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EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' RESPONSES TO THE NEEDS OF SAME-
SEX SEXUALITY SCHOOL YOUTH.

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Abstract:

School youth with same-sex identities have been harassed, ostracized, discriminated against, violated, dehumanized and underserved in the South African school settings because of their disapproved non-normative sexual orientations (Butler, Alpaslan, Strumpher & Astbury, 2003; Butler & Astburty, 2008; Francis, 2017; Kowen & Davis, 2006; McArthur, 2015; Msibi, 2012).

Although South Africa has come a long way in protecting the rights of individuals with same-sex identities, schools are often managed by hegemonic heterosexual infused policies and protocol, leading to schools being homophobic in nature (Francis, 2017). More to it, school policies (including curriculum) and procedures were designed in such a way that the rights, well-being and freedom of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth have been on the peripheries of school priorities (Bhana, 2014a).

These factors raise the question on the obligations and role of the educational psychologists and their preparedness to address the needs of youth who identify with same-sex sexuality in a school environment that is policed with compulsory heteronormative practices (Francis, 2017). When faced with cases of same-sex sexuality youth, how do educational psychologists respond and create an enabling environment for such young people to interact and navigate in an often compulsory heteronormative environment.

Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews which were audio recorded. Content analysis was used to find relevant themes related to the research question. Based on this, the study explored the responses of educational psychologist's to the needs of school youth. Five educational psychologists were interviewed focusing on the way in which they have dealt with sexual- minority school youth, either in their private practice or within the educational sector.

The study brought forth that the biggest concern is that even though the participants showed a general willingness and comfort to work with sexual minority individuals, the minority are still led by their deep-seated institutional and socially constructed heterosexual preferences. Another core finding from this study is that even though educational psychologist understand that their work should be of a systemic nature, their engagements with schools are limited and often the intervention stops at the family. Lastly, a finding in this study was that educational psychologists lacked formal training focusing on the needs of sexual minority populations, which had a limiting effect on the effectiveness of the work of educational psychologists with sexual minority youth.



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2. CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

School youth with same-sex identities have been harassed, ostracized, discriminated against, violated, dehumanized and underserved in the South African school settings because of their disapproved non-normative sexual orientations (Butler, Alpaslan, Strumpher & Astbury, 2003; Butler & Astburty, 2008; Francis, 2017; Kowen & Davis, 2006; McArthur, 2015; Msibi, 2012). This is despite the affirmation and the legal and educational advances in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (DoJ, 1996), the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (DoE, 1996) and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) that prohibit any form of discrimination towards populations with diverse sexual orientations. Studies in South Africa that stretch over a decade repeatedly show that young people with same-sex sexualities are faced with physical and emotional violence, bullying from both peers and teachers and teased and sidelined in educational activities (Butler, et al., 2003; Butler & Astburty, 2008; Kowen & Davis, 2006; Msibi, 2012; McArthur, 2015; Francis, 2017). Literature internationally shows that youth with same-sex identities experience higher levels of emotional distress, truancy at school, higher prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse as well as higher reports of suicidality in their efforts to navigate through a social system that is disapproving of their being (Bahr, Brish & Croteau, 2000; Brown, 2017; Espelage, Aragon, Birkett & Koenig, 2008; LaSala, 2013; Ryan, 2009). The situation as depicted in the South African literature is no different showing how young people with same-sex sexualities are at risk of dropping out of school because of the education system that is not responding adequately to their needs (Butler, et al, 2003; Brown & Diale, 2017; Francis, 2017; Kowen, 2015; Msibi, 2012). The systemic homosexual dissonance and reluctance to affirm sexual diversity often push young people with same-sex identities out of the school system (Butler, et al., 2008; Msibi, 2012).

Although South Africa has come a long way in protecting the rights of individuals with same-sex identities, schools are often managed by hegemonic heterosexual infused policies and protocol, leading to schools being homophobic in nature (Francis, 2017). More to it, school policies (including curriculum) and procedures were designed in such a way that the rights, well-being and freedom of lesbian, gay, bisexual and

transgender (LGBT) youth have been on the peripheries of school priorities (Bhana, 2014a).

There is an emerging body of research that found that the lack of training on issues of sexual diversity in pre- and in-service teacher education results in a perpetuation of homophobic violence towards same-sex sexuality youth in schools (Bhana, 2014; Brown & de Wet, 2018; DePalma & Francis, 2014; Francis, 2017; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). Teachers in South Africa are found to conflate their personal, cultural and religious views that often lead to their reluctance to address homophobic incidents in schools (Bhana, 2014; DePalma & Francis, 2014; Francis, 2010).

Homophobic bullying is not always given the same attention as other forms of bullying in school policies and code of conducts, however this form of bullying has been found to be more severe in nature and impact than other forms (Francis, 2017). Government failed to provide clear guidelines on how to deal with homophobic bullying in schools and codes of conduct did not specify guidelines for dealing with homophobia in schools (Thani, 2017).

These factors raises the question on the obligations and role of the educational psychologists and their preparedness to address the needs of youth who identify with same-sex sexuality in a school environment that is policed with compulsory heteronormative practices (Francis, 2017). When faced with cases of same-sex sexuality youth, how do educational psychologists respond and create an enabling environment for such young people to interact and navigate in an often compulsory heteronormative environment.

Through my literature search I discovered a gap through the invisibility and silence on research that relates to same-sex sexuality identities and educational psychologists in South Africa. For this reason I will rely on literature from the global-north and explore the relations with the South African context. The mental health of youth with same-sex identities in addition to adolescent development challenges are troubled by issues of social stigmatization, discrimination, violence and unresponsive systems that result in compromised emotional wellbeing, safety, barriers to learning and often various risky behaviors (LaSala, 2013; Ryan, 2009; Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009; Sawyer, Porter, Lehman, Anderson and Anderson, 2006). On the contrary youth with same-sex identities who experienced a supportive learning environment showed

better attendance, academic performance and human agency (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012; Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014). Despite the poignant findings about the well-being of same-sex youth as highlighted in the forgoing literature, educational psychologists are found to pay less attention to the plight of this learner population (Bahr et al., 2000). These authors report that educational psychologists were uncomfortable to proactively advocate for the acceptance of sexual diversity in school settings. Their willingness stretched as far as the therapy room with the individual client as they were not at ease to disrupt the normativities found in the school and surrounding cultures. Another study by Sabin, Riskind and Nosek (2015) pointed out that stigma and personal beliefs impeded the willingness of therapists to adequately support young people with same-sex sexualities. Educational psychologists and school counsellors with a positive attitude to support youth with same-sex identities often felt discouraged by the rooted social repressions towards homosexuality that filtered through school settings by learners, teachers and parents (Lassiter & Sifford, 2015). Similar findings were made by Hall, McDougald and Kresica (2013, p.131) namely that negative attitudes and feelings about sexual minorities were caused by a lack of formal education and adequate sources of information about sexual orientation, low levels of training and competency concerning counselling gay, lesbian and bisexual students which subsequently led them to infrequently demonstrate supportive behaviours to improve the school environment. These concise reflections on the perceptions, experiences and responses of educational psychologists to youth with same-sex identities highlights my concern about attitudes, confidence and competencies of educational psychologists in South Africa towards this often hidden population of school youth. It is therefore imperative for me to explore how educational psychologists who are mandated in their role to address to the needs of youth with same-sex identities function in school and broader communities with rooted intolerance towards non-normative sexualities.

In order to provide training for educational psychologists on topics directly related to LGBT youth, we need to establish how the different ecologies impact the responses of educational psychologists to youth with same-sex identities. The forgoing literature established that the everyday realities of same-sex identity youth in South African schools are affected at biological, psychological, and social levels and through multiple

settings of influence. It further indicated the risk implicated to these young people's development and learning. I am adopting the Bronfenbrenner's ecological paradigm to explore the potential for educational psychologists' intervention with young people who identify with same-sex sexualities. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) explain that the complex human agency is best understood through a four nested system known as micro, meso, macro, chrono and exosystem. The model in the context of this study purports that same-sex identity youth agency and learning should be understood through a joint function of environmental interaction (Sontag, 1996, p.321). Environmental interaction can be perceived as the exchange between the individual system within and the ecosystem or condition outside her/himself (Sontag, 1996, p.322). Homosexual identities in South Africa are influenced by the progressive and protective constitution and other favourable legislation and policies. It is also impacted by the socio-cultural and religious values and beliefs that are still in misalignment with the constitutional principles (Msibi, 2010; Sutherland, Roberts, Struwig & Gordon, 2016). These values manifest themselves in close and extended family settings (Bhana, 2013). This literature shows that the contestation between progressive constitutional ideals and repressive social values towards homosexuality filters through the micro, meso and macro levels of many communities in South Africa. Homosexual dissonance in communities has led to various forms of aggression by ordinary community members and significant others such as teachers, peers and close relatives (Francis & Reygan, 2016). Such experiences subsequently impacted the individual development which often leads to self-hate and other fatal consequences such as suicide. This reflection of the realities for same-sex youth is critical to comprehend how sociological context of same-sex identity youth through the different levels of society has a direct impact on their wellbeing and learning opportunities (Francis, 2017). Educational Psychologists themselves navigate within these various ecological systems and are influenced by the multiple policies, values and practices held by the system. The lack or invisibility of education about the lived experiences of homosexual identities in the training of educational psychologists could create risks for same-sex youth considering the rooted repressive values about homosexuality by the majority of South African communities (Sutherland et al., 2016).

1.2 MOTIVATION AND RATIONALE:

Considering the dissonance, fatalities and aggression towards a population that is socially not affirmed, it becomes critical that educational psychologists should have a level of understanding and skills towards intervention. The last five years recorded the savage murders motivated by the hatred for non-heteronormative sexualities (Sutherland et al., 2016). Without repeating it, it can be stated that the foregrounding literature brief and what follows in Chapter 2 in no uncertainty depict the vulnerabilities that youth with same-sex sexual orientations experience in South African schools every day. In a recent personal experience with a homosexual related incident at school I noticed how leaders avoided the matter because of personal beliefs and pushed it to the school counsellors, that is indicative of how non-heteronormative sexualities are pathologised and frowned upon. It also exposed my own inability to address the issue comprehensibly because of the unfamiliarity to address such complexities. I had to involve parents but at the same time risked exposing the learners' sexual identity which in turn would be a violation of their constitutional rights. In light of all of these reflections I strongly advocate training that is inclusive of affirming and empowering knowledge around sexual diversity as advocated by the Psychological Association of South Africa (2017).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The emerging literature on same-sex sexuality school youth in South Africa shows that school is an unsafe space for young people with same-sex sexual orientations (Bhana, 2014; Butler, et al, 2003; Francis, 2017; Kowen, 2015; Msibi, 2012). These studies also show that teachers and learners are hostile and school leadership is unresponsive towards the needs of youth with same-sex sexual identities. Inadequate teacher training coupled with repressive personal beliefs around people with same-sex sexual orientations prevent teachers and other education authorities to respond positively to the needs of young people with same-sex sexualities in their care (Bhana, 2014; Francis, 2010; Francis, 2016; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015).

Considering the documented South African social dissonance towards same-sex identities and the experiences of such young people (Msibi, 2010; 2012; Sutherland et al., 2016) it is not surprising to find that youth with homosexual orientations

experience higher levels of mental health difficulties and barriers to learning (LaSala, 2013; Ryan, 2009). These two conditions are central to the role and responsibilities of educational psychologist (Department of Health, 2011, p. 8). However little is known to how educational psychologists are trained to respond to the needs of young people with same-sex sexualities even less so on intervening on a whole school level. The realities of youth with same-sex sexual orientations is impacted by various ecologies among others home and school (Matee, 2018). One cannot disregard the role of parents in relation to schooling and wellbeing as stipulated in the South African White Paper 6 on Inclusion Education (DBE, 2001). Those charged with the learning and wellbeing are to have a close working relationship with families but research shows that parents who deny the same-sex sexual identity of a child expect from educational psychologist to 'repair' their child (LaSala, 2013). For these reasons educational psychologists need to be knowledgeable, skilled and possess positive values to support youth with same-sex identities and their communities. Not only are parents and family active agents in same-sex identity youth, they are primary participants in the schooling environment, meaning that parents are an integral part of intervention focus of educational psychologists (Matee, 2018). I claim that the role of the educational psychologist in supporting youth with same-sex sexual orientation or are perceived as such stretch beyond the therapy room, into the different socio-ecological systems.

Based on the above factors, this study aims to explore how educational psychologists understand the construct of same-sex sexual orientations and the role that the school environment plays. It further explores how educational psychologists respond to youth with same-sex sexual orientations and their communities. Finally, it identifies enabling training needs for educational psychologist to respond more adequately to the life of youth with same-sex sexual orientations, specifically in the education environment in South Africa.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) a research question is simply the question that the study aims to answer. They mention that a good research question is one that can be answered and that it should somehow be measurable

(Terre Blanche et al, 2006). The focus of this study is therefore framed on the questions below.

1.4.1 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:

How do educational psychologists respond to the needs of school youth with same-sex sexual orientations within the school environment?

1.4.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How do educational psychologists perceive same-sex identities?
- What are the training and developmental needs of educational psychologists in responding to the needs of school youth with same- sex sexualities?

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH AIMS ARE:

Educational psychologists have to follow the scope of practice as set out by the HPCSA, which states that educational psychologists should work with clients to optimize their functioning (Department of Health, 2011). The rules and conduct specifically for psychologists furthermore states that “A psychologists should maintain up- to- date competency in his or her areas practice.” (HPCSA. 2006, p. 16). In order for educational psychologists to respond to contemporary and emerging social and psychological needs, training programmes and opportunities need to be developed. Such development can only take place by exploring a thorough understanding of the current state of knowledge in a particular area. Therefore, the aims of this study is as follow:

- The study explore educational psychologists understanding of the needs and well-being of school youth who identify with same-sex sexual orientations.
- Secondly the study examines how educational psychologist respond to the needs of school youth with same-sex sexual orientations within the schooling environment

- The third aim is to establish what the needs of educational psychologist are to adequately respond to the needs of school youth with same-sex sexual orientations focusing on intervention within the school.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS:

- *Gender*: "Gender refers to the roles and expectations attributed to men and women in a given society, roles which change over time, place, and life stage." (Phillips, 2005, p. 4)
- *Homophobia and homophobic bullying*: "Fear, rejection or aversion, often in the form of stigmatizing attitudes or discriminatory behavior towards homosexuals and/or homosexuality. A gender specific type of bullying that is based on actual or perceived sexual orientation." (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [UNESCO], 2012, p. 11).
- *Suicidality*: Bostwick et al. (2014, p. 1129) define suicidality as: "Behaviour related to contemplating, attempting or completing suicide."
- *Gay*: The term can refer to "same- sex sexual attraction, same- sex behaviour and same- sex culture identity in general. However it often refers to men who are sexually attracted to and the capacity for an intimate relationship primarily with other men." (UNESCO. 2012, p. 6).
- *Lesbian*: "Lesbian women experience sexual attraction and the capacity for an intimate relationship primarily with other women." (UNESCO. 2012, p. 6).
- *Bisexual*: "Bisexuality is a sexual orientation in which an individual experiences a combination of sexual and affectional attractions to members of both sexes; engages to varying degrees in sexual activities with both sexes; and self-identifies as bisexual in a way that is consonant with personal, social, political, and lifestyle preferences." (Morrow & Messinger, 2012, p. 7)
- *Transgender*: "People whose gender identity is different from the gender commonly socially assigned to them on the basis of their biological sex (e.g., a biological male with a feminine gender identity)." (Morrow & Messinger. 2012, p. 7)
- *LGBT*: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender.
- *SMY*: Sexual minority youth.

- *Gender identity*: Gender identity refers to “an individual’s personal sense of identity as masculine or feminine, or some combination thereof.’ (Morrow & Messinger. 2012, p. 8)
- Heteronormative: “Those punitive rules (social, familial, and legal) that force us to conform to hegemonic, heterosexual standards for identity.” (Vaccaro, August & Kennedy, 2012, p. 144)
- *Heterosexism*: “The belief in the superiority of heterosexuality over other forms of sexual orientation. Like racism and sexism, heterosexism is ingrained in society and serves to systematically privilege heterosexual people and oppress GLBT people. “(Morrow & Messinger, 2012, p. 7)
- *Sexual orientation*: “A person’s capacity for profound emotional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender.”(UNESCO. 2012, p. 6)
- HPCSA: Health Professions Council of South Africa.
- Same-sex identity: refers to an individual with a consciousness that he or she is emotionally and sexually attracted to another person of his or her own sex (UNESCO, 2012)

1.7 RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE

Terre Blanche et al. (2006, p. 46) state that “qualitative researchers collect data in the form of written or spoken language, or in the form of observations that are recorded in language, and analyze that data by identifying and categorizing themes.” McInerney (2001) elaborates that qualitative research provides a clearer picture of the specific problem in its true setting. Qualitative research allows for elaborating on qualitative data and finally, and possibly most applicable to the current study, is that qualitative research allows for the problem to be viewed holistically (McInerney, 2001).

