



**EXPLORING HETEROSEXUAL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS GAY AND LESBIAN AT THE  
HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-  
NATAL**

**By**

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As the candidate's supervisor, I approve the submission of this thesis

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## **Abstract**

LGBTQIA+ students seem to be the most marginalised group in the university environment. Homosexual attacks, discrimination, oppression, verbal harassment, and physical threats reflect negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students on the Howard University campus. Numerous factors play a role in influencing attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students such as culture, religion, social media, and derogatory language that is used against LGBTQIA+.

This study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the attitudes of heterosexual students towards LGBTQIA+ students on campus. Ten participants were interviewed using an interview schedule, and data were analysed using thematic analysis. The study's findings show that negative attitudes towards gay and lesbian students at UKZN still exist, and male heterosexual students have more negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ than female heterosexual students. The main themes that emerged from the study show that verbal harassment and physical threats are common toward gay and lesbian students on campus. The study's findings provide insight into the attitudes of heterosexual students towards students who identify as gay and lesbian.

The recommendations from the study are that educational institutions develop strategies for integrating LGBTQIA+ students into the higher education system by ensuring a support system and appropriate organisational responses to specifically address these issues. The study further recommends that the university give specific support by hiring social workers to provide attitude-responsive educational programmes and participate in policy development at the university management level.

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## Acronyms

LGBTQIA+ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and others.

UKZN University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

It has been emphasized that sociologists consider sex, gender, and sexuality to be different, consisting of separate features defined in binary terms (Lorber, 1996). Bhana (2012, p 310) illustrates these binary terms by stating that the human body/physical appearance is either male or female, where it presents one's gender. Whereas behaviour of gender and social roles are categorized as either masculine or feminine, a social actor's sexuality is based on the division between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Thus, these identified variables are known as indications of social dynamics that could have an impact on attitudes, behaviour as well as an individual's life chances (Tshilongo, 2018). Further, these dynamics may be understood as a group of norms, identities, and roles which may serve as indicators of the social, gendered, or sexual self.

Brickell (2006) alluded that these dynamics are socially constructed. According to Schilt and Westbrook (2009), sex, gender, and sexuality systems rest on the belief that there is a link between gendered behaviour, (hetero) sexual identity and social roles, and one's biological sex, which results in an attraction between two opposite sexes. However, this belief upholds gender inequality as opposites. Hence bodies, genders, and sexes cannot be expected to fulfil identical social roles and, as such, cannot receive similar resources. Thus, Schilt and Westbrook (2009, p.451) argue that this ideology tends to perpetuate the belief that a heterosexual gender and sexual identity is valued over other sexual minority identities and expression and creates an inherent system of associated power and privileges, thus enforcing a hierarchy of rigid beliefs, rules about issues concerning gender, expressions, and roles to which individuals are expected to conform. So, failing to conform to these prescriptions may then be viewed as immoral behaviour that threatens the existing norms that may lead to the preceding reference to sexual violence to 'correct' a perceived deviant gender or sexual identity (Tshilongo, 2018).

Sexuality is a prominent part of everyone's life (Gaine, 2010). Those who are heterosexual never need to think about their sexuality regularly because it has been normalized. However, those who are not members of this group face prejudice, fear, and hate because of their sexuality daily (Gaine, 2010). Compulsory heteronormative and gender-normative behaviour is accepted and even encouraged in society and institutions of learning. This fosters and sustains a culture

of silence, which often determines acceptable sexual and gender norms. Sexuality is constructed through a heterosexual and homosexual lense where its binary opposite is seen as abnormal and deviant (Fox, 2007). Thus, Victor, Nel, Lynch, and Mbatha (2014) confirm that some LGBTQIA+ individuals are victims of heteronormative and patriarchal prescriptions which discriminate against them owing to their gender and sexual non-conformity.

Gender and sexuality are entrenched in and conveyed through heteronormative ideologies by way of different responses, values, expectations, roles, and responsibilities given to individuals and groups according to their biological sex (Johnson, Greaves & Repta, 2007). Toomey, McGuire, and Russell (2012, p.188), show that heteronormativity may be considered “a hierarchical societal system that privileges and sanctions individuals based on assumed binaries of gender and sexuality; as a system that defines and enforces beliefs and practices on what is “Normal” in everyday life” concerning gendered and sexual identities (Ingraham 2006, p.309). For instance, most South African girls and boys are engaged in certain roles that guide them in how they should behave as gendered beings. These norms and beliefs maintain the dominance of heterosexuality by constraining and subordinating homosexuality (Corber & Valocchi 2003). Gender construction has also impacted on attitudes of people because of the stereotypes and norms of masculinity and femininity (Jagessar, 2015). For example, it often is not only the same-sex sexual activity that is condemned but also the crossing of gender roles within the sexual act (Durell, Chiong & Battle, 2007).

This highlights the socially constructed nature of gender, which normalizes heterosexuality and renders any other sexuality abnormal. Gender norms are used to make assumptions about socially constructed gender norms. Msibi (2012) claims that homophobic and heterosexism discourses are consolidated by the hierarchical and oppositional ordering of sexuality. It is suggested that homophobia and sexism are direct aspects of patriarchy (Mattyse, 2015). Bodies are policed to the extent that in some conservative communities, women are not allowed to wear trousers and shorts. This is considered inappropriate for women, especially in conservative South African contexts communities. For instance, teachers may implement the rules in the dress code where girls are expected to wear skirts rather than pants. Thus, school rules allow girls to wear pants, and this absurdity promotes both sexism and homophobia.

Homosexuality is a complex phenomenon that has been a subject of interest for centuries and has been part of the human experience for decades. The term homosexuality is a broad concept that involves both men and women. It is usually described as sexual activity or behaviour

between people of the same sex or having sexual feelings toward other people of the same sex and defining self as homosexual (Trippo, 1977). In this study, homosexual people are classified into gay and lesbian students. The term “homosexuality” was first used in the United States of America but originated from European medical literature (Blasius & Phelan, 1997). According to Murphy (1997), the American Psychiatric Association (APA) formally classified homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance in 1952. This classification was revised in 1968 to characterize homosexuality as a mental disorder. It was only as late as 1973 that the A.P.A. voted to remove homosexuality from the DSM and finally declassified and discarded its diagnosis as a disorder (Murphy, 1997). This was supported by findings made by renowned psychologist Evelyn Hooker, who concluded that there were no differences between gay and heterosexual men’s mental health (Martinez, 2011). With homosexuality no longer being classified as a mental illness or illegal, LGBTQIA+ individuals have seen some progress towards equality (Cornish, 2012). Despite this, throughout the world, discrimination against LGBTQIA+ individuals is still common, and this discrimination unsurprisingly has an impact on the psychological well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals (Cornish 2012).

Though homosexuality is accepted in other countries, there is still to be a significant amount of prejudice toward the LGBTQIA+ community. Sexual prejudice is frequently reported in the LGBTQIA+ literature, with studies reporting 66 % of LGBTQIA+ individuals experiencing discrimination because of their sexual orientation (Warner et al. 2004). Thus, discrimination can occur from a young age within an individual’s family and continues throughout their life, in school, at work, and within the community (Cornish, 2012). According to Herek (2000, p.19) sexual prejudice is “negative attitudes toward an individual because of her or his sexual orientation”. Although other minorities, who often share their minority status with their family, LGBTQIA+ individuals tend to also experience victimization within their own families (Hunter, 1992). Balsam, Rothblum and Beauchaine (2005) found that LGBTQIA+ individuals reported more childhood psychological, physical, and sexual abuse by their parents or guardian compared to their heterosexual siblings. Further research has shown that when individuals are open with their sexuality, they are at risk of abuse from their family members. Australian LGBTQIA+ youth found that young people were worried that disclosing their sexual preference would humiliate their families and feared being rejected by their family and friends”. This was particularly prevalent in religious families and families from an ethnic minority background. Statistics from South African show that in 2013, 61% of South African

respondents believed society should not accept homosexuality. The results above correspond with the Pew Research Centre found that 62% of South Africans personally believe that homosexuality is morally unacceptable. Findings from the (2016 OUT Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Well-Being) report point towards victimization being particularly high amongst school-aged youth, individuals aged 16-24 years expressed that they have even experienced victimization based on their LGBTQIA+ status, most commonly in the form of verbal insults, (55%) and threats of violence (35%).

During the tragic times of apartheid in South Africa, the apartheid contributed to a lot of discrimination towards the basis of sexual orientation, as well as bringing about equal rights for LGBTQIA+ people in the constitution. In times of apartheid, homosexuals were oppressed, marginalized, stigmatized, and discriminated against. The dominant white culture was one of authoritarianism, heterosexism, and patriarchy (Nel & Judge 2008). A study conducted by (Gunkel 2010) illustrates how the government at the time of apartheid regulated its race regime through heterosexuality and acts such as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act, no. 55 of 1949, the Immorality Act; and the Sexual offences Act 23 of 1957. Thus, Homosexual sex was referred to as “sodomy” during apartheid, which was a punishable offence under these patriarchal laws, but sex between women was not criminalized (Gunkel, 2010). According to Potgieter (2006), this indicates women’s position in society at the time of apartheid was not seen as important enough to warrant any laws, or that a lesbian existence was just a figment of the imagination and embarking on such behaviours was seen as meriting other types of “corrective” actions. It has been contended that homosexuals were viewed as criminals, and sometimes, they even lost employment because of their sexuality (Wells & Polders 2006).

Therefore, there were LGBTQIA+ organizations that were formed to fight against the ill-treatment of homosexuals. On 1 April 1982, the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) was formed, and it was the first LGBTQIA+ people organization to be formed in South Africa (DeVos 2007). According to Croucher (2002), GASA’s main mandate was to provide the answer for all the LGBTQIA+ people’s needs and rights. There were anti-apartheid movements that took place in the 1980s where they advocated for sexual rights. Simon Nkoli, a young black man from Soweto, was very active in the youth anti-apartheid movements (Cock 2003). Nkoli, the activist, noted that the struggle against apartheid was inseparable from homophobia and advocated that LGBTQIA+ people also had to be free from discrimination based on their

sexuality (Barnard & De Vos, 2007). However, Nkoli was arrested because he was at the forefront of fighting for the rights of LGBTQIA+ people. He was serving his three years sentence in Robben Island, and he was the world's most famous figure for gay rights (Kennedy 2006). During the 1990s, several townships in South Africa developed homosexuals organizations, such as the Gays and Lesbians of the Witwatersrand (GLOW), and Simon Nkoli was the chairperson (Christiansen 1997). The LGBTQIA+ activism during the apartheid era and lobbying efforts by the National Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Equality all played a role in bringing about changes in the law for homosexual people in South Africa (Murray 1998). The efforts of various organizations fighting for the rights of LGBTQIA+ people have resulted in the South African constitution implementing equal human rights for all people regardless of their race, gender, and sexuality. Today, from a human rights point of view, South Africa stands out amongst other African countries as being much more progressive in terms of sexual diversity.

Despite the laws that protect LGBTQIA+ people in South Africa, discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa and other African countries has progressed beyond philosophical condemnation to physical violence (Mendos 2019). Some LGBTQIA+ people have been ridiculed, abused, raped, imprisoned, or killed in public (Msibi 2009). With the advent of democracy in South Africa, those who identify as queers along the LGBTQIA+ continuum were promised that they would benefit from constitutional protections such as freedom of sexual affiliation, travel, and access to information (De Palma & Francis, 2014). However, heteronormativity is legitimized by numerous South African institutions, including schools and universities (Brown & De Wet, 2018; Francis, 2019). This thwarts efforts to promote the relevance of progressive agendas that prioritize the protection of these vulnerable groups in South Africa, especially in institutions of higher learning.

Universities are not just places where students learn academic subjects, and they are also places where students become more aware of their identities in a variety of ways, most notably around sexuality, which is inextricably linked to gender struggles (DePalma & Atkinson, 2006). Most South Africans consider the LGBTQIA+ community or those in same-sex partnerships to be unacceptable (Lesch, Brits & Naidoo, 2015). As a result, it is not shocking that many South African students still have negative attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ persons. The study conducted by Mwaba (2009) at the University of Western Cape, South Africa, indicates that up to 44% of

students in South Africa oppose the idea that homosexuality should be socially acceptable because they believe it is immoral. Msibi (2012) claims that young LGBTQIA+ have terrible school experiences ranging from punitive actions communicated in disparaging language to savage hate expressed through violence. In this study, I refer to gays and lesbians.

To put this in context, gay and lesbian students at universities encounter homophobia (the irrational fear of, hatred of, or contempt for homosexuals or homosexuality (Muller 2013:2), biphobia, internalized oppression, marginalization, prejudice, and violence regularly (NACOSA, 2014). LGBTQIA+ students have reported being victims of a variety of forms of violence, ranging from physical assault, rape, and murder to more subtle forms like microaggressions (NACOSA, 2014; Brink, 2017).

## **1.2. Problem statement**

Attitudes shape people's behaviour, and in the university environment, gay and lesbian students are vulnerable to discrimination and stigma. This is a problem because there is widespread homophobia globally and in our country. Despite having the most progressive legislation and policies in place to combat homophobic attacks against LGBTQIA+, South African LGBTQIA+ students continue to face violent homophobic attacks, and these negative views toward LGBTQIA+ students exist in institutions of learning from primary school to higher education institutions, notwithstanding constitutional provisions, and anti-discriminatory laws (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Ganga-Limando, 2014,p.2). South African college students nevertheless preserve negative attitudes in the direction of LGBTQIA+ people in society and on campus. Mwaba (2009) determined that 44 % of the university students in his lecture room examine believed that LGBTQIA+ students ought to now no longer be socially accepted in South Africa, as they have taken into consideration it to be immoral. However, approximately 41 % believed that the government was right in granting equal rights to LGBTQIA+ community. Negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students are still prevalent on many university campuses. Bhana (2014) notes that verbal harassment, threats, and physical violence are common for LGBTQIA+ students. For these students, their identity formation process may be complex because of the potentially negative experiences of humiliation and homophobia based on sexual orientation and/or heteronormative inclinations since they do not conform to the accepted gender and sexual roles of the larger mainly heterosexual society (Harper & Schneider, 2003). The victimization of young LGBTQIA+ in South Africa is significantly higher than that of their non-LGBTQIA+ counterparts. This study sought to provide an in-

intensity exploration of heterosexual students' attitudes towards those who identify as LGBTQIA+ students at the Howard College campus on the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This emphasizes the necessity of understanding the reasons for these hostile attitudes, which may have detrimental repercussions on gay and lesbian students

### **1.3. The rationale of the study**

People's attitudes towards homosexuality, especially heterosexual students' attitudes, have constituted the focus of many studies conducted around the world. The challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ students in university communities have become a major focus of research in recent years globally (Osmanaga, 2015). Such scholars as Francis and Msibi (2011); Rothmann and Simmonds (2015) also indicated the nature of homophobia in South African education contexts, including derogatory language, discrimination, and sexual assaults.

Despite South Africa's legal protection rights for the LGBTQIA+ community, a considerable number of South Africans still have judgmental attitudes towards them. People's attitudes influence their behaviour, and LGBTQIA+ students at universities are especially at risk of discrimination. A developing quantity of research on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students in South Africa has developed, illustrating and unfriendly, in large part unsupportive, and unsafe contexts in which many of these young LGBTQIA+ find themselves. Jagessar and Msibi (2015) unpacked the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students at a Higher Education Institution to highlight how LGBTQIA+ students are being marginalized, oppressed, and discriminated. Bhaba (2014) also alluded that in South African universities, over 30 lesbian killings have been reported in the last fifteen years (Bhana 2014). When it comes to education in South Africa, there are rules in place that protect basic rights. Despite these policies and safeguards, schools continue to be hostile environments for LGBTQIA+ students who are harassed, tormented, and victimized. This demonstrates a misalignment of policy and practice, as well as the fact that the South African education system is still not as all-inclusive as it aims to be.

This study hopes that examining heterosexual university students' attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students will provide valuable insight into how to move toward a climate free of heteronormativity and homophobic discrimination. It must be emphasized that students, regardless of their sexuality, play a vital role in creating a climate of free discrimination and stigma and that their views must be heard. In essence, the rationale for this study is to understand the acceptability of LGBTQIA+ students' sexuality by the wider student

community on campus. It is anticipated that this study will highlight a gap in the existing pool of literature about the attitudes of the wider student community to LGBTQIA+ students at the Howard College campus.

#### **1.4. Location of the study**

This study was conducted at the Howard College campus at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which has students with diverse sexual orientations. UKZN Howard College was chosen location because of the issues of homophobia that have been predominant on the Howard College campus Facebook page in the form of hate speech and negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students.

#### **1.5. Aim of the study**

This study aims to explore the attitudes of heterosexual students towards students who identify as gay and lesbian at Howard College campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **1.6. Objectives of the study**

- a) To explore the extent of acceptability of gay and lesbian students on campus.
- b) To explore the attitudes of heterosexual students towards gay and lesbian students on campus.
- c) To explore the effects of attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students.

#### **1.7. Definition of keywords**

##### ***1.7.1 Sexuality***

Sexuality is much more than sexual feelings or sexual intercourse. Sexuality is an important part of who a person is and what she or he will become. It includes all the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of being a male or female, being in love, as well as being in a relationship that includes sexual intimacy and physical, sexual activity. The World Health Organisation defines sexuality as a central aspect of being human throughout life which encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction (Gruskin, Yadav, Castellanos-Usigli, Khizanishvili & Kismödi, 2019). It is expressed and experienced in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles, and relationships. While sexuality can include all these dimensions, not all of them are



always experienced or expressed (Macleod & McCabe, 2020). Sexuality is therefore influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual factors.

