Teenage attitudes towards sexual diversity in Spain

Lidón Moliner Miravet*, Andrea Francisco Amat and Arecia Aguirre García Carpintero

Department of Education, Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, Spain

*Corresponding author: Lidón Moliner Miravet. Email: mmoliner@uji.es

Abstract

We conducted a study of homophobia among Spanish school students as perceived and expressed in three different contexts: education, the family and social. A survey on adolescence and sexual diversity was administered to 128 tenth-grade students in their 4th year of secondary school in Castellón, Spain. A descriptive approach was taken to survey design and analysis. Frequencies, percentages and Student's t-tests were conducted to analyse differences by gender. Results reveal relatively high levels of homophobic attitudes and the clear need for intervention at the educational level.

Keywords: homophobia, secondary education, sexual affective diversity, young people, Spain

For centuries, the marginalisation, persecution and ridicule of 'homosexuals' (and those assumed to be such) has been normal daily practice across the world (Cornejo, 2012). Despite this, same sex relationships and practices behaviours are perceived quite differently in different socio-cultural contexts (Blackwood (1986). Moreover, the category of homosexual does not exist in many cultures, at least in the same way it is conceptualised in Western countries. Nonetheless, in today's society, homophobic attitudes can be encountered in many different contexts. Although there is no standard definition of what constitutes homophobia, it includes a dislike, fear, avoidance and denial of homosexuality (Herek, 2004) and the display of negative attitudes towards homosexuals or homosexuality (Herek, 2000). We understand homophobia as a cognitive, affective and/or behavioural hostility towards people who experience sexual desire for individuals of their own sex and/or who engage in sexual activity with such individuals.

Homophobia often involves a rejection of all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) persons, or those presumed to be so, as well as people who do not conform to the gender roles traditionally assigned to men and women (Borrillo, 2001). Homophobia and sexism combine with one another such that a wide range of contraventions of gender and sexuality norms are persecuted, regardless of the sexual orientation and gender involved. As a result gay, lesbian, transsexual and bisexual children learn to hide significant parts of their lives, knowing that if they reveal their real selves, they may become the target of rejection, isolation, mockery and bullying (Platero, 2008).

Homophobia may manifest itself in various forms: cognitive homophobia involves negative beliefs about homosexuality such as being unnatural, sinful, inferior or undesirable; affective homophobia involves feelings of rejection towards homosexuality and homosexuals; and liberal homophobia accepts or "allows" the expression of homosexuality in the private sphere but considers any public expression to be inappropriate (Borrillo, 2001 in Pichardo, 2009).

Across a range of contexts, high levels of homophobia have been found among secondary school students (O'Higgins-Norman, 2009; Guasp, 2012; Jones, 2015). Homophobic behaviours together with teacher training cause LGBTI+ students to be subjected to isolation and violence, a situation with serious consequences for physical and mental health, both in the short term and later in life (Martxueta, 2013 in Penna and Sánchez, 2015). The potential impact of bullying on young LGBTI+ people's emotional wellbeing and mental health may manifest itself in self-harm, depression and/or attempted suicide. Bullying also has an impact on school attendance or engagement, educational attainment and potential for employment and promotion opportunities (Formby, 2015).

Research has shown that European LGBTI+ youth experience significantly higher levels of discrimination and verbal, physical, and sexual violence than their heterosexual peers during their school years (Magic and Maljevac, 2016). Because of this, schools must address homophobia as in all areas of their activity (Warwick and Aggleton, 2013). It is particularly important to work on sexuality and gender identity together, as research has identified a clear connection between gender, misogyny and homophobic attitudes (Generelo and Pichardo, 2005; Prati, 2012; Jones, 2014).

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the experiences of LGBTI+ school students. There is growing concern about anti-LGBTI+ violence and bias against young people as a human rights issue and a barrier to global development (Kosciw and Pizmony-Levy, 2016).

Although homophobic bullying has long existed in and beyond schools, only recently has the study of its nature and consequences been undertaken in Spain.

An early study of homophobia in the education system was carried out in schools in the autonomous community of Madrid (Generelo and Pichardo, 2005). The authors found significant gender differences, with girls showing greater tolerance for and understanding of LGBTI+ experience, while approximately 30% of the boys manifested a strong rejection towards this. Research was later extended to all of Spain in a study of Adolescence and Minority Sexualities: Excluded voices (Galofre, Generelo and Pichardo, 2008). This later study found that a wide range of contexts—from the family to the school, but including peer groups and religious communities—could become spaces of exclusion. Inspired by the interest that the study results generated, a third study entitled Attitudes about the Diversity of the Adolescent Population of Coslada (Madrid) and San Bartolomé de Tirajana (Gran Canaria) (Pichardo et al., 2007) involved a larger population sample. Findings revealed a serious lack of knowledge about LGBTI+ people's experience: a high percentage of students, especially boys, showed a strong overt rejection of homosexuality, bisexuality and transsexuality, but a considerable but hidden, proportion of students expressed feelings of attraction towards persons of the same sex. In a similar vein, two research studies undertaken by the National Youth Institute – Respect for Sexual Diversity among Children and Adolescents (INJUVE, 2010) and Youth and Sexual Diversity" (INJUVE, 2011) – both identified high indices of LGBTI-phobia in among youth in Spain, and in 2015 a study titled Abrazar la Diversidad: Propuestas para una educación libre de acoso homofóbico y transfóbico (Pichardo and De Stefano, 2015) once again revealed a high frequency of insults, mockery and aggression directed towards sexual-affective diversity[1].

