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**SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM RESPONSES TO THE CARE AND SUPPORT
OF LEARNERS WITH SAME-SEX SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS IN A TOWNSHIP
SCHOOL**

By

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FULL DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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Abstract

The School-Based Support Teams are designed to ensure that inclusive policies are executed at school level. The aim of this structure is to provide care and support for all learners (including learners with same-sex sexual orientations). The school should be an affirming space, where homosexuals are embraced and where the status quo (heterosexuality) is not the only sexual orientation that is accepted. However, through this study it is evident that the school studied is still lacking in terms of the implementation of inclusive education. For instance, data revealed that the school does not embrace sexual diversity. As a result, the welfare of learners with same-sex sexual orientations in this educational setting is compromised because of the compulsory heteronormative culture that is dominant in these institutions. This study explores the responses of members in the School-Based Support Team (SBST) to the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations in a township school. The researcher took a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm. In this study, data was collected by means of face-to-face interviews with ten selected participants. All of these members were in SBSTs. Themes then developed from the data. The first theme showed that educators in the SBST do not perceive learners with same-sex sexual orientations as learners who require care and support. According to them, learners who need support are those with medical deficits. The second theme shows that the educators in the SBST are nonresponsive when it comes from discrimination and prejudice faced by learners with same-sex sexual orientations. The last theme revealed that many educators are perpetrators of homophobia and violence. The findings from this research provide evidence that through intensive in-service training it is possible for the SBST and educators to fight forms of oppression against learners with same-sex sexual orientations. The main conclusion from this study is that educators in the SBST lack knowledge on how to care for and support learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Thus, the SBST must be trained and developed in order to respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations.

Keywords: School-Based Support Team, inclusive education, same-sex sexuality, heteronormativity, responsive

Declaration

I, Johannes Buthelezi declare that

- The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- This dissertation does not contain any other person's writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - their words have been re-written, but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
 - where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

Signed.....

Date.....

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my late grandmother uNaNdlebe. Thank you Gogo for raising me. I still remember your teachings and the love you gave me when I was young.



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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

1 Introduction

“I don’t feel safe from abuse at my high school. I am persistently victimised for being gay. By the time I was in 9th grade, listening without responding to others bashing homosexuals was more painful than the harassment I deal with now. Up to now, a person has masturbated in front of me, I watched until he stopped, he thought I will change and become a straight man. I was embarrassed and ashamed of who I am.

I have had hot cigarettes thrown at me and people call me vulgar names almost every day, including teachers. What I am describing now is not simple child’s play and name-calling. It is harassment that threatens my safety at school” (Hall, 2007, 4).

The quotation above narrates the experiences of a high school learner with a same-sex sexual orientation. However, the above behaviour does not end at school level as learners with same-sex sexual orientations continue to be victimised in communities where they come from (Hall, 2007). This learner experienced abusive and discriminatory behaviour because of his sexual orientation. Teachers did not protect him from name-calling and other forms of discrimination. In some schools lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) learners experience harassment, bullying and discrimination from heterosexual learners and several teachers (Kumashiro, 2000; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). These cases of abuse should be dealt with at school level (DoE, 2001) and supportive structures such as School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs) should ensure that all children are protected and given the support they need (DOE, 2014). However, research on sexuality in South African schools depicts a very grim picture. School youth with same-sex sexual orientations faced violence, discrimination, isolation and rejection by peers and teachers (Butler, Alpaslan & Strumpher, 2003; Francis, 2010; 2011; Msibi, 2012; 2014; Bhana, 2014). The main function of the School-Based Support Team is to assist teachers and learners to develop inclusive learning environments, where every child is given an opportunity to learn effectively (Mahlo, 2014).

Msibi (2011) states that the discrimination and bullying of learners with same-sex sexual identities affects their school performance, social and personal lives and overall wellbeing. Msibi (2012) he presented on how schools failed to guard, care for and support pupils with same-sex sexual orientations, with teachers as the main perpetrators. This is in violation of the country's policies and I want to single out the policy on Inclusive Education (DBE, 2001) as a case in point. This document advocates for the provision of quality education that is free from discrimination regardless of the child's background or ability. The challenge is the skewed focus of inclusive education being only from the perspective of a deficit in cognitive learning and other forms of disabilities (Porteus, 2016). There is a need to widen the understanding of inclusive education to consider other variables such as environmental factors. Schools by nature are heterosexual, a social construction of gender that promotes the attraction to the opposite sex (Francis, 2012). This is found in its official curriculum and extra curriculum (Msibi, 2012); school infrastructure such as bathrooms (Brown, 2018) and school apparel such as uniforms (Meadmore & Symes, 1997; Brown, 2017). Any deviation of gender expression from the birth sex is regarded as abnormal and warrants punishment (Francis, 2017). Teachers expressed unwillingness and discomfort with regards to teaching learners with same-sex sexual orientations or teaching about homosexuality (Bhana, 2014; DePalma & Francis, 2014; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). Young people with same-sex sexual orientations were thrown with stones, called names by peers and teachers and refused entrance to classrooms while others were simply ignored (Butler, Alpaslan & Strumpher, 2003; Msibi, 2012; Brown, 2017; Francis & Brown, 2017). The impact of bullying and discrimination against learners with same-sex sexual identities in schools affected their learning and agency negatively to the point where some dropped out of school (Msibi, 2014). The South African Constitution acknowledges the basic human right to full citizenship regardless of sexual orientation (DOJ, 1996). Potgieter and Reygan (2012) underscore the ratified rights of sexually diverse identities by the Department of Justice (1996) in their promotion of sexual diversity in the curriculum and in teaching materials. The only conclusion to explain the misalignment between constitutional values and school responses to same-sex sexual orientations is that schools have not transformed towards the practice of social justice and social cohesion for every child (Muthukrishna, 2008). Schools still have not come to the table regarding social inclusion and holistic development, hence aspects such as a sense

of belonging for certain learners such as those with same-sex sexual orientations is still a distant reality (Francis, 2017). If inclusive education is geared towards preparing learners for an inclusive society (DoE, 2001) then schools should prepare these young people to know, appreciate and affirm differences as a norm in a diverse South Africa (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). Akker, van der Ploeg and Scheepers (2012) highlight that education is a socializing agent that increases general knowledge and stimulates critical thinking, so children should transform and be induced to embrace others. Schools should take up this responsibility as agents of change that enable young people to develop a mindset that dispels conservative traditional norms that construct homosexuality as a curse or a deviant personal choice (Akker et al., 2012). Thus, schools should teach children the values of respect, tolerance, peace and harmony. In this way they will be able to understand and accept the differences amongst people (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001) emphasises that every child in South Africa (including learners with same-sex sexual orientations) must be accommodated in classrooms, despite the challenges they encounter in their learning process or the different expressions they may exhibit, compared to hegemonic identities. White Paper 6 (DBE, 2001) anticipates an education system that will allow inclusive education to take place, where children with different abilities or orientations are included in the mainstream schools (Ahmmed, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Inclusive education requires school curricula, pedagogies, organisation, resources and the attitudes towards care and support for learners to be modified to ensure that all learners (despite their capabilities, race, sexual preferences and social class) are included in schools and obtain quality education (Ahmmed et al., 2012; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Education as a microcosm of South African society should affirm, embrace and celebrate diversity (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015).

Although inclusive education is in its implementation phase, this study aims to explore how a critical unit such as the School-Based Support Team creates a safe and enabling learning environment for school youth with same-sex sexual orientations.

1.1 Realities of learners with same-sex sexual orientation in South Africa: Case studies of gay and lesbian identities

Francis and Msibi (2011) state that democracy in South Africa brought a new development, which encourages the rights of people with same-sex sexual identities. In schools, for instance, educational policies should be developed to create a safe environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual youth (Francis & DePalma, 2014). Furthermore, the school curriculum should not discriminate or exclude learners with a same-sex sexual orientation (Arndt, 2004). The schooling system, teachers, and curriculum content has a huge influence on creating a just society (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). Potgieter and Reygan (2012) are of the opinion that content knowledge must help children to be aware of discrimination and injustices towards certain groups of citizens and it should translate to the notion of inclusive education. But to achieve this, educators should be equipped to address the mainstreaming of sexual diversity in schools (Francis & Msibi, 2011). Donohue and Bornman (2014) state that educators are key role players in inclusive education. Contemporary teacher education should train educators to accommodate diverse learners in schools (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Msibi (2016) positions the school curriculum at the centre of knowledge distribution and therefore it should be a crucial to confronting homophobia in schools.

However, schools and the department of education in South Africa are still battling with the issue of care and support of learners with learning difficulties, including learners with same-sex identities who are bullied and discriminated against (Arndt, 2004). The foregrounded literature expressed how children with same-sex sexual orientations are still harassed, bullied and dehumanized. Francis and Msibi (2011) state that although inclusion was introduced in a post-apartheid South Africa, the education system (and other societal institutions) continues to reproduce and uphold patterns of heterosexism, that discriminate against people with same-sex sexual identities. Msibi (2014) points out that when the topic of homosexuality arises in the classroom, educators become authoritarian and scripted. The problem is that the education system is surrounded by educators who believe that homosexuality is something to be hidden and kept separate from teaching, learning and daily school life (Francis, 2012). The reality is that schools are heteronormative in nature (Msibi, 2014).

It is normal to be a straight man or woman but to be a homosexual is not a consideration for many school authorities (Brown & Diale, 2017).

In this section I attempted to illustrate the disjuncture between policy and institutional and systemic practices that undermine the right of certain identities in schools such as young people with same-sex sexual orientations.

1.2 Background of the study

1.2.1 The road to inclusive education: Salamanca Framework for Action

The Salamanca Framework for Action from the World Conference on Special Education gave birth to the frameworks of inclusive education in 1994 (Ainscow, 2004). The conference discourse was based on the eradication of discrimination and oppressive teaching and learning environments affecting certain identities, which at the time was those learners with disabilities (Engelbrecht, 2006). The main purpose of the Salamanca Framework for Action is to inform policy and advance the notion of an inclusive learning space that is enabling and supportive to all learners regardless of background or challenges (UNESCO, 1994). According to Mdikana, Ntshangase and Mayekiso (2007) this statement points out that inclusion and participation are crucial to human dignity and to the enjoyment of human rights such as the right to quality education. In South Africa, inclusive education is a direct response to the onslaught of the apartheid system that created vilified identities (Muthukrishna, 2008). White Paper 6 on the policy on Inclusive Education suggests that education should establish supportive structures that will provide care and support to all children who are experiencing challenges in their learning processes. Although this notion is rather retroactive, I would emphasise that support systems should be proactive in creating enabling learning environments. Below is a brief summary of the Salamanca Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) to highlight the tenets of inclusive education:

- To provide a policy that will improve education systems that allow every child to be included.
- To adopt the principle of inclusive education and enrol all children in ordinary schools unless there were convincing reasons for doing otherwise.

- To create advocacy projects and encourage the exchange of inclusion knowledge with other countries.
- To endorse the idea that service teacher training address the provision of inclusive education.

The reference points from the Salamanca Framework for Action became the foundations for White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education in South Africa (Mdikana, Ntshangase & Mayekiso, 2007). Engelbrecht (2004) believes that the present-day education legislation and policy in South Africa is influenced by the Salamanca statement because it displays the commitment to deal with diversity and provide ideas for educational support (DoE, 2001; UNESCO, 1994; Ainscow, 2004).

1.2.2 Inclusive Education in a South African context

The discourse of inclusive education started in 1994, after the collapse of the apartheid system in South Africa (Naicker, 2006), paralleled by the development of the Salamanca Framework of Action (Engelbrecht, 2004). The apartheid system discriminated against its people according to race, class, sex and sexual identities and its practices and philosophies were deeply entrenched in the education system (Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001). Naicker (2006) says the apartheid education policy was a systemic tactic that destroyed the dignity and humanness of certain identities. Inclusive Education now has this immense responsibility to restore justice and humanity for all South Africans (Muthuskrishna, 2008). I want to concur with Muthukrishna (2008) that these travesties were systemically induced, hence the undoing of such practices should also be explored from a systemic angle.

After the collapse of the apartheid system in 1994 it was necessary for the new government to implement policies to promote equity, justice and inclusion in society. (Mdikana, Ntshangase & Mayekiso, 2007). Policies are designed to encourage the transformation of society and educational practices with the aim of attaining a just and equitable life for all citizens (Mdikana, Ntshangase & Mayekiso, 2007).

Inclusive education in South Africa acknowledges that children are diverse, raised in different communities, grow up in different backgrounds, have different learning needs and portray different abilities and disabilities (UNESCO, 1994). These differences should be accepted in the schooling system and perceived as normal aspects of

human development (Florian, 2008). In this way, all learners (including learners with same-sex sexual identities) are treated with respect and acknowledged for their dissimilarities as advocated in White Paper 6 for Inclusive Education (DOE, 2001).

This system aimed at changing ways of thinking, ways of teaching and developing new strategies of teaching and learning that will enhance inclusion (Mdikana, Ntshangase & Mayekiso, 2007). Florian (2008) argues that inclusive pedagogy needs a shift of thinking about diverse learning performances and teaching, whereby challenges are regarded as within-child, while the issue is in many instances caused by a deficiency in the education system. When a learner is seen as the problem, the education system tries to fix the child so that he/she can fit into the system (Florian, 2008; Landsberg, Krüger and Swart, 2016). Learning difficulties should not be seen as located within the child, but in an environmental, societal and cultural frame that fails to acknowledge the diverse performance and expression of learners (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). However, when the problem is seen through the lens of an inclusive education system, then the authorities must transform the education system by creating various enabling support systems promoting effective learning environments (Landsberg, Krüger & Swart, 2016). Schools do not operate in isolation; they are influenced by economic, political and social developments in society (Landsberg, Krüger & Swart, 2016). Consequently, the education system should take these aspects into consideration when developing a curriculum, when it is presented to learners and when children are being supported. Educators who understand the multiple layers that impact learning and agency in young people tend to be more inclusive in their teaching practices (Landsberg, Krüger & Swart, 2016; Florian, 2008).

1.2.3 Responses to Inclusive Education by the South African government.

A. White Paper 6 and Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support

In 2001, the South African government published White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (DOE, 2001). The Paper presents a national strategy for systematically addressing and removing barriers to learning through establishing full-service schools,

converting special schools into resource centres as well as training education managers, teachers and SBSTs (DBE, 2001).

Jama (2014) argues that White Paper 6 (DBE, 2001) serves as a foundation for South Africa's new education system. It outlines strategies to gain new knowledge and insight, new paradigms and to find ways to implement inclusive education (Smit & Paulsen, 2001; Mdikana, Ntshangase & Mayekiso, 2007). In essence, this policy enables the empowerment of learners by developing their individual strengths and allowing them to participate critically in the process of learning (DBE, 2001). Through the guidance of White Paper 6 (DBE, 2001) learners who need support can be assisted (by teachers, principals and other stakeholders in education such as psychologists) and this support will contribute positively to their school grades and their overall development (Landsberg, Krüger & Swart, 2016).

Furthermore, in responding to inclusive education, the Department of Education introduced the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) in 2014. The main purpose of SIAS (DBE, 2014) is to ensure that change in the education system occurs on the road to an inclusive education system in line with the regulations of White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001). Jama (2014) states that the SIAS (DoE, 2014) policy document is crucial as it informs educators and other stakeholders on how to provide support strategies to every child at school. Its aim is to support learners who are exposed to factors that could create learning barriers (DoE, 2014). SIAS (DoE, 2014) provides an outline for the standardisation of the processes to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion at school.

Although the above-mentioned policies are in place, Donohue and Bornman (2014) observed that such policies have limitations. As a result, inclusion does not take place in schools. They claim that the policy's lack of clarity for diverse situations; inconsistent SIAS training for educators; unequal access to supporting resources and the failure to redress the skewed educational provisions in the country, has led to the failure of inclusive educational practices. Consequently, teachers are challenged by their limited skills and have failed to endorse and appropriate the policies in place (Jansen, 2001). Additionally, the Inclusive Education policy tend to pathologise learning difficulties with an unbalanced approach to medical and cognitive causes of barriers to learning that

perpetuate labelling learners (Porteus, 2008). Such approaches to inclusion leave very little room for young people with same-sex sexual orientations, whose challenges are created by environmental and systemic factors.

B. Supporting structures in implementing Inclusive Education: School-Based Support Teams

Implementing an inclusive system at schools will require supportive structures that enhance the inclusive education philosophy (Engelbrecht, 2004). In this section I discuss the functions of School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs). School-Based Support Teams are implemented at school level (Makhalemele & Nel, 2015). The main function of SBSTs is to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services that will reinforce the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs (Jama, 2014; DoE, 2001). These structures serve as instruments for delivering support and care services at ordinary schools (Jama, 2014). Jama (2014) says that a SBST's key functions are as follows:

- It organizes and manages support and care systems for learners and educators at an institutional level.
- It collectively identifies institutional challenges such as barriers to learning and lack of resources at school level.
- It develops strategies to address all barriers to learning. This includes a major focus on educator development, parent consultation and support.
- It should work with other institutions to form relationships that will assist them to share knowledge, resources (including human resources), and engage in combined training programmes or interactive workshops.
- It should treat all learners (including learners with same-sex sexual orientation) with respect and develop a caring pedagogy.
- It should monitor and evaluate the work of the team within an 'action-reflection plan'.

The SBST is trained to identify barriers to learning and they should know how to provide strategies that will eliminate these barriers. In this way, it will be providing an ongoing support system in the institution (Mackay, 2014).

However, in most township schools the SBSTs lack knowledge on how to put policy in place (Mackay, 2014). It does not know how to screen, identify and give support to

learners who are exposed to harassment and bullying (Jama, 2014). Some members in the SBST still have negative attitudes towards learners with a same-sex sexual orientation (Donohoe & Bernman, 2014). Success in inclusion education depends on the attitudes and actions of school principals and other structures such as the SBSTs as they create a school culture that will fight for the rights of the minority groups (including learners with same-sex sexual identities (Ainscow, 2002).

1.3 Problem statement

Discrimination against people with same-sex sexual orientations includes harassment and bullying. For instance, at schools, when a gay male learner is sexually harassed by heterosexual male learners, educators should respond to this case or complaint in a similar fashion to sexual harassment between two heterosexual learners (Hall, 2007). However, research shows the contrary (Francis, 2017). Bullying and harassment of learners with same-sex sexual orientations occur in schools because schools are heteronormative in nature (Msibi, 2014). Thus, in some instances, children with same-sex sexual orientations are victimised by educators (DePalma & Francis, 2014; Msibi, 2014). According to Meyer (2007) homophobic bullying and harassment are aspects of school violence. When heterosexual adults bully and harass people with same-sex sexual identities, children practice this behaviour and becomes normalised in our schools because members of the community normalise it (Hall, 2011; Msibi, 2011).

However, in South Africa, discrimination against individuals with same-sex sexual identities is not accepted by the South African School's Act (DoE, 1996) and the South African Constitution (DoJ, 1996). Msibi (2014) says that despite constitutional provisions, homophobia continues to be a major practice in schools. Homophobia is a problem because it creates complex issues such depression, low self-esteem, and renders affected school youth suicidal (Francis & Reagan, 2015).

These poignant realities faced by school youth with same-sex sexual orientations are in total contradiction to the fundamentals of inclusive education that promotes a learning environment free from discrimination and prejudice (DoE, 2001). Implementation tools for an enabling environment are in place, (DoE, 2014) yet schools have been branded as unsafe spaces for school youth with same-sex sexual

orientations (Msibi, 2012; Brown & Diale, 2017; Francis, 2017). Considering these challenges, this study hopes to explore how support structures such as the school-based support team perceive and respond to same-sex sexualities in schools.

1.4 Research question

Formulating the research question(s) is a pivotal step in research processes because these questions narrow the objective and purpose of an investigation (Creswell, 2002). The problem examined in this study is SBST perceptions and responses to the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations.

Therefore, research questions for this study are articulated below.

The main research question was as follows:

- How do the School-Based Support Teams respond to learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

To answer the main research question, I deemed it is necessary to develop the following sub-questions to serve as a guide for this study:

- How do teachers in the SBST perceive same-sex sexual orientations?
- How do teachers in the SBST respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations?
- What are the needs of teachers in the SBST to help them provide an enabling, affirming and inclusive learning environment for learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

1.5 Aims and objectives

The study will pursue the following objectives:

- Firstly, the aim of this study is to find out how school-based support teams respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations.
- Secondly, this study aims at identifying the needs of teachers in the SBST to sufficiently respond to the needs of school learners with same-sex sexual orientations.

1.6 Clarification of key concepts

The concepts of day-to-day language have multiple denotations. So, the researcher should define concepts so that readers outside the field of study may understand what the researcher is saying in his or her research study (Creswell, 2014). Defining terms provides the researcher and readers of the study a vivid understanding of concepts which are used in the study (Creswell, 2002). For this study, the following are key concepts that will be used, and they are comprehensively explained in the following paragraphs.

- **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation refers to the sex of those to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted (Klein, 1993). Some people identify as pansexual or queer in terms of their sexual orientation, which means they define their sexual orientation outside of the gender binary of "male" and "female" only (Klein, 1993).

- **School-Based Support Teams**

School-Based Support Teams are defined as powerful support structures that deliver care and aid to learners at school level (UNESCO, 2001). The SBST comprises of the school principal, a school assessment team (SAT) representatives, an educator from each school/learning phase, and a learning support educator with knowledge in learning support and good teamwork skills (Mackay, 2014).

- **Heterosexuality**

According to Msibi (2011) heterosexuality refers to men or women that are sexually attracted primarily to people of the opposite sex.

- **Homosexuality**

According to Meyer (2007) homosexuality refers to people who are sexually attracted to people of the same sex.

- **Inclusion**

Inclusion is the procedure by which learners who go through barriers to learning and development, gain access to and participate in the mainstream school system (Mahlo, 2011). Inclusion recognizes the fundamental right to education which will give

opportunities to all learners to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning (Mahlo, 2011). Inclusion, therefore, is about providing access, opportunities and accommodating the diverse needs of learners and providing continued support when needed.

1.7 Theoretical framework

Creswell (2014) says a theoretical framework is essential when undertaking a research study because it assists in understanding the subjective world of human experience. This implies that theory is a set of meanings that give insights into people's behaviour (Creswell, 2002). Furthermore, qualitative researchers use theory when conducting a research study for broad explanations for the behaviour and attitudes of human beings (Creswell, 2014).

Theoretical frameworks become a transformative perspective that shapes the types of questions asked; it informs how data are collected and analysed (McMillian and Schumacher, 2010). Therefore, an investigator throughout the study is guided by the theory in examining what issues are important (Creswell, 2014). In this chapter, I briefly discuss the Theory of Anti-oppressive Education and Self Efficacy Theory, for the reason that this study adopted the two theories and they serve as a navigator throughout the study. In Chapter 2, I will provide a comprehensive discussion of these theories.

1.7.1 Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education

In this section, I provide an overview of the Theory of Anti-oppressive Education as an underpinning for this study. I will engage more with the theory in chapter 2. According to Kumashiro (2000) the theory of anti-oppressive education is aimed at addressing the issue of oppression of the "other" - such as learners with the same-sex sexual orientations in hegemonic environments. Kumashiro (2000) refers to the concept of 'other' as all identities that are constructed as different by societies that value the dominant expression of identity and being. Subsequently, those who are 'othered' are marginalised and those who fit the dominant template are privileged (Kumashiro, 2000). This theory is in the best position to deal with the transformation agenda in the

South African educational system that promotes an inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environment for all learners (DBE, 2001). Educators have to reconsider pedagogies, curricula, (the main tool of knowledge transfer) and care and support for learners who are trotting at the peripheries of education's borders. Anti-oppressive education is a concerted and overt frame of response to undo an educational system that creates dichotomies of learners, (Kumashiro, 2001) and in so doing, drives a notion that normalises and affirms difference.

The theory of anti-oppressive education is built on four pillars that aim to undo the often institutionalised and normalised notions of oppression in schools. Kumashiro (2001) refers to them as education for the other, education about the other, education that is critical in privileging and othering, and education that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2000). I concisely discuss each of the approaches below.

Education for the other

Education for the 'other' aims at helping people who are oppressed or unequally treated in society. With reference to this study the foregrounding literature has illustrated how young people are 'othered', discriminated against and isolated simply because of their expression of a sexual orientation that is not conforming to the privileged heterosexuality that is perceived to be the norm. Education systems, and schooling in particular, will have to create the means for a supportive and enabling environment. The school-base support team in this study is an ideal unit in the school to create an inclusive education for the other (for young people with same-sex sexual orientations). However, in the midst of systemic discrimination towards same-sex sexual orientations, the question remains how they perceive and respond to sexual diversity.

Education about the other

Kumashiro (2001) notes that hegemonic identities often silence marginalised identities. This silence and invisibility is found in the pedagogies, curricula and hidden curricula spaces. Francis and DePalma (2014) pointed to the unwillingness of teachers to teach about same-sex sexual orientations, while Msibi (2011) found that curricula hesitantly refer to same-sex sexual orientation in an affirming manner. Even textbooks do not address same-sex sexual orientations (Reygan, 2013). As a result, there is very little understanding to mainstream an education about the other. Such silences can

only be reversed if there is an explicit drive to make sure that education about the other is infused into the education of the dominant identity group. As an empowering unit, I believe the school-based support team is critical to undo the invisibility of same-sex sexuality education as the 'other' within the schools. They should appropriate their care and support mandate and advocate for the normalising of oppressed groups such as those with non-normative sexualities.

Education which is critical of privileging and othering

Kumashiro (2000) is of the view that when hegemonic expressions are perceived to be the norm the majority are less likely to see that others exist and form part of the society, they live in. It becomes challenging for them to see how their accepted and preferred expression of being creates a lower ranking of others. Kumashiro (2001) suggests an education that brings about an awareness of privilege and how it creates othering and oppression. I would suggest an advocative role for the school-based support team that will pro-actively deal with issues of privilege and othering. In the care and support role, the school-based support team is ideally positioned to educate different school structures on how certain identities, expressions and beings in schools are advantaged and how others are suppressed by the nature of everyday practices at schools.

Education that changes students and society

In the last approach, Kumashiro (2000) talks about education that changes society, and education that acknowledges the discursive nature of oppression. He argues that overt strategies should be put in place to facilitate change. Overt transformation will have to take place in the manner in which teachers speak about same-sex sexual orientations and knowledge through curricula and textbooks will have to present same-sex sexual identities in an affirming way. Safe and inclusive environments will have to be established through pro-active approaches to address homophobic violence. The theory of anti-oppressive education and the school-based support team is an ideal match to investigate affirming and enabling environments for young people with same-sex sexual orientations in South African schools.

1.7.2 Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura (1994) states that self-efficacy refers to certain perceptions an individual has that informs him or her whether they can complete a particular task or not. These perceptions affect how a person behaves, thinks, feels and does certain things in his life (Bandura, 1994). Self-Efficacy can be either positive or negative. People's views about their efficacy impact on perceived biases related to accomplishment and disappointment (Bandura, 1994). A person with positive self-efficacy can accomplish a task because they ensure that they persevere in an activity until the task is completed (Kear, 2000). On the other hand, a person with a low or negative perception of self-efficacy can be unsuccessful in completing the task because they are less likely to attempt or persist in challenging activities (Kear, 2000). Research pointed out that teachers felt uncomfortable because they were never trained to respond to issues of same-sex sexual orientations (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015; DePalma & Francis, 2017; Francis, 2017). It is inevitable that teachers will feel incompetent and lack the confidence to address issues of sexuality. It is more challenging when teachers are conflicted with issues of culture and religion that serve as gatekeepers to the education of sexual diversity (Francis, 2010; Brown & Diale, 2017). Just as the Department of Education presents various training courses on SIAS (DBE, 2014), there is a need to train teachers about sexual diversity and how to create an inclusive environment for this cohort of learners too. An ideal departure point is that of the school-based support team. They can then facilitate this training for the rest of their colleagues and also serve as ongoing support.

According to Bandura (1994) self-efficacy is based on the following four principal foundations of knowledge and practice:

- Mastery experiences (previous experience – success and failure)
- Vicarious experiences (observing the performances – successes and failures of others)
- Social persuasion (verbal persuasion from peers, colleagues, relatives)
- Physiological and emotional states (from which people partly judge their abilities, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction)

These tenets could assist the school-based support team to respond to requests for training and support in schools that would enable teachers to address issues of sexual diversity more confidently.

1.8 Organisation of chapters

The study will have five chapters organised as follows:

Chapter 1

This chapter introduced the background and rationale for the study as well as the problem statement, research questions and aims. Theoretical assumptions informing the research will be briefly explained. The research paradigm guiding the research will be highlighted according to the research methodology and design. Data collection, sampling, and data analysis will also be explained. Lastly, I concluded the chapter with a brief discussion about trustworthiness and ethics.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 gave a detailed explanation of the theoretical framework that guided this research and review the literature.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 discussed research methodology.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 provided an analysis of the research findings and discussions.

Chapter 5

Lastly, chapter 5 provided a discussion of results in the context of existing literature. The chapter also included the following aspects: summary, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

1.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter gives an orientation of the study. One of the important areas in this chapter is to provide the background and the purpose of the study. The study will provide SBST member responses on the care and support of learners with same-

sex sexual orientation in a township school. Lastly, I stated how I will structure all my chapters for this study.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2 Introduction

The primary goal of education is to prepare learners for full citizenship (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). Learners should strive to know each other and become mindful of both differences and similarities. In this way, full citizenship occurs because acceptance and tolerance of differences is embraced at school level (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Bhana, 2014). Full citizenship is guided by human rights, which emphasises that all people, regardless of their social or sexual orientation or whether they are in the majority or the minority are given an equal opportunity to be full citizens of a country (Ilyayambwa, 2012). The declaration of the human rights of the people with same-sex sexual orientation in South Africa ensured that the principles of human dignity and the embodiment of full citizenship are equal in the education system (Ilyayambwa, 2012; Bhana, 2014). Under the law, everyone is equal and should benefit from the constitution of South Africa (DOJ, 1996). Although the Constitution of South Africa addresses the issue of equity, transformation, and social cohesion, there are inconsistencies between societal values and constitutional principles (DePalma & Francis, 2014; Brown & Diale, 2017). In reality, people with same-sex sexual orientations are victimised because they do not conform to the norm (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2011, Msibi, 2012; Brown & Diale, 2017). In this study I discover the responses of the School-Based Support Team to the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations in a township school setting. This chapter therefore draws on the literature that exposes the experiences and realities of people with same-sex sexual orientations, focusing on how they are treated in schools and how the schooling system responds to the emerging sexual diversity in South African schools (and in communities). The discussion on sexual diversity in education in South Africa is fairly new in its development, but there is progress in the research on sexual diversity (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2012).

This chapter used the research questions to examine the existing knowledge in literature. The research questions are set out below.

The primary research question is:

- How does the School-Based Support Teams respond to learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

The following are the secondary research questions:

- How do teachers in the SBST perceive same-sex sexual orientations?
- How do teachers in the SBST respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations?
- What are the needs of teachers in the SBST to provide an enabling, affirming and inclusive learning environment for learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

2.1 The road to democracy: Transformation in the education system in South Africa

South Africa as a democratic country made some progressive commitments when it comes to policy transformation (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). Engelbrecht (2004) argues that the contemporary education system, legislation and policy demonstrate the commitment of the South African government to address the diversity among learners and give support to those children who experience challenges at schools. Gruba et al. (2004) believes that policy changes are determined by learners' demands and diversity in schools (Engelbrecht, 2004). Policy transformation is initiated when new government officials are introduced, predominantly in previously oppressed countries in which existing policies are viewed as representing a small minority of the population (Hoadley & Jansen, 2010). Change should occur based on societal diversity and political and social priorities in order to accommodate new demands at school level (Moodley, 2013; Gruba et al., 2004). In 1994, apartheid collapsed and the African National Congress came into power. As a result, South Africans expected the new government to change the educational policies and the curriculum. It was expected that the new developments in the education systems would display the values and beliefs of a non-racial society and democratic values such as social justice, equality and human rights (Spady, 1994). Indeed, Curriculum 2005 was introduced, and it was generally known as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). Spady (1994) sees OBE as an education system that provides what is essential for all learners to be

successful at the end of their learning experiences. However, this curriculum was later revised and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was introduced. The RNCS reorganised and strengthened curriculum 2005 (Moodley, 2013) and continued to enhance the principles of OBE (DoE, 2002). This policy statement was part of the process of transforming education and training to achieve the aims of our democratic society and of the South African Constitution (Moodley, 2013). In 2010, the Minister of Education announced that The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) would be introduced in 2012 as a school curriculum. She emphasised that CAPS was not a new curriculum, but rather a revision of RNCS (DoE, 2010). The Life Orientation (LO) CAPS policy document (DoE, 2011, p. 4) states that the education system addresses the following critical principles:

- **“Social transformation:** *ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of the population*
- **Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice:** *infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors”.*

Through this curriculum learners should be introduced to their constitutional rights and be taught how to respect the rights of others (Spady, 1994; DoE, 2011; Moodley, 2013). The education system should be inclusive - this means schooling should accommodate diversity and learner needs (Engelbrecht, 2004; DoE, 2011; Donohoe & Bornman, 2014). To achieve the abovementioned principles the Department of Education uses White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) as a guideline in redressing the issues of the past. According to White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001, p. 5), *“the principle guiding broad strategies to achieve this vision include: acceptance of principles and values contained in the constitution and human rights and social justice for all learners.”* According to Mdikana, Ntshangase and Mayekiso (2007) the introduction of White Paper 6 in 2001 is the government’s assurance of equity by addressing diversity, discrimination and introducing inclusive education. In White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) there are doctrines for generating new knowledge and new paradigms in the movement of inclusion (Mdikana et al., 2007). This transformation in the education system requires a commitment to a single, inclusive education for all (DBE, 2001; Mdikana et al., 2007). However, other

educationist authors (such as Donohoe & Bornman, 2014) do not believe that White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) is clear enough. They state that it lacks clarity and is ambiguous about how to eliminate discrimination at schools (Donohoe & Bornman, 2014).

