown to me.

- Then, to Professor Deevia Bhana, without your support I would have never imagined achieving this milestone. Your constant feedback and reassurance pushed me to strive only for excellence. I have nothing but admiration and gratitude for you.

- Last, but certainly not least, praise and thanks to God for guiding me through one of the most challenging academic years I have ever faced, and for giving me the wisdom and perseverance to write this dissertation.

Thank you all for believing in me!

ABSTRACT

Teacher perspectives on transgender identity in the South African schooling system is not well documented although there is evidence of inequalities based on sexual orientation. LGBTIQ+ identities are often marginalised, discriminated against, and victims of violent crimes. Teachers can play a role in perpetuating such inequalities but they can also challenge the status quo. An insufficient amount of research on primary school teachers' knowledge of transgender identities in South African education directed this study. The research design involved semi structured individual interviews and focus group discussions (using photo elicitation methods and vignettes) with primary school teachers from two schools in Chatsworth, KwaZulu-Natal. This study was guided by three research questions, namely: "How do primary school teachers view and understand transgender identity?" "What lived experiences of primary school teachers influence their views and understanding of transgender identities?" "How do primary school teachers' views and understanding of transgender identities affect the teaching and learning environment?" Data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The research findings revealed inadequate knowledge of transgender identity due to essentialist belief systems that impede the construction of gender knowledge. The findings point to a patriarchal society where unequal power relations within the community, culture, tradition and religion repudiate transgender and other non-conforming gender identities. Notwithstanding this, the teachers appeared intent to acquire more information on the phenomenon and extend their professional development.

The dissertation concludes with recommendations to facilitate teachers' perceptions, understanding, and implementation of gender and sexual diversity in primary schools. These include adopting a whole-school approach that looks at developing inclusive strategies of negotiation, compromise, endorsement of well-informed respect for difference, and promotion of conflict resolution practices to deal with difference of opinion. The implementation of these strategies can ultimately benefit primary school environments in maintaining an atmosphere that is trans-inclusive and repute gender discrimination altogether.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABH	Aryan Benevolent Home
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
COVID-19	Coronavirus
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
FtM	Female-to-Male
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department
HSSREC	Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZN DBE	KwaZulu-Natal's Department of Basic Education
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/ questioning including (+) sexual identities such as asexual, pansexual or Two-Spirit
MtF	Male-to-Female
NCAVP	National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programme
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
PDF	Portable Document Format
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SGB	School Governing Body
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TENI	Transgender Equality Network Ireland
TGD	Transgender and Gender Diverse
TPOC	Transgender People of Colour

UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
US	United States

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

> *The decomposed body of transgender activist Nare Mphela was found in her rented room in a village outside Mokopane, on Thursday 9ᵗʰ January 2020. Community members raised the alarm after a strong smell permeated the Parkmore, Sekgakgapheng village. Police Spokesperson Mojapelo said her body was found with multiple stab wounds and was already in a 'state of decomposition'. The South African Human Rights Commission's Limpopo head, Victor Mavhidula, said Mphela had approached them after she faced discrimination about her gender identity from her school principal and 'at the time of the incident, Nare left school and it was so touching'. According to Mavhidula, Mphela had been active in the community and spoke out against gender discrimination and believed she might have been targeted because of her stand on LGBTIQ+ rights* (Pijoos, 2020, n.p.).

This study focused on exploring how transgender identities are viewed by primary school teachers. The above excerpt from a newspaper article captured the essence of my study and reflected my core argument, which was that teachers' attitudes towards transgender identities continue to impact, influence, and contribute to poor educational experiences, and lead to the deterioration of physical and mental health. This was supported by Jones (2019) who explained South Africa's contribution to transnational lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (LGBTIQ+) work. She stated that although South Africa was one of first countries in the world to develop a framework that categorised homophobic discrimination as unconstitutional, social upheaval and hostilities continue to be practiced in the schooling system (Jones, 2019). During interview sessions with 102 informants networking for international LGBTIQ+ students' rights, Jones (2019) discovered that teachers were seldom informed, acquainted with, or poised enough to discuss topics of sexual and gender diversity in classroom settings. Consequently, issues of homophobia and transphobia in classrooms were disregarded, and inadequate support structures or the lack of clear guidelines were blamed (Jones, 2019).

The excerpt highlighted the central part of my study, which was the detrimental effects of teachers' lack of knowledge and negative perceptions of LGBTIQ+ identities. In addition to this, the excerpt also emphasised the lack of sensitivity that South African teachers show particularly to transgender identities. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to present a contextual narrative for transgender identities and to show how the school environment has become a platform for the re-inscription and reinforcement of unequal gender norms espoused

by society. This study locates transgender identities within the discourse of gender and sexual diversity and concentrates on how sociocultural norms and values attached to gender and sexuality underpin teachers' views on transgender identities. Although South African research has focused on transphobia in tertiary institutions and high schools by examining staff and teacher's understandings of queer identities (Msibi, 2012; Bhana, 2012), there remains a paucity of research focusing on primary school teachers' views and understandings of transgender identities in South Africa. By means of this study, I intend to add to the existing body of research and literature on transgender identities in South African primary schools. The insights obtained herein will contribute to designing resources that can aid all school stakeholders to develop both a broader perspective of transgender identities and an understanding of the myriad of strands of gender and sexual expression. A further purpose is to develop an awareness of the discrimination, intolerance, anger, and violence that is directed toward transgender identities.

1.2 Definition of the Problem

Transgender identities remain subjected to constant fear, hate, and harassment, with murder undoubtedly being the most hostile manifestation of discrimination. Despite the realisation of anti-discriminatory laws like the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Act No. 4 of 2000 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2000), which prohibits any unfair discrimination from governmental or private organisations as well as individual persons, victimisation and violence continue to be directed toward non-conforming identities. This shows the tensions that persist among South Africa's multicultural society, especially with regard to how desensitised the general public has become to inhumane brutalities. The violence perpetrated against transgender identities also demonstrate subjectivities that are embedded in sociocultural norms and values within South African society.

Mphela's life story showcased the pervasiveness of these subjectivities after she won a landmark lawsuit in 2017, pending the accusations of gender identity discrimination from her high school principal. In a law report, Mphela reiterated incidences where the school principal actively demeaned and humiliated her because she identified as a transgender woman (Mphela v Manamela, 2016). She described how the principal used to instruct learners to harass and provoke her in the school bathrooms, and also encouraged learners to 'check' her genitalia. Additionally, Mphela conveyed being referred to as 'the gay' and being blatantly

alienated and excluded from the learning environment, with statements like "you are gay, and I do not talk to people like you" and "you are gay and should get out of sight'. Because of the ongoing discrimination, Mphela was unable to obtain her Grade 12 qualification in 2014.

However, as a result of Mphela's credible testimony, the "South African Human Rights Commission" (SAHRC) requested that her school principal as well as teachers from Raselete Secondary School undergo 'sensitisation training'. This was carried out in an effort to stymy and eradicate ostracisation and discrimination, as well as ensure that teachers and learners are protected within the school environment. According to Stoloff et al., (2015), sensitisation training consists of a group of stakeholders that come together to maintain an environment that is physically, socioculturally, economically, and politically healthy. The aim of sensitisation training amongst school employees is to dispense essential information on healthy teaching and learning and identify actions needed for inclusive environments (Stoloff et al., 2015). However, Mphela's victory was short lived as her distressing death not only served as a reminder of the violence experienced by all transgender identities but also revealed the vulnerabilities that young transgender identities experience when faced with discrimination that obstructs their fundamental right to education.

1.2.1 Non-conforming and transgender identities

Good quality education is globally recognised as the most sufficient instrument for cultivating societal inclusion, furthering human rights as well as attaining the agency for all individuals, including non-conforming identities (Francis et al., 2018). While school environments are habitually viewed as safe sites to aid and support, research shows that nonconforming gender identities experience oppression from school faculty and staff (Bhana, 2012; Msibi, 2012; Francis & Reygan, 2016; Francis, 2017). Within the Southern African schooling context, dominant notions of sexual culture support heterosexuality, and continue to construct homosexuality as an issue that needs to be hidden (Francis et al., 2018). Research addressing homophobia in the South African curriculum found that the teaching and learning material, pedagogy, classroom norms, routines, practices, and what teachers say and do reinforce heteronormativity and cisnormativity (Francis, 2019). Francis (2019) argued that cisnormative regulations maintain ideologies of power and dominance that belong to heterosexual identities within most schools. For transgender identities, these environments proved to be hostile, suggesting that their needs are often disregarded in the classroom (Francis, 2019).

1.2.2 Gender identity construction and transphobia

Schooling environments are shaped by heteronormativity and are subjected to rigid gender expectations that leave transgender youth vulnerable to harassment (Kearns et al., 2017). In schools, young boys and girls are divided into a limited range of acceptable behaviours dictated by society. Often transgender identities struggle with the rigid categories of the male and female narratives and find that they do not belong (Kearns et al., 2017). According to Jenkins (2004), each individual has a personal and social identity. "Personal identity" refers to the way an individual sees themselves, whereas "social identity" depends on broader environmental aspects (Jenkins, 2004). Gender and sexuality forms part of an individual's identity that firmly integrates and constructs a sense of self; however, identity is influenced by society through processes of inclusion. These influences often dictate desirable behaviours, expectations, norms, and essential differences between people. However, because schools have a narrow understanding of gender, gender roles, and expectations, individuals who do not conform to societal norms are left increasingly susceptible to harassment and bullying, with little or no intervention from teachers (Kearns et al., 2017). When male identities lack sporting prowess, physical strength, and distinctive skill in sport, they are equated with subordinate forms of masculinity and categorised as effeminate. When transgender identities transition from man to woman, the loss of masculinity is seen as the loss of power (Jenkins, 2004). In an environment of unequal power, for instance, cisgender teacher and transgender learner, teachers hold the power and authority and delegate learners' roles. This often results in transgender learners tolerating oppressive behaviour and choosing not to respond to discriminatory situations. Oppression refers to prolonged acts of mistreatment or exercise of exploitive authority. It results in subordinate identities who begin to self-hate and attempt to reinvent themselves in the image of the desired group (Jenkins, 2004).

According to the Department of Education (DoE) (2012), homophobia and transphobia are widespread in South African schools, and have long-lasting negative impacts on the holistic development of learners. Francis (2017) argued that schooling environments are not simply sites for academic education but can also serve as safe spaces where all members of the school community have the freedom to construct and express their identity. The DoE's School Safety Framework (2012) found that teachers play the most important role in the prevention of transphobia; however, due to the lack of training, teachers may perpetrate transphobic bullying in the classroom, or choose to remain silent (DoE, 2012).

1.2.3 Transgender studies

Qualitative research in the international field of transgender studies provides a non-linear approach to studying gender and sexualities through feminist theories and sexuality studies (Hines, 2010). Rather than upholding gender binaries, such as men and women, and masculinities and femininities, transgender studies focus on the intersections of social representations and political involvements to capture the lived experiences of non-conforming identities (Hines, 2010; Schilt & Lagos, 2017). Such studies have examined the broad spectrum of transgender populations and their narratives, and integrated transgender perspectives into gender equality work. Additionally, transgender studies have also identified transgender subjectivities that continue to maintain unequal power relations and perpetuate social inequalities. Schilt and Lagos (2017) claim that the field of transgender studies has undergone rapid change over the last decade, yet transgender identities continue to be subjected to discrimination and marginalisation in all educational environments (Schilt & Lagos, 2017).

Wentling (2015) conducted an online survey with 557 educational staff to examine how teachers recognise transgender identities in universities. The findings indicated that although there was an increase of students who now proudly self-identify as transgender, students remain invalidated regardless of gender policies that aim to address and protect LGBTIQ+ rights. Wentling (2015) claimed that educational staff failed to support transgender students' identity development and further neglected to honour their personhood. This was due to the resistance of gender-neutral language and gender-neutral recognition in classrooms, allowing a gendered linguistic hegemony to be perpetrated (Wentling, 2015).

Bhana (2016) conducted a study amongst primary school teachers and learners. She examined the contradiction of teachers' perception of childhood innocence to learners' conceptualisation of sexuality and gender. The findings showed that the primary school environment has become a key site for gender and sexuality production through heterosexual play (Bhana, 2016). However, careful attention was also placed on hegemonic masculinity and femininity and how these constructions impact the lived experiences of young boys and girls.

Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2017a) conducted a study amongst 75 primary school teachers in Australia to identify the existing attitudes and knowledge teachers have on transgender and gender diverse (TGD) identities. The study recognised that there was a growing number of young children between the ages of 5 and 6, and early adolescents, who actively identified as transgender or gender fluid (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017a). Their

findings further revealed that although primary school teachers were generally positive about the inclusion of transgender learners in the curriculum, their perceived lack of understanding and unconcealed discomfort teaching gender and sexuality demonstrated the multiple complexities transgender identities face in schools (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017a).

Furthermore, a study conducted in the United States (US) by Smith and Payne (2016) among district level administrators, school principals, and elementary school teachers explored the fear experienced when faced with gender and sexuality education. These scholars found that education on sexual diversity and gender identity, pertaining specifically to transgender identification, received most resistance from teachers (Smith & Payne, 2016). During the interview sessions, teachers' responses reflected overt resistance, preserved the notions of a conservative American society, expressed the efficiency of asexual teaching and learning, and the protected normative gender interpretations and the gender binary (Smit & Payne, 2016).

1.2.4 Transphobic attitudes in primary schools

Apostolidou (2019) stated that transphobic related attitudes, harassment, and bullying in educational environments have detrimental instant and gradual consequences on learners. The author found that learners (5-11 years old) who experienced transphobic bullying in schools are at jeopardy of suffering from mental health difficulties, which in turn lead to self-harm and suicidal behaviours (Apostolidou, 2019). Additionally, prolonged exposure to these behaviours results in higher dropout levels and limits employment prospects. Statistics show that 64% of transgender identities reported being bullied in the school environment but only 29% claimed that teachers intervened when witnessing these behaviours. Apostolidou (2019) targeted primary school teachers and educational professionals in an attempt to explore experiences of transphobia and examined the ways teachers and staff aim to combat transphobic bullying in school. The author found that the majority of school professionals reported the prevalence of transphobia in schools, but that this was not addressed further, and instead, was "swept under the carpet" (Apostolidou, 2019). A major finding was that the main perpetrator of transphobic attitudes and bullying in primary schools are teachers. Additionally, when teachers and staff were asked to provide strategies to combat transphobia, the responses included training. Training referred to staff needing to be sensitised and educated on issues of diversity, particularly on self-expression and respect of sexuality and gender (Apostolidou, 2019). These findings highlight the multiple complexities transgender identities face in school

environments and demonstrate the importance of teachers' views and attitudes when fostering a healthy teaching and learning environment.

A study by Collins et al., (2016) investigated transphobic bullying in Irish primary schools. These scholars endeavoured to unpack the prevalence of transphobia, how schools react to transphobia, and what interventions are put in place to combat transphobia. The study was piloted across 14 schools with teachers who taught the 5th and 6th grade. The teachers were selected because the authors found that 12-year-olds were the most common age to selfidentify as LGBTIQ+. The findings exposed that only 19% of transphobic bullying was dealt with by teachers, whereas 79% of teachers were aware of transphobic incidences, and 30% of teachers had personally witnessed cases more than 10 times, yet overlooked the situation (Collins et al., 2016). The intervention strategies relied on anti-bullying programmes to reduce victimisation. Various resources developed internationally are aimed to tackle transphobic bullying in schools. For instance, the Scottish Transgender Alliance (2019) focused on informing individuals of the dangers of being misgendered and misrecognised through the use of incorrect pronouns. This educates individuals and aims to deconstruct the ideals of stable gender identities, which strengthens gender power hierarchies (Scottish Transgender Alliance, 2019).

Within the South African context, there are governmental strides to deconstruct gender power hierarchies through gender and sexually inclusive legislature and intervention strategies. For instance, the Love Not Hate Campaign (2016) focuses on highlighting the prevalence of LGBTIQ+ discrimination and hate crimes. South Africa also hosts the annual Cape Pride Festival, intended to provide a platform to raise awareness of the challenges the LGBTIQ+ people face, whilst advocating for gender equality and celebrating individuality. However, three days after the celebrations in February 2020, the body of popular drag queen, Adnaan Davids, was found in Athlone with news headlines reading 'Queer individual murdered and brutalised in Cape Town'. According to the Daily Voice (Igual, 2020), Davids was stabbed 25 times in the head, face, and neck with a pair of scissors, as well as sodomised with a stick, and thereafter abandoned near the national route (N2). An unnamed relative stated that Davids was teased throughout his life, "men used to call him a moffie but he never let that bother him, he enjoyed dressing in drag and entering modelling competitions" (Igual, 2020, n.p.).

The incidents of Adnaan Davids and Nare Mphela show that South Africa cannot attempt to implement gender and sexually inclusive legislature without first addressing various

sociocultural factors that respond to LGBTIQ+ identities with such distaste and resistance. Matebeni and Msibi (2015) claim that non-conforming identities continue to face challenges because society's understandings of gender and sexuality is limited. As a consequence of inadequate gender identity and same sex sexuality education, society responds to gender and sexual diversity with discrimination, criminalisation, victimisation, violence, and even murder (Matebeni & Msibi, 2015; Schilt & Lagos, 2017).

Emerging research shows that non-conforming South African learners experience oppression and marginalisation merely on the account of their gender identity and expression (Schilt & Lagos, 2017). In April 2021, the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) took to the streets of the Western Cape to protest against the draft policy on sexual orientation and gender identification in public schools. The political party stood firmly against principals' management of referring learners who question their gender identity to a professional psychologist, social worker, or gender organisation. What is more, the ACDP opposed LGBTIQ+ learners' use of bathrooms and other facilities in the school environment that aligned with learners' affirmed gender. Although the ACDP proclaimed that their aim was not to discriminate or marginalise any group of individuals, the protest action perpetuates hostility against non-conforming and transgender identities under the pretence of religious value. Figure 1 below shows ACDP protest action.

Figure 1: ACDP protest action (Source: KEEP THE ENERGY, 2021, n.p.)

The fundamental concern with South African political leaders and people of faith contesting gender diversity, is the use of religious values to propagate discrimination and pardon LGBTIQ+ hate crimes. In June 2021, the principal of DF Malan High School in Cape Town allegedly shamed queer learners after they had experienced queerphobia from peers (Ntseku, 2021). Learners reported being harassed, cursed, and intimidated for celebrating Pride Month during their lunch break, and thereafter were reprimanded by the principal who claimed that learners were bullied because they were wrong for celebrating Pride Month openly. According to one of the learners, the principal said: "We should not celebrate Pride because it is for our own good and schools aren't the place for such things" (Ntseku, 2021, n.p.).

Msibi's (2012) research on how queer youth experience schooling in South Africa revealed that queer high school learners' schooling experiences were punctuated with many punishing practices, ranging from derogatory language to maliciousness and rejection, and that teachers were the main perpetrators. Male learners reported that teachers resorted to derogatory labelling, using words like '*isitabane*', 'moffie', '*ongqingili*' or 'faggot' to refer to learners who exhibited gender and sexual diversity. Msibi stated that when teachers made learners feel effeminate, it led to a form of internalisation where learners found their queer identity as less appealing, which then reinforced heteronormativity as the ideal. Msibi also found that teachers used fear by distributing the idea that "homosexuality was contagious", which contributed to the increased isolation and marginalisation of young queer identities. Interestingly, South Africa's interventions to reconfigure ways in which transgender identities are viewed, focus mainly on post-primary school. Yet, both high school and primary school environments have been identified as heterosexual domains where gender binaries are upheld, whilst gender and sexual diversity remain repudiated and rejected (Bhana, 2012; Msibi, 2012; Reygan, 2019).

Bhana (2012) also researched teachers and their understanding of homophobia in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The findings showed that schools endorse homophobic attitudes when teachers promote heterosexual domination, silence sexualities, and allow religious convictions to promote intolerance (Bhana, 2012). Bhana (2012) claimed that hierarchies of social inequalities are increasing in South Africa, and despite the visible evidence of hate, violence, and murder, homophobic crimes are still not considered a serious issue. Still, primary school teachers actively resist sexuality education, despite the implementation of a Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) curriculum intended to assist both teachers and learners. The aim

of the CSE is to build understanding of concepts, values, and attitudes pertaining to identity, gender, and sexuality, in an attempt to deconstruct toxic understandings and dismantle the hate that is so prevalent in our society. However, primary school environments have become inundated with anti-sex education groups such as #LeaveOurKidsAlone, which are made up of a community of parents, teachers, and principals across South Africa. This group of individuals actively resist and threaten to shut down schooling environments that support sexuality education (Hlangani, 2019). Public protests voiced concerns that the CSE goes against the cultural and religious belief systems of the South African society, and seeks to sexualise young children, stripping away their innocence (Hlangani, 2019).

Reygan and Francis (2015) argued that teachers are generally unprepared to accommodate gender diverse lessons in the classroom due to feelings of discomfort. However, numerous studies locate teachers at the forefront of change, arguing that the understanding of alternate sexualities can be ameliorated through the re-education of teachers (Bhana, 2012; Msibi, 2012; Reygan & Francis, 2015). Failure to incorporate prevalent information on violent intimate relations, early pregnancy, and HIV-risk, leave South African youth increasingly vulnerable. Reygan (2019, p. 90), in asking "what needs to be done in the school system to reconstruct the African child to include sexual and gender diversity?" identified teacher attentiveness to teaching about and affirmation of non-conforming identities as an intervention to reject transphobic hostilities and brutalities in the school environment.

Nevertheless, Jones (2019) claimed that transgender communities or non-conforming identities continue to suffer the most in terms of freedom of expression, and continue to be misunderstood and invisible in society. Conversely, Francis (2017) conducted a survey with 53 teachers and found that the vast majority responded to non-conforming identities with anger, threats, and even assaulted the 'offender'. However, 9 participants indicated that they would just ignore LGBTIQ+ people (Francis, 2017). Watson and Miller (2012) proclaimed that schools are in the midst of a dehumanisation crisis in terms of the extent and frequency in which the LGBTIQ+ experience harassment and abuse. The author stated that teachers who commit these atrocious acts become oppressors rather than restorers, and oppressors who bully, exploit, and rape do so by the virtue of their power (Watson & Miller, 2012).

1.2.5 Power dynamics

Gender power imbalances between teachers and learners, together with other intersecting forms of social inequalities, pose a challenge to transgender holistic health. Despite a plethora

of quantitative evidence on the high risk of HIV and unwanted pregnancy among nonconforming identities, there remains a scarcity of research on how South African primary schools view transgender identities. Moreover, what prevalent issues around transgender and transphobia are teachers aware of? And how mindful are teachers of gender norms, power relations, and sexual coercive attitudes that shape the teaching and learning environments? However, Connell (1987) discussed gender power hierarchies amongst masculinities and revealed that the cultural normative ideal remains hegemonic masculinities. Since hegemonic masculinity has been established as the dominant masculinity, this results in gender being performed in such a way that it becomes inextricably tied to heterosexuality. When school teachers perform or enforce rigid gender norms, non-conforming identities are obligated to coincide with heterosexual norms or risk enacted stigma. Transgender identities struggle to maintain a hetero-cis-gender identity, meaning someone who identifies as both heterosexual and cisgender, and are therefore seen as not belonging. In the following chapter I will discuss this further, but first I need to situate myself within the research context.

1.3 Rationale

The motivation for undertaking this study stems from my personal observations of gender discrimination. I was alarmed after I witnessed the principal of a primary school in Chatsworth shame learners in the assembly area by referring to them as 'gays'. The comments "we do not want these funny haircuts, like gays in this school" and "we do not want gays walking around in this school", were made by the principal and directed to young boys. I have schooled in the Chatsworth area, and I completed teaching practice in five different schools in the same area. Throughout my years of schooling and teaching I noticed a pattern emerge in the ways in which some teachers responded to non-conforming identities with anger and frustration and some who overlooked instances where learners would use derogatory language, mock, and provoke their peers. Msibi (2012) states that the use of shame or ridicule towards or against non-conforming gender identities serves as weapons of both sexism and homophobia. Such discrimination coupled with teacher bigotry works to uphold gender inequality and build intolerance in the school environment. However, the comments I observed were not exclusively addressed to gay learners, but also towards boys who were effeminate. This sparked my interest and curiosity of what primary school teachers know about transgender identities and what informed their perceptions.

Reygan and Francis (2015) contend that the continuous use of the term 'gay' in a negative sense repeats the hostile legacy of discrimination, and perpetuates and condones harassment toward LGBTIQ+ identities. This legacy is often portrayed within conservative communities, as knowledge and understanding of transgender or transgender identities are shirked off, unspoken about in any formal environments, and even taboo in homes. For this reason, I set out to explore teachers' views on transgender identity to understand what South African primary school teachers' outlooks, interpretations, or perceptions of transgender identities are, what underpins these views, and how these constructions of transgender identities filter into the teaching and learning environment.

1.4 Location of Study

The study was conducted in Chatsworth, KZN. Historically, Chatsworth was a farm area acquired by Samuel Bennington in 1848 and named after Chatsworth in Derbyshire, England. Later, Chatsworth became an Indian settlement under the Group Areas Act and consisted mainly of poor to working class Indian people (South African History Online, 2019). At present, the township has expanded into a suburb and is also undergoing rapid integration, but is still predominantly occupied by Indians who embrace strong cultural and religious beliefs. According to the 2011 census, Chatsworth has a population of 196,580, comprising of "60.03% Indian, 38.15% African, 1.18% Coloured, 0.15% White and 0.05% other". The majority of the population are female (51.72%), whereas 48.28% are male (Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2011).

While the community's cultural and religious backgrounds continue to flourish, there have in more recent times been deviations from the old exclusively male dominated street corners to a new generation of youth expressing their non-conforming gender and sexuality (Vahed & Desai, 2012). Brandon 'Brady' Ramsunder made headlines after he entered Miss Bollywood in 2010, however, he was denied entry due to being male. A decade on, Kriben Kribashnee, a transgender woman, openly addressed the transphobia she faces from family and members of the Chatsworth community (Makhaye, 2021). In an interview with the local newspaper, Kribashnee reiterated "one of the relatives rubbed green chillies all over my body, saying it will help to heal me and make me a straight boy" and "some men have touched me and even tried to rape me, but I managed to run away" (Makhaye, 2021, n.p.). These occurrences verify that despite the 'coming out' of non-conforming identities, the Chatsworth

community continues to struggle with the stigma and negative perceptions attached to transgender identities, and this mentality filters into the school environments.

1.5 The Research Site

For the purpose of this research, two neighbouring primary schools were selected as the research sites for the study. During my practice teaching, I visited, observed, and taught at both schools. Eden and Ale primary (pseudonyms) are both public schools in the Chatsworth area, and are identified as quintile 4. All public schools in South Africa are categorised into one of five quintiles, depending on the financial resources available to the school. Schools in the first three quintiles have been acknowledged as "no fee-paying institutions". According to the government, these schools get the majority of assistance and funding, whereas schools in the 4th and 5th quintile are seen as self-sufficient and therefore fee-paying institutions. Eden primary has an estimate of 462 learners served by 16 teachers, and Ale primary has an estimate of 439 learners served by 18 teachers. Both schools operate under similar education and community contexts. In addition, the majority of the teachers from both schools live in the Chatsworth area and are thus familiar with the community and the environment. My view was that since this community has resisted comprehensive sexuality education, both schools will be an ideal location to conduct this research.

1.6 Research Design and Methods

The study undertook a phenomenological approach and focused on understanding views of transgender identities. A qualitative approach, located within the interpretivist paradigm, was used to explore the topic '*Primary school teachers' views on transgender identities'*. This research design was used to gain a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, and uncover trends in the thoughts and viewpoints of primary school teachers regarding transgender identities (Struwig & Stead, 2017). The study conveniently selected two (2) schools in the Chatsworth area based on my prior experience, and thereafter purposively selected a combined sample size of thirty (30) qualified primary school teachers. Once ethical clearance was granted by KwaZulu-Natal's Department of Basic Education (KZN DBE) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the relevant data was gathered through structured one-on-one interviews with photo elicitation methods and focus group discussions with the use of vignettes. All sessions were audio recorded with the consent of the participants. The data was then transcribed and analysed thematically.

1.7 Aim, Objectives & Research Questions

1.7.1. Aim

The aim of the study was to explore primary school teachers' views on transgender identities due to the long-lasting impact teachers have on a young learner's sense of self.

1.7.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1) Explore primary school teachers' views and understanding of transgender identity,

2) Ascertain where these understandings, information, and views stem from, and 3) Determine how these views shape the teaching and learning environment.

1.7.3 Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1) How do primary school teachers view and understand transgender identity?

2) What lived experiences of primary school teachers influence their views and understanding of transgender identities?

3) How do primary school teachers' views and understanding of transgender identities affect the teaching and learning environment?

1.8 Outline of the Study

- **Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 provided the background of hate and violence that transgender identities are subjected to in the South African society and reflected on how these inequalities are present in educational environments. The main elements of the research process were also described, namely: the rationale, location of study, research site, methodology, aim, objectives, and research questions. Lastly, the chapter provided an overview of the forthcoming chapters to give the reader a 'roadmap' of what is to come.

- **Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 discussed the theoretical framework that underpins the study. Connell's (1987; 2002) theory of masculinities, Foucault (1978; 1980; 1991) and Butler's (1990; 1993) theory

of performativity with reference to queer theory, contribute to understanding transgender identities in relation to teacher-learner power dynamics and intolerance in the teaching and learning environment.

- **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3, in an attempt to provide a holistic view of transgender identities in educational spaces, reviewed relevant literature from an international and local standpoint.

- **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 explained the methodological approaches implemented in this study to explore primary school teachers' views on transgender identities. The research design, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, ethical considerations, and data analysis were also explained, along with a description of trustworthiness and the importance thereof.

- **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 analysed the data gathered and indicated how primary school teachers in the Chatsworth area constructed their views and understandings of gender and gender specific identities.

- **Chapter 6**

Chapter 6 ascertained the effect of power by analysing the language and practices inherent in the Chatsworth community, culture, tradition, and religions.

- **Chapter 7**

Chapter 7 determined the primary school teachers' approach to the Life Orientation curriculum, paying close attention to CSE, and also considered support structures for the transgender learning experience.

- **Chapter 8**

Chapter 8, the final chapter, concluded the study and provided recommendations based on the findings of the research.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduced this study that set out to explore primary school teachers' views on transgender identities, along with the main elements of the research process. This chapter presented key insights into how transgender and other non-conforming gender identities are considered in the global and local context, paying close attention to discrimination against LGBTIQ+ identities in the schooling environment. The teachers' understandings of gender, sexuality, and transgender identity in the schools were closely associated with negative

perceptions, lack of sensitivity, and overall lack of knowledge. These insights were explored further in the later chapters of this study. Moreover, this chapter defined the problem as schooling environments being shaped by rigid gender expectations and heteronormative ideals. In addition, the chapter also provided the aim of the study, the rationale for conducting this research, and also indicated the location and study site, as well as described the research design and methodology employed to guide the data collection and research process. The penultimate section presented an overview of the forthcoming chapters.

Attention now shifts in the next chapter to the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced this study and the main elements of the research process. The central aim of this study was to explore South African primary school teachers' views on transgender identities. The current chapter outlines key theoretical concepts and perspectives informed by post-structuralist feminist discourses to analyse teachers' views on transgender identities. I have drawn on the social constructionist and essentialist theories to reflect on the constructions of gender, sexuality, and transgender identity. Next, I engage with Connell's (1987; 1995; 2002) theory of masculinities to understand how social expectations of sex roles that presuppose the categories of gender in terms of 'men' and 'women' are foundational to the production of gender inequities. Then, I turn to Foucault (1978; 1980; 1991) to understand how power, resistance, and oppression play out in the realm of gender and sexuality in relation to LGBTIQ+ identities in schools. Lastly, I draw on Butler's (1990) theory of performativity and queer theory to show how the patriarchal constructions of gender shape the teachers' construction of gender and sexuality. I also look at how dominant gender and sexual norms embedded in social constructionist and essentialist theories work to oppress, marginalise, and subordinate transgender identities. In doing so, I join the discussion on problematic heterosexuality, embed my discussion on LGBTIQ+ identities within the discourse of gender and power, centring my focus on school teachers' constructions and views on transgender identity. Then, I discuss how the robustness and resilience of patriarchy paralyses the quest for gender and sexual equality.

Having introduced the chapter above, attention now shifts to the essentialist approach to understand gender.

2.2 Understanding Gender: Essentialism

Amongst sociologists, one of the most controversial debates is the one between essentialism and social constructionism. According to DeLamater and Hyde (1998, p. 10), essentialism is grounded in a belief that certain phenomena are "natural, inevitable, universal and biologically determined". This type of modern essentialism refers to research and theories that assume a biological stance, usually regarding sexual behaviour. The common assumption of the essentialist approach is that phenomena, particularly gender and sexuality, reside within

individuals in the form of anatomy, hormones, and personality traits (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). Essentialism centres around the notion that there are underlying true forms present, for instance, heterosexual and homosexual, and that these forms are both distinct and separate. Alternatively, Gagnon and Simons (1973) argue that sexuality is not a universal phenomenon that can be categorised as the same, at all times, and in all contexts. Instead, Gagnon and Simons (1973) argue that sexuality is created by culture which distinguishes certain behaviours and relations as 'sexual'. The influence of socialisation is described next.

2.3 Understanding Gender Socialisation

Although essentialism relies on biological deterministic views (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998), within gender studies there is a cultural essentialist perspective that influences individual thoughts and behaviour by separating men and women through socialisation processes. Haralambos and Holborn (2013) view socialisation as a process through which young children inherit and embrace attitudes, behaviours, and expectations in accordance with their physical sex. Moreover, Haralambos and Holborn (2013) perceive the notion that agents of socialisation, namely family, peer groups, and schools, enforce and regulate appropriate gendered behaviours. Stockard (1999) states that socialisation is the way individuals develop the idea of their gender-differentiated roles within society. For instance, school environments work as a socialising agent to enforce traditional gender roles when teachers moderate gender in learners' daily lives. This has a direct impact on the development of gender-related concepts and attitudes in schools. Stockard (1999) postulates that teachers contribute to gender stereotyping through play by ascribing specific toys and activities to boys and girls. Hence, the theory of socialisation, together with essentialist perspectives, represent fixed and intrinsic views. These biological essentialism beliefs infiltrate social institutions, such as the school, which subsequently suggests that teachers are conduits through which gender stereotypes are enforced and regulated.

The view that social interaction plays a role in constructing gender is discussed next in the social constructionist theory.

2.4 Understanding Social Constructionist Theory

According to Lorber (2000), gender is built upon the biological differences between men and women. Despite gender being established through physical sex categories and reproductive capabilities, Lorber (2000) disputed that there is no essential masculine or feminine features

presented at birth. For this reason, Lorber (2000) argued that the concept of gender is constructed through continuous social interaction. Thus, allowing individuals to learn 'notions of gendered behaviours'. Brickell (2006) points out that the social constructionist theory is particularly valuable when analysing notions of gendered behaviours as it considers gender and sexual complexities. Lorber (2000) mentions the formation of hierarchal social systems denote the existence of dominant (masculine) and subordinate (feminine) groups. However, Brickell (2006) argues that the social constructionist approach problematised the current understandings of the natural world, such as men dominate over women. Alternatively, allowing for a more critical approach to exploring phenomena by recognising a matrix of intersecting perspectives on gender and sexuality.

Emerging research has drawn increasing attention to the plight of LGBTIQ+ identities in schools (Stieglitz, 2010; Bhana, 2012; Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Taylor, 2011; Martinez & Roble, 2019). Bhana (2012) who focused on teachers as agents of socialisation, and their understanding of lesbian and gay learners in South African schools, underlined the complexity of power and privilege in schools, and emphasised an operational gender binary. Bhana (2012) found that through religious discourses and sexual silencing, teachers restricted sexual freedom and denied homosexuality in school. Bhana (2012) also pointed out that whilst teachers show intolerance towards lesbian and gay identities, teachers cannot solely eliminate homophobia in the school environment. Despite this, Bhana (2012) highlights the importance of recognising that teachers have the capacity to oppose the heterosexual hegemony presented in schools. The analysis of Bhana's study emphasises the extreme manifestation of the dominant discourse surrounding heterosexuality that works as an intermediary to subordinate and exclude other genders or sexualities. Although Bhana's findings were limited to teachers' homophobic attitudes, in the context of LGBTIQ+ violence in South Africa, it becomes clear that teachers' views need to be explored further. In this regard, Bhana's (2012) study lays the foundation for me to explore teachers' views on transgender identities.

The view that gender is taught and not inherent is explored in the next theory.

2.5 Gender as a Social Construct

Connell (2002) argued that individuals are not essentially born with masculine or feminine characteristics but are rather taught to perform gender. Connell (2002, p. 68) maintained that through various social interactions, individuals create and recreate the concept of a gendered self, while simultaneously solidifying "ideologies of natural difference". These discourses not

only expand on perceived notions of "natural difference" but also describe the regulation of compulsory heterosexuality that threaten individual sex and gender freedom, resulting in gender inequalities. School environments are common spaces where all stakeholders including learners, teachers, and school leadership-management perform gender based on their physical sex (Connell, 2002). The norms and values within the schooling environment communicated, to teachers and learners set parameters of acceptable gender expression. For instance, regulation of gendered school uniforms, policing of gendered social performances, and compulsive heterosexual cultural scripts used to govern sexuality, perpetuate school-based homophobia and transphobia. This, together with the lack of educational texts involving transgender narratives, foster an environment that allow for the inundation of dominant discourses surrounding heteronormativity. These dominant discourses render sexuality as irrelevant in young children's lives, consequentially silencing and dismissing children's sexualised identity. However, Connell's assertion that whilst school environments are cultivated as gendered communities, evidence indicating that young children navigate in and out of gender patterns illustrate that the primary school environment is a fundamental space to explore emerging patterns of gender and transgender identities.

For transgender identities, the process of integrating and acquiring social membership in the school environment is a complicated process, as transgender narratives are overwhelmed by gender power imposed by schools and society. Tolman et al., (2003) argue that societal pressure forces transgender identities to conform to either a man or woman, which in turn negatively impacts their identity. In recent years, transgender studies have expanded on the experiences of LGBTIQ+ identities (Hines, 2010). Hines (2010) provided a basis for understanding how a range of non-normative sexual acts are viewed as separate from heterosexuality. Transgender studies began to unpack the intersection of identities including race, gender, and sexuality, and draw attention to issues of heterosexism and heteronormativity (Hines, 2010). DePalma and Atkinson (2010) also analysed ways in which institutional heteronormativity operated in primary schools in the United Kingdom (UK). Their study showed that two-thirds of young LGBTIQ+ identities experience homophobic bullying. Moreover, 64% of transgender men and 44% of transgender women experienced direct bullying or verbal and physical harassment whilst in school, while four out of five LGBTIQ+ identities claimed that there were no adult support systems in school. DePalma and Atkinson (2006) also found that young learners who perpetuated homophobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours did so due to stereotypical cultural understandings of gender and sexuality.

The theory of masculinities postulated by Connell is described next.

