Children's meanings of same-sex sexualities: A study of 8- and 9year - old boys and girls in a primary school.

UNIVERSITY OF
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A research study submitted as the full dissertation component in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Education Degree in the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

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DECLARATION

I, **Nosipho Sithole**, hereby declare that:

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

LGBTQI – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer and Intersex

UNESCO – United Nations Economic and Social Council

NGO – Non-Government Organisation

LS - Life Skills

HOD – Head of Department

LO – Life Orientation

FP – Foundation phase

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Aids – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme

DoE – Department of Education

UKZN – University of KwaZulu-Natal

GLSEN – Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

DBE - Department of Basic Education

MSM – Men who have sex with other men

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This study explores the meanings of same-sex sexualities among Grade 3 children aged eight and nine years old. This study took place at Moonlight Primary School (pseudonym) situated in Newlands West, north of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. Thirty learners were involved in this study; they were all interviewed individually in order to share their meanings of same-sex sexualities. Findings reveal that children in primary schools define same-sex sexuality as boys who display feminine traits or girls who display masculine traits. Within this study, findings also reveal that children do not regard same-sex sexuality as a sexual identity, but as an 'act' that is done by boys and girls who do not want to conform to normative gendered traits. Boys and girls in primary school have been deemed innocent and asexual. However, this study reveals that children in primary school monitor normative gender traits and bully peers who do not conform to heteronormative traits. The school playground is one of the sites where children's sexualities are scrutinised by peers. In primary school, games are gendered and children who do not conform to that are marginalised and victimised by peers. In South Africa, the foundation phase curriculum does not include same-sex sexualities.

Families and places of worship condemn same-sex sexualities. Parents do not want their children to be associated with homosexuality. Parents also presume that all children are heterosexuals. They also believe sexuality is for adults and not for children because they are deemed to be still young and innocent. Study also reveals that media (television) helps children to identify non-normative gendered traits. Findings reveal that religious institutions do not share their thoughts and views about same-sex sexualities. Some places of worship clearly state that homosexuals are bad people because they do not conform to normative gendered traits and are perceived as a threat to the status quo. The findings also reveal that boys and girls always want to maintain normative gendered traits in school, therefore they always play with peers of the same sex to avoid being bullied by peers. Homophobic insults and homophobic bullying are very common in primary schools, therefore usage of the word gay or *isitabane* (derogatory word for gay) is very frequently used by children.

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Homophobic bullying is a part of life in South African schools. Zondi (2017) notes that in South Africa homosexual people encounter discrimination every day, regardless of constitutional protection. For instance, a South African school principal, Nomapondomise Kosani in East London (Eastern Cape), sent 38 lesbians home with letters and forced them to 'out' to their parents (Zondi, 2017). Another homophobic incident happened in a school in Limpopo where a female learner did not conform to gender-segregated uniform and was followed to the toilet by other learners to physically check her private parts (Igual, 2014). Harassment and homophobic bullying of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) pupils who do not comply to prescriptive-gendered behaviour in schools takes many forms, ranging from hate speech to their exclusion from school and this makes schools unsafe for minority sexualities.

Kings (2014) states that LGBTQI learners are not safe in South African schools because of the hostility that exists in them; LGBTQI learners consequently suffer because they do not conform to normative-gendered roles. Bhana (2012) notes that homophobia is a common occurrence in South African schools. This is because social institutions, like schools, promote physical and sexual violence. "LGBTQI learners are victims of bullying, rape, assault and hate crimes, 9% of bullying is from principals, 22% is from teachers and two-thirds of bullying is from school mates. This provides insight into societal views of homosexuality" (Kings, 2014, p. 5). Msibi (2012) indicates that pupils who are perceived as gay, bisexuals and lesbians in township schools in South Africa are victimised by teachers. LGBTQI learners are not accepted and LGBTQI intolerance is pervasive in South African schools. LGBTQI learners have negative experiences about schooling because of overt and covert violence in schools (Msibi, 2012). Male and female participants from Msibi's 2012 study state that "harmful words like '*isitabane*' or '*moffie*' or '*ungqingili*' or '*usis'bhuti*' were used by other learners to refer to them" (Msibi, 2012, p. 523). Homophobic violence is deeply rooted within ideals of patriarchy and heteronormativity (Msibi, 2013).

The study focuses on how boys and girls make meaning of same-sex sexualities in primary school in South Africa and it is vital in order to be able to deconstruct their preconceived

ideas which might serve to fuel incidents of homophobic violence and bullying at school and within South African society at large. From early childhood, children are aware of same-sex sexualities.

Robinson and Diaz (2006) state that young boys and girls are extremely knowledgeable of difference and diversity, and this impacts their response towards others and their daily social actions. However, the knowledge they have favours heterosexuality and discriminates against minority sexualities. This study seeks to eradicate negative information they have about homosexuals from an early age and to minimise harassment, prejudice and homophobic bullying.

1.2   Background to the Study

Sexual diversity is not well accommodated in South African schools, despite the provision of the South African Constitution and the strides made by the Department of Education. Teaching about same-sex sexualities in South African primary schools is not part of the curriculum. Heteronormativity is part of the South African school; traditionally gendered roles are normalised through practices like separate toilets, sports, lines and duties for boys and girls. Francis (2013) states that HIV and sexuality education in South Africa are combined in the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum. LO is a mandatory subject for all pupils from foundation phase to high school. However, in the foundation phase it is called Life Skills (LS) and from Grade 4 to 12 it is LO. The main objective of LO and LS is to provide learners with life skills that will empower them to be responsible citizens, to be aware of their roles in communities and to be aware of themselves (Ngabaza et al., 2016).

They have the same components such as beginning knowledge, creative arts and physical education. In the foundation phase LS does not include sexuality education and it usually assumes heteronormative families and does not accommodate diverse families. LO concepts also favour heterosexual gender norms, therefore it is hard to discuss issues of sexual and gender diversity in schools. Ngabaza et al. (2016) state that sexuality education helps learners to make informed decisions about their own health and others. Sexuality education is very important in South Africa where gender-based violence is prevalent, HIV and Aids is pandemic; children and women are raped daily and sexual harassment and killings of homosexuals occurs in our communities. Even though sexuality is everywhere, schools are significant places for the construction and ruling of sexual identities in and outside the school

(Epstein & Johnson, 1998). In a South African study conducted by Francis (2013) participants (teachers) chose not to teach sexual education or same-sex sexuality because of their own credence and values. Teachers are not willing to teach about different sexual identities although homosexuality is not uncommon at schools. Francis (2018) indicates that although the South African Constitution protects every citizen and promotes inclusive and equal education, regardless of sexuality, homosexual learners are facing harshly discriminatory social realities in schools. Non-heterosexual identities and behaviours are not tolerated in schools and schools' daily culture, curriculum and interactions are entrenched by heterosexuality. In primary school heterosexuality is perceived as 'natural' and other sexual identities as taboo.

Bhana et al. (2011) state that early childhood is regarded as a stage where children are unworried and unharmed by the gendered world of adults. However, heterosexual gendered norms are ruling primary schools and different sexual identities are considered as foreign (Robinson, 2002). Homosexuality issues are hardly addressed in school, therefore teachers only discuss gender diversity when learners ask questions about it (Francis, 2012). This has led to victimisation and humiliation of LGBTQI individuals in school assembly, corridors, staffrooms, toilets and in the classroom. When they are harassed, they seldom report cases in school because they fear that more harassment might occur, or even fear for their lives. Schools assume that all individuals in school, both teachers and learners, are heterosexual which has led to inequality practices (Francis, 2017). Even though sexuality education is meant to be taught in school, not enough training has been done to equip teachers about gender and sexuality diversity and non-heterosexuality (Francis & Reygan, 2016 and Francis, 2012). Francis (2012) indicates that teachers stubbornly ignore issues of sexual diversity. Francis (2012) states that some teachers were against the incorporation of homosexuality in education, especially teachers who have high levels of beliefs in God, either as Muslims or Christians.

South African Department of Basic Education is in the process of designing a contemporary LO textbook for Grade 4 (9-10 years) that will contain new content on sexuality education that is endorsed by United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO). Learners will learn, in an appropriate and sensitive manner, how babies are made (Department of Education, 2019). However, this has not been welcomed by South African parents and society. Most parents think that sexuality should not be included in the Grade 4 curriculum as

they are still too young to know about sex-related matters. They also think content from this LO book is clearly not appropriate for learners as young as Grade 4. This clearly shows that in South African primary schools, sexuality education is regarded as taboo.

According to Reygan and Lynette (2014) in South African culture, same-sex sexuality is considered as un-African and alien. The South African Constitution does not discriminate against any individual who resides in South Africa, regardless of their sexual identity. However, citizens and leaders of the country often speak and act in contravention of this section of the constitution (Francis, 2017; Mathibe, 2015; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; and Reygan, 2016). Bhana (2013) notes that South Africa has made exceptional progress in securing the rights of homosexuals, by doing away with the evil policies of apartheid that favoured heterosexuality and has replaced these with policies that encourage sexual inclusivity for all citizens.

Furthermore, in 2006 same-sex marriages were made legal (Reygan, 2016). These policies are in contrast with the current South African reality where non-heterosexual people face many forms of discrimination, exclusion and gender-based violence. In South Africa, there are extensive rights and protection of every sexual identity and women, but the reality is grim for minority sexualities (Anguita, 2012). Butler and Astbury (2008) note that even though South African legislation changed after apartheid and protected every citizen, notwithstanding their sexual identity, it is hard to change societal attitudes and habits of society to reorganise in favour of same-sex people. Violence is very high in South Africa. In South Africa, gender-based violence is widespread and the country has the highest prevalence of rape in the world (Anguita, 2012). Additionally, Reygan (2016) indicates that prevalent violence affects all sections of society including non-heterosexual youth. There are numerous factors facing the teaching of homosexuality in South African schools. Msibi (2012) states that in classrooms teachers fear teaching the sexual diversity curriculum because of negative consequences from communities. The growing body of research indicates that educators view same-sex sexualities as unethical and abnormal (Francis & Msibi, 2011).

According to DePalma Ungaro: "School contexts play an important role in perpetrating or challenging discrimination" (2017, p. 4). Schools are sites that normalise practices that create social injustices, like bullying which occurs in and outside of the classroom. School bullying happens daily where learners are teased, harassed and discriminated, many of which are acts of the societal manufacture of sexual and gender identity. Learners in childhood institutions

use the word gay to refer to someone who acts 'abnormally' or to tease each other (Allan et al., 2008). This shows that children in primary school produce narrow, culturally stereotyped understandings of gender and sexuality. "Lack of clear and effective policy and training, along with cultural assumptions and taboos about sexuality, have prevented teachers from exploring non-heterosexuality and gender variance within educational contexts" (DePalma Ungaro, 2017, p. 4). Therefore, schools need to improve curriculum training and policies about gender and sexuality in order to provide a curriculum that considers the lived experiences of minority sexualities. According to Francis: "Schooling, one of the most important socialisers in society, is used to describe the character and climate of schools inclusive of the curricular and social-emotional experience" (2017, p. 360). Although schools are supposed to provide inclusive education for all learners, homosexual learners' experiences of schooling are different from heterosexual learners. In South African secondary schools, the homophobia experienced by minority sexual identities is morally wrong and it violates their constitutional rights (Butler et al., 2003).

Gays, lesbians and bisexuals are harassed, violated, excluded, discriminated and rejected by peers and teachers. Violence in schools affects learners negatively in many ways; it affects their self-esteem, concentration; it also affects their performance and their overall potential. Some are withdrawn and unwilling to come to school (Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2010). This is evident in a study conducted by McArthur (2015) where a participant was a victim of homophobic violence from peers, principals, school administrators and teachers. Sometimes he did not feel like attending school or ran away from it. Teachers are the main perpetrators of victimisation of homosexual learners in schools and they regard homosexuality as evil and infectious (Msibi, 2012).

In a study by Msibi one participant (a female learner) stated: "I was at school, and Mrs. Nhleko called me to the staffroom. She started shouting at me and told me to stop acting like a boy. She said I need to stop this lesbian thing because I would begin to make other learners like me" (Msibi, 2012, p. 524). Additionally, in a study conducted by Msibi, (2012, p. 525) a participant noted: "I am used to it now … Mr. Mncube dragged me by my neck and told me to stop bothering them in the staffroom. He had done this to me before. He likes pushing me and shouting at me in front of other teachers whenever I go to the staffroom. He always says he doesn't like *isitabane* (derogatory word for gay in isiZulu) and other teachers just laugh and do nothing." This shows that victimisation of non-heterosexual learners is a daily

phenomenon and teachers are the perpetrators. Bhana (2014) notes that schools in South African are not only treacherous and violent, but a place where homosexual learners are intimidated, not tolerated and disrespected every day. Most gays and lesbians in schools do not share their experiences and feelings with adults and other heterosexual learners. They are scared to be judged, humiliated and bullied. Butler et al. (2003) state that when homosexual learners try to share their feelings with adults, they are dismissed and considered to be going through a phase that will pass. Therefore, learners can feel invalidated, neglected and humiliated. This clearly demonstrates how gays' and lesbians' feelings are taken for granted and hence are victims of various homophobic attacks in schools.

According to Reygan and Lynette, "constructions of gender in traditional South African society are closely tied to heteronormativity and traditional, hegemonic understandings of gender playing out in same-sex sexualities" (2014, p. 708). 'Curative' rape that happens in our society to 'cure' lesbian makes one question the morals of South Africans. Bhana (2013) states that moral education and human rights is essential in South Africa, because the moral integrity of our country is questionable, hence there are gender dynamics that reinforce masculine heterosexual power. South Africa is a culturally entrenched country.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that same-sex sexualities are regarded as taboo and this is a worldwide occurrence. Boys and girls in school view homosexuality as a myth; teachers, administrators and school managers are also perpetrators of homophobia. Heterosexuality remains as the dominant form of sexuality, therefore, other minority sexualities are viewed as 'abnormal'. In school homosexuals are victims of discrimination, harassment, hate crime and violence. This research is set against this backdrop of how boys and girls construct same-sex sexualities, most especially in the context of one institution, Moonlight Primary School.

1.3   Significance of study

The present research explores the meanings of same-sex sexualities in a primary schooling context in KwaZulu-Natal. This study is essential because it shows how foundation phase boys and girls are able to identify non-normative gendered traits and are able to categorise sexualities thus disrupting notions of young children being 'innocent' about matters on gender and sexuality. The current study considers how boys and girls have the potential to create their own meanings of same-sex sexualities, through gendered plays, normative

gendered roles, in a heterosexual setting like primary school which often favours heterosexuality and subordinate diverse sexualities. Halpern and Perry-Jenkins (2016) state that social theory mentions that boys and girls have the potential to develop the meaning of males and females, by imitating plays which is vital in acknowledging and processing differently gendered roles and attitudes. The cultural environment plays a major role in processing normative-gendered roles and children internalise these roles when they are expected and promoted in a cultural environment from an early age. Epstein and Ward (2011) indicate that boys and girls start learning about gendered roles at home from an early age, by attending to parent-gendered roles. In a primary school context, non-heteronormative sexualities are considered to be 'non-existent' (Van Leent, 2017). Therefore, boys and girls who are perceived as gays and lesbians or who do not conform to normative gendered roles are victims of homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools (Van Leent, 2017).

1.4   Rationale

Blaise states that "the most obvious and explicit ways in which children practise gender and identify themselves as either female or male begins with how they wear gender and present themselves to others during the school day" (2005, p. 61). In relation to gendered performances at school, I wish to state my personal and professional motivation in conducting a study of this nature. At home I have an eight-year-old niece who is currently in Grade 2 and an 18-year-old nephew doing his first year in college. At school my niece takes part in most sports. My nephew always teases her by saying that she behaves like a boy and loves sports like boys. Last year girls from her class teased her saying she would not get a boyfriend, because she plays with and shares her lunch with boys (most of her friends are also boys). In a different incident and on a professional level as a Grade 1 teacher, a seven-year-old boy from Grade 1 used to like hugging me, complimenting my hairstyle or clothes and walked in a traditionally feminine manner. Other learners used to question his behaviour and one learner called him '*isitaban*e'.

O'Sadan (2012) similarly notes that boys and girls in primary school can identify objects and behaviour that belong to males and females because of socialisation. These two incidents from my personal and professional life awakened my interest in the need to disrupt normative-gendered performances among children as they work to ridicule and position those who do not conform as inferior. Related to this are practices of intolerance against ideas of homosexuality which also needs to be urgently addressed at a primary school level. My study

therefore seeks to examine how children construct same-sex sexualities, in pursuance of our perception of how boys and girls construct sexuality and gendered performances.

As a teacher, I have witnessed how boys and girls in primary school experience same-sex sexualities. Children in primary school perceive same-sex sexualities as 'unnatural' and consequently use the word gay in various ways to insult each other. Homosexuality in primary school is thus marginalised and rejected.

In school, I have observed how learners view homosexuality as a taboo, often this occurs among boys and sometimes between girls. Learners often use gay (*isitabane*) as a swear word or sometimes they use it to refer to a boy who displays feminine traits. There was an incident where a Grade 3 boy spent time with girls and enjoyed playing games and sharing toys and lunch with girls and he was thus called gay by other boys. Another incident happened in class where one boy called another boy gay for crying in front of the class because he lost his pencil. Boys who do not show masculine behaviour in primary schools are also labelled as soft and often called gays. Most learners do not want to be affiliated with homosexuals because they feel that they are inhuman and fear rejection from peers.

1.5   Definitions of terms

1.5.1   Same-sex sexualities

"The terms 'lesbian' and 'gay' are used to refer to people who experience attraction to members of the same-sex, and the term 'bisexual' describes people who experience attraction to members of both sexes" (Moleiro & Punto, 2015, p. 1). Therefore, the same-sex sexualities concept refers to two human beings of the same-sex sexuality who are interested in each other. The same-sex sexualities concept will be used in this study to explore how boys and girls in primary school make meanings from it.

1.5.2   Heterosexuality

According to Naples: "Heterosexuality is much more than a biological given or form of sexuality or sexual orientation. It is a highly regulated, organised and ritualised set of social processes and practices. Heterosexuality circulates as normal through highly intertwined networks of social arrangements and ideologies that include social processes and practices such as dating, initiating sex, engagements, weddings, proms and caring for children" (2016, p. 2). The concept of heterosexuality will be used in this study to highlight how schools routinely portray normative-gender norms through interactions, routines and curriculum. In

institutions like schools heterosexuality is a norm, therefore it is expected from learners. Ingraham and Saunders (2016) allude that heterosexuality is an ideology that arranges gender as a taken-for-granted and ruling arranged notion of everyday life.

1.5.3   Heteronormativity

Herz and Johansson note that "the concept of heteronormativity is sometimes used to describe a body of lifestyle norms as well as how people tend to reproduce distinct and complementary genders (man and woman)" (2015, p. 1011). Additionally, Ingraham and Saunders state that: "Heteronormativity sets institutionalised heterosexuality as the standard for social arrangement based on the asymmetrical division of the sexes. It ensures the organisation of heterosexuality in everything from gender to marriage as the standard for all social-sexual relations" (2016, p. 2). The institution of heterosexuality maintains and regulates gender and is taken as natural. The concept of heteronormative will be used in this study as primary schools are institutions that often use social arrangements based on heteronormative gendered norms.

1.6   Aims

This study seeks to explore how boys and girls, aged eight and nine, make meanings of same-sex sexualities in primary schools. The significance of the study is to explore how children in primary schools perceive same-sex sexualities. This research also seeks to examine how heterosexual gendered norms are dominant in primary schools and non-heterosexual norms are rejected and marginalised. Additionally, this study examines how children encourage heterosexuality among peers by performing gendered plays and daily routines that favour gendered norms.

1.7   Objectives

The study will focus on the following key objectives:

1. To understand how girls and boys in primary school make meanings of same-sex sexualities.
2. To examine how children promote, accommodate or reject heterosexuality in primary school.

1.8   Questions of this research

This research aims to answer the next research questions that are informed by its aims and objectives:

1. What do children understand and perceive by same-sex sexualities?
2. How do children promote, accommodate or reject heterosexual norms?

1.9   Context of study

My study will be conducted at Moonlight Primary School (pseudonym) in Newlands West, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Newlands West was occupied only by Indian people because of the Group Areas Act that was executed during the segregation years. After the 1994 democratic elections, things changed, and other races now live in Newlands West, including Africans, coloureds, whites and Indians. Even though this is a suburb, there are 'RDP' (low-cost) houses built in this area for people who earn low incomes. This low-income area is called Westrich and is dominated by Africans. The school is co-educational and school fees are mandatory (school fees are R1500 per annum). The school services learners from Newlands West, Newlands East, KwaMashu, Lindelani, Westrich, Ntuzuma and Inanda areas. Some of these places surround townships. Most learners are Africans, some Indian and a very few are coloured (75% Africans, 20% Indians, 4% coloureds and 1% Africans from other countries). The school has a library, hall and two computer rooms. The majority of its teachers are Indian and there are a few African teachers.

Although Moonlight Primary School is situated in Newlands West, the majority of learners do not reside in the area; instead they come from neighbouring townships. Most learners come to school by public transport. Some parents struggle to pay schools fees because they also need to pay for transport costs which range from R350-R500 per child and per month.

1.10   Research methodology

This is a qualitative study. This study was conducted in a school where I work, which positions me to spend maximum time with the participants to gain authentic information about same-sex sexualities. The qualitative research component used is an interpretivist paradigm. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) claim that the interpretivist paradigm calls for data that is authentic and able to demonstrate the experiences of the studies' participants. I

chose an interpretivist paradigm for my research because I was trying to find a genuine and authentic cognizance of how children understand same-sex sexualities.

1.10.1 The sample

This research employed convenience and random purposeful sampling. Creswell (2007) notes that convenience sampling safeguards money, time and effort, but at the cost of facts and reliability. Creswell (2007) states that random purposeful sampling includes authenticity to a sample when a possible purposeful sample is too large. My sample consisted of 30 children (boys and girls) of eight and nine years old. This research drew on random purposeful sampling as children in primary school were randomly selected in order to attain the objectives of this study on how children understand same-sex sexualities. The study was conducted in Newlands West, a suburb in KwaZulu-Natal because I am a primary school teacher in this suburb and thus was able to have access easily to participants from this school.

1.10.2 Data collection

This research used in-depth interviews as a method to accumulate data. Bertram and Christensen (2014, p. 80) define interviews as "a structured and focused conversation where a researcher has in mind particular information that he or she wants from the participants, and has designed particular questions to be answered". Interviews are engaging and they help you, as the researcher, to get information about the participants' real world (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thirty learners were interviewed. Boys and girls were interviewed individually over a period of eight weeks. The study used structured observations. Structured observation is when an investigator has a distinct understanding of what he/she wants to attain (Bertram & Christensen, 2014). Observations were done during lunch breaks and in class. Audio recording for interviews was used. All participants were informed about the purpose of using an audio-recording device. I assured them that as the researcher I would be the only person to access or listen to the audio recordings. I tried to include a sample of participants who reflect the three major race groups in the school (Africans, Indians and coloureds).

1.10.3 Safety and well-being of all participants

Since I would be working with young boys and girls aged eight or nine, guardians or parents were asked to sign an assent form (Appendix 6) granting their children permission to participate. I also ensured that those participants who might reveal traumatic experiences or

were experiencing any form of trauma could be dealt with in a professional and safe way, by sourcing external health care (a registered social worker).

1.10. 4 Ground rules in individual interview

Ground rules ensure that participants' information is confidential. As ground rules are important these were communicated during interviews. Participants were encouraged to respect others, and to refrain from judging and sharing what was said during interviews with outsiders.

1.11 Summary of chapters

1.11.1 Chapter one

The main purpose of chapter one is to give a summary of the entire research. It submits the setting of the study, by assessing the prevalence of discrimination against same-sex sexualities in South African society and within schooling contexts. It also offers a rationale and the aim and objectives of conducting this research. In addition, methodology and research questions are stipulated, and surroundings of the study.

1.11.2 Chapter two

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework of this research on same-sex sexualities. This chapter uses two theories which are queer theory and poststructural feminist theory to examine how boys and girls in primary school construct gendered identities. Blaise (2009) states that queer theory examines how prescriptive gendered norms have been normalised, therefore making heterosexual relations as the most accepted and valued form of sexuality, thus dominating and becoming an instrument of power. Queer theory does not identify with a set sexual identity, but is an umbrella term that does not marginalise any sexual identity. MacNaughton (2006) states that feminist poststructural theory believes that children learn sex-gendered roles not only from their parents, teachers and peers, but they are also energetically involved in the manufacture of their own gender.

1.11.3 Chapter three

Chapter three firstly provides an outline of literature arising within an international context on same-sex sexualities, followed by a section covering literature stemming from a sub-Saharan African context. Finally, I provide a detailed account of literature in relation to children's meanings of same-sex sexualities in the local context of South Africa.

1.11.4   Chapter four

Chapter four outlines the methodology and research design utilised in order to do this study. It discusses the surroundings of the study, the obtaining of entry to the research place, and also data collection techniques and sampling employed. This chapter further discusses how the data collected was analysed and provides an outline and discussion of the study's ethical issues and limitations.

1.11.5   Chapter five

Chapter five investigates the data collected and analyses it thematically, thereafter it presents findings on how boys and girls in primary school make meanings of same-sex sexualities in Grade 3 at Moonlight Primary School. The main theme discussed is how boys and girls in primary school understand same-sex sexualities. Firstly, the meanings of children's same-sex sexualities are presented. Secondly, the chapter examines whether children learn about diverse sexualities in school, and it also investigates how parents promote heterosexuality and are intolerant of gay and lesbian identities. Thirdly, the chapter examines how homosexuality is constructed within a discourse of homophobia and unravelling insults and homophobic bullying from peers in primary school. Fourthly, how children identify non-normative gender on television was discussed. Lastly, an analysis and discussion of how the media and home portrays homosexuals and the use of the gay word to insult peers who do not conform to gendered norms is presented.

1.11.6   Chapter six

This chapter concludes this study. It reviews its findings and provides recommendations on combating the phenomenon where heterosexuality and homophobic attacks are promoted in South African schooling institutions. It further provides recommendations and interventions on how schools could implement inclusive education.

1.12   Conclusion

In conclusion, chapter one provides an outline of my research by firstly discussing the background of the study, and defining the main concepts that have been utilised. It then presents the importance of the study, its objectives and aims, questions of the research and surroundings. The study methodology is also described. Chapter one then affords a background to the study, through its discussion of same-sex sexualities in South Africa and sexual education and same-sex sexuality in a schooling context. The rationale of this study is provided, which explains the reasons for undertaking the research. Finally, the chapter

concludes by outlining a brief overview of each of the chapters that follow. The following chapter explains the theoretical framework adopted for the exploration of children's meanings of same- sex sexualities at Moonlight Primary School.

CHAPTER TWO:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter I outline the theoretical framework utilised in this research. This research examines how young boys and girls make meaning of same-sex sexualities in a primary school context, where notions of heterosexuality are prevalent. In schools, heterosexuality is dominant and has a crucial responsibility in moulding the behaviour of their learners. Primary school classrooms are viewed as "sacred" and same-sex sexuality considered a threat and therefore taboo in these settings. Bhana (2016) describes schools as places where certain gender practices are employed in classrooms. For this reason, same-sex sexualities are not formally discussed in foundation phase classrooms. To assist in understanding how boys and girls at primary school construct same-sex sexualities, my study is underpinned by various theories in the field of same-sex sexualities at school. I begin by outlining how primary schools are viewed as safe and untroubled sites for foundation phase education and how heterosexuality has been determined as being normal behaviour. Secondly, I highlight how innocence and customary gender practices are prevalent at primary schools. Thirdly, I explain how teachers and peers police gender discourses at school and how gender relationships in the classroom are different for both boys and girls. I then proceed to examine the notion of the queer theory in relation to my own study. Finally, I conclude by presenting an overview of how a poststructuralist feminist theory was utilised to frame how primary school boys and girls construct same-sex sexualities.

2.2   Theoretical framework

2.2.1   Heterosexuality and primary schooling

This section outlines how primary schools encourage heterosexual discourses and how sexuality is not viewed as part of the curriculum for young children. According to Mackenzie and Talbott "schools are key institutional spaces in and through which children learn gender as they navigate and resist often unspoken normative and normalising practices at the institutional and individual levels" (2018, p. 657). Schools are places where heterosexual norms are learned, either covertly or overtly, through gender-normative exercises that govern such norms at primary schools. Daily activities promote normative-gendered stereotypes in schools. Normative-gendered practices exhibited at primary schools problematise homosexual learners' experiences, as their sexuality is interrogated and they are judged by

their peers, within an environment that is governed by heterosexual norms that do not allow them to explore their sexuality. Gender diversity in schools is not promoted through activities, curriculum or gender plays. The teaching of sexuality in primary schools has been rejected, on the grounds that they are institutions at which children learn only academic skills. However, Bhana (2013) indicates that in the formation years of education, whether adults accept this or not, sexuality is a vital reservoir through which pupils account for being boys and girls. At schools, however, heterosexuality has been regarded as the compulsory form of sexual identity. According to one study, "the inclusion of sexuality issues in early childhood education has always been a contested area" (Osgood & Robinson, 2017, p. 13). Hence, in primary school, children are regarded as innocent and sexuality is viewed as an 'adult' issue. The scholar Renold (2007) argues that schools and schooling practices have been regarded as the key social places for the construction and reconstruction of learners' sexual cultures. In school, heterosexuality is the principal form of sexuality that is overtly recognised and performed daily.

DePalma's study (2013) strongly conflates sex-gender and sexuality, which is unquestionable at primary school level. At this stage of schooling, strict adherence to gender is emphasised by teachers, learners and peers. Heterosexual desire is regarded as normal and healthy for children at primary school, and for their development. Throughout the schooling day, heterosexuality is treated as customary (Blaise, 2009). Additionally, the scholar Blaise (2005) notes that, while at school, teachers and children normalise heterosexual behaviour, thus creating inequality between boys and girls. Heterosexual behavioural norms dictate that girls should be docile and passive, and boys violent and authoritative, in order to be accepted by their peers. Heterosexuality is recognised as a common form of sexuality, as it constructs womanhood and manhood. Therefore, in school, heterosexuality is overtly discussed by teachers and learners (Kehily, 2002). This makes it difficult for any other form of sexuality to be acknowledged in primary schools. As a result, only heterosexuality is considered to be normative by children and by teachers.

Research by MacNaughton (1998) indicates that children are exposed to different gendered messages daily, practised through various discourses. According to another study, by Epstein and Johnson, "schools are sites where sexual and other identities are developed, practised and actively produced on a daily basis" (1998, p. 2). Schools are regarded as places that heterosexual gendered identities are produced and maintained each day, through both explicit

and hidden curricula. The scholar Hartman (2018) states that one of the most prevalent gender practices in primary schools is the separation of boys and girls into separate lines, thus creating gender polarisation. Gendered norms are recognised as prescriptive and invigorate boys and girls to sustain their heterosexual roles in the foundation phase classroom (Blaise, 2005). Further, Adriany (2018) states that gender plays an important part in children's lives, however, it is not included in the curriculum, especially in early childhood education.

Primary schools are built with gendered norms in mind, such as separate toilets, change rooms, administrative systems and institutionalised daily routines (Frohard-Dourlent, 2018). Young children encounter many gendered messages during their schooling from parents, peers, the media and teachers, and they absorb all of these (MacNaughton, 1998). However, binary gendered norms may perturb and limit non-heterosexual learners, with heterosexual stereotypes dominant and same-sex sexualities excluded from the school curriculum. Further, hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are recognised at primary school as essential ideals of heterosexuality.

A study by Blaise (2005) states that these two factors are perpetuated by sustained routines that award authority to men over women – in the case of primary school, supremacy of boys over girls. One study states: "By locating the local gender discourses and practices in a kindergarten classroom, the gendering process begins to reveal how femininity and masculinity are socially constructed through the heterosexual matrix and how discourses of heterosexuality regulate the gendered social order of the classroom" (Blaise, 2005, p. 210).

Preschool children spend time in social environments in which gender is emphasised daily and this affects their gender attitudes and stereotypes (Shutts et al., 2017). In primary school, heterosexual identity is regarded as the dominant gender identity (Blaise, 2005; Paechter, 2007; and Skelton, 2001). Primary schools are not only places at which children learn subjects, but they are where they construct their sexual identities. Heterosexual discourses regard hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity as dominant, therefore, gendered practices are maintained and primary schools are thus regarded as heavily gendered institutions.

The gender order is patriarchal. Therefore, masculinity is highly regarded as being powerful and is placed above femininity, hence masculinity is (authoritative) and femininity is (fragile) (MacNaughton, 1998). Emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity are impacted by

heterosexual discourses that define normal gendered stereotypes and beliefs for men and women, including society's assumptions of females and males being in love and sexually attracted to the opposite sex (Blaise, 2005). Children regard a heterosexual relationship as 'normal' or 'natural', as heterosexual norms are reinforced and accepted as social constructions that should be maintained (Blaise, 2009).