In 1996, a new constitution was approved by the government. The main focus of the constitution was to eliminate the prejudices of the apartheid system. It was the first constitution in the world to protect the rights of people with same-sex sexual identities (Graziano, 2004; Ilyayambwa, 2012). Francis and Reygan (2016) say this constitution was the only one (in the world) in 1996, that included sexual orientation protection, where same-sex marriage has been legalised from 2006 (Laing, 2013). Section 9 (under equality) of the constitution (DOJ, 1996, p. 5), highlights an important aspect that discrimination against people with same-sex sexual orientations is unlawful:

“Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.”

School is a state institution and it is guided by the constitution (Arndt, 2004). Schools are legally required to protect people with same-sex sexual identities from harassment, bullying, and discrimination (Hall, 2007; Bhana, 2014; Brown & Diale, 2017). White Paper 6 (DBE, 2001) says schools are designed to provide a full range of support for learning needs among all learners regardless of their similarities and dissimilarities. In the new democratic South Africa, school challenges faced by learners should not be seen as being within the learner, but rather within the system (DoE, 2001; Engelbrecht, 2004). Engelbrecht (2004) believes that there is nothing wrong with learners so they cannot be fixed, the system should be transformed so that it can accommodate diversity in schools. Schools must *“shift from the traditional child-deficit, medical approach towards an ecological and multi-level systems approach, suggesting a wider scope of analysis and action within an inclusive educational approach”* (Engelbrecht, 2004, p. 23).

Brown and Diale (2017) acknowledge that the government made progress when it comes to the legislative framework that promotes the protection of all learners and they also acknowledge that schools are still behind in failing to recognise sexual diversity. However, it appears that recently, schools are critical sites for the

enforcement of heterosexuality and the perpetration of homophobia (Bhana, 2012). For Brown and Diale (2017), schools are not yet places where fundamental human values are taught and embraced. People with same-sex sexual orientations are still rejected and are still referred to as 'others' and they tend to have negative experiences at school (Graziano, 2004; Msibi, 2012). Msibi (2012) conducted research on the "*Experiences of homophobia among queer youth in South African township schools*" and one of his findings is that schools are homophobic and unsafe spaces for school youth with same-sex sexual orientations. Teachers, school administrators and learners express their dissonance with learners with same-sex sexual orientations through language (verbal) and physical abuse (Msibi, 2012). Brown and Diale (2017) recently exposed that harassment, discrimination and homophobic violence towards learners with same-sex identities can be traced back to educators. Some teachers are lacking knowledge and understanding about same-sex identities, hence they victimise these learners (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2012; Mostert, Gordon & Kriegler, 2015). In schools it is believed that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are trying to be an opposite gender (for instance, lesbians are trying to be men and gays are trying to be women) (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2012). According to Mostert, Gordon and Kriegler (2015) educators in schools perceive same-sex sexual orientation as a sickness and it is seen as a taboo to have this minority sexual orientation. As a result, learners with same-sex sexual orientations are harassed, victimised and discriminated against with the aim of changing them to conform to the compulsory heteronormative school environment (Meyer, 2007; Msibi, 2012). Furthermore, in South African societies heterosexuals believe that men with same-sex sexual identities are men who have failed to honour their male status (Graziano, 2004; Msibi, 2012). Homophobia, heterosexism and heteronormativity create injustices in schools towards learners with same-sex sexual identities (Mostert, Gordon & Kriegler, 2015). This approach is used in schools. Thus, homophobia is expressed as an attempt to make boys and girls 'straight' (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2012; DePalma & Francis, 2014). According to Meyer (2007) homophobia in schools needs to be addressed if the government wants to attain the basic expectations of school safety for all. From the above discussion, it is clear that learners with same-sex sexual orientations get little support from educators (including the SBST) and administrators (Msibi, 2011, 2012).

Since this study is concerned with the responses of the school-based support team to the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations, the next section will focus on sexual diversity in South Africa and how the South African education system responds to sexual diversity in the school environment. Another question is how the system develops strategies that will create conducive learning environments for learners with same-sex sexual identities.

2.2 Sexual Diversity in South Africa

2.2.1 A historical reflection of sexual diversity under the Apartheid system

According to Francis and Reygan (2016) South Africa has a long history of excluding people based on race, gender, sex and class. The legacy of the apartheid system is still seen in a democratic South Africa (Francis & Reygan, 2016; Jagessar, 2015). During the apartheid system the government did not care for minority sexualities, which includes the sexual preferences of gays, lesbians and transsexuals (Potgieter, 1997; Ilyayambwa, 2012). In addition, a 1987 parliamentary report states that homosexuality is an acquired sexual behaviour and is considered as evil, and consequently the government decided to discriminate against people with same-sex sexual identities (Arndt, 2004). Mostert et al. (2015) mention that people with same-sex sexual orientations were seen as different from the norm (heterosexual). As a result, the government did not recognise them and they were condemned, excluded and even punished by the law in the criminal, civil and family law courts (Potgieter, 1997). People with same-sex sexual identities were viewed as a threat to the nation and some people believed that it could be cured with spiritual and psychological interventions (Potgieter, 1997; Graziano, 2004). Prior to 1994 people with same-sex sexual orientations were denied their basic human rights and the apartheid system reduced them to social outcasts and criminals (Arndt, 2004).

In the past it was believed that same-sex sexual identities among black South Africans is un-African (Graziano, 2004; Msibi, 2011). Msibi (2011) says others viewed homosexuality as a danger to African culture, tradition and normative family values. African leaders often hold the idea that homosexuality is a western phenomenon and that Africans should be protected from it (Msibi, 2011). Msibi (2011, p. 62) quoted former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, saying the following about same-sex

identities: *“People with same-sex identities are worse than pigs and dogs and homosexuality is a scourge planted by the white man on a pure continent.”* In South Africa, the former president Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma mentioned that same-sex marriages are a humiliation to the country and to Christianity (Reygan & Lynette, 2014; Jagessar, 2015). However, Zuma later expressed his regret about uttering this statement and apologised to the public. However, his opinions remain valid for many people (Msibi, 2011). Former Minister of Arts and Culture, Lulu Xingwana, decided to walk out of an exhibition that displayed pictures of undressed lesbian couples. She mentioned that the exhibition was ‘immoral, offensive and going against nation-building’ (Reygan & Lynette, 2014). These homophobic statements are based on the false assumption that homosexuality is un-African (Msibi, 2011; Jagessar, 2015). The idea of same-sex sexual orientation being un-African has created a culture of discrimination in higher education institutions in South Africa (Jagessar, 2015). Msibi (2011) argues that those who believe homosexuality is un-African do not explain how it was imposed on Africa and it is not clear when this imposition took place. Msibi (2011) and Jagessar (2015) believe that same-sex sexual identity is a logical feature of African society and its belief systems.

According to Donohoe and Bornman (2014) racially and sexually entrenched attitudes and the implementation of discriminatory practices led to disparities in the delivery of education. Schools, for instance, provided support services to learners according to race (Donohoe & Bornman, 2014). In the past, children were taught the language, the history and perspectives of the dominant culture (Meyer, 2007). In this case, children were taught that being heterosexual is normal and acceptable (Graziano, 2004; Mayer, 2007; Graziano, 2004; Mostert, Gordon & Kriegler, 2015). Heterosexism is connected to cultural restrictions and informed by the embedded prejudices against people with same-sex sexual orientations (Meyer, 2007).

2.2.2 Homosexuality and Religious Beliefs

Religious beliefs play a fundamental role in rejecting homosexuality (Francis & DePalma, 2014). Some of those who oppose same-sex sexual identities use religion as a scapegoat to hide their homophobic tendencies (Jagessar, 2015). According to Akker et al. (2012) religion provides norms that inform humans how to live by creating moral rules that will determine what is good and what is wrong and, in this way, religion

has a substantial effect on a person's attitudes. Furthermore, religious values consider homosexuality as immoral (Ellison, 1993). Msibi (2012) states that religion is a barrier that challenges those who engage in religion to support and care for people with same-sex sexual identities, and this includes school teachers. Religious people, who support heterosexual conventionalism have a strong attitude that homosexuality is wrong, and as a result they disapprove of it (Akker et al., 2012). Akker et al. (2012) says the more people involve themselves in a religious organisation, the more they will comply with religious norms and values. Religion makes demands of its followers that ensure that they do not deviate from the norm (Msibi, 2012). For instance, in Christianity, gender roles are seen through God's authority and Christians do not want to oppose God's authority. As a result, people with same-sex sexual orientations are victimised because they are seen as different from the norm (Nel & Judge, 2008). Ellison (1993) believes that people with same-sex sexual orientations have been exposed to religious condemnation in the past. This injustice has taken place ironically in the name of the gospel of love, mercy and peace (Ellison, 1993).

2.2.3 Misalignment of social values/culture and constitutional ideals

Democracy in South Africa brought changes in policy and these policies are guided by the constitution which emphasises the principles of human dignity, equality and social justice (Englebrecht, 2004; Graziano, 2004; Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2011; Brown & Diale, 2017). In South Africa, homophobia occurs in violation of the law because the constitution protects the rights of people with same-sex sexual identities (Msibi, 2011). Literature shows that in South African townships people with same-sex sexual identities have negative experiences in communities, churches and in schools (Msibi, 2012). Queer learners are bullied, verbally harassed and physically harmed (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2011; Msibi, 2012; Brown & Diale, 2017). Msibi (2011, p. 61) says "*the forum for the Empowerment of Women reported that 46 lesbian women participated in a survey which shows that 41% had been raped, 37% had been assaulted and 17% had been verbally abused*". In 1998 at least 31 lesbians had been killed (Nel & Judge, 2008). Modisane (2014) says the South African government and justice system is failing the victims of these rapes and killings by setting low bail and taking years to bring the court cases to a conclusion. Hate crime is used as a way to convert lesbians in townships to heterosexuality, as an attempt to 'cure' them from

being homosexuals. These hate crimes expose the fact that social values are not on a par (Brown & Diale, 2017) with what the constitution emphasises about the rights of people with same-sex sexual orientations. Modisane (2014) believes that the goal of accepting people with same-sex sexual orientations remains as elusive today as it was in pre-1994 because the society still believes that homosexuality is un-African and that it is against the normal cultural expectations for men and women (Msibi, 2012).

Even though the constitution (DOJ, 1996, p. 24) declares that the country should have *“the values that inspire an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom”*, some people with same-sex sexual identities suppress their sexual identity in public and assimilate heterosexual norms (Modisane, 2014). Assimilation is a strategy they use to protect themselves from homophobia (Modisane, 2014). Out of fear of punishment, those who are victimised adjust themselves to comply with expected social values and behaviour (Modisane, 2014; Brown & Diale, 2017). Brown and Diale (2017) noticed that student teachers with same-sex sexual identities try to express themselves in a way that will show that they conform to the norm because they are trying to prevent losing credibility as teachers. Assimilation is a threat to the freedom of the individual (Modisane, 2014). Msibi (2012) observes that in townships people with same-sex sexual orientations hide themselves due to fear of being exposed to discrimination and prejudice. Furthermore, Brown and Diale (2017) notice that sexual diversity in the South African education system shows that same-sex sexual orientation is viewed as something that should be hidden and kept away from the teaching and learning environment. In some communities hate crimes occur because those who better understand same-sex sexual identities remain silent, fail to act, or do not render support to the victims (Nel & Judge, 2008). Due to lack of support people with same-sex sexual identities are at greater risk of suicide, alcohol abuse and dropping out of school. (Msibi, 2012).

2.2.4 School as a microcosm of the society

According to Francis and Brown (2017) schools are learning environments that teach children about their basic human rights in society. The main purpose of schooling is to educate learners about full citizenship and to equip them to be better members of their communities. In addition, Francis and Brown (2017) believe that schooling is there to

give guidance on how to relate with others and to become mindful of both differences and similarities (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). Children should learn to be community builders (Francis & Brown, 2017) and they should receive support so that the 'other' can find resources and tools to challenge all forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000).

However, Msibi (2012) observes that schools in South African townships are unsafe for learners with same-sex sexual identities because they are exposed to violence and harassment (Graziano, 2004; Msibi, 2012; Brown & Diale, 2017; Francis & Brown, 2017). Educators normalise heterosexuality through denying the existence of learners with same-sex sexual identities (Msibi 2012; Francis & Brown, 2017). Lack of acceptance for sexual diversity in South African schools is acknowledged as the norm (Brown & Diale, 2017). Sometimes these harmful actions are initiated by peers and teachers, (Kumashiro, 2000; Francis & Brown, 2017) but at other times harm is the result of the failure on the part of teachers and school administrators (Kumashiro, 2000; Msibi, 2012). Schooling is very oppressive when learners with same-sex sexual orientations do not get support from teachers (Msibi, 2012). However, Nel and Judge (2008) and Msibi (2012) state that not all educators create unsafe learning environment intentionally, rather they are homophobic because they lack knowledge about what homosexuality is about. In responding to oppressive schooling, it is important to study the realities of learners with same-sex sexual orientations at school level. Therefore, in the next section, I will discuss the experiences of learners with same-sex sexual orientations in the school setting.

2.2.5 The realities of learners with same-sex sexual orientation at school

Kumashiro (2000) argues that schools should acknowledge sexual diversity and he believes that the culture of 'otherness' should be assimilated in the classroom. Currently this is not the case in some of the schools in South Africa where learners with same-sex sexual orientations remain oppressed and discriminated against (Msibi, 2011, 2012; Francis & Brown, 2017). Brown and Diale (2017, p.1) observe that schools are "connected to contextual experiences of rejection and of being 'othered'". There are forms of oppression that expose the rejection of the 'other' in schools. Therefore,

the following discussion focuses on some of the realities that learners with same-sex sexual identities are exposed to.

Firstly, classroom teachers fail to challenge existing social norms that see homosexuality as immoral and heterosexuality as normal (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). In classrooms heterosexism is reinforced and exclusion of the minority sexual groups happens through ignorance or avoidance of the issue of sexual diversity (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). The main issue here, is the attitude of educators towards same-sex sexual orientation. Some educators have not shifted from the ideology that homosexuality is un-African and still believe that social norms are fixed and stable, hence they reject the culture of people with same-sex sexual identities or exclude it in their teaching pedagogy (Msibi, 2011, 2012). Secondly, the South African school curriculum is silent about the challenges faced by people with same-sex sexual orientations (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). The consequence of this silence is that learners with same-sex sexual orientations do not have the opportunity to recognise their marginalised status and the consequences of this for their rights and responsibilities as citizens (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). The issue here is that silence in the curriculum about sexual diversity does not prepare learners for how to live and treat people with same-sex sexual identities (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012) and this puts emphasises on the fact that people with same-sex sexual identities are second class citizens in South Africa (Nel & Judge, 2008). Thus, they face challenges in gaining access to their constitutional rights and services (Nel & Judge, 2008). Silence about homosexuality expands intolerance and prejudice (Francis & Msibi, 2017). In addition, Kumashiro (2000) believes heteronormative curricula normalise heterosexuality and '*otherise*' homosexuality. Lastly, there are elements of normalising heteronormativity in schools (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Francis & Brown, 2017) such as, for instance, signage of 'male' and 'female' learners' toilets. Heteronormative elements give learners with same-sex sexual identities problems in expressing themselves or in exposing whom they are attracted to (Francis & Brown, 2017). Some teachers believe that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are trying to change their sex or gender (Msibi, 2012; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Francis & Brown, 2017).

2.2.6 Driving forces in education systems: policy and curriculum

Fataar (2007) states that in South Africa policy has been based on breaking apartheid legacies (Fataar, 2007). According to Steyn (2000) developing new educational policies and curricula was an attempt to redress and create equity in schools, with the ultimate goal of providing free and just education for all. During the apartheid era, the Department of Education did not provide support to Black learners with disabilities or who needed additional support (Walton, 2010). These learners attended local schools but received no support, and often they did not attend school at all (Walton, 2010). This had to change, so new school policies and curricula had to be implemented to accommodate the needs of all children in schools (Steyn, 2000; Fataar, 2007). Policy is a vehicle for transformation (Paechter, 2000). Policy instructs new teaching pedagogies (Fataar, 2007) and by deciding to teach learners in a different way, social transformation might be achieved (Paechter, 2000). Francis and DePalma (2014) suggest that educational policies should be safe for people with same-sex identities and that the curriculum must address homosexuality. However, at schools such educational policies are likely to be contested and resisted, especially if the changes are observed to demoralise the values, relative power and privileges of the dominant group in the society (Paechter, 2000). The curriculum and policy can be opposed by people who want to cling to their values and those who wish to change certain features of the society (Paechter, 2000; Fataar, 2007). Indeed, there is a gap between the purpose of policy, its implementation, the curriculum and government's capability to establish an equitable and just system (Fataar, 2007).

The next section will explore the South African Schools Act (SASA), the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and White Paper 6 of 2001 because they brought much change to the education system.

a. The South African Schools Act of 1996

According to Engelbrecht (2016) the South African Schools Act (DoE, 1996) articulates the new aims of equity, redress, quality, efficiency and the right of all learners to equal access to the broadest possible educational opportunities. Walton (2011) shares the

same sentiments with Engelbrecht (2016) and according to her the South African Schools Act of 1996 (DoE, 1996) unified the education system in order to redress past injustices. On the other hand, Naidoo (2005) sees SASA (DoE, 1996) as a legislation that is radical in that it prescribes fundamental transformation at school level. Naidoo (2005) highlights that the main objective of SASA is to:

“...redress past injustices in the education system. To ensure that the system provides educational progressively high quality for all learners and a strong foundation for the development of all our people’s talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic wellbeing of society, protect and advance our diverse culture and language, uphold the rights of all learners, parents (DoE, 1996, p. 2).

The above quotation underlines that every child in South Africa should have access to schooling. Section 5 (1) of SASA (DoE, 1996) mandates schools to admit learners without any entry assessment, into schools of their choice and provide safe teaching and learning environments. The vision and mission of SASA (DoE, 1996) is in line with the South African Constitution’s (DoJ, 1996) vision of building a society that is free from prejudice and discrimination. Naidoo (2005) points out that Section 8 of SASA (DoE, 1996) considers gender in biological terms and provides no room for wider conceptions of gender, so one can claim that the rights of people with same-sex orientations are not protected in this context. Even though the Schools Act (DoE, 1996) does not deliberate the matter of sexual diversity in schools, that does not give schools the authority to discriminate against, harass or commit hate crimes towards learners with same-sex sexual identities. I believe that schools are government institutions that should be guided by the Constitution of the country. The South African Constitution (DOJ, 1996) in Article 9 (3) states that South Africa should be a just society that does not discriminate against sexual orientation (Arndt, 2004; Laing, 2013; Francis & Reygan, 2016). As a result, schools should have a curriculum that is inspired by the principles of the constitution of the country (Spady, 1994; DoE, 2011; Moodley, 2013).

b. The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

Moodley (2013) states that CAPS is an amendment to what educators teach (curriculum) and not how they teach (teaching methods). In short, teachers should teach the curriculum, but they have to decide how they teach it in their classrooms. Teaching methods should include every child in the classroom (Du Plessis, 2015) as stipulated in the Life Orientation CAPS document. CAPS is well structured; it covers study areas, topics and sub-topics, examples, plans, annual teaching plans, assessment activities and resources to guide teachers (Du Plessis, 2015). The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is crucial in creating a just, non-discriminatory society and it aims to create an effective learning environment (Moodley, 2013). CAPS contains constitutional principles which are intended to redress the legacies of the apartheid system. Clearly, *“the school curriculum is the vehicle to create the conditions for inclusive education”* (Naicker, 2006, p. 4). Lampen (2014) points out that CAPS supports the diverse learning needs of all children in the classroom and this can be done through the process of *‘curriculum differentiation’*, which includes *“processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum”* (DOE, 2011, p. 4). Lampen (2014) sees the process of curriculum differentiation as the strategy used to overcome the potential barriers to learning in classrooms (Department of Education, 2001). Sumran and Malcom (2004) argue that curriculum amendments and policy implementation is viewed as crucial to achieve education for all South Africans. Even though South Africa appears to have produced more educational policies than any other modern democratic country, Jansen and Taylor (2003) noticed that there are loopholes in the policies. For instance, there is no specific policy that protects the rights of learners with same-sex sexual identities. These policy gaps have therefore resulted in an unjust and discriminatory education system for learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). In addition, Vandeyar and Killen (2003) believe that policy transformation does not necessarily lead to major changes in the classroom. At schools some teachers use the same pedagogical practices they used before the advent of democracy (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003).

c. White Paper 6

Jama (2014) states that South Africa has created a policy framework that allows for the implementation of an inclusive education system. In 2001 White Paper 6 was published with the purpose of implementing an inclusive educational system in South Africa (Jama, 2014). White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) proclaims that the Department of Education has an obligation to make sure that all learners registered in schools are cared for and supported so that they can learn effectively (Jama, 2014). White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) states that educational support in inclusive education and training is pivotal and described it as support for all learners within a systemic and developmental approach. Engelbrecht (2016) points out that it empowers all learners to learn and enables them to participate actively and critically in the learning process. Furthermore, White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) outlines a national strategy for systematically addressing and eradicating barriers to learning (Engelbrecht, 2016) through:

- Establishing full-service schools,
- Converting special schools into resource centres,
- Training education managers and teachers, and
- Developing institutional and district support structures.

White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) states that there should be a conceptual transformation, meaning that all stakeholders in education should step away from using the terms “disability,” “learning difficulties” or “learners with special education needs” to the more encompassing “barriers to learning and development” (Danials, 2016; Landsberg, Krüger & Swart, 2016). Using “learning barrier” extends the meaning beyond simple physical disability to include other factors like poverty, language, family dynamics, negative attitudes, physical and sexual abuse, stereotyping of differences and an inflexible curriculum. According to SIAS (DOE, 2014) learning barriers are defined as challenges that arise within the educational system as a whole and at the learning sites that prevent a learner from having access to learning and development (Danials, 2016). Furthermore, White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001, p.12) seeks to “*enable education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.*”

2.2.7 Core duties of an educator

In the education system, teachers play a critical role, which is to carry out the goals of the Department. The main goal of the education system is to ensure that the following happens in schools:

- “[Equipping] learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country.
- *Active and critical learning: encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths*” (DBE, 2011, p.4).

It is the responsibility of an educator to create safe and conducive learning environments for all learners (including learners with same-sex sexual orientations) in the classroom (Steyn, 2000). In South Africa teachers are obligated to register at a council called the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Council members are expected to act as professionals who respect learners and they must demonstrate a sense of caring towards learners. According to the South African Council for Educators, a good teacher:

- *“respects the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and in particular children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality;*
- *acknowledges the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realize his or her potentialities;*
- *Strives to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of South Africa*” (SACE, 2000, p. 4).

From the above quotation it is clear that the SACE document shares the same sentiments as the constitution about protecting the rights of learners [people] with same-sex sexual orientations. The realities in schools illustrate that some teachers do not respect sexual diversity in schools and that learners with same-sex sexual identities are harassed and bullied by teachers (Msibi, 2011, 2012). This is against the law, as it is emphasised in the SACE document that teachers should “*refrain from any form of sexual harassment of learners*” (SACE, 2000, p. 4). However, learners with

same-sex sexual identities expect educators to act or do something about the harassment they face on a daily basis (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001) but the question is whether this is possible if they are the main perpetrators of harassment and prejudice toward learners with same-sex sexual preferences (Msibi, 2012). Teachers have not gelled well with policy transformation, and their teaching pedagogies are still based on their previous understanding of education (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003). Some of them neglect what is said in the policy and do the opposite of what the policy instructs them to do (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Vandeyar and Killen (2003) urge South African educators to change their practices in response to the new policies and curriculum. Teachers must address the needs of learners through the provision of an inclusive curriculum and through the development of positive and equitable teaching practices and policies (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001). However, transformation in education depends on the attitude of educators, as they build the school culture (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). When teachers change their attitudes towards changes in the education system, silence around homophobia in schools is likely to stop (Msibi, 2012).

Furthermore, SIAS (DOE, 2014) states that school teachers are expected to care for all learners at school and provide necessary support to those who need it (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2001). The term “*support*” could be viewed as all actions that educators employ to make it easier for learning to occur (Mackay, 2014). This duty expected of an educator will be further elaborated on in 2.4 since ‘*support*’ is critical in inclusive education and this role must be undertaken by the SBST members at schools.

2.3 Inclusive Education in compulsory heterosexual school cultures

According to Walton (2011) inclusive education is a process of providing access and participation to learners in schools and reducing exclusionary forces in all phases of school life. Ahmend, Sharma and Deppeler (2011) define inclusive education as a reform strategy that intends to include learners with different abilities and differences at schools. From the two above definitions it is clear that inclusion in education should acknowledge and respect the fact that children are diverse and that they have different needs (UNESCO, 1994; DOE, 2001; Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011).

Inclusion is about the promotion of equal participation and non-discrimination within a single education system (Bornman & Rose, 2014). In an inclusive classroom environmental barriers to learning are addressed and learners are given the adequate support services that they need (Walton, 2011). Learners have unique life experiences and needs, therefore, the education system must accommodate every child in the school (Armstrong et al., 2011). It should also end segregation and prejudice in schools for the benefit of all children (Prinsloo, 2001; Ahmend et al., 2011; Walton, 2011). In addition, support and care should be the priority when implementing inclusion policies at schools (Prinsloo, 2001). In order to successfully implement inclusive education, the Department of Education should consider the following aspects as stated by Mahlo (2013, p.165):

- *Providing a strengthened education support services which will give support to educators*
- *Providing in-service training for regular teachers so that they can cope with learners who experience barriers to learning*
- *Re-training and reorganising district support services in order to provide educators and learners with support they need.*

For this study it is crucial to discuss the road South Africa has taken when it comes to inclusive education. As we have seen in 2.4.1 the realities of learners with same-sex sexual identities are not desirable. As a result, the next section discusses inclusive education in South Africa.

2.3.1 Inclusive Education in South Africa

The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa can assist in promoting constitutional values such as the rights to equality and freedom from discrimination (Walton, 2011). According to the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga (as cited in Walton, 2011) there has been some progress in the implementation of inclusive education. In 2010, she stated that 8 schools nationally had succeeded in supporting the needs of a diverse learner population and she remained confident that ordinary schools were making progress in becoming inclusive (Walton, 2011). Furthermore, by 2009 the Department of Education had managed to introduce full-service schools whose main responsibility is to adopt and implement the principles and practices of inclusive education (DOE, 2009). Despite this, homosexuals at some

schools are still exposed to hatred, discrimination and harassment (Msibi, 2011, 2012; Msibi, 2012; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Francis & Brown, 2017; Francis & Msibi, 2017). Msibi (2012) points out that the school environment is unfriendly to learners with same-sex identities because schools have a heteronormative culture (Kumashiro, 2000; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Francis & Msibi, 2017). This is against the law (Donohoe & Bernman, 2014) since schools are guided by government policies and the constitution which prohibit discrimination against learners at school level (Walton, 2011). For instance, White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) is designed to change the South African educational system from one that discriminates against and segregates learners to a system that provides systemic support and creates school environments that enhance the skills of teachers to cope with more diverse learners (Donohoe & Bernman, 2014). For that reason, discriminating against learners with same-sex sexual orientations deprives learners of their constitutional rights to freedom and education (Msibi, 2011, 2012; Brown & Diale, 2017; Francis & Msibi, 2017). Schools should develop practices that reach out to all learners (Ainscow, 2000) and that prevent discrimination (Walton, 2011). According to Ainscow, (2000) inclusive education is about the development of schools, rather than the integration of vulnerable groups of learners into existing arrangements. Schools must change and implement new policies to avoid discrimination in schools (Walton, 2011). However, implementation will be difficult as long as the policy is still vague and lacks direction (Donohoe & Bernman, 2014). I will discuss this point further in the next section.

2.3.2 Advantages of Inclusive Education in South Africa

Makhalemele and Nel (2015) state that the introduction of inclusive education in South Africa brought good transformation to the education system such as support structures like School-Based Support Teams aimed at caring for and supporting learners with learning and social challenges. Support structures have a pivotal role to play in schools because they focus on individual learner intervention (DOE, 2001; Jama, 2014; Makhalemele & Nel, 2015). In addition, inclusive education in South Africa has managed to shift focus from a medical to a social understanding of learning challenges that learners face. Indeed, White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) advocates changing the system, not the learners, in order to maximize the participation of these learners in the education system (Florian, 2008; Mahlo, 2011; Jama, 2014; Landsberg, Krüger &

Swart, 2016). In an inclusive school, educators and peers are not allowed to try to change learners with same-sex sexual orientations because there is nothing to be fixed (Msibi, 2011). Inclusive education encourages schools to be an affirming space, where 'otherness' is embraced and where 'normality' is not accepted as the only way of being (Kumashiro, 2000). However, the department of education has not reached this phase of including all learners (especially learners with same-sex sexual orientations) because there are many challenges facing the system and the schools (Daniels, 2007; Donohoe & Bernman, 2014).

2.3.3 Shortcomings of Inclusive Education in South Africa

A lot must be done when it comes to inclusion in South African schools because support services (Such as SBSTs) in schools have failed to address the major issues faced by learners (Hay, 2003). Policy developers and implementers in South Africa have arrived at a conclusion that there are several shortcomings with the implementation of inclusive education (Naicker, 2006). A minority of learners in schools are still discriminated against based on their sexual orientation (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2014). Kumashiro (2000) argues that schools should provide supportive spaces where the "other" is cared for and supported by authorities. However, currently authorities (or schools) are not yet practising inclusion principles. In schools, for instance, contextual factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education are not yet recognised (Ainscow, 2000) and sexual diversity among learners (including learners with same-sex orientations) is still not acknowledged (Msibi, 2012). Brown and Diale (2017) spotlighted the fact that schools still have gaps in recognising and appreciating sexual diversity, and as a result learners are oppressed and discriminated against in schools (Nel & Judge, 2008). The main problem with schools is that they are dominated by compulsory heteronormativity (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2012; Brown & Diale, 2017). At some schools learners with same-sex sexual orientations are seen as demonic or possessed with evil spirits (Graziano, 2004) and other schools view the behaviour of learners with same-sex sexual orientations as immoral (Brown & Diale, 2017). The following section discusses the most critical shortcomings of inclusive education:

a. Lack of clarity in the White Paper 6 policy document

In 2014, Donohue and Bornman did a study on *“The challenges of realising inclusive education in South Africa”* and the outcomes of the study reveal that White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) is imprecise about the mission and the vision of inclusive education in South Africa. They argue that teachers do not understand what is required of them, hence they do not implement what is outlined in White Paper 6 (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). In addition, Conrad and Brown (as cited in Lampen, 2014), conducted a study in 2011 where they stated that school principals (who were participants) demonstrate confusion around ‘what is meant’ by ‘inclusive education’. Lack of a clear and explicit policy implies that educators cannot draw on authoritative discourse to guide their classroom actions (DePalma & Francis, 2014). Another problem with White Paper 6 is that it does not give direction on how to select or classify learners with severe special needs. As a result, even learners who experience mild learning difficulties are still kept in separate “special” schools and some of them are still hidden at home by parents because they do not get accommodation in so called “special” schools (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). The problem here is that the isolation of learners based on their learning needs is a violation of their human rights (Mitchell, 2005). Engelbrecht et al. (2001) argue that all educators are trained to meet with diversity in schools, and therefore children with mild learning barriers should not be kept in so called “special” schools.

b. Lack of epistemology and teacher training

What happens in practice at schools does not display the principles of inclusive education (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Naicker (2006) says that the gap between policy and reality can be traced to the fact that policy and the curriculum do not display a pedagogic revolution but are stuck at a political level and ignore the epistemological issues in the training of teachers. Naicker (2006, p. 1) says *“epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies knowledge”*. Naicker (2006) argues that after freedom came to South Africa in 1994, the Department of Education was invaded by bureaucrats who were not trained in the field of education but were expected to lead the Department. However, as authorities they have to train teachers in the new inclusive policies that were introduced. It is a challenge to train or orientate others if one does not possess

a sound understanding of epistemological issues (Naicker, 2006). In most cases training that is provided by people who lack knowledge about inclusive education, tends to be routine and controlled as opposed to reflective, critical and able to create new meaning (Naicker, 2006). As a result, these trainings do not have a positive effect on teachers. In 2012 Msibi conducted a study focussing on the experiences of homophobia among queer youth in South African township schools. Some of his findings highlight the point that school teachers are confused when it comes to sexual diversity and they tend to victimise learners who do not comply with the norms of society (Msibi, 2012). In some instances, teachers punish learners based on their sexuality, with the aim of changing their behaviour so that they can conform to 'normal' behaviour (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2012). But inclusive education is not about making children as normal as possible; it is about transformation of the society and its educational institutional arrangements. (Mahlo, 2013). Msibi (2012) believes that not all teachers victimise learners (especially learners with same-sex sexual identities) purposefully, but rather that they lack information about inclusion (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Even though this is not done intentionally it is considered as a barrier to inclusive education (Donohue & Bornman, 2012).

c. Negative attitudes towards inclusive education

Bornman and Rose (2010) argue that some township educators have negative thoughts and attitudes towards the new initiative of inclusive education. They do not display an empathetic understanding of learning barriers that learners come across in their daily realities in schools, (Mdikana, Ntshangase & Mayekiso, 2007) and some indicate that the initiative of inclusion will not work in black schools due to overcrowding (Bornman & Rose, 2010). Bornman and Donohue (2013) add that school personnel such as teachers have negative notions about inclusive education and learners needs because they still view learning barriers as originating within individual learners themselves.

c. Loopholes in the school curriculum

Lampen (2014) observes that the school curriculum can hinder the implementation of inclusive education. According to him, the curriculum can be the greatest barrier to

learning (Lampen, 2014). Aspects of the curriculum that may create barriers to learning include the content, the medium of instruction (the language used), how the classroom is organized, teaching methods, pace of teaching, time allocated to complete the curriculum, learning materials used and assessment methods (DOE, 2001). Within inclusive education, it is considered important for a curriculum to be flexible in order to accommodate diversity within the classroom (DOE, 2011; Lampen, 2014). Educators should ensure that they create space in their curriculum for learners to deal with the crises they encounter, for instance, rejection because their sexuality is different (Kumashiro, 2000).