### ***1.7.2 Heterosexuality***

Heterosexuality is largely defined as an attraction to the opposite sex. Poole (2017) defined heterosexuality as a sexual orientation where there is emotional, romantic and or sexual attraction and desire between two people of the “opposite” sex and gender. Gender is a socially constructed concept, like heterosexuality originating in Euro-Western society and sciences, based on the idea of difference where the word hetero means different. The normalization of this sexuality eventually “other” other sexualities that do not conform to the norm of heterosexuality. The normalization of binaries, therefore, led to homosexuality being seen as the opposite of heterosexuality. The global spread of this sexuality obscured various ways in which people viewed sexuality, thereby disallowing sexuality outside of the norm (Manning, 2013). Heterosexuality has become so normalized that all people are typically considered heterosexual until stated otherwise.

### ***1.7.3 Homosexuality***

Homosexuality is derived from the Greek word Homo, which means same and refers to a person’s sexual attraction and affection towards the member of one’s sex, (Ciccarelli & White, 2021). It refers to an individual who is primarily attracted to another individual of the same sex. The attraction may be physical, emotional, and/or sexual (Woronoff & Mallon, 2006). Homosexual people are classified into gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender (LGBTQIA+).

### ***1.7.4 Homophobia***

The term “homophobia” was coined by George Weinberg (1972) in the late 1960s. His work signalled a general shift, whereby no longer homosexuality itself but the negative attitudes towards homosexuality became increasingly seen as a social problem worthy of study. The suffix in “phobia” suggests it to be an irrational fear, like the fear of heights or spiders (Roggemans, Spruyt, Droogenbroeck & Keppens 2015). Some public opinion researchers try to avoid such intermingling of cause and consequence and prefer to speak about ‘sexual prejudice’ (Herek, 2004), and ‘anti-gay sentiment’ (Hooghe, Harell, Quintelier & Dejaeghere

2010), or ‘homonegativity’ (Stulhofer & Rimac, 2009). We share the critique on the term ‘homophobia’ and prefer to use ‘negative attitudes towards homosexuality. We share the critique on the term ‘homophobia’ and prefer to use ‘negative attitudes towards homosexuality. This term has negative connotations, attitudes, hostility, and oppression based on sexual orientation (Herek, 2004). Homophobia is observable in critical and hostile behaviour such as discrimination and violence based on a perceived non-heterosexual orientation (Human Rights Watch, 2011,p.2).

## **1.8. Structure of the dissertation**

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the study with the background and problem statement discussed. The aim and objectives of the study are provided.

Chapter 2 encompasses the literature review chapter. This chapter presents the literature review of some of the studies that have been undertaken on LGBTQIA+ students globally and specifically in South Africa. The chapter then merges contemporary discussions and arguments on LGBTQIA+ students from existing literature.

Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter that focuses on a detailed description of the qualitative interpretivism paradigm. A discussion on the use of the research designs, sampling methods, data collection method, data analysis methods, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations is presented.

Chapter 4 focused on the presentation and discussion of the study’s findings. This chapter begins with a presentation of the demographic characteristics of the participants. The main themes are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of findings concerning the objectives of the study and it outlines the major conclusions drawn from the research findings and recommendations concerning the study.

The next chapter provides an overview of the literature review in the designated area of study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1. History of the problem**

The topic of homosexuality and homophobia has attracted considerable interest among social scientists in recent years (Drazenovich, 2012). This is partly due to the increased visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTQIA+) communities worldwide. Breaking the silence on LGBTQIA+ issues has led to significant changes at the macro level to support LGBTQIA+ rights in South Africa. According to Akokpari and Zimbler (2008) most African states adopted a Bill of Rights in their constitutions, taking a stand against any form of discrimination. South Africa as a nation has undergone major social and political changes since 1994 when the Apartheid Government was dismantled in favour of a democratic state. In this process, many South Africans have had to renegotiate their identities in terms of race, class, and gender. Sexuality has been placed in the political limelight throughout this period of transition, with South Africa being known to have some of the most progressive laws concerning sexual orientation in the world (Gunkel 2010). Despite these advancements, antigay attitudes are still pervasive and are a significant source of stress and pain for many LGBTQIA+ people.

### **2.2 Oppression of LGBTQIA+ members of the community**

The topic of sexuality has historically been an area of moral and cultural conflict, with homosexuality being particularly contentious. Sexual diversity, however, is a fact of life. Two per cent of the world's population of women (12 million), and four per cent of men (24 million), live exclusively as homosexuals (Baird 2001). Yet, it continues to be illegal in at least 70 countries worldwide, with it being a capital offence in Afghanistan, Mauritania, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen (Baird 2001). Despite the widespread talks about human and sexuality rights, homophobic attitudes often combined with a lack of legal protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity exposes many LGBTQIA+ persons to gross violations of their human rights. They are discriminated against in many avenues of society, for instance, in learning spaces, workspaces as well as hospitals.

LGBTQIA+ people have historically been victims of exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization and denied the right to be different or other from the norm of heterosexuality as imposed by society.

Group identification and social identity development for LGBTQIA+ people have long been synonymous with negative characteristics and inferior status in society. Since South Africa became a democratic country, certain rights have become available to citizens previously described as ‘other’. The Constitution of South Africa states that people should be treated equally based on the principles of human dignity, equality, and the advancement of human rights and freedom for all. The right to equality is discussed in Section 9 of the Constitution and deals with issues concerning the equality clause. Section 9 (1) provides the basic principles behind the right to equality by stating that everyone is equal before the law. The overall vision of the Constitution of South Africa is to protect every citizen from unfair treatment and any form of oppression. Section 9 of the Constitution of South Africa declares that neither the State nor any other person may discriminate unfairly against any individual or social group based on any of the following forms of difference: race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, culture, or language.

In keeping with the vision of equality for all, supporting legislation is in place to prevent discrimination in a range of areas (Sanpath, 2006). An example of this is the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000, which commits the government to promote equality on all grounds. While the South African Bill of Rights Act of 1996 section 10 emphasizes respect and recognizes all people’s rights, which is in keeping with its overall commitment to democratic values, what transpires in everyday practice is not always consistent with this inclusive vision. The reality is that inclusion, tolerance, and respect are not always practised in communities. Gay and lesbian people are still considered ‘other’ and still experience various forms of oppression daily.

In addition, LGBTQIA+ people have not been fully recognized nor afforded equal rights or social status in numerous societies both globally and locally (Adams, Blumenfeld, Castaneda, Hackman, Peters, & Zuniga 2000). Homophobic attitudes and the stigma attached to their ‘otherness’ have resulted in their mistreatment and oppression. The development of an identity, although commonly made along the lines of social difference, is more frequently accomplished through practices of exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression (Vincent 2003). Group identification and social identity development for LGBTQIA+ people are synonymous with negative characteristics and inferior social status. They are regarded as criminals, sick, abnormal, rejected because of their difference; excluded from many activities taking place in their communities, and often the target of violence (D’Augelli 1989). LGBTQIA+ have faced

longstanding oppression and stigmatization due to their deviant sexual orientation. A study conducted by Comstock (1991) indicates that LGBTQIA+ students are victimized at a far higher rate than others on college and university campuses, with rates four times higher than the rate of victimization reported for the general student population. It reveals that LGBTQIA+ students experience kicked, beaten, punched, or thrown objects on them (Comstock 1991).

Homophobia is the fear or hatred of and hostility towards LGBTQIA+ people that has existed throughout history and continues to operate today. It can manifest itself in many forms, including derogatory comments or jokes, physical attacks, discrimination in the workplace, and negative media representation. While very few large-scale research projects investigating homosexual youth have taken place in South Africa, there have been several important small-scale investigations (Richardson 2006). These small-scale studies have focused on homophobia and the negative experiences of gay and lesbian youth, and the main conclusion drawn from these studies is that despite liberal laws which have been introduced to protect the rights of homosexuals, including the Constitution of South Africa, LGBTQIA+ youth are still victimized, bullied and harassed even by those who are expected to uphold the principles of the South African Constitution, including schoolteachers (Richardson 2006).

Developing and accepting an alternative sexual orientation requires exiting a learned heterosexual status and embracing an LGBTQIA+ self (D'Augelli 1994). Exposure to university settings is a crucial time for sexual identity formation since this is the time when students are more likely to engage with issues of pluralism and diversity. LGBTQI+ identity has been shown to develop in early adolescence from age 13 through to 26, with gay youth typically acting on their feelings at about age 15 and lesbians at aged 20 (Vare & Norton, 1998). Vare and Norton (1998) indicate that LGBTQIA+ adolescents experience the same biological, cognitive, and social developmental changes as heterosexual teens but face several major stressors and behaviours that are highly characteristic of this population. For example, they are more likely to be stigmatized for being homosexual who can result in harassment and violence against them. LGBTQIA+ youth who are stigmatized may use various strategies to cope, such as denying their gay identities, withdrawing from their peers, developing health and academic difficulties, and abusing substances (Vare & Norton, 1998).

### 2.3 African countries responses to the LGBTQIA+ community

According to the Amnesty International report of 2012, most African countries have not welcomed the notion of LGBTQIA+. This is seen through African leaders who made “anti-gay” statements. Some of these statements were made by the former president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, who said: “When I was growing up, *unqingili* (a gay person) would not have stood in front of me. I would knock him out” (Hawker 2015). Zuma later apologized for his comment. Another anti-gay statement was made by Reverend Kenneth Meshoe of the ACDP, who openly and emphatically opposed gay marriages on public platforms in Parliament and opposed Archbishop Bishop Desmond Tutu. He said that he would refuse to enter a “homophobic heaven” or serve a “homophobic God” and stated: “We ask Archbishop Tutu not to confuse people who respect the scriptures and advised him to keep his unbelief to himself if he does not believe in the teaching of the Holy Bible” (Hawker 2015). Another anti-gay comment was made by the Zulu King, King Goodwill Zwelithini, who said: “Traditionally, there were no people who engaged in same-sex relationships. There was nothing like that, and if you do it, you must know that you are rotten”. The King later stated that he was quoted incorrectly due to poor translation. Other leaders in Africa who made anti-gay statements include former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe publicly stated that he believed LGBTQIA+ were “no lower than pigs and perverts and therefore have no rights” (Tiripano 2000). Littauer (2013) notes that President Mugabe even stepped up his campaign against LGBTI Zimbabweans during an election rally in 2013. President Mugabe argued, “if you take men and lock them in a house for five years and tell them to come up with two children and they fail to do that, then we will chop off their heads” (Littauer 2013). Moreover, President Mugabe has described gays as being worse than barnyard animals and has also criticized the United States and President Barack Obama for using foreign aid for the protection of LGBTQIA+ rights. He cautioned African countries that have not criminalized same-sex acts, saying they were falling for the European countries’ trickery all in the name of foreign aid (LGBTQIA+ Nation, 2013). When leaders make statements that are anti-gay, it may not be easy for other people in the country to be less homophobic towards LGBTQIA+ people as they might believe that LGBTQIA+ people, therefore, need to be punished. Such expressions by leaders may thus negatively impact the safety of LGBTQIA+ people.

Thus, the issue of LGBTQIA+ rights in Post-independence Africa remains a contentious topic since, for most of the states, it is deemed taboo/ immoral and inhuman. Even though

LGBTQIA+ exist, they suppress or conceal their identities because of the fear of societal discrimination. However, despite this heated discussion on homosexuality, South Africa embraced the notion of lesbians and gays. However, constitutionality has not assured an end to social discrimination and violence (Francis & Msibi, 2011). There seems to be a missing element when it comes to the protection of lesbian rights in South Africa. Herek and Beril (1992) asserted some time ago that lesbians are part of a marginalized population that places them at risk of targeted victimization. Rankin (2003) asserts that discrimination against lesbians is found in all levels of society; hence, it is also found in educational institutions. The fact that some students are lesbian, they experience discrimination and marginalization one way or the other during their schooling and, by extension, their university careers (Vollenhoven & Els, 2013).

#### **2.4 LGBTQIA+ in insitutions of higher learning**

Due to the various diversities often present in higher education institutions, many LGBTQIA+ students often find space and freedom to claim and negotiate their same-sex identities when they reach higher education institutions (Soudien 2008). However, this does not always mean that LGBTQIA+ students are accepted in these institutions. For instance, (Msibi, 2009) states that while universities are often perceived as diverse and liberal environments, the opposite often happens in South African higher education institutions. Homophobia is a daily experience of many LGBTQIA+ individuals or others who are perceived to conform to non-normative gender and sexual identities.

A school is a frightening place for LGBTQIA+ children because of the shame and ridicule and the fear of being attacked, resulting in frequent absences and academic failure (Bailey, 2003). These children frequently waste an excessive amount of time and energy worrying about how to get to and from school safely, how to avoid being surrounded by other students in hallways, if they will be safe in the lunch or locker room, and which restroom they can use and when (Bailey, 2003). The press has focused on the extent to which gay-friendly institutions of higher learning exist in the United Kingdom (UK). Homophobia on campus remains a big problem in UK higher education institutions, and as a result, universities and colleges are not seen as 'safe venues' in which to discuss sexual orientation/gender identity (Sonja, 2008). He also alluded that about 23.4% of students said they had been the subject of homophobic harassment/discrimination at least once during their time at university.

In most situations, lesbians in Higher Education Institutions are not fully understood, appreciated, and served. Collier (2001) asserts that women who self-identify as lesbians are often viewed as the other, and it is difficult to understand because some lesbians portray male characteristics in their lifestyle. In many cases, lesbianism makes it difficult for other heterosexual students to understand them, normally generating disgust and hate towards lesbian students. Rankin (2003) and Collier (2001) posit that students in university communities often fear 'coming out as a lesbian for the sake of protecting their academic careers. In some instances, they receive negative comments from their educators, and some make it known by intentionally failing some LGBTQIA+ students. Francis and Msibi (2011) study revealed that some educators even make disturbing remarks such as, "homosexuality is a social disease."

Traditional students are often introduced to unfamiliar subcultures for the first time on the college campus. Recent high school graduates find themselves transitioning from an atmosphere in which homophobia is likely to be tolerated and possibly even expected to an educational setting in which diversity is promoted. To uphold our country's democracy, an educated and informed society is essential. A university education not only provides students with knowledge and skills but also aims to equip them with the ability to deal with societal problems. Universities provide the foundation for students to change, grow and develop to equip them with the complexities of living in modern society. According to Gaff (1983) it is in the context of higher education that students develop personal qualities such as tolerance of ambiguity and empathy for people with different values.

Although it is still true that most learners find it difficult to maintain an open and unprejudiced attitude toward LGBTQIA+ learners, there is both increasing tolerance for gays and lesbians and a slow increasing understanding of sexual diversity in our culture. Perhaps in a few short decades, the majority opinion will be in favour of accepting sexual minorities and an understanding that gay, lesbian, transgendered, and transsexual persons are equally capable and equally deserving of societal respect and support (Mbisi, 2012). Until that time, it will take many pioneers to pave this road of social tolerance and respect. The way homosexuality has been perceived throughout history has a direct impact on how it has been considered in the ensuing centuries. In the late nineteenth century, medical discourse and sexological literature became fertile ground for the creation of sexual categories (Pickett, 2009). According to Drazenovich (2012) western society turned sexuality into a science, portraying homosexuality as a medicalized disorder embedded in a subgroup of people to create a chaotic community.



With the growth of industrialization, anti-homosexual sentiment grew more prevalent and violent globally. Homosexuality has been defined as a sin, an abomination against Judeo-Christian traditions, and a major felony (Brown, 2011). In addition to criminal sanctions, the medical community vilified gay men and lesbians, portraying them as immoral, sick, and inferior people. Thus, Brown (2011) alluded that the fear of people with a different sexual orientation being feared, ostracized, and alienated leading to criminalization. He continues to clarify that a significant segment of the medical profession condemned homosexuality as a disease, and psychiatrists classified homosexuality as a pathology. Clinicians and scientists conflated gender and sexuality, claiming that homosexuality violated "natural laws" by conflating men's and women's roles, establishing heterosexuality as the dominant sexuality (Mahasha, 2016).

## **2.5 Higher institutions in African countries**

Many LGBTQIA+ people in Africa face homophobia, with Uganda being a major example, and homosexuality is illegal in many African countries. In Uganda, the community promotes and adheres to heteronormativity, continuing to form heterosexist attitudes (Boyd, 2013). Despite the deaths of many of Uganda's LGBTQIA+ youngsters, the Ugandan government has taken steps to further criminalize homosexuality (Rusnak, 2014). In 2006, Uganda's parliament revised the country's constitution to prohibit "marriage between persons of the same gender." In 2009, it passed the so-called "Anti-Homosexuality Bill," which President Museveni actively backed (Rusnak, 2014, p.11). In January 2011, Ugandan gay rights activist David Kato was murdered a few months after a national newspaper published a list of "top homosexuals" together with a banner reading "Hang them". Similarly, in Tanzania, having sex with someone of the same sex leads to 5 year-imprisonment. The Islamic law in Sudan, even kissing someone of the same sex is illegal. Same-sex practices can result in torture, imprisonment, and death (Reddy, 2011). Zimbabwe has a plethora of overlapping laws that all outlaw same-sex relationships, and Zimbabwean common law prohibits sodomy. The national legislature in Zimbabwe introduced and approved a "Sexual Deviancy Law" in 2006, which criminalizes behaviours perceived as homosexual by the general population (Kretz, 2013, p. 226). Anyone caught kissing, holding hands, or hugging a person of the same sex in public could face a prison sentence under this rule. Several times, the country's former President Robert Mugabe has made derogatory remarks toward homosexuality and even called them 'pigs.'