One study opines: "Schooling, one of the most important socialisers in society, is used to describe the character and climate of school inclusive of the curricular, social and emotional experience" (Francis, 2017, p. 360). Primary schools are sites where same-sex sexuality is interrogated and policed. In these classrooms, sexuality is a forbidden subject and LGBTQI sexuality is regarded as oppressive (Hemingway, 2008). In primary schools, children practise many common gender discourses and regard these as compulsory. All of them fall within the heterosexual matrix. In addition, primary school teachers construct heterosexual gendered behaviour in classrooms in many different ways. As a result, children manufacture these identities daily, during play (Gansen, 2018). Most play occurring both within and outside the classroom is heteronormative. Therefore, playgrounds are regarded as spaces in which children share, hide or exhibit their sexuality (Renold, 2005). Further, places such as halls, classrooms, corridors and toilets are recognised as sexual performance sites, where sexuality takes place either explicitly or covertly (Renold, 2005). Heterosexual play is monitored by both peers and teachers.

Young children's play is always heterosexual, as children are socialised into the heterosexual matrix (Paechter, 2017). In schools, there is the perception that all girls want boyfriends and these assumptions are regarded as limiting to children who are exploring their sexuality. "Understanding gender and children's attachment to stereotypical gendered differences makes it possible to determine how heterosexual discourses operate in the classroom and how they enforce heteronormative behaviours" (Blaise, 2009, p. 457). When primary school learners do not adhere to heterosexual norms, their behaviour falls into question and is not tolerated by their peers. If a girl likes the colour blue, she is questioned by other children, as it is regarded as a boy's colour. Children are capable of reinforcing normative-gendered practices and thus limiting the behaviour of other learners. In the foundation phase classroom heteronormativity is prevalent and these practices restrict boys and girls from exploring sexual orientation and sexual identity (Blaise, 2009). Educators are mandated to create new instruction strategies because foundation phase classrooms are dominated by normative

heterosexual practices. Therefore, queer theory informs the current education debate over the soundness of using sexuality to understand human emotions, behaviour and sexual desire (Paechter, 2017). Having outlined how heterosexuality is constructed as the norm within primary schooling, I now go on to examine how innocence and traditional gendered practices are sustained in primary schools.

2.2.2   Innocence and customary gender practices in primary schools

Various heterosexual activities take place in foundation phase classrooms, such as kissing, writing love letters, general plays and "catches" (Bhana, 2013). In most instances, traditional play activities are gendered and sexualised. One study determined that "childhood innocence has been enshrined within traditional theories of human development, which have also constituted understandings of sexuality" (Robinson & Davies, 2014, p. 253). Sexual innocence is regarded as normal in children.

Even though children may undertake activities that promote the heterosexual matrix, they are still regarded as being innocent. The scholar Renold (2007) states that children's sexuality is discussed within the context of exploitation and abuse, because children are viewed as asexual and, therefore, sexual issues are only for adults. In primary school, sex education is not associated with children because they are viewed as innocent and any talk of sexuality is for adults. A study by Bhana (2007) states that children are viewed as being too young to discuss issues that relate to their own sexuality. Bhana (2007) adds that adults silence children if issues of sexuality are broached.

As primary school classrooms are viewed as places that protect childhood, any discussion about issues of sexuality within them is considered an invasion of these places for children (Allan et al., 2008). Additionally, same-sex sexualities are not discussed in the formal curriculum and are regarded as illegal and associated with homophobia (Allan et al., 2008). This makes it extremely difficult for primary school teachers to address the issues of same-sex relations. However, they have the potential to change traditional gender norms that prevail in childhood classrooms. Foundation phase is associated with sexual innocence and a time when children are ignorant about sexual matters, which occur later in their lives. The scholar Renold (2005, p. 17) notes that "childhood is perceived as a space where children are untroubled and untouched by the cares of the (adult) sexual world to come". The South African poststructuralist feminist academic Bhana (2007), however, notes that in the foundation phase years of schooling, sexual rights and the independence of children remains

unexamined and complex, and the sexual innocence of children is a major concern. Children are believed to have a sexual identity yet are not regarded as sexual beings because they are still young. In addition, Blaise (2009) states that children are viewed as asexual and this ideal viewpoint sustains the belief that children's sexuality develops at a later stage in life.

Preschool teachers, because they are involved in early childhood education, are required to put a stop to customarily differentiated gender roles through fluid teaching techniques, but this rarely occurs (Warin, 2015). The foundation phase classroom can be deconstructed as a site where common gender stereotypes are taught through the use of changeable teaching methods. A study by Warin (2015) states that if teachers want to discard customary and inflexible gender roles, they must provide alternative teaching methods, through resources and learning experiences, to help learners adopt new behaviour.

Additionally, Blaise (2009) indicates that if foundation phase educators can propel the margins of their conceptual and experimental understanding, this can help to interrupt stereotypical gendered practices in the early classroom. Queer theory's main project is exploring the contesting of the categorisation of gender and sexuality; identities are not fixed –they cannot be labelled and categorised –because identities consist of many varied components (Piantato, 2016). Having outlined how primary schools serve as places where innocence and customary practices are regarded as normal, in the next section I highlight how teachers and peers in schools maintain and police dominant gender practices.

2.2.3 Teachers and peers police gender discourses in school

The scholars Graham et al. (2017) state that, according to research, learners utilise the dominant gender discourses learned at school as they interact with their peers. In addition, the manner in which children express their gender at school is highly influenced by peer pressure (Graham et al., 2017). Those who do not conform to the dominant gender practices are harassed and discriminated by other learners. Sex roles become more stereotyped as children grow up and actively maintain gender stereotypes (MacNaughton, 2006). Monitoring these begins in the early childhood classroom, where children also learn to maintain such roles.

Hartman (2018) states that children who express their gender in a non-normative way are policed by their peers. Their peers may judge them and make certain recommendations. A boy at primary school who prefers to spend time with girls and enjoys taking part in feminine activities, such as skipping and talking with girls, is judged by his peers for following non-

normative gender practices and may become marginalised for behaving differently. Heterosexual norms dominate primary schools and learners who do not follow these are discriminated against and rejected by their peers. Therefore, homosexuality is not tolerated in schools. Teachers and peers police learners' behaviour according to customary gender norms. Most research has demonstrated that, in primary schools, the policing of sex and gender begins early and is conducted among very young boys and girls (DePalma, 2013).

Graham et al. (2017) note that within the school environment, gender discourses are attached to school practices that produce certain interpretations about the suitable gendered ways. If a learner does not demonstrate "appropriate" behaviour according to an assigned gender role, she or he is harassed, bullied and is a target of hate crimes. In school, gender discourses are monitored, both inside and outside the classroom. In a study, Graham et al. (2017) note that, in school, gender is highly influenced by peer pressure and children's expression of their gender is monitored on a daily basis. Additionally, MacNaughton (2006) indicates that children in the early classroom view gender boundaries as crossing the line or acting against the rules if they do not "abide" by them. Further, Graham et al. (2017) state that learners employ these gender discourses in order to exercise their social authority and therefore harass or punish peers who do not conform to these norms.

In school, boys use labels such as 'gay' or 'fag' to police each other's gender (Graham et al., 2017). In school, when someone is called gay by their peers, that person is regarded as 'abnormal', 'gender incorrect' or stupid, and a male child who does not demonstrate the traits of ruling masculinity is discriminated against. Validation of the dominant gender discourses of masculinity in schools involves boys subordinating other boys who are viewed as being different from them (Graham et al., 2017). The promotion of masculine and feminine heterosexuality in schools creates the seclusion and discrimination of minority sexualities. Diverse sexuality and gender roles are viewed as taboo. Learners who portray 'inappropriate sexuality' are often victims of hate crimes and are discriminated by their peers, because of their sexuality.

Sexuality is policed in schools as a disciplinary exercise that sees other types of sexualities as 'unfavourable'. One study states: "The disciplinary practice of using gay or fag to police gender maintains the privileged status of masculine heterosexuality as well as maintaining 'undesirability' of diverse sexuality and gender" (Graham et al., 2017, p. 6). When learners exercise gender harassment at school, teachers do not intervene, as schools do not have

gender policies that protect homosexual learners. In most schools, gender harassment is normalised. In instances of such harassment, teachers are unwilling to intervene (Graham et al., 2017). Therefore, cases of gender bullying and harassment are problematic and not given special attention, as other cases may be, as they fall outside the customary masculinity and femininity traits.

In most schools, the dress codes and uniforms for boys and girls are not the same and certain items are expected to be worn by the different sexes. Different dress code rulings send out different messages to boys and girls about the suitable ways in which to present themselves in their communities (Graham et al., 2017). This is sustained by teachers and peers, as the dress code is regarded as a school practice. However, this also creates division between boys and girls, and learners who do not adhere to these school practices are punished or harassed. School uniforms control how boys should dress to portray "suitable masculinity" and girls must also dress to showcase "suitable femininity".

In schools, certain bodies are constructed as appropriate and some as inappropriate because of dress codes and uniforms (Graham et al., 2017). Schools are sites where social constructs are created as a form of disciplinary action, however these gendered binaries create inequality between boys and girls. Poststructural theory sees sexuality as relations and describes identity outside of normative moulds, in education it opens the possibilities for analysis without delimiting the choices (Chapman, 2016). Having outlined how school teachers and children police gender discourses at school, in the next section I further explore gender and primary schooling by examining how gender play governs children in the foundation phase classroom.

2.2.4   Gender play in foundation phase classroom

Children prefer different gender plays and this begins at an early age. According to Adriany (2018), performing gender is a daily activity that children engage in. From a tender age they know the difference between masculinity and femininity. According to Oncu and Unleur (2012), from as early as two years old, children can differentiate between males and females, and gender discourses and heterosexual norms. They also choose gender play that is "normal" for their gender, for example, a female child will choose to play with dolls and boys with cars or helicopters. Children easily learn the sex roles that are expected from them because of the heterosexual norms that constantly surround them. This simply demonstrates that in foundation phase classrooms, heteronormativity can surface in many ways. A study by

Adriany (2018) reveals that when boys and girls play with different toys from an early age, this is presupposed and recognised as legitimate and biological. Children learn from an early age how to be a boy or a girl (Witt, 1997).

Additionally, Mackenzie and Talbott (2018) assert that immediately after children begin coming into an understanding of themselves, boys and girls begin to negotiate notions about gender in their lives. This occurs in their early childhood years, when they begin to experience gender possibilities and social regulations (Mackenzie & Talbott, 2018). Before they start school, children have become socialised and have therefore already internalised the stereotypical gender roles associated with boys and girls.

However, boys and girls who do not comply with normalised gender stereotypes are regarded as 'other' and are discriminated against because they are seen to be different (Adriany, 2018). Most of these gendered practices are exercised at home, either covertly or overtly. Research by Witt (1997) points out that boys and girls encounter the procedure of gender socialisation through activities, suggestions, encouragements, discouragements, explicit and covert behaviour, and diverse forms of teaching. All boys and girls undergo these stereotyped heterosexual practices while they are growing up at home. However, as they start going to school, more gender socialisation roles are reinforced by peers and teachers (Witt, 1997). Children are also able to construct and reconstruct their gender from an early age.

MacNaughton states that "gender studies across cultures suggest that, by three or four years of age, children know their gender, as well as the play preferences, behaviours and expectations that adults favour for this gender" (2006, p. 17). Further, Fouts et al. (2013) state that children, after the infancy stage, demonstrate preferences towards children of the same gender or play partners, and this occurrence is defined as the emergence of gender or gender discrimination. The social construction of gender play from childhood has a huge impact on how children play, behave and perceive gender stereotypes. Play is crucial in schools, as it builds social and academic skills, and can also assist children in attaining knowledge about the world (Lynch, 2015; and Cherney & Dempsey, 2010). It is for this reason that the early childhood years are both extremely important and fragile, in that children acknowledge and recognise gender roles (Chapman, 2016). From primary school, they learn to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate gender related behaviour for boys and girls (Cherney & Dempsey, 2010). Further, play in schools is not just a powerful place to manufacture

gender, but it also promotes the functioning of heteronormative discourses (Osgood & Robinson, 2017).

As boys and girls are intrigued by their parents, educators and peers, they also start to expand knowledge about gender stereotypes and gender responsibilities (Cherney & Dempsey, 2010). According to MacNaughton (2000), children, from birth, are treated as gendered individuals by their parents. The latter also have strong gender perceptions for their children's gender before they are born. Children start choosing their toys as early as their toddler years. There may be many reasons for this, including overtly labelling toys as feminine or masculine, colour preferences or shapes (Weisgram et al., 2014). In addition, socialising agents such as parents, other family members, the children's peers and commercial outlets play a great role in advertising gender-specific toys (Weisgram et al., 2014; and Oncu & Unleur, 2012).

In foundation phase, children can create their own traditional gendered discourse that promotes heterosexual traits. From an early age, children have their own agency and create their own messages about gender and sexuality. In addition, they can recreate their own meaning of gender and sexuality with each other because, in the early classroom, gender and play is always encouraged (Blaise, 2009). Through talks and play, children learn how to be either a male child or female child and these influences reinforce normative gendered stereotypes. Normalisation of gendered practices promotes the construction of gender power and children actively take part in these practices. According to Bhana: "Young children actively produce sexuality, express their desires and do so by investing in 'boyfriend and girlfriend' cultures involving sexual practices that include love letters, kissing and games" (2013, p. 57).

This clearly demonstrates that socialisation in foundation phase plays a pivotal role, whether it is achieved either explicitly or covertly. Heteronormative play narratives that occur in primary schools – such as mock weddings, boyfriends and girlfriends, kissing and chasing, and mothers and fathers – are regarded as normal and part of growing up (Osgood & Robinson, 2017). Gender play from childhood allows children to be able to select toys that are 'appropriate' for their gender. Gender plays also allow boys and girls to be mindful and aware of which toys are meant for either sex. Overt labelling of toys and colour are the primary features that make children fully aware of the toys associated with their gender (Weisgram et al., 2014). Further, in the early years, gender roles become more significant, in

that children will avoid playing with toys intended for the opposite sex, even if they like them (Cherney & Dempsey, 2010). Also, Oncu and Unleur (2012) determined that in the early childhood years, girls play quietly with other girls, while boys play rough-and-tumble games with other boys; however, both sexes do sometimes play together.

Gendered toys and toy colour are always significant to children because of the stereotypes associated with toys. The media is also an interacting instrument when it comes to gendered toys for children. Media for children, like cartoons, electronic and print media, also communicate which gendered toys and toy colours children must choose (Spinner et al., 2018). Additionally, "media represents a powerful socialising agent of gender-roles norms because they communicate our cultural definitions of gender normativity in myriad formats and settings" (Spinner et al., 2018, p. 316). In addition, MacNaughton (1998) notes that children could develop sexist attitudes by being exposed to television shows and stories. When they play gendered games, they also absorb gendered messages that reinforce customary gendered-role stereotypes.

"Research into children's play outlines what is considered to be stereotyped play differences of boys and girls, or gendered play" (Chapman, 2016, p. 1273). In addition, Lynch (2015) notes that research on gender roles in primary school classrooms has revealed that customary stereotypes are maintained. Another study by MacNaughton (1998) has determined that, in children, gender order is reinforced and challenged by adults, and that children always see themselves through adult eyes. Primary school classrooms are highly gendered and practices favour stereotyped gendered play. However, teachers can influence gender play in the classroom so that children can understand gender roles (Chapman, 2016).

Learning gender is an ongoing process and children actively engage with gendered messages around them every day. Teachers in the foundation phase classroom need to help children to interpret and challenge these gendered messages that they have learned, in terms of how to be a boy or girl. Teachers, therefore, have to ensure that in foundation phase classrooms, boys and girls are given equal opportunities to explore toys that are intended for different genders. "Often, early childhood teachers and parents view children's pretend play as 'simply play', failing to recognise how gender is created and re-created in these storylines" (Blaise, 2005, p. 77). Gendered play does not only polarise boys and girls, but creates inequity between them.

Girls' gender discourse is about beauty and make-up, while boys' concerns construction and power. All these gendered identities that take place in the classroom create an opportunity for the heterosexual matrix (Blaise, 2005). To ensure that children play in an environment that creates gender equality in the early classroom, teachers should be actively involved in the everyday gendering routines of the male child and the female child (MacNaughton, 1998). In the foundation phase classroom, teachers are responsible for instilling teaching discourses that will not create gender inequality, by giving boys and girls equal opportunities to express themselves and negotiate other forms of sexuality. The scholars Blaise and Taylor (2012) state that when teachers witness gender play in the early classroom, they view it as a normal utterance of distinction between the male child and the female child, or assume that children are imitating gender practices that they have seen in the media, at home and/or from books. Teachers, however, have a responsibility to question these gendered expressions and challenge them, in order to create a learning space that will favour all sexualities.

MacNaughton (2006) states that it is crucial to remove sex-gendered stereotypical stories, plays and poems, as this could assist in bringing about gender equality in education. Sex-gendered behaviours in the classroom are perpetuated by gender plays that always instil traditional gender stereotypes in boys and girls. Further, Graham et al. (2017) note that traditional gendered practices can be disrupted in schools, provided that changes are made to curricula and teaching. Educators can alter dominant gender discourses through their teaching and by challenging present gender discourses that sustain heterosexuality as the only sexuality allowed in schools. The challenging of dominant gender discourses in the early classroom can help learners to become aware that heterosexism is not the only form of sexuality and that gender equality can be created among male child and female child.

In a study conducted by Mayeza (2017) in South Africa, in which the playground functioned as a gendered place, children monitored each other's behaviours through marginalisation, bullying, violence and exclusion. Mayeza noted: "Positions of domination and subordination play themselves out in ways that further perpetuate gender inequalities where girls are policed and prevented from participating in soccer on the playground" (Mayeza, 2017, p. 477). School playgrounds, his study determined, are mostly kept for boys while girls sit on the far side, fulfilling a spectator role. Girls are excluded from utilising the playground and playing soccer because the site is associated with boys. At the township school where Mayeza (2017) conducted the research during lunch times, the playground was normally

utilised for football sports, but these excluded female children and other male children who were seen as being less masculine.

In addition, in a study conducted by MacNaughton (1998), in an early childhood centre, she discovered that the construction material area was dominated by boys and girls ruled in the home corner and less physically active play areas. Poststructural theory benefits emphasis inclusivity in classroom operations and encourages learners and teachers to focus on inclusive and diverse cultures (Osgood & Robinson, 2017). Having outlined how gender play in the early classroom governs boys and girls, the next section examines queer theory in relation to primary school education.

2.3   Examining queer theory in relation to primary school education

According to Blaise and Taylor "queer theory is called queer because it questions the assumption that expressions about gender are 'normal' or 'natural'" (2012, p. 88). Queer theory does not believe that there is only one way to express one's gender and sexuality and that gender identity changes over time. According to research: "Queer theory is the growing and contested postmodernist body of knowledge which positions forms of identification as fluid and multiple" (Msibi, 2013, p. 67). Many theorists use 'queer' to refer to LGBTQI individuals and queer theory challenges gender categories. The scholars Blaise and Taylor (2012) determined that most people think that queer theory is for gays and lesbians. However, queer theory represents many different sexual identities. According to a study: "Queer theory teaches that all identities are performances and these performances are interrelated and complicit in many ways, queer and non-queer, however damaging effects are still felt by many in the queer community" (Morris, 2000, p. 27).

Callis (2009) indicates that queer theory is deeply rooted in the social constructionist and feminist theoretical movements of the 1980s and 1990s. According to Piantato (2016) and Callis (2009), "queer" was once used as an informal term for same-sex sexualities and to direct homophobic insults towards same-sex identities. However, Piantato (2016) also asserts that the word lately has lost its negative insinuation as it relates to same-sex attraction and to people whose sexuality and bodies are non-heterosexual. Although the word queer has had negative connotations associated with it, it groups all types of sexualities and does not regard them as different. Blaise (2009) states that queer theory divulges how heterosexual practices have been normalised, and thus have become instruments of power, positioning heterosexual

relations as the most valued and acceptable form of sexuality. Heterosexuality has been accorded authority over other sexualities, hence it is viewed as normative sexuality and everyone is expected to be a heterosexual. Normative practices, as powered by heterosexuality and all its social constructs, rule foundation phase classrooms. The manner in which schools normalise heterosexuality makes homosexuality questionable and thus an unacceptable form of sexuality (Hartman, 2018).

Hartman (2018) also determined that: Queer theory is helpful in understanding how norms surrounding gender and sexuality are manufactured, normalised and unending, and how they can be challenged and unruly. Queer theory is associated with how gender identities and gender can be questioned and interrupted. Further, "queer theory is exciting and useful because it helps to expose this binary and unravel dominant and marginalising understandings of gender and sexuality, revealing a multitude of possibilities for the expression of one's gender and sexual identity" (Hartman, 2018, p. 82). It further assists in the discovery of other discriminated understandings of sexuality and gender identity, which thus leads to an understanding of the many ways that gender and sexuality can be expressed, and that heterosexuality is not the only way or 'innate' form of sexual identity.

Queer theory does not identify with a set sexual identity, but is an umbrella term that does not marginalise any sexual identity. It dismisses stereotypes and negativity created by the norms that govern sexuality and gender (Piantato, 2016; and Morris, 2000). Further, Morris (2000) indicates that gender is socially constructed, therefore queer theorists emphasise that there is no core gender, as gender performances are changing and unpredictable. Therefore, the term queer is fluid. It offers reassurance from traditional sexual identities and continues to deconstruct the confining of identities (Morris, 2000).

However, Gieseking (2008) opines that queer is an umbrella term employed to describe individuals with minority sexualities and those who identify as LGBTQI. Another study also highlights that queer theory defeats the binarism between men and women categories and consequently between male and female biological sex and hetero/homosexuality and the automatic link between these notions" (Piantato, 2016). Queer theory seeks to deconstruct the ruling norms and stereotypes of how sexual identities should behave. In addition, the deconstruction of normalised homosexuality and heterosexuality will assist in developing a better understanding of sexual identities. The scholar Callis (2009) notes that queer theory maintains that normalised heterosexual and homosexuality should be deconstructed. A study

by Blaise and Taylor (2012) states that queer theory asserts that gender and sexuality go together. You cannot think about gender as separate from sexuality; they are linked. Therefore, queer theory is devoted to evaluating and fixing old ways of theorising about gender and sexuality (Gieseking, 2008).

Queer theory argues that sexual identity is fluid, desires are dynamic and unstable, and that sexuality is unavoidably entwined and ruled by constitutive power relations (Gamson & Moon, 2004). Additionally, queer theory with its acceptance of fluidity and goal of binary deconstruction, was seen as a more inclusive and radical option (Callis, 2009). Since its inception, queer theory has been criticised by many scholars. Callis (2009) notes, however, that it is favoured in certain academic circles, while other scholars criticise queer theorists for being silent about bisexuality.

In addition, "queer theorists believe that heterosexuality is compulsory for deviations from the conventional or 'normal' ways of being a boy or a girl" (Blaise, 2005, p. 22). In schools, heterosexual behaviour is viewed as conventional. Boys and girls are anticipated to demonstrate heterosexual manners and heterosexuality is sustained by teachers. Further, Blaise and Taylor (2012) state that heterosexual norms have an enormous influence on children's gender, not biological instincts or socialisation, in accordance with queer theory.

School is also a site where heterosexuality operates and children make meaning of heterosexual discourses in order to monitor social gender in the classroom. Queer theory believes that children easily conform to commonly repeated gendered stereotypical behaviour and they are compelled to undertake this daily (Blaise & Taylor, 2012). This may include forming lines of the same gender, sports, clothes, behaviour and colours. All of these gendered practices are common in the early classroom and instil heterosexual norms. Children who do not conform to these gendered stereotypes are policed by their teachers and peers. In the childhood classroom setting, gendered norms are recognised when societal practices are reinforced, and children are taught the normal or correct way to be in a relationship (Blaise, 2009). Morris (2000) states that it is vital for teachers to teach learners about the complications of identities, therefore, queer theory is relevant to education. This might help people to understand and create an awareness of those who have previously been documented in harmful and vicious ways.

In foundation phase education, queer theory views boys' and girls' conduct as both sexual and gendered (Blaise & Taylor, 2012). This is challenging, because children are seen as asexual beings who are not old enough to think or talk about sexuality. Despite this, heterosexual identity is commonly used in the foundation phase classroom by teachers and peers. The study by Blaise and Taylor (2012) indicates that in primary school contexts, heterosexual discourse is everywhere and children engage with gendered ideas that are always heterosexual. Exposure to heterosexual gendered norms in foundation phase classrooms creates power dynamics that produce forms of exclusion and inclusion. However, queer theory in primary school research suggests that teachers must not think that children's behaviours are only gendered, as they are sexual too (Blaise & Taylor, 2012). Heterosexual discourses are normal in the early classroom and heterosexual stereotypes are performed by learners every day.

Queer theory has also re-explored religion as a source of sexual-moral discourse (Gamson & Moon, 2004). Queer theory investigates how religious organisations, which have a great proportion of heterosexual members, view queerness as opposing righteousness and is therefore a sin. Heterosexuals therefore find it difficult to love other sexualities because they regard them as being against the nature of God. This forces sexual minorities to suppress their feelings because they want to be welcomed by heterosexuals.

Phobia against queers is everywhere. Homosexuals are subject to much discrimination and hate crimes, and have no protection (Morris, 2000). Queer individuals suffer from marginalisation, discrimination, humiliation, abuse and shame when they admit to a queer identity. This is because heterosexual norms are regarded as "natural", while other forms of sexuality are rejected and side-lined. Further, Morris (2000) states that anyone who feels marginalised by conventional perceptions of sexuality is referred to as queer. According to queer theorists, gender is socially constructed and they insist there is no such thing as a core gender (Morris, 2000). Gender is thus perceived as being characterised by constant change. Having outlined how queer theory works in connection to foundation phase education, in the following section I highlight the construction of children's gendered identities, employing a poststructuralist feminist theory.

2.4 Constructing children's gendered identities using a poststructuralist feminist theory

Osgood & Robinson state that "we know that young children from very early ages begin to explore gendered and sexual identities from the narratives or cultural stories they are told by their families, educators, peers and the media about what it means to be a girl or a boy" (2017, p. 5). Further, MacNaughton (2006) states that feminist poststructuralism theory believes that children not only learn sex-gendered roles from their parents, teachers and peers, but they are also fervently involved in the manufacture of their own gender. Children are aware of gender binaries from foundation phase, due to socialisation through society and the media. Researchers and feminist theorists have insisted that the psychological and behavioural traits that are linked with being female or male are not 'innate', but the consequence of socialisation, which children learn from the actions and stories that they encounter daily, about what it entails to be a girl and a boy (Osgood & Robinson, 2017). Thus, gendered sex roles are learned by children at an early age. According to research: "In feminist poststructural accounts of gender, man, woman, boy and girl are unstable and contested social categories whose meanings and representations are open to change across and within different cultures over time" (Osgood & Robinson, 2017, p. 12).

Feminist poststructuralist theory regards gender as a discourse that is fluid and changes with the times. Feminist researchers have stated that there are many ways in which manliness and womanliness are accomplished within and across cultures, to challenge universal gender sex roles (Osgood & Robinson, 2017). According to MacNaughton (1998), poststructuralist feminist theory highlights the need to assess how we can assist children in manufacturing different conceptions of what it entails to be a girl or a boy. Therefore, poststructuralist feminist theory does not limit children to heterosexism, but allows them to explore other sexualities.

According to Blaise: "Feminist poststructuralism and queer theory are post-developmental perspectives that take a critical stance toward taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, including sex, gender and sexuality" (2009, p. 452). However, in the early classroom, gender is not the only aspect that children learn about; they also learn from their peers, teachers and foundation phase daily practices while constructing their social worlds. Feminist poststructuralism regards teachers as active observers in children's early education, as this

theory focuses on change. Teachers must therefore question and challenge present normative gendered practices in the classroom (Blaise, 2005).

Blaise and Taylor (2012) note that feminist poststructuralist theorists never presume that girls and boys virtuously play out gender responsibilities. Children are gendered individuals who can identify different gendered roles for boys and girls. Feminist poststructuralist theorists also believe that boys and girls can construct and reconstruct their gender, and multiple meanings are carried through their construction (Adriany, 2018). This simply means that children understand gender from childhood and this is why they participate in gender practices and even create and recreate new meanings for gender.

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how heterosexuality in primary schooling is viewed as normalised by teachers, policies and learners, even though there are other sexual identities. It also explores how innocence and customary gender practices are prevalent in primary schools. Renold (2005) states that in the early childhood stage, sexual innocence is expected and boys and girls are viewed as being unconcerned and unblemished by sexual issues, which are the concern of adults. Further, I have outlined how teachers and peers perform within gender discourses in schools and how gender play dominates foundation phase classrooms. Lastly, in this chapter, I discussed queer theory and feminist poststructuralist theory.

Queer theory complicates heterosexuality because of its dominant role in society (Barozzi & Ojeda, 2016). This theory is important in the foundation phase education as it assists learners in finding out about different sexual identities, creates equality and interrogates power relations in society. In addition, poststructuralist feminist theory has created an appreciation for the multiple and contradictory experiences of early childhood, and enabled important interrogations of what kind of ideas about gender (and sexuality) are articulated within preschool policy and practice (Lyttleton-Smith, 2017). Queer theory and poststructuralist feminist theory were especially useful to my study, as I consistently referred to them while exploring and analysing how children in primary schools make meaning of same-sex sexualities. In the next chapter I review literature on how children make meaning of same-sex sexualities from various local and global contexts.

CHAPTER THREE:
LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1   Introduction

Children are regarded as virtuous and sexuality is considered taboo, hence schools find it difficult to teach sexuality and same-sex sexualities. "Within the hegemonic discourses, 'innocence' is a deeply entrenched value inherent in the child" (Robinson & Davies, 2008, p. 344). It is assumed that from the formation age, learners can recognise the gender binaries to which they belong (Wingrave, 2018). This is one of the reasons that from childhood, children can construct and regulate each other's gender. This study focuses on how children make meaning of sexual orientation and gender identity.

In doing so I pay specific attention to how primary school children make meaning of same-sex sexualities in South Africa, as this is a nascent and under-researched area of study in this country. In this chapter I outline a summary of the important publication in relation to how children make meaning of same-sex sexualities at primary school. I begin by analysing publications arising within an international context. I then outline literature stemming from a sub-Saharan African context. Lastly, I provide a detailed account of literature in relation to children's meaning of same-sex sexualities in a South African context.

3.2.   International literature

3.2.1   An international perspective: constructing same-sex sexualities in schools
In order to provide the reader with background knowledge into how children make meaning of same-sex sexualities in schools on an international front, I begin by providing an outline of existing international policies and laws on homosexuality. Next, I outline international literature on homosexuality in relation to intolerance and homophobia. I then provide insight into the conflict which exists between religion and homosexuality in various international contexts. Finally, I present findings from specific international contexts on how children construct same-sex sexualities at school.

3.2.2   Policies, laws and homosexuality
Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) protects and gives equal rights to all citizens in European countries, LGBTQI communities are still not allowed to access the full set of human rights (Marks, 2006). "The European Union has mandated decriminalisation of homosexuality as a requirement for membership. The Russian Federation enacted highly

discriminatory legislation against homosexuality in 2013" (Beyrer, 2014, p. 1). Globally, some countries still view same-sex sexualities with prejudice and discriminate against LGBTQI despite policies and laws that give equal rights to every citizen regardless of their sexual orientation (Beyrer, 2014). Same-sex sexualities' individual rights are violated in various countries, hence those affected are discriminated against, abused and receive poor health services and some may lose their lives (Marks, 2006). However, in the United States the year 2013 was a turning point for same-sex sexualities as they gained full citizenship rights, for example marriage equality, parenting and health care (Beyrer, 2014).

Policies prohibit discrimination against LGBTQI people, however they are still at risk of being victims of abuse within families, communities, schools and religious institutions. Homosexuals are subjected to torture, state-sponsored death and abuse in many societies (Marks, 2006). For many decades in Europe the topic of homosexuality has been a source of heated debate leading to mass pro- and anti-homosexuality demonstrations and international and interpersonal conflicts (Van der Akker et al., 2013). President Barack Obama stated that in the United States homosexual marriage must not be viewed as unnatural, and celebrities and sportsmen could publicly demonstrate homosexuality (Jackle & Wenzelburger, 2015).

Socialising agents like families, places of worship, communities and schools are responsible for installing traditional gender stereotypes that promote heterosexuality (Van der Akker et al., 2013). In other countries there are, however, laws which prohibit same-sex sexualities and any activities associated with homosexuality. The criminalisation of homosexual activity "is common in various Muslim countries, both civil law and *shari'a* (the rules governing the practice in Islam) allow this to occur" (Marks, 2006, p. 19). Intolerance of homosexuality in many European countries is common even though policies and laws proscribe such practices. Berg et al. (2013) note that LGBTQI people suffer from social prejudice even from countries that have very liberal legislations.