2.4 Compulsory heteronormativity in school environments

In the black community, where black culture is practiced there are still belief systems that consider gender and heterosexuality as unified (Myers & Raymond, 2009). Black culture expects that gender-based roles in relationships between men and women are compulsory, fixed and cannot be changed (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). These gender roles are not negotiable (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009) and heteronormativity mandates to society that a man's sexual partner must be a woman, and that a woman will be the main carer of children while the man provides for them (Francis, 2013; Bendall, 2014). Heteronormativity is socially constructed and undermines people with same-sex sexual orientations (Nzimande, 2015). It follows that these gender roles are socially constructed (Bendall, 2014) and those who do not comply with heteronormativity are regarded as socially inferior and they are not likely to be accepted by traditionalists (Nzimande, 2015). Heterosexuality can be defined as a collection of normalising discourses that maintain and support heteronormativity in all social environments (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). It is associated with normative or natural sexual relations that seem to be more acceptable in the society (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015; Nzimande, 2015). Francis and Brown (2017) conducted a study entitled '*To correct, punish and praise' LRC leaders' experiences and expressions of nonheterosexuality in Namibian schools*'. In this study they use the work of Foucault. He states that normalisation is constructed on an ongoing practice of comparison, reward and punishment (Francis & Brown, 2017). The practice of normalising heterosexuality and '*othering*' people with same-sex sexual orientations identifies and maintains a stable border between heterosexuality and same-sex sexualities (Francis & Brown, 2017).

The disadvantage of normalisation is that it prioritises heterosexuality and assumes that all learners fall within the category of heterosexuality (DePalma & Francis 2014; Francis 2012; Msibi 2012) and as a result, learners with same-sex sexual orientations are maltreated.

Furthermore, heterosexuality is learnt where boys learn to construct their masculinity while girls learn to acquire femininity (Myers & Raymond, 2009). Warner (as cited in Dhaenens, 2012, p. 306) says:

“If you are born with a male genitalia, the logic goes, you will behave in masculine ways, desire women, desire them exclusively, and have sex in what are thought to be normal sex organs.”

The conjecture here is that it is normal for males to desire females, but it is a taboo for men to desire other men (Dhaenens, 2012). In a normal society therefore, it is expected that there are only two genders, with ‘maleness’ entailing masculinity and ‘femaleness’ demanding femininity (Myers & Raymond, 2009; Bendall, 2014). According to Francis (2013) heteronormativity is the process where heterosexuality becomes constructed as a norm of the society and meeting the requirements of this normativity creates *“heterosexual imaginary and it perpetuates heteronormativity”* (Rothmann & Simmods, 2015, p.1). According to Rothmann and Simmods (2015) heterosexual imaginary is a deceptive idea that heterosexual relations are natural and they are therefore unquestioned. Heterosexuality generally remains unquestioned and unevaluated (as opposed to homosexuality). It is viewed as something that is just the way it is and it is a right deed to do (Dhaenens, 2012; Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). However, this deceptive idea creates *“objectification and the binary logic of othering of non-normative sexualities”* (Rothmann & Simmods, 2015, p. 2).

Myers and Raymond (2009) state that in most South African societies (and schools) heterosexuality is the only sexual category that is acceptable even though there are diverse sexual desires amongst people. As a result, people are compelled to be straight (Myers & Raymond, 2009) even though they are not. Those who fail to conform to heteronormativity are exposed to discursive discrimination (Msibi, 2012; Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). Discursive discrimination is described as acts of verbal, emotional or social forms of discrimination (Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). In some instances, people with non-normative sexualities experience corrective rape and beating to get rid of their homosexual tendencies (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2012; DePalma &

Francis, 2014). In addition, Dhaenens (2012) conducted a study on the role of media (television) as in *Glee*, looking at the representation of gay teenagers in the media. One of his findings is that all characters who do not conform to the heteronormal are represented on television as deviant and are viewed as inferior to those who are privileged by heteronormativity (Dhaenens, 2012). The representation of homosexuals in society (including via the media) is seen through the lens of heteronormativity (Dhaenens, 2012). Msibi (2011) states that same-sex sexual identity challenges the pretence of heteronormativity which is enforced through both active and inactive means through the everyday routines of school life (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). In addition, Myers and Reymond (2010) point out that media plays a critical role in society and it sets the tone for how people behave towards other groups within society. For instance, the media promotes heterosexuality and demonises homosexuality (Dhaenens, 2012).

Abbott, Ellis and Abbot (2015) argue that even educators promote a heteronormative philosophy when teaching about sexuality and relationships in schools. As a result, sexuality lessons fail to meet the needs of learners with same-sex sexual identities (Abbot et al., 2015). Stear (2017) refers to this as an educational heteronormative, which is defined as an organizational structure in schools that supports heterosexuality as normal and anything else as unusual. The fact that the topic of sexual and gender identity is excluded in the curricula exposes the fact that educational structures are not entirely functional in schools in terms of addressing same-sex sexual orientation. (Stear, 2017). Unmistakably, schools affect learners with same-sex sexual identities through curricula and teacher-learner interactions (Myers & Raymond, 2009). In most cases educators circumvent sexual diversity in their teaching philosophy and those who include homosexuality tend to take positions that authorise the idea of compulsory heterosexuality (Francis, 2012; DePalma & Francis, 2014). Stear (2017) argues that educational heteronormativity has negative effects on the educational experiences of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. However, educational institutions (such as schools) must challenge heterosexism and heteronormativity (Francis, 2013). Schools should stop denying homosexuality and exclude it in curricula and daily life (Francis, 2013) because such deeds undermine the constitutional rights of learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Msibi, 2011; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). These practices expose learners to harassment and victimisation (Nel & Judge, 2008; Stear,

2017) and therefore school becomes oppressive for them. (Msibi, 2012). Clearly, schools for now tend to be core hubs of homophobia (Msibi; 2011; Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). Homophobia is grounded in the normalising discourse of heteronormativity both within and beyond school settings (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009; Msibi, 2011).

Rothmann and Simmods (2015) state that there are ways to deal with the exclusion of non-heteronormative individuals. Teacher training and university courses should change the way they portray homosexual individuals (Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). Firstly, the education system should develop and implement an inclusive curriculum (Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). DePalma and Atkinson (2009) agree with Rothmann & Simmods (2015) about an inclusive curriculum, but they place greater emphasises on the role of educators. In dealing with heteronormativity in schools educators are expected to reach beyond passive and disingenuous tolerance of learners with same-sex sexual orientations to proactively incorporate discussions of sexuality and gender into the curriculum (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). Teachers need to recognize and affirm differences and tailor their teaching philosophies to accommodate every demographic in the classroom (Kumashiro, 2000). Msibi (2012) states that when educators challenge homophobia in schools, they are not doing queer learners a favour, but it is their duty to protect the human rights of all learners (DOJ, 1996; Rothman & Simmods, 2015). Educators should use classrooms and schools as platforms that challenge heteronormativity (Francis, 2013). In addition, when queer learners are adequately supported by the system and educators, they are more likely to successfully complete schooling (Msibi, 2012). Secondly, educators who are already in the field must go through re-education (Msibi, 2012). Some educators conform to heteronormativity and display negative attitudes toward homosexuality (Msibi, 2012). However, this must be transformed and it can only be changed through the re-education (Msibi, 2012) of educators, school administrators and other stakeholders (Gruba et al., 2004). Teacher training should educate school personnel about strategies to challenge heteronormativity (Msibi, 2012). Finally, once educators start to support learners with same-sex sexual identities and understand what is meant to be a queer learner transformation will occur (Msibi, 2012). Learners learn to accept themselves and they tend to feel included in the system when they are loved and supported (Graziano, 2004; Msibi, 2012). Hanckel and Morris (2013) mention that

support for queer children is crucial and provides new opportunities for children. They conducted a study in 2013 on '*Finding Community and contesting heteronormativity: queer young people's engagement in Australian online community*'. The main aim of the study was to examine the lives of queer young people who participate in an online community where they used that space to overcome their experiences of individualism and nonconformity. These online communities are used as supportive structures to queer young people because they help them to reach the realisation that it is not them who needs fixing within the society, but it is the heteronormative society that is the problem (Hanckel & Morris, 2013). In addition, online communities give young people the "*emotional resources and social capital to do something to address their marginalisation*" (Hanckel & Morris, 2013, p. 827). Hanckel and Morris (2013) state that learners with same-sex sexual orientations need to have platforms where they can come together and support each other so that they can fight against injustices that they experience in their daily realities. Msibi (2012) argues that learners with same-sex sexual orientation when supported, learn to resist bullying, harassment, and discrimination and challenge heteronormativity in schools. In addition, Msibi (2012) says it is good when learners with same-sex sexual orientations are included in school practices.

2.5 Contestations of inclusive education and compulsory heteronormativity

Inclusive education is aimed at redressing past imbalances (Armstrong et al., 2011) which discriminated against people based on gender, sexual orientation and race and seeks to break the chains of apartheid education (Fataar, 2007). Contemporary education emphasises the importance of participating "*fully in an education environment that embraces, celebrates and values diversity and attends to the needs of the individual in a humane manner*" (Francis & Brown, 2017, p. 2). On the other hand, compulsory heteronormativity is aimed at preserving gender roles, culture and religion (Bendall, 2014). In society, and specifically institutions such as schools, learners are coerced directly or indirectly to conform to social categories of gender and sexuality which are endorsed through hegemonic or dominant practices (Francis & Brown, 2017). Those who do not conform are seen as deviants to heteronormativity (Francis, 2013; Francis & DePalma, 2014).

Heteronormativity is deeply rooted in culture and religion (DePalma & Francis, 2014) and those who believe in these systems also believe that they are fixed and cannot be changed (Arndt, 2004; Nkosi & Masson, 2017). Some religions such as Christianity promote heterosexuality and do not support the acceptance of homosexuality (Nkosi & Masson, 2017). It is believed that there are no examples of homosexual marriages in the Bible, so according to Christianity homosexuality is abnormal and inconsistent with what God had intended for humans (Nkosi & Masson, 2017). The above discourse on homosexuality gives emphasis to the ideology that homosexuality is contradictory to the basic tenets of the Christian faith (Nzimande, 2015; Nkosi & Masson, 2017). According to Christianity God created a man and a woman (DePalma & Francis, 2014; Nkosi & Masson, 2017). Nkosi and Masson (2017) highlight that *“many theologians argue that throughout the old and the New Testament the practice of homosexuality is condemned”*. Therefore, some educators (especially those who are Christians) view learners at school as straight boys and girls (Msibi, 2012; Nkosi & Masson, 2017) nothing more and nothing less. According to Nzimande (2015) heterosexuals fail to acknowledge and accept people with the same-sex sexual orientation because homosexuality seems to clash with their belief systems. The problem with this ideology is that it victimises learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Msibi, 2012; Nzimande, 2015; Lees, 2017). Lees (2017) observes that some educators pay no attention to teaching about same-sex sexual sexuality because of their own religious and cultural beliefs or discomfort with the subject. The exclusion of homosexuality in the curriculum and the failure to protect the rights of learners with a same-sex sexual orientation encumbers the progress of inclusive education (Francis & DePalma, 2014). The South African constitution is also violated by such actions and teachers who discriminate against learners with same-sex sexual orientation are therefore committing misconduct (SACE, 2000).

2.6 The role of School-Based Support Teams in relation to sexual diversity

2.6.1 SBST defined and its composition

The School-Based Support Teams (SBST) were created at schools by the Department of Education to deal with inclusive education (Makoelle, 2014) and to provide care and support to learners and teachers (Jama, 2014; Mackay, 2014; Staden, 2015). These

teams become a school-level support mechanism (DOE, 2014). Every public school must establish a SBST (Mphahlela, 2005; Masango, 2013; Jama, 2014) as a fundamental approach for transformation towards inclusive education (Fourie, 2017). The SBST can be defined as a structure that supports educators who are subjected to the challenges of teaching inclusive education (Masango, 2013). Teachers should be capacitated on how to differentiate the curriculum and assessment mechanisms to ensure that all learners are accommodated in a single classroom (DOE, 2014). The School Based Support Teams can be defined as an organisation that supports the learning process by identifying and addressing barriers to learning and promoting effective teaching and learning (Mphahlele, 2005; Fourie, 2017). The SBSTs should respond to learner and teacher needs to ensure that quality teaching and learning transpires at schools (Makoelle, 2014). It should put in place systems that are more supportive of an individual learner's needs so that all learners can learn effectively from the curriculum (DOE, 2001; Makoelle, 2014) and provide an environment for educators to share knowledge and skills to express and receive collegial and emotional support (Mphahlela, 2005; Nel et al., 2016). Staden (2015, pp. 66 - 67) says the SBST should comprise of the following members:

- *A learning support teacher who is competent and innovative, and possesses good collaborative skills;*
- *The referring teacher (usually the learning area/subject or class educators);*
- *Educators who have particular expertise on offer concerning the needs and/or challenges of learners;*
- *The principal or deputy principal or a member of the management team, who should be involved on a part-time basis;*
- *Any member of the district-based support team, depending on the support needs of the learner (for instance: an occupational therapist or psychologist);*
- *The parents of learners;*
- *Learners' representatives at senior and further education and/or higher education levels; and*
- *Specific member(s) of district based support team and of the special school/resource centre.*

However, Mphahlele (2005) states that the composition of the SBST is subject to the size and the needs of the school and the availability of educators. Mackay (2014) states that each member in the team must be allocated certain duties and this team

should be led by the co-ordinator. In some township schools the SBST is co-ordinated by the Head of Department (HOD) in the department of Life Orientation (Staden, 2015). The main responsibility of the co-ordinator is to manage the operations of the group, schedule and preside over meetings and arrange in-service training workshops (Mackay, 2014). The co-ordinator as the driver of the SBST should create meetings that are conducive and enable the full participation of all members to ensure that every member understands the role they have to play in supporting learners who are victimised at school (Mphahlele, 2005; Mackay, 2014; Mkhuma, Maseko & Tlale, 2014). Another important member in the SBST is the scribe or the secretary. Members of the SBST should either rotate this position or democratically elect the scribe (Mphahlele, 2005). The main role of the scribe is to note down all minutes during meetings to track the progress of the organisation (Mphahlele, 2005). However, Nel et al. (2016) believe that this composition of the SBST is insufficient. Additional human resources are needed in the SBST, such as social workers. Fourie (2017) shares the same sentiments as Nel et al. (2016). She states that supplementary members can be co-opted so that they may assist with a particular challenge, such as for instance, members of the local community who have certain expertise (Fourie, 2017).

2.6.2 The purpose of the School-Based Support Team

According to Nel et al. (2016) the main purpose of the SBST is to support the teaching and learning process. This can be done by connecting the SBST to other school-based management structures and processes. These structures identify school needs (especially learners' needs) and create strategies to address these needs (Nel et al., 2016). The SBST also collaborates with other stakeholders with the aim of discovering resources required to deal with challenges faced by learners. Lastly, it monitors and evaluates the work of the team or develops an action reflection framework (DOE, 2014; Fourie, 2017). In order for the SBST to have meaning and purpose, it needs the following key qualities: *“deep human values of caring for the psycho-educational well-being of all learners”* (Fourie, 2017, p. 59). Team members should have deep passion, compassion and patience in order to deal with sensitive issues (such as homosexuality) that might be encountered at school level (Fourie, 2017). In addition, Fourie (2017) says it is purposeful to establish SBSTs in schools because:

“They localise, contextualise, provide immediate support, empowering educators for building self-reliant problem-solving schools; and establish their own networks with local community organisations” (Fourie, 2017, p. 57).

SBSTs allow individual problems to be addressed properly and if the SBST has exhausted all their means, they can be referred to the District-Based Support Team (DOE, 2014; Nel et al., 2016).

2.6.3 Key functions of the SBSTs in schools

The White Paper 6 policy document (DOE, 2001) argues that SBSTs are created to reduce learning difficulties and reinforce the effectiveness of support services in public schools. It is imperative for SBST members to know their roles and functions because when they do, the team can be highly effective in eliminating barriers to learning (Fourie, 2017). Makoelle (2014, p. 67) summarises the functions of the SBST as follows:

“The role of the school-based support teams include, among others, organising support and establishing the individualised education programmes for vulnerable learners and learners perceived to be having barriers to learning. However these teams also have to be instrumental, engage, reflect and probe and enquire about the inclusive pedagogic practices in order to develop and enhance their use in the classrooms”.

The SBST is expected to handle the process of addressing barriers to learning at school level (Masango, 2013; Mkhuma et al., 2014; Nel et al., 2016) and this will ensure that intervention strategies and resources are utilised to enable the educators to fully participate in creating an inclusive education system (Armstrong et al., 2016). Mphahlele (2005) advocates that SBSTs should be seen as a strategy to create the involvement of every learner and increase the educational opportunities of learners that experience barriers to learning. According to Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014) these teams are supposed to provide a facility for educators to exchange ideas and knowledge on how to support learners and implement inclusive education. The primary function of the SBST should be to empower educators and promote effective teaching and learning within the school environment (Mphahlele, 2005; Makoelle, 2014, Gaffney, 2014; Nel et al., 2016). Furthermore, members of these teams can empower

their colleagues by providing the necessary support and guidance on how to support learners who are facing challenges in their learning (Jama, 2014; Gaffney, 2014). Therefore, these members must have strong teamwork skills and be willing to share their knowledge with other staff members (DOE, 2001; Gaffney, 2014; Mkhuma et al., 2014). According to Gaffney (2014, p. 12) “*support should be viewed as a team approach, rather than the responsibility of an individual*”. Everyone employed in any learning institution should play their part in caring for and supporting learners (Gaffney, 2014).

Rulwa-Mntwana (2014) identifies the following as primary functions of the SBST:

- Organising all learner, teacher, and curriculum support in the school;
- Finding school needs with a focus on barriers to learning at learner, teacher, curriculum and school levels;
- Being able and taking the initiative in the use of the SIAS Policy and guiding teachers through the SIAS support provision process;
- Developing appropriate in-class and school-based strategies to address these needs;
- Encouraging collegial/peer support;
- Drawing upon additional resources from within and outside the school to address these challenges;
- Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an ‘action-reflection’ framework.

It is imperative that the SBSTs honour these functions to ensure that the team is functional, reliable and visible at school (Gaffney, 2014). Landsberg (as cited in Gaffney, 2014) argues that the SBST should be visible and flexible within the school system as this will make it a point that schools are really serious about the implementation of inclusive education. The SBST has a significant role to play in the implementation of SIAS policy. (DOE, 2014; Nel et al., 2016) For instance, it is responsible for completing and submitting the necessary application forms to the District-Based Support Team (DBST) with all the relevant supporting documents for learners who require reasonable accommodation or placement (Gaffney, 2014; Nel et al., 2016). In addition, Nel et al. (2016) argue that the SBST should be properly organised and have an inspiring policy so that it can motivate educators to be part of

the team and help to change the attitudes of those educators who are negative towards the implementation of inclusive education. In order for the SBST to function effectively, it is required to hold meetings at least once each term (Mackay, 2014).

2.6.4 School-Based Support Team challenges

According to Ainscow (2002) the implementation of inclusion rests on the attitudes and actions of educators. One of the challenges that School-Based Support Teams face in schools is the fact that most educators have negative views or attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education in schools, (Donohue & Bornman, 2014) especially when they are required to do the SIAS process (Nkuna, 2014). Educators fail to identify and perform screenings for learners who display learning barriers (Nkuna, 2014). Educators are not conversant with inclusive education and this reflects in their daily practices at schools (Fourie, 2017). As a result, there is little collaboration between subject educators and the SBST (Mphahlele, 2005). Fourie (2017) argues that even the SBST members have limited understanding about the identification of learning barriers and generating intervention strategies for educators to support learners. In addition, Nkuna (2014) mentions that SBST coordinators influence the functioning of the team either positively or negatively. When the coordinator fails to take the SBST members and educators through the processes of SIAS and guide the team towards inclusion, they are bound to have negative attitudes towards inclusive education (Fourie, 2017). The Department of Education (DOE, 2010) states that the coordinator and members of the SBST should be trained properly to ensure that they help other educators to address barriers to learning and teaching. However, this is not usually the case because at some schools the SBST team does not respond to the needs of learners (Jama, 2014) and at other schools the SBST does not sufficiently respond to the challenges that hinder teaching and learning (Fourie, 2017). For example, in most township schools discrimination against learners with same-sex sexual orientations is not seen as a barrier to learning (Msibi, 2012) yet these learners do not cope with their studies at schools because they experience discrimination and punishment (Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). Some of the origins of discrimination lie in the fact that educators have limited knowledge about homosexuality (Msibi, 2012).

Another challenge that the SBST encounters is the non-existence of participation by other stakeholders (for instance parents) in creating an enabling environment for

support at schools (Fourie, 2017). According to Mokoelle (2014) South African township schools have SBSTs that tend to have minimal collaboration with other stakeholders, especially parents and guardians. Warren (as cited in Fourie, 2017) argues that an effective SBST builds relationships with parents and other community structures in order to enhance the mandate of inclusive education as stipulated in White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001). Gaffney (2014) believes that there are benefits in working together with parents; some of these benefits include exchanging ideas and expertise and creating conducive learning spaces both at schools and at home. Nel et al. (2016) identifies time as a challenge for the SBSTs. Educators who are members of the SBST are over-burdened with large classes and their workload is doubled since they are expected to teach and perform SBSTs duties (Fourie, 2017). Nel et al. (2016) believes that the only solution to this constraint is to allocate the SBST slots in the timetable for holding meetings and to do administration work (Nel et al., 2016) and also to reduce the class workload of team members (Fourie, 2017).

2.6.5 Intersecting Support Structures and Sexual Diversity in Education

South African literature is silent about the relationship between School-Based Support Teams and sexual diversity in education but there are researchers who wrote about sexual orientation and the role of educators in ensuring that schools do not discriminate against learners because of their sexuality. In 2.6.1. I highlighted that the composition of SBSTs includes educators (and they are the majority in the SBST). This implies that the literature that discusses the roles of educators in education and that also discusses sexual orientation and diversity is relevant for this study. As a result, the researcher will show the relevance of these sources in intersecting SBST and sexual diversity in education.

In 2017 Lees wrote an article titled "*Sexual diversity and the role of educators: reflections on a South African teacher education module*". Lees (2017) argues that pre-service educators must align their teaching practice with the South African constitution in order to ensure that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are not victimised, but in cases where they are victimised, educators should take appropriate steps to deal with the matter (Meyer, 2009). Schools can be spaces that acknowledge sexual diversity (Meyer, 2009; Rothman & Simmonds, 2015). At schools learners with same-sex sexual orientations are harmed by homophobia, as a result of which they all

need support (Kumashiro, 2000). According to Meyer (2009) all stakeholders in the community (learners, parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, SBSTs and school board personnel) must be involved in the process of transforming schools by eradicating ignorance and intolerance. The tone must be set by the leader or the school principal (Meyer, 2009). Principals are part of the SBSTs in schools (Fourie, 2017) therefore, when they encourage transformation, they are actually ensuring that support structures are functional and that schools are safe spaces for sexual diversity. Lees (2017) believes that in a safe learning environment, learners with same-sex sexual orientations are able to express their own feelings and attitudes. In this way schools will allow learners with same-sex sexual orientations to be themselves and move away from 'conflation of the homosexual' (Rothman & Simmonds, 2015). 'Conflation of the homosexual' denotes the way people *"assimilate non-normative sexualities and genders and as a result construct a heterosexual imaginary which claim that heterosexuality remains the organising principle for maintaining normativity"* (Rothman & Simmonds, 2015, p. 4). To transform the functionality of supportive structures in schools there are three areas to be considered to build a strong supportive school environment (Meyer, 2009). These are (a) policy, (b) resources and support and (c) educators and support staff.

a. Policy

Supportive structures in schools should have or design a policy that can address the issues of bullying and harassment of all learners at schools (Meyer, 2009). This policy should indicate clear, definite guiding principles on actions against bullying and discrimination against all learners (including learners with same-sex sexual orientations). Furthermore, it should include response protocols and implementation strategies (Meyer, 2009) in order to know how to deal with people who are violating the rights of certain learners at schools (Lees, 2017). Policy can shift from a system where learners are referred to another specialised school to schools that have a functional policy that will strive to deal with issues of discrimination and bullying within the school (DOE, 2014).

b. Resources and support

According to Meyer (2009) supporting learners requires resources such as time, money, and materials to ensure that a learner's needs are catered for. In cases where

the school does not have a psychologist but there is a need to have one, the SBST should build relationships with one of the local full-service schools so that the full-service school can send an educational psychologist to the school (DOE, 2014), and if there is a need for the school governing body to provide remuneration it should be done without any hesitation because this will help learners who need support.

c. Educators and support staff

Meyer (2009) says educators and support staff have a huge role to play in eliminating homophobia and responding positively towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations. At schools, educators must embrace homosexuality and defend the rights of all learners (Lees, 2017). So in order for them to contribute in a positive way they need to put effort into these areas:

- Apprehend school policies (especially inclusion policies)
- They should share and practice intervention strategies for instances of discrimination and harassment
- They should also incorporate appropriate curricular materials and programs that are inclusive of sexual diversity (Meyer, 2009).

A lot can be done by the supportive structures in schools to promote sexual diversity in school, such as for instance curricular interventions that discuss primary issues of homophobia and heterosexism which include the following:

- *A campaign against name-calling that includes education about what words mean, and why certain insults are inappropriate and discriminatory.*
- *Curricular inclusion of contributions by gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people to history, art, science, literature, politics, and sports.*
- *Providing inclusive and diverse information about sex, gender, and sexual orientation in biology, health, and sexual education classes.*
- *Conducting critical media literacy activities that analyse gender stereotypes and heterosexism in popular culture (Meyer, 2009).*

It is imperative for supportive structures to respond to sexual diversity because neglected learners with same-sex sexual orientations tend to leave school, drop their performance and some even attempt suicide (Meyer, 2009; Lees, 2017; Msibi, 2014). Lees (2017, p. 254) argues that *“Any teacher who stands up in school and states that homosexuality is wrong and disparages LGBTI individuals contradicts the nation’s constitution”*. Once schools neglect homosexual learners’ needs, a violation of the constitution occurs, as also reflected in White Paper 6 that stipulates that people

should not be discriminated against based on their sexuality (DOE, 2001). In South Africa School-Based Support Teams are tasked by the National Basic Education Department to respond to all learners needs (DOE, 2001, 2014). Schools are expected to respond confidently to sexual diversity and ensure that discrimination, harassment and bullying of learners with same-sex orientations is eliminated from schools.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education

According Kumashiro (2000) the theory of anti-oppressive education is education that is against several forms of oppression and discrimination. Oppression cannot have space in the education system (Kumashiro, 2001) because South Africa is a democratic country and all learners are equal within the law (DOE, 2001). In cases where people are oppressed in the education system the theory of anti-oppressive education provide strategies on how to change the situation (Kumashiro, 2001). People should learn to unlearn what they were taught about forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). Furthermore, for transformation to occur in schools, educators must rethink their practices and explore other forms of anti-oppressive education that might help to change what oppresses learners at school level. Kumashiro (2001) states that unlearning is an essential and desirable part of anti-oppressive education. This process of unlearning will educate people (especially educators in schools) to learn not to discriminate against the '*Other*' simply because they do not conform to heteronormativity (Kumashiro, 2000, 2001). In this study anti-oppressive education is used to explore the responses of SBSTs towards the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Kumashiro (2000) argues that they should unlearn what they know about homosexuality and relearn what homosexuality is all about and to avoid judging or making assumptions about these learners' experiences. Notions that assume homosexuality as un-African should be unlearned for instance (Msibi, 2012). This can be done through applying policy, using the curriculum to create advocacy about homosexuality and schools starting to accept homosexuality through a human right discourse (Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). The curriculum should be utilised as a platform to discuss issues of oppression and allow learners to express their own views about what oppresses them, (Kumashiro, 2000) because in this way transformation will transpire. According to the CAPS document (DOE, 2011) teaching and learning

should be learner-centred which means learners should be actively involved in their learning process because they have prior knowledge (Moodley, 2013).

However, Kumashiro (2000) identifies four primary pillars that can be used by educators and support structures to change the nature of education and the curricula, pedagogies and policies. The following discourse engages these four primary pillars as follows:

2.7.2.1. Education for the Other

This approach puts emphasis on how educators can ensure that the experiences of learners who do not conform to heteronormativity are not disregarded and excluded in the education system. This would help affected learners to enjoy their schooling years more. Kumashiro (2000) argues that at times oppression of the *'other'* arises from the inaction of educators and support structures when they notice that queer learners are being discriminated against, harassed, isolated, bullied or excluded. Thus, I contend that educators are accountable for change in schools and they should turn around oppressive spaces to become more inclusive schools. At schools the *'other'* responds differently from these oppressive acts and dispositions (Kumashiro, 2000). Msibi (2012) believes that some queer learners resist such behaviours as they have accepted themselves the way they are, and have learnt that someone else's view of themselves does not really define who they are (Graziano, 2004). Kumashiro (2000) shares the same sentiments with Msibi (2012). He argues that some queer learners are refusing to accept the dominant values and norms of schools and society (Kumashiro, 2000). This sense of pride unleashes confidence and a strong sense of identity because most of them have found ways to reverse discrimination to the benefit of their self-development (Msibi, 2012). For instance, some resist oppression by participating in extracurricular and social activities at schools and some ensure that they are studying hard so that they can perform well in their academics (Kumashiro, 2000; Msibi, 2012). Kumashiro (2000) argues that when learners with same-sex sexual identities attack oppression they experience *'hidden injuries'* such as the *"psychological harm of internalising or resisting stereotypes"* (p. 27). As a result, some cannot cope with these injuries and they tend to fail and dropout of school, some abuse drugs and some undergo depression (Kumashiro, 2000). In this study I propose that this must change, not a single child should undergo these 'hidden injuries'. Educators

and support structures should certify that schools are safe spaces where learners who are ‘*othered*’ cannot experience abuse (Kumashiro, 2000).

However, Kumashiro (2000) argues that this approach has three shortcomings. Firstly, it is a fallacy that educators can only concentrate on the treatment of the learners who are ‘*othered*’ and ignore other ways in which oppression takes place in schools (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) says this approach suggests that the ‘*other*’ is the problem and needs fixing especially when educators are focusing on the undesirable experiences of the ‘*other*’ in schools. In this study I maintain that the system needs fixing not learners with same-sex sexual orientations because these learners are victims of the education systems. Secondly, Kumashiro (2000) states that *the use of the term “the Other”* (p. 30) needs an explicit definition because it is addressing people whose identities are complex to explain because “*they are fluid, congested and constantly shifting*” (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) argues that when dealing with education for the ‘*other*’ educators should be able to answer these questions: Who is the ‘*other*’ and what kind of safe environments are needed? And for whom? The third shortcoming of this approach is its belief that educators can examine the desires of their learners (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) argues that the way teaching takes place in schools needs to change because it does not respond to diversity. It is crucial in challenging the oppression of the marginalised groups in schools, but it is not enough (Kumashiro, 2000) to transform the whole education system.

2.7.2.2. Education about the Other

This approach seeks to provide inclusive information about marginalised groups (Kumashiro, 2000). In fighting against oppression in schools researchers have identified that it is important for every learner in school to have necessary information about the ‘*other*’ (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) states that there are two types of knowledge that can result in victimisation or harm of the ‘*other*’. According to him, “*the first kind of knowledge is knowledge about (only) what society defines as ‘normal’ (the way things are generally are) and what is normative (the way things ought to be.)*” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 31). In this situation the ‘*other*’ is not fully known since it is seen through the lenses of the norm. For instance, Msibi (2012) observes that in the society heterosexuals understands gays as men who have failed and who need to be

straightened. Hence, they are beaten, harmed or killed (Nel & Judge, 2008; Brown & Diale, 2017). Kumashiro (2000) states that this knowledge is known as 'partial knowledge' and he believes that the outcomes of 'partial knowledge are misconceptions about the 'other', for instance, believing that homosexuality is un-African (Msibi, 2011).

The "second kind of knowledge is about the 'other' but encourages a distorted and misleading understanding of the 'other' that is based on stereotypes and myth" (Kumashiro, 2000, p.32). This information can be acquired at school and from the society (Kumashiro, 2000). Media plays a fundamental role in providing 'partial knowledge' (Kumashiro, 2000; Dhaenens, 2012). Television, for instance, is considered as an ambiguous platform that is able to both consent to and contest heteronormativity assumptions (Dhaenens, 2012). But in recent years, television approves of 'othering' certain individuals who do conform to societal norms and values because it represents homosexual characters as deviant and inferior in drama series (Dhaenens, 2012). Another way to learn 'partial knowledge' is through teaching boys and girls 'proper' gender roles (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000, p. 32) notes that 'partial knowledge' is inevitable because it is acquired "through 'informal or hidden curriculum' and this kind of curriculum carries more educational significance than the official curriculum". This results in providing learners with limited and incomplete knowledge about the 'other' because of exclusion, invisibility and silence about homosexuality (Kumashiro, 2000).

However, there is a way to teach learners in school about the 'other'. Kumashiro (2000) states that there are two ways to teach about the 'other'. Firstly, the school curriculum should be "specific on the other" (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 32). The curriculum should include the role played by people with same-sex sexual orientation in liberation movements that happened around the world and mostly in Africa, alternatively it can show the positive representation of queers in films (Kumashiro, 2000). And lastly, learners can be taught about the 'other' with a strategy to "integrate Otherness through the curriculum" (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) urges educators to integrate lessons and topics about the 'other' in the curriculum throughout the year. This should not only be included in the curriculum when the Annual Teaching Plan instructs educators to teach about people with same-sex sexual orientation, learners should be taught about homosexuality every day. This integration system will be beneficial in the

schooling system because it will assist “*educators to address the intersections of these different identities and attendant forms of oppression*” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 33).