By not making use of standardized equipment, one can provide more elaborative, meaningful and personal information, as well as information shared impulsively or unplanned. Qualitative researchers make use of various methods to collect data that

will provide information about the finer details of the phenomena being questioned (Terre Blanch et al., 2006).

To conclude on this, Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2016) state that qualitative researchers are interested in the meaning that is attached to things.

1.7.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006, p. 6), research paradigm is “all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry.” These authors continue to state that the interpretive approach to research aims to explain the “subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action” (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 7).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) explain that the interpretive paradigm is concerned with the individual and their view of social interactions. They furthermore state that the interpretive paradigm for research aims to gain an understanding of the individual from the inside-out (Cohen et al., 2007). Finally, these authors mention that theory is constructed on the findings of research, hence theory follows research.

Based on the above, this study is interpretive in that it aims to understand educational psychologists’ understanding of same-sex identities as social phenomena and the levels of development of these identities within the schooling environment.

1.7.3 RESEARCH DESIGN: NARRATIVE METHODS:

Research designed as a narrative inquiry means the researcher moves away from number and statistics towards descriptions and personal experiences (Clandinin, 2007). Researchers making use of narratives tend to place great value on the participants’ experiences, and the value it has in developing theories according to Clandinin (2007).

A narrative inquiry provides a direct description of the participants’ everyday life, including what they say and do (Taylor et al., 2016). This study is a narrative inquiry in that it focuses on the narratives of educational psychologists’ perceptions and responses to sexual diversity with school youth in and around the school environment.

The data gathered includes personal experiences of the participants; the stories underpinning their attitudes, behaviors, their understanding of the impact of the schooling environment on school youth with same-sex sexual orientations and their engagement with such clients.

This study aimed at exploring how educational psychologists act in the best interest of non-heterosexual identities, while working in settings that are largely regulated and policed by heteronormative principals. Educational psychologists with same-sex sexual identities form part of this study as a way to determine their personal and professional contribution to intervention with sexually diverse clients. I believe that this angle could enrich this study considering the experiential knowledge that is attributed to this narrative inquiry.

Focusing on the narratives of the participants will provide rich, descriptive data about the educational psychologists' personal and professional experiences in dealing with youth clients from diverse sexual orientations.

1.7.4. SAMPLE AND SAMPLING

“Sampling is the selection of research participants from an entire population, and involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours, and/ or social processes to observe” (Terre Blanche et al., 2007, p. 49). Selecting participants for a study is determined by representativeness, meaning that the researcher should select participants that will represent the population which is being investigated (Terre Blanche et al, 2007). Cohen et al. (2007) distinguish between two methods of sampling; probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Non-probability or purposive sampling is the method to be used in this study as this method aims to select a specific group of participants. Participants in a non-probability sample are selected based on certain characteristics. According to Cohen et al. (2007) the researcher making use of purposive sampling deliberately selects a particular group of the wider population.

The group selected for this study is registered, practicing educational psychologists. This means that participants should currently be practicing as education psychologists. In order for them to do this, they need to be registered as educational psychologists at the HPCSA. A minimum of a master's degree in Educational

Psychology needs to be obtained before one can register as an educational psychologist.

The above-mentioned aspects determine which individuals should be included in the study and furthermore excludes various individuals in the wider mental health profession.

1.7.5 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) state that semi structured interviews give participants the opportunity to communicate their experiences and views. In this study, interview questions were determined in advance, however I granted opportunity for unplanned, informal questions during the interview in order to provide rich, descriptive data.

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. This data was then analyzed through content analysis. Content analysis was used to find relevant themes related to the research question. Stemler (2001, p 1) states that “content analysis has been defined as a systemic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding.” After transcribing the audio recordings, I read the information to gain a general sense of information; I embarked on the content analysis process as set out above.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.8.1 ETHICAL PERMISSION AND CLEARANCE

Terre Blanche et al. (2007, p. 61) state that research ethics “involves more than a focus on the welfare of research participants and extends into areas such as scientific misconduct and plagiarism.”

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Johannesburg as a way for the Ethics Board and Department of Educational Psychology to ensure that various ethical principles will be adhered to. An ethics certificate was issued to grant permission to conduct this research.

1.8.2 CONSENT, CONFIDENTIALITY, HARM OR INJURY

Each research participant completed a consent form after I had explained the purpose and aim of the study as well as the various methods used during the study. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any given time, without any consequences. Participants furthermore were informed that their identity would be withheld during all aspects of the research. Considering that I recorded all interviews, participants were made aware of this and their written permission was sought to continue. Confidentiality was also discussed and agreed upon as a way to protect their identity as mentioned earlier. Finally, participants were encouraged to consult with another mental health professional in the event where they could potentially relive trauma or any other challenging emotional experiences as a result of their engagement in this study.

1.9 QUALITY CRITERIA

Research, especially qualitative research, aims to measure something that cannot be measured directly (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006). Therefore researchers need to ensure that “the measurements obtained from an operational definition actually represent the intangible construct.” (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006, p. 67). Validity and reliability are two criteria used to evaluate the quality of measurements according to Gravetter and Forzano (2006).

1.9.1 RELIABILITY

Gravetter and Forzano (2006, p. 72) define reliability as “the stability or consistency of the measurement.” This means the level to which the measurement will yield similar findings in similar conditions.

Reliability of this study was ensured by a similar idea to what Gravetter and Forzano (2006) call simultaneous measurement. However, measurement (interviews and reflective reports) was not conducted by two researchers, but rather checked and evaluated by the research supervisor of this study.

1.9.4 VALIDITY

Validity refers to the level to which the measurement measures what it says it aims to measure (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006).

Creswell (2014) lists a number of methods to ensure or increase the validity of a study. One of the methods is member checking, which will be used in this study. As mentioned earlier, all interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, coded and through this process, various themes were identified. After completion of this process, I made summaries of the findings and provided participants with the opportunity to comment and confirm the findings.

Triangulation is another method of ensuring validity according to Creswell (2014). Triangulation was done by comparing themes gathered from the transcriptions of interviews as well as from the reflective reports compiled by participants.

1.10 GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 of this study provided an in depth description, introduction and overview of the study, including the motivation, rationale, problem statement, research question, purpose of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, research paradigm, research design, ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature applicable to the current study. This included literature on the ecological systems theory and the influence of educational psychologists on various systems that people with diverse sexual orientations navigate in.

The third chapter of this study focuses on the results and findings of the study in relation to the existing literature.

The final chapter, Chapter 4, will discuss the reflection and recommendations of the study.

1.11 CONCLUSION

Chapter one aimed to provide a general, in depth introduction and overview of the study. Various aspects such as the research problem, research aim, research problem,

clarification of concepts, research methodology, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, reliability and validity were discussed in great detail.



3. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006) state that the purpose of a literature review comprises of an overview of existing knowledge, research and discourse and its link to the existing study under investigation. Based on this, this chapter is an attempt to provide insight to sexual diversity particularly of school youth who identify with same-sex sexual orientations and their experiences in an around the micro and macro ecologies of their lives. It also explores how key individuals responsible for the care and agency perceive and respond to their identities. More so I hoped to identify gaps and limitations which the existing study intended to fill. Focusing on this will provide the reader with a clear understanding of the background and architecture of this study.

The democratic transformation that South Africa underwent since 1994 is well known around the globe, with the main focus on post-apartheid development based on racial equality, while other minority factors such as same-sex sexualities and gender inequalities have received less exposure (Msibi, 2013). Victor, Nel, Lynch and Mbatha (2014) are of the opinion that in relation to other African countries, South Africa has progressed significantly in terms of legislation to protect the rights of all sexual orientations. They further argue that despite this legal protection and affirmation, it does not address the harmful influences of discrimination, silences, prejudice and stigmatization experienced. This is because the progressive legal frameworks do not automatically translate to social transformation (Sutherland et al., 2016). Individuals who identify with same-sex sexual orientations in South Africa continue to experience extreme forms of violence, including “curative” rape for lesbian females and physical violence towards gay males, which are grounded in fears related to homophobia and perhaps the lack of understanding (Msibi. 2011; Sutherland et al., 2016). Burton, Marshal and Chisom (2014) state that individuals who identify with same-sex sexual orientations are at greater risk for negative mental health outcomes due to overt forms of discrimination and isolation which often lead to internalized stigma and homophobia (Burton et. al., 2014). The foregrounding literature brief in Chapter 1 illustrated that the situation in schools were now different. Based on this, it is inevitable for this study to take the stance that the role of educational psychologists need to be reformed from a

client-deficit focus towards to an ecological and systems paradigm, focusing on a wider scope of proactive intervention and practice (Engelbrecht, 2004). This is, if health practitioners are serious to align practice with the constitutional framework of inclusive and non-discriminatory service delivery. This study for this reason draws on the ecological systems framework of Bronfenbrenner (Donald et al., 2010), focusing on systems including the individual, the family, schooling systems, communities, cultural implications, religion, policies and legislative frameworks and the impact of these systems on the development and well-being of sexual minority school youth.

Victor et al. (2014) are of the opinion that psychology professionals can assist in the transformation of unfair sexual and gender practices by taking an affirmative stance towards sexual and gender diversity. However, for educational psychologists to be able to fully take part in the transformation process, they need to receive adequate training on the specific needs of same-sex sexuality individuals as stated by Frank and Cannon (2010), that individuals who identify with diverse sexual orientations experience additional stressors due to their sexuality. These authors also found that mental health students receive very little or no training to respond to the mentioned additional stressors (Frank & Cannon, 2010).

The abovementioned focus areas were investigated in the light of the primary research question:

How do educational psychologists respond to the needs of school youth with same-sex identities within the whole school environment?

The secondary research questions leading this study are:

- How do educational psychologists perceive same-sex identities?
- How do educational psychologists respond to the needs of school youth with same-sex identities in regulated hegemonic heteronormative school environments?

These questions are guided by an approach to review the existing literature. The literature review focus of the available local literature is of limited scope, I therefore also explored international literature and applied it to the South African context.

2.2. MENTAL HEALTH OF SAME SEX SEXUALITY YOUTH:

Adolescence is a life period where youth experience various developmental challenges. In addition to this, homosexual adolescence also has to face the consequences of being part of a minority group who often experiences different forms of discrimination (Padilla, Crisp & Rew, 2010). These authors continue to highlight that internalized homophobia (process of internalizing stigma and discrimination), expectations of rejection and discrimination are often associated with suicidality, demoralization and unrealistic guilt (Padilla et. al., 2010). Additional to this, Pearson and Wilkinson (2013) found that adolescents who identify with same-sex sexual orientation are more likely to use illegal substances, be pushed and run away from home and experience more problems in the school context, including academic challenges, because of their repressed sexual orientation. It is important to point out that these experiences should not be seen through a victim lens but how compulsory heteronormative environments suppress these young individuals (Msibi, 2012).

UNESCO (2012, p. 6) defines homophobia as: "Fear, rejection or aversion, often in the form of stigmatizing attitudes or discriminatory behavior towards homosexuals and/or homosexuality." They continue to state that homophobic bullying refers to "a gender specific type of bullying that is based on actual or perceived sexual orientation" (UNESCO, 2012: p 11). In the piece published by UNESCO (2012) it was stated that homophobic bullying undermines educational achievement, causes fear and hurt and involves an imbalance of power. This document continues to mention that many individuals with non-heteronormative identities in various countries, such as Bangladesh, India and Nepal, have reported that they were denied access to education (UNESCO, 2012). Poor school attendance, failure of completing the schooling career and poor academic performance were emphasized as the three main impacts of homophobic bullying in schools (UNESCO, 2012). Finally, in the text published by UNESCO (2012), it was mentioned that a third of individuals who identified with same-sex sexual orientations in the USA have reported to have missed school due to fear and homophobic violence. School youth with same-sex identities have been harassed, ostracized, discriminated against, violated, dehumanized and underserved in South African school settings because of their disapproved non-normative sexual orientations (Butler et al., 2003; Butler & Astburty, 2008; Francis, 2017; Kowen & Davis, 2006; McArthur, 2015; Msibi, 2012).

McCabe, Rubinson, Dragowski, and Elizalde- Utnick (2013) mention that LGBT individuals who experience homophobic bullying have higher rates of mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety and suicidality. Bostwick et al. (2014, p. 1129) define suicidality as a “behaviour related to contemplating, attempting or completing suicide”. According to McCabe et al. (2013), further risk behaviours such as substance abuse and risky sexual behaviours, are also often exhibited by these individuals as a way to develop a sense of belonging and expression of their frustrations.

Bostwick et al. (2014) focused specifically on suicidality in racially and ethnically diverse sexual minority youth groups. Although based in America, this article provides profound global information pertaining to sexual minority youth and suicidality. This article looks at suicidality across various racial/ethnic groups after the authors identified a gap in existing literature in that these studies were dichotomous or trichotomous (Bostwick et al., 2014). This means that previous studies compared two or three racial/ethnic minority groups with each other. The authors mention important findings of previous research related to their study, such as that previous studies found that youth who identified with non-heteronormative sexualities were twice as likely as heterosexual youth to contemplate suicide and that 28% of youth with non-heteronormative sexualities had a history of suicide (Bostwick, et al. 2014). The study concludes that there are various differences in suicidality in ethnic and racial minorities within the construct of youth who identify with non-heteronormative sexual orientations. It is interesting that the authors assume a view that the cultural perceptions of suicide may act as a protective factor and have an influence in the suicidality of various ethnic and racial individuals with non-heteronormative sexual orientations. Bostwick et al. (2014) mention that youth with diverse sexual orientations are less likely to attempt or successfully execute suicide in cultures where there are stronger negative sanctions and beliefs towards suicide, hence keeping them from externalizing homophobic bullying, discrimination and victimization in the form of suicidality. This raises the question on other aspects of mental health (prolonged internalization of bullying, discrimination, and victimization) as set out in the minority stress model (MSM) in Mustanski, Garofalo and Emerson (2010). These authors mention that the minority stress model sets out that internal and external manifestations of prejudice, victimization and social stigma contribute to mental health differences between minority and hegemonic groups. The minority stress model

outlines that minority groups tend to have more mental health difficulties due to the increased bullying, victimization and discrimination experienced. Mustanski et al., (2010) in their study attempt to elaborate on the general mental health of LGBT individuals. These authors state that literature focuses mostly on suicidality and fails to focus on mental health disorders in LGBT populations. They do, however, mention one study of mental disorders in LGBT populations, which found that the prevalence of major depression and conduct disorder was significantly higher in LGBT youth than in their heterosexual counterparts. In their study with 246 ethnically diverse, LGBT youths in Chicago, Mustanski et. al. also found that one third of all participants met the diagnostic criteria of at least one mental disorder, based on the DSM- IV.

Marshall et al. (2011) found that sexual minority youth have significantly higher rates of suicidality. Marshall et al. furthermore state that discrimination and victimization, among other negative experiences may have a major impact on the mental health of LGBT youths. This study attempts to also link various mental health disorders to suicide and mentions that mood disorders, depression being the main disorder, were identified (diagnosed) in most of the youths who attempted suicide. Marshall et al.'s (2011) overview of literature highlights the finding that sexually minority youth are more at risk of mood disorders, hence contributing to the larger prevalence of suicidality. Considering the heightened levels of discrimination, homophobic bullying and violence towards school youth with same-sex sexual orientations in South Africa as purported by a number of researchers and it is inevitable that these mentioned mental health pressures are prevalent among this youth (Brown, 2017; Francis, 2017; Grobbelaar, 2018; Matee, 2018; Msibi, 2012; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). At the centre of response to care and support is the educational psychologist. I would like to point out that it is concerning that there is almost a deafening silence within the domain of educational psychology as shared by Njoko (2018).