Stigmatisation of homosexuality in certain European countries makes it impossible for same-sex sexuality people to access health and other services. "Social marginalisation at the societal structure of rule-systems and communities' expressed values were precursors to internalised homonegativity among European men who have sex with other men (MSM), but also marginalisation in terms of lack of sexual health promotion measures for MSM in their local environments" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 66). Although homonegativity is decreasing in some Western countries, in other countries it is still the same. In countries like Turkey or

China homonegativity is continuous and people are still against homosexual neighbours (Jackle & Wenzelburger, 2014). Although there are European states which censure homosexuality, there are also states which have made progress in accepting same-sex sexualities. "While several European countries and an increasing number of states in the United States have extended legal recognition and rights to same-sex couples, the socio-political initiative for LGBTQI equality has also taken on global dimensions" (Ogland & Verona, 2014). Some South American countries like Uruguay, Argentina and Colombia have already accepted same-sex marriages and rights of homosexuals, while other states are also negotiating their stance on homosexuality (Ogland & Verona, 2014).

3.2.3 Homosexuality, homophobia and intolerance

According to Mayfield "homonegativity is preferable to homophobia because it is a more inclusive term that describes all possible negative attitudes towards homosexuality and gay men and lesbians" (2001, p. 54). In Europe homonegativity is an issue, it affects the entire continent. Doebler (2015) indicates that half of the population express negative attitudes towards gay and lesbian people in many countries. Intolerance of sexual minorities is a global phenomenon, but varies according to different cultures and states. Haney (2016) reveals that attitudes towards homosexuals differ among different cultures. Homophobic insults are common among leaders of states in different countries, even though legislation recognises all sexualities. In the United States, Malaysia, Zimbabwe and other parts of the world — even though they are from different continents — political leaders use homophobia as a deep-rooted weapon to combat homosexuality in these countries (Reynolds, 2013). All over the world homosexuals have been stigmatised, harassed and tormented because of their sexuality.

Intolerance of homosexuals is widespread in Europe and in some states people are victims of criminalisation because of homosexual practices. In comparison to men, women are found to be more open-minded towards homosexual people. "Men are thought to hold more negative attitudes towards gay men than towards lesbians, whilst women are expected to rate gay men and lesbians similarly" (Roggermans et al., 2011, p. 257). Condemnation of homosexuality by European migrants is common due to religiosity and socialisation. Van der Bracht and Van de Putte (2014) indicate that disapproval of homosexuality is common among Muslim migrants and non-European citizens. Many countries in Europe have legitimised same-sex marriages (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Spain and Sweden) while others are in the process of legitimising same-sex marriages. There are however, some countries (Saudi

Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq) which still maintain and enforce punishment of same-sex relations that sometimes lead to criminalisation and the death penalty for homosexuals (Van der Bracht & Van de Putte, 2014). Tolerance and intolerance of homosexuality have huge effects on affected individuals who live in those countries.

Thus, this has a significant impact on an individual's stance on homosexuality if he/she is living in a country that is tolerant towards homosexuality or in a country that is intolerant towards same-sex sexualities (Van der Bracht & Van de Putte, 2014). In South American countries like Brazil, homosexuals are not widely accepted by citizens (Ogland & Verona, 2014). It was also found that white American females have fewer negative attitudes toward homosexuals compared to white American males, African American males and African American females (Schulte & Battle, 2004). Natives of Western countries show positive attitudes towards same-sex sexualities however, immigrants show permissive attitudes (Schulte & Battle, 2004).

Roder (2015) notes that second-generation migrants appear to be supportive of homosexuality compared to first-generation, thus exposure to other values and moralities may alter the generation's perceptions. Not all Islamic countries are against homosexual practices or have homonegativity against homosexuality. For example, in 2014 the Government of Bangladesh decided not to condemn LGBTQI rights, by taking on policies that recognise *hijra* (neither a man nor a woman) as a third gender (Hossain, 2017). This was celebrated by many European countries and policy makers, while non-governmental organisations and foreign donors endorsed this function (Hossain, 2017).

The Netherlands is a country known to be gay- and lesbian-friendly, with the first same-sex marriage taking place in 2001 (Buijs et al., 2011). However, there is significant brutality and prejudice against homosexuals in Amsterdam (Buijs et al., 2011). These incidents alert us to the reality that as much as policies and laws are in place for homosexuals, most countries are heterosexist and citizens don't allow homosexuals to have the same rights as heterosexuals. Globally, many countries find it hard to accept homosexuals, because individuals are born into a heterosexual society. Hence, non-heterosexuals are victims of insults, 'curative' rape, stigmatisation, violence and even death. As much as Amsterdam is a city that accepts same-sex sexualities, research conducted by Buijs et al. (2011) unveiled that youngsters were against male public displays of homosexuality, especially kissing in public and engaging in homosexual practices on the street. Additionally, participants stated that homosexual

practices should not be publicly displayed because they are filthy and children should not be exposed to them (Buijs et al., 2011).

Although the Netherlands is known to be a gay-friendly country in Europe, in research conducted by Buijs et al. (2011) most respondents demonstrated homophobic violence and some boys did not even want to be friends with homosexuals as they did not want to be seduced by gay men. Socialisation that happens at home, in school and places of worship also has a great impact on how heterosexuals view homosexuals in society. Therefore, Roggermans et al. (2015) note that fighting LGBTQI intolerance remains a high priority on the political agenda. Tradition and gender are also related to pessimistic views towards homosexual individuals. "The gender belief system perspective, therefore, holds that heterosexuals dislike lesbians and gay men because they are stereotypically perceived as having cross-gender traits, roles and physical characteristics, that is, heterosexuals' attitudes towards gays are derived from their beliefs about the characteristics that heterosexuals should exhibit" (Roggermans et al., 2015, p. 258).

3.2.4   Religion and homosexuality

Adamczyk and Pitt state that "religion may have a greater effect on attitudes about homosexuality in developed countries like the United States, which are characterised by a high level of self-expression and a diversity of perspectives" (2009, p. 339). In religious countries, non-heterosexuality is an isolating occurrence. In the 1970s abortion was illegal in Europe, however, now things have changed, and homosexual rights are contested not only in society but also in places of worship (Samson et al., 2011). Additionally, "homosexuality has long been subject to a religiously infused debate across Europe" (Doebler, 2015, p. 1). Different church denominations are opposed to homosexuality, therefore the LGBTQI community is stigmatised in Christian churches. Homosexuals are perceived as ungodly individuals, who are demonic. In Europe fundamentalist Catholics think that their Christian religion is under severe threat because of homosexuality (Samson et al., 2011).

In Western and Eastern Europe non-heterosexuals are not accepted even though there have been strides made by Irish, Estonian and Slovenian governments for accepting gay marriage, however Christian political parties and churches are still contesting the acceptance of homosexuality (Doebler, 2015). Homosexuals in Europe face negative attitudes daily. The Islamic religion is morally against homosexual practice and behaviour (Doebler, 2015). Therefore, there seem to be high levels of homonegativity in countries where Islam is the

dominant religion. A study conducted by Doebler (2015) in Europe indicates that moral rejection of homosexuality by people living in highly religious countries is more likely to happen than people living in non-religious countries. This comes as no surprise, as people in non-religious countries are not exposed daily to Christian values compared to people from religious countries who associate homosexuality with sin. There are also traditional believers who are against homosexuality and regard it as taboo. In Europe, traditional believers also do not accept homosexuality and they regard it as sinful (Doebler, 2015).

Homosexuality is negatively viewed by various religions. Therefore, in some countries gays and lesbians are victims of persecution due to their sexual orientation. Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and some other traditional religions regard homosexuality as a sin (Samson et al., 2011). In Poland, Jews and traditional conservatives view homosexuality as a sin (Graff, 2010). Some European migrants condemn homosexuality because of their religious and moral values. Van der Bracht and Van de Putte (2014) state that Muslim migrants have homonegative and conservative attitudes towards homosexuality. Additionally, Van der Bracht and Van de Putte (2014) note that homosexuality disapproval and religiosity develop during socialisation and this happens to many people. In Western countries researchers have noted that Islamic countries have negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Roder (2015) states European countries that have long associations with Islamic religion have negative attitudes towards homosexuality and there are high incidences of gender discrimination.

Muslim homosexuals who live in European state that there are Islams who do not enjoy gay and lesbian rights (Roder, 2015). In Brazil most citizens identify themselves as Catholics followed by Protestants, while others follow spiritist faith traditions (Ogland & Verona, 2014). European natives appear to be tolerant of homosexuality compared to immigrants. Muslims and Eastern Orthodox Christians are less tolerant towards homosexuality (Roder, 2015). Roggermans et al. (2015) note that religions (Islam, Protestantism and Judaism) all have something in common: if the religious commitment is strict, there is more homonegativity towards same-sex sexualities.

3.2.5   New Zealand – same-sex sexualities

Quinlivan notes that "despite my ongoing enthusiasm and interest in exploring the possibilities of queer conceptual frameworks and pedagogies within the contexts of New Zealand high schools for over 15 years now, queer pedagogical interventions within schooling sites appear to be relatively thin on the ground" (2012, p. 513). High schools in

New Zealand are finding it hard to address same-sex sexuality in the classroom. Heteronormative norms in the classroom and in schools seem to be dominating high schools (Quinlivan, 2012). In a study conducted by Quinlivan (2012) in one New Zealand high school, students regarded gender and sexuality to be biological and fixed. Furthermore, discrimination and physical and verbal harassment of learners who were gays and lesbians were common (Roder, 2015). LGBTQI students in high school, thus, hardly disclose their sexuality because of consequences associated with homosexuality (Buijs et al, 2011). Additionally, a teacher who took part in this study by Quinvilan (2012) notes that homophobia and gender-based violence was common in the high school under study.

3.2.6   Norway – same-sex sexualities in schools

In Norway same-sex sexuality first appeared in the curriculum in 1974, when the Norwegian state legalised men to be sexually intimate with other men (Rothing, 2017). Furthermore, since 1974 when homosexuality was legalised, changes were included in the Norwegian schools' curriculum and textbooks (Rothing, 2017). In 1997 a new curriculum was introduced in Norway. This curriculum indicated that same-sex sexuality and heterosexuality should be regarded in the same way (Roggermans et al., 2015). Heck et al. (2016) stated that sexual orientation was addressed in three subjects: religious studies, social studies and science, but sexual education was introduced for Grade 8 to 10.

3.2.7   Pakistan same-sex sexualities in school

Saeed et al. (2018) state that Pakistan is a Muslim society governed by stereotypical gender roles that distinguish between men and women. In Pakistan minority sexual identity individuals are not allowed to perform Muslim religious obligations or to attend Hajj, and they are also exposed to prejudice, hate crime, verbal and bodily harassment (Saeed et al., 2018). Homosexual people are regarded as outcasts in society; they are excluded from community support and legal financial support, and face high levels of violence and some parents have even tried to kill their homosexual children (Saeed et al., 2018). Homosexual people face discrimination in schools, workplaces and their society. Schools are not different from other social contexts and homosexuals in these institutions are discriminated against and face adversity daily (Heck et al., 2016). Heck et al. (2016) indicate that currently there is a dearth of research on same-sex students in Pakistan and they were severely inadequately represented in school-based research.

3.2.8   United States of America - same-sex sexualities in school

Although schools in the USA present a major problem for homosexual students, because they experience high levels of violence and discrimination, schools are also institutions where homosexual students can receive support from teachers and peers (Heck et al., 2016). Data from Massachusetts of Youth Risk Behaviour Surveillance System reported that there was a decline in school bullying and violence exposure to LGBTQI high school students in 1999 to 2013. Despite this decline in bullying in schools, LGBTQI students were still victims of various homophobic attacks and even fatal injuries from other learners (Heck et al., 2016).

Russell states, "in 2008 Lawrence King was murdered in school by a boy he gave a Valentine Day's card to; a year later Carl Walker-Hover was harassed and bullied in school and he eventually committed suicide" (2011, p. 34). Additionally, Russell (2011) ascertains that homosexual identities in school are unsafe and many schools, school districts, states and communities face legal action because they fail to keep these social places safe for LGBTQI students. However, over the years there has been a positive shift in schools in the United States, where inclusive education policies were introduced to cater for all learners regardless of their sexual identities. "A study in California has shown that when students report that their schools have inclusive policies, they feel safer at school and report less anti-LGBTQI harassment, and they report their schools as safer for LGBTQI students" (Russell, 2011, p. 127). Evidence also suggests that students from inclusive education policy schools have reported less hostile learning environments (Russell, 2011).

3.2.9   Ireland – same-sex sexualities at school

According to O'Higgins-Norman (2009) sex and sexuality within Irish society is regarded as traditionally uncomfortable to talk about. In Ireland sexuality issues were not discussed in public (Samson et al., 2011). Discussion of sexuality was condemned since it is traditionally unacceptable. Therefore, "children were to be protected from anything that might arouse in them a premature curiosity about sexual matters and so sex was not talked about in front of them and sex education was put off for as long as possible" (O'Higgins-Norman, 2009, p. 382). Like most countries, children are protected from knowing about sexuality because they are believed to be innocent. Adults were uncomfortable discussing issues of a sexual nature. This resulted in homosexuality being regarded as illegal in Ireland in 1993 (Russell, 2011). Many teachers and children view homosexuality as abnormal and people who are homosexuals as deviants from heterosexuality and considered fixed for all individuals

(O'Higgins-Norman, 2009). O'Higgins-Norman states, "Ireland, like other Western societies, is homophobic in general and [that] the school is a key context in which homophobia is expressed" (2009, p. 383). In research conducted by O'Higgins-Norman (2009) the majority of participants, both teachers and students, viewed heteronormativity as the standard for every individual, and teachers noticed that students created and maintained boundaries for students regarded as gays and lesbians. Most students in schools normalise heteronormative values and individuals deviating from these norms are not acceptable and are subject to victimisation (Doebler, 2015).

3.3 Sub-Saharan Africa perspective – Meanings of same-sex sexualities in schools

In this section I examine literature describing how children make meaning of same-sex sexualities in schools in the sub-Saharan context. Firstly, I outline the discourse surrounding homophobia in sub-Saharan countries. Secondly, I outline how religion has an impact on perceptions of homosexuality in sub-Saharan countries. Thirdly, I provide an outline on the prejudicial attitudes faced by African people who are non-heterosexuals. Lastly, I present findings from different sub-Saharan schools on how children make meaning of same-sex sexualities in schools.

3.3.1 Discourse surrounding homophobia in sub-Saharan Africa

On the African continent homosexual identity and behaviour has been stigmatised and is still stigmatised by discrimination because of tradition and culture. Many scholars have noted that homophobia is very common in Africa. Non-heterosexual people have been labelled as un-African because of their sexual orientation. On the African continent being gay or lesbian, or engaging in same-sex practice is widely resisted (Matolino, 2017). Additionally, Matolino (2017) notes that homosexual lifestyles or same-sex sexualities are regarded inimically on the basis that such sexual behaviour infringes on the beliefs of African society. Over the years Africa has been associated with homophobia and has been regarded as the "most homophobic continent" globally (Van Klinken, 2017). Africa and its political leaders have been against homosexuality and they perceive it as a Western phenomenon.

This has led to the victimisation of LGBTQI people in most African countries. "Different national leaders of African countries have uttered homophobic hate speech over the years" (Nyanzi, 2016, p. 957). Most African leaders condemn homosexuality, hence in some African countries homosexuals endure severe punishment. "In Namibia, Zimbabwe and Somalia, for

instance, homosexuals are subject to extremely repressive legislation and tracked down by state police" (Etoke, 2009, p. 174). Many African leaders have broadcast statements widely that homosexuality is 'un-African'. Several utterances made by heads of state include the following: Former president Chiluba of Zambia and Arap Moi of Kenya, both declared that same-sex sexualities were "un-African" and in conflict with Christianity (Nyanzi, 2016). Furthermore, the president of Gambia threatened to kill homosexuals or threatened them with expulsion from the country within 24 hours (Nyanzi, 2016). Thoreson (2014) states that Ugandan Member of Parliament David Bahati in 2009 initiated an Anti-Homosexuality Bill which stipulated life incarceration for someone who took part in same-sex sexualities practices and even the death penalty for homosexuals. And also, President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2012, disapproved of the decriminalisation of same-sex sexualities because of "tradition" (Nyanzi, 2016).

In African society traditional values are still regarded as very important and should be maintained for future generations. Many leaders of African states have a strong resistance to homosexuality because they always want to protect traditional and cultural norms (Valentine & Ward, 2012). Heteronormative social order has to be preserved, and heterosexual family is regarded as African as it maintains culture and tradition. Therefore, "the dearth of scholarly research on African homosexuality, without doubt, is largely responsible for the well-circulated proposition that same-sex sexualities are 'exotic' and 'un-African'" (Essien & Aderinto, 2009, p. 124). The above statement demonstrates how same-sex sexualities in Africa are regarded as a distant aberration and should not be associated with African people. Modern African leaders criticise homosexuality as opposing African culture on the grounds of race, creation, culture, belief, identity and societal norms (Nyanzi, 2016). Most African countries view homosexuality as taboo and 'peculiar'. Nyanzi (2016) further explained that in Uganda, people have pervasive stereotypes about homosexuality such as evil, insane, immoral and deviant. Additionally, (Nyanzi, 2016, p. 956) indicates that "several ministers, state officials, religious clerics and leaders have publicly issued homophobic speeches".

Homosexuality in Africa is marginalised and designated as 'inhuman' and is regarded as a form of deviant Western sexuality that is invading African countries. Valentine and Ward (2012) further explain that intolerance of homosexuality in Uganda started during the British colonial era and is still present today (Valentine & Ward, 2012). African leaders regard heterosexuality as the only African type of sexuality and same-sex sexuality as taboo because

it does not produce a traditional family structure, good religious values and generational sustainability (Essien & Aderinto, 2009). African political leaders also use same-sex sexuality as a political tool when campaigning for elections and some have even passed anti-homosexuality bills. Tamale (2013) notes that in 1995 former president of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe criticised same-sex sexuality and described it as a Western occurrence, "worse than dogs and pigs". Additionally, Reddy (2002) indicates that Mugabe in a speech, denounced same-sex sexualities, saying homosexuals should not be regarded as part of society. African leaders regard same-sex sexualities as Western imperialism against African traditions, immoral and against Christian teachings, including the political leaders of Kenya, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia (Reddy, 2002). Van Klinken (2017) explained that President Chiluba of Zambia regards homosexuality as the deepest level of depravity and as unbiblical and abnormal. Homosexuality and religion on the African continent have negative implications. "Most religious leaders and political leaders do not recognise same-sex sexualities" (Mbote et al., 2018, p. 630). In Kenya there are two main religions: Anglicanism and Islam, however Christianity is the dominant one. Mbote et al. (2017) state that the Catholic church condemns any same-sex sexualities, (in fact any sexual sexualities, outside the context of union between male and female). In the next section I discuss religion and homosexuality in sub-Saharan Africa in greater detail.

3.3.2   Religion and homosexuality

Religion clearly shapes the politics of human rights and homosexuality in Africa (Van Klinken, 2017). In Africa, religion and beliefs play a crucial role in creating intolerance and harsh judgement on same-sex sexualities. Many researchers are concerned by anti-gay prejudices that are based on US-Christian values but are practised in Africa (Zahn et al., 2016). The governments of Ghana, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya, and several religious and cultural institutions view same-sex sexualities as a Western phenomenon that is infiltrating their countries (Essien & Aderinto, 2009).

"There's enough evidence to argue that religion is a major factor in fuelling homophobia in Africa, and is a key obstacle to moving towards a future in which African LGBTQI people will be accepted in their communities and societies" (Van Klinken, 2017, p. 2). Religion among African people plays a vital role in the lives of political leaders, society and church pastors, who often regard homophobia as un-African, unnatural, un-Christian and unbiblical. Most leaders confirm that Bible teachings are against homosexuality, and why it is regarded

as a sin. Ban Ki-Moon, former United Nations secretary-general, asked for Zambian people to recognise the rights for same-sex sexualities and was labelled an "agent for the devil" (Van Klinken, 2017). In Kenya homosexuality is criminalised and religious leaders know it well, hence decriminalisation of same-sex sexualities would be against their religion (Mbote et al., 2018).

On the African continent, several religious leaders, such as political leaders, have made homophobic utterances during interviews, press releases, speeches and sermons (Nyanzi, 2016). Religious leaders are powerful in the same way as political leaders and dissemination of their utterances reaches and influences many people. "Akin to presidents, the religious clerics' words are powerful because they influence meanings associated with sexual practices and persuade the masses to act in accordance to the circulating hate-speech" (Nyanzi, 2016, p. 957). Powerful words from religious leaders have made African society condemn homosexuality, as places of worship are against it. Many Christian and Islamic denominations in Africa condemn homosexuality and any form of same-sex practices. In Uganda homosexuality is feared because it is regarded as antisocial, as actions of same-sex sexualities seemingly dismiss replication outright by declining to have sex with the opposite sex (Boyd, 2013). "In Kampala the born-again Christian community became actively involved in protesting [against] homosexuality, their interest intensifying in the wake of the 2009 bill which was publicly and vigorously supported by several prominent pastors" (Boyd, 2013, p. 702). People of Uganda embracing the Christian term 'born-again' usually belong to Pentecostal churches and are against same-sex sexualities. Even though this is still a new phenomenon of religion, devotees condemn homosexuality practices and are concerned about moral sexual matters.

"The role of religion is often mentioned in media reports about the controversies surrounding homosexuality in Africa" (Van Klinken, 2013, p. 520). There are many controversial stories associated with homosexuals in Africa: Lesbians are victims of 'corrective' rape inflicted by straight men, and gay men suffer homophobic attacks that sometimes lead to harassment and in some instances, death. Ward (2013) states that homosexuality is regarded as "inhuman and unbiblical" by Ugandan bishops. In African countries homosexuality engenders negative attitudes; in research conducted by Allman et al. (2007) in Nigeria, most participants declared that Nigerians are very religious and homosexuality is against their beliefs and the teachings from churches and mosques. Furthermore, "societal and family pressure to conform to

community norms, as well as the role of children and procreation within family structure, meant that most participants either planned to be or were currently married" (Allman et al., 2007, p. 160).

In many African countries procreation of family structure is important and a traditional custom that every individual should follow. Heterosexuality is still regarded as the only form of sexuality. Therefore, people who diverge from heterosexuality are labelled 'un-African' and may suffer severe punishment, discrimination, harassment and even death in some countries. Across the African continent religious beliefs and denominations are robust predictors of attitudes about same-sex sexualities. Religious organisations regard homosexuality as 'ungodly' and sinful. Religious beliefs have a great impact on African societies' morals and values. Even though there are different religious affiliations in Africa, all of them condemn homosexuality; hence many believers are against homosexual acts.

3.3.3   Prejudice faced by African people who are non-heterosexuals

In most African nations same-sex marriage is prohibited, even unthinkable and homosexuality is illegal. As a result, in Africa sexual minorities face severe intolerance and prejudice. Penalties for homosexuals on the African continent range from arrest and punishment, to the death penalty (Zahn et al., 2016). Likewise, Zahn et al. (2016) and Msibi (2012) note that homosexuality is currently criminalised in 38 out of 54 African countries. In Africa many countries criminalise and harshly punish minority sexualities. LGBTQI people in Africa live under severe restrictions and endure punishment, for example several years in prison is meted out to those who publicly engage in homosexual activities (Kretz, 2013). In some African countries same-sex sexualities are described as not 'normal', those people not full citizens, nor deserving of rights and privileges like other citizens (Kretz, 2013). In Africa public and Christian leaders regard homosexuality as wrong and evil. Essien and Aderinto (2009) also note that spiritual leaders and traditional leaders in Africa criticise same-sex sexuality.

In a study directed by Zahn et al. (2016) same-sex sexuality individuals were scared to seek help in Botswana due to discrimination or negative experiences at healthcare facilities. What is puzzling is that even in South Africa (Cape Town) where sexual orientations have equal status according to the constitution, healthcare providers are not well equipped to treat same-sex sexualities (Zahn et al., 2016). In Uganda newspaper articles label homosexuals as mad people, mentally disorganised and drunken, who are trying to change the nature of sexual

norms and discourses (Valentine & Ward, 2012). In a study conducted by Valentine and Ward (2012) one participant stated that when homosexuality was mentioned in the media people would hurry to purchase that newspaper where it was described as "moral decline". In a study conducted by Allman et al. (2007) in Nigeria, participants indicated that homosexuality was forbidden in their country and as a result, they had to live a double life as public heterosexuals, but covertly practise homosexuality. Many non-heterosexuals are afraid to be labelled deviant and abnormal by society. Prejudice associated with homosexuality thus prevents them from making their homosexual status public.

3.3.4   Kenya same-sex sexualities in school

In sub-Saharan countries same-sex sexualities are considered un-African and unacceptable, therefore, in school, heterosexuality is regarded as the only form of sexuality, despite some improvement in attitudes towards homosexuality around the world (Mucherah et al., 2016). Furthermore, Mucherah et al. (2016) state that high levels of education help people to tolerate homosexuality. Education has a positive impact on how society understands and tolerates issues that are regarded as taboo. In research conducted in Kenya by Mucherah et al. (2016) learners believe that same-sex sexuality exists in their schools and teachers should talk about it so students can have a clear understanding about homosexuality. Furthermore, some students also believed that same-sex sexualities are an abnormal sexual deviation, and many students seemed to be less informed about homosexuality (Mucheruh et al., 2016). One of the main issues that makes homosexuality seen as intolerable in Kenya by citizens and by schools, is that the Kenyan government imposed laws and policies against homosexuality which included 7-14 years imprisonment, and that had a big impact on how students view homosexuality as well as being not well informed about it (Mucherah et al., 2016).

3.3.5   Nigeria – same-sex sexuality at school

In Nigeria there has been a lack of research on homophobia in schools, however it is regarded as bullying (Okanlawon, 2017). Additionally, Okanlawon (2017) notes that this may be because homosexuality is still regarded as unnatural and taboo by political leaders and society, and it is not publicly addressed nor is there awareness about it. In Nigeria schools do not have anti-homophobic policies, because homosexuality is neglected and same-sex learners are not safe in schools (Okanlawon, 2017). Therefore, social places like schools and places of higher education are used to abuse and victimise LGBTQI students because they are not protected by them or society. In Nigeria homosexuals are voiceless, and they endure high

levels of violence. Homophobic attacks are regarded as normal bullying which happens every day.

According to Okanlawon (2017) students 'prefer' to be bullied by fellow classmates rather than be expelled or suspended by school management because of their sexuality. On the positive side, there are a few teachers and students who regard homophobic bullying as unjust for the LGBTQI cohort in schools. Hate crimes are also normalised against same-sex sexuality students. Many LGBTQI students were publicly called names like faggot, homo, gay lord, woman and lesbo by other students because public stigmatisation was common (Okanlawon, 2017). In the study conducted by Okanlawon (2017) one participant who is a lesbian stated that in a hostel, other female students did not want to spend time with her because they thought she would want to be intimate with them. Additionally, in the same study another gay student was beaten by heterosexual male students because he made advances on a heterosexual man (Okanlawon, 2017). Other LGBTQI students received threats and were blackmailed by others.

3.3.6   Zimbabwe – same sex sexuality in schools

Zimbabwe, like most African countries, condemns and stigmatises homosexuality. Political leaders and prominent religious leaders view same-sex sexualities as taboo and myth and should not be associated with African people. There has been limited research about homosexuality in Zimbabwean schools, hence children are regarded as innocent. According to Mtemeri (2015) Africa is known as a continent that condemns homosexuality more than any other continent in the world. In a study conducted by Mtemeri (2015) at a university in Zimbabwe 50% of participants agreed that people who are homosexuals are sick, and believe they have a chemical imbalance. Furthermore, Mtemeri (2015) states in Zimbabwe homosexuality is stigmatised and homosexuals are discriminated against. Indeed, many homosexuals and bisexuals were not willing to engaged in research because they were afraid of being victimised by heterosexual students, and because the Christian religion plays a big role in their upbringing.

3.3.7   Namibia-same-sex sexuality at school

Francis and Brown (2017) note that the Namibian constitution protects the rights of every citizen notwithstanding their sex, belief and race. Although there is legislation that protects every citizen in Namibia, same-sex sexualities are still proscribed and this act is regarded as illegal and a criminal offence (Brown, 2017). Additionally, because same-sex sexualities

between men is regarded as a sexual offence in Namibia, this makes homosexuality to be identified as a sexual act and not as an identity (Brown, 2017). This makes it hard for homosexuals to be accepted and to enjoy equal rights equivalent to the heterosexuals in Namibia. The Namibian school curriculum overtly emphasises that all sexualities must attain equal education in schools (Francis & Brown, 2017). However, Namibian school learners who are homosexuals felt isolated and marginalised by teachers and other learners (Brown, 2017). Furthermore, "the school-related homophobic violence creates critical barriers to learning and dispossesses human agency for learners from homosexual identities" (Brown, 2017, p. 342).

In the Namibian community homophobic violence is prevalent (Currier, 2012; and Lafont, 2010). Homophobic attacks in schools makes it hard for learners who are homosexuals to access education without fear and rejection from peers and teachers. As a result, schools become unsafe for same-sex identities. In a study conducted by Brown (2017) one participant reported that in school they experience physical and verbal abuse from peers; boys in school would initiate fights with the participant because he identified himself as being gay, and teachers would embarrass him in front of other learners in school assembly. Furthermore, at the school premises he was called names like *moffie* and everything he did wrong at school was associated with his homosexuality. One of his friends was stabbed by learners because he was gay (Brown, 2017). These violent attacks on same-sex learners in school indicate that "schools are an abusive environment for homosexual learners" (Brown, 2017, p. 247).

3.4   South African perspective – Constructing same-sex sexualities in schools

In this section I provide an overview of literature in relation to how homosexuality is constructed in South African schools. Firstly, I outline how homosexuality is constructed in South Africa. Secondly, I discuss how culture and religion impacts on how homosexuality is viewed in the country. Thirdly, I outline the gender discrimination and violence inflicted by heterosexuals on homosexuals and the problem of corrective rape in the country. Lastly, I consider homosexuality in higher learning institutions and how children construct same-sex sexuality in schools.

3.4.1   Constructing homosexuality in South Africa

DePalma and Francis state that "from a legislative perspective, the Republic of South Africa is a world leader in support for LGBTQI rights" (2014, p. 1687). South Africa has made great

strides in terms of legislation toward LGBTIQ people, exemplified by allowing same-sex marriage, protecting all sexual orientations, acceptance of joint adoption by same-sex couples and banning employment prejudice segregation based on sexual identity (DePalma & Francis, 2014). However, after great strides by legislation to ensure that homosexuality is treated equally in the country, South African citizens themselves still discriminate against same-sex sexuality people. South Africans have several cultural and religious beliefs that make them view homosexuality as an alien sexual orientation. In South Africa there is a strong belief that same-sex sexuality is not African and there are several reasons for this statement by Brown: "Historical Southern African culture wherein homosexuality was taboo; colonial and post-colonial Christian evangelising; and the perception that homosexuality in Africa is a product of the recent, post-apartheid, emergence of Western-backed sexual rights organisations" (2012, p. 51).

Ward (2013, p. 413) states that prior to 1994, "in South Africa, for [a] long [time] homosexual practice was associated with white society and to be rejected with apartheid and its dehumanising practices". However, South Africa's constitution protects all citizens regardless of their sexual orientation. Although our legislation recognises every sexual orientation, homosexuals in South Africa are still sufferers of homophobic slurs. One of the most advanced constitutions in the globe which encourages tolerance for every sexual orientation is from South Africa (Brown, 2012; Mwaba, 2009; Nkosi & Masson, 2017; Nkabinde & Morgan, 2006; and Zahn et al., 2015). However, discriminatory segregation against sexual orientation still exists. Regardless of the constitutional stipulations same-sex sexualities in South Africa face discrimination because of their sexual identity (Nkosi & Masson, 2017; and Naidu & Mutambara, 2017). However, South African leaders are still against homosexuals. Obed Mlaba (former Durban mayor) and Jacob Zuma (former South African president) once shamed and marginalised homosexuals in public (Francis & Msibi, 2011).

In South Africa homosexuality is associated with colonialism and from Western countries (Brown, 2012). Conforming to patriarchal systems is important in South Africa, hence heterosexual practices are policed by society. Men and women who don't uphold patriarchal and heteronormative manufactures are victims of gender-based violence, assaults, punishment, rape and even death – all these forms of victimisation are regarded as a form of societal control by heterosexuals. "Sexual violence is one of the ways in which both lesbian

women and gay men are discriminated against for what is perceived to be their non-conforming to patriarchal and heteronormative constructs" (Nel & Judge, 2008, p. 26).

3.4.2   Culture, religion and homosexuality

South Africa is one of the African states where culture and tradition still play a major role in society. As a result, people are condemned if they do not follow what is right according to 'culture'. In South Africa homosexuals are frequently victims of violence. In South Africa same-sex practices have been associated with sickness. According to Graziano (2004) spiritual and psychological intervention in South Africa is a method used to 'cure' gay men and lesbians. Furthermore, research into discrimination of same-sex sexuality in South Africa is sometimes based on facts written by authors from Europe or sources outside South Africa (Sigamoney & Epprecht, 2013). Hence religions and some cultural beliefs are also against same-sex sexuality in South Africa. How South Africans view the world or make moral decisions is based mostly on Christianity, Islam and/or African religions (Ward, 2013).