Kumashiro (2000) mentions that education about the ‘*other*’ is the approach that allows educators to bring valuable information and knowledge that will improve their learners’ understanding of the ‘*other*’ in schools. Basically, this approach is in a position to transform heteronormativity and normalize differences and Otherness (Kumashiro, 2000). Another advantage of this approach is that it gives necessary knowledge about the ‘*other*’ and shows that well-informed learners (or human beings) do not oppress the ‘*other*’ or one another (Kumashiro, 2000). This approach influences all learners (Kumashiro, 2000) and the knowledge provided to learners helps to create a homogenous society (Kumashiro, 2002). However, there are shortcomings in this approach as well. Kumashiro (2000) identifies three challenges to these approaches. He states that otherness can remain different from the norm when the ‘*other*’ is taught in such a way that the ‘*other*’ is prioritised over the dominant group in the society (Kumashiro, 2000). Secondly, Kumashiro (2000) states that educating about the ‘*other*’ often puts the ‘*other*’ as the expert and the problem with this situation is that it supports the social, cultural and intellectual separation between the norm and the ‘*other*’. Lastly, Kumashiro (2000) states that the main purpose of this approach is to work against partial knowledge and that people should seek full knowledge and find the truth about the ‘*other*’. But Haraway (as cited in Kumashiro, 2000) notes that *partial knowledge is the only form of knowledge that is possible and desirable* (p. 34). In schools, there is insufficient time to deal with every culture and identity of learners in detail (Kumashiro, 2000), and as a result only partial knowledge about the ‘*other*’ becomes possible to teach in schools (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) argues that learners at school should know that what is being taught about the ‘*other*’ can never depict a complete picture because there is always more to be sought out. One lesson cannot do justice to the symbolic representation of every individual in schools or societies. Throughout the study I argue that oppression in schools is created by the system and it should change, however, this approach does not bring about structural and systemic transformation, it does not change the norm (Kumashiro, 2000).

2.7.2.3. Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering

In this approach, Kumashiro (2000) is of the view that oppression can be eliminated in schools and the only way to do so is to provide more knowledge about oppression. This knowledge will ensure that educators and learners are equipped with the ability to “*recognise, understand and critique current social inequalities*” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 36). Critical pedagogy ensures that forms of oppressions are evaluated and changed in schools and in societies (Kumashiro, 2000). Ellsworth (as cited in Kumashiro, 2000) mentions that critical pedagogy is the process of educating learners (and even educators) in logic and other critical skills for finding the truth about the dominant culture and the marginalised culture. Thus the main purpose of critical pedagogy is to induce transformation through challenging forms of oppression. Kumashiro (2000) argues that learners who have acquired both knowledge about the ‘*other*’ and critical thinking skills are in a position to challenge all forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). In this study I argue that learners who have learnt about the ‘*other*’, acquired knowledge about what oppresses them. New ways of critical thinking can challenge forms of oppression which oppress learners with same-sex sexual orientations in schools.

Furthermore, this approach challenges oppression by bringing new knowledge that allows educators and learners to fight against oppression in schools (Kumashiro, 2000). When challenging oppression especially oppression based on heteronormativity, educators and support structures should understand that what we perceive as ‘normal’ is constructed by the society and it both regulates who we are supposed to be and denigrates whoever fails to conform to the norm of the society (Kumashiro, 2000), as in the case of people with same-sex sexual orientation who are ‘*othered*’ in the society (Nzimande, 2015). Kumashiro (2000) states that children in schools must be taught about the ‘*other*’ and learn more about the ways that are used to categorise people, and why some are ‘*othered*’ while others are normalised. Britzman (as cited in Kumashiro, 2000) mentions that schools should also teach learners to unlearn what they have acquired over the years about what is ‘normal’ within the society. In this process of learning about the dynamics of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000) it is pivotal for educators and learners to realise that they must also learn about themselves. Kumashiro (2000) argues that there are two ways that should

be considered when learning about oneself. Firstly, that an individual should note that the identities and experiences they are studying may be similar to theirs. Secondly, they have to realise that they might be contributing to forms of oppression, especially when they position themselves in supporting privileged identities (Kumashiro, 2000).

According to Kumashiro (2000) the main advantage of this third approach is the fact that it allows educators to attempt changing the whole society by introducing new ways of dealing with oppression of the other. For instance, learners who have the knowledge and thinking skills necessary to comprehend forms of Othering and Normalising and who most importantly, understand themselves, tend to “*resist hegemonic ideologies and change social structures*” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 38). Even though this approach is beneficial, it also has limitations. For example, it proposes that oppression is structural in nature which suggests that oppression impacts on people the same way (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) believes that this is not the case, as people can be subjected to the same forms of oppression but the impact will differ. “*This means structural explanations cannot account for diversity and particularity*” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 38). This approach suggests that learners are expected to learn and unlearn knowledge, understand forms of oppression and critique that oppression, and thereby effect social transformation (Kumashiro, 2000). This leads me to the second shortcoming of this third approach. Kumashiro (2000) states that awareness does not automatically drive towards action and transformation since educators cannot really know that learners have managed to learn and unlearn. In addition, a teacher cannot be sure that what is supposed to be acquired has moved a learner from the position of oppressing the ‘*other*’ to the position of understanding the Other (Kumashiro, 2000). Thus, there is no real ways of knowing that the educated learner has acquired understanding that inspires actions leading towards transformation Kumashiro, (2000) notes a challenge to this approach. For example, a learner can be educated about forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000) but he/she can still continue to harass and discriminate against learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Kumashiro (2000) highlights that the assumption that learners will first learn and then “*act critically*” is not easy to attain because there is a lot that an educator cannot do and does not know and cannot control” (p. 38). The structure of the education system lets educators know what they are going to teach; however they do not have control over the actions of

learners and this affects educators negatively since they *'feel paralyzed'* about not having control (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 39).

2.7.2.4. Education that Changes Students and Society

This last approach accepts that education should be discursive in nature and its main goal is to teach the *'other'* and heterosexuals about forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). This approach is aimed at working towards transformation (Kumashiro, 2000). In order to change what is happening in schools (and in societies) critical awareness should include pedagogies that would fight against forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2002) and find ways to eliminate the harmfulness of repetition of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). According to Kumashiro (2000) oppression and harm are the products of the actions and inactions of people towards oppression. For instance, stereotypes have the power to harm the *'other'*. Kumashiro (2000) states that stereotypes can be traced from to social structures and ideologies. On the other hand, Butler (as cited in Kumashiro, 2000) mentions that the power of stereotypes about homosexuality originates from *"a particular history of how that stereotype has been used and a particular community of people who have used that stereotype and constitute that history"* (p. 40). As a result, this approach suggests that the power of stereotypes should be diminished at schools since it affects how the marginalised group is treated by those who are perceived as being privileged. (Kumashiro, 2002) In this way educators will be challenging oppression at schools (Kumashiro, 2000). However, Kumashiro (2000) states that it is problematic to challenge forms of oppression because oppression is situated and complex in nature, so there is no single strategy that works for all educators (Kumashiro, 2000). For that reason, Kumashiro (2000) believes that a poststructuralist approach will be beneficial for educators when they participate in anti-oppressive education. In addition, it can be used for formulating conceptualizations of oppression that derive from the discourse (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) points out a number of strategies that can be used by educators to challenge forms of oppression and to assist them to rethink their current practices.

Firstly, poststructuralism recommends that schools should develop new strategies that will be used in bringing about change and to challenge forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). In order for change to occur educators should ensure that they are

altering their citational practices (Kumashiro, 2000). Kumashiro (2000) says one of the strategies that can be used to bring about change is 'laboring' and this process will disrupt harm that is caused by forms of oppression. This strategy suggests that people (educators in particular) should start to eliminate repetition and rework history. According to Kumashiro (2000, p. 42) "*when there are enough members of a community participating in this kind of labor citational practices (especially the repetition of harmful citation) changes occurs*". For example, heterosexuality is regarded as normal and people with same-sex sexual orientations are treated badly because their sexuality is regarded as an illness (Kumashiro, 2000). So educators and other community members should change their practices and begin to treat all identities the way as they treat heterosexuals because in this way change will transpire (Kumashiro, 2000).

Secondly, Kumashiro (2000) believes that the work of contemporary feminist and queer readings of psychoanalysis is useful in anti-oppressive education because it assists educators to re-evaluate their teaching and learning processes and change them. These theories state that many educators resist change and this create difficulties in achieving anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2000). The reason people resist change is because humans prefer to learn only what affirms what they already know (Kumashiro, 2000) and what they subscribe to, for instance religious beliefs, culture and norms. For instance, most heterosexuals fail to accept and live peacefully with people with same-sex sexual orientations (Msibi, 2012). However, information and knowledge is available to everyone with the hope that they will change how they treat the '*other*'. The constitution (DOJ, 1996) and White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) are examples of available knowledge, yet learners with same-sex sexual orientations are still harassed and victimised at schools and in communities. Even Kumashiro (2002) mentions that knowledge should be used in conjunction with other pedagogies that can fight oppression and reduce the repetition of such occurrences. Thus, for this study this approach is crucial because it proposes that educators should transform their practices in order to treat every learner at school with the dignity and respect, they deserve regardless of their sexual orientation.

2.7.2 Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura (1994, p. 1) define Self-Efficacy as:

“People’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes”.

It is pivotal for educators to have strong self-efficacy because efficacious people have the ability to achieve difficult tasks (Bandura, 1994; Kear, 2000) such as challenging heteronormativity. In most communities, people (including those at schools) regard the issue of same-sex sexual orientation a taboo and they find it difficult to talk about (Graziano, 2004) so I believe that educators who have strong self-efficacy will attempt to challenge it regardless of what religion and culture is perceived as normal. Kear (2000) states that positive self-efficacy will ensure that an individual is successful and they will persevere in an activity until the task is accomplished. DePalma and Francis (2014) state that religion and culture perceive homosexuality as immoral and this perception marginalises people with same-sex sexual orientations. In this case educators may explicitly or implicitly support this perception, or else they may feel unprepared to challenge it (DePalma & Francis, 2014). But educators should challenge heterosexism and heteronormativity (Francis, 2013). Thus, the only way for educators to challenge forms of oppression at school is to develop a strong, positive self-efficacy.

Bandura (1994) states that the theory is influenced by four principal foundations of knowledge and practice. In the following section I discuss these principal foundations.

a. Mastery experiences

Bandura (1994) and Kear (2000) believe that mastery experiences occur when a person attempts to do a certain task and they are successful in it. Mastery experiences are very important experiences because they boost the confidence of an individual that has to accomplish something important to them (Bandura, 1994; Kear, 2000). It also upsurges self-efficacy because a person is likely to believe in themselves and this motivates that individual to attempt a new activity or task especially if they are familiar with the task and they were successful in doing it (Bandura, 1994). I argue that training is vital in preparing teachers and support structures in dealing with inclusive education and sexual diversity at schools. Educators who are well prepared and trained in ways that can eliminate forms of oppression at schools, will have an ability to develop a

strong or positive self-efficacy (Kear, 2004). Then they will try to use the skill and knowledge they have acquired from training to fight forms of oppression. According to Kear, (2004) through training programs, workshops and internships people gain mastery experiences and they become proficient at new skills and increase their self-efficacy. However, Kumashiro (2000) reminds us that knowledge alone is not enough to enforce change. Educators must use the knowledge they have to act against homophobic attacks such as the harassment of people with same-sex sexual orientations.

b. Vicarious experiences

People who have the same qualities as yourself can influence your self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1994) observing another person like yourself engaging in a task that you are want to do, and witnessing them becoming successfully at it can increase self-efficacy. On the other hand, when observing another person like you fail to attain positive results from a particular task or activity that you wish to engage in can threaten self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). The extent to which vicarious experiences affect self-efficacy is based on how much you want to engage or participate in an activity that you observed another person engage in (Bandura, 1994). The more you want to engage in it, the greater the influence. Bandura (1994) states that the more one associates oneself with the person being observed, the greater the belief that oneself can also accomplish the behaviour being observed.

c. Social persuasion

According to Bandura (1994) social persuasion promotes self-efficacy because when people are persuaded verbally they start to believe that they can do certain tasks and that they can achieve positive results on a certain task. I do agree with this principle, which means that through training and workshops educators and support structures such as SBSTs may learn how to care for and support learners with same-sex sexual orientations. This will put them in a position where they can persuade learners to respect sexual diversity at school. In this way, forms of oppression at school will be attacked.

d. Physiological and emotional states

Physiological and emotional states are the last consideration of this theory. It stipulates that negative emotions and misinterpretations of physical states should be reduced with the aim of developing strong/positive self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994).

The theory of self-efficacy has its shortcomings. Hawkins (1995) notes that self-efficacy theory has three shortcomings, namely:

- ❖ **CAUSALITY**- Self-efficacy predicts, but does not change behaviour. One can argue that it cannot fully assist in working against forms of oppression.
- ❖ **INCOMPLETENESS**- Self-efficacy theory inspires people to transform their behaviour and their attitudes towards oppression, however, it does not provide enough or complete details on how people can transform their behaviour.
- ❖ **TRIVIALITY**- This theory can be referred to as common sense but in reality this is not the case because people struggle to develop strong self-efficacy.

2.7.3 Conclusion

To summarise, this section touched on two vital aspects of this study namely, the literature review and the theoretical framework. Both of these aspects were discussed comprehensively in this chapter. The main focus here was to find out from the literature some of the realities of children with same-sex sexual orientations at school level (and even in communities where they come from) and what treatment they experience from educators, staff members and peers. It is evident from the literature that discrimination, bullying and prejudice against learners with same-sex sexual orientations takes place in schools (and communities) and there are a number of reasons why such deeds are taking place. Cultural and religious beliefs play a leading role in creating the perceptions held by educators (and others in the community) towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Such people are victimised because they do not conform to the norm. Normativity is based on gender roles, and those who act outside of these gender roles are regarded as the *'other'*. These are two reasons why some educators and support structures such as the SBSTs are demeaning to learners with same-sex sexual orientations. However, White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) on inclusive education, SACE (2000), the South African Constitution (DOJ, 1996) and SASA (DOE, 1996) instruct educators to treat every child with dignity and to respect diversity among

learners. Furthermore, they should ensure that every learner has access to education despite their particular needs.

In the next chapter I will discuss research methodology.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3 Introduction

It is critical for this study to suggest appropriate or possible solutions to the research problem. However, this cannot be achieved without a research methodology. According to Kothari (2002) a research methodology assists researchers to find solutions to social issues (research problems) scientifically. This is needed for this study. This study will embark on a qualitative research approach so that it can explore the SBST's care and support towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations. A qualitative research approach is appropriate for this study because it ensures that researchers explore and understand the meaning of the social and human problems of individuals or groups (Creswell, 2014). In 3.2.2 I discussed this approach in detail. In this chapter I will also discuss the research paradigm, the research design and data collection methods. This chapter further explains the procedures followed during field work on how data was collected and how it was analysed during the research. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the discussion of ethical considerations and guidelines followed in gathering data.

3.1 Research methodology

Kothari (2002, p. 31) defines a research methodology as:

“...the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. In fact, the research methodology is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data”.

From the above definition it is clear that a research methodology provides several steps that allow the research to engage with the problem to be solved in a logical manner (Kothari, 2002). The main purpose for research methodology is to give the most valid and accurate responses to research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). So in order for this study to be accurate in exploring how a support structure such as the School-Based Support Team perceives and responds to learners with same-sex sexual orientations in the selected school, it is pivotal to engage in a research methodology.

3.1.1 Research Paradigms

Stanage (as cited in Groenewald, 2004) gives a historical definition of the term paradigm. This term can be traced back from the Greek language (paradeigma) and it also has a Latin origin (paradigma) (Groenewald, 2004) and is defined as a collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research (Creswell, 2014). Groenewald (2004) shares the same sentiments with Creswell (2014). He defines a research paradigm as a customary set of beliefs that guide action in a research project and it also shapes the researcher's worldviews about the topic they are studying (Groenewald, 2004). Paradigms are general philosophical orientations about the world and the nature of research that the researcher brings to the study (Creswell, 2014). Without selecting a paradigm, there is no foundation for choices regarding research methods, literature and research design (Bogdan & Biklen 1998). Paradigms influence the way the researcher analyses and interprets knowledge and data (Kerlinger, 1986; Creswell, 2014). Without identifying a suitable paradigm, there is no foundation for subsequent choices regarding methodology, methods, literature or research design (Creswell, 2014).

In this study, the researcher adopts a constructivist paradigm and it serves as a guide for research methodology and design. Constructivism points out that people build their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (Creswell, 2014). When they come across new knowledge, they reconcile it with their prior ideas and experiences. In this process, two things may occur; an individual can change what they believe in, or maybe neglect the new information that could undo certain constructions and reconstruct new understanding (Creswell, 2014; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Kothari, 2002). Current constructions of sexual diversity in South Africa is that it is evil, un-cultural and western imported (Msibi, 2012; Sutherland et al., 2016). In examining the perceptions of school-based support teams, it appears that the construction of sexual diversity could be an ideal departure point to undo erroneous understandings and reconstruct more affirming understandings through training and support.

3.1.2 Qualitative Research Approach

Creswell (2014) and Yin (2012) are saying qualitative research is an approach that offers investigators a platform to explore and search for meaning regarding a group that is experiencing a social or human problem. A qualitative research study allows a researcher to focus on the meanings that participants embrace or attach to about a problem or issue. As earlier mentioned, the issue of same-sex sexual orientation is value laden because of the intersections with culture and religion that largely govern identity in South Africa. It is by exploring the deep-seated meanings from people, their stories and experiences that researchers can develop a form of understanding of the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is through qualitative research that the construction of sexual diversity can be explored to redress the dangerous constructions prevalent in schools and society.

In addition, this study will utilise a case study approach. Case studies allow the researcher to inquire, evaluate and develop an in-depth analysis of a case, event or process (Creswell, 2014). The strength of a case study design lies in the ability to examine in-depth, a case within a real-life setting (Yin, 2012). Case studies are bounded by time and events. The researcher collected detailed information using different data collection measures over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2014 and Yin, 2012). For this study, the researcher aimed at collecting data that dealt with real-life experiences of a school-based support team in capturing how they perceive and respond to sexual diversity.

3.1.3 Data collection Method

Data collection is regarded as the gathering of structured information through multiple forms such as interviews, observations, documents and audio-visual means (Yin, 2012). Qualitative data collection methods are critical for my study because such methods are interactive and humanistic in nature and they provide a platform for researchers to develop a rapport with the participants during interviews (Masango, 2013). According to Yin (2012) there are four types of data collection methods namely: interviewing, observing, collecting and examining and lastly feeling. For this research I collected my data by using individual and face-to-face interviews which allowed me

to interact with the participants and obtain vital insights about how the participants respond to learners with same-sex sexual orientations at school. McMillan & Schumacher (2014) advise that researchers should gather data that is accurate, authentic and that represents reality.

❖ Individual and face-to-face interviews

In this study, I collected data by means of face-to-face interviews of selected participants. In qualitative interviews, the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, conducts telephonic interviews, or engages in focus group interviews (Creswell, 2014). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that interviews are effectively used to provide the participants with the platform to describe and explain what is most prominent to them about the problem that is studied. Interviews are powerful tools which help people to share their challenges, understanding and their feelings about a certain issue (Masango, 2013). These interviews comprise of unstructured and open-ended questions (Creswell, 2009; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) that are few in number and projected to bring out understandings and opinions of a certain issue from the participants (Creswell, 2014). An interview allows a researcher to interact with a set of participants about their beliefs and perceptions about a certain issue (Yin, 2012). According to Masango (2013) researchers should ensure that they are in control of the interview process so that participants do not deviate from the topic and they can only do that by employing standardized interview questions. Thus, I decided to use interviews with open-ended questions because I was hoping to reveal important insights about the school-based support team's perceptions and responses when dealing with issues of same-sex sexual identities at schools. To obtain clarity and in-depth information from participants, the researcher used probing questions and he also used follow-up questions during the interview for the purpose of enriching the information (Creswell, 2014). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) believe that it is vital for researchers to ask follow-up questions because they ensure that interpretation and concepts have reciprocal meaning for both participants and the researcher, thus allowing both parties to agree on the descriptions and meanings of different events. I ensured that I conduct interviews during lunch time and after school to avoid wasting contact time. The interviews were scheduled for approximately forty minutes per person. Furthermore, interviews were recorded on audio tape and all the

participants remain anonymous. Participants were assured that the information that was recorded is confidential and would be used for academic purposes only. To make meaning of the information that was recorded the researcher transcribed these tapes. To ensure that everything that was said by participants is captured, I transcribed word by word (verbatim), and I did this by writing what I understood or heard from the audio tapes.

However, face-to-face interviews have some shortcomings (Masango, 2013). These shortcomings can be traced to participant responses. For instance during the interview some participants experienced challenges in sharing what the researcher hoped to explore. This challenge can be a result of many factors, Masango (2013) mentions that at times participants are unaware of regular patterns of behaviour in their lives as members of the SBST. Another shortcoming of interviews is that the interviewer can ask questions that can lead to long narratives from participants and sometimes such narratives can be irrelevant to the topic. Furthermore, sometimes participants can supply irrelevant information due to the fact that they have limited knowledge of the language that is used during the interviews (Masango, 2013). Therefore, in this study, I gave the participants an opportunity to use English because the school uses English as their language of teaching and learning. And they were also given an opportunity to give responses in their home languages where they felt they would not be able to provide answers in English.

❖ Sampling methods

Sampling in qualitative research is the selection of data sources from which data is collected to address the research objectives (Creswell, 2014). Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 201) define sampling as a *“place where to go to obtain the data”*. Maree (2010) explains sampling as the process that allows the researcher to select a portion of the population for study. The main purpose of sampling as a method is to select certain people, settings or events on the grounds that can give the researcher essential information for a certain study (Maree, 2010). This study considers purposive sampling that will select a certain sector of the population that will provide the most relevant data that will respond to the objectives of this research. Therefore, I have carefully chosen participants based on the knowledge I have about the population and

the study itself. The study participants are selected based on the study's purpose. This study is concerned with School-Based Support Team perceptions and responses of same-sex sexual orientations. It is therefore necessary to focus only on members in the School-Based Support Team.

For this research, I identified a secondary school that has a functional school-based support team. I then interviewed the SBST coordinator who is the current Life Orientation HOD, five SBST grade coordinators and four SBST members. Research shows that youth in South Africa more frequently express their same-sex sexual identities at the age of 14 (Francis, 2011). Learners at this age are commonly found in secondary schools hence I selected this secondary school.

❖ Data processing and analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) describe qualitative data analysis as a procedure of temporary discovery analysis aimed at developing coded topics and categories that may primarily come from the data or which may be predetermined, as well as identifying patterns when looking for explanations. Creswell (2014) emphasises that researchers should read the transcripts and the notes repeatedly in order to familiarize themselves with the content and understand the data collected. This process of reading will allow the researcher to make sense of what is written in the transcripts by arranging the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, identifying themes and finding out how the themes are related (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, in this study, the researcher looked at regularities and patterns in the data. In this study I followed the next six steps as stated by Creswell (2009) in a chronological order in order to analyse data:

- a. **Step one** (Raw data) – data is arranged and interviews are transcribed.
- b. **Step two** (Organising and preparing data for analysis) - I read the data with the aim of finding meaning and reflecting on what is expressed by the participants during the interviews.
- c. **Step three** (Reading through all the data) – I coded the transcripts. Creswell (2009) states that coding is the process of organising the data or a process of categorising the data. For this study, I labelled these categories.

- d. **Step four** (Coding the data) – the researcher used the coding process to make a description of themes for data analysis. According to Creswell (2009), description contains a comprehensive rendering of information about people, places or events in a particular setting. I found it necessary to create a narrative of themes because it is useful for understanding SBST responses to the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations.
- e. **Step five** (Interrelating themes/Description) – I used narrative discussions of themes with the aim of providing findings of the study.
- f. **Step six** (Interpreting the meaning of themes/descriptions) – I interpreted the data.

3.2 Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness and credibility are the strengths of qualitative research because they determine the accuracy and reliability of the findings (Creswell, 2014). According to Yin (2012) trustworthiness is a method of ensuring rigour in qualitative research without compromising relevancy in order to get accurate information. For this reason, I conducted one-to-one interviews instead of focus group discussions. This enabled me to identify the consistencies from the different members of the school-based support teams. More so, it created a safe environment for participants to express themselves freely. All participants were presented with the same set of questions within the semi-structured interview guide. I am fluent in the main languages spoken in the targeted environment for this research, so I allowed participants to engage in a language that is most comfortable to them.

3.3 Ethics

Creswell (2014) states that ethics refers to the moral commitment researchers are required to make to acquire objective and accurate data about real phenomena. Before conducting this study, I requested permission from the ethics committee of the University of Johannesburg and the leadership of the identified schools. Only school-based support team members were engaged and their consent was sought too. A detailed discussion of the research was had with the participants and those who

agreed to continue with the study, and participants were provided with a consent form. I explained to the participants that the identity of the school and that of all participants would not be disclosed and should they feel the need at any given moment to withdraw then they were welcome to do so. I am aware that sexuality is a sensitive topic and may elicit uncomfortable emotions. For this reason, I arranged for a psychological counsellor to be on standby to assist participants who may require such services. This was all in an effort to minimise any form of harm. As soon as I am done with the study, I will revisit the school to share my findings with them to confirm whether I have presented a true reflection of what they have expressed.

3.4 Reflexivity

According to Creswell (2009) reflexivity is a crucial process in a qualitative research. This process allow the researcher to have a self-reflection while conducting the study (Creswell, 2009). In other words, reflexivity is a process that allow introspection on the role of subjectivity in the research process (Yin, 2012). During data collection and data analysis it was difficult for me (as a researcher) to acknowledge that some SBST members are homophobic. While the process of coding demanded tedious work, it showed me the value of being concise and accurate in identifying categories and to be always mindful of detaching my own interpretation at these stages of data processing.

The study taught me how to be discriminating in selecting core and fundamental data from those that were important to give due importance to the information provided by the participants of the study. When I listened to the participants' responses and views about learners with same-sex sexual orientations, I came to understand how participants normalise heterosexuality and discriminate homosexuality in schools. However, I admire the participants' willingness to share their honest views and perceptions about homosexuality because in my view transformation occurs when people are honest and comfortable to engage in sensitive issues such as gender and homosexuality. Re-education occurs when people are involved in conversations that are uncomfortable and sensitive. In the process, I came to examine my own views of homosexuality and became more appreciative of how I have supported learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Interacting with the participants exposed that not every educator at school is privileged on how to support and care for learners with same-

sex sexual orientations, a lot must change in the education system. Thus, I believe this study will contribute in redressing and re-educating educators about forms of oppression that occurs at school.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I established the methods used to explore and study how the school-based support team responds to the need to care for and support learners with same-sex sexual orientations. It also described a constructivist epistemology which supports certain assumptions in this research study. Qualitative data collection and data analysis methods were discussed in this chapter. As a result, the next chapter will discuss the research findings that originate from the information provided during all the participants' interviews



CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4 Introduction

This study aimed at finding out how the School-Based Support Team (SBST) responds to the needs of learners who identify with same-sex sexual orientations. Secondly, it was aimed at identifying the needs of teachers in the SBST to sufficiently respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. For this study interviews were critical because they offered the researcher an opportunity to inquire, evaluate (Creswell, 2014) and examine their real-life experiences (Yin, 2013). Participants in this study were members of the SBST at the secondary school. The data that was gathered from the participants is utilised to comprehend how the SBST responds to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. I mentioned in Chapter 3 that six steps are to be considered to analyse and discuss data that was collected. This chapter engages with the suggested stages five and six. Therefore, in this chapter I used **step five** (Interrelating themes/description) to discuss three themes and I moved to **step six** (Interpreting the meaning of themes/descriptions) to ensure that the findings of the study are presented. I used thematic analysis, which can be defined as the procedure of classifying “*patterns or themes within a qualitative data*” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3352). When thematic analysis is used in qualitative research three aspects are covered namely, to summarise data, to organise data and most importantly to provide an analysis of it (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

4.1 Data Collection and Analysis Strategies

Ten participants were interviewed individually. Participants include the members of the School-Based Support Team namely, the coordinator, five senior phase teachers (Grade 8 and 9) and four FET (Further Educational and Training) phase teachers (Grade 10, 11 and 12). Although the principal also forms part of this team, his response was that he has no knowledge about the functions of the SBST at his school. The following table illustrates the list of participants:

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	TEACHING EXPERIENCE	TEACHING GRADE
1	Black Female	4 years	Senior phase
2	Black Female	13 years	FET
3	Black Female	2 years	FET
4	Black Female	10 years	Senior phase
5	Black Female	23 years	FET
6	Black Female	24 years	FET
7	Black Female	8 months	Senior phase
8	Black Male	5 years	FET
9	Black Female	13 years	Senior phase
10	Black Female	18 years	Senior phase

Table 4.2.1: Overview of Participants

The individual interviews conducted with the selected participants were transcribed verbatim. The researcher started by coding the data and later on, he categorised it into codes. The researcher ended up with the themes below which aligns with the main and secondary research question. Therefore, during the data analysis process the researcher discovered the following themes:

❖ A narrow view to inclusive Education
❖ Perceptions about Gender and Sexual diversity
❖ (Non) Responses to homophobic bullying and violence

Table 4.2.2 An outline of themes that emerged

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.2 THEME 1: A narrow view of Inclusive Education

4.2.1 Reinforcement of medical model of inclusion

White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) stipulates that every child should be given an opportunity to learn and schools should support learners who require assistance (DOE, 2014).

Each school should have a School-Based Support Team which will help learners to deal with barriers to learning and social problems that learners encounter in and around school (Masango, 2013). Chapter 2 of this study (in 2.6) points out that SBSTs are developed by the Department of Education to ensure that the implementation of inclusion at schools occurs (DOE, 2014; Jama, 2014; Mokoelle, 2014; Fourie, 2017). Furthermore, this will ensure that every child who experiences barriers that hinder learning is given full support and are cared for (Jama, 2014; Mackay, 2014; Staden, 2015). In exploring teachers' understanding on the role of the SBST, participant 3 stated that the main function of the SBST is to:

“... act as an internal structure within a school in order to meet the needs of both educators and learners to promote inclusive education” (line 179).

And she went further explaining what she meant by inclusive education:

P3: “Eh...I understand that inclusive education is where by we try by all means to accommodate all the different types of learners that we have in our schools” (line 181).

R: “What does the SBST do to respond to different learner’s needs in your school?” (line 182).

P3: “As a teacher I always ensure that I promote good morals in the classroom and again I make it a point that I plan my lessons thoroughly where I try by all means that I cater for diverse learners learning styles and again I also encourage learners to work in teams so that there can be a warm classroom environment” (line 183).

Participant 3 is familiar with the principles to create an enabling classroom environment that accommodates diverse learners' needs and backgrounds but inclusive education requires more than that. According to Makhalemele and Nel (2015) some educational institutions have support structures that still have a deficient understanding of learning barriers. These structures still perpetuate a medical model of inclusion that focuses on learning difficulties and disabilities that focus on internal, within child barriers (Muthikrishna, 2008). Jama (2014) believes that SBST's should be responsible for supporting and empowering all learners by developing their strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the learning process (DOE,

2001). However, Participant 4 knows that all aspects that need support should be covered by the SBST. She said:

“...to support learners with barriers to learning. It could be learning, social barriers that they encounter (line 267).

But she believes that learners with same-sex sexual orientations do not get support from the SBST. In line 301 she explained: *“as far as I am concerned, in my school homosexuals do not get that kind of support”*. So from the above interaction with the participant, it is clear that the system has not fully transitioned from medical disabilities to safe and enabling learning environments for all children regardless of ability or background (Naicker, 2006). I will unpack much on the challenges of the medical model in 4.3.1.1.

Another factor that indicates that the SBST might be lacking enough knowledge on inclusive education, is that this study found that the SBST members of the school describe their role as that of helping learners who experience cognitive challenges. If such learners do not improve their writing and reading, then recommendations are made to remove them and place them in special schools. As indicated by Participant 2:

“Uhm... The SBST helps learners by intervening with different types of help such as uhm... giving them extra time eh... Individually so as to check exactly where they need to be given help and then work is given to some of the learner’s but then if the educator finds that the learner cannot really do any improvement then that is when the SBST will decide to refer the learner or the case to other institutions because maybe they are good in handwork line as opposed to reading and writing” (line 119).

According to White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) the introduction of inclusive education will prevent educators from referring learners to special schools while they can assist them in mainstream schools. Donohue and Bornman (2014) share the same sentiment as expressed within White Paper 6. They believe that referring learners from mainstream to special schools can be attributed to the legacy of educational policies instituted under the apartheid system. When the researcher asked about the role of the SBST in the school they responded:

“The case I have was talking about a child who was illiterate in my class. He’s doing grade 9B” (Participant 1: line 10).

“To my understanding the role of the School-Based Support Team is strictly to help learners who are having problems in learning eh... the learning barriers which they encounter in classes because you find that some of the learners can’t read and write and that makes them feel very much inferior when they are in classes with other learners” (participant 2: line 117)

“Uhm... The SBST helps learners eh by intervening with different types of help such as uhm... giving them extra time eh... Individually so as to check exactly where they need to be given help and then work is given to some of the learner’s but then if the educator finds that the learner cannot really do any improvement then that is when the SBST will decide to refer the case to other institutions because it is not only the reading and writing issue some are good in handwork” (Participant 2: line 119).

“The role of the SBST is to assist learners with learning barriers during their schooling for instance if a learner cannot write, they try by all means to assist the learner to achieve that skill of writing” (Participant 10: line 705).