Against the background of this research, in the present study we sought to investigate attitudes towards sexual-affective diversity among the school student population in the city of Castellón. The city, located on the Mediterranean coast, is the provincial capital and forms part of the Valencian Community, one of 17 autonomous communities[2] in Spain. It has a population of approximately 172,000 inhabitants and 35 primary schools (from 6 to 12 years old), 13 secondary schools (from 12 to 16 years old), 11 secondary schools (from 16 to 18 years old) and a public university.

Between 1991 and 2015, the city council was controlled by the Partido Popular (PP), the main conservative party in Spain. The PP also presided over the Generalitat Valenciana, the government of the Valencian Community, from 1995 to 2015. It is important to note that although the passing of a law allowing same sex marriage in 2005 was a legal milestone in Spain, the legalisation was not approved of by all citizens. Just days before it was passed by the central government in Madrid, a major demonstration occurred in defence of the heterosexual family, in which both the PP and the Catholic Church actively participated. In fact, the PP later appealed to the Constitutional Court to rescind the law, alleging that it distorted the institution of marriage, although the challenge was not upheld.

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[1] Sexual-affective diversity makes reference to the different types of sexual options and affections present in our present-day society and its richness.
[2] An autonomous community is a first-level political and administrative division, created under the Spanish constitution of 1978, designed to guarantee limited autonomy for the nationalities and regions that make up Spain.

Pichardo et al.'s (2007) earlier research had focused on very different contexts to our own and was carried out over a decade ago. Our study is the first of its kind to be undertaken in a city where the need for an assessment at one at the most renowned schools in the city was called for after high levels of homophobia were reported informally among the students. The educational psychologist at the secondary school contacted us due to her concern about the homophobic attitudes that had begun to appear among year-4 students (15 to 16 years old). Negative attitudes were being expressed in the form of insults during class changeovers. Following this initial contact, we approached the school's management team with a proposal to administer a questionnaire to all year-4 students intended to assess their levels of homophobia prior to an intervention based on the results obtained. In the present paper, we focus only on the results of the survey.

Our research had the following specific objectives: to uncover levels of homophobia among the student population in three different domains (education, family and social) and to analyse the differences between boys and girls with respect to homophobic attitudes to various items in the questionnaire. Specifically, we focused on the attitudes of students in their final year of compulsory education.

Methods

Our study was descriptive in character, since we were interested in collecting data on various aspects, dimensions and components of the phenomenon being investigated (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2010). In this case, our interest was in students' attitudes towards homophobia. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire survey.

Participants

A number of factors informed our choice of study population. First, the secondary school in question was located in Castellón, the city where our university is located. Second, our study was conducted in response to a request by a local school educational psychologist, who wanted us to assess the views of students in the year-4 classes. Third, the school principal showed interest in the subject of the study and thereby facilitated it. Finally, the creation of a local LGBTI+ collective in the city meant that we could later undertake intervention activities with their participation and support.

Specifically, the sample comprised 128 year-4 students whose ages ranged from 15 to 18 years (the wide age range is explained by the presence of several students who were repeating courses). 56.2% were female (72), and 43.8% (56) male. Regarding place of birth, 35 students (approximately 27.3% of the sample) reported coming from countries other than Spain: 26 from Romania, 3 from Peru, 2 from Colombia, and 1 from each of Ecuador, Argentina and China; 5 students did not answer this question.

Data collection

The survey instrument used (the Survey on Adolescence and Sexual Diversity) had originally been devised by Pichardo et al., (2007). It consisted of 16 multiple-choice questions designed to

assess young people's attitudes towards sexual-affective diversity (see Appendix 1). Questions are grouped around three contexts (except for item 1, which does not focus on any one specific area): homophobia in the educational context (item 6, 7.2, 8, 9), in the family context (item 7.1, 9) and in the social context (items 3, 4, 5 and 7.3).

In this study, we will only examine responses to questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 8 and 9, since only these 11 questions that correspond closely to our objectives The questionnaire had not been previously validated. Nevertheless, we considered it well suited to the research as it had been used in multiple prior studies published in indexed journals (Galan et. al, 2009; Tosso and Sáinz, 2015; Garrido-Hernansaiz et al. 2017; Pascual-Soler et al. 2017). A reliability test using the Kuder Richardson 20 coefficient (Kuder and Richardson, 1937) was performed. Answers from items 3 to 9 were coded in a binary way, with answers showing respect for sexual diversity being given a value of 1; with a value of 0 being assigned in the opposite case. The questionnaire showed good reliability on the test (KR-20 = .713), given that only 7 items were analysed.

Permission to administer the questionnaire was granted by the local Education Department. After obtaining this authorisation, we sent the questionnaire and an explanation of the project's aims to the school management team. At a meeting of the School Council (the school's decision-making body) made up of school managers, administrators, teachers, students and families, the proposed study was discussed and approved. Following this we contacted the school educational psychologist to arrange a suitable time to administer the questionnaire in class.

Analysis of the results

We used the statistical software SPSS, version 23.0, to analyse the data. To avoid problems of missing data, we performed a listwise deletion (Enders, 2010), as less than 1% of the study participants had missing values in their answers (Allison, 2002). Data were subjected to descriptive analysis, the Student's t-test for independent samples, and the Chi-square test to compare frequencies by gender. Below, we only focus on the significant results. To simplify the tables, we do not provide entire data from the Student's t-test and the Chi-square test.

Results

Responses to item 1 revealed that the great majority of students had heard of or witnessed homophobic acts, above all insults, negative comments and mockery, whereas nearly 37% of the sample students had witnessed physical attacks. This percentage fell when the respondents are those who had perpetrated or suffered from these behaviours. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that between 10 and 15% of the respondents indicated they had insulted, spoked badly of, or even stopped speaking to an LGBTI+ student.