2.6 Connell's Theory of Masculinities

Connell (1995) considers masculinities and femininities as construed outcomes of the socialisation processes, presented as personal identity as well as in socially systematised relations. Connell (1995) coined the term 'hegemonic masculinity'. It refers to patterns and practices carried out to maintain heterosexuality, and is reliant on social ascendancy of masculinity to be indoctrinated in cultural and religious practices. Additionally, hegemonic masculinity is closely related to the ideal of male domination and female subordination, or the marginalisation of identities that are gender or sexually non-conforming. Although Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argued that the masculine sense of self can only be achieved through continuous engagement in those discursive practices that signify masculinity, LGBTIQ+ identities struggle to negotiate their masculinity in the school environment, as they refuse to conform to this pattern of hegemony (Connell, 1995). It can be argued that hegemonic masculinity does not entail complete cultural control in school environments, however LGBTIQ+ identities are considered inferior compared to their heterosexual counterparts. Connell (2002, p. 54) reflected on the "gender order of society" that imposes gender regimes closely aligned with hostility, power, and estranged sexuality. It is this gender order in schooling institutions that creates the "patriarchal divide" in which LGBTIQ+ identities are vulnerable to violence and discrimination (Connell, 2002, p. 143). Among the LGBTIQ+ community present in schooling institutions, transgender identities, more specifically, transgender women, are the most vulnerable, being positioned at the bottom of the gender power hierarchy (Connell, 1995). Schilt and Westbrook (2009) in examining the potential challenges of the sex, sexuality, and gender hierarchy found that non-conforming or LGBTIQ+ identities pose a challenge to both the performance of gender and heterosexuality in social situations as they do not fit into gender binaries. According to Bartholomaeus et al., (2016), the heteronormative school society shames transgender identities through verbal harassment, marginalisation, isolation, and physical violence. These behaviours are constituted as transphobia and are in line with dominant ideals of masculinity and power. For this reason, LGBTIQ+ identities experience acts of violence, marginalisation, and discrimination as retaliatory actions to enforce a "patriarchal social order" (Bartholomaeus et al., 2016), which Msibi (2012) described as 'compulsory heterosexuality'.

While heteronormativity is unequivocally harmful to LGBTIQ+ identities, socially created standards enforced through homonormativity require LGBTIQ+ identities to associate with the gender of their sex. Additionally, ideologies of masculinity and femininity are retained, even though homonormativity accepts gay identities. This is because characteristics of gay identities follow traditional gender roles where one gay male is inherently masculine, and therefore 'the man', and the other is feminine, and consequently, 'the woman'. Despite the progression of LGBTIQ+ communities, transgender identification continues to be confronted by challenging gendered systems that attempt to polarise identities using heteronormative standards. Although transgender identities are supported by queer theory as the queer analysis disrupts the hegemonic gender order by rejecting and subverting any normative construction of gender, sex, or sexuality, society continues to misunderstand or confuse transgender identities with gay or lesbian identities. Courtney (2014), in her study with five lesbian, gay, and bisexual school leaders in England, showed that school teachers are capable of disrupting misinformation and misunderstanding irrespective of their gender and sexual status. Courtney (2014) found that heteronormative discourses can be challenged through increased teacher visibility, by disclosing their position on sexuality and deconstructing notions that non-heterosexual identities are problematic.

To shed further light on the topic under investigation, the post-structuralist feminist theory is reviewed next.

2.7 Post-Structuralist Feminist Theory

One of the major tenets of the post-structuralism feminist approach lies in the deconstruction of power. According to Scott (1988), feminist studies require an approach that challenges traditional perspectives of patriarchal forms of power that are systematically repeated. Scott (1988) offered post-structuralism as an alternative theoretical basis for the analysis of behaviour, experiences, and views. Post-structuralism challenges essentialist notions of identity that divide men and women along the lines of anatomical and hormonal difference (Scott, 1988). It is necessary to note that many theorists pair post-structuralist feminist approaches and queer theory to demonstrate how power is a fluid entity which can be possessed by any individual regardless of gender, sexuality, class, or creed (Scott, 1988). Furthermore, post-structuralism embraces complexity and aims to deconstruct deterministic explanations of gender, sex, and power relations that are used to suppress LGBTIQ+ identities. In doing so, post-structural perspectives challenge the dominant discourses of power by

allowing for the deconstruction of binary gender categories. Applying this approach to teachers' views of transgender identities allows this study to observe how power may be deployed and exercised differently in relation to feminist perspectives.

According to Scott (1988), post-structuralist feminist discourses utilise a Foucauldian perspective of power, which is important for understanding how power embraces individuals and their field of relations. Foucault (1981, p. 139) stated "we have to dig deeply to show how things have been historically contingent". Post-structural analyses enable this type of approach. Foucault (1981) provided a starting point for the analysis of the body from a power perspective; post-structuralism, however, goes one step further by highlighting the importance of subjectivity and discourse. Post-structural feminist theory allows the study to shift the perspective to consider a degree of specificity for all individuals involved.

Cannon et al., (2015) reviewed girls' experiences of violence in intimate relations, where boys were seen as the aggressors and girls as victims. They argue that already viewing girls as a homogenous group, disregards particular historical contexts such as their use of control, frustration, anger, and violence (p. 672). This, they note, creates a setting in which the dominant identities (boys) control subordinates (girls), so girls can only be perceived as victims of violence, whilst possibilities such as girls using self-defence or violence against an intimate partner is overlooked. Such a simplistic presumption, in their view, excludes various narratives of young girls and women whose identity differ along the lines of gender and sexual orientation, styming their access to power.

Subjectivity is an important component of post-structuralist feminist ideology. This means that how an individual [teacher/s] talks about their experiences will determine the meanings they attach to these experiences. Since post-structuralism favours the recognition of subjectivity, it allows for the scrutiny of how patriarchy, racism, ageism, and homophobia perpetuate gender and sexual inequalities (Scott, 1988). By allowing teachers to voice their understandings, beliefs, and reasoning, the study grounds the teachers' subjective views of transgender identities, and ultimately provides deep insight into the experiences of transgender identities within the schooling context. This is necessary not only to discuss teachers' views and constructions of alternate sexualities, but also to discuss more broadly what is absolutely essential to address gender and sexual inequalities within the schooling context. It is therefore important that this study acknowledges these problem areas as well as suggest an approach that will not only help to understand how teachers' view transgender identities, but also recognise how these views are constructed and reconstructed among primary school teachers

within the Chatsworth area. Since transgender studies within the primary school environment is a relatively new research area in South Africa, the post-structuralist approach adopted in this study will enable a 'deep' analysis of the qualitative data which I envisage will contribute to and broaden knowledge specifically related to teachers' views and perceptions of transgender identities.

In the next section of this chapter, I expound further on my rationale for utilising a post-structural feminist approach for understanding the girls' experiences of gender and sexual violence. I begin by exploring Foucault's (1980) ideas of power and explain why it has relevance for this study.

2.8 Power, Discipline and Sexuality: A Foucauldian Perspective

According to Foucault (1980), power is both a fluid and relational concept that operates in a field of human relations. This means that since power is based on social location, individuals make use of available tactics to negotiate dynamics of power. Hartsock (1987) claims that the key insight of Foucault's theory of power is that power cannot be controlled and seized by one dominant group to subordinate others. Foucault (1980) further argues that power functions in several ways, and is established through repetitious and self-reproducing forms of knowledge that are both intentional and subjective. Therefore, to overlook ways in which power operates among relations, such as teacher-learner relations where ideas, attitudes, and information intertwine, creates the perception that power is static and understood mainly as a binary that functions as 'power over' (Foucault, 1980). For example, heterosexuality has power over homosexuality. These binaries create the illusion that heterosexuality is in a position of power, whereas identities who do not conform as always 'victims in waiting'. Foucault (1980) reasoned that the perception that power as oppression must be dismantled as oppressive measures are not simply repression or censorship but are dynamic, allowing for new behaviours to emerge. Simply stated, Foucault (1980) maintains that where there is oppression, there is resistance, and resistance is embedded in power. In reading Foucault (1978) critically, one can surmise that gender power relations cannot simply be reduced to oppressor-victim relations, as various institutions, such as hospitals, churches, and schools reproduce ways of thinking and behaviours associated within a certain context. For instance, the assumption that homophobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours in schools are attributed mainly to teachers who oppress LGBTIQ+ learners.

For this reason, Foucault shifts the focus away from the oppressive aspect of power and concentrates on the resistance of individuals and groups that power is exerted upon. Foucault's (1980) idea of power has created a major debacle amongst feminist researchers who, in questioning power, suggests a major loss of legitimacy in institutions, which in this study, is the school. One such study by Schilt and Westbrook (2009) conducted in-depth interviews with 54 transgender men in the US. Their study demonstrated how gender and sexual interactions significantly differed, depending on social or heterosexual circumstances. Their study which explored how cisgender individuals interact with transgender individuals in social environments revealed that when transgender men's (hetero)sexuality aligns with cisgender heterosexual men's sexuality and desire for women, transgender masculinity becomes reinforced. This finding shows that gender fluid expressions or masculine transgender presentations can break away from the stereotypical oppressor-victim narrative that commonly governs heterosexual-homosexual relations. Schilt and Westbrook's (2009) findings illustrate that transgender men experience social acceptance by cisgender heterosexual male colleagues when sexual attraction to the opposite sex (women) is portrayed. These findings validate how transgender identities claim power in terms of mainstream acceptance in social situations, irrespective of gender binaries that reflect cisgender conformity. Drawing inspiration from the conception of 'transgender sublimity' demonstrated in Schilt and Westbrook's (2009) study, my study attempts to move closer to a more profound understanding of transgender identities within the school context, using the qualitative aspect of 'gendered embodiment' and 'subjectivity'. I now elaborate on Foucault's (1977; 1991) treatment of discipline and depict what Foucault refers to as '*panopticism*' to illuminate how the school organisation plays a role in the production of inequalities.

2.9 Foucault's Discipline and Power

Foucault's (1977) notion of disciplinary technology capitalises on the relation between knowledge and the body. Foucault (1977) claimed that exploiting the vulnerable nature of the physical body allowed for ruling powers to sustain their privileged power positions. These ruling powers employed measures of control designed to train and exercise the body to make it productive and cooperative. Politicians, health officials, and business magna adopted systems of control to manipulate the gestures, attitudes, and movements of bodies. One such technique included the metaphoric *panopticon*, used in the organisation of men and women into uniform categories to achieve "power through transparency" (Foucault, 1991). Foucault

considered the *panopticon*, an architectural plan of prisons, as a representation of society in general. He claimed that the design of the buildings reflects the basic principles and practices that are present in Westernised society in terms of control over men and women. Foucault (1977, p. 201) argued that "no one individual is responsible for exercising power" and illustrated this point by explaining power in prisons. He maintained that prison guards hold certain advantages over prisoners; however, guards themselves are also subject to control via administrative power. While prison guards are seen as exercising their power over prisoners, guards only function as part of a given regime. Therefore, in the absence of prison guards, prisoners continue to behave in a manner that is cohesive to that said regime. Even though the panopticon represented an ideal of comprehensive control over discipline of inmates (Foucault, 1991), the philosophy can be easily transferred to establishments such as hospitals, workshops, and schools. Schools are but one of several sites that are organised around a panopticon-like structure. Foucault recognised that schools operate within the framework of operational power practices. Even though leadership-management, parents, and teachers function alongside structures of gender power, Foucault (1991) argued that the school must be recognised as an institution that can resist gender authoritative discourses and practices. This is important as this view aligns with Bhana (2012) and has relevance for my study.

2.10 Foucault's History of Sexuality

According to Foucault (1998), society now shows an increased interest in sexualities that do not conform to marital bonds. Foucault (1998) argued that modern control of sexuality views sex as an object of scientific discipline, knowledge, and domination. However, he argued that there is a further dimension to the control of sexuality. For example, Foucault (1998, p. 104) described the "hysterization of women's' bodies" which emphasised women as highly sexual beings as well as objects of medical knowledge and the main source of reproduction. In this way, Foucault showed how sexuality becomes an essential construct, focused on determining health, desire, and identity. Foucault then disputed that modern sexuality was also characterised by the secularisation of society. He highlighted the "pedagogization of children sex", which perceives children as highly sexual beings, in contradiction to ideologies around childhood innocence (Foucault, 1988). This viewed the sexuality of children as something dangerous, subsequently emphasising the need for monitoring and control. Although the history of sexuality highlighted the emergence of modern sexuality, Foucault (1988) also focused on contemporary ideas and practices, such as campaigns against homosexuals; hence

the predominant views on sexuality remain expressions of a natural sexuality. Foucault (1988) emphasised this point by referring to the "socialization of procreative behaviour" that considered reproduction as a necessity and an act of public importance. Thus, framing the ideology that non-heterosexual identities are unnatural, unreal, and unaccepted due to nonprocreative sex. Foucault (1990, p. 45) used the term 'perverse pleasure' to conceptualise nonprocreative sex as a further unit of sexuality displayed by adults with atypical sexual orientations. Foucault (1990) argued that the power and pleasure dynamic factor in sexual desire contributes to the existence of sexual perversions. For this reason, Foucault's (1990) perverse pleasure illustrates how various sexual interactions contribute to the construct of sexuality. Having considered Foucault's viewpoints in the sections above, some critiques are offered next.

2.11 A Critique of the Foucauldian Perspective

Foucault (1978) asserts that the process of being sexed involves the subjection of an individual to fixed social systems that reproduce and construct gender and sexuality through informal practices or socialisation. However, Foucault's theory of power, gender, and sexuality leaves gaps since he does not recognise that new behaviours are agentic. Foucault's work borders on the perspective of the dominator, and for this reason he fails to recognise unequal power relations that are present amongst marginalised sexualities. Feminist critics express concern that Foucault's account of subjectivity ignores agency and resistance (Hartsock, 1987).

Hartsock (1987) pointed out that Foucault's conception of power leaves little room to explore how marginalised groups, which in this study relates to transgender identities, recognise their sexualities, capabilities, and strengths to contest lopsided or one-dimensional views of power. Moreover, she argues that individuals cannot exist outside power without individual agency, as agency grants humans the ability to create, affect change, and transform power and knowledge. Despite the critique, Foucault does propose the panopticon metaphor that explores the relationship between systems of social control, individuals in disciplinary situations, and the power-knowledge concept. In this way, the metaphor proves valuable when analysing gendered and sexual practices.

Having examined gender, power, and sexuality, I now shift the focus to Butler to explore the theory of gender performativity. This is important since gender performativity is integral to understanding transgender identities. I expand on Butler's theory of performativity and queer theory to illustrate how gendered behaviours are conveyed in social settings.

2.12 Butler's Theory of Performativity and Queering Sexualities

Butler (1993, p. 21) terms 'gender performativity' as learned gendered behaviour that is enacted in a social setting, regulated through rigid gender regimes that authorize gender divisions and constrain true gender expression. Butler (1993) also argues that whilst the social construction of gender itself dictates masculine and feminine appearance and behaviours, performativity must be understood as a deliberate act to inculcate gendered practice into individuals. Butler (1993) points out that the continuous repetition and reiteration of gendered norms into individuals bring about a fabricated sense of self. For instance, within the schooling context, individuals who are subjected to gender norms and cultural signifiers experience constrained identity, as well as internalise, legitimise, and adhere to gendered behaviours, roles, and expectations, both consciously and subconsciously. Butler (1993, p. 152) claims that gender normality tends to deprive and even stymie one's identity and ability to live a functional life by creating a space that overlooks and even silences stigma, victimisation, harassment, and homophobic and transphobic threats. Butler's (1993) theory of performativity denaturalises gender and provides a possibility for individuals to opt out of the rigid gender binary.

Queer theorists maintain that there is no essential gender category, asserting that people exist both as subjects and objects of society (Butler, 1990). This suggests then that gender and sexual identities are not 'born' (inherent) but are rather constructed by repeated gender performances that are informed by existing social constructions of gender (Butler, 1990). This is important as it allows for the analysis of transgender identities beyond the gender binary that dictates heterosexuality. Butler's (1990) insights into gender and sexuality are recognised through the paradigm of performativity, representation, and identification of binaries. Butler (1990) contended that rather than looking at how femininities are being misrepresented socially and politically, we should look at how categories of 'femininities' are being reproduced and confined by gender power structures. For this reason, the queer theory evolved from the dissatisfaction of privileged identities, including women or the 'lesbian and gay' movement, consequently dismissing 'other' identities while under the pretence of emancipation. Butler (1990) elaborated on the 'heterosexual matrix' that accounts for how gender binaries in society align representations of sex and sexuality to assumed gender based on heteronormativity. For this reason, queer theory is utilised to disturb the gender binary and problematise causal constructions of gender and sexuality. A good example of causal

constructions of gender and sexuality are institutions or individuals labelling all LGBTIQ+ identities as gay. Despite attempts to disturb notions of cisnormativity and heteronormativity, queer theory recognises the impossibility of rejecting the current order of gender and sexuality but instead aims to negotiate the limitations of gender norms. For this reason, queer theory is applied as a useful tool to undermine normative discourses not only underling cisnormativity and heteronormativity but also homonormativity. However, Weedon's (1997) concern was the conditions under which individuals functioned in relation to community and institutional context. Like other post-structural theorists, Weedon (1997) disputed that all identities are feeling, thinking, social individuals who are capable of resisting and rejecting various gender discourses that are in line with compulsory heterosexuality. Weedon's (1997) work focused on theorising about identity (individuals) as diverse, contradictory, and changing over time and space. Identity construction is therefore a process in which the individual actively participates in establishing his or her own identity, suggesting that individuals are therefore agentic beings who have the power to negotiate and/or choose a desired gender category.

2.13 Conclusion

The initial chapters set the stage to explore 30 primary school teachers' constructions and views on transgender identities in the two schools under study, namely Eden primary and Ale primary (pseudonyms). Through post-structuralist feminist discourses, together with social constructionist and essentialist theories focused on gender and sexualities, it becomes evident that gender is a complex and infinite concept that remains entrenched in global societies. Connell's theory of masculinities emphasised how social assumptions, especially surrounding social expectations centring on the idea that sex roles presume the categories of gender in terms of 'men' and 'women', endanger transgender identities. While the Foucauldian perspectives on power, gender, and sexuality highlighted the risks transgender identities face in terms of limited capabilities due to a one-dimensional view of their power. Butler's theory of performativity further illuminated how patriarchal constructions of gender filter into school institutions and shape the teachers' construction of gender, sexuality, and transgender identities. Whilst Butler's queer theory was able to unpack essentialist as well as social constructionist perspectives to explore how dominant gender and sexual norms work to oppress, marginalise, and subordinate transgender identities. The following chapter presents a review of international, intercontinental, and national literature that focuses on transgender identity.

CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework underpinning this study. Various theories were explored to provide a better understanding of gender, gender identity, and sexuality. To reflect on other research studies and scholarly viewpoints on the topic, this chapter presents the literature review of the study. To recap, the central aim of this study was to explore primary school teachers' views on transgender identities in a former Indian suburb in the province of KZN, South Africa. A broad analysis of recent literature on how primary school teachers construct, express, and defend their views on transgender identities will be used to contextualise the study and orientate the reader to the field. In addition to drawing on global and local literature to show how the school becomes a platform for the re-inscription of unequal gender norms espoused by society, the impact this has on transgender identities will also be highlighted. Furthermore, I will also show where the literature reviewed supports my argument that sociocultural norms and values attached to gender and sexuality underpin teachers' views on transgender identities. In addition, particular attention is given to the ways in which other researchers have framed and conceptualised primary school teachers' views on transgender identities.

The body of scholarship that I draw on engages in analyses that show how gender power imbalances, together with other intersecting forms of socio-cultural inequalities, pose a challenge to transgender identities' holistic development (Francis, 2019). Emerging research shows that in South African schools, many teachers have vague conceptions of gender identities. As a result, prevalent issues around homophobic and transphobic bullying and power struggles between heterosexual cisgender and transgender identities continue to thrive (Francis 2019). Despite the recognition of pervasive inequalities and stress on the need for teaching gender and sexuality as part of the formal curriculum (DBE, 2011), South African schools continue to present as dangerous sites that are intolerant, disrespectful, and threatening toward gender non-conforming identities.

Moreover, it is important to highlight the scarcity of local studies that examine primary school teachers' views on transgender identities in the South African context. To this effect, it is noted that interventions seeking to counter such prejudices are hindered by limited

research on the topic. The limitations of how primary school teachers' views shape the teaching and learning environment, therefore, underscore the relevance and importance of exploring this phenomenon further. This study, in turn, will contribute to the existing body of research and thereby promote the development of appropriate and suitable intervention strategies.

Hence, this chapter will focus on the development of transgender identities, global issues of transphobia, teacher construction of transgender identity, and transgender identity in the curriculum. These themes are discussed under their respective headings below. For now, the literature on the global phenomenon of transphobia is reviewed next.

3.2 Transphobia: A Global Phenomenon

Over the last decade, transgender identities have remained in the shadows of society, stereotyped as mentally ill sexual deviants. Many have even been persecuted within the LGBTIQ+ community for being liars, fakers, or posers (Bedortha, 2019). Transphobia remains an explicit form of aggression, hostility, and brutality that is directed toward transgender identities on account of their perceived or actual gender identity, expression, and sexual orientation, which represents structural inequality in almost all schools (Stieglitz, 2010; Biegel & Kuehl, 2010). In the Canadian context, Taylor (2011) conducted a nationwide survey on experiences of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia among 3,700 learners between the ages of 13 and 18, and noted the measures taken by schools to combat forms of homophobic and transphobic bullying. Although learners who actively identified as transgender were comparatively smaller in number compared to learners who self-identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, the survey found that transgender identities were severely more susceptible to harassment. Taylor (2011) found that 90% of transgender learners reported experiencing verbal harassment, 23% of which reported that teachers were the perpetrators of negative gender-related language or constant transphobic comments. Martinez and Robles (2019) affirmed that individuals who experience homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are vulnerable to long-term consequences in terms of education, such as poor-school performance and increased absenteeism, which in turn lead to school failure and dropout. Additionally, the extent of intolerance and violence experienced by transgender learners affect mental health and, in extreme cases, result in suicide or death by hate crimes (Martinez & Robles, 2019). The experiences of homophobic and transphobic bullying are further detrimental to young

children and adolescents as significant distress is placed on this phase of development during which personality and identity are established (Martinez & Robles, 2019).

Taylor (2011) argued that while two-thirds of learners, both LGBTIQ+ and nonLGBTIQ+, reported feeling unsafe in terms of gender identity, expression, and sexual orientation, there was a lack of evidence and silencing of transphobic experiences. As a result of this, teachers, administration staff, and the school community as a whole were unable to adequately respond to acts of homophobic and transphobic bullying both witnessed and personally perpetrated in schools. In light of this, Martinez and Robles (2019) affirmed that school environments play an essential role in the prevention of homophobic and transphobic bullying, as these environments are responsible for not only developing well-informed and actively involved learners, but also inculcating a value system into each learner so they are able to fully integrate into the broader society. Irrespective of race, gender, or sexuality, all learners have a basic fundamental right to education. However, this right is infringed by homophobic and transphobic acts that remodel school environments into extremely stressful and dangerous sites that uphold exclusion, pathologisation, and violence against transgender identities (Martinez & Robles, 2019).

In the US, transgender women are primarily the targets of transphobic harassment, abuse, and violence. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programme (NCAVP) (2017) indicated that 50% of murders of LGBTIQ+ identities are perpetrated solely against transgender women. The NCAVP in 2017 researched the experiences of discrimination and violence of transgender people of colour (TPOC) in the wake of the murder of 28 transgender identities. It was discovered that at least half of those murdered were TPOC. Simons et al., (2021) highlighted the increase in transgender fatalities in the US, revealing that 23 TPOC were murdered by June 2020, nearly equalling 2019's total of 27. Simons et al., (2021, p. 17) also claimed that TPOC face additional discrimination and violence compared to Caucasian transgender identities on account of having "more than one oppressed identity (race and gender)".

Tracing the "evolution of representation of transgender identities on American television" from the 1980's, Bermudez de Castro (2017) claimed that the fear of transgender identities manifested itself and presented as hatred, outrage, panic, or disgust. Due to decades of misinterpretation through the media, this resulted in emotional or physical violence. Bermudez de Castro (2017) argued that transgender characters in both films and series were portrayed stereotypically and in a dehumanising manner. Obviously due to oblivious

scriptwriters who themselves could not understand or differentiate between LGBTIQ+ identities, and thus strengthened stereotypical and biased views of transgender held by the vast public. Although observing the shift in media approach to subjectivities of LGBTIQ+ identities throughout the decades, Bermudez de Castro (2017) nevertheless maintained that volatile messages concerning the transgender community have infiltrated all domains of governance. These domains include actions undertaken by governments, formal and informal systems adopted by employment organisations and power, and language and norms entrenched in tertiary and basic education institutions.

In Portugal in 2007, a transgender woman by the name of Gisberta Salce Junior, aged 46, was tortured, raped, and drowned by 16 adolescents aged between 13 and 16 years (Carrere-Fernandez et al., 2019). Despite the inhumaneness of the case, the media painted Gisberta as a "homeless, immigrant, transvestite prostitute, and a drug addict who was HIV positive" (Carrere-Fernandez et al., 2019, p. 1). In consequence, the general attitude of the Portuguese society was subdued while feelings of pity were accentuated and redirected toward the perpetrators. The broad assumption that young children and adolescents are not capable of homophobic and transphobic beliefs or cannot be perpetrators of hate crime, stem from hegemonic discourses around childhood innocence. Global society perceives childhood as a state of purity and moral innocence that needs to be protected from adult knowledge; however, these complex constructions on childhood innocence have disadvantageous impacts on young children and adolescents' agency, together with transgender identities.

Carrere-Fernandez et al., (2019) conducted research among 1,005 adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 in Northern Portugal to analyse their opinions, outlooks, and approaches to TGD individuals. The study found that young Portuguese boys exhibited significantly more destructive outlooks on TGD identities compared to young girls, and actively participated in more sexual stereotyping, sexist and transphobic approaches, trans-bashing, and moral disengagement with regard to bullying in school (Carrere-Fernandez et al., 2019). In addition, young men were penalised more for transgressing gender roles, as femininity was devalued and even feared amongst young boys. Thus, indicating the instinctive reaction to protect or preserve hegemonic masculinity, which remains overvalued by society today. Allen (2019) conducted a similar study among high school learners in Aotearoa-New Zealand and found that cisgender heterosexual males reported being shamed and ridiculed for dressing in tight skinny jeans. This is an indication of the normalisation of social discourses present in patriarchal systems that discount any identity that strays from the hegemonic heteronormative

ideals, proving to have a detrimental impact on children and young adolescents as they are in an evolutionary period of development that can entice negative attitudes toward transgender identities.

Although there are emerging studies that have indicated that structural interventions be put in place to reduce aggressive and violent attitudes, entrenched gendered discourses have a crippling affiliation on teacher support of trans-inclusive initiatives (Bartholomaeus, 2013; Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017b). This is primarily due to the lack of information and understanding teachers, administrative staff, and other key stakeholders have on terminology like gender identity, sexual orientation, and heteronormativity. In spite of teachers, leadership management and the school community who oppose transphobic bullying, the tolerance of myths, prejudice, and misperceptions of transgender communities normalise and entrench discrimination in school practices.

Having outlined the prevalence of transphobia as a global phenomenon and noting the serious implications it has in the school environment, I will now go on to explore how TGD identities, notions of heteronormativity, and rigid forms of heterosexuality produce and reproduce the gender binary that influences transgender identity in the school environment.

3.2.1 The gender binary

According to Carrera et al., (2012), transgender communities have been widely recognised by streamlined binaries of man and woman, and therefore seek to signify gender fluidity through "female-to-male (FtM) and male-to-female (MtF), or genderqueer identities". School environments are entrenched with heteronormative gender binaries that support heterosexuality (DePalma & Atkinson, 2006). Transphobia emerges through heteronormative gender binaries, as school-based interventions fail to consider broader cultural and organisational structures that conceal homophobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours (DePalma & Atkinson, 2006). In this section, I outline how schools function through the power and privilege of heteronormativity, and also discuss the rigid implementation of the gender binary through school uniform and the different learning areas.

3.2.1.1 Gendered school uniform

Although there is a steady incline in the number of young adolescents who 'come out' as being transgender in Australian society, school policies promote rigid policing of gendered uniforms (Jones et al., 2016). The authors carried out a survey among 189 TGD current and past learners

between the ages of 14 and 25 to explore school treatment of TGD by staff and peers. The results showed that learners found school uniforms as 'mostly inappropriate' as they were compelled to act in accordance with the perceived appropriate school dress code that assigns dresses and skirts to girls and trousers and shirts to boys. A 16-year-old transgender boy further described feelings of depression when he was 'forced' to dress in a skirt, while a 25year-old gender FtM participant described being harassed and bullied by school staff and peers in an all-girls school when she requested trousers (Jones et al., 2016). Similarly, a study conducted at an Irish school revealed that environments restrict transgender learners' rights, such as when teachers dictate and force learners to wear clothing that conform to and uphold gender normativity and heterosexuality (Transgender Equality Network Ireland [TENI], 2016). Despite the shift in some school communities to get involved in and support a trans inclusive culture through the use of altered codes of conduct, intolerance remains prominent in most schools.

3.2.1.2 Gendered curriculum

Higgins et al., (2016) conducted a national study with 2,264 LGBTIQ+ identities in Ireland and highlighted surrounding factors that affected their mental health and well-being in education programmes. One of the major findings was that the transition phase from childhood to adolescence was prominently challenging, as this period was not formally recognised in some school contexts. Thus, leaving LGBTIQ+ identities without an option to learn about feeling different or not able to fit in, or navigating and trying to make sense of their sexuality throughout all areas of the curriculum. McGlashan and Fitzpatrick (2018) conducted a study among LGBTIQ+ high school learners in Auckland, New Zealand. These scholars explored the role of gendered pronouns adopted in schools, as fixed notions of language reinforce and stabilise gender binaries. They argued that the use of the he/she gender binary strengthened power relations and systemic gendered hierarchies already deep-rooted in school culture. Learner participants in the study described feelings of illegitimacy when compared to fixed heterosexual identities portrayed in textbooks and reiterated by teachers and school staff.

In their study, Jones et al., (2016) drew attention to teacher resistance to sexuality and puberty education when 85% of learner participants reported sexuality education as inappropriate. A 21-year-old transgender male described sex education teachers as intolerant staff, and perceived sex education as uninformative as the curriculum failed to mention transgender or intersex identities (Jones et al., 2016).

Shefer and Macleod (2015) conducted research on sexual practices among South African youth to identify the gap between policy and lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ identities. The authors found that sex and sexuality in the Life Orientation curriculum attempt to challenge gender power inequalities that manifest in unsafe, coercive, and violent practices in South African society (Shefer & Macleod, 2015). Moreover, Francis (2017) found that the majority of high school teachers in South Africa grappled with articulating terms such as 'gay', 'lesbian', 'bisexual', or 'homosexual' in classrooms, and viewed comprehensive sexuality education as inappropriate, explicit, and unnecessary, and in need of being eradicated.

A 14-year-old transgender participant in the study conducted by Jones et al., (2016) expressed that while academic schooling was generally tolerable, physical education was the most difficult class as all aspects of the subject required separation into boys and girls, where boys were expected to participate in hyper masculine activities. Bowley (2013) studied the social construction of hegemonic masculinity through sport by observing a group of boys aged between 13 and 14 in a South African high school. The author found that while sport is encouraged, sport is also gendered and sexualised, and thus a contributing factor to unequal gender power relations among boys and the unethical tolerance of homophobia. Due to the historical absence of information from school curriculum as well as continued neglect of transinclusive education, transgender identities are confronted with an array of difficulties in the school environment, which results in feelings of confusion and a sense of gender incongruence.

3.3 Schooling and Marginalisation of LGBTIQ+ Globally

Pinto and Moleiro (2015) conducted in-depth interviews with a group of self-identified transsexual individuals. Their interview sample comprised 14 (MtF) and 8 (FtM) participants aged between 16 and 55 years, from two major Portuguese cities. The participants specified that gender expressions and normalised gender roles were not problematic in themselves, but the intolerance of transsexual identity and transsexual experiences by school staff created a higher degree of difficulties. Guasp et al., (2014) compiled a report using 1,832 school staff members in the UK. The report focused on primary schools' responses to homophobic bullying and language, and revealed that 70% of primary school teachers heard homophobic language yet only half of the teachers effectively intervened (Guasp et al., 2014). The real concerning factor was that 39% of the teachers believed that addressing issues pertaining to LGBT identities was not permitted in the primary school environment, despite the

requirements from the UK Government to proactively challenge homophobic bullying (Guasp et al., 2014). In spite of this, 90% of the teachers claimed that it was their duty to prevent homophobia in schools; yet one of the teacher participants stated that she would not punish learners for referring to a broken computer as 'gay', but would intervene if a learner was bullied (Guasp et al, 2014). The response of the teacher indicates the lack of understanding of homophobic and transphobic prejudices and attitudes, and highlights teacher inability to adequately deal with such situations. DePalma and Atkinson (2006) argued that rather than focusing on eradicating acts of homophobic and transphobic bullying, teachers and school leadership-management should focus on everyday practices. For instance, when the term gay is subtext to an object that fails to function in an expected manner or an inconvenience, rather than allowing further indifference in the school environment, which undervalues LGBTIQ+ identities, teachers and leadership-management should act swiftly to limit homophobic and transphobic complicity.

Farrelly (2014) investigated the occurrence of homophobic bullying among 283 leadership-management staff in primary schools across Ireland. The respondents, comprising of principals, deputy principals, and those acting in either role, completed a questionnaire that addressed the nature of homophobic bullying, the effectiveness of homophobic bullying policy in schools, and how leadership-management perceived the role of other school stakeholders when addressing homophobic bullying (Farrelly, 2014). The alarming findings showed that only 19% of the respondents reacted to homophobic bullying that presented itself in schools, which included physical violence, exclusion, and cyber-bullying (Farrelly, 2014). Whereas most respondents claimed that school policies made no direct reference to homophobic bullying, and therefore incidences were dealt with in an informal manner (Farrelly, 2014). Moreover, 70% of respondents were aware to some extent of the use of homophobic language in the teaching and learning environment, yet indicated that discussions around subjects of sexuality and sexual orientation with staff and learners brought about discomfort and was therefore avoided (Farrelly, 2014).

Sjurso et al., (2019) conducted a qualitative study on the correlation between teacher authority and cases of bullying in schools in Norway and Ireland. Their findings showed that learners between the ages of 12 and 18 described instances of victimisation, and experienced negative comments and exclusion in the actual classroom as well as online. They also reported that teachers were directly involved in such behaviours (Sjurso et al., 2019). During the interview process, the participants were asked what teachers would do to stop bullying. Out

of the 10 participants, over half reported that 'they [teachers] did not react to it', or the teachers completely ignored what happened and 'did not get anything sorted'. When probed about how the bullying stopped, the responses included changing schools and isolating themselves from teachers and peers (Sjurso et al., 2019). For most self-identifying transgender youth, experiences of victimisation and exclusion from formal and informal curriculum have become a norm, as school textbooks continue to underrepresent identities. Moreover, school policies on dress codes and uniforms, including regulated hair styles, stereotypically maintain strict distinctions between male and female identities based exclusively on physical sex allocated at birth (Open Society Foundation, 2015).

This results in transgender identities having to navigate sex-segregated situations with no formal understandings that support their gender identity and expression, leaving them susceptible to frequent discrimination and bullying by individuals in schooling institutions. Apostolidou (2019) also found that school teachers, counsellors, psychologists, and other professionals who work directly in the school context acknowledged the prevalence of transphobic bullying, but also claimed that incidences of teacher-perpetrated bullying are kept hidden. During a focus group discussion, participants of the study stated teachers made comments such as "go and play with the children that are like you, why do you behave like a girl". These foregrounded the larger discourses that exist within the school environment with regard to teachers' prejudice stance on gender and sexuality, and the response to identities that oppose heteronormative expectations (Apostolidou, 2019).

3.4 LGBTQI+ and Schooling in Africa

As transgender subjectivities are being placed at the forefront of collective global awareness, school environments are now obligated to acknowledge social constructions of gender and adopt trans awareness (Kroeger & Regula, 2017). Despite the physical evidence of human right violations against the LGBTIQ+ community, poor pervasive understanding around gender and sexuality together with unchallenged levels of homophobia, are particularly situated on the African continent (Izugbara et al., 2020). Currently, there are several African countries that continue to impose laws that oppose fundamental rights of LGBTIQ+ identities. Countries such as Somali, Mauritania, and Sudan have endorsed the death penalty for homosexual activity among men, while homosexual identities face life imprisonment in Uganda and Sierra Leone. While attitudes toward homosexuality vary across Africa, South Africa has granted full constitutional protection against homophobic discrimination, and

actively examine disruptive gender binaries that impede school structures and practices (Leonardi & Staley, 2018).

However, Francis et al., (2019) researched the role school cultures play in marginalisation, silence, and rejection of non-conforming identities across Southern African countries. Their findings revealed that across Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa, school environments were beleaguered by heteronormativity and patriarchal ideas that were reinforced and maintained by teachers and school managers (Francis et al., 2019). Although governmental policies considered gender identity and diversity (DBE, 2011), the actual implementation of these policies by the school communities continue to be disregarded. Francis et al., (2019) claimed that schools have a normalised expectation to function using exclusive heterosexual cisgender traits that stem from robust religious influence, coupled with heteronormativity entrenched in society which filter into the school context. Kuloba (2014) argued that hostility against homosexuality in Africa is a combined manifestation of biblical imperatives together with African culture. Children within this cultural context are taught from an early age to avoid acts or behaviours that place shame on the family, with young boys in particular being expected to bring glory to the family (Kuloba, 2014). Homosexuality is considered a shameful act or behaviour, and is at times undisclosed by family members, with murder of LGBTIQ+ identities being the most hostile form of homophobia under colonial laws.

3.4.1 LGBTQI+ and schooling in South Africa

The remainder of this chapter focuses on South African studies that address discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ+ identities in school environments. Daniels et al., (2019) conducted focus group discussions among gender non-conforming high school learners. Their findings revealed that learners are constantly subjected to exclusion, marginalisation, and discrimination. Msibi (2012) also conducted research among queer learners in a rural high school in South Africa, and discussions revealed the constant use of derogatory language in the school environment and the detrimental effects thereof on developing young LGBTIQ+ identities. While Msibi (2012) exposed the implications of the use of homophobic and transphobic terms such as 'moffie', 'ongqingili', or 'isitabane' on gender queer learners, Bhana (2012) argued that teachers' innate beliefs of gender and sexual diversity as morally incorrect, governed school environments, and consequently, undermined gender progressive education policies. Daniels et al., (2019) demonstrated how discriminative practices during

lessons emasculate LGBTIQ+ identities in classrooms. This was supported by an incident where a teacher in the study explained magnetism as opposite charges attract, and then conveyed that two men cannot correspond with one another. The teacher in this instance was oblivious to his/her own personal gender bias and unawareness of LGBTIQ+ identities that were personally affected by the statement. Consequently, this instance showcased how illinformed teachers impose their gendered power and sustain heteronormative hierarchies present in school environments.