Participant 6 believes that another role of the SBST is to ensure that learners who misbehave (disobedient behavior) in class are dealt with because they have either mental or psychological problems. She conveys it well in line 412:

“I believe that the role of the SBST is to support these learners and find out what problems they have maybe that is making them not to perform or make them to misbehave in class. Maybe these kids have issues mentally or maybe they cannot think straight when they are in class, who knows”.

It is clear that difficulties are pathologised and attributed to the inner world of the learner. Walton (2011) points out that the definition and interpretation of inclusion can be problematic sometimes especially when it puts emphasis on learning difficulties such as illiteracy and poor curriculum adaptation (Walton, 2011). White Paper 6, for instance, provides a definition of inclusion as a platform where schools no longer have a separate curriculum for learners with disabilities or learning difficulties as every child

in South Africa follows the same curriculum (DOE, 2001). As much as this definition might have some elements of truth, it pushes the idea that the medical model of inclusion is to be privileged and it is silent about issues of social and systemic challenges that create a number of shortcomings in the execution of inclusive education in schools.

None of the ten participants of this study included the case of learners with same-sex sexual orientations when stating the roles and responsibilities of the SBST. I had to ask another question to find out how the SBST perceives learners with same-sex sexual orientations. I asked Participant 1 whether she is comfortable to talk about homosexuality with learners and she stated that:

*“I think I am **comfortable** because I would talk about it in a **positive way**. In a **jokily way**. Not talk about it trying to offend them and I would talk about it that way hoping that the person receives it well, that person sees my intention” (line 81).*

Although Participant 1 points to her level of comfort about engaging in topics related to sexual diversity, she believes that she can talk about homosexuality in a *positive and jokily way*. Msibi (2012) and Brown and Diale (2017) found that jokes are a common bullying tactic that often inflicts hurt and vilification. Jokes aimed at people with diverse gender and sexual orientations are similar to the view that *“threats and assaults moves beyond docility to that of fixing, compliance and ultimately re-establishing norms”* (Brown, 2018, p.13). Thus, this is the reality of learners with same-sex sexual orientations at school. This educator who is a member of the SBST, not just jokes about going to the toilet but brings into question the identity of this individual as will be seen below. Participant 1 elaborated further to explain what she meant with jokily:

“... I used to talk about it last year in my class with that boy. I would be like “oh! My God you are going to the toilet? Ha! Aah I wonder”. And we would laugh about it and then he goes” (line 81).

It was not clear enough what the participant meant when she was talking about intentions, so I had to probe more. She said:

*“My intention would be trying eh...to show that **these people** are part of us and we do not dislike them. At the end of the day they are human beings” (line 83).*

The comment by this participant illustrates the boundaries of them and us, the heterosexual and the homosexual as well as the dominant and the inferior. Line 83 exposes that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are 'othered' but they must be brought into the mainstream community. Such acts can be categorised as educational exclusion which is a form of social injustice (Sayed et al., 2003). Social injustice is often viewed as a norm, hence it is a feature of all human relationships (Sayed et al., 2003). While Hlalele (2012) mentioned that social justice is with equal justice. All people should have equal rights and opportunities (Hlalele, 2012) despite their sexual orientations or gender at school (or in the society). Francis (2013) perceives social justice as both a process and a goal. He (2013, p.3) states that:

“The main objective of social justice is the ‘full and equal participation of all groups in a society mutually shaped to meet their needs’. The process of attaining this goal, should be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change”.

In this study I argue that schools must provide equal rights and opportunities for all learners because that is the nature of inclusive schools. Inclusive education is a form of social justice (Sayed et al., 2003). When inclusion is seen through the lens of social justice, then it is there to assist people to attain their democratic rights that ensure that they be treated with respect and dignity all the time (Bhana, 2012). Brown and Diale (2017) argue that the education system should be driven by social justice doctrines that put emphasis on democratic values. According to the South African constitution democratic values refers to human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedom and lastly, non-racialism and non-sexism (DOJ, 1996). Schools should accept principles and values contained in the constitution to ensure that human rights and social justice for all learners is attained (DOE, 2001). Furthermore, Bhana (2012) argues that teachers should play a critical role in ensuring that all school learners (including learners with same-sex sexual orientations) experience learning that is free from hatred, prejudice and social inequalities. Delpit (as cited in Bhana, 2012) mentioned that educators should be committed to fighting against oppressive forms that discriminate against learners with same-sex sexual orientations, so that transformation can occur at schools. A major gap in the system relates to social justice concerns. Participant 6 said:

“I don’t think so because mostly the team concentrates on I think the performance of the learner, learners who misbehave, learners who are needy--- who are from needy backgrounds and so on but for these ones [learners with same-sex sexual orientations] I haven’t heard of any support given to them” (line 450).

It was disturbing to hear another participant (Participant 3) saying that even though the school has learners with same-sex sexual orientations she does not interact with them because she does not find a reason to do so. Such positions taken by teachers perpetuate the notion of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Francis, 2012). These conservative views ‘other’ homosexuality and privilege heterosexuality (Kumashiro, 2000). Francis (2012) says such behaviour from educators’ isolate learners with same-sex sexual orientations, further marginalising them and making them vulnerable to prejudice and attack. Position theory can be defined as an “endeavour[s] to understand people’s positions rather than the roles they assume” (Francis, 2012, p. 3). Once an individual takes up a specific position as his/her own, he/she certainly perceives the world from that position (Francis, 2012). An educator’s position on a particular situation is influenced by his or her history and life experiences (Francis, 2012). Participant 3 prefers to position herself away from people with same-sex sexual orientations. She expressed this in lines 236-241:

R: Ehm... now I just want to find out in inclusive education and you said we must include all different types of learners so do you have these learners in your school?

P3: Yes they are available.

R: Okay. Eh... can you share one of your experience, have you interacted with one of these kids?

P3: Not yet so far.

R: Okay, but why mam don’t you engage with them?

P3: I haven’t found a reason to do so sir.

Participant 5 pointed out that some educators’ fuel the discrimination and prejudice in the school as inferred from Participant’s 3 responses. When an educator positions himself/herself like we have noted with Participant 3, then heterosexuals are privileged and learners with same-sex sexual orientations are ‘othered’ (Kumashiro, 2000). This needs to change; educators should ensure that all forms of oppression in schools are eliminated (Kumashiro, 2001). Kumashiro (2000) states that the anti-oppressive

education theory emphasises that educators and schools should implement strategies that will help in overcoming resistance to transformation and unlearning stereotypical knowledge about oppression of the 'other'. Unlearning oppressive stereotypes and misinformation should take place because nonheterosexuality is excluded when teaching and learning is based on such oppressive stereotypes (Francis, 2017). Educators must be agents of change and make a difference for the marginalised groups in the society and at school level to ensure that all forms of oppression are eradicated in schools (Kumashiro, 2000). When I asked Participant 5 about oppression of learners with same-sex sexual orientations in their school she said:

"We still have teachers who are still judging them and for that they are killing the children's future because some of these children leave school because a teacher instead of teaching, you will see a teacher now concentrating on the sexual status of that particular child line" (line 375).

The main role of the SBST is to support teachers and learners towards an enabling learning environment (Jama, 2014). Educators who are lacking knowledge and skill to support learners should obtain assistance from the SBST. Participant 5 is an active member of the SBST although she could track such violation by teachers, she did not fulfil in her duty to change the repressive circumstances for learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Hence, some of them quit school. When I questioned Participant 6 about discrimination and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations she re-iterated that:

*I think they need support because this is so confusing, it is so confusing because learners don't know how to behave around these **type of learners**, the teachers----- some teachers don't know how to behave around them. So, these learners **who are like this**, lesbians or gays, they need to be supported because even at home I believe they have problems, so they find themselves erh... so **they find themselves between nowhere**. **The parents don't accept them, the teachers do not accept it and their peer also do not accept it. They just find themselves in the middle of nowhere**, so I think they need support (line 454).*

Participant 6 stated that there are learners with same-sex sexual orientations at the school but they are rejected by their peers, educators and even their parents. As a result, "*they find themselves in the middle of nowhere*" (Participant 6). This rejection can be tracked in the selection of words that she used to refer them. Firstly, the

participant used phrases such as “*type of learners*” and “*who are like this*”. These phrases demonstrate that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are ‘*othered*’ and they are perceived differently from the heterosexual learners in the mainstream schooling system. For instance, the word used (“*type*”) demonstrates that learners are not treated equally or the same as heterosexual learners. Using these words segregate learners with same-sex sexual orientations from heterosexual learners (Francis, 2018), since they are categorised in a certain way which is different from the norm - hence Participant 6 uses the term “*type*”. By using these terms the educator labels learners and declares that there is something wrong with learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Francis, 2018) and imply that they need fixing (Msibi, 2012). Once learners are labelled in this manner by educators it demonstrates that they do not belong in the education system (Sigamoney & Epprecht, 2013). Labelling in this case refers to addressing people differently and not treating them like normal people are called and treated (Francis, 2017). When people with same-sex sexual orientations are labelled, the education system regards them as invisible (Francis, 2017). For Brown (2018) invisibility is a powerful form of violence which is unfair, damaging, and manipulative in nature. The effect of invisibility and nonrecognition of homosexuality by the education system demonstrates that learners with same-sex sexual orientations become isolated and are being ‘*othered*’ by the system (Francis, 2012, 2017). Brown (2018) points out that when human beings are ‘*othered*’ they are not considered as humans at all and “*cannot be humanised for they fit no dominant frame for the human within that particular border*” (p.11).

This shows that there is a systemic problem where educators do not take responsibility for implementing the policy (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). This study found that seventeen years after the ratified White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) this school has made very little effort to create a safe and inclusive learning environment for same-sex sexual orientations. Rothman and Simmonds (2015) and Brown and Diale (2017) argue that homophobic schools violate the human rights of learners with same-sex sexual orientations because every child has a right to equal access to education. For instance, Participant 1 stated that the learning environment for learners with same-sex sexual orientations is not yet conducive. It is not conducive because this learning environment remains silent and unresponsive to the discrimination of the ‘*other*’, and

it reproduces and propagates the legacies of oppression (Brown, 2018). She declared in line 105:

“Uhm...in terms of the learning environment that we are doing, we are ignoring them (queer learner) in our school they do not exist it is boys and girls that’s it”.

Participant 3 mentioned that language is used to mock and name call homosexuals. The offensive name-calling strengthens *“feelings of ‘othering’ and displacement within the self”* (Brown, 2018, p. 14). When I asked her why they refer to people with same-sex sexual orientations with oppressive language she responded:

But sometimes they use these names to tease them or maybe to make fun of them so that others can laugh (line 216).

Msibi (2012) believes that language is the most useful tool that is used in schools to discriminate against queer learners. Francis and Reygan (2016, p. 181) refer to this form of oppression as macroaggressions and they define it as:

“...daily verbal, behavioural, or environment indignities, whether intentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults towards members of oppressed groups”.

Macroaggression creates oppressive learning environments which are hostile to learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Francis & Reygan, 2016). For this study oppressive language refers to the language that is used by participants (or the SBST) to reinforce binaries that objectify, exclude and *‘other’* those who do not conform to the norm (Rothmann & Simmods, 2015). It has a negative impact because it continues to propagate heterosexism and gender normativity, and as a result learners with same-sex sexual orientations are excluded in the school environment (Francis & Reygan, 2016). Clearly, this affects people with same-sex sexual orientations negatively because they cannot freely express themselves at school and they are obliged to conform to heteronormative standards (Msibi, 2012). Also, they do not benefit from their constitutional right to a non-homophobic school environment. Participant 3 expressed the following:

“Yes, they are discriminating them and also they are provoking them with the mentality that they will change if they are called with those names” (line 218).

This shows that name-calling or labelling has the power to influence and determine who should be considered normative and who should be seen as the 'other' (Francis, 2018). This is oppressive, hence Kumashiro (2000) mentions that schools have a duty to "acknowledge and affirm differences and tailor their teaching to the specifics of their student population" (p. 29). Schools should be inclusive, non-discriminatory, non-sexist (DBE, 2000; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015; Brown & Diale, 2017). This goal can only be achieved when schools start to prepare educators to implement inclusive education at school level. Engelbrecht et al. (2001) mentioned that educators who are not prepared to create inclusive environments for teaching contribute little towards inclusion. From the participants' responses it is clear that members of the SBST lack self-efficacy (Pajares, 1997; Bandura, 1994) thus they fail to challenge heteronormativity and embrace inclusivity at school. Self-efficacy theory asserts that people who are not trained or equipped well to fulfil certain tasks lack motivation in performing required tasks (Bandura, 1994). According to Bandura (1994) self-efficacy is one's belief in the ability to be able to succeed in accomplishing a certain task. Bandura (1994) mentions that individuals can deliberately influence one's functioning and life circumstances. The researcher's interactions with the participants reveals that participants are not confident in embracing inclusion at schools (especially challenging oppression against learners with same-sex sexual orientations). So, they believe that more training is needed. Participant 7 mentioned that:

*"I think more training is needed because eh...we might be trained while we were in our institutions where we studied but now it needs to be you know something that we do it more often as a reminder **that these people [homosexuals] are part of our society so we need to do this and that in order to attend to them**" (line 555).*

Although Participant 7 was answering the question based on training, she showed that she is uncomfortable to talk about people with same-sex sexual orientations. According to her narrative people with same-sex sexual orientations are still viewed as people who are not considered as human beings. To support this view, she uses the phrase "these people". As indicated earlier, using such a phrase to refer to people with same-sex sexual orientations reduces them to objects and creates two groups within the same society (the privileged and the 'other') (Kumashiro, 2000; Francis, 2018).

There are those who believe they were not trained at all. Participant 9 said that:

“Actually I did not meet this issue [homosexuality] while still at school, it’s a new concept which I got while I was already in the working system, but I think it must be included in the training system for teachers” (line 678).

Participant 10 argues that as much as she knows that she must accommodate every child in the classroom she does not have time to do so. As a result, she believes that more training is needed. She puts it well:

“I think more training is needed. Because we do know that we should acknowledge diversity, but we are not informed on how can we do that and again the department does not allocate us time to deal with this diversity issue. We noticed that we are having a huge number of learners who have different genders. Now I think more information is needed for us to deal with these learners” (line 767).

Participant 1 also commented about time:

“We don’t have time to engage, speak about homosexuality. And be aware of our environment that we live in” (line 103).

Participant 1 assured the researcher that there is a division in this secondary school. Learners with same-sex sexual orientations are ‘othered’ and heterosexual learners are privileged.

My argument with the above statement (line 103 and 767) is that participant 1 and 10 denounced the system (the department) by stating that the policy is there, but no time is allocated to its implementation. This might be the reality of the SBST at the school where this study was conducted. However, the self-efficacy theory accentuates the significance of developing skills and experiences that can assist people to perform difficult tasks successfully (Pajares, 1997). Educators as members of the SBST should develop a skill which puts emphasis on learning to teach the discipline (the subject content) while learning to critique the ways (strategies) in which the discipline is presented and how to abolish forms of oppression in schools (Kumashiro, 2001). Educators should acquire ‘*mastery experiences*’ in overcoming obstacles through persistent effort (Bandura, 1994). This means time should not hinder the process of implementing the inclusive education policy at schools. It is expected that the SBST responds positively to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations even

though the department does not allocate time for school personnel to do so. Educators should be trained to develop strong self-efficacy which gives them a sense of accomplishment and the self-assurance that they are capable of addressing difficult activities (Bandura, 1994) such as addressing forms of oppression that discriminate against learners that do not conform to normative identities (Kumashiro, 2000). Participant 9 agrees that training will have a constructive outcome that embraces learners with same-sex sexual orientations at school level:

“I believe that training would be the most important tool because is the only way in which we can be able, even to conscientise other learners concerning the issue of homosexuality” (line 690).

Participant 1 suggested a different strategy of conducting teacher training. During the conversation she said:

R: “So as a professional educator are you trained to respond to sexual diversity? And do you think more training is needed? (line 90).

P1: Eh...Uhm...Not trained to deal with sexual diversity and I haven't heard of a workshop or training not more training programs to help us as educators to learn about sexual diversity because is something that is completely ignored in the education system (line 91).

R: So if they--- as you are saying that more training is needed. What kind of training must be provided? (line 92)

P1: Uhm... For me workshops where we as teachers going somewhere and there is a presenter I don't feel those are productive enough I feel like we need a training whereby we will involve those learners because we will come up with strategies and ways on how to deal with them and we do not know them. So the training that should be taking place is the one that the learners are involved” (line 93).

Participant 1 says learners with same-sex sexual orientations should be part of training sessions and they should interact with educators because in that way, educators will learn how to treat them with respect and dignity.

An inclusive education system can work if the Department of Education provided more advanced teacher training. Training should focus on the roles and duties of the SBST

because they should give clear direction on how learners with learning barriers can be supported and cared for at school level. The following are the roles and duties that Rulwa-Mntwana (2014) points out:

- ❖ Organising all learner, teacher and curricular support in the school;
- ❖ Finding school needs with a focus on barriers to learning at learner, teacher, curriculum and school levels;
- ❖ Being able to take the initiative in the use of the SIAS Policy and guiding teachers through the SIAS support provision process;
- ❖ Developing appropriate in-class and school-based strategies to address these needs;
- ❖ Encouraging collegial/peer support;
- ❖ Drawing upon additional resources from within and outside the school to address these challenges;
- ❖ Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an 'action-reflection' framework/plan.

Participant 5 make additions to the above roles of the SBST. She believes that love is fundamental in ensuring that learners are supported and cared for. She assumed the:

“The purpose of being teachers and members of the SBST is to love children for who they are so that they can give children education. Leading them to be responsible in their adulthood”
(line 375).

Walton (2011) says these key functions of the SBST are there to ensure that implementation of inclusive education occurs in schools. Inclusive education can be defined as a process of increasing the access and participation of all stakeholders within the system and especially to reduce exclusionary measures affecting all school learners in all aspects of school life (Walton, 2011). Mahlo (2013) points out that in an inclusive environment changing attitudes, teaching methods and adapting the setting occurs with the aim of meeting the needs of all learners. Participants agree that transformation should occur in order to achieve inclusion in school. Participant 5 stated that in order for the SBST to respond to the needs of learners effectively, it should develop a better selection process when appointing educators for SBST membership. This will ensure that all members are selected on merit. She said:

“The first eh...point that I want to make is with the formation of the SBST in an entity there must be a criteria that must be used to select the SBST committee, not everyone have the skills on how to support. Not everyone have the love of children at school. Not everyone have the idea or the strategy of talking to kids. I have been an SBST member for a period of 10 years, my co-ordinator did not have love for children and I had to be under her” (line 401).

According to Kumashiro (2000) schools should be spaces where learners who are ‘othered’ can go to for assistance, advocacy, resources and so forth. But how can learners with same-sex sexual orientations go to school while there are educators (especially SBST members) like Participant 3 who do not respond to the needs of all learners as stipulated in the Salamanca statement of 1994? Mahlo (2013) is of the view that the Salamanca statement of 1994 with a philosophy that aims at “education for all” to ensure that schools are more welcoming and contribute in building an inclusive society. The abovementioned core duties of the SBST (duties i and v) command the SBST to care for and support learners based on their needs so that they can participate in society as full citizens (Steyn, 2000; Nkosi & Masson, 2017).

The data collected demonstrates that the school is still oppressive and unsafe for learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Participant 1 indicated one reason why people with same-sex sexual orientations are discriminated against in schools. She said: *“...they are insulted daily because of choices that they have made in terms of their sexuality”* (line 64). From this conversation it is clear that educators should have to learn about the ‘other’. Knowing about the ‘other’ is important because when an individual is aware of forms of oppression that are harmful to queer people, he/she will unlearn their previous knowledge about the ‘other’ (Kumashiro, 2000).

When I asked Participant 5 about learners with same-sex sexual orientations she highlighted that some educators in the SBST *“don’t want to accept these people. We see them as dirty”* (line, 395). Even here, the participant includes herself in a collective that abhors same-sex sexual diversity using the word ‘dirty’. This positioning underscores the vilification and demonising of learners with same sex-sexual orientations. They need to be cleaned (fixed) while heterosexuality is inadvertently seen as clean and pure by educators. In these quotations, participants believe that homosexuality is a choice and resides within the person, and they appear to be unified in their discrimination. Hence, schools are oppressive because there are still educators

(SBST) who do not understand homosexuality. When I asked Participant 6 how she feels when people discriminate against learners with same-sex sexual orientations she said:

“... we need to sit with them and find out where this thing comes from because I believe that it doesn't just start from nowhere. There has to be a reason why a person decides to take that route so I think” (line 434).

Even Participant 6 believes that homosexuality is a decision. Hence participants believe that learners with same-sex sexual orientations need fixing. She uses this sentence “*and find out where this thing comes from*” to refer to homosexuality as an identity that is un-human or foreign and perhaps induced. I believe that members of the SBST should transform so that they can understand the processes of privileging and othering within the society. Transformation will take place when the SBST starts to acknowledge that they have roles and responsibilities (as indicated by Rulwa-Mntwana, 2014) to assist and support every child in school. They should execute those roles and responsibilities. They must also change their negative attitude towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Furthermore, the South African Council for Educators' (SACE) code of conduct (2000) instructs educators to avoid inflicting any form of humiliation, and refrain from any form of abuse, physical or psychological in order to transform the current education system that discriminates against the ‘*other*’.

Kumashiro (2000) says that to understand the oppression of learners with same-sex sexual orientations “*requires moving beyond homophobia and its humanist psychological discourse of individual fear of homosexuality as contagion, to consider heteronormativity*” (p. 36). This approach will give educators an opportunity to acquire knowledge about oppression. And it helps in learning that what is defined as normal is social constructed (Kumashiro, 2000). Because homosexuality in communities is viewed as abnormal, schools also see homosexuality as abnormal since school is a microcosm of society (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). However, educators should not be passive in fighting against heteronormativity as the norm (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009) if they are really optimistic about inclusion in schools. Inclusion requires that schools are not spaces where learners who are ‘*othered*’ and experience abuse,

(Kumashiro, 2000) and I would argue that they should not be ‘*othered*’ in the first place. My position is that difference should be celebrated and normalised.

4.3.1.1. Challenges of the medical model

The medical model seeks to reduce learning barriers which are located within the learner (Slee & Allan, 2001). That means learners are seen as broken and in need of fixing (Naicker, 2006; Retief & Letšosa, 2018). It ignores the system’s inability to respond to learners with different abilities and backgrounds (Naicker, 2006). Retief and Letšosa (2018) state that the medical model interprets learning challenges as residing within the individual. In this way learning challenges are perceived as an “intrinsic and characteristic of a person rather than as a social construct” (Naicker, 2006, p. 3). Handling the issue of learning barriers from a medical perspective leads to the prevention of access to education and this is a reflection of a deficient system not a deficient person (Naicker, 2006). It also denies the opportunity to address barriers from a systemic level. When the researcher asked Participant 2 a question based on the reasons that makes the SBST fail to support learners with same-sex sexual orientations, she responded as follows:

“...there is something wrong with gays and lesbians and they will automatically change. That’s my understanding but if it continues then it means that the child is in the body which is not the right body and then that child won’t change” (line 169).

Participant 2 shows a narrow understanding of diverse sexual identities. In the above quotation she expresses that homosexuality can fade away and that people with same-sex sexual orientations might be in the wrong body, and at some point they will change and become straight. This understanding expresses that this teacher believes that homosexuality resides within a child. Francis (2018) mentions that educators perceive homosexuality as intrinsically and inevitably wrong. Hence Participant 6 believes that change does not happen automatically, some actions should be taken to correct this wrong deed. Participant 6 said:

But most of the people, most of the elderly people fight with them should a person or a father or a mother find their children doing that at first they fight with them with the aim of correcting this

behavior. They fight they scolds. Old people in my age do not want to have kids who are not straight. So they fight (line, 430).

Francis (2018b) confirms that corrective measures such as ‘just punishment’ have occurred in some societies (and schools) and heterosexuals are perpetrators of such punishments (Nel & Judge, 2008; Msibi, 2012; DePalma & Francis, 2014). Brown (2018) states that symbolic violence is used to restore the deviation.

However, in a democratic society a school is a microcosm of the society and it should ensure that the constitution of the country is not violated and that all citizens benefit from it. Section 9 (3) of the Constitution prohibits any form of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (DoJ, 1996). Even the SACE (2000) prohibits educators from discriminating against learners based on gender and sexual orientation. It also instructs educators to acknowledge what the constitution requires of them. It stipulates that an educator:

- *“respects the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and in particular children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality;*
- *acknowledges the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realize his or her potentialities;*
- *strives to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of South Africa;*
- *exercises authority with compassion” (SACE, 2000, p. 4).*

The researcher found that learners with same-sex sexual orientations in this study are still viewed as if homosexuality is wrong and unacceptable (see line 169). Brown and Diale (2017) note that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are still perceived as immoral, are given little support, and discriminated against. Rothmann (2018) highlights one of the reasons why sexual minorities are perceived as immoral and sometimes given little support. He elucidates that heteronormativity has an effect on how sexual minorities access resources and notes that there is *“reinforcement of a heterosexual and/or homosexual binary logic”* (Rothmann, 2018, p. 1). This means that the sexual identity of the child is important when it comes to the distribution of resources. Learners with same-sex sexual orientations are likely to receive less support from educators and school administrators. Schools should not give resources (for care and support) to people based on their sexuality. This is because when resources are allocated in this way, learners who are sexual minorities are excluded

from the system because of their non-conformity. (Rothmann & Simmonds 2015). Participant 1 claimed that the Department of Education money is utilized in other structures within the education system but ignores programs related to awareness of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. She said that:

P1: Uhm... I feel like we need awareness campaigns. As much as the department of education can spend money on advertisement for example SGB selection or elections. Why don't they do something similar with sexual diversity or with other problems that we have. Where by you see an advertisement on TV, where learners will be wearing school uniform and raising awareness on the issue. We never see that actually when we are watching TV what we see is 'Pride'. Do you know pride? (line 99).

R: No, I don't (line 100)

P1: It is a day whereby they celebrate LGBT. But why the DBE does not provide ways to make noise in the media platforms about this issue so that people can be aware of it and not hiding behind being negative and saying all sorts of things about these type of learners.

Participant 6 says the issue of resource distribution is not only a problem for educators but learners with same-sex sexual orientations are also being affected. She mentioned that:

"It's not only our problem as you know educators and---- but this thing is very broad, is very wild I heard at some stage that homosexuals in our school were saying when taking an ID is a problem. What should be written in their ID? Male or female? I heard about that so I don't know how they are responding to that" (line 486).

There is no way that the issue of Identity Documents cannot affect the education system because in secondary schools learners are expected to produce their IDs when writing their grade 12 examination. What happens when the ID photo does not match the physical appearance of the ID holder?

The education system should be designed in such a way that it endorses all the basic human rights of all learners who are admitted into schools. Therefore, SBSTs in

schools must embrace social inclusion and be responsive to discrimination against learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Embracing social justice will ensure that all learning barriers (including barriers that are created by gender violence/discrimination) are addressed in a learning institution. Inclusion can nurture a *“holistic and integrated support provision through interpersonal collaboration, as well as the development of a community-based support system which included a preventative and developmental approach to support all learners”* (Makhalemele & Nel, 2015, p. 2).

For this study, we cannot locate learning challenges/barriers that are faced by learners with same-sex sexual orientations within themselves because they are socially constructed. But we need to look at how the system perpetuates and regulates forms of oppression. The SBST as a supportive structure in the school should respond to homosexuality to ensure that learners get access to their constitutional rights.

4.3 Theme 2: Educator’s perceptions of gender and sexual diversity

4.3.1 Constructions of diverse sexual orientations

Schools should be spaces or sites of both knowledge (learning the content of subjects) and identity construction (where educators help children to construct or mold their sexuality) (Francis, 2017). Educators should treat every learner with respect and dignity, differences should not influence how they treat children in schools (DOE, 2014; Rothman & Simmonds, 2015). Unfortunately, data from this study shows that learners with same-sex sexual orientations *“experience significant homophobia in [the] school environment”* (Francis, 2018, p. 5). In this way schools are failing to perform their duty of helping learners to construct their identity without restrictions. This is because educators build their perceptions about sexual identity from different ideologies. For instance, data from the study shows that some SBST members believe that learners with same-sex sexual orientations have chosen the path of homosexuality and ignored their biological sexuality. When I asked Participant 5 about her views regarding people with same-sex sexual orientations she mentioned that:

*“We cannot judge them [homosexuals] because of the **way they want to live their lives**”* (line 343).

The above quotation raises the point that homosexuality is a sexual orientation that can be chosen, as implied by Participant 5 who used the above sentence during the interview. From her selection of words, homosexuality is in a marginalized position relative to the norm (Francis, 2012). However, his intention is not to judge people with same-sex sexual diversities. In the quotation beneath, Participant 6 also believes that homosexuality is a 'decision' that can be taken by people. This notion creates a fallacy or misconception that people with same-sex sexual orientations have an option to choose being either heterosexual or homosexual. Participant 6 mentioned that educators should interact with learners with same-sex sexual orientations and find out from them why they choose to be homosexuals.

*“...maybe we should sit with some of them [people with same-sex sexual orientations] and find out **where this thing** [homosexuality] comes from because I believe that it doesn't just start from nowhere. There has to be a reason why a **person decides to take that route**” (line 434).*

In addition, participants perceive homosexuality as fashionable at the present time. As a result, learners are choosing to be homosexuals. This perception encourages educators to express personal prejudice towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Msibi, 2012; Francis, 2017; Brown & Diale, 2017). Educators' abhorrent outlook on same-sex sexual orientations have implications for care and support (Brown & Diale, 2017). The concern is that they will aim to restore the state of heterosexuality, as suggested in the quote “*Where it comes from*”, as though it is something that should not be there and that by determining the root cause, it can be fixed (Brown & Diale, 2017). Participant 2 believes that educators perceive homosexuality differently. There are those who find it difficult to understand learners with same-sex sexual orientations because they claim that they do not know the origin of same-sex sexuality. As a result, they mistreat them. This was mentioned by Participant 2:

*“As educators we are not the same. Some treat them fairly because they understand the reason **why they are being like** [homosexuals] that but some other **teachers also tend not to have anything to do with them**” (line 155).*

The phrase (“*why they are being like that*”) points to the binary sexual and social context in which learning is facilitated at school. It threatens the care of and support

for learners with same-sex sexual orientations by educators or members of the SBST because of their repressive stance on sexual diversity. According to Francis (2017) educators who fail to act on homophobic bullying show complicity and give the impression that homophobia is acceptable at school.

When I asked Participant 1 about her perceptions about learners with same-sex sexual orientations she expressed the view that gays are acting. She put it well:

*“You will find someone **acting as a girl**, we do not know if that person truly feels that way or she’s in the adolescent stage”* (line 32).

When asked what she meant about acting, she expressed it as follows:

*“**Abosis’bhuti** because they are brothers or boys who are trying to make themselves sisters. So that’s how the name came about”* (Participant 1: line 46).

Participant 1 used the term ‘*abosis’bhuti*’ to refer to homosexuals. According to Sigamoney and Epprecht (2013) certain words that refer to people with same-sex sexual orientations in South Africa often have demeaning connotations. In this study too, participants referred to people with same-sex sexual orientations as ‘*abosis’bhuti*’ (a combination of male and female) or ‘*stabane*’. Words were switched amongst the participants. In line 46 Participant 1 uses a Zulu noun which is a combination of two proper nouns, usisi (sister) and ubhuti (brother) which equals to ‘*usis’bhut’i*’ (directly translated it means a sister whose a brother). Participant 9 is familiar with the term, she said in line 651: “It differs we call them ‘*bopedipedi*’, ‘*bo bhut’lisi*’ and ‘*bosisiboy*’”. These names simply mean that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are sisters who are boys or brothers who are sisters. ‘*Sis’bhututi*’ highlights that there is an insistent compulsory heterosexuality. That means educators (or adults who use this term) only see learners through their biological sex and not their sexual identity. There is a strong adherence to the boy/girl binary - an either/or situation.

Others prefer the word ‘*istabane*’ as indicated before. Sigamoney and Epprecht (2013) referred to ‘*sabane*’ or ‘*staban*’ as a vulgar term. Those who use this term are violating the rights of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Participant 3 stated that “*they are being called lesbians and gays. But to be specific more they call them **Stabane***” (line 212). Sigamoney and Epprecht (2013) define ‘*stabane*’ as:

“Same-sex attracted men and women as “half man-half woman,” hermaphrodite or intersex” (p.100).

Homophobic language is used by heterosexual people to discriminate against queer learners at South African schools (Msibi, 2012). Language is an influential tool in which homophobia is imbedded (Msibi, 2012). Bourdieu (as cited in Letseka, 2013) argues that language is not only a tool used for communication or even knowledge but is also an instrument of power. Thus, language can give people power to resist forms of oppression and power is accompanied by resistance (Brown & Diale, 2017). This study argues that educators (including the SBST) should not use homophobic language because it affects learners with same-sex sexual orientations negatively. Rothmann and Simmonds (2015) provide a strong indication that ‘discursive discrimination’ should be prohibited by professional educators. ‘Discursive discrimination’ is defined as verbal, emotional and social forms of discrimination (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). Participant 5 agreed that when homophobic language is used homosexuals are discriminated against at school. She said:

R: So what you are is that there are teachers who are victimising these learners? But in which way if I may give me an example? (line 376)

P5: Exactly. Can I use Zulu? (line 377)

R: Yes you can Mam (line 378).

*P5: “Ungazongitshela wena Stabane, angizelanga ukuzofundisana nezitabane mina. Ukame izinwele zakho kahle uyekele ukuqina nokufaka amacici” [don’t tell me stabane, **I am not here to teach izitabane.** Comb your hair, stop plaiting your hair and wearing those earrings]. How many minutes? What is my role as a teacher? To come and do what? And teach. When I reprimand a learner I must I must do so based on my work, based on the content not personal” (line 379).*

The above quotation is a vivid example of how some educators are homophobic, and very clear in expressing how they feel about learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Such educators do not act as professional educators, in fact they are doing the opposite of what is expected from them. They are expected to teach learners and provide safe learning environments within which to educate and fight against forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). Educators should ensure that every child in

the classroom is “*encouraged to participate fully in an education environment that embraces, celebrates and values diversity and attends to the needs of the individual in a humane manner*” (Francis & Brown, 2017, p. 2). But instead of creating that learning space they prefer to discriminate and perpetuate forms of oppression. Clearly, declaring that “*I am not here to educate ‘izitabane’*” exposes the fact that the school in the study has educators who are not well informed about the ‘*other*’.