Table 1. Item 1 (overall results)

Gender differences were present in the use of insults, speaking badly of, or mocking LGBTI+ persons. There were significant differences between boys and girls, since the sampled girls reported fewer insults than the boys (x^2=3.585, p=.05, **df=3**) and were less likely to have engaged in mocking behaviour (x^2=2.82, p=.09, **df=3**). The results also show that boys received more insults in response to their homosexual orientation, whereas their girl peers were more likely to be spoken badly about or given the "silent treatment".

Table 2. Item 1 (results by gender)

Educational Context

In the case of responses to item 6 (responses to a teacher who tells you they are homosexual), nearly 100% of the sample stated that the most important aspect was being a good teacher, rather than the teacher's sexual orientation. A small minority (7%) of the participants stated that they would like their teacher to be homosexual because this would enrich their lives.

Table 3. Item 6 (Overall and by gender results)

Regarding item 7.2 (how do you think gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals are treated at school?), the school was perceived in general to be more unfair in terms of its treatment of LGBTI+ persons than the family domain (see item 7.1), although less unfair than society at large (see item 7.3). In our sample, 63.3% of the students viewed the school as a hostile space. With respect to gender, the percentages are very similar and no statistical significant differences were found, although the boys stated that the school treated gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual persons more unfairly.

Table 4. Item 7.2 (Overall and by gender results)

Responses to item 8 (if the student next to you said that they were gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual, how would you react?) show that, in general, students' attitudes would not change, and that they might even support their fellow students if they were LGBTI+ (albeit at a lower percentage). It is noteworthy that approximately 20% of the students would still feel somewhat uncomfortable in this situation. In the case of transsexual persons, this percentage was higher; people in this group likely encounter the most difficulties and rejection.

Table 5. Item 8 (overall results)

When gender is considered, the percentage of boys who would feel uncomfortable about a classmate telling them that he or she was gay or bisexual is much higher than the percentage of girls reporting this attitude. With respect to reactions to lesbian women, girls reported feeling more uncomfortable than the boys. For reactions to transsexual persons, 73.6% of the girls reported that nothing would change, but this percentage was only 33.9% for the boys. Table 6 shows significant differences between boys and girls in several options related to this item.

Table 6. Item 8 (results by gender)

In relation to item 9 (if you are, or others thought you were, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, what do you think the reaction of ... would be?), students thought that the most negative reactions would come from their schoolmates: 32% thought that their schoolmates would reject them, and 6% believed that they might be subjected to physical abuse. They felt that only approximately 20% of their classmates would support them and that there would be attempts to change them (11%). The students surveyed believed that teachers would react in the most positive way to support them, although a high percentage thought that teachers would avoid the issue. Finally, students noted that while most of the support would come from their friends, it would also be those friends who would most ardently try to change them.

Table 7. Item 9 (overall results)

When gender is taken into account, girls felt much more supported by their friends than did boys; in fact, there were significant differences between girls and boys since the girls were less likely to think that they would be ignored (x^2=3.585, p=.05, **df=3**) and more likely to think that they would be supported by their friends (x^2=11.92, p=.00, **df=3**). Girls were however more uncertain about how teachers would react but stated that they would receive support more than the boys did.

Table 8. Item 9 (results by gender)

Family Context

Overall, responses to item 7.1 (how do you think that gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals are treated by their families?) were balanced. Approximately 50% of the students believed that the treatment of LGBTI+ persons in the family context is similar to that in other domains, whereas 43.7% believed that it was more unfair.

The distribution of responses by gender was the same as the general distribution of responses, although girls were slightly more positive than boys in their perceptions of the treatment that LGBTI+ persons receive in the family context.

Table 9. Item 7.1 (Overall and by gender results)

For item 9 (if you are, or others thought you were, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, what do you think the reaction of ... would be?), the overall results reveal that nearly 20% of the sample students thought that family members would attempt to change them. Slightly more than half of the students stated that they were certain that their families would support them if they were LGBTI+.

With regard to gender, the percentages were balanced. However, there were statistically significant differences in the answers to questions referring to physical violence, as boys stated that they would be more likely to be beaten by their families than girls (x^2=2.854, *p*=.09, ***df=3***). In addition, although the differences were not significant, in terms of the rejection that LGBTI+ young people would experience, this was felt more likely among boys than girls; girls were also less certain about how family members would react.

Table 10. Item 9 (Overall and by gender results)

Society in general

In general, the majority of respondents had no qualms about a male or female couple showing their affection in public (item 3, what do you think about a male couple showing their feelings in public in the same way as a man and a woman might (kissing, hugging, walking hand-in-hand)? and item 4, what do you think about a female couple showing their feelings in public in the same way as a man and a woman might (kissing, hugging, walking hand-in-hand …)? A small percentage stated that it does not matter what the couple does, so long as it is not done in public. Although the percentage is much lower, a very few young people said they were disgusted when seeing two men showing affection to each other in public.

Table 11. Items 3 and 4 (overall results)

When we analysed the data according to gender, we found that girls were significantly less homophobic than boys in their responses to item 3, to which a higher percentage of boys stated that it does not matter what the couple does provided it is not done in public. These findings were statistically significant in terms of the differences between boys and girls (x^2=6.576, *p*=.01, ***df=3***). In addition, although both girls and boys had high scores for this item, there were also significant differences in the response "It's fine with me" in favour of girls (x^2=2.755, *p*=.09, ***df=3***).

Responses to item 4 differed slightly from those to item 3. Although we found higher percentages for the "It's fine with me" option and lower ones for "I don't care what they do, so long as it's not in public" option, the percentage of girls who reported "I am disgusted when it see it" and "I think it's wrong, they shouldn't do it" options was higher than those for the boys. Nevertheless, statistically significant differences between boys and girls were evidenced in girls' greater tolerance for public displays of affection between two girls (t=.01) (x^2=5.949, *p*=.01, ***df=1***).