The tension that persists among heterosexual cisgender identities and non-conforming or LGBTIQ+ identities have been forged through South Africa's robust history, which gave rise to the complex multicultural society of today. Bhana et al., (2019) stated that the South African education system attempts to redress LGBTIQ+ inequalities, yet school institutions continue to resist change, and remain strongly gendered, heteronormative, and steadfast in traditional and cultural beliefs. Similar to other African countries, these ideals primarily stem from the apartheid era, through the adoption of the Christian National Education curriculum which focused primarily on religious conservation teachings. Christianity completely condemns homosexuality as a way of life, and defends condemnation of such by stating that non-conforming identities are morally wrong, deviant, and sinful (Bhana, 2012; Msibi, 2012; Francis, 2013; DePalma & Francis, 2014; Reygan & Francis, 2015; Francis & Reygan, 2016). Langa (2015) introduced terms such as 'un-African' and 'un- Christian' to describe how homosexuality is viewed in South African township schools. The interview and focus group discussion revealed that LGBTIQ+ identities were labelled as "sexually aberrant, perverse, contaminating and threatening" to the globally recognised establishment of a nuclear family (Langa, 2015). Even though teachers from an African community shared these views, various ethnic and religious groups within South Africa's diverse society holds onto similar philosophies. Begley (2000) reasoned that these philosophical beliefs stem from religious studies surfacing throughout the 19th century, where society assigned desirable attributes to a woman, such as piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity, and attached femininity to the character of a woman based on virtue. Religious studies during this time further portrayed women as uninterested in sex and vulnerable to seduction, with the loss of purity being symbolised as unnatural and unfeminine (Begley, 2000). The idealisation of femininity had drastic implications on men, as men were seen as polar opposites; this gave rise to notion of masculinity. This polarisation of men from women and the prohibition of feminine traits inscribed hyper masculine traits, such as the male thirst for success and status, judged on their

ability to be tough, confident, and resilient, and commended on aggressiveness, violence, and boldness. Begley (2000) claimed that the more men and women conformed to these attributes, the stronger heteronormativity became in the global society, thus giving rise to the gender binary present today.

Even though the South African government implemented the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in an attempt to shift educational perspectives and identify new forms of freedoms for LGBTIQ+ identities in schools, discrimination and marginalisation of transgender identities continue. This curriculum-based approach to teaching and learning focuses on physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cognitive aspects surrounding gender and sexuality, in both formal and informal school settings (Adesina & Olufadewa, 2020). While the CSE is scientifically supported with incremental and age appropriate content aimed at cultivating everyday life skills and reinforcing healthy sexual understandings among young children (Adesina & Olufadewa, 2020), deeply embedded normative views and hierarchies of heteronormative power command moral politics and exclusionary practices in schools (Bhana et al., 2010). There has been a surge in research focusing on dismantling systems of heteronormativity through transgender studies over the past decade, with emphasis being placed on transgender agency and how each individual should be empowered to make active decisions in order to meet his or her own holistic needs through the CSE curriculum (Hedge & Mackenzie, 2012).

Research shows that despite the aim of the Bill of Rights (Act 108 of 1996) to provide equality, human dignity, and freedom and security with regard to sexuality and reproductive decisions, developing agency among LGBTIQ+ identities are compromised in school environments. Additionally, the agency of transgender identities is further jeopardised when their personal growth, ideas, and possibilities become dishevelled by toxic societal norms and expectations. Society's construction of what transgender identities should and should not be and do, are determined by heterosexual social and cultural narratives and a complex classification of masculinities. Mayeza and Bhana (2020) researched "understandings of masculinities in South African primary schools" and found that young masculinities struggle with the contractions of "being a real boy". This concept was closely conjoined with fighting prowess and intertwined with a quest for positional power, even at the young age of 10. The school-based study highlighted that social constructions of masculinities were reliant on heteronormativity and subordination of femininities (Bartholomaeus, 2013, Mayeza & Bhana, 2020). Consequently, enforcing and sustaining these ideals in the school environment further

forced young boys to embody hegemonic masculine roles. These studies demonstrate that young boys who undertake activities that are perceived as feminine, who are slim-built and actively participate in platonic relations, are stereotyped as feminine, and reported experiencing homophobic violence for being ranked as a subordinate within the hierarchy of masculinities. These dominant discourses around young masculinities in primary school make toxic societal norms and gender expectations more prominent, and support the inclusion of gender, sex, and sexuality education at primary school level.

3.5 LGBTQI+ and South African Teachers

A number of South African studies contend that teachers remain untrained when it comes to dealing with disputes surrounding gender diversity and identity (DePalma & Francis, 2014; Bhana, 2014; Francis, 2017). Fitzgerald (2018) researched understandings of transgender through a psychological lens and argued that in order to alleviate discrimination and marginalisation of transgender identities, prejudice attitudes and behaviours need to be reduced. By definition, prejudice is traditionally defined as negative attitudes that are attached to an individual or group. Reygan and Francis (2015) found that teachers upheld prejudice and homophobic discourses through defense of heterosexism in the teaching and learning environment. These scholars conducted a study amongst teachers in the Free State and established that teachers approached gender and sexual diversity education with emotion rather than professionalism, thereby accentuating prejudice directed toward transgender identities in schools (Reygan & Francis, 2015).

Opposing South African teachers' problematic approach and sentiments towards non-conforming identities (Bhana, 2012; Reygan & Francis, 2015), Msibi (2019) researched queer Black male teachers. The findings revealed that same-sex relations among teachers are largely refuted, with non-conforming teachers being fundamentally discriminated against and marginalised, resulting in them having to adopt creative ways to manage their gender identity and sexuality to avoid homophobia and transphobia in the work environment. This finding established that school environments, rather than just teachers, are expected to uphold asexuality, and any identity within the environment that deviates from the hetero-cis-gender norm will be vilified and silenced. Msibi (2019) argued that the culturally diverse society together with issues of desegregation and educational reform, challenge teachers through heterogeneity of the curricula and new educational legislature. The increase of cultural diversity in schooling environments requires the teaching and management of all learners,

irrespective of socio-cultural backgrounds; however, introducing schools as all-inclusive environments proves to be problematic. Teachers are not able to effectively and efficiently manage and teach all cultures, languages, and backgrounds as their mutual understanding and acceptance of individuals is limited to prior knowledge and new comprehendible information. Msibi (2019) highlighted that the way LGBTIQ+ identities are viewed and understood by teachers depends heavily on their background, age, race, and class. Additionally, the demographics of teachers and other socio-cultural and historical contexts also influence teachers. Msibi (2019) claimed that these views, interpretations, and understanding of gender identity or transgender identity will differ from rural context to the township and even metropolitan areas.

3.5.1 Teacher race, religion, culture, and class

Homophobic and transphobic violence in the South African society transcend all categories of race, religion, culture, and class (Msibi, 2012). Yet, LGBTIQ+ identities are severely constrained within schools due to the toxic mix of religious and cultural standards, and negative stereotypes that propagandise mindsets and maintain gendered misconceptions (Msibi, 2019). Although acts of homophobia are especially rife in black townships and schools, patriarchal practices are present in all aspects of South African society where normative masculinities exercise their power, privilege, and authority to retain their position in society. Akoob (2018, n.p.) wrote an article in a local newspaper that addressed "toxic masculinity in the South African Indian community". This article drew attention to the high levels of sexism and homophobic attitudes of the Indian community. These insights are noted in the current study. Akoob (2018) maintained that explicit, aggressive, vitriolic, and malicious content are propagated on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. It also illustrates the bigotry that exists amongst the dominant heterosexual identities within the Indian community. In 2017, a skit was published on Facebook titled 'Coming out of the closet'. It highlighted the devastating lived reality of queer identities in Indian communities as they navigate their sexuality in silence and attempt to communicate or "come out" (Akoob, 2018, n.p.). The video exposed an Indian parent who explained how ballet and musicals will ensure his son would be gay, and seeing that his son supported the European football team Liverpool, therefore he has to be gay. Akoob (2018) argued that within the Indian community homophobic stereotypes on LGBT identities are concealed under the pretence of comedy, audience acceptance, and constitutional freedom of speech. Yet these stereotypes reinforce

negative perceptions of LGBTIQ+ identities and encourage individuals to avoid certain activities and roles because society perceives them as abnormal. Studies show that culture, tradition, and religion have a major influence on how tolerant teachers are to non-conforming gender identities, as homosexuality is considered a sin (Msibi, 2012; DePalma & Francis, 2014; Reygan & Francis, 2015). There are three major religious groups in the Indian community, namely: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. Each prohibit homosexuality based on the teachings of holy text that states the 'natural' order is being unsettled through homosexuality. Akoob (2018) disputed that while the term 'gay' is used as a synonym to refer to an object, role, interest, or behaviour that is fiercely ostracised within the Indian community, the rejection is also pejorative due to fear.

3.5.2 Fear and silencing

Teachers experience much difficulty when having to oppose personal values and belief systems to accommodate non-conforming gender identities in the classroom climate. While DePalma and Atkinson (2010) pointed out that teachers are essential when educating learners' views on homosexuality, personal bias and unaddressed teacher prejudice have the potential to steer lessons away from LGBTIQ+ inclusivity. Alternatively, teacher fear can be expressed through implicit homophobic and transphobic attitudes, or through silencing of questions and conversations about and around non-conforming gender identities in the school environment. Studies have shown that silencing, denial, and ignorance of non-conforming identities are used as tools of discrimination, and are commonly practiced in primary schools. This is due to the presumption of childhood innocence and the idea that children are blank slates and vulnerable to negative sexual influence rather than as active agents in the development of their gender and sexual identity (Francis, 2012; DePalma & Francis, 2014; Mayeza & Bhana, 2020). The fear of extinguishing childhood innocence together with deeply embedded school cultures, including teacher, personal or professional life experience, central myths, rituals and ethics sustain negative constructions of transgender identities.

However, it must be noted that it is especially difficult for teachers to teach something that goes against their personal beliefs and values. Even though Bhana (2012) conducted a study that portrayed the views of Christianity, other religions like Islam and Hinduism follow similar teachings, such as the purpose of marriage is reproduction, and therefore homosexuality is considered off the religious path (Bhana, 2012; Francis, 2017; Francis 2012). Therefore, teachers are at risk of unconsciously projecting views such as that homosexuality

is contagious and sinful, and a situation plagued with the possibility of disease and death. In this way, teachers warp the teaching and learning environment and instil a sense of intolerance and fear. However, there is evidence that reveals the desire of young people to know more about sex and sexuality. Despite this thirst for more information from the teaching and learning environment, teachers continue to extinguish any curiosity while simultaneously linking gender and sexuality to fear and shame, rather than providing an inclusive environment that considers young identities' thoughts and feelings about their gender and sexuality.

3.5.3 Supporting teachers to address homophobia and transphobia

Gudyanga et al., (2019) substantiates that all teachers require professional growth in order to gain increased experience in their teaching abilities. Similarly, teachers who implement the CSE first need to understand their sexuality and gender identity, and only thereafter reflect on how their ideas filter into everyday classrooms (Gudyanga et al., 2019). Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2017a) identified that non-conforming children's identity development has been neglected in Australian primary schools. Yet, literature showed that there is a growing number of youths disclosing their non-conforming gender identities (Conron et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2014; Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017a). Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2017a) found that children between the ages of 5 and 10 become increasingly self-aware of gender identity, and that the most common age of self-awareness of non-conforming gender identity was 12-years old. These findings coincide with South African education legislation, which states that the most appropriate age to address controversial issues around gender, sex, sexuality, and transphobic bullying is at primary school level. During this time period, the gap between male and female, masculine and feminine roles, and manliness and womanliness are reinforced and extended, and as a consequence, influences how society makes sense of bodily development.

For young transgender identities, having to navigate their sexuality whilst observing stereotypical lifestyles that are portrayed on social media, leaves them vulnerable and further susceptible to harmful and coercive practices (Le Roux, 2013). Research showed that the highest prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS in South Africa is present among the 15-24 age group (Francis 2019). Young transgender identities are most susceptible to this due to sexual coercion as a result of unequal sexual power relations and dynamics that produce conditions for sexual violence and multiple sexual partners. Therefore, research identified teacher preparation with regard to sex and sexuality education as essential to facilitate controversial conversations, such as negotiations in the classroom, to entice learners out of their comfort zones (Gudyanga et al., 2019). While agency is promoted in the

South African curriculum, understanding and reasoning surrounding transgender identities are excluded from primary school environments altogether, as it is considered an unacceptable subject to address in the classroom.

Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2021) suggest that the inclusion of non-conforming gender identities will be best facilitated through the development of school policies. The authors claim that gender inclusive policies need to be implemented, monitored, and updated by school staff. However, non-conforming gender and sexual identities, including school community members, teachers, and learners need to be actively consulted about their needs. Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2021) also acknowledged that schools cannot identify and approach individuals unless people are visible or disclose their non-conforming status. As such, school policy should make resources and training compulsory. For instance, all school staff and people who work or volunteer within the school need to undergo inclusive language training. In this way, schools move away from idolising notions of gender and sexuality and rather draw on both teachers' and learners' existing knowledge from the broader socio-cultural context, thus fostering an environment that is not simply tolerant but welcoming and respecting of transgender identities. It is clear that the implementation of the CSE curriculum to address issues of homophobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours will depend largely on teachers in society (Kruger et al., 2015). Generally unaware of their influence, teachers, school leadership-management as well as the community have a direct impact on the construction of gender, sexuality, and transgender identity through the curriculum. For this reason, it is imperative to explore primary school teachers' understanding, attitudes, and reasoning.

In light of the above discussions, some concluding remarks follow next to wrap up the chapter.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the literature review of the study. The literature focused on the development of transgender identities in society and surrounding factors that continue to plague this community with regard to educational development. International, intercontinental, and national studies disclosed the nature of societal expectations, religious values, cultural norms, and notions of masculinities that influence the way transgender identities are viewed, often in relation to violence or marginalisation. The literature highlighted the complexity of heteronormativity in South Africa, touched on the construction

of gender binaries, and divulged the dangers of gender stereotypes inside and outside of the school environment. Through these findings, it is evident that power and privilege are entrenched within a heterosexual discourse and hetero-cis-gender binary, and have filtered into the school environment, giving rise to gender hierarchies that dictate the lived experiences of transgender identities. Although the literature presented in the South African context focused on non-conforming identities mostly post-primary school, this study aims to work toward fulfilling the existing gap by focusing extensively on primary school teachers' views on transgender identities.

The following chapter describes the research design and methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature review of the study that focused on understanding transgender identity and subjectivity in society. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed in this study. Research can be defined as "a systematic process of collecting and logically analysing data for a specific purpose" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 490). The research process was guided by the following research questions: "How do primary school teachers view and understand transgender identity?" "What lived experiences of primary school teachers influence their views and understanding of transgender identities?" and, "How do primary school teachers' views and understanding of transgender identities affect the teaching and learning environment?"

The literature in the previous chapter highlighted how school teachers approach, perceive, and make meaning of transgender identities and subjectivities. It also revealed that societal norms and religious, cultural, and traditional beliefs and notions of femininities and masculinities fuse to propagate stigma and bigotry toward transgender identities in education institutions. This approach to my reading and understanding of the literature facilitated my understanding of how sexual and gender power is negotiated, resisted, and reduced, which facilitated my analysis of the data.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. The first section outlines the research design. Thereafter, the context of the study along with the sampling style and data collection methods are described. Attention is then given to the data analysis procedure, trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations adhered to in this study. The penultimate section reflects on the limitations of the study. Some concluding remarks follow next to bring the chapter to a close.

4.2 Qualitative Research Approach

This study embraces a qualitative research approach which Struwig and Stead (2017) regard as interdisciplinary, multi-pragmatic, and multi-method processes used for systemic inquiry into human phenomenon. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that researchers applying a qualitative research approach collect detailed information from participants of that study, and thereafter explore the meaning each participant attaches to a particular phenomenon. According to Flick (2009), a qualitative research approach considers a range of perspectives

on a phenomenon, thus acknowledging multiple social subjectivities. This approach proved beneficial as it allowed for research flexibility to focus on the adaption of sample sizes or data collection methods to explore subjectivities. Flick (2009, p. 16) claims that in order to divulge such subjectivities, the researcher-participant relationship should be seen as "an explicit part of knowledge instead of deeming it in an intervening variable". By doing so, the researcher undertakes a subjective role in the study while participants undergo investigation. For this reason, the qualitative research approach qualified as the ideal choice for my study, as it provided the freedom to explore the school teachers' viewpoints on transgender identities in the primary school environment. Having outlined my reasons for adopting a qualitative research approach, I will now go on to explain why I selected the interpretivist research paradigm for this study.

4.2.1 An interpretivist paradigm

According to Creswell (2007, p. 19), a paradigm "informs the practice of research". Cohen et al., (2011) claim that research paradigms represent a particular set of beliefs or worldview. For this reason, the research paradigm determines the choices the researcher makes in terms of what is acceptable research (Cohen et al., 2011). This study adopted an interpretivist paradigm which seeks to understand diverse behaviours and views. Since the interpretivist paradigm is often described as social constructivism, it is appropriate to associate the meaning participants construct within the regulatory influence of their social context. This paradigm enables the researcher to explore and view a phenomenon (in this case, transgender identities) through the perceptions of the participants, with no expectations of universal truths. The interpretivist paradigm best suited this study, as it allowed for teacher participants to share their attitudes, understandings, and constructions of transgender identities while being able to give reasons for their constructions. In this way, the study moved away from limitary perceptions, and foregrounded the multiple complex meanings participants hold in particular settings (Creswell, 2007).

The phenomenological approach to this study is described next.

4.2.2 Phenomenological research design

This study utilised a phenomenological research design to obtain necessary information. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 34) describe 'phenomenology' as "a way of thinking and studying social reality", while McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 346) define the concept

'phenomenological' as "participants perspectives of a particular event". A phenomenological research design enables participants to express their thoughts, attitudes, and understandings in relation to a particular phenomenon based on their lived experiences. Additionally, this research design sought to explore commonalities within particular groups of participants in order to conceptualise the phenomenon under study, which in this case was transgender identities. The literature review highlighted teachers' views toward transgender and nonconforming gender identities as largely oppressive in the primary school environment (Guasp et al., 2014; Farrelly, 2014). The research design adopted in this study aimed to represent the understandings and views primary school teachers attach to transgender identities, based on their personal and professional lived experience.

Scott (1988) emphasised the importance of recognising subjectivity, for instance, teacher participants may be considerate of transgender and other gender and sexual diverse identities due to their upbringing, personal experiences, or education. Therefore, a phenomenological approach was found to be most appropriate for this study as it looks at "a description of a phenomenon" as well as an interpretation made by the researcher (Moustakas, 1994; Hammersley, 2013). Creswell (2007, p. 59) calls this the "interpretive process", where the experiences of the researcher are considered together with participants' perspectives of the phenomenon being investigated. This research design was the most appropriate as the central aim of the study was to represent the understandings and views primary school teachers attach to transgender identities, based on their personal and professional lived experiences.

Having outlined the qualitative phenomenological approach adopted in this study in the section above, I now go on to give a detailed description of the location and context of the study.

4.3 Location and Context of the Study
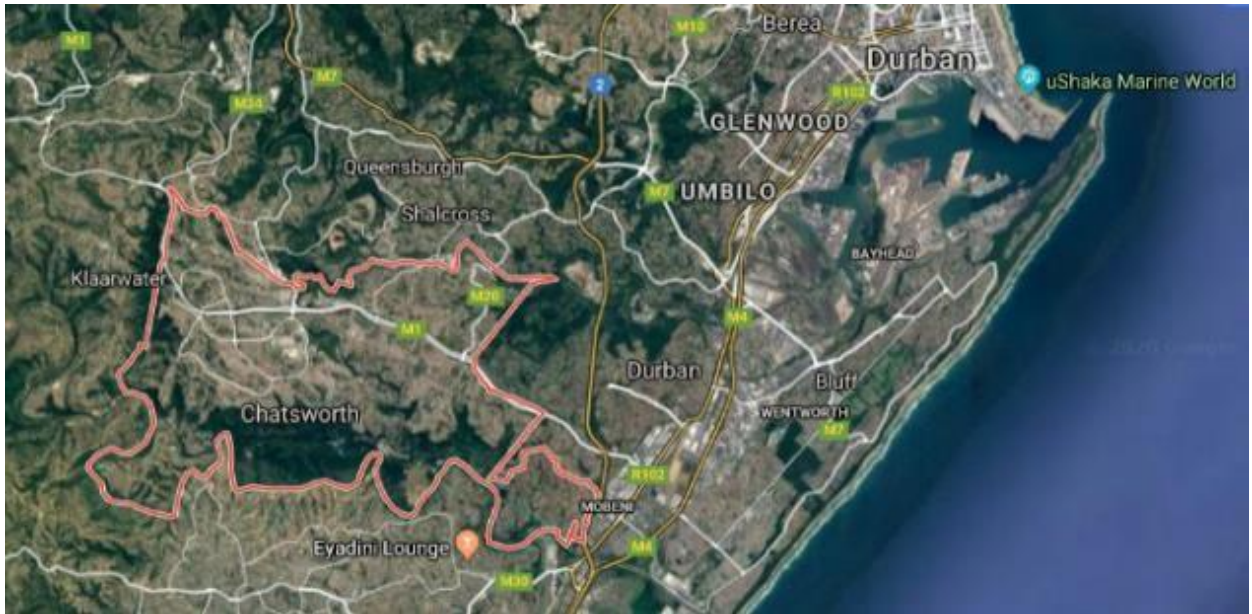
Figure 2: Map of Chatsworth, Durban

(Google Maps, 2020, n.d.)

This study was conducted in Chatsworth, a small former Indian suburb in the eThekwini Municipality located in the province of KZN (see Figure 2). In the 1950s, the Indian population of Durban was forcibly removed from their existing homes into purpose-built townships due to the apartheid government's Groups Areas Act of 1950 (Freund, 1995). In 1964, the working-class township of Chatsworth was officially unveiled, consisting of 11 neighbourhood units containing 7,000 sub economic houses (Desai, 2019). The apartheid government deliberately build these houses to serve as a buffer to segregate white residential areas and African townships. At the outset, Chatsworth consisted of poor to working-class Indian people, which was a direct result of the restrictions put in place to limit non-whites from employment opportunities in specified areas, conducting business, or ownership of property (Yengdea, 2021). Now, Chatsworth has expanded into a growing business district, with major infrastructural developments. Over the years it has also seen a rapid integration of different ethnic and racial groups. One of the major infrastructural developments include the M1 Hans Dettman Highway, which serves as the main artery to all 11 units and surrounding areas like Mobeni and Mariannhill. According to the 2011 census (Stats SA, 2011),

Chatsworth has a total population of 196,580 people, of which the Indian or Asian race make up the majority of the population. The suburb is well known for various religious groups and places of worship, including the 'Habibia Manzil', which is a mosque, as well as the 'Sri

Radhanath Temple of Understanding'. These places serve as a reminder of the fundamental cultural and religious backgrounds of the people in the Chatsworth area.

4.3.1 Gender Violence in Chatsworth

There are continuous reports of violence perpetrated in and around the Chatsworth community. Parry and Gordon (2020) draw attention to the increase in the number of domestic violence cases, particularly since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Parry and Gordon (2020) acknowledged mandatory lockdowns and quarantine procedures, but also specified the challenges individuals and communities faced, namely unemployment, and feelings of immobilisation and emasculation. Local newspaper headlines in 2020 read: 'Chatsworth man accused of killing wife over decision to divorce' and 'Pregnant mom found dead "strangled" in Chatsworth'. Parry and Gordon (2020) claim that high levels of violence perpetrated against women are cemented in patriarchal attitudes that often favour men over women. These attitudes combined with aggravating circumstances such as substance abuse, unemployment, and crowded homes lead to an environment that is five times more likely to end in violence or murder (Stats SA, 2018a). The occurrences of violence in the Chatsworth community can be directly linked to feelings of powerlessness and associated with the use of violence as a coping mechanism.

In light of this, the Chatsworth community has also implemented initiatives to provide safety and shelter to victims of gender-based crimes. One such initiative belongs to Meela Bangtu, the principal of the Aryan Benevolent Home (ABH), a registered non-profit organisation (NPO) that cares for children, elderly, and physically or mentally disabled people, and which now extends its care to victims of gender-based crimes. In an interview with the Rising Sun, Bangtu stated that the ABH affords shelter to 87 children, most of whom exhibit challenging behaviours (Naidoo, 2020). Gopal and Marimuthu (2014, p. 79) state that young boys display more aggressive tendencies than girls, and some tend to become involved in violent crimes such as malicious damage of property, assault, and rape. This finding exposes gender power inequalities that exist between adolescent boys and girls, and demonstrates the manifestation of violence from a young age. Despite the prevalence of gender-based violence perpetrated against women and children, reports of violence perpetrated against gender and sexual diverse identities remain scarce in the Chatsworth area.

4.3.2 The research site

Eden Primary and Ale Primary (pseudonyms), both located in the Chatsworth area, although in two different units, were selected as the research sites for this study. The two neighbouring primary schools are only 1,2 km apart. Since they are in close proximity to one another, there are a number of similarities between the two schools. For instance, both are public primary schools situated in the fourth quintile. The South African education sector is categorised into the private and public domain; the public domain is further sub-divided into quintiles (Van Dyk & White, 2019). A school situated in the fourth quintile can be categorised as a feepaying school, well-off, and stationed in an affluent community (Van Dyk & White, 2019). The facilities available to both schools include developed libraries, computer rooms, outdoor play areas, and access to community facilities, such as the Chatsworth Athletic Stadium, where each school hosts fund raising events to sustain its infrastructure. Table 1 below captures the close similarities between Eden and Ale Primary.

Table 1: Details of Eden and Ale Primary

	Eden Primary	Ale Primary
Principal:	Mrs. Naidoo (pseudonym)	Mr. Motley (pseudonym)
Head of Department:	2	2
Total number of teachers:	16	18
Gender:	14 (f) and 2 (m)	16 (f) and 2 (m)
Race: Total number of	African (1) and Indian (15)	African (1) and Indian (17)
learners:	462	439

Both schools accommodate Grade R to Grade 7 learners, with teachers managing classroom sizes of 25 to 40 learners. Core subjects at the schools include English Home Language, IsiZulu or Afrikaans First Additional Language, Mathematics, and Life Skills. Teachers from both schools also act as facilitators to extra-curricular activities, such as soccer, mini-cricket, table tennis, and netball. All teachers selected for this study are qualified and employed either by the South African Education Department or the School Governing Body (SGB). Chatsworth Primary Schools came under siege in March 2020 when parents and educators from KZNs communities took to the streets to oppose CSE. Protestors comprising of parents and teachers voiced their grievances with the DoEs announcement to implement scripted sex education lesson plans into the Grade 4 to 12 curriculum.

A primary school principal shared his view with the tabloid, Post, stating that he feared that his staff were not equipped to handle such topics and believed that workshops were simply

not enough to empower teachers to comfortably address such topics (Khan, 2020). In response to public concerns, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) clarified that in-service training on subjects like Life Skills and Life Orientation have been present since the year 2000, with detailed training manuals as well as scripted lesson plans for sexuality education (Khan, 2020). Since I have had teaching experience in multiple Chatsworth schools, I also witnessed discussions on 'the inappropriate nature of the sexuality curriculum'.

Having provided contextual background into the research context and the research sites, attention will now shift to the sample and recruitment plan undertaken to meet the anticipated research objectives. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic that wrought havoc in South Africa and across the globe, held me to ransom. However, with the easing of lockdown restrictions after some time, I was able to continue with the data collection process. In what follows, I explain my recruitment plan as well as document the changes that were implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.4 Sampling and Recruitment Plan

According to Robinson (2014, p. 25), "[S]ampling is a central practice of qualitative methods" as this process involves decisions on which individuals, groups, or objects to include in a research study. Robinson (2014) presented a four-point approach to sampling, which includes defining a target population, deciding on a sample size, selecting a sample strategy, and creating a recruitment plan. I employed Robinson's (2014) sampling approach to recruit teacher participants. In research, the term 'target population' refers to a portion of society that could be included in a study (Creswell, 2007). Since this study concentrated on primary school teachers' views on transgender identities, I decided on the inclusion of all qualified teachers employed at primary schools in the Chatsworth area. When determining how many participants to include in the study, I considered the minimum sample sizes from previous qualitative studies. Fugard and Potts (2015), and Braun and Clarke (2016) recommended using 12 participants to reach data saturation. Given (2016, p. 259) defined data saturation as the "point in a qualitative study where additional data do not lead to new emergent themes". Taking this into account, I opted to use a sample size of 24 participants to ensure that a spectrum of views could be explored in order to reach data saturation. I then used a combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques in the study.

Moser and Korstjens (2018) describe purposive sampling as specific or deliberate choices the researcher makes to produce a sample that represents selected situations or context

54

and provides rich data on the phenomenon of interest. Creswell (2007) acknowledged that purposive sampling is frequently used by qualitative researchers in the interpretivist paradigm to explore a particular phenomenon within a specific context. By applying purposive sampling techniques, I was able to meet the inclusion criteria to select the participants. For example, (1) all qualified teachers, (2) employed in public primary schools, (3) in the Chatsworth area. I consciously selected this sample because in spite of primary school environments being susceptible to diverse gendered experiences, teachers' opinions on sexualities and gender identities have yet to be explored.

Even though teacher participants were selected based on the purposive criteria in order to encapsulate understandings which exist in a specific population, I combined purposive and convenience sampling techniques to enhance the methodology of the study. Robinson (2014, p. 32) describes *convenience sampling* as selecting participants who are on a "first-come-firstserved-basis". This sampling technique is seen during the data collection process through voluntary participation and teacher availability to carry out telephonic interviews and WhatsApp group discussions. Subsequently, 30 teachers were selected from public primary schools restricted to the Chatsworth area. Robinson (2014) mentions that convenience sampling also means choosing a sample that is easily accessible to the research. Since the Chatsworth suburb is my hometown, it was therefore convenient and feasible for me to make contact with the different primary schools.

Prior to the enforced COVID-19 lockdown, I approached five (5) primary schools in the Chatsworth area and briefly explained the nature of my study to each principal. I made enquires as to which schools would be interested in contributing to the study by posing questions like: "Would teachers be available to complete interviews?" and "Will you be willing to share your views on the topic?"

From the outset, three (3) of the five (5) school principals expressed interest in the study. They were eager for the schools to be used as a research site and distributed sample consent forms to possible participants. The sample consent form explained the nature and purpose of the study to the teacher participants, informing them of the topic before engaging in the data collection process. The principal and heads of department (HODs) assisted in the distribution of the sample consent forms and kept in close contact with me throughout the data collection process.

After obtaining ethical clearance from the DoE (see Appendix A), I visited the schools with the hopes of encouraging teachers to participate in my study by explaining the nature of

my research. This was on the suggestion of the principals from all three (3) schools who claimed that it would be beneficial if the teachers knew who they were talking to. Taking this into consideration, I visited the schools and briefly explained my research topic whilst stressing the importance of voluntary participation. Shortly after my encounter with the primary school teachers, I received confirmation from the principals that their teacher staff were willing to participate in the study.

My intention was to ensure that the sample of participants was evenly represented in terms of race, gender, and age group. However, the sample representation became reliant on the demographics of the schools as well as the interest and availability of the participants. Since the two schools that contributed to the study complied at convenience, the sample group reflects the schools, but I did make a conscious effort to obtain diverse representation. I noticed that the sample group did not comprise any male teachers, and since the sample group had complete female representation at a certain point, I specifically asked the principals to communicate with their male staff. As a result, three (3) male teachers willingly agreed to participate in the study after initial unease. The lack of male teachers in primary school environments became apparent together with the lack of racial diversity. I attempted to gain further inclusion of participants, however, teachers indicated that they were unable to avail themselves due to overworked schedules, and overseeing and implementing COVID-19 regulations.

The tables below provide the demographics of the participants from Eden Primary (Table 2) and Ale Primary (Table 3). Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the schools and maintain anonymity.

Table 2: Demographics of participants from Eden Primary School

No.	Name of participant (pseudonyms)	Sex	Race	Number of years teaching
1	Linda	F	I	*25*
2	Patricia	F	I	*2*
3	Jennifer	F	I	*13*
4	Barbara	F	I	*10*
5	Susan	F	I	*10*
6	Jessica	F	I	*5*
7	Margaret	F	I	*20*
8	Richard	M	I	*40*
9	Dorothy	F	I	*6*
10	Sandra	F	I	*12*

Table 3: Demographics of participants from Ale Primary School

No.	Name of participant (pseudonyms)	Sex	Race	Number of years teaching
1	Deborah	F	I	*6*
2	Sharon	F	I	*4*
3	Cynthia	F	I	*6*
4	Helen	F	I	*5*
5	Brenda	F	I	*4*
6	Rachel	F	I	*13*
7	Maria	F	I	*8*
8	Diane	F	I	*14*
9	Megan	F	I	*5*
10	Natalie	F	I	*2*
11	Lauren	F	I	*32*
12	Thomas	M	I	*30*
13	Anna	F	I	*4*
14	Joseph	M	I	*50*

4.4.1 COVID-19 restrictions in qualitative research

The COVID-19 lockdown and government-imposed restrictions hampered communication with the principals and teacher participants. This was confirmed by Van Der Berg and Spaull (2020) who mentioned how the initial 3-week lockdown that was effected in March 2020 morphed into hard restrictions that saw the close of schools ongoing into the fifth month of August. Principals and staff were unattainable and prior application for ethical clearance had to be reconsidered in order to facilitate research studies that maintained the safety and security of the researcher and participants. The country was still in lockdown in August of 2020, which to a great extent prohibited this research from taking place. However, alternative data collection strategies were accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and data collection commenced from August 2020.

Initially, based on the interest of the schools and the total number of available staff, 34 participant informed consent forms were delivered to schools, pending approved COVID-19 strategies. Since I was not allowed to physically enter the school environment at this point, I relied heavily on constant communication with school principals to organise and manage time to conduct my research. The principals were reluctant to conduct research, fearing the safety of staff; however, I assured both principals of the change in data collection methods from faceto-face individual interviews and in person focus groups to telephonic interviews and WhatsApp group discussions. This eased their concerns and from there 34 forms were distributed, of which 30 teachers voluntarily agreed to participate.

Even though the study had achieved the desired sample size at this point, there were further challenges, as certain participants from both schools were working from home due to comorbidities. Mthethwa (2020) explained 'comorbidities' as concessions given to employees (in this case teachers) with medical conditions, which may place the individual at higher risk of complications should they be infected with COVID-19. The DBE published a statement in late September urging teachers who were granted concessions to return to school (Mthethwa, 2020). Subsequent to these implications, only 24 of the 30 participants contributed to the telephonic interviews and 9 in the online WhatsApp group video call sessions. From the initial 12 participants at Eden Primary, 10 teachers contributed. One teacher participant retired and the other went on maternity leave. From the initial 18 participants at Ale Primary, only 14 teachers contributed to the study, as one teacher moved overseas to continue her educational career just before the country's borders closed. Three others withdrew for various reasons cited, which included lack of time to participate in engagement sessions, and infection of self

or close family members. Despite the number of challenges, I considered 24 participants (see Table 4) to be a reasonable size to obtain rich, in-depth data.

Table 4: Number of participants who participated in engagement sessions

	Telephonic individual interviews	WhatsApp video call discussions
Ale Primary	14	6
Eden Primary	10	3
Total	24	9

Having outlined the recruitment process above, I will now go on to describe the data collection process, which includes the instruments employed in this study, namely telephonic individual interviews and online group discussions.

4.5 Data Collection Process

Creswell (2007) describes the data collection process as a systematic process of gathering information through various interrelated methods in order to yield a hypothesis on research data. Struwig and Stead (2017) distinguish between two types of research data, namely: *primary data*, which includes new data collected by the researcher for research projects, and *secondary data*, which is available data from previous studies other than the current project. Seeing that this was a qualitative study, I utilised primary data as I collected new information on primary school teachers' views on transgender identities through telephonic semistructured interviews and online focus group discussions.

4.5.1 Implementing interviews

Interviews are one of the data collection methods frequently used in qualitative studies. They involve focused conversations where the researcher obtains detailed insights/information from participants on a particular phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2007; Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018). By means of the careful design of specific interview questions, effective interaction occurs centring around the exchange of opinions and knowledge, thus accentuating the social situatedness in relation to the research phenomenon (Linblom & Zieke, 2003). In view of the fact that qualitative research strives to understand how knowledge and perceptions transpire within a sample size (Struwig & Stead, 2017), an interview in interpretivist research is the

most effective method to collect data. Creswell (2007) indicates that sensitive and socially dependent concepts initiate complex reactions, and therefore the implementation of interviews will allow the participants the opportunity to voice their opinions and apprehensions, prompted by beliefs and experiences. Additionally, Creswell (2007) upholds that good qualitative research involves the report of multiple perspectives, and due to this, the interview method is most appropriate as the researcher can ask probing and clarifying questions to establish a range of viewpoints.

However, the implementation of interviews is not without weaknesses as Creswell (2007) draws attention to participants' unconscious adaptation of responses to interview questions, depending on certain conditions, such as who participants are speaking to. Creswell (2007) emphasises the impact of language in an interview session, asserting that the approach and demeanour of the researcher may sway how forthcoming participants are and/or the quality of information given.

Prior to the engagement sessions with participants, I conducted a pilot test with two university colleagues. This small-scale test was carried out to correct my verbal and nonverbal language (I was able to rephrase questions, and thus eliminate unnecessary confusion); rearrange the order of questions to facilitate the flow of the conversation; identify my tone and approach to responses; and find areas where I could probe further for additional information.

Furthermore, the pilot testing was completed telephonically and through video calls, respectively, thus preparing me for any technical issues during the actual sessions. For instance, colleagues had to be placed on loudspeaker so that the interviews could be recorded. This enabled me to make improvements to ensure that participants could hear the questions clearly. In addition to hearing the questions, Smith et al., (2008) emphasised the importance of communicating with the participants in their home language, as accurate comprehension of the interview questions is fundamental to limiting misinterpretation and verifying the participants' responses. Smith et al., (2008) mentioned that to make certain accurate meaning is captured, researchers can utilise bilingual interview questions. In this regard, all the teacher participants who contributed to the study were English home language speakers. Consequently, all telephonic interviews and WhatsApp group discussions were conducted in English.

According to McGrath et al., (2018), pilot testing provides the researcher with an essential opportunity to clarify questions, explore language choice, and practice aspects of active listening. Seeing that I was faced with instances where participants struggled to hear

the interview questions, the pilot testing was a necessary part of the data collection process. I was able to apply a calm and friendly approach when conversing, exercise patience through careful explanations of questions, provide alternative solutions to poor connectivity, and constantly ensure the comfort of the participants. To set participants at ease, I spoke about being a student teacher at the schools between the years 2015 and 2018, and this initiated conversation. The teacher participants asked questions such as "what are you majoring in?" and "why this major?". Fostering rapport, this newfound familiarity initiated conversations about the teachers' experiences.

Karnieli-Miller et al., (2009) advised qualitative researchers to recognise power relations in the data collection process, and consequently safeguarding participants from any form of intimidation or fear brought upon by the researcher. With the intention of exploring participants' beliefs, opinions, and understandings, Karnieli-Miller et al., (2009) asserted that the researcher must refrain from appearing as an authority figure, but rather create a climate that is welcoming and safe. By adopting this approach, the teacher participants were able to speak freely about their views on transgender identities, without the fear of being judged for their responses.

All engagement sessions, including the telephonic interviews and WhatsApp group discussions, were audio recorded with the consent of the participants, and then transcribed verbatim using the cell phone application (app) Voice Notebook. As per the app's description, Voice Notebook converts audio files to text using various voice commands, and saves files locally or sends them to the cloud for storage. This app proved to be a vital tool when compiling transcripts, as it saved me a tremendous amount of time. The files could be uploaded directly to the cloud and emailed to my laptop, which I then saved on my external hard drive. By securing the information to my cell phone, cloud, laptop, and external hard drive, I ensured the safety of the data collected in the event of damage or theft of property.