Sports that are played by learners can influence educators to develop certain perceptions (as indicated in line 208). According to Participant 3 educators can determine the gender or sexuality of a learner through their preference of sporting codes. She stated that it is normal that boys will playing rugby and if it happens that a particular girl plays rugby, she will be automatically be categorized as a lesbian since she does not conform to the normal standards of the sport. She said:

*“Alright. You know sometimes when it comes to athletics, I mean to sports there are those **kinds of sports that are strictly meant for boys**, but you may find a girl **playing that type of a sport like rugby**. We see them **playing rugby those girls**. That’s how we can say this one act like guys”* (line 208).

From the above quotation it is clear that Participant 3 views sport as strictly divided along gender lines. Sporting codes are categorized according to gender binaries. It is normal for boys to play rugby or soccer and it is normal for girls to engage in netball. Thus, heteronormativity plays a critical role at school and in society. Rothmann and Simmonds (2015) argues that privileged heterosexuality remains unquestioned and under-critiqued because heterosexual is perceived as ‘normal’ and ‘good’ (Brown & Diale, 2017). But homosexuality is always under scrutiny and questioned (Francis & Brown, 2017). For instance, a boy who plays soccer or rugby will not have his sexuality questioned, but a boy who plays netball will be, and he will likely be punished for it (Judge & Nel, 2008). However, for Rothmann and Simmonds (2015) this alludes to the objectification and binary logic of ‘*othering*’ those who have a non-normative sexuality.

Sometimes educators’ perceptions about people with same-sex sexual orientations can be influenced by the lives of prominent people in the society. For instance, Participant 7 expressed her views in line 569. She mentioned that:

“Uhm... the information that I am providing is not that true but most of the time there are people who decides that okay I will

have one child for instance Somizi Mhlongo. Somizi is a father to a 23rd daughter. So, he had a child and then he decided to show up to the society that he is gay. But he still has that one child. If Somizi didn't change at the age of 40 how many children, he would have now?"

Participant 7 developed her perceptions about homosexuality based on Somizi's life story. Somizi Mhlongo is a South African gay man, father, actor, choreographer, and a television and radio personality. Basically, he is a South African celebrity. According to Participant 7, who cited the example of Somizi, people can decide to take the path of same-sex sexual orientation after they have their biological children, at any age. Somizi's personality can be understood by studying the notions of effeminate gay men (EGM) and masculine gay men (MGM) (Glick, Gangl, Gibb, Klumpner & Weinberg, 2007) Glick et al., (2007) state that:

"An effeminate gay man (EGM) violates norms of sexuality and personality, whereas a masculine gay man (MGM) violates norms of sexuality, but not of personality" (p.55).

From the above quotation it is clear that Somizi has violated the general gender norms (sexuality and personality). He has a biological child which means that he once pursued a heterosexual relationship with the mother of his child. But now he is attracted to same-sex people. However, this does not mean that he is less a gay man, or that he decided to be gay after having a baby. It is likely that he became an EGM as a defensive measure against forms of oppression that gay men are facing. Glick et al. (2007) claim that gay men who are viewed as effeminate are more likely to be targeted for discrimination and bullying, so they are forced to develop defensive reactions. Attitudes are more negative toward EGMs because they are seen as deviant both sexuality and personality-wise (Glick et al., 2007). To avoid misconceptions, educators and the SBST should familiarize themselves with these notions. They should unlearn perceptions that people with same-sex sexual orientations choose or decide to be homosexuals.

Mapaseka Mokwele, a radio talk show host on Khaya FM (a local radio station) influenced Participant 5 to think in a positive way about people with same-sex sexual orientations. According to Participant 5, the show educates the public about complex issues that affect society. She mentioned that:

*“I am a person who like to listen to radio talk shows. The other time I was listening to Khaya FM eh... the program that is being hosted by Mapaseka Mokwele. Mapaseka Mokwele loves homosexuality topics and they are heating topics and the responses of people who are involved in those topics, you will hear from response that the people need such topics because we are living in that generation. So, one of the gentlemen was being asked about what will happened if his children are gays and lesbians. Only to find out that gentleman has two gays in his family and all those children are his, biologically. So, I find the topic being good. So that where I heard the cry of the gentleman because he wants to support his children. **And remember he is a man and he is expecting to give his boys the norms and values of how to be good husbands. So how will he give his sons the values, yet his sons don't want to be husbands?** So, he was asking---- he was crying in fact to Mapaseka. He wanted help from the entire listeners. He wanted to know how to deal with the case because he doesn't get support from his wife. The wife will always blame the man and you know it is a challenge because he said it made the drift between them as a couple” (line 391).*

Children are raised to conform to societal norms such as gender roles. Boys are expected to be straight men who will be husbands someday. On the other hand, girls are raised to be good wives who will respect their husbands. Basically, children are socialized in such a way that they are supposed to be sexually attracted to the opposite sex. The challenge here is that parents (even educators) impose their values onto learners (Mchunu, 2007). This is a sign that children are nurtured in a heterosexual society where homosexuality is unexpected. In such societies, children are assumed to be heterosexuals (Mchunu, 2007). King et al. (as cited in Mchunu, 2007) state that parents do not only feel uncomfortable talking about sexuality, but they also lack factual information about sexuality. This can be the reason why children have parents who believe in heteronormativity.

Prominent people use media as a platform to teach educators (or the society) about homosexuality. Participant 1 confirms that media plays a huge role in how people construct their perceptions towards people with same-sex sexual orientations. According to Gonta, Hansen, Fagin and Fong (2017) *“the media has a strong influence over individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors”* (p. 22). It is crucial for the media to provide and present accurate and fair information and knowledge about the ‘other’

(Gonta et al., 2017). Learning accurate information and unlearning what is incorrect will ensure that educators are knowledgeable about forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000).

Furthermore, Gonta et al. (2017) argue that television is one of the most fundamental sources of media influencing both young and old people. Television has the power to influence and inspire young people and their futures (Gonta et al., 2017). For example, Participant 1 indicated that before she saw Somizi on TV she perceived learners with same-sex sexual orientations as people who will have a bleak future. TV gave her an opportunity to unlearn what she thought was correct information. When people utilize media to learn more about homosexuality, they change how they perceive people with same-sex sexual orientations. Participant 1 stated that:

*“And how I see them [homosexuals] I **don’t see them with a future**, people who have careers but when I see on **TV people like Somizi succeeding** then I started to change my thinking that this gay thing works in other communities because we have gays that have made it in life” (line 62).*

However not every member of the society views such information in an optimistic manner. For instance, Participant 7 believes that Somizi Mhlongo is the main reason why young people are gays and lesbians (*as seen in line 569*). For Dhaenens (2012) this is normal because sometimes the media can portray people who do not conform to the heteronorm as deviant and as a result they are excluded from privileges enjoyed by heterosexuals. Educators should unlearn this knowledge because it reproduces stigmatization and other forms of oppression in schools. It is not surprising that youth with non-heteronormative sexualities drop out of school, considering messages from teachers of doom and failure. Unlearning what a person had previously learned as normal and normative is crucial because it is another way that can be used to fight forms of oppressions (Kumashiro, 2000). According to Kumashiro (2000) normalizing and privileging can be insidious, hence it is necessary for educators to unlearn such stereotypes. Kumashiro (2000, p. 37) says:

“Privilege is often couched in other discourses. Thinking critically, then, involves recognizing this couching and masking of privilege, and teaching critically involves unmasking or making visible privilege of certain identities and the invisibility of this privileges”.

Participant 2 mentioned that it difficult to articulate the term homosexuality or homosexual when referring to learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Instead she refer to homosexuality as 'this thing' or 'it'. According to Francis (2017) referring to people with same-sex sexual orientations as 'this thing' or 'it' contributes in rendering homosexuals invisible within the school environment, and such behavior from educators "*leads to legitimacy compulsory heterosexuality*" (p.9). It also shows that such learning environments could be seen as homophobic and do not regard people who do not comply with the norm as human beings. Francis (2018) states that referring to learners with same-sex sexual orientations as 'it' or 'thing' is another strategy used by educators to replicate and affirm heteronormative notions about gender and sexuality. It also "*invisibilise[s] non-normative gender and sexuality*" (Francis, 2018, p. 5). Conforming to the norm refers to acceptable heterosexual conduct, dress and behavior (Bhana, 2012; Msibi, 2012; Brown & Diale, 2017). In most instances, learners with same-sex sexual orientations can be forced to embrace heterosexuality. For instance, Participant 1 mentioned that physical appearance plays a role in reinforcing heteronormativity in schools. She said, "*A boy should shave his hair*" (line 26).

Participant 7 raised another important symbol used to determine the sexuality of a person. She stated that the name of a person can lead educators to categorize a child into a certain sexuality without confirming their gender. Through my interaction with participants I found out that names that are given to children after birth can encourage heteronormativity or can put pressure to children to behave in a certain manner. The participant mentioned that names given to boys and girls determines their behavior and how they construct their sexuality (Vance, 1989). Thani (2016) says these influences how learners construct their gender and sexual identities.

The researcher had an interesting conversation about this matter with Participant 7:

*P7: "Uhm... okay there are natural features such as the voice and appearance eh... however, sometimes it is not easy to tell if a person is male or a female by eh... **looking at natural features but the other feature can be the names. The names that our parents give us are the ones that describe us to someone who doesn't know us for instance my name is Lungile eh... as I am a Zulu person Lungile is a name that is referred to a girl and Lungelo is a name referred to a boy**" (line 509).*

R: "So basically when a child is born they will give that child a name based on the sex of the child or whatever sex of the child is?" (line 510)

P7: "Most of the time it refers to that" (line 511).

R: "But in your opinion does---- do names of people determine their behavior in future?" (line 512)

*P7: "Eh... I believe that each and every Africa name it influences the way you behave for instance uhm... **if my name is Mgwazeni (Stab)** if I become problematic to the society then it is expected (Laughing) **because my name is Mgwazeni**. Obviously I will have eh...eh... cases where I will beat and stab people. Eh I will follow my name" (513).*

This shows that in the opinion of some people, gender and sexuality can be socially constructed. In line 509 the participant explained about the social constructions of gender and sexuality. The social construction theory proposes that one of the last remaining outposts of the "natural" in our thinking must be changed and become the product of human action rather than the result of the body, biology or an innate sex drive (Vance, 1989). Vance (1989) sees social construction theory as the theory that challenges what is known as 'natural' and 'fixed'. It explains that gender and sexuality are not static but that it changes, and these changes are socially constructed. In this study, the researcher claims that heterosexuals cannot be normal and fixed, people interact and socialize with diverse identities. As a result, gender and sexuality is coached and taught (Vance, 1989).

According to data from this study biological factors can also influence how educators construct the sexuality of children or build perceptions about learners. Thus, these perceptions are set out by society and they put emphasis on reproduction, marriage and longevity (Dhaenens, 2012). For example, Participant 7 mentioned that:

R: Okay. So in a case whereby Bafana, a boy named Bafana but Bafana does not became a boy, when he grows up. What happens to the society? (line 514)

P7: Ey... the society will have the negative attitude towards Bafana because Bafana is not uhm...that person that the society expects him to be. Because if a boy is named Bafana obviously

the society will be expecting Bafana to grow up and become a man eh... Bafana should get married and have children but if Bafana does the opposite then the society will be judgmental, will call him names and even discriminates him sometimes (line 515).

Participant 7 continued to explain that physical appearances have an impact on the construction of a gender and Participant 4 agrees. According to Participant 4, biological sexual organs determines the sexuality of any person. She mentioned that:

From their physical being because a boy doesn't have boobs, breasts and doesn't have a vagina, a boy has a penis. So that's how we categorize a boy and a girl" (line 271).

In line 26 Participant 1 concurs with Participant 7 that physical appearance is used to construct a certain perception about sexuality. Participant 1 added that:

"Typically we look at the facial features. Does a person have a beard? Does he look more feminine? And when I come to think of it [laughing] there is no right word to [laughing] to say whether a person is male or female. I have noticed that this discriminates because if I look a certain way it makes me an ugly person, ngifana nomfana mara ngiyintombazana (I look like a boy but I am a girl)".

Those who are not attracted to the opposite sex are seen as deviant and are eligible for discrimination and bullying. Dhaenens (2012, p. 306) says:

"People who are born with male genitalia, the logic is that you should behave in a masculine ways, desire women, desire feminine women, desire them exclusively, have sex in what are thought to be normally active and assertive ways and within officially sanctioned contexts"

Msibi (2011)) postulates that sexual identity can be constructed in relation to reproduction. Participant 6 shares the same views as Participant 4 and with Msibi (2011). When the researcher asked her about how to determine the sexuality of an individual, she articulated that:

"I think is not by choice that we group the people like that. When a person is born female then that person is a female because of the sexual parts of that individual. He is male or she is female because of the sexual organs that the person has" (line 416).

Indeed, when a male does not embrace those societal values he is regarded as disobedient. He is likely to face disciplinary measures in the form of discrimination or bullying aimed at changing him into straight man who will embrace societal values (Francis, 2017). For instance, Participant 2 mentioned that: “...*there is something wrong with gays and lesbians and they will automatically change*” (line 169). Data from this study shows that when a person does not express himself/herself according to their biological gender, the society (including educators) perceive that something is inherently wrong with the individual, and that fault resides within themselves (as indicated in theme one). It is the responsibility of the SBST to protect the human rights all learners at school (Jama, 2014). Furthermore, the SBST should ensure that social inclusion occurs at schools (Mackay, 2014). In that way educators (including the SBST) will be less judgmental and more inclusive towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Mackay, 2014). A team that is inclusive can coach other teachers and learners that there is nothing wrong with children with same-sex sexual orientations. They are humans who will need care and support now and again like any other human being. Coaching from the SBST is important because it will help others to unlearn the misconception that there is something inherently wrong with a homosexual child. Participant 6 says:

“They choose to not express themselves like that according to their gender I am not very sure where the problem is or the reason why they express themselves like that” (line 418).

Constructing perceptions on gender and sexuality based on culture and religion is another way to regulate sexuality (Bhana, 2014). Subsequently, same-sex sexual identities are still oppressed, rendered invisible and silenced (Brown, 2018).

Participant 6 could not say the word homosexuality or homosexuals. She referred to homosexuals as ‘it’ or ‘them’. Francis (2012) also noted in his study that the majority of educators struggle to articulate the terms ‘gay’, ‘lesbians’, ‘bisexual’ or ‘homosexual’. According to Francis (2012) “*their non-use of such terms contribute to making homosexuality invisible within the classroom and lends legitimacy to compulsory heterosexuality and homophobia*” (p. 7). Participant 6 mentioned that:

*“You know if you see **it** and perceive **it** the way we do, maybe let me say the way **Christian** do it doesn't make us to ill-treat them*

even though we see it is not right but it doesn't make us or make Christians to ill treat them and discriminate them..." (line 444).

Christianity (or religion) is used as a gatekeeper of sexual diversity. In other words, religious dogma is used to police sexuality (Brown, 2018). Francis (2012) argues that educators' religious beliefs and values strongly influence their approach in dealing with same-sex sexual identities. Religion has expectations of both men and women (Msibi, 2012). These expectations have compulsory demands that normalize heteronormativity and it challenges those who deviate from the 'norm' (Msibi, 2012). Furthermore, religion provides norms on how to live (Akker et al., 2012). These norms suggest what is good and what is bad (Akker et al., 2012). Religion is used to condemn homosexuality and it has served to deny and call into question the morality and existence of same-sex relations (Msibi, 2011). Msibi (2011) argues that Christianity represents a contradiction because other authors argue that this phenomenon is a western imposition on Africa. So why do people use it as gatekeepers or to justify the rejection of homosexuality?

Msibi (2014) observes that some schools struggle to respond to the issues of sexuality and as a result they avoid the issue of sexuality in their teaching philosophy. Francis (2018) argues that teaching and caring about sexually diverse identities can be neglected by educators and support structures because they are not supported by parents. As Participant 2 mentioned, the SBST is able to support and care for learners with same-sex sexual orientation only if parents play their role. She said:

*"It is important that the school work hand in hand with parents so as to find out as when and how did all these have started because when you sit with the parent you might find that the parent say **"this thing started when my child went to kindergarten and then my child came back and he was changed"** or **another parent will tell you that "ever since he/she went to kindergarten the child never played with girls"**" (line 161).*

Sometimes parents (or the society) claim that homosexuality can be passed on by just interacting with other children or people who are homosexuals. In the above quotation the educator highlights that there are parents who believe that their learners were heterosexuals before they went to pre-school or to school, but then when they went there they came back as different children who are attracted to same-sex individuals. There are societies and more specifically educators, that stigmatize homosexuality

(Judge & Nel, 2008) and believe that is contagious (Msibi, 2012). Participant 2, quoting parents, indicated that:

“... this thing started when my child went to kindergarten and then my child came back and he was changed” or another parent will tell you that “ever since he/she went to kindergarten the child never played with girls” (line 161).

There is an interpretation that these children were ‘straight’ before they went to kindergarten or pre-school and got infected with homosexuality when they arrived there. According to Msibi (2012) educators are guilty of spreading the notion that homosexuality is contagious, and that heterosexual children are in danger of being infected by queer learners. This kind of information about the ‘*other*’ encourages a distorted and misleading information about the ‘*other*’ based on stereotypes and myths about same-sex sexual orientations (Kumashiro, 2000).

Every school has a support structure that should ensure that all the needs of learners are cared for in school (as indicated in chapter 2.6). For example, Participant 1 states that their SBST tries by all means to overlook the challenges that are faced by learners with same-sex sexual orientations at schools. She describes it well:

“...we are ignoring them in our school, they do not exist it is only boys and girls that’s it. So, we becoming that eh--- the generation that is similar to our grandmothers that sweeps everything under the rug and pretend that things are not happening where else things are happening” (line 105).

There are many ways to justify why educators overlook homosexuality at school level. The fact that Participant 1 indicated that “*they do not exist it is only boys and girls*” indicates that same-sex sexual orientation is silenced in this secondary school (Francis, 2017). According to Francis (2018) educators and school administrators are often reinforcing the silence on matters related to sexual diversity and this promotes heterosexist attitudes. Francis and DePalma (2012) identified that there are educators who ignore or avoid issues related to sexual diversity. They are ignoring them because the curriculum does not give them the platform to engage in discussions about same-sex sexual orientations (Francis, 2017). This is challenging because homosexuals are positioned as a deviant group of people who are sinful and immoral (Francis, 2012, 2013) and as a result they “*are given little support and are isolated*” (Brown & Diale,

2017, p. 2). When the researcher interacted with Participant 10 about the support that should be given to learners with same-sex sexual orientations she mentioned that:

R: “Okay. But do they [learners with same-sex sexual orientations] get support from the SBST?” (line 760)

P10: “That question I cannot answer. I don’t know” [laughing] (line761)

R: “Why because you are a member of the SBST?” (line 762)

P10: “I don’t know. I haven’t paid much attention to gender being a restriction to education or to access education” (line 763).

R: “But do you think these learners need support?” (line 764)

P10: “Uhm... I don’t know. I don’t even know whether there is a problem” (line 765).

Participant 10 is a member of the SBST, but she does not perceive discrimination against learners with same-sex sexual orientations as a learning challenge or barrier. Not paying much attention (as indicated in lines 763 and 765) simply means educators in this school are in denial that there are learners with same-sex sexual orientations in the school. Participant 10 demonstrates that she is not familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the SBST (they are indicated in theme 1). According to White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) schools should create places that are safe for all learners despite their challenges, be it learning or socially. This will require an inclusive education system because inclusion is about acknowledging that all children need help, care and support (DOE, 2001). Mackay (2014) views inclusion as a process of empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the learning process.

On the other hand, data from this study revealed that educators’ perceptions can be constructed based on gender roles. Participants 9 and 8 mentioned that it is difficult to accept people with same-sex sexual orientations because of gender roles that are influenced by compulsory cultural roles. They explain that:

“... our African culture believes that a boy must a boy, must appear as boy and must be able to play his role in a family as a

male child in that particular family, that is why culturally or in our African communities they are not yet fit, they don't fit in our societies, our African communities. Maybe because they cannot perform as expected by the community or they do not appear as expected by the community itself” (Participant 9: line 659).

By stating that “... **our African culture believes that a boy must be boy...**” Participant 9 exposes his belief that homosexuality is un-African (Msibi, 2011; Sigamoney & Epprecht, 2014; Reygan & Lynette, 2014; Brown & Diale, 2017). Sigamoney & Epprecht (2014) think that this assertion that homosexuality is “un-African,” is the basis for homophobic prejudice throughout the continent. However, Msibi (2011) believes that it is not true that homosexuality was imposed on Africa because “*African men do have, and have always had, sex with one another, the same could be said about women*” (p. 62).

Participant 8 uses a phrase “**complete male**” to explain cultural requirements. The use of this phrase exposes the fact that people with same-sex sexual orientations are dehumanized and discriminated against (Sigamoney & Epprecht, 2014). Francis (2012) argues that people (including educators) repeatedly use the idea of culture and traditions to justify patriarchy and heterosexism.

*“Now according to culture, you have to be a **complete male**, one day you will be expected to be a father, a leader of a family but now of they find that you are gay. They start to act in a different way, they will not respect you, and they will not regard you as a man that can lead a family” (Participant 8: line 611).*

Fixed gender roles are influenced by culture (Francis, 2018) as highlighted by the two participants. Culture influences people to perceive homosexuality as inferior sexuality or non-existent (Judge & Nel, 2008). As a result, people with same-sex sexual orientations are exposed to violence because heterosexuals in townships use violence and coercion to assert their authority (Msibi, 2012). Bhana (2014) shares the same sentiments as Msibi (2014). She also refers to this way of thinking as personal beliefs which are influenced by culture. For instance, Participant 4 mentioned that culture has an impact on the construction of gender and sexual identities. She reported:

P4: “Yes, culture does play a big role” (line 287).

R: “In which way?” (line 288)

P4: "Our culture tells us that a male should be the head of the family and then there comes a boy who don't want to behave like a male or be the father to his kids someday and instead he wants to dress like a woman and culture discriminates that type of a person" (line 289).

Participant 7 highlighted that in Zulu culture gender roles are important and so-called 'straight' boys are rewarded with praises (*izibongo*), while boys with same-sex sexual orientations are punished and denied the freedom to be who they are. Brown and Diale (2017) view this as a policing system which can be referred to as a 'panopticon' system. It functions as the surveillance of a masculinity system where people are checked to see whether they conform to the norm or not (Brown & Diale, 2017). If they do not conform, they are subjected to discipline and punishment (Brown & Diale, 2017). Foucault (as cited in Brown & Diale, 2017) define the panopticon system as:

"...is a conscious-building concept of a prison where power is exercised through surveillance and monitoring of behaviour to discipline a person into subjugation" (p.9).

"Out of fear for punishment, those under the constant gaze regulate themselves to comply with an expected behaviour" (Brown & Diale, 2017, p. 9). In this study we notice that 'izibongo' are used to police or control young men to ensure that they remain heterosexual. If they want to keep their praises, they must ensure that they conform to the expected behaviour which is to be a heterosexual man. Once they start to deviate from the norm these praises are withdrawn (in a form of punishment) from them by elders. Withdrawal of praises (*izibongo*) means loss of being, loss of identity and loss of a sense of belonging. Participant 7 mentioned that:

P7: "Eh...uBafana is a gay person. Yes, Bafana will still have his clan names but the praises that he got from his father as in eh... "uyinsizwa eshaya ezinye izinsizwa" (you are a young man who fights with other man). Bafana is no longer that young man therefore Bafana will leave these clan praises but..." (535).

Participant 8 also agreed that culture influences our personal beliefs. Personal beliefs are wrapped in our identities be it culture, religion or social norms. He further argued that once a person discloses his/her sexuality the society starts to lose respect for that

person. Therefore, the dominant cultural norms create a learning space where violent and coercive sexual relations is encouraged for real, 'straight' men and women (Msibi, 2014). Our interactions went as follows:

P8: "They start to act in a different way, they will not respect you, and they will not regard you as a man that can lead a family" (line 611).

R: "So basically, in your community, if you are gay, you don't receive respect?" (line 612)

P8: "You don't receive respect, even if you are female, in our culture, a female is expected to be a mother and you are expected to be taught how a female behaves, you are taught how to carry yourself when you get married, how to treat a man, how to raise children" (line 613).

Participant 2 states that there are cultural customs that contribute to the violation of the rights of people with same-sex sexual orientations. And such customs can divide families. For instance, in some ethnic groups circumcision is very crucial and it should be done in a traditional way to avoid discrimination. So, in a case whereby a child identifies with a same-sex sexual orientation and he does not want to be circumcised in a traditional way, he is likely to be discriminated against because he deviated from the norm. This is a form of 'hegemonic masculinity'. Brown (2018) indicates that the notions of hegemonic powers repress, contain and control behaviours and as a result, sexual minorities are oppressed. Mtenje (2016, p. 32) defines "hegemonic masculinity" as:

"...a version of masculinity that is dominant in society, a form that acts as a yardstick for measuring other masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity "establish (es) the cultural ideal" for what it means to be a man, "silence(s) other masculinities, and combat(s) alternative visions of masculinity".

This means hegemonic masculinity is the imaginary form of masculinity in a given historical-cultural space (Mtenje, 2016). Hegemonic masculinities assume heterosexuality as the legitimate form of sexual desire and expression (Mtenje, 2016). For instance, young men should be circumcised and if they are not regarded as 'real men'. Participant 2 indicated that:

*“Ja, I would say culture does have an impact because as a parent-- most parents find it difficult to accept that their sons are in the body of a man yet they behave like girls and other kids they even run away from their homes because there is time when the father will decide to take **the child for circumcision** and the boy because he knows that **he doesn't need to be circumcised he then decides to run away from home and go stay far away from his family**. So that he can live the life that is going to fulfil his own being” (line 149).*

In most African cultures young boys undergo a process of circumcision, which is referred to as an initiation school. Ngcobo (2013) articulates that initiation schools separate the men from the boys. At the initiation school these young boys are taught to live and understand the meaning of being a man ('*straight man*') (Gwata, 2009). That means male circumcision should be understood as more than just a medical intervention (Gwata, 2009). It is mainly an initiation ritual into adulthood (Ngcobo, 2013; Gwata, 2009). Stinson (as cited in Gwata, 2009) expresses that this initiation is a major social act which culminates in a boy's integration into the community and grants him acceptance and respect from other community members. Once a boy refuses to go through this experience he is seen as deviant and is rejected by the community (Vincent as cited in Gwata, 2009). However, this process is not a pleasant process for learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Ngcobo, 2013) because their sexuality is questioned when they undergo a traditional circumcision (Gwata, 2009). For instance, those who were forced (because they are gay) by parents to go to the mountains for circumcision are expected to change after the circumcision period (Gwata, 2009). Change is required because traditional male circumcision involves the creation of a new identity (Gwata, 2009). They are projected to be straight men. These expectations are based on hegemonic masculinities. In a Xhosa culture for instance circumcision is the most secretive and sacred ceremony practiced (Vincent as cited in Gwata, 2009). It is therefore a ritual which not only marks a boy's transition to manhood but also affords him legitimate membership in the tribal community. This prominence is based on being a heterosexual man, who will have and raise children and become the head of the family (Ngcobo, 2013). Therefore, it forces boys with same-sex sexual orientations to leave their families and start a new life away from home. As indicated by Participant 2:

“he doesn’t need to be circumcised he then decides to run away from home and go stay far away from his family. So that he can live the life that is going to fulfil his own being” (lines 149).

Another major influence on how people perceive and respond to people with same-sex sexual orientations is religion. Religious beliefs have been a major discourse in relation to homosexuality (DePalma & Francis, 2014). Christian teachings for example, discourage homosexuality. The Church as an institution puts emphasis on heterosexual marriages and it discourages discourses on homosexuality (Francis, 2013). It claims that homosexuality should not be a topic of discussion with young people at church (Francis, 2013). Van Wormer and McKinner (2003) argue that young people with same-sex sexual orientations who are raised in strict religious families are likely to experience dissonance between their spirituality and sexuality. In schools it is a similar thing as educators’ personal religious principles influence how they approach learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Francis, 2012). For instance. Participant 6 stated that as a Christian it is challenging for her to accept learners with same-sex sexual orientations. She declared the following:

“As a Christian woman I don’t know how I am going to behave should that be the case where my child tells me that he is gay because it is always best to cross the bridge when you get there. I can’t just decide what I am going to do should I experience that. But it is difficult to accept it eh... when you believe in God” (line 430).

Some educators are violating the rights of learners with same-sex sexual orientation and justifying their actions with religion. Francis (2012) notes that educators’ personal beliefs and values impact on their approach in dealing with learners with same-sex sexual orientations. For them, homosexuality is a burden that they need to pray about so that they he homosexual can become a straight’ man or woman as - indicated by Participant 6 in line 6 (***“prayed for and then it will maybe go away”***). DePalma and Francis (2014) mentioned that religious people are certain in their convictions that homosexuality can be cured and prevented through prayer and fasting. Educators state that their religious beliefs do not allow them to support learners who do not conform to ‘normality’ (Graziano, 2004). Thus, some educators might be homophobic because they have misconceptions about homosexuality (Francis, 2012). According

to Francis (2012) educators tend to teach on the basis of their own values and beliefs. Participant 6 described how religion plays a role:

*“Jah I think religion does to a certain extent influence the way they are treated because when we read from the Bible, the Bible puts it clearly that eh... it is sin to sleep to the person of the same sex. Maybe having sex with that person and you are having the same sex so it puts it clearly that it is a sin and in that way that’s how now Christians maybe have an attitudes towards lesbians and gays, I should think but now if we can understand that sometimes we belief-- Christians believe that this is just a spirit which needs to--- maybe dealt with, **prayed for and then it will maybe go away**.so I believe that religion does have an influence with regard to how people are treated” (line 440).*

Participant 4 mentioned that religion has an influence on how people treat other people with same-sex sexual orientations. The Bible is frequently quoted to justify that homosexuality is a sin, wrong and unaccepted by God (Francis, 2012). Christians (including educators who are Christians) believe that “God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve” (Francis, 2012, 2017). Nkosi and Masson (2017) state that:

“Homosexual acts in the Bible appears fairly unambiguous, this factor is only relevant if one views the Bible to be morally sound and that biblical writers were not story tellers but actual channels for the voice of God” (p. 86).

Most of the participants in this study believed that the Bible is an authority on what is acceptable in the eyes of God. This belief system pushes educators to disapprove of homosexuality in schools. In line 291 she said:

“Religion also has an impact on how one view these people [homosexuals] that because the Bible says people should not sleep with one another if they have same sex, same genders. They should not have sexual intercourse with one another if they are both males. So according to me this is a sin and eh... totally wrong. It should not happen”.

Therefore, these belief systems have negative effects on the inclusive education system. The teaching on the topic of homosexuality is excluded because educators have positioned themselves in a corner where they teach on the basis of their own values and beliefs (Francis, 2012). Participant 7 declared that:

You know with religion ... most of the churches discriminate against gays and lesbians and they will say that their behavior is demonic. So, they will say they are having demons and therefore not allowed to come to church. Obviously when the congregation see a gay person or a lesbian person, they are going to judge this kind of a person because according to their religion eh... a person who is gay or who is lesbian contain demons (line 533).

However, Participant 9 highlighted that some pastors are encouraging churches as institutions to accept people with same-sex sexual orientations the way they are. She said:

P9: "As for religion, I think religion supports them" (line 659).

R: "In which way Mam? (line 660)

P9: "Its---- ah! ---- Given examples I was-----... ah! Recently there was a church services where I attended and it was whereby the pastor was actually giving advices to the community on how to treat and how accept them [homosexuals] in a way that they would be comfortable moving around societies. So, I believe religion does accept them" (line 661).

The members of the SBST of the school where this research was conducted have conflicting views about religion. Some support the notion that religion provides the truth about homosexuality while others are against it. This uncertainty at the school brings in questions its mandate to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all learners.

However, Participant 5 gave a different view on religion. When I asked her how religion influences people in perceiving people with same-sex sexual orientation she said that:

"Just because I am a Christian I am looking down to other people. If I don't have knowledge that is going to kill me. Reading and knowing and accepting every human being according to the love of God and loving a person the way a person he is or she is, not according to my opinion" (line 369).

Participant 5 sees Christianity as a platform to transform how people think about same-sex sexual identities. She indicated that God encourages human beings to love each regardless of dissimilarities. Once educators change the way they think and their attitude towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations they will start to treat them

with respect and dignity (Rothman & Simmonds, 2015). This view is alignment with Kumashiro's fourth approach that education should transform learners and the society (Kumashiro, 2000). Transformation can only occur when educators refrain from hateful and harmful speech influenced by cultural and religious stereotypes (Kumashiro, 2000). Educators should "*strategize ways to resist, challenge or dismantle an already-existing structure of oppression*" in schools (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 40). Thus, the theory for this study suggests that any stereotypes or personal belief systems that educators may have about learners with same-sex sexual orientations should be dismantled. Instead educators and support structures should acquire new belief systems which perceive homosexuals as human beings who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

4.3.2 Systemic reinforcement of heterosexual binaries

Educators are important in bringing about change, in challenging the dominance of heterosexuality at schools (Francis, 2017). However, participants in this study demonstrated that they are not challenging heterosexual practices such male/female binary representations such as the school bathrooms. The researcher asked about the structure of the school bathrooms and some of the participants responded as follows:

"They are not accommodated at all. The toilets that we have in our school is strictly male and female" (Participant 1: line 83).