Table 12. Items 3 and 4 (results by gender)

For item 5 (do you believe it is right to treat people who are attracted to people of their same sex with disrespect?), nearly all the sample students thought that treating LGBTI+ persons disrespectfully was unacceptable. The vast majority of both boys and girls stated that

disrespectful treatment of LGBTI+ persons was not acceptable, but the percentage of girls holding this view was significantly higher than that of boys (t=.02), (x^2=5.331, *p*=.02, ***df=3***).

Table 13. Item 5 (Overall and by gender results)

For item 7.3 (how do you think society in general treats gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals?), the overall majority of students believed that LGBTI+ persons receive more unfair treatment. This percentage was higher among the girls.

Table 14. Item 7.3 (Overall and by gender results)

Discussion

The results show that nearly 90% of the surveyed students had witnessed or heard insults about LGBTI+ persons, more than 80% had witnessed negative comments or rumours, and more than 75% had seen mocking behaviour. Nearly 40% of the students surveyed had witnessed some sort of physical violence related to a person's sexual orientation at some point. These results are in line with findings from studies by Generelo and Pichardo (2005), Pichardo et al., (2007), Pichardo and De Sefano (2015) and Fulcher (2017). When we contrast these results to those the homophobic actions (insults, comments and mockery) reported as perpetrated by responding students, only 15% stated that they had carried out homophobic actions**.** There is a notable contrast between the high rate of respondents who have witnessed aggressions and the low numbers of those who identify as perpetrators of such actions. This result may be due to the prevalent politically correct discourse and to the difficulty of self-identifying as an aggressor. Qualitative studies are required to further our understanding of this phenomenon and thereby ferret out the causes of homophobia both in the power dynamics present between adolescents and in the complexities of cases of bullying.

With respect to gender, girls were less likely to exhibit attitudes and participate in activities involving rejection or aggression. This finding aligns with the results of prior studies (Generelo and Pichardo, 2005). The difference suggests that there is a harsher social punishment for boys who do not conform to conventional heterosexual roles or practices. Similar results were found by Prati (2012), whose scores showed that aggressive homophobic behaviours were directed more towards male than female students. Male students also perpetrated more acts of homophobic aggression than female students. However, there are two exceptions to this general pattern. Sexism and homophobia combine to construct one another, resulting in the harassment of the most vulnerable boys and girls: nonconformity to gender and sexuality norms is persecuted, independent of the person's sexual orientation and gender (Platero, 2008).

In the educational context, the data reveal the school to be a hostile space. According to students, school is where the most negative reactions to the possibility of being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual occur. Study findings show there are students who would feel uncomfortable if a schoolmate revealed a sexual orientation that differs from the norm. This

affective homophobia, manifests itself in those who report feelings of "disgust" or "revulsion" towards a homosexual others. Transsexual persons encounter the most difficulties and rejection in this regard. We found that boys felt more uncomfortable with gay men, as did girls with lesbians.

Our results suggest that homophobia in schools may be especially difficult to tackle due to some reasons that we explain below. The normalisation of homophobic violence places the student under attack in a position of special isolation (Penna, 2012; Pichardo, 2009; Sánchez Sáinz, 2009 and 2010). Formby (2015) found that teachers often feel they do not have the skills needed to confront bullying linked to gender and sexual diversity. Programmes and educational initiatives are needed to develop sexual-affective education from an inclusive point of view. Positive affirmations of lesbian, gay and bisexual people should be promoted as part of the school curriculum (Brito, 2007). Leonardi and Staley (2015) describe their work with the Teacher Institute, intended for local teachers, preservice teachers, educational leaders, and teacher educators, with a stress on knowledge building, critical self-reflection, dialogue and action on gender and sexual diversity.

Students considered the family less homophobic than other domains. Nonetheless, nearly half the students thought that LGBTI+ persons would be more unfairly treated at home than in the school or other social environments. Nearly 20% of the surveyed participants thought that the families of LGBTI+ persons would attempt to change them, suggesting that a minority of people believe that sexual orientation can be modified.

By marking the option "I think it's wrong, they shouldn't do it", students expressed an explicit and open homophobia of a cognitive nature. When a student affirmed that "I am disgusted when it see it", he or she manifests an affective type of homophobia, whereas by choosing the option "I don't care what they do, so long as it's not in public" they are expressing liberal homophobia, which implies that homosexuality is seen as a shameful reality that should not be displayed. The display of affection we presented to the students in this survey was of the kind that heterosexual couples routinely display in public spaces without causing any kind of disgust. Although these attitudes are generally accepted, in this survey we encountered a degree of liberal homophobia: they can do it, but not in public.

Regarding gender, we found that the girls were less liberally homophobic. Interestingly, for boys there was a greater degree of tolerance of lesbian rather than male homosexual behaviour. Pichardo (2009) notes that this greater degree of male acceptance of sex between women is linked to the construction, primarily through pornography and the communications media, of lesbian sex as an object of desire for heterosexual men. Teachers should be trained to acknowledge and address the role of hegemonic masculinity and heterocentricity in schools and classrooms so as to challenge homophobia.

It is noteworthy that the students showed a good understanding of the presence of homophobia in society, with percentages near 90% in all the variables. They were aware of the unequal treatment of LGBTI+ people in society.

For these reasons, analysing and challenging the factors of discrimination should be one of the priorities of any educational policy, since these factors limit the ability to live peacefully with others and impede social and personal development (Penna, 2013). For teachers to play their part in tackling homophobia in schools, they must act against it through a high quality educational response to the presence of sexual-affective diversity (Penna and Sánchez, 2015).