Having elaborated on the choice of interviews as a data collection method, I will now explain the methods used to engage the participants during the interview process, namely photo elicitation.

4.5.2 Photo elicitation method

According to Glaw et al., (2017), photo elicitation is a technique applied in qualitative research to trigger richer conversations. Harper (2002) first described photo elicitation as the use of photographs in interviews; however, Glaw et al., (2017) further alluded to the use of any visual

medium to explore participants' beliefs, attitudes, and views. Bigante (2010) claims that photographs, video clips, or artefacts are now a frequently used technique in the interview process, as it promotes rapport and enables the researcher to further grasp the viewpoint of the participants. Meo (2010) contends that photo elicitation techniques bring about longer and more enjoyable interviews; they also allow participants to make sense of a phenomenon that would otherwise be difficult to comprehend. Glaw et al., (2017) explain that visual stimuli evoke participants' feelings, memories, and experiences, compared to the conventional use of interview questions. Harper (2002) alleges that this response is the ability of the human brain to retain visual information more effectively than processing written or verbal information.

Considering the advantages, I implemented the photo elicitation technique in my study by using images of local and international gender and sexual diverse identities to gain an understanding on how participants viewed transgender identities. One of my major concerns when recruiting participants was failure to gather any response from the participants due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Since the topic of transgender identity or the LGBTIQ+ community is seldom discussed in the area, the study anticipated the reluctance of participants to openly share their views.

However, the use of photo elicitation adequately stimulated conversation, and aroused the participants' interest in sharing their opinions of the individuals who were displayed and enhanced their recollection of encounters with similar identities in their day-to-day lives. Lenard and McKnight (2015) add that images or prompts facilitate conversations where participants feel in control during the interview process, seeing that they become the expert on the topic, thus evading power struggles between the researcher and participants.

Despite certain shortcomings, such as participants not recognising the identities, choosing not to say much about the images, and opting not to elaborate, most of the participants displayed a high level of comfort as they spoke freely about the LGBTIQ+ community and transgender identities. Eight (8) images were used for photo elicitation (see Appendix B) during the telephonic interview session to promote dialogue (Glaw et al., 2017). On the day of the scheduled individual interview, I sent a document containing the 8 images separated into row A and row B to the participant via WhatsApp. I instructed each participant to have a look at the images as they will be relevant to the interview session. Participants were allowed to open the document during the interview and then answer questions.

When engaging with the participants, I used broad open-ended questions (see Appendix C) to obtain detailed responses, starting with: "What adjectives would you use to

describe the individuals?" and "Explain why you chose these adjectives?" This form of questioning allowed the teacher participants to provide detailed descriptions of their responses, thus eliciting rich data as hoped for. In keeping with this, Bates et al., (2017) state that broad open-ended questions allow qualitative researchers to explore participants' understanding whilst fostering familiarity with the research phenomenon. This was evident throughout the interview process as teachers frequently apologised for providing ill-informed information on transgender identities. However, with the use of photo elicitation, participants' responses became more affirmative. For example, one participant's initial response was, "I do not know much about transgender people", but upon seeing an image of Caitlyn Jenner, the participant went on to say "Yes, I know Caitlyn. I have followed her journey".

4.5.3 Telephonic semi-structured interviews

Individual interviews were conducted at the onset of the data collection process. Initially, the individual sessions with the teacher participants were intended to be face-to-face semistructured interviews. Struwig and Stead (2017) distinguish between three categories of interviews, namely: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured.

Semi-structured interviews allow the participants' responses to be influenced or guided by predetermined questions, unlike unstructured interviews where there are no prearranged questions; they are also phrased in a strategic manner that facilitates discussion beyond the question (Berg, 1995; Struwig & Stead, 2017). However, due to the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic, the initial choice of face-to-face semi-structured interviews had to be adapted to telephonic semi-structured interviews.

The formulated list of open-ended questions remained the same, but the execution of the interviews was ear-to-ear to ensure the safety of the researcher and participants. Since *semi-structured interviews* are regarded as a flexible technique, the structure of the engagement session was minimally affected. Brown and Danaher (2019) reason that the effectiveness of semi-structured interviews lies in the degree of rapport between the researcher and participants. Even though qualitative interviews are traditionally conducted face-to-face to build and maintain rapport through visual cues (Novic, 2008; Qu & Dumay, 2011), Fontana and Frey (2005) accentuate the importance of creating an environment that encourages participants to speak freely, thus upholding rapport.

This study acknowledged that face-to-face interviews are the most effective for gathering qualitative data as it allows the researcher to meet the participants in person, and in

so doing engage in rapport building exercises such as small talk and jokes. However, the study abided by the procedures put in place by the South African government and UKZN to restrict physical human interaction, thus ensuring preventive measures against the contraction or transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Consequently, the study implemented telephonic semistructured interviews (see Appendix C).

According to Vogl (2013), telephonic interviews can be as effective when collecting qualitative data, as there is no significant difference between the number of words given by participants during in-person or telephonic sessions. This finding indicates that the level of rapport is relatively similar in both instances, thus revealing that telephonic interviews have the potential to encourage participants to communicate openly. Vogl (2013) claims that participants feel more in control during a telephonic interview as they are free from bias, stereotypes, and/or assumptions made by the researcher, thereby assuring that the discussion on the phenomenon is the focal point of the interview. Moreover, the participants experience a greater level of anonymity and privacy during telephonic interviews, and therefore feel more open to discuss topics that can be considered sensitive. I concur that participants were more receptive to the research topic, open about their personal experiences, and vocal on their understandings and concerns. The level of comfort was evident at the end of each interview session, as I enquired whether the participants would be willing to further the conversation via a focus group, and all were eager to do so.

In total, 24 telephonic semi-structured interviews were completed. All interviews were conducted during school times, as per the clear instructions of the principals. The teacher participants provided me with times they were available, and the interviews were completed when participants were alone, with each interview lasting between 20 and 40 minutes. McGrath et al., (2018) maintain that the venue is a vital instrument to the interview process, therefore the researcher must ensure comfort, safety, and a noise free environment. Although the venue and time was determined by the participants, I attempted to meet the above criteria. I used a calm and friendly tone when communicating with them, often clarifying questions, and constantly reassuring the participants that their responses would remain anonymous. I also ensured that the connectivity was always clear, and when it was not, I offered alternative solutions, like calling on the school landline.

The table below represents the 24 teacher participants, the data collection tool used, and the duration of the interviews.

Table 5: Telephonic semi-structured individual interviews

No.	Name of participant (pseudonyms)	Interview time
1	Linda	00:33:49
2	Patricia	00:19:09
3	Jennifer	00:37:03
4	Barbara	00:24:04
5	Susan	00:30:42
6	Jessica	00:24:10
7	Margaret	00:22:41
8	Richard	00:18:46
9	Dorothy	00:18:14
10	Sandra	00:18:23
11	Deborah	00:39:50
12	Sharon	00:43:10
13	Cynthia	00:32:38
14	Helen	00:36:22
15	Brenda	00:20:39
16	Rachel	00:16:25
17	Maria	00:17:03
18	Diane	00:26:04
19	Megan	00:16:59
20	Natalie	00:23:17
21	Lauren	00:29:22
22	Thomas	00:25:52
23	Anna	00:23:20
24	Joseph	00:18:38

4.5.4 Focus group discussions were adapted to group video calls

Focus group discussions followed the individual interviews, as group discussions allow participants to interact further and communicate on the specific research topic. Struwig and Stead (2017) explain that focus group discussions use participant interaction to explore and perceive a certain phenomenon within a social setting. This method contrasts individual

interviews as the conversation shifts between researcher and participant, and participant and participant. For such interaction to take place, the focus group usually consists of 4 to 12 participants to encourage varied responses (Struwig & Stead, 2017).

The initial plan was to conduct focus group discussions with 4 to 6 teacher participants, ensuring effective organisation and management of the groups. However, due to complications arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person focus group discussions were adapted to group video calls. Creswell (2007) claims that focus group discussions advantage qualitative studies as this method allows for social interaction through the exchange of opinions and viewpoints. In doing so, group interaction formulates in-depth information, not only on a singular teacher but on the overall teaching and learning environment. I found that the focus group discussion provided more context as to how the research phenomenon is viewed in primary schools. When engaging in focus group discussions, I made use of a vignette to further probe teachers' ideas and understandings of transgender identities. The use of WhatsApp video call group discussions with vignettes, together with individual interviews with photo elicitation, facilitated the collection of rich, in-depth data from the participants on transgender identities.

4.5.5 Vignettes

To elicit dialogue and gather understanding of teachers' views on transgender identities, I used vignettes as a data collection tool in the focus group discussions. According to Palaiologou (2017), vignettes are short scenarios or stories that present a hypothetical situation, which are intended to stimulate a response from the participants. Vignettes further permit the researcher to explore the emotional response and acted out behaviours, providing an alternative dimension to the participants' knowledge of the phenomenon (Palaiologou, 2017). In this study, I made use of a written vignette (see Appendix D) which brought to life the experience of a primary school learner facing difficulties in relation to gender identity. Silva (2019) claims that written vignettes provide brief descriptions of a person or social situation, with precise references to the most important factors. In this study, vignettes presented participants with specific concepts such as transgender pronoun choice and acknowledged participants' interpretations and their understanding.

The vignette was sent to the respective group via WhatsApp the morning of their scheduled session. The teacher participants were asked to read the scenario, take a few minutes to familiarise themselves with the narrative, as well as place themselves in the situation. They

were then asked a range of open-ended questions (see Appendix E). For example, "What is your initial reaction to this scenario?" By doing this, the vignette served as the ideal medium through which I could explore teachers' feelings and behaviours in relation to transgender identities; it also permitted greater interaction, which in turn elicited richer data.

Silva (2019) favours the use of vignettes in qualitative research, as this tool provides realism through situational factors; allows for a standard stimulus for all participants; directs participants to specific research problems; and encourages participant involvement. The implementation of vignettes in focus group discussions assisted in approaching the research topic of primary school teachers' views on transgender identities in a controlled and simple manner. Seeing that this topic is generally perceived as a controversial and sensitive one, this tool allowed the researcher to approach participants in a neutral manner.

The short scenario (vignette) assisted teachers to apply years of observation, experiences, and knowledge to the research phenomenon. The teacher participants found the vignette to be realistic and recalled similar situations in the classroom, irrespective of primary or secondary school. Since the group discussions were comprised of teachers belonging to the same school, participants were comfortable sharing their views among their colleagues. For this reason, the responses given were interesting as teachers bounced their ideas and views off one another, essentially forming overall opinions, experiences, and judgements. Silva (2019) affirms that the use of vignettes helps sustain a non-threatening atmosphere between the researcher and participant, consequently reducing power struggles. This tool contributed fundamentally to the collection of rich data.

4.5.6 WhatsApp group discussions

The study implemented WhatsApp video call for focus group discussions. Each group consisted of 3 to 4 teacher participants. For the purpose of this study, this form of communication proved to be the most cost effective and convenient. Even though apps such as Zoom Rooms are designed for group calls, I considered teachers' limited time, access to individual laptops, and Wi-Fi. Considering these factors, I decided that WhatsApp video call would be the most suitable, as it would be accessible to all the teacher participants; it could accommodate 2 to 8 individuals at a time; and it would use approximately 200 mb for a 45minute group discussion, as made known by my pilot test.

Furthermore, the online group discussions took place during school hours when teachers were able to avail themselves. When the sessions began, the teachers joined the call

individually via their cell phones, thus ensuring social and physical distancing. The venues were suitable for the engagement sessions, as the teachers were on break or having a free period, thereby leaving the rooms noise free. However, only a limited number of participants who contributed to individual interviews were able to attend the group discussions. This was purely due to time availability and work schedules in the school environment, as certain teachers had more free time than others.

In total, nine (9) teachers were able to contribute to the group discussions as they were familiar and comfortable with group video calls. Teachers from Eden Primary and Ale Primary were not mixed; this was done to ensure participant comfort as they would be speaking amongst colleagues. Altogether, 3 WhatsApp video call group discussions were held. Each group consisted of 3 participants. Group 1 was made up of teacher participants from Eden Primary (see Table 6); they were grouped together according to convenience. Groups 2 and 3 were teacher participants from Ale Primary (see Table 7); they were also grouped together according to convenience.

As with the individual interviews, I also attempted to achieve varied representation in the group discussions, but ultimately participation relied heavily on time availability. Subsequently, there were no male participants in the WhatsApp video call group discussions. The participants who contributed to the group discussions, together with the duration of the WhatsApp group discussion, are as indicated in the two tables below:

Table 4: Eden Primary WhatsApp video call group discussions

No	Teacher participants (Pseudonyms)	Number of participants	Duration of discussion
1	Sharon, Helen, Brenda	*3*	00.20.44

Table 5: Ale Primary WhatsApp video call group discussions

No	Teacher participants (Pseudonyms)	Number of participants	Duration of discussion
2	Jessica, Dorothy, Sandra	*3*	*00*.30.41
3	Deborah, Cynthia, Natalie	*3*	*00.* 26.55

Archibald et al., (2019) highlight the advantages of using communication technologies in qualitative research. The authors claim that online methods of data collection are more efficient, convenient, cost effective, and flexible. I noted these advantages during my study; however, I also experienced challenges, such as managing and organising times when two or more teachers were available. Due to COVID-19 regulations, schools had implemented strategies such as the skeleton staff system, which means that the school environment had the minimum number of employees required to operate, or in other words, full staffing was not needed. This meant that schools did not have extra staff members (such as student teachers or parental aids) to assist with relief. This restriction made focus group discussions challenging as many teachers were not available to participate. Breen (2006) concurs that one disadvantage of online group discussions is gathering participants at a common time as well as managing them.

I experienced additional challenges with technology itself, in that poor connectivity resulted in participants asking for questions to be repeated. Archibald et al., (2019) concur with this, claiming that despite online methods being intuitive, there will always be some degree of difficulty with connectivity. Technical difficulties, including low Internet reception or outdated software, can pose a problem and cause frustration. There were instances during the WhatsApp group discussions where I had to pause the session to explain to participants how to turn on their cameras, as participants were not familiar with the video call function.

Despite these challenges, when participants were able to avail themselves and successfully connect, the group discussions proved to be valuable. The participants who did contribute to the group discussions were enthusiastic. They openly shared their views and voiced their opinion without any fear. All teacher participants who joined the video call were comfortable and outspoken, and even shared how their colleagues began addressing the topic in the staffroom with each person having their own ideas and beliefs.

The groups comprised three (3) individuals, and because of this, each person had sufficient time to voice their views/understanding. Participants took turns answering each question and used the answers of their colleagues to support their ideas. Ultimately, the interaction during the group calls were presented harmoniously. Since I conducted individual interviews prior to the group discussions, the participants were comfortable communicating with me, and this allowed them to share their viewpoints more openly.

The conversation continued to be relaxed and participants were at ease with me being present, which supressed any power struggles. Even though I was prepared to step in and

mediate, the climate created for the group discussions exhibited respect and patience. There was therefore no need to intervene. The three (3) sets of participants who contributed to the group discussions were put together conveniently, as the grouping was dependent on which teachers were available at a common time. The data collection process, which comprised telephonic semi-structured interviews with photo elicitation, and WhatsApp group discussions with vignettes, allowed for an in-depth exploration of the research phenomenon.

I will now go on to describe the data analysis process of the study.

4.6 Data Analysis

Miles et al., (1994) and Cohen et al., (2007) define 'qualitative data analysis' as a process of reduction, organisation, and verification. In essence, participants' responses of a specific phenomenon need to be reduced to the simplest form, then organised into codes or categories so that emerging themes can be identified and conclusions drawn. In other words, possible patterns can be verified by looking at the relationships between each code or category. The data consisting of verbatim quotes from the telephonic interviews and online focus group discussions were analysed using thematic analysis. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) describe thematic analysis as a process of identifying patterns that are interesting and of use to the research question/s. Subsequently, good thematic analysis relies on interpretation to make sense of raw data.

The challenging aspect of thematic analysis, according to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), is determining the difference between simply summarising and organising the data and examining and analysing data. To ensure that the data are analysed instead of simply summarised, Braun and Clarke (2016) indicate that the researcher needs to become familiar with the collected data. Taking this into consideration, all engagement sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim, using the cell phone app Voice Notebook. Since this app allowed audio data to be converted to text, I played and replayed recordings and repeated word for word what participants said during their sessions. Furthermore, I paused the audio to text conversions to manually add in sounds the participants made, as well as punctuation marks when their sentences ended. This process enabled me to become familiar with the raw data that I collected, which later assisted me in formulating themes.

Maguire and Delahunt (2017) mention the challenging aspects of thematic analysis being determining the difference between simply summarising and organising data compared to examining and analysing data. Braun and Clarke (2016) claim that to ensure data is analysed

instead of simply summarised, it is imperative for the researcher to become familiar with the data that has been collected. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) pointed to the significance of revisiting transcriptions to add short summaries of participant responses or make notes on interesting aspects. Taking this into consideration, all engagement sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim, using the cell phone application 'voice notebook' and short but concise notes were added to each line of transcriptions. This application allowed the audio data to be converted to text, which was then converted into a Microsoft word document. Thereafter, summaries and notes were inserted into the transcriptions using the 'add comment' option.

This entire process proved to be the most efficient method that enabled me to become familiar with the large quantity of raw data that was collected. After summaries of the findings were made and notes were added, patterns in knowledge and language began to emerge which were intentionally colour coded. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) also made reference to the use of codes or coding as an essential part of the qualitative data analysis process. Strauss (1987, p. 3) describes codes and coding as a "qualitative inquiry that identif[ies] a summative portion of whole transcripts, subsequently allowing for categories to emerge". While McMillan and Schumacher (2010) describe coding as practical tools when separating data into segments of suitability, relevance, and interest. In this study, the use of thematic coding assisted in separation and categorisation of data.

The study arrived at the themes by assembling chunks of data centring around the different aspects of the main phenomenon, and generating coherent groups. There are three main coherent themes presented in the study, which are divided across Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 5 analysed the data gathered and indicated how transgender identities are viewed by primary school teachers in the Chatsworth area, and explored how they constructed their views and understandings of gender and gender specific identities. Chapter 6 ascertained the effect of power by analysing language and practices amongst community, culture, tradition and religion. Chapter 7 determined primary school teachers' approach to the Life Orientation curriculum, paying close attention to CSE and considered support structures for the transgender learning experience.

4.7 Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative research is often criticised for lacking scientific rigour compared to experimental quantitative research (Mays & Pope, 1995; Cope, 2014). However, Shenton (2004) and

Silverman (2017) point out that qualitative researchers can incorporate measures of trustworthiness that match the scientific merit of rigour and validity of quantitative studies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four elements to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research, namely: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. These elements, together with researcher reflexivity are described in more detail below.

4.7.1 Credibility

The *credibility* of this study was established by making sure that all procedures employed were in accordance with qualitative research methods, such as the construction of research questions, the data collection process, and the data analysis process. The use of open-ended questions during the telephonic individual interviews and online focus groups, together with thematic analysis accentuated exploration of the participants' experiences and provided detailed descriptions of the research phenomenon. This together with frequent communication with school principals and teachers via email and WhatsApp, developed a sense of familiarity, which Shenton (2004) alleges establishes a relationship of trust between the researcher and participants, thus resulting in credible and effective engagement. Even though the study made use of purposive sampling, during the engagement sessions the participants volunteered to contribute at their convenience. Shenton (2004) affirmed that this approach builds credibility as research selection bias is avoided. Since interviews were conducted telephonically using convenience sampling, the study avoided stereotypical behaviours, assumptions, and deliberate exclusions.

Shenton (2004) emphasised the importance of the selection process, claiming that credibility of qualitative studies is strengthened using convenience sampling, as this method provides greater assurance of unbiased results. Although Shenton (2004) warned that convenience sampling could lead to over-representation or under-representation of particular groups in a sample, Guba (1981) suggested that the use of triangulation, a combination of different research methods to explore the same phenomenon, ultimately compensates for the limitations in the sampling process.

This study implemented telephonic individual interviews with photo elicitation and online WhatsApp video call group discussions with vignettes, to further enhance credibility. Participants were also notified at various points of the engagement session of their choice to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Shenton (2004) stated that data collection processes are most credible when participants are genuinely willing to participate

and prepared to share information. To maintain rapport, I reminded the participants of their anonymity during all sessions. As a result, participants were at ease to share their ideas, experiences, and understandings without apprehension or the fear of losing credibility with colleagues, school management, and principals. Moreover, I also scheduled regular debriefing sessions with my mentor and supervisor where alternative approaches to improve my study were discussed, and this, according to Shenton (2004), increases the credibility of the study.

4.7.2 Transferability

Erlandson (1993) noted that generalisation in qualitative research is not possible as findings are defined by a specific context. However, Shenton (2004) contrasted this by saying that although a phenomenon is unique, it also falls with a broader context, therefore advocating for the prospect of *transferability* in qualitative studies. To ensure transferability, I established the context of the study with detailed descriptions and provided sufficient background information on the chosen research site. Gill (1979) initially emphasised the importance of the researcher conveying contextual data such as location and environments, claiming that this allows for transference. The sample size also contributed to the transferability of this study, as I gained thick descriptions of transgender identities during the data collection process. The responses reflect multiple realities present in the primary schools, which contributed to the study and assisted in the understanding of the phenomenon.

4.7.3 Dependability

In order for future researcher/s to repeat a similar study, although not necessarily obtain the exact same results, the study had to ensure *dependability*. To achieve this, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend the use of overlapping methods such as interviews and focus groups, but emphasise a detailed methodological plan. By clearly laying out the processes, methods, and strategies used in the study, future researchers can view the work as a prototype (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). For instance, in this study, the research design and implementation thereof carefully described the details of data collection in the field, as well as attached reflections on the effectiveness of the methodological processes undertaken. Doing so provided an audit trail for future studies.

4.7.4 Confirmability

Shenton (2004) recognised the difficulties that researchers face in terms of objectivity and claimed that qualitative research methods are prone to research bias. As such, *confirmability* is adopted by qualitative researchers to ensure that all the experiences and views of participants are represented, rather than the preferences of the researcher (Patton, 1990; Moser and Korstjens, 2018). Shenton (2004) explained that triangulation promotes confirmability in qualitative studies and reduces the effect of researcher bias. By using a combination of individual interviews and focus group discussions, I was able to phrase questions in various forms in order to confirm the teachers' views on transgender identities.

The transcripts derived from the interviews and focus group discussion displayed the data gathered and allowed for step-by-step procedures to be followed. Moser and Korstjens (2018) referred to this process as 'audit trails' and claimed that this strategy guarantees dependability and confirmability through research finding transparency.

One more strategy to ensure transparency and confirmability in a qualitative study is *reflexivity*. Miles et al., (1994) considered the extent to which a researcher is able to admit their own predisposition as a fundamental part of confirmability. In the following section, I discuss researcher reflexivity in more detail and explain how I strove to maintain reflexivity during the research.

4.7.5 Researcher reflexivity

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) describe reflexivity as the "rigorous self-examination of the researcher". Raheim et al., (2016) claim that researcher analytic self-awareness, experience, and reason needs to be untainted by personal opinions, beliefs, and views. To ensure reflexivity, the researcher must provide admission of beliefs and assumptions. For instance, due to my prior engagement in primary schools in the Chatsworth area, I had preconceived ideas of teachers' attitudes and behaviour toward LGBTIQ+ identities.

This had to do mainly with my experience as a student teacher and my personal observations of gender discrimination in the primary school environment. I witnessed the principal of a primary school shame learners by referring to them as 'gays'. The comments "we do not want these funny haircuts, like gays, in this school" or "we do not want gays walking around in this school", were made with reference to the boys' who did not adhere to the dress code. Irrespective of these prior observations, I approached teacher participants with a neutral stance throughout the research process, sustaining a level of trust, comfort, and

respect for various opinions, thus facilitating the trustworthiness of this study. Moser and Korstjens (2018) emphasised the importance of qualitative researchers remaining reflexive throughout the data collection process, as unchecked predispositions directly influence the organisation, analysis, and interpretation process.

When the topic was first introduced to the principals, there was a level of uncertainty and interest on my behalf. I was confronted with various questions by both principals whose schools are participating in the study. For instance, "Why did you choose this topic?", "Is talking about this intimidating?", and "What exactly are you looking for?". These questions illustrated the curiosity of the principals, and were repeated by the teacher participants on more than one occasion. After one interview a teacher asked: "So why this topic?" and then commented further: "I am glad you are doing this and not some boring topic".

Although the teachers were co-operative, being a young female student approaching participants immersed in a conservative community elicited a level of nervousness and uncertainty, as conversations around gender, sexuality, and transgender identity are not discussed in my own home. Despite the initial unease, I found that all the teacher participants were curious and vocal about the research questions and my reasoning for conducting this study. The teachers conveyed a welcoming and friendly disposition, and even encouraged the commencement of the study in spite of the COVID-19 regulations.

Fineefter-Rosenbluh (2017) pointed out that through multiple complexities the researcher may influence the responses given by the participants. However, due to the use of telephonic individual interviews and online group discussions, participants' views on transgender identities were unaffected by the researcher. Farooq and De Villiers (2017) highlight that telephonic communication is more suitable as unknown influences such as physical appearances, or the age of individuals, do not entice particular responses. Additionally, telephonic interaction eliminates interpreting body languages and urges participants and the researcher to pay careful attention to what is being said during the engagement sessions. In this way, the participants are free to respond to questions as they find appropriate without any pressure to answer in a particular way. Overt participant comfort was displayed in the engagement session as teachers disclosed exactly how they felt about the topic even though it was not in line with other teachers in the same school. Since I was not employed at either school, I was able to maintain my impartiality and objectivity.

I also kept a diary to make notes of any additional information given to me after the official engagement session was completed. These notes also helped me to interpret the

participants' thoughts, assumptions, and understanding. When the interviews were transcribed, I attached the notes I thought would be useful to develop a holistic description of the participant. For example, how many years each teacher taught at Chatsworth schools; how many years in primary schools; and what grades they are or have taught. These additional notes assisted me to better acknowledge and understand the participants, and helped me avoid any bias. The complete profile of participants proved useful when analysing the data and creating themes. Moser and Korstjens (2018) point out that a certain degree of researcher bias is inevitable in qualitative research. However, through reflexivity the researcher can become aware of their influence on the study. In this regard, I am aware that I had a certain degree of influence on the participants. Nevertheless, I made a concerted effort to limit biases and ethical dilemmas that transpired in this study.

As will all research projects that involve human subjects, specific ethical guidelines need to be followed. I will now discuss the ethical considerations adhered to in this study.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the research design is trustworthy, processes must adhere to research ethics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Creswell (2007) states that ethics is an important consideration in qualitative studies, as ethical principles ensure that protection and welfare of all participants. Cohen et al., (2007) opine that before embarking on a research study, the study has to be recognised and gain formal acceptance. In line with this, I obtained ethical clearance from the DoE (Appendix A) and UKZN's Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix F). Thereafter, the principals of Eden Primary and Ale Primary were notified and a letter requesting permission (see Appendix G) to conduct the research was sent. The letter explained the nature and purpose of the study, and guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of the schools and participants. Both principals granted permission to conduct the research in their schools, thereby allowing me to distribute consent forms to the participants (see Appendix H). My status of being an ex-scholar as well as a student teacher at the schools certainly influenced the principals' decision to welcome me to use the schools as my research sites.

Creswell (2007) maintains that the most important ethical consideration is gaining informed consent from the participants. This entails voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw. I delivered consent forms (Appendix H) to the schools, and the principals distributed the forms to the staff. This was done because I could not physically enter the school premises due to the nationwide lockdown period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consent

forms (Appendix H) were sent to all teacher participants (34); however, only 30 participants expressed interest in contributing to the study. Before the onset of the interviews, the teachers notified me of their availability. If any were unavailable, engagement sessions were rescheduled accordingly.

Unfortunately, several teachers withdrew from the study due to their unavailability and workload, but they did nevertheless express their sincere apologies. Creswell (2007) assures the autonomy of participants where they have the freedom to withdraw without fear of repercussions. I was very understanding and assured them that their withdrawal was perfectly acceptable as the COVID-19 pandemic had created much disturbance in the workplace.

The 24 participants who willingly contributed to the study were constantly reminded of the purpose of the study, the nature of the questions, the conciseness of the engagement sessions to limit disruptions to the school day, and the confidentiality of any information shared. Thus, the study ensured *non-maleficence,* which Creswell (2007, p. 141) defines as "doing no physical, emotional or social harm to any person". Participants could be harmed if sensitive personal information is made public; therefore, to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were used for the schools and each participant. Where necessary, the description of the schools was altered to limit recognition. When specific information was provided by the participants, such as their cell phone number, I made a note of the information and secured this for my own access only.

Similarly, the verbatim transcriptions were securely stored on my password protected laptop and cloud account. I also indicated what process would be followed if teacher responses revealed that participants themselves were guilty of gender discrimination. This included providing the school(s) with DBE issued Challenging Homophobic Bullying in Schools (2015) guides. This document looks at creating a safer environment for all by defining gender terms like 'transgender', 'heterosexism', and 'transphobia'; it addresses myths about the LGBTIQ+ community; and it discusses homophobic bullying in schools and teacher responses.

Moreover, I planned to organise additional sessions with school management and teachers to facilitate conversations on the importance of inclusivity in school environments, as well as the negative impacts homophobia and transphobia have on the school community and society. However, no responses of the sort were vocalised.

Since the data collection process was completed telephonically, the venue for the engagement sessions were determined by the participants. The conversations were not

disrupted, and the participants sounded comfortable in their selected spaces, for example, empty classroom or vacated staffroom. This is essential as participants need to feel safe in a non-threatening environment to best contribute to the study. Creswell (2007) points out the importance of *beneficence* in research studies, as the contributions given by the participants should be constructive to the research community or lead to some positivity. Undertaking this study promoted conversations around transgender identities that were previously avoided.

Even though I considered ethical considerations in this study and gathered a satisfactory sample size, I did encounter challenges that impeded the research process. I will now provide a detailed description of the limitations that were encountered during the data collection process, and expand on the approaches that were used to counteract these limitations.

4.9 Limitations

This section acknowledges the limitations encountered in this study. The most prominent limitation of this study was the time factor during the data collection process. This was due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on research. Bania and Dubey (2020) pointed out the tremendous shift qualitative research methods have had to undergo, moving from primary methods of in-person sessions to the use of communication technologies. Consequently, the completion of telephonic interviews and online group sessions exceeded the initial plan of action.

Moreover, the resources that were originally designed, such as images for photo elicitation and vignettes, had to be converted to portable document format (PDF) and sent to the participants before the scheduled sessions began. Participants struggled to view and save the documents. This presented another time challenge, as I had to take time from the engagement sessions to explain the procedure of accessing documents. On more than one occasion I had to pause the session to explain how to view a document whilst talking on the phone, or how to shift the camera in order to be seen during the video call. Even though I was fully prepared to assist the participants with their technical issues, this led to further time constraints as teachers had to go back to class or perform other duties in school.

At the beginning of the data collection process, both principals made it abundantly clear that all engagement sessions were to be conducted during school hours, given teacher availability and that the sessions would not interfere with teaching and learning. The reason being that research should not impede on the personal time of the teachers. This made the data

collection increasingly difficult as I had to create schedules and allocate teachers specific times to have the engagement sessions, and when participants were late, I had to reschedule because there was not enough time to complete the session. To ensure that each participant had sufficient time to respond to the questions, I chose to reschedule, assuming that another teacher participant was reserved to be interviewed next. The availability of the participants was also reliant on the lockdown level as teachers were more focused on implementing protocols to ensure the health and safety of all members in the school environment.

Six (6) participants withdrew from the study during the data collection process due to unavailability. At this point, I made contact with three (3) other schools in the Chatsworth area. These schools shared similar characteristics with Eden Primary and Ale Primary, as they are public schools in the fourth quintile. Since I was still unable to physically visit the schools, I communicated with the principals via email. The principal of one school immediately refused to participate, stating that his staff would be uncomfortable discussing such a topic as they are much older and very conservative. The other principals expressed interest in the study and indicated that they would convey the invitation to their staff. Unfortunately, the staff of these schools did not agree to participate. As a result, I felt overwhelmed in attaining the desired sample size.

My initial plan was to gather 30 teacher participants; however, I only managed to obtain a sample of 24, which was below my original target. Nevertheless, the telephonic interviews and online discussions were 20 to 40 minutes each, with detailed responses that varied across the group. I encouraged discussions and, in some instances, when participants apologised for 'talking too much', I assured them that their contributions were greatly appreciated. Given (2016) spoke about data saturation, I believe that the sample of 24 participants was sufficient for this study as the participants provided a significant amount of information on their personal experiences, observations, and views on transgender identities.

Ratner (2002) talked about researchers in qualitative studies being responsible for identifying values, ideas, and assumptions in order for data interpretation to be trustworthy. This highlighted another limitation of the study, namely, the relation between the researcher and participants and issues of subjectivity. Ratner (2002) argued that a qualitative researcher cannot be completely detached from the context and participants, and therefore subjectivity is inevitable. I found that there was a low response rate from male teachers as well as teachers from local black African cultures. However, I did mention in the data collection process that teachers made contact with me at their convenience, thereby limiting any inclination to

specific individuals and researcher biases. Additionally, telephonic interviews shielded the participants' identity further as the teachers often only gave me their first names. As a result, I was not able to identify specific individuals.

Lastly, in the trustworthiness section (section 4.7), I discussed in detail how I addressed the issue of subjectivity.

The conclusion below recaps the main points of the chapter.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology employed in this study. Particular attention was given to the qualitative research approach within the interpretivist paradigm that was utilised, along with the phenomenological methodology to explore primary school teachers' views on transgender identities. The research sites and context of the study together with sampling techniques and recruitment plan were also discussed. These included Eden Primary and Ale Primary (pseudonyms) in the Chatsworth area, and a combination of purposive and convenience sampling. The data collection methods, namely: telephonic individual interviews with photo elicitation, and online WhatsApp video call group discussions with vignettes, were also explained in detail. The process of thematic data analysis was also described in identifying the themes and related sub-themes. In addition, the trustworthiness of the study was established, and the ethical considerations adhered to unpacked. The penultimate section acknowledged the limitations of the study. A brief conclusion was then provided to wrap up the chapter.

The data analysis of the study is presented next.

CHAPTER 5
DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology implemented in this study. This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the data used to represent how primary school teachers view and understand transgender identities. The findings and thematic analysis of this study are presented in three chapters as follows: Chapter 5 considers primary school teachers' constructions of gender and gender specific identities. Chapter 6 investigates the effect of power on teachers' views on transgender identities. Chapter 7 concentrates on the teacher and the transgender learning experience. The reason for the division of the discussion of the findings and analysis into three chapters is to offer a more streamlined approach. In addition, the data discussed is supported by participant verbatim quotes that appear consecutively to the analysis to ensure a correlation between the key concepts emerging from the literature and theories.

Attention now shifts to the first topic to be discussed, namely, gender identity.

5.2 Gender and Gender Specific Identity

5.2.1 Introduction

According to Neary and Cross (2021), 'gender identity' refers to an individual's deep-seated recognition of self as male, female, or other gender. An individual's gender identification may or may not correspond with the assigned sex at birth. The terms used to acknowledge individuals whose identity or expression varies from tradition or stereotypical norms are 'gender fluid', 'genderqueer', and 'gender variant' (Neary & Cross, 2021). Recent research suggests that there is a growing number of young children who disclose that they are gender fluid or transgender (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2021; Clark et al., 2014; Conron et al., 2012), despite historical practices of exclusion in educational spaces. However, some authors have argued that through proactive development, transgender and other non-conforming gender inclusion can be facilitated in schools (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017b; Francis, 2017). In view of these findings, this chapter considers teachers' constructions of gender and sexuality

and goes on to examine the ways in which they select, organise, and interpret transgender identity.

5.2.2 Teachers' construction of gender, sexuality, and transgender identity

Participants' responses to the question: "How would you describe gender?"

"It is based on the way you are born; you know, like your human parts … one is male, and one is female. That for me is gender" (Dorothy).

"Gender is either you are male, or you are female, so it is very straightforward, it's you are born man or woman" (Maria).

"How you feel either male or female yes, not the sex organs and stuff. You know it is about the person and how they feel" (Linda).

Most of the participants responses (75%) indicated gender as either male or female, reinforcing the idea that gender is categorised into two distinct groups and is something that is present at birth. Dorothy's response in particular builds on gender and sex as not being mutually exclusive categories, thus upholding the heterosexual binary. Butler (1990) argues that gender, sex, and sexual orientation are closely entwined social constructs that permit a gender binary. When Maria proclaims, "*it is very straightforward*", she reiterates invisible norms that circumscribe individuals as cisgender heterosexual until proven otherwise. Although the majority described gender as male and female, some participants did not ascribe to rigid perceptions of the gender binary. For instance, Linda broke away from naturalised understandings of the gender binary when she regarded gender and sex as non-interchangeable concepts.

"Gender is something that shows you or tells you whether you are masculine or feminine or whether you are female or male, but you know I was also reading somewhere that there says gender is fluid … you can be born a female and then you feel like you are a male" (Susan).

> *"We cannot just say gender is male and female because there's a gender spectrum"* (Sandra).

Although in the minority, the above response indicates an affirmation of gender identity outside the male/female binary. Susan builds on Linda's statement by moving away from biological sex constructs such as man/woman and male/female to gender being masculine and feminine characteristics brought upon by feelings and qualities attached to male and female. Moreover, Susan made use of the term 'gender fluid' which Neary and Cross (2021) refer to as a non-binary gender identity or an individual whose experience of gender varies from multiple genders at one time, to regular movements between two genders or the choice of having no gender at all. Sandra referred to non-binary gender identity when she alluded to gender being a spectrum.

> Participants' responses to the question*:* "Would you describe gender and sex as the same?"

> *"No, so I feel like gender has nothing to do with what you are physically, it has more to do with how you express yourself"* (Sandra)*.*

> *"No, I think the human body is just in your physical state whereas your gender comes from within"* (Rachel)*.*

Most of the participants made a clear distinction between physical maleness and femaleness and the mien of masculinity and femininity. Butler (1990) views gender as an infinite spectrum of performance and repetition of masculine and feminine expression and claimed that gender can be undone by not referring to or ignoring the gender binary. Even though individual teachers within Eden and Ale primary view gender differently, Kelan (2010) points out that destabilisation of the predominant gender order can only be achieved through collective action. Since gender is not the only relevant social category in primary schools, it is fundamental to consider gender in relation to sexuality and sexual orientation. Ewing et al., (2020) found that despite the dynamic nature of LGBTIQ+ identities, perceptions on how individuals should express their gender and sexuality are limited by heterosexual binaries.

"Uhm, I'm not very clued up about the LGBT group but from what I understand is that there are gay, lesbian and transgender, and they all have their rights" (Susan).

"I know there is gay and transgender but for me it doesn't make any difference mam" (Richard).

"I'm just going to answer it the way I understand it. So if I had to look at a female, and let's just say she has a very masculine way, then in this case you will identify herself as being gay... if you get a female who is again very masculine and things like that, but then she has a beard, then that is transgender – so for me, everything is very tricky" (Dorothy).