Pachankis, Cochran and Mays (2015) expressed an assessment of the relationship between mental health and sexual orientation disclosure among LGBT individuals. The authors made use of a follow up survey and focused on two main mental health disorders; major depression and generalized anxiety disorder. Their findings concluded that closeted men were less likely to report signs of major depression, however there were higher reports of anxiety in recently outed (disclosed) men than distantly outed (disclosed) men. (Pachankis et al., 2015). They furthermore found that

women who remained closeted (have not yet disclosed their sexuality) showed higher rates of depression than recently outed women. In conclusion, their findings were that the association between being in or out, largely depends on gender (Pachankis et al., 2015)

Williams and Chapman (2011) focus on five important aspects with regards to youth with diverse and particular non-normative sexual orientations. These include health and mental health needs, the use of services, the turning down of services, the barriers to health care services and the preferred setting of health care services. These authors made use of information gathered from a representative sample completed by school attending adolescents. Literature mentioned in this writing correspond with various findings cited above, in that youth with same-sex sexual orientations have a greater risk of experiencing anxiety, depression and suicidality due to hegemonic behaviours to alternative sexual expressions (Williams & Chapman. 2011).

The aforementioned authors furthermore summarized existing literature which found that youth with non-heteronormative sexual orientations experienced higher rates of victimization, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual risk behaviours, fall pregnant or father a pregnancy (Williams & Chapman. 2011). An alarming finding by Williams and Chapman (2011) is that even though Sexual Minority Youth (SMY) were more likely to make use of mental health services, they reported higher levels of unmet mental health needs. The authors do not discuss or explore possible reasons for this, however I believe that one major reason for this could be that these individuals are forced by their families or other significant individuals to meet with mental health practitioners with the goal to "fix" their sexual preferences as was my experience with similar incidents in my work context. Williams and Chapman (2011) found that youth with non-heterosexual orientations preferred to make use of private mental health practitioners, rather than those in schools, due to perceived higher levels of confidentiality. This finding can pose a major problem in the South African context, as many individuals do not have the financial resources to afford the private practitioners, and mental health practitioners at schools (and other government institutions) that are in many instances the only way in which to consult with such a practitioner.

This USA study conducted by Chapman and Williams however also relates to the South African context, including various barriers to mental health services. My

experience is that one of the possible barriers in South Africa is the long waiting period to get an appointment with a mental health practitioner at a government institution, this waiting period can be as long as eight weeks. The information in this study relates closely to the current study being completed, as the young man involved in the study shows various signs of mental health difficulties, however have not reported any mental health interventions to date.

The negative impacts on the decreased well-being of same sex attracted youth need to be investigated as it is not the results of the same sex attracted identity but rather the impacts of the social context in which these individuals live (Pearson & Wilkinson, 2013). Therefore, it seems favorable to make use of the eco- systemic theory to form an understanding of these influences within the different sub systems in which SMY function.

2.3 AN OVERVIEW OF THE ECO- SYSTEMIC THEORY:

The literature establishes that the everyday realities of youth who identify with same-sex sexual orientations in South African schools are affected at biological, psychological and social levels and through multiple settings of influence. It further indicates the risk implicated for these young people's development and learning. I am adopting the Bronfenbrenner's ecological paradigm to explore the potential for educational psychologists' intervention with young people who identify with same-sex sexualities. Focusing on this theory in my view captures a broader frame to the research question in that it will provide the educational psychologist an understanding of school youth with diverse sexual orientations with specific needs. Moreover it will allow for the educational psychologist to realize that their role does not stop in their office but rather extends beyond. By understanding the abovementioned, one will be able to investigate the educational psychologists' responses to these needs.

Donald et al. (2010) explains that the complex human agency is best understood through a four-nested system known as micro, meso, macro and chrono and exosystem. The model in the context of this study purports that youth with same-sex sexual orientation agency and learning should be understood through an intersected function of the everyday ecologies (Sontag, 1996). These everyday ecologies can be

perceived as the exchanging environments of the individual within an even or condition outside her/himself (Sontag, 1996). These conditions as mentioned above referring to the different systems in which the individual functions. These systems influence the individual on all levels.

Homosexual identities in South Africa are influenced by the progressive and protective constitution. It is also impacted by the socio-cultural and religious values and beliefs are still in misalignment with the constitutional principles (Msibi, 2011; Sutherland et al., 2016). These values manifest themselves in close and extended family settings (Bhana, 2014; Matee, 2018). Homosexual dissonance in communities has led to various forms of aggression by ordinary community members and significant others such as teachers, peers and close relatives (Francis & Reygan, 2015). Such experiences have subsequently impacted the individual development which often leads to self-hate and other fatal consequences such as suicide. This reflection of the realities for same-sex youth is critical to comprehend in the sociological context of same-sex identity youth though the different levels of society have a direct impact on their wellbeing and learning opportunities. Educational Psychologists themselves navigate within these various ecological systems and are influenced by the multiple policies, values and practices held by the system. The lack or invisibility of education about the lived experiences of homosexual identities in the training of educational psychologist could create risks for same-sex youth considering the rooted repressive values about homosexuality by the majority of South African communities (Sutherland et al., 2016).

Hong, Espelage and Kral (2011) focus on risk factors within various systems, for suicidality among SMY. However the information in this article provides an applicable framework for exploring the systemic influences on SMY, hence allowing the investigation of educational psychologists' responses to the deriving needs of SMY.

2.4 MICRO SYSTEMS

According to Hong et al. (2011), micro systems refer to the individuals and groups with whom the individual interacts. The micro level factors are constantly in direct interaction with the individual (Hong et. al. 2011). These groups and individuals in the

micro system include the characteristics of youth with diverse sexual orientations, parental and familial support, peer relations and schooling.

2.4.1 SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH CHARACTERISTICS

Mustanski et al. and Emmerson (2010) in their survey focus on mental disorders of LGBT youth aimed at investigating the association of race/ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation and developing mental disorders. These authors hypothesized that LGBT youth or other minority groups (race, gender, ethnicity) would have developed more mental disorders, however, they found no link between these two factors (Mustanski et al., 2010). Bostwick et al. (2014) on the other hand found that there were in fact variations in risk factors in suicidal outcomes based on sex and race/ethnicity. These authors however take in account that the cultural understanding of suicide (or self-harming behaviors) might have an impact on suicidality (Bostwick et al., 2014). Meyer (2014) explains through use of the minority stress model that individuals who make up part of any minority group have a higher risk to develop mental disorders, and belonging to more than one minority group might possibly lead to even greater risks. The minority stress model focuses on the influences of stigmatization, discrimination and social injustice on minority groups (Meyer, 2014).

Only a small amount of South African literature is available on the characteristics of SMY as a risk factor for developing mental health disorders, however Msibi (2012) focuses on the invisibility of SMY in the context as well as the contributory influences of being part of a racial minority group, which will be discussed later in this paper.

2.4.2 PARENTAL AND FAMILIAL SUPPORT

Coming out refers to the process in which LGBT individuals disclose their sexuality to parents, peers or other significant individuals (Goodrich & Gillbride, 2017). These authors mention that the coming out process is significant to LGBT individuals as findings suggest that individuals who delay or who do not come out, often experience higher levels of depression, substance abuse and suicidal behaviours (Goodrich & Gillbride, 2017). However, findings furthermore suggest that children who come out to their parents report higher levels of suicidality than those who do not disclose their

sexuality, according to Goodrich and Gillbride (2017). Higher levels of suicidality as well as low self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness can be ascribed to the negative reactions of parents after the coming out process such as emotional and material rejection and verbal or physical assault (Goodrich & Gillbride, 2017; Ryan, 2009). Ryan (2010) and Hilton and Szymanski (2014) found that LGBT youth who experience rejection by their family including their siblings, experience higher levels of suicidality and depression and are more likely to abuse illegal drugs or to engage in unprotected sexual intercourse.

A number of researchers found that family support reduces the psychological impact of social stigmatization, discrimination and victimization often experienced by SMY (Goodrich & Gillbride, 2017; Hershberger & D'Augelli, as cited in Goldfried & Goldfried, 2001; Padilla et al., 2010). These authors also found that there is a positive link between self-esteem and supportive parent relationships among gay and lesbian individuals (Goodrich & Gillbride, 2017; Godfried & Godfried, 2001). Padilla et al. (2010) found that there is a strong link between life stressors and drug abuse, of which SMY are more at risk due to the additional stigmatization and discrimination often experienced. Perceived support from parents and siblings tend to act as a buffer in the context of drug abuse and acceptance by both parents were found to decrease suicidality in SMY. (Hilton & Szymanski, 2014; Padilla, et. al., 2010) Pearson and Wilkinson (2013) are of the opinion that youth with diverse sexual orientations with parent relationship characterized by warmth, closeness and love, are equipped with the necessary security and confidence to reject the stigma. Parents may not always be aware of and explicit in their homophobic actions, and Kitlinger (as cited in Pearson and Wilkinson, 2013) warns that subtle assumptions such as heterosexual interests and silencing of non-heterosexual attractions might have negative impacts on youth with diverse sexual orientations.

Watson, Barnett and Russel (2016) investigated the relationship between parental support and educational success of homosexual individuals. Pearson and Wilkinson (as cited in Watson et al., 2016) mention that higher rates of depression in youth with diverse sexual orientations are a result of low levels of support from parents. They also found that on the other hand, parental warmth, support and acceptance are found to be protective factors for SMY and contribute greatly to improved educational performance of SMY in relation to heterosexual peers (Watson et al., 2016).

Gorman-Murray (2008) takes a different stance to his research and focuses on the factors influencing and the consequences of supportive families on the coming out process of youth with same-sex sexual orientations. The importance of coming out to friends and families is emphasized in this piece, as research suggest that individuals who choose not to disclose their same-sex sexual orientation often experience isolation leading to low self-esteem, self-hate and self-destructing behaviours particularly in communities with high levels of sexism and homophobia (Gorman-Murray, 2008).

2.4.3 PEER RELATIONS

Adolescence is a developmental stage where the importance of relationships with peers receive a lot of attention, they become less dependent on parents and more dependent on peers for emotional support. Hong et al. (2011) mention that peer rejection, and termination of friendship often occur when SMY come out, this has a negative impact on self-esteem, coping and often lead to suicidality. The school is the main source for adolescents to create agency around peer relationships, however as mentioned in Espelage et al. (2008) and Aragon and Birkett (2008) victimization by peers is a primary, negative influence on school involvement for youth with diverse sexual orientations, often being a predictor of anxiety, depression, personal distress and low sense of school belonging (Hin et al. 2011). Savin-Williams (as cited in Morrow & Messinger, 2006) found that more than 95% of youth with diverse sexual orientations felt left out and emotionally isolated from their peers. Morrow and Messinger (2006) mention that adolescents express different ways of coping with this sort of victimization; including social isolation, not participating in extra-curricular activities, absenteeism and finally dropping out. Alternatively, youth with diverse sexual orientations may become over achievers in the academic field or another coping mechanism may be reaction formation where they will take on an exaggerated heterosexual image (Morrow & Messinger, 2006).

2.4.4 SCHOOLS

Although South Africa has come a long way in protecting the rights of individuals with same-sex identities, schools are often managed by hegemonic heterosexual infused policies and protocol, leading to schools being homophobic in nature (Francis, 2016).

Francis (2012) is concerned with the way sexuality education is conducted in South African schools. Teachers are often given a curriculum as guideline which still provides space where educators should be creative in teaching about the given topic. The concern with this is that teachers often impede their own personal values on learners during lessons, including sexuality education and often choose what to teach and what not to teach based on these values (Francis, 2012). My observations during my work in the education system for seven years allow me to be of the opinion that the majority of teachers do not teach sexual education considering the needs and rights of homosexual students. Failing to teach about homosexuality contributes to the silencing of these issues creating invisibility and perpetuating homophobic bullying and violence. The work of Butler et al. (2003) supports the notion of invisibility in the curriculum in their study of eighteen self-identified youths with same-sex sexual orientation who reported harassment, not only from peers, but also from teachers. Francis (2012) also underscores the notion of invisibility of homosexuality in the curriculum and the fact that teachers who engage the topic of homosexuality express their own values and re-inscribe heterosexuality. Butler et al. (2003), Wells and Polders (2006) and Kowen and Davis (2006) speak about whole school victimization in that these researchers found that youth who are perceived to have same-sex sexual orientations or expressed such orientations more often experienced violence, rejection and isolation, not only from their peers, but also from teachers and leaders in the school.

Homophobic bullying is not always given the same attention as other forms of bullying in school policies and code of conducts, however this form of bullying has been found to be more severe in nature and impact than other forms (Francis, 2016). Government failed to provide clear guidelines on how to deal with homophobic bullying in schools and code of conducts did not specify guidelines for dealing with homophobia in schools (Thani, 2017). On the contrary, code of conducts in school often lack the information

on how to deal with inappropriate sexual behaviour between individuals with same-sex sexual orientations (Francis & Brown, 2017). During 2017 I had to deal with a case where a group of boys, who all identified with same-sex sexual orientations that showed inappropriate sexual behavior, which went against the code of conduct of the school. During the disciplinary process, it was clear the various role players were not comfortable in dealing with the case in that they found it difficult to treat the case in an equal light as a similar incident between heterosexual individuals.

The abovementioned paints a picture of unsafe, unaccepting and disrespectful schooling environments, which on its own can lead to negative mental health implications such as depression, anxiety and suicide ideation; (Bhana, 2014.; Msibi, 2012; Victor & Nel, 2016). Langille, Asbridge, Cragg and Rasic (2015) found in their study in the USA that many members of the youth with same-sex sexual orientations felt disconnected to school which later led to increased incidences of truancy and suicide ideation. Although this research was conducted on an international level, one could relate these findings to South African schools, based in the mentioned heterosexual dominant cultures of local schools. Brown (2017) found that learners who did not feel a sense of belonging toward schooling, were often absent from school and engaged in truancy.

2.5 MESO SYSTEMS

Hong et al (2011, p 888) define meso systems as: “Meso systems are composed of interrelationships between two or more micro-system level interactions or settings in which the individual functions.” The findings of their studies report that youth who identify with same-sex sexual orientations feel unsupported at school due to the perceived lack of support from teachers when it comes to negative relationships with their peers (Hong et al, 2011).

2.5.1 LACK OF TEACHER AND SCHOOL STAFF SUPPORT

The main aspect that raises concerns in the schooling context is that schools are highly heterosexualized (Bhana, 2014). “Both in their structures and practices, these understandings can be seen as a key barrier to improving the educational, moral and social outcomes for young people at school” (Bhana, 2014, p 363). Wilmot and Naidoo

(2014) is of the opinion that while teachers continue to promote heterosexuality in schools, the full inclusion of homosexuality will not develop. The improving of educational, moral and social outcomes, I believe, do not remain within the school, but rather that learners carry these heterosexual preferences and discourses into their adult lives and different contexts, causing it to remain an unresolved discourse. Reygan (2013) supports this notion stating that forced heterosexuality in schools is a major contribution to victimization, violence and discrimination against SMY. Brown (2016, 2017) is of the opinion that forced normalization of heterosexuality is the reason why homosexuality is seen as abnormal in schools, which is supported in the work done by Bhana (2014).

Msibi (2012) makes mention of the existing fear in SMY, based on religion, culture and beliefs of impurities that are a few aspects that marginalize youth who identify with same-sex sexual orientations, and teachers often reinforce those fears by supporting these beliefs or not challenging them. In the same study, Msibi (2012) had participants who identified with same-sex sexual orientations that reported that peers had thrown stones at them, they were called discriminatory names and beaten by teachers. DePalma and Francis (2014) explored the discourse of teachers with regards to sexual diversity in four main categories; scientific, religious, legislative and policy driven. Physical discourses were found to be based on the reminiscence of it being classified as a psychiatric disorder in the DSM (Diagnostic and statistical manual for mental disorders) up until 1986 (DePalma & Francis; 2014). Religious discourses were found to be based on conceptions of psychotherapy to “cure the gay” and various religious beliefs that defined homosexuality as a sin (DePalma & Francis, 2014). The authors highlights the fact that education policies do not specifically express sexual diversity when inclusivity is mentioned (DePalma & Francis, 2014). Bhana (2014) explored the way that teachers in South African schools normalize heterosexuality and how this raises the question of moral education. Teachers were found to be uncomfortable (Francis, 2010) and ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of sexual diversity in and around schooling (Francis, 2017). According to Francis (2010; 2011) teachers are not specifically trained on issues of sexual diversity, and the focus remains on sexual education within a heterosexual context.

2.6 EXO- SYSTEMS

According to Hong et al (2011) the exo-system refers to the interaction between two or more settings, one of which the individual is not part of. Parents for example who do not receive the necessary support to deal with a child who experience same sex attractions, might have a negative impact on the individual.