Following our assessment of students' attitudes in this project, we carried out an activity in classrooms. Three workshops were run in which issues of affective-sexual diversity were addressed through a series of activities stimulated by the life stories of LGBTI+ people who came into the school to share their experiences and discuss with the students what they had learned about sexuality and gender identity. This was followed by a debate in which the students were encouraged to question the discourses and exclusions inherent in heteronormativity.

If diversity of sexuality and gender identity remains invisible, the result is the reinforcement of heteronormativity. Schools thereby become the facilitators of social exclusion. As work within the geography of sexuality has highlighted (Duncan, 1996; Longhurst, 2001), place and space are central to the production of sexed bodies, of desires, practices and identities. Beginning from the idea that there is little is innate or natural either in space or in sexuality, human geographers have shown how sex and sexualities are created by way of spaces, places and environments. On the one hand, spaces are usually understood as heterosexual, and uncomplicated representations of heterosexuality, reinforcing heteronormativity, are expected to be publicly visible (Brown and Browne, 2016). Those who do not obey these norms are identified and rejected, often through verbal and/or physical violence (Browne, 2004 and 2007). On the other hand, spaces are dynamic and potentially transformational. It is important to recognise this if education is to ensure a range of human diversity and complexity is reflected in a multiplicity of options, desires, expressions and practices of sexual and gender identity.

In a similar vein, queer pedagogy may offer a framework that allows us to rethink educational interventions. The objective of queer pedagogy is not limited to or exclusively centred on the issues linked to the experience of LGBTI+ identities; rather, it seeks to destabilise the normal/abnormal dichotomy. Queer epistemology destabilises sexual identities, by grouping together homosociability and homosexuality among other practices (Sedgwick, 1998), thereby offering alternatives for thinking, structuring and normativising pedagogical practices (Planella and Pie, 2012; Ugena, 2010). Queer pedagogy goes beyond the simple challenge of understanding gender and sexual identity to deconstruct the categories and the languages that support them (Meyer, 2007).

As Taylor et al. (2016) note, training teachers on LGBTI+ issues provides an excellent example of civic education for the development of social justice. Similarly, a pedagogy that "reveals the lack of reflection about normalcy" (Britzman 2002: 203) problematises "the normalising strategies that, in the framework of other sexual identities (and also in the context of other identity-providing groups, such as race, nationality and class), seek to dictate and restrict the available

ways of living and being" (Louro, 2001: 16). Incorporating a queer perspective into pedagogy provides a means for rethinking current educational practices and the power relations present in school. Such a pedagogy questions discourses and practices of sexual normalisation and the scholastic practices that promote, reproduce and legitimise the discourse of heterosexuality as the only possible identity (Alegre, 2013).

Queer pedagogy seeks to question dominant social norms, how they affect people and how power dynamics and social privilege arising from heteronormativity challenge us at various levels. It is an educational approach that aims to go beyond the discourse of victimisation of LGBTI+ others. A growing body of work suggests the need for caution when stating the risks gender and sexual minority youth face and portraying (young) LGBTI+ people as "victims". Airton (2013, in Formby, 2015), and Rasmussen and Crowley (2004: 428-9, in Formby, 2015) note the common portrayal of LGBTI+/queer youth as "wounded" or "suffering", which "deflect[s] research and pedagogy away from a consideration of the operations of heteronormativity in schooling towards a focus on individual/group pathology". Such an educational approach places the responsibility on the individual rather than examining the structural dynamics of sexuality- and gender-based inequality. In contrast, queer pedagogy allows us to address the complexity of sexualities and expressions of gender from an intersectional perspective that must be grounded in these structural dynamics.

This study is not without its limitations however, notably, a small sample size and the use of a non-validated instrument. Regarding the sample size, our study responded to a request and the need for a specific course involving students in their 4th year of compulsory secondary education. Therefore, we cannot generalise from such a group since the representativeness of the sample is limited. With respect to the use of a non-validated instrument, the questionnaire has been used previously in several studies in Spain with a considerable impact and engages with a variety of issues that aligned closely with the objectives of our study. Future research might usefully extend this work to other schools and years, taking into account the contributions of teachers and LGBTI+ students, utilising a mixed methodology that incorporates discussion groups and interviews.

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Appendix 1
Survey on Adolescence and Sexual Diversity

Item 1. Regarding the homosexual sexual orientation *Item 1. Referido a la orientación sexual homosexual*	Have you heard or witnessed *Has escuchado o presenciado*	Have you done or used *Has realizado o utilizado*	Have you been called or subjected to *Te han dicho o hecho*
Insults: maricón (faggot), bollera (homo), sarasa (fairy), tortillera (lesbo), travelo (tranny)… *Insultos: maricón, bollera, sarasa, tortillera, travelo...*			
Speak badly, negative comments, rumours... *Hablar mal, comentarios negativos, rumores...*			
Mockery, imitation, gestures... *Burlas, imitaciones, gestos...*			
Threats *Amenazas*			
Throwing things, hitting, showing *Tirar cosas, golpes, empujones...*			
Beatings *Palizas*			
Stopping speaking to, ignoring, not letting participate, isolating... *Dejar de hablar, ignorar, no dejar participar, aislar...*			

Item 2. Do you know gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual people? *Item 2. ¿Conoces a personas que sean gays, lesbianas, bisexuales o transexuales?*	Gay *Gay*	Lesbian *Lesbiana*	Bisexual *Bisexual*	Transsexual *Transexual*
I know nobody *No conozco a nadie*				
Close friends. *Amistades cercanas*				
High-school colleagues. *Compañeros/as del instituto*				
Acquanintance *Conocidos*				
Family *Familiares*				
Teachers. *Profesores/as*				
Historic and literature figures *Personajes históricos y literarios*				
Cinema and television actors *Personajes de la tv, cine*				
I don't understand the word *No entiendo la palabra*				