Moreover, South African society believes that homosexuality is a sin since it is against Christianity (Nkabinde & Morgan, 2006). Even in school religion plays a big role, and teachers find it difficult to teach sexual diversity because it is against their religion and cultural practices. In a study conducted by DePalma and Francis (2014) Life Orientation teachers explicitly indicated that teaching about homosexuality is against their Christian religion. Additionally, teachers stated that same-sex sexuality is a sin and a disorder which can be healed by Christianity (DePalma & Francis, 2014).

3.4.3   Gender, violence and homosexuality in South Africa

In South Africa sexual violence is uncontrollable and South Africa is still a state that is deeply rooted in patriarchal systems (Brown, 2012). Violence and patriarchal customs make it very difficult for heterosexuals to accept or even tolerate homosexuality. Women in South Africa are sufferers of sexual violence, homophobic slurs, gender-based violence and death perpetrated by straight men. "In African societies, the lesbian desire is a still-born desire that only exists through its negation and its prohibition" (Etoke, 2009, p. 185). Lesbians in South Africa are not only condemned by society, but also sufferers of 'curative' rape. In South Africa 'curative' rape perpetrators are straight men who believe that lesbians need to be 'cured' from homosexuality because they consider it to be unnatural and ungodly. Unfortunately, 'curative' rape is one of various offences that lesbians in South Africa face daily because citizens lack education about LGBTQI (Brown, 2012).

'Curative' rape sufferers do not disclose cases to the authorities. 'Curative' rape is "steeped in culture, gender inequality, social mores, historical oppression, governmental segregation and a fear of cultural imports from the West" (Brown, 2012, p. 48). In South Africa homophobia against lesbian individuals is very harsh; they are raped, shamed, punished or harassed by society (Msibi, 2011). Black lesbians feel like outsiders in South Africa because of their sexual orientation and they are harassed in many public spaces. "Despite growing attention by the media, LGBTQI rights organisations, human rights organisations and scholars, the incidence of corrective rape does not seem to be curtailing" (Brown, 2012, p. 47). South Africa is a most patriarchal society (Msibi, 2011). Therefore, black lesbians who don't conform to societal values and patriarchal systems become victims of 'hate crimes', violence and rape (Naidoo & Karels, 2012).

Furthermore, cultural and societal customs contribute to 'corrective' rape which makes LGBTQI individuals more vulnerable in South Africa (Brown, 2012). South Africa is a violent country; hence minority sexualities face more violence because of their sexual orientation. Lesbians in South Africa encounter all forms of violence, two-fold to heterosexual women. A 13-year-old girl was raped in Gauteng and the attacker said he was "curing" her of lesbianism (Brown, 2012). In the African continent and other continents 'corrective' rape has been on the rise and most victims suffer from stigmatisation, hate insults, rape and sometimes death. Brown notes that "curative" rape, as it is called, has claimed many victims in South Africa and around the world" (2012, p. 45).

South African homosexuals do not experience ill-treatment in places of worship only, but also in social structures like hospitals, schools, the media, by members of society and in police stations. According to Graziano (2004) black gay men and lesbians have been mistreated in South African police stations and sometimes hate speech is inflicted on them as well. In a study conducted by Graziano (2004) in Johannesburg (South Africa) some participants reported dissatisfaction with South African hospitals and clinics, since they lack health professionals who are trained to deal with gay men and lesbians without prejudice against homosexuality. Reinforcing this, Potgieter (2006) notes that homosexual individuals are victims of rape and sexual abuse in South Africa. Hate crimes and other forms of criminal activity against LGBTQI people send a message to victims or survivors that they must change their sexual orientation because it is considered abnormal (Nel & Judge, 2008). Additionally, in a study conducted in Gauteng, Nel and Judge (2008) indicated that 73% of victims had not

reported cases of sexual violence because they fear that their cases would not be taken seriously; 43% fear abuse from police officers and 33% do not disclose their sexual identity to police officers.

In a newspaper article written by Nomahlubi Jordaan (2017) the body of a 27-year-old woman was found in Naledi one Sunday. Two men appeared in Protea Magistrates Court in connection with the murder of a woman believed to be a lesbian. Furthermore, Jordaan (2017) notes that the death of Lerato Moloi shocked groups on social media and members of the LGBTQI community. This gruesome incident that happened in our community is said to 'correct' lesbians into straight women.

Gay men in South Africa are also not safe; they too are victims of hate crimes, intolerance and high levels of violence. Milani (2014) states that in 2012 in Kuruman in the Northern Cape a gay man, Thapelo Makutle, was found dead; his genitals were removed and his throat was slit after he was crowned Miss Gay Kuruman at a pageant.

3.4.4 Institutions of higher learning and homosexual students

Homophobic violence is common in most places especially at institutions of higher learning (Jagessar & Msibi, 2015). Furthermore, homophobic acts that occur in higher learning institutions are often because of heteronormative customs that regard homosexuality as abnormal (Jagessar & Msibi, 2015). Homophobic bullying is common in institutions of higher learning, sometimes even leading to harassment, cyber-bullying, discrimination and insults. Prado-Castro and Graham (2017) state that lesbian students fear disclosing their sexual identity in public places and private spheres because of social prejudice and violence. In institutions of higher learning homosexuals are discriminated against and called names by heterosexuals. Naidu and Mutambara (2017) note that lesbian students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal have been discriminated against and have been called names by heterosexual students. Higher education students who are black are mostly Christians and also believe in traditional teachings. Francis and Msibi (2011) conducted a study at one of the institutes in South Africa where the majority of students were black; most students believed that same-sex sexualities is a sin and against the tenets of Christian religion.

Furthermore, although students do not recognise Christianity as foreign and 'unAfrican', same-sex sexualities are however, perceived as a Western phenomenon (Francis & Msibi, 2011). This makes it hard for LGBTQI people to be accepted in most places. They face many

forms of victimisation from heterosexuals. "In many communities a disproportionate number of LGBTQI persons continue to face sexual orientation and gender presentation-related oppression, marginalisation, discrimination and victimisation" (Nel & Judge, 2008, p. 32). Homophobic prejudice in places of higher learning is common and LGBTQI students are victimised daily.

Negativity around lesbianism also affects tertiary institutions because in communities they are targets of prejudice and marginalisation. Homophobic attacks are on the rise in communities with students imitating behaviour they are used to experiencing in their daily lives (Nduna et al., 2017). Additionally, Jagessar and Msibi (2015) state that higher education institutions are like schools, which form part of society, where homophobic attacks are common and homosexuality is viewed as taboo. This means that the community plays a vital part in the socialisation of society's young or old people. Institutions of higher learning police same-sex sexualities and sanction students who belong to minority sexually-oriented groups (Nduna et al., 2017). At the same time, "university is a space where young people explore many of their multiple identities including sexual identity; they may take this to the next level and be involved in romantic relationships" (Nduna et al., 2017, p. 6).

3.4.5 Constructing same-sex sexualities in South African schools

"Putting sexuality and children together remains, despite all policy efforts to change this, morally troubling" (Bhana, 2013, p. 117). As a result, in South Africa there is a scarcity of research about how primary school boys and girls construct same-sex sexualities. Most researchers - (Msibi, 2012; Francis, 2014; and Bhana, 2014) - have done research in high schools with learners and teachers. South African Schools Act stipulates that every learner has equal rights regardless of their sexual identity. In the policies of South African schools' sexuality is scarcely mentioned and, therefore, many teachers find it difficult to teach about homosexuality. However, teachers and student teachers in South Africa assume that high school learners are heterosexual and too young to know about homosexuality, or to be identified as gays and lesbians (Richardson, 2008). South African heterosexual children have more rights compared to homosexual children's rights, which are not regarded as important (Richardson, 2008).

Parents, teachers and other social agents are not comfortable addressing sexual rights for children, and this creates silence and heteronormativity (Bhana, 2013). In schools hetero-morals are regarded as normal and natural. Bhana (2013) notes that under the hetero-moral

order, heterosexuality is considered natural and sexual relations between male and female are regarded as the only norm. In a study conducted by Bhana (2013) among parents in KwaZulu-Natal and in Gauteng, participants showed discomfort and intolerance about homosexuality and one participant noted that she would be very sad if her girl child decided to be a lesbian after so much guidance about morals and values, and some also cited religious values and how these are used against same-sex sexualities. Hate crimes, assaults, accusation and victimisation of same-sex learners is common in schools. Homosexual learners in schools have been assaulted because of their sexuality (Francis & Msibi, 2011).

Furthermore, Francis and Msibi note that "gay men reported a far higher rate (68%) of verbal abuse and harassment at school than lesbian women (42%)" (2011, p. 160). "Homosexuality is regarded as a deception, evil and a lie and the reason for sickness and destruction" (Bhana, 2013, p. 120). "In South Africa, school laws (South African Schools Act No. 84, 1996) compel heads of departments and principals to intervene to secure the protection of all learners (and teachers)" (Bhana, 2014, p. 69). In South Africa gender stereotypes, cultural values and practices, heterosexuality and tradition still exist in schools as social agents and even on sexual rights. "Deeply entrenched ideas of patriarchy together with ignorance have rendered queer learners in South Africa invisible" (Msibi, 2012, p. 515). Many forms of violence are imposed on homosexuals in schools, some are imposed through language, which is hate speech.

Most teachers believe that sex education is against their religion, values and traditions; therefore, sex education faces resistance in schools because of teachers' beliefs that sexuality should not be part of the curriculum. Francis and DePalma (2014) state that some teachers regard sexuality education as a moral and value-driven subject. Some teachers ignore sexuality education in some schools because it is against their religions and beliefs, especially when it comes to same-sex sexuality (Francis, 2012). "While the South African Department of Basic Education has released a manual challenging homophobic bullying in schools, the author believes it is incumbent upon South African teacher education institutions to consider their role and the place of LGBTQI matters in pre-service teacher development programmes" (Lees, 2017, p. 250). This area of research has been neglected because sexuality is not associated with children because they are viewed as 'innocents' in schools. This research plans to explore how children view homosexuality from primary school and how they perceive same-sex sexualities.

Francis and Reygan state that "recently there has been continuing and acute resistance to latest structures of sex teaching including from NGOs, centres of learning and religious structures (2016, p. 183). Even though the South African Constitution safeguards the rights of every human being regardless of their sexual identity, many teachers, however, condemn minority sexualities and have negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians. In a study conducted by Francis and Reygan (2016) most participants (teachers) indicated they were not comfortable discussing same-sex sexualities with learners and showed disapproval of homosexuality.

3.5   Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted how countries around the developed world, other sub-Saharan African countries and South Africa view homosexuality. I have also outlined how schools construct same-sex sexuality. A common thread is that homosexuality on the African continent and across the globe is still unaccepted and deemed as taboo. There is however, legislation and laws which prohibit discrimination according to a person's sexual orientation. Worldwide homophobic attacks are common. Even though there are policies and laws stipulated by countries' constitutions, leaders of states, religious leaders and society still do not tolerate homosexuality. The irony is that some presidents are actively bigoted against homosexuals. Most leaders of African states regard homosexuality as a Western perversion that should not be associated with Africans.

Therefore, many LGBTQI people are rejected and isolated by society. A lot needs to be done for society to exercise greater acceptance of minority sexualities. Institutions such as families, schools, places of worship and higher education institutions have a great effect on how people view homosexuality. Sexual challenges facing non-heterosexuals in many countries are severe, such as hate speech, harassment, persecution, 'corrective' rape and even death. "South African schools have an important part to play in challenging diversity issues such as homophobia, as homophobia is fuelled by both a lack of awareness and a lack of the promotion of Constitutional values and rights" (Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013, p. 281).

As much as sexual diversity is supposed to be learnt in schools, teachers are not well prepared to discuss such matters with the learners. Also, some teachers are not well equipped to discuss sexual matters with learners, let alone discuss homosexuality. Sexual diversity is still regarded as taboo by several institutions in South Africa, even though the South African

Constitution protects the rights of every person regardless of sexual orientation. The South African Schools Act also does not discriminate against learners according to their sexual orientation. My study seeks to create awareness about same-sex sexualities and to enlighten society that from primary school, children understand same-sex sexualities and are able to construct their own meanings. Despite the huge disapproval of homosexuality in our society, this study seeks to investigate children's perceptions and understanding about homosexuality from primary school to bridge the existing gap in South African research into young children's constructions of same-sex sexualities. The next chapter outlines the methodology and research design that was employed for this research.

CHAPTER FOUR:
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1   Introduction

This study explores the meanings of same-sex sexualities among boys and girls in Grade 3, between the ages of eight and nine, at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal.

In this chapter the methodology and research plan of the research will be discussed. The chapter contains three sections. Firstly, I outline my research design section and present a discussion on why I adopted a qualitative research approach. Secondly, in the methodology section I outline the following: the context where my research took place, how access was gained into the research site, the sampling strategy employed and the data collection methods utilised. Thirdly, this chapter will discuss how the data emanating from my study was analysed, together with issues dealing with the ethics rigour, self-reflexivity, trustworthiness and limitations. The chapter will conclude a brief summary of what has been examined.

4.2   Research Design

Punch states that "a research design includes planning and executing a research project from identifying the problem to reporting and publishing the results" (2009, p. 34). It helps the researcher to execute his/her research with a clear understanding and focus on what is needed in the study. Every study thus needs a research design. Collins et al. note that: "Design experiments were developed as a way to carry out formative research to test and refine educational designs based on theoretical principles derived from prior research" (2004, p. 18). According to Kothari: "The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data" (2004, p. 31). A research plan is an important component for each study. For this study I have decided to adopt a qualitative research design, which will be addressed in the next section.

4.2.1   Qualitative Research

Lichtman (2010) notes that the key objective of a qualitative study is to present an understanding and an in-depth interpretation of a person's occurrences. Furthermore, Sutton and Austin note that "qualitative research can help researchers to access the thoughts and feelings of research participants, which can enable development of an understanding of the

meaning that people ascribe to their experiences" (2015, p. 226). Therefore, qualitative research is basically about understanding and describing human discussions, human relationships and human phenomena (Lichtman, 2010). Additionally, qualitative research is a way in which a researcher collects, arranges and interprets information collected from individuals utilising his or her eyes and ears as filters (Lichtman, 2010). The fundamental motive of a qualitative inquiry is to investigate lived occurrences of human beings and individuals' culture and interactions. To research individuals' experiences, qualitative research utilises sources like unstructured interviews, group interviews, observation and collection of documentary materials (Palic et al., 2016). Qualitative researchers are always looking for a problem that needs to be solved.

Brantlinger et al. (2005) note that "qualitative research is a systematic approach to understanding qualities, or the essential nature of a phenomenon within a particular context" (2005, p. 195). According to Creswell: "The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (2007, p. 265). Furthermore, Creswell notes that "qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (2007, p. 37). The qualitative research approach was chosen as the most suitable for this study because it outlines why human beings act or react in the way that they do. In this case I want to explore how children in primary school construct same-sex sexualities. Having outlined why a qualitative approach was best suited for my study, in the upcoming segment I address the specific research methodology employed to conduct my study.

4.3 Methodology

"Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem and it may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically" (Kothari, 2004, p. 8). It is important for a researcher to not only know his/her research methods but also research methodology to conduct a study (Kothari, 2004). Researchers need to design research methodology before conducting a study because problems differ for each study. They also need to know the criteria by which they can determine the methods and approaches that will be applicable to certain studies and those that will not (Kothari, 2004). Kothari notes that "research methodology has many dimensions and research methods do constitute part of the research methodology" (2004, p. 8). He emphasises the reasoning behind each research

technique selected. The research methodology hence presents a fluent description of how the whole research course was embarked upon. The upcoming segment will examine in detail the context of the study.

4.3.1 Context of the Study

This study took place in a school named Moonlight Primary (pseudonym), located in Newlands West suburb, north of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Durban is a major city situated in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Newlands West is 14 kilometres from Durban Central Business District (CBD). Below is a map of Newlands West.
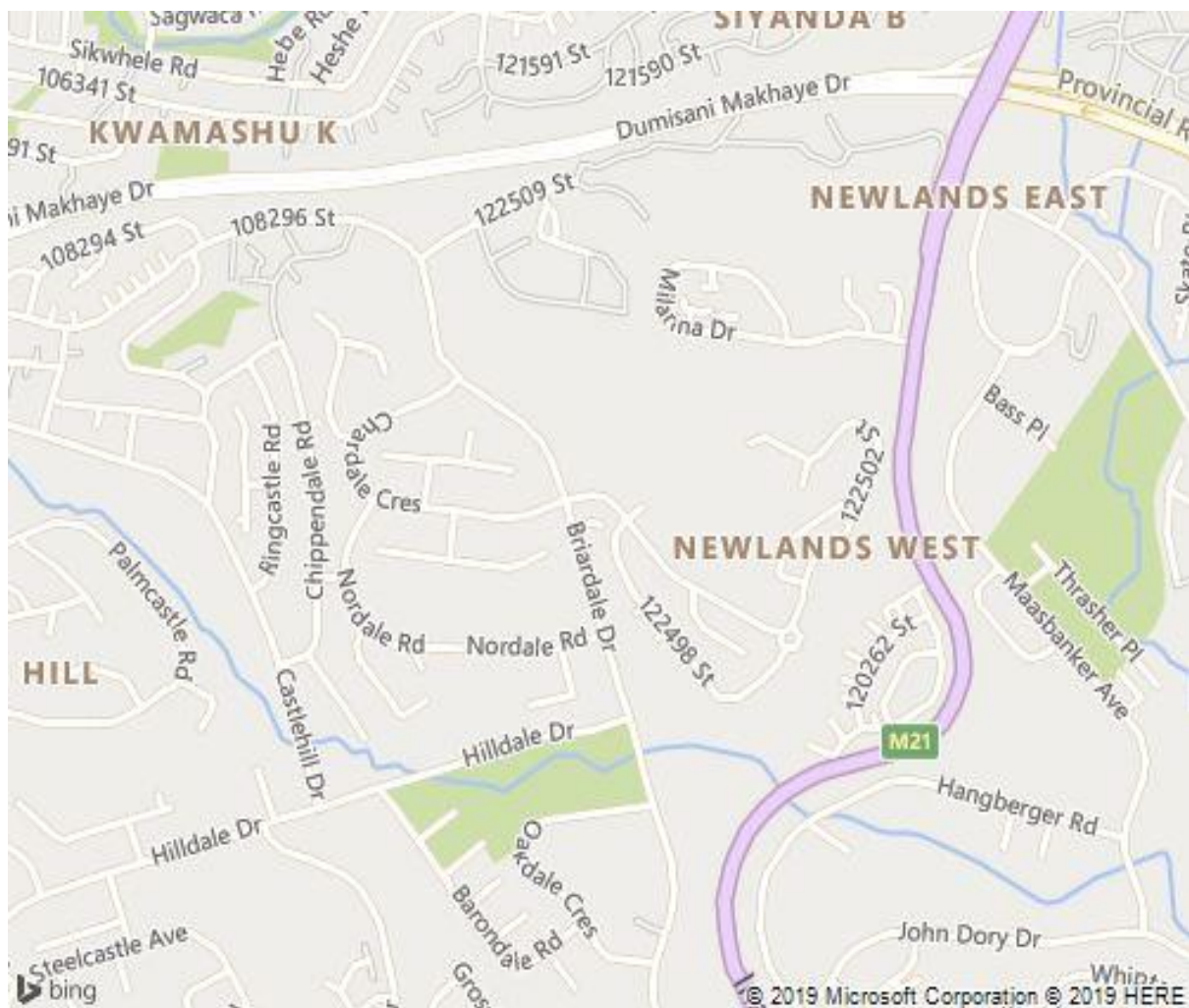
Figure 1 – Map showing the location of Newlands West Source (Frith, A, 2011)

4.3.2 Geographical background of Newlands West

Newlands West is a residential area situated in the north of Durban and is surrounded by the district of Newlands East in the east, KwaMashu and Ntuzuma townships in the north and

KwaDabeka in the west. There are various areas that constitute Newlands West; they are Hillgrove, Parlock, Briardale, Earlsfield, Castlehill, Riverdene and Westrich.

4.3.3 Historical Background of Newlands West

In 1975 during the apartheid era, the Durban City Council decided to build houses for the Indian and coloured communities. These houses were to be built in Phoenix, Newlands West and Newlands East (Lux, 1985). This project started in April 1975 and was designed to provide 8,000 houses to 60,000 people and the first houses were ready in June 1981 (Lux, 1985). Additionally, in April 1985 a housing project was officially opened at Castlehill (Lux, 1985). These houses were built because of the Group Areas Act which separated residential areas for all races in South Africa.

Mkhabela (2019) notes that as stated by Group Areas Act, act 41 of 1950, metropolitan districts were to be arranged into different ethnic isolated regions. According to Thompson (1995) this indicated that people of one race had to live and work in a zone assigned to them by the apartheid government. Thus, this act divided racial groups in South Africa. Dyzenhaus (1991) states that after the endorsement of this act, it then became a criminal offence, for which a person could be prosecuted, if found to be living or owning land, without authorisation, in an area classified for another race other than one's own. After 1994, the Group Areas Act was abolished and people were allowed to stay anywhere in South Africa regardless of their race. Newlands West was initially utilised as a buffer between racial areas and after the termination of apartheid new infrastructural investments were made (Berkhout, 2010). In 1996, 2,600 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing units were built in Newlands West (Berkhout, 2010). These housing units were designed by the democratic government as a government-funded social project for people earning less and for the unemployed.

4.3.4 Social demographics of the study

4.3.4.1 Population

The entire population of Newlands West is 50,627 with 12,222 households (Frith, 2011). There are 26,576 females amounting to 52.49% of the people, and 24,052 males which is 47.51%. Below is a table outlining the racial make-up of the population residing in Newlands West:

Ethnic group	People	Percentage
Black African	33,575	66.32%
Indian/Asian	15,751	31.11%
Coloured	847	1.67%
White	145	0.29%
Other	310	0.61%

Figure 2 – Newlands West racial demographics. Source: (Frith, A., 2011)

Newlands West has more females than males and is heavily populated. It is a multiracial suburb and the black/African community comprises of more than 60% of its population.

4.3.4.2 Social amenities

In Newlands West there are four primary schools and three high schools. There are many pre-schools and creches. There are many places of worship, such as temples, churches and mosques that cater for different religions as this suburb has different races and different belief systems. There is one clinic that opens five days a week, a rehabilitation centre, a swimming pool and a library. There are a few shopping centres within the area which have restaurants, grocery shops, pharmacies, petrol filling stations, bakeries and clothing stores. There is one police station which is located on Inanda Road. The next section outlines in detail one of the primary schools in Newlands West, i.e. Moonlight Primary School, as this school was selected as my research site.

4.4 The school – Moonlight Primary School

Gender	Boys				Girls			
Race	African	Indian	Coloured	White	African	Indian	Coloured	White
Total	480	167	15	0	525	208	20	0
Percentage	73	25	2	0	69	28	3	0

Figure 3 – Learner demographics at Moonlight Primary School, according to gender and race.

In total, 1,000 (70%) of the learners at Moonlight Primary School are African learners and hail from the surrounding African townships of KwaMashu, Lindelani, Ntuzuma, Westrich and Umzinyathi. There are also a few African learners who come from Newlands West and

Newlands East. Initially, Moonlight Primary School was designated as an Indian-only school for the Indian community because of the South African Group Areas Act of 1950. The Group Areas Act of 1950 was part of the legislation that produced inequalities in township schools during the apartheid era. Only Indian residents were placed in Newlands West. Therefore, even schools were racially segregated during apartheid. According to Ndimande (2016) the racial segregation of schools in South Africa maintained white supremacy, hence Africans, Indians and coloured individuals were relegated as second-class citizens. Ndimande states that "under apartheid, education played a major role in creating social inequalities and poverty in black communities" (2016, p. 34). Furthermore, the social lives of children are hugely impacted by educational inequalities, this also includes the destitution they encounter when they are adults (Ndimande, 2016).

Moonlight Primary School is a fee-paying school, however some parents struggle to pay school fees because of poverty and poor socio-economic conditions. Some fathers and mothers do not work and are contingent on social grants and occasional jobs. In 1996 the democratic constitution was adopted, with the aim of altering long-standing social disparities in South Africa (Ndimande, 2016). In line with the new constitution many changes were expected in the education system. Children from the closest townships like KwaMashu, Lindelani, Westrich and Ntuzuma were allowed to attend schools like Moonlight Primary School because of the equal education introduced by the democratic constitution of 1996.

The remaining African, Indian and coloured learners at this school come from Newlands West, Newlands East, Parlock and other Durban surrounding areas. The school is close to all the major transport routes that lead to the townships, for instance, bus and taxi routes. A few children walk to school and some cross the main road where there are buses, taxis and cars; these children are from Newlands East and some from Newlands West. However, most learners utilise private transport to get to and from school to protect them from crossing major roads. Most of these learners' experience socio-economic conditions that are better than the majority of African learners. Their parents hold better paid positions in various companies and some work for different government departments. As you enter the school, the first building is the office block and staffroom and on the left there is a school hall. The next building comprises two Grade 3 classes. The block after that houses four Grade 2 classes, then four Grade 1 classes, plus four Grade R classes. Next to these blocks, there is a computer room. Opposite these blocks, there are two Grade 3 classes, a library/computer room, two

tuckshops and one admin office. The double-storey building is a senior primary block which comprises Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 classes. Each block has its own toilets. The school has one playground, a tennis court and a netball court. The tennis court is utilised by both boys and girls. The school has a parking lot and, at the entrance, a security guard is on duty all day. Several years ago, a teacher's vehicle was stolen from the car park. At that time school cameras were not installed. Since then, an access-controlled gate has been installed and security cameras placed throughout the school for safety purposes. Moonlight Primary School has two entrances and only one security guard.

During lunch breaks there is one playground that is shared by boys and girls from foundation phase. Grade R children have lunch in their own building and use the playground at their own allocated time. During lunch breaks there are two or three teachers on ground duty, however bullying and fighting incidents still take place despite the surveillance of learners. Learners are not allowed to play in the corridors, classrooms, parking lots and in areas behind the school library and behind all other blocks. The school also houses two tuck shops, which sell snacks and inexpensive food items, bearing in mind the social and economic backgrounds of learners. The school has tap water, electricity, fans and working plug points. Moonlight Primary School has enough desks and chairs to cater for all the learners and there are chalkboards, bins, cupboards and teacher desks and chairs in all classrooms. Classrooms that are conducive for teaching and learning are always encouraged by the principal, deputy principals and the school departmental heads; as a result, most of the classrooms have colourful, educational posters displayed on their walls. The school hall and classrooms are rented out during weekends to generate further income to cover the school's expenses. I used one of the classrooms being rented out to collect my data.

The school educates learners from Grade R to 7. There are four classes for each grade. Consistent with the school's most recent records at the time of the study, there are, in total, 1,415 learners at the school – 662 boys and 753 girls. Below is a table showing the number of learners who attend this school, according to grade and gender:

Grades:	Number of Boys:	Number of Girls:	Total Number of Learners:
R	77	96	173
1	78	103	181
2	90	95	185
3	92	83	175
4	95	90	185
5	76	101	177
6	77	93	170
7	77	92	169
Total	662	753	1415

Figure 4 – Roll of learners at Moonlight Primary School, 2019.

Moonlight Primary School has a male headmaster, two male deputy headmasters and four departmental heads, three of whom are females and one male. Two females are departmental heads in the junior primary phase and the senior primary phase has a male and a female departmental head. Thirty-seven teachers are employed at Moonlight Primary and paid by the state and seven teachers are paid by the school governing body; one teacher is assigned to each class per grade and there are five teachers who are non-form educators (the total digit of learners in the school had necessitated the employment of extra teachers). Below are the teacher demographics at Moonlight Primary School:

Gender Position	Male	Female	*Race*	Black African	Indian	Coloured
Principal	1				1	
Deputy principal	2				2	
Foundation phase HODs		2		1	1	
Foundation phase teachers		17		3	13	1
Senior phase HODs	1	1			2	
Senior phase teachers		20		4	15	1
Total	4	40		8	34	2

Figure 5 – Teacher Demographics at Moonlight Primary School, 2019 – according to race and gender.

The school employs five cleaners aside from the teaching staff. There are three clerical staff and two clerical assistants. Moonlight Primary School aims to nurture and develop the child

holistically to realise his or her full potential within the curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular aspects of education.

In relation to the above, the school offers a range of sporting codes, namely, soccer for boys only and cricket for boys and girls, netball for girls only, and volleyball, chess and table tennis for both boys and girls. The institution also hosts an annual inter-athletics meeting, at which learners take part in various fun events. Another annual event is the school fun run which takes place at the beginning of the year. Moonlight Primary, like many other schools, is a public, fee-paying institution. It has adequate resources but also relies heavily on fund-raisers such as debutantes' balls, concerts and fun-run initiatives. The school fees are increased each year, as expenses escalate. In 2019, the fees stand at R1,500 per annum. If the fee is paid in term one, learners receive a R300 discount. However, many parents and guardians are unable to do so. In some cases, the school fees are paid in small amounts, when monthly grants are received. This money is not enough to keep the school operational and so it relies on the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for resources. The water and electricity accounts are paid for by the Department of Education (DoE), which also provides textbooks and stationery for learners each year.

Parental involvement exists at the school. Some parents assist teachers whenever help is needed. This is a public school and the majority of learners are drawn from surrounding townships like Lindelani, KwaMashu, Westrich, Inanda and Ntuzuma. The parents or guardians of problematic learners seldom attend such meetings and, in such cases, lack of parental involvement at home and school is obvious. However, other parents, grandparents and guardians may live far away from the school, precluding them from being able to meet with teachers.

Some parents also make donations to the school, for example the feeding club that operates at the school is funded by parents. This is a voluntary feeding club funded by different parents and sponsors for indigent learners. In the morning teachers and support staff serve porridge and during lunch break they provide sandwiches to indigent learners. The school does not have a formalised feeding scheme. A feeding scheme is governed by the DoE and is given to educational centres that are below quintile 5. Moonlight Primary School is assigned to quintile 5 school status, and thus does not qualify for a feeding scheme. Quintile 5 indicates that a school is well resourced, however, this is not the case at Moonlight Primary. This school is not well resourced because there are several items that you can find in private

schools which are not available at this school. The school does not have a swimming pool, parents do not pay exorbitant school fees and most learners come from surrounding townships like KwaMashu, Westrich, Inanda and Lindelani, where many households are very poor. The classrooms are also overcrowded, with 45 to 50 learners which makes optimal teaching and learning difficult to achieve.

The learners' academic achievement rates are weak, because, for the majority, English is a second language, with isiZulu being their mother tongue. As a result, they have difficulty reading, writing and communicating fluently. In most instances, those children living with their grandparents do not get help from them with homework, because they themselves had limited schooling and may be illiterate. When learners' parents are absent and they are cared for by their grandparents, these learners often take advantage of the situation and tend to rebel. Despite such poor results, the DoE advocates that teachers pass most of the learners, since it would be considered a misuse of resources if they were to repeat the same grade. One reason for this that has surfaced, mostly from my observation, is that lack of parental involvement has a huge influence on learners' progress at school. Next, I discuss how access was gained to Moonlight Primary School.

4.5   Gaining access

From an early stage, accessing permission to conduct a study was essential. I approached the principal with a consent letter (Appendix 2), specifying what the study entailed and what I wanted to achieve at the school. I verbally explained to the principal what the research entailed and I answered any questions the principal had. The principal was supportive and willingly signed the letter, allowing me to coordinate research at the school. I teach at this institution, therefore I was fully aware of the happenings in and around the institution. It was advantageous for me to have had the access because I had already been a teacher at the school for eight years, so I am familiar with it. Gaining permission from the principal was not a hard process, however gaining permission from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) ethics department was complicated and it took me several months before I was allowed to proceed. I applied to the DoE to be allowed access regarding the participants. After this was attained, formal requests were made to parents/guardians, because learners under this study were too young to provide consent on their own. I assured the school principal, parent/guardians and participants that data emerging from this research would be private and that participants' names would be replaced by pseudonyms. The school name was given a

pseudonym too. I advised learners they were allowed to pull out of the research whenever they wanted to, and not answer any questions they felt made them uncomfortable. The next section addresses the sampling procedure employed for this study.

4.6   Sampling

In qualitative research sampling is a significant process (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Therefore, the choice of sampling strategy is an essential consideration for every study. Collins et al. note that "sampling is an important step in the research process because it helps to determine the quality of inferences made by the researcher that stem from the underlying findings" (2006, p. 86). Additionally, in qualitative research sampling is often intentional and needs to align with research motives and questions (Punch, 2009). In qualitative research purposive sampling is mostly utilised, and the main reason is to provide insight into the research question. Punch (2009) notes that in qualitative research, like any other research, sampling is important because not everyone can be studied everywhere doing everything. Therefore, a sampling decision is a requirement for every study. In qualitative research, the researcher's sampling plan entails discretion over both the sample scope and sampling strategy (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

This study utilised two sampling methods – convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Collins et al. (2006) define convenience sampling as selecting surroundings, groups and/or humans which are appropriately accessible and who are willing to take part in the study. Convenience sampling is thus not random and therefore does not have a specific purpose other than being inexpensive, non-demanding of resources and providing the simplest and most uncomplicated access. Additionally, Cohen and Manion (1994) note that convenience sampling refers to selecting the closest human beings to serve as participants and following that procedure until the required sample size has been secured. I chose Moonlight Primary School, as I teach there, which meant that I could journey to and from the site without incurring any additional costs or spend long periods travelling.