2.6.1 SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

The Substance Abuse and Medical Health Services Administration in the United States of America (SAMHSA) (2014) is of the opinion that negative outcomes for LGBT youth can be lessened if parents engage with knowledgeable sources, professionals and support, as many parents want to help their LGBT child, but do not always know how to do this.

Goldfried and Goldfried (2001) pay attention to the experiences of parents whose children identify as gay or lesbian and they found that parents tended to have their own challenges in dealing with their child's sexuality. Firstly, parents often experience conflict between the love and acceptance of their child, and their own predispositions regarding same-sex sexualities. Godfried and Godfried secondly mention that parents may feel angry and resentful towards their child for emotional hurt experienced. Parents reportedly also show concern about what others in their social context might think when they find out about the child's same-sex sexual orientation. Feelings of mourning and loss are also often identified in parents whose children identify as gay or lesbian (Savin-Williams & Dubé, 1998). These authors outline the work of various studies suggesting that parents go through a grieving process related to that of the well-known Kubler-Ross grieving process, however Savin-Williams and Dubé (1998) also mention that not all parents go through these stages, and proposed that a new model needs to be developed in order to understand the emotional processes of parents of children with diverse sexual orientation.

During later studies Goldfried and Goldfried (2001) and Goodrich and Gillbride (2017) suggested that parents typically go through the following process when finding out about their child's same sex sexuality;

- Subliminal awareness: Suspicion based on behavior patterns through childhood even long before the coming out event.
- Impact: A crisis stage during the actual disclosure of the child's sexuality. This stage is often accompanied by shock, denial, blame, confusion, anger and guilt.
- Adjustment: Learning to deal with the crisis with various behaviours including secrecy and attempts to convince the child to change their sexuality.
- Resolution: Working through the shocks where parents often experience feelings of mourning the heterosexual child and accompanying aspects.
- Integration: Having worked through the mourning process and hopefully accepting their child's sexuality and offering support.

In addition Goldfried and Goldfried (2001) are of the opinion that as soon as youth come out about their sexuality, parents go in, meaning that as soon as parents find out about their child's sexual preferences, they often tend to become more reserved about talking about the child with fears of others asking questions and finding out about their child's sexuality. Therefore parents often have to go through a coming out process themselves (Goldfried and Goldfried. 2001).

Ryan (2009) is of the opinion that parents act negatively toward their child's sexuality as they are not sure how to support their child and they want to protect their children against discrimination and stigmatization from society. According to Ryan (2010), parents who were initially very rejecting towards their LGBT child, can modify their rejecting behavior and learn to support their LGBT child with the appropriate support from mental health practitioners.

2.6.2 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS

A number of international articles and books talk about school psychologists, which can be described in role, as similar to that of an educational psychologist in the South African context.

Bahr, Croteau and Brish (2000) aimed, in their study on addressing sexual orientation in training of school (educational) psychologists, to explore how school psychologists gain an understanding of sexual minorities via training in sexual orientation. Although an international study, it provides valuable information to the South African contextual

understanding of the said topic. A lack of focus on the needs of SMY in relation to other minority groups was identified in training programmes of school psychologists (Bahr et al. 2000), meaning that school psychologists are not trained on how to deal with the specific needs of SMY. As a student in education and psychology for the last 9 years, I can support this statement by the authors. Only recently on a Master's degree level have I received formal training on the needs and challenges of LGBT individuals. The first part of Bahr et al.'s (2000) arguments are based on the ethical principles of school psychologists and how these principals promote the inclusion of the rights and well-being of SMY in training programmes. The information given can be directly related to the rules of conduct for psychologists set out by the HPCSA (2011). The authors focus on professional relations and responsibilities, professional competence and professional practices. These three ethical principles provide a foundation for the support of the importance of training in the field of sexual orientation. Not only do these rules emphasize the respect and enhancement of human rights by school (educational) psychologists, but also the responsibility of school (educational) psychologists to engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes focusing on sexual orientation. The challenge in South Africa however is that there are very little CPD opportunities in the area of concern available. In response to this, Robertson and Full (2015) suggest alternative ways to access professional development opportunities. The authors suggest that professional development can take place through community collaboration, consulting with students support groups, gaining information through a university or higher education institute diversity group and contacting a local cultural advocacy group (Robertson and Full. 2015). Drawing these ideas back to a South African context, one can see that a large body of work has been done in developing various agencies, support groups and diversity groups in South Africa, such as the LGBTIQ+ conferencing that took place in October 2018. Various other organizations such as Out Well-being, I am gay support network and PFLAG South Africa have been developed to provide various forms of information and opportunities for networking and development within the field of LGBT.

2.6.3 POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

Kraak and Young (2001) outline the transformation that led to a more inclusive educational system in South Africa by stating that the schooling system during the apartheid era was designed to provide privileged support for white learners and marginalize learners from other races. In response the South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996 (SASA) prohibits such privileges and rectify inequalities based on all forms of discrimination. This act however does not mention sexual orientation, but has been superseded by the Constitution of South Africa, in article 9(3) (DOJ, 1996) that criminalizes discrimination based on sexual orientation. This prescribes that youth with diverse sexual orientations shall function optimally in a society where they can freely express their sexuality without being discriminated against.

The Curriculum and Assessment policy (CAPS) is another South African policy that provides for the protection of SMY (Department of Education. 2002). This policy states that educators should:

- Equip learners, irrespective of their socio- economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfillment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country.
- Social transformation: ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of our population.

CAPS is furthermore aligned with the constitution of South Africa as well as the SASA.

The South African Council for Education (SACE) is a professional body where all educators must register in order to teach in South Africa. Once again SACE principles are aligned with the South African constitution regarding sexual orientation and the fair treatment of these individuals. The SACE code of conduct set out clear guidelines to educators regarding their attitudes toward learners, and educators are expected to South African Council for Educators (2002. P 9):

- respect the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and in particular children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality;

- acknowledge the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realize his or her potentialities;
- strive to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of South Africa.

DePalma and Francis (2014) and Bhana (2014) share their opinion that South Africa is one of the most advanced countries in LGBT support. The authors mention the various ways in which South Africa supports sexual minorities. In 1996 South Africa prescribed the discrimination based on sexual orientation during employment, then barred hatred motivated by sexual orientation in 2000, legalized same sex couples' adoption, permitted marriage of same sex couples in 2006 and included protection of homosexuality in the constitution (Bhana, 2014; DePalma & Francis, 2014). However, DePalma and Francis (2014) are of the opinion that these supportive gestures are merely on paper and not implemented in reality in the South African context. The challenge, however, is that there are no educational policies that inform schools how to become safe spaces for LGBT learners (Francis & Msibi, 2011). This challenge posed by this is that once again, teachers are not trained in including and teaching on issues of homosexuality (Butler and Astbury, 2005). In response to this however, it needs to be taken in account that efforts are underway in considering the introduction of an anti homophobic bullying curriculum in a number of provinces in South Africa (Bhana, 2013; Butler, 2009; Msibi, 2012).

2.7 CHRONO SYSTEMS

Chrono systems refer to the change over time and the influence of these changes on the individual (Hong et. al. 2011).

2.7.1 PARENTING STYLES:

Furthermore, parents often come from pro-creation heterosexual backgrounds and raise children with these scripts as received from their parents and previous generations. Not only is this often the only way they know how to raise their children, but they might feel ashamed, unsure and under pressure from society to raise heterosexual children. During an interview I had with a parent whose child needed

support in disclosing his sexuality, the mother agreed to the client receiving support, however informed me that she is concerned that I, as a student educational psychologist, will encourage the client's same sex identity and that she does not want him to feel that it is "ok" to be gay. Ryan (2009) states that many parents feel unsure when they learn their child identifies with same-sex sexual orientation, and that they do not know how to act in the child's best interest. These parents often want to support their children, but at the same time do not want to 'encourage' their same-sex identity (Ryan. 2009). This poses a major challenge to educational psychologists as even though the goals and feelings of parents need to be respected, so does the needs and feelings of the client, in this case the child.

2.8 MACRO SYSTEMS

Hong et al (2011, p. 889) state that Macro systems are the "cultural blueprint that may determine the social structures and activities in the immediate micro systems level"

2.8.1 SOCIETAL HOMOPHOBIA, TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS

Policies set in place to protect youth who identify with diverse sexual orientations have been discussed in detail above and it has furthermore been mentioned that these policies are in many instances merely put on paper. One aspect that limits the true implementation of these policies is the deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and values that have been passed over from generation to generation.

Brown and Diale (2017) state that extreme violence and discrimination still occur against sexual minority groups. Msibi (2009) found that deviation from normative sexual behaviours for lesbian identities often result in correctional rape or punishment and even murder of individuals with same-sex sexual orientations in worst case scenarios. Msibi (2009) describes that these discriminatory actions are to maintain notions of hetero-masculinity. Kimmel (as cited in Msibi. 2009, p 50) states that: "violence is often the single most evident marker of manhood. It is a tool used by men to exert their authority and power over women and also over men." Msibi (2009) is of the opinion that extreme homophobia and increased exposure of LGBT individuals might be the basis of increased homophobic violence in South Africa. Vincent and

Howell (2014) support Msibi in his opinions by identifying three themes in their study. They found that their participants described homosexuality as unnatural, ungodly and un-African. These authors are of the opinion that homophobia (and the related violence) is built on the notions of these three aspects.

2.9 CHANGING ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS/ (WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS?)

2.9.1 WORKING WITH FAMILIES

Goldfried and Goldfried (2001) state that a clergy once said that homosexual individuals are “antifamily” but the authors are of the opinion that families are “anti-homosexual”. This statement has a tremendous impact on the role of educational psychologists when working with families, as the focus needs to shift away from the reality of diverse sexualities, and rather move to the “anti-homosexual” attitudes of the family members. Based on the work of Gorman-Murray (2008) one should ask the question; How can educational psychologists intervene to queering the family? He believes that it can be done by the family resisting heterosexual norms and beliefs and focusing more on gender being fluid and supporting differences (Gorman-Murray, 2008). The difficulty with heterosexual families is often a lack of understanding of other sexualities (Gorman-Murray, 2008). Pearson and Wilkinson (2013, p 376) make an interesting statement which gives way to new ways of thinking with regards to intervening with youth with diverse sexual orientations. They claim that “Such risks (lower levels of wellbeing and higher levels of substance abuse) are not inevitable results of same- sex attraction but stem from the interplay between the stress and social support these young people experience in their immediate contexts.” Based on this, one can conclude that a primary role of educational psychologists has shifted focus from the individual with same-sex sexual orientation to the social context in which the person functions.

LaSala (2000) mentioned that till the 1970’s homosexuality was seen as a mental illness that was caused by dysfunctional families. The author is of the opinion that even though homosexuality has been removed from the DSM-5 as a psychiatric disorder, the remanence of earlier views of homosexuality has spilt over in the family

and the acceptance of their child who identifies with a same-sex sexual orientation (LaSala, 2000). An outline for therapists working with families of sexual minority individuals is given by LaSala (2010) in that he suggests family therapy as a frame of reference for the therapist. He furthermore states that the therapist should firstly address the emotions experienced by the family and the sexual minority individual during the coming out process, thereafter parents must grieve and receive accurate information about homosexuality. LaSala and Frierson (2017) emphasize the importance of providing parents with accurate information about LGBT lifestyles in order to correct parents' related misconceptions. Thirdly LaSala (2000) mentions that therapists need to support people who identify with diverse sexual orientations to deal with the dissonant reactions of their parents. Finally, it is mentioned that families should be taught to maintain uplifting and non-discriminatory language (LaSala, 2000).

SAMHSA (2014) mentions that a paradigm shift in how support is rendered to LGBT youth needs to take place based on emergent literature suggesting that the families of LGBT individuals contribute significantly to their mental wellbeing. Mental health practitioners have dual roles according to SAMHSA (2014) in that they need to engage in psychoeducation as well as psychological support.

Mental health professionals need to empower families by providing them with accurate information on sexual orientation, referring families for necessary intervention with the family, counseling the families and by educating the families (SAMHSA, 2014). Savin-Williams and Dubé (1998) support the above statements by cautioning mental health professionals not to automatically accept that parents will follow the stages of grief or any set out process of acceptance. They suggest a more individual approach by focusing on the following (Savin- Williams & Dubé, 1998):

- Youth who identify as same-sex sexuality individuals often need time to deal with their oppressed sexuality, and parents similarly need time to accept their own new identity as a parent of a child with a non-normative sexuality.
- Parents should be provided with accurate and supportive educational information in order for them to “discard both their previous heterosexual hopes and their fears regarding perceived consequences of the child’s homosexuality” (Savin- Williams and Dubé, 1998, p 11)

- Thirdly, Savin-Williams and Dubé (1998) mention that mental health professionals should take the existing nature of the relationship between child and parent into regard. This will provide a hypothesis for therapists to build on to reach warm, accepting and supportive parent child relationships.
- Involving extended family members can be beneficial for the acceptance process according to Savin-Williams and Dubé (1998), as these family members can possibly provide a different perspective to parents. This is especially applicable to the South African context where family and family bonds are of great importance in various cultures (Matee, 2018).
- Providing a safe space for parents to engage in self-reflection and examination to determine their needs for the child-parent relationship is another way in which mental health professionals can play an integral role.

LaSala (2013) investigates the three waves of family research over time with relation to gay and lesbian individuals who provide implications for the changing roles of educational psychologists. The first wave was “the idea that gay or lesbian sexual orientation is a disease caused by family dysfunction” (LaSala, 2013, p267). The second wave mentioned by LaSala (2013) is that families were seen as obstacles for sexual minority individuals, the final wave is currently where families are viewed as a resource for individuals who identify with same-sex sexual orientations. Ryan (2009) mentions that mental health practitioners often see the family as a burden and an unsupported unit in the lives of LGBT individuals, however mentions that practitioners should assess the role that the family plays when working with LGBT individuals. Mental health practitioners can, with the use of family therapy assist the family in becoming resources in HIV prevention as well as buffers for the impact of stigmatization and discrimination (LaSala, 2013). Therefore, the role of educational psychologists has to change by focusing on making use of the family as resources for SMY.

Padilla et al. (2010) made recommendations for social workers for working with families and youth with same-sex sexual orientations which I think is useful for educational psychologists working within the South African context. According to Padilla et al. (2010) it is recommended that social workers (applicable to educational psychologists) need to pay attention to a broad range of factors when engaging with youth with diverse sexual orientations and their families. Mental health professions

need to furthermore be aware of the long- term risks of negative family relationships; and finally, it is recommended in the article that these professionals must have a good understanding of the legal framework in order to advocate and act in the best interest of youth with diverse sexual orientations (Padilla et al., 2010).

2.9.2 WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Harper and Singh (2017) suggest six ways in which counsellors (can also be applied to educational psychologists) can intervene to create safe schools for SMY.

The first direction for intervention is ‘employing intersectionality and inclusivity’ (Harper & Singh, 2017, p 405). Inclusivity is a term used within the education system of South Africa, with emphasis on inclusion of diverse abilities, backgrounds and identities (DBE, 2001). Harper and Singh (2017) define inclusivity as the consideration of the entire population, including minorities. South Africa however had a skewed focus on inclusive education that mainly paid attention to aspects of disabilities and learning difficulties and other barriers to learning such as diverse sexual orientations that have been perceived as non-normative, were neglected and received less attention within this field (Brown, 2017). Hay, Smith and Paulsen 2001 and Engelbrecht (2004) are of the opinion that educational psychologists play a significant role in broadening the inclusive lens to all variables that could cause barriers to learning which include responses to sexual minorities. Intersectionality refers to the idea that one individual has an intersectional cohort of identities, such as gender, race, class, religion etc. and at times one individual possesses a number of minority and often conflicting identities (Harper & Singh, 2017). Intersectionality in South Africa is an often neglected reality, for example an individual might form part of a minority group based on race and identify with a non-heteronormative sexuality. This means that educational psychologists will have to ensure that they are educated and equipped to educate learners, families, school staff and other community members in this regard (Harper & Singh, 2017).

Harper and Singh (2017) outline the second direction as assessment, research and programme evaluation. The emphasis in this direction is on the continued professional development of educational psychologists in order to understand the unique needs of SMY. The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) has set out guidelines

for continued professional development (CPD) of all health professions including the field of psychology, by providing a minimum amount of CPD points to be collected within a given timeframe (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2011). The availability of CPD training opportunities focusing on working with same-sex sexual orientations is limited and provides opportunities for health professionals to develop such training programmes. The Psychological Association of South Africa (PsySSA) released a statement in 2013 where they made it clear that it is expected of psychologists (within all fields) to be knowledgeable about same-sex sexual orientations, have awareness of the different contexts in which they work and have an affirmative approach when intervening (Victor, Nel, Lynch & Mbatha, 2014).