Times of Swaziland columnist Vusie Ginindza referred to LGBTQIA+ individuals as a 'social syphilis' and contended that society must be protected against these 'termites' (Graziano, 2004). She concludes that if sodomy is created by God, please send me to hell (Luirink, 2000). The finance minister in Namibia warned that LGBTQIA+ individuals have recently infiltrated Namibia and that the LGBTQIA+ community's antisocial lives not only 'are sources of deadly communicable diseases but also lead to social disorder' (Murray, 1998, p. 252).

Despite this trend in most Southern African countries, South Africa has one of the world's most advanced constitutions. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which is the Civil Union Act, guarantees gender equality and the freedom to express one's sexual orientation. South Africa became the fifth country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage, Civil Union Act 17 of 2006. This occurred after the Supreme Court found that the old legal definition of "marriage" violated the Constitution since LGBTQIA+ were denied the same rights as heterosexuals (Iyayambwa, 2012). However, this does not necessarily imply that gays are not harassed or discriminated against in South African society. Because of their nonheteronormative orientation and behaviour, the LGBTQIA+ population in this country continues to face obstacles such as physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual assault, harassment, and murder (Mahasha, 2016).

## **2.6 Higher institutions in South Africa**

Several provisions concerning the protection of homosexual rights have been put in place since the late 1990s in South Africa. These include providing same-sex couples equal rights regarding immigration regulations (1999), pension benefits (2002), recovering funeral expenses (2003), adoption (2002), and marriage (2006) billed as civil unions or marital unions (Reddy, 2011). The SA Constitution has been portrayed as one of the most liberal in the world, correcting the wrongs of apartheid (Johnson, 1997). As a result of the privilege offered by the Constitution, the long-standing invisible and silent community of the South African homosexual community has become more visible and protected. In addition, the LGBTQIA+ voice is also being heard in important avenues of society such as social media and entertainment. New forms of expressions are reflected in gay and lesb pride and parades, where participants no longer hide their faces behind brown paper bags or even university space (Gevisser & Cameron, 1995).

At the Howard College campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, there is a program implemented to protect vulnerable groups from discrimination, marginalization, oppression,

and stigma. For example, there is a society that is implemented to support homosexual students at UKZN Howard College known as “UKZN’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexed (LGBTIA+) Forum, who functions under the HIV and AIDS Programme. In 2017 they hosted an educative event under the theme: Generation of Pride. It focuses on milestones and everyday achievements of the LGBTQIA+ community with the primary emphasis on celebrating the pivotal, hard-fought achievements of the community. It is also a platform to encourage those who belong to the LGBTQIA+ community to celebrate who they are and show society that they are not just victims but also victors who have the strength and capability to fight and defeat sexist attitudes. The Rules for student discipline are prescribed by the Council of the University in terms of section 36 of the Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997. University of KwaZulu-Natal disciplinary rules (2017) promote social inclusion and the acceptance of homosexual students. In addition, Section 9 of the UKZN Disciplinary Action countered psychological harm, humiliation, hate speech, or attacks on the dignity and people of other students and committed illegal acts by students breaking university policy.

## **2.7. Homosexuality as a despised sexuality**

Homosexuality is othered in favour of heterosexuality which is categorized as ‘normal’ or ‘seeds. Homosexuality is genetically inherited. Some research suggests the presence of genetic factors is partly associated with homosexuality (Iemmola, & Ciani, 2009). Others claim that this sexuality is foreign and are adamant that homosexuality was non-existent among indigenous Africans despite evidence to the contrary (Dlamini, 2006). Mokhobo (1989, p.22), for instance, believes that homosexuality was non-existent in African society and that ‘the concept is abhorrent and aligned to Africans.’ However, it has been found in the mines and in boys at circumcision schools and in the compounds which have long demonstrated evidence of same-sex practices and homosexuality (Achmat, 1993). Dlamini (2006) concurs that homosexuality was evident in the mines during colonialism and the system of migrant labour. Swidler (1993) perceives mine homosexuality as a new type that developed due to male migrant labour to the mines, as black men were not permitted to bring their wives or partners. Senior miners would take new miners as wives, teach them the ways of the mine and the nature of its work, and offer them protection in exchange for cooking and sexual favours.

The statement above also corresponds with the “INXEBA” movie, INXEBA is essentially an intersectional story about three Xhosa men that is told in the setting of the mountains of the Eastern Cape during a period of the male Xhosa initiation, which is referred to as

ULWALUKO. Two of the men (Xolani & Vija) are caregivers and tasked with assisting their initiates during this period. They have a secret sexual relationship that they only engage in during this period every year. Homosexuality in the film is explored as a repressed and oppressed experience in the setting of traditional Xhosa cultural tradition. The statements above also correlate with a study conducted by (Shayi, 2008) indicates that homosexuality is a prison culture since most men have sex with other men. Shayi's (2008) findings continue to illustrate that it starts with the older and experienced inmate helping the new inmate with whatever needs he may have, protecting him, sharing his food with him, giving him cigarettes if he is a smoker, and orientating him to the cell rules. Thus, the experience inmates are usually not in a hurry, and old inmate continues to lure the naïve inmate with gifts and favours until asks him to engage in homosexual sex. Therefore, a homosexual old inmate is categorized as the Ninevites or the 28s.

LGBTQIA+ people have historically been victims of discriminatory laws and prejudices globally and in Africa. Hegemonic societal masculinities perpetuate gender roles, and in most African societies, men are expected to support, protect, and head households while women perform domestic duties in the private sphere. Those who detract from societal norms are marginalized, oppressed, and face societal and personal violence. However, this has resulted in high levels of discrimination and rejection toward LGBTQIA+. Goldfried (2001) asserts that sexuality does not coincide with socially constructed norms. It is usually discriminated against. Msibi (2011) noted that in many societies around the world, sexuality continues to be highly controlled and heavily policed, as can be seen by the way homosexuals have been treated in countries such as Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The statement above confirms that these elements play a vital role in determining heterosexual attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ people.

Homosexuality is illegal in 38 African countries (Kutsch, 2013), and many of these countries retain their laws against homosexuality that were promulgated during the colonial era. In many other African countries, being a non-heterosexual individual or gender non-conforming is considered taboo. Africa has some of the worst laws on same-sex relationships (Carroll & Itaborahy, 2015). For instance, in Zimbabwe, homosexuality is openly condemned by senior politicians and religious leaders, leading to aggression and violence against LGBTQIA+ people (Smith, 2015). The reason given for this rejection and hostility is that LGBTQIA+ rights are against culture, and religious value systems are considered an imposition by Western nations.

Further, homosexuality has been described as a “lifestyle” or “choice” which is foreign to Africans and is considered morally, culturally, and religiously wrong. Homosexuality is often met with harsh punishment and from imprisonment to the death penalty, depending on the state (Gitari, 2013). Few countries, such as Kenya and South Africa, have constitutions that protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation (Ellis, Ficek, Burke & Das, 2008).

Members of the LGBTQI+ community face many challenges, including in institutions of higher learning such as universities (Lynch & Van Zyl, 2013; Pardess, 2005; Arndt & DeBruin, 2006). They find it difficult to adapt to life on campus, especially due to the negative attitudes they receive from the wide university environment. The study conducted in South Africa by Muller, (2013) indicated that the campus environment was unwelcoming and hostile towards LGBTQIA+ students. McCormack (2012) argues that the treatment of minority groups such as homosexuals and lesbians mirrors the attitudes of the social mentality from a specific geographic or cultural context. Such mentalities shape everyday human relationships and behaviour, determining people’s destinies.

## **2.8 Mental health and physical harm**

Studies have shown that LGBTQIA+ individuals are more susceptible to mental health risks and victimization, which are more likely to lead to substance abuse and sexual risk-taking, (Bontempo & D’Augelli 2002). Therefore, the environmental responses to their families, campuses, and society increase their health risks. For example, LGBTQIA+ individuals experience exclusion, discrimination, and hate speech from university students and communities they live in based on their sexual orientation, often leading to depression and fear of accessing health resources. In the study conducted by Rounds, McGrath & Walsh (2013), homosexuals experience indirect and direct verbal abuse and insults, as well as many other forms of discrimination. They do not access satisfactory healthcare services. In Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV transmission was described from the start as essentially a heterosexual problem. The first epidemiological study to measure HIV prevalence among men having sex with men (MSM) was only conducted in 2004 in Senegal (Wade et al. 2005). Since then, several studies carried out in various African countries have confirmed that HIV prevalence among MSM is between 2 - 20 times higher than among the general population (Baral, Sifakis, Cleghorn, & Beyrer 2007). As within other continents, African MSM is particularly vulnerable to HIV, especially since in most African countries’ homosexuality is highly stigmatized. Men who have sex with other men very often conceal their homosexuality from their families and friends and

avoid seeking health care through fear of rejection (Griensven, 2007). HIV prevention programs are insufficiently considering his specific group. Only 27 countries out of 86 (31%) included MSM in their national HIV surveillance report in 2007 (Saavedra, Izazola & Beyrer, 2008)

The South African (SA) Bill of Rights Act of 1996, section (27(1) asserts that homosexual people have the right to access health care services and may not be refused services or treatment or provided with inferior care due to gender minority status. The LGBTQIA+ communities, including students, continue to suffer physical health inequalities as opposed to their heterosexual counterparts (Lick, Durso & Johnson 2013, p. 521) despite the many advances made with regard to legal protection for LGBTQIA+ communities. Thus, Stevens (2012) also added that homosexuals are denied access to quality sexual health care services both internationally and unintentionally due to structural and in structural and institutional barriers in the South African Health Facilities. Arndt and DeBruin, (2006) indicate that negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ individuals persist in universities. Therefore, these negative attitudes may lead to a high level of stigma and social discrimination, which compromise governments' responses to the HIV epidemic among homosexuals (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Ganga-Limando, 2014).

## **2.9 Possible factors that motivate heterosexual students' attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ communities**

### **2.9.1 *The cultural debate on sexuality***

Culture is defined as a shared set of values, beliefs, and rituals within individuals or groups passed down from generation to generation (Gerena, 2021). Culture is the mean by which we receive, rationalize, organize, and understand experiences in the world (Saleebey, 1994). He continues to argue that through culture, we construct meaning which allows us to tell stories and weave narratives (Saleebey, 1994). For example, culture has powerfully shaped people's thoughts, behaviours, and how people interact with each other. In South Africa, culture is reflected as interlaid by class structure, racial heritage, religion, dichotomies, historical relevance, and language (Isaac & Mc Kendrick, 1992, p. 66). Most people take culture as a way of life since it is something they experience every day. However, people may experience it as a process that is productive and which provides an individual with the tools to master the world (Ngcobo, 2007). Therefore, through socialization, culture presents vivid images and ideas of

acceptable sexual behaviour; through culture, sex becomes institutionalized or ritualized and ultimately imprints upon our minds a dominant sexual ideology (Ettorre, 1980,p.16). Homosexual attitudes and behaviour culture are unconsciously influenced and limited by the heterosexual ideology and practices of the culture in which that person resides (Ngcobo, 2007). Tati (2009) states that cultural values and norms often use culture as justification and have no relationship to non-heterosexual identities. The study found that students who grew up in a socio-cultural context defined by deeply rooted patriarchal structures and heteronormativity reported that their living conditions were more hostile (Tati, 2009). Sexual minorities identified that they don't conform to the patriarchal and heterosexual norms, such as that bias, and are daily confronted with rejection and discrimination (Tati, 2009).

Culture plays a predominant role in every individual as it can influence people's perceptions and attitudes of people, events, concepts and attitudes towards sexuality. Culture is a major determining factor that can influence an individual's attitude toward homosexuality. Most South African people do not acknowledge that LGBTQIA+ sexuality is not a matter of choice but a matter of identity (Rudwick, 2011). Although South Africa is progressive in its legislation against discrimination based on homosexuality, homophobia is still prevalent in this heterosexist society. Across cultures, homosexuality is pathologized, and where cultural discourses such as the notion that "homosexuality is not African" continue to play themselves out Henderson and Shefer (2008).

### ***2.9.2. The role of religion in influencing attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students.***

Historically human sexuality has been regarded as problematic by theologians and the South African churches work within the Christian tradition (Germond & Gruchy, 1997). Traditional Christian teaching has viewed sexuality as a threat to the spiritual life and practice of Christians, and throughout the centuries, Christian theologians have tried to devise various strategies to contain the danger to which human sexuality exposes the Christian soul and restricts sexual practice. The issue of human sexuality is more complex for the South African churches than for their first-world counterparts because South Africa has inherited problematic Western attitudes towards sexuality as well as African ones. This leaves the church in South Africa struggling for consensus, and churches are divided over the issues of homosexuality and Christian ethics and morality. Some oppose homosexuality and consider it a sin, on the one

hand, and, on the other, some are supportive of homosexuality, viewing it simply as one of the natural God-created diversities among people.

The Human Rights Watch report (2011, p. 21) states that the “church is central and is meant to play a pivotal role in the South African society, pointing out that the church often shapes the community life, often providing spiritual and material help to those in need”. This means that churches have a great influence on some of the social issues affecting communities (Jagessar, 2015). The Human Rights Watch (2011) further notes that, “conservative church teachings tend to shape public attitudes towards non-normative gender and sexual expression in South Africa.” These teachings fuel violence and discrimination against lesbians in their communities. This clarifies the voices by Fox (2001), which state that our social beliefs and perceptions are shaped by cultural and coded norms that are practised in our day-to-day lives.

Religion appears to be one of the strongest arguments made in the rejection of homosexuality. Although most religious groups emphasize that people should respect others, most religions tend to categorize homosexuality as “unnatural” or “impure” (Yip, 2005). The way people interpret and the extent to which they are familiar with the scriptures have an impact on how they perceive sexuality (Kenneth, 2004). Religion views homosexuality as sinful and something that requires punishment. Considering that religion dictates what is sinful or immoral, it is important to examine the way people interpret religious scriptures to better understand how they view homosexuality or sexual relations between same-sex partners and legal unions (Kuptsevykh, 2014). Studies identify the interpretation and influence of religious texts as a significant factor for LGBTQIA+ individuals (Schulte & Battle 2004; Whitehead 2010).

It is expected that people will interpret the bible differently (Germond & Gruchy, 1997). The first and most obvious account in the bible of Adam and Eve leads most Christians to conclude that it is only people of the opposite sex who qualify to indulge in a sexual relationship with each other. Religious culture and the attitude of the Church have a great impact on homophobia within communities, especially within black communities, where religious beliefs are widely and deeply engrained in everyday life. Some churches believe that LGBTQIA+ sexuality is sinful because they insist that the Bible emphasizes that homosexuality is unnatural and immoral. Most Christian churches believe that homosexuality is sinful and an abomination in the eyes of God (Vermeulen, 2008). Statements such as the following are not uncommon in local newspapers in South Africa: “Homosexuality is far more of an abomination in the eyes



of God than rape. Rape is unlawful sexual intercourse. Homosexuality is unnatural and unlawful sexual intercourse. It is far better for a virgin to suffer rape than for one to engage in LGBTQIA+ even voluntarily” (Maogi, 2004, p.36).

For ages, people have debated whether LGBTQIA+ is a sin in the sight of a higher power, and in Christianity, for example, there is a conflict when gays practice Christianity (Nkosi & Masson, 2015, p.01). While some may see the two as incompatible, many LGBTQIA+ Christians believe that neither their Christian beliefs nor their sexual orientation should be seen in binaries. The church and other Christians have reacted differently to these Christians' decision to continue practising homosexuality while yet remaining Christians. These reactions often range from hostile to empathetic, discriminatory to accepting, and dismissive to inviting (Nkosi & Masson, 2017, p.02).

Most theologians assert that in the Old and New Testaments, the practice of homosexuality is evil. According to the New King James Version of the Bible, Leviticus 18:22 states that “You must not have sexual intercourse with a man as you would with a woman; it is a detestable practice”. Leviticus 20:13 further states that “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death”. Thus, biblical historians are well known that according to some analysts of the bible highlights that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of the same-sex practices that had become a way of life in these two cities.

In the book of Genesis, chapter 19 verses, five illustrates that when the men of Sodom wanted to sodomize or rape the two male visitors who had entered the city of Sodom, it reads, “They called to Lot: Where are the men that came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them”. Gnuse (2015, p.72) states that what was immoral to God wasn't the homosexual act, but the people of Sodom were violating the customs of hospitality, which was highly valued at that time in the Middle East. Further, the Sodom people used sexual violence to show power and dominance over strangers by displaying a lack of social justice; however, that incurred the wrath of God. There are different opinions amongst the main churches of Christianity that are divided when it comes to same-sex relationships. Homosexuality was seen as dangerous, and sodomy was perceived as a sin (Cviklova, 2012). The Catholic Church has traditionally been opposing homosexuality, for example, The Administrative Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops requested a constitutional amendment to protect the

traditional institution of marriage, and the Vatican opened an official website that publishes articles that condemn homosexuality (Cviklova, 2012). This is like the Southern Baptist Church, they do not allow LGBTQIA+ clergy, and they see homosexuality as an unforgiving sin, whereas the Presbyterian Church in the USA has been much more accepting in that it has allowed for the ordination of LGBTQIA+ clergy and accepts homosexuals' civil rights within society (Cviklova, 2012).