The above responses denote that teacher participants have a partial understanding of gender and sexually non-conforming identities. Susan made use of the LGBT acronym but conceded to overlook bisexual identity and expression. While Richard was familiar with gay and transgender identity, his word choice pointed to an understanding that LGBTIQ+ identities held no individuality.

Renold (2000) points out that sexuality, and specifically heterosexuality, is such an integral part of the everyday experience that the majority of identifications or interactions are governed through heteronormative standards. Even though there is a spectrum of LGBTIQ+ authenticities, the realities are very rarely examined due to the same rigid heteronormative standards. Consequently, when individuals, in this case teachers, are questioned on gender and sexual identification or expression, their heteronormative gender systems become disrupted, and teachers are forced to notice LGBTIQ+ identities.

Dorothy articulated that differentiating between gay and transgender identity is 'tricky', something that is deceptive and requires caution when handling. Like Richard's response, Dorothy sees LGBTIQ+ identities as indifferent from one another. Nevertheless, most of the teacher participants were able recognise and define transgender by relating the term to transition or change.

Participants' responses to the question*:* "How would you describe the term transgender?"

"I would assume that it's a transition or transformation of a person. So this person wants to move away from their gender or their anatomy into the opposite gender and anatomy" (Natalie).

"Transgender means changing your origin to go to another level. So like you are moving from one place to another. Trans for me, I will take it like transport so like moving or like moving away" (Lauren).

"Transgender for me as somebody who has now embraced the true self. You know they are now living the life the way they want to live. Transgender coming from the word "transition" are individuals embracing the gender that does not match what they physically born with" (Sandra).

According to Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2021), at birth, most individuals are assigned one of two sexes, namely, male or female. The heteronormative expectation thereafter is that gender proceeds from the assigned sex category, from male to masculine. However, transgender identities describe individuals whose gender identity and expression differ from normative sex-gender categories. Most of the teacher participants were able to make use of linguistics to explain the term 'transgender'. Natalie associated the term transgender to the transformation of a person, while Lauren related transgender to transportation. Both participants equated transgender identification as moving away from their assigned sex category, and toward the opposite sex. Sandra also used her knowledge of language and paralleled transgender to the term 'transition'. However, Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2021) argue that the assumption that there are just two sex categories or two gender categories results in the omission of non-binary gender identities.

"Okay, for me, transgender is when someone, an individual we want to change, ok, not wants to change, but they feel more comfortable in a different gender. So, like a male actually feels more comfortable being a female" (Brenda).

"You born of one gender but, ah, your expression and how you carry yourself, your identity and how you feel about yourself, is of the other gender" (Linda).
"I don't know if you know this, but when it came to her [Caitlyn Jenner] *kind of idea of what she wanted to look [like], she always said that she admired Kim*

Kardashian, and she always wanted to look like Kim. So that is what I base my answers on, like someone is transgender – it's what they see themselves as per what they aspire to be" (Anna).

"...for me, it is if you want or if you feel like as if you were not created the way you should be and you have this feeling like you want to be this person who you feel you truly were meant to be, then that for me is transgender. To become the person you truly feel that exists" (Deborah).

Even though most teachers were able to associate transgender with the lack of correspondence between gender and sex, the participants' supposition of two gender categories were evident. Brenda's response in the above excerpt shows that transgender identification is understood as the movement from male to female (MtF) or female to male (FtM). The same was suggested when Linda mentioned "*one gender and the other gender*", neglecting the spectrum of transgender identities.

Anna's understanding, on the other hand, deviated from normative gender and sex ideologies, and focused on identification being a strong sense of self and individualistic aspiration. Deborah's response also challenged the two sex and two gender binary by making reference to the authentic self. This statement posits transgender identification as an innate recognition of self rather than just the desire to be the opposite sex.

These findings were in line with Levitt and Ippolito (2014) who found that there is a lack of transgender awareness in mainstream society. As a consequence, transgender identities are compelled to trade their need for an authentic sense of self for their need for safety and security from discriminatory practices. Since the presentation and communication of authentic gendered self is limited by contextual stressors, the next section will explore this in detail.

5.2.3 Primary school teachers' selection of transgender adjectives

According to DeLamater and Hyde (1998), essentialism centres around the construct of underlying true forms which see social categories like heterosexual and homosexual as both fixed and separate. The homosexual category challenges and disrupts gender dichotomy; consequently, LGBTIQ+ identities are met with subjectivities such as harassment, violence, and discrimination. However, transgender identities are exposed to additional difficulties

because non-binary gender identity conforms less to the conventional heterosexual matrix (Richards et al., 2016).

This study made use of photo elicitation methods to gather teachers' initial perception of non-conforming gender identities. Participants were exposed to two rows of images (Appendix B) and were asked to attach adjectives to each individual. The figure below represents all the adjectives put forward:

Row A
> •childlike, confident, cute, fatherly, sad, worried, happy, sassy, content, smiley, disorganised, confused, handsome, old, mature, upset, unhappy, brave, diverse, vibrant, boring, masculine, model, manly, educated, business-like, serious, strict, homeless, jobless, loud, annoying, relaxed, calm, worried, charming, outspoken bold, unafraid, elated, joyful, accepted, jubilated, inconsequential, misinterpreted, hurt, athletic, well-kept, healthy, energetic, conceited, dark, gloomy, fabulous, unhappy, weird, scary, robotic, robber, guilty, suspicious, creative, talented, sincere, well-known, arrogant, decent, classy, introverted, boring, jovial, sophisticated, preoccupied, fake, gay, petite, young

Row B
> •happier, more comfortable, transitioned, fierce, confident, proud, beautiful, done up, fabulous, radiant, fashionable, trendy, different, content, feminine, transformed, diverse, model, attractive, attention seeker, girly, prideful, womanly, neat, professional, famous, funny, over-bearing, loud, pretty, natural, a bit much, stylish, self-centred, highly-advantageous, bold, revved, unusual, jubilated, peaceful, balanced, worrying, serious, troubling, fake, not genuine, sham, weird, unnatural, gorgeous, not normal, outgoing, motherly, lovely,creative, smart, sophisticated, shocking, scary, prim, proper, classy, stunning, attentive, glaring, interested, dazzling, caring, elegant

Figure 3: Adjectives used in photo-elicitation

Jawad and Yosif (2017) describe an *adjective* as a word that modifies a noun by providing more information about the person or thing. When the participants described Caitlyn Jenner and Lavern Cox prior to their transition process (row A), there was a repetition of ominous adjectives, such as sad, worried, unhappy, hurt, dark, gloomy, guilty, and suspicious. Whereas there was a difference of perception following their transition (row B) as adjectives were more propitious, for instance, happier, more comfortable, content, fierce, proud, bold, and radiant.

Ryazanov and Christenfield (2017) claim that transgender identities are continuously stereotyped, denounced, and discriminated against due to essentialism and heteronormativity that manifests in society and filters into schools. Although most of the teacher participants

(79%) were familiar with transgender women through Caitlyn Jenner's publicised journey, essentialist beliefs linked to the rigid gender binary were noticeable.

A participant's response to the question: "What adjectives would you use to describe individuals in row B?"

"Definitely weird" (Patricia).

A participant's response to the question: "Why do you choose the word weird?"

"It just seems fake, you know. It is the same group of people in A and B and B is just fake" (Patricia).

The above extracts reveal how entrenched heteronormative gender systems are in everyday life. When the teacher participants provided adjectives for same-sex attracted identities and transgender identities, caution was visible. The participants made neutral but deliberate word selections such as "weird" and "fake", and subsequently imposed stringent essentialist and hetero-cis-normative rules on non-conforming gender identity. Butler (2006; 2011) describes non-conforming identities as an error of society. Patricia's response illustrated how nonconforming gender expressions are denied, and furthermore, how LGBTIQ+ identities are reduced to an aberration of the hetero-cis-gender form.

"Okay, the first two is weird, not actually, the first three are weird, but the fourth [laughs] – the fourth looks gorgeous, but yes, the three are weird" (Barbara).

A participant's response to the question: "Why do you choose the word weird?"

"Because you see this is not the norm. It is not the norm, so obviously it is like, uhm, if A, B and C had to walk past me, it is not something I have been exposed to or used to looking at or used to seeing in our daily life, so, uhm, you know it is weird and obviously we will give it a second glance, you know. You will have these thoughts you know, and we will question ourselves like, is this a male [or]

is this a female? You know those types of questions, so that is why I chose the word 'weird', because it is out of the norm for me" (Barbara).

Central to Patricia's response, Barbara perpetuated compulsory heterosexuality through the denial of non-conforming gender identities. Butler (1987) argues that gender is an ongoing discursive practice structured around heterosexuality where rigid rules create a false pretence of stable genders attached from biology. Simultaneously, these conceptual and cultural perceptions identify non-conforming identities as preposterous.

Foucault (1988) points out that sexuality is not a category that can be understood by naturally sexed binaries, rather sexuality is a category of culture and knowledge. Foucault's history of sexuality has shown that LGBTIQ+ are not a unified identity but rather individuals who are either enabled or constrained due to their sexual preference or gender. For instance, society cannot perceive sexuality or sexual orientation without assent, yet there seems to be a societal marker to indicate a gay or lesbian identity. These social markers make transgender identities a less stable or established identity, consequently being excluded when misunderstood.

The next section looks at how transgender gender identities are organised into categories.

5.2.4 Primary school teachers' organisation of the transgender identities as male and female

"Transgender is completely different and it's a completely different group of people, and they prefer to put on the makeup and change the way they look, and wear the high heels and stuff; they are comfortable wearing the high heels and putting on the wigs and wearing the jewellery, so I think there is a very big difference between being gay and being transgender" (Anna).

Butler's (1990) theory of performativity states that male and female roles and behaviours are not biological or fixed but rather based on social constructions that are reinforced by media and culture. In the above excerpt, Anna describes how transgender identities differ from other gender identities belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community. Abdelsamad (2021) claims that transgender identities express their gender through the use of particular clothing, makeup, or pieces of jewellery in order to align themselves with masculine or feminine societal norms.

Abdelsamad (2021) asserts that transgender identities make a conscious decision to express their gender in traditional ways to 'pass' as the gender with which they identify. Within the transgender community, 'passing' is seen as the highest form of gender identity approval and sense of acceptance into the hetero-cis-gender society.

Butler (1999) affirms that identity in itself is an illusion created by performance, and for transgender individuals, identity performance entails two aspects that are contradictory. On the one hand, transgender identification challenges and defies rigid gender binaries that have been cultivated by hetero-cis-gender culture. Conversely, transgender individuals have an innate need to be recognised by their chosen gender or sex, despite a gender identity that does not fit within the gender binary system.

> *"To me, a gay person is just a regular man that has a different sexual preference... but I think with transgender people you can visibly see that they dress and behave like the opposite sex"* (Barbara).

> *"You* [Transgender] *identify yourself as the other gender so you try to dress up or express yourself as the other gender. Whereas you see gay people, I don't think they change themselves, so they won't change their clothing. You know my friends are just normal but they look normal so you would never tell they are gay"* (Linda).

The above responses indicate the depth of rigid dichotomous thinking, as identities who do not fit traditional gender binaries are still being acknowledged through dominant belief systems. All of the teacher participants separated gay identity from transgender identity through the differentiation between gay sexual preference and transgender identity choice. However, Barbara characterised gay identities as regular which suggests that gender identities outside the gay category are unusual or irregular. In the same way, Linda described her gay friends as normal, indirectly alluding to the atypical or deviant nature of transgender identities.

> *"When it comes to being transgender, like I said before, it's transforming or transitioning into the other sex"* (Natalie).

"Transgender is when, or it means that you feel happier being the other gender"
(Brenda).

Bizjak (2018) claims that transgender identities both conform and oppose normative gender practices through various gender performances. However, Bizjak (2018) points out that when non-conforming individuals are kept separate through polarisation of gender expression, new binaries emerge that conceal transgender identity. When Natalie refers to transgender as transitioning into the other sex, there is an unspoken assumption that transgender individuals must fit one gender or the other. Whereas Brenda states that transgender identities feel happier as the other gender, and by making this statement omits alternative transgender identities from social life and subsequently discriminates based on gender identity.

Bockting et al., (2021) proclaim that transgender identities conform to gender binary conceptualisations to avoid stigma associated with non-conformity. The authors state that transgender individuals either conceal their gender identity and non-conforming feelings from society by expressing themselves as their assigned sex or attempt to recreate themselves to pass as a cisgender member of the other sex.

The next section will look at how transgender expressions and employment is interpreted.

5.2.5 Primary school teachers' interpretation of transgender expression and employment

"You see it happening all the time … you see young boys acting very girlish"
(Diane).

"I have observed these things, when you going to, like, the local mall, and if you observe people [transgender] *you will see how they behave, how they walk and talk, and all of that"* (Thomas).

The above extract focuses on entrenched experiences of high level stigma attached to transgender identities. Most of the teacher participants (72%) unsuspectingly characterised transgender, particularly transgender women, as caricatured identities with exaggerated personalities and behaviours. Diane professes that non-conforming gender expression is prevalent in the local community but also alludes to alternate gender expression being an 'act'.

Language is a powerful tool used to convey everyday ideas, thoughts, and feelings, and Diane's use of the word 'act' can be interpreted in one of two ways. First, act could mean that non-conforming gender expression is being reduced to a pretence, an attempt to make transgender identity appear true despite this not being the case. Alternatively, acting entails that non-conforming gender expression is part of theatrics or caricatured in a way that accentuates behaviours that are dissimulated. Thomas's response also reinforces the idea that transgender identity is simplified or exaggerated behaviours when he regards transgender identity and expression as something that can be observed. Both Diane and Thomas in this instance based their understandings of transgender identity on fixed understandings of masculinity and femininity, and how men and women should perform in society.

> *"You know Bruce was different before, well I do feel like he changed a bit, you will see Caitlyn Jenner now all dressed up and takes care of his looks but before, like before he revealed himself as transgender, he used to dress up not fashionable. Now he's very into nails and take[s] care of his skin and clothing. So he has become feminine after he transgendered"* (Helen).

Hughto et al., (2020) claim that transgender individuals experience discrimination across the home, school, and work environments due to acts of mis-gendering, denial, and violence. As seen in the above excerpt, Helen elaborated on Caitlyn Jenner's transition process, but refuted Caitlyn's gender identity through the use of incorrect pronouns. Dolan et al., (2020) state that mis-gendering occurs when individuals deliberately or inadvertently address or describe a person with language that does not align with their gender identity. When Helen assigns the incorrect pronoun to describe Caitlyn Jenner, she then becomes culpable of mis-gendering which Dolan et al., (2020) claim discriminates, marginalises, and destabilises transgender identity. However, the practice of mis-gendering needs to be understood in relation to rigid ideologies around essentialism.

> *"I did see kids in high school and how they dress and how they talk and how they walk. I know that there's a change in the way people think; I know that! But for me, it still remains very straight forward – you [are] born with the parts of a man, and so you will be a man"* (Maria).

Presently, transgender identities live through substantial levels of stigma due to the historical support of gender essentialism. Everyday policies and practices robustly impede opportunities for transgender identities (Skewes et al., 2018). Maria's response illustrates how fixed essentialist mindsets obstruct the realisation of gender equality for transgender identities. Even though Maria observed non-conforming gender expression in the school environment and acknowledges the shift in global gender perspectives, she formidably advocates for essentialist thinking. The assumption that men and women are defined by their biological composition, distinct characteristics, and immutable nature increases the risk of discrimination and violence against transgender identities. It is important to note that although the following interpretation of transgender identity is not shared by most of the participants in this study, it is however fundamental in gathering contextual views of primary school teachers.

"If you look at most of these people [transgender] *and I'm not trying to make a judgement or something but most of them are coming from backgrounds that have a lot of issues… They are coming from homes with socio economic barriers, and uhm, how can I say, there is this demand for a cross-gender or transgender person relationships. So you will see because of money issues and these backgrounds that these individuals come from, they have turned to being this way, especially the guys"* (Jennifer).

Jennifer's interpretation of transgender identities moves away from innate recognition of self to acquired financial security. This response contends that individuals turn to being transgender due to various surrounding factors, including environment and financial concerns. Even though Jennifer did not explicitly state that transgender identities engage in sexual activities for financial gain, her language choice, for instance, "demand for" and "turning to" suggests that transgender women in the community turn to sex work. Yasin and Namoco (2020) declare that any sexual act or practice in exchange for money is defined as prostitution. Even though the broad term is "sex work", in actuality, anything from sensual dancing and pornography to sexual solicitation carried out for food, housing, or other services is considered prostitution. Jessica's interpretation of transgender identities is not implausible as the perception of transgender women as sex workers stem from decades of misinterpretation, which Bermudez de Castro (2017) argued portrayed transgender identities in a dehumanising manner.

"These guys who dress up as girls and stuff because of work issues … there is a lot of pressure on males you know so I think most of them feel like if they are female then the pressure is lesser" (Jennifer).

Jennifer warranted transgender women turning to sex work because of financial strain, and as an approach to evade complexities associated with manhood. Yasin and Namoco (2020) state that the stereotypical narrative of transgender women is one historically inundated by prostitution, drug addiction, and disease. However, the authors argue that being a sex worker is an avenue for transgender identities to generate income to survive. By referring to money and work issues, Jennifer highlighted the link between prostitution and poverty caused by the lack of job opportunities for transgender identities.

The National Transgender Discrimination Survey (2015) reported that 50% of transgender sex workers in the US experienced homelessness and lived in extreme poverty due to being rejected by family and kicked out of their homes at a young age. Due to rejection, many transgender identities are unable to complete school which then results in the inability to find well-paying jobs, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and prostitution.

Richter and Buthelezi (2021) noted the accentuated levels of victimisation and violence transgender sex workers experience after a transgender woman in their study reiterated an incidence of gang rape by clients and described secondary victimisation from hospital staff. In the participant's response she alleged that the doctor and nurses assigned to assist her made a mockery out of the situation, with statements such as "this is not rape", "come see a man got raped", and "you were sodomised because you are a man" (Richter & Buthelezi, 2021, p. 146). The participant claimed to have left the hospital without any medical treatment, emphasising the deeply embedded discourses surrounding rejection of nonconforming gender identity, reception of violence, and refusal to support transgender survival (Yasin & Namoco, 2020).

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter considered teachers' constructed views and understandings of gender and sexuality. The findings showed that understanding stemmed from deeply embedded ideologies of essentialism, where gender is seen as one of two distinct sex categories. What is more, sex and sexuality was effectively separated from gender as teachers were able to distinguish

between gender, sex, sexuality, and sexual orientation. This chapter went on to discuss teachers' selection of transgender and gender non-conforming adjectives and found that teachers made deliberate word choices that moved away from overt pessimism. The chapter also looked at how transgender identity was organised as male and female categories and attributed these views to deeply entrenched heteronormative ideologies that prompt societal categorisation of transgender as overly caricatured identities. Finally, the chapter looked at how the teachers interpreted transgender identity, with the common finding being nonconforming gender and sexual identity continuing to be subjected to stigma and prejudices.

The next chapter looks at the effect of gender power on transgender identity.

CHAPTER 6
THE EFFECT OF POWER

6.1 Introduction

Foucault (1977) argues that analysis should move away from understanding power as exercised by or enforced against, and rather urges that continuous and uninterrupted practices of power should be explored. Foucault sees power as 'something' that is subjected to ongoing subjugation and as a result gradually and progressively governs our bodies and behaviours. This chapter looks at the way in which power is formed and distributed through the presumptions and prohibitions expressed by means of language power. This chapter will focus on various surrounding factors that influence primary school teachers' understanding of transgender identities.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, the chapter will look at the compromising Chatsworth community whilst underlining the core cultural beliefs in relation to non-conforming identities. Next, the chapter will discuss tradition and how this translates into the treatment of transgender identities. The chapter will then look at the three religious groups identified – Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism – and their influence on transgender identities. Finally, the chapter will assess how teachers' knowledge plays a part in transcending the he/she gender binary by establishing gender neutrality, accepting transgender pronoun choices, and identifying homophobic and transphobic indicators in school.

6.2 A Compromising Chatsworth Community

"There have been many hate crimes against transgender people. You know in school's people will get hit just because they are different like gay or transgender or dressing up like that … then you get things like murder and rape; people get killed because they find out [the] person is transgender. One case was of a prostitute; it was a male but looked like a female, and when the people found out who the person was, they murdered them" (Helen).

A participant's response to the question: "And this happened in Chatsworth?"

"Uhm, yeah! There was a story a few years back – this young man who was mutilated. It was in the local newspaper, he was attacked, mutilated, and his penis was put in his mouth. I also heard there was a time where they were decapitating people in Silverglen. So there was this man in Chatsworth who was decapitated; they found his body in a park somewhere I think, and he was known for being feminine and stuff" (Helen).

In the above excerpt, Helen described the prevalence of hate crimes in the Chatsworth area. Pickles (2021) defines 'hate crimes' as any criminal act, activity, or hostility involving violence in private or public spaces that are motivated by prejudice due to gender identity and sexual orientation. Most of the teacher participants (80%) in this study indicated that nonconforming identities experience verbal and physical bullying in and outside the school environment. However, Helen's response revealed that members in this community become increasingly vulnerable to rape and murder when gender expression does not match heterocis-gender norms in the school environment or when non-conforming gender identity or sexual diversity is discovered by community members. When asked to confirm the area predominantly known for hate crimes, Helen described horrific acts such as decapitation and mutilation allegedly perpetrated in the Chatsworth Silverglen area. Upon further investigation, no information was found regarding the existence of prostitution pertaining to transgender sex workers, or murder and mutilation of non-conforming gender identities in the Chatsworth area. Helen's recollection of events was supported by Linda.

"You know, now that I think about it, a couple years back there was a boy from the area, and he was transgender. He used to carry his bag and he used to wear beautiful blouses with his jeans and high heels and bangles and everything. He used to move around Chatsworth and then I heard around a year or two ago he was murdered because he was transgender" (Linda).

During the interview process Linda mentioned that a boy from the Chatsworth area whom she personally observed wearing feminine clothing was murdered on the basis of non-conforming gender expression. Since it was not evidently clear whether the young man self-identified as transgender or was labelled as such by the community, further inquiry was conducted. Despite finding confirmation of murders perpetrated in the Chatsworth area, there was no indication

or written report to suggest that a young transgender identity was harmed or murdered in Chatsworth. Wood et al., (2019) claimed that despite the murder of transgender identities being on the rise, public awareness through mass media, such as news channels and newspapers, remain scant. The authors ascribe the paucity of written work on national news sites or in local newspapers to consumers' lack of interest in the topic. Simply stated, members of global communities consider transgender social issues such as being mis-gendered, misidentified, or murdered as invaluable stories.

A participant's response to the question: "This was in the Chatsworth community"?

"It was in Welbedacht but he was always in the area, and uhm, it sent shivers down my spine because those people have their lives – nobody should tell who they can be and what they can be. They have their idea of themselves, and nobody can take that away. It was like a bad bad, I actually felt very sick about that. That was a very sick thing; you know murders are bad, but this was even worse because he was just killed because he was just different, you know" (Linda).

Chapter 1 of this study drew attention to the experiences of a 26-year-old transgender woman by the name of Kriben Kribashnee. Kribashnee grappled with ongoing acts of bodily harm, verbal and sexual harassment, and attempted rape (Makhaye, 2021), which highlighted the dismal reality of non-conforming gender identities living in the Chatsworth area. All of the teacher participants strongly contested any act of violence directed toward persons irrespective of gender and sexuality. Linda expressed her sense of distress when confronted with violent realities solely on the basis of gender expression. Foucault (1977) argued that by exploiting the nature of the physical body through acts of violence and oppression, ruling powers are able to sustain their privileged power positions. The study acknowledges Foucault's (1980) ideology on where there is oppression, there is resistance, and resistance is embedded in power. Kribashnee's power can be observed through her undaunted attitude to transphobic community members with responses such as "*I have learnt to fight back and tell people where to get off*" (Makhaye, 2021). However, rigid measures of control designed to train transgender identity to be productive and cooperative in hetero-cis-gender society sustains gender power imbalances, which continues to restrict transgender identification and expression. Figure 4

below illustrates how many teachers acknowledged non-conforming identities having the freedom of gender expression in the Chatsworth community.
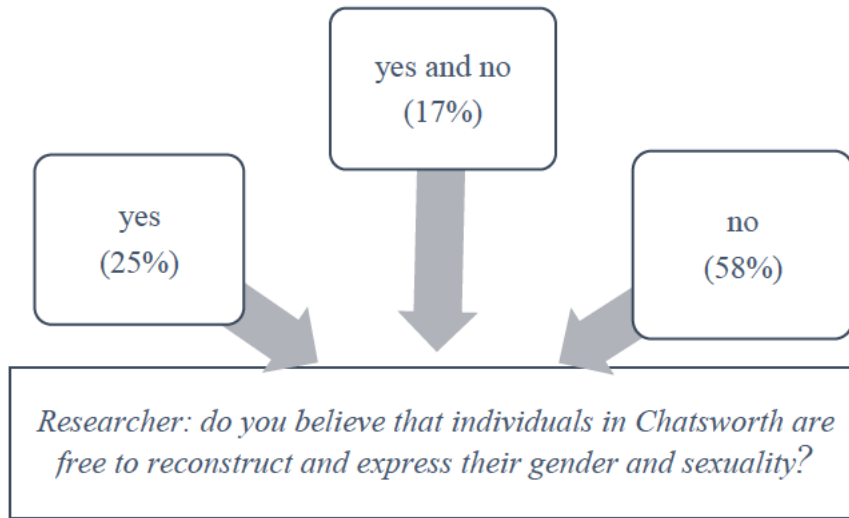
Figure 4: Teachers' response to freedom of gender expression

As seen in Figure 4 above, a small group of teacher participants (25%) claimed that individuals in the Chatsworth community have the freedom to openly express non-conforming gender and sexuality. The participants rationalised their response on the basis of the South African Constitution that prohibits any form of harassment associated with sex, gender, or sexual orientation.

> *"You know people are free to do this; they're free to do it but you know it is deceitful … like if you are a boy and you are dressing up like a girl, like a boy with a beard and a moustache just dressing up in a skirt and heels. It doesn't make sense and you are confusing the younger children. I feel like confusing people is wrong but if you come out of your house or your home all dressed up in this way and the next person doesn't know, then it's a problem. I feel like you can do whatever you want – you're free to do whatever you want, as long as it doesn't affect the next person; but when a boy dresses as a girl, I and people are seeing him as a girl, I think it does affect the next person. I find that very wrong"* (Diane).

Diane was one of the six participants who claimed that non-conforming and transgender identities have the freedom to express themselves in a manner deemed appropriate. Sevelius et al., (2021) reinforced that gender identity is an innate sense of self whilst gender expression refers to how individuals convey their gendered self to society. However, Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2017b; 2021) have mentioned that transgender expression is compounded by transphobia through acts of systemic discrimination, which is perpetrated by a repetition of attitudes, behaviours, and practices that disadvantage transgender persons.

Diane's response illuminated the existence of systemic discrimination when she referred to transgender identity as being deceitful and a means to confuse children. Even though Diane proclaimed that transgender identities have the freedom to be, her response supports hetero-cis-gender underpinnings that place superior status on individuals whose gender identity and expression aligns with their assigned sex, whereas non-conforming gender expression is seen as very wrong.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that a large number of participants (58%) acknowledged systemic discriminations that hindered transgender freedom of expression.

> *"They are free to do this because we live in a democratic country, and you have rights obviously; but I'm pretty sure because of this community that we live in and the narrow-minded people that are around us, uhm, individuals wouldn't be free to do this"* (Barbara).

> *"I would say not in our society, no. You must remember that this is out of the norm. The norm is that the girl must dress up like a girl and a boy must dress like a boy. Like initially, the earring thing was taboo in Chatsworth; so if a boy wore earrings, he was looked at and he was judged, but now that has become something so normal. So you see, maybe in time Chatsworth will change in that sense but at the moment, if you are doing something that is abnormal, like you wearing a female kind of thing, it is not accepted. But I do think females get away with it more, with the fact that they can wear male clothes and call it 'unisex'* [laughs]. *So you can wear a man's tracksuit pants and call it fashion"* (Linda).

Barbara is one of the four participants to acknowledge the constitutional rights of gender nonconforming identities whilst emphasising restrictive contextual factors, such as members of community who actively deny transgender identification. Barbara made use of the word "narrow-minded", which implies that members of the Chatsworth community are not willing to listen to or tolerate views that are not in line with dominant ideologies.

Respectively, Linda described trans-gender expression as "out of the norm". Foucault (1980) argued that power is fluid and becomes established through repetitious forms of knowledge, both intentional and subjective. The repetition and self-reproducing forms of knowledge can be seen in Linda's response when she alludes to static gender roles and expressions attached to girls and boys. Even though Foucault claimed that power operates among relationships, viewing gender power as static and mainly through a binary, negates new ideas, attitudes, and information. Linda used the example of young men sporting earrings as a taboo form of self-expression, as the community considered this a display of womanliness. At the same time, Linda implicates society's double standard when allowing women to dress in clothing considered masculine in the name of fashion. This finding indicates that through gradual change in ideas and attitudes, power can be shifted in the favour of masculinities and femininities. The next section discusses the core cultural beliefs present in the Chatsworth community.

6.3 Core Cultural Beliefs and Non-Conforming Identity

> *"I think now the way of thinking is different. People do what they like. Boys can wear pink and flower shirts; it is in fashion and people are not mocked about it"* (Thomas).

The Chatsworth community is immersed with rich cultural and religious backgrounds; however, the community has observed a deviation from previous exclusive male dominated sectors to a new generation that has altered core-cultural beliefs (Desai & Goolam, 2012). By definition, 'core cultural beliefs' refer to language, dress, and social habits adopted by a particular community. Thomas noticed the shift in core cultural beliefs through alternative ways of gendered thinking and dressing. The gender binary that exists creates the illusion that heterosexuality is the dominant identity, yet Thomas' response indicated that the distinctive lines that previously separated masculinity and femininity have been blurred.

101

A participant's response to the question: "What role does community culture play on your perception of transgender identities?"

"I'm going to say that growing up I was completely against this. You know, my religion, my entire community, and my family is against this, and I have lived in Chatsworth for my entire life. I went to an Islamic all-girls school, so conversations of homosexuality were a complete no no. Also, with Chatsworth and growing up around Indians and whatever, it was a big no in this culture. So naturally I was against it and then I was exposed to higher education, and I was enlightened when I met people not from here, and I was like, okay, there is nothing wrong with them. They are just like us" (Sharon).

A participant's response to the question: "Can you elaborate on this enlightening moment?"

"Oh, okay. Uhm, at campus you meet so many more people and they show you what it means to be open minded. So like instead of always being told what to do it's like, here are a group of people but you have to think for yourself and make a choice about the kind of people you want to associate with. You have to pay attention and read into situations, and you will quickly realise that there is more to life than just being told 'hey, these people, these gay people, are bad'" (Sharon).

Societal, cultural, and traditional ideologies have a direct effect on teachers' perceptions of transgender and other non-conforming gender identity. Sharon professed to the denial of transgender identification on the basis of a culture that advocated for a heteronormative network. Sharon expanded on the omission of conversations on homosexuality in her home and school environments, and announced that non-conforming gender expressions and sexual diversity is completely repudiated by cultural standards. Msibi (2012) proclaimed that deeply ingrained cultural, traditional, and religious beliefs sanction gender roles, which is then used to define and polarise men and women. A large number of the teacher participants (62%)

stated that cultural beliefs had some level of influence on their perceptions and understandings of transgender identities.

> *"I think it has played a very big role because I grew up with the perceptions of others. Their perceptions were put on me"* Cynthia).

A participant's response to the question: "What perceptions were those?"

> *"The perception that this isn't right. You know, like it is not okay to be gay or you know it is not okay to be transgender and that God made you a certain way and that is the way you are supposed to be. If you were born a woman or man, you have to stay a woman or man because that is the way God made you, and this is the way he wants you to be. You know if you were born a woman and you feel like you are a man, this culture believes that if you were supposed to be a man God would have made you that way. So I grew up with this perception that this is not ok"* (Cynthia).

Francis et al., (2019) opined that community, culture, and religious institutions serve as key stakeholders in the establishment and maintenance of gender power hierarchies which contribute to gender inequalities. In the above excerpt, Cynthia reported that culture plays a major role in the discrimination of transgender identities, when non-conforming gender identity is negatively labelled and rejected by members of society. Although there has been a subtle shift in core-cultural beliefs which are seen through side-stepping rigid gender roles, it is of utmost importance to acknowledge the power dynamics entrenched in culture that privilege hetero-cis-gender identity over non-conforming gender identity.

In the previous extract, Sharon stated that the Chatsworth community culture dictates how individuals should think and what they should do. This kind of oppressive culture strips humans of their individuality and identity and leaves behind an indoctrinated society incapable of critical thinking. When Cynthia expressed "*their perceptions were put on me*" in the above excerpt, she also contended that the attitudes, perceptions, and understanding surrounding transgender identity were not her own, but rather knowledge and information placed on her by the same institutions mentioned above. What is more, Cynthia pointed out that culture, tradition, and religion are closely entwined constructs that are used as tools to police gender

identity and expression. When individuals choose to abandon gender roles they are seen as rebels, challenging and questioning the will of God.

6.4 Tradition and the Treatment of Transgender Identities

A participant's response to the question: "Why do you think this community is closed off to the idea of transgender identities?"

"Uhm, we have a very powerful and ancestral, wait no not ancestral no, heritage as such. You know we are closed to these things. The Indian culture tells us we have to fight it, like even born left or right-handed. You know in the past if you were writing with your left hand your parents would force you to write with your right hand. So with these things you have to stick with 'the normal' you know. But you know talking about normal with this COVID thing, maybe the normal will change now. People will be open to new changes, maybe it will be more liberated, and people will think on a more liberated level" (Linda).

Culture looked at the language, dress, and social habits of individuals within a community, whereas tradition focus on the transmission of beliefs or customs from one generation to the next. In the above extract, Linda confirmed that the Chatsworth community has a powerful heritage, with the term referring to something that is rooted from previous generations. Linda disputed that culture and tradition are unaccepting of non-conforming gender and sexuality and further wrangled that individuals need to fight gender and sexual diversity. Linda compared non-conforming gender identity and expression to identities who were left-handed, claiming that in both instances individuals are abnormal.

Masud and Ajmal (2012) examined belief systems that viewed left-handedness as a sign of evil. The authors stated that generational support of this perception is due to traditions that associate right-handed people as normal whilst left-handed people are seen as abnormal. Masud and Ajmal (2012) argue that criticism of left-handedness is present across all continents as the left is normally associated with femininity and the right with masculinity. This finding resonates with Connell (1987) who claimed that hegemonic masculinity favours masculine cultural ideals which can be seen through a right handshake being acknowledged as a universal

sign of strength, assuredness, and mutual respect. Whereas left handshakes are seen as subordinate and feminine and are therefore a sign of disregard throughout the world. *"You know, uhm, yeah, it is a very confusing ... There are flash entertainers.*

"They dress as ladies. They are so feminine that I don't know if they are transgender or like a character or things, but, uhm, people allow that. But then our religion and our people will not accept transgender but that they do accept all that entertainment which is so confusing to me" (Linda).

"...back in the day women weren't allowed to work or you [do] not go out or entertain people or anything. Men had to do everything, so like example, men had to go to work, men had to fix everything, men also had to be performers. Like theatres and stuff. Men had to wear women's clothing, play the character of a woman because women weren't allowed to be there. Indian women weren't allowed to dance in front of crowds and stuff back in the day because that wasn't considered a good thing to do, so men have to dress up in these clothes and dance. Now we call them a 'flash entertainer'. Nobody understands that this was something that was from the past, and it doesn't mean that it's acceptable for men to dress as women now" (Diane).

Another tradition that brought about a lot of controversy amongst the teacher participants was the notion of 'nagara dancers'. The teacher participants voiced concern and confusion when referring to the community's acceptance of nagara dancers – men who dress in women's saris and Punjabis and perform at weddings or prayer. Sinha (2021) argues that nagara dance is a form of ancient architectural style of dance and music used to worship. Even though nagara dance is primarily the contemporary use of instruments, nagara music has been adapted to performance to ensure a profitable career in the modern world (Sinhna, 20201; Toomey, 2014).

To date, the oldest nagara group in South Africa is called "Flash Entertainers" and they have been operating since 1968. Linda was hesitant when describing nagara dancers as she attempted to differentiate between creative performers and transgender identity. The society often assumes that men who dress as women and perform are homosexual; this assumption was shared by a number of participants in the study (25%). However, both participants and larger communities fail to comprehend the other surrounding factors influencing such forms

of entertainment. Diane was able to highlight the perplexity of gender inequalities with regard to flash entertainers through her statement *"men had to wear women's clothing, play the character of a woman because women weren't allowed to"*. This finding revealed the traditional patriarchal structures that are ever-present in the Indian community, which have limited women's freedom of creative expression. Although nagara dancers express themselves through song and dance in relation to worship of the goddess, women who danced alongside men were labelled as "women of the night". As a result, men exclusively participated in nagara dancing.

The next section will present how traditional biases together with other forms of religious and cultural beliefs emphasise entrenched power hierarchies which influence the teachers' views on transgender identities.

6.5 Religion: Contest, Confront or Confuse

Several South African studies have focused on the impact of religion on entrenched heterosexual norms and disavowal of homosexual identity (Bhana, 2012; DePalma & Francis, 2014; Francis & Reygan, 2016; Msibi, 2012). These studies found that deep-rooted heterosexual norms influence expectations of men and women, thus governing people's thoughts and behaviours, and at the same time consigning homosexual identity to aberrant, perverse, and contaminating status, as this contradicts the will of God.

However, Francis (2019) discovered that high school teachers were becoming more tolerant of non-conforming learners, irrespective of their personal religious beliefs. The findings from Francis' (2019) study showed that teachers supported inclusivity of nonconforming gender and sexuality, despite acknowledging homosexuality as a sin. Francis' results were concurrent with the findings of this study, as all teacher participants affirmed that learners have a fundamental right to education.

Nevertheless, the teachers in this study argued that religion contests homosexuality whilst also bringing about confusion. There were three main religious groups present in this study, namely: Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. The findings in this regard are presented below.

6.5.1 Islam

"In my religion being gay or lesbian is prohibited. It is completely forbidden and Uhm how do I explain it is completely forbidden for you to be that person but you know they also say the teachings also say you cannot hold things against a person. It says things like I have to respect the next person and I can't treat you differently because you are a human being after all and I have to respect all humans and living creatures as I wanted to be treated myself. But now there is this kind of twisted mind-set that people have against gay, lesbian and transgender and if they identify as that. People will treat them badly, they will say bad things about them, they will completely shun them from the family and the community. So I think somewhere along the lines things got very twisted" (Sharon).

"Uhm I believe that I have no control of outside opinions or outside factors. You know beside my own so for me, I will control how I think and I will accept everyone for who they are. Especially as being a teacher as well because in this profession we have to have an open mind and be very accepting and encouraging as well Uhm you know you want to build good happy and healthy human beings, so yeah I don't have any control of the community and those things [religion] *so I guess I focus on my own self and how I behave in society"* (Jessica).