Item 3. What do you think about a male couple showing their feelings in public in the same way as a man and a woman might (kissing, hugging, walking hand-in-hand…)? *Item 3. ¿Qué te parece que una pareja de hombres muestre sus sentimientos en público de la misma manera que una pareja de hombre y mujer (besos, abrazos, caminar de la mano...)?*	
I think it's wrong, they shouldn't do it *Me parece mal, no deberían hacerlo*	
I am disgusted when it see it *Me da asco verlo*	
I don't care what they do, so long as it's not in public *Me da igual que lo hagan, pero no en público*	
It's fine with me	

Me parece bien

Item 4. What do you think about a female couple showing their feelings in public in the same way as a man and a woman might (kissing, hugging, walking hand-in-hand…)?
Item 4. ¿Qué te parece que una pareja de mujeres muestre sus sentimientos en público de la misma manera que una pareja de hombre y mujer (besos, abrazos, caminar de la mano...)?

I think it's wrong, they shouldn't do it *Me parece mal, no deberían hacerlo*	
I am disgusted when it see it *Me da asco verlo*	
I don't care what they do, so long as it's not in public *Me da igual que lo hagan, pero no en público*	
It's fine with me *Me parece bien*	

Item 5. Do you believe it is right to treat people who are attracted to people of their same sex with disrespect?
Item 5. ¿Crees que es correcto tratar con desprecio a personas a las que les gustan las personas de su mismo sexo?

It is right *Es correcto*	
It is not right *No es correcto*	

Item 6. Responses to a teacher who tells you they are homosexual
Item 6. Respuestas a un/a profesor/a que dijera que es homosexual

This would be a reason to mock them *Sería un motivo para burlarme de él/ella*	
Gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals should not be teachers *Los/as gays, lesbianas, bisexuales, transexuales no deben ser profesores/as*	
I would tell my family so that they would complain to the school *Se lo diría a mi familia para que pusieran una queja en el instituto*	
What is important is that the person is a good teacher, not their sexual orientation *Lo importante es que sea un buen profesor/a, no su orientación sexual*	
I would like it because I think it would greatly enhance my life *Me gustaría porque creo que podría aportarme mucho*	

Item 7.1. How do you think that gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals are treated by their families?
Item 7.1. ¿Cómo crees que se trata en la familia a gays, lesbianas, bisexuales y transexuales?

More unfairly *De forma más injusta*	
Like everyone else *Como a todos/as los/as demás*	
More favourably *De forma más favorable*	

Item 7.2. How do you think gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals are treated at school?
Item 7.2. ¿Cómo crees que se trata en la escuela a gays, lesbianas, bisexuales y transexuales?

More unfairly *De forma más injusta*	
Like everyone else *Como a todos/as los/as demás*	
More favourably *De forma más favorable*	

Item 7.3. How do you think society in general treats gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals?
Item 7.3. ¿Cómo crees que se trata en la sociedad en general a gays, lesbianas, bisexuales y transexuales?

More unfairly *De forma más injusta*	
Like everyone else *Como a todos/as los/as demás*	

More favourably *De forma más favorable*	

Item 8. If the student next to you said that they were gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual, how would you react? *Si tu compañero/a de al lado te dice que es gay, lesbiana, bisexual,o transexual, ¿cómo reaccionarías?*	Gay *Gay*	Lesbian *Lesbiana*	Bisexual *Bisexual*	Transsexual *Transexual*
I would try to change seats *Intentaría cambiarme de sitio*				
I wouldn't do anything, but I would feel somewhat uncomfortable *No haría nada, pero me sentiría un poco incómodo/a*				
It wouldn't change my attitude, everything would stay the same *No cambiaría mi actitud, todo seguiría igual*				
I would have more confidence in that person, and would support them *Sentiría más confianza con esa persona y la apoyaría*				
I would attempt to hook up with that person *Intentaría ligar con esa persona*				

Item 9. If you are, or others thought you were, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, what do you think the reaction of ... would be?) *Si fueses o pensasen que eres gay, lesbiana, bisexual,o transexual, ¿cuál cree que sería la reacción de...?*	Friends *Amigos/as*	Teachers *Profesores/as*	Schoolmates *Compañeros/as*
They would hit me or beat me *Me pegarían o darían una paliza*			
They would reject me *Me rechazarían*			
They would ignore the issue *Ignorarían el tema*			
I don't know how they would react *No sé cómo reaccionarían*			
They would support me *Me apoyarían*			
They would try to change me *Intentarían que cambiara*			

Item 10. I would like to know more about… *Item 10. ¿De cuál de estos temas te gustaría saber más?*	
Sexuality *Sexualidad*	
Sexual diversity (homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexualism) *Diversidad sexual (homosexualidad, lesbianismo, bisexualidad)*	
Transsexualism *Transexualidad*	
Love and/or couples relationships *Amor y/o relaciones de pareja*	
Different family models *Diferentes modelos de familia*	
Other subjects *Otros temas*	

Item 11. Who would you like to give you information about sexuality and couples subjects?