Many scriptures in the New Testament mostly speak against homosexuality. 1 Corinthians.6:9–10 state that: “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: *neither the sexually immoral*, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, *nor men who practice homosexuality*, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God”. This disapproval of homosexuality is also affirmed 1Timothy. 1:10, where the Apostle Paul talks about the unnaturalness of homosexual practice, ‘the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine.

Again, in the book of Romans, the apostle Paul talks about God’s wrath against sinful humanity. Chapter 1 vs 26 and 27 reads: “Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men and received the due penalty for their errors.” Therefore, most Christians are strongly believed in bible scriptures that condemn homosexuality by quoting the Bible.

Nonkosi and Masson (2017) illustrate those Christian churches comprise many denominations, and each has various interpretations of the bible. Within the churches of Christian, there are numerous positions on the debate of homosexuality and Christianity (Bosman 2009,p. 2). However, these different viewpoints are based on the interpretations of the bible Nonkosi and Masson (2017). They continue stating that, however some traditional Christian stand together in this argument, as others also argue that it’s not a bad thing or a sin to enjoy sex. They argue that it “is not a sin before God’s eyes when a married couple engages in sexual activity not only for procreation purposes but also for pleasure” (Nonkosi & Masson, 2017,p.76). The Roman Catholic Church still stands and believes in bible scriptures that God intended sex for

procreation purposes only; they teach that sex is sinful whenever it is not engaged in procreating (Crooks & Baur 2013).

Another argument against homosexuality is that the example of homosexual marriage does not appear in the bible since homosexuality is seen as unnatural and inconsistent with what God has intended for humans. These Christians believe that same-sex practice is not acceptable and sinful. They argue that bible teachings should not be disregarded as it is the primary source of authority in questions of morality and faith for all Christians (Yarhouse, 2010,p.17). However, another Christian is against the acceptance of homosexuality. For example, some liberal groups of Christians view that the rejection of homosexuality is not representative of God's love (Nonkosi & Masson (2017,p.76). This is because in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus speaks about the gospel of acceptance and love. Therefore, they strongly believe it cannot be segregated from other sins, and that needs to be understood within the context of the theology of sin (Masango 2002,p.956).

Discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students/groups was frequently perpetrated by Muslim or Christian society (Mahasha, 2016). Traditionally, Christianity as a religion encourages heterosexuality and opposes gay acceptance. For ages, people have debated whether homosexuality is a sin in the sight of the Lord. For LGBTQIA+ who practice Christianity, the combination of these two features has frequently resulted in conflict (Nkosi & Masson, 2017). While some may see the two as incompatible, many homosexual Christians believe that neither their Christian beliefs nor their sexual orientation should be abandoned. The church and other Christians have reacted differently to these Christians' decision to continue practising homosexuality while yet remaining Christians. These reactions ranged from hostile to empathetic, discriminatory to accepting, and dismissive to inviting (Nkosi & Masson, 2017,p.02).

Further, negative perceptions of LGBTQIA+ people are also prevalent among university students. In a study by Mwamba (2009), heterosexual students with strong religious beliefs showed more negative attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ students as compared to the rest of the student community. Similar forms of negativity towards LGBTQIA+ people have been noted among heterosexual students who regularly attend places of worship (Froese, Bader, & Smith, 2008). In the case in South Africa, LGBTQIA+ university students may be exposed to a range

of stigmatizing and discriminatory practices from their heterosexual counterparts (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Sandy, 2015). Some of the discriminatory practices reported are influenced by students' religious affiliations and beliefs (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

### **2.9.3. Derogatory Language**

Homophobia and heterosexism are ingrained in language, which is a powerful structural instrument (Msibi, 2011). Language is one of the most common ways used to oppress others, and this applies to LGBTQIA+ students (Msibi, 2012). Msibi continued to allude that the extent to which language can be used to discriminate against LGBTQIA+ people. In his research, he discovered that verbal abuse appears to be a common problem. Anti-gay language, one of many mechanisms through which heterosexism is enacted, communicates hostility toward lesbian, and gay people and contributes to creating an unwelcoming and unsafe environment for them in the case of heterosexist language such as “that’s so gay” and “no homo” although it may not be used to intentionally harm, it can create psychological distress and negatively affect homosexual individuals. Students have been called insulting names like 'moffies,' 'faggots,' and '*izitabane*' because of hate speech (Mattyse 2015; Msibi, 2011:523). These phrases are an example of heterosexist language (Ramlow, 2003), a mechanism by which sexual orientation microaggressions and everyday derogatory slights directed toward marginalized populations are perpetuated (Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus, 2010). Being subjected to derogatory labels referring to LGBTQIA+ also affects the human perception and behaviour toward LGBTQIA+ people (Fabio, 2011). He continues to state that after exposure to these labels, LGBTQIA+ start to be marginalized and seen as people belonging to a lower order of humanity (Fabio, 2011).

Recently, the concept of microaggressions has been used regarding sexual orientation, including heterosexist language (Nadal et al. 2010; Sue, 2010). Experiencing and witnessing heterosexist harassment, such as being called homophobic names or overhearing gay jokes, harms LGBTQIA+ students. Derogatory language is rife in institutions of learning (Msibi, 2012).

He continued stating that male learners reported that words like '*isitabane*', '*moffie*' and '*ongqingili*', which are all derogatory isiZulu and Afrikaans words with a meaning similar to '*faggot*', were being used in schools to refer to them. Others noted that other learners saw them as effeminate and wanting to be like girls, often referring to them as '*osis-but*' (Msibi, 2012). Labelling is one subtle form of behaviour used in expressing small aggression to 'othered' groups (Sithole, 2015), and these small aggressions are hard to notice, their repetition over a

prolonged period contributes to threats towards and stress for minority groups, (Kiekel, 2012). Derogatory labels used towards LGBTQIA+ students in South African universities, such as *isitabane*- referring to gays and lesbians as being called *inkonkoni*. Some previous studies indicate that heterosexual men hold more negative feelings compared to heterosexual women towards LGBTQI+ people.

#### **2.9.4. The role of media in perpetuating homophobia**

As with other sexual topics, attitudes towards homosexuality are not born, but are socialised, (Calzo & Ward, 2009). Multiple agents contribute to this socialization process, including parents, peers, and religious institutions. Prominent among them are likely to be the media, which youth frequently cite as a top source of sexual information, (Brown, Halpern, & L'Engle, 2005). The media is typically seen as being part of two different but interrelated processes (Adamczyk et al., 2015). While media may be viewed as influencing individuals' attitudes, it can also be understood as expressing a nation's values or its collective consciousness. Additionally, the media is motivated by profits (Adamczyk et al. 2015), and content affects who will advertise with them, and when community attitudes change, media portrayals tend to adjust (Pan et al. 2010).

While the media can be used to empower and support communities, they can also be used to oppress others. For instance, in 2010 the Uganda newspaper, *Rolling Stone*, printed the names of hundred LGBTQIA+ people along with their photos, addresses, and a subtitle that read, "Hang Them". In this country where homosexuality can carry a lifetime prison sentence, the publication was devastating for the identified individuals. Violence followed, and several people who were named were attacked. This happened because the government claimed that there was a gay campaign to recruit school children. Shortly after the story appeared, police found Ugandan gay rights activist David Kato bludgeoned to death in his home. These journalists tarnish the profession with their discrimination. Even worse, they encourage hatred and contribute to the increase of violent attacks on LGBTQIA+ people throughout the region. Other articles perpetuated stereotypical portrayals of LGBTQIA+ people, which makes society believe that LGBTQIA+ people are abnormal and don't have a right to embrace their sexuality. In one egregious example from Lesotho Rose Moremoholo profiles a gay man named Motebang Rampai (The Post, 2015), and the story headlined "Fighting to be like anybody else," reads like an attempt to challenge negative stereotypes about LGBTQIA+ people. At times Moremoholo is sensitive to Rampai's story, allowing his voice to appear throughout the story.

However, the writer's mistakes with language and heterosexual bias manage to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and present Rampai as strange and "other." The journalist continues to be like many feminine gays, who wear makeup, lipstick and woman clothes, Rampai keeps his male clothes but acts feminine," writes Moremoholo. This example illustrates the author's perpetuation of the stereotype that most gay men wear women's clothes and makeup, conflating homosexuality and gender identity. Worse, she infers that Rampai's personality is an "act" and that his "feminine" characteristics are not genuine. The statement above illustrates how the writer is homophobic against LGBTQIA+ sexuality and how judgemental is towards Rampai. Therefore, this indicates that still, the media identifies homosexuality as alien, different, and at times even unnatural and abnormal, bringing up the question of the causes of homosexuality (Kuhar, 2003). On the other side, media ads tend to show people in a certain aspect or idea of what a man is supposed to do like or act like, what products they should use, such as colognes, sports hair and skin products and as soon as they act differently, they instil the idea that there is something wrong. So, the role of media in homophobia in this is that it gives people fear especially African traditional men that if their sons behave differently, there is something wrong.

Given the increased visibility of those who engage in same-sex relations as well as the emergence of gay public figures such as popular TV stars (i.e., actresses and singers), it might be easy to think that homophobia has today been eradicated from society; however, this is not the case (Robinson & Ross, 2013). According to (Robinson & Ross, 2013), homophobic attacks can be expressed at personal, interpersonal, institutional, and societal levels; homophobia can also be expressed by LGBTQIA+ individuals themselves. Reddy (2001) argues that the widespread attention given the homophobic attacks stems from the media reports of incidents that have occurred nationally and internationally. For instance, in Russia in 2013, "a 23-year-old man in Volgograd revealed he was gay to some drinking companions; they beat him, shoved beer bottles in his anus, and crushed his head with a stone" (Mezzofiore, 2013:1). In Russia, during the St. Petersburg annual festival in 2012, the pop star Madonna was sued because she spoke out in defence of gay rights; however, the suit was later thrown out (Mezzofiore, 2013). In 2013, "a 20-year-old South African student was bullied, pushed, forced to imitate sex acts, stripped down and even had his head slammed into a watermelon by anti-LGBTQIA+ activists (Mezzofiore, 2013).

LGBTQIA+ people continue to be underrepresented and misrepresented in African media. Research conducted by the Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) and Community Media for Development (CMFD) found that media presents an unfair reflection of the LGBTQIA+ community. It noted that media highlights sexuality in stories where it is not relevant, creating a sense of “otherness.” This also perpetuates stereotypes that construct LGBTQIA+ people as hyper-sexed. For instance, Media present homosexuality as unnatural or unclean, and LGBTQIA+ people do not deserve human rights because of the type of sex they engage in. In one article from Kenya’s Saturday Nation, “US leader defends Kenyan trip, disagrees with Ruto over gay rights,” the journalists include a quote from Kenyan Vice President William Ruto in which he says, “the US has allowed homosexuality and other dirty things.” This is an example of the type of homophobia commonly tolerated at the highest decision-making levels in Africa, which is perpetuated by a media that fails to provide context, dissenting views, and, most importantly, the voices of LGBTQIA+ people. While the above story presented the view of US President Barack Obama, noting that he disagrees with Ruto, it had no LGBTQIA+ sources.

#### **2.9.4.1.        *Social Media***

Social media can be broadly defined as a communication format wherein individuals set up profiles, generate content, and/or interact and maintain connections with other users via online platforms or other digital mediums. Prevalent examples of social media sites include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and other sexual and/or gender minority (LGBTQIA+) youth identify significant benefits from engagement with social media, as well as other Internet-enabled technologies. Fox and Ralston (2016) suggest that social media serves as informal learning environments for LGBTQIA+ youth during their identity developmental processes. As LGBTQIA+ identities remain highly stigmatized, social media sites provide youth with critical opportunities to explore, label, and practice disclosing their emerging LGBTQIA+ identities; control and rehearse their social interactions; as well as access identity-specific resources (Craig & McInroy, 2014). Even engaging more passively with social media (such as watching LGBTQIA+ YouTube content) enables individuals to learn about identity-specific issues and be inspired in their coming out process, increasing identity confidence (Fox & Ralston, 2016).

The comparative anonymity available online facilitates opportunities for youth to develop and explore their LGBTQIA+ identities in ways not feasible in offline communities (McInroy &

Craig, 2015). Anonymous social media activities ensure that participants' emerging LGBTQIA+ identities are protected from premature disclosure and from socially significant individuals (e.g., friends, family) who may not be accepting (McInroy & Craig, 2015). Recent research finds that LGBTQIA+ youth can engage in self-expression by curating their profiles and navigating unwanted comments and advances, which they are unable to do to the same extent in their offline lives. One can argue that for LGBTQIA+ youth, online community engagement enhances well-being. Participation in online communities may allow LGBTQIA+ youth to access role models who share their experiences, as well as seek emotional and social support. Overall, social media allows LGBTQIA+ youth to explore their identities and social relationships, access resources, and curate their mode of self-expression while controlling their degree of self-disclosure

First, the findings from this study support the emerging understanding that social media can have a positive effect on LGBTQIA+ youth's well-being. Existing research has focused disproportionately on the negative effects of social media participation, identifying social media's potential to increase anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as lower self-esteem and other aspects of mental well-being among youth (Shaw et al. 2015; Woods & Scott, 2016). This study suggests that social media also helps stigmatized youth maintain critical access to emotional support, develop their identities, find important information, and be entertained, which aligns with emerging exploratory research on the benefits of social media and forms of coping for LGBTQIA+ youth.

## **2.10. Challenges faced by gay and lesbian students on university campuses**

### ***2.10.1. Discrimination and stigma***

Discrimination is the practice of treating a particular group in society less fairly than others. Stigma refers to a strong feeling of disapproval shared by most people in society about something, whereas stigma refers to a strong feeling of disapproval shared by most people in society about something (Hornby, 2010). Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major (1991:218) claim that "stigmatized individuals possess or are believed to possess some attribute, or characteristics, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context". The stigmatization of homosexuality is evident in countries where homosexuality is legalized (Statham, 2012). Gender non-conforming youth experience verbal homophobic behaviour from peers has been reported in surveys conducted in the United States and United Kingdom among LGBTQIA+ youth (Peter, Taylor & Chamberland, 2015). This is similar to South Africa,



LGBTQIA+ individuals experience stigmatization, which demonstrates hate crime. For instance, lesbian experience hates crimes in the form of corrective rape. Thus, corrective rape is defined as rape perpetrated by straight men against lesbians to correct or cure their unnatural or unaccepted sexual orientation (Brown, 2012). It has been shown in the study conducted by Karaan and Geduld (2015) that an average of ten lesbians are raped per week in South Africa to correct their sexual orientation. Equally, gay men in South Africa experience homophobic attacks through verbal aggression (Sithole, 2015).

Even though South Africa's 1996 constitution was the first in the world to incorporate clauses prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, homosexuals in the country continue to endure prejudice and violence. With the criminalization of homosexuality to legislative support for equality, LGBTQIA+ people in South Africa remain vulnerable to sexual orientation and gender presentation-related oppression, marginalization, discrimination, and victimization (Nel & Judge, 2008). For example, in a survey on attitudes towards gender and sexuality nonconformity in South Africa (HSRC 2016), 72 % of South Africans responded that same-sex sexualities are morally wrong even though they believed that gay and lesbian people should have constitutional and legislative protections against discrimination (HSRC, 2016). Discrimination against LGBTQIA+ is found at all levels of society as it's also found in educational institutions (Rankin, 2003). It has been indicated in the study conducted by Vollenhoven and Els (2013) that some LGBTQIA+ students experience discrimination and marginalization during their schooling time and their university careers.

Discrimination has been documented on the Howard College campus of the University of KwaZulu- Natal, where LGBTQIA+ students have been verbally harassed and threatened. These attitudes to LGBTQIA+ students reveal a disconnect between the constitution's objectives of non-discrimination and equality for all South Africans and reality (Human Rights Watch, 2011). In South Africa and other African countries, discrimination against homosexuals has escalated from mere ideological condemnation of homosexuality to the enactment of physical violence (Tshilongo, 2018). A range of factors contributes to this stigmatization and associated discrimination, including religious beliefs and societal values and norms, which together shape people's attitudes and behaviours toward sexuality and sexual relationships (Aggleton, 2009).

LGBTQI+ have been publicly ridiculed, attacked, raped, imprisoned, or killed in some cases (Msibi, 2009, p.50). Colleges and universities, like any other social institution or society, can be repressive environments for LGBTQIA+ students, according to the Uconn Rainbow Centre (2015:4). LGBTQIA+ people have long been stigmatized, and as a result, they have been harassed and discriminated against. Several studies have identified the significant hurdles that homosexual and lesbian students confront. What concerns me the most is that stigma and discrimination against homosexual and lesbian students exist not just in the community but also in higher education institutions. According to several studies, homosexual and lesbian students continue to face stigma and prejudice. Because of the stigma attached to homosexuality, these individuals are more likely to experience fear, anxiety, and shame, and hence limit their exposure to knowledge about their sexuality, attempting to dismiss the burgeoning homosexual reality in favour of passing as heterosexual (Butler, 2007:82; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015:65). The study conducted by (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Sandy, 2015) findings illustrates that participants claim that stigma and discriminatory acts harm physical, social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing where participants reported that some LGBTQIA+ students refused to attend the classes of specific lecturers to avoid humiliation.

### ***2.10.2. Violence against lesbian women***

Globally, it has been found that when lesbians are exposed to victimization by police and prison guards, the law fails to take measures to protect them (Almeida, Johnson, Corlis, Molnar and Azrael, 2009); for instance, in Brazil, a lesbian couple was beaten at a police station and forced to perform oral sex (Almeida et al., 2009). In Jamaica, a lesbian was stabbed to death after the police officer who reportedly participated in the attack urged others to beat her because of her gender identity. This indicates how lesbians are exploited (Kheswa, 2016).