Sharon pointed out that homosexuality is prohibited in her religion. She used terms such as "forbidden" to indicate that non-conforming identity is not permitted due to a selection of certain heteronormative rules. However, Sharon's response hinted of confusion with religious teachings contradicting one another. Sharon cited teachings from the Quran such as "I *have to respect all humans and living creatures as I wanted to be treated myself",* yet she claims that peaceful religious teachings around acceptance and respect have been lost. Sharon claimed that treatment of transgender identities as social pariahs is due to twisted mind-sets of society and not those reflected in religious texts. Jessica asserted that external factors surrounding the prohibition of homosexuality cannot be controlled, however she would follow her innate religious belief of acceptance of everyone, irrespective of alternative gender and sexuality.

Jessica also emphasised the significant role primary school teachers play when teachers use encouragement and acceptance to develop learners' holistic needs.

6.5.2 Christianity

"I'm Christian, I come from a Christian home and my family has a Christian background. So everyone in my home and my family have this perception [that] being gay or transgender is unacceptable in God's eyes" (Cynthia).

"I'm Christian and in the Bible it states that you know males need to be with females and [there] are specific Scriptures, well, not Scriptures, but there's a passage in the Bible that says that males are supposed to be with females and so I would say with religion it is not accepting of transgender" (Brenda).

"Uhm, so I am Christian, and Christians believe that you know God didn't make Adam and Steve, he made Adam and Eve. So religion says men belong with women and not men, so yeah. I wouldn't know how I would handle it personally if someone close to me had to be transgender because I think only experience can teach you this kind of thing. I don't think any kind of teaching or any kind of temple, mosque, or church can influence you, you know; whichever religion you are, I don't think they can teach you how you must behave. But yes, only first-hand experience can have an influence on how you deal with this" (Susan).

Cynthia claimed that traditional families uphold religious ideologies that see gay and transgender identities as wrong in God's eyes. Msibi (2012) asserted that religious underpinnings place firm restrictions on non-conforming gender identities as these individuals are seen as unworthy and sinful. Brenda alluded to religion enforcing heteronormativity through passages in the Bible that unambiguously proclaim that *males are supposed to be with females.* These passages not only embed heteronormative ideals into society but also rebuke the existence of homosexuality and non-conforming gender identity. Susan claimed that Christianity believes that God created man and woman with the statement *"God didn't make Adam and Steve, he made Adam and Eve",* but also drew attention to individuals' capacity to

reject ideologies that are detrimental to people in society. Susan specified that religious texts and teachings, either in a church, mosque, or temple, have the ability to influence individuals' mindsets and viewpoints, however people make an active choice concerning their behaviours. Susan's response brought up an important point that despite pious teachings, religion cannot be used as tool to create God-fearing people or be used as ammunition for hate and discrimination.

6.5.3 Hinduism

"Being a Hindu, we have a very strict and religious background, so obviously our parents do not allow us to speak about this or even hear about it" (Patricia).

"I am a SAI devotee, and one of the teachings is that you be accepting of everyone; it doesn't matter who it is in your heart, you need to be open and accepting and understanding of people. So in a way, religion teaches you how to be a good person; it doesn't discriminate against people, it is just how people use religion to make people out to be wrong" (Maria).

"I am Telugu, but I also have a Hindu family and I have come across many teachings that say Hindu Gods and Goddesses are gender neutral. This doesn't make sense because arts and goddesses which gives them a gender, but they tell you that Gods have no gender. And even though this is what they say, the community, the house, is difficult time when it comes to accepting transgender people or the transgender way of life. I find this extremely strange, and I personally want to ask people why is it like this?" (Natalie).

Similar to Islam and Christianity, Patricia claims that Hindu households are strict establishments with topics of gender and sexuality being taboo. In Patricia's response it can be noted that any gender or sexuality outside the heteronormative ideal is not spoken about and not heard of, as if non-conforming gender and sexuality is non-existent.

However, during the course of the interviews it became apparent that Hindu participants were not aware of any texts or teachings that overtly stated that homosexuality is a sin. For instance, Maria stated that *"religion teaches you how to be a good person, it doesn't*

discriminate". Nevertheless, Maria declared that society weaponised religion in such a way that the democracy of the South African people is stripped away. Alternatively, Natalie revealed that "*Hindu gods and goddesses are gender neutral*", meaning that divinity does not have an assigned gender but rather are non-binary beings. This finding prompted a further look into non-conforming gender in Hinduism and found that transgender identity holds equal status to heterosexual identity in Hindu mythology (Srinivasan & Chandrasekaran, 2020). Sanskrit used in religious texts is one of the oldest languages in the world, and is known to refer to three genders, namely: masculine, feminine, and gender neutral – with the term "tritiyaprakriti" (Srinivasan & Chandrasekaran, 2020). Despite this interesting finding, Natalie claimed that the South African Hindu society still struggles with the acceptance of transgender people. The next section will focus on how primary school teachers attempt to transcend gender binaries.

6.6 Transcending The He/She Binary and Establishing Gender Neutrality

Gender neutrality is a form of identification that falls outside the gender binary of male and female. This term means that individuals dissociate with concepts of man and woman seen through the alteration of style of language. By identifying as gender neutral there is a sense of gender blindness where gender specifics are not acknowledged. Even though participants belonged to the minority, the teachers showed inclinations of transcending the gender binary through their recognition of gender neutrality.

> *"You know I was also reading somewhere that there says gender is fluid. So my understanding ... gender is fluid; so for example, just because I am female and I like dressing in male clothes like a pants or t-shirt, doesn't mean I want to be a man. It is just that I enjoy expressing myself this way"* (Susan).

Although the male and female gender binary originated in the pre-biblical era, society at present continues to enforce a range of rigid rules that restrict human self-expression. As seen in the above excerpt, Susan claims that simply altering the way you dress as a woman may be interpreted as the failure to adhere to the gender binary. For transgender identities, massive strides have been made over the last decade to integrate into society, however transgender identities who are publicised are typically gender conforming and fit the binary.

Even though Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2021) claim that society is seeing an influx of non-conforming, non-binary, and gender-neutral identities, the gender binary that exists is being used as a tool to undermine transgender identities. Thompson (2019) argued that heterocis-gender identities establish their primacy to the detriment of non-conforming gender identities and this demonstration of power asphyxiates individuals' right to autonomy.

"My parents are very open to everything, and they have chosen to be understanding of their children … like if I chose to be a girl and liked another girl or I want to be gender neutral. That is what I wanted to do, I didn't want to identify as a girl and be that way I wanted to be. Even though when I was younger I didn't know what that meant, I knew I just wanted to be" (Deborah).

A participant's response to the question: "Is this your own personal experience?"

"Yes, I had to figure it out on my own, but I did have the support of my parents. But then again, the parents here in this community, well the community in general, they don't have uhm, room for that. You cannot explore or find yourself because they are very focused on what will people say, and because of that, people in Chatsworth believe that this is the only way you have to be because this is how I was raised. There is no sense of let me stand up for myself or the mind-set of hey, this is what my child wants, or this is what my child is struggling with, or the thought of my child is struggling to find herself let me help. There is this instant reaction of oh, something is not right, or there is something wrong with my child, or I must do something to change this because I feel like it is wrong. The community has this mind-set of I cannot change my beliefs and what I understand, so my child has to change the way they are" (Deborah).

An autonomous individual refers to someone who has the capacity to be their own person, to make informed decisions, and to live life in accordance with their own motivations and reasoning. Individual autonomy can also be defined as an individual's ideas and views that are not a by-product of manipulation and a distortion of external factors. In the above extract, Deborah made her own gender discovery known after disclosing that as a child she wanted to

identify as gender neutral. Deborah brought up an important point when she imparted that she did not know the term 'gender neutrality' as a young child, rather she *"just wanted to be".*

De Witt (2014) used Erikson's psychosocial theory to summarise the basic premise of human development. The author claimed that individuals' development is determined by the progression of the individual self and by the nature of the social and cultural environment. Additionally, de Witt mentioned that individual autonomy which manifests with versatile potential and willpower emerges between the ages of 18 months to 3 years.

Deborah made specific reference to gender development and articulated that the Chatsworth community and culture do not allow any room for gender exploration or expression. For this reason, gender non-conforming identities have lost their sense of autonomy and the community as a whole has been immobilised to change.

De Witt (2014) asserted that parents play a significant role in encouraging the autonomy of a young child and for transgender identities it can be argued that parental support is fundamental to learn how to stand up for oneself whilst simultaneously being shielded from shame and feelings of doubt.

6.7 The Concept of Transgender Pronoun Choice

During the course of the group discussions, the teacher participants were exposed to a vignette underlining the plight of young transgender identities in the primary school environment. Teachers were asked to respond to and expand on their understating of matters portrayed in the vignette, such as transgender pronoun choice, transphobic bullying, parental support, and teacher intervention.

Participants' responses to the question: "What do you understand by the concept 'transgender pronoun choice'?"

"So them choosing what to be called. I think it's your opinion. Like Elliott wants to be a she, and not a he, even though the world says he is a boy. He wants to be a she and a her. I think this is it. I'm not too sure, but yeah" (Sandra).

"I feel the same, it is what they want to be called and how you identify. So Elliott identifies as a she and wants to be a her. Now will people accept this or maybe not, but this is pronoun choice. I think this makes people feel more comfortable

with themselves because they see themselves as female or male and they want pronouns that match" (Jessica).

"I was only recently introduced to this concept. I was on Twitter and on the profile they have 'he/him', and I didn't understand why because obviously I know this, but I saw it a lot and it didn't click. But then I was watching Grey's Anatomy and this person came in and it was a female but she insisted the doctor say him but the doctor didn't understand what was happening. But then they explained it, so it made sense why you have the pronouns. I think everyone should respect what you want to be called. Whether it is a him or her you, need to respect people's choice" (Dorothy).

In the above extracts the participants shared their understanding of transgender pronoun choice. Sandra said transgender pronoun choice is a personal decision based on an individual's desire, regardless of what the outside world sees. While Jessica stated that transgender pronoun choice depends on one's identity and how they wished to be referred to so that they are more comfortable.

Zambon (2021) remarked that gender pronouns are words used to refer to individuals, such as he, she, and them; these serve as useful tools when replacing nouns such as names. VanderSchans (2015) argued that for transgender identities physical appearance, clothing, and names form part of their external identity, and play a significant role in allowing individuals to feel more authentic and natural.

Dorothy explains that transgender pronoun choice is widespread on social media and television shows and is something that individuals need in order to feel respected. This finding resonated with Zambon (2021) who asserted that utilising the correct gender pronoun is a sign of respect, a show of support for an inclusive immediate environment, and an affirmation of an individual's gender identity.

Presently, social media platforms like Instagram have introduced the option to select gender pronouns to be part of an individual's official profile, in attempt to ally with transgender rights. The social media giants allow their users to choose up to four pronouns from a list to be displayed next to their account name. Despite the feature being available in the US, UK, Canada and Australia, transgender identification and expression is still being denied in 70 countries across the world, with non-conforming gender expression in 12

countries punishable by death. Therefore, the issue of transgender pronoun choice needs more urgent attention.

> *"Uhm, sometimes people like to be called 'he' or sometimes they want to be known as a 'she', and then sometimes they don't wish to be called he or she and they want to be gender neutral. So this is pronoun choice"* (Cynthia).

> *"Yeah"* (Natalie).

> *"Whose child is it? One celebrity. He isn't transgender but he is a boy and he identified himself just a self. I can't remember who it was but sometimes people don't care about being a him or her, you just want to be neutral. Sometimes you are not in the mood to be human"* (Cynthia).

Cynthia brought her perception of gender neutrality into the conversation of transgender pronoun choice and was supported by her colleagues. She claims that there are individuals who simply do not care about being assigned gender pronouns, they simply want to be.

Zambon (2021) argued that simply ignoring gender pronouns can do more harm than good, as transgender identities who are non-binary find themselves once again dejected from society. In today's world it is important to never assume or attach pronouns to an individual, as incorrect pronouns are offensive and harmful to personal identity. Consequently, overt displays of pronouns on social media sites prove most beneficial as this limits incorrect pronouns deliberately or unconsciously, whilst assisting with the development of transgender identity. Since teachers in this study showed a clear understanding of transgender pronoun choice, the study went on to look at participants' views on assisting trans identity development.

> Participants' responses to the question: "If you were in this situation would you support transgender identity development?"

> *"Would I support it, yes! Because you cannot shoot a learner down for how they feel. As much as we have our own beliefs, and we think, okay, this isn't right, you have to support the learner and help them develop. If they are being teased, they need one person to support them. They will remember this forever because*

you helped them become who they are. Essentially, teachers are capable of doing this for learners – you help people develop into themselves" (Sandra).

"I have nothing to add; I feel like this is such an important thing to be a child's support even when they feel alone. You need to be there. This is our job. I wouldn't be scared because it is all about the child. You know as a teacher you need to be that person they can rely on because sometimes their parents aren't there. In this case, the parents are supportive, but in most cases, it isn't this way. These learners are with you every day, so they are also like your children" (Jessica).

"I will also be very supportive, but also very, I wouldn't say scared, but…" (Dorothy).

"Cautious" (Sandra).

"Yes, cautious, because me as the teacher cannot encourage this when the parent or the community is so against this. This can be a very dangerous situation because if the family doesn't believe in the LGBT or the community doesn't accept it, [it] could be dangerous. It shouldn't be like us against them" (Dorothy).

All teachers who participated in the focus group discussions claimed that they would support transgender identity development in the primary school environment. Sandra reasoned that the teachers' responsibility is to be a support structure for young people whose identity is still developing, whether conforming or non-conforming. She also argued that holistic learner development should be at the forefront of basic education and to ensure that teachers' personal beliefs, ideas and opinions of non-conforming gender and transgender identity need to be kept separate.

Adding to Jessica's statement, Sandra explained that teacher support can disrupt certain challenges transgender identities experience in schools, such as loneliness, fear, and insecurity. Jessica also emphasised that the vignette painted a picture-perfect scenario with adequate parental support, but argued that this is not the reality in the Chatsworth community.

She claimed that learners rely on primary school teachers for support and in turn teachers see learners as their own children. This is in line with Botha et al., (2015) who insist that teachers have a legal obligation under South African educational law to act in the best interest of learners, and this includes protection from any danger. Botha et al., (2015) emphasise that when teachers who display certain behaviours or engage in activities that prevent educational progression or unjustifiably cause damage to individuals (body), this is seen as an infringement of subject rights and is unlawful.

Dorothy pointed out that even though teachers are vocally supportive of transgender identification and advocate for non-conforming pronoun choice, teachers remain safeguarded when faced with topics of gender, sexuality, and transgender identity.

Participants' responses to the question: "After reading this, would you describe El as a transgender identity?"

"I think he's still a baby, he is still a child. He has a lot of years to grow" (Helen).

"He still has to discover himself" (Brenda).

"Exactly, he still doesn't know exactly what he is or why he wants what he wants" (Helen).

Even though all of the teachers who participated in the group discussions indicated full support of transgender pronoun choice, the above extracts show how primary school teachers may overlook young transgender identities under the pretence of childhood innocence. Furthermore, the teachers consequently undermine transgender identity development by effecting transphobia through mis-gendering of young non-conforming gender identities.

Kangaudel et al., (2020, p. 698) explain the discourse of childhood innocence as "a blissful state of purity" where ownness is handed over to adults in an attempt to protect the young from the perverse. The authors claim that the discourse of childhood innocence becomes threatened when youth are exposed to language, knowledge, or practices of gender and sexuality. In attempt to maintain childhood innocence, teachers conform to fixed pronoun choices, which McGlashan and Fitzpatrick (2018) claims reinforces and stabilises the he/she

gender binary whilst strengthening power relations and systemic gendered hierarchies already deep-rooted in primary schools.

6.8 Homophobic and Transphobic Indicators in Society and the School

A participant's response to the question: "Do you believe that primary schools are a safe space for transgender identities?"

"It should be, but I don't think it is. I don't think it is safe because you have learners who bully the teachers. We see it with student teachers, these learners will say stuff that isn't respectful, so no it is not a safe space for anyone who isn't normal. It's not safe for anyone, especially if they are identifying with another gender and this goes for anyone – learners, teachers, the principals, and anyone in the community – they are vulnerable because in Chatsworth being transgender or gay is wrong and people are against this. So as much as we want this to be a safe space, it's not" (Sandra)

Participants' responses to the question: "When you said even learners bully teachers? Please elaborate?"

"Oh they will tease the teacher; I have seen this. I will give you an example, it's not to do with transgender but the bullying mentality. I am short and I go into a Grade 6 class and the learners will stand next to me and say 'I am taller', so they will tease you, and I have seen learners mock and imitate teachers. If a male teacher doesn't have a manly voice, he is gay, and learners will laugh. So nobody is safe" (Sandra).

"I feel like everything that is said is right. You know in the school environment it is tough. In this community – this Chatsworth community – it is tough, and it is not accepting. The whole community – from learners to adults – it isn't safe" (Jessica).

"I agree, it is not safe mostly because schools have lots of old school values. We are always trying to mould kids into a certain way. We know we not supposed to but this is how we were taught and we do the same. There is only 2 genders – male and female – so if you see someone who doesn't fit like a male, being too feminine, the teacher will have to speak to the learner to join more male company or change the way they walk or speak. Also, other learners call each other gay for not being manly enough and it's not in this school but I've seen teachers before not reprimanding learners for this behaviour. I don't know if they felt like it will put the child right, but nothing was done. This is how it is. It is not a safe place" (Dorothy).

The above extracts display teacher discussions on the safety of transgender identity in the primary school environment and argue that the safety and security of non-conforming identity is under threat. Sandra claimed that even though schools are meant to be a safe space, learners, teachers, principals, and any member of the community is susceptible to bullying on the basis of gender and sexual identity. This is mainly because of cultural and religious beliefs that condemn such expressions. Sandra talks about the bullying mentality prevalent amongst learners used to mock and bully teachers who do not conform to society's standards of masculinity or femininity. Sandra's response is in line with Msibi's (2019) study which found that non-conforming teachers are being discriminated against and marginalised, resulting in suppressed gender identity and sexuality in order to avoid homophobia and transphobia in the work environment.

Jessica added that schools – and society as a whole – are tough on and not accepting of non-conforming gender identities, leaving everyone susceptible to danger. Wilson et al., (2011) focused on violence directed at teachers from a prevention standpoint and claimed that it is fundamental to identify the contextual and individual factors that permit violent attitudes and behaviour in this study directed toward non-conforming identities. Dorothy pointed out generational teachings that force all members of society to conform to the only two genders – male and female. She claimed that if individuals show signs of non-conformance, then chastising techniques like shaming and shunning are used to "*put the child right",* or in other words, ensure hyper masculinity and heteronormativity is sustained. These punishing techniques instinctively give rise to acts of homophobia and transphobia which Dorothy explained as using the term gay as an insult. All teacher participants were asked about their

118

understanding of terms like 'homophobia' and 'transphobia'. The predominant view was these concepts are linked to fear.

A participant's response to the question: "And what do you understand by the term homophobia and transphobia?"

"I will say people who are afraid of people who are gay or lesbian or people who are afraid of people who are changing over" (Lauren).

A participant's response to the question: "Do you think homophobic and transphobic attitudes are prevalent in Chatsworth primary schools?"

"I have been teaching here for a while so I cannot say that I know schools, so I'm ignorant in that sense but yeah I will say it is. Obviously [in] a school scenario I would think that this behaviour becomes a sore point in high school, especially from people who refuse to accept it and start out and pointing fingers, you know. I haven't heard cases of people being bullied because they are gay or transgender, not especially in primary school, but I did see one video where, and this was maybe 12 months ago, where a person was being bullied because of the choice they made" (Lauren).

A participant's response to the question: "Could you elaborate on that story?"

"Ok there was this child and one of the Durban schools that was being bullied for type of choice the child made and when the child tried to react, he was beaten up badly and this video surfaced on social media. When I opened up this video, I said you know society is so ignorant because they cannot accept this child for who he is. Do you know they are trying to shut the door in this child's face, and you know just looking at the video you can see the child lying down all beaten up; it shows me that, hey, we haven't come a very long way in terms of acceptance" (Lauren).

Dessel et al., (2017) declared that only 2.4% of the population are open about their nonconforming gender identity, classifying LGBTIQ+ identity as a minority group and leaving them more susceptible to suppression from majority groups. The author highlighted that both conforming and non-conforming identities experience a sense of fear; transgender identities fear ostracisation from close family and friends or discrimination from the community, while hetero-cis-gender identities fear being converted into a homosexual.

In the above extract, Lauren admitted to being ignorant of the prevalence of homophobia across primary schools but also mentioned that homophobic behaviours are a sore point in post-primary schools. Lauren emphasised the predicament transgender identities find themselves in with regard to severe physical bullying in the educational environment. She used the example of a Durban high school learner who was 'beaten badly' for expressing their gender or sexuality that did not align with the community. The act of physically humiliating the learner was further extended when the ordeal was circulated on social media. Lauren alleged that homo/transphobic behaviours are based on fear and eventually manifest itself in a display of aggression, exhibiting how society remains ignorant of non-conforming gender expression and insists on refusing transgender identity.

> *"I will say, yes, in Chatsworth, yes, because if we are looking at learners in school, the parents are very afraid of this. They don't want their children to join a child who is gay or transgender because they feel like their children will become the same. So yes, they have this fear of being gay and their children being gay. So yes, it is prevalent in schools, but I haven't seen anything here"*
> (Margaret)

Margaret also pointed out that practices of homo/transphobia is due to hetero-cis-gender fear of 'turning homosexual' or having their children be influenced by non-conforming identities, ultimately leading to youth choosing the homosexual lifestyle. Margaret's response shed light on society's perception of gender through the heterosexual matrix, with the default setting being men or women who are attracted to or interested in the opposite sex exclusively. This ideology also fosters the perception that sexuality is a choice and therefore susceptible to influence, either from immediate company like peers or broader communities such as those seen on social media.

Van Anders (2014) argued that biological theories attempt to use the nature-nurture debate to try and make sense of sexuality, especially homosexuality. The author claimed that despite considerable research, no evidence has been found to indicate biological impacts on sexuality. However, Van Anders (2014) stated that emerging research is exploring the impact of prenatal care on the development of certain hormones that differ from the heteronormative society.

> *"Well I wouldn't say not this school in particular but across schools and Chatsworth you do have behaviours like this definitely. You know, we do have topics like bullying and stuff in our life orientation syllabus that talks about how to treat other people but we don't have specific programmes that talk about these problems when it comes to gender and you know we need to help. You see learners today they are all on social media and they all have these ideas and they come into schools, and they talk to their friends or the way that they think is very different. So in terms of like teasing and bullying and mocking each another, this is the definite problem. You know in our school we have a very strict policy on bullying, so I haven't picked up on anything that was so so serious; but as a teacher, you need to be aware of bullying like this that exist in schools"* (Joseph).

Despite the acknowledgement of homo/transphobic attitudes and behaviours, both Margaret and Joseph affirmed that these actions were not tolerated in their schools. Joseph emphasised the role of the primary school curriculum when addressing issues of homo/transphobia. He stated that bullying is a topic that all teachers have exposure with; however, specific topics like homophobic and transphobic bullying is not explicitly stated in official documents, and therefore teachers tend to overlook teaching this topic in the classroom. Joseph claimed that young learners are exposed to tools such as social media, which expand on their ideas and understandings, and these understandings filter into the school environment. Despite having a strict no bullying policy, Joseph contends that teachers need to become aware of homo/transphobic bullying because it does exist in schools.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter investigated the various surrounding factors that influence primary school teachers' understanding of transgender identities. Following an exploration of the Chatsworth

community, the teachers expressed that the community was not accepting of non-conforming gender expressions. The chapter also found that ideologies were strongly informed by corecultural beliefs that deem gender, sex, and sexuality topics of non-discussion and even taboo. Moreover, the chapter deliberated on tradition and accentuated unquestioned generational practices that led to the mistreatment of transgender and other non-conforming identities. Also highlighted was that non-conforming gender and sexuality continues to be rejected on a religious basis, and that power and knowledge passed on has an adverse effect on how teachers perceive transgender identity. The chapter assessed teacher support in transcending the gender binary and found that teachers attempted to establish understandings of gender neutrality, transgender pronoun choice, and identify homophobic and transphobic indicators in schools.

The final analysis chapter looks at teacher professional development.

CHAPTER 7
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Introduction

The South African government implemented the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in attempt to shift educational perspectives, identify forms of discrimination and marginalisation toward gender non-conforming identities, as well as pinpoint new forms of freedom for LGBTIQ+ identities in schools. Adesina and Olufadewa (2020) claim that this curriculum-based approach to teaching and learning focuses on physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cognitive aspects surrounding gender and sexuality. While the CSE aims to cultivate everyday life skills and reinforce healthy sexual understandings among young children (Adesina & Olufadewa, 2020), deeply embedded normative gender views and hierarchies of heteronormative power command practices in schools (Bhana et al., 2010). This chapter will examine the teacher participants' approach to the Life Orientation curriculum, specifically CSE in primary schools. It will also evaluate primary school teachers' support for a trans-inclusive teaching and learning environment. Lastly, attention will be given to teacher professionalism on the subject of tolerance and respect of transgender and other nonconforming gender identities.

7.2 Teachers' Approach to the Life Orientation Curriculum

> Participants' responses to the question: "My next question is about the comprehensive sexuality curriculum, what do you understand by this, have you come across it?"

> *"Do we actually have this?"* (Cynthia).

> *"Oh, we do have this, but we don't use this"* (Natalie).

> [Laughs] *"We don't use it"* (Deborah, Cynthia and Natalie).

The teachers were questioned on their understanding and perception of South Africa's CSE. All of the teachers in the focus groups were familiar with the curriculum being affiliated with

sex education. However, the participants' responses to the implementation of CSE was shared with condescension; as seen in the excerpt above, the participants laughed at the prospect of having a curriculum that is not in use. In light of this, the DBE (2019) argues that CSE has been part of the formal curriculum since the year 2000 and is firmly integrated into subjects such as Life Skills and Life Orientation. This denotes that the CSE has been present in the South African curriculum for over twenty years, yet teachers have limited understanding on and implementation of this subject area.

"Not in school, no" (Brenda).

"I mean I know the basics" (Helen).

"Oh yeah, we know the basics" (Sharon).

"But we focus more on reproduction and the anatomy of the body. I don't think we have anything in school that talks specifically on transgender" (Brenda).

"Yeah we don't, or maybe we just haven't seen it" (Sharon).

"Yeah" (Helen).

"Maybe there are documents by the department on addressing these issues, but we have never come across it" (Brenda).

In addition to the omission of CSE, the participants claimed to be aware of basic sexuality education and placed more emphasis on awareness of anatomy and understanding reproduction, as indicated in the above extracts. The DBE (2019) claimed that CSE aims to provide essential skills, knowledge, and resources that young learners can make use of if or when they find themselves in a situation that requires negotiation of risk-taking behaviours, establishing positive gender and sexual identity, and navigation of relationships. This curriculum was designed specifically in response to the challenges South African youth face in terms of gender and sexuality education, seeing that young learners are being increasingly

exposed to pornography, earlier sexual debut, non-compliance with condom use, and the transmission and contraction of HIV and other STDs (StatsSA, 2018b; UNESCO, 2018). Despite this information, Bhana et al., (2019) argued that cultural, historical, and socioeconomic factors characterise the South African milieu and have filtered into the primary school environment where compulsory heterosexuality is favoured over sexual diversity.

In the above extract, Brenda claimed that the teaching staff have not come across CSE in terms of non-conforming or transgender identification or expression. She went on to reveal how primary schools insist on topics implicating hetero-cis-gender anatomy and reproduction, thereby ensuring that schools function as heteronormative institutions.

"Well, you know I do teach Grade 4 life orientation and I believe in that there's a certain age for everything. At Grade 4 level I don't think topics that should be taught. You know, I don't even feel like human reproduction should be taught at this age. I was taught about these things when I was in Grade 8 and I think that it's a good time … You know, I did have the opportunity to teach life orientation in Grade 7 and I had to teach human reproduction, and I couldn't" (Diane).

A participant's response to the question: "Why was that?"

"I just couldn't teach it properly, I just couldn't. You know, I'm a very shy person and don't know how to explain it; I just couldn't even read this textbook out loud so when it came to teaching the subject I did make worksheets and stuff and I gave it to them and I said just read" (Diane).

A participant's response to the question: "Would you say that it has something to do with the way you were taught human reproduction in school?"

"No, I wouldn't say has anything to do with that. I don't think it's fair to blame schools and to blame teachers. I don't think parents even teach their kids about this you know. I'm very open compared to like lots of people; I can talk to my husband about anything. But you know you are taught from a very young age that you don't talk about these things to other people you can talk about it with your husband or your wife but how do you talk to your child about this, and you

know I don't even know how I'm going to talk to my child about this. How do we talk about this?" (Diane).

Even though the predominant views among the teachers were to be inclusive and supportive of gender and sexuality, there were concerns with teachers' capacity to actually implement such a curriculum. Diane shed light on the inappropriateness of including gender and sexuality in the primary school environment. She stated that lessons on gender and sexuality should take place post-primary because learners are uncomfortable with such topics. However, research shows that learners who are exposed to CSE are starting to develop critical thinking skills and make safer decisions on their sexual relations. Diane shared that she had the opportunity to teach life orientation in Grade 7 but could not bring herself to teach the topic due to feelings of shyness. Therefore, learners were provided with worksheets and expected to learn about topics like reproduction. This method of teaching can prove useful when extending lessons out-of-class; however, worksheets are not effective teaching tools when teaching concepts like reproduction as it blocks divergent thinking and discourages learners' opportunity to share their understandings and learning in various ways. Alternatively, Diane considered herself to be an open-minded person who could hold conversations with anyone, but firmly believed that topics such as sex, sexuality, and reproduction should be held between husband and wife.

Francis and DePalma (2014), Pound et al., (2016), and Wood (2009) noted that CSE is regularly implemented by teachers who are embarrassed, apprehensive, and poorly equipped. In addition to Diane being shy about teaching topics like reproduction, she commented "*you can talk about it with your husband or your wife",* implying that sexuality is a heterosexual construct that should be spoken of after marriage. Bhana et al., (2019) claimed that for South African teachers the social construction of gender, sex, and sexuality, and the teaching of CSE are underpinned by moral and religious worldviews. Therefore, Diane's response which attempts to defenestrate the school and teacher from complete culpability, is partially viable. As moral agendas emphasise silence around the display of gender and sexuality amongst youth and focus on the abstinence approach to reproduction, this simultaneously upholds heteronormative standards.

Participants' responses to the question: "Do you believe CSE will be useful in targeting issues like transphobia?"

"I don't think it would because this curriculum also doesn't target transgender in particular. Maybe I'm wrong but nothing is specific to transgender. I think it also disadvantages the LGBT. Because if you think about it, you learning sexual relations but only straight relationships, so yes, it is disadvantaging the transgender people. And doesn't help" (Sandra).

"I basically feel the same because the curriculum isn't designed to help transgender or gay people. It is only to teach you one way. So you have challenges as a female or a male. You develop as a female or male. Not as you as a female in a relationship with another female or even transgender" (Dorothy).

"In a way it is used to show there is only one way" (Jessica).

"I think it can be used as a tool to show this is normal and that is not. To prove being gay or transgender is wrong" (Dorothy).

Ngabaza and Shefer (2019) and Swanepoel (2020) pointed out that CSE does in fact address concerns regarding young sexual beings and acknowledges issues of gender violence present in schools. However, when the participants were asked if CSE had the ability to alleviate transgender challenges in the primary school environment, one group said this curriculum could not. Sandra emphasised that CSE does not target transgender identity, narratives, or subjectivities, and therefore places transgender and other members or the LGBTIQ+ at risk. She stated that the CSE centres around issues of gender, sexuality, and the freedom of South African citizens, but only those who are 'straight' or hetero-cis-gender.

Dorothy added to this argument by articulating that CSE is not intended to help gay and transgender people because it does not challenge the heterosexual matrix of being born male, subsequently sporting masculine characteristics and then developing into a man who marries a woman. Dorothy declared that in a way the CSE can be used as a weapon to show how heteronormativity is superior and to prove that homosexuality and non-conforming gender identity are erroneous. Even though CSE has been implemented in an attempt to mitigate issues of gender violence and repression of alternative sexuality, the curriculum focuses on women and children. Unfortunately, the curriculum has not implemented an

intersectional lens, therefore the plight of disabled women, women of colour, and subsequently transgender women are not recognised. Nevertheless, Bhana et al., (2019), Francis (2017), Ngabaza and Shefer (2019), Msibi (2015), and Shefer and Macleod (2015) firmly stood by the prospect of using the CSE to alleviate the power of gender inequality by dismantling heteronormative supremacy in the school environment.

7.3 Teacher Support for a Trans-inclusive Environment

Participants' responses to the question: "What support do teachers need to better their understanding of transgender identities?"

"I think that workshopping is [a] very important tool and mechanism going forward. I think the best way to learn the topic is from very educated people. And you know, I think that we don't just need the Department of Education, we need the more information we can get about the topic. So even if someone from the Department of Health can come in and talk to us about how people actually feel, how they think what is going on in the body, than we can have teachers who have this whole idea of what we're dealing with. These people can now direct teachers on how to properly deal with the situations in school" (Joseph).

"I think breaking up teachers into their grades and having grade-appropriate meetings because I will be honest with you, some teachers don't even know what it is to be gay or what it is to be lesbian; they don't know how to talk about these topics themselves, so how are they expected to teach these topics in their classrooms if they don't understand it themselves. So instead of just giving us textbooks to read, I think we should have like one-to-one conversations with an actual person telling us their stories or telling us how we should react, I think we better learn at, you know, personal interaction" (Rachel).

"*We need workshops, we need meetings and things like that so that we can learn how to teach the topic. I would like to have this conversation and I would like people to explain to me and tell me about this topic in a very simple way. In primary school I feel like it's very important for teachers to use language that*

learners can actually identify with, and then that is where you create a classroom that is much more relaxed. I feel like everyone wants a relaxed classroom; no one wants something or a space that is tense, and I feel like we can only do that once teachers themselves know about this topic. So just someone to come in and show us and give us resources that can help us make the classroom relax where we can have conversations" (Megan).

"Ok, I think teachers obviously need to be workshopped. I need to be trained and obviously we need the resources to teach in the classroom, but mostly, we need to know about the concept, I think this is lacking at the moment. Obviously resources are limited and we struggle with this, so if we are going to be teaching this topic we need things like textbooks and stuff like that and it needs to be supplied to schools. The teacher needs to be given these things because teachers are not going to go out and get this information. If you expect teachers to do this, I'll be honest, teachers do get lazy; they get minimal information and I think that is where you come in Karen. You are here to supply us and talk to us about this information. Teachers need to be fed this information, they need to be workshopped, and then we can take it from there. We do need a young people's ideas to help teachers help the learners" (Thomas).

When the participants were asked what support teachers need to further their understanding on transgender identity, all of the participants reiterated the need for educational workshops. These centres for teaching focus on realising teacher effectiveness and efficiency through the implementation of practical and tangible strategies for everyday tasks and challenges (Reygan, 2019). Workshops are informed by research-based practices and allow teachers to decide on and adapt means and methods to best suit their teaching style and the various learning styles found in their classroom.

The above extracts share some of participants' suggestions on teacher support. Joseph emphasised that in order for primary school teachers to receive adequate support and expand on their understanding of transgender identification, expression, and challenges, the government needs to provide a nationwide intervention where information can be disseminated. Joseph argued that in addition to information from the DBE, teachers need other departments to become involved in schools, such as the Department of Health. Joseph claimed

that a combination of information from experts in their specified field will allow teachers to obtain a holistic understanding of transgender identity, which facilitate their knowledge on the topic.

Rachel also focused on building primary school teachers' knowledge of transgender identity by providing information but separating the information into grade appropriate understandings. Rachel argued that some teachers, at present, struggle to define and understand terms such as gay and lesbian, therefore providing a one-size-fits-all textbook that addresses issues around gender and sexuality will prove to be unhelpful. Rachel suggested having actual gender non-conforming or transgender identities physically address teachers, as this will have a greater impact as teachers will be exposed to real-life stories, including how learners felt in school and the challenges they faced. In this way teachers will foster a personal connection and hopefully develop sensitivity, tolerance, and respect for transgender identities as human beings.

Megan proposed that teachers be taught about transgender identity and subjectivity in a way that is simple and easy to understand. Often terms such as cisgender, transgender, queer, or questioning can be overwhelming for people with no prior exposure; therefore, Megan proposed that teachers need to be taught in a manner that can be deposited into their classroom. Megan argued that it is fundamental for teachers to use language that learners can understand and comprehend in order to sustain a harmonious teaching and learning climate, and this can only be done when teachers themselves have a concrete understanding of the topic. Megan recommended that teachers receive sensitivity training where an expert in transgender studies or a transgender individual can affirm how to manipulate resources.

Thomas stated that primary school teachers' knowledge and understanding on transgender identities are lacking at present. He attributed teacher inability to implement such topics in the classroom due to an obvious lack of resources such as textbooks, but also pointed to teachers' lack of initiative when gathering information on topics such as gender, sexuality, and transgender identity. Thomas revealed that teachers need to be handed information on transgender identity because they are inclined to be lazy when they are not given material. He further remarked that if teachers are left to their own devices, minimal effort will be put into gathering good research-based information on transgender identity, and thus suggested that this is where schools are in need of research and new ideas to assist teachers to help learners.

"Oh, I think teachers need to be given workshops. I think more learners need to start feeling comfortable thinking about these things because they need to learn respect and tolerance and they need to be able to accept other people. We don't teach these topics because there is a transgender person in the classroom or there's a gay person in the classroom, you need to learn these things because eventually you going to meet people in your life, and you need to know how to be able to address this" (Natalie).

Natalie suggested that teacher workshops impart a sense of comfort as their fundamental objective is to foster a teaching and learning environment where learners begin to understand, tolerate, and respect others. Natalie concurs with the rationale of the South African National Curriculum Statement (2003) for citizenship education. Education for citizenship is underpinned by democracy which focuses on developing informed and responsible individuals who are willing to actively participate in society. Presently, the South African society has seen an increase in LGBTIQ+ hate crimes, with many more accounts of assault and murder being exposed through the media. Natalie argues that primary school teachers' concerns regarding the existence of LGBTIQ+ learners or legislature in the school environment is somewhat misplaced as the focus should be on educating hetero-cis-gender identities on how to foster attitudes and behaviours that can prove beneficial to the country's future.

All support strategies suggested by the participants correlated with Bartholomaeus and Riggs's (2021) educational policy which is aimed at affirming transgender and non-binary identities and creating an inclusive educational space that is central to all learners and teachers.

7.4 Teacher Professionalism: Tolerance or Respect

"I feel like teachers have to deal with so many people, you have to deal with so many learners, you have to deal with colleagues, you have to deal with parents, you have to deal with the community – the larger community that [is] around you, so you come across very different people in a very short time. So you do come across these things, and as a teacher your kind of have to put that aside because you have a job, do your job, and you need to be professional" (Megan).

All of the participants in this study stated that creating a safe and secure teaching and learning environment is a teacher's fundamental objective. Megan acknowledged that teachers, particularly primary school teachers, have to keep in close contact with many people in order to have a harmonious flow within the school environment. These individuals include learners, teacher colleagues, parents and guardians of learners, and the surrounding community as well. Megan stated that due to vast exposure to different characters, teachers have become increasingly aware of non-conforming gender identities and diverse sexuality, but she maintained that teachers need to remain professional at all times and focus on their objective.