Item 11. ¿Quién te gustaría que te diera información sobre estos temas de sexualidad y pareja?	
Mother / father *Madre/ padre*	
Siblings or other relatives *Hermanos/as u otros familiares*	
Couple *Pareja*	
Teachers or high-school personnel *Profesorado o personal del instituto*	
Friends and colleagues *Amistades y compañeros/as*	
TV / Radio / Books / Journals *TV / Radio / Libros / Revistas*	
Internet *Internet*	
Parish or religious group *Parroquia o grupo religioso*	
Nobody *Nadie*	
Others *Otros*	

Item 12. Where do you get from now information about sexuality and couples? **Item 12. *¿Dónde consigues ahora la información sobre estos temas de sexualidad y pareja?***	
Mother / father *Madre/ padre*	
Siblings or other relatives *Hermanos/as u otros familiares*	
Couple *Pareja*	
Teachers or high-school personnel *Profesorado o personal del instituto*	
Friends and colleagues *Amistades y compañeros/as*	
TV / Radio / Books / Journals *TV / Radio / Libros / Revistas*	
Internet *Internet*	
Parish or religious group *Parroquia o grupo religioso*	
Nobody *Nadie*	
Others *Otros*	

Item 13. If a colleague tells you his/her father is gay or his/her mother is lesbian, what would you do? **Item 13. *Si algún compañero o compañera te dice que su padre es gay o su madre lesbiana, ¿qué harías?***	
I don't like people like that and I would tell him/her *No me gusta que haya gente así y se lo haría saber*	
I would tell everybody to mock him/her *Se lo diría a todo el mundo para burlarme de él o ella*	
I would not get along with him/her any more *Dejaría de tener contacto con él o con ella*	
We would still be colleagues, but I would ask him/her not to tell anybody *Seguiría teniendo mi amistad, pero le pediría que no lo dijera a nadie*	
Nothing would change about my relationship with that person *No cambiaría nada de mi relación con esa persona*	
I would thank he/she has the confidence to tell me and I would support him/her in case he/she need it *Agradecería que tuviese la confianza de decírmelo y le apoyaría si lo necesitase*	

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Item 14. Which of the following examples in the list bellow do you consider a family?
Item 14. Marca con una X todos los ejemplos de esta lista que consideres que son familias

A single mother and her children *Una madre soltera y sus hijos/as*	
A divorced man with children married with another woman with children *Un hombre divorciado con hijos casado con otra mujer con hijos*	
A couple of a man and a woman without children that live together without being married *Una pareja de hombre y mujer sin hijos/as que conviven sin casarse*	
A couple of two women and their children *Una pareja de mujeres y sus hijos/as*	
A child in care by a man *Un niño acogido por un hombre*	
A couple of a man and a with their children *Una pareja de hombre y mujer con sus hijos/as*	
A couple of two married men without children *Una pareja de hombres casados sin hijos*	
A person who has no partner and lives alone *Una persona que no tiene pareja y vive sola*	

Item 15. Usually you feel physical and love attraction towards:
Item 15. Normalmente sientes atracción física y amorosa:

Boys always *Siempre por chicos*	
Boys most of the times and sometimes girls *La mayor parte de las veces por chicos y a veces por chicas*	
Boys and girls equally *Por chicas y chicos por igual*	
Girls most of the times and sometimes boys *La mayor parte de las veces por chicas y a veces por chicos*	
Girls always *Siempre por chicas*	
I'm not sure about it *No lo tengo claro*	
I prefer not to answer this question *Prefiero no contestar a esta pregunta*	

Item 16. 16. Do you want to add any comments?
Item 16. ¿Quieres añadir algún comentario?

	Have you heard or witnessed	Have you done or used	Have you been called or subjected to
Insults: maricón (faggot), bollera (homo), sarasa (fairy), tortillera (lesbo), travelo (tranny)…	89% (114)	14.8% (19)	11.7% (15)
Speak badly, negative comments, rumours...	82% (105)	15.6% (20)	17.9% (23)
Mockery, imitation, gestures...	76.5% (98)	11.7% (15)	10.9% (14)
Threats	38.3% (49)	1.5% (2)	8.6% (11)
Throwing things, hitting, showing	37.5 (48)	5.5% (7)	4.7% (6)
Beatings	36.7% (47)	0.8% (1)	2.3% (3)
Stopping speaking to, ignoring, not letting participate, isolating...	44.5% (57)	10.9% (14)	13.3% (17)

Table 1. Item 1 (overall results)

	Have you heard or witnessed		Have you done or used		Have you been called or subjected to	
	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy
Insults	88.9% (64)	89.3% (50)	9.7% (6)	21.4% (12)	8.3% (6)	16.1% (9)
			x^2=3.585, p=.05			
Speaking badly	81.9% (59)	82.1% (46)	12.5% (9)	19.6% (11)	20.8% (15)	14.3% (8)
Mockery	79.2% (57)	73.2% (41)	6.9% (5)	17.8% (10)	11.1% (8)	10.7% (6)
			x^2=2.820, p=.09			
Threats	37.5% (27)	39.3% (22)	0% (0)	3.6% (2)	8.3% (6)	8.9% (5)
Throwing things	38.8% (28)	35.7% (20)	4.2% (3)	7.1% (4)	4.2% (3)	5.3% (3)
Beatings	40.3% (29)	32.1% (18)	0% (0)	1.8% (1)	1.4% (1)	3.6% (2)
Stopping speaking	48.6% (35)	39.3% (22)	9.7% (7)	12.5% (7)	16.6% (12)	8.9% (5)

Table 2. Item 1 (results by gender)

	General	Girl	Boy
This would be a reason to mock them	0.7% (1)	0% (0)	1.8% (1)
Gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals should not be teachers	0.7% (1)	0% (0)	1.8% (1)
I would tell my family so that they would complain to the school	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
What is important is that the person is a good teacher, not their sexual orientation	97.6% (125)	97.2% (70)	98.2% (55)
I would like it because I think it would greatly enhance my life	7% (9)	11.1% (8)	1.8% (1)
		x^2=4.089, p=.04	

Table 3. Item 6. (Overall and by gender results)

	General	Girl	Boy
More unfairly	63.3% (81)	61.1% (44)	66.1% (37)
Like everyone else	37.5% (48)	41.6% (30)	32.1% (18)
More favourably	0.7% (1)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)