Devers and Frankel (2000) state that purposive sampling procedures are designed to intensify understandings of selected humans' or groups' occurrences or for developing theories and ideas. Furthermore, Punch (2009) defines purposive sampling as an intentional procedure, with some motive or focal point in mind. There are many reasons why I used purposive sampling. I opted for a particular case because it represented the wider population, captured

the experiences of a certain humans, was remarkable and diverse, or because the researcher has an intuitive interest in that specific instance.

In this study I utilised purposive sampling to allow me to select participants based on various criteria, such as: gender, age, culture, the contexts that they come from and their socio-economic class. During the selection process, I spoke to diverse learners before selecting participants. I aimed for a diversified sample. My main purpose was to capture a variety of experiences and meanings of same-sex sexualities from my learner participants. Below is the sample size, 30 learners from Grade 3.

Grade 3: 30 Learners				
Boys: 13 Girls: 17				
Race	Indian	African	Coloured	Age group
Number of girls	1	16		8 & 9
Number of boys	2	10	1	

Figure 6 – Table of participants according to grade, race, age and sex

Moonlight Primary School provides the sample of the study. At this school, rich data was gathered as diverse race, class and age groups of learners attend this school. I chose to conduct my study with Grade 3 learners because it is the class that I teach. In the foundation phase same-sex sexualities are not part of the curriculum. Primary schools are also institutions where heterosexual gendered norms are daily emphasised, through behaviour, school uniform, class lines, sports, duties and toilets. In schooling contexts, homosexuality is invisible and unexamined. This primary schooling context was purposefully selected, as was the population for the research, as there are few studies about same-sex sexualities in primary schools. The main reason is that, historically (and currently) children's sexualities have not received proper attention due to associating children or childhood with innocence (Renold, 2007). Furthermore, Renold (2007) states that in the early educational settings heterosexuality is not only allowed, but a mandatory element.

In line with this clarification, this study focuses on both boys and girls from Grade 3, with the intention of shedding more light on making meanings of same-sex sexualities among primary

school children. I aimed to gather different perspectives, experiences and perceptions of same-sex sexualities. Although numerous studies have investigated high schools, studies investigating primary school children within the field of same-sex sexualities are limited, hence I aimed to obtain the views of learners in primary school (foundation phase). I distributed a total of 44 letters of assent and consent to all potential participants. Many were enthusiastic about participating in the research and 30 letters were signed and returned, thereby giving me authorisation to observe and interview the research participants. The next section outlines the study's data collection process.

4.7.   Data collection

According to Sutton and Austin (2015) a researcher's aim is to select a data collection method (interviews, focus groups and observations), and this procedure entails the generation of big amounts of data. Punch (2009) states that in qualitative investigation interviewing is mostly an eminent data collection tool. The most obvious disadvantage is that the data from qualitative studies, frequently derived from one-on-one interviews, focus groups or observation tends to be time-consuming to gather. For the motive of this investigation one-on-one interviews and structured observations were utilised. In a qualitative study, researchers use natural settings to collect data, hence they have face-to-face encounters with the participants.

One of the important characteristics of qualitative research is that it utilises open questions, which can change during the research process (Palic et al., 2016). In qualitative research a researcher is important because he or she is needed to collect data, interview participants and observe their behaviour. One of the most significant elements of qualitative research is that researchers are more interested in understanding and not in predicting or controlling (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Kothari (2004) indicates that qualitative investigation is more interested in human behaviour to discover how human beings feel and what they ponder about certain subject matter. Furthermore, Palic et al. (2016) state that qualitative research is about words and the views of the participants.

4.7.1   Piloting

Piloting a study gives researchers an idea of the kind of data that his or her study will generate. Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) define a pilot study as a miniature design of a whole study, as well as the particular trail of a specific research technique such as an

observation or interview plan. According to Van Teijlingen & Hundley (2001), the convenience of coordinating a pilot study is to help the researcher check where research methods may not be followed, or whether research techniques and procedures are too complicated or inappropriate. Additionally, piloting a study is essential for a researcher to collect preliminary data and to check whether the research strategy is workable and realistic (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). I thus utilised a pilot study to test my interviews and to obtain some feedback on how learners respond. The pilot study assisted greatly with the research process, as it allowed for shaping questions and ideas about what to probe in the final study. Grade 3 learners aged between eight and nine years old formed part of the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted in the same school understudy. I was able to grasp the kind of questions that the learners from Grade 3 were able to understand and which matters they were willing to discuss. I was thus able to restructure my interview questions in a manner that would elicit maximum responses from my research participants. The first method of data collection was individual interviews, which will be discussed below.

4.7.2   Individual interviews

Interviews are a universal way of accumulating facts for research. Dakwa (2015) describes interviews in qualitative research as a method that outlines and explores the meanings of central themes and issues in lives of the humans being interviewed. Additionally, an interview is a way in which you obtain (information about) what individuals feel and think about their universe and their identified circumstances (Dakwa, 2015). Semi-structured interviews were utilised for this study. This type of an interview is open and it allows interviewees to bring new ideas during the interview process (Dakwa, 2015).

Punch (2009) refers to interviews as the most distinguished method of collecting data in qualitative research. One convenience of coordinating interviews for a qualitative research is that it allows greater depth compared to other techniques of collecting data (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Interviews also enable the researcher to seek clarity and elaboration from the participant (Appendix 1) (Schmuck, 2006). The questions in this study were thus semi-structured and utilised as a guide to allow the participants to bring up other pertinent issues. Semi-structured interviews provided opportunities to ask participants questions that were not listed on the interview schedule. According to Dakwa (2015) in-depth interviews or unstructured interviews assist the researcher to interrogate interesting realms for the study. I opted for semi-structured interviews, so participants could elaborate when answering

questions and in order to eliminate one-word answers. At the end of this dissertation is an interview list of open-ended questions that were generated and employed for the purposes of this study (Appendix 1).

Interviewing is challenging in a qualitative study; it also makes a researcher learn about what participants think or feel (Lichtman, 2010). It is challenging because you hear about participants' feelings and thoughts. Some may be depressing narratives that need urgent attention. Interviews can offer trustworthy qualitative data. As per the requirements of the study, I conducted individual interviews with 30 learners from Grade 3. Moonlight Primary School is an English-medium school, however, most learners there are Africans and their home language is isiZulu. Interview questions were written in English, and while interviewing I would translate questions to make learners feel comfortable about sharing their views. When questions were changed into their home language or when I would code-switch they felt more comfortable about answering and sharing their experiences.

Below is a table that provides details of the boys and girls who were interviewed, all with pseudonyms, to guarantee their confidentiality and anonymity:

Name (pseudonyms)	Sex	Age	Race	Religion / Culture	Time interviewed
Bongi	Female	8	African	Christian	11 minutes
Thems	Female	9	African	Shembe	15 minutes
Sazi	Male	8	African	Christian	10 minutes
Naledi	Female	9	African	Shembe	15 minutes
Njabs	Male	8	African	Christian	10 minutes
Simu	Female	9	African	Christian	12 minutes
Sandi	Female	9	African	Christian	14 minutes
Dan	Male	8	Coloured	Christian	10 minutes
Lona	Female	9	African	Christian	10 minutes
Jobo	Female	8	African	Christian	12 minutes
Thina	Female	9	African	Christian	14 minutes
Sam	Male	9	African	Christian	12 minutes
Khetho	Male	9	African	Christian	15 minutes
Malindi	Female	8	African	Christian	10 minutes
Dudu	Female	9	African	Christian	13 minutes
Smanga	Male	8	African	Christian	10 minutes
Mmeli	Male	9	African	Christian	15 minutes
Buhle	Female	8	African	Christian	12 minutes
Khuli	Female	8	African	Christian	14 minutes
Mlondi	Male	9	African	Christian	9 minutes
Lwethu	Male	8	African	Christian	10 minutes
Msebe	Male	9	African	Christian	14 minutes
Khuli	Female	8	African	Christian	10 minutes
Joy	Female	9	African	Shembe	15 minutes
Ahmed	Male	9	Indian	Islam	13 minutes
James	Male	8	Indian	Christian	15 Minutes
Kelitah	Female	8	Indian	Hindu	10 minutes
Qhawe	Male	9	African	Christian	14 minutes
Bibi	Female	8	Indian	Islam	10 minutes
Senzi	Female	9	African	Christian	13 minutes

Figure 7 – Demographics of participants in semi-structured interviews

4.7.3   Structured Observations

Lichtman (2010) states that the purpose of observations is to observe individuals in a natural setting and it helps the researcher to comprehend human beings' behaviour and interrelationships among groups. In qualitative research, observation is a major tool of collecting data (Merriam, 2009). Advantages of observation is that it occurs in surroundings where the occurrence of interest naturally happens instead of a setting selected for the intention of interviewing (Merriam, 2009). The process of observation begins with choosing an institution and gaining access to it, after which one is allowed to observe and record (Punch, 2006). Additionally, structured observation breaks up behaviour into small parts based on predetermined categories (Punch, 2006). This makes it easier for a researcher when analysing data. As a researcher, I selected Moonlight Primary School for my observation and the school principal (gatekeeper) granted me permission (Appendix 2). Merriam (2009) states that recording of observations must be as detailed as possible to form the database for analysis.

Structured observations, if they are done well, are more ambitious than unstructured ones, however they are restricted and straight to the point (Schmuck, 2006). Observations can be useful for a researcher to understand how learners play together, walk to class after lunch breaks and assemblies, and to check how much time learners spend on certain activities (Schmuck, 2006). During observation a researcher is able to collect data that some participants cannot divulge. This study has used structured observation to collect data (Appendix 3). Twenty observations were conducted. These observations took place during school lunch breaks and in the classroom. Below is structured observation sheet (Appendix 3). The next section addresses data analysis.

Structured Observation Sheet			
Observation sheet	Yes	No	Researcher Field Notes:
1. Do girls and boys play together?			
2. Do children demonstrate anger when called gay (*isitabane*) by peers?			
3. Are children able to separate plays in terms of traditional girls' play or boys' play?			
4. Are children able to identify gay or lesbian individuals?			

5. Do children fight when called gay or lesbian by other children?			
6. Do children maintain normative gendered roles?			
7. Do children use the word gay (*isitabane*) as a swear word?			
8. Do children identify certain behaviours or performances as homosexual?			

Figure 8 – Structured Observation Sheet.

4.8   Data Analysis

Jones and Watt (2010) note that data analysis happens throughout the whole research procedure, a study is formed and reformed as a study continues, and data is slowly modified into findings. This simply means that data analysis begins on the day you embark on your research project. Before you analyse the data, you collect in the field you have been analysing data along with the research process. Certain items need to be considered before a researcher analyses data: taking notes during the interview and applying appropriate procedures for transcribing the data (Vaughn et al., 1996).

Palic et al. note that "qualitative data analysis is a process of the description, classification and interconnection of phenomena with the researcher's concepts" (2016, p. 8). Further, "data analysis is a process of gathering, modelling and transforming data with the objective of accenting and highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions, discussing strategies and supporting decision-making" (Palic et al., 2016, p. 82). In qualitative research analysing data means that a researcher must work with interpretations rather than with numbers (Palic et al., 2016). Data analysis constitutes one step among numerous others within the research procedure, yet there are various perspectives to the part of qualitative data investigation within this procedure (Palic et al., 2016).

There are several methods of analysing data and this study utilised thematic analysis. According to Dakwa (2015) in qualitative research, thematic analysis focuses on distinguishing significant facts in the data and classifying it. Additionally, Dakwa (2015) notes that the investigator is required to read the data and distinguish feasible topics, and the themes should correlate with the research question and should report the occurrences under inquiry. The themes that arose from my findings were subjected to the existing theories and literature that informed the work. This study developed 10 themes, and 60 pages of

transcribed interviews were transcribed. Below is a table summarising the methodology and research plan utilised for this research:

Summary of Research Design and Methodology	
Research approach:	Qualitative
Research sample:	Purposive and convenience sampling
Data Collection methods:	Semi-structured individual interviews and structured observations
Number of Participants:	30
Observations:	15
Number of Interviews:	30
Data Analysis:	Thematic Analysis

Figure 9 – Summary of Research Design and Methodology

4.9   Ethical Issues

According to Punch (2009) ethical issues are essential, especially when research involves children, numerous issues are involved and there are structures in place to deal with these concerns. Additionally, Punch (2009) states that investigation in teaching involves moral issues, because it entails accumulating data from humans, and about humans. This study falls within these parameters, because data was collected from children.

According to Bell "as children's rights exist in the moment when research interests and children's everyday lives intersect, continuing throughout the research process and beyond, to treat children as 'moral agents in their own right' requires researchers to recognise that children as research participants and as persons affected by research arrive with rights and retain their rights at all times" (2008, p. 10).

Safety is the cornerstone of ethical conduct for a qualitative study (Lichtman, 2010). Daymon and Holloway note that "when collecting data through human interaction, it is important to pay close attention to ethical issues because there are inherent problems and dilemmas related to the inductive and holistic nature of qualitative research" (2002, p. 78). When collecting data it is important to think about the safety of your participants. All research is a moral and an ethical venture that should deal with ensuring that participants in a study are not hurt because of the research conducted (Halai, 2006). Most research institutions such as

universities lay down the rules and regulations for conducting research in a more ethical way and they implement this by ensuring that researchers receive consent from an ethics department (Halai, 2006).

In my case, the ethics committee from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix 4) and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education granted me permission to conduct my study (Appendix 5). According to Corbin and Strauss "confidentiality is an important issue when doing interviews and later when writing" (2008, p. 30). This study ensured that no direct harm was inflicted upon participants and there was no infringement on their human rights. Skelton (2008) notes that all research undertaken must be ethical, sensitive and respectful, especially research involving children and young people. Additionally, Punch (2009) notes that in education and social science research literature, ethical issues have become a bigger feature in qualitative methods. According to Halai (2006) consent forms should have the following information; a clause that states that involvement of participants is non-compulsory and they have the right to pull out of the study, purpose, procedures, benefits and time period.

Orb et al. (2000) state that through the application of appropriate ethical regulations harm can be prevented or reduced. In line with the rules, I thus requested ethical clearance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (Appendix 5) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal for the purposes of conducting the study (Appendix 4). After these gatekeepers had given the go-ahead, I approached the school principal, who had acknowledged the appeal and given me access to conduct my research. Before this I ensured that participants were not under any harm or distress. Appendix 6 was filled out by parents or guardians before the participants took part and is a letter signed by parents or guardians granting the participants' permission to take part in the research. The next section of this chapter will outline issues dealing with autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence.

4.9.1   Autonomy

First, Dakwa (2015) defines autonomy as the participants' rights of privacy, the interviewer has no rights to force interviewees to speak if they are not willing to speak. Qualitative research has ethical principles that the researcher should adhere to, such as autonomy. In qualitative research participators have the right to determine freely whether to take part in research and have the right to pull out at any time without any complications. On the other hand, Skelton notes that "children and young people must be protected and have exactly the same rights of withdrawal from the project and rights over the research material they provide

that are accorded adult participants" (2008, p. 23). Therefore, in all investigations young or old participants have the same rights and they must be protected. Hence, as the researcher in this study I placed great emphasis on the fact that their identities would be protected and be anonymous at all times and their real names would not be used anywhere in the research. An audio-tape recorder was used to record the interviews in order to obtain word-for-word responses. Permission to record the interviews was also given by all participants.

4.9.2 Non-maleficence

Dakwa (2015) refers to non-maleficence as the interviewer's way to prevent hurt to the interviewee. Additionally, it entails protecting a participant from any kind of exploitation, such as sexual, emotional and physical (Dakwa, 2015). Non-maleficence is about minimising harm, and it also consists of some rules, such as do not cause offence, do not kill and do not cause pain (Sotuki & Duku, 2015). Furthermore, this simply signifies that in research participants should not be exposed to any danger (Sotuki & Duku, 2015). In this study I ensured that participants were interviewed in school, a place they are familiar with. Also, they were not vulnerable to any harm during the process of interviewing. Identical admiration was given to all participants and ground rules were laid out. All these methods worked towards ensuring that my participants could talk without undergoing any judgement or blame, thereby allowing the data to be as accurate as possible.

4.9.3 Beneficence

Lastly, beneficence refers to doing good for others and preventing harm, and is one of the ethical principles closely linked with research (Orb et al., 2000). In all research the use of pseudonyms is important. Protection of participants' identities is significant for every study. According to Sotuki and Duku (2015) beneficence rules are as follows: prevent individuals from danger, assist humans with disabilities, safeguard and secure the rights of humans and stop torment from happening to others. Further, beneficence must produce new knowledge that would be beneficial to participants, to other humans or society as a whole (Sotuki & Duku, 2015). Dakwa states: "The principle of beneficence demands that you respect the interests of the interviewees whose capacity for autonomy may be diminished owing to immaturity, lack of understanding, extreme distress, serious disturbance and/or any other significant personal constraints" (2015, p. 300). All participants who took part in this research were protected by the use of pseudonyms. I also employed a pseudonym to protect the school's identity.

4.10   Rigour

Rigour refers to the way in which we show morality and proficiency: it is about ethos and politics, despite the paradigm (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Furthermore, Tobin and Begley state: "It is the construction, application and operationalisation of these attributes that require innovation, creativity and transparency in qualitative study" (2004, p. 390). Rigour is also determined by the supervision and execution of the data accumulation and investigation process (Tracy, 2010). This may be judged by evaluating interviews, observations and field notes. To ensure high quality in qualitative research, it should be rigorous (Tracy, 2010). To ensure rigour in this study, I selected participants in an unbiased manner. Moreover, the data was presented truthfully and to achieve this, verbatim responses were employed. The next section addresses the trustworthiness of the study in greater detail.

4.11   Trustworthiness

Assuring trustworthiness of a study is a vital part of qualitative research. Polit and Beck (2012) state that credibility gives out the focus of the investigation and mentions to the reliance in how well the facts outlines the preconceived focus. Selecting a suitable data collection method is useful in every study, to ensure that the researcher achieves the determined results. "Methodological triangulation refers to the use of more than one research method, this type of triangulation is often referred to as the essence of triangulation" (Palic et al., 2016, p. 59).

In this study, I utilised interviews and structured observations to triangulate and to ensure the credibility of my findings. Using several techniques to accumulate data helped me gain a deeper understanding. Elo et al. (2014) refer to dependability as a firmness of data over time and under distinct circumstances. To ensure dependability of this study, I selected a diverse sample of sufficient size to ensure that research questions were answered and to ensure the richness of data. According to Polit and Beck (2012) conformability means that the data precisely constitutes the knowledge that the participants imparted and the understanding of that data was not fabricated by the researcher. I ensured that data was accurate by providing field notes. In order to ensure dependability and confirmability, I kept observation notes, a reflexive journal and audio recordings. A reflexive journal helped me to write down my personal feelings and biases throughout my research (see subsequent section on self-reflexivity). This helped me to be more critical when observing and conducting individual interviews. Tracy (2010) defines transparency as nobility about the investigation procedure.

Additionally, explicit investigation is determined by revealing the investigation's problems (see section to follow on limitations) and unforeseen twists and turns, and revelations of the methods the investigation converted over time (Tracy, 2010).

Tracy notes that "transferability is achieved when readers feel as though the story of the research overlaps with their own situation and they intuitively transfer the research to their own action" (2010, p. 845). To ensure transferability I have provided plenty of thick descriptions from the participants' interviews and observations, and I have also outlined the characteristics of the geographical area where my study took place in order to ensure that the same study can be done in another place utilising the same data collection method. Regarding trustworthiness, I included children from a variety of backgrounds, cultures and ages who had diverse views on similar issues. This presented me with rich data that could be then analysed thematically.

4.12   Self-reflexivity

According to Tobin and Begley (2004) reflexivity is central to the inspect series, in which investigators keep a self-vital report of the investigation procedure, incorporate their internal and external discussion. Tracy (2010) refers to self-reflexivity as one of the most admired executions of qualitative investigation, viewed to be moral and genuine with one's self, one's investigation and one's spectators. It motivates the researcher to be honest about their strengths and flaws (Tracy, 2010). Self-reflexive practice starts very early when a researcher attains access to coordinate research, to facts coordination, inspection and presentation. Maintaining reflexivity is needed by researchers because they continually locate and relocate themselves within their work, and to prevail with the research, participants and methodologies (Bott, 2010). Self-reflexivity and openness are two important means to attain honesty in a qualitative investigation. Another important aspect of self-reflexivity is transparency.

Most participants felt comfortable with the me, as I have taught them. I repeatedly asked participants to refer to me by my first name. Participants were aware that I was in charge of the interview process, thus creating unequal power relations between my interviewees and me. To overcome this barrier, I dressed simply, without drawing attention to being a working-class woman.

Learners felt comfortable to talk with me. If there were incidents of homophobia on the ground and in class they were comfortable to report them to me. During lunch break I would be visible also on the ground to observe, and learners were willing to talk to me about cases of homophobia that happened during their breaks.

4.13   Limitations

Every study has its limitations. Common criticism for qualitative research is that it is often biased and small scale (Anderson, 2010). The first limitation of this study was the poor correspondence from parents/guardians. I had to make several pleas for learners to return consent forms. Some parents/guardians refused to sign consent letters. Only a few Indian and coloured learners provided consent to take part in the study. This was a predicament because I wanted to collect varied data from a varied range of participants.

The second limitation of this study was time. Most interviews were done in the morning or during lunch breaks. In the morning some learners did not arrive on time for individual interviews because of transport problems. The school only has one lunch break so interviewing time was limited.

4.14   Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the investigation design and methodology utilised to conduct this research. This is a qualitative study that explores how children make meanings of same-sex sexualities: a study at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal. The data collection methods utilised were semi-structured individual interviews and structured observations. The data was analysed thematically. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were employed to select the participants. All ethical principles were maintained throughout the study and my researcher reflexivity was considered.

In the upcoming chapter I shall provide findings that endeavour to answer the following questions:

1. What do girls and boys understand and perceive by same-sex sexualities?
2. How do children promote, accommodate or reject heterosexual norms?

CHAPTER FIVE:
DATA ANALYSIS

5.1   Introduction

The preceding chapter outlined the research plan and methodology employed in this study. This chapter will thematically analyse the data collected by drawing on queer theory and poststructuralist feminist theory to examine how young children between the ages of eight and nine construct same-sex sexualities. Davies and Robinson note that "queer theory is reinforcing the notion that identities are not fixed or stable, but rather are shifting, contradictory, dynamic and constructed" (2013, p. 252). The normalisation of heterosexual relationships contravenes queer theories and same-sex sexualities are consequently deemed unacceptable. However, within a feminist poststructuralist understanding of gender performativity, Robinson and Diaz (2006) emphasise that the understanding of what it means to be a boy or a girl is established within the many discussion of masculinity and femininity that are anciently and ethnically accessible. Furthermore, "poststructuralists criticise the structuralist notion of structure underlying language and power relations, emphasising fluidity and complexity instead" (Monro, 2005, p. 4). The findings of my research illustrated that different elements influence children's constructions of same-sex sexualities at the school understudy. Specific themes emerged from the data collected and the study's findings will be discussed and analysed in connection to the ensuing thematic headings:

- Unravelling what it means to be gay or lesbian: "*I know them as people who are boys but change themselves to girls or girls who change themselves to boys";*

- Examining positive attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals: Gay people are decent people because they do not harass or rape other people;

- Children learning about sexual diversity in primary schools;

- Parents promoting heterosexuality and intolerance of gay and lesbian identities: Families and non-acceptance of homosexuality;

- Playground politics: Examining how homosexuality is constructed within a discourse of homophobia: Playground as a site to scrutinise peers' sexuality;

- Unravelling insults, hate speech and homophobic bullying from peers in primary school;

- Media and its role in children's learning about diverse sexualities: Children identifying non-normative gendered behaviour on television;

- How children negotiate between religion, places of worship and same-sex sexualities: Religious institutions, children and homosexuality;

- Primary school as a gender policing site; and

- *Isitabane*: A tool used to regulate non-normative gender performances at school.

5.2.1   Unravelling what it means to be gay or lesbian: "I know them as people who are boys but change themselves to girls or girls who change themselves to boys".

In Moonlight Primary School (the study's research site), the medium of instruction is English, however 70 percent of learners are Black Africans who speak isiZulu as their first home language. Therefore, the majority of the Black African learner participants chose to respond in isiZulu during interviews. In cases where learners responded in isiZulu I present their responses first in isiZulu and follow this by a translation in English. In gaining a deeper insight at the beginning of the individual interviews of this study, all participants were asked to define gay and lesbian individuals. Their responses were as follows:

Umcwaningi: Kungabe yini oyaziyo ngabantu abanobulili obufanayo, noma uke wabona abantu abanobulili obufanayo?

Researcher: What do you know about gay or lesbian people or have you seen gay or lesbian people?

Simu (intombazane): Bangabantu abazishintshayo kade bengabafana bezenze amantombazane, noma kade bengamantombazane babe abafana.

Simu (girl): I know them as people who are boys but change themselves to girls or girls who change themselves to boys.

Sandi (umfana): Yebo… ngiyabazi ngibabona ngasekhaya bedlula emgwaqeni bangabafana abazenza amantombazane.

> Sandi (boy): Yes... I have seen them in my neighbourhood walking on the road and they are boys acting like girls.

According to DePalma and Atkinson (2010) gender non-conforming identities are often mixed with sexual orientation. Similarly, from the above children's responses it is clear that their understandings of what it means to homosexual is based upon normative-gendered practices of being a boy or being a girl. The children, therefore, construct individuals who do not comply to traditional gendered stereotypes and manners as gay or lesbian. In doing so they conflate non-normative gendered performances with being gay or lesbian.

Primary schools are institutions that promote heteronormative discourses, thus Butler (1994) notes that through gender performativity ruling, ways of 'doing' masculinity and femininity are formed, naturalised and normalised through the daily reiteration and performance of the form that subjects take up such masculinity and femininity. It is interesting to note how the children within my own study construct gay and lesbian individuals in reaction to normative gendered performances. The children do not define homosexuality as an identity but rather as an 'act' or performance done by either boys or girls who do not want to conform to gendered norms (i.e. boys who enact womanly attributes or girls who enact manly attributes). Similarly, a study conducted by McNamara (2014) found that rural Malawians do not view homosexuality as an identity, but as an act. Additionally, this act was considered a performance that is limited to Western people. These attitudes stemming from Africa are most probably established upon a strong belief among African people which mandates heterosexuality as the one only and timeless form of sexuality (Epprecht, 2009).

Children always police individuals who do not comply to gendered standards by constructing them as either gay or lesbian.

Below is the response from a participant who had constructed his mum's friend as gay:

> *Umcwaningi: Kungabe yini oyaziyo ngabantu abanobulili obufanayo, noma kukhona obaziyo abanobulili obufanayo obaziyo?*

> Researcher: What do you know about gay or lesbian people or have you seen gay or lesbian people?

> *Mmeli (umfana): Ngike ngambona ekhaya, umngani kamama.*

> Mmeli (boy): I have seen him at home, my mum's friend.

Umcwaningi: Kungani uthi umngani kamama unobulili obufanayo?

Reseacher: Why are you saying your mum's friend is gay?

Mmeli (umfana): Iyo…kuningi. Ugqoka izingubo ezinemibala eqhamile, ufaka izinzipho, wenza ikhanda njengamantombazane, uma ekhuluma ubanga umsindo unezwi futhi ekungathi elentombazane noma ehamba uhambisa okwentombazane. Ubiza umama ngo 'chomi' njalo.

Mmeli (boy): Yoo….so many things. He wears clothes with bright colours, does manicure, does women' hairstyles, and when he speaks his is loud and his voice is feminine and walk like a girl. He calls mum 'chomi' (is an African slang word used mostly by girls when referring to a friend).

Mmeli constructs men with feminine traits as being gay. Participants (Mmeli, Simu and Sandi) have identified places where they have seen people who act like girls when they are boys. According to participants if a person is a boy and acts like a girl, then that person is gay. Furthermore, children not only monitor gender-based traits in peers but also in adults, for example where Mmeli indicates how his mum's friend acts like a girl, despite being male. However, it is important to note that not all gay men display womanly attributes and not all lesbians display manly attributes. For example, Connell states that "the dominant culture defines homosexual men as effeminate, however this definition is wrong as a description of some men who are homosexuals, who mostly do 'act like a man" (1995, p. 162). Therefore, "non-traditional heterosexual men face resistance, mostly from those who subscribe to more traditional sexual scripts, largely because sexuality is highly gendered in our society and variations from the stereotype of gender are perceived negatively" (Hill, 2006, p. 154).

Therefore, boys who exhibit womanly attributes and girls who show manly attributes cannot be automatically labelled as gay and lesbian. This makes them targets of homophobic attacks because they reject gender norms (Glick et al., 2007). On the other hand, Davis points out that "queer theory, prompts the denunciation of childhood innocence as one of the cornerstones of the heteronormative life-schedule, supporting the patriarchal structures of compulsory heterosexuality and fixed gender determination" (2011, p. 383). Queer theory thus seeks to debunk childhood innocence because it perpetuates traditional gendered norms. This represents childhood as an immature stage of children where they are not aware of sexuality because it is believed that it does not exist in this phase. However, the above extracts illustrate how boys and girls attempt to identify diverse forms of sexuality and their

ability to do so is clouded by stereotyped and gendered understandings of what it means to be attracted to a person of the same-sex sexuality.

The stereotyped way in which children construct gay and lesbian identities is problematic because not all people who are not gender-complying are gay or lesbian. Therefore, pupils who are not gender-complying may also run the risk of becoming victims of homophobic bullying in schools from peers. This is because, Schippers notes that "when a man exhibits hegemonic, feminine characteristics – as in having desire to be the object of masculine desire, being physically weak, or being compliant – he becomes the target of stigma and social sanction" (2007, p. 96). Furthermore, Schippers (2007) argues that womanhood is always regarded as subordinate and not desirable collated to masculinity, consequently it can result in indiscrimination and harassment.

Participants in this study were also asked to comment on whether gays and lesbians are good or bad people. The responses are stated below:

Umcwaningi: Kungabe abantu abanobulili obufanayo (izitabane) bangabantu ababi noma abahle?

Researcher: Are gay or lesbian people good or bad?

Lona (intombazane): Mmmm… (ephumula kancane). Bangabantu ababi ngoba bafuna ukuzishintsha ekubeni abafana babe amantombazane, noma ekubeni amantombazane babe abafana. Abajabule ngokuba abantu abayibona.

Lona (girl): Mmm…(sigh). They are bad people because they change from being boys to girls and girls into boys which is not a good thing. They are not happy with who they are.

Jobo (umfana): Oh…bangabantu ababi mam! (edinekile). Bakhuluma njengamantombazane bebe bengabafana.

Jobo (boy): Oh…they are so bad mam! (disgusted). They talk like girls while they are boys.

Thina (intombazane): Abantu ababi kakhulu, akukho lutho okuhle ngabo. Benza ngendlela ehlukile kunalena abazalwa beyiyona.

Thina (girl): They are very bad people, actually there is nothing good about them. They behave different from how they were born.

Dan (boy): They are bad people because they do not want to behave the way they were born, they act differently.

The above comments from different learners indicate the of boys and girls have negative attitudes towards gay or lesbian individuals in society. Participants think that homosexuals are not good people because they behave differently from heterosexuals. They are unable to comprehend how homosexuals can alter what is considered 'normal' behaviour for a boy or girl. The act of contravening normative-gendered performances is thus unsettling for the children in the excerpts above.

According to Sutherland et al. (2016) (seven out of 10 people) in South Africa determined that homosexuality is bad and sickening and strongly believe that it breaks the gender-dressing norms. Alongside teenagers (between the ages of 16-19) and adults (from the ages 45-54) viewed same-sex sexualities and non-gender conformity as disgusting. Thus, at Moonlight Primary School eight- and nine-year-old boys and girls share the same sentiments of many South African citizens about 'how sickening homosexuality and non-conforming individuals are in society'. Similarly, Matolino states that "same-sex practice, homosexual lifestyles, or being gay, either as an imbued sexual orientation or choice, is widely resisted on the African continent" (2017, p. 59). The above participants constructed homosexuality in a negative way and the majority said same-sex individuals are bad people because they don't behave in the way they were born. In a separate South African study Mayeza (2015) similarly found that negative constructions and criticism from boys and girls about individuals who are homosexuals to be very common among boys and girls in primary schools and when they spoke about homosexuality they labelled it as 'wrong' and 'unnatural'. Thus there is an impeding need to include sexual diversity teaching in childhood institutions in order to eradicate the negative perceptions that boys and girls have about same-sex sexualities. Another participant in this study had the following to say about gay and lesbian individuals:

James (boy): Mmm…They are so bad because they want to change the way they were born and behave differently from how God created.