"They use the same toilet as girls and boys" (Participant 3: line: 245).

"...because you will think of things like getting into a toilet, when they get into a toilet eh...which toilet do they go to? Eh...a lesbian will have to go to girl's toilet and a gay would have to go to boy's toilet and at the same time this gay wants to behave like a girl. So it is a problem eh... so that's why I say maybe the team can organize some sessions and hear from them how they should be treated. It is a serious problem" (Participant 6: line 480).

"...also it can be because we know this bathroom to be strictly for ladies because they are even saying ladies then other one says gentlemen so how do you classify yourself if you are a gay" (Participant 6: 488).

To get clarity on this matter and to find out how educators in the SBST think about compulsory heteronormativity I asked Participant 3 whether this is a form of

discrimination or not. She answered by saying *“I don’t think they feel any offense by going to the same toilets as boys and girls”* (Participant 3: line 247). However, in line 83 and 480 (as indicated in the first and the last quotation) Participant 1 differ with views of participant 3 on this notion because they believe that learners with same-sex sexual orientation are terrified when they have to go to the bathroom. Even though Participant 1 considers the toilet issue as a challenge for learners with same-sex sexual orientations, Participant 6 believes that resolving this issue is the responsibility of the SBST. When the researcher asked him ‘who should provide or build alternative bathrooms for learners with same-sex-sexual orientations?’ She replied:

“...is the responsibility of the SBST. To see also how they are treated there. Maybe to also go into the bathrooms to just check what happens in there. We must check because you will find that they are having problems in the bathrooms” (Participant 6: line 490).

Unresponsiveness to the discrimination against learners with same-sex sexual identities result in reproducing and perpetuating legacies of oppression (Brown 2018). In the school where this research was conducted bathrooms are distinguished by the demarcation symbol of the male and female figure at the door. And these pose a lot of questions: what happens to learners who experience same-sex sexual violence when they need to go the bathroom? Is it safe for them to go there? Brown (2018, p. 13) states that:

“The material architecture of the bathroom site is wrapped around social matrices of the heteronormative identity and reduces the body to an object. This taken-for-granted gender marker becomes an enactor of disciplinary power that regulates the body and divides space”.

In this way schools reproduce and normalize compulsory heterosexuality (Francis, 2017). Participant 1 is aware there is no comfort for some learners with same-sex sexual orientations when there is a need for them to go to the bathrooms at school. As Brown (2018) indicates the bathroom makers create an intense situation for queer learners because they reinforce heteronormativity. Participant 1 remarked that:

“I used to talk about it last year in my class with that boy. I would be like oh! My God you are going to the toilet? Ha! Aah I wonder. Please be careful” (line 81).

To get clarity on what she meant when she said to the learner “please be careful”, the researcher asked what she meant about that and she replied:

*“In our school there is a lot of bullying that goes on in the toilets. So when they [homosexuals] **go in there they are terrified** because other learners may call them names and they can make their time in the toilet an unpleasant one. Oh my God! I am going to do this at home and then I would do it when I come back from school because obviously **they are confused where do I go?** What do I do? And I can assure you when it does happen when they do go there it’s an issue because we do **not accommodate them at all and I feel it is unfair.** If there are schools that are able to build ramps to accommodate---**Uhm learners with disabilities but why don’t we accommodate gays?**” (line 83).*

*“The bathroom is more than a (safe) space for relief and comfort” (Brown, 2018, p. 13). But at the school where data was collected it is unsafe for learners with same-sex sexual orientations. A school bathroom is a “gendered, policed zone where people with same-sex sexual orientations must select between the heteronormative binaries, which denies the existence of non-normative expressions” (Brown, 2018, p. 13). In the above quotation, the participant indicates that the toilet is a terrible place for learners with same-sex sexual orientations (“So when they [homosexuals] **go in there they are terrified**”). According to White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) school structures should ensure that it accommodates all learners’ needs, for instance, building ramps for learners who are physically disabled. But why they do not build bathrooms that will be unisex? Such bathrooms will not have markers that indicate two genders, namely male and female. Bullying and discrimination against learners with same-sex sexual orientations transpires in the presence of SBST members but the team fails to respond towards these systemic reinforcements of heterosexual binaries. However, ignoring forms of oppression in school will not assist in building a just society. Enabling the education system to meet the needs of all learners (DOE, 2001) will require educators who will question heteronormativity (Rothmann, 2018) and develop strategies to fight oppression (Francis, 2017). According to the Anti-Oppressive theory, educators should develop a culture of resistance in order to change and learn (Kumashiro, 2000).*

This suggest that educators should participate in “*ongoing, never-completed construction of knowledge*” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 43).

4.4 THEME 3: (Non) Responses to homophobic bullying and violence

4.4.1 Lack of knowledge and skills on how to respond to homophobic violence

Firstly, educators and support structures lack knowledge and skill on how to respond to homophobic violence. Msibi (2012) also observes that not all educators discriminate against learners with same-sex sexual orientations purposefully, but they are homophobic because they lack information and knowledge about homosexuality. Francis (2012) states that educators do not possess cumulative knowledge about homosexuality. Their knowledge is minimal therefore they lack strategies on how to respond to discrimination towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Francis, 2012). Participant 10 confirmed that educators ill-treat and are non-responsive towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations because educators lack knowledge on how to embrace sexual diversity. She noted that:

*P10: I think more training is needed. Because we do not know what should we do to acknowledge sexual diversity and we are not informed on how we can do that...Now I think more information is needed for us to deal with **these learners** (line 767).*

R: What kind of information? (line 768)

*P10: [Laughing] primary the information that I need is a psychological one of **how do they become like this [homosexuals]**? And how do I make them feel comfortable because of their sexual orientation? (line 769)*

In line 769 participant 10 reveals that lack of knowledge makes some educators discriminate against learners with same-sex sexual orientations and prevents them from using proper language to refer to learners with-same-sex sexual orientations. She used a phrase such as ‘*these learners*’. Msibi (2012) states that language used by educators is critical in the discrimination against queer learners and such language is used by educators to prevent learners from claiming queer identifications (as indicated in theme 2). It also feeds the regime of heterosexism by presenting homosexuality as abnormal (Msibi, 2012). This is an indicator that township schools

are making slow progress towards becoming inclusive (Walton, 2011) because there are still educators who do not embrace sexual diversity. Data from this study shows that educators can be perpetrators of discrimination and prejudice by using homophobic language. Participant 4 said:

*“Some educators call them by names, the names which we have described earlier, for instance they would describe them as **‘Thabo the gay’** whereas some teachers address or call straight kids their name” (line 299).*

Once the child is referred to as *‘Thabo the gay’* or *‘those people’* they are *‘othered’* and not treated as equal as his/her heterosexual peers in schools (Kumashiro, 2000). Educators who are using discriminatory language portray non-normative sexualities and genders as *‘objects’* (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). As objects, *‘the homosexuality’* comes to be regarded as *‘the other’* and this reinforces a binary logic that discriminates against people who do not conform to heterosexual norms (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015).

Participant 10 agreed that it is simple to call people with same-sex sexual orientations *“those people”*. She said:

*“...we call them **“those people”**, those people in direct quotation marks” (line 719).*

Educators who use repressive language to address people with same-sex sexual orientations do not perceive them as learners who should be treated with respect, equality and dignity. However, schools should not be spaces which privilege a certain group and marginalize the *‘other’* group (Kumashiro, 2000). Participant 3 mentioned that the way in which queer learners act can take many forms. In the excerpt below she explained that:

P3: “Okay maybe boys they act as if they are girls. Same applies to girls they act as if they are boys. That’s how I know” (line 204).

R: “But how? What determines that a boy should act a certain way? Or a girl should act like this?” (line 205)

P3: “What determines?” (line 206)

R: "Yes or what is it that they are doing that shows that they are not expressing themselves according to their gender" (Line 207)

*P3: "Alright. You know sometimes when it comes to athletics, I mean to sports there are those kind of **sports that are strictly meant for boys** but you may **find a girl playing that type of a sport like rugby**. We see them playing rugby those **girls**. That's how we can say these one act like guys" (line 208).*

Participant 3 identified an important aspect which are sporting codes that are played by learners at school. According to the above quotation, sports can be used to categorise the gender/sexuality of a person. However, these categories are based on compulsory heteronormativity. It is normal for boys to play sports such as rugby and soccer and for girls to play netball. However, it becomes questionable if a boy plays netball or a girl plays rugby. Moreover, Mchunu (2005) states that girls are excluded from boys' sports. According to him this is done as a policing technique to ensure that the sexual orientations of children are suppressed so that sexualities that do not conform to the norm cannot be expressed at school (Mchunu, 2005). For Francis and Brown (2017) this normalisation is characterised by the idea of belonging to a 'normal' group. Normalising, for Foucault (as cited in Francis & Brown, 2017), is based on an ongoing process of judgement, reward and punishment. The process of normalising heterosexuality and 'othering' people with same sex sexual orientations preserves the unchanging boundary between heterosexuality and queer sexual orientations (Francis & Brown, 2017). Thus, heteronormativity privileges heterosexuality and assumes that all children registered at school are heterosexuals (DePalma & Francis 2014; Francis 2012; Msibi 2012). Hence, Participant 3 highlighted how sporting codes are divided along gender or heteronormativity lines.

Another factor that contributes to the non-responsiveness of educators towards homophobic violence, is that little has been done by the Department of Education to equip teachers to challenge and teach about issues related to homosexuality and homophobia (Francis, 2012). Participant 1 confirmed:

"Okay, I think the DBE or the department of education in Gauteng they have not done enough to raise awareness and teach us about homosexuality. And this is a serious problem in our classrooms because we have these learners in our classes but we are not sure what can we do with them. I think charity begins

at home so what can the Department of Education and the school should call these learners and engage with them” (line 107).

Lack of knowledge is challenging educators as indicated by Participant 1. She mentioned that not knowing about the “*other*” creates classrooms or schooling where homosexuality is silenced and invisible (As indicated in 4.5.1). As a result, there is a need for in-service teacher training. It is needed because lack of training prevents educators from being productive in the implementation of inclusive education (Walton, 2011). Francis (2018) observes that educators often feel inadequate to teach about gender and sexuality and in his study, there were educators who indicated that they had little or no training in this topic since they became professional educators. Ongoing in-service teacher training will assist educators to go beyond anti-homophobia discourse towards one of tolerance and acceptance (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). Such educators will ensure that forms of oppression in school are eliminated (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). Furthermore, training can break the silence around homophobia (Msibi, 2012). Participant 1 stated that lack of knowledge is the main challenge at school because it prevents the SBST from being a functional structure. In line 8 Participant 1 said that:

“Eh... I feel that as teachers we lack information in our school. We do not know what the function of the SBST. Eh... it does not help learners who need support because we do not know how to do so sometimes” (line 8).

The SBST is the structure that should ensure that the inclusive education policy is implemented at school level (Jama, 2014). It should also ensure that learners and educators are always supported so that teaching and learning can take place effectively (Engelbrecht, 2004). However, it is challenging to support other stakeholders if there are still gaps in knowledge and skill. For instance, Participant 1 indicated in the above quotation that members of the SBST are clueless when it comes to supporting learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Basically, there is a lack of knowledge about the ‘*other*’. While the researcher was interacting with Participant 9 she also indicated that at the university where she was studying she did not receive any training in this topic. She shared the following:

*Actually I did not meet **this issue** [homosexuality] while still at school--- eh at the university. It is a new concept which I got while*

I was already in the working system, but I think it must be included in the training system for teachers (line 678).

It was challenging for Participant 9 to articulate the term homosexuality. She sees homosexuality as an 'issue' – an issue that is problematic or seen as something inconsequential. Rothmann and Simmonds (2015) indicated that language can be used by educators to reinforce binaries that objectify, exclude and 'other' those who do not conform to the norm. In this case learners with same-sex sexual orientations are reduced to nonhumans. Thus, homosexuality is perceived as a threat to heterosexuality. However, sexual diversity within a particular institution should not be perceived "as a threat to be negotiated or a problem to be solved, but rather as the condition for the interactions through which the self develops" (Cahill as cited in Rothmann, 2018, p.1).

Sometimes lack of knowledge and confidence can lead members of the SBST to be confused about the care and support that should be provided to learners with same-sex sexual orientations. According to Francis (2012) understanding and knowledge about homosexuality is limited among educators in schools that are located in townships. Therefore, at most schools heterosexuality is presented as the norm, either consciously or unconsciously (Francis, 2012). Participant 5 mentioned that:

P5: Uhm...As for the support from the SBST at the moment I cannot say yes and I cannot say no (line 381).

R: Why? (line 382)

*P5: Why do I say so? It depends on how the other members of the SBST treat them because you may find that **the very same SBST member** is the one that is being **negative towards the gays and the lesbians**. So, if I am an ordinary teacher, I want the support from based on eh...eh...those that issue or problem. I might not find the support so that I can support the learner because the very same member that I went to for support is the very person that has the information on support system but doesn't give me the support that I need to support that gay child" (line 383).*

Participant 5 mentioned that perceptions of the SBTS can influence how other educators perceive learners with same-sex sexual orientations. She believes that some members of the SBST are negative towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations. As a result, educators who are not part of the team do not see the point

of supporting and caring for learners with same-sex sexual orientations. The main aim of the SBST is to support both educators and learners (Jama, 2014; Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014) to ensure that schools are spaces that are safe for all learners (Kumashiro, 2000). A negative team will produce negative educators who do not want to support learners. According to Francis (2017) negativity leads to a lack of response from educators or the failure to respond in a meaningful, constructive way to forms of oppression in schools. Such schools internalize homophobia (Brown & Diale, 2017).

However, some educators are aware of challenges that queer learners face at school. However, they do not respond to these needs. Participant 4 believes that learners with same-sex sexual orientations need support. The SBST of the school does not take initiative to educate other educators who are not members of the SBST about homosexuality. For Mphahlele (2005) there is little or no collaboration between classroom educators who are not members of the SBST and the team. The team members have limited knowledge regarding strategies to care for and support learners in the classroom (Mphahlele, 2005). This might be the reason why the team does not collaborate with other educators. How can you support or train others while you also lack knowledge and skill? According to self-efficacy theory people who are persuaded (trained) are likely to mobilise and make a huge effort to perform well and find ways to sustain that performance (Bandura, 1994). So in this study I argue that it is the responsibility of the SBST to persuade or train educators about forms of oppression and how to fight against them in schools (Kumashiro, 2000) so that they can develop positive self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Participant 4 pointed out in lines 301-305:

P4: As far as I'm concerned, in my school homosexuals do not get support from educators.

R: Do you think they need support?

P4: They do need support.

R: What kind of support?

*P4: For instance if they could get **counselling or form group sessions** on their own on how to deal with **bullying** if they are being bullied for how they **chose** their sexual orientation.*

The above interaction with Participant 4 exposes the fact that educators are mindful that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are bullied in school. They are bullied because of their non-normative sexual orientations. However, educators (and the

SBST) do not respond to it. Not responding to this bullying of learners with same-sex sexual orientations is in direct violation of the code of conduct for educators according to South African law. According to Francis and Brown (2017) “*all people shall be equal before the law*” (p.1) and people should not be discriminated against because they do not conform to the norm. Khalane (as cited in Francis, 2013) states that:

“All individuals are entitled to exercise their human rights when deciding on their sexual orientation whether it is based on their conviction that they were genetically so predisposed or motivated by external circumstances or events. Similarly, individuals can exercise their human rights by choosing to change their sexual orientation” (p. 2).

Since schools are heterosexual in nature educators have the responsibility to challenge heteronormativity in schools (Brown, 2018). Msibi (2014) mentions that the schooling space is often heterosexualised. This “*heterosexualisation of space produces negative results to people with non-normative sexual orientations*” (Msibi, 2014, p. 387). For instance, they are victimized and bullied by heterosexual educators and peers (Msibi, 2012). Another challenge here is that:

“This may create uncritical assumptions about heterosexuality as the norm, while rendering other forms of sexual identity as supposed subordinate ‘others’” (Rothmann, 2018, p.1).

Schools that are heterosexualised are discriminatory and exclusive in nature (Bhana, 2014). Basically, they are operating in violation of the South African Schools Act. SASA (1996) stipulates that schools should redress past injustices in educational provision while contesting racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance. Rothmann and Simmods (2015) consider schools as institutions that should provide learners with the opportunity to exercise their human rights. However, within this space learners encounter gender-based violence such as homophobic bullying. According to Walton (2011) there are two features that create exclusive schools. Firstly, the non-implementation of inclusive policies. Walton (2011) believes that educators do not play their role in the implementation of inclusive education policies. The policy stipulates that all children must be included in the education system (Walton, 2011). Secondly, schools do not embrace inclusion. In other words, schools have not reached the phase of embracing diversity, especially sexual diversity. But the anti-oppressive theory says schools should create affirming

spaces, where 'otherness' is embraced and where 'normalcy' is not presumed (Kumashiro, 2000). Furthermore, schools should provide supportive spaces where the 'other' can find resources and tools to oppose oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). In other words, learners with same-sex sexual orientations should develop the skills to resist various forms of oppression. Msibi (2012) says queer learners can only attain this skill if there is support offered by educators at schools.

On the other side, Participant 3 mentions that support should not be given only to learners with same-sex sexual orientations, but that their parents also need support and should be involved in fighting against oppression. Education takes place in two forms, namely, formal education and informal education. An educator is responsible for formal education that is guided by the school curriculum and policies. Informal education can be gained through interaction with adults who share the realities of their societies. So family is a relevant institution for learning to take place outside the school (Mchunu, 2007). Parents themselves lack knowledge on sexual diversity and subsequently would not know how to support their children (Matee, 2018). There is a need for a relationship between the home and the school so that these two environments could empower each other to create a safer learning and agency environment. Parents should teach their kids the values of tolerance, respect and ubuntu (Mchunu, 2007). In this way heterosexual learners will learn to respect and embrace sexual diversity at school because they are taught well at home. However, Mchunu (2007) mentioned that there is a strategy used by parents and educators to oppress and violate the rights of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Mchunu (2007) observes that parents and educators use a hidden curriculum to oppress. She defines a hidden curriculum as:

"...a strategy that is used by both parents and educators to ensure that boys and girls are being policed. To ensure that any sexual interest in the opposite sex do not develop at all because they are all the same sex at school" (p.37).

So, in this study I argue that both educators and parents should be well equipped about forms of oppression that affect learners with same-sex sexual orientations. They should learn new knowledge and unlearn previous knowledge about the 'other' and the privileged (Kumashiro, 2000). In this way they will be victorious against forms of

oppression against learners with same sex sexual orientations. Participant 3 concurs with the above. She mentioned that:

*“The SBST can support learners with same-sex sexual identities by means of offering **counselling together with their parents** whereby most **learners with such identities are being isolated from home**”* (line 259).

Parents and educators should work together to support learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Partnerships between the school and family is pivotal because homophobia originates in the normalizing discourse of heteronormativity both within the home and the school setting (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). For instance, some parents assume that their children are straight, and they disapprove of non-normative sexualities (Myers & Raymond, 2009). In addition, they perceive heterosexuality as fixed (Myers & Raymond, 2009). It is advisable therefore that educators and parents assist one another to fight against forms of oppressions.

Participant 4 shared the same sentiments with Participant 3 about counselling as a supportive measure for learners with same same-sexual orientations. However, the SBST cannot provide this service to learners because their members are not qualified educational psychologists. But they should consult the nearest full- service school and request a psychologist that will assist the school with counselling learners with same-sex sexual orientations (Fourie, 2017). In line 305 Participant 4 pointed out that:

*“...if they [learners with same-sex sexual orientations] could get **counselling or form group sessions** on their own on how to deal with bullying if they are being bullied for how **they chose their sexual orientation**”* (line 305).

However, she expressed that same-sex sexual orientation is ‘chosen’. The above quotation denotes homosexuality as unnatural and it is questioned while heterosexuality is seen as natural and fixed (Msibi, 2012; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). In this way people/learners with same-sex sexual orientations are perceived as a vulnerable group at school (Francis, 2012).

Participant 1 suggested another strategy to conduct teacher training. She stated that:

*“For me workshops where we as teachers go somewhere and listen to a presenter I don’t think those workshops are productive enough. I feel like we need a training whereby we will **involve**”*

those learners [with same-sex sexual orientations] because we will come up with strategies and ways on how to deal with them and we do not know them. The main objective of this training should be identifying their needs. So, that after this training we are equipped with relevant knowledge. So, the training that should be taking place is the one that the learners are involved. Eh...They should tell us what is challenging them and what do they need from us as their teachers. In that way maybe we will solve the problem of homosexuality in our school' (line 93).

According to Participant 1 a productive training is the one that involves both educators and learners. According to Participant 1, determining the root cause of the lack of knowledge among educators will ensure that educators have accurate and correct information about homosexuality. For Rothmann and Simmonds (2015) teacher training must expose educators and learners (including both heterosexual and queer learners) to modules that concern homophobia and heterosexism. Teacher development should not regard those who are 'othered' as inferior based on the use of descriptive derogatory labels or negative stereotypical attributes. (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). Such training may ensure that educators are given an opportunity to 'unlearn' incorrect assumptions and prejudices associated with sexual orientations that move away from heteronormativity (Kumashiro, 2000; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). Participant 2 shares the same sentiments with Participant 1 that educators should engage with learners to learn more about the 'other'. When the researcher asked her about the discrimination against learners with same-sex sexual orientations, she remarked:

"I would say is lack of understanding that is why they are being ill-treated by educators. So, it is best to call the learner and engage with the child... the learner can tell you things which make you change your mind after talking to him/her" (line 157).

Training that involves learners with same-sex sexual orientations will ensure that the exclusion of 'voices of the queer' no longer occurs (Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). Learners will be able to educate the privileged group in the society and at school about homosexuality and they will state their needs. Furthermore, they will also learn to express themselves. Secondly, it will ensure that it breaks the silence around homophobia at school (Msibi, 2012). Thus, educators should be equipped with knowledge and skills on how to respond to learners with same-sex sexual orientations so that they can also benefit from their constitutional rights. The South African

Constitution and Bill of Rights guarantees the protection of people with same-sex sexual orientations (Arndt, 2004). In addition, educators who are trained and acquired experience will have the most positive views and perceptions about inclusive education (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014).

This study advocates for education that will transform the society (Kumashiro, 2000). This kind of education requires educators who are knowledgeable about the 'other' and the privileged. According Brown (2018) knowing about the forms of symbolic violence in certain spaces of power, privilege and oppression provides educators with an opportunity to be practical about interventions that could reduce violence emanating directly from compulsory heteronormativity. I argue that the Department of Education should invest in empowering educators and School-Based Support Teams because these are agents of transformation. Investing in teacher training will bring benefits and some changes in the teaching space, such as:

- ❖ Educators will have confidence and high self-efficacy that will boost their teaching pedagogy in the classroom (and at school in general).
- ❖ It will provide space for collaboration among all stakeholders, for instance, the SBST, classroom educator, parents and the learner.
- ❖ Educators will be knowledgeable and skilful about forms of oppression thus they will start to work towards the implementation of inclusive education where the 'other' is not oppressed.

4.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter analysed data that was provided by ten participants through individual interviews and it also discussed three themes. The main aim of analysing data was to discover the responses of the School-Based Support Team to the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations in a township school. To analyse and discuss data, the researcher was guided by the sub-questions of this study:

- ❖ How do teachers in the SBST perceive same-sex sexual orientations?
- ❖ How do teachers in the SBST respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

- ❖ What are the needs of teachers in the SBST to provide an enabling, affirming and inclusive learning environment for learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

In this chapter, the researcher found that educators and the SBST draw their perceptions about the 'other' from a number of factors. Firstly, perceptions are drawn from religious beliefs and cultural customs. Educators construct their perceptions based on religion and culture, and some are influenced by the media. Through the interaction with the participants, it was revealed that religion and culture do not support homosexuality. As a result, educators have developed negative attitudes towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Therefore, schools are not yet inclusive because educators are violating the constitutional rights of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Sexual diversity is not embraced at schools. This is evident through the language and names that are used at schools to refer to learners with same-sex sexual. They are offensive and dehumanise learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Furthermore, schools practiced heteronormativity and any other sexuality that is non-conforming is discriminated against by educators. However, participants claimed that they are willing to implement the policy of inclusion and embrace sexual diversity. But the findings show that educators are not trained to deal with the challenge and they are not trained to care for and support learners with same-sex sexual orientations. They are not equipped to fight against forms of oppression that alienate learners with same-sex sexual orientations. As a result, educators do not feel confident and lack high self-efficacy in performing their duties as agents of change.

In the next chapter, I summarised all the research findings and suggest a few recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This last chapter of this study summarises, makes recommendations and concludes the study. The conclusion is based on the findings of the study. The purpose for conducting this study was to ascertain the School-Based Support Team's responses to the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations at a township school. A qualitative approach as declared in Chapter 3, was used to gather data about the responses of the SBST concerning the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Creswell's method (2009) was then used to analyse the data collected through ten individual face-to-face interviews with the aim of achieving the objectives of the study. The study has put the following objectives forward in answering the research question:

- To find out how school-based support teams respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations.
- To identify the needs of teachers in the SBST to sufficiently respond to the needs of school learners with same-sex sexual orientations.

Therefore, this chapter will show how the findings of this research have achieved the above-mentioned objectives.

5.2. Summary of the findings and conclusion

White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) instructs educators and SBSTs to address, reduce, minimize, or remove barriers to learning and to provide care and support for all learners who need it (including learners with same-sex sexual orientations). Brown and Diale (2017) say that South Africa has a progressive constitution that advocates for the protection of individuals with same-sex identities. However, this study discovered that despite the introduction of the White Paper 6 policy document and the progressive constitution, schools are still facing some systemic challenges in dealing with discriminatory behaviour against learners with same-sex sexual identities. Some

of these challenges are the result of lack of support from the SBST. The findings highlighted that some members of the SBST are keen to support learners with same-sex sexual orientations, but they lack knowledge about the 'other' (homosexuality). So they claim that they do not know how to care for and support learners with same-sex sexual orientations. As a result, the SBST also fails to support classroom educators. The data collected was based on the main research question, "How do the School-Based Support Teams respond to learners with same-sex sexual orientations?"

Research sub-questions are used in this chapter to summarise the research findings. In the following discussion the researcher showed how each research question was addressed by the findings in the previous chapter.

5.2.1. Summary of the empirical investigation

How do teachers in the SBST perceive same-sex sexual orientations?

There is evidence that teachers' perceptions about learners with same-sex sexual orientations is based on religious and cultural belief systems (Francis, 2012; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015; Nkosi & Masson, 2017). Another belief originates from the fallacy that homosexuality is a choice or a conscious decision that is taken by adolescents during puberty. These belief systems are based on heterosexual standards which influence educators to perceive same-sex identities as immoral and sinful.

Data collected from the participants reveal that educators believe that homosexuality is un-African, but they also indicated that their beliefs originate from religious and cultural systems they are affiliated with. These systems have negative effects because religion and culture oppose homosexuality. Educators become perpetrators of homophobia and discrimination at school. Educators (including the SBST members) create unsafe places for learners with same-sex sexual orientations (but this is not always intentional).

There are a number of reasons why schools are unsafe for learners with same-sex sexual orientations:

- ❖ Firstly, there is silence about name-calling at schools. Silence about forms of oppression towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations make homosexuality invisible and objectify learners with same-sex sexual orientations. (Sigamoney & Epprecht, 2013). As a result, learners with same-sex sexual orientations are oppressed, discriminated against and dehumanised at school;
- ❖ Secondly, the SBST as a supportive structure in the school is aware that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are bullied and insulted by heterosexual learners when they go to the bathrooms. A bathroom should be a place of relief and safety (Brown, 2018) for everyone. Moreover, schools have signage at the door of each toilet indicating either male or female. The team is silent about this matter. According to Francis (2017) educators who do not act on physical or verbal homophobic bullying demonstrate that such violent acts are usual and tolerated, maybe even welcomed in some cases. Thus, the SBST is seen as reinforcing heterosexual binaries;
- ❖ Thirdly, educators do not include the topic of homosexuality or sexual diversity in their teaching philosophy or pedagogy (Francis, 2017). Most of those who teach about sexual diversity distort the information about homosexuality and mislead learners. It is implicit that the SBST lacks content and pedagogical knowledge to teach about gender and sexuality diversity. However, some participants of this study claimed that the curriculum does not offer them the space to teach about sexual diversity. They also stated that they are not trained to deal with sexual diversity;
- ❖ Lastly, there are educators who perceive homosexuality as a problem that is located within the

learner. They believe that learners with same-sex sexual orientations need 'fixing'. Human beings cannot be fixed, they are not objects. These educators are still trapped in past thinking that learning barriers have their origins within the child and that the child needs fixing. In short, educators reinforce the medical model of inclusion.

However, through the findings of this study it has been discovered that the SBST in the township school tried to provide support to learners with same-sex sexual orientations, however minimal. This is because the SBST is faced with factors (as indicated above) within the system and the school, which make their interventions unsuccessful.

How do teachers in the SBST respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

The research findings displayed how educators are still unresponsive to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. This study showed (as confirmed in the literature) that the safety of learners with same-sex sexual orientations is not assured at school because educators view homosexuality with the same societal values that describe homosexuality as 'dirty', evil and demonic. Educators believe that young people with same-sex sexual orientations deviate from the norm and that they need punishment to ensure that they change and become 'straight'. So, with these widely held views, how can the SBST respond positively to the needs of the learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

Data from this study established the following conclusions regarding teachers from the SBST:

Educators are unresponsive to the discrimination against learners with same-sex sexual orientations. Even when oppression is practiced in their presence, they tend to turn a blind eye. Educators have become the main perpetrators of homophobia and violence;

Educators judge learners with same-sex sexual orientations because they do not conform to the norm. They do not embrace sexual diversity at schools and as a result, schools are divided into the privileged and the 'other'.

Homophobia and violence towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations occurs in violation of the law. Educators are supposed to be guided by the SACE (*nd*) and the constitution (DOJ, 1996) which forbids t discrimination against learners based on gender or sexual orientation.

What are the needs of teachers in the SBST to assist then to provide an enabling, affirming and inclusive learning environment for learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

This study supports the notion of education that transform the society (Kumashiro, 2000). Thus, educators as core agents of change in schools (Msibi, 2012) should initiate transformation in schools. However, they cannot implement education that transforms the society if they are not knowledgeable and skilled about how to initiate change at schools. Data from this study revealed that the SBST has the following needs that, if met, can assist the team to transform the society:

- The SBST needs in-service training and interactive workshops on how to be responsive to learners with same-sex sexual orientations;
- The SBST needs to collaborate with all stakeholders (this includes educators, heterosexual learners, learners with same-sex sexual orientations and the district representatives) to ensure that they enlarge their understanding of learners with same-sex sexual orientations;
- The SBST needs to get necessary resources that will ensure that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are cared for and supported in a mainstream school.
- Educators in the SBST need to reflect on how their personal values and belief systems create forms of oppression;
- The SBST needs to embrace sexual diversity and find ways to deal with prejudice faced by learners with same-sex sexual orientations.
- The SBST needs to acquire knowledge on inclusive education policies such as White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) and the SIAS (DOE, 2014) among others.

For the above needs to be addressed, the section below outlines the recommendations of the researcher.

5.3. Critical reflections and recommendations

5.3.1. Critical reflection on this study (limitations)

This research has the following limitations:

This study was restricted in scope, only one school was sampled and ten members of the SBST were interviewed. Thus, narratives of this study cannot be generalized beyond the experiences of the educators in the SBST who were interviewed.

When the researcher collected data, he did not interview the school principal. His response was that he has no knowledge about the functions of the SBST in his school. The researcher could have persuaded the principal to do the interview and find out why he lacked knowledge about the functionality of the SBST.

Three interviews were conducted during lunchtime, so it was very noisy and it was difficult to transcribe some of the views of the participant. The researcher could have booked another appointment with the participants.

In two interviews the researcher allowed participants to engage in code switching, thus it was sometimes difficult to get the meaning of some phrases when the researcher was transcribing the data collected.

In three interviews, participants battled to answer the question based on the treatment of educators towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations. The researcher could have used a better questioning technique that would have made the participants more comfortable to answer the question.

5.3.2. Strengths and contributions of the study

As much as this study had some shortcomings, it also had strengths that are worth pointing out. The researcher managed to ask open-ended questions, which allowed wide responses from the participants. Thus, the data collected demonstrated that the researcher collected in-depth experiences and knowledge from all participants about sexual diversity. In addition, the researcher used a probing system using clarity

seeking questions. This assured that both the researcher and the participant were on the same page during the interview.

5.3.3. Recommendation for this study

From the above summary it is obvious that the SBST lacks knowledge about embracing sexual diversity. The SBST at the township school does not fully acknowledge differences. However, this might be the result of lack of training, knowledge and skills as indicated by Msibi (2012) and confirmed in the findings of the study. Thus, the researcher is of the view that the following recommendations are indispensable to ensure that the SBST creates a pleasant learning experience for learners with same-sex sexual orientations at this township school. There are three recommendations for the SBST of the secondary school:

- ❖ The SBST should attend in-service trainings and workshops which are organised by the Department of Education that are based on inclusive education and sexual diversity. However, the SBST should not rely only on these workshops. They should use other opportunities that are offered by non-profit organisations (NPOs) and non-government organisations (NGOs) such as ANOVA or Sisonke Gender Justice because they also offer workshops on gender and sexuality diversity. According to Rothmann and Simmonds (2015) training that is based on sexuality is vital for educators (and support structures) because it exposes them to topics or modules that concern homophobia and heterosexism. This training should ensure that *“the LGBT issues focus on the systemic change principles that address the larger interrelated nature of systems of injustice and oppression”* (Francis, 2017, p. 16). Once the SBST has attended those trainings they need to share the skill they acquired with classroom educators at school. This must be done in the form of on-going workshops at the school. This will ensure that the school is more inclusive and supportive towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations.
- ❖ I recommend that the SBST collaborates more with other stakeholders such as the District-Based Support Team (DBST) and parents. Because the issue of sexual orientation is a societal issue, so to respond accordingly, the team needs to work together with other institutions within the society. This will assist the team gain more insight about the sexual diversity of learners they teach.