The third direction for intervention for therapists is to work on a systemic level (Harper & Singh, 2017), moving away from a medical, maladaptive view of sexual diversity to a wider, inclusive lens of intervention. This aspect has been discussed in detail in previous sections of this chapter. Consultation, collaboration and stakeholders are the next direction for intervention as mentioned by Harper and Singh (2017). The focus here is on the collaboration between stakeholders and professionals to provide for all needs of individuals who identify with diverse sexual orientations. The scope of practice for educational psychologists as set out by the Health Professions Council of South Africa sets out clear guidelines to the spaces and limitations of services of educational psychologists (HPCSA, 2017). These guidelines confine the intervention areas of Educational Psychologists, meaning that they need to collaborate and build networks with other professionals (e.g. social workers, South African Police Service, Department of Education, etc.) in order to provide fully for the needs of SMY. Harper and Singh (2017) suggest that counselors (educational psychologists) should have access to tools and resources when working with SMY. The reality is that educational psychologists are learning on the job about working with youth with diverse sexual orientations, and very little resources are available to cater specifically to this cohort. The lack of resources and tools creates a gap in the intervention process and perhaps provides an opportunity to health professionals to develop necessary resources and tools specifically for intervention with individuals who identify with same-sex sexual orientations. The final direction for intervention as mentioned by Harper and Singh (2017) is the importance of relationship building and queer and trans narratives. The importance of perceived support and acceptance of youth who identify with same-sex

sexual orientation for mental health has been discussed in detail in earlier parts of this chapter. Educational psychologists are often known as experts in building relationships and providing a safe space for youth with same-sex sexual orientations to share their narratives. Micro therapy skills, active listening, warmth, empathy, positive regard, etc. are all valuable tools that educational psychologists can make use of to create a safe, supportive relationship with youth with same-sex sexual orientations.

2.9.3 WORKING WITH THE INDIVIDUAL

Morrow and Messinger (2006) make mention of conversion therapy, where LGBT youth would engage in therapy with the primary goal to convert them to heterosexual individuals. From this it is clear that this kind of therapy in itself is a form of sustaining and providing privileged support for heterosexuality. It continues to impose discrimination and victimization. Matee (2018) recently found that parents in Johannesburg, South Africa would still opt for such practices through therapy, religious institutions and/or traditional entities as a first option. This is a critical concern for the wellbeing of young people who identify with same-sex sexual orientations and are still under the care of parents.

The following roles of educational psychologists can be summarized based on the above information and used as conclusion for this section:

- Educational psychologists should communicate the willingness to work with and support youth with same-sex sexual orientations in order to normalize sexual diversity in schools and communities (Victor & Nel, 2016).
- Engelbrecht (2004) states that educational psychologists can become resource individuals for working collaboratively with other professionals because of their specialized training in mental wellbeing.
- Educational psychologists should explore and make available resources to create awareness and provide support for youth with same-sex sexual orientations (DePaul, Walsh & Dam. 2009).
- The promotion and use of acceptable, non- discriminatory language towards youth with same-sex sexual orientation is another important role of educational

psychologists. Language acts as a powerful tool that can either further victimize and discriminate against or support and normalize youth with diverse sexual orientations (Brown & Diale. 2017; Butler, et. al. 2003; Francis. 2010; Msibi. 2012;)

- The development and implementation of policies to protect youth with diverse sexual orientations and promote acceptance and non-discriminatory practices is another important role of educational psychologist within the South African context (Harper & Sing, 2013).

2.10 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 provided an in- depth discussion of the various systematic influences on the individual who identifies as a sexual minority. In this chapter, the focus was on the mental health implications of discriminations, homophobia, homophobic bullying, etc. An overview of the eco systemic approach was provided in detail and various aspects within each sub system were discussed. Thereafter the changing role of the educational psychologist based on these influences were discussed. The information discussed in Chapter 2 provide a basis to answer the research question in that it provides the wide area of focus with regards to the needs of SMY based on the influences of the various systems. Chapter 2 therefore provides a starting point in answering the research question: *How do educational psychologists respond to the needs of youth with same-sex identities within the whole school environment?*

4. CHAPTER 3: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

3.1. INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 2 focused on reviewing literature related to this study. Chapter 3 presents the analysis of data. Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data gathered through semi structured interviews. Transcriptions of the interviews with the participants were analysed with the focus on finding common and shared experiences and issues. The recurrent and shared experiences together form various themes. The themes were guided by the main research question, as well as the two secondary questions.

The main research question is:

- How do educational psychologists respond to the needs of youth with same-sex identities within the whole school environment?

Secondary research questions:

- How do educational psychologists respond to the needs of youth with same-sex identities in regulated hegemonic heteronormative school environments?
- What are the training and developmental needs of educational psychologists in responding to the needs of youth with same- sex sexualities?

Below are four main themes that emerged during the data analysis process:

- Perceptions of gender;
- The influence of personal background and context of educational psychologists on work with same- sex minority individuals;
- Systemic approach to intervention;
- Training received during formal education of educational psychologists.

A total number of five participants were interviewed, all of which are registered educational psychologists, either in private practice, schools or employed in the inclusive support services units of the Gauteng Department of Education. Three of the five participants are currently in private practice, with one of these participants also working at an independent school in Johannesburg. The other participant works at a

school for learners with intellectual disabilities and the other works in the Gauteng Department of Education.

Below is a table with information about the participants. The table below aims to provide more information on the research participants to create a better understanding of participants when mentioning the interviews in the theme discussions. Pseudonyms will be used in order to maintain the ethical considerations of data collection.

	Participants pseudonym	Venue	Date
1	Elna	Bedfordview	2018. 03. 02
2	Francois	Bedfordview	2018. 03. 06
3	Zaheera	Rosebank	2018. 06. 25
4	Lucinda	Alberton	2018. 07. 02
5	Amanda	Bedfordview	2018. 07. 30

Below follows a discussion of the various themes identified during the interviews.

3.2. PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER

Society often constructs gender, based on certain roles and expectations which in its turn influence the way professionals, families and schools perceive gender and sexuality (Seidman, Fischer & Meeks. 2011). It is Gorman-Murray (2008) who states that families need to resist heterosexual norms and beliefs and focus more on gender being fluid and supporting differences. Relating this statement back to South Africa, the democratic transformation that South Africa underwent since 1994 is well known around the globe, with the main focus on post- apartheid development based on racial equality, while other minority factors such as same-sex sexualities and gender inequalities have received less exposure (Victor, Nel, Lynch & Mbatha, 2014). Therefore, the heterosexual beliefs and masculinities prescribed to gender by society have continued. With the family as the system directly influencing the child, one can conclude that the believes of the family have tremendous implications on the child's perception of gender, and conflict between the family's perception of gender and that

of the child can lead to a decrease in well-being of the child at hand (Pearson & Wilkinson, 2013). The difficulty with heterosexual families is often a lack of understanding of other sexualities (Gorman-Murray, 2008). Therefore, an important role of educational psychologists is to intervene and help families to align with diversity that is expressed in the constitution of South Africa. However, the responsibility of the educational psychologist in raising awareness, advocating and educating does not stop at the family however, but continues through the whole social ecology in which and individual identifying as same-sex attractive, navigates (Engelbrecht, 2004). The social ecology mentioned above includes educator responses, which often have a negative emotional impact for learners who are gender fluid (Francis, 2010; 2011). Teachers often find it challenging to teach about sexual identity due to the conflict thereof with their own beliefs and values, as well as the lack of understanding of gender and sexuality education. Educational psychologists play an important role in training educators on sexuality and the non-discriminatory teaching thereof.

The participant's responses bring me to the influence of the next system, society in general. The participants in this study view gender as fluid (not fixed and set out as male and female only) and constructed by society. They furthermore also distinguish between biological sex and societal perception of gender and various norms and roles prescribed to gender. This dual conceptualization of gender often brings with it conflict between the individual's gender identification and society's gender expectations and formation. Having this understanding of gender provides for a twofold description of gender in that educational psychologists should understand that gender roles are assigned by society.

Francois is an educational psychologist in private practice, who identifies as a gay male. He is currently completing his doctoral degree, with the focus on gender fluidity. He provided a very detailed description of gender which is academically based on his current research:

Gender is a very complicated multidimensional concept. Our current understanding has really moved from being binary; boy, girl; and to much more complicated ideas. There are dimensions to gender, there is actually (5) five biological human sexes. I suppose the very first one that we are looking at, is the biological sex. Being male genitals, females' genitals, we

know that that is not the only spectrum that there is. The second dimension of gender has a lot to do with sexual orientation, the third gender has to do with expression of the gender role. Then the fourth one is the gender identity of the individual (Francois, 2018).

Francois' response has a detailed understanding of the various dimensions of gender. Francois' understanding of gender breaks down the limits instated by the traditional gender binaries of being either male or female. The question, however, arises what this means for clients who experience challenges due to the gender conflicts experienced with society. Having a gender fluid perspective could provide a therapeutic attitude of acceptance of all expressions of gender. This is hopeful to clients who do not conform to the traditional constructs of the heteronormative gender frames.

As mentioned above, society prescribes a number of roles and expectations to gender, including expectations of sexual attractions which lead one to belief that gender is socially constructed, that being; men should be attracted to women and women be attracted to men. This link between gender and expected sexuality provides the reason why the perception of gender is important in this study, it forms the basis of discriminatory practices towards sexual minority groups. Mental health practitioners who have a perspective that gender is not fixed, can possibly break the binary beliefs added to gender by society.

Francois' response portrays his view on gender as being fluid and influenced by society. Elna portrayed a similar view on gender, however her view was based on how individuals perceived themselves:

I think gender is quite fluid and goes with what the person identifies themselves with. And who are they attracted to and who they feel comfortable with. Society has a very big role to play in terms of the messages we give in terms of how do I identify myself in terms of my sexuality and where it might be heading (Elna, 2018).

In addition, Zaheera mentioned that:

I think society is very stuck in terms of the norms of a boy and a girl. So, boys are blue girls are pink. You know boys play outside, soccer. Girls play

with dolls. I think society has a very stereotypical and set way of looking at gender. And we know that gender is evolving these days. And it doesn't necessarily mean that there is something wrong if a girl plays with boy toys that are labelled boys. Or vice versa (Zaheera, 2018).

Amanda also mentioned the conflict between the individual's perceived gender and the gender that society notices by stating that:

I think gender is, your sex that you feel and society feels that you are a male or a female.

Amanda's response refers to the notion that sex is the biological aspect of identifying to a certain group, male or female, whereas gender is more socially constructed by the prescribed roles and expectation as perceived by society.

Elna, Zaheera's and Amanda's descriptions of influence of society on gender identification can be supported by Malpas' (2011) belief that society perceives gender to be rigid, binary and fixed, with a number of roles and expectations added to specific genders. Zaheera and Amanda's understanding of gender reinstates that gender is socially constructed. Families, schools, cultures, etc. determine the gendered self (Seidman et al., 2016). Social roles are determined based on these gendered selves meaning that sexuality is also gendered. The implications of sexuality being gendered is that due to the binary view of society sexuality remains to be seen as heterosexual in that males should be attracted to females and vice versa. These perceptions of society on gender and sexuality can lead to what Kumashiro (2000) defines as othering, where all groups that are in minority are depicted as abnormal and are subsequently treated differently, often in an oppressive way. McCabe et al. (2013) mention that individuals with diverse sexual orientations who experience homophobic discrimination have higher rates of mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety and suicidality.

Lucinda's definition of gender differs from the other participants in that she perceives gender to be biologically, scientifically determined:

For me gender would be what your biological sexual orientation and make up would be. Biological gender would be the scientific classification, so male

having male gender organs and female being according to scientific orientation of gender (Lucinda, 2018).

There is a risk to the biological construct of gender determined by the genitalia of an individual. Cases where external genitalia do not clearly represent a male or female, which is called intersexed genitalia (Seidman et al., 2016), disqualify Lucinda's definition of gender. With this perception of gender, Lucinda is at risk of producing and perpetuating notions of othering, leading to further discrimination and stigmatization.

The participant continues by contributing to the idea that conflict can exist between biological gender, gender roles and gender identification:

There often can be a conflict, this is my biological gender make up, this is what my setting, my surroundings, my culture says, but I am feeling in conflict with that.

The participants' perceptions and understandings of gender are that gender can be a conflictual concept, in that the individual's perception of own gender might conflict with societal perception of gender. Gender is often defined by the biological traits such as a vagina (female) and a penis (male), however there is need for a more sophisticated understanding of gender, where the biological characteristics of gender merely form a small part of gender identification (Francis. 2014). The above descriptions of gender aim to compile such a sophisticated definition, as participants include the individual's own perceived gender.

3.3. THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS ON WORK WITH SAME SEX MINORITY INDIVIDUALS:

The review of literature indicated that SMY individuals are at greater risk for negative general and mental health outcomes due to internalizing stigma, discrimination and homophobia (Burton et al., (2014). Educational psychologists are perceived to play a supportive, accepting role when working with individuals who experience such dissonance. Educational psychologists are also often expected to advocate for the wellbeing of individuals such as those who identify as sexual minority individuals. The impact of discrimination, homophobia and oppression often leads to depression in youth who express as same sex attracted which, if not attended to, can escalate to

suicidality, risky behaviour and school absenteeism (Victor, et al., 2016). These mental health implications make it clear that the probability of educational psychologists having to work with sexual minority youth are high. Educational psychologists have been known to work within the office, commonly with the individual in isolation, looking at diagnosing and problem searching within the individual (Engelbrecht. 2004). The focus of therapeutic interventions of educational psychologists should move from within the therapy room to outside, through advocacy and raising awareness. I support the view of Victor et al (2016) who posit that an important role of educational psychologists are to advocate sexual fluidity, address internalised homophobia, engage in context appropriate language and show respect for same- sex sexuality relationships.

Professionals such as teachers, who are expected to portray a supportive role, are often governed by their own contexts, beliefs, norms and values (Msibi, 2012). These findings are mostly related to educators, and a gap in literature with regards to the impact of these contextual factors on the work of educational psychologists has been overlooked, hence the focus of the interview questions. Lucinda comes from an Afrikaans, Christian family and currently operates from her private practice. She made the following statements:

It is not easy, if you focus on your own beliefs and religion and culture and everything. There is a conflict, but I think the most important thing that I remind myself of is that I am working on the best interest of the client and I am not there to judge or I am not there to put my beliefs and my personal ideas and values onto them, but to assist them in exploring and accepting themselves for who they are, even though it might not be directly in line with my own. Which is not easy, but I think that is the ultimate goal. It is also to know that you don't have to let go of your own beliefs and your own values and your own things, but to make sure that you don't imprint that on them. (Lucinda, 2018).

Educational psychologists are taught very early in their study careers that personal values, beliefs and norms should not interfere with the therapeutic relationship. The importance of acting in the best interest of the client is furthermore emphasised during training. Being an individual functioning in their own various systems, it cannot be

expected of educational psychologists to function without a personal “frame of reference”, however these professionals need to be cautious as to how these influences are expressed during therapy. Evans (2010) mentions that critical self-awareness of personal beliefs and the impact it has on the therapeutic relationship is imperative. Lucinda’s response raises concern about unconscious discrimination, combined with the lack of training (which will be discussed in detail later) on aspects related to sexual minority youth. Educational psychologists run the risk of engaging in discriminatory behaviour towards sexual minority youth.

When I asked Amanda about the impact of her personal beliefs and values her response was more concerning, she is an Afrikaans educational psychologist, coming from a Christian background. She currently works at the district office of the Department of Education. She mentioned that:

I struggled with it (working with a client who identifies as same sex attracted) because I feel in a sense as an educational psychologist, there needs to be empathy and there needs to be putting yourself in the person’s shoes. I was unable to have that empathy part because I am not like that and sometimes it is difficult to not judge as my religion plays an important role in my life (Amanda, 2018).