Lesbians increasingly disclose their identity in a strongly homophobic society because of their recognition by the law and the protection of their sexual orientation (Gontek, 2009). However, at the same time, discrimination and violent attacks are part of their daily life. Herek and Beril (1992) asserted that time ago that lesbians were part of a marginalized population that put them at higher risk of targeted victimization. According to Rankin (2003), discrimination toward lesbians is found at all levels of society as it is also found in educational institutions. Lesbian students experience marginalization and discrimination during their school days, even at university (Vollenhoven & Els, 2013). In some instances, they receive negative comments from

their educators, and some make it known by intentionally failing some LGBTQIA+ students (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Sandy 2015:5). Thus, (Francis & Msibi, 2011, p.162) study revealed that some educators even make disturbing remarks such as, “homosexuality is a social disease.” This results in the fact that Lesbian students fear disclosing their sexualities because of the discrimination that is rife on university campuses.

South African studies done on lesbians (Arndt & de Bruin, 2006; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Mavhandu-Mudzusi, 2014) indicate that homophobia does exist in universities in South Africa. This illustrates that it's evident that most lesbian students in Higher Education Institutions often must deal with discrimination and negative attitudes from other/ or some heterosexual students (Msibi, 2013). Further, Rankin and Weber (2010) argued that it had become a norm for LGBTQIA+ students in university environments to face challenges of harassment and discrimination. Being an LGBTQIA+ student usually increases higher chances of being vulnerable and harassed by heterosexual students. The study conducted at the University of Zululand (Ngcobo 2007) affirms that lesbian students on campus faced gruelling discrimination from other students. On 26 February 2005, this has also been reported in the Natal witness that an incident of one of the horrible incidents that occurred at the University of Zululand. Most male students were reported to have “*toys toyed*” (demonstrated) against all LGBTQIA+ students who resided within university residences. This is similar to the incident that occurred at the University of the Western Cape, where a lesbian student was attacked in front of security staff (Davis, 2012).

### ***2.10.3 Lesbians are at higher risk of experiencing corrective rape due to their gender identity.***

Kruger (2006, p.13), defines the term ‘corrective rape’ as a form of hate crime that “In the case of lesbian, and particularly butch lesbian, rape is used to demonstrate that as a woman they are subjected to the power of men over their lives. ‘Curative Rape’ is motivated by the belief that lesbians ‘pretend’ to be a man and are designed to ‘prove’ that they are women. Actually, ‘curative rape’ is motivated by the belief that lesbians ‘claim’ to be a man and is designed to ‘prove’ that they are women. The intellectual that all lesbians must become heterosexual ‘thanks to’ heterosexual intercourse is very prevalent in certain communities in South Africa.” This illustrates that most lesbians were raped to maintain society’s dominant norms. Curative rape is not only the cause to sought LGBTQIA+ sexual orientation, but the point is with the

heteronormative structures of society, and the threats men feel (Gontek 2009). Therefore, men feel threatened by lesbians in their masculinity, particularly in such a way that they feel like they have sexual competition, and as a form of punishment, a lesbian are not available sexually to them (Reid & Dirsuweit, 2002).

In the early 2000s, activists and LGBTQIA+ organizations started touching on the topic of a lesbian who experienced hate crimes in South Africa. One of the activists, Zanele Muholi researched between the years 2003 and 2004. In the townships of Gauteng, she conducted interviews with 47 victims of homophobic hate crimes. Out of these 47 women, 20 shared that they have been raped because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, four women had suffered attempted rape, and 17 have been physically attacked, three of them with weapons. In this study, 29 of the 47 women knew their perpetrator, yet only 16 women reported the perpetrator to the police. The majority of the 47 women were under 25 years of age and had suffered such crimes repeatedly (Muholi 2004). Statements like “we will teach you a lesson”, “*show you how to be a real woman*” or “*show you to be a real man*” accompany the crime indicating the perpetrators’ belief in the myth that lesbianism and being gay is unnatural and wrong.

On June 30th, 2011, Gali, 23 years of age, was also the victim of violent attacks against lesbians. She was stabbed within a stone's throw of her home in Crossroads Township, Cape Town, as she was coming back from work one evening with her girlfriend. She reported that two (men) that stay within her community commence yelling verbal insults at her as she was crossing along the road and followed her and started swearing at her, screaming: 'Hey you lesbian, you tomboy, we'll show you,' Ms. Jeli reported to the BBC. Before she knew it, a sharp knife had entered her back, two fast jabs, and then she was on the ground, half-conscious, she felt the knife sink into her skin twice more. She thought that they would kill her. Another victim was Tuda on April 4, 2014, who was raped by eight men and murdered in KwaThema township near Johannesburg. Tuda was 24 years old (BBC News, 2014). Her face and head were destroyed by stoning, and she was stabbed several times with broken glasses. The attack on her is thought to have begun as a case of what is known as "corrective rape", in which men rape lesbians in what they see as an attempt to "correct" their sexual orientation with no good result than being a wicked act towards lesbian and gay people, the practice appears to be on the increase in South Africa as this attitude creates a hostile environment to the LGBTQIA+ minority. Being lesbian is perceived as taboo and shameful, hence instigating violence and

abuse, and in some cases, it leads to some lesbians being disowned by their families. According to the Human Rights Watch Report (2011:7), some lesbians go through gruesome and painful experiences that are perpetrated by their family members. For instance, the report narrates the story of a young lesbian girl who was raped by her cousin, who intentionally claimed to ‘help her realize her sexuality.

#### ***2.10.4. Academic performance of students experiencing homophobia***

Heterosexual students’ attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students have become a major issue with negative effects on the mental health of homosexual students in various ways. Such negative effects and stressful experiences may prevent individuals from engaging or being part of campus-related events, organizations, and clubs, as well as impede their academic potential (Rankin, 2005). According to Blackburn and McCready (2009), LGBTQIA+ students experienced a gradual decline in academic excellence either because of homophobia from other social actors or their own internalized stigma. Although some LGBTQIA+ students leave school for good because of the hatred they experience, others return later, or never leave at all, instead choosing to stay and make space for themselves (McCready, 2007). This concurs with the study findings of (Rankin *et al.*, 2010) illustrate that LGBTQIA+ college students are more often seriously considering leaving their institution, fearing for their physical safety, and avoiding disclosure of their sexual identity because of a fear of negative experience.

Not only do LGBTQIA+ students at the university of level perform poorly in their academics, but it also occurs in high school learners. The historical overview of homosexuality shows the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students over time, indicating how classmates and the school environment impact their academic performance negatively. Harsh experiences that they receive from their family, school, peers, and society impact their academic performance (Bierman, 2004).

D’Augelli, Hersberger, and Pilkington (1998:200) indicate that “up to half of the LGBTQIA+ men have experienced some form of bullying at school and many problems of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students in high schools, such as poor academic performance, truancy, and dropping out of school, are direct or indirect results of verbal and physical abuse perpetrated by peers or others in school”. Being emotionally stressed may result in low self-esteem and make gay and lesbian learners underperform at school.

In a study conducted in the U.S. by Oswalt & Wyatt (2011), LGBTQIA+ students reported experiencing heightened anxiety, depression, and discrimination which affected their academic performance. This had negative challenges and resulted in more difficulties for them, such as poor academic performance. Some LGBTQIA+ students reported that they have already terminated their academics to reduce anxiety related to labelling, stigmatization, and discrimination (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Sandy, 2015). Muthien (2009) also concurs and states that corrective rape might as well be called curative rape because it refers to rape as the cure. This indicates that the sexuality of women in South African society is restricted to heteronormative norms and beliefs.

#### ***2.10.5. Homophobia at institutions of higher learning***

For the LGBTQIA+ students, their identity formation process may be complex because of the possible negative experiences of humiliation and homophobia based on heterosexist and/or heteronormative inclinations hence they do not conform to the accepted gender and sexual role of the larger heterosexual society (Harper & Schneider, 2003). These experiences of LGBTQIA+ students are further problematized by an emphasis on messages which posit homosexuality as unacceptable, which may result in a lack of emotional support and even internalized homophobia (Butler *et al.* 2003:5). Homophobia is characterized by different views. According to the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) (2002), homophobia is defined as the hatred or fear of or discrimination towards homosexuals or homosexuality. Kitzinger (2001) asserts that the form of discrimination results from what is called heteronormativity, which promotes a firm adherence to heterosexual gender role stereotypes. Current definitions theorize homophobia as a “gender-specific type of bullying that is grounded on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity” (UNESCO, 2012 :11). For instance, it may include verbally abusive harassment, physical, sexual, or discrimination, or other forms of behaviours, as well as the usage of offensive nicknames directed towards LGBTQIA+ individuals. The homophobic term is used to signify negative attitudes, prejudices, and a dislike towards LGBTQIA+ individuals. Farley (2005) argues that in contemporary society, homophobia is one of the most openly expressed forms of discrimination. He further argues that they may be prejudices that are considered socially acceptable in certain circumstances

Today’s institutions of higher education are more diverse than they have ever been. Studies conducted at the University of Zululand (Ngcobo, 2007), University of the Western Cape

(Mwaba, 2009), and University of Johannesburg (Arndt & De Bruin, 2006) indicate that the reports on discrimination toward lesbians are caused by heterosexual students who are homophobic. LGBTQIA+ individuals face a steady battle against prejudiced views, discrimination, harassment, and even assault (Jenkins, Lambert & Baker, 2009); writing from an American perspective, argue that homophobia remains a pre-eminent factor and challenge in the current daily lives of non-heterosexual individuals. Tshilongo (2018) also alluded that LGBTQIA+ students are experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual assaults, which results in a negative impact on their psychological well-being. It has been argued that most societies in South Africa are highly homophobic and heterosexist in nature (Matabeni, Reddy, Sandford, & Southey-Swartz, 2013). In most cases, the South African LGBTQIA+ community contends with homophobic activities (Matabeni, et al., 2013). Findings from the existing studies suggest that as much as the South African constitution has tried to protect the rights of every individual, regardless of sexual orientation, however, these protections have not been expanded to schools and higher education institutions (Arndt & Bruin, 2006; Butler, Alpaslan, Strumpher & Astbury, 2003; Graham & Kiguwa, 2004; Hames, 2012; Ngcobo, 2007). Soudien (2008) found that many South African institutions are still making slow progress when it comes to transformation, especially regarding LGBTQIA+ issues. Francis & Msibi (2011) suggest that negative attitudes often silence any teaching supportive of LGBTQIA+ issues; it limits the chances of teaching about sexuality. This results from people's belief that heterosexuality is a norm and regard LGBTQIA+ people as powerless and prone to discrimination and abuse.

Verbal abuse, harassment, discrimination, and threats of physical violence against LGBTQIA+ students on university campuses are rife (Bhana, 2014; Butler et al., 2003; Francis, 2017). This also applies in schools as LGBTQIA+ students at secondary schools have reported being sexually harassed, raped (including gang rape), and torture and tormented by fellow heterosexual students at least once throughout the duration of their studies (Butler & Astbury, 2008; Graham & Kiguwa, 2004; Arndt & Bruin, 2006; Butler, Alpaslan, Strumpher & Astbury, 2003). Using the school toilets was also noted as a frequent problem. Gay learners feared going to the toilet due to harassment for using the male toilets (Graham & Kiguwa, 2004).

Thus, homophobia as a common characteristic of a heterosexist society is expressed as avoidance of LGBTQIA+ students, telling bad jokes, verbal or physical threats, violence such as gay-bashing and "corrective rape", destruction of private property and murder, and 36% experienced harassment, including verbal homophobia (89%), threats (48%), written comments

(33%), physical violence, and 79% experienced homophobia from their fellow students and 20% feared for their safety on their respective campuses (Wells & Polders, 2006; Rankin, 2005).

Nzimande (2015) found that cognitive thinking about LGBTQIA+ was extremely emotive in a study he performed with teachers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Participants indicated several types of 'bitter information that they must have picked up early in their socialization processes. *"There is no such thing as gay or lesbian, they are not born with it, it's just a fashion," they said. "These people 'omathandazinto' (they like things), they are just confused, these people 'bayanginyanyisa' (I despise them), this gay/lesbian thing is for white people, blacks are just copycats,"* they added. These are blatant assertions of hatred and homophobia directed at LGBTQIA+, as well as a belief that homosexuality is linked to a specific race, which is perceived as furthering the message that homosexuality is un-African (Nkosi & Masson 2015:03).

As a result, LGBTQIA+ students are frequently overlooked and denied the opportunity to participate in class. Mudzusi and Sandy (2015) discovered that some students' studies are disrupted because they are denied financial aid due to homonegativity on the part of the university's financial staff officers. Thus, discussion of these issues should be made a priority to be able to develop programs and campaigns and support services for despised sexual minorities on university campuses. According to the findings of the UNESCO Report (2012) on homophobic bullying in educational institutions, homophobia was posited as a worldwide problem in academic institutions. Unfortunately, the *status quo* remains. Based on collaborative attempts on the part of various non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and education departments from twenty-five countries, recommendations were for governments to improve the circumstances of LGBTQIA+ learners in educational contexts who may be subjected to homophobic bullying due to their sexual orientation (UNESCO 2012). It is worrisome that South African education institutions (mostly schools) were also mentioned as part of the findings from the UNESCO Report (2012). Therefore, the experience of homophobia toward gay and lesbian students may result in self-hatred, self-devaluation, acting out, isolation, self-destructiveness, and aggression, which is known as internalized homophobia (Butler et al. 2003).

Higher education residences are viewed as second homes where students can explore their sexuality freely and experience new aspects of life without any discrimination (Soudien 2008).



However, it has come to attention that homophobia also occurs in university residences. Internationally, it has been written by scholars about challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ students in higher institutions and higher education residences (Campos, 2005; Ellis, 2009; Lambert, Ventura, Hall & Close-Tolar, 2006; Rankins, 2003; Travers, 2006). In the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students who reside in university accommodations, homophobia is seen to be a major challenge, as LGBTQIA+ students are beaten, harassed, raped, and excluded by fellow heterosexual students (Evans & Broido 2002). LGBTQIA+ students indicate when they were not out to other students, they had more negative perceptions about the residence floor, and they were not much involved in them (Evans & Broido 2002). Therefore, this negativity has also been visible in (Rivers & Taulke-Johnson's 2002) study, which showed that as LGBTQIA+ student's experience of coming out to their flatmates was particularly positive, this was met with indirect negativity based on conversations they had where they were asked about their sexual activities.

Experiences in the residences and higher education spaces are negative, with many LGBTQIA+ students being ill-treated at universities, and these negative experiences have been experienced in universities like the University of Stellenbosch, the University of the Western Cape, the University of the Free State, and the University of Zululand (Jagessar, 2015).

### **2.11 Internalized homophobia**

Internalized homophobia has conventionally been seen as “a sexual identity characterized by persistent, structured negative feelings, particularly of shame and self-loathing” (Moss, 2003:197). It represents a “taking in” of the dominant culture's attitude towards homosexuality and making it one's own. Similarly, Meyer & Dean (1998:161) define internalized homophobia as “the gay person's direction of negative social attitudes toward the self, leading to a devaluation of the self and resultant internal conflicts and poor self-regard”. Barnes and Meyer (2012) demonstrate that internalized homophobia mainly occurs because of ignorance, at other times because of negative stereotypes and culture/or religion and misconception that people learn from society, schools, churches, and families.

LGBTQIA+ students become victims of the emotional violence perpetrated against them by society. This happens. When individuals grow up being told explicitly and implicitly by society that heterosexuality is normalised and that homosexuality is abnormal and inferior (Cornish

2012). These messages are internalized into an individual's belief system and lead to the development of internalized homophobia, also called internalized homonegativity, is a dynamic force that LGBTQIA+ people contend with daily. Internalized homophobia may be considered a normative developmental experience for many homosexual individuals, given the prevalence of homophobia in society. This is the incorporation or internalization of the mainstream heterosexist culture's unfavourable attitudes and assumptions at the personal household and societal levels (Mullaly 2013) and adds to sexual and affectional fragmentation. Internalized homophobia is particularly hazardous and self-oppressive to the formation of homosexual identity in this aspect.

#### **2.12. Fear of “coming out”**

The term “coming out” is used to describe the process of and the extent to which one identifies oneself as LGBTQIA+. Coming out to others is perhaps the first step toward a positive understanding of one's homosexuality. This process not only includes the realization that one is homosexual but also accepting of it and deciding what to do about it. Coming out is defined as the process by which a person develops a homosexual identity, acknowledges it to themselves, and discloses it to others. It is a crucial phase in self-actualization, in which a person accepts themselves regardless of the opinions and actions of others in society (Nkabinde 2019). Coming out is a societal recognition of one's own identity. Coming out to oneself demands the development and adaption of a non-traditional sexual identity, the restructuring and reorganization of one's unique history, as well as the adaptation of one's interpersonal and societal relationships. The individual who is coming out may suffer negative consequences as a result; therefore, individuals' reluctance to declare their sexual orientation to society is exacerbated by the ubiquitous nature of discrimination, disinformation, and stereotyping in heterosexist societies (Msibi 2011). Gender boundaries might be extra flexible, human nature conceptualizations might be more open to variation and coming out as an LGBTQIA+ individual would be simpler if attitudes were more positive. These developments, however, are observable in society and are mismatching with the South African constitution. However, one of the main issues that exemplify the rejection of LGBTQIA+ students is their sexuality which looks to be abnormal to heterosexual university students.