Furthermore, the DBST will assist the team on how to function better and give support to the SBST (Jama, 2014). This will assist the team to know their roles and duties as a supporting structure within the school.

- ❖ Lastly, I recommend that the Department of Education (curriculum developers to be exact) develops a policy or guidelines that will stipulate what is required from the SBST and educators when it comes to gender and sexual diversity. These guidelines should give direction to the SBST on how to discipline a teacher or a learner that uses name-calling, discriminates against or bullies' learners with same-sex sexual orientations at school. And it should specify how to teach on the subject of homosexuality in the classroom. This recommendation is based on what is stipulated by Francis (2017) who points out that currently, the Life Orientation textbook reflects the dominance of heterosexual content. DePalma & Francis (2014) also points out that the LO Curriculum Statement has no reference to teaching about non-normative gender and sexualities. In the curriculum policies regarding the teaching of LO, there is no appearance of the words homosexuality, bisexuality, gay, lesbian, bisexual and sexual orientations. (Francis, 2017). Thus, the absence of these words in the curriculum policies contributes to the hostility and prejudice towards learners with same-sex sexual identities.

5.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, caring for and supporting learners with same-sex sexual orientations should be normalised in the school where this research was conducted. The SBST (and other stakeholders) should ensure that all forms of oppression within the school are prohibited. This will make the secondary school more inclusive and embrace sexual diversity. Thus, the SBST is critical in the implementation of inclusive education. However, this study found that the teachers in the SBST lack knowledge on how to respond to forms of oppression that are faced by homosexuals at the school. In actual fact, the participants mentioned that homosexuality cannot be regarded as a learning barrier. They believe that homosexuality is a conscious decision and with proper punishment, such learners can change and become straight again. Literature used in this study revealed that these perceptions were influenced by religious and cultural beliefs systems which are dominated by heterosexuality. The study also

recommended that the SBST attend in-service training and collaborate with other stakeholders within the society. Lastly, the researcher believes that the Department of Education should develop guidelines that guide the SBST on how to reduce discrimination and the bullying of learners with same-sex sexual orientations. These guidelines can ensure that learners with same-sex sexual orientations are cared for and supported in this township school under investigation.



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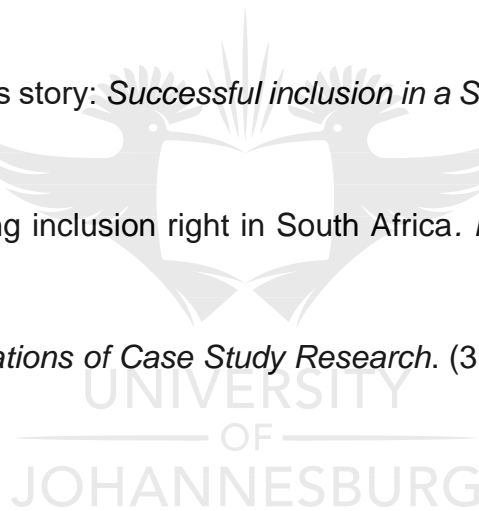
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APPENDIX A: Participant consent forms



Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Psychology

LETTER REQUESTING CONSENT FOR YOUR SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear School Principal

I am a master's student at the University of Johannesburg reading under the supervision of Prof Anthony Brown in the Department of Educational Psychology. As masters students we are conducting research on School Based Support Teams and sexual orientations in the establishment of an inclusive education system.

I am inviting your school to participate in this study. This will involve the participation of members of the School Based Support Team in a face-to-face individual interview lasting approximately sixty minutes. The interview questions are attached to this letter for your perusal. The interviews will be conducted as a time which is convenient for all participants. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time if you wish to do so. Withdrawal from the study will not affect your relationship with the researcher. Your permission to audio record the interview is specifically requested. Audio tapes will be kept locked away for safety and destroyed no longer than one year after publication of research reports or papers.

The school name will not be used in the publication of any of the individual participants' reports and the names of educators will be kept anonymous and confidential. There are no foreseen risks associated with your participation in this

research. Your name is only required for the purpose of obtaining informed consent.

The school will benefit from participating in this study by developing more awareness around the issues of the responses of members of the School Based Support Teams towards care and support of earners with same-sex sexual orientation in your school. A feedback session will be arranged with the research participants to inform you of the results of the study.

If you require further clarification concerning the research study, please contact me or my research supervisor.

Regards,

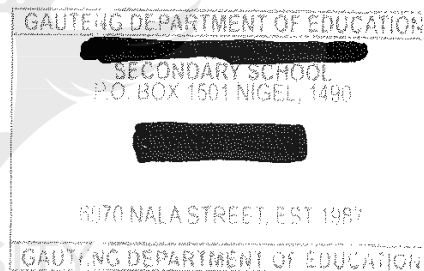
Student Name: Johannes Buthelezi

Student Number: 201033025

Student Cell Number: 0817954295

Student Signature: 

DATE: 14/08/2018



UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: **SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM RESPONSES TO THE CARE AND SUPPORT OF LEARNERS WITH SAME-SEX SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN A TOWNSHIP SCHOOL**

Purpose: The aim of this study is to explore the responses of School Based Support Teams in towards learners with same-sex sexual orientations in a township school.

Participant Full Name: _____

Designation or Job Description: EDUCATOR

I, the undersigned, hereby agree to be involved in the above research project. I have read the letter pertaining to this research project and understand the nature of the research and my role in it. I have also read the attached interview questions and am willing to discuss this topic in a interview.

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to participate in a focus group or individual interview lasting about one hour and understand that other research participants in the group will hear what I have said and thus full confidentiality may not be maintained.

J. Mbiza

Should you wish to be on the email of people kept informed of the project please provide your email address:

Date of signing:

14 AUGUST 2018

Signature:

J. Mbiza

Furthermore I expressly give the researcher permission to audio record the focus group interview session in which I am involved.

Date of Signing:

14 AUGUST 2018

Signature:

J. Mbiza

Although personal information is required on this form, please be assured that your confidentiality and anonymity during the study will be maintained and that this form will be destroyed upon completion of this study.



Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Psychology

Research Project Title: SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM RESPONSES TO THE CARE AND SUPPORT OF LEARNERS WITH SAME-SEX SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN A TOWNSHIP SCHOOL

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the role of the SBST in your school?
2. According to your understanding what is gender?
3. How do you categorise a person as male or female?
4. Do you have people in your community who do not express themselves according to their gender?
5. What do you call them in your community?
6. Why are they called like that?
7. How are they treated in your community?
8. How do you feel about the way the community treats people with this sexual orientation?
9. In your opinion do you think culture and religion influence the way people treat people with same-sex sexual orientation?
10. What do you think is the role of religion, socialization and acceptance in the way we treat people who do not express themselves according to their gender?
11. Do you have these learners in your school? How would you react when you see a group of learners insulting another learner because they express themselves differently from their gender?
12. How are they treated by educators?
13. Do they get any support from the SBST support?
14. As a professional educator are you trained to respond to sexual diversity?
Do you think more training is needed?

15. What else do you need in order to respond to the needs of the learners with same-sex sexual orientation?
16. Do you think the *curriculum* gives educators a platform to engage in this topic?
17. How can the SBST respond to learners with same-sex sexual orientations?

Regards,

Student Name: Johannes Buthelezi

Student Number: 201033025

Student Cell Number: 0817954295

Student Signature: 

DATE: 14/08/2018



UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

APPENDIX B: Example of excerpt from transcribed interview

Transcription: Interview Audio

Participant: XXXXXXXXXX

Researcher: Johannes Buthelezi

Date: 10/09/2018

P1 = Participant 1

R = Researcher

Numbers = Line numbers

NB: All the participants were given the instructions about the study prior this interview and the researcher explained that the participants can withdraw their participation at any time and that participation is voluntary.

LINE NO	SPEAKER	CONVERSATION
1	R	Good morning Mam
2	P1	Morning
3	R	How are you?
4	P1	I am fine and how are you?
5	R	I am good thanks. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to interact with you Mam, I hope this interaction will be beneficial to both of us. Eh...the first question that I have for you is what is the role of the SBST in your school?
6	P1	Okay, I am not quite sure but I think the role of the SBST is to engage with learners that have socio-economic issues at home actually and at school which affect their learning as a whole. Yes that's what I understand.
7	R	So who is responsible to deal with this issues? Is it only the SBST or even the classroom or subject teachers?
8	P1	Eh... I feel that as teachers we lack information in our school. We do not know what the function of the SBST. Eh... it does not help learners who need support because we do not know how to do so sometimes" (line 8)I didn't even know what SBST is until recently when I had a case. I didn't even know that this structure existed within out school.
9	R	Okay. Do you mind sharing about this case you are referring to?
10	P1	So going back to your question that who does it affect in particular? Who should assist? Is it only the SBST or the class teacher? I think the class teacher should be involved or any other teacher that the child is comfortable communicating to. Then that would be told to the SBST. The case I have was about a child who was illiterate in my class. He's doing grade 9B.
11	R	Okay thank you Mam. Are you a member of the SBST?
12	P1	Yes I am but I only became a member after the incident I told you about, the illiterate learner. Actually, I was told I was asked by the Life Orientation HOD to be the grade 9 co-ordinator because I care a lot about learners I agreed. But he didn't explain in details what it really means to be the coordinator.
13	R	Okay Mam. Another follow up question. According to you do you think the structure is functional?

14	P1	No. How many people are supposed to be on the SBST?
15	R	It depends with the school for instance: the number of learners and the number of the stuff.
16	P1	Oh okay.
17	R	Yes. Eh...The other question that I have is what does the SBST do to respond on different needs or to different learner's needs in your school?
18	P1	Okay in my school as I said I do not see the team being active or maybe it is because I haven't got too many cases whereby I could have to consult or ask the SBST.
19	R	Okay.
20	P1	So ay, I don't see it working. I don't see them being highly active and looking at the environment or looking at where the school is based I have noticed that the school is surrounded by many socio-economic issue. At this school in particularly the SBST was supposed to be the most active or highly visible structure of which it is not.
21	R	It is not? Okay Mam. The third question. According to your understanding what is gender?
22	P1	According to my understanding gender is being female, male or bisexual or heterosexual that is gender. Is the type of sexuality that a person is. Yes that's how I understand gender.
23	R	Okay. What--- Since you are talking about sexuality, what is sexuality?
24	P1	Sexuality is being male, female, transgender or heterosexual. That's how I understand it.
25	R	Okay, then how do we know that a person is male or female?
26	P1	[Sighing] Typically we look at the facial features. Does a person have a beard? Does he look more feminine? And when I come to think of it [laughing] there is no right word to [laughing] to say whether a person is male or female. I have noticed that this discriminates because if I look a certain way it makes me an ugly person, <i>ngifana nomfana mara ngiyintombazana</i> (I look like a boy but I am a girl). So it is confusing when you really take time to think about it because from when we grew up we knew that a girl should look a certain way, hair. A boy should shave his hair. So that's how we were taught to differentiate or to establish sexuality.
27	R	So can we say physical appearance is very important in determining whether a person is male or female?
28	P1	Iyaah. I would say so physical appearance is very important in determining whether a person is female or male. That's why when you find a person who was born a male. But now feels like he wants to be a female they go and change their physical features to be more female like through surgery. That's how we were taught as a society to differentiate the two. As per physical looks.
29	R	Okay, the firth question that I have is are there people in your community who do not express themselves according to their gender?
30	P1	Iyaah, defiantly. There are.
31	R	Okay.
32	P1	[sighing] There are. You will find someone acting as a girl, we do not know if that person truly feels that way or she's in the adolescent stage. But there are people in my community. They are gay, lesbians' visa versa.
33	R	Okay, so in your community what do you call these people? Which names are they given?
34	P1	'Sis'bhuti', please don't take it personal that that I call them like that, Sis'bhuti [laughing] and then there is this thing with the hand [the participant lifted her hand trying to demonstrate how gays in her community use their hands]. We just do it

		with the hand where we show the hand. Their hand is more feminine than a normal guy's hand actually would be. "Istabane".
35	R	So--- so why do you use your hand? What does the hand eh... refers to?
36	P1	You know when most guys changes their sexuality from male to female one of the thing they do is to soften their hands and they communicate, they use their hands too."Mkhozi ngiyakutshela" [the participant demonstrated how they use their hands]. It's just the hand thing. I don't know. So if we want to gossip about them we would be like "Where is [demonstrating with her hand]. We just do it do it with the hand.
37	R	Okay, So you call them sis'bhuti and maybe softy?
38	P1	Uhm...
39	R	Okay.
40	P1	And we do not know how to differentiate between a gay and lesbian. In our community all of them are gays.
41	R	Okay, so once you don't express yourself according to your biological gender you are gay despite that you are male or female?
42	P1	Yes, yes, yes you are gay.
43	R	So why are they called like that? Why did you call them Osis'bhuti?
44	P1	Are you saying why do we call them by names?
45	R	No. Why do you call them with the names that you mentioned that you call them osis'bhuti, Why do you say they are sis'bhutis?
46	P1	Abosis'bhuti because they are brothers or boys who are trying to make themselves sisters. So that's how the name came about. Eish! Usis'bhuti [laughing] that's---- I don't know. Whey I grew up they were calling them like that, Usis'bhuti.
47	R	So according to you do you think they want to be Osisi? Like for instance a boy whose gay wants to be usisi? That's why you call them sis'bhuti?
48	P1	Yes.
49	R	Do you think it is what they choose? Or it is something that they are born with?
50	P1	With me personally I know it's going to come out as if I am being judgemental but when I think about it I feel like is things you observe and you put them in your brain I don't think people are born in that way. When I observe I haven't seen an old lady (ugogo) "westabane" so it just means that as the years goes [laughing] by these people they just realise that this gay thing "ayikho" (it is not there).
51	R	So you also call them Stabane?
52	P1	Yes [laughing] yah just released that. I know it is wrong. I know we should respect other people's feelings and how they feel and we should support them but honestly deep down in my heart I really think it is just a phase, something they are going through and it will pass. It is not something they are born with and I believe that we tell our minds what we want to be if a person tells his mind that you want to be a female while you are a male then your brain is going to start doing those things that are done by females. That's why I don't believe that there is someone born otherwise. The Bible says for----- God has a plan. If God wanted you to be a woman from birth, why change? I feel like it is a phase. I feel like is a bit of a fashion, it's a bit of influence and at times it has to do with self-esteem issues.
53	R	Okay.
54	P1	That----- maybe if it is a guy, if it's a girl wanting to be a lesbian she will be like 'oh maybe I am not pretty enough' and people, the community will then do a mistake and say these boy is handsome and you start taking these things in and then as you grow older you will be like 'ha indeed I am a boy'. So even the community look at this look thing that where we started is very important that we as parents and community we give our children a reassurance that they need because if those

		comments are being said you start believing that actually I want to be a boy or if you are a girl your breast is small you will think that it is the reason why you shouldn't be a girl.
55	R	So Mam I just want to understand. Do you think the religious issue has an impact on how we view izitababane or sis'bhuti?
56	P1	Jah absolutely, uhm... you know religion has a way and we are living each and every day. So religious people, people who are going to church or Christians----- let me take a Christian point of view, they are very much judgemental so they like acting as if people who are not expressing themselves according to their sex are committing a sin and this make people who are supposed to be normal in terms of sexuality uncomfortable because religious people think they are so superior. They know above anyone else. Then if you are not going to do something that is within the norm you are possessed and I feel that they are making them worse because in life in general we like to prove a point if people are going the right direction you want to go left because you want to just show them that this thing does exist. So jah religion plays a huge role. It is just that I do not know how to put it in a sentence to...
57	R	No but I do understand.
58	P1	Iyah.
59	R	Okay. How are they treated in your community?
60	P1	We don't. I don't take them seriously.
61	R	How?
62	P1	Especially in my community. The only transgender person I take seriously is the one with money. I know I am discriminating but that's the truth. That's how I feel when I see a gay person. I also believe that money plays a huge role for instance when watching TV you get to know a Somizi who can really afford this lifestyle and he knows what he is doing. That's how I judge them. I don't take them seriously, I just see people who are just going through a phase also what they are doing they do not know what they are doing. They are just doing it just for the fact of doing it. They do it because they think they enjoy this thing. I don't see them as people who have proper and serious careers and it is because of the community for instance if you became a gay teacher, it's just off. I have never seen a teacher who's gay personally so for me I cannot say how they are treated in my community but I can only speak for myself and truthfully. And how I see them [homosexuals] I don't see them with a future, people who have careers but when I see on TV people like Somizi succeeding then I started to change my thinking that this gay thing works in other communities because we have gays that have made it in life
63	R	Uhm...But are they discriminated? Or killed? Or anything. How does the community respond?
64	P1	Uhm...I don't have a personal experience or have experience or heard of a lesbian that have been killed around Tsakane, they are insulted daily because of choices that they have made in terms of their sexuality. Jah oh! Okay now that I remember, there is this cousin of mine who lives at Donator. They had a neighbour who was a lesbian that girl so they killed her at Thema and they also raped her with a beer bottle and that was very traumatic. They do not deserve to be killed. Everyone is going through something uhm...
65	R	So I think---- the following question was going to be how do you feel about the way the community treats them? Eh...but now I think you have answered this one. But in a nutshell how do you feel about being called izitabane, sis'bhuti and what you have just sad?
66	P1	Nkonkoni? [Laughing]
67	R	[Laughing] Oh! Now you remember these names? Hey! [Laughing].

68	P1	[Laughing] Jah.
69	R	Okay let me just ask this: eh...do you think it is a good thing that we give people with same-sex sexual identities these name? Do we really need to give them such names?
70	P1	Uhm...
71	R	Don't you think we offend them?
72	P1	Let me tell you we can give them names but not to insult them but to refer to them. Do you understand? Not to insult but to refer them. It is like with us we don't like being called 'kaffers' but they refer us as blacks. Does the name Black offend us? I feel like we need to give a name that is respectful that is not offensive because obviously if you going to call me by something you been sarcastic or look at down upon me. They are going to be offended, at the end of the day they are human whether you like them or not but the bottom line is that we should respect them. So they feel---- I am sure they feel offended and at times depressed, insulted all those words but we have to find a better word for them. And I don't think <i>sis'bhuti</i> is an offensive name. You were a guy, now you are changing so technically so take pride on it. It is just that these people take things way to seriously because which a person says <i>sis'bhuti</i> we usually saying it in a positive note instead of saying it in a negative note because you are changing from being girl to guy or guy to girl so you are a <i>sis'bhuti</i> .
73	R	[Sighing] Okay Mam. Let us this issue into the school eh... environment. Do you have these learners your school?
74	P1	Yes. I had one that I taught last year. Can we mention names?
75	R	It is not necessary Mam.
76	P1	I had one that I taught last year and I think I have one in 9E this year. But I am not sure and I am scared to ask.
78	R	Why?
79	P1	I don't want him to feel uncomfortable. I don't go around asking boys that 'are you a boy? Are you a girl? Why should I ask him?
80	R	But are you comfortable uhm----Eh... speaking about homosexuals if you are given that platform?
81	P1	I think I am comfortable because I would talk about it in a positive way. In a jokily way. Not talk about it trying to offend them and I would talk about it that way hoping that the person receives it well that person sees my intention. Jah is not something that would make me uncomfortable because I wouldn't like to talk about it in an uncomfortable way or talking down upon them. Do you understand what I am saying? I used to talk about it last year in my class with that boy. I would be like oh! My God you are going to the toilet? Ha! Aah I wonder. Please be careful. And we would laugh about it and then he goes.
82	R	Ah! This is interesting. Since you were talking about the toilets do you think (Sighing) give me the structure of your school toilets. Do you have boys and girls? Or do you have a different structure? How do you accommodate these young people in terms when they go to the bathroom? Or before you answer my question can you please share your intentions? What do you intend to do when you speak about homosexuality in that fashion?
83	P1	Okay...eh My intention would be trying eh...to show that these people are part of us and we do not dislike them. At the end...of the day they are human beings. To answer your second question I would say they are not accommodated at all. The toilets that we have in our school is strictly male and female. In our school there is a lot of bullying that goes on in the toilets. So when they [homosexuals] go in there they are terrified because other learners may call them names and they can make their time in the toilet an unpleasant one ----- Oh my God! I am going to do this at

		home and then I would do it when I come back from school because obviously they are confused where do I go? What do I do? And I can assure you when it does happen when they do go there it's an issue because we do not accommodate them at all and I feel it is unfair. If there are schools that are able to build ramps to accommodate----- Uhm learners with disabilities but why don't we accommodate gays?
84	R	That's a good question. How are they treated by educators?
85	P1	Uhm... [Sighing] there thing about this ---- uhm... Eh gays, lesbians, transgender issue I feel like as females, we taking it better than males in general. I am not talking about educators or doctors----- even when you are at home with your brother he will be like "hayi I don't like these people". But when you get a female they express that they are okay with them. So I would like to think that in a school environment female educators are okay with it. The male teachers are uncomfortable with it because this is just how the community works.
86	R	But according to you why is it like that? Why men eh---why---- how can I put this? Why do the males do not want to talk about it?
87	P1	Uhm... I do not know because they even ask why I like Somizi? They even call gays our people, the female's people, your people.
88	R	Do you think culture has an impact because remember eh... lot of men are cultural and influenced by cultural values. So do you think in accepting eh... people with same-sex sexual identities culture has a role to play? Or do you think culture has a role to play the way we perceive them?
89	P1	Culture does have a role. Culturally people are trained that a man should be behave in a certain way. So when a man does the unexpected and decide that he does not feel like one. Other men take offense. They do. More than being discriminated and being tortured by men. Females are tortured by males because they are different from other females for instance the case I was telling you about the girl who transgendered to be---- from female to a male. He was raped by a male and brutally murdered. It was like doing a human slaughter. So culture does play a big role as much as religion does.
90	R	So as a professional educator are you trained to respond to sexual diversity? And do you think more training is needed?
91	P1	Eh...Uhm...Not trained to deal with sexual diversity and I haven't heard of a workshop or training not more training programs to help us as educators to learn about sexual diversity because is something that is completely ignored in the education system.
92	R	So if they--- as you are saying that more training is needed. What kind of training must be provided?
93	P1	Uhm... For me workshops where we as teachers go somewhere and listen to a presenter I don't think those workshops are productive enough. I feel like we need a training whereby we will involve those learners [with same-sex sexual orientations] because we will come up with strategies and ways on how to deal with them and we do not know them. The main objective of this training should be identifying their needs. So that after this training we are equipped with relevant knowledge. So the training that should be taking place is the one that the learners are involved. Eh...They should tell us what is challenging them and what do they need from us as their teachers. In that way maybe we will solve the problem of homosexuality in our school.
94	R	Okay.
95	P1	Should be where teachers are active. Teachers and those learners are engaging, not for us having a speaker or a presenter to come and dictate. Yah, Yah.

96	R	So you feel that eh... these learners are the ones that are supposed to say what they really want? How they want to be supported?
97	P1	Yes absolutely because you might sit and think that you know but you haven't experience it. The time that they are living in and your times are completely different so we need them to be move involved in helping us on how to deal with them. Yes.
98	R	So what else do you need in terms of support despite the workshops and so on? What else do you need in order to respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual identities?
99	P1	Uhm... I feel like we need awareness campaigns. As much as the department of education can spend money on advertisement for example SGB selection or elections. Why don't they do something similar with sexual diversity or with other problems that we have. Where by you see an advertisement on TV, where learners will be wearing school uniform and raising awareness on the issue. We never see that actually when we are watching TV what we see is 'Pride'. Do you know pride?
100	R	No, I don't.
101	P1	It is a day whereby they celebrate LGBT. But why the DBE does not provide ways to make noise in the media platforms about this issue so that people can be aware of it and not hiding behind being negative and saying all sorts of things about these type of learners.
102	R	Okay, jah that would be something new and I think it can work to raise awareness. But do you think the curriculum gives educators a platform to engage in this topic?
103	P1	No, not at all I think it ends there in class but as a teacher teaching EMS eh... the role of me being a pastoral carer in the classroom is not included in the curriculum. We just get in class and do activities, mark that's it. We don't have time to engage, speak and be aware of our environment that we live in.
104	R	Okay, all in all what can you say about the learning conditions or the learning environment has in terms of these learners?
105	P1	Uhm...in terms of the learning environment that we are doing, we are ignoring gays and lesbians in our school they do not exist it is only boys and girls that's it. So we becoming that eh---- the generation that is similar to our grandmothers that sweeps everything under the wrack and pretend that things are not happening where else things are happening. So the environment is it conducive? Jah, as a learner but in terms of their personal needs I don't think it is it is at all. In school and in the community we living in. that's why I was saying I don't take whose gay and lesbian and community seriously but when I watch what is happening outside in other communities I feel like those people can make it to just prove my point that we just ignoring them. Why are they being like that? Let's just carry on with life whereby maybe we should give them the benefit of the doubt. It is something that they are feeling and they should go out there to be full members of the community as we are also recognised.
106	R	Okay, the last question that I have is how can the SBST respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientation? What can they do?
107	P1	Okay, I think the DBE or the department of education in Gauteng they have not done enough to raise awareness about homosexuality. And this is a serious problem in our classrooms because we have these learners in our classes but we are not sure what can we do with them. I I think charity begins at home so what can the Department of Education and the school should call these learners and engage with them. Have programs maybe similar like AA (Anonymous Alcoholics). Have a program whereby we just sit and talk because communication goes a long way and then that program will be supporting learners that we have in our schools on how to deal with the problem of sexual diversity. And come up with solutions that when

		engage the principal and the SGB so that we can have facilities for these learners and include them in our school code of conduct actually.
108	R	Okay, yoh! Thank you Mam that was insightful and thank you once more for taking your time and speaking about this issue and hopefully one day we will reach a point where there are solutions. Thank you Mam.
109	P1	You are welcome.

Transcription: Interview Audio

Participant: XXXXXXXXXX

Researcher: Johannes Buthelezi

Date: 13/09/2018

P10 = Participant 10

R = Researcher

Numbers = Line numbers

NB: *All the participants were given the instructions about the study prior this interview and the researcher explained that the participants can withdraw their participation at any time and that participation is voluntary.*

LINE NO	SPEAKER	CONVERSATION
700	R	Good afternoon mam
701	P10	Afternoon
702	R	How are you?
703	P10	I am okay and how are you?
704	R	I am good thanks, ah firstly I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to interact with you as we have discussed the purpose of this interview is to gather information about the role of the SBST in responses to the care and support of learners with same-sex sexual orientation. So the first question that I have for you is what is the role of the SBST?
705	P10	The role of the SBST is to assist learners with learning barriers during their schooling for instance if a learner cannot write, they try by all means to assist the learner to achieve that skill of writing or if the learner is having some challenges at home they try to assist the learners to get over those matters that are disadvantages to learners.
706	R	Okay. So according to your understanding what gender is?
707	P10	[Sighing] Gender is such a broad word hey. Gender can be described in so many ways. The more stereotype---- stereotypical one is the one that confuses gender with sex. Most of us we think gender is sex because we assume that every woman is a female and a man is a male but in reality is not because we--- gender is beyond those two things, two categories uhm... a woman and a man. In today's society---- the society today has broaden the definition in such a way that I myself I am confused. I am not even sure what gender is.

708 R But when you are saying uhm...gender cannot just be man and women, what else do we have?

709 P10 We have lesbians, gays or homosexuals and heterosexuals all those things.

710 R So how do we categorise a person as a man or a woman?

711 P10 Biologically is quite easy because a female is someone with female organs, there productive system. We go to a woman who has a womb and a male will be a man with testicle for example, a penis [laughing].

712 R [Laughing] Do you have----- as you have mentioned that gender is not woman and man---- do you have people in your community who do not express themselves according to their gender?

713 P10 Yes we do, tons and tons of them.

714 R Okay, what do you call them in your community?

715 P10 **Actually we labelling them as----- because we are Christian based so we labelling them as some sort of a demonic thing.**

716 R So what do you call them?

717 P10 **Sinners?**

718 R Sinners! But I mean if you see that person walking down the street do you say this is a sinner? Or there is a specific name that you are referring to that you use in your community?

719 P10 Eh... we do not really call them sinners but we call them "those people", those people in direct quotation marks.

720 R Do you have maybe a vernacular name that you specifically use for them?

721 P10 Oh! [Laughing] *istabane*.

722 R Okay. But why do you call them like that? Sinner, "those people" and *stabane*? Why do you refer them as such?

723 P10 Is because we---- because they were previously labelled like this. I was primarily socialised to such stereotypical naming.

724 R Okay. So how they treated in your community?

725 P10 Uhm... in my community they are treated differently.

726 R Differently how?

727 P10 Differently in such a way that---- we seem not to understand what are they,

728 R Okay.

729 P10 And it is quite complex to try to understand this people.

730 R So as a result, how do you treat them?

731 P10 [Laughing] as a result----- actually we do---- [laughing] I cannot explain.

732 R But do you try to understand their position in the society?

733 P10 We try--- I do try to understand them.

- 734 R But according to you where is the problem of not understanding? What prevents your community to not understand these people?
- 735 P10 Firstly we have no information. Lack of information. We don't know what primarily what made them to be like this.
- 736 R Okay. So how do you feel the way the community treats them.
- 737 P10 **It is inhuman. First of all they are chased from the--- let me talk about the gay. A gay leaner will be chased out of a female toilet and also he will be chased out of a male toilet because he doesn't belong there.**
- 738 R So do you think toilets are some of the forms of discrimination that are used to discriminate?
- 739 P10 **Yes because they have drawn a person who is wearing a skirt and also the male toilets are a man wearing a trouser. What about the male who is wearing a skirt?**
- 740 R Uhm...okay. But how can we according to you how can we accommodate people with same-sex sexual orientation when it comes to the toilet, what must be done by the school management? What do you think must be done?
- 741 P10 **I think we need to have more symbols that represent diversity today. We need to have more than two symbols**
- 742 R To accommodate them?
- 743 P10 Yes to accommodate them.
- 744 R So basically how do you feel about the way these people are treated?
- 745 P10 I feel bad about them.
- 746 R Why?
- 747 P10 It is very sad not to belong and it is so sad for people to not understand you.
- 748 R So in your opinion do you think culture and religion influence the way people treat people with same-sex sexual orientation?
- 749 P10 They play a huge role.
- 750 R In which way?
- 751 P10 Uhm... there is something called primary socialization which plays a role in a person's life. So I am primary socialized to go to church and in my church women wear skirts and men wear trousers. Then here comes someone who wants to go to my church, but she was born a female but now she doesn't feel comfortable of wearing a skirt. Do you see now that person is being discriminated? But she also wants to be a Christian as I am. It is very sad.
- 752 R So now what you are saying mam is that in church there are forms of discrimination?
- 753 P10 **Yes the church itself and also our culture where male will have to go to initiation schools and then after that you become a man where else that guy doesn't want to be a men afterwards. He just want to be himself.**

- 754 R Okay mam do you have these learners in school? And how would you react when you see a group of learners attacking another learner because they express themselves differently from their gender?
- 755 P10 We do have those learners in our school but then we have to go to gender equality where learners do not discriminate against each other. Those basic principles that they have to learn and we have to tell them that this is wrong you are not supposed to discriminate someone because of gender.
- 756 R Okay. How are they treated by educators?
- 757 P10 [Laughing] As an educator myself, to me they are just the same. Gender has nothing to do with academic work.
- 758 R So do you think they are not discriminated?
- 759 P10 No.
- 760 R Okay. But do they get support from the SBST?
- 761 P10 That question I cannot answer. I don't know [laughing].
- 762 R Why because you are a member of the SBST?
- 763 P10 I don't know. I haven't paid much attention to gender being a restriction to education or to access education.
- 764 R But do you think these learners need support?
- 765 P10 Uhm... I don't know. I don't even know whether there is a problem.
- 766 R Okay, then as a professional educator are you trained to respond to sexual diversity? Do you think more training is needed?
- 767 P10 I think more training is needed. Because we do know that we should acknowledge diversity but we are not informed on how can we do that and again the department does not allocate us time to deal with this diversity issue. We noticed that we are having a huge number of learners who have different genders. Now I think more information is needed for us to deal with these learners.
- 768 R What kind of information?
- 769 P10 [Laughing] primary the information that I need is a psychological one of how do they become like this? And how do I make them feel comfortable because of their sexual orientation? And which example should I use that will not discriminate them because we call them boys and girls and boys category. And sometimes they don't belong on that category
- 770 R So basically what you are saying Mam, you are saying at this current moment you are not equipped to deal with these learners?
- 771 P10 No we are not.
- 772 R Who should provide that information?
- 773 P10 Someone who knows more about gender, equality, stuff.
- 774 R Whose that someone?

- 775 P10 I don't know
- 776 R Is it the department? Is it the school principal? Is it the SBST coordinator?
- 777 P10 I think the department should have some workshops based on this because I doubt that the principal knows about this stuff.
- 778 R Why?
- 779 P10 I doubt [laughing] it is just a hint.
- 780 R [Laughing] Okay despite or except the workshop what else do you need in order to respond to the needs of learners with same-sex sexual orientation?
- 781 P10 We need more books, any book that will information on sexuality.
- 782 R Do you think the curriculum gives educators the platform to engage in this topic?
- 783 P10 No not my curriculum.
- 784 R Why?
- 785 P10 It is mainly base on content that we need to teach. Nothing more on diversity. All those things you just do them because of your micro curriculum but not the typical core curriculum.
- 786 R Uhm.... The last question if how can the SBST respond to learners with same-sex sexual orientation?
- 787 P10 Firstly the structure must acknowledge that now we have learners like that and after acknowledging that such things we need to inform learners about sexual orientation. We need to take it step by step until we accept it and then we inform the society about sexual orientations.
- 788 R Thank you so much Mam for your time and insightful thoughts. I hope you have learnt something while we were interacting.

APPENDIX C: TURNITIN