Reygan (2019) identified inclusive teaching and learning environments, or in this case, trans-inclusive, and teacher preparedness as key elements to interrupt homophobic and transphobic attitudes that have seeped into the primary school environment through broader societal discourses. Previously, Bhana (2012) claimed that educators cannot completely eliminate homophobia and transphobia but can work against heterosexual hegemony, and this view was seemingly reflected by the teacher participants who used language such as "tolerant", "accepting", and "supportive". However, upon closer exploration it became evident that there was a disconnection between what was being said and how it was being said.

> *"You know, one of our basic education principles is inclusive education and inclusive education talks about barriers to learning we face. Children struggle to learn but it should also include issues of gender where teachers need to know I'll be inclusive of learners who are struggling. These children have the right to education, and it is not up to the teacher to decide on who is learning in the classroom because all children have the constitutional right to education no matter what gender they may be, if they are confused in their mind or whatever, education cannot be stopped or kept from these children; this is not acceptable, it will never be acceptable"* (Joseph).

In terms of the teaching and learning environment, Joseph affirms that inclusive educational practices need to be implemented in primary schools. He pointed out how inclusive education helps to deconstruct barriers that young learners face in school, but also argues that there needs to be more gender focused subject areas that hopefully will assist teachers with struggling (transgender) learners. Joseph stood by the learners right to basic education and claimed that no single teacher has the authority to deny them this opportunity.

Foucault stated that worldviews are shaped by how language is applied together with how dominant power relations are wielded through social interaction. Joseph's statement "*all children have the constitutional right to education no matter what gender they may be, if they are confused in their mind or whatever"*, showed how language can be robust and reaffirming but also demeaning and discouraging. One of the most pervasive myths surrounding transgender identification is that these individuals are in some way confused or that this form of gender identification is a phase that will pass. When teachers use language to describe transgender identity in a manner that can prove misleading to society and the school, it fosters an environment where hegemonic discourses are propagated.

> *"I did do this one thing in my Grade 4 class, I know it's a little bit bad, but you know I have this rule about no touching and keep your hands to yourself, no sharing and stuff, so my Grade 4 class, as I was teaching, these two boys were arm wrestling. So I said why are those two boys holding hands, I know what I made it seem like, but they're separated so quickly. You know the way I said it made it seem wrong, I know that wrestling isn't a feminine thing, it's between two men, but the way I said holding hands, both boys felt so offended by it and they let go of each another. So in a way they knew it was wrong. So like I said before, it is all about how you say something; if you were a teacher [and] make something sound wrong, this is how learners pick up on it"* (Diane).

In the above extract Diane explained how she used strategic language to enforce discipline in the teaching and learning environment, which at the same time cultivated a hegemonic heteronormative environment. Diane started off by acknowledging the fault in her approach to teaching and learning and went on to share how she got learners to stop arm wrestling and pay attention to the lesson by insinuating that two boys holding hands is in fact a homosexual behaviour. When Diane alluded to arm wrestling as being a gay behaviour, she reiterated hegemonic heteronormativity as a state of power that functions through moral and intellectual leadership which results in the affirmation of social practices, social hierarchies, and heterosexual ways of living. Diane claimed that arm wrestling is not a feminine activity but because of her choice of words and tone of voice, the learners immediately felt a sense of shame and offense and withdrew their behaviour. Diane said that she was aware of the statement she made and claimed that both boys as well as the rest of the class understood the

underlying innuendo – that boys holding hands means you are gay. Diane argued that the language teachers choose to implement has a direct impact on how messages are received in the classroom. So, for instance, if a primary school teacher deems hand holding among young boys as inappropriate and gay behaviour, these views will be accepted and imitated by learners, forming such a worldview.

> *"Many people will say yes, we will accept transgender or be tolerant and respectful, and they will say yes, they want to know about these things. You know but behind their backs or when the doors are closed there will be a totally different story. There will always be this stigma attached to this person. There will always be talks and there will always be laughter and mockery. There will be all these things because deep within every member in this community there is that thing that tells you we are against this. At the same time, yes, we can be tolerable in the school environment. Like in the school environment we are made to be professional people so whatever enters the classroom, now its gender, so if its transgender or gay learners entering your class you have to be professional and you have to put his or her life aside and be professional"* (Jennifer).

In the above excerpt Jennifer imparted that despite what individuals say about tolerance and acceptance of transgender identities, there will always be subtle forms of transphobia present. Jennifer claimed that talks, laughter, and mockery will remain sore points for transgender freedoms as certain perceptions and understandings have been inculcated in the minds of individuals. She stated that teachers are capable of tolerance and will be able to accept 'whatever' enters the classroom, since this is what is expected of a professional teacher.

Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2021) stressed the need for primary schools to implement strategies to encourage their staff to undergo inclusive language training in order to alleviate issues of transgender discrimination. The authors argued that if teachers move away from ageold understandings and language that idolize notions of hegemonic heteronormativity, then they can begin to foster a teaching and learning environment that is not simply tolerant on the basis of professionalism, but also welcoming and respecting of transgender identities.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter looked at how the teacher participants in this study approached the Life Orientation curriculum, referred to as Life Skills in primary schools, and found that teachers

had a very basic understanding of CSE. In addition to a basic understanding, the findings showed that the CSE curriculum for the most part was not implemented in the schools, and if it was, the teachers almost exclusively focused on heteronormative lessons around anatomy and reproduction. The chapter also evaluated the teachers' support of gender, sexuality, and trans-inclusivity, and the findings showed that most of the teachers supported trans-inclusion despite concerns of teacher diffidence and lack of knowledge and resources. Finally, this chapter regarded teacher professionalism and found that all of the teachers in this study advocated for the respect and tolerance of all members, including transgender and gender nonconforming identities.

7.6 Summary of the Data Analysis

The findings presented over Chapters 5, 6 and 7 elucidated the primary school teachers' views and understandings of transgender identity. The teachers' knowledge and awareness were organised into three major themes, namely: (1) the first considered gender and other gender specific identities based on essentialist notions facilitated by heterosexual gender binary. The findings indicate that essentialist belief systems were not used to denounce transgender identities but were rather utilised to explain how teachers themselves lack knowledge on the phenomenon. (2) The second investigated the effect of power and found that patriarchal society where unequal power relations police the roles of men and women have a fundamental influence on gender knowledge. The findings point to a community, culture, tradition, and religion that is not accommodating of transgender and other non-conforming gender identity, resulting in continuous acts of harassment and violence. Notwithstanding this evidence, most of the teachers declared that the schools in this study detest such behaviours and attempt to evade prejudices and practices that denounce gender or sexual diversity in the school environments. (3) The third examined teachers and the transgender learning experience and exposed the limitations the schools are confronted by in terms of poor execution of curriculum and inadequate teacher training. Nevertheless, the findings revealed that the teachers appeared intent to acquire more information on the phenomenon and emphasised the prerequisite of teacher professionalism to threaten gendered prejudice.

The findings across the three chapters were grounded by Connell's (1987; 1995; 2002) theory of masculinities to assist in understanding society's presupposition on the polarisation of gender. This together with Foucault's (1978; 1980; 1991) theories of power and knowledge as well as Butler's (1990) theory of performativity in relation to queer theory, supported

understandings of power, resistance, and oppression relative to notions of gender identity and heteronormative ideologies within institutions. These chapters indicate that teachers from Eden and Ale Primary School view and understand gender, sexuality, and transgender identity through essentialist ideals and heteronormative standards. Yet, teachers from these schools also demonstrated considerable resistance to gender intolerance through the negation of discrimination in the teaching and learning environment. The study notes the existence of teachers who do not agree with transgender identification or lifestyle. However, precedence is placed on the vast majority who repudiate intolerance and acts of gender discrimination despite personal views on morality and religious value systems.

In the concluding chapter, the study provides a brief overview of this dissertation, the major findings and proffers recommendations to support primary school teachers' perceptions and understanding of transgender identities.

CHAPTER 8
SUMMATION, RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This study began with the violent death of a transgender activist, Nare Mphela. Since her death, the police have questioned her boyfriend, but no arrests have been made to date. The case of Nare Mphela like other non-conforming gender and sexual identities elucidate the extent of systemic gender discrimination in South Africa. The central aim of this study was to explore school teachers' views and understanding of transgender identity.

This final chapter provides a summation of all the previous chapters, including a summary of the major findings that were presented in three separate chapters, categorised as follows: understandings of gender and gender specific identity; exploring the effect of power; and highlighting teacher professional development. The penultimate section presents recommendations based on the findings that emerged from this study. A final conclusion brings the study to a close.

8.2 Summation of Chapters

Chapter 1 explored the pervasive nature of hate and violence that transgender identities are subjected to in the South African society and how these inequalities manifest in educational environments. The research surrounding adverse subjectivities of non-conforming gender identity increases the need for research on understanding transgender identification and expression in schools to assist teachers and learners to initiate conversations and improve their knowledge and understanding. In this chapter, the research problem was identified, followed by a description of the rationale, location of the study, research site, methodology, and central aims. The forthcoming chapters were also outlined to give the reader an overview of the study.

Chapter 2 presented the theoretical framework underpinning this study. Connell's theory of masculinities was fundamental as this emphasised how social assumptions and expectations centring around sex assigned roles endanger transgender identities. Furthermore, the Foucauldian perspectives on gender power assisted in highlighting the limited capabilities transgender identities face due to a one-dimensional view of their power. Butler's theory of performativity then further illuminated how patriarchal constructions of gender filter into school institutions and shape the teachers' construction of gender, sexuality, and transgender

identities. Moreover, Butler's queer theory was able to unpack essentialist as well as social constructionist perspectives in the endeavour to explore how dominant gender and sexual norms work in school environments.

Chapter 3 reviewed scholarly literature from international, intercontinental, and South African perspectives focusing on the nature of societal expectations, religious values, cultural norms, and notions of masculinities that influence the way transgender identities are viewed, often in relation to violence or marginalisation. The literature highlighted the complexity of heteronormativity in South Africa, touched on the construction of gender binaries, and divulged the dangers of gender stereotypes inside and outside of the school environment. Through these findings, it was evident that power and privilege is entrenched within a heterosexual discourse and hetero-cis-gender binary, which has filtered into the school environment, giving rise to gender hierarchies that dictate the lived experiences of transgender identities.

Chapter 4 outlined the research design and methodology employed in this study. First, the nature of the study was detailed which included the qualitative research approach, interpretivist paradigm, and phenomenological methodology used to explore how school teachers from two primary schools in the Chatsworth area view and understand transgender identity. Next, the research sites and context of the study together with the sampling techniques and recruitment plan were discussed. These included Eden Primary and Ale Primary (pseudonyms) in the Chatsworth area, and the combination of purposive and convenience sampling. Then, a detailed account of the data collection methods was provided which included telephonic individual interviews with photo elicitation and online group discussions with vignettes. Thereafter, the thematic data analysis process was described and the trustworthiness of the study confirmed. Lastly, the ethical considerations adhered to were noted and the limitations of the study acknowledged.

Chapter 5 presented the thematic analysis of the data that were generated in this study. The analysis was presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to offer a more streamlined approach. These three chapters demonstrated how primary school teachers in the Chatsworth area view and understand transgender identities. This chapter considered teachers' construction of gender and looked at understandings of transgender and other non-conforming identities.

Chapter 6 explored the effect of power by analysing language and practices amongst the community, culture, tradition, and religion.

Chapter 7 highlighted primary school teachers approach to the Life Orientation curriculum, paying close attention to CSE and considered support structures for the transgender learning experience.

Chapter 8 provides a summation of the chapters, highlights the major findings of the research, and offers recommendations to assist teachers and other primary school stakeholders better view and understand transgender identity.

8.3 The Major Findings of the Study

8.3.1 Gender and gender specific identities

Neary and Cross (2020) defined gender identity as an individual's deep-seated recognition of self as male, female, or other gender. The findings revealed the growing number of young children who disclose being transgender or gender fluid, therefore underscoring the importance and relevance of the current study on teachers' construction of gender sexuality and transgender identity. Additionally, the findings showed that most of the teacher participants perceived gender as dichotomous due to reiterated invisible norms that circumscribe individuals as cisgender heterosexual until proven otherwise. The study found acknowledgement of gender identity outside the male/female binary stemming from acquired knowledge through media platforms. However, the findings showed that rigid social categories of masculinity and femininity persist in both primary schools. Kelan (2010) contended that gender binary can be disrupted through collective understanding intervention, and unfortunately the findings suggest that teachers did not hold a collective standpoint on the phenomenon or issues surrounding it. Renold (2000) pointed out that sexuality, specifically heterosexuality, is such an integral experience that society, in this case teachers, mostly reflect on rigid heteronormative practices in schools. The findings of the study further illuminate the extent to which the two-sex/two-gender paradigm is accepted, and the recognition of gender based on assigned sex categories. It was pertinent to consider teachers' perceptions of gender and other gender specific identities in order to construct an understanding of primary school teachers' viewpoints in relation to their gender knowledge.

- *Primary school teachers' selection of transgender adjectives*

The findings indicate that essentialism plays a major role in how teachers construct their understanding of gender and gender specific identities. The study implemented photoelicitation methods that yielded results showing the participants' deliberate selection of language. The assiduous word choice highlights the teachers' need not to offend or be offensive toward non-conforming identities. Despite deliberate strides, heteronormative ideologies surfaced during activities through forms of mis-gendering and other misinformed familiarities. For instance, grappling to allocate gender pronouns to a transgender woman or the use of terms such as 'weird' to refer to transgender identities.

- *Primary school teachers' organisation of transgender identity.*

The findings suggest that teachers struggled to establish what transgender identity encompassed. Some participants understood transgender identity as innate feelings, while others perceived it as enjoyment of materialistic items of the opposite sex. Then, the study also found that transgender identity was categorised by demands of society, thereby indicating that teachers in this study held a mixed understanding of transgender. Despite this, the predominant finding was that all transgender identities were susceptible to heteronormative ideals and threatened by the gender binary. The research showed that transgender identities express themselves through clothing, makeup, and jewellery in order to align with their recognised self. However, it was further revealed that transgender identities, specifically transgender women, are subject to extreme hostilities for the expression of their femininity compared to other members of the LGBTIQ+ community.

- *Primary school teachers' interpretation of transgender expression and employment* The findings showed the existence of high levels of stigma attached to transgender women. The common perception of transgender was an overly exaggerated personality that is not only weird but also caricatured in nature. The findings considered language and found that transgender was described or understood as an act or rather some sort of theatrics. Moreover, understandings of gender expression moved away from an innate sense of self-articulation to being a form of attention seeking. Although this view was not shared by all, there were instances where transgender identities were interpreted as over-the-top, a response to the immediate environment, or an act to gain materialistic favour. One of the

participants shared that there is a demand for transgender women in the community, indicating a market for transgender sex work. However, upon further investigation there was no substantial proof to indicate that a sex trade exists in the community. Yet, through various local newspapers transgender subjectivities were brought to light such as concerns of sexual harassment, rape, and even murder.

8.3.2 The effect of power and transgender identity: community culture, tradition, and religion

The research identified power with something that is subjected to ongoing subjugation and as a result gradually and progressively governs bodies and behaviours. Further investigation showed how power is formed and distributed through the presumption and prohibitions of gender sexuality and transgender identity. The findings revealed the prevalence of hate crimes directed towards non-conforming gender and sexual identities. There was also an awareness of hate crime in the Chatsworth area. The findings confirmed that transgender and other gender non-conforming identities are most vulnerable in this society and are susceptible to verbal and physical bullying, harassment, rape, and even murder. It was also established that any individual who does not conform to the community's idealistic perception of masculinity and femininity will be liable to acts of violence. The predominant view was the belief that the Chatsworth community was not a safe space to express non-conforming gender or sexuality. This is as a result of heteronormative cultures, traditions, and religious views that meet nonconforming gender and sexuality with various forms of aggression and violence. Even though the predominant view suggested that the community was not a safe place, the teachers also cited constitutional rights to express gender and sexuality in a manner that is deemed appropriate. Simultaneously disclosing that constitutional freedoms do not assure safety and security from discrimination in the immediate community, the findings highlighted that cultural views, traditional practices, and religious beliefs are at the forefront of ignorance and intolerance toward transgender identities.

- *Core cultural beliefs and non-conforming identity*

The findings suggest that the Chatsworth community follows core cultural belief systems that prescribe language, dress code, and social habits. These entrenched belief systems perpetuate the gender binary that upholds the heterosexual matrix. The findings confirm that perceptions and understandings held by teachers were at some point ideologies passed down by family, friends, and other members of the community to denounce gender diversity. Nevertheless,

there is evidence to suggest that the teachers have attempted to move away from personal cultural influences in an effort to foster an inclusive teaching and learning environment. The findings point to teachers' acknowledgement of the shift in global perspectives regarding nonconforming gender and sexuality but emphasise rigid gender roles, assumptions, and expectations that remain rooted in schools.

- *Tradition and the treatment of transgender identity*

The findings reveal that gender roles, assumptions, and expectations stem from the transmission of beliefs and customs from past generations. The predominant interpretations of culture and tradition revealed intolerance toward transgender identity. Repetitive activities and behaviours that have become steadfast traditions, and thus unwavering practices, were also recognised. Deviation from these practices is perceived as rebellion, abnormality, and unacceptable by the community. The findings draw attention to harmful acts of regulating gendered behaviours by using emotional or physical force, for instance, shaming, manipulation, or bullying tactics to ensure individuals conform to traditional forms of hegemonic masculinity. What is more, ideals of hegemonic masculinity were reinforced by religious and moral underpinnings used to negate transgender identification. The findings did not delve deeply into religious teachings; however, there was evidence to suggest that religious institutions and leaders are not supportive of gender and sexual diversity.

- *Transcending the gender binary and the establishment of gender neutrality*

Although the investigation into community, culture, tradition, and religion conjures up feelings of rejection and intolerance toward transgender identities, there was evidence that suggested that teachers advocated for support and respect. The findings illuminated teacher standpoints on abandoning moral and religious value systems that denounce gender diversity in order to achieve a teaching and learning environment that ensures holistic development. The findings indicated that primary school teachers held the capacity to transcend the heterosexual gender binary when they attested to gathering independent information on topics, such as gender, after being exposed to these constructs in real life. This signals that primary school teachers are independently educating themselves on aspects of gender and constructing deeper understandings of topics such as gender roles, gender stereotypes, and how their behaviours were impacting the school environment and potentially endangering transgender or gender-nonconforming identities in the school.

- *The concept of transgender pronoun choice*

The findings suggested that teachers had the capacity to transcend gender binaries put in place in primary schools. The study provided a hypothetical scenario through a vignette to assist the participants to understand how teachers would respond to transgender identity in primary schools. The findings indicated an overwhelming support for trans-inclusion in the primary school curriculum and confirmed positive reception of transgender pronoun choice in schools. Correspondingly, the findings disclosed a clear understanding of the concept of transgender pronoun choice, and the ability to reason why correct pronoun allocation is fundamental to transgender identity development. Even though the findings suggest that pronoun allocation seems like a daunting task, the predominant view was that teachers need to be support structures and feelings of loneliness need to be combatted. Further evidence revealed the influence of age on transgender identification and the findings suggested that despite teachers advocating for support and care of transgender identity, some overlooked young transgender identity under the pretence of childhood innocence and perpetrated acts of transphobia through mis-gendering.

- *Homophobic and transphobia in society and the school*

The findings reveal that teachers were aware of homophobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours in society or school. These responses were attributed to personal observations or experiences where aggression or volatile messages have filtered into the school environment. The common view of homophobia and transphobia was the fear or the refusal to associate with nonconforming gender and sexual identity. In addition, the findings revealed that aggressive, intolerant, and violent approaches to gender and sexual diversity also stem from parents and community members who fear that their children will be influenced into choosing a homosexual lifestyle. This perception of transgender and other non-conforming identity reaffirms heteronormative ideals that strategically entice fear concomitantly, denying schools the opportunity to build knowledge on gender, sex, sexuality, homosexuality, and transgender identity.

8.3.3 The teacher transgender learning experience

South African studies draw attention to the poor reception of comprehensive sexuality education in schools. Even though this curriculum aims to cultivate life skills to reinforce

gender and sexual understandings, heteronormative power and practices continue to command schools. The findings demonstrate that the Life Orientation curriculum is approached in a dismissive manner with laughter in a patronising tone. The research highlighted that CSE has been active since the year 2000, yet the findings indicate a very basic understanding of what the curriculum entailed, thereby almost exclusively effecting lessons on heterosexual relations, reproduction, and cisgender anatomy. Additionally, the findings exposed high levels of teacher anxiety and overt shyness, resulting in the inability to adequately execute CSE lessons. The findings showed the importance of noting the various historical, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds teachers come from in order to understand that teachers cannot be impartial to gender identity and sexual diversity without proper training. Moreover, placing unrealistic expectations on teachers to address and challenge gender discriminations prior to training adds to stress and anxiety. In order to understand what causes unwarranted stress and anxiety, the study looked at teachers' perception on including gender and transgender narratives in the curriculum. The findings suggest that topics of gender and sexuality should be introduced from Grade 4 onward, based on aspects of personal development such as building tolerance, understanding, and respect. Although there was no collective response on the grade to introduce topics, the common view included decent exposure to real world topics to foster critical thinking and response. On the other hand, there were findings that suggested that CSE could prove more detrimental than effective to transgender identity. The predominant opinion of the participants revealed that this curriculum will not be used to target transgender challenges, rather the CSE will reaffirm heteronormative livelihoods by reinforcing understanding of womanhood by female's ability to reproduce. The findings illustrate how this curriculum can be used as a gender power tool to disprove the existence of transgender identity.

- *Teacher support for trans inclusive environments*

The findings also foreground that the teachers from Eden and Ale Primary Schools are in support of trans-inclusive teaching and learning environments. The unanimous response showed teachers looking for educational workshops to better their understanding and current knowledge on the phenomenon. As per the findings, the teachers recommended that the Department of Health together with the Department of Education combine information and resources to facilitate an holistic understanding of gender and sexuality among Life Orientation teachers. A common finding was that teachers continue to struggle with

descriptions and understanding of gay, lesbian, and transgender. Therefore, providing a one size-fits-all textbook to address multiple issues of gender and sexuality is unsuitable and irrelevant. Coincidentally, the findings provided a solution such as inviting non-conforming gender identities to address staff in order to provide a more empathetic approach to understanding gender and transgender identity. The research indicates that life orientation topics receive limited attention as these subject areas are seen as unimportant; however, the findings indicate that to combat teacher disinterest in the topic, it is imperative to provide teachers with the latest resources and information to enhance the teaching and learning environment.

- *Teacher professionalism tolerance or respect*

The findings show that despite the teachers limited knowledge and inadequate implementation of gender inclusive lessons, the fundamental aim of all the teachers is to create a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. In search of a harmonious environment, the participants supported the notion of including gender and sexual diversity into the primary school curriculum, taking into account age appropriateness. The findings further indicated that teacher professionalism supersedes any kind of prejudice towards gender identity. Even though both schools were actively involved in limiting any form of gender discrimination, homophobic and transphobic behaviours were evident in the school environments. Reygan (2019) claimed that homophobia can be addressed and interrupted through teacher preparedness that can be achieved when teachers stand together as a collective. The findings suggest that at present teachers do not address issues of transphobia as a collective, rather the language implemented by each teacher will not create sufficient disruption. Furthermore, the findings reveal that teachers are very self-aware of their word choice and language use that upholds heteronormative ideologies while simultaneously placing a sense of stigma on certain social practices or homosexual ways of living. This means that teachers in this study deliberately choose to implement language and messages that are potentially received negatively in the classroom. However, seeing that teachers are able to amend these behaviours and change them from being inappropriate to more acceptable, then the primary school environment will not only become a space of tolerance and acceptance but will also become welcoming and respecting of transgender identity. Unfortunately, at present the primary school environment is barely accommodating of non-conforming gender identities.

8.4 Recommendations

The findings illustrate that primary school teachers' perceptions and understandings of transgender identity are informed by essentialist understanding. These understandings lead teachers to remain silent on topics of gender sexuality and transgender identity, resulting in the promotion of heteronormativity within the school environment. However, the teacher profession cannot be villainised, rather teachers need to be commended for acknowledging their shortcomings in terms of inadequate knowledge. The study recommends that teachers be provided with appropriate resources to equip all educational stakeholders with interventions that can be used to embrace transgender and other non-conforming gender identity.

> In a transforming and democratic society, personal and individual needs have to be placed in a social context to encourage acceptance of diversity and to foster commitment to the values and principles espoused in the constitution… (DOE, South African National Curriculum Statement, 2003:11).

Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2017b) state that the needs of transgender and other nonconforming gender identity is best met by establishing a whole-school approach. Simply stated, primary schools should move away from being spaces contingent on the visibility or involvement of LGBTIQ+ members, and instead focus on developing strategies such as negotiation, compromise, endorsement of well-informed respect for difference and promotion of conflict resolution practices to deal with difference of opinion (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017b; Education for Citizenship, 2008). The following are key considerations teachers as well as other school faculty may undertake in order to create inclusive teaching and learning environments that that are welcoming, including, and respecting.

- *Adapt school philosophy and ethos*

The school philosophy and ethos is constructed through the interaction of teachers, learners, parents, immediate community, and a value system that essentially creates the atmosphere of the school. To assist teachers in better perceiving and understanding nonconforming gender and sexuality, school stakeholders need to come together to produce mission and value statements that specifically address gender diversity (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2021). For instance, signs and posters that usually decorate primary school walls should be gender

inclusive, specifically naming gender diversity, providing indispensable information, and showing a celebration of gender.

- *Improve school policies and procedures*

To support teachers' understanding of gender challenges there needs to be improvement to school policy and procedures to include anti-bullying, harassment, and discrimination policies. These policies should have clear and concise definitions with detailed descriptions and manifestations of gender discriminative language and behaviours (Reygan, 2019). Even though the study found no indication of transphobic bullying, the DoE issued 'Challenging Homophobic Bullying in Schools' guide will prove beneficial to teachers. This document focuses on creating an inclusive teaching and learning environment by defining gender terms like transgender, heterosexism, and transphobia. What is more, the document tackles myths about the LGBTIQ+ community and shares dialogues about homophobic bullying in schools together with teacher responses. By providing schools with such resources, teachers will be provided with detailed procedures on how to adequately deal with complaints of gender discrimination and harassment (Reygan, 2019). However, teachers also require more structured support in terms of guidelines to help develop their professional capacities in order to support learners, colleagues, parents, and others seeking refuge to disclose their gender or sexual identity. By adopting uniformed procedures, such as recording incidences of transphobic bullying, harassment, and discrimination in a formal report will provide all teachers with a collective standpoint in the intervention of transphobia. These recommended strategies have the potential to support primary school teachers to become more receptive to transgender and other non-conforming gender identity within the school context.

- *Supportive leadership-management*

For teachers to adequately implement trans-inclusive procedures and policy, there needs to be adequate support from school leadership management. Bartholomeus and Riggs (2021) proclaim that to achieve trans-inclusion in schools, leadership-management needs to supply their teacher staff with appropriate resources, adequate training time, and sufficient funding. This together with collective action will ensure that teacher trans-inclusive training then filters into classrooms effectively and efficiently.

- *Realising trans-inclusive practice and language*

The findings in this study showed that teachers struggled with gendered practices and transinclusive language. To facilitate inclusivity, it is essential for teachers to reflect on daily practices and language that enforce gender (Francis, 2017). This study recommends undertaking a reflexive language approach to assist teachers in identifying seemingly natural comments, praise, or reprimands that enforce gender binary in schools, and provide practical solutions to shift into an inclusive stance. Language is an integral part of everyday life and therefore it is imperative for teachers to be able to directly challenge homophobic and transphobic language that presents in classrooms or in school. This can only be achieved by attempting to realise trans-inclusive practice.

- *Allocating resources and training for teachers*

The realisation of trans-inclusion cannot be achieved without the proper allocation of resources and training for all stakeholders. The study recommends that primary school teachers be provided with resources such as information articles, storybooks, and revised textbooks, as well as other teaching aids such as posters that are free from transphobic insinuations and depictions (Reygan, 2019). However, it is equally important for teachers, school faculty, and any other individuals who come into contact with schools, either through work or on a volunteer basis, to undergo sensitivity training (Abaver & Cishe, 2018). Sensitivity training will allow for individuals to become self-aware of prejudices and learn to be more empathetic to others through the dynamic of group interactions. Sensitivity training was proposed by the teachers in this study as participants understood that speaking with transgender and other non-conforming gender identities would assist teachers to be more perceptive to subjectivities.

- *Functioning with the immediate community*

It is important to note that primary schools rely on the immediate community to function satisfactorily. The study recognises that teachers cannot function independently to communities and therefore recommend inviting the parents and other members of the community to be part of trans-inclusive initiatives (Robinson et al., 2017). These invitations should detail what is intended on being addressed such as gender identity, sexuality education, and gender diversity, and provide the community with the opportunity to engage in an orderly manner. By doing this, the school serves as a change agent and extends their teaching and learning environments to all members of the community.

- *Maintaining harmonious teaching and learning*

The findings suggest that primary school teachers defend transgender developments in school, however teachers need support to create and maintain harmonious teaching and learning environments. This study recommends that the responsibility of trans-inclusion should not fall exclusively on Life Orientation teachers, but that all subject areas should be open to including gender and sexually diverse narratives (Francis, 2019). By introducing gender diversity to subjects such as language, art, history, mathematics, and comprehensive sexuality education, the gender inclusive narrative will become repetitive, awarding teachers and learners a greater opportunity to learn about social constructions of gender. There will be resistance to change and arguments that gender and sexual diversity lessons are not practical, however teachers are capable of finding innovative ways to teach topics. For instance, teachers can start with working with learners and evaluate library books that use homophobic and transphobic language or use silences to exclude gender diversity (Reygan, 2019). Then, initiatives can gradually move from identification of transphobia to understanding how transphobia hinders development, and eventually celebrating diversity by acknowledging days of gender significance such as South African Pride Month or International Transgender Day of Visibility (Bartholomeus & Riggs, 2021).

8.5 Final Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the major findings of the study by presenting the primary school teachers' views and understandings on transgender identity. The study contributed insight and awareness of transgender identity and offered a glimpse into how patriarchal gender systems in community, culture, tradition, and religion continue to reinforce heteronormative ideals. The significance of the study rests in the dynamic involvement of all teachers and leadershipmanagement teams with regard to their approach and direct involvement to refute discrimination against transgender and other non-conforming gender identities. Despite findings that confirm inadequate teacher training and insufficient teacher intervention with regard to addressing gender challenges, teachers also displayed confidence in their professional conduct. For this reason, the study provided recommendations that attempt to offer primary school teachers effective interventions to assist in developing their personal understanding and thereby contributing to a gender inclusive teaching and learning environment.

The recommendations included assuming a whole-school approach in order to disrupt practices that perpetrate hegemonic ideals. These included adapting the school philosophy and ethos to create a school atmosphere that is trans-inclusive, and improving school policy and procedures to assist teachers with issues of homophobia and transphobia in schools. Subsequently, teachers require adequate support from leadership-management teams in order to realise trans-inclusive language and practices, placing emphasis on ample time for reflexivity. Thenceforward, the focus should be placed on allocating appropriate resources and sensitivity training for all educational stakeholders, thus assembling the possibility of functioning in relation to the immediate community and permitting a harmonious teaching and learning environment. By attempting to implement the whole-school approach recommended above, teachers can work on developing negotiation, compromise, and conflict resolution skills to address subtle and overt forms of intolerance, aggression, and violence perpetrated against transgender and other nonconforming gender identities. Although this study was conducted with teachers from two primary schools in the Chatsworth area, all schools in South Africa should strive to build competencies around the phenomenon discussed. This is achievable through educational engagement that promotes critical thinking skills and recognises individuals as active, responsible citizens of society who are concerned about the welfare of others; encourages respect and involvement of all identities; and have a comprehensive understating of transgender and other non-conforming identities.

To conclude this study, I leave you with these final words:

"This transition has been harder on me than anything I could imagine. And that's the case for so many others besides me. For that reason alone, trans people deserve something vital. They deserve your respect. And from that respect comes a more compassionate community, a more empathetic society, and

a better world for all of us."
– Caitlyn Jenner (Sojatia, 2021, n.p.).

REFERENCES

Abaver, D. T., & Cishe, E. N. (2018). Violence, abuse and discrimination: key factors militating against control of HIV/AIDS among the LGBTI sector. *Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS, 15*(1), 60-70. http://doi.org/10.1080/17290376.2018.1492960

Abdelsamad, Z. A. (2021). A transgression look into the transgender women of Ireland in Patrick McCabe's 'breakfast on pluto'. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature, 9*(2), 35-42.

Adesina, M. A., & Olufadewa, I. I. (2020). Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) Curriculum in 10 east Southern African countries and HIV prevalence among the youth. *European Journal of Environment and Public Health, 4*(1), 2542-4904.

Akoob, R. (2018, May 18). Toxic masculinity in the South African Indian community. *Daily Maverick*. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2018-05-18-toxicmasculinity-in-the-south-african-indian-community/amp/

Allen, L. (2019). Bearing witness: straight students talk about homophobia at school. *Sex Education, 19*(3), 1-14. http://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2019.1581604

Apostolidou, Z. (2019). Homophobic and transphobic bullying within the school community in Cyprus: a thematic analysis of school professionals, parents and children's experiences. *Sex Education,* 20(1), 46-58. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2019.1612347

Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. C., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 18*(1), 1-8.

Bania, J., & Dubey, R. (2020, October 28). *The Covid-19 Pandemic and Social Science (Qualitative) Research: An Epistemological Analysis*. Paper presented at the Global University Network for Innovation. http://www.guninetwork.org/report/covid-19pandemic-and-social-science-qualitative-research-epistemological-analysis

Bartholomaeus, C. (2013). Colluding with or Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity: Examining Primary School Boys' Plural Gender Practices. *Australian Feminist Journal, 28*(77), 279-293.

Bartholomaeus, C., & Riggs, D. W. (2017a). The capacity of South Australian primary school teachers and pre-service teachers to work with trans and gender diverse students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 65(1), 1-37.

Bartholomaeus, C., & Riggs, D. W. (2017b). *Transgender People and Education*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Bartholomaeus, C., & Riggs, D. W. (2021). Transgender and non-binary students, staff, and family members in schools. In K. A. Allen, A. Reupert, & L. Oades (Eds). *Building better schools with evidence-based policy: Adaptable policy for teachers and school leaders* (pp. 183-191). Abingdon.

Bartholomaeus, C., Riggs, D. W., & Andrew., Y. (2016). Exploring trans and gender diverse issues in primary education in South Australia. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 65*(1), 1-37.

Bates, E. A., McCann, J. J., Kaye, L. K., & Taylor, J. C. (2017). "Beyond words": a researcher's guide to using photo elicitation in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 14*(4), 459-481.

Bedortha, E. (2019). Fear and loathing: How an engrained fear of the unknown fuels transphobia. (Master's thesis, Merrimack College, Massachusetts, United States). Begley, S. (2000). The stereotype trap. Newsweek, *136*(19), 159-185.

Berg, B.L. (1995). Qualitative Research Methods For The Social Sciences.Allyn and Bacon, Boston

Bermudez de Castro, J. (2017). Psycho Killers, Circus Freaks, Ordinary People: A brief history of the representation of transgender identities on American TV series. *Oceanide, 9*(1), 1-9.

Bhana, D. (2012). Understanding and Addressing Homophobia in Schools: A View from Teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, *32*(3), 307-318.

Bhana, D. (2014). Managing' the Rights of Gays and Lesbians: Reflections from some South African Secondary Schools. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 9*(1), 1-14.

Bhana, D. (2016). *Gender and Childhood Sexuality in Primary School*. Springer.

Bhana, D., Crewe, M., & Aggleton, P. (2019). Sex, sexuality and education in South Africa. *Sex Education*, *19*(4), 361-370. http://doi.org/ 10.1080/14681811.2019.1620008

Bhana, D., Morrell, R., Shefer, T., & Ngabaza, S. (2010). South African teachers' responses to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers in schools. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 12*(8),871-883. http://doi.org/ 10.1080/13691058.2010.500398

Biegel. S., & Kuehl, S. J. (2010). *Safe at school: Addressing the school environment and LGBT safety through policy and legislation*. National Education Policy Centre.

Bill of Rights Act 108 of 1996 (S. Afr).

Bigante, E. (2010). The use of photo-elicitation in field research. *Open Edition Journals*. doi: https://doi.org/10.4000/echogeo.11622

Bizjak, D. (2018). Silencing/Voicing Transgender People at Work: An Organizational Perspective. *PIJ, 12*(3), 2499-1333.

Bockting, W. O., Miner, M. H., Romine, R. E. S., Dolezal, C., Robinson, B. E., Rosser, S., Coleman, E. (2021). The Transgender Identity Survey: A Measure of Internalized Transphobia. *LGBT Health, 7*(1), 15-27. http://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2018.0265

Botha, P., Smit, M. H., & Oosthuizen, I. J. (2015). The educator as a caring supervisor. In P. Botha, M. C. Roos, J. P. Roussouw & M. H. Smit (Eds.), *Aspects of Education Law*. (4th ed., pp. 211-237). Van Schaik Publishers.

Bowley, B. (2013). Soft boys, tough boys and making young sporty masculinities at a private boys' school. *Sex, Gender and Childhood, 27*(3), 87-93.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2016). (Mis) conceptualising themes, thematic analysis, and other problems with Fugard and Potts' (2015) sample-size tool for thematic analysis. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 19*(6), 739–743.

Breen, R. L. (2006). A Practical Guide to Focus-Group Research. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education, 30*(3), 463-476.

Brickell, C. (2006). The Sociological Construction of Gender and Sexuality. The Sociological Review, 54(1), 87-113. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2006.00603.x

Brown, A., & Danaher, P. A. (2019). CHE Principles: facilitating authentic and dialogical semi-structured interviews in educational research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 42*(1), 76-90.

Butler, Judith. 1987. Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. Theatre Journal, 40(4), 519-531. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge Butler. J. (1993). *Undoing Gender*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (1999). Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity (Tenth anniversary edition). Routledge.

Butler, J. (2006). *Gender trouble*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (2011). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of 'sex'*. Routledge.

Cannon, C., Lauve-Moon, K., & Buttell, F. (2015). Re- theorizing intimate partner violence through post-structural feminism, Queer theory and the Sociology of Gender. *Social Sciences, 4*(1), 668-687. http://doi.org/10.3390/socsci4030668

Carrera, M. V., DePalma, R., & Lameiras, M. (2012). Sex and gender identity: Moving beyond fixed and natural categories. *Sexualities, 15*(8), 995-1016.

Carrera-Fernández, M. V., Almeida, A., Cid-Fernández, X. M., Vallejo-Medina, P & Castro, R. Y. (2019): Patrolling the Boundaries of Gender: Beliefs, Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Trans and Gender Diverse People in Portuguese Adolescents. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, *32*(1), 40-56. http://doi.org/10.1080/19317611.2019.1701170

Clark, T. C., Lucassen, M. F. G., Bullen, P., Denny, S. J., Fleming, T. M., Robinson, E. M., & Rossen, F. (2014). The health and well-being of transgender high school students: Results from the New Zealand adolescent health survey (Youth'12). *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 55(1), 93–99.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed). Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7th ed). Routledge.

Collins, B., Keating, S., & Morgan, M. (2016). The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Primary School Pupil: Rights and Equality Approaches In M. Nohilly, B. Collins, A. M. Kavanagh, S. Keating, F. O'. Mahony, & C. O'. Sullivan (Eds.). *Citizenship Education 100 Years On* (pp. 48-59). SPHE.

Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and Power.* Polity Press.

Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities.* Blackwell Publishers.

Connell, R. W. (2002). *Gender.* Polity Press.

Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender and Society, 19*(6), 829-859.

Conron, K. J., Scott, G., Stowell, G. S., & Landers, S. J. (2012). Transgender health in Massachusetts: Results from a household probability sample of adults. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*(1), 118–122.

Cope, D.G. (2014). Methods and Meanings: Credibility and Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research. *Oncology Nursing Forum, 41*(1), 89-92.

Courtney, S. J. (2014). Inadvertently queer school leadership amongst lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) school leaders. *Organization, 21*(3), 383-399.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publication

Daniels, J., Struthers, H., Maleke, K., Catabay, C., Lane, T., Mclntyre, J., & Coates, T. (2019). Rural school experiences of South African gay and transgender youth, *Journal of LGBT Youth, 16*(4), 355-379.

de Witt, M. W. (2014). The young child in context, a thematic approach: Perspectives from educational psychology and sociopedagogies. (9th ed). Van Schaik Publishers.

DeLamater, L. D., & Hyde, J. S. (1998). Essentialism vs. social constructionism in the study of human sexuality. *The Journal of Sex Research, 35*(1), 10-18.

DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (2006). The Sound of Silence: Talking about Sexual Orientation and Schooling. *Sex Education 6*(4), 333-349.

DePalma, R., & Francis, D. (2014). Silence, Nostalgia, Violence, Poverty: What Does 'Culture' Mean for South African Sexuality Educators. *Culture, Health and Sexuality, 16*(5), 547-561.

Department of Basic Education (DBE). (2011). Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grade 10-12: Life Orientation. Government Printers.

Department of Basic Education (DBE). (2019). *Comprehensive Sexuality Education.* https://www.education.gov.za/Home/ComprehensiveSexualityEducation.aspx

Department of Basic Education South Africa (DBE). (2015*). Challenging homophobic bullying in schools.* Department of Basic Education.

Department of Education (DoE). (2003). Revised National Curriculum Statement. Grades 10-12. Life Orientation. FormeSet Printers

Department of Education (DoE). (2012). Annual Report: Department of Education and Skills. https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Corporate-reports/annual-report

Desai, A. (2019). Indian South Africans: (be)-longing and the post-apartheid search for roots and the imagined family. *Diaspora Studies, 12*(1), 1–13. http://doi.org/10.1080/09739572.2018.1538685

Desai, A., & Goolam, V. (2012). Chatsworth: Between Continuity and Change. *The Oriental Anthropologist, 12*(2), 223–233. https://doi.org/10.1177/0976343020120201

Dessel, A. B., Goodman, K. D., & Woodford, M. R. (2017). LGBT discrimination on campus and heterosexual bystanders: Understanding intentions to intervene. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education.* http://doi.org/ 10.1037%2Fdhe000001

Dolan, I. J., Strauss, P., Winter S., & and Lin, A. (2020). Misgendering and experiences of stigma in health care settings for transgender people. *National Library of Medicine, 12*(4), 150-151. http://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.50497.

Education for Citizenship. (2008). Section 1: What is citizenship and why is education for citizenship   important.
http://www.itscotland.org.uk/citizenship/managemnettoolkit/planning/paper/section1.asp

Erlandson, D. A. (1993). *Doing naturalistic inquiry: a guide to methods*. Sage.

Ewing, D., Brown, A., Mkhize, N., & Msibi, T. (2020) Sexual and gender identities: violating norms, *Agenda, 34*(2), 1-6. http://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2020.1756629

Farooq, M. B., & De Villiers, C. (2017). Telephonic Qualitative Research Interviews, when to consider them and how to do them, *Meditari Accountancy Research, 25*(2), 291316.

Farrelly, G. (2014). Homophobic bullying and school leadership: an associated view [Doctoral thesis, Dublin City University].

Fineefter- Rosenbluh, I. (2017). Incorporating Perspective Taking in Reflexivity: A Method to Enhance Insider Qualitative Research processes. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 1-11.

Fitzgerald, H. N. (2018). Understanding transgender prejudice through the lens of emotion [Master's thesis, West Virginia University].

Flick, U. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (4th ed). Sage Publishers.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2005). The Interview: From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (p. 695–727). Sage.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality, 1. An Introduction.* Harmondsworth Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1980). Power/Knowledge, Selected Interviews and Other Writings: 1972-1977. Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1981). *The history of sexuality. Vol 1, The will to knowledge*. Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1988). The political technology of individuals. In Martin, L., Gutman, H., & , Hutton, P.H (Eds.). Technologies of the Self. Tavistock.

Foucault, M. (1990). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 3: The Care of the Self.* Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and Punish: the birth of a prison.* Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1998). *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge*. Penguin.

Francis, D. (2012). Teacher positioning on the teaching of sexual diversity in South African schools. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 14*(6), 597–611. doi:10.1080/13691058.2012.674558

Francis, D. (2013). "You know the homophobic stuff is not in me, like us, it's out there." Using participatory theatre to challenge heterosexism and heteronormativity in a South African school. *South African Journal of Education, 33*(4), 1-14.

Francis, D. (2019). Keeping it straight' what do South African queer youth say they need from sexuality education. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *22*(6), 772-790. http://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2018.153922

Francis, D. A. (2017). Homophobia and sexuality diversity in South African schools: A review. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 14*(4), 359–379.

Francis, D. A. (2019). What does the teaching and learning of sexuality education in South African schools reveal about counter-normative sexualities. *Sex Education, 19*(4), 406-421.

Francis, D. A., Brown, A., McAllister, J., Mosime, S. T., Thani, G. T. Q., Reygan, F., Dlamini, B., Nogela, L., & Muller, M. (2019). A Five Country Study of gender and Sexuality Diversity and Schooling in Southern Africa. Africa Education Review, 16(1), 19-39.

Francis, D. A., & DePalma, R. (2014). Teacher Perspectives on Abstinence and Safe Sex Education in South Africa. *Sex Education, 14*(1), 81-94.

Francis, D., & Reygan, F. (2016). Let's See if It Won't Go Away by Itself'. LGBT Microaggressions among Teachers in South Africa. *Education as Change, 20*(3), 180-20. http://doi.org/10.17159/1947-9417

Francis, D.A. (2017). Homophobia and sexuality diversity in South African schools: A review. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 14*(4), 359-379. http://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2017.1326868

Francis, D. A., Reygan, F., Brown, A., Dlamini, B., McAllister, J., Nogela, L., Mosime, S. T., Muller, M., & Thani, G.T.Q. (2018). A Five Country Study of Gender and Sexuality Diversity and Schooling in Southern. Africa, *Africa Education Review*, *16*(1), 19-39. http://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2017.135963

Freund, B. (1995, August 30). *Destroying communities: The impact of group areas, 19501980*. Paper presented at the African Studies Seminar series. Conference proceedings of the Wits Institutional Repository Environment on DSpace. http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/8676

Fugard, A. J. B., & Potts, H. W. W. (2015). Supporting thing on sample sizes for thematic analyses: a quantitative tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 18*(6), 669-684.

Gagnon, J. H., & Simon, W. (1973). Sexual Conduct. The Social Sources of Humanity Sexuality (2nd ed). Routledge.

Gill, M.M. (1979). The analysis of the transference. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 27*(1), 263-288.

Given, L. M. (2016). *100 questions (and answers) about qualitative research*. Sage.

Glaw, X., Inder, K., Kable, A., & Hazelton, M. (2017). Visual Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Autophotography and Photo Elicitation Applied to Mental Health Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 1-8.

Google. (n. d.). [Map of Chatsworth, Durban]. Retrieved July 12, 2020,

Gopal, N., & Marimuthu, B. (2014). A quantitative understanding of gender differentiated delinquent trends among school going adolescents in Chatsworth, Durban. *Southern African Journal of Criminology, 27*(2). 69-81

Guasp, A., Ellison, G., & Satara, T. (2014). Homophobic bullying in Britain's schools in 2014. [Teacher's Report]. The Monument Trust.

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries, *Educational Communication and Technology, 29*(1), 75–91.

Gudyanga, E., de Lange, N., & Khau, M. (2019). Zimbabwean secondary school Guidance and Counselling teachers teaching sexuality education in the HIV and AIDS education curriculum. *Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS, 16*(1), 35-50.

Hammersley, M. (2013). *What is Qualitative Research*. Bloomsbury.

Haralambos, M., & Holborn, M., (2013). Sociology: Themes and Perspectives. (8th ed.). Collins.

Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: a case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies, 17*(1), 13-26.

Hartsock, N. (1987). *Foucault on Power: A theory for women.* University of Leiden.

Hate Crime Report. (2016). Hate Crime against Transgender people in South Africa. OUT
LGBT Wellbeing. https://out.org.za/library/reports/

Hedge, N., & Mackenzie, A. (2012). Putting Nussbaum's capabilities approach to work:
revisiting inclusion. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 42*(3). 327-344.

Higgins, A.,Doyle, L., Downes, C., Murphy, R., Sharek,D., DeVries, J., Begley, T., McCann,
E., Sheerin, F., & Smyth, S. (2016). The LGBTIreland report: The National Study of
Mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people
in Ireland

Hines, S. (2010). *Transgender identities towards a social analysis of Gender Diversity. Madison
Avenue*. Taylor & Francis.

Hlangani, A. (2019, November 13). #LeaveOurKidsAlone: Leader of anti sex ed group says
they'll bring the country to a standstill. *Parent24.*
https://www.news24.com/parent/Learn/Learning-difficulties/leaveourkidsalone-
antisex-ed-group-gathers-over-50-000-fb-members-in-just-two-weeks-20191113

Hughto, J. M. W., Pletta, D., Gordon, L., Cahill, S., Mimiaga, M. J., & Reisner, S. L. (2020).
Negative Transgender-Related Media Messages Are Associated with Adverse Mental
Health Outcomes in a Multistate Study of Transgender Adults, *LGBT Health 8*(1), 32-
41. http://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2020.0279

Hutton, P. H. (eds.). *Technologies of self* (pp. 16-49). Tavistock.

Igual, R. (2020, March 9). Queer individual murdered in Cape Town. *Daily Times.*
https://www.mambaonline.com/2020/03/09/gay-man-murdered-and-brutalised-
incape-town-graphic/

Izugbara, C., Bakare, S., Sebany, M., Ushie, B., Wekesah, F., & Njagi, J. (2020) Regional
legal and policy instruments for addressing LGBT exclusion in Africa, *Sexual and
Reproductive Health Matters*, *28*(1). http://doi.org/10.1080/26410397.2019.1698905

Jawad, H. F., & Yosif, M. M. (2017). A stylistic study of the use of adjectives in Shapiro's
"auto wreck". *International Journal of Advanced Research*, *5*(4), 1664-1668.
http://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/3995 Jenkins,

R. (2004). *Social Identity.* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Jones, T. (2019). South African contributions to LGBTI educational issues. *Sex Education,
19*(4), 455-471. http://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2018.1535969

Jones, T., Smith, E., Ward, R., Dixon, J., Hillier, L., & Mitchell, A. (2016). School experiences
of transgender and gender diverse students in Australia. *Sex Education, 16*(2), 156171.

KangaudeI, G. D., Bhana, D., & Skelton, A. (2020). Special focus: The African children's charter at 30: reflections on its past and future contribution to the rights of children in Africa. *African Human Rights Law Journal.* http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/19962096/2020/v20n2a15

Karnieli-Miller, O., Strier, R., & Pessach, L. (2009). Power Relations in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research, 19*(2), 279-289.

Kearns, L. L, Mitton-Kükner, J., & Tompkins, J. (2017). Transphobia and Cisgender Privilege. *Canadian Journal of Education, 40*(1), 1-27. https://www.jstor.org/stable/90002337

KEEP THE ENERGY [@keeptheenergy]. (2021, April 26). Discrimination is not a religious value [Instagram post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/COJADk-nZhq

Kelan, E. K. (2010). Gender Logic and (Un)doing Gender at Work. *Gender, Work and Organization, 17*(2). 174-194. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2009.00459.x

Khan, N. (2020, March 1). Parents march against sex education, *The Post*, p. 9.

Kroeger, J., & Regula, L. (2017). Queer decisions in early childhood teacher education: teachers as advocates for gender non-conforming and sexual minority young children and families. *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies, 6*(1), 106-121.

Kruger, L. M., Shefer, T., & Oakes, A. (2015). I could have done everything and why not?': Young women's complex constructions of sexual agency in the context of sexualities education in Life Orientation in South African school. *Perspectives in Education, 33*(2), 50-62.

Kuloba, R.W., (2014). Homosexuality is unAfrican and Unbiblical: Examining the ideological motivations to homophobia in Sub- Saharan African- the case study of Uganda. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, 14*(8).

Langa, M. (2015). "A boy cannot marry another boy": Adolescent boys' talk about "gay" boys at school. *African Journal of Psychology, 25*(4), 313-319.

Leonard, M., & McKnight, M. (2015). Look and tell: Using photo-elicitation methods with teenagers. *Children's Geographies, 13*(6), 629-642.

Leonardi, B., & Staley, S. (2018). What's involved in 'the work'? Understanding administrators' roles in bringing trans-affirming policies into practice. *Gender and Education, 30*(6), 754-773. http://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1455967

Le Roux, N. (2013). Gender variance in childhood/adolescence: Gender identity journeys not involving physical intervention. [Doctor of Clinical Psychology, University of East London]. http://doi.org/10.15123/PUB.3493

Levitt. H. M., & Ippolito, M. R. (2014). Being Transgender: Navigating Minority Stressors and Developing Authentic Self-Presentation. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 38*(1), 46-64. http://doi.org/10.1177/0361684313501644

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Lorber, J. (2000). The social construction of gender. Night to his Day. Routledge.

Love Not Hate Campaign. (2016). Hate crimes against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people in South Africa.

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars. All *Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 3*(1), 351-354.

Makhaye, C. (2021, April 22). LGBTQIA+ people in South Africa 'are under siege'. *Times Live.* https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021-04-23-lgbtqia-people-insa-are-under-siege/

Martinez, T. D., & Robles, R., (2019). Preventing transphobic bullying and promoting inclusive educational environments" Literature review and implementing recommendations. *Archives of Medical Research, 50*(1), 543-555.

Masud, Y., & Ajmal, M. A. (2012). Left-handed people in a right-handed world: A phenomenological study. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 9*(2), 49–60.

Matebeni, Z., & Msibi, T. (2015). Vocabularies of the non-normative, *Agenda, 29*(1), 3-9, http://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2015.1025500

Mayeza, E., & Bhana, D. (2020): Boys negotiate violence and masculinity in the primary school, *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 44*(3), 426-443.

Mayeza, E. (2021). South African LGBTPQ Youth: The Perceptions and Realities of Coming Out and Parental Reactions, *Journal of GLBT Family Studies. 17*(3): 292-303. https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2021.1897051

Mays, N., & Pope, C. (1995). Rigour and qualitative research. *BMJ, 311*(6997), 109-112.

McGlashan, H., & Fitzpatrick, K. (2018). 'I use any pronouns, and I'm questioning everything else': transgender youth and the issue of gender pronouns. *Sex Education, 18*(3), 239-252. http://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2017.1419949

McGrath, C., Palmgren, P. J., & Liljedahl, M. (2018). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher, 41*(9), 1-6. http://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149

McMillian, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry* (7th ed). Pearson.

Meo, A. I. (2010) Picturing students' habitus: The advantages and limitations of photo elicitation interviewing in a qualitative study in the city of Buenos Ares, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 9*(2), 149-171.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: a Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed). Sage.

Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*(1), 9-18.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Sage.

Mphela v Manamela 2016 (1), case no 1/2016, Seshego Magistrates Court (Equality Court).

Msibi, T. (2012). 'I'm used to it now': experiences of homophobia among queer youth in South African township schools, *Gender and Education, 24*(5), 515-533, http://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2011.645021

Msibi, T. (2012). 'I'm used to it now': experiences of homophobia among queer youth in South African township schools. *Gender and Education, 24(*5), 515-533.

Msibi, T. (2015). The teaching of sexual and gender diversity issues to pre-service teachers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Lessons from student exam responses. *Alternation, 12*, 385-410.

Msibi, T. (2019) Passing through professionalism: South African Black male teachers and same-sex desire. *Sex Education, 19*(4), 389-405. http://doi.org/0.1080/14681811.2019.1612346

Mthethwa, A. (2020, August 2). '*Living in fear: The plight of educators with comorbidities'*, Daily Maverick. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-07-07-living-in-fearthe-plight-ofeducators-with-comorbidities/#gsc.tab=0.

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP). (2017). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected hate violence in 2016. Emily Waters.

National Transgender Survery. (2015). The National Centre for Transgender Equality Release U.S Transgender Survey [Video]. Youtube. https://youtu.be/P7enwOuHQrM

Neary, A., & Cross, C. (2018). *Exploring Gender Identity and Gender Norms in Primary Schools: The Perspectives of Educators and Parents of Transgender and Gender Variant Children, Limerick*. [University of Limerick and the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland].

Ngabaza, S., & Shefer, T. (2019) Sexuality education in South African schools: deconstructing the dominant response to young people's sexualities in contemporary schooling contexts. *Sex Education, 19*(4), 422-435. http://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2019.1602033

Novic, N. (2008). Is there a bias against telephone interviews in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing and Health. 31*(4), 391–398. http://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20259

Ntseku, M. (2021, June 10). Investigation into queerphobia at DF Malan High School underway says Schafer. *IOL.* https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/

Palaiologou, I. (2017). The use of vignettes in participatory research with young children. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 25*(3), 308-322.

Parry, B. R., & Gordon E. (2020). The shadow pandemic: Inequitable gendered impacts of COVID-19 in South Africa. *Gender Work Organ*. http://doi.org/10.1111/gwao12565

Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. (2nd ed). Sage.

Pickles, J. (2021). Supporting LGBT+ People Experiencing Hate: Perspectives from LGBT+ Youth and Community Workers. *Sociological Research Online*, 1-19. http://doi.org/10.1177/13607804211015817

Pijoos, L. (2020, January 10). Fearless transgender activist Nare Mphela found murdered. *Times Live.* https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-01-10-fearlesstransgender-activist-nare-mphela-found-murdered/

Pinto, N., & Moleiro, C. (2015). Gender trajectories: Transsexual people coming to terms with their gender identities. Professional Psychology: *Research & Practice, 46*(1), 12-20. http://doi.org/10.1037/a0036

Pound, P., Langford, R., & Campbell, R. (2016). What do young people think about their school-based sex and relationship education? A qualitative synthesis of young people's views and experiences. *BMJ Open, 6*(9). Doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2016011329.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). (2000). Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Act 4 of 2000. Government Gazette.

Qu, S. Q., & Dumay, J. (2011), The Qualitative Research Interview. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management, 8*(3), 238-264.

Raheim, M., Magnussen, L. H., Sekse, R. J. T., Lunde, A., Jacobsen, T., & Blystad, A. (2016). Researcher-researched relationship in qualitative research: Shifts in positions and researcher vulnerability. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being, 11*(1), 1-12.

Ratner, C. (2002). Subjectivity and objectivity in qualitative methodology. *Forum Qualitative Social Research, 3*(3), 1-9.

Renold, E. (2000). 'Coming out': Gender, (hetero)sexuality and the primary school. *Gender and Education, 12*(3), 309–326. http://doi.org/10.1080/713668299

Reygan, F. (2016). Making schools safer in South Africa: An antihomophobic bullying educational resource. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 13*(1-2), 173-191.

Reygan, F. (2019). Sexual and gender diversity in schools: Belonging, in/exclusion and the African child. *Perspectives in Education, 36*(2), 90-102. http://doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie

Reygan, F., & Francis, D. (2015). Emotions and pedagogies of discomfort: Teachers responses to sexual and gender diversity in the Free State, South Africa. Education as Change, 19(1), 101-119. https://doi.org/10.1080/16823206.2014.943259

Richards, C., Bouman, W. P., Seal, L., Barker, M. J., Nieder, T. O., & T'Sjoen, G. (2016). Non-binary or genderqueer genders. *International Review of Psychiatry, 28*(1), 95–102. http://doi.org/10.3109/09540261.2015.1106446

Richter, M., & Buthelezi, K. (2021). Stigma, Denial of Health Services, and Other Human Rights Violations Faced by Sex Workers in Africa: "My Eyes Were Full of Tears Throughout Walking Towards the Clinic that I Was Referred to". In S. M. Goldenberg, R. M. Thomas, A. Forbes & S. Baral (Eds.)*, Sex Work, Health, and Human Rights Global Inequities, Challenges, and Opportunities for Action*. (2nd ed, pp. 141-152). Springer.

Robinson, K. H., Smith, E., & Davies, C. (2017) Responsibilities, tensions and ways forward: parents' perspectives on children's sexuality education. *Sex Education, 17*(3), 333347.

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 11*(1), 25-41.

Ryazanov, A. A., & Christenfeld, N. J. S. (2017). The strategic value of essentialism. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 12*(1)*, 1-15.

Schilt, K., & Lagos, D. (2017). *The development of transgender studies in sociology*. (Report No. 43). Chicago, Illinois: Department of Sociology, University of Chicago.

Schilt, K., & Westbrook, L. (2009). Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity: "Gender Normals, Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality. *Gender and Society, 23*(4), 440-464.

Scott, J. W. (1988). Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism, *Feminist Studies, 14*(1). 33-50.

Scottish transgender alliance. (2019). Youth and Family. Creating change together. https://scottishtrans.org/trans-rights/practice/youth-family/

Sevelius, J. M., Chakravarty, D., Dilworth S. E., Rebchook, G., & Neilands, T. B. (2021). Measuring Satisfaction and Comfort with Gender Identity and Gender Expression among Transgender Women: Development and Validation of the Psychological Gender Affirmation Scale. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 18*(1), 3298. Doi: 10.3390/ijerph18063298

Shefer, T., & Macleod, C. (2015). Life Orientation sexuality education in South Africa: Gendered norms, justice and transformation. *Perspectives in Education, 32*(2), 1-10.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects. *Education for Information, 22*(2), 63-75.

Silva, A. S. (2019). Vignettes: a data collection technique to handle the differential operation of items in surveys. *Brazilian Business Review.* http://doi.org/10.15728/bbr.2019.16.1.2

Silverman, D. (2017). How was it for you? The interview society and the irresistible rise of the (poorly analysed) interview. *Qualitative Research, 17*(2), 144-158.

Simons, J. D., Grant, L., & Rodas, J. M. (2021). Transgender people of colour: Experiences and coping during the school-age years, *Journal of LGBTQ Issues in Counseling,* 15(1), 16-37. http://doi.org/ 10.1080/15538605.2021.1868380

Sinha, T. (2021). Influence of dance and music in the architectural style of ancient Indian temple. *International Journal of Sanskrit Research,* 7(2), 85-87.

Sjurso, I.R., Fandrem, H., Norman, J.O.,& Roland, E. (2019). Teacher Authority in LongLasting Cases of Bullying: A Qualitative Study from Norway and Ireland. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(7), 1163. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16071163

Skewes, L., Fine, C., & Haslam. N. (2018) Beyond Mars and Venus: The role of gender essentialism in support for gender inequality and backlash. *PLoS ONE, 13*(7). https://doi. org/10.1371/journal.pone.0

Smit, B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2018). Observations in qualitative inquiry: When what you see is not what you see. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 17*(3), http://doi/org/10.1177/1609406918816766

Smith, H. J., Chen, J., & Liu, X. (2008). Language and rigour in qualitative research: Problems and principles in analysing data collected in Mandarin. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 44*(8).

Smith, M. J., & Payne, E. (2016). Binaries and Biology: Conversations with elementary education professionals after professional development on supporting transgender students. *The Educational Forum*, *80*(1), 34-47. http://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2015.1102367

Sojatia, S. (2021, January 20). Quotes by transgender people that will inspire you.https://www.shethepeople.tv/news/20-amazing-quotes-by-transgender-peoplethat-will-inspire-you/

South African Department of Education. (2003). National Curriculum Statement: Grade 10-12. Life Orientation. Government Printer.

South African History Online. (2019). Chatsworth, Suburb of Durban. https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/chatsworth-suburb-*durban*

Srinivasan, S.P., & Chandrasekaran, S. (2020) Transsexualism in Hindu Mythology. Indian *Journal of Endocrinal and Metabolism, 24*(3),235–236. http://doi.org/10.4103/ijem.IJEM_152_20

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). (2011). Chatsworth Main Place 599161. https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/599161

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). (2018a). *Quarterly labour force survey—Quarter 2.* Republic of South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. (2018b). Demographic Profile of Adolescents in South Africa. Statistics South Africa.

Stieglitz, K. A. (2010). Development, risk and resilience of transgender youth. *J Assoc Nurses AIDS Care*, *21*(1), 192-206.

Stockard, J. (1999) "Gender socialization." In J.S. Chafetz Handbook of the Sociology of Gender (pp. 215-246). Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Stoloff, S., Maude Boulanger, M., Roy, V., & Rivard, M.C. (2015). Sensitization Sessions as the Foundation for Training. *Journal of Education and Learning, 4*(3). 146-157.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). Ba*sics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Struwig, F.W., & Stead, G.B., (2017). *Research: Planning, Designing and Reporting*. Pearson South Africa (Pty) Ltd. A

Swanepoel, E. (2020). New method, same curriculum: Taking a step back to reflect on 'doing' comprehensive sexuality education in the 21st century. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa, 16*(1), 1-2. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/td.v16i1.80

Taylor, C. (2011). Every class in every school: The first national climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. [PhD, University of Winnipeg]. Egale Canada Human Rights Trust. https://egale.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2011/05/Every-Class-In-Every-School-Final-Report.pdf

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (*UNAIDS). (2012).* UNAIDS World AIDS Day Report 2012. Geneva: UNAIDS.

Thompson, R. (2019). Feminist thought and transcending the gender binary. *The Classic Journal*

Tolman, D.L,. Striepe, M.I., & Harmon, T. (2003). Gender Matters: Constructing a Model of Adolescent Sexual Health. *The Journal of Sex Research 40*(1), 4-12. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490309552162

Toomey, K. (2014). Study of Nagara Drum in Pushkar, Rajasthan. Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/1816

Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI). (2016). Transforming the Classroom, Supporting Trans Young People in Schools. https://www.teni.ie

UNESCO. (2018). International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence informed approach. https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/ITGSE_en.pdf

Vahed, G., & Desai, A. (2012). Chatsworth Between Continuity and Change. *The Oriental Anthropologist, 12*(2). 223-233.

Van Anders, S. (2014). Biol/ogics. *Transgender studies Quarterly, 3*(1), 33-35.

Van Der Berg, S. & Spaull, N. (2020). 'Counting the Cost: COVID-19 school closures in South Africa and its impact on children', *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 10*(1), 924. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v10i1.924

VanderSchans, A. (2015). The Role of Name Choice in the Construction of Transgender Identities. [Master's Major Research Papers Article 2 and Proceedings of WISSLR]

Van Dyk, H., & White, C. J. (2019). Theory and practice of the quintile ranking in schools in south Africa: A financial management perspective. *South African Journal of Education, 39*(1), 51-60.

Vogl, S. (2013). Telephone Versus Face-to-Face Interviews: Mode Effect on Semi-Structured Interviews with Children, *Sociological Methodology, 43*(1), 133-177.

Watson, S., & Miller, T. (2012). LGBT oppression. *Multicultural Education, 19*(4), 2-7.

Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell

Wentling, T. (2015). Trans* disruptions: Pedagogical practices and pronoun recognition. *Transgender Studies Quarterly, 2*(3), 469-476.

Wilson, C. M., Douglas, K. S., & Lyon, D. R. (2011). Violence against teachers: Prevalence and consequences. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(12), 2353-2371.

Wood, L. (2009). Teaching in the age of AIDS: Exploring the challenges facing Eastern Cape teachers. *Journal of Education, 47*(1), 127-150.

Wood, F., Carrillo, A., & Turner, E. M. (2019). Visibly Unknown: Media Depiction of Murdered Transgender Women of Color. *Race and Justice*. http://doi.org/10.1177/2153368719886343

Yasin, R., & Namoco, S. (2020). Prostitution: a new dynamic of discrimination. *Gender in Management. An International Journal*. http://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2020-0205

Yengde, S. (2021) Indians in Apartheid South Africa: class, compromise and controversy in the era of the Group Areas Act, 1952–196., *Diaspora Studies, 14*(1), 75-96. http://doi.org/10.1080/09739572.2020.1816801

Zambon, V. (2021, February 11). What to know about gender pronouns. *Medical News Today*. https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/gender-pronouns.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ETHICAL CLEARANCE)

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli	Tel: 033 392 1063/51	Ref.:2/4/8/4092

Miss Karen Sathyanand
Road 721
House 98 Montford
CHATSWORTH
4092

Dear Miss Sathyanand

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEW ON TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 03 March 2020 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma/Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 03 March 2020

...Leading Social Compact and Economic Emancipation
Through a Revolutionary Education for all...

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa
Physical Address: 228 Pietermaritz Street • Ex-NED Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201
Tel.: +27 33 3921063 • **Fax:** +27 033 3921203 • **Email:** Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za • **Web:** www.kzneducation.gov.za
Facebook: KZNDOE....Twitter: @DBE_KZN....Instagram: kzn_education....Youtube kzndoe

APPENDIX B: PHOTO-ELICITATION (IMAGES)

A

B

Caitlyn Jenner [@caitlynjenner]. (2021, September 29). Autograph day [Instagram post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CI3fodjFDve

James Charles [@jamescharles]. (2021, September 29). Thermal energy [Instagram post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CUx_mAfhsg3

Lasizwe Dambuza [@lasizwedambuza]. (2021, September 29). One thing about me, I can be handsome and also pretty [Instagram post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CUwmqMTDcUd

Laverne Cox [@lavernecox]. (2021, September 29). TransIsBeautiful [Instagram post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CT-JAW9J_W

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Photo-elicitation

I.   Do you recognize the individuals in row A? yes/no
II. Where do you recognize them from?
III. What adjectives would you use to describe them?
IV. Why did you use these specific words?

Semi-structured interview

1. How would you describe gender?
2. Where does your understanding of gender come from?
3. Would you describe gender and sex as the same?
4. Do you believe that individuals are free to express their gender?
5. How would you describe transgender?
6. Where does your understanding of transgender come from?
7. How does identifying with gay compare to identifying as transgender?
8. What feelings emerge when you talk about this topic?
9. What role does your community, culture and religion play on your understanding of transgender identity?
10.   Do you think it is important for teachers to recognize transgender identity?
11.   What do you understand by terms homophobia and transphobia?
12.   Do you believe homophobic and transphobic behaviors are prevalent in primary schools?
13.   Would you be comfortable addressing topics of homophobia and transphobia in the classroom?
14.   What are the anticipated challenges?
15.   What support do teachers need to better their understanding of transgender identity?

APPENDIX D: VIGNETTE (SHORT STORY)

Narrative of transgender learner: Elliot

At the beginning of the new school year, a young boy (Elliot) enters your classroom. Gradually he begins to be teased by other learners because they say 'he behaves like a girl'. Elliot's impeccable appearance, mannerisms and particular feminine interests, result in exclusion from peer groups. Recently you noticed Elliot distressed in the classroom where he refused to participate in lessons and did not respond to you calling his name. Elliot insisted on more than one occasion that everyone should call her 'El'. You notify Elliot's parents and they admitted to have noticed the change in their child's demeanor. Both of Elliot's parents explain to you that they accept their child individuality and personality and request you respect her name choice.

APPENDIX E: GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you feel reading about this case?
2. What do you understand by the term identity?
3. Would you describe Elliot as a transgender identity?
4. Do you believe age is a factor in this case?
5. What do you understand by transgender pronoun choice?
6. Do you believe that individuals are free to change their name?
7. If you were in this situation would you support trans* learners' identity development in terms of recognizing their name choice? Why/ why not
8. How do you feel about comprehensive sexuality education?
9. Will the CSE be useful in terms of reducing homophobia and transphobia?
10. In your opinion, what support do teachers need to help their understanding?

APPENDIX F: UKZN (ETHICAL CLEARANCE)

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

28 July 2020

Miss Karen Sathyanand (219071806)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Miss Sathyanand,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001367/2020
Project title: Primary school teachers views on transgender identities.
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 22 July 2020 to our letter of 09 June 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid for one year until 28 July 2021
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

174

APPENDIX G: LETTER TO PRINCIPAL (S)

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

'LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH'

The Principal

████████████████

████████████████

████████████████

████████████████

Dear ███████████   Date: 20 February 2020

"Request to conduct research in your school"

I Karen Sathyanand, (student number 219071806), am a Master's student (Gender Education) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I request permission to carry out a research project at ████████████ School. My project seeks to explore "primary school teachers' view on transgender identities".

My study forms part of a larger research project (with Professor Deevia Bhana as Principal Investigator), titled, **learning from the learners**, which seeks to explore how boys and girls in schools in KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape learn about and "perform" gender and sexuality. My study is expected to enlist 30 teacher participants in total, and utilize focus group discussions with photo elicitation and individual interview sessions with vignettes as a data collection method. Considering the current state of COVID-19 and the declaration of the national lockdown, telephonic interviews and online group discussions via Skype or WhatsApp video call will be utilized to ensure the safety of participants. Therefore, times of group discussions and individual interviews can be altered depending on participants' availability. I intend to conduct this research between the 31st March- 12th June (Term 2). By doing so, I will ensure that teaching time is not disrupted.

The school along with each participate will remain anonymous and all data collected will be confidential. For this reason, pseudonyms will be allocated to the school and all participants. However, it must be understood that there are limits to confidentiality. Should at any time during the data collection process, a situation or a disclosure of a sensitive nature arises, the researcher will seek permission from the participant to address the matter and follow the required process. Please note that participants are permitted to withdraw involvement, without penalty. This will be further disclosed in written consent forms handed out to each participant.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

███████████   ███████████
--------------------------------   --------------------------------
Karen Sathyanand   Project Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhana

If you would like further information pertaining to the validity of the study, please contact my project supervisor, (see details above) or the "University of KwaZulu-Natal Research and Higher Degrees Office" on (031) 260 3919 / rhdedgewood@ukzn.ac.za

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

I .... (full name of principal) herby confirm that I have read and understood the content of the above letter, and consent to the school being used as a research site as well as grant authorization for teachers of the school to participate.

I acknowledge that date and times of the project will be at my discretion.

I also recognize the rights of the school and participants, to withdraw their involvement.

Principal's signature
20/02/2020

School stamp

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

'LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH'

The Principal

█████████████
█████████████
█████████████
█████████████

Dear █████████████   Date: 20 February 2020

"Request to conduct research in your school"

I Karen Sathyanand, (student number 219071806), am a Master's student (Gender Education) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I request permission to carry out a research project at ████████ School. My project seeks to explore "primary school teachers' view on transgender identities".

My study forms part of a larger research project (with Professor Deevia Bhana as Principal Investigator), titled, **learning from the learners**, which seeks to explore how boys and girls in schools in KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape learn about and "perform" gender and sexuality. My study is expected to enlist 30 teacher participants in total, and utilize focus group discussions with photo elicitation and individual interview sessions with vignettes as a data collection method. Considering the current state of COVID-19 and the declaration of the national lockdown, telephonic interviews and online group discussions Skype or WhatsApp video call will be utilized to ensure the safety of participants. Therefore, times of group discussions and individual interviews can be altered depending on participants' availability. I intend to conduct this research between the 31st March- 12th June (Term 2).By doing so, I will ensure that teaching time is not disrupted.

The school along with each participate will remain anonymous and all data collected will be confidential. For this reason, pseudonyms will be allocated to the school and all participants. However, it must be understood that there are limits to confidentiality. Should at any time during the data collection process, a situation or a disclosure of a sensitive nature arises, the researcher will seek permission from the participant to address the matter and follow the required process. Please note that participants are permitted to withdraw involvement, without penalty. This will be further disclosed in written consent forms handed out to each participant.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

_____   _____
Karen Sathyanand   Project Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhana

If you would like further information pertaining to the validity of the study, please contact my project supervisor, (see details above) or the "University of KwaZulu-Natal Research and Higher Degrees Office" on (031) 260 3919 / rhdedgewood@ukzn.ac.za

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

I ███████████████████████████████████. (full name of principal) herby confirm that I have read and understood the content of the above letter, and consent to the school being used as a research site as well as grant authorization for teachers of the school to participate.

I acknowledge that date and times of the project will be at my discretion.

I also recognize the rights of the school and participants, to withdraw their involvement.

███████████████
....

Principal's signature

███████████████████████

School stamp

APPENDIX H: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Dear Participant

25 August 2020

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

I, Karen Sathyanand (███████████████), am a Master's student (Gender Education) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I request your participation in a study that I am undertaking as part of my degree. My study forms part of a larger research project (with Professor Deevia Bhana as Principal Investigator,) titled, **learning from the learners**, which seeks to explore how boys and girls in schools in KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape learn about and "perform" gender and sexuality.

The aim of my study titled "primary school teachers' views on transgender identities'" seeks to explore teachers' understanding and attitudes pertaining to transgender identities, and how these understandings potentially filter into the teaching environment, as school spaces have been identified as domains where gender and sexual diversity is rejected. This study is expected to enlist 30 teacher participants in total, and request your voluntary participation in a group discussion with photo elicitation methods as well as an individual interview with the use of vignettes, that is estimated to last 30-40 minutes each. Considering the current state of COVID-19, telephonic interviews and online group discussions via Skype or WhatsApp video call will be used. Therefore, times of group discussions and individual interviews can be altered depending on your availability.

With your permission, an audio recorder will be used during each session. After the collection of data, the information from recordings will be transcribed and validated with you, by sending the transcripts of sessions through email. Pseudonyms of your choice will be allocated to you to ensure confidentiality and anonymity is upheld all the time. Data collected will be safely put in storage and thereafter destroyed pending five years. Please note that you have an option to participate or withdraw from the research project if you feel you no longer want to continue, there are no penalties. This study is not designed to create discomfort or stress nevertheless if any concerns or questions arise, please contact my project supervisor Professor Deevia Bhana on: (031) 260 2603/ bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za, or the "Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee" (HSSREC) on: 031 260 3587/ hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution.

Karen Sathyanand

Participant email: .... Participant cell number: ....

DECLARATION

I.. (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have read and understood the content of the above document, and I agree to be a participant.

I also recognize my right to withdraw participation.

....
Participant's signature   Date

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[please ✓]

I agree to audio- record:	Yes	No
my group discussion		
my individual interview		

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX I: TURNITIN REPORT

APPENDIX J: EDITOR'S LETTER

DR LEE-ANNE ROUX

EDITOR | PROOFREADER

☎ +27 82 825 7325
✉ leeanne@proof-reading.co.za
🌐 www.proof-reading.co.za

PROOF-READING

PROFESSIONAL EDITING SERVICES

PHD PRACTICAL THEOLOGY (SU) ● MTH PRACTICAL THEOLOGY (SU) ● BA (HONS) PSYCHOLOGY (UNISA)
BTH (HONS) PRACTICAL THEOLOGY (UNISA) ● BTH PASTORAL COUNSELLING (UNISA)

11 August 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: LANGUAGE EDITING

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited the thesis titled:

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEWS ON TRANSGENDER IDENTITY

By

Karen Sathyanand

████████████████

Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lee-Anne Roux