Social beliefs regarding gender can cause those who identify as the ‘degraded LGBTQIA+ to be labelled as a threat or danger to society Steans (2013:3). In the African context, at

Stellenbosch University (Graziano 2004:273) “revealed that many LGBTQIA+ students do not reveal their sexuality because of the hostile campus environments and for fear of discrimination and victimization”. Butler et al. (2003) explored the coming out process of a group of 18-year-old young LGBTQIA+ high school students in South Africa and found that themes of harassment by peers, teachers, and administrators, ineffective school counsellors, avoidance, rejection, isolation, and lack of homosexual information were common to most participants’ experiences. These findings indicate the negative experiences LGBTQIA+ students face when they disclose their sexual orientation at institutions of learning.

Even though some LGBTQIA+ students find it difficult to disclose their sexuality because of the negative experience they receive from university students, however, some LGBTQIA+ students find it not difficult to come out because some may be comfortable disclosing their sexuality at universities rather than in their communities, or those with support may be more comfortable to disclose their sexual orientation. For instance, the study findings of Mutambara (2015) indicate that some LGBTQIA+ students revealed that they did not struggle with disclosing their sexuality because they were lucky enough to associate themselves with people who are non-judgemental and understand them for who they are. It has been asserted that some university students disclosing their sexuality are not difficult for them because of the welcoming environments that surround them (Arndt & de Bruin, 2006). Further, Jagessar & Msibi (2015) found that although discrimination may be rife at some tertiary institutions, some heterosexual students openly declare support for LGBTQIA+ students and call for respect for the rights of every human being regardless of sexual orientation.

### **2.13. Theoretical Framework of the study**

This study adopted Ma’s critical social work approach and was used in the study as it explores three inter-related levels of oppression: the personal, cultural, and structural levels. This theory applies to the proposed study, particularly regarding how LGBTQIA+ students are oppressed at different levels. Oppression is defined as “a term that is generally understood as the domination of subordinate groups in society by a powerful political, economic, social and culturally dominant group” (Mullaly 2010:27). Dominelli (2002) defines oppression as involving relations of domination that divide people into dominant or superior groups and subordinate or inferior ones. LGBTQIA+ students are the subordinate group that is oppressed because of their sexuality. In the eyes of heterosexual students, LGBTQIA+ students are outsiders who have gone against the cultural and religious norms of society. This leads to

homophobic discriminatory violence targeted towards them. Johnson (2006:16) highlights the difficulties that people encounter due to diversity and difference in “a world organized in ways that encourage people to use the difference to include or exclude, reward or punish credit or discredit, elevate or oppress, value or devalue, leave alone or harass”. Singh (2013) states that in universities, as in society, students are classified according to sexuality, race, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Therefore, critical social work theory is important in the identification of some of the hidden structural systems that oppress and discriminate against LGBTQIA+ students at various institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

Critical social work theory helps to reveal some of the repressive structures that LGBTQIA+ students must navigate through during their university years for social workers to intervene. The goal of structural social work is to "change the entire constellation of oppressive laws, processes, and practices" (Mullaly, 2010:158). This means it can be utilized as a theoretical framework to explore South African social behaviours and systems that discriminate against LGBTQIA+ students. Critical social work aims to reduce the harmful impacts of an exploitative and alienating social order on people while also changing the conditions and social structures that create the negative effects (Mullaly, 2010).

The study draws on critical social work to provide insight into the relationship between oppression and identity; understanding oppression at a personal, cultural, and societal level is crucial, and we need to be aware of and challenge how it is structurally reproduced (Dominelli, 2002; Mullaly, 2010; Young, 2009). Critical social work also raises the consciousness of people's unthinking application of oppressive and discriminatory norms and stereotypes, as well as their naive compliance with unjust institutional standards, resulting in what Young (1990:48) calls the "five faces of oppression," namely exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. These types of oppression are intertwined, for instance, oppressed people endure several forms of violence when they are exploited, consigned to the fringes, lack a voice and are powerless, and are subjected to cultural imperialism.

Along the lines of social group membership, both structural processes of oppression and oppressive treatment of some persons by others occur. LGBTQIA+ students in South African universities can be thought of as a social group that is marginalized, exploited, rendered weak, and subjected to cultural imperialism and violence due to their sexuality. Despite having some form of statutory rights enshrined in the constitution of South Africa, LGBTQIA+ students

continue to face homophobic attitudes and violence from heterosexual students and the wide university community.

Members of various groups have an impact on people's identities and sense of self. These identity constructions, according to Dominelli (2002), are important to structural oppression processes. Identity is the perception of who one is in connection to others. The utilization of differences to demarcate the borders of one group and its members from others is common in identity formation processes, resulting in binary opposites that connect groups that are regarded 'inferior' to those that are considered 'superior' (Dominelli 2002:8). Homosexuals versus heterosexuals are one example of this binary opposite. One of the outcomes of such superior versus-inferior opposites (Dominelli 2002) is that members of different positioned groups develop either privileged or oppressed identities, which are connected with the binary opposites connecting the groups to which they belong.

It is according to these binary opposites that members of one group are given privileged identities, while members of the other group are given stigmatized identities (Dominelli 2002). The dominant or superior group then presents these identities as natural, which is supported by the media, social institutions, and dominant discourses. Members of inferior groups, according to (Mullaly 2010:67), are 'imprisoned' by binary identities because there are few means to leave them. Mullaly (2010) claims that this is also because those who question these identities are labelled as deviants by the dominant group.

## **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter gives an outline of the research methods that were followed in the study. The data collection instruments, analysis of data and describes the methods and procedures that were followed to carry out this study.

### **3.2. Research Design**

Qualitative research attempts to broaden and deepen our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world. It is mostly concerned with exploring the “why” questions of research (Maree 2016). For example, it is concerned with the social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about why people behave the way they do, how opinions and attitudes are formed, how people are affected by the events that go on around them, how and why cultures and practices have developed in the way they have (Hancock *et al.*, 2007). Qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment and focuses on their meanings and interpretations (Maree 2016).

In this study, a qualitative research design was used. Qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social and/ or human problems (Creswell 2007). Qualitative research aims to give privilege to the perspectives of research participants and to illuminate the subjective meaning, actions, and context of those being researched (Popay *et al.*, 1998). Qualitative research is based on the foundation that individuals are the primary sources to describe their views and feelings in their own unique way (Babbie & Mouton 2001). Thus, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) attest that qualitative research involves a naturalistic approach meaning that qualitative researchers study phenomena within their natural settings, attempting to make sense of and interpret these phenomena in terms of people's perceptions. Therefore, I focused on gaining an inner perspective of heterosexual students' attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students on campus. This has provided insights from the standpoint of the participants, which may enable the researcher to perceive things as their informants do as they explore the insiders' view (Tshilongo 2018). Qualitative research was

necessary for this study because it provided an understanding of why heterosexual students have negative attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ students on campus.

### **3.3. Research Paradigm**

This study adopted an interpretivist paradigm which believes that reality is socially constructed, and subjective. As a result, interpretivists see the goal of theorising as providing an understanding of direct lived experience instead of abstract generalisations” (Gray 2013:15). Therefore, the interpretivism paradigm is defined as “the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman 2011). It focuses on the way in which people make sense of their subjective reality and assign meaning to it; it does not focus on individual objects which exist in isolation (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2011). It rather explores the worlds within the context of their lives (Babbie & Mouton 2008:28). Using an interpretivist paradigm assisted me in understanding participant’s views, heterosexual students’ attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students on campus. The Interpretivism paradigm usually seeks to understand a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed (Willis 2007). It endorses different perspectives that other students have regarding LGBTQIA+ students. In the context of this study, participants constructed their own knowledge within the social context influenced by their previous knowledge and understanding, therefore, a researcher seek to find the existing reality to heterosexual students.

### **3.4. Sampling and Population**

#### ***3.4.1. Population***

According to Welman et al. (2011:52), a research population is the research objective and may include individuals, organisations, or groups. The target population provided the findings from the sample that was utilised to simplify the results. The population of this study was university students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus, in any college regardless of the year of study.

### **3.4.2. Sampling**

Sampling is the selection of participants from the entire population (Durrheim 2010). There are numerous forms of sampling methods that can be employed for any various selection of the study by researchers, however, for this study, in particular, researchers decided to utilize the non-probability sampling method through availability sampling. Thus, non-probability sampling is used when researchers do not know whether all elements of the population have been included in a sample (Campbell, 2016). The benefit of using non-probability sampling in this study is that it is an appropriate means for researchers to gain access to their selected sample at little or no cost and, as such, the participants may potentially be more “readily available” (Neuman, 2011:248), participants that were available were invited to participate in the study. Availability sampling helped to gather perspectives from different university students’ attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students on the Howard College campus. The interviews with participants took place at places that were convenient for them, and therefore, these participants to feel more relaxed about the interview process and became open to sharing their views. In this study, a list of all UKZN campuses was compiled, and ten students selected to form part of the sample. Participants would seek clarity on some questions for them to respond appropriately. This helped to improve both the interview schedule and the researcher as a key instrument. Questionnaires were designed in such a manner that administering them was feasible. Data gathered through the questionnaires reflects on respondents’ views of the respondents the subject and additional information relevant to the research matter (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The research process was flexible in that it had space on the questionnaire for respondents to provide additional information relevant to the study that they might have felt compelled to mention.

### **3.5. Data Collection**

The procedure of examining and bringing together information relating to a research study is data collection (Rudge, 2012), and it entails directly finding the applicable information from the sample population. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from ten university students, the duration of the interview was 40-45 minutes. Data were collected using Zoom, WhatsApp and email for example, we communicated through recorded voice notes and video calling, and others were interviewed through Facebook calling and messenger. The in-depth interview, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001), takes the form of a conversation in which the researcher probes the participant to discover new information, open new dimensions



of a problem or secure vivid, accurate and detailed accounts that are based on the personal experience of the participant.

This study used an interview schedule in which questions were formulated based on the existing literature on homosexuality within higher education institutions to provide as much detail and understanding as possible (Creswell, 1998). Van Teijlingen (2014) states that a qualitative research interview seeks to cover both the factual and meaning level, though it is moreover difficult to interview at a meaning level. The main aim of interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewee would say. An interview schedule (see **Appendix A**) was used to gather information; Therefore, in-depth interviews also provided a more relaxed atmosphere in which the participants were able to share with the researcher in a comfortable manner. This was also to ensure the safety of participants, in line with COVID-19 regulations.

### ***3.5.1. Semi-structured interviews***

I employed semi-structured interviews, which involved a number of open-ended questions based on the topic areas that I wanted to cover. The open-ended nature of the questions defined the topic under investigation but provided opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail (Fox, Hunn & Mathers 2009). I was free to alter the order and wording of the interview questions, depending on the motion of the interview, and to ask additional questions as suggested by (Corbena 2003). I also explored new paths that emerged during the interview that I had not considered initially. Hand (2003) and Dearnley (2005) found that the open nature of the questions encouraged depth and vitality, which helped new concepts to emerge.

### **3.6. Methods of data analysis**

Data analysis is defined as the process of bringing order, structure, as well as meaning to the entire data that has been collected by the researcher (Bacon, 2015). The purpose of carrying out the data analysis process enabled me to get useful information which I analysed using thematic analysis. Thus, thematic analysis is primarily defined as a “method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). Qualitative data from the semi-structure interviews were analysed using thematic analysis because this method allows for flexibility or adaptability with the framework of the proposed investigative study (Braun & Clarke 2006). However, frequently thematic analysis goes further than this and assists in understanding various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). One of the

benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility. Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed yet complex account of data. Rubin and Rubin (2011) claim that analysis is exciting because you discover themes and concepts embedded throughout one's interviews. Thematic analysis can be an essentialist or realist method, which reports experiences, meanings, and the reality of participants, or it can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

This study adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis, where data was analysed step-by-step, namely (a) familiarising yourself with your data, for example, after the data has been collected, reading all the transcripts carefully line by line to familiarise myself with the data. It is noted that the time spent in transcription is not wasted, as it informs the early stages of analysis, and a researcher develops a far more understanding of the data through having transcribed it (Braun & Clarke 2006). Moreover, it has been emphasised that it is important for a researcher to familiarise him or herself with the data through reading and rereading the data and writing down the initial ideas that they hold (Wilson & MacLean 2011).

Then I generated initial codes, and highlighted the relevant words, phrases, and sentences from the transcript. Coding in qualitative research may be defined as the process of generating ideas and concepts from the empirical findings of a study by reviewing the interview transcripts and field notes which resulted from the research (Bryman 2016). The coding process in qualitative research is regarded as the "important first step as means to label, separate, compile, and organize data" (Bryman 2016:445).

I then searched for themes which were developed from the identified codes in the transcripts. This phase, which re-focuses the analysis at the broader level of themes rather than codes, involves sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). These may include defining the study concepts such as heterosexuality, gay, lesbian, homosexuality, views on the factors influence the attitudes of heterosexual students towards LGBTQIA+ students on campus, university policy regarding sexual orientation and the process that can be done to protect vulnerable groups such as LGBTQIA+ students on campus.

### **3.7. Trustworthiness of the study**

Trustworthiness of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Beck 2014). Thus, Shenton (2004) suggested four criteria to ensure valid interpretation of data is credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferrable.

#### ***3.7.1. Credibility***

Fouche and Delport (2007) state that credibility in qualitative research refers to confidence in the truth of the findings. Credibility is associated with internal validity; since it focuses on how the empirical findings from the study match the lived reality of participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985), argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. In this study, credibility was ensured by adopting the credibility strategies known as member checking, which (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) consider the single most important provision that can be made to bolster a study's credibility. This is because checks relating to the accuracy of the data may take place during the course, and at the end, of the data collection dialogues (Shenton, 2004). To guarantee the credibility of my research, I conducted member checking, which entailed returning to the participants from whom data was acquired to ensure that my interpretations were accepted as accurate depictions of their experiences. I spoke to my participants and showed them the preliminary report to validate that I had accurately documented what they stated in the interview and that I had not twisted their words.

#### ***3.7.2. Transferability***

Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations (Denscombe 2010). Transferability refers to the generalizability of inquiry. In my study, transferability was achieved by providing detailed descriptions of the sample and the demographic information of the individuals. The study's geographical limitations were well stated, making it possible to adapt the research findings or methodologies to a different location.

#### ***3.7.3. Dependability***

Dependability may be defined as the extent to which research findings can be repeated in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, and similar results would be obtained (Merriam, 1998). The study's dependability was attained by describing the study's

goal, how and why participants were recruited for the study, how the data were collected and how long the data collection lasted, and how the data were analysed. In this chapter, I also offered a full description of the study methodology, ensuring the reliability of my findings. Care was taken to ensure that I followed the process was followed accordingly and clearly by providing details account to research process. This was done through having a research supervisor to thoroughly check the research study if data collection and data analysis are results does support the data study.

#### ***3.7.4. Confirmability***

Confirmability is also known as objectivity of the researcher and is needed to ensure that the findings are not influenced by the researcher (Denscombe 2010). It addresses the fundamental issue that findings should embody the situation being explored rather than the beliefs, theories, and preconceptions of the researcher (Gasson 2004). The role of member checking in promoting such confirmability must again be emphasised in this context to reduce the effect of being biased in the study. For this study, I used audit trails as a technique to establish the confirmability of the study findings. In developing an audit trail, a researcher provides an account of all research decisions and activities throughout the study. The researcher detailed the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of data (Shenton 2004). I used a reflective diary to write down my personal experiences and biases, which helped me to conduct this research without bias. I also made sure that my interviews were flexible and open and that I asked open-ended questions rather than leading questions to allow my participants to speak freely about their experiences.

#### ***3.8. Ethical Consideration***

Research ethics addresses the questions that are relevant to the study. Ethics are more than a set of principles or abstract rules that sit as an overarching entity guiding our research (Davies & Dodd, 2002). As Charlesworth (1996) argued, ethics are about the issues or potential problems each research situation presents. Ethics exist in our actions and in our ways of doing and practising our research. We perceive ethics to be always in progress, never to be taken for granted, flexible, and responsive to change (Davies & Dodd, 2002). Ethics is concerned in addition with the steps taken to protect those who participate in the research if it is necessary (Flick, 2011). Thus, Maree (2016:300) stated that “it is imperative to obtain clearance from ethics committee when human (or animals) subjects are involved in any kind of research of an

empirical nature.” Therefore, this implies that whenever the researcher conducts the study, ethical clearance must be present. Ethics are the standards that recognize right and wrongful conduct. Ethics are important to deciding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The motivation to consider ethical measures prevents making or distorting information and encourages the pursuit of truthful knowledge, which is the essential aim of the research study (Burgess 1989).

In this study, the researcher received gatekeeper permission from the office of the Registrar at UKZN for this study. Then, the gatekeeper letter was used to apply for ethical clearance at the University’s Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, (See **Appendix C**). Ethical clearance was obtained with the protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000605/2019 (see **Appendix D**).

### ***3.8.1. Informed consent and voluntary participation***

I made the participants aware that the research was only for academic purposes, that they were not forced to participate in the study and that the interviews were completely voluntary. To ensure that voluntary participation is acknowledged, the interview schedule was accompanied by a written informed consent statement (See **appendix B**). The researcher used informed consent to avoid certain potential risks to participants, such as the loss of confidentiality, and psychological risks, including depression, guilt, and physical risks. Informed consent means the significant consent of individuals to participate in an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, decisiveness, or unfair manipulation (De Vos *et al*, 2002). The researcher obtains consent from the participants and asserts to them that any information they would discuss would remain confidential and their personal details would not be shared with anyone. I obtained verbal informed consent and then used the interview schedule to gather data.