This response of Amanda emphasizes the difficulty that she experiences with excluding her values and beliefs from the therapeutic relationship. Not only does she find it difficult to empathize with the client, but she also seems to find it difficult to show acceptance of the client. Her understanding of empathy furthermore seems to be inaccurate as even though therapist and client are “different”, one can still act in an empathical manner towards to client (Egan. 2010). Empathy runs much deeper than merely being the same as the client, but can rather be perceived as a value or a philosophy that form part of the being, meaning that empathy is not necessarily a learnt skill of a therapist, but rather a way of living (Egan. 2010). The lack of empathy in the therapeutic relationship is detrimental, as empathy creates a sense of safety and trust in clients (MacFarlane, Anderson & McClintock, 2017).

The client in the scenario mentioned by Amanda had the need to come out to his parents after an incident at the school (not specified), the client already seemed to be

scared to come out to his parents, especially his father. The lack of empathy in this case will add to the feelings of being unsafe, experienced by the client. Macfarlane et al. (2017) found that the client contributes to the empathy process by supplying vulnerable “material” that in turn requires the empathetic response of the therapist. A conclusion that can derive from this finding is that client who does not receive an empathetic response from the therapist might feel exposed, judged and vulnerable in return.

Amanda’s response places emphasis on her religion and the importance thereof as well as the difficulty she experiences to put her religion aside when working with sexual minority youth. Critical self- awareness is of essence when working as an educational psychologist (Egan. 2010). Amanda will have to pay attention and understand the influence of her personal religious beliefs on working with sexual minority youth. Evans (2010) is of the opinion that religion does not shape attitude, but rather build prejudice toward groups who are not aligned with the set out standards. This raises great concern, not only for learners who identify as same sex attractive, but all learners who are “not like” Amanda. Amanda’s mentioning of the difficulty in engaging in non-judgmental behaviour towards the client based on her religious beliefs, makes it clear that she perceives her religion to condemn homosexuality.

Amanda and Lucinda show self- awareness in their above responses on their possible homophobic nature and how it might influence their work with clients who identify as same- sex attraction. Therapists’ self- awareness is vital to the therapeutic relationship and the therapist can minimize the negative effects of conscious and unconscious discrimination within the therapeutic relationship (Egan 2010; Evans, 2010; Macfarlane et al., 2017). Amanda’s and Lucinda’s experiences also carry a number of implications for future training and development of educational psychologists, which will be discussed later.

When asked about her levels of comfort in working with sexual minority individuals, Elna responded with the following:

I am very comfortable and it comes from my upbringing. I grew up, and that was now remember, many, many years ago when many of these things you now discussed was referred to and very much frowned upon. But I grew up in an environment with a mother who had friends who were homosexual and

they would come to our house. In primary school I had a friend, a female girl friend who we all knew in school was a little bit different in terms of how she acted. Later on, it did come out that she was attracted to girls. And I had a primary school teacher, male teacher who was in a relationship with another man who was the uncle of my best friend in primary school (Elna, 2018).

Elna's response above shows that she was (and still is) able to, despite general beliefs and attitudes, in a time of great oppression of and inequality of minority groups, accept individuals who identified with the minority groups. She furthermore had interaction with homosexual individuals throughout her personal life. Both Elna and Lucinda mentioned that they have sexual minority individuals in their personal, social circle, which can lead one to conclude that individuals who have had exposure to people with same- sex sexualities are more comfortable to work with sexual minority individuals (Alderson. 2004). One can also conclude that these participants have unsilenced sexual minority individuals by engaging with them on a social level allowing the acceptance and non- discriminatory attitude to be easier and more comfortable to maintain. These participants are able to live and breathe acceptance not only on a professional level but also on a personal level, allowing for a supportive attitude to be deeply rooted, which also relates to the earlier discussion around the development of empathy within the therapeutic relationship.

Four of the participants portray a willingness and openness to working with individuals who identify as same sex attracted, which is hopeful in terms of the emotional support for these individuals. These findings suggest that non- heterosexual school youth who require the support of educational psychologists will be able to engage in positive therapeutic relationships. It can also be concluded from these findings that the majority of educational psychologists respond with an attitude of acceptance and support to the needs of non-heterosexual school youth. Further suggestions from the findings include that even though some educational psychologists might have difficulty with the influence of their own beliefs and values, through increased self- awareness, supervision and adequate training they can still make a positive contribution to the emotional wellbeing of sexual minority school youth.

3.4. SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO INTERVENTION:

Engelbrecht (2004) mentioned that educational psychologists move away from a client-deficit focus towards an ecological and systems paradigm, focusing on a wider scope of intervention and practice. This statement suggests that intervention cross the borders of the therapy room, and flow into the various systems involved in the youth's context. Participants in this study all mentioned that they work on a systemic approach when working with sexual minority individuals. Their focus of intervention is based on the eco systemic theory developed by Bronfenbrenner. Donald et al.(2010) explains that the complex human agency is best understood through a four-nested system known as micro, meso, macro and chronosystem. The model in the context of this study purports that same-sex identity youth agency and learning should be understood through a joint function of environmental interaction (Sontag. 1996).

The participants in this study found it important to use what the client brings, especially in terms of the language used to describe sexual minority individuals. This means that the focus of their intervention is on the clients' needs and goals. The terminology of the client was also taken into regard and the participants made use of the terminology used by the client. Educational psychologists run the risk of using language of a derogative nature and causing further oppression and discrimination. When asked about the preferred terminology, the majority of the participants mentioned that they see the client as the expert in their own context, and value the language chosen by the client. Language acts as a powerful tool that can either further victimize and discriminate against sexual minority youth or support and normalize sexual minority youth (Brown & Diale, 2017; Butler et al., 2003; Francis, 2010; Msibi. 2012).

I asked Lucinda about her experience with clients who identify as same- sex attracted, and she responded by stating that she worked with a client who identified as same-sex sexual attraction. This client had suicidal ideation as a result of his family's disapproval of his sexuality. Homosexual dissonance in communities has led to various forms of aggression by ordinary community members and significant others such as teachers, peers and close relatives (Francis & Reygan, 2015). Such experiences subsequently impact the individual's development which often leads to self-hate and other fatal consequences such as suicide.

Lucinda stated that she worked with the family by:

Guiding the parents and helping them to understand, also referred them for their own therapy to a clinical psychologist. Kind of educating the parents on what the results could be if they didn't (accept his sexuality) and just helping them explore their own emotions (Lucinda, 2018).

From Lucinda's response, I notice that providing support and guidance to parents are important, not only during the coming out process, but also after this. Coming out refers to the process in which LGBTI individuals disclose their sexuality to parents, peers or other significant individuals (Goodrich & Gillbride, 2017). These authors mention that the coming out process is significant to LGBTI individuals as findings suggest that individuals who delay or who do not come out, often experience higher levels of depression, substance abuse and suicidal behaviours (Goodrich & Gillbride, 2017). Ryan (2009) is of the opinion that parents act negatively toward their child's sexuality because they are not sure how to support their child and they want to protect their children against discrimination and stigmatization from society. According to Ryan (2010), parents who were initially very rejecting towards their LGBTI child, could modify their rejecting behaviour and learn to support their LGBT child with the appropriate support from mental health practitioners. This brings me to the next response of the participants; psychoeducation was mentioned by most of the participants, and was deemed an important part of the intervention process. Lucinda's response was more focused on educating the parents of the possible implications should they not accept their child's sexuality:

"Kind of educating the parents on what the results could be if they didn't (accept his sexuality) and just helping them explore their own emotions."

The client mentioned in Lucinda's case had showed signs of suicidality, which has been reflected in literature as an increased concern with individuals who identify as same sex attracted due to discrimination, rejection and violence (Bostwick et al., 2014; Goodrich & Gillbride, 2017; Padilla et al. 2010; Ryan, 2010; Williams & Chapman, 2011). Lucinda saw her role in the psychoeducational process to inform the parents about these risks.

Francois' response to the role psychoeducation was focused more on clarifying and discrediting myths surrounding sexual minority individuals. Individuals' beliefs are

often influenced by homosexual tendencies and discriminatory beliefs, which need to be clarified through psychoeducation (SAMHSA, 2014).

As time goes along, I think psychoeducation in the process is critical, because there are so many perceptions and myths as to what it would mean to explore or to identify as lesbian or gay. For example, it is a sin, and it is sick, and it means whatever. I think you have to address that, and it often takes psychoeducation. When you can work with that, we can move more towards really exploring and creating a stronger support network.

Francois' response speaks to the erroneous constructions of non-heterosexuality, where education about the other, and normalizing the other is highlighted (Kumashiro. 2000). "Othering" refers to individuals who are "othered" due to their non-normative orientations (Kumashiro. 2002). Education about the ostracised, silenced and made to be invisible minority group forms an integral part of this anti-oppressive approach. Education focusing on providing comprehensive information about minority groups are believed to change the experiences of minority groups according to Kumashiro (2002). Francois' response relates to this aspect of anti-oppressive education in that he believes that educational psychologists should engage in psychoeducation focusing on providing comprehensive knowledge of individuals who identify as same-sex attractive.

Zaheera's perceived the importance of psychoeducation to provide information to the parents with regards to sexual minority youth and to answer a number of questions that the parents of her client had:

I think then after that my session was more structured on information giving. The parents had lots of questions. What does it mean now? How are we going to do this? They also wanted to consult with their religious leaders. And I basically had to do a lot of information sharing (Zaheera, 2018).

Parents often lack the necessary knowledge and truths about sexual minority youth, which can increase levels of rejection, but also levels of anxiety in parents with relation to their religious beliefs. Through psychoeducation, the therapist can possibly lower the levels of uncertainties faced by the parents. Parents often experience conflict

between the love and acceptance of their child, and their own predispositions regarding same sex sexualities. Godfried and Godfried (2001) mentioned that parents may feel angry and resentful to their child for emotional hurt experienced. Parents reportedly also show concern about what others in their social context might think when they find out about the child's same-sex sexual orientation. Although Zaheera's response focused on providing information, I believe that an important role which was perhaps overlooked by Zaheera, is that the parents require emotional support based on the above findings of Godfried and Godfried.

Francois and Elna mentioned that parents go through a grieving process when they find out that their child is a sexual minority individual. These parents grieve future dreams and aspirations such as marriage, grandchildren, etc. Feelings of mourning and loss are also often identified in parents whose children identify as gay or lesbian (Savin-Williams & Dubé, 1998). Psychoeducation once again plays an important role in this regard as parents need to be educated about the laws on marriage and adoption of same sex attracted couples. The role of educational psychologists is therefore to support parents through this process and educating them on the existing possibilities.

The participant's responses raised a concern with me in that even though they mentioned working on a systemic approach, they seemed to end the intervention at the family level. School level intervention was only mentioned by Zaheera, where they had advocacy campaigns at her school of employment. Amanda's response: "*what I need to do is to advocate it to more parents and bigger systems*", reflects that she is aware that advocacy is needed on the topic at hand, however she found other forms of intervention such as individual therapy, facilitation of coming out and family therapy more important.

There seems to be a limit in the systemic intervention of educational psychologists in private practice. With the lack of interventions at school, change cannot occur in other systems such as political systems and governing systems. Based on these findings, participants remain caught up in the individualistic approach to intervention as mentioned by Engelbrecht. (2004). The concern with the limited intervention, focusing mainly on the individual, is that educational psychologists might not reach the level of policy development and political influences (Engelbrecht, 2004). The inclusive nature of Education in South Africa provides a stage for educational psychologists to broaden

their interventions to various systems of school youth. Interventions of educational psychologists should not be focused on “damage control”, as in the case mentioned by Zaheera, but should rather be preventative of nature (Engelbrecht, 2004).

The participants in this study mentioned that the national curriculum includes limited information on same sex attraction, and same sex relationships. Literature supports this. Francis (2012) explored the invisibility of homosexuality in the curriculum, he also found that teachers who in fact do teach about homosexuality, expressed their own values of forced heterosexuality. The limited intervention on the school level raises concern. Educators need to be educated on homosexuality, which once again leads to emphasis on the important role that psychoeducation play.

The limited systemic intervention as concluded can be a direct result of the lack of training in formal education programmes for educational psychologists. Therefore, the next point will focus on the participants’ responses with regards to training received, or the lack thereof.

3.5. TRAINING RECEIVED DURING FORMAL EDUCATION OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

The training received by participants in this study did not provide them with knowledge on how to respond to the specific needs of individuals with diverse sexual orientations. Elna mentioned that as a lecturer at honours and master’s level for educational psychologists, she did not focus specifically on sexual minorities, but rather:

What we used to do was during the orientation week, one whole day would be spent on otherness. Who is your other? Who do you discriminate against? So, students had to bring symbols or photos of who according to them would be their other (Elna, 2018).

Elna’s response is concerning as literature pointed that there are specific sexuality development theories that can support educational psychologists in dealing with sexual minority youth (Walker & Prince, 2010). However, Elna’s above response relates directly to what Kumashiro (2002) meant when he defined anti-oppressive education, as mentioned earlier.

Francois' response raises a similar concern in that training is focused on allowing students to develop a general inclusive thinking:

"I think in training we are exposed to thinking inclusively."

People who identify as same sex attraction experience increased levels of discrimination and bullying due to their non-normative orientation (Msibi, 2012), therefore educational psychologists need to be aware of the specific mental health needs of these individuals as effects of homophobic reactions of society.

The views of the above participants are of concern in that educational psychologists should not only be able to apply basic therapeutic skills, but should also be able to work in societies compiled of individuals with diverse needs and values, including LGBT individuals. Training institutions who aim for their students to be effective educational psychologists working with the LGBT community, should include specific issues related to the needs of the said population (Schmidt, Glass & Wooten. 2011). The focus of diversity in the South African context has been primarily on race and individuals with disabilities, which once again has led to the invisibility of the needs of LGBT individuals. The consequences of ignoring these needs lead to a lack of knowledge of educational psychologists in working with LGBT individuals, which leads to the LGBT community not receiving effective therapeutic services (Schmidt. et. al, 2011).

The rest of the participants' responses were similar that those of Francois and Elna in that no or very little training, focusing on sexual minority individuals, was received. The responses raise great concern as literature revealed that participants as young as twelve years of age accept and disclose their sexuality, which means that the probability of these individuals falling victim to bullying and homophobia is high (Francis, 2012). Based on this, it is inevitable that educational psychologists will be required to work with cases where sexual minority individuals are involved. Educational psychologist who lack training focusing on the specific needs and experiences of sexual minority individuals, might act in discriminatory ways without being aware thereof. This is especially concerning taking in account the mentioned influence of the participants' personal beliefs and values.

Elna mentioned that:

It could easily make them feel uncomfortable and they might not know how to deal with it. Uhm, specifically if in their upbringing were perhaps very religious, rigid categorized classified, boxed. I think in such a circumstance it would make it difficult for the psychologist. And specifically, in their training was not addressed and sensitively handled (Elna, 2018).

This response of Elna raises the concern that educational psychologists might lack the confidence to work with sexual minority individuals, but also to work with other professionals who deal with LGBT individuals including educators. The lack of confidence to address teachers who are homophobic, may lead to the discriminatory attitudes to continue and increase. The lack of education and training focusing on the mental health needs of sexual minority youth may explain the low levels of comfortability of educational psychologists to work with sexual minority youth. Not only does it influence the comfortability levels of educational psychologists, the silencing of issues pertaining to sexual diversity in the training of educational psychologists can lead to increased levels of continuous negative attitudes, prejudice and discrimination (Alderson, Ozreck & McEwen, 2009).

3.6. CONCLUSION:

This chapter focused on the responses of educational psychologists to the needs of sexual minority youth. Participants included registered educational psychologist, both in private practice and in the education sector. The study was guided by three specific questions:

Primary research question:

- How do educational psychologists respond to the needs of youth with same-sex sexual orientations within the school environment?

Secondary research questions:

- How do educational psychologists perceive same-sex identities?

- What are the training and developmental needs of educational psychologists in responding to the needs of youth with same- sex sexualities?

The responses of the participants pose a number of findings. Firstly participants have a multi-dimensional perception of gender, which includes the individuals' gender identification and society's gender description and goals. Society's attributions to gender are often governed by the deep- seated beliefs of gender roles, masculinities and gender inequalities.

The majority of participants have a willingness and comfort to work with sexual minority individuals, however the minority are still led by their deep- seated institutional and socially constructed heterosexual preferences. The danger in this is that the influence of these rigid beliefs and norms might lead to the lack of empathy, unconscious discrimination and homophobic attitudes.

Findings in this study furthermore reflect that even though educational psychologists understand that their work should be of a systemic nature, they do not engage in systemic work past the family. The lack of intervention on larger systems such as schooling, community level, etc. can lead to the lack of education of these systems, leading to continuous and increased levels of discrimination.