James (participant) commented further and went on to say that "gays and lesbian were not created by God they just change themselves".

James believes that homosexual individuals change the way God created them. This shows that religion plays a pivotal role in how children construct gay and lesbian individuals as inherently bad. They use religion to argue that homosexuals are not created by God because they do not conform to the way in which God created them – i.e. in accordance to normative-gendered norms. As a result, homosexual individuals become stigmatised and banished. This means that children's religious upbringing also plays a vital role in shaping the way in which they view other peoples' sexuality. From an early age children's religious upbringing influences their assumptions about homosexuals having changed themselves. Sutherland et al. (2016) similarly note that generally South Africans who are religious, predominantly perceive same-sex sexualities to be immoral and 'wrong'. Furthermore, Ward (2013) reveals that some Christian churches in Africa have prohibited same-sex activity and punished offenders. Intolerance towards gay and lesbian identities from a religious standpoint thus shaped the above participants' negation of lesbian and gay identities. Having examined how children construct gay and lesbian identities the next sub-theme will address how children constructed gay and lesbian identities in a positive light.

5.2.2 Examining positive attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals: Gay people are decent people because they do not harass or rape other people

On a different level some of my participants demonstrated more positive attitudes towards gay and lesbian identities. The participants below had the following to say about gay and lesbian individuals:

> *Umcwaningi: Kungabe abantu abanobulili obufanayo bangabantu ababi noma abahle?*

> Researcher: Do you think gay or lesbian people are good or bad people?

> *Dudu (intombazane): Bangabantu abahle ngoba abahlukumezi futhi abadlwenguli muntu.*

> Dudu (girl): Gay people are decent people because they do not harass or rape other people.

> *Sandi: Abantu abayizitabane abantu abangashayi muntu futhi ngeke ubathole belwa nabanye abantu.*

> Sandi: Gay people do not fight with anyone, and will not find them engaging in violence with other people.

Dudu's attitude was different to others as she constructed gay people as decent individuals who did not abuse others, nor harass other people. Sandi similarly distances gay people from engaging in violent performances. Both Dudu and Sandi probably have a heightened awareness of heterosexual and hypersexualised males who sexually abuse women and children in South Africa. For example, in South Africa heterosexualised violence by male perpetrators is common, and females face a high endemic of sexual abuse (Otwombe et al., 2015). Likewise, in this study Dudu and Sandi are aware of the prevalence of violence and sexual abuse in South Africa, but argue that such crimes are not perpetrated by homosexual individuals. Furthermore, homophobic attacks like 'curative' rape and gay-bashing is often perpetrated by heterosexual males. "The negative attitudes that South Africans have towards homosexuals are reflected in the treatment of lesbian women living openly in South Africa" (Mulaudzi, 2018, p. 6).

Additionally, Mulaudzi (2018) states that South African lesbian women are in danger of being earmarked for sexual brutality simply because of their sexual identity. Therefore, in South Africa, females who are attracted to the same-sex are sufferers of 'curative' rape by heterosexual men who believe that lesbians need to be 'cured' from their sexual identity by sleeping with 'straight' men (Asante, 2019). Recently in South Africa there have been many incidents of rape, femicide and harassment of women – and girls are also victims of rape, abduction and harassment – and the perpetrators are often heterosexual men. In South Africa in the 2015/16 reviewing year, Crime Statistics SA stated there were 51,895 sexual offences, more than 142 per day (TimesLive, 2017). Furthermore, rape statistics in South Africa are among the highest globally and the country has struggled with sexual violence for a long time (TimesLive, 2017).

There have been incidents of sexual violence and rape in schools, where heterosexual learners were the perpetrators. In schools, older boys are alleged to be perpetrators of violence and sexual violence (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Thus, the comments made by Dudu and Sandi need to be considered in this context of violent heterosexual men, where gay and lesbian individuals are often the victims, rather than perpetrators of violence and abuse. Dudu and Sandi are observant about issues happening in society and schools, and their responses about lesbian and gay individuals being non-violent probably stems from this. Having examined

how some children displayed positive attitudes towards gay and lesbian identities, in the next section I uncover the extent of children's learning about sexual diversity at their school.

5.3   Children learning about sexual diversity in primary school

Social difference can start from childhood where children can be taught about different sexualities and their significance. Social difference can also shape children's constructions about same-sex sexualities. However, in South Africa, the foundation phase (Grade R-3) curriculum does not include knowledge about diverse forms of sexualities. In schools' teachers do not teach about same-sex sexualities, thus children do not learn about what it means to be attracted to the same-sex or any other forms of diverse sexuality. Therefore, children make their own assumptions about what it means to be attracted to the same-sex.

In turn they often develop stereotyped and prejudiced attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals. These stereotypes are used by boys and girls to discriminate and victimise learners who are perceived as homosexuals. This may be because foundation phase education is heteronormative and strongly supports traditional gendered roles. Similarly, Robinson (2002) states that in primary school settings there is a pervasive heterorsexism which is strengthened through the discourses of 'compulsory heterosexuality'. Most learners in this study revealed that they were not taught about gays and lesbians at school which reinforce compulsory heterosexuality within the schooling culture. Below are extracts from children about diverse sexuality at school:

Researcher: Do you learn about gay and lesbian people in school?

Umcwaningi: Kungabe niyafunda ngabantu abonobulili obufanayo esikoleni?

Joy (girl): No mam in school they do not teach us about gays and lesbians.

Khuli (intombazane): Hhayi bo!! Esikoleni asifundi ngabantu abayizitabane futhi othisha abakhulumi ngabo.

Khuli (girl): Oh no!! In school we don't learn about gays and teachers do not talk about them.

Njabs (boy): Mmmm…. Esikoleni asifundi ngabantu abayizitabane. Kodwa uma sinabangani bami siyakhuluma ngabo uma sidlala uma umuntu owumfama ezenza intombazane ekhuluma njengentombazane noma ehamba njengentombazane futhi siyabahleka.

Njabs (umfana): Mmm…. in school they don't teach us about gays, however when I am with my friends we talk about gay people, boys who act like girls. They walk and talk like girls and we laugh at them.

Smanga (umfana): (ehleka) Asifundi ngabo esikoleni fiuthi nje othisha abakhulumi ngabo.

Smanga (boy): (laughs) We don't learn about gays in school and teachers don't talk about them.

An interpretation of the above responses shows that children are aware that diverse sexuality education is not part of their curriculum. This is because diverse families are not represented within the Life Skills learner workbooks in the foundation phase. Instead they are presented as nuclear and heterosexual families. The heterosexual family with a mother and father is still viewed as a hegemonic interpretation of relevant and affluent family life (Robinson & Diaz, 2006). Heteronormative practices are thus regulated via the Life Skills curriculum in primary schools through the curriculum that explicitly favours heterosexuality. Furthermore, in primary school, teachers consider sexuality to be private and should be within the family and not the responsibility of the teacher (Robinson, 2002). Additionally, many parents aspire to 'protect' their children from learning and accessing information about sexual matters.

McGinn et al. (2016) state that most parents are scared that their children may begin thinking about sexuality, and this is considered off limits for children and more of an adult topic. These factors perhaps add to the reasons why the teachers in the above children's responses do not teach about gays and lesbians at school. Furthermore, heteronormativity characterises many school environments and is perpetuated in the everyday practices and processes of the everyday practices and processes of school life (DePalma & Atkinson, 2009). In my study, this is evident because participants stated that teachers do not teach them about same-sex sexualities, which demonstrates schools are institutions that promote heterosexual cultures. Having examined the absence of sexuality education at school, the next section focuses on how parents promote heterosexuality and intolerance of gay and lesbian identities.

5.4 Parents promoting heterosexuality and intolerance of gay and lesbian identities

5.4.1 Families and non-acceptance of homosexuality

Parents often believe their children are heterosexual (Martin, 2009). Robinson and Diaz note that "sexuality appears to be an issue that adults have difficulty talking about and very strong religious attitudes about rightness/wrongness" (2006, p. 151). The belief that children are heterosexual at birth encourages parents to continue instilling heteronormative practices into their children. This serves to erase homosexuality from the children's social world (Martin, 2009). Children are born in heteronormative sites called 'home' where they are taught to obtain a gender orientation that is in line with their biological sex, thus they are compelled to act like a man or woman in society and to be attracted to the opposite sex in their childhood stage (Alves et al., 2016). Therefore, heterosexuality governs most households and parents expect their children to be heterosexual beings. Other forms of sexuality are invisible and are marginalised.

Homosexuality in South Africa is still not acceptable in most families, and parents do not address diverse sexuality with children. This is because, "South Africa, like other parts of Africa, is currently knee-deep in state-sanctioned homophobia of the worst kind, the dominant discourse is that homosexuality is 'unAfrican', a 'Western' import or disease" (Distiller, 2011, p. 4). To gain a deeper understanding of what parents say about gay and lesbian individuals and how this impacts on children's beliefs I present the following extracts from participants:

> *Umcwaningi: Bathini abazali bakho noma odadewenu nabafowenu ngabantu abanobulili obufanayo?*

> Researcher: What do your parents or siblings say about gay or lesbian people?

> Bongi (girl): My mother said that gays are very wrong to change themselves from who they are being a boy to a girl, because God did not create them like that.

> *Thems (intombazane): Ubaba nomama ababafuni abantu abayizitabane futhi bathi abathandi ingane yabo ifane nabo. Futhi uma ingane yabo ingase ifane nezitabane bangayincisha imali bangayisupport.*

> Thems (girl): Daddy and mommy don't like gay people and they would not like their children to be gays either. If one of their child is gay they will not support him or her financially.

Simu (intombazane): Abazali bami ba strict (banomthetho oqinile) ababafuni abantu abayizitabane, futhi bathi bona abafuni ukubona ingane yabo izenza isitabane.

Simu (girl): My parents are very strict and they do not like gay people, hence they say they do not want their child to be gay.

In the above extracts Bongi, Thems and Simu explain how their parents feel about gay and lesbian individuals. What is common about participants' responses is that their parents do not tolerate homosexuals and they do not want their children to associate themselves with gays and lesbians. What is concerning is that most parents do not go into great detail to explain to their children why they do not like homosexuals, however they insist that they do not want their children to be gay or lesbian. This shows that homosexuality is still considered a taboo topic of discussion within the home-setting and is stigmatised in society. Therefore, intolerance towards homosexuals is reinforced from home and most households promote heterosexual practices. Consequently, there is a greater risk that children will be inclined to police and condemn peers whom they consider to be gay or lesbian.

Some parents choose to use religious doctrines to characterise homosexuality as negative and to promote heterosexuality. The participants' responses thus demonstrate how South African families are heteronormative, and this is evident "in a strongly traditional and family-based society with a culture in which the traditional family is prominent, powerful, visual, and valued" (Johnson, 2004, p. 200). Additionally, "caregivers may intervene by imposing normative hegemonic masculinity through gender policing (e.g., telling their son to change his feminine behaviour, restricting activities, forcing counselling or religious interventions, punishing with physical and/or verbal abuse, and forcing enrolment in traditionally masculine activities)" (Bauermeister et al., 2017, p. 694). This is similarly noticeable in the case of Thems in this study who reveals that her parents would withdraw financial support from their child if he/she is gay.

I asked Qhawe (participant) what his parents would do if they found out one of their children was gay. Below is his response:

Umcwaningi: Ucabanga ukuthi abazali bakho bangayenzani ingane yabo uma bengayibona ukuthi ingane yabo iyisitabane noma inobulili obufanayo?

Reseacher: What do you think your parents would do if they found out that their child is gay or lesbian?

Qhawe (umfana): Anginaso isiqiniseko, mhlawumbe angashaywa kuthiwe akayeke lento ayenzayo.

Qhawe (boy): I am not sure, maybe they would hit him and say he must stop what he is doing.

Even though Qhawe is not sure what may happen to a sibling who is a homosexual, he suggests that the child would be punished and made to stop. Here, being homosexual is constructed as an act or performance that can be stopped and corrected. It is not understood as an identity. This clearly shows that from childhood children are aware that parents do not tolerate homosexuality and they might choose to punish their child if he/she displays same-sex relationship traits. This again shows how South African society is often heteronormative (Lubbe, 2007). Lubbe states that "heteronormativity emphasises the correctness of heterosexual dogmas and traditional family forms while at the same time censuring, punishing, 'medicalising', and rendering homosexuality invisible in all of its manifestations" (2007, p. 264). Similarly, in the above excerpt Qhawe demonstrates how condemnation of homosexuality begins at home and that corporal punishment may be used by his parents to stop this 'deviant' and non-normative form of sexuality. However, theory scholars contend that homosexual people and families come out to disclose their sexuality and a new same-sex sexualities era would make an appearance (Roseneil, 2002).

Robinson and Diaz note that: "'Family' is a powerful and pervasive word and it represents a highly stable and contradictory space, in which an individual's sense of belonging and identity can be affirmed on the one hand, or dismissed and denied on the other" (2006, p. 82). This shows that family is one of the most important structures in society, hence children respect them and learn how to be a boy or a girl from this structure. Additionally, in research coordinated by Braga et al. (2018) in Brazil most families demonstrate heteronormativity as a controlling device for sexuality, thus resulting in violence, repression, rejection and silencing the process of 'coming out of the closet' for children who are gays and lesbians.

Similarly, Qhawe believes that his parents see the need to prevent their children from being homosexual; thus they may opt for violence in the form of corporal punishment to stop their child from identifying him or herself as homosexual. Further to this, Smith and Payne claim

that "the adult is positioned as protector of the child, and this dynamic extends into schools where educators take the protection of childhood innocence as part of their professional obligations" (2014, p. 4).

Many homes like, like Qhawe's promote heteronormative practices and they can do anything to prevent their child from homosexuality. Family is one of the sites where cultural, social and economic meanings are created. If a child is non-conforming to normative-gendered traits he/she might be a victim of corporal punishment. This is due to: "The character of normative constructions of the power relations between adults and children and adult rights over children makes violence to the young by adults possible" (Van der Ende et al., 2016, p. 724). Therefore, his parents consider being gay as wrong and as a misdemeanour that can be stopped and parents think that it's normal to impose punishment. In doing so it shows his parents do not regard homosexuality as a sexual identity but rather as a choice (one that is wrong). In this instance violence is used as a tool to regulate homosexuality and to call those who demonstrate homosexual tendencies to order. This demonstrates how homes are manufactured as heterosexual sites that cannot accommodate homosexuals (McKinnon et al., 2017).

Furthermore, homosexuality in Africa is regarded as demonic and in violation of African culture (Asante, 2019). This is because most parents prevent homosexuality because they still believe in conservative religion (Martin, 2009). This situation within the home perpetuates the way homosexuals are treated in society and in schools. For example, when heterosexuality is universally viewed as a norm, LGBTQI individuals are subject to stigma and stereotyping (Kar et al., 2018). Robinson (2002) further states that in society the prevalence of homophobic and heterosexist discourses interpret all other sexualities other than heterosexuality as uncommon and untypical, resulting in the discrimination of those who are LGBTQI individuals and also the silencing of their experiences of harassment and inequity.

Below are extracts from Njabs who stated that his parents do not say anything about gays and lesbians, however personally he thinks they are bad people who act differently to the way they were born.

Njabs (boy): Abazali bami abasho lutho ngabantu bobulili obufanayo, kodwa mina ngithi bangabantu ababi ngoba bazenza amantombazane bebe bengabafana ngibona kuyinto embi leyo.

Njabs (umfana): My parents do not say anything about gays and lesbians, however personally I say they are bad people. They behave different from 'normal' boys and girls and that is bad.

According to Njabs his parents fail to speak about same-sex sexualities at home. Mangeya (2018) similarly found that parents consistently avoid conversations with boys and girls on matters about their sexuality. Even though parents may not discuss homosexuality at home, children like Njabs can make their own assumptions about gays and lesbians. This demonstrates that children are aware of diverse forms of sexuality and the normalisation of heterosexuality, and demonstrate homophobic tendencies towards those who perform gender in non-normative ways.

It also shows that children have sexual awareness. Therefore, the assumed innocence in childhood that children possess needs to be questioned. In the past and contemporarily, the concept of childhood innocence continues to persist as children are regarded as non-sexual beings (Bhana, 2008; and Egan & Hawkes, 2008). Furthermore, "this has been exacerbated because culture has also regarded children as the proverbial blank slates who do not know anything about issues relating to sexuality" (Mangeya, 2018, p. 46). It is thus assumed that children do not recognise sexuality and have no knowledge of it, however this is not the case from the comments made by Njabs. The assumptions Njabs makes about gay and lesbian individuals is however problematic as he perpetuates gendered norms and constructs gay and lesbian individuals as bad, ultimately fuelling intolerance towards diverse forms of sexuality. In the forthcoming segment I will examine playground politics in connection with homosexuality.

5.5 Playground politics: examining how homosexuality is constructed within a discourse of homophobia

5.5.1 Playground as a site to scrutinise peers' sexuality

It is quarter past ten in the morning. It is foundation phase lunch break. Boys and girls are playing on the playground, and some are having lunch. The researcher is on the ground too observing a group of Grade 3 girls who are playing skipping rope. This theme begins with an observation:

It was a sunny day and children are outside for lunchbreak when one boy from grade 2 asked to play with girls and the skipping rope. The girls refused to play with him stating that "we do not play with boys". One girl said "from grade one Milo liked to play with girls and does not want to play with boys". They advised him to go and play with other boys and stop behaving like an isitabane *(girls giggling).*

The above observation shows how boys and girls are expected to play with their own sex and how these plays are highly gendered and monitored by peers. Likewise, Chapman (2015) indicates that from an early age boys and girls learn their gender roles by locating themselves within the discourses of femininity and masculinity that is accessible to them in society. Therefore, they scrutinise each other's sexuality and victimise peers who do not conform to normative-gendered traits. This above observation shows that when children are in school they have a clear understanding of heterosexual norms. Similarly, Lynch (2015) notes that school plays are significant for minors to attain a better comprehension of the world and they also sharpen their academic and social skills.

In this incident Milo comes under scrutiny for wanting to play with girls instead of boys. Children, from childhood, are able to identify sports for different sexes; this is the case in the above observation where girls who are seven or eight do not allow a boy to play a 'girls' game with them. Likewise, from the age of three boys and girls are able to differentiate gender (Stitzlein, 2007). Gendered play is thus maintained by these girls on the playground by not allowing Milo to play with them. Similarly, Blaise and Taylor (2012) state that children's gendered play supplies proof of the heterosexual matrix and its robust gender stereotyping effects. Furthermore, Bryan (2018) argues that when boys participate in childhood plays that are viewed as 'girls play or playing girls' they face negative comments from peers because they are non-conforming to gender expectations. This may incorporate 'playing with dolls or taking part in hand jives' or participating in any other 'girls ventures' these activities are 'labelled' 'girls plays'. In the observation above Milo faces negative comments from the girls who direct homophobic insults at him because he does not want to play with other boys but with girls. Research investigating gendered roles in primary schools sustains the stereotypes (Lynch, 2015). According to girls in this observation, when a boy like Milo wants to play skipping rope he is referred to as *isitabane*. Below are extracts of who children prefer to play with and why they play with them:

Umcwaningi: Udlala nobani? Kungani udlala nabo?

Researcher: Who do you play with? Why do you play with them?

Ahmed (boy): I play with my friends who are boys (giggles). I don't play with girls,
my friends will laugh at me and call me gay.

*Mmeli (umfana): Ngasekhaya bakhona abangani bamantombazane enginabo.
Anginabo abangani bamantontombazane esikoleni ngoba abangani bami
abangabafana bazokuthi intombi yami.*

Mmeli (boy): In my neighbourhood I have friends who are girls. However, in school I
do not have friends who are girls because my friends (who are boys) will
say that girl is my girlfriend.

*Mlondi (umfana): Angidlali namantombazane ngoba ngizohlekwa ngiphinde ngibizwe
ngesitabane abanye abafana namantombazane.*

Mlondi (boy): I don't play with girls because other children will laugh and mock me
and I will be called gay.

Mayeza (2018) notes that pre-teen children are assumed asexual. However, this is indeed a
presumption because in my study children are aware of sexuality; they state that they do not
want to play with the opposite sex because peers would view them as gays. They also do not
want to be associated with diverse forms of sexuality. Renold (2006) and like Mayeza (2017)
found that the childhood stage is mostly regarded as a time of expected sexual blamelessness.
Furthermore, "children are perceived to be asexual, innocent and 'too young' to be capable of
understanding or dealing with such 'adult' concepts as sexuality" (Robinson, 2002, p. 419).

However, this is not the case when one considers the responses from Ahmed, Mmeli and
Mlondi as their responses show that children between the ages of eight and nine are not
simply innocent bystanders in constructions of gender and sexuality. They have constructions
about gender and they are able to regulate their play in a gendered manner. In the above
excerpts the boys are careful to not play with girls, because playing with girls contravenes
normative male performances and so they would be at risk of being labelled gay. According
to Blaise and Taylor (2012), feminist poststructuralists never presume that children
blamelessly play out gender roles. However, queer theorists are aware that minors are not
blameless when it comes to gender roles. Queer theorists state that sex responsibilities were
learned daily through communications from schooling, peers, families and the community

and gender distinctions were also mainly constructed through socio-cultural morals and perceptions of man and woman (Osgood & Giugni, 2015). They instead acutely acknowledge and police gender roles from childhood. Evidence of this is also seen within this study in which the child participants actively engaged in gendered play and policed those children who did not conform to gendered play.

Below is an extract from Mmeli who has a different response about playing with girls:

> Mmeli (boy): In my 'hood I have friends who are girls, however in school I don't have girls who are girls in school because other boys are going to laugh at me and say she is my girlfriend.

Mmeli's performance is regulated, whereby having a girlfriend is considered as the only reasonable explanation for playing with girls (thus positioning playing with girls within a notion of heterosexual desire). This shows that minors may have distinct reasons as to why they do not play with opposite sex. In Mmeli's case it is to avoid ridicule and to avoid being labelled as having a non-platonic friendship with a girl. Playing with the opposite sex in primary school is something children do not aspire to, because of unfounded assumptions about heterosexual desire that come from peers. Peers often police who children are able to play with. Gender policing from peers makes it impossible for learners to play with the opposite sex because they do not want to be labelled as being in a fabricated heterosexual relationship. Thus, in order to engage in platonic friendships normative-gendered practices are favoured and children then play only with children of the same sex all the time in school.

Every day boys and girls in primary school monitor their gender and this has led to heterosexuality being the dominant one. For primary school boys and girls sexuality forms a very important part of their social life. Bhana and Mayeza (2016); and Bhana (2007) note that sexuality for young learners is vital for their daily cultures.

However, Mmeli stated that in his neighbourhood he plays with girls because his friends will not see him, laugh at him and says the girl he chooses to play with is his girlfriend. Maintaining heterosexuality at all times in primary school is important in order to belong to the peer group.

The way in which Mmeli's friends ridicule him demonstrates how heterosexism is maintained at school. Children like Mmeli are thus fearful of playing with the opposite gender because

they may be categorised by friends according to heterosexual norms. Thus, these children display an inability to comprehend how boys and girls can play together without there being heterosexual desire and fuelling heteronormative gendered practices at school.

Below is an extract from one participant sharing feelings on gendered play:

Lwethu (Umfana): Abazali bami abashongo ukuthi ngingadlali namantombazane. Ngazinqumela nje ukuthi anagizodlala nawo. Ngicabanga ukuthi kumele amantombazane adlale wodwa nabafana badlale bodwa. Ngoba nemidlalo yethu ayafani.

Lwethu (boy): My parents did not say that I should not play with girls. I decided not to play with them because I do not want to. I think boys should play together and girls should also play together too. Our games too are not the same.

My interpretation of the above responses is that boys and girls do not want to play with the opposite sex. In the above extract Lwethu (participant) decided to not to play with girls. In this extract parents did not say anything about gender play, however this boy decided not to play with girls. However, Lwethu believes that boys' and girls' games are different, thus children are able to create their own constructions about who to play with and they also think that games are gendered. This implies that children have agency. Therefore, Tisdall and Punch (2012) note that children's agency should be a challenged and investigated notion rather than taken for granted. Likewise, feminist poststructuralist theory views minors as acute gender agents in the manufacturing and monitoring of their gender identities and gender identities of their peers (Osgood & Giugni, 2015). The above creates gender play discrimination among boys and girls. This demonstrates how primary schools are central sites for manufacturing and nurturing of mandatory heterosexualities, and especially as to how children's gender identities are performed (Renold, 2006). Gendered play in preschool performs an important role, be it in teaching, preschool activities or in play – and boys and girls (three to five years) have constructed toys that are suitable for a particular gender (Hallström et al., 2015). However, the way these plays' recreations are gendered is internalised by boys and girls and continued when they are in school. According to feminist poststructural theory, description of gender is a precarious and opposed social category whose connotations and interpretations are open to change across and within distinct cultures over time (Osgood & Giugni, 2015). Gendered plays maintain heterosexuality as the

dominant sexuality. Martin (2009) states that practises that occur in primary school become embedded and astute over time.

In primary school, children are able to develop their own agency regarding gender. They are also social agents of gender. Renold states that "constructing normative sexualities means not only essentialising and absolutising gender and sexual difference, but also sustaining gender and sexual inequalities" (2006, p. 494). Similarly, Lwethu does not want to play with girls, which means the continuation of discrimination and gender inequality and the maintenance of normative gendered norms. Likewise, Renold (2006) argues that heterosexuality has been a taken-for-granted norm, remained invisible and unexamined and has been made natural – and it is not even recognised as one version of sexuality. Therefore, "feminist postructuralist theory view[s] children as either taking advantage of or contesting (or sometimes doing both contesting or complying) the power that prevailing the gender discourses make available to them" (Blaise & Taylor, 2012, p. 90). In my study many of my participants like Lwethu complied with, rather than resisted, prevalent gender norms by actively engaging in gendered play.

Below is an observation that took place on the school playground and which demonstrates an incidence of homophobic bullying in relation to a gender non-conforming boy:

> *It was after ten o'clock in the morning (Grade 1-3) break time, some learners are playing on the ground some are playing at the pavilion area. Sandile who is a boy is carrying a skipping rope to play with girls during break time. A group of boys notice that Sandile is carrying a skipping rope. They went to him and started calling him (isitabane) gay for playing girls' games and for sharing lunch with girls instead of playing time with other boys. "One boy from the group said that is why you behave different from other boys, you a 'softie' that spend time with girls". Sandile felt sad but he continued to play with his friends (girls). The teacher who was on duty just looked at these boys and continued walking around the playground.*

Bryan (2018, p. 4) defines play "as a self-directed and self-selected activity in which children engage alone or with other children to act out stories and engage in interactive conversations, while using real or imaginary objects can be used to facilitate these processes". In primary school children are able to identify boys or girls who are gender non-conforming during play.

For example, the group of boys in the above excerpt shows how children police each other's performances during play in gendered ways. They do this by name-calling and hurling homophobic slurs at children who do not conform to normative gendered performances. Homophobic attacks and same-sex prejudices are common in institutions like schools because they are often dominated by heterosexual teachings. Similarly, "homophobic teasing or name-calling is a commonly reported experience, particularly by students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender" (Espelage et al., 2015, p. 3).

Furthermore, Francis (2017) notes that research shows sexual identity and gender are formed overtly in educational institutions and is how heterosexuality is typical. Gender non-conforming learners like Sandile thus become victims of stigmatisation and discrimination from peers. Likewise, Blondeel et al. note that "sexual stigma based on perceived sexual orientation emerges from a society's shared belief system in which homosexuality is denigrated and discredited as invalid relative to heterosexuality" (2018, p. 29). Similarly, in the incident described above, homophobia is used as a tool to ridicule Sandile whose behaviour deviates from normative masculine performances. Bryan (2018) has argued that "playing with and/or like the girls" can construct pessimistic results for boys who fearlessly disobey gendered assumptions of children's play. Likewise, in my study Sandile is victimised because he plays with girls. "Therefore, this serves to demonstrate how young children are socialised into and uphold those dominant masculine views as early as early childhood education" (Bryan, 2018, p. 2).

According to poststructuralist theory "children learn their gender and [gender roles] by positioning themselves inside the masculine and feminine discourses that are available to them in our society" (Chapman, 2015, p. 1273). Skipping rope in primary school is a feminine game that is associated with girls. Sandile is thus ridiculed and labelled as gay because he engages in a feminine game that is considered the terrain of girls. Homophobia can be inflicted by boys and girls and, in this observation it is inflicted by a group of boys. From childhood boys and girls select different play themes and this happens from preschool (Änggård, 2011). Furthermore, Zosuls et al. claim that "preschool-aged girls tend to play more with dolls, tea sets, and other domestic items, as well as art activities and dressing up, whereas boys tend to play more with toy vehicles, tool sets, balls, swords, and toy guns" (2009, p. 25). Therefore, minors are constructed into playing with different toys

(MacNaughton, 2006; and Browne, 2004), which is why Sandile is insulted when he carries a skipping rope, because it is known to the children as a girls' sport.

From the poststructural theory perspective, MacNaughton (2006) and Blaise (2005) state that everyday adults as well as children actively partake in the production of their gender identities. The teacher who was on duty did not reprimand these boys and this demonstrates how the teacher is complicit in the normalisation of homophobic bullying in schools. In most instances it is men who are perpetrators of violence against other men who do not comply to dominant traits of manhood (Blondeel et al., 2018). In this incident it was a group of boys mocking and calling names to another boy learner who was carrying a skipping rope and playing with girls.

Homosexuality among boys and girls is viewed as abnormal and children who are gender non-conforming are harassed daily in the classroom or outside of it. GLSEN (2015) similarly indicates that minors who self-identify as gender non-conforming and homosexuals are unequally intimidated and troubled in public learning institutions. Additionally, Robinson notes that "sexuality and sexual orientation issues are controversial areas that are fraught with many obstacles and cultural taboos that operate to silence, marginalise, and/or limit any dialogue or representation of this form of difference, especially in the context of children and, by association, early childhood education" (2002, p. 416).

In the next section I will discuss the insults, hate speech and homophobic bullying from peers in primary school.

5.6   Unravelling insults, hate speech and homophobic bullying from peers in primary school

This section begins by outlining how Msebe was bullied in school by one learner who perceived him as gay. This also serves as a constant reminder that children are always policing gender and victimise children who contravene heterosexual norms. The common occurrence of homophobic bullying, insults and hate speech in primary schools has a major impact on learners who are perceived as homosexual by peers:

> *Umcwaningi: Wake wabizwa ngomuntu onobulili obufanayo esikoleni noma uke wabona omunye umfundi obizwa kanjalo abanye abafundi?*

Reseacher: Have you been called gay by your peers in school or have you seen other learners being called gay by other learners?

Msebe (umfana): Yebo!!! Sebeke bangibiza esikoleni, omunye wabafana baka grade 3D kade ngidla ilunch nabangani bami oNtando noThando (amantombazane) sise nkundleni yezemidlalo.

Msebe (boy): Oh yes!!! I have been called gay by one of the boys from grade 3D on the grounds while eating lunch with my friends Ntando and Thando (girls).

Umcwaningi: Yini eyenza akubize ngomuntu onobulili obufanayo?

Researcher: Why did he call you gay?

Msebe: Mmmm….. (ecabanga) angazi kahle, kodwa ngicabanga ukuthi yingoba njalo ngidlala noThando noNtando (amantombazane). Oh futhi wathi mina ngikhulumisa okwentombazane ngibuye ngihambise okwentombazane.

Msebe: Mmmm…..(thinking) I am not really sure, but I think it is because I play with Ntando and Thando (girls). Oh! he also stated that I speak and walk like a girl.

Umcwaningi: Wazizwa kanjani?

Researcher: How did you feel?

Msebe: Ngacasuka

Msebe: I was so sad.

Msebe has been victimised by a peer for playing with girls and for speaking and behaving like a girl. He is experiencing homophobic bullying because according to his peers, he is non-conforming to normative gendered roles. Plummer (2001) states that homophobic terms, such as faggot and poofter, are generally learnt during primary school. This shows that children in primary school as young as eight- to nine years old are aware of gendered norms and they monitor them daily. Blaise (2009) similarly notes that from childhood boys and girls are aware of sex and sexualities. Children's awareness of sexualities forces them to expect peers to display heterosexuality always. Therefore, in primary school, learners who are perceived as gay or lesbian, because they do not comply with heterosexual and gendered norms. suffer from homophobic torments and insults from peers. "Homophobia is a process of

dehumanising by socially excluding and isolating a group who does not conform to particular normative hegemonic practices" (McArthur, 2015, p. 54). Brutality is a foundational element of relations in all institutions of children's actuality, and it also reproduces the common structure of their social existence (McDonald, 2014). The prevalent homophobic language in schools is accompanied by damaging consequences to learners who are vulnerable to such language (McCabe et al., 2013). This is caused because schools are social institutions that reflect heterosexual values of society (McCabe et al., 2013). Learners inherit societal behaviours from home and from school and explicitly maintain and value heterosexism and they are against individuals who do not conform to normative gendered roles.

Opting for violence among primary school learners is prevalent when they are called gay. Below are the responses of learners who were asked how they would feel if they were called gay by their peers:

Researcher: How would you feel if someone calls you gay?