### ***3.8.2. Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity***

Confidentiality and privacy were ensured in the interviews by not sharing any participants’ identifying details in the interview schedule or in the final report. The anonymity was also applied to protect the identity of the participants through the use of pseudonyms. This means that no one would be able to link the information to any of the participants. Tourani *et al.*, (2018) mentioned that both the researcher and the participant must have a clear understanding of confidentiality. Furthermore, privacy was ensured that no participants would be forced to

reveal information to the researcher that the participant did not wish to reveal during the interview. All the recordings and audio recordings will be destroyed three years after the study has been completed, in accordance with university policy.

### ***3.8.3. Protection from harm***

Given the sensitivity of the subject matter, it was imperative for me to determine whether the research constituted a potential risk to participants in order for me to address potential harmful effects before the commencement of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I was committed to ensuring that no harm was inflicted on the participants, in terms of not being offensive, disrespectful, or discriminatory toward the rights of the participants. Also Leedy & Ormrod, (2017) argue that the researcher must ensure that participants are not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm. I told participants that if they were uncomfortable, I would offer support and, if necessary, make referrals with relevant social workers. The participants felt very appreciated and grateful for the opportunity to participate and share their stories.

### **3.9. Limitations of the study**

Study limitations are the characteristics, designs, or techniques of a study that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the results of one's research. The importance of qualitative research, as (Mushunje 2017) points out, is the analysis of data in context and the transferability of data across similar samples, despite the fact that this study was limited to a specific geographic location and had a small sample size.

### **3.10. Conclusion**

This chapter explains the study's methodology. The study paradigm, research design, data collection methodologies, and data analysis methods have all been discussed in this chapter. The chapter in this study went into greater detail about how trustworthiness was ensured. The final section of this chapter focused on the research's limitations and how these constraints were addressed.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the results of the data collected using interviews with participants. The analysis of data from the semi-structured interviews is presented in this chapter. These themes provide a comprehensive discussion of the narratives of the ten participants, both from undergraduate and postgraduate levels between the ages of 23-32 years. The study represents the sample of students at the Howard College campus, and the sample comprised five females and five males. The average age of the participants is 27 years, with the oldest aged 32 years and the youngest aged 23 years. Most of the participants are postgraduate students, and the other four students are undergraduates.

### 4.2. Summary of the Themes

- a) General attitudes of heterosexual students regarding homosexuality.
- b) Homophobic attitudes influenced by culture
- c) Homophobic attitudes influenced by religious beliefs
- d) Social media as a site of homophobic attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students
- e) Homophobic language
- f) Fear of coming out because of homophobia attitudes
- g) The impact of homophobic attitudes on LGBTQIA+ students' personal safety on campus
- h) Initiatives to protect LGBTQIA+ students on campus

**Table 4.1 demographic details of participants (pseudonyms)**

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Level of study
Ntokozo Mthembu	Male	26	Postgraduate
Londiwe Mbatha	Female	28	Postgraduate
Nokuthula Jali	Female	23	Undergraduate
Nomkhosi Dongwe	Female	24	Undergraduate
Aphelele Mbhele	Male	25	Undergraduate
Nzuzo Bhengu	Male	27	Postgraduate

Naledi Mpoli	Female	26	Postgraduate
Bandile Jama	Female	25	Undergraduate
Khulekani Duma	Male	32	Postgraduate
Cebo Nkosi	Male	30	Postgraduate

#### **4.2.1. General attitudes of heterosexual students regarding homosexuality**

Six of the participants indicated that LGBTQIA+ students faced discrimination and homophobia from students on campus. Most of the participants reported that males tend to have a negative attitude toward LGBTQIA+ students as compared to females. Female participants highlighted that they are friends with LGBTQIA+ students, while male participants mentioned that they would never be friends with them as associating with a gay person when you are male can indicate that you are gay as well. The following excerpts support this:

*One of the attitudes I've witnessed is that some heterosexual male students on campus never want to associate themselves with gay students and feel as if lesbian students are trying so hard to be like them. (Lindani Mhlongo)*

*I don't think they do fit in the society, because when we with male students like friends you can sense and hear all criticism and prejudice, they portray towards gay and lesbian students, even females do portray such hatred. Moreover, the society is pruned to understand genders according to roles, and gays and lesbian do not fit in either of these roles because of discrimination and society constructions. (Mbalenhle Khosi)*

*For me, I wouldn't feel comfortable if I share a room with a gay, unless otherwise I know that they respect the fact that I am straight and then that can free me because, generally these people used to seduce people regardless of what they are, as in heterosexual or homosexual. For example, like myself I was approached by many gay students which is offensive to me, and I felt disrespected, and I noticed that most of gays don't respect, especially someone's boundaries. (Mahloko Motloun).*

*Heterosexual people normally have negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ people, others are said to be homophobic. Heterosexual male students, in general have more negative attitudes towards gay students than heterosexual female students do yet they have fewer negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students. (Mnotho Cele).*



The findings are in line with various studies (Arndt & De Bruin, 2006; Ngcobo, 2007; Mwaba, 2009) that have reported that homophobic attacks are equally on the increase in communities and students tend to emulate behaviours that are reflective of society that they come from. University campuses serve as a microcosm of society. In a South African university residential life, mixed experiences and confirmation of unpleasant campus life, dormitories, and fellow students are reported (Munyuki & Vincent 2017). In certain institutions, male residents appear to be hotspots for homophobia (Graziano 2004). Heterosexual students still have homophobic attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students (Kiguwa & Langa, 2017). Evidence from other studies suggests negative attitudes, prejudice, and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students (Arndt and De Bruin 2006; Hames 2007).

Critical social work theory that underpins this research is useful in identifying the elements that contribute to homophobic views against LGBTQIA+ students. Singh (2013) emphasizes this argument, stating that at colleges, students are categorised based on their sexuality, race, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. This study identified some of the hidden structural structures that oppress and discriminate against LGBTQIA+ students at UKZN. Critical social work helps to highlight some of the restrictive systemic mechanisms that LGBTQIA+ students must navigate during their university years. The goal of structural social work is to "change the entire constellation of oppressive laws, processes, and practices" (Mullaly, 2010:158). This means it can be utilized as a theoretical framework to explore South African social behaviours and systems that discriminate against LGBTQIA+ students.

#### ***4.2.2 Homophobic attitudes influenced by “culture”***

The findings indicate that the negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students are a result of “culture”, with the socially constructed traditional roles influencing these beliefs. Some of the participants indicated that homosexuality is the rejection of a traditional (dominant) sexual ideology seen to be heterosexual and male orientated. Some of the participants highlighted that:

*One of the main factors could be cultural beliefs, for example as Zulus we believe that males have certain ways to behave to fit in the society, so cultural beliefs play a huge role in influencing the attitudes of heterosexual students towards LGBTQIA+ students on campus. However, same gender relationships in my culture are regarded as taboo because they against our norms and values of society. As well as lesbian behaviour is*

*not approved in our culture, since females are expected to marry a male, and have children. (Thandeka Zuma).*

*My beliefs as a Xhosa man my tradition prohibits sexual relationships with similar genders, I am personally against it because I cannot describe it and it's something that does not exist. (Phawu Tshabalala).*

*The most influence comes from the way we are raised and our culture, to understand that there're only two genders that are dominant known as girl/boy, therefore, social construction causes to be difficult for the society to accept that there's a sexuality that has recently prevail and got rife in our society. (Mbalenhle Khosi)*

*It would be one of the facts that heterosexual students would never understand the lifestyle of LGBTQIA+ students on campus. Being judgemental towards them since that is typical influenced by cultural background which of course influence heterosexual students' attitudes towards gays and lesbians on campus. (Siyabonga Zungu)*

Some academics agree with these findings, claiming that the belief that same-sex desire is unAfrican is at the root of violence towards people who choose LGBTQIA+ sexuality over heterosexuality and that this belief is still held by many South Africans (Msibi, 2011; Tati, 2009). Similarly Gontek (2009) found that culture pushes many South Africans and Africans across the continent to see homosexuality as 'un-African' to this day.

Culture gives vivid pictures and notions of appropriate sexual behaviour through socialization; sex becomes institutionalized or ritualized through culture and ultimately imprints a dominant sexual ideology on our minds (Bhana 2014). The heterosexual ideology and practices of the culture in which a person lives automatically impact and limit the expression of their sexuality through societal attitudes and individual behaviour. Culture is one of the oppressive structural mechanisms that LGBTQIA+ students must experience during their university years, and critical social work theory helps to identify some of these oppressive institutions. This means that critical social work theory can be utilized as a theoretical framework to investigate South African social behaviours and institutions that discriminate against LGBTQIA+ students in order for heterosexual students to challenge some of these rigid cultural norms.

#### **4.2.3. Homophobic attitudes influenced by religious beliefs**

Most of the participants highlighted that religion is often used as a tool to discriminate against gay and lesbian students. The participants indicated that it was a sin to be gay or lesbian as it

goes against the teachings of the Bible. Hence, most Christian students hold homophobic attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ students on campus, which is largely influenced by their religious beliefs. The following excerpts from the participants support this:

*Religious background also determines and shape the attitudes of heterosexual students in terms of how we view gay and lesbian students on campus (Siyabonga Zungu).*

*As heterosexual male students we don't like being friends with gay students because we feel like people will automatically assume that you are gay, and it goes against my religious beliefs. The dominant attitude that we also have towards LGBTQIA+ student is that we can't accept who you want to be, while you can't accept who you really are. And my religion does not allow me to accept them (Phawu Tshabalala).*

*Influence come from what you were taught when you were young, e.g., basically most of us our families taught us about only two genders that are accepted and exist in society, which is boy/girl, so being gay or lesbian is still not accepted because of cultural and religious reasons (Tsebo Ntethe).*

*In communities where we come from, it's unacceptable to live with gay and lesbian, it's immoral and unrighteousness against the will of God. They are not wanted (Lwazi Ndlovu).*

The findings are in line with Bhana's (2014) study, which noted that religion is typically the strongest predictor of negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students by heterosexual students and that some of the students' understanding of sexuality is rooted in religion (Bhana 2014). Thus, Langa (2015) investigated how 32 adolescent males (31 straight and one gay) in two South African township high schools discussed "gay" boys. Homosexuality was described as "unchristian, sexually deviant, perverse, polluting, and threatening to the institution of the heterosexual family" (Langa, 2015:32). The participants' comments confused gender and sexuality as one, owing to heteronormative traditional and religious ideas. Furthermore, international research shows that those who are drawn to religious institutions have higher degrees of heteronormativity (Olson, Cadge & Harrison, 2006). As a result, religion plays a significant role in sexuality policing, with homosexuality being heavily policed and sanctioned in many religions, notwithstanding constitutional rights.

#### **4.2.4. Social media as a site of homophobic attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ student**

The study findings indicated that social media, especially Facebook, was used as a tool to discriminate against LGBTQIA+ students. Most of the participants highlighted that they had come across posts on Facebook that were homophobic. Some of the participants indicated that:

*Yes, I do think Howard Facebook page has an influence in shaping and perpetuating the attitudes of heterosexual students. This is because I have seen a lot of post of gay students predominantly posted and when you view comments, there are very criticising and shaming. For example, once a gay student posted his picture, and it was shared several times and you could see that the picture is shared with the intention of discrimination because of his sexuality (Mbalenhle Khosi).*

*Yes, but to a certain extent, in a manner that only female heterosexual students supporting LGBTQIA+ students, but male heterosexual students don't. If there's a post in Howard Facebook page that showing features of gays and lesbian students, 90% male heterosexual students will ridicule that post, which proves that there has a lot done to incorporate the LGBTQIA+ students on campus (Phawu Tshabalala).*

*Yes, I think the Facebook page of Howard has a great influence in shaping the attitudes of heterosexual students as it instils the fact that everyone is not equal no matter which gender, they are. It teaches heterosexual students that it is fair to treat LGBTQIA+ students differently simply because their sexuality is against their culture or beliefs (Mnotho Cele).*

The findings from the study conducted by (Fahs & Gohr, 2012) highlighted those interpersonal interactions on Facebook tend to be homophobic towards LGBTQIA+ people. Some studies (Guan & Subrahmanyam, 2009; Staksrud & Living stone, 2009) indicate that LGBTQIA+ students who engage in social media experience bullying and exposure to inappropriate content, which have negative consequences.

#### **4.2.5. Homophobic language**

Seven of the participants in the current study indicated that the key mechanism used to attack or discriminate against homosexual students is language. Language has been found to be one of the key ways through which discrimination and abuse of LGBTQIA+ students are perpetrated and maintained in South African universities. In support of this, some of the participants reiterated that:

*I feel like most black male heterosexual students don't accept LGBTQIA+ students on campus, because of negative comments they had towards them such as "you need to change the way you are behaving and be a real man", (Thandeka Zuma)*

*I think the language they use to describe LGBTQIA+ students on campus are offensive, they usually call them Izitabane which is a Zulu name used to describe LGBTQIA+ but it normal offensive and has that sense of hatred in (Mbalenhle Khosi)*

*Honestly speaking the language, they used to be very bad, to an extent that some end up committing suicide, or being depressed due to hate speech expressed by heterosexual students. Some heterosexual students believe that using bad language would ridicule LGBTQIA+ students in a way that they would discourage their behaviour, and hopeful they will change, but unfortunately that a lie, it's just a pure hatred towards LGBTQIA+ students (Phawu Tshabalala).*

The findings are consistent with (Msibi, 2011) study, which found that language is a potent instrument for entrenching homophobia and heterosexism. Labelling can take many different forms, including micro-aggression. The application of a label to someone has a profound impact on how they are regarded by others and how they perceive themselves. Labelling is a type of social constructivism in which language or discourse plays a significant part in social life's formation.

The existence of oppression's structural patterns and processes, according to critical social work theory, permits some people to oppress others on purpose, which can lead to the kind of autocratic behaviour that is commonly associated with the term oppression (Dominelli, 2002; Young 1990). These forms of oppression, according to Young (1990), are intertwined: oppressed people, for example, face multiple forms of violence when they are exploited, sent to the margins, denied a voice and power, and exposed to cultural imperialism. So many of these students show attitudes of being very oppressive and marginalise homosexual students.

#### ***4.2.6. Fear of coming out because of homophobic attitudes***

Given students' negative attitudes toward homosexuals, it may be less stressful for LGBTQIA+ students to pretend to be part of the mainstream or heterosexual community. Some of the participants stated that some LGBTQIA+ students are "in the closet" in order to fit in with the mainstream culture. Internalized homophobia appears to be fostered in this way, separating

public and private life. LGBTQIA+ students would undoubtedly find it difficult to come out because of negative labelling and stigmatization. Some of the participants indicated that:

*For my opinion, they don't fit in a society only few manage to, reason being they are discriminated, and others hide behind closet because they are ridiculed because society does not consider LGBTQIA+ individuals as a norm in normal society because of cultural reasons that they have towards gay and lesbian students (Phawu Tshabalala).*

*Discrimination, bullying and exclusion in normal circumstances make it difficult for LGBTQI+ student to come out and even disclose their sexuality (Lwazi Ndlovu).*

The findings indicate that to avert stigma and discrimination, LGBTQIA+ students have found several ways to protect themselves. One is to live double lives, where they publicly engage in heterosexual relationships during the day and privately enjoy being with the partners of their choice at night. Msibi (2012) found that LGBTQIA+ students at South African universities such as Stellenbosch University, the University of Western Cape and University of KwaZulu-Natal seek acceptance by “acting straight” to pass as heterosexual (. In essence, lesbian and gay persons face oppression and prejudice on a regular basis. In these situations, they confront a range of potential reactions when they disclose their sexual orientation to others, and some of those reactions may be horrific. This is in line with Msibi (2012) findings from research of 14 "gay" students aged 16 to 21 years in South African township schools, which indicated that verbal and physical abuse existed in school contexts and is a major factor in some of them not disclosing their sexuality.

#### ***4.2.7. The impact of homophobic attitudes on LGBTQIA+ students' personal safety on campus***

Some of the participants in the study indicated that the personal safety of LGBTQIA+ students was not guaranteed on campus. This is a result of the intense discrimination and homophobic attitudes of some of the heterosexual students, especially male students who do not want to be in a way associated with gay students.

*The general attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students, would be teasing, criticism and shaming them and at time they are attacked in public, and gays are brutally assaulted, and lesbians are raped and killed which is a hate crime (Mbalenhle Khosi).*

The foregoing illustrates that the university climate is hostile to LGBTQIA+ students. This is consistent with Mudzusi and Sandy (2015); Matthyse (2015), both of whom did research at

rural universities. In both investigations, the campus climate was shown to be intolerant of LGBTQIA+. Physical, sexual, and verbal assault, as well as property crimes and threats of violence, are all common forms of victimization for sexual minorities (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks 2006, Herek 2000, Anderson *et al.* 2015).

The animosity stems from the binary identities that society has produced. According to Dominelli (2002:8), these identity constructions are crucial to structural oppression processes as "the perception of who one is in relation to others." In identity formation processes, the use of differences to distinguish one group and its members from others is common, resulting "othering" others who do not fit into the mainstream or dominant groups, are regarded as 'inferior' to those who regard themselves as 'superior' (Dominelli 2002). One example of this binary opposition is homosexual vs heterosexual. According to Dominelli (2002), one of the outcomes of such superior-versus-inferior opposites is that members of various positioned groups develop either privileged or oppressed identities, which are linked to the binary opposites that connect the groups to which they belong.