Table 4. Item 7.2. (Overall and by gender results)

	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Transsexual
I would try to change seats	3.1% (4)	0.7% (1)	2.3% (3)	6.2% (8)
I wouldn't do anything, but I would feel somewhat uncomfortable	17.9% (23)	12.5% (16)	18.7% (24)	24.2% (31)
It wouldn't change my attitude, everything would stay the same	75% (96)	82% (105)	74.2% (95)	61.7% (79)
I would have more confidence in that person, and would support them	36.7% (47)	37.5% (48)	34.4% (44)	28.9% (37)
I would attempt to hook up with that person	0% (0)	6.2% (8)	8.6% (11)	1.6% (2)

Table 5. Item 8 (overall results)

	Gay		Lesbian		Bisexual		Transsexual	
	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy
I would try to change seats	0% (0)	7.1% (4)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	1.4% (1)	3.6% (2)	1.4% (1)	8.9% (5)
	x^2=2.911, p = .02						x^2=6.791, p = .00	
I would do nothing, but would feel uncomfortable	5.5% (4)	33.9% (19)	16.6% (12)	7.1% (4)	13.8% (10)	25% (14)	16.6% (12)	12.5% (7)
	x^2=16.073, p = .00				x^2=2.721, p = .09		x^2=4.457, p = .03	
It wouldn't change my attitude, everything would stay the same	86.1% (62)	60.7% (34)	83.3% (60)	80.3% (45)	83.3% (60)	62.5% (35)	73.6% (53)	33.9% (19)
	x^2=9.973, p = .00				x^2=6.418, p = .01		x^2=9.20, p = .00	
I would feel more at ease	52.7% (38)	16.1% (9)	45.8% (33)	26.8% (15)	45.8% (33)	19.6% (11)	40.3% (29)	46.4% (26)
	x^2=17.735, p = .00		x^2=4.568, p = .03		x^2=10.626, p = .00		x^2=10.0, p = .00	
I would attempt to hook up	0% (0)	0% (0)	5.5% (4)	7.1% (4)	8.3% (6)	8.9% (5)	2.7% (2)	14.3% (8)

Table 6. Item 8 (results by gender)

	Friends	Teachers	Schoolmates
They would hit me or beat me	3.1% (4)	0% (0)	6.2% (8)
They would reject me	12.5% (16)	0% (0)	32% (41)
They would ignore the issue	14.8% (19)	58.6% (75)	25.8% (33)
I don't know how they would react	30.5% (39)	25.8% (33)	29.7% (38)
They would support me	58.6% (75)	27.3% (35)	18.7% (24)
They would try to change me	14.1 (18)	0.7% (1)	11.7% (15)

Table 7. Item 9 (overall results)

	Friends		Teachers		Classmates	
	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy
They would hit me	2.7% (2)	3.6% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4.2% (3)	8.9% (5)
They would reject me	8.3% (6)	17.8% (10)	0% (0)	0% (0)	36.1% (26)	26.8% (15)
They would ignore the issue	9.7% (7)	21.4% (12)	55.5% (40)	62.5% (35)	22.2% (16)	30.3% (17)
I don't know how they would react	29.2% (21)	32.1% (18)	30.5% (22)	19.6% (11)	31.9% (23)	26.8% (15)
They would support me	72.2% (52)	41.1% (23)	23.6% (17)	32.1% (18)	18.1% (13)	19.6% (11)
They would try to change me	12.5% (9)	16.1% (9)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	8.3% (6)	16.1% (9)

Table 8. Item 9 (results by gender)

	General	**Girl**	**Boy**
More unfairly	43.7% (56)	40.3% (29)	48.2% (27)
Like everyone else	51.5% (66)	54.2% (39)	48.2% (27)
More favourably	3.9% (5)	2.7% (2)	5.3% (3)

Table 9. Item 7.1 (Overall and by gender results)

	General	Girl	Boy
They would hit me or beat me	3.9% (5)	1.4% (1)	7.1% (4)
They would reject me	11.7% (15)	12.5% (9)	10.7% (6)
They would ignore the issue	17.2% (22)	12.5%	23.21% (13)

		(9)	
I don't know how they would react	29.7% (38)	34.7% (25)	23.21% (13)
They would support me	58.6% (75)	59.7% (43)	57.1% (32)
They would try to change me	17.9% (23)	19.4% (14)	16.1% (9)

Table 10. Item 9 (Overall and by gender results)

	Item 3	Item 4
I think it's wrong, they shouldn't do it	3.1% (4)	2.3% (3)
I am disgusted when it see it	5.5% (7)	1.5% (2)
I don't care what they do, so long as it's not in public	18.7% (24)	13.3% (17)
It's fine with me	79% (101)	84.4% (108)

Table 11. Item 3 and Item 4 (overall results)

	ITEM 3		ITEM 4	
	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy
I think it's wrong, they shouldn't do it	4.2% (3)	1.8% (1)	4.2% (3)	0% (0)
I am disgusted when it see it	2.7% (2)	8.9% (5)	2.7% (2)	0% (0)
I don't care what they do, so long as it's not in public	11.1% (8)	28.6% (16)	3.9% (5)	21.4% (12)
It's fine with me	84.7% (61)	71.4% (40)	87.5% (63)	80.3% (45)

Table 12. Item 3 and Item 4 (results by gender)

	General	Girl	Boy
It is not right	97% (120)	97.2% (70)	89.3% (50)

Table 13. Item 5. (Overall and by gender results)

	General	Girl	Boy
More unfairly	89.9% (115)	91.6% (66)	87.5% (49)
Like everyone else	10.9% (14)	8.3% (6)	14.3% (8)
More favourably	0.7% (1)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)

Table 14. Item 7.3 (Overall and by gender results)