James (boy): I will feel very sad, because I am not a boy who acts like a girl.

Umcwaningi: Uzizwa kanjani uma umuntu ekubiza ngomuntu onobulili obufanayo?

Researcher: How would you feel if someone calls you gay?

Njabs (umfana): Ngiyadinwa, uma nje kukhona ongibizwa ngesitabane ngingafuqa ngempama.

Njabs (boy): I would be very angry, and I would punch that person very hard.

Umcwaningi: Kungani ungamshaya?

Researcher: Why would you smack that person?

Njabs (umfana): Ngoba ngingumfana mina kodwa umuntu engibiza ngesitabane uchaza ukuthi ngingumfana ozenza intombazane.

Njabs (boy): Because I am a boy and someone who calls me gay says that I am a boy who behaves like a girl.

Violence in schools threatens people's nobility of the disgruntled, as well as discontinuing the constructive operating of schools (Bhana, 2009 and Reyneke, 2011). In the above excerpt Njabs says that he would resort to violence and hit anyone who calls him gay, because according to him to be gay means that you are boy who behaves like a girl. According to him

the best way to deal with homophobic bullying perpetrators is to opt for violence. This shows that children such as Njabs who are still in primary school are aware of same-sex sexualities and they do not want to be associated with homosexuality. Likewise, research shows that in primary school learners are aware of diverse sexualities (Van Leent & Ryan, 2016). Additionally, Pallotta-Chiarolli (2000) indicates that primary school learners use homophobic words or insults every day. Additionally, Payne and Smith note that 'bullying' "behaviours are not antisocial but rather highly social acts that maintain the peer boundaries for 'normal' gender" (2016, p. 132). Similarly, in the above situation Njabs maintains how he would resort to violence and punch an individual who threatens his boundary of a normative gendered and heterosexual identity by calling him gay.

Below are responses from another participant who was called gay by a peer. He also opted for violence. Similarly, McArthur (2015) indicates that school violence is not the same, it consists of different aspects such as race, gender, class, age and sexuality. This shows that same-sex sexualities in schools and in society are viewed as taboo and are not easily accepted by the participants, thus learners choose to resort to violence if they are called gay:

Umncwaningi: Uzizwa kanjani uma umuntu ekubiza ngesitabane?

Researcher: How would you feel if someone calls you gay?

Qhawe (umfana): Ngifunda ibanga lesibili kukhona intombazane eyangibiza ngesitabane, ngadinwa. Uma kuphuma isikole ngayishaya.

Qhawe (boy): While I was in grade two a girl called me gay, and I was angry after school I smacked her.

Umcwaningi: Kungani wakubiza ngomuntu onobulili obufanayo?

Researcher: Why she was calling you gay?

Qhawe: Ngoba ngangikhuluma nomngani wami ngezwi elincane sengathi intombazane wafika yena wathi, 'kanti usuyisitabane nawe ukhulumisa okwesitabane'.

Qhawe: I was talking to my friend and my voice was so feminine and that girls said, "You are gay now, you talk like gay people".

The above responses depict that homophobic slurs are common among peers in primary school if you do not conform to normative gendered traits. These incidents happened in the

playground. Similarly, Minton et al. (2008) note that school corridors seem to be a common place for bullying (72 % of those bullied), and also half of bullying happens in the playground and in the teaching institution toilets. Homophobia was used as a tool by Qhawe's peer to insult him because he did not conform to normative gendered traits. Likewise, homophobic violence can be ascribed to difficult masculinities finding it hard to sustain their hegemonic masculinities in society (McArthur, 2015). Furthermore, Gerouki (2010) indicates that the hostile and aggressive school environment might affect learners' attitudes towards school. In this incident Qhawe chose to utilise violence to defend himself from perpetrators of homophobic bullying. Homophobic bullying happens in the classroom and outside it. This shows how non-conforming behaviour is stigmatised and viewed as abnormal in primary schools, and learners who do not perform normative gendered norms are ridiculed and are victims of negative bullying comments.

Additionally, hegemonic masculinity is male-centred and it encourages power over women and minority sexualities and is associated with being strong and powerful (Fernandez-Alvarez, 2014). It also perpetuates patriarchy in society, which oppresses women. When men feel that their masculinity is under threat they use violence to repossess power and position (Moosa & Bhana, 2017). This is evident in the responses stated earlier from Njabs and Qhawe when they said they would opt for violence if someone calls them homosexual and they believe their masculinity is being compromised. This is because South African society is still firmly attached to patriarchal and gender inequity (Jewkes et al., 2015). This is also shown by the above participants' remarks and how they want to maintain heterosexuality at all times.

Qhawe was bullied in school by peers because he did not conform to traditional gendered norms and was thus labelled gay. Similarly, Minton et al. (2008) state that homosexual pupils are more likely to be sufferers of bullying in teaching institutions compared to heterosexual learners. Thus, Denny et al. (2014) state that bullying is a social construct, therefore, it is pervasive within social relations. Homophobic bullying is common in primary schools because it actively encourages normalisation of heterosexism by using same-sex sexualities to insult those who do not conform to gendered norms. This has a negative effect on the lives of minors because minors like Qhawe from this study become victims of homophobic bullying. Likewise, McArthur (2015) states that homophobic violence and homophobia in schooling institutions leaves many boys unsafe. It is evident that there is stigma associated

with being called gay, and boys and girls do not want to be associated with homosexuality. This is evident where Njabs and Qhawe drastically opt for violence because they definitely do not want to be called gay. Violence entails deprivation and neglect but it is often sexual, physical and psychological (Radford et al., 2017). In this case Njabs and Qhawe turn to physical violence because they think that their gender identity is being compromised by peers who construct them as homosexuals.

Butler (1990) states that performing of masculinity is reproductively performed by children so they can 'do it correctly' in front of others and in front of their peers. Thus children do not want to be associated with same-sex sexualities because they want to maintain normative masculinities always. Hegemonic masculinity is pervasive in primary schools and boys aspire to maintain this type of masculinity. Dalley-Trim for example also states that "research on boys' performativity in the classroom site has demonstrated that boys – although not all boys – actively seek to engage with and play out these dominant versions of masculinity" (2007, p. 202). Additionally, Bartholomaeus states that "in primary schools the concept of hegemonic masculinity is used with boys mainly in terms of sport, bodies and sexuality" (2011, p. 235). Furthermore, "hegemonic masculinity is the form embodying male domination and exercising power and authority over women (and other men), with all the consequences of oppression, violence and privileges" (Fernandez-Alvarez, 2014, p. 49). Njabs wants to display normative masculinity at all times because it is regarded as superior to other masculinities. Below is the extract from Njabs who stated further that he did not want to be likened to girls:

> *Umcwaningi: Kungani ungathandi ukufaniswa nentombazane?*

> Researcher: Why you don't like to be likened to girls?

> *Njabs(umfana): Hhuuu…hhayi amantombazane ayathanda ukudlala imidlalo engingayithandi nokuthi ayathanda ukukhala.*

> Njabs(boy): Hhuu….no girls like to play games that I do not like and they like to cry.

Njabs states that he does not like to be likened to girls because they play games that he does not like and they like crying. By rejecting girls' vulnerability, it can be understood that he aspires instead towards hegemonic masculine traits associated with boys because it demonstrates toughness and power. Similarly, Robinson and Diaz (2006) note that from childhood it is vital for boys and girls to get their gender performance right, also in the way

they are regarded and welcomed by peers, plus by themselves. Njabs thinks that it is important to sustain his normative masculinity and behave like a boy at all times. Furthermore, Robinson and Diaz (2006) indicate that hegemonic discourses are there to monitor and control "correct" gender performativity. Therefore, Njabs believes it is always important to perform gender. This may be because schools are heterosexual sites, thus they may also promote hegemonic masculinity overtly and covertly. Below are more extracts of learners who do not want to be likened to girls:

Umcwaningi: *Kungani ungathandi ukufaniswa nentombazane?*

Researcher: Why you don't like to be likened to girls?

Mmeli: Mmmm…. Angithandi ukufaniswa nentombazane lokho kuchaza ukuthi ngiyisitabane.

Mmeli: Mmmm…..I don't like to likened to girls, that would mean that I am gay.

Umcwaningi: Kungani usho kanjalo?

Reseacher: Why do you think like that?

Mmeli: Ngoba izitabane abafana abazenza amantombazane

Mmeli: Because gays are boys who behaving like girls.

Maintaining hegemonic masculinity continues to raise boys who think that displaying feminine traits implies that you are gay and this in evident in Mmeli's response. Mmeli maintains that when you are called gay it implies that you are a boy who behaves like a girl and he does do not like that. This may be because schools are viewed as one of the most important institutions where masculinities are manufactured and established (Swain, 2004). This leads to the continuation of homophobic bullying and gender policing in primary school in order to maintain hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity promotes supremacy of boys over girls and it strongly opposes homosexuality. Likewise, Beasley observes "that at the top of the hierarchy of masculinities is hegemonic masculinities: it emphasises men's supremacy over women as well as supremacy of certain men over others" (2008, p. 222). Thus the boys in this study did not wish to be likened to girls as this can be considered a loss of power and a negation of their hegemonic and heterosexual masculine identities as they would be labelled gay. In the next section I will discuss how media has an impact on how children learn about diverse sexualities.

5.7 Media and its role in children's learning about diverse sexualities: Children identifying non-normative gendered behaviour on television

This theme will start with children's response about homosexual individuals they have watched on television.

> *Umcwaningi: Uke wababona abantu abanobulili obufanayo kumabonakude noma ephephandabeni?*

> Researcher: Have you seen gays or lesbians on television or on a newspaper?

> *Dudu: Oh ya…ngake ngambona kuTV edlala kuZalo*

> Dudu: Oh yes… I have seen him on television on a telenovela called uZalo

> *Umcwaningi: Wayenzani ekhombisa ukuthi unobulili obufanayo?*

> Researcher: What he was doing to show that he is gay?

> *Dudu: Igama lakhe uGC uhambisa okwentombazane, kodwa uwumfana futhi uyaluka ekhanda nendlela akhuluma ngayo uyaziqhenya.*

> Dudu: His name is GC (gay) he walks like girl but he is a boy, he plaits his dreadlocks and talks with pride like a girl.

Dudu is able to identify non-normative gendered performances that are shown on television. Likewise, Robinson and Diaz (2006) note that means of communication and communications automation, such as computers, movies, mobile phones and television characterise the way boys and girls grow up because we live in a globalised and competitive world. Dudu concludes that this character GC is gay because he does not conform to heteronormative practices – (GC is a character on *Uzalo* – a South African soapie and he is openly gay). Media for children like Dudu is not only for entertainment but for learning about diverse sexuality. Similarly, through media, educational setting, families and peers is where children often gain sexual knowledge (Davies & Robinson, 2013). Furthermore, through the media children learn about gender and sexuality (Martin, 2009). Dudu can identify different traits displayed by GC that are non-normative. Dudu identifies gay behaviour displayed by the character GC with walking and talking like a girl and plaiting one's hair. Similarly, Harrison (2016) states that sexual identity and gender expression are available within children's television. According to Dudu if you display traits that are opposite to one's gender then that person is gay. Children can identify gender normative traits that belong to a particular sex.

Therefore, straight subjection to same-sex characters seems to influence viewers and often media utilisation leads viewers to construct reliance about same-sex sexuality that occurs at the same time as those shown in the media (Calzo & Ward, 2009).

Children's exposure to media happens at home before they start primary school. From an early age children's exposure to media begins before they can practise critical thinking expertise (Harrison, 2016). Many agents contribute to this, in this case it is media that boys and girls watch daily. In media the prestige of LGBTIQ individuals has risen (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011). Below are responses from the participants where they refer to other television shows that display gay individuals:

> *Umcwaningi: Uke wababona abantu abanobulili obufanayo kumabonakude noma ephephandabeni?*

> Researcher: Have you seen gays or lesbians on television or seen them on a newspaper?

> *Thems: Yebo, ngimbone kumabonakude uSomizi ku channel 161 kuDSTV*

> Thems: Yes, I have seen him on television his name is Somizi on channel 161 on DSTV.

> *Umcwaningi: USomizi kungabe yini ayenzayo eyenziwa abantu abanobulili obufanayo?*

> Researcher: What is being done by Somizi that is also done by gay people?

> *Thems: Iyooo… indlela agqoka ngayo, ahamba ngayo, yonke nje into yakhe ihlukile kunabanye abafana. Wenza ikhanda njengamantombazane, agqoke nezingubo aphinde afake namaweave ne make up.*

> Thems (girl): Yoooo…the way he walks and the way he dresses and actually everything about him is different when compared to other boys. He wears dresses and put on weaves and make-up.

Children such as Thems between the ages of eight to nine watch these shows and are able to identify non-normative gendered traits. Similarly, boys and girls are also exposed to media such as e-television and on mobile phones where LGBTQI people are regularly portrayed. Harrison (2016) indicates that people from around the world learn from media, because increasingly it is becoming a cultural benchmark. Most of these television shows are popular

for boys and girls in primary schools, because they have quoted popular characters and feature homosexual individuals like GC and Somizi. Children are apparently more exposed to television than print media because most of the participants refer to gay people only on television. Below are extracts from participants about more individuals who are viewed as homosexuals on media:

> *Umcwaningi: Uke wababona abantu abanobulili obufanayo kumabonakude noma ephephandabeni?*

> Researcher: Have you seen gays or lesbians on television or on a newspaper?

> *Naledi: Ngike ngambona edlala ku* Ses'Top la*, edlala ku channel 191.*

> Naledi: I have gay individual on *Ses'Top la* which is on channel 191.

> *Umcwaningi: Kungani uthi lowomuntu unobulili obufanayo?*

> Researcher: Why are saying that person is gay?

> *Naledi: Kunalomuntu ongumfana odlala ku* Ses'Top la*, ukhulumisa okwentombazane, uhambisa okwentombazane futhi ugqoka ama bum shorts amantombazane futhi unamhlaya wenza ukuthi abantu bahleke.*

> Naledi: There is a guy who plays on *Ses' Top la*, he talks like a girl, walks like a girl and wears bum shorts. He is funny and makes people laugh.

According to Naledi this gay character on *Ses'Top la* makes people laugh. Similarly, "the discourse of gay men as 'funny' and entertaining is a dominant one that prevails in Western societies and is largely perpetuated through popular culture, especially film and television comedies" (Robinson & Diaz, 2006, p.164). This is also common in South Africa where there are shows and telenovelas where gay men are portrayed as 'funny'. To mention a few, *Uzalo* is one of the most watched telenovelas in South Africa, as is *Ses'Top la;* both these shows are on channel 191. Somizi's show is called *Living a Dream with Somizi* and *Idols* music show where he is the judge. Likewise, Gomillion and Giulian (2011) state that in media homosexual characters have become influential, for example in television shows like *Will and Grace, The Ellen* show, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy;* these programmes have become fascinating to a vast audience of heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals alike. What is common from participants' responses about gay characters on television is that they all, walk and talk like girls. This shows that even with media children are able to identify non-normative gendered behaviour which is associated with gay individuals on screen. Such media shows in

South Africa are watched by many viewers and thus play a crucial role in reinforcing their ideas about non-normative gendered behaviour being linked to homosexuality. The next section in this chapter addresses religion and places of worship in relation to how children construct same-sex sexualities.

5.8. How children negotiate between religion, places of worship and same-sex sexualities

5.8.1. Religious institutions, children and homosexuality

Children are raised with a religious upbringing because their parents accompany them to places of worship. The beliefs that prevail in religious institutions play a vital role in how children assimilate them. However, homosexuality is a sensitive topic in most places of worship regardless of the religion. Most religious institutions regard homosexuality as a sin. Similarly, Yacoub (2015) notes that same-sex sexuality is a great sin and firmly forbidden in Islamic jurisprudence. Additionally, in Islam heterosexuality is a premium characteristic of a good Muslim (Yacoub, 2015). Likewise, Bhana et al. (2019) state that conservative Christian principles were formed into local customs replicating gender as binary and diverse sexualities as appalling. Places of worship are institutions which favour heterosexual roles and promote hegemonic masculinity.

Similarly, Robinson and Diaz (2006) observe that religious faiths normalise ruling discourses promoting heterosexuality as normal and natural and other sexualities are unusual and abnormal. Homosexuality remains a contentious matter, hence they prefer not to discuss it in religious institutions. The sensitivity that comes with homosexuality in modern society makes places of worship shy away from addressing it. Homosexuality is still regarded as taboo and unacceptable in many institutions. Heteronormative practices are prevalent in these institutions and they govern how the faithful should conduct themselves. In most places of worship, they do not preach about gay people. Buhle (participant) stated how her pastor referred to same-sexuality as bad people whose behaviour is unacceptable. Below are extracts about what churches, mosques, temples say about gay and lesbian individuals:

> *Thems (intombazane): Mina ngiya esontweni. Umfundisi uthi izitabane zingabantu abambi, akufanele izingane zibafunze ngoba zibafundisa into embi.*

> Thems (girl): I go to church. My pastor says that gay people are not good, and children must not be like them because they are teaching them bad thing.

Naledi (intombazane): Mina ngikhonza kwaShembe. Siya ethempelini umshumayeli akakhulumi ngabantu abayizitabane.

Naledi (girl): I go to Shembe (Nazareth denomination). We go to the temple and the pastor does not talk about gay people.

Researcher: In church, temple, or mosque what do they say about gay or lesbian people?

Ahmed: I go to mosque. They do not talk or preach about gay people.

According to Thems who goes to church – the pastor states that homosexuals are bad people. Homosexuality according to this church is very bad and children are advised not to behave like gay individuals. Similarly, in America organisations like Focus on the Family and American Family Association employ religious guidance, devotional, and God to denounce homosexuality, and to separate discussion on sexual and gender variety in non-religious teaching institutes (Newman et al., 2017). These are attempts to condemn same-sex sexualities. Therefore, "the more homosexuality is rejected and interpreted as deviant behaviour by a particular denomination, the more the members of that denomination will reject homosexuality" (Gerhards, 2010, p. 15). Therefore, the above Christian denominations have a significant responsibility to embrace and address diverse sexuality as a form of sexual orientation.

"Religiosity appears to be one of the strongest socialising determinants to explain rejection of homosexuality" (Janssen & Scheepers, 2018, p. 1). This is evident in Naledi's response, where she goes to Nazareth Baptist church, which is better known as the Shembe denomination. According to Naledi they go to the temple on Saturdays, however the preacher does not preach about gay people. This shows that some denominations do not address issues of homosexuality. Furthermore, Ahmed goes to mosque and they also do not discuss issues of homosexuality. According to Adamczyck and Pitt (2009) Muslims worldwide reject same-sex sexuality.

Below is the extract from a participant who stated that he thinks that gays should have their own places of worship because they are different from heterosexuals. This shows that from childhood boys and girls do not accept homosexuality not only at school but also in places of worship. Children have their own constructions concerning religion and same-sex sexualities. Dan believes that gay and lesbian people are different from heterosexuals thus they must have

their places of worship. This promotes the discrimination and marginalisation of homosexuals. Homosexuals are thus seen as people who should be ostracised in most public places.

> Researcher: In church, temple, or mosque what do they say about gay or lesbian people?

> Dan: I am a Christian, I go to church almost all Sundays and during the week. Nothing is said about gays, but I think they go to other churches, not my church.

> Researcher: Why should they go to other churches?

> Dan: Because there are no gay people in my church.

> Researcher: Do you think gay people must have their own church?

> Dan: Oh yes… they must have their own church, where people like them worship.

> Researcher: Why you do not want to worship with them?

> Dan: Because there are no gay people in my church and they must go to a church where other gay people go.

> Researcher: Why you do not want to be in the same church with gay people?

> Dan: Because they are not like us.

> Researcher: How are they different?

> Dan: They act like girls while they are boys.

Dan thinks that gay people should have their own places of worship. Dan goes to church almost every Sunday. Whitehead observed "that higher levels of religious service attendance will serve to intensify the negative attitudes biblical literalists have toward gays and lesbians" (2018, p. 9). This may be the situation with Dan too, because his weekly church attendance may influence him to be homophobic. Furthermore, he thinks that they must not worship with heterosexuals because they are 'different'. They are 'different' because they do not conform to normative gendered traits. According to him the place in which he worships is only for people who conform to heteronormative traits. Likewise, Bartkowski et al. (2008) state that the power of religion impacts on minor's lives across various institutional surroundings such as home and teaching institutions. However, Dan's church avoids teaching about sexuality

issues leaving him to make his assumptions about same-sex sexualities. This is problematic because he is led to believe that his church does not include gay people – thus he believes that gay people must be banished for being different and have their own church. Similarly, "the family's religious environment can function alternatively as a stepping stone or a stumbling block for children's development" (Bartkowski et al., 2008, p. 33). However, according to Bartkowski et al. (2008) religion does seem to be virtuous for minors. Religious institutions should thus provide teachings that empower children to be better citizens. Tolerance of all sexualities should be taught in places of worship to develop children holistically. Having outlined how children negotiate between religion, places of worship and same-sex sexualities, I now move on to examine how primary schools are gender policing sites.

5. 9   Primary school as gender policing site

Richardson defines "gender as the learning of culturally and historically specific social roles associated with women or men, and used to describe someone as masculine or feminine" (2015, p. 15). Children in primary school frequently monitor each other's gender by ensuring that minors display manly and womanly attributes that are relevant to their genders. Payne and Smith indicate that "gender policing is the social process of enforcing cultural expectations for 'normal' masculine and feminine expression" (2016, p. 129). Somehow, gender performativity was found to be very important to the children in my own study. This section will begin with an observation from what happened in the classroom:

> *It is 9h30 in the morning in a grade 3 class and it is group reading time. Group two are called to the front to take mats and their reading books. While they are sitting down Ndalo (girl) sits with her legs wide opened. One boy (Manzini) who is sitting next to her said "Hey Ndalo put your legs together, girls do not sit like that, it's us boys who must sit with legs wide opened." The teachers asked Manzini who told him that? Manzini said "my grandmother always says that to my sister because she does not know how to sit like a girl."*

> *"How must girls and boys sit?" asked the teacher. "They must sit with their legs closed and boys can open their legs but mam you allow girls to sit like us. Do you think that is not right? Yes, mam I think so. They are things for boys and things for girls. What are things for girls? Cooking, playing*

skipping rope, looking after babies. And boys what are their things?
Playing soccer and working hard." (observation)

Here, Manzini gender-polices how his classmate (Ndalo) sits. Therefore, according to Manzini being 'correctly' in gender is based on assumptions about what is appropriate for boys and girls. Boys are hierarchically positioned in terms of bodily performances, and opened legs, soccer and hard work are considered a means of getting the gender right. Girls on the other hand are policed and regulated by subordination. This is because of the 'heterosexual matrix' that is extensively regarded in community as 'appropriate'. Executions of gender are formed and normalised as heterosexual (Butler, 1990). This did not start in school, but from home because Manzini was told by his grandmother how girls and boys should behave. This means that socialisation by family members still has a big influence on how children monitor gendered norms. Additionally, Smith and Payne reveal: "As children learn and invest in the rules of normative masculine and feminine performance, they also learn to use these social norms to police one another and battle for social position" (2018, p. 3). This is evident in the way Manzini gender-policed Ndalo and listed chores 'supposed' to be for boys and for girls. This also demonstrates how gender monitoring begins from childhood.

Similarly, gender monitoring that occurs during childhood and adolescence may have deep-rooted influences into adulthood (Bauermeister et al., 2017). This may be caused because schools are also sites that instil normative gendered traits overtly and covertly. Likewise, structures create the school culture and are influence and shape everyone at school, and impact how gender should be performed (Bantjes & Nieuwoudt, 2014). Ndalo's way of doing gender is under surveillance because Manzini expects her to maintain gendered roles. Therefore. Ndalo is under pressure to maintain heterosexual gendered roles and pupils who do not comply to heterosexual gendered roles are at risk of being harassed and discriminated against. Payne and Smith (2016) note that in schools all actions are measured against heteronormative standards. This makes learners regularly insecure because of policing from teachers, administrators and peers. Manzini is policing gender in the classroom thus making learning difficult for Ndalo because learners who do not adhere to normative gendered traits are victimised, discriminated against and bullied by peers. Payne and Smith (2016) indicate that learners whose genders do not normatively line up with their biological sex are the often preyed on and harassed through bullying. This is because "as students go about their school

day, all actions are measured against heteronormative standards, which means constant vulnerability to the possibility of policing from peers or adults, this policing establishes the boundaries of 'normal' gender performance" (Payne & Smith, 2016, p. 129).

The teacher in the above observation did not challenge Manzini's belief about gendered roles, instead she remained quiet and was thus complicit in maintaining gendered performances. Similarly, Francis and Brown (2017) state that complicit silence is an act of surveillance and is naturalised as a mandatory significance. Furthermore, "heterosexuality is normalised and incorporated into the character and climate of schools, inclusive of the curricular and social-emotional experience, so the policing and regulating of sexuality occurs – thus normalising heterosexuality makes explicit gender and sexuality binaries in curriculum, pedagogy and school culture" (Francis & Brown, 2017, p. 4). Having outlined how the primary school is a gender policing site, in the next section I go on to examine how *isitabane* is used as an instrument to regulate non-normative gender performances at school.

5. 10 *Isitabane*: A tool used regulate non-normative gender performances at school

Daily usage of a pejorative gay term or *isitabane* occurs in primary schools both inside and outside the classroom. This theme begins with an observation of what happened outside the classroom:

> *Its nine o'clock in the morning the children are lining up outside the classroom, because it's time for P.E. (Physical Education). Ryano is talking in boys' line and the teacher asked him to join girls' line. Nikita "Hayi bo Ryano, are you a girl now or you are* isitabane*?" Ryano looked at her with an angry face and replied "Leave me alone". The whole class laughed. The teacher asked Nikita to apologise to Ryano. (observation).*

Nikita calls Ryano *isitabane* because he is not standing in the boys' line. This shows that children inside and outside the classroom who do not conform to normative gendered traits are victims of verbal abuse or hate speech from peers. Similarly, DePalma and Jennett reported: "A recent UK study found that 75% of primary teachers' report hearing the phrases 'you're so gay' or 'that's so gay' and that 44% report hearing words like 'poof', 'dyke', 'queer' and faggot" (2010, p. 17). This shows that Nikita uses teachings that prevail in primary school to maintain heteronormative practices. Separate lines for boys and girls is one

of the normative gendered practices that prevails in school and reinforces gender binaries at all times. Similarly, Dessel et al. indicate that "schools often mirror and reproduce inequalities through heteronormativity and binary gender norms systems that make up larger societal norms" (2017, p. 136).

The teacher decided to punish Ryano by moving him to join the girls' line. By moving to the girls' line Ryano faces ridicule from his peers as he is forced to contravene gendered norms by moving into a girls' space. The teacher is complicit in constructing gay identities as an insult by simply asking Nikita to apologise for her remarks – instead of questioning the learners about why they consider being labelled as gay as an insult – the teacher fails to promote respect for and acceptance of diverse sexual identities. Dessel et al. (2017) state that educators hold a responsible place in the classroom, a setting where they assist, expand and guide the behaviour and language of learners. Furthermore, Farr (2000) states that educators are professionals whose educational directive means they have an impact on whether or not their learners grow views of preconception or respect toward same-sex sexualities. Bhana states that "the repudiation of homosexuality and constitution of heterosexuality as the norm during lessons, through jokes and outright discrimination by teachers, requires attention" (2012, p. 308).

Birkett and Espelage (2015) state that in schools one of the most common forms of victimisation present is homophobic name-calling. Therefore, the gay word is used every day by children in the classroom, playground and in the assembly area. This is the same at the primary school where my research was conducted, where boys and girls use such words to insult others. In my observation boys and girls use the gay word to tease and deride each other. Below are the responses from participants who were called (*isitabane*) by peers:

> *Umcwaningi: Wake wabizwa ngesitabane?*
>
> Researcher: Have you been called gay?
>
> *Naledi: Ngake ngabizwa ngesitabane uSiviwe (umfana) ngoba ethi ngithanda ukudlala nabafana.*
>
> Naledi: Siviwe (boy) once called me *isitabane* because I like playing with boys.
>
> Researcher: Have you been called gay?

James: Yes mam, I was called *isitabane* by Jomo because I refused to lend him my pencil.

In primary school usage of the word *isitabane* is common from both boys and girls, and in the above extract this is evident. Children like Siviwe use the word *isitabane,* and they assume that boys and girls who do not conform to normative gendered traits are gays. However, children assume that boys and girls who do not conform to normative gendered traits are gays. Likewise, Naledi was even called gay even though she is a girl. James was also called *isitabane* because he refused to give Jomo a pencil. This shows that in primary school the gay word is often used as an insult, not as a sexual orientation. This is evident in James's scenario. Primary schools are places where homophobic bullying happens every day, as in this incident where Naledi was called gay because she was playing with boys. Likewise, Toomey and Russell (2016) note that learners often become sufferers of homophobic tormenting because of their sexual identity, appearance, or expression and their gender challenges to normative gendered traits. Naledi is a victim of homophobic bullying because she does not play with other girls.

If you do not adhere to normative gendered traits you will be called names. Similarly, "bullying of this nature also manifests in the use of statements that frame 'inappropriate' ways of being that do not conform to the gender binary norm" (Apostolidou, 2019, p. 7). Children also think that to be gay is not a sexual orientation, instead they believe that people are just imitating the opposite sex. Therefore, participants want to correct peers' behaviours by explaining how a heterosexual boy or girl behaves. Likewise, Valentine et al. (2014) note that 'compulsory heterosexuality' and monotonous heterosexism produce the very circumstances in which homophobia and gender inequity are created. If they do not behave like them, they are victims of homophobic bullying and hate speech. Similarly, Apostolidou (2019) concurs that schools are sites that appear to sit in a context that is highly affected by homophobic bullying, violence and discrimination.

5.11   Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the findings from this study by drawing upon queer theories and a feminist poststructuralist theory. It began by unravelling what it means to be attracted to the same-sex and looked at how children define same-sex sexualities. It also analysed how some children demonstrated positive attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals. Secondly, this

chapter discussed whether children learn about diverse sexualities in school along with how parents promote heterosexuality and intolerance against gay and lesbian identities. Thirdly, playground politics was discussed, and examined how homosexuality is constructed within a discourse of homophobia. In addition, I unravelled how insults, hate speech and homophobic bullying emanate from peers in primary school. Then I analysed the media and its role in children's learning about diverse sexualities and discussed how children are able to identify non-normative gendered behaviour on television.

Additionally, I examined how children negotiate between religion, places of worship and same-sex sexualities. Lastly, I provided a discussion which focused on the primary school as a gender-policing site, and I uncovered how *isitabane* was often used as a tool by participants to regulate non-normative gender performances at school. Little attention has been given to understanding the complications surrounding the ways in which children construct same-sex sexualities in foundation phase teaching surroundings. The findings from this research demonstrate how their constructions of same-sex sexualities are problematic as they reinforce homophobic bullying. In addition, their constructions largely underpin the normalisation of heterosexuality within school cultures. Boys and girls are thus concurrently obliged to assimilate heteronormativity within school settings (Youdell, 2006) and ultimately reject, subordinate and marginalise same-sex sexualities. The next chapter will present a brief synopsis of the study's overall findings and present recommendations based on them.

CHAPTER SIX:
CONCLUSION

6.1   Introduction

This study explored how foundation phase learners aged between eight and nine constructed same-sex sexualities at a primary school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. I examined the ways in which children construct same-sex sexualities within their daily lives at school, where heteronormative practices and traditional norms are deeply entrenched. In this concluding chapter, I begin by presenting a concise outline of this study and providing a brief overview of previous chapters. Finally, recommendations are offered based on the findings of this research.

6.2   Chapter summaries

Chapter one introduced and provided a synopsis of the scope and purpose of this study. It firstly presented the study's background, wherein the significance of research into homosexuality in South Africa and in South African schools was outlined. Next, the rationale of the study was provided followed by definitions of the main terms employed throughout. It then provided the aims, objectives and research questions in relation to the study. Lastly, a review of the study's research context and research methodology was provided.

Chapter two examined the theories underpinning this research study. I presented how queer theory and poststructuralist feminist theory were used to frame how primary school boys and girls construct same-sex sexualities. Blaise (2012) states that queer theory is referred to as queer theory because it interrogates the presumption that articulations about gender are 'customary' or 'inborn'. MacNaughton (2006) notes that feminist poststructuralist theory poses that boys and girls do not learn about sex-gendered characters from teachers and peers, but are able to construct their own gender. The societal manufacture of gender was also highlighted as a prominent theory within this chapter as the constructions of same-sex sexualities in my study were largely influenced by social factors that regulated the daily lives of children.

Chapter three presented a review of all the important literature in relation to how children construct same-sex sexualities at primary school. Firstly, I presented literature from an international context. This was followed by literature stemming from a sub-Saharan African context. Finally, I provided a detailed account of literature in relation to children's constructions of same-sex sexualities in a South African context. The multiple ways in which children construct same-sex sexualities were explored within this chapter under specific themes.