Chapter 4 will focus on the journey of conducting a study that raised a number of concerns for educational psychologists' work with sexual minority youth. The next chapter includes a summary of the findings as well as recommendations and limitations of the study.

Throughout the findings of this study it was evident that educational psychologist lacked formal training focusing on the needs of sexual minority populations, which had a limiting effect on the effectiveness of the work of educational psychologists with sexual minority youth. The lack of formal training furthermore can lead to the unconscious discrimination of educational psychologists toward sexual minority individuals.

5. CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND LIMITATIONS:

4.1. INTRODUCTION:

This chapter focus on the journey I have taken with this study. The findings of the study are summarized in the conclusion based on the research questions. The limitations of this study will be the second focus of this chapter followed by the study's strengths and contributions. The recommendations for future research will be discussed before a reflection of this study will form the conclusion of this chapter.

4.2. SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS;

The aim of this research was to explore educational psychologists' responses to the needs of youth who identify with same-sex sexual orientation. My hope for this study was for educational psychologists' understanding of the needs and well-being of same-sex sexual orientation youth to be explored. I furthermore hoped that this study could provide a description of how educational psychologists responded to the needs of same-sex sexuality youth within the school system. Finally, I believed that this study would provide insight on the training and development needs of educational psychologists in order to adequately respond to the needs of same-sex sexuality school youth.

The study brought forth that the biggest concern is that even though the participants showed a general willingness and comfort to work with sexual minority individuals, the minority are still led by their deep-seated institutional and socially constructed heterosexual preferences. The concern is that the inability to undo this could lead to responses that are framed through heteronormativity and in so doing perpetuate the status quo in the ecological frame.

Another core finding from this study is that even though educational psychologist understand that their work should be of a systemic nature, their engagements with schools are limited and often the intervention stops at the family. Many of the participants seemed to intervene with the individual and with the family, but did not engage with the school. One of the participants engaged in advocacy work within the school and another and another assisted the school with adapting their policies, however no long term and sustainable interventions were mentioned.

Lastly, a finding in this study was that educational psychologists lacked formal training focusing on the needs of sexual minority populations, which had a limiting effect on the effectiveness of the work of educational psychologists with sexual minority youth. Only one participant mentioned that she received a once-off lecture focusing on sexual minorities, in her finals year of formal training. All the other participants mentioned that the focus of their training was on minority groups (others) in general with no focus on the specific needs of sexual minority youth.

4.2.1 HOW DO EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH SAME-SEX IDENTITIES IN REGULATED HEGEMONIC HETERONORMATIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS?

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study revealed that youth who identify with same-sex sexual orientations experienced challenges in a variety of ecological systems in which they functioned. This is regardless of the protective nature of the constitution of South Africa. Although the focus of this study was on educational psychologists' responses to same-sex sexuality school youth, Chapter 2 focused on challenges experienced in various systems of the same-sex sexuality youth, based on the bio-ecological systems perspective. The reason for this is that these individuals experience challenges within all these systems and educational psychologists should respond to the multi-system needs.

Literature highlighted that same-sex sexuality attracted individuals were experiencing continuous marginalization, oppression, discrimination and victimization within various systems of functioning. These unjust reactions toward same-sex attracted sexualities lead to various mental health challenges including depression and suicidality. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 included both international literature as well as a wide range of local literature focusing on the needs of same-sex attractive sexualities. From this it is undeniable that educational psychologists will be confronted with working with individuals who identify with same-sex sexual orientations. The literature revealed that educational psychologists should be intervening on all ecological systems in which the individual function, including within the family, schooling, policies and community engagement.

Reverting back to my study, the following results were brought forward:

- Although the majority of the participants showed a willingness to work with sexual minority youth, they were still governed by conservative socially constructed, heterosexual norms.
- Empathy, an integral aspect to effective therapeutic intervention, was found to be perceived as a challenge by a participant when working with youth with diverse sexual orientations.
- Participants' responses were also found to be influenced by their religious beliefs and values.
- It is perceived that gender is not stagnate, in terms of the male or female binary, but rather fluid and defined by the individual. However, the influence of gender roles assigned by society often conflict with the gender perception of the individual.
- The majority of educational psychologist respond to the needs of same-sex attracted sexualities on a systemic way, however only a minority were found to intervene past the family system and no intervention takes place on larger systems.

The mere fact that this study could take place shows that educational psychologists have different responses to the needs of youth who identify with same-sex sexual orientations. The study revealed that the work of educational psychologists with same-sex sexual orientation youth is influenced by their background, whether it is their language use, the way it influences basic therapeutic skills or the levels of comfort in working with same-sex sexual orientation youth. The basic therapeutic skills of educational psychologists are not aimed specifically at same-sex sexuality orientation individuals, and the study showed that these skills can be influenced by the deep-seated heteronormative practices and norms. Findings in this study furthermore revealed that some educational psychologists are continuously influenced by their religious norms and values. Literature outlined that religion does not shape attitude, but rather build prejudice toward groups who are not aligned with the set-out standards. Educational psychologists' perception of gender as being fluid is hopeful when working with individuals who identify with same-sex sexual orientation in that it can lead to the therapeutic context being safe for the true expression of gender felt by the client. The second finding that is hopeful in work with same-sex attracted youth, is that educational psychologists in this study showed awareness of the tensions that

exist between society's expectations of hegemonic genders and the perceived gender of the individual (client). With this awareness, educational psychologists can, based on their scope of practice (HPCSA, 2017), raise awareness through training of professionals, awareness campaigns, policy development and psychoeducation. The limiting finding in relation to this however is that educational psychologists do not receive adequate training for work specific with individuals who identify as same- sex attracted.

4.2.2 WHAT ARE THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH SAME- SEX SEXUALITIES?

Educational psychologists are prescribed and guided by the HPCSA to act in a respectful, non-discriminatory way towards all clients. Findings from this study however, demonstrate that educational psychologists have not received training to equip them to respond directly to the needs of youth who identify as same- sex attracted.

Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 emphasized that a lack of focus on the needs of SMY in relation to other minority groups was identified in training programmes of school psychologists (Bahr et al. 2000). The findings of this study correlate with literature, and demonstrate the need for knowledge that will enable educational psychologists to:

- Be aware of, and respond adequately to the emotional needs of youth who identify as same- sex attracted;
- Know how to respond to homophobic bullying (Francis & Msibi, 2011), discrimination based on sexuality and victimization of youth who identify as same- sex attracted;
- Focus on possible advocacy based on social justice issues and equal treatment of same- sex attracted youth;
- Intervene on various systemic levels, ranging from the individual, to the family, school, society and general beliefs of groups within society; and
- Indulge in critical self- reflection (Evans, 2010) on the impact of personal norms and values when working with clients who identify as same sex attracted.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings discussed above, the following recommendations are suggested for future and improved responses of educational psychologists to youth who identify as same- sex attracted.

4.3.1 SELF-REFLECTION, PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION AND THERAPY:

Self-reflection, professional supervision and therapy to enable educational psychologists to develop and increase self-awareness, especially focusing on the influence of their personal norms and values on the therapeutic process with same-sex attracted youth, are required. With increased self-awareness, educational psychologists will be likely become aware of the influence of their personal beliefs on the intervention process with sexual minority youth. Personal therapy can guide educational psychologists in exploring the impact of their own personal background and experiences on their responses the youth who identify as same- sex attracted youth.

4.3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE TRAINING:

Findings in the study furthermore emphasized the lack of training and development opportunities that focus on the specific needs of same- sex attracted youth. Based on the findings that were formulated during the data analysis, educational psychologist need to build their knowledge on the specific needs of same-sex attracted needs. I would, based on the findings like to recommend that future research be focused on the current curriculum development of educational psychologists and how the curriculum can be adapted to include knowledge on responding to the specific needs of youth with same-sex sexual orientation. The theory of anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2000) provides a solid framework that I would recommend be considered when developing a training programme that will better equip educational psychologists in dealing with sexual-minority youth. The theory suggests that here are two groups in society, those who have power and those who are oppressed (Kumashiro. 2000). The author uses the word other to describe all minority groups in society. The role of educational psychologists based on this theory is two-fold: Firstly, educational psychologist should be trained to be able to play an integral role in making schools

helpful spaces, and not harmful spaces for sexual minority youth, as interpreted by Kumashiro (2000). Secondly educational psychologists should be able to form part of the separate spaces, providing support for minority groups, in schools. These separate spaces include access to therapeutic interventions, resources and advocacy opportunities. A training programme that is built on the foundations of Kumashiro's anti-oppressive education framework is likely to equip educational psychologists with the necessary skills to create safe spaces for learners, especially in schools.

4.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Although the responses from the participating educational psychologists carry richness with them, these responses cannot be generalized beyond that of the participant. The sample size was small and was not a perfect representation of the South African context as the sample did not include participants from the African culture. Despite these limitations, the purposively selected sample contributed to the validity of the study in that all participants were registered as educational psychologists with the HPCSA and their views contributed to the trustworthiness of this study. The participants were also from various contexts in which educational psychologist can practice in South Africa, such as schools, private practice and the department of education district offices. It will be interesting to interview educational psychologists from the African culture (e.g. Zulu culture) to explore how they would respond to youth that identify as same-sex attractive.

5.5 REFLECTIONS OF THE STUDY:

Working in the education system for approximately seven years has lead me to realize that various groups of learners are often treated with less respect, interest and attention. This includes sexual minority groups. This has led me to be interest in how, as a student educational psychologist, I can respond to the needs of sexual minority learners. After consulting with a few professionals, I came to the realization that many of these individuals did not feel that they had adequate skills to deal with same-sex attracted youth, hence my interest in this study.

Through my engagement with literature, I realized that there was quite a large body of research available, focusing on various professionals, specifically teachers and other

school staff. There was however a gap in that very little research focusing on educational psychologists was available.

I believe that this study will open the door to further research in the field, and I would suggest that future research focus on further development of appropriate, more specific skills that educational psychologists need to work with sexual minority youth.

5.6 CONCLUSION:

The global and national literature on youth who are a sexual minority indicate that they experience specific challenges which add to mental health difficulties. Literature furthermore revealed that sexual minority youth experienced challenge on all systems identified by the bio-ecological systems theory. Discrimination and victimization towards sexual minority youth were revealed to be taking place at home in neighborhoods, in families, in schools both from school staff and other learners. The silence and invisibility of sexual minorities were found to be evident in the curriculum and other policies followed by schools. The invisibility was furthermore evident in the training programmes followed by educational psychologists, which were found to fail to focus on the needs of sexual minority individuals. Findings in this study suggested that educational psychologists needed to be aware of the influence that their own norms and values had on working with same-sex attracted youth. The study proposes that educational psychologists should increase their awareness of the influence that these personal beliefs have on the therapeutic process with sexual minority youth. Suggestions include that training programmes of educational psychologists should be based on Kumashiro's anti-oppressive framework. I am hopeful that this study will throw light on the relationship between educational psychologists and their responses to the needs of sexual minority youth.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

NHREC Registration Number REC-110613-036



ETHICS CLEARANCE

Dear M Cawood (Bekker)

Ethical Clearance Number: 2017-088

Educational psychologists' responses to addressing the needs of same- sex sexuality youth within the whole school environment.

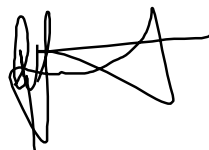
Ethical clearance for this study is granted subject to the following conditions:

- If there are major revisions to the research proposal based on recommendations from the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted.
- If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, it remains the duty of the student to submit a new application.
- It remains the student's responsibility to ensure that all ethical forms and documents related to the research are kept in a safe and secure facility and are available on demand.
- Please quote the reference number above in all future communications and documents.

The Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee has decided to

- Grant ethical clearance for the proposed research.
- Provisionally grant ethical clearance for the proposed research
- Recommend revision and resubmission of the ethical clearance documents

Sincerely,



Prof Geoffrey Lautenbach

Chair: FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

18 October 2017

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONS

FORMATION AND STRUCTURE:

- Choose a setting with little distraction
- Describe the entire study
- Explain the purpose of the interview
- Address terms of confidentiality and trustworthiness
- Indicate how long the interview usually takes
- Allow interviewee to clarify any doubts about the interview
- Prepare a method for recording data
- Method to record data: Audio recording

QUESTIONS:

1. What is gender for you?
2. How do you understand the concept gender and how do you think gender is defined by society?
3. Gender is often described as static, black and white, no in between, how do you feel about this? Is this how you perceive gender?
4. What have you come across in your practice around the social construction and expectations of gender roles.
5. Are there people who are from a particular gender, that orient differently?
6. What phrase or name do you use to describe these individuals?
7. Have you ever had clients who orient differently?
8. How did you deal with them and how did you feel as a person, taking in account your beliefs and religion, values etc.?
9. How comfortable did you feel working with these clients?
10. How does your culture/ beliefs/ background influence your perception of LGBT clients?

11. In my experience in dealing with family members, impression of them was that educational psychologists can “fix” them. Parents come to educational psychologists and say saying fix my child. Have you come across this?
12. How do you deal with parents who are shocked and grieved by their child’s sexuality (should child be LGBT)
13. What are your experiences in working within schools and the context within?
14. How do you think the systems, policies and processes influence working with?
15. Is there anything that you wish to know or that will give you more confidence when working with SMY?
16. Did you receive training on working with individuals who identify as LGBT?
17. How did they build their knowledge and skills needed to work with LGBT individuals?
18. What do you know on how SMY are treated in schools?
19. DO you know of any incidents? Or examples?
20. Do you think the role of educational psychologists is changing or should be changing with regards to working with LGBT individuals?
21. How do you think the constitution (equality) is interpreted and complied to by professionals (including teachers), school managements, parents, community members etc.?

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Transcription: Interview Audio

Transcription: Interview audio recording

Participant: *Elna

Date: 2018. 03.02

Researcher: Melissa Cawood (Bekker)

P: Participant

R: Researcher

Numbers: Line numbers

1	R	Ok, so ELNA*, thank you so much for agreeing to take part in my research, I really appreciate it. I would firstly want to inform you a little bit on what my research is about. So, the topic is: Educational psychologists' responses to the needs of same sex sexuality youth. So basically, I am looking at the way in which educational psychologists work with these individuals and the way that their, ed. Psych's background their attitudes and the way that they deal with these clients.
2	ELNA	Hmmm
3	R	So firstly, I sent you an email to which you agreed to take part in the research. So I would just like to inform you that if there is any time that you feel uncomfortable with the questions or you do no longer want to take part in the process, just let me know and we will withdraw.
4	ELNA	Nods in agreement

		<p>I would also just want to inform you that your identity will be withheld during the research, however my research supervisor will have access to our recordings.</p> <p>Finally, should you feel that you experience any emotional trauma due to this interview, I will suggest that you consult with another mental health professional and if you need a referral I will do that.</p> <p>Do you understand and agree with the above-mentioned?</p>
5	ELNA	I understand and I agree. Thank you
6	R	Thank you
7	R	I am not going to use too much of your time, I believe forty minutes should be enough, but let's see how it goes.
8	ELNA	Perfect
9	R	So, my first question, ELNA* is, what is gender for you? How do you see gender, how do you interpret gender?
10	ELNA	Gender is not equal to the physiology. SO in other words, you may physically a boy with the anatomy of a boy, but that does not necessarily mean that that will be your preference in terms of a more intimate relationship.
11	R	Ok
13	ELNA	Same with a female
14	R	Alright
15	ELNA	I think gender is quite fluid and goes with what the person identifies themselves with. And who are they attracted to and who they feel comfortable with.