#### ***4.2.8. Initiatives to protect LGBTQIA+ students on campus***

Participants in this study focused on the issue of lack of knowledge from other heterosexual students who were intolerant of homosexuality. They further highlighted the need to conduct workshops as a way of disseminating information. In support, the participants indicated:

*Creating awareness and informing others about the community, to gain more insight, and to realize that each individual is unique and should be treated in a well manner (Lindani Mhlongo).*

*I think the university should embark on the initiative of public address and mobilising about gay and lesbian students and make students aware about how they unknowingly ill-treat gay and lesbian students on campus. They must also bring into light other prejudices that has occurs towards this vulnerable group, that the media doesn't exhaust or talk about. Make awareness about how important it is to include them in our society and outline the danger they face by alienating them in our societies (Thenjiwe Sibanyoni).*

Workshops and social awareness campaigns with LGBTQIA+ activism is rooted in the idea that negative attitudes and behaviour toward homosexuality can be challenged. Using the extracts from the participants, the focus should be on challenging homophobia, discrimination,

and labelling of LGBTQIA+ students on campus. Quite importantly, the theoretical framework underpinning this study can be used to challenge some of the repressive cultural and religious beliefs as well as structures that oppress, discriminate, and influence homophobic attitudes. "Change the entire constellation of oppressive laws, processes, and practices" is the purpose of critical social work theory (Mullaly 2010:158). This means it can be used to investigate South African social behaviours and systems that discriminate against homosexual and lesbian students as a theoretical framework. This is in line with one of the organization's objectives, which is to lessen the negative effects of an exploitative and alienating social order on people while also altering the conditions and social structures that cause the negative effects (Mullaly 2010).



## **CHAPTER 5: Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of findings that were generated through participants during interviews in relation to the objectives of the study. This chapter also contains an integrated discussion of the major results from the study's discussion chapter, as well as the relevant conclusions and recommendations based on those findings. There includes a summary of all the chapters as well as conclusions based on the study questions. The study's primary conclusions and contribution to the body of knowledge on heterosexual students' attitudes toward homosexual and lesbian students in South African universities are then presented. Recommendations and opportunities for future research are also discussed.

### **5.2. Summary the findings in relation to the objectives of the study**

Findings of the study indicate that LGBTQIA+ students face challenges such as discrimination. Participants also illustrated that heterosexual male students seem to have more attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ students and female heterosexual students seem to accept LGBTQIA+ students on campus. These findings correspond with the study conducted by (Herek, 2004), which indicates that heterosexual male students' views on attitudes and discrimination were significantly more negative than the of heterosexual female students. Further, theme one findings show that participants view that LGBTQIA+ students also experience homophobia on university campuses. The findings concur with the study by Kiguwa and Langa (2017), which found that heterosexual students have homophobic attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students. Heterosexual male students' negative attitudes may be a potential influence on their privileged status in society or culture.

The findings of the present study found that culture play a vital role in influencing homophobic attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students. Findings indicate that the main reason why homosexuality is rejected, is because of the traditional dominance of societal attitudes. Most of Africans believe that homosexuality is un-Africa. Findings also highlight that for people who strongly believe in culture, there are only two genders that are dominantly known as girl/boy, and there are certain cultural norms and values of society that must be adhered to fit in society. Therefore, it is considered immoral in society to act against these norms or to have different sexuality. My perspective on these findings is that culture is one of the strongest factors that influence people's perception and attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ people, as their sexuality is

regarded as un-African in their culture. Another aspect of my view is that culture is seemed to be one of the oppressive factors that LGBTQIA+ students experience during their university/college time.

The findings of the study indicate a majority of the participants view that religion is one of the main factors that is used to discriminate against LGBTQIA+ students because their sexuality is regarded as a sin and it's against the teachings of the bible. Findings also found that social media is another factor that perpetuates homophobic attitudes toward gay LGBTQIA+ students on campuses. Facebook was found to be the one that influenced and shaped the attitudes of heterosexual students. Take for example, there are numerous negative posts that are shared by university students criticizing and shaming the sexuality of LGBTQIA+ students. It has also been found that there are many LGBTQIA+ students who experience bullying on social media. Homophobic language has been found as another factor that perpetuates discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students. Findings illustrate that heterosexual students used offensive language to describe LGBTQIA+ students, such as "Isitabane" which is a Zulu word used to describe gays and lesbians. Labelling has been found that it's social constructive, and it is used to oppress LGBTQIA+ students.

Findings of the present study indicate that LGBTQIA+ students find it difficult to come out because of negative labelling and stigmatization they receive from heterosexual students. The third objective of the study explores the effects of attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ students, and this relates to the findings of the study about the impact of homophobic attitudes on LGBTQIA+ students' personal safety on campus. Findings illustrate that the personal safety of LGBTQIA+ students wasn't guaranteed on campus because of discrimination and homophobic attitudes heterosexual students have towards LGBTQIA+ students. Findings demonstrate that LGBTQIA+ students are experiencing criticism, teasing, attacks in public and brutal assaults, and lesbians are being raped. The findings of the study also show that participants initiate that university management should take a stand in protecting LGBTQIA+ students on campus. This will be done by implementing educational programmes, campaigns, and awareness that will fight against homophobia, discrimination, oppression, marginalization, harassment, assaults, etc., against sexual minorities on campus.

In my opinion, most LGBTQIA+ students deal with difficult experiences, and having such experiences is their standard. Looking at the harsh experiences that LGBTQIA+ students face in the university environment, the university management must take a stand in protecting the

rights of homosexuals because it looks like the rights of LGBTQIA+ are only written in the paper, and it's not practised. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the university to make every student feel safe, free, and comfortable regardless of their sexualities.

### **5.3. Summary of previous chapters**

Chapter 1 introduced the study with the background and problem statement discussed with the aid of relevant literature. The aim, objectives, and research questions of the study are provided.

Chapter 2 encompassed the literature review chapter. This chapter presents the literature review of some of the studies that have been done on gay and lesbian students globally and specifically in South Africa. The initial part of the chapter is directed towards the understanding of the history of the LGBTQIA+ community. The chapter then merges contemporary discussions and arguments on gay and lesbian students from existing literature.

Chapter 3 was the methodology chapter that focused on providing a detailed description of the qualitative interpretivist paradigm. A discussion on the use of the research designs, sampling methods, data collection method, data analysis methods, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations is presented.

Chapter 4 focused on the presentation and discussion of the study's findings. This chapter begins with a presentation of the demographic characteristics of the participants. The main themes are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the summary of the study findings in relation to the objectives of the study, and it also outlines the major conclusions drawn from the research findings and recommendations in relation to the study.

### **5.4. Major Conclusions**

The major conclusion that can be drawn from this current study are that gay and lesbian students face discrimination and homophobic attitudes from heterosexual students on the Howard College campus. Heterosexual male students tend to have the most entrenched negative, homophobic attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ students, as they indicated that they will never befriend a gay student because the wider campus community will also think they are gays as well by associating with gay students. Therefore, their attitude towards LGBTQIA+ students was negative, and they cited various reasons to justify this, such as culture, which is used as a reason and justification to perpetrate homophobia.

Society is androcentric, and South Africa is also patriarchal that is characterized by a strongly male-dominated society. Gender equality and freedom to express one's sexual orientation is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa but are not practised. It is widely acknowledged that we have far to go before getting near this ideal. Attacks and killings of lesbians and homosexual people are rife, and society still finds it difficult to understand and acknowledge that women and men have rights over their bodies and can negotiate their lives differently, as well as express their sexual vulnerabilities differently, not to mention the sexual marginalization. In a patriarchal society like South Africa, one may expect these differences to be more pronounced. Prejudices and myths about gays and lesbians still exist, and they are frequently accompanied by discrimination and even violence. Being homosexual or lesbian is not a right but a crime in many places around the world. Discrimination is firmly rooted in everyone, including the prejudiced group, and is often unconscious. The heterosexual worldview that pervades the general population has been adopted by society.

Based on the responses, students have a bad perception of homosexual students, are prejudiced towards them, and discriminate against them. Prejudice against homosexuality is a severe social issue that must be addressed. Participants' comments were interpreted as biased; there is a need to ensure a culture which is pro-equality and anti-discrimination. The internalization and assimilation of heterosexual standards and authoritarian attitudes have negative consequences on homosexual and lesbian perceptions and experiences. In this study, derogatory language, verbal harassment, and exclusion were evident, suggesting that verbal harassment is rife in the university context and that homophobic attitudes remain strong in South African universities. There is thus a deep-rooted culture of heteronormativity and heterosexism, which is normalized by the negative attitudes of the heterosexual students and the wider university community. As with all other forms of oppression, heterosexism is based on the prejudice and assumption that heterosexuality is the only natural, 'normal', acceptable sexual orientation.

In some educational settings, expressions of acceptable sexuality, such as a heterosexual pair holding hands, are accepted, whereas the same behaviour from a homosexual couple is stigmatized in a heteronormative educational setting; same-sex students are ostracized as their feelings contradict the widely believed and disproved normative ideals of appropriate gendered sexuality. Discrimination was alive and well on campus, according to the participants in this study. While some participants believed that the constitutional rights of LGBTQIA+ are constantly being violated, others did not. The participants also stated that there is a lack of

understanding on campus about different types of sexual orientation and that other students were violating homosexual and lesbian students' human rights.

Given the negative attitudes about homosexuality, pretending to identify with the mainstream or heterosexual culture may be a way of protecting oneself from harm. As a result, some of the respondents indicated that gay and lesbian students stay 'in the closet' to be accepted into mainstream society. Internalized homophobia appears to be entrenched in this way and leads to a separation of public and private life. Identity is frequently questioned by society. LGBTQIA+ individuals are frequently oppressed and discriminated against, and in these situations, they confront a range of potentially threatening reactions when they disclose their sexual orientation to others.

## **5.5. Recommendations**

Given the severity of homophobia, it is recommended that institutions develop a strategy to integrate LGBTQIA+ students' concerns into the higher education system. First and foremost, it is critical to put in place support systems and suitable organizations to particularly address these issues. The findings show that there is a dearth of support in South African universities for the LGBTQIA+ community that can lead and advise on the institutionalization of LGBTQIA+ students' issues. South African universities must invest in the emotional support and physical protection of LGBTQIA+ students, who suffer emotional and psychological harm because of homophobia. They are subjected to verbal harassment, slurs, humiliation, and rejection, all of which are major stressors that can lead to despair, anxiety, substance misuse, and even suicide.

It must be the responsibility of the management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to implement educational courses in order for students would be knowledgeable about the sexual orientation of LGBTQIA+ students. Therefore, such courses should include information on how to ace skills and use specific language, which may encourage people to engage critically with debates on gender and sexual diversity and equality (De Wet 2017). It will be important for the university management to employ t social workers who will provide educational programmes that will address the attitudes and engage in policy-making should ensure that policies and programmes developed specifically designed to be LGBTQIA+ needs driven. Finding by Meaney & Rye (2009) highlight the importance of structured intervention programmes to address attitudes toward homosexuality in university settings. Woodford,

Silverschanz, Swank, Scherrer, and Raiz (2012) also alluded that educational programmes can be included in first-year seminars so that it would help to give information and dispel myths about homosexuality. For example, the belief that homosexuality is immoral and un-African can be challenged by including information in the curriculum that supports historical evidence of homosexual practices in the African continent. Social workers would play an important role in the provision of support and counselling services to LGBTQIA+ students who are physically and emotionally affected by the issues they face. Therefore, social worker professionals can provide psychosocial support to LGBTQIA+, and this may contribute to the prevention of internalised homophobia and marginalisation.

Challenges that underpin education aimed to confront negative attitudes and beliefs highlight the need for awareness training, oversight, and accountability. South African universities must also create a system to manage advocacy and activism, public awareness, education, and training for students and all employees and students at institutions of higher learning. LGBTQIA+ issues should be included in the general education curriculum, and information should be more accessible. Factors such as culture and religion must be challenged so that multiple sexualities are embraced, and all students may enjoy learning in universities without fear of marginalization, oppression, and stigma.

#### ***5.5.1. Recommendations for future research***

It is also important to undertake a study on the different campuses at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to get a holistic picture of the heterosexual attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ students. In addition, a study that includes lecturers and management is important to understand what needs to be done to protect and promote the rights of LGBTQIA+ students in South African Universities.

To evaluate the effectiveness of implemented programmes that deal with bullying, discrimination, and the safety of LGBTQIA+ students or courses that address issues in expectations of creating an environment where discrimination based on sexuality is eliminated. This will assist the university management in being aware of programmes that are effective in addressing the challenges faced by sexual minorities on campuses.

I would suggest that future research be conducted to investigate the academic performance of LGBTQIA+ students so that university management would be able to establish how the

provision of safe spaces which encourage students' participation in LGBTQIA+ programmes will impact potentially on their academic performance.

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EXPLORING HETEROSEXUAL STUDENT'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS GAY AND LESBIAN AT THE HOWARD  
COLLEGE CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU- NATAL

*You are invited to participate in this research study that is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.*

**Section A: Background Information**

1. Sex

• ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age

**section B**

1. In your opinion, what are your beliefs about gay and lesbian students on campus?
2. In your view, do you think gays and lesbian students do fit in society?
3. What would be general attitudes of heterosexual students towards gay and lesbian students?
4. What would you interact if you are sharing same room at residence with gay or lesbian student?
5. What factors influence the attitudes of heterosexual students towards gay and lesbian students?
6. What do you think about university policy regarding sexuality?
7. In you view, what do you think about the language use to describe gay and lesbian students on campus?
8. In your view, do you think Facebook page of Howard College campus has a great influence in shaping the attitudes of heterosexual students? Explain why.
9. How would you react to a lesbian or gay friend?
10. Do you think it is necessary to have university policies in place to protect the rights of lesbian and gay students? Please provide a reason for your answer.
11. What do you think could be done to protect vulnerable group of lesbian and gay students on campus?

**Consent to participate on research**

Date: August 2019

Madam/Sir

I Mandisa Base, cordially invites you to consider participating in an investigative study of attitudes towards students who identify as lesbian and gay at the Howard College, university of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The aim of this research is to explore the attitudes towards students who identify as homosexuals within campus, however, it is unknown how people perceive about them. The duration of your participation if you choose to enrol and remain in the study is expected to be 30-45 minutes.

The study will not involve any risks and/or discomforts as no personal or sensitive information will be required. We hope that by undertaking this investigative study, there will be a better understanding of the influences of attitudes towards students who identify as lesbian and gay.

Researcher strongly emphasize the following to the participants of the study:

The researcher will take the responsibility to protect the participants as an ethical commitment that considers the participant's rights. Confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants will be of the high degree to the researcher. This will be achieved through not asking for personal details of the participant e.g. names, ID number, cell phone number, etc. As an interviewee do you permit an interviewer to use AUDIO-RECORDING (YES/NO). All data acquired from the interview questionnaires will be analysed by researcher and sent in as part of dissertation which will be stored in the UKZN premises for five (5) years, thereafter destroyed.

---

**INFORMED CONSENT:**

Please select your choice below. You may print a copy of this consent form for your records. Clicking on the "Agree" button indicates that

- You are 21 years of age or older.
- You are freely and voluntarily engaging in the research study.
- You have read the above information.

- You understand that you can leave the interview questionnaires, you they feel uncomfortable or offended.
- You understand the purpose and procedures of the study as stated above.
- You understand that the research aim is not offensive, disrespect, and the discriminatory of the rights of the participants.
- You understand that the research study will be reported fully and honestly.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at (079 322 8184) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION  
Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

21 October 2019

Miss Mandisa Base (SN 214503024)  
School of Applied Human Sciences  
College of Humanities  
Howard College Campus  
UKZN  
Email: [214503024@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:214503024@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Dear Miss Base

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

*"Heterosexuals Student's Attitudes towards Students who Identify as Gay and Lesbian at the University of KwaZulu-Natal at the Howard College Campus."*

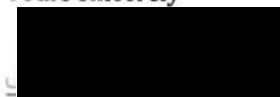
It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with students on the Howard College campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely



**DR KE CLELAND  
REGISTRAR (ACTING)**






**Office of the Registrar**

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: [registrar@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:registrar@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

18 November 2019

Ms Mandisa Base (214503024)  
School Of Applied Human Sc  
Howard College

Dear Ms Base,

**Protocol reference number:** HSSREC/00000605/2019

**Project title:** Exploring heterosexual attitudes towards students who are identify as gay and lesbian at the Howard College campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

### **Provisional Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol**

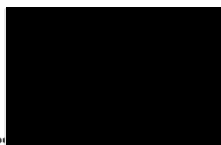
This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 14 October 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) on 30 October 2019. The protocol has been provisionally approved, subject to the following conditions set out below being addressed:

1. Please provide a work plan that covers all aspects of the research process (including data collection).
2. Please provide more specific information regarding the research procedure (how, where, when, by whom will data be collected).
3. How will participants receive study feedback (the statement that findings will be made "available to the public" is a little vague).
4. Gatekeeper permission letter for the research is required.
5. Consent Section: Permission must be obtained for audio-recording. Please include the following sentence:  
AUDIO-RECORDING YES / NO

Kindly upload your response on the RIG online system as soon as possible.

**This approval is granted provisionally and the final clearance for this project will be given once the above-mentioned condition(s) has been met. Note that data collection may not proceed until final ethics approval letter has been issued after the remaining conditions have been met and approved by the research ethics committee.**

Yours faithfully



.....  
**Professor Urmilla Bob**  
University Dean of Research

/dd

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)  
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000  
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

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By Mandisa Base

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