Chapter four discussed the research plan and methodology employed for this research. I outlined my research plan section and presented a discussion on why I acquired a qualitative research approach. Secondly, in the methodology section I outlined the following: the context where my research took place, how access was gained into the research site, the sampling strategy employed, and the data collection methods utilised. In this chapter I also discussed how the data was analysed, together with issues dealing with the rigour of ethics, self-reflexivity, trustworthiness and restrictions of the study. For any study it is important to consider all the constraints; and this chapter therefore concluded by acknowledging its limitations.

Chapter five analysed the data generated from research observations and interviews. The meanings of same-sex sexualities were discussed under specific themes. I began the chapter by unravelling what it means to be attracted to the same-sex – where learners defined same-sex sexualities. Next, I examined positive attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals. Children learning about sexual diversity in primary school was also discussed. Thereafter I analysed playground politics at school and explored how homosexuality is constructed within a discourse of homophobia. Additionally, I probed how insults, hate speech and homophobic bullying was often used by children against gender non-conforming boys and girls. The media and its role in children learning about diverse sexualities was also explored within the chapter. Following that the chapter considered how children negotiate between religion, places of worship and same-sex sexualities and how primary schools operate as a gender-policing site. Lastly, the word *isitabane* was explored as a tool being used to regulate non-normative gender performances at school.

6.3 Main Findings of this study

6.3.1 Unravelling what it means to be gay or lesbian

The findings within this theme highlighted the meanings Grade 3 children between the ages of eight and nine have about same-sex sexualities. It also demonstrated how they made sense of homosexuality via gendered performances. Butler (2004) states that children steer a planet already ordered by heterosexuality. Therefore, minors' comprehension of what it signifies to be homosexual is entrenched within traditional gendered beliefs of what it signifies to be a boy and a girl. According to Callahan and Nicholas "gender binarism is closely related to the concept of heteronormativity, each being understood as discourses that exert power in subtle and cultural ways by promoting heterosexuality and binary gender" (2018, p. 3). The meanings of same-sex sexualities constructed by the children in this study were directly related to their constructions of normative gendered performances. These constructions are influenced by educational settings, which are sites where binary discourses manufacture gendered bodies (Callahan & Nicholas, 2018).

Children further identified same-sex sexuality as an 'act' rather than an identity. Hence boys or girls who performed in a gender non-normative way were constructed by children as homosexual. This may be because Myers and Raymond indicate that "from a very young age, children are pressed into a rigid heterosexual mould" (2010, p. 6). This is done by teachers and parents who overtly and covertly instil heteronormative traits from an early age. Furthermore, this study also revealed that gay or lesbian people were considered bad people because they did not behave appropriately for their birth gender, that is either as a boy or as a girl. Bell and Perry (2015, p.101) note that this is caused by "fixed in heterosexism in gender and gender roles that are viewed as naturally masculine or feminine".

6.3.1.2 *Examining positive attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals*

On a different level, some children in this study constructed gay and lesbian people as 'good'. In this finding, children stated that gay people are not violent, and they do not rape others. This finding must be understood in a South African context where there are high levels of violence against children and women by heterosexual men. According to Gonsalves et al., "approximately a third of all women who have been in a relationship have been physically or sexually assaulted by their intimate partners, and this accounts for the greatest proportion of sexual violence overall" (2015, p. 2). Additionally, Boonzaier notes that "many heterosexual men discuss their violence as an enforcement of the patriarchal masculinity narrative" (2008,

p. 184). Homophobic attacks such as curative rape and gay bashing are thus often perpetrated by heterosexual males. For example, "the negative attitudes that South Africans have towards homosexuals are reflected in the treatment of lesbian women living openly in South Africa" (Mulaudzi, 2018, p. 6). Additionally, Mulaudzi (2018) states that South African lesbian women are in danger of being earmarked for sexual brutality simply on the basis of their sexual identity. Therefore, in South Africa, lesbians are sufferers of 'curative' rape by heterosexual men who believe that lesbians need to be 'cured' from their sexual identity by having sex with 'straight' men (Asante, 2019). In schools, older heterosexual boys are alleged to be perpetrators of violence and sexual violence (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Hence the way in which children construct gay people as 'good' and non-violent must be understood within this context of violent heterosexual men, where gay and lesbian individuals are often the victims rather than perpetrators of violence and abuse.

6.3.2   Children learning about sexual diversity in primary schools

Participants in my study revealed that they do not learn about diverse sexuality in primary school. This is an accurate reflection because Grade 3 Life Skills books only portray heterosexual relationships and nuclear families. This may be because in society heterosexuality operates as the dominant discourse (Robinson & Diaz, 2006). Learners also stated that teachers do not talk or address diverse sexualities in class. Martino (2009) states that the pervasiveness of heteronormativity within educational institutions is firmly in line with heterosexuality in the curriculum, teaching and learning institutions' ethos. Additionally, Francis (2012); and Helleve et al. (2009) state that educators fear moving away from tradition; hence they are under pressure to teach values according to tradition.

This study found that children in school assume that everyone is a boy or a girl and that they should behave within normative gendered performances associated with being a boy or a girl. These gender binaries presume that pupils identify as heterosexual and personify binary gendered performances and suppositions (Dinkins & Englert, 2015). As a result, schools become heterosexual sites and homosexual learners become victims of homophobia. In relation to this, Dinkins and Englert argue that "a heteronormative environment dominates school culture, and students are positioned as straight; binary gender performances and heterosexual identities are empowered while LGBTQI students and non-heterosexual gender behaviours are marginalised" (2015, p. 394). Hence the lack of education on sexual diversity

in the school attended by the child participants largely contributed to the normalisation of a heterosexual school culture.

6.3.3 Parents promoting heterosexuality and intolerance against gay and lesbian identities

6.3.3.1 Families and non-acceptance of homosexuality

My study found that parents promote heterosexuality and negate homosexuality among their children. This may be because of the assumption that: "heterosexuality is the only acceptable sexual category, despite the complexity of human desires" (Myers & Raymond, 2010, p. 4). Parents do not want their children to be associated with gays and lesbians. According to Kane (2006) parents start gendering their offspring from their first awareness of children. Within this theme, I discovered that children believed that their parents would resort to punishment if their children were gay or lesbian. This shows that parents regulate their children by using violent discipline. In most households corporal punishment and psychological violence are common, and worldwide boys and girls are vulnerable to these types of violent chastisement (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017, p. 2).

In this study it was found that within the home setting, homosexuality is still regarded as taboo and many parents do not want their children to be associated with same-sex sexualities. This may be caused by "parent-oriented concerns for not having further descendants, having a sense of failure as a parent, becoming distant from the child/extended family/community, and the conflict of loving a child who transgresses one's own moral and religious beliefs" (Wang et al., 2009, p. 286). Consequently, the children in my study did not tolerate same-sex sexualities because they were raised by their parents in a way that abhorred being gay or lesbian. However, in a different instance a participant stated that he did not like gay individuals, but no one at home told him not to accept gay people. This is significant as it demonstrated that "children are indeed social agents influencing their own lives and those of the persons in their environment in many ways and that power relations are an important category in considering the relationship between children and adults" (Graf, 2016, p. 20).

6.3.4 Playground politics: examining how homosexuality is constructed within a discourse of homophobia

Playgrounds are commonly used for playing games, however children in primary school also use playgrounds as sites where they use homophobic slurs and name-calling against children who do not conform to normative gendered practices. Mayeza states that "the playground

emerges as a space, like the classroom, where children are regulated, monitored and evaluated, but in the playground this is in relation not to their academic 'work' performances, but their gendered performances" (2015, p. 64). Therefore, this leads to victimisation and stigmatisation of gender non-conforming learners.

6.3.4.1 Playground as a site to scrutinise peers' sexuality

Within this theme observations and responses from participants showed that the primary school playground is an active site where homophobia takes place. According to Wormer and McKinney (2003) children who identify as homosexuals and those who are perceived as gay or lesbian are often victims of homophobic incidents. The school playground in primary school is used by both boys and girls. Children from an early age know sporting codes that are for boys and sports codes that are for girls. Thus, McCormack and Gleeson state that "boys who are perceived as weaker, smaller or feminine are likely to be subjected to homophobic bullying" (2010, p. 388). The findings also revealed that the playground is also an area where children monitor gender normative traits, where they use homophobic slurs against learners who do not conform to gendered norms. Renold (2002) states that homophobic slurs, such as teasing, labelling and name-calling were directed at boys who did not adhere to hegemonic masculine practices. Findings from this study also showed that children actively construct gender and sexualities on the playground, and this was evident in the way they labelled gender non-conforming children as gay.

The playground is a significant place for gender manufacturing, but it is equally a vital place in which discourses of heteronormativity are reinforced such as kissing games, weddings narratives, mothers and fathers, prince and princess stories; in the early childhood centres these are common narratives (Robinson & Diaz, 2006). This study also revealed that boys do not want to play with girls because they fear being labelled as gay by peers. Furthermore, one participant stated that he does not like to play with girls because peers will assume that the girl with whom he plays is his girlfriend. In primary school the gender monitoring on the playground makes it impossible for learners to play with peers of the opposite sex without it being constructed within a notion of heterosexual desire. Mayeza similarly states that "the policing of gender 'boundaries' through the kinds of exclusionary violence and bullying in the playground is also linked to the (re)production of heteronormativity" (2015, p. 50).

6.3.5 Unravelling insults, hate speech and homophobic bullying from peers in primary school

This study found that insults, hate speech and homophobic bullying were a common occurrence in primary school. Weber and Dickter (2015) state that the utilisation of homophobic language such as 'gay' in school settings continues prejudice against homosexual individuals and has a negative impact for members of sexual minority groups. When learners contravene heterosexual practices peers would use hate speech to address them. According to Jennett, "in schools, homophobic bullying can directly affect any young person whose life choices, interests or needs do not conform to accepted gender norms" (2004, p. 6). Therefore, when primary school learners use hate speech to address peers, it shows that they are aware of diverse forms of sexuality and they actively identify peers who do not conform to gendered traits. Schools are also sites that encourage heteronormative practices at all times, hence children insult peers who do not display normative gendered traits. Within this theme research revealed that if children are victims of homophobic slurs, they choose to be violent. Children use violence as a tool to protect themselves when they are called gay. Dworkin and Yi (2003) state that violence takes place in school, community and home, and homosexuals are often targeted because of their identity.

Maintaining hegemonic masculinity at all times was found to be very important for some of the boys in this study. Boys do not want to be likened to girls, because according to them, being like a girl implies that a boy is gay. Therefore, Renold (2005) states that sexuality has been noted as vital to dominant masculinity in primary schools. It is also crucial for boys to maintain hegemonic masculinity at all times. Bartholomaeus (2012) states that these young masculinities that are displayed by boys in primary school influence masculinities in adulthood. Research conducted by Bhana (2008); Renold (2005) and Keddie (2006), also shows that violence and physical aggression are features of dominant masculinity among primary school boys. This study similarly showed that when primary school boys' masculinities are threatened, they resort to violence.

6.3.6 Media and its role in children's learning about diverse sexualities
6.3.6.1 When children are able to identify non-normative gendered behaviour on television

Within this theme the findings show that children who are eight to nine years old are able to identify characters on television who do not conform to gendered norms. Poole notes that "media representations of identities are dominantly constructed through a heteronormative

lens, with traditional gender roles defining how one can or should be masculine or feminine" (2014, p. 279). Participants in this study thus identified gender non-normative traits of gay men on popular South African television shows: for example, speaking like a girl, walking like a girl and dressing up like a girl. Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh note that "television brings family members together, creating new situations in which communication can and does occur" (2000, p. 330).

This shows that television viewing influences children in identifying traits that are non-normative in society. This study showed that children do not simply view television shows passively, instead they are observant and identify diverse sexualities. Additionally, the stereotyped manner that television shows depict gay men as feminine is problematic as it reinforces stereotyped notions which rigidly position gay men as feminine and feminine men as gay. Such understandings fail to recognise gender and sexuality as being fluid. Consequently, gender inequalities become further entrenched within rigid understandings of gender and sexuality.

6.3.7 How children negotiate between religion, places of worship and same-sex sexualities

This study found out that in most religions same-sex sexuality is still regarded as taboo. Therefore, according to Wormer and McKinney "gay and lesbian children growing up in strict religious families are apt to experience dissonance between their spirituality and sexuality" (2003, p. 416). Within this theme the participants also noted that parents do not want their children to be gay, nor do they want their children to be associated with homosexuals. Some participants stated that their parents would not support them if they were gay. This study revealed that most religious denominations condemn same-sex sexualities because most of them do not even talk about it in their worship centres. This is largely influenced by underlying beliefs that, "homosexuality is considered un-Christian, un-Islamic, against Judaism, a plague, a white man's issue, un-American, un-African, and part of bourgeois decadence to name a few justifications" (Dworkin & Yi, 2003, p. 6).

6.3.8 Primary school as a gender-policing site

Primary school are areas where boys and girls are regarded as blameless and therefore, they need to be sheltered from sexuality matters (Renold, 2005). However, findings from this study reveal that primary school boys and girls are able to identify individuals who do not display feminine and masculine traits. Displaying 'appropriate' gender is important in

primary school and this was demonstrated in this study. This is caused because schools are sites that promote heteronormative traits through the curriculum, school structures and teachings. Therefore, homosexual identities are made unavailable in one sense through the fact that they are not taught a formal school curriculum, while simultaneously reinforcing the fact that they are non-accepted, and are brought into being through the popular discourses of homophobia (Allan et al., 2008). Children who did not conform to normative gendered traits were thus found to be marginalised and victimised by peers within this study.

6.3.9 *Isitabane*: A tool used to regulate non-normative gender performances at school

Within this theme I found that *isitabane* or the gay word is frequently used by children in primary school. Solomon (2015) and Van Leent (2017) state that in schools homophobic name-calling prevails. This study revealed that the word gay or *isitabane* is used by learners to ridicule others. Most children were called gay because they did not conform to normative gender practices. According to Mayeza, "the term 'gay', rather than being used to indicate same-sex desire, is used as an insult to describe boys who are constructed as feminine or 'unmasculine'" (2015, p. 64). This may be because schools are heterosexual areas where normative gendered traits are mandatory. The children in my own study used the words gay and *isitabane* to regulate normative gender performances among their peers. Solomon stated that "students (boys in particular) as either agents or targets of sexist language had an increased likelihood of being agents or targets of homophobic language" (2015, p. 85). However, in my research the usage of gay and *isitabane* was generally used by both boys and girls.

6.4 Recommendations

The need to have a sheltered and supportive school domain for homosexual learners is imperative (Abreu & Kenny, 2017). According to Bhana (2012) to address homophobic bullying in schools we need legislative and educational interventions that thoroughly understand the problem. Primary schools thus need homophobic bullying interventions to ensure that all learners are safe regardless of their sexual orientation. Therefore, Wormer and McKinney (2003) note that school management systems have a significant responsibility to play in ensuring that learners are safe in schools. Furthermore, several researchers have acknowledged that schools must design and implement overt policies in opposition to

learners who ridicule, intimidate, eliminate, or maltreat other pupils based on gender identity or sexual orientation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). In this section I offer recommendations and a detailed account of possible intervention strategies that could be undertaken at the level of the school, home and places of worship.

6.4.1   Intervention at school

In school there is no clear perception as to why homosexuals are victims of homophobia, thus Herek (2004) states that there is no understanding of what leads to homophobia, but it consists of fear, dislike, denial and avoidance of homosexuality. This may be because homosexuality is viewed as taboo in society and heteronormative practices and traditional gendered norms dominate many social spheres. Therefore, South African schools are anti-gay institutions where schooling occurrences for homosexual learners are filled with oppression and stereotypical stigmatisation (Msibi, 2012 and Richardson, 2004). Consequently, there is an impending need that existing heterosexual norms and gender stereotypes in the school curriculum be addressed to eliminate the stigmatisation of minority sexualities. This calls for training of prospective educators on matters of sexuality and same-sex sexualities (Sargin & Circir, 2015). The proper training afforded to teachers can work towards ensuring that children are taught about matters of sexuality which include diverse forms of sexuality and diverse family compositions.

This calls for a revised primary school curriculum to ensure gender equality and inclusion of diverse sexuality to minimise the daily occurrence of homophobic crimes at schools. Further, Perez-Testor et al. observe that "expanding teachers' specific information on diversity and helping them to examine their own beliefs and values on homosexuality would enable us to lower the transmission of prejudicial attitudes" (2010, p. 145). Even though teachers need to embrace and teach all learners regardless of their sexual orientation, they also need further training and further knowledge regarding homosexuality and how to address homophobic slurs and stigmatisation of homosexual learners in school. According to Farr (2000) educators are a group of executives whose teaching roles mean that they may impact on whether their learners expand views of prejudice or demonstrate respect towards sexual variety. Therefore, "addressing diversity means that each individual pupil will have sufficient opportunities to make the most of his or her capacities within a framework where the challenge is to achieve equality through the acceptance of difference" (Perez-Testor et al., 2010, p. 139).

In this study I have observed that it is from the primary school stage that minors begin being homophobic towards peers who do not conform to gendered norms. Therefore, Van Leent states, "a respectful approach to addressing homophobic language and bullying is required to address the inequalities inherent in heteronormative schooling practices" (2017, p. 8). When children enter adolescence, it is when gender expectations intensify which overtly gives boys and girls authorisation to monitor peers' behaviour, and reward those who uphold gendered norms and stigmatise those who do not conform (Payne, 2007 and Horn, 2007). Therefore, interventions to eliminate homophobia among learners and society at large should pursue to encourage prominent contact between humans of distinct sexual identities (Perez-Testor et al., 2010).

School management also has a significant responsibility to play in supporting educators in the execution of inclusive education. Robinson and Diaz (2006) note that in early childhood management bodies' responsibility is to implement inclusive social justice policies and programmes. These programmes could assist teachers to tackle issues of homosexuality and ensure that all sexual identities are respected in order to minimise victimisation of homosexual learners, and gender non-conforming learners. Furthermore, these educational programmes could eliminate gender policing among teachers and peers and ensure social justice within each school's ethos and culture. Robinson and Diaz note that "building positive networks across all levels of early childhood education is crucial to the successful implementation of inclusive social justice education programmes" (2006, p. 178).

Interventions at schools should encourage and provide opportunities for children to manufacture same-sex sexualities as a form of sexual identity in order to minimise homophobic bullying. Payne and Smith (2015, p. 190) claim that "for any change to be sustainable, school interventions must take on the task of cultural change alongside violence intervention". This will help children to respect all forms of sexual identity and to eliminate marginalisation of homosexual learners. It is important that schools focus on attaining an enhanced comprehension of the indistinct ways that the accrediting of heteronormative gendered performances continually impact how learners arrange their school surroundings (Payne & Smith, 2015). Additionally, a non-discrimination policy should be part of daily practice and its implementation should be part of the school culture (Payne & Smith, 2015). The South African Department of Education is planning to introduce comprehensive sexuality education in 2020. This is going to take place in Grade 4. Comprehensive sexuality

education may support boys and girls by offering, "a safe passage to adulthood and in reaching their full potential in educational achievement, earning capacity and societal participation" (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016, p. 472). Additionally, Boonstra (2011) states that comprehensive sexual education has enormous potential to give children vital teachings about their bodies and sexuality, to minimise humiliation and anxiety, to prevent misinformation and to enhance their capabilities to make secure and knowledgeable decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.

Therefore, teachers have a significant responsibility to play in primary schools to ensure that gendered inequalities are not reproduced and to ensure that other sexualities are given equal recognition. According to Francis (2017, p. 4), "teachers are critical in bringing about change, in challenging the dominance of heterosexuality in schools". Additionally, "teachers play an important role in promoting safety and reducing bullying in schools" (Russell et al., 2015, p. 34). Teachers also need to be trained about addressing homophobic bullying cases in schools. Newton (2015) indicates that to prevent homophobic bullying and eliminating insults, teachers must be trained to be confident when utilising relevant language to deal with and address homophobia at schools.

6.4.2   Intervention at home

Robinson and Diaz (2006) claim that families can influence how variety and difference are labelled in various childhood institutions. This was evident in this study, where the home setting played a significant role in making meanings of same-sex sexualities among children, therefore intervention from the home environment is vital. According to Robinson and Diaz (2006) families play a significant responsibility in sustaining governing societal discourses, and in manufacturing children's subjectivities. Family is one of the most important structures for every child, and families play a significant role in protecting their children. Parents need to embrace all sexualities, so children have positive attitudes towards homosexuals. Same-sex sexualities, when disclosed to the family, can cause complications in family relationships (Nascimento & Scorsolini-Comin, 2018). Families expect the continuation of heteronormative practices, thus homosexual individuals fear to come out to families and society because of possible rejection and victimisation. Parents expect children to follow normative gendered traits, hence children who are perceived as homosexuals are expected to change the way they 'behave'. Thus, families as performative social spaces are instruments of self-reflexivity, interrelating with the wider society (Robinson & Diaz, 2006).

LaSala (2000) states that parents may need re-education about same-sex sexualities' way of life; this would help them to unlearn the prevalent biased and outdated information about homosexuals. Parents need to be more receptive towards diverse sexualities and accept and support their children who may be gender non-conforming as stigmatising them can result in disastrous consequences for children who are sexually diverse. Likewise, LaSala states, "Parents are asked to embrace this fundamental component of their son's and daughter's identity that is still stigmatised by society and historically has been attributed to family dysfunction" (2000, p. 71).

Stigmatisation and prejudice that faces homosexuals may lead to dropping out of school, depression and suicide. Similarly, Goodman states, "sexual minority youth face mental health disparities compared to their heterosexual peers, including higher rates of depression, anxiety, suicide, and substance use" (2018, p. 9). Parents thus need to learn ways to accommodate homosexuality in order to prevent unnecessary victimisation of homosexuals. Further, Goodman (2018) indicates that support from parents may help homosexuals avoid the predictive factor of mental health outcomes.

Parents of gay and lesbian children need to support their children. Firstly, Needham and Austin (2010) state that parents need to provide support, by expressing love and spending time engaging in entertaining activities with their children. Secondly, Harkness (2016) notes that parents may also give direct support for their child's sexual identity; they must be willing to talk about their children's sexual identity and the process of identity exploration. Thirdly, Ryan et al. (2010) indicate that parents of homosexual children can help them by becoming involved in their child's school, encouraging respect toward homosexuals within their religious institutions, and advocating for other members of the family to support their child's sexual identity. Lastly, D'Amico et al. (2015) state that parents can substantiate their child's sexual identity and behave in a friendly manner toward their child's homosexual friends. This may help children to see beyond the gender binary and to accept gender and sexually diverse identities.

6.4.3   Intervention at places of worship
In this study, places of worship played an important role in manufacturing how children in primary school view homosexuality. "Traditionally, religion has played a strong role in codifying socially acceptable expressions of gender and sexuality" (Drescher, 2010, p. 440). Religious institutions have their gender-acceptable roles for men and women, thus if someone

is non-conforming to those roles they are victimised. These religious doctrines govern the religious bodies and they condemn homosexuality as a sexual identity. Furthermore, these teachings are passed from one generation to the next. Places of worship continue to be spaces that perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes and sustain heteronormative practices, thus promoting discrimination against homosexual individuals. Abreu and Kenny note, "these organisations utilise religious teachings, spirituality, and God to condemn same-sex attractions, and to isolate and silence discourse on sexual and gender diversity in secular educational institutions" (2017, p. 5).

Places of worship have a significant role in society and they also promote heterosexual discourses, therefore individuals who locate outside of dominant discourses encounter stigmatisation and very little support from most religious bodies. According to Horn et al. (2008) places of worship and religious beliefs reinforce how heterosexual children negatively judge homosexuality and how they should treat homosexual peers. Varjas et al. (2007) state that one of the main religious teachings is that same-sex sexuality is a sin, thus creating non-tolerance towards gay and lesbian learners.

Therefore, the role of religious institutions is to eliminate negative opinions about homosexuality to ensure inclusion and acceptance of all sexual identities. Religious institutions can play a significant role in impacting the public's understanding and acceptance of same-sex sexualities. Therefore, "alongside religious denominations, religiously based organisations can play a role in influencing social policy and shaping public attitudes" (Newman et al., 2017, p. 8). The main task of places of worship is to reshape society's negative attitudes and minimise homophobic bullying towards homosexuals. This may be done through positive teachings about homosexuality and the acceptance of all sexual orientations. Positive teachings may create tolerance for diverse sexual identities. These interventions may help eradicate harmful religious discourses that prevail in religious institutions and may assist children in constructing positive attitudes towards homosexuality. Religious-based establishments and places of worship can thus play a significant role in impacting social policy and moulding perceptions of the public (Newman et al., 2017).

6.5   Conclusion

The above recommendations mentioned in relation to this study are useful in promoting acceptance towards homosexual learners. There is an urgent need to challenge the way

children make meanings of same-sex sexualities, by offering them opportunities to construct homosexuality in a tolerant way. Changing the way children make meanings of same-sex sexualities from an early age may help to reduce traditional stereotypes and homophobic prejudices that are prevalent in primary schools. Robinson and Diaz state that "deconstructing gender and power at all levels of society is crucial to building children's understanding of gender discrimination and inequality" (2006, p. 138). Interventions on all parts of society will therefore afford children an opportunity to accept diverse sexuality and minimise discrimination and victimisation of gender non-conforming individuals and same-sex sexualities that occur every day.

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Appendix 1

Questions for learners

Research instruments

1. What do you know about gays and lesbians?

2. Do you think gays or lesbians are good or bad people? Why?

3. At home what do your parents and siblings say about same-sex sexualities?

4. In school do teachers talk about same-sex sexualities?

5. What your friends say about same-sex sexualities?

6. Have you ever been called gay or lesbian? And how did you respond?

7. Have you ever witnessed gay or lesbian learners being bullied in school or outside school premises?

8. Have you seen gay or lesbian people on media? Television, newspaper, or social networks?

9. At home, school, church, temple or mosque what do they say about gay and lesbian people?

10. Do you use gay word to insult your peers?

Appendix 2

Appendix 2:

Letter to the principal asking for permission to conduct research at school

Date: _22 ___January___ 2019_

Dear Principal ___Mr R. Singh_____

My name is Nosipho Sithole, I am a master's student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am doing research on young boys and girls "perform" gender. Considering the violence, sexual abuse, rape and HIV/AIDS, it is important to understand how young boys and girls construct the world around them. I would like to ask permission to conduct my research in your school.

The study is part of a larger research project, **learning from the learners**, which seeks to explore how boys and girls in schools in KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape learn about and "perform" gender and sexuality. My research project forms part of this project. I am looking to work with at least 30 boys and girls in your school, in grade 3. These learners will be interviewed individually. All participants will only be recorded if they agree. All participants' names and the name of your school will be kept anonymous; real names will never be used. The participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time.

Everything discussed in the study will be kept confidential to protect the children. The learners' permission will be secured before even commencing with the study. A letter will also be written to the parents/guardians of minor to ask for their permission for their participation in the study.

DECLARATION

I ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ (full names of principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to my school participating in the research project.

I understand that my learners are at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should they so desire.

Additional consent, where applicable
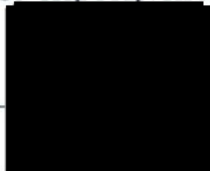
I hereby provide consent to:

Appendix 2 (cont.)

Audio- record my learners' interviews   YES/NO
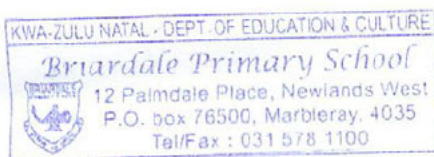
SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL DATE

PRINCIPAL: P. SITHOLE

2 2 JAN 2019

Thank you for your willingness to participate

Sincerely

Miss Nosipho Sithole

School Stamp

KWA-ZULU NATAL · DEPT. OF EDUCATION & CULTURE
Briardale Primary School
12 Palmdale Place, Newlands West
P.O. box 76500, Marbleray. 4035
Tel/Fax : 031 578 1100

0735500891

nosipho245@gmail.com

The project supervisor is:

Professor D. Bhana, PhD

School of Education

University of KwaZulu - Natal

Private Bag X03

Cnr Mariannhill & Richmond Roads

Ashwood

3605

South Africa

Tel: +27 (0) 31 260 2603

Fax: +27 (0) 31 260 3793

Email: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the Research Office through

Mariette Snyman

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Research Office: Ethics

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001

Durban

4000

Tel: +27 31 260 8350

Fax: + 27 31 260 3093

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix 3

Structured Observation Sheet

Observation sheet	Yes	No	Researcher Field Notes:
1. Do girls and boys play together?			
2. Do children demonstrate anger when called gay (*isitabane*) by peers?			
3. Are children able to separate plays in terms of traditional girls' play or boys' play?			
4. Are children able to identify gay or lesbian individuals?			
5. Do children fight when called gay or lesbian by other children?			
6. Do children maintain normative gendered roles?			
7. Do children use the word gay (*isitabane*) as a swearing word?			
8. Do children identify certain behaviours or performances as homosexual?			

Appendix 4

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL ™

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

4 February 2019

Miss Nosipho Sithole 200100488
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Sithole

Protocol reference number: HSS/1645/018M (Linked To HSS/0852/014CA)
Project title: Exploring how children construct same-sex relationships : A narrative study at a primary school in KwaZulu-Natal

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 17 September 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhana & Dr Shaaista Moosa
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrator: Ms Sheryl Jeenarain

Appendix 5

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma	Tel: 033 392 1063	Ref.:2/4/8/1756

Miss N Sithole
1125 Riverdene
Newlands West
Durban
4037

Dear Miss Sithole

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPLORING HOW CHILDREN CONSTRUCT SAME – SEX RELATIONSHIPS: A NARRATIVE STUDY AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN KWAZULU-NATAL",** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 April 2019 to 01 September 2021.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Briadale Primary School

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 05 April 2019

Appendix 6

Letter of assent to parents/guardians requesting permission to interview their children at school

Dear Parent / Guardian

I, Miss Nosipho Sithole, Student Number 200100488, am a Masters student (Gender Education) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am seeking your permission for your child to take part in a research project that I will be doing at Briardale Primary school, 12 Palmdale Place Newlands West. My contact details are as follows 0735500891. My home address is 1125 Riverdene, Newlands West 4037.

Key features of the project:

Violence in South Africa is very prevalent. This study forms a part of a larger research project, **learning from the learners**, which seeks to explore how boys and girls in schools in KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape learn about and "perform" gender. One would hope that after so many years of democracy there would be evident tolerance. Our constitution enshrines respect, equality and non-discrimination of people regarding their identity. Traditional gender norms are dominant in our communities. In South Africa HIV/AIDS prevalence is very high. Pseudonyms will be used to protect participants' identities. Participants will be allowed to withdraw whenever they like. All interviews will be audio taped.

If you would like further details pertaining to the validity of the study then you are most welcome to contact Professor Deevia Bhana, my supervisor of the study on bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za or on 031 260 2603.

****

Parent/Caregiver consent form

I am willing for my (child's name) _____ to participate in the study being conducted by N. Sithole at Briardale primary school.

I understand that the identity of my child will remain confidential.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN   DATE

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record the interview   YES /NO

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

_____

Miss N. Sithole

You can also contact the Research Office through:

Mariette Snyman

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Research Office: Ethics

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001

Durban

4000

Tel: +27 31 260 8350

Fax: + 27 31 260 3093

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

NOTE:

Potential subjects should be given time to read, understand and question the information given before giving consent. This should include time out of the presence of the investigator and time to consult friends and/or family.

Appendix 7

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

1 November 2017

Professor Deevia Bhana (381778)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number : HSS/0852/014CA
Project title: Learning from the learners : Growing up as girls and boys and negotiating gender and sexuality in and outside school

Approval notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application for an amendment dated 20 October 2017 has now been granted **Full Approval**.

- *Include age Learners 13 to 18 years old*
- *To include Northwood High School, KwaSanti High School, and Zipatele High School*
- *Specific amendment for the following school is requested based on a new international colloboration with Johns Hopkins University and Colorado State University for 16 to 18 years old learners involving two focus groups*
- *Sithabile Secondary School*
- *KwaSanti High School*
- *Marrianridge High School*
- *Zipathele High School*

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

▮▮▮▮▮ ....

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities Social Sciences Research Ethics

/pm

Cc Supervisor/Project Leader: Dr Bernhard Gaede
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Benn Sartorius
Cc School Administrator: Ms Caroline Dhanraj & Ms Merridy Grant

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010
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Appendix 8

Kristine Melville-Rossouw
Editor
8 Kingston Terrace East
North Adelaide 5006
South Australia

+61(0)448 236320
krissie999@gmail.com

This is to confirm that during May 2020, I, Kristine Melville-Rossouw, (B. Journalism & Media Studies, Rhodes University) a professional editor, reviewed and edited Chapters One to Six of Nosipho Sithole's thesis, titled: "Children's meanings of same-sex sexualities: A study of 8 and 9-year- old boys and girls in a primary school".

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Signed....

Date........................22 | 5 | 2020

Appendix 9
Turn-It-In Originality Report

Submission Author: Nosipho Sithole

Submission date: 18-Dec-2019 12:52 PM (UTC + 0200)

Submission ID: 1236464783

Word Count: 49 631

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