16	R	So, basically, what you are saying is that even though there is a biological aspect of gender, it is not necessarily the roles that go with that given gender.
17	ELNA	No, no.
18	R	O, uhm. How do you see the roles that go with specific genders? And how do you think society... or how do you think those roles influence young people who may not perhaps conform to society's expectations.
19	ELNA	Uhm, I think society plays a very big role also the parents and the othering of their children. So, there is a lot of controversy about, specifically now lately and in the research and in media with for example Angelina Jolie that took a lot of flak because she would not conform in the way her one child was dressed. Uhm, I believe we need to give our children at a very young age options in terms of what they play with. Not specifically boys play with boy specific toys and girls play with girls' typical toys. I think you need to give them a repertoire of things that they can play with. And be very careful of how we stereotype in terms of colors for example pink is only for girls and blue only for boys.
20	R	Ok
21	ELNA	So, society has a very big role to play in terms of the messages we give in terms of how do I identify myself in terms of my sexuality and where it might be heading.
22	R	Ok, I think that is quite an important point that you mentioned and it forms quite a big part of my research as well. You mentioned in your first question that even though there is a biological part gender it doesn't necessarily mean that a boy will be attracted to a girl as society expects.
23	ELNA	Yes

24	R	Have you ever come across a client in your practice that you had to give therapy to in that regard?
25	ELNA	<p>I am going to start with many years ago I had a boy that was at that stage nine years old who came into my practice and very specifically said to me “I know my body is that of a boy, but inside I do not feel like a boy, I feel like a girl.” And when I looked at the family on the father’s side, I could see genetically that there are indicators there that suggested that this was not just something that came from the son, I got identification indicators from the father. Uhm and I had to guide the parents in terms of telling them that they needed to give him enough space to feel comfortable with whichever way he identified himself with. Mostly we also or I have encountered it in adolescence girls and boys will come to me and also now recently, not event at the beginning of the year, two weeks ago, parents came to me with a son in grade nine who said to them that he has created an online relationship with a boy in America whom he is never met and he feels attracted to. I had to say to the parents that it is quite normal in terms of his developmental age, to feel attracted to someone of the same gender. It does not necessarily yet mean that he is going to become gay. Same then with girls, because during adolescence there is a time of experimentation and sexual exploration and we cannot yet say where that is going to resolve in terms of sexual identity.</p>
26	R	<p>Ok, that is uhm what I hear form your explanantion is that when you, or in any case, let’s keep to adolescents who have same sex attractions or exploration as you mentioned. You don’t work on an individual basis, you work more... you said you got the parents in and had an interview with them.</p>
27	ELNA	<p>Yes, I work systematically, so that means that I might often also have to caution teachers in terms of how they label or how they categorize uhm. We often have in the school environment specifically in the secondary school where labels are flown around very loosely and it already start in primary school with learners saying things like “Hy’s</p>

		<p>'n moffie" or "Sy's 'n letta." And then to caution firstly in a school context the teachers and the principals. Uhm that that is a form of bullying and it is labelling and not acceptable and you may not use those words. And also when I do presentations t parents lam very careful with the words I use. I will for instance never say mom and dad, I would say there are moms and dads but there might also be moms and moms and dads and dads and grandparents and uncles and aunties that act as parental figures.</p>
28	R	<p>Ok. So I want to explore the school a little bit more, but before I go there. Uhm, ok we spoke about little bit about systems, but before we even go there, I want to know from a personal point of view as a professional, how comfortable are you with working with same sex sexuality youth?</p>
29	ELNA	<p>I am very comfortable and it comes from my upbringing. I grew up, uhm, and that was now remember many, many years ago when many of these things you now discussed was referred to and very much frowned upon. But I grew up in an environment with a mother who had friends who were homosexual and they would come to our house. Uhm in primary school I had a friend a friend, a female girl friend who we all knew in school was a little bit different in terms of how she acted. Uhm later on it did came out that she was attracted to girls. And I had a primary school teacher, male teacher who was in a relationship with another man who was the uncle of my best friend in primary school.</p>
30	R	<p>O, ok.</p>
31	ELNA	<p>So we all knew he was gay. So I grew up with those principles and the concepts and I think kudos to my mom who never would cluster and categorize or box people.</p>
32	R	<p>Ok, so do you think on the other hand as an educational psychologist who did not have the advantage that you did in terms of upbringing, would not be so comfortable in working with these clients?</p>

33	ELNA	It could easily make them feel uncomfortable and they might not know how to deal with it. Uhm, specifically if in their upbringing were perhaps very religious, rigid categorized classified, boxed. I think in such a circumstance it would make it difficult for the psychologist. And specifically in their training was not addressed and sensitively handled.
34	R	We are going to talk a bit about training just now. What role do you think as an educational psychologist, religion plays in these individual views or their ability to work with same sex sexuality.
35	ELNA	I think if they come from a religious context where the message was communicated in the church that this is wrong or it is not acceptable or it is not approved. So in other word the church plays a big role inters of the messages that they communicate. SO if you are raised in a church or religious environment that says this with that and this is not acceptable and that is acceptable. And this is sin and that is not sinful it can make it very difficult. We should be more open and flexible in terms of the client that you are working with.
36	R	That is quite a difficult thing for educational or mental health professions to deal with. Because their religion form part of who they are. So sometimes I think it is unconsciously that they act in a discriminatory way.
37	ELNA	Same with not only sexuality but also uhm, races for example. Uhm any kind of otherness that is different to me and ours.
38	R	Yes, I agree with this.
39	ELNA	It is the othering.
40	R	The othering. I like the word the othering. Uhm, in my experience in dealing with family members, I have had parents who, it was more difficult for their to accept their child's sexuality than it was actually for the child to accept their sexuality.
41	ELNA	Yes

42	R	And sometimes I found that therapy doesn't always lay with the child but very often with the parent. Have you ever dealt with parents who were traumatized by their child's sexuality?
43	ELNA	The parents who I saw recently who freaked out when they suspected that their child might be showing homosexual tendencies. Because of him... The fact that he discussed it with them that he was attracted to the boy in America. I had to very much normalize for them that we cannot yet classify, categorize and even if it were the case, it still was their child. But that we would then deal with it but not at the moment. At the moment that was not the issue, the issue was that the kid was lonely and we needed to create more social relationships in his immediate environment. And then I had other parents who are as flexible as can be and for who are very open in terms of I accept my child irrespective of. These are often parents who are in the minority, they are very broad minded. Uhm, the majority of parents are traumatized if they start thinking that my child is going towards an otherness whether it is in terms of gender, sexuality or culture and religion.
44	R	Do you also feel that or should I ask how do you deal with parents who are shocked or grieved with their child, I think that it relates a lot to the previous question, but do you feel that sometimes parents are grieved when they find out that their children are of another sexual orientation?
45	ELNA	Yes, it is the loss of a dream a dream that you had. So, if you have got a son and that child turns out to become a homosexual, it is the loss of the fantasy and the dream of the wedding, the woman and the grandchildren. And then to acknowledge that and have a lot of empathy and then very softly and gently explore where their ideas come from and the way they were raised. And on another level, does it change your child?

46	R	Ok. It still sort of even though because they grief, is because of that otherness and I think our role as you mentioned is to normalize the otherness.
47	ELNA	And often I do go back in terms of the child you held in your arms. The fact that this child that this child can choose a partner that you possibly do not agree with. Does it change that baby that you once held in your arms? It changes the dream.
48	R	Yes
49	ELNA	It doesn't change the person
50	R	The dream I think includes the whole "My daughter is going to get married, I am going to be a grandparent. That whole sort of social happening.
51	ELNA	Yes, and one needs to be very gentle, a lot of empathy and very respectful as a professional. We are working with the extended family members involved in this whole... I don't want to call it a dilemma, but challenge.
52	R	How would you deal with it, or if you have, how have you dealt with a same sex sexuality child within a more African culture where it has got a lot...where masculinity and all those roles that go with that, and boys that need to go to the mountain and where all of those sorts of things come in.
53	ELNA	I have never in my own practice had to deal with that, but I am assuming it might be even more challenging. The more rigidity there is in terms of cultural expectations the harder it is going to be therefore the more sensitive we will have in approaching it. There has been a lot of controversy about the newest movie that has been shown. Now I have not seen the movie and for the life of me I can't remember the name of the movie. It is about the Northern Sotho's going into the mountains for their ritual of entering manhood and the topic of homosexuality is brought in. And it raised a lot of controversy. Mainly

		because, uhm, African people felt it was a white person who was the director. Not an African person and it therefore might create a stigma that all African people believing or belonging to this tribe or cultural affiliation. And so there was a lot there was a huge debate a couple of weeks ago. Now I can't remember when it showed, but it might still be showing at Rosebank. There was a big storm about not showing that movie anymore. Uhm because it touched on this very topic. So I can only assume that if an African client like that was referred to me, I would most probably first consult with my African psychology colleagues on how to deal with this.
54	R	In terms of their cultural believes and what goes with that.
55	ELNA	As a white person, I would feel ill equipped. I would have to get the help of African colleagues.
56	R	And I think the fact that you are a white person might actually put oil on the fire because of what you mentioned.
57	ELNA	Yes
58		Now, you are practicing in a school at the moment. How do you feel the policies, procedures, educators forms opinions or direct learners in terms of same sex minority?
59		I am at a Christian school, so it plays a very big role. So, we do have people on staff who are quite uhm religious and strict in their religious believes. And from their verbal and non-verbal behavior there is discriminatory practices towards children who start showing an interest in same sex relationships. My job is then to come back and to say that the Bible also says that you may not judge.
60	R	Mmm Yes
61		And our constitution says you may not discriminate so you are acting unconstitutionally and you are actually going against your own religion. And we may not do that in the school and we may not show tolerance towards any form of discriminatory behavior. But if we for

		example see affection being showed during break, between a boy and a boy or a girl and a girl or a boy and a girl, that needs to be addressed. So you cannot have a tolerance or an acceptance for affection between a boy and a girl but not a tolerance for affection between a boy and a boy or a girl and a girl. Then you have to have a uniform standard.
62	R	Mmmm
63	ELNA	So If I pick up that there is discriminatory practices, I voice it very loudly.
64	R	I think the things that you mentioned are very important, they are the more observable ways. But what about, I am gonna give you an example; at the school where I work, our code of conduct says no physical contact and then under that it says no physical contact will be allowed between a boy and a girl. Which actually if we had a bright parent and they have to voice that physical contact, it means nothing. It means that there is sort of policy that covers them
65	ELNA	It means that your policy needs to be thinking broader. It is like when we address parents and we speak about mother and father and we might have kids there with same sex parents or who are raised by uncles and aunties or ouma and ouspas.
66	R	Gogos
67	ELNA	Or gogos, we need to be very careful also when we address the audience that we are mindful. So, when I do sex educations with the grade 6 group I have the girls separate and I have the boys separate. It is often brought up by the boys and interestingly enough about gays and "moffies". Then they ask me how does it work, and how do they get children. Then I say to them, you know what, these are still topics we are going to address in high school in your biology or life science class. What I can tell you is that our constitution says that we may not discriminate and the Bible says I may not judge. Now I have received criticism before from staff members that say to me, why do I not bring

		<p>religion in and tell them that it is wrong. Then I said because in my audience there are children who have family members who are same sex relational. I have got boys there with two daddies or two mommies. I have children there with family members who are in same sex relationships. And I have children there who starts suspecting that they might fall in those categories. I may not start boxing them. Then I am acting unconstitutional and then according to the Christian faith, I am not open.</p>
68	R	Yes
69	ELNA	And I am not open towards them.
70	R	And unethical in a way based on the HPCSA.
71		<p>Unethical and then I stick to biology and I stick to biology and say that their is enough research suggesting that during certain months of the pregnancy, typically in the first trimester, hormones are excreted and can influence sexual identity. There is research starting to suggest that.</p>
72	R	<p>That is something that I was not aware of, I would like to read up on that. Okay, you also touched on training a bit earlier. What I want to know is there anything that you wish you knew, or that you wish you would know, or that you were trained on for working specifically with same sex sexuality?</p>
73	ELNA	<p>I was never in my training, it is a topic that never came up, however having been a lecturer, I tried to instill in students to think quite broad minded, not to discriminate, not to categorize. What I would have emphasize more is perhaps the cultural relevance in the South African diverse cultural ground of what they must consider or anticipate when working with specifically with African cultures and sexualities and sexual identity. I would have emphasized that, that as a lecturer I never considered. I considered the more flexibility and</p>

		consideration for cultural values, but never directly touched on sexuality.
74	R	My last question, Uhm as somebody who was involved in the masters educational psychology programme at the University of Johannesburg what do you think should be included. It touches on the question that I just asked you. What would you have included that would assist students with more information on same sex sexuality and how to deal with them. I understand that in a programme like that, you can't deal with each and every case that you might come across, but do you perhaps think that, or let, me hear your opinion on that,
75	ELNA	What we used to do was during the orientation week, one whole day would be spent on otherness. Who is your other? Who do you discriminate against? So, student had to bring symbols or photos of who according to them would be their other.
76	R	Mmmm
77	ELNA	So, I would give an example, I would tell them, my other would be a male authoritarian figure.
78	R	Ok
79	ELNA	Irrespective of uhm culture, but it would be male figure. And then I would say for others it might be someone with disabilities or someone's sexual identity goes against your religious values. So, a whole day was spent on exploring your other and where does that believe system come from and how would you deal with that when you are confronted with clients. And then in terms of their theoretical framework and ethical practice. and in hind side if I had to re-touch base in terms of the orientation week, I would perhaps jut emphasize a little bit more the differences and allow more voices from the different cultural affiliations of the students in the group. Specifically, more in terms of sexual identity.
80	R	Ok,

81	ELNA	I would just open up more space for it.
82	R	I think it is becoming something that is becoming more acceptable and
83	ELNA	I think it more open
84	R	More open and the notion of psychology has become more acceptable. SO as education psychologist we will get to deal with these things more in terms of any issue, but especially sexuality.
85	ELNA	If I could end of; At the school where I work there is a teacher who lost her husband many years ago. Raised her two children, she is currently in a relationship with a woman. It is her second relationship with a woman and her dilemma was how to hide it from the school.
86	R	Oh, from the school?
87	ELNA	From the school. So, coming to social functions and not to let on that her partner is a female sexual partner, not just a friend. Her sons are ok with her relationship, her sister is ok with the relationship. Her sister's husband said he can't deal with it. And the discrimination that she is confronted with and the sense of shame she is experiencing. Because finally she has found someone who she feels comfortable with. She was lonely for many years, now she has found a partner but she can't be open about this partner in her school community. Knowing that there some teachers who will accept it and there are some teachers who will judge her. And some parents who will judge her for it and the secrecy around it.
88	R	I think we deal with so many young people who is in that same situation.
89	ELNA	Yes
90	R	Ok, ELNA* I think that that is it, and I just want to once again thank you for taking part in my research.

91	ELNA	I think it is a very fascinating topic, and I think you are very brave in doing this because it is a challenging topic and it is going to shift your own frame of reference in ways that you have not yet even anticipated.
92	R	I think it is very true.
93	ELNA	So, good luck with it
94	R	Thank you very much



APPENDIX D: CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITOR



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that the thesis titled **"EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' RESPONSES TO THE NEEDS OF SAME-SEX SEXUALITY SCHOOL YOUTH"** by MELISSA CAWOOD was proof read and edited by me in respect of language.

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Kind regards

Anna M de Wet

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1.1. Introduction and background

School youth with same-sex identities have been harassed, ostracized, discriminated, violated, dehumanized and underserved in South Africa school settings because of their disapproved non-normative sexual orientations (Butler, Alpaslan, Strumpher & Astbury, 2003; Kowen & Davis, 2006; Butler & Astbury, 2008; Msibi, 2012; McArthur, 2015; Francis, 2017). This is despite the affirmation and the legal and educational advances in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (DoJ, 1996), the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (DoE, 1996) and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) that prohibit any form of discrimination towards populations with diverse sexual orientations. Studies in South Africa that stretch over a decade repeatedly show that young people with same-sex sexualities are faced with physical and emotional violence, bullying from both peers and teachers, teased and sidelined in educational activities (Butler, Alpaslan, Strumpher & Astbury, 2003; Kowen & Davis, 2006; Butler & Astbury, 2008; Msibi, 2012; McArthur, 2015; Francis, 2017). Literature internationally shows that youth with same-sex identities experience higher levels of emotional distress, isolation at school, higher prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse as well higher reports of suicidality in their efforts to navigate through a social system that is disapproving of their being (Bahr, Birsch & Croteau, 2000; Ryan, 2009; Espelage, Aragon, Birkett & Koenig, 2008; LaSala, 2013; Brown, 2017). The situation as depicted in the South African literature is no different that shows how young people with same-sex sexualities are at risk to drop-out of school because the education system that is not responding adequately to their needs (Butler, et al., 2003; Msibi, 2012; Kowen, 2015; Francis, 2017). The systemic homosexual dissonance and reluctance to affirm sexual diversity often push young people with same-sex identities out of the school system (Butler, et al., 2008; Msibi, 2012).

Although South Africa has come a long way in protecting the rights of individuals with same-sex identities, schools are often managed by hegemonic heterosexual infused policies and protocol, leading to schools being homophobic in nature (Francis, 2017). More to it, school policies (including curriculum) and procedures were designed in such a way that the rights, well-being and freedom of LGBT youth have been on the peripheries of school priorities (Bhana, 2